Research Article

The Impact of Digital Leadership on Achieving Institutional Agility through the Zero Bureaucracy Government Program in the United Arab Emirates (An Applied Study on the Sharjah Police Sciences Academy)

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	The study aimed to measure the impact of digital leadership on achieving institutional agility and to examine the mediating role of the Zero Bureaucracy Government Program's requirements in the relationship between digital leadership and institutional agility from the perspective of employees at the Sharjah Police Sciences Academy in the United Arab Emirates. The study adopted a quantitative approach, using a questionnaire to collect data distributed to a randomly selected sample of 288 administrative and academic staff members at the academy. The results indicated a very strong, statistically significant positive relationship at the level of ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between digital leadership and institutional agility. Moreover, the independent variable (digital leadership) had a statistically significant impact on the dependent variable (institutional agility) at the level of ($\alpha \leq 0.05$). The findings also revealed that the Zero Bureaucracy Government Program partially mediates the relationship between digital leadership and institutional agility, according to the employees of the Sharjah Police Sciences Academy in the UAE. The study recommended enhancing strategic partnerships between the Sharjah Police Sciences Academy and relevant government entities in the UAE that are involved in the academy's activities and fields of work, with the aim of reengineering operational and administrative processes at the academy to align with the objectives of the Zero Bureaucracy Government Program. **Keywords:** Digital Leadership, Institutional Agility, Zero Bureaucracy Government Program, Sharjah Police Sciences Academy, United Arab Emirates.

1. GENERAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The success of administrative processes today increasingly relies on the efficiency and effectiveness of leadership. In the modern era, several leadership theories have emerged. However, with the rapid acceleration of digital transformation, it has become essential for leaders to harness digital technologies and integrate them into leadership practices, as these technologies significantly affect performance and productivity (Al-Husnawi, 2024).

Technological advancements have led to clear changes in traditional leadership functions. Tasks such as monitoring, directing, structuring, and team management have transitioned to being largely dependent on specialized systems and programs. Leadership now utilizes digital tools for generating, retrieving, and disseminating knowledge, as well as fostering constructive interaction between various administrative levels, which are essential requirements for institutional performance development (Ziadeh, 2021).

Al-Hajj (2021) notes that by the end of the 20th century, governments began seeking new administrative approaches to adapt to technological changes. These changes demanded genuine reforms in management and leadership systems, leading to the adoption of new methods that rely on modern technologies. Among the most recent approaches in government, reform is the reduction of bureaucratic procedures and the reinvention of government. This approach aims to create a lean, efficient government that operates in an organized and smart manner, moving away from centralization and the complexity of procedures.

In a proactive step to effectively and efficiently shape the future, the UAE government launched the "Zero Bureaucracy Government Program" in 2024. The program aims to eliminate inefficiencies in government

service delivery, enhance levels of efficiency and quality, and achieve institutional flexibility and agility. It seeks to simplify, reduce, and eliminate unnecessary government procedures while reformulating policies that support and assist all beneficiaries of government services (The Official Portal of UAE Government, 2024).

Therefore, the focus of this study is to determine the impact of digital leadership on achieving institutional agility through the Zero Bureaucracy Government Program, with an applied case study on the Sharjah Police Sciences Academy.

1.2 Research Problem and Questions

The (UAE) seeks to fulfill the requirements of future governments through well-planned and carefully studied visions. One of the key pillars of these visions is the provision of an advanced digital environment and the establishment and development of programs that support the use of electronic systems and smart applications to deliver services and enhance institutional performance. This vision can only be realized through the presence of digital leaders who distinguish themselves from traditional leaders by a unique blend of traits, technological skills, and knowledge. These leaders are characterized by innovative and unique leadership styles that align with the digital age while still maintaining the essential characteristics of traditional leadership (Al-Shamrani, 2023). These leaders must ensure that government services remain agile and responsive to the needs of the public (Abdel Aal, 2023).

To cultivate leaders with such qualities, several modern theoretical approaches have emerged to assist governments in institutional development. One such approach is the reinvention of government, which has led to a modern administrative method aimed at reducing bureaucratic procedures to create significant and exceptional improvements in processes, thereby enhancing performance and productivity.

In this context, Al-Fahdawi's (2022) study found that digital leadership practices play a vital role in enhancing institutional excellence and competitiveness. Al-Alwan's (2023) study revealed that dealing with the implications of digital transformation and its wide-ranging impact on institutions requires visionary leadership capable of driving long-term strategic changes. Furthermore, in Ogbeibu's 2024 study, it is noticed that Technological entrepreneurship greatly enrichens organizational behavior as a result of its mediating role from organizational agility. Moreover, in Noreen's 2023 study, confirmation is found that digital leadership impacts sustainable performance, showing the mediating effect of smart technologies.

In light of defining the research problem and identifying the research gap in previous studies, it became clear that researchers agree on the importance of digital leadership in improving performance, achieving organizational agility, and reducing bureaucratic procedures. They also highlighted the effectiveness of electronic management as a modern technical mechanism to overcome negative aspects within government administrative bodies. Furthermore, digital leadership has been a strong predictor of organizational agility due to the utilization of modern technological methods in administrative work.

However, the present study tries to fill the gap in research and contribute to new knowledge on the role that can be mediated by the Zero Bureaucracy Government Program between digital leadership & attaining institutional agility in security institutions. Such studies have not been undertaken in the UAE to the best of the researcher's knowledge. It would, therefore, be very significant to discuss this paper in view of the fact that the Zero Bureaucracy Government Program is an administrative initiative by the government of UAE aiming to enhance the effectiveness of governmental procedures to widen the leading position and increase its competitiveness in the world. Based on the above, the main research problem is identified as follows:

What is the impact of digital leadership on achieving institutional agility through the mediating role of the Zero Bureaucracy Government Program at the Sharjah Police Sciences Academy?

This main question leads to several sub-questions as follows:

1.   How can bureaucratic procedures be minimized in security institutions?

2.   What is the impact of digital leadership on achieving institutional agility from the perspective of the study sample at the Sharjah Police Sciences Academy?

3.   Do the requirements of the Zero Bureaucracy Government Program mediate the relationship between digital leadership and achieving institutional agility from the perspective of the study sample at the Sharjah Police Sciences Academy?

