

# The Perception of Managers on Public Servants' Resistance Impact on the Implementation and Success of Outsourcing Initiatives

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## ABSTRACT

Governments worldwide increasingly adopt outsourcing to enhance efficiency and improve service delivery. In the United Arab Emirates (UAE), federal authorities have actively pursued outsourcing alongside Emiratization policies aimed at increasing national workforce participation. However, the coexistence of these strategies has created organizational challenges, particularly in relation to public servants' resistance to outsourcing initiatives. Despite the strategic importance of outsourcing, limited research has examined how such resistance influences its implementation and outcomes within the UAE public sector. This study aims to explore managers' perceptions of public servants' resistance and its impact on the implementation and success of outsourcing initiatives in UAE federal government organizations. Adopting a qualitative research design, the study draws on in-depth interviews with managers involved in outsourcing processes to examine the sources, dynamics, and consequences of employee resistance. The findings reveal that addressing resistance requires a comprehensive and integrated change management approach. Key themes emerging from the thematic analysis include transparent communication, employee participation, training and skill development, leadership and organizational support, cultural transformation, employee buy-in, and gradual implementation. Transparent communication was identified as critical in reducing uncertainty, addressing job security concerns, and building trust. Involving employees in decision-making processes enhanced their sense of ownership and alignment with organizational goals. Training and upskilling initiatives were found to mitigate fears of displacement by demonstrating organizational commitment to employee development. Furthermore, strong leadership support and a culture of inclusion and collaboration were essential in fostering openness and reducing resistance. Aligning employees with strategic objectives and ensuring their concerns are addressed contributed to securing their buy-in, while structured and gradual implementation supported smoother transitions. By highlighting the interplay between public servant resistance and outsourcing outcomes, this study contributes to addressing a gap in the literature on public sector outsourcing in the UAE. It also proposes a conceptual framework that links resistance management practices to outsourcing success, offering practical insights for policymakers and government organizations seeking to balance Emiratization goals with effective outsourcing strategies. The study recognizes its primary limitation in focusing solely on managerial perspectives, with interviews concentrated in IT and HR departments, and suggests future research should incorporate broader departmental representation and direct public servant input for a more holistic understanding. The conceptual framework proposed is grounded in change management and resistance theory, visually summarized to support practical application.

**Keywords:** Emiratizations, Outsourcing, Public Servant Resistance, Managers' perception

## INTRODUCTION

Emiratization is a government program in the UAE that aims to increase the number of national workers in government and private organizations (Bocanet, A., & Grassa, 2023). It was first introduced in the 1980s (Karam et al., 2023). It all started 50 years ago, with oil exploration in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region. To deal with the boom and development that accompanied oil exploration, employers were permitted to hire expats without government approval. This choice was also made due to a dearth of skilled local workforce in the nation. However, the number of native skilled workers in the UAE has grown, but reliance on expats continues to climb (Al-Waqfi & Forstenlechner, 2010; Alawad, 2024). UAE residents prefer to work in the government sector rather

than the private sector; these workers are known as public servant employees since the public sector is less onerous and more flexible, with higher pay and more public holidays (Al Murshidia & Al Riyami, 2020). Public servants are those who work for government agencies or departments and are in charge of carrying out different tasks and obligations for the public good. The public services must include the federal and state general public services, the joint public services, the education service, the judicial and legal service, and the military forces. These personnel play a critical role in ensuring that government operations run smoothly and that residents receive needed services. Public servants operate in a variety of fields, from firemen and police officers to teachers and healthcare professionals, and they make major contributions to a country's general well-being and progress (Lyons, 2006).

While this study examines the perceptions of managers in relation to public servants' resistance, it is important to note the absence of direct input from public servants themselves. This focus, while providing valuable insights into managerial strategies and institutional approaches, represents a limitation in capturing the full spectrum of resistance dynamics. Future research should seek to triangulate these findings with the experiences and perspectives of public servants, as their voices are critical to understanding and addressing resistance in practice.

The sample for this research was drawn primarily from IT and HR departments, as these areas are most impacted by outsourcing decisions in the UAE federal sector. However, this focus may not fully represent perspectives across all departments, and further studies are needed to validate and expand upon these findings.

