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## The Role of Supportive Leadership in Enhancing Proactive Employee Work Behaviour in the Banking Sector in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI)

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**Abstract:** This study aims at exploring how supportive leadership relates to proactive work behaviour in private banks in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, as well as which areas of leadership play a most important role in contributing to the responsibility-taking, voice, innovation, and problem prevention. A cross-sectional survey of 444 employees measured supportive leadership via perceived organizational support, individualized consideration, work-life balance, and trust configuration; outstanding performance via process and service, customer focus, human resources focus, and growth and learning; and proactive work behaviour via responsibility taking, voice, innovation, and problem prevention. The assessment ways proved to be reliable with the 40 item instrument (Cronbach 40 = 0.854). Supportive leadership was found to have an average of more than neutral (M = 3.44, SD = 0.56) although proactive behaviour was found to be closely related with neutrality (M = 3.05, SD = 0.56). The only unique effect was found to be negative, and that was trust in leadership (= -0.253, p < 0.001). In contrast, perceived organisational support was non-significant ( $\beta = 0.092$ , p = 0.148) and work-life balance was marginal ( $\beta = 0.106$ , p = 0.079). The research finds that supportive practices need to be matched with learning arrangements and considered discretion in case the bank wishes to gain consistent profits in proactive behaviour.

**Keywords:** Supportive leadership, Proactive work behaviour, Banking sector, Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

### دور القيادة الداعمة في تعزيز سلوك العمل الاستباقي للموظفين في قطاع المصرفي، في إقليم كردستان العراق (KRI)

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**المستخلص:** تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف كيفية ارتباط القيادة الداعمة بالسلوك الوظيفي الاستباقي في البنوك الخاصة في منطقة كردستان العراق، وكذلك أي مجالات من القيادة تلعب دورًا مهمًا في المساهمة في تحمل المسؤولية، والإدلاء بالرأي، والابتكار، ومنع المشكلات. استطلاع مقطعي شمل 444 موظفًا قيّم القيادة الداعمة من خلال الدعم التنظيمي المدرك، والاعتبار الفردي، وتوازن العمل والحياة، وتكوين الثقة؛ والأداء المتميز من خلال العملية والخدمة، والتركيز على العملاء، والتركيز على الموارد البشرية، والنمو والتعلم؛ والسلوك الاستباقي من خلال تحمل المسؤولية، والتعبير عن الرأي، والابتكار، ومنع المشكلات. أثبتت طرق التقييم أنها موثوقة باستخدام الأداة المكونة من 40 عنصرًا (كرونباخ  $\alpha = 0.854$ ). تبين أن القيادة الداعمة كانت لها متوسط أعلى من الحياد ( $M = 3.44$ ,  $SD = 0.56$ ) على الرغم من أن السلوك الاستباقي كان مرتبطًا بشكل وثيق بالحياد ( $M = 3.05$ ,  $SD = 0.56$ ). التأثير الفريد الوحيد الذي وُجد كان سلبياً، وهو الثقة في القيادة ( $\beta = -0.253$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) على النقيض، كان الدعم التنظيمي المدرك غير ذي دلالة ( $\beta = 0.092$ ,  $p = 0.148$ ) وكان توازن العمل والحياة هامشياً ( $\beta = 0.106$ ,  $p = 0.079$ ). تجد الدراسة أن الممارسات الداعمة تحتاج إلى أن تتماشى مع ترتيبات التعلم وأن تُؤخذ بعين الاعتبار في حالة رغبة البنك في تحقيق أرباح متسقة في السلوك الاستباقي.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** القيادة الداعمة، السلوك العملي الاستباقي، قطاع المصرفي، إقليم كردستان العراق.

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## Introduction

Proactive work behaviour refers to self-directed, prospective activities that are targeted to advance the work practices, preclude issues and mould work surroundings by responsibility-taking, voice and innovativeness. Recent research proves that proactivity helps an employee to associate day-to-day activities to future performance and meaning states, which is especially important in the highest services and risk-sensitive work environment, i.e., banking (Fay et al., 2023). Kurdistan Region in Iraq operates based on the increasing pressure of digitalization, operational dependability, and consumer confidence of the private banks. In that regard, those employees who foresee and preempt issues, propose process enhancements, and express their concerns plausibly are involved in the service quality and risk management. The ability to be proactive is facilitated by leadership. The leadership that fosters energy, competence, and psychological safety of employees needed to take initiative and innovate is enabled by the supportive leadership in the form of perceived organizational support, individualized consideration, work-life balance support, and trustful leader employee relationship (Bakker et al., 2023; Deng et al., 2023; Kleynhans et al., 2022). Organizational Support Theory (OST) is the concept describing how the employees deduce that the organization appreciates their involvement and is concerned about their well-being; the perceived organizational support leads to the felt obligation and socio-emotional benefits resulting in discretionary effort and proactive acts (Eisenberger et al., 2020; Caesens and Stinglhamber, 2020). The mechanism is theoretically applicable to front-line employees in the banking environment to identify anomalies, remediate service failures, and suggest system improvements prior to the disruption escalating.

