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Leadership Style and Its Relationship to Job Satisfaction for Employees at the University of Babylon

Ahmed R. Al-Owaidi[1], Thabet Ali Saleh[2], Meriem Benmechirah[3]

[1]Department of Follow-Up, Al-Qasim Green University, Babylon, Iraq
[2]College of Administration and Economics, Kirkuk University, Kirkuk, Iraq
[3]Istanbul Commerce University, Fatih, Türkiye
Email: ahmedrasim@uoqasim.edu.iq

Abstract

The goal of this study was to examine the association between leadership styles and job satisfaction from the perspective of a sample of employees (administrative and teachers) with various job titles and scientific titles at the University of Babylon—Iraq and used a questionnaire as a tool for collecting data that adopted a five-point Likert. Scale to represent the opinions of the study sample, that was selected using the random sampling method, where the researchers randomly distributed (55) a questionnaire and (50) valid questionnaires were approved for analysis, representing a response rate of (91%). The results of the study showed that there is a positive and strong correlation between the style of democratic leadership and job satisfaction and that there is an inverse relationship between the style of autocratic leadership and job satisfaction. The study's findings also showed that there is no connection between a laissez-faire leadership style and job satisfaction. Accordingly, the study recommended that the style of leadership adopted in the organizations targeted by the study should enhance job satisfaction, loyalty to the organization, and performance in general. The study also suggested expanding the research circle to include a larger number of governmental as well as private universities and adopting other leadership styles as variables for future research.

Keywords

Leadership Styles, Job Satisfaction, Democratic Leadership, Autocratic Leadership, Laissez-Faire Leadership, University of Babylon—Iraq

1. Introduction

The element of leadership is essential. It contributes to shaping the attitudes of workers towards the organizations in which they work. It is perhaps considered one of the most important variables affecting their performance and attitudes. It represents a set of behaviors that the leader directs his subordinates. The leadership to obtain a comprehensive commitment of the individual toward the organization (Al-Shanti, 2017) provides the guarantee. Organizations need flexible leadership capable of facing challenges, and the kind of individual who has the art of management to be able to lead their duties efficiently and sincerely (Kanaan, 2009). In universities, leaders determine the style of performance for academics and students (Rosnizah et al., 2022).

Successful principals indicate that using different forms of leadership behavior, not just one, will lead to better school results (Kafa & Pashiardis, 2020). Also, the success of the organization depends on the effectiveness of leadership in terms of employee satisfaction at work, and this is one of the foundations of the success of organizations (Voon et al., 2011).

In addition, the economic, social, political, professional, and personal factors that exist in the lives of leaders depend on their professional and personal experiences (Day, 2000). As for the degree of job satisfaction, it is affected by the leadership style, which is an external motivating factor (Geleto et al., 2015).

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Indeed, many educational institutions have managers who are unable to motivate their employees due to their ineffectiveness (Piosik et al., 2019). Since leadership has a significant impact on employee fulfillment and their attitudes toward their jobs, the role of leaders in organizations has changed today, since the effectiveness of any organization depends on the leadership techniques used by its leaders (Hina, 2015). Usually, harmful and ineffective management and leadership behavior called destructive and authoritarian leadership (Alshaar, 2022) seriously affect the organization and employees.

The leadership style is one of the factors that can enhance satisfaction or dissatisfaction in public universities (Dirar et al., 2021). Job satisfaction is one of the key components that improve human resources because it is one of the fundamental elements of every organization and is supported by both external and internal factors (Purwanto et al., 2019). It plays a significant role in ensuring that staff members at public universities perform well (Abayomi, 2020). It can enhance employees' work experiences and organizational outcomes while also fostering creativity (Abidakun & Ganiyu, 2020). Additionally, being satisfied can boost individual efforts, enhance employees' abilities and communication skills, increase retention, and otherwise help the organization grow.

2. Study Problem

Lack of clarity of vision among the administrative leaders at the University of Babylon about following the appropriate leadership style that achieves job satisfaction among employees.

