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An Evidence-Based Review on Nationalization of Human Resources in the GCC Countries

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An Evidence-Based Review on Nationalization of Human Resources in the GCC Countries

Abstract

This study aims to conceptualize the term “workforce nationalization” and enhance its effectiveness with an extensive review of the extant literature and a thematic analysis. The study explores the role of institutional policies, HRM practices, gender, nationalization challenges and its outcomes. A quantitative and qualitative analysis of 62 articles in the literature helped in identifying key themes and factors to measure the effectiveness of nationalization policies. Additionally, this study aims to provide an agenda for future research with implications for management and practice that include enhancing current practices and improving effective implementation of nationalization policies. In doing so, this review contributes to the current research that has not yet explored in depth the effectiveness of nationalization in the GCC countries.

Keywords: GCC countries; nationalization; localization; human resource management

Introduction

Viewing workforce nationalization in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region as more than a catchy headline in the local news, we argue that nationalization initiatives offer a unique and rich research phenomenon engulfed with managerial, organizational, economic and political dilemmas, the investigation of which would profoundly enlighten employers, policy makers and scholars. Although its importance to the future and sustainability of the GCC economies, workforce nationalization has not received significant research attention among management scholars as concluded by various studies, some of their conclusions are based on extensive reviews of studies specific to the GCC region (e.g., Alfarhan & Al-Busaidi, 2018; Budhwar et al., 2019; Elbanna et al., 2020a; Glaister et al., 2019). While some scholars have attributed this gap to several difficulties that challenge research in the Arab region in general (Elbanna et al., 2020a; Zahra,

2011), this does not change the reality that nationalization challenges continue to exacerbate in the GCC region (Budhwar et al., 2019).

Moreover, although major changes in the region over the last two decades has created fertile grounds to raise new research questions associated with workforce nationalization, the research about this topic is still rare in academic journals and hence we need to examine such questions and revisit theoretical assumptions and conceptual models of current nationalization practices. The pressing question now is '*how can we improve the current practices of nationalization in the GCC region in order to enhance their effectiveness?*' To answer this, first, we explore the current nationalization research discussion in the GCC countries. Second, in light of our findings, we offer agenda for future research to better understand nationalization practices and enhance its prospect. In so doing, we conduct both quantitative and qualitative reviews of the published literature about the nationalization to reveal key themes and put forward an issue-based research agenda that can also provide policy makers and employers with relevant implications.

The rest of this paper is organized as follows. We begin by explaining the methodology of the review before presenting an overview and analysis of current literature and the revealed themes. Then, we conclude the paper, present detailed research agenda to advance research on workforce nationalization and discuss its practical implications.

Review methodology

This study has two objectives. These are (1) describing the current research landscape concerning workforce nationalization in the GCC countries and (2) developing a future research agenda to better understand and enhance the practices of workforce nationalization. In order to achieve these objectives, we combined quantitative and qualitative analyses as described in our two-stage approach below.

The first stage aims to review the literature to identify relevant papers on workforce nationalization in the GCC countries. We used different keywords to identify the list of articles for review, including localization, nationalization, workforce localization, workforce nationalization, GCC, Bahrainization,

Emiratization, Kuwaitization, Qatarization, Omanization, and Saudization. Using these keywords and similar to previous reviews (Elbanna et al., 2020b), we reviewed academic journals in the EBSCO, Emerald, JSTOR Business, ProQuest, and Science Direct databases to gather relevant articles. Taken into account limited research on the workforce nationalization in the GCC countries, the authors did not place restrictions on the time-period of their review. Upon applying the above criteria, our systematic literature review process revealed 62 relevant research studies from 28 journals (see Table 1). Only three papers were identified before 2000.

To ensure the robustness of the review procedure, the first two authors, who conducted the literature review, had to agree that the identified papers were relevant to GCC workforce nationalization. The few cases where there was initial doubt about the inclusion of a paper, the first two authors discussed their inclusion until a consensus was reached. Second, in order to discover if there were any relevant papers not captured by the above keywords, we screened the references from the identified articles. Third, using the identified keywords, we reviewed the identified journals in the first two rounds. It is worth noting that, we considered theoretical papers in addition to empirical-based ones in order to contribute to the frame of reference needed to achieve the study objectives. Irrelevant areas for the purpose of this study, such as other managerial practices in the GCC region or HRM in other Arab countries, were disregarded.

In accordance to a predesigned coding frame, the quantitative review of Stage 1 summarized the current research productivity based on key descriptive factors which most of them were coded as dichotomous variables with 0 or 1. We consulted relevant literature (Cropanzano, 2009; Gilson & Goldberg, 2015; Johnson et al., 2007), to code research methods of each study into one of four categories, namely, theoretical, quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods papers. We reviewed and included the scope of each study, theory usage, sample (focus country, size) in addition to other factors such as method design (data collection method, source of data, time horizons, and analysis techniques), author profile (affiliation, nationality) key findings and abstract of each study. Table 2 presents some important characteristics of the analyzed variables in this stage.

The purpose of stage 2 was to use a thematic analysis to describe the current research landscape and develop a future research agenda on the workforce nationalization concerning unanswered research questions for both public and private organizations in the GCC region. Thematic analysis is a suitable qualitative tool for understanding patterns and trends in the data. It involved reading the identified papers and drawing conclusions from its multistep process (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The thematic analysis involved two steps. Using an inductive approach in Step 1, we categorized the sampled studies by topic or issue to identify trends in the data. In Step 2, we used a more analytical approach to analyze the content of each selected article and categorize the studies by main research questions aiming to better understand the current research dialogue and identify relevant future research avenues.

In the next section, we present a brief overview of the current literature and then summarize the literature under each theme by discussing the research questions raised, findings from these studies, and areas for future research.

Insert Table 1 about here

Overview of current literature

Our literature review led to 62 articles published in 28 journals (see Tables 1 and 3). 21 journals have an impact factor more than one, 16 journals were classified as two and more according to the British AJG list and 19 journals were ranked as B and above based on the Australian ABDC list. With the exception of six journals, all sampled journals have information for at least two out of the three quality measures. One journal only, namely, *Education, Business and Society: Contemporary Middle Eastern Issues* (2008-2014), did not have any quality measures because its publication was suspended since 2015. The above reflects the relevant quality of selected journals. 31 of the papers reviewed (50%) were published in five journals with nine papers (15%) published in one journal, namely, *International Journal of Human Resource Management*. The other four journals are *Employee Relations: The International Journal*, *Human Resource*

Development International, Middle East Journal and Education, Business and Society: Contemporary Middle Eastern Issues. The GCC workforce nationalization also attracts the attention of the top tier HRM journals, such as Human Resource Management, International Journal of Human Resource Management, and Human Resource Management Journal (N = 11, 18%). Similarly, this also applies to few top tier business journals, namely, Journal of World Business, American Economic Journal: Economic Policy, Journal of Business Ethics, and Journal of Business Research (N = 6, 10%).

