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The Interplay of Entrepreneurial / Learning Orientations and Organizational Structures in Driving the Growth of Government: "An Empirical Investigation of Public Services in the United Arab Emirates"

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Abstract:

This research examines key organizational factors driving the growth of government in the United Arab Emirates. Entrepreneurial orientation, learning orientation, and organizational structure of government were identified as critical constructs that might have important implications for the growth of government. The study tests entrepreneurial orientation's impact on the growth of government, learning orientation's mediating role, and organizational structure's moderating effects. A questionnaire assessing these variables was administered to 300 senior and middle-level managers in public service organizations. Quantitative analysis shows that

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entrepreneurial and learning orientations independently promote growth. The moderating role of organizational structure has had varying degrees of impact on the relationships among different constructs. Learning orientation played a mediating role by translating entrepreneurial orientation's potential into actualized expansion. The findings make theoretical contributions validating links between orientations, capabilities, and structures that cultivate public sector dynamism. This research sheds light on the intricate interplay of entrepreneurial, learning orientations, and organizational structures in driving government growth.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial orientation, Learning orientation, Organizational structure, growth of government, United Arab Emirates.

1. Introduction

With the emergence of modern nation-states, the role of governments has been phenomenal in societal transformation (Haggard, 2018). As such, the growth of government (GoG) has remained unabated over the years (Schuknecht, 2020; Berry & Lowery, 1987). Therefore, understanding the factors that trigger the GoG is of great importance. There is a large body of quality literature in the disciplines of economics and political science on the determinants of the GoG (Larkey et al.,1981). However, limited studies in the public sector management discipline have followed the same path (Alonso et al., 2015). No research framework exists to study the GoG focusing on the organizational determinants.

The rationale for focusing on organizational constructs as determinants of GoG stems from the rapid transformation of the theory and practice of public sector management. Following globalization, new managerial practices based on new public management (NPM), new public governance (NPG), and public value framework (PVF) have supplanted age-old Weberian bureaucratic domination in public service management. Instead, new lexicons, like EO, collaborative governance, and public value creation, have received profound acceptance from both scholars and practitioners (Osborne, 2020; Haque, 2020).

This study aims to examine the impact of EO (independent variable) on GoG (dependent variable) with the moderator (OS) and the mediator (LO) into the perspective. This study will contribute to existing public management literature through the introduction of a novel framework and using organizational-level data to fill a gap in the empirical research on GoG. A literature review opens the discussion on EO, LO, OS, and GoG, followed by a detailed methodology, and a conclusion.

2. Literature Review

This section provides an overview of extant literature on the key concepts examined in this research and the interrelationships thereof. First, we will provide an analysis of the meaning and determinants of GOG from both conventional and well as managerial perspectives. A clear conceptualization of the research constructs and the development of hypotheses will follow this discussion.

2.1. Growth of Government

There remain controversies about the exact meaning of GoG. Many studies consider the size of the government to be the main indicator of GoG. The size of the government is defined as the ratio of government expenditure to gross domestic product (GDP) (Mann, 1980). Berry & Lowery (1984) have identified two reasons for the rise of the ratio of public expenditures to GDP: (a) the government increases the amounts and types of goods and services; (b) the cost of goods and services at a constant level rises relative to what the private sector price goods and services. GoG impacted by both these reasons is known as current-dollar growth. On the other hand, growth caused by the increase in the scope of government activity is termed real growth. For this study, the ratio of public expenditure to GDP and the ratio of government employees as a share of the working-age population is employed to measure the size of the government (Alonso et al., 2015).

Scholars in economics and political science have a tremendous amount of research in identifying and analyzing the determinants of GoG. Aktan (2017) identified 20 factors categorized under three broad headings: economic factors (9), political factors (7), and social factors (6). There is no reflection on the organizational determinants of GoG. Wagner (1958) discussed the issue of GoG back in 1883. He identified the need to establish internal and external security and justice and provide public goods as the critical reasons for increasing public expenditures. In economics, public choice theorists have contributed

enormously to analyzing public expenditures. Niskanen (2017), a prominent public choice theorist, applied economic analysis to understand GoG. He preferred market mechanisms to bureaucratic intervention in allocating and managing resources for public services. Bureaucratic intervention neglects competition and clients' choice in service delivery. Public managers didn't have any incentives to maximize efficiency. Rather, they were more interested in maximizing their budgets and influence for personal accumulation.

Tullock (1993) is another dominant public choice theorist who was apprehensive of the big government and protagonist of the market economy. Public bureaucracy was seen as an empire builder, implying that it always liked to expand the budget according to the demands of the political authority and for its benefit. Public managers were prone to inefficiencies because of a lack of individual accountability, competition and lack of incentives. They indulged in rent-seeking behavior propelled by budget maximization and influence.

Studies in political science attribute GoG to a left-leaning ideology of the regime and populist rhetoric (Anderson, 2000). Some studies found the influence of party ideology on public expenditures. It is a partisan approach that is tantamount to pleasing the voters (Herwartz & Theilen, 2017; Cameron, 1978; Cusack, 1997). In other words, politicians make policies based on populist rhetoric, reflected in larger social spending and government expenditure (Li & Li, 2024).

Despite the rich literature on the determinants of GoG, the current study adopted an alternative approach for two reasons. First, studies in economics and political science have primarily relied on time-series and country-level data. In addition, the severe attack on bureaucracy and big governments is not also empirically well-founded (Khan, 2013; North, 1990; Cinar et al., 2024; Schou, 2024). Second, the organizational factors have remained conspicuously absent in the analysis of GoG. Third, the radical developments in public management over the last four decades have spawned new insights that could be extremely valuable for understanding the determinants of GoG.

As mentioned before, the notion of public entrepreneurship has become prolific in contemporary public management scholarship (Hodgkinson et al., 2023; Vivona, 2023). Hayter et al., 2018; Haque, 2020; Klein et al., 2010; Cheang & Lim, 2023). Public entrepreneurship has entered the public management discourse with a big bang. It has provided a new stream of public management research that focuses on enhancing the government's performance and fulfilling public needs. In this context, 'embedded structures do not limit agency, but offer a policy or infrastructure framework for developing entrepreneurial actions' (Funko et al., 2023, p. 5).