Perceived organizational support serves as a generic assumption of the view that the organization values input and is concerned about welfare. Meta-analytic and narrative reviews demonstrate positive relationships between perceived organizational support and engagement, thriving, and innovation-related behaviors, often through the satisfaction of basic psychological needs and identification processes (Eisenberger et al., 2020; Fan et al., 2022). Studies since 2020 have reported that supportive climates, which recognize contributions and provide resources, are related to proactive innovation behavior, suggesting that employees reciprocate supportive signals with change-oriented actions (Fan et al., 2022). In banking, where clients value reliability and trust, the logic that supports cultivates extra-role effort is consistent with the need to maintain standards while adapting processes to new technologies and regulatory expectations (Potipiroon & Ford, 2021). Individualized consideration, a micro-foundation of transformational leadership, involves coaching, attending to individual needs, and enabling development. Leadership episodes involving

personalized consideration have been identified in relation to personal initiative and the active prevention of daily problems. These experiences are indicative of the fact that experimentation is encouraged and competence building is encouraged (Deng et al., 2023). The individualized consideration, in the context of bank branches and operations units, is manifested as the possibility to study new systems, practice better processes, and test customer-service innovations with the help of supervision that will increase the chances of employees becoming responsible and proposing solutions.

Work-life balance reduces the strain and restores the attentional resources required to effect improvement-oriented action (Demir & Budur, 2023). The pandemic-related and post-pandemic reviews suggest that a work-life balance may positively impact well-being and engagement, which are, respectively, correlated with performance and innovation outcomes (Le et al., 2020). In banking roles with customer-facing peaks and compliance deadlines, supportive leave systems, predictability, and effective workload management can reduce burnout and permit staff to invest in preventive planning and structured problem-solving. The existing information on remote and hybrid arrangements also demonstrates associations with stress reduction and satisfaction levels, which imply that an appropriately designed flexibility can be made compatible with performance levels (Wells et al., 2023). Trust configuration refers to the quality and form of trust in leader-follower and team relations. Concept analyses and empirical studies indicate that psychological security and promotive voice are predicted by trust of the leader; when employees trust the leadership, they believe the interpersonal risk of speaking up is lower and there is a channel through which their ideas can be considered (Karikumpu et al., 2024; Silva et al., 2024; Joo et al., 2023). Literature establishes that trust is a process that links leadership style and performance achievements, which is consistent with the perception that servant, ethical, and authentic leadership styles build trust and enable constructive challenge (Legood et al., 2021). Confidence in financial services is enhanced when errors are reported and escalated promptly, allowing for proactive disclosure and correction.

In this study, supportive leadership is a four-facet construct that encompasses organizational support, individualized consideration, work-life balance support, and trust configuration. It examines its connection with proactive work behavior, which in this context refers to taking responsibility, voicing opinions, individual innovation, and preventing problems. It also considers whether an organizational orientation toward, standardized processes, customer focus, human resource development, and learning helps translate supportive leadership into sustained proactive routines by providing systems, standards, and feedback channels that legitimize and absorb employee initiatives (Chen et al., 2023). The Kurdistan Region's private banks offer a pertinent setting because modernization pressures, customer experience goals, and compliance needs jointly create demand for anticipatory and improvement-focused behaviour.

## **1- Problem Statement**

Although proactive behaviour has been theorized under supportive leadership, the supporting role in process-intensive, regulated banking remains inconclusive. The support of managers is often expressed through oversight and escalation norms and can negatively influence autonomous action, even without the intention. The former studies have constrained the facilities' ability to test aspects of leadership and system requirements that delineate day-to-day discretion (Zhou et al., 2024). This paper addresses the gap by estimating the distinct influence of perceived organizational support, personalized consideration, work-life support, and trust established on responsibility-taking, voice, innovation, and problem prevention among bank staff in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The question is to determine which dimensions of leadership are the working predictors of the proactive behaviour under this context.

## **2- Research Questions**

A. How are the relationships between leadership facets and work behaviour levels on the overall proactive work behaviour?

B. Which is the best leadership factor that predicts responsibility, voice, innovation, and prevention?

### **3- Aim and Objectives**

#### **A. Aim**

The study aims to quantify the association between supportive leadership and proactive employee work behaviour in private banks in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

#### **B. Objectives**

- To estimate the strength and direction of the association between supportive leadership and proactive work behaviour among bank employees.
- To identify the unique contributions of perceived organisational support and trust in leadership to proactive work behaviour when modelled alongside other supportive practices.

### **4- Hypotheses**

H<sub>01</sub>: The supportive leadership support was positively associated with proactive work behaviour.

H<sub>02</sub>: The leadership show a positive unique association with proactive work behaviour after accounting for perceived organisational support, individualised consideration, and work–life balance support.

### **5- Importance of the Study**

The research paper examines the effect of favourable leadership on proactive employee behaviour in privately owned banks in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Banking is a highly stable service-based business in which responsibility-taking, voice, innovation, and problem prevention influence service quality and risk management. The study disaggregates supportive leadership into perceived organizational support, individualized consideration, work-life balance support, and trust configuration, thereby identifying the element that most effectively stimulates proactivity. The outcomes lead to leadership development, work design, and governance practices that enable safe, improvement-oriented action. The main contribution is the dimension-level diagnosis, which links leadership practices with the bank-specific performance behaviors that can be implemented.

