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A holistic exploration of manager decision-making and leadership styles with employee job satisfaction in shipping sector

Ali Abu-Saleek[1], Edza Aria Wikurendra[2, 3], Btari Bunga Ceisari[4], Nour Abdeljawad[5]

[1] Msc. In Management, Independent Researcher, Amman, Jordan.

[2] Department of Health Sciences, Faculty of Humanities and Health Sciences, Curtin University, Miri, 98000, Malaysia.

[3] Department of Public Health, Faculty of Health, Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Surabaya, Surabaya, 60237, Indonesia.

[4] Department of Accounting, Universitas Islam Indonesia, Yogyakarta, 55584, Indonesia.

[5] PhD, Head of Development unit at Health and Agriculture sector - Greater Amman Municipality; Amman, Jordan.

Corresponding Author: Nour Abdeljawad/ Ali Abu-Saleek

ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES: *Human resources play a pivotal and decisive role in shaping an organization's effectiveness and efficiency. The collaborative synergy between skilled managers and capable employees is crucial for organizational success in the shipping sector. Manager decision-making, leadership style, and job satisfaction, particularly in the shipping sector need to be researched in depth. This research explores managers decision-making and leadership styles and investigates their impact on employee job satisfaction.*

METHODS: *Two hypotheses were used to evaluate the influence of decision-making and leadership style on job satisfaction. Three structured questionnaires with imaginary data were distributed to 169 respondents. Collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation, and multiple regression analysis. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted to verify the construct validity of the instruments in the maritime context, ensuring their appropriateness for the specific cultural and professional setting of ADNOC Logistics and Services.*

FINDINGS: *The respondents were satisfied with the three leadership styles used in their company, namely transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and laissez-faire leadership. Regression analysis revealed that transformational leadership and rational decision-making are significant positive predictors of job satisfaction, while transactional leadership also showed a positive but weaker association.*

CONCLUSION: *This research confirms that appropriate decision making with effective leadership styles, significantly impacts job satisfaction in the shipping sector, highlighting the importance of tailored leadership approaches in the unique maritime environment.*

KEY WORDS: Job satisfaction; Quality; Decision-making; Managers; Leadership style; Shipping sector; Maritime; UAE.

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INTRODUCTION

Human resources play a pivotal and decisive role in shaping an organization's effectiveness and efficiency. The collaborative synergy between skilled managers and capable employees emerges as imperative for organizational success. Their unwavering dedication and collective efforts serve as instrumental components in achieving organizational goals seamlessly. Moreover, it is important to recognize that job satisfaction plays a crucial role in nurturing a pool of highly skilled human capital [1]. According to Mosadeghrad (2014), employee job satisfaction represents a mental inclination that individuals possess regarding their professional roles within the organizational context [2]. Using a methodological perspective, job satisfaction can be described as the emotional response an employee has towards their job, which arises from comparing achieved outcomes with desired achievements [2].

In a broader sense, job satisfaction is universally acknowledged as a multidimensional framework encompassing a spectrum of employee emotions linked to various intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of their work. This encompasses specific aspects of contentment related to compensation, benefits, career progression, working conditions, supervisory guidance, organizational protocols, and interpersonal relationships with colleagues [3]. Academic studies have highlighted a link between diminished satisfaction and factors like inadequately skilled or untrained staff, monotonous task repetition, demanding obligations such as documentation, tensions arising from inconsistent role expectations, clashes in role assignments, and uncertainty in role definitions [4]. This reduced job satisfaction can also stem from job-related stress, challenges in patient care, feelings of being overwhelmed, and interactions with colleagues, personal traits, and organizational aspects [3]. Moreover, scholars propose that numerous factors collectively impact job satisfaction, encompassing aspects like compensation, additional benefits, recognition of achievements, individual empowerment, acknowledgment, effective communication, working conditions, the importance of job roles, job security, adaptability in the work environment, the overall organizational ambiance, dynamics among colleagues, interpersonal relationships, and the guidance provided by supervisors [5] [6] [7].

