

THE IMPACT OF STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP ON ACHIEVING JOB SATISFACTION FOR EMPLOYEES IN THE UAE ISLAMIC BANKING SECTOR

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify the relationship between strategic leadership and job satisfaction among workers in the UAE Islamic banking sector. The researcher also aims to highlight the relationship between the characteristics of strategic direction and job satisfaction among employees. Data obtained from $n=180$ questionnaires revealed a significant relationship between strategic leadership and job satisfaction among Islamic banks' employees. Besides, strategic leaders also increased the employees' confidence by motivating them to share their valuable opinions to advance their working conditions. The researchers further concluded that leadership in Islamic banks is strategically working to accomplish their organizational goals. They tend to give special consideration to improve employees' working conditions that ultimately help to provide job satisfaction and designated business goals.

KEYWORDS: Strategic leadership, Job satisfaction, Islamic banking

INTRODUCTION

The theory of strategic leadership is one of the most effective approaches dealing with management literature as it determines the success and efficiency of the manager's potential or his inefficiency. (Masa'deh, 2016). Today strategic leaders play a fundamental role in the economic development process. Due to this reason, strategic leadership is one of the essential tactics that organizations use in achieving competitive advantage. Strategic direction is capable of constituting organizational harmony under the designated business criteria (Abdulla et al., 2011). Strategic leadership also plays an active role in small size organizations to achieve their goals, gives them the ability to survive, and adapt to recent environmental changes. Likewise, strategic leadership can influence the employees to achieve the organizational goals and establish a flexible corporate culture to motivate the employees regarding task completion (Habes, Alghizzawi, Salloum, et al., 2020; Muhaisen et al., 2020). The potential of an organization depends on workforce capabilities and employees' ability to work. (Habes, 2019) If an organization lacks interest in employees' well-being, it often leads to negative consequences, including job satisfaction among the workforce. Thus, despite there is much consideration regarding organizational management. Still, job satisfaction is one of the most prominent concerns for all (Alhawamdeh, Alghizzawi, et al., 2020; Habes, Alghizzawi, Ali, et al., 2020).

Addressing the determinants behind job satisfaction can help organizations to design an appropriate work environment and an effective incentive system to increase job performance among leaders and employees (Al-Swidi et al., 2012). The process of studying both strategic leadership and job satisfaction is of greater significance. The current study aims to highlight the importance and role of strategic leadership and its potential impacts on work performance in the United Arab Emirates Islamic banking sector. (Alhawamdeh, Alghizzaw, et al., 2020; Hassan et al., 2008)

SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTION

The current study deals with a new dimension of strategic leadership for selecting, preparing, and directing the administrative processes in the General Authority for Islamic Affairs and Endowments, in contrast to what previous studies have addressed (Al-Mahayreh & Abdel-Qader, 2015). This study is of particular significance as it analyzed the strategic role of the administrative leadership, its impact on achieving job satisfaction, and its effectiveness among the employees of the Islamic banking sector in the UAE. This study also provided a theoretical framework covering the topic of strategic leadership, job satisfaction, and performance effectiveness as a pathway for future researchers. This research is a scientific contribution to studying the role of successful strategic leadership in developing the performance of institutions and job satisfaction.

LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1: Leadership & Job Satisfaction:

In the middle of the twentieth century, several studies addressed leadership styles, their effectiveness, role, and impacts, often resulted in conflicting arguments. Despite the attempts to unify the literature, understanding effective leadership is an incomplete task. Therefore, leadership is mainly defined as a practice of authority within a particular professional relationship or group, having two or more members. A leader focuses mostly on directing activities towards group goals achievement as it is commonly attributed to the leadership role. Fiedler believes that leadership is the process of influencing others with joint action, demanding a leader's compatibility to deal effectively with the challenges. As the definitions of job satisfaction vary due to the diverse approaches highlighted by different researchers, they made many attempts to affirm a special meaning of job satisfaction (Choi et al., 2016). For instance, job satisfaction is the psychological feeling of contentment, satisfaction and happiness to satisfy the needs, desires, and expectations with the work and workplace environment. (Alghizzawi, Habes, Salloum, et al., 2019; Salloum, Al-Emran, Habes, et al., 2019) This job satisfaction is achievable through favorable internal and external environmental factors and management patterns. Similarly, Block defines job satisfaction as a result of many experiences associated with work and attributes itself with an individual's appreciation for yield and its management (Al-Shibly et al., 2019; Alnawafleh et al., 2019; Tone Hosmer, 1982). Job satisfaction is further defined as an outcome of factors related to the job, mainly measured by the individual's acceptance of work with comfort, self-satisfaction, and effectiveness. Job satisfaction is an individual's feeling of happiness and satisfaction, achieved by determining what the individual expects from his work (Hoq et al., 2010).

