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**Leadership, Organizational Learning and Commitment for Police Officers in the USA,
Australia and Malta**

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Leadership, Organizational Learning and Commitment for Police Officers in the USA, Australia and Malta

Abstract

This paper used Social Exchange Theory (SET) as a theoretical framework to compare the effectiveness of organisational leadership (captured by perceived organisational support-POS and leader-member exchange-LMX) and training to support the development of committed police officers in the USA, Australia and Malta. Overall, 1,043 police officers participated in a self-report survey (569 in the USA, 193 in Australia, and 262 in Malta). The findings suggest that poor workplace relationships, coupled with poor training experiences negatively impact police commitment. Poor workplace relationships have contributed to somewhat uncommitted police officers protecting Australians, and it is only marginally better in Malta and USA. The findings also suggest that satisfaction with training mediated the relationship between LMX, POS and affective commitment for Australian police only (partially confirmed for the USA but not for Malta). Improving leadership and organizational learning would positively enhance police officers' levels of organisational commitment, and consequently, the service provided.

Keywords: leader-member exchange, perceived organisational support, training, affective commitment, comparative research.

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Leadership, organizational learning and commitment for police officers in the USA, Australia and Malta

A society needs a committed ‘first response’ workforce (police, soldiers, fire-fighters) to protect citizens and their civil rights, according to the values of that society. As values change, new legislation is implemented, and society expects that first responders will comply irrespective of their personal values. They also are given the legitimacy and responsibility to use force at times, which can be stressful and have detrimental impacts if adequate training (to ensure operational competency) and support (when the emotional toll is high) is not in place (Brunetto et al. 2017). Some knowledge required by police officers can be taught formally; however, much of the specialised occupational knowledge that informs decision making on the job is strongly influenced by the context in which it is taught (Hordern 2016). According to Hordern (2016), the acceptance of knowledge depends on the social context in which it is given, and hence, the power of those giving the knowledge is an important consideration. This is an important issue for the allocation of training resources in the public sector because resources are scarce, and training resources are scarcer still (Berman et al. 2012). This paper compares the effectiveness of basic organisational processes – leadership and training to support the development of committed police officers across three countries (USA, Australia and Malta). Uncommitted police officers represent a potentially problematic security threat if society feels unprotected.

Whilst training continues to be a growth industry in the private sector, the austerity agenda has negatively impacted public sector employees’ access to formal training; instead, placing a greater burden on incidental training on the job (Berman et al. 2012). Formal organizational learning refers to the suite of formal learning activities that influences policies and processes about how knowledge is implemented in practice (Vera & Crossan 2004). However, there are competing agendas at play which influence the value of formal training for some types of employees. For example, policing is similar to other occupations, especially the professions, in that the established strong culture socialises each new wave of recruits into a specific way of ‘thinking and doing’, and that influences how they perceive training (Brunetto & Farr-Wharton 2005; Evans 2011; Farr-Wharton et al 2011). In policing, senior leaders are calling for “new approaches and fresh thinking”, in order to challenge traditional approaches to policing (Outram *et al.* 2014, p. 92). They identified the greatest challenges as “skill shortages [and] ... increasing community expectations” [about what police officers should/could do] ... (Outram et al. 2014, p. 95). This is because when new laws are implemented, police officers firstly undergo training to acquire new knowledge and skills (when possible). However, the decision to fully adopt a new policy is strongly influenced by their relationship with police leaders, who either legitimise formal training (Berson et al. 2006) or discredit it in favour of maintaining the status quo (Makin 2015). This means that on-the-job training can negate new learning from formal training, unless leaders actively encourage police officers to adopt new procedures. Brunetto et al. (2015) identified that nurse’s intention to implement new skills depends on the support of management. In the case of policing, Makin (2015) refers to the problem as the ‘dualistic dilemma’. The implications of employees facing a situation where organizational leadership subtly contradicts the value of formal training are unclear. A key objective of this present research is to seek to clarify such implications.

Leadership practices are instrumental in affecting the commitment of police officers (Johnson, 2015). Affective commitment refers to the extent to which employees associate with and perceive themselves as part of an organization (Meyer et al. 2012). This is important because police commitment affects how they do their job and as a consequence, for example, Ford et al. (2003) found that committed police were less corrupt and more supportive of community-oriented policing. Further, Rose et al. (2009) identified that high satisfaction with training was also associated with high commitment. Also, Rodwell, Noblet and Allisey (2011, p. 392), in examining Australian police officers, found that management needs to focus far more on being supportive so as to build more committed employees. The void in the research is in comparing whether satisfaction with training mediates the relationship between leadership and commitment across different countries.

