Effect of Leadership Style on Policy Timeliness and Performance of Smart City in Dubai: A Review

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Abstract

This study conceptually reviews the role of leadership style on the relationship between smart city policy timeliness (that is, smart city policy formulation, implementation and evaluation) and smart city performance. To achieve this, the scholars reviewed earlier literatures, as well as government portals on the development of smart city agenda in Dubai while relating it to earlier smart cities. The findings reveal that the leadership style used in Dubai 'transformational leadership' would enhance the smart city policy stages. Considering this, the scholars conclude that the transformational leadership style is an important factor that speeds up the smart city policy stages in implementing smart city agenda.

Keywords
Smart city performance, policy timeliness, leadership style, Dubai Smart city.

1. Introduction
One of the major government concerns is the absorption of migrants from less developed economy to urban centers which in recent times have been overpopulated and congested. The effect of this phenomenon includes high crime rate, social vices such as xenophobia, ethnic and racial tensions that might lead to loss of life and properties as well as costing government billions of US dollars (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2016).

Besides, the services provided by government seems to be ineffective and inefficient in the congested or crowded areas. Thus, to avoid these issues, there is need to liberate the congested areas to less populated area via infrastructural development and information communication technologies (Albino, Berardi & Dangelico, 2015; Zanella, Bui, Castellani, Vangelista & Zorzi, 2014). The process of connecting these isolated areas led to the invention of advanced or model city known as smart cities (Schaffers, Komninos, Pallot, Trousse, Nilsson & Oliveira, 2011).

In the era of globalization and advanced technologies, the term smart city has been widely used in numerous studies, as such, keen interests and attentions had been geared towards defining, modelling and performance contributing indicators (Alves, Dias & Seixas, 2019; Du, Zhu, Shi, Wang, Lin & Zhao, 2019; Willems & Graham, 2019) adoption

and usability (Johnson, Robinson & Philpot, 2019). Besides, scholars had also devoted amiable interests in the implementation of smart city agenda as well as the interrelationship between urban management, policy and smart city technologies (Nam & Pardo, 2011; Yigitcanlar & Kamruzzaman, 2018).

Some of the indicators highlighted by scholars include; government intervention, smart city policy, resource readiness, finance availability, human factor and the time needed for policy implementation to deliver sustainable outcome as well as leadership (Alves et al., 2019; Caragliu, & Del Bo, 2019; Willems & Graham, 2019; Du, 2019). With these, it was concluded that the concept of smart city should be able to connect and integrate the disconnected places in the traditional urban setting in smart ways to provide effective and efficient services with less human interaction (Zygiaris, 2012). Despite the wider interest, the termed smart city according to some scholars remains abstract and vague (Sikora-Fernandez & Stawasz, 2016). This is because, in history, there is no city that fits into the classifications of smart city. Therefore, for a city to be name smart, such city must address the issue of environment, security, governance and resource sustainability (Colding & Barthel, 2017).

Similarly, the intense migration being felt at the other developed places is also being observed in Dubai making the government of Dubai under the leadership of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum to think for the innovative ways of dealing with this situation. With this, the government of Dubai declare their intention to create a smart city and make all the residence of Dubai the happiest people on earth before the end of the year 2021 (Dubai, 2020; Government of Dubai, 2017). Thus, within a short period of time precisely between the year 2013 and 2018, the city of Dubai has been ranked not just among the available smart city, but among the most performing smart cities around the world (Fourtané, 2018; IESE, 2018). According to Kaur and Maheshwari (2016) by the end of the year 2017, Dubai government has commissioned above 100 smart city projects.

The observation, that is, the time between smart city policy formulation by the government of Dubai and its implementation to the extent that the city is being ranked among the most performing smart cities in the world contradicts the notion proposed by Rajendran (2019) Bengtsson (2013) and Odendaal (2006) arguing that ample time is needed between smart city policy formulation, implementation and evaluation so that the citizens can be able to connect the past to the present and relates it to the future.

