Training as a Mediator of the Relationship Between Leadership Styles and Job Satisfaction of Police Employees in Sharjah

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the relationship between various leadership styles (transformational, transactional, democratic, and laissez-faire) and job satisfaction among Sharjah Police employees, with a particular emphasis on the mediating role of training. A comprehensive methodology was employed, using a valid and reliable 45-item questionnaire to collect data from a sample of 306 Sharjah police officers. To ensure the construct validity of the questionnaire, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted. The findings reveal significant insights into the influence of leadership styles on job satisfaction and training. Democratic leadership significantly positively impacts both training ($\beta = 0.289$, $p < 0.001$) and job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.196$, $p < 0.001$). Transactional leadership also enhances training ($\beta = 0.282$, $p < 0.001$) and job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.215$, $p < 0.01$). Conversely, laissez-faire leadership does not significantly influence training ($\beta = 0.084$, $p = 0.26$), but positively affects job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.205$, $p < 0.001$). Interestingly, transformational leadership significantly impacts training ($\beta = 0.268$, $p < 0.001$), but its direct effect on job satisfaction is not supported ($\beta = 0.075$, $p = 0.24$). The study highlights that training mediates the relationship between democratic, transactional, and transformational leadership styles and job satisfaction, but not in the case of laissez-faire leadership. These findings underscore the critical role of leadership style and training in shaping job satisfaction within policing employees. For Sharjah Police, focusing on specific leadership styles and their influence on training can significantly enhance employee well-being and performance.

Keywords: Leadership Styles, Job Satisfaction, Police Employees, Training, Sharjah

1. Introduction

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is renowned for being the most innovative economy and lucrative business market in the Arabian Gulf region and among Arab nations. Recognized by the

Global Competitiveness Report of the World Economic Forum as an innovation-driven economy (Schilirò, 2015), the UAE emphasizes a 'people first' ethos, where investing in human capital is a key component of its development strategy, followed by building a leadership pipeline (Isaac et al., 2019).

Job satisfaction, defined as the level of contentment that makes employees feel their job drives quality service, extends beyond daily duties, rewards, and payments. It encompasses job security, promotion, organizational policies, career enhancement, and the impact of the job on personal lives (Tatar, 2020). Job satisfaction depends on individual aims, goals, and values. It includes both facet satisfaction (promotion and safety) and overall satisfaction (Zolkapli et al., 2020). An employee's level of satisfaction is linked to their value system and how well it aligns with their job. Satisfaction can be enhanced by recognition of achievements and positive attitudes towards assigned tasks (Ezeanyim et al., 2019). Factors influencing job satisfaction include supervision, job security, health, promotion potentials, appreciation, physical conditions, interpersonal relationships, work situation, and communication (Kumari et al., 2022).

Leadership styles significantly impact job satisfaction. These styles include transformational, transactional, democratic, laissez-faire, and authoritative. Effective leadership involves analyzing team capacity and behavior, understanding strengths and weaknesses, and determining the right strategy to motivate employees. Leadership is crucial for influencing followers to achieve goals and creating a culture that enhances employee retention, loyalty, and knowledge sharing (Wen et al., 2019). Transformational leadership, in particular, motivates employees to perform beyond expectations and enjoy their work (C. Chen et al., 2021; Rodrigues & Ferreira, 2015).

Training plays a pivotal role in enhancing job satisfaction. It equips employees with the necessary skills and knowledge, demonstrating the organization's commitment to their growth. Training should be prioritized to keep employees updated with the latest information and technology, thereby improving service quality (Karia et al., 2016; Zulkpli et al., 2017). For Sharjah police, training enhances their skills and knowledge, enabling them to provide better services and meet societal expectations (Abdulhabib & Al-Dhaafri, 2020).

The World Internal Security and Police Index (WISPI) aims to measure the ability of a country's security apparatus to respond to internal security challenges, focusing predominantly on the police (Amurshedi, 2023). Effective leadership and training are crucial for improving job satisfaction and service delivery in the police force, which, in turn, enhances community well-being (Illanes et al., 2018).

Conceptual Framework

This study aims to explore the mediating influence of training on the relationship between

leadership styles and job satisfaction within the Sharjah Police Department in the UAE. The theoretical framework, developed from previous research (Imenda, 2014; Osanloo & Grant, 2016), integrates various interconnected concepts to offer a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing job satisfaction.