2.2. Entrepreneurial Orientation

EO refers to an organization's strategic orientation towards innovativeness, risk-taking, and proactiveness (Covin & Wales, 2019). EO reflects the behaviors and processes that provide a basis for entrepreneurial decisions and actions (Anderson et al., 2015). Recent studies have conceptualized EO as a multidimensional construct consisting of distinct but related dimensions of innovation, risk-taking, proactiveness, competitive aggressiveness, and autonomy (Shirokova et al., 2016). In the public sector context, EO enables organizations to explore creative approaches to problem-solving, pioneer new public services, and foster a culture of innovation (Haque, 2020).

2.3. Organization Structure

OS refers to the arrangement of tasks, hierarchy of authority, and communication channels within an organization (Jones & George, 2022). Structural elements such as formalization, centralization, and flexibility have implications for innovation, learning, and growth outcomes (Alfalasi et al., 2020; Tortorella et al., 2021). Recent studies emphasize the enabling or constraining effects of organizational design on EO and learning in the public sector (Moon et al., 2020).

2.4. Learning Orientation

LO refers to an organization's ability to continuously learn, unlearn, and relearn based on experience, experimentation, and data-driven insights (Jyoti & Rani, 2019). In the public sector context, LO allows organizations to improve processes and responsiveness to citizens' needs through knowledge gain, transfer, and application (Alhammadi et al., 2021; Cegarra-Navarro et al., 2022). Scholars have emphasized the high-performance work system for LO to work with efficacy and contribute to public value creation and desirable outcomes (Gemici & Zehir, 2023; Dash et al., 2023). Recent studies have examined the role of LO in enhancing public sector innovation, excellence, and outcomes (Choi & Chandler, 2015).

3. Hypotheses Developments and a Conceptual Framework

3.1. Entrepreneurial Orientation and Growth of Government

Recent studies have found a positive relationship between EO and organizational growth and performance across contexts (Wiklund & Shepherd, 2005; Shah et al., 2021). In the public sector context, EO enables organizations to better serve citizens through enhanced responsiveness, improved services, and new solutions to social problems (Klein et al., 2010). Empirical studies have linked EO to improved organizational performance in public healthcare (Chang et al., 2019) and new venture growth in state-owned enterprises (Xing et al., 2020). Alonso et al. (2015) have found a direct relationship between NPM precepts (EO is one of them) and GoG. Based on the above discussion, the following hypotheses were developed and explored.

H_0(1): Entrepreneurial orientation is not related to the growth of government.

Ha(1): Entrepreneurial Orientation is positively related to the growth of government.

3.2. Entrepreneurial Orientation and Learning Orientation

EO reflects an organization's emphasis on creativity, change, and exploring new approaches (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). Empirical studies have found a positive link between EO and LO across contexts (Real et al., 2014; Sawaen et al., 2020). Based on this discussion, the following hypothesis was developed and explored.

H_0(2): Entrepreneurial orientation does not affect learning orientation.

Ha(2): Entrepreneurial orientation has a significant positive effect on learning orientation.

3.3. Learning Orientation and Growth of Government

Organizational learning enables adaptation, improved decision-making, and better alignment with a changing environment (Mahmoud et al., 2016). Studies across contexts have linked LO to beneficial organizational outcomes, including stronger performance (Alegre & Chiva, 2008), innovation (Adewunmi et al., 2023), and competitive advantage (Jyoti & Rani, 2019). Based on the above discussion, the following hypotheses were developed and explored.

H_0(3): Learning orientation does not affect the growth of government.

Ha(3): Learning orientation has a significant positive effect on the growth of government.

3.4. Organisational Structure and Growth of Government

OS is widely recognized as a crucial element that impacts the expansion and authority of public sector institutions, and two main aspects of OS are being explored in the current research: formalization and centralization (Al-Qatawneh, 2014). Formalization pertains to the extent to which rules, processes, instructions, and communications are documented and codified (Kaufmann et al., 2019). According to Kaufmann et al. (2019) and Valio (2023), formalization helps improve coordination, consistency, and accountability in big companies. The other aspect of centralization is consolidating decision-making power at the upper levels of an OS Altamimi et al. (2023). Centralized decision-making frameworks provide cohesive policy direction but may result in information overload, delayed choices, and less adaptability to local circumstances (Zhang & Sun, 2023).

Some studies have shown conflicting results about the impact of formalization and centralization on the growth of firms. Valio (2023) and Boyne et al. (2021) suggested that bigger bureaucracies are often more structured and centralized, aligning with self-sustaining bureaucratic growth and development theories. Other research found no correlation between structural dimensions and organizational development after accounting for other variables (Lan & Rainey, 1992). Boyne et al. (2021) and Dameri and Ricciardi (2021) discovered that organizations with more centralized promotion procedures had a higher rate of job expansion when money was increased. Meier et al. (2013) also contended that formalization facilitated growth by allowing agencies to oversee and supervise their subordinate divisions. Considering that the UAE public sector institutions conversely have both characteristics in terms of OS, it is important to explore the impact of formalization and centralization on GoG. Based on the above discussion, the following hypothesis was developed and explored.

H_0(4): Organizational Structures (Formalized and Centralized) do not affect the growth of government

Ha(4): Organisational Structures (Formalized and Centralized) affect the growth of government.

3.5. Organisational Structure and Learning Orientation

Formalized and organized OS can also affect the firm's capacity to learn, adapt, and innovate, known as its LO. High centralization, characterized by the concentration of decision-making authority at upper levels, might impede an organization's capacity for learning (Altamimi et al., 2023). As indicated by Whetsell et al. (2021), formalization may improve learning by facilitating knowledge transfer, coordination, and responsibility within the organization. However, Dameri and Ricciardi (2021) indicated that excessive formalization might hinder organizational learning by promoting inertia, reducing receptivity to new ideas, and restricting local experimentation. Meta-analysis indicates that the connections between structural dimensions and LO depend on an organization's strategic setting. Centralization impeded LO in dynamic workplaces that need flexibility, whereas formalization inhibited learning in prospector firms seeking breakthroughs (Moynihan & Landuyt, 2009; Rashman et al., 2009). Hence, exploring how these types of OS can affect the LO of employees in the UAE's public sector is important. Based on the above discussion, the following hypothesis was developed and explored.

