

The Impact of Perceived Benefits of Customer Service Training on In-Role Performance in the UAE Retail Sector

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Article History: Received: February 09, 2026 Revised: March 05, 2026 Accepted: March 13, 2026 Available Online: March 21, 2026	The aim of this study is to explore the effect of perceived benefits of customer service training on in-role performance of employees in retail industry in United Arab Emirates. While the UAE retail industry is in a state of rapid growth, issues like employee turnover and fluctuation in performance are also a major problem. The objective of the present research was to fill this gap in the literature by offering quantitative evidence of the link between training perceptions and job performance in this context. The design of the research used was deductive positivist, mono method and quantitative research, the data collection method was in the form of an online survey using Google Forms. 208 valid responses were received from the UAE retail workers who attended the Customer Service Training. A total of 11 items were included in the survey and were rated on a five-point Likert scale, which were validated scales. IBM SPSS Statistics was used for the analysis of the data, with descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, Pearson correlation and linear regression performed. Results showed that the perceived benefits of customer service training is positively related at a moderate level to in-role performance ($r = .537$, $p < .001$). The analysis of in-role performance using linear regression revealed that the variance in in-role performance was significantly explained by perceived training benefits ($R^2 = .288$). The results of the study show that there is a positive relationship between perceived training benefits and in role performance. The findings of this study add to the human resource management literature and suggest some practical implications for HR managers and practitioners in the UAE retail sector.
Keywords: Customer service training, in-role performance, perceived benefits, human capital theory, UAE retail, employee performance	
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1. Introduction

Customer service training is a strategic resource that the retail organizations in UAE employ in achieving sustainable competitive advantage. The UAE retail market is also relevant to the UAE country vision, as is the case with other frameworks, such as the National Agenda and Vision 2031, which are also focused on excellence of services. The experience confirms that the training programmes properly designed in the Emirates make a lasting impression and enhance the skills of the employees as well as decrease the number of operational errors. The right training programmes also boost work satisfaction and productivity as they also help in aligning individual career aspirations. Because the retail team is the front line with the multicultural consumer shoppers, high performance – defined as a behavior that generates value – is central to the success of the organization. The labour productivity of the retail industry is a crucial factor in the national economic development, especially in the UAE, where the retail estimated GDP is expected to expand from USD 44.38 billion in 2024 to USD 61.89 billion by 2030 (TechSci Research, 2020).

Moreover, the high turnover can be resolved with the help of strategic training as it implies the long-term dedication to the workforce development (Usamah Aldehaim et al., 2025). Of particular interest is that just about half of the luxury retail employees in the GCC region have said they plan to leave their jobs in the industry (Basu, 2025), making it clear that they need to invest in meaningful training that is personally and professionally rewarding. Employment in the UAE retail sector must be flexible, as this will aid in adapting to the changes in technology and globalization. The integration of these technologies such as e-learning will enable the retailers to provide interactive training that will help them to achieve excellence in the business. Last but not least, the empowerment of the employees has to be related to customers so that the employees can be empowered to meet the rising demand for quality service delivery in this dynamic global hub.

1.1 Problem Statement and Research Gap

Training has been recognized as an important factor in the enhancement of customer service, but the issue now is whether employees believe customer service training is useful to them or whether their beliefs in the usefulness of training translate into better job performance. The rapid turnover of employees in the UAE retail industry also underscores the need to grasp the value of training in boosting employee performance. While there is existing literature that discusses the benefits of training and performance, literature is limited and only focused on the perceived benefits of customer service training to the employees pertaining to the UAE retail environment. This gap is important as employee perception influences implementation of trainings, thus enabling employee performance. Although many studies have been conducted in the field of training and performance, few quantitative studies have investigated the relationship between training and performance in the retail industry in the UAE. This is a context that is multicultural and service-oriented, which should be investigated in a focused way. This study seeks to close this gap by asking the question if workers' perceived benefits of customer service training are predictive of their in-role performance.