1.3 Importance of the Study：

- **Theoretical Importance:** The study provides a theoretical foundation for the key concepts of digital leadership, organizational agility, and the Zero Bureaucracy Program. It addresses a modern leadership topic, highlighting the importance of effective leadership that leverages technology and aligns with contemporary administrative transformations. Such leadership has a direct impact on achieving institutional goals. Moreover, agility performs a significant part to enhance the security institutions to adapt to new developments and respond

to changes. The Zero Bureaucracy Program further facilitates a transition to a new era of government work, contributing to the goals of the UAE Centennial 2071.

- **Practical Importance:** This study may help identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement, leading to recommendations that could contribute to developing an agile and integrated operational system within the Sharjah Police Sciences Academy. The researcher hopes that the study's findings and recommendations will raise awareness among leaders and officials in the academy to take developmental measures, redesign administrative processes, and formulate forward-looking strategies and policies. These efforts aim to maximize the benefits of the Zero Bureaucracy Program and contribute to achieving institutional agility.

1.4 Study Objectives:

1.   Define digital leadership and organizational agility, and then indicate the importance of both concepts in security work.

1.   The level of influence that digital leadership has on organizational agility, in terms of perceptions from the sample of the study at the Sharjah Police Sciences Academy.

2.   The perceived mediating role of the requirements of the Zero Bureaucracy Government Program in the relationship between digital leadership and organizational agility from the standpoint of the study sample at the Sharjah Police Sciences Academy.

1.5 Study Hypotheses:

Based on a review of previous studies that analyze and measure the dimensions of the current study (digital leadership, organizational agility, and the Zero Bureaucracy Program), the researcher identified significant aspects that contribute to the formulation of the study's hypotheses. The hypotheses are as follows:

•   **Hypothesis 1**: There is no statistically significant impact at the level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) of digital leadership on organizational agility from the perspective of the study sample at the Sharjah Police Sciences Academy.

•   **Hypothesis 2**: There is no statistically significant impact at the level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) of the requirements of the Zero Bureaucracy Government Program on the relationship between digital leadership and organizational agility from the perspective of the study sample at the Sharjah Police Sciences Academy.

1.6 Study Boundaries:

•   **Subjective Boundaries:** Limited to theoretical topics related to digital leadership, organizational agility, and the Zero Bureaucracy Government Program in the United Arab Emirates.

•   **Human Boundaries:** The sample unit consists of administrative and teaching staff at the Sharjah Police Sciences Academy in the UAE.

•   **Temporal Boundaries:** Data and information were collected during the period from 1/5/2024 to 30/9/2024, which is the period during which theoretical literature related to the study topic was gathered, the study tool was applied, statistical analyses were conducted, and results and recommendations were reached.

•   **Spatial Boundaries:** Emirate of Sharjah – Sharjah Police Sciences Academy.

1.7 Study Terminology:

•   **Digital Leadership:** A modern leadership style that describes and explains the transformation in leadership and its digital role. It includes essential capabilities in the domains of communication and computing, which play an active role in knowledge societies. It differs from traditional leadership in that it employs digital technologies to effect change in work methods and practices, enhances transparency, and allows the utilization of data and information to improve the work environment (Al-Mawjida, 2023).

•   **Zero Bureaucracy Government Program:** A government program launched by the United Arab Emirates in 2024 to form a new phase in governmental work focused on reducing procedures and eliminating unnecessary requirements, thereby elevating levels of efficiency, quality, and governmental flexibility and establishing an exceptional and pioneering experience in governmental work (The Official Portal of UAE Government, 2024).

•   **Organizational Agility:** Al-Hawamda defined it in 2022 as "an organization's capability to achieve the set results in light of the strategic objectives that it aspires to develop with regard to services and enhance its knowledge, material, and human resources; this reflects on the nature of the institutional work and activities in a proactive manner".

•   **1.8 Previous Studies:**

•   **Study by Ogbeibu (2024) titled "Unlocking the Potential: The Impact of Digital Leadership on Firms' Performance through Digital Transformation":** This research is conducted to Explore how digital leadership can drive organizational success by fostering employee engagement in digital

initiatives in private companies in Malaysia. The quantitative approach was used in this research, where data were collected from 164 employees in Malaysian private companies through questionnaires. The results indicated that digital leading capabilities, especially forecasting and future vision, are not directly contributing to influencing company performance.

- **Study by Noreen (2023) titled "Exploring the Impact of Digital Leadership on Sustainable Performance with Mediating Role of Artificial Intelligence":** The present research has been conducted to study the impact of digital leadership on performance and specifically the role of mediation by smart technologies within the business environment. Overall, the approach followed in this research was quantitative in nature. In total, the questionnaire was applied to 230 employees in seven firms operating in industrial areas in Australia. Data analysis was performed via SEM. The results indicated that the indirect influence on long-term job performance was statistically significant since mediators and digital leadership show bi-way relationships. The research also indicated that, together with smart technologies, digital leadership considerably enhances creative talents in companies.

- **Study by Abdel Aal (2023) titled "Requirements for Information Technology to Achieve Strategic Agility in Egyptian Universities: A Case Study of Sohag University":** The objective of this study is to explore the factors that contribute to strategic agility within Egyptian universities and to outline the specific information technology infrastructure necessary for its realization at Sohag University. An exploratory approach was adopted through a literature review. The research has deduced that information technology may activate the process of agility in administrative process designs and competitive advantages. Agility can thus make universities change and adapt their competitive strategies and implement far-reaching changes to operate successfully.

- **Study by Al-Alwan (2023) titled "Organizational Leadership in the Era of Digital Transformation: An Exploratory Study":** This study aimed to explore the most important tools for leading organizations in the era of digital transformation at the levels of human resources, processes, strategies, organizational frameworks, and organizational culture. To achieve the study's objectives, an exploratory approach was based on reviewing theoretical literature related to leadership and digital transformation. The study identified numerous significant parts to organizational leadership in the digital transformation era. In terms of human resources, several leadership roles emerged, including adopting skills aligned with the digital age, understanding how remote and virtual teams operate, and communicating through electronic platforms. Regarding processes, the emphasis on developing operations through simplifying procedures and automation became evident, contributing to improving institutional performance.

- **Study by Nouri (2023) titled "Reflections of Digital Leadership on Job Performance: An Exploratory Study in the Scientific Departments of Public Universities in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq":** This study examined the role of digital leadership in reflecting on the job performance of heads of departments at three public universities in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The study used the analytical approach in its design. For the data collection process, 62 department heads were randomly sampled. It was found that the dimensions of digital leadership, represented by digital vision, professional development of individuals, and innovative thinking, are related to the job performance. There is a considerable amount of correlation between digital leadership and work performance from the whole and partial levels' perspectives.

