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Emiratization: United Arab Emirates' national workforce development program

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EMIRATIZATION: UNITED ARAB EMIRATES' NATIONAL WORKFORCE

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

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Organization Development

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by

Mohamed Abdusheikh

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under the guidance of the Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has

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MASTER OF SCIENCE

IN ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Since the economic boom in the oil industry in the 1970s, local workers in the United Arab Emirates have comprised less than 1% of the private sector workforce. Foreign workers dominate the private sector payrolls while most Emirates chose positions in government organizations. This imbalance poses economic and social risks to the country; and the government has strived to increase the numbers of local workers in these settings (called Emiratization) through aggressive legislation and regulation. To date, Emiratization has been largely unsuccessful by most accounts.

This study aimed to identify and understand the success factors that might be associated with Emiratization programs and determine the role that knowledge management systems may play in increasing local worker representation. It gathered survey and interview data from Emirati workers, leaders, and managers to gauge their views on public and private sector employment and Emiratization to date.

The key findings propose that the government take a more collaborative approach with private sector organizations, create a supportive knowledge management system related to Emiratization, create a government entity to coordinate Emiratization with private sector organizations, and form a transorganizational system comprised of the various stakeholders.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is a Middle Eastern country in the

Arabian Gulf that formed in 1971. It is rich in oil and gas resources and has one

of the highest gross domestic products in Asia. Since the discovery of oil in the

1960s, the UAE, like its fellow member countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council,

has experienced phenomenal economic development and socio-political change

(Davidson, 2005). In particular, the development of the country's oil industry led

to an influx of foreign workers to compensate for local labor supply shortages.

For example, as of 2004, "expatriate labor across all occupations and skills levels

constituted around two-thirds of the total workforce and 95 percent of labor in the

private sector" in Saudi Arabia (Pakkiasamy, 2004, para. 3). In the UAE in 2004,

the percentage of expatriates in the private sector was 80%. By 2009, that figure

had increased to 99.57%, meaning that only 13,000 of the 3 million private sector

employees were Emiratis (Hafez, 2009). The rest of the UAE workforce is

employed by the public sector (government).

The lack of national workers in the private sector leads to critical skill and

knowledge gaps. For example, when Emirati workers are only employed by the

government, the country's labor force lacks the breadth of experience and

business savvy required by private sector organizations. This presents a major

obstacle for the UAE government to achieve its strategic objectives of developing

a diversified and more sustainable economy, as outlined in the Dubai Strategic

Plan 2015 (Dubai eGovernment, 2011) and Abu Dhabi Strategic Plan 2030

(General Secretariat Executive Council Emirate of Abu Dhabi, 2011). Thus,

Emiratization, a strategy to increase the participation of local workers in private sector businesses, is a primary strategic objective of the UAE government.

However, despite multiple efforts at Emiratization, the percentage of Emiratis employed in the private sector remains low. If this trend continues, the intended economic shifts could further exacerbate the low representation of Emiratis in private sector businesses, lead to high unemployment rates for these citizens, and possibly arouse economic and social unrest ("Gulf States Struggle," 2011). The present study attempted to extend the findings of *The Abu Dhabi Emiratisation Forum* (2010) by focusing on the knowledge management (KM) system implications for Emiratization.

Purpose of the Study

The ultimate stakeholder of the national workforce development initiatives is the UAE government, the authority and strategic orchestrator of legislation, strategic projects, and other initiatives. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to evaluate the government approaches to UAE national workforce development programs to date and recommended changes that could help make these programs more effective. The following research questions guided this study:

- What was the UAE government's approach to Emiratization?

- What role, if any, could KM play in Emiratization?

The study aims were as follows:

1. Identify key success areas to serve as knowledge base for future decision-making, program development, and further research in this area.

2. Provide pertinent recommendations on how KM could be leveraged to facilitate the achievement strategic objectives of the government and private sector organizations.

The results of this study can help the government in achieving greater success with its Emiratization and economic development strategic initiatives. This study was not meant to solve all the issues that the stakeholders are experiencing; however, it hoped to offer insights and potential solutions for improving the effectiveness of present and future Emiratization programs. Recommendations from this study would benefit from further analysis regarding their viability.

Description of Key Terms

Certain terms used in this study are defined below to better illustrate the ideas and allow the reader to fully comprehend their meaning. Table 1 presents these terms and their definitions.

Research Background

Since the early 1970s, Gulf countries, such as the UAE, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Oman, have experienced rapid economic development of their oil- and gas-dependent economies, including major infrastructure projects and development of local businesses. To support such growth, businesses recruited foreign workers because of skill and labor shortages in the local market. This approach prompted governments to adopt liberal policies regarding foreign workers, and employers were able to freely recruit expatriates with limited government intervention. Despite the liberal employment regulations, UAE immigration and citizenship policies remained strict, stipulating that foreign workers (termed *temporary guest workers)* were ineligible for permanent residency or citizenship status, no matter how long they lived or worked the country.

Table 1

Key Terms

Term	Description
United Arab Emirates (UAE)	An Arab country located in the Middle East on the Arabian Gulf and bordering Oman, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia.
Emiratization	A UAE strategy to reduce the number of foreign workers by integration of Emirati workers into the private sector labor force, which is dominated by foreign workers. This practice also is known as nationalization.
Emirati	A person who is a UAE citizen and holds UAE passport.
Public Sector	The sector that consists of Government departments and institutions sector.
Private Sector	The sector that consists of privately held organizations and other non-government organizations.
Semi-Government Organizations	Corporate organizations owned by the government.
Gulf Country Corporation	Gulf countries such as UAE, Oman, Bahrain, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia.
Guest Workers	Expatriates or foreign national workers.
National Workforce Development Program	UAE-based government program established for the development and employment of UAE national citizens—in particular, their participation in the private sector.
Dubai Strategic Plan 2015	A declaration of the vision for the emirate and the steps needed to achieve the vision. The focus is on urban growth, technological advancement, and making Dubai a desirable place to live and do business.
Abu Dhabi Strategic Plan 2030	A comprehensive plan for developing the city of Abu Dhabi. The plan addresses land uses, building heights, and transportation plans for the entire metropolitan area of Abu Dhabi to support it in becoming a global capital city of more than 3 million people.
Executive Director for National Workforce Development	A senior government role in Emiratization and employment in the country. This role focuses on placing Emiratis in the private sector organizations at all levels and business sectors.
Policy Expert in Gulf Employment Trends	An expert within the Dubai School of Government who focuses on analyzing policies related to employment and education.
Emiratization Program manager	Role within a private or public organization that is tasked with attracting, recruiting, developing, and retaining UAE Emiratis.
Emiratization Recruitment and Placement Expert	Managing director of a recruitment firm specializing in placing Emirati candidates in both public and private sectors.
Executive Director for Vocational Training	Role that focuses on training high school graduates in collaboration with companies to make them ready to assume specific skilled jobs.

