



Assessing the Role of Leadership in Shaping Digital Transformation Capabilities in UAE Governance

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims to investigate the impact of leadership on digital transformation in the UAE government, using a Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice (KAP) analytical framework. This study examines the effect of leaders' familiarity with digital technologies, their attitudes towards innovation, and their practical tactics for execution on the process of digitalizing government services. Employing a mixed-methods methodology, this research uses surveys and interviews to gather data from influential policymakers while also conducting a comprehensive examination of case studies on digital projects. The findings suggest that considerable knowledge and favorable attitudes towards digital transformation exist. However, implementing digital transformation methods exhibits notable disparities among various government bodies. The research highlights the need to implement a comprehensive approach and enhance leaders' skills and knowledge to ensure alignment with efficient digital methods. This will ultimately support a more substantial digital transformation in the administration of the United Arab Emirates.

Keywords: Digital Transformation, Leadership, Governance, UAE, KAP Model, Innovation, Public Sector

JEL Classifications: H83, O33, M15

1. INTRODUCTION

Considering the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the global governance landscape has been pushed to emphasize prioritizing digital transformation significantly. Digital transformation involves transforming firms or services through digital technology, replacing existing processes with digital ones, or using newer technologies to replace older ones (Metawa et al., 2022). Organizations in the digital age are facing a wide variety of challenges, such as adopting blockchain and smart devices, using artificial intelligence (AI), and using enterprise resource planning systems to manage digital transformation (Yao et al., 2024). Governments and organizations are transforming to digital business models that will increase the value of their products and services by relying on digital technologies. There are many challenges to digital transformation in the public sector, including technological limitations, resource

constraints, and administrative capabilities (AlNuaimi et al., 2022). While digital transformation can be a challenge for public sector organizations, it offers several advantages, including support for innovation, enhanced data accessibility, and enhanced government services (Seepma et al., 2021; AlNuaimi et al., 2022).

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is an exemplary example for studying the interdependent connection between leadership and digital transformation, as it has been at the forefront of adopting technological innovation in its governance systems. According to Alsuwaidi and Almarri (2021), leadership is crucial in promoting digital initiatives that form the foundation of governance skills. This study aims to investigate the importance of leadership in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) public sector with regard to facilitating and carrying out digital transformation initiatives. An analysis of the complexities surrounding this correlation

reveals a dearth of academic investigation, specifically within the Middle Eastern context, concerning the quantifiable impact of leadership qualities on the outcomes of digital transformation in governance. To fill the current void in Knowledge, this research endeavor presents empirical results from the United Arab Emirates (UAE). These findings might potentially contribute to policy and administrative changes within the UAE and other countries undergoing comparable digital transformations (Khan, 2019; Al-Khoury, 2012).

The discussion around DT in the context of governance in the United Arab Emirates highlights leaders' intricate temporal challenges while managing the change process. In their study, Kreutzer et al. (2018) observed that organizational inertia poses a substantial obstacle to digital transformation (DT), especially among medium to large organizations that resist change. The lethargy mentioned is often exacerbated by a misconception of digital transformation (DT) as only a technology change rather than a profound alteration in company operations, as highlighted by the World Economic Forum (2015), posing a significant challenge for organizational leaders.

Kreutzer and Land (2014) have redirected attention away from conventional measures of organizational adaptation, such as size, speed, conformity, or strength. Instead, they propose a shift towards prioritizing the survival of the smartest, highlighting the importance for leaders to rethink business models, sales strategies, and marketing approaches to address the challenges posed by digital influences effectively. Neubauer et al. (2017) reiterated this viewpoint, contending that the rapid advancement of digital technologies necessitates a leadership approach that deviates from conventional authoritative models and instead embraces a more collaborative and empowering style.

