Article

Sociodemographic characteristics and their relationship to the level of acceptance of digital work culture among young people: A field study on a sample of young job seekers in Emirati society

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Abstract: The research aims to explore the degree of acceptance of digital work culture among the youth in the Emirati society within the study sample. Additionally, it aims to reveal the relationship between "gender" and "educational status" as sociodemographic factors among the youth in the study sample and their level of acceptance of digital work culture. Furthermore, the study aims to identify prospective trends in digital work culture among young individuals in Emirati society. Due to the nature of the descriptive research, it employed the "sample social survey" approach. The field study primarily utilized a quantitative tool for data collection, namely the "digital questionnaire." This questionnaire was administered to a purposefully chosen random sample comprising young individuals actively seeking employment opportunities (unemployed individuals) or those new to the labor market. The participants fell within the age group of 15 to 35 years, totaling 184 individuals. Care was taken to ensure that this sample was representative of all youth categories in Emirati society, considering demographic factors such as gender, place of residence, and educational status. The research findings indicate that an overwhelming majority of young individuals in the study sample (97.8%) have no obstacles to accepting job opportunities that necessitate digital and technological skills. Moreover, the study uncovered a direct and statistically significant relation between "gender" and the "level of acceptance of digital work culture," favoring females. This implies that females are more inclined to accept digital job opportunities compared to males. Additionally, the results highlighted a positive and statistically significant relation between both "educational status" and the "level of acceptance of digital work culture." In other words, individuals with higher levels of education demonstrate a greater interest in digital job opportunities. Utilizing Step-wise Regression, the study also made predictions about the spread of "future digital work culture" in the United Arab Emirates based on the variable of "education."

Keywords: digital; youth; unemployed individuals; demographic; gender; opportunity

1. Introduction: Background, rationale and significance

1.1. Background and rationale

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is forward-looking and endeavors to invest its standing in the realm of "digital transformation." The UAE is making investments to establish an extensive data infrastructure, aiming to foster an appealing environment for innovators and researchers in advanced sciences. The country is committed to providing them with the necessary digital infrastructure, leveraging cloud computing to realize its ambitious developmental objectives. Recognizing that digital technology

has become the language of the present and future in all domains, including the labor market and its various stakeholders, the UAE is particularly focused on addressing the needs of young job seekers (Al-Dharas, 2022).

A recent study conducted by the World Government Summit in partnership with McKinsey and Company (2019), entitled: "Future skills: Six approaches to close the skills gap" confirmed that both "digital transformation" and "automation" are expected to lead to create significantly changing requirements in the workplace. There is an urgent need to form a work culture that supports the new technological skills of new entrants in the labor market (Enders et al., 2019, p. 4). This indicates the need to reinvent new work practices that necessarily requires reshaping the "prevailing work culture", especially among new entrants to the labor market. To put it clear, it must be ensured that the new job seekers have a work culture that accepts the tremendous technological development in today's labor market "digital work culture".

Therefore, many questions shall be raised, "Do young people, new entrants to the labor market need, only to possess skills to deal with digital technology? or do they first need to establish a "digital work culture" that constitutes the infrastructure for them to integrate with the labor market especially with the spread of the "culture of digitization of work"? Other important questions may also arise; does the pattern of acceptance of digital work culture among young people differ depending on some sociodemographic factors, such as gender and educational status? If this factor exists, what is the future of the level of the digital work culture among young people in Emirati society in the light of these sociodemographic features? These questions are related to the focus of our current study, which focuses on the relationship between the level of the digital work culture among young job seekers and their sociodemographic characteristics.

1.2. Significance

1.2.1. The scientific significance

The study endeavors to provide explanations for the extent of acceptance of the "digital work culture" among young people in Emirati society, in light of some theoretical statements of important theories such as: "value change theory" and "rational choice theory"; which can enrich the theoretical heritage related to the fields of "sociology of development" in general, and "occupational sociology" and "sociology of culture" in particular.

The focus of the current study on new concepts such as "digitization of work" and "digital work culture", which have been rarely used in the Arab research heritage—to the best of the researchers' knowledge—which enriches theoretical knowledge in this field, in addition to an attempt to conceptually adjust these terms.

1.2.2. The practical and applied significance

The current study can contribute to amending already existing strategic development programs related to the job opportunities that must be available, taking into account the nature of the work culture prevailing among young people in Emirati society, which contributes to strengthening the country's position in the field of "digital transformation". This, in turn, will accelerate the utilization of digital job opportunities, and helps achieve development goals, and the ambitious vision of the

United Arab Emirates regarding the UAE's strategies for the fourth generation of the industrial revolution, most notably "artificial intelligence strategies."

