

The Effect of Quality Assurance as A Mediator between Management Practices and Job Performance in Sharjah Government Entities

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the effect of management practices on job performance in Sharjah government entities, with quality assurance as a mediating variable. Despite federal initiatives such as the UAE Government Excellence Program, performance disparities persist across emirates, with Sharjah reporting only 62% citizen satisfaction compared to Dubai's 85% in 2023. Grounded in an integrated theoretical framework combining the Resource-Based View, Total Quality Management, and Organisational Culture Theory, this quantitative study employed a survey-based design with data collected from 285 employees selected through simple random sampling from Sharjah Customs. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was used to test the hypothesized relationships. The findings confirmed that management practices significantly influence job performance ($\beta = 0.564, p < 0.001$) and quality assurance ($\beta = 0.783, p < 0.001$). Quality assurance significantly affected job performance ($\beta = 0.275, p < 0.001$) and partially mediated the management practices-performance relationship (indirect effect = 0.216, $p < 0.001$), accounting for 27.7% of the total effect. The model explained 63.7% of the variance in job performance and 61.4% in quality assurance. The study contributes theoretically by extending the Resource-Based View to the UAE public sector and demonstrating how quality assurance operates as a process mechanism translating managerial inputs into performance outcomes. Practically, the findings provide evidence-based insights for policymakers in Sharjah to strengthen management development programs, establish robust quality assurance systems, and pursue integrated approaches to performance improvement, ultimately supporting efforts to bridge the service delivery gap with other emirates.

Keywords: Management practices, quality assurance, job performance, public sector, Sharjah, Total Quality Management

1. Introduction

Effective governance relies on well-structured management practices, robust quality assurance systems, and supportive organisational cultures to deliver public services efficiently and maintain citizen trust (Hasinat et al., 2024; Rohman et al., 2023). In the United Arab Emirates, federal initiatives such as the Government Excellence Program and Vision 2031 have prioritised innovation and service excellence as national imperatives (UAE Government, 2023). Despite these efforts, performance outcomes remain uneven across emirates, with Sharjah reporting only 62% citizen satisfaction compared to Dubai's 85% in 2023 (Sharjah Government Media Bureau, 2023). This persistent gap underscores the need to examine the organisational factors shaping job performance within Sharjah's government entities, which have received limited scholarly attention relative to Abu Dhabi and Dubai. While existing research establishes that management practices positively influence job performance (Ali & Abas, 2022), the mechanisms through which this occurs remain underexplored, particularly the mediating role of quality assurance and the moderating influence of organisational culture. This study addresses this gap by proposing an integrated model examining whether quality assurance mediates the relationship between management practices and job performance, and whether organisational culture moderates this relationship in Sharjah's public sector. The findings aim to provide evidence-based insights for policymakers and contribute to theoretical development in public administration.

2. Background of the Study

Job performance is crucial for organizational effectiveness, especially in the public sector where efficiency, accountability, and citizen trust are vital for legitimacy. The UAE government has prioritized improving public service outcomes through initiatives like the UAE Government Excellence Program and Vision 2031, which focus on innovation, service excellence, and citizen satisfaction. (UAE Government, 2023). Despite these reform efforts, performance outcomes remain uneven across emirates. While Dubai recorded citizen satisfaction levels of approximately 85% in 2023, only 62% of Sharjah residents reported satisfaction with the quality and responsiveness of government services during the same period (Sharjah Government Media Bureau, 2023). This disparity highlights a persistent performance gap and calls for examining the organisational factors shaping job performance in Sharjah's government entities, which have received limited scholarly attention.

In an ideal governance environment, government entities operate through well-structured management practices that establish clear processes, performance standards, and accountability mechanisms (Hasinat et al., 2024). These practices should be reinforced by robust quality assurance systems that ensure procedural compliance and promote continuous improvement in service delivery (Rohman et al., 2023). Equally important is the presence of an organisational

culture that encourages accountability, innovation, and active employee engagement (Denison et al., 2019; Borodako et al., 2023). The UAE's economy grew by 3.6% in 2023, driven by a robust 6.2% expansion in the non-oil sector, which now accounts for 74.3% of GDP (International Monetary Fund, 2023). Key non-oil growth areas included the financial sector (14.3%), construction (8.9%), and real estate (5.9%), propelled by mega projects such as Etihad Rail and the Dubai 2040 Urban Master Plan (Barakat et al., 2024). This economic transformation places corresponding demands on government entities to enhance their operational efficiency and service delivery capabilities.