Furthermore, most commercial businesses cannot provide the same perks as the public sector, hence the majority of individuals opt to work as public servants in the Middle East (Albloushi, 2015). The UAE federal government wanted to achieve success by helping UAE citizens (Emiratis) to accomplish economic growth in its vision for 2021, titled "Building a Competitive Knowledge Economy" as part of the national priorities. To measure this success, the UAE has established performance metrics that include the Emiratization rate in the private sector as well as the percentage of UAE nationals in the workforce. At this moment, the importance of outsourcing has grown, and the number of government institutions that rely on it has climbed dramatically. According to a 2016 study, the Emiratization rate in the private sector was 3.38%, with UAE citizens accounting for 7.19% of the workforce (UAE Government Portal, 2022).

Since 2006, a study by the Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research has emphasized the UAE's support for the private sector as a key factor in national growth. This assistance might be provided by increased outsourcing of Emirati labor, under the caveat that the Emiratization outsourcing plan affects the function of public servant personnel. Its goal is to leverage mature nations' private sector knowledge to promote economic growth (Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, 2006). It is clear that the UAE community benefited from the Emiratization outsourcing approach in the business sector (Al Ameri and Al Ameri, 2018). According to the Emiratization plan, the UAE federal government will successfully shift 65% of federal government employment to local people by 2020 (Jamal). The Emiratization strategy intends to increase Emiratization in administration and assistant administration posts by 10% per year, reaching 90% in five years (Emiratization Indicators in the Federal Government Are Running on Target, 2020). However, public workers' perceptions of these programs remain uncertain. Because public servants work for the government and citizens, their perception and attitude toward outsourcing in the UAE was expected to be positive in comparison to those in the private sector, but this may not be the case; for example, Oliveira et al. (2019) discovered that job satisfaction among outsourced workers was significantly higher than that of public servants.

While outsourcing can be beneficial, it also has some disadvantages. Outsourcing may have an influence on present employees' motivation, performance, and job security, as well as cause misunderstanding and uncertainty (Al Shahab, 2019). It may also result in job losses or employee reluctance (Seroka-Stolka & Dagmara, 2015). Winning or losing is how legacy employees would feel as a result of outsourcing (Edwin & Ohaegbu, 2015). For example, in the United States, outsourcing has influenced employees, which may result in the failure of outsourcing contracts since trust must be created between corporations and employees (Tolbert, 2017). Another example from a case study in Pakistan, where outsourcing failed, demonstrates that ethics, labor relations, and fair treatment are significantly better before outsourcing than after it. (Asghar et al. 2016). As a result, employee and management attitudes are the most significant aspects of outsourcing (Edwin and Ohaegbu, 2015). As the

engagement of the staff, governance, lack of accountability, and resources may affect the outsourcing outcome (Rajack, 2019). However, to the present, the perception of public servants in the UAE remains unreported or explored in the literature which require an in-depth analysis to understand why public servants may resist the Emiratisation outsourcing strategy.

The core aim of this study is to deepen understanding of public servant resistance to outsourcing from the perspective of managers in government organizations, and to elucidate why such resistance is critical in the context of Emiratisation policy. To begin, understanding how the public sees these persons is critical for evaluating the efficacy of Emiratisation policies and services. It sheds light on the public sector's strengths and flaws, helping policymakers to make more informed decisions and execute essential adjustments. Additionally, studying public perception and resistance helps in gauging the level of trust and confidence citizens have in their government, which is crucial for maintaining social stability and fostering a positive relationship between the public and public servants. Finally, analyzing public servant perceptions and opposition to outsourcing strategies contributes to a more transparent and responsible public sector, resulting in better governance and, eventually, a stronger and more successful society. To that end, the aim of this study is to explore the perception of managers on public servants' resistance impact on the implementation and success of outsourcing initiatives.