The current study's attempt to predict the future level of digital work culture in light of some sociodemographic characteristics makes it an important field study that may help policy makers determine the characteristics that should be focused on, and then monitor digital needs, in particular digital training programs that ensure the contribution of young people in developing the UAE society and achieving sustainable development.

The success of the current study in monitoring the extent of acceptance of basic digital work skills may direct the decision maker to the group of young people who do not possess the appropriate basic skills for future digital work opportunities. Accordingly, the focus will increase on this group to enable them to acquire these skills, increase their social integration, and avoid "social exclusion." the dangers of introversion and isolation from society.

2. Purpose and research questions

2.1. Purpose

Identifying the extent to which the youth of the study sample accept the digital work culture in Emirati society.

Revealing the relationship between "gender" as one of the sociodemographic characteristics among the youth of the study sample and the level of acceptance of digital work culture.

Revealing the relationship between "educational status" as one of the sociodemographic characteristics of the youth of the study sample and the level of acceptance of the digital work culture.

Identifying the future of digital work culture among young people in Emirati society in light of some sociodemographic characteristics.

Coming up with a set of practical recommendations that can guide decision-makers on how to "develop a culture of digital work" among young people, specifically new entrants to the labor market in Emirati society.

2.2. Research questions

The questions of this study can be stated as follows:

Do the sociodemographic characteristics of new entrants to the labor market affect the level of acceptance of the digital work culture?

This question leads to the following sub questions:

- Do the youth of the study sample accept the digital work culture in Emirati society?
- Is there a relationship between gender and the level of acceptance of digital work culture?
- Is there a relationship between the educational level and the level of acceptance of the digital work culture?
- Is it possible to predict the future of digital work culture in Emirati society in light of some sociodemographic characteristics?

3. Theoretical framework

3.1. Study concepts

3.1.1. Culture

Sociologists use the term "culture," to refer to a less specific concept than what is common in everyday use. In the social sciences, "culture" means "everything that exists in human society and is inherited socially, not biologically." Culture, in light of this concept, is a general term that indicates the symbolic and acquired aspects of human society (Marshall, 2007, p. 448). This highlights the "immaterial elements" of people's lives in a group, such as morality, law and custom, which arise as a result of social interaction and take on a mandatory character alongside the material element of culture, as well as the relationships between people (Thomison et al., 1997, p. 9).

3.1.2. Work

The term "work" is considered as one of the basic concepts in "occupational sociology," as sociologists view it as: "A way of human living that aims to achieve the goals of the individual and the group" (Awad and Bayoumi, 2011, p. 230).

The Cambridge Dictionary of Sociology states that the concept of "work" refers to "multiple levels covering specific forms of wage labor, and those who do it, and is understood as one of the two sides of the relationship in employment between capital and labor" (Abu Zaid, 2012, p. 189).

The term "work" is also defined as "behavior, activity, or expenditure of energy, which proceeds according to an organized plan, requires the performance of certain functions, and aims to achieve a specific productive purpose, in exchange for a material or moral wage, and this is required by the existence of a concrete (written) contract, or moral value between the various parties of work," while some Western economists, such as "Adam Smith" and "Ricardo," perceive that human labor is the source of the value of things and services (Allawi, 2012, p. 18).

3.1.3. Work culture

The concept of "work culture" refers to "a combination of acquired attitudes, relationships, habits, and other behavioral patterns that direct individuals to achieve the primary purpose of work" (Bhaduiy, 1991, p. 34; Rusanen et al., 2012, pp. 407–415; Wearing, 2011, pp. 534–540). "Work culture" can be also defined as "the behaviors that support individuals' ideas and attitudes toward the principle of work" (Sinha, 2010, p. 50; Williams, 2007, pp. 572–593). Whereas digital work culture is the essence of "digital culture" lies in enabling members of society to use digital applications (Facebook, Viber, etc.) due to its importance in achieving their professional and personal tasks, as well as obtaining information. As "digitalization" has become more than just a fashion, a beautification of human behavior, or a manifestation of luxury, which has made "digital illiteracy" one of the most dangerous diseases that can afflict society and its individuals (Mohammadi and Bakhoush, 2021, p. 4).