Considering this, the main objective of this study is to conceptually examine the relationship between smart city policy timeliness and smart city performance considering the role of leadership in the relationship.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Overview of Smart City
The idea of smart cities has long been in existence and are often called utopia (Mora & Deakin, 2019). The history predates historical era. Despite this, evidence point to the notion why smart city initiative came into existence. According to Eremia, Toma and Sanduleac (2017), the sole purpose of smart city is to create and enhance quality of life through smart infrastructure and facilities, information sharing, city management, rendering city services and promoting healthy life experiences for the citizens (Bibri & Krogstie, 2017; Miranda, Porciuncula & Cunha, 2019).

Since over the last three decades, the concept of smart city has once again been brought into limelight (Mora & Deakin, 2019) with the idea that smart city should be city governed with technological orientation (Angelidou, 2015; Mora & Deakin, 2019), yet, the technological anchor of smart city should center on social cohesion and environmental friendliness (Bibri & Krogstie, 2017; Kandpal, 2019). Despite this, the success of smart city initiative lies on the political will, government or city leadership (Kandpal, 2019).

On the account of Kandpal (2019), smart city faces setback due to lack of proper policies from the governing agencies. While Yigitcanlar, Han, Kamruzzaman, Ioppolo and Sabatini-Marques (2019) argues, although, several cities are called smart cities, yet, their governments have no proper framework for their sustainability. As such most of the earlier smart cities are met with failures. Yet, several smart cities are still in existence and more are also joining them. Several factors such as technology, environment, human relation in the form of socio-political government intervention, smart city policy, resource readiness, finance availability, human factor and the time needed for policy and leadership were some of the factors that enhance the implementation of smart city.

However, in this study attention is given to the impact of leadership style in shortening the time needed in formulating and implementing smart city policies in Dubai to the extent that it is ranked among the most performing smart cities in the world. Leadership style has been argued to be one of the critical factors that ensure the completion of several successful national projects in Dubai were attributed to the leadership style employed in the country (Remeithi & Matar, 2017). According to past studies (such as Davidson, 2005; Elsheshtawy, 2004; Stringer, 2008) transformational leadership is the leadership style used by the Emirati in Dubai. As such, within a minimum amount of time, the government turn a deserted city to be one of the top smart cities.

2.2 Leadership Style and Smart City in Dubai

The transformation of Dubai metropole into one of the most world performing smart city did not happen in a vacuum. This is achievable as a result of the leadership style that enhance policy formulation which invariably, led to the shortest time frame in the smart city policy implementation strategy (Gertler & Wolfe, 2004). Unlike the common timeliness which several smart city scholars and analyst have tagged to be more than a decade for effective transformation of urban city to a smart city (Rajendran, 2019), the scenario witnessed in Dubai differs. In view of this, it is imperative to highlight and analyze the responsive factors for the paradigm shift which place Dubai city as one of the performing smart cities among its contemporaries (Fourtané, 2018; Government Portal, 2019).

As a matter of fact, Dubai smart city stands tall in the area of socio-economic and conducive business thriving society. To justify this, the following would give a clearer picture in terms of the time needed for smart city policy formulation and implementation dubbed as smart city timeliness which has placed Dubai as a leading smart city in the contemporary world. The phenomenon of leadership style remains a viable key in ensuring the performance of policy proposal and its implementation. As rightly pinpointed by Berry, Johnson and Montgomery (2005) and Murphy, Elliott, Goldring and Porter (2006), leadership is the hallmark of policy achievement. This conforms with the leadership style adopted by any society. The index of developed, developing and underdeveloped of any city revolves on the viability and vibrancy of the leadership (Bebbington, 2000). This justify the positional placement of Dubai smart city on the effectiveness of its leadership Remeithi & Matar (2017). The leadership style in Dubai can be likened to transformational leadership (Davidson, 2005; Elsheshtawy, 2004; Stringer, 2008).

On the account of Remeithi & Matar (2017), due to transformational leadership style adopted in Dubai, several national projects were successfully executed within a short time span. For instance, the city of Dubai was transformed from a complete desert to one of the world-renowned tourist zones within a decade (Al Maktoum, 2015; Garb, 2004). Also, the transformation of traditional governance into a digitalize governance system is all about the transformational leadership style (Salem, 2016).