### **1<sup>st</sup>: Literature Review**

#### **1- Organizational Support Theory and the Motivational Basis of Proactivity**

Organizational Support Theory posits that perceived organizational support reflects employees' global beliefs that the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being, creating felt obligation and socio-emotional fulfillment that motivate discretionary effort (Eisenberger et al., 2020). Conceptual developments prioritize the criticality of boundary conditions and the potential of ambivalent reactions in the case of non-alignment of support with justice or autonomy and call on the careful development of supportive practices (Caesens and Stinglhamber, 2020). The empirical studies show that perceived organizational support is associated with engagement, satisfaction of psychological needs, and proactive innovation behaviour, which suggests that supportive climates are sources of energy and meaning to take action when confronting change (Fan et al., 2022). The connection in the banking context can be made in that proactive behaviour, including identifying errors early, proposing process controls and customised services involve both resources and a perception that the organisation values proactive behaviour. The OST course to proactivity may be affected by autonomy and competence. Under the conditions of congruence of signals of support with the resources, training, technology, and time, the basic need satisfaction of employees is triggered, which triggers self-determined motivation (Fan et al., 2022). Employees can also see the results of their proposals, which further enhance the use of proactive cycles with the presence of standardized processes in service and data feedback (Fay et al., 2023; Al-Taie and Khattak, 2024). However, perceived organizational support without credible

avenues for idea implementation risks frustration; thus, combining support with process and learning systems is essential to convert willingness into action (Jiang et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2023). In banks where compliance is stringent, supportive interpretations of honest error reporting and constructive dissent are particularly crucial in avoiding silence. The literature, therefore, supports a positive direct effect of perceived organizational support on proactive behavior, with more potent effects present when enabling systems are in place.

## **2- Individualized Consideration and Capability Development for Proactive Action**

Individualized consideration represents a leader's tailored coaching, attention to individual needs, and facilitation of growth. Strong primers and evidence from diary research suggest that the stimulation of personal initiative and interest in experimenting with new strategies occurs under the influence of transformational leadership events, such as individualised consideration (Bakker et al., 2023; Deng et al., 2023). The two antecedents of creative work behaviour can be referred to as intellectual stimulation and consideration of the individual, which, in turn, is mediated by commitment to change or creative self-efficacy (Chen et al., 2023). The capability pathway is involved in delivering proper and adaptable banking services. Leaders who scaffold learning on new platforms, pair juniors with experienced staff, and recognize micro-improvements create conditions where responsibility-taking and preventive planning are feasible and less risky (Li et al., 2020; Halliwell et al., 2023). Recent studies extend this logic by linking individualized consideration to psychological safety via trust. When employees perceive that their leader understands their constraints and will coach rather than punish, they are more likely to voice ideas and admit near misses, an antecedent of process improvement. According to the reviews, these climates decrease the fear between people and enhance the learning behaviors, which lie adjacent to proactivity (Joo et al., 2023; Patil et al., 2023). Ideally, individualized consideration can be formalized with well-organized feedback rungs, micro-learning and appreciation of small-scale innovations, consistent with leadership moments and system-wide continuous improvement. According to the literature, thus, the idea of individualized consideration is a proactive behaviour enabler and a safety facilitator of banking.

## **3- Work–Life Balance Support and Resource Conservation for Proactivity**

Practices of the work life balance affect proactivity as they save on resources and strain. The synthesis of evidence created in the pandemic indicates that balance may be enhanced or worsened by remote and flexible working arrangements, depending on their design. Nevertheless, properly handled they improve well-being, engagement, and performance antecedents of innovation (Irfan, 2015; Jun and Lee, 2023). The systematic reviews also report that work-life balance is either linked to job satisfaction and lower turnover, which means that favourable balance practices make the teams more stable and release cognitive resources to enhance work (Le et al., 2020; Wells et al., 2023). According to conservation of resources view, work-life balance boosts resource reserves in terms of time regulation and emotional energy; such reserves may be used in planning, prevention of problems and positive voice. Credible leave system, predictable scheduling and workload negotiation are essential in the banking sphere where role overload may occur because of service windows and compliance activities. Imagine that employees want to be treated fairly in the process of striking a balance between family and their work. Then, they will be less prone to surface compliance and will consider making proactive error avoidance and customer-oriented corrections. According to emerging literature, work to life balance is positively related to innovative work behaviour through engagement pathways, which is in line with less strain leading to more curiosity and experimentation (Irfan, 2015; Ma et al., 2024). The literature therefore supports a positive association between work–life balance support and proactive behavior, contingent on supportive leadership and clear performance systems.

#### 4- Trust Configuration, Psychological Safety, and Voice

Trust configuration refers to the extent to which staff perceive leaders as benevolent, competent, and having integrity. Concept analyses and empirical studies since 2020 converge on the view that trust underpins psychological safety and promotive voice (Karikumpu et al., 2024; Kleynhans et al., 2022). Meta-analytic evidence suggests that contemporary leadership styles influence performance in part by fostering trust, which enables employees to raise concerns and propose changes (Legood et al., 2021; Otterbring et al., 2024). Time-lagged analyses show that trust conditions the effect of paradoxical or empowering leader behavior on promotive voice, implying a moderating role whereby supportive signals translate into voice more strongly when trust is high (Silva et al., 2024). In banks, voice is essential to risk governance; however, employees may fear negative consequences. Trustlowers perceived interpersonal risk increases the likelihood that managers will act on suggestions. Psychological safety research also underscores the importance of trustful climates for team learning and innovation (Abbas, 2023). Reviews and bibliometric analyses reveal leadership safety innovation chains across various sectors, with empowering or authentic leadership enhancing safety, which in turn redirects and promotes learning behaviors and productivity (Joo et al., 2023; Patil et al., 2023). Recent scale work validates instruments for assessing psychological safety, which can be used in conjunction with trust indexes to diagnose readiness for voice and prevention-focused proactivity (Wang & Ning, 2024; Mazzetti & Schaufeli, 2022). The literature, therefore, justifies modeling trust as both a component of supportive leadership and a moderator of the perceived organizational support–voice link.

