

Impact of leader–member exchange and perceived organisational support on turnover intention

The mediating effects of psychological stress

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to investigate the relationship between leader–member exchange (LMX), perceived organisational support (POS) and turnover intention (TI) through the mediating effect of psychological stress in the police personnel of United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Design/methodology/approach – A questionnaire-based survey was used to collect data from police personnel ($n = 800$) deployed in different positions in UAE police departments. The structural equation modelling analyses were consistent with the full and partial mediation models in which LMX, POS and PS predict TI. Specifically, several alternative models were compared to confirm the mediation effects.

Findings – The results revealed that while LMX had a direct negative effect on police force TI, POS had no indirect impact on police force TI. Furthermore, LMX did positively influence police personnel's POS. PS acted as a full mediator between police personnel's POS and TIs. Additionally, the direct positive effects of PS on police personnel's TIs were confirmed.

Research limitations/implications – The findings will help policymakers and practitioners to better understand the influences of the LMX, POS and PS factors on police force TI and will help in formulating strategies to minimise TI and retain talented police personnel for effective safety and law enforcement in the country.

Originality/value – The study contributes to the literature by being one of the first to study the LMX, POS, PS and TIs of police personnel within the context of an emerging Arab country.

Keywords United Arab Emirates, Police, Turnover intention, Leader–member exchange, Perceived organizational support, Psychological stress

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Since the last decade, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has transformed into a tourist and business hub for the Arab region (The Ministry of Cabinet Affairs, 2017). Additionally, the UAE has made remarkable improvements in maintaining security and safety development indicators over the past four decades, which have allowed the UAE to lead the region on many fronts (John, 2017). This achievement was not possible without the efforts of the UAE police force, which has played a pioneering role in carrying out the three main policing roles: maintaining order, enforcing the law and providing services (Ministry of Interior, 2016).

The number of police workers under the Ministry of Interior (MOI) totals 17,291, which constitutes 30.5 per cent of the total utilised by government organisations (Abdel Hamid, 2015). The military and police employment in the UAE (comprising 2.1 per cent of the UAE workforce) was second among the top 20 high-stress jobs and had the most elevated rate of voluntary resignations (63.1 per cent) among general turnover in the UAE, which amounted to 5 per cent of the total (Jabeen *et al.*, 2018). Even though 5 per cent is, as yet, a moderately low number, this is an alarming figure as far as worker enlistment and retention in the UAE is concerned, and the issue will be aggravated if it is not addressed properly and in time.



Employee turnover intention (TI) has emerged as a critical issue (Kim *et al.*, 2010) that could lead to negative outcomes, such as a combination of (monetary, mental and exchange) costs, increased workload due to the lack of staff, poor profitability and enlistment costs (Suliman and Al Obaidli, 2011). Abu Elanain (2014) reported that for some organisations, both the direct costs (through selection, training and so forth) and indirect costs (regarding decreased efficiency and lost knowledge) of employee turnover have been observed to be especially high. Harhara *et al.* (2015) demonstrated that companies must bear the burden of both the direct and indirect costs related to turnover, and perhaps most importantly, lost human capital (Grissom *et al.*, 2012).

Suliman and Al Obaidli (2011) reported that in the UAE, employee turnover generally costs around AED9.9bn every year. Several researchers have investigated an interesting connection between leader-member exchange (LMX) and employees' TIs (Abu Elanain, 2014; Adil and Awais, 2016), and between psychological stress (PS), perceived organisational support (POS) and TI (Shen *et al.*, 2014). The LMX relationship requires more exposition (Michel and Tews, 2016). Therefore, a study of the effects of LMX on TI in the UAE setting would contribute to expanding the external validity of the LMX relationships. Additionally, notwithstanding the depth of the previous research in this area, the nature of the relationships between PS, LMX, POS and turnover have been elusive and are still ineffectively understood, particularly concerning police forces (Alhashmi *et al.*, 2017). Hence, the objective of this study is to investigate the mediating effects of PS in the relationships between POS and TI and between LMX and TI while investigating the full or partial nature of the mediation. To the authors' knowledge, this paper is the first of its kind to investigate the mediating roles of PS in the UAE police force.

Literature review

TI is the indicator of exit and can subsequently be utilised as a proxy for turnover (Cho and Lewis, 2012). The research hypotheses are discussed in the subsequent sections.