Figures 1: the research conceptual framework
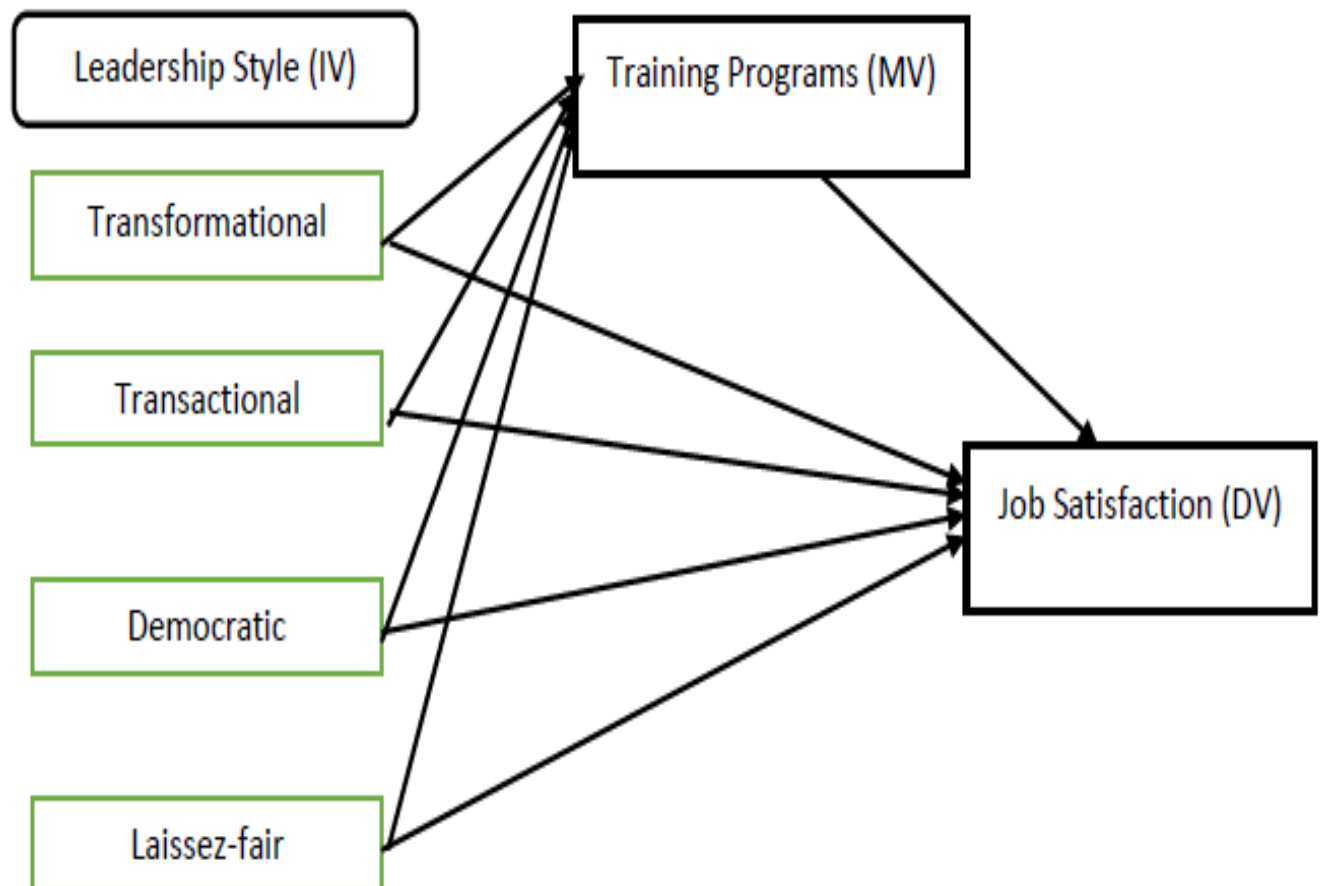
The framework examines how different leadership styles—transformational, transactional, democratic, and laissez-faire—impact job satisfaction. It highlights transformational leadership's pivotal role in engaging and influencing others, thereby enhancing job satisfaction through dynamic leader-follower relationships (Khan et al., 2020). The framework also considers job satisfaction as a complex construct affecting employee performance and service quality, with dimensions such as career growth, motivation, supervision, and job security being influenced by leadership styles.

Training is identified as a critical mediator in this relationship, essential for enhancing job

satisfaction and employee performance (C. Nguyen, 2021). The framework recognizes that effective training programs, supported by leadership, improve job satisfaction by addressing key factors like security, reliability, interactivity, responsiveness, and accessibility.

In the context of Sharjah's police, smart policing practices have transformed information access and sharing, emphasizing the need for a highly satisfied workforce (Eterno et al., 2017). Effective leadership must address concerns related to security, privacy, connectivity, and responsiveness to promote job satisfaction among officers (Shin, 2017).

