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Promoting a culture of tolerance and coexistence in the United Arab Emirates

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Abstract: The United Arab Emirates is the most involved country in the world in terms of developing community awareness of the value and importance of tolerance, and high-level human solidarity, enhancing it as a community culture, and informing it of a strong institutional framework, legal and legislative frameworks. The research aims to highlight the United Arab Emirates government's contribution to promote tolerance in society. The research fellow is descriptive analytic. The research concluded that the UAE government has succeeded to a large extent in establishing the concept of tolerance through its global role in developing the concept of tolerance. The research recommends the need to expand the application of the culture of tolerance in Arab and international societies and benefit from the experience of the United Arab Emirates in promoting the culture of tolerance.

Keywords: tolerance; tolerance culture; radicalism; violence; UAE society; the United Arab Emirates

1. Introduction

Our God, the Almighty, has given tolerance and forgiveness a high status in His Holy Book, praising the tolerant believers who forgive people and forget their wrongdoings, saying: "And those who avoid the major sins and immoralities, and when they are angry, they forgive" (Ash-Shura: 37). The Holy Quran also classified the tolerant as being among the doers of good, saying: "And those who restrain anger and pardon the people—and Allah loves the doers of good." (Surat Al Imran: 37) These Holy Quranic verses are the basis of the roots of the emergence of the concept of tolerance.

At the level of the Arab countries, the United Arab Emirates has been recognized as the first nation to fight for a culture of tolerance in Emirati society and across the country. where Emirati society consists of an enormous amount of variance and unity, where distinction appears in the great difference in races, genders, religions, and beliefs that lead to cultural differences more than 200 nationalities, and where the commonalities and unity appear in the fact that all members of Emirati society live what is referred to as tolerance and coexistence.

The value of this research coming from it is of utmost importance at present with the proliferation of intolerant and extremist viewpoints globally.

Tolerance can be explained for a variety of definitions. The difference in definitions is attributed to the difference of cultures and religions and to the variety of epistemological methodology that are used to construct the concept.

Relegionally, the concept of tolerance appeared for the first time in Islam religion by Prophet Muhammad—may God bless him and grant him peace. The Sunnah of the

Prophet has shown several hadiths that demonstrate the virtue of tolerance, some of these hadiths indicate that the tolerant person will gain more honor. On the authority of Abd al-Rahman ibn Awf—may Allah be pleased with him—he said: The Messenger of Allah—may Allah bless him and grant him peace—said: (There are three things, and by the One in Whose Hand is the soul of Muhammad, if I were to swear by them, no wealth will be diminished by charity, so give charity. And no servant forgives an injustice, seeking thereby the Face of Allah, except that Allah will raise him in honor because of it).

On the authority of Abdullah bin Omar—may God be pleased with them both—he said: (A man came to the Messenger of God—may God bless him and grant him peace—and said: O Messenger of God, I have a servant who mistreats and oppresses, should I hit him? He said: You forgive him seventy times every day.) On the authority of Abdullah bin Masoud—may God be pleased with him—he said: The Messenger of God—may God bless him and grant him peace—said: (Indeed, God Almighty is Forgiving and loves forgiveness).

Internationally, tolerance, according to UN General Assembly Resolution No.51/201, is defined as “respect, acceptance and appreciation of the endless richness of our world’s cultures, our forms of expression and ways of being human” (Member States of UNESCO, 1996).

Locally, His Highness Sheikh Zayed, may God have mercy on him, founder of the United Arab Emirates said: “Tolerance is a duty, because man is a human being first and foremost, God created him whether he is Muslim or non-Muslim.” Sheikh Zayed said about tolerance: “Without tolerance, no friend would become friend, nor brother become brother. Tolerance is an advantage”.

The wise Arab Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan—may God bless his soul—said about tolerance: “Tolerance is a duty. If the greatest of all greats, the Creator—the Almighty—forgives, and we are human beings, should we not forgive?”

Tolerance can be defined as “respect, acceptance, and appreciation of the richness and diversity of our world’s cultures, ways of speaking and expressing our quality of human beings” (Boghian, 2016).

This study defines tolerance, according to the Islamic methodological framework outlined above, as dealing with the ‘other’ out of mercy and ease and confronting the offender with forbearance, compassion, and generosity, based on understandings to promote justice. When broadly exploring the notion of tolerance in Western contexts. In the same context, tolerance is regarded as an ideal and one of the principles that ensure a secure and enjoyable life, not for the individual, but for local, regional, and global communities (El-shiekh and Elsheikh, 2024).