- **Study by Kamal and Mahmoud (2022) titled "Digital Leadership as an Entry Point to Enhance Organizational Agility among Academic Leaders at Aswan University":** This study aimed to identify mechanisms for enhancing organizational agility in light of academic digital leadership. The descriptive approach was adopted, and the results showed that the dissemination of digital learning culture among academic leaders at Aswan University was moderate. This result may be due to the complexities of administrative procedures and overlapping responsibilities for necessary decision-making for transformation. The achievement of digital citizenship among academic leaders at the university was also moderate, attributed to the lack of required technical support to ensure the continuity of digital transformation and management processes. Additionally, digital leadership was a good predictor of organizational agility.

- **Study by Al-Haj (2021) titled "Reinventing Government: An Analytical Study of the Experience of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Light of Vision 2030":** This investigation aimed to measure the level of the Saudi government's actions align with the concept of reinventing government and reducing government bureaucracy according to its future vision 2030. The inductive method was adopted, analyzing a set of official documents and data related to the administrative reform process, such as policies, programs, initiatives, and government practices. The study concluded that the Saudi government is making significant efforts to accomplish the largest governmental reform movement, and its actions largely align with the standards and characteristics of the concept of reinventing government.

- **Study by Letchmunan (2020) titled "The Impact of Digital Leadership on Sustainable Performance: A Systematic Literature Review":** This research explored the relationship between

organizational agility, encompassing its dimensions of sensing, responding to change, and competitive capability, and its potential to enhance organizational success. Through a quantitative approach, the study found a significant correlation between agility and improved organizational outcomes. Participants in the study affirmed the influence of agility on institutional success and recommended further development of its dimensions, recognizing their direct impact on operational systems. This development would ultimately contribute to organizational success, bolster the institution's capacity and capabilities to adapt to evolving stakeholder needs and preferences, and ensure the effective alignment of institutional resources

1.9 Commentary on Previous Studies:

The researcher benefited from last researches in clarifying concepts and terminology, establishing the theoretical framework, constructing the study instrument, comparing results, and developing a solid understanding of the importance of digital leadership in organizational agility and reducing bureaucratic processes. The findings and recommendations of this study may enhance the awareness of leaders and officials at the Sharjah Police Sciences Academy, emphasizing the need to form specialized teams and grant them the necessary authority to implement developmental measures, re-engineer administrative processes, and develop forward-looking strategies and policies to maximize the benefits provided by the Zero Bureaucracy Government Program.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

2.1 Digital Leadership

The term "digital leadership" was first used in academic studies in 1996 by Professor Utho Creusen at the University of Eschwege in Germany. He identified a relationship between the success factors of emerging organizations and modern digital technologies, highlighting digital leadership role in the behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs of workers, thereby enhancing the institution's position (Al-Hawamdeh, 2022).

According to Abdalla (2023), digital leadership is one of the concepts that describe and interpret the transformation in leadership and its digital role. It encompasses essential capabilities in communication and computing, which play a significant role in knowledge communities due to their dynamic nature, forming the basis for digital transformation.

Al-Alwan (2023) emphasizes that digital leadership is crucial for developing and sustaining a culture of innovation by rapidly adopting ideas through the use of information technologies and agile business engineering.

Zeike (2020) argues that digital leadership significantly differs from traditional leadership styles. Digital leaders possess a distinct blend of skills, attitudes, knowledge, and professional and personal experiences. Unlike traditional leadership, digital leadership promotes transparency, accuracy in work, and error avoidance.

The following figure illustrates the interrelationship between traditional and digital leadership themes across organizational levels, particularly concerning human resources, operations, strategies, and organizational culture:

Figure 1: The Overlap of Traditional and Digital Leadership Responsibilities at Organizational Levels

Source: (Al-Fahdawi, 2022)

Digital leadership necessitates that employees embrace change and innovation to keep pace with the environmental shifts surrounding the organization. This requires high competencies capable of competing and adapting to the variables and demands of the digital age. Furthermore, digital leadership emphasizes

operational execution as a strategic foundation for addressing contemporary challenges and preparing information systems to meet the current and future needs of the community and stakeholders (Al-Mawajda, 2023).

The strategic importance of digital leadership can be summarized as follows (Kamal & Mahmoud, 2022):

• **Supporting Employees**: It aids in simplifying administrative processes for employees.

• **Facilitating Participation**: It facilitates involvement in decision-making processes and reduces hierarchical barriers.

• **Streamlined Information Management**: Digital leadership enables easier management of diverse information without unnecessary complexity.

• **Enhanced Communication**: It improves communication and strengthens relationships with partners and relevant institutions.

• **Community Transformation**: It assists in transitioning towards a developed, future-oriented society.

Al-Faris (2022) highlights the following requirements for effective digital leadership:

• **Appropriate Technical Planning**: Digital leadership must have a scientific plan and a clear, defined strategy that aligns with the basic needs of employees, stakeholders, and beneficiaries of the organization's services.

• **Excellence for Leadership**: The pursuit of excellence is crucial for leaders engaged in digital leadership, as they possess effective skills, abilities, and experiences that enable them to achieve superior performance levels, reflecting the organization's leadership.

• **Genuine Digital Transformation**: This involves possessing attributes that contribute to achieving the organization's strategic goals, effectively implementing modern technologies, moving away from traditional methods, and making digital technology a fundamental requirement in administrative and organizational transactions both inside and outside the organization.

The researcher acknowledges that contemporary leaders are required to foster change and innovation, allowing employees to adapt to technological advancements and devise methods and approaches that ensure the organization's continuity. Furthermore, a digital leader must possess the ability to influence employees by transforming the organizational culture.

2.2 Organizational Agility

Agility is a relatively modern administrative concept that has emerged prominently in specialized theoretical literature in recent years. It denotes an organization's adaptability and responsiveness, remain flexible, innovate, and perceive transformations both within and outside its operational environment, responding effectively to them (Yousef, 2019).

Agility, for Abdel-Aal (2023), represents the flexibility of organizations to act unplanned in new activities that can respond to unexpected changes. In the year 2019, Al-Ta'i regarded agility as the capability to monitor and explore consistently and with the capability for creating effective responses with proper capabilities that can take advantage of opportunities presented within a situation by means of speed, surprise, and competitive advantage.

