

NEURO-LINGUISTIC PROGRAMMING (NLP): AWARENESS AND PRACTICE IN UAE

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ABSTRACT

Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) is a new field, concerned with people's patterns of behavior and communication. Patterns include not only observable actions in the world but also the thinking processes and the organization of people's states-of-mind as well as their emotions and how all senses are used to reach a point of attention or concentration. Since its focus is on creating models of human's excellence, many applications of NLP have been developed. Moreover, NLP diffusion across the globe has been highly documented where leaders and consultants in businesses have turned to the creative and innovative aspects of NLP for inspiration in organizational development, total quality management, team building and strategic planning. However, although there is a strong body of knowledge documenting NLP across the western hemisphere, much less is known about the Arab world in this respect.

The aim of this paper is twofold: to assess NLP patterns and behaviors as practiced by a sample of UAE employees and managers in order to shed light on current practices in the UAE workplace; and, to assess the impact of NLP on respondents' behavior and its consequences on the organization's objectives. Accordingly, a quantitative analysis is applied using a survey questionnaire. Employees and managers from different areas and work environments constitute the sample population. Outcomes of the research are expected to define the workplace environment by defining the dynamics of UAE employees and managers that are believed to play a significant role in contributing to the assessment of the organization's health.

Keywords: Behaviors, Neuro-Linguistic Programming, Quantitative Analysis, UAE

1. Introduction

Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) is concerned with how top people in different fields obtain outstanding results, and how their successful thinking patterns and behavior can be copied. It is concerned with what happen when people think, and the effect of their thinking on their behavior, and the behavior of others. NLP teaches how to communicate, inwardly and outwardly, in a way that can make a difference between mediocrity and excellence, between just existing and really living (Hilton, 2007).

NLP is both an art and a science of personal excellence. It is an art, because the way that one thinks and acts is unique to each person, and any description - especially of feelings, attitudes and beliefs - is bound to be highly subjective. It is also a science because it incorporates well researched methods that can be used to identify the patterns of successful behavior (Samarathunge, 2001).

Being an energizing science, NLP is now applied in different areas in the world, namely the major three continents: Britain, America and Australia. NLP was looked at to be one way to treat people with disorders, phobias or other mental problems, but eventually it developed to be a science that is applied in different areas, starting with someone's personal life and reaching the corporate life of any organization (Global Watch Weekly Report, 2014, Para 1). Based on that, and considering the progressive UAE business market, this research will provide a general overview of the NLP concept and practices, while shedding light on the current status of NLP awareness in the UAE area, taking Dubai as the main area of research as it mainly includes the largest number of internationally known companies and corporations, in addition to the workforce formed of foreigners from different continents.

2. Literature Review

There are a number of earlier descriptions of NLP. Grinder and Bandler, defined NLP as "Neuro-Linguistic Programming is the discipline whose domain is the structure of subjective experience. It makes no commitment to theory, but rather has the status of a model – a set of procedure whose usefulness not truthfulness is to be the measure of its worth" (Dilts, Grinder, Bandler, Cameron-Bandler & DeLozier, 1980).

McDermott (n.d., Para 7) contended that the early years of NLP were an exciting time of discovery. Starting with Bandler and Grinder who "observed the dynamics of unconscious communication, the influence of language patterns, the structure of belief and identity, and the neurological patterns people use for storing information. Their experimentation with the processes and procedures created, allowed them to discover that these were effective in helping people to make the changes they wished to make with success". Moreover, McDermott adds, "NLP became known as a new field of personal growth that offered people the possibility of working through difficult problems in a short amount of time. It was then that NLP attracted an expert group to study and advance the field of NLP to the stature it has today namely, Leslie Cameron-Bandler, Judith DeLozier, and Robert Dilts".

According to Collingwood & Collingwood (2001), NLP explores the relationships between how people think (neuro), how people communicate both verbally and non-verbally (linguistic), and how people build patterns of behavior and emotion (programmes). Furthermore, the co-creator of NLP, John Grinder and his partner Carmen Bostic St. Clair (2001) use a more technical definition of NLP in their book *Whispering In the Wind*. They assert NLP as

"... a modeling technology whose specific subject matter is the set of differences that make the difference between the performance of geniuses and that of average performers in the same field or activity. In this sense, the objective of modeling studies in NLP is to explicate in a transferable and learnable code these sets of differences. The core activity, then, is the mapping of tacit knowledge onto an explicit model (p. 50)".

Satrajit (2010) presents a simple view of NLP. He contends that **Neuro** is about the neurological system. NLP is based on the idea that humans experience the world through their senses and translate sensory information into thought processes, both conscious and unconscious. Thought processes activate the neurological system, which affects the physiology, emotions, and behavior of the person. While, **Linguistic** refers to the way human beings use language to make sense of the world, capture and conceptualize experience, and communicate that experience to others. In NLP, linguistics is the study of how the words humans utter influence their experience. Finally, **Programming** draws heavily from the learning theory and addresses how humans code or mentally represent experience. The personal programming consists of the internal processes and strategies (thinking patterns) that a person uses to make decisions, solve problems, learn, evaluate, and get results. NLP shows people how to recode their experiences and organize their internal programming so as to attain the outcomes they want.

Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) is a new field concerned with the processes of how people live their lives, and their patterns of behavior and communication. Patterns include not only observable actions in the world but also the thinking processes and the organization of people's states-of-mind as well as their emotions and how all senses are used to reach a point of attention or concentration (Collingwood, 2013, Para 2). Since its focus is on creating models of human excellence, many applications of NLP have been developed. People apply NLP to coaching, management, personal development, human change, counseling, and education. Any area of life, where the quality of a person's behavior or communication is critical to the success of his/her outcome, is amenable to NLP application (Collingwood, 2013, Para 19).

The phrase "Neuro-Linguistic Programming" describes the process of how personality creates and expresses itself. People are all made up of a neurology that conveys information about the surrounding environment to their central nervous systems and brains. Since humans are also meaning-creating creatures, they translate these perceptions in their brains into meanings, beliefs and expectations (The Mindworks.eu, 2014, Para 2). As humans continue to grow from baby into a more complex adult human, they tend to filter, distort and magnify the input they receive from the environment such that it matches the elaborate program one evolves to explain life's experiences. Therefore, the core of NLP is about the study of how people do all the aforementioned activities, the kinds of meanings they deduce from their perceptions, and the internal programming and external behaviors they set up to explain, predict and make sense of it all (NLP-practitioners.com, 2014, Para 5-6). It is now used internationally by millions of people throughout the world in such diverse fields as management, sales, marketing, public relations, education, therapy, sports, and personal development (Laposi & Dan, 2014, 135).