1.2 Research Scope

The study is based on employees from the retail sector in UAE that have attended a Customer Service Training Program. Independent variable is perceived benefits of customer service training and dependent variable is in-role performance. Data is collected with a quantitative survey method which gives measurable knowledge of the relationship of these variables.

1.3 Research Purpose

The aim of this research is to investigate the link between employee's perception of service training and in-role performance. The study aims to provide practical implications for the UAE retail companies in improving the effectiveness of training and to provide the gap in literature in this context. The results are also expected to provide empirical support for the wider HRM discourse, with a specific targeted application in the service and multicultural environments that are not well represented, like the UAE's retail industry.

1.4 Research Question

What is the impact of perceived benefits of customer service training on in-role performance among employees in the UAE retail sector?

1.5 Research Objectives

To examine the perceived benefits of customer service training and its relationship with in-role performance among employees in the UAE retail sector.

To give recommendations on how the retail organisations in the UAE can improve customer service training practices.

2. Literature Review

Customer service training is a strategic human resource practice that seeks to enhance skills, knowledge and in-role performance of employees. It is an ongoing process highlighted in contemporary competitive economy to develop human capital and improve Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs), and directly contribute to organizational excellence (Cooper et al., 2019). The current trends, which have a different approach from the previous ones, view the employees as an asset that can be kept for a longer period of time than if it were regarded as a workforce (Lasa, Pedroni and Komm, 2024), enable to consider development as a set of perceived benefits that employees receive. In this strategic approach, customer surveys are a crucial part to identify skill gaps and align training programs with the expectations of customers in the real world (Johnson, 2011).

The UAE retail market was projected to be USD 44.38 billion in 2024 and is expected to grow to USD 61.89 billion in 2030 at a CAGR of 5.70% (TechSci Research, 2020). Despite this growth, there remain employment issues. Human resource practices such as customer service training are crucial in maximizing perceived development gains, as nearly half (around 50%) of luxury retail workers in the GCC region plan to leave their jobs (Basu, 2025). The UAE retail business atmosphere is extremely competitive and service-oriented, where the requirements of customer are continuously evolving due to the influence of globalisation and digitisation, and so employee performance is vital to an organization's success. Another separation has to be made between in-role performance and extra-role performance, which can be defined as organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) (Abdurachman et al., 2023). This research focuses specifically on in-role performance, as it directly affects operational efficiency and service delivery in the UAE retail context.

2.1 In-Role Performance

In-role performance, also known as In-role Behavior (IRB), is the type of behavior rewarded by the formal reward system and included in the job description of the employee (Williams and Anderson, 1991). This performance includes skillfulness, intensity and productivity; and illustrates dedication, innovation and contribution to an organisation (SearchInform, 2025); and generates

organisational value and sustainable competitive advantage (Platania et al., 2024). This study is based on in-role performance because the in-role performance is formally assigned roles which are obligatory in the UAE retail sector, whereas the extra-role behavior includes OCB (Abdurachman et al., 2023) which is not obligatory in this sector.

Adaptive performance is also a requirement, employees who adapt their responses to changing work demands in highspeed industries (Abdurachman et al., 2023). A workplace that fosters trust, collaboration and support is characterized by positive workplace conditions, which lead to higher engagement and productivity (Cooper et al., 2019). Additionally, setting clear expectations and SMART goals further increases accountability (SearchInform, 2025), and customer surveys provide an important feedback loop for continuous improvement in in-role performance (van Vulpen, 2021). Where companies have successful performance, it is usually a result of the individual's motivation, the support they receive from co-workers and the advantages they feel from mechanisms of organisational development.

2.2 Perceived Benefits of Customer Service Training

Customer service training is a systematic effort designed to enhance the knowledge, skills and attitudes of the workforce to yield improved in-role performance. The extent to which the employee believes that development is needed and that the activity will benefit the employee is a mediator between their decision to participate and the development activity (Noe and Wilk, 1993). These perceived benefits are usually categorized by: personal benefits (personal development and job performance), career benefits (career goals, career advancements) and job-related benefits (job-related gains with managers and co-workers). The three types of benefit that employees recognize are likely to help them demonstrate affective commitment to perform their in-role duties (Johnson, 2011).