The theoretical framework informing this study is social exchange theory (SET). SET assumes that workplace relationships built on trust and respect facilitate mutual reciprocity such that over time there are benefits for all stakeholders, far in excess of the initial relational exchanges (Mitchell, Cropanzano & Quisenberry 2012). Employees, on one hand, benefit from increased resources, information, respect and opportunities for promotion; managers, on the other hand, benefit from increased support for their ideas and the organization benefits because of increased organizational effectiveness (Shore et al. 2009). Using SET, we conceptualize that when police officers receive a singular message about policies from leaders, and formal training, and are adequately resourced and respected, they return support for their leaders; and, as a consequence, are committed to the goals of the organisation (especially protecting citizens). Whilst there is research linking effective leadership to satisfaction with training, and a link between satisfaction with training and high commitment, there is minimal comparative research examining these issues (and the extent to which mediation is present), across three continents – USA, Australia and Malta. The research questions are:

RQ1: What is the impact of organizational police leadership on police officers' satisfaction with training and commitment to their organization?

RQ2: What are the similarities and differences in police leadership, satisfaction with training and commitment across Australia, Malta and the USA?

Much of the training research is North American-centric, and therefore, the findings from this present research should provide a more comprehensive understanding about the link between leadership, organizational learning and commitment in different countries. The reason for including Malta and Australia is because the USA and Australia are examples of “core New Public Management (NPM) group” because they have actively implemented reforms. whereas Malta is an example of “NPM laggards” because it has implemented few, if any, reforms (Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011). Additionally, Australia differs from the USA because reforms have increased the discretionary power of Australian managers and whilst there has been significant reforms in performance management in both countries, the implementation has focused on senior management only in the USA (Brunetto et al. 2016, 2017; Shane 2010). Hence, the three countries provide different stages of reform in changing leadership and performance practices.

Background

Social Exchange Theory (SET)

As stated, SET assumes that workplace relationships built on trust and respect will over time deliver greater benefits to all stakeholders. The theory is based on humans being social creatures who tend to respond favourably to positive respectful interactions. As such, when a manager interacts positively, it builds a somewhat obligatory expectation of a similar response, facilitating the development of mutual reciprocity (Shore et al. 2009). Previous research shows that employees who are adequately resourced (with the necessary knowledge and skills and organizational support) to do their job, respond by supporting management decisions, which also benefits the organization by increasing organizational efficiency and effectiveness (Mitchell et al. 2012). In contrast, if police receive information on-the-job that differs from the information received during formal training, then the result is likely to be increased confusion, increasing dis-satisfaction with the organizational leadership, and this is likely to reduce their organizational commitment. The SET variables examined to capture police leadership include perceived organizational support (POS) and supervisor-subordinate (leader-member) exchange relationships (LMX), and outcomes such as affective commitment.

Perceived Organizational Support (POS)

POS is a SET variable because it captures employees' perceptions of the extent to which the organization supports and sustains them in the workplace (Eisenberger et al. 1997, 2016). When police officers perceive high levels of support in the way they are managed and trained, then it is likely that they will respond with high organizational commitment (Farr-Wharton et al, 2017). On the other hand, when managers subtly negate official sources of information from training, and fail to provide feedback loops for clarifying information, it is likely that police officers will be less satisfied with organizational support and the training given and, consequently, less committed to the organization. While there is research showing that POS predicts satisfaction with training and development (Trincherro et al. 2013) and affective commitment (Cropanzano & Mitchell 2005), no research has compared the impact of POS upon police perceptions of training and commitment in Australia, Malta and the USA. We expect organization commitment to be lowest when the dualistic dilemma is greatest because Berson et al. (2006) argues that the leadership determines the value of organisational learning and Makin (2015) argues that the leadership may undermine the value of police training in some cases.

Supervisor-subordinate relationship

The supervisor-subordinate relationship can be captured using the Leader-Member Exchange framework (LMX) which argues that supervisors favour some employees (insiders) more than others (outsiders) creating differing relationships and outcomes. LMX is a typical SET variable because respectful supervisor-subordinate interactions build trusting relationships that deliver benefits for all stakeholders (employees, management, organizational effectiveness). For example, Dulebohn et al. (2012, p. 1744) summarized from their meta-analysis that when employees are treated with respect, effective relationships develop and subsequently, improved outcomes result from "stimulating them to perform beyond expectations"; rather than employees working to contract requirements only. They also found that much of the variance in employee outcomes was explained through the mediating role of LMX (Dulebohn et al. 2012). In the public sector, a supervisor often is less able to influence resourcing for employees. However, effective supervisors can mediate the excessive demands of senior management on

employees to some extent (Farr-Wharton et al. 2017). So it can be supported that LMX provides an important lens through which the police leaders/police members' relationship can be explored.

