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Influence of organizational culture on knowledge transfer: Evidence from the Government of Dubai

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In the current context of globalization and technological spread, the role of knowledge as an organizational resource is phenomenal. Knowledge management can be seen as an add-on to reform paradigms such as new public management, good governance, and smart government, which has generated significant interest for public sector reformists in recent years. The amount of literature on knowledge management in public the sector of the United Arab Emirates is relatively scanty. In the Government of Dubai (1 of 7 Emirates in the UAE), the journey towards knowledge management has started 2 decades or so ago and now has begun to take structural roots in many organizations. This study examines the relationship between organizational culture elements (i.e., trust, communication between employees, reward, leadership, and learning and development), organizational socialization, and knowledge transfer in the government organizations in Dubai. Based on a theoretical framework to measure the influence, this study conducted a questionnaire survey in the Government of Dubai entities. From 811 respondents representing these organizations, the survey results unfold positive relationship between knowledge transfer and the 4 selected organizational cultural elements (i.e., trust, communication between employees, reward, and leadership). Socialization is found to play a moderating role in all the hypothesized relationships except between reward and knowledge transfer. It also examines further research implications to support knowledge transfer processes and practices in the public sector of Dubai and the UAE.

1 | INTRODUCTION

Over the past five decades or so, the knowledge management literature has been deepened by various scholarly thoughts and constructs. In the 1960s, Polanyi, one of the early thinkers provoked a philosophical underpinning by his famous quote: "we can know more than we can tell" (Polanyi, 1966). The 1990s received a renewed scholarly attention on the field when a host of scholars enriched the discourse with diverse perspectives on how knowledge could lead to innovation, development, and change. Galtung and Vincent (1992) perceived information and knowledge as important drivers of economy and social power, and others including Senge (1990); Drucker (1995); Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995); Davenport, De Long, and Beers (1998) underlined the need for knowledge management as a new paradigm and a central strategic tool to organizational performance. Recent literature continue to underpin the role of knowledge management in innovation through integration and networking (Alexander, Neyer, & Huizingh, 2016; Cappelli & Montobbio, 2016; Galunic, Sengupta, &

Petrinlieri, 2014; Liana, Phillips-Wen, & Jain, 2016; Llopis & Foss, 2016; Matysiewicz & Smyczek, 2016).

For public sector reformists, knowledge management has generated significant interest in the post-new public management era (Tangaraja, Mohd Rasdi, Ismail, & Abu Samah, 2015). Sandhu, Jain, and bte Ahmad (2011) perceived managing knowledge as a central resource for government services to improve public governance and service delivery. However, as Zhang and Ng (2012) observe, organizations are not able to create knowledge by themselves because knowledge is created by individuals and argue that leveraging knowledge is only doable when individuals are ready to share their knowledge with others. Therefore, determining which factors promote individuals' knowledge transfer (Van den Hooff & de Ridder, 2004) constitute an important area of research. To explore the question further, Ives, Torrey, & Gordon (2003) examined what are the elements that effectively influence organizational knowledge transfer and found that these are organizational structure, culture, processes, strategy, and information technology.

An important aspect of transfer is knowledge sharing (Chang & Lin, 2015). Previous researches have shown that culture is the key influence on knowledge management and effectiveness of knowledge sharing (Bose, 2004; Chase, 1997; Demarest, 1997; Gold, Malhotra, & Albert, 2001; Tong, Tak, & Wong, 2015). Knowledge sharing requires organizational members to be willing to contribute their knowledge to the organization (Ajmal & Koskinen, 2008; Politis, 2003; Trivellas, Akrivouli, Tsifora, & Tsoutsa, 2015; Wei, 2005). Shared organizational values influence the individual's perception of ownership of knowledge and subsequent inclinations to share knowledge with others (Jarvenpaa & Staples, 2001; Tan, Lim, & Ng, 2009; Wasko & Faraj, 2005). Referring to the current "connected age," Sharif and Al-Karaghouli (2011) observe that the social interactions that we are now seeing are becoming so embedded with technology that the ability to avoid or reduce engagement with social communities that are truly born out of a knowledge era is becoming harder.

2 | STUDY RELEVANCE TO THE UAE'S PUBLIC SECTOR

Since the 1990s, the UAE Government federally and the Government in the emirate of Dubai have been successively launching various reform programs such as public private partnership, strategic planning, Dubai Government Excellence Program (DGEP), smart government, service innovation, and the "star rating system"-based performance management. The trigger for these changes was to raise competencies of all service delivery channels. However, alongside a skyrocketing journey towards service quality and performance (Rahman & Said, 2015), the UAE started building knowledge culture in government organizations at the beginning of the new millennium as the country moved forward to compete with the rest of the world based on its knowledge economy rather than solely on its natural endowments (Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Authority UAE, 2011). In 2000, few entities in the Government of Dubai started mobilizing knowledge teams. A milestone was achieved in 2008 when the DGEP included knowledge transfer as a criterion for excellence. This created a momentum to build knowledge culture in various public organizations. From 2010 onward, organizations such as Dubai Police, Dubai Courts, Knowledge and Human Development Authority, Dubai Electricity and Water Authority, and Road Transport Authority started embedding knowledge management in their strategy and created units/departments to operationalize knowledge management-based strategy. In their study, Biygautane and Yahya (2011) observed that the DGEP succeeded in encouraging public organizations in Dubai to adopt the best practices to enhance their effectiveness and service delivery.