2.1 NLP New Code

According to Carroll (2009, June), "new Code NLP is set of NLP tools and techniques developed by John Grinder initially with Judith Delozier, and then Carmen Bostic St Clair. In later years other collaborators have joined John and Carmen to form a development team. When creating the New Code, Grinder sought to correct what he perceived to be coding flaws in the classic code and to create fast and effective change processes for working with clients. John was also concerned at the lack of personal congruency in NLP Practitioners, that is people well trained in NLP were stunningly effective at helping their clients experience miraculous change yet their own lives were in a mess. Self-application of New Code patterns is an essential part of training for New Code NLP Practitioners" (Para 2).

According to Collingwood (2010), a significant difference between the new code of NLP and the classic code is the specification of the roles of conscious attention and the unconscious mind. "Historically, application of classic code NLP was oriented towards conscious manipulation of internal representations (visual images, sounds, and sensations). There was no formal engagement of the unconscious mind. An

outcome was chosen in isolation and a process implemented to shift from the present state to the desired state. If the outcome had unfortunate consequences to the person's lifestyle, family or social system, this became apparent through feedback in real time" (Para 21).

Collingwood (Para 24) contends that "it is useful to engage the unconscious mind when choosing outcomes and resources, because it has access to a greater range of possibilities than the conscious mind. It works with patterns, in metaphor and can consider multiple time frames, logical levels and perceptual positions. The unconscious mind has the capacity to imagine future scenarios and include likely consequences. It can deliver intents, solutions and many other resources to consciousness and carries information from all our experience".

The author continues, "As communication with the unconscious mind develops, it may progress naturally from "yes", "no" and "don't know" signal responses to offering fully formed ideas to the conscious mind in response to proposals and questions. Since this is how ideas are communicated already, the intent is to recognize when the unconscious uses this route to communicate in response to conscious queries" (Para 36).

2.2 The NLP Communication Model

The NLP Model explains how human beings process the information that comes to them from the outside. According to NLP, people move through life not by responding to the world around them, but as they perceive or map of this world.

Abraham (n.d.) contends that "people's perceptions are gathered through their senses and they filter and interpret their experiences based on their beliefs, interests, upbringing, preoccupation and state of mind so that they fit in with what they know. Their map of the world is like a copy of the outside world and since this cannot be exact in terms of measurement, and other statistical data, only a model is made" (p. 1). Figure 1 depicts a graphical representation of the aforementioned model.

According to Shashank Nakate (2009), "the human brain or the nervous system, receives huge amounts of information, around 2 million bits per second. However, only 7 bits of information is consciously 'assimilated' in the period of a second. The information is processed and then it affects the thoughts, physiology and behavior" (Para 2). Furthermore, Nakate contends that "when the information enters the mind, it is filtered and either deleted, distorted or generalized. The generalization of information happens due to the ideas, values, memories and beliefs that are already present in one's mind. Based on these memories, ideas, values, etc. an internal representation of the information is formed. This representation has an impact on the physiology and further guides the behavior. The changes that take place in the behavior are reflected in the form of posture, body language and facial expressions" (Para 3).

Moreover, Nakate concurs that the NLP communication model was developed by scientists on the basis of four assumptions namely, "1) sensory organs help the person collect information from the surroundings; 2) one has to constantly change the way he/she performs the tasks to avoid a state of mind, if one doesn't change his/her thought process, the feedback he/she obtains will be redundant; 3) thoughts have a huge impact on the end result of one's efforts; and, 4) every single person has the resources to bring about desirable changes in his/her thoughts and behavior" (Para 4-7).

2.3 The Pillars of NLP

The NLP Center (2006) presented the six principles that are also labeled the pillars of NLP namely,

- 1) Personal or individual emotional state and level of skills.
- 2) Presupposition – or the guiding principles of NLP. When accepted as 'real "and acted upon they help shape one's beliefs and ideas of how to act effectively in the world;

- 3) Rapport- the quality of relationship that results in mutual trust and responsiveness.
- 4) Outcome- knowing what is the desired outcome that is, being clear about what is wanted and being able to elicit from other individuals or customers what is that they want.
- 5) Feedback – indicators for the achievement. The act of paying great and close attention to the responses, feedback should be precise and accurate;
- 6) Flexibility – if what is being done is not achieving the right outcome, then strategy change is needed.

Bandler and Grinder (cited in Love, 2001, p.1), contended that NLP is an attitude, a methodology which leaves behind a trail of techniques. The level of the individual's effectiveness depends on the user's attitude and skills. The individual's success depends on how resourceful and skillful he/she is. The more congruent the individual is the more successful he/she will be. Congruence is when one's goals, beliefs and values align with his/her actions and words. Smart (2006) asserted that "one of the most profound ideas of NLP is that, if one person can do something, it should be possible to find out what they're doing and replicate it. NLP modelling is a unique approach for identifying and replicating the unconscious skills of excellent performers (e.g., the naturally talented), then teaching them to others" (p. 5). However, for a successful teaching to occur there should be rapport between the different individuals. Rapport is gained through understanding and respecting the way another person sees the world. Rapport is essential for good communication as it gives the feel of acknowledgment and by the other person and results in more responsiveness. Rapport is built to achieve certain outcomes. Outcome thinking has basic three elements: a) knowing the present situation, b) knowing the desired situation, and c) planning the strategy around it to achieve the goal. The next requirement is feedback about the outcomes, and finally there should be flexibility. Often enough, the first approach is not the right one, so flexibility is needed to go around a problem and find the most precise way of dealing with an issue. NLP encourages choice governed by purpose in a relationship of rapport and awareness.

2.4 The Presuppositions of NLP

The fundamental presuppositions of NLP form the basic epistemology upon which all the rest of its methodology and technology are built. They are the primary ideas and assumptions from which everything else in the field is derived. They form the philosophy behind all of the NLP models, distinctions, and techniques. According to anonymous (2014), there are thirteen presuppositions as shown in Exhibit 1.