Training

As stated, training forms part of the organizational learning arsenal that an employee can use to learn new knowledge, skills and attitudes required to undertake tasks specific to each occupation (Noe 2005). Policing is also similar to other 'first response' occupations in that the unpredictable nature of crime/accidents/potential threats makes it difficult to build capabilities using only a formal training process (Brunetto et al. 2016). Across most OECD countries, the expectation is that formal police training will consist of initial training at the academy (mostly rote learning of laws and procedures), field training (especially of the physical component involved in policing), and on-the job training (by watching senior police officers at work undertake routine activities). Throughout this process, police officers need to achieve tangible competencies in defence tactics, driving and traffic enforcement, firearms training and arrest procedures to build their technical, tactical knowledge and expertise. From this base, they can learn to identify a potential problem and then think critically about ways of legally and safely resolving the problem.

Werth (2011) argues for more skill-building in the intangible higher order skills such as critical thinking skills on the job, so as to prepare police for monotonous and routine activities one minute and then a life threatening event. However, police leaders in some countries suggest that formal training accounts for less than 10 percent of real police work (Caro 2011). Additionally, Hordern (2016) argues that the legitimacy of specialised occupational knowledge depends on the social context and the power of those giving the information. Hence, in ideal conditions, the supervisor legitimises the skills learnt both formally and informally. The hypothesis is:

H1. LMX is positively correlated with satisfaction with training

Additionally, organizational police leadership has a responsibility to reduce the dualistic dilemma by providing appropriate training and a coherent singular source of knowledge and skills (Outram et al. 2014). We argue that high level of training satisfaction is associated with low dualistic dilemma. The hypothesis is:

H2. POS is positively correlated with satisfaction with training

Affective Commitment

Affective or organizational commitment refers to the extent to which an employee experience significant emotional attachment to an organization, and, as a consequence, are more dedicated and prepared to work hard to achieve organizational goals (Meyer et al. 2012). High quality LMX is associated with high affective commitment and therefore we expect to replicate a similar result for police officers in Malta, Australia and the USA.

H3. LMX is positively correlated with affective commitment

Additionally, because it is a SET variable, past research shows that for example when Italian, UK and Australian nurses experience organizational support from management, they reciprocate with positive commitment to the organisation (Brunetto et al. 2017; Rodwell et al.

2011). We therefore expect to replicate a similar relationship for police officers. The hypothesis is:

H4. POS is positively correlated with affective commitment

The relationship between training and affective commitment has been examined for police officers in the USA (Brunetto et al. 2016), but not for police officers in Malta and Australia. We expect a similar outcome. The hypothesis is:

H5. Satisfaction with training is positively correlated with affective commitment

The contribution of this paper is in comparing whether satisfaction with training mediates the relationship between LMX and POS; and affective commitment not just in the US case, but also for police in Australia and Malta. The reason for examining this is to ascertain which country experiences ‘dualistic dilemma’. We argue that where formal and informal training are inconsistent, then satisfaction with leadership is low, which negatively impacts affective commitment. The hypothesis is:

H6. Satisfaction with training mediates the relationship between LMX (a), POS (b) and affective commitment

Police officers in USA, Australia and Malta.

Police have the same purpose in each country, which is to protect and maintain public order and to prevent (if possible) crime and/or investigate and collect evidence against criminals. Hence, formal training is similar across the three countries. In terms of size, Malta is much smaller in size and structure and has a younger history in that it only came under the control of the government in 1921. In Australia and the USA, policing is the state responsibility mainly, although in the US, there are some funded county police officers. As stated, a major difference in the three countries is the degree to which reforms have changed leadership practices (Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011) with Australian managers experiencing higher discretionary power compared with other core-NPM countries such as the USA (Brunetto et al. 2015, 2017). We therefore expect Australia will have the lowest means. Training satisfaction is likely to be low in all three countries, even Malta because the Malta Police Union are increasingly critical of their training (The Malta Independent 2016). Because we expect the lowest satisfaction with POS and LMX for Australian police, we expect the “dualistic dilemma” to be strongest for Australian police officers. Since past research shows that POS and LMX impacts training satisfaction, we expect their satisfaction with training and affective commitment to be the least of the three countries.

