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## THE INTERACTIVE IMPACTS OF LEADERSHIP, ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE, AND ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR ON COMPANY PERFORMANCE

**Phasha Bennitta Senyatsi** 

Corresponding Author: University of Pretoria, South Africa  
Email: [bennitta.senyatsi@dpworld.com](mailto:bennitta.senyatsi@dpworld.com)

**Olufemi Adetunji** 

University of Pretoria, South Africa  
Email: [olufemi.adetunji@up.ac.za](mailto:olufemi.adetunji@up.ac.za)

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### Abstract

This paper examines the interactive influence of organizational leadership, organizational climate, and employee-related factors on organizational performance (OP). It hypothesizes that while organizational leadership (OL) positively affects OP, this effect is mediated by the interactive influence of the organizational climate (OC), organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), and employee performance (EP). It uses Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to analyze data collected from Imperial Logistics South Africa. A total of 611 usable responses were obtained and analyzed using SmartPLS. Results indicated a strong direct relationship between OL and OP, more than that of other factors. The mediatory influence of OC, OCB and EP was investigated by analyzing the indirect effect, total effect, the variance accounted for (VAF) and the impact performance matrix analysis (IPMA). While mediatory effects were observed, OL remains the primary factor directly influencing OP. Interestingly, the impact of OL on EP is not direct but rather through the mediation of OC. While factors responsible for this unique direct influence of OL are not investigated, they likely relate to organizational size. Although leadership can be distant in large organizations, it shapes the workplace environment, enhancing strong OC mediation. Leadership should foster a positive environment to empower employees and boost OP's impact.

**Keywords:** Organizational Leadership, Organizational Performance, Organizational Climate, Employee Performance, Organizational Citizenship Behavior

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### 1. Introduction

Organizational leadership (OL) plays a pivotal role in shaping the success and performance of businesses and institutions across various sectors. Effective leadership becomes increasingly critical as companies become more global, competitive and complex. The ability of leaders to influence and guide their teams toward achieving common goals directly affects organizational

performance (OP), innovation, and overall growth (Yuki, 2002). However, the capacity of leadership to successfully achieve this cannot be viewed in isolation, as leadership alone cannot deliver results but must work interactively with other factors (Megheirkouni, 2016).

Contextual leadership supports the notion that leadership does not operate in a vacuum and that its success is based on relationships with other factors (Oc, 2018). Leadership alone cannot deliver results but must be mediated by other factors. It is crucial to understand both the direct and indirect impacts of leadership on the performance of an organization by identifying the factors that function in conjunction with leadership to deliver significant organizational outcomes. A review of the literature identifies factors that, together with leadership, influence the performance of organizations. Leadership within an organization goes beyond mere management; it involves inspiring and empowering employees, fostering a positive work culture, and driving transformative changes (Anderson and Anderson, 2002).

This paper explores the relationship between OL and OP, as well as the mediatory roles of organizational climate (OC), employee performance (EP), and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), in the relationship between these two key factors, using a South African logistics company as a case study. Motivated by the need to enhance operational effectiveness in the competitive logistics sector, this study seeks to identify how these factors collectively influence organizational outcomes. This research paper investigates how transformational leadership styles impact employee performance and how a supportive organizational climate can nurture organizational citizenship behavior. Drawing on real-world data from Imperial Logistics, the study provides insights into effective practices and strategies to boost performance. It offers practical recommendations for managers and the management team looking to enhance organizational performance in similar settings.

The paper is structured as follows: the next section is the literature review, followed by research objectives and hypothesis development. The methodology used in the research follows from there before discussing the results, such as the evaluation of the measurement model and the evaluation of the structural model. Subsequently, the findings and discussion follow before the conclusion of the paper.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1. Levels of leadership**

Leadership encompasses different levels, ranging from individual contributors to leaders of organizations. Effective leadership throughout all levels is crucial for organizational success. Leadership influences an organization's effectiveness, and its achievement heavily relies on leadership (McDermott *et al.* 2011). A recognized trend exists regarding how leadership affects individuals' behavior (Zigarmi *et al.* 2004). Research on non-profit organizations (NPOs) has shown that leadership, organizational citizenship, and the work environment can significantly impact individual and organizational performance (Aboramadan and Dahleez, 2020).