The theoretical literature emphasizes that organizational agility has become a fundamental requirement to succeed. Shahada (2018) asserts that the increasing organizational problems necessitate change and the development of services and organizational procedures, requiring a degree of agility for success. This is particularly vital given the intensifying competition among organizations and the rising expectations of stakeholders, compelling organizations to swiftly exploit and explore available opportunities to enhance and improve their services.

Additionally, implementing agility in institutions yields the following benefits (Al-Fahdawi, 2022):

• **Competitive Advantage**: When agility is present in any organization, it provides distinctive characteristics that set it apart from competitors. These traits include the ability to work and produce through flexible collaboration and coordination between employees and management, with agility and precision in execution.

• **Adaptation to External Environment**: Agile institutions are characterized by their capability to adapt to various environmental conditions that may arise at any moment.

• **Strategic Decision-Making**: Agility contributes to creating a wise and flexible leader who confidently addresses all risks, responds swiftly, and manages any threats faced by the organization.

- **Streamlining Procedures**: Agility helps eliminate unnecessary routine steps and procedures that do not impact the required constraints and processes.

The researcher adds that the application of agility elements in security institutions contributes to encouraging employees towards creativity and innovation, thereby enhancing service development, which in turn helps achieve excellence and leadership in work.

There are different models of organizational agility; among them, the model of Sharifi and Zhang has a particular importance. Their model, presented in Figure 2, connects the initial part of agility with operational programs which reflect the pressures under which changes take place in the business environment surrounding the company. In this regard, the organization seeks new ways to advance the work for the purpose of standing at the forefront of competition. Agility capabilities are shown in the second part of the model. This model defines all the means, methods, and tools- in other words, the factors that make agility achievable. These enabling factors must be addressed within the key dimensions of any organization's environment: human resources, technology, innovation, and creativity. There are three major steps comprising this model:

Figure 2: The (1999, Sharifi & Zhang) Model for Implementing Agility in Organizations
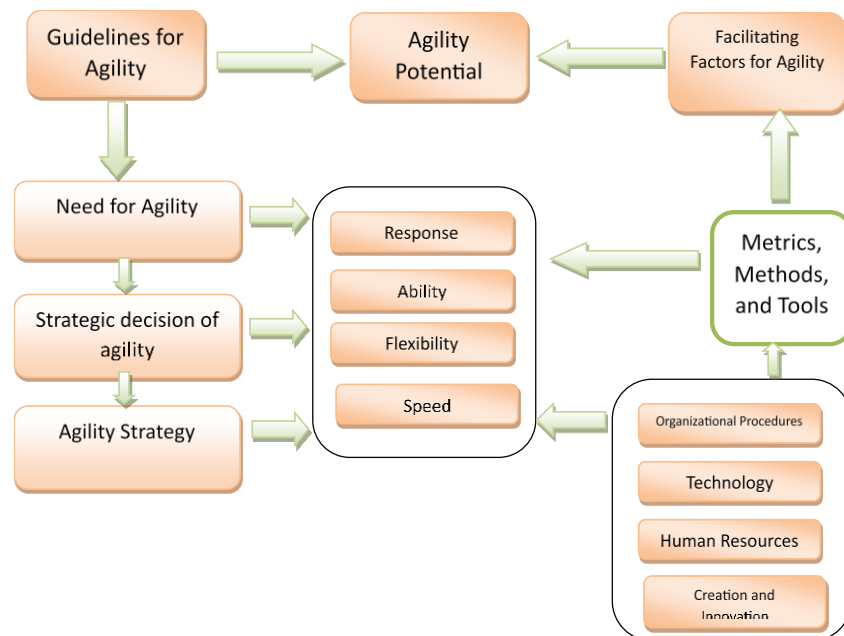
Source: (Al-Youssef, 2019)

The following figure summarizes that the organizational agility of each type and size of institution, in a dynamic business landscape, holds the golden key to success. Agility can enable an organization to cope with and lead these unexpected changes towards quick exploitation of opportunities, adopting unconventional strategies and policies in order to face up to challenges and keep pace with rapid developments. This is possible when accurate information is available on the needs of stakeholders and the competitive environment.

Nouri, 2023 explains that establishing an agility strategy in the security institution is taken to be one of the aspects that enhance the decision-making process since it improves the environment of security work and creates an accurate database that aids in informed decisions. It also enhances the capacity of the security institution to cope with a dynamic community, establish a goal and set priorities for the coming events, evaluate advancements made and present situational analyses and risk assessments that might help clarify what the organization is capable of doing in light of its relative strengths and weaknesses.

2.3 Zero Bureaucracy Government Program:

Bureaucracy refers to a governmental system characterized by specialization, adherence to established rules, regulations, and procedures, a hierarchical authority structure, and an administrative organization that is marked by centralization, formality, and routine. It also indicates the enforcement of laws and regulations governing work with authority in organized societies (Ibrahim, 2019).

Bureaucracy has undergone a gradual reform process, and it remains deeply rooted in some of the most successful and prestigious organizations, albeit in forms that are entirely different from those that prevailed in the past. The following sections will outline the fundamental models that establish the stages of bureaucratic

evolution, from its classical concept to its most recent phases, which serve as the foundation for the operation of creative institutions.

These models are represented as follows (Al-Ghalayini, 2020):

- **Model One: Classical Bureaucracy**: This is the foundational model of bureaucracy and represents, in its entirety, the traditional organizational hierarchy that is entirely under the control of the chief executive officer of the organization. The CEO holds complete authority in decision-making and supervises the establishment and dissemination of procedures.

- **Model Two: Lightened Bureaucracy**: This model takes partial measures to ease the centralized hierarchical grip of the CEO, allowing for greater participation in decision-making.

- **Model Three: Team-Based Bureaucracy**: This model emerges when the organization discovers that the senior management team responsible for decision-making and problem-solving is not fully capable of addressing issues and requires collaboration between different departments. Nevertheless, the structure of departments and the sense of hierarchical organization remain strong, despite granting more authority to employees at middle and lower levels.

- **Model Four: Matrix Organization**: This model marks the first departure from the known hierarchical structure of bureaucracy, where the organization decides to organize itself in a matrix form. In this arrangement, senior management grants various functional departments the autonomy to make appropriate decisions and address challenges more freely. According to this model, senior management plays a more coordinating role rather than a hierarchical one in decision-making, focusing on aligning departmental efforts.