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In the same context, the UAE’s diverse society and the government’s emphasis on tolerance as a national priority by launching the Year of Tolerance and establishing the Ministry of Tolerance.

This study aims to identify the efforts of government sector in tolerance in the UAE Islamic.

The importance of tolerance in the United Arab Emirates stems from several challenges, namely that the Emirati society is one of the most diverse societies in terms of nationalities, races, and multiple religions. The importance of tolerance is that it is an umbrella for all these backgrounds and cultures, while taking into account the preservation of the Islamic religion and Emirati values.

The value and novelty of this research is that it is the first research that discusses the efforts of the UAE government in promoting a culture of tolerance, which leads to enriching research and bridging the research gap related to this field.

Based on the above, we can ask the following fundamental question: What are the efforts of the UAE government to achieve a culture of tolerance?

2. Previous literature

Tolerance is the declaration of respect for others and their right to a dignified and secure life (Aderibigbe et al., 2023), to believe something they would like, and to be considered with consideration, regardless of color, language, belief, or viewpoint. Today, humanity has an urgent need to spread a culture of tolerance and turn it into a culture of religion (Alhashmi et al., 2020).

This demands a consistent effort provided by its institutions of thinking, conscience, and human construction, beginning with the family, continuing to the school, university, places of worship (Monier, 2024), religious scholars, sociologists, psychology, and institutions of culture, youth, media, and civil society in all of its spectrums and components, because they have the capacity to influence the mind and conscience, and it is their duty, or even their basic mission, to shape the conscience and ideas and protect the person against (Riaz et al., 2023).

Hatred that seeks to exclude the other, hate him, disdain him, trivialize his ideas, and eliminate him of his most fundamental rights as a human being whom God has honored and granted the freedom to believe regardless of he wants, but it is the freedom of the accountable who will be held accountable for what his hands have done (Jamilah, 2021). It also contains the universal values that produce harmonious civilizations that cooperate in kindness and compassion (Nugroho, 2019).

If you understand, achieving such principles has an enormous impact and is quite important. The absence of tolerance leads to radicalism, competition, violence, and destruction. This is why God has emphasized the importance of forgiveness and brought it closer to piety. God Almighty says, “And if you pardon, it is closer to piety.” Forgiveness is a critical step toward tolerance with others when they do wrong. To you, it takes psychological fortitude to control wrath and discipline an impulsive soul with the impulse to offend; intellectual tolerance is more necessary.

This involves accepting individuals who disagree with us in their thoughts, opinions, and even beliefs, resulting in the highest kind of fairness. Moral standards are placed on top of one another: “And let no people’s enmity cause you to be unjust.” Be just. “This is closer to piety...” Is there anything bigger than doing justice to others...?

Tolerance is required of people in dealing with others, and tolerance is essentially comfort and reassurance for the soul (El Shishtawy Hassan and Ozgen, 2021), through which transactions are elevated, bonds are strengthened, and affections are sublimated.

Tolerance for individuals amongst them remained a source of goodness and a step toward virtue (Al-Abbady, 2024). Hearts are merciful, efforts are joined, and thoughts are transmitted in a climate of tolerance infused with the energy of religious faith, which is a virtue that cannot. Its outcomes are only apparent through emotional involvement and proper treatment.

God Almighty said in Surat Al Imran, verse 159: (So it is because of mercy from God that you were kind to them, and if you had been harsh and harsh in heart, they would have dispersed from around you, so pardon them and seek forgiveness for them and consult with them in the matter. So if you are determined, then put your trust in God. Indeed, God loves those who put their trust in them.).

The concept of tolerance must not be separate from its relationship with global practice, due to this social human concept has evolved into one based on regard for other people through attractive mutually beneficial treatment within the framework of public rights and society as a whole.

3. Literature review

There are several definitions for the concept of tolerance. That certainly, the concept of tolerance is more expensive than any one that can encompass it all (Alfaifi and Aseery, 2024). Perhaps the most comprehensive definitions are those contained in the UNESCO Declaration of Principles of Tolerance of 16 November 1995, signed by 185 countries, which explains that tolerance is respect, acceptance, and appreciation for the rich diversity of our world's cultures, our forms of self-expression, and the ways in which human uniqueness manifests itself. Knowledge, honesty, communication, freedom of expression, conscience, and belief all contribute to reinforce this tolerance (United Nations General Assembly Resolution, 1994).

