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Entitled

*EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EMIRATIZATION STRATEGIES IN THE QUASI-PRIVATE  
SECTOR: MULTIPLE CASE STUDIES FROM THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR IN THE UAE*

by

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Abstract

A central aspect of the United Arab Emirates' strategic vision for a post-oil future is to make better use of its indigenous human capital, thus securing a return on the substantial investment the government has made in education, and reducing the reliance on a largely non-national labor force. While Emiratisation (a policy to replace expatriate workers by citizens) has been successful in the public sector, the private sector is still largely staffed by expatriates with citizens representing less than 5 percent of the total workforce in this sector. Therefore, Emiratisation efforts have recently been focused on enhancing employment opportunities for citizens in the private sector. One of the key initiatives in this regard is to make use of State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs), as commercially run organizations capable of subsidizing the transition from a classic bureaucratic and unproductive public sector to a truly private sector. These enterprises are expected to achieve this transition through the strategic policy of Emiratisation. Many researchers have identified a myriad of barriers that prevent effective Emiratisation, but few have focused on the elements required for successful Emiratisation. The purpose of this study is to explore elements of successful Emiratisation to date in several subsidiaries of one of the UAE's largest industrial investment holding companies, operating in the metals, oil and gas, construction and building materials, and food and beverages sectors. These multiple case studies allow us to discuss in depth factors that can make Emiratisation successful in the manufacturing sector in the UAE. In order to achieve this, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, including managers from human resources (HR) and Emiratisation departments within these SOEs. A multiple case studies approach was used to obtain empirical data on the factors that contribute to successful Emiratisation, and the challenges faced in implementing Emiratisation plans at these organizations. The findings of this study indicate that Emiratisation is not just a matter of increasing the number of Emiratis in the workforce, or hiring Emiratis to meet quotas, but a strategy designed to recruit and develop Emiratis for current and future positions. This study explored three factors that enhance Emiratisation strategy. Government regulations can support and enhance nationalization in the country and many companies have prepared long-term Emiratisation plans, as they must send in quarterly reports to the HRA. Each company investigated here has set an Emiratisation target to match their business needs, not just to fill quotas. Another key factor in successful Emiratisation is upper-management support. In order for a nationalization program to be successful it must offer total commitment and support to the candidates, otherwise we will not see any motivation from the participants and the program will fail. This study also explored the role of strategic HR involvement. One of the key roles of a human resources department is the training and development of staff. The findings of this study can assist decision makers and HR professionals in identifying factors in successful Emiratisation and thus enhance the employment of nationals in the hi-tech manufacturing sector. Additionally, these findings can help to further expand the parameters of labor nationalization and emphasize the aspects that make for successful nationalization in key organizations.

**Keywords:** Emiratisation Strategies, Economic Diversification, State-Owned Enterprises (SOE), United Arab Emirates.