As posited by Sahyaja and Rao (2018), the contemporary landscape of leadership in the digital age encompasses a diverse range of requirements. These include four key competencies: intellectual, emotional, digital, and personal characteristics (IQ, EQ, DQ, PQ), which together contribute to the development of successful leadership in the digital Era. In light of the changing leadership paradigms, scholars such as Lynch (2016) have drawn attention to a significant preparation gap. This gap pertains to many managers and workers expressing skepticism over their businesses' ability to navigate digital upheavals effectively.

In the context of the United Arab Emirates' endeavor to achieve superior governance, leadership must align with digital imperatives. This alignment necessitates a cultural transformation that emphasizes employee empowerment, as proposed by Ancarani and Di Mauro (2018). In their study, Jakubik and Berazhny (2017) have proposed adopting an altrocentric leadership approach, which emphasizes cooperation and empowering teams to effectively address the performance requirements associated with contemporary governance.

Moreover, the difficulty also encompasses the aspect of human capital. In their study, Colbert et al. (2016) emphasized the need to recruit and retain individuals with digital skills. According

to Creusen et al. (2017), using agile working practices in conjunction with digital Knowledge is recommended to maintain responsiveness and adaptability within the rapidly evolving digital landscape. According to Lenka et al. (2017), the co-creation process with clients poses difficulties in conventional businesses, necessitating a workforce equipped with novel skills to facilitate innovation.

This study contributes to the existing literature by investigating the impact of leadership on digital transformation in the UAE government, using a Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice (KAP) analytical framework. This research aims to analyze the leadership characteristics and approaches that facilitate or hinder the implementation of digital technology in the governance of public sector entities. Moreover, this research endeavor shall investigate the significance of leadership in fostering an environment favorable to digital innovation. This research endeavor aims to analyze the leadership transformations that are imperative for effectively addressing the complexities of the digital Era. With the objective of making a scholastic contribution to the current body of knowledge on governance in the digital Era, this research endeavors to methodically investigate the correlation between proficient leadership and the achievement of digital initiative implementation success. Additionally, it seeks to provide practical insights that can be utilized by officials and policy designers in the UAE and other regions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Digital Transformation

Bresciani et al. (2021b) performed research that defines digital transformation (DT) as a purposeful undertaking including implementing modifications that use current technology breakthroughs. Furthermore, Nwankpa and Roumani (2016) define digital transformation as a deliberate and planned change in an organizational setting that involves adopting and integrating various technologies. The ultimate objective of this transformation is to improve the delivery of goods and services. Altering business procedures, corporate cultures, and organizational features to adapt to shifting customer requirements brought on by advances in digital technology is a strategy that is sometimes referred to as "digital transformation." According to Parmentier and Mangematin (2014), the concept of digital transformation encompasses three fundamental elements. Firstly, it involves the evaluation and redefinition of the boundaries of a firm. Secondly, it entails the community's involvement in creating goods and services, which is accompanied by decreased property rights. Lastly, it necessitates the reorganization of both organizational and product identities. The identification of digital transformation may be attributed to the existence of three discernible facets. Hinings et al. (2018) emphasize the possibility of disturbances occurring inside various businesses and organizations. Digital transformation refers to the cumulative effects of diverse digital innovations and technologies, which give rise to novel entities, frameworks, methodologies, principles, configurations, and ideologies. These elements modify, dismantle, replace, or enhance existing norms and regulations within enterprises, ecosystems, sectors, or domains (Westerman et al., 2014; Scuotto et al., 2020;

Krimpmann, 2015). The potential impact of the digital revolution is to fundamentally change business frameworks, reconfigure the employment environment for leaders, workers, and knowledge experts, and modify the essence of organizational cultures (Legner et al., 2017; Loebbecke and Picot, 2015). The phenomenon of digital transformation involves a wide range of implications that might result in several outcomes.

