

The Moderating Effect of Job Autonomy on the Relationship between Transformational Leadership and Organizational Innovation

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Abstract

In the quest to improve performance, attention has been directed at leadership styles and new innovative ideas. It must be emphasized that the dire need for better public services has led to several innovation frameworks in various global regions. Abu Dhabi Executive Council Authority is the focus of this paper, where an innovative approach is applied to assess the impact of transformational leadership on organizational innovation, in addition to the moderating role of autonomy. The data was collected from 389 employees of Abu Dhabi Executive Council Authority and analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM) via SmartPLS 3.0. The results proved that there is a significant impact of transformational leadership on organizational innovation, and it also proved the significant moderating role of autonomy in the model. The proposed model explained 64% of the variance in organizational innovation.

Keywords; *Transformational leadership; job autonomy; organizational innovation*

I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of leadership has garnered a lot of interest amongst the various practitioners and scholars, as it played a vital role in the organisational performance and offered a competitive advantage. However, researchers are still determining if the leadership fosters a higher performance and if the earlier performance was influenced by leadership and innovation. Thus, many studies have attempted to determine the relationship between leadership and organisational performance (Samad 2012).

Since the existing environment is seen to be innovative and competitive, the relationship between the TL and organisational performance is not clear. The competitive advantage is based on the innovativeness which enables the organisations to improve their results (Aragón-Correa et al., 2007; Donate and Sánchez de Pablo 2015). In these

scenarios, the managers need to motivate their employees to participate in the innovative process and gain new knowledge which allows the companies to introduce novel products into the markets (Andriopoulos and Lewis 2010). The TL and human resource activities were regarded as triggers of innovation and competence (Findıklı et al., 2015). Heffernan et al. (2016) stated that there was a higher need to investigate the variables which mediated between the organisational performance and the human resource activities (Al-Mulla, Asma; Ameen, Ali; Isaac, Osama; Nusari, Mohammed; Hamoud Al-Shibami, 2019; Albreiki, Ameen, & Bhaumik, 2019; Albreiki, Ameen, & Bhaumik, 2019; Alkhateri, Asma S; Abuelhassan, Abuelhassan E; Khalifa, Gamal S A; Nusari, Mohammed; Ameen, 2018; Osama Isaac, Abdullah, & Ramayah, 2019; Mona Saeed Mohamed et al., 2018).

Siddique (2012) observed that the UAE was one of the countries in the Middle East, which was undergoing significant economic development. The country is undergoing a massive development in the fields of agriculture, tourism and trade. Furthermore, a majority of the UAE organisations are conducting business activities, worldwide (Siddique 2012; Al-Ali, Ameen, Issac, Nusari, & Ibrahim Alrajawi, 2018; Alghawi, Ameen, & Bhaumik, 2019; Alshamsi, Ameen, Isaac, Khalifa, & Bhumic, 2019; Alshamsi, Ameen, Nusari, Abuelhassan, & Bhumic, 2019). The UAE government has vowed to improve organisational performance and has presented the UAE Vision 2021, wherein effective leadership was the main factor in its strategy (Mathias 2017).

Some empirical studies have analysed the above-mentioned relationships. One such study investigated the Spanish industries (Aragón-Correa et al., 2007; García-Morales et al., 2012). Thus, there is a higher need to determine the empirical relationship between organisational innovation and TL (Para-González et al., 2018) (Al-Obthani & Ameen, 2019a; Alhefity, Ameen, & Bhaumik, 2019b, 2019a; Alneyadi, Al-shibami, Ameen, & Bhaumik, 2019; Alneyadi, Al-Shibami, Ameen, & Bhaumik, 2019). This study has highlighted the gaps existing in the literature for identifying the effect of TL on the innovation. The researchers have also attempted to study the moderating role played by the job autonomy in the public sector organisations in UAE, especially in the Abu Dhabi Executive Council Authority.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Organizational Innovation (OI)

Innovation can be defined in multiple ways; a significant amount of research indicates that it is about creative things. For instance Rogers (1995) suggests that innovation is about creating new object, practice or idea based on an individual's view. The same author illustrated a second concept named as diffusion of innovation that focuses on the dispersion of innovation over time through specific

channels within social system members. On the other hand, Amabile (1983) thinks that there is a distinction between innovation and creativity, the latter is defined as the process to produce new ideas, while innovation creates and implements new products, processes, and ideas (Trott, 2005; B. A. Al-Gamrh & Al-Dhamari, 2016; B. Al-Gamrh, Ku Ismail, & Al-Dhamari, 2018; Safipour Afshar, Pourheidari, Al-Gamrh, & Afshar Jahanshahi, 2019). Thus, it is concluded that creativity is an element of innovation (West & Farr, 1990).

