

IMPACT OF UAE'S SOFT POWER PRACTICES ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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Abstract

International relations (IR) refer to the interactions among sovereign states and the scientific study of these interactions. It encompasses various activities among states such as diplomacy, trade, and foreign policy, as well as interactions with international actors like intergovernmental organizations, NGOs, and multinational corporations. The primary purpose of this study was to examine the UAE's soft power practices (foreign policy, culture, and political values) influence on international relations. The study also examined the role of public perception as a moderator on the effect of the UAE's soft power practices (foreign policy, culture, and political values) on the international relations of the UAE. A cross-sectional poll was performed with more than 357 employees of all levels who work in the UAE embassies around the world, and any other employees working in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who were chosen using the quota sampling method. The current paper confirms previous findings on the relationship between soft power practices (foreign policy, culture, and political values) and international relations. The latest study backs up prior research on the link between soft power practices (foreign policy, culture, and political values) and international relations. As a consequence of these findings, managers may be able to boost UAE's international relations by focusing on soft power practices like foreign policy, culture, political values, and public perception.

Keywords: soft power practices, foreign policy, culture, political values, public perception, international relations

Introduction

International relations are a science that observes and analyzes with the aim of interpreting and predicting the course of relations between countries (Viotti & Kauppi, 2019). It is also known as the study of interactions between specific types of social entities, and it also includes the study of the appropriate conditions that surround these interactions (Jackson, 2016). International relations are comprehensive relations involving various groups in the field of state relations, whether these international relations are formal or informal international relations (Baylis, 2020). The concept of international relations involves all communications between states and all movements of

peoples, goods and ideas of states across national borders (Lambach, 2022). During the past four decades, the UAE has achieved what the major regional countries have not achieved in terms of adopting soft power in improving international relations (Almezaini, 2012). The UAE has succeeded, under its wise leadership, in winning minds and hearts in the Arab region and the world, which contributed to the growth of its soft power and the increase in its influence in the UAE's international relations (Hellyer, 2001). The UAE has preserved its values and moral constants in light of its endeavor to achieve its common interests with people and societies (Salisbury, 2020).

Attempts to understand the mechanisms and means of Emirati soft power and the means of action in international relations have become a process that is largely incomprehensible and needs study and refutation (Antwi-Boateng & Alhashmi, 2022). This is because international relations and soft power are distinguished by many characteristics that are almost disparate and conflicting. The traditional escape in international relations based on traditional power still exists and is used by many countries and governments (Saber et al., 2018). In this globally intertwined situation, the question arises about how a small country like the UAE achieves its national interests on the one hand, and how it influences regional interactions, expands its influence, and exploits its soft power within the framework of its competition with major countries at the regional and international levels while preserving its national principles and values and good communication with the Emirati public opinion (Diwan, 2021). The study of international relations focuses on the concept of power and how states use it in the system, and states seek through international relations to reach the goals of their foreign policy, each of which has its importance (Alhashmi, 2019).

In its international relations, UAE adopts soft power in the areas of its foreign policy, culture, and political values (Baycar & Rakipoglu, 2022). These strategies made the UAE a rising soft power (Khan, 2012). Little has been written about the UAE's soft power relationship and its international relations (Matheson, 2020; Al Ketbi, 2017; Saad, 2020). The concept of soft power has recently emerged as a critical component of study in academic and public discussions of international relations (Wojciuk, Michałek & Stormowska, 2015; Hudson, 2022). Soft power is emerging as a vital strategy in the field of international relations (Lee, 2015; Liu & Turner, 2018). However, the UAE has not garnered much attention as a soft power, whether in terms of theoretical study or practical application (Yukaruk, 2017; McClory, 2019; Saad, 2020).

Although, many studies have indicated the extent of the impact of the soft power tools of the UAE on its international relations, but this relationship needs further study and analysis. For example, one of these studies is Krzymowski's study (2020) indicated that culture, international politics, and political values represent the pillars of the UAE's international relations strategy. According to Al-Suwaidi (2021), soft power is a basic idea that refers to the ability of governments to influence others without the use of force or threats. According to Ibrahim and Al-Azzawi (2022), the good reputation of the Emirates is an enormous soft power that distinguishes it. According to Saber (2018), the UAE's global influence can be built for any country through soft power tactics.