2.2. Leadership and Digital Transformation

Digital transformation may be seen as a fundamental organizational change encompassing digitally empowered institutional structures across many fields and entities. To achieve success, it is essential for digital transformation to establish its legitimacy inside the belief system of the company (Hinings et al., 2018). Leadership is considered a crucial component of an organization's values and belief systems from the standpoint of NIT. Biggart and Hamilton (1987) say that while organizations move through the process of evolution, it is necessary for leadership to also go through the process of transformation and adjustment. Organizations go through the process of digital transformation when they adjust their operational processes and the supply of goods and services while simultaneously cultivating successful digital cultures (Bresciani et al., 2021a). Without leaders who can build platforms for it and motivate stakeholders to take action, it is not conceivable (Sainger, 2018). In addition, several studies found a positive link between leadership and digital transformation in the UAE. For instance, AlNuaimi et al. (2022) explored the impact of digital transformational leadership on digital transformation in the public sector organizations in the UAE. According to their findings, digital transformational leadership positively impacts digital transformation. Similarly, Albannai et al. (2024) found that leadership in digital transformation plays a significant role in implementing digital strategies that improve organizational agility. Table 1 provides an overview of the studies conducted in the UAE.

2.3. Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis Development

Using the KAP (Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices) model is essential to evaluating the impact of leadership on shaping digital

transformation capabilities within the governance structure of the UAE. The methodology offers a systematic approach to assessing the disparity between leaders' theoretical understanding of digital advances and their practical implementation, which is essential in advancing governance. Applying the Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice (KAP) principles makes it possible to develop customized training modules and governance initiatives based on a comprehensive comprehension of leadership capabilities within the digital domain. Therefore, this methodology facilitates the reduction of the disparity between leaders' theoretical understanding, their perspectives on digital transformation strategies, and their proficiency in implementing these strategies within the governance framework of the United Arab Emirates.

2.3.1. Knowledge

According to the KAP model in knowledge, it is essential for leaders in UAE governance to possess an extensive understanding of not just digital technology but also to exhibit a heightened awareness of global best practices in the realm of digital governance. The ability to compare policies with international standards allows leaders to ensure that governance is successful and up to date. The study conducted by Mergel et al. (2019) emphasizes the need for leaders to comprehensively understand various digital technologies, ranging from data analytics to blockchain, and their potential to improve public sector services. In addition, Buyannemekh et al. (2023) highlight the significance of leaders possessing an awareness of global trends in electronic governance, as this knowledge may contribute to creating citizen-centric services that prioritize the needs and preferences of the public. By incorporating this information, leaders can cultivate a governance atmosphere that supports technology innovation and conforms to the refined methodologies seen in digitally advanced countries. The integration of various digital governance initiatives is of utmost importance in establishing the United Arab Emirates as a leader in the field of digital governance excellence.

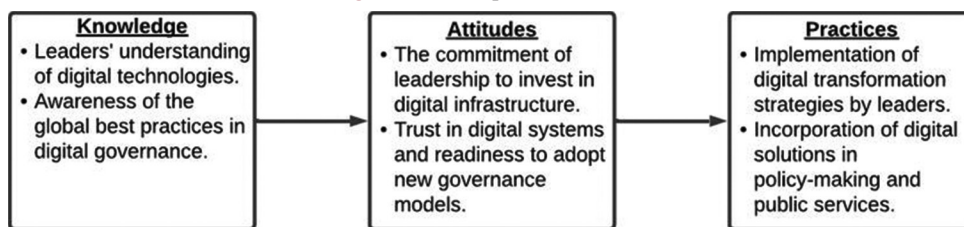
H₁: There is a significant association between knowledge and attitudes.