2.1. Study Aims and Questions

This study aims to identify the leadership style practiced by administrative leaders and its impact on achieving job satisfaction for employees at the University of Babylon, by responding to the subsequent questions:

- What is the leadership style practiced by the administrative leaders at the University of Babylon from the employees' point of view?
- What does the University of Babylon's staff think about their level of job satisfaction?
- Is there a statistically significant connection between the administrative leaders' chosen leadership style and the degree of job satisfaction at the University of Babylon from the employees' perspective?
- Are there statistically significant variations in workers' job satisfaction opinions owing to functional and personal variables (gender, educational. qualification, and years of experience)?

2.2. Study Hypotheses

Based on the above questions, the study hypotheses were formulated as follows:

H1: There is a significant relationship between the democratic leadership style and job satisfaction of employees at the University of Babylon.

H2: There is a significant relationship between the autocratic leadership and job satisfaction of employees at the University of Babylon.

H3: There is a significant relationship between the laissez-faire leadership style and job satisfaction of employees at the University of Babylon.

H4: At a significant level (a > 0.05), no differences are statistically at a significant level (a > 0.05), no differences are statistically significant in the job satisfaction of the study sample according to the variables of gender, level of education, and number of years of experience.

2.3. Research Model

The model of study shown in Figure 1 is based on the literature that was reviewed.

3. Literature Review

3.1. Leadership

Leadership is a complex concept that includes many overlapping variables, and there is no comprehensive and comprehensive definition of all its meanings (Bro, 2019). As the difficulty in defining the meaning of leadership does not
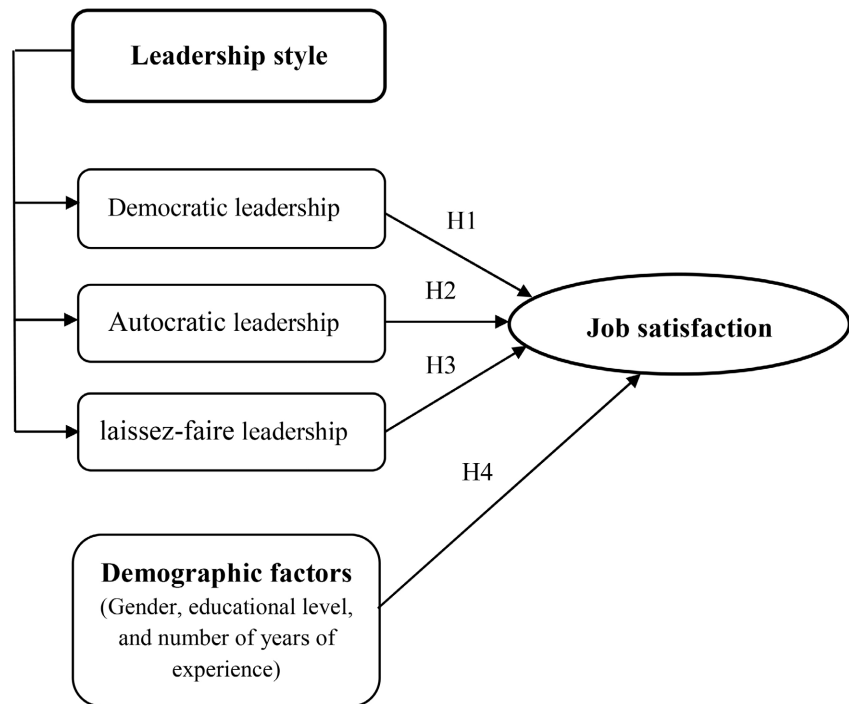
Figure 1. Theoretical Model of the research.

stem from the lack of evidence, proofs, and data about its meaning but rather the abundance of this evidence and its multiplicity is what led to the existence of a contradiction and conflict of opinions and concepts about the idea of leadership and its meaning (Bennis & Nanus, 1985).