H_0(5): Organizational Structures (Formalized and Centralized) do not affect learning orientation.

Ha(5): Organisational Structures (Formalized and Centralized) affect learning orientation.

3.6. Moderating Effects of Organizational Structure

3.6.1. Moderating Effect of Organisational Structure on the Relationship between Entrepreneurial Orientation and Learning Orientation

OS influences how conducive the workplace is for learning and innovation. Studies suggest that organic, decentralized structures that allow flexibility are more supportive of EO and LO (Kearney et al., 2014; Liu et al., 2022). Recent research found that OS moderates the EO-LO link, such that decentralized structures strengthen this relationship (Tajpour et al., 2021).

H_0(6): Organisational Structure does not moderate the relationship between entrepreneurial and learning orientation.

Ha(6): Organizational structure significantly weakens the positive relationship between entrepreneurial and learning orientations.

3.6.2. Moderating Effect of Organisational Structure on the Relationship between Learning Orientation and Growth of Government

While LO promotes growth, its impact may depend on the OS. Studies suggest that organic structures that permit flexibility enable organizations to fully leverage learning for innovation and improved performance (Wang et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2022). In contrast, rigid bureaucratic structures can inhibit an organization's ability to apply knowledge gains from LO due to excessive formality, restricted information flows, and limited autonomy (Mahmoud et al., 2016). Klein et al. (2010) found that public entrepreneurship stimulates public service organizational growth. However, LO can be better connected through EO. In this situation, an adaptable OS can boost the impact of LO on GOG. Based on this review, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H_0(7): Organisational Structure does not moderate the relationship between learning orientation and the growth of the government.

Ha(7): Organisational Structure significantly weakens the positive relationship between learning orientation and the growth of the government.

3.6.3. Moderating Effect of Organisational Structure on the Relationship between Entrepreneurial Orientation, Learning Orientation, and Growth of Government

Organizations with an entrepreneurial orientation actively pursue new opportunities, take calculated risks, and emphasize innovation (Meekaewkunchorn et al., 2021). EO and LO have been theoretically and empirically linked to facilitating strategic renewal, adaptation, and growth (Correia et al., 2023; Sawaean & Ali, 2020). Sawaean and Ali (2020) have indicated that in highly centralized structures with decision control concentrated at higher echelons, entrepreneurial initiatives and experimentation from lower levels may be stifled, which could impact any effects on growth due to LO. Formalization has also been proposed as a potential moderator of the EO-growth relationship.

Regarding LO, centralized decision-making may undermine organizational openness to new ideas and the dispersed information flows needed for effective learning processes. Yet some centralization may be required to coordinate, integrate, and leverage organizational learning capabilities. More studies are needed to examine how configurations of structure contingently enable or constrain the effects of EO and LO orientations on governmental growth trajectories over time.

H_0(8): Organisational Structure does not moderate the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation, learning orientation, and the growth of the government.

Ha(8): Organisational Structure significantly weakens the positive relationship between entrepreneurial orientation, learning orientation, and the growth of the government.

3.7 Mediating Effects of Learning Orientation

3.7.1. Mediating Effect of Learning Orientation on the Relationship between Organizational Structure and Growth of Government

An organization's LO, which involves acquiring new knowledge, challenging existing assumptions, and adjusting behaviors, could be influenced by how structural aspects such as centralization and formalization impact the GoG. For instance, Valio (2023) outlined that structural aspects of an organization impact employees' ability to learn and their innovativeness and creativity. Sawaean and Ali (2020) found that using management change strategies to develop a learning organization reduced inclinations toward bureaucratic expansion and resource accumulation. Structural centralization and formalization in the model influenced development by impacting an organization's openness to learning and change activities. There is a need to specifically measure and analyze the mediation pathways to better understand the intricate connections between OS, LO, and GoG patterns across time. Based on the above discussion, the following hypothesis was developed and explored.

H_0(9): Organizational learning orientation does not mediate the relationship between organizational structure and the growth of the government.

Ha(9): Organizational learning orientation mediates the relationship between organizational structure and the growth of the government.

3.7.2. Mediating Effect of Learning Orientation on the Relationship Between Entrepreneurial Orientation and Growth of Government

While EO provides impetus for growth, its impact may be enhanced when paired with LO, which allows the actualization of innovative ideas (Real et al., 2014). Empirical research suggests LO mediates EO and performance by enabling organizations to fully leverage the knowledge gained through their entrepreneurial culture (Li et al., 2008). Cultivating LO can thus allow public organizations to translate the potential of EO into actualized growth and improved performance.

H0(10): Organizational learning orientation does not mediate the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and the growth of the government.

Ha(10): Organizational learning orientation mediates the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and the growth of the government.

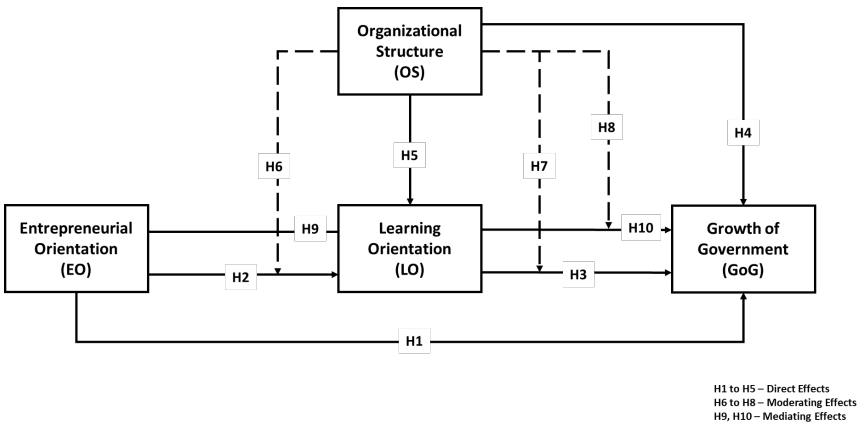


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

4.Empirical investigation

4.1. Research setting

The UAE is an oil-rich country in the Middle East with an estimated population of 10 million, of which around 11% are local Emiratis and the rest are expatriates. The UAE is a federal state with seven local governments. Despite its enormous natural resources, economic diversifications have boosted its economic and social development. The public sector remains the main engine of the UAE's progress. The UAE has succeeded in modernizing public service management (Sarker et al., 2023). Therefore, the UAE's public sector provides a compelling context for empirical investigation.