The implications of low job performance in government entities are significant. Ineffective performance undermines service efficiency, delays policy implementation, and erodes public confidence in government institutions (Alhosani & Yaakub, 2020). These challenges have broader implications for Sharjah's competitiveness within the UAE and the wider GCC region. Sharjah occupies a strategically important position within the UAE federation. Its economy expanded by 4.6% in 2023 and is projected to grow at an average annual rate of 2.8% through 2027, driven primarily by non-oil sectors such as manufacturing, trade, and logistics (Economy Middle East, 2023). However, without parallel advances in management effectiveness, quality assurance systems, and organisational culture, economic growth may not translate into corresponding improvements in institutional efficiency and public service performance. Despite ongoing government reforms, performance variability continues to challenge Sharjah's government entities. A recent survey revealed that only 62% of residents were satisfied with local government services, compared to 85% in Dubai (Sharjah Government Media Bureau, 2023). While Dubai and Abu Dhabi have made significant strides in integrating smart governance tools and performance-based systems, Sharjah's public sector continues to lag in service efficiency and employee performance (Nahyan et al., 2024).

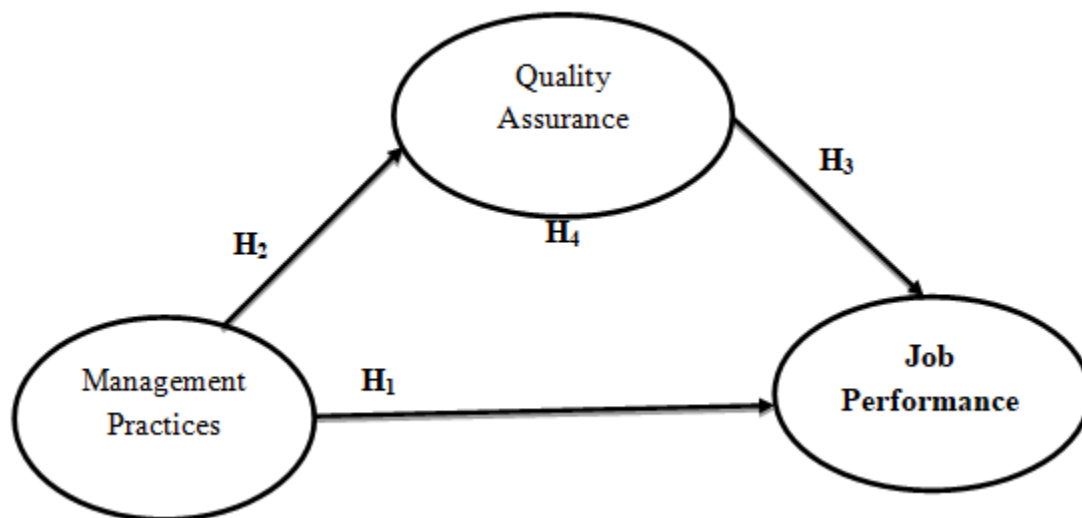
The conceptual framework positions management practices as the independent variable, job performance as the dependent variable, quality assurance as a mediator, and organisational culture as a moderator. Management practices are proposed to have a direct effect on job performance (H_1). Additionally, management practices influence job performance indirectly through quality assurance (H_3), with management practices affecting quality assurance (H_5) and quality assurance affecting job performance (H_2). Organisational culture moderates the relationship between management practices and job performance (H_4). [Insert Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework showing $MP \rightarrow JP$ (H_1), $MP \rightarrow QA$ (H_5), $QA \rightarrow JP$ (H_2), $MP \rightarrow QA \rightarrow JP$ (H_3 mediation), and OC moderating $MP \rightarrow JP$ (H_4)]

