

## Ethical Leadership as a Predictor for Employee's Performance: The Mediating Role of Affective Organizational Commitment

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**Abstract:** This study employs structural equations modelling via AMOS to analyse the 504 valid questionnaires in order to assess the proposed model to identify the factors that influence employee performance. Abu Dhabi police is the focus of this study where an innovative approach is applied to assess the impact of Ethical Leadership (EL) through Affective Organizational Commitment (AOC) on employee Performance (PERF). The study describes the relations among the various constructs. Our research has improved our insight about employee performance. Results indicated that the EL significantly predicted AOC which in turn influenced the dependent variable. Further, it was found that EL has an indirect effect on PERF through AOC. The proposed model explained 40% of the variance in PERF.

**Key words:** Ethical leadership, employee performance, affective organizational behavior, Abu Dhabi police, indirect effect, dependent variable

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### INTRODUCTION

Abu Dhabi police is one of the crucial service sectors in UAE, now a days and based on the high level of competition between service providers, along with large development in the service economy has constrained service firms to focus bigger responsiveness on the quality of services delivered to customers (Abou-Shouk and Khalifa 2017; Agwa *et al.*, 2017; Khalefa, 2015; Khalifa and Hewedi, 2016; Mohamud *et al.*, 2017). In Abu Dhabi police, SQ is mostly correlated to the level of its employee performance (Randeree *et al.*, 2012; Al Ramahi, 2015; Johnson, 2015; Barton *et al.*, 2016; Albaity and Melhem, 2017; Mohamed *et al.*, 2018). Scholars have debated that constant change requires staff to modify not only work routines but also social practices (e.g., relations with their managers and peers) (Abd-Elaziz *et al.*, 2015; Carter *et al.*, 2013; Khalifa and Ali, 2017). To adapt to the day by day challenge of real-time adaptation, workers specifically hold powerful elements of their performance routines and integrate them with new, more proficient ones (Carter *et al.*, 2013; Khalifa and Fawzy, 2017). Hence, these employee's regularly encounter challenges and tensions in keeping up prior levels of performance while adjusting to their new job requirements (Badran and Khalifa, 2016; Morsy *et al.*, 2016). In order to mitigate the tensions and facilitate

effective performance, managers must show suitable leadership behaviors (Hoch *et al.*, 2018; Mohamed *et al.*, 2018).

In the present evolving conditions, if organizations target to have a sustainable progress, strategic superiority and corporate image at that point they need to set up a culture that supports and supports the ethical behaviors (Hoch *et al.*, 2018; Hussein *et al.*, 2013; Nusari *et al.*, 2018; Reb *et al.*, 2018). While building up the ethical working condition as a good example, leader's behaviors impact the other behaviors in the associations and their behaviors turn into the most critical factor in this process. In this context, ethical leadership can be defined as "the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships (Walumbwa *et al.*, 2011; Khalifa and Abou-Shouk, 2014; Demirtas and Akdogan, 2015; Qoura and Khalifa, 2016).

As stated above, ethical leadership is considered important for organizations because it helps reduce business costs (Thomas *et al.*, 2004). Several studies have explored the beneficial impact ethical leadership has on reducing unethical practices and harmful follower behaviors (Mayer *et al.*, 2009). However, relatively less attention has been paid to the effects of ethical leadership on employee performance (Piccolo *et al.*, 2010; Walumbwa *et al.*, 2011, 2012 and 2017). Few studies have

examined how and why ethical leadership relates to in-role performance (Bouckennooghe *et al.*, 2015; Chen *et al.*, 2014; Huang and Paterson, 2017; Schneider *et al.*, 2002; Walumbwa *et al.*, 2011). This is the first research investigates the relationship between the ethical leaders and policemen performance in the United Arab Emirates. The government of UAE does the best to improve the employee's performance in all sectors. This reason motivates the researcher to study the influence of ethical leadership on employee's performance in police sector.

