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Continuous Improvement and Organisational Excellence in UAE Government Entities

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Excellence in UAE Government Entities**



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Abstract

Purpose: This study examines how continuous improvement (CI) is applied in participating United Arab Emirates (UAE) government entities and how formal CI adoption relates to employee involvement, internal-process efficiency, service quality, training and resources, and perceived contribution to organisational excellence. It addresses the risk that entities appear compliant with the Government Excellence Model (GEM 2.1) while lacking the internal capability for continuous learning and frontline problem solving.

Methodology: A descriptive cross-sectional survey design was adopted. Data were collected from 414 employees, almost all working in UAE government entities, through a self-administered online questionnaire distributed by non-probability convenience and snowball sampling. Because respondent-level data, scale anchors and validation statistics were unavailable, the aggregated survey results were analysed descriptively using percentages, together with means and standard deviations reconstructed from the response distributions. Results are presented in tables and figures.

Findings: Formal CI adoption was high (95.7%), as were positive ratings of internal-process efficiency (92.2%), training and resources (94.2%) and service quality (94.9%). However, employee involvement ($M = 3.03$) and perceived contribution to organisational excellence ($M = 3.10$) clustered at the midpoint of five-point scales. The pattern indicates a gap between formally deployed CI programmes and the employee participation through which improvement becomes embedded in daily work.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: The study integrates Public Value Theory, Dynamic Capabilities Theory and Institutional Theory into an adoption–participation–excellence interpretation of public-sector CI. For practice, it recommends moving beyond formal programmes to regular CI skills development, protected time for employee participation, evidence-based benefit reviews and public-value measurement aligned with GEM 2.1. For policy, it suggests that excellence assessments should examine routine learning and employee participation, not only the number of projects.

Keywords: *Continuous Improvement, Organisational Excellence, Employee Involvement, Public Value, UAE Government*

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INTRODUCTION

Governments are expected to deliver reliable, accessible and continually improving services while safeguarding public resources and public trust. In this context, continuous improvement (CI) is more than an operating technique or an activity of the quality department. It is a public-sector capability that helps entities learn from variation in services, remove wasteful processes, improve citizens' experience, strengthen accountability and adapt services to changing expectations. CI is particularly relevant to the UAE government, where excellence frameworks, digital transformation and commitments to citizen-centred services drive improvement both at the visible point of service delivery and in the internal processes behind it (United Arab Emirates Government, 2025).

Classic CI thinking emphasises iterative learning through the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle, structured problem solving through the Define-Measure-Analyse-Improve-Control (DMAIC) sequence, and the removal of waste through Lean thinking (Deming, 1986; Imai, 1986; Snee, 2010; Womack & Jones, 2003). These approaches help teams define a problem, understand variation, implement countermeasures and standardise the improved process. Public organisations, however, must apply them within legal, equity, policy and stakeholder boundaries. Unlike private production, public value is not defined by cost and output alone; it also comprises fairness, accessibility, transparency, timeliness, privacy, resilience and confidence in institutions (Bryson et al., 2014). Thus, the success of CI depends largely on whether methods are adopted as part of “business as usual” or only as “projects”.

This tension is reflected in the survey results. Very few respondents reported that CI was not encouraged in their entity, and ratings of efficiency, training and resources, and service quality were strong. However, employee involvement and the sense of contributing to organisational excellence clustered around the midpoint, suggesting that the formal visibility of CI may be stronger than broad employee ownership of it.

The study therefore examines how mature CI is within the participating UAE government entities, which outcomes it is perceived to deliver, and which management practices could turn it into a lasting organisational capability. The lens is deliberately pragmatic: the survey is used to identify current strengths and gaps and what is needed to “do CI better”, not to claim that excellence practices are already in place.

Problem Statement

UAE government entities have well-developed excellence structures, yet there may be a gap between formal, compliance-oriented implementation and the capability to build and sustain continuous improvement under GEM 2.1. High adoption rates may reflect the existence of programmes rather than employees having the time, authority, information, guidance and psychological safety to improve their work continuously. This distinction matters because an entity can still point to projects, training and initiatives while its employees experience improvement as something separate from their normal work. The study addresses this gap by comparing formal adoption with participation, cadence and perceived contribution to organisational excellence.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

Three complementary theories inform this study. Each explains a different part of the relationship between formal CI adoption, employee participation and organisational excellence, and together they provide the lens through which the survey results are interpreted.

