



## **Business Engagement and City Branding**

**تأثير العلامة التجارية للمدن على استجذاب الأعمال**

**by**

**NAWFAL S. ABDUL GHANI AL JOURANI**

**A thesis submitted in fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN BUSINESS MANAGEMENT  
at  
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**November 2018**



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## **Abstract**

There is an abundance of literature on consumer engagement, however, little is known as to how engagement is made by organizations. This study addresses this gap by investigating how city brands specifically, (and organizations in general), can make engagement happen. In the academic literature and in business practice there is no universal understanding of how engagement is developed by organizations in a way that adds to the rich and evolved consumer-based thinking (in marketing, branding, advertising, and other relevant activities). This thesis examines the underlying mechanisms of what make organizations have brands that are successful in their attempts to be engaging. The analysis identifies components of *the business engagement model* and how they operate in creating and managing successful brands in general and in city branding more specifically. This study defines business engagement as the management system in which leadership creates a vision that drives the creation of a collective culture which in turn adopts innovations for the sake of achieving consistent competitive ability to the entity within which it is applied. The thesis addresses another gap in the literature which is city branding. There is an abundance of literature on what it is, but not a lot of consensus on how cities can do it. There is a need for a universal framework that can be relatively generalized in addressing how city branding can be successfully implemented. Dubai is chosen as the subject matter of this research. Informed by the literature on city branding, marketing, branding, innovation diffusion, and leadership, this thesis adopts a qualitative research approach that uses interviews and documents as the major sources of primary and secondary data. 24 Dubai Government organizations participated in the interviews, and the four main findings are: 1. Leadership, vision, collective culture, innovation, and consistent competitive ability are the ingredients of the business engagement model. 2. City branding is not a promotional activity as commonly perceived, but a business management process that precedes promotion. 3. Leadership plays a major role in the process of city branding (and any other branding context), not as a political promotional tool, but as a business management application that *makes* brands and not only promotes them. 4. The business engagement model is ubiquitous. Business engagement happens organically whenever there is a brand using situation wherein leadership creates a vision that drives all involved to achieve it. This study supports existing literature on engagement and city branding and expands it to provide a conceptual framework for city managers and planners, leadership entities, researchers, and marketing specialists that contributes to managing city branding and other brand making endeavors.

Keywords: business engagement, city branding, leadership, collective culture, innovation, diffusion, and consistent competitive ability.

في الوقت الذي يوجد فيه الكثير من الدراسات حول مفهوم الاستجذاب على مستوى المستهلك، لا يتوفّر الكثير من الأبحاث حول الكيفية التي تقوم بها المؤسسات بصنع هذا الاستجذاب أصلًا. من هنا تعمل هذه الرسالة على معالجة هذه الفجوة عبر دراسة الكيفية التي تقوم بها العلامات التجارية للمدن خصوصاً والمؤسسات عموماً بصناعة الاستجذاب. وسواءً على صعيد العلوم والأدبيات الإدارية أو في حيز التطبيق العملي، لا يوجد حتى الآن فهم علمي منقٍ عليه يفسّر ظاهرة الاستجذاب على مستوى يتنبئ بذلك المقصور على النظريات المعنية بالمستهلك - بما يخص الفعاليات كـالإعلانات (advertising) والتّسويق (marketing) والترويج (branding) وغيرها، ويقدم أيضاً تصوّراً فلسفياً شاملًا يبيّن أهمية الاستجذاب والقيادة التي يمنحها للمؤسسات التي تحسّن تطبيقه والطرق والآليات المتّبعة لإدارته بشكل ناجح، والدور الذي تلعبه القيادة في هذا السياق. عليه، تقوم هذه الأطروحة بدراسة الآليات الكامنة التي تتبع للمؤسسات أن تتطور علامات تجارية جاذبة. وكشف تحليل البيانات الذي تم إنجازه في هذه الرسالة عن العناصر التي يتكون منها نموذج الاستجذاب، وكيف تقوم هذه العناصر بالعمل مجتمعة على صنع علامات تجارية ناجحة في كل الميادين عموماً وعلى صعيد العلامات التجارية للمدن على وجه الخصوص. تعرّف هذه الرسالة استجذاب الأعمال على أنه العملية الإدارية التي تقوم فيها القيادة بتطوير الرؤية التي يبدورها تsemه في تكوين ثقافة جماعية تبني الابتكار وسيلةً لتحقيق القدرة التنافسية للجهة التي يتم تطبيق هذه العملية فيها. كما تقوم الرسالة بمعالجة فجوة أخرى في الأدبيات وهذه تتعلّق بموضوع العلامات التجارية للمدن. فيالرغم من وجود الكثير من الأبحاث المعنية بماهية العلامات التجارية، لكن مع افتقار وجود اتفاق شامل بين المختصين على الكيفية المثلثيّة التي تستطيع بها المدن أن تدير علامتها التجارية بشكل ناجح. هناك حاجة ل توفير إطار نظري شامل يمكن تعديله بشكل نسبي بحيث يكون نظاماً متاحاً للتّطبيق فيما يتعلق بإدارة العلامات التجارية للمدن وكيفية القيام بذلك. وتم استخدام إمارة دبي لتكون علامتها التجارية موضوعاً لهاً البحث. وفقاً للتحليل شامل لكل الأدبيات المعنية بحقول المعرفة في ميادين العلامات التجارية للمدن، والقيادة، والتّسويق، والترويج، ونظريات انتشار الابتكار، تبنّت هذه الدراسة منهاجاً بحثياً نوعياً يعتمد على استخدام المقابلات والوثائق كمصادر لاستقصاء البيانات الأولية والثانوية وتحليلها تباعاً. إذ قامت 24 مؤسسة تابعة لمدينة دبي بالمشاركة بهذه الدراسة. وخلصت الدراسة إلى النتائج التالية: 1. يتكون نموذج الاستجذاب من العناصر التالية: القيادة، والرؤية، والثقافة الجماعية، والإبتكار، والقدرة المترافقية على التنافس. 2. تقع عملية صنع العلامة التجارية للمدن خارج نطاق الترويج التسويقي (وليس ضمنه وفقاً للاتفاق السادس حالياً) إذ هي عملية إدارية في المقام الأول تبدأ قبل الترويج وتنتهي. 3. تلعب القيادة دوراً رئيسياً في عملية صنع العلامة التجارية للمدن (والعلامات التجارية عموماً) – والدور الذي تقوم به القيادة ينبع من مهام التمثيل السياسي وحسب بل يضطلع بدور إداري أساسي في صنع العلامة التجارية وتحديد ملامح هويتها. 4. إن نموذج الاستجذاب الاقتصادي كلي الوجود. إذ تحدث حالة الاستجذاب بشكل تلقائي وطبيعي (غير مفْحَم أو مصطنع) في أي سياق استخدام لعلامة تجارية يكون فيه هناك قيادة تنجح في استقطاب كل الأطراف المعنية وتوجيهها لتحقيق هدف مشترك (أو مجموعة من الأهداف المشتركة). ختاماً، تدعم نتائج الدراسة هذه كل الأدبيات المتوفّرة حالياً في ميدان البحث وتبني عليها وتسهم في توسيعها عبر تقديم إطار نظري متكملاً لظاهرة الاستجذاب يمكن الاستفادة منه من قبل كل من العاملين في ميادين العلامات التجارية للمدن، والمؤسسات التجارية، والهيئات القيادية، والباحثين، والمدراء الإداريين، والهيئات الأكاديمية، وأصحاب التسويق، وكل المهتمين بإدارة العلامات التجارية بشكل عام.

المفاهيم الرئيسية: استجذاب الأعمال، العلامة التجارية للمدن، القيادة، الثقافة الجماعية، الإبتكار، نظرية انتشار الأفكار، والقدرة المترافقية على التنافس.

## الإهداء

أهدى هذه الرسالة لمقام صاحب السمو

الشيخ محمد بن راشد آل مكتوم

صانع رؤية دبي

والملهم الحقيقى وراء هذا العمل

### Dedication

*I dedicate this thesis to*

## **His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum**

*Dubai's Visionary-in-Chief,  
The true inspiration behind this work*

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## **CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1. 1. Overview**

According to the United Nations (UN), in 2016 more than 54.5% of humans live in cities, and by the UN's estimates, the percentage of humans living in urban settlements will be more than 60% by the year 2030 (United Nations 2016). It is becoming the norm that cities are the social form and embodiment of our human existence. They are the platform for our survival as a species and provide access to our needs – whether social, psychological, physical, economic or political. However, why do people and organizations choose to locate or tour or work in a particular city?

On a higher level, it is worthwhile to contemplate some laymen questions that are relevant to the exploration of business engagement conducted in this study: Why do people do the things they do in society? What are the underlying influencing factors affecting an individual's or group's or organization's motivation and decision to buy a special brand of soap, join a spa club, or a certain movement, subscribe to the principles of a certain leader, or a political ideology, or follow the practice and teachings of a religion, or a management philosophy? Why do people choose to spend their vacations in a specific city, rather than another? How do the new ideas and perceptions about cities move inside and across social systems?

More importantly, how does the *adoption* of these ideas move inside and across a social system from one member to another? Does leadership have a role in this process? Are the mechanisms of social contagion and new product adoption the same?

Is there an academic knowledge and understanding of these dynamics? Can there be an efficient management of such mechanisms in the management of businesses and organizations? What fields of knowledge and management practice cover these phenomena?

Some fragmented answers to these questions can be found in areas such as behavioural psychology, consumer behaviour studies, marketing, religion, sociology, cultural and anthropological research, and in specific fields such as innovation diffusion and leadership theories, and so on. However, no matter what types of activity and adoption of ideas is occurring in various contexts, there is clearly a common thread to all of the above-mentioned questions. There is a unit of adoption, an adopted idea, and an originator of that particular idea. This trilogy can be found to be applicable commercially in many cultural, social, political, and even individual contexts. The manipulation (and/or management) of this system is traditionally—and conveniently—labeled under marketing, branding, propaganda, promotions, selling, preaching, advertising, and so on. What is critical in many of these subjects is that in the context of city brands, it is not easy to assign any one of these elements as the driver for the adoption by people of the city's overall product offering. It will be studied in the course of this thesis, if there are common principles, activities and themes across different types of brand and marketing contexts.

This study investigates how organizations can make engagement; an engagement that influences opinion cognitively, build perceptions and connections emotionally, and leads adoption behaviourally. The ultimate purpose of any originator activity, in the trilogy system (originator-idea-adoption unit), is to create brands that are strong and

influential enough to make their target adopters behave in a certain way, and therefore possessing equity and value (see Section 2.e.2). The thesis also investigates the role leadership play in the creation of business engagement.

The Dubai city product offering as a brand is an informative and interesting example of how some of the principles of business engagement function. The city has risen from comparative obscurity in the seventies and eighties to have become a global brand in just a matter of a few years – by and large attributed to its leadership's focused vision on transforming the city into a globally recognized house name.

## **1. 2. Research Problem and Gaps in the Literature**

The problem that is addressed in this study is twofold: first, there are insufficient business engagement theories and frameworks to explain the engagement phenomena in terms of how it is made by businesses or organizations. While there is an abundance of literature on customer engagement with sound understandings and theoretical frameworks as to what it is and how it is structured, there is a scarcity when it comes to having theoretical frameworks that can present a straightforward, clear, applicable, and relatively generalizable understanding of how organizations can *make* engagement. Second, city branding, while recognized in the literature as a growing field, it still lacks a holistic conceptual rationale and model that can be applied for urban development by city policy makers and inform standard organizational theories and recommendations for good practice in the context of business management.

In the academic literature, and in business and management practice, there is no single, universal theory of business engagement that covers marketing, branding and advertising (in any brand using context) and transcends consumer-based marketing thinking to make the focus on conceptualizations that explain how organizations (and especially cities) can generate engagement. The lack of a universally agreed understanding of how engagement is made by organizations presents an absence of best practice, a lack of common standard in businesses – which impacts the successful dissemination of new ideas, projects, and brands in society on the one hand, and plays a detrimental role in how successful businesses are financially and strategically managed on the other. Another indirect gap of sorts in the literature, is the lack of inclusion of the role that leadership plays in creating business engagement on hand, and in driving successful city branding programs on the other.

Much of current marketing theory is consumer-based, and the recent organizational theory does not include any role for marketing, while leadership thinking is limited mainly to the realm of organizational strategy, without considering the impact that leadership plays in influencing business engagement. Hence, there is a need for a new way of thinking that incorporates engagement of business as an overarching concept covering these gaps in the literature. In this thesis, the focus is on city brands, but based on the data analysis and interpretation, some tentative generalizations relevant to any brand form can be made.

### **1. 3. Research Aim**

The research aim of this study is to explore and understand the mechanisms and building blocks of business engagement, within which visions, ideas, programs, and brands spread in social systems under the influence of leadership.

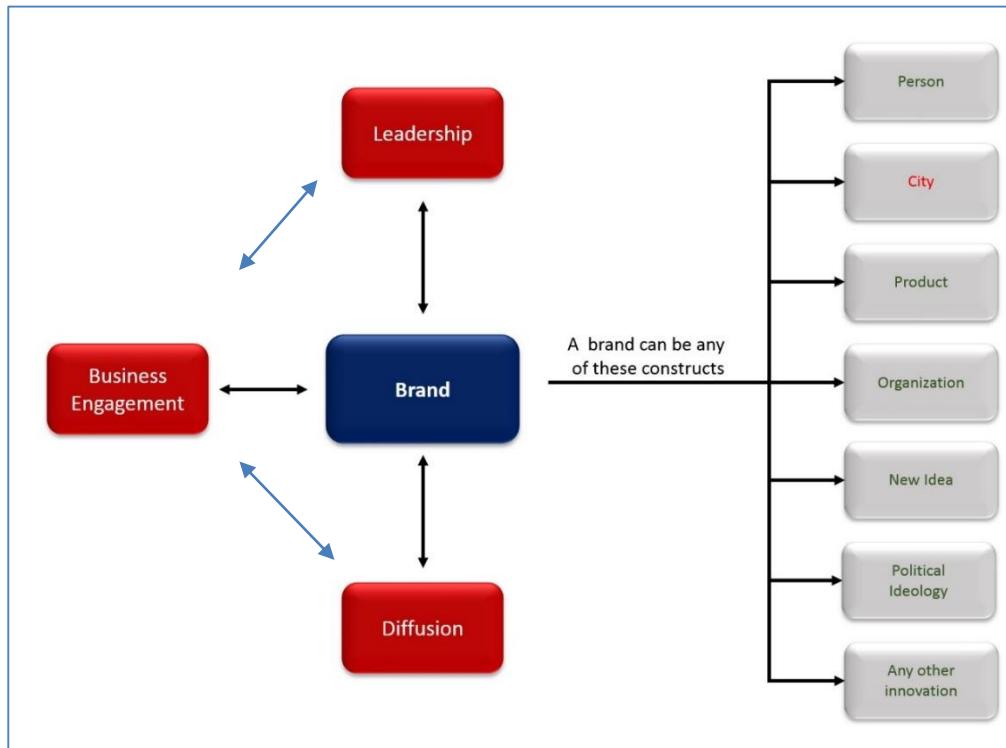
Based on a comprehensive analysis of the literature (in the areas of city brands, customer engagement, marketing, branding, innovation diffusion, and leadership), this research study aims to explore the nature of business engagement as an emerging concept and unravel its various working processes and mechanisms. Based on concepts and findings derived from using a qualitative grounded theory approach including interviews, and secondary data analysis of the Dubai city brand, this thesis argues that the business engagement model is one of the main underlying influences behind successful city brands assisting them to achieve a sustainable competitive edge and contributing significant knowledge and understanding on the efficacy of aspects of ideas diffusion and leadership. Particularly, the business engagement model explains how organizations can achieve competitive edge through creating engaged customers. What the model presents is an understanding of how this customer engagement is made and what organizations (city brands in the context of this study) need to do to create effective customer engagement. It is proposed at this stage of the research that leadership plays a major role in creating the vision which inspires the business or organization to achieve the desired engagement at any given customer targets.

This study proposes that business engagement explains the way brands work - in terms of the role that leadership plays in expediting (or hindering) the *spread* of the proposed brand offerings (a concept treatment borrowed from innovation diffusion theory) in social systems using selected aspects of diffusion theory such as the basic characteristics of the innovation that lead to its diffusion across the social system over time. The study proposes that the business engagement model utilizes (and is affected by) leadership and diffusion of ideas in the creation of strong successful brands, that have engaged customers.

Figure 1 below presents the research strategy in terms of the interrelationships of the central concepts under consideration in the thesis. It is critical to understand that before any data analysis, this figure only represents the starting point of the research study at the very early stage. Few clarifications regarding the figure are in order here. First, all the conceptual elements present in the figure, i.e., leadership, diffusion, and brand, represent the basic thinking at this stage of the thesis, and they do not represent a working model. The relationship that exists among these elements in the figure are exploratory and can form a basic understanding or a starting point that is deducted from the existing literature driving the data-based research work and analysis to follow, which will lead to the emergence of the business engagement model. Second, brand can mean an idea, an organization, a city, a country, a product, etc., and this is where the link with the theory of innovation diffusion lies, in that how new ideas spread inside the community of a group of people or organizations can benefit from the theoretical findings of the innovation diffusion theory. The mechanisms generally accepted as standard norms of explaining diffusion can be applied in the business engagement model postulated by this study. Third, the conceptual relationships in this

figure, in terms of power and hierarchy, are only explanatory at this stage. That is, they are deduced based on the researchers understanding of the current literature on each of these concepts. The relationship, the concepts, and (as expected) the emerging new concepts will all form and assume an emergent role based on the data analysis (Please see Figure 24). Towards the end of the thesis, following the data analysis based on grounded theory, a model of business engagement will be emerged and be interpreted and discussed, within which, the whole concepts will be presented and a final format, and the role and relations ship for each will be elaborated in details in the Discussion chapter of this thesis.

**Figure 1. A Proposed Business Engagement Study Strategy**



Source: Author's own origination.

City branding is used as the area of analysis because it represents an excellent example of the need for a new model representing the diffusion of brand perceptions in social systems. Cities are run by politicians who rely on delegated working groups, mostly in urban development, and on advertising agencies to create promotional campaigns to promote them. Yet, the fundamental problem here lies in the missing link that leadership plays in creating a business engagement platform that unites the various teams' efforts successfully.

Moreover, a city brand is a potent showcase for the need to employ a universal model of business engagement. A theoretical framework that can provide a convincing explanation of the role of leadership in creating and diffusing brands, and how these brands are managed and sustainably rejuvenated. It can also provide a lingua franca of

sorts for all management teams involved in the development of a city brand – in which case, most come from totally different vocational backgrounds (such as urban planning, policy making, administrative services, etc.) often with limited academic or practical understanding of brand management.

#### **1. 4. Research Objectives**

As stated in section **1.c.** above, this study aims to investigate, explore and understand what constitutes business engagement, and how organizations in general, and city branding specifically, can use the model to create strong, successful brands. The objective are made as such that they start with the need to conduct a fully comprehensive literature review on subjects of relevance, then identify the literature gaps clearly. The remaining objectives will be in the form of conducting empirical research (in this case a grounded data analysis) to address the gaps identifies, and develop also an overall conceptual model, with relevant explanations, suggestions for development in future research and the generation of hypothesis to be also texted in future studies. Accordingly, and based on this premise, the following are the research objectives of the study:

- Obj1 Provide a detailed and comprehensive review of existing literature relating to the concepts of city branding, engagement, leadership, marketing, branding, and innovation diffusion.
- Obj2 Identify the gaps in the literature with reference to business engagement and city branding.
- Obj3 Address the gaps in the literature through conducting empirical study work in data gathered from interviews and secondary documents analysis.
- Obj4 Propose a comprehensive and systematic approach to the process of managing city brands.

- Obj5 Present a comprehensive and systematic approach to the process of managing brands in the commercial and business contexts, in general.
- Obj6 Develop an initial abstract theoretical understanding of the concept of business engagement.
- Obj7 Offer insights and recommendations to further develop the business engagement theory.
- Obj8 Generate a set of hypotheses related to the concept of business engagement that will allow further investigations in future studies.

## **1. 5. Research Questions**

To guide the research process, a group of research questions are formed in light of the study's research problems, aims and objectives. Research question number one focuses on identifying what business engagement is and how can it be defined. Research question number two address what constitutes this business engagement in terms of the elements of which it is formed. Questions number 3 and 4 investigate the relationship of leadership and diffusion concepts with business engagement and how each of them operates inside the business engagement model. The last question, number five, addresses the issue of how and if business engagement can contribute to the creation of strong successful city branding and in general branding as well.

RQ1. What defines business engagement?

RQ2. What are the main elements of business engagement?

RQ3. What is the role leadership plays in business engagement?

RQ4. What are the diffusion elements that are deployed within business engagement?

RQ5. Can business engagement create strong city brands with a sustainable competitive edge?

## **1. 6. Research Strategy**

As is clearly identified by the research questions above, this thesis is not targeting the testing of existing theoretical frameworks. Instead, the research study is exploring the underlying factors of business engagement, what makes up business engagement, and how city branding works in the light of our understanding of what constitutes business engagement. By this, the research attempt will be directed at empirically addressing the two literature gaps identified by the study, i.e., the development of a business engagement framework and a universal city branding model. Therefore, strategically, and systematically, the study follows a qualitative research approach in that it attempts to explore the underlying implications of human experience and rationalize that experience through providing meaning and understanding. This qualitative approach finds its roots in what Lincoln & Guba (1985) describe as the naturalistic method wherein the research design is exploratory in nature and there is no availability of relevant theoretical frameworks to the subject matter being studies (Lincoln & Guba 1985). One of the most useful descriptions of qualitative research can be found in Flick's (2014, p. 542) definition: 'Qualitative research is interested in analyzing the subjective meaning or the social production of issues, events, or practices by collecting non-standardized data and analyzing texts and images rather than numbers and statistics.' This definition is important because it highlights and concurs with Merriam's (2009) point that qualitative research is characterized by four main features. These include: focus is on meaning, the researcher plays an active role in data collection and analysis, the process is inductive (rather than deductive), and the end research product is descriptively rich.

To gain insight and create a deep understanding of the complexities of business engagement model and how it applies in the process of city branding of Dubai, qualitative methods are essential to use, due to their discovery oriented approach, and capacity to explore and explicate complex phenomena as lived and experienced by the members of communities exposed to those phenomena (Holbrook & O'Shaughnessy 1988, Miles & Huberman 1994, Fournier & Yao 1997). No matter what topic or field of study, qualitative research has unique characteristics and capabilities to 'identify, analyze, and understand patterned behavior, and social processes' (Given 2008, p.706), making it an appropriate choice for this research study.

As the aim is not to test empirically an existing theory, but rather, an attempt is made at building and conceptualizing a new theoretical framework, the research design of this study will adopt a qualitative approach using the mechanisms of constructivist grounded theory methodology. Grounded theory refers to a style of research that focuses on the analysis of data as a means towards developing theory. In other words, it is the discovery of theory from data obtained in the process of conducting social research (Glaser & Straus 2006). What this means is that a theory grounded in data is induced, rather than logically deducted, as a theory based on a priori set of existing axioms and previously conceived knowledge systems. Deductive reasoning can be used to empirically test, prove, or refute a theory, whereas inductive reasoning promoted by the grounded theory method simply focuses on the underlying principles of a certain phenomenon and developing conceptualizations that are generalizable (Gary 2009). The methods of theoretical sampling, coding, sorting, and categorizing

will be used.

Having said that, this study will not ignore the existing literature on the various concepts involved in the area of study of the thesis. In fact, the existing literature will form as a guiding and launching platform for the development of the data-based approach applied in the study. What this means, is that the thesis will use all existing literature on the concepts of marketing, city branding, diffusion, branding, and leadership to guide the researcher in driving initial conclusions about the nature of how these concepts are formed, where they stand in the literature, and how their relationships among them stands. After the data-based analysis, the emergent model will be discussed in relation to this literature and the new findings will be elaborated and discussed, and a conclusion chapter is made to provide final comments on these findings.

Accordingly, this thesis is structured into seven chapters to reflect its research strategy: 1. Introduction (wherein the research problem, aims, objectives, and questions are identified), 2. Literature Review (wherein relevant theoretical models guiding this thesis are elaborated and discussed), 3. Research Methodology (wherein the philosophical underlying principles guiding the research method are presented), 4. Findings and Theory Development (wherein data analysis initial results are presented and emergent model starts to take shape), 5. Discussion (wherein the findings significance and meanings of the emergent model are elaborated in depth), 6. Conclusion (wherein the researcher rounds up the entire structure of the thesis and presents accounts on the model and the significance of its role), and 7. Recommendations (wherein the study presents recommended actions based on the

finding of the data analysis).

The data collection in this research study focuses strategically on the following main constructs: Dubai leadership (as represented by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the UAE Vice President, Prime Minister, and Ruler of Dubai), Dubai government entities, semi-governmental organizations, and commercial businesses that are owned and operated by the Dubai brand. The Dubai owned organizations and businesses work together to present an overall perception of the Dubai city brand. The data collection for the research is based on 30-minute duration audio recorded interviews with 24 participants who are key figures in the Dubai organizations theoretically sampled and selected for this study. It was realistically expected that saturation could be reached after conducting the first ten or more interviews, however, it was decided that all the organizations listed (see Table 4 below) would be interviewed to ensure comprehensiveness of the data. In addition, secondary data collection is used covering all publicly available documents and material including, but not limited to, annual reports, strategy presentations, corporate manuals, websites, social media posts, journal articles, and business reports.

## **1. 7. Significance and Contribution to Knowledge**

The expected contribution of this study divides into two parts: applied and theoretical. On the theoretical level, this research study's application of grounded theory methods has uncovered some of the working mechanisms of the business engagement model. The emergent theory from the data has been

interpreted and developed into a plausible and universally applicable conceptual framework. The conceptual model of business engagement provides a common abstract platform that can augment the work of other well-established organizational concepts and theories which combined can contribute to creating equity and a competitive edge.

For strategy experts developing the performance measurements and business processes within the organization, the business engagement model will provide a tangible bridge that translates Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and lofty vision statements into a practical, executable form of behaviour and actions that all members of the organization can relate to and understand. In addition, for studies focused on the discipline of strategic management, the business engagement model provides valuable insights that can position the brand equity of the organization directly with its vision and various value propositions.

For marketing theorists and academics, the business engagement model will assist with providing a marketing framework in the much-needed organizational level of thinking and tools that can be used in developing marketing specific doctrines, strategies, and policies. Moreover, the business engagement model also may have the potential to provide a common and universal system that encompasses the fragmented studies of marketing, which are consumer-focused, and connect them more concertedly with the organization, ensuring that the marketing process is a fundamental component of organizational theory and management.

In terms of leadership theory, this is the first study of its kind (to the best knowledge of the researcher) that positions leadership at the heart of the management process of city branding. The business engagement model has the potential to identify the role that leadership plays in the creation of strong and sustainable city brands—and other commercial brands, thus increasing scholarly knowledge about how leadership can be understood and conceptualized in the context of organizational theory. In the business engagement model, leadership is the main trigger for the process of vision development leading to the creating of a collective culture that drives the city to be innovative in the pursuit of achieving consistent competitive ability.

It is intended that the business engagement model assists the elaboration and application of diffusion theories positioning them for the first time in the context of city branding. In particular, this study provides new theoretical insights and abstract knowledge on how diffusion can be conceptualized in the context of brand development and adoption process. Finally, models of business engagement present a significant theoretical contribution to knowledge influencing the thinking, conceptualization, and meaning of city branding in terms of the contrapuntal alignment of the theoretical concepts of leadership, engagement, branding, and diffusion.

On the applied side, (considering the state of ambiguity and confusion engulfing city branding as a management exercise), the study will yield a comprehensive set of guidelines on the processes of city branding. Following completion of the thesis, these guidelines might be presented in the form of best practice strategies,

action plans, how-to manuals, and models that can be of significant benefit to city policy makers, planners, marketing agencies contracted on behalf of city councils, and urban developers. In addition, this thesis could contribute to practical know-how guides for city governments planning to promote, modify, change, and/or enhance their city brand image and global perception.

Most importantly, the full understanding of the success factors of the application of the business engagement model in the Dubai city brand context can help as a frame of reference and a best-practice example case for other cities in the region; especially in the context of the Arab world, wherein, to the best knowledge of the author, no similar work has yet been embarked upon in the area of city branding.

Another important applied benefit expected from greater knowledge of the components of the engagement model lies in social behaviour, its anticipation, modelling, and hopefully, prevention. If practitioners have a better understanding of how new ideologies, trends, and modes of behaviour spread in society, then they can develop methodologies and business strategies that can contribute to the management of these phenomena. For example, addressing the issues of crime, theft, drug addiction, traffic violations, divorce, and even, the spread of terrorist ideologies, can be better managed in societies if the factors that impact their spread and diffusion, are clearly understood and identified in the early stages.

## **CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2. 1. Introduction**

As the aim of this study is not to test empirically an existing theory, but rather, an attempt is made at unravelling what constitutes business engagement in the context of city branding specifically, the research design of this thesis adopts a qualitative approach using the mechanisms of constructivist grounded theory methodology.

While grounded theory (please see section 3.E.) refers to the discovery of theory from data (Glaser & Straus 2006), that does not mean that this study will not consider the literature in guiding its initial conceptualizations, discussions, arguments, and suggested research approach.

This study will not ignore the existing literature on the various concepts involved in the areas of research interests of this thesis. In fact, the existing literature will form the guiding and launching platform for the development of the data-based approach applied in the study. This means that the thesis will use all existing literature on the concepts of marketing, city branding, diffusion, branding, and leadership (to be reviewed below in this order) to guide the researcher in driving initial conclusions about the nature of how these concepts are formed, where they stand in the literature, and how they form relationships among themselves. Figure 1 is deduced based on the existing literature which guides this study and forms as a theoretical frame of reference for the emerging data grounded outcomes that are represented in the emergent model (in Figure 24). After the data-based analysis, the emergent model will be discussed in relation to the existing literature, and the new findings will be

elaborated and their significance argued in length in the Discussion Chapter below, and a conclusion chapter is made to provide final comments on these findings.

As indicated in Figure 1 (which is deduced by the researcher based on the existing theoretical systems), the literature review in this study covers the areas of marketing, city branding, branding, engagement, and leadership in this order so as to have the guiding theoretical principles and paradigms that according to which and within which the new emergent model is based. Accordingly, the following literature review is intended to rationalize the inclusion of the concepts, their flow, and their significance and relationship with the research questions, the literature gaps, and the research methodology used in the study. Marketing is the first concept reviewed as it is important to see what it means, and what it does to the brand building process, followed then by the concept of city branding wherein the goal is to see the level of research maturity in the growing field, and how it is going to relate to the current study attempt at developing new insights based on data gathered from the context of the city of Dubai.

Branding will be considered next to see how this brand making and promotion relate to the city branding area and to the business engagement construct at large. And as brands aim to engage their users, the concept of engagement is reviewed next in a section which provides insights into how the literature defines engagement and what the developments in the study of engagements are. Following to this, the literature review covers the theory of innovations diffusion, to see how some of its concepts that relate to the spread of ideas from one individual or organization to the other contribute to the thesis overall understanding of the components of business engagement.

Finally, the literature review includes leadership to understand what role it is to play in driving business engagement in the context of city branding, and in general branding as well.

## **2. 2. Marketing**

### **What is marketing?**

There is a dual constraint in marketing, both, in terms of the status of its theories within the academic literature, and in terms of the nature of its actual identity as a discipline and real-world practice by management. Academics question its status as a social science, while business circles see it as a promotional tool for profit generation. From the early 1980s onwards, with many areas of marketing experiencing substantial popularity in the business world, the academic literature however continues to question the credibility of marketing as science (Anderson 1983), and whether it can be regarded as enjoying the same status as the other well established and recognized disciplines of the social sciences. Another issue with marketing is that academic scholars often regarded it somewhat narrowly as an unscrupulous exercise that organizations apply to generate profit (Rogers 1983). This unpopular sentiment remains prevalent today with the addition of the common perception that marketing lacks critical and theoretical edge and thinking (Tadajewski 2010). Some researchers have even reached the conclusion that academic marketing research has developed in directions that are alienating it from business and government organizations, alike (Webster Jr. & Lusch 2013).

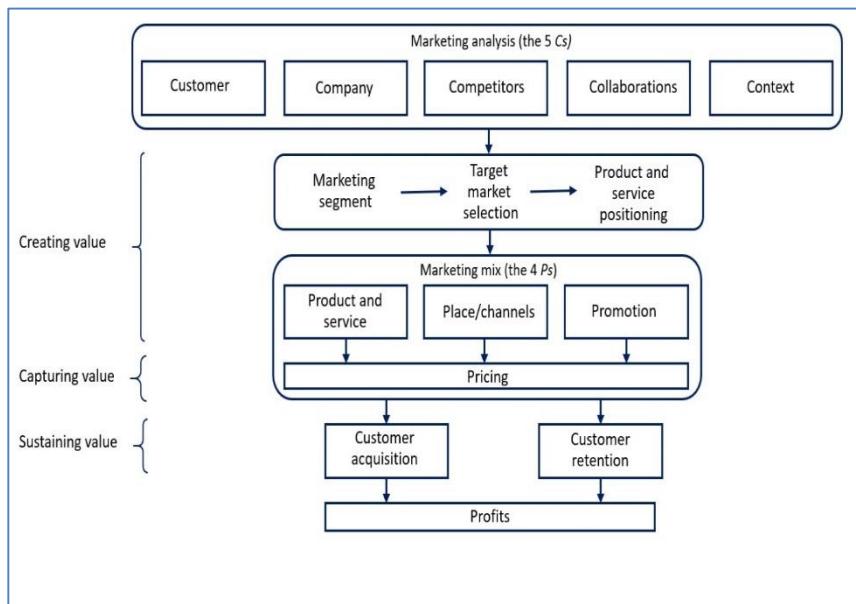
After reviewing the contents of eighteen representative textbooks in organization theory and organizational behavior that have been published over the course of the last 20 years, it is evident that not one of them includes any reference to marketing and its influence on the organization. These books are: *Organizations Evolving* (Aldrich & Ruef 2011), *Organizational Theory, Design and Change* (Jones 2013), *Understanding Identity and Organizations* (Kenny et al. 2011), *Organizational Behavior* (Adler 2002), *Mastering Organizational Behavior* (Pettinger 2000), *Organizational Behavior* (Schermerhorn et al. 2012), *Organizational Behavior* (Buchanan & Huczynski 2004), *Designing Effective Organizations* (Banner & Gagne 1995), *Organization Theory and Design* (Daft 2007), *Reflections on Groups and Organizations* (de Vries 2011), *Organizational Behavior and Management* (Ivancicovich et al. 2005), *Organization Theory* (Hatch & Cunliffe 2013), *Understanding Organizations* (Handy 1999), *International Organizational Behavior* (Francesco & Gold 2005), *Fundamentals of Organizational Behavior* (DuBrin 2005), *Rethinking Organizational Behavior* (Jackson & Carter 2000), *Organizational Behavior* (Hellriegel & Slocum Jr. 2004), and *Organizational Behavior* (2015).

This disregard for marketing subjects within organization theory signifies that there is a serious lack of understanding of what marketing is and what it can do in the organization and affirms the problem that marketing is not being perceived as a serious discipline, and an act of promotion with the aim of generating profit. According to Webster & Lusch (2013) for this trend to end, marketing's significance as a field of human social knowledge, need to be elevated in the thinking of business managers and academic researchers.

Traditionally, in the commercial business world, marketing is defined as ‘the process by which companies create value for customers and build strong customer relationships in order to capture value from customers in return.’ (Kotler and Armstrong 2014, p. 677). This definition is the foundation upon which existing theoretical marketing thinking is largely based. What it proposes is an exchange system wherein the organization develops a product (to be branded) that offers value to the user of this product, and in return (and here lies the stigma that is causing the pejorative perceptions about marketing), the organization takes back that value in terms of profit.

This profit driven, sales promotion-based theory is represented in Figure 2 wherein the overall strategy of marketing is composed of the 5 Cs (customers, company, competitors, collaborators, and context), value creation is made through selecting a market segment, positioning a product offering relevant to it, and targeting it with the elements commonly known as the four Ps (of product, place, price, and promotion). After value creation comes the stage of value capturing through pricing and sales which leads to profit (Silk 2006).

**Figure 2: Overview of the Marketing Process**



Source: Silk (2006), Figure 1-1, p.4.

The fundamental problem with this theory is that it is overly simplistic especially in its representation and explanation of the customer-brand relationship. In addition, it predominantly focuses the company's entire efforts on profit only, ignoring completely corporate citizenship and social responsibility. In short, this thinking is consumer-based and not organizationally-based. A more inclusive view of the nonprofit and social nature of marketing is represented in the definition provided by the American Marketing Association, which although being consistent with the value exchange theory of marketing, still provides a new dimension in the thinking of a larger role of marketing within society:

'Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large' (American Marketing Association 2015).

The importance of this definition lies in the departure in thinking away from exclusively regarding marketing as a profit-only generating process, and its assertion that marketing involves the delivery of greater good and benefit to society.

In academic circles, there is no one agreed upon definition of marketing (Anderson 1983, O'Rourke 2004, Tadajewski 2010, Malhotra et al 2013, Shaw 2014). However, recent attempts at providing a comprehensive definition of marketing include the introduction of concepts such as network of individuals, social matrix, and management of customers' shared participation in the value exchange exercise (Layton 2011). The significance of this definition is that it adds the social dimension to the idea of value exchange present in traditional marketing theory.

This study does not define marketing in terms of value exchange dynamics, but rather, in terms of being a critical component that complements the output of other ingredients in the process of creating business engagement. In the life of organizations and people, marketing is omnipresent (Layton 2011, Kotler & Keller 2012). People and organizations alike use marketing and are influenced by it – knowingly and unknowingly, (when they engage in any goal driven behaviour), willingly and unwillingly, (when they engage in any persuasion driven behaviour), and consciously and unconsciously (when they engage in submissive behaviour). Consequently, a new way of thinking about marketing in terms of engagement – rather than value exchange – is in order.

## **Current marketing theory and engagement**

It is important to note that marketing is an evolving discipline and has not yet reached full maturity in terms of what it is, what it does and where it stands in the literatures on business, management and organization theory. In the last few decades, for example, marketing practitioners and researchers have borrowed conceptual models and frameworks (Stewart & Zinkhan 2006) from other social sciences and disciplines in order to provide some theoretical grounding for marketing applications and their business-related propositions. This signifies the need for more development in marketing theory. Some researchers go so far as saying that marketing itself is currently at a crossroads in its evolution (Webster Jr. & Lusch 2013) and that there is a clear need for reform and a renewed direction.

Early marketing thought attempted to explain the marketing phenomenon in terms of the materialistic and commercial realities of the time, as a reflection of how goods are exchanged in society. There are several marketing schools that were developed commencing from the early 1900s up until the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and these including the commodity school, the functional school, the regional school, the institutional school, and the functionalist school (Powers 2012).

Commodity-based thinking on marketing concentrated on providing explanations of the types of goods and products being exchanged in the marketplace. The functional school focused on exploring the various roles and tasks performed by the marketing activity in relation to the various nature of goods in a social system. The regional school focused on the effects that place and location play on goods and the changes

they bring to the marketing process. The institutional school attended to the roles various organizations and companies play in the marketing process, and finally, the functionalist approach explained marketing primarily from functional and structural perspectives seeking to incorporate the whole set of marketing relationships in a social system.

It is significant to note that all these theoretical approaches to understanding the marketing phenomenon share two characteristics: first, they are a direct reflection of the time in which they were developed. That is, they possess a strong association with industrial, social, political, and cultural trends of a particular time, making them historically specific and relevant to that period. Secondly, this approach and way of thinking cannot easily be generalized or universalized to explain marketing phenomena across different historical periods, locations, cultures, and industries.

While there is no consensus on what constitutes a marketing theory, the majority of marketing academic researchers seem to be in agreement that a universal marketing theory is needed (O'Rourke 2004, Stewart & Zinkhan 2006, Tadajewski 2010, Layton 2011, Bastos & Levy 2012, Webster Jr. & Lusch 2013, Shaw 2014). The requirement then is for a universal theory that can explain business activity, in such a way that it can provide rational account of any marketing effort, anywhere and anytime (Stewart & Zinkhan 2006) which advances our overall knowledge and understanding.

Shaw (2014) argued that despite the fragmentation, diversity, and abundance of terms and terminologies in the marketing field, there are enough foundational elements that

can be used in the quest for building a new marketing theory (Shaw 2014). He identifies a number of reasons why marketing scholars should work on the development of a new theory in marketing, which include the disciplinary fragmentation of marketing, marketing identity and its credibility crisis, and the overall status of marketing as a social science. This research study acknowledges these problems and constraints; however, they are principally academic issues. The commercial world of business can benefit significantly from a universal theory of marketing that informs practice and leads to tangible real-world benefits and results. This clearly presents the need for the development of a larger theoretical business framework that can account for marketing and its role within the organization.

A plausible explanation as to why there is scant reference to marketing in the major organizational theory text books can be found in the preconception that marketing is not an organizational level construct but is solely concerned with the consumer-related aspects of the business. This supports the premise of the current research study, in that business engagement transcends marketing, and would need to be placed alongside well-established and studied concepts in organizational theory, such as strategy, culture, innovation, HRM, knowledge and talent management and so on. Business engagement as an intellectual concept evidently incorporates fragments of marketing related activity, but essentially is an organization phenomenon.

As this research study aims at unraveling the components of business engagement and how they lead to the creation of strong city brands specifically, and brands in general, an understanding of brand and branding literature is required at this stage, this will help provide clarity and precision whenever the term brand and branding is

further used in the thesis, and will also inform the theoretical development process in the data analysis chapters 3 and 4.

## **2. 3. City Branding**

### **Overview**

One century ago, a French sociologist by the name of Rene Maunier stressed the importance of studying cities and understanding the role they play in human knowledge and life experience. He further defined the city as a complex of community aggregations of human beings in relation to a certain geography (Maunier 1910). What is interesting is Maunier's explanation that cities rise into prominence and recognition not only for the existence of industrial advancements alone, (as many cities with inferior industrial basis also arise), but due to the perceptions of comparison with other territories. This notion of relational competitiveness is still valid and relevant today.

Paris, Manchester, Basrah, Sharjah, New York, Mumbai, Barcelona, Istanbul, and Tel Aviv – are city names that mean something and stand for something for the multiple audiences that experience them. The meaning, knowledge, feelings, associations that are evoked by each one of these cities is embedded in their brand name. City branding is the new management process that is addressing these aspects.

City branding is a topic of research that is gaining growing momentum and interest in all relevant disciplines of academia, governmental studies, and business (Dinnie 2011,

Sevcik 2011, Jarvisalo 2012, Boland 2013, Mahmoudzadeh et al. 2014, Hoyng 2014, Herget et al. 2015). In addition, city branding is being considered as an important research analysis unit to understand its role in a diverse range of phenomena such as, social inclusiveness (Merrilees et al. 2014), social identity (Riza et al. 2012), experience and loyalty (Kazancoglu & Dirsehan 2014), cultural change (Northover 2010), tourism impact (Chuang 2015), changing negative perceptions through events (Herstein & Beger 2014), creativity in changing negative perceptions (Trueman et al. 2007), culture (Kavaratzis 2011), and economic development (Crombie 2011). The concept is even being studied in relation to standard marketing applies techniques such as logos (Ashworth et al. 2007), and websites (Vanderleeuw & Sides 2014).

### **Place branding, destination branding, and country-of-origin**

Before embarking on addressing the development stages of the study of city branding, it is useful to clarify the relationships that exists with other terms in the field making the approach a bit confusing, especially with using the term place branding and how it is different from city branding, destination branding, and country of origin (Kavaratzis 2005). The term place branding admittedly is unclear in terms if a place can be a brand or not (Anholt 2010), or in terms if it is a form of marketing or policy making (Anholt 2008). Place branding, according to this study, is an umbrella term that covers all aspects of branding related to places, which can in the form of a country, region, a city, or a destination. This position runs in line with Dooley & Bowie's (2005) approach that utilizes the techniques of brand architecture in designing a place brand portfolio for place branding. Brand architecture refers to the 'organizing structure of the brand portfolio that specifies the brand roles and the relationships among brands

and different product-market brand contexts' (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2002, p: 134).

Dooley & Bowie suggest that a place brand is the sum collection of all brands originating in a place. They state that the hierarchy of this portfolio is composed of sub-brands in the following order: nation brands, sector umbrella brands, regional and city brands, corporate brands, and then product brands (Dooley & Bowie 2005).

Research interest in place branding is still enjoying momentum in that recent studies sees place branding as a form of application in the public sector concerning the use of branding in the context of certain geographical locations such as countries, regions, cities and communities (Klijn et al. 2012), and newer research into the subject matter advocates the need for more research towards developing universal place theories and processes (Kavaratzis & Hatch 2013). What is of significance, and relevance to this study, is that city branding is a major component of the overarching place theory system, and the analysis and focus here will be to address it from this perspective.

Another important distinction to be addressed is that between destination, country-of-origin, and city branding. Some authors use location or destination branding to refer to place branding (Morgan & Pritchard 2002, Balakrishnan 2009), whereas others define destination branding as that activity of promoting touristic product offerings in a place (Kavaratzis 2005). It is clear from this approach that a destination can be a smaller part of a city or a region or a country, such as Disney Land in Paris, or the Ocean Drive in south beach Miami for example. Accordingly, a destination exists within a city, region, or country. Therefore, this study's focus is on the city component of a place, and not the destination.

In terms of country-of-origin, this is a well established field of study since the early 1970s when the term ‘made in’ was introduced by Nagashima (1970) expressing that the term stands for all the meanings and stereotypes associated with the country in which a product is made (Nagashima 1970). Further research identified the significance of country-of-origin in increasing the appeal and competitive edge of products in relation to the place where they were manufactured. Country-of-origin in this context is defined as that information which is related to the country place of the product (Zhang 1996, Agrawal & Kamakura 1999). With the advent of technological advancements, the Internet, and globalization, country of origin continues to assume relevance and attention from researchers on various levels of interest such as its role in creating brand equity (Yasin et al. 2007), or its use as a decision-making tool (Saran & Gupta 2012), or its role in specific industries such as organic food appeal and distribution (Thogersen et al. 2017).

In addition, and as a direct result of globalization, issues such as origin of production, origin of design, origin of ingredients, or origin of brand are all being tackled by country-of-origin research (Miller et al. 2016), posing many new challenges to understanding what country-of-origin stands for in the modern era. On the cover of iPhones, for example, the manufacturer writes “Designed by Apple in California, Assembled in China”. In this case, what dynamics are in effect in relation to the original meaning of country-of-origin? In this case, is the iPhone using stereotypes from the country of China where it is assembled? Or it takes stereotypes of California (the city/state) in which it is designed? Clearly, further research work is needed in the area of country-of-origin to address the complexities that will continue to arise due to globalization and the continuous outsourcing of manufacturing to

China and other countries.

