

## PROACTIVE WORK BEHAVIOR AS A MEDIATOR BETWEEN SUPPORTIVE LEADERSHIP AND OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE IN PRIVATE BANKS IN THE KURDISTAN REGION OF IRAQ

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### ABSTRACT:

The research looks at whether proactive work behavior can describe the transforming proactive leadership in terms of excellent performance in the employees of the privately owned banks in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Recent studies in leadership also consider support to be a resource that enhances reciprocity, psychological safety and the desire to make contributions that are not in line of duty. The proactive work behavior in service organizations is operationalized in terms of responsibility taking, employee voice, individual innovation and problem prevention, which are behaviors directly associated with minimizing service failures and enhancing the quality of processes. The cross-sectional survey design was used among the private banks in Erbil, Sulaymaniyah and Dohuk. Out of the 690 questionnaires that were sent out, 444 valid responses were included in the modeling. The quality of measurement was ensured based on high levels of internal consistency and convergent validity with a Cronbach alpha of 0.945 to 0.958 and an AVE of over 0.85 on the core constructs. The partial least squares structural equation modeling was applied since it applies to prediction-oriented models and indirect effect testing in multi-construct designs. Supportive leadership had a positive predictive power on proactive work behavior ( $b = 0.633$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and excellent performance ( $b = 0.518$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), whereas proactive work behavior had an outstanding performance ( $b = 0.468$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The indirect effect was also strong ( $b = 0.296$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), which is a partial mediation effect, and the model accounted for 40.1 and 79.4 percent of the variance in proactive work behavior and outstanding performance, respectively. The results imply that the improvement of performance within the private banks is pegged on the supportive practices of leaders that institutionalize the voice, responsibility, innovation and prevention behaviors and not through the main compliance control. One of the ways that supportive leadership enhances performance is by engaging proactive work behavior.

**Keywords:** Proactive work behaviour; Supportive leadership; outstanding performance; Private banking; Kurdistan Region of Iraq..

### INTRODUCTION

The private banks exist at the crossroads of rigorous procedural norms and great flexibility in their contacts with customers. Banking performance does not solely lie in technical competence and compliance, but also in how employees foresee failures of service, how to coordinate and how to communicate risks early on. Where financial confidence is thin, and the modernization of organizations is lopsided, behaviour contribution of the employees plays a central role since the recovery and reliability of the services are based on the discretionary behavior of employees in real time. Empirical studies of employee wellbeing and employee performance suggest that the leadership practices that are supportive, acknowledging, and just conveying can reinforce engagement and downstream performance effects (Mazzetti & Schaufeli, 2022; Jo, Park, and Kim, 2025). The work environment that the leadership provides in the bank greatly influences the performance of the employees.

The supportive leadership style is one that is applicable in service situations since the leadership style focuses on support, caring and provision of resources that enable employees to satisfy demands. Climate and exchange processes represent empirical evidence that supportive leadership is related to performance outcomes, which

support may occur via relational and coordination mechanisms, instead of task instructions alone (Jameel, Sahito, Guo, Hussain, Kanwel, and Khan, 2025). Resource-based. In terms of resources, supportive leadership may expand perceived ability to act by facilitating access to guidance, recovery resources and development opportunities, which may sustain performance during periods of pressure (Nguyen, Tran, and Pham, 2025). Supportive leadership is an effective tool for enhancing the performance capacity in service organizations.

Nevertheless, one of the most common shortcomings in leadership performance studies is that they report direct performance links of leadership performance without identifying the

pathway of behavior that leadership converts into performance outcomes. This is significant to banking since constructive change behaviors in performance improvement, which include raising concerns, preventing errors, and process improvement, are to be adopted. Proactive work behavior offers a viable means of entry since it encompasses self-driven, future facing behaviour that alters work conditions or approaches to enhance the results (Cui et al., 2021). More recent evidence also cautions that proactive behavior may be costly in terms of increased anxiety or work-family strain, which shows that proactivity must be supported and not punitive (Cui et al., 2021; Ye, Li, and Zhang, 2025).