The 1980s and early 1990s witnessed growth in the Emirati local workforce and Emiratis began to replace those foreign workers who held government positions. Today, Emiratis still generally pursue public sector employment due to the exceptional working conditions, high pay and benefits, ease of securing employment, lower workload, lower performance expectations, and high job security associated with these positions (McMurray, 1999). Local workers often consider private sector working conditions inferior and unsuitable due to the absence of certain benefits associated with their local culture, such as frequent work breaks.

By the mid-1990s, public sector job opportunities began to grow scarce and the UAE government realized that they needed to direct Emiratis to private sector careers to avoid increases in unemployment and other adverse social issues. The key challenge the government faced was how to integrate the local work culture with the private sector. Efforts to this end failed, however, as private sector organizations remained focused on their financial bottom lines and did not partner with the government in its efforts to integrate local workers into their workforces.

As the decade wore on and the UAE economy continued to grow, the average UAE annual unemployment rate was 7.9% and the Emirati unemployment rate was 8.2%. However, the rapid influx of foreign workers started to pose economic and social problems for the UAE labor market, such as difficulties finding employment and dramatic changes as a result of granting women more rights (Prasad & Yang, 2002). By 2005, foreign workers constituted roughly 91% of the UAE labor market overall and 99% of the private sector

workforce (Abdelkarim, 2001; TANMIA, 2006). Furthermore, this same year, the Emirati unemployment rate was 12.6% (19.8% for females, 8.9% for males). Unemployment is expected to rise unless strong government intervention programs are established (TANMIA, 2006).

In short, the government employment policies led to a substantial imbalance of local versus foreign workers in the UAE workforce. As of 2009 in the UAE, only 0.43% of all private sector employees were Emiratis (Hafez, 2009). The expatriate majority can be viewed as the direct result of ambitious development plans to transform the country into a regional economic power (Mohamed, 2002). Currently, despite growth in the local indigenous population, Emirati workforce participation remains slight and reliance on expatriates continues to grow.

Although a substantial imbalance exists, Emiratis and guest workers have so far enjoyed a harmonious relationship due to their practical and mutual need for co-existence. Emiratis acknowledge the lack of local workers and worker expertise to meet increasing demands, while guest workers acknowledge their status as temporary providers of skills and expertise—in exchange for higher incomes and standards of living than are available in their home countries. Views about foreign workers are changing, however, as the UAE strives to become a knowledge-based economy and the government recognizes that long-term and sustainable economic development relies upon growing the Emirati private sector workforce (Randeree, 2009).

Emiratization

Emiratization refers to the UAE government's policies to develop local talent for private sector jobs and to close the gap between the number of guest workers versus local workers in the country (Toledo, 2006). The UAE government's commitment and support for Emiratization initiatives is strong, as it continues to invest significant resources towards achieving its strategic goals. For example, it recently pledged $150 million on a single Emiratization program for developing future Emirati entrepreneurs.

Although the UAE government is clearly committed to Emiratization, there seems to be a general lack of reciprocal commitment from private sector organizations and Emirati workers themselves. In a recent Emiratization forum organized by the Dubai School of Government, program managers from private sector organizations, Emirati workers, and pertinent government departments argued that Emiratis' compensation demands were significantly higher than the market and, as such, hiring Emiratis could adversely affect private sector organizations' financial bottom lines. The *Emiratization Forum Report* produced as a result of this forum summarized much of the prior research on Emiratization in the UAE, captured the essence of the issue from the private sector organization perspective, and produced practical recommendations from the private sector individuals who would be enforcing the policies ("The Abu Dhabi Emiratisation Forum," 2010). Four recommendations for Emiratization were produced:

1. Create awareness in the early stages by promoting private industry in schools and universities.

2. Implement internship programs to create awareness of the different facets of private industry careers.

3. Enable increased communication between the education system and industries to align educational programs with the market's actual needs and requirements.

4. Develop a retention plan for Emiratis, covering career orientation, development plans, training programs, and a mentoring system.

In its efforts to facilitate and support Emiratization national strategies, the UAE government has established departments to oversee program implementation. The government also has empowered the ministry of labor to implement legislation to monitor and regulate private sector organizations in its Emiratization endeavors. Some of the key government departments established to provide oversight to Emiratization programs and initiatives were: National Human Resources Development and Employment Authority, Emirates National Development Program, and Abu Dhabi Tawteen Council. The core objectives of these entities are to provide all able and willing Emirati workers with training and employment in order to eliminate involuntary unemployment. These entities also are tasked to provide policy related advice to the government on matters related to Emiratization, Emirati employment, and workforce planning.

In 2006, the UAE ministry of labor issued a decree that required all private sector organizations with 50 or more employees to appoint an Emirati human resource manager. The premise behind this law was that Emirati human resource managers would favor hiring Emirati workers, thus, boosting Emiratization. This law was rescinded less than a year later due to a lack of qualified Emirati human resource professionals. These kinds of quotas only served to undermine the Emiratis' credibility in the eyes of the private sector.

They felt victimized by the government and diminished their commitment to Emiratization (TANMIA, 2006).

Available studies on national workforce development are primarily limited to theory-based recommendations. For example, Toledo (2006) discussed potential Emiratization strategies based on the Ramsey Theorem, a mathematical theory that studies the conditions under which order (in this case, balancing the number of local and foreign workers) could exist. Al-Ali, Shee, and Foley (2008) used capital theory to hypothesize how Emirati workforce participation could be increased, while Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner (2010) examined how stereotypes undermine Emiratization efforts. Other articles provided various sets of recommendations for balancing the numbers of Emirati versus foreign workers (Fasano & Goyal, 2004; Randeree, 2009).

Toledo's (2006) discussion of the Ramsey Theorem outlined the problems associated with Emiratization and explored conditions under which a higher participation of native workers in the UAE labor market could be achieved. Toledo concluded that Emiratization policies may be successful if companies received government support in exchange for hiring nationals. However, he observed that in a perfectly competitive market, private sector firms would not want to hire UAE nationals due to issues such as skill gaps and work culture. Toledo also predicted that enhancing labor mobility among expatriates may help increase their productivity, thus, raising their wages and reducing the wage gap between nationals and guest workers.

Al-Ali et al. (2008) identified factors to enhance workforce participation, recruitment, and retention of UAE nationals in Dubai's workplaces through three

lenses of capital theory: human capital, such as education, skills, and experience; social capital, such as gender inequality, nepotism, and trust; and organizational capital, such as culture, English fluency, and human resource management. Their key recommendation was to include a government official in all job interviews at private sector organizations to ensure fairness in the selection of Emiratis. Such a recommendation clearly assumes that a viable pool of Emirati candidates exist and that bias in employment decisions is prevalent, although the report did not verify either assumption. Another recommendation was to establish a Career and Succession Plan Review Board, which would focus on career development for UAE nationals.

Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner (2010) contended that foreign workers' negative stereotypes of Emiratis (and Emiratis' internalization of these stereotypes) lead to resistance against hiring Emiratis within private sector organizations. The authors deduced four popular areas of stereotyping: Emiratis' skills and competencies, work ethic, cultural disposition, and the perceived effectiveness of Emiratization. Although these authors described a psychological dimension to the lack of Emiratization, the authors failed to address whether the stereotypes are a genuine reflection of Emiratis and fell short of providing concrete measures for improving Emiratization.