2.3.2. Attitudes

The "Attitude" component within the Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice (KAP) framework of leadership in UAE governance includes the dedication to allocate resources towards the development of digital infrastructure, the confidence in the reliability of digital systems, and the willingness to embrace novel governance models. The attitudes shown by leaders towards digital transformation play a crucial role in influencing their inclination to allocate resources and advocate for the implementation of technology-driven governance. The study conducted by Al Maamari and Bhuiyan (2021) examines the relationship between leadership views and investment in digital infrastructure, emphasizing the consequential influence on the level of digital governance maturity within a nation. Furthermore, the study conducted by Verhoef et al. (2021) delves into the correlation between leaders' trust in digital systems and the effective execution of e-government services. The authors state that having faith in technology is a fundamental need for its acceptance and use. Moreover, the significance of leaders' willingness to envision the government considering digital potentials is underscored by

Table 1: Literature review

Authors	Year	Objective
Smith and Beretta	2021	The objective is to analyze how leadership practices in the UAE influence the rate at which government sectors embrace digital technologies.
Khan et al.	2022	To assess the ability of senior public sector officials in the UAE to facilitate digital transformation.
Lakshmi et al.	2023	This study aims to assess how training for future leaders has affected digital transformation initiatives in the UAE.
Al Blooshi et al.	2023	The purpose of this research is to investigate the connection between different leadership styles and the level of success that may be attained in digital transformation within the context of government institutions in the UAE.
AlNuaimi et al.	2022	The objective of this study is to examine how leadership within the public sector of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) can promote a climate that is favorable for digital innovation.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework

AlMulhim (2023), who proposes that a favorable mindset plays a crucial role in adopting novel frameworks like smart governance. Incorporating these attitude elements is essential for establishing a strong digital ecosystem in the United Arab Emirates, promoting a governance model that exhibits resilience, responsiveness, and a forward-looking approach.

H₂: There is a significant association between attitudes and practices.

2.3.3. Practices

The knowledge, attitude, and practice (KAP) model's Attitude factor is of paramount importance in influencing leaders' perspectives regarding implementing digital transformation strategies and incorporating digital solutions into public services and policy formulation. Fostering a favourable attitude among leaders is essential for facilitating the seamless integration of technology into governance procedures. This results in an environment where digital transformation is not merely recognized. The leaders' commitment to these strategies is evident in their policy formulation process, which intentionally incorporates digital solutions to deliver public services. The research conducted by Almansoori and Ahmad (2023) demonstrates the importance of this subject by revealing that the perspectives of leaders in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) regarding digital technology are pivotal to the successful execution of e-governance initiatives. Additionally, Jumma Alhosani (2019) emphasizes the need for leaders to be prepared to adopt and allocate resources to emerging technologies to integrate digital solutions effectively. This, in turn, leads to improved efficiency and accessibility of public services. These attitudes demonstrate a readiness to embrace emerging technology and signify a more comprehensive dedication to promoting a governance paradigm that is inclusive of digital advancements.

Figure 1 represents the research conceptual framework, showing the relations between the study variables; Knowledge, attitudes and Practices.

3. METHODOLOGY

This research presents a detailed exploration of how leadership influences the United Arab Emirates government's digital transformation, with particular emphasis on developing digital skills. The document will offer a thorough review of the research methodology, from the creation of evaluation tools to the phases of gathering data. This study aims to investigate the role of leadership in executing digital transformation strategies and its effect on the overall governance structure in the UAE.

3.1. Measurement construct

After conducting an extensive literature study, a well-designed questionnaire was created to aid in gathering data. The development of this instrument was guided by recognized metrics and grounded on the theoretical framework of the knowledge, attitudes, practices (KAP). Utilizing a 5-point Likert scale, participants were given the opportunity to indicate their degree of agreement, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), offering a range of 25 answer options to denote different levels of agreement or disagreement (Gupta et al., 2024).

3.2. Data Collection

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, incorporating primary and secondary research, to examine the impact of leadership on the adoption and efficacy of digital transformation initiatives within the United Arab Emirates' governance structures. The survey concentrates specifically on the UAE. An extensive search of the Scopus database and secondary sources, including scientific papers, sector studies, opinion articles, and opinion pieces, was utilized to collect secondary data. The primary method of data collection involved the dissemination of a meticulously crafted questionnaire that had been customized to address the intricate objectives of the study.