4.2. Data Collection and Sample

The current research adopted a quantitative research method, and the focus of the current research was to deduce hypotheses from established theoretical frameworks and evaluate them. An online survey in English and Arabic was developed using scales and was distributed to the selected population. The current study's population was middle managers across various sectors in the UAE. The sample was chosen from the large population of middle managers, and this research used a non-probability purposive sample approach to identify workers working in government organizations in the UAE as the criterion for survey participation. Probability sampling enables more generalizability by using random selection; however, creating a comprehensive sample frame for the full target population was hindered by practical limitations (Bell et al., 2019). Purposive sampling allows for selecting a specific sample that closely matches the research objectives to study entrepreneurial orientation, LO, and growth trends in UAE public sector organizations. While there are constraints in generalizing outside this particular community, targeting government officials allows for quick and effective data gathering from the intended demographic. Non-probabilistic purposive sampling involves selecting a specific sample with

the necessary features and expertise to address research problems, making it justifiable despite its limitations compared to random selection methods (Tongco, 2007). A sample of 303 senior and middle managers across healthcare, education, government services, and social services in the UAE participated in the current study.

After determining the sample, the data collection process was initiated. The first step of data collection was to develop a questionnaire using pre-established scales. After developing the questionnaire, an online survey was developed using the Zoho platform, and the link was sent to the sample through several online social media sites, such as WhatsApp, LinkedIn, and Facebook; respondents were compiled through university alumni and public sector associations and contacted multiple times over 3 months to maximize participation. Among respondents, 72.3% occupied senior roles, with the remainder in middle management. The pie chart below shows the distribution of sectors in the sample size.

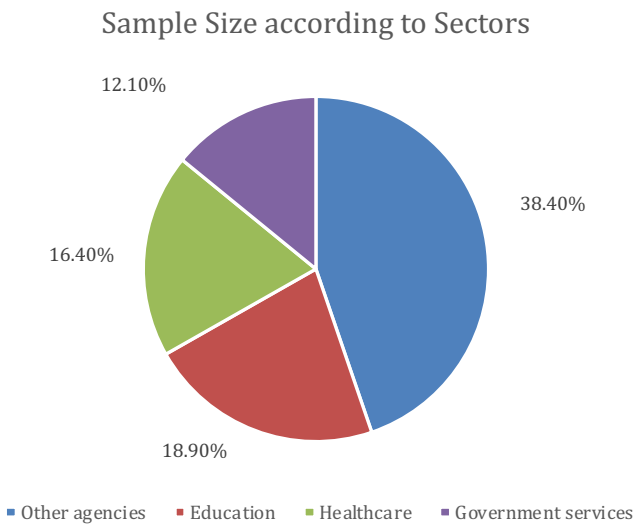


Figure 2: sample size according to sectors

4.3. Measures

This study adopted reflective multi-item measures to assess four key constructs - EO, LO, OS, and GoG. EO was measured using a 9-item scale adapted from Covin and Slevin (1989) that captured associated behaviors like pioneering novel approaches. LO utilized a 9-item scale from Sinkula et al. (1997) encompassing commitment to learning, shared vision, and open-mindedness. OS examined centralization via three items from Aarons et al. (2015), reflecting restricted employee discretion, and formalization through 3 items from Ayyagari et al. (2011). A new 5-item scale measuring GoG across budget, services, human resources, and partnerships was developed based on a review of the most relevant literature (Lybeck & Henrekson, 2014) as there are no validated items and scales of GoG in public management literature. All the variables were measured using 5-point Likert scales, ranging from 'Strongly Disagree' to 'Strongly Agree'.

5. Results

5.1. Descriptive analysis

The study's demographic data encompasses various factors, including gender, age, education level, work experience, organization type, current position, and organizational size. The findings revealed that most participants were males (N=174), and most held a master's degree (N = 138). The findings also revealed that most participants belonged to the age group of 31 to 40 years old (N = 132), indicating the presence of young managers in the UAE's service sector. Regarding work experience, most participants (N = 152) had a significant amount of work experience of 11 to 17 years. The survey results also indicated that most of the managers worked in ministry and federal government organizations (N = 177), and most of the participants worked in large organizations with more than 500 employees (N = 225). The demographic analysis is represented in the following table.

Table 1: Demographic Distribution

Demographic Distribution	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
Gender		
Male	174	51.03%
Female	167	48.97%
Age		
30 or less	41	12.02%
31 - 40	132	38.71%
41 - 50	124	36.36%
51 - 60	39	11.44%
Above 61	5	1.47%
Education		
High School	24	7.04%
Diploma	24	7.04%
Bachelor's degree	110	32.26%
Master's degree	138	40.47%
PhD / DBA	41	12.02%
Other (Please specify)	4	1.17%
Work Experience		
Less than 3 years	17	4.99%
3 - 10 years	87	25.51%
11 - 17 years	152	44.57%
More than 17 years	85	24.93%
Type of Organisations		
Ministry	98	23.74%

Federal government department	42	12.32%
Federal government independent authority	37	10.85%
Local government department	93	27.27%
Local government independent authority	57	16.72%
Municipality	14	4.11%
Organizational Size		
Less than 500 employees	116	34%
More than 500 employees	225	66%

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics (Demographics)

Demographic Characteristics	Min	Max	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	Variance
Age	1	5	2.52	2	0.9	0.81
Gender	1	2	1.49	1	0.5	0.25
Level of education	1	6	3.44	4	1.03	1.06
Experience in the current organization	1	4	2.89	3	0.83	0.69
Type of organization	1	6	3.03	3	1.61	2.59

