

Critical Success Factor in the Implementation of MBWA in UAE Public Sector

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Abstract

Management by Walking Around MBWA is a management style that involves the leadership techniques that a manager practices when managing an organization. It involves any technique adopted by managers to motivate their employees, in addition to directing and controlling them. MBWA is mainly based on three major issues which are the characteristics of leaders, the characteristics of subordinates, and the organizational environment. Management styles are categorized based on the influence managers have on employees, it can be through their power, their ability to use that power, and through the managers' behaviour as autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire. In this study, the critical factors that shape the success of the implementation of MBWA in public sector are examined in the municipality and utility organizations in UAE as a case study towards

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1 Introduction

Managers of public sector organizations face an imperative need to improve and enhance the performance of their organizations in order to eliminate the mistakes that render down the performance and reputation of their organizations. These organizations through top managers, leaders and policy makers have advocated for the adoption and implementation of a totally different and unconventional style of management referred to as Management by Walking Around MBWA to achieve the goals and objectives of their organizations. This management theme is wide spreading in the U.S and U.K (Dandoy et al., 2017). Adoption of this theme of management simply means that senior managers frequently visit and observe the performance of frontlines employees and representatives and work with them to identify and resolve operational obstacles rather than waiting for these obstacles to be reported to senior managers on their desks (Lacity & Willcocks, 2018).

The term (MBWA) is a management style that concentrates on human relations, open assessments and knowledge, which are extremely important for development and excellent performance of employees within an organization. In (Serrat, 2017); the authors indicate that this concept of management was first practiced in 1973 by Bill Hewlett and Dave Packard, the founders of HP corporation, this concept was then generalized and popularized by Tom Peters and Robert waterman in the early 1980s, at that time, managers used to be located away from their employees and needed to personally visit their workplaces to actually observe their performance, but nowadays; the organizations rely on electronic techniques that make the presence of managers at employees' workplaces unnecessary since the contact can be easily made through

email, videoconference and internet based solutions (AL-Qeed, 2015), hence; (MBWA) is important for the appreciation, recognition and interpersonal contact between employees and senior managers to improve the performance of the workplace which is a key factor of the human productivity, overall performance, outstanding leadership, creation of organizational culture and other features of organizational excellence (Zgodavova et al., 2017).

Nowadays, globalization has changed the shape of the world and hence; the challenges and obstacles faced by organizations are rapidly growing, the main obstacle faced by public sector organizations is their ability to survive and compete among organizations of private sectors that spend more efforts and invest more finance in order to enhance and modify the performance of their organizations, although there is no relation between public and private sector organizations, since public sector organizations are owned to the state while private sector organizations are owned by individuals (Paul et al., 2016), but it is important for public sector organizations to follow as recent and modern management styles as private ones to gain satisfaction and trust of citizens towards their satisfaction (Dhar & Kushwah, 2019), due to this, the public sector environment has encountered a lot of changes. The authors in (Kim, 2019) believed that maintaining competence is becoming very hard especially for public sector organizations. Moreover, researchers believe that to be able to survive, it is necessary for any organization to create new management strategies that allow them respond to the market changes and needs (Arundel et al., 2019). The basics of management state that the main motivation of any manager in public or private sector organizations is to search for opportunities and discover what strategies to execute to be able to survive among competitors (Korea et al., 2017). A lot of studies proved that to be able to survive, organizations must invest in customers' as well as employees' satisfaction; however, this satisfaction can never be achieved through conventional, imitative and traditional management policies and styles (Kitana Abdelkarim, 2016).

To achieve the desired level of satisfaction, employees must work in a working environment free of stress and problems. However, this can never be achieved by managers who are not concerned with ameliorating the working conditions of employees and solving their work-related problems. To achieve those goals, managers can stay around their subordinates, interact with them and with customers at the same time, and help them solve their problems through direct and face to face communication. This style of managing an organization is known as management by walking around (MBWA). It was concluded by (Durrah et al., 2018) that organizations that follow (MBWA) as a major management style within their operational procedures normally perform much better than those organizations that don't follow (MBWA) since it is considered to be a key success factor for any organization, especially in the public sector (Hassan & Khan, 2019).