### **The Impact of Emiratisation Outsourcing**

The UAE has been implementing an Emiratisation policy for over a decade during this time the effectiveness of the policy and its challenges have been discussed on various platforms by the stakeholders (Reddy & Kota, 2019). The association between Emiratisation and outsourcing in federal organizations in the UAE could not be denied. An example of an outsourcing initiative in UAE is when a minister of the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation in 2019 highlighted that outsourcing the ministry's services to be provided through the private sector is one of the most important strategic paths of the ministry, which aims to enhance employment opportunities for citizens within a set of policies and programs aimed at promoting the acceleration of the pace of Emiratisation. In 2017, The Federal Authority for Human Resources (FAHR) published its strategic plan for 2017-2021. A part of the second strategic objective is "Foreseeing Emiratisation Challenges and setting suitable futuristic programs" by "Following up with the Recruitment plans in the Federal Government" (Strategy of the Federal Authority for Government Human Resources (FAHR) 2017-2021, 2017, p. 10). In addition, FAHR directs federal organizations to set an Emiratisation plan for all specialty jobs for five to ten years. It also included directions to stop recruiting non-local individuals in supervisory, administrative, and support service jobs through outsourcing in private companies in UAE. The federal government in UAE has worked on the Emiratisation policy for years, which has resulted in an increase in the number of local employees in federal government organizations from 53% to 65% in the last eight years. In addition, outsourcing is officially becoming a practice within the federal government to reduce the number of ministries or have a smaller number of ministries. At the same time, there is a big difference between local and non-local salaries in the federal government. Salaries in government jobs are multiple times higher than those for similar jobs in the private sector. The UAE government needs to create a balance between government and private-sector jobs in terms of features so that UAE nationals can consider joining the private sector. However, the UAE government employs locals as an essential policy to maintain the relationship between the welfare of rulers, locals, and citizens.

### **Employees' Resistance Towards Outsourcing**

The reasons for opposition to outsourcing vary widely depending on the individual and the circumstances around the outsourcing choice. The fear of job loss or displacement is a typical motivator for opposition. Employees may be concerned that their employment will be terminated or that they will be compelled to accept new responsibilities with less job security or lower compensation. Employees may also be concerned about how outsourcing would affect their work environment and job satisfaction. They may be concerned that outsourcing may result in increasing workloads, worse morale, and a lack of collegiality among coworkers (Iannuzzi & Sacchetto, 2022). For example, if a corporation plans to outsource its customer service department, employees may object owing to the possibility of layoffs and job instability. They may also be concerned about the quality of service offered by an outsourced workforce, as well as the impact on their client relationships.

Overall, the fear of outsourcing might cause employees to feel confused and uneasy. Employees who are concerned about the future of their careers may be less productive and engaged at work. In such circumstances, employees may begin exploring for alternative job possibilities in order to ensure their future employment. Companies must address these issues and speak freely with their employees in order to reduce worries and develop confidence in the outsourcing process.

Employees who are concerned about outsourcing may sense a lack of commitment to their employer, as their employment might be easily replaced by workers in other nations. This lack of job security can lead to feelings of instability and uncertainty, lowering staff morale and loyalty. The worry of losing their employment can also lead to increased stress and anxiety, affecting their general well-being and effectiveness at work. Employers must stress openness and open communication in order to develop a sense of confidence and support among their employees throughout outsourcing choices. By addressing these issues and giving reassurance, businesses may help employees feel appreciated and safe in their employment, eventually increasing productivity and retention. Employees who feel comfortable in their roles and understand the rationale for outsourcing decisions are more likely to stay dedicated and engaged with their work. This sense of consistency may lead to a more favorable work atmosphere and higher morale, enhancing the organization's overall performance. Employers may establish a stronger and more resilient workforce by communicating openly and honestly with workers about outsourcing and its influence on their responsibilities (Aragão et al., 2022).

One of the primary reasons why workers choose to outsource is the potential cost savings. Companies may typically cut overhead expenditures while increasing profitability by outsourcing specific services or functions. Outsourcing also allows firms to have access to specific talents or experience that would otherwise be unavailable in-house. This can lead to increased efficiency and production, which benefits the entire business (Souza & Lemos, 2016). However, businesses must explicitly convey these reasons to employees in order to retain confidence and openness during the outsourcing process. Employees might feel more at ease with the changes being implemented if the benefits of outsourcing are explained to them.

