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Leading with Humility: Servant Leadership on Knowledge Sharing Via Organizational Citizenship Behavior and Trust in Private Organization

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Abstract: *The current research investigated the extent to which leaders can encourage knowledge sharing by carrying it out ethically. We hypothesize that servant leadership has the ability to encourage the sharing of knowledge, drawing on the principles of social learning theory. Furthermore, social learning theory demonstrates that organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) as a mediator and trust as a moderator can boost knowledge sharing among employees in private organizations. In the private organization' KP, Pakistan, we collected data from 340 managers and employees in three phases. Furthermore, the analysis tool SPSS was used to evaluate the model and investigate the effects of mediation and moderation. The findings indicate that servant leadership has a positive association with knowledge sharing, and this relationship is strongly mediated by OCB. Moreover, trust positively moderates this relationship. Our research suggests that servant leaders can foster knowledge sharing via OCB and employee trust.*

Key Words: Servant Leaders, Private Organizations, Social Learning Theory, Knowledge Sharing

Introduction

In the public sector, sharing knowledge is essential for human capital management (Kim and Lee, 2006). Attention to stakeholders promotes knowledge, which is a powerful tool for long-term public service improvement. Knowledge sharing has become crucial for improving public service in the Pakistani environment, where Relationships or "a type of" serve a role in the employment of employees (Hasanuddin et al., 2021). Sharing knowledge could serve as another way of addressing the knowledge gap among private firms in KP. Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) has been suggested as a possible mediator due to the fact that it indicates the degree to which workers participate in voluntary behaviors that are positive for the organization (Ma et al., 2023; Das, 2021; Linuesa & Elche, 2023).

People are encouraged to leave their expertise behind even if they would have to leave their hometown in modern society. Management gurus also underline that a company should create plans not just to retain staff members but also their expertise (Ullah et al., 2024; Rocha et al., 2022). By means of knowledge exchange, an organization becomes up-to-date, which results in its enhanced performance and outside exposure. However, workers need a motivating factor to go beyond their own interests, therefore strengthening the presumption of sharing as losing information and opportunities to others. With a particular emphasis on the important role that OCB plays as a mediator, the purpose of this research is to evaluate the influence that servant leadership has on knowledge sharing. Through investigation of this relationship, we want to contribute to a more in-depth understanding of the ways in which servant leadership may be used to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and further improve the performance of an organization. Servant leadership, based on Ortiz-Gómez et al. (2022), promotes the growth of workers in the workplace. This technique has facilitated knowledge sharing, as stated by the past study of Azeem

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▪ **To Cite:** Khan, A. H., Mansoor, R., Ullah, S., & Ullah, R. (2024). Leading with Humility: Servant Leadership on Knowledge Sharing Via Organizational Citizenship Behavior and Trust in Private Organization. *QJSS Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(3), 39-50. <https://doi.org/10.55737/qjss.791000496>



et al. (2021). Knowledge sharing has become crucial for organizational innovation and competitiveness, explains Soomro et al. (2021). As noted by Harrigan et al. (2021), Kadarusman and Bunyamin (2021) discovered that servant leadership and knowledge sharing are complicated, with trust playing a major role. When workers trust their leaders, they are more likely to share knowledge (Berraies et al., 2024; Zhou et al., 2022).

This research contributes to the existing body of literature on knowledge management by investigating the role of servant leadership in fostering knowledge sharing inside private. The main purpose of this study is to investigate organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) mediates the association between servant leadership and knowledge-sharing organizations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. An understanding of the moderating effect of trust on the relationship between SL and knowledge sharing is the focus of the second study objective. KP private organizations are a particularly valuable setting for this research paradigm as they reflect the significance of knowledge for low-quality human resources as inputs to the value chain in public organizations.

Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Servant Leadership

The value of servant leadership and other types of ethical and compassionate leadership grows stronger when the welfare of employees is considered the greatest priority (Miralles et al., 2024). In the leader-follower dynamic, servant leadership places an emphasis on service (Khan et al., 2022; Miralles et al., 2024). In the leader-follower dynamic, servant leadership places an emphasis on service (Lu et al., 2024). A servant leader is one who leads with a desire to support others (Cerff, 2023). Al-Azab & Al-Romeedy (2024) characterized servant leadership as organizing the success of supporters over the self-interest of the leader. This can be accomplished by focusing on leader behaviors that promote follower development and minimizing the leader's praise. This description aligns with this point of view. Thus, servant leaders show their moral obligation to the organization's and its stakeholders' success, especially with respect to its employees and clients (Mostafa, 2022). In the words of Zheng et al. (2024), servant leadership is defined as giving instructions, empowering and developing others, and exhibiting humility, genuineness, interpersonal acceptance, and stewardship. Mostafa (2022) suggested six characteristics of a servant-led company, which include protecting people, developing individuals, creating a sense of community, being genuine, exercising leadership, and sharing leadership. Thus, according to Cerff (2023), servant leadership fosters organizational justice, organizational trust, OCB, and working together.

Knowledge Sharing

One of the main ways employees contribute to organizational knowledge enhancement and high performance is by sharing their professional knowledge. Information, abilities, and values all contribute to knowledge (Lam et al., 2021). Knowledge is described as a "meaningful and organized accumulation of information through experience, communication, or inference" by (Adaku et al., 2022), taking into account the dynamic character of knowledge. According to Thomas & Gupta (2022), which generalize this dynamic viewpoint, knowledge provides a framework for evaluating and incorporating fresh knowledge and personal experiences. Knowledge sharing is a dynamic system that promotes the sharing of knowledge between different people (Cerff, 2023). Mostafa (2022) emphasizes the mutual advantage of knowledge sharing, learning it as a two-way process wherein individuals share information and work together to create new knowledge. There are four ways that knowledge can be shared within the company: (1) by introducing knowledge to databases within the company; (2) by exchanging knowledge in formal interactions between teams; (3) by exchanging knowledge in unofficial interactions; and (4) exchanging knowledge within practice communities, which are volunteer forums centered around topics of interest.

Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) has been defined by Schlicker et al. (2021) as the activities that workers do that are not expressly included in their authorized job descriptions. Das (2021) emphasized that organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) are voluntary actions taken by employees that are informative to the company's mission but not strictly needed by management. Even though they may not immediately interest the employees, professionals perform OCBs for the betterment of the group or company (Zayed et

al., 2022). A "good citizen" at work promotes the well-being of the company as a whole (Santos et al., 2023). As stated by Hong & Zainal (2022), OCB promotes the organization by maintaining and strengthening its network of relationships. However, Qian, Shen, & Song's (2023) study utilizes the sub-game-perfect Nash Equilibrium (SPNE) to shed light on the OCB's deciding process in an innovative manner. According to this concept, each employee's own promotional for OCB is in order to maximize his own performance consequence, and the workload, OCB costs, and OCBs carried out by coworkers all have a combined impact on the overall amount of OCB revealed by each employee (Zayed et al., 2022). Based on Das (2021) developed an OCB model with four dimensions: individual initiative (communications intended to improve both private and public achievement), private industry (doing tasks in a way that goes above and beyond the call of duty), and loyal boosterish (promoting the organization to outsiders). This model's OCB scale, which measures civic behaviors towards peers and the organization, was used in this current study.

Trust

Rust defines "the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other party will perform a particular action important to the trust" (Pianigiani et al., 2024). Trust is a very complex concept. Furthermore, According to past research, the degree of trust shown by supervisors to workers affects their degree of exchange quality (Kerse, 2021). Trust influences how followers see their leader and, thus, their reaction to sharing their expertise. Trust is basic in both organizational and interpersonal interactions. Therefore, much research (e.g., (Birkmann et al., 2022). has investigated its moderating influence. Trust may be seen as clarifying the impacts of the servant leader on the work attitudes of her followers (Cooper et al., 2023; Lee et al., 2022). Thus, this study addressed the gap that servant leadership develops trust in their team or workers in a contract, giving more efficiency to the organization.

