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Talent Management in the Public Sector: Empirical Evidence from the Emerging Economy of Dubai

Abstract

Talent Management (TM) has attracted considerable attention across the globe and the challenges of managing talent effectively and delivering on strategic agendas is increasingly recognised. Yet TM has remained underexplored in emerging markets, particularly, in the public sector context. This research aims to fill the gap by exploring TM in the public sector of the emerging economy of Dubai. 34 in-depth interviews with senior human resource (HR) managers, field visits and extensive document reviews provide insights about TM practices and policies in the public sector. Our key findings indicate that TM in the public sector in Dubai is ineffective, and fragmented. Accordingly, we offer some potentially valuable implications for theory, practice, and future research.

Introduction

The unprecedented complexity of today's talent management (TM) context – marked by the Covid-19 pandemic, technology, and broader political, demographic, and socio-economic, changes highlight the challenges of work and management of people (Reiche, Lee, & Allen, 2019, Gallardo-Gallardo, Thunnissen, Scullion, 2020).

In particular, mitigating the Covid-19 risks has resulted in changing views on TM policies and practices (Collings, Nyberg, McMackin, & Wright, 2021). The wider field of human resource management (HRM) has provided little evidence of how to answer some of those key questions, such as remote working (Collings, Mellahi & Cascio, 2017). Although, there has been a rapid increased interest in TM over the past decade (Collings, Mellahi, & Cascio, 2017), many organisations struggle to deliver on their talent agendas (Charan, Barton, & Carey, 2018). While managers seek to address their context specific challenges, research has portrayed an overly unitarist and managerialist TM perspective. We still know little about how local contextual factors shape TM, especially with regards to key TM practices, such as talent attraction, development and retention (Tyskbo, 2021). Talent management research was largely focussed on senior managers in large multinational corporations (MNCs) (Thunnissen et al., 2013) with limited attention to other contexts such as the public sector (Boselie and Thunnissen, 2017; Kravariti and Johnston, 2020). Public sector organizations operate under different conditions and are subject to divergent interests and motives, with particular rules, logics and norms (Delbridge & Keenoy, 2010), and to capture the complexity of different perceptions of TM policy and practice, we adopt a contextual approach by including the perspectives on TM in the public sector in a non-Western educated industrialised rich democratic (WEIRD) context, addressing a research gap in the literature. The lack of research on contextual TM research in the public is a major limitation in the literature; we explore how

local institutional embeddedness influences the adoption of TM practices (Thunnissen & Buttiens, 2017; Haak-Saheem, Darwish, & Al-Nasser, 2017), and our empirical research highlights the importance of understanding contextual factors to advance our knowledge of TM in the public sector context.

Therefore, in this study we argue that to understand how TM unfolds within a particular context, we need to understand how local factors, shaped by the existing rules, logics and norms influence its adoption. Hence, the institutional logics perspective (see, for example, Scott, 1987; Thornton, Ocasio, & Lounsbury, 2012; Bevort, & Poulfelt, 2015; Glaister et al., 2019; Tyskbo, 2021) is a valuable theoretical perspective to develop a more nuanced understanding of TM. In doing so, we adopt the general definition in which TM is described as the coordinated attraction, identification, development, and retention of talent (Scullion, Collings & Caliguiri 2010).

Whilst design and implementation of TM is determined by the contextual factors (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020), yet our understanding of how TM unfolds in public sector is in the early stages and it has remained an underexplored area of research (Kravariti & Johnston, 2019; Boselie and Thunnissen, 2017). Public sector organizations face increased challenges to respond effectively to higher level of competition for talent. The public sector context is complex and characterized by distinctive challenges in areas such as ownership, interests of multiple stakeholders, the role of the government, the relevance of politics, the impact of public values linked to institutions and culture, and the employment of professionals in public service jobs (Leisink, Boselie, Hosking, &Van Bottenburg, 2013).

However, as a result of privatization and New Public Management (NPM), some public sector organizations (e.g., airports) are more closely related to private sector companies. This is in

particular the case in Dubai where the government leads the social and economic development (Haak-Saheem & Festing, 2020). Unlike in WEIRD countries, in which control over resources is decentralised (Whitley, 1994), the government in Dubai controls and co-ordinates economic activities (Haak-Saheem & Festing, 2020). In addition, the public sector is the main employer of nationals in Dubai and TM is therefore vitally important to develop local talent given the strong reliance on foreign expertise. The challenges of TM in Dubai are unique, as the ratio of citizens to expatriates is among the most disproportionate in the world (see, for example, Forstenlechner & Mellahi, 2011), and less than 20% of Dubai's total population are citizens, which indicates that nationals are a minority. Governments across the Gulf Council Countries (GCC) have introduced measures to increase participation of nationals in the labour markets (Budhwar, Pereira, Mellahi & Singh, 2019). For example, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) introduced Emiratization as a policy at the federal level to boost employment of nationals.

Our study explores TM in the public sector in Dubai by addressing the following research question: How do contextual factors shape TM in public sector organizations in Dubai? In spite of our focus on Dubai, we believe our findings have relevance for countries across the GCC and the Middle East region. Drawing on institutional theory this article aims to further our understanding on TM in a public sector emerging market setting. Our research will also assist policymakers and practitioners to develop effective TM practices in in the public sector in Dubai.

The paper is structured as follows: First, we briefly discuss the theoretical perspectives on TM, followed by a discussion on TM in the public sector context and its approaches. We then more specifically discuss TM in Dubai's public sector. The literature in relation to TM practices is then presented. This is followed by our methods and findings. We finally move on to discuss the findings as well as the implications for theory and practice.

Talent Management - Theoretical Perspectives

Talent management draws on a number of established theories, principally the resource–based view (RBV), human capital theory and institutional theory (Barney et al., 2001; Dries, 2013; Gallardo -Gallardo et al., 2020). The former highlights the importance of resources that are rare and difficult to imitate and are integral to the achievement of competitive advantage (Barney et al, 2001). The RBV outlines how TM practices can be aligned with business strategy to achieve sustainable competitive advantage (Tarique & Schuler, 2010). Human capital theory highlights the importance for organizations to invest in people (Becker et al, 2009), which can be specific to one organization or more general in nature (Sarabi et al, 2019).