This open communication can help soothe workers' anxieties or anxiety about their employment being jeopardized. Finally, when done correctly, outsourcing may be a strategic decision that improves both the company's financial line and its overall performance. Employers must explain that outsourcing is not a reflection of employee performance, but rather a strategic business choice designed to improve efficiency and competitiveness. Employers that are open about the reasons for outsourcing can foster a greater feeling of trust and collaboration inside the firm. This can lead to a smoother transition and help employees see the bigger picture of how outsourcing can contribute to the company's long-term success. Ultimately, open communication and understanding can pave the way for a successful outsourcing strategy that benefits both the company and its employees. More arguments are provided in the literature listed below. Understanding and properly addressing these factors may help firms manage the transition to outsourcing more efficiently, avoiding disruption and maintaining a healthy work environment.

### **Managers' Perception towards Resistance Behavior & Attitude**

How managers see outsourcing has a direct impact on how they manage resistance. Managers may minimize negative behaviors such as poor morale and unwillingness to change by managing the issue effectively through communication, trust building, and change management. Managers may assist employees understand the rationale for outsourcing and relieve job security concerns by encouraging open and transparent communication channels. Building trust by providing regular updates and involving staff in decision-making may also assist to reduce resistance and boost team buy-in. Implementing change management practices, such as offering training and assistance to staff moving to new jobs, can help to smooth the process and guarantee a successful outsourcing venture. Finally, by tackling resistant behaviors and attitudes head on, managers may create a more smooth and good outsourcing experience for all parties involved.

The framework stresses the critical role that managers have in influencing the success of outsourcing. It emphasizes how managers' attitudes on outsourcing, particularly their perspectives on collaboration, trust-building, and change management, have a direct impact on how workers respond to outsourcing projects. By exploring how managers can overcome employee resistance through strategies such as clear communication,

employee involvement, and providing training, the framework addresses the pressing issues that managers face when managing outsourcing transitions. This is closely related to the necessity for good managerial participation to ensure that work quality stays high throughout the process. The framework also points out the importance of strong leadership in guiding the cultural shift required for outsourcing to succeed. The framework examines the role of managers in building a culture of cooperation and openness, highlighting how management attitudes influence outsourcing success in terms of work quality and efficiency. Thus, the framework gives a thorough explanation of how managers' views and attitudes influence outsourcing success, which is consistent with the study's second purpose.

Managers with a good impression of outsourcing are more likely to develop and implement successful resistance-reduction tactics. For example, they will encourage communication, engage staff in the process, and provide proper training. By fostering a culture of open communication and transparency, managers can address any concerns or uncertainties that employees may have regarding the outsourcing initiative. Involving employees in the decision-making process and providing them with the necessary training can help alleviate fears and build trust in the new system. Managers that take a proactive approach and demonstrate a commitment to assisting their team through the change can considerably boost the odds of a successful outsourcing endeavor.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The qualitative data gathered from the in-depth interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis guided by an inductive approach, which is appropriate for studies aiming to generate insights directly from participants' lived experiences rather than from predetermined theoretical assumptions. An inductive orientation allows patterns, concepts, and themes to emerge naturally from the data, ensuring that the analysis remains grounded in the perspectives expressed during the interviews. This approach was selected because the research sought to explore underlying meanings, perceptions, and processes that are not yet well-defined in the existing literature, making a flexible and data-driven method both necessary and methodologically sound. The researcher began by identifying key public organizations in the UAE that would provide valuable insights into the outsourcing strategies. This involved researching government departments, agencies, and other relevant entities that are involved in the decision-making process. A diverse and inclusive sample is ensured in the interview so that the results of the interviews accurately reflect the perspectives and experiences of the broader population. Additionally, understanding the demographic characteristics of participants help the researcher analyze the data in a more nuanced and context-specific way in order better interpret the findings and draw meaningful conclusions from the interviews.