As presented in Table 2, 15 different areas of workforce nationalization are studied in the sampled articles. The first four areas, namely, public policies, education, HRM and challenges, have received the attention of more than 30% of studies. Only seven studies (11%) involve comparison and one of them involved comparison outside the GCC region (Parceró & Ryan, 2016). One of the most commonly examined aspect (in 66% of the studies) is the role of institutional policies and their effects on the implementation of nationalization programs. In addition, studies that focuses on gender and the role of women in implementing nationalization programs are notable (about 55% of the studies). It was expected to have a good proportion of the reviewed articles examined the how workforce nationalization interrelates with a variety of HRM practices (about 53% of the studies). The least common emphases of the selected articles are the role of contextual factors such as social contract (24 %) and to a greater extent psychological contract (11%) on nationalization programs implementation. Another related topic that receives little attention from scholars according to the review is the examination of international business in promoting for nationalization programs in the GCC countries (3%). Although it is of greater importance, only 32.2% of the studies focused on the outcomes generated from the implementation of workforce nationalization programs in the GCC.

Most of the studies were empirical (83.9%) adopting quantitative (43.5%) qualitative (29.1%) or mixed methods (11.3%). Out of the 52 empirical articles, 48 articles were cross sectional, and four articles were longitudinal. Ten studies were theoretical/literature based (16.1%). Compared to a recent review on management research in the Arab World (Elbanna et al., 2020a) where survey was the dominant data

collection method (44%) followed by interviews and secondary data (31%, 23%); in this review, secondary data (38.4%) and interview (37.1%) are the dominant data collection methods in our study followed by survey (24.2%). This may show the exploratory nature of the current research on the GCC workforce nationalization compared to other management research areas in the Arab World. The most frequent unit of analysis was that of country (40.3%) followed by individual (35.5%) and then organization (24.2%) which is also different from the reported results of Elbanna et al. (2020a), namely, individual, then organization and lastly country levels. The six GCC countries are represented in the articles we reviewed with most of the scholarly attention has been placed on the UAE (54.8%) and Saudi Arabia (40.3%). Qatar and Oman (17.7) along with Bahrain and Kuwait (12.9%) received lower scholarly attention. This is expected given that the UAE and Saudi Arabia are the largest economies in the GCC region which may offer researchers with more opportunities for conducting research. Although most of articles (77%) were by scholars who are affiliated to institutions located in the GCC region, 45% of them were not Arabs. These results highlight the evident interest of both institutions and researchers, in and outside the GCC region, in conducting research on GCC workforce nationalization. Of the 62 reviewed articles, 39 do not base their studies on a well-grounded theory, while less than half the articles reviewed (23) have a theory for the presentation of their arguments.

These results show an ample room for scholars to add to the workforce nationalization in the GCC literature. In the following sections, we address the questions that guided our evidence-based research and suggest areas where additional research is required to complete the current view of workforce nationalization in the GCC region.

Insert Table 2 about here

Analysis of literature: thematic analysis and research agenda

Conceptualization of workforce nationalization

Consistent with being at early stages in conceptualizing workforce nationalization, about 33% of the articles attempted to provide clear conceptualization of the term. The studies which are interested in this issue has been increasing over the last two decades (e.g., Abaker et al. 2019; Al Ali 2008; Al-Dosary and Rahma, 2005; Forstenlechner et al. 2012; Forstenlechner & Mellahi 2011; Goby 2015; Waxin et al. (2018)). Given its importance and prevalence in GCC human resources management praxis, several scholars have tried to define the concept from various perspectives. A review of the existing workforce nationalization definitions underlined the existence of an assortment of themes. For example, group of definitions emphasized on HRM activities, such as recruitment, selection, training and development, to be performed by centralized state institutions (e.g., TANMIA in UAE, PAAET in Kuwait) or in a decentralized manner through encouraging institutions and firms to perform them for local employees (Rees et al. (2007) Waxin et al. (2018)). It has been observed that while several studies conceptualized workforce nationalization as a planned replacement of foreign workers with nationals, largely through employment quota targets (Abaker et al. 2019; Al-Harbi 1997; Salih (2010); Toledo (2013), other studies highlighted the importance of enhancing the employability of nationals through investment in education and skills development (Al Ali 2008; Forstenlechner et al. 2012; Forstenlechner & Mellahi 2011; Goby (2015)Rees et al. 2007). Thus, several development and vocational training initiatives have been reported to support the implementation of workforce nationalization. For instance, Saudi Arabia established the Human Resources Development Fund, specialized training institutes and initiated internship projects through local chambers of commerce and industry to advocate the implementation of workforce nationalization (Al-Dosary and Rahma, 2005). Table 3 provides a summary of workforce nationalization definitions reported in studies conducted in GCC countries.

A careful examination of these studies reveals that a common theme that cuts across most of the nationalization definitions is state intervention to ensure an effective policy implementation, which may

take a direct or an indirect form. The direct market intervention includes imposing quotas and reserving certain jobs for nationals (Forstenlechner et al. 2012; Rutledge et al. 2011). An example of the direct market intervention is the Nitaqat program in Saudi Arabia. The program is designed by Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Labor and Social Development to foster the implementation of workforce nationalization in the private sector. The program classifies private firms into four color-coded categories: platinum, green, yellow and red based on the percentage of Saudi nationals employed by them (Abaker et al. 2019). The indirect intervention encompasses enabling national employees to achieve their career potentials by providing them with training and development opportunities. This intervention may take a radical format through a reform of the educational system (Forstenlechner et al. 2012) or capacity building initiatives to enhance nationals' skills, knowledge and competencies (Forstenlechner & Mellahi 2011; Rutledge et al., 2011).

Our review of the literature illustrates that most definitions of workforce nationalization place more emphasis on 'quantity nationalization', where specific quotas are set for organizations to keep (e.g., hiring a particular number of locals each year or maintaining a certain percentage of local workforce). Exceptions for this line of thinking are Al Ali (2008), Forstenlechner & Mellahi (2011), and Goby (2015) who highlighted the importance of building and developing nationals' skills to enhance their chances in the job market. Taking a more comprehensive approach, Forstenlechner et al. (2012) described workforce nationalization (e.g., Emiratization) as a process that has two aspects. The first is 'bottom-up', where the state has a critical role in restructuring the educational systems and aligning the skills of graduates with the needs of the market. This aspect emphasizes on 'quality nationalization' where the state endeavors to enable national employees to achieve their career potentials by providing them with relevant and high-quality education along with training and development opportunities. The second is 'top-down', through which the state intervenes by setting a range of direct quantitative measures such as quotas and specifying certain jobs to be staffed exclusively by nationals. Based on this discussion, we propose the following definition for workforce nationalization: *"a national strategy that aims to enhance the employability of national workforce by qualifying them with the knowledge, skills and competencies needed for a knowledge-based*

economy”. This proposed definition can help boost the attractiveness of the national workforce and make it beneficial and economically advantaged for organizations to employ nationals.