Fasano and Goyal (2004) examined the effects of government policies implemented by Gulf Cooperation Council countries to boost the effectiveness of national workforce development programs. The researchers concluded that an effective nationalization strategy would increase the attractiveness of private sector employment for nationals by doing the following:

1. Reducing the wage differential between the public and private sectors.

2. Making social benefits available to both private and public sector working nationals.

3. Announcing strict limits on public sector employment.

4. Reducing disparities in labor mobility by creating a level playing field between hiring or firing national workers in relation to expatriate workers.

5. Encouraging skill acquisition by nationals by strengthening educational and vocational training.

6. Providing time-specific incentives, such as subsidies, to companies for training and scholarships.

7. Promoting self-employment.

Some of these recommendations were unworkable. For example, reduction of the wage differential would have necessitated government subsidy for national workers and, thus, would have stirred animosity with foreign workers. On the other hand, the recommendation of enhancing vocational skills and promoting entrepreneurship is presently high in the government agenda. The UAE government also has established specific entities (e.g., the Khalifa Fund) to financially support Emirati entrepreneurs.

Randeree (2009) focused on the difficulties hampering Emiratization caused by demographic workforce imbalances, the challenges of private sector employment, poor clarity about the role of national women in society, and high unemployment among poorly trained Emiratis. Randeree pointed out that more than two-thirds of graduates from UAE government universities are female, but women as a whole account for less than 12% of the country's entire workforce. She concluded, therefore, that enhancing local women's private sector workforce presence would be key to achieving Emiratization.

In summary, the Gulf countries have experienced rapid economic development since the early 1970s, forcing its private sector businesses to heavily rely on foreign labor forces due to local worker shortages. Further, local workers have preferred public sector positions due to compensation, culture, and work conditions. By the mid-1990s, shrinking public sector opportunities prompted the UAE government to focus on how local workers could be integrated into the private sector. Emiratization efforts have largely failed, however, as local workers remain uninterested in private sector employment and private sector organizations have remained focused on their financial bottom lines. Unemployment is expected to rise unless strong government intervention programs are established. The *Emiratization Forum Report* published in 2010 offered four recommendations to improve the situation, including creating awareness, opportunities, and communication related to recruiting and retaining local workers. The government also has created several departments to support Emiratization efforts.

Knowledge Management

KM is a discipline that seeks to maintain and leverage the value of an organization's knowledge assets, thereby, improving individual and organizational performance (Fiol & Lyles, 1985). Knowledge assets and capabilities have been described as core competencies (Prahalad & Hamel, 1990), invisible assets (Itami, 1987), and intellectual capital (Edvinsson & Malone, 1997; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Stewart, 1997). The value of an organization's intellectual assets has been estimated to far exceed—by three to four times—the value of its physical and financial assets (Edvinsson & Malone,

1997; Handy, 1991). It is important to note that organization knowledge is valuable and contributes to organizational performance to the extent that it is unique, difficult to obtain, relevant, and applied effectively to the organization's competitive strategy (Barney, 1991). Thus, organizations seek to develop or acquire knowledge that distinctly adds value for customers that can be leveraged across products, functions, business units, or geographical regions.

KM is related to organizational learning, which generates new knowledge on an ongoing basis that needs to be managed for performance benefits. organizational learning is rooted in and influenced by the human resource structures and the social systems within the organization (Cummings & Worley, 2005). For example, the learning processes in the organization affect the amount and kind of knowledge that an organization possesses. Knowledge, in turn, affects performance outcomes.

Thus, both practices are integral for enabling organizations to create wealth (Teece, 1998) as well as to create a sustainable competitive advantage—especially in the current volatile market conditions (Crossan, Lane, & White, 1999; Lant, 2000; Prokesch, 1997; Spender, 1996; Strata, 1989). Organizations are adopting organizational learning and KM practices at a rapid and increasing rate (Cummings & Worley, 2005). Figure 1 depicts how organizational learning and KM are related.

Organizational learning consists of four interrelated activities: discovery, invention, production, and generalization (Dewey, 1933). Discovery, the start of learning, is initiated when errors occur or when gaps between the desired and current state are detected. Invention focuses on creating solutions to correct the

| Organization characteristics | Organizational learning processes: | Organizational knowledge | Organizational performance |

Organizational Learning   Knowledge Management   Competitive Strategy

Organization characteristics
- Structure
- IT
- HR practices
- Culture
- Leadership

Organizational learning processes:
- Discovery
- Invention
- Production
- Generalization

Organizational knowledge
- Explicit
- Tacit

Organizational performance

Based on "Organization learning disorders: Conceptual model and intervention hypotheses," by W. Snyder and T. G. Cummings, 1998, *Human Relations, 51*, p. 876.

Figure 1

Interrelationships between Organizational Learning and Knowledge Management

errors or close the gap. Production focuses on implementing the solutions. Generalization, the final step, involves reflecting on the solutions and their effects and then extending that knowledge to other relevant situations. These four processes produce new knowledge that enables organization members to improve the organization (Cummings & Worley, 2005).

Three types of learning have been defined (Argyris & Schon, 1978, 1995; Senge, 2006). Single-loop (adaptive) learning deals with improving the status quo, such as reducing errors and closing gaps between desired and existing conditions. As a result, the effect of this type of learning is incremental improvements in organizational functioning. Double-loop (generative) learning focuses on changing the status quo, which involves revising underlying assumptions and conditions. Doing so can ignite transformative change, thus, radically altering status quo. The third type of learning is called *deuterolearning*,

which focuses on learning how to learn and improving the organization's methods of single- and double-loop learning.

The key outcome of organizational learning is organization knowledge, which includes members' awareness and expertise regarding organizational processes, services and products, customers, and competitive environments (Cummings & Worley, 2005). Knowledge can be explicit and codified in manuals, documents, and databases. It also can be tacit and exist primarily in members' intuitions, memories, and skills (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Polanyi, 1966). KM interventions in organizations have aimed to codify members' knowledge so it may be more easily shared across the organization and applied to its tasks. The difficulty of accessing and codifying tacit knowledge also has led to efforts to help members informally share their knowledge.

Given KM's focus on capturing and codifying knowledge, KM practice involves developing tools and techniques for collecting, organizing, and translating information into useful knowledge (Kim, 2002). As a result, KM relies heavily on information systems and technology and emphasizes electronic forms of knowledge storage and transmission (e.g., intranets, databases). KM systems also encompass both human and automated activities and their associated artifacts (Newman & Conrad, 1999).

There is growing emphasis in organizations on developing measures to capture knowledge capital (Edvinsson & Malone, 1997; Kaplan & Norton, 1996; Leonard-Barton, 1995; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Stewart, 1997; Svieby, 1977). Increasing attention is directed at how firms can acquire and use it effectively. While KM interventions are increasingly being developed, there is no universal

approach to the practice. However, they all address three essential steps of KM, which are generating, organizing, and distributing knowledge.