However, the leadership transformational style in Dubai would not have achieved tremendously without adequate concentration timing. This leads to the assessment of some of the developmental projects executed within Dubai smart city along the time factor. Supporting this assertion is the studies of Bengtsson (2013) and Rajendran (2019) that affirmed the synergy between stages of policy making and timeliness. The giant strides that led to functional Dubai smart city were achieved with a period of 5 years. It is not surprising as one of the Dubai transformational leaders His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum was quoted to have said that before the year 2021, Dubai city will be the best smart city in the world (Singh, 2015). As at the year 2018, Dubai city has been ranked as one of the most performing smart cities in the world (Fourtané, 2018; Glasgow Universiti, 2019).

Linking this dimension and the development to the common claims of longer time to achieve the smart city development, Dubai's scenario has been able to surpass unnecessary time delay in the smart city policy implementation. This makes the Dubai smart city to be amazing and the inflow of increased number of tourists across the globe testifies to the fast-smart city transformation within Dubai. Thus, the phenomenon observed in Dubai smart city development plan is synonymous to common phrase which says "project delayed implied project denied" as experienced in earlier smart cities that were deemed as failure.

3. Proposed Conceptual Framework

Relating the arguments of earlier scholars and the reality happening in Dubai, the authors developed the conceptual framework that is presented in Figure 1. Table 1 shows the role of leadership style on the relationship between policy timeliness and smart city performance.
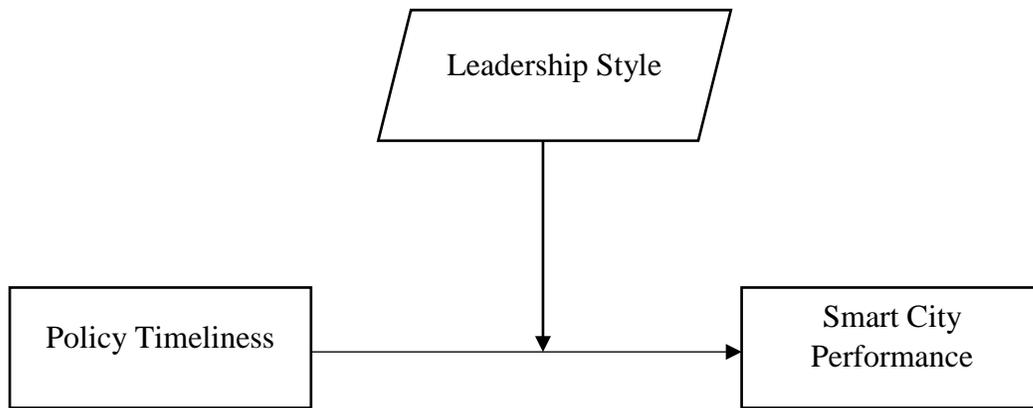
Figure 1. Proposed framework of the role of leadership style on the relationship between policy timeliness and smart city performance

Table 1. The role of leadership style on the relationship between policy timeliness and smart city performance

Policy Timeliness	Leadership	Smart City Performance
The time that is required to formulate and implement a smart city policy influence the performance. If the time of smart city policy is short then smart city performance will be accelerated. Whereas, if policy timeliness is long, that is the time to formulate and complete implementing a smart city policy, then the performance will be in a slow progress.	The power of leadership might be a moderating factor on the relationship between policy timeliness and Smart City performance. Dubai Leadership has shown the best example in moderating this relationship. Leadership is a factor that might strengths or weakens this relation. It is important to study the role of leadership to find its effect on performance.	Smart City performance is influenced by several factors. Policy timeliness is one of them as proven in previous literature. But how can leadership moderate these factors with respect to performance. When Policy Timeliness is short under the leadership motivation and support, we would have to a better and fast performance. This is what Dubai is showing as a good example in performing its Smart City.

4. Conclusion

No doubt, the vital role of leadership style towards the development of any society to be qualified as smart city cannot be overemphasized. This has been back dropped of this study using Dubai smart city as a case. Although, this paper is a conceptual review, the availability of relevant literature confirmed the stance of Dubai smart city among the performing smart cities in the world. Asides the transformational leadership style, as enumerated in Dubai's affairs, the fast tracking of some of the timely projects within the city reflects the performance of a policy proposal to a policy implementation. In a nutshell, the dimension of effective smart city in the world has always recognize the moderating role vis a vis impact of leadership with strong will in order for a leadership vision not to become a mirage.

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