However, relatively few studies have tested how and why ethical leadership relates to task performance and if, so, the mechanisms through which ethical leadership relates to task performance. An important exception is recent research by Piccolo *et al.* (2010) that examined the roles of task significance, autonomy and effort in the relationship between EL and task performance. They found that EL increases task significance which in turn, results in improved performance. Dust *et al.* (2018) and Mo and Shi (2017) reported that the relationship between EL and both employee and organization performance needs more investigations.

Accordingly, the main objective of the current study is to broaden this early and later research by looking at the role of Affective Organizational Commitment (AOC) in the ethical leadership-performance relationship. The contribution is to additionally expand understanding of the perplexing relationship between EL and employee performance by drawing on three main traditions in testing mediation in leadership research. Consideration regarding the mediating mechanisms in the ethical leadership-follower performance relationship also highlights important applied outcomes. This study attempts to achieve the following research objectives to examine the effect of in ethical leadership on employee performance. To examine the effect of EL on AOC. To examine the effect of AOC on employee performance. To examine the mediating effect of AOC on the relationship among ethical leadership and employee performance.

### **Theoretical framework and hypothesis formulation**

**Ethical leadership and employee performance:** Similarly, ethical leaders, those who demonstrate integrity and are concerned with the collective good rather than self-interest are highly respected, admired and viewed as ideal leaders by Chinese employee's (Chen *et al.*, 2014; Niu *et al.*, 2009; Tang *et al.*, 2015). These leaders are likely to serve as role models for employee's and exert referent power on them which are important ingredients for forming a more personalized emotional bond between

the leader and the follower (Chen *et al.*, 2014). As a result, both benevolence and morality will likely motivate followers to engage in social exchanges by putting more effort into work and going above and beyond for their leaders (Colquitt *et al.*, 2007; Loi *et al.*, 2009; Ullah, *et al.*, 2017).

The community's increased attention to morally acceptable business practices by managers has led to an emerging interest in EL (Bouckennooghe *et al.*, 2015; Fiaz *et al.*, 2017). Although, EL has had considerable intuitive support, only recently has this leadership approach received strong theoretical support in the management literature (Belschak *et al.*, 2018; Gukdo *et al.*, 2018; Demirtas and Akdogan, 2015; Hoch *et al.*, 2018; Liao *et al.*, 2017; Shapiro and Stefkovich, 2016; Shin *et al.*, 2015; Walumbwa *et al.*, 2017). EL has been identified as a valid distinct "leadership" construct rather than just another aspect of major leadership practices (e.g., transformational, transactional and authentic leadership) (Walumbwa *et al.*, 2011, 2017).

Empirical research on EL is still in its infancy, yielding a number of pivotal questions that remain to be answered (Mayer *et al.*, 2009; Walumbwa *et al.*, 2011). In this inquiry, the researcher addresses one such key question which is exploring the processes through which EL relates to employee's in-role job performance. Consequently, the following hypothesis is proposed:

- H<sub>1</sub>: ethical leadership has a positive effect on employee performance

**Ethical Leadership (EL) and Affective Organizational Commitment (AOC):** EL is the demonstration of normatively proper behavior through individual activities and interpersonal interactions and it highlights the advancement of such behavior to subordinates through two-way communication, support and decision-making (Brown *et al.*, 2005; Demirtas and Akdogan, 2015). Moreover, ethical leadership conduct endorses firm representative's attitudes to daily work and their attachments to the organization (i.e., affective organizational commitment) (Brown and Trevino, 2006; Demirtas and Akdogan, 2015).

Consequently, ethical leaders who are committed to high service quality and have strong customer-orientation will be the driver of their follower's affective organizational commitment. Brown and Trevino (2006) indicated that ethical leadership is directly linked to subordinates work attitudes and they proposed that ethical leaders create follower's organizational commitment. Neubert *et al.* (2009)'s empirical research

showed that EL conduct is directly and indirectly linked to follower's organizational commitment. Joo (2010) mentioned that leadership is critical for employee's organizational commitment. Another study by Kim and Brymer (2011), confirmed that the EL of the executives will have a positive effect on their middle manager's AOC. According to what discussed, the study hypothesizes:

- H<sub>2</sub>: ethical leadership influences positively on AOC

**Affective Organizational Commitment (AOC) and employee performance:** The effect of OC on employee performance and organizational effectiveness has received much attention between scholars (Allen and Meyer, 1996; Karim and Noor, 2017). Organizational commitment is a measure of an employee's identification with his or her organization (Ahmad *et al.*, 2014; Johnson, 2015; Karim and Noor, 2017; Lee and Steers, 2017; Mohamed *et al.*, 2018). Over the years, the definition of the organizational commitment construct has been further refined and developed. Drawing on early work on OC (Becker, 1960; Porter *et al.*, 1974; Wiener, 1982; Meyer and Allen, 1984) proposed a three component conceptualization of organizational commitment. The three components are Affective Commitment (AC), Continuance Commitment (CC) and Normative Commitment (NC). AC refers to the employee's emotional attachment to identification with and involvement in the organization (Meyer and Allen, 1984).

Researchers have generally, concluded that there is a positive relationship between AOC and in-role performance (Allen and Meyer, 1996; Babakus *et al.*, 2003; Demirtas and Akdogan, 2015). AOC has also been regarded as an important factor in predicting extra-role behaviors (Wiener, 1982) such as Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB). A meta-analysis on studies over the past 25 years across 14 countries (Ahmad *et al.*, 2016; Devece *et al.*, 2016; Jaramillo *et al.*, 2005) indicated that the relationship between organizational commitment and job performance is positive and stronger for sales employee's than for non-sales employee's. Stronger correlations between organizational commitment and job performance were also found for collectivist compared to individualistic cultures. Ahmad *et al.* (2014) revealed a positive relationship between organizational commitment and employee's job performance and in the comparative analysis of three dimensions of organizational commitment, normative commitment has a positive and significant impact on employee's job performance. Darolia *et al.* (2010) in a survey of 231 male-skilled workers from different units of National Fertilizer Ltd., India, found

a positive correlation between organizational commitment and organizational support and their significant contribution in determining job performance. Hence, it is hypothesized as follows:

- H<sub>3</sub>: AOC influences positively on employee's performance

**The indirect effect of EL on employee's performance via.**

**AOC:** Leadership styles such as transactional, authentic and transformational leadership, also capture leader's personal traits, what obviously sets EL separately from more normal leadership styles is the hands-on approach that characterizes the ethical manager dimension (Brown *et al.*, 2005; Piccolo *et al.*, 2010; Walumbwa *et al.*, 2012). EL is to be reasonable and reliable and they are extra prospective to be attached to service quality. Hartline and Ferrell (1996) illustrated that a leader's attachments to service quality is significantly related to his/her subordinate's job satisfaction. Hartline *et al.* (2000) argued that a superior's customer-orientation leads to a follower's AOC. Thus, EL who are attached to high service quality and have solid customer-orientation will be the driver of their follower's AOC. Brown and Trevino (2006), mentioned EL is significantly associated to employee's work attitudes and they suggested that EL create subordinate's OC. Neubert *et al.* (2009)'s experiential study presented that EL conduct is directly and indirectly attached to follower's OC.

Social learning perspective illustrates inclusive framework to describe how EL apply their impact on subordinate's task-related performance (Bandura, 2001). This theory suggests that EL applies its influence on subordinate's behavior in large via. modelling (Brown and Mitchell, 2010; Walumbwa and Schaubroeck, 2009). Subordinates can acquire what conduct is obligatory and predictable to do well on the job through role modelling. EL is attractive and genuine role models that hold their subordinate's attention and they affect them successfully by serving their workers grasp their perspective at research (Bandura, 2001; Brown *et al.*, 2005). In addition, OC has a positive and significant impact on employee's job performance (Babakus *et al.*, 2003; Evanschitzky *et al.*, 2006). Fu and Deshpande (2014) found that OC influences employee's job performance. Further, these results revealed that OC mediates the relationship between the employee's job satisfaction and their performance. In this regard, the researcher hypothesizes that:

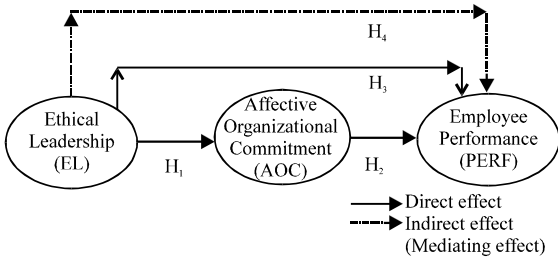


Fig. 1: Proposed research model

- H<sub>4</sub>: employee’s AOC mediates the relationship between ethical leadership and employee’s performance

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

**Overview of the proposed research model:** The relationships between constructs hypothesized in the conceptual framework have been adapted from the relevant literature in the subject matter. Figure 1 shows the proposed model that contains EL and AOC to predict PERF. These relationships are taken from Brown *et al.* (2005) and Brown and Trevino (2006) for EL (MacKenzie *et al.*, 1991; Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003) for PERF (Allen and Meyer, 1996) for AOC. The proposed model examines the relationship between the aforementioned constructs among employee’s in Abu Dhabi police in the United Arab Emirates. The proposed conceptual framework has four hypothesis to test.

**Development of instrument:** The development of instrument for current study included a 20 item questionnaire and based on the employee’s performance literature, a multi-item Likert scale was applied (Lee *et al.*, 2009). Constructs were measured using a Likert scale which recommended in the previous studies (Isaac *et al.*, 2017a, b) with 7 being ‘Strongly Agree’ and 1 being ‘Strongly Disagree’. Given the fact that the respondents were Arabic-speakers, it is required to have the questionnaires translated from English to Arabic in a precise way (Khalifa and Abou-Shouk, 2014; Aldholay *et al.*, 2018a, b; Mohamed *et al.*, 2018). Thus, a back translation was applied which is a procedure widely used in a cross-cultural survey (Brislin, 1970). Previous studies were used to get a validated to measure the variables in this study. These measurements are derived from Brown *et al.* (2005), Michael *et al.* (2006) for EL, (MacKenzie *et al.*, 1991; Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003) for PERF and (Allen and Meyer, 1996) for AOC. The number of items for each construct is estimated based on guidelines Hayduk and Littvay (2012) who recommended the use of

Table 1: Summary of demographic profile of respondents

Variables	Frequency	Valid percent (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	388	68.3
Female	180	31.7
<b>Age</b>		
<25	79	13.9
25-30	234	41.2
31-35	206	36.3
36-40	49	8.6
<b>Education</b>		
Bachelor	502	88.4
Post graduate	66	11.6
<b>Tenure</b>		
<1 year	51	9.0
1-5	193	34.0
6-10	226	39.8
11-15	77	13.6
More than 15	21	3.6

the few best items. Out of 660 surveys administered to UAE employee’s in the Ministry of Interior, 568 were returned with complete and valid data. In the final questionnaire, all items had acceptable reliability as the individual Cronbach’s alpha coefficients of the constructs which ranged from 0.85-0.950 were all greater than the recommended value of 0.7 (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994) Table 1.

**Data collection:** The data was collected by delivering a self-administered questionnaires ‘in-person’ from April 2017 until August 2017 to police officers and their immediate supervisors within Abu Dhabi police. The number of the distributed questionnaires was 700 and the number of the returned sets is 588 of which 568 responses were considered suitable for the analysis. According to, Krejcie and Morgan (1970) and Tabachnick and Fidell (2012), the sample size was seen as sufficient. Compared to the relevant literature the 81.1% response rate of this study is considered very good (Baruch and Holtom, 2008; Cable and DeRue, 2002). The number of the deleted questionnaires was 20 including 15 missing data cases of more than 15% of the questions and 5 cases that have a straight lining.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

For this study, the main reasons for choosing SEM as a analytical technique is that SEM offers a simultaneous analysis which leads to more accurate estimates (Isaac *et al.*, 2017a, b, 2016).