- **Model Five: Network Organization**: This model is perhaps the most prevalent today, given the increasing reliance on the concept of external resources or outsourcing tasks to external entities for the organization's benefit. In this model, the organization employs a large number of employees and decides to operate through subcontracting arrangements, while the number of core employees is limited. Their primary role is to define strategic directions and provide the necessary operational support for subcontractors.

Although the previous theoretical patterns of traditional bureaucracy represent stages of transformation from bureaucracy to network organizations, they are ultimately considered different types of organizations that still exist today in various forms and tools. It can be said that the first four models are reformist and aligned with the developmental concept that institutions are undergoing in the current era. In cases where an organization is ready to undergo a genuine internal revolution, it will evolve into the fifth model.

At the beginning of 2024, the UAE government launched the Zero Bureaucracy Government Program as a new phase of governmental work aimed at enhancing levels of efficiency, quality, and flexibility in the UAE. This program seeks to simplify and reduce government procedures while eliminating unnecessary actions and requirements. Government entities have been directed to immediately implement the program by eliminating at least 2,000 procedures and reducing the timeframes for procedures by at least 50%, while zeroing out all unnecessary requirements. The results will be evaluated, and the best achievements will be celebrated at the end of 2024. This program serves as a national model for achieving the simplest, fastest, and most efficient government procedures. Through this initiative, the UAE government aims to bring about a remarkable shift in governmental procedures (The Official Portal of UAE Government, 2024).

The following figure illustrates the stages of evaluating the Zero Bureaucracy Government Program in the UAE:

Figure (3)
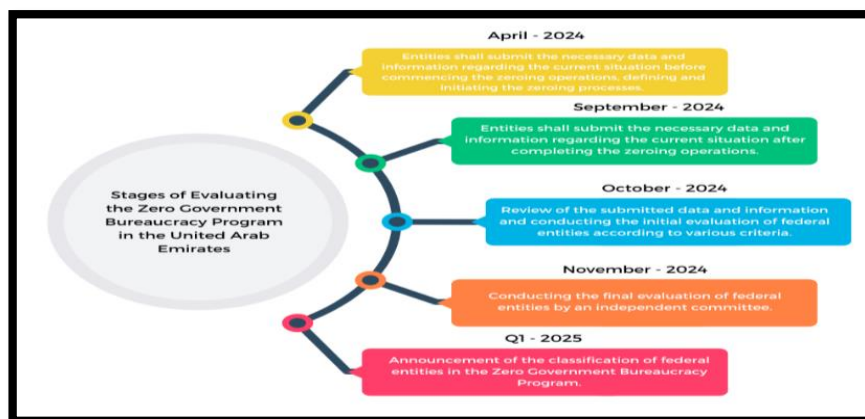
Source: (Ministry of Cabinet Affairs, 2024)

The impact of implementing the Zero Bureaucracy Government Program encompasses the following groups:

- **Individuals and the Private Sector**: Ensuring the involvement of individuals and the private sector in the bureaucracy elimination process and evaluating its effects on them.

- **Government Entity**: Assessing the impact based on the extent to which the entity complies with the objectives of the Zero Bureaucracy Government Program.

- **Employees**: The importance of leadership within entities establishing mechanisms and incentive programs for employees, in addition to empowering them to propose and implement initiatives for reducing bureaucracy in procedures, requirements, and regulations.

2.4 The Role of Digital Leadership in Achieving Agility by Reducing Bureaucratic Procedures

Today, government institutions, including security agencies, recognize the necessity of digital transformation. They must either embrace digital transformation or face obsolescence. Modern technologies have asserted themselves strongly in administrative functions, necessitating that digital leaders overcome these challenges. Security institutions must remember that their strongest source of growth and reason for existence are the clients, and their goal is to meet client expectations and enhance satisfaction through services that exceed their anticipations.

The Importance of Digital Leadership in Transitioning from Traditional Bureaucratic Work Methods to Modern Approaches

Al-Hassnawi (2024) emphasizes the significant role of digital leadership in the transition from traditional bureaucratic work methods to modern practices effectively and successfully. Its importance is highlighted in the following aspects:

- **Updating Procedures and Reengineering Administrative Processes and Organizational Structures:** Digital leadership is essential for streamlining and improving existing workflows to enhance efficiency and responsiveness within organizations.

- **Training and Developing the Skills of Leaders and Employees:** There is a need to elevate the technological expertise of both leaders and staff, ensuring they are well-equipped to navigate the digital landscape.

- **Facilitating Effective Communication Across All Administrative Levels:** Digital leadership fosters enhanced communication channels among all levels of staff, promoting a collaborative environment.

- **Encouraging Positive Digital Behavior Among Employees:** It is crucial to cultivate a culture where employees engage with and embrace digital technologies positively.

Consequently, security leaders should consider the transition from traditional and conventional leadership to digital leadership, especially since it contributes to achieving agility in security operations. Digital leadership also aims to create digital teams to improve operations, activities, and tasks while reducing bureaucratic procedures, ultimately striving to achieve strategic objectives that ensure organizational leadership. This can be accomplished through the following steps:

- **Establishing a Clear Strategic Vision:** Developing a defined future vision with strategic objectives and indicators regarding digital leadership and its roles in achieving the institution's goals and directions.

- **Gaining Upper Management Buy-in:** Senior executives' focus on utilizing digital technology to reduce administrative burdens and elevate service quality.

- **Reassessing and Updating Technological Infrastructure:** Institutions must review and modernize their technological infrastructure, ensuring it is secure against potential risks.

Efforts to Enhance the Zero Bureaucracy Government Program in Sharjah Police Sciences Academy

In the context of strengthening efforts and initiatives aimed at developing the Zero Bureaucracy Government Program, and designing a specific methodology that covers the necessary steps to address challenges in accordance with the phases and evaluation criteria established by the UAE Cabinet, the Sharjah Police Sciences Academy has prioritized the innovation and implementation of solutions that support the simplification and reduction of procedures. In 2024, the academy launched two key projects: the **Digital Transformation Project** and the **Virtual Training Project**. These initiatives aim to help achieve the objectives of the Zero Bureaucracy Government Program through the following measures:

- **Integrating Administrative Processes and Reducing Procedures:** The academy updated 25 operational manuals and decreased the number of processes from 193 to 187 in 2024. Additionally, the number of procedures was reduced from 1,239 to 1,183.