Turnover intention

Employees most often leave their organisations for reasons related to money, individual issues with their supervisor, the organisational culture, issues linked to internal collaboration, and work benefits (Pawar and Chakravarthy, 2014). Replacing employees could require extra organisational assets for enlisting and training employees (Choi and Lee, 2014).

Much research has been devoted to foreseeing employees' decisions relating to turnover (Liu and Onwuegbuzie, 2012). A recent study (Kang *et al.*, 2018) emphasised that organisations have to understand workers' well-being in order to address turnover. TI has continuously been the main concern for leaders across business organisations since high TI can substantially impact workplace morale and prevent individuals from developing any type of commitment towards their organisation (Lutgen-Sandvik *et al.*, 2016). Also, Dechawatanapaisal (2018) affirmed that TI has an important mediating role in the relationship among job embeddedness and actual turnover. Therefore, it is extremely important for organisations to recognise the relationship between TI and its causes (Lin *et al.*, 2017).

Given these potential negative outcomes, it is not a surprise that researchers have committed many efforts to discover the antecedents of both TI and actual turnover (Lin *et al.*, 2017). Moreover, research by Uzoka *et al.* (2011) reported that turnover studies directed in Western countries could not be generalised to other regional contexts, which constitutes another motivation for the choice of this topic for research. This study tests the legitimacy of three variables that may impact the UAE police work force's TI.

Psychological stress and turnover intention

PS has been, for the most part, studied in Western context (Lee *et al.*, 2015). Over the last three decades, theoretical and empirical work has revealed that employees suffering from PS are more likely to leave (Mosaddeghrad, 2013).

By extending the previous literature on PS and TI, this study integrates the general strain theory and organisational theory to explain strain and TI and its mediators. These two theories are complementary to each other, and both can be utilised to understand the effects of strain and its outcomes on individuals' behaviours at the workplace. Agnew (1992) has revealed that a negative affective situation can mediate the relationship between strain and negative results. Therefore, the strain individuals feel can lead them to be more frustrated and unsatisfied, which can impact their commitment to the organisation and may result in high TI. Based on Agnew's general strain theory, Moon and Jonson (2012) examined the mediation effect of strain on organisational commitment measures, including intentions to quit, and reported that police officers that experienced various types of stress, including both the failure to attain valued goals and the elimination of positive stimuli, that were negatively associated with their organisational commitment. Moreover, Shim *et al.* (2015) verified that general strain theory can be applied to a police profession, and negative emotions had significant mediating impacts on the relationship between strain and TI. Ahmad *et al.* (2018) used organisational theory as a framework to affirm that satisfied and professionally committed and devoted police officers are unlikely to quit police organisations.

Hence, we posit the following hypothesis:

H1. PS is positively related to TI.

Leader – member exchange and turnover intention

Several studies have investigated LMX and its effect on TI (Chen *et al.*, 2016). Consistent with Western studies, the study by Abu Elanain (2014) showed that LMX plays a practical role in staff TI in the UAE.

The nature of LMX affects the relationship between employee emotional intelligence and both TI and job fulfilment (Jordan and Troth, 2011). A high-quality LMX relationship expands work fulfilment and abates TI (Adil and Awais, 2016). High-quality LMX negatively affects TI and actual turnover (Rosen *et al.*, 2011). Moreover, Ballinger *et al.* (2010) confirmed that individuals' attachments to others, such as leaders, in exchange relationships improves the retention of skilled employees and diminishes their TIs. Additionally, Dulebohn *et al.* (2012) reported that while leadership behaviours and perceptions, follower characteristics, interpersonal relationship characteristics and contextual variables represent significant groups of LMX antecedents, leadership variables explained the most variance in LMX quality. Chen *et al.* (2016) suggested that the leader–follower relationship partially mediates the relationship between leader–follower congruence/incongruence in workplace loneliness and follower TIs. Moreover, the LMX quality is positively connected with organisational commitment and job satisfaction, whereas it has negative relationships with job stress and TI (Kim *et al.*, 2017). Hence, this study endeavours to narrow this gap by empirically testing the relationship between LMX and TI through the mediating effect of PS in the UAE police force. In view of the above contentions, we propose the following hypothesis:

H2. LMX is positively related to TI.