**Descriptive analysis:** Demographic profile of respondents shows that 388 (68.3%) were male and 180 (31.7%) female. 13.9% were <25 years old, 41.2% between 25 and 30, 36.3% between 31-35 years, 8.6% between 36 and 40 and 3.7% being 50 years and above. In terms of education

**Table 2: Measurement model stats**

Fit index	Cited	Admissibility	Results	Fit (Yes/No)
$\chi^2$			267.126	
DF			167	
p-value		>0.05	0.000	No
$\chi^2/df$	Kline (2010)	1.00-5.00	1.600	Yes
RMSEA	Steiger (1990)	<0.08	0.033	Yes
SRMR	Hu and Bentler (1999)	<0.08	0.069	Yes
GFI	Karl and Sorbom (1998)	>0.90	0.956	Yes
AGFI	Karl and Sorbom (1998)	>0.80	0.945	Yes
NFI	Bentler and Bonnet (1980)	>0.80	0.964	Yes
PNFI	Bentler and Bonnet (1980)	>0.05	0.847	Yes
IFI	Bollen (1990)	>0.90	0.986	Yes
TLI	Tucker and Lewis (1973)	>0.90	0.984	Yes
CFI	Byrne (2010)	>0.90	0.986	Yes
PGFI	James <i>et al.</i> (1982)	>0.50	0.760	Yes

**Table 3: Mean, standard deviation, loading, Cronbach's alpha, CR and AVE**

Constructs/items	Loading (>0.5)	M	SD	a (>0.7)	CR (>0.7)	AVE (>0.5)
<b>Ethical Leadership (EL)</b>						
EL1	0.77	4.644	0.899	0.930	0.941	0.614
EL2	0.84					
EL3	0.83					
EL4	0.82					
EL5	0.84					
EL6	0.84					
EL7	0.87					
EL8	0.71					
EL9	0.79					
EL10	0.81					
<b>Affective Organizational Commitment (AOC)</b>						
AOC1	0.77	4.560	1.015	0.909	0.929	0.662
AOC2	0.71					
AOC3	0.70					
AOC4	0.79					
AOC5	0.73					
AOC6	0.70					
<b>Employee Performance (EPF)</b>						
PERF1	0.81	4.736	1.042	0.897	0.928	0.763
PERF2	0.74					
PERF3	0.75					
PERF4	0.76					

M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation a = Cronbach's alpha; CR = Composite Reliability; AVE = Average Variance Extracted, the measurement used is seven-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), all the factor loadings of the individual items are statistically significant ( $p < 0.01$ )

background, 88.4% had a bachelor degree (the majority of participants) with the remaining 9% having finished postgraduate studies. In terms of tenure, 9% were >1 year's experience, 34% between 1 and 5, 39.8% between 6-10 years, 13.6% between 11 and 15 and 3.6% being 15 years and above.

**Measurement model assessment and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA):** As shown in Table 2, all the goodness-of-fit indices surpassed their particular acceptance levels as recommended by previous research, hence, indicating that the measurement model showed a fairly good fit with the data collected. The total fit indices show that the Chi-square is not significant ( $p$  should be >0.5). While the Chi-square is not significant, the model still fits because Chi-square statistic nearly always rejects the model when large samples are used (Bentler and Bonnet, 1980; Karl and Sorbom). The Chi-square sensitive

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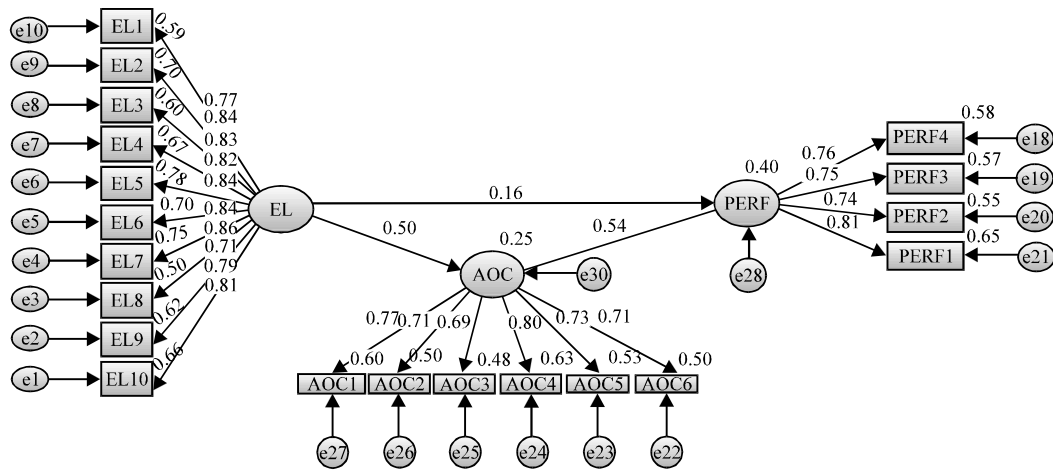