This article investigates the role of proactive work behavior in mediating the interaction between supportive leadership and excellent performance in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq among the private banks. The survey data employed in the analysis were obtained with the help of 690 distributed survey questionnaires, in which 444 valid answers were obtained in Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, and Dohuk (in general) among the private banks. The model represents a multidimensional conceptualization of the constructs; supportive leadership is reflected in the perceived organisational support, individualised consideration, work life balance support and trust configuration; proactive work behaviour is reflected in the responsibility taking, employee voice, individual innovation and prevention of problems; and outstanding performance is reflected in the process and service, customer focus, human resources focus and growth and learning. The paper validates a mechanism-based model with multidimensional constructs that are consistent with the realities of service banking.

This is intended to test the relationship between supportive leadership and the excellent performance of the employees in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq regarding the mediation of proactive work behavior. The aims are to define the levels of supportive leadership, proactive work behavior and excellent performance and dimensions, to determine the direct impact of supportive leadership on proactive work behavior and excellent performance, determine the direct impact of proactive work behavior on excellent performance and finally, the indirect impact of supportive leadership on excellent performance through proactive work behavior. This advocates a mechanism-based perception of performance enhancement within the banking sector.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Supportive Leadership Is A Resource-Oriented Leadership Approach**

Supportive leadership is more conceptualized as a resource-oriented leadership style that improves the ability of employees to address work demands and maintain wellbeing and long term input. The support in modern organizations is not restricted to interpersonal kindness, as they are tangible behaviors, like the appreciation of effort, fair treatment, elucidation of expectations, and accessibility to guidance in the case of challenges. The open-access research evidence suggests that recognition and equity are closely connected with engagement and reduced burnout, which is important to sustain performance under the pressure of a continuous workload (Jo et al., 2025; Mazzetti & Schaufeli, 2022). This tendency can be correlated with the conservation of resources explanations when supportive leader behavior enhances the presence of resources and lessens the risk that the employees are subjected to continuous depletion, thus being more willing to invest in the effort and continue their fight despite the barriers.

Relational mechanisms also exist in supporting leadership. The leaders also show a supportive behavior, which will make employees feel that the organization appreciates them, and this can enhance trust and collaboration. The accessible studies about inclusive leadership indicate that support-oriented behaviors can be used to boost job performance based on the social exchange process that involves increased leader-member exchange and organizational identification (Wang et al., 2025). These processes are especially applicable in service organizations, where coordination, responsiveness, and service failure management, but not individual task accomplishment, determine performance.

Moreover, supportive leadership is related to development and building capacity. Support in the form of coaching, feedback, and informal guidance is the one that has a direct impact on the use of the skills and performance. It has been proven that employee coaching relationships and perceived organizational support can enhance performance through enhancing learning and competence development (Nguyen et al., 2025). This suggests that supportive leadership may be involved in performance by providing resources in the short term and capable of forming in the long term. In banking, where the reliability of service and the confidence of customers are at the centre stage, supportive leadership can be used to minimize uncertainty by establishing foreseeable interpersonal environments and more distinct problem-solving pathways. The supportive leadership is thus an integration of resource and relationship guarantee, which fosters long-term employee input in both operational and customer facing effort.

## **2.2. Proactive Work Behavior and Its Dimensions in Contemporary Organizations**

The proactive work behavior is generally addressed as a complex of constructive efforts by which employees foresee the requirements in the future and make changes aimed at enhancing the results of work. It is not similar to reactive performance as it deals with self-initiated behaviour that is directed towards the formation of work processes, error prevention, and service quality improvement. The existence of modern evidence summarised in a scoping review suggests that proactive work behavior is typically operationalized in terms of voice, taking charge, innovation, and problem prevention (Satwika & Suhariadi, 2025). These are critical behaviors in organizations that have to deal with volatility, as they enhance flexibility and minimize the gap between the problems arising and the remedies taken.

One of the main characteristics of the work behavior, proactive behavior, is its multidimensionality. Employee voice refers to raising issues, recommendations or new ideas for improvement, particularly in situations where risk or uncertainty is involved. Accepting charge/responsibility is associated with possessing duties and being ready to act without being told what to do. Innovation is about trying something more improved, providing a better way of doing things, or changing tools and practices. Prevention of problems refers to knowing the early warning signs, minimizing the variation in processes, and intervening to prevent the breakdown of the service before it actually happens. These dimensions come into play especially in service organizations like banks, where any small breakdown in processes may be easily translated into customer dissatisfaction or operational risk.