Insert Table 3 about here

One of the largest Quota-based labor policies are the ones implemented in the GCC region. Many of the articles, 21 out of 62, describes the Quota system as a popular way of implementing nationalization programs in the GCC countries. This Quota system, as argued by Parcero and Ryan (2016), imposes a minimum expatriate/national personnel ratio. This system is usually used to favor members of disadvantaged groups and aims to increase the representation of these groups in a variety of areas such as elected positions and employment (Peck, 2017). Several articles described the Quota system, which holds different names depending on the country (e.g., Nitaqat policy in Saudi Arabia), as a way to implement nationalization programs (e.g., Rees, Mamman, & Braik, 2007; Swailes, Said, & Fahdi, 2012). Forstenlechner, Lettice, and Özbilgin (2012) described the Quota system implemented in the UAE. While there is discussion in the literature about the level of implementation of Quota system in several GCC countries, few studies examined its effectiveness in achieving nationalization results. One of the main factors that influence its success is whether the government enforces the system and provides incentives for companies that successfully implemented it (Peck, 2017). Based on the current literature, quota system appears to be the main tool for implementing nationalization programs in the GCC countries.

To sum, it would appear to be a great potential to assess whether Quota system is an effective way to implement nationalization, as it has been first initiated and implemented since 1980s and has become more institutionalized practice in 2000. Previous studies that examined the effectiveness of quota systems in employment followed an economic approach to understand how the system impact on employment outcomes (Nazarov, Kang, & von Schrader, 2015; Yuko Mori & Sakamoto, 2018). This approach could be employed in examining the impact of Quota system in achieving workforce nationalization in the GCC countries.

The role of institutional policies

The institutional context encompasses norms, rules and cognitive structures and sets the boundaries within which human and economic interactions take place (Scott, 2013). Consequently, the evaluation of the nationalization strategy requires the simultaneous examination of the institutional context in which policies are enacted (Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner, 2014; Glaister et al, 2019). As Edelman and Suchman (1997) note societies that are immersed in a sea of law and regulations, have a strong influence on nationalization strategies.

Public and institutional policies

Studies examining the institutional policies requirements for the effective implementation of workforce nationalization programs, perhaps not surprisingly, dominate this stream of research (41 articles), and this interest has been stable over the years. An example of this line of inquiry is the study of Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner (2014) on workforce policy design and institutional environment in the UAE. While the focus in the 1990s was to embark a policy of workforce nationalization that aims at reducing dependence of expatriate workers and creating job opportunities to nationals, more recently the focus has shifted toward creating mechanisms to set and monitor achievement of workforce nationalization targets. For example, Rees et al. (2007) discussed the government initiatives in the UAE that was first introduced to support nationalization such as restricting the number of work permits issued for expatriates, funding HR development programs for nationals, and setting up a federal institution (called TANMIA) responsible for nationalization programs. Also, many of the articles discussed the early enforcement of national employment quota policies (such as the Nitaqat program in KSA) in the GCC region (Peck, 2017; Yamada, 2018) that started in the 1990s (Al-Dosary & Rahman, 2005; Swailes et al., 2012; Williams et al., 2011). Swailes et al. (2012), for example, discussed the compensatory policies provided by the Omani government for private sector companies for meeting Omanization target.

The current state of knowledge about nationalizations strategies in the GCC region is heavily skewed towards examining the formal regulations and mechanisms in place, such as the studies of Mellhai (2007)

in KSA, Berrebi et al. (2009) in Qatar, Gabeen et al.'s (2018) in the UAE and Glaister et al. (2019) in Oman to list few. The literature establishes that the GCC governments albeit to a varying degree are key actors in shaping the nationalisation policies and practices through administrative micro interventions to prescribe how businesses organize the national and expatriate workforce. The direct inversion measures are in the form of quota systems that have proved inefficient over the past four decades (see Berraebi et al., 2009; Toledo, 2013, Marchon and Toledo, 2014; Peck, 2017; Gabeen et al., 2018). While the rules and regulations created sanctions for deviant organizations that do not employ nationals, it has also created defenses and loopholes to escape sanctions. Several studies capture the evasive mechanisms adopted by organizations. For example, Sidani and Al Aris (2014) identify the effect of institutional drivers on talent management of nationals as 'necessary evil'. Barneet et al (2015) concurs with the view that labor quotas create inefficiencies and is a mean for organizations to sustain their legal legitimacy in the GCC contexts while Peck (2017) highlights the negative effect of the Saudi quota system (Natiqat) on private sector operating costs and multinationals' increased exit rates.

Due to ineffective implementation of quota systems, many studies have shifted toward examining the reform initiatives that have started to take place by many GCC countries in recent years in an attempt to provide solutions to some challenges faced by the government that led to ineffective implementation of nationalization strategies. Moideenkutty et al. (2016) study, for instance, discussed the actions made by the Omani government to deal with low local employment such as reserving certain trades and occupations for locals.

Another important issue that can be seen in the current literature is the fact that institutional policies have put more pressure on some sectors to localize their workforce more than other sectors (Williams et al., 2011). For example, Forstenlechner and Mellahi (2011) showed that banking and financial services sector were found to be highly regulated in terms of achieving workforce nationalization than other sectors. Moreover, the Qatarization program originally proposed a quota of 50 percent Qataris in key positions in the oil and gas industry (Williams et al., 2011). However, a more soft and indirect policies are used with

MNEs and the industry sector. Then, it is wise to recommend future research that spread among different sectors and that could investigate the phenomena from the employer perspectives. This can help find better ways to develop more institutionalized government nationalization policies that could benefit both parties: the employer as well as employees.

Quota system

The inefficiencies of the quota system have also been captured in relation to the rise of phantom employment or the ‘ghost employee’ among the national workforce (see Al-Dosary and Rehman, 2005; Salih, 2010; Al Riyami et al., 2015).

Our examination of the literature indicates that nationals’ human capital development is hampered by institutional fragmentation (Yamada, 2018), we also capture scholars’ calls for effective nationalization through market-based mechanism rather than fiat and the need for policy options to develop the skill profiles of nationals (Al-Dosary 2004; Al-Dosary and Rahman, 2005; Forstenlechner et al., 2012; alfarhan et al., 2018). Despite these calls, limited evidence exists on the outcomes of the quota systems in the GCC. For example, the study of Parcero and Ryan (2016) in Qatar and UAE, which although established the beneficial effect of the quota system on the nationals’ talent acquisition highlighted the associated costs to private sector organizations. Similarly, Forstenlechner and Mellahi (2011) st established that less coercive measures are more successful in enticing organizations to employ home nationals in UAE.

Psychological and Social Contracts

The standpoint of neo-institutionalism argues that institutional context could not only be conceptualized as formal norms, regulations and procedures, but also could include informal values, cultures and conventions (March and Olsen, 2010). An emergent dialogue in nationalization literature examines the relationship between the informal institutional mechanisms such as values and norms in the society and nationalization strategies (Bosbait and Wilson, 2005; Williams et al.,

2011; Forstenlechner et al. 2012b; Sidani and Al Ariss, 2014; Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner, 2014). Our review suggests two important and interrelated factors that are closely linked to the successful implementation of workforce nationalization. These are social and psychological contracts that describe the relationship between the employer and employees. Of the reviewed papers, about 22.5% (14 out of 62 articles) discussed or examined social/psychological contracts and how they are related to workforce nationalization. The majority of these studies are examined within the UAE context. Moreover, most of the papers described social/psychological contracts and in what way it relates to workforce nationalization initiatives. However, few studies were undertaken to provide empirical examination of the phenomena of social and/or psychological contracts.

