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Perpustakaan Tuanku Bainun
Kampus Sultan Abdul Jalil Shah



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**TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND JOB
COMPLEXITY EFFECT TOWARDS ORGANIZATIONAL
INNOVATION MODERATING EFFECT OF JOB
AUTONOMY TO SHARJAH ROAD AND
TRANSPORT AUTHORITY IN UAE**



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KHALED ALNAQABI

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AND TRANSPORT AUTHORITY IN UAE

KHALED ALNAQABI

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FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT AND ECONOMICS
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ABSTRACT

This study examines the effects of transformational leadership (TL) and job complexity (JC) on organizational innovation (OI), with a focus on the moderating role of job autonomy (JA). The study implemented a quantitative, cross-sectional method with valid and reliable instruments to collect data from 368 staff members of the Sharjah Roads and Transport Authority (SRTA) in the UAE using a systematic probability sampling method. The researcher used descriptive data, factor analysis, and covariance-based Structural Equation Modelling (CB-SEM) to analyse the data. The findings reveal a significant positive effect of TL on OI ($\beta=0.511$, $t = 8.241$, $p < 0.001$), and a positive impact of JA on OI ($\beta = 0.156$, $t = 3.346$, $p < 0.001$). However, the study also found that JA moderates the relationship between TL and OI ($\beta = -0.178$, $t = -4.567$, $p < 0.001$). Conversely, JC negatively affects OI ($\beta = -0.34$, $t = -6.744$, $p < 0.001$), even as JA moderates the JC-OI relationship ($\beta = 0.039$, $t= 2.193$, $p < 0.05$). These findings provide precious insights into the dynamics of leadership, job design, and innovation within companies, highlighting the complex interaction among TL, JC, and JA in fostering organizational innovation. The study highlights the crucial role of strategic leadership and balanced organizational structures in fostering innovation within the public sector, emphasizing the need to carefully manage JA, leadership effectiveness, and JC to optimize creative outcomes. This implication suggests a re-evaluation of leadership approaches and organizational designs to enhance innovation in governmental entities.





**KEPIMPINAN TRANSFORMASIONAL DAN KESAN KOMPLEKSITI
PEKERJAAN TERHADAP INOVASI ORGANISASI KESAN
MODERASI AUTONOMI PEKERJAAN KEPADA
PIHAK BERKUASA PENGANGKUTAN DAN
JALAN SHARJAH DI UAE**

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini meneliti kesan Kepemimpinan Transformasional (KT) dan Kompleksiti Kerja (KK) terhadap Inovasi Organisasi (IO), dengan fokus pada peranan moderasi Autonomi Kerja (AK). Kajian berbentuk kuantitatif ini menggunakan kaedah keratan rentas. Data diperolehi daripada soalselidik ke atas 368 kakitangan Pihak Berkuasa Pengangkutan dan Jalan Sharjah (SRTA) di UAE melalui kaedah pensampelan rawak sistematik. Kajian ini menggunakan analisis deskriptif, analisis faktor, dan Pemodelan Persamaan Struktur kovarian (CB-SEM). Penemuan utama kajian menunjukkan kesan positif yang signifikan dari KT terhadap IO ($\beta=0.511$, $t = 8.241$, $p < 0.001$), dan kesan positif AK terhadap IO ($\beta = 0.156$, $t = 3.346$, $p < 0.001$). Namun, kajian juga mendapati bahawa AK secara negative memoderasi hubungan antara KT dan IO ($\beta = -0.178$, $t = -4.567$, $p < 0.001$). Sebaliknya, KK memberi kesan negatif terhadap IO ($\beta = -0.34$, $t = -6.744$, $p < 0.001$), walaupun AK secara positif memoderasi hubungan KK-IO ($\beta = 0.039$, $t = 2.193$, $p < 0.05$). Penemuan ini menyediakan wawasan berharga tentang dinamika kepemimpinan, reka bentuk kerja, dan inovasi dalam organisasi dengan menonjolkan interaksi kompleks antara KT, KK, dan AK dalam mendorong inovasi organisasi. Kajian menekankan peranan penting kepemimpinan yang strategik dan struktur organisasi seimbang dalam memajukan inovasi dalam sektor awam, menekankan keperluan untuk pengurusan autonomi kerja, keberkesanan kepemimpinan, dan kompleksiti kerja untuk mengoptimumkan hasil kreatif. Implikasi kajian mencadangkan penilaian semula pendekatan kepemimpinan dan reka bentuk organisasi untuk meningkatkan inovasi dalam entiti pentadbiran sektor awam.



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AI	Administrative Innovation
IC	Individualized Consideration
II	Idealized influence
IM	Inspirational motivation
IS	Intellectual Stimulation
JA	Job Autonomy
JC	Job Complexity
OI	Organizational Innovation
PI	Product Innovation
PSI	Product and Service Innovation
PTI	Process Technology Innovation
SRTA	Sharjah Roads & transport Authority
TL	Transformational Leadership





LIST OF APPENDICES

- A The Questionnaire
- B Questionnaire Translation
- C Questionnaire Back Translation





CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION



In today's rapidly changing work environment, organizations, particularly those in the public sector, face increasing demands for effective leadership and innovation. This study focuses on the Sharjah Road and Transport Authority (SRTA) in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), exploring the relationships between transformational leadership (TL), job complexity (JC), and organizational innovation (OI). Additionally, the study considers job autonomy (JA) as a moderating factor, examining its potential to influence or enhance the impact of TL and JC on OI. This chapter begins by outlining the key concepts central to the study, including leadership, job complexity, and innovation in the workplace. The research context will be explained, detailing the importance of these factors within the SRTA. Following this, the study's objectives and the research questions guiding the investigation will be introduced. The chapter also





provides an overview of the study's scope, highlighting the significance of understanding the interplay between leadership, job design, and innovation in improving organizational outcomes. Lastly, the structure of the remaining chapters will be summarized.