Researchers have studied different facets of knowledge management in the UAE, but most have focused on private sector. Ahmad and Daghfous (2010) enquired why businesses, including local firms and multinational companies, were not effectively sharing interorganizational knowledge in the UAE. In another study by Connell, Kriz, and Thorpe (2014), a comparative research was conducted in New South Wales, Australia, and Dubai, UAE, to investigate how industry clusters could facilitate knowledge sharing and collaborative innovation. A paper by Ewers (2013) examined the efforts by the United Arab Emirates and the other Arab Gulf States to use their oil wealth to import the human capital necessary to diversify their economies beyond oil and how these expatriates and foreign firms adapt their knowledge transactions for application to the region's unique business and regulatory environments.

In the context of public sector in the UAE, more research has been done in areas of leadership, service excellence, and performance management, but knowledge management is somewhat underresearched. Two studies on the public sector in Dubai and the UAE by Seba, Rowley, and Lambert (2012) and Al-Khouri (2014) looked at particular aspects that influence knowledge sharing and knowledge culture in Dubai Police and the Emirates Identity Authority respectively. But in none of these studies, the relationship between organizational culture and "knowledge transfer" was researched. The case study on Dubai Police investigated on four challenges in sharing implicit knowledge— leadership, time allocation, trust, and organizational structure. The study found barriers created by all the four factors in knowledge sharing environment (Seba et al., 2012). Four years later, the Emirates Identity Authority case study observed that enablers such as leadership, culture, vision, transparency, and change management strongly supported knowledge management at this federal body (Al-Khouri, 2014).

The present study intended to examine whether the overall public sector environment in Dubai has changed positively to create a strong knowledge transfer culture since Seba's Dubai Police case study of 2012. Therefore, this study aimed to examine the relationships between selected organizational cultural elements (i.e., trust, communication between employees, reward, leadership, and learning and development), organizational socialization, and knowledge transfer among the public sector employees in Dubai. The selection of trust, communication, reward, leadership, and learning and development as key variables was intended to examine how these cultural elements influence transfer of explicit and tacit knowledge in a unique Arab public sector context such as Dubai. Some of these cultural values (e.g., leadership, trust, and learning and development) were chosen as these are linked to the knowledge- and innovation-based strategies of the Dubai government (Al Awar, 2015; Executive Council-Dubai Government, 2010).

3 | LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 | Knowledge transfer

In an organizational context, knowledge transfer is a process through which one group (e.g., department or division) is affected by the experience of another group (e.g., department or division) because it involves two or more parties together (Argote & Ingram, 2000; Hasan, Low, & Islam, 2013). Maurer, Bartsch, and Ebers (2011) conceptualized knowledge transfer as the mobilization, assimilation, and use of knowledge resources. Facilitating knowledge is a challenging mission as Lam and Lambermont-Ford note that the willingness of individual to share and integrate their knowledge is one of the central barriers for knowledge transfer (Lam & Lambermont-Ford, 2010). For public sector organizations, the bureaucratic organizational culture tends to

mean that employees often see knowledge management as a management responsibility and not necessarily something for which every employee should take some responsibility (Seba, Rowley, and Delbridge, 2012). Therefore, this study is interested to investigate how elements of organizational culture (i.e., trust, communication between employees, reward system, leadership support, and learning and development) and organizational socialization influence the knowledge transfer (i.e., explicit and tacit knowledge) in public organization in Dubai.

3.2 | Organizational culture

The knowledge management literature repetitively emphasizes the inseparable relationship between organizational culture and knowledge management (Davenport & Prusak, 1998; Skerlevaj, Stenberger, Skrinjar, & Dimovski, 2007). Organizational culture is combination of values, norms, guiding beliefs, and understanding that is shared by members of an organization (Daft & Armstrong, 2012). Organizational culture may be seen as a major facilitator in building a positive knowledge-transfer environment in the public sector. Some studies found that organizational cultural elements including trust, communication, reward system, and organizational structure may positively impact knowledge sharing in organizations (Al-Alawi, Al-Marzooqi, & Mohammed, 2007; Seba et al., 2012). Having recognized that there are various elements of culture that may affect knowledge transfer, in this study, six elements have been selected: trust, communication between employees, reward, leadership, learning and development, and organizational socialization.

3.2.1 | Trust

Trust is the extent to which an individual is willing to associate and interact with others (Kumar, Rose, & Muien, 2009). Trust is a potential determinant of transferring knowledge between individuals and organizations. A recent study by Rutten, Blass-Franken and Martin found significant differences in the level of knowledge sharing organizational situations where trust varies. The study showed that low level of trust results in less knowledge sharing (Rutten, Blaas-Franken, & Martin, 2016). Martin (2000) indicates that the key elements of a knowledge culture are a climate of trust and openness in an environment where constant learning and experimentation are highly valued, appreciated, and supported.

3.2.2 | Communication between employees

Communication also plays an important role in knowledge transfer (Ounjian & Carne, 1987). Communication creates the space for people to work together to achieve individual or collective organizational goals (Boshoff, 2008). McEvily, Perrone, and Zaheer (2003) suggest that improvement in knowledge transfer can be achieved through the openness of communication channels, social networks, and trust.

3.2.3 | Reward

Reward is a measure of how well the organization recognizes employee performance with rewards (Janz & Prasarnphanich, 2003). Leonard-Barton (1995) points out that an organizational incentive system influences the path and the manner of knowledge circulation.

Hansen, Nohira, & Tierney, (1999) note that incentives, whether tangible or intangible, are an integral part of knowledge transfer process as they can motivate employees to share their knowledge they otherwise may hoard. Other researches also support with fact that rewards systems have positive effects on employees' knowledge transfer (Martín-Cruz, Martín-Pérez, & Trevilla-Cantero, 2009; Martín-Pérez, Martín-Cruz, & Estrada-Vaquero, 2012).