The questionnaire was divided into four discrete portions. The primary phase of the study was the collection of demographic data, including factors such as age, gender, and family income. The following parts were designed to assess the participants' understanding and willingness to embrace the governance in the United Arab Emirates. Using a five-point Likert scale enabled the systematic measurement and categorization of participants' replies. The researchers adopted Google Forms as a tool for disseminating surveys, strategically using their social networks, including Facebook and WhatsApp, to ensure a targeted response range of 420-450. However, 50 answers were subsequently eliminated from the study because of their incomplete nature or possible bias.

Regarding completing a thorough data cleansing process to ensure precision and consistency, the research refocused its efforts on acquiring valuable perspectives from executives actively spearheading digital transformation within the UAE government. The primary aim of this research was to analyze the strategic approaches and underlying motivations that drive organizations and individuals to advocate for and implement digital technologies to improve the effectiveness of governance (Gupta et al., 2024). A series of reminder emails was sent to enhance the level of involvement and increase response rates, explicitly guaranteeing respondents the assurance of confidentiality to safeguard the integrity of their provided comments.

3.3. Common Method Bias

Multiple actions were performed to mitigate common method bias in this study (Podsakoff et al., 2012). Names and personal information were not required from participants to maintain anonymity. Additionally, this study conducted a single-factor test according to Harman (1960). The study implemented Harman's single-factor test to address potential common method biases stemming from the survey's self-reporting nature (Harman, 1960). A significant single factor typically accounts for most of the variance (Sharma et al., 2023). However, in this instance, the most prominent factor accounted for approximately 27.46% of the total variance. This figure is significantly less than the threshold of 50%, suggesting that common method bias did not pose a considerable concern in the dataset examined (Podsakoff et al., 2003). In addition, this indicates that the collected data is reliable and that the measured constructs are distinct and not confounded by each other.

4. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

A PLS-SEM analysis was performed on the proposed model following the two-step methodology that Anderson and Gerbing describe. This analysis was carried out following their recommendations. This statistical analysis was carried out with the assistance of the Smart PLS 4.0 program. Social science researchers are increasingly using this approach to study complex relationships. PLS-SEM has several advantages over other methods, such as covariance-based SEM and ordinary least squares (OLS). The method is suitable for both complex and simple models, and the normality assumption does not need to be checked (Hair et al., 2014). Moreover, Kraus et al. (2020) argue that it provides a higher estimation precision than covariance-based SEM.

4.1. Construct Reliability

The study scrutinized the constructs within its theoretical framework to assess convergent and discriminant validity. AVE, factor loadings, and Cronbach's alpha were utilized for convergent validity. AVE was employed to gauge how well the constructs captured the variance relative to error variance. Hair et al. (2011) posited that convergent validity is affirmed when factor loadings exceed the threshold of 0.70. Internal consistency was verified using Cronbach's alpha, with all constructs showing values above 0.70, denoting robust consistency (Hair et al., 2006). This confirmed that the measurement items reliably reflected the constructs.

Furthermore, the researchers analyzed composite dependability, and all of the obtained values above the threshold of 0.70 established by Carmines and Zeller (1979), indicating a high level of reliability. The AVE was computed to assess the degree

to which the constructs explained the variability in the observable variables. Values of AVE >0.5 suggest strong convergent validity and reliability of the scale. The research found that the AVE values varied from 0.86 to 0.94, indicating strong convergence and the constructs' capacity to explain a large amount of variation in the observable variables, as shown in Table 2.

Cronbach's alpha values for Attitudes, Knowledge, and Practices are 0.918, 0.92, and 0.911, respectively. These values are higher than the generally recognized benchmark of 0.70, which implies that each construct has a high degree of internal consistency. This high consistency provides evidence that the items included inside each scale accurately assess the constructs for which they were designed. Similarly, the composite reliability indices, particularly ρ_a and ρ_c , vary from 0.915 to 0.933 for all constructs. This means that they are higher than the typical cutoff of 0.70, which in turn strengthens the reliability of the constructs as well as the general consistency of the measurement model.