1.2 Research Background

In the realm of business management, OI emerges as the pivotal force driving companies toward unprecedented success, blending visionary leadership with strategic practices to revolutionize the way businesses operate and compete in the ever-evolving global market.



OI is the implementation of new ideas, products, or processes within an organization (Mendoza, 2015). It is a key factor for organizational growth and competitive advantage in today's rapidly changing business landscape (Alharbi et al., 2019). OI, is a multifaceted concept crucial for business growth and sustainability, encompasses the implementation of novel ideas, practices, products, or services within an organization. This form of innovation is essential for companies striving to maintain a competitive edge in the rapidly evolving global marketplace (Bessant & Tidd, 2013). It manifests in various forms, including PI, process innovation, business model innovation, organizational structure and culture innovation, and marketing innovation (Brennan, 2014).





Product and Service Innovation “PSI” involves the development and introduction of new products or significant improvements to existing ones, often seen as the most tangible form of innovation. Process innovation, on the other hand, pertains to changing the way products or services are created or delivered, potentially involving new methods, equipment, or software to enhance efficiency or quality (Hervas-Oliver et al., 2012). Business model innovation entails altering the fundamental ways in which a business operates, which may include changes in revenue models, distribution channels, or target customers (Tucci, 2014).

Equally important is innovation in organizational structure and culture, which involves modifying internal structures, cultures, or practices to foster a more innovative and adaptable environment. This type of innovation is critical for creating an atmosphere that supports creativity and collaboration (Taha et al., 2016). Lastly, marketing innovation introduces new marketing strategies, including novel ways of promoting products, new packaging, or new marketing channels (Purchase & Volery, 2020).

The successful implementation of OI requires a conducive environment that encourages creativity, risk-taking, collaboration, and continuous learning. TL, characterized by its ability to inspire and motivate employees towards a collective vision, plays a pivotal role in fostering such an environment (Thanh & Quang, 2022). A scholar has introduced the TL concept, and later it has been interestingly expanded by other scholars and further stretched by including the four dimensions; IS, IC, IM, and II idealized (Khan et al., 2020). According to (Asbari et al., 2020), TL is regarded as one of management techniques which the leader not only uses a radar to keep tabs on





what's going on in the company as a whole but also uses a moral compass to drive the company in the right path under the leader's moral principles. More than merely a change in direction, a decisive move toward human leadership where mutual regard and support are the norms across the company (Asbari et al., 2020).

TL believes that this style plays a significant role in developing the process. Thus, it was recognized as one of the most critical factors influencing general OI (Sherine et al., 2019). TL involves the full involvement of participants through collaboration, motivation, and improving morality levels of leaders and followers. This was like scholars' ideas of a transformational leader. Scholars has proposed that TL enhances the efficiency of human resources management within government and customer experience organizations, TL is a tenable and unimpeachable style of leadership that releases followers' perspectives on issues, enables followers to approach issues from multiple perspectives, and aids in adapting to evolving environments (Pongpearchan, 2016).

TL via the four components; II was believed to have caused employee's creativity resulting in OI (Shafi et al., 2020). Similarly, the significance of employee's creativity in OI. These indicate that TL generates a creative workforce, thus paving the way for innovation in an organization.

Moreover, the complexity of jobs within an organization, encompassing the variety of tasks and level of information processing required, can stimulate creative thinking and problem-solving skills, crucial for innovation (Kozioł-Nadolna, 2020a). JC, a concept central to organizational psychology and management, refers to the





degree to which a job requires a variety of different activities and the utilization of multiple skills and talents. It encompasses the extent to which a job demands a worker to engage in different tasks and the level of concentration and creativity those tasks require. The complexity of a job is a crucial determinant of employee behavior and performance in the workplace.

Wood defines JC as a function of the range of tasks an employee performs, the information processing required, and the problem-solving that the job demands. This definition underscores the multifaceted nature of JC, suggesting that more complex jobs require a broader range of skills, deeper knowledge, and greater cognitive engagement from employees (Wood, 2008). Campbell further elaborates on the implications of JC, suggesting that jobs with higher complexity tend to be more challenging and intellectually stimulating. This stimulation can lead to greater job satisfaction, higher levels of intrinsic motivation, and enhanced performance, including creativity and innovation within the job role (Campbell, 2006).

Moreover, Hackman and Oldham's job characteristics model highlights JC as a key factor that impacts an employee's psychological states and outcomes. According to their model, jobs that score high on complexity, along with other core job dimensions like task identity and task significance, can lead to higher internal work motivation, job satisfaction, and work quality (Ali et al., 2014).