In terms of its relationship with city branding, country-of-origin is concerned with the existing stereotypes about a certain country, whereas the former is concerned with how cities brand themselves and create their own identities to achieve competitive edge. As it relates to Dubai, the same logic applies, in that the stereotypes about the UAE and how they relate to the city of Dubai may need to be examined. It is not the main study focus of this thesis though. Having said that, and as an observational remark by the author, in visiting many global cities during the course of this study, (cities in the countries of Norway, UK, Germany, Greece, USA, and Canada), all taxi drivers of these countries know Dubai very well, but when the researcher asked them about the UAE, none of them knew what that was. While this is a potential research area, it is not the focus of the current study as indicated above.

### **Development stages of city branding**

To trace the development of the concept of city branding and present a comprehensive definition for it, the attempt will be made here to trace the literature that addressed the subject matter chronologically (please see table 3). In 2004, Kavaratzis (2004) published what can be regarded as one of the early research attempts contributing towards the development of a sound theoretical framework for city branding. He argues that the problem facing cities to have successfully branding strategies lies in three main challenges that include: lack of marketing understanding by city officials in charge of branding projects, marketing method application in the public sector has not yet matured, and the practicing marketers' lack of understanding in the special

nature of how places perform as a product (Kavaratzis 2004). In his theoretical model, Kavaratzis argues that similarities can be drawn between corporate branding and city branding and introduced a marketing mix method that focuses on primary and secondary communications in delivering brand marketing activity for the city.

Corporate branding (or corporate identity) is another area where the lines between the practitioner and academic communities are blurred in marketing, and is an area creating considerable confusion, too (Balmer 1998, Knox & Bickerton 2003, Pillai 2011). The concept of corporate branding emerged in the field of management before academia started paying attention to it (Fletcherin & Usunier 2012). To understand corporate branding (identity), it is useful to comprehend first what brand identity means. ‘In contrast to brand image (the brand’s current associations) a brand identity is aspirational. The brand identity represents what the organization wants the brand to stand for’ (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2002, p: 40). That is, a brand identity is the desired perception of the brand as championed by the organization itself. A brand image, by contrast, is how the brand is perceived by its target customers, now in the present moment. Therefore, brand identity has a futuristic dimension about it, which indicates the need for continuous engagement. By continuous engagement, what is meant is that the process of engaging customers does not stop, and does not have an expiration date; rather, it is an ongoing process that will be on as long as the brand exists.

Corporate branding can be defined as a holistic approach to brand management, in which all members of an organization behave in accordance with the desired brand identity (Harris & De Chernatony 2001). It can also be defined as a systematically

planned and implemented process of creating and maintaining a favourable image and consequently a favourable reputation for the company as a whole by sending signals to all stakeholders and by managing behaviour, communication, and symbolism (Einwiller & Will 2002). Another way of looking at corporate branding states that it is a manifestation of the features that distinguish an organization from its competitors. It is a reflection of the organization's ability to satisfy consumer's needs, namely: trust in the company to deliver a consistent level of product / service, quality of the product / service at a reasonable price and the reduction of risk of making an unwise purchase decision (Bick et al. 2003).

A common thread in these definitions is the notion that the organization itself turns in to a brand. An inward focusing brand, where the focus is on engagement, morale, stakeholder performance, and staff retention. In other words, corporate branding is the management method by which organizations try to streamline their image and reputation, internally, and externally. A strong corporate brand (identity) translates into a strongly motivated workforce that produces strong brand product lines. It is this meaning that Kavaratzis attempts to use in explaining the dynamics of city branding. In the context of corporate brands, Daimler, Apple, Google, Pepsi, Porsche, BMW, IBM, Boeing, GE are a few examples of strong corporate brands that release strong product brands.

While pioneering in decontextualizing standard marketing method and applying it to the context of urban development, highlighting for the first time the need for an interdisciplinary approach in managing city brands (between marketing and urban planning). This model, however, still operates within the fundamental marketing

ideology that is still based on the traditional value exchange theory of marketing reviewed below.

In the same year, Caldwell & Freire (2004) introduced another city brand theoretical model focusing on the brand box concepts (Caldwell & Freire 2004). In their model they argue that the same marketing strategies and techniques used in the commercial business world can be applied to marketing and branding cities. However, they made a very significant distinction in the branding of places, distinguishing between city and nation branding.

A nation brand can be defined as the perception of a nation, locally, regionally, and internationally, along with all the associations (good or bad) that come with that perception. A new discipline on the rise in marketing (Kunle et al. 2010, Marandu et al. 2012), nation branding refers to the process in which the conventional marketing strategies and techniques are derived from the commercial field and applied to the building of nation brands. The distinction Caldwell & Freire (2004) made between a nation brand and city brand rests on the notions of representation and functionality. According to their theory, nation brands perform a representational role (identifying the nationality of someone for example), whereas city brands perform a functional role (such as Paris being the fashion capital of the world, whereas New York us for finance and London for business).

Building on this intellectual momentum of a growing understanding of the importance of city branding, further studies began to emerge questioning the appropriateness of using the standard marketing tools (normally used in product promotional settings), in

the promotion of cities (Parkerson & Saunders 2004). According to findings reported by Parkerson & Saunders (2004) there are four themes that emerge as relevant in the process of using marketing techniques in city branding, which include, the influence of the city as a network on branding (how the various stakeholders involved in the decision-making process which in turns affects the brand messaging thematically and structurally), market segmentation (which refers to the sorting of the type of audiences targeted by the city brand's messaging in terms of the city's varied product offerings), corporate branding (which refers to the holistic approach to brand management, in which all members of an organization behave in accordance with the desired brand identity – explained above), and finally, a political dimension as represented by the role leadership plays in the branding of cities (in their analysis they state that in the UK, the political dimension which drives the development process is led by urban regeneration). This point – while it is certainly different in the context of Dubai where the development process is triggered by the direct political leadership in the form of the His Highness the Ruler - represents an important addition in the literature as it provides the foundation for further research into the role leadership plays in city branding. In addition, their reference to the importance of messaging diversity emanating from the various constituents of the city brand touches upon a very important point in understanding the nature of city brands, in that they are a collective sum results of the effects performed by the various brands which operate under their umbrella (Please refer to the Dubai Brand Situation section 2.D below).

In 2005, Kavaratzis & Ashworth re-emphasized the importance of articulating a universal theory for the understanding and management of city branding and stated that there are three types of city branding that include geographical nomenclature (the

name of city), product-place co-branding, and place branding management (Kavaratzis & Ashworth 2005). The geographical nomenclature refers to where a physical product is named for a geographical location, such as a Bolognese soup for example, whereas cobranding of a product and place ‘attempts to market a physical product by associating it with a place that is assumed to have attributes beneficial to the image of the product.’ (Kavaratzis & Ashworth 2005, p. 511). Applying the concept of corporate branding to the place refers to the notion that the place brand is to be managed as the whole umbrella brand to the various products the place is offering. They also concluded that places can be regarded as products, and that cities need city branding and marketing to be recognized, to be competitively advantageous, and to achieve sustainable development. Perhaps the most important contribution to the concept development of city brand in their work lies in the use of the brand umbrella analogy. They argue that the real question for any city brand is its capability to provide a strong platform of associations (that are united by one vision about that particular city) that can be utilized successfully by the city (Kavaratzis & Ashworth 2005).

This particular issue is of relevance to brand extension and in the context of the city of Dubai, and should be given ample analysis due to the varied and diversified sub-Dubai brands that contribute to the overall perception of the Dubai umbrella brand.

Subsequent studies on the concept of city branding more or less focus on the same basic ideas that commercial marketing techniques and methods can be applied in the marketing of places. This has prompted researchers to do further work in analyzing and evaluating the validity of using conventional marketing tools when branding cities

(Cozmiuc 2011). In the same year, Keith Dinnie (2011) published a pioneering book on the subject of city branding, wherein he introduced two parts that are focused on theory and practice, incorporating the work of more than 30 researchers presenting 18 case studies covering issues relevant to the city branding of cities such as Accra, Ahmedabad, Barcelona, Budapest, Hong Kong, Lisbon, and New York (Dinne 2011). Dinne concurs with the previous theoretical work in the field and stresses the importance of achieving multidisciplinary integration between marketing and urban planning in branding cities. His theoretical framework proposes that city branding contains three core themes; brand architecture and attributes, a network, and sustainability (Dinne 2011).

Following on from this work, other researchers started contemplating the practical aspects of city branding, such as in the work of Braun (2012) who outlines eight different proposals that could affect the successful implementation of city branding. Of significance in this regard, is Braun's emphasis on the important role that leadership and stakeholders play in developing successful city branding programs. Martinez's (2012) critical review of the theory and practice of city branding, emphasizes, in addition, the importance of considering the cultural identity of the place in designing effective city branding programs. More applied work has begun to emerge recently utilizing the concept of city branding, especially in the area of tourism in terms of economic impact (Herget et al. 2015) and attachment to the local brand (Chuang 2015).

**Table 3. Development Stages of City Branding Research**

Year	Author(s)	Study Focus	Findings
2004	Kavaratzis, M.	From city marketing to city branding: towards a theoretical framework for developing city brands	Suggested using standard marketing methods in promoting cities and emphasized the need for interdisciplinary application (between marketing and urban policy making)
2004	Caldwell & Freiroe	The differences between branding a country, a region, and a city: applying the brand box model	Suggested commercial marketing strategies can be applied in marketing cities and made the distinction between the branding of cities and that of nations.
2004	Parkerson & Saunders	City branding: can goods and services branding models be used to brand cities?	Introduced a model four city branding based on four dimensions: city influence as a network, market segmentation, corporate branding, and urban regeneration.
2005	Kavaratzis & Ashworth	City branding: an effective assertion of identity or a transitory marketing trick?	Identified three types of city branding: geographical nomenclature, product-place cobranding, and place branding management. They concluded that places can be products, and argued that question for any city brand lies in its capability to create strong associations with its various product offerings.
2011	Dennie, K.	City branding	Supported the multidisciplinary approach in city branding and developed a model for city branding of three main themes including brand architecture, network, and sustainability.
2012	Braun, E.	Putting city branding into practice	Emphasized the role of leadership and stakeholders in developing successful city branding programs.
2012	Marteniz, N.M.	City marketing and place branding: a critical review of practice and academic research	Emphasized the role of the cultural identity of the place in developing effective city branding programs.
2015	Herget, J., Petru, Z., & Abraham, J.	City branding and its economic impact on tourism	Found that city branding programs affect the economic performance of tourism strategies and activities in cities.
2015	Chuang, Y	Exploring the influence of community attachment on city brand attitudes	Studied city brand interaction with the emotional attachment to the place, finding that city branding affect the way people feel about their cities.

Source: Author's own origination.

To understand the phenomenon of city branding, a sound and clear understanding of brand and branding must be achieved, including how branding plays a role in the framework of a universally understood engagement theory. A grounded analysis of the city brand of Dubai implemented in this thesis, will be reported in later chapters and the author will argue a useful insight and contribution to the existing literature.

## **2. 4. The Dubai City Brand Situation**

### **Overview**

*'Porsche toothpaste, Boeing coffee, Louis Vuitton burger, Rolex milk, Google beer, IKEA rice, American Express perfume, Coca Cola smart phone, McDonalds' suit, and an Apple anti-aging cream'...* What is wrong with the preceding phrases? And, what is wrong with the following ones: Russian perfume, French vodka, Italian horses, Cuban watches, Arabian cigars, and Scottish leather?

If all of these statements are mentioned in a fictional context, there is nothing wrong, and no harm done. However, in the contexts of brand leadership, category fit, and brand equity associations, then everything is wrong. In the first example, some of the world's top 100 brands (Forbes 2014), are stripped of their usual category associations, and placed in a category that is not related to them. That is why, the statement sounds strange and unnatural. It is so, because these brands are global leaders in their respective categories. For example, the brand category of Porsche is sports cars; Boeing: aviation; Rolex: watches; Louis Vuitton: fashion; Coca Cola: beverage; McDonalds: food. When an organization expands its business strategy to

incorporate other categories in its product offering, this is referred to as brand extension, which is a common strategy organizations adopt when launching new product offerings, using an existing well-known brand name, (Volckner & Sattler 2006, Keller 2003), or more simply stated, it is the process of extending an existing brand name to new product categories (Kotler & Armstrong 2014).

While this is apparent for commercial applications, can the same argument be applied when it comes to national or city brands? In the second example stated above, Russian vodka, French perfume, Italian leather, Cuban cigars, Arabian horses, and Scottish whisky, would obviously seem to be more natural and normal to hear. And, again, it is simply due to the fact that each of these brand representations are leaders in their category, and have, over time, created brand equity associations of leadership in each of these categories, (Please see section 2.C.2 above regarding the effects of product – place cobranding ).

Country and region brands such as Iraq, Israel, and Africa, for example, are frequently associated with negative category associations such as war, violence, disease, civil war, corruption and famine, whereas nation brands of USA, Europe, UK, or France, for example, enjoy more positive perceptions (Avraham 2009, Kyriaco & Cromwell 2004). It can be argued that this is a major reason why there has been greater migration of people to the destination brand of Europe, than to the regions and countries of Iraq, Africa, or KSA.

In terms of city branding, and if we consider the city brand of Dubai in this context, how does brand category expansion work? Is it good for the city brand of Dubai to

extend itself to other categories, or best to endorse other categories without using the brand name of Dubai on them? The following sections will address this issue.

### **Brand extension**

When an organization embraces a business expansion strategy to enter into other categories in its product offering, this is referred to as brand extension, which refers to launching new products, using an existing well-known brand name (Keller 2003, Volckner & Sattler 2006), or as explained by Kotler & Armstrong (2014) it is the process of spreading an existing brand name to new product. What organizations do in this context is a process of equity transfer.

The perceived value of brand equity, as discussed above, is what makes businesses thrive, survive in difficult times, and continue over time to renew their product offerings. This will help the brand owner (a business, an organization, a leader, or a group of individuals) to gain and benefit from the brand equity, which helps the business achieve competitive edge and sustainable profitability. The product offering renewal, or an organization's capability to adjust to change in the market place, can either be in the form of a brand extension, or in the form of the creation of a completely new brand name that is endorsed by the permanent organization.

The introduction of new projects, (extended brands), usually comes as a result of many factors, that according to the Project Management Institute (PMI) and as represented by Gardiner (2005) include: a market demand, a business need, a customer request, a technological advance, a legal requirement, a crisis, and a

social need. In addition, companies resort to brand extension because it is cheaper and safer (Sichtmann & Diamantopoulos 2013). The introduction of a new product offering to any marketplace is a costly undertaking. The building cost of a new brand to represent a new product by an organization can reach up to \$100 million (Khermouch et al., 2001, Voss & Gammoh 2004). In addition to the matter of cost, the introduction of a new brand naturally involves high risk, and the easiest way to mitigate this risk is by extending the well-established brand name onto the new product offering being introduced (Iversen & Hem 2011). That is why 80 per cent of organizations resort to brand extensions when launching new product offerings to the marketplace (Keller 2003). The brand can either extend in the same category, (such as the Porsche model below), or into a different category all together (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2002, Aaker 2010), such in the Virgin brand model.

Brand extension success, no matter what field of application, depends on two fundamental factors: category fit and equity of the permanent organization's brand (Keller et al. 2000, Barone et al. 2000, Volckner & Sattler 2006, Charters 2009, Abosag et al. 2012). This means that a strong brand can afford to extend, however, the extension must be carefully done so that it moves into a business area that is relevant to the core brand's already established perceptions and attributes. Also, this extension must generate a reciprocal transfer of positive perceptions accordingly between the parent and extended brands. Fit can be defined as the customers' perceptions of how logical and sensible the new product offering is related to the parent brand (Dwivedi & Merrilees 2013).

Sichtmann & Diamantopoulos (2012) developed the concept of *perceived brand*

*origin-extension fit* which basically describes the overlap of associations between the new category brand and the origin parent brand. According to this approach, the customers' perception of this overlap will play a major role in the success or failure of the extension, as it will reflect on the perceived equity of the origin brand, (Sichtmann & Diamantopoulos 2012). This dynamic is explained in the context of what is described as forward and backward effects of brand extension (Milberg et al.1997, Balachander & Ghose 2003).

The forward effect refers to the transfer of parent brand attributes and associations to the new extended brand. This transfer is influenced by the actual performance of the new brand product offering. When the performance is in line with the already existing equity and values of the parent brand, (i.e., true to the brand vision and promise), then the new extended brand will give rise to backward effects that will contribute to commercial success in the short run, while also creating a positive feedback that can support and even enhance the existing parent brand. If customers develop a positive attitude towards the newly extended brand, this will avoid the risk of image dilution, and strengthen the parent brand (Martinez & Pina 2010). In the case of Dubai city brand, using the parent Dubai brand in its various extensions such as, Dubai Internet City or Dubai Sports City, or Dubai Police, will allow for both effects to take place at the same time. All three extensions will assume the benefits that are associated with the parent brand name of Dubai (this is the forward effect), and the parent brand name of Dubai will be affected by how the three extensions perform in terms of how well or not so well received by their target groups, (this is the backward effect).

It is important to note that brand extension and endorsement are both challenging activities. Brand endorsement, i.e., the venturing into a new category under a new brand name, is costly; and brand extension by simply using the same brand in a new category is risky, in that it might dilute the equity of the brand. So, what is the best way to handle corporate expansion from a branding point of view, commercially, and in the context of city brands? Arguably, organizations should think creatively and passionately about marketing. With this thinking in place, brand extensions and endorsements can be managed successfully by the establishment of strong and sensible connections between the parent brand and the extended brand (Martinez & Pina 2010). It is also likely to be more efficacious when the marketing strategy for the extension, focuses more on the parent brand rather than just on the promotion of the merits and characteristics of the extended or endorsed brand (Martinez & DeChernatony 2004).

In light of these factors, and turning to the dynamics underlying the endorsement, or extension brand strategies at work in the city brand of Dubai, it is clear that there often are significant challenges that must be addressed. Due to the fact that this is the first major thesis study to focus on qualitatively analyzing the Dubai city brand in terms of a brand strategic direction regarding extension or endorsement, this research adopts an exploratory approach creating the opportunity for future research on how to develop and sustain global city brands.

### **Dubai Brand: Extension or Endorsement?**

City brands need to be careful in deciding on the best strategy to adopt in designing

the product offering expansion they are planning. Will the new expansion be a mere extension of the brand under the same name? Or will it assume a new brand that is endorsed by the permanent organization, i.e., the parent brand? The question that needs to be addressed here in this section is the general issue of brand expansion into other categories, commercially, and in the context of city branding, with a focus on Dubai city, as a brand, and how is it managed to achieve competitive advantage, sustainably and profitably. Analysis of this issue relates to how the Dubai brand is managed to achieve competitive advantage by leveraging the Dubai brand equity and utilizing that equity by extending and transforming its value into the various, public, private, existing, and new, businesses and programmes presented by Dubai.

There are two main schools of thought when it comes to brand extension into another new category. One that refuses to accept the same brand name expansion and believes in the development of a new brand name altogether to represent the new product category, so that the core brand is protected from dilution by the extension (Loken & John 1993, Ries & Trout 1994, Reis & Ries 1998, Martiniz & Pina 2003, Kim 2003, Martinez & Chernatony 2004, Kumar 2005, Kim & Yoon 2013). An example of this approach to brand strategy is that of Nestle, Unilever, and Procter & Gamble, all three have category specific brands that are owned and endorsed by them, but extensions of them are not usually permitted. This approach is traditionally referred to as brand endorsement.

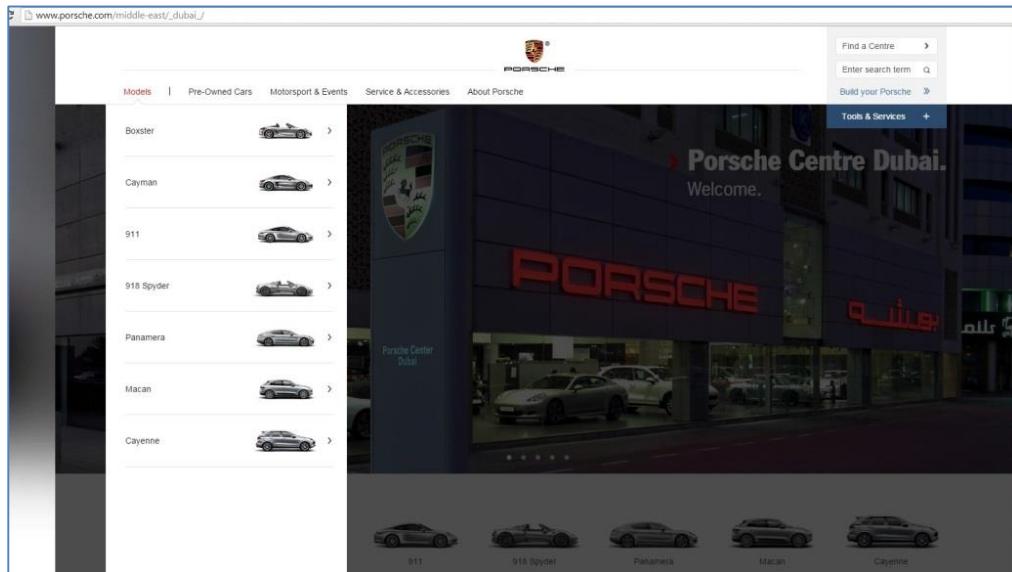
The other approach, referred to as brand extension, advocates for the overlap of benefits from extending the use of the existing brand name onto the new product category in question, which will help in the creation of positive feedback value to the

core brand, (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2002, Aakar 2010, Iversen & Hem 2011, Sitchman & Diamantopoulos 2012, Dwivedi & Merrilees 2013). Both positions have valid ideas and arguments that need to be addressed by organizations in managing their projects. A case in point is the Virgin brand. Virgin manages a wide product portfolio (aviation, entertainment, retail, drinks, etc.), by simply extending the brand name onto any other category offerings, such as Virgin Airlines, Virgin Fitness, Virgin Megastore, and so on.

Choosing the right brand extension strategy is a daunting task and can impact the corporate success of the entire organization behind the brand involved (Martinez & Chernatony 2004). The position this thesis adopts regarding the issue of brand extension is summarized in the following two points:

First, in the commercial context, brand extension into the same category (vertically), is acceptable, and sometimes, necessary and strategic to achieve competitive advantage. Expanding the same brand name to a totally different category is not acceptable and poor strategy. A successful example of brand extension is the Porsche automotive brand, wherein new category lines are introduced in the fashion of extending the Porsche name into new car modifications, such as a four-door sedan, or an SUV, with introducing a sub-brand to identify the category. In the following webpage from Porsche's Dubai branch, (See Figure 3), the categories of brand extension are clearly identified:

**Figure 3. The Porsche Brand Extension Model**



Source: Porsche Dubai region website (2018).

For example, the four-door sedan car from Porsche is sub-branded as Panamera, whereas the SUV as Cayenne, and so on. All, however, represent a careful extension to the Porsche brand, that despite some negative effects of dilution – especially on the brand's main offering, the Porsche 911, and some angry hard core fans who did not like Porsche's entry into any category other than the two door sports car - the company managed to successfully steer the transition, making that expansion into sedans and SUVs very profitable and competitive, earning the brand a status of 89 among the world's top 100 brands, ahead of its other automotive industry rivals, Lamborghini and Ferrari.

Nevertheless, if Porsche expands the brand name to a more affordable offering, or into a different category altogether, such as toothpaste, the brand fit will not be achieved, and the extension will meet with severe challenges. The Virgin brand however does exactly that. Their business strategy is simply expansion into any

category and extending the brand name into that category. While the brand owner is a fascinating marketer and visionary in creating interest in the Virgin brand, unfortunately, the Virgin brand name is over-extended and ultimately unsustainable, with customer perceptions of the brand mostly associated with the airline side of the business at the expense of the other categories the brand is used to represent (Hughes 2007). Consequently, endorsement rather than extension is likely to be a better fit to a sustainable Virgin brand expansion and extension strategy.

Second, in city branding, the situation is somewhat different. The brand name of the city can be used as a functional descriptor, such as Dubai Police, or a business category representative, such as Dubai Properties. Due to the fact that city branding theory is not fully developed yet, and there is little or no research on the subject matter (see: Marandu et al. 2012), one can only explore potential relationships from existing theories of branding and marketing and apply ideas from these relationships to developing an understanding of the underlying working mechanisms of a city brand. In the context of Dubai Police, and Dubai Properties, does the brand name “Dubai” used in both cases, mean the same?

The response to this question is inevitable complex. Yes, they are the same in so far that “Dubai” functionally refers to the destination, the place where this category is happening, and no, in terms of the connotations and associations. In the police category, Dubai is a place, within which the brand use is to identify and differentiate only; whereas in the Properties category, Dubai is a business, a strategy, and a perception of product offerings. Another question is: Does Dubai need to expand its brand? And why? Dubai city, and any city, cannot afford not to expand a variety of

product offering so they can be competitive and attractive on the long run. In addition to infrastructure and policy development, offerings in tourism, financial services, health care services, conferences and exhibitions, and so on, are necessary to diversify income in a non-oil-based economy such as that of Dubai and generate more revenue to the city. They also help build equity for the city brand thanks to the backward effects on the long run.

The position of this thesis accordingly has to retain the same reasoned flexibility, stretching the brand into too many categories is not an appropriate strategy, and focusing on successful categories, or emerging ones can be done by creating a strong communications strategy that links the endorser brand (i.e., the core mother brand) the permanent organization, with the new category brand (i.e., project or temporary organization). For example, Dubai's top two most important, and best performing brands, do not carry the Dubai brand name at all, and these are: Emaar and Emirates Airline. However, both brands are so intelligently marketed that it is almost immediate for people to identify an association with the parent brand, Dubai.

## **The Dubai Brand System**

As we begin to examine the brand extension strategies in place within the Dubai brands system, if any, a question needs to be answered first: what is Dubai? The word itself means the city of two lands, Bur Dubai, and Deira, according to interpretations expressed by Dubai locals to the author. What the literal meaning of cities are does not matter as much as the significance of these city brand names have in relation to their constituent users.

Dubai economy has seen year-on-year growth and strong performance. The city's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) standing today at \$ 26.8bn, grew by 3.2% in 2017, and all indicators show an expected continuous growth rate of 3.5% for the current year of 2018. More than 30% of the UAE's workforce resides in Dubai, with the number of total employees reaching 3.8 million. Dubai received more than 15 million tourists in 2017, with the number expected to increase to 20 million tourists by the year 2020 (The Report 2018).

Politically, Dubai is one of the seven emirates forming the federation of the United Arab Emirates. The modern history of Dubai goes back to the 1800s when it was a small fishing village inhabited by the Bany Yas tribe, (Bagaeen 2007).

Archeological findings in the Jumeirah area of the city indicate the presence of human civilizations dating back to BC times (Wilson 2006). Our principal concern here though is what is Dubai as a brand? Does the Dubai brand mean the same to local nationals and to the multinational expatriates living in the city who form the majority of the population? Does the Dubai brand mean the same to the external world as it means to the internal population? What are the perceptual components that make up the Dubai brand? This is an area that requires further research, qualitatively, and quantitatively, however, what can be discussed in the context of this thesis are Dubai name usages by the various Dubai institutions, and how these usages perform the roles of brand extensions as was analyzed above. Further elaboration and evaluation of these issues will be presented in the data analysis and discussion chapters of this thesis.

Moreover, one helpful way of learning about the meaning of the Dubai brand and

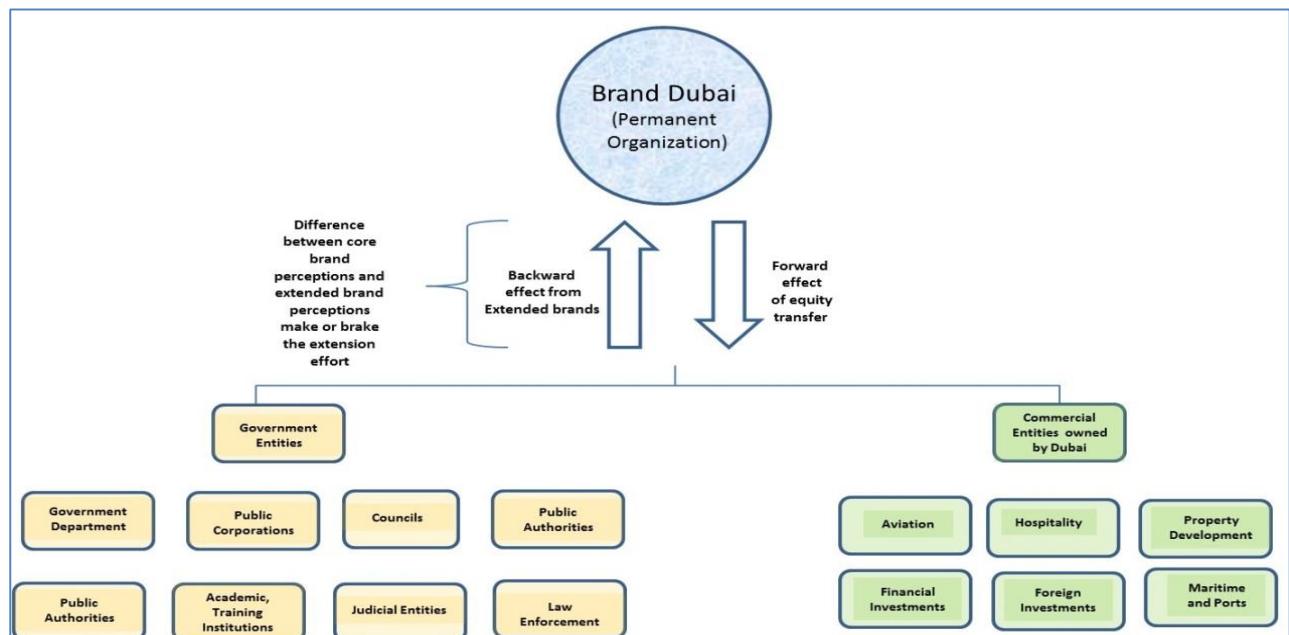
what it stands for, can be found in the analysis of the Dubai Ruler's and what His Highness refers to as the Dubai way, in his book titled, *My vision*. According to the Ruler of Dubai, the way of doing business in Dubai, is an excellence driven life philosophy that follows the ensuing stages: vision, goal setting, planning, resource allocations, and the starting of projects.

In addition, His Highness outlines the DNA of Dubai brand attributes, which involves the adherence and application of a set of standards, that include: superiority (in challenging one's own successes), overcoming the impossible (in daring to think of new innovative things), the melting pot of success (adopting a collective team spirit at work), adopting a civilized model of management, creating circumstances for success, positive attitude, innovation, and sustainability, (Al Maktoum 2012). This work ethic is the underlying force behind the drive from the leadership that impels Dubai to become a global brand, against all odds, in a region rife with political instability and conflict. This is the role that the Maktoum leadership plays in diffusing the Dubai vision across the many social systems that constitute its main targets. This component will be further analyzed in chapters 4 and 5 of this thesis.

Dubai is managed by the Government of Dubai, headed by His Highness the Ruler, and administrated, (as far as government departments are concerned), by the body called The Executive Office (TEC), headed by His Highness the Crown Prince of Dubai. TEC performs the role of the strategy custodian to the government, and all businesses of a governmental nature, are designed, strategized, and launched under the direct management and guidance of TEC. This is not to say that the Dubai

brand extensions in this context are the only ones at play shaping the overall perception of the brand. There are others of course. Accordingly, and informed by the works of Aaker & Joachimsthaler (2002) and Keller (2003), on brand hierarchy – which refers to the way in which a parent brand has a group of sub-brands that relate to it and that are governed by the relationships that exist among these sets of brands, the following model, in Figure 4, illustrates where the various, public, private, and semi-public Dubai brand extension organizations sit, and how they develop a back or a forward effect with the Dubai core brand. The focus in this suggested visual presentation lies in showing how the parent brand of Dubai affects, and is affected by, the various brands that operate under its umbrella.

**Figure 4. A proposed Dubai Brand Model**



Source: Author's own origination.

Unlike figure 3, wherein a parent brand expands in the same area – that of automotive, the model in figure 4 represents the brand of Dubai's relational links

between both commercial and public entities of varying and different interests. In the majority of governmental entities, the brand name Dubai is used to indicate a location descriptor, and the brand relationship is that of extension, such as Dubai Municipality, Dubai Civil Defense, Dubai Police, Dubai Courts, Dubai Chamber, Dubai Tourism, and so on. It is important to note that these brand extensions still perform the same forward and backward effects between the parent and extended brands. The more positive a user experience is with a Dubai government department, say, the Police, the more positive feedback effect will be directed back to the parent nation brand of Dubai, enhancing its equity.

On the commercial entities side, where Dubai owns and operates business organizations in various fields such as aviation, hospitality, property development, there is a mixed use of the brand Dubai extension strategies. In some examples, such as in the aviation industry, Dubai adopts a dual strategy in extending its brand name to the business: one is that of endorsement with Emirates Airline, the other is that of brand extension in the case of Fly Dubai (an affordable low-cost airline for shorter destinations). On the property side, for example, Dubai adopts endorsement for brand extension in the case of Emaar, whereas the brand name Jumeirah is adopted in hospitality.

Direct brand extension strategies are applied in the property category as well, with the examples of Dubai Properties, which is part of the holding conglomerate under the brand name, Dubai Holding. It is interesting to note here, that during Dubai's most difficult time during the financial crisis of 2008 and the immediate years that followed, the Dubai endorsed brands performed better than those that are direct

extensions. Emaar, Emirates Airline, and Jumeirah, all survived the crises without having to make large numbers of their staff redundant, unlike the case with Dubai Properties and Dubai Maritime City. It is worth noting that the endorsement branding strategy, requires investment in terms of effort and funds, but still is the best to follow to secure a competitive advantage over the long run especially in venturing into a new domain. The data grounded analysis to be conducted in later chapters of this thesis will help with analyzing and evaluating each of the brand expansion approaches especially in terms of identifying which is more efficient in the context of the Dubai city brand system.

It is important to understand when it comes to city brands, they often arise and grow organically. They occur less often as a result of a decision by members of a board. What cities all over the world are realizing now is that – while there is the fact that certain preconceived and existing perceptions about the brands of their cities do exist beyond their control (i.e., the image of their city brands among their target user groups) – there is a chance that they can create new future perceptions about their brands (i.e. the identity they aspire to create), with the application and use of city branding strategies and techniques.

As this research study argues that the business engagement model is one of the main underlying influences behind successful city brands assisting them to achieve a sustainable competitive edge, it is important to have a full review of the existing literature on engagement before embarking on reviewing other related constructs that contribute to the business engagement framework, and these are marketing, branding, innovation diffusion, and leadership. The study of engagement is

growingly becoming a mainstream research item in modern marketing and organization theory research.

## 2. 5. Engagement

### What is engagement?

The various forms of activities organizations apply to *sell* product offerings, (be it commercial, environmental, or political) are subject to, and influenced by the various economic, social, cultural, and political factors at play at the time. The utilization of conventional marketing tools that focuses on customers past experiences with the product, through achieving customer satisfaction and perceived quality, are no longer adequate to predict or provide a reliable explanation of anticipated customer future behaviour towards the brand, (Applebaum 2001). Engagement – as proposed by this thesis – is the way forward to securing a lasting, sustainable, and competitive product offering.

Customer engagement is a nascent concept in marketing, and there is no established or unified knowledge about it in the marketing field (Hollebeek 2011a, Gambetti et. al 2012). While the semantic meaning of the concept of ‘brand engagement’ denotes the ultimate goal of all marketing effort, which is *engaging* consumers and influencing their purchasing behaviour, the scientific significance of the concept as a standalone field of knowledge, (i.e. as part of a universal theory of marketing, and a practical marketing construct), is only implicitly and inadvertently present in the daily practices of marketers (Bordie et al. 2011, Hollebeek 2011a).

To engage, in the common use of the English language, is to be emotionally committed and invested in an object, and therefore behave in a manner that satisfies that emotional commitment. This central concept remains valid, to varying degrees, in the academic use of the term.

In the social sciences, the meaning of engagement is context dependent (Hollebeek 2011a), and therefore the precise meaning and focus shifts from one discipline to another. In the social sciences domain, the meaning of engagement depends on the dynamics at play in the field of inquiry. Based on Hollebeek's (2011a) findings and argument, in the field of social psychology, engagement refers to involvement, response to social stimuli, and participating in social activities; in the field of educational psychology student engagement refers to academic investment, commitment, and motivation plus a sense of belonging to their establishment. Hollebeek further elaborates that in the context of organizational behaviour, engagement stands for the emotional, cognitive and physical commitment employees place in their work. Hollebeek (2011a) outlines and expands on the work of Ilie (2008) and Brodie et al. (2011), in presenting a full description of how engagement relates conceptually to the various disciplines of social science (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Overview: engagement conceptualizations (selected academic disciplines)**

Discipline	Concept	Author(s)	Definition	Themes/dimensionality
Sociology	Civic engagement	Jennings and Zeitner (2003)	Behaviors & attitudes regarding (quasi-)political processes/institutions	Multidimensional: 1. Media attentiveness 2. Trust 3. Political involvement
Psychology	Social engagement	Achterberg et al. (2003); Tsai et al. (2009)	A high sense of initiative, involvement & adequate response to social stimuli, participating in social activities, interacting with others	Multidimensional: 1. Ease of interacting with others 2. Ease of doing planned/structural activities 3. Ease of doing self-initiated activities 4. Establishing own goals 5. Pursuing involvement 6. Acceptance of invitations to group activities
Educational psychology	Student engagement	Fredricks et al. (2004)	The multifaceted nature of student engagement exists in the following dimensions: (a) cognitive, e.g. willingness to master certain skills; (b) emotional, e.g. positive/negative reactions to teachers; & (c) behavioral, i.e. participation (e.g. in academic/extracurricular activity)	Multidimensional: 1. Cognitive 2. Emotional 3. Behavioral
	Student engagement	London et al. (2007)	A student's level of academic investment, motivation & commitment with their institution, perceived toward their institution	Multidimensional: 1. Academic investment 3. Commitment to institution 4. Perceived psychological connection to institution 5. Comfort with institution 6. Sense of belonging to institution
Organizational behavior	Occupational engagement	Beijerholm and Eklund (2006)	A lifestyle characteristic including the external/objective & internal/subjective aspects of occupational performance, which involves both anticipation & comprehension thereof, and serves as the basis for an ongoing, cyclical means of maintaining a sense of self & well-being	Multidimensional: 1. Daily rhythm (activity/rest) 2. Occupational variety/range 3. Place 4. Social environment 5. Social interplay 6. Interpretation 7. Extent of meaningful occupations 8. Routines 9. Initiating performance
	Employee engagement	Schaufeli et al. (2002)	A positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind [and work-related activities]	Multidimensional: 1. Absorption 2. Dedication 3. Vigor

Source: Hollebeek (2011a), Table 1, p.558.

Through examination of all the definitions of engagement in the fields of Sociology, Psychology, Educational Psychology, and Organizational Behaviour, represented in Table 1 above, it is clear that the term ‘engagement’ refers to a desired positive behaviour, to be performed by the target user – be that a student, teacher, citizen or employee. For example, in Psychology, engagement means a high sense of initiative, in Educational Psychology it refers to the willingness to master certain skills and fostering a sense of belonging, and in Organizational Behaviour it concerns a positive and fulfilling state-of-mind about work. All of these outcomes make engagement a relevant and significant practice in the social sciences and most importantly, a concept that requires further research and analysis, due to its potential for bringing tangible value in the life and work domains of human experience.

In the marketing field, the outcome of engagement is translated into long term

customer loyalty, product profitability, and most importantly equity. While marketeers in the real world have started to identify the importance of engagement (Moffitt & Dover 2011), there is a lack of academic studies in the field (Verhof et al. 2010). Nonetheless, there are some studies in the marketing field with a focus on sub-categories of engagement, such as customer engagement, consumer brand engagement, and brand engagement in general, with the focus being on the individual perspective on brand engagement. Table 2 developed by Hollebeek (2011a) presents studies on engagement in the marketing field up until recently.

**Table 2. Engagement in Marketing Studies**

Author(s)	Concept	Definition	Engagement dimensionality
Gambetti and Graffigna (2010)	Engagement	Rather than a specific definition, the following marketing-based engagement sub-forms are identified: consumer-, customer-, brand-, advertising- and media engagement	Focal engagement sub-forms may comprise the following dimensions: 1. Soft (relational) 2. Pragmatic (managerial)
Vivek (2009)	Consumer engagement	The intensity of a consumer's participation & connection with an organization's offerings &/or its organized activities	Multidimensional: 1. Awareness 2. Enthusiasm 3. Interaction 4. Activity 5. Extraordinary experience
Patterson et al. (2006)	Customer engagement	The level of a customer's physical, cognitive & emotional presence in their relationship with a service organization	Multidimensional: 1. Vigor 2. Dedication 3. Absorption 4. Interaction
Hollebeek (2011)	Customer brand engagement	The level of an individual customer's motivational, brand-related & context-dependent state of mind characterized by specific levels of cognitive, emotional & behavioral activity in brand interactions	Multidimensional: 1. Cognitive 2. Emotional 3. Behavioral
Van Doorn et al. (2010)	Customer engagement behaviors	The customer's behavioral manifestation toward the brand or firm, beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers	Multidimensional: 1. Valence 2. Form 3. Scope 4. Nature 5. Customer goals
Phillips and McQuarrie (2010)	Advertising engagement	Modes of engagement are routes to persuasion	Multidimensional: Consumers engage ads to: 1. Act 2. Identify 3. Feel 4. Immerse
Calder and Malthouse (2010)	Media engagement	A motivational experience; being connected to a specific media	Multidimensional: 1. Transportation 2. Irritation 3. Promotion 4. Rejection
Algesheimer, Dholakia, and Herrmann (2005)	Brand community engagement	Positive influences of identifying with the brand community through the consumer's intrinsic motivation to interact/ co-operate with community members	Multidimensional (inferred): 1. Utilitarian 2. Hedonic 3. Social
Abdul-Ghani, Hyde, and Marshall (2010)	Engagement	Requires consumer connection (e.g. with specific media)	1. Utilitarian 2. Hedonic 3. Social
Higgins (2006)	Engagement	Being engaged is to be involved, occupied & interested in something	Multidimensional (inferred): 1. Cognitive 2. Emotional 3. Behavioral

Source: Hollebeek (2011a), Table 2, p.560.

By studying all of the definitions of engagement in the marketing literature represented in Table 2 above, it is clear that all seem to incorporate the concepts of participation, motivational drive, positive relationship, behavioural activity, and involvement. Hollebeek (2011a), presents a definition of brand engagement, from an

academic marketing research perspective, by saying that it is ‘the level of customer’s cognitive, emotional, and behavioral investment in specific brand interactions,’ (Hollebeek 2011a). Nonetheless, in a following study, Hollebeek admits that despite the growing use of the term engagement, there is a semantic and definitional confusion (Hollebeek 2011b) surrounding the concept. One alternative way of understanding engagement is represented in the commercial marketing literature, where it is represented by the notion of brand excitement. According to Moffitt and Dover (2011), engagement refers to the level of excitement consumers have for a brand. It is also agreed, by both academics and commercial marketing practitioners that engagement is an emerging concept that requires further research and exploration (Little & Little 2006).

## 2. E. 2. Developments in the study of engagement

Up until the time of writing this thesis, a decade of engagement research has ensued, covering so many various areas and interests, theoretically and empirically, qualitatively and quantitatively (Hollebeek 2012, Gummerus et al. 2012, Brodie et al. 2013, Hollebeek et al. 2014, Hollebeek & Chen 2014, Viveck et al. 2014, Kuvykaite & Tarute 2015, Hollebeek et al. 2016 a, Hollebeek et al. 2016 b, Harrigan et al. 2016, Viswanathan et al. 2017, Venkatesan 2017, Pansari & Kumar 2017, Harmelling et al. 2017, Alexander et al. 2018). In what follows is a chronological overview of these important stages of the development of consumer engagement related research. Table (x) below presents a summary of these studies.

In 2012, Hollebeek (2012) re-iterated the importance of engagement in generating

superior competitive advantage and profitability to brands. Hollebeek addressed a gap in the literature regarding the relationship between customer engagement and customer value with regards to hedonic and utilitarian brands. Her research findings support the conclusion that customer engagement does contribute to customer value and theorized that consumer engagement triggers consumer value and creates loyalty for the concerned brands (Hollebeek 2012). Gummerus et al. (2012) build on this understanding of engagement and applied it in the context of social media wherein they studied how customer engagement affects the benefits and outcome relationships of brand behavior. They argue that customer engagement is divided into two elements: community engagement behaviours and transactional engagement behaviours. They also state that there exist three relationship benefits in their model and these include, economic, entertainment, and social. In addition, they concluded that social media can be used to enhance the engagement benefits to create lasting royalty and positive customer behaviour (Gummerus et al. 2012). This approach is reminiscent of Aaker's brand value proposition system (Aaker 2010) that divides the customer brand benefits into social and functional. What is significant in the study of engagement at this stage is the fact that it is being recognized as a main, structurally integral component of analysis that is open to further research with the potential of having several dimensions.

Brodie et al. (2013) took the relevance of engagement in social media further by conducting an exploratory theoretical study aimed at understanding how engagement performs in the context of online brand communities. According to their findings, customer engagement is a multi-dimensional, and is composed of emotional, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions, the consequence of which is consumer loyalty,

satisfaction, empowerment, connection, bonding, trust, and commitment (Brodie et al. 2013). Moreover, they found that customer engagement is a context-dependent, interactive, experiential process with varying intensity. This finding further supports the significance of engagement as a main area of knowledge that requires further research, especially, at this stage, in terms of measuring that intensity, and if so, developing methods with which the level of intensity can be managed to achieve desired goals. Another significant finding by their work is that customer engagement is triggered largely by the consumer's need for information, indicating the participatory and passion drive customer have for a certain brand when the engagement process is being managed successfully. This indicates that the consumer involvement in the brand is a process that proceeds engagement and not a result of it, whereas brand equity is the result of the successful implementation of engagement, as proven by further research work on consumer engagement in social media (Hollebeek et al. 2014).

In addition, the study of engagement thus far has been only on the level of positively associated brand experience. An interesting study is made by Hollebeek & Chen (2014) wherein the focus has been on unravelling the mechanisms at play in relation to customer engagement in the context of brands that create negative associations, leading to unfavorable brand related thoughts within consumers (Hollebeek & Chen 2014). This research has increased the scope and applicability of the consumer engagement construct paving the ground for further empirical and theoretical research. Realizing the significance of the consumer engagement concept, researchers began to look at ways of measuring it (Vivek et al. 2014) and trying to rationalize its effects in the hope ultimately of harnessing its potential benefits to all parties involved. The

interesting approach adopted in this study lies in the researchers' adoption of the S-D logic theory aspects in developing their understanding of the consumer engagement model. The S-D logic thinking, in its core being focused on the notion that service-for-service exchange principle (Vivek et al. 2014) is used to develop the main finding of the study that consumer engagement is a three-dimensional construct comprising of conscious attention, enthused participation, and social connection. The study also presents a scale of measuring consumer engagement and conceptualizes a different definition of engagement than that of Hollebeek's above. Viveck et al. (2014) define engagement as the 'level of customers (or potential customers') interactions and connections with the brand or firm's offerings or activities, often involving others in the social network created around the brand/offering/activity.' (Vivek et al. 2014, p. 401) The interesting thing about the study of engagement, because it is a rapidly growing concept, is that new studies bring fresh and added perspective to the core understanding of the concept. Hollebeek's definition of engagement in terms of its cognitive, emotional, and behavioural attributes (Hollebeek 2011a) is not at odds with this definition, if anything, the Vivek et al.'s definition builds on it and adds an important point which is that of the inclusion of potential consumers – adding a significant point to our general understanding of engagement in that it is a time bound phenomenon, but rather, it is an ongoing one.