The AVE values for the constructs-0.606 for Attitudes, 0.583 for Knowledge, and 0.618 for Practices-exceed the threshold of 0.50, indicating a considerable effect on the variables observed and affirming good convergent validity. These values are as follows: 0.606 for Attitudes; 0.583 for Knowledge; and 0.618 for Practices. These AVE measures imply that over 50% of the variation in the indicators can be ascribed to the underlying constructs, which provides evidence that the constructs successfully capture the ideas to be evaluated. Overall, the robust values for Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and AVE for all constructs suggest that the measurement model contains both reliability and validity, validating its acceptability for future analysis in the present research, as illustrated in Figure 2. In addition, the robust values for AVE for all constructs demonstrate that the measurement model possesses both reliability and validity.

4.2. Discriminant Validity

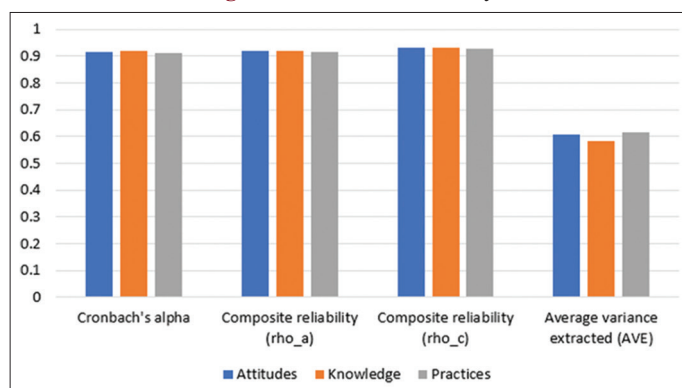
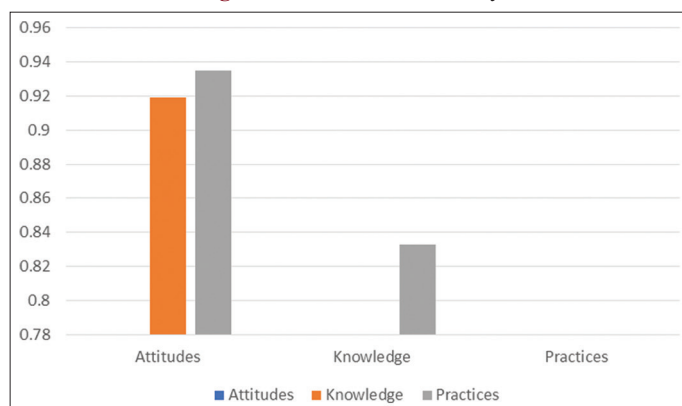
The analysis also included a comparison of the square roots of the AVEs with the correlations between constructs to verify the distinctiveness of each construct. Detailed in Table 3 of the study, this method further affirmed the discriminant validity of the constructs.

The discriminant validity of the variables Attitudes, Knowledge, and Practices is shown in Table 3. The numbers below the matrix's diagonal indicate the correlations between different constructs. The correlation coefficient between attitudes and knowledge is 0.719, showing a significant positive association. However, the magnitude of the correlation does not reflect redundancy or overlap in the constructs being measured. The correlation coefficient 0.833 indicates a strong positive relationship between Knowledge and Practices, indicating that both entities are intimately interconnected but maintain their individual characteristics. The correlation between practices and attitudes is moderately strong, with a coefficient of 0.835. This indicates a tight alignment between people's enactment of practices and their corresponding attitudes.