JC is one of the enrichments constructs the assumption that employees must improve their skills and knowledge continuously for employability and job productivity as their main option. The reason for the changing in their career path from simple to





complex jobs is due to their efficient performances in complex jobs after spending sufficient time in practicing experiential learning of simple jobs. Within employment experiences, individuals with higher ability and personality characteristic such as self-esteem and self-efficacy prefer more complex jobs. On the other hand, autonomy at work is referring to the employees' freedom of performing their jobs in which the concept of individuals is different is embraced through the increased workplace autonomy (Khoshnaw & Alavi, 2020). Each member's various validity depends on various approaches in performing their duty that has been entrusted to them. JA also refers to how and when the duties are performed, as well as the level of independent judgment and discretion required for the task (Harun, 2010), particularly pertaining the pace and order of work completion, and the freedom from micromanagement.



As the relationship between JC and energy depletion is moderated by

psychological empowerment, innovation, on the other hand, happens to be one of the inevitably essential management capacities to guarantee a company's development. Therefore, it is needed to relate the above concepts in guiding SRTA innovation. Workplace autonomy differs in meaning from personal autonomy in which workplace autonomy is defined as purposeful work though it allows individual decision making in performing the tasks. However, scholars view innovation as a complicated construct that corresponds with a few other common concepts such as technology, creativity, and changes, and often used as an umbrella concept covering all. In the same way, OI is the employment of a latest executive method in the firm's business procedures, workplace organization, or external relations, which involves the typologies of radical innovation and incremental innovation. Incremental innovation establishes a gradual, continuous





improvement of existing products and services, disruptive innovation, which is often the most well-known type of innovation, and sustaining innovation.

Another significant factor is JA, which refers to the degree of control and discretion employees have over their work. Autonomy has been recognized for its positive impact on employee motivation, satisfaction, and subsequently, their capacity for innovative thinking (Lee & Jo, 2023). The interplay of these factors—TL, JC, and JA—thus significantly influences an organization's innovative capabilities and outcomes (Jung et al., 2003). JA, a critical aspect in the field of organizational behavior and human resource management, refers to the extent of freedom, independence, and discretion employees have in scheduling their work and determining the procedures to carry out their tasks.



Rem & Vandenberg (1995) job characteristics model is foundational in highlighting the importance of JA. They posit that autonomy is one of the core job dimensions that can lead to increased psychological states of experienced responsibility for outcomes and knowledge of results. This, in turn, can enhance internal work motivation, job satisfaction, and quality of work performance (Rem & Vandenberg, 1995). Research by Monje-Amor et al. (2021) expands on this by exploring the concept of psychological empowerment, of which autonomy is a key component. Spreitzer argues that when employees feel a sense of autonomy in their work, they are more likely to feel empowered, which can lead to higher job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and work effectiveness.





Emphasizes the complexity of JA, suggesting that while autonomy can increase motivation and satisfaction, it can also lead to challenges in coordination and integration within teams (Haas, 2010). This dual nature of autonomy requires careful management, especially in contexts where collaboration and interdependence are critical. Moreover, autonomy has been linked to innovation within organizations. JA can foster an environment conducive to creativity and innovation by allowing employees the freedom to explore new ideas and approaches in their work. This is particularly relevant in dynamic and fast-paced industries where quick adaptation and innovative solutions are essential (Nilasari et al., 2022).

JA can be globally embraced for yielding perceived self-determination and intrinsic motivation, which enhance creativity in employees. An employee gets independence which is a reality of TL. Thus, 50.7% of OI is related to TL. Scholars further asserted that even though JC and disintegration of autonomy may be seen as challenging in research, the two affect a company's innovation and thus should be investigated (Elomami, 2015).

Over the years, the public sector in the UAE has undergone substantial waves of change with globalization. However, the diverse gains from globalization across countries have called for OI (Horne et al., 2013). The UAE government's determination to the innovation agenda stipulated acting fast, flexibility to change, embracing partnerships, and implementing the innovation agenda as essential procedures. As the UAE strives to implement a sustainable investment plan in human capital, the public sector is positioned as a service-oriented economy, hence required to take an exploratory approach toward public sector innovation in countries of the Gulf





Cooperation. Innovation is indeed a vital management capacity to guarantee transformation and the public sector employed Shaikha Salem to develop a conceptual model for OI (Salem et al., 2017). Consequently, various organizations require innovative employees to reach a high- performance level. Innovative employees are distinctively perceived as vital in producing since they possess an innovative way of sharing ideas and approaching problems (Josquar, 2023). The multidisciplinary nature of OI lends itself to both a richness of perspective and a difficulty for valuation and relevance. Facing the intensity of globalized competition, there is widespread recognition that TL and OI are critical forces driving the economic growth.

The survival of organizations is presently dependent on innovation since different entities focus on achieving competitive advantage, for that reason, all managers and leaders are more concerned with better ways of boosting innovative behaviour among employees. For instance, SRTA in UAE brags about the experience and creativity achieved. The company announced the launching of a new On-Demand Mobility service in Sharjah and the adoption of Tesla electric vehicles by the end of 2020, being made available on smartphones indicates innovations in the sector. Unfortunately, there are unmeasurable loopholes like limited legal assistance to pursue worker's complaints, gender-based challenges, and more stemming from the failure to embrace TL. Such experiences are like a shadow in the achievement of JA and OI. Much as SRTA could meet international standards and could transport over 27 million passengers per year across all cities and regions of the Emirate, the worker's capacity and conditions are not well established hence the need for a detailed study on the role played by TL, JC and JA on OI.





Theoretical arguments propose that TL should commit to innovation by positively influencing employees' intrinsic motivation (Saeed et al., 2019). The researchers thought that TL through the proposed different dimensions positively influences organizational reactivity and innovation directly and indirectly. This is because an individual employee, team, and organization are equally crucial for TL dimensions to operate. The significant influence between TL and internal organizational social capital, which scholars have related to JC and autonomy during critical interpretation and analysis.