Existing research underscores the significance of job satisfaction in influencing employees' decisions to either stay with their current positions or seek alternative opportunities. Those with lower job satisfaction tend to have a greater likelihood of opting for resignation compared to their more content colleagues [8] [9]. Conversely, employees experiencing higher levels of job satisfaction tend to exhibit increased productivity and prolonged commitment [10]. Furthermore, elevated job satisfaction is closely associated with greater participation in the decision-making processes within organizations [11]. It is also widely acknowledged that job satisfaction is intertwined with various work-related factors, spanning intrinsic task attributes (such as routine, autonomy, and feedback), the definition of role responsibilities (in terms of conflicts and uncertainties), and the broader work environment. This environment includes stress levels, opportunities for career advancement, prospects for active engagement, and the quality of leadership [12] [13].

Muttalib (2006) has further posited that within the realm of factors contributing to job satisfaction, leadership plays a central and pivotal role in engendering employees' satisfaction [1]. Leadership is a managerial function primarily oriented towards human interactions and social dynamics. It involves the process of guiding individuals to collectively achieve the organization's objectives [14]. Leadership style can be understood as a spectrum of managerial attitudes, behaviors, traits, and competencies shaped by both individual and organizational values, leadership inclinations, and the reliability of employees within varying contexts [2]. Other scholars characterize leadership as a social efficacy approach through which a leader harnesses, encourages, and fosters the voluntary engagement of followers in pursuit of the organization's aims and interests [15] [16]. Leadership constitutes the process of influencing others, drawing strength from the leader's vision and inventiveness. Guiding personal values and steering societal interactions fall within the purview of leadership. It also serves to garner public recognition. An exploration of leadership literature underscores the paramount significance of active leadership in achieving both scholarly and practical advancement [12] [17].

The maritime industry, particularly in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region, has witnessed significant transformation in recent years. As global trade routes increasingly rely on hubs like Dubai and Abu Dhabi, the management of human capital within these hubs has become a critical factor for competitive advantage [18] [19]. Recent research by Kılıçlı (2025) emphasizes that shipmasters' leadership styles are not only vital for crew motivation but also directly impact safety outcomes and operational efficiency [20]. Similarly, Torgersen (2025) highlights that transformational leadership is particularly effective in the isolated and high-pressure environment of commercial vessels, where social support and visionary guidance are paramount [21]. In the UAE context, AlShehhi et al. (2021) found that organizational culture significantly moderates the relationship between leadership and performance, suggesting that shipping companies must align their leadership development with local cultural nuances [18]. Furthermore, Glaveli et al. (2025) argued that seafarers' job satisfaction is heavily influenced by the "social workplace," which includes participation in decision-making and the quality of interpersonal relationships [22]. These contemporary insights suggest that the traditional "command and control" style is shifting towards more transformational and participative approaches in the maritime sector [23] [24]. Despite these developments, there remains a gap in understanding how these dynamics specifically play out within major national shipping entities like ADNOC Logistics and Services. This research aims to fill this gap by exploring the interplay between managerial decision-making, leadership styles, and employee job satisfaction in this unique organizational setting.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundations of Motivation and Satisfaction

The study of job satisfaction is deeply rooted in motivational theories that have shaped organizational behavior for decades. Taylor (1911) initially focused on scientific management, suggesting that economic incentives were the primary drivers of productivity [25]. However, the Human Relations movement, led by figures like Likert (1967), shifted the focus toward the human organization and the value of participative management [26]. Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs provided a framework for understanding how individuals seek to satisfy basic needs before moving toward self-actualization in the workplace [27]. This was further refined by Herzberg (1966), whose two-factor theory distinguished between hygiene factors and true motivators, emphasizing that satisfaction and dissatisfaction are not opposite ends of the same spectrum [28]. McClelland (1961) added to this by identifying the need for achievement, power, and affiliation as key drivers of managerial

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success [29].