In 2015 and following to the Marketing Science Institute's 2014-2016 Research Priorities underlying the importance for conducting further research on engagement, Kuvykaite & Tarute (2015) conducted a critical analysis study focusing on the multidimensionality of consumer engagement. They found that the majority of research work on consumer engagement is inconsistent, and with results being

controversial (Kuvykaite & Tarute 2015). Other interesting finding by this study includes that the majority of studies on consumer engagement are theoretical in nature, and the empirical studies are mostly qualitative. This is interesting in two points: first, for empirical research on consumer engagement to increase there must be a need for more theoretical understanding, frameworks, and conceptualizations that can be used as reference for empirical work to begin, and second, qualitative empirical research is used due to its innate exploratory nature considering that consumer engagement is a new field of knowledge that is largely unchartered.

Moreover, and in relation to the issue of consumer engagement dimensionality, the researchers provide another significant finding in that there are two main approaches: one the unidimensional approach which sees consumer engagement as the most important dimension, which includes differing definitions by different researchers; two the multidimensional approach which sees many combinations come together to form the construct of engagement (Kuvykaite & Tarute 2015). Regardless of where a researcher stands on the dimensionality of engagement, one thing is for sure agreed upon by all that engagement is an important knowledge area that needs further research theoretically and empirically. The researchers conclude however that consumer engagement is best seen as a multidimensional construct incorporating three main elements of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions – which is the basic definition Hollebeek presented in her various research papers on the subject matter (Hollebeek 2011a, 2011b, and Holebeek et al. 2014).

In addition, in 2016, Hollebeek et al. (2016) revisit the consumer engagement relationship with the service dominant logic theory, however, to apply that in the field

of customer relationship management. The study also found that there is a growing use of engagement terminology indicating conceptual areas of developing research, such as consumer engagement, customer engagement, customer engagement behaviours, consumer brand engagement, advertising engagement, and brand engagement in self-concept (Hollebeek et al. 2016 a). in addition, Hollebeek et al. (2016) reviewed the various future of the study of consumer engagement in terms of new developing areas of knowledge such as big data, service systems, and critical drivers of engagement (Hollebeek et al. 2016 b). Other applied areas of the study of engagement started to include various research areas such as tourism (Harrigan et al. 2016) and mobile technologies (Viswanathan et al. 2017).

The growing interest in engagement motivated the Journal of the Academic Science of Marketing to have a special issue on customer engagement in 2017, incorporating three significant papers addressing the concept. in one article, Venkatesan (2017) stressed the importance of customer engagement as a new field of study and stresses its importance as a new imperative for organizations to establish a relationship with their target users above and beyond the monetary relationship (please see section 2.2 on the value exchange theory of marketing). He states that while customer engagement is now considered by managers as an important strategy to achieve long term success, he acknowledges that ‘managers also recognize the challenges presented in developing and executing a customer engagement. This presents a great opportunity for academics to develop frameworks and insights that can guide effective customer management strategies.’ (Venkatesan 2017, p.293). The significant finding here lies in the fact that for engagement to happen on the consumer level, organizations need to understand it, and develop systems to develop it, which runs in line with the aim

(please see section x) of this these in developing the business engagement model, which concerned with how organizations manufacture or make consumer engagement.

In another attempt at defining what customer engagement is, Pansari & Kumar (2017) try to look at engagement in terms of a brand – consumer relationship that is based on satisfaction that leads to bonding. They define consumer engagement as ‘that when a relationship is satisfied, and has emotional bonding, it then progresses to engagement.’ (Pansari & Kumar 2017, p.295). In addition to this attempt, and by 2017, customer engagement is still gaining momentum in terms of its interest and value as a new research area, however, some researchers suggest that the abundance of knowledge in the field is met with confusion and terminology chaos in that ‘there is a considerable variation in the definitions, concepts and arguments used to examine the construct.’ (Harmeling et al. 2017) They also add that replicating results is inapplicable and contradictory findings are inevitable, which hinders the process of theory development in the field. On one hand they are right in saying that replicating results is difficult and may not be attainable. But it is important to note, that ontologically speaking, from a relativists approach, results of social research may not need to be exactly replicable, because ontologically speaking, there are several realities that are studied by this approach (please see Methodology section). Instead, the focus should not be on results duplication to develop theory, but rather, focus should be on common and similar patterns for the sake of progressing research and development in the field.

In a fresh look at engagement in terms of the micro, meso, macro, and meta-level perspectives, Alexandar et al. stress on the importance of organizations’ need to

understand the values and norms surrounding the various engagement contexts, and that they have to develop the tools and programmes that will enable them to achieve the desired behaviour by target engaged group. (Alexander et al. 2018) This notion is critical important in that it alludes for the first time an important gap in the literature, which is addressed by this thesis (please see intro section) This gap lies in the fact that all the research work that has been done in the engagement field is totally focused on the consumer level. Alexander et al. (2018) state: ‘Thus far, the analytical focus of engagement research has predominantly been on the micro level, concerned with individual customers and their relationships with specific focal objects, such as products, firms, or brands.’ (Alexander et al. 2018, p.2). Not that there is anything wrong with that, what it is needed now is to develop frameworks, systems, tools that can help with the understanding of how consumer engagement is manufactured, made, created, and managed by organizations – which is one of the main aims of this study.

The position this thesis adopts in defining business engagement is exploratory in nature at this stage of the research. The data analysis in chapters 4 and 5 below will have new concepts to emerge representing a grounded definition of business engagement. As to engagement on the consumer level, it may be seen as that state of mind wherein consumers/customers/users/buyers identify with the brand and interacting with that brand becomes a means of self-actualization, gratification, fulfillment, and belonging. What this study seeks is to develop a conceptualization of how engagement is made, not what it is.

Successful brands, (be they cars, watches, clothes, computers, restaurants, cities, or

countries), create a story that the target user wants to be a part of, and this is engagement. In a way, engagement can be seen as a dynamic belief system that brands try to imprint on customers' hearts and minds, motivating them to behave in a certain way. This goes in line with Hollebeek's definition of engagement as 'the level of customer's cognitive, emotional, and behavioral investment in specific brand interactions,' (Hollebeek 2011a). It is envisaged, however, that this research study, using grounded theory methods, will provide a deeper understanding of engagement in terms of how it is produced by the organization, and how this can be integrated within the frameworks of marketing and organization theories and real-world business practices. Accordingly, the focus in the literature review continues at this stage to study where engagement fits within branding in the literature and how branding is relevant to the proposed model of business engagement.

## **2. 6. Branding**

### **What is branding?**

This thesis assumes that all organizational effort is embodied and summarized in one main construct, and that is the term *brand*. The justification for this assumption is that Any business behaviour cannot remain immune to branding. Branding is ubiquitous for organizations and people, too. On the level of the organization, the brand carries all the meaning and knowledge about that organization's corporate identity, and all its product offerings. As for individuals, every person has an identity that is unique. The behaviour of a person leads to him/her being branded as such by others. The omnipresence of the concept of brand is reminiscent of Rene Descartes' philosophical

doctrine of Cogito ergo sum (“I think, therefore I am”), which can be amended to the idea that ‘If we are (exist), then we are branding or are branded.’

The conventional definition of a brand is that it ‘consists of any name, design, style, words, or symbols, singly or in any combination that distinguishes one product from another in the eyes of the consumer.’ (Brassington & Pettitt 2000, p. 98). A more modern interpretation is presented in Kotler & Armstrong’s definition, which states that a brand is ‘a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of these, that identifies the products or services of one seller or a group of sellers and differentiates them from those of competitors’ (Kotler & Armstrong 2014, p. 763). The problem with adopting these types of definition is that they dwarf the brand, confine its influence, and reduce its potential to the sheer functionality of distinction and identification. In short, these definitions rely too heavily on the teachings of traditional value exchange-based marketing theory.

The proposed new way of thinking relates to the literal meaning of branding – when used as means to identify and distinguish cattle by burning (Bastos & Levy 2012). The functional aspect of brand use is as an identifier and a distinguisher, yet the power of a brand lies in more than its ability to identify /differentiate a product and resides in its power to influence behaviour (Aaker 2002, Aaker 2010; Al Ries & Al Ries 1998; Gerzema & Lebar 2008).

This thesis defines the brand as an ongoing process of perception in the minds of the targeted user groups. In addition, this research study sees brands as a formation of the collective consciousness of the target group. This means that the ownership

of brands does not rest with the organization that created it (as conceptualized in traditional marketing thinking), but is also shared, imagined, lived, and owned by the intended user.

### **Brand, product, and equity**

There is a common misconception in academic and commercial fields to conceive of the brand as a product (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2002, Ries & Ries 2004). A product, according to Kotler, is ‘anything that can be offered to a market for attention, acquisition, use, or consumption, that might satisfy a want or need,’ (Kotler & Armstrong 2014, p.679).

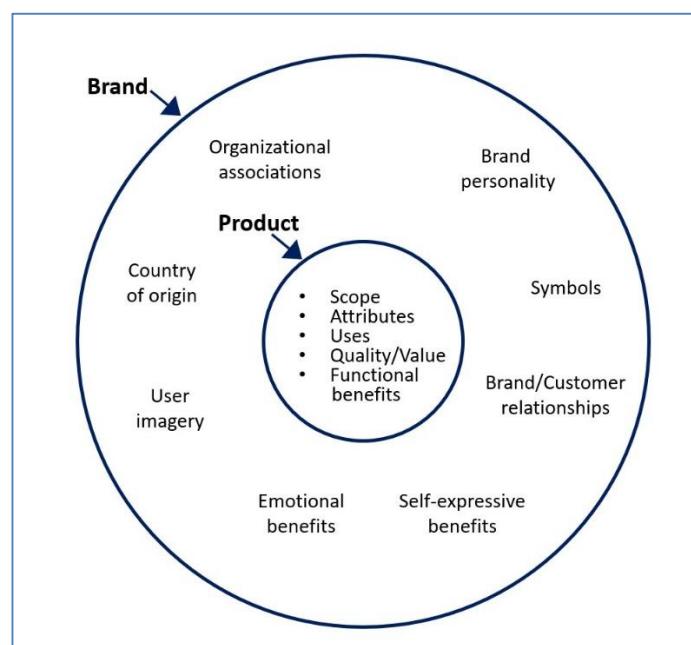
Broadly speaking, a product is a service, event, organization, idea, or a mix of any of the above. In other words, the product is the tangible or intangible offering of a brand. The brand here is the face of the business strategy, while marketing is the process by which the brand is managed by the businesses or individuals that own it, to inspire, attract, excite, and most importantly, *engage* target user groups.

The product might undergo updates, modifications, alterations, and so on, but the brand from which this product is offered, remains constant (Owen 2002). This view is further echoed by the notion of continuity. A brand can last for decades, while products offered by that brand often will see many changes and updates in response to market trends and consumer demands. The Harley Davidson brand, for example, was established in the year 1903, and has produced many different product lines since that date until today, including different styles and designs, higher engine

capabilities and outputs, and more environmentally conscious products, such as an electric bike to keep in with the prevailing attitudes of the times. The same can be said about the Apple brand – wherein the group has managed to maintain the same central brand story but over time has introduced many different products such as desktop computers, laptops, peripherals, music players, iPads, smart phones, and wrist watches.

In addition, it is important to acknowledge that a brand is a larger entity than a product, and that they have different features, characteristics, and functions. This is clearly represented in Figure 5 below wherein Aaker & Joachimsthaler (2002) position the product within the brand system. This form of representation makes a clear distinction between the role of marketing, which is product and consumer based, and business engagement, which is organization and brand focused.

**Figure 5. Brand is Larger than Product**



Source: Aaker & Joachimsthaler (2002), Figure 2-5, p.52.

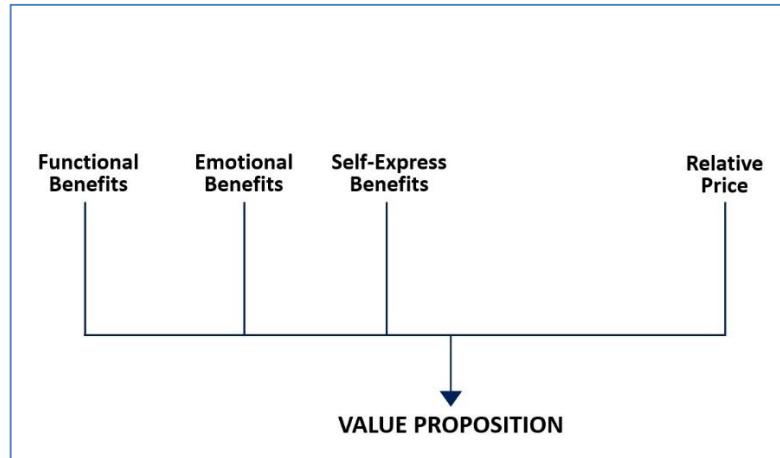
In addition to establishing the brand/product dynamic, Figure 5 above identifies important factors such as personality, symbols, customer relationship, emotional benefits, associations, and self-expressive benefits as part of the brand and not the product. These elements play a major role in the creation of brand engagement with customers. It is the features of the brand that will ensure the business engages successfully and achieves a sustainable competitive advantage or are a major reason for failure., when the business processes managing the brand do not perform well.

Another element that needs to be addressed to achieve a deep understanding of the meaning of a brand, is the concept of equity. Brand equity is a strategic asset for the business and is the foundation that allows the organization to achieve long term profitability and maintain a sustainable competitive advantage (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2002). Brand equity is the sum of all those elements that motivate customers to pay more or do more, in interacting with a brand.

According to Kolter & Armstrong (2014) brand equity is the ‘differential effect that knowing the brand name has on customer response to the product, or its marketing’ (Kotler & Armstrong 2014, p. 673). A customer pays a lot more for a Rolex than a Casio, despite the fact, that in some cases, the Casio tells the time better. It is the perceived value of a brand that makes customers behave accordingly. The perceived value of the brand is what makes businesses thrive, as well as survive in difficult times, and continue to renew their product offerings. In the brand value proposition model presented in Figure 6, Aaker (2010) outlines four types of value that a brand can provide, and these are: functional, emotional, self-expressive, and

price.

**Figure 6: Brand Value Proposition**



Source: Aaker (2010), Figure 3-13, p.102.

The price value constitutes only a small part of the overall value proposition of a brand. This is significant in terms of theory and practice. Theoretically, this supports the argument to look for a new conceptual understanding of business engagement that covers more aspects than just price focus and product centric activity typical of conventional marketing thinking.

In terms of practice, this is relevant in that brand owners need to tailor their marketing communications strategies based on the fact that the target user's engagement is not only price dependent. Strong brands *engage* their target users and allow them the opportunity to identify with them and use them as a means of social and emotional expression rather than solely as a means to satisfy a physical need or a function (Bastos & Levy 2012, Hatch 2012,).

The engaging process here is initiated by the developer of the brand, (the

organization, the artist, the thinker, the political leader, the nation leadership, the city management, etc.). It can be said in this context that brands normally assume a life of their own apart and aside from the intentions and desires of their creators. This relates to the duality of brand identity (what the organization wants the brand to be – *future focus*) and brand image (what the brand really is – its perception in the mind of the actual user groups – *the present reality*).

Brand engagement takes place when brand values spread in the social system due to the influence of leadership, as is proposed by this study. The goal of any brand is to achieve engagement, not for short-term gain, but for the establishment of a long term sustainable competitive edge. An important question here is, how does the brand's perceived value proposition transit through society from one individual to the other, and from one organization to the other? The diffusion of innovations can provide some relevant insights, however, to see what aspects of the innovation diffusion theory are relevant to the proposed business engagement model, a literature review is discussed in the following section.

## **2. 7. Diffusion of Innovations (DOI)**

### **Innovation**

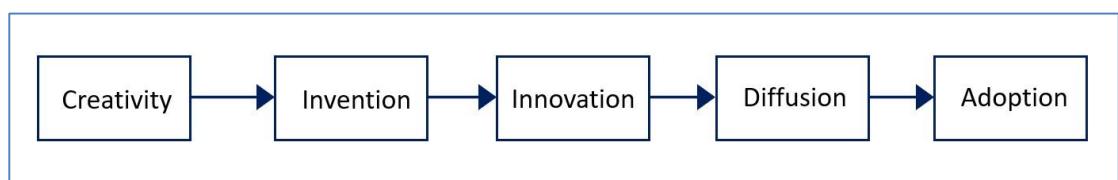
Innovation in the organization context is the creation of either a new process or a new product or service which will influence the way the organization conducts its business (Clegg et al. 2011). Moreover, innovation on the organizational level can also refer to

the generation, development, and implementation of the ideas that are new to an organization and have practical or commercial applications (Asce et al. 2004).

Other definitions of innovation include relevant concepts, such as the ‘successful exploitation of new ideas,’ ‘the commercialization of new processes,’ ‘utilization of small-scale changes in know-how,’ ‘the exploitation of change as an opportunity,’ ‘achieving competitive advantage,’ and a combination of ‘good ideas, motivated staff, and out of the box thinking’ (Bessant & Tidd 2011). Innovation in the context of organizational behaviour refers to the ‘generation, adoption, implantation, and incorporation of new ideas and practices’ (Axtell et al. 2000, Van de Ven 1986). Innovation can be regarded as a process that involves the creation of change, the management of change, dissemination of change, and ultimately, the full adoption of that change.

The innovation/change paradigm process is illustrated in Figure 7, wherein the idea is first conceptualized/created into an invention, then turned into an innovation (by allocating the applicability and generalizability of the idea in the first place), that is then diffused (spread) into the various social systems, then finally adopted. Adoption is the result of successful diffusion.

**Figure 7. The Innovation Change Process**



Source: Ehigie & McAndrew (2005), Figure 1, p.929.

Considering the multifaceted nature of the concept of innovation, the definition that this thesis adopts is consistent with Rogers (1983) who states that innovation is ‘an idea, practice, or object, that is perceived as new, by an individual, or other unit of adoption.’ (Rogers 1983, p. 11) The significance of this definition lies in the introduction of the concept of the *perception of newness* as a determinant of the idea to be considered as an invention. The perception of an idea as an invention and how useful it is to be adopted are key factors in the success or failure of innovations.

If the target groups or individuals of an invention understand that invention well, form positive perceptions about its use, application, and usefulness, then the more successful its diffusion and adoptions will be (Rogers, 1983). In addition, if the innovation product is produced with high quality that meets the end users’ expectations, organizations may, and can, manage the diffusion of their innovations on two basic factors: quality assurance and effective marketing (Szymczyk & Kaminski 2014). These innovations can be represented as brands, and their link with innovation diffusion in the engagement process will be explored in the empirical research for this thesis.

## **Diffusion**

The study of innovation diffusion is gaining momentum and has become of growing interest in academic research (MacVaugh & Schiavone 2010, Li & Sui 2011, Mela et al. 2013), due to diffusion’s potential in predicting the performance or behaviour of a

new product, service, policy, ideology, or movement, depending on the context of study. Moreover, diffusion studies can help in many marketing fields of interest such as consumer response to new products, market entry strategies, and product development processes (Hauser et al. 2006), and in areas of consumer behaviour (Claudy et al. 2015).

It is an onerous undertaking for organizations to forecast sales or predict the acceptability levels of newly launched products or innovation adoptions. Diffusion research is useful in this regard. The dynamics and mechanisms of diffusion can also assist our understanding of the process in which business engagement works in societies and cities. The spread of a brand's value proposition from one user to the other and from one organization to the other is the main link between business engagement and innovation diffusion theory.

Diffusion refers to the spread of innovations in a community of social systems, individuals, users, groups, countries, organizations, and national policies (Wejnert 2002). Rogers defines diffusion as: 'the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels, over time, among the members of a social system,' (Rogers 1983). The new idea product or service, which will be realized and communicated in the form of a brand, will need to be explained to the target audience, through a communication means that they both can relate to, and over a certain duration of time.

Innovation diffusion, which this study compares with brand adoption, starts low with the very limited number of people (or sometimes organizations) referred to as innovators in a society. Then, the early adopters start to embrace the innovation, prompting the start of a take-off effect, after which comes the late majority who then adopt the innovation (Rogers 1983).

Diffusion research is varied, and covers many research areas such as agriculture, information technology, family planning, marketing, politics, and policy development (Wejnert 2002). This multi-faceted nature of the sectors in which the same principles of diffusion apply supports the universality and potential generalizability of business engagement. Moreover, according to Jeyaraj & Sabherwal (2014), there are several models of innovation diffusion, and these include: critical mass theory, threshold models, homophily models, proximity models, and influence models (Jeyaraj & Sabherwal 2014).

The critical mass models refer to the situation wherein the number of innovation adopters reach a certain level, after which a bandwagon effect is created, and adoption becomes rapid (Markus 1990, Abrahamson & Rosenkope 1993). The threshold models focus on the notion that diffusion of innovations becomes rapid when a certain standard within a select proportion of adopters in the social system is met by the innovation offering. After these adopters and the threshold of more of them is met by the innovation, adoption becomes accelerated, (Granovetter 1978).

The homophily models base their understanding of diffusion on the notion that potential users of an innovation become adopters when they see other similar status users adopt that innovation (Valente 1995). The proximity models explain the diffusion of innovation in terms of the juxtaposition of adopters with potential adopters in the community in terms of factors such as geographical location, shared values, positions, and beliefs (Rice 1993). The influence models were championed by Rogers, (1983) and Bass (1969) amongst others and focus on the idea that the diffusion of innovations is affected by two types of communication channels: mass media and interpersonal relationships.

Whether the diffusion dynamics are in small-networks (Delre & Jager 2007), or policy innovation diffusion (Suwa & Jupesta 2012), or diffusion of suicide terrorism (Horowitz 2010), or technology diffusion in agricultural studies (Drape et al. 2013), or innovation diffusion in small firms (Choudrie & Culkin 2013), or the diffusion of Japanese brands into the Chinese market (Horn 2009), all are centered on one essential principle that is resonated and represented in Rogers' understanding of the process of diffusion. The process of diffusion of all of these innovations is composed of four components: innovation, communication channel, time, and a social system (Rogers 1983).

The high level of generality is what makes Rogers' model of diffusion of innovation to be one of the most practical and widely used theoretical frameworks in understanding, modelling, and managing innovations in business (Barr 2002, Doran 2009, Doyle et al. 2013, Melnyk & Davidson 2009, Starkweather & Kardong-Edgren

2008). In fact, recent research studies show that during the last 20 years the study of diffusion has made great progress in a plethora of multidisciplinary fields (Sui & Li 2011), with Rogers model of diffusion often being acknowledged as theoretically and empirically sound and relevant (Gouws & van Oudtshoorn 2011).

Rogers model lends itself easily to broad application across numerous research areas. Rogers' work has been used in, for example, the study of diffusion in public TV usage in Taiwan (Li et al. 2013), nurses' adoption of technology (Lee 2004), best practice diffusion (Pearcy & Draper 1996), mobile devices integration in nursing (Doyle et al. 2013), technology adoption in agricultural degree programs (Drape et al. 2013), and in measuring diffusion of marketing messaging through social media platforms (Rogers et al. 2012).

### **Rogers' model of diffusion of innovations**

Rogers' model of innovation diffusion was introduced in 1962 and his book is in its 5<sup>th</sup> edition published in 2003. In his conceptual framework, Rogers (1983) outlines how new ideas are diffused and adopted among individuals or organizations as members of a social system. The diffusion process is divided into four main elements: the *innovation*, the channel of *communication*, the *time* in which diffusion takes place, and the target audience of that innovation, i.e., the *social system*.

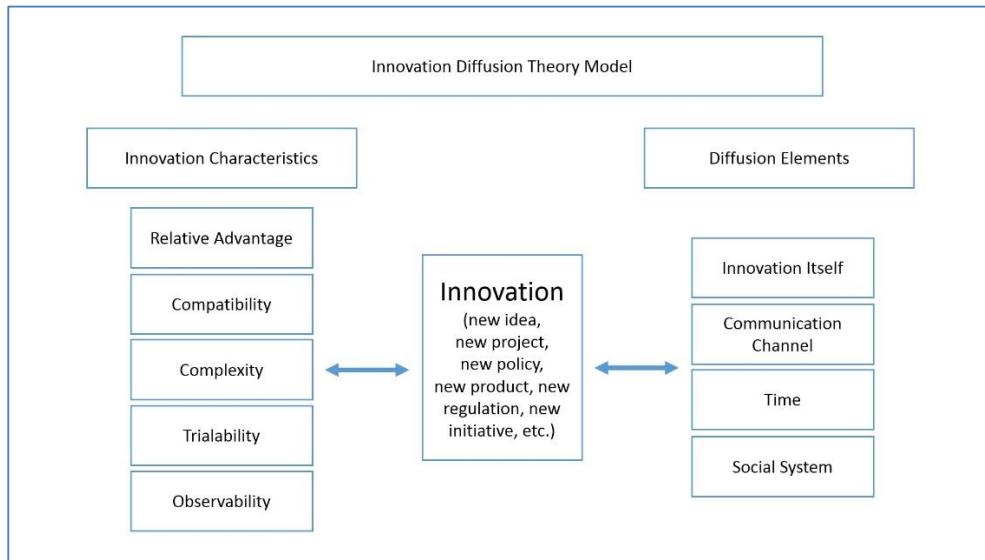
While stressing that all innovations should not be regarded as equivalent units of analysis, Rogers outlines that there are five characteristics about innovations that will

help in providing an explanation of the rate of their adoption. These characteristics include *relative advantage*, *compatibility*, *complexity*, *trialability*, and *observability*, (Rogers 1983). The relative advantage of an innovation refers to the end user's perception of how useful or beneficial the new idea presented can be, in comparison to the status quo. The more value end users see in the innovation, then the faster the rate of adoption will be. Compatibility is the degree to which the new innovation fits within the overall practice and value systems of the end users. If an innovation presents a serious and uncompromising departure from the standard norm of doing business in a community, it will less often see rapid adoption. The complexity of innovation refers to how easy or difficult the end users perceive the innovation to be. The easier it is to understand, the quicker it will be adopted.

Trialability refers to the end users' ability to experiment with the innovation on a trial basis prior to making the decision to adopt (or not). Observability is the extent to which the results of adopting an innovation are visible to the end user. This is relevant to the relative advantage of the innovation, in that it is easier for people to adopt something new if they can visualize the results it will bring and the associated benefits it will give them.

This thesis proposes that the elements and characteristics of innovation diffusion theory will play a significant role in business engagement, in terms of engagement and adoption. Figure 8 presents the aspects of diffusion theory that are relevant for this study on business engagement and the diffusion of innovation.

**Figure 8. Elements of Rogers' Theory Used in This Study**



Source: Author's own origination based on Rogers diffusion theory  
(Rogers 1983)

The diffusion of brands across social systems depends on many factors, and a key one of them is effective leadership. Leadership is not only spearheading the spread of new ideas (or brands) in society but is largely responsible for inspiring people to embrace new patterns of thinking, and adopting change in organizations, cultures, nations, and societies at large. Leadership plays a critical role in the process of business engagement, inside and outside the organization alike.

## **2. 8. Leadership**

### **Overview**

The concept of leadership is shrouded with complexities, confusions and contradictions (Avoilo & Bass 2002, Grint 2005, Hannum et al. 2007, Bass & Bass 2008, Hall & Janman 2010). In everyday English, leadership refers to the position of a leader of a group or of an organization; or it refers to the time when a person holds the position of leader; or the power or ability to lead other people (Merriam-Webster 2015). What is significant in these common definitions and uses of the word leadership are three important aspects: power, ability, and followership. The dynamics at play among these three different aspects shape and influence group behaviour in human social systems, be that a city, or a bank, or a school, or a hospital.

In organizational behaviour and leadership studies there are many theories ranging from the simple assumption that great leaders are born with a special unique set of traits, to the more complex notion that certain behaviours make leaders great, to the idea that context provides the conditions for great leaders to happen, to the concept that great leadership involves a relational exchange of benefits with followers, to the highly popular theory of effective leadership as being a transformational force inspiring followers themselves to lead. Regardless of the approach, all leadership theory is based on the simple premise that a leader can influence followers to think and behave in a certain manner. This influence can be represented at the higher levels of employee and systems performance, which in turn, are translated into long term organizational growth, superior profitability, and sustainable competitive advantage.

Product offerings developed by organizations including tangible services such as watches, cell phones and cars, and intangible services such as health care, hospitality, education are all shared and commercially transacted in society in the form of brands. One of the most important roles of leaders in organizations is to make sure that their brands are competitive, innovative, and enjoy healthy commercial activity in the marketplace. Cities, in this frame of thinking, are increasingly regarded as competing brands, and it is the role of the leadership of these cities to inspire visionary national agendas that create organizational cultures and align the city's natural resources, people, workforce, and situational context in building strong regional and global brands.

### **What is leadership?**

The way leadership works, the way leadership is structured, the way leadership is styled, and the way leadership is managed, all contribute to how society performs, in terms of individuals, large scale projects, programmes and organizations, and nations. Leadership is important to understand because it influences group behaviour. In the context of organizational behaviour and organization theory, and since the time of the ancient Greek philosophers and comparatively more recent Machiavellian philosophy (Ronald 2014), leadership has been at the centre of interest, although without any unanimously agreed definition applicable to all situations (Bass & Stogdill 1990, Yukl 2002, Uen 2012).

Furthermore, there is no single universally applicable understanding of leadership across different cultures, in that non-Western conceptualizations of leadership and how it sits within the organization are remarkably different from mainstream Western organization theory (Dorfman & House 2004). Indians, Japanese, Arab, and Turkish organizations, for example, have totally different ideas, values and beliefs as to what leadership is, what the role of the leader is, and what the followers' roles are in the workplace. Consequently, this is also likely to be similar with city brands, where leadership plays a different role in each culture. Cited in Ronald (2014), there have been numerous attempts in defining leadership during the last century, and these include the views that leadership:

“...is the preeminence of one individual in a group in the process of control.” (Mumford 1906); “... is the centralization of effort in one person.” (Blackmar 1911); “... focuses the attention of group members into the desired direction.” (Bernard 1927); “... is the art of influencing.” (Copeland 1942); “... consists of a relationship between an individual and a group.” (Knickerbocker 1948); “... is the process of influencing the activities of an organized group in its effort toward goal setting and goal achievement.” (Stogdill 1950); “... induces a subordinate to behave in a desired manner.” (Bennis 1959); “... is interpersonal influence toward the attainment of a specified goal or goals.” (Tannenbaum 1961); “... is an influential increment over and above compliance with the routine directives of the organization.” (Katz and Kahn 1966); “... transforms followers, creates visions of the goals that may be attained and articulates for the followers ways to attain those goals. Leadership persons mobilize resources to arouse, engage and satisfy the motives of followers” (Burns 1978); “... is the ability to start evolutionary change processes that are more adaptive.” (Schein 1992); “... is a form of social influence.” (Pondy 1989); “... is an interaction and leaders are agents of change whose acts affect other people more than people's acts affect them.” (Bass 1994); “... is an individual's effort to change the behavior of others.” (Bass 1996); “... needs a leader. The only definition of a leader is someone who has followers.” (Drucker 1998); “... refers to a potential or capacity to influence others.” (Vroom and Jago 2007).”

After examining these definitions, the following conclusions can be made. Leadership means different things at different times and under different conditions. In the early 1900s up to 1948, leadership was portrayed as the dominance of one individual over the group, within whom power is centralized, and he/she controls and dictates group behaviour. It is fascinating how this understanding reflects the political atmosphere of that period of modern history where dictatorships were the common mode of rule, and power was centered on a dictator, such as Stalin, Hitler, and Mussolini.

Post WWII, and with the triumph of Western democracies, world order started to depart from the notion that all power is centered in one individual. Dictatorships are becoming a thing of the past. From the early 1950s to the end of the 1960s in the definitions above, the meaning and focus of leadership shifted. Concepts such as interpersonal influence, incremental performance, and collective goal setting started to emerge.

From the late 1970s onwards, and with the advancement of information technology, global communications, and globalizations, new trends in understanding leadership have also emerged. Leadership is now associated with concepts such as transformation of followers, engagement, motivation, and most importantly, evolutionary change.

Moreover, in all the various definitions above, one common thread is present, and that is of influence, (House et al. 2004). No matter what the intellectual or ideological framework in which leadership is perceived, the fundamental idea is that it is a

process wherein one person exerts influence over others.

By analyzing the definitions above within their era's socio and political context, two observations can be made. First, individual leadership has been replaced by organizational or institutional leadership. Power is no longer centered in one person but is distributed and decentralized in the social system. One can argue that while this runs in line with democratic doctrines of rule in the West, it may not be a useful approach in running projects. Autocratic social systems, (negative aspects aside), have some positive elements about them, especially in fast decision making, single-mindedness in vision / strategy execution, and fast delivery of projects. Secondly, these definitions mirror in a way the prevalent theoretical models of leadership at the time. For example, the early 1900s understanding of leadership runs in line with the Traits theory positions on leadership, while the contemporary meaning of leadership clearly resonates with the transformational theory of leadership.

Robbins & Judge (2015) provide an all-encompassing definition of leadership that puts the focus on vision realization: 'Leadership is the ability to influence a group toward the achievement of a vision or set of goals.' The unique thing about this thinking is that it links leadership with vision and the fulfilment of the social system goals. Significantly, the understanding of leadership here still sees it as an *ability* – or a trait. And the real question in organizational behavior, is how far this ability can be trained, managed, and most importantly, transferred to others. What this definition lacks are the artistic, or emotional aspects in understanding leadership.

Leadership is that phenomenon which inspires people's relationship with their worldview, and motivates them to behave extraordinarily – *negatively, or positively*. This notion is interesting especially in the business engagement sense wherein leaders and their opinions perform the role of a social magnet drawing their influences on a certain idea, brand, product, philosophy, or a fashion trend (Lyengar et al. 2008).

## **Leadership and the organization**

Leadership in the organizational context is a function of management. Leadership plays many roles inside the organization depending on the field of the organization and its specialty. In general, nine main roles are agreed upon as the main functions of leadership in the organization (Dubrin 2004, Northouse 2007), and these include: figurehead, spokesperson, negotiator, coach and motivator, team builder, team player, problem solver, entrepreneur, and strategic planner. Depending on the situation, personal charisma and talent of the manager, the organization context, a manager can become an inspirational leader who can unleash his or her team's innovation, creativity and dedication to do more on the job (Durbin 2004).

Questions on leadership and management that are commonly debated in leadership theory and practice include such topics as: "Is a manager the same as a leader?", and, "Can leaders be managers"? It is commonly argued by the group in favour of a fundamental difference between the two that leadership is about inspiring behaviour while management is about rationalizing behaviour. According to this way of thinking in the academic literature (Durbin 2004, Gardiner 2005, Hughes et al. 2006, McKenna

2012), leadership is the force that motivates people to go the extra mile and achieve higher or more, in terms of higher degrees of performance and conducting their work with more creativity. Management, in contrast, is said to be concerned with the day-to-day supervising, controlling, planning, and coordination of the workplace's routine behaviours.

Accordingly, leaders are dreamers, visionary, inspirational, and those who do the right things; while managers are analytical, structural, rational, implementers, and those who do things right. Some researches go so far as to claim that managers cannot be leaders and vice versa, and that certain people are born managers, or born leaders (Hughes et al. 2006). This is important to understand in that it has a direct effect on the role leadership plays in the organization, in terms of the emotional climate and employee engagement influencing group behaviour. This leads one on to the distinction between leadership and headship, or leadership by appointment to a head position. Holding a leadership position in the organization, for example, does not mean that the head automatically exercises leadership (Ciulla 1995). This suggests that leadership happens spontaneously – not by decision, but by the availability of all aspects involved in the process, i.e., people, situation, task at hand, and the organization.

## **Leadership theories**

The influential theoretical attempts at understanding and analyzing leadership include, (in chronological order), trait theory, behavioural theory, contingency theory,

relational theory, and transformational theory (Grint 1997, Hughes et al. 2006, Northouse 2007, McKenna 2012, Robbins & Judge 2013, Ronald 2014). Some of the most prominent leadership theories are: trait theory, behavioural theory, contingency theory, relational theory and transformational theory. Referred to as the ‘Great Man’ model, trait theory states that leaders are endowed with a unique set of personality qualities and features that make them capable of leading (Robbins & Judge 2013).

Instead of focusing on a leader’s traits, personality and character, behavioural theory focuses attention on what a leader does. The focus here is on the actions and behaviour of leaders, which sets them apart from followers (Robbins & Judge 2013, Ronald 2014). Building on the aforementioned theoretical models of leadership, Fiedler (1964) developed a new model based on contingency theory assuming that leadership’s effectiveness is contingent on the successful match between a leader’s style and the situation in which leadership is conducted (Northouse 2007). Most leadership theories discussed above (trait, behaviourist, and contingency), focus on three aspects as main dynamics informing our understanding of leadership: the leader, the follower, and the context. The relational theory, commonly known as the leader-member-exchange (LMX) model, directs attention towards the interactional relationship that exists between the leader and the led (Northouse 2007).

### **Transformational theory of leadership**

Successful leaders motivate their followers to do great things. They do that by inspiring their followers, by involving them in a cause higher than their own, and they induce higher levels of meaning in organizational behaviour. The term

transformational was first coined by Downton in his *Leadership* book published in 1978. Downton used the transformational mode of leadership to distinguish another form he referred to as transactional leadership (Northouse 2007).

Transactional leadership is based on the notion that a certain reward (given or gained) by the leader or followers in exchange for a specific behaviour constitutes effective leadership. In some ways, this theory resembles the foundation of traditional marketing theory that is based on value exchange in the social system.

Transformational leadership is far more than that and is considered by a large group of scholars to be the most promising theory of leadership (Van Seters & Field 1990, Ronald 2014).

Developed by Bass (1994), transformational theory states that successful and effective leadership *engages* followers in a change process that transforms them towards achieving more in terms of performance, belief, and output of their behaviours, be that in the organization, or in a school, or in the entire culture or nation (Northouse 2007, (Robbins & Judge 2013). According to Bass, the transformational leader recognizes the needs and potential of his / her staff and the organization alike and creates a commonly shared vision that all can identify with and work together in achieving that vision. He goes on to emphasize that worthy leaders help followers transcend their personal interests and work collectively to achieve a shared goal, and in the process of doing so, they themselves are transformed into leaders (Bass 1994, Ronald 2014).

Transformational leadership is understood to function and perform based on the application of four main factors, commonly referred to as the *four Is* (Bass 1994)

which are: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual simulation, and individualized consideration. Idealized influence refers to the leader's capabilities in persuading followers to forsake their personal interests and embrace those of the organizations' interests instead making them their own. Inspirational motivation is that process wherein leaders transform followers into working together to achieve a common goal. Intellectual simulation refers to the leader's success in creating a culture or a drive for continuous innovation and creativity within followers. Individualized consideration refers to the leader's work towards understanding the followers' talents, goals, and aspirations so that he/she can develop a platform for them to unleash that potential. Accordingly, it is argued that the more a leader succeeds in managing by adopting these four Is, the more effective his/her leadership will be (Ronald 2014).

The model of transformational leadership is criticized for its lack of conceptual clarity, difficulty of measurement, and the assumption that it regards leadership as a personality trait (Northouse 2007). The theory is also criticized for overlooking contextual factors (Bryman 1996) and for the lack of clarity in providing a reliable measure of factors influencing transformational leadership maturity (Miner 2005).

Considering all of these, and other criticisms of the transformational theory, this model is still regarded as one of the most useful approaches for understanding and analyzing leadership (Miner 2005), but clearly with the need for conducting more research (Ronald 2014). Recent leadership research supports this conclusion and finds that transformational leaders are visionary influencers who engage and inspire their organizations (and followers) to believe in a common higher order that leads them to

innovate and create new ideas, products, and services (Ghasabeh et al. 2015). Some recent empirical research studies continue to find significant evidence that visionary transformational leadership in organizations empowers employees to achieve higher performance outcomes (Bish et al. 2015). Accordingly, this study will use the principles of transformational theory in understanding the role that leadership plays in the engagement and diffusion processes of brands in social systems.

Inevitably, all of the leadership theories discussed above are the product of their intellectual context and historical time. In the last century the trait theory prevailed because the collective intellectual consciousness of the time celebrated dictatorship. Post-World War II and post modernism, the conceptualization of leadership follows the intellectual frameworks of current modes of thinking and discourse. The prevalence of democratic thinking affects the way in which leadership is theorized. That's why transformational theory, for example, is regarded as a better approach because it provides ways of thinking consistent with democracy. Consequently, there is bound to exist an association and alignment of theories with the status quo of the social, political, cultural, and philosophical discourse. By the same logic, marketing theory itself is context dependent. The similarities between the two theories will be further elaborated on in later chapters of this study.

While there is a rich literature on branding, leadership, and city branding, there is a scarcity of research which examines the role of leadership in city branding, with the latter being a nascent area of research and practice. This thesis investigates the relevant theoretical grounds for combining the disciplines of leadership, marketing, and branding, and in subsequent chapters of the thesis will analyze the study data with

the aim of creating the platform that fosters the emergence of a conceptual model that articulates the relationship between leadership and city branding, in the form of business engagement.

### **Leadership in the Arab context**

As far as leadership in the Arabic world is concerned, and to understand the role of leadership in the process of city branding in an Arabic context, to the best knowledge of the researcher, not much literature can be found. However, it can be safely assumed that Islamic values influence the moral behavioural code of the majority Muslim individuals in the Arab world wherein leadership of those in charge is encouraged to be followed and obeyed. In the Arabic workplace, (including in countries such as the UAE where modern management best practices are implemented), it can be assumed that the religious teachings of right and wrong play a role in driving behaviour, and direct how leadership is perceived by workers in organizations. Religious teachings provide the underlying influence on normative moral conduct, and the workplace is no exception.

The significance of this outline of the role of leadership within the traditional Arabic collective consciousness (and subconsciousness), lies in the precept that all members of the social system should perform a leadership role in their respective lives through following their own duties, and this role expectation is transformational in terms of guardianship and responsibility that is shared across all social levels in society, from the ruler all the way down to the lowest status individual. This is relevant especially in terms of how the leadership and values of the Dubai parent city brand are inspired,

welcomed, and transformed throughout all of the associated extended and endorsed brands.

Since WWII and following to the great powers' mandate on the MENA region, several instances of inspirational leaderships took place in the Arab world, and influenced the spread of knowledge about relevant city brands. Ideologically focused on Arabic nationalism, Cairo in Egypt saw the rise of the leadership of the charismatic Jamal Abdul Nasir, whose rule in Egypt ended the Western supported monarchy. Soon afterwards, this thinking started to diffuse into other Arabic nations, due to the fact that Cairo had an influential city brand that inspired change across the country's borders. This cycle of Arab nationalism continued for 50 years or so, and it produced militarized dictatorships that, yet in another cycle of change, became threatened by the recent Arab spring movements. The apparent failure of the Arab spring movements, can be construed as due to a lack of leadership and influential nation and city branding, as well as other geopolitical factors.

The continuous streak of wars and instability which led to the weakening of city brands such as Baghdad, Damascus, Sanaa, and Tunisia in the countries of Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and Tunisia respectively, coupled with the lack of inspirational leadership, have led to the rise and diffusion of extremist movements, negative decentralization and fragmentation of power, and dangerous political power vacuums. Additional theoretical, and empirical work is required in the leadership and city branding domain in the Arab world. The subject matter of this study being focused on studying the role that leadership plays in diffusing the Dubai brand under the business engagement platform across social systems is a step in that direction.

## **Leadership and city branding**

Will Apple be what it is today without the past leadership of Steve Jobs? Will Ford be what it is today without the previous leadership of Henry Ford? Porsche without Ferdinand Porsche? Virgin without Sir Richard Branson? Microsoft without Bill Gates? The role that leadership of organizations plays in the development of brands is well established and researched (Low & Fullerton 1994, Tilley 1999, Wong & Merrilees 2007, Hankinson 2012). The important question here lies in identifying what factors in leadership are directly or indirectly related to branding and ways that makes brands of organizations successful, sustainable, and competitive.

What leadership does in terms of branding and marketing strategy is essential to the success and survival of any business (Van Gelder 2005). Leadership inspires the vision of the organization and utilizes the various managerial tools at its disposal to inspire the organization's employees towards working together in the realization of that vision. The realization of a vision is characterized by an organization's outputs in terms of employees' behaviour, commercial products and services branding (Van Gelder 2005, Naidoo & Ukpere 2012). Several researchers emphasize the importance of concentrating the responsibility for branding in the organization to top management (Mosmans 1996, Urde 1999, Hankinson 2012). This leadership role is so important that some researchers argue that the management of branding should be handled directly by the organization's CEO (Roll 2006). In many ways, knowingly and unknowingly, organizations' CEOs run the branding of their businesses.

Leadership influences employee behaviour and performance, which in turn will be

reflected directly on the output level of the organization, and ultimately the brand. Leadership does that internally (Vallaster & Chernatony 2006, Morhart et al. 2009, Naidoo & Ukpere 2012), and externally by applying strategies that align the brand's goals with those of employees, so that they transcend their own personal goals, and adopt those of the brand they work for. Some studies also assert that leadership plays a positive role in building strong brands in the services industry (Uen et al. 2011), sustaining brand values during difficult times (Czinkota & Hadiono 2012), and encouraging innovation (Waite 2014).

The main common thread in the definition of leadership within all of the discussed theoretical models (trait, behaviour, contingency, and transformational) is the idea that leadership influences group behaviour. There is a duality in that influence working inside (the effect of leaders on their followers), and outside the organization (the effect of leaders on stakeholders, marketplace partners, customers, press members, governmental and non-governmental agencies), with the leader being the figurehead, the spokesperson, and most importantly, the human face of the business strategy and vision of the organization.