Even if researchers are found to have tried studying and understanding personnel interactions, limited attention has been given to the field of TL, JC, JA, and how they relate to creativity and innovation (Monje Amor et al., 2021). Preceding authors absorbed a direct positive contribution towards workplace creativity revealed by task completion yet with three dimensions of work autonomy; work method autonomy, work schedule autonomy, and work criteria autonomy, which positively contribute to OI. Therefore, the current investigation sought to combine the influence of TL, JC, and JA on OI.

The moderating effect of JA on the relationship between TL, JC, and OI within the SRTA in the UAE is crucial. Research shows that JA enhances the effectiveness of TL by empowering employees to take initiative and apply creative solutions (Saad & Abbas, 2019). In complex work environments, JA allows employees to leverage challenges for innovation (Dawadi et al., 2021). In the UAE, where innovation is a key national goal, JA is particularly important. It can increase engagement and motivation, leading to higher levels of innovation (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Additionally, JA





serves as a critical moderator in the TL, JC, and OI relationship, potentially strengthening these connections (Karim et al., 2020). Therefore, understanding JA's moderating role is essential for developing strategies that promote innovation within the SRTA.

Based on the above discussion, the principal issue addressed by this study revolves around the impact of TL and JC on OI, with specific attention to the moderating role of JA within the SRTA in the UAE. The research aims at understanding how TL styles and intricate job roles influence innovation at the SRTA and explores how JA affects these relationships. The study aims to achieve four key objectives: to ascertain the effect of TL on innovation, to comprehend the impact of JC on innovation, to analyse how JA modifies the influence of TL on innovation, and to investigate how JA affects the relationship between JC and innovation at the SRTA. The initial chapter outlines the research background, identifies the problem statement, states the research objectives and questions, and sets the hypothesis. Additionally, it details the scope, significance, and limitations of the study, along with the conceptual framework that underpins the research.

1.3 Research Problem

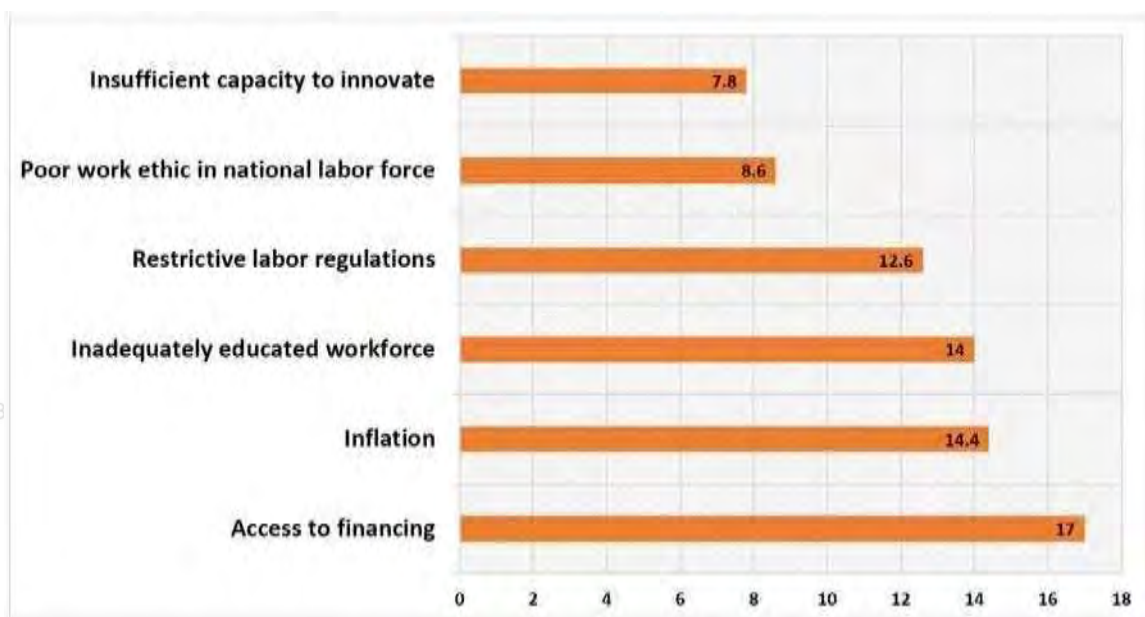
A plan that has led the nation, particularly the Emirate of Sharjah, toward exceptional growth and development has been the UAE embarking on an ambitious journey toward global leadership in innovation. This vision has propelled the UAE toward achieving this vision. The substantial infrastructural initiatives that Sharjah is undertaking reflect



the city's dedication to becoming a cultural and tourism epicenter. The Global Competitiveness illustrated a limited educated workforce and insufficient capacity to innovate as the most problematic factors for doing business in UAE in figure 1.1 below. Such undoubtedly affects the innovation of many organizations, particularly SRTA.

Figure 1.1

The Most Problematic Factors for Doing Business in UAE



The "Global Competitiveness Report" highlights critical challenges such as 'Insufficient capacity to innovate' and an 'Inadequately educated workforce,' which are directly relevant to the research problem investigating the impact of TL and JC on OI in Sharjah's government entities. These challenges underscore the importance of the study, suggesting that enhancing leadership quality and addressing job complexities may be key to overcoming barriers to innovation. Thus, the research could provide actionable insights into improving the innovative capabilities of the SRTA and contribute to the broader goal of increasing UAE's competitiveness.