2.5 Different Methods for NLP Modeling

NLP began as a model of how people communicate with each other, and was developed by Bandler and Grinder (1975) based on their study of great communicators. Modeling is the core activity that defines the field of Neuro-Linguistic Programming. The Oxford English Dictionary defines modeling as "1. The work of a fashion model; 2. The activity of making three-dimensional models". NLP works by modeling human's excellence in every possible field of life.

Co-creator of NLP, John Grinder and his partner Carmen Bostic St Clair, use a more technical definition of NLP in their book *Whispering In The Wind*, as

"... a modeling technology whose specific subject matter is the set of differences that make the difference between the performance of geniuses and that of average performers in the same field or activity. In this sense, the objective of modeling studies in NLP is to explicate in a transferable and learnable code these sets of differences. The core activity, then, is the mapping of tacit knowledge onto an explicit model..... a model of human model is a description of some portion of the source's behavior, a mapping from a complex set of interactions onto a reduced set of elements" (2001, p. 50)".

NLP Modeling is a methodology consisting of a series of processes for assimilating, reproducing, describing (coding) and transferring humans' capability, specifically humans' excellence. There are five modeling phases which include: **Preparation**: the preparation phase of modeling starts with identifying an appropriate exemplar as the model of excellence; **Information Gathering**: the modeler takes an unconscious uptake of patterns demonstrated by the model; in this state, lots of observation, listening, matching and usage of micro-muscle movement to mimic the model's micro behavior over time, is needed; **Model Building**: it is an evaluative phase based on feedback gained from demonstrating the modeled patterns in the appropriate context; **Testing**: it occurs when the modeler achieves criterion, whereby he or she can reproduce the skill in the same context with the same outcomes in the same time frames as the model of excellence. At this stage in the modeling process, the modeler sorts his or her behavior; thus, keeping behaviors that are relevant and discarding those that are idiosyncratic and not essential to the skill being modeled; and, **Transferring**: it is the explicit coding stage where the constituent patterns of the model are coded (described) in a suitable form for transfer to others. The final phase is actual transfer of the skill to others with testing and modification of the model as necessary (Lawley, 1998).

The body of NLP is a collection of models. The main models comprise of (listed in chronological order) the Meta Model, the Representational System model- with the sub-modalities model as a sub-category, the Milton Model, Rapport, Anchoring, Perceptual Positions, Precision model, and more recently the Verbal package. There are also a number of minor models with a small number of constituent patterns (Collingwood, 2008).

2.5.1 The Meta Model

According to Andreas (2003), the Meta Model is explained as follows: "People respond to events based on their internal pictures, sounds and feelings. They also collect these experiences into groups or categories that are labeled with words. The meta-model is a method for helping someone go from the information-poor word maps back to the specific sensory-based experiences they are based on. It is here in the information-rich specific experiences that useful changes can be made that will result in changes in behavior" (Para 20).

"...the goal of the Meta Model is not to find the 'right' answers, but rather to ask better questions – to widen our map of the world rather than to find the 'right map of the world'. The purpose of the Meta Model inquiry system is to help identify missing links, unconscious assumptions and reference experiences that make up the 'deeper structure' of our conscious models of the world" (Robert Dilts, 2000; cited in Richardson, 2004, p. 2).

2.5.2 The Milton Model

The use of language is essential in directing a person's experience and focusing of attention. The Milton Model, named after Milton Erickson, lists the key parts of speech and the key patterns that are useful in subtly and effectively directing another person's line of thinking. The principles of the Milton Model basically state that a more general use of language can lead to more rapport, meaning that more specific language is more limiting and has a greater chance of excluding concepts from a person's experience (Nauheimer,, 2010, p. 62).

According to Exforsys (2007), the Milton Model is related to the NLP Meta Model. It was based specifically on Bandler and Grinder's modeling of Erickson's hypnotic language with clients. It is often mistakenly described as a mirror image of the Meta Model, using Meta Model violations in a positive way to produce therapeutic trance. While there is a significant overlap in language forms, the Milton Model contains forms which do not appear in the Meta Model (various types of ambiguity, pacing and leading, tag questions, etc.), and vice versa.

Exforsys states that “The technique employed by Milton Model is commonly used for reaching into the unconsciousness depth of mind, where the actual information of an experience is stored, and then retrieving this information by helping the client reach an altered state of mind. The goal is to prevent the client from using his conscious mind, which usually tends to distort the facts, modify or delete key aspects of the experience. The Milton Model also tries to follow and understand the reality as perceived by the client in order to build a genuine rapport or portrait of the event” (Para 4). The core concept behind the Milton Model in NLP is that the “unconscious mind is always alert and listening to the external world. Suggestions made by the therapist trained in NLP can have a hypnotic influence on the patient” (Para 11).

2.6 Trance

According to O’Connor & McDermott (2009, Para 2), the Milton Model originated in hypnotherapy was used to induce trance. Trance is a special state evoked only by skilled hypnotists after much concentration. It is a naturally occurring state that people slip into and out of all the time, and is essential for mental health. Trance is a state where a person’s attention is tightly focused on his/her internal world; any language pattern that increases his/her involvement in his/her own internal reality will deepen trance. A person’s attention is always somewhere between being focused completely on the outside world with minimal awareness of one’s self, or on one’s internal world. It can be said that people constantly keep on switching between momentary trance and actual reality in their everyday life.

2.7 Representational Systems

Bradbury (n.d.) contends that the Representational Systems (or just rep’ systems) are basically one’s five senses. Thus, there are three main rep’ systems - Auditory (sound), Kinaesthetic (feelings - tactile and emotional) and visual (pictures, images, etc.). And two other systems which tend to be used less frequently, at least in western societies: Olfactory (smell) and gustatory (taste). Furthermore, Bradbury (n.d., Para 7) clarifies that people use their rep’ systems for collecting and processing all sensory information. Although they use all of their rep’ systems all of the time, people tend to give just one or two of them more attention than the others, depending on the existing context. For example, if a person was sitting at home, listening to the radio, he/she might be mainly focusing on what he/she could hear. But if that person suddenly smell (or at least thought he/she could smell) something burning, he/she might rapidly refocus his/her attention onto what he/she could see and smell, until he/she discover where the smell of burning was coming from.