Servant Leadership and Knowledge Sharing

A new academic study has focused on the impact of servant leadership on information sharing, highlighting the idea that leadership styles may alter the dynamics of an organization's knowledge. Knowledge sharing has been proposed to benefit from servant leadership, which is described as a leader's focus on assisting and empowering their team members. Empowering workers to focus on their personal development and well-being is a crucial component of servant leadership, according to (Maaz et al., 2024; Jiménez-Estévez et al., 2023). As a result, an environment is created that encourages people to share their ideas and expertise. According to this theoretical framework, leaders who prioritize others create an atmosphere of trust and respect, which is necessary for the free flow of information (Wijaya et al., 2022). Studies have demonstrated that when managers display servant leadership, staff are more inclined to share information, adding credibility to this thesis. According to one research, workers are more likely to disclose what they know when they believe their managers are really concerned about them (Ahmad et al., 2022). This is reflected when servant leaders passionately support knowledge sharing and create an environment in which people are recognized and motivated to share their knowledge with others (Halisah et al., 2021). These findings support the concept that the supporting character of servant leadership eliminates difficulties in knowledge sharing, which leads to improved organizational learning and creativity.

In the words of Babalola et al. (2021), servant leadership is an innovative type of leadership that concentrates on the development and well-being of workers. Knowledge sharing is a vital engine for organizational innovation and competitiveness, although the relationship between servant leadership and it has not been extensively examined in the private sector. As we established the following hypothesis,

H1: There is a positive and significant relationship between servant leadership and knowledge sharing.

Mediating Role of Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) was used to evaluate the relationship between servant leadership and knowledge sharing via OCB as an individual mediator. According to social learning theory (Su et al., 2021), employee behavior is affected by the behavior of the leader. The quality of social interactions encourages people to reciprocate privileges to those who have participated in one's advantages. This



particular type of implicit knowledge exchange develops toward the point where there's something that seems like an equal distribution of benefits (Santos et al., 2023). An achievement of their own self-interest, showing empathy and problem, and putting forth the best interest of their employees (i.e., investing in and growing their competence and values) are characteristics of servant leaders (Manzoor et al., 2024; Bier et al., 2024). The leader emphasizes the well-being of the organization's employees and other stakeholders, and employees will respond. In addition to the manner in which the servant leader regards them, employees also reciprocate in response to the leader's commitment to the organizational mission and transcendent treatment of other stakeholders. Under servant leadership, employees socially reciprocate by returning transcendent contributions, such as knowledge sharing, to the organization in order to earn their transcendent treatments. In recompense for the leader's serving behavior, employees participate in knowledge sharing as a means of exchange to support and maintain the serving environment.

Existing research indicates the potential of organizational citizenship behavior to serve as a mediating factor in the relationship between servant leadership and knowledge sharing. Recent research suggests that servant leaders foster a supportive work environment that motivates employees to engage in behaviors that exceed explicit job responsibilities, including altruistic cooperation and voluntary knowledge sharing (Khalil et al., 2022). This mediation effect becomes particularly pertinent in the private sector of KP, in which the extent to which OCB affects the sharing of knowledge practices may be influenced by cultural and organizational standards (Bier et al., 2024; Khan et al., 2022). However, the literature is significantly insufficient in the study of this mediation within the particular socio-economic and cultural context of KP, Pakistan, as there is a shortage of empirical evidence. Therefore, the mediating effect of organizational citizenship behavior on the relationship between servant leadership and knowledge sharing will be expected:

H2: *Organizational citizenship behavior mediates the relationship between servant leadership and knowledge sharing.*

The moderating effect of Trust

Trust is an important part of knowledge exchange (Cvitanovic et al., 2021), and knowledge sharing between individuals (Rafeh et al., 2024) has received considerable theoretical attention in recent years. On the basis of SET, multiple trust theories understand that trust between two individuals serves as an organizing principle for repeating exchange relationships (Roth, 2023). An individual's trust becomes stronger when they fulfill a responsibility and compensate (Roth, 2023). Maintaining that trust is "the degree to which the person who trusts maintains a positive perspective regarding the trustee's reliability and goodwill in a high-risk exchange situation." Trust is defined as the level of confidence that an individual has in the actions and decisions of a different person), the willingness to put their trust in that individual and an expectation that the other person is going to reciprocate if one communicates (Rafeh et al., 2024). Trust is the confidence that the other individual will not exploit one's weaknesses (Cvitanovic et al., 2021). Other researchers (Knell & Stix, 2021) establish trust as one's beliefs, hopes, or assumptions regarding the possibility that the other individual's accessible actions will have advantageous, benign, and positive side effects for oneself. In order to share knowledge, an individual needs to accept an appropriate degree of sensitivity that is dependent upon the positive objectives of the other person (Manzoor et al., 2023; Erkilic & Aydın, 2022). In a nutshell, trust is perceived as the attitude that originates from the tractor's opinions and impressions of the trustee (Knell & Stix, 2021).