This concern has come after a difficult international effort. All international human rights declarations and instruments affirm tolerance for the right of everyone to enjoy his freedom of opinion and belief. This is found in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, either authorized or authorized. The Declaration on Human Rights and Citizens 1789 and the Declaration of Principles on Tolerance adopted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris in 1995, which provided a universal vision of tolerance as it relates to peace and peace between generations and peoples, as the General Assembly of the United Nations decided on 30 December 1993 to declare 1995 the World Year for Tolerance. UNESCO was entrusted with the preparation of a declaration of principles on tolerance and the holding of meetings, conferences and symposia on the subject. It was also decided to launch a promotional campaign on new forms of intolerance in modern times with a view to promoting ethical thinking so as to better contribute to avoiding the negative effects of modernity and modernization that have emerged in modern cultures and societies.

The Charter of the United Nations stated in its preamble that the practice of tolerance is one of the principles that must be applied to achieve the goals sought by the United Nations in order to prevent the outbreak of war and maintain peace, and the United Nations General Assembly called at its 85th plenary session on 20 December 1993. For the year 1995 to be the United Nations Year of Tolerance, given that one of

the purposes of the United Nations is to achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian nature. UNESCO has appointed the lead agency for this year.

On 21 February 1995, the United Nations Year of Tolerance was officially opened at a joint press conference held by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Director-General of UNESCO at the United Nations headquarters in New York.

The Declaration of Principles on Tolerance emerged, according to which the meaning of tolerance is defined in article 1, paragraph 1, that tolerance means respect, acceptance and appreciation for the rich diversity of our world and cultures, expressions and human qualities (United Nations General Assembly, 1996).

Tolerance is freedom and harmony in diversity. It is not only a moral imperative but a political and legal need.

Tolerance is a virtue that facilitates peace and contributes to the replacement of the culture of war by a culture of peace.

In his books “A Letter of Tolerance” and “Two Letters of Government”, John Locke suggested a more detailed and structured theory of the idea of tolerance; it included the principle of separation between church and state, which was the cornerstone of the principles of future constitutional democracy (John, 1997), and John Locke believed that tolerance was that people should not be tried on the basis of their religion, but be treated as civilians on a ground in which all were equal without discrimination or prejudice of any kind (Tate, 2022).

The British Tolerance Act of 1689 was the political better of the efforts of the authors of theories on the notion of tolerance in the seventeenth century. It was also a political necessity that gave way to the evolution of the history of tolerance, which in turn contributed to greater political stability in the British islands, despite the limited scope that the Act guaranteed for tolerance.

Philosophers and the book of the Enlightenment, foremost among them Voltaire and Lissing, have been involved in promoting and developing the idea of wider religious tolerance. Voltaire (1694–1778) has mentioned the origin and development of the theory of tolerance: The first principle of nature is diversity and this establishes diversity in the field of human life, and acceptance of this diversity is a fundamental right of existence (Abdul, 2011).

Voltaire addressed the modern concept of tolerance when he remarked, “I do not agree with you, but I am willing to die in defense of your right to express your own opinion”.

This old expression represents the most realistic appearance of the classical notion of tolerance, which expanded in the first half of the twentieth century to embrace not only religious tolerance but additionally freedom of thought, opinion, and expression.

In this context, we believe the problem of tolerance originally developed in Arab civilization at the religious level, providing the foundation for all other liberties later acquired in Western countries.

In addition, the attempts of Thomas Jefferson and other intellectuals to incorporate Luke’s views of tolerance into the United States Constitutional have been extremely (Voltaire, 2009).

4. Research methodology

The research followed the descriptive analytical methodology to answer the fundamental question of the research in addition to analyzing previous studies related to tolerance.

4.1. The UAE's specific initiatives and approaches of tolerance

Tolerance is one of the greatest concepts of humanity; it is a human principle that embodies the nobles and slaves most beautifully, and in the words of the Arabs, it permits and enables forgiveness, apologies the expression of goodness, the language of kindness, the respect and generosity of others, the tolerance that I agree with, and forgiveness is the ease (Jamal al-Din, 1955, 1956).

According to the French dictionary "Larousse", tolerance involves valuing others' freedoms, their methods of thinking and acting, and especially their political and religious perspectives (Madeleine, 1981). According to the Social Sciences Dictionary, the tolerance concept is designed to accept the beliefs and behavior of others on the basis of difference, as opposed to the concept of authoritarianism, oppression, and violence, which is one of the most fundamental characteristics of a democratic society (Zahid, 2024).