Public Value Theory

Public Value Theory holds that public managers should create value for citizens and society, not merely deliver outputs efficiently (Moore, 1995). Bryson et al. (2014) extend this view into public value governance, in which multiple stakeholders, democratic values and the shared creation of value shape what counts as success. In this study, the theory explains the “why” of CI: improvement in government is justified by its contribution to service quality, fairness, accessibility and trust, so a process change that saves time but increases citizen effort or reduces access is incomplete. The theory informs the outcome stage of the analytical framework (Figure 1) and the recommendation that CI benefits be measured in public-value terms.

Dynamic Capabilities Theory

Dynamic Capabilities Theory explains how organisations sustain performance by developing routines to sense problems and opportunities, act on them, and reconfigure resources and processes in response to change (Teece et al., 1997). Applied to CI, it explains the “how” of improvement: the capability lies not in owning tools such as DMAIC or PDCA, but in repeated routines through which employees surface problems, test countermeasures and standardise what works. In this study, the theory frames employee participation and improvement cadence as indicators of whether CI has become an embedded capability, and it helps interpret the midpoint participation ratings as evidence that this capability is not yet widely distributed.

Institutional Theory

Institutional Theory argues that organisations often adopt formal structures and practices to gain legitimacy and conform to expectations in their field, sometimes before, or without, changing underlying behaviours (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Where excellence awards and frameworks are highly visible, high reported CI adoption may be partly institutionally rational. In this study, the theory explains why formal adoption can be high while participation remains moderate, and it underpins the concern that CI could become ceremonial compliance rather than a developmental practice.

Taken together, the three theories suggest an adoption–participation–excellence pathway: institutional pressures explain high formal adoption; dynamic capabilities explain whether adoption becomes routine problem solving through employee participation; and public value defines the outcomes against which improvement should be judged. GEM 2.1 adapts the logic of the EFQM Model to UAE government priorities such as distinctive value, innovation, agility and future readiness (EFQM, 2025; United Arab Emirates Government, 2025). It complements, but is not identical to, the EFQM Model, which offers a general excellence logic connecting direction, execution and results.

Continuous Improvement as an Organisational System

CI is best understood as an organisational system rather than a toolbox. PDCA supports iterative learning, DMAIC supports data-driven problem solving, Lean directs attention to flow and waste, and ISO 9001 addresses process control, nonconformity and the improvement of

the quality management system (International Organization for Standardization, 2015). Combined, these elements form a learning cycle: define a service problem, gather evidence, test solutions, standardise the change and verify that it works. When they are fragmented, however, an entity can show a great deal of improvement activity with little sign of a robust improvement system.

Reach and cadence are two indicators of CI maturity. Reach refers to how widely improvement practice extends across teams; cadence refers to how regularly it occurs. Leaders should regularly coach teams to improve close to the work, using evidence and sustaining gains. Episodic campaigns, slogans and isolated specialist projects rarely change the work system, which requires a combined and sustained effort (Deming, 1986; Liker, 2004). A mature system also matches the method to the problem: simple PDCA cycles for routine local problems, structured DMAIC for complex cross-functional problems, and strategic portfolio review for projects that affect public value and government priorities. Over-structuring small problems can slow learning, whereas under-structuring major problems can lead to superficial solutions.

Public Value and Organisational Excellence

Public-sector CI should be assessed in terms of public value as well as operational efficiency. Public value governance takes into account multiple stakeholders, democratic values and the shared creation of value (Bryson et al., 2014). Service quality, equity, transparency, resilience and stewardship therefore matter alongside speed and cost. If a process improvement increases the effort required from citizens, reduces accessibility or weakens fairness, the improvement is incomplete. Organisational outcomes should therefore be linked to the experiences of citizens, employees, partners and the wider community, which is also the logic of results-oriented excellence models such as the EFQM Model and GEM 2.1 (EFQM, 2025; United Arab Emirates Government, 2025).

Participation, Leadership and Learning

Frontline employees see rework, hand-offs, delays, complaints and exceptions that may not be captured in high-level reporting. CI is therefore most effective when it is practised with the involvement of employees. Involvement should go beyond attendance at training sessions: staff should have opportunities to contribute information, test countermeasures and influence decisions.