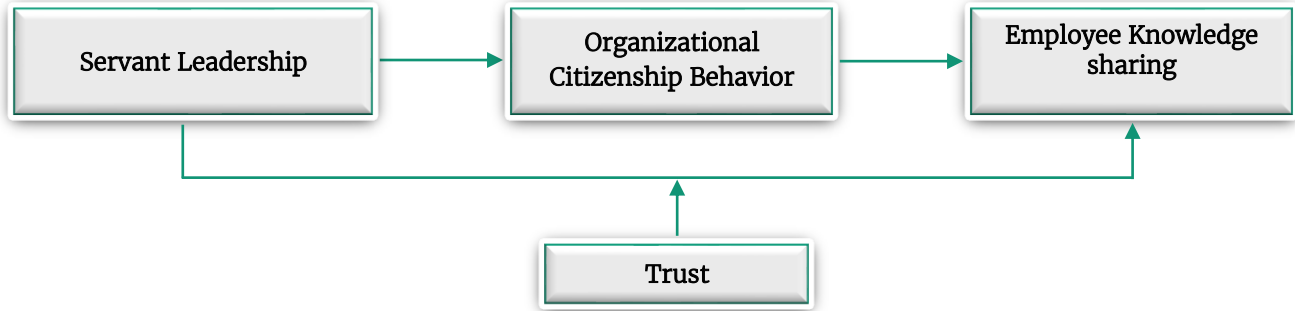
The moderating role of trust, particularly within certain regional environments, has received less attention than servant leadership and knowledge sharing, which have both been the focus of considerable research. Understanding how trust impacts servant leadership's knowledge-sharing efficiency may shed light on regional organizational achievement mechanisms. Although fundamentally essential, the study on how trust moderates servant leadership and knowledge sharing in KP's private sector is limited. In numerous cases, trust improves leadership. Its moderating role in servant leadership and knowledge sharing in KP's unique socio-cultural environment has not been properly investigated. This study examines how trust and servant leadership affect knowledge sharing, providing KP organizational leaders with valuable insights. The following hypothesis for the study is proposed:

H3: *Trust significantly moderates the association between servant leadership and knowledge sharing.*

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1

This study framework



Methods

Sample Size and Procedure

Employees and managers from private organizations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa participated in this study. The selected organizations had at least five individuals, including supervisors, who had worked together for a minimum of one year. We searched out the heads of departments due to base to research (Glick et al., 1990); data on organizational characteristics like entrepreneur orientation is most often gathered from middle-level managers. Managers in the middle rank are considered the primary promoters of the enterprise.

Podsakoff et al. (2003) used three separate phases of collecting data to minimize common method bias. During the first wave (T1), employees and their department managers reported demographic information. Employees also provided comments regarding servant leadership, while department managers gave information on the organization's age and size. In the second wave (T2), the study was conducted one month after T1; information about Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) was taken from employees and department managers. In the past study, Carpenter, Berry, and Houston (2014) found a higher level of convergence between self-ratings and supervisor ratings of Organisational Citizenship Behaviours (OCBs) when compared to self-ratings and coworker ratings. One month after T2, the T3 survey was carried out to get responses from employees and managers regarding trust and knowledge sharing.

Table 1

Participant's characteristics

Sample indicators	Employees	Managers
Gender		
Male	217 (6.38%)	83 (14.4%)
Female	27 (7.9%)	13 (3.8%)
Age		
18-24	108 (3.18%)	46 (13.5%)
25-30	51 (1.50%)	37 (1.09%)
31-36	42 (1.24%)	16 (4.7%0
Above 36	27 (7.9%)	13 (3.8%)
Job tenure		
Less five years	26 (7.6%)	15 (4.4%)
6-10	75 (22.1%)	57 (16.8%)
11-15	67 (19.7%)	49 (14.4%)
Above 15	23 (6.8%)	28 (8.2%)
Total n	340	



Measure

The participants reported their opinions on multiple subjects such as servant leadership (SL), knowledge sharing (KS), organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), co-worker support (CS), and ethical climate (EC) using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (indicating strong disagree) to 5 (indicating strongly agree).