Institutional theory suggests that organizations face social pressures to adopt strategies and practices which fit with their institutional environment (Di Maggio & Powell, 1983) and that they must conform to the rules, regulations and value systems required by their environment (i.e., institutional isomorphism). Thus, institutional theory perspective also explains the differences in approach to TM between small medium enterprises (SMEs) and large organizations (Krishnan and Scullion, 2017). However, there has also been a dearth of research into HR decision making and their impact on TM practices in the public sector. which leaves an important gap in our understanding of how the HR function frames the key problems of TM. To address this issue, we draw on the institutional logic perspective (Lawrence et al., 2011; Thornton, Ocasio, & Lounsbury, 2012; Bevort, & Poulfelt, 2015; Glaister et al., 2019; Tyskbo, 2021) as it offers new insights into TM in the public sector. Institutional logics have become an important theoretical framework in organizational and management theory (e.g. Almandoz, 2014, Bevort & Poufelt, 2015), yet there is very little reference to institutional logics in HRM scholarship (e.g., Martin, Siebert, & Robson, 2016). Institutional logics have been defined as: '... the socially constructed, historical patterns of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs, and rules by which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence,

organize time and space, and provide meaning to their social reality' (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008, p. 101). Thus, logics offer a meta-theoretical framework to develop an understanding on how individual and organizational actors' interests, identities, values, and assumptions are embedded in different structural levels of context (Martin et al., 2016). 'Institutional work' refers to 'the purposive action of individuals and organizations aimed at creating, maintaining, and disrupting institutions' (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006: 215). This perspective highlights 'the efforts of individuals and collective actors to cope with, keep up with, shore up, tear down, tinker with, transform, or create anew the institutional structures within which they live, work, and play, and which give them their roles, relationships, resources, and routines' (Lawrence et al., 2011: 53). Moreover, they prescribe what constitutes legitimate practices (Pache & Santos, 2010). Violating these prescriptions risks social exclusion (D'Aunno, Sutton, & Price, 1991), as well as pushback from disapproving organizational members, such as senior managers (Glynn, 2000). Most recently, Saqib and colleagues (2021) argue that institutional analyses of HRM within emerging-economy organizations provide little insights on how actual employee management practices are associated with dominant HRM models. In our case, we base our analysis on institutional logics to further our understanding of TM in a public sector emerging market setting and to explore how distinct ownership structures (e.g. the role of government) shape TM (Glaister et al., 2019).

Talent Management in the Public Sector Context

While developing management and leadership competencies are seen as increasingly important in public sector organisations (Tummers and Knies, 2013), TM in this context is an underexplored field of research (Barkhuzien, 2014; Boselie and Thunnissen, 2017; Kravariti and Johnston, 2020). Traditionally the public sector has been characterised by employment security, life-long careers and the strong tradition of equality of treatment and development

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opportunities open to all on an equal basis (Leisink, Boselie, Hosking, & Van Bottenburg, 2013). However, this approach is under pressure for a number of reasons. First, due to austerity and government cuts investment in TM initiatives have been limited. Second, there is a trend in many countries to reduce the size of the public sector in the economy and to increase privatisation. Third, there is some shift away from permanent to more flexible contracts (Culie, Khapova, & Arthur, 2014). Fourth, the new focus on Public Sector Management (PSM) promotes managerial and efficiency logics, increased pressure for accountability and the need create value (Macfarlane et al, 2012; Boselie & Thunnissen, 2017). Finally, the public sector is characterised by goal ambiguity as goals in the public sector are less tangible, more diverse and more difficult to measure which makes the design and implementation of TM practices more challenging, particularly when resource constraints limit flexibility in approaches to TM (Blom et al, 2020).

Inclusive vs Exclusive Approaches to TM in the Public Sector

The inclusive approach takes the view that all employees in the organisation are potential talents and can contribute to organisational goals reflecting the importance of equal opportunities and employee development. It has been suggested that the inclusive approach is a better fit with the egalitarian public sector culture and plays a role in integrating employees towards the common values of the public sector (Poocharoen and Lee, 2013), and should use HR practices that enables the optimisation of the generic capabilities of all employees (Sparrow et al., 2014). Inclusive approaches seem less effective in large MNCs, but research suggests that inclusive TM is common in SMEs due to the fit with their egalitarian organisational cultures (Krishnan and Scullion, 2017). In addition, research suggests that inclusive approaches may be more common in the private sector in countries with strong egalitarian cultures where differentiation is less well accepted such as in Scandinavia (Bjorkman et al., 2017).

Alternatively, the exclusive approach focuses on a select group of high potential or high performing employees (Gallardo-Gallardo et al, 2013), based on the notion of a differentiated HR architecture (Becker, Huselid, & Beatty, 2009). The assumption is that investing in employees with valuable and unique skills will generate higher returns (Lepak & Snell, 1999). However, it has been argued an exclusive approach in the public sector may conflict with public sector values of equality and fairness and may undermine the morale of the majority who are not identified as talent (Swailes, 2013; Boselie and Thunnissen, 2017).

Studies on TM in the public sector highlights that inclusive approaches are used in the public sector, yet there is little discussion of the rationales behind these approaches (Macfarlane et al, 2012). For example, Glenn (2012) argues that while inclusive approaches are generally a better fit with public sector culture, exclusive approaches are also common and used for strategic purposes such as recruitment for scarce strategic and leadership positions. Recent research by Tyskbo (2021) shows that despite the highly egalitarian and collectivist context of a Swedish public sector hospital, exclusive TM approaches were used to recruit and develop professional staff. Shortages of leadership talent in the public sector has led to the growing use of exclusive TM approaches to fill critical roles (Kravariti & Johnston, 2019). This tension between inclusive and exclusive TM approaches is a key TM challenge in the public sector (Bevort & Poulfelt, 2015).

In spite of these discussions, TM practices in the public sector are still relatively underdeveloped, poorly applied and can be characterised as ad hoc, fragmented and reactive (Barkhusizen 2014; Culie, Khapova, & Arthur, 2014). However, public sector organizations have begun to adjust their HRM policies and practices to align them to fit the demands of a rapidly changing external environment where the focus is increasingly on performance which

challenges the traditional values of public sector of equality and fairness (Boselie & Thunnisen, 2017).

New Public Management and TM

The introduction of NPM which prioritises organizational performance and efficiency agendas impacts TM and its underlying logics approaches. Exclusive approach to TM is seen as a better fit with the logics of NPM and TM has been seen as a managerial tool to improve efficiency and performance (Boselie & Thunnissen, 2017). These logics affect TM policy and practice and it is suggested that in the public sector the focus should be on enhancing motivation as the way to increase performance (Thunnissen & Buttiens, 2017). However, a key challenge for TM in the public sector is that defining performance can be problematic given the greater diversity of goals and stakeholder groups (Blom et al, 2020). In addition, it has been argued that the adoption of NPM and austerity measures has reduced the ability of public sector organizations to attract talents and had negative effects on employee engagement (Dougherty & van Gelder, 2015).

Talent Management in the public sector has been influenced by internal and external factors. While the former focuses on activities which align with the strategic objectives and core cultural values (Thunnissen, Boselie & Fruytier, 2013; Kravariti & Johnston, 2019), external factors such as political, cultural and financial factors (Kravariti & Johnston, 2019) seem to play a stronger role in the context of the public sector. For example, government budget cuts have reduced resources for implementing TM and limits the ability of the public sector to attract talents (Llorens, 2011). The increase in retirees across the public sector is an emerging challenge for TM (Clarke & Scurry, 2017), contributing to talent shortages (Poocharoen & Lee, 2013). Research suggests that public sector HR actors need to address competing priorities,

and that competing institutional logics play an important role in how TM practices are understood and enacted in practice (Alvehus, 2018).