Opportunities for participation depend on leadership conditions. Inclusive leadership, implementation support, clear communication and adequate resources can increase the frequency of improvement practices (Aarons et al., 2014). This is especially important for raising problems that might otherwise be perceived as criticism, which requires psychological safety within teams (Edmondson, 1999; Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006).

Proposed Analytical Framework

Drawing on the theoretical framework, CI is interpreted through five interconnected elements: strategic alignment and leadership, improvement infrastructure, employee participation, process efficiency and service quality, and public value and organisational excellence. Formal adoption is treated as the starting point, not the end point, of improvement maturity. As shown in Figure 1, leadership and governance identify improvement priorities from strategy; the improvement infrastructure provides processes, data, time and coaching; employees convert these into problem solving; problem solving produces gains in efficiency, service quality and public value; and verified results feed back into leadership and governance, renewing

capability. The framework is diagnostic: it does not presume that adoption signals excellence, but shows where the pathway may break down (Fernandez & Rainey, 2006).



Figure 1: Integrated Continuous-Improvement Pathway for UAE Government Entities

Figure 1 presents the five elements as a sequence, from strategic alignment and leadership to public value and organisational excellence, closed by a feedback loop of learning and capability renewal.

Research Gaps

Conceptual gap: Discussions of CI methods, leadership, employee involvement and organisational excellence are often separated. This study links them in one chain from adoption to participation, public value and excellence, and explains why the use of tools alone is not enough.

Contextual gap: Despite the UAE's distinctive government-excellence architecture, there is limited descriptive evidence on whether formal CI activity in government entities is accompanied by a regular cadence, employee involvement and a perceived strategic contribution.

Methodological gap: Prior studies have largely tested relationships between quality-management practices and performance using inferential models (Jimoh et al., 2019; Sadikoglu & Olcay, 2014), with less attention to descriptive diagnosis of how improvement systems operate in public entities. This study offers such a diagnosis and an action plan that can inform more robust follow-up research (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006).

Research Questions

RQ1: How widely, how often and with which methods is CI applied in the participating UAE government entities?

RQ2: How do respondents perceive CI outcomes in terms of internal-process efficiency, service quality, training and resources, employee involvement and contribution to organisational excellence?

RQ3: Which management practices could link formal CI activity with embedded organisational capability in UAE government entities?

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional survey design, which suits the aim of describing patterns of CI practice and identifying practical improvement issues, but not testing causal relationships or making population-wide inferences. The target population was employees of UAE government entities. A sample of 414 respondents was obtained through non-probability convenience and snowball sampling: a self-administered online questionnaire was distributed through the researcher's work-related and professional contacts and WhatsApp groups between May and July 2026, and respondents were invited to share it with eligible colleagues. An eligibility question confirmed current employment in a UAE government entity (99.5% of respondents). The questionnaire covered eligibility, demographics, CI implementation, frequency of initiatives, improvement tools, internal-process efficiency, training and resources, service quality, employee involvement and contribution to organisational excellence; involvement and excellence contribution were rated on five-point scales, while efficiency, training and resources, and service quality were measured as levels of agreement. The instrument was aligned in content with the main domains of the analytical framework, but no pilot test, expert-panel review, Cronbach's alpha or factor analysis was undertaken; future studies should validate it through expert review, cognitive testing of response anchors and pilot reliability testing. Because the analysis drew on aggregated survey charts rather than respondent-level data, results were analysed descriptively using percentages, while means and standard deviations for the two five-point items were reconstructed from the reported response distributions and are treated as indicative only. Repeated or inconsistent labels in the frequency item were handled with caution, and no reliability, subgroup or causal analyses were performed. Findings are presented in tables and figures. No personally identifiable information was collected. The main limitations are self-reporting, non-probability sampling, the concentration of respondents in Abu Dhabi and in early career stages, missing scale anchors and the lack of respondent-level data; these limit the scope of the claims but do not prevent the findings from being used for diagnosis and action planning.

RESULTS

Respondent Profile

Table 1 summarises the profile of the 414 respondents.