One example of interest here, albeit to show negative and poor leadership in the business world, is that of the infamously cold, detached, and uncharismatic CEO of BP during the Gulf of Mexico's oil spill disaster of 2010, Mr Anthony Hayward. His lack of charisma and reportedly aloof demeanour during the US Congress hearings exasperated many people and exacerbated BP's problems negatively affecting the brand perception heavily. It also led to his immediate dismissal by the board. Until today, BP has never been able to repair the damage done by Mr Hayward's leadership

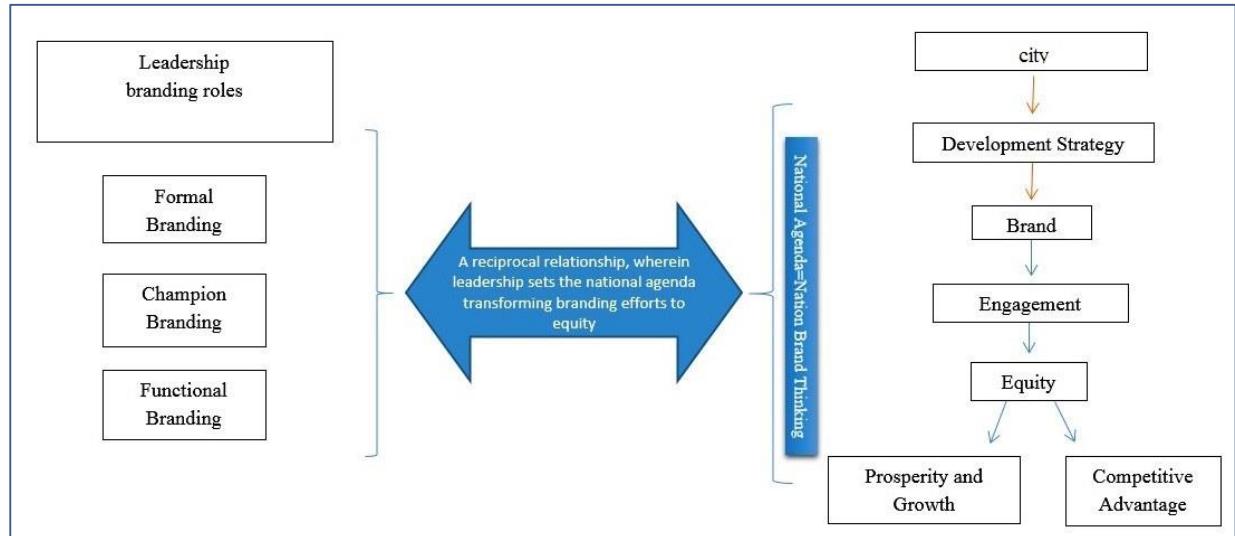
on its global brand image (Olenski 2014), which is now mostly seen as an example of corporate greed and irresponsible corporate citizenship.

In contrast to Mr Hayward's ineffective leadership during crisis, the leadership of Mr Akio Toyoda, the president of Toyota Motors Corporation, played a major role during the Toyota vehicles recall crisis of 2009-2010 in protecting the legacy of the Toyota brand. His brave, honest, sincere – Japanese culture inspired style - in addressing the US Congress hearings, not only managed to unite the Toyota employees behind him, but also Toyota's customers. According to the polls, more than 70% of the users in the US still view Toyota's brand image favourably (Rasmussen Reports 2010). The leader of a city brand functions in a similar way. In good and bad times, they unite, synchronize, inspire, and influence behaviour – internally and externally. In city branding, and because it is a nascent discipline, leadership is often interpreted only in the political context (Kunle et. al 2010).

This thesis proposes that leadership in city branding plays a threefold role, as illustrated by Figure 9 below: formal branding (being the official figurehead of the city), functional branding (inspirational force driving the national agenda and uniting the city's people in one vision), and champion branding (the human face of the brand, promoting its value propositions). While administrative government bodies lay out the business plans (process-driven), for the city, leadership – through three behaviours outlined in the model – transforms this body of knowledge body into a national agenda (vision-driven), that is commonly shared by all stakeholders and followers, representing the city brand. The goal of this agenda, for any city brand, is the achievement of long-term equity of competitive advantage coupled with social

prosperity and economic growth (Kotler et al. 1997).

**Figure 9. Proposed Leadership Roles in City Branding**



Source: Author's own origination.

## 2. 9. Theoretical Considerations: Business Engagement

This research study proposes that the Dubai brand's equity is achieved through a business engagement model. Moreover, in line with the principles of grounded theory, this thesis will attempt to analyze factors of the business processes and practices across a group of Dubai organizations to discover the principles of engagement that lead to the success of their collective city brand. The research work will analyze the entire range of publicly available materials across a multi-platform of organizations, establishments, authorities, and businesses that all come together to create the brand perception of Dubai.

This thesis proposes that a brand is the face of business strategy and the collective result of the workings of business engagement. The working relationships and mechanisms of the components of programs involved in this frame of thinking, help lead to the success of brands. The theoretical model targeted by this study proposes that ideas diffuse in the social system with the influence of leadership. In the context of city branding, the focus of this study (though this can be applied to any brand system – see Figure 1) is on how leadership sets the national agenda transforming all branding efforts to equity. The principles of innovation diffusion theory apply in the manipulation and management of the diffusion of this thinking across social systems, and in the management of the many facets of the particular city brand. The national agenda in city branding can be equated to the corporate vision in the context of brands developed by organizations in the business context. The conceptual model proposed in this thesis is based on theories of leadership, city branding, diffusion, and branding.

## **CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3. 1. Overview**

To gain insight, and have a deep understanding of the complexities of brand diffusion in social systems and the influence that leadership plays in this process, qualitative methods are essential to use, due to their discovery oriented approach, and capacity to explore and explicate complex phenomena as lived and experienced by the members of communities exposed to those phenomena (Holbrook & O'Shaughnessy 1988, Miles & Huberman 1994, Fournier & Yao 1997). No matter what topic or field of study, qualitative research has unique characteristics and capabilities to 'identify, analyze, and understand patterned behavior, and social processes' (Given 2008, p.706), making it an appropriate choice for this research study.

Accordingly, and since the aim is not to empirically test an existing theory, but rather, an attempt is made at building and conceptualizing new theoretical frameworks, the research design of this study will adopt a qualitative approach using the mechanisms of constructivist grounded theory methodology (Khan 2014). The methods of theoretical sampling, coding, and constant comparison will be used. Data gathering will be accomplished by the use of interviews, case studies, and secondary data analysis.

### **3. 2. Ontology, Epistemology, Axiology**

#### **Ontology**

The word ontology is derived from the Greek words of thing and rational account, and it stands for the philosophy and study of our being (Given 2008). Ontology relates to our beliefs about reality, and what we think constitutes truth in our lived world. It ‘studies assumptions about existence and definitions of reality,’ (Hatch & Cunliffe 2013, p.11). That is, ontology is our attempt at understanding what we think we can know, and what makes up that knowing. Ontology can be defined as our ‘beliefs about the world, what makes the world, and how these aspects interrelate. Ontology asks: what is the nature of reality? and what can be known about it?’ (Glense 2011, p.282). Put simply, ontology is what we think the truth of our lived world is. And this understanding ideology will eventually dictate the way we study our world and its perceived reality as we understand it.

There are two forms of ontology: realist/objectivist and relativist/subjective. The objectivist approach believes that there is an ‘unshakeable reality existing outside human influence,’ while the subjectivist argues that there are ‘many phenomena that would be unknowable using objective ontology such as culture,’ (Hatch & Cunliffe 2013, p.11) What this means is that the realist ontological thinking sees the world as having one truth that can be discovered by objective research methods. This truth does not change, and what can be discovered about it is universally generalizable. The relativist ontological thinking on the other hand believes that there are multiple

realities in the world, and what is considered as real depends on what meaning we collectively attach to truth. That is, the way we perceive reality makes it a truth. This means that truth is evolving and changes depending on the context of the experienced phenomena. And because our perception of truth is context dependent, it is not generalizable, and cannot be objectively measured. Instead of absolute generalizability, truth can be transferred to similar contexts. In relativist/subjective ontology, the researcher gets very close to data to arrive at a certain truth, whereas in realist/objective ontology the researcher gets as far away as possible from data to discover the truth.

We perceive the world through our human level cognitive ability, subjectively in the way our minds are designed to do so, in the manner they are made or programmed to do so. This means that our perception of reality does not mean that the reality/truth we perceive really exists beyond and outside our perception domain. However, it is important to understand that there is a dual nature to the world we are attempting to understand. There is a physical reality, and a metaphysical one. The scientific study of the natural (tangible) world can easily fit the dynamics of objective ontology, whereas the understanding of complex human behavior in social contexts is naturally better suited with subjective ontology due to the fact that context plays a major role in shaping the perceived reality in the metaphysical world. For example, water is made up of Hydrogen and Oxygen, H<sub>2</sub>O. This is a truth that exists outside our influence as researchers, it does not change, can be discovered by objective methods, and is universally generalizable. Water is water everywhere – of course in various forms of solid, liquid, or vapor. Addiction to alcohol, contrastingly, is a phenomenon with many varying realities, it changes from one context to the other, it cannot be

discovered by objective methods, and is certainly not generalizable. In general, where we stand ontologically, shapes our epistemological beliefs, and forms our methodological approach to discovering knowledge, depending most significantly on the nature of the research questions that drive the process in the first place. This means that realist and relative ontologies are not at competing ends, but rather, they represent different intellectual foundations to tackle different forms of discovery efforts relating to the physical or the metaphysical aspects of the world.

## **Epistemology**

The word epistemology is derived from the Greek words of episteme meaning knowledge, and logos meaning explanation and it stands for the justification, explanation, and rationalization of knowledge, answering questions such as, what is knowing? What is the known, and what is knowledge? (Given 2008). In other words, it is the understanding of the way in which we obtain knowledge about something, and how we acquire that knowledge. Epistemology ‘studies how we know, and what counts as knowledge.’ (Hatch & Cunliffe 2013, p.11). Epistemology determines the relationship between the researcher and research, how we understand the way in which we discover new things and gather knowledge about them. It ‘deals with the nature of knowledge and the ways in which we know the world and justify our beliefs about the world.’ (Glense 2011, p.280). In simple terms, epistemology stands for the study of knowledge.

There are two types of epistemology: positivist and interpretivist. This corresponds to the two types of realist and relativist ontology. Positivist epistemology assumes that truth can be discovered by the application of the scientific method, using hypotheses that are derived from a theory and objectively test them. Interpretivist epistemology assumes that there exist multiple realities to a given phenomenon and discovering these realities cannot be attained without the researcher's deep involvement in analyzing the contexts that give meanings to the studied experience. (Hatch & Cunliffe 2013). Positivist epistemology, also referred to as the etic approach to research, corresponds to realist ontology, in that it believes that the research should be done in an objective way so that the researcher does not influence that data that is gathered. The researcher must not contaminate the data with his/her interpretations and must maintain full detachment to achieve objective measurement. Interpretivist epistemology, also referred to as the emic approach, relates to relativist ontology, in that it believes in the importance of researcher involvement in understanding and unravelling the complex multi-realities that exist in a studied phenomenon. In this approach, truth is created by meanings of context and experience, which are constructed by the deep involvement of the researcher. The main goal of this approach is no to text a hypothesis based on an existing theoretical reference, but, to investigate and find new discoveries about the world providing new understandings about it.

Epistemology derives its intellectual foundations from ontology. Ontological beliefs form the frame of reference for our ways of gathering and studies knowledge. 'Our epistemological assumptions define the kind of knowledge that will be used to address what our ontological assumptions define as real.' (Hatch & Cunliffe 2013, p.11)

Applying the above understanding in the context of this study, the doctrine adopted

here is that of relativist ontology, and the methodological research guidelines are based on interpretivist epistemology.

## Axiology

Axiology refers to what constitutes the value of matters such as knowledge, freedom, justice, human life, wisdom, self-fulfillment and well-being. (Given 2008) Axiology, also referred to as value theory, asks questions such as, what is it that we value? What values should direct our research? What value or outcome will our research bring? Axiology is relevant to qualitative research because it provides a foundation for the understanding of the process of adding to knowledge that is normally associated with research, explaining what constitutes the value this addition to knowledge is supposed to bring.

There are different views of what value is. Plato sees value as essence that is perceived by intuition, while Aristotle defines value in terms of human interest. Neo-Kantian approaches see value as objective and universally valid, but existentialist thinkers view value as a man-made construct (Given 2018). The existentialist view of value is in line with the constructivist research paradigm which sees values as an inescapable component that shapes research outcomes. They are in line because both share the same fundamental relative ontological thinking which believes that truth is constructed and plural. The contribution to knowledge presented in this thesis is axiologically based on the constructivist research paradigm. Cited in Given (2008),

Guba and Lincoln (1994) introduced four main paradigms of inquiry, and these include, positivism (the approach that only recognizes phenomena that are objectively, scientifically, and mathematically proven with no influence from researcher's opinion or values), post positivism (the thinking where the views, values, and theoretical background of the researcher are accepted to be included in the research process influencing what is being studied), constructivism, (the notion that people construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world by experiencing it), and critical theory (where the focus is on reflexivity and moving from the universal aspects of social knowledge, to be centered upon the societal interactionism in social research). Positivist theorists and post positivists exclude and to a certain extent tolerate values respectively, while constructivist and critical theorists include values in the outcome of the research inquiry.

### **3. 3. Qualitative Research**

To define and provide a clear description of the qualitative method of research, it is useful first to understand what research involves. According to Merriam (2009) there are four main types of research work which include: pure research (contribution to knowledge), applied research (practice improvement in a certain field), evaluation research (projects assessment and verification), and action research (in response to a localized incident or problem).

This broad understanding makes it clear that there are instances where we need to have explanations and understandings about certain phenomena, and instances where we need to know about the existence of these phenomena in the first place. Qualitative

research describes and explains, while quantitative research also describes but more often is used to test the phenomena in question. Sometimes, both methods are used together (mixed methods or pluralistic research) depending on the research subject matter, requirements, and questions.

Qualitative research helps when it is difficult to state the research problem in terms of quantification or sheer numbers (Glesne 2011) the depth and meaning of human experience, or life world, as experienced subjectively by the people involved. Rather than focusing on cause and effect relationships or studying the prevalent attributes in a particular social population, (as is more often the case with quantitative methods), qualitative research tries to explore the underlying implications of human experience and rationalize that experience through providing meaning and understanding.

One of the most useful descriptions of qualitative research can be found in Flick's (2014, p. 542) definition: 'Qualitative research is interested in analyzing the subjective meaning or the social production of issues, events, or practices by collecting non-standardized data and analyzing texts and images rather than numbers and statistics.' This definition is important because it highlights and concurs with Merriam's (2009) point that qualitative research is characterized by four main features. These include: focus is on meaning, the researcher plays an active role in data collection and analysis, the process is inductive (rather than deductive), and the end research product is descriptively rich. Descriptively rich means 'words and pictures rather than numbers are used to convey what the researcher has learned about a phenomenon. There are likely to be descriptions of the context, the participants involved, and the activities of interest. In addition, data in the form of quotes from documents, field notes, and

participant interviews' (Merriam 2009, p: 16) are also included to provide further support to the study findings.

Accordingly, from an epistemological standpoint, qualitative research is interpretivist/constructivist in that it aims to explain the context-bound multiple realities as they are lived by people experiencing those subjective realities (Merriam 2009, Flick 2014). There are several types of research schools that fall under this approach that include phenomenology, hermeneutics, ethnography, and grounded theory. Phenomenology refers to the 'careful description and analyses of the subjects' life world and the meaning making and understanding in that life world,' hermeneutics is the 'study of interpretations of texts in the humanities to arrive at valid interpretations to the meanings of a text,' ethnography is the research strategy that is 'based on participation, observation, and writing about a field under study,' and grounded theory refers to 'a theory developed from analyzing empirical material, or from studying a field or process.' (Flick 2014, p: 534)

In qualitative research, where the focus is on the provision of deep understanding and explication of the lived phenomenon, theory becomes an induced understanding of the said phenomenon as a result of data analysis performed in the investigative research process (Given 2008). This understanding forms the basis for grounded theory which is the chosen method of research for this thesis. Grounded theory enables the emergence of theoretical frameworks based on data, especially in areas of research where there are not a lot of theoretical work available. The two main research gaps addressed by this thesis, (i.e., the lack of a universal understanding of business engagement and the lack of universal model for how city branding is made), make

grounded theory a suitable research methodology. The following section is addressed to explain grounded theory and how it is applied in this study.

### **3. 4. Grounded Theory**

Before discussing the evolution of grounded theory and which approach to grounded methods will be applied in this study, it is important to understand what theory means in general, scientifically, and specifically within the qualitative research discourse. In everyday language a theory refers to an idea or set of ideas that is intended to explain facts or events. In the scientific sense a theory may be a model or set of propositions that pertains to a certain phenomenon providing a certain understanding about that phenomenon (Given 2008). In both interpretations there exist two important constructs, a phenomenon, subject matter and topic, and, a set of ideas that gives them meaning. It is the discovery of that meaning that is different and unique to various schools of thought adopted in the research process, and in the research question itself. In other words, theories can be seen as attempts at providing explanations and answers to certain aspects of a phenomenon, providing descriptions that account for what happened, how it happened, and possibly explaining why it happened (Charmaz 2014). The degree of abstraction applied in this level of analysis is that of a broader, macro nature (where the focus is on national or global or local social communities), in contrast to meso- or micro- levels of theorization, wherein the focus is on market/organization specific or singular transactions or sharing specifically (Vargo & Lusch 2017).

Grounded theory refers to a style of research that focuses on the analysis of data to

develop theory. In other words, it is the discovery of theory from data obtained in the process of conducting social research (Glaser & Straus 2006). What this means is that a theory grounded in data is induced, rather than logically deducted, as a theory based on a priori set of existing axioms and previously conceived knowledge systems. That is, the theorization and abstraction to result from grounded theory analysis is not based on prior existing concepts, but is derived from and based upon the data, hence the use of the term grounded. Deductive reasoning can be used to empirically test, prove, or refute a theory, whereas inductive reasoning promoted by the grounded theory method simply focuses on the underlying principles of a certain phenomenon and developing conceptualizations that explain that phenomenon, and are to a certain extent generalizable (Gary 2009).

The methodology of grounded theory has seen major development since its launch as a method of research in 1967 by Glaser and Strauss. There are generally three schools of grounded theory mythology: the classical, first school launched by Glaser and Strauss (1967), the evolved approach to grounded theory by Corbin and Strauss (2008), and constructivist grounded theory by Charmaz (2006) (see: Amsteus 2014, and Ramalho et al. 2015). While all three approaches agree on the principle of deriving theory from the analysis of data, Glaser's approach insists on entering the research field with no literature review or prior knowledge about the subject matter. Strauss shared this view at the beginning, but later evolved his position to be more tolerant to prior existing knowledge and accepted the incorporation of concepts taken from the literature review into earlier stages of the grounded research process (Khan 2014, Amsteus 2014, Ramalho et al. 2015).

The majority of scholars seem to be in agreement that while literature review is regarded as data in grounded theory, it should be reviewed as part of the research process, and most agree that the literature review should be conducted and not ignored as it assists the researcher to gain insight and depth especially in cross-disciplinary research (Hallberg 2010, Giles et al. 2013, Ramalho et al. 2015).

The constructivist approach shares both schools' emphasis on making sure to allow theory to emerge from the data without contamination from previously developed work, it differs in that it sees knowledge construction as a process of social interchange (Flick 2014), wherein the role of the researcher cannot be ignored or separated out from the research process. Most importantly, constructivist grounded theory methods acknowledge that 'people, including researchers, construct the realities in which they participate. Constructivist inquiry starts with the experience and asks how members construct it.' (Charmaz 2006, p. 187). This means that there is no absolute (or objective) truth here, just a reality that is perceived collectively by the people who are experiencing that lived life experience (Khan 2014).

Due to its focus on the development of theoretical outcomes and insights derived from real world data, grounded theory has been used in many marketing-related research areas, yielding remarkable results (Goulding 1998, Pettigrew 2000). However, some researchers see that the divergent diffusion of grounded theory has led to diluting its essence and may even risk its validity as a research method (Wilson & Hutchinson 1996, Jones & Noble 2007, Gurd 2008), while others disagree with this concern stating that the variety in its subject matter and different topics of study have actually helped the method to be more valid, versatile, and relevant (Joannides & Berland

2008, Amsteus 2014).

This study adopts the position that grounded theory as a research methodology is not a rigid pre-scribed formula to be followed to the letter by researchers. Rather, it can be seen as a research doctrine, or philosophy, that allows the emergence of theoretical frameworks and conceptual paradigms irrespective of the area of application and achieved by simply adhering to its general overall guidelines. This thinking is in line with Charmaz's statement that 'like any container into which different content can be poured, researchers can use basic grounded theory guidelines such as coding, memo-writing, and sampling for theory development, and comparative methods are, in many ways, neutral' (Charmaz 2006, p. 9).

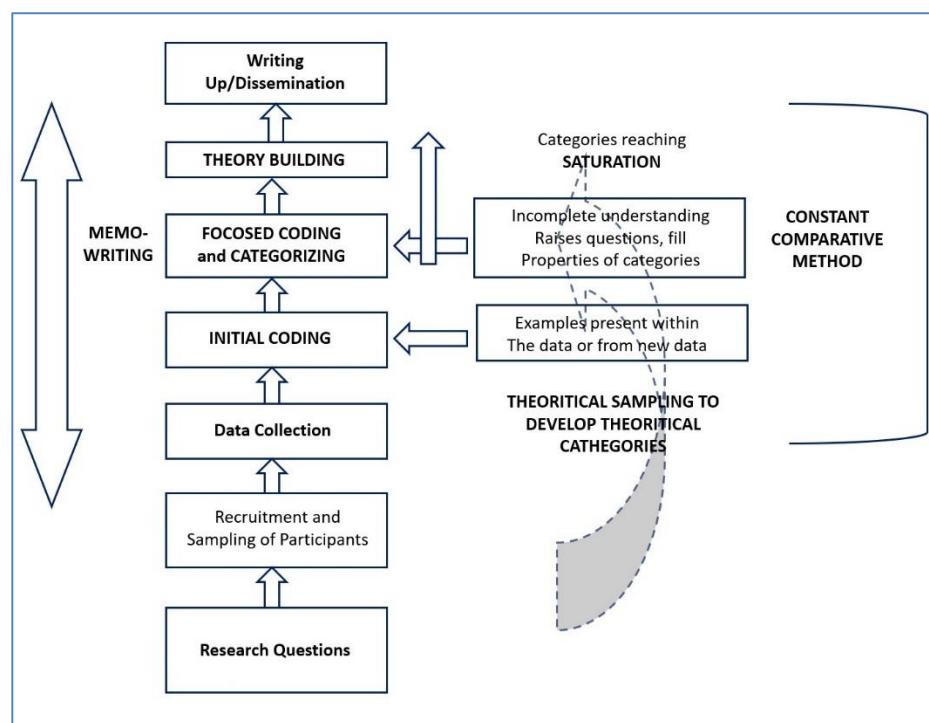
The theoretical sampling of data will adhere to the grounded theory principles of data collection, where the emerging theory will help to guide the data to be collected next, until saturation is achieved, (Glaser 1992), with the application of the method of constant comparison, (Glaser & Strauss 2006). The central features of grounded theory methodology include constant comparison, coding, theoretical sampling, memo writing, theoretical sensitivity, and saturation, (Khan 2014, Amsteus 2015).

Constant comparison refers to the generation of abstract concepts (also referred to as themes) through inductive data comparisons; coding refers to defining emergent data incidents according to what the researcher sees; theoretical sampling stands for the selection of representative sampling of the population (as opposite to random sampling); memo-writing refers to the development of codes into conceptual

categories by the researcher earlier in the data analysis procedure; theoretical sensitivity represents the researcher's examination of the data and capacity to think of data in theoretical terms; and finally, saturation refers to the state wherein gathering new data on a particular category reveals no new properties (Charmaz 2006, 2014).

Figure 10 below represents the detailed processes of grounded theory as a methodology to be followed and applied in this study.

**Figure 10. A Visual Representation of a Grounded Theory**



Source: Charmaz (2014), Figure 1.1, p.18.

### **3. 4. Methods of Data Collection and Analysis**

In line with the methodological principles of grounded theory outlined above, this study will utilize interviews as the primary source of data, along with documents as secondary data sources and bases of analysis in this work.

#### **Secondary data analysis**

This research will depend on the collection and analysis of external secondary data, which will include published and publicly available materials, lists and databases, and syndicated services (Malhotra & Birks, 2006). In addition, documents incorporating photographs, text, and various visual data (Greenbank 2003) and magazines, newspapers, books, and minutes of corporate meetings can also be studied as they provide valuable insight to the researcher (Bloyce 2004, Bryman 2004, Given 2008).

The publicly released documents, strategies, programs, promotions of a set of organizations in Dubai will be studied. These organizations can be categorized into government, semi-government, and private sectors.

Viable data can include corporate identity symbols, logos, brand promises and slogans, sub-brands, corporate videos, posters, advertisements, broadcasts, uniforms, packaging, press releases, websites, social media channels, customer service centers manuals, events and exhibitions participation details, newspapers clippings, sponsorships, and sales campaigns materials. This analysis will provide a deep understanding of social systems of business management in each brand being studied (Shah & Corely 2006), and how they contribute to the

general understanding of the Dubai city brand.

### **Semi-structured interviews**

Qualitative interviews of a theoretically selected sample of management representatives will be conducted using the ‘focused’ interview method (Flick 2014). This approach applies open questions concentrating on the current research topic. The researcher will lead the interviewees into the main theme of this research, without promoting a particular opinion on each of their business programs or strategies (Brinkmann & Kvale 2015). According to Brinkmann & Kvale (2015), this form of interviewing has a planned yet flexible open-ended nature, and helps in providing rich descriptions of the life world of the participants and the phenomenon being analyzed. Moreover, a written interview guide with specific topics and carefully selected wording (Given 2008) will be developed and used so that data gathered will be as comprehensive and relevant to the phenomena studied as much as possible.

### **Characteristics of data sample**

The data collection in this research study focuses strategically on the following main constructs: Dubai leadership (as represented by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the UAE Vice President, Prime Minister, and Ruler of Dubai), Dubai government entities, semi-governmental organizations, and commercial businesses that are owned and operated by Dubai. The Dubai owned organizations and businesses work together to present an overall perception of the

Dubai city brand.

Data collection will include 30-minute duration interviews with 24 participants who are key figures running significant Dubai organizations. The interviews are audio recorded with written consent from participants. It is realistically expected that saturation could be reached after conducting the first ten interviews, however, it is planned that all of the organizations listed will be interviewed until saturation is achieved. The nominated interviewees will be key leadership figures in the organization, with positions that include chairman, CEO, member of the board, director, and senior management position individuals. In addition, secondary data collection will cover all publicly available documents and material including, and not limited to, annual reports, strategy presentations, corporate manuals, websites, social media channels, journal articles, and business reports. The data gathered will be fully analyzed and interpreted to provide relevant answers to this research main questions.

## **Stages of Data Analysis**

This thesis is following the grounded theory practice and process presented by Charmaz (2014), and the various steps involved in the execution of the study are perceived, designed, and implemented in line with Charmaz's representation of the process of conducting grounded theory research. That is, the data analysis will be comprising the following stages: presenting the research questions, recruitment of participants, data sampling, initial coding, focused coding and categorizing, and theory building. Figure 10 above represents the research analysis steps applied in this study.

## **Research Questions**

The problem that is addressed in this study is twofold: first, there are insufficient business engagement theories and frameworks to explain the engagement phenomena in terms of how it is made by businesses or organizations. While there is an abundance of literature on customer engagement, there is a scarcity when it comes to having theoretical frameworks that can present a straightforward, clear, applicable, and relatively generalizable understanding of how organizations can *make* engagement. Second, city branding, while recognized in the literature as a growing field, it still lacks a holistic conceptual rationale and model that can be applied for urban development by city policy makers and inform standard organizational theories and recommendations for good practice in the context of business management.

Therefore, the main aim of the study is to identify and understand the constitutive elements of business engagement and how they perform in the context of city branding, and also seek clarification for the role leadership and innovation diffusion play in the proposed business engagement model. Accordingly, the research questions that arise from this are the following: RQ1. What defines business engagement? RQ2. What are the main elements of business engagement? RQ3. What is the role leadership plays in business engagement? RQ4. What are the diffusion elements that are deployed within business engagement? And RQ5. Can business engagement create strong city brands with a sustainable competitive edge?

## **Recruitment and Sampling of Participants**

### **Overview**

The number of interviews needed to reach saturation in a grounded theory study, is a contested issue (Saldana 2010, Charmaz 2014). While there is no clear-cut quantification of the appropriate number of interviews to be considered satisfactory to validate the findings of a study in the qualitative sense, some literature (e.g. Straus & Corbin 1998) indicates that ten interviews can be used to conduct grounded theory research (Saldana 2010). However, the best approach is to keep collecting data until saturation is achieved.

However, a better way of looking at saturation in a grounded theory study is not in

terms of population representation or statistical generalizability, but rather in terms of theoretical depth and insight, where there is a complete and full exhaustion of core categories and their meanings in relation to the life world and experience that it tries to explicate. In Charmaz's words, saturation happens 'when gathering fresh data no longer sparks new theoretical insights, nor reveals new properties of those core theoretical categories.' (Charmaz 2014, p. 213).

Table 4 outlines the organizations interviewed and included in this study. Theoretical saturation was indeed arrived at after the full coded analysis of 12 interviews. Nonetheless, the researcher opted to continue with the data collection and included 24 organizations, conducting 24 interviews with one participant from each organization, although not for the sake of saturation or population representativeness. Instead, the reason for including all the 24 organizations in the study is due to the fact that they provide a comprehensive empirical account of the Dubai brand situation as has been explained in Chapter 2, in that there is a representation of Dubai leadership, Dubai Government, Dubai Semi-government, and commercial businesses. More importantly, when the research topic embarks upon the exploration and development of complex conceptual construct analysis, it is advisable to increase the number of interviews which 'contributes to the professional credibility of the work' (Charmaz 2014, p: 108). Furthermore, increasing the amount of data gathered helps with creating and then refining the categories that will emerge from the later stages of data analysis, making the categories to be 'more abstract, hold greater theoretical reach, and demonstrate more theoretical connections' with each other (Charmaz 2014, p. 205).

The sample of organizations include standard government entities such as Dubai Police, Dubai Municipality, Dubai Chamber, and semi-governmental businesses such as Dubai Wholesale City, Dubai World Trade Centre, Dubai International Financial Centre, and commercial businesses that are owned by the government of Dubai such as Emirates Airline, Dubai Ports World, and Emirates NBD Bank.

**Table 4. Participant Organizations in the Study: Governmental, Semi-Governmental, and Commercial**

Dubai Government Entities		
Sl. No	Entity Name	Designation
1.	<b>The Executive Council of Dubai</b>	Senior Consultant
2.	<b>Department of Finance</b>	Executive Director – Budget & Financial Planning
3.	<b>Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing</b>	Senior Vice President
4.	<b>Dubai Corporation for Ambulance Services</b>	Director – Medical and Technical Affairs Department
5.	<b>Dubai Statistical Centre</b>	Manager, Economic Sector Statistics
6.	<b>Dubai Municipality</b>	Director – Health and Safety
7.	<b>Roads and Transport Authority</b>	Director

8.	<b>Dubai Customs</b>	Director Communications
9.	<b>Department of Economic Development</b>	Director
10.	<b>Dubai Maritime City Authority</b>	Executive Director - Operations
11.	<b>Knowledge and Human Development Authority</b>	Chief of Regulations and Compliance Commission
12.	<b>Dubai Police</b>	Deputy Commander-in-Chief
13.	<b>Dubai Media Incorporated</b>	Marketing and Corporate Communications Department Director
<b>Semi-Governmental Organizations</b>		
14.	<b>Dubai Chamber</b>	Chairman
15.	<b>Emirates Maritime Arbitration Centre</b>	Vice Chairman and Secretary General
16.	<b>Dubai International Financial Centre</b>	CEO
17.	<b>Dubai Multi Commodities Centre</b>	Director
18.	<b>Dubai World Trade Centre</b>	Senior Vice President
19.	<b>Dubai Wholesale City - TECOM</b>	CEO
<b>Commercial businesses that are owned and operated by Dubai</b>		
20.	<b>DP World</b>	Senior Vice President & Managing Director, UAE Region

21.	<b>Dubai Drydocks World</b>	Director - Commercial
22.	<b>Meraas</b>	Director – Procurement and Projects Contracts
23.	<b>Emirates Airlines</b>	Senior VP - Marketing
24.	<b>Emirates NBD</b>	Vice President

### **Participating organizations overview**

The following account represents a description of each one of the organizations included in this work. This represents what they do and their area of specialty within the overall Dubai city product offering. Some of these organization perform a functional role – such as that of Dubai Police, and others undertake a commercial role such as that of Emirates Airline. However, all of them share the responsibility of representing the values of the Dubai brand in their respective sectors of work. The way that each one of them delivers their services is a direct reflection on the overall image of the city of Dubai.

### **The Executive Council of Dubai**

The Executive Council of Dubai was formed by Law No. 3 for 2003 issued by the late Sheikh Maktoum Bin Rashid Al Maktoum to assist the Ruler in discharging his tasks

and exercising his powers. It is currently chaired by His Highness Sheikh Hamdan Bin Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai, and consists of a number of heads of government entities. The council aims to create and update a comprehensive strategic plan for Dubai, working out the annual budget of the Government of Dubai, maintaining the city's security and order, providing public utilities and achieving economic and social progress in the city. It also drafts and oversees the implementation of the general policy of Dubai, takes the necessary measures for the enforcement of local and federal laws, approve draft laws and decrees before submission to the Ruler and establish government entities in the emirate and monitor the progress of work in them. In addition, the council also reviews and studies legislation and tracks the performance of government entities through Key Performance Indicators and monitors the progress made by the committees in implementing the strategies related to growth sectors in Dubai.

### **Emirates Airlines**

Emirates Airlines is an airline operating as a subsidiary of The Emirates Group, which is wholly owned by the government of Dubai's Investment Corporation of Dubai. To-date, the company is known as the largest airline in the world and operates over 3,600 flights per week from its hub at Dubai International Airport. Emirates' financial success has been attributed in part to the rapid growth in demand for air travel in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia; the airline's investment in state-of-the-art aircraft, and the availability of airport capacity that can be used 24 hours a day. Emirates Airline is one of the best airlines in the world.

## **Roads and Transport Authority**

The Roads and Transport Authority (RTA) is the major independent government roads & transportation authority in Dubai. The RTA is responsible for planning and executing transport and traffic projects in Dubai, preparing legislation and strategic plans, developing other integrated solutions of road system and marine network that are safe and in line with the city's plans for economic development and of the highest international standards. The authority's mission is aimed towards the development and management of integrated and sustainable roads and transportation systems at a world-class level; provide pioneered services to all stakeholders for their happiness; support Dubai's vision through shaping the future; prepare policies and legislation; adopt technologies and innovations and implementing world-class practices and standards.

## **The Department of Economic Development**

The Department of Economic Development was established with a mission to contribute to economic planning and business sector regulation by recommending policies and preparing development programmes and projects by developing the best resources possible. The DED is backed with a vision to help achieve the emirate's economic development goals of competitiveness and sustainability. DED has set three goals: to contribute to help achieve the emirate's vision, prepare a competitive business environment and to provide the best human, financial and technical resources supportive of creativity and excellence

## **Meraas**

Meraas is a Dubai based holding company committed towards creating a better city for people to live, work, and visit. The company designs for a diverse mix of people to stimulate a creative urban culture where the next generation of ideas, businesses, and communities can take root. Meraas's vision is to encourage people to live an active urban lifestyle by designing, developing, and operating diverse places that enable people to enjoy more of the things they love. By focusing on what matters most to people, Meraas states that we're reimagining our city to develop new possibilities that will shape urban life for generations to come.

## **The Department of Finance**

The Department of Finance is tasked with improving fiscal discipline through the planning and controlling of government revenues and expenditures. It is also responsible for the preparation of the full set of Dubai Government's consolidated financial reports based on the world's best practices while also increasing fiscal transparency. The department's vision is based on the sound management of public finance with the aim of ensuring equilibrium among the emirate's many economic and strategic objectives while supporting its economic route in order to maintain its lead in all fields and allocate resources. The Department of Finance has laid out a four-pronged set of strategic goals, which include stakeholder happiness; enhancing financial stability and stimulate economic growth; ensure continued financial efficiency in the public sector and to enhance corporate capabilities in support of excellence and innovation.

## **Emirates NBD**

Emirates NBD is a leading banking group that was formed in October 2007. The company's vision is to be globally recognized as the most valued financial services provider based in the Middle East. It has a significant retail banking franchise in the UAE and is a key participant in the global digital banking industry, with over 90 per cent of all financial transactions and requests conducted outside of its branches. The bank currently has 221 branches and 1023 ATMs and SDMs in the UAE and overseas and a large social media following.

## **Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing**

The Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DTCM) the principal authority for the planning, supervision and development of the tourism sector in the emirate implements an integrated program of international promotions and publicity activities. With its headquarters based in Dubai, the DTCM also has offices in New York, London, Paris, Frankfurt, Stockholm, Milan, Moscow, Sydney, Johannesburg, Mumbai, Beijing, Hong Kong, Tokyo, Jeddah, Riyadh and Berne. The DTCM's mission is aimed towards 'positioning Dubai as the leading tourism destination and commercial hub in the world and strengthen the Dubai economy by attracting tourists and inward investment into the emirate.' The department has three key objectives, which includes the move to maintain market share across all existing source markets; increase market share in markets with growth potential and to increase the number of repeat visits to Dubai.

## **DP World**

DP World operates multiple related businesses – from marine and inland terminals, maritime services, logistics and ancillary services to technology-driven trade solutions. To-date, DP World has a portfolio of 77 operating marine and inland terminals supported by over 50 related businesses in 40 countries across six continents with a significant presence in both high-growth and mature markets. Its vision is 'to lead the future of world trade' and currently operates with a dedicated team of over 36,500 employees from 103 countries cultivating long-standing relationships with governments, shipping lines, importers and exporters, communities, and many other important constituents of the global supply chain, to add value and provide quality services today and tomorrow. By thinking ahead, foreseeing change and innovating DP World aims to create the most productive, efficient and safe trade solutions globally.

## **Dubai Chamber**

The Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry is a public non-profit organization established to support the business community in Dubai and promote the emirate as an international business hub. Currently, Dubai Chamber has around 108,000 members and has formed 19 business groups representing various sectors and has initiated the Dubai Business Women Council. The Chamber's mission is to represent, support and protect the interests of the business community in Dubai through the creation of a favourable environment; promoting Dubai as an international business hub and by supporting the development of business. The Dubai Chamber has four

strategic goals: creation of a favourable business environment in Dubai, promote the emirate as an international business hub, support the development of business and achieve institutional excellence and efficient management of resources.

### **Dubai Customs**

Dubai Customs is responsible for facilitating free trade in Dubai and helps to secure the integrity of Dubai's borders against attempted smuggling. It is known as the gateway to Dubai's prosperity; adopting a clear vision to be the leading customs administration in the world supporting legitimate trade. Dubai Customs has a mission to protect society and sustain economic development through compliance and facilitation. Dubai Customs is committed to developing its customer service and complaints handling systems, following the directives of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, UAE Vice-President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, to go beyond satisfying customers to making them happy, and in line with the Happiness Indicator initiative to measure the public's happiness and satisfaction of government services.

### **Dubai Drydocks World**

Dubai Drydocks World is the largest facility in the Middle East and is the flagship company of Dubai World subsidiary Drydocks World; firmly positioned as a leading and fast growing international player in Offshore and Engineering, Ship Repair and Maintenance, Shipbuilding and Conversion, Rig building and re-furbishment,

FPSO/FSO conversion, offshore fabrication, Maritime Clusters and Yacht and Fleet operations with facilities in the Middle East and Southeast Asia through DDW-PaxOcean Asia Pte.Ltd. Drydocks World is powered by its mission to grow and sustain its business as a world leading Marine, Offshore and Industrial service provider by enhancing knowledge and innovation that add value to the stakeholders. To-date, the shipyard has repaired over 7500 vessels so far and since 2003, has maintained a British Safety Council 5-Star Award for its safety management system and is also the proud recipient of the coveted British Safety Council Sword of Honour for 2012.

### **Dubai International Financial Centre**

The Dubai International Financial Centre is a 110-hectare district and major global financial hub for the Middle East, Africa and South Asia (MEASA) markets. Known as one of Dubai's independent free-zones, the DIFC is governed by a common-law framework distinct from the UAE legal system with laws and regulations issued in English. It is bounded by a vision to contribute to Dubai's reputation as a global business hub by maintaining international standards, developing international relations, business and employment creation, and economic development.

### **Dubai Police**

Dubai Police states that it is the most forward thinking and progressive Arab police force today, employing more than 17,000 officers of the highest educational standards of any policing organization. Dubai Police has received both local and international recognition including the 'Dubai Award for Government Performance' and the ISO

2000:9001 for applying quality management systems in all police fields. To-date, there are currently eleven Dubai police stations in the city. The police force closely cooperates with Civil Defence and Ambulance personnel. Dubai Police was the first Arab police force to apply DNA testing in criminal investigations, the first to use electronic finger printing, and the first Arab department to apply electronic services. It was also the first to use GPS systems to locate Police Patrols via satellite, aiding operations. Dubai Police's Strategy is to play a major role in society, establishing a "Human Rights Department" within its administrative structure.

### **Dubai Municipality**

Dubai Municipality provides essential municipal-based services to the emirate's diverse population--including urban planning and supervision of construction, environmental protection and improvement, conservation of public parks, regulating and ensuring international quality standards in construction and building materials, food & consumable items, professional services in laboratory certification and accreditation. Dubai Municipality's vision is to create an excellent city that provides the essence of success and comfort of living. Its strategy is based on a five pillars: creative and pioneering municipality, constructive partnerships and effective communication, city growth, city excellence and city environmental sustainability.

### **Dubai Media Incorporated**

Dubai Media Incorporated (DMI) is the official media organization of the government of Dubai. It is a government owned and controlled company composed of a number of

print, radio and TV channels under its umbrella including: Dubai TV, Al Bayan, Sama Dubai TV, Dubai One, Dubai Sports, Dubai Racing, Dubai Zaman, Dubai Drama, Noor Dubai Radio & Noor Dubai TV, Dubai FM, Emarat Al Youm, Emirates 24/7, Tawseel and Masar Printing Press. DMI represents one of the biggest media organizations in the United Arab Emirates and plans to expand on the regional front. The organization's main mission is building its image base more efficiently and effectively in Arab countries.

### **Knowledge and Human Development Authority**

The Knowledge and Human Development Authority is the educational quality assurance and regulatory authority of the UAE. The KHDA oversees the private education sector in Dubai, including early childhood education centres, schools, higher education providers, and training institutes. Moreover, it aims to develop all knowledge and human resource sectors in the Emirate of Dubai and bring them up to international standards and prevailing best practices. It also aims to tailor the educational system to accommodate the requirements of the job market.

### **Dubai Multi Commodities Center**

The Dubai Multi Commodities Center was established to provide the physical, market and financial infrastructure required to establish Dubai as a hub for trade in global commodities. DMCC Free Zone is the UAE's largest and fastest growing free zone in the UAE, with over 11,700 registered members. Today, DMCC is the dedicated

global centre for more than 13,000 businesses from a wide range of industries and sectors, as diverse as energy and financial services to diamonds, gold and base metals. The development is grouped into clusters each comprising three tower blocks around three large lakes and a park. There are 66 fully operational towers and the 200-hectare mixed-use Free Zone comprises both freehold and leasing options.

### **Dubai Maritime City Authority**

The Dubai Maritime Authority (DMCA) is the government authority charged with regulating, coordinating and supervising all aspects of Dubai's maritime sector. DMCA aims to build effective and strategic partnerships with relevant government agencies, private businesses and stakeholders in line with its vision to create a safe and vibrant maritime sector and therefore drive economic sustainability and growth in the emirate. The authority has placed key priority in its values, which include leadership, enthusiastic customers, innovation, collaboration, human capital excellence, respect & integrity and the environment. DMCA provides a platform of excellence and quality as it develops world-class regulations and guidelines to raise the standards of the maritime industry and boost its infrastructure, operations and logistics services while offering investment opportunities to boost Dubai's competitiveness at the regional and international levels.

### **Dubai World Trade Centre**

The Dubai World Trade Centre is a purpose-built complex for events and exhibitions. Operating with the mission to deliver 'Destination Dubai' for the region, the Dubai

World Trade Centre provides a world-class business networking platform with integrated end-to-end services. Connecting people, products and ideas from around the globe through the year-round calendar of international trade fairs, blockbuster consumer shows and prestigious international conferences. The centre contributes to the country's MICE sector through size, resources, diversity of calendar and scale of events. Today, the Dubai World Trade Centre offers a scope of activities that are far broader than before, extending from huge in-house competencies to supplementary services.

### **Dubai Statistical Centre**

The Dubai Statistical Centre is the official source responsible for providing statistical data in the Emirate of Dubai--taking charge of key statistical activities, carrying out the general census of population, count of housing and establishments, conducting economic and social statistical surveys and publishing statistical books and bulletins for the Emirate of Dubai. The centre is guided by the vision of 'statistics that support creating happiness and sustainable development.' Since its establishment in 2006, Dubai Statistics Center is backed by a mission to provide smart and innovative statistical services with the highest levels of accuracy, reliability and transparency, which make a major contribution to the sustainable development of the emirate of Dubai and support its aim to increase the happiness of the community and future generations.

## **Dubai Wholesale City – TECOM**

Dubai Wholesale City, is a member of the TECOM Group, and is a global fully integrated wholesale trading hub. The state-of-the-art master development will serve as a key contributor to the UAE's strategy of economic expansion and a channel for global trade through its cutting-edge infrastructure and innovative solutions; supporting business growth by connecting traders and buyers. The development aims to serve as a global primary one-stop shop for traders, catering to all wholesale needs.

## **Dubai Corporation for Ambulance Services**

The Dubai Corporation for Ambulance Services was created under Law No. 15 of 2010 issued by HH Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, with the mission to provide and regulate emergency medical services professionally and sustainably within a simulated environment for creativity, supported with qualified human resources and effective partnerships for distinguished ambulance services. The corporation, which is primarily tasked with providing patient transporting services, helps in the development and application of necessary policies towards providing ambulance services in emergency cases and operating a control centre for ambulance services in the emirate.

## **Emirates Maritime Arbitration Centre**

The Emirates Maritime Arbitration Centre (EMAC) is a first-of-its-kind initiative created by His Highness Sheikh Hamdan Bin Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum,

Crown Prince of Dubai. The centre aims to provide maritime arbitration services that conform to set international maritime standards and best practices. EMAC is ably guided and supported by the Dubai Maritime City Authority (DMCA) and operates under the vision of the Dubai Maritime Sector Strategy (DMSS); reinforcing the emirate's efforts to position itself as a premier world class maritime hub. The centre's role is to provide key administrative supervision of the processes of mediation and arbitration in accordance with regulations issued by the centre. EMAC is financially and administratively independent to ensure full transparency and impartiality.

### **Collection of Data**

The 24 Dubai organizations were interviewed, using a focused, semi-structured interviewing technique which applies open questions with a focus on business engagement. This form of interviewing is suitable for grounded theory analysis, in that the interviews can be focused to invite detailed discussions of the topic of study (Charmaz 2014). The Appendix contains a list of the interview questions used. The questions are available in English and Arabic, as some interviewees (UAE nationals) preferred to conduct the interview in Arabic. The interviews were audio recorded in sessions that ranged in duration of 25 to 35 minutes, and the audio recordings are safely stored electronically and in print form. All interviewees were given a clear explanation about the study, its purpose, aims and objectives. They were all requested to sign a consent form allowing the researcher to use the information recorded for the purpose of data analysis in the doctoral thesis research. Please see in the Appendix a copy of the consent form in English and Arabic. The study interviewees job positions

range from senior manager to director and CEO and Chairman.