The recent empirical findings related to open access indicate that motivational states and work characteristics determine proactive behavior, i.e., it is not exactly dispositional (Chanie, Melese, and Demesie, 2023). Job autonomy, feedback, and supportive climates enhance the readiness of employees to take proactive action since they enhance the perceived control and diminish the uncertainty regarding consequences. Nevertheless, there are also indications of possible expenditures. Work-family conflict and anxiety can be heightened through proactive action in which employees experience pressure to work more without the support or even recovery time (Cui et al., 2021). This implies that when proactive behavior is handled as an extra demand and not as a supported contribution, then it becomes burdensome.

## **2.3 Outstanding Performance as a Multidimensional Service Construct**

Exceptional performance within the banking industry is conceptualized more as a multidimensional construct since banks develop value by providing quality services, processes, workforce, and organizational learning. Single performance measures may conceal the nature of performance creation within the service contexts where customer satisfaction and trust require continuity in the execution of processes and the solution of problems. A multidimensional perspective encapsulates the reality that banks have to ensure that they are error-free, customer-oriented, staff competency and regulatory and technological change all at the same time.

Performance in service organizations is generated by both execution of tasks and contextual behaviors which assist in ensuring coordination, learning and recovery of service. Research on open access leadership suggests that the impact of leadership on performance is mediated by intermediate conditions, such as engagement, and resource conditions, which then impact task performance and extends their contribution to the work environment (Mazzetti & Schaufeli, 2022). Equally, the body of literature related to the topic of organizational support and coaching suggests that performance can be enhanced by capability development and perceived support, which may help to boost the performance of an employee based on competence building and a better work practice (Nguyen et al., 2025). These results underscore the measurement of performance in a manner that takes into account process outcomes as well as learning outcomes instead of concentrating on instant productivity.

Process and service quality in banking has embodied reliability, accuracy, speed and management of operational processes. Customer focus refers to the way employees react to customer needs, offer consistency in service delivery and handling of complaints or service failures. The human resources focus is a reflection of the support of the workforce, skill development, communication practices and the capability of the organization to maintain good staffing and competence. Growth and learning is an ability to enhance practices with time, learn and be flexible with new technologies and customer demands. Those dimensions are theoretically interconnected as the reliability of the processes provided helps customers to be confident, and the workforce capacity and learning give an opportunity to continue the improvement and minimize errors.

## **2.4 Linking Supportive Leadership to Proactive Work Behaviour**

The connection between supportive leadership and proactive work behavior is based on the fact that employees take initiative and improve their work when they feel safe, fairly treated, and have access to resources. There is riskiness in proactive behavior since voice may be confronted with an established practice, innovation may fail, and problem prevention may entail cross-role coordination. When leaders demonstrate that they appreciate employees who do speak up, that they consider mistakes as learning opportunities, and that they will support employees when challenges occur, then these risks are more likely to be accepted.

Research that is open access states that autonomy supportive environments enhance the emotions and creative output of the employees, which implies that the support enhances internal motivation and minimizes any perceived threat linked to experimentation (Ye, Li, and Zhang, 2025). Similarly, inclusive leadership studies indicate that behaviors of the leader that appreciate employee feedback and minimize exclusion may boost proactive behaviors through the enhancement of psychological resources and the decrease of interpersonal risk perceptions (Chang, Ma, and Lin, 2022). These results imply that enabling leadership has the potential of enhancing the practicability of such proactive behaviors as voice and innovation since employees anticipate equitable treatment and favourable reactions.

Proactive leadership is also affected by capability and climate mechanisms, as well as supportive leadership. Employees can feel more capable of taking initiative when leaders coach, give feedback, and offer development opportunities to them. Moreover, leader support is capable of influencing an innovative climate and enhancing psychological empowerment that are factors relating to increased levels of innovation and voice behavior. There are open-access studies that reveal that supportive leadership has the potential to foster innovative work behavior due to the power and compatibility of climates (Jameel et al., 2025). This means that supportive leadership not only enhances willingness, but also may enhance capacity through the development of knowledge and confidence needed to be proactive in solving problems and doing improvement work.

