



LEADERSHIP STYLES AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG POLICE CONSTABLES

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Abstract

The relationship between leadership styles and job satisfaction among police constables is a crucial aspect of organizational behavior in law enforcement agencies. This study examines the impact of different leadership styles on job satisfaction among police constables, exploring the complexities of leadership in a high-stress, hierarchical environment. The research investigates the correlation between transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles and job satisfaction, providing insights into the most effective leadership approaches for enhancing constable well-being and performance.

Keywords: Job, Police, Satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

Leadership in police organizations significantly influences not only organizational effectiveness but also the morale and well-being of personnel. Police constables, as the operational backbone of law enforcement, carry out duties that are demanding, stressful, and often thankless. Their experience in the workplace is shaped by the nature of the leadership they encounter. Leadership styles determine how supervisors communicate, motivate, and support their subordinates, which in turn can directly affect job satisfaction. In a profession where discipline and responsiveness are crucial, understanding this dynamic becomes especially important.

Theoretical Framework

The study draws on the Full Range Leadership Model proposed by Bernard Bass and Bruce Avolio, which outlines three major leadership styles: transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire. Transformational leaders are visionary and supportive, often inspiring subordinates and addressing their individual needs. Transactional leaders operate through structured rewards and corrective actions, while laissez-faire leaders tend to avoid direct involvement. This research also considers Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory, which distinguishes between factors that cause job satisfaction and those that prevent dissatisfaction. When combined, these theories offer a comprehensive lens to understand how leadership behaviour influences job satisfaction among constables, thus providing a foundation for meaningful analysis.

Review of Literature

Alajmi, A. (2025) examined leadership styles and perceptions in Kuwait's police stations, focusing on the influence of cultural factors like *wasta* (nepotism). The study found that

transformational leadership practices were associated with higher job satisfaction among officers. However, the prevalence of *wasta* negatively impacted perceptions of fairness and satisfaction. The research emphasizes the need for transparent and merit-based leadership approaches to improve job satisfaction in policing.

Yang, P. M. (2023) explored the impact of servant leadership on employee job satisfaction within law enforcement. Utilizing the Organizational Leadership Assessment (OLA), the research found a strong correlation between servant leadership constructs and job satisfaction. The study concluded that servant leadership positively influences job satisfaction among law enforcement personnel, regardless of tenure and education levels, highlighting its potential benefits in policing contexts.

Chikeleze et al. (2021) examined the relationship between supervisors' servant leadership qualities and police officers' job satisfaction. Conducted in a southern U.S. police department known for its servant leadership practices, the research utilized the Servant Leadership Scale and the Job Descriptive Index. Findings indicated a statistically significant positive correlation between perceived servant leadership and job satisfaction among officers, suggesting that servant leadership can enhance officers' job satisfaction.

Sedano, A. (2021) investigated the relationship between transformational leadership, public service motivation (PSM), and job satisfaction within the Los Angeles Police Department. Utilizing surveys over a year, the study found that transformational leadership positively influences both PSM and job satisfaction among officers. The research suggests that adopting transformational leadership practices can enhance motivation and satisfaction in law enforcement agencies.

Maurya, M. K. (2019) investigated gender differences in perceived role expectations, mental health, and job satisfaction among civil police constables in Uttar Pradesh, India. Surveying 203 constables, the research found significant gender disparities in role expectations and psychological well-being. Notably, facilitative role expectations positively correlated with job satisfaction for both genders, while psychological distress negatively impacted job satisfaction among males. The study emphasizes the need for gender-sensitive leadership approaches in policing.

Hadley et al. (2018) explored challenges in police leadership, focusing on identity, experience, legitimacy, and direct entry into leadership roles. The research highlighted those officers often value leaders with frontline experience, perceiving them as more legitimate and credible. The study suggests that leadership development programs should consider the importance of shared experiences and identity to enhance leadership effectiveness and job satisfaction among officers.

Sharp, J. M. (2016) examined job satisfaction among law enforcement officers across different generational cohorts. The study found significant differences in job satisfaction levels, with Generation X officers reporting higher satisfaction compared to Millennials. Factors influencing these differences included perceptions of promotion opportunities and supervision quality. The research highlights the importance of tailoring leadership and management practices to address generational differences within police organizations.