### **3. 6. Coding**

Brinkmann & Kvale (2015) define coding as the process of ‘breaking a text down into manageable segments and attaching one or more key words to a text segment in order to permit later retrieval of the segment.’ (Brinkmann & Kvale 2015, p. 363). This definition taken too literally, renders the coding process into a mere linguistic technique with no theoretical significance to the research process. Rather than just being a reductionist strategy, coding is the first step in the development stages of building a theory from data. Coding is a departure from the actual data into the abstraction of that data into theoretical structures. It represents the beginning of the conceptualization, and abstraction process that leads to the development of theoretical understanding and frameworks.

The research practice of grounded theory is focused on the generation of levels of abstraction that emerge organically from the data and are continuously checked and compared against additional data until saturation occurs within the emerging categories (Charmaz 2014). Coding, the first measure in the process of achieving abstraction from data, can be seen as the connection between the data collected and the emergent theoretical understanding that can be developed to understand that data. Hence, it is an essential component of doing research following grounded theory methodology.

According to Charmaz, coding is the process where segments of data are intended by the research to categorize and summarize the data. Most importantly, coding in grounded theory refers to the ‘move beyond the concrete statements in the data, to making analytic sense of stories, statements, and observations.’ (Charmaz 2014, p. 111). Coding, in this sense, assists in the emergence of interpretative meanings and understandings about the studied experience in the research topic. The coded texts serve as the building blocks for the analytical abstraction that follows, and which leads on to the processes of theoretical categorization.

Coding is important in grounded theory because it can lead to the development of theoretical generalizations applicable universally and can provide analytical sense to the subject of research (Charmaz 2014). There are two main types of coding in grounded theory: initial and focused. Both are used in this study.

### **3. 7. Initial Coding**

Initial or (open) coding refers to that stage in grounded theory research where the concrete data are transformed into a realm of theoretical possibilities and insights, by naming each segment, word, or line into a label. During this phase, it is critical to remain open to all theoretical directions and possibilities that are present in the data. The most common method used in this initial phase is that of line-by-line coding which helps in identifying underlying meanings, useful insights, and emergent links among the various data elements to pursue (Charmers 2014). Paragraph coding is also

a permissible option when using this form of coding (Saldana 2010).

Initial coding unveils the various theoretical possibilities that the data have and helps to shape the theoretical foundation for the upcoming analytical stages in the research.

The analysis of the 24 transcribed interview texts resulted in the availability of 1455 initial codes. The English and Arabic texts were manually analyzed using the line-by-line coding method. This decision was taken by the researcher so that full immersion in the data occurs.

The full initial codes analysis is available in the Appendix (section 3). Due to the fact that the entire initial coding account runs for more than 330 pages, below is a representative sample of that coding presented in Figure 11. This sample is from the interviews of three different organizations, which are governmental, semi-governmental, and commercial, and one of them is in Arabic.

## Figure 11. Initial Coding of Interview Transcribed Texts

### 1. From a governmental entity, interview conducted in Arabic

<u>Interview Text:</u>	<u>Initial Coding:</u>
<p>الباحث: لماذا يرايك تتمتع دبي بسمعة عالمية كبيرة يصاحبها توافق الكثير من السياح وشركات الأعمال في وقت واحد؟</p> <p>السيد عازف: علينا أنت اليوم أن تجيء بتحليلات المستشرِّع اليوم، هو التحليلات الرئيسية التي مطلوبة بذلك، يعني هناك أول شيء نظرية موجودة في الدول أو في الإمارت فالإمارات من شرعياتها وأدبيتها وأوضاعها الكل، وللعمليات، أي جزئية تتفاهم أن ما فيها تتفق أو تطابق على كل حال فرقية تصرُّف، فيها المستشرِّعات التي تتفق مع المستثمرين وإن أقول لك يمكن قانون الشراكة مع القطاع الخاص ما يتضمن بذلك كبير على مستوى الدول، فإذا يعني هنا أنه اليوم المستثمر، وأياليه لازم يدرك أنه منهن تشتَّر، يعني فالضرائب التي هي مطلوبة اليوم متقدمة بشكل إيجابية، وبالتالي حتى لا يخاف المستثمر على الضرائب على مستوى الدول المترتبة عليه، حيث تموجة الأنظمة سوء التقنية اليوم وذلك الحكومة الذكية وطبعاً على مستوى كل الدول المترتبة عليه، حيث تموجة كلها تقول التقنية اليوم موجودة عندك applications available، يعني هنا أنا أقول لك أنا المستثمر يوم يدرك أنه منهن تشتَّر، يعني على مستوى كل الدول المترتبة عليه، حيث تموجة كلها ينادي المستثمر يوم يدرك أنه منهن تشتَّر في العمل في هذه الجزرتين، فهو هنا المنظومة أيضاً اليوم عذنا بذن وراتب لمرحلة متقدمة في التعامل مع المستثمرين أو الشركات أو الخدمات المطلوبة على مستوى الحكومة، خلاف ذلك اليوم فيه تتبع من قبل قواعد المستثمرين وتحصلهم بطرق أو يأخذون فيه اليوم ثباتات وبيانات كبيرة وبالتالي العملية تحسن إطار قيادي على أعلى مستوى العمل بالتعامل مع هذه الجهات، خلاف ذلك أيضاً مهم جداً اليوم الآخر، المحمد الذي له دور كبير في موضوع الاستقرار وبالتالي هذه الجزرية أو أوصيكم بشكل كبير أنه اليوم فلا عنوان للوحدة العامة بالنسبة لأنني ينادي في هذه العجلة الاقتصادية على مستوى الاستشارات وطبعاً جميع الشركات والمستثمرين الذين يأتون إلى هنا في الإسراء، فإذا يذهبوا على مستوى الطريق على مستوى الدخان والتلوث، يعني سراء كانت طباعات البنية التحتية أو أيضاً حتى في الصحة في التعليم يعني اليوم مدارس على مستوى كل الجمادات يعني حتى اليوم يوم يذكر على مستوى العالم في التعليم والطباعة كلها اليوم وبخصوصها في الإشارة بنوعه، والسكن مثل اليوم عندك طلاق العدوى العقاري تساهم بشكل كبير في استقرارهم في العملية مكتسبة لإلاسان لما يعني بيديه وقوف ملوكية من قوافل وشروعات وتمام وبنية طرقها وطرق وسكن وآمن، وهذا المحمد يعني هنا خططه الذين وحدوه، رب العافية على هذه النعمة فيه هي الحالية وباقي الأشياء اللي هي تعطي الطبيع اليوم أن يعني تقدر تستقبل أي حد سكن يدخل فيها ويحصل كل الأشياء المطلوبة على مستوى الخدمات.</p>	<p>Q9:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dubai city taking investor's considerations into account</li> <li>- Dubai regulations and systems are clear to all</li> <li>- Dubai enjoys smart systems and applications in gov services</li> <li>- Dubai presents ease-of-use to its services</li> <li>- Dubai leadership meets and welcomes business leaders</li> <li>- Dubai has excellent security, safety, infra-structure, health, education, restaurants, housing</li> <li>- Dubai welcomes diversity and multi-culturalism</li> <li>- Dubai services are available to all</li> </ul>

### 2. From a semi-governmental entity, interview conducted in English

<u>Interview Text:</u>	<u>Initial Coding:</u>
<p>Researcher: so that's from your opinion, its fine ... How does the overall perception of Dubai as a city ok? reflect on your own organization? Does it support your business? On the other hand Does your business support the overall perception of Dubai?</p> <p>Trixi: Definitely both ways, I think.., I think very much the brand.., the brand of Dubai has has.., emerged very strongly globally as a result of the the overarching vision coming from His Highness Sheikh Mohammed and because of that all the.., all the key government stakeholders and even including large family groups have all come together to.., to carry this brand forward so the brand of Dubai is aa.., is aa.., almost spearheaded by His Highness but put together consolidated and crystallized by many different entities, so in that regard for us in businesses, when you do mention the brand of Dubai there is instantaneous goodwill and it represents many different things to.., to a lot of people in terms of the opportunities, in terms of the experience, in terms of the...the...the adventure instincts to it.., as an organization, as an organization we of course, as a quasi-government entity Dubai, Dubai's brand for us and the mission of Dubai takes priority over everything else, so in that regard we do a lot to promote the brand first over the commercial interests of our products</p>	<p>Q2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dubai brand has emerged very strong globally</li> <li>- HHSM overarching vision plays a major role in globalizing Dubai brand</li> <li>- HHSM vision brings government and private organizations in Dubai together</li> <li>- Brand Dubai is spearheaded by HHSM</li> <li>- Brand Dubai is consolidated and crystallized by many different entities</li> <li>- When Dubai name is mentioned, there is instantaneous good will</li> <li>- For many people, Dubai represents opportunity, experience, and adventure</li> <li>- For our organization, the mission of Dubai takes priority</li> <li>- We do a lot to promote Dubai first, over the commercial interests of our products</li> </ul>

### 3. From a commercial entity, interview conducted in English

<u>Interview Text:</u>	<u>Initial Coding:</u>
<p>Researcher: Done, last question, basically how does Dubai do it? How does Dubai achieve global recognition?</p> <p>Janarthanan: I think haa...the.. if I look at it they very well branded themselves, now I can compare them with the corporate yea, in terms of if you see the amount of advertisement, the amount of going to important locations and name by the stadium, by the football team, by make advertisements, tourist attractions and give them friendly visa environment yea, so I think here Dubai is acted as a corporate to brand themselves very well in the target segments or the capture segments so that is where that Dubai is been recognized quickly [Researcher: But who's behind this effort?] Janarthanan: Of course the leader Sheikh Mohammed [Researcher: Explain how?]</p> <p>Janarthanan: See any company anyone performs it doesn't come from the bottom to top, it comes from the top to bottom, so I just mentioned about our company we said that we have to be safety oriented, safety is the highest priority, unless my CEO or Chairman says it the message doesn't drive down because if I say that you are no.3 or no.4, sah ok it is important, it's not so important but my CEO consistently says that this is important it goes across everyone, unless otherwise the leadership wants to see the country develop this way none of the other guys who are around him or below him or much below him will react to his requirements so obviously the drive is from him otherwise Dubai will not be what it is today.</p> <p>Researcher: I like that and I will quote this anything else you would like to add about Dubai, your perception about Dubai? Anything.</p> <p>Janarthanan: See Dubai in fact when I came into the country I said that ok I'm gonna stay here for a couple of years, I'm gonna be a 20 years and aha.. this is been an amazing journey.</p> <p>[Researcher: So from 2years to 20years] Janarthanan: 20years and Fortunately I have seen how the country can develop or progress which sometimes you think that it is just a imagination or it's a dream but here I've seen dream coming true, when the projects were announced even when the airport was becoming built, initially when it was announced I was a bit skeptical.. do we have that kind of a demand and all those things kind of that, after few years and few developments what is been going on all these skeptical things is taken away and say that oh if you want to do it, you can do anything. That is one thing which I have learnt it from Dubai.</p> <p>[Researcher: And do you believe yourself as belonging to Dubai?] Janarthanan: Yes definitely because when we say sometimes.. I.. we say our country also sometimes then we realize of course this country.. I'm not coming from UAE but we always have that belonging ok Dubai because I've been here it has given me a professional life, it has given me aha.. a good life I would say that my kids got.. were born and educated here, so I know Dubai more than my own country and I have more sense of belonging here and thankful to the country as well.</p>	<p>Q12:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dubai markets itself very efficiently</li> <li>- Dubai has a friendly visa policy</li> <li>- Dubai has many attractions</li> <li>- HHSM plays a major role in branding Dubai and promoting the city</li> <li>- Dubai is managing its city promotion in the way a business does</li> <li>- HHSM drive is what makes Dubai what it is today</li> <li>- When I came to Dubai, the plan was to stay for 2 years. I stayed for 20!</li> <li>- Dubai has an aggressive ambitious spirit: you can do anything in Dubai.</li> <li>- I know Dubai more than my home town</li> <li>- I belong to Dubai and see it as my home</li> <li>- I have a great sense of belonging to Dubai, and I am grateful to all what the city offered me and my family</li> </ul>

As can be noticed from the initial codes above, they are simple, as short as possible, and were created spontaneously, as it is important to let the codes emerge organically from out of the data (Charmaz 2014), and they should not be forced by any preconceived ideas from the researcher. The role of the researcher here (and in constructivist grounded theory) is simply to construct the codes by allowing the data to reveal them. To reiterate, for the entire set of 24 interviews, 1455 initial codes were developed.

What is important to note about the initial codes so far as the process of analysis is concerned, is the fact that they all represent a common understanding of what the priorities are for the city of Dubai, and how each party goes about doing their part in support of the whole, which is Dubai. Most importantly, it is reasonable at this stage to say, and based purely on the initial coding data analysis, that all interviewees share the same mind-set or way of thinking regarding their life world and living reality,

which is Dubai. These ideas were further crystalized and refined to achieve greater conceptual clarity and identification in the next stages of coding.

Many of the initial codes developed in the analysis pertain to the main research aim of this thesis, while others cover issues that are not related to the subject matter and therefore were dropped in the second cycle of analysis, which is called focused coding.

### **3. 8. Focused Coding and Categorizing**

Focused coding is the stage where data becomes more abstract, and the theoretical skeleton of the analysis starts to take shape. Moreover, the theoretical directions of data analysis become clear with the aggregation of the emergent focused codes into categories. Also referred to as theoretical or selective coding (Saldana 2010), focused coding is the phase of data analysis in which the researcher is choosing a selected set of ‘initial codes that have more theoretical reach, direction, and centrality, and treating them as the core’ of the emergent analysis (Charmaz 2014, p. 141). This means that informed choices must be made to select the codes that will form the base for the development of categories which in turn will form the nuclei for the emergent theoretical constructs. For the development of sound grounded theory analysis, the choice made to select focused codes must not be based on the mere need to fill up categories with no real theoretical depth or substance (Silverman 2014), but rather is to be made in relation to the research questions posed by the study, that is why the

data analysis begin with the research questions. Most significantly, the selection of focused codes also needs to be informed by the need to provide theoretical understanding and abstractions that explain the social reality of the interviewees (Charmaz 2014). That is, this refers to how the selected focused codes need to be relevant to the subject matter and research question being investigated so they can add depth and meaning to the emerging analytical concepts

Accordingly, focused coding can be described as that stage in the analysis, wherein the initial codes are used as a launching pad for the processes of conceptualization that account for the studied phenomenon. In other words, with focused coding, the emergent grounded theory starts to take shape and begins to develop, especially with the arrival of the emergent categories. ‘Categories develop through focused coding.’ (Charmaz 2014, p. 150).

The initial coding analysis that resulted in 1455 initial codes was reduced to 413 focused codes. After careful review and scrutiny, the selected focused codes are presented in the Appendix (section 4). The codes are selected based on their theoretical significance and potential in the development of sound theoretical categories that can conceptually represent the data, in addition to their repetitiveness of course. An important point about the selection of focused codes must be made here: the repetitiveness of a certain initial code does not mean its automatic inclusion at the level of focused codes. What matters in the context of grounded theory is that the codes selected in the focused stage of the analysis express something significant about the data. Charmaz (2014, p. 145) recommends: ‘if the code is telling, use it.’

After reviewing and scrutinizing the 1455 of initial codes in relation to the research main questions and considering the real-life experience of the Dubai city brand and organizations interviewed, 413 codes were selected as focused codes which led to the emergence of the core categories. A category in grounded theory research is an analytical concept that is the aggregate of common themes and patterns that are taking shape in the codes being analyzed (Charmaz 2014). Most categories that emerge in the analysis are transformed into the main concepts of the emergent theory. The way each of these categories work, how they relate to each other, and where they stand in relation to organizational theory literature, will all be addressed in detail in chapters 4 and 5 of this thesis.

As is the case with addressing the data analysis in initial coding above, and for the sake brevity, accessibility, and ease of understanding, because the entire focused coding account runs for more than 122 pages, a representative sample of that coding is presented in the following chapter. This sample is from the analysis of interviews of three different organizations which are governmental, semi-governmental, and commercial, and one of them is in Arabic. The following figure presents a sample of the focused coding process.

**Figure 12. Focused Coding of Interview Transcribed Texts**

1. From a governmental entity, interview conducted in Arabic

Initial Coding	Focused Coding	Theoretical category
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Leadership driving the creation and implementation of Dubai city vision</li> <li>- Leadership driving growth and development</li> <li>- HHSM follows up projects directly</li> <li>- HHSM is present in all projects directly</li> <li>- HHSM directly oversees Dubai projects from start during, and to the end</li> <li>- HHSM directions are critical to Dubai city projects</li> <li>- HHSM is present in all implementation locations in all Dubai projects</li> <li>- HHSM encouraging competitiveness</li> <li>- HHSM encouraging competitiveness between public and private sectors</li> <li>- HHSM visionary leadership is accompanied by visionary fellowship</li> <li>- ED, CEO, Managers and all staff are clearly aware of HHSM's vision</li> <li>- HHSM creating a comprehensive management system for Dubai to compete (Dubai number 1)</li> <li>- HHSM rewards achievement in Dubai</li> <li>- HHSM is a motivational leader with positive energy</li> <li>- Dubai city is a result of the effort of an organizational culture based on an integrated team (national agenda)</li> <li>- HHSM motivates collective action in Dubai</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Leadership driving the creation and implementation of Dubai city vision</li> <li>- HHSM follows up on projects directly</li> <li>- Directly oversees Dubai projects from start to end</li> <li>- ED, CEO, Managers and all staff are clearly aware of HHSM's vision</li> <li>- HHSM rewards achievements in Dubai</li> <li>- Dubai city is a result of the effort of an organizational culture based on an integrated team</li> <li>- HHSM motivates collective action in Dubai</li> </ul>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="flex: 1;"> <p>Leadership</p> </div> <div style="flex: 1;"> <p>Execution follow-ups</p> </div> <div style="flex: 1;"> <p>Vision</p> </div> <div style="flex: 1;"> <p>Recognize and reward</p> </div> <div style="flex: 1;"> <p>Collective culture</p> </div> </div>

2. From a semi-governmental entity, interview conducted in English

Initial Coding	Focused Coding	Theoretical category
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Of course, Dubai city is a commercial brand</li> <li>- Dubai brand is an identity that stands for something in the eyes of the world</li> <li>- Dubai is recognized as the brand of the future</li> <li>- Dubai is a city that contains what everybody wants</li> <li>- Dubai real brand building started with the Burj Al Arab hotel</li> <li>- Dubai philosophy is to get to the number one</li> <li>- In people's mind, Dubai represents the quest for number one</li> <li>- Dubai city is definitely a brand</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- HHSM is brand Dubai himself</li> <li>- Dubai leadership is the brand</li> <li>- Dubai people live the leadership vision and ambitions</li> <li>- HHSM wants Dubai to be number one</li> <li>- HHSM is driving everyone in Dubai to become number one</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dubai is recognized as the brand of the future</li> <li>- Dubai is a city that contains what everybody wants</li> <li>- Dubai philosophy is to get to the number one</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- HHSM is driving everyone in Dubai to become number one</li> <li>- Dubai people live the leadership vision and ambitions</li> </ul>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="flex: 1;"> <p>Consistent competitive ability</p> </div> <div style="flex: 1;"> <p>Collective culture</p> </div> <div style="flex: 1;"> <p>Vision</p> </div> <div style="flex: 1;"> <p>Leadership</p> </div> <div style="flex: 1;"> <p>Organizational alignment</p> </div> </div>

### 3. From a commercial entity, interview conducted in English

Initial Coding	Focused Coding	Theoretical category
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- HHSM is always involved in all matters of Dubai</li> <li>- HHSM puts everything under proper control</li> <li>- HHSM does not delegate and stays away</li> <li>- HHSM has deep, detailed involvement in the implementation of projects in Dubai</li> <li>- HHSM ensures that everything in Dubai is done properly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- HHSM has deep, detailed involvement in the implementation of projects in Dubai</li> </ul>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Execution follow-ups</div>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- HHSM is a role model</li> <li>- All leaders in Dubai look up for him</li> <li>- My 9 years old kid knows about HHSM, loves him, and loves to meet him</li> <li>- HHSM is loved by everybody</li> <li>- All leaders in our bank follow HHSM vision</li> <li>- HHSM vision is shared with every level in the bank</li> <li>- From the smallest employee, to the most senior, all follow HHSM vision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All leaders in Dubai look up for him</li> </ul>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Leadership</div>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All leaders in our bank follow HHSM vision</li> </ul>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Vision</div>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- From the smallest employee, to the most senior, all follow HHSM vision</li> </ul>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Organizational alignment</div>

It is important to note that the corresponding numbers of focused codes to each category would have been much higher if the repetitive codes were included. For example, in the leadership category, the researcher did not merely group together all the initial codes that relate to leadership and put them under one focused code. In the Emirates NBD analysis above, five initial codes about leadership were presented by one significant focused code. The aim here is to include codes that are of theoretical significance rather than are a representative sample of a statistical population.

In short, the aim is to qualify the data rather than quantify it. That is, the goal is to discover what elements constitute the model of business engagement and explore how

these affect the performance of the city of Dubai, and to some extent any city.

In accordance with the principles of grounded theory, especially the concept of emergence, no literature review or reference is made or conducted in relation to the emerging categories at this stage. What is evident from the data analysis so far is that leadership is the key driver underlying all the performance, outlook, and understanding of all the 24 organizations interviewed. In the context of this study, and in the context of the real lived experience of the study participants, leadership stands for the role of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum (HHSM) as the ruler of the city.

In addition, the emergence of new categories is characteristic of the unique nature of grounded theory as a research method. In the beginning of this research project the focus was merely on how brands diffuse in social systems due to the influence of leadership. This was the basic, initial understanding of how the business engagement model works based on literature review of the existing theoretical constructs. However, the data analysis revealed very interesting new categories that were not even included in the initial research plan.

Furthermore, it is significant to note that the use of initial coding and focused coding techniques is considered sufficient to address the theoretical development needs of this research study. According to Charmaz (2014) initial and focus coding analysis is sufficient to conduct sound grounded theory studies (Charmaz 2014, p. 143).

With the use of theoretical sampling and sorting techniques, the analysis process moves on to a higher conceptual level wherein each category is elaborated and the role and scope of each is presented, and finally how each of them works together is explained in the overall business engagement model. In addition, the analysis of categories will also include reference to the existing literature to see how they relate to organizational theory. Following this interpretation and discussion of the codes and categories in relation to the extant literature, the researcher will use diagramming techniques to present the business engagement model and main findings of this grounded theory research study.

### **3. 9. Theoretical Sampling**

#### **Theoretical sensitivity**

It is critical to clarify a fundamental concept that plays a major part in the development of grounded theory analysis. This concept is theoretical sensitivity. It refers to a researcher's ability to think of the data being analyzed in conceptual and abstract terms. It helps with interpreting the meanings and understandings attached to each category developed, and how those meanings clarify, crystalize, and distinguish the various properties of the categories, and importantly, establish the conceptualized relationships between them.

Theoretical sensitivity assists in the development of analytical abstractions about the

subject matter under analysis. The use of theoretical sensitivity can ‘foster going to the roots of studied life and specifying how it is constituted.’ (Charmaz 2014, p. 161). What this means is that in the analytical processes to follow, the data will be conceptualized and reported in such a way that explains how the lived experience is executed, and what the factors involved in that execution are. In effect, what is being addressed here is that the focused codes are being abstracted through theoretical sensitivity into becoming categories. According to Charmaz (2014): ‘Theoretical sensitivity enables grounded theorists to construct analytic codes leading to abstract concepts that have clear empirical indicators and can be distinguished from other concepts’ (Charmaz 2014, p:161).

### **Theoretical sampling**

The aim of theoretical sampling is to develop an integrated theoretical statement that explains and accounts for the main research questions of the study. Theoretical sampling is about the selection of relevant segments of data and using them in the elaboration and development of categories in the emerging theory (Charmaz 2014). This refers to the collection of pertinent data under each category, exhausting all available data until there is no emergence of any new constructs, and the categories are saturated. This is how theory evolves from data in the grounded methodology. This study has utilized the use of theoretical sampling in outlining the emergent theoretical categories. The main purpose of theoretical sampling, therefore, is to gather data components that illuminate the categories they collectively form.

A representation of the theoretical sampling strategy applied in this research is

presented in Figure 13 below, wherein the categories to the right hand side of the table have been arrived at by the complete exhaustion of all relevant focused codes that relate to the research concept, in this case for example, the emergence of the execution follow-up category. By constantly comparing the data, more focused codes were added – organically in that they are not coerced by the researcher to fit the analysis, i.e., they emerged naturally from the data – to further distinguish and clarify the status of this category. The same logic was applied in all the categories that emerged in this analysis.

**Figure 13. Saturating the execution follow-up category as a theoretical sampling method**

Initial Coding	Focused Coding	Theoretical category
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- HHSM vision is essential in making Dubai reputation</li> <li>- Dubai reputation is achieved by strategic plans and development projects</li> <li>- Dubai is reputable today for trade and all relevant sectors</li> <li>- Dubai has efficient logistics sector</li> <li>- Dubai economic sectors connectivity is good for the brand</li> <li>- Dubai presents ease of doing business and connectivity</li> <li>- HHSM direct involvement in the strategic planning for Dubai</li> <li>- HHSM following-up on all implementation plans</li> <li>- HHSM directly following up with all governmental departments</li> <li>- HHSM continuously reviewing KPIs and accomplishments levels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- HHSM vision is essential in making Dubai reputation</li> <li>- HHSM following-up on all implementation plans</li> <li>- HHSM directly following up with all governmental departments</li> <li>- HHSM continuously reviewing KPIs and accomplishments levels</li> </ul>	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="flex-grow: 1; margin-right: 10px;"></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; border-radius: 10px; background-color: #f0f0f0;"> <span style="font-weight: bold;">Leadership</span> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="flex-grow: 1; margin-right: 10px;"></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; border-radius: 10px; background-color: #f0f0f0;"> <span style="font-weight: bold;">Execution follow-up</span> </div> </div>

The category that is coined as ‘execution follow-up’ enjoys a great deal of theoretical significance in this research. As Charmaz points out, categories ‘define pivotal qualities of the studied experience.’ (Charmaz 2014, p. 198). In this case, as will be

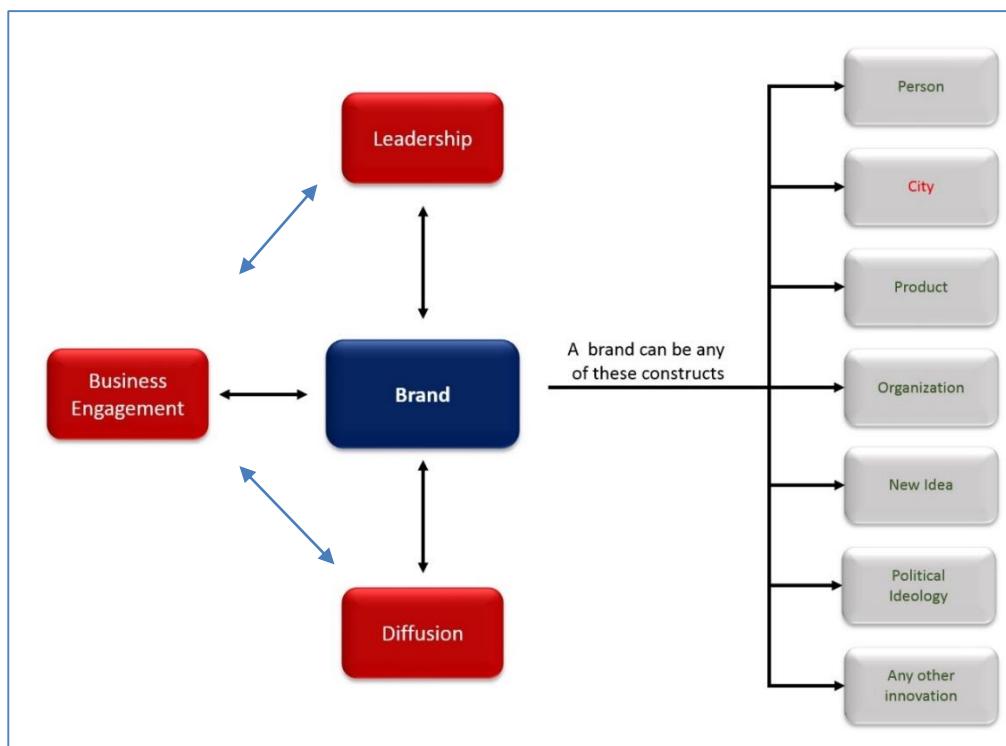
elaborated upon in Chapter 4, the category signifies an important constituting element in Dubai's business engagement model. It relates to the importance of continuous monitoring Dubai leadership applies to achieve successful results in the overall management of the city. Hence, the use of theoretical sampling strategy which led the researcher to establish a working relationship between the category of leadership and the category of execution follow-up.

Accordingly, theoretical sampling relates to the theoretical argument of the research subject, and not the statistical accuracy of the population. Significantly, theoretical sampling is used in this study to let categories emerge, and to provide the means to create relationships among them that would lead to further abstraction and conceptualization of the data, enabling ultimately, the development of some theoretical frameworks that address the main research questions. Theoretical sampling used in this study provides analytical definition to the emergent categories and contributes to identifying the links that exist between the categories. In summary, theoretical sampling is a strategy that can be followed in conducting research which integrates sample selection, data collection, analysis and interpretation (Charmaz 2014).

Finally, one of the most significant advantages of theoretical sampling, (due to its very own nature of abstraction), is the fact that it can provide the analysis with generalizability that transcends the boundaries of the topic being studied (Charmaz 2014). This important attribute relates to the notion that the theoretical findings emergent from this research should be relevant to as wide a range of research work as

possible. According to Charmaz (2014): ‘Theoretical sampling leads you to sample across substantive areas. Thus, engaging in theoretical sampling can encourage you to raise your theory to a formal, more abstract level that cuts across different substantive areas.’ (Charmaz 2014, p. 213). This will form the intellectual foundation upon which the theoretical frameworks emergent from this work will have a workable, scalable, and adaptable level of universality and generalizability for various fields in addition to that of city branding, which is the topic of this empirical study (please see Figure 1 reproduced again below).

**Figure 1. A Proposed Business Engagement Study Strategy**



Source: Author's own origination.

## **CHAPTER 4. FINDINGS, THEORY BUILDING, AND DIAGRAMMING**

### **4. 1. Overview**

At this stage of the research process the intention is to conceptualize the data and create a theoretical platform that accounts for business engagement in city branding. In this platform the emergent categories will be clearly defined, with their properties identified and articulated, then the emergent model will be identified accordingly. It is important to note that these definitions will not draw directly from the existing literature although some of those categories do have various similarities and associations, such as in the ideas of leadership, vision, and culture. Inclusion of literature will be conducted at a later stage after the completion of the process of integrating the categories, with the aim of interpreting how the emerged model fits and links with the existing body of literature on business engagement and city branding specifically, and organizational theory more generally.

Furthermore, after the full integration and clarification of the categories, the sub-categories, and the identification of the working mechanisms of the business engagement model, an attempt will be made at diagramming the theoretical aspects and incorporating a visual representation that captures the way each category works in the overall model.

## **4. 2. Categories**

The 24 interviews conducted by the researcher were conducted in English and Arabic, as some participants who are UAE nationals preferred to conduct the interview in Arabic. The transcribed texts of all of the interviews were read, scrutinized, and analyzed manually by the researcher to develop the emerging initial and focused codes, as well as the emergent categories. The initial coding phase resulted in 1455 codes. Some of which were irrelevant to the study's purpose, (which is to investigate, explore and understand what constitutes business engagement, and how organizations in general, and city branding specifically, can use it to create strong, successful brands), and therefore they were not included in the further stages of the analysis. A full initial coding analysis is available in the Appendix.

With the start of the focused coding phase, the theoretical sampling strategy was followed to make sure that the selecting of codes relate substantively to the emerging categories. The full focused coding analysis is available in the study's Appendix. The following table represents all the categories and the number of corresponding focused codes for each one of them.

**Table 5: Emergent categories and the number of focused codes for each**

Sl. No	Emergent Theoretical Categories	Focused codes
1.	<b>Leadership</b>	96
2.	<b>Vision</b>	81
3.	<b>Collective culture</b>	77
4.	<b>Innovation</b>	33
5.	<b>Cultural diversity tolerance</b>	31
6.	<b>Consistent competitive ability</b>	32
7.	<b>Organizational alignment</b>	20
8.	<b>People empowerment</b>	19
9.	<b>Execution follow-ups</b>	18
10.	<b>Recognize and reward</b>	6
11.	<b>Zero-Corruption</b>	3

- Leadership

This category emerged by the aggregation of 96 significant focused codes that

bear theoretical significance, centrality and relevance to the research main questions. At this level of the analysis, it is clear that all 24 organizations think highly of the importance of leadership, and all (no exception) seem to attribute the success of the Dubai city brand to the leadership of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum (HHSM).

Here are some representative examples of the focused codes that led to the emergence of the leadership category:

- HHSM creating a national agenda to achieve number one status for Dubai
  - HHSM is driving the city brand of Dubai
  - Dubai leadership is behind the city's success
  - We are all driven by HHSM leadership
  - HHSM has strong fellowship in Dubai
  - HHSM pushes all of us to make Dubai competitive
  - HHSM is leading the development drive in Dubai
  - HHSM is the main pillar behind Dubai
- Vision

One of the emergent categories is the vision, which was not considered in the initial literature review and proposal at the beginning of this research work. The vision category emerged with the combination of 81 focused codes. All the 24 interviewed organizations seem to be fully aware of, and passionate about the

Dubai vision to become the number one city brand in the world. Other categories that emerged seem to be there to support the achievement and fulfillment of this promise. Here are representative examples of the vision category focused codes:

- Everybody is clearly aware of HHSM's vision
  - HHSM's vision leads the Dubai city brand
  - Dubai has a very clear vision
  - HHSM is important for Dubai vision
  - HHSM vision pushes us to present unique services
  - HHSM vision inspires me to follow him
  - Dubai leadership sets a clear vision for the city
  - Dubai brand starts with HHSM's vision
- Collective Culture

One of the emergent categories is the category coined as 'collective culture', which was not considered in the initial literature review and proposal at the beginning of this research work. This category emerged with the combination of 77 focused codes. From the analysis of all of the interviews, it was evident that the 24 organizations (government, semi-, or commercial), and the interviewees (locals, expatriates, women, and men) all shared a tacit value system that governs and shapes the behaviour of many people working, visiting and living in the city of Dubai – professionally on the organizational level, and personally as well on the individual level.

Here are representative examples of the collective culture category focused codes:

- Private public partnership is responsible for managing Dubai city brand
- HHSM motivates collective action in Dubai
- Collective team work makes Dubai unique
- Everybody is responsible for the city brand of Dubai
- Our work together helps realize the leadership vision
- All government departments represent Dubai, no one does that alone
- HHSM work ethic is imprinted in our culture
- We all sing the same song

- Innovation

This category emerged by the aggregation of 33 significant focused codes that bear theoretical significance, centrality and relevance to the research main questions. All 24 organization believe in the importance of being innovative, so they can achieve the vision of Dubai which they are a part and parcel of.

Here are representative examples of the innovation category focused codes:

- HHSM resorted to innovative strategies out of necessity
- To compete, Dubai needs to come up with innovative solutions
- Due to lack of natural resources, Dubai needs to innovate
- To keep Dubai number 1 in the future, we must continue innovating
- Innovation in services is Dubai alternative source of revenue

- Dubai embraces innovation to improve quality of life
  - Thanks to HHSM vision, Dubai is always innovating
  - Dubai is committed to its economic diversification strategy
- Cultural Diversity Tolerance

One of the emergent categories is the category coined as ‘cultural diversity tolerance’, which was not considered in the initial literature review and proposal at the beginning of this research work. This category emerged with the combination of 31 focused codes. All the individuals who participated in the research indicated that Dubai has a very welcoming society which is tolerant of diversity. This attitude does not only relate to the visitors of the city but is imbedded in the very fabric of the Dubai workforce as well. All organizations interviewed employ a multi-national workforce, with some of them boasting to have more than 50 different nationalities working for them.

In addition, many interviewees indicated that Dubai welcomes everyone from all over the world, allows religious freedom to all, and is home to more than 200 different nationalities. Below are some representative examples of the cultural diversity category focused codes:

- Dubai welcomes diversity and multi-culturalism
- Dubai services are available to all

- HHSM created a welcoming culture in Dubai – to everyone
  - Dubai is a city of opportunity to everyone
  - Dubai has a platform that welcomes everyone
  - Dubai is the most beautiful example of public diplomacy
  - Dubai has a tolerant culture
  - Dubai welcomes all cultures from all over the world
- Consistent Competitive Ability

One of the emergent categories is the category coined as ‘Consistent competitive ability’, which was not considered in the initial literature review and proposal at the beginning of this research work. This category emerged through the combination of 32 focused codes. All of the management efforts of Dubai organizations that were interviewed in the study were clearly geared toward gaining the capability to compete by representing the best in terms of quality and service.

Collective analysis of all of the participants in the study showed that all of these organizations are driven to use innovation and be more innovative in what they do so that they can remain competitive not only in the short term, but continuously, and here lies the particular significance of this category. Consistency is a major factor in guaranteeing a lasting perception, when it comes to attracting global equity for a city such as Dubai. It stands for all that Dubai, and any other city, or business aspires to achieve, which is the ability to be competitive continuously

and sustainably for the short and long terms alike.

Below are some representative examples of the consistent competitive ability category focused codes:

- Dubai has global standards
  - Dubai has political stability
  - Everything Dubai offers is unique
  - Dubai is the main destination for business and tourism
  - Dubai is a record-breaking city
  - Dubai has a robust commercial justice system
  - Dubai is safe and has great infrastructure
  - Dubai has many attractions
- Organizational Alignment

One of the emergent categories is the category coined as ‘organizational alignment’, which was not considered in the initial literature review and proposal at the beginning of this research work. This category emerged with the combination of 20 focused codes. What this category illustrates is the concept that all of the 24 organizations align themselves automatically and organically with the master vision of Dubai to become the number one city in the world.

Each organization of course has their own strategic plans, performance management, and key performance indicators on the corporate level, but that is

not what organizational alignment stands for. In the case of these Dubai organizations it stands for the organizational culture and the individual belief system of all levels and employees. The significant element here is that there is a complete level of identification with the vision of Dubai that each employee not only understands the strategic vision of the city but sees their own role as a complimentary action that supports the achievement of that vision. Here are some representative examples of the organizational alignment category focused codes:

- All Dubai entities look at HHSM vision and following it
  - We understand the larger Dubai strategy, align our role, and do it
  - Our strategic plan is derived from the Dubai strategic plan
  - Our organizational culture is 100% aligned with HHSM's vision
  - HHSM ensures that strategies in place are aligned with the vision
  - When we perform in our organization, we are performing for Dubai
  - All organization heads in Dubai are cascading HHSM's vision to their staff
  - Small and senior employees, all follow HHSM's vision
- People Empowerment

Another of the emergent categories is the category called 'people empowerment', which was not considered in the initial literature review and proposal at the beginning of this research work. This category emerged with the combination of

19 focused codes. Without the right people in place, nothing can be accomplished. This idea is shared by participants in the research from all 24 organizations included in the study. The analysis revealed that the Dubai leadership pays special attention to the role of people in delivering what is expected of them. Moreover, the analysis reveals that Dubai is unique in the appointment of people in high-powered top positions in its various organizations. Dubai appoints leaders based on the merit of the individual, and not their connection, gender, race, or cultural background. Moreover, the Dubai leadership pays extra attention to support all management layers within organizations, and not just the people at the top. Below are some representative examples of the people empowerment category focused codes:

- HHSM creates innovative people by investing in human beings
- HHSM invests in young employees preparing them for leadership
- HHSM support the creation of jobs for young Emiratis
- HHSM trusts his people
- Dubai attracts best talent by giving them good life quality
- HHSM is building the manpower of Dubai
- Dubai leadership makes sure there are strong leaders in Dubai organizations
- HHSM empowers everyone to do the vision together

- Execution Follow-up

Another of the emergent categories which was not considered in the initial literature review and proposal at the beginning of this research work is the category termed ‘execution follow-up’. This category emerged with the combination of 18 focused codes. The 24 organizations indicated that for all of the many Dubai projects to succeed, there is a well-organized monitoring and follow-up process conducted by the highest level of leadership in Dubai. According to all individual participants of the study, HHSM follows up directly on all of the mega projects taking place in Dubai, and they all seem to agree that this is one of the reasons that can be attributed to the success of the city and HHSM leadership as well. Here are some representative examples of the innovation category focused codes:

- HHSM follows up on projects directly
- HHSM oversees Dubai projects from start to end
- HHSM visits us on location to oversee implementation
- HHSM following up on all implementation plans
- HHSM directly following up with all government departments
- HHSM continuously reviewing KPIs and accomplishments levels
- HHSM reviews our performance daily
- HHSM has detailed involvement in the implementation of Dubai projects

- Recognize and Reward

Another of the emergent categories not considered in the initial literature review and proposal is the category of ‘recognize and reward’. This category emerged with the combination of 6 focused codes. All of the individuals who participated in this research indicated that one of the main reasons why people excel in Dubai is the fact that the leadership pays special attention to recognize the good work done, and reward that effort. The Government of Dubai has invested substantially in creating a plethora of award programs in Dubai encouraging all organizations and individuals to compete in the delivery of their services and products. Here are representative examples of the recognize and reward category focused codes:

- HHSM rewards achievements in Dubai
  - HHSM recognizes and rewards hard innovative work
- Zero Corruption

Another of the emergent categories not considered in the initial literature review and proposal is the category, ‘zero-corruption’. This category emerged with the combination of only 3 focused codes. What is remarkable about these focused codes is the theoretical significance they enjoy, rather than their mere repetitive presence in the data. An important point about the selection of focused codes must be re-iterated here: the repetitiveness of a certain initial code does not mean its

automatic inclusion at the level of focused codes. What matters in the context of grounded theory is that the codes selected in the focused stage of the analysis express something significant about the data. Charmaz (2014, p:145) recommends: ‘if the code is telling, use it.’ Also, Charmaz (2014) states that ‘if you have the making of a solid analysis with a small number of focused codes, then proceed with the analysis’ (Charmaz 2014, p:143). Dubai has enjoyed a long-lasting reputation as one of the most corruption free cities in the world. This plays a major role in the overall collective culture of the city on one hand and supports the other categories (mentioned above) that work together to form the overall Dubai business engagement model elaborated below. Here are the representative zero-corruption category focused codes:

- Dubai leadership has zero-degree tolerance for corruption
- There is zero-degree corruption in Dubai
- Dubai has zero-degree corruption in its policies

To summarize this stage of the analysis, 24 interviews with government, semi-government, and commercial organizations generated 1455 initial codes, which after further theoretical sampling and analysis led to the emergence of 413 focused codes. The application of theoretical sampling on these focused codes helped with the emergence of eleven theoretical categories which will form the analytical foundation of the concepts upon which the overall theoretical framework of this study will be constructed. This stage of the analysis poses a set of important challenges including such questions as: What is the scope and role of each category? Which category

triggers the action? Is there a hierarchical relationship among the categories? Are there categories that are working together under a larger category? That is, are there sub-categories among those that emerge in the analysis? Which ones? And what are the criteria used in determining that? These challenges are addressed through implementation of what Charmaz calls, theoretical sorting.

#### **4. 3. Theoretical Sorting**

A theory commonly means a set of ideas that try to explain some facts or events. In the grounded theory domain, theories ‘try to answer questions. Theories offer accounts for what happens, how it ensues, and may aim to account for why it happened. Theorizing consists of the actions involved in constructing these accounts.’ (Charmaz 2014, p. 228). Three important issues to address in this definition include: 1. The questions that need answering? 2. The interpretation of the actions and events that form the phenomenon? and 3. How these interpretations are made? In the case of this grounded study, the questions asked are:

1. What defines business engagement?
2. What are the main elements of business engagement?
3. What is the role leadership plays in business engagement?
4. What are the diffusion elements that are deployed within business engagement?

## 5. Can business engagement create strong city brands with a sustainable competitive edge?

The eleven emergent categories (and the way they operate individually and collectively within the business engagement model) will offer the theoretical interpretation provided to answers to the above questions, and finally, an attempt will be made to explain how these answers are developed by abstracting the categories and determining their working relationships. This approach to the analysis and interpretation constitutes theoretical sorting.

Theoretical sorting refers to the grounded theory technique which provides clarity and definition to the theoretical associations and connections that exist among categories. It is the way in which each category is defined, explained, and elaborated in terms of the scope and function it performs within the overall model. In addition, the relationship among the categories will be outlined and identified – using theoretical sampling and constant comparison – to account for the actions of the social reality being studied. What theoretical sorting really does is that it allows the researcher to develop an integrative platform in which the scope, role, function of each category is identified, and the links that exist among them, are clarified as well. According to Charmaz: ‘theoretical sorting gives you a means of creating and refining theoretical links. Through sorting you work on the theoretical integration of your categories.’ (Charmaz 2014, p. 216).

#### **4. 4. Defining the Categories and Their Properties**

##### **Overview**

Two points are important to mention here. First, the definitions and characteristics of each category in what follows are derived from data and not drawn from the existing literature (however, in the Discussion chapter, the emerging concepts will be reviewed in relation to the existing literature). At this stage, the aim is to define each analytical concept or category in relation to the set of meanings it generates in the emerging data. That is, the concept of leadership here is not defined in accordance with the literature, but in terms of how the data define it. In other words, the categories will be defined based on the meanings generated by the actual life world, social realities, and lived experiences of the study participants.

Second, the order in which the categories appear below is indicative of the frequency of occurrence of each category based on the number of codes and their theoretical significance that led to its emergence. This is significant on a theoretical level in that it demonstrates the comparative role of each category in the structure and hierarchy of the business engagement model. That is, the higher the number of the codes, the earlier in the mode is the event of instigation of action. It is important to note that this does not mean that a category with higher number of codes is necessarily more important than one with a lower number of codes, and the aim here is theoretical insight and significance not statistical representation. For example, the zero-

corruption category emerged with three focused codes only, while collective culture category emerged with 77 focused codes. That does not mean that the status of corruption in Dubai is less important or insignificant in comparison to role and contribution of the collective culture. Rather, it means that zero-corruption plays a major role in Dubai's overall culture which makes theoretical sense to include it as a sub-category operating within the larger collective culture.

## **Leadership**

Leadership is a difficult concept to define. In the context of Dubai, leadership means everything. According to all participants of this study, the leadership of Dubai is the main engine driving the city's aggressive and ambitious vision to become the number one city in the world. All participants refer to the leadership of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum (HHSM) the UAE Vice President, Prime Minister, and Ruler of Dubai, as visionary, inspiring, and motivating. All participants also attribute the success of Dubai and its global reputation to the cosmopolitan orientation of HHSM's leadership.

Moreover, participants see HHSM as a selfless leader who loves and is loved by everybody in Dubai, and who inspires everyone to assimilate the values of happiness and positive energy in their professional and personal lives. HHSM's humility and simplicity make him accessible and approachable for everyone in Dubai. According to the data, HHSM's moderate political views and welcoming cultural philosophy

enabled Dubai to become a platform that welcomes nationalities from all over the world. HHSM's charismatic leadership is welcomed by all participants in the study.