H7. The means for POS, LMX, training and affective commitment will be lowest for Australia.

Methods

To compare the impact of organizational leadership (LMX and POS) and training satisfaction on the affective commitment of police officers in Australia, USA and Malta, a cross-sectional design was used. A self-report survey was employed to collect data from 1043 police officers: 588 from one state in the USA, 193 from one state in Australia, and from 262 working in the police department of Malta.

Sampling: Police officers are required to attend one day’s training yearly and data was collected during this period to capture data from police officers in Australia and the USA. Over

a period of five months, police officers whilst attending training events, were invited to participate. In Australia during 2010-11, 750 surveys were distributed and 193 usable surveys (representing a response rate of nearly 26%) were received. The demographic detail included the following: the majority were male (N=132, 68.4 percent) who held the rank of senior constable (31.6 percent); with an average tenure of less than 5 years in their present position and had been employed as a police officer for 3-10 years.

A similar process was followed in collecting data in the USA over a period of five months (January-May inclusive, 2013). Police officers from one city were invited to complete a survey during their training sessions. The USA sample totalled 596 useable surveys (response rate of approximately 50%). The demographic details (see Table 1) include: mostly males (412), with 3 sergeants, and 164 females with 3 sergeants (12 respondents failed to provide such information). A remainder were rank-and-file police officers (non-sergeants). The process for collecting data in Malta was different. In 2015, 900 police officers from police stations in two of the five regions of Malta were invited to participate, and in response 258 useable surveys were obtained (28.7% response rate). The demographic details are: 193 (74.5%) were male and 65 (23.5%) were female, of which 72.5% (187) were constables; 18.2% (47) were 2nd rank constables and 9.3% (24) were senior ranks. In each of the three countries, envelopes were provided to seal completed surveys and an enclosed secure box was used to collect the completed surveys.

Insert Table 1 about here

Measures: To operationalize the path model, previously validated scales were used. A six-point Likert-type scale, ranging from ‘1’=strongly disagree to ‘6’=strongly agree was used. Each of the scales used within our study resulted in suitable levels of composite reliability and average variance extracted for the USA, Australia and Malta (see Table 2). To test the impact of organizational leadership, the following validated surveys were used. *Leader-Member Exchange (LMX)* was measured using Graen and Uhl-Bien’s (1995) instrument, which captures employees’ satisfaction with the quality of the relationship with their supervisor. A typical item is: ‘I have a good working relationship with my supervisor’. *Perceived organizational support (POS)* was measured using Eisenberger et al. (1997) to capture the relationship between the organization and the individual. A typical item is ‘My organization cares about my opinion’. *Satisfaction with Training* was measured using the six-item instrument developed by Meyer and Smith (2000) and modified for the policing context. A typical item is “The training I have received so far has helped me be a better police officer”. *Affective commitment* was measured using a modified version of Allen and Meyer’s (1990) instrument for capturing commitment to the organization. A typical item is ‘I feel strong ties with this [police service]’.

Insert Table 2 about here

Data Analysis: A five step approach was used to analyse the data. The first two steps included Anderson and Gerbing’s (1988) two-step structural equation modelling approach – including the estimation of a separate measurement and structural model. The analysis then included a

test of mediation examining direct and indirect effects of predictor, mediator, and criterion variables (MacKinnon et al. 2002). The final two steps included an approach to examine the similarities and differences of the way management practices influence perceptions of training satisfaction and affective commitment. In particular, (1) a SEM test of the equivalence of latent mean structures and (2) causal equivalence (Byrne 2010) were used to test the similarities and differences for police officers in Malta, USA and Australia.

The hypothesised measurement model resulted in poor fitting models, especially in the Australian and Maltese samples (see Table 3). The following items were removed due to small squared multiple correlations, including the following items: one affective commitment – *‘I do not feel emotionally attached to this organisation’*, one LMX – *‘My supervisor is satisfied with my work’*, and two POS – *‘If given an opportunity, my organisation would take advantage of me’* and *‘My organisation is willing to help me if I need a special favour’*. Also, an error covariance was estimated between two affective commitment items *‘I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organisation’* and *‘This hospital has a great deal of personal meaning for me’*. The modifications resulted in a good fitting baseline measurement model and associated structural model for each of the three groups (see Table 3). A common latent factor was added to the baseline measurement models to test for common method bias. The confirmatory factor analysis for each group remained as good fitting models.