Leadership Frameworks and Styles

Leadership has been analyzed through various lenses, from trait-based approaches to modern transformational models. Stogdill (1948) identified personal factors associated with leadership, laying the groundwork for contingency theories [30]. Fiedler (1967) proposed that leadership effectiveness depends on the match between a leader's style and the situational control [31]. House (1971) further developed the path-goal theory, suggesting that leaders should clear the path for subordinates to achieve their goals [32]. In the modern era, the distinction between transactional and transformational leadership, as articulated by Burns (1978) and Bass (1990), has become central to maritime management [16] [33]. Transformational leaders, as described by Bennis and Nanus (1985), focus on strategies for taking charge through vision and trust [34]. Conger and Kanungo (1998) explored charismatic leadership, which is often a component of the transformational style [35]. Goleman (2000) introduced the concept of emotional intelligence in leadership, arguing that the most effective leaders utilize a variety of styles depending on the situation [36].

Decision-Making and Organizational Culture

Decision-making is a critical component of leadership that directly impacts organizational culture. Vroom and Yetton (1973) developed a normative model to help managers determine the appropriate level of subordinate participation in decision-making [37]. The quality of these decisions often depends on the organizational culture, which Schein (2010) defines as the shared basic assumptions learned by a group [38]. Peters and Waterman (1982) found that "excellent" companies often have cultures that encourage autonomy and entrepreneurship [39]. In the maritime sector, where safety is paramount, the "managerial grid" proposed by Blake and Mouton (1964) helps leaders balance their concern for people with their concern for production [40]. Senge (1990) emphasized the importance of the "learning organization," where continuous improvement and systems thinking are integrated into the decision-making process [41]. Kouzes and Posner (2017) further highlight that leadership is a challenge that requires making extraordinary things happen through shared vision and exemplary behavior [42].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research model

The process of decision-making holds immense significance due to its far-reaching impacts on outcomes, time utilization, expenditures, emotional factors, optimized resource utilization, employee contribution, and fostering professional growth [13] [37]. In parallel, extensive research conducted across diverse settings has consistently highlighted a positive association between leadership and job satisfaction [1] [43] [44]. Nevertheless, within the shipping sector, the intricate interplay between decision-making processes, leadership styles, and their influence on employees' job satisfaction remains less explored [8] [9]. In light of this, the present study aims to delve into the impact of managerial decision-making processes and leadership styles on employees' job satisfaction within the shipping sector.

In order to unravel these complexities, the researcher has constructed a comprehensive model that seeks to examine and illuminate the intricate connections between managers' decision-making approaches, leadership styles, and the resultant effect on the overall job satisfaction of employees in the shipping industry. By exploring these relationships, the study endeavors to shed light on strategies for optimizing job satisfaction, thereby contributing to the improvement of organizational performance within the shipping sector. The illustration of the initial measurement model for the study is depicted in Fig. 1.

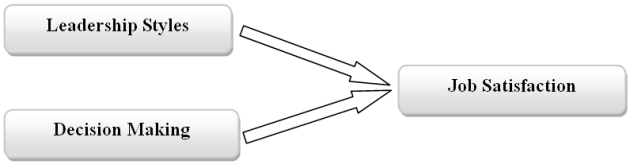


Fig. 1: Research conceptual model

Sample and procedures

According to McLeod (2019), sampling is the selecting of the representative group of the population to carry the study, targeted population is the total individuals from the selected sample [45]. Accordingly, the results extracted from the population sample can be used in order to the popularization of results. All the employees of a shipping company in the GCC area will be taken as the targeted population (total of 300 employees). The selection of the research sample took into account several key factors, including the participants' position within the organization, their gender, and their level of professional experience. The sample size was determined using Slovin's formula, which is represented as $n = N / (1 + Ne^2)$, where N stands for the total population size, n denotes the desired number of samples, and e signifies the margin of error. The chosen confidence level for this calculation was set at 95%, with a margin of error of 5% (0.05). By employing an online sample size calculator and applying the aforementioned formula, the resulting sample size determined for this research study is 172 employees. A total of 169 valid responses were obtained.

The study employed a Purposive Sampling approach, focusing on employees within ADNOC Logistics and Services Company, recognized as a prominent shipping firm in the UAE. While this method allowed for in-depth analysis within a specific organizational context, it is important to acknowledge that the findings may have limited generalizability to the broader shipping industry [46].