Leadership is defined as "the process of influencing individuals to direct their actions and skills to fulfill organizational objectives", and it plays a big role in whether a company succeeds or fails (Nteboheng & Samson, 2021). A process includes "describing the organization's vision, persuading members of the vision, and supplying members with the information they need to realize the vision" (Chandrasekara, 2019).

The leader, according to (Govender et al., 2013), is a change agent who motivates followers to meet objectives. He is "the person who recognizes a need and believes he can contribute to its fulfillment" (Nadeem et al., 2012).

3.2. Leadership Style

It is defined as "the behavioral patterns that leaders use when collaborating with and directing others" (Mwesigwa et al., 2020). According to (Nam & Park, 2019), a leader's style is reflected in how leaders connect with their team. It is a set of traits and behaviors used by the leader in dealing with subordinates (Samita, 2022).

The leadership style is the manner in which followers are led. With the advancement of leadership studies, the number of leadership styles is continually changing. If the leadership style is effective, the organization's performance will

improve and the intended goals will be met; but, if the leadership style is ineffective, the organization's performance will fall short. Then this matter will negatively affect organizational performance and employee performance (Akhila, 2018). As effective leaders are the ones who adopt the correct type of leadership according to the requirements of the situation (Armstrong, 2016).

3.3. Democratic Leadership Style

The democratic leader is the one who takes the final decisions, however, he invites the subordinates to contribute to making those decisions, and this is reflected positively in increasing employee satisfaction and developing their skills (Nadeem et al., 2012).

According to (Smith, 1998), employee effectiveness will be high if the task is well-organized and the relationship between the leader and his subordinates is positive, and democratic leaders also take seriously their responsibility to involve team members in discussion, and are capable of working energetically in small teams.

As the group, under this leadership, chooses or elects its leader, as the behavior of the democratic leader is characterized by encouraging others to participate, and authorizing them the necessary powers for the purpose of carrying out their tasks easily. Also, this pattern is concerned with consolidating the belief among subordinates that they are an important part of administrative decisions. As it relies on experience and the power of consultation in managing others and motivating them to work in a team spirit in a way that guarantees their loyalty and increases their motivation to achieve and strive seriously to achieve goals collectively (Salah Al-Nuaimi, 2020).

In addition to the democratic leader sharing tasks among the group members and being a part of it, subordinates also participate in decision-making, which is essential to democratic leadership because it places a strong emphasis on people (Nteboheng & Samson, 2021).

3.4. Autocratic Leadership Style

Autocratic (authoritarian) leadership: It is the oldest style of leadership, where the boss is the central personality, and there is no concept of leadership or direction, and flexibility is non-existent, as the leader makes decisions and the subordinates must implement them as quickly as possible (Hawela, 2019). It is a leadership style, which cares about achievement and work relying on central methods. Centralization of authority and strict control over subordinates (Bro, 2019). The type of manager who cares about work more than his interest in people as work has a first priority among other priorities. In addition, the dictatorial manager believes that the requirements of work conflict with the needs of individuals and therefore he plans, organizes, directs, and monitors work tightly on the grounds of that this reduces human conflict (Osama, 2014).

Autocratic leadership, according to (Quible, 2005), allows group members to

focus on completing their jobs without worrying about recommended ideas or insights into complicated choices. Authoritarian leaders also address problems unilaterally, denying group members the freedom to behave as they see fit.

Although authoritarian leadership is frequently characterized by power abuse and can lead to authoritarianism, dictatorship, and control, it is employed in instances when the leader is more knowledgeable and well-informed or has information that other group members do not have (Roul, 2012).

Where some studies have shown that the authoritarian leadership style contradicts job satisfaction (Thusyanthini & Thusyanthini, 2014; Jerome, 2018). As this style reflects an o consuming, style that has contradicting effects (Harms et al., 2018) (Figure 2).