Table 1: Respondent Profile (N = 414)

Characteristic	Category	Percent
Currently employed in UAE government	Yes	99.5
Age	25–34	80.0
	All other groups combined	20.0
Gender	Female	90.3
	Male	9.7
Emirate	Abu Dhabi	90.6
	Other emirates combined	9.4
Government-service experience	Less than one year	6.0
	1–5 years	79.7
	6–15 years combined	8.3
	More than 15 years	6.0

Almost all respondents (99.5%) were currently employed in a UAE government entity. The sample was concentrated among women (90.3%), employees aged 25–34 (80.0%), those with 1–5 years of government-service experience (79.7%) and those based in Abu Dhabi (90.6%). Figure 2 illustrates this concentration.

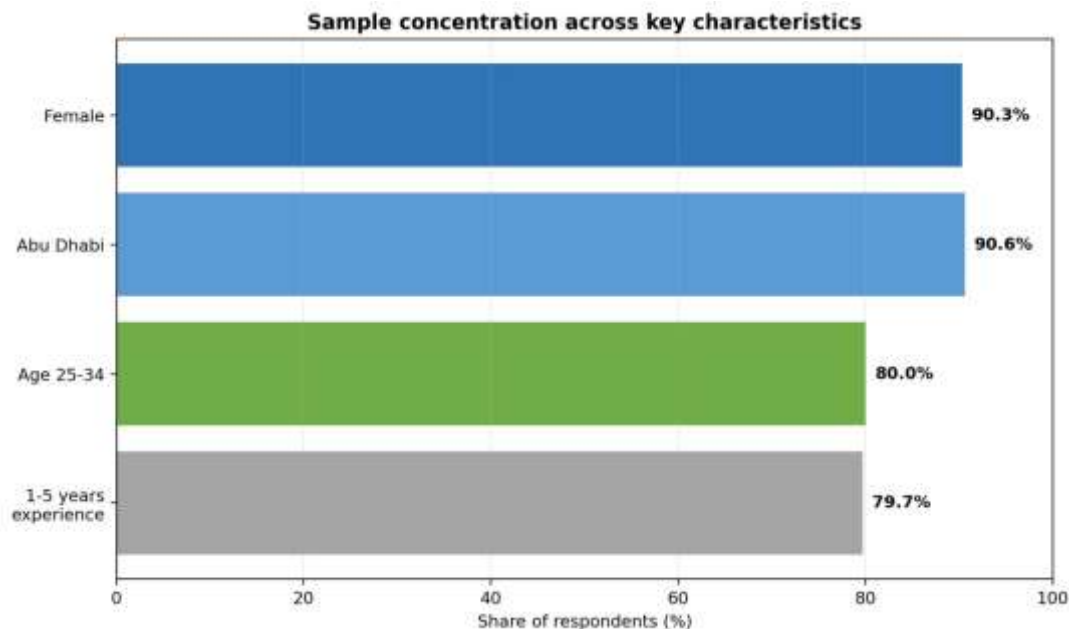


Figure 2: Concentration of the Respondent Profile

Figure 2 shows that each of the four main characteristics accounts for roughly four-fifths or more of the sample.

Although this profile is analytically useful, it is not diverse. Conclusions should therefore not be extended to other emirates, grades or specialist functions, to men or to senior leaders without additional sampling. The concentration may also shape perceptions of participation, training and excellence; for example, newer employees may experience formal training and programmes differently from long-serving staff, and institutional programmes may differ between emirates.

Adoption, Cadence and Method Orientation

Formal CI adoption was high, with 95.7% of respondents indicating that CI was actively implemented in their entity. This is consistent with the UAE government's emphasis on excellence and innovation (United Arab Emirates Government, 2025). However, adoption alone does not show that CI is part of daily management. Table 2 presents the deployment indicators.

Table 2: Continuous-Improvement Deployment Indicators

Indicator	Response	Percent	Interpretation
Active implementation	Yes	95.7	High formal adoption
Frequency	Once every two years or less	31.9	Largest clearly labelled category
	Semi-annually	22.7	Periodic rather than routine
	Quarterly	19.6	More regular project cycle
	Annually	15.0	Periodic cycle
	Other displayed categories combined	10.8	Duplicated or inconsistent labels
Most common method	DMAIC-type approach	60.4	Strong project-method orientation
	PDCA	26.3	Secondary iterative method
	All other methods combined	13.3	Lean Six Sigma, Kaizen, 5S, benchmarking, VSM and others

Table 2 shows that initiative cadence was mixed: among clearly labelled responses, 31.9% reported activity once every two years or less, 22.7% semi-annually, 19.6% quarterly and 15.0% annually. Methods were concentrated, with DMAIC-type approaches accounting for 60.4% of reported methods, PDCA for 26.3% and all other methods for 13.3%.