These supportive leadership dimensions map onto motivational (perceived organizational support), capability (individualized consideration), resource (work–life balance), and risk/safety (trust) pathways to proactive behavior. A system-level orientation toward standardized processes, customer focus, human resource development, and learning likely mediates the conversion of supportive leadership signals into enduring proactive routines because it provides the structures and feedback mechanisms where ideas are captured, tested, and scaled (Chen et al., 2023; Fay et al., 2023). The integrated model, therefore, predicts direct positive effects of supportive leadership on proactive behavior, indirect effects through performance systems, and a trust-based strengthening of the perceived organizational support voice relationship.

#### 5- Conceptual Framework

The hypothesized relations between the supportive leadership facets and proactive work behaviour are visualised in Figure 1, which is made by researcher.

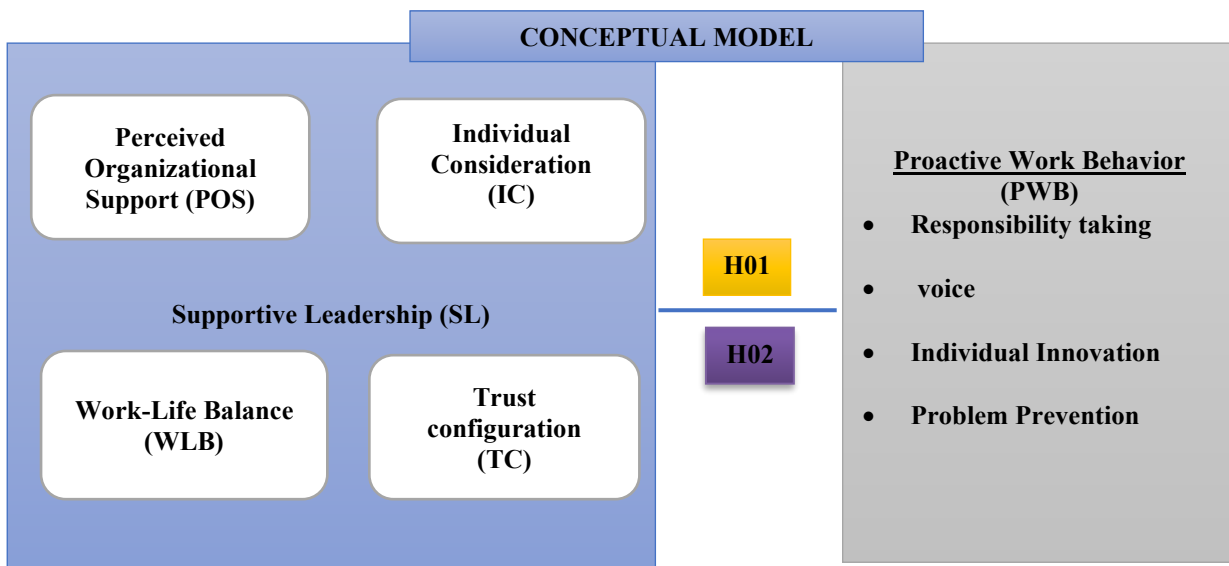


Figure (1): Conceptual Model

## **2<sup>nd</sup>: Research Methodology**

### **1- Research Design**

This study employs a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design to investigate the directional relationships between Supportive Leadership and Proactive Work Behavior, as well as Proactive Work Behaviour, using three nested models. A cross-sectional approach is appropriate for estimating associations among well-established latent constructs in leadership and work behavior research where validated self-report measures are standard (Eisenberger et al., 2020). The design follows prior studies that operationalised supportive leadership through perceived organizational support, individualized consideration, work–life balance support, and trust configuration, and examined their links to proactive and innovative behaviors (Bakker et al., 2023; Kleynhans et al., 2022; Fay et al., 2023). The models are specified as follows: proactive work behavior is regressed on supportive leadership dimensions; proactive work behaviour is regressed on supportive leadership is regressed on combined. The design enables comparative inference on single-predictor and combined specifications while maintaining consistent measurement across constructs (Chen et al., 2023). The analytic focus is predictive rather than causal; therefore, the design emphasises psychometric adequacy, model parsimony, and comparative explanatory power across specifications (Fay et al., 2023). The approach is suitable for the banking context, where large employee samples can be accessed efficiently through the use of structured questionnaires.

### **2- Population, Sampling, and Sample Size**

The sample includes the employees of the private banks running in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Purposive sampling focus on those branches and departments in which the respondents are directly affected by the leadership practices and performance systems, such as customer service, operations, risk and compliance, and retail banking (Silva et al., 2024). This methodology is consistent with the research on leadership and voice that samples the role holders who experienced the focal practices and results (Kleynhans et al., 2022). It is intended to be represented by a sample of 444 respondents that can be considered constant, allowing estimating reliability indices, and factor structures and multiple regression coefficients with sufficient power. Recent survey studies in related domains report robust estimation with samples of comparable or smaller size when constructs are measured with concise, validated scales (Bakker et al., 2023; Deng et al., 2023). The sample size also supports facet-level analyses for Proactive Work Behavior, which can be estimated as a higher-order index or by subscales reflecting responsibility, voice, innovation, and prevention (Koyama et al., 2025; Fay et al., 2023). The sampling frame will aim for proportional representation across prominent role families and banks to enhance generalizability within the region's private banking sector.