Perceived organisational support and turnover intention

Research consistently shows that POS is linked to turnover (Eisenberger *et al.*, 2016). Employees who had high POS tended to be firmly associated with and faithful to their employer (Loi *et al.*, 2006). According to Fazio *et al.* (2017), POS might directly influence

employee TI without the mediation effect. Other studies (Rahn *et al.*, 2016; Choi and Chiu, 2017) suggested that POS ought to be linked with TI. Hence, we posit the following hypothesis:

H3. POS is positively related to TI.

Leader – member exchange and perceived organisational support

Most researchers have affirmed that LMX and POS are positively related (Credo *et al.*, 2010). Furthermore, researchers (Chen and Eldridge, 2011) confirmed that LMX and POS exchange relations are grounded in the norm of reciprocity. Subordinates with high-quality LMX relationships may actually perform better because of the added support, feedback, resources and opportunities provided to them (van Dierendonck and Driehuisen, 2015). The quality of LMX has a stronger effect on POS, thus indicating that LMX plays a key role in affecting employees' perceptions of organisational support (Casimir *et al.*, 2014).

Both POS and LMX are significantly affected by the organisation (Sluss *et al.*, 2008). Moreover, Ahmed *et al.* (2012) explained that leaders and supervisors are considered to be organisational representatives who impact basic decision making and act as a bridge between the administration and the employees. Employees view their supervisors' help as organisational help (Kossek *et al.*, 2011) since the leaders and supervisors are seen to be agents of the organisation (Sluss *et al.*, 2008). Thus, the higher the level of LMX is, the higher the employees' perceptions of organisational help and support are (Kossek *et al.*, 2011). Additionally, Rahn *et al.* (2016) confirmed that LMX is a major predictor of POS. Thus, both LMX and POS have significant impacts on employees' affective commitment and can later lead to employees' intentions to leave (Robson and Robson, 2016).

The relationship between POS and LMX has been extensively researched in both Western and non-Western settings (Eisenberger *et al.*, 2014). Additionally, different researchers (Zagenczyk *et al.*, 2010) have recommended that future scholars examine exchange relations and their mutual, independent and interdependent impacts on employee performance at work. Considering the literature and suggestions for future research by past researchers, it is believed that employees interpret supervisory help from their leaders and supervisors as being indicative of organisational support for them. Hence, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

H4. The LMX level is positively related to the POS level.

PS as a potential mediator

Previous studies (Bauer and Green, 1996) have revealed that in LMX relationships, leaders and supervisors create unique relationships with their followers in a similar group. With enhanced communications, this LMX relationship may decrease job stressors and TI and enhance work fulfilment (Zhang *et al.*, 2013). Rotenberg *et al.* (2010) affirmed that the feeling of separation by their leaders and supervisors creates emotional and occupational stress among out-group subordinates. Along these lines, the nature of the LMX relationship, as measured by the three criteria of respect, trust and commitment, will have critical effects on stress. Prior studies (Mehta, 2016) have affirmed that high-quality LMX contributes to decreasing employees' stress. Whenever the values of leaders or associations do not match those of the subordinates, conflicts arise, which ultimately lead to anxiety and stress. Conflicts constantly aggravate the LMX relations and cause anxiety and stress, as reported by Lawrence and Kacmar (2012).

POS limits the adverse physical, psychological and behavioural reactions to stressors through financial and emotional support (Jain *et al.*, 2013). Stamper and Johlke (2003) affirmed the role of POS as a moderator between job stressors and employees' fulfilment with their jobs and their intentions to stay with their present organisation. Past research

(Rahn *et al.*, 2016) reported that both LMX and POS have interactive impacts on PS. However, to the best of our understanding, there are limited studies that have addressed the relationship between PS and TI (Karatepe and Uludag, 2007; Moon and Jonson, 2012). Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H5. PS mediates the relationship between LMX and TI.

H6. PS mediates the relationship between POS and TI.

Hence, the hypothesised relationships mentioned above are presented in the conceptual model in Figure 1. The model also contends that PS plays a full and partial mediating role in the relationship between LMX, POS and TI.

Methodology

Participants

The police personnel deputed to the police headquarters were selected for participation using a random sampling method with the help of the Police HR Department. Of the total population ($n = 17,291$), a total of 1,500 questionnaires were distributed online to the respondents. Of these respondents, approximately 52.1 per cent were male and 47.9 per cent female. With respect to age, most of the respondents (35.6 per cent) were in the 30–39-year age range, 26.0 per cent were in the 40–49-year age range and 26.0 per cent of respondents were between aged 20 and 29 years. A total of 47.5 per cent of the respondents were married with children. Regarding occupational rank, 59.8 per cent of the respondents were at the supervisory level (front-line managers), and 40.3 per cent of them were at the managerial level; 31.9 per cent of the respondents had completed five to ten years of service in the UAE Police.