An excerpt from the interview of the senior official from Dubai Metal and

Commodities Corporation summarized HHSM's leadership in Dubai:

I think we're very fortunate to have an unbelievably charismatic and visionary leader you know, we, we have a leader that is.., I'm gonna say loved by pretty much all and why why, because the first thing is Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum sets vision but he also delivers it, he's a humble person umm.. he's a.. he's an individual that people are inspired to.. to follow and to do their best and you know what what amazes me is that that crosses over locals as well as expats, give me a city anywhere else in the world where you can say that that holds truth, I don't think there are very many.

All of the focused codes analyzed indicate that there is a committed and genuine belief in the legitimacy, effectiveness, and strength of the leadership in Dubai. So much so, that there is a high level of admiration and emotional attachment to the leadership of Dubai, as represented by HHSM. Accordingly, it is safe to say that Dubai enjoys a popular form of leadership that is trusted and welcomed by everyone in the city. But, the question of relevance to the subject matter of this research is the nature of the role that this leadership plays in the overall business engagement model. It is evident from all of data analyzed by the researcher that the number 1 function of the Dubai leadership is to set the vision and direction for the city. In HHSM's own words, the role of the leader is 'to persuade his people to accept his visions and goals, in order to enlist their full cooperation in implementing them.' (Al Maktoum 2012, p. 50). The significance of this statement does not lie only in the notion that leadership sets the vision for the city in the Dubai model, but in HHSM's use of the word

‘persuade’ to comment on the way in which the adoption and diffusion of the vision takes place in Dubai.

Visionary, charismatic, and genuine leadership like that of HHSM does not use fear or power to coerce his agenda or thinking ideology over the people. Leaders like HHSM inspire their people to believe in the vision (which in the case of Dubai has become a national agenda and a collective action motif). “We have strong leadership who does not lead by fears, he rules by love, and this is to me is very important,” says the senior official from Emirates Airlines. This is a sentiment that is shared by all participants in the study. The leadership in Dubai is so inspiring, that it makes the lines between individual gain and Dubai gain disappear. Whatever success Dubai achieves, is a personal success as well. That is, this leadership is so effective that it has indeed transformed the thinking mentality of all organizations and individuals in Dubai to think in the same way. The senior official of Dubai Chamber says “In Dubai, we all believe what the leadership believes,” and this is echoed by what the senior official from Dubai Roads and Transport Authority stresses that “HHSM has strong fellowship in Dubai”. For leadership to be effective, it must be believable by the fellowship for action to take place. This is exactly the case in Dubai city. The senior official from the Dubai Economic Department said it best:

Our relationship in the UAE as in general and specifically in Dubai is very very close to our leaders, there is this kind of trust, there is this kind of belief, there is this kind of connection that we know whatever he says –His Highness - is the right way, is the right direction and we should align and follow.. happily not forcefully.

HHSM makes sure to communicate his vision of Dubai repeatedly, clearly, and

consistently. He is a well-established poet, and a prolific writer. He communicates his ideas for the direction of Dubai regularly and has written four books that outline the philosophy of his rulership, his vision, and the way he sees as best for moving the city forward. These books are: *My vision* (2012), *Flashes of thought* (2013), *Flashes of wisdom* (2015), and *Reflections on happiness and Positivity* (2017). Reading these books carefully, and analytically, one can come closer to unravelling the thought process in HHSM's leadership. He is passionate about creating happiness for the people of Dubai, he is passionate about the future, and he is passionate about making government departments, think like him in being vision driven and not just process driven. HHSM says: "We see the government as an active part of society, never as something that is separate or isolated. The government's job is to achieve happiness for people" (Al Maktoum 2013, p. 14). This is not a political slogan but a representation of the true and authentic spirit and philosophy of leadership that HHSM has, and that all the participants in this study seem to clearly understand, admire, and similarly believe in. Accordingly, the function of the leadership category in the Dubai business engagement model triggers the whole process towards progress within the city of Dubai, by creating an ambitious vision, inspiring people to believe in that vision, and enabling the realization of that vision.

## **Vision**

Dubai is a vision driven city. This is a realization that can be verified by the 81 focused codes that emerged in the earlier stage of analysis of the data. The city, the organizations, and the people seem all to be driven by one shared strategic vision,

which is for Dubai to become the number one city in the world. The number one best city in the world refers to the way in which Dubai is achieving the top ranking on world-recognized indexes that measure and benchmark cities on all different levels, be that tourism, happiness, IT, safety, business, etc. Interestingly, in terms of the overall ranking as the number one best city in the world, according to the World Best Cities index, Dubai today is ranked as number 7 among the world's top 100 cities (Best Cities 2018). In addition, on the regional level, the city of Dubai has achieved the number one in economic performance ranking already, according to the Dubai Competitiveness Report 2018, and fourth globally beating cities such as Toronto, Tokyo, Hong Kong (Dubai Competitiveness Report 2018).

All 24 participants in the study showed absolute awareness and understanding of the vision. There seems to be a state of full diffusion for the vision of Dubai in the various social systems across the city, and that is due to its simplicity and clarity. The senior official from Dubai Statistics Department stated that “Dubai leadership sets a clear vision for the city,” and the senior official from Dubai Financial Department agrees and adds that “every executive director, director, CEO, manager, and staff are aware of HHSM’s vision for Dubai.”

Not only that, all of the participants see the significance and importance of the shared vision for the progress and success of the city of Dubai. It is not an empty catchphrase for them, they see it as a way of life, a guiding philosophy that inspires all of them to perform and excel in what they do, so that their organizations achieve the number one status in their fields, leading them collectively to support the realization of the Dubai

vision. “Dubai futuristic vision helped the city turn the sand into gold,” says the Dubai Chamber senior official, and adds:

We have to always you know believe that since Dubai wants to be no.1 we have to be also no.1 Chamber of Commerce and by the way this is our vision to be the best Chamber of Commerce in the world and aa.. I remember many people challenged me to be aa.. aa.. one of the top, I said the problem if the city says we want to be one of the top cities, yes but the city and the leader of the city says we want to be no.1, so I’m the only Chamber and if we are in the city no.1 we have to be also no.1 in the services we provide, in the way we provide them and the way our business community should aspire to be.

Another substantial finding related to the role of the theoretical category of vision in the overall business engagement model is that all participants see the vision as an immediate product of the Dubai leadership. This is illustrated by the senior official from Dubai Media Incorporation who says “without the great vision of HHSM, Dubai success was not possible.” All emergent focused codes about the vision indicate that the HHSM is the originator, owner, and main driver of that vision. This finding has significant theoretical implications for the development of the business engagement model. It identifies the relationship that exists between the categories of leadership and vision. This relationship is one where the vision is the outcome of the leadership category, as illustrated in the following figure:

**Figure 14. Dubai Leadership Creates the Vision for the City**



The data analysis of the emergent vision category focused codes has led to two important discoveries that are related to the concept of innovation diffusion. In the early stages of this research study, it was proposed that the study of Roger's diffusion model will be used to identify the way in which brands diffuse in the social system. The interesting finding here, is that brand diffusion is not particularly relevant to the inner workings of the business engagement model. Brand adoption occurs after full deployment of the business engagement model, and therefore falls outside the scope and main aim of this research. However, the diffusion system still works within the business engagement model at the level of adoption of the vision by all of the Dubai organizations involved in realizing the city's vision. That is, diffusion works as an enabler to the category of vision on the internal level of the model, and not as a separate phenomenon and category of its own. This interpretation is supported by the data which did not reveal any codes that are specific to diffusion.

The second interesting finding lies in the fact that the characteristics of the diffusion model, including relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, reliability, and observability, all support and explain the full diffusion of the Dubai leadership vision of becoming the number one city in the world. All 24 participating organizations see and appreciate the relative advantage of the vision in that it will benefit them if Dubai becomes number one and enjoys a global reputation. This is expressed by the Emirates NBD bank senior official in response to the question of how the reputation of Dubai as a top city reflects positively on them:

Dubai has a very good reputation and rating of Dubai is very high and the rating of our bank is very high because of the success of Dubai so it adds

value and it helps us in lending from other countries and it lend at cheaper rates because of Dubai because the reputation of Dubai and our bank risk is low because Dubai politically its very strong.

In terms of the aspect of compatibility, all organizations interviewed indicate that the Dubai vision is not just compatible rather, it forms the basis for their own visions. This is represented in the visions of all the Dubai organizations included in this study that state they aspire to be world leading in the respective fields. This is well illustrated by the Dubai Chamber senior official who says: "Since Dubai wants to be no.1, we have to be also no.1".

As to the issue of complexity, it is well established that the vision of Dubai is one of the simplest strategic directions possible. It is this clarity and simplicity that renders it so readily adoptable by all of the Dubai organizations. "Dubai has a very clear vision which is to be the world number one city," says the Dubai Maritime City Authority senior official. As to the trialability, the vision of Dubai is a lived reality that all Emirates and expatriates live and breathe every day. The very existence of the prosperity and overall success that everybody enjoys for being part of Dubai is the direct result of not only trying out the vision, but actually living it and working to achieve it. "HHSM's vision has become a way of work for all of us," says the senior official of Dubai Media Incorporation.

Finally, when it comes to the element of observability of the diffusion of the vision of Dubai, it is evident from analysis of all of the emergent focused codes that the participants see tangible results of success from adopting the vision. "Thanks to HHSM's visionary leadership, we are now one of the world's best police forces," says the Dubai Police senior official. This is also echoed by Emirates Airline senior official who says: "we are now the

world's largest airline, thanks to the vision and leadership of HHSM."

If the vision of Dubai is fully diffused across all its entities and organizations, what is it that binds them all together despite the very different nature of their domains? The following category addresses this question.

### **Collective culture**

Seventy seven focused codes emerged on the culture of business life in Dubai as lived and experienced by the 24 study participants. They all seem to have a common tacit agreement on behaving in such a way that achieves the requirements of the vision of Dubai. The Emirates Maritime Arbitration Centre senior official says: "Dubai entities work together to realize its vision." The senior official from Dubai Corporation for Ambulance Services says: "Dubai city brand is everyone's responsibility," and the senior official from Dubai Statistics Centre says: "Government and private sectors are responsible for the Dubai city brand." And the list goes on as indicated by the way that all of the 77 codes refer to a larger intangible constituent that is organically built within the city of Dubai, and according to criteria which everyone in the city works towards.

"We all work for the same vision," says the Dubai Police senior official. "Everyone in Dubai works together for the number one vision," says the Dubai Ports World senior official, and the Emirates Airline senior official says: "the combined work of every

entity makes the city of Dubai work well.” It is evident that even if the entities of Dubai do not cross paths with each other in their line of work, or even if they operate in a totally different domain, they speak the same language, and believe in the same value system when running their respective businesses. This is represented clearly in the following statement from the Emirates Airline senior officer:

Yeah we [referring to Dubai entities] don’t meet and work together, that’s the beauty of the vision, the vision is created for you, it creates like a platform, but this platform all what you need to be on this platform then you are, you sing same song, we have millions people sing same song they don’t know each other.

To the best knowledge of the researcher, HHSM and the Government of Dubai, have not issued any regulation or decree that forces different department entities to work together. What is clear is that the full diffusion of the leadership vision creates a group understanding of what the goal is, what the main targets are, and where the city of Dubai journey is heading. “Any simple statement, quote, or a tweet from HHSM, is immediately transformed to a strategy and action program for all of us,” says the senior official from Dubai Economic Department.

The robust leadership of HHSM coupled with the clear and well diffused vision, have led to the creation of a joint organic understanding in all the organizations working in Dubai to put their hands together in pursuing the aim for Dubai to become number one. This phenomenon is coined here as collective culture, to differentiating it from that organizational culture that occurs at the organizational level. The shared belief in the leadership vision creates a collective culture in Dubai. The collective culture of

Dubai is what enables every Dubai organization to excel in their line of work, so they become number one. This domino effect of vision assimilation works well for Dubai city, and theoretically, this category can indeed be seen as the engine of the business engagement model. To use an analogy, leadership is the driver controlling the steering wheel directing the car in accordance with their vision of where they want to go. The engine of the car is the collective culture that provides the power that enables the car to move. This engine has various components and without the engine, a car is not mobile. Without a real, vibrant, passionate culture, organizations, (and cities alike), little can be achieved even with good visions and leaders. In terms of the conceptual model of business engagement, the relationship between the category of collective culture and the vision and leadership categories is illustrated in Figure 15 below:

**Figure 15. Group Belief in the Leadership Vision Creates the Collective Culture in Dubai**



Dubai city is made up of an extensively multi-cultural population containing more than 200 nationalities from all over the world. To varying degrees, these different cultural backgrounds have different work ethics. How can the Dubai collective culture category assimilate all of those work ethics and attitudes within the business engagement model? How can Dubai create and successfully manage in its overall

work environment a workforce that has experienced so many different approaches to management? This raises the question as to, what are the components of collective culture in Dubai? Since, unlike the categories of leadership and vision, the collective culture category is a group-holding analytical concept.

A collective culture is the product of the work of many different elements brought together. Therefore, this category will encompass a group of sub-categories (or sub-themes) that, with the use of theoretical sampling and sorting strategies, are identified as follows: cultural diversity tolerance, organizational alignment, people empowerment, execution follow-up, recognize and reward, and zero-corruption. The analysis of each of these sub-categories will resume after the analysis of the two major categories of innovation and consistent competitive ability so that the full theoretical presentation of the categories and their hierarchy is presented.

## **Innovation**

Dubai has no natural resources, no rivers, no mountains, and no greeneries whatsoever. Dubai is in the heart of one the world's most troubled and unstable political regions. The city is located in the Middle East, which is largely considered as one of the mot religiously conservative geographies in the world. Yet, "Everyone from all over the world dreams of visiting Dubai," says the senior official from Dubai Dry Docks world. The city is a destination for millions of tourists from all over the world, and it is one of the most dreamt of destinations to visit, according to the senior

officer from Dubai Tourism and Commercial Trade. Not only do tourists come to Dubai in large numbers, “world leading businesses such as Yahoo and Amazon are acquiring Dubai grown businesses and setting up shop here,” says the senior official of Dubai Wholesale City. What is it that makes Dubai so attractive to people and businesses despite the fact that the city is literally stripped of any natural resources? The answer according to focused codes emergent in the data analysis is due to the city’s innovative spirit.

Innovation in Dubai, in its broad sense refers to the city’s thinking in terms that are out of the norm. In effect, it is the alternative natural resource the city uses to power its growth plans and achieve the immense success it enjoys. The innovation category emerged with 33 focused codes and is represented in the data by all 24 participants as the means of survival, and the solution Dubai has employed to address its challenges. According to the senior official of the Dubai Executive Council, (the executive arm of the Ruler’s office in charge of monitoring the performance of all other Dubai government entities):

HHSM inspires the people in Dubai to embrace innovation and be innovative themselves in everything they do, personally and professionally. HHSM is creating a culture of innovation in Dubai.

The Dubai leadership’s realization of the need to use innovation in the pursuit of making wins and gains for the city is not a new thing. It is a long-standing tradition in the rule of the Al Maktoum family. In the year 1894, for example, the ruler of Dubai at the time was His Highness Sheikh Maktoum Bin Hashr Al Maktom. One of the first things he introduced to vitalize trade movement in the small city back then was the

creation of the first-of-its-kind tax exemption for all foreign traders coming to Dubai (Furguson 2009). This innovative strategy led Dubai to become a bustling port in the following years, with the city becoming the port of call for major British steamship lines. The adoption of this innovative idea brought income to the Emirate and increased its GDP. The same philosophy of rulership exists in Dubai today, and it will hopefully continue so. The senior official of Dubai Executive Council describes the idea of innovation adoption as a philosophy of rule in Dubai eloquently in the following statement:

Dubai has no natural resources, so the city needs to be innovative to compete. To keep Dubai as the number one in the future, we must continue innovating. Dubai is always coming up with new innovative strategies. Innovation in tourism, services, industries, and others, is Dubai's alternative source of revenue.

This important statement generates three significant ideas that underpin and exemplify the type of relationship the innovation category has in the overall business engagement model. First, Dubai uses innovation to have the ability to compete. From the leader, to the organization, to the people in the Emirate, all seem to believe in the importance of innovation in giving them the chance to compete as they benchmark Dubai against well-established global cities. Accordingly, the senior official from Dubai Dry Docks World asserts, "Dubai is ahead of many other cities thanks to its innovation adoption spirit."

The second important aspect of the Executive Council statement is that Dubai uses innovation not only to compete on the current stage, but for the future as well. This

indicates the long-term vision and planning and also stresses the importance of using innovation as a tool to generate lasting competitive capabilities for the Emirate. “Effective leadership enables the city to be sustainable for the future by adopting innovations,” says the senior officer from Dubai Ports World. The third important aspect of the statement is the notion that innovation adoption is the revenue generating alternative to Dubai’s lack of natural resources.

The above points are significant because they indicate and signal clearly the function, scope and role of the innovation category in the overall business engagement model. As suggested by the data, innovation is the means used by all of the organizations and entities in Dubai so that they can compete now, maintain number one status in the future, and generate revenue. Therefore, the hierarchical position and order of appearance for innovation in the model is as follows in Figure 16:

**Figure 16. Dubai is Building an Innovation Adoption Culture**



One of the most important reasons why Dubai adopts innovation is for the city to be able to compete and attract more tourists, visitors, businesses, and foreign investment to its economy. This is what this study coins as ‘consistent competitive ability.’

## **Consistent competitive ability**

The collective culture in Dubai uses innovation to achieve a consistent competitive ability for the city. Three significant roles innovation plays in this regard. First, Dubai uses innovation to have the ability to compete. Everyone in Dubai believes in the importance of innovation in giving them the chance to compete as they benchmark Dubai against well-established global cities. The second important aspect is that Dubai uses innovation not only to compete on the current stage, but for the future as well. This indicates the long-term vision and planning and stresses the importance of using innovation as a tool to generate lasting competitive capabilities for the Emirate. The third important aspect is the notion that innovation adoption is the revenue-generating alternative to Dubai's lack of natural resources.

The ability to compete is an essential component to win the race, now and in the future. What it entails is a committed leadership, clear vision, engaged responsive culture and the adoption of innovation. According to the 32 emergent focused codes in the data, the consistent element stands for the steadiness that Dubai has shown across the years in running its resources, managing them, and promoting them. Dubai has always been consistent in its messaging, its communications, and in its brand promise of providing quality and uniqueness in everything the city offers. This is due to many factors on the top of which is the political stability and continuity that the city enjoys. The senior officer from Dubai Media Incorporation says: "Dubai story will continue whether through HHSM, or the Crown Prince, or the people of Dubai", is a clear indication the strong value-based collective culture that resides in Dubai. This is

supported by the senior official of Dubai Ports World when he describes Dubai as a “city with self-energizing/running culture,” indicating the uninterrupted nature of Dubai progress.

Furthermore, the uninterrupted building of the various capability components of the city is what makes Dubai competitive. The development of a world-class infrastructure, wow-factor attractions such as the world’s tallest tower, and continuously bringing out-of-the-box ideas and policies all contribute to the city’s ability to compete. According to this study, possessing a consistent, uninterrupted ability to compete is a prime factor for winning and achieving competitive advantage. According to the data analyzed, competitive ability is different from competitive advantage in Dubai. Competitive advantage is the finish line, but in Dubai, the organization and leadership alike, while all are seeking to win competitive advantage, believe that in the “race for excellence there is no finish line, because development is an ongoing [consistent] process.’ (Al Maktoum 2012, p. 214).

The target to become the number one city in the world may seem to be an exaggeration, says the senior official of Dubai Chamber, but even if it is:

Not realistic at least you are going in the right direction, they say as long as can see the stars even if you don’t reach the stars but you get close to the moon so you don’t need to reach the stars but you are flying in the right direction.

The theoretical significance here lies in the fact that what the Dubai leadership wants

for the city is to have an ongoing, continuous, uninterrupted stream of innovation driven activity so that while it is contributing to the city winning global recognition and awards such as winning the bid to host Expo 2020, it is creating a state of continuous progress and prosperity and benefiting the people. Dubai winning to host the Expo 2020 is a great achievement for a city, because expos are ‘large-scale, global events organized and facilitated by governments that serve to educate the public, share innovation, promote progress and foster cooperation. Since the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London, Expos have been a showcase of innovation and inspiration to humankind and are today unrivalled among international events in their size, scale, and length and visitor numbers.’ (Bureau International des Expositions 2018).

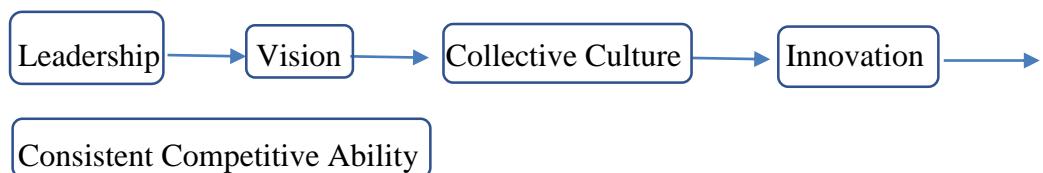
In addition, Dubai believes in challenging norms and taking risks. According to the senior official from Emirates Airlines, “Dubai takes risks, and has opened the city to foreign investors.” This open business policy is championed and led by Dubai in the region. No other city is open for foreign investments like Dubai. “Thanks to the city’s business friendly policies and regulations, Dubai is the most successful hub in the region,” says the official from Emirates NBD bank.

Therefore, considering the 32 emergent focused codes, what the Dubai government wants is for the city to enjoy a lasting, sustainable competitive ability that can help Dubai maintain and achieve the vision of becoming number one in the future.

According to HHSM, “when leaders have the ability to foresee the future – as well as the road leading to it – they are the best people to fulfill its promise. We must plan, endeavor, innovate, and do our best to reach our goals.” (Al Maktoum 2012, p. 47).

Consistent competitive ability is the city's readiness to compete now, and in the future. Based on this data-driven understanding of the role and function of consistent competitive ability, the way this category fits in the overall model is at the end, representing the ultimate outcome for the deployment of the business engagement model in the context of city brands. Figure 17 presents this position. In addition, the Figure also encompasses a depiction of the overall conceptual structure for the business engagement model:

**Figure 17. The Business Engagement Model**



Importantly, the collective culture category includes the other sub-categories. The main goal of Figure 16 above at this stage is to demonstrate the main structure of the business engagement model. Further detailed diagramming in the next sections will elaborate and clarify the full extent of the scope and function of each category and how they are linked to each other in the model.

### **Cultural diversity tolerance**

Thirty one emergent focused codes combined to form this category that focuses on the

city's social acceptance to people from all walks of life. This is a very important aspect of the overall collective culture in the city. "Dubai is a tolerant cosmopolitan city," says the senior official from Emirates Airline. The senior official from Dubai Media Incorporated adds, similarly, that "Dubai has created a platform that welcomes everybody," regardless of their race, religion, or nationality. Dubai Corporation for Ambulance Services senior official says that their services are "equally presented to all residents of Dubai regardless of their origin or status. The same ambulance we give to HHSM is the one we give to the labourer who needs it, no difference."

The significance of multi-pluralism and diversity tolerance in Dubai has far reaching benefits for the economy. It encourages visitors from all over the world to travel to the city and be safe and enjoy themselves, but it also encourages multi-national talent to migrate to Dubai and make it their home. On one hand this increases the level of know-how, skill and talent in the city, and also allows for the acculturation of the UAE local talent after working closely with talents from all over the world in virtually all fields of business. The city's tolerance of diversity is best represented by these words from the statement of the senior official of Dubai World Trade Center:

The one thing that you cannot feel strongly in another city is the sense of community, wellbeing and a whole community cohesiveness regardless of the nationality of a..., because the leadership is integrated, so integrative and so inclusive, it makes everybody feel that they own Dubai and that they are a part of the Dubai story. Dubai itself is inclusive and it gives you the chance to build your life and your career here.

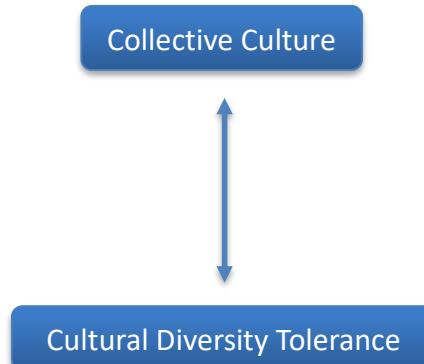
There are more than 200 different nationalities living and working in Dubai. The 31<sup>st</sup>

focused emergent codes of data indicated that all 24 organizations interviewed not only believe in diversity tolerance, but also practice it. “Dubai is open, and welcomes all cultures from all over the world,” says the senior official from Dubai Metal and Commodities Corporation, who is supported by the senior official of Dubai Dry Docks world who says:

HHSM empowers a culture of belonging for everyone in Dubai. When I first came to Dubai the plan was to stay for two years only. Now, it is almost 20 years later, and I have a great sense of belonging to Dubai, and I am grateful to all what the city offered me and my family.

In answering a follow-up question about if there is any preference in the Dubai workplaces for one nationality over another, all emphatically asserted that Dubai welcomes everyone and that the only differentiating factor is the performance and delivery of your work, not where you are from. This was noticeably most emphasized by the senior officials who are UAE nationals. “Dubai openness to cultural diversity is essential for its attractiveness,” says the UAE senior official from Dubai Maritime City Authority. “Dubai welcomes participation from everyone (locals and expats),” says another UAE senior official from Emirates Maritime Arbitration Centre, and adds, “Dubai also welcomes everyone to enjoy in its achievements, everybody are equal in Dubai.” This tolerance of cultural diversity, on the theoretical level, contributes to the strength, attractiveness, and competitiveness of the overall Dubai collective culture. That is why this analytical concept is a sub-category within the collective category as shown in Figure 18 below:

**Figure 18. Cultural diversity tolerance supports the collective culture of Dubai**



Unlike with the previous categories in the model, the sub-categories do not have a unidirectional link with their main category, rather, they have a bidirectional relationship that indicates joint, mutual impact and influence. The collective culture of Dubai includes tolerance and affects it, and is also influenced by it. The more tolerant the city, the more attractive the collective culture is; and the more attractive the collective culture, the more tolerant the city becomes. The same logic applies to the following sub-categories in terms of their relationship with the holding category of collective culture.

### **Organizational alignment**

Twenty emergent codes indicated that all of the 24 organizations included in the study align their respective organizations' direction to that of the Dubai overall vision. "All Dubai entities are looking at HHSM vision and follow it," says the senior official from Dubai Tourism and Commercial Marketing department and adds that "HHSM

inspires all leaders of the different Dubai organizations to follow suit.” The issue of vision diffusion addressed above is a major influencer on organizational alignment, although indirectly.

In the context of the city of Dubai, according to the data analyzed in this study, organizational alignment is not the same as using the exact Dubai vision and pursuing it. It refers to an overall belief held by the top management of organizations and all employees, in the importance of following the direction of HHSM and his vision. That is, it is a collective culture that drives everyone in the organization to assimilate to the overall vision of Dubai and support Dubai’s aspirations to become the number one city in the world. The statement of a Dubai Municipality senior officer illuminates this point clearly:

Dubai brand starts with HHSM vision. We model implementation and best practice strategies to make the brand successful and sustainable. We understand the larger Dubai strategy, align our role, then do it. Our strategic plan is derived from the Dubai strategic plan.

Two important points emerge about alignment in this statement: first, the individual strategy of the government department is derived from the principal strategy of Dubai, and second, the implementation is modeled uniquely to correspond to the sector and field of work relevant to the organization, which is in this case Dubai Municipality. Similar sentiments are shared by all of the other 23 organizations included in this research sample. Accordingly, rather than being a means of strategic alignment (on the level of strategic planning and quality departments), organizational alignment is

really a cultural phenomenon that exists in all of the Dubai organizations included in this research. “Our organizational culture is 100% aligned with HHSM vision,” says the senior official from Dubai Customs. The senior official from Dubai Economic Department says: “Whatever HHSM says is the right direction, and we all lovingly follow and align.”

It is safe accordingly to generalize at this stage, and state that all Dubai organizations follow suit in the same way. HHSM is very clear on this matter. In his book, “*My vision*”, he states that the organizational leadership that fails for whatever reason must “relinquish leadership to others who are more capable of realizing the vision.” (Al Maktoum 2012, p. 47). A few years ago, the Dubai leadership wanted all government entities to have their services available on apps on mobile phones, in yet another innovative initiative to make Dubai more competitive. HHSM appeared in the newspapers holding a smart phone with the caption saying: “I want all Government Departments to present their services on the smart phones in one year from now. Those who do not, we will make them a farewell party” (Al Bayan 2015).

This leadership style is conducive for organizational alignment to be an element of collective culture, and therefore more than a strategy and KPI configuration. The top management interviewed affirm their belief in the importance of alignment to the Dubai vision. “We always link our organization to whatever Dubai is part of. We align our strategy with the vision [of Dubai] from the business perspective,” declares the senior official of Dubai Chamber. The senior official from Dubai Dry Docks says, “HHSM vision is reflected in our business performance and organizational culture.”

Accordingly, the analytical concept of organizational alignment is considered as a sub-category that supports, influences, and affects the overall collective culture in Dubai. Figure 19 shows the relationship between the two categories:

**Figure 19. Organizational Alignment with Dubai Vision Supports a Vibrant Collective Culture in the City**



### **People empowerment**

The 19 emergent focused codes that form this category reveal that all 24 representatives of their organizations acknowledge the fact that, in Dubai, people are always regarded as the main driver for development. They also highlight that HHSM pays great attention to provide all the support needed for people (from all over the world and not only for UAE nationals) so they can succeed in their roles. It is believed by all participants that the leadership of HHSM is creating an innovation

driven talent pool in Dubai. “HHSN creates innovative people by investing in human beings,” says the senior official from Dubai Corporation of Ambulance Services, and the senior official from Dubai Roads and Transport Authority says that “Dubai success is due to HHSN vision and his investment in human capital.”

“Dubai has an excellent talent pool,” says the senior official of Dubai Ports World, and he adds that the leadership of Dubai knows how to integrate the talents of everyone to work together in delivering the city’s vision. Thanks to its welcoming and tolerant culture, all participants believe that Dubai is a great destination to head to for living and working. “Dubai attracts the best talents from all over the world by providing a good quality of life, great schools for their kids, and good health care,” says the senior official from Dubai International Financial Centre. As suggested by the focused codes, the Dubai leadership recognizes the important contributions to the city made by foreign talent, which helps to explain why the collective culture is thriving. And so in the business engagement model, the analytical concept of people empowerment is considered a sub-category within the category of collective culture.

HHSN is known for his strong belief in the future, and according to the participants of the study, he works hard to empower the national UAE workforce to complement his vision. The senior official from Dubai Statistics Centre says that “HHSN encourages UAE young employees to gain knowledge from international and regional experiences of excellence, and he invests in the young employees to prepare them for leadership.” The senior official from Dubai Chamber explains this approach by saying: “Our leadership vision supports second and third levels of employees

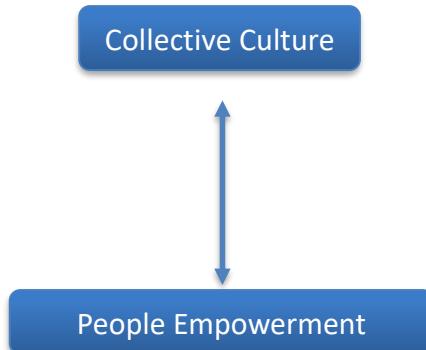
preparing them for leadership.” The importance of empowering young Emiratis and how that relates to the overall collective drive to compete is expressed informatively by the senior officer from Meraas Company:

HHSM backs the achievement of the vision by funding and appointing the right teams. HHSM is building the manpower in Dubai. He is investing in young generations so that they continue the Dubai vision in the future.

This belief in national talent, coupled with the welcoming and tolerant culture in attracting and motivating expatriate talent, is what makes Dubai’s workforce innovative, productive, and competitive – which are elements that support the overall collective culture in the city of Dubai. “HHSM trusts his people and empowers everyone to work together and deliver the vision of the city,” says the senior official from Dubai Metal Commodity Corporation. The senior official from Dubai Ports World exclaims that “the successful leadership of HHSM channels the human resources of the city in the right direction, and he makes groups of people from different cultural backgrounds think the same.” All participants agree that the leadership of HHSM empowers everyone in the city of Dubai to do their best in the collective effort to realize the vision of Dubai. “HHSM empowers us and gives us more responsibilities to deliver our contribution to the vision of Dubai,” explains the senior official from Emirates Airline.

Accordingly, the analytical concept of people empowerment is regarded as a sub-category within the collective culture of Dubai. Figure 20 below represents the relationship between the two categories in the model:

**Figure 20. People empowerment fuels the collective culture in Dubai**



### **Execution follow-up**

All 24 interviewees indicated that the Dubai success story is the result of continuous, close, and involved monitoring and follow-up directly by HHSM. The Ruler of Dubai plays special importance to the continuous monitoring of the progression and status of all projects being developed in Dubai, and on the day-to-day running of the operations of all of the government departments in the city. Some participants in this study said that HHSM has more than 5000 mystery shoppers that report back to him on the quality of services being delivered by all of the Dubai government entities.

Significantly, the Dubai community was taken by surprise when the media reported HHSM visiting the offices of senior government officials in the early hours of the morning to see if they were punctual. “The reality of it, this is what got the services in Dubai to improve,” said the Dubai based Bloomberg reporter in answering why

HHSM is doing that (Fattah 2016). The leadership's continuous involvement in the implementation of all of Dubai's plans indeed contributes to a performance-driven culture and in a way, reduces, or even eradicates, typical preconceived ideas that governmental employees are laid back and lazy. In Dubai, HHSM ensures that there is a collective culture of hard work, punctuality, and excellence in the provision of all services.

"HHSM oversees all Dubai projects from start to end, he directly follows up on all projects in the city," says the senior official from the Dubai Financial Department. This keen passion for making sure that implementation is underway, and in the right way, is characteristic of Dubai's execution of many of its ambitious and wow-factor inducing projects. "HHSM visits us on location to see implementation for himself," says the senior official from Dubai Corporation of Ambulance Services." There are 18 emergent focused codes that relate to the importance of execution follow-up in Dubai. It creates a culture of responsibility and accountability, that guarantees delivery of excellence in the services presented by all the governmental departments in the city. "HHSM continuously reviewing key performance indicators and accomplishments levels in our work," says the Dubai Statistics Centre senior official.

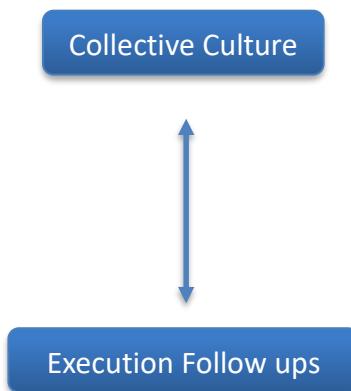
It is evident from the emergent focused codes and the accounts of all of the study participants, HHSM is passionate about the vision he sets for Dubai. He uses the vision as a means of uniting everyone in one direction and is committed to its realization by being involved in reviewing all implementation and action plans throughout. This unorthodox approach in city management is – in this researcher's

opinion –one of the fundamental reasons why the city of Dubai is so unique on both regional and global levels. In most cities, the follow-up on progress on the various projects and governmental services presented is normally conducted by teams of governmental or third-party agencies, but not directly by the political leadership as is the case in Dubai. This is one of the reasons why most people in Dubai – in organizations or on the personal level, revere, love, and highly respect HHSM. That see how genuine he is in asking for excellence in Dubai, and they respond by excelling in their own areas of work. The senior official from Dubai Executive Council says:

HHSM has teams in place that follow up on progress everywhere in Dubai. We conduct regular performance reviews on all government entities in Dubai. The unique things here, is that HHSM does not stop at reviewing these reports. He closely follows up on all projects, and closely monitors performance on all levels. HHSM has real time access to the KPI levels real time, and across all government departments in Dubai.

The significant contribution of this category of analysis to the business engagement model is based on the assumption that when leadership creates a culture of accountability and responsibility, matched by sincere belief in the vision sought by all parties, a platform for generating excellence is established within the collective culture of the city. Accordingly, execution and follow-up is regarded as a sub-category within the overall category of the Dubai collective culture. Figure 21 presents the relationship between the two categories.

**Figure 21. Execution Follow ups are Essential to the Collective Culture of Dubai**



### **Recognize and reward**

This category emerged based on 6 focused codes. Unlike the above categories that have theoretical significance and higher frequency of occurrence, the recognize and award category was identified by the researcher primarily based on its theoretical significance and reach. Recognizing the efforts of employees and rewarding them above and beyond their remunerations, create a collective culture that has high morale and energy, and celebrates achievement, and welcomes innovation in Dubai. This encourages people to outperform, to be more involved in their organization's drive, and most significantly, this will encourage people to belong to the story of Dubai.

“Whatever you give to Dubai, Dubai gives you back,” says the senior official from Dubai Corporation of Ambulance Services, referring to a photo showing him with HHSM handing him an award for being one of the best government employees of the

year. This category encourages people to come to Dubai and work in it, as they know that their efforts will be appreciated. “Dubai recognizes talent and celebrates it,” says the senior official from Dubai World Trade Centre. It is interesting how HHSM realizes the importance of recognizing and rewarding people for their work. This encourages people to be more loyal to Dubai and give of their best in every line of work they are in, so their respective organizations perform exceptionally. “HHSM recognizes and rewards the achievements in Dubai,” say the senior officials from Dubai Financial Department, and the Dubai Roads and Transport Authority. Dubai has more than 12 important recognition and awarding programs, including, for example, the Dubai Government Excellence Program Award, Dubai Quality Award, and Dubai Human Development Award.

What is important about this behavior is its purpose and rationale. The Dubai leadership uses recognition as a means to create a collective culture of excellence and performance in the city and help Dubai to realize its vision of becoming the number one city in the world. Moreover, it encourages the development of a competitive spirit in the overall collective culture in Dubai. Organizations and employees, all work twice as hard to have the honour of being recognized and rewarded by HHSM. Theoretically, the analytical concept of recognize and reward is interpreted by the research as a sub-category within the collective culture of Dubai. It highlights the role that recognition plays in supporting the overall mechanism of the working of the business engagement model. Figure 22 shows the relationship between the recognize and reward category and collective culture:

**Figure 22. Recognizing achievement builds an involved collective culture in Dubai**



### **Zero-corruption**

This is a category that emerged in only three focused codes. The participants who drew the researcher's attention to this aspect of the city of Dubai are the senior official from Dubai Tourism and Commercial Marketing, and the senior official from the Emirates NBD bank. This study is including this as a category due the highly significant role that zero corruption plays within the collective culture of Dubai specifically, and within the business engagement model, in general. The worst and most difficult epidemic to be addressed and eradicated is corruption. Corruption in cities is analogous to cancer. As indicated by the analysis of the data above, the city of Dubai operates under inspiring leadership, has a very clear vision and is enabled and realized by the collective effort of everyone in Dubai. For the model to function effectively, it assumes that everyone in Dubai is not corrupt. If governmental department employees take bribes, and do not treat everyone equally, the integrity,

quality, justice, and overall culture of Dubai is compromised. One of the strongest elements that supports a thriving social structure in Dubai is zero tolerance of corruption across all fields in the city. According to the senior official from Emirates NBD bank:

Dubai is one of the efficiently run cities I have seen in my life. HHSM has established a sense of good management everywhere in the city. Dubai is well-regulated, not with systems, but with the best systems in the world. HHSM has a zero-degree tolerance for corruption. That's why Dubai has a great reputation internationally, and because of that, we can have exceptional banking facilities from global financial organization at exceptional rates.

Dubai has succeeded in creating a collective culture that is free of corruption, and according to the data analyzed so far, Dubai's global reputation is well achieved as a place where there is high quality, excellent service, safety and security, and justice for all, regardless of race, religion, culture, age, or gender. Most significantly, corruption, in the context of city branding, or in the context of commercial exchange, has the same destructive effect, and having a zero-corruption environment is therefore crucial for the success of any vision driven effort, and that is the main reason why this study includes zero-corruption as a constituting element within the overall setup of the business engagement model. Consequently, the analytical concept of zero-corruption is regarded as a sub-category in relation to the collective culture. Figure 23 below represents the relationship between the categories of zero-corruption and collective culture:

**Figure 23. Dubai has a Zero-corruption Collective Culture**



It is important to note that not only do the sub-categories have a bidirectional relationship with the principal category of collective culture in Dubai, they also have a bidirectional relationship. That is, the recognize and reward sub-category, for example, is important for the empowerment of people in Dubai. Likewise, the execution follow-ups category plays a role in the organizational alignment effort exerted by all organizations in Dubai. The zero-corruption sub-category supports the creation of an even playing field for all nationalities in Dubai, which is represented by the cultural diversity tolerance sub-category. All six sub-categories form the collective culture category and are affected by it as has been explained in this chapter.

## **Diagramming the analytical concepts**

According to Charmaz (2014), diagraming is the visual representation of analytical concepts, and it helps in giving ideas concrete images. Diagraming outlines the relationships that exist among categories in a visual model: ‘Diagrams enable you to see the relative power, scope, and direction of the categories in your analysis, as well as, the connections among them’ (Charmaz 2014, p. 218).

Figure 24 below provides a visual representation of the emergent Dubai business engagement model incorporating all of the categories based on the emerging themes identified earlier. What this model represents is a full articulation of the components of the engagement business model. These components begin with the leadership which generates a vision (a national agenda), which leads the emergence of a collective culture that adopts innovation for ensuring that the city is sustainably competitive. The diagram also illustrates the power, scope, and direction for each category in the model. It is evident that leadership assumes the highest level of power in the business engagement model of Dubai. As indicated by all participants of this study, it is an undisputed reality that the leadership in Dubai is the main driver for the city’s success (and even existence as has been vigorously and persuasively emphasized by some of the study’s participants).

The scope of leadership in Dubai is clear: setting where the city is going through the vision. The relationship of Dubai leadership with the vision is immediate, strong, and

existential. That is, Dubai leadership is all about the vision. HHSM is very passionate about the Dubai vision, as is plainly indicated by all of the participants. The Dubai leadership is described as visionary by all participants in the study.

The vision category is presented as the second highest powerful level in the business engagement model. This has theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, it argues that Dubai is a vision-driven city, as opposed to a process-based city with a focus on the proper application of the common city management bureaucracies. At one end, Dubai applies the world's best available practices in the management of the city, in addition, Dubai is so forward thinking that it can be said that the city is living *literally* in the future. This spirit of Dubai is embodied in the overall collective culture of the city. Dubai's vision thrives on the aggressive, ambitious, bold, and risk-taking culture engulfing the city. Practically, the scope of the vision in the model is clear: making Dubai the number one city in the world. The vision category relationship in the model is two-fold: it is driven by the leadership, and it ignites, mobilizes, and unites in the collective culture of the city of Dubai.

Collective culture assumes the third level in the model. This category involves the inclusion of several sub-categories that constitute it and are also influenced by it. That is, the collective culture of Dubai is the sum result of other related constructs that make the city vision-driven, and attractive to individuals and businesses from all over the world. These sub-categories include, culture diversity tolerance, people empowerment, recognize and reward, organizational alignment, execution follow-ups, and zero-corruption. The significance of these sub-categories is that they are equally

influential in supporting a collective culture in Dubai. Their scope of work is supportive of each other and the relationship is mutually supportive and bidirectional as represented in the diagram. The collective culture in Dubai is vision driven to make Dubai the number one city in the world, by the city's continuous, determined, and passionate adoption of innovations in all walks of life and business. Therefore, the collective culture seeks to realize the vision by making the city of Dubai innovative.

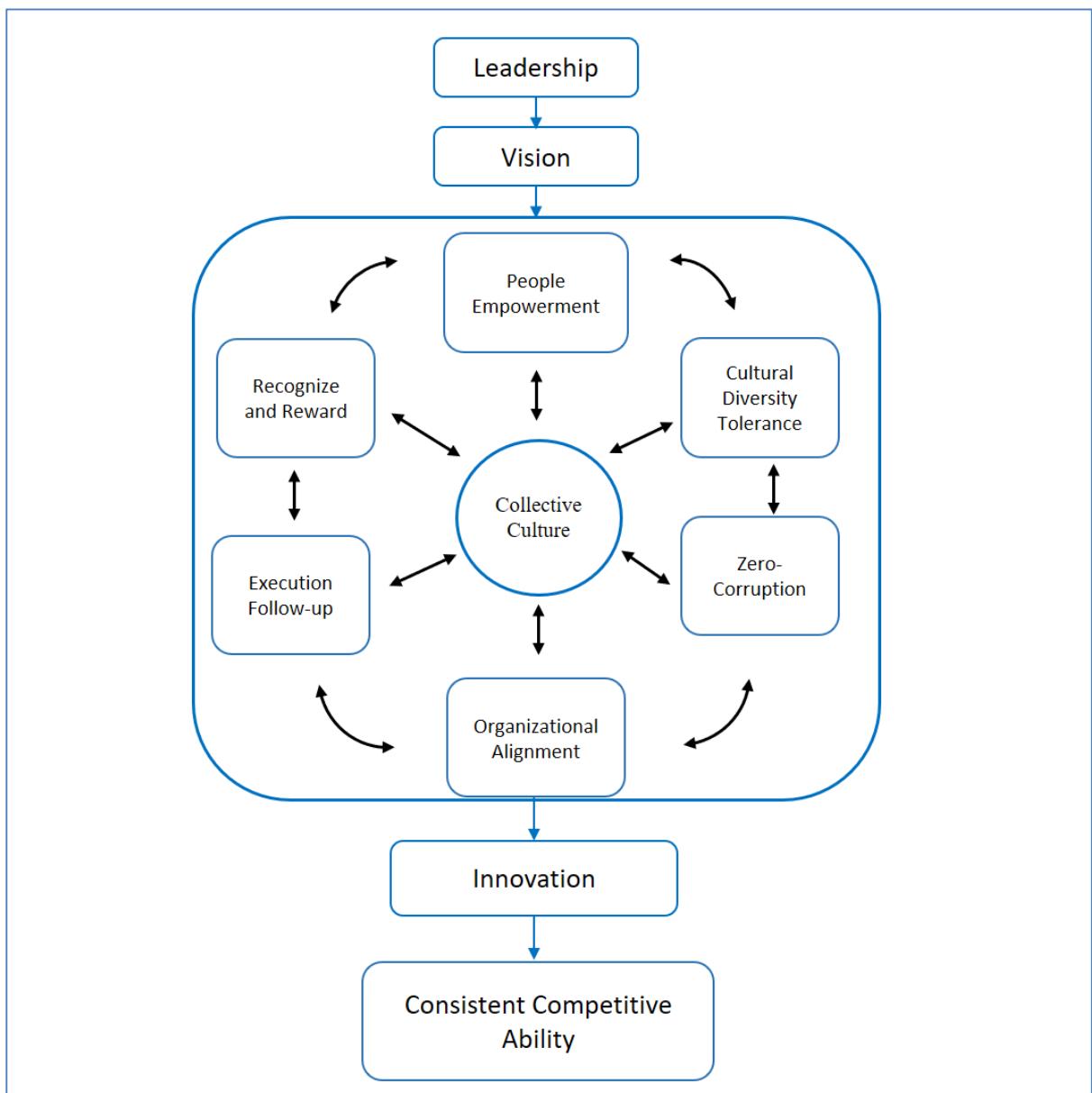
Innovation is a very important vehicle for realization of the vision of the collective culture in Dubai. Dubai's lack of any natural resources impelled the city to adopt innovation not just innovation as a competitive strategy, but rather, as a strategy for survival. At the peak of the global financial crisis in February 2009, the researcher attended a meeting with HHSM along several leadership and top management figures from leading Dubai organizations and governmental departments. At the time, Dubai was receiving a plethora of negative media coverage due to the debt rescheduling of one of its major holding business groups called Dubai World (Watson 2010).