### **3- Data Collection**

Data was collected using a structured questionnaire administered via Google Forms. Online administration supports efficient distribution across geographically dispersed branches and preserves standardisation in item presentation and response options. The instrument includes four sections. In section A, demographics are captured. B is Supportive Leadership, assessed by items of perceived organizational support, individualized consideration, work life balance support, and trust configuration, based on the established operational definitions (Eisenberger et al., 2020; Bakker et al., 2023; Kleynhans et al., 2022). Section C assesses the Proactive Work Behaviour which encompasses responsibility, voice, innovation, and problem prevention in line with the modern conceptualisations (Fay et al., 2023; (Chen et al., 2023)). Each of the scale items will be rated using a five-point Likert scale with strongly disagree being the first point and strongly agree being the last point. The form will be available via a safe link, and one-submission options will be available and the time of completion encouraged identifying cases of rushing. A small sample pretest conducted with bank employees will be used to evaluate clarity and flow of response and slight changes in

wordings will be done in areas where there is need to ensure that there is content validity as well as improved readability.

#### **4- Reliability and Validity**

The rating of reliability was done through Cronbach's alpha and item total relating to each subscale, with a desired alpha of  $\geq .70$  (Kleynhans et al., 2022). The construct validity was done using an exploratory factor analysis to ensure that the intended four-factor structures were met in each of the central constructs and subsequently higher-order aggregation was confirmed wherever it was required. Inter-factor relationships and the Fornell-Larcker criterion will be used to test discriminant validity as one of the factors to make sure that the dimensions of leadership, performance, and behaviour are different (Fay et al., 2023). The operational definitions and item domains recorded in the literature of leadership, support, and proactivity assist in supporting content validity (Eisenberger et al., 2020; Bakker et al., 2023). A pilot test will determine the comprehensibility of the words and the variability of the responses, which will be checked prior to the rollout.

#### **5- Data Analysis**

The data collected on the respondents were analyzed using Statistical Package on the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics will give a summary of means, the standard deviations, skewness, and kurtosis of all the subscales and give frequency distributions of the demographic variables. The scale reliability will be presented as the alpha of Cronbach with a 95% confidence interval (Fay et al., 2023). The estimation of three regression models will then be done. Regression is used to predict the proactive work behaviour in response to supportive leadership by studying the interrelationship between proactive work behavior. It incorporates the two predictors to measure singular effects and additional variance explicated. Coefficients were provided as standardized, model R<sup>2</sup>, adjusted R<sup>2</sup> and t-tests, and the factors of variable inflation will be checked to determine the presence of multicollinearity.

#### **6- Ethical Consideration**

The research will be conducted according to the ethical standards and principles of informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation institutionalized. A consent statement will be given on the Google Forms landing page and it will explain the aim of the study, voluntariness of the involvement, anticipated time of completion, and data management. No personal data will be gathered but only basic demographics and the respondents will be free to leave at free will. All the data will be stored in encrypted drives and will be reported in aggregate form to avoid deductive disclosure, hence can only be accessed by the research team. The items included in the questionnaire captivate pre-defined constructs in leadership and organizational behaviour, and this reduces the risk to the participants (Eisenberger et al., 2020). The online platform also lowers the administrative load and keeps the respondent autonomy but maintains standardisation in the delivery (Irfan, 2015). Any amendments in the protocols that emerge as a result of the pilot will undergo review prior to complete rollout ensuring that it remains ethical.

#### **3<sup>rd</sup>: Results**

This part shows these three prespecified models empirical results. The paper is structured in sample characteristics and scale diagnostics, descriptive statistics of all the constructs and regression analysis of leadership, performance only and the combination model.

**Table (1):** Demographic Statistics

	<b>Group</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Gender	Male	234	52.7
	female	210	47.3
Age	18-24	8	1.8
	25-34	151	34.0
	35-44	194	43.7
	45-54	78	17.6
	54-60	13	2.9
	250-500	122	27.5
Monthly Salary	500-750	86	19.4
	750-1000	159	35.8
	1000-1500	77	17.3
	Primary school degree	7	1.6
Educational Level	Diploma degree	109	24.5
	High school degree	16	3.6
	Bachelor degree	149	33.6
	Master degree	141	31.8
	PhD degree	22	5.0
	Specialty	Management	159
Accounting		164	36.9
IT & Digital Banking		32	7.2
Statistics		58	13.1
Marketing		31	7.0
Job Title	Manager	20	4.5
	Assistant Manager	30	6.8
	Divison Head	59	13.3
	Department Head	54	12.2
	Employee	279	62.8
	Assistant General Manager	2	.5
	Years of experience in current job	2-5	120
6-10		173	39.0
11-15		116	26.1
16-20		31	7.0
20-35		4	.9
<b>Total</b>		<b>444</b>	<b>100%</b>