This stream advocates the importance of normative behavior by organizations and decision makers and signifies the need to revise and update the social contract in addressing nationalizations strategies through enhancing education systems and addressing biases and nationals' perceptions about vocational education and blue collar jobs (Bosbati and Wilson, 2005; Gallant and Pounder, 2008; Forstenlechner and Rutledge, 2010; Forstenlechner and Mellahi, 2011; Williams et al., 2011; Tlaiss and Al Waqfi (2020). These studies acknowledge that in the GCC states, governments provide their nationals with well-remunerated undemanding public sector jobs as part of the social contract to distribute wealth (World Bank 2016). A careful examination of the studies in this domain establishes the need to revise the principal transmission mechanisms of this 'social contract' between the State and the nationals and capture several weaknesses in relation to policy regulations, implementation tools as well as inadequate cultural norms such as the tendency to accept white collar jobs and nationals' career progression perspectives. Our examination reveals paucity in research that provides explicit description or an explanation of how to foster an informal institutional context that complements formal mechanisms. The same observation motivated the study by Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner (2014) which examined the formal and informal mechanisms in the United Arab Emirates, however, there remains a need to simultaneously examine formal governmental and informal non-governmental influences on nationalization to develop further understanding about the

nationalization initiative within the middle eastern context (Waxin and Bateman, 2016; Glaister et al., 2019).

An important factor that impedes the success of workforce nationalization is the effect of existing social contract among nationals in the GCC countries that describes the implicit relationship between national employees and the employer. The Gulf States are characterized by a special form of social contract that embodies a set of attitudes and beliefs about work (Swales et al., 2012). Under the current social contract, the public sector has to guarantee employment to home nationals and to provide high remuneration to them in exchange for their employment (Forstenlechner & Rutledge, 2010). Consequently, this has led to a strong preference among nationals for jobs in the public sector (Forstenlechner, 2009). Looking at it from the psychological contract theory, national employees in the GCC region have built certain beliefs that take shapes around the expectations that future employers (most likely from the public sector) will provide secure and well-paid work that is not particularly challenging (Swales et al., 2012).

Thus, not only does the wrongful perception of social contract appear to be impeding the uptake of workforce nationalization, but there are also concerns that the public sector has reached a saturation point and the employment of nationals in the public sector can no longer be guaranteed (Forstenlechner, Lettice, et al., 2012). The implication is that not only will social and psychological barriers impede the successful implementation of nationalization initiatives, but also it may be problematic for the society in that nationals will not accept private sector jobs that offer lower compensations compared with the public sector, thus causing an increase in unemployment rate. This calls for the need to revisit the current social contract in the GCC region (Forstenlechner & Rutledge, 2010).

Another implication relates to the unrealistic psychological contract that spread among national employees in the GCC. The reviewed literature has shown that psychological contract is context specific and confirms previous arguments that national culture, systems and institutions substantially influence how the psychological contract forms and is shaped (e.g., Hui, Lee, & Rousseau, 2004; Westwood, Sparrow, &

Leung, 2001). While this may be realistic, it creates huge problems to the nationalization efforts. Potential national employees do not see a need to develop their knowledge and skills since they can ensure secured jobs with low level of competencies. Few studies have tackled this issue from different perspectives. Swailes et al. (2012), for example, found that education system in Oman is not developing graduates with the right ethics in terms of their expectations of the employment relationship. Thus, their study suggests that there is a need to focus on the beliefs that young people develop about the government role in providing for their future and about the nature of the employer`s expectations from employees. Ali et al. (2020) have examined psychological contract from different perspectives. Authors investigated the impact of job insecurity – as a psychological contract breach - caused by nationalization policies on expatriate workers. The study found adverse effect of job insecurity for expatriates on their job performance like disengagement, burnout, and intentions to quit. Accordingly, it appears that further studies that focused on examining how unrealistic social/psychological contracts forms and what factors are affecting them in order to provide practical implications for employers and the government to put strategies that will help change the current social/psychological contracts.

In summary, the current state of knowledge criticizes the utility of imposing quotas and reserving certain jobs to be exclusively staffed by nationals. Further, our review reveals a paucity of research which simultaneously examine the formal mechanisms and informal norms compared to empirical studies that had entirely focused on examining enacted policies and procedures. There also remains the need to examine the effect of existing rules and prevailing social norms on market imperfections such as the rise in phantom employment which results from the imperfections in the labor market (Al-Dosary et al., 2006; Ali et al., 2020). Considering the institutional context is quite different between the GCC and other countries where nationalization strategies took place, comparative studies between different countries and regions would provide a better understanding about the role of context in designing policy for supporting nationalization. Further, although the focus on institutional context is valuable as it helps to separate competing layers of the framework in which nationalization strategies are planned and enacted, further work could be done on

understanding the interplay between the specific aspects such as Islamic religion, social and cultural norms and nationalization's endeavors.

HRM practices, nationalization challenges and outcomes

Workforce nationalization and HRM practices

Important contribution of the reviewed research includes articles that examined the link between workforce localization and HRM practices. Particularly, over half of the reviewed studies (33 articles) at least described, and to a higher extent, examined the link between workforce localization programs and the HRM practices implemented (e.g., Madhi & Barrientos, 2003; Rees et al., 2007). This interrelationship is expected and are deemed necessary when investigating local employment practices, particularly in the international context. International companies usually choose to apply the ethnocentric (hiring from the parent country) and/or the polycentric (hiring locals) approach of hiring (Mayrhofer & Brewster, 1996). In both approaches, implications for HR practices take place.

Among the HR practices usually adopted in companies, employment practices (recruitment and selection practices), HR training and development, and career planning are the most practices investigated in terms of their link to workforce nationalization in the reviewed articles (Al Dosary, 2004; Rutledge, Al Shamsi, Bassioni, & Al Sheikh, 2011). Madhi and Barrientos (2003), for example, explored the nature of employment and career development in Saudi Arabia. Tlaiss and Al Waqfi (2020) investigated the strategic role HR managers play in developing careers for Saudi women. Their study provided empirical evidence of the need to improve hiring, training, and career planning practices to advance the career of women in Saudi Arabia. Glaister, Al Amri, and Spicer (2019), on the other hand, investigated how localization implemented in Oman influences managers to rationalize talent management practices.

Another aspect, which was examined in the reviewed articles, is the fact that HR practices, particularly hiring, training and development, and career planning, are differentiated according to nationality. This means that different system of HR practices is adopted for locals and another one for expatriates. Moideenkutty et al. (2016) study, for example, focuses on localization HRM practices in an attempt to

examine their effects on financial performance. Rees et al. (2007) found that for effective implementation of Emiratization, the investigated companies focus on empowering Emirati staff by providing appropriate learning and development opportunities.