UAE is trying to make the most of its soft power in improving its international relations (Wojciuk, 2018). The effectiveness of the UAE's current soft power is being questioned (Krzyszowski, 2022). Although public Perception is a key component of soft power strategies, few studies have been conducted on public Perception and its relationships to soft power and international relations (Manu, 2016). However, soft power is viewed and evaluated is critical to Nye's theory of it (Nye, 2018). An examination of public perception reveals that it is socially based on the country's soft power and international relations (Goldsmith & Horiuchi, 2012). It shows public perception about a country's soft power initiatives and its effectiveness as one of the elements may affect soft power (Fisher, 2021). This study attempts to bridge the gap in research on how the UAE uses soft power practices (foreign policy, culture, and political values) as a tool for international relations by adopting the effect of public perception in the process of interaction between its international relations and its soft power despite its small size and lack of appreciation for its soft power (Al-Hashemi, 2019; Krzyszowski, 2020).

Therefore, the problem of the study was crystallized in that the means of Emirati soft power and the means of action in international relations have often become incomprehensible and requires research and criticism, as both the features of soft power and international relations are almost in contradiction with each other. UAE, as a small ambitious country, does not receive sufficient attention and appreciation in the framework of its competition with major countries, an obstacle in achieving its national interests through its soft power in a world that prefers hard power while preserving its national principles and values. Taking into account the influence of the Emirati public perception (Antwi-Boateng & Alhashmi ; 2020 ; Diwan, 2021: Saberi et al., 2018).

Literature Review

Numerous studies have shown that the Emirati experience with regard to foreign policy, like other successful experiences, falls within the consensus among scholars that there is a need for a foreign policy specific to each country, and that the UAE cannot continue without a foreign policy and efforts in international relations for this (Keating & Kaczmarzka, 2019; Nye Jr, 2019; Darwich & Kaarbo, 2020). The link between international and domestic determinants has been a widely discussed topic in the field of international relations and foreign policy analysis. The UAE has shown a distinguished model in foreign policy aimed at playing an effective role on the international stage and practicing healthy international relations between international parties. The country's foreign policy is considered a role model in relations between peoples, as it was built on solid foundations based on affection, love, tolerance and respect for the other, which is The approach established by the late founder of the state, God willing, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, may his soul rest in peace, which is the approach of wisdom, moderation, and reliance on firm strategic bases, represented in keenness to adhere to the Charter of the United Nations and its respect for international charters and laws, in addition to establishing relations with all countries the world based on mutual respect and non-interference in the internal affairs of others, in addition to the tendency to resolve international disputes through dialogue and peaceful means, and to stand

by issues of right and justice and to actively contribute to supporting international stability and peace.

Hypothesis 1: Foreign policies have an impact on the international relations of the UAE.

Different declarations and dialogue between cultures can represent an effective tool that can help create peace and dialogue and contribute to international relations between the majority of countries in the world, including the United Arab Emirates, protect cultural diversity within the UAE society, and consider cultural diversity there as well, and accept cultural rights as one of them. basic human rights. It considers the cultural values and cultural heritage of the Emirates. Part of the collective identity of indigenous peoples with their cultural heritage has its rights such as land rights and access to and control over land and its resources, which are fundamental to indigenous people countries around the world, and they depend on these rights and access for their physical and cultural survival. In order to survive as distinct nations, indigenous peoples and their communities must be able to own, maintain, and manage their lands, resources, and culture. They play an important role in the self-determination and decolonization of indigenous peoples, and in improving the level of international relations (Al Zaabi & Awamleh, 2019; Antwi-Boateng & Alhashmi, 2021; Saber et al., 2018; Al Suwaidi, 2021).

Hypothesis 2: Emirati culture has a positive influence on the international relations of the UAE.