4.1.1. Launch of the year of tolerance

On 15 December 2018, His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan named 2019 as the Year of Tolerance in the UAE. The goal of this statement was to make the UAE a world-renowned capital of tolerance. The Year of Tolerance attempts to emphasize the importance of tolerance formation. It is an extension of the course and strategy of the founder of the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Zayed in the United Arab Emirates' leadership, and to adopt tolerance as a permanent institutional action aimed at strengthening tolerant principles, through dialogue, and accepting others and opening up to diverse cultures in the world. The United Arab Emirates is the first country in the world to appoint a Minister for Tolerance and to establish the Ministry of Tolerance. It is the most active country in the world in promoting community awareness of this lofty human value and its importance, consolidating it as a community culture and providing it with a strong institutional, legal and legislative framework, so that it becomes an integral part of the country's national personality.

On the occasion of "World Day for Tolerance", we in the United Arab Emirates are also proud that we have another universal symbol of tolerance, which is forgiven by God's permission, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan.

The International Day for Tolerance is an important occasion to recall the importance of the value of tolerance and the importance of promoting it in the minds of generations and peoples as a basis for spreading a spirit of cooperation and understanding between human beings and acceptance of others and to confront extremism in all its forms, which no longer threatens Arab and Islamic States (The official portal of the UAE government, 2018).

4.1.2. Establishment of a ministry of tolerance

The United Arab Emirates has introduced the Ministry of Tolerance, which is the first of its kind in the world. In doing so, the United Arab Emirates is following the

approach of the Holy Prophet in the promotion of tolerance as a method and method of State administration and of coexistence among people under a law that protects all. A new Ministry is attached to this principle.

The establishment of the new Ministry of Tolerance provides a strategic approach to teaching future generations the principles of the first rulers of the United Arab Emirates. The formation of the Ministry of Tolerance and Coexistence is aimed at promoting tolerance, pluralism and acceptance of the other in the United Arab Emirates. It has received global, and not only local, reactions, thanks to its thinking and universality. It will help young people and the next generation to understand the values of tolerance, rejection of violence and hatred, and to educate it on those values in order to prepare it for future leaders who are committed to the approach developed by the founder of the State in the management of the country of tolerance (The official portal of the UAE government, 2018).

The post of Secretary of State for Tolerance was first created in the United Arab Emirates in February 2016 during the announcement by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Deputy Head of State and Prime Minister of the Government of Dubai, of the twelfth ministerial formation and fundamental changes in the Federal Government, and the reasons why the State leadership appointed a Minister of State for Tolerance.

The Vice-President of the United Arab Emirates, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Governor of Dubai, has announced the creation of a Ministry of Tolerance and Coexistence for the first time in the United Arab Emirates in the composition of the Council of Ministers of the United Arab Emirates, which was formed in February 2016. His Highness announced the twelfth ministerial formation and fundamental changes in the Federal Government. He explained the reasons for the creation by State officials of the post of Minister of State for Tolerance. His Highness said that hatred in our State could not be tolerated. We could not accept any form of discrimination between any person residing in the United Arab Emirates or being a citizen of the United Arab Emirates. His Highness also emphasized that the culture of tolerance was not born today in the community of the United Arab Emirates, but rather an extension of a culture that has prevailed in the United Arab Emirates since its inception.

The Ministry of Tolerance and Coexistence supported the position of the United Arab Emirates to promote the values of tolerance, pluralism and the culture of acceptance of the other, whether intellectually, culturally, communally or religious, and to publish an article in local newspapers on 27 February 2016 entitled “Ministers of Tolerance, happiness and the future” (Emarat Al Youm newspaper, 2018).

Why? He answered all the questions that had been asked in that regard: In recent years in the Middle East, we have learned that we need to learn, teach and practice tolerance, to feed our children with thought, values and behaviour, to develop laws, policies and a whole system of programs and initiatives. Yes, we have learned that from the hundreds of thousands of dead, millions of displaced and affected people we have seen in the last five years in the region because of sectarian, intellectual, cultural and religious intolerance, hatred and intolerance (The official portal of the UAE government, 2018).

4.2. Ministry of tolerance aims to

- 1) Promote the value of tolerance in the UAE's society.
- 2) To establish the individual's rights and duties, in addition to his or her connection with society and society's relationship with the state.
- 3) Providing trained perspectives on social, political, religious, and legal issues.
- 4) Individual ideological and religious requirements are not allowed to take precedence over human needs.
- 5) To eliminate racial and political disparities between nations and their citizens.
- 6) Commitment to human rights.
- 7) Preservation of culture and national identity, as well as the consolidation of values such as loyalty and nationalism (The official portal of the UAE government, 2018).