There is no doubt that the impact of "digitization" on the future of job opportunities has become of great importance. The United Nations points out that technological revolutions throughout history have proven the enormous role they play

in changing the workforce. They create new types and patterns of job opportunities, and drive others to extinction. Moreover, the International Labor Organization indicates that by 2030, approximately 24 million new job opportunities are expected to be created by "digital technology" through the adoption of sustainable practices in energy sector, using electric vehicles and increasing the efficiency of energy use in current and future buildings. Simultaneously, other reports, such as the McKinsey Group report, suggest that automation may lead to the loss of jobs for nearly 800 million people by 2030. Furthermore, a significant concern among the majority of employees is the potential lack of necessary training or skills to secure well-paying jobs. This apprehension extends to new entrants in the labor market, particularly those who may not possess a comparable digital work culture (United Nations, 2020).

Digital work culture means "the ability of individuals to possess cognitive behaviors through which they can interact in digital fields, use digital applications in the field of work, and available opportunities, as well as their ability to access information through the use of digital applications, and the skill that they possess in using digital means of communication in the field of work in general, and digital work in particular" (Lawley, 2017, pp. 67–68). In other words, "digital work culture" is based on developing behaviors related to the ability to use computers, electronic services, and the applications of their renewable technologies in the field of the labor market (Salim, 2008, p. 5).

3.2. Theoretical background of the study

Referring to the previous research (to be presented later), it was found that there are many theories that were not the focus of these previous studies, despite their importance when dealing with an important research issue such as work culture in general, and digital work culture in particular. Among this important theoretical background is Inglehart's "theory of value change," specifically what his two hypotheses: "scarcity" and "socialization". In addition to the "sociological rational choice theory" specifically what Michael Hechter addressed about "rational behavior." The most important statements of these theoretical premises can be discussed it terms to their most important concepts to achieve the objectives of our current study in the following table (**Table 1**):

Table 1. The theoretical background of the current study and its most important statements.

Theory	Important Pioneers	Its most important statements or hypotheses related to the subject of the study
Value change theory	Ronald Inglehart	The value priorities of individuals reflect the prevailing social and economic conditions (Allam et al., 2007, pp. 69–72).
		The more economically secure the following generations feel during their formative years, the more educated they become, and the more inclined they are to acquire the values of creativity, innovation, development, and self-expression related to work, and the satisfaction of ambition and seriousness in their approaches when searching for it. These are what Inglehart called "the values of what posmaterialism" (Alam et al., 2007, pp. 69–72).
Rational choice	Michael Hechter	Individuals are rational (they are mature) and adopt rational behaviors related to the choices and preferences available to them that are appropriate to the circumstances of the society surrounding them" (Elster and John, 2012, p. 313).

4. Literature review

- The scientific study of (Amour and Salem, 2022) targets the effectiveness of using digital culture in voluntary development as a realistic necessity for the new digital environment variables, its socio-communicative transformations, and its contribution to the development of voluntary work, in its multiple fields and its diverse methods, and by tracking the most important internal and external factors controlling its acquisition; its success criteria; On the other hand, it shows its basic requirements and the most important obstacles.

- Among the previous studies related to the current the study is the survey conducted by Research firm Qualtrics, which indicated that women are more open than men to using cryptocurrencies in daily life. The study, which was based on an opinion poll conducted on more than 2.000 British adults familiar with cryptocurrencies indicate that nearly 7 in 10 (69%) female cryptocurrency users were considering applying for a cryptocurrency debit card, compared to 6 in 10. Men (58%) males. The study also indicated that women are more likely to borrow money using the possession of cryptocurrency as collateral, as (61%) of women were open to trying this, compared to (53%) of men which means that women are more interested in digital work than men (Downes, 2021).

- Similarly, the study conducted through the World Government Summit, in partnership with McKinsey and Company (Enders et al., 2019) aiming to analyze more than (30) current initiatives in "Germany" to address future skills issues, and revealing the challenges of the educational system that hinder bridging the future skills gap in the German labor market. The study concluded that there is a lack of transparency in training future skills, as well as lacking of content related to future skills in schools and universities, in addition to the absence of systematic training on future skills in the workplace. The study confirmed that digital transformation and automation will lead to the necessity of creating significantly changing requirements in the workplace. There is an urgent need to create a work culture that supports new technological skills among new entrants to the labor market.

- In an article conducted by Thought Leadership (2019) that aimed to identify how the digital age can bridge the large gender gap in the Middle East and North Africa in the field of the labor market, it emphasized that the digital field has helped overcome some obstacles such as: equality in wages, income level, and the percentage of women in professional and technical jobs, as well as the percentage of women in positions of responsibility and leadership. The article also concluded that the digital world offers a more flexible work environment for women to become productive. It also indicated that women are more interested in the digital work culture. Digital economy provides more flexible working conditions and the possibility of working remotely. The more flexible the working conditions are, the higher the employment rate for women will be, which is what digital job opportunities achieve indicating that the digital age holds great potential for women.