Like all successful states, Emirati political values are promoted as a political guide through research indicating that political values help filter political information and guide people through complex political environments. Contrary to this set of findings there is other evidence that people's endorsement of political values may be less consistent than originally assumed that the framing of an issue can alter the importance of people's political values, and that endorsement of political values is constrained by candidate evaluation. The argument runs counter to the notion that individuals' political values are static political guides and builds on the idea that they are flexible and that social influence underlies this flexibility (Saber et al., 2018; Al Suwaidi, 2021). Emphasis on the concrete, historical and social definition of the political values of the Emirates, the organic link of the declared, tested, promoted and defensive values, and the organic link of the history of the Emirates with the values on which it was established, with specific positions, interests and ideals of the Emirati society. And that the Emirati national groups are still aware that despite the social, political and ideological divisions, humanity today seeks to achieve certain basic interests, especially the national interest of the UAE by expanding its influence, soft power, international influence and relations through the dissemination of positive political values (Antwi-Boateng & Alhashmi, 2021; Krzymowski, 2020; AlKetbi., 2017).

In addition to the differences between contemporary civilizations, and between social and political systems and their own world of values, the common basic interests of all countries, including the UAE, such as creating a new climate of peace and cooperation among nations, a new global political and economic order, and other issues that are of planetary importance require

confirmation. and promoting shared political values that are public and recognized as such (Krzyszowski, 2022; Al Zaabi & Awamleh, 2019).

Hypothesis 3: The UAE's political values have a positive impact on the international relations of the UAE.

Public perception is a state of self-awareness and greatly affects judgment on things, policies, and even international relations. Public perception may affect the political values practiced by the state and their connection to the state's international relations. General perceptions are internal models that a person shows from his surroundings and his influences on that environment and through which he judges the behavior of the state in its international relations, the content of the political values it practices, and the nature of its foreign policy in general (Aysolmaz et al., 2023). The process of constructing and synthesizing culture among the public affects and is affected by its general perception. It is carried out by the individual through general perception, cultural backgrounds, and prevailing political values in society and the state (Kazun & Kazun, 2020).

General public perception is a planning or drawing closely related to the reality that connects international relations, cultures, foreign politics, and culture, which is represented by individuals or society, and in this way, it can lead to the crystallization of many mental images immersed in the world of society, some of which are likely to contradict each other (Che-Ha et al., 2016). The close link between these drawings and this planning has not been fixed, the general perceptions centered around reality are crystallized through a process that includes the general perception of the state's foreign policies, public culture, and political values in a country such as the Emirates as a result of choices and organic affiliation to a social or cultural group and certain political values. The majority of perceptions affect General beliefs, attitudes, and opinions toward international relations and their relevance to foreign policy, culture, and political values (Dowler et al., 2006; Egelhofer et al., 2023).

Hypothesis 4: Public perception moderates the relationship between Foreign policy and international relations of the UAE.

Hypothesis 5: Public perception moderates the relationship between political values and the international relations of the UAE.

Hypothesis 6: Public perception moderates the relationship between culture and international relations of the UAE.

Figure 1 shows the hypotheses of the study, which form the relationships between five main variables that make up the majority of this model: three independent variables (foreign policy, culture, and political values) and one dependent variable (international relations).