Research suggests that TM is more complex in the public sector (Boselie & Thunnissen 2017), and that competing logics play an important role in its implementation (Tyskbo, 2021). The market driven logic of NPM and TM conflicts with the professional and bureaucratic logics in the public sector, highlighting that effective TM in the public sector depends upon different organisational actors bringing different institutional logics to the fore (Boselie & Thunnissen, 2017; Grant et al, 2020). The important role of institutional logics is highlighted by outlining how diverse logics of the state, market and society shape TM conceptualisation and implementation (Glaister et al, 2019).

Talent Management in Dubai's Public Sector

In line with the strategic plan for the development of Dubai, the government has recognized the need to invest in the development of Emiratis in order to reduce reliance on skilled expatriates following the localisation policy introduced by the UAE (Eabrasu & Al Ariss, 2012).

International travel restrictions in response to the Covid-19 pandemic has increased the motivation of governments in the region to reduce dependency on foreign skills and competencies (Haak-Saheem, 2020). In the context of the UAE, Emiratization policies aim to foster greater participation of the UAE nationals in the workforce and build national human capital (Haak-Saheem, Festing & Darwish, 2017; Al Bastaki, Haak-Saheem & Darwish, 2020). Employment, training and development opportunities for nationals has been considered as a priority post Covid-19. Abdalla and colleagues (2010) argue that the shortage of Emirati workers to cope with the economy's escalating demand for labour has resulted in major

challenges over recent decades. The high dependency on expatriates and the concentration of Emiratis in the public sector has created a unique labour market situation (Al-Waqfi & Forstenlechner, 2014). These particular labour market conditions impose a unique challenge to TM in Dubai specifically (World Population Data, 2019; Haak-Saheem, 2020).

While the government encourages citizen to take up jobs in the private sector, a large number of nationals still prefer employment in the public sector. The increasing demand for highly skilled employees, such as medical staff, engineers or academicians attracted a high number of expatriates. The development of those skills and competencies require long-term investments in the education system. For example, the UAE government allocated 14.8% of the federal budget for development of the education system, in order to provide quality education services and enhance a knowledge-based economy in 2020 (UAE, 2020), yet despite the heavy financial investments in education, the national workforce has not yet been able to catch up with the skills and competencies required to compete in the global labour market. Therefore, the present employment market depends on a large number global talent to meet market needs (Haak-Saheem, 2016).

Unlike the private sector, the public sector seems to be an attractive employer to national talent in Dubai and nationals are somewhat preferred choice in terms of filling key managerial positions (Mellahi, 2007; Haak-Saheem and Darwish, 2014). The evidence highlights the lack of success of the Emiratization policy in achieving the desired changes in the labour market conditions and employment of nationals. Moreover, Forstenlechner and Rutledge (2011) argued that the fundamentals of higher education and research have been relatively ignored across the GCC region. Furthermore, there is considerable disparity between performance and reward for nationals, with citizenship remaining the key differentiating factor in relation to higher wages and shorter working hours (Kapiszewski, 2001). In addition, appointments to

government posts and promotions, often have little to do with the subject studied (Al-Dosary & Rahman, 2005). Across GCC states, the education system has been unable to nurture the advanced technical, managerial and professional skills required by modern economies (Kapiszewski, 2001). Mellahi and Wood (2002) argued that the education system has failed to develop an internal supply of human capital, a situation which poses considerable risks for Dubai, and as neglecting educational and vocational training will result in the failure of the localization policy and leadership development (Al- Dorsay and Rahman, 2005).

In this context, considering key TM practices such as selection, training and development and retention (Stahl et al, 2012; Scullion and Collings, 2011; Sparrow et al, 2014) might address some of the highlighted challenges. We consider these three sets of practices that encompass talent management activities, as we explore TM in public sector of Dubai.

Overview of Key Talent Management Practices

Talent Attraction/Talent Acquisition

Talent acquisition has been defined as the process recruiting talent (Stahl et al., 2012). Thus, TM policies increasingly focus on developing employee value propositions and employer brand to source the best talent (Martin & Sinclair, 2019). Developing a strong image as an employer is essential to attract the best talent and many organizations invest heavily in trying to be known as one of the best places to work (Sparrow & Makram, 2015). The current emphasis on talent acquisition, tends to overlook the reality that hiring talent does not necessarily lead to successful talent utilization (Groysberg, 2010). Getting the talent in is only the first step and customized socialization practices or "onboarding" are often required for incoming talents (Dokko & Jiang, 2017).

The Middle East context is characterised by some specific aspects of the talent acquisition process, notably the phenomenon of *wasta,* (Favouritism) a common practice in the UAE (Al-Ali, 2008). The term refers to "both the act and the person who mediates or intercedes" (Cunningham & Sarayrah, 1993). More specifically, *wasta* is a form of social networking or nepotism that promotes the recruitment of individuals within the same network or family of individuals in key positions and an association with a particular family or tribe is a guarantee of access to the best positions. *Wasta* also plays a significant and often invidious role in talent acquisition and takes place implicitly (Al-Ali, 2008). Officially employment through *wasta* is inappropriate as it creates discriminatory practices in the workplace and may result in unsatisfactory outcomes for both the organization and the individual. Another key problem is that better qualified candidates might be overlooked.

Talent Development

Talent Development is a key element of the TM process (Cappelli, 2009) and should be linked with the strategic trajectory of the organization (Phillips & Roper, 2009). A key issue is whether organisations make or buy talent (Bidwell, 2011). The former is positive for addressing both employee and organizational needs (Sparrow et al, 2014), and enhances the development of organizational knowledge (Lepak & Snell, 1999) succession planning (Gandz, 2006).

Talent development seeks to provide job and career-related competencies for individuals and involves a range of practices including leadership development programmes, and mentoring (Caligiuri et al., 2009). Developing talents is a key challenge for public sector organization given the rapidly changing environments (Scullion and Collings, 2011; Boselie & Thunnissen, 2017). To date there is little empirical research on public sector talent development strategies,

more research is needed on how talent in public sector develops the knowledge, networks, and skills to compete for high level strategic positions in the organisation (Leisink et al, 2013). Macro level studies suggest talent is a key element influencing national competitiveness (Khilji & Schuler, 2017; Vaiman, Sparrow, Schuler, & Collings, 2019).

Talent Retention

Talent retention is a critical challenge for employers (D'Amato & Herzfeldt, 2008) and is one of the main purposes of effective TM systems (Dries, 2013; Scullion et. al, 2020; Holland & Scullion, 2019), but while organizations invest significant resources to limit talents leaving the organization, it has remained unclear, how organisations retain their talent (Martin & Schmidt, 2010; Pate & Scullion, 2018). Moreover, increased mobility and the erosion of long-term employment relations and traditional psychological contracts makes retention more difficult (Scullion et al, 2020. The costs of replacing talents, can be considerable (Holland & Scullion, 2020). Public sector organizations have begun to employ a range of retention strategies to minimize turnover including career development, compensation and benefits, flexible working and work–life balance (Kravariti & Johnston, 2019).