Need for the Study

In many police departments, especially in India, leadership development has traditionally focused on higher-ranking officers, with limited attention given to how leadership affects the lower ranks. Constables, however, form the majority of the police force and work at the ground level, interacting directly with the public. Given their critical role, it becomes essential to explore how various leadership approaches impact their job satisfaction. Insights from such a study can support more inclusive leadership strategies that recognize and address the needs of constables.

Importance of the Study

This study is significant for both academic inquiry and administrative practice. Examining the relationship between leadership styles and job satisfaction among police constables can offer practical recommendations for improving workplace conditions. Enhanced job satisfaction is known to increase motivation, reduce absenteeism, and promote professional behaviour, outcomes that are crucial in maintaining public trust and law enforcement efficiency. Moreover, the findings may help reform police training modules to promote leadership practices that are more empathetic, participative, and effective.

Objectives of the Study

- To identify the predominant leadership styles perceived by police constables in their respective departments.
- To assess the level of job satisfaction among police constables about different aspects such as work environment, support, recognition, and autonomy.
- To examine the relationship between specific leadership styles (e.g., transformational, transactional, laissez-faire) and job satisfaction among police constables.
- To provide recommendations for improving leadership practices that can enhance job satisfaction and performance in the police force.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a **quantitative, descriptive-correlational design** to investigate the association between leadership styles and job satisfaction among police constables.

Sample Size: A total of 172 constables participated in the study.

Sampling Technique: Purposive sampling was used to ensure representation from different stations and shifts, selecting participants based on their availability and willingness.

A structured, self-administered questionnaire was designed with three major sections:

1. **Demographic Information:** Age, gender, education, marital status, years of service, and income.
2. **Leadership Style Scale:** Adapted from the **Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ)** developed by Bass and Avolio, assessing transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership dimensions.

3. **Job Satisfaction Scale:** Based on the **Job Descriptive Index (JDI)**, covering satisfaction with supervision, co-workers, pay, promotion, and the nature of work.

DATA ANALYSIS

Descriptive Statistics: To summarize participant characteristics and responses (mean, median, standard deviation, frequency).

Reliability Analysis: Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the internal consistency of the scales.

Correlation Analysis: Pearson's correlation coefficient was applied to explore the relationship between leadership styles and job satisfaction.

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA): Conducted using Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with Varimax rotation to identify key dimensions within the leadership and satisfaction scales.

Demographic Characteristics:

The following table gives information related to Demographic Characteristics.

Demographic Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	172	
Male	140	81.4
Female	32	18.6
Age Group	172	
25-35	30	17.5
36-45	59	34.3
46-55	44	25.6
56 and above	39	22.7
Marital status		
Married	139	80.8
Single	33	19.2
Education		
SSC	23	13.4
Graduate	101	58.7
PG	33	19.2
Technical	15	8.7

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics

The demographic profile of the respondents (N=172) reveals a predominantly male sample (81.4%), with only 18.6% females, indicating gender imbalance. The majority of participants fall within the 36–45 age group (34.3%), followed by 46–55 (25.6%), and 56 and above (22.7%), suggesting a mature workforce. Most respondents are married (80.8%), reflecting social stability. In terms of education, graduates make up the largest group (58.7%), while only a small fraction have technical qualifications (8.7%) or have completed SSC (13.4%). Notably, there are no respondents with a PhD. This suggests a moderately educated, experienced, and predominantly male population, suitable for studies involving professional attitudes or workplace behaviour.

Experience: The data related to experience is given hereunder.

Experience	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<5yrs	43	25.0
6-10	39	22.7
11-20	48	27.9
21 and above	42	24.4

Table 2: Experience

The distribution of work experience among the respondents (N=172) shows a fairly balanced representation across all experience levels. The largest segment (27.9%) has 11–20 years of experience, indicating a significant proportion of mid-career professionals. Those with less than 5 years (25.0%) and more than 21 years (24.4%) form nearly equal parts of the sample, suggesting the presence of both early-career and highly experienced individuals. The 6–10 years group accounts for 22.7%, reflecting a steady pipeline of emerging professionals. Overall, the data indicates a well-distributed mix of experience levels, enhancing the depth and reliability of insights drawn from the study.

Transformational Leadership Style: A leadership approach where leaders inspire, motivate, and intellectually stimulate their followers, encouraging them to exceed their self-interest for the sake of the group or organization. It focuses on creating positive change in individuals and organizations by appealing to higher ideals, values, and long-term goals.