- **Developing Electronic Programs:** New electronic programs have been created to support the goals of the Zero Bureaucracy Government Program, aligning with the UAE's future digital transformation initiatives. Examples include the **Masar Program for Indicators**, **Fikra Platform**, and **Kafaati Project**.

- **Formulating and Approving Relevant Administrative Policies:** Several policies have been developed and approved, including policies on service development and delivery channels, governance, business continuity management during emergencies, innovation, remote work systems, and integrated management systems.

- **Restructuring the Organizational Framework:** The organizational structure has been reshaped, with updates made to ten internal regulations. Operational objectives have been aligned with the goals of the Zero Bureaucracy Government Program in the UAE.

Source: Strategy and Performance Development Department, Sharjah Police Sciences Academy, 2024.

3. FIELD STUDY

3.1 Study Design

- **Study Methodology:** Based on the nature and objectives of the study, the researcher adopted a quantitative methodology that aims to accurately describe the phenomenon or problem as it exists in reality. This approach aims to explore how digital leadership influences organizational agility, with a focus on the intermediary role of Zero Bureaucracy Government Program at the Sharjah Police Sciences Academy.

- **Study Population and Sample:** The total study population consists of all administrative and teaching staff at the Sharjah Police Sciences Academy, totaling 516 individuals according to the academy's administrative statistics from July 2024. The study sample included 288 individuals, representing approximately 56% of the total population. The sample was selected using a probability sampling method (simple random sampling) due to the approximate homogeneity among the study participants. This approach aims to achieve a high degree of accuracy and reliability, making the study results more representative of reality within security institutions. The study sample was determined using the Steven Thompson formula for calculating the required sample size in descriptive research. The table below provides a breakdown of the study sample based on demographic factors:

Table (1) Distribution of the Study Sample According to Demographic Variables

Variable Type	Levels	Frequencies	Percentage
Gender	Male	235	81.5%
	Female	53	18.5%
	Total	**288**	**100%**
Educational Level	Bachelor's Degree	197	68.4%
	Master's Degree	81	28.2%
	Doctorate	10	3.4%
	Total	**288**	**100%**
Years of Experience	Less than 10 years	23	7.9%
	10 years to less than 15 years	187	64.9%
	15 years to less than 20 years	54	18.8%
	20 years or more	24	8.4%
	Total	**288**	**100%**

3.2 Study Instrument:

Following a thorough review of relevant theoretical literature and empirical research, the researcher designed a questionnaire as the primary data collection instrument. The questionnaire was developed based on existing studies and aligned with the study's objectives. Rigorous scientific methods were employed to ensure the questionnaire's validity and reliability. The questionnaire consisted of (4) parts representing the study variables, as follows:

1.   **Part One**: Contains the demographic variables of the sample (gender, educational level, years of experience).

2.   **Part Two**: Contains items related to the independent variable: digital leadership, consisting of (6) items.

3.   **Part Three**: Contains items related to the dependent variable: organizational agility, consisting of (6) items.

4.   **Part Four**: Contains items related to the mediating variable: the Zero Bureaucracy Government Program in the United Arab Emirates, consisting of (6) items.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument:

- The researcher assigned numerical weights using a five-point Likert scale and ensured that the questionnaire was reviewed by several experts at the Sharjah Police Sciences Academy to verify the face validity of the items concerning their relevance to the topic and their alignment with the dimensions and axes.

- Internal consistency indicators were extracted for the questionnaire items composed of the three axes, and Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated for the items with the axis to which they belong.

- Reliability coefficients were calculated using Cronbach's Alpha, and correlation and reliability coefficients for the axes with the total score of the instrument were extracted.

Table (2): Internal Consistency Reliability Analysis of the Questionnaire Item Clusters

Digital Leadership Items	Correlation	Organizational Agility Items	Correlation	Zero Bureaucracy Government Program Items	Correlation
Item 1	.912**	Item 1	.875**	Item 1	.930**
Item 2	.950**	Item 2	.949**	Item 2	.956**
Item 3	.930**	Item 3	.930**	Item 3	.952**
Item 4	.943**	Item 4	.899**	Item 4	.943**
Item 5	.883**	Item 5	.848**	Item 5	.969**
Item 6	.962**	Item 6	.955**	Item 6	.972**

Overall Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient for the Clusters: 0.985

*Correlation is statistically significant at the 0.05 level; **Correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 level.

Table (2) reveals that the correlation coefficients for the items within the study clusters are strong, exhibiting values ranging from moderate to very high. Notably, no item displayed a correlation lower than the threshold of 0.20. The overall reliability coefficient for the clusters was calculated to be 0.985, which is considered an excellent value within statistical sciences. This high coefficient indicates a robust internal consistency among the items within the clusters.

Based on these findings, all items associated with the study clusters, totaling 18 items, are convenient for the implementation of the questionnaire on the targeted sample. This affirms the reliability of the instrument and reinforces the validity of the study's subsequent analysis.

3.3 Testing the Study Hypotheses

The researcher utilized appropriate analytical techniques to verify the validity of the study hypotheses using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The details are as follows:

3.3.1 Results of the First Hypothesis

Hypothesis: There is no statistically significant effect at the level of $\alpha \leq 0.05$ of digital leadership on organizational agility from the perspective of the study sample at the Sharjah Police Sciences Academy.

To validate this hypothesis, multiple linear regression analysis was employed.

Table (3): Summary of the Regression Model (Digital Leadership) and (Organizational Agility)

Model	Correlation Coefficient (R)	R-squared (Coefficient of Determination)	Adjusted R-squared	Standard Error
	0.951	0.904	0.900	0.26162

The results in Table (3) indicate that the correlation coefficient $(R = 0.951)$ suggests a very strong positive relationship between digital leadership and organizational agility. Furthermore, the R-squared value $(R^2 = 0.904)$ indicates that approximately 90% of the variability in organizational agility can be explained by digital leadership. This is considered a substantial value, particularly when taking into account the influence of other variables that may affect the level of organizational agility, while holding the other factors constant.