3.1 Dimensions of strategic leadership

The radical change in the third millennium led to a transformation in the leadership structure. Organizations need to pay special consideration to strategic leadership, that led to the emergence of several basic dimensions of relevant leadership style that consists of:

- a. Organizational learning:** Strategic leadership aims for change and improvement through sensitive organizational capabilities. To achieve the desired goals, an organization should be aware of the possible challenges and consequences. Awareness is essential for gaining a competitive advantage because it enables an organization to improve its competitive position by avoiding mistakes (Al-rahmi et al., 2015). Understanding also allows the organization to improve its operations by understanding weaknesses and strengths and looking for the best ways to correct them. (Oliver, 2012: 11). Awareness also enables the organization to improve its operations by understanding weaknesses and strengths and looking for the best ways to correct them. (Oliver, 2012: 11). We can assume that a strategic leader who possesses full knowledge of organizational challenges and strengths is better able to guide and support his workforce in the best possible manner (Alghizzawi, Habes, & Salloum, 2019; Habes et al., 2019).
- b. Organizational Structure:** It is a framework that determines the nature and reality of corporate relationships regarding the plan, authority, points of connection, levels of interaction, and others (Sweis, 2010, 64). The organizational structure is known as the internal pattern of the organization that consists of relationships. Roles exist throughout the organization, and the organizational structure consists of assigning tasks, coordination, and supervision, directed to achieve organizational goals (Costa et al., 2012; Salloum, Al-Emran, Khalaf, et al., 2019). Here we can assert that a strategic leader who can draw and define the suitable structure of the authority is well-capable of achieving he desired organizational goals.
- c. Administrative Empowerment of Workers:** Empowerment is a primary factor in improving administrative proceedings. It is a process that grants autonomy to workers by sharing relevant information with the employees and necessary control over the factors affecting their performance. In simple terms, it is a style that shares leaders' authority with the other members in the decision-making process (Pandey & Kingsley, 2000). We can claim that a strategic leader can inspire individuals through his vision and enables them to participate in policymaking and implementation.

d. Modern technologies: It is a group of logistical interactions that work to organize the technical skill of the leader, through which the organization interacts internally and externally to facilitate its general performance (Alghizzawi, Salloum, et al., 2018; Madar, 2017). Here we assume that the strategic leader who keeps pace with technical progress can lead the authority to develop, change, and interact with the potential competitors.

3.2 The Importance of Job Satisfaction and Strategic Leadership:

Job satisfaction received much attention as the workforce prefers to avail satisfaction through different sources. Job satisfaction has a more significant influence on employees' personal and professional lives. Job satisfaction leads to increased productivity and other benefits for institutions and workers. As a result, many studies addressed job satisfaction in the field of organizational psychology. Some studies also revealed that functionally satisfied individuals live longer than dissatisfied individuals and are less prone to anxiety, have increased self-esteem, and more generous social adaptability. As there is a positive correlation between job satisfaction and better psychological and physical health (Chi & Qu, 2008). Job satisfaction is of great importance, as it is a measure of effective performance. Higher job satisfaction leads to desirable results as organizations give special consideration to grant bonuses and attractive salary packages to their employees. On the contrary, dissatisfaction causes absenteeism, frequent work accidents, delays in work, moving to other institutions, and anti-workplace behavior, which directs them to establish trade unions to defend their interests. As Likert argued, attaining organizational goals become impossible, leading to adverse outcomes [18]. Therefore, job dissatisfaction is one of the most apparent indications of poor working conditions and employees' rights violations [19]. So we assume that:

- ✓ A high level of job satisfaction leads to a higher level of ambition among employees.
- ✓ Individuals with high job satisfaction scores are more satisfied with their free time, especially with their families, as well as more satisfied with life in general.
- ✓ Employees who are more satisfied with their work are less likely to have work accidents.
- ✓ High level of job satisfaction leads to an increased organization performance

In general, employee job satisfaction one of the most critical indicators of department performance and progress. Dissatisfied employees poorly perform and having adverse physical and mental health [20, [21].