Procedure

The questionnaires were formally distributed with the prior approval of the concerned Institutional Review Board. The respondents were assured of their confidentiality and anonymity. First, a pilot study was conducted ($n = 20$) at one of the police headquarters located in Fujairah, UAE, to ensure the logical and clear interpretations of the survey items. After the pre-test, a few items were dropped, and some were reworded, which was aided by the validity checks. A total of 1,500 questionnaires were distributed, out of which 852 were received, leading to a response rate of 56.8 per cent. A total of 52 questionnaires were excluded since the responses were incomplete and 800 were found to be appropriate for data analysis using the method suggested by Krejcie and Morgan (1970).

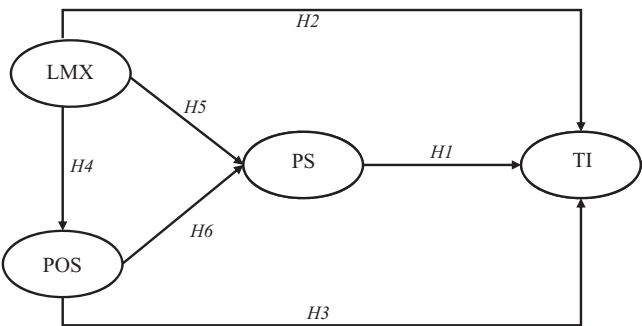


Figure 1.
Proposed model

Measurement scales

To test the proposed hypotheses, a questionnaire-based survey was used to collect data from the police personnel. The questionnaire comprised of five sections: demographics, LMX, POS, PS and TI. The survey used a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) for each item. Table I demonstrates the survey items and their sources.

Results*Factor analysis and validity testing*

Table AI demonstrates each construct's measurement items (see the Appendix) and their Cronbach's α , construct reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE) values. Emerging from this step, all scales' items that were used had factor loadings that exceeded the general cut-off value of 0.5 (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2013) and were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), with the exception of items LMX1, LMX2 and LMX3 where the

		Sources
<i>Leader-Member Exchange (LMX)</i>		
LMX1	My supervisor personally helps me to solve problems	Liden and Graen (1980)
LMX 2	My relationship with my supervisor is effective	
LMX 3	I have confidence in my supervisor to support my decisions	
LMX 4	My supervisor considers my suggestions	
LMX 5	We are both suited to each other	
LMX 6	My supervisor understands my problems	
LMX 7	My supervisor recognises my potential	
<i>Perceived organisational support (POS)</i>		
POS1	My organisation takes pride in my accomplishments	Eisenberger <i>et al.</i> (1990)
POS2	My organisation cares about my well-being	
POS3	My organisation values my contributions	
POS4	My organisation considers my goals	
POS5	My organisation has great concern for me	
POS6	My organisation is willing to help me	
<i>Psychological stress (PS)</i>		
PS1	My work hours are long	Cooper and Marshall (1976)
PS2	My current job is challenging	
PS3	I have to work, even on vacation	
PS4	I can make a decision on how to implement my tasks	
PS5	Shifts are scheduled fairly	
PS6	My immediate supervisor assigned me to work based upon what I have learned from on-the-job training	
PS7	The current promotion policies can inspire my potential at work	
PS8	My rank is reasonable based upon my hard work and efforts	
PS9	The allocation of work that is categorised “other” is fair	
PS10	The work climate is pleasant	
PS11	My family does not support my job	
PS12	Citizens make complaints about police services	
<i>Turnover intention (TI)</i>		
TI1	I often think about quitting my current job	Tett and Meyer (1993), Dysvik and Kuvaas (2013)
TI2	I am always on the lookout for a better job	
TI3	There is not much to be gained by staying in this job	
TI4	I do not see many prospects for the future in this organisation	
TI5	I will probably look for a new job next year	

Table I.
Construct
measurement scales

loadings fell below the cut-off criterion. These items were excluded from the analyses. The AVE represents the amount of variance captured by a construct related to the amount of variance due to measurement error, and it must be above 0.5 (Hair *et al.*, 2017). The CR values ranged from 0.836 to 0.927, which are above the 0.70 cut-off, thus indicating adequate internal consistency (Hair *et al.*, 2013). Similarly, all Cronbach's α coefficient values were acceptable at 0.65 or higher (Furr, 2017). Therefore, the scales that were used were considered reliable and could be used for further analysis (Hair *et al.*, 2013).