The best approach to training is to create a training cycle that includes the identification of skill gaps and the measurement of results (Nwali and Adekunle, 2021). Customer surveys are an important tool in this cycle as it ensures training meets the needs of customers and that employees recognise job-relevant benefits from training (Newman, Thanacoody and Hui, 2011). The UAE Vision 2031 (FAHR, 2026) is also being addressed in training programmes in UAE. Work roles, which are seen to be relevant to employees' career development are more likely to be embraced by staff and the perceived benefits are further strengthened when organisations draw on customer feedback to ensure training content reflects the actual needs of the market.

2.3 Relationship Between PBCST & IRP

Research has demonstrated that training programmes have a positive relationship with employee outputs. Training improves technical and soft skills and it is argued that such training can explain up to 18% of variance in performance, which is in line with Human Capital Theory, which states that employees will increase their productivity when they feel that their personal, career, and/or job development activities have provided them with some type of benefit. (Yash Deliwala and Alpesh Gajera, 2025) In industries like retail which frequently adapt to technological advancements and evolving customer preferences, employees can use lifelong learning to stay current with the latest innovations and ensure that they provide top-tier customer care (Ahmed et al., 2024).

Studies have shown the beneficial effect of training on the competency of employees and employee morale, with the majority of the gains in service businesses directly attributed to organised training programmes (Nwali and Adekunle, 2021). Formal role obligations evaluated by the supervisor, rather than the employee's own rating of the role, is a stronger predictor of customers' self-reports of satisfaction and word-of-mouth than are employees' self-reports of role obligations (Netemeyer and Maxham, 2007). Employees are more likely to fulfil formal

performance expectations when they feel that training will enable them to do their jobs more effectively and achieve career goals (Noe and Wilk, 1993). However, there is a significant gap in research, especially in the context of retail in the UAE, regarding the specific link between the perceived benefits of customer service training and in-role performance that has yet to be explored quantitatively.

2.4 Theoretical Frameworks

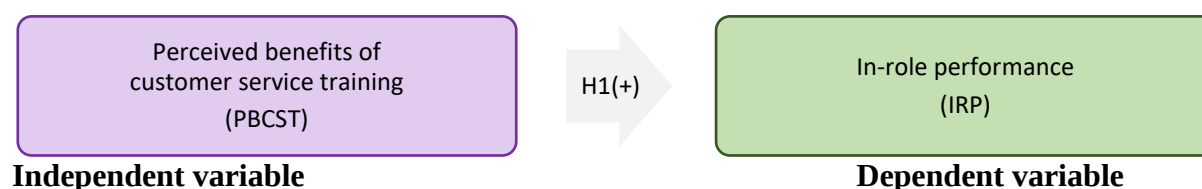
2.4.1 Human Capital Theory

Human Capital Theory (HCT) was proposed by Gary Becker and Theodore Schultz, who suggested that the skills, knowledge and experiences of employees are valuable resources for the organisation (Ross, 2024). Training and education therefore are strategic investments that enhance the productivity of the workforce and the economic value of organisations (Awu, Darius and Chimele, 2025). HCT also proposes that the costs and the perceived benefits of employees learning new skills be taken into account, such as career progression and wage opportunities (Maringe, 2023). Trainings and development are among the vital strategic investment for long run organisations' success (Awu, Darius and Chimele, 2025), as organisations in the modern knowledge economy are urged to keep developing their human resources to sustain competitive advantage (CIPD, 2017). If employees believe training is a worthwhile investment, their productivity and in-role performance, or formally rewarded behaviour (as described in job advertisements), will follow.

2.5 Hypothesis Development

Based on the reviewed literature and the theoretical grounding of HCT, the following hypothesis is proposed (Barroga and Matanguihan, 2022):

H1: Perceived benefits of customer service training positively influence in-role performance among employees in the UAE retail sector.