Administrators and managers in the Sharjah police department must adopt workforce agility practices to enhance service delivery and continually adapt to improve police service quality (Davis & Leslie, 2015). This multifaceted framework offers a robust foundation for understanding the complex dynamics influencing job satisfaction in the Sharjah police context.

Problem statement

The fundamental problem addressed in this study revolves around the significant impact of leadership styles on job satisfaction within organizational settings, particularly within the Sharjah Police Department in the United Arab Emirates. Misalignment of leadership styles with the specific needs and cultural context of the UAE can lead to negative consequences (Diaj et al., 2015). Sharjah Police faces mounting pressures from stakeholders, with demands for improved service quality, a reduction in cybercrime, traffic congestion, and other crime-related issues (AlMansoori, 2022).

Sharjah Police, led by Brigadier Saif Mohd Al Zari Al Shamsi, also faces challenges in selecting and developing its leadership cadre (Aarset & Glomseth, 2019). Leaders in policing are expected to possess diverse skills, including knowledge gathering, effective communication, and judicious use of authority. An internal analysis revealed that the primary factor affecting job satisfaction is the relationship between employees and their management, particularly the leadership styles of supervisors (Saeed et al., 2023). Training was identified as the second critical factor, although there is a concerning scarcity of employee training within Sharjah Police (Ahmed et al., 2014).

Despite improvements in job satisfaction rates among Sharjah Police employees, from 67.9% in 2018 to 74.8% in 2021 (Mohammad & Essa, 2024), these figures still fall short of the ambitious goals set by Sharjah Police leadership, especially compared to Dubai Police's satisfaction rates of 92.4% in 2018 and 94.7% in 2021. This discrepancy underscores the need for Sharjah Police to enhance job satisfaction to achieve comparable levels.

The overarching problem examined in this study is the pivotal role of leadership styles in shaping job satisfaction among employees and the potential negative consequences of this

relationship. Leadership styles can either nurture professional growth through training or hinder it (H. Chen, 2016). The significant correlation between leadership styles and job satisfaction has been emphasized by Vuong & B., (2023), Jabbar et al., (2020), and Kalsoom et al., (2018). The UAE predominantly tends towards consultative leadership approaches, necessitating an understanding of the evolution of these styles over the past decade, especially in law enforcement (Mazrouei & Pech, 2015).

Existing literature suggests that managers in Dubai need to adopt diverse leadership styles to instill confidence and commitment among employees (Muttalib et al., 2023). The UAE's rich Arab culture introduces unique characteristics that significantly influence leadership styles and their impact on job satisfaction (Ahmed et al., 2014). Effective leadership practices can create a supportive environment that encourages employee participation in training programs (Mazzetti & Schaufeli, 2022). These programs enhance job-related skills and promote competence and satisfaction among employees.

Training plays a crucial role as a mediator between leadership styles and job satisfaction.

The effectiveness of training depends on various factors, including the quality of training programs and organizational support (Rashad Yazdanifard, 2014). Public institutions face pressure to deliver services and meet stakeholder needs (Johari et al., 2019). Hence, exploring the mediating role of training on the relationship between leadership styles and job satisfaction within the Sharjah Police Department is crucial to understanding these variables' complex interplay and impact.

There is a substantial research gap, as most studies have been conducted in educational settings and often rely on limited sample sizes that cannot be generalized (N. Nguyen, 2018; Tremblay et al., 2012). There is a lack of investigation into the police setting, despite the importance of job satisfaction and leadership styles in this sector. Available studies often prioritize customer satisfaction over job satisfaction (Al-Ababneh et al., 2018). Therefore, it is imperative to investigate the interplay between leadership styles and job satisfaction within the UAE's specific context, particularly Sharjah, to mitigate potential adverse effects on employees and the organization.

The main purpose of studying the mediating effect of training programs on the relationship between leadership styles (transformational, transactional, democratic, laissez-faire) and job satisfaction among police employees in Sharjah is to enhance the understanding of how different leadership approaches influence job satisfaction through the implementation of training initiatives. This research aims to identify whether training can serve as an effective mechanism to improve job satisfaction, thereby boosting overall performance and service quality within the

police force. By examining the interplay between leadership styles and training, the study seeks to provide actionable insights for developing targeted training programs that align with specific leadership strategies, ultimately fostering a more motivated, skilled, and satisfied workforce in the Sharjah Police Department.