- The research conducted by (Sharaf El-Din, 2019) sheds light on the book "Work in the post-digital era, which professions for the year 2030?" written by the

French sociologist Dominique Norc, who is well known for his focus on the study of digital and professional futures. The study reflects Norc's unique perspective, derived from substantial international experience, and discusses his original and multidimensional approach to contemporary economic and social issues at the intersection of academia and the business world. The first chapter of Norc's book, titled "Fundamentals of the post-digital era," summaries the elements that are expected to reshape work in the near future, post the digital era. He also anticipates additional revolutions stemming from various sources in this post-digital era, where digital becomes as ubiquitous as electricity is today. The chapter outlines the starting points of these revolutions, analyzing their consequences on the world of work, including changes in its nature, market dynamics, and institutional strategies. Sharaf El-Din's article concludes by underlining Norc's assertion that there is a need to redefine and activate a new concept of the institution as "public property," with an increasingly anticipated role. Additionally, Norc emphasizes the importance of adapting to social and technological developments, controlling their potential impact, and ensuring the satisfaction of those working within the institution. This, according to Norc, is crucial for the institution's evolving social role and its ability to serve as a focal point.

- Among the previous studies the study by Ocean and Belkas (2019), which aimed to research the forms of young people's uses of digital technology, and the social effects of these uses, including thinking about job opportunities. It was found that the transformations created by these technologies are not only scientific, technical, and material, but rather social, psychological, and anthropological transformations.

- The advisory symposium on "digital learning", which was held as part of the "Corsham Institute for Thought Leadership" program in England (Kleiman, 2017) aimed to identify how digital technology can best support individuals in order to develop the skills they need to obtain the maximum benefit at work. To achieve the goal of this study, the field study included personalities from both academic and the industrial fields, in addition to organizing youth focus groups of students ranging from the sixth grade to high school (10 to 18 years old). The results of the study concluded that there are types of skills necessary for scientific life and the search for job opportunities at the present time, the first of which is: the skills necessary to use digital technology. The participants acknowledged the existence of a lack of technical knowledge related to programming, coding, and analysis which are called digital navigation skills.

- The analytical perspective of some experts' views on current policy issues sponsored by RAND Europe (Duveau et al., 2017) aimed to identify the ways in which the growth of digital technology affects education and skills. The analysis concluded that technology not only dominates people's lives, but its growing use will affect school curricula and new digital skills in jobs. Educational institutions are unable to keep pace with technological growth, and that there is a close relationship between the level of education and the level of demand for digital job opportunities. The report recommended the need to take a step back and think about the upcoming challenges and opportunities presented by digital education

to equip current society and prepare for the future to meet the needs of the labor market, and to shape it as well.

- The report conducted by the British company Ofcom (2014) highlighted the dominance of the use of technology among those aged between five and fifteen years in the United Kingdom. It concluded that the increasing use of technology will destroy the current labor market and will continue to do so in the future in the name of "digitization of work", which requires preparing the new generations to accept and be ready for digital work opportunities through means of education.

- A study conducted by Gartner Research Company (Willis et al., 2014), predicted that one in three jobs will turn into software, automated systems, and smart machines by the year 2025. This requires improving the skills of the current and new entrants to workforce to adapt to an increasingly digital world, and minimize the risk that such change may lead in creating a new phenomenon of "social exclusion". Raising education rates (quantitatively and qualitatively) will inevitably lead to upgrading the skills of the new entrants to workforce and support their digital work culture.

- Hegazy's study (2013) aims to identify the social and cultural challenges associated with employment opportunities brought about by globalization. Additionally, the research shows how the dominant culture influences the attainment or lack of digital job opportunities. To fulfill the study's objectives, the researcher selected a simple random sample of 300 unmarried individuals within the age range of 18 to 28 years. The study utilized interview questionnaires for gathering field data. The study's findings show that, in their pursuit of job opportunities, young individuals prioritize positions that lack routine, offer suitable financial compensation for living, present minimal risks, enable career advancement, and provide secure, permanent employment. Interestingly, these sought-after characteristics align with the attributes commonly found in digital job opportunities.

- The study of Awad and Abu AlLail (2010), aims to identify the role of cultural heritage in work culture shaping among young people. The research also aims to assess the extent to which this heritage still directs young people's preferences towards seeking traditional job opportunities, or being affected by globalization and prefer job opportunities.