3. Methodology

This research study uses the Research Onion framework to structure the research methodology from philosophical to specific data collection processes (Melnikovas, 2018).

3.1 Research Philosophy

The research philosophy used is positivism because the scientific approach can be applied in studying the social world and the study of the social world is carried out based on facts that can be observed and measured. This philosophy is appropriate for this study because it is looking to find the relationship between perceived benefits of customer service training and in-role performance through numerical data, and not subjective interpretations.

3.2 Research Approach

Deductive method is used where theory is applied down to observations. The study is based on Human Capital Theory (HCT) that suggests that employees view training as a strategic investment

in their own productivity, which results in the formulation of a specific hypothesis (H1) and testing whether it is supported by data collected for the study.

3.3 Methodological Choice

The present study follows a mono-method quantitative research design. Quantitative research involves numerical data which is meant to be generalised to a larger population (Ghanad, 2023). Standardised measures and numeric analysis make evaluations of the influence of perceived benefits on formally assigned job responsibilities more objective and reliable.

3.4 Research Strategy

A survey technique was employed, with participants filling out standardized questionnaires. The use of surveys in HRM research is currently common, which are good means of gathering employee attitudes, behaviors and experiences. In this way, it was possible to quantitize the relationship between perceived training benefits and in-role performance among the UAE retail sector employees systematically.

3.5 Time Horizon

A cross-sectional approach with data taken at a point in time was used. It is suitable for explanatory research, where the relationship being explained is contained within a set timeframe (Saunders et al, 2019).

3.6 Techniques and Procedures

3.6.1 Data Collection and Instrument

An online questionnaire was sent to employee UAE Retail workers using Google Forms. The purpose of the study was explained to the participants and an informed consent statement was presented to the participants, and that they can withdraw at any time without consequences. The instrument was composed of 11 closed ended items which were scored by a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree).

Perceived Benefits of Customer Service Training (IV): The perceived benefits of customer service training as perceived by the employees were measured by a six item scale adapted from Noe and Wilk (1993) and Newman, Thanacoody and Hui (2011). Examples of items include: "Participating in training programmes will help me to do my job more effectively" ($\alpha = .775$).

In-role Performance (DV): The five items scale originally developed by Williams and Anderson (1991) was used to measure in-role performance. Sample items include: "I do my job as outlined in my job description" ($\alpha = .729$).

Both alpha values exceed the accepted threshold of 0.7, confirming the reliability of both scales.

3.6.2 Sampling Method

Convenience sampling was used; participants were chosen based on availability and willingness to participate. The target population comprised of people who had received customer service training as employees in the UAE retail sector. A total of 208 valid responses were collected which is suitable for this exploratory study using a quantitative method in an undergraduate level (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). Convenience sampling is a commonly used and recognized sampling method that is used in exploratory research when access to a specific population is limited, but it is less generalizable than other sampling methods.

3.6.3 Data Analysis

Data was analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics (IBM, 2024) as follows: Descriptive statistics was used to describe demographic data and central tendencies; reliability analysis was undertaken with Cronbach's Alpha to ensure internal consistency, with a coefficient of 0.7 and above regarded as acceptable; inferential statistics, such as Pearson correlation and linear regression, was conducted to test the significance and strength of the relationship between PBCST and IRP.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical behaviour was upheld throughout. Respondents were not coerced to take part and they were given an explanation of the purpose of the study and their right to withdraw from the study at any time. Personal identification data were not gathered so that there is full anonymity and confidentiality. Data was kept in a secure and confidential manner and was only accessed by the researcher.

4. Results and Findings

The results of a survey questionnaire sent to UAE retail workers is presented in this section. The results are presented sequentially according to the response rate, the demographic profile, preliminary data screening, and inferential statistical analysis of reliability, correlation and regression.

4.1 Response Rate and Sample

The online survey questionnaire was sent to employees in the UAE retail sector using Google Forms and after screening for study eligibility, 208 valid responses were collected. The respondents were the ones that also confirmed their current employment in the UAE retail sector and their participation in the customer service training, with 88.9% confirming their current employment in the UAE and 73.6% confirming participation in customer service training. All responses were included in the analyses which involved 208 respondents.