Servant Leadership: The current study investigated Servant Leadership (SL) by conducting a survey using a 14-item scale developed by Ehrhart (2004). "My supervisor encourages others to develop and flourish" and "My supervisor puts the needs of others before their own needs" are two of the survey's statements. The high reliability of this survey in terms of internal consistency was shown by its Cronbach's α rating of 0.95.

Knowledge Sharing: To investigate the outcome variable KS, this research used a scale composed of 4 elements. The survey scale was created by Lin (2007). One element from this survey scale is that "in my opinion, sharing knowledge is important for the organization's assigned goals." The alpha value of the scale is 0.87, which shows scale reliability.

Organizational Citizenship Behavior: The current research study utilized a nineteen-item survey scale to examine the intervening variable OCB. This study adopted a scale from Moorman & Blakely (1995). A scale sample of one item is like, "I help a colleague in the workplace when I need assistance." This scale consists of a strong alpha value of 0.86, indicating that the scale is reliable for investigating the factor.

Trust: The study investigated trust via a survey that contained an 11-item questionnaire developed by McAllister (1995). The questionnaire included statements such as "I have confidence in my supervisor to fulfill commitments" and "My supervisor is truly concerned about my well-being." This survey possessed high reliability in terms of internal consistency, as shown by a Cronbach's α score of 0.90. It indicates that the scale is a valid trust measure, allowing accurate assessment.

Results

Table 2

Scale reliability

	SL	KS	OCB	T
Variables	Independent	Dependent	Mediator	moderator
Items	14	04	19	11
C. alpha	0.845	0.793	0.861	0.908
Developed by	(Ehrhart, 2004)	(Lin, 2007)	(Moorman & Blakely 1995)	(McAllister, 1995)
Remarks	Accepted	Accepted	Accepted	Accepted

The reliability findings provide sufficient evidence that the instrument is reliable, as shown by the model tables 1. It has been shown that all of the variables (SL, KS, OCB, and T) have alpha values that are more than 0.7, which confirms the reliability of the scale that was used in this study. However, SL, KS, OCB, and T were all assessed via a scale consisting of SL-14, KS-04, OCB-19, and T-11 items, with Alpha values of S-0.845, KS-0.793, OCB-0.861, and T-0.908 respectively. In light of this, all of the instrument values are higher than 0.7, which is evidence that the scale that was used in the present study is reliable. (Table 2)

Table 3

KMO & BTS statistics

	SL	KS	OCB	T
Variables	Independent	Dependent	Mediator	moderator
KMO test	0.855	0.798	0.706	0.740
BTS test	754.551 P < .05	508.725 P < .05	212.782 P < .05	254.970 P < .05

In light of the fact that the KMO values of all the research variables are greater than .50, the sample that is being used in this investigation is suitable. In a comparable way, the BTS values for all of the constructs (SL, KS, OCB, and T) are significant, which indicates that the alternative hypothesis is accepted. (Table 3)

Hypothesis testing

Table 4

Coefficient summary

Values	Predictor (SL)
T	11.43
P	.000
Beta	0.45
R ²	0.36
F	130.761 (0.000)
Dependent variable	Knowledge sharing
Decision	Accepted (H1)

According to the results of the regression analysis, the independent (SL) factors show a significant positive relationship with the dependent variable (KS), which is knowledge sharing. SL with high beta values explains knowledge-sharing variation more effectively. Thus, overall F and significant p suggest model fitness. The present study's hypothesis (H1) has been confirmed. Regression is described in Table 4 above. The R2 value is .36, indicating that SL explains 36% of knowledge sharing. (Table 4)

Mediation Analysis

Table 5

Summary

Effect	Values
Servant leadership -> Organizational Behavior	.6059 (p=.000)
Organizational Behavior -> Knowledge sharing	.4934 (p=.000)
Direct effect	.3027
Indirect effect	.2990
Total effect	.6017

Table 5 shows the mediation analysis of (OCB) on the relationship between the predictor (SL) and the outcome variable (KS). The direct effect of all the relationships is substantial. Similarly, the values of z (6.045) and p for the indicated relationship are statistically significant, suggesting that the mediator, OCB, partially mediates the link between SL and KS. Therefore, hypothesis 2 is supported.