In an era characterized by rapid technological advancements and economic globalization, organizations that seek to maintain competitiveness must prioritize innovation as a means of adapting to the evolving landscape (Prasanna et al., 2019). Among the various strategies employed to foster innovation, TL and JC have garnered significant attention. TL, with its emphasis on inspiring, motivating, and intellectually stimulating followers, has been shown to positively influence OI by cultivating a culture of creativity and risk-taking (Steinmann et al., 2018). JC, on the other hand, refers to the level of skills, knowledge, and cognitive abilities required to perform a job effectively (Niyomdechcha & Kirana Yahya, 2019). It is often associated with higher levels of innovation as it encourages employees to think critically, explore new ideas, and find novel solutions to problems. While both TL and JC have been independently studied in relation to OI, limited research has investigated their combined effect. Moreover, the moderating role of JA in this relationship has been largely overlooked. JA refers to the degree of freedom and discretion that employees have in carrying out their tasks (Hackman & Oldham, 1976).

Several scholars have attempted organizational personnel investigations but failed to provide comprehensively gathered literature on the affiliation between TL, JC, JA, and OI (AlEsa & Durugbo, 2022). The reviewed studies provide support for the aims of this research and highlight the need to investigate the combined effects of TL, JC, and JA on OI in the UAE context. Al-Haddad & Al-Abed found that TL positively influences employee creativity in the UAE public sector, suggesting that leaders play a crucial role in fostering an innovative work environment (Masa'deh et al., 2021). Nijenhuis, (2015) demonstrated that JC is positively associated with innovative work behavior in the UAE private sector, indicating that jobs requiring high levels of skills





and knowledge promote employee innovation. showed that JA moderates the relationship between leadership style and employee creativity in the UAE banking sector, suggesting that the positive effects of leadership on creativity are stronger when employees have higher levels of autonomy (Elrehail et al., 2018). These findings indicate that TL, JC, and JA are important factors influencing innovation in the UAE context. However, further research is needed to specifically examine the combined effects of these factors and to explore their implications for OI in the UAE. This study aims to contribute to this area of research by investigating the effects of TL and JC on OI and the moderating role of JA in the context of SRTA in the UAE.

The existing literature on OI has primarily focused on the individual effects of TL and JC. While these studies have provided valuable insights into how each factor independently contributes to innovation, they have largely overlooked the potential synergistic effects that might arise when these two factors are considered together. For instance, transformational leaders, known for inspiring and motivating employees, might amplify the positive effects of JC by fostering an environment where challenging tasks lead to creative solutions. However, most research has examined the influence of TL or JC on OI in isolation, neglecting the potential combined impact of these variables (Afsar & Umrani, 2020; Gui et al., 2022; Mohammed & AL-Abrow, 2023). Moreover, the role of JA as a moderating factor in this relationship has been significantly underexplored. JA, which refers to the degree of freedom and discretion that employees have in their work, is crucial for allowing employees to leverage their creativity and problem-solving skills effectively (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). While some studies have suggested that higher JA can enhance the positive effects of leadership on innovation (W. Huang et al., 2019; Kutieshat & Farmanesh, 2022), empirical research





investigate how JA moderates the TL-JC-innovation relationship is scarce. This lack of research leaves a significant gap in our understanding of how organizational structures and leadership styles can interact to foster innovation.

Investigating how these factors interact, and influence innovation outcomes is crucial for a comprehensive understanding of OI dynamics. This is particularly relevant in the context of the SRTA in the UAE, where public sector innovation is essential for improving service delivery and operational efficiency (Alameri et al., 2019; Nasution et al., 2021). This study aims to fill these gaps by exploring the interplay between TL, JC, and JA, thereby providing valuable insights that can inform both academic research and practical applications in public sector management (Wang et al., 2020).



TL, JC, and OI (Chen et al., 2016). While research shows the benefits of JA on work performance, a significant research gap exists regarding its moderating effect on the relationships between TL, JC, and OI. Although complex work environments and TL boost creativity and job satisfaction, it's unclear if JA moderates these effects. Some studies suggest JA may enhance TL's impact by allowing more decision-making flexibility, and high autonomy might strengthen the JC-organizational creativity link (Sia & Appu, 2015). However, more research is needed to confirm this moderating role, as other factors like management support and organizational culture could also influence these outcomes (Muecke et al., 2020). Additionally, challenges in the UAE and Sharjah, including a shortage of skilled labor and a lack of studies on work autonomy's effect, hinder progress. The ambiguous concept of leadership further complicates research on TL, JC, work autonomy, and OI (Scheepers & Storm, 2019).





This study aims to address these gaps by investigating the combined effects of TL and JC on OI and the moderating role of JA in the context of SRTA in the UAE. By examining these relationships, the study seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence innovation in organizations. Such understanding contributes to the existing body of knowledge on OI by investigating the combined effects of TL and JC on OI and the moderating role of JA in the context of SRTA in the UAE. The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the factors that influence innovation in organizations, particularly in the UAE context. The study also contributes to the limited research on the combined effects of TL and JC on innovation and the moderating role of JA. The findings will have practical implications for organizations seeking to foster innovation and enhance their competitiveness in a rapidly changing global landscape.