Structural modelling and mediation analysis

According to Hair *et al.* (2017), structuring alternate and competitive models is recommended in order to achieve a better explanation of the relationships obtained from the constructs. For this purpose, six alternative models were tested (Figure 2). The (M1) is the proposed model of this study and is illustrated in Figure 1. The alternative models (Figure 2) are (M2 and M3), and they, respectively, propose that PS partially and fully mediates the relationship between LMX and TI, and POS directly impacts TI. Furthermore, (M4 and M5), respectively, propose that PS partially and fully mediates the relationship

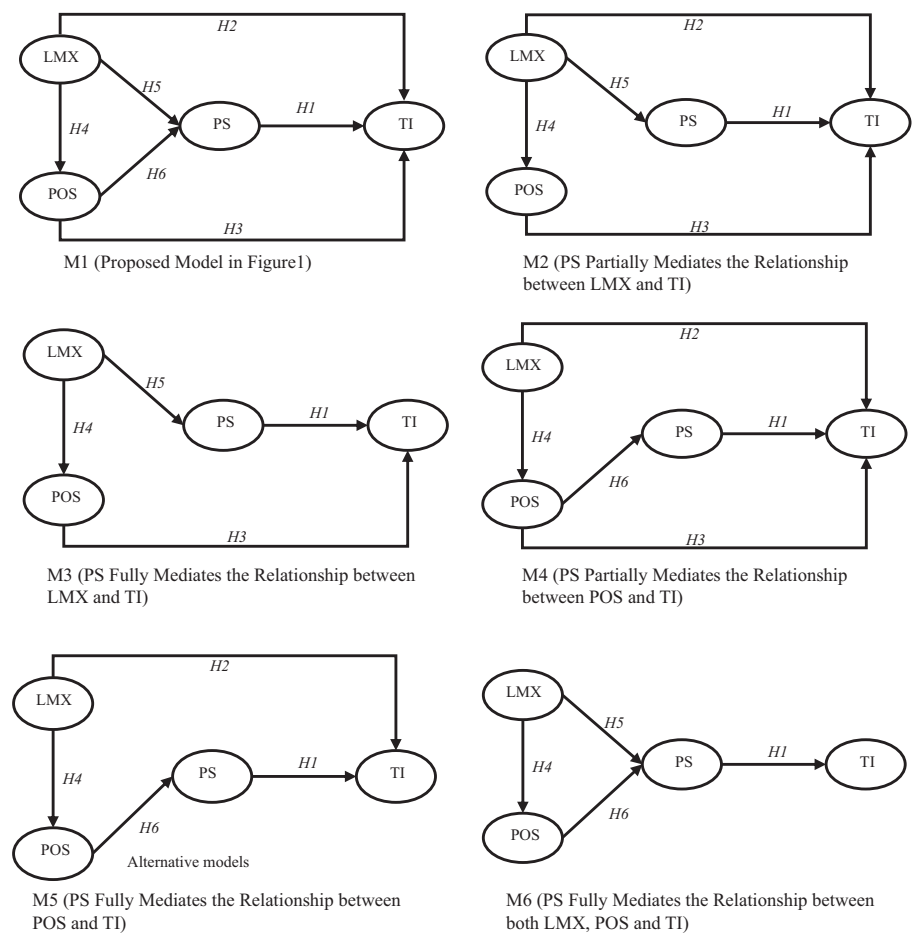


Figure 2.
Alternative models

between POS and TI and that LMX directly impacts TI. Finally, (M6) proposes that PS fully mediates the relationship between LMX, POS and TI.

These alternative models were estimated using SPSS AMOS 23 with the maximum likelihood estimation. Moreover, bias correction bootstrapping was conducted in order for the mediation test to be conducted, as suggested by Preacher and Kelley (2011). First, the measurement models' fits were examined and were found to be consistent with the thresholds proposed by the literature.