Moderation analysis

Table 6

	B	t	p	R ²
Constant	3.89		.000	
SL	.387	2.61	.000	
OCB	.327	3.05	.001	.596
T x SL	.135	5.11	.000	.23

Dependent Variable: KS

The table above illustrates the assessment of the moderating influence of trust (T) on the relationship between servant leadership (SL) and knowledge sharing (KS). The findings demonstrate that SL has a significant effect on knowledge sharing ($\beta = 0.38$, $\text{sig} = 0.000$). T x SL positively moderates the association



among SL-KS ($\beta = .13$, sig = .000). The R square value indicates that 2% of the variation in knowledge sharing is attributed to the combined effect of trust and servant leadership. Thus, H₄ is accepted.

Discussion

This study's result extends the understanding of social learning theory by studying the relationship between servant leadership and knowledge sharing in a private company situated in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The study started by developing a conceptual framework derived from previous studies on servant leadership, organizational citizenship behavior, trust, and information sharing, with a particular emphasis on private organizations wherever possible. Our findings align with another study (Bhatti et al., 2023; Ng, 2023), indicating that servant leadership has positive impacts on the sharing of knowledge via the mediating effect of affective commitment and normative commitment. This study extends research by showing that OCB serves as a mediator in this association, indicating that servant leaders promote a culture of citizenship that motivates employees to share their knowledge. Furthermore, our research indicates that trust acts as a moderator in the link between servant leadership and knowledge sharing. When there is a high level, the positive effect of servant leadership on the sharing of knowledge is increased with Entrepreneur orientation (Shafi et al., 2020). This implies that servant leaders who emphasize the establishment of trust with their staff are more inclined to foster an atmosphere that is appropriate for the sharing of knowledge.

Theoretical Implications

The current study contributes to the literature on servant leadership, knowledge sharing, and organizational behavior by revealing how organizational citizenship behavior mediates and trusts moderates. The results indicate servant leadership's impact on knowledge sharing, a key organizational outcome. The research also illustrates the dynamics of the servant leadership-knowledge sharing relationship and the importance of organizational citizenship and trust. This study also enhances our knowledge of the complicated relationship between leadership, employee behavior, and company accomplishments. This research improves leadership theories and frameworks by studying servant leadership's limits, enhancing our knowledge of organizational behavior and performance.

Practical Implications

This research has considerable implications for knowledge-sharing groups. Organizations should support knowledge sharing via servant leadership development that emphasizes empathy, humility, and self-awareness. Employees should also be encouraged to volunteer, assist others, and participate in company-wide activities. Leaders should promote open communication, follow through on pledges, and lead by example to build trust. Empowering people to own their work and encouraging cooperation may boost the exchange of knowledge. Regular feedback and coaching may assist workers in realizing the importance of sharing knowledge, and rewarding those who share may encourage the behavior. Through these tactics, firms may foster collaboration, confidence, and knowledge sharing, boosting innovation and competitiveness.

Future Research and Limitations

This study was carried out in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa through the efforts of a Pakistani higher private organization. This type of organization operates by a variety of categories that correspond to the country and the industry in which it operates. When conducting the next research, it is advised that data be collected from various industries, such as healthcare centers, insurance companies, service providers, and so on, in order to verify the results of this study. It is possible that future research might investigate the distinctions that exist across different cultures in order to get a comprehensive grasp of how these components function in a variety of cultural contexts. Organizational citizenship behavior was the term used to characterize the outcome variable of the research. The behavior of organizational citizenship can consequently take on a wide variety of different forms, such as efficiency, innovation, quality, and overall performance. In the future, research might separately investigate these dimensions in order to get a deeper understanding of the specific aspects of organizational citizenship behavior that are influenced by SL and other variables.

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