The main significance of this paper is to determine the Critical Success Factors (CSFs) of the (MBWA) management styles and to examine its characteristics and perceived merits to demonstrate whether this style is beneficial to apply in the public sector or not. Moreover, the relevance of this study is to outline the perceived merits of (MBWA) and examine whether its elements and CSFs normally vary with the demographic variables of the respondents. The timeliness of this study is planned to be conducted at well-known public-sector organizations including utility and municipality organizations in UAE which are ranked among the top five public sector organizations among 7 in the UAE. Moreover, the relevance of this study is to find the weakness points and practices of (MBWA) and transform these weaknesses into strengths, thereby improving this organization through increasing the level of satisfaction of its employees through adoption of (MBWA).

2 Background

Employee satisfaction is a key indicating factor that measures up to a large extent the employee performance in an organization, to be satisfied, employees must work in a work environment free of stress and problems (Teare, 2017). However, this can never be achieved if managers are not concerned with ameliorating the working conditions of employees and solving their work-related problems. To achieve those goals, managers can stay around their subordinates, interact with them and with customers at the same time, and help them solve their problems through direct and face to face communication. This style of managing an organization is known as management by walking around (MBWA). Recently, it came to be a fact that organizations depend on management by walking around, as a management style, because it is a key success factor for any organization, especially in the healthcare sector.

Employees have lower sense of focus during working hours specifically in public sector organizations mainly due to lack of managers' attention. This causes decrease in production and the motivation to work on employees and it also causes to

the lack of feedback from workers to managers, Lack of communication in the workplace decrease the transparency and transfer of information and even eliminate some weak signals from workers that would contain important opportunity for businesses, Communication in workplace plays a big role in work place. (Hee et al., 2019) claims that companies should regularly articulate their goals, missions and policies to their workers in order to improve their performance (Banks & Harcourt, 2018). He also claims that managers must communicate with their employees to get feedback and eliminate barriers on communication (Ammari et al., 2017).

The implementation of MBWA provides to successful problem-solving skill to manager as he/she has the fully understanding of process of work due to communication between his/her employees and learning the details of work during this supervision. Being a manager in an organization poses challenges to traditional work groups in functional organizations and demands an alternative management approach that requires the evaluation of management competencies to manage at different management levels, the question of “how can I manage them if I can’t communicate/interact with them” (Cascio, 2000) is still ongoing and it reveals a set of barriers for management with respect to communication and employee relation such as unclear roles and responsibilities, management agenda and style, expectations creep and unevenness in processes (Kishk & Ukaga, 2008). In addition, researchers argue that the MBWA management will transform the models of management and the way it is measured, evaluated and developed in organizations, even though many aspects of management will also remain unchanged, however, other researchers claimed in theoretical review of MBWA that “there is a little current theory to guide researchers on the MBWA management in public sector organizations.” (Dodge et al., 2015).

In UAE, the study of MBWA is one of the most considered by Sheikh Mohammed's in 10 commandments of governance. His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, took to share his ten commandments of governance as detailed in his latest book titled “Qissati” (My Story). His first commandment is to serve people. The purpose of the government is to serve the people, the purpose of a government job is to serve the community and the purpose of laws and regulations is to serve humans (Almansoori, 2018). In general, the government organization's mission and vision certainly provide the framework which shows the work procedures in the organizations and distinguish it from another firm. The employee’s performance is affected by one way or another with several factors from both inside and outside the organization. Hence MBWA has a great role and impact on how employees actually take care about their work in public sector organizations in UAE according to the nature and strength of that organization (Rahmat et al., 2020).

Since the fast progress and the rapid development of information and communication in UAE government organizations; (MBWA) and its relationship with the organization, which helps organizations to use all management techniques which are applicable to what organizational change required and contribute to the improvement of employee's performance in the government organization. Therefore, the present review will focus on the management by walking around concept and its relationship with the employee's performance in government organization (Amponsah & Ahmed, 2017).