Transformational Leadership Style	Mean	SD
Idealized influence		
I feel good being around my Boss	4.11	1.21
I have complete faith in my Boss	4.05	1.16
I am proud to be associated with my Boss	4.01	1.24
Inspiration motivation		
My Boss is optimistic about the future	4.23	1.39
My Boss usually talks about what needs to be done	4.15	1.28
My Boss always articulates about vision of the future	3.98	1.26
Intellectual stimulation		
May others think about old problems in new ways	3.89	1.32
Give new ways on how to do our jobs	3.68	1.21
Solves problems from different perspectives	4.11	1.33
Individualized Consideration		
Spends more time developing others	4.01	1.22
Treats me as an individual rather than just a member of a group	3.91	1.34
Give personal attention to others who feel rejected	3.95	1.23

Table 3: Transformational Leadership Style

The data reflect a generally positive perception of transformational leadership among respondents. Across all four dimensions—Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individualized Consideration—mean scores hover around or above 4, suggesting agreement with the statements.

- Idealized Influence shows strong ratings, with respondents feeling good around their boss (M=4.11, SD=1.21) and expressing complete faith (M=4.05), indicating admiration and trust.
- Inspirational Motivation scores the highest overall, especially on optimism about the future (M=4.23), reflecting the leader's ability to inspire and communicate purpose effectively.
- Intellectual Stimulation displays slightly more variability, with the lowest mean (M=3.68) on giving new ways to do the job, indicating room for improvement in fostering innovation.
- Individualized Consideration is consistently positive, with respondents recognizing developmental support (M=4.01) and personal attention (M=3.95), highlighting the leader's attentiveness to individual needs.

Overall, the results suggest a well-perceived transformational leadership style, with particular strengths in motivation and trust-building, while indicating modest scope for growth in promoting intellectual stimulation.

Transactional Leadership Style is a leadership approach that focuses on clear exchanges between leaders and followers. It is based on the concept of rewarding performance and penalizing failure. This style emphasizes structure, supervision, and goal-oriented tasks, making it suitable for maintaining order and routine operations, especially in hierarchical organizations like the police force.

Transactional Leadership Styles	Mean	SD
Contingent Reward		
-Specified what I will receive if I perform very well	3.83	1.11
-So, satisfaction comes when I do a good job.	3.97	1.14
Management-by-Exception (Active)		
-Always pays attention to mistakes, exceptions, and deviations from standards	3.15	1.32
-Always keeps track of my mistakes	3.32	1.65
-Spends it time looking to put out fires	3.29	1.57
-Pays attention to failure to meet standards	3.43	1.31
Management-by-Exception (Passive)		
-Show attitudes of “if it isn’t broke, don’t fix it”	3.41	1.17
-Only takes action if things go wrong	3.35	1.25

Table 4:Transactional Leadership Styles

The assessment of transactional leadership reveals moderate perceptions across its three dimensions: Contingent Reward, Management-by-Exception (Active), and Management-by-Exception (Passive).

- Contingent Reward scores relatively well (M=3.97 and M=3.83), suggesting that leaders are fairly effective in clarifying expectations and acknowledging good performance, though not as strongly as transformational traits.

- Management-by-Exception (Active) shows lower means (ranging from M=3.15 to M=3.43), with relatively high standard deviations, indicating variability in perceptions. Leaders seem to focus moderately on errors and deviations, which may imply a reactive rather than proactive management style.
- Management-by-Exception (Passive) has slightly better means (M=3.41 and M=3.35) than the active form, suggesting that some leaders may tend to intervene only when problems arise, reflecting a more hands-off approach until necessary.

In summary, while contingent reward behaviours are reasonably well-practiced, both active and passive management-by-exception styles are perceived less favourably, indicating a leadership approach that may lack consistent engagement and proactive oversight.

Job satisfaction refers to the degree of contentment or positive emotional state an individual feels toward their job. It reflects how well a job meets an employee's expectations, needs, and values. In simple terms, it is **how happy or satisfied a person is with their work**.

Job satisfaction	Mean	SD
Chance to do something that makes use of my abilities	3.38	2.13
Satisfied with working conditions	3.41	2.88
Opportunity to do different things	3.22	2.57
Chance to do things for other people	3.81	3.19
Freedom to implement my judgments	4.01	3.62
Being recognized for a job well done	3.28	3.57
Opportunity to work autonomously	3.86	3.44
Chance to try my methods in doing the job	3.91	3.18
Chance to tell other people what to do	3.75	3.29
Chance for advancement on this job	3.35	3.73

Table 5: Job satisfaction

The job satisfaction scores reflect a generally moderate to positive perception among respondents, with **mean values ranging from 3.22 to 4.01**. However, the **high standard deviations (SDs ranging from 2.13 to 3.73)** across items indicate substantial variability in individual experiences.