While services and goods are different in nature and in terms of their characteristics, numerous researchers claim that the theories and concepts that are applicable to the manufacturing sector can actually be transferred and used in the service context using the assimilation approach (de Vries, 2006; Droege, Hildebrand, & Forcada, 2009). For the purpose of examining the service sectors' innovation, Droege et al. (2009) mention that the same models of innovation were used in these studies in the service context as in the sector of manufacturing. There is a need to examine the factors of the study that affecting the organizational innovation.

2.2 Transformational Leadership (TL)

Many researchers have accepted TL as the ideal style of leadership in various contemporary organisations. This leadership style has garnered a lot of recognition because of its effect on the different organisational outcomes like organisational innovation (Wang et al., 2011) and employee satisfaction (Voon et al., 2011; Ngadiman et al. 2013). It was noted that the TL could instigate a need for higher order (Rowold and Schlotz 2009). In their study, Aldholay, Isaac, Abdullah, Abdulsalam, & Al-Shibami (2018) and Aldholay, Isaac, Abdullah, & Ramayah (2018) mentioned that the TL could motivate all the employees and generate positive emotions, which further created an inspirational vision and directed the employees to work towards fulfilling the objectives. Based on the proposed

dimensions of the TL which were described earlier, Aydogdu and Asikgil (2011) derived 4 TL dimensions, which were used in this study. These included the Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, Idealised Influence and Individualised Consideration. The above arguments and other supporting results led to the following hypothesis:

H1: Transformational leadership has a positive effect on organizational innovation.

2.3 Job Autonomy (JA)

In their study, Hackman and Oldham (1975) described autonomy as the level to which any job allows freedom, discretion and independence to the employee during the work scheduling and process planning, which need to be carried out for the task execution. Karasek and Theorell (1992) stated that autonomy was a vital component of the job design since the level of discretion and freedom allowed the employee to plan and determine how to carry out his job. Shalley and Gilson (2004) noted that a higher JA allowed the employees to expand their horizon and use innovative steps for completing the job. When the groups required a higher personal development, JA was regarded as an important element which motivated the individuals (Cleavenger and Munyon 2013). Autonomy could be improved after motivating the employees to learn and grow at their workplace and providing them with more opportunities to lead themselves while doing their jobs (Manz and Sims 2001; Al-Ali et al., 2018; Alkhateri, Asma S; Abuelhassan, Abuelhassan E; Khalifa, Gamal S A; Nusari, Mohammed; Ameen, 2018).

Several studies proposed that the transformational leaders offered a higher degree of JA (Bass and Avolio 2000). They also encouraged the employees to solve their job-related problems using innovative and creative techniques, which could increase the sense of self-determination and self-control amongst the employees towards their job (Avolio et al., 1999).

In this study, the researchers assumed that the JA played a vital role in determining the relationship between the TL and organisational innovation for 2 reasons. Firstly, JA was an important characteristic which helped the employees explore different types of work processes (Wang and Cheng 2010; Al-Obthani & Ameen, 2019b, 2019a; Alshamsi, Ameen, Isaac, et al., 2019; Alshamsi, Ameen, Nusari, et al., 2019; Ameen & Ahmad, 2011, 2012, 2013; Ameen, Almari, & Isaac, 2018). Secondly, it was noted that a higher JA helped the employees negotiate their work expectations based on their innovative performance (Wang and Cheng 2009). The employees with a higher JA expressed a higher responsibility towards their jobs (Parker and Sprigg 1999). The above arguments and other supporting results led to the following hypothesis:

H2: Job Autonomy strengthens the positive effect of transformational leadership on organizational innovation

III. RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Overview of the Proposed Conceptual Framework

"The correlations between the parameters conjectured in the conceptual model have been obtained from available literature Ghazali et al. (2015) and Rezvani et al. (2017). Fig 1 shows transformational leadership as a second-order construct to (idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration), organizational innovation as a second-order construct to (product innovation, process innovation, and administrative innovation), in addition to the moderating variable of job autonomy. The proposed model has two hypotheses to be tested."