1.4 Research Objectives

Specifically, the following objectives are established:

1. To examine the effect of TL on OI at the SRTA in the UAE.
2. To assess JC's effect on organizational innovative at the SRTA in the UAE.
3. To evaluate the moderating role of JA on the relationship between TL and OI at the SRTA in the UAE.
4. To evaluate the moderating role of JA on the relationship between JC and OI at the SRTA in the UAE.





1.5 Research Questions

In achieving the objectives of this study and using the problem statement as its premise, the research questions of this study has been constructed as follows:

1. Does TL effect on OI at the SRTA in the UAE?
2. What is the effect of JC on the OI under the SRTA in the UAE?
3. Does JA moderate the relationship between TL and OI at the SRTA in the UAE?
4. Does JA moderate the relationship between JC and OI at the SRTA in the UAE?

1.6 Research Hypotheses



This study has developed and suggested four main research hypotheses in achieving the research objectives as mentioned below:

H1: There is a positive effect of TL on OI at the SRTA in the UAE.

H2: There is a positive effect of JC on OI at the SRTA in the UAE.

H3: JA moderate the relationship between TL and OI at the SRTA at the UAE.

H4: JA moderate the relationship between JC and OI at the SRTA in the UAE.

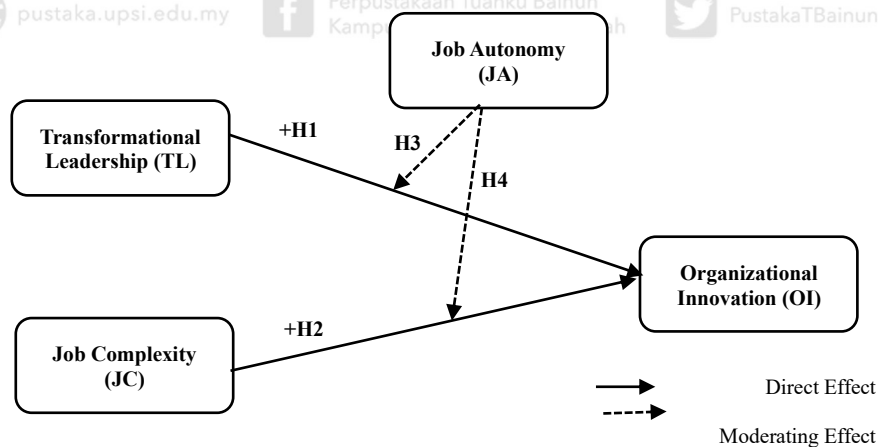


1.7 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework (Figure 1.2) proposed for this study delineates the interaction between TL, JC, and OI, with a particular focus on the moderating role of JA within the SRTA in the UAE. Central to this framework is the notion that TL, characterized by II, IM, IS, and IC, directly influences OI. Concurrently, JC is posited to affect innovation, with both constructs potentially enhanced by the degree of JA afforded to employees.

Figure 1.2

Conceptual Framework. Adopted from Bass and Avolio and Shkraba Anthony (Foon Moey & Soo Foon, 2016) and modified by the researcher



The conceptual framework of the study integrates several key theories to explain the relationships between TL, JC, JA, and OI. Transformational Leadership Theory, as proposed by Bass & Avolio, (1993), underscores the role of leaders in inspiring and motivating followers to transcend their self-interests for the collective good. This theory identifies four components of TL: I, IM, IS, and IC. These components collectively



enhance OI by fostering a supportive environment that encourages creativity and innovation among employees (Bass & Avolio, 1993).

The Job Characteristics Model, developed by Hackman & Oldham (1976), posits that job characteristics such as task variety, autonomy, and feedback significantly influence job satisfaction and performance. In the framework, JC reflects the challenging and multifaceted nature of job roles, stimulating employees' cognitive and creative capabilities. Higher JC necessitates advanced problem-solving skills and fosters an environment conducive to innovation. JA, another critical element of the Job Characteristics Model, refers to the degree of freedom and discretion employees have in their work. It moderates the relationship between TL, JC, and OI by allowing employees to exercise creativity and initiative.



Innovation Diffusion Theory, articulated by Rogers, (1983), explains how innovations are adopted and spread within organizations. This theory suggests that the adoption of innovation is influenced by factors such as perceived benefits, communication channels, and the social system. The framework categorizes OI into three types: PTI, PSI, and AI. TL and JC drive these innovations by creating a culture that values and supports innovative activities. TL inspires and motivates employees to engage in innovative behaviours, while JC challenges employees to develop creative solutions.

Direct effects in the framework include the influence of TL on OI (H1) and the impact of JC on OI (H2). The moderating effects highlight the role of JA in strengthening these relationships. Specifically, JA amplifies the impact of TL on OI





(H3) and enhances the relationship between JC and OI (H4). When employees have greater autonomy, they are better positioned to leverage the support and inspiration from transformational leaders and effectively manage complex tasks to innovate (Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Wang et al., 2020).

This framework provides a comprehensive understanding of how TL, JC, and JA interact to drive OI. By integrating Transformational Leadership Theory, the Job Characteristics Model, and Innovation Diffusion Theory, the framework offers valuable insights for public sector entities, such as the SRTA in the UAE, aiming to foster a culture of innovation and enhance service delivery and operational efficiency.

Numerous empirical studies have demonstrated a positive relationship between TL and OI. For example, Chen et al (2020) found that TL positively influences employee innovative behaviour, mediated by intrinsic motivation and psychological capital. Similarly, Saeed et al (2019) and Shang (2023) showed that TL is positively associated with employee creativity, mediated by psychological empowerment. These findings suggest that transformational leaders, through their ability to inspire and motivate employees, create an environment conducive to innovation by enhancing employees' intrinsic motivation and psychological empowerment. Consequently, the first hypothesis (H1) is that TL positively influences OI.