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics (Variables and Items)

Variable	Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance
Entrepreneurial Orientation - Innovation	Our organization is very open to innovations	3.83	1.14	1.3
	Our organization's hierarchy is very creative about invention and innovation of new projects and business methods	3.66	1.09	1.18
	The organization often implements new approaches to meet its responsibilities	3.7	1.12	1.26
Entrepreneurial Orientation - Proactiveness	Our organization rarely hesitates when it comes to controlling unexpected changes in the business industry	3.53	1.13	1.27
	The organization responds mostly actively to labor/ training market changes	3.7	1.1	1.22
	Our organization often approaches external groups to initiate projects	3.75	1.14	1.3

Entrepreneurial Orientation - Risk-Taking	Our organization usually implements promising but risky projects	3.56	1.14	1.3
	The organization is very careful in the course of project implementation	3.74	1.11	1.24
	Our organization often gets involved in projects, even if the outcome is initially uncertain	3.5	1.19	1.41
Learning Orientation - Commitment to Learning	Our organization's management gives its employees encouragement that is beneficial to learning	3.93	1.09	1.18
	Our organization's employees' ability to continue learning is highly valued and appreciated	3.87	1.06	1.13
	Our organization gives employees aid to better their learning	3.68	1.1	1.2

Learning Orientation - Shared Vision	Our organization has a commonality of purpose among the employees	3.86	1.06	1.12
	Our organization's employees and management agree with the visions	3.8	1.06	1.12
	Our organization's employees feel involved in forming and helping drive forward toward achieving the organization's visions	3.77	1.12	1.25
Learning Orientation - Open Mindedness	Our organization's clients are subject to scrutiny by employees	3.76	1.05	1.11
	Our organization's members agree that the perception of the marketplace should be put to question	3.74	1.05	1.1
	Our organization's way of interpreting client information is questionable	3.77	1.03	1.05

Organization Structure Formalized	Our organization has documented the contents of the work tasks and the ways of carrying these out	3.93	1	1
	In our organization, work evaluation is done based on documented standards	3.9	1.03	1.07
	The policies and directions of our organization must be disclosed through official letters	3.69	1.08	1.16
Organization Structure Centralized	Our organization cannot take any action until a supervisor (or senior) decides	3.78	1.13	1.28
	Even in trivial matters, our organization needs first to get the supervisor's final decision (approval)	3.7	1.13	1.28
	Action can be taken, and implementation can be done mainly after decisions are made at the higher management level	3.89	1.07	1.14

Growth of the Government	Our organization has considerably expanded public services over the last 10 years	3.95	1.09	1.19
	Our organization has considerably increased budgetary allocations for better public services	3.86	1.08	1.18
	Our organization has created new units and branches for expanded public services	3.82	1.05	1.11
	Our organization has employed new people for expanded public services	3.85	1.07	1.15
	Our organization has partnered with non-government organizations and the private sector to provide public services (outsourcing & public-private partnerships)	3.89	1.02	1.04

5.2. Structural Model

Statistical validation analyzed factor loadings, reliability, and validity. According to Hair et al. (2019) and Guenther et al. (2023), item loadings are recommended to exceed 0.708. In the same way, the minimum value for Cronbach's alpha is 0.7 and for composite reliability is 0.7 (Hair & Sarstedt, 2019), and the minimum value for Average variance extracted (AVE) is 0.5 (Guenther et al., 2023; Hair et al., 2017). As can be observed in the following table, the EO, LO, and GoG measures showed excellent psychometric properties, including high Cronbach's alphas of 0.907, 0.925, and 0.930, respectively, which are greater than the threshold value of 0.7 (Hair & Sarstedt, 2019), indicating good reliability of scales used for the data collection process. Similarly, centralized and formalized OS scales also demonstrated satisfactory reliability with Cronbach's alpha values of 0.879 and 0.865, respectively. Also, the values of factor loadings, composite reliability, and AVE met the threshold values, indicating good reliability and validity of data. In addition, the validity of the scales was also high, considering the AVE values for EO, LO, and GoG were 0.843, 0.870, and 0.781, respectively. Similarly, centralized and formalized OS scales also demonstrated satisfactory reliability with AVE values of 0.803 and 0.788, respectively.

Overall, statistical testing provided confidence in the measures' ability to assess the key constructs reliably and validly within the UAE public sector context. Table 2 summarises the psychometric properties, highlighting the rigorous scale validation process. This ensured robust instrumentation to examine the research issues accurately.

Table 4: Constructs' Reliability and Validity

Constructs and items	Loadings	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Entrepreneurial Orientation		0.907	0.942	0.843
Entrepreneurial Orientation - Innovativeness	0.921	0.905	0.940	0.840
EOI1	0.901			
EOI2	0.923			
EOI3	0.926			
Entrepreneurial Orientation - Proactiveness	0.915	0.861	0.915	0.783
EOP1	0.888			
EOP2	0.895			
EOP3	0.871			
Entrepreneurial Orientation - Risk-Taking	0.918	0.822	0.894	0.737
EOR1	0.875			
EOR2	0.842			
EOR3	0.857			
Growth of the Government		0.930	0.947	0.781

Constructs and items	Loadings	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted (AVE)
GOG1	0.881			
GOG2	0.913			
GOG3	0.884			
GOG4	0.887			
GOG5	0.854			
Learning Orientation		0.925	0.953	0.870
Learning Orientation - Commitment to Learning	0.917	0.922	0.951	0.865
LOC1	0.936			
LOC2	0.949			
LOC3	0.905			
Learning Orientation - Shared Vision	0.951	0.927	0.953	0.872
LOS1	0.933			
LOS2	0.941			
LOS3	0.928			
Learning Orientation - Open Mindedness	0.930	0.917	0.948	0.858

Constructs and items	**Loadings**	**Cronbach's alpha**	**Composite reliability**	**Average variance extracted (AVE)**
LOO1	0.928			
LOO2	0.920			
LOO3	0.931			
Organization Structure Centralized		0.879	0.925	0.803
OSC1	0.909			
OSC2	0.886			
OSC3	0.894			
Organization Structure **Formalized**		0.865	0.917	0.788
OSF1	0.929			
OSF2	0.910			
OSF3	0.819			

5.3. Coefficient of determination

The coefficient of determination (R-square) quantifies the amount of variation in the data accounted for by the model (Chicco et al., 2021). Table 3 presents the coefficients of determination (R-squared and R-squared adjusted) for two critical factors in the study, GoG and LO.