This study adopts an integrated theoretical framework combining the Resource-Based View (RBV) as the primary umbrella theory, supported by Total Quality Management (TQM) and Organisational Culture Theory (OCT) as complementary sub-theories. RBV posits that

organisations achieve sustained performance when they possess and deploy resources that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (Barney, 1991). Management practices and quality assurance systems are conceptualised as strategic intangible resources that shape how work is structured, monitored, and evaluated in government entities. RBV supports H₁ (management practices → job performance) and H₅ (management practices → quality assurance), and justifies incorporating organisational culture as a moderating variable (H₄), recognising that resource effectiveness is context dependent.

Based on the framework (Figure 1), TQM emphasises continuous improvement, process standardisation, systematic monitoring, and feedback mechanisms (Deming, 1986; Oakland, 2014). Quality assurance represents the operational expression of TQM principles, serving as the mechanism through which management practices are institutionalised and translated into measurable performance outcomes. TQM provides the process-oriented justification for positioning quality assurance as a mediating variable (H₃), explaining how managerial intent is transformed into consistent job performance.

Fig. 1. The Conceptual Framework of the study



Existing research has consistently shown that effective management practices contribute positively to job performance (Ali & Abas, 2022; Wassan et al., 2022). However, much of this evidence is derived from private-sector settings or from larger emirates, limiting its applicability to Sharjah's public institutions. Similarly, quality assurance systems have been extensively examined in healthcare and education (Idris, 2019; Sharma, 2023), yet their role in government service delivery within the UAE remains underexplored. While organizational culture is

acknowledged as an important determinant of performance (Denison et al., 2019), few empirical studies have examined its moderating role in public sector performance relationships within Sharjah. More critically, the interaction among management practices, quality assurance, and organizational culture has not been sufficiently examined in an integrated manner.

Prior studies show that management practices improve job performance, but they lack insight into the mechanisms. Specifically, there's no evidence that structured quality assurance systems mediate managerial intent into consistent performance. Despite Sharjah's strategic importance, it's received less scholarly attention than Abu Dhabi and Dubai (Al Hebsi & Wilkins, 2022; Alnahhal et al., 2022). This study addresses this gap by investigating factors influencing job performance in Sharjah's government entities, focusing on management practices, quality assurance, and organisational culture. The research questions are formulated as follows:

1. What is the effect of management practices on job performance in Sharjah's government entities?
2. What is the effect of quality assurance on job performance in Sharjah's government entities?
3. What is the effect of management practices on quality assurance in Sharjah's government entities?
4. Does quality assurance mediate the effect of management practices on job performance in Sharjah's government entities?

3. The Methodology

This study adopts a positivist approach, assuming organizational phenomena can be objectively observed, measured, and analyzed statistically to identify causal patterns. As a quantitative, survey-based research design, it provides precision and explanatory power to examine mediation and moderation effects within a multi-construct framework. The unit of analysis is individual employees within Sharjah Customs, part of the Sharjah Seaports, Customs, and Free Zones Authority. The target population comprises 1,038 employees across 11 customs centers. Using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sampling table, a minimum sample of 285 respondents is required for a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error. Simple random sampling was employed, ensuring equal selection probability. The sampling frame was the complete employee database provided by the Human Resources Department. Each employee was assigned a unique number from 1 to 1,038, and computer-assisted randomisation tools (Excel RAND function) were used to select 285 respondents. Duplicate selections were replaced through the same randomisation procedure to maintain sampling integrity.

Data were collected using structured questionnaires adapted from validated instruments. The Management Practices Scale (MPS) had 18 items across planning, organizing, leading, and controlling dimensions (Bloom & Van Reenen, 2007). Quality Assurance items were adapted from SERVQUAL, and Job Performance was measured using the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ). The overall scale-level CVI (S-CVI/Ave) was 0.94, exceeding the recommended 0.90. One organizational culture item was revised based on expert feedback, achieving an acceptable S-CVI/Ave of 0.92. All constructs demonstrated strong content validity and were retained for further analysis. A pilot study with 100 employees tested instrument validity and reliability. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) examined item loadings and factor structure. Four items were dropped based on low loadings or conceptual misalignment: OP4 (0.59), LP3 (0.58), OC5 (0.56), and QA4 (0.58). All remaining items demonstrated adequate loadings ranging from 0.63 to 0.82, confirming factor structure alignment with theoretical dimensions. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, with all constructs exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.70: Management Practices (0.971), Quality Assurance (0.971), and Job Performance (0.978). The overall instrument reliability was 0.994, indicating excellent internal consistency.