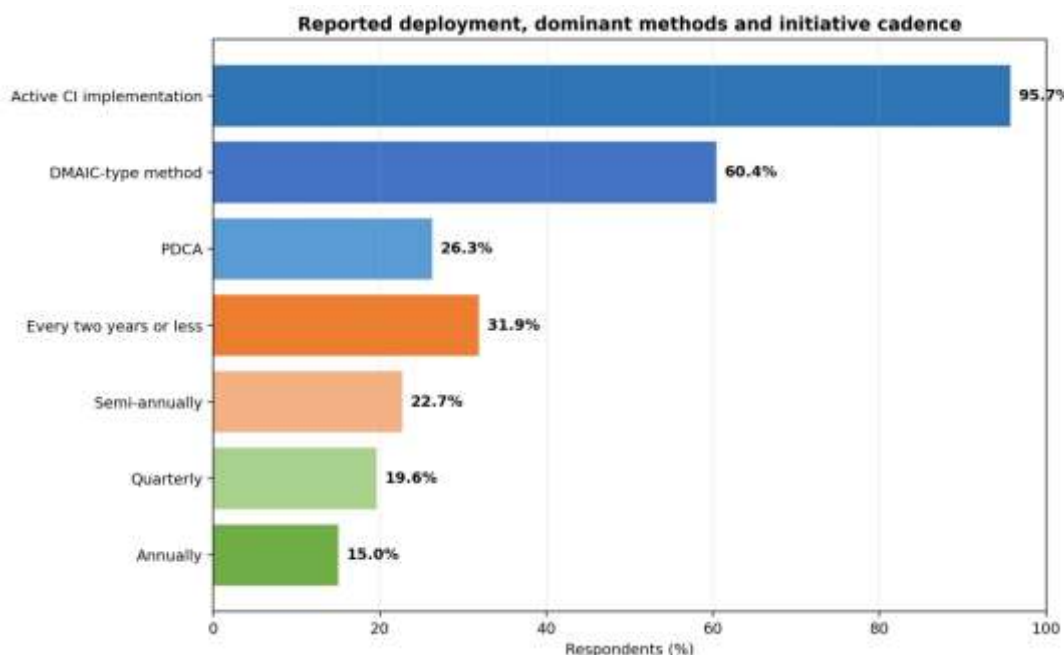


Figure 3: Reported Continuous-Improvement Deployment, Methods and Cadence

Figure 3 contrasts near-universal adoption with relatively infrequent improvement cycles and a dominant project-based method.

Cadence matters because continuous improvement depends on repetition. In a programme that is formally active but infrequent, many employees may have few opportunities to make meaningful improvements, and the learning loop may be too slow to affect day-to-day operations (Deming, 1986; Liker, 2004). Similarly, DMAIC is useful for complex, data-driven

problems, but it can add unnecessary overhead for smaller problems that do not require a full project method (Snee, 2010). In mature CI systems, the level of method matches the complexity of the problem.

Employee Participation

Employee involvement showed the clearest pattern. Of 411 valid responses, 88.2% selected the midpoint of the five-point scale, 7.0% selected categories 4 or 5 and 4.8% selected categories 1 or 2; the reconstructed mean was 3.03 (SD = 0.53). Figure 4 shows this concentration alongside the ratings for contribution to organisational excellence.