The challenges to management are also made more complicated with the rapid advancement in information and communication infrastructure in UAE (Fazli & Farooq, 2018), this infrastructure is rapidly growing and changing, this change can’t be kept away from organizational structure and management approaches, we can’t simply ignore these changes and advancements in technological infrastructure of the nation, they are in our daily routine and they shaped the style of our life, and hence; it will shape the style of management in public as well as private sector organizations (Kelidbari et al., 2016).

3 Related work

The authors in (Abiodun et al., 2013) defined management style as the leadership technique a manager practices when managing an organization. It involves any technique adopted by managers to motivate their employees, in addition to directing and controlling them. Other researchers such as (Vahedi & Asadi, 2013) defined managers as “individuals who achieve goals through other people, who oversee the activities of others, and who are responsible of attaining organizational goals”, (Abiodun et al., 2013) stated that the management style is based on three major issues which are the characteristics of leaders, the characteristics of subordinates, and the organizational environment. Management styles

are categorized based on the influence managers have on employees, it can be through their power, their ability to use that power, and through the managers' behaviour as autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire, to begin with, an autocratic manager exercises a lot of power on his subordinates who are not allowed to interfere in the decision-making process. Autocratic managers apply high levels of control and centralization. In addition, they neither encourage employees to learn, nor provide them with any explanations.

The democratic or participative managers allow subordinates to interfere in the decision making and problem-solving processes. Subordinates are always updated regarding any issue that might affect their jobs. Moreover, it is the subordinates' duties to evaluate their performance, participate in setting the organizational goals and objectives, and learn continuously to be able to succeed in their careers. Democratic managers favor acknowledgments, and work on reaching high levels of personal growth and employee satisfaction (Asrar & Kuchinke, 2016).

Furthermore, the authors in (Abiodun et al., 2013) stated that laissez-faire managers provide employees with the freedom, power, and authority. Employees are allowed to set the goals, take decisions, and solve problems with no directions from their managers. Laissez-faire manager takes no responsibility, has no problem in delaying decision making, does not provide feedback, and hardly works on satisfying employee needs.

The author in (Durrah et al., 2018) defined MBWA as the act of being in direct contact with employees, knowing everything happening around them, detecting their needs, and listening to their point of view regarding any possible issue; which is considered the best way for achieving organizational objectives. Regular visits and continuous meetings create a bond between managers and subordinates, enhance their communication, and show interest and commitment of the manager to the employees. As a result, employees will directly respond to the managers' requests. Moreover, Buckner in (AlRawashdeh, 2012) considered that when applying MBWA, the manager encourages team work, takes into consideration employees' points of views and allows them to evaluate the organization. Moreover, employees interfere in setting organizational goals and objectives, in addition to evaluating their self-performance which motivates them and increase their productivity levels.

For (Serrat, 2017), MBWA is an effective leadership method that can be used by any manager, but never in virtual organizations. He highly believes in Edwards Damming's saying "if you wait for people to come to you, you will only get small problems. You must go and find them. The big problems are where people do not realize they have one in the first place". When managers are autocratic and locked in their offices, they will face difficulties in detecting problems, because out of fear subordinates will try to solve the problems alone. This might not be efficient and will lead to more complex problems. On the other hand, sometimes subordinates do not realize that they are facing problems, consequently, if not detected by more experienced and mature people those problems will lead to organizational failure.

(Hassan & Khan, 2019) considers that the major objective of the SEAM process is to locate any organizational dysfunction and measure its hidden costs such as the time wasted in doing unnecessary tasks which do not generate any profits for the organization. Similarly, MBWA is able to reduce the hidden costs such as the wasted time because when managers are always present, supervising their subordinates and allocating the tasks properly, there will be no possibility of wasting time. In addition, MBWA obliges managers to socialize with workers through direct and face to face communication, share their interests, and fulfill their needs, which highly empowers them and increases their level of engagement.