Table 1: The Demographic of Participants

Participant ID	Age	Gender	Experience (Years)	Job position	Department name
P1	44	Male	20	Section Manager	HR Department
P2	38	Male	15	Project Manager	IT Department
P3	45	Male	25	Section Manager	HR Department
P4	43	Male	26	Manager	IT Department
P5	45	Male	27	Section Manager	HR Department
P6	38	Female	17	Project Manager	IT Department
P7	60	Male	35	Director	IT Department
P8	39	Female	16	Section Manager	Strategic Department

P9	43	Female	19	Section Manager	IT Department
P10	45	Male	25	Senior Manager	IT Department
P11	39	Male	14	Director	IT Department
P12	38	Female	16	Project Manager	IT Department
P13	45	Male	20	Senior Project Manager	IT Department
P14	35	Male	13	Supervisor	Engineering Department
P15	43	Male	24	senior Manager	IT Department

To enhance the validity and reliability of the findings, all interviews followed a standardized protocol, were recorded and transcribed verbatim, and coded independently by two researchers. Member checking was conducted by sharing summaries with participants to confirm accuracy. The study acknowledges the potential for bias inherent in qualitative research and the limited generalizability due to the relatively small and departmentally concentrated sample. Nevertheless, the chosen methodology provides rich, context-specific insights that are often lacking in large-scale quantitative studies, and the findings are intended to inform future research and policy development.

## DISUCSSION OF RESULTS

The thematic analysis of interview transcripts indicates numerous significant perceptions (themes) on public servant resistance to Emiratization outsourcing. Data on the second research question indicated federal government managers' views on strategic outsourcing's quality. Managers repeatedly stressed the necessity of maintaining high service standards throughout organizational transformations and highlighted numerous important concerns that must be addressed to guarantee outsourcing activities do not compromise performance or public trust. The perceived danger that outsourcing may lower service quality and consistency, especially while local contractors are still learning the skills, is key. Managers questioned if external suppliers were trained and ready to meet norms and expectations. Previous experiences or observed discrepancies in outsourced operations reinforced a cautious approach to assigning important services outside the business.

The findings also showed how managers value communication, employee involvement, and open decision-making during strategic outsourcing. Many managers feel that outsourcing's effectiveness depends on how effectively employees are educated and involved in the transition and how responsive management is to their concerns. Work quality was also affected by the availability of training and upskilling for kept and moved workers. These data imply strategic outsourcing presents problems and possibilities for managers. While they understand the potential for efficiency and specialized capabilities, risk management and quality assurance remain priorities. Managers recommend a collaborative strategy that balances innovation and service standards, and their ideas help build outsourcing policies that meet organizational and Emiratization goals. The next section breaks down these views and opinions into the primary data topics, examining the key problems influencing management outsourcing quality viewpoints. Table 1 lists themes and transcript codes.

Table 1: The Summary of Themes in the Transcripts of Managers

Themes (Perceptions)	Codes (Impact)	Frequency of occurrence
Effective Communication	Open dialogue and transparent communication	12
	Providing reassurance about job security	8

	Clear explanations about the rationale behind outsourcing	5
	Regular updates on progress	4
	Soliciting feedback from employees	6
	Addressing misconceptions	1
Involvement and Participation	Involving employees in decision-making processes	9
	Involving employees in planning and implementation stages	11
	Seeking employee input	6
	Acknowledging employee contributions	8
Training and Skill Development	Offering training programs to enhance skills	10
	Providing opportunities for training and upskilling	8
Leadership and Organizational Support	Strong leadership providing direction and empowerment	7
	Demonstrating commitment to Emiratization goals	5
	Ensuring resources are allocated appropriately	3
	Enforcing policies consistently	1
Cultural Shift towards Collaboration and Inclusivity	Fostering a culture of collaboration and inclusivity	9
	Promoting openness and transparency	11
	Providing forums for dialogue and feedback	5
Employee Buy-In and Trust Building	Aligning employees with organizational goals	7
	Building trust through effective communication	3
	Gaining employee buy-in for outsourcing initiatives	1
Change Management and Gradual Implementation	Implementing gradual changes	6
	Providing comprehensive change management plans	8
	Supporting employees to adapt to changes	7

These findings are consistent with established change management and resistance frameworks, such as Kotter’s Eight Steps and Lewin’s Change Model, which emphasize the importance of clear communication, participation, and leadership in reducing resistance and facilitating change. The role of training and skill development aligns with psychological contract theory, where perceived organizational support can reduce employee anxiety and opposition. By viewing the results through these theoretical lenses, this study provides a more nuanced understanding of resistance as both an individual and organizational phenomenon, influenced by structural, cultural, and strategic factors.