Methods

In this study, we adopt an inductive research method (Birkinshaw, Brannen & Tung, 2011), allowing us to collect data unconstrained by predetermined categories of analysis, and thus allowing for depth and detail (Patton, 1990). Our approach allowed us to engage with 'a phenomenon from the perspective of those living it' (Corley, 2015, p. 1) to build insightful, accurate, relevant and useful theory (Glaser & Strauss, 2017).

Research Setting

Dubai's government entities are divided into ten categories depending on the nature of their role: government departments, public corporations, awards, public authorities, academic and training institutions, judicial entities, councils, centres, law enforcement bodies and offices. The government departments are classified based on the nature of each entity's work – that is, departments are categorized based on similarities in type of work – while the public authorities' classification consists of all authorities under Dubai's government umbrella. In relation to sample, and given the scope of the present research, the study adopted theoretical sampling. Table 1 summarizes the main characteristics of the sample.

Data Collection

Prior to the interviews, one of the authors visited several government entities to gain a better understanding of the working environment and organizational structure. Data was drawn from theoretical sampling representing different organizations such as government departments, public corporations, public authorities, judicial entities, councils, centres, etc. We adopted this sampling strategy as we knew where to start the initial sampling. Chenitz & Swanson (1986) argue that in theoretical sampling the sample is not selected from the population based on certain variables prior to the study, rather the initial sample is determined to examine the phenomena where it is found to exist. Our sample included respondents who were familiar with TM practices. The interviewees' familiarity with TM practices in their respective organizations to elaborate on TM in a more informed and articulate manner. Our interview question aimed to encourage participant to discuss TM practices, their views on whether those practices were 15

Table 1: Sample description

	Org. Code	Org. Name	Population	Sector	Dubai Government Classifications	Gender	Designation	Yrs of Experience	Age	Certificate
1	Org. 1	DEWA	10,793	Local Government	Public Authorities	Female	DSM – Payroll	15	37	Master's
2	Org. 2	Financial Audit Department	209	Local Government	Government Departments	Female	DSM – R&S	21	43	High School
3	Org. 3	Awqaf and Minors Affairs Foundation	169	Local Government	Public Corporations	Female	Manager – JD&E	7	36	Bachelor's
4	Org. 4	Department of Finance	140	Local Government	Government Departments	Female	HR Specialist	10	33	Bachelor's
5	Org. 5	General Directorate of Residency and Foreigners' Affairs Dubai	4,701	Local Government	Government Departments	Male	SM – Training Department	35	46	Bachelor's
6	Org. 6	Community Development Authority	240	Local Government	Public Authorities	Male	HR Director	4	41	Bachelor's
7	Org. 7	Dubai Courts	1,214	Local Government	Judicial Entities	Female	Head of Excellence Unit	3	27	Bachelor's
8	Org. 8	Dubai Statistics Center	166	Local Government	Centers	Female	HR Manager	7	29	Bachelor's
9	Org. 9	Dubai Civil Aviation Authority	112	Local Government	Public Authorities	Female	Manager	12	38	Bachelor's
10	Org. 10	Islamic Affairs and Charitable Activities	1,236	Local Government	Dubai Government Departments	Male	Manager	10	40	Bachelor's
11	Org. 11	Knowledge and Human Development Authority	726	Local Government	Public Authorities	Male	HR Director	10	38	Bachelor's and Master's – PHD in HR
12	Org. 12	Dubai Airports	3,250	Local Government	Public Corporations	Female	Director of Capacity	10	45	Bachelor's in Social Studies

13	Org. 13	Dubai Government and Human Resources Departments	105	Local Government	Dubai Government Departments	Male	Manager – HR Info and Smart Transformation Center	5	43	Master's
14	Org. 14	Dubai Municipality	11,913	Local Government	Dubai Government Departments	Female	Manager	8	33	Bachelor's
15	Org. 15	Dubai Police	20,929	Local Government	Law Enforcement Bodies	Female	Manager	8	31	Bachelor's
16	Org. 16	DHA	12,233	Local Government	Public Authorities	Female	Director	14	42	Master's
17	Org. 17	Smart Dubai Government Establishment	168	Local Government	Dubai Government Departments	Female	Head of Recruitment	9	45	Bachelor's
18	Org. 18	Dubai Judicial Institute	28	Local Government	Academic & Training Institutions	Female	Specialist	5	30	Master's
19	Org. 19	Department of Economic Development	603	Local Government	Dubai Government Departments	Male	Manager	10	36	Master's in Management
20	Org. 20	Dubai Custom	2,935	Local Government	Dubai Government Departments	Female	Manager	15	40	Bachelor's
21	Org. 21	Roads and Transport Authority	6,339	Local Government	Public Authorities	Female	Manager	10	37	Bachelor's
22	Org. 22	Dubai Women's Establishment	106	Local Government	Public Corporations	Male	Senior – Manager	20	43	Bachelor's
23	Org. 23	Dubai Chamber	198	Local Government	Dubai Government Departments	Female	Manager	9	33	Master's
24	Org. 24	Land Department	551	Local Government	Dubai Government Departments	Female	Manager	15	38	Bachelor's
25	Org. 25	Dubai Public Prosecution	663	Local Government	Judicial Entities	Male	Manager	18	45	Bachelor's