2.7.1 Language and Representational Systems

People rely on their 5 senses to make Visual Representations (VRs). So, some people use their visual representational system more, some people use their auditory representational system more, and some people use their Kinesthetic more than the others. Usually an individual prefers to use a certain modality or use a certain modality as their primary representational system.

According to Horton (2006), “because people use language to communicate thoughts, the words they choose reflect the way they think. When relating experiences, an individual uses the visual, auditory, or kinesthetic representational system to identify these experiences and communicate them to others” (Para 18). Moreover, Horton contends that the mind and body are absolutely interconnected, so each time a person access one’s Visual Memory, for example, he/she moves his/her eyes upward and to his/her left.

Furthermore, Holistic Online (2013), asserts that a representational system in NLP consists of the five senses namely: “Visual (images); Auditory (sounds); Kinesthetic (touch and internal feelings); Gustatory (tastes); and Olfactory (smells)” (Para 13). Therefore, when a person perceives the world surrounding him/her, he/she uses one or a combination of these senses.

2.8 Establishing Rapport

According to Walter and Bayat (2003, Para 16), communication by the human physiology or body language relates to posture, gestures, facial expressions (including blinking), and breathing. The remainder of the human communication, being tonality, relates to the tone (pitch), tempo, timbre (quality), and volume of the person's voice. Humans can use these forms of communication by trying to match some of the aforementioned features in the person with whom they are trying to communicate. This is known as establishing rapport, and works on the principle that people like people who are similar to them. The two ways of establishing rapport are known as matching and mirroring (Jago and McDermott, 2001). With matching, someone copies exactly one or more aspects of the other's person non-verbal communication. With mirroring someone copies, but in such a way as to create a mirror image of the full action of the other person. The key point to remember with these forms of nonverbal communication is subtlety; the practitioner would not match a strong regional dialect but might match the speed of the other people's speech and the pitch of their voice (ibid).

Psychologist Albert Mehrabian, cited by Hernandez (2007), known for his pioneering work in the field of nonverbal communication or body language, established a model which suggests that 55% of one's communication is visual, 38% is how one says what he/she wants to say (tone of voice, for example), and only 7% belongs to words. According to Mehrabian's model, "actions indeed speak louder than words. Emphasizing some of these gestures without exaggerating will transmit strong messages without saying a single word" (p. 49). Therefore, one may conclude that 93% of communication is non-verbal. This fact is fundamental in the process of establishing rapport with others.

Greenshields (2010, Para 1) asserts that "Rapport" is the capability to create the trust by understanding and respecting the other person's world of reality; a fact that can make one to have a strong common bond, resulting in taking the lead in any conversation or persuasion to the direction that one wants. Therefore, most of the communication is outside of the person's awareness. A tremendous opportunity exists for communications outside of normal channels, thus, it is important to note the major elements for establishing rapport among people. Exhibit 2 summarizes the suggested six steps to create trust and understanding.

2.9 Anchoring

According to James (1999), "an anchor occurs any time a person is in an intense state, and at the peak of that intense state or that experience a specific stimulus is consistently applied, the state and the specific stimulus become linked neurologically so that the state can be continually produced by setting off the stimulus" (Para 55).

James also contends that emotional states have powerful and pervasive influence on one's thinking and behavior. After eliciting and calibrating these states, one needs some way of making them consistently available, stabilized and more resourceful in the present time. Four steps are identified, and are presented in Exhibit 3.

2.10 NLP in Business

Ewing (1999) contends that "many organizations in the United States and around the world have used NLP to assist them to achieve their corporate objectives. Those projects range from coaching individual executives for improved performance and communication to customer service initiatives involving every employee in the company. NLP is useful in any situation in which two or more people must communicate in order to produce results" (Para 1). She offers examples such as, Diners Club which trained managers and representatives in customer service; BMW in England modeled the communication patterns of the top 1% of persons in sales. After determining the successful behaviors of these salespeople, the skills were taught to

every salesperson in the organization; American Express trained twenty-four line managers from all over Asia to become transformational trainers who later on developed “American Express Quality Leadership”; and Fiat modeled the leadership skills of their finest formal and informal leaders (Para 2-5).

Moreover, Lincoln (2008) contends that the basic NLP skills which improve and enhance communication, rapport building and goal setting are all immediately applicable to the business world and have a proven effect on the bottom line. He summarizes the benefits in the following areas:

- * Personal Development
- * Relationships and Communication
- * Skill Development
- * Professional Development
- * Negotiation

Finally, Lazarus (2014) assures that applying NLP in business organizations will lead to

- * Better selling and customer reachability,
- * Better people management and more effectiveness in building trust,
- * Making better choices and decisions,
- * Using the mind-set for success and excellence for the rest of people’s careers,
- * Making promotion and career/business success more likely,
- * Gaining a competitive edge over people who do not apply NLP.

Many leaders and consultants in businesses have turned to the creative and innovative aspects of NLP for inspiration in organizational development, total quality management, team building and strategic planning. NLP skills underlie much of what is taught in negotiation courses. It enables sales persons to sell the fantasy. Furthermore, presentation skills and public speaking are an integral part of corporate life today. NLP self-management techniques, language patterns and goal setting are vital to effective speaking and peak performance.

3. Research Methodology

Primary data is necessary to understand some of the underlying factors that may lead to better assessment of NLP status in UAE. This exploratory research aims at assessing NLP patterns and behaviors practiced by a sample of UAE employees and managers, in order to shed light on current practices in the UAE workplace. The study was conducted in the period extending from September to April, 2013, using a survey questionnaire. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007), “using a survey strategy allows the collection of a large amount of data from a sizeable population in a highly economical way... resultant data is used to suggest possible reasons for particular relationships between variables and to produce models of these relationships” (p. 138).

3.1 The Survey Design

Questions were designed using a variety of styles. Dichotomous, multiple choice, and Likert scale questions. The survey used in this research is a questionnaire with 11 questions and distributed to a population of 114 employees who were asked to fill in the questionnaire online and whose responses were taken as a basis of deriving the final results. Questions dealt with respondents’ awareness of the concept and application of NLP; the last question is related to the background of the respondent.