4. The Findings

4.1 Assessment of Measurement Model

Prior to testing the structural relationships, the measurement model was assessed to evaluate the reliability and validity of the constructs. Following Hair et al. (2021), the assessment included examination of indicator loadings, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity.

Indicator reliability was assessed by examining the outer loadings of all items on their respective constructs. Results show that all outer loadings exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2021), indicating that each item shared more variance with its construct than with measurement error. For job performance, loadings ranged from 0.862 to 0.89, with JP01 exhibiting the highest loading (0.89) and JP03 the lowest (0.862). Management practices loadings ranged from 0.807 to 0.858, with MP16 demonstrating the strongest loading (0.858) and MP06 the weakest (0.807). Quality assurance loadings ranged from 0.789 to 0.852, with QA10 loading most strongly (0.852) and QA08 loading at 0.789. All loadings exceeded the minimum threshold, confirming that each indicator reliably represented its respective construct. Internal consistency reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (ρ_a), and composite reliability (ρ_c). As shown in Table 1, all constructs demonstrated excellent reliability, with values substantially exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Table 1. Reliability and Convergent Validity

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (rho_a)	Composite Reliability (rho_c)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Job Performance	0.936	0.937	0.950	0.758
Management Practices	0.970	0.970	0.973	0.690
Quality Assurance	0.943	0.944	0.951	0.660

Job performance demonstrated strong reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.936$, $\rho_c = 0.950$), as did management practices (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.970$, $\rho_c = 0.973$) and quality assurance (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.943$, $\rho_c = 0.951$). These values indicate that the items measuring each construct were internally consistent and collectively represented their respective latent variables reliably.

Convergent validity, assessed through Average Variance Extracted (AVE), measures a construct's ability to explain its indicators' variance. An AVE value of 0.50 or higher indicates acceptable convergent validity, suggesting the construct explains at least 50% of the variance.. As reported in Table 1, all constructs achieved AVE values exceeding the 0.50 threshold. Job performance demonstrated the highest convergent validity (AVE = 0.758), indicating that 75.8% of the variance in its indicators was explained by the latent construct. Management practices (AVE = 0.690) and quality assurance (AVE = 0.660) also exhibited strong convergent validity, with both constructs explaining well over half the variance in their respective items.

Discriminant validity, ensuring constructs' empirical distinctness, was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio. The Fornell-Larcker criterion requires the square root of each construct's AVE (diagonal values) to exceed its highest off-diagonal correlation. The square root of AVE for job performance (0.871) exceeded its correlations with management practices (0.780) and quality assurance (0.717). Similarly, the square root of AVE for management practices (0.831) exceeded its correlation with quality assurance (0.783), and the square root of AVE for quality assurance (0.813) exceeded its correlations with both job performance (0.717) and management practices (0.783). These results satisfy the criterion, confirming discriminant validity. The HTMT ratio, following Henseler et al. (2015), requires values below 0.90 for discriminant validity. All HTMT values (ranging from 0.761 to 0.817) were below the conservative threshold of 0.85, providing strong evidence of empirical distinctness among the constructs.

Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were examined to assess potential collinearity issues among indicators. VIF values below 5 indicate that collinearity is not a concern (Hair et al., 2021). All VIF values ranged from 2.248 to 3.417, well below the conservative threshold of 5. This indicates that collinearity among indicators was not a concern, and the measurement model was suitable for structural analysis.

Model fit was assessed using the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) and the Normed Fit Index (NFI). The SRMR value of 0.031 was substantially below the recommended threshold of 0.08 (Hu & Bentler, 1999), indicating excellent model fit. The NFI value of 0.938 exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.90, further confirming adequate model fit.