To establish robust discriminant validity, it is necessary for the square root of the AVE for each construct, generally found on the

Table 2: Construct reliability

Variable	Cronbach's alpha	(rho_a)	(rho_c)	(AVE)
Attitudes	0.918	0.92	0.932	0.606
Knowledge	0.92	0.922	0.933	0.583
Practices	0.911	0.915	0.928	0.618

Figure 2: Construct reliability**Figure 3: Discriminant validity**

diagonal (not shown in this depiction), to exceed the correlations shown in the corresponding row and column. If this requirement is satisfied (as seen in a well-constructed discriminant validity table), it would confirm that each construct exhibits a stronger correlation with its own indicators than the indicators of other constructs, thereby proving discriminant validity, as shown in Figure 3. This implies that the constructions exhibit differentiation despite their interrelationships, since each construct encompasses various facets of the variables under consideration.

4.3. R Square

The correlation coefficient, which ranges from -1 to $+1$ and denotes the absence of correlation, measures the strength and direction of a linear association between two variables. A value of $R^2 > 0.01$, which signifies that the independent variable accounts for 1% or more of the variance in the dependent variable, is regarded as positive. R^2 is a metric utilized to evaluate the extent to which the independent variables account for the variability observed in the dependent variable. A greater R^2 value signifies more pronounced correlations.

The R-square and modified R-square values for the Attitudes and Practices constructs included inside the model are shown in Table 4, respectively. The square root of the variance in attitudes is calculated to be 0.725, which indicates that the model's independent variables explain 72.5% of the total variance. Although the adjusted R-square for Attitudes is somewhat lower than before, coming in at 0.723, suggesting a little drop owing to

Table 3: Discriminant validity

Variable	Attitudes	Knowledge	Practices
Attitudes			
Knowledge	0.719		
Practices	0.835	0.833	

Table 4: R square

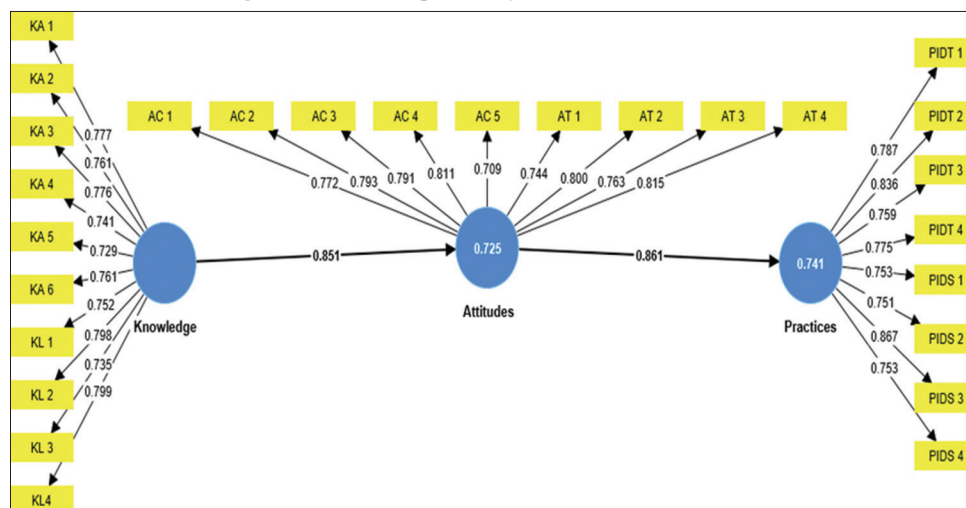
Variable	R-square	R-square adjusted
Attitudes	0.725	0.723
Practices	0.741	0.739

the complexity of the model and the number of variables, it still indicates a solid model fit for the Attitudes construct.

The R-square value for Practices is 0.741, indicating that the model accounts for 74.1% of the practice variation. The adjusted R-square value of 0.739 provides evidence that, even after accounting for the number of predictors, the model demonstrates a high fit. In general, the strong R-square values observed for both categories indicate that the model can significantly explain the Attitudes and Practices dimensions. The strong correspondence between the R-square and adjusted R-square values suggests that including predictors in the model is suitable and that an excessive number of variables does not exaggerate the model's ability to explain the data.

Figure 4 shows the interconnections among Knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. This model is often used in social science research to comprehend the interplay between various factors and their mutual influences.

Based on the visual representation provided, it is possible to derive the following interpretations: The construct denoted as 'Knowledge' is linked to the construct denoted as "Attitudes" with a route coefficient of 0.851. The robust positive coefficient observed in this study indicates a statistically significant positive association, indicating that their attitudes tend to become more favourable as individuals' knowledge levels rise. The link between attitudes and practices is shown by a coefficient of 0.861, indicating a robust and favourable association. This indicates that the existence of constructive mindsets is apt to result in the enactment of similar actions. The coefficients associated with the numerous routes leading to the acquisition of knowledge range from 0.729 to 0.798. These coefficients reflect the relative contributions of several qualities of Knowledge, namely KA1 through KL4, to the overall construct of "Knowledge". The coefficients associated with the routes leading to "Attitudes" range from 0.744 to 0.815. The present study examines the contributions of several attitude components, namely AC1 through AC4, to the overall construct of "Attitudes". The coefficients assigned to the pathways leading to "Practices" range from 0.753 to 0.867. The coefficients in question pertain to the contributions made by different practice descriptors (specifically, PIDT1 through PIDS4) to the overall "Practices" construct. The values denoted as 0.725 and 0.741 in the "Attitudes" and "Practices" circles, respectively, will likely represent the squared multiple correlations (R^2). These values represent the extent to which the predictors account for the variation in the "Attitudes" and "Practices". The variable

Figure 4: Structural path analysis for the research model

“Knowledge” accounts for 72.5% of the variation in the variable “Attitudes”, whereas the variable “Attitudes” accounts for 74.1% of the variance in the variable “Practices”. The observed values are significantly elevated, indicating that the model explains a considerable proportion of the variability in these constructs. In general, this model posits a robust and affirmative directional relationship between knowledge and attitudes and between attitudes and practices. This implies that interventions targeting knowledge enhancement may trigger a ripple effect, leading to attitude changes and impacting behaviors.

5. CONCLUSION, POLICY IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE STUDIES

In summarizing the study on the impact of leadership in advancing digital transformation capabilities within the UAE government, leadership is more than just a supportive force; it acts as a driving force. The study results emphasize leaders’ crucial role in effectively navigating and executing digital transformation programs. The common leadership style in the UAE is transformational, which has played a crucial role in creating an atmosphere that supports innovation and change. As a result, the country’s digital development has been accelerated. This research underlines the significant correlation between visionary leadership and digital proficiency in achieving the ambitious objectives outlined in the strategic frameworks of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), as the country continues to establish itself as a prominent model of digital governance on a global scale. Future undertakings must prioritize the cultivation of this dynamic, therefore assuring the continuous alignment of leadership development programs with the evolving needs of an increasingly digital world. This will effectively contribute to the sustained progress of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in its journey towards becoming a digitally empowered society.

This study offers several important policy implications for advancing digital transformation. It is evident from this study that leadership is crucial to leading digital change across the UAE government. Development programs for leaders should focus on

building transformational leadership skills- vision, flexibility, and creativity to stay on top of ongoing changes. Developing leaders in line with national digital objectives will empower them to drive growth in the future. The UAE can further strengthen its global leadership in digital governance by enshrining leadership in its digital policy.

This study has some limitations that can be addressed in future research. First, this study was conducted in the UAE and may not apply to other countries with different leadership styles or digital policies. Future studies should be conducted in other countries to investigate how leadership supports digital transformation. In addition, this study didn’t examine a specific leadership style. Future research could investigate how different leadership styles affect digital transformation. Lastly, this study used a cross-sectional questionnaire for data collection. Future studies could use longitudinal data to examine how leadership impacts digital transformation over time.

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