MSW MANAGEMENT -Multidisciplinary, Scientific Work and Management Journal
ISSN: 1053-7899
Vol. 36 Issue 1s, 2026, Pages: 734-739

The relationship between future foresight and institutional performance development in the UAE: A modern technologies perspective

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This study aims to measure the impact of future foresight on developing institutional performance in the context of modern technologies at the Department of Economy and Tourism in the Emirate of Dubai. Government institutions in the UAE face increasing challenges amid rapid technological developments and global economic changes. Despite significant investments in modern technologies, there is a clear gap in understanding how future foresight affects institutional performance development. The study relied on a descriptive-analytical approach using a quantitative method through an electronic questionnaire applied to a stratified random sample of employees in the department. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The results showed a strong positive correlation between future foresight and institutional performance, as well as a statistically significant impact of future foresight on institutional performance, with high levels of application of future foresight and institutional performance. The study recommends developing a specialized future foresight unit within the department, investing in modern technologies to support foresight operations, training employees on future foresight skills, and adopting a future foresight approach as part of strategic planning in other government institutions.

Keywords: Future Foresight, Institutional Performance, Modern Technologies, Department of Economy and Tourism.

1.1 Introduction

The United Arab Emirates, and the Emirate of Dubai in particular, witness rapid development in modern technologies and digital transformation, requiring government institutions to adopt modern approaches in planning and management. Future foresight is one of the most important approaches that enable institutions to predict future changes and prepare for them. In line with Dubai's economic agenda D33, which aims to establish the city among the top three cities globally for business and entertainment, the Department of Economy and Tourism in Dubai seeks to develop its institutional performance by benefiting from modern technologies and future foresight (Dubai Government, 2023). The current study is characterized as a systematic activity aimed at achieving specific goals represented in expanding and deepening the understanding of various phenomena. It aims to provide an accurate description of phenomena and problems, predict future developments related to the research topic, and formulate new judgments for phenomena that have not been previously studied in the UAE environment (Habes et al., 2018, 2019, 2022).

1.2 Problem Statement

Government institutions in the UAE face increasing challenges amid rapid technological developments and global economic changes, requiring them to adopt modern approaches in planning and management to ensure sustainable institutional performance and achieve excellence (Al Shamsi, 2023). Although the UAE ranked first globally in the Digital Government Index for 2022, there is an urgent need to develop future foresight mechanisms to keep pace with modern technological developments (UAE Smart Government Program, 2023).

Recent studies indicate that 70% of government institutions in the region lack clear strategies for future foresight, negatively affecting their ability to adapt to technological changes (Dubai Statistics Center, 2024). In this context, the Department of Economy and Tourism in Dubai seeks to achieve the goals of Dubai's economic agenda D33, which aims to double the economy's size and establish the city among the top three cities globally for business and entertainment by 2033 (Dubai Government, 2023).

Despite significant investments in modern technologies such as artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, and blockchain, there is a clear gap in understanding how future foresight affects institutional performance development in light of these technologies (Al Ali et al., 2024). A preliminary exploratory study conducted by the researcher on a sample of 50 employees at the Department of Economy and Tourism in Dubai showed that 65% of them believe the institution needs to develop its future foresight capabilities, and 78% think that modern technologies have not been optimally utilized to improve institutional performance. The main research question can be summarized as what is the impact of future foresight on developing institutional performance in the context of modern technologies at the Department of Economy and Tourism in the Emirate of Dubai?

1.3 Research Objectives

The study aims to measure the contribution of future foresight to developing local performance in contemporary aspects of the economy and participation in the Emirate of Dubai. It identifies the following solutions:

1. Determine the level of applying future foresight in the Department of Economy and Tourism in Dubai.
2. Measure the level of institutional performance in the context of modern technologies.
3. Analyze the correlation between future foresight and institutional performance in the context of modern technologies.
4. Measure the statistical impact of future foresight on institutional performance.
5. Identify differences in the responses of sample individuals regarding the study variables according to demographic variables.