Predictive relevance was assessed using Stone-Geisser's Q^2 value obtained through blindfolding. Q^2 values greater than zero indicate that the model has predictive relevance for a given endogenous construct (Geisser, 1974; Stone, 1974). Results show that job performance exhibited a Q^2 value of 0.479, indicating moderate predictive relevance (Hair et al., 2019). Quality assurance demonstrated a Q^2 value of 0.400, also indicating adequate predictive relevance. These positive Q^2 values confirm that the model possesses predictive power beyond chance. The Q^2 predict results support the model's predictive capability. Both constructs demonstrated reasonable prediction errors, with RMSE values of 0.606 for job performance and 0.611 for quality assurance, and MAE values of 0.633 and 0.629 respectively.

4.2 Assessment of Structural Model

Following confirmation of the measurement model's reliability and validity, the structural model was assessed to test the hypothesized relationships. The assessment included evaluation of path coefficients, coefficients of determination (R^2), effect sizes (f^2), and the significance of direct and indirect effects through bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples (Hair et al., 2021). The R^2 value represents the proportion of variance in endogenous constructs explained by the predictor variables. Following Cohen's (1988) guidelines, R^2 values of 0.26, 0.13, and 0.02 are considered substantial, moderate, and weak, respectively. Management practices explained 61.4% of the variance in quality assurance ($R^2 = 0.614$), which is considered substantial. Together, management practices and quality assurance explained 63.7% of the variance in job performance ($R^2 = 0.637$), also representing substantial explanatory power. These R^2 values indicate that the model possesses strong predictive capability within Sharjah's government entities.

Effect sizes (f^2) assess the contribution of each exogenous construct to the R^2 of an endogenous construct. Following Cohen's (1988) guidelines, f^2 values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 represent small, medium, and large effects, respectively. Management practices demonstrated a very large effect on quality assurance ($f^2 = 1.589$), substantially exceeding the threshold for a large effect. The

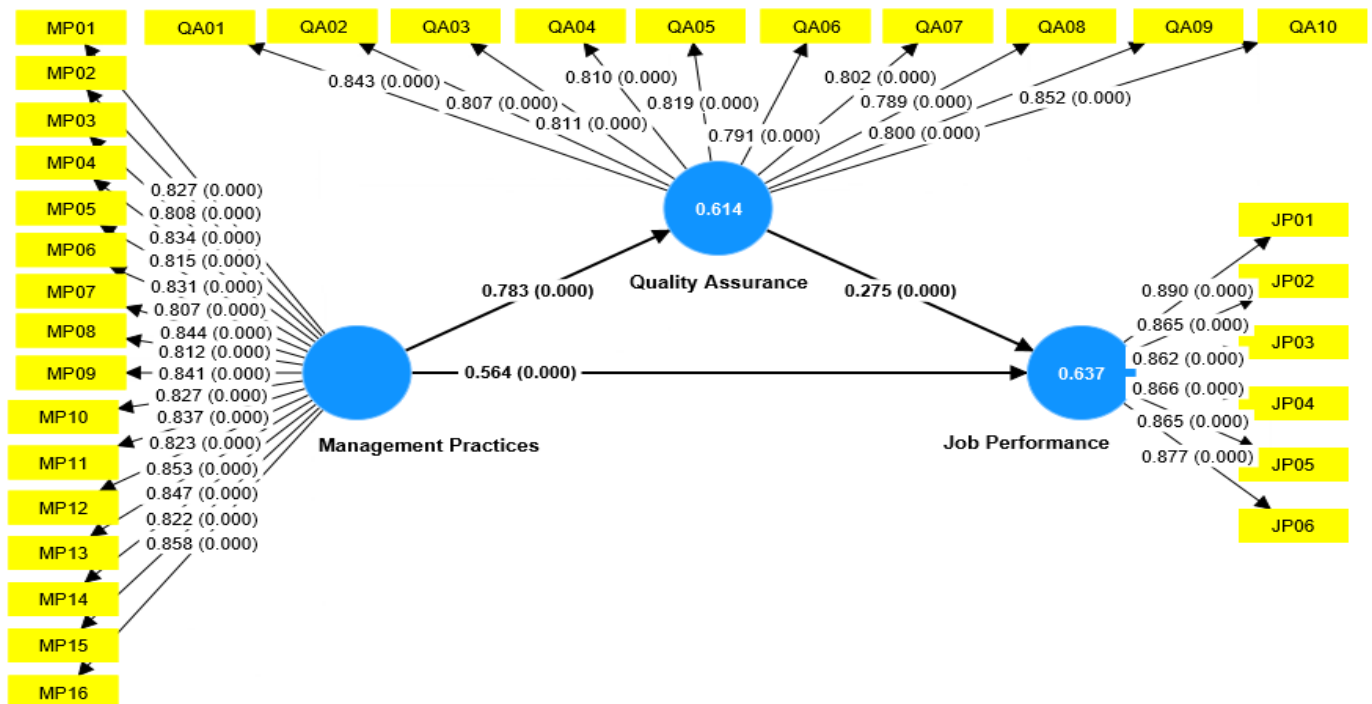
effect of management practices on job performance was medium to large ($f^2 = 0.338$), approaching the threshold for a large effect. Quality assurance exhibited a small effect on job performance ($f^2 = 0.081$), indicating that while significant, its unique contribution to explaining variance in job performance was modest.