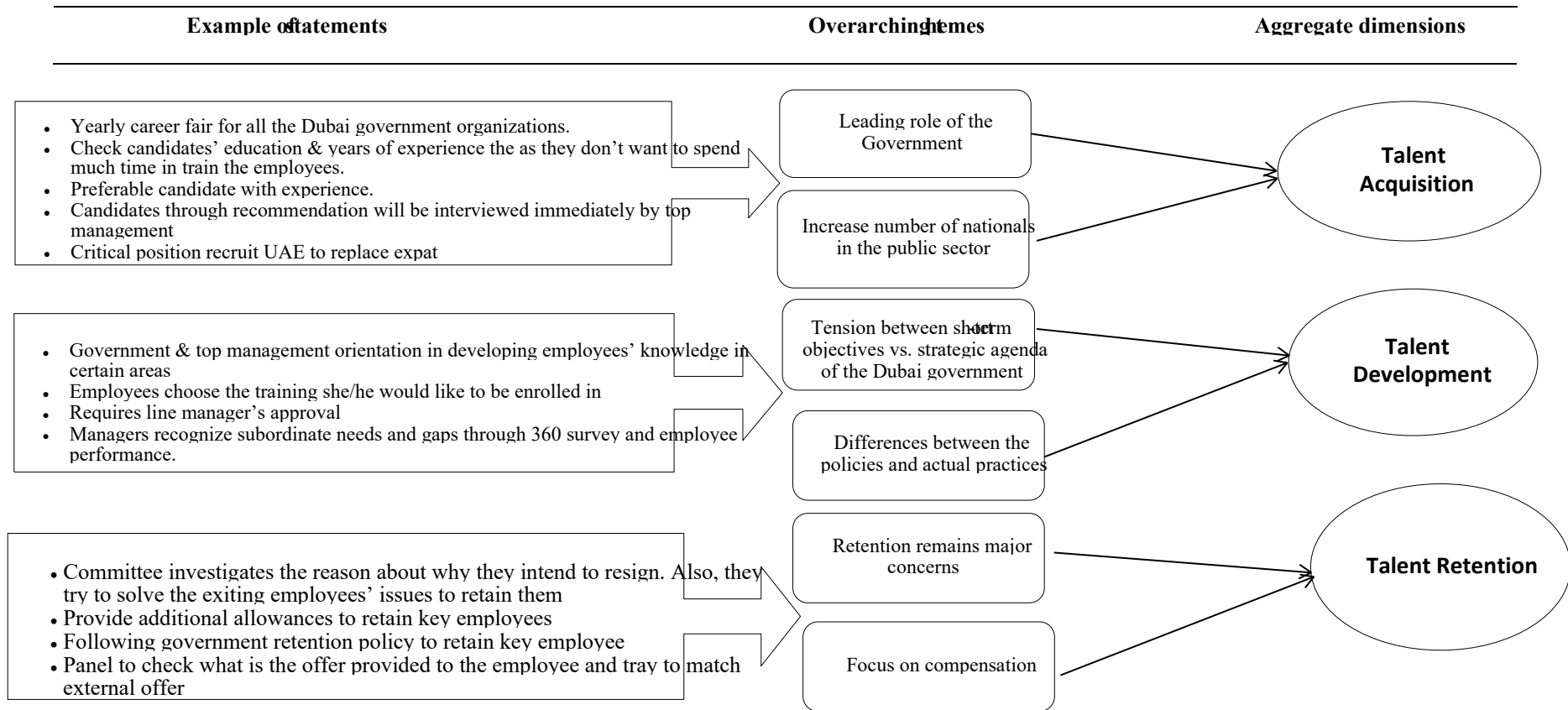| 26	Org. 26	Dubai Culture	315	Local Government	Public Authorities	Male	Specialist	10	33	Bachelor's
27	Org. 27	Dubai Corporation for Ambulance Services	1,430	Local Government	Public Corporations	Female	Senior – Specialist	15	38	Bachelor's
28	Org. 28	Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing	499	Local Government	Government Departments	Male	Manager	7	35	High School
29	Org. 29	Dubai Media Incorporated	1,476	Local Government	Public Corporations	Female	Assistant Manager	6	30	Bachelor's
30	Org. 30	Dubai Sports Council	94	Local Government	Councils	Male	Manager	18	42	Bachelor's
31	Org. 31	Hamadan Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Award for Distinguished Academic Performance	54	Local Government	Awards	Female	Assistant Manager	8	29	High School
32	Org. 32	Dubai Airport Free Zone Authority	208	Semi-government		Male	Manager	12	34	Bachelor's
33	Org. 33	Dubai Civil Defense	1,830	Federal Government	Dubai Government Departments	Male	HR Director	19	45	MBA
34	Org. 34	Mohammed Bin Rashid Housing Establishment	210	Local Government	Public Corporations	Female	HR Manager	14	37	Bachelor's

proven to be successful in their context, or whether those TM practices were based in existing TM models and frameworks. Further, we were interested in the role of the government – as the main stakeholder – in shaping TM.

The Dubai Statistical Centre provided a directory containing all Dubai government organizations. After organizational approval was obtained, the interviews were conducted. The organizations and individuals approached were assured that participation in the interview would be voluntary and confidential. Letters were sent to 46 organizations and only 34 of them agreed to participate. In addition to the in-depth interviews, documents such as organizational charts or HR policies were shared. Moreover, the team reviewed organizations' websites and the Government of Dubai's Human Resources Laws in order to understand organizational strategies and TM policies/practices. This approach provided deeper insights and enriched the level of understanding as well as the information basis for the researchers' interpretation (Wolff, 2004). Given the Arab culture, face-to-face interviews were conducted and lasted about 60 to 90 minutes. Eighteen interviewees refused to be recorded. In these cases, extensive notes were taken during the interviews.

Data Analysis

When analysing the data, an excel sheet was used to record the respondent's length of service, nationality, age, educational and professional background, organization's name, number of employees, their perspectives and experiences with TM. We coded the information by recording the statement in the relevant cell of the table and then aggregated the answers. We also recorded some quotes for illustrative purposes. The data content was coded first by the lead author and then by the second author for consistency and accuracy (see Miles & Huberman, 1994). Approximately 95% agreement was achieved between the two coders. The

Figure 1: Overview of the Data Structure

Example of statements	Overarching themes	Aggregate dimensions

- Yearly career fair for all the Dubai government organizations.
- Check candidates' education & years of experience the as they don't want to spend much time in train the employees.
- Preferable candidate with experience.
- Candidates through recommendation will be interviewed immediately by top management
- Critical position recruit UAE to replace expat

Leading role of the Government

Increase number of nationals in the public sector

Talent Acquisition

- Government & top management orientation in developing employees' knowledge in certain areas
- Employees choose the training she/he would like to be enrolled in
- Requires line manager's approval
- Managers recognize subordinate needs and gaps through 360 survey and employee performance.

Tension between short-term objectives vs. strategic agenda of the Dubai government

Differences between the policies and actual practices

Talent Development

- Committee investigates the reason about why they intend to resign. Also, they try to solve the exiting employees' issues to retain them
- Provide additional allowances to retain key employees
- Following government retention policy to retain key employee
- Panel to check what is the offer provided to the employee and tray to match external offer

Retention remains major concerns

Focus on compensation

Talent Retention

authors openly discussed and resolved differences in coding and data interpretation. Figure 1 summaries our data analysis structure.

Findings

We aimed to identify the research findings that were relevant to factors and issues relating to TM in the Dubai s public sector.