4.2 Respondent Demographics

The demographic data was gathered on four variables: Age, gender, tenure and job position. The age group distribution of the respondents was predominantly young with 76.9% in the age range of 18-25 years and 23.1% in the age range of 26-35 years. The sample was predominantly female (75.0%) than male (25.0%). The work force was also fairly young, with 51.4% having been in the current job for less than one year, 27.4% for one to three years, and 21.2% for four to six years. For job position, Sales Associate/Sales Assistant is the most frequently reported position (40.4%), Customer Service Representative (20.7%), Store Manager/Assistant Manager (16.3%), Other (11.1%), Cashier/Checkout Staff (6.7%), and Store Supervisor/Team Leader (4.8%).

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	%
Age	18–25	160	76.9
	26–35	48	23.1
Gender	Male	52	25
	Female	156	75
Tenure	Less than 1 year	107	51.4
	1–3 years	57	27.4
	4–6 years	44	21.2
Position	Sales	84	40.4
	Associate/Assistant		
	Customer Service Rep	43	20.7
		4339	

Store	34	16.3
Manager/Assistant		
Other	23	11.1
Cashier/Checkout Staff	14	6.7
Supervisor/Team	10	4.8
Leader		

4.3 Data Screening

Data were first checked for missing values and normal distribution of variables that was required for Pearson correlation and linear regression before inferential analysis. All 208 cases were checked for missing values for the independent variable (PBCST) and the dependent variable (IRP) and there were none, which indicated that the dataset was complete and appropriate for analysis. The demographic and screening variables were acceptable for skewness between -2 and +2, and between -7 and +7 for Kurtosis, as recommended by Hair (2011), and so the assumption of normal distribution used for subsequent parametric testing was accepted.

Table 2: Missing Value Analysis

		N	%
Cases	Valid	208	208
	Excluded	0	.0
	Total	208	100.0

4.4 Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's Alpha was used to assess the internal consistency of both measurement scales. The Cronbach's Alpha was .775 for the Perceived Benefits of Customer Service Training scale (six items) and .729 for the In-role Performance scale (five items). The values are above the generally accepted value of 0.7 (Lunneborg, 1979), which means that both scales have good internal consistency and that they measure their constructs reliably.

4.5 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were computed to describe the central tendency and variability of the two variables on the 208 valid responses. The mean score obtained by PBCST was 4.41 (SD = .449), which showed that the customers generally agreed that Customer Service training had personal, career and job related advantages. IRP's mean score was 4.28 (SD = .440) indicating relatively high in-role performance ratings. The range of the scores for both variables was between about 2.80 and 5.00, which falls within the 5-point Likert scale adopted.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
PBCST	208	2.83	5.00	4.4135	.44864
IRP	208	2.80	5.00	4.2798	.43956
Valid N (listwise)	208				

4.6 Pearson Correlation

Pearson correlation analysis was done to check the strength and direction of the correlation between PBCST and IRP. The results showed that there was a strong and significant positive correlation between the two variables ($r = .537$, $p < .001$). This suggests that increased perceived gains from training in customer service are correlated with increased in-role performance among

employees. The significance value is below 0.05, so the relationship is not likely to be due to chance. In line with this, the null hypothesis fails to be supported and H1 is accepted: perceived benefits of customer service training positively affect in-role performance of UAE retail employees.

Table 4: Pearson Correlation

		PBCST	IRP
PBCST	Pearson Correlation	1	.537**
	Pearson Correlation		.000
	N	208	208
IRP	Pearson Correlation	.537**	1
	Pearson Correlation	.000	
	N	208	208

4.7 Linear Regression

Simple linear regression was used to calculate the extent of the prediction of the IRP by PBCST. The model resulted in an R value of .537 and an R² value of .288, which means that the model explains about 28.8% of the variance in in-role performance. This estimate is fairly stable as evidenced by an Adjusted R² of .284. The overall model was statistically significant (F(1, 206) = 83.285, $p < .001$), which indicates that PBCST is significant to predict IRP.