1.4 Study Boundaries and Scope

The scope of this study is confined to examining the impact of future foresight on enhancing institutional performance within the context of modern technologies(Elareshi et al., 2022; Habes et al., 2021). Future foresight is explored through four key dimensions: strategic analysis of the future environment, scenario building, proactive planning, and continuous monitoring and follow-up(Habes et al., 2023). Institutional performance, in turn, is assessed based on digital operational efficiency, the quality of electronic services, technological adaptability, and the effectiveness of data-driven decision-making(Alghizzawi et al., 2024; Kreishan et al., 2024). The study is specifically applied to the Department of Economy and Tourism in the Emirate of Dubai, United Arab Emirates, a pivotal government body responsible for the development of the emirate's economic and tourism sectors(Alhazmi et al., 2026; Tahat et al., 2023). It involves participants across various administrative levels, including senior leadership (directors general and their deputies), middle management (department heads and unit chiefs), and executive staff (employees and specialists). The research is conducted over a period spanning from February 2025 to June 2025, encompassing all phases from instrument development to data collection, analysis, and report writing.

1.5 Importance of the Study

This study derives its significance from several theoretical and practical aspects, making it a valuable addition to scientific knowledge and practical application in the field of public administration and institutional development.

- **Theoretical Importance:** The study contributes to enriching the Arabic literature on future foresight and institutional performance, especially given the relative scarcity of studies that link these two concepts within the Arab context (Abu Al-Nasr, 2022). Furthermore, the study presents an integrated theoretical model that clarifies the relationship between future foresight and institutional performance in the context of modern technologies, paving the way for researchers to conduct similar studies in different environments and sectors (Al-Zahrani et al., 2023).

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- **Practical Importance:** The practical significance of the study is reflected in its ability to assist the Department of Economy and Tourism in Dubai in developing its strategies and future policies based on well-documented scientific foundations, thereby enhancing its ability to achieve the goals of Dubai's Economic Agenda (Dubai Government, 2023). The study also provides practical guidelines for other government institutions in the UAE and the Arab region on how to implement future foresight methodologies and leverage modern technologies to improve their institutional performance (Al-Mansouri, 2024).

1.6 Definitions and Concepts

1.6.1 Future Foresight

Future foresight is defined as a proactive process aimed at anticipating all possible scenarios, managing the future, and identifying opportunities and potential challenges before they actually arise (Al Shamsi, 2023, p. 45). It is also described as the diligent and continuous pursuit of achieving desired future goals from an integrated perspective that considers current capabilities and challenges, which positively reflects on determining the paths of an institution's life cycle and its future (Abu Al-Nasr, 2022, p. 78).

Future foresight represents a fundamental pillar for enhancing strategic thinking and developing proactive capabilities by identifying driving factors and studying potential outcomes to reach strategic decisions (Al-Zahrani et al., 2023, p. 132). Moreover, it is regarded as a methodology for building a future vision, which serves as the cornerstone for developing leadership practices, formulating and implementing strategies, and driving change, particularly in higher education institutions (Al-Mansouri, 2024, p. 28).

Effective future foresight requires a comprehensive analytical approach that integrates multiple perspectives and diverse methodologies from various disciplines. A study by the Institute for the Future demonstrated that institutions adopting comprehensive approaches to foresight are up to 50% more successful in predicting future challenges and opportunities compared to those relying on one-sided analysis (Gordon & Glenn, 2024, p. 156).The dimensions of future foresight encompass several key aspects that collectively enhance an institution's ability to anticipate and respond to change. These include the **strategic analysis of the future environment**, which focuses on analyzing trends and developments through methods such as environmental and horizon scanning, scenario planning, and back casting within strategic planning frameworks (Bell, 2023, p. 89). **Scenario building** is also essential, as it involves developing multiple possible futures, enabling public administration to craft proactive policies and adaptive strategies that mitigate potential disruptions (Kahn & Wiener, 2022, p. 234). **Proactive planning** further supports this process by setting forward-looking plans to address emerging challenges and opportunities, helping leaders identify trends and manage strategic risks (Al Ali et al., 2024, p. 52). Finally, **continuous monitoring and follow-up** are critical, requiring ongoing tracking of local and global developments across political, social, economic, and cultural domains, and leveraging this information to improve data-driven decision-making (Dubai Statistics Center, 2024, p. 67).