According to Table (1), the sample used was well balanced and professional (n = 444). The gender distribution is almost balanced (52.7% male and 47.3% female). The median value is 2544 and the median age is 2544, and is dominated by 2544 (77.7 percent) with an examination of the core mid-career group, 3544 (43.7 percent). The educational attainment is also high with 33.6 having bachelor degree, 31.8 having master degree, 5.0 having PhD, and 5.2 having high school education and less. The salaries range around the middle tiers (750 -1000 = 35.8; 250-500 = 27.5) which is a combination of junior and fixed jobs. Accounting (36.9%), Management (35.8%), has functional specialisms with smaller but significant proportions in Statistics (13.1%), IT & Digital Banking (7.2%), and Marketing (7.0%). The topmost positions are occupied by Division and Department Heads (25.5%), with the non-managerial workforce (Employees 62.8%). Tenure is not changing and 65.1% give 6-15 years in their present occupation. Altogether, the data set is that of an experienced and highly qualified banking cohort, which would be appropriate in the study of workplace behavior. This piece facilitates the variation in the perception of leadership and proactive behavior on the basis of education, functional and tenure with a restriction on the level of confounding on basis of age as a result of the mid-career focus. The operational character of such a

high number of roles increases the relevance of the testing of the relationship between the supportive leadership and performance systems and the frontline proactivity in the private banks.

**Table (2):** Descriptive Statistics

Dimension	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Proactive work behavior	444	3.0473	.55930
Supportive Leadership	444	3.4378	.56425

Table (2) reveals the descriptive findings which depict moderate central tendencies, with similar dispersion among constructs on a five-point scale. The most dominant mean ( $M = 3.44$ ,  $SD = 0.56$ ) is obtained with supportive leadership and it is clearly above the neutral point implying that employees tend to believe that leadership is more supportive than otherwise. The Proactive Work Behaviours is less ( $M = 3.05$ ,  $SD = .56$ ), and it is centred around the neutrality and it means that self-reported initiative, voice, innovation, and prevention behaviors exist but are not highly supported. Standard deviations between 0.55 and 0.56 represent a sufficient variability with no indication of extreme compression that is favourable to the future regression. The higher supportive leadership alongside only middling performance systems and proactive behavior suggests potential headroom for leadership to translate more fully into system enablement and day-to-day proactive conduct. Taken together, the means are consistent with a setting where supportive cues are perceived, yet their behavioural and systemic uptake remains partial, providing a suitable empirical basis to test whether supportive leadership additively predict proactive work behavior in the specified models.

**Table (3):** Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.854	40

Table (3), shows that the Cronbach's alpha for the complete 40-item instrument is .854, indicating good internal consistency and acceptable measurement reliability for research purposes. An alpha above .80 suggests items coherently reflect their intended constructs, supporting the use of composite scores in subsequent analyses. Nonetheless, reliability should also be confirmed at the subscale level and complemented by validity evidence to ensure robust measurement and interpretation of the construct.

**Table (4):** Model Summary of Proactive Work Behavior on Supportive Leadership

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.243 <sup>a</sup>	.059	.050	.54507

a. Predictors: (Constant), Trust Configuration, Work-Life balance, Perceived Organizational Support (POS), Individual Consideration

Table 4, displays the leadership model, which reveals a small but statistically significant association with proactive work behavior ( $r = .243$ ). The explained variance is modest ( $R^2 = 0.059$ ; adjusted  $R^2 = 0.050$ ), indicating that the four supportive-leadership dimensions together account for approximately 5.9% of the variance in behavior. Overall model fit is modest; inference should rely on the significance and relative weights of the individual predictors, with diagnostics reported.

**Table (5):** Regression Coefficients of Supportive Leadership Dimensions

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	3.470	.166		20.913	.000
	Perceived Organizational Support (POS)	.063	.044	.092	1.450	.148
	Individual Consideration	-.089	.057	-.110	-1.547	.123
	Work-Life balance	.091	.051	.106	1.761	.079
	Trust Configuration	-.196	.041	-.253	-4.837	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Proactive work behavior

Table 4.5 shows that the four supportive-leadership dimensions are entered simultaneously; only Trust Configuration is a statistically significant predictor of Proactive Work Behaviour, and its effect is inverse ( $\beta = -0.253, p < .001$ ). Perceived Organizational Support ( $\beta = .092, p = .148$ ) and Individualized Consideration ( $\beta = -0.110, p = .123$ ) are non-significant, while Work-Life Balance shows only a marginal positive association ( $\beta = .106, p = .079$ ). The negative coefficient for Trust Configuration, alongside weak or null effects for the other dimensions, indicates that the net, partialled influence of “Supportive Leadership” is not uniformly positive in this specification. This pattern may reflect suppression or multicollinearity among leadership facets, measurement polarity in the trust items, or substantive overlap where trust signals reliance rather than initiative when other supports are controlled. It is advisable to inspect zero-order correlations, variance inflation factors, and facet-level models of Proactive Work Behavior to determine whether bivariate relations are positive but turn negative under joint estimation. The leadership regression does not confirm  $H_{02}$ ; supportive leadership effects appear heterogeneous, with a small tendency for Work-Life Balance to relate positively and Trust Configuration to relate negatively to proactive behavior in this sample.

**Table (6):** Model Summary of Proactive work behavior on Supportive Leadership

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.112 <sup>a</sup>	.013	.010	.55642

a. Predictors: (Constant), Supportive Leadership

Table 4.6 indicates a very weak bivariate relationship between supportive leadership and proactive work behaviour ( $R = 0.112$ ). The model explains only 1.3% of the variance ( $R^2 = 0.013$ ; adjusted  $R^2 = 0.010$ ), implying negligible explanatory power after adjusting for sample size. The standard error of the estimate (0.55642) is large relative to the five-point scale, signalling substantial unexplained dispersion around predicted values. On model fit alone, supportive leadership as a single composite predictor offers limited predictive utility for proactivity, warranting facet-level analyses and inclusion of proximal task and climate variables to improve explanation.