3.1.1 Questionnaire Structure

The questionnaire consists of four different parts:

1. Technical knowledge about the subject: this part, questions 1, 2, and 5, helps assess the level of people's awareness of NLP as well as the level of NLP education and awareness of the Gulf employees.
2. The second part, questions 3, 4, 6, and 10, reflects the respondent's attitude to the subject; it helps in the assessment of the respondents' behavior and feelings, and determines to what extent they believe in NLP.
3. The third part of the questionnaire, questions 7 to 9, is related to NLP implementation. Its main focus is to assess respondents' readiness to accept, learn, and practice NLP related knowledge and practices. This part will guide the researcher as to the best way to reach the interested people to achieve effective results.
4. The last part includes six demographic questions. The resultant data is to shed light on the respondents' background.

3.2 Sample Selection

Data was collected from a sample of employees working in different business fields and who come from different educational backgrounds, through a questionnaire posted online that contains direct and straight questions. The sample was not selected randomly, but rather conveniently, dependent on the fact that the employees approached have different backgrounds, and are willing to share their views, have been working in UAE for some time, and are holding different managerial positions.

150 persons were selected; these employees are working at different companies in UAE and specifically Dubai, a state of the Emirates; each of the respondents comes from different environment, works in different fields, on top of that, the respondents represented different age groups and management levels and marital status. However, only 114 questionnaires were deemed useful after eliminating incomplete and erroneous questionnaires, ending with a response rate of approximately 74%

The survey was conducted through the survey power tool available online, namely, "surveymonkey.com". A list of 150 candidates was identified; the candidates varied between management executives, middle management and top management. The link for the survey was sent to each person's individual email; the power tool did capture all the responses as per the structured survey.

It is important to note here that the process that was followed while conducting the survey took into consideration several factors: Setting the objectives of the survey, specifying the population of interest, defining the type and intention of using the data to be collected, selecting the sample, constructing the questionnaire, pre-testing the survey, conducting the survey through contacting the sample and analyzing the collected information (Hejase and Hejase, 2013, p. 40).

4. Results and Findings

4.1 Knowledge about NLP

This section shows the results related to the respondents' technical knowledge of the subject; it helps in assessing the level of people's awareness of NLP as well as the level of NLP education and awareness of the Gulf employees.

Results of questions related to Technical Knowledge show that 42.1% are aware of the terminology of NLP. This is not surprising since NLP represents a topic that has recently surfaced in the Middle East. Also, most of the managers interested in the subject belong to top management ranks.

Moreover, out of the 48 respondents (making 42.1% of the total sample) who happened to be aware of NLP concepts, 50% confirmed that their first knowledge of NLP was through someone else. 20.8% confirmed that they came to know about NLP through the web and Internet surfing. Only 10.4% of the respondents were introduced to NLP through a course they had studied.

4.2 NLP in Practice

Results show that 33.3% of the respondents confirm that their interest in NLP extends beyond a year; however, 37.5% of the respondents claim that NLP is a new area of interest to them. The aforementioned results depict that the respondents' NLP awareness is increasing even though it is a newly introduced subject to them.

4.3 Attitude about NLP

This section shows the results related to the respondents' attitude towards the subject; this part helps in the assessment of the respondents' behavior and feelings, and determines to what extent they believe in NLP. Questions 3, 4, 6, and 10 cover the aforementioned topic.

As for question 3 (**When you first heard of the NLP concept, how do you describe your first reaction?**) results indicate that out of the overall population of respondents who are aware of NLP, 77.1% are positive about it. That is, 58.3% of the respondents mentioned that they are curious about it, and want to know more; 18.8% are excited to know what it could do. However, 22.9% of the respondents exposed negative feelings about NLP.

Table 1 indicates that the majority, consisting of 56.25% of the sample population who are aware about NLP, consider it a tool for their own personal growth; 41.7% of the respondents perceive NLP as a tool to enhance business in the different fields of application, including corporate, sales, consulting, negotiation, etc... 35.4% of the respondents, who are familiar with NLP, will use their knowledge to help others; 31.25% of the respondents consider NLP as a career booster; and, an equal percentage of 25% of the respondents aim at new career opportunities or counseling roles.

Table 2 shows that respondents were given the opportunity to state their feeling about the most threatening issues that may face the persons who are acquainted with NLP techniques. Results show that 73.33% of the respondents (33 out of 45) believe that the most threatening issue against the NLP community is the "lack of understanding of the general community." This concern resulted in a rating average of 1.96 in a scale of 5, indicating respondents' agreement of the above issue. Other issues that the respondents feel to be threatening are as follows: 53.33% of the respondents (24 out of 45) feel that NLP community is judged as associated with "mind control" and "brainwashing", 35.56% (16 out of 45) associate NLP community with "stage hypnosis"; 26.67% (12 out of 45) feared that the NLP community will be facing legal issues; and finally, 33.33% (15 out of 45) believe that the NLP community is associated with partitioning the general community.

The aforementioned findings reflect that the NLP community is facing the general community's lack of knowledge of NLP, especially since people do not read or care to read about such topics. Finally some respondents raised the issue that people usually resist any foreseeable change that comes their way.

4.3.1 Question ten: attitude towards NLP in UAE

Tables 3 and 4 represent the general concepts behind NLP which were assessed by the respondents who are acquainted with NLP principles. Table 4 is a subset of Table 3 and it shows an ordered ranking of the different statements as assessed by the respondents.

It is worth noting that Table 4 shows the following:

1. Respondents ranked first the statement that says "A positive attitude to life is very important for your personal growth,"
2. Respondents ranked second the statement that says "I believe that a person's thoughts, gestures, and words interact together,"
3. Respondents ranked third the statement that says "A person should have clear goals in his/her life,"

4. Respondents ranked fourth the statement that says “A person has responsibility of his/her own success,”
5. Respondents ranked fifth the statement that says “There is no such thing as failure; there is feedback,”
6. Respondents ranked sixth the statement that says “It is important to discover the joy of learning.”

As for the statements that were ranked last, they are:

7. I feel positive about putting my own knowledge/competencies into practice.
8. NLP is a practice that would be useful in my personal life
9. Each behavior has a positive intention
10. NLP is a practice that will not be useful in my work

As reviewed in the literature and according to NLP, people move through life not by responding to the world around them, but by responding to their perception of the model or map of this world (Abraham, n.d., p.1). Therefore, people’s perceptions are gathered through their senses; they filter and interpret their experiences based on their beliefs, interests, upbringing, preoccupation and state of mind, so as to fit in with what they know. Looking at the first six statements that were ranked high (Table 4), one may observe that all of them express inner feelings and personal choices, which are necessary to be well defined before judging the external environment experiences. Moreover, respondents should feel comfortable with their NLP knowledge before proceeding to apply it either in their personal work or life or in their relationships. It seems that the majority of the sample did not reach this stage; the evidence is found in the respondents’ ranking of the last statements that are related to NLP applications.