## **2.5 Proactive Work Behavior as the Pathway to Performance and the Mediation Proposition**

The proactive work behavior is closely associated with performance since it leads to continuous improvement, prevention of errors and learning, which form the core service excellence. In the banking industry, reliability and customer confidence are critical factors of performance, and these elements are determined by the speed of the identification of issues by employees, their correction of process flaws and addressing the needs of customers. The problem prevention, the voice, and the innovation can be used as proactive behaviors to minimize the disruption of operations in the short term and enhance the processes and customer treatment in the long term.

The evidence provided by open access sources indicates that proactive behavior is also related to the outcomes of performance, yet the relationship between the variables is conditioned by the motivational states and facilitating conditions of a supportive context (Chanie et al., 2023; Satwika & Suhariadi, 2025). It means that proactivity is not necessarily good, as it has to be directed into the productive activity of improvement and sustained with the help of the necessary organizational mechanisms. It has also been demonstrated that proactive behavior may cause strain, such as anxiety and work-family conflict, especially when organizations subject initiative to further load without sufficient recovery or justice (Cui et al., 2021). This corroborates the claim that leadership plays a central role since the resources and protection provided through supportive leadership may enable the proactive behavior to be translated into performance instead of being exhausted.

The theory of mediation offers a mechanism explanation: supportive leadership enhances performance in part because it enhances proactive work behavior, which in turn adds to exemplary performance in terms of improvement and prevention behaviors. Leadership thus serves as an upstream factor, whereas proactivity serves as the behavior proximate driver of performance. Partially mediation is also supported by this framework as

supportive leadership can still affect the performance in other routes, including engagement, coaching, coordination, and climate. The findings of open access research suggest that support-oriented leadership affects performance in terms of engagement and resource states, which supports the need to determine the mechanisms instead of direct effects (Mazzetti & Schaufeli, 2022; Wang et al., 2025).

Partially least squares structural equation modelling is often suggested as the most appropriate method to estimate mediation within predictive models with multiple constructs in case the measurement quality and discriminant validity have been set (Hair and Alamer, 2022; Cheah et al., 2026). This enables both direct and indirect relations to be estimated simultaneously, as well as making an inference regarding the relative contribution of behavioral mechanisms. Comprehensively, the mediation suggestion explains the creation of actual performance gains that can be achieved through supportive leadership, which facilitates proactive behaviors that enhance processes, bolster the service quality, and augment organizational learning.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Research Design**

The study adopted a quantitative cross-sectional design to assess the relationship between supportive leadership, proactive work behavior and outstanding performance in the private banks. The cross-sectional survey designs are still prevalent in the leadership and behavior studies when the goal is to approximate the relationships and indirect impacts in the organizational context, but the cause and effect cannot be established due to the lack of time (Hair and Alamer, 2022).

### **3.2 Setting and Participants**

The research was done in the private banks within the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, and Dohuk. The number of questionnaires sent out was 690, and after data screening, 444 valid responses were maintained. The sample of respondents was representative of various functional areas and grades, and this can be used to make inferences about leadership and performance perceptions among the operational positions.

### **3.3 Sampling and Procedure**

This was done through a stratified method in order to enhance representation in banks and positions. The sampling technique that was used was the structured questionnaire, which was distributed online and paper-based to ensure access disparities. They were voluntary and anonymous, and the respondents were told that the data would be utilized in the academic analysis.

### **3.4 Measures**

The supportive leadership was assessed as a multidimensional construct, which was denoted by the perceived organizational support, individualized consideration, support of work-life balance and trust configuration. The proactive work behavior was measured in terms of responsibility taking, employee voice, individual innovation, and problem prevention. The measures of outstanding performance were process and service, customer focus, human resources focus and growth and learning. The items were rated on a five-point Likert scale.

### **3.5 Analytical Strategy**

The partial least squares structural equation modelling was used on the two-stage procedure, which analyzes the measurement model, then the structural model. Such a methodology is based on the recent suggestions to determine the internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity before the hypothesis is tested (Hair and Alamer, 2022; Cheah et al., 2026). Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability and AVE were used to measure the quality of measurement, whereas HTMT was used to evaluate the discriminant validity. The evaluation of structural models was performed with bootstrapping to test the significance of the path and the indirect effect, and the model's explanatory power was estimated with the help of R-squared.