There is support for convergent validity with all path loadings and composite reliabilities being greater than 0.70 and all latent variables average variance extracted exceeded 0.50 (see Table 2). Discriminant validity was established by testing a number of alternate models that were significantly different from the baseline measurement model in which we combined the four constructs examined in the model (See Table 4) (Fornell & Larcker 1981).

Insert Table 3 about here

Insert Table 4 about here

Results

All hypotheses were tested using structural equation modelling using AMOS software and a maximum likelihood estimation technique. We controlled for gender and age. However, as neither control was significant, they are not depicted in Figure 1. Also, a covariance was estimated between the two exogenous variables, though because this is not the focus of our study, the covariance is not depicted in Figure 1. Figure 1 depicts support for hypotheses 1 to 5, except LMX did not significantly correlate with satisfaction with training in the Maltese sample, and LMX did not directly influence affective commitment in the Australian sample.

Insert Figure 1 about here

The results from the mediation analysis provide support for hypothesis 6a and 6b for the US and Australian samples (see Table 5), with satisfaction with training completing mediating the relationship between LMX and affective commitment in the Australian sample, and partially mediating POS to affective commitment. In addition, hypothesis 6a and 6b were partial

mediators for the US sample. On the other hand, in the Maltese sample, satisfaction with training partially mediated POS to affective commitment; but did not mediate LMX to affective commitment.

Insert Table 5 about here

Further, a test of the equivalence of latent mean structures (see Table 6) provided partial support for hypothesis 7. The US and Australian samples, and the Australian and Maltese samples significantly differed in relation to each of the four constructs examined within the study. However, Malta and Australia did not significantly differ in their perceptions of POS. In addition, Malta and the USA did not differ significantly in their perceptions of LMX and affective commitment. As hypothesized, affective commitment, satisfaction with training, POS and LMX was significantly lower in Australia when compared to US police and Malta, except that satisfaction with training was significantly lower in Malta when compared to Australia. Finally, satisfaction with training was perceived significantly higher in the US when compared to Malta, however, POS was perceived significantly lower in the US when compared to Malta.

Insert Table 6 about here

To test the equivalence of latent mean structures we adhered to prescriptions by Byrne (2010) by first examining whether any differences were manifesting from the measurement model. Any significant differences in the measurement model are freely estimated when examining the equivalence of latent mean structures. The results provide partial support for hypothesis 7 (see Table 7). In particular, hypothesis 1 (LMX positively correlates with training opportunities) significantly differed between USA and Malta. Hypothesis 2 (POS positively correlates with training opportunities) and hypothesis 4 (POS positively correlates with affective commitment) were significantly different between Australia and USA, and between Malta and USA. Hypothesis 3 (LMX positively correlates with affective commitment) and hypothesis 5 (training opportunities positively correlates with affective commitment) significantly differ from Australia and Malta.

Insert Table 7 about here

Discussion

This paper examined the organizational-leadership – learning- commitment nexus across Australia, Malta and the USA to see whether the key organizational processes supported the development of committed police officers. Police officers are expected to protect human life, property and civil rights, according to the values of the society, and to adopt new processes as societal values change. Formal training is perceived as the vehicle for upskilling police officers. However, we argued that if ‘dualistic dilemma’ is present, then the outcome is uncommitted police officers, which represents more than just wasted capabilities, they represent a potentially more problematic security threat. Hordern (2016) argues that management determines the legitimacy of knowledge and if ‘dualistic dilemma’ is present then that suggests that management’s actions are thwarting the value of formal training. Hence, whilst individual

paths had been examined previously, the implications from this comparative policing study are significant for the potential safety of society.

The findings show that all hypotheses were supported, but not for all countries. For example, the path between POS and training satisfaction was expected to be significant because of past research for other types of employees and because senior police leadership determines the funding, quality and access to training - and this was confirmed in this study for each country. On the other hand, the path between LMX and training satisfaction has been confirmed previously for US police officers (Caro 2011; Werth, 2011). However, in this study it was confirmed for the US and Australian sample, but not for the Maltese example, suggesting that basic “truths” from research tested mainly in North American countries may have less relevance in understanding organizational behaviour in other countries. In total, the organisational leadership (captured by POS and LMX) accounted for approximately half of the variance explaining training satisfaction for Australian and US police officers. However, it explained only a quarter of the variance for police officers in Malta.