4.4 Implementation of NLP

The third part of the questionnaire is related to NLP implementation. Its main focus is to assess respondents’ readiness to accept, learn, and practice NLP related knowledge and practices. This part will guide the researcher as to the best way to reach the interested people to achieve effective results. This part includes questions 7, 8, and 9.

As for question 7 (**As a resident in the UAE, how do you rate the level of awareness of the issue of NLP in the country and among the people you meet?**), results show that the respondents already have the disposition to continue with their knowledge, even if they, in their majority or 79.2%, have described their level as either aware or slightly aware. As for the remaining 20.8% who either know or are progressively building further knowledge, it seems that they aim to continue applying NLP concepts in their work and life. The respondents were asked via question 8 to comment if they feel that there might be any cultural obstacles that might face the emerging breakthrough of NLP in the UAE. Only 29 persons took the liberty to comment on the obstacles that, according to their experience, may have a direct impact on the progress of NLP in UAE. The most prominent opinions about the subject are as follows:

1. There is a cultural shock
2. There is a lack of understanding of what NLP is
3. Religion in the region is an obstacle against NLP dissemination
4. There is a cultural issue represented by the behavior of the people; for example, no eye contact, mental setups, fear, and the lack of a reading community.
5. There are no cultural issues involved.

The majority of the respondents related NLP progress to either religion and personal attitudes and behaviors.

Table 5 indicates that from the overall sample population targeted for this survey, an average of 65.4% (average of 68.75% and 62.12%) expressed their interest in attending an NLP training session. Such a result is positive and is considered as a good indicator that people are getting to know the value of NLP and would be interested in its applications.

4.5 Demographics

It is worth noting that in order to ensure that the current study has considered the right population, and has resulted in the best results, the only restriction applied was related to targeting only middle to top management executives who are assumed to be the level of people who could be aware of the NLP concept in UAE. All other respondents are employees and lower level managers.

Table 6 represents the demographics characterizing respondents from UAE residents. As it is observed, the respondents represented people from different industry sectors, age, groups, and status, and exposed a clear picture of the formation of the working society in UAE. One may observe that only three resident UAE managers are among the 114 respondents; a fact that reflects a multi-national formation of the upper management in UAE.

Table 6 shows that the majority of the respondents, or 77%, are between 26 and 50 years old. 73% of the respondents are males and 27% are females. 57% of the respondents are single, 40% are married, and 3% are divorced. 48% of the respondents belong to the management, marketing, purchasing and sales, and engineering & IT sectors.

Moreover, 54% of the respondents belong to lower management jobs, and 46% belong to middle and upper management jobs. The majority of the respondents are Lebanese with 37%, followed by Indians with 19% of the sample population. Interestingly enough, ten other nationalities are represented in the sample as well, constituting 44% of the sample.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

NLP is the study of humans' experiences that impact all aspects of someone's life in the future. Science states that human experience is determined through the five senses. NLP states how one uses these senses, and in what order. The way in which people string things together and the connections that they make is the cause for their talents and their limitations.

Building on the aforementioned statements, the researcher has observed from the outcomes of the current research that the respondents are aware of their internal strengths and are somewhat knowledgeable about NLP; however, they lack the skills to apply it externally. That is, the respondents are interested in being trained in NLP skills, and in knowing how these skills are applied in their personal lives or in their work environment. Moreover, the current research has shown that the respondents are worried about the cultural obstacles that exist in UAE; for example, strict attachment to religion, communication skills, bounded-mind sets, etc...

Several insights could be inferred from this study. First, in relation to answering the question "what is the level of awareness of NLP within the UAE, considering the population of general executives and people interested in the topic?" quantitative evidence is obtained. Based on the results, it was found that the level of NLP awareness has not reached the level by which one can assert that the UAE respondents are reasonably familiar with the concept to an extent that they are able to utilize the benefits of NLP concepts in their

professional or personal lives. NLP is still treated in UAE as a therapeutic approach only, rather than a holistic approach that can be customized into business as well as personal life.

In UAE, if someone executes a quick online search to find out a specialized center where NLP knowledge and application can be provided, it will become obvious to the person that NLP is being so far treated on commercial basis where practitioners and trainees are trying to market NLP most of the time for the purpose of conducting training / seminars and reaping the financial return out of sharing general knowledge and some exercises.

The researcher's recommendation to all trainers and practitioners is to start educating and shedding light on the wellness of practices directed towards the community, and to expose a high level of social responsibility by sharing NLP concepts with all interested people who are either searching for therapeutic healing or personal development dimensions in their life. The actions to be taken could evolve around planning general short break out seminars that would help introduce the NLP concept to the major executive / interested population in UAE.

Another insight that is considered an important outcome of the study is its academic contribution to the very few publications found on the subject matter in Lebanon and the region. According to Carey, Churches, Hutchinson, Jones, & Tosey (2010), "there is absence of any formal and systematic literature review of evidence in relation to the impact and use of NLP in education," (p. 6). Research focusing on business applications of NLP in the Middle Eastern region is not extensive and far from being comprehensive. There are only few studies that have addressed NLP applications in business in Abu Dhabi (Ahmad, 2013), India (Shiv, 2012; and Singh and Abraham, 2008), and Turkey (Özmen, 2009). The results will also provide exploratory findings that can be used by other researchers, Middle Eastern or others; thus, making it possible for cross-cultural comparisons to be performed. Moreover, the current study could be considered as a catalyst that might lead others to do more in-depth tests on issues pertaining to NLP education and applications.

The few research references that have been accredited to the Arab world, on the said topic, including the current research, form a premature argument to draw any general conclusions. Therefore, one can't neglect the current need to encourage Middle Eastern educational institutions to analyze the reported western NLP' know how and practices, and perform a series of research projects to address the differences between these two cultures in perception, applicability, sensitivity to religious beliefs and their influence on the way business is conducted in Lebanon and the surrounding Arab nations.