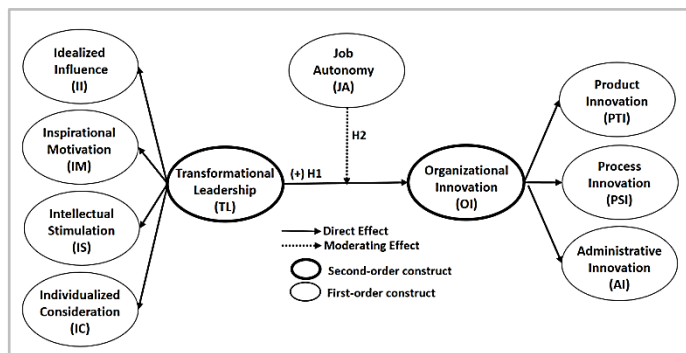


Figure 1: The conceptual framework

3.2. Advancement of Instrument and Data collection

In this investigation, the scientists constructed up the ballot instrument which made from 32 inquiries. Factors had been predicted utilizing a Likert Scale which prescribed within the beyond examinations (Isaac, Aldholay, Abdullah, and Ramayah, 2019; Isaac, Abdullah, Ramayah, and Mutahar, 2018). This records was collected by using conveying the self-guided survey 'face to face' to the people in the Abu Dhabi Executive Council Authority, UAE, within the length between March 2018 and April 2019. Out of the 500 polls that have been appropriated, 389 reactions supposedly turned into affordable for research. This instance size changed into good enough as expressed by using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) and Tabachnick and Fidell (2012).

IV. INFORMATION ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The professionals applied the SmartPLS 3.Zero programming for searching at their model, with the help of the Partial Least Squares (PLS) Variance-Based Structural Equation Model (VB-SEM) (Ringle et al., 2015). They applied a 2-set up systematic system (Anderson and Gerbing 1988; Hair et al., 2017) for (an) Assessing the estimation model (i.E., unwavering quality and legitimacy); and (b) Assessing the primary model (i.E., theorized courting analysis). The essential causes at the back of selecting SEM as a measurable method for this research is that SEM offers a concurrent examination which prompts increasingly precise opinions (Isaac, Abdullah, Aldholay, and Ameen, 2019; Isaac, Abdullah, Ramayah, and Mutahar, 2017; Mutahar, Daud, Thurasamy, Isaac, and Abdulsalam, 2018).

4.1 Measurement Model Assessment

The aftereffects of the data examination validated that the numerous parameters just like the Composite Reliability (CR), Cronbach's alpha, Average Variance Extended (AVE) along the issue loadings had been better than the recommended qualities (Kline 2010; Hair et al., 2010) as portrayed in Table 1.

Table 1: Measurement model assessment

Constructs	Item	Loading (> 0.7)	M	SD	α (> 0.7)	CR (> 0.7)	AVE (> 0.5)
Idealized Influence (II)	II1	0.937	3.601	0.992	0.967	0.973	0.858
	II2	0.923					
	II3	0.932					
	II4	0.933					
	II5	0.911					
	II6	Deleted					
	II7	0.920					
	II8	Deleted					
Inspirational Motivation (IM)	IM1	0.945	3.724	1.068	0.962	0.973	0.899
	IM2	0.952					
	IM3	0.939					

	IM4	0.956					
Intellectual Stimulation (IS)	IS1	0.922					
	IS2	0.878	3.474	1.080	0.942	0.959	0.853
	IS3	0.943					
	IS4	0.948					
Individual Consideration (IC)	IC1	0.950					
	IC2	0.942	3.553	1.050	0.962	0.972	0.897
	IC3	0.958					
	IC4	0.938					
Job Autonomy (JA)	JA1	0.923					
	JA2	0.946	3.322	1.226	0.920	0.949	0.862
	JA3	0.915					
Product Innovation (PTI)	PTI1	0.940					
	PTI2	0.949	3.722	1.096	0.940	0.961	0.893
	PTI3	0.946					
Process Innovation (PSI)	PSI1	0.965					
	PSI2	0.961	3.632	1.069	0.955	0.971	0.917
	PSI3	0.947					
Administrative Innovation (AI)	AI1	0.911					
	AI2	0.917					
	AI3	0.875	3.352	1.041	0.944	0.957	0.818
	AI4	0.897					
	AI5	0.921					
	AI6	Deleted					

Note: *M*=Mean; *SD*=Standard Deviation, α = Cronbach's alpha; *CR* = Composite Reliability, *AVE* = Average Variance Extracted.