- The **highest satisfaction** is observed in areas related to **freedom and autonomy**, such as "Freedom to implement my judgments" (M=4.01), "Chance to try my methods" (M=3.91), and "Opportunity to work autonomously" (M=3.86), suggesting employees value decision-making independence.
- **Altruistic and leadership-oriented factors** also score relatively well, including "Chance to do things for other people" (M=3.81) and "Chance to tell other people what to do" (M=3.75), indicating satisfaction from influence and service aspects of the job.
- On the lower end, items like "Opportunity to do different things" (M=3.22), "Being recognized for a job well done" (M=3.28), and "Chance for advancement" (M=3.35)

highlight areas where satisfaction is comparatively weaker, pointing to a need for more variety, recognition, and career growth opportunities.

Overall, while autonomy and meaningful engagement appear to be strengths, the high variability suggests that not all employees share the same level of satisfaction, and efforts could be directed at improving consistency, recognition, and professional development.

Leadership style	Job Satisfaction
Individualized consideration	0.517**
Intellectual stimulation	0.639**
Inspiration motivation	0.613**
Idealized influence attributed	0.598**
Contingent reward	0.632**
Management by exception (Active)	0.619**

Table 6: Correlation between transformational leadership style and job satisfaction

The correlation analysis reveals strong and statistically significant positive relationships ($p < 0.01$) between various dimensions of leadership styles and job satisfaction.

- Among transformational leadership components, **Intellectual Stimulation** ($r = 0.639$) shows the highest correlation with job satisfaction, suggesting that leaders who encourage innovation and new perspectives significantly enhance employee satisfaction.
- **Inspiration Motivation** ($r = 0.613$), **Idealized Influence** ($r = 0.598$), and **Individualized Consideration** ($r = 0.517$) also demonstrate robust correlations, indicating that motivational, visionary, and personalized leadership behaviours are positively associated with how satisfied employees feel in their roles.
- Interestingly, **Contingent Reward** (a transactional element) also shows a strong correlation ($r = 0.632$), reinforcing the value of recognizing and rewarding performance.
- **Management by Exception (Active)** ($r = 0.619$), despite being a more corrective form of leadership, is still positively correlated, possibly reflecting that accountability and performance monitoring, when balanced, contribute to satisfaction.

Both transformational and certain transactional leadership practices significantly influence job satisfaction, with intellectual stimulation and performance-based rewards standing out as key drivers.

CONCLUSION

The study comprehensively examined the relationship between leadership styles, particularly transformational and transactional, and job satisfaction among police personnel. The findings reveal that transformational leadership is positively perceived across its core dimensions, especially in areas like inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation. These styles are

significantly correlated with job satisfaction, highlighting that leader who are visionary, supportive, and intellectually engaging foster a more satisfied and motivated workforce.

Transactional elements like contingent reward also show strong positive associations with job satisfaction, suggesting that clear expectations and recognition of performance remain vital. However, dimensions such as management-by-exception (both active and passive) are comparatively less favoured, indicating that overly corrective or reactive leadership may not resonate well with employees.

In terms of job satisfaction, while autonomy, meaningful work, and the freedom to implement ideas are key sources of satisfaction, variability in responses suggests inconsistency in experiences across the workforce, particularly in recognition, career growth, and task diversity.

Suggestions

1. **Encourage Transformational Practices:** Leadership training programs should emphasize transformational behaviours, particularly intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and motivational communication.
2. **Strengthen Recognition Systems:** Implement structured recognition and reward mechanisms to ensure consistent acknowledgment of employee efforts and achievements.
3. **Foster Professional Growth:** Develop transparent pathways for career advancement and skills development to enhance long-term engagement and satisfaction.
4. **Promote Participative Leadership:** Encourage leaders to involve employees in decision-making and provide autonomy in task execution to leverage their abilities effectively.
5. **Balance Transactional Elements:** While accountability is important, management-by-exception should be balanced with developmental feedback and support to avoid a purely corrective approach.

By aligning leadership practices with the psychological and professional needs of personnel, organizations, especially in the policing sector, can foster a more motivated, satisfied, and high-performing workforce.

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