3.5. Laissez-Faire Leadership Style

Laissez-faire leadership is defined as a "leadership style comes from the French phrase for (let him do it)" (Eagly et al., 2003). It is a negative personality trait characterised by avoidance, hesitation, and indifference (Jeevarathnam et al., 2013). This pattern is completely opposite to the democratic pattern; as there is an absence of real leadership, and every individual is free to perform work as he pleases, and the character of chaos dominates this leadership and the passivity of the leader, this style of leadership behavior is characterized by the leader's non-interference in the course of affairs and he does not give his directions or instructions to the workers at all, unless he is asked to do so as it is a leadership that gives subordinates greater freedom and independence in performing tasks (Nasser, 2013). When staff members are highly motivated and skilled, this approach works better (Goldberg, 1992). It is also the least effective and least performing driving style. Because laissez-faire leadership rarely makes decisions and offers little guidance, concern, or encouragement to their subordinates, it has a negative effect on how well they execute their jobs (Avolio, Waldman, & Einstein, 1988; Bass, 1990).

A laissez-faire leader is one who does not interfere with work tasks, avoids and can dismiss responsibilities entirely, and fails to encourage or direct followers; this style is met with dissatisfaction and thus lacks productivity and effectiveness (Limsila & Ogunlana, 2008).

The leader fails to lead the team, does not complete his tasks, and does not lead effectively, according to this leadership style. Leaders who take a hands-off
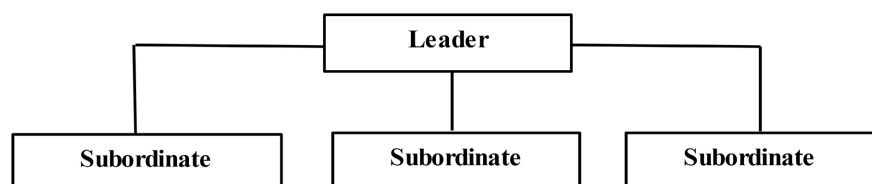
Figure 2. The authoritarian style of leadership. Source: Muhammad (2012). An Introduction to Management, 2nd Edition, University Press Office, Algeria.

style seldom direct or participate in decision-making. Thus, because the leader does not demonstrate genuine power, does not answer questions, and does not give information or support to the group, this leadership style allows subordinates to make their own decisions (Morreale, 2002). Subordinates of laissez-faire leaders must consequently seek guidance from various sources to make final judgments (Liphadzi et al., 2015).

In contrast, the study of (Abid et al., 2016) demonstrates that incorporating followers in decision-making and giving them the impression that they are integral parts of the business process empowers them and inspires them to focus their efforts on accomplishing organizational goals.

3.6. Job Satisfaction

"How comfortable a person is with their job" is an early definition of job satisfaction (Paul, 1997). When considering job and work experience, job satisfaction is a positive emotional state (Prameswari et al., 2020). It refers to a person's satisfaction with his work (Aziri, 2011). This is reflected in the productivity of the worker, as the satisfied or satisfied worker has better productivity than the productivity of the dissatisfied worker (Sageer, 2012). According to Taskinen, satisfied employees work meticulously, are more innovative and productive, provide value to customers as well as enhance culture and interest in business, and thus they increase profits with their initiatives. Organizations that talented people leave may incur costs and losses (Kekäläinen, 2019: p. 17; Taskinen, 2019).

Besides, it cannot be denied that satisfied workers engage in more creative and innovative activities in group discussions and meetings a lot (Davidescu et al., 2020). Also express their satisfaction with their jobs if their jobs are rewarding and satisfactory, and this level of satisfaction is considered an essential component of the success of the organization (Shrestha, 2019). Therefore, the reasonable job satisfaction that the employee enjoys has a positive effect on improving his performance and increasing his morale, which is reflected in the formation of good relations with his colleagues (Natasha & Francisco, 2016).

Generic, extrinsic, and intrinsic job satisfaction are the three main categories of job satisfaction. Where the measures of intrinsic and external satisfaction are derived from Herzberg's theory, as extrinsic job satisfaction is related to factors such as supervision, compensation, and company policies, while intrinsic job satisfaction is related to motivators such as job contentment (Shrestha, 2019).