### **3.6 Ethics and Quality Controls**

There was no collection of any personally identifying information. The screening of data was done to ensure that only complete data was retained, and the modeling retained only valid questionnaires. The design and analysis are in line with the present-day open access methodological literature in terms of PLS SEM reporting expectations. Every action was documented according to the guidelines of open access on the PLS SEM assessment.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Table 1 suggests that the sample was balanced (52.7% male; 47.3% female), rather broad. The majority of the respondents are in the mid-career, with 78.1 being in the age bracket of 25-44, and the age groups of 18-24 and 54-60 are small, implying that the findings are from core operational staff. The level of education is relatively good: 64.9% have a bachelor's or master's degree, and 24.8% have a diploma, which facilitates knowledgeable answers. There are different pay levels with salaries grouped at 750-1000 (34.9) and 250-500 (30.4). The predominant roles include employees (46.2) and unit heads (42.1). The experience is concentrated on 6-10 years (37.4%). Administrative and accounting specialties lead (68.3%), which is suitable for the banking operation, but does not reflect the marketing and digital operations, which are slightly underrepresented.

**Table 1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents N= (444).**

| Variable      | Frequency                 | %   |
|---------------|---------------------------|-----|
| <b>Gender</b> | Male                      | 234 |
|               | Female                    | 210 |
|               | Total                     | 444 |
| <b>Age</b>    | 18-24                     | 8   |
|               | 25-34                     | 152 |
|               | 35-44                     | 195 |
|               | 45-54                     | 77  |
|               | 54-60                     | 12  |
|               | Total                     | 444 |
|               | Primary school            | 7   |
|               | High school               | 18  |
|               | Diploma                   | 110 |
|               | Bachelor                  | 149 |
|               | Master                    | 139 |
|               | PhD                       | 21  |
|               | Total                     | 444 |
|               | 250-500                   | 135 |
|               | 500-750                   | 86  |
|               | 750-1000                  | 155 |
|               | 1000-1500                 | 68  |
|               | Total                     | 444 |
|               | Administration            | 157 |
|               | Accounting                | 146 |
|               | Statistic                 | 68  |
|               | Marketing                 | 48  |
|               | IT & Digital Banking      | 25  |
|               | Total                     | 444 |
|               | Employee                  | 205 |
|               | Head of Division          | 99  |
|               | Head of Department        | 88  |
|               | Assist. Manager           | 32  |
|               | Manager                   | 17  |
|               | Assistant General Manager | 3   |

|                   |     |      |
|-------------------|-----|------|
| <b>Total</b>      | 444 | 100% |
| <b>2-5 Year</b>   | 129 | 29.1 |
| <b>6-10 Year</b>  | 166 | 37.4 |
| <b>11-15 Year</b> | 111 | 25.0 |
| <b>16-20 Year</b> | 34  | 7.7  |
| <b>20-35 Year</b> | 4   | 0.9  |
| <b>Total</b>      | 444 | 100% |

#### 4.1 Measurement Model Quality

Table 2 provides reports on the reliability and convergent validity of the three core constructs. The internal consistency is also good with Cronbach's alpha of 0.945-0.958 and composite reliability of 0.960-0.969. All the constructs have AVE values greater than 0.85, which supports convergent validity, and the values of HTMT are less than 0.90, which supports discriminant validity. The quality of the measurement allows one to interpret structural paths.

**Table 2. Measurement model quality for core constructs**

| Construct                            | Cronbach's $\alpha$ | rho_A | CR    | AVE   |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| <b>Supportive Leadership (SL)</b>    | 0.946               | 0.952 | 0.961 | 0.861 |
| <b>Proactive Work Behavior (PWB)</b> | 0.958               | 0.958 | 0.969 | 0.888 |
| <b>Outstanding Performance (OP)</b>  | 0.945               | 0.945 | 0.960 | 0.858 |

HTMT: OP–PWB = 0.836; OP–SL = 0.857; PWB–SL = 0.662.