It is noteworthy that, while a large percentage of the reviewed studies described the link between localization and HRM practices, only few HR practices have received attention. Future research should explore the 'big picture' of HRM system that support workforce nationalization implementation. Specifically, a strategic view of HRM need to be considered.

Challenges of Workforce Nationalization

As documented in Table 4, a review of the literature on nationalization suggests many challenges and barriers that impedes its successful adoption.¹ About more than half of the reviewed studies discussed and examined these challenges and barriers. Salih (2010) classified these challenges as macro and micro environmental factors. The most widely cited challenges are related to the macro social and cultural roots (Salih, 2010). Among the social factors cited are the appropriateness of a given occupation and the lack of prestige attached to many positions (Forstenlechner, Madi, Selim, & Rutledge, 2012). Another barrier that is widely mentioned is the lack of well-educated and well-trained local workforce to replace expatriates in many occupations (Albejaidi & Nair, 2019). In another word, the education system in the GCC is perceived to be ineffective and does not produce productive workforce (Williams, Bhanugopan, & Fish, 2011). Also, the lack of a well-developed human development plans for local employees is considered as another major barrier (Achoui, 2009).

Additional barriers that are more related to perceptual biases were also cited. Specifically, from the employer perspective, negative stereotypes exist that: local workers are unskilled and less disciplined than their foreign counterparts (Aljanahi, 2017; Mellahi, 2007), lower wages of expatriates compared with local employees (Al Dosary, 2004), the flexibility of expatriates in terms of working hours compared with locals,

¹ A part of the literature review table (Table 4) was removed to meet the page limit restrictions.

and the relative ease of terminating expatriate contracts compared with local employees (Al Dosary, 2004). Another stereotype exists, from local employees' perspectives, that they can receive social and economic security in the public sector jobs that is not guaranteed in the private sector (Forstenlechner, Selim, Baruch, & Madi, 2014). Moreover, a negative self-stereotype by local employees about their skills and competencies also can impede their participation in the private sector employment (Al-Waqfi & Forstenlechner, 2014).

Another micro environmental factor that serves as barriers to nationalization is the little effort made by many companies to apply modern forms of HRM systems and to rely on traditional systems that consider human resources as costs that needs to be minimized by employing less costly expatriates compared with locals (Harry, 2007). Other studies noted that the unrealistic structure of the labor market is a major barrier for nationalization (Abdalla, Al-Waqfi, Harb, Hijazi, & Zoubeidi, 2010).

The current literature provided detailed list of challenges and or barriers for workforce nationalization in the GCC countries. However, there is still a scope for future research. The motivation of national workforce could be examined thoroughly to explore the social and cultural phenomena. Then, the articulation of HR practices that supports these cultural goals is required. Moreover, objective measures of barriers for nationalization are required. This would help guide public policy and the subsequent nationalization implementation (Williams et al., 2011).

Insert Table 4 about here

Outcomes of Workforce Nationalization

The effectiveness of nationalization programs is usually examined through quantitative and qualitative measures. Quantitative measures rely on the number (or percentage) of nationals employed. Other measures are related to recruitment and employment for nationals, enrolments in training programs for nationals, retention rate and/or turnover rate for both nationals and non-nationals (Waxin, Lindsay, Belkhodja, & Zhao, 2018). Qualitative measures, on the other hand, used satisfaction surveys on localization programs,

behavioral and attitudinal measures of employees, and fit with organizational culture (Rees et al., 2007; Waxin et al., 2018).

Of the studies (about 20 out of 62) that discussed and examined the outcomes of nationalization, the majority reported quantitative approaches (mainly quota system) for measuring workforce nationalization progress (e.g., Forstenlechner & Mellahi, 2011; Waxin et al., 2018). Particularly, the increased number of local employees is used as a measure of measuring nationalization success. Other studies reported the drop of foreigners' recruitment as a major indicator of nationalization success (Al-Dosary & Rahman, 2005). Few others argued for the need to use qualitative measures (such as attitudes survey) combined with the quantitative ones (Rees et al., 2007). Few empirical studies provided conflicting results for the economic outcomes of nationalization programs. Moideenkutty, Murthy, and Al-Lamky (2016), for example, provided an evidence that nationalization programs, regardless of its cost, can produce financial outcomes. On the other hand, Marchon and Toledo (2014) found that the Quota system implemented in the UAE has led to increase in labor and production cost. Toledo (2013) found that, in the short run, nationalization policies tend to achieve some level of success. Finally, at the individual level, one study examined the effect of nationalization programs on employees' work-related outcomes. Ali, Ali, Grigore, Molesworth, and Jin (2020) found that job insecurity that results from workforce nationalization has a significant effect on reducing the engagement of immigrant employees and leads to increased employee burnout and intentions to quit jobs.

Clearly, there appears to be a major gap in the literature regarding how nationalization outcomes are measured. A disagreement exists in the literature of whether nationalization can lead to benefits or are major costs to organizations. Moreover, no single measures of nationalization, whether quantitative or qualitative, have been sufficiently examined. In addition, measuring the success of nationalization shall be looked at through a comprehensive model of nationalization implementation. In this regard, Wong and Law (1999) proposed a model explaining the process leading to effective localization in transnational corporations that

includes three stages: planning, localizing, and consolidating. This or similar models could be utilized to better measure the success of nationalization programs implemented in the GCC.

Gender/women workforce nationalization

Although the literature recommends female education and employment as part of the successful nationalization strategy (Rutledge et al., 2011; Albejaidi and Nair, 2019), our review reflects the need to expand on existing studies to identify mechanisms to effectively integrate women into nationalization initiatives.

The main streams/themes investigate the role of cultural factors in inhibiting female employment (Gallant and Pounder, 2008; Rutledge et al., 2011); talent management and integration in national work force (Rutledge et al., 2011; Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner, 2012), cultural stereotypes (Sidani and Al Ariss, 2014; Belwal and Belwal, 2017) and the limitations of the current education systems in empowering women employment particularly in private sector organizations (Salih, 2010; Belwal et al., 2019; Albejaidi and Nair, 2019). A dominant stream examines the effect of quota practices on improving women's representation in the national workforce. However, the results establish that the effect of quota systems remain generally ineffective (Forstenlechner et al., 2012) due to the lack of upward feedback in the creation of regulations in relation to women's needs for work life balance and stereotyping when it comes to nomination and award of senior management posts (Mellahi, 2007; Belwal and Belwal, 2017). Consequently, scholars call for the examination of the current social, economic and political issues in GCC societies to identify alternative market interventions to address the national psychological contract and expectations about women guaranteed employment and glass ceiling progression (Forstenlechner and Baruch, 2013). It may be useful that future studies look for comparison between policies enacted in private and public sector organizations with respect to national female employment. Future studies can identify the most predominant type of conflict informing the work life balance of women in the GCC contexts based on religious considerations and societal norms and propose alternative mechanisms to effectively deal with them to enhance women participation in the national workforce.