3.2.4 | Leadership

Leadership refers to the process of influencing others towards achieving some desired goals (Jong & Hartog, 2007). Kerr and Clegg (2007) see leaders as role models who may provide appropriate knowledge and network within and across boundaries and to create opportunities to transfer knowledge. The role of the upper level management to successfully run this knowledge transfer campaign is thus vital as people at the upper end make major decisions in allocating resources and time needed to coordinate knowledge management program (Von Krogh, 1998). Investigation by Donate and Sanchez de Pablo (2015) also revealed that leadership has substantial impact on knowledge transfer.

3.2.5 | Learning and development

Learning and development orientation refers to the extent to which an organization is willing to encourage its members to learn and develop themselves for long-term success (Islam, Hasan, & Rahman, 2015). Learning and development is also a process in which organizations build, supplement and organize knowledge, and develop efficiency by improving collective skills of the workforces (Fiol & Lyles, 1985). Several authors (Yang, 2007a; Jones, Herschel, & Moesel, 2003) contend that there is a relationship between learning process and knowledge transfer.

3.2.6 | Organizational socialization

Organizational socialization has been receiving attention in the mainstream management research over the past two decades, particularly in relation to research on learning and knowledge sharing in the organizations (Danielson, 2004). Organizational socialization refers to the process in which a person acquires and shares his or her knowledge, skills, and dispositions that make him or her a capable member of the organization (Brim & Wheeler, 1966). To achieve more favorable outcome of knowledge sharing, organizations should provide greater emphasis on organizational socialization (Islam, Ahmad, & Mahtab, 2010). A study by Islam et al. (2015) indicates that appropriate organizational culture creates socialization and in turn increases knowledge transfer. Socialization also brings employees together and increase their tendencies to transfer knowledge within the organizational setting.

4 | RESEARCH MODEL AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Based on the above literature review, this study aims to develop a knowledge transfer model involving five key elements of organizational culture (i.e., trust, communication between employees, reward, leadership, and learning and development), organizational socialization,

and knowledge transfer. Figure 1 presents the research model in the following manner.

Based on the above conceptual discussions and the model, the study proposes the following 10 hypotheses:

H1: *Trust has positive relationship with knowledge transfer.*

H2: *Communication between employees has positive relationship with knowledge transfer.*

H3: *Reward has positive relationship with knowledge transfer.*

H4: *Organizational leadership has positive relationship with knowledge transfer.*

H5: *Learning and development has positive relationship with knowledge transfer.*

H6: *Organizational socialization moderates the relationship between trust and knowledge transfer.*

H7: *Organizational socialization moderates the relationship between communication between employees and knowledge transfer.*

H8: *Organizational socialization moderates the relationship between reward and knowledge transfer.*

H9: *Organizational socialization moderates the relationship between leadership and knowledge transfer.*

H10: *Organizational socialization moderates the relationship between learning and development and knowledge transfer.*

5 | METHODOLOGIES

The research strategy adopted in this study was deductive in nature. By reviewing the relevant literature, the tentative theory was first derived. The hypotheses are then deduced and tested from the data collected through questionnaire survey. The population for this study consists of public organizational employees within the Government of Dubai. A structured questionnaire was used for collecting data from respondents of a range of pubic organizations including department of

FIGURE 1 Research model

health, education, transport, and trading. The questionnaire consists of six sections having measurement scales for trust, communication between employees, reward, leadership, learning and development, and organizational socialization vis-à-vis knowledge transfer. Knowledge sharing was measured using eight indicators that included four items from the study conducted by Al-Alawi et al. (2007), and four items (e.g., "senior management clearly supports the role of knowledge in our firms' success") by Gold et al. (2001). Measurement instrument for trust consisted of the first four items as employed in Al-Alawi et al. (2007) study (see table V). Similarly, identical items from the same study were also used for measuring communication between staff, and reward system aligned with knowledge sharing process. Leadership was measured using six items taking one item from each domain identified as relevant for measuring the construct by Arnold, Arad, Rhoades, and Drasgow (2000). Five factors that are identified as conducive to the learning environment (see Table 1, p. 78) in the Inkpen (1998) study were adapted and used to measure learning and development variable selected for this study. Socialization was measured using one item nominal scale based on the definition by Jones (1986). These studies confirm reliability and validity of the items under respective constructs. Pilot studies were conducted to validate these measures prior to finalizing the questionnaire.

All questionnaire items were assessed on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). Items for measures were translated into local language to ensure original meaning of the questions remains intact—experienced translators were used to rephrase questions in the local language, and then to back-translate into English for the comparison of meaning between the two contents. All questionnaire items were assessed on a 5-point Likert-type scale, and reliability was measured through Cronbach's α and exploratory factor analysis (EFA). Confirmatory factor analysis further confirmed construct validity and item reliability. Structural equation modelling was used to test hypothesized relationships, and multigroup analysis was performed to study moderating effect. Due to confidentiality issue, a complete list of employees (sampling frame) for each organization was unavailable; hence, the study is based on convenience sampling (Hair, Anderson, Babin, & Black, 2010). The self-administered questionnaires were completed by 811 employees of the government organizations in Dubai.