1.6.2 Institutional Performance in the Context of Modern Technologies

Institutional performance in the context of modern technologies refers to an institution's ability to achieve its objectives and deliver services efficiently by leveraging advanced technologies. Modern technologies have fundamentally transformed organizational operations, driving improvement and adaptation (Schwab, 2023, p. 45). They serve as primary catalysts for development and innovation, compelling institutions to move away from traditional methods and adopt more collaborative and creative approaches (UAE Ministry of Economy, 2024, p. 89; UAE Cabinet, 2023, p. 156).

The dimensions of institutional performance in this context include digital operational efficiency, which focuses on streamlining processes, reducing manual work, and cutting costs without compromising service quality (OECD, 2024, p. 78; World Bank, 2024, p. 123). Another key dimension is the quality of electronic services, where digital advancements improve user experiences and foster customer loyalty through smart applications and technologies like chatbots (World Bank, 2024, p. 67). Technological adaptability is also crucial, as it reflects an institution's flexibility in adopting new technologies and innovating in their application, which boosts productivity and allows employees to focus on more valuable tasks (OECD, 2023, p. 145; Al Shamsi, 2023, p. 98). Lastly, the effectiveness of data-driven decision-making has increased, with advanced analytics and big data enabling organizations to gather insights and make better strategic decisions (Al Ali et al., 2024, p. 61; Al-Mansouri, 2024, p. 39).

2.1 Literature Review

A study on "Future Foresight and Its Impact on School Institutional Excellence" at the Emirates Foundation for Education showed a significant impact of using foresight on institutional excellence (UAE Smart Government Program, 2023, p. 87). Leading entities seek to adopt foresight as a means to improve performance and achieve excellence (ibid., p. 92).

Another study on "The Role of Future Foresight in Community Leadership" concluded that foresight is a key approach to developing institutional performance and should be a mandatory strategic direction, especially for public sector institutions (Al Shamsi, 2023, p. 156). Foresight also precedes and greatly assists strategic planning (ibid., p. 161).

A study in Oman on "The Role of Strategic Planning and Future Foresight in Supporting Decision-Making in State Institutions" found a direct relationship between strategic planning, foresight, and decision-making (Al Ali et al., 2024, p. 45). It also concluded that making the best decisions requires sound strategic planning and sharp foresight based on accurate data and information (ibid., p. 51).

A study on "Future Foresight Competencies among Academic Leaders and Their Role in Development" showed that foresight contributes to enhancing imagination, creativity, and innovation in developing the institutional work system by building an institutional vision and leading efforts to implement mission data and strategic directions (Al-Zahrani et al., 2023, p. 167).

Studies have shown that "modern technology has become a main driver in developing institutions and enhancing their capacity for innovation" (UAE Ministry of Economy, 2024, p. 78). Another study found that adopting a modern technological system can improve organizational performance by streamlining processes and increasing efficiency (UAE Cabinet, 2023, p. 134).

2.2 Research Gap in Previous Studies :

Despite the existence of studies on future foresight and institutional performance separately, there is "a clear separation between innovation methodologies and future foresight, which weakens institutions' ability to adapt to future changes" (Abu Al-Nasr, 2022, p. 189). Furthermore, the groundwork for understanding foresight and future studies in Arab institutions remains limited, with no general methodology for foresight at the national level (Al-Mansouri, 2024, p. 67).

The research gap is evident in the lack of studies linking future foresight and institutional performance in the context of modern technologies, especially in the Arab environment and specifically in the United Arab Emirates. This justifies the importance of conducting this study to fill the research gap and provide a scientific contribution in this field.

2.3 The Relationship Between Future Foresight and Institutional Performance

The relationship is manifested in that "innovation based on future foresight focuses on the interconnection between foresight and innovation, serving as a catalyst for achieving sustainable growth" (Abu Al-Nasr, 2022, p. 134). Future foresight enables government institutions to anticipate future trends, analyze upcoming risks and opportunities, and innovate new solutions to meet future societal needs (Al-Zahrani et al., 2023, p. 141).