While the current state of knowledge identifies the significance of elevating the education and skill levels of females and establish the importance of addressing societies and individuals' perceptions about the need for women to join the national workforce (Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner, 2012; Aljanahi, 2016), there seems to be dissatisfaction with existing policies (Belwal et al., 2019). Furthermore, limited studies examine how to align perceptions about the values of the family based, patriarchal Islamic society and the established gender roles defined in the teaching of the Islamic religion (Belwal et al., 2019). Although this perspective requires empirical validation, our review returns limited qualitative or/and quantitative findings in this regard as evidenced by recent calls of Jabeen et al. (2018). This could be a potential area to explore in future.

Therefore, future research should extend the above themes to examine alternative mechanism to achieve synergy between religious and social factors to overcome resistance to female integration in the national workforce. Additionally, future studies may also consider different aspects of diversity management principles in non-western contexts to formulate multi-level perspectives as a basis for the analysis. The simultaneous examination of formal regulations with the integration of societal norms will clarify debates about other relevant constructs and variables such as gender roles. In the future, studies should examine the formulation of comprehensive plans for training, skill development and creating capabilities for national females to perform different tasks. This recommendation is underpinned by the need of the GCC countries to move from a commodity-dependent allocative economic model to a more diversified and knowledge-based states (Belwal and Belwal, 2017; Waxin et al., 2018).

Discussion

While the need to revisit policies for better implementation and effectiveness of nationalization has led to many exploratory studies in the literature, however, there still remains in gap in measuring its outcomes qualitatively. The main aim of this study was to identify the gaps in the literature and conceptualize a theoretical framework for nationalization, that will help future studies to be well grounded in theory. Additionally, this research paves way for agendas that will enhance the effectiveness of

nationalization in the GCC i.e., help policy makers and employers. A two-step research methodology (qualitative and quantitative) and a thematic analysis of empirical and theoretical studies helped this study in comprehending current trends and themes in the existing literature. Out of the 62 articles that were reviewed, 66% have looked into the role of institutional policies and its impact on the implementation of nationalization programs followed by HRM, education and challenges of nationalization. Important research areas such as CSR and international business have received minimal attention. Moreover, majority of the studies have focused on the impact of nationalization on country level, individual level and lastly, organization level. On the contrary, Elbanna et al. (2020a) have identified the flow of current nationalization research as individual, organization and country levels. This indicates that the focus of nationalization has been shifting over the years, where factors such as psychological and social factors also play a major role on nationalization (Forstenlechner & Rutledge, 2010). Apart from the flow that has been identified, the existing literature heavily relies on data specific to only two GCC nations, namely UAE and KSA. Thus, there is a gap in the literature, even though researchers within or outside the region have shown immense interest to explore nationalization in different contexts, countries, and cross-country comparisons.

The findings of this study indicate that most workforce nationalization definitions rely on factors such as quantity (quota system) or replacement of expatriates with locals. However, a few studies also identified the importance of educating, training and developing the national workforce for the job market (Forstenlechner & Mellahi, 2011; Forstenlechner et al., 2012). Moreover, heavy reliance on state regulations and policies has limited the scope of research on nationalization in different contexts. An important aim of this research is to provide workforce nationalization with a definition that helps organizations in employing nationals that add value to both, the organizational and the economical ecosystem.

This study has also identified that human resource nationalization in the GCC basically works in two streams; first, less reliance on expatriate workers, and second, developing the national workforce with the required education and training. Furthermore, success of nationalization heavily relies on institutional

policies such as the quota system (quantitative), that is implemented in both public and private sectors. The quota system has been a major factor in boosting national representation in organizations (Parcero & Ryan, 2016). However, the quota system has been challenging organizations as it comes at a cost of training the locals with the required skill sets (Sidani & Al Aris, 2014; Barneet et al, 2015). On the contrary, the qualitative system of incorporating nationals in the workforce has been seen as an effective tool for nationalization. The qualitative system focuses on education, training, and development before inducting the individuals into private or public organizations (Forstenlechner et al. 2012; Forstenlechner & Mellahi 2011). While the quota system directly impacts the national workforce representation, however, it comes with added issues for both employers and employees. These institutional policies have been pressurizing a few sectors and exhausting the public sector. Additionally, the private sectors are not ready to pay high remuneration that is expected by the national workforce in the GCC. Thus, future researchers can look into the challenges faced by MNEs and SMEs. This can help in developing institutionalized government policies on nationalization that benefits employers and employees.

The role of institutional policies has impacted the relationship between the state and its nationals, employers, and employees. The state under the social contract is tied down to equal distribution of wealth (Forstenlechner & Rutledge, 2010). Whereas the psychological contracts between employees and employers is adversely affected by state policies that has given an upper hand to employees' expectations. Few studies have also identified that education in the region is lagging behind in setting high ethical standards and producing skilled workforce (Williams, Bhanugopan, & Fish, 2011; Swailes et al., 2012). Thus, proving as a barrier to effective implementation of nationalization. The social contract in the region can be questioned in terms of building a perception in the minds of the locals who have a secure job irrespective of their low level of competencies. Thus, this mindset or perception among the GCC workforce needs to be changed in order to build or develop diversified knowledge-based economies that are highly needed in the region (Waxin et al., 2018).

Table 1
Sampled journals and their quality indicators

Journals	Number of articles (%)	Impact factor 2019	ABS 2018	ABDC 2019
Human Resource Management	1 (1.6%)	2.476	4	A*
Journal of World Business	2 (3.2%)	5.194	4	A*
Human Resource Management Journal	1 (1.6%)	3.816	4	A
American Economic Journal: Economic policy	1 (1.6%)	3.940	3	A*
International Journal of Human Resource Management	9 (14.5%)	3.040	3	A
Journal of Business Ethics	1 (1.6%)	4.141	3	A
Journal of Business Research	2 (3.2%)	4.874	3	A
International Journal of Manpower	1 (1.6%)	0.953	3	A
Journal of Management in Engineering	1 (1.6%)	3.760	2	A
Personnel Review	2 (3.2%)	2.074	2	A
Labor	1 (1.6%)	0.190	2	B
Career Development International	2 (3.2%)	2.320	2	B
Employee Relations: The International Journal	4 (6.5%)	1.641	2	B
Human Resource Development International	7 (11.3%)	1.980	2	B
Journal of Economic Studies	2 (3.2%)	NA	2	B
International Journal of Public Administration	1 (1.6%)	NA	2	B
International Journal of Public Sector Management	1 (1.6%)	NA	1	B
International Journal of Organizational Analysis	1 (1.6%)	NA	1	B
Equality, Diversity, & Inclusion: An international Journal	1 (1.6%)	NA	1	B
Review of International Business and Strategy	1 (1.6%)	NA	1	C
Journal of Developing Areas	1 (1.6%)	0.357	1	Not listed
Journal of the Knowledge Economy	1 (1.6%)	NA	Not listed	C
International Journal of Health Planning and Management	1 (1.6%)	1.367	Not listed	Not listed
Middle East Journal	4 (6.5%)	0.675	Not listed	Not listed
Middle East Policy	2 (3.2%)	0.744	Not listed	Not listed
Middle Eastern Studies	3 (4.8%)	0.361	Not listed	Not listed
Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews	1 (1.6%)	12.110	Not listed	Not listed
Education, Business and Society: Contemporary Middle Eastern Issues	7 (11.3%)	NA	Not listed	Not listed
Total	62			