6 | DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Nine hundred twenty-eight questionnaires were distributed, 811 were received with an 87% response rate. From among the respondents, about 33% government employees have been working in public service for over 10 years. Around, 6% of the respondents are holding top management positions, 30% are middle-level managers, 52% are junior managers, and the remainder included other circles of 11.5%. The number of employees in the organizations varies: 14.4% of them have less than 100 employees, 12% have between 100 and 200, 8% are staffed with 201–300, 7% have 301 to 400, 5% between 401 and 500, and 54% organizations have a top strength of over 500 people. It shows that all sizes of public organizations (large-medium-small) were represented in the survey. In terms of
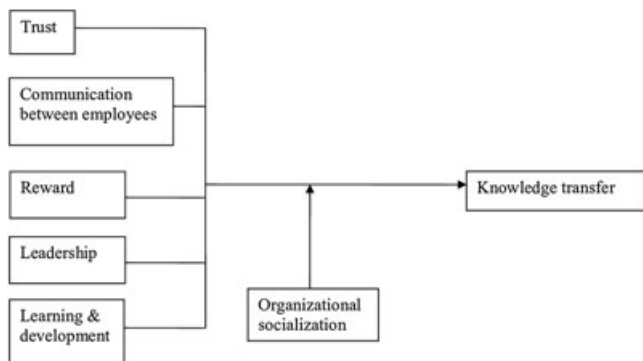
TABLE 1 Sample characteristics

Characteristic	Frequency	%
Gender*		
Male	493	60.8
Female	317	39.1
Age*		
<25	32	4.1
25–35	285	36.3
36–45	284	36.2
46–50	89	11.4
Above 50	94	12
Education level		
PhD degree	38	4.7
Master's degree	169	20.8
Bachelor degree	406	50.1
Diploma	109	13.4
A-levels	26	3.2
Others	63	7.8
Position in the organization		
Top-level manager	48	5.9
Middle-level manager	242	29.8
Lower level manager	428	52.8
Others	93	11.5
Number of employees in the organization*		
Less than 100	117	14.4
100–200	94	11.6
201–300	65	8
301–400	60	7.4
401–500	39	4.8
Above 500	424	54
Number of years working		
Less than 2 years	212	26.1
2–4 years	116	14.3
5–7 years	91	11.2
8–10 years	128	15.8
More than 10 years	264	32.6

Note. N = 811; variables with asterisk do not correspond to the total number (N) due to missing data.

educational attainment and age, there is a typical mix of backgrounds. In terms of education, for example, only a few (5%) have the top qualification, Master's (21%), Bachelor's degree (50%), Diploma certificate (13%), Advanced levels (3%), and others 8%. Table 1 details other demographic characteristics including gender, age, position, organization, size and length of service.

6.1 | Data normality and multivariate assumptions

Complete data screening was done to identify missing values and extreme responses. A careful evaluation revealed a number of cases with extreme values representing consistent pattern throughout the completed questionnaire (e.g., either a high or low value on a Likert scale). In this regard, standard deviation of all the items for each respondent was measured and cases with zero variance were deleted

—visual inspection of the data also confirmed respondents' such unengaging behavior. Missing values were identified and eliminated from the data set. Scatter-dot diagram was used to identify influential respondents, and no major outliers were detected—outliers were assessed using Cook's distance measure, and none of them were above the threshold of 1 (Zou & Lee, 2008). No multicollinearity was detected as Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) (<3), and tolerance level (>.1) fell within the acceptable range (Kamukama, Ahiauzu, & Ntayi, 2011). Skewness and kurtosis of all the items in the dataset were all acceptable—skewness ranged between −.22 and .12, whereas kurtosis lay between −.19 and .75 (Kline, 2011). Finally, responses from 811 respondents were restored and saved for further data analysis.

6.2 | EFA and measurement model Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Measurement scales as recommended were derived from the past research (Malhotra, 2003) and assessed using both exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis techniques. In order to check data dimensionality, scale items for each construct were subjected to EFA—29 items relevant with six corresponding constructs were submitted to confirm if items within each category corresponds to the single underlying factor that they intended to measure—organizational socialization was measured using categorical scale hence, not submitted for EFA. The principal component analysis extraction method was used for EFA, and factor loadings were generated using Varimax rotation method. Based on the most common rule, eigenvalues greater than 1 was set for number of factors to be identified and qualified as separate constructs (Zikmund & Babin, 2007). Five distinctive constructs were identified with few items loading low, and cross loading with other constructs. Items of "learning and development" construct cross-loaded heavily with knowledge transfer and few other identified factors—EFA with few removed items also failed to identify it as a distinct concept. Careful evaluation suggests that in the context of UAE, items under this construct had similar connotations with others hence generating similar interpretations by the respondents. To avoid possible correlation of error terms with independent constructs when structural model is run, the construct was dropped and the model is respecified. First, the respecification is done on the assumption that the parameters in the model like previous studies (e.g., Al-Alawi et al., 2007) despite the inclusion of this variable still provides meaningful interpretation of the factors that are assumed to impact knowledge transfer within organizational settings. Second, it is justified from statistical point of view as the new model may generate better model fit due to the omission of a variable such as "learning and development," which may produce significant problem in making inferences (Jöreskog, 1993). This study therefore excludes "learning and development" construct from the theoretical model and performs subsequent analysis without this variable.

All lowly loaded (<.50) and cross-loaded items were dropped (nine items) and resubmitted for further EFA (Garver & Mentzer, 1999). Finally, 20 items identified a five-factor model with no cross and low loading items explaining 79% of the variance. Table 2 shows that all finally retained items for each variable—learning and development variable was dropped; hence, it is not shown in the table. A Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin

TABLE 2 Exploratory factor analysis and reliability

Items	Cronbach α	Loadings	Eigenvalue	Factor	Extraction	%Explained
Leader17_1	.960	0.930	9.255	1	0.829	46.273
Leader17_2		0.948			0.864	
Leader17_3		0.884			0.852	
Leader17_4		0.927			0.869	
Leader17_5		0.962			0.860	
Leader17_6		0.771			0.740	
Know_20_1	.929	0.685	2.101	2	0.680	56.776
Know_20_2		0.874			0.835	
Know_20_3		0.894			0.723	
Know_20_4		0.932			0.848	
Know_20_5		0.911			0.832	
Rew_16_2	.906	0.929	1.963	3	0.902	66.593
Rew_16_3		0.938			0.918	
Rew_16_4		0.886			0.725	
Comm_15_2	.875	0.930	1.285	4	0.813	73.017
Comm_15_3		0.863			0.791	
Comm_15_4		0.897			0.809	
Trust_13_3	.715	0.596	1.241	5	0.540	79.222
Trust_13_4		0.835			0.734	
Trust_13_5		0.897			0.681	