#### 4.3 Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

The bootstrapped direct effects are shown in Table 3. The supportive leadership has a significant prediction on proactive work behavior ( $b = 0.633$ ,  $t = 18.219$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and excellent performance ( $b = 0.518$ ,  $t = 12.753$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The outstanding performance is also anticipated by the proactive work behavior ( $b = 0.468$ ,  $t = 11.201$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The performance is strongly predicted by both the leadership support and proactive behavior.

**Table 3. Bootstrapped structural paths (direct effects)**

| Path            | $\beta$ | t      | p      | 95% CI LL | 95% CI UL |
|-----------------|---------|--------|--------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>SL → PWB</b> | 0.633   | 18.219 | <0.001 | 0.563     | 0.700     |
| <b>PWB → OP</b> | 0.468   | 11.201 | <0.001 | 0.385     | 0.548     |
| <b>SL → OP</b>  | 0.518   | 12.753 | <0.001 | 0.439     | 0.599     |

#### 4.4 Mediation Analysis and Explanatory Power

Table 4 demonstrates that the proactive work behavior of the leader indirectly influences excellent performance based on supportive leadership ( $b = 0.296$ ,  $t = 10.238$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The pattern is indicative of partial mediation because the direct effect is still important. Table 5 indicates that the model accounts for 40.1 percent of the variance in proactive work behavior and 79.4 percent in excellent performance. The model is very explanatory and helps in the mediation mechanism.

**Table 4. Mediation test (indirect, direct, and total effects)**

| Effect                         | $\beta$ | t      | p      |
|--------------------------------|---------|--------|--------|
| <b>Indirect: SL → PWB → OP</b> | 0.296   | 10.238 | <0.001 |

|                        |       |        |        |
|------------------------|-------|--------|--------|
| <b>Direct: SL → OP</b> | 0.518 | 12.753 | <0.001 |
| <b>Total: SL → OP</b>  | 0.814 | 26.385 | <0.001 |

Table 5 indicates a high level of explanatory power. The most supportiveness of the leadership is the reason behind a significant proportion of proactive work behavior ( $R^2 =$

0.401; adjusted  $R^2 = 0.399$ ), meaning that a prominent portion of the variance in employee proactivity can be attributed to leadership support. The model describes an even greater proportion of exemplary performance ( $R^2 = 0.794$ ; adjusted  $R^2 = 0.793$ ), indicating high predictive results for performance. On balance, supportive leadership and proactive behavior are important contributors to performance differences.

**Table 5. Model explanatory power and diagnostics**

| Outcome                              | $R^2$ | Adjusted $R^2$ |
|--------------------------------------|-------|----------------|
| <b>Proactive Work Behavior (PWB)</b> | 0.401 | 0.399          |
| <b>Outstanding Performance (OP)</b>  | 0.794 | 0.793          |

The leadership that has been shown to support proactivity and performance, and the proactive behavior mediates the leadership influence on performance. The supportive leadership and proactive behavior are explained to be the joint cause of the performance variation in the sampled banks. These findings give unanimous evidence of the postulated model relationships.

## **DISCUSSION**

These findings indicate that supportive leadership is highly related to proactive work behavior and outstanding performance, and that proactive work behavior also correlates highly with excellent performance. This tendency is in line with the evidence on open access leadership that relational and supportive leadership is a resource condition that reinforces positive work states and downstream effectiveness (Mazzetti & Schaufeli, 2022; Wang et al., 2025). The employees of a private bank are exposed to the variability of the service and sensitivity to reputation in their work, which means that the encouragement of leaders can conceivably diminish the fear of speaking up and strengthen the desire to accept the tasks to improve. The well-developed SL - PWB route ( $b = 0.633$ ) suggests that proactivity is not just a personal characteristic but the behavioral reaction to the perceived support and trust circumstances. Supportive leadership is a facilitating context of proactive behavior in banking work.

The positive correlation of the proactive work behavior with performance ( $b = 0.468$ ) substantiates the argument that positive change behaviors are part of service outcomes. Modern empirical evidence indicates that performance is associated with proactive behavior via motivational states and work design, which means that proactivity leads to better performance once it is invested in efficient process change and learning (Chan et al., 2023).