Table 2
Articles count by methodological characteristics

Characteristics	Classifications	Count (%)
Areas²	Public policies, laws and institutional changes	41 (66%)
	Education and national development	36 (58%)
	HRM practices	33 (53%)
	Challenges of nationalization	33 (53%)
	Women	28(45%)
	Quota system	24(39%)
	Sociology	24 (39%)
	Demographics	21 (44%)
	Outcomes of nationalization	20 (32%)
	Social contract	15 (24%)
	Psychology	12 (19%)
	Economics	9 (15%)
	Psychological contract	7 (11%)
	Politics	6 (10%)
CSR and international business (2 studies each)	4 (6.4%)	
Methods³	Quantitative	27 (43.5%)
	Qualitative	18 (29.1%)
	Mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative methods)	7 (11.3%)
	Theoretical/literature based	10 (16.1%)
Time scope	Cross sectional	48 (77.4%)
	Longitudinal	4 (6.5%)
	Not applicable (Theoretical/literature-based papers)	10 (16.1%)
Data collection methods	Secondary data	24 (38.7%)
	Interview	23 (37.1%)
	Survey	15 (24.2%)
	Others	13 (21%)
Unit of analysis	Country	25 (40.3%)
	Firm	15 (24.2%)
	Individual	22 (35.5%)
Country⁴	UAE	34 (54.8%)
	Saudi Arabia	25 (40.3%)
	Qatar	11 (17.7%)
	Oman	11 (17.7%)
	Bahrain	8 (12.9%)
	Kuwait	8 (12.9%)
	Region	6 (9.7%)

² The total adds up to more than 62 articles and 100% since it was allowed to code a study under more than one area.

³ The definition is based on the work of Johnson et al. (2007); Gilson and Goldberg (2015); and Cropanzano (2009).

⁴ The total is more 100% since many studies used multi-country samples.

Table 3

Workforce nationalization definitions in the context of the GCC countries

Study	Concept (country)	Definition	Key themes	Emphasis/level
Waxin et al. (2018)	Workforce localization (UAE)	“the recruitment and development of citizens to increase their employability, thus reducing a country’s dependency on expatriate labor”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Activities such as recruitment, training and development for enhancing local employees’ capabilities. - Creating employment opportunities for national citizens. 	Direct intervention (quantity)
Al-Harbi (1997, p. 87).	Workforce localization (KSA)	“the replacement of the expatriate labor force with a trained and qualified local labor force in a planned manner that will ensure the continuity of work”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Planned replacement of the expatriate workforce with a local workforce. -Local workforce development. 	Direct intervention (quantity)
Salih (2010)	Workforce localization (Kuwait)	“the process of replacing expatriates with nationals in several economic roles”.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Replacing expatriates with nationals. - Planned replacement in specific sectors. 	Direct intervention (quantity)
Forstenl echner & Mellahi (2011, p. 456)	Workforce localization (UAE)	“Investing in and supporting nationals to build their skills to enhance their chances in the job market”.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Investing in education and development of local workforce. - Enhancing employability for local workforce. 	Indirect intervention (quality)
Rutledge et al. (2011)	Labor Nationalization (GCC)	“It includes direct labor market intervention such as reserving certain job categories for nationals, and indirect intervention by developing local workforce”.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Direct market intervention. - Indirect market intervention. 	Direct intervention (quantity)
Goby (2015)	Emiratization (UAE)	“Attaining full employment within the national labor force, reducing the reliance on foreign labor and developing market-oriented skills among locals”.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creating employment opportunities for locals. - Reducing the reliance on foreign labor. - Enhancing employability for local workforce. 	Indirect intervention (quality)
Al Ali (2008, p. 368)	Emiratization (UAE)	“a focused social capital program, seeks to overcome structural barriers to Emirati employment in organizations, and address	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adapting workplace for nationals. - Investing in education and development of local workforce. 	Indirect intervention (quality)

		social issues rising from citizens' entry into the labor market"	- Addressing social issues related to locals' entry into the labor market (e.g., trust, gender issues and Wasta).	
Rees et al. (2007)	Emiratization (UAE)	"the recruitment and development of UAE nationals to increase their employability, thus reducing the country's dependency on an expatriate workforce".	- Activities such as recruitment and development of local workforce. - Enhancing locals' employability. - Reducing dependency on expatriate workforce.	Direct intervention (quantity)
Forstenlechner et al. (2012)	Emiratization (UAE)	a process to "overhaul educational systems and more closely aligning the skills taught with the needs of the market" (bottom-up) and to "implement a range of direct labor market intervention measures such as setting quotas and the allocation of certain roles to be staffed solely by nationals" (top-down).	- Reform educational systems. - Alignment between education and skills needed in the market. - Labor market intervention to implement the localization.	Direct intervention (quantity) & indirect intervention (quality)
Toledo (2013)	Emiratization (UAE)	"a government policy designed to increase the participation of native workers in the production of goods and services in the private sector".	- Planned replacement in specific sectors.	Direct intervention (quantity)
Abaker, Al-Titi, & Al-Nasr (2019, p. 458)	Saudization (KSA)	A policy that includes "restrictions to recruiting expatriates in the public sector as well as private companies in order to reduce foreign employees and rely more on locals".	- Limit the reliance on expatriates' workforce. - Planned replacement in specific sectors, mainly in the private sector.	Direct intervention (quantity)

Table 4
Summary of articles reviewed

Study	Description	Methods	Key findings
1. Nakhleh (1977)	Observations on labor markets and citizenship	Secondary data, Bahrain and Qatar	Both countries must rely on foreign labor in their development processes-more so in Qatar than in Bahrain. Politics play a determining role, often negative, in policy planning.
2. Looney (1991)	Patterns and challenges of HR development	Secondary data, Saudi Arabia	Two proposed scenarios concerning migration to the Gulf region are suggested
3. Al-Harbi (1997)	A description of employment environment of engineering companies	the Markov Chain analysis, interviews, Saudi Arabia	There is a need to improve the retention level of Saudi engineers, especially in the first two years of employment.
4. Mellahi and Al-Hinai (2000)	Perceptions of private sector managers about problems and solutions of localization	114 surveys from private Omani and Saudi Arabian firms; 5 interviews	Reporting key differences between local and expatriate workers and the qualities that local workers should possess to make them employable in the private sector
5. Madhi and Barrientos (2003)	Exploring main factors shaping employment and career development	Conceptual, Saudi Arabia	A significant difference exists in career opportunities, mobility, conditions of work, and pay across Saudis and foreign employees.
6. Al-Dosary (2004)	Outlining problems associated with developing human resources locally	Conceptual, Saudi Arabia	Different approaches suggested that can work together as a solution for improving nationalization efforts
7. Al-Dosary and Rahman (2005)	A critical review of Saudization	A review, Saudi Arabia	Saudization should place importance on skill development and be implemented through market forces and incentives.
8. Bosbait and Wilson (2005)	The national education policy and labor market	Survey, 411 young Saudi respondents	Identified Saudization challenges associated with education, culture and blue-collar jobs
9. Al-Dosary et al. (2006)	Causes of graduate unemployment and consequences	Secondary data, Saudi Arabia	Proposes a combination of a rational planning model and communicative rationality to solve the problem of graduate unemployment
10. Harry (2007)	Crucial issues of employment creation and localization and the factors underlying them	A literature review, GCC countries	The private sector maximizes short-term gain while creates long-term problems. Governments needs to create a productive indigenous workforce and worthwhile jobs for citizens.
11. Mellahi (2007)	The implications of the new legal framework for HRM in the private sector.	Semi-structured interviews, secondary data, Saudi Arabia	Private sector is reconfiguring their HRM practices to meet the new legal requirements (including Saudization).
12. Rees et al. (2007)	Identify issues related to the implementation and evaluation of Emiratization programs.	Case study, UAE, 12 senior managers, secondary data and interviews	Emiratization is considered as key success factor. Commitment toward implementation is questioned. Only quantitative methods of evaluating the program are used. Resistance to change by non-nationals is a major challenge.
13. Forstenlechner (2008)	The conditions under which Emiratization can enable organizations to capitalize on local human capital	18 interviews with UAE and expatriate managers	Successful Emiratization is based on the serious commitment to the integration of UAE nationals into the workforce rather than producing statistics for securing government goodwill.