4 Evolution of The Public Sector in UAE

Public Sector reform was introduced in the UAE and developing countries to overcome issues related to administering laws, providing better services to customers, and ensuring equity and justice (Hayter et al., 2018). Governments around the world have implemented various forms of PS reform that were associated with NPM (New Performance Management), such as implementing private sector practices, introducing market forces to governments, and establishing democracy in organizations. While NPM initially developed for the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development members, it was doubtful if this concept would be applicable in developing countries (Kankanhalli et al., 2017). Globalization and the need to ensure international competitiveness encourage the reform process and transformation of governments in developing countries to overcome traditional management issues, such as lack of accountability, poor

performance, inefficient systems, high operating costs, and bureaucracy.

In (Kankanhalli et al., 2017), the study provided an example of the differences between public management systems in developing countries. He studied two situations in the global context where the application and implementation of NPM demonstrated both marked success and failure in the process. The study focused on Singapore as a success model, while Bangladesh analyzed as a model of failure; Vis versa, the NPM concepts. However, the cultural and governmental differences between Singapore and Bangladesh might influence the degree of reform. For example, Bangladesh showed less effort than Singapore in implementing the necessary public administration process, less political support to implement change, a lack of having qualified people in the PSOs (Public Sector Organizations), and in facing issues in establishing the rule of law due to the impact of bureaucracy.

Over the years, there have been tremendous changes in the public sectors of both developing and developed countries; one significant change is the transformation and movement from old-style management to modern management (Furst Bowe, 2019). This has motivated national governments to institute PS reforms towards improving the working culture, contributing to decentralization, providing ground-level workers with a sense of responsibility, measuring individual productivity, being client-focused and initiating overall improvements in the entire process chain (Alansaari et al., 2019).

The Ministry of Cabinet Affairs and the Future enables the excellence in performance of government entities and development of leadership capabilities in the ministries, authorities and federal institutions, as well as proposing ideas, designing innovative initiative and enhancing the leading role of UAE. Government Excellence Model has been developed to serve the ambitious vision of the United Arab Emirates. This vision is for the UAE to be among the best countries in the world by 2021 and keep pace with leading programs and projects implemented in the field of service improvement within the UAE government (Saeed Mohamed et al., 2019). It also involves coping with modern trends in public sector administration to reach a leadership position in all areas. His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum became Prime Minister in 2006; the UAE government has gone through phases of a remarkable evolution (Lasrado & Gomiscek, 2017). These phases have resulted in the UAE government's achieving top ranking in efficiency as well as raising UAE's ranking to the 12th position in the International Competitiveness Index in 2014 up from 27th place in 2011. This System has been designed based on successful practices applied by the UAE government through structured criteria that inform interested parties wishing to achieve an active leadership position about the programs, initiatives, and strategies that need to be adopted and implemented (Flevy Lasrado, 2018). These have been included within three main pivots: the vision, innovation, and enablers. The system has been adopted as a basis for assessing government entities participating in the Government Excellence Award. The aim is to determine the level of maturity they have reached throughout their journey towards achieving effective leadership. It is also to identify improvement areas and opportunities which help these entities achieve their ambitious objectives. To this end, Government Excellence System has considered adopting a new way of thinking in planning, implementing, and developing government action. This new way based on innovative principles and concepts - that have been tried and applied within the UAE government - that have proven their effectiveness in achieving leading results (Lasrado & Gomiscek, 2017)

5 Critical Success Factors of MBWA in UAE Public Sector Organizations

The impact of MBWA on the organizational outcomes may be studied from different dimensions through different dimensions, such as discovering facts, communication improvement, motivation, creating, and feedback.

5.1 Discovering Facts

Discovering facts is organized steps aim to find the information about a problem, this information helps the managers to determine the actual reality of the problem to be resolved. Managers are having difficulty finding out the problems facing the organization's employees (Streshly, 2012), so; MBWA is one of the most effective methods of identifying and finding solutions to these problems. According to (Durrah et al., 2018); discovering facts refers to the ability of the manager through walk round to identify the problems of organization and judging the quality of implementation and seeing cases of employees and get comprehensive information about the organization.