Talent Acquisition

The research findings from our study shows that TM practices are directly influenced by the government. According to the national agenda, the Dubai Plan 2021 is a comprehensive strategic plan that will guide Dubai's government sector toward the future of the city. The Government of Dubai is the driving force, and recruitment takes place based on government priorities. Emiratization, for example, is considered to be a key performance indicator (KPI) with the aim to increase the number of nationals in the public and private sector (www.government.ae). Moreover, providing employment to nationals is a key driver of the UAE's economic development, as highlighted by a sample of interviews. For example, one of the interviewees stated that:

> *"As per the national agenda of 2021 and His Highness's guidance, recruiting nationals in supervisory categories or top management to replace expatriates in government entities is a priority"*. (Sara, Organization 1)

Moreover, recruitment of adequate national talent is prioritized even in the case of non-vacancies as outlined by this respondent:

> "*The manpower planning strategy depends on the organization's projects. Nationals can be employed even if there are no present vacancies, but expatriates can be hired only if there is a vacancy*" (Shakeela, Organization 2)

Even though there is a high proportion in the public sector, the government still emphasizes the need to increase the number of nationals in the public sector. Therefore, a target has been set by the government to ensure employment nationals is prioritized as stated be this interviewee that:

> "*Emiratization is not a campaign that has been launched only once, but also the government are playing a critical role in pushing up the number of nationals in the public sector, not only the private sector. Therefore, it continuously monitors the percentage of Emiratis in the public sector*". (Amal, Organization 3)

According to the Dubai Government Human Resources Law No. 27 of 2006, Article No. 37, recruiting and selecting employees should be conducted on a fair and equitable terms. However, expatriates are considered only when there are no UAE nationals available or suitable for the selected post. As stipulated in the UAE Federal Labour Law (1980), article 10 and 11, should national workers not be available, the priority of employment shall be given to: (1) Arab workers holding the nationality of an Arab State, (2) Workers holding other nationalities. A National Employment Section is established by the Ministry of Labour for all non-employed nationals which examines the records of registered non-employed nationals to ensure there are no eligible nationals available before granting work permits to expatriates.

Talent Development

The Government of Dubai Human Resources Management Law No. 27 of 2006, Article No. 89, requires that the government is committed to the development of public service human resources. Article No. 90 dictates that training needs analysis will be derived from government strategies and polices.

A major aim of the initiatives is to support career path development. However, HR managers face challenges to implement such practices, as highlighted by this interviewee:

> *"We are struggling to implement career pathways within the organization for political reasons. For example, linking promotions along a career path is undesirable to certain people. However, it is a system that can help employees predict the next stage, as well as recognize the requirements for each move".* (Omer, Organization 25)

Another HR manager reported that:

> *"The implementation of career pathways in Dubai's public sector is unfortunately still in process for the majority of sectors. Many of the younger generations prefer to have a career path as they think it will encourage, lead and direct them to the next level. Transparency in presenting the career pathways processes will be highly required".* (Majed, Organization10)

The development of nationals is not related to short-term objectives; rather, it is linked to the long-term strategic vision for developing the Dubai economy. More specifically, the Dubai Industrial Strategy 2030 is based on five key objectives that will serve as the foundation for Dubai's future orientation. The Industrial Strategy aims to develop capabilities in the areas of aerospace, maritime, aluminium and fabricated metals, pharmaceuticals and medical equipment, food and beverages and machinery and equipment (UAE 2020). The recruitment, development and retention in those key areas is considered as critical to build local capabilities.

Our data shows that policies and actual practices on the ground can differ significantly. An important finding is the persistent tendency of some individuals to misuse their authority and power to continue to engage in nepotism, favouritism and social networking which can act as a barrier to successful talent development as reported by this participant:

"Wasta sometimes has a role in promotion, which will result in demotivated and disappointed hard-working employees who are putting effort into developing themselves and delivering outstanding performance. Usually, individuals who are promoted through wasta are incompetent to handle their position, which will indirectly result in future organizational failure by consuming financial and non-financial resources". (Abdullah, Organizatio 19)

The government's strategy is to reduce the impact of *wasta* on employment decisions. Consequently, an internal audit department has been introduced to monitor employment related decisions:

"Wasta has been reduced somewhat as per the continuous efforts of the Dubai Government since 2006, through the establishment of a clear rule in HR government law as well as the continuous emphasis and direct monitoring of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum. This is due to extensive benchmarking and best practices among developed countries, who are ahead of the Arab world in many respects such as HR practices, strategies, regulation, etc". (Samira, Organization18)

Talent Retention

As our data reveals, organizations employ retention polices to encourage employees to remain within the organizations, as highlighted by this respondent:

"We are following retention policies to retain talent within the organization by allowing them for example to move internally across different organizational departments" (Iman, Organization 7)

In spite the fact that organizations are aware of the importance of talent retention, retaining talent is identified as a major concern:

> "*Turnover is alarming high in many organizations. We are fully aware of this but there is little what we could do about it. The polices are in place, but local employees are aware that switching is very easy for them* '(Amna, Organization 9)

Interview data shows that employees have to attend an exit interview or a panel discussion post resignation. The purpose of such a discussion is to understand the reasons why employees leave and encourage them to stay by providing solutions to their concerns:

> *"In our organization, we enrol employees who resign in an exit interview process. The interview process usually aims to retain employees, through either transferring them to another department or increasing their salary".* (Hana, Organization 22)

Another interviews stated that:

> *It's critical for us to enrol resigning employees in a retention process such as an exit interview. This interview, where simple questions are asked of resigning employees, assists us to identify the main reasons for employees' resignation, which assists us to enhance the system in future.* (Humaid, Organization 30)

Discussion and Conclusions

Our study aimed to address TM issues in the public sector in emerging economy of Dubai. By doing so, we aimed to respond to the call of Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2020) to pay greater attention to contextual factors shaping TM.

One key finding is that only few public sector organizations utilize TM policies and practices. A large number of organizations are still largely unfamiliar with TM. Our findings also highlight that some organizations are neither familiar with the term nor concept of TM. Existing

research on HRM in the region (e.g., Haak-Saheem & Festing, 2020) suggest that the government plays a central role in managing human resources in the Dubai public sector, and the policy is that TM should be well aligned with the overall strategic direction of the government. However, our findings indicate that this often not the case in practice. Actual TM practices have little to do with strategic direction. There was little consistency across government areas in their approach to managing talent. Our results also show that a traditional approach to talent acquisition in the Dubai public sector is still the norm and that many organizations have little awareness of talent attraction methods such as employer branding and employer of choice strategies. In practice, these traditional recruitment processes tended to be reactive and ad hoc. Some interviewees identified the existence of particular assessment tools as a potentially effective recruitment mechanism but pointed to their limited use in practice. Managers felt they lacked the competences to run assessment centres to substantiate recruitment decision. In practice, they were usually run by international consultancy firms who had little knowledge of the public sector context. Despite the policy of the government to increase the participation of UAE nationals in the workforce, in some organizations the numbers of expatriates still exceed those of nationals.

As indicated by the respondents the use of *wasta* is also still dominant in the recruitment process. Consequently, candidates are recruited based on their interpersonal relationships rather than matching job requirements which imposes sever challenges to effective talent acquisition.

In regard of talent development, our findings show that while there are government leadership programmes for UAE nationals, a significant weakness is the lack of control mechanisms to ensure that the employees attend relevant training. Further, the inability to plan effectively to address competency gaps results in vacancies not being filled and opportunities are missed to

enhance employees' development. Our results reveal that the majority of Dubai's public sector organizations fail to develop effective career paths, which results in talent moving to other organizations. This suggests the need to provide career planning and to develop and retain public sector talents.