Table AII shows that the fits of all the proposed and the alternative structural models are acceptable and similar regarding their values (see the Appendix). The recommended acceptance of a good fit to a model requires that the obtained normed fit index (NFI), Tucker–Lewis index (TLI), and comparative fit index (CFI) values are greater than or equal to 0.90, and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) is below 0.08 (Hair *et al.*, 2013; Byrne, 2016). However, the examination of the data indicated that only the hypotheses of M5 are verified, indicating that LMX directly impacts TI, while PS fully mediates the relationship between POS and TI. The fits of M5 are CFI: 0.924, TLI: 0.912 NFI: 0.909, and RMSEA: 0.076, and the χ^2 value is 1,699.148 with 304 degrees of freedom. Focussing on this model, it explains 71.3 per cent of the variance in TI ($R^2 = 71.3\%$). Table II shows the standardised total, direct, and indirect effects of the hypothesised predictors on the outcome variable and indicates the mediating conditions, as suggested by Wang and Zhang (2011). Drawing upon the findings, PS fully mediates the relationship between POS and TI with a standardised indirect effect of $b = -0.641$ ($p < 0.001$); therefore, *H6* is verified. Additionally, *H1* is supported (0.635 , $p < 0.001$), which is a necessary condition for the mediation effect (Baron and Kenny, 1986, p. 1176). Similarly, LMX directly impacts TI ($b = -0.227$, $p = 0.017$). Therefore, *H2* is verified, whereas *H5* is rejected. The coefficients of the PS and TI constructs were reversed, and thus a negative direction was intended (e.g. I often think about quitting my current job). This model also provides empirical evidence of LMX's impact on POS ($b = 0.791$, $p < 0.001$), thus verifying *H4*. *H3* was rejected since POS impacts TI only via the mediating construct of PS (Figure 3).

Discussion and conclusions

The study examined the mediating effects of PS in the relationship between LMX, POS and TI in the UAE police force. This study tested six different models of the proposed framework and discussed the relationship between POS, LMX, PS and TI. The study findings revealed that POS negatively affects employees' mental health and which, in turn, influences their TIs. Furthermore, it was found that employees with more PS feel more psychological, emotional, or physical stress at work and think about quitting their current job (Mosadeghrad, 2013). The below sub-sections discuss the study findings in detail.

Psychological stress and turnover intention

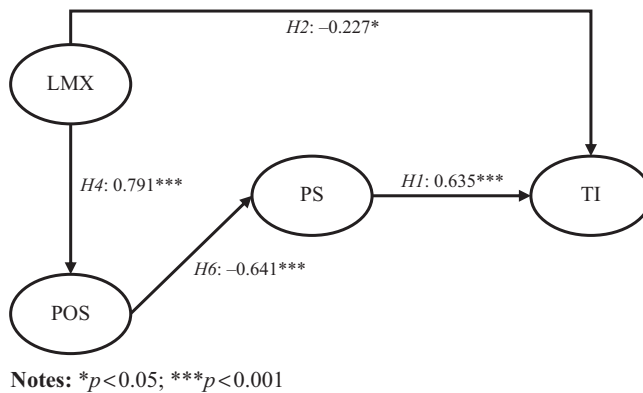
Once the police personnel feel a sense of psychological, emotional or physical stress from their work, they are likely to consider quitting their present place of employment. The result demonstrated that PS positively influences TI. The study findings affirm the previous

Paths	Coefficient	Type of effect
TI $\leftarrow$ LMX	-0.227*	Direct
POS $\leftarrow$ LMX	0.791***	Direct
TI $\leftarrow$ PS	0.635***	Direct
PS $\leftarrow$ POS	-0.641***	Indirect

Notes: * $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.001$

Table II.
Mediation effect
of PS on the
POS/TI relationship

Figure 3.
Results of the final
structural model



research (Mosadeghrad, 2013; Shim *et al.*, 2015) that with higher PS, more employees intend to leave their organisations. Another study on stress in the police showed that police personnel TIs are positively linked to tenure, perception of provocation, and burnout and are negatively linked with participation in decision making, work fulfilment, supervisory help, and support from colleagues (Dowden and Tellier, 2004).

Leader-Member Exchange and turnover intention

The study indicates that the intention of a police officer to resign drops and his/her organisational attachment escalates when there is a strong interpersonal relationship between a leader and his/her subordinates. Previous studies (Kim *et al.*, 2017) are reinforced by this study, and they also support the relationship between LMX on TI. Improved job satisfaction and decreased turnover rate and role stressors can be observed because of the LMX relationship as a result of better communication (Zhang *et al.*, 2013; Chen *et al.*, 2016). While this research affirms how a high level of police force LMX weakens their intentions to resign, an adverse relationship between the quality of LMX and TI and actual turnover is also reported in earlier research (Jordan and Troth, 2011). The reasons behind such a finding are many and varied. For example, in recent years, the UAE Government has given greater importance to the development and well-being of police personnel. In addition to the physical returns, a healthy positive relationship among subordinates and their leaders is the only way to create and sustain a favourable work setting.