Path coefficients were examined to test the significance and direction of hypothesized relationships. Table 2 presents the structural model with path coefficients, and Figure 2 summarizes the results of hypothesis testing.

Table 2 Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Path	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Values	Decision
H ₁	Management Practices → Job Performance	0.564	0.564	0.054	10.439	0.000	Supported
H ₂	Management Practices → Quality Assurance	0.783	0.783	0.022	36.348	0.000	Supported
H ₃	Quality Assurance → Job Performance	0.275	0.275	0.057	4.848	0.000	Supported

Figure 2: Structural Model with Path Coefficients



H₁ proposed that management practices positively influence job performance in Sharjah's government entities. As shown in the results, the path coefficient from management practices to job performance was positive and significant ($\beta = 0.564$, $t = 10.439$, $p < 0.001$). The t-value substantially exceeded the critical value of 1.96, and the p-value was below the 0.05 significance level. These results provide strong statistical support for H₁, confirming that effective management practices significantly enhance job performance. The effect size ($f^2 = 0.338$) indicates a medium-to-large practical significance.

H₂ proposed that management practices positively influence quality assurance in Sharjah's government entities. The path coefficient from management practices to quality assurance was positive and highly significant ($\beta = 0.783$, $t = 36.348$, $p < 0.001$). This represents the strongest relationship in the model, with a t-value substantially exceeding the critical threshold. The effect size ($f^2 = 1.589$) indicates a very large practical effect, demonstrating that management practices are a powerful determinant of quality assurance systems. H₂ is strongly supported.

H₃ proposed that quality assurance positively influences job performance. The path coefficient from quality assurance to job performance was positive and significant ($\beta = 0.275$, $t = 4.848$, $p < 0.001$). While the effect size ($f^2 = 0.081$) was small according to Cohen's (1988) guidelines, the relationship remained statistically significant, confirming that quality assurance contributes meaningfully to job performance. H₃ is supported.

Hypothesis 4 proposed that quality assurance mediates the relationship between management practices and job performance. Mediation was assessed by examining the significance of the indirect effect through bootstrapping procedures (Preacher & Hayes, 2008).

Table 3 Specific Indirect Effect

Path	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Values
Management Practices → Quality Assurance → Job Performance	0.216	0.216	0.045	4.771	0.000

Table 4 Total Indirect Effect

Path	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Values
Management Practices → Job Performance	0.216	0.216	0.045	4.771	0.000

As presented in Tables 3 and 4, the indirect effect of management practices on job performance through quality assurance was positive and significant ($\beta = 0.216$, $t = 4.771$, $p < 0.001$). The confidence interval did not include zero, confirming that mediation is present.