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher utilized a quantitative approach as they help to describe results directly gathered from respondents in the form of numbers, frequencies, and percentages. (Alghizzawi, Ghani, et al., 2018; Habes, Alghizzawi, Salloum, et al., 2018) As the quantitative method is one of the fundamental data gathering techniques applied in descriptive studies, it represents a standard model for the steps of collecting data from the participants and presenting data in a well-manipulated manner. (Alhumaid et al., 2020; Habes, Alghizzawi, Khalaf, et al., 2018; Habes, Salloum, Alghizzawi, et al., 2018) Thus the researcher used n= 180 well-developed, structured questionnaires distributed among the respondents currently working in Islamic banks in the United Arab Emirates.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

5.1 Demographic variables

Table 1: Demographical Data of the Study Respondents

Variable	Factor	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	162	90.7%
	Female	18	9.3%
Marital Status	Single	17	9.5%
	Married	163	90.5%
Work Experience	More than fifteen years	85	46.7%
	Less than ten years	42	23.3%
	Less than five years	40	22.2%

Table 1 above shows the demographical data of the study participants. As seen, $N= 162$ or 90% of the participants were males, and $n= 18$ or 9.3% were females. Similarly, a majority of respondents ($n= 163$ or 90.5%) were married, and $n= 85$ or 46.7% of the participants were having work experiences of more than fifteen years in the relevant field, $n= 42$ or 23.3% of participants' had less than ten years of experience, and only $n= 40$ or 22.2% of participants had less than five years of field experience.

5.2 The Relationship between Strategic Leadership and Job Satisfaction in the Islamic Banks in Emirates

The first hypothesis aimed to validate the relationship between strategic leadership and job satisfaction among the employees of Islamic banks. Results indicated that all paragraphs of the axis are statistically significant as the relationship between the proposed variable is positive ($\alpha= 0.001$). We found that strategic leadership seeks to achieve job satisfaction an average of (4.36). Results also revealed that the strategic leadership aims to achieve employee satisfaction by all available means and methods with the mean value of (4.52), and the highest error value that did not exceed (0.05). We also found that strategic leadership is concerned with the participation of employees in the work plans of the authority. Seeking employees' involvement is one of the most critical characteristics of strategic leadership, having positive impacts on the workflow with an average of (4.37) and an error value (0.05). It is also evident from the results that managers fully cooperate and support the employees with a high average of (4.44) and an error value of no more than (0.05), which contributes to work performance efficiently. Likewise, managers also participate with employees in decisions making a high average of (4.25) and an error value that does not exceed (0.06), which is a democratic management approach. The strategic leadership also provides job satisfaction by improving the employees' performance with an average of (4.43) and an error value that did not exceed (0.05). It is one of the essential pillars of the successful institution that can keep pace with the accelerating scientific developments and revolutions. In this regard, strategic leadership monitors the strengths and weaknesses of employees. It takes care of their physical and psychological needs with a high average of (4.28) and an error value that did not exceed (0.06). This approach contributes to developing practical treatment plans for the employee who suffer from professional inadequacies. Results also indicated that employees' needs and demands strongly impacts leaders with a high degree of (4.11) and an error value that does not exceed (0.06). **Table 1** contains a detailed overview of the results relevant to the first hypothesis.

Table (1): Arithmetic Mean and Standard Deviation

Measuring factors	Arithmetic average	standard deviation	ratio	correlation	sig
Strategic leadership seeks to achieve employee satisfaction.	4.52	0.74	0.05	.858**	0.001
Strategic leadership is concerned with involving employees in the work plans of the banks.	4.37	0.83	0.05	.903**	0.001
Instructs managers in the spirit of cooperation and support among workers.	4.44	0.79	0.05	.831**	0.001
Managers involve employees in making decisions, delegating banks, and taking care of employees' needs and wants.	4.25	0.91	0.06	.896**	0.001
The strategic leadership provides the organizational climate that achieves my satisfaction and performance	4.43	0.75	0.05	.902**	0.001
Strategic leadership encourages competition and innovation at work	4.45	0.77	0.05	.886**	0.001
Strategic leadership studies and considers my strengths and weaknesses	4.28	0.94	0.06	.884**	0.001
The wishes of the employees influence the leader	4.11	0.92	0.06	.697**	0.001
Strategic leadership enhances the capabilities of the authority's employees and supports rehabilitation and Emiratization.	4.38	0.74	0.05	.871**	0.001

