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Bridging the Leadership Gap:

A Model and an Instrument to Measure the Effectiveness of the Leadership Development Programmes in Abu Dhabi, UAE



ABSTRACT

This study presents an evaluation framework for the leadership development programs (LDPs) provided by the Center of Excellence (CoE) in Abu Dhabi, UAE. The proposed framework incorporates various theories, models, tools, methods, and instruments into one holistic framework. The framework aims to provide decision makers formative and summative information to assess their LDP investments through an integrated set of quantitative and qualitative techniques. It is grounded in academic theories and applies best practices in the fields of: leadership development, adult learning, program evaluation, performance management, and human resources. The evaluation process encompasses evaluating the "efforts" provided to conduct the LDP and the "results" of attending this LDP on a personal, organizational, and society level. To generate the framework, interviews were conducted with participants, instructors and organizers of the LDPs to incorporate their feedback, perceptions and expectations. Although the LDPs of the CoE were designed to serve pre-defined Abu Dhabi leadership competencies, they are modeled after existing programmes and paradigms in the US and Europe. Cultural aspects and pedagogical practices were highlighted. Gender and religious considerations were found to be contemplated in the conducted LDPs. However, the programs do not utilize local stories, norms, and traditions to enrich the content or the andragogy. The participants are not in favor of utilizing technology or community of practices in their learning process, and they prefer coaching over all other pedagogical practices. Suggestions are made on how to benchmark organizational leadership capacity, build a country-wide leadership ecosystem, embed ethics in the LDPs, and localize the content and delivery of the programs.