In 2016, the Council of Ministers adopted the National Program for Tolerance to consolidate the values of tolerance, multiculturalism and acceptance of others, and to reject discrimination, hatred and intolerance by thought, education and behaviour. The programme is based on seven main pillars:

Islam.

- 1) The Constitution of the United Arab Emirates.
- 2) Zayed's legacy and United Arab Emirates morality.
- 3) International instruments.
- 4) Archaeology and history.
- 5) Human instinct.
- 6) Common values.

The National Program for Tolerance will be implemented through task forces set up in cooperation with the main stakeholders, which will operate within five main areas:

- Strengthening the role of government as an incubator of tolerance.
- Strengthening the role of the family in building society.
- Promote tolerance among young people and prevent them from intolerance and extremism.
- Enriching scientific and cultural content.
- To contribute to international efforts to promote tolerance and to highlight the leading role of the State in this field.
- The program includes a number of initiatives, including a week of tolerance per year, the establishment of the Emirates Centre for Tolerance and the program of responsibility for tolerance for institutions (The official portal of the UAE government, 2018).

Accordingly, the values of tolerance in United Arab Emirates society are based on seven main pillars: Islam, the Constitution of the United Arab Emirates, the legacy of Zayed and the ethics of the United Arab Emirates, international covenants, monuments and history, human innate and shared values. Through these solid foundations, the United Arab Emirates society continues to consolidate the values of tolerance, cultural pluralism and acceptance of others, and to reject discrimination, hatred and intolerance in thought, education and behaviour.

Accordingly, the values of amnesty and tolerance were found to be a major feature of the civilizational image of the United Arab Emirates after the founding of the United Arab Emirates in 1971, rooted in the legacy of Zayed Al-Ghud al-Ghud al-Tahrah, whose children have since established it, the tolerant values of Islam, which promote tolerance, coexistence and mediation, and the ethics of the United Arab Emirates, which have been established over time, supported by the system of authentic Arab values, customs and traditions associated with the children of this country, and the Constitution of the United Arab Emirates and international covenants, which cover these values, which encourage tolerance and mutual coexistence with a legal framework that protects them and ensures their continuity. The national program for tolerance supports the State's approach to the implementation of United Arab Emirates Vision 2021 and the national agenda, with a view to reaching a cohesive and identifiable society.

The program works in five main areas: Strengthening the role of the Government as an incubator for tolerance; strengthening the role of the family in building society; promoting tolerance among young people and preventing them from intolerance and extremism; enriching scientific and cultural content; contributing to international efforts to promote tolerance; and highlighting the leading role of the State in this area. Several initiatives include: The Voice of Tolerance initiative, which is based on the selection of members from different segments of society, to disseminate the values of tolerance and rejection of racism and hatred through various targeted activities and activities, the use of social media and the channels of communication available, and in partnership with the various media.

5. Conclusion

In this article, the purpose of this research was to discuss the efforts of the contribution of UAE authorities in developing a culture of tolerance. The research concluded that:

- 1) The UAE government has succeeded to a large extent in establishing the concept of tolerance through its global role in developing the concept of tolerance until the name of the United Arab Emirates became linked to tolerance and it is part of the vision of the national strategy of the United Arab Emirates, whether through developing programs, strategies and initiatives related to promoting the values of tolerance.
- 2) The pioneering efforts of the Government of the United Arab Emirates to develop a State Ministry of Tolerance and a national program for tolerance are aimed not only at preserving the values of tolerance and coexistence that prevail in the United Arab Emirates society and at providing initiatives that promote these values and disseminate them locally, regionally and internationally. Rather, they are intended to convey the message of the High Emirate to the entire world that the concern to consolidate the values of tolerance, coexistence, respect for cultural pluralism, rejection of hatred and extremism and rejection of others must be a top national and international priority and must have the institutional and legal frameworks that protect them, since only this will ensure security, stability and world peace.

The research recommends the need to expand the application of the culture of tolerance in Arab and international societies and benefit from the experience of the United Arab Emirates in promoting the culture of tolerance.

For future research, the study recommends: To reinforce the UAE's role as a global tolerance funding and to confirm the value of tolerance as a long-term institutional act through a series of laws and policies aimed at deepening tolerance, negotiation, acceptance of the other, and openness to different cultures, particularly among younger generations, with the goal of reflecting its positive effects on society as a whole. Everyone must understand that solidarity and civil society cannot be built on a relationship between awareness of freedoms and commitment to duties.

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