Note. %Explained = variance explained; Leader = leadership; Know = knowledge transfer; Rew = reward; Comm = communication between employees; Trust = trust between employees.

test measure of.931 (sig.000) satisfied sampling adequacy test—no extractions under communalities were below .30 (Field, 2005). High loadings (>.50) between items of the same construct in the model showed convergent validity while no cross loading confirmed discriminant validity (Dinev & Hart, 2004). Cronbach's α for all the items were found to be above.70 indicating internal consistency (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Exploratory and factor analysis outputs are shown in Table 2.

Reliability and validity of the measurement model was checked. Confirmatory factor analysis showed high loadings (≥.70) between items and each latent construct (convergent validity), and no significant correlations (>.80) between constructs were visible (discriminant validity). Composite reliability index (CR > .70) of each construct also confirms reliability, convergent validity is achieved with average variance extracted scores of >.50, and discriminant validity is evidenced because square root of average variance extracted of each construct did not exceed the correlation coefficient between that and other relevant constructs (Jiang, Klein, & Crampton, 2000). Table 3 shows validity and reliability statistics of the measurement model.

Researchers use an array of indicators to assess model fit (Schreiber, Nora, Stage, Barlow, & King, 2006). Absolute and incremental fit indices (Hu & Bentler, 1998) along with goodness-of-fit indices (GFIs) are most common in practice (Schreiber et al., 2006). All these fit indices, if within the range, indicate that the data support the model well. Researchers recommend GFI and adjusted goodness-of-fit index

(AGFI) value to be above 0.90, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) <0.08, and comparative fit index (CFI) >.0.90 (Byrne, 2001). The measurement model achieved overall model fit with CMIN/DF of (2.481) and significance level at.000. Although a chi-square value is significant in this study, which reflects poor model fit, researchers consider these measures as acceptable as long as relative /normed chi-square (x^2/df) does not exceed 5.0. Large sample size may contribute to inflated chi-square value, and hence, this study will rely on (x^2/df)for model fit assessments (McIntosh, 2006). Other goodness-of-fit measures indicated good match between hypothetical and observed model with GFI (.953); AGFI (.938); CFI (.983); RMSEA (.043; Hu & Bentler, 1999).

Configural and metric invariance tests were also conducted to assess models' applicability in the multigroup analysis as hypotheses suggest. Configural invariance assumes factor structure is the same for each group whereas metric invariance indicates factor coefficient equivalence across groups—criteria that need to be met before testing any moderating hypothesis by a grouping variable. A freely estimated model with two groups (organizational socialization—high/low) generated adequate model fit with standardized root mean square residual (SRMR .0368), RMSEA (.029), and CFI (.979) confirming configural invariance. The freely estimated model was then compared with a fully constrained model keeping all the item loadings equal across each corresponding constructs between the two groups. The

TABLE 3 Validity and reliability statistics (measurement model)

	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	Lead.	Know.	Reward.	Comm.	Trust
Leadership	0.960	0.801	0.523	0.963	**0.895**				
Knowledge	0.930	0.728	0.523	0.977	0.723	**0.853**			
Reward	0.916	0.789	0.203	0.989	0.350	0.450	**0.888**		
Communication	0.875	0.701	0.151	0.990	0.370	0.389	0.217	**0.837**	
Trust	0.724	0.510	0.356	0.990	0.597	0.582	0.278	0.356	**0.686**

Note: CR = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted; MSV = maximum shared variance; MaxR = maximum reliability. The bold emphases are used so that readers can visually locate the square root of average variance extracted values.

chi-square difference test produced a change in the chi-square (ΔX^2 30.628) value and degrees of freedom (Δdf 20) between the two models, which established metric invariance with a p value at .06.

6.3 | Structural model

Hypotheses in the current study were tested using maximum likelihood estimation with structural equation modelling using AMOS version 21. Model fit was examined to ensure that it meets all the criteria for running Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) analysis (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998). Fit indices indicate good model fit of the structural model. The CMIN/DF ratio of 2.4 81 indicates satisfactory fit (Byrne, 2004; Colom, Rebollo, Palacios, Juan-Espinosa, & Kyllonen, 2004). RMSEA (.043) as a measure of discrepancy between the model and data per degree of freedom is also well below the threshold of <.08, indicating good fit (Colom et al., 2004; Hair, Bush, & Ortinau, 2006). The CFI (.983) indicating comparative fit of the model as the value is close to desirable 1 (McDonald & Marsh, 1990). CFI of .970 fulfills the restrictive criteria ≥.950 set by Hu and Bentler (1999), indicating a robust fit of the model (Byrne, 2008). SRMR indicates acceptable fit when the value is <.08 (Hu & Bentler, 1999), and for the current model, a value of .035 is considered satisfactory (Cooper, Gomez, & Aucote, 2007). As noted, although chi-square p value <.05 indicates poor fit of the model, CMIN/DF of 2.481 explains that the predicted model is not very different from observed data as it meets the threshold set for this study. Despite the propensity of GFI and AGFI to get affected by the sample size, current model generated values of .953 (GFI) and .983 (AGFI), which is considered as an acceptable fit as it exceeds the threshold of.90 (Colom et al., 2004). Overall results suggest that there is a satisfactory fit of the observed data with the predicted model.