JC has also been found to be positively related to Esch et al (2018) demonstrated that JC is positively associated with employee creativity, mediated by an innovation climate. Additionally, Sia & Appu (2015) found that JC is positively related to individual creativity, particularly among employees with high levels of knowledge and





skills. These studies indicate that complex jobs, which require diverse and challenging tasks, stimulate employees' creative capacities and promote a climate of innovation within organizations. Thus, the second hypothesis (H2) is that JC positively influences OI.

JA has been identified as a crucial moderator in the relationship between leadership and innovation. For instance, Akhtar & Ali (2023) showed that JA moderates the relationship between leadership style and employee creativity in the UAE banking sector. Their findings suggest that the positive effects of leadership on creativity are stronger when employees have higher levels of autonomy. This implies that JA provides employees with the freedom and discretion necessary to apply their creativity and innovative ideas effectively. Therefore, the third hypothesis (H3) posits that JA moderates the relationship between TL and OI, such that the positive effect of TL on OI is stronger when JA is high.

Although research on the combined effects of TL and JC on innovation is limited, some studies have provided initial support for this relationship. For example, Anderson et al. (2014) found that TL and JC interact to influence team innovation, such that the positive effect of TL on team innovation is stronger when JC is high. This suggests that when employees face complex tasks, the inspirational and motivating aspects of TL can further enhance their innovative capacities. Thus, the fourth hypothesis (H4) posits that JA moderates the relationship between JC and OI, such that the positive effect of JC on OI is stronger when JA is high.





These empirical studies provide robust support for the relationships proposed in the conceptual model of this study. They collectively suggest that TL and JC are positively related to OI and that JA plays a significant moderating role in these relationships, enhancing the effects of TL and JC on OI when autonomy is high. These hypotheses guide the investigation into how TL, JC, and JA interact to drive OI in the SRTA in the UAE.

1.8 Operational Definitions

1.8.1 Transformational Leadership



TL is the leadership approach that creates significant change in the life of people and organizations. It redesigns perceptions and values and changes expectations and aspirations of employees (Avolio & Bass, 2004). It will be operationally defined as the extent and manner in which leaders in the SRTA demonstrate the key dimensions of TL. Responses will be scaled and analyzed to quantify the degree of TL exhibited by individual leaders within the SRTA for the purpose of this study.

1.8.2 Intellectual Stimulation

IS is one of the components of TL where leaders encourage innovation and creativity by questioning assumptions and soliciting followers' ideas (Avolio & Bass, 2004). This





will be operationally defined as the degree to which leaders in the SRTA encourage creativity and critical thinking among their subordinates. This includes challenging assumptions, soliciting new ideas, and fostering an environment where innovative thinking is rewarded. The frequency and effectiveness of these behaviors will be measured through specific items in Questionnaire.

1.8.3 Individualized Consideration

IC is a component of TL where leaders provide a supportive environment by attending to the individual needs of followers (Avolio & Bass, 2004). Operationally defined as the extent to which leaders in the SRTA demonstrate attention and care towards individual employee needs, personal development, and mentoring. This dimension will be quantified through the questionnaire by assessing the frequency and intensity of personalized interactions and support provided by leaders to their team members.

1.8.4 Idealized Influence

II describes leaders who act as role models with high ethical standards, who are trusted and respected by followers (Boon et al., 2016). This is defined operationally as the extent to which leaders in the SRTA are perceived as role models, demonstrating high ethical standards, and gaining respect and trust from their employees. Measurement will be based on the questionnaire responses evaluating the leaders' ability to inspire admiration, respect, and trust among their team members.





1.8.5 Inspirational Motivation

IM involves leaders who communicate high expectations and inspire followers through motivation to commit to and achieve a shared vision (Avolio & Bass, 2004). This refers operationally to the degree to which leaders in the SRTA articulate a clear and compelling vision that is inspiring to their employees. The questionnaire will measure the frequency and effectiveness of communication of these visions, as well as the leaders' ability to motivate and rally their teams around common goals.

1.8.6 Job Complexity

JC refers to the number of different tasks required in a job and the frequency of changes in job activities (Wood & Bandura, 1989). Operationally defined as the level of diversity, difficulty, and amount of information processing required in the job roles within the Sharjah Government. It will be measured through a structured questionnaire assessing the variety of tasks, the intellectual challenges presented by the job, and the requirement for creative problem-solving.

1.8.7 Job Autonomy

JA is the degree to which a job provides substantial freedom, independence, and discretion to the individual in scheduling the work and in determining the procedures to be used in carrying it out (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). This will be operationally





defined as the degree of independence, freedom, and discretion employees have in scheduling their work and determining the procedures in their job in the Sharjah Government. Measurement will be through a scale assessing the extent of decision-making power and independence experienced by employees in their roles.

1.8.8 Organizational Innovation

OI refers to the process of introducing new ideas, workflows, methodologies, services, or products within an organization (Damanpour, 2020). Operationally defined as the implementation of new ideas, processes, products, or procedures within the SRTA organization. This will be measured through a combination of surveys and organizational records, assessing the frequency, novelty, and impact of these innovations.