Methodology

This study adopts a positivist research paradigm, utilizing a quantitative research approach to explore the mediating effect of training programs on the relationship between leadership styles (transformational, transactional, democratic, laissez-faire) and job satisfaction among police employees in Sharjah. The survey method, specifically a cross-sectional design, was employed to gather data at a single point in time. The research population encompasses all staff members of the Sharjah Police Force, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the organizational dynamics.

A simple random sampling technique was used to select participants, a method chosen for its prevalence and simplicity in achieving a representative sample. Out of 350 distributed questionnaires, 322 were returned. After a meticulous screening process to ensure data completeness, 16 questionnaires were excluded due to incomplete responses, resulting in a final sample of 306 completed questionnaires for analysis.

Section I collected demographic information, including gender, age, educational background, and years of service at Sharjah Police. Section II consisted of 45 items related to Leadership Styles, Job Satisfaction, and Training. Within the Leadership Styles dimension, 22 questions assessed various leadership styles: transformational leadership (6 items), transactional leadership (5 items), democratic leadership (6 items), and laissez-faire leadership (5 items). The Training dimension included 11 items, and the Job Satisfaction dimension comprised 12 items.

The questionnaire demonstrated good face, content, and construct validity, confirmed through Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), and high reliability, indicated by Cronbach's alpha results. Data screening was conducted to ensure quality, and the Mardia test for normality revealed the need to use Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) for data analysis. This approach was chosen due to its robustness in handling non-normal data and its effectiveness in exploring complex relationships among variables.

The Findings

The study aimed to examine the mediating effect of training on the relationship between different leadership styles and job satisfaction among police employees in Sharjah. The findings, as illustrated in the figure, reveal significant insights into these relationships.

Figure 2
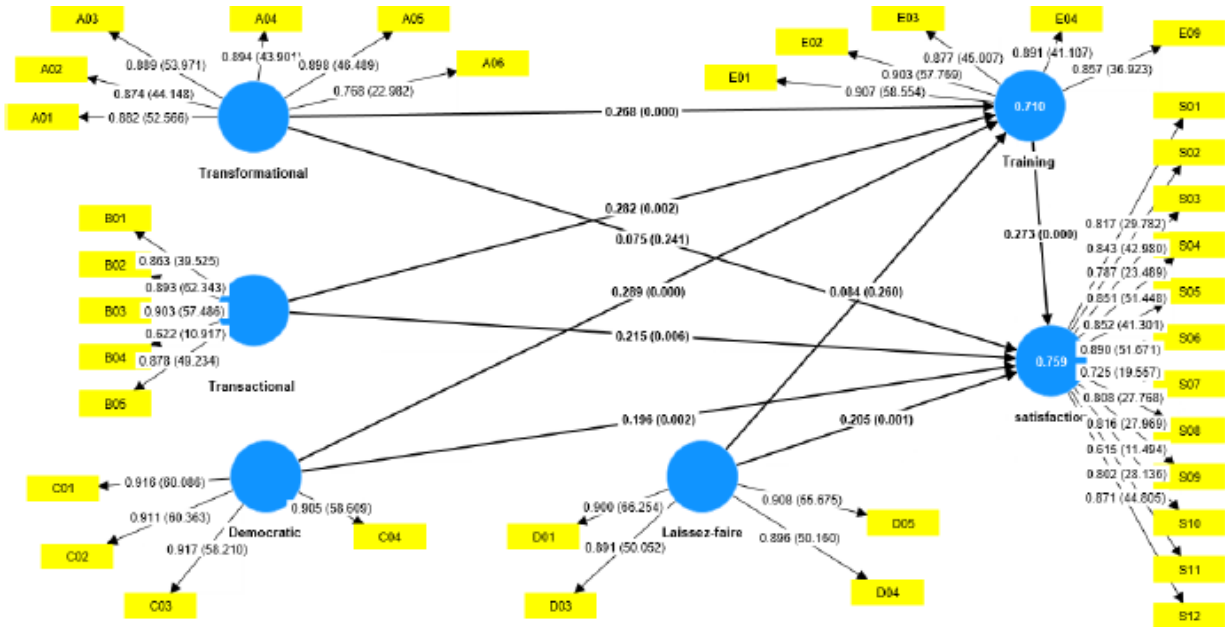
The findings, as illustrated in the figure, reveal significant insights into these relationships. Transformational leadership significantly impacts training (β = 0.268, p < 0.001), indicating that leaders who inspire and motivate their followers through a shared vision and personal development positively influence the effectiveness of training programs. Similarly, transactional leadership shows a significant positive effect on training (β = 0.282, p < 0.001), suggesting that leaders who focus on clear structures, rewards, and punishments enhance the impact of training on employees. Democratic leadership also significantly affects training (β =0.289, p < 0.001), highlighting that inclusive and participative leadership styles improve training outcomes. In contrast, laissez-faire leadership does not significantly influence training (β = 0.084, p = 0.26), implying that a hands-off approach may not be effective in enhancing training programs.