As depicted in Figure 2, all paths between leadership, communication, reward, trust, and knowledge transfer are found significant at 95% confidence level. Although leadership has the strongest effect (β = .504, p = .000) on knowledge transfer, communication between employees although identified as an important contributor, its effect is seen very weak (β = .090, p = .002). The influence of reward and trust are also significant with standard regression coefficients of .201 (p = .000) and.193 (p = .000), respectively. Output of the SEM model is shown in Table 4. Findings from this study correspond to the previous research results, and such consistencies establish validity of the outcome of this research. The impact of leadership on knowledge transfer is evidenced in the study conducted by Yang (2007b). Communication (Ridder, 2004) and reward (Simonin, 2004) also played a major role in motivating people to share information and skills with other members in the organizations. Previous studies also suggest that exchange of job-related information involves transfer of intellectual assets, which often requires trustworthy environment and partners (Szulanski, Capetta, & Jensen, 2004).

The moderating role of the proposed hypotheses was investigated using multigroup analysis using AMOS. Models for high/low
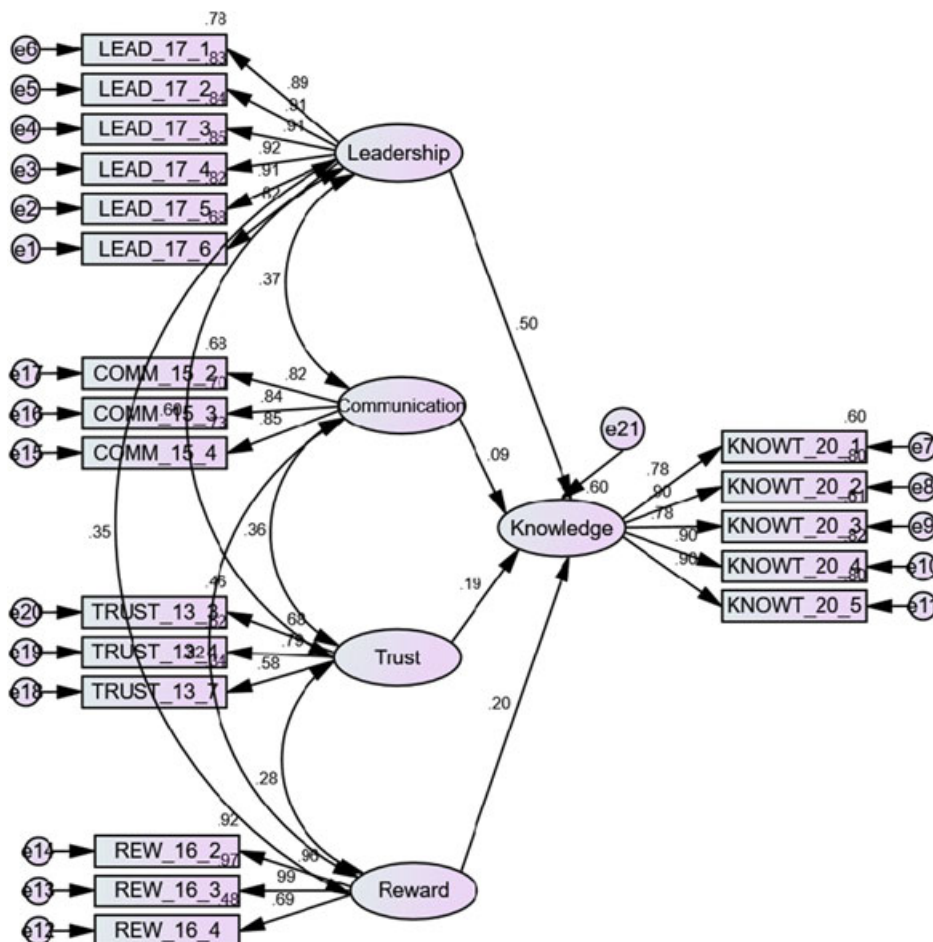

FIGURE 2 Structural model—regression coefficients, item loadings, and variance explained

TABLE 4 Standard estimates of the main model

				Estimate	SE	CR	p values	Hypothesis
H1	Knowledge	←	Leadership	.504	.029	12.63	.000	Supported
H2	Knowledge	←	Commu.	.090	.026	3.054	.002	Supported
H3	Knowledge	←	Reward	.201	.025	7.088	.000	Supported
H4	Knowledge	←	Trust	.193	.046	4.734	.000	Supported

Note: Knowledge = Knowledge Transfer; Commu. = Communication between employees; SE = Standard Error; CR = Critical Ratio

organization socialization groups were run separately. Both the model fitted the data reasonably well—structural model was then run simultaneously for two groups. Comparisons were then made between the two groups using nested models where first, the model was run simultaneously (unconstrained model). Second, the unconstrained model was compared against constrained measurement weight model where all the structural paths and factor loadings were constrained to be equal. This was to check whether the two groups are equal in the hypothesized relationships between variables—chi-square difference test was conducted, and chi-square value and degrees of freedom statistics were used to assess invariance (Byrne, 2004). The unconstrained and fully constrained model in this study showed that models are not invariant. Thus, chi-square difference ($\Delta\chi^2$ = 43.602) and changes in the degrees of freedom (Δdf = 15) suggested possible differences in the hypothesized paths across two groups (p = .000). Tables 5 and 6 shows relevant fit and test statistics for the unconstrained and constrained model for two groups.