4. The Relationship between Variables

4.1. The Relationship between Leadership Style and Job Satisfaction

Numerous studies on the connection between leadership pattern and workers job satisfaction have been conducted in public universities, and the findings show that there is a meaningful connection between them (Nam & Park, 2019).

Additionally, leadership philosophies play a significant part in societal and organizational behaviors and can affect how satisfied employees are with their jobs (Jabbar & Hussin, 2019). Some studies have also shown that there is a strong and significant connection between leadership and employee job satisfaction (Njiinu, 2017). Similar findings were reached by (Kalsoom et al., 2018), who found a positive relationship between leadership pattern and job satisfaction. Leadership patterns have a considerable impact on job satisfaction in higher education institutions, as (Lin et al., 2018) demonstrate.

4.2. The Relationship between (Democratic Leadership Style) and (Job Satisfaction)

Democratic leadership styles and employee job satisfaction are linked, and leaders significantly affect overall performance and growth (Kelali & Narula, 2017). According to the study (Afshinpour, 2014), democratic leadership involves decentralizing decision-making in which employees participate, in addition to using their subordinates' suggestions and recommendations and being forgiving of mistakes. This leadership style also includes decentralization in decision-making, which employees participated in.

Jerome (2018) holds that democratic leadership techniques emphasize the strength of the group as a whole, that there is enhanced interaction with participants in decision-making that high levels of participation increase employee creativity and innovation, and that participation in decision-making fosters a sense of responsibility in subordinates. And the findings of his research demonstrated a link between democratic leadership and job satisfaction. The findings of the studies (Bro, 2019; Nada, 2019; Dike & Madubueze, 2019), which examined how leadership style affects work satisfaction help to boost business efficiency.

Moreover, the study (Dolly & Nonyelum, 2018) revealed that democratic leadership leads to increased productivity due to its constructive effect on job performance since the respondents exhibited a high degree of work satisfaction.

4.3. The Relationship between (Autocratic Leadership, Style) and (Job Satisfaction)

Quible (2005) asserts that authoritarian leaders independently arrive at the solution and do not permit the other group members to operate as they choose, as opposed to autocratic group members who prioritize task performance without taking into account difficult alternatives. According to the study (Hamdoud, 2012), there is a poor relationship between the authoritarian leadership style of managers and the satisfaction of their employees. According to the research instrument, respondents avoided criticism of the authoritarian style and their opinions were neutral, according to the study by (Bro, 2019). Although abuse of power is a common characteristic of authoritarian leadership and can lead to authoritarianism, domination, and tyranny, (Roul, 2012) argues that it can also

be used successfully because the leader has access to information or is more knowledgeable than other group members. Despite this, according to (Jerome, 2018; Thusyanthini & Thusyanthini, 2014), authoritarian leadership is an arrogant style with contradictory effects, and there is a conflict between it and work satisfaction.

4.4. The Relationship between (Laissez-Faire Leadership Style) and (Job Satisfaction)

The use of a non-interventionist leadership style does not serve the goals of the organization, and has negative effects on work. although it may serve the workers to some extent, as some managers in this style are characterized by hesitation in making decisions and trying to delegate their responsibilities to subordinates, and not Using their authority, and trying to give workers the freedom to do their jobs (Hamza & Samia, 2020; Sunday, 2016). Despite this approach may be effective when team members are good at their field of expertise, it often leads to a lack of motivation and role blurring (Belias & Koustelios, 2014).

As the results of the study (Hussain & Sheema, 2022; Lütfi & Murat, 2021) shown that physicians working in hospitals experience lower job satisfaction as a result of laissez-faire leadership.

However, a study (Rosnizah et al., 2022) shown that job satisfaction and laissez-faire leadership have a substantial relationship.

Additionally, a study (Nada, 2019) found a positive relationship between job. satisfaction and a laissez-faire leadership style. The study's findings (Huynh et al., 2019) further demonstrated that laissez-faire leadership enhances job satisfaction.