The second set of paths were from LMX and POS on to affective commitment. All paths were significant except the path from LMX to affective commitment for Australian police officers. This means that the relationship between the supervisor and Australian police officers did not impact on their commitment to the organization. In contrast, the relationship with the organisational leadership strongly impacted all police officers’ commitment to the organization as foreshadowed by Rodwell et al. (2011) research. The third path examined was between training satisfaction and affective commitment. This had been previously confirmed for nurses in Australia, UK and Brazil by Brunetto et al. (2015) and the findings from this paper support this trend. In total, a third of US commitment, half of Australian commitment and a quarter of Maltese commitment to their police organization was explained by organizational leadership (LMX, POS) and training satisfaction.

A further contribution of the paper is in relation to the mediation results, showing that satisfaction with training mediated the relationship between LMX (a), POS (b) and affective commitment for Australian police only, although it was partially confirmed for the USA but not for Malta. Previous research had proven the path from POS to training satisfaction for Italian nurses (Trincherio et al. 2013) and to affective commitment (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005), and the contribution of this paper is that the findings show that POS does significantly impact police perceptions of training and commitment in Australia, Malta and the USA. Further, Makin (2015) argued that the ‘dualistic dilemma’ exists and this paper confirmed this and found that when low levels of satisfaction with POS and training co-exist, the dualistic dilemma is greatest and, as a consequence, affective commitment is lowest in those countries. In this study, of concern is that police officers from all three countries were somewhat dissatisfied with POS, but only in Australia and Malta were police officers ALSO somewhat dissatisfied with training, and only in Australia were police officers ALSO somewhat not committed to the organization. This suggests that the impact of the dualistic dilemma is greatest in Australia, and least in the USA (contrary to Makin (2015), (although he was not comparing across countries). The findings suggest that Australian police are comparatively less committed to the goals of their police department, with implications for both wasted capabilities, and potentially impacting security.

One of the potential limitations is that the effect of national culture on the perceptions of police officers across countries was not examined so as to reduce the complexity of the paper. However, it remains a limitation in interpreting the results. Another limitation is the use of self-report survey data, which can cause common method bias. However, the common method variance was negligible for each group (e.g., USA = 2.76%, Australia = 1.66%, Malta = 1.06%) (Podsakoff et al. 2003).

Conclusion

To understand the contribution of the findings it is important to understand the potential implications of the findings. At one level there are significant internal and external changes impacting all first response occupations, and policing is no different in challenging traditional approaches (Outram et al. 2014). There is evidence from this study of some level of dualistic dilemma (Makin 2015) in each country. Of greater significance is the impact these organizational processes have on police commitment. Using a SET framework, it was evident that poor workplace relationships, coupled with poor training experiences negatively impact police commitment – a somewhat sobering finding considering the context of increasing demands on police services. Poor workplace relationships have contributed to somewhat uncommitted police officers protecting Australians, and it is only marginally better in Malta and USA. Using an analogy in medicine, if senior medical leaders subtly undermined the training of medical practitioners, would the organizational learning program remain? Further, whilst research continues to show the importance of effective leadership, the dis-satisfaction with perceived support (meaning dis-satisfaction with senior police leadership) in Malta, USA and Australia challenges the effectiveness of the present approaches in managing police to protect the public. One solution involves an evidence-based theoretically embedded multi-pronged approach to improving leadership and organizational learning. If the present methods of preparing leaders were more informed by SET principles, so as to build healthy workplace relationships, then past research suggests that policing outcomes would improve. Despite growing expectations of improved public services by the public, without changes in leadership practices, the result appears to be wasted capabilities, with the potential to negatively impact public safety.

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Table 1. Demographics

	USA		Australia		Malta	
Gender	N	%	N	%	N	%
Male	396	69.6	132	68.4	196	74.8
Female	161	28.3	61	31.6	66	25.2
Missing	12	2.1				
Total	596		193		262	
Age						
=< 30 years	3	0.5	33	17.1	107	40.8
31-44 years	211	37.1	130	67.4	72	27.5
45+ years	322	56.6	30	15.5	80	30.5
Missing	33	5.8			3	1.2

Table 2. Composite reliability and average variance extracted

	USA		Australia		Malta	
	CR	AVE	CR	AVE	CR	AVE
POS	0.84	0.62	0.82	0.54	.86	.53
LMX	0.90	0.61	0.92	0.67	.85	.50
Training opportunities	0.81	0.59	0.77	0.53	.85	.65
Affective commitment	0.89	0.61	0.86	0.56	.87	.57