The first step of KM, generating knowledge, involves identifying the kinds of knowledge that will create the most value for the organization and creating the mechanisms for creating or capturing that knowledge. Mechanisms could include acquiring knowledge externally through company acquisitions or consultants (Anand, Manz, & Glick, 1998), sharing knowledge internally through communities of practice (Brown & Duguid, 1991; Wenger, 1999), or developing knowledge internally through specialized departments (e.g., research and development, corporate universities, centers of excellence).

The second step, organizing knowledge, involves refining and capturing valued knowledge in accessible and usable forms. Two specific strategies are codification, which means categorizing and storing knowledge in databases, and personalization, which means supporting people in sharing their knowledge with others—usually through personal conversations, direct contact, and ongoing dialogue (Hansen, Nohria, & Tierney, 1999). Codification works best with explicit forms of knowledge, whereas personalization strategies are most appropriate for tacit knowledge.

The third and final step, distributing knowledge, involves creating mechanisms for members to gain access to needed knowledge. The three distribution approaches are self-directed, knowledge services and networks, and facilitated transfer. Self-directed distribution relies on members' initiative to access tools such as knowledge databases and locator systems. Knowledge services refer to entities (e.g., help desks, knowledge packages, knowledge

departments or managers) that scan the flow of knowledge and put it in more useful forms for organization members. Knowledge networks are forums such as chat rooms, intranets, knowledge fairs, and communities of practice that create linkages among organizational members for sharing knowledge and learning from one another. Finally, facilitated transfer refers to change agents helping and encouraging members to seek and share their knowledge (Garvin & March, 1997; O'Dell & Grayson, 1998).

Substantial research on KM and organizational learning has been conducted by organizations such as the Society for Organizational Learning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Volvo, and IKEA (Cummings & Worley, 2005). Ruggles (1998) concluded based on his study of KM in 431 United States and European firms that organizations may face several problems implementing KM practices. Specifically, he found that less than one in two companies (46%) reported above-average performance in generating new knowledge. Roughly one in four (29%) had success with embedding knowledge in processes, products, or services, and only one in eight (13%) were successful in transferring existing knowledge to other parts of the organization. It would be helpful to understand why these companies had difficulty achieving success in these areas.

Davenport and Prusak (1998) found in 31 KM projects across 20 organizations that KM contributed to the fundamental transformation of only three of the firms studied, although many of the companies reported operational improvements in product development, customer support, software development, patent management, and education and training. In a study of companies such

as Buckman Laboratories, Texas Instruments, CIGNA Property & Casualty, and Chevron conducted by the American Productivity & Quality Center, KM was found to yield a number of performance improvements, including new product sales, manufacturing capacity, and corporate profits, as well as reductions in costs, service delivery time, and start-up time for new ventures (O'Dell & Grayson, 1998). It is important to note that most reports of organizational learning and KM are case studies or anecdotal reports; therefore, more systematic research is needed to understand the effects of these interventions.

Regarding KM in the UAE and in public sector organizations, Maddaloni (2002) stated that UAE public sector organizations have had difficulty building an appropriate structure for sharing knowledge and have lacked the public-private partnerships needed to support KM activities. However, in recent years, these organizations have recognized the need to develop KM capabilities for creating, accumulating, organizing, sharing, and utilizing knowledge to support their policy and decision-making systems. Misra et al. (2003) argued that governments, in particular, need to establish KM programs to become *anticipatory*, meaning they learn from past experience, understand the present scenario, and anticipate future threats and opportunities. These activities are consistent with organizational learning concepts forwarded by Argyris and Schon (1978, 1995) and Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, and Ross (1994). Moreover, KM is an essential complement to organizational learning —particularly in government settings— because these organizations are distributed enterprises that need to share knowledge across states and local governments.

Public sector KM frameworks, in particular, need to acknowledge that the public sector focus, context, and workforce differ from that the private sector, thus requiring differences in the KM program. For example, public sector organizations tend to be driven by policies, politics, and bureaucracy, whereas private sector organizations tend to be driven more by strategy, structure, and culture. Parker and Bradley (2000) further speculated that public sector employees are more selfless and value social development and the pursuit of the public interest more than private sector employees. Therefore, public sector KM may focus on public service, whereas private sector KM may focus on generating profit.

For the past decade, the UAE government has implemented initiatives such as e-governance, an online knowledge portal, and the Information and Communication Technology Landscape in the UAE to improve public service, process transparency, and data and information management. Maddaloni (2002) pointed out that a gap in these programs has been their neglect to gather tacit knowledge acquired through implementation of various government-funded programs, such as the National Workforce development programs.

Summary

The UAE government has determined that long-term and sustainable economic development relies upon growing the Emirati private sector workforce (Randeree, 2009). However, like other Gulf countries, private sector organizations in the UAE remain heavily dependent on foreign workforces (Hafez, 2009) despite governmental efforts at Emiratization. While several studies on national workforce development are available, they are primarily

limited to theory-based recommendations (Al-Ali et al., 2008; Fasano & Goyal, 2004; Randeree, 2009; Toledo, 2006). These recommendations typically included government subsidies (Fasano & Goyal, 2004; Toledo, 2006), close involvement in recruiting by government officials (Al-Ali et al., 2008; Fasano & Goyal, 2004), and a government-supervised career planning and development program for Emiratis (Al-Ali et al., 2008; Fasano & Goyal, 2004). Other articles even fail to provide clear recommendations to improve Emiratization (Al-Waqfi & Forstenlechner, 2010; Randeree, 2009).

One topic that has relevance to leveraging the skill and knowledge base across Emiratis but has not received substantial attention by researchers is KM. KM is particularly important to public organizations to enable them to distribute knowledge across states and local governments and to learn from past experience, understand the present scenario, and anticipate future threats and opportunities (Misra et al., 2003). While the UAE has implemented several KM initiatives over the past decade, research has not been conducted to examine the impact of these initiatives on Emiratization.

Thus, based on the available studies, it appears that the government is working on a very thin layer of actual data and that their efforts to support Emiratization might be better served if data were actually collected. This study gathered data related to the effectiveness of Emiratization and the possible role of KM in Emiratization. The results of this study provide a framework that other organizations can model. It is also aimed to be a focal point for providing best practices knowledge and guidelines for various government bodies could use to gauge progress and direct research projects.

Description of the Study

This exploratory case study involved an analysis of decisions, experiences, and outcomes related to Emiratization strategies and initiatives in the UAE. The overarching approach was to find out what has happened, what is happening, and what new insights can be gained through the perspectives of Emirati workers, managers, and leaders. Surveys and interviews were used to collect quantitative and qualitative data. The instruments used to collect the data were designed to collect valuable information while maintaining ease of administration and completion.

Sample

Human subjects were involved in the study through personal interviews and online surveys. All participants were informed of the study purpose, nature and duration of participation, their rights, and confidentiality of the data. Participants provided consent before participating in the study.

A total of 75 Emirati workers employed in the public and private sectors throughout the UAE were invited to complete the survey. Of these respondents, 70% were female, 90% were from Dubai (10% were from other Emirates), and 80% were from the public sector (20% were from the private sector).

Participants were located through a convenience sampling strategy (Miles & Huberman, 1994), wherein the researcher utilized his personal and professional network to identify study candidates. Some participants were within the government network of employees. The researcher also contacted colleagues who knew and could forward study invitations to Emiratis working in private sector. The researcher also approached recruitment firms and asked

them to distribute study invitations to their Emirati candidates using their database. Invitations were sent by email and included the goals and purpose of the study and the voluntary nature of participation. Participants were allowed to withdraw at any time. A total of 54 completed surveys were gathered, yielding a 72% response rate.

In addition, six individuals who did not participate in the survey were recruited from public and private sector organizations to participate in an interview. Participants included Emiratization program managers in both private and public sectors; government officials in charge of training, development, and placement of Emiratis; and Emiratization consultants and experts with a wide knowledge spectrum in the field. The researcher had access to the government employees through his professional networks across both public and private organizations, as he had been involved in various Emiratization initiatives for more than a decade. Over the last 3 years, he also has been involved in similar human capital development initiatives at a local government level.

Ideally, this study should have drawn representative survey and interview samples from across the country. However, due to the limits of convenience sampling and the researcher's personal and professional networks, the majority of survey respondents were from Emirate of Dubai. The interview sample reasonably represented the state of the country in terms of Emiratization because of their dealings across the country. Nevertheless, a larger interview sample (e.g., 20 to 25 interviewees) would have generated a wider scope of feedback and opinions on the topic.

Instruments

Data were collected using two instruments: an online Emirati Satisfaction Survey of public and private sector Emirati workers and interviews with government officials to evaluate the Emiratization program.

Emirati Satisfaction Survey

The quantitative Emirati Satisfaction Survey measured Emiratis' job mobility and satisfaction levels as well as their positions, career tracks, and development in both the public and private sectors. These data enabled the researcher to understand their views of their jobs and whether they were satisfied.

The survey was developed by the researcher based on his experience with prior Emiratization programs. It was administered online using the Survey Monkey tool over a period of 2 weeks. The survey sample asked for responses to nine survey questions using a standard five-point Likert scale of strongly agree (5), agree (4), undecided (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1). The survey was intentionally designed to be brief to assure the relevancy of the items and place minimal time demands on respondents. The nine questions were:

1. The Program placed me in an interesting job.
2. I am rarely bored in my job.
3. The job I am in provides freedom for creativity.
4. I feel my job is important to the success of my organization.
5. I feel there is an opportunity to grow in my organization.
6. I am provided with adequate training opportunities.
7. I am not considering working in the private sector.

8. My supervisor provides me feedback and develops me.

9. My supervisor provides opportunities for development.

The survey also gathered freeform comments and demographic information about their current employment (e.g., sector, field, industry) to deepen and contextualize the data.

Emiratization Program Evaluation Interview

One-on-one, 1-hour interviews were conducted to gather data on lessons learned, best practices, views about the present government's approaches to Emiratization, and program managers' commitment to Emiratization. The interview questions were as follows:

1. How do you describe the Emiratization program? What are its key features and objectives?

2. Are you satisfied with the present situation with regards to Emiratization? Why are you satisfied or unsatisfied?

3. What are the areas of your program that you are proud of? How did you decide to incorporate that part?

4. What are some of the key lessons and experiences that you can share? Why do you think they are important?

5. What do you think about the base of knowledge driving the program?

6. What is your opinion on Emiratis working in public and private sectors? What do think needs to be done to improve the situation?

7. What do you think it takes for Emiratis to excel in the workplace?

8. Is there anything else you would like to add or contribute?

The interviewees were given the option to review these questions in advance. The interviews were conducted outside the office premises to foster friendly, open, and cohesive discussions. The discussion was semi-formal and encouraged in depth inquiry and understanding of the issues and the subject.

Data Collection and Analysis

Survey data were analyzed by reporting summary descriptive statistics for each question. The findings from this survey were intended to serve as a basis for continuing research and helped the researcher understand the current level of satisfaction and other perceptions of people currently involved an Emiratization program.

Interview data themes were identified using content analysis steps described by Marshall and Rossman (2006). These themes were used to recreate a success framework for the assessment of program effectiveness and to provide relevant knowledge for future use in research or decision making purposes.

Findings

Emirati Satisfaction Survey

A total of 54 Emirati public and private sector employees completed the survey. Overall, the sample was more likely to agree than disagree with these statements (see Table 2). The two most positive statements were Items 4 and 8. Eighty-seven percent (mean = 4.31; SD = 0.80) agreed with the item, "I feel my job is important to the success of my organization." In addition, 83% of participants agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, "My supervisor provides me feedback and develops me." On the other hand, only 49% of the sample agreed with the item, "I am rarely bored in my job." A total of 36% of participants disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement, suggesting that there was some level of dissatisfaction. Similarly, respondents were equally split on whether they were considering working in the private sector: 30% were not

considering private sector work, 35% were undecided, and 35% were considering it. The data suggest that Emiratis involved in the Emiratization programs are generally satisfied in their positions. Due to the survey design, it was not possible to distinguish answers from public sector employees versus private sector employees.

Table 2

Emirati Satisfaction Survey Results

| Item | Distribution | | | Mean | SD |
	Agree	Undecided	Disagree		
1. The Program placed me in an interesting job.	62%	27%	12%	3.67	0.90
2. I am rarely bored in my job.	49%	15%	36%	3.28	1.12
3. The job I am in provides freedom for creativity.	65%	15%	19%	3.71	1.05
4. I feel my job is important to the success of my organization.	87%	9%	4%	4.31	0.80
5. I feel there is an opportunity to grow in my organization.	56%	26%	19%	3.46	1.08
6. I am provided with adequate training opportunities.	57%	15%	28%	3.28	1.17
7. I am not considering working in the private sector.*	30%	35%	35%	2.96	1.27
8. My supervisor provides me feedback and develops me.	83%	6%	11%	3.87	0.93
9. My supervisor provides opportunities for development.	60%	19%	13%	3.74	1.03

* Private sector employees were not presented with this question.

Emiratization Program Evaluation Interview

The six interview participants had solid knowledge and experience in the area of Emiratization and a summary of their opinions is described below.

1. Five participants described the Emiratization program as the UAE government's drive to secure employment for Emiratis, especially in the private sector. Two participants described it as the drive to reduce unemployment in the private sector and reduce over-employment in the public sector. Four of the participants believed that the key features of the Emiratization initiatives were

training, development, and placement of Emirati graduates through government legislation and various initiates.

2. Five participants reported dissatisfaction with the Emiratization program, citing its inconsistent approach and rapid changes in the leadership of the government entities as the two biggest problems. Participants also cited the lack of clear vision, planning, and organization as factors contributing to their dissatisfaction. One participant shared, "Emiratization must be approached holistically rather than from a training and development perspective." Another added, "It's not enough to employ Emiratis, the key is to develop their careers." With respect to the government's approach to private sector organizations, the participants believed it was too aggressive and unrealistic. One commented, "Employment of "Emiratis in the private sectors through government legislation (quota systems) is not sustainable." In contrast, participants were satisfied with the level of financial investment and the government's persistence over the years by establishing various entities to oversee this initiative.

3. Participants identified several areas of pride regarding the Emiratization program. Five participants mentioned the establishment of vocational training institutes for Emirati high school dropouts and graduates. The Emiratis who complete these remedial and readiness programs go on to serve in the Army and police forces. One participant commented, "Successful Emiratization programs such as those at the Police and Armed forces possess solid disciplinary base and purpose." This program was initiated in response to the high dropout rates of Emiratis from high school and colleges. An interviewee shared, "It's important for private sector organization to begin to attract Emiratis while still in high school to

enhance their readiness." Private sector program managers also explained that the work placement and internship programs were an effective way of introducing potential Emirati workers to the private sector work environment and opportunities. This way, Emiratis experience the value proposition offered by the private sector organization before making permanent employment commitments. Participants also believed that a clear career development pathway was effective in luring Emiratis to private sector organizations.

4. The most common key lesson participants shared was that generalizations about Emirati workers hinder recruitment and retention. Most participants believed that Emiratis do not need any special treatment and also desire to be treated the same way as foreign workers. Some managers shared that top management support and involvement is another key success driver of their programs. Additionally, they observed that Emirati role models help inspire new recruits to work hard and adapt to different environments. One participant shared, "Emirati role models could play a critical role in attracting and retaining Emirati workers in the private sector."

5. Participants emphasized that one of the most important areas guiding the Emiratization program was English language training. This program helps Emiratis communicate more confidently in private sector environments that use English as the communication medium. Private sector organization program managers also reported working with government entities to fulfill their program needs (e.g., resourcing, training). However, they were uncertain about the availability of overall guidance regarding best practices or the management of Emiratization programs. Government participants were uncertain about whether

any knowledge bases existed to inform the programs, although they did share that certain government entities act as data and information centers for the recruitment of Emiratis. Finally, although the Ministry of Labour is a source for employment laws and labor relations policies and procedures, participants primarily viewed the Ministry as policy makers and regulators rather than a source for management consultation on Emiratization. One interviewee shared, "There is a great need for a domain government entity that will provide advice and guidance to private sector organizations wish to develop or improve their Emiratization programs."

6. Participants' views varied regarding the issue of Emiratis working in public and private sectors. One participant believed that salary was the biggest inhibitor for Emiratis to join private sector organizations, while the remaining five acknowledged it as a factor but not a key determinant. Five participants believed that Emiratis lacked awareness about the opportunities at private sector organizations. This suggests a disconnect regarding the programs being offered and Emiratis' awareness of them. Additionally, employers need to present a clear employer value proposition to attract Emiratis. Participants mentioned that the new generation of Emiratis prefers to work in multicultural environments rather than in Emirati-dominated organizations. Three participants believed that peer pressure and cultural barriers prevented more Emiratis from joining private sector organizations. They added that working conditions in the public sector suit them more. They believed that private sector organizations must duplicate the same working conditions and pay if they want to attract more Emiratis. One participant shared, "Awareness and sensitivity of UAE culture is key to the development of a

successful [Emiratization] program. . . . Most of the existing programs are not attuned with the local culture and that is one of the key reasons for its failure." Two participants explained that Emiratis preferred to work in the public sector not only because of the working conditions, but also out of a felt obligation to serve their country. These participants emphasized that Emiratis are as talented and hard working as foreign employees.

7. Participants named several factors that they believed would help Emiratis excel in the workplace. These included having access to a structured development program; possessing the right attitude and work ethic; being open to learning and developing in a systematic fashion; learning and adapting to different cultures and backgrounds; receiving coaching and mentoring; having a college education; and being fluent in English. Each of these factors was mentioned by at least half of the sample. One interviewee shared, "Fluency in English language instill great confidence to Emirati workers in private sector."

8. When asked for any additional thoughts, several respondents shared their belief that a more effective partnership between government entities and private sector organizations needs to exist to tackle the issues undermining Emiratization. Others pointed to government-owned organizations (such as oil, gas, and aluminum companies) as models for a successful Emiratization program because of their strict program structure and pay packages. They emphasized that Emiratis must prepare themselves mentally and emotionally to contribute to the private sector economy that the government highly advocates in its strategy.

9. The researcher specifically asked participants about the knowledge base driving the program. They responded that they did not know of any KM resources, and reveals a substantial gap in Emiratization programs. Thus, although the government entities created to support Emiratization maintain databases of Emirati workers and the employers seeking to employ them, no evidence exists of a government KM system dedicated to support Emiratization. Additionally, these entities operate at a local government level, limit their scope to their specific regions, and limit their level of collaboration. One participant shared, "There is valuable knowledge that is not captured and shared to benefit the wider group."

Summary

Overall, the data collected provide a good basis for further analysis and facilitation for achieving the objectives of this study. The feedback and sentiments expressed by all participants indicate the level of interest and felt importance of this topic. For example, one interviewee emphasized, "Private organizations must understand and adapt the right Emiratization strategies to ensure an effective and sustainable working model."

The study results revealed conflicting interests between government and private sector managers regarding Emiratization legislations and existing business realities. One participant shared, "Private sector organizations focus on their bottom lines; most of them cannot afford to fully comply with government legislations with regards Emiratization." Namely, the government requires private sector organizations to employ Emiratis in accordance with certain quotas that increase annually. While the private sector organizations would like to comply,

they would prefer to do so within their business model (e.g., skill needs), human resource practices (e.g., compensation), and work systems (e.g., working conditions). Finally, it is notable that participants were not aware of a KM system that supported Emiratization.

Discussion

This study evaluated the government approaches to UAE national workforce development programs to date. In this final section, results and recommend changes that could help make such programs more effective are discussed. In particular, the study wanted to examine the extent to which the government had utilized KM in its Emiratization strategies.

The studies and trends indicate that more than 99% of Emirati workers are presently employed in public sector (government) organizations (Hafez, 2009). The UAE government sees this as a critical risk toward achieving its vision of a diversified knowledge economy by the year 2030 (General Secretariat Executive Council Emirate of Abu Dhabi, 2011). Past research has suggested that working conditions, perceptions, culture issues, and pay gaps were the key obstacles to Emiratization (McMurray, 1999). The data collected for this study both support some of these ideas but add important new data to help accelerate the Emiratization process.

The UAE government's approach during the past decade has been to contain and start reversing the trend of low Emirati representation in the private sector through aggressive legislation enforced on private sector organizations ("The Abu Dhabi Emiratisation Forum," 2010; TANMIA, 2006). Despite these efforts, research and present statistics indicate that the situation is deteriorating

as the population of foreign workers continues to increase, with only 0.43% of private sector workforces being comprised of Emiratis (Hafez, 2009).

This study gathered data from a sample of Emirati workers to gauge their views on public and private sector employment. Data also were gathered from managers and leaders in public and private sector organizations to evaluate the current Emiratization program. The following sections review the key findings.

Emirati Perceptions of Their Work and Workplaces

The Emiratis reported satisfaction with their jobs and supervisors, but less satisfaction with opportunities for development, creativity, and engagement. This feedback is consistent with past literature that advised that Emiratization programs focus on training, development, and employment ("The Abu Dhabi Emiratisation Forum," 2010).

The survey findings suggest that some potential problems face private organization workplaces and, if unaddressed, could prompt Emiratis to leave their for-profit organizations. The key issues appear to be centered on training, development, and growth; creativity; and feeling interested and engaged in their work. These results suggest that possible leverage points for attracting Emiratis to private sector workplaces would be assuring they understand the opportunities to receive training and development, career growth, and exciting work. While some Emiratis may already be aware of this, it is not well articulated. Emiratization currently is, for the most part, approached in terms of numbers (how many Emiratis can we employ to satisfy government quotas) rather than well structured careers opportunities. Therefore, as Fasano and Goyal (2004) suggested, it would be helpful to design private sector jobs and workplaces to

include factors that are attractive to talented Emiratis may help increase their private sector workforce participation.

Another important finding from the survey was that Emiratis were equally split on whether they were considering working in the private sector: 30% were not considering private sector work, 35% were undecided, and 35% were considering it. These data support the assertion above that unless private sector organizations do a better job of making work attractive, reduced recruitment and higher turnover among the Emirati population is likely.

The manager and leader interview data shed some light on how private-sector organizations might approach this issue. For example, the interview results revealed that Emiratis prefer to work in multicultural environments that are much more prevalent in the private sector environment. These findings depart from past literature, which emphasized that Emiratis were reluctant to seek employment in the private sector (McMurray, 1999).

The managers and leaders in both public and private section organizations stressed that the private sector failed to communicate a visible value proposition of private sector employment opportunities to Emiratis. Therefore, a majority of the Emirati workers may be choosing public sector employment mainly because they are simply unaware of the value and opportunities available in private sector organizations. Thus, it is critical to share the attractive elements of the private sector workplace to desirable candidates. Additionally, private sector organizations could offer internships and work placements to Emiratis to allow both parties to better determine their fit with each other.

This observation highlights the importance of a broad KM system that contains the right information and is available to Emirati workers. This option is explored in more detail below.

Manager and Leader Perceptions

The managers and leaders interviewed were unsatisfied with the Emiratization program's lack of consistent leadership, vision, planning, and organization. They added that the government was too aggressive and unrealistic with private sector organizations and primarily viewed the government as playing a role in helping with resourcing and training and in setting and regulating policy compliance. Participants voiced appreciation for the government's persistence and financial investment in Emiratization but noted the absence of a KM program to support Emiratization. For example, one interviewee asked, "If a new or existing organization wants to learn about a successful Emiratization model; which government entities can they approach to guide them?"

Participants found the vocational training institutes and work placement and internship programs most helpful. They explained that these programs provide a solid bridge and workplace readiness. They also enhance Emiratis' confidence with regard to English communication and technical skill. However, these programs were mostly one-sided. They presented a perspective and data driven by the government and represent an important place for private sector organizations to "make their case" for employment.

Participants also identified several success factors that private sector organizations could offer to new Emirati employees, including clear career

development pathways, Emirati role models, coaching and mentoring, and English language training. Private sector top management support and involvement also was associated with the success of Emiratization. At the same time, the interviewees stressed that Emiratis did not require special treatment and should not be treated differently (e.g., receiving special benefits or privileges) compared to foreign workers. This suggests that Emiratization may be more successful and work better if a balance was struck between aligning benefits to the local culture (e.g., compensation, social security, leave) and aligning with private sector standards regarding these aspects. While several other authors have discussed the importance of providing career development pathways ("The Abu Dhabi Emiratisation Forum," 2010; Al-Ali et al., 2008; Fasano & Goyal, 2004) and *The Abu Dhabi Emiratisation Forum* (2010) recommended instituting a mentoring system, other study findings comprise an important addition to existing literature.

The Emiratization program managers and leaders additionally shared that successful Emirati employees possessed the right attitude and work ethic, were open to learning and developing systematically, learned and adapted to different cultures and backgrounds, had a college education, and were fluent in English. The managers and leaders believed that lack of awareness about the opportunities at private sector organizations, peer pressure, cultural barriers, working conditions, and lower salaries in private sector jobs versus public sector jobs undermined Emiratization. These findings emphasize that Emiratis themselves need to play an active role in achieving a successful Emiratization

program. In other words, the program's success needs action both from a supply side and demand side of the employment equation.

What was not obvious was the passion, desire, and even some regrets that program managers felt—particularly those who demonstrated high commitment and dedication to improving the Emiratization program. When the data are grouped, themed, and categorized, some of the energy behind the observations is lost.

Figure 2 presents a force field analysis of the key factors supporting and hindering Emiratization. This analysis suggests that several factors support it; however, there are more (and possibly more powerful) factors hindering Emiratization. This suggests that Emiratization efforts should focus on removing the barriers to the initiatives.

Factors supporting Emiratization	Factors against Emiratization
Government support	Inconsistent government leadership and approach
Training, development, and placement initiatives	Lack of clear vision, planning, and organization
English language training	Stereotypes
Employer value proposition	Private sector salaries
Openness to learning	Peer pressure and cultural barriers
	Quota system

Figure 2

Emiratization Force Field Analysis

Based on these findings, it appears that KM could support both Emiratis and public and private sector organizations in enhancing the success of

Emiratization. Namely, a KM entity could be created to act as a resource to support all stakeholders in this effort. This recommendation is described more fully in the next section.

Recommendations

Several recommendations are offered based on the study findings:

1. Given that interviewees emphasized that the UAE government has been too aggressive with private sector organizations, it follows that the UAE government should adopt a more supporting rather than an authoritative role in implementing Emiratization initiatives. This could be accomplished through a partnership with private sector organizations that articulates common goals and objectives. KM could aid this partnership in the form of a KM entity that could serve as an advisory, consultative, or information-providing body regarding all existing and new organizations in the country. An entity is advised because, despite the range of organizations and stakeholders involved in Emiratization and who are aware of the problem, no one organization or set of stakeholders is accountable for assuring its success. As a result, direction is lacking and cohesive, effective action is notably lacking. The government KM entity could have a clear mandate and serve as a central place for knowledge and advice. The result may be more cooperation and less resistance from private sector organizations regarding Emiratization because the entity would serve as a partner rather than a regulator and the organizations could seek information, support, and best practices from this entity. Private sector organizations, in turn, would be motivated to collaborate with the entity because it would support them in integrating local workers into the workforces.