For the centralized OS model, the R-Square value of GoG indicated that approximately 60.3% of the variance is explained by the model's predictors, and the adjusted R-squared, accounting for the number of predictors, stands at 59.8%. For LO, the R-squared value is 0.629, indicating that nearly 62.9% of the variance can be attributed to the model's variables, with the adjusted R-squared at 62.5%. For the formalized OS model, the R-Square value of GoG indicated that approximately 59.5% of the variance is explained by the model's predictors, and the adjusted R-squared, accounting for the number of predictors, stands at 58.9%. For LO, the R-squared value is 0.692, indicating that nearly 69.2% of the variance can be attributed to the model's variables, with the adjusted R-squared at 68.9%. The comparison of R-squared values shows that the formalized OS model better accounts for the variation in LO, indicating its greater influence on promoting learning in government organizations. The centralized OS model has a greater impact on the GoG than the formalized OS model.

Table 5: Coefficient of Determination

	Centralized Model		**Formalized Model**	
	R-square	R-square adjusted	R-square	R-square adjusted
Growth of the Government	0.603	0.598	0.595	0.589
Learning Orientation	0.629	0.625	0.692	0.689

5.4. Model Fit Summary

In PLS-SEM, there are goodness-of-fit measures, such as Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), NFI (Normed Fit Index), and Chi-square values that can help in evaluating the model fit (Hair et al., 2019). The authors outline that the threshold value for SRMR should be less than 0.08, and the NFI value must be greater than 0.9. It can be observed in the following table that SRMR values for both centralized and formalized OS models are 0.053 and 0.047, respectively, which is less than 0.08, indicating a good model fit. NFI values also for centralized and formalized OS models are 0.907 and 0.913, respectively, which is greater than 0.9 and indicates a good model fit. Hence, both models are a good fit.

Table 6: Model Fit Summary (goodness of fit measures)

	Centralized		**Formalized**	
	Estimated model	Criterion & Status	Estimated model	Criterion & Status
SRMR	0.053	< 0.08 (good fit)	0.047	< 0.08 (good fit)
Chi-square	357.636		346.345	
NFI	0.907	> 0.90 (good fit)	0.913	> 0.90 (good fit)

5.5. Discriminant validity

Table 5 presents the results of the Fornell-Larcker criterion for discriminant validity, examining two perspectives of OS (centralized and formalized) alongside the constructs EO, GoG, and LO. The Fornell-Larcker criterion is met when the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) square root for each construct is greater than the correlations between that construct and other constructs. In this analysis, all constructs meet the criterion. Specifically, for centralized OS, the square roots of the AVEs for EO (0.918), GoG (0.684), LO (0.777), and centralized OS (0.896)

are all greater than their correlations. Similarly, for formalized OS, the square roots of the AVEs for these constructs are also higher than their respective correlations. These findings demonstrate that the constructs in the model have discriminant validity, as they exhibit greater variance within themselves than in their relationships with other constructs, thus confirming the independence of the constructs within the model.

Table 7: Discriminant validity (Fornell-Larcker criterion)

Models	Centralized				Formalized			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
(1) Entrepreneurial Orientation	0.918				0.918			
(2) Growth of the Government	0.684	0.884			0.684	0.884		
(3) Learning Orientation	0.777	0.731	0.933		0.777	0.731	0.933	
(4) Organization Structure	0.544	0.553	0.540	0.896	0.700	0.678	0.755	0.887

5.6. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

5.6.1. Path coefficients with direct effects

Table 6 reports the direct path coefficients for two OS perspectives, centralized and formalized. The results confirm several hypotheses. Hypotheses H1 and H2, linking EO to GO and LO, are supported for both structures. Similarly, H3 and H4 find support in both cases. H5, relating OS to LO, is supported for centralized structures but not formalized ones. However, H6 receives support for centralized structures but not formalized ones, indicating an interaction effect. Lastly, H7 is supported in centralized structures but not in formalized structures, highlighting the nuanced influence of OS on these relationships. These results emphasize the importance of considering the specific organizational context when examining these constructs.

Table 8: Path coefficients with direct effects

Hypothesis	Paths	Centralized OS			Formalized OS		
		β	P values	Results	β	P values	Results
H1	Entrepreneurial Orientation -> Growth of the Government	0.248	0.014	Supported	0.242	0.016	Supported
H2	Entrepreneurial orientation -> Learning Orientation	0.657	0.000	Supported	0.476	0.000	Supported
H3	Learning Orientation -> Growth of the Government	0.380	0.000	Supported	0.345	0.001	Supported
H4	Organization Structure -> Growth of the Government	0.166	0.004	Supported	0.200	0.009	Supported
H5	Organization Structure -> Learning Orientation	0.153	0.041	Supported	0.404	0.000	Supported

H6	Organization Structure x Entrepreneurial Orientation -> Learning Orientation	-0.058	0.043	Supported	-0.025	0.325	Non-supported
H7	Organization Structure x Learning Orientation -> Growth of the Government	-0.082	0.012	Supported	-0.049	0.092	Non-supported

5.6.2. Path coefficients with indirect effects

Table 6 presents the path coefficients with indirect effects, considering two perspectives of OS, Centralized and Formalized. The results provide valuable insights into the relationships between the examined constructs. Hypothesis H8 is non-supported in centralized and formalized structures (p-values 0.086 and 0.377, respectively). Hypothesis H9, which suggests a path from Organization Structure to LO and then to Growth of the Government, is non-supported in the Centralized context (p-value 0.062) but supported in the Formalized setting (p-value 0.003). Hypothesis H10, which examines the direct path from EO to LO and GoG, is supported in centralized and formalized contexts (p-values 0.002 and 0.012, respectively).