The sentiment for all at the time was negative, lots of rumors and uncertainty dominated. HHSM came into the room, held the microphone, stood among us and said: "We did not make the global crisis. It came to us. Here, we do not have rivers, or plants, just desert, and it also gets very hot, too. Still, we have managed to attract people to come to us. What we will do, now, as we have done before, is to continue innovating new things that keep making us competitive." These words relate directly to the power and normative acceptance of the role of innovation in Dubai, and consequently, it is depicted in the model, as both an outcome and a desired goal; the

aim of which is to create a consistent, sustainable, and uninterrupted competitive ability for the city of Dubai.

Being competitive and continuously so is at the core of the Dubai philosophy and spirit. The working of all the components and categories forming the business engagement model is crowned with the result for the city being competitive and having the ability to compete continuously. Accordingly, the scope of this consistent competitive category is the realization of the Dubai's vision of becoming the number one city in the world. This is achieved by the city's adoption of innovations; hence, the relationship between the two categories is that of a cause and effect, with the category of innovation being the cause for the effect of consistent competitive ability.

**Figure 24. The Emergent Dubai Business Engagement Model**



## **CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION**

### **5. 1. Overview**

This chapter addresses the significance of the study findings considering the research questions being investigated to unravel the dynamics of the business engagement model and how it is applied in the process of city branding. In other words, this chapter seeks to answer the main research questions, linking them with the methodology of research, study findings and how the business engagement model works, bearing in mind its various subcomponents that emerged from the data analysis. In addition, the chapter also provides the main significance of the findings and their contribution to knowledge on the level of city branding and business engagement.

The study identifies two main problems in business engagement and city branding: first, there are insufficient business engagement theories and frameworks to explain the business engagement phenomena in terms of how organizations can make or create engagement; second, city branding, while recognized in the literature as a growing field, lacks a holistic conceptual rationale and model that can be applied for urban development by city policy makers, and inform standard organizational theories and advance recommendations for good practice in the context of business management. The dada analysis conducted so far by applying Grounded Theory methodology (Charmaz 2014) will help address these two problems by providing the

emerged business engagement model to be fully discussed in this chapter.

That is, city policy makers, urban developers, managers, marketing agencies, and the people living in a city, are all involved in a process that needs to be clarified, understood, and managed to achieve successful results. The main issue here is the fact that while branding, leadership, marketing, city branding, and innovation diffusion are often studied individually to see how they contribute to the overall success of an organization, (in terms of the success of its various brands), it has not been attempted before to connect all of them together in a model that can account for how—holistically—business engagement occurs, and what the constituent elements of that engagement are, and how they dynamically and organically, evolve and affect each other.

The aim of this research study is to unravel what constitutes the business engagement process and identify its various elements. This thesis argues that the brand success as a process (in any application in general, and in city branding in particular), arises because of the deployment of the business engagement model. According to the data analysis, the business engagement model occurs when there is visionary leadership that creates a collective culture, which is driven by innovation to achieve consistent competitive ability.

The mode of thinking here is multidisciplinary, in that it involves integrating insights about leadership, branding, marketing, innovation diffusion, and the growing field of

city branding. Independently, each of these areas have their own interpretations and sets of challenges, however, in the context of business engagement and city branding, they acquire new relationships that define and govern the development of successful city brands. In essence, leadership sets the vision for the city, and inspires the creation of a collective culture that understands the vision (after its full diffusion across all the city-owned organizations) and encourages the city to become innovative by providing an excellent product offering so that it remains competitive and attractive.

## **5. 2. Research Questions and Overview of Findings**

### **Answering the research questions**

This study identifies a formalized set of research questions for which the answer is represented by the emergence of the business engagement model. These questions aim at unravelling what constitutes business engagement and how it works in the context of city branding. These research questions are:

- 1. What defines business engagement?**
- 2. What are the main elements of business engagement?**
- 3. What is the role leadership plays in business engagement?**
- 4. What are the diffusion elements that are deployed within business engagement?**
- 5. Can business engagement create strong city brands with a sustainable competitive edge?**

Theorizing, as defined by Charmaz (2014) is the process of clarifying ‘the actions that are involved in constructing’ our understanding of the studied phenomena (Charmaz 2014, p.228). What follows is a clarification of the actions that construct the various components in the business engagement model, (Section 5.b.2) and the provision of emergent answers to the main research questions of this thesis.

**Question 1: What defines business engagement?** Based on the intensive analysis of the data generated from 24 theoretically sampled organizations in Dubai, a theoretical model that can be described as the representation of the concept of business engagement has emerged. Business engagement is the management system in which leadership, vision, culture, and innovation work *contrapuntally* (together) to create a consistent competitive ability to the relevant entity in which it is applied. In other words, business engagement is the process in which leadership creates a vision that drives the creation of a collective culture that will adopt innovations for the sake of achieving a consistent competitive ability. That is, business engagement leads to the full alignment of the efforts of everybody and all organizations in a city in the achievement of a common goal that is set and inspired by the city’s leadership’s vision.

**Questions 2: What are the main elements of business engagement?** The main elements of business engagement include leadership, vision, collective culture, innovation, and consistent competitive ability.

**Question 3: What is the role leadership plays in business engagement?** In the management of cities, the model of business engagement suggests that leadership

assumes a very significant role in the formation, deployment, and achievement of the city's shared national agenda, or vision. The leadership's role is as the *engager-in-chief*, whose role not only relates to organizations whose acquiescence to his/her leadership is mandated by law, but to the entire collective culture of the city. The process of business engagement is defined in this thesis as a dynamic belief system that imprints into a population's hearts and minds, motivating them to behave in a way that follows the leader's mandate. In other words, leadership engages the collective culture with a vision, the aim of which is to sustain competitive ability continuously. In the business engagement model leadership goes beyond the formalities of seniority representation, and more into an active role that not only guides but inspires, encourages, and supports all individuals and organizations that constitute the relevant social system.

It is important to clarify here that leadership even with the world's most successful vision, cannot achieve anything alone, and cannot be regarded as the sole contributor to the successful operation of the business engagement model. The collective work of all the categories together with leadership makes the model work.

**Question 4: What are the diffusion elements that are deployed within business engagement?** The data analysis in the study revealed two interesting findings: firstly, the diffusion was relevant to the very vision of Dubai itself, rather than to the brand of Dubai, which is the outcome of the working of the business engagement model. That is, the diffusion involvement in the model is on the internal level, rather than the external level of the theoretical framework. Specifically, it relates to how the

leadership's vision for Dubai is diffused across the social system that is composed by individuals and organizations who work together to realize that vision. Secondly, the diffusion model characteristics of relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, reliability, and observability all apply in providing an interpretation that can account for the full diffusion of the Dubai leadership vision of becoming the number one city in the world.

**Question 5: Can business engagement create strong city brands with a sustainable competitive edge?** The answer to this question in relation to the city of Dubai, is that it can. The resilient economic performance of Dubai is remarkable, particularly when considering the overall global economy, and the turbulent political conditions in the GCC and MENA region. The Dubai economy has seen year-on-year growth and strong performance. The city's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) standing today at \$ 26.8bn, grew by 3.2% in 2017, and all indicators show an expected continuous growth rate of 3.5% for the current year of 2018. More than 30% of the UAE's workforce resides in Dubai, with the number of total employees reaching 3.8 million. Dubai received more than 15 million tourists in 2017, with the number expected to increase to 20 million tourists by the year 2020 (The Report 2018). These numbers indicate that Dubai has a consistent competitive ability. If the same factors are replicated in the context of another city, that is, if the business engagement model is applied, it is argued by the researcher of this thesis that that place would also be successful.

In addition, Dubai is the only Arabic city that is not only on the list of the world's best

100 cities, but is on the top ten list ranking currently at number 7 (Best Cities 2018).

On the regional level, the city of Dubai has achieved the number one in economic performance ranking already, according to the Dubai Competitiveness Report 2018, and fourth globally beating cities such as Toronto, Tokyo, Hong Kong (Dubai Competitiveness Report 2018).

## **Overview of Findings**

### **Business engagement**

Twenty four interviews with government, semi-government, and commercial Dubai organizations generated 1455 initial codes, which after further theoretical sampling and analysis led to the emergence of 413 focused codes. The application of theoretical sampling on these focused codes helped with the emergence of eleven theoretical categories that form the theoretical components of the business engagement model. These categories are leadership, vision, collective culture, innovation, and consistent competitive ability. The collective culture category has emerged with six sub-categories that include zero-corruption, cultural diversity tolerance, organizational alignment, execution follow-up, recognize and reward, and people empowerment. The way that business engagement works, in the context of the city of Dubai, is that leadership generates a vision, which inspires the collective culture to be innovative so that the city has the capability to compete consistently.

There is a fundamental idea that needs to be clearly understood here, which is the fact that business engagement exists organically, when the various components of the model are present and functioning effectively. That is, it cannot be coerced into existence, and it cannot be simply copied by other cities on a surface level, with the hope that the results will be identical. The engagement that takes place is heavily directed to the level of leadership effectiveness, plausibility, and to a large extent, appeal. All of the study participants expressed deep, genuine, and sincere appreciation and admiration for the leadership of Dubai, indicating that it is this affection which makes them model their behaviour accordingly – on the individual level, and on the organizational level. Any leadership in the world can generate any vision they like, the question is if that vision is believable, and if that leadership itself is relatable, approachable, and inspirational? This has theoretical and practical implications.

On the theoretical level, the model can be made compatible with most cities all over the world (albeit with the understanding that leadership in the Middle East is a different phenomenon than in Europe and elsewhere). However, the leadership of cities is more or less the same. It is the power that leadership enjoys which makes the difference. This point brings in the fundamental methodological philosophy on which this study is based, and that is of relativist ontology – which states that the lived world has multiple realities that are context dependent, evolve, and change. In this instance, the business engagement model's effectiveness, plausibility, and applicability are naturally context dependent. And here lies the practical implication. The way in which the model is applied is not by a decision, but is enacted organically as a natural response to whatever leadership, vision, and collective culture exists in a city. This brings in another important aspect of business engagement, which is that of form and

content.

It is critical to understand that the model is not universally applicable in terms of content, but it is so in terms of form and structure, as argued by this study. Every city in the world has a leadership structure that guides or at least influences where the city is going. In Dubai it is the Ruler, in Salzburg it is a board, in New York it's the governor, in Baghdad it is the mayor, and so on. In each of these cities there are opportunities, challenges, economic situations, and relevant cultural belief systems. Each of these cities have a different understanding of what the role of leadership is, however, they all have it. Each of these cities have an idea of what they want to become, i.e., they all have a vision, although different in content. Dubai's vision is to be the world number one city, but Baghdad's vision on the other hand, could be currently, to be a safe place for people to live in and visit. The point here is the model structure applies to all cities, but the content is different and unique to each reality of that city. Every city has leadership, every city has a collective culture that aspires to become something in relation to a vision they all believe in and share.

## **Leadership**

One of this study's most interesting findings is that leadership drives city branding. According to all organizations included in this study, the leadership of HHSM not only manages brand Dubai, he is the very brand of the city itself. They all indicate

that the city brand of Dubai is a direct reflection of the personality, spirit, and philosophy of HHSM. The role of leadership and city branding in the literature is intensively discussed in section (2.g.8), where leadership is reduced to a functional role representing the political power in the city (Kunle et al. 2010). The findings of this study (in the context of the city of Dubai) stand in contrast with this way of thinking, which is due to two main reasons. One, the style of Dubai leadership, and two, Western ways of conceptualizing what leadership is.

Leadership in Dubai is not an administrative function, of being on top of the decision-making hierarchy, or simply being a figurehead of power. Rather, HHSM plays the role of visionary-in-chief and engager-in-chief not only for the Dubai Government organizations, but also to the people of the city, locals and expatriates alike. The full diffusion of HHSM's vision (see section 4.d.3) making everyone in Dubai thinking and behaving like him, amounts to a perfect example of transformational leadership. Transformational leadership theory defines successful leaders as those who inspire their followers to believe in the necessity of change, making them transform to deliver more in terms of their performance, behavioural output, and even beliefs (Northhouse 2007, Robbins & Judge 2013). HHSM's leadership has transformed all Emirati locals in Dubai to be vision-based thinkers, and rally behind him in the pursuit for making Dubai the number one city in the world. Expatriates living and working in Dubai share the same passion for the leadership and its vision of becoming number one in the world.

The second point relates to the fact that leadership is understood differently in

different contexts. In the Western way of thinking, individual leadership is replaced by democratized establishments that assume the role of leadership and lead accordingly. In the Middle East, and in Dubai specifically, (please see section 2.g.7) the role of leader is still relevant and is crucial. Prior to the data analysis, and based exclusively on the literature review, this study identified three main roles for a leader in city branding: formal branding (administrative role being the figurehead of the city), functional branding (driving the city's national agenda inspiring all to follow one vision), and champion branding (in being the face of the brand promoting its value proposition). Following the data analysis, it can be said that all three roles do exist in Dubai, and indeed, thanks to the transformational, inspirational leadership of HHSM, Dubai has emerged as a major city that is known all over the world.

Another significant finding about the Dubai leadership is that high-powered positions in all Dubai Government owned organizations are not filled with people who have a connection to the ruling family. These positions are filled with people who are qualified to run the job, they are UAE nationals and expatriates, men and women. What this signifies is the fact the leadership in Dubai recognizes the importance of talent diversity and understands that a competitive work environment will always yield innovative outcomes – if the people appointed to these positions want to keep their jobs, as these jobs themselves are competitive and need continuous innovation and drive to sustain. If you are talented, hardworking, innovative, then Dubai is the place for you, says HHSM in his book *My Vision* (Al Maktoum 2012). HHSM speaks of the opposite migration, where global talents are now migrating not to the traditional places in Europe or the US, but to Dubai, where they will have quality of life and thrive personally and professionally. This open-minded, forward-thinking, inclusive

rule philosophy is what makes Dubai leadership effective and appealing to locals as well as expatriates from all over the world.

The question in the context of business engagement is: what does leadership do? Regardless of the theoretical approach to leadership (see section 2.g), all seem to indicate that the main role of leadership is to influence people. In the context of business engagement, this role is expanded. This study argues, based on the analysis of new data, leadership does more than influence in the business engagement model. It inspires, transforms, and engages communities. The role of the leader is not only to tell people what to do, but to lead people to believe that what needs to be done is something that they want to do for themselves, as a personal goal not just as a response to a command from higher authority or simply through being influenced by the opinions of a leader. This is a state of total identification with the set of visions, goals, and overall outlook and ideology of the leader, and to whatever this leader represents. This situation is the case in Dubai where the power and authority of the leadership of HHSM does not come from His Highness' official position as a ruler of the city, but as a result of His Highness being a passionate leader who genuinely believes in his vision and wants everyone around him to behave in line with the realization of that vision.

The realization of that vision is no longer a city goal, but a group goal, and an individual goal as well. All of the participants in this study indicated that the leadership of Dubai creates a platform that welcomes all of them, regardless of their race, creed, color, gender, or age. What this achieves in the context of city branding and on the level of business engagement in general is unprecedented levels of high

performance, quality delivery, and passionate commitment on behalf of everyone to deliver their best for Dubai, and to have the ultimate prize when someone is directly thanked and acknowledged by HHSM. This unique style of leadership is what makes Dubai city unique.

This is not a ground-breaking discovery. Across history, there are many examples of effective leadership that has led to passionate commitment from people. What is significant here, however, is that it is in the context of organizational theory and management of city branding, that leadership is regarded as the main initiator of the process of making a city brand successful – in line with findings cultivated from the data analysis in this study. A further question arises here: if there is no effective or inspirational leadership, for whatever reason, can the business engagement model operate effectively and successfully? The answer is no. Leadership is the most powerful category in the theoretical framework, as it sets in motion the domino effect of the various other components that build the business engagement model in city branding, and in other contexts as well. What leadership does is it generates a vision, a call for action that is diffused effectively throughout every organization in the city, and is passionately adopted by everyone who lives and works in the city.

## **Vision**

The most important outcome of leadership performance is vision. According to the business engagement model, what leadership develops in city branding is the vision of

where the city is heading, and what the city wants to stand for in the minds of its target users. The city's image is what people think about it now, the city's identity is what the city wants people to think about it in the future. That is, the current perception of a city plays a major role in the determination of what the city's vision will be, here again, depending on the level of leadership that the city enjoys. The image of the city brand (or any business brand) is that of how people see it now, the identity of a city brand is how the city itself (or the business) wants its brand to be seen by people. The difference between the two is represented by the vision.

In the context of organizational theory, a vision is the organization's ability to foresee a future in which behaviour is different from what it is being done now, and will help the organization to survive and remain competitive (McKenna 2012). Three aspects of this way of understanding relate directly to the emerged conceptualization about the role of vision in the business engagement model: 1. Correctly understand the city's brand current reality, 2. Correctly predict a future scenario for the city brand to be competitive (i.e., focusing on a product category that is going to make the city viable in the future, such as investing in clean energy, in the finance sector, in free zone, or in maritime and logistics infrastructure and so on), and 3. The necessity of change for the city to be able to survive. All these vision-related conceptualizations do occur in Dubai as the data has revealed. All research participants stressed that Dubai's success as a thriving cosmopolitan place did not and could not have happened without the vision of HHSM.

What this signifies, is that HHSM understood earlier on the reality of Dubai – a desert

city in a very troubled region with no natural resources and foresaw a different future reality where the city becomes a global beacon of tourism, events, trade, and leisure. But for that future reality to materialize, change needs to happen, too. And this is exactly what has emerged in Dubai as the vision to become a world number one city has transformed the way locals think in that it has opened up their mentality and helped them to welcome new ideas, cultural diversity, and a totally different understanding of their world in relation to others. In the course of gathering data for this study, the researcher went to the building of Dubai Ambulances Service. Hanging on the walls is a large framed photograph (see Figure 25, below) of HHSM standing with young Emirati women who are in employed work (for the first time in the history of the UAE) a beautiful example of how leadership brings in change and breaks traditional barriers to new thinking.

**Figure 25. HHSM with UAE Women who Work as First Responders in Dubai**

**Ambulance Corporation**



Source: Publicly exhibited at the head quarter office building of Dubai Ambulance Corporation

The real challenge here lies in encouraging people (of any city or organization) not only to believe in the vision and behave to realize it, but to make each one of them a champion of his vision so they influence their own networks and social circles to adopt and realize that vision. The diffusion of HHSM's vision in Dubai is outstanding. All participants of this study understand, believe, and are passionate about the Dubai vision. not only do they see it as a guiding philosophy for their work, but they also take personal pride in being a part of it. This is the engagement aspect

which makes brands (of cities and any product) surpass many others.

What makes a vision successful is its simplicity, relatability, and applicability – to use some aspects of the Roger's innovation diffusion model. The Dubai vision is simple: we want to be number one. It does not need a second layer of communicating to explain it. A household Emirati woman in Dubai understands it in the same way a high-powered Emirates Airline vice president does. Children of Dubai understand it, and HHSM meets some of them and posts his meeting with them saying the words we want to be number one on His Highness' social media channels. The simplicity of the vision makes it easy for people to adopt it. The Dubai vision is applicable, in that the success of the city in achieving this goal means more benefits to the individual working and living in the city, so that the common good becomes the personal good. And this is one of the most important aspects that the business engagement model presents in that the vision of a city, organization, or nation, becomes effective (fully diffused) when the individuals concerned do not see it as an external empty slogan, but, identify with it.

This self-realization which is associated with the vision makes it easy for leadership to introduce change, and lead people and organizations to embrace that change passionately. This is what is happening in Dubai. And this is what is happening (and has always happened) with successful brands across human history. From humanity's great big religions, to political movements, to art trends, to fashion fads, to new technology adoption, the same principles of business engagement apply. The vision becomes a personal calling, in addition to its role as a group compass.

The applicability aspect of the vision is also very important in terms of its appeal within the target audience. Dubai vision does not ask its people in an organization to grow wings and fly. It asks them to understand, adopt and use the world's best practices in every field so they can become the world number one city, individually and collectively. The way of doing business in Dubai is all about adopting innovative solutions to improve quality of life (Al Maktoum 2012), for individuals and organizations alike. What Dubai sees in HHSM's vision for the city is not a slogan, but an action plan, a practical way of life of dos and don'ts that impel them to work to achieve their individual and collective success and prosperity. The same can be applied in organizations. If a vision is seen as simple, real, relatable, applicable, (and most significantly beneficial to me as the target adopter), it is more likely that this vision will be fully diffused.

### **Collective culture**

What or who delivers or realizes the vision in the city or the organization? Realization of the vision is the main role of the city's collective culture. Collective culture is the engine that delivers the vision. In the model of business engagement, this term is coined to represent the emergent analytical concept that encompasses a group of structures that support the collective work which forms the underlying process that deliver the realization of a city's vision. It is the shared meaning that people, individuals and organizations, in a city have in understanding their reality, and how they collectively think about that reality, and behave accordingly. In line with the business engagement model, collective culture is not the standard cultural background

of a person, nor is it the same as organizational culture. In business engagement, collective culture is transformed and incorporates several other components. That is, collective culture represents a platform that incorporates components that include the cultural aspects of individuals and organizations but are not totally made of that. According to the analysis of the data, the emergent collective culture category includes six main components, which are: cultural diversity tolerance, zero-corruption, people empowerment, recognize and award, execution follow-up, and organizational alignment.

The way that collective culture delivers the vision is as follows: talents from all over the world are working in an environment that recognizes and rewards talent, has zero-corruption, invests in empowering people so they deliver, has performance monitoring systems in place and has organizations that are working in total synchronization for the achievement of the number one position in their respective fields. Talents from all over the world are attracted to the city of Dubai because everybody is regarded equal in the eyes of the law, no matter what religion, what race, creed or culture. This is the work of the cultural diversity tolerance component in the business engagement model. In Dubai workplaces, anyone from anywhere in the world can have the opportunity to work here if they have the talent. Indeed, even at the level of the 24 participants of this study, there were men, women, of Australia, UK, Singapore, India, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and the UAE, with so many different cultural and religious backgrounds, yet they all strongly believe that Dubai has a platform that welcomes diversity and is culturally tolerant. The cultural diversity tolerance finding is significant because it allows the inclusion of talent from all over the world to the benefit of the city's economy, making it vibrant and innovative. A nationalistic, protectionist strategy, in

contrast, does not allow the city to enjoy the various innovations and efforts of newcomers and is caged in its own bubble of isolation.

Empowering people is a corner stone of Dubai's collective culture. Data analyzed in this study show that HHSM has always emphasized investment in the development of human beings in Dubai. According to all of the 24 participants, HHSM has established policies that support the Dubai workforce (UAE nationals, young generations, women, and expatriates) to be able no to gain new knowledge and expertise in new fields but to assimilate that knowledge and apply it innovatively for improving the quality of life in Dubai in general and refining their own work experiences, specifically. On many occasions and in public speaking opportunities, HHSM makes it clear that the young UAE nationals are the number one priority for the government, to invest in, train, and prepare for future leadership. This applies also for the support and encouragement HHSM provides to the expatriate workforce as well, by continuously meeting with the heads of international businesses who are in Dubai and paying close attention to their needs and requirements to achieve, maintain, and increase the ease of doing business in Dubai. The significance of this finding in the business engagement model lies in the fact that people are the ones who deliver results, not systems or strategies, and HHSM realizes this fact and that's why he empowers human beings in Dubai, according to the statement of all the participants of this study.

Empowered people and cultural diversity tolerance in Dubai are supported by another aspect of the collective culture which is the zero-degree corruption. This component

helps with the creation of a very attractive work environment for businesses. One of the main aspects of business life in Dubai, according to the data is that it does not have corruption. All government services are presented transparently and equally to all. No bribes or under-the-table transactions happen in Dubai. According to the senior official from Dubai International Financial Centre, Dubai enjoys one of the world's best commercial justice systems, and the senior official of Emirate NBD and the senior official of the Dubai Financial Department, emphasizes that this is one of the reasons why Dubai has such global appeal financially, due the absence of corruption in all aspects of doing business in the city. In addition to the business sector, everyday life in Dubai is also corruption free. Millions of people living, working, and visiting the city conduct all sorts of transactions, and these can be performed with transparency, governance, and trust. This is not to say that Dubai is a crime free utopia. Rather, the predominant situation in Dubai is a zero-corrupt culture that is run by the rule of law which respects all and treats all equally. The significance of this finding represents an important aspect in the branding process of cities. The management of corruption on all levels is a major requirement for cities to have successful brands that are perceived positively by target groups. Cities with higher corruption rates, crime, injustice, and so on, are less likely to be successful in applying any promotional campaigns to improve their image. This is a task that needs to be internally addressed as part of the overall workings of the business engagement platform, and not by marketing practitioners and agents.

Complementing people empowerment, diversity tolerance, and zero-corruption are three key components that support the creation of a vision (and process)-driven collective culture in Dubai. These components include, recognize and reward talent,

execution follow-up, and organizational alignment. The “recognize and reward” element represents a significant finding that explains in part why global talent is attracted to Dubai. Dubai recognizes and rewards talent, in terms of pay and of recognition. The city has implemented a plethora of performance awarding programs on the organizational and the individual levels. Annually, HHSM recognizes not only the efforts of big local and international business conglomerates based in Dubai, but also for example the efforts of street cleaners who are working in Dubai Municipality. This behaviour is a manifestation of Dubai’s deep-rooted appreciation of talent (big or small, local or international), which explains the level of enthusiasm that all 24 participants expressed regarding the way in which Dubai welcomes, nurtures, and appreciates talent. However, even with an appreciated multi-national taskforce that is empowered to work in a zero-corrupt economy, there must be a system in place to gauge, measure, monitor, and assess performance. This guarantees that good behaviour is enhanced and erroneous behaviour eradicated.

The execution follow-up category in the model addresses this issue. HHSM encourages a direct, real-time, hands-on approach to supervision on projects. His Highness himself visits construction sites, customer service front desks, and inside government office buildings to gain first-hand knowledge and understanding of how the vision of Dubai is being delivered. This finding significantly highlights the issue of vision/process management aspects in the city branding process of Dubai. While Dubai is a vision-driven city, process driven management is given high importance as well by the leadership in Dubai to guarantee quality delivery of all projects, programs, and action plans. That is, Dubai is not running by visionary thinking alone, but also by the adoption of global best practice and processes in the implementation of its vision.

no matter how successful or strong a vision is, it becomes worthless if it is not matched by a committed group of people and organizations to see it through. This introduces an important sub-component without which the collective culture is not complete and could not function successfully according to the working mechanisms of the model of business engagement. This component is organizational alignment.

All organizations that are owned and operated by Dubai follow HHSM's vision. All 24 organizations which participated in this study have in their office buildings in prominent places various sayings of HHSM, with variations that echoes Dubai vision to become the world number one. Almost all of these organizations have in their vision the proposition to become number one, or global leader in their respective areas. One may think that these organizations do that out of political necessity, or courtesy to the ruler. After analysis of the data, it is remarkably clear that the diffusion of HHSM's vision in these organizations is not a temporary fad, but fundamentally, an identity-building exercise, and influential form of identification. All seem to possess a genuine understanding, belief, and commitment to the vision of HHSM. The walls of Dubai Ambulance Corporation building, of Dubai Municipality, Dubai Police, Meraas, Dubai World Trade Centre, Dubai Tourism, Dubai Ports, and Emirates Airline, all exhibit symbols of strong alignment with the single unanimously agreed goal of making Dubai the world's number one city.

The brilliance of the Dubai vision lies in its simplicity which makes it easy for all its organizations to line up with. All work to be world number one in their respective fields, and all 24 participants seem to believe that this alignment will have the desired

domino effect across the city. And there is abundant evidence that it is effective. The language with which the senior official from Dubai Police (who is a UAE national) speaks about Dubai vision and aspirations, is exactly similar in tone, meaning, and enthusiasm to that language used by the British expatriate senior official from Dubai International Financial Centre. While the same applies on all 24 organizations, and despite their different domains, and even though some of them never meet, they are working in a way for the same team, trying to achieve the same vision for Dubai. This is articulately represented by what the senior official from Emirates Airline remarks in saying that Dubai organizations sing the same song, although they never meet or know each other.

What is interesting in Dubai is that these organizations truly align with the vision, on two levels: the official organizational one, and most significantly, on the level of their people. All of the individuals interviewed in this research study assert that their organization is part of the Dubai puzzle, and they are contributing individually and professionally in building the story of Dubai and making it happen. This is the cornerstone of the business engagement model, in that the belief systems of the target groups become in-sync organically with the overall vision, regardless of what the meaning of that vision is, and they behave passionately, and creatively if needs be, to achieve that vision. In a city with no natural resources, innovation is not only the answer to a need, but is a necessary strategy for survival.

## **Innovation**

Need is the mother of creation goes the saying. In Dubai, this is reality that has been in the city for a long time. It is significant that the data show that Dubai regards innovation as an alternative resource for generating revenue as opposite to natural resources which are scarce in Dubai. What is more significant, is that the leadership and followership in Dubai realize that fact and behave accordingly. In his personal Instagram account, HHSM posts a photo of himself when he was in his early teens with his father, the late sheikh Rashid Bin Saeed, at the top of the Empire State building in New York in the 1960s with a comment that crystalizes the critical role innovation plays in the realization of the city's vision. Along with the old picture, HHSM juxtaposes a future rendering of Dubai's newest innovations, another world tallest tower, in addition to the world's tallest tower that does exist in Dubai now, Burj Khalifa is far higher than the Empire State building which he visited in his early teens. HHSM realizes earlier on that for Dubai to become equivalent with New York and many other successful cities, work needs to be done, and change is at the heart of that endeavour.

Dubai is located in one of the world's most unstable regions politically and is also situated within an overall Arabic/Islamic traditionalist environment. Adopting an open cosmopolitan approach in this region is not an easy thing to do. But for Dubai, to have any chance of survival, let alone succeed and prosper, the leadership has no choice other than to be innovative in presenting change, and in institutionalizing the Dubai rule philosophy which at its heart, is focused on finding new and viable ways with

which the city can be attractive. Innovation adoption in Dubai is not a luxury. It is a means of survival, from the earlier days of its formation, up until today. With no natural resources, the city needs to produce a product that can be unique and appealing to visitors, investors, and talent from all over the world. In a region that is perceived as dangerous to most of the Western world, Dubai today attracts millions of tourists annually, with Dubai airport becoming one of the world's busiest hubs. How does Dubai do that? The answer is simple: being innovative and becoming the first in the introduction of many solutions that improve Dubai's equity. These may include adopting innovations that range from government policies to increase the ease of doing business, eliminating red-tape and bureaucracies, creating regions first free economic zones that allow foreign investors to bring and transfer capital, allowing foreigners to own property in the city, allowing cultural freedoms for diverse groups, providing world class policing that makes people safe but yet not feel suffocated or their privacy violated, and so on goes the list with many first-of-its-kind initiatives that really sets the city apart from any other urban development in the world.

What is significant about the finding of innovation adoption in the model of business engagement in general and on the Dubai city level specifically is that it is an end to a means and an end by itself, too. What business engagement does is leads the city to be innovative, but the processes that lead the city (or the business organization) to be innovative are innovation-driven themselves. That is, to produce innovation, innovative thinking, attitudes, approaches, and philosophies have to be in place. This is what Dubai has created. According to the data, the senior executives of Dubai organizations and their employees believe (and practice that belief) that innovation is what they all work together to achieve for the city, and being innovative in their own

ways of thinking is essential for achieving that outcome. All of the components of the collective culture work together to create an environment which is ripe for producing innovation, which is in many ways the most important asset to have for a city or a business, to remain competitive.

### **Consistent competitive ability**

In the year 1894 Dubai was a small coastal village with the entire population less than 10000 people working in maritime related businesses on fishing and pearl diving. The city's lack of means of survival at the time pushed its leader then – the late Sheikh Maktoum Bin Hashir Al Maktoum (HHSW Website 2018) to innovate new ways in which his city can be attractive. He issued the regions first tax exemption scheme that allowed foreign investors and ship owners many economic benefits, which led for Dubai soon to become a port of choice for the world's leading shipping lines (Wilson 2006). In the 1950s, Dubai made another important change so that it would remain competitive and attractive. The ruler of Dubai then, the late Sheikh Rashid Bin Saeed Al Maktoum, wanted the city to welcome larger vessels so that larger amounts of trade could be conducted. The innovation that was adopted at the time was to change the marine infrastructure of the city by dredging its inner waterway and enlarging its capabilities to welcome bigger vessels – and that was the well-known Dubai Creek expansion. In the 1960s Dubai built its first international airport, and in the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s and 2000s Dubai continued the same philosophy of innovating new changes that improve infrastructure, increase the city's quality of life, and attract more people to its shores (Al Maktoum 2012). There is a consistency in the way the Dubai

leadership approaches and manages progress in the city. This consistency of rule, of applying the same ideologies of openness, tolerance, innovation, and risk-taking are the trademarks of what this study coins as the “Maktoum Factor”. This factor represents the DNA of Dubai leadership which changes and adapts with the changing times, yet regardless of context or period, the same principles apply: business friendliness, cultural tolerance, and innovation adoption.

Consistency is critical for the competitive ability to remain sustainable in a city, or a business alike. People build their perceptions about a brand over time, until a point when the same meaning associated with that brand exhibits a repetitive mode of the same features of quality, character, and features. The same applies for city brands.

This study believes that the consistent competitive ability is the outcome of the application of the business engagement model. In the context of Dubai, the Maktoum Factor has been essential for the competitive survival and ongoing global success of the city. HHSM has indicated more than once that reaching number one is not a rigid goal, but a moving one. He always emphasizes that there is no finish line in the race for excellence (Al Maktoum 2012), and stresses that competitive ability comes from the understanding of leadership on the changes to be made and appropriately charting the course for the nation to follow. For Dubai, the Maktoum Factor has been the foundation upon which and from which the city derives its consistent competitive ability. In Dubai, the Maktoum Factor can be both a physical representation (in the form of the leadership succession planning as represented by His Highness the Dubai Crown Prince), and a metaphysical embodiment that is represented in the ideological meanings and substances of the various teachings and practices of HHSM. To be able to compete continuously, cities need to have a model of business engagement where

leadership generates a vision that inspires a collective culture which produces innovations that make it competitive. What competitive ability does for the city is that it allows it to remain innovative internally and continuously as the norm. It allows the city (and the business) to be an uninterrupted evolving, challenging status quo, which involves finding new ways for thinking about things and new ways of doing new things. Leadership in this context is critical, as it is the trigger for the whole process of business engagement. Leadership itself needs to be regenerative and continuously evolving.

In the model of business engagement, all of the components are strategically and organically linked. It is therefore asserted that a leadership who believe in openness, diversity, humanity, innovation, and competitiveness, will effectively serve the creation of a collective culture (in the city and the organization) which produces an innovation-driven platform that keeps the city competitive.

### **5. 3. Contribution to Knowledge and Implications**

#### **Business engagement and city branding**

The existing literature regarding city branding (see Chapter 2) highlights two important aspects about the concept, and these are: 1. The use of commercial marketing techniques in the promotion of cities, which is still a contested matter; and 2. The need to have an interdisciplinary approach/theory in managing city branding

(Braun 2012, Caldwell & Freire 2004, Chuang 2015, Cozmiuc 2011, Dinne 2011, Hergert et al. 2015, Kavaratizis 2004, Kavaratizis & Ashworth 2005, Martinez 2012, Parkerson & Saunders 2004). The problem with this approach is that it does not study city branding in the context of the organization but rather limits its definition to the level of the consumer. That is, city branding is regarded as a promotional tactical activity, and not a strategic management-level ideology. This attitude is caused by the influence of the conventional marketing theory, which is based on the premise that a brand exchanges value with the consumer with the ultimate gain being profit for the organization behind it or that owns that brand (see section 2.b). In addition, understanding city branding solely in terms of promotional aspects is a major shortcoming on both theoretical and practical levels. This is due to the fact (based on the findings of the data analysis in this study) that branding cities is not merely a promotional campaign that includes appointing marketing agencies to release some press releases and launch hefty advertising campaigns in global media. This is the mistake that almost all cities advertising through the media make.

As the data analyzed by this thesis show and is a significant contribution to the knowledge of city branding practice, city branding is viewed as a major undertaking that does not happen overnight. In a way, it grows progressively based on the organic deployment of a business engagement model. This means three things, which count as major contributions to the knowledge about city branding according to this thesis: 1. City branding is *not* a marketing promotional exercise, 2. City branding is the responsibility of *ALL* the people and organizations in a city, and 3. City branding is driven by the *leadership*. The major problem with the current thinking in city branding is that it tackles the matter on the surface only, and not in depth. It sees city

branding as a branch of marketing, whereas, it is a leadership mandate, as is clearly presented in the analysis chapter above. Leaders make the difference for cities, and not urban planners, city policy makers, or marketeers. In the business engagement model, leadership inspires a vision for the city, and the city in response develops a collective culture that embodies that vision and works with the leadership to deliver it. The mechanisms of this go far beyond that of the appointment of a marketing agency to improve the city's image. They involve a full engagement of followership, supported by a totally diffused vision – which performs as the guiding compass for everyone involved in the city. Of course, the real-world situation is not idealistic, and there have to be checks and balances and governance in place and this is what Dubai has successfully implemented.

There are several main questions here that need to be addressed considering the findings of this research study: 1. After the data-based analysis of this thesis of city branding in Dubai, how do the viewpoints in the current literature on city branding relate to the findings of this study? That is, do the findings support the literature that using standard commercial promotional activities can be applied to city branding? Do the findings support the need for a multidisciplinary approach in managing city branding? And, 2. What is city branding in terms of the business engagement model? Is the model generalizable to other cities? Is it Dubai city specific, or can it be applied in a city in Saudi Arabia or China for example? Is the model applicable to organizations as well? The answer to all of these inquiries lies in understanding the nature of the emergent business engagement model. Perhaps one of the most interesting findings of this study is that *leadership* is the main trigger for business engagement and is the main driver in the processes of city branding (or rather, city

brand making). In addition, and significantly, business engagement ‘happens’ and it is not applied by a royal decree or a corporate top management decision. All 24 participants from Dubai-based organizations in this study articulated an unwavering belief, commitment, and passion for the vision of Dubai and its leadership. This engagement was not induced forcibly on the individuals holding leadership positions in these organizations, it has happened organically because Dubai city branding process has a thriving business engagement system in place. For the people who participated in this study, city branding is not a marketing or promotional exercise, for them it is an exercise of self-identification. The city branding of Dubai for them is a meaningful identity, and not just a promotional implementation.

Therefore, the answer to question whether commercial marketing and promotional activity is part of city branding can be understood in terms of the binary relationship between a city’s identity and a city’s image (see section 2.e). The identity refers to what the city wants to be, as to the image, it refers to how people perceive that city as it is. The use of commercial marketing and promotional techniques in the city branding process often focus on the city’s efforts to change, improve, or enhance its public image. Based on the data analyzed for this thesis, Dubai’s identity is clearly articulated by its vision to become the number one city in the world. That is what the city wants to be in the future, that is its identity. Therefore, according to the business engagement model, image-related marketing and promotional activity resides outside the city branding process, and is not a central part of it, contrary to what is commonly argued in the literature. This means that city brand promotional activity is just the tip of the iceberg, and must be regarded as a complementary, albeit sometimes necessary, effort to the process of city branding, but not a major component. The major

components of city branding are represented by the business engagement model. These include leadership, vision, collective culture, innovation, and consistent competitive ability. The collective culture in city branding includes sub-elements such as zero-corruption, recognition and reward, people empowerment, cultural diversity tolerance, execution follow-up, and organizational alignment. Accordingly, city branding can be defined as the business engagement process which is driven by leadership that inspires a collective culture to adopt innovations for the city to remain continuously competitive.

The question of the universality and applicability of this model can be addressed by considering two major aspects: theoretical and empirical. As outlined in the introduction to the methodology chapter, this study is a qualitative investigation that is based on relativist ontological theoretical foundations. In relativist ontology, there is no absolute one truth, and experiences of the world may have multiple realities that are constantly evolving and changing. Therefore, the issue of generalizability of this research outcomes is not applicable, as is the case with a realist ontological approach for example where the goal is to conduct experimentation on hypotheses generated through existing theories. The aim here is not testing but developing theory. Accordingly, what can be said in this regard, in line with the interpretivist epistemological approach this study adopts, is that the findings may be transferrable to similar contexts providing useful insights on city branding and how it is managed.

Empirically, how the business engagement model of city branding can be applied by asking a set of questions in the context of another city. For example, in the context of

the city of Cairo. What type of leadership does Cairo have? Does Cairo have a clear vision that everybody and every organization in the city understands? In terms of the collective culture of Cairo, what is the level of corruption in the city? Is the city tolerant of cultural diversity? Does the city recognize and reward achievement? Are there governance and follow-up systems in place? Are the people of Cairo empowered? Is there an organizational alignment between the city's vision and the organizations working in it? What is the innovation adoption level of Cairo? The answers to these questions will bring to light the workability and ease of applicability of the business engagement model in addressing the effectiveness of city branding in cities. Table 8 presents a visual representation of an exploratory suggestion that can trigger further future research in the area to analyze the business engagement levels in city brands. This understanding can be the basis for additional empirical future work.

**Table 8. A suggested measure for business engagement in city branding**

Category	Score				
	1	2	3	4	5
Leadership					
Vision Clarity					
Corruption					
Diversity Tolerance					
Rewarding System					
Follow up					
People Empowerment					
Organizational Alignment					
Innovation Adaption					

Source: Author's own origination.

Moreover, can the business engagement model of city branding be applied in

branding situations other than cities? Business engagement happens organically in any social group situation, depending on the availability of leadership, a direction or a common goal, that all involved are inspired to achieve. So, theoretically, the business engagement model as presented above can indeed be applied on the organizational level as well.

An organization leadership – be that a chairperson or a CEO, or a managing director, for a small, medium, or large business, sets the course of where the organization is heading. They inspire their teams (various department heads and staff across the organization) and motivate them to believe in the vision and be passionate about achieving it. The overall collective culture can be equated here to that of an organizational culture – which represents the shared meanings and values of what best represent success for the organization. This organizational culture, in turn, will drive the organization to be more innovative so that it can compete continuously. The sub-components of collective culture in the business engagement model can be applied on the organization side. Every organization needs a zero-corruption environment where people are empowered, their efforts recognized and rewarded, and their cultural diversity welcomed and tolerated. Moreover, every department in the organization needs to be aligned with the overall vision of the organization, and there must be established governance and execution follow-up systems to ensure the delivery and implementation of plans and programs.

## **Implications for managers, marketing practitioners, politicians, and researchers**

The contribution of this study falls into two parts: applied and theoretical. On the applied side, considering the state of ambiguity and confusion engulfing city branding as a management exercise, the study delivers a comprehensive set of policies on processes of city branding as have been presented in the preceding section. For managers, these guiding principles provide blueprints for the planning, managing and executing of new city branding programmes that can be of significant benefit to city policy makers, planners, marketing agencies contracted on behalf of city councils, and urban developers. In addition, this thesis contributes as a useful reference for city governments planning to promote, modify, change, and/or enhance their city brand image and global perception.

Probably most important, the full understanding of the success factors of the application of the business engagement model in the Dubai city brand context can contribute as a benchmark case for other cities in the region; especially in the context of the Arab world, wherein, to the best knowledge of the author, no similar work has yet been embarked upon in the area of city branding. City planning managers can benefit from their understanding of how business engagement works in the context of city branding.

Another important applied benefit from the knowledge of the components of the engagement model lies in social behaviour, its anticipation, modelling, and

hopefully, prevention. If practitioners have a better understanding of how new ideologies, trends, and modes of behaviour spread in society, then they can develop methodologies and business strategies that can contribute to the management of these phenomena. For example, addressing the issues of crime, theft, drug addiction, traffic violations, divorce, and even, the spread of terrorist ideologies, can be better managed in societies if the factors that impact their spread and diffusion, are clearly understood and identified in the early stages. That is, the application of some aspects of the business engagement model in the context of these social phenomena can help in identifying what leadership systems are at play there, what type of vision they are generating, and what sort of a collective culture dominates in each situation.

On the theoretical level, this research study's application of grounded theory methods has uncovered the working mechanisms of the model of business engagement. The emergent theory from the data has been interpreted and developed into a plausible and universally applicable conceptual framework. The conceptual model of business engagement provides a common abstract platform that can augment the work of other well-established organizational concepts and theories which when combined can contribute to creating equity and a competitive edge.

For strategy experts developing the performance measurements and business processes within the organization, the business engagement model will provide a tangible bridge that translates Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and lofty

vision statements into a practical, executable form of behaviour and actions that all members of the organization can relate to and understand. In addition, for studies focused on the discipline of strategic management, the business engagement model provides valuable insights that can position the brand equity of the organization directly with its vision and various value propositions.

For marketing theorists and academics, the business engagement model will assist with providing a marketing framework in the much-needed organizational level of thinking and tools that can be used in developing marketing-specific doctrines, strategies, and policies. Moreover, the business engagement model also may have the potential to provide a common and universal system that encompasses the fragmented studies of marketing, which are consumer-focused, and connect them more conceretedly with the organization, ensuring that the marketing process is a fundamental component of organizational theory and management.

In terms of leadership theory, this is the first study of its kind (to the best knowledge of the researcher) that positions leadership at the heart of the management process of city branding. The business engagement model identifies the roles that leadership plays in the creation of strong and sustainable city brands—and other commercial brands, thus increasing scholarly knowledge about how leadership can be understood and conceptualized in the context of organizational theory.

It is intended that the business engagement model assists the elaboration and

application of diffusion theories positioning them for the first time in the context of city branding. This study provides new insights and abstract knowledge on how diffusion can be conceptualized in the context of vision development and adoption process. Finally, models of business engagement present a significant theoretical contribution to knowledge influencing the thinking, conceptualization, and meaning of city branding in terms of the contrapuntal alignment of the theoretical concepts of leadership, engagement, branding, and diffusion. For researchers, the business engagement model forms the starting point where future studies in the qualitative and quantitative modes of inquiries can be made. Qualitative research opportunities are present in the areas of applying the business engagement model in the context of other cities, organizations, and brands in the commercial context. Quantitatively, research can be conducted to test the relationship between leadership and the success of cities, or the relationship between vision and collective culture, or any of the model components with competitive ability and innovation, and so on.

#### **5. 4. Relationship with Existing Literature**

So far, all of the concepts presented in the emergent business engagement model are defined, conceptualized, and represented solely based on the data. In the following sections, an attempt is made to incorporate relevant literature to understand and elaborate these concepts. At this stage, it is important to bring in a process of alignment to identify where the emergent model stands in relation to the existing

review of the literature on leadership, vision, collective culture, and innovation.