On the other hand, the results of the study (Ümit & Mahire, 2022) indicated that perceptions of organizational happiness and leadership chaos have a positive and substantial relationship.

4.5. Research Methodology

The research used the descriptive analytical approach to describe the phenomenon of the research characteristics. As the approach allows providing an image of the current situation of the studied phenomenon as an accurate and local description, then diagnosing it, revealing its various elements, analyzing, measuring and interpreting those data, and reaching an accurate description of the phenomenon and its results, depending on the appropriate statistical method, and the study followed the methods Quantity.

The questionnaire, which was formulated based on the hypotheses of the study and the relevant literature, was adopted as a data collection tool.

The simple random sampling method was used to select the study sample, where (55) questionnaires were distributed to the study sample, and (50) valid questionnaires were retrieved for analysis. As in the case of research that relies on the analytical method of relationships and relational survey, the sample size

must range "between" (50 - 100) (Delice, 2010). The target community for the study was the workers at the University of Babylon (teachers and administrators).

5. Data Analysis and Finding

5.1. Reliability of Questionnaire Scales

The stability of the questionnaire was measured by Cronbach's alpha to ensure the reliability of its data, as it was measured for each dimension of the study and all items of the questionnaire combined, and Table 1 below shows the results.

The results showed that the values of coefficient of Cronbach's alpha for each dimension of the study were greater than (0.6), and for all axes it amounted to (0.839), this indicates that the stability is high and the tool is reliable, since value of coefficient of Cronbach's alpha is higher than 0.6 (Mohajan, 2017).

5.2. Testing the Study Hypotheses

It is clear from Table 2 above that there is a positive and strong correlation between the style of democratic leadership and job. Satisfaction, where the correlation value was (r = 0.739) and the significance level a < 0.05, according to which the first hypothesis (H1) is accepted, which states "There is a significant relationship between the democratic leadership style and job satisfaction of employees at the University of Babylon".

It is clear from the table that the relationship is inverse between the autocratic leadership style, and job satisfaction, where the value of the correlation coefficient was (r = −0.321) and the level of significance a > 0.05. This means that the level of employee satisfaction decreases if the leader practices the authoritarian leadership style. So the second hypothesis (H2) is rejected which states:

"There is a significant relationship between the autocratic leadership and job satisfaction of employees at the University of Babylon."

While it is clear that the relationship between leadership style "laissez-faire" him work and job satisfaction at the level of significance of 0.05 is not significant, where the correlation coefficient (r = 0.149) and the value of alpha (a = 0.301), which is greater than 0.05. Therefore, the third hypothesis (H3), states "There is a significant relationship between the laissez-faire leadership style and job satisfaction of employees at the University of Babylon".

Table 1. Reliability of scale.

Scale	Cronbach's alpha	Items number
Democratic leadership	0.907	10
Autocratic leadership	0.735	9
laissez-faire leadership	0.759	10
Job satisfaction	0.816	29
overall	0.839	58

Table 2. Correlations.

		Dimension 1 (Democratic style)	Dimension 2 (Autocratic style)	Dimension 3 (Laissez-faire style)	Job satisfaction
Dimension 1 (Democratic style)	Pearson Correlation	1	−0.310*	0.124	0.379**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.028	0.390	0.007
	N	50	50	50	50
Dimension 2 (Autocratic style)	Pearson. Correlation	−0.310*	1	0.062	−0.321*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.028		0.671	0.023
	N	50	50	50	50
Dimension 3 (Laissez-faire style)	Pearson. Correlation	0.124	0.062	1	0.149
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.390	0.671		0.301
	N	50	50	50	50
job satisfaction	Pearson. Correlation	0.739**	−0.321*	0.149	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.007	0.023	0.301	
	N	50	50	50	50

* indicates that there is a correlation in sig. at the level of 0.05 (two-tailed). ** indicates that there is a correlation in sig. at the level of 0.01 (two-tailed).