Third, path-by-path analysis was done setting one particular path of the unconstrained model equal between two groups while letting rest of the paths interact freely—as before, difference in any one path between two groups was identified using chi-square difference, degrees of freedom, and p value statistics. The method continued for testing all the hypothesized paths between the respective independent and dependent variables of this study (Floh & Treiblmaier, 2006). Because testing equality of error variances across groups are considered excessively stringent, the current model was not subjected to error covariances equality (Byrne, 2001). Table 7 shows a comparison of standard estimates and standard errors between unconstrained model and the model in which each path was constrained to equal.

6.4 | Confidence level and moderating effect of organizational socialization

Statistical significance serves as a basis for rejecting or not rejecting a phenomenon and subsequently drawing important conclusions, yet it can often obscure findings without offering any insights and

TABLE 6 Invariance test statistics—Unconstrained and fully constrained model (high/low socialization group)

	Chi-square	Degrees of freedom
Unconstrained model	539.372	320
Fully constrained model	582.974	335
Change	$\Delta\chi^2$ 43.602	Δdf 15
p value	.000	
	Models are different	

Note. Significant at 0.05 level.

adding little to our knowledge. As for example, a p value of around .05 (95% confidence level) may prompt a researcher to either reject or not reject the null hypothesis by creating confusions and suggesting another experiment to validate the result. (Fisher, 1973). Although researchers consider p value as to be an important yardstick, they also suggest interpreting relationships between variables based on its context and not focusing solely on the chance factor (Batterham & Hopkins, 2006; Cohen, 1990; Sterne & Smith, 2001).

In this context, it is safe to assume that a choice between 90% or 95% does not seem to be a problem if alternative evaluations are put into effect. Using 90% confidence level may not be the conventional method for hypothesis testing, but it should not be considered as a proxy for errors, and findings can still be interpreted based on its relevance, utility (Cohen, 1990; Sterne & Smith, 2001), context of the research, and other available evidences (Batterham & Hopkins, 2006). In fact, literature suggests using a 90% instead of 95% confidence level (Batterham & Hopkins, 2006; Cumming & Finch, 2005) and urges not to describe group differences based on its statistical significance (Sterne & Smith, 2001). According to Fisher (1973), the founder of the idea of significance testing, interpretations of p value largely lie with the researcher; confusing findings can always be validated with future research. Current study to understand the moderating effect of organizational socialization employed a 90% confidence level for hypothesis testing.

TABLE 5 Model fit statistics—Unconstrained and constrained model (high/low socialization group)

	Unconstrained model (high/low)	Constrained model (high/low)
CMIN/DF	1.686	1.746
RMSEA	0.029	0.034
CFI	0.979	0.977
GFI	0.938	0.933
AGFI	0.919	0.916

Note. CMIN/DF = normed chi-square; RMSEA = root mean square error approximation; CFI = comparative fit index; GFI = goodness of fit index; AGFI = adjusted goodness-of-fit index.

TABLE 7 Standard estimates and standard error—Unconstrained and constrained model (high/low socialization group)

Estimates Unconstrained lmodel							Estimates Constrained model			
High social	SE	Low social	SE	Constrained equal path			High social	SE	Low social	SE
0.459	0.029	0.434	0.042	Lead.	= =>	Knowledge	0.492	0.024	0.378	0.024
0.042	0.023	0.096	0.031	Comm.	= =>	Knowledge	0.073	0.019	0.055	0.019
0.219	0.025	0.201	0.031	Reward	= =>	Knowledge	0.233	0.020	0.183	0.020
0.077	0.030	0.183	0.055	Trust	= =>	Knowledge	0.127	0.027	0.088	0.027

Note. High social = high socialization group; low social = low socialization group; Knowledge = knowledge transfer; Comm. = communication between employees; Trust = trust within employees; Lead. = leadership; SE = standard error.

The moderating impact of socialization is visible in all but one path in the structural model. As depicted in Table 8, the influence of leadership on knowledge transfer is found significantly different among high/low socialization groups—a chi-square change of 2.719 with a p value of. 099 resulted in the rejection of null hypothesis suggesting statistical difference between groups at a. 10 level. Employee commitment and their effort to transfer knowledge was not also similar for employees who tend to socialize more than the others ($\Delta\chi2$ = 3.719, p = .054). Similarly, the effect of trust on knowledge transfer although found significant, it is however evidenced that the effect varied between employees with high and low need for socialization ($\Delta\chi2$ = 3.345, p = .067). In the contrary, moderating role of socialization on the relationship between reward and knowledge transfer is found not significant ($\Delta\chi2$ = .299, p = .585).

7 | DISCUSSION

The study strongly supports the notion of leadership skill and its effect on knowledge transfer process, and the effect is quite strong. As evidenced in the literature, this study also confirms the effect of reward, communication between employees, and trust as significant predictors of knowledge transfer process. However, the moderating role of socialization in the hypothesized relationship between variables may draw readers' attention. It seems that unless an organization encourages members to act like a social unit, it is difficult to ensure transfer of knowledge between employees. Exchange of information happens between two parties when they go along together or at the minimum do interaction periodically to achieve organizational objectives.

The idea that leadership, trust, communication, and reward affect employee's willingness to transfer knowledge may get affected by the influence of the identified moderating variable of this study—extent to which members socialize with each other. The study shows that the employees in the Government of Dubai are not similar in their effort of socializing with their peers, and as a result and according to the theory, the relationship between leadership and knowledge transfer varied significantly between groups with high and low need for socialization. The impact of socialization on the relationship between trust, communication, and knowledge transfer as evidenced in the literature also holds true in the current context where employees showed differences in their degree of socialization and its effect on the corresponding dependent variable. Based on the findings of this study, organizations need to encourage employees to socialize more to enhance their communication at work, build trust between employees, and create environment for leaders to guide people setting examples. It may be argued that employees across all levels of socializing groups agree with the effectiveness of reward on their organizational performances in terms of knowledge transfer. Employees may or may not feel the need for socializing, or it may be the case that members may differ in their perceptions about the positive role of leadership, level of communication, and trust, but it is possible to boost their knowledge sharing behavior by providing the right reward—the case of Dubai is perhaps a demonstration of that fact. It is also logical to assume that socialization may be a strong motivator of knowledge transfer, but perhaps the influence on human behavior may vary depending on the demographic and psychographic profile of a person. In the case that some people due to their unique characteristics may not socialize well, managers can use reward as a remedy to enhance their performances in sharing knowledge with others.