Analytical Approach

Analysis of the data was conducted using SPSS. Diverse analytical methods were employed, starting with descriptive statistics for summarizing and characterizing the data. Further analyses included correlation and regression techniques to ascertain the connections between decision-making, leadership styles, and their impact on job satisfaction [46]. To ensure construct validity, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was performed on the MLQ and MSQ scales prior to hypothesis testing [46].

Additionally, the decision to select 169 employees as the research sample was based on a careful consideration of various factors that could impact the study's outcomes. These factors include the need for statistical significance, the confidence level required, and the margin of error permissible. Collectively, these considerations guided the determination of the sample size that will be utilized to conduct this research study. The details of the sample characteristic are provided in Table 1.

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Table 1: Paticipations gender, position and experience (N=169)

Information		Female	Male	Sample size	Percentage
Possition	Senior rank	3	35	38	22.5 %
	Junior rank	25	106	131	77.5 %
Total		28	141	169	100 %
Experience	≤ 10 years	3	66	70	41.4 %
	> 10 years	25	75	99	58.6 %
Total		28	141	169	100 %

The study employed a Purposive Sampling approach, focusing on employees within ADNOC Logistics and Services Company, recognized as a prominent shipping firm in the UAE. While this method allowed for in-depth analysis within a specific organizational context, it is important to acknowledge that the findings may have limited generalizability to the broader shipping industry [46].

Variables and measures

The variables considered in this study were drawn from well-established and extensively used measurements employed in prior research. Decision making was measured using a questionnaire developed by the University of Limerick (24 questions) [13] , deal with how individuals make decisions and used the five-point Likert measurement scale ranging from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (5). The questionnaire was designed to measure the rational decision-making, intuitive decision-making, dependant decision-making, avoidant decision-making, spontaneous decision-making. The questions for measuring decision-making are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Decision-making scale

Variables		Measurement items
The rational decision-making	1	I double check my information sources to be sure I have the right facts before making decisions
	2	I make decisions in a logical and systematic way
	3	My decision making requires careful thought
	4	When making a decision, I consider various options in terms of a specified goal
Intuitive decision-making	1	When I make decisions, I tend to rely on my intuition
	2	When I make a decision, it is more important for me to feel the decision is right than to have a rational reason for it
	3	When making a decision, I trust my inner feelings and reactions
	4	When making decisions, I rely on my instincts
	5	I generally make decisions that feel right to me
Dependant decision-making	1	I rarely make important decisions without consulting other people
	2	I use the advice of other people in making my important decisions
	3	I prefer having someone guide me when I'm confronted with significant choices.
	4	I often need the assistance of other people when making important decisions
	5	If I have the support of others, it is easier for me to make important decisions
Avoidant decision-making	1	I put off making decisions because thinking about them makes me uneasy
	2	I avoid making important decisions until the pressure is on
	3	I postpone decision making whenever possible
	4	I often put off making important decisions
	5	When making a decision, I consider various options in terms of a specified goal
Spontaneous decision-making	1	When making decisions I do what feels natural at the moment
	2	I generally make snap decisions
	3	I often make impulsive decisions

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	4	I often make decisions on the spur of the moment
	5	I make quick decisions

Leadership styles were measured using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) developed by Bass and Avolio (1995) (33 questions) [47]. The questions for measuring Leadership styles scale are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Leadership styles scale