Table (4): Analysis of Variance (Digital Leadership) and (Organizational Agility)

Source	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F Value	Statistical Significance
Regression	92.981	5	18.596	271.685	.000
Residual	9.925	145	.068		
Total	102.905	150			

The data presented in Table (4) indicate a statistically significant effect at the level of α≤0.05\alpha \leq 0.05α≤0.05 for the independent variable (digital leadership) on the dependent variable (organizational agility) at the Sharjah Police Sciences Academy. The F value calculated is 271.685271.685271.685, with a significance level of 0.0000.0000.000, which is statistically significant at the α≤0.05 0.05α≤0.05 threshold.

Based on these findings, the first hypothesis is rejected: There is no statistically significant effect at the level of 0.05≤α0.05 \leq \alpha0.05≤α of digital leadership on organizational agility from the perspective of the study sample at the Sharjah Police Sciences Academy.

### 3.3.2 Results of the Second Hypothesis

There is no significant effect at the level of 0.05≤α0.05 alpha0.05≤α of the requirements of the Zero Bureaucracy Government Program on the relationship between digital leadership and organizational agility from the perspective of the study sample at the Sharjah Police Sciences Academy.

The second hypothesis explored the concept of interactive mediation. This analysis involved four key conditions:

1. **Significant Independent-Dependent Variable Relationship:** A statistically significant association between the independent and dependent variables must exist, indicating that the independent variable can influence the dependent variable.

2. **Independent Variable's Effect on Mediating Variable:** We assessed the impact of the independent variable on the proposed mediating variable.

3. **Mediating Variable Introduction in Regression Model:** The mediating variable was introduced alongside the independent variable in multiple regression models. This allows us to determine the mediating effect on the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Here, a significant effect of the independent variable on the mediating variable followed by a significant effect on the dependent variable is expected.

4. **Interactive Mediation Type:** We examined the nature of the mediation. If the independent variable's relationship with the dependent variable becomes non-significant when the interaction term (mediator x independent variable) is included in the model, full interactive mediation is present. Conversely, if a significant or non-significant relationship persists, partial interactive mediation exists.

To assess these conditions, regression equations based on Baron and Kenny's (1986) approach were employed. This analysis evaluated the mediating variable's significance in the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

Figure 4: Results of the Regression Analysis (for Digital Leadership) Overall in the Independent Variable (Institutional Agility) After Introducing the Mediating Variable (Zero Government Bureaucracy Program)
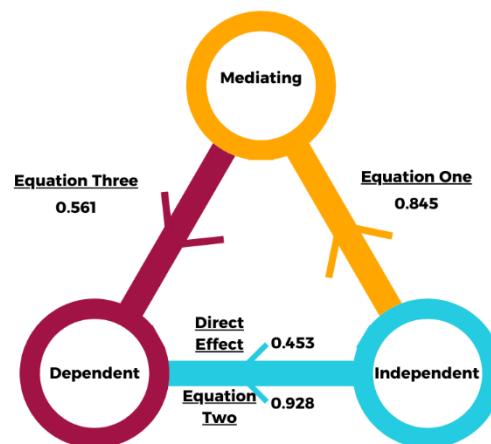
Table (5): Results of Regression Analysis (for Digital Leadership) Overall in the Independent Variable (Institutional Agility) After Entering the Mediating Variable (Zero Bureaucracy Government Program)

Study Variables	F Value	Significance	(R²)	B	Standard Error	Beta	t Value	Significance
Digital Leadership - Institutional Agility	1278.914	.000	.896	.928	.026	.946	35.762	.000
Digital Leadership - Zero Bureaucracy Government Program	768.209	.000	.838	.845	.030	.915	27.717	.000
Digital Leadership X Zero Bureaucracy Government Program - Institutional Agility	1181.911	.000	.970	.453	.049	.462	9.341	.000
			.561	.053		.529	10.682	.000

The results from Table (5) indicate that the relationship between digital leadership and institutional agility is positive and statistically significant, as evidenced by the t-value of (35.762) with a significance level of (0.000) and a Beta value of (0.946). The coefficient of determination (R^2) is (0.896), which explains approximately (89.6%) of the variance in institutional agility.

Furthermore, the relationship between digital leadership and the Zero Bureaucracy Government Program is also positive and statistically significant, with a t-value of (27.717) and a significance level of (0.000) and a Beta value of (0.915). The coefficient of determination for this relationship is (0.838), indicating that digital leadership contributes to approximately (83.8%) of the variance in the Zero Bureaucracy Government Program in the Sharjah Police Sciences Academy, from the perspective of the study sample.

After introducing the mediating variable into the regression equation, as shown in the results, the strength of the correlation between the independent variable (digital leadership) and the dependent variable (institutional agility) decreased from Beta = (0.946) to Beta = (0.462). However, this relationship remains statistically significant. The explanatory power improved from (%89.6) to (%97), indicating a percentage increase of (%7.4) in explaining the variance in the dependent variable (institutional agility).

Although the correlation coefficient decreased and remains statistically significant, this suggests that the Zero Bureaucracy Government Program partially mediates (Partial Mediation) the relationship between digital leadership and institutional agility from the perspective of the study sample in the Sharjah Police Sciences Academy.

3.4 Study Results and Discussion

The results revealed a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between digital leadership and institutional agility. This indicates that updating procedures, operational work guides, restructuring the organizational framework, and formulating modern administrative policies within the Sharjah Police Sciences Academy all contribute to continuous improvement and efficiency in performance. This reflects the academy's management awareness and understanding of the rapidly changing external environment, especially in light of implementing modern management approaches such as government innovation and bureaucracy reduction programs, which enable security institutions to effectively and efficiently respond to changes.

These findings are consistent with the conclusions of Al-Fahdawi (2022), which stated that digital leadership practices are significant in the excellence and competitiveness of institutions. They also align with Al-Allwan's (2023) findings that dealing with the data of digital transformation requires visionary leadership capable of driving strategic changes in the long term and enhancing operations and business performance by adopting modern business models. Furthermore, they correspond with the study by Ogbeibu (2024), which found an important statistical impact of digital leadership and its dimensions on institutional performance through agility.

The results showed a statistically significant effect at the level of ($0.05 \leq \alpha$) of the independent variable (digital leadership) on the dependent variable (institutional agility) from the perspective of employees at the Sharjah Police Sciences Academy. This indicates that the academy aims to provide proactive digital services for both employees and clients. Additionally, the academy encourages self-directed digital learning among its members in educational programs and supports non-traditional digital practices to achieve the best outcomes, including the "Masar" program for monitoring strategic indicators.