Transformational leadership theory, a well-regarded model, emphasizes leaders who inspire and motivate their followers to exceed expectations (Fu *et al.* 2022). Transformational leaders prioritize personal development, a shared vision, and organizational changes. Studies have highlighted the importance of transformational leadership in fostering innovation, boosting employee engagement, and improving organizational performance (Bakker *et al.* 2023). Research indicates that transformational leaders often cultivate positive workplace environments, enhance employee satisfaction, and improve organizational outcomes (Sokolic *et al.* 2024). Furthermore, transformational leadership is particularly effective in dynamic and complex contexts where adaptability and innovation are essential (Afsar and Umrani, 2020).

### **2.2. Theoretical framework: transformational leadership history**

In 1978, James MacGregor Burns laid the groundwork for transformational leadership, which describes a leader and their followers inspiring one another to higher standards of moral behavior and motivation (Mulla and Krishnan, 2009). Transformational leadership, a theory of leadership that emphasizes the leaders' ability to inspire and elevate their teams, is impactful. However, its

success centers around the interaction of leadership with other complementary factors. Transformational leadership alone might not guarantee the desired outcomes, as its effectiveness can depend on organizational culture, followers' characteristics, and contextual variables (Bass and Riggio, 2018). For example, it was found that while transformational leadership positively influenced employee motivation and job satisfaction, these effects were moderated by the employees' self-worth level (Jaiswal and Dhar, 2015).

Transformational leadership is essential for effectively handling the complex business interactions of employee performance and organizational citizenship behavior. Transformational leaders encourage intrinsic motivation in their workforce, creating an environment where people are driven by a sense of purpose and personal development in addition to extrinsic rewards (Avolio and Yammarino, 2021).

Transformational leadership enacts a change in motivation that aligns with the dynamic nature of the organizational environment as workers seek out atmospheres that support their personal growth and well-being (Berberoglu, 2018). Gaviria-Rivera and Lopez-Zapata emphasized how transformational leadership fosters a sense of shared vision and resolve, positively impacting the organizational environment (Gaviria-Rivera and Lopez-Zapata, 2019).

Zhang *et al.* provided evidence of the connection between improved employee performance and transformative leadership (Zhang *et al.* 2011). Effective leaders who exude charisma and show personalized attention nurture intrinsic motivation in their staff, leading to increased output and enhanced work performance. These leaders cultivate intrinsic drive, creativity, and originality within their workforce, improving individual and team performance (Arnold, 2017). Dispersed teams benefit from the ability of transformational leaders to foster a sense of community and involvement, which helps maintain high-performance levels.

Under transformational leadership, OCB flourishes above and beyond the call of duty. Lee *et al.* highlighted how transformational leaders promote OCB by instilling a sense of identification with the organization's values and goals (Lee *et al.* 2018). The emphasis on idealized influence, motivational encouragement, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration enables transformational leaders to address the interconnected issues of workplace climate, employee performance, and OCB, generating synergistic effects that propel organizations toward long-term capability. Employees become more willing to contribute beyond their roles, positively impacting teamwork and overall organizational effectiveness. The most successful organizations' emphasis on volunteerism and community engagement programs reflects their commitment to OCB.

### 3. Research objective

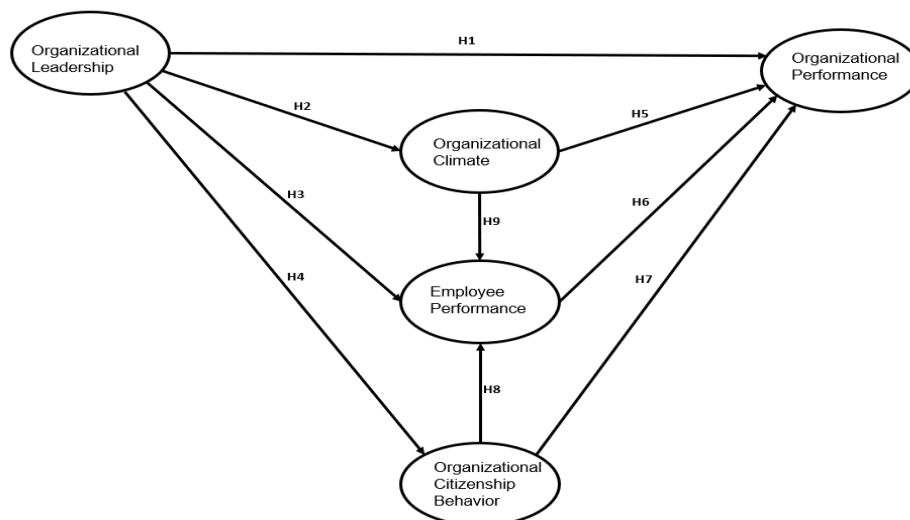


Figure 1. The proposed structural model

This research aims to understand the influence of leadership on organizational performance and its interrelationship with organizational climate, employee performance, and organizational citizenship behavior. The research's empirical model, depicted in Figure 1, illustrates the hypotheses.