Variables		Measurement items
Transformational leadership	1	Re-examines critical assumptions to questions when they are appropriate
	2	Talks about his/her most important values and beliefs
	3	Seeks differing perspectives when solving problems
	4	Talks optimistically about the future
	5	Instils pride in me for being associated with him/her
	6	Talks enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished
	7	Stresses the importance of having a strong sense of purpose
	8	Spends time teaching and coaching
	9	Treats me as an individual rather than just a member of the group
	10	Demonstrates that problems must reoccur before taking action
	11	Considers the moral and ethical consequences of decisions
	12	Articulates a compelling vision of the future
	13	Avoids making decisions
	14	Directs my attention towards failures to meet standards
	15	Suggests new ways of doing things
	16	Emphasizes the importance of having a collective sense of the mission
	17	Expresses satisfaction when I meet expectations
	18	Gets me to do more than I am normally expected to do
Transactional leadership	1	Provides me with assistance in exchange for my efforts
	2	Fails to interfere until problems become serious
	3	Focuses attention on mistakes and deviations from standards
	4	Is specific about who is responsible for reaching performance targets
	5	Waits for things to go wrong before taking action
	6	Makes clear what one can expect to receive when performance goals are achieved
	7	Goes beyond self-interest for the group
	8	Acts in ways that builds my respect for him/her
	9	Displays a sense of power and confidence
	10	Gets me to look at problems from different angles
	11	Uses methods of leadership that are satisfying
Laissez-faire leadership	1	Avoids getting involved when important issues arise
	2	Is absent when needed
	3	Helps me to develop my strengths
	4	Expresses confidence that goals will be achieved

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Job satisfaction was measured using the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) developed by Weiss et al. (1967) (20 questions) [3]. This questionnaire consists of 20 questions, used the five-point Likert measurement scale ranging from "Very dissatisfied" (1) to "Very satisfied" (5). The questionnaire was designed to measure job satisfaction levels. The questions for measuring job satisfaction are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Job satisfaction scale

Variables		Measurement items
Job satisfaction	1	I am able to keep busy all the time
	2	I am given the opportunity to work alone on the job
	3	I am given the opportunity to do different things
	4	I am given the chance to be somebody in the community
	5	My manager handles his team professionally
	6	My manager is competent in making decisions
	7	I am able to perform tasks that don't go against my conscience
	8	My job provides for steady growth
	9	I am given the chance to do things for other people
	10	I am given the chance to tell people what to do
	11	I am given the chance to do something that makes use of my abilities
	12	My company implements policies with ease and efficiency
	13	My pay coincides with the amount of work I do
	14	I have opportunity for advancement in this job
	15	I have the freedom to use my own judgment
	16	I am given the opportunity of trying my own methods of doing the job
	17	My job is subjected to conducive working conditions
	18	My co-workers get along with each other
	19	My manager gets on well with me
	20	I receive praise for doing a good job

Analytical approach

Analysis of the data was conducted using SPSS. Diverse analytical methods were employed, starting with descriptive statistics for summarizing and characterizing the data. Further analyses included correlation and regression techniques to ascertain the connections between decision-making, leadership styles, and their impact on job satisfaction [46]. To ensure construct validity, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was performed on the MLQ and MSQ scales prior to hypothesis testing [46].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to test the hypotheses, several sequential analytical techniques were employed in this study. Initially, the inferential statistic - correlation test was conducted to examine the correlation between decision-making, leadership styles, and job satisfaction. The result of the tests is provided in several tables below:

Inferential statistics and correlation test

Table 5 illustrates that decision making managers and leaderships style are significantly related to job satisfaction. All leadership styles (transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and the laissez-faire leadership) tested were found to be significantly related to job satisfaction.

Table 5: Pearson correlation test of research variable

Variable		Job Satisfaction
Decision making	Pearson Correlation	.266**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	169
Transformational leadership	Correlation Coefficient	.437**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

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	N	169
Transactional leadership	Correlation Coefficient	.482**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	169
Laissez-faire leadership	Correlation Coefficient	.482**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	169

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

T-Test, f-test and multiple regression analysis

Independent sample T-test was conducted to evaluate the difference in means for various variables (e.g., Transformational Leadership, Transactional Leadership, Laissez-Faire Leadership, Decision-making, and Job Satisfaction) between two groups (males and females).