The data further suggest that resistance is not simply a function of misunderstanding or lack of information, but is shaped by perceptions of job security, the degree of employee involvement, and the quality of leadership and

organizational support. This supports the argument in the literature that successful change management in outsourcing contexts requires a holistic, multi-dimensional approach (Souza & Lemos, 2016; Kotter, 1996).

Interviews suggest that addressing these issues together may foster public servants' adoption of Emiratization outsourcing tactics. Successful government change management requires communication, participation, training, leadership support, cultural transformation, staff buy-in, and progressive implementation. A deep grasp of each issue to determine how they might reduce government sector opposition to Emiratization outsourcing tactics. Transparent communication is key to good communication. It reassures workers about the outsourcing plan and addresses job security and misunderstandings. Sharing progress and asking for criticism builds trust and reduces worries. Involving workers in decision-making and planning shows respect for their knowledge and ideas, according to the second topic. This participation empowers workers and connects the outsourcing strategy with company objectives, making them more open to change. Training and Skill Development illustrates why upskilling and training programs prepare workers for Emiratization and outsourcing. Investing in their development shows a commitment to their growth and success, which helps reduce job displacement fears.

Thematic analysis shows that leadership and organizational support are essential for direction, empowerment, and morale throughout transition. Leaders must show their commitment to Emiratization objectives and invest resources to help staff adapt. A culture of cooperation and inclusion encourages openness, transparency, and mutual respect in the company. This culture transformation makes workers feel appreciated and heard, making them more inclined to embrace organizationally aligned outsourcing. Aligning workers with business objectives and creating trust via effective communication are key for securing their buy-in for outsourcing efforts. Employees should comprehend the changes and feel their best interests are being addressed. Finally, change management and gradual implementation reveal that helping workers with thorough change management strategies may reduce resistance. Organizations may help workers adjust to new jobs and responsibilities by offering proper support. Figure 1 shows topics by initial research question code frequency.

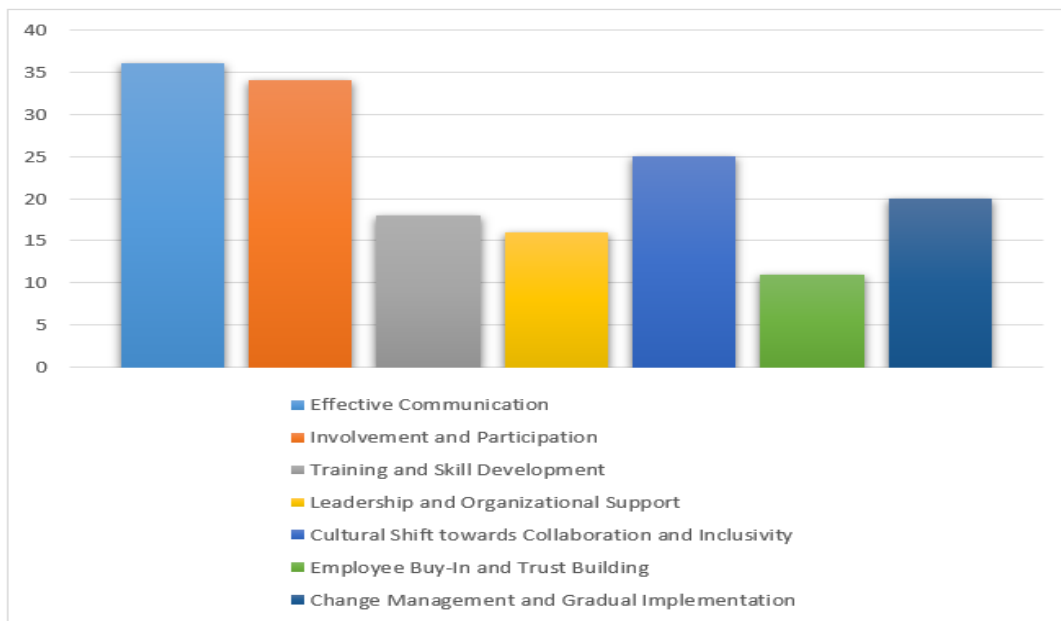


Figure 1: The Distribution of Reduction Factors for Public Outsourcing Resistance