Key: *II*: idealized Influence, *IM*: inspirational motivation, *IS*: intellectual stimulation, *IC*: individual consideration, *JA*: job autonomy, *PTI*: product innovation, *PSI*: process innovation, *AI*: administrative innovation.

"The discriminant validity refers to the degree to which the different articles differentiate amongst the concepts and measure the constructs. The researchers used the Fornell-Larcker factor for analysing the discriminant value in the measurement model and the results have been presented in Table 2. The results indicated that the square root of the AVE on the diagonals (presented in bold) was higher than the correlation occurring between the constructs (corresponding row and column values), which indicated a higher relationship between the different concepts and their markers compared to the other concepts suggested in the model (Fornell and

Larcker 1981; Chin 1998). Hair et al. (2017) described this as satisfactory discriminant validity. It was noted that the exogenous constructs showed a correlation of <0.85 (Awang 2014). Thus, the discriminant validity of all the constructs was satisfactory."

Table 2: Fornell-Larcker criterion

	AI	IC	II	IM	IS	JA	PSI	PTI
AI	0.904							
IC	0.668	0.947						
II	0.705	0.774	0.926					
IM	0.675	0.737	0.795	0.948				
IS	0.721	0.753	0.784	0.761	0.923			
JA	0.244	0.239	0.238	0.256	0.191	0.928		
PSI	0.743	0.628	0.624	0.646	0.632	0.248	0.958	
PTI	0.781	0.665	0.657	0.654	0.666	0.254	0.779	0.945

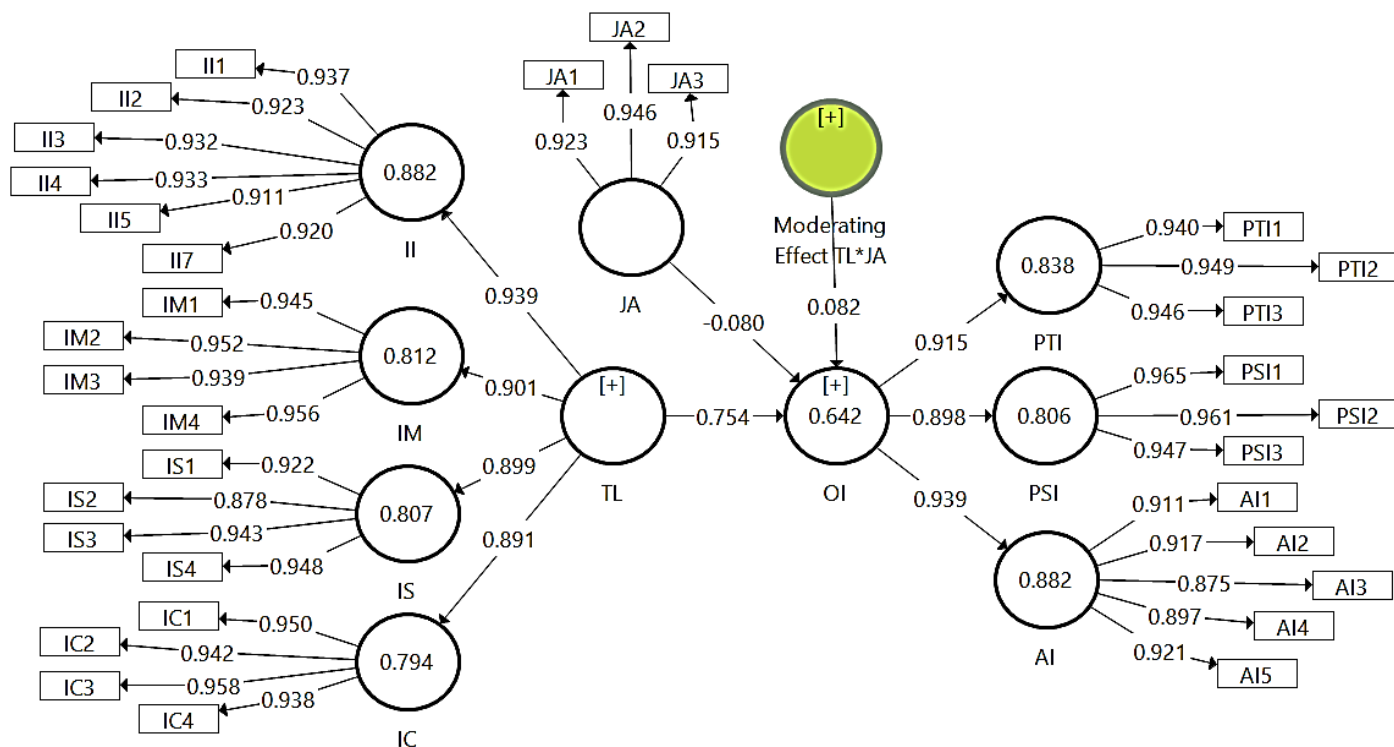
Note: Diagonals represent the square root of the average variance extracted while the other entries represent the correlations.