In this regard, the present findings are in conjunction with the work of Al-Hussanawi 2024, as in his study, digital leadership and its dimensions were reported to have a statistically significant impact on performance at work in interactive roles through knowledge sharing. Again, the same findings support Ogbeibu 2024, since in his study, the positive effect of digital leadership was identified at organizational performance. They also agree with Noreen's study that said, through the mediation role of smart technologies in the business environment, digital leadership affects performance on a statistical basis. And last but not least, findings which agree fully with Abd El-Aal who said that information technology plays an effective role in attaining agility to redesign administrative processes.

The results revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between digital leadership and the Zero Bureaucracy Government Program, evidenced by a "t" value of (27.717) with a statistical significance of (0.000) and a Beta value of (0.915). The coefficient of determination (R^2) was (0.838), indicating that digital leadership contributes to approximately (83.8%) of the variance in the Zero Bureaucracy Government Program at the Sharjah Police Sciences Academy. This suggests that the academy's management recognizes the importance of having effective leadership that leverages technology and aligns with contemporary administrative transformations, which has a direct impact on adaptability and flexibility in turbulent environments, thereby helping to reduce bureaucratic procedures.

In this context, the management of the Sharjah Police Sciences Academy has made efforts in 2024 to develop electronic programs that contribute to achieving the goals of the Zero Bureaucracy Government Program, including initiatives like the "Fikra" platform and the "Kafa'ati" project. These findings are consistent with Al-Alao's (2023) study, which identified numerous important roles for organizational leadership in the digital transformation era. It was evident that there was a heightened focus on process development through simplification and automation of procedures, leading to improved performance. Additionally, these results align with the study by Kamal and Mahmoud (2022), which found that digital leadership serves as a significant catalyst for overcoming the complexities of administrative procedures.

The results indicated that the Zero Bureaucracy Government Program partially mediates the relationship between digital leadership and institutional agility at the Sharjah Police Sciences Academy. This suggests that the current era and its rapid technological advancements necessitate the presence of digital leaders in government institutions who differ from other leaders in their unique blend of traits, skills, and technological knowledge. These leaders prioritize making government services agile, effective, and responsive to the needs and aspirations of stakeholders, contributing to a remarkable transformation in the processes and services provided by government institutions.

This finding aligns with Al-Haj's (2021) study, which concluded that government institutions' adoption of a bureaucracy-reduction approach enhances efficiency in administrative reform processes, including policies, programs, and governmental practices.

4. CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND FUTURE STUDIES

4.1 Conclusions

- **Integration of Leadership Types**: Traditional leadership and digital leadership intersect and intertwine across organizational levels, particularly in human resources, processes, strategies, and organizational culture. However, digital leadership is characterized by enhancing transparency, accuracy of work, and error avoidance, while allowing for the utilization of information in a digital environment aimed at increasing employees' knowledge and skills. This, in turn, improves the work environment and amplifies the influence and motivation of leaders on employees.

- **Organizational Challenges and Change**: Organizational issues have necessitated government institutions to enact change and develop services and regulatory procedures. This requirement demands a degree of agility by exploring and leveraging opportunities to develop and enhance services that align with the rising expectations of stakeholders.

- **Zero Bureaucracy Government Program**: Zero Bureaucracy Government Program reflects the leadership visions of the UAE and its future directions based on a forward-looking vision centered on developing an integrated and innovative government work system that meets future needs and expectations. This is achieved by eliminating redundancies, repetitions, and contradictions in the requirements for obtaining government services, as well as reducing the lengthy timeframes for completing procedures, thereby enabling government entities to overcome bureaucratic challenges and make swift decisions.

- **Strong Positive Relationship**: The results showed a very strong statistically significant positive relationship ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between digital leadership and institutional agility from the perspective of employees at the Sharjah Police Sciences Academy.

- **Statistical Impact of Digital Leadership**: The results indicated a statistically significant effect ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) of the independent variable (digital leadership) on the dependent variable (institutional agility) from the viewpoint of employees at the Sharjah Police Sciences Academy.

- **Contribution of Digital Leadership to Bureaucracy Reduction**: The findings revealed a positive and statistically significant relationship between digital leadership and the Zero Bureaucracy Government Program, with digital leadership contributing approximately 83.8% of the variance in the Zero Bureaucracy Government Program from the perspective of employees at the Sharjah Police Sciences Academy.

- **Partial Mediation Effect**: The results showed that the Zero Bureaucracy Government Program partially mediates the relationship between digital leadership and institutional agility from the viewpoint of employees at the Sharjah Police Sciences Academy.

4.2 Recommendations

- **Enhancing Strategic Partnerships**: It is recommended to strengthen strategic partnerships between the Sharjah Police Sciences Academy and federal and local entities in the UAE, particularly those relevant to the academy's activities and fields of work. This aims to re-engineer operational and administrative processes in alignment with the Government Bureaucracy Reduction Program and achieve its objectives.

- **Facilitating Coordinated Meetings**: Conducting joint coordination meetings between the academy and other relevant police and security entities is advised to blend experiences, knowledge, and best practices. This collaboration would contribute to enhancing institutional agility, reducing bureaucracy, and minimizing unnecessary procedures and requirements.

- **Adopting Global Best Practices**: The academy should review global best practices related to the use of digital technologies in delivering services associated with police academies. This includes implementing administrative measures and making informed decisions while diligently working on their execution. It is essential to evaluate the outcomes and impacts of these services based on their effectiveness in meeting the expectations of the academy's service beneficiaries, making necessary adjustments towards achieving the goals, and measuring the return on investment and added value.

- **Reviewing Procedures and Processes**: A thorough review of the procedures, operations, and pathways involved in delivering educational and administrative services at the Sharjah Police Sciences Academy is recommended. Necessary improvements should be implemented to enhance the strategic performance level within the academy, with an emphasis on accelerating procedures and reducing completion timelines.

4.3 Future Studies

Based on the findings and recommendations of this study, we suggest conducting the following studies:

- **The Role of Digital Competencies in Meeting Future Security Trends**: This study would explore how digital competencies can be developed and utilized to align with emerging security requirements and trends, assessing their impact on enhancing operational efficiency and effectiveness in security agencies.

- **The Role of Strategic Information Systems in Reducing Bureaucratic Procedures in Policing**: This research could examine the implementation and effectiveness of strategic information systems in mitigating bureaucratic challenges within police work, analyzing how such systems can streamline processes, improve decision-making, and enhance overall organizational performance.

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