14. Gallant and Pounder (2008)	Opportunities and barriers of female nationals' employment	A literature-based study, UAE	Cultural factors are largely responsible for inhibiting the level of employment of Emirati females
15. Achoui (2009)	Identify challenges of HRM development	Conceptual analysis, Saudi Arabia	Challenges identified include the high dependence on expatriates and the ineffectiveness of HRM development programs for the localization process
16. Berrebi et al. (2009)	An assessment of Qatar's labor markets	Qatar 2004 Census	A list of challenges facing Qatar's labor markets and the response from the Qatari government
17. Pech (2009)	Contemporary methods of educating young Emirates as alternatives to the present punitive methods of training	Interviews, 70 recruits, UAE	To better meet UAE Emiratization goals, an education system for Emirates should be integrated with the industry
18. Abdalla et al. (2010)	Determinants of employment and the wage gap between the public and private sectors	1099 workers, UAE, survey	The labor market is segmented based on sectors (public versus private) and types of workers (nationals versus non-nationals).
19. Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner (2010)	To explore stereotyping of citizens	310 Surveys, UAE	Emiratis are negatively stereotyped, by expatriates, in terms of skills and attitudes towards work
20. Forstenlechner (2010)	HRM recommendations for workforce localization	25 Interviews with HR managers, UAE	A list of proposed adaptations needed to key HRM processes to foster localization
21. Forstenlechner and Rutledge (2010)	The role of updating "social contract" in resolving unemployment problem	Secondary database, GCC	Three types of policy responses: enhancing educational attainment, diversifying the economy and intervening directly in the labor market
22. Salih (2010)	Explore the slow growth of local employees despite localization	10 interviews and 9 respondents for a questionnaire, Kuwait	Many challenges were identified for implementing localization program in the private sector
23. Forstenlechner and Mellahi (2011)	How do MNEs obtain external legitimacy through the employment of locals? What are the drivers and cost/benefits?	UAE, 48 semi-structured interviews with MNEs managers, qualitative	The motives for obtaining external legitimacy through hiring locals varied from social legitimacy logic and a sense of appropriateness to economic efficiency and business case logic. MNEs that are not being seen to be supporting localization are put at disadvantage relative to others.
24. Forstenlechner and Rutledge (2011)	The perceptions, realities and policy options of demographic imbalance	Secondary data, GCC	A brief overview of the GCC's national/non-national demographic evolution and the demographic composition as it currently stands
25. Raven (2011)	Issues related to implementation of Emiratization in the education sector	Conceptual, UAE	Several challenges to Emiratize the UAE education sector are identified and discussed
26. Rutledge et al. (2011)	The impact of nationalization policies on female labor force participation	Expert semi-structured 18 interviews, Saudi Arabia and UAE	Nationalization policies marginally increases female participation in the labor force. Still, policies are not gender focused. Gendered-nationalization approach needs to be adopted

27. Williams et al. (2011)	the importance, challenges and impact of localization practices	Qatar, review paper	There are many barriers to localization like inefficient quota system, strict cultural practices and ineffective education system
28. Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner (2012)	The factors determining career choice behavior in the private sector	Semi-structured interviews with 60 young Emiratis, UAE	A list of potential causes of the very low private sector employment levels and a two-approaches strategy to deal with them
29. Forstenlechner et al. (2012a)	Analysis of the multi-level dynamics of the quota system and their impact	longitudinal case study, UAE	The success and failure of a quota system is contingent upon a web of multi-level influences, transcending the tendency of current debates to polarize the value and weaknesses of quotas in absolute measure
30. Forstenlechner et al. (2012b)	Factors that reduce employers' willingness to recruit national candidates	247 questionnaires, HRM personnel, UAE	Four factors made UAE employers less willing to recruit nationals, namely, social, motivational, cultural and regulatory factors.
31. Lim (2012)	work preferences for Generation Y Emirates for better recruitment	Interviews & questionnaires, 155 respondents, UAE	Generation Y Emiratis seeks jobs that offer training opportunities to develop skills to participate in the private sector job market.
32. Swailes et al. (2012)	Attitudes toward Omanization and barriers toward its effective implementation	25 interviews, Oman	Localization policies are progressing steadily as labor markets change. A mismatch exists between graduates' employability and the skills needed by employers.
33. Forstenlechner and Baruch (2013)	Explain the UAE labor market using existing career theories and concepts	Conceptual analysis approach, UAE	Government approach to localization through legal pressures have low impact on localization success
34. Toledo (2013)	The conditions under which an Emiratisation quota could increase employment opportunities for native workers in the private sector	Ramsey Rule application, modelling, UAE	Emiratization quota achieves some level of success in the short run, if implemented in firms that are operating in imperfectly competitive markets. In the medium run, a higher level of labor mobility for migrant workers could increase employment opportunities for native workers.
35. Yaghi and Yaghi (2013)	How employees perceive practices of HR diversity in their organizations	Survey, 795 responses, private and public sectors, UAE	Employees with different backgrounds perceive diversity differently. Successful diversity practices include reforming Emiratization programs to eliminate perceived inequality
36. Al-Asfour & Khan (2014)	key initiatives and challenges of Saudization	A review, Saudi Arabia	A holistic Saudization policy is needed to bridge the gap of talent and skills required after the removal of the expatriate workers.
37. Al-Waqfi and Forstenlechner (2014)	Assessment of Emiratization policy and its major challenges	32 managers and HR practitioners, interviews, UAE	Several weaknesses of the Emiratization program are related to policy regulations and implementation tools adopted. Barriers to effective Emiratization were identified
38. Forstenlechner et al. (2014)	Career attitudes of nationals and its effects on willingness to work in the private sector	Online survey, 2267 responses, UAE	Social contract and expectations toward state employment have strong implications for willingness to work in the private sector

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