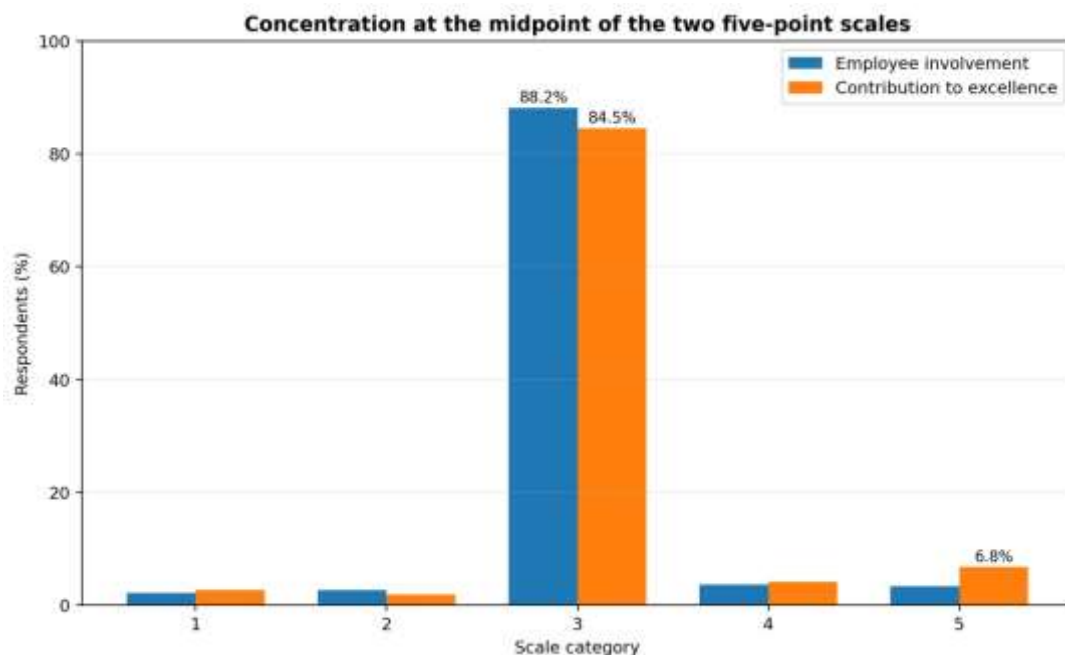


Figure 4: Distribution of Employee-Involvement and Excellence-Contribution Ratings

Figure 4 shows that both five-point items are heavily concentrated at category 3, with few responses at either end of the scale.

Because scale anchors were unavailable, the midpoint cannot be labelled precisely as “neutral”, “moderate” or “occasional”. Nevertheless, the concentration shows limited differentiation and little evidence of high-end participation across the sample. This is important because CI depends on the regular discovery of small service problems by employees who feel empowered to change the processes they work with every day (Edmondson, 1999).

Several explanations are possible. Improvement may be driven mainly by specialist teams; frontline staff may lack protected time for improvement; or leaders may collect ideas without closing the loop on implementation. In hierarchical settings, staff may also be reluctant to raise problems unless this is actively encouraged (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). Alternatively, employees may take part in formal schemes without understanding how these schemes contribute to organisational excellence. These explanations are hypotheses to be tested with respondent-level data, interviews and evidence on idea submission, implementation and benefit reviews.

Perceived Outcomes and the Excellence Gap

Perceived operational outcomes were strong. As shown in Table 3, 92.2% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that internal processes were efficient, 94.2% gave positive ratings for training and resources and 94.9% for service quality.

Table 3: Perceived Involvement, Organisational Excellence and Outcomes

Measure	Scale	Mean	SD	Key result
Employee involvement	1–5	3.03	0.53	88.2% midpoint; 7.0% chose 4–5; 4.8% chose 1–2
Contribution to organisational excellence	1–5	3.10	0.65	84.5% midpoint; 10.9% chose 4–5; 4.6% chose 1–2
Internal-process efficiency	Agreement	–	–	92.2% agree/strongly agree
Training and resources	Agreement	–	–	94.2% agree/strongly agree
Service quality	Agreement	–	–	94.9% agree/strongly agree

Table 3 contrasts the high agreement levels for the three operational outcomes with the midpoint means for employee involvement ($M = 3.03$) and contribution to organisational excellence ($M = 3.10$). Means and standard deviations were reconstructed from aggregated distributions.

These results are consistent with studies showing that coherent quality-management practices can contribute to operational performance (Jimoh et al., 2019; Sadikoglu & Olcay, 2014).

The result for organisational excellence was weaker. Of the 414 respondents, 84.5% chose the midpoint for contribution to organisational excellence, 10.9% chose categories 4 or 5 and 4.6% chose categories 1 or 2; the reconstructed mean was 3.10 ($SD = 0.65$). Figure 5 illustrates this gap between efficiency and excellence: respondents were confident about the operational benefits of CI but less confident about its contribution to overall organisational excellence. One pragmatic interpretation is that employees experience improvements within their own work area but are not convinced that these improvements affect strategic outcomes, citizen value or GEM 2.1 results.