## **Leadership**

Historically, there is no one unanimously agreed upon definition of leadership. Section (2.g.) of this thesis provides an intensive review of some of the existing literature on leadership, and argues that one of the most useful ways of understanding leadership reported in the literature exists in the definition presented by Robbins & Judge (2013), wherein leadership is understood in terms of its role in driving a vision for a group of people and that leadership is seen as the ability to influence a group toward the achievement of a shared vision or a common set of goals (Robbins & Judge 2013). This definition relates to the concept of leadership in the business engagement model primarily at one level, which is that of influencing others. The business engagement model suggests that in addition to engaging people with the vision, the leadership generates the vision.

Moreover, and considering the embryonic status of city branding as a discipline, (see Section 2.a), the role of leadership in the literature is merely reduced to that of political administration (Kunle et. al 2010). According to the model of business engagement proposed based on the data-grounded analysis of the city of Dubai, leadership is seen as far more than just a means of political administration. HHSM is seen as a symbol for the nation of Dubai, and his vision for the city is regarded as a higher purpose that all seem to be following out of respect, love, and admiration. In the earlier stages of this work, leadership is defined as that process which inspires a

people's relationship with their worldview and motivates them to behave accordingly. Following from the data analysis, and in relation to the existing understanding of leadership in the literature, leadership is hereby defined as the ability to generate a vision which inspires a people's relationship with their worldview and motivates them to behave accordingly. This means that the findings of this study in relationship to leadership support some of the existing literature and expand its significance to introduce the new role that leadership plays in generating vision and inspiring change in the business engagement model.

## **Vision**

As mentioned in McKenna (2012), vision can be defined as the ability to "be sensitive to changes in the organization's environment, and to be able to perceive a future advantageous position to which the organization must move if it is to survive" (McKenna 2012, p. 421). This definition embodies the vision category's interpretation that emerged from the model of business engagement in this research work. The vision indeed is an understanding of the circumstances and conditions surrounding Dubai, and the leadership's ability to understand those circumstances, and most significantly, predict the best course of action that leads to a favourable outcome, in this case, Dubai being the number one city in the world and having consistent competitive ability.

In addition, the existing literature and the way the model addresses the vision address

the concept in the same way. However, the concept of vision as related in the literature often refers to the context of the organization (Hatch & Cunliffe 2013), but not to the context of city branding. It is a difference of application chiefly, as the main properties of the vision remain the same whether applied to organizations or to cities. Dubai's vision to become number one is indeed a goal of competitive survival that is applied to achieve a favourable circumstance for the city's future – not least due to its lack of natural resources. Accordingly, the finding of this study in relation to the category of vision supports the existing literature and expands the application aspect of the term to be extended into the domain of city branding.

## **Collective culture**

In the common use of the word, culture stands for: "the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group; the characteristic features of everyday existence (such as diversions or a way of life) shared by people in a place or time." (Merriam-Webster 2018). Culture is the tacit agreement among a group of people as to the commonly accepted behaviour in relation to any given situation.

Culture can be seen as 'the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another.' (Hofstede 1991, p.5), or the common value system and world views and meanings as shared by a people on all their different age group levels (The GLOBE Project 2004). Of great significance

in both definitions is the emphasis placed on the collective nature of a set of common meanings among a group of people. Culture can also be a *distributed* common understanding of the meaning of reality and the experienced world.

“Culture is distributed among the people who hold the values, beliefs, meanings, expectations, and so on, of which culture is constituted. In turn, the value and significance attributed to the distinctive contributions of group members as they interact constructs culture and creates the coherence needed to form and maintain a collective identity.” (Hatch & Cunliffe 2013, p.159)

The question raised here is, does the collective culture category that emerged in the Dubai business engagement model represent the generic meaning of culture above, or is it merely a form of organizational culture?

Before answering this question, it is advisable to see how the literature defines organizational culture. It is difficult to provide a single, unanimously accepted definition of organizational culture (Jung et al. 2009, Baird et al. 2011 Xiaoming & Junchen 2012, Pilch & Turska 2014). However, a rising number of research studies in different areas regard organizational culture as an important contributor to the organization’s overall performance in areas such as innovation (Naranjo-Valencia et al. 2011), commercial success and competitive advantage (Yarbrough et al. 2011), human resources performance (Chow 2012, Awadh & Saad 2013), and even organizational corruption (Campbell & Goritz 2014). This suggests that this intangible construct of organizational culture is gaining growing importance in interpreting important performance-related aspects in organizations.

In their book *Organization Theory*, Hatch & Cunliffe (2013) list several salient definitions of the concept, highlighting important properties for it, such as a way of thinking, accepted meanings, common understanding, basic assumptions, shared knowledge, tacit knowledge, and manifested behaviour. A clear and practical definition of organizational culture is that it is a system of shared meanings held by members [of the organization] that distinguishes the organization from other organizations (Robbins & Judge 2013). The significance of this definition is multi-fold. It alludes to the role organizational culture plays in organizational competitiveness, distinguishing them, and highlighting also that: it is a system that is shared, and is a system of values that a group of people believe in. The question here remains, is collective culture the same as organizational culture? According to the meanings that emerged from the data analysis, the organizational culture within every organization in Dubai, along with the belief systems of the population of many individuals in the city, all seem to share the same values that are driven by the vision of Dubai to become number one, hence, the use of the term ‘collective culture’ that encompasses both: the organizational culture of government businesses plus the popular culture of the overall population of Dubai. Accordingly, the findings of this study support and expand the existing literature by the introduction of the term collective culture which incorporates both organizational culture and individual sub-cultures.

## **Innovation**

To innovate in the context of Dubai is not only about how to find new ideas and apply

them to make the city to make it more competitive. Innovation in Dubai and in the business engagement model, is a basic ingredient of the identity of the city, and its people too. The abject lack of natural resources, coupled with being in a very troubled region, has forced Dubai to adopt innovation as a means of survival, and as a viable alternative source of revenue. Innovation in the business engagement model is the main product of the city's collective culture, leading it to have the ability to compete and succeed in achieving its chosen vision. Innovation, in the context of city branding and based on the data analysis, is defined as the city's overall readiness and eagerness to be open to new ideas and thinking in terms that are out of the norm. In effect, it is the alternative natural resource the city uses to fuel its growth plans and achieve the immense success it enjoys. Fundamentally, innovation in city branding and in the business engagement model, refers to the ability to adopt new ideas, the ability to create new solutions that have practical benefits to the city's users and target groups. This is in a way not that different from how innovation is understood in the literature.

In the academic literature, innovation is perceived as the formation of either a new process or a new product or service which will have an effect on the way the organization conducts its business (Clegg et al. 2011). In addition, it is also defined as the development and execution of new ideas to an organization, having practical implications of commercial nature too (Asce et al. 2004). Innovation has been variously defined, for example, as 'successful exploitation of new ideas,' 'the commercialization of new processes,' 'utilization of small-scale changes in know-how,' 'the exploitation of change as an opportunity,' 'achieving competitive advantage,' and a combination of 'good ideas, motivated staff, and out of the box thinking' (Bessant & Tidd 2011). Innovation in the context of organizational

behaviour significantly refers to the generation, adoption, implantation, and incorporation of new ideas and practices (Axtell et al. 2000, Van de Ven 1986). The definition of innovation that this research study has adopted is that of Roger's where he states that innovation is 'an idea, practice, or object, that is perceived as new, by an individual, or other unit of adoption.' (Rogers 1983, p. 11) The significance of this definition lies in that it broadens innovation to include all phenomena and means a city adopts to become competitive. Accordingly, the findings of this study support the literature's understanding of innovation, and expands it in one area of application, which is city branding.

## **5. 5. Methodological Implications**

This is a qualitative study that investigates what occurs in the process of adopting an idea, a brand, or a vision in the context of city branding. Since this is a nascent research area, there are few fully formulated theoretical models of city branding, and how business engagement works. Thus, the aim is to explore the city branding phenomenon and develop a theoretical model that account for it and other areas of business engagement as well. The ideologies and methods of grounded theory suit this pursuit. The grounded analysis allows for the emergence of theory organically and naturally, which provides rich understandings for the underlying meanings of the activities taking place in the studied phenomena, and in this research study's thesis. The ontological foundations of this study are relativist in nature with the belief that reality is jointly formed by the participants of the lived phenomena. This means that the truth that this study has sought to unravel is evolving, changing, and most

significantly is multiple depending on the context of its occurrence.

The relativist ontological thinking adopted in this study sees what is real is as a result of what meaning we (researcher and participants) collectively attach to truth. What this means is that the truth we seek to understand about a certain phenomenon is changing dependent on the context in which that phenomenon occurs. Due to the fact that the accounts of the research phenomenon is context dependent, the generalizability of the findings and the methods selected are also context dependent and are generalizable not on the absolute level as is the case with realist ontology, but relative to similar contexts and situations of application.

The intellectual assumption here is that a grounded theory methodology has been particularly suitable for unearthing the underlying meanings affecting our understanding for the studied phenomena. Being not only close to the data, but fully immersed by in it, enables the researcher to cultivate world views as experienced by the study participants in relation to the study's main task of unravelling the business engagement model and how it works within the context of city branding. The challenge will be to see if the same methodology can be applied in further research investigating city branding phenomena in other contexts, such as in Asia, or Africa, in studying empirically how (and if) the business engagement model works in a city such as Nairobi in Kenya, or Manilla in the Philippines. Based on the data analysis, and the findings of this study it is proposed that a grounded theory approach would be worthwhile when applied to other city branding contexts. So, further empirical research should be conducted to explore empirically the amount of variation existing in contemporary concepts and practices of branding cities.

Another significant implication for the methodology adopted in this study is the literature review. Before embarking on the data analysis, this study conducted a full literature review on the various subjects that are pertinent to the main questions of the study. This represents the theoretical guiding framework for the research study. This activity did not contaminate or influence the emergence of findings from data. Rather, the literature review itself is considered as data, the analysis of which provides necessary tools to elaborate, explain, and position the emergent theory. And after concluding this secondary data analysis, the initial literature review provides valuable reference points and insights as to how the new emerging concepts perform and relate to each other in the larger existing body of knowledge in management and organization theory.

## **5. 6. Ethical Considerations**

Issues of ethical integrity and best practice are relevant in any qualitative research (Given 2008, Flick 2014), and they are even of concern (Merriam 2009). This is due to the fact that the probing and exploratory methods of qualitative research may touch upon sensitive or confidential information, depending to some degree on the specific area of research, – hence, the need to protect the privacy and anonymity of the research informants and participants.

Since this study uses interviews as one of its principle methods of gathering data, the central ethical issues involved here are informed participants consent for audio

or video recording, confidentiality of information, anonymity of the participants, and the fully transparent and clear presentation of the research topic of the study, its aims, and target publications.

No organization nor interviewees are included in this study without the full consent of the authorities and individuals involved. Informed consent agreements regarding recording, copywriting, and various uses of the interview data is provided in line with qualitative research best practice (Flick 2014). All 24 study participants have read, agreed upon, and signed the consent form. Hard copy signed consent documents are available in hard copy form and are stored in a digitally scanned format for safe keeping as well.

## **5. 7. Limitations and Future Studies**

### **Study limitations**

Considering that this is the first city branding analysis conducted on an Arab city brand such as Dubai, and considering the fact that the aim is to investigate and identify the constituting elements of the business engagement model and how they operate in city branding, the study did not encounter sampling difficulty as the approach is a qualitative one, using grounding theory methodologies which made the sampling theoretical rather than statistically representative of the entire population of the city of Dubai. Twenty four organizations participated in the current study, and the researcher encountered no significant difficulty of access to the leadership of those organizations.

The study however, did not fully include aspects such as age, race, religion, ethnicity, gender, and nationality of the participants, as this would have diluted the focus and broaden needlessly the scope of study. The aim of this study is to uncover the core principles of business engagement. The different roles that these elements play in this regard is an area for future research, especially in an Arabic/Islamic context of city branding.

In addition, the leadership part of the study involves the analysis of the leadership role of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the UAE Vice President, Prime Minister, and Ruler of Dubai, and it would be expected that an interview or an audience with His Highness may not be attainable. Therefore, the focus is mainly set on the analysis of secondary data such as His Highness' published works, poetry, social media outlets, official website, governmental speeches, initiatives, publications, and notes in various public appearances. With the design of study being on the analysis of secondary documents that are already published and publicly available, the research encounters no difficulty in data access in this regard.

Finally, the present work's qualitative and theoretically oriented nature generate relative generalizability; therefore, this study recommends that future quantitative research on the topic that would overcome this issue.

## **Future studies**

The findings of this study provide a platform for future studies that can be conducted qualitatively and quantitatively on three main areas of research:

1. Qualitative research opportunities are present in the areas of empirically applying the business engagement model findings in the context of both city branding, and commercial branding. The study findings can be qualitatively applied in the analysis of other cities in the Arab region, such as Jeddah, Salalah, Amman, and so on; and globally, in the study of cities such Toronto, Salzburg, and Munich. In addition, the study findings can be applied in the study of commercial branding, for example, in the study of brands such as Coca Cola, Mercedes, Rolex, and Google.
2. The thesis findings can be used in conducting comparative empirical studies on two or three cities, using qualitative and quantitative methods. For example, the model can be used in understanding factors of success and failure in a group of cities in the Middle East, Europe or Asia.
3. Quantitatively, hypothesis research can be conducted to test the relationship between leadership and the success of cities, or the relationship between vision and collective culture, or any of the model components such as zero-corruption with competitive ability and innovation.
4. Further qualitative and quantitative research in the area of developing a validated measuring system for how cities can be using business engagement effectively or not in relation to the various components of the business engagement model such as leadership, corruption, tolerance, organizational alignment, etc.

5. Further qualitative work is needed in substantiating a reliable form of measurement to the effectiveness of business engagement in terms of scope and scale, in the context of city branding, and general branding as well.

## **5. 8. Recommendations**

The recommendations in this section are intended to identify areas where improvements can be made to what otherwise has been described as a successful implementation of the business engagement model in Dubai. Informed by the emergent nature of the grounded theory data analysis, these recommendations are developed as proposed remedies to issues that were identified during the development of the concepts and categories throughout the various stages of data analysis.

### **Government-to-Government Alignment**

While there is a significant amount of organizational alignment with the larger vision of Dubai, in that all governmental departments believe in the Dubai as number one city vision and align with it, there is a concern that such complete alignment may not exist at the cross-governmental level, chiefly between one governmental department and another. Some of the data analyzed in the research study show that there are indications of silo effect management in some areas. Whereas government to business is excellent when it comes to each governmental department and their target groups, it is not as positive when it comes to cross-governmental coordination. This is probably a sign of success, rather than failure. The fact that each government department is so

dedicated to their clientele and addressing their needs may have led to the development of the silo effect syndrome. The solution to this problem can be addressed by the creation of a *Dubai vision team* that is composed of representatives from each sector, on the leadership level, without creating additional governmental bureaucracy and needless committee meetings. The main purpose of this body is to provide the various leaderships with a holistic viewpoint of the customer experience in the city and help them to identify areas for improvement as well as areas of new opportunity.

### **Criminal Justice System Modernization**

Due to the silo effects referred to in point 1 above, i.e., a relative lack of communication and coordination between the entity that promotes Dubai and the entity that polices the city, some elements in the Dubai criminal justice system could be modified to support the globally recognized cultural diversity tolerance of the city. For example, the Dubai commercial justice system is one of the best in the world, yet the criminal justice system could see some improvement, especially in handling minor offences involving international tourists and non-Muslim residents with their life style choices. With this, the city can easily avoid needless negative publicity in the global press and cement its reputation as the Middle East's haven for cultural diversity and tolerance.

## **Dubai Brand Making Entity**

Dubai has many department entities and organizations that work brilliantly in promoting its brand value propositions and offerings. Organizations such as Dubai Tourism, Dubai Media, and Emirates Airline (which are also participating organizations in this thesis) are doing a phenomenal job in telling the story of the city brand of Dubai. But all these efforts, in line with the principles of business engagement, fall outside the inner workings of the brand making process. What these do is that they enhance the existing image of Dubai globally. What Dubai needs is an entity that is focused on the brand identity creation side of the equation. This is not the work of a Brand Dubai, for example, which is a creatively driven arm for the Dubai Government Media Office, since what this entity does is concentrate on the promotion of the image of Dubai, and not the creation of an identity for the city brand. This process would entail reviewing the leadership practice in the city, auditing the vision, and overlooking all the other aspects and components of the collective culture in the city. That is, the entity will need to review issues such as corruption, talent recognition and rewards, execution of programs, cultural sensitivity and tolerance, people empowerment, and the overall extent of organizational alignment to the overarching vision of Dubai. In addition, this entity should pay close attention to innovation adoption levels and performance across the city (in both the public and private sectors) to ensure that the city maintains its competitive ability.

All the above recommendations – while based on the analysis of data that is specific to Dubai city – will also be useful to consider for other cities as well. The overall well-

being of a city brand is not simply a reflection of the image it enjoys but is indeed a core identity component of its existence and survival.

## **CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION**

It has been argued in this thesis that at the heart of any successful brand adoption there is an application of the business engagement model. In the context of city branding, it is concluded that the successful implementation of the various components of business engagement leads to the creation of successful brands, that is due to the application of all the various components of the business engagement model starting from leadership on vision and the collective culture which leads to innovation adoption that supports the creation of continuous competitive ability for the city. The study also concludes that the business engagement model can be applied in the context of commercial branding. This is in the sense that the leadership of a city can be equated with the headship of the organization, the vision can be the same, and the collective culture is equated with the organizational culture, and the categories of innovation and continuous competitive ability remain unchanged.

The significance of the development of the business engagement model lies in the fact that it can account for the city branding process – and any other commercial branding process by identifying the key factors that lead to the creation of successful brands. The business engagement model provides a realistic answer, this study argues, to all of the questions presented in the introduction of this research study. Questions such as, why people do the things they do in society, what motivates people to adopt a certain religion, ideology, or continuously buying from the same soap brand, and deciding to reside or visit a city other than the other? The answers are fragmented and partially available in various fields of psychology, marketing, branding, sociology,

and so on. The model of business engagement addresses the fragmentation of knowledge on these issues and provides a universal platform that can explain how engagement is made- not on the user level, but on the organization level. That is, it accounts for what goes inside the creation process of city branding, and any other general branding.

Leadership plays a major role in the process of brand making. Unlike what is otherwise mentioned in the various streams of literature on leadership, this study finds that leadership is driving the city branding process, (and any commercial branding process). This is considered here to be due to two reasons. First, city branding is commonly perceived as a promotional activity that is image-focused, and second, leadership is seen as assuming only a symbolic political role. One of the significant findings of this study is a new conceptualization of what constitutes city branding. The empirical research study found that city branding is a process that involves leadership developing a vision which leads a collective culture that is inspired to adopt innovation in the pursuit of acquiring increasing competitive ability. That is, city branding is an identity exercise, rather than an image activity. Identity refers to what a brand wants to be, and image refers to how that brand is perceived in the present time by its target users. Therefore, the role of identity creation in the life cycle of any city brand is that of its leadership. Secondly, this study concludes that a city's leadership does more than political representation. A successful city brand is the result of inspiring leadership that is vision-driven and is passionate about creating a collective culture that adopts innovation to achieve consistent competitive ability.

The study also concludes that city branding is not a promotional activity in the field of commercial marketing. This is a significant finding in that city branding attempts to create an identity for the city through the implementation of the business engagement model, while promotional activities are aimed at image modification or improvement that are usually conducted by third-party agents who are not involved in the brand making process. The reason why most city promotional campaigns do not work is because city branding is misunderstood as an image exercise, and not an identity building management practice as it is conceptualized in the business engagement model. In city branding, leadership identifies a vision that creates a collective culture which delivers the vision by adopting innovative thinking for the city to remain competitive. Image promotion tells that story and popularizes it, but does not create it, and here lies the shortcoming of many image improvement campaigns that do not have a proper understanding of how business engagement works in the context of city branding.

The most significant conclusion of the study is the uncovering of the various components of the business engagement model which can present a reasonable account for understanding the phenomena of business engagement in all their various contexts. Business engagement is the management system in which leadership, vision, culture, and innovation work *contrapuntally* (together) to create a consistent competitive ability to the relevant entity in which it is applied. That is, leadership creates a vision, inspires a collective culture to deliver that vision via adopting innovations to remain continuously competitive. In this study, the entity on which the business engagement model is applied is that of the city brand of Dubai, in the context

of city branding. The goal of the model in the context of city branding is the creation of consistent competitive ability, not purely for the sake of winning in benchmarking exercises, but significantly, for the creation of an identity for the city. Dubai wants to be the number one city in the world and is using the business engagement model in the realization of this vision.

For Dubai to be innovative, continuously, so that it achieves competitive ability, the collective culture of the city needs to empower people, recognize and reward them, tolerate their cultural diversity, and provide them with a life quality that has zero corruption. Organizations in this culture need to align with the overall vision and receive continuous oversight and follow-ups from leadership. This is the Dubai collective culture that enables the city to be innovative and have consistent competitive ability. This is how the business engagement model creates city brands that are successful and enjoy strong equity. Business engagement happens when leadership sets a clear vision that diffuses fully into the social system. The diffusion of the vision leads to two outcomes that are related; one, the creation of a collective culture (collective action around a national agenda), two, the collective culture develops a higher and continuous rates of innovation adoption which leads to the city having a consistent competitive ability. This capability inherently enables the city (or the organization) to work toward achieving its vision.

It is important to note that this thesis research did not create a priori the business engagement model. It is claimed that business engagement is present and organically implemented at any time and in any place wherever there is a group of people who are

led to behave collectively for the achievement of a common goal. Wherever, and whenever, there is a certain vision that is championed by a passionate leadership, supported by a committed collective culture, leading to competitive ability, there is a clear case for using the business engagement model. The business engagement model is about brand making, and not simply promotional branding.

The world's best strategies mean nothing without the passionate commitment of people. The world needs something to explain why we believe in certain things and behave according to that belief. Business engagement answers that. This is what business engagement does. It explains the passionate commitment on behalf of organizations and people when they all share a common goal and move in one direction for the successful realization of the shared vision. Since antiquity, from the first recorded history of how humans adopted innovations, a form of business engagement has been present in that process. A leader articulates a vision, which inspires the collective culture to achieve that vision by adopting the innovation. Can business engagement be applicable to the understanding of the engagement phenomena in fields of human experience other than that of city branding? To reiterate the arguments made by Professor Kathy Charmaz, grounded theory results that are based on theoretical sampling techniques can help with making generalizations that are applicable to many areas of human experience (Charmaz 2014). The answer, therefore, is strongly in the affirmative.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **1. Interview Questions in English and Arabic**

#### **Questions in English**

1. In your opinion, who is responsible for the branding of the city of Dubai?
2. How does the overall perception of Dubai as a city reflect on your own organization? Does it support your business? Does your business support the Dubai overall perception too?
3. Do you think city brands can be seen as business brands? That is, do you see Dubai city brand in the same way as any other brand, such as Coca-Cola, Rolex, or Porsche, etc. for example? And why?
4. Do you think that the leadership of Dubai is important in driving the realization of its business vision as a city? Why? And How?
5. How do you see the role of the Ruler of Dubai in building the overall perception of Dubai city?
6. How does the role of the Ruler of Dubai affect the organizational culture in your organization?
7. How can your business win the hearts and minds of its target users?
8. What role do your staff (which departments specifically) play in ensuring that the business value proposition of the city of Dubai is shared with your target users?
9. Why do you think there is a global recognition, matched by a high level of tourists and business influx to Dubai city?
10. What is the most efficient method of spreading your organization's value proposition with your target users achieving higher success results with them?
11. What are the elements that lead to the overwhelmingly high recognition Dubai city enjoys globally?
12. How does Dubai city achieve this global recognition?

## الأسئلة باللغة العربية

1. برأيك الشخصي، من هو المسؤول عن تطوير العلامة التجارية لمدينة دبي؟
2. كيف تتعكس سمعة مدينة دبي (الانطباع العام عنها في أذهان الناس) على مؤسستكم؟ هل يساعد ذلك في عمل مؤسستكم؟ وهل تساعد مؤسستكم في تعزيز سمعة دبي والانطباع العام عنها؟
3. هل ترى أنه من الممكن اعتبار العلامة التجارية للمدن (city brand) على غرار العلامة التجارية للأعمال الأخرى؟ بمعنى، هل يمكن التعامل مع العلامة التجارية (براند) لمدينة دبي بذات الطريقة التي يتم التعامل بها مع أي علامة تجارية أخرى مثل كوكاكولا، أو روبيكس، أو بورش، ألمـ؟ ولماذا؟
4. هل تعتقد أن قيادة مدينة دبي مهمة لتحقيق رؤيتها لمدينة؟ لماذا؟ وكيف؟
5. كيف يسهم حاكم دبي في بناء سمعة (الانطباع العام) لمدينة دبي؟
6. كيف يسهم دور حاكم دبي في بناء الثقافة المؤسسية داخل مؤسستكم الموقرة؟
7. كيف تقوم مؤسستكم بكسب عقول وقلوب المستخدمين المستهدفين لها؟
8. ما الدور الذي يلعبه الموظفون (أي الأقسام تحديداً) في توصيل قيم مدينة دبي عبر مؤسستكم إلى المستخدمين المستهدفين؟
9. لماذا برأيك تتمتع دبي بسمعة عالمية كبيرة يصاحبها توافد الكثير من السياح والشركات والأعمال في وقت واحد؟
10. ما هي أكثر الوسائل فاعلية التي تعتمدها مؤسستكم لنشر أفكار وبرامج ومنتجات مؤسستكم لتحقيق النجاح المرغوب مع جمهور المستخدمين المستهدفين لكم؟
11. ما هي العوامل التي تجعل من دبي مدينة ذات صيت عالمياً وإقليمياً؟
12. كيف تقوم دبي بتحقيق هذه السمعة العالمية؟

## **2. Interview Consent Forms in English and Arabic**

### Informed Consent to Participate in Study

Dear Madam / Sir

I am a PhD student at the British University in Dubai (BUiD). I am researching business engagement and city branding, in terms of theory and practice. Kindly see attached certification letters from the University.

This research will add to the body of knowledge about what constitutes business engagement as a rising concept in management. The research aim of this study is to unravel the mechanisms and building blocks of business engagement, within which brands diffuse in social systems under the influence of leadership. The subject matter of the study is the city of Dubai as a brand.

Thank you for your willingness to participate in the interview. Your time and involvement is profoundly appreciated. The entire interview will take approximately 30 minutes. To maintain the essence of your words for the research, I will record the information. At any time, you may request to see or hear the information I collect.

You are welcome to speak in English or Arabic, whichever suits you. The interview will be digitally-recorded and the interviewer will take notes. This is done for data analysis. The audio recording will be transcribed by the interviewer and kept confidential in a password-protected computer. All individual identification will be removed from the hard copy of the transcript. Participant identity and confidentiality will be concealed using coding procedures. Only the field of the organization work maybe referred to in the analysis for theoretical significance purposes related to the data.

Excerpts from the interview may be included in the final dissertation report or other later publications. However, under no circumstances will your name or identifying characteristics appear in these writings.

I would be grateful if you would sign this form on the line provided below to show that you have read and agree with the contents.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Sincerely,

Nawfal S. Abdul Ghani Al Jourani

British University in Dubai

## الموافقة على المشاركة في دراسة بحثية

تحية طيبة

أنا طالب دكتوراة في الجامعة البريطانية في دبي ويدور بحثي في علوم الإدارة عموماً ويتخصص في ميدان استجاذاب الأعمال وتطوير العلامة التجارية للمدن، من الناحية النظرية والتطبيقية، ومرفقاً لاطلاعكم الكريم الكتب الرسمية من الجامعة التي تؤيد ذلك.

ستسهم هذه الدراسة بإذن الله تعالى في تقديم تصور نظري جديد لمفهوم الاستجاذاب في إدارة الأعمال، وهي تهدف إلى تحديد البنية الأساسية التي يتكون منها الاستجاذاب بالشكل الذي يتيح للعلامات التجارية أن تنتشر في المجتمعات الإنسانية تحت تأثير القيادة. وستقوم الدراسة بالتركيز على مدينة دبي كمادة البحث وكتجسيد للعلامة التجارية التي تقوم القيادة بتحقيق الاستجاذاب لها على مختلف الأصعدة.

و هنا أتقدم لعاليتكم بفائق الشكر والامتنان لتخصيص وقتكم الثمين للمشاركة في هذه الدراسة بالسماح لي بمقابلتكم والإجابة على أسئلتي المتعلقة بالبحث. هذا وألفت عاليتكم إلى أن الزمن الكلي المتوقع للمقابلة لن يتجاوز 30 دقيقة، ولتحقيق الدقة الفصوى سأقوم بتسجيل المقابلة صوتياً. وأحب أن أشدد لعاليتكم أنكم على الرحب والاسعة في أي وقت إن رغبتم بالاطلاع على المادة التي تم تسجيلها.

ويمكنكم إدلاء إجابتكم باللغة العربية أو الإنجليزية (بالطريقة التي تناسبكم) وسأقوم بتدوين الملف الصوتي للمقابلة لاحقاً لأغراض تحليل البيانات العائد للدراسة، والتي سيتم المحافظة على خصوصيتها بشكل سري تام.

وأحب أن أؤكد لعاليتكم أن الدراسة ستتوخى متنهي الخصوصية في استخدام البيانات التي سيتم تحصيلها بحيث لن يتم ذكر اسمكم أو الدلالة على شخصكم الكريم بأي شكل من الأشكال. كل ما سيتم استخدامه هو المعلومات التي تدون بها والتي قد يتم اقتباس بعض منها للضرورة في داخل محتويات الدراسة، وسيكون ذلك بشكل عمومي تماماً مع ذكر التخصص الذي تعمل المؤسسة به فقط، وذلك لعمل المقارنات التحليلية النظرية في الدراسة.

وهذا أكون ممتناً لكم لو تكرمنتم بالتوقيع أدناه كدلالة على فهمكم لموضوع المقابلة وموافقتكم على ما تم ذكره أعلاه.

الاسم: \_\_\_\_\_  
التاريخ: \_\_\_\_\_ التوقيع: \_\_\_\_\_

ولكم مني خالص الشكر والتقدير والامتنان،

نوافل سعدون عبد الغني الجوراني  
الجامعة البريطانية في دبي

### **3. Samples of Initial Coding**

Interview Text:	Initial Coding:
<p>الباحث: إذاً كيف تتعكس سمعة مدينة دبي ويعودها مدينة أقدس الانطابع العام عنها في ذهان الناس على مؤسستكم وهل يساعد ذلك في عمل المؤسسة وهل تساعد مؤسستكم بتغيير سمعة دبي وكيف؟</p> <p>السيد حمد: نحن سلطنة الضيافة في دبي، دائرة الضيافة صار لها الجنين من سنة 89، كانت مجلس دبي للترويج ومسؤولة إدارة سياحة كوكبة من 97 مصطفى السياحة هي مسؤولة عن تنظيمه هي سلطنة الضيافة في المدينة ودفن المسؤلين عن العمل والقيام planning developing and regulating ، وهذا يعني كل جانب،</p> <p>الباحث: هل هناك دور للتنمية والتطور ، وتحفيظ التأمين ، وتحفيظ التأمين ، يعني ما هي المهمة التي تؤديها مؤسسة دبي؟</p> <p>السيد حمد: كل يعرف ما شاء الله في أي مكان، كبرت هايتا شملة كل علىها مسحة ما جنت على العمل مالكم كباراً وهو العكس هل شملة بيساعد سمعة دبي؟ نحن نعمل على هايتا المسحة ما جنت يوم وليلة، هندي اشتغلنا عليها سبعين يعني لو تكلم عن عمر دائرة الضيافة الجنين حوالي 25 سنة فسمعة دبي اليوم كانت تكبر كل سنة، واليوم وصلنا مرحلة يعني ما شاء الله الحمد لله تغير المدينة إلى رائعة في العالم في عدد الزوار والذريون ونحو ذلك، وأن تكون عن عدد الزوار في سنة ستلايين 1990 كانوا في حدود نصف مليون زائر ووصلنا فرق 15 مليون زائر في 2016.</p>	<p>Q2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Planning and guiding the promotion of Dubai from 1989</li> <li>- Dubai reputation happened after many years (25) of DTCM work</li> <li>- Dubai is world fourth city in the number of visitors</li> <li>- In 1990 we had half a million visitors</li> <li>- In 2016, we had more than 15 million visitors</li> <li>- Dubai reputation (recognition as a leading global city) increases every year</li> </ul>

## Dubai Corporation for Ambulance Service

### Interview Text:

Researcher: How do you think he effects that organizational culture that is in your organization from a tactical and realist point of view?

Dr Omar: Yea, first thing you've got a big support, firr the second thing is what he did is he detached us from the Ministry of Health, so we are government funded, but also he guide us to be income generated organization without effecting the poor people or those who are in need or those emergency but we have to search, he put this and now we have to think how to do it? so we are working on the insurance scheme and everybody gave this service free of cost, where our budget exceeded 300 million per year and our respond time is 8min but for all cases which is beyond the international benchmark.

Researcher: I was about to ask: where are we with the International benchmark?

Dr Omar: We are the best I can tell you, we are the best, we are unique, we are the first. We are the first people to be paperless organization hospital in the area since 2009, we capture everything through the system ok, so by saying this I never compare myself by apple banana even in the region, we are the first, now the vision of the UAE government is to implement and initialize 4min this is a big challenge for us how we do it? He said - I don't know you have to do it, saving life is something very important for me for you for the government, one good thing our leaders use the same ambulance there is no ambulance for a leader.. there is no ambulance, if any leader.. this is the ambulance hes using, poor person is using, labor is using I'm using, you are using this one but they care for the services, they spend billions of dollars to make a Dubai brand for Dubai citizens and for Dubai Habitants, for all the World. [Researcher: Thank you, you have the ??? and I like this point just.. I have a few more questions that I.. ] no problem.

### Initial Coding:

Q7:

- HHSM empowers us and supports us
- HHSM guiding us to be income-generating without affecting the poor
- HHSM guiding us to be innovative in our management
- HHSM requesting us to even reduce the 8 minute response time to beat the international standard
- We are the best in the world
- We are the first paperless health service provider

## Dubai Municipality

### Interview Text:

الباحث: تكلم عن العلامة إذا، كيف تتع垦ن سمعة مدينة دبي؟ بذلك شو أقصد الإطياع العام عن دبي في أذهان الناس على مؤسستكم؟ كيف تتع垦ن على المدينة؟ هل يساعد ذلك في مصلحتها في عمل مؤسستكم مثلاً الإطياع العام عن دبي؟ هل تساعد مؤسستكم في تعزيز الإطياع العام عن دبي؟

السيد رضا: أكيد **اينما** يعني الموضوع ع مثل عرض وطلب، إذا كان **اينما** اللي يغير من كيرك وكمسحة وكأخذع أو كان له علاقة يعني إعاد الوسيع المسمى فكاك لازم يستجيب يعني هذا شيء عليه، فينكمسن مشارة على المدينة وغير ما يعني، المدينة تعتبر من الدول الكبير اللي هي تسامح في قضيباً الليبية والقضيباً على المسحبة والمدحافنة عليها والسلامة، فليعطي يعني مثابة علىها، (الباحث: بوجهة نظركم من المدينة مثلاً كيف تتو تسامموا سمعة دبي؟ هل المدينة تنسها؟)، عمل المدينة إذا لازم تكون متوازن، أداء، أداء شيء، أسرار، أسرار، دوري وظيفة، دوري، عرف ابن دورنا وفي أي الأدوار يعني ربطة كلها وتحتها وهذا أوردي له خارطة تربت فيه حلقة الليبية الاستراتيجية، وبatisch حلقة الدولة الحالية الوطنية، هناك هذه الخطوط وأيضاً تنشأ تنشأ داخلياً في عيدها المباريات وأيضاً المؤشرات ففيما تنشأ تنشأ في مطلعها واحدة مثل ما انت عارف هناك أمور لها علاقة بالمشروعات وهناك أمور لها علاقة بتنقل الأصول وهناك أمور لها علاقة بتقليم المرافق وكل هذا تتسامم فيه سوا بداية من مرحلة التخطيط ومفيها مرحلة البناء والتثبيت وأيضاً مصباً برحلة التشغيل على سبيل المثال يعني لا يوجد يعني المكان تحمله يعني يتحمله سامحة الليبية، فيه، بناء هذا المكان يحتاج موافقات الليبية والتسارع الخاصية بناءه (الباحث: وهذا يطلق على كل مشروع يعني تقريباً يطبق على كل مشروع دبي، لما اتيت تنشأله هذا المشروع أو هذا المبنى هناك اشتراطات صحية هناك اشتراطات سلامه يعتمد على الناشط الذي سيكون فيه، وبالتالي الليبية موجودة في كل مراحل مشروع وكل المراحل.

### Initial Coding:

Q2:

- Dubai reputation reflects directly on our work
- We are trusted with preserving the infrastructure and health related aspects in the city
- Our work reflects directly on brand Dubai
- We understand the larger Dubai strategy, align our role, and then do it
- Our strategic plan is derived from the Dubai strategic plan
- We make our leaders and our staff aware of this direction
- We all work under one umbrella

## Roads and Transports Authority (RTA)

### Interview Text:

Researcher: How can your business – the RTA, win the hearts and minds of the target users?

Moaza: aaaaa... we have aa.. done a lot I would say for Dubai, done a lot for Dubai in terms of the things we've bought to it and if you ask me what are the things that have really changed how people see RTA, Dubai metro maybe as a mode of transport was one of the projects that aa.. maybe it's become a landmark of Dubai or maybe that and the second project I would say was the Dubai water canal and how its changed the face of Dubai aa.. proudly both of these projects have been executed and delivered by RTA aa.. and I would say they bring happiness, happiness to commuters, happiness to people using the canal you know happiness, so I think how can we do it? we do it with the service we provide, the way we make people happy is the service you provide and the ease of the service, if you are giving me a service that is so difficult for me to complete or get it done you know I will be happy but if I can get a service done with a press of a button aa.. I think that is aa.. something that is aaaaa... Its gonna make me happy you know, so ease of the service provided and the quality of it, this is what aa.. what we embark on to make people happy.

### Initial Coding:

Q7:

- Our Dept has done a lot to Dubai
- Dubai metro, Dubai water canal projects changing the way people move in Dubai
- We make people happy by the quality of service that we provide
- We make people happy by the ease of use for the service we provide

## 4. Samples of Focused Coding

### Dubai Customs

Initial Coding	Focused Coding	Theoretical category
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Everyone is responsible for the brand of Dubai city</li> <li>- Whoever lives in Dubai (government or private) represent Dubai</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Everyone is responsible for the brand of Dubai city</li> </ul>	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <span style="margin-right: 10px;">}</span> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px; border-radius: 10px; background-color: #f9f9f9; margin-right: 10px;">Collective culture</div> </div>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dubai leadership is essential for Dubai city success</li> <li>- With no vision of leadership, any city wont succeed</li> <li>- HHSM vision is key to Dubai city success today</li> <li>- We have a very clear vision</li> <li>- Our vision is so clear it makes all of us work together to achieve it</li> <li>- Dubai vision is to be number one in the world</li> <li>- Everyone across Dubai working together to achieving the vision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dubai leadership is essential for Dubai city success</li> <li>- HHSM vision is key to Dubai city success today</li> <li>- Our vision is so clear it makes all of us work together to achieve it</li> <li>- Everyone across Dubai working together to achieving the vision</li> </ul>	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <span style="margin-right: 10px;">}</span> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px; border-radius: 10px; background-color: #f9f9f9; margin-right: 10px;">Leadership</div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <span style="margin-right: 10px;">}</span> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px; border-radius: 10px; background-color: #f9f9f9; margin-right: 10px;">Vision</div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <span style="margin-right: 10px;">}</span> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px; border-radius: 10px; background-color: #f9f9f9; margin-right: 10px;">Collective culture</div> </div>

### Dubai Economic Department

Initial Coding	Focused Coding	Theoretical category
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dubai always adopts disruptive innovations</li> <li>- Dubai always takes risks on doing new things</li> <li>- Dubai does not wait</li> <li>- Dubai celebrates its diverse and multicultural population</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dubai always adopts disruptive innovations</li> <li>- Dubai always takes risks on doing new things</li> <li>- Dubai celebrates its diverse and multicultural population</li> </ul>	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <span style="margin-right: 10px;">}</span> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px; border-radius: 10px; background-color: #f9f9f9; margin-right: 10px;">Innovation</div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <span style="margin-right: 10px;">}</span> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px; border-radius: 10px; background-color: #f9f9f9; margin-right: 10px;">Consistent competitive ability</div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <span style="margin-right: 10px;">}</span> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px; border-radius: 10px; background-color: #f9f9f9; margin-right: 10px;">Cultural diversity tolerance</div> </div>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dubai does it all in is "Dubai way"</li> <li>- HHSM vision mobilizes the different teams to work together and make it happen</li> <li>- Dubai always sees global best practice and adopts the best</li> <li>- Dubai keeps searching for new innovations</li> <li>- Dubai seeks to be number one in the fastest way, but with high quality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- HHSM vision inspires us</li> <li>- HHSM vision mobilizes the different teams to work together and make it happen</li> <li>- HHSM vision mobilizes the different teams to work together and make it happen</li> <li>- Dubai keeps searching for new innovations</li> </ul>	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <span style="margin-right: 10px;">}</span> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px; border-radius: 10px; background-color: #f9f9f9; margin-right: 10px;">Leadership</div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <span style="margin-right: 10px;">}</span> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px; border-radius: 10px; background-color: #f9f9f9; margin-right: 10px;">Collective culture</div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <span style="margin-right: 10px;">}</span> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px; border-radius: 10px; background-color: #f9f9f9; margin-right: 10px;">Vision</div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <span style="margin-right: 10px;">}</span> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px; border-radius: 10px; background-color: #f9f9f9; margin-right: 10px;">Innovation</div> </div>

### Dubai Chamber

Initial Coding	Focused Coding	Theoretical category
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In Dubai, we all believe what the leadership believes</li> <li>- Our leadership has big ambitions for the city</li> <li>- Our leadership pushes us to continue innovating new projects and developments</li> <li>- I believe we are in the right track</li> <li>- We all continue working hard, being ambitious</li> <li>- To increase our revenues, we must think of new innovative ways to develop our products</li> <li>- Our leadership vision supports 2nd and 3rd layers of employees preparing them to lead</li> <li>- Dubai is always innovative in the way its been doing things</li> <li>- Innovation put Dubai where it is today</li> <li>- Ports, airport, infrastructure are all innovative solutions to maximize Dubai competitiveness</li> <li>- We need to continue innovating to be able to keep going further</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In Dubai, we all believe what the leadership believes</li> <li>- Our leadership vision supports 2nd and 3rd layers of employees preparing them to lead</li> <li>- Ports, airport, infrastructure are all innovative solutions to maximize Dubai competitiveness</li> <li>- We need to continue innovating to be able to keep going further</li> <li>- Innovation put Dubai where it is today</li> <li>- To increase our revenues, we must think of new innovative ways to develop our products</li> <li>- Our leadership pushes us to continue innovating</li> <li>- Dubai is always innovative in the way its been doing things</li> </ul>	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <span style="margin-right: 10px;">}</span> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; border-radius: 10px; text-align: center;"> <b>Leadership</b> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <span style="margin-right: 10px;">}</span> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; border-radius: 10px; text-align: center;"> <b>People empowerment</b> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <span style="margin-right: 10px;">}</span> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; border-radius: 10px; text-align: center;"> <b>Consistent competitive ability</b> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <span style="margin-right: 10px;">}</span> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; border-radius: 10px; text-align: center;"> <b>Innovation</b> </div> </div>

### Dubai Ports World

Initial Coding	Focused Coding	Theoretical category
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- HHSM is a role model who is pioneering a unique culture in Dubai</li> <li>- HHSM is creating a culture in Dubai that is self-energized and motivated</li> <li>- Dubai culture is like kinetic energy in that it is self-generating</li> <li>- HHSM makes different age groups of people from different cultural backgrounds think the same</li> <li>- HHSM vision is inclusive of all people, that's why they are following his model in Dubai</li>   <li>- We are part of the whole culture that is driven by HHSM</li> <li>- We look up to HHSM for inspiration</li> <li>- HHSM vision for Dubai to be number 1 is simple, yet to make it is hard</li> <li>- We are part of the Dubai culture that works to realize that vision</li> <li>- Our culture is derived from HHSM vision: we think bold, we think big, we invest, and deliver</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- HHSM is creating a culture in Dubai that is self-energized and motivated</li> <li>- HHSM makes different age groups of people from different cultural backgrounds think the same</li> <li>- HHSM vision is inclusive of all people</li>   <li>- We are part of the whole culture that is driven by HHSM</li> <li>- HHSM vision for Dubai to be number 1</li> <li>- Our culture is derived from HHSM vision: we think bold, we think big, we invest, and deliver</li> </ul>	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <span style="margin-right: 10px;">}</span> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; border-radius: 10px; text-align: center;"> <b>Collective culture</b> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <span style="margin-right: 10px;">}</span> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; border-radius: 10px; text-align: center;"> <b>People empowerment</b> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <span style="margin-right: 10px;">}</span> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; border-radius: 10px; text-align: center;"> <b>Cultural diversity tolerance</b> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <span style="margin-right: 10px;">}</span> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; border-radius: 10px; text-align: center;"> <b>Organizational alignment</b> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <span style="margin-right: 10px;">}</span> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; border-radius: 10px; text-align: center;"> <b>Vision</b> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <span style="margin-right: 10px;">}</span> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; border-radius: 10px; text-align: center;"> <b>Leadership</b> </div> </div>

### Emirates Airline

Initial Coding	Focused Coding	Theoretical category
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Emirates Airline was the first organization that started to promote Dubai</li> <li>- Promoting Dubai was a business necessity for Emirates Airline</li> <li>- We strive and live as a business on the success of Dubai as a hub</li> <li>- Dubai infrastructure, regulations, and rules were the basis of our success</li> <li>- We believe in Dubai vision</li> <li>- HHSM vision was the main driver for our business</li> <li>- Our growth necessitated the investment in Dubai infrastructure</li> <li>- HHSM lays out his vision, and gives deadlines</li> <li>- HHSM has always been very clear</li> <li>- All Dubai growth today is attributed to the leadership of HHSM</li> <li>- Dubai is a vision driven city</li> <li>- Dubai has a politically stable system</li> <li>- HHSM is a driver for both government and private sectors in Dubai</li> <li>- Dubai has a good success story</li> <li>- Dubai resorts to innovative brave solutions to address challenges</li> <li>- Dubai is run like a business – referred to as ‘Dubai Inc.’</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- HHSM vision was the main driver for our business } Leadership</li> <li>- HHSM lays out his vision, and gives deadlines } Vision</li> <li>- Dubai is a vision driven city }</li> <li>- HHSM is a driver for both government and private sectors in Dubai }</li> <li>- Dubai resorts to innovative brave solutions to address challenges }</li> <li>- Dubai infrastructure, regulations, and rules were the basis of our success }</li> <li>- Dubai has a politically stable system }</li> <li>- We believe in Dubai vision }</li> </ul>	<p><b>Leadership</b></p> <p><b>Vision</b></p> <p><b>Collective culture</b></p> <p><b>Innovation</b></p> <p><b>Consistent competitive ability</b></p> <p><b>Organizational alignment</b></p>