Key: II: idealized Influence, IM: inspirational motivation, IS: intellectual stimulation, IC: individual consideration, JA: job autonomy, PTI: product innovation, PSI: process innovation, AI: administrative innovation.

4.2 Structural Model Assessment

The researchers tested the structural model after computing the beta (β), R², and corresponding t-

values using a bootstrapping process using a resample size of 5,000 (Hair et al., 2017).



Key: II: idealized Influence, IM: inspirational motivation, IS: intellectual stimulation, IC: individual consideration, OI: organizational innovation, PTI: product innovation, PSI: process innovation, AI: administrative innovation.

Figure 2:PLS algorithm results

4.2.1 Direct Effect Hypotheses

The results shown in Fig. 2 and Table 3 stated that transformational leadership also positively influenced organizational innovation. Thus, the structural model was accepted with ($\beta = 0.754, t = 21.870, p < 0.001$) The transformational leadership and job autonomy could explain 64% of the variance noted in organizational innovation. Furthermore, the R^2 values showed an acceptable explanatory power, indicating that the model was substantial (Cohen 1988; Chin 1998).

Table 3: Result of Direct Effect Hypotheses

Hypot hesis	Relatio nship	Std Be ta	Std Err or	t- val ue	p- val ue	Decis ion	R^2
H1	TL→OI	0.754	0.034	21.870	0.000	Supported	0.64

Key: TL: transformational leadership, OI: organizational innovation

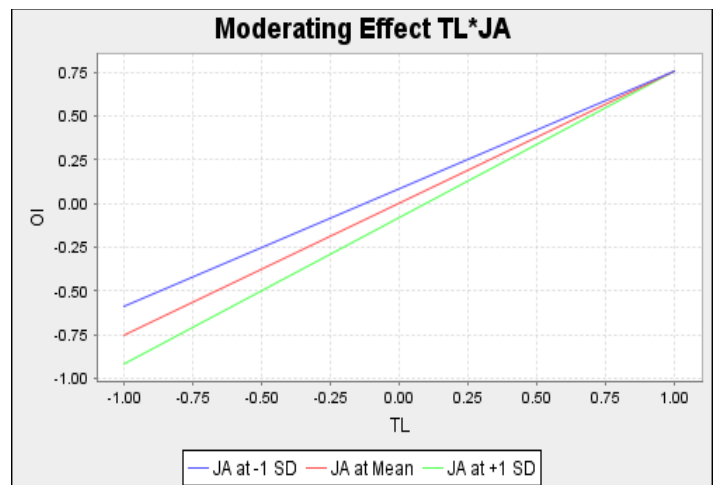
4.2.2 Moderating Effect Hypotheses

As described in Fig. 2 and Table 4, the researchers tested 3 sub-hypotheses for the 4 hypotheses, like (1) They tested the causal effect of the predictor on the outcome; (2) They also tested the causal effect of the moderating factor on the outcome; (3) They tested the causal effect of the interaction (predictor x Moderating) on the outcome. They presented the H2 for assessing the moderation of the study. They used a bootstrapping process for a resample size of 5,000 for assessing the interaction effects. The results shown in Fig. 3 and Table 4 stated that the job autonomy could moderate (strengthen) the positive effect of the transformational leadership on the organizational innovation ($\beta = 0.082, t = 2.221, p < 0.05$) Thus, H2 was acceptable.