5.2 Communication Improvement

Communication is the core of management, and managers cannot perform the basic management functions without it. Managerial success depends on the ability of managers to develop empathy and reach at mutual understandings with colleagues, subordinates and even clients by creating good connections with them. (AL Shra'ah et al., 2012) considered MBWA as a communication strategy between managers and subordinates, depending on informal contacts which build trust and promote teamwork. Others have defined it as informal communication technology leads to raise employees' awareness of tasks and improve the confidence level which in turn encourage employees to share new ideas. Along the same line.

5.3 Motivation

Motivation is an important dimension of MBWA, and the impact of motivation on high quality performance has been identified by many researchers. Practicing MBWA promotes the positive attitudes of employees towards the work and motivates managers to face work challenges of direct communication with employees (AL Shra'ah et al., 2012). Also, (Buckner, 2008) presented that practicing MBWA increases the leadership effectiveness because it encourages top managers to leave their desks and roaming in the workplace, connecting directly to the activities, building relationships, increasing personal involvement, and expressing recognition that employees need to contribute to organizational success. According to (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014), unintended negative effects of MBWA may arise due to oversight-oriented walk rounds, which were based on a suspicion relationship that put managers in the role of inspecting on front line staff-and consequently, compelled front-line staff to conceal their actual assurances.

5.4 Creativity

The main goal of development is to upgrade the organizational capability to process its functions and cope with problems and challenges, through developing communication, interpersonal relations, trust, motivation, decision-making processes, leadership styles and cooperation. Many researchers argue that practicing MBWA leads to continuous developments and innovation, the organizational performance positively affected by implementing employees' ideas that are solicited by quality improvement programs such as MBWA (Tucker & Singer, 2015). Moreover, MBWA enables managers to understand the different aspects of the problem, and its probable impacts, when dealing with front line workers, consequently, improves managers' skills in problem solving (David & Amey, 2020; Tucker & Singer, 2015).

5.5 Feedback

The main objective of feedback is to improve performance where the managers should know how to give it and how to receive it from subordinates, in order to be more constructive when discussing performance, when it is done correctly it will increase the employee engagement. Employees' perceptions of feedback and service quality perceptions are related through trust in managers. Managers should use MBWA to provide constructive feedback by acknowledging good performance immediately and publicly, but they should make criticism privately and not on the spot.

5.6 Quality of Service

The importance of studying quality of service QoS can be attributed to the massive growth in the service industry, which in turn increases the importance of understanding the factors of success and failure of service organizations. Service quality has been defined from different perspectives, (David & Amey, 2020) defined service as *"Any act or performance that one party can offer to another that is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything"* (Cadet et al., 2017)

5.7 Balanced Scorecard

Research has shown that organizations are more and more eager to implement modern management approaches that concentrate on various aspects of the organization and is in line with the organizational strategy. As a result, this has given

rise to the development of numerous multi-dimensional performance measurement systems such as the MBWA, performance pyramid and the determinants framework. There is growing evidence within the literature which has demonstrated that the use of MBWA contributes to the organizational performance effectiveness (Brage et al., 2014). The usage of MBWA as part of organizational management has been highly recommended by many scholars because of its cascading effect. It facilitates in the provision of accurate and meaningful measurement of performance which in turn encourages appropriate employee behaviour within the workforce, thus, providing better and reliable information to management in their decision-making process.

5.8 Training

The universalist style proved to be better than others as it highlights the existence of management practices, thus, organizations adopting the universalist approach and providing training will be more effective. However, the contingent stand specifies that an organization's training policy will depend on their strategic approach. The configurational approach, on the other hand, lays emphasis on the concept of complementarities between the different management practices. It advocates that training improves organizational effectiveness to a large extent when combined with other corresponding management practices (Samwel, 2018). Performance related training is another form of training that has gathered momentum since the 1990's (Armstrong & Brown, 2009). The basis of this type of training is that it makes provision for the improvement of abilities and aptitudes which have a direct effect on individual and team performance. According to (Dermol & Čater, 2013), it is worthy to note that researchers have mainly focused their attention on exploring the current results of training at either the individual or organizational level.