Perceived organisational support and turnover intention

Interestingly, of the two independent variables, only the direct impact of POS on TI was rejected. Thus, the results of this study found no evidence of a direct relationship between police personnel POS and TI. Given the existing literature, a negative impact of police personnel POS on TI is assumed in this study (Cho *et al.*, 2009). Employees consider their leader to be a representative of the entire organisation and view all forms of support and resources provided by their leader as coming from the organisation itself, which could be the reason behind the unanticipated outcome of the current research (Rahn *et al.*, 2016; Choi and Chiu, 2017; Fazio *et al.*, 2017).

Leader-Member Exchange and Perceived organisational support

The positive impact of LMX on POS is indicated by this study, and the opinion that the LMX level is directly proportional to the POS levels is assumed in this research (Credo *et al.*, 2010; Kossek *et al.*, 2011). This study also supports the findings of prior studies showing

that higher the LMX, the healthier the perception of support at work (high and positive POS). These exchange relations are clear from the literature (Rahn *et al.*, 2016). Both LMX and POS equally are exchanged relations, namely, the leaders, the organisation and the employees having positive exchange relations with each other (Sluss *et al.*, 2008; Chen and Eldridge, 2011; Robson and Robson, 2016). Actions that are executed in the name of the leaders of the organisation are assumed to be the actions of the whole organisation (Rahn *et al.*, 2016). For this reason, a good organisational response will be perceived as being the result of the support and reaction of a good leader (Kossek *et al.*, 2011; Eisenberger *et al.*, 2014). This study furthers the work of researchers (Zagenczyk *et al.*, 2010; Ahmed *et al.*, 2013) who have recommended greater research focussing on the topics of LMX and POS and the relationships between them.

PS as a potential mediator

Contrary to expectations, LMX did not have any indirect impact on TI, but certainly had direct negative effects on TI. This is inconsistent with the findings of Lawrence and Kacmar (2012) who reported that poor LMX relations between leaders and employees lead to high stress. Furthermore, in earlier studies, it was mentioned that employees are assumed to quit more often when stressed and under pressure (Mosadeghrad, 2013), but a leader can minimise the levels of stress and work-related pressure felt by individuals by achieving a high level of LMX (Mehta, 2016). The degrees of the LMX relationship and leader support have greater influences on TI than on PS in the UAE, and it is possible that the outcomes may vary among different locations because it is only based on the distinctive features of the UAE police force. It is possible that the degree of the LMX relationship may not be the reason for PS in the police force and could increase in an organisation for internal and operational reasons. PS has not been demonstrated as being a mediating factor in the relationship between LMX and police force TI in the UAE in this study.

The absence of a direct effect of POS on TI was compromised by an indirect effect. PS acted as a full mediator between POS and TI. The study suggests that PS was the precursor to TI, and, thereby, PS was the mediator in the relationship between POS and TI. The fact that POS has only an indirect effect on TI can be represented by the effect of PS on TI (Karatepe and Uludag, 2007) and the direct effect of POS on PS (Jain *et al.*, 2013). There was no implication for POS having a direct effect on TI, which verifies the presence of a fully mediated relationship (M5) rather than an alternative partially mediated relationship (M4). There is a consistent probability that the police force of the UAE will manage to work and carry the responsibility more efficiently as there is growth in other sectors. The UAE is anticipated to make progress in various sectors in the future, including society, tourism, security, economy, and travel. Therefore, the approach of reducing police personnel PS with organisational support will positively affect their work performance, increase their intentions to stay and maintain public safety and security.

Implications

This study has several theoretical and practical implications. First, to our knowledge, no previous studies in the Arab world have examined the mediating effects of PS on LMX, POS and TI together. This study has therefore added to our understanding of this area. Second, it provides an insight for Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)-based researchers to understand the related theories such as social exchange theory and general strain theory and their linkages to TI in a police organisation based on the context of an emerging Arab country. Third, couched within social exchange theory, this study suggests that senior police administration can lower TI by reducing the PS among their employees. This is consistent with other studies (e.g. Karatepe and Uludag, 2007) and suggests that PS and LMX are important antecedent variables of TI. Fourth, the study results will help academics obtain a clear view

of the mediating effects of PS in the relationships between LMX, POS and TI in an Arab-based law enforcement organisation.