**Table (7):** Regression Coefficients of Supportive Leadership

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	3.429	.163		21.005	.000
	Supportive Leadership	-.111	.047	-.112	-2.367	.018

A. Dependent Variable: Proactive work behavior

Table 4.7, shows that the composite supportive leadership index has a small but statistically significant negative association with proactive work behavior ( $B = -0.111, SE = 0.047; \beta = -0.112;$

$t = -2.367$ ;  $p = .018$ ). The intercept ( $B = 3.429$ ,  $p < .001$ ) indicates that, at the sample mean of supportive leadership, predicted proactivity lies modestly above the neutral point on the five-point scale. The negative standardized coefficient implies that a one standard deviation increase in supportive leadership is associated with a 0.112 standard deviation decrease in proactive behavior, holding no other variables in the model. Given the small absolute effect size and prior evidence expecting a positive link, this result points to either suppression by unmodelled task or climate factors, measurement polarity issues, or a context in which supportive signals are interpreted as cues for escalation rather than autonomous initiative. Against the stated hypotheses,  $H_{01}$  (positing a positive association) is not supported and is contradicted by the significant negative coefficient. However, the negative bivariate sign cautions that any claimed positive unique contribution would need to emerge only after controlling for other leadership facets.

#### 4<sup>th</sup>: Discussion

This discussion interprets the findings in relation to the study objectives and situates them within the context of contemporary research on supportive leadership systems, and proactive work behavior. The first objective assessed the direct association between supportive leadership and proactive work behavior. The supportive leadership did not exhibit a positive net effect; instead, the combined leadership index was negatively related to proactive behavior in the joint model and displayed a weak negative relationship. This contrasts with the prevailing expectation in Organizational Support Theory, which posits that perceived organizational support and related supportive signals elicit discretionary, change-oriented effort (Caesens & Stinglhamber, 2020). It also diverges from evidence that transformational micro-episodes, which exceptionally involve individualized consideration, activate personal initiative (Bakker et al., 2023). Similar suppression patterns have been documented when overlapping climate constructs are entered simultaneously (Fay et al., 2023). Second, the leadership subdimension results suggest construct heterogeneity. The trust configuration displayed a robust negative coefficient, while the work–life balance trended positively, and perceived organizational support and individualized consideration were non-significant. Trust is typically a precursor to psychological safety and voice (Kleynhans et al., 2022; Karikumpu et al., 2024); however, the adverse partial effect suggests that, net of systems and other supports, trust, as measured here, may signal reliance on leaders and risk transfer upward rather than initiative-taking by employees. This interpretation is coherent with recent work showing that trust can increase compliance and reduce self-initiated action when task interdependence is high and rules are salient (Allen & Hu, 2024). It is also consistent with banking's high-reliability demands where staff may escalate issues to trusted supervisors rather than act autonomously.

The objective was to evaluate the direct association between proactive work behavior. Customer focus, growth, and learning are positive predictors, whereas process and service are negatively related, and human resources focus is not significant. This pattern aligns with studies that emphasize the enabling role of learning climates and feedback-rich, user-oriented systems in promoting proactivity and innovation (Fay et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2023). The positive link between growth and learning mirrors evidence that development investments and learning infrastructures catalyze proactive problem-solving and idea generation by expanding competence and autonomy (Koyama et al., 2025; Chen et al., 2023). Similarly, customer-focused systems provide salient performance signals and frequent feedback that motivate employees to take charge and improve service delivery, consistent with research on voice and service quality loops (Allen & Hu, 2024). The negative coefficient for process and service suggests that highly standardized, error-minimizing routines may crowd out discretion and reduce self-initiated behavior, once learning and customer focus are held constant. Proactivity requires latitude for change-oriented action, and tightly specified processes can narrow perceived choice sets and heighten the costs of deviation, especially in regulated contexts such as banking. This echoes findings that formalisation can dampen voice and innovation unless paired with participative mechanisms and experimentation windows (Fay et al., 2023). The non-significant human resources focus may indicate that general

HR programs, as measured, are too distal to shape day-to-day initiatives once more proximal learning and customer logics are included in the model.

In contrast, supportive leadership became significantly negative, yielding only partial support for hypothesis. This divergence from theorised positive leadership effects warrants further consideration. One possibility is conceptual overlap coupled with differential proximity to behaviour (Iddrisu & Mohammed, 2024). In contrast, supportive leadership, as captured here, may operate more as a background relational context (Lee et al., 2023). When both are entered, the more proximal system variables subsume the shared variance that is positively related to proactivity, leaving the residual leadership variance associated with compliance and upward reliance, which lowers proactivity (Javalagi et al., 2024). This mechanism is compatible with multilevel views, in which structural enablers serve as necessary conduits between supportive leadership signals and action (Fay et al., 2023). The trust configuration items emphasise supportive escalation and direct interaction with leaders. In high-reliability services, such emphasis could reduce perceived discretion to act autonomously, especially when process standards are salient (Ji et al., 2025). The adverse partial effect for trust configuration aligns with this logic and is consistent with research indicating that paradoxical or controlling leadership cues can suppress promotive voice unless balanced by explicit empowerment and learning framing (Silva et al., 2024; Joo et al., 2023). If individualized consideration and perceived organizational support do not strongly dominate the leadership index, the composite may overweight trust-related compliance cues in this sample.