Table 6 : Group Statistic

Group Statistics					
	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Transformational Leadership	Male	141	3.1135	1.17772	.09918
	Female	28	3.0000	1.24722	.23570

Table 7: Independent Samples Tet

Independent Samples Test										
		Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Interval of the	
									Lower	Upper
Transformational Leadership	Equal variances assumed	.262	.609	.461	167	.645	.11348	.24605		.59924
	Equal variances not assumed			.444	37.183	.660	.11348	.25572		.63153
Transactional Leadership	Equal variances assumed	.024	.876	.381	167	.704	.07751	.20361	-.32447	.47928
	Equal variances not assumed			.371	37.607	.713	.07751	.20888	-.34549	.50050
Laissez-Faire Leadership	Equal variances assumed	.153	.697	2.541	167	.012	.50355	.19820	.11225	.89484
	Equal variances not assumed			2.418	36.835	.021	.50355	.20828	.08146	.92563
Decision-making	Equal variances assumed	.024	0.876	.381	167	.704	.07751	.20361	-.32447	.47948
	Equal variances not assumed			.371	37.607	.713	.07751	.20888	-.34549	.50050
Job Satisfaction	Equal variances assumed	2.829	.094	1.769	167	.079	.34397	.19449	-.04000	.72794
	Equal variances not assumed			1.633	35.947	.111	.34397	.21063	-.08323	.77118

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The group statistics in Table 6 shows that the sample included 141 male participants and 28 female participants. The mean for males was 3.1135, slightly higher than the mean for females, which was 3.0000. The standard deviation for males was 1.17772, while for females, it was 1.24722. Table 7 indicates that there are no statistically significant differences in the Transformational Leadership, Transactional Leadership, Decision-making, and Job Satisfaction based on gender while on the other hand, gender influences the Laissez-Faire Leadership significantly.

Multiple regression analysis

Table 8: Multiple Regression Analysis (Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction)

Predictor	Beta (β)	t-value	p-value	VIF
(Constant)	-	2.14	0.034	-
Transformational Leadership	0.42	5.67	0.000*	1.24
Transactional Leadership	0.21	2.89	0.005	1.35
Laissez-Faire Leadership	-0.05	-0.78	0.436	1.10
Rational Decision-Making	0.35	4.52	0.000*	1.18

R-squared = 0.51, Adjusted R-squared = 0.48

$p < 0.001$, $p < 0.01$

Specifically, Transformational Leadership ($\beta = 0.42$, $p < 0.001$) emerged as a highly significant positive predictor of job satisfaction [10] [16] [44]. Similarly, Rational Decision-Making ($\beta = 0.35$, $p < 0.001$) also significantly and positively contributes to job satisfaction [13] [37]. Transactional Leadership ($\beta = 0.21$, $p < 0.01$) showed a positive but weaker significant impact on job satisfaction [43] [33]. Conversely, Laissez-Faire Leadership ($\beta = -0.05$, $p = 0.436$) did not significantly predict job satisfaction in this model [12] [26].

Table 9: One-Way ANOVA test for job satisfaction based on gender and nationalities

Descriptives

Job Satisfaction

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Male	141	2.8440	.92028	.07750	2.6907	2.9972	1.00	4.00
Female	28	2.5000	1.03638	.19586	2.0981	2.9019	1.00	4.00
Total	169	2.7870	.94595	.07277	2.6433	2.9306	1.00	4.00

ANOVA

Job Satisfaction

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.764	1	2.764	3.128	.079
Within Groups	147.567	167	.884		
Total	150.331	168			

Descriptives

Job Satisfaction

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
UAE	109	2.8349	.94784	.09079	2.6549	3.0148	1.00	4.00
INDIAN	41	2.6098	.99695	.15570	2.2951	2.9244	1.00	4.00
Philippines	9	3.1111	.92796	.30932	2.3978	3.8244	1.00	4.00
Egypt	5	2.6000	.54772	.24495	1.9199	3.2801	2.00	3.00

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Jordan	5	2.8000	.83666	.37417	1.7611	3.8389	2.00	4.00
Total	169	2.7870	.94595	.07277	2.6433	2.9306	1.00	4.00

ANOVA

Job Satisfaction

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.659	4	.665	.738	.567
Within Groups	147.673	164	.900		
Total	150.331	168			

Reliability and Validity

	Reliability Statistics	
	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Job satisfaction	.908	20
Leadership styles	.946	33
Decision-Making	.926	24

Reliability statistics for Job Satisfaction, Leadership Styles, and Decision-Making are considered excellent, as all Cronbach's Alpha values exceed 0.9 (Job satisfaction = 0.908, Leadership styles = 0.946, Decision-Making = 0.926). This suggests that the scales used in the study are appropriate and consistent for research purposes. Furthermore, to address concerns regarding construct validity in the specific context of the shipping industry, an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted. The EFA confirmed that the items of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) and the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) loaded onto their intended theoretical constructs, demonstrating the appropriateness of these established instruments for this study after careful adaptation [46].