Since this study has involved one particular country, which is a limiting factor to generalizing results, the similarity of the value systems with that of other Arab countries may lead to similar results, especially since NLP is simply a new concept. However, during the last two years, extensive presence of professional NLP trainers have been observed and one cannot but wonder about the tremendous number of Master NLP trainers offering courses and coaching businesses as well as individuals in the Middle East region. Such a surge for training has boosted awareness. Furthermore, Lebanese as well as Arab universities offer awareness lectures to its student bodies. Consequently, more research is needed to highlight any differences, including a wider array of respondents from the different economic sectors and educational institutions.

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Exhibit 1: NLP 13 presuppositions

The thirteen presuppositions are the central principles of NLP; they are its guiding philosophy, and its 'beliefs'. These principles are not claimed to be true or universal.

1. People respond to their experience, not to reality itself.

When people do not know what reality is, their senses, beliefs, and past experience give them a map of the world from which to operate. A map can never be exactly accurate. Some maps are better than others for finding one's way around. NLP is the art of changing these maps, so as one has greater freedom of action.

2. Having a choice is better than not having a choice.

One always acts to increase choice. The more choices one has, the freer one is and the more influence one has.

3. People make the best choice they can at the time.

A person always makes the best choice he/she can, given his/her perceived map of the world. The choice may be self-defeating, bizarre or evil, but for the person in question, it seems the best way forward.

4. People work perfectly.

No one is wrong or broken. One must find out how one and others do what they do so their strategy can be changed to something more useful and desirable.

5. All actions have a purpose.

People's actions are not random; they are always trying to achieve something, although they may not be aware of what that is.

6. Every behavior has a positive intention.

NLP separates the intention or purpose behind an action from the action itself. Persons are not their behavior. When persons have a better choice of behavior that also achieves their positive intention, they will take it.

7. The unconscious mind balances the conscious; it is not malicious.

The unconscious is everything that is not in consciousness at the present moment. It contains all the resources one needs to live in balance.

8. The meaning of the communication is not simply what one intends, but also the response one gets.

There are no failures in communication, only responses and feedback. If one is not getting the result one wants, it will change what one is doing. Take responsibility for the communication.

9. One already has all the resources needed, or one can create them.

There are no un-resourceful people, only un-resourceful states of mind.

10. Mind and body form a system. They are different expressions of the one person.

Mind and body interact and mutually influence each other. It is not possible to make a change in one without the other being affected. When one thinks differently, his/her body changes. When one acts differently, the person changes his/her thoughts and feelings.

11. People process all information through their senses.

Developing one's sense so one becomes more acute, it gives one better information and helps one think more clearly.

12. Modeling successful performance leads to excellence.

If one person can do something, it is possible to model it and teach it to others. In this way everyone can learn to get better results in their own way.

13. If one wants to understand - Acts

The learning is in the doing.

Source: http://www.achievingexcellence.com/p-a_nlp_presup.html

Exhibit 2: Six steps towards building rapport

1) Body Languages Matching (Gesture, Posture, Tiny Movement, Breathing, and Facial Expression)

The easiest way to create instant trust is by using body language. People always like those people who are like them.

2) Auditory Modeling (Voice, Tonality, Pace, Rhythm, Volume, Pitch)

Matching the auditory part may subconsciously create the bond between two persons, especially if the other person is heavily using the auditory modality in communication. However, one needs not to model all, just choosing one aspect to match will do.

3) Word Matching

Word matching is to use the exact word that is said by the person that one wants to build the rapport with. A word may mean someone's value or belief as well. By using the exact words, even phrases, one can always make sure he/she is on track of someone's thinking pattern, because the thinking pattern is nothing but a series of internal dialogue. Dialogues use words for communication with others. With dialogue, the relationship can be created faster.

4) Experience Matching

Experience is a reflection of someone's past events and is a summary of someone's history. Therefore, sharing similar experiences of the past can speed the climate of trust and understanding. Quoting examples helps to build interpersonal bonding.

Source: Greenshields, 2010, Para 5-8.

Exhibit 3: Four Steps in Anchoring

1. The first step is to put the person in state (choose the emotional state). It's important that the state be fully associated. Which means that the person is in their body, looking through their own eyes (as opposed to looking at their body from outside it)? It's also important that the state be intense and congruent.

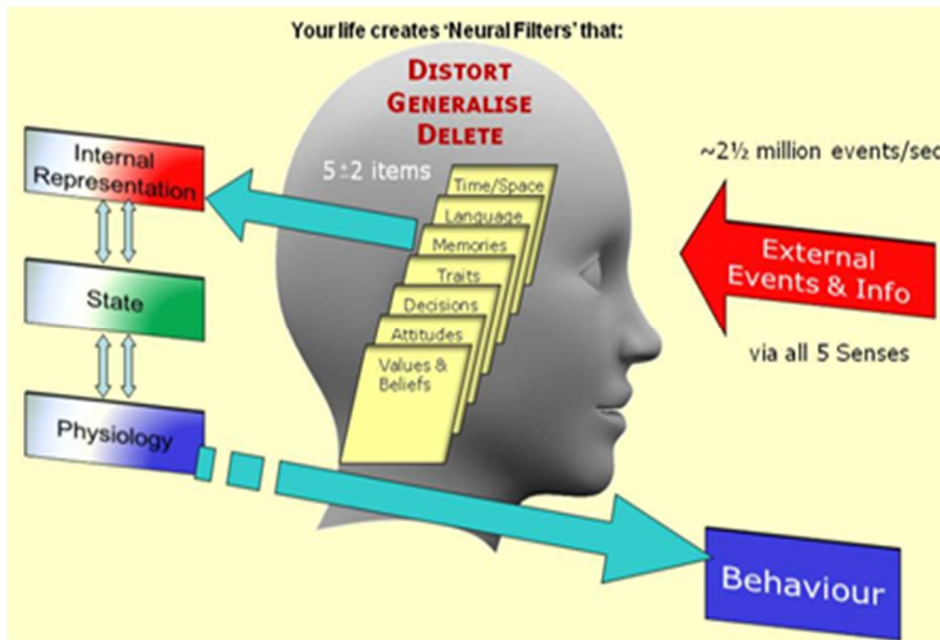
2- The second step is to provide a specific stimulus when a person is at the peak. Provide a specific stimulus and apply it consistently. When the person is at the peak of that experience, the anchor should actually be ending.