Finally, government organizations may lessen public servant opposition to Emiratization outsourcing techniques by combining these concepts into a holistic change management strategy. Transparent communication, employee participation in decision-making, training and development, strong leadership support, a collaborative and inclusive culture, trust, and gradual change are essential. These methods make workers feel appreciated, supported, and empowered to transform for Emiratization. Thus, resistance is reduced and the organisation may shift to a more inclusive and sustainable workforce. In addition to the above tactics, government agencies must acknowledge that effective Emiratization outsourcing projects must take into account cultural, social, and economic issues. This requires continual monitoring and assessment to discover and solve new issues. For

instance, working with labor unions, educational institutions, and industry experts may give useful ideas and support for implementation. Government sectors may lessen opposition and maximize Emiratization outsourcing techniques to create long-term organizational performance and national growth by taking a proactive and flexible approach.

Thematic analysis codes may help reduce public servant opposition to government sector Emiratization outsourcing. Building trust and resolving job security and outsourcing concerns requires open debate and transparent communication. Updates, feedback, and correcting misunderstandings boost staff engagement and buy-in. Employee participation in decision-making, planning, and execution promotes ownership and organizational alignment. Leadership guides, empowers, and shows Emiratization commitment. Training programs, upskilling opportunities, and thorough change management strategies help workers adjust to changes, while constant policy enforcement assures fairness. Fostering cooperation, inclusion, and transparency, garnering staff buy-in, and making progressive changes are vital for decreasing opposition and encouraging effective government Emiratization outsourcing projects.

For a friendly workplace, resources must be distributed properly and communication and feedback platforms provided. Effective communication and continuous policy enforcement are key to employee support for outsourcing projects. Gradual adjustments with complete change management strategies help workers adjust to new jobs and responsibilities. Training and upskilling personnel improves their abilities and shows a commitment to their professional growth. Aligning personnel with business objectives and fostering openness, transparency, and cooperation reduces opposition and improves government Emiratization outsourcing efforts.

Figure 2 summarizes code occurrence rates in all transcripts.



Figure 2: The Frequencies of Occurrence of Codes

Based on the above results, employee contributions are valued by the company and promote continuing participation. Reassurance regarding job security during outsourcing reduces anxiety and promotes stability. Leadership that guides and encourages workers to own their positions may influence their outlook on change. A culture that values diversity and inclusion makes workers feel appreciated and respected, which encourages Emiratization aims. Regular progress reports and employee participation in decision-making keep them informed and engaged in the projects' success. A holistic strategy that tackles communication, engagement, leadership, and organizational culture is essential to lowering opposition and implementing Emiratization outsourcing initiatives in the government sector.

A diversified approach is needed to reduce government employee opposition to Emiratization outsourcing. Effective communication requires open conversation, transparent communication, job security reassurance,

explicit explanations of outsourcing, frequent progress reports, and feedback to correct misunderstandings. Employee engagement in decision-making, planning, and execution, together with recognition, fosters ownership and commitment. Strong leadership guides, empowers, and shows commitment to Emiratization objectives, while training and skill development prepare personnel for the changing situation. Openness, transparency, and debate foster a culture of cooperation and inclusion, which boosts buy-in. Outsourcing projects need trust, communication, and employee alignment with business objectives. Gradual implementation, backed by thorough change management strategies and staff adaptation aid, reduces resistance and enhances transition.

The proposed conceptual framework (see Figure 3) visually connects the identified resistance management practices—communication, participation, training, leadership, and cultural transformation—to successful outsourcing outcomes. This framework is grounded in established change management and resistance theories and is intended to guide both future research and practical implementation in similar policy environments.