5.2 The Influence of Strategic Leadership on Work Performance in the Islamic Banks in Emirates

The second hypothesis postulated the impact of the strategic leadership on the employees' work performance. Results revealed that all paragraphs of the axis are statistically significant as the relationship between the proposed variable is positive ($\alpha \leq 0.05$). After examining the arithmetic averages, we found that strategic leadership strongly influences employees to work performance with an average of (4.36). We also found that strategic leadership motivates the employees to present new and innovative ideas suitable for work with an average of (4.43), which is the highest value among all values. Likewise, findings also indicated that strategic leadership helps in solving the problems that hamper workflow for employees with an average of (4.41). Removing potential obstacles is one of the essential contributive factors to maintain working activities. Furthermore, the authority also helps the strategic leadership to increase the level of job satisfaction for employees by an average of (4.41), which is the general goal. Similarly, strategic leadership based decisions increase employee satisfaction, such as increasing salaries and incentives, with an average of (4.21). As salary increases and bonus rewards are among the most important motivations that raise employee morale for work loyalty. In this context, we found that the organizational climate at work helps as a mediating factor between employee satisfaction and performance with an average of (4.36). **Table 2** below provides a detailed overview of the relevant results.

Table (2): One-Sample T-test

Measuring factors	Arithmetic average	standard deviation	ratio	T	sig
Leadership motivates employees to provide new and innovative ideas suitable for work.	4.43	0.73	0.05	95	0.000
Strategic leadership helps solve problems in the workflow of employees.	4.41	0.74	0.05	93.12	0.000
Strategic leadership helps in increasing the level of job satisfaction of the employees.	4.41	0.79	0.05	87.35	0.000
Management decisions increase leadership in improving my satisfaction, such as increases in salaries and incentives.	4.21	0.94	0.06	69.94	0.000
Organizational climate helps by acting as a mediating factor between my satisfaction and performance.	4.36	0.74	0.05	91.95	0.000

3.5 Relationship between the Behavior of Strategic Leader and the High Degree of Job Satisfaction

The third hypothesis intended to authenticate the relationship between the behavior of the strategic leader and the high degree of job satisfaction among employees. The level of significance ($\alpha = 0.001$) and the arithmetic averages validated that the behavior of the strategic leader contributes to a high degree of job satisfaction for the employees with an average of (4.35). The general environment provided by strategic leaders affects achieving satisfaction with an average of (4.33). We also found that work systems, methods, and procedures involve the achievement of satisfaction among employees with a higher value of (4.42). Moreover, **Table 3** also shows that job happiness and the sense of accomplishment provided by the strategic leadership has a high degree of (4.31). Furthermore, the results showed the leadership, supervision pattern, the organization's policies, and the methods of its management contribute to achieving employee satisfaction with a high degree of (4.37). Similarly, the relationship between the employees and the strategic leadership also contributes to achieving satisfaction was also very high (4.33).

Table (3): Paragraph Correlation, Mean, and the Standard Deviation

Measuring factors	Arithmetic average	standard deviation	ratio	T	sig
The general environment provided by the strategic leader affects achieving my satisfaction and affects job performance.	4.33	0.78	0.05	.884**	0.001
The work systems, methods, and procedures of the job influence the achievement of employee satisfaction.	4.42	0.68	0.04	.883**	0.001
Affects career happiness and the sense of accomplishment provided by the strategic leadership.	4.31	0.76	0.05	.893**	0.001

The style of leadership and supervision and the organization's policies and management methods contribute to achieving my satisfaction.	4.37	0.79	0.05	.932**	0.001
The relationship between the employee and the strategic leadership contributes to my satisfaction.	4.33	0.77	0.05	.932**	0.001

CONCLUSION

Strategic leadership is one of the most critical factors that contribute to increased employee performance in Islamic banks. Strategic leaders motivate employees to share their personal opinion, contribute equally in the decision making process, and also tend to solve their workplace problems. As a mediating factor between satisfaction, performance, and managerial decisions, strategic leadership improves the job satisfaction level. The significant differences between strategic leadership and social variables did not influence strategic leadership, as the correlation value for all of them is greater than the $\alpha \geq 0.05$, with the exception of the position of senior management and preachers.

The results of the study showed that strategic leadership is one of the most critical factors that contribute to the high degree of job satisfaction among the employees of Islamic banks in the Emirates. Employee satisfaction has substantial impacts on job performance, and the methods adopted by strategic leaders directly affect the job satisfaction among the employees. Thus the study recommends providing a favorable workplace environment to employees so that they can share their opinions and play an influential role in the decision making process. A favorable workplace environment that will help them to propose creative ideas, and development proposals, that will also, which would lead to achieve an atmosphere of trust and cooperation, raise productivity and develop work outputs. The recommendation is linked with the study results that can further improve the performance of Islamic banks in the United Arab Emirates.

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