Table 3. Confirmatory factor analysis and test of invariance

Step 1. Baseline model							
USA							
Model	Factors	X²	df	Δχ²	RMSEA	CFI	SRMR
Measurement	POS, LMX, Training, Affective commitment	769.516	246		.06	.94	.04
Baseline measurement	POS, LMX, Training, Affective commitment	412.800	163		.05	.97	.04
Alternate 1	Combine POS with LMX	1883.516	166	1470.716(3)*	.14	.76	.11
Alternate 2	Combine POS with Training	806.129	166	393.329(3)*	.08	.91	.07
Structural	POS, LMX, Training, Affective commitment	412.800	163		.05	.97	.04
Australia							
Model	Factors	X²	df	Δχ²	RMSEA	CFI	SRMR
Measurement	POS, LMX, Training, Affective commitment	551.465	246		.08	.88	.07
Baseline measurement	POS, LMX, Training, Affective commitment	371.258	163		.08	.92	.06
Alternate 1	Combine POS with LMX	891.327	166	564.069(3)*	.15	.71	.15
Alternate 2	Combine POS with Training	455.587	166	84.329(3)*	.10	.89	.07
Structural	POS, LMX, Training, Affective commitment	371.258	163		.08	.92	.06
Malta							
Model	Factors	X²	df	Δχ²	RMSEA	CFI	SRMR
Measurement	POS, LMX, Training, Affective commitment	544.549	246		.08	.89	.07
Baseline measurement	POS, LMX, Training, Affective commitment	337.013	163		.06	.94	.06
Alternate 1	Combine POS with LMX	857.421	166	520.408(3)*	.13	.75	.12
Alternate 2	Combine POS with Training	585.470	166	248.457(3)*	.10	.85	.08
Structural	POS, LMX, Training, Affective commitment	337.013	163		.06	.94	.06
Step 2. Test of invariance					Δχ²	Δdf	P
USA, Australia, and Malta		Model 1 (Measurement)			214.305	32	<.001
		Model 2 (Structural)			410.576	42	<.001
USA and Australia		Model 1 (Measurement)			39.566	16	<.001
		Model 2 (Structural)			46.945	21	<.001
USA and Malta		Model 1 (Measurement)			188.830	16	<.001
		Model 2 (Structural)			357.747	21	<.001
Australia and Malta		Model 1 (Measurement)			72.372	16	<.001
		Model 2 (Structural)			228.257	21	<.001

Table 4. Correlation matrix

		1	2	3	4	5	6
USA & Australia (above diagonal)	1. Gender	1	-.071	.0088	.111**	.064	.034
	2. Age	-.118	1	-.059	.009	.011	-.003
	3. Affective commitment	.149*	-.016	1	.463**	.428**	.355**
	4. Training opportunities	.045	-.014	.570**	1	.508**	.409**
	5. POS	.128	.081	.531**	.575**	1	.432**
	6. LMX	-.028	-.049	.349**	.479**	.397**	1
Malta	1. Gender	1					
	2. Age	-.065	1				
	3. Affective commitment	-.112	.110	1			
	4. Training opportunities	-.034	.203**	.327**	1		
	5. POS	-.096	.067	.405**	.501**	1	
	6. LMX	-.050	-.029	.344**	.153*	.298**	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). * . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 5: Mediation hypothesis testing

USA	Total effect	Direct effect	Indirect effects	Result
H6a: Training opportunities mediates LMX to affective commitment	$\beta = .202, p = .004$	$\beta = .142, p = .004$	$\beta = .060, p = .003$	Partial mediation
H6b: Training opportunities mediates POS to affective commitment	$\beta = .405, p < .005$	$\beta = .233, p = .005$	$\beta = .172, p = .004$	Partial mediation
Australia	Total effect	Direct effect	Indirect effects	
H6a: Training opportunities mediates LMX to affective commitment	$\beta = .151, p = .096$	$\beta = .047, p = .558$	$\beta = .104, p = .002$	Full mediation
H6b: Training opportunities mediates POS to affective commitment	$\beta = .575, p = .003$	$\beta = .368, p = .006$	$\beta = .206, p = .005$	Full mediation
Malta	Total effect	Direct effect	Indirect effects	
H6a: Training opportunities mediates LMX to affective commitment	$\beta = .234, p = .004$	$\beta = .233, p = .005$	$\beta = .001, p = .939$	No mediation
H6b: Training opportunities mediates POS to affective commitment	$\beta = .335, p = .006$	$\beta = .246, p = .010$	$\beta = .090, p = .014$	Partial mediation