The findings align with the existing literature in demonstrating a positive association between learning-oriented and customer-oriented systems and proactivity (Fay et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2023). They also align with the notion that supportive contexts are associated with stronger performance systems, as indicated by the positive relationship between supportive leadership and proactive work behaviour. However, they diverge from studies that consistently report uniformly positive links between leadership and proactivity (Bakker et al., 2023; Deng et al., 2023). The divergence may reflect sectoral specificities in the Kurdistan Region's private banks, where regulatory compliance and risk aversion are prominent and where supportive leadership may be enacted as close oversight and problem containment rather than empowerment. There is a positive tendency of the work life balance, which is in line with findings that recovery of resources supports action of improvement (Le et al., 2020). Job design, role breadth self-efficacy, and psychological safety are some of the factors that shape proactivity (Fay et al., 2023; Wang and Ning, 2024). Explanatory power may be enhanced by the incorporation of job autonomy, error management climate, and explicit cues of empowerment. The findings warn of the assumption of a homogenously positive impact of supportive leadership on proactivity in the absence of the proximal task systems which mediate or which dampen initiative.

When it comes to perceived organizational support, it might need credible, learning-favourable structures to be converted into proactive action, otherwise, the support might be returned into compliance instead of actual change (Eisenberger et al., 2020; Fan et al., 2022). The trend shows the significance of disaggregating leadership composites and facet-to-facet pathways testing. For instance, individualized consideration may predict innovation more strongly than voice, whereas trust configuration may predict prevention through escalation rather than responsibility-taking in situation (Hassan et al., 2025). Practically, managers in private banks seeking to foster proactivity should pair supportive leadership with growth and learning infrastructures, as well as customer feedback loops. The study achieves its objectives by demonstrating that systems, particularly growth and learning, as well as customer focus, are the most consistent positive correlates of proactive work behavior in this setting. In contrast, supportive leadership, as measured, does not show the expected positive association and can be negative once systems are held constant. Aligning supportive leadership with explicit learning infrastructures and calibrated process flexibility appears essential for converting supportive intent into proactive conduct in private banks in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

### **5<sup>th</sup>: Conclusion**

In conclusion, this study examined whether supportive leadership and systems predict proactive work behavior among employees in private banks in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Across three prespecified models, the evidence indicates that system-level orientations especially learning and customer focus are the most consistent correlates of proactivity. In contrast, supportive leadership, as operationalized here, does not display the uniformly positive association assumed in much recent work. Taken together with contemporary theory, the results suggest that supportive signals alone are insufficient to elicit change-oriented action unless embedded in credible structures that channel initiative into routine practice. In this high-reliability, compliance-intensive sector, leadership support may be interpreted as encouragement to escalate rather than to act autonomously; without explicit learning infrastructure and feedback loops, such support can translate into compliance rather than initiative. The study advances the Organizational Support Theory by emphasizing the significance of proximal systems that are task-oriented in transforming perceived support into proactive behavior. It underscores the need to disaggregate leadership composites: resource-restorative elements (work–life balance) appear more facilitative of proactivity than trust cues that may emphasise deference in tightly standardised environments. Managerially, banks seeking stronger proactivity should pair supportive leadership with growth-and-learning mechanisms, customer feedback cycles, and carefully calibrated process flexibility that defines safe zones for experimentation. Future research should employ longitudinal or multilevel designs, incorporate supervisor or objective indicators of proactivity, and test facet-to-facet pathways. This study advances a contingent view: supportive leadership contributes to proactivity when aligned with learning-oriented, customer-facing systems that legitimise and absorb employee initiative. The system-level learning and customer focus are more behavior-oriented, and leadership signals alone do not suffice unless woven into structures that legitimize initiative. Disaggregated leadership clarifies where the levers need to be invested and where unwanted compliance cues are encountered. In line with the intent of support and clear areas of discretion, feedback loops, and rehabilitative opportunities, there is the most likely pathway to long-term proactivity.

### **6<sup>th</sup>: Recommendations**

The infrastructure for growth and learning, micro learning, after-action reviews, and mentoring ought to be provided to facilitate these processes and support the initiative's capability. Identify the points of discretion in critical processes so employees know where they can safely make improvements. Integrate pair customer feedback dashboards, team huddles to facilitate the bringing of ideas to light and looping. Preserving work-life balance helps stabilize intention and energy, and monitor work. Rethink trust practices that rely on default escalation; instead, test the rapid recovery from coaching. Voice on risk and service reliability leader scripts, and use and reward minor and documented process improvements. Calculate the unit-level proactive measures and rewards for established gains. Integrate faculty-level diagnostics into leadership development so that managers can develop their perceived organizational support and individualized consideration without jeopardizing trust signals. This alignment will likely increase responsibility-taking, constructive feedback, and problem-solving across branches and operations.

### **7<sup>th</sup>: Suggestions for Future Study**

Disaggregate team and within-team mechanisms by use of longitudinal designs or multilevel designs. The addition of supervisor ratings and the behavioural indicator of initiative to self-report. Test to facet pathways as such, individualized consideration to innovation and trust to prevention. The moderator roles of job autonomy, error management climate, and formalization are to be tested. Assess the context sensitivity and external validity by comparing branch and operations units and private and public banks. Include qualitative follow-ups to acknowledge that sometimes trust does not, in itself, stimulate action.

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