Table 4: Result of Moderating Effect Hypotheses

	Std Beta	Std Error	t-value	t-value	Decision
H2.a:	0.75	0.03	21.8	0.00	
TL→OI	0.75	0.03	21.8	0.00	
H2.b:	0.08	0.03	2.43	0.01	Support ed
JA→OI	0.08	0.03	2.43	0.01	Support ed
H2.c:	0.08	0.03	2.22	0.02	
TL*JA→OI	0.08	0.03	2.22	0.02	

Key: TL: transformational leadership, JA: job autonomy, OI: organizational innovation



Key: TL: transformational leadership, JA: job autonomy, OI: organizational innovation

Figure 3: Moderating effects result

V. DISCUSSION

In this study, it was noted that TL positively affected the organisational innovation amongst the employees of the Abu Dhabi Executive Council Authority, UAE, as shown in earlier reports (García-Morales et al., 2012; Heffernan et al., 2016). This was based on the fact that the organisational leaders instilled a sense of pride amongst their subordinates, placed their group before their own interest, acted admirably, mentioned the important beliefs and values, were optimistic about the future, were enthusiastic about what had to be accomplished,

presented a vision for the future, were confident about achieving the organisational objectives, re-examined the critical presumptions, sought multiple perspectives regarding the problem-solving, offered new options with regards to the completion of an assignment, treated other employees as individuals instead of only group members, understood that every employee has different abilities, needs and aspirations, helped other employees develop their skills and presented a different perspective while tackling the organisational issues. As a result, the organisations tend to adopt novel technologies in their work processes, showed a faster response to the occurring changes, helped in developing novel services and products, offered administrative support to the employees, provided an open, participative and communicative environment, implemented a better performance evaluation system and always considered the creativity of the person during the hiring process.

The researchers also noted that the JA moderated the relationship by increasing the effect of the TL and organisational innovation amongst the employees of the Abu Dhabi Executive Council, as shown in the earlier studies (Heyden et al., 2012). This was based on the fact that when the organisational leaders instilled a sense of pride amongst their subordinates, placed their group before their own interest, acted in an admirable manner, mentioned the important beliefs and values, were optimistic about the future, were enthusiastic about what had to be accomplished, presented a vision for the future, were confident about achieving the organisational objectives, re-examined the critical presumptions, sought multiple perspectives regarding the problem-solving, offered new options with regards to the completion of an assignment, treated other employees as individuals instead of only group members, understood that every employee has different abilities, needs and aspirations, helped other employees develop their skills and presented a different perspective while tackling the organisational issues, then the organisations tend to

adapt novel technologies in their work processes, showed a faster response to the occurring changes, helped in developing novel services and products, offered administrative support to the employees, provided an open, participative and communicative environment, implemented a better performance evaluation system and always considered the creativity of the person during the hiring process. Thereafter, the employees were permitted to make decisions related to their work schedule, determine their task order and plan on how to carry out their tasks.

VI. IMPLICATIONS

The concept of TL is newly emerging, and till date, has not been understood by the organisations in the Arabic world, including UAE. In this study, the researchers have attempted to describe this concept with regards to the Emirates public sector. The researchers have presented a comprehensive description of the manner in which the internal leadership activities affect the people, groups or the organisation's performance. They also showed ways to use it in the best possible manner to improve the overall performance. This study only tested the direct and indirect effects with the help of the moderating variable (like JA) in the UAE public sector.

The UAE government can derive many benefits and can offer resources to the informal groups of individuals that can encourage them to generate novel ideas, increase the trust amongst all members after improving their interactions in the social network which could facilitate knowledge transfer and co-operation. These were seen to be important requirements for increasing organisational performance. The government needs to develop a knowledge source that offers valuable knowledge for generating novel ideas, improving the processes and organisational techniques and embracing a developmental culture. This study has also described many benefits for the UAE public sector, which could improve organisational innovation. Some

recommendations were made in this study. The public leaders need to promote and maintain the relationship between the employees and clients for supporting the strategies and goals, which could increase the cohesion of the informal organisations (A. Aldholay, Abdullah, Isaac, & Mutahar, 2019; A. H. Aldholay, Abdullah, Ramayah, Isaac, & Mutahar, 2018).