#### **4. Hypotheses development**

Extant literature motivates the relationship in the factor structure in Figure 1, hence formulating the relevant hypotheses.

##### **4.1. Hypotheses formulation**

Numerous studies have investigated the relationship between leadership and organizational performance. Scholars have extensively explored transformational leadership, highlighting its positive influence on employee motivation, commitment, and job satisfaction, leading to improved organizational outcomes (Bass and Avolio, 1994).

###### *H1: Organizational leadership affects organizational performance*

Studies have underlined the transformative influence of leadership styles on the organizational climate. Transformational leadership makes the workplace environment more empowering and upbeat. Al Khajeh emphasized the role that leadership plays in creating a supportive workplace culture (Al Khajeh, 2018). According to Monahan's research, ethical leadership has become increasingly important in fostering an environment of honesty and openness, increasing commitment and satisfaction (Monahan, 2012).

###### *H2: Organizational leadership affects organizational climate*

Previous academic studies have shown the critical connection between worker productivity and leadership. Avolio and Yammarino shed light on the function of transformational leadership in fostering employee engagement and commitment and promoting positive performance results (Avolio and Yammarino, 2021). Gaviria-Rivera and Lopez-Zapata emphasized genuine leadership's impact on self-motivation, workplace contentment, and efficiency (Gaviria-Rivera and Lopez-Zapata, 2019). Taken as a whole, these findings highlight the causal relationship between leadership and worker performance.

###### *H3: Organizational leadership affects employee performance*

Several studies demonstrate how important leadership is for OCB. Higher levels of OCB have been associated with effective leadership behaviors, such as transformative and servant leadership (Nurjanah *et al.* 2020). These leadership philosophies promote a positive workplace and motivate staff members to take up extracurricular activities. Since ethical leadership influences workers' views of justice and inspires them to return favors, it is also favorably related to OCB (Yuki, 2002).

###### *H4: Organizational leadership affects OCB*

Organizational climate is significant for comprehending individuals within any organization (Lafta *et al.* 2016). Evidence from several studies has demonstrated the significance of organizational climate as a factor influencing organizational performance (Oc, 2018). Employee perceptions of the workplace are reflected in the organizational atmosphere (Zhang and Liu, 2010).

###### *H5: Organizational climate affects organizational performance*

The way employees perform has a significant impact on how well their organization functions. Employee engagement and performance are positively correlated with higher productivity and overall success, as established by AbuKhalifeh and Som (AbuKhalifeh and Som, 2013). Samwel found a positive correlation between financial results, staff performance, and customer satisfaction (Samwel, 2018). Together, these studies demonstrate the relationship between employee performance and organizational success as measured by productivity, customer happiness, financial gains, and innovation.

*H6: Employee performance affects organizational performance*

The effect of OCB on organizational performance has been researched. According to Jaiswal and Dhar, OCB promotes improved communication, increased cooperation, and an overall enhancement of the organizational climate (Jaiswal and Dhar, 2015). Consequently, this enhances efficiency and productivity. OCB indirectly affects client retention and satisfaction by improving employee morale and job satisfaction (Ombanda, 2015). Consequently, fostering an environment that values OCB can be essential to achieving organizational success over the long term.

*H7: OCB affects organizational performance*

OCB has attracted significant interest due to its possible effect on employee performance. OCB, characterized by voluntary actions beyond formal job obligations, has been associated with better performance outcomes. According to Nurjanah *et al.* OCB promotes a positive workplace, which raises overall output and job satisfaction (Nurjanah *et al.* 2020). Similarly, Heckman *et al.* highlighted how OCB fosters team cohesiveness and reduces turnover, enhancing individual and team performance (Heckman *et al.* 2007). These studies demonstrate the positive correlation between OCB and employee performance.

*H8: OCB affects employee performance*

The organization's culture strongly impacts employees' performance. Academics have recognized its influence on productivity, job satisfaction, and motivation (Dirwan *et al.* 2024). Collaboration and engagement are promoted in a positive environment, which improves outcomes (Zhang and Liu, 2010). According to several studies, supportive leadership and open communication cