

A Model of Leadership from the UAE to the World

Abdelrahman Baqrain

Zayed University, College of Business, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Abdelrahman.Baqrain@zu.ac.ae

Raquel Warner

Mohammed Bin Rashed School of Government, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

racquel.warner@mbrsg.ac.ae

Gouri Menon

Zayed University, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Gouri.Menon@zu.ac.ae

Mouawiya Alawad

Zayed University, Institute of Social and Economic Research, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Mouawiya.alawad@zu.ac.ae

Summary

In December 2021, the UAE celebrated the jubilee anniversary of the union. In comparison to many global states, this country has witnessed tremendous changes over the five decades. Most notably the ambitious vision and pace of development has earned the UAE global repute. There has not been much research about the leadership style evident among Emirati leaders in both public and private sector in the UAE that facilitated this tremendous rate of national development in this global environment of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. There are not many of the

leadership theories that have been successfully investigated to explain the Emirati model of leadership (Abdallah and Al-Homoud, 2001). This study draws on integral leadership theory to undertake a holistic assessment of leadership development, leadership practices and cultural values among Emirati leaders in the UAE to determine what is the salient model that has contributed to the success of the country. In addition, the study examines the challenges of leadership development in the UAE and determine the mitigation strategies to ensure continuity of the high-performance leadership strategies.

This study used a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods to gather data. An existing database of survey data from leadership development candidates were used to provide “numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 12). Open ended interviews were conducted to elicit rich descriptions about the perceptions of respondents regarding factors that influence Emirati leadership development and practice. “Good descriptive studies provoke the ‘why’ questions of analytic (cause-and-effect) research” (Eich Drummond & Murphy-Reyes, 2018, p. 157). These interviews were supplemented by a focus group convened with 6 leaders from a federal entity in the UAE. According to Lau (2017) exploratory studies of this nature are useful to investigate and understand a particular issue or topic area without predetermined notions of the expected responses. The design is mostly qualitative in nature, seeking input from respondents with open-ended questions of an analytical nature that seek to answer how or why. Relevant insights were derived by analyzing first-person experiences of being in a leadership position in the UAE and respondents’ perspectives on how their leadership capacities were influenced and developed.