Fig. 2: Research structural model results, EL: Ethical Leadership; PERF: employee performance; AOC: Affective Organizational Commitment

suggested level of 0.7 (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). Furthermore, in order to assess the construct reliability, it was found that all values of the Composite Reliability (CR) were greater than the advised value of 0.7 (Kline, 2010; Gefen *et al.*, 2000) and by this result the construct reliability has been achieved (Table 3). To determine indicator reliability, factor loadings were observed (Hair *et al.*, 2013). The loadings for all the items surpassed the suggested value of 0.5, thus, the loadings for all the items are fulfilled all the requirements without being eliminated from the scale. Moreover, to examine convergent validity Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was used, all AVE values were greater than the suggested value of 0.50 (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Therefore, successfully fulfilled and it demonstrated sufficient convergent validity (Table 3).

For testing convergent validity (the extent to which a measure correlates positively with alternative measures of the same construct), this study used the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and it indicated that all AVE values were higher than the suggested value of 0.50 (Hair *et al.*, 2010) ranging from 0.614-0.763. The convergent validity for all constructs has been successfully fulfilled and adequate convergent validity exhibited as Table 3 shows. The discriminant validity (the degree to which items differentiate among constructs or measure distinct concepts) of the measurement model was checked using three criteria, namely cross-loadings, Fornell-Larcker and the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT). According to Hair *et al.* (2017), the cross-loadings are typically the first approach to assess discriminant validity of the indicators. As shown in Table 3 the cross loading criterion fulfills the requirements

because the indicators outer loadings on a construct were higher than all its cross-loadings with other constructs (bold values). The results of discriminant validity by using the Fornell-Larcker criterion is shown in Table 4 where the square root of the AVEs on the diagonals as represented by the bolded values are higher than the correlations between constructs (corresponding row and column values). This indicates that the constructs are strongly related to their respective indicators compared to other constructs of the model (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Chin, 1998a, b), thus, suggesting a good discriminant validity (Hair *et al.*, 2017). In addition, the correlation between exogenous constructs is less than 0.85 (Awang, 2014). Hence, the discriminant validity of all constructs is fulfilled.

**Structural model assessment:** The goodness-of-fit of the structural model was comparable to the previous CFA measurement model. In this structural model, the values were recorded as  $\chi^2/df = 1.600$ , CFI = 0.986 and RMSEA = 0.033. These fit indices provide evidence of adequate fit between the hypothesized model and the observed data (Byrne, 2010). Thus, path coefficients of the structural model could now be examined.

**Direct hypothesis tests:** The hypothesis were tested using the structural equation modeling via AMOS (Fig. 2). The structural model assessment indications are illustrated in Table 5 with 3 out of the 3 hypothesis of this study being supported. EL significantly predicts AOC. Hence, H<sub>1</sub> is accepted with B = 0.422, p<0.001. Likewise, AOC significantly predicts PERF. Hence, H<sub>2</sub> is supported (B = 0.582, p<0.001). Furthermore, EL significantly

**Table 4: Results of discriminant validity by Fornell-Larcker criterion**

Factors	1	2	3
AOC	0.81	0.43**	0.50**
PERF		0.77	0.62**
EL			0.74

Diagonals represent the square root of the average variance extracted while the other entries represent the correlations; EL: Ethical Leadership, PERF: Employee Performance AOC: Affective Organizational Commitment