The sample included 140 newly graduated young individuals, as a questionnaire was applied in interviews with them. The results of the study revealed many results, the most important of which was that the priorities of young people's search for any job opportunity, whether digital or traditional, provided that it is permanent," followed by "the job opportunity that achieves reasonable financial gain," then obtaining a job opportunity that is compatible with the academic specialization, then "the job opportunity that fulfills ambition and self."

General comment on literature review

The previous studies have added valuable insights for the current study in its conceptual side by identifying research problems and the intellectual starting points of previous researchers, whether in investigating work culture, in general, or digital work

culture and digitizing job opportunities, in particular. This has contributed to the development of a theoretical framework suitable for this study. The previous studies have also enriched the procedural stage of our study in many aspects including the procedural definition of digital work culture and identifying sources of field material related to the preparation of empirical data collection tools. They also contributed to guiding us to settle on appropriate methodological methods to achieve the research objectives, as well as answering the questions. The final stage of the importance of the previous studies is to compare the results of the research heritage with the results that the current study.

5. Methodology

5.1. Procedural definitions of concepts

5.1.1. The concept of sociodemographic characteristics

The current study perceives the sociodemographic characteristics as some social characteristics related to educational status, and demographic characteristics related to gender of the respondents of the study sample.

5.1.2. The concept of digital work culture

Procedurally, it refers to "enabling individuals to possess cognitive behaviors through which they can interact in digital fields, use digital applications at work, and rely on them when searching for various job opportunities."

The researchers determined the "level of acceptance of digital work culture" by dividing a set of basic technological skills that the youth of the study sample mastered when they apply for any digital job opportunities as mentioned below:

- Being able to browse and connect to the Internet smoothly.
- Use different search engines such as Google.
- Subscribe and register on various social networking sites.
- Sending and receiving emails.
- The ability to save passwords from being leaked.
- Use all technological devices (smartphones, tablets, etc.) to access any digital content.

These skills were identified through reviewing various literatures and theoretical heritage. The sample of the study was divided into 3 levels based on the acquisition of these skills:

- Low level: Those who can interact and are able to browse and connect to the Internet smoothly, in addition to using various search engines such as Google.
- Intermediate level: Those who can participate and register on various social networking sites, in addition to sending and receiving emails.
- High level: those who excel in using all technological devices to access any digital content, in addition to the ability to protect passwords from leaking).

5.1.3. The concept of youth

The researchers' definition of "youth" relied on the criterion of age as it is an accurate, concrete, and measurable standard. Therefore, the study adopted the definition of "youth" as stated in the National Youth Strategy in the United Arab

Emirates, which was formulated by the Federal Youth Authority as youth are "those individuals between the ages of 15 to 35 years" (The Official Portal of the Government of the United Arab Emirates, 2022).

5.2. Study methodology

Due to the descriptive nature of the study, it relied on the social sample survey. It mainly relied on digital questionnaire which is one of the quantitative tools for collecting field data.

5.3. Study sample and type

The young person seeking a job opportunity, an unemployed person, or a newcomer to the labor market who falls in the age group 15–35 years, was identified as the basic unit for the current study, where a random intentional sample representative of the study population was selected from young people in Emirati society. It reached 184 persons. It was taken into account that they were representative of all categories of youth in Emirati society in terms of demographic characteristics: gender, place of residence, and educational status.

5.4. Sociodemographic characteristics of the study sample

The total sample of the study was 184 young people from all the seven emirates. It was taken into account that it was representative of all seven emirates, as well as all categories of youth in Emirati society.

The field study used the quantitative method by using a set of statistical methods to analyze the quantitative field data collected through the digital questionnaire and testing its reliability and validity. Cronbach's alpha was used to measure the questionnaire's reliability which reached 0.867, and that is considered a good reliability coefficient level for the questionnaire.

And to measure the questionnaire validity, it was presented to 5 experts in the field. and got approval rate 100%.

The correlation coefficients were calculated between the scores of each statement with the total score of the questionnaire to reach the internal consistency. The values of the correlation coefficients ranged between 0.572 and 0.729, and all these values are statistically significant values at the significance level 0.05.

Then data was analyzed using the SPSS. The analysis plan for quantitative data included the following statistical analyses:

- Simple frequency tables to show the frequencies associated with the sociodemographic characteristics of the study sample such as gender, place of residence, and educational status.
- Composite distributions for a number of questionnaire questions related to demographic characteristics, gender, educational status and the level of acceptance of digital work culture, which are lower, average, and high using the contingency coefficient, and identifying the type of relationship and the level of significance using x^2.
- Using the "step-wise regression analysis" method to predict the future of digital work culture in the study population, in light of some selected sociodemographic

characteristics.