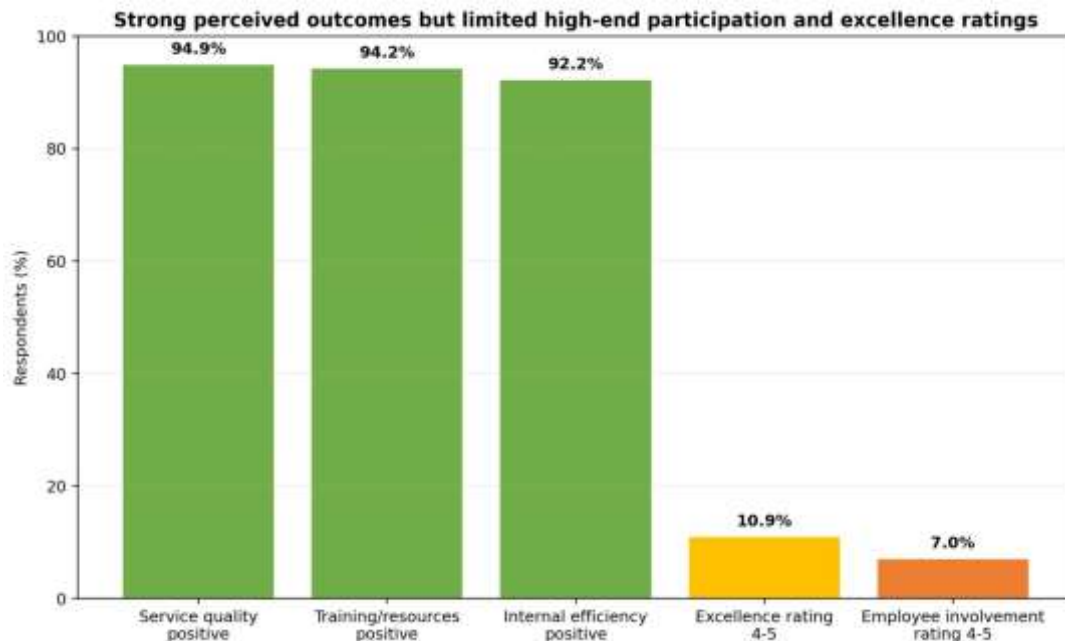


Figure 5: Perceived Outcome Strengths and the Participation/Excellence Gap

Figure 5 shows positive operational ratings above 90%, compared with high-end (4–5) ratings of 10.9% for excellence contribution and 7.0% for employee involvement.

The training and resources results also require careful interpretation. Training can build vocabulary or lead to certification without developing skills in problem definition, testing countermeasures, standardisation or coaching. Improvement projects also need time, reliable data, local decision rights and support from decision makers; these resources need not be limited to formal courses or project templates (Bortolotti et al., 2015; Netland, 2016).

Discussion

Adoption, Cadence and Improvement Maturity

In relation to RQ1 and RQ2, the participating entities show high formal adoption but an intermediate level of CI maturity. The results can be explained by distinguishing between programme visibility and embedded capability. High ratings for efficiency, training and resources, and service quality suggest successful formal projects, whereas midpoint ratings for participation and excellence contribution suggest that CI is not yet widely used in frontline work. This is consistent with Institutional Theory's concern that formal structures may signal compliance and legitimacy before deeper behaviours change (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). The managerial challenge is to show how improvement activity translates into changes in outcomes that matter, and to link those changes to the programmes that are visible in reporting.

Employee Participation, Leadership and Psychological Safety

The findings highlight the importance of leadership and psychological safety. Employees need clear ways to escalate issues, access to the evidence behind them, and the authority to experiment and receive feedback on decisions. CI maturity should therefore be judged not only by the adoption rate but also by the breadth of participation, the regularity of improvement cycles and the quality of problem discussion. From a Dynamic Capabilities perspective, these

are the routines through which an organisation senses and acts on problems (Teece et al., 1997). Leaders can help by framing problems, asking for evidence, avoiding blame, bringing defects to the surface and removing obstacles that teams cannot resolve alone (Edmondson, 1999; Nemphard & Edmondson, 2006). Without these conditions, training and resources can remain symbolic rather than developmental.