**Table 5: Structural path analysis result**

Hypothesis	Dependent variables	Independent variables	Estimate B (path coefficient)	SE	CR (t-values)	Decision	
H <sub>1</sub>	EL	<---	AOC	0.422	0.041	10.243***	Supported
H <sub>2</sub>	AOC	<---	PERF	0.582	0.061	9.612***	Supported
H <sub>3</sub>	EL	<---	PERF	0.143	0.043	3.350***	Supported

\*\*\*p<0.001; \*\*p<0.01; \*p<0.05; SE = Standard Error, CR = Critical Ratio; EL: Ethical Leadership, PERF: Employee Performance, AOC: Affective Organizational Commitment

**Table 6: Coefficient of determination result R<sup>2</sup>**

Exogenous construct	Endogenous construct	R <sup>2</sup>	Cohen (1988)	Chin (1998a, b)	Hair <i>et al.</i> (2013)
EL	AOC	0.25	Substantial	Moderate	Weak
EL-AOC	PERF	0.40	Substantial	Moderate	Weak

EL: Ethical Leadership, PERF: Employee Performance, AOC: Affective Organizational Commitment

**Table 7: Bootstrapping the indirect effect of innovation**

Hypothesis	Relationship	Std Beta	SE	t-value	Decision
H <sub>4</sub>	EL-AOC-PERF	0.27	0.04	3.91***	Supported

Preacher and Hayes (2004, 2008); EL: Ethical Leadership, PERF: Employee Performance, AOC: Affective Organizational Commitment; \*\*\*p<0.001; \*\*p<0.01; \*p<0.05

predicts PERF. Hence, H<sub>3</sub> is supported (B = 0.143, p<0.001). Note that the standardized path coefficient indicates the strengths of the relationship between independent and dependent variables, so, the direct effects of AOC on PERF are higher than to the direct effects of EL on PERF and EL on AOC.

**Coefficient of determination R<sup>2</sup>: the variance explained:**

The R<sup>2</sup> resulted from structural model showed that all R<sup>2</sup> values are sufficiently high, so that, the model can fulfill a satisfactory level of explanatory power (Urbach and Ahlemann, 2010) (Table 6).

**Indirect hypothesis testing (Mediation Assessment):**

The mediation effect test is based on Preacher and Hayes (2004, 2008) which is using the method of bootstrapping of the indirect effect. Table 7 illustrates the result which shows that the indirect effect B = 0.41 was significant with a t-value of 4.55. Additionally, Preacher and Hayes (2008) indicate that the 0.41, 95% Boot CI: (LL = 0.20, UL = 0.35) does not straddle a 0 in between indicating there is mediation. Therefore, it was concluded that the mediation effect of the innovation variable is statistically significant, also supporting H<sub>4</sub>. Based on the proposed model, this study improves the understanding of the role played by AOC, LMX and EL in the employee performance at police institutions in the United Arab Emirates and highlights relevant implications and suggestions for management and policy makers. The discussions are further detailed in

the following. The study found that EL positively affect employee performance among policemen within the Abu Dhabi police in the United Arab Emirates, this is supported by previous studies (Bello 2012; Bouckenoghe *et al.*, 2015; Chen and Hou, 2016; Dhar, 2016; Walumbwa *et al.*, 2011; Yidong and Xinxin, 2013; Zehir and Erdogan, 2011). It is explained by the fact that the more the leadership of the organization is committed to establishing directions that will be aligned with all activities, teams and units that will ultimately be at the best interests of Abu Dhabi police service needs, besides encouraging cooperation, team work and social responsibility commitment, the more resource efficient the organization become and more likely to achieve optimal quality, besides meeting its benchmarks on time to perform its duties.

Likewise, it was found that AOC positively affect employee performance among workers within the Abu Dhabi police in the United Arab Emirates, this is supported by previous studies (Ahmad *et al.*, 2014; Allen and Meyer, 1996; Atmojo, 2015; Babakus *et al.*, 2003; Fu and Deshpande, 2014; Lee and Steers, 2017; Meyer *et al.*, 1989). In this knowledge-based economy, it has become more important than ever in understanding individual work-related behavior because it is identified as more stable and less subject to daily fluctuations than job satisfaction (Joo, 2010). The more AOC the employee's becomes and more likely to achieve optimal quality, besides meeting its benchmarks on time to perform their duties. Additionally, EL was found to positively affect

AOC among respondents within the Abu Dhabi police in the United Arab Emirates, this is supported by previous studies (Almatrooshi *et al.*, 2016; Demirtas and Akdogan, 2015; Shapiro and Stefkovich, 2016). It is explained by the fact that the more the high quality relationship between supervisors and their subordinates, the more to enhance their performance in the UAE security sector and more likely to achieve optimal quality, besides meeting their benchmarks on time to perform their duties.