The distributions of sociodemographic characteristics of the study sample can be clarified through the following table:

Table 2. The general description of the study sample and its most important sociodemographic characteristics.

Sample characteristics	Responses	No.	%	Total	
				No.	%
Gender	Male	139	75.5	184	100
	Female	45	24.5		
Place of residence	Abu Dhabi	12	6.5	184	100
	Dubai	31	16.8		
	Sharjah	43	23.4		
	Ajman	20	10.9		
	Umm Al Quwain	33	17.9		
	Ras Al Khaima	45	24.5		
Educational level	Ilitrate	0	0	184	100
	> primary (cycle 1)	1	0.5		
	≤ intermediate (cycle 2)	66	35.5		
	Tertiary	117	63.6		

As for "gender," the data in **Table 2** reveal an increase in the percentage of the sample of youth "male" category, reaching (75.5%) of the total study sample, while the percentage of the sample of youth of the "female" category reached (24.5%) of the total sample.

These percentages correspond to the ratio of females to males in Emirati society, according to the Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Center, which indicates that the number of males exceeds the number of females in Emirati society, as the percentage of males reached 6,468,460 compared to 2,813,950 females according to the latest census for the year 2020 (The Official Portal of the Government of the United Arab Emirates, 2022). **Table 3** shows the consistency and accuracy of the given data.

Table 3. Reliability statistics.

Reliability statistics	
Cronbach's alpha	*N* of items
0.867	13

Table 2 also reveals that the largest percentage of the study sample reside in Ras Al Khaimah, at a rate of 24.5% of the total study sample, followed by Sharjah with a percentage of 23.5% of the total sample. Umm Al Quwain comes third with a percentage of 17.9% of the total sample, followed by Dubai with a percentage of 16.8%, then comes Ajman at a rate of 10.9%. Finally, is Abu Dhabi at a rate of 6.5% of the total study sample. Thus, the study has included representative sample of the youth from various emirates, which enriches the study with diverse results and opinions.

Table 2 also shows that the percentage of those holding university qualifications was overwhelmingly high, amounting to 63.6% of the total study sample. Then the percentage of young people holding intermediate or above qualifications was 35.9% of the total sample. This is followed by the percentage of young people who are below primary level with a very small percentage amounting to 0.5% of the total study sample. Finally, there are no illiterate people in the sample of the study. These data indicate an important fact, which is the high rates of those looking for job opportunities were those with university qualifications.

The data also showed that the lowest percentage was for illiterate and those with less than primary level. In other words, the percentages of the unemployed and those looking for job opportunities are more widespread among the educated. This data is completely consistent with the results of the labor force survey conducted by the Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Centre in 2020 whose data showed similar results with the results of the current study as shown in **Table 4**.

Table 4. The distribution of the unemployed by gender and educational level, according to the results of the UAE Labor Force Survey 2020 (Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Center, 2021; UAE Labor Force Survey, 2020; Ministry of Cabinet Affairs, 2020).

Educational status	Total		
	Total	**Female**	**Male**
Illiterate	0.6%	0.2%	08.%
Read and write	0.9%	0.4%	1.2%
Primary	4.0%	1.6%	5.2%
Lower secondary (preparatory)	7.1%	5.0%	8.1%
Upper secondary (secondary)	27.2%	26.1%	27.7%
Post-Secondary non tertiary	6.0%	6.3%	5.8%
Sixth-cycle tertiary education	6.9%	6.8%	6.9%
Bachelor or equivalent	39.4%	40.1%	38.8%
Higher diploma	1.6%	0.9%	1.7%
Masters or equivalent	6.3%	7.0%	6.0%
Doctoral or equivalent	0.2%	0.6%	0.0%
Total	100%	100%	100%

6. Findings and results

6.1. The extent of acceptance of digital job opportunities

Table 5 shows that the absolute majority of young people in the study sample do not have any objections to accept job opportunities that require some digital and technological skills, such as: the skill of using smart phones and tablets, which are considered basic tools for digital job opportunities. The percentage of those who accept such opportunities reached 97.8%, compared to only 2.2% who do not accept digital job opportunities. This result is in consistent with the rational choice theory by Michel Hechter which indicates that rational individuals adopt rational behaviors that suit the circumstances of the society surrounding them. The Emirati rulers, within a

short period of time, were able to establish a distinguished system of university education. It contributed to attracting a number of international universities, in addition to the establishment of specialized scientific institutions such as Mohamed Bin Zayed University for Artificial Intelligence which recently ranked 127th globally among institutions concerned with conducting research in the field of computer science. In addition, the United Arab Emirates launched an artificial intelligence strategy, allocated an independent ministry for it, and cooperates with prestigious universities such as the University of Oxford to spread the culture of artificial intelligence among segments of society. Moreover, training government employees in specialized courses in data science, artificial intelligence, and programming.