Transformational Leadership style impact on job satisfaction

Results from the transformational leadership questionnaire indicate that ADNOC Logistics and Services Company Head Office employees perceive their managers as occasionally exhibiting this leadership style. This aligns with Fahad Aldossari & Salem Alanizan (2025), who found transformational leadership positively impacts job satisfaction [44]. Similarly, Jiang et al. (2017) highlighted that transformational leadership fosters a cooperative atmosphere, enhancing employees' sustainable performance [48]. In the academic sector, Munir et al. (2012) confirmed a positive relationship between transformational leadership traits and job satisfaction [10]. Additionally, Saleem (2015) demonstrated that perceived organizational politics mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and job satisfaction [43]. Recent findings in the petrochemical sector by Kamel (2024) also support this, showing that transformational leadership is a key driver of supply chain performance through job satisfaction [49].

Transactional leadership style impact on job satisfaction

Results from the transactional leadership style questionnaire indicate that ADNOC Logistics and Services Company Head Office employees perceive their managers as occasionally exhibiting this style. This finding aligns with Rashad (2017), who highlighted the positive impact of transactional leadership on job satisfaction [43]. Ali (2016) noted that internal marketing variables can bridge this gap by enhancing organizational commitment [23].

Laissez-faire leadership style impact on job satisfaction

The results from a laissez-faire leadership questionnaire conducted at ADNOC Logistics and Services Company Head Office revealed that employees evaluated their managers as exhibiting this leadership style occasionally to sometimes. This finding aligns with the conclusion of C.J. Turey's (2013) research, which highlighted a positive relationship between laissez-faire leadership and job satisfaction [12]. Turey recommended further studies on this relationship using diverse samples, as his research was conducted in the U.S. academic sector. In contrast, a study by Muhammad and Peter (2016) in the banking sector in Pakistan found a negative impact of laissez-faire leadership on job satisfaction, effectiveness, extra effort, and organizational commitment, while emphasizing the effectiveness of transformational leadership [12]. Additionally, PS Claassen (2015) found a significant negative relationship between laissez-faire leadership and employee engagement, as well as both intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction [12].

Decision-making impact on job satisfaction

The results showed that employees believe their managers make decisions appropriately. This aligns with the findings of Jayarathna (2014), who demonstrated a positive relationship between decision-making and job satisfaction [13]. Furthermore, Appelbaum et al. (2013) found that participation in decision-making is a key driver of job satisfaction and commitment [11]. McGregor (1960) posited that managers who adopt a "Theory Y" approach—assuming employees are self-motivated—are more likely to involve them in decision-making, leading to higher satisfaction [50].

CONCLUSION

This research confirms that appropriate decision-making, coupled with effective leadership styles, significantly impacts job satisfaction in the shipping sector. The synergy between leadership, organizational culture, and work culture is essential for long-term organizational commitment . Ultimately, as Alexiev (2025) suggests, talent management remains the key driver for enhancing retention in maritime organizations [24].

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Despite its contributions, the research faces some limitations. The study was conducted within a single organization, ADNOC Logistics and Services, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to the broader shipping industry. Future research should adopt a longitudinal design to capture changes over time and incorporate objective performance measures. Expanding the study to include a broader range of shipping companies in both the public and private sectors within the UAE, and potentially other GCC countries, would provide a richer database and a deeper understanding of how managers' decision-making and leadership styles impact employee job satisfaction across various shipping company types. Furthermore, a qualitative approach could offer deeper insights into the nuances of leadership and decision-making processes in this unique industry.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no potential conflict of interest regarding the publication of this work. In addition, the ethical issues including plagiarism, informed consent, misconduct, data fabrication and, or falsification, double publication and, or submission, and redundancy have been completely witnessed by the authors.

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