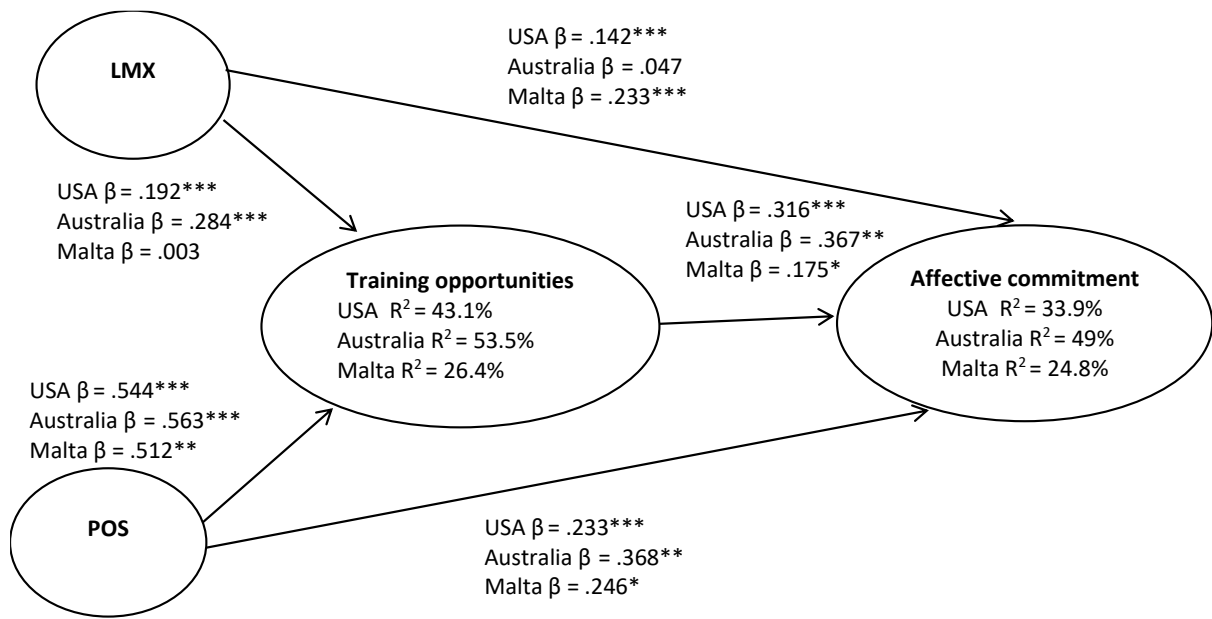
Table 6. Invariance of latent mean structures

Dependent Variable	Mean	Standard deviation	Groupings		Difference estimate	P
Affective commitment	4.37	.99	USA	Australia	-.251	<.001
	3.86	1.11	Australia	Malta	.416	<.001
	4.39	1.07	Malta	USA	-.092	.079
Training opportunities	4.59	.96	USA	Australia	-.863	<.001
	3.76	1.12	Australia	Malta	-.341	<.01
	3.44	1.24	Malta	USA	.736	<.001
POS	3.52	.83	USA	Australia	-.302	<.001
	3.76	.89	Australia	Malta	-.011	.761
	3.46	1.09	Malta	USA	-.106	<.05
LMX	4.51	1.00	USA	Australia	-.383	<.001
	4.19	1.17	Australia	Malta	.416	<.001
	4.82	.83	Malta	USA	-.044	.455

Note: Groupings to the right of the vertical line are compared to those on the left of the line. A negative difference estimate reveals that the grouping on the right has decreased.

Table 7. Invariance of causal structures

Hypothesis	Groupings		$\Delta\chi^2$ (df)	P	Outcome
Hypothesis 1	USA	Australia	13.711(10)	>.05	✗
	Australia	Malta	19.626(12)	>.05	✗
	Malta	USA	12.794(5)	<.05	✓
Hypothesis 2	USA	Australia	21.411(11)	<.05	✓
	Australia	Malta	20.909(13)	>.05	✗
	Malta	USA	24.255(5)	<.001	✓
Hypothesis 3	USA	Australia	13.708(9)	>.05	✗
	Australia	Malta	20.975(11)	<.05	✓
	Malta	USA	8.863(4)	>.05	✗
Hypothesis 4	USA	Australia	19.246(10)	<.05	✓
	Australia	Malta	15.221(11)	>.05	✗
	Malta	USA	19.23(5)	<.05	✓
Hypothesis 5	USA	Australia	13.878(11)	>.05	✗
	Australia	Malta	26.931(14)	<.05	✓
	Malta	USA	9.278(5)	>.05	✗



* $P < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Figure 1. Structural model standardised regression weights