Retention of employees in the public sector is not a central focus of TM strategy. While exit interviews take place in a number of organizations, data is not used effectively to understand voluntarily turnover. Our findings suggest that overall, public sector organizations do not pay enough attention to retention and run the risk of losing talent more frequently. Using turnover data more effectively would lead to improved talent retention policies and practices.

Implications for theory, practice and future research

This study contributes to broadening our knowledge of TM policies and practices in an emerging market which is an underexplored context and delivering new insights on the role of governments to addresses demographic and educational challenges by nurturing local talent (what we referred to as Emiratisation or localisation). Although technical education seems to have been enhanced, vocational and generic tertiary educational skills remains limited (Mellahi & Wood, 2002; Wood, Darwish, Alanezi & Singh, 2019). Our study suggests that expatriates may have little interest in supporting and developing local talents and they rather prefer recruiting their peers (see Wood et al. 2019). Hence, having an effective TM practices in the public sector aligned with the strategic direction of the government has potential to contribute to the overall success of localisation polices in the UAE and the wider GCC region.

This work also has important implications for the institutional theory. As our findings show, when it comes to talent acquisition and development, *wasta* plays an important role. Hence, there is no doubt that TM practices are to some extent influenced by the dominance of tribal societal structures prevailing in this context. *Wasta* needs to be seen from the institutional

perspective so we could better understand its significant role at the macro level where informal institutions are favoured to those formal ones for cultural and economic reasons (Glaister et al., 2019). Hence, it seems that solid informal networks and ties provide a coherent alternative to more formal institutions necessary to secure competitive advantage (see Al-Hasan & James; 2003; Darwish et al., 2016). Therefore, we argue that exploring more closely the institutional logics within the UAE public sector organizations would be very helpful to examine how they face institutional complexities and realities; the latter is also essential to ensure a better understanding of the interplay between state, market and societal logics (see Glaister et al., 2019).

There are several studies in the field that highlighted a strong influence for *wasta* on HRM practices. More recently, Tlaiss (2020) reflected on *wasta* as an important factor limiting the development of talent management practices. Similar studies emphasise on the dominant role of *wasta* in Middle Eastern HRM practices in terms of talent acquisition, talent development (Haak-Saheem and Darwish, 2021), and performance appraisal (Harbi et al., 2016). In fact, this cultural norm is not just exclusive to the Middle Eastern context (e.g. see studies about the influence of the Chinese guanxi on HRM practices, Gibb and Zhang, 2017; Gu and Nolan, 2017; Jackson & Horwitz, 2018). These studies show that culture can facilitate the emergence and the operationalisation of a new logic in organizations (i.e. *wasta* logic). In other words, fostering a new form of institutional rationality (Lounsbury, 2008) that adheres to strong national cultural norms. Therefore, we argue that instead of viewing *wasta* as an institutional pressure that scholars problematize while theorizing about global talent management practices, *wasta* (or the influence of personal relationships in general) should be embraced as institutional logics "guide [the] decision-making of actors in a field" (Lounsbury, 2008: 353).

By focusing on *wasta* as an institutional logic we show how globally and institutionalized TM practices vary in non-Western contexts. For instance, studies that reflected on *wasta* show how organizational actors mobilized their informal networks/relationships to influence how HRM practices are being carried out (e.g. Brannine and Pollard, 2010; Harbi et al., 2016). Moreover, these studies reflected on the role of *wasta* in comparison with values derived from Western cultural contexts (e.g. Harbi et al., 2016; Gu and Nolan, 2017;). What these studies have in common is that HRM practices are predominantly influenced by patterns of social interaction (i.e. informal networks) rather than global strategic HRM practices (Nishii and Wright, 2008). However, these studies overlooked the influence of these strong cultural norms as a logic that informs the performativity of HRM practices. By doing so, prior work inadvertently overlooked the uniqueness of the context itself in shaping practices. This contributes to aggregating the influence of informal relationships (e.g. *wasta/guanxi*) under one umbrella term –that is informal institutional logic. To this end, instead of viewing practices as only originating in the West and that differences in cultures are conceptualized as institutional pressures, we need to embrace the uniqueness of these non-Western contexts and reconceptualise some of their dominant cultural values/norms (e.g. *wasta*) as an institutional logic, and that its multiplicity with other institutional logics result in variations to the practice that is context specific and are shaped by informal institutional logic. Therefore, this view offers a more contextualized contribution (Whetten, 1989) to the institutional theory.

Again, it is suggested that public sector HR actors need to address competing priorities, and that competing institutional logics play an important role in how TM practices are understood and enacted in practice (Alvehus, 2018). Given the complexity of TM practices in the public sector, competing logics could play an important role in better understanding how to implement TM in this sector (Tyskbo, 2021). As outlined earlier, market driven logic of NPM and TM

conflicts with the professional and bureaucratic logics in the public sector; hence, effective TM in the public sector depends upon different organisational actors bringing different institutional logics to our understanding of TM (see Boselie & Thunnissen, 2017; Grant et al., 2020).

Our study also suggests some areas for future research and a number of implications for practice. Sparrow et al (2014) argued that TM is emerging as a multi-disciplinary bridge field which should bring in insights from related fields such as marketing, supply chain, employer branding and logistics (Sparrow et al., 2014). We suggest this approach is particularly useful for public sector organizations due to the complexities of managing talent in the increasingly volatile external environment facing public sector organisations (Boselie & Thunnissen, 2017). Also, more dynamic perspectives on TM in the public sector are required to enhance understanding of how the TM agenda changes in relation to shifts in the strategic trajectories of public sector organizations (Clarke & Scurry, 2017; Krishnan & Scullion, 2017; Farndale, Sparrow, Scullion & Viodic, 2019).

In the public sector context, due to the large number of stakeholders involved, the study of TM from a multi-level perspective would add to understanding of TM from different perspectives (Sarabi, Hamori, & Froese, 2019; Caligiuri & Dragoni, 2019), and future research should seek to adopt a broader perspective to take account of the perspectives of a wider range of stakeholders (Swailes, 2013).

More research is needed in the neglected area of diversity management and its links to Talent Management in the public sector, and more work is needed on the identification and evaluation of talent in the public sector context (McDonnell et al., 2020; Bidwell, 2011; Bidwell & Keller, 2014). There is a need to pay more attention to the growth of non-standard employees, a rapidly growing area of the public sector (Cascio & Boudreau, 2016). More research in the rapidly

developing area of Talent Analytics (Minbaeva & Vardi, 2019) would help inform decisions around public sector organization's TM strategies and further research is also needed on the areas of employer branding and careers in the public sector (Kravariri & Johnston, 2020; Martin & Sinclair, 2019; Clarke & Scurry, 2017), and on the links between talent management and performance (e.g., Collings et al., 2017) in the public sector (Boselie & Thunnissen, 2 017).