One of the confinements of this exam is that the data amassed became go-sectional in place of longitudinal in nature. The longitudinal strategy also can enhance the comprehension of the affiliations and the causality amongst elements (Isaac, Abdullah, Ramayah, Mutahar, and Alrajawy, 2017; Isaac, Abdullah, Ramayah, and Mutahar Ahmed, 2017). Destiny studies want to be directed to study the relationship amongst elements by way of most important culturally severa investigations as endorsed with the useful resource of beyond examinations (Isaac, Abdullah, Ramayah, and Mutahar, 2017a; Isaac, Masoud, Samad, and Abdullah, 2016).

Appendix

Appendix A

Instrument for variables

Variable	Measure	Source
Idealized Influence (II)	II1: Leaders instill pride in others for being associated with them.	(Wang & Lai, 2014)
	II2: Leaders go beyond self-interest for the good of the group.	
	II3: Leaders act in ways that build others' respect for them.	
	II4: Leaders display a sense of power and confidence.	
	II5: Leaders talk about their most important values and beliefs	
	II6: Leaders specify the importance of having a strong sense of purpose.	
	II7: Leaders consider the moral and ethical consequences of decisions.	
	II8: Leaders emphasize the importance of having a collective sense of mission.	
Inspirational Motivation (IM)	IM1: Leaders talk optimistically about the future.	(Wang & Lai, 2014)
	IM2: Leaders talk enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished.	
	IM3: Leaders articulate a compelling vision of the future.	
	IM4: Leaders express confidence that goals will be achieved.	

VII. CONCLUSION

This article aimed to study the effect of the TL on the organisational innovation and moderating role played by the JA on this effect in the governmental sector in UAE. The study compiled the evidence presented by earlier studies with regards to the concept of TL. Regardless of the different constraints of this study, encouraging results were noted as the researchers could highlight some of the novel perspectives. They proposed a novel model, which included the independent variable of the 2nd-order TL construct (i.e., inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, idealised influence and individualised consideration) and the dependent variable included the 2nd-order construct of the organisational innovation (i.e., process, product and innovation). Job autonomy was the moderating variable. The results showed that both the hypotheses were significant, and the independent variable could explain 64% of the variance noted in the organisational innovation.

Intellectual Stimulation (IS)	<p>IS1: Leaders re-examine critical assumptions to question whether they are appropriate.</p> <p>IS2: Leaders seek differing perspectives when solving problems.</p> <p>IS3: Leaders get others to look at problems from many different angles.</p> <p>IS4: Leaders suggest new ways of looking at how to complete assignments.</p>	(Wang & Lai, 2014)
Individual Consideration (IC)	<p>IC1: Leaders treat others as individuals rather than just as a member of a group.</p> <p>IC2: Leaders consider an individual as having different needs, abilities, and aspirations from others.</p> <p>IC3: Leaders seek a differing point of view when dealing with organizational issues.</p> <p>IC4: Leaders help others to develop their strengths.</p>	(Wang & Lai, 2014)
Product Innovation (PTI)	<p>PTI1: In our organization, new technology is adapted for improving the work processes (computers, wireless networking, etc.)</p> <p>PTI2: In our organization, we try new methods for improving processes (paperless environment, online learning, etc.)</p> <p>PTI3: Our organization is quick to respond to the changing needs of its customer.</p>	(Hussain, 2015)
Process Innovation (PSI)	<p>PSI1: We always develop new product and services.</p> <p>PSI2: We try to introduce and diversify our product to suit customer needs</p> <p>PSI3: We always try applying a new idea/technology at our organization.</p>	(Hussain, 2015)
Administrative Innovation (AI)	<p>AI1: Administrative support is always there for employees.</p> <p>AI2: Employees compensation system is linked to performance.</p> <p>AI3: Our institution has a new and improved performance evaluation system.</p> <p>AI4: At our organization, we believe in the open communication environment.</p> <p>AI5: In our organization, employees are hired on their creativity.</p> <p>AI6: In our institution, there is a participative working environment.</p>	(Hussain, 2015)

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