Regarding the direct impact on job satisfaction, transformational leadership does not show a significant direct effect (β = 0.075, p = 0.24), suggesting that its positive influence on job satisfaction is mediated through training. On the other hand, transactional leadership significantly enhances job satisfaction (β = 0.215, p < 0.01), indicating that structured and reward-based leadership positively affects employees' job satisfaction. Democratic leadership also has a significant positive impact on job satisfaction (β = 0.196, p < 0.001), emphasizing the importance of participative decision-making in fostering job satisfaction. Interestingly, laissez-faire leadership positively affects job satisfaction (β = 0.205, p < 0.001), even though it does not influence training, indicating that a relaxed leadership style might be appreciated by employees,

leading to higher job satisfaction.

Training significantly mediates the relationship between democratic, transactional, and transformational leadership styles and job satisfaction. This mediation is crucial as it suggests that training programs enhance the positive effects of these leadership styles on job satisfaction. The absence of significant mediation for laissez-faire leadership implies that while it might directly influence job satisfaction, it does not enhance job satisfaction through training.

In summary, the study underscores the critical role of leadership styles and training in shaping job satisfaction within the Sharjah Police Department. Transformational, transactional, and democratic leadership styles positively influence training, which in turn enhances job satisfaction. Conversely, laissez-faire leadership directly impacts job satisfaction without the mediation of training. These findings suggest that Sharjah Police should focus on specific leadership styles and robust training programs to foster a satisfied and effective workforce.

Discussion

The findings from the current study align with the existing literature on transformational leadership and job satisfaction, reinforcing the established connection between these variables. Transformational leadership did not show a significant direct impact on job satisfaction in the Sharjah Police Department ($\beta = 0.075$, $p = 0.24$). This result is consistent with the insights of Zeleke & Obang, (2021) and Jenner, (2019), who found that while transformational leadership positively affects job satisfaction, this impact is often mediated by other factors such as training and employee empowerment. Zeleke & Obang, (2021) investigated the correlation between leadership styles and job satisfaction among educational staff in Ethiopia, concluding that transformational leadership positively influences job satisfaction by addressing the needs of subordinates and fostering a sense of empowerment. Similarly, Jenner, (2019) explored the effects of transformational leadership on job satisfaction among civil servants in the U.S., emphasizing the importance of idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration as critical behaviors that enhance job satisfaction.

The current study's findings suggest that transformational leadership in the Sharjah Police Department enhances training ($\beta = 0.268$, $p < 0.001$), which in turn improves job satisfaction. This mediation effect underscores the importance of training as a conduit through which transformational leadership impacts job satisfaction, aligning with the situational leadership theory that employees require different leadership behaviors based on their needs and work context. Pratama & Evanita, (2020) also support this view, finding that transformational leadership significantly impacts job satisfaction among staff in Indonesian public higher education institutions. Their study, while limited to a university context, highlights the broader

applicability of transformational leadership in various public sector environments, including the police force. This indicates that the influence of transformational leadership on job satisfaction is context-dependent and mediated by factors like training.

Conclusion

The study examined the mediating effect of training on the relationship between different leadership styles and job satisfaction among police employees in Sharjah. The findings highlight the significant role that leadership styles, particularly transformational, transactional, and democratic, play in enhancing job satisfaction through training programs. Transformational leadership was found to significantly influence training, which in turn positively impacted job satisfaction. This aligns with previous research, suggesting that transformational leaders, through their ability to inspire and empower, can foster a more engaged and satisfied workforce when supported by effective training programs. Transactional and democratic leadership styles also showed a positive relationship with both training and job satisfaction, underscoring the importance of structured, reward-based, and participative approaches in promoting a supportive work environment. However, laissez-faire leadership did not significantly impact training but had a direct positive effect on job satisfaction, indicating that a hands-off approach may be appreciated by employees who value autonomy.

The study's findings reinforce the critical role of training as a mediator between leadership styles and job satisfaction, emphasizing that leadership effectiveness is not solely based on direct interactions but also on the provision of opportunities for professional development. For the Sharjah Police Department, focusing on implementing and enhancing training programs that align with effective leadership styles can significantly boost job satisfaction and overall performance.

Acknowledgements

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