An important lesson for practice highlighted by our research is a deeper understanding of the barriers to developing effective management strategies within the UAE's public sector. There are also lessons for similar countries in the Middle East region in relation to managing the tensions between their efforts to promote fairness in their formal selection processes and the strong informal institutional engagements such as *wasta* when seeking to recruit and develop talents. Our research also confirms that retention should be part of an integrated TM practices approach which could help to improve the overall performance of organisations and help them in sustaining competitive advantage (see Collings et al., 2017; Scullion et al, 2020).

We acknowledge some limitations of this work. Interviews were conducted with single respondents, those senior HR managers in the public sector. Although additional data were gathered from some documents such as organizational charts or HR policies, some elements of common method variance bias may have crept in. Hence, multiple respondents could be considered in future work to gather data especially those policy makers in relation to Emiratisation policy. Moreover, this work was only limited to the Dubai public sector; therefore, it would be rewarding to widen the parameters of the current population and include the public sector of the entire country and potentially the entire GCC region. It would also be interesting to broaden the nature of the study over time and include other key TM areas and assess the status of TM on a longitudinal basis as this would offer profounder insights.

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Table 1: Sample description

	Org. Code	Org. Name	Population	Sector	Dubai Government Classifications	Gender	Designation	Yrs of Experience	Age	Certificate
1	Org. 1	DEWA	10,793	Local Government	Public Authorities	Female	DSM – Payroll	15	37	Master's
2	Org. 2	Financial Audit Department	209	Local Government	Government Departments	Female	DSM – R&S	21	43	High School
3	Org. 3	Awqaf and Minors Affairs Foundation	169	Local Government	Public Corporations	Female	Manager – JD&E	7	36	Bachelor's
4	Org. 4	Department of Finance	140	Local Government	Government Departments	Female	HR Specialist	10	33	Bachelor's
5	Org. 5	General Directorate of Residency and Foreigners' Affairs Dubai	4,701	Local Government	Government Departments	Male	SM – Training Department	35	46	Bachelor's
6	Org. 6	Community Development Authority	240	Local Government	Public Authorities	Male	HR Director	4	41	Bachelor's
7	Org. 7	Dubai Courts	1,214	Local Government	Judicial Entities	Female	Head of Excellence Unit	3	27	Bachelor's
8	Org. 8	Dubai Statistics Center	166	Local Government	Centers	Female	HR Manager	7	29	Bachelor's
9	Org. 9	Dubai Civil Aviation Authority	112	Local Government	Public Authorities	Female	Manager	12	38	Bachelor's
10	Org. 10	Islamic Affairs and Charitable Activities	1,236	Local Government	Dubai Government Departments	Male	Manager	10	40	Bachelor's
11	Org. 11	Knowledge and Human Development Authority	726	Local Government	Public Authorities	Male	HR Director	10	38	Bachelor's and Master's – PHD in HR
12	Org. 12	Dubai Airports	3,250	Local Government	Public Corporations	Female	Director of Capacity	10	45	Bachelor's in Social Studies

13	Org. 13	Dubai Government and Human Resources Departments	105	Local Government	Dubai Government Departments	Male	Manager – HR Info and Smart Transformation Center	5	43	Master's
14	Org. 14	Dubai Municipality	11,913	Local Government	Dubai Government Departments	Female	Manager	8	33	Bachelor's
15	Org. 15	Dubai Police	20,929	Local Government	Law Enforcement Bodies	Female	Manager	8	31	Bachelor's
16	Org. 16	DHA	12,233	Local Government	Public Authorities	Female	Director	14	42	Master's
17	Org. 17	Smart Dubai Government Establishment	168	Local Government	Dubai Government Departments	Female	Head of Recruitment	9	45	Bachelor's
18	Org. 18	Dubai Judicial Institute	28	Local Government	Academic & Training Institutions	Female	Specialist	5	30	Master's
19	Org. 19	Department of Economic Development	603	Local Government	Dubai Government Departments	Male	Manager	10	36	Master's in Management
20	Org. 20	Dubai Custom	2,935	Local Government	Dubai Government Departments	Female	Manager	15	40	Bachelor's
21	Org. 21	Roads and Transport Authority	6,339	Local Government	Public Authorities	Female	Manager	10	37	Bachelor's
22	Org. 22	Dubai Women's Establishment	106	Local Government	Public Corporations	Male	Senior – Manager	20	43	Bachelor's
23	Org. 23	Dubai Chamber	198	Local Government	Dubai Government Departments	Female	Manager	9	33	Master's
24	Org. 24	Land Department	551	Local Government	Dubai Government Departments	Female	Manager	15	38	Bachelor's
25	Org. 25	Dubai Public Prosecution	663	Local Government	Judicial Entities	Male	Manager	18	45	Bachelor's
26	Org. 26	Dubai Culture	315	Local Government	Public Authorities	Male	Specialist	10	33	Bachelor's
27	Org. 27	Dubai Corporation for Ambulance Services	1,430	Local Government	Public Corporations	Female	Senior – Specialist	15	38	Bachelor's

28	Org. 28	Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing	499	Local Government	Government Departments	Male	Manager	7	35	High School
29	Org. 29	Dubai Media Incorporated	1,476	Local Government	Public Corporations	Female	Assistant Manager	6	30	Bachelor's
30	Org. 30	Dubai Sports Council	94	Local Government	Councils	Male	Manager	18	42	Bachelor's
31	Org. 31	Hamadan Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Award for Distinguished Academic Performance	54	Local Government	Awards	Female	Assistant Manager	8	29	High School
32	Org. 32	Dubai Airport Free Zone Authority	208	Semi-government		Male	Manager	12	34	Bachelor's
33	Org. 33	Dubai Civil Defense	1,830	Federal Government	Dubai Government Departments	Male	HR Director	19	45	MBA
34	Org. 34	Mohammed Bin Rashid Housing Establishment	210	Local Government	Public Corporations	Female	HR Manager	14	37	Bachelor's

Figure 1: Overview of the Data Structure

Example of statements	Overarching themes	Aggregate dimensions

- Yearly career fair for all the Dubai government organizations.
- Check candidates' education & years of experience the as they don't want to spend much time in train the employees.
- Preferable candidate with experience.
- Candidates through recommendation will be interviewed immediately by top management
- Critical position recruit UAE to replace expat

Leading role of the Government

Increase number of nationals in the public sector

Talent Acquisition

- Government & top management orientation in developing employees' knowledge in certain areas
- Employees choose the training she/he would like to be enrolled in
- Requires line manager's approval
- Managers recognize subordinate needs and gaps through 360 survey and employee performance.

Tension between short-term objectives vs. strategic agenda of the Dubai government

Differences between the policies and actual practices

Talent Development

- Committee investigates the reason about why they intend to resign. Also, they try to solve the exiting employees' issues to retain them
- Provide additional allowances to retain key employees
- Following government retention policy to retain key employee
- Panel to check what is the offer provided to the employee and tray to match external offer

Retention remains major concerns

Focus on compensation

Talent Retention