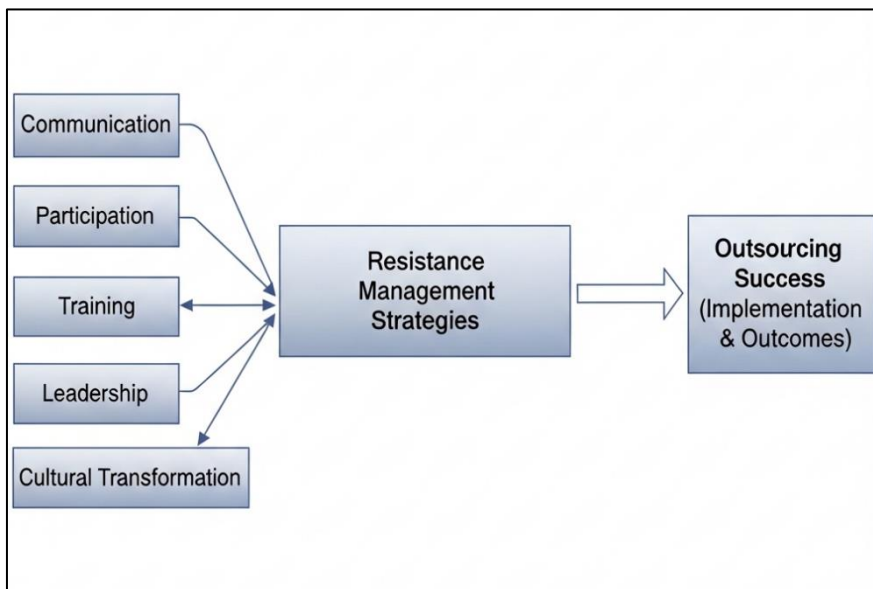


Figure 3: Conceptual Framework Linking Resistance Management Practices to Outsourcing Success

## CONCLUSIONS

This study examined the influence of public servants’ resistance on the implementation and success of Emiratization-oriented outsourcing initiatives in the UAE federal government sector, drawing on managers’ perceptions through a qualitative approach. The findings confirm that employee resistance represents a significant barrier that can delay implementation processes, reduce operational efficiency, and ultimately compromise the intended outcomes of outsourcing strategies. The results highlight that resistance is not merely an individual reaction but a multidimensional organizational phenomenon shaped by uncertainty, perceived job insecurity, lack of involvement, and limited understanding of outsourcing objectives. Addressing these factors requires a holistic and strategically coordinated change management approach. In particular, the study identifies transparent communication as a critical mechanism for reducing ambiguity and building trust, as it reassures employees and clarifies the rationale, benefits, and progress of outsourcing initiatives. Similarly, employee participation in planning and decision-making processes enhances ownership and alignment with organizational goals, thereby increasing openness to change.

The findings further emphasize the importance of training and skill development in mitigating resistance. By investing in upskilling and preparing employees for new roles within outsourced environments, organizations can reduce fears of displacement and demonstrate commitment to workforce development. In addition, strong leadership and organizational support were found to play a pivotal role in guiding transitions, maintaining morale, and reinforcing commitment to Emiratization objectives. A culture that promotes inclusion, collaboration, and mutual respect further supports the acceptance of outsourcing by ensuring that employees feel valued and heard. Moreover, the study underscores the importance of securing employee buy-in through alignment with organizational goals and addressing employee concerns, alongside adopting gradual and well-

structured implementation strategies. Effective change management practices that provide continuous support throughout the transition process significantly reduce resistance and facilitate smoother adoption of outsourcing initiatives.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the literature by extending conventional outsourcing and organizational change theories into the context of Emiratization, offering a nuanced understanding of how resistance emerges and influences outsourcing success in the public sector. Methodologically, it demonstrates the value of qualitative inquiry in capturing managerial insights and uncovering complex organizational dynamics. Practically, the study proposes a comprehensive framework that links resistance management strategies—such as communication, participation, training, leadership support, and cultural transformation—to successful outsourcing outcomes. Overall, the study provides actionable insights for policymakers and government organizations seeking to balance national workforce objectives with outsourcing efficiency. By proactively addressing public servant resistance, UAE federal entities can enhance the effectiveness of outsourcing initiatives while maintaining alignment with broader Emiratization goals.

In synthesizing the findings, this study extends existing outsourcing and organizational change theories into the context of Emiratization, highlighting the practical interplay between policy objectives and resistance management. The managerial perspective provides a valuable but partial view; thus, the lack of direct public servant input remains a notable limitation. Future research should integrate public servant perspectives and expand the range of departments studied to increase generalizability and depth. The conceptual framework developed—visually summarized in Figure 3—offers practical and theoretical guidance for policymakers and administrators navigating the complex terrain of Emiratization and outsourcing in the UAE.

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