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2.4 Proposed Conceptual Model

Based on the theoretical framework and previous studies, a conceptual model can be developed to illustrate the causal relationship between future foresight (as an independent variable) and institutional performance in the context of modern technologies (as a dependent variable). Future foresight, with its four dimensions (strategic analysis of the future environment, scenario building, proactive planning, and continuous monitoring and follow-up), influences institutional performance with its four dimensions (digital operational efficiency, quality of electronic services, technological adaptability, and effectiveness of data-driven decision-making). The following figure illustrates it:

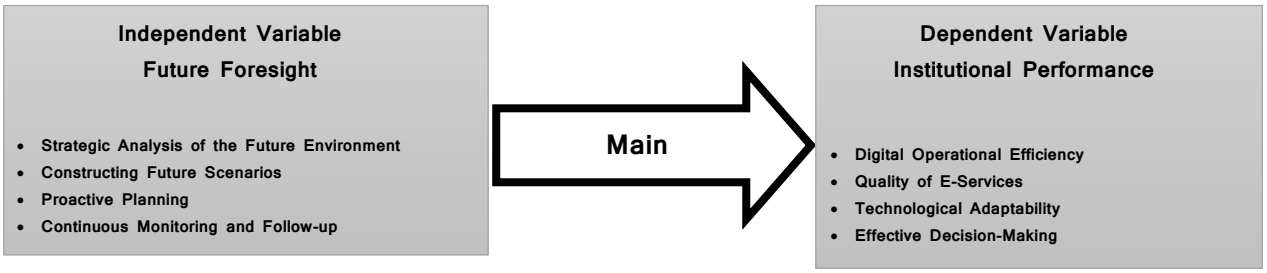

Figure 1. The figure above was prepared by (the researcher)

This model reflects the modern trend toward integrating future foresight with modern technologies to improve institutional performance. It contributes to developing a deeper understanding of the complex relationships between these variables in the contemporary institutional environment (Dubai Government, 2023, p. 201).

2.5 Study Hypotheses

Main Hypothesis: There is a statistically significant impact of future foresight on the development of institutional performance in the context of modern technologies at the Department of Economy and Tourism in the Emirate of Dubai.

Sub-Hypotheses:

a) There is a statistically significant impact of future foresight on digital operational efficiency.
b) There is a statistically significant impact of future foresight on the quality of electronic services.
c) There is a statistically significant impact of future foresight on technological adaptability.
d) There is a statistically significant impact of future foresight on the effectiveness of data-driven decision-making.

3.1 Study Methodology

The study employs a descriptive-analytical approach, utilizing exclusively quantitative methods. This methodology focuses on collecting and analyzing numerical and statistical data to explore the relationships between variables and rigorously test the research hypotheses. By relying on quantitative analysis, the study aims to provide objective and measurable insights into the dynamics of future foresight and institutional performance within the context of modern technologies.

The research population includes all employees of the Department of Economy and Tourism in the Emirate of Dubai, encompassing staff at all administrative levels—senior leadership, middle management, and executive employees—across the main headquarters, branches, and affiliated offices. This broad inclusion ensures a comprehensive representation of diverse opinions and experiences related to future foresight and the advancement of institutional performance through modern technologies.

To achieve balanced representation, the sample was selected using a stratified random sampling method. The population was divided into strata based on administrative level, and individuals were randomly chosen from each group. This approach minimizes sampling bias and enhances the accuracy and generalizability of the results. Out of a targeted sample size of 250 individuals, data were collected from 140 employees. Although this is lower than the intended number, it constitutes a substantial proportion of the target and is considered sufficient for the statistical analyses required in descriptive-analytical research, especially if the distribution among strata is maintained. It is advisable to address this sample size in the study's limitations, clarifying the reasons for the gap—such as response rates or field circumstances—to provide context for the findings.

3.2 Data Collection Tool

The study relied on an electronic questionnaire as the sole data collection tool, designed to suit the research objectives and variables. The questionnaire consists of three main sections:

- **Section One:** Demographic data (gender, age, educational qualification, job title, years of experience) to describe the sample characteristics and analyze differences between groups.
- **Section Two:** Future foresight scale, comprising 20 statements distributed across four main dimensions, measuring the extent to which the institution implements foresight and future planning practices.
- **Section Three:** Institutional performance in the context of modern technologies scale, containing 24 statements covering the dimensions of digital operational efficiency, quality of electronic services, technological adaptability, and effectiveness of data-driven decision-making.