2. This study revealed several features of successful Emiratization programs based on the perspectives of Emiratization managers and leaders and these could be communicated in form of best practices education and consultation. These features included consistent leadership and collaborative approach by the government entities; clear vision, planning, and organization; governmental financial investment; top management support and involvement by private organizations; guidance regarding best practices for Emiratization; and training, development, and placement of Emirati graduates through government legislation and various initiates. Providing best practices education and consultation based on these features could represent a strong start to an Emiratization KM system. For example, if an organization in retail wanted to know more about how to develop a program, they would pair it with another organization in its sector that is successful with Emiratization.

3. Develop a KM government entity. The interview participants revealed that no KM program or process was in place to support Emiratization. This is a substantial gap. One possibility for launching a KM process is to develop a fully structured Emiratization knowledge base and advisory service government entity with which private sector organizations could consult and collaborate. The entity could carry out four roles: research, consultancy, liaison services, and program management. In a research capacity, the entity could capture and manage all the data, information, and knowledge that will facilitate the development of new policies or improve existing ones. The entity will conduct pertinent research that will facilitate the understanding the effectiveness and impact of policies and program initiatives. As a consultant, the entity could serve as the government's

core knowledge and information center in support of private sector organizations

to effectively and sustainably manage their respective Emiratization programs.

As a liaison, the entity could act as a medium between other government entities

(e.g., National Human Resources Development and Employment Authority,

Emirates National Development Program), private sector organizations, and

Emirati workers. In a program management capacity, the entity will manage the

overall progress of the entire government initiatives and investments on UAE

national workforce development. The creation of this entity and KM process

could serve as a significant step toward shifting the approaches of both the

government and private sector organizations to achieving their mutual and

strategic social, economic, and financial objectives. Despite the potential value of

a KM entity, it is important to acknowledge that this recommendation carries

some risk given the prior research that suggests a very poor implementation

success rate for KM across organizations (Davenport & Prusak, 1998;

Maddaloni, 2002; Ruggles, 1998).

4. If any KM initiative is to be successful, it will be necessary to shift

private organizations' views of the UAE government. Interviewees shared that

they viewed the government as a policy creating and enforcing body. The

previous recommendation suggested that a KM entity within the government

should be created to act as a research, consultancy, mediating, and program

management body with regard to Emiratization. However, for this to work, private

organizations' views of the government would have to substantially shift,

especially given their experience of the government being "too aggressive and

unrealistic" with them. Shifting these views will take acknowledgement of the

issue, communication, and consistent demonstrated change in approach over time. This role of building these bridges and developing these relationships and understandings would be carried out by the KM entity.

5. Form a KM transorganizational system comprised of the new KM government entity, Emiratization government entities, and private sector organizations. The recommendation above creates a new government entity with certain responsibilities. But the data also suggested that many private sector stakeholders believed the government was too aggressive and unrealistic, and that Emiratization programs were ineffective. Coordination among these different stakeholders will have to improve if the new entity has any chance of being successful. When multiple entities must coordinate to solve problems that no single entity can solve on its own, a different form of organization and planned change is called for (Cummings & Worley, 2005). Known as "trans-organization development" (Cummings, 1984), this change process seeks to intentionally coordinate the work of multiple organizations toward a shared goal or objective.

Transorganizational systems are formed where the problems facing a group of organizations are too complex for single organizations to resolve on their own (Cummings, 1984). Such an approach has the advantages of expanded expertise, sphere of influence, and problem-solving capacities. The new KM entity, as part of its mission, has the responsibility to liaison between different organizations to accomplish the objectives of Emiratization.

The focus of transorganizational development is to "help organizations recognize the need for partnerships and to develop appropriate structures for implementing them" (Cummings & Worley, 2005, p. 151). The first step in

formalizing the transorganizational system will be to identify the specific

organizations (and the individuals within them) who will be important for

addressing the issues and problems facing the UAE related to Emiratization.

(The purpose of identification is to make manifest the existing transorganizatinal

system.) Following identification, the transorganizational system should be

convened, wherein partner organizations are brought together to explore their

motivations, expectations, and their perceptions of the joint task. Kaplan (1982)

referred to this process as corresponding to the diagnosis component within

traditional organization development interventions. Such activities can be

described as modified "search conferences" (Emery & Purser, 1996), which

enable stakeholder organizations to discover shared values, goals, expectations,

and ambitions that will facilitate joint task achievement. The outcome of the

meeting should be a strategic plan whereby there is a clear vision of how the

system needs to change in order for partnership to succeed.

Thereafter, the partner organizations would mobilize for task performance.

Rules and procedures would be established that recognize how decisions are to

be taken (and what data is needed); where accountability for particular activities

or task achievement lies; and the roles, responsibilities, resources, and

requirements from member organizations to the partnership. The focus then

becomes task execution. Process and outcome data are then generated, which

are fed back to stakeholders regarding the extent to which the partnership

objectives have been achieved. The outcomes of these steps are (a) the creation

of clearly articulated rules and process for engagement, (b) mutually defined

accountability and resource allocation structures, and (c) mutually defined evaluation procedures for assessing progress.

Study Limitations

The main limitations of this study concern the quality and scope of the data gathered. First, the sample size was small and those who participated were not always the most appropriate selections for the topic of Emiratization. While these pose limitations for the findings, the exploratory data gathered here provided valuable insights into managers' and employees' views regarding Emiratization and the factors that support and hinder it.

Second, data collection was limited to the Emirate of Dubai due to time constraints. As a result, the range of data—particularly the survey data—may not represent the viewpoints of all Emiratis across the country.

Third, self-reported data always introduces risks of hypothesis guessing and answering questions in a socially desirable manner. The validity and representativeness of the findings could be challenged. However, every attempt was made to understand the motivation of the interviewees and there is no apparent reason to believe that the data collected was biased in any particular way. More research would need to be conducted to confirm the present findings. Future studies should include larger samples, more representation of personnel across the UAE, and use of various forms of data collection (e.g., archival records, observation) to overcome the limitations of any one method.

Conclusion

The low representation of Emiratis in UAE private sector organizations has been and perhaps will continue to be a contentious issue. As long as the

discrepancy exists, the government likely will continue to work to correct the imbalance. Despite its commitment and efforts to this end, the study data confirmed prior research that revealed concerns over the current chosen approaches and measures.

Given the long history of Emiratization efforts and the range of successes and failures that have occurred during this time, it would be highly beneficial to begin capturing and managing this information, in the form of a KM process or entity, to enable all parties to learn from this history, design more effective Emiratization approaches, and make data-based decisions on implementation efforts.

The current flaws in Emiratization initiatives and misperceptions among the varied stakeholders of Emiratization are hindering the progress and benefits that could be achieved if an effective KM system were implemented and a process of learning from the past and collaborating to create a positive future were designed. This study proposed that the creation of a new KM entity and the initiation of a trans-organization development process would be an effective remedy and solution. The government could make significant strides if it begins to learn from its history in a methodical way. This could be possible if KM became an integral part of its Emiratization strategy.

This study is a reflection of the kind of work that can be accomplished by organization development practitioners. Although the study topic does not address typical change management issues, this research has demonstrated how organization development methods may be used to address important country, government, and organization issues.

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