In banking, responsibility taking and prevention of problems can decrease the number of mistakes in the operations, and voice and innovation can enhance the treatment of the customers and the internal coordination. Simultaneously, the open access research warns that proactivity may be associated with various costs (anxiety, which could compromise wellbeing and sustainability), unless organizations manage proactivity as one more burden without assistance (Cui et al., 2021). This means that the support offered by the leaders to the recovery and even balanced work allocation is necessary so that proactivity does not prove to be detrimental, but useful. The proactive behavior enhances the performance, but only in a supportive and non-punitive environment.

The mediation outcome shows that the mediation is partial, with a huge indirect impact ( $b = 0.296$ ) and a direct impact ( $b = 0.518$ ) left. This is to indicate that supportive leadership enhances performance through the activation of proactive behaviors and also through other mechanisms. Recent open-access research indicates that leadership can be related to performance via such mediators as engagement, identification, and resource states that can reflect more of the impact of leadership than is reflected by proactive behavior only (Mazzetti & Schaufeli, 2022; Wang et al., 2025). These other mechanisms can be coordination, coaching and climate shaping that enhance process

discipline and customer focus in service organizations in which employees are not specifically active. The relationship between leadership performance is multi-pathway, proactivity being one of them.

The fact that the study is based on a predictive structural model is consistent with the existing advice on open access PLS SEM, which suggests a clear distinction between measurement and structural analysis, good bootstrapping of indirect relationships, and good reporting of reliability, validity, and R-squared (Hair et al., 2022; Cheah et al., 2026). This is because the explanatory power of the model in predicting outstanding performance ( $R^2 = 0.794$ ) implies that the supportive leadership and proactive behavior model explains high performance variance in the sample. The cross-sectional design, however, implies that causality cannot be established, and reverse causality may exist, whereby better-performing units would have a more positive view of leadership. Open access methodological literature suggests more diagnostics and design solutions to mitigate the risks of missingness and single-source designs, such as resilient missing data treatment and transparent reporting (Amusa & Hossana, 2024). The design has strong structural evidence that needs to be supported by longitudinal and multi-source designs.

## 5.1 Practical Implications

For managers of banks, the findings imply that the supportive leadership behaviors should be formalized by the banks in leadership development and performance management systems that are privately owned. The supportive leadership must be put into practice, like scheduled recognition, equitable scheduling, open communication and safe employee voice channels. Evidence on open access suggests that resource conditions can be leveraged by leaders to increase the engagement and effectiveness of scale (Jo et al., 2025). Banks are also advised to incorporate proactive work behavior into process improvement systems, such as an organized incident reporting, prevention checklists, and innovation suggestion cycles, to ensure that proactivity is organized towards quantifiable results and not an informal endeavour. The supportive leadership and the proactivity must be instituted as systems and not as the goodwill of an individual. This aids focused leadership, nurturing and orderly proactive frameworks in private banks.

## 6. Conclusion

The research has looked into the role of supportive leadership in exceptionally good performance in the private banks of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, with special focus on proactive work behavior acting as a mediator. The evidence suggests that the supportive leadership style is correlated with increased performance and enhanced proactive behaviors, such as assuming responsibility, positively voicing, driving innovation and averting problems before they have grown out of proportion. These behaviors are actual processes by which employees convert the support provided by the leaders into the reliability of the service and better organizational performance. The implications of the findings for the manager of the private banks that customer confidence and consistency of service are strategic concerns are evident. The leadership development should be based on support that can be observed in everyday practice, such as equity, availability of guidance, consideration of the wellbeing of the employees, and developing trustworthy communication. With this kind of support, the employees would take early action on emerging issues, offer improvement ideas, and put efforts into refining processes. Conversely, compliance-oriented management, which discourages voice or considers individual errors as mistakes, is likely to discourage proactive efforts and undermine learning. The research also makes a contribution to the research as it elucidates a behavioral pathway in which leadership correlates with performance within a banking environment that is not well studied in the international literature. The conceptualization of proactive work behavior and excellent performance as multidimensional

constructs in the analysis indicates the fact that performance in a bank is contingent upon service processes, customer orientation, workforce competence, and learning capacity and not single outcome indicators. The cross-sectional design does not allow causal inference, and survey data can have a common method effect. Longitudinal designs, multi-source performance measurement, and comparative analysis across types of banks should be utilized in future research to confirm stability and determine other mechanisms like engagement and psychological safety.

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