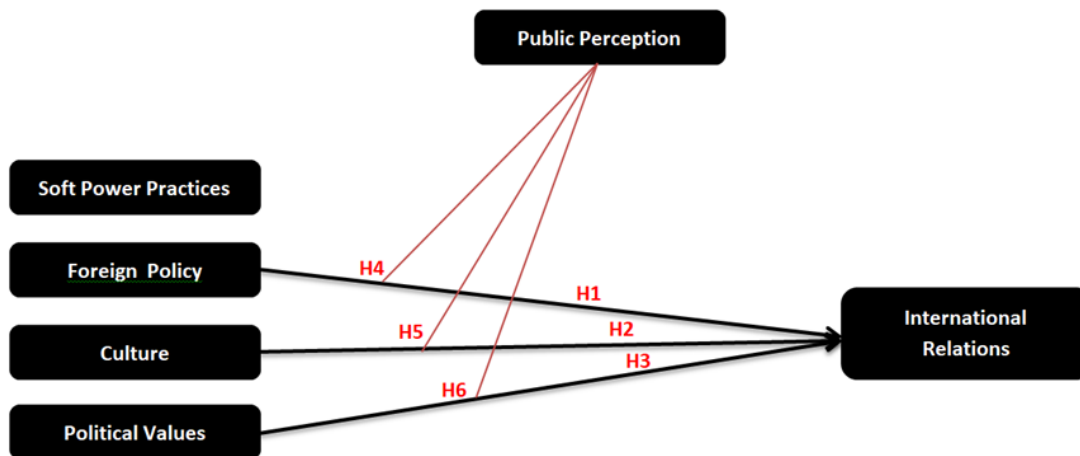


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Methodology

The need to efficiently achieve the objectives of this study updated the researcher's choice of quantitative approach. The reason for this choice is that the researcher really wants to validate the relationships that exist between the study variables, and this is consistent with the views of (Kelley et al., 2003) and also (Williams, 2007). Quantitative research methodology is supposed to help structure and validate by showing relationships between variables to be able to generalize, and much more, choosing quantitative research methodology has several comparative benefits when compared to referring to qualitative research, such as opportunity awareness (it doesn't take much of opportunities compared to qualitative insights), effectiveness, (implementation does not require a lot of information) and also has good conveniences for studying a large sample (Al-Zawawi et al., 2007). It is in fact also a tomographic survey method, due to the fact that the data collected will certainly only cover the time period of the study (Creswell, 2010). Again, the choice of a cross-sectional survey rather than a longitudinal survey research method is in fact because the researcher aims to collect data that clarify the opinion of subjects as well as colleagues that cannot be easily obtained using other resources such as posterior sources (Angrist & Pischke, 2010).

For this research specifically, the study population includes any Emirati employees with diplomatic missions - political - or public relations working in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which includes any employees of all levels who work in the UAE embassies around the world, and any other employees working in the ministry in Abu Dhabi. Abu Dhabi or any other offices in the Emirates. It does not include employees in simple jobs, technical or administrative employees. According to the ministry's reports, the number of employees is approximately 5,000 in all locations and departments. Based on what was provided in the sample size table of Krejcie & Morgan (1970), the population of this study is 5000, and according to the results obtained in the calculation, the sample size is 357 to be able to achieve a large level of response rate. At least 50%

of the sample is required (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). However, proper selection of samples is essential to ensure that participants are effective providers of the population landscape. And since the sample will be selected from specific categories of the study population (not every employee can be selected) and obtaining a complete list of employees' names is not possible for sovereign reasons, so the selection will not be random and our sample is not random.

Conclusion

This research has analyzed and produced a preliminary conceptual model for the characteristics to provide insight into international relations literature. Future academic research may find this conceptual framework interesting. Future studies may examine the link between these components to comprehend them better. In addition, foreign policy, culture, and political values significantly impact international relations by shaping interactions, priorities, power dynamics, negotiations, cooperation, and the development of international institutions and norms. Understanding and navigating these influences are essential for policymakers and diplomats to promote mutual understanding, prevent conflicts, and cultivate positive and productive international relationships. The search results provide valuable insights into the relationship between the UAE's soft power initiatives and their impact on the country's international relations. The search results suggest that the UAE has made significant investments in soft power initiatives, such as foreign policy, culture, and political values, to enhance its global influence and bilateral relations. However, the success of these initiatives depends heavily on how they are perceived by both domestic and international audiences. Scholars note that while the UAE has been ranked highly in global soft power indices, there is still a need to better understand how its citizens view and evaluate these soft power efforts (Diwan, 2021; Saberi et al., 2018). Public perceptions are crucial, as they can either reinforce or undermine the country's soft power narrative (Aysolmaz et al., 2023). The research results highlight the importance of aligning soft power practices with the values and aspirations of the Emirati public. If the public does not perceive these initiatives as authentic and beneficial, it can limit their effectiveness in improving the UAE's international standing and bilateral relations. In summary, gaining a deeper understanding of public perception is essential for the UAE to optimize its soft power strategy and achieve its desired foreign policy outcomes.

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