All statements were constructed using a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree), allowing for precise and objective measurement of participants' attitudes and opinions. To ensure the tool's validity, it was reviewed by a panel of experts in management and statistics to confirm the clarity and suitability of the statements for the research objectives (face validity). The reliability of the questionnaire was tested using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, with results showing high reliability levels for both the future foresight and institutional performance scales, reflecting the tool's dependability and consistency in measuring the targeted variables.

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

A. Means and Standard Deviations

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Future Foresight	3.84	0.63
Institutional Performance	3.48	0.55

The results indicate that the mean score for future foresight among the sample is relatively high, reflecting a good awareness of the importance of future planning within the institution. The mean for institutional performance is also good, with a relatively low standard deviation, indicating homogeneity in employees' evaluations of institutional performance in the context of modern technologies.

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B. Frequencies and Percentages for Demographic Variables

Category	Percentage (%)
Male	55
Female	45
Diploma	25.7
Bachelor's	19.3
Master's	30
Doctorate	25
Experience < 5 years	22.1
5–10 years	20
11–15 years	24.3
More than 15 years	33.6

The sample distribution shows a relative balance between males and females and diversity in academic qualifications, with master's and doctorate degrees representing a high proportion. There is also a good gradient in years of experience, with a slight tendency toward those with longer experience, which enhances the credibility of the results and reflects good representation of the study population.

4.2 Pearson Correlation Coefficient

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Statistical Significance (p)
Future Foresight & Institutional Performance	0.55	< 0.001

The results show a strong and positive correlation between future foresight and institutional performance, which is statistically significant. This means that a higher level of foresight is associated with improved institutional performance.

4.3 Linear Regression Analysis

A. Simple Regression

Coefficient	Value
Impact Coefficient	0.48
Equation	Institutional Performance = 0.48 × Future Foresight + 1.65

The results of the simple regression indicate that future foresight directly explains a significant portion of the variance in institutional performance. Each increase in future foresight leads to a noticeable increase in institutional performance.

B. Multiple Regression

Variable	Impact Coefficient (β)
Future Foresight	0.48
Gender	0.06
Academic Qualification	-0.004
Years of Experience	0.008

Future foresight remains the most influential variable on institutional performance compared to demographic variables, whose effects are very weak. This reinforces the importance of foresight as a key factor in performance development.

4.4 Independent Samples t-Test (Gender)

Variable	t Value	p Value	Conclusion
Institutional Performance	0.63	0.53	No statistically significant differences between males and females

The results indicate no significant differences in institutional performance evaluation between males and females, reflecting fairness in the work environment and that institutional performance is not affected by gender.

4.5 One-Way ANOVA

Variable	F Value	p Value	Conclusion
Academic Qualification	0.72	0.49	No statistically significant differences between educational levels
Years of Experience	0.12	0.91	No statistically significant differences between experience groups

The ANOVA results show no significant differences in institutional performance attributable to academic qualification or years of experience, indicating similar levels of institutional performance among different educational and temporal categories within the institution.

5.1 Interpretation of Results and Relationship Between Variables

The study found a high level of future foresight among employees, with clear institutional emphasis on analyzing trends, proactive planning, and regularly updating scenarios. This reflects growing managerial awareness of the need to prepare for future changes using modern foresight tools.

In terms of institutional performance, the organization has made notable strides in adopting automation and artificial intelligence, enhancing operational efficiency and electronic service quality. While the institution shows adaptability to new technologies, there remains a need to further cultivate a culture of innovation and data-driven decision-making.

Statistical analysis revealed a strong, positive relationship between future foresight and institutional performance, indicating that greater investment in foresight and proactive planning leads to significant performance improvements, especially in the context of digital transformation. Regression results confirmed that future foresight is the most influential factor in driving institutional performance, whereas demographic variables (gender, education, experience) had no significant impact, suggesting a unified perspective across employee groups.

Overall, the findings highlight the critical role of integrating future foresight with modern technologies to drive institutional excellence. They underscore the importance of building future capabilities, ongoing employee training, and continuous development of digital systems to remain agile and innovative in a rapidly changing environment. These results support embedding foresight into strategic planning and call for further initiatives to promote innovation and adaptability within the government sector.