Table 5 Total Effects

Path	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Values
Management Practices → Job Performance	0.780	0.779	0.024	32.667	0.000
Management Practices → Quality Assurance	0.783	0.783	0.022	36.348	0.000
Quality Assurance → Job Performance	0.275	0.275	0.057	4.848	0.000

The total effect of management practices on job performance ($\beta = 0.780$, $t = 32.667$, $p < 0.001$) comprised both direct and indirect components. The direct effect ($\beta = 0.564$) and indirect effect ($\beta = 0.216$) sum to the total effect ($0.564 + 0.216 = 0.780$), confirming complementary mediation (Zhao et al., 2010). The variance accounted for (VAF) was calculated as $0.216/0.780 = 0.277$, indicating that 27.7% of the total effect of management practices on job performance was mediated through quality assurance. This represents partial mediation, suggesting that while quality assurance significantly transmits the influence of management practices, a substantial direct effect remains.

4. The Conclusion and discussion

This study examined the impact of management practices on job performance in Sharjah’s government entities, with quality assurance as a mediator. The findings support all hypothesized relationships, offering theoretical and practical insights. The positive relationship between management practices and job performance ($\beta = 0.564$, $p < 0.001$) aligns with the Resource-Based View, which views management practices as strategic resources that generate sustained performance advantages. This supports previous UAE research by Aldarmaki et al. (2019) and Alweteed (2018), who found positive effects of TQM practices on organizational performance. The consistent findings suggest that well-structured management practices are universally important for performance enhancement.

The strongest relationship in the model was the effect of management practices on quality assurance ($\beta = 0.783$, $p < 0.001$). This finding is theoretically grounded in Total Quality

Management principles (Deming, 1986), which emphasize that quality systems require structured managerial commitment to process standardization and systematic monitoring. The result aligns with Khan et al. (2020), who found that quality management practices are significantly influenced by organizational commitment, and Feng et al. (2008), who demonstrated that organizational commitment predicts successful ISO certification. In the UAE context, Alhamd (2023) found significant positive effects of TQM practices on quality-related outcomes at Abu Dhabi Agriculture and Food Safety Authority.

Quality assurance significantly influenced job performance ($\beta = 0.275$, $p < 0.001$), though with a small effect size. This supports TQM's process-oriented explanation that quality systems create structured environments for effective performance (Oakland, 2014). It aligns with Idris (2019b) and Rifa' et al. (2019), who found that quality assurance significantly affects organizational performance in higher education and positively influences quality culture and performance in Indonesian institutions. Quality assurance partially mediated the management practices-job performance relationship (indirect effect = 0.216, $p < 0.001$), accounting for 27.7% of the total effect, addressing the theoretical "black box" between management inputs and performance outcomes. While RBV explains *what* resources matter (Barney, 1991), TQM explains *how* these resources are operationalized through structured processes (Deming, 1986). The partial mediation pattern suggests multiple pathways exist, consistent with Ali and Abas (2022), who found that employee motivation partially mediates HRM practices and job performance in UAE banks. Similarly, Alhamd (2023) found that organisational culture mediates TQM-performance relationships, while Shuaib et al. (2021) demonstrated that dynamic capabilities mediate quality management-innovation relationships.

Several patterns emerge when comparing findings with previous studies. First, management practices consistently demonstrate significant effects on performance across UAE contexts (Aldarmaki et al., 2019; Alweteed, 2018). Second, mediation effects are consistently observed, though mediators vary—organisational culture (Alhosani & Yaakub, 2020b), employee motivation (Ali & Abas, 2022), and quality assurance (present study)—suggesting multiple parallel mechanisms. Third, studies examining moderation consistently demonstrate that organisational culture conditions relationship strength (AlHammadi, 2022; Priyono et al., 2023; Rizal et al., 2021), supporting culture's theoretical importance. Theoretically, the study extends RBV application to the UAE public sector, provides empirical support for integrating RBV and TQM, and demonstrates that quality assurance transmits managerial effects through process mechanisms. Practically, findings suggest that investments in management development will yield performance improvements, quality systems require strong managerial foundations, and multiple performance pathways should be pursued simultaneously.

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