3- The third step is to change the person's state. Have that person get out of the state he/she was in. Perhaps have the person walk around. At least have him/her take a deep breath.

4- The fourth step is to 'Set off' the anchor by applying it in exactly the same way, and discover if person(s) applied to go back into the aforementioned state.

Source: James, 1999, Para 58-62.

Figure 1: NLP Communication Model



Source: <http://www.holis.ca/wp-content/uploads/2008/08/the-human-communication-model.jpg>

Table 1: Impact of NLP on a person's life

4-How do you think the NLP will impact your life? Please tick as many boxes as are applicable to you	Frequency	Percent, %
As a tool for personal growth	27	56.25%
As part of my spiritual journey	10	20.8%
As a new career opportunity	12	25.0%
In business. i.e. Corporate, consulting, sales, negotiation...	20	41.7%
In counseling or therapeutic roles	12	25.0%
To help others	17	35.4%
In my career	15	31.25%
As a hobby	6	12.5%
As a way to gain celebrity status	4	8.3%
Total (Multiple Responses)	123	
Total	48	

Table 2: Perception about the NLP community

Question 6: Answer Options	SA 1	A 2	N 3	D 4	SD 5	Rating Average	Response Count
Lack of understanding outside of the NLP community	17	16	9	3	0	1.96	45
Association with "mind control" and "brainwashing" type techniques	6	18	18	3	0	2.40	45
Association with stage hypnosis	3	13	24	5	0	2.69	45
Partitions within the community	2	13	21	9	0	2.82	45
Threat of external legal actions from those with no knowledge of NLP	6	6	25	8	0	2.78	45
Other, please specify							3

Note: SA: Strongly Agree (weight: 1), A: Agree (weight 2), N: Neutral (weight 3), D: Disagree (weight 4), and SD: Strongly Disagree (weight 5)

Table 3: NLP related facts

Rank	Declared Attitudes	SA	A	I	D	SD	Count	Weighted Rank
1	A positive attitude to life is very important for your personal growth	15	10	14	2	0	41	2.07
2	I believe that a person's thoughts, gestures, and words interact to create his/her perception of the surrounding world.	11	17	11	3	0	42	2.14
3	A person should have clear goals in his/her life	9	18	12	2	0	41	2.17
4	A person has responsibility of his/her own success	10	14	13	2	0	39	2.18
5	There is no such thing as failure; there is feedback	10	13	18	2	0	43	2.28
6	It is important to discover the joy of learning	7	19	11	4	0	41	2.29
7	I feel positive about putting my own knowledge / competencies into practice	6	15	18	1	1	41	2.41
8	NLP is a practice that would be useful in my personal life	4	17	16	4	1	42	2.55
9	Each behavior has a positive intention	4	11	18	8	3	44	2.89
10	NLP is a practice that will not be useful in my work	5	7	15	8	8	43	3.16

Answered question = 45 respondents

Note 1: SA: Strongly Agree (weight: 1), A: Agree (weight 2), I: Indifferent (weight 3), D: Disagree (weight 4), and SD: Strongly Disagree (weight 5)

Table 4: Ranking respondents' attitudes towards NLP

Rank	Declared Attitudes	SA & A	I	SD & D	Weighted Rank
1	A positive attitude to life is very important for your personal growth	61%	34%	5%	2.07
2	I believe that a person's thoughts, gestures, and words interact to create his/her perception of the surrounding world.	67%	26%	7%	2.14
3	A person should have clear goals in his/her life	66%	29%	5%	2.17
4	A person has responsibility of his/her own success	61%	33%	6%	2.18
5	There is no such thing as failure; there is feedback	53%	42%	5%	2.28
6	It is important to discover the joy of learning	63%	27%	10%	2.29
7	I feel positive about putting my own knowledge / competencies into practice	51%	44%	4%	2.41
8	NLP is a practice that would be useful in my personal life	50%	38%	12%	2.55
9	Each behavior has a positive intention	34%	41%	25%	2.89
10	NLP is a practice that will not be useful in my work	28%	35%	37%	3.16

Note 1: SA: Strongly Agree (weight: 1), A: Agree (weight 2), I: Indifferent (weight 3), D: Disagree (weight 4), and SD: Strongly Disagree (weight 5)

Note 2: The lower the rank (around 1), the more the respondents agree with the statement.

Table 5: NLP Training Sessions

9-Would you be interested in attending any NLP training or practice sessions to increase your knowledge?		
	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	33	68.75
No	16	31.25
Total	48 out of a total of 114	

Note: Respondents acquainted with NLP

9-Would you be interested in attending any NLP training or practice sessions to increase your knowledge?		
	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	41	62.12
No	25	37.88
Total	66 out of a total of 114	

Note: Respondents not acquainted with NLP

Table 6: Respondents' demographic data

Demographic Variable	Description	Frequency (114 respondents)	Percentage, %
Country	Australia	7	6.14
	Canada	3	2.63
	England	7	6.14
	France	3	2.63
	India	22	19.3
	Iraq	7	6.14
	Jordan	7	6.14
	Lebanon	42	36.85
	Syria	7	6.14
	UAE	3	2.63
	USA	3	2.63
	Other	3	2.63
Age Category	21 – 25	17	14.91
	26 – 30	55	48.25
	31 – 35	9	7.89
	36 – 40	7	6.14
	41 – 45	7	6.14
	46 – 50	10	8.78
	51 – 55	0	0
	56 – 60	3	2.63
	61 – 65	3	2.63
66 – 70	3	2.63	
Managerial Position	Lower Management	62	54.38
	Middle Management	39	34.21
	Top Management	10	8.78
	Owner	3	2.63
Gender	Female	31	27.19
	Male	83	72.81
Marital Status	Single	65	57.02
	Married	46	40.35
	Divorced	3	2.63
Industry	Accounting	3	2.63
	Advertising	10	8.78
	Consultancy	10	8.78
	Finance, Banking, Insurance	10	8.78
	Education	10	8.78
	Hospitality	3	2.63
	Media & Events	10	8.78
	Manufacturing	3	2.63
	Purchasing & Sales	17	14.90
	Management & Marketing	24	21.03
	Engineering & IT	14	12.28