1.8.9 Product Innovation

PI is the development and market introduction of new, redesigned, or substantially improved goods or services. This is defined as the introduction of new or significantly improved goods or services in the SRTA (Ribbat et al., 2023). It will be measured by tracking the development, launch, and impact of new products or services, including enhancements in features, user experience, or performance.





1.8.10 Product and Service Innovation

PSI involves the implementation of new or significantly improved production or delivery methods (Ribbat et al., 2023). Refers to the implementation of new or significantly improved production or delivery methods in the Sharjah Government. This includes changes in techniques, equipment, or software. Measurement will involve assessing the adoption of these new methods and their impact on efficiency and effectiveness.

1.8.11 Administrative Innovation

AI is related to the creation or alteration of organizational structures, administrative systems, or operational processes (Damanpour, 2020). Operationally defined as the implementation of new or improved administrative processes, practices, or structures within the Sharjah Government. This includes innovations in organizational structure, administrative processes, or resource management, and will be measured through organizational assessments and employee feedback.

1.9 Scope of the Study

The study focuses on the employees of SRTA, encompassing a diverse range of staff members from various departments and levels within the organization, including





leadership roles and operational staff. These employees' insights will provide a comprehensive view of the impact of TL, JC, and the role of JA on OI within the SRTA.

Geographically, the research is confined to the Emirate of Sharjah in the UAE, ensuring that the findings are particularly relevant to the regional context and beneficial to the local government and its public service sectors. By focusing on this specific location, the study will consider regional policies, cultural factors, and organizational practices unique to Sharjah, making the findings highly applicable to the local context.

The data collection will occur over a specified period that aligns with the SRTA's strategic planning cycle, likely coinciding with a fiscal or operational quarter. This timing ensures that the data reflects the current dynamics within the organization and captures any recent changes or initiatives that have been implemented. The collection period will be carefully chosen to avoid any significant organizational disruptions, such as major holidays or project deadlines, to ensure accurate and consistent data gathering.

The purpose of this study is to provide valuable insights into how TL and JC influence OI within a public sector organization, and how JA can enhance these effects. Understanding these relationships will inform strategies to foster innovation within the SRTA and other similar public sector organizations in the UAE. The study aims to fill the existing research gap by examining the combined effects of TL and JC on OI and exploring the moderating role of JA. This investigation will contribute to the academic literature and offer practical recommendations for enhancing innovation in public sector entities.





The study will employ quantitative research methods, including structured surveys and statistical analysis, to collect and analyze data from SRTA employees. Surveys will be designed to measure perceptions of TL, JC, JA, and OI, ensuring that all relevant variables are accurately captured. Statistical techniques such as regression analysis and moderation analysis will be used to test the hypotheses and determine the relationships between the variables. This approach will ensure that the findings are robust and can be used to draw meaningful conclusions and recommendations for enhancing OI through effective leadership and job design. By integrating these methodologies, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors driving innovation within the SRTA and offer actionable insights for similar public sector organizations.



1.10 Significance of the Study

This study possesses multifaceted significance, both theoretically and practically, contributing valuable insights to academic literature and offering actionable recommendations for public sector management.

In the academic realm, this study addresses a critical gap by providing a comprehensive analysis of the relationships between TL, JC, JA, and OI. It offers empirical evidence that reinforces foundational theories such as Transformational Leadership Theory, the Job Characteristics Model, and Innovation Diffusion Theory. By examining these relationships, the study contributes to the theoretical discourse by elucidating how TL and JC interact to influence OI, with JA acting as a moderator. This





enriched understanding provides a robust reference point for future research, enabling scholars to build on a solid empirical foundation. Furthermore, the study's findings offer new insights into the synergistic effects of leadership and job design on innovation, thus filling a notable gap in existing research.

From a practical standpoint, the study yields substantial implications for policymakers and managers within the UAE's public service sectors. It underscores the importance of fostering an innovative culture in public entities like the SRTA, aligning with the strategic objectives outlined in the Global Competitiveness Report. The findings highlight the urgent need to address challenges such as workforce education and innovation capacity, which are key drivers of competitive advantage and public sector efficiency. By demonstrating the positive impact of TL and JC on OI, and the moderating role of JA, the study provides actionable strategies for enhancing innovation through effective leadership and job design practices.

The significance of this study extends to the broader context of UAE national development. By focusing on federal government institutions, it underscores the evolution of a creative culture within the UAE government administration. The results can guide both federal and local entities in implementing effective change management practices, thereby enhancing their capacity for innovation. Moreover, the study emphasizes the value of fostering stronger ties between government entities and educational institutions, a crucial step for the UAE in its pursuit of evolving into a knowledge-based economy. The insights gained from this research can inform policy decisions and strategic initiatives aimed at cultivating a more innovative and efficient public sector.





In a region where data collection can be challenging, this study not only achieves its stated objectives but also contributes functionally beyond them. It helps bridge the disconnect that often exists between government operations and academic research, providing a model for conducting empirical research in similar contexts. While the study's direct contribution to the UAE's knowledge-based economic development may appear modest, its implications are far-reaching and indicative of a larger commitment to innovation and organizational development. By providing a detailed analysis of the factors driving OI, this study supports the UAE's broader goals of achieving sustainable economic growth and enhancing public sector performance.

1.11 Summary



It can be summarized that, this chapter has discussed the background of this study, followed by, problem statement, the objectives and questions of the study, hypothesis, and conceptual framework. It also gives the scope and significance of the research; the focus of this study is the SRTA in the UAE, where innovation is seen as a core factor in government strategy.