In summary, the results reveal that the impact of OS on the indirect relationships between these constructs varies depending on the structural perspective. Furthermore, direct paths from EO to LO and GOG are consistent across both perspectives. These findings underscore the significance of considering the specific OS when assessing these relationships.

Table 9: Path coefficients with indirect effect

Hypothesis	Paths	Centralized OS			Formalized OS		
		β	P values	Results	β	P values	Results
H8	Organization Structure x Entrepreneurial Orientation -> Learning Orientation -> Growth of the Government	-0.022	0.086	Non-supported	-0.009	0.377	Non-supported
H9	Organization Structure -> Learning Orientation -> Growth of the Government	0.058	0.062	Non-supported	0.139	0.003	Supported
H10	Entrepreneurial orientation -> Learning Orientation -> Growth of the Government	0.250	0.002	Supported	0.164	0.012	Supported

Moreover, utilizing SmartPLS version 4, Structural Equation Models (SEM) were developed to examine OS from centralized and formalized perspectives. This software is well-suited for analyzing data with a limited sample size and non-normally distributed data, utilizing bootstrapping techniques to ensure the robustness of the results. SmartPLS delivers essential statistical information, including coefficients, p-values, and R-square values, facilitating the evaluation of relationship significance and explaining the proportion of variance. Figure 2 visually depicts the SEM model examining the relationships between EO, LO, centralized OS, and GoG. Standardized path coefficients and R-squared values illustrate the significance and strength of the linkages between the constructs. Figure 3 presents the parallel SEM model incorporating a formalized OS in place of a centralized structure. The two models allow a comparative analysis of how the nature of OS impacts the hypothesized variable relationships.

The graphical models enrich the understanding of the quantitative results by providing a clear conceptual overview of the model structure and findings.

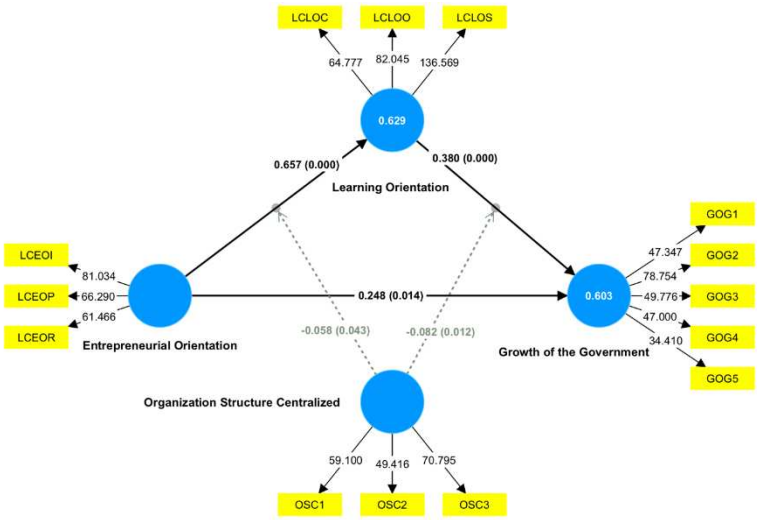


Figure 3: SEM model with organization structure centralized items

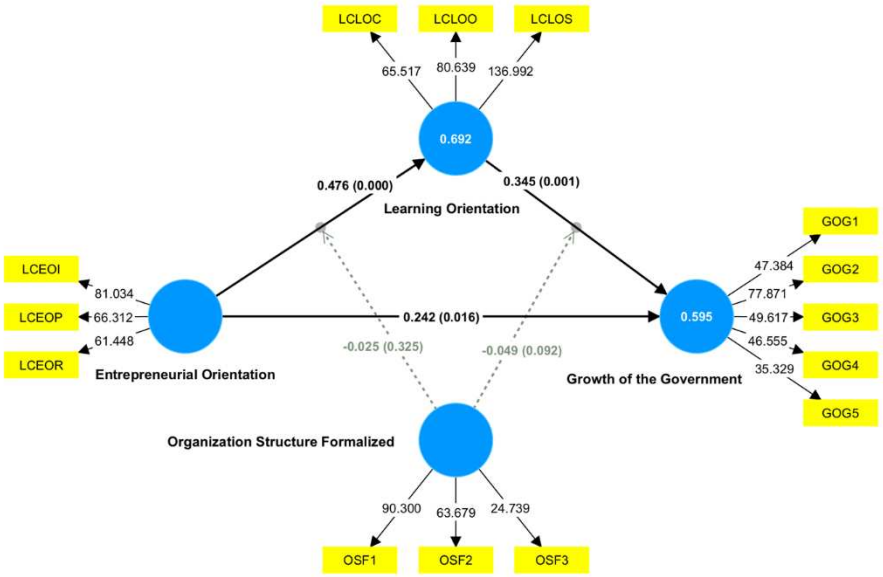


Figure 4: SEM model with Organization Structure formalized items

6. Discussion of Results

The findings provide compelling insights into the complex relationships between EO, LO, OS, and growth within the UAE's public sector context. First, EO significantly positively affected the GoG, supporting H1. Table 4 shows that this relationship is held for centralized and formalized structures. This aligns with studies indicating that EO allows public entities to pioneer new services, find creative solutions, foster a responsive culture, and expand steadily (Klein et al., 2010; Kuratko et al., 2021). The tendency to identify and leverage opportunities signalled by EO seems to promote public sector growth.

EO positively predicted LO, affirming H2. This relationship remained consistent across centralized and formalized structures (Table 4). As hypothesized, EO's focus on questioning the status quo and trying unproven

approaches provides the impetus for LO by encouraging experimentation and new perspectives (Real et al., 2014).

LO exhibited a significant positive link with the GoG, supporting H3. This relationship holds up under both OS conditions tested (Table 4). Empirically, this finding aligns with studies suggesting LO facilitates innovation, responsiveness to public needs, and leveraging growth opportunities (Moynihan & Landuyt, 2009; Wang et al., 2022).

OS positively moderated the EO-LO relationship only for centralized designs, affirming H5. Under centralized structures, the EO-LO link is strengthened. However, this moderation disappeared in the formalized structure (Table 4). This highlights the need for flexible structures to realize EO's learning benefits.