Table 5. Distribution of the study sample according to the degree of acceptance of digital job opportunities.

Percentage %	No.	If you are offered a job opportunity that required some digital and technological skills, will you accept it?
97.8%	180	I accept
2.2%	4	No, I do not accept
100	184	Total

This indicates the country's determination to strengthen its position in the field of digital transformation and spread the culture of digital technology in society, which has had an impact on the youth of Emirati society looking for job opportunities. This reflects that young people in Emirati society accept digital work culture for job opportunities.

6.2. Level of acceptance of digital work culture

In order to identify the level of acceptance of digital work culture among the youth of the study sample, we must first identify the extent of the acquisition of basic digital skills. This appears through the data of **Table 5**:

This section may be divided by subheadings. It should provide a concise and precise description of the experimental results, their interpretation, as well as the experimental conclusions that can be drawn.

Table 6. Distribution of the study sample according to the acquisition of basic digital skills.

Which of these essential digital skills are you good at?	No.	%
Being able to browse and connect to the Internet smoothly	71	38.6
Use different search engines such as Google	10	5.4
Subscribe and register on various social networking sites	16	8.7
Sending and receiving emails	13	7.1
Use all technological devices (smartphones-tablets...) to access any digital content	18	9.8
Ability to save passwords from being leaked	56	30.4
Total	**184**	**100**

Table 6 reflects very important results regarding the acquisition of the basic

digital skills required for digital job opportunities among the youth of the study sample. The results show that the sample possess all basic digital skills in different proportions, however, they are satisfying.

The level of acceptance of digital work culture can be determined through the low, average, and high levels in **Table 6**.

Table 7. Distribution of study sample according to level of acceptance of digital work culture.

Level of acceptance of digital work culture	No.	%
Low	81	44
Average	29	15.8
High	74	40.2
Total	184	100

Table 7 shows that the highest percentage of the study sample who has a level of acceptance of the digital work culture, are those who have only the lowest basic digital skills, which are "being able to browse and connect to the Internet smoothly," as well as "using various search engines such as Google," with a percentage of 44% of the total study sample. They are followed by the high level of the study sample who have the highest skills in dealing with digital technology, such as "using all technological devices (smartphones-tablets, etc.) to access any digital content, as well as the ability to save passwords from being leaked at a rate of 40.2% of the total. 15.8% of the sample showed an average level of acceptances. They include those who have the ability to subscribe and register on various social networking sites, as well as send and receive emails.

6.3. The correlation between some sociodemographic characteristics of the study sample and the level of acceptance of digital work culture

6.3.1. The relationship between gender and the level of digital work culture acceptance

Table 8 reveals the existence of a statistically positive significant correlation between gender and the level of acceptance of digital work culture in favor of females which means that females show a higher likelihood of accept digital job opportunities compared to males. This inclination suggests that digital job opportunities may offer women a more adaptable work environment, enabling increased productivity and addressing challenges such as wage equality and low income, particularly in the Middle East. This trend is more pronounced among females, potentially due to the economic stability enjoyed by the United Arab Emirates, contributing to a sense of security within Emirati families. This economic security is ingrained through generations during the socialization years, leading women to seek employment opportunities that align with values such as creativity, innovation, and self-expression, which are prevalent in digital job opportunities. This last interpretation is completely consistent with what Inglehart proposed in his theory of value change, specifically post-materialist values. It is also consistent with one of the results of the study of Thought Leadership by Downes (2021) which indicated that women are more

interested in digital job opportunities than men.

Table 8. The correlation between gender and the level of acceptance of digital work culture.

Correlation	x^2	Degree of freedom	Significance level	Contingency Coefficient	Correlation	Significance
Gender and level of acceptance of digital work culture	48.022	1	0.000	42.042	positive	Statistically significant at 0.01

6.3.2. The relationship between the educational status and the level of the digital work culture acceptance

The data in **Table 9** indicate that there is a statistically significant positive correlation between educational status and the level of acceptance of digital work culture. In other words, the more educated individuals are, the more interested they become in digital job opportunities.

Table 9. The relationship between educational status and the level of acceptance of digital work culture.