The extent to which members within the organizational setting socialize with each other is one of the important determinants of the knowledge sharing process (Bender & Fish, 2000; Lawson, Petersen, Cousins, & Handfield, 2009). A study conducted on a construction and architectural engineering consultancy firm in Dubai also revealed the positive effect of socialization on the knowledge transfer behavior (Arif, Egbu, Alom, & Khalfan, 2009). Based on the evidence, it can be expected that employees of the government organizations in Dubai show likewise behaviors in their effort to socialize with others. Given

TABLE 8 Hypothesized relationship—Moderating role of socialization

Constrained equal path			Chi-square			Degrees of freedom				
			U. Model	C. Model	$\Delta\chi^2$	U. Model	C. Model	Δdf	p value	Decision
Leadership	➔	Knowledge	539.372	542.091	2.719	320	321	1	.099	Supported
Comm.	➔	Knowledge	539.372	543.091	3.719	320	321	1	.054	Supported
Reward	➔	Knowledge	539.372	539.671	0.299	320	321	1	.585	Not supported
Trust	➔	Knowledge	539.372	542.717	3.345	320	321	1	.067	Supported

Note. Chi-square difference test at 90% confidence-level (significant at 0.10 level); U. Model = unconstrained model; C. Model = constrained model; Comm. = communication between employees; Knowledge = knowledge transfer.

the fact that socialization is important in the knowledge transfer process and that evidences from the past literature are in line with such assumption, it is important that public organizations in Dubai also feel the importance of creating positive environment for employees to interact with each other for possible dissemination of information—current study provides support for this notion on a 90% confidence level. Authors of this study would like to take the opportunity of inviting researchers to delve into this matter further by showing a possible effect of socialization instead of rejecting hypotheses using 95% confidence level. Although with 10% significance level, there are possibilities of rejecting the null hypotheses when they are true, authors of this study are hopeful in attracting inquisitive minds to discover the extent of making such error.

The study is also subject to some limitations. Like many other countries, organizational behavior of employees in a country such as Dubai may get influenced by its unique cultural factors. This study did not identify all factors that may have other impacts on the hypothesized relationships between identified variables. The variables that are used to measure employee responses may also produce social desirability effect. Hence, common method bias should have assessed to generate more concrete findings. The moderation effect was measured using chi-square difference test using 90% confidence level— researchers should follow caution in interpreting findings from this research accordingly. It is recommended that future research address all these issues and compare findings of this study to validate results and to better understand the effect of the identified variables in the conceptual model.

8 | IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The findings of the study could be useful to public sector managers in formulating and implementing knowledge transfer strategies in their organizations. This study reveals that organizational cultural elements such as leadership, trust, reward, and communication between employees play an important role in transferring knowledge between employees. Although the impact of all these independent variables is significant, it is important to notice that the moderating impact of socialization is also visible except for the relationship between reward and knowledge sharing process. Managers can work on promoting the right environment for employee socialization as the variable was found to create moderating impacts and contribute to knowledge transfer process. However, the moderating effect of socialization in the relationship between reward and knowledge transfer deviates from the norm. The context of the study may be suggestive of this unexpected finding that requires some explanation.

Employees in the public organizations in Dubai are influenced by reward in their effort to transfer knowledge to other employees. Like in many other culture, this may also be true in the current context; however, the findings reveal that motivation for knowledge transfer, guided through the reward aspect, does not make a difference among high/low socialization groups. This means that regardless of the extent of socialization by the employees, they all value the importance of reward factor in their contributions to effectively pass knowledge to their colleagues when needed. This further shed light on the

importance to understand the cultural variation that may result from the unique situation of this country—equal employee response to the reward factor regardless of the psychographic differences (i.e., extent of socialization). Managers can focus on offering rewards to boost knowledge transfer process without giving much attention to the behavioral differences that may exist among people in the current setting. Overall, findings of this study underscore the importance of the public organizations taking into account organizational culture and socialization for ensuring knowledge transfer and strongly suggest taking proactive approach to encourage employee participation in that endeavor. To utilize the findings generated from this research, it can be suggested that public organizations should create supportive culture and promote environment for socialization as conditions for knowledge transfer.

9 | CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has revealed different literal constructs to comprehend the importance of knowledge transfer in the public sector in Dubai. The study finds that four cultural elements, finally selected as independent variables for this study, have positive correlation with knowledge transfer. This finding implies that the core organizational cultural values such as trust, communication between employees, reward, leadership, and organizational socialization are important catalysts in transferring knowledge within the Government employees of Dubai. To sustain and strengthen this relationship between cultural values and knowledge transfer, the policymakers and organizational leaders in the Government of Dubai may take an understanding of this knowledge enrichment process in reviewing their future knowledge management policies and strategies. However, like other studies, this research also has limitations. First, this study is only based on the public sector employees in Dubai, and findings cannot be generalized to other cultures and countries. To overcome this limitation, the construct used in this study could be investigated in other cultures and countries. Second, the study only employed organizational culture as independent variable, without shedding light on other independent variables that may have relevance in this context. Future research can identify those factors and incorporate them in the model.

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