From Operational Improvement to Organisational Excellence

In relation to RQ3, the results also show why excellence models should not be treated as documentation exercises. GEM 2.1 can help entities orient improvement towards public value, but only if they can show evidence from daily work that their capability is being renewed (United Arab Emirates Government, 2025). Consistent with Public Value Theory, the strategic challenge is to link priorities to team practices, citizen outcomes and verified benefits (Bryson et al., 2014; Moore, 1995). This requires a management cycle in which entities select a small number of priority challenges, run short improvement cycles in teams, review evidence of improvement openly and standardise improvements without losing the learning.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This study analysed 414 questionnaire responses on CI and organisational excellence in participating UAE government entities. The results are positive but uneven. Formal CI adoption and the perceived operational impact of CI were high, whereas employee involvement and perceived contribution to organisational excellence were moderate. The evidence therefore suggests a gap between formal roll-out and sustained participatory capability. The main conclusion is that CI should be treated as a learning system in which strategy sets priorities, leadership creates the conditions, employees identify and solve problems, public value is realised and the cycle towards excellence continues.

The study is limited by the lack of respondent-level data, duplicated response options, missing scale anchors, reliance on self-report and the concentration of respondents. Future research should use stratified sampling, fully labelled response anchors, validated measures, qualitative interviews and operational indicators to test the adoption–participation–excellence pathway. A stronger design would also compare entities at different levels of CI maturity and link perceptions to actual service results, such as shorter cycle times, better complaint resolution, reduced citizen effort and less rework.

Recommendations

Contribution to Theory

The study connects CI practice with Public Value Theory, Dynamic Capabilities Theory and Institutional Theory in a single adoption–participation–excellence pathway. It shows that high formal adoption, which institutional pressures can explain, does not by itself indicate the routine problem-solving capability described by dynamic capabilities, and that the outcomes of CI in government should be judged against public value rather than efficiency alone. Future studies can use this pathway as a testable model.

Contribution to Practice

UAE government entities should translate general strategic directions into improvement challenges with owners, baselines, stakeholder outcomes and sustainability criteria. Frontline teams should hold weekly or biweekly huddles to address local issues using visual management

and rapid PDCA cycles, while cross-functional or complex issues should be addressed through DMAIC or Lean Six Sigma. Leaders should check whether ideas are implemented and whether benefits are sustained at 90 and 180 days. Within the improvement portfolio, projects that respond to compliance requirements should be separated from improvement opportunities identified by employees, because both are important but require different governance. Ownership should rest with process owners and service teams, with guidance from a small central CI office. Table 4 sets out a twelve-month roadmap for these actions.

Table 4: Twelve-Month Implementation Roadmap

Timing	Priority	Key actions	Illustrative measures
0–90 days	Align governance	Define strategic challenges, baselines, process owners and selection criteria	Approved portfolio; baseline completeness; duplicate projects stopped
Months 3–6	Build participation	Launch team huddles, visual boards, an idea pipeline and leader coaching	Teams using huddles; ideas per 100 staff; decision lead time
Months 6–9	Integrate outcomes	Link PDCA/DMAIC projects to GEM 2.1 and balanced public-value measures	Projects mapped to GEM 2.1; citizen effort; first-contact resolution; equity checks
Months 9–12	Verify and scale	Conduct 90/180-day benefit reviews, peer learning and cross-entity replication	Sustained benefit rate; replicated practices; participation across grades
Ongoing	Improve the evidence base	Repeat a labelled, stratified survey and connect perceptions with operational data	Reliability; subgroup coverage; longitudinal outcome changes

Table 4 sequences the recommendations from aligning governance in the first 90 days to verifying and scaling improvements by month 12, with an ongoing effort to strengthen the evidence base.

Measurement should also shift from activity reporting to evidence of public value. Useful indicators include cycle time, first-contact resolution, avoidable contacts, rework, accessibility, complaints, citizen effort, employee participation, idea decision time and sustained benefits. Where possible, measures should be disaggregated to reveal equity and service-access problems. Entities should also monitor the health of their improvement system: the number of teams holding regular huddles, the number of ideas tested, the speed of decisions, the frequency of benefit reviews and the replication of improvements across teams. These measures would show whether active learning, rather than administrative reporting, is taking place and would give leaders an early warning when CI becomes more form than substance.

Contribution to Policy

At the policy level, organisational excellence should not be assessed only through projects and high-level indicators, but also by whether entities have routine learning, draw on employee input and can link process changes to public-value results. Embedding these criteria in GEM 2.1 assessments would reduce the risk of ceremonial compliance and help entities demonstrate how CI is changing work.

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