5.3. Testing the Forth Hypothesis H4

H4: At a significant level (a > 0.05), no differences are statistically at a significant level (a > 0.05), no differences are statistically significant in the job satisfaction of the study sample according to the variables of gender, level of education, and number of years of experience.

To answer this hypothesis, we use one-way analysis of variance in (3) directions (N-Way ANOVA). In this type of one-way analysis of variance in (3) directions, we will consider one dependent variable and (3) independent variables.

H4a: There is no significant difference at the level of significance (a > 0.05) in the job satisfaction of the research sample according to the variables of gender.

H4b: There is no significant difference at the level of significance (a > 0.05) in the job satisfaction of the research sample according to the variables of educational qualification.

H4c: There is no significant difference at the level of significance (a > 0.05) in the job satisfaction of the research sample according to the variables of experience.

Comment on the table:

- About hypothesis H4a, it is noted that the *p*-value = (0.34), which is above the (0.05) significance level. Therefore, hypothesis (H4a) is rejected, which means "there is no significant difference at the level of significance of 0.05 in the study sample due to the gender variable".

Table 3. Variance analysis (ANOVA).

		Sum. of Squares	df	Mean. Square	F	Sig.
gender	Between Groups	5.800	25	0.232	1.185	0.340
	Within Groups	4.700	24	0.196		
	Total	10.500	49			
Educational_Qualification	Between Groups	35.720	25	1.429	0.797	0.711
	Within Groups	43.000	24	1.792		
	Total	78.720	49			
Professional_Experience	Between Groups	58.800	25	2.352	3.595	0.001
	Within Groups	15.700	24	0.654		
	Total	74.500	49			

- As for job satisfaction according to the academic qualification, it is clear from Table 3 that the *p*-value = (0.711), which is greater than the level of significance 0.05 and the decision here is to reject the hypothesis (H4b) meaning that There is a significant difference at the level of significance of 0.05 in the research sample due to the educational qualification variable.

- As for the effect of the factor of years of experience, the *p*-value was equal to (0.001), which is smaller than the level of significance 0.05, this means accepting the hypothesis (H4c), which means, that there are no statistically significant differences at the level of significance 0.05 in a sample Study according to the variable years of experience.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study looked at a sample of University of Babylon employees to determine the relationship between leadership (pattern) style and job satisfaction. The study was based on the SPSS statistical program for data analysis, as several methods and statistical tests were applied (Pearson correlation, Cronbach's alpha, one way ANOVA, regression analysis to test hypotheses, and so on). The results showed that democratic leadership and satisfaction with factors have a strong correlation, and as a result, this relationship has a positive effect on improving job performance, likewise with many studies conducted by (Afshinpour, 2014; Jerome, 2018; Bro, 2019; Nada, 2019; Dike & Madubueze, 2019; Dolly & Nonyelum, 2018).

As well as, this study concluded that there is an inverse relationship between adopting an authoritarian leadership style and job satisfaction and this agrees with the study (Hamdoud, 2012; Bro, 2019; Thusyanthini & Thusyanthini, 2014; Jerome, 2018) and does not agree with a study (Roul, 2012), which indicated that the leader in this type of leadership style, where is more understanding of matters or has the ability to obtain information that is difficult for the rest of the

group members to access.

The findings of this study likewise indicated that there is no significant relationship between job satisfaction and a laissez-faire leadership style, and this agrees with the results of the study (Hussain & Sheema, 2022; Lütfi & Murat, 2021), while it contradicts the results of the study of (Rosnizah et al., 2022; Nada, 2019; Huynh et al., 2019).

Therefore, the style of leadership adopted in any organization must enhance job satisfaction, loyalty, and performance in general, and this requires strengthening reliance on the democratic style of leadership and searching for other leadership styles that motivate employees and improve performance.

Finally, the study suggests expanding the research circle to include public and private universities and adopting other leadership styles as variables for future research.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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