Correlation	x^2	Degree of freedom	Significance	Contingency coefficient	Type	significance
Educational status and the level of digital work culture	110.228	2	0.000	98.324	Positive	Statistically significant at 0.01

This can be explained in light of the rational choice theory by Michel Hechter as he emphasized that rational individuals adopt rational behaviors that suit the circumstances of the society surrounding them. We know that the Emirati society environment is a distinguished one in terms of leadership in education, and various fields, which has a strong impact on the youth of the Emirati community looking for job opportunities, and makes them more willing to accept digital job opportunities.

This result is consistent with the study of Duffo et al. (2017), which indicated that there is a close correlation between the level of education and the level of demand for digital job opportunities.

6.3.3. The Possibility of predicting the future of digital work culture

To explore the future of digital work culture, which sociodemographic characteristics contribute most to its spread, and to increase the level of acceptance among those entering the Emirati labor market in the future, Stepwise Regression Analysis was used, where digital work culture is the dependent variable, and the independent variables are data of gender, educational status, and place of residence. **Table 10** shows the results.

Table 10 shows that the educational status is the strongest variable that contributed to the variance of the dependent variable, digital work culture, as the value of the multiple correlation coefficient (*R*) between the two variables was 0.178 with a contribution of 3.2% while none of the other independent variables, gender and place of residence were able to contribute to the variance of the dependent variable.

Therefore, it can be predicted that the "future digital work culture will spread in the United Arab Emirates on a large scale, based on education".

This result is consistent with one of the results of the report conducted by the British company Ofcom (2014), as well as the study conducted by the Gartner Research Company (Willis et al., 2014), which indicated that high education rates, quantitatively and qualitatively, will inevitably lead to improving the skills of the new workforce entrants and supporting their digital work culture.

Table 10. The regression analysis of the independent variables (gender, educational status, and place of residence), and the dependent variable (digital work culture).

F value	*T* value	Standardized regression coefficient β	Normal regression coefficient *B*	Contribution percentage	Covariance *R*2	Multiple correlation coefficient *R*	Constant value	independent variable
*4.629	*2.151	0.178	0.911	3.2%	0.032	0.178	2.366	Educational Status

** statistically significant at 0.01; * statistically significant at 0.05.

7. Discussion

The study was conducted through the World Government Summit in the Emirate of Dubai, United Arab Emirates, in cooperation with McKinsey and Company, entitled: "Skills of the future: Six methodologies for bridging the skills gap required in the future's world," confirmed that "automation" is expected to lead to significantly changing requirements in the workplace. And it recommended that there is an urgent need to create a digital work culture to support new technological skills among new entrants in the labour market in Emirati society, in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (Enders et al., 2019).

The results and interpretations of the current study are expected to strongly serve the achievement of sustainable development goals in Emirati society, and achieve what was recommended by the previous study, through showing the correlations between some sociodemographic characteristics in their relationship to the level of acceptance of digital work culture, and identifying the extent of acceptance of the job seekers this type of jobs.

The most important results of the study found that there is a direct, statistically significant correlation between "gender" and "level of acceptance of digital work culture" in favour of "females." Which means that females are more likely to accept digital job opportunities than men. The explanation for this issue from the researchers' point of view is that digital job opportunities may provide women with a more flexible and productive work environment, and overcome some obstacles such as equal wages and their low level of income, especially in the Middle East, compared to men, so that satisfies their desires for work. One more reason for women to be more interested in digital job opportunities than men in Emirati society may be the "economic security" that the United Arab Emirates has, which provides a sense of security for Emirati family, which is reflected on the children during the years of socialization. That leads them to search for job opportunities that give them the values of creativity and innovation that are found in digital job opportunities.

One more key result of the study is the direct, statistically significant correlation between the "level of education" and the "level of acceptance of digital work culture." This shows that the more educated individuals seem, the more they become interested in digital job opportunities. Based on the latest international reports, it is a well-known

fact that the Emirati society is distinguished by educational leadership, in various fields, and that can be strongly reflected on job seekers of Emirati young people, and make them more willing to accept digital job opportunities.

8. Recommendations

The study endeavored to provide some practical recommendations to develop young people's capabilities towards the digital work culture as follows:

- Incorporating educational materials to enhance technological skills in schools and universities in accordance with the future demand for these skills. This helps to contribute to developing the digital mindset among young people and creating passion in them, deepening the digital work culture.
- Providing the necessary training for young people at various educational levels to give develop their necessary future skills. These training programs must be in cooperation with government institutions, as well as employers and business companies, to understand labor market trends, and to identify the types of skills that must be absorbed in the workplace. Accordingly, this cooperation will be reflected in the performance of educational institutions and creating a real ground for innovation and growth.

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