Table 5: Regression, Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.537a	.288	.284	.37183	2.088

Table 6: Regression, ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	11.515	1	11.515	83.285	.000b
	Residual	28.481	206	.138		
	Total	39.995	207			

Table 7: Regression, Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
1	Constant)	1.960	.256		7.669	.000
	PBCST	.526	.058	.537	9.126	.000
95.0% Confidence Interval for B						
		Lower Bound	Upper Bound			
1	(Constant)	1.456	2.463			
	PBCST	.412	.639			

The unstandardised coefficient for PBCST was $B = .526$ ($p < .001$), suggesting that each increase of a unit in perceived benefits of training is accompanied by an increase in in-role performance of .526 units. When PBCST equals zero, the IRP score was predicted to be 1.960, which was the constant. This positive relationship is also reflected in the standardised Beta coefficient of .537, which is in line with the correlation in section 4.6.

The regression model was validated by diagnostic checks. The Durbin-Watson statistic of 2.088 indicated no significant autocorrelation in the residuals, and residual standard deviation (.371) suggested a well-fitted model with no major violations of the normality assumption. These results together support the hypothesis that is accepted: the perceived benefits of customer service training are positive and significant to in-role performance of employees in the UAE retail sector.

5. Discussion

5.1 Correlation and Regression Results

Analysis of data using Pearson correlation showed a moderate, positive and statistically significant relationship between the perceived benefits of customer service training (PBCST) and in-role performance (IRP) with $r = .537$ and $p < .001$. Results of the linear regression analysis supported the fact that PBCST is a significant predictor of IRP, as the model explained 28.8% of the variance in IRP ($R^2 = .288$, $F(1, 206) = 83.285$, $p < .001$). The unstandardised coefficient of .526 means that if in-role performance goes up 1 unit, perceived training benefits goes up by .526 unit. This result supports H1; that perceived benefits of customer service training is positively and significantly related to in-role performance for UAE retail employees.

The R^2 value of .288 is significant, as it indicates that about 28.8% of the variation of in-role performance is due to the perceived benefits of training. A result that is almost a third of the variance of an outcome in social science research, where many interacting variables influence human behaviour, is practically significant. The rest of the variance (71.2%) is due to other factors that are not part of this study, including organisational climate, supervisory feedback, personality characteristics, and job design. This makes training one of several factors that can influence retail employee performance.

5.2 Theoretical Implications

This finding is consistent with the Human Capital Theory (HCT) which proposes that the value of an organisation and its workforce is enhanced when employees are trained and developed (Ross, 2024). Training is known to have positive effects on the in-role performance of employees when they perceive personal, career and job related benefits from training, which makes them more motivated to apply their newly acquired skills to their job roles (Awu, Darius and Chimele, 2025). The present study supports this theoretical claim, by showing that the greater the perceived training benefits, the greater the in-role performance, thereby establishing training as a strategic human capital investment, rather than a procedural obligation.

The results also corroborate Cooper et al (2019) who found supportive work environment as significant drivers of employee performance. From a customer service training perspective, it can be thought of as a representation of the organisation's investment, as it is a clear indicator that the organisation cares about its employees' growth and development, especially within the UAE retail landscape. Employees are more likely to rally around their formally given duties when training is seen as an assist instead of a requirement, and this is especially true in the UAE's multicultural retail environment where formal training can be a binding force among different employee groups.

Furthermore, the results support those of Noe and Wilk (1993), who showed that perceptions of personal, career and job-related benefits mediate training participation and transfer. In the context of the UAE retail, this study offers quantitative evidence to support this theoretical argument, giving empirical support to a well-established theoretical position.