Finally, the results also revealed that EL has an indirect effect on employee's performance via AOC among employee's within the Abu Dhabi police which confirms the mediation role that AOC has in this context. This concept has significant value for researchers interested in employee performance. Moreover, the variance explained by the proposed model in the current study for employee performance among knowledge workers within the police institutions in the United Arab Emirates is 40%. It is explained by the fact that ethical leadership not only has a normative role by encouraging ethical behavior among followers (Brown *et al.*, 2005; Brown and Trevino, 2006, 2014), it also has a positive impact on in-role performance by strengthening subordinate's relationship with their supervisors and increasing employee's attachment to their organizations. The fact that ethical leadership indirectly affects follower's performance makes the case that organizations should emphasize ethics as an essential part of their leadership development programs.

Simply stated, the more the supervisors are always strengthening subordinate's relationship with their supervisors and increasing employee's attachment to their organizations, the more optimal quality is achieved, benchmarks and timelines are met, resources are efficiently utilized and the organization reached a mastery level in the performance of its duties, given that employee's are building on new ideas all the time and fulfilling the organization requirement to be innovative by adopting new tools and ideas. Moreover, while other leadership styles such as transformational and authentic leadership, also, capture leader's personal traits what clearly sets ethical leadership apart from more traditional leadership styles is the hands-on approach that characterizes the moral manager dimension (Brown *et al.*, 2005; Piccolo *et al.*, 2010; Walumbwa *et al.*, 2011, 2017).

## **CONCLUSION**

In order for any organization to experience employee's performance growth, it is essential to make

changes in its structures or mode of operation. While the United Arab Emirates government institutions are leading in terms of performance compared to regional counterparts, it is in a constant pursuit to enhance its public organization's productivity and performance (Global Innovation Index, 2016), the findings of this study could be considered as one of the initiatives to serve on that direction. The main objective of this study is to determine factors that influence employee's performance at Abu Dhabi police. Despite various constraints to the study, the results have been encouraging as it has managed to throw some lights on a new perspective. The proposed model includes EL as independent variable and AOC as mediating variable in addition to employee's performance as the dependent variable. The results revealed that the EL and AOC significantly explain 40% of employee's performance. The implications of this study have been deliberated; some directions for future research have been suggested.

## **LIMITATIONS**

The present research is of significant for practitioners as it illustrates the importance of EL and AOC. Although, a link of causality between the variables of this study cannot be clearly recognized because of the cross-sectional design, the results indicate that EL and AOC are important to facilitate and enhance the employee's performance.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

The research prescribed, here has implications for the improved understanding of the links between the various significant dimensions related to employee's performance in UAE's public sector. The results should be of interest not only for Abu Dhabi police but also to the Abu Dhabi local government authorities as well as researchers. The results also affirm that the prominence of ethical leadership behavior among many factors may influence the attitudes and attachments of organizational members, (Brown and Trevino, 2014) and contribute to individual flourishing (Demirtas and Akdogan, 2015).

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study emphasizes the importance of EL and links it with AOC and performance but it does not address the issue of how EL could be nurtured. More research may determine the antecedents of EL in the same context and develop a comprehensive framework of both antecedents and consequences. It is expected that key findings,



especially, the proposed model will help in supporting the UAE government policy initiatives, especially to increase productivity as part of the job at all levels of organizations. We live in a world that is driven by technology and innovation where change is continuous and overwhelming. There is a persuasive call for a constant research effort in the area of performance. This study has a limitation of being conducted in only one organization of the public sector in the UAE, thus, the result should be taken with caution.

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