The findings also have other significant implications for organisational policymakers and leaders, especially regarding how police officers' PS can influence their subordinates' TIs. Furthermore, to reduce the PS and to achieve a low turnover rate, the study results will encourage the senior administrators to contemplate and listen to their staffs' suggestions and to provide organisational support to employees in accomplishing their objectives. Thus, the turnover rate in the UAE and the intentions of police employees to resign can be minimised by supporting the staff and helping them eliminate their psychological burdens. Moreover, the study results will help the policy makers and police management to understand the importance of providing assistance to police personnel, valuing their contributions and accomplishments, and proactively considering employees' objectives.

Through this study, we learned that employees see support from leaders as a form of organisational support and that LMX is an important variable of POS. To achieve a high LMX and make workers perceive that they are appreciated by their leaders, the administrative leaders and supervisors are advised to take part in leadership training programmes, which will help them improve their leader-member relationships to deliver extra POS. Finally, the study findings can be generalised to the police forces of many GCC countries, which have a homogenous governance structure and cultural background.

Limitations and future research directions

A number of limitations exist in this study. First, the human resource department of the MOI was responsible for circulating the study questionnaires. Hence, there may be the possibility of common method bias since the questionnaires were self-reported. Second, the study has only a quantitative paradigm and hence suggests that a mixed-method approach should be used to analyse employee TI. Additionally, future studies may apply the research model in other government and non-governmental organisations to test its applicability. Further variables, such as the quality of work life, organisational justice, and psychological empowerment should also be tested in future studies besides the variables LMX and POS that this study has primarily focussed on.

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Constructs	Items	A	AVE	CR	Mean	SD	Standardized factor loading	p-value
Leader-member exchange (LMX)	LMX4	0.825	0.569	0.836	5.31	1.003	0.730	< 0.001
	LMX5				5.31	1.006	0.816	< 0.001
	LMX6				5.24	1.002	0.900	< 0.001
	LMX7				5.26	1.000	0.517	< 0.001
Perceived organisation support (POS)	POS1	0.928	0.681	0.927	5.37	0.809	0.702	< 0.001
	POS2				5.32	0.901	0.818	< 0.001
	POS3				5.32	0.874	0.827	< 0.001
	POS4				5.34	0.900	0.858	< 0.001
	POS5				5.34	0.882	0.842	< 0.001
	POS6				5.33	0.893	0.890	< 0.001
Psychological stress (PS)	PS1	0.933	0.509	0.925	5.34	0.96	0.857	< 0.001
	PS2				5.32	1.06	0.671	< 0.001
	PS3				5.40	1.07	0.665	< 0.001
	PS4				5.34	1.03	0.705	< 0.001
	PS5				5.26	1.04	0.673	< 0.0001
	PS6				5.30	1.03	0.727	< 0.001
	PS7				5.35	1.02	0.705	< 0.001
	PS8				5.39	1.08	0.804	< 0.001
	PS9				5.32	1.05	0.661	< 0.001
	PS10				5.39	1.06	0.706	< 0.001
	PS11				5.37	1.09	0.698	< 0.001
	PS12				5.33	1.06	0.660	< 0.001
Turnover intention (TI)	TI1	0.903	0.661	0.907	5.43	0.800	0.708	< 0.001
	TI2				5.36	0.803	0.802	< 0.001
	TI3				5.39	0.833	0.866	< 0.001
	TI4				5.39	0.839	0.869	< 0.001
	TI5				5.39	0.834	0.810	< 0.001

Table AI.
Constructs, descriptive
statistics and
confirmatory factor
analysis

Model	χ^2	df	p	RMSEA	NFI	CFI	TLI
M1	1,698.900	302	0.000	0.076	0.909	0.924	0.911
M2	1,721.797	303	0.000	0.077	0.908	0.923	0.910
M3	1,723.898	304	0.000	0.76	0.908	0.923	0.911
M4	1,699.082	303	0.000	0.076	0.909	0.924	0.912
M5	1,699.148	304	0.000	0.076	0.909	0.924	0.912
M6	1,704.703	304	0.000	0.076	0.909	0.924	0.912

Note: $n = 800$

Table AII.
Fits of the
research models

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