5.3 Practical Implications

5.3.1 Designing Training

High mean scores for PBCST ($M = 4.41$) and IRP ($M = 4.28$) suggest the practical relevance of training design in the UAE retail sector, as those who consider training valuable reports high levels of IRP. To enable employees to apply training to their formal performance, retail organisations should implement training programs that are personally beneficial to employees in three ways: personal growth, career development, and job-specific skill improvement (Ada et al., 2023). This is especially true of the largely young, early career workforce identified in this study, for whom career-oriented training messages are likely to be particularly motivating. Moreover, with 73.6% of respondents reporting that they had attended training before, but 51.4% having been in their position less than 1 year, organisations need to focus on structured, frequent training, not just induction training. This helps maintain perceived benefits up-to-date and reinforces them regularly, which helps to maintain their positive influence on in-role performance over time (Johnson, 2011).

5.3.2 Management Support

Training is a large but not all-consuming performance driver, accounting for 28.8% of in-role performance variation, so managers need to be aware of this. Training must be complemented with supportive management practices, clear job performance expectations and ongoing feedback systems. One-to-one feedback sessions between training and observed behaviours on the job can help ensure that training is put into practice and that the return of training investment is maximised.

5.3.3 Continuous Learning and Policy Alignment

Training should be an ongoing process and not a one-time event, with employee perceptions of training regularly evaluated via surveys and performance appraisals to ensure training is relevant and meets the needs of the workplace. The results at a national level validate the UAE Vision 2031 framework's focus on service excellence and workforce development (FAHR, 2026). Retail companies are urged to see training as more than just internal HR matters, but as a contribution to the nation's workforce development plans. It is important for HR practitioners to develop programmes that explicitly express the three dimensions of perceived benefits identified by Noe and Wilk (1993) so that training is more personally meaningful and relevant to the performance of the organisation and nation as a whole.

6. Conclusion

This study examined the impact of perceived benefits of customer service training on in-role performance among employees in the UAE retail sector. The role of training on performance has been an interest among scholars, and due to few scholars focusing on this particular relationship in the retail context of the UAE, there is a limitation in the quantitative research. The purpose of this study was to answer this question based on the assumption that a human capital theoretical perspective, which assumes that employees who believe their work performance will benefit from customer service training will be more likely to perform well on the job, would address this gap.

A deductive positivist and mono-method quantitative research design was used. The data were obtained using an online survey questionnaire filled out by 208 UAE customer service trained

employees. The instrument consisted of 11 items, which were based on the validated items of Noe and Wilk (1993), Newman, Thanacoody and Hui (2011) and Williams and Anderson (1991). The data were analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics by descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, Pearson correlation and linear regression.

The outcome was quite definite and substantial. Descriptive statistics showed that both levels of perceived training benefits ($M = 4.41$, $SD = .449$) and in-role performance ($M = 4.28$, $SD = .440$) were high. Both scales showed good internal consistency with Cronbachs alphas of 0.775 and 0.729 respectively with a cut off value of 0.7. A Pearson correlation found a moderate, positive relationship between PBCST and IRP that was statistically significant ($r = .537$, $p < .001$). The standardised Beta coefficient for in-role performance was .537 with linear regression accounting for 28.8% of the variance ($R^2 = .288$, $F(1, 206) = 83.285$, $p < .001$). Hence, H1 was supported — perceived benefits of customer service training positively and significantly relate to in-role performance among the UAE retail employees.

The results support the Human Capital Theory and previous research by Noe and Wilk (1993), and Williams and Anderson (1991), which suggest employee perceptions of training is an important pathway that links training with measurable performance gains. Retail organisations in UAE are encouraged to develop training programmes that are deemed to be of value and to match training programmes with UAE Vision 2031 (FAHR, 2026). This research adds primary quantitative data to a context that is underrepresented and emphasizes the role of perceived benefit in in-role performance.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. This was a significant increase from previous exploratory research in this field, but the sample size was small, and convenience sampling may not be representative of the wider population of retailers in the UAE. The cross-sectional design does not make causal inferences, and self-reported information may lead to response bias. Future research should use longitudinal designs to prove causality, include supervisor-rated performance measures along with self-reports, broaden to other industries, and include other qualitative methods, such as interviews to gain further insight into how employees feel and utilize the training benefits in the workplace.

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