OS positively moderated the LO-GoG relationship only under centralized conditions, supporting H6. The linkage between LO and public sector growth was enhanced in centralized contexts. However, in formalized structures, this moderating effect was non-significant (Table 4). This emphasizes the decentralized authority's role in fully empowering entities to leverage LO for expansion and performance gains (Zhang et al., 2022).

These findings indicate that OS shapes how EO and LO affect public sector growth. While EO and LO independently promote GoG, decentralized and flexible designs optimize their impacts. This highlights the need to address structural constraints for public managers seeking growth through entrepreneurial, learning-focused cultures.

Furthermore, LO appears to be a crucial mediator, translating EO's potential into realized growth. Path analysis confirmed LO's mediating role, whereby EO cultivates learning capabilities that drive public sector expansion (Table 5). This aligns with the study's regression results, which found that LO explained 62.9% of the variance in GoG (Table 2).

Overall, this study makes essential theoretical and practical contributions. It offers empirical insight into how key organizational capabilities and structural factors interact to drive public sector excellence in the UAE. The findings inform public management theory on the enabling role of flexible designs and learning practices in conjunction with a strategic emphasis on entrepreneurship. With its robust analysis and context-specific findings, this study significantly advances knowledge on how public entities can sustain excellence, development, and service delivery.

7. Conclusion

7.1. Theoretical Contribution of the Study

This research makes significant theoretical contributions to public sector innovation, learning, and growth scholarship. It provides robust empirical evidence validating the positive relationships between EO, LO, and public sector growth. The findings affirm that cultivating entrepreneurial emphasis on innovation, proactiveness, and risk-taking allows public entities to expand their activities and outputs. This aligns with and builds on prior conceptual work positing that EO enables public organizations to better capitalize on opportunities (Klein et al., 2010).

Furthermore, the study illuminates LO's crucial mediating role in translating EO into realized growth outcomes. This substantiates and advances theoretical perspectives highlighting learning capabilities' importance in actualizing the potential benefits of innovation-focused cultures (Wang et al., 2022). The research also elucidates the contingency effects of OS, demonstrating that decentralized designs strengthen the positive linkages between LO, EO, and GoG. This affirms long-standing theoretical arguments that excessive bureaucracy and formalization restrict innovation and learning (Moon et al., 2020).

The items and scales to measure GoG are absent in public management literature. After an extensive review of the literature, new items to measure GoG were developed, and their validation was confirmed (Table 1). This is a major contribution to conducting quantitative empirical research in public management.

7.2. Managerial Implications

The study findings provide practical implications for public policymakers and leaders seeking to enhance organizational outcomes. The results highlight the importance of public managers proactively fostering entrepreneurial strategic emphasis and priorities at the organizational level to drive innovation and growth.

However, cultivating EO alone may be insufficient. The study indicates that concerted efforts to nurture learning capabilities create the critical absorptive capacity to translate innovative ideas into implemented growth. Furthermore, the research clarifies that OS transformations are vital to unshackle public sector entities from bureaucratic constraints that undermine innovation and learning. Thus, a holistic approach encompassing strategies, capabilities, and structures is imperative.

7.3. Limitations and Future Research

The research outlines certain constraints that need to be acknowledged. The primary limitation is limited generalizability. The study largely focuses on the UAE's public sector, limiting the generalizability of its conclusions to other geographical locations or organizational situations. Agranoff (2016) points out that focusing on a single setting might restrict the applicability of research results. Future research should investigate similar settings beyond the UAE, such as other Middle Eastern countries and Western nations.

The cross-sectional approach has difficulties analyzing the temporal development of interactions between variables. Future research can utilize longitudinal or experimental research methods that would provide a more thorough comprehension of the causal connections among EO, LO, OS, and GoG in the public sector, overcoming this constraint.

The study's data-gathering methodology may be affected by common method bias, which might impact the reliability of the results. To address bias, precautions were made to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. Future research should use mixed-methods techniques that combine quantitative and qualitative data-gathering methods to validate findings and improve methodological rigor.

The study's emphasis on certain variables like EO, LO, and OS overlooks other possibly significant elements such as organizational culture, leadership style, and external environmental situations. Future studies should use a more thorough theoretical framework and explore a wider variety of variables to better understand the elements that impact organizational performance and adaptation in the public sector.

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تداخل التوجهات الريادية / التعلمية والهياكل التنظيمية في دفع نمو الحكومة: "دراسة تجريبية للخدمات العامة في الإمارات العربية المتحدة"

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يتناول هذا البحث العوامل التنظيمية الرئيسة التي تدفع نمو الحكومة في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة؛ إذ إنّ التوجه الريادي والتوجه التعليمي، والهيكل التنظيمي للحكومة تُعتبر عوامل ذات أهمية عالية قد تكون لها تأثيرات مهمة على نمو الحكومة. يختبر البحث تأثير التوجه الريادي على نمو الحكومة، ودور التوجه التعليمي كوسيط، وتأثيرات الهيكل التنظيمي كمعوّق. تم نشر استبيان يقيم هذه المتغيرات إلى 300 من الإداريين في المناصب العليا والمتوسطة في الجهات الحكومية ذات الخدمة العامة. باستخدام التحليل الكمي، تظهر النتائج أن التوجهات الريادية والتعليمية تعزز نمو الحكومة بشكل مستقل. كما أظهرت دور الهيكل التنظيمي؛ إذ كان له تأثيرات متفاوتة على العلاقات بين العوامل المطروحة. أسهم دور التوجه التعليمي كوسيط بتوسيع فعلي في إمكانيات التوجه الريادي. وتقدم النتائج إسهامات نظرية تؤكد على الروابط بين التوجهات والقدرات والهياكل التي تعزز حيوية القطاع العام. ويسلط هذا البحث الضوء على التداخل المعقد بين التوجهات الريادية والتعليمية والهياكل التنظيمية في دفع نمو الحكومة

الكلمات الدالة: التوجه الريادي، التوجه التعليمي، الهيكل التنظيمي، نمو الحكومة، دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة

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