5.9 Top management support

According to (García-Sánchez et al., 2017), commitment refers to attachment and readiness to put extensive effort on behalf of the organization. Authors in (Lee et al., 2016) have emphasized on the importance of commitment as it leads to improved performance in the event organizations decide to shift from traditional control oriented approach to workforce management. On the other hand, (Cheng et al., 2007) have highlighted that for the successful organizational performance, organizations should have active senior management support, participation and leadership. This is mainly in the event that top management commitment and leadership acceptance for performance measurements implementation is absent, employees will have the tendency to give less or no priority to the new system.

5.10 Employee engagement

Employee engagement is considered to be a vast concept that defines almost all the facets of management. It is a relatively new concept for the business and academic world (Ashraf & Siddiqui, 2020). Although the term employee engagement is still being debated and researched by academicians and the corporate world, it has become the buzz word of the current globalized economy. On the other hand, (Berry & Morris, 2008) indicated that employee engagement being a new concept, has received much attention in the past five years in the media and has been considered to be vital to an organization's success. From a theoretical point of view, employee engagement has been related to job performance, and this is the reason why the theme has attracted so much interest over the past decades (Sun & Bunchapattanasakda, 2019).

5.11 Reward Management

Reward Management is concerned with the formulation and implementation of strategies and policies that aim to reward people fairly, equitably and consistently in accordance with their value to the organization, the concept of reward has gained much popularity in the previous years that it has not only captured the attention of researchers but managers as well (Sun & Bunchapattanasakda, 2019). This is mainly because reward constitutes one of the key components of a Performance Management System, which is directly linked to the motivation, performance and expected behaviour of the workforce in their quest to put additional effort for the discharge of assigned duties and responsibilities. Organizations can have recourse to two types of rewards while designing their reward management strategies namely intrinsic and extrinsic. (Sun & Bunchapattanasakda, 2019) pointed out that reward is conducive when the employees show readiness to contribute to the profitability of the organization through additional efforts.

5.12 Enterprise resource planning ERP

With the rapid changes occurring in the dynamic environment, organizations can no longer avail themselves to the traditional management approaches, most of the researchers are of the opinion that ERP system has become famous in a lot of companies so as to deal with environmental change and to face challenges while others opined that ERP implementation can provide a competitive edge to organization and help to achieve operational excellence (Sun & Bunchapattanasakda, 2019). According to (Voronkova et al., 2017) , some 30,000 firms have applied an ERP system across the world necessitating a yearly investment of US\$ 10 billion. However, according to (Shatat, 2014), during the years 1996 to 2003, a remarkable positive growth has been noted in the number of ERP system.

5.13 Culture

There is unanimous consensus among academics and practitioners who are of the view that organizational performance depends on the extent to which the culture values are broadly shared (Nikpour, 2017). Various studies have integrated organizational culture as contingent factors that can enhance organizational performance (Abdul et al., 2019). The widespread popularity and interest in organizational culture stem from the common belief that corporate culture usually leads to superior organizational financial performance. Three organizational factors namely innovation, outcome orientation and teamwork have been proposed by (Baird et al., 2012) in his examination relating to the impact of organizational culture on performance (Idowu et al., 2020).

5.14 Behaviour

Behavioural factors have recently played a vital role in the positive use of management approaches in organizations. Studies led by researchers have noted that although management approaches have been implemented in many firms, these are not being used to their full extent. One of the main reasons that have given rise to such a state of affairs is employee behaviour (Maseko, 2017). They also added that though particular attention has been given in the literature to the direct relationship between the behavioural factors and PMS, this has simply been discarded by organizations. There has been extensive debate in the literature as regards the behavioural factors and the use of management, the outcome of which has generated very conflicting views. Behavioural factors are crucial for a successful management approach implementation. This argument is supported by giving prime importance on the laying foundation of any management approaches which is based on the behavioural and outcome approach or a combination of both.

6 Conclusion

The implementation of proper management style is a key factor for the success of private and public sector organizations, in public sector organizations, this factor is considered to be more important and essential due to traditional differences and organizational gaps between public and private sector, a number of factors shape the success of public sector organizations and are critical to its success and growth, those factors have to be considered throughout different management levels to cope with cultural and social changes resulted from rapid growth and evolution encountered in public and private sector organizations.

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