5.2 Discussion: Comparison with Previous Studies

The main findings of this study align with and expand upon existing literature in several key areas. First, the relatively high level of future foresight among employees, characterized by institutional interest in analyzing trends and proactive planning, mirrors the conclusions of Al Shamsi (2023) and Al-Zahrani et al. (2023), who found that organizations with robust foresight mechanisms are better positioned to anticipate

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and manage change. However, this study adds nuance by highlighting the increasing managerial awareness of foresight tools, suggesting a cultural shift toward strategic anticipation that some earlier studies, such as those by Bell (2023), identified as lacking in public sector institutions.

Regarding institutional performance in the context of modern technologies, the observed progress in automation, AI adoption, and service quality improvement is consistent with findings from the OECD (2024) and World Bank (2024), who noted that digital transformation drives operational efficiency and enhances user experiences. Nevertheless, while previous research often emphasized technological adoption as a primary barrier, this study reveals that the main challenge now lies in fostering a culture of innovation and integrating data-driven decision-making—a shift from technological readiness to organizational adaptability.

The strong positive correlation between future foresight and institutional performance supports the arguments of Kahn & Wiener (2022) and Al Ali et al. (2024), who demonstrated that foresight-driven organizations outperform their peers, especially during periods of digital transformation. This study reinforces the idea that foresight is not merely a planning tool but a strategic asset that directly influences performance outcomes.Interestingly, the lack of significant differences in foresight and performance levels across demographic variables diverges from some earlier studies (e.g., Abu Al-Nasr, 2022), which found that factors like experience and education could influence openness to innovation. The homogeneity observed here may reflect the effectiveness of the department's internal communication and training strategies, or it may indicate a broader cultural alignment within the organization.In summary, this study confirms and extends previous research by demonstrating the practical benefits of future foresight and modern technology adoption in a real-world institutional context, while also highlighting emerging challenges related to innovation culture and data integration.

5.3 Main Findings

- The study found that employees at the Department of Economy and Tourism in Dubai exhibit a high level of future foresight, with strong institutional commitment to analyzing trends, scenario planning, and proactive strategic management. There is a growing managerial awareness of the value of foresight tools in preparing for future changes.
- Institutional performance has significantly improved through the adoption of modern technologies such as automation and artificial intelligence, resulting in greater operational efficiency and enhanced electronic services. The organization demonstrates adaptability to new technologies, though there remains a need to further strengthen a culture of innovation and data-driven decision-making.
- A strong positive correlation was identified between future foresight and institutional performance, confirming that investment in foresight practices leads to better outcomes, particularly in the context of digital transformation. Additionally, demographic factors such as gender, education, and experience showed no significant impact on levels of foresight or performance, indicating a consistent and unified approach among employees across the institution.

5.4 Recommendations

1. **Develop a Specialized Future Foresight Unit:** Establish a dedicated team for trend analysis, scenario building, and strategic plan updates.
2. **Enhance Investment in Modern Technologies:** Continue to invest in automation, AI, and big data analytics to boost efficiency and service quality.
3. **Build Employee Capabilities:** Offer targeted training in foresight and technology to foster strategic thinking and innovation.
4. **Integrate Foresight into Strategic Planning:** Embed foresight practices into planning processes and link them to key performance indicators.
5. **Promote Innovation and Adaptability:** Cultivate a culture that supports innovation and adaptation to technological and future changes.
6. **Develop Data and Analytics Systems:** Regularly update digital infrastructure and adopt advanced analytics to support informed decision-making at all levels.

5.8 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study highlights future foresight as a key driver of institutional performance during Dubai's rapid digital transformation. Adopting foresight methodologies and proactive planning has been shown to boost operational efficiency, elevate electronic service quality, and enhance adaptability to new technologies and data-driven decision-making. The strong link between foresight and institutional performance underscores the value of embedding foresight into strategic planning and investing in employees' digital skills.

Integrating foresight practices and establishing specialized units for monitoring future trends are essential for maintaining flexibility and readiness to address emerging challenges. Ultimately, the sustained excellence of government institutions in Dubai relies on their capacity to anticipate change, embrace technological advancements, and prioritize ongoing training and digital development to realize the emirate's economic vision.

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ISSN: 1053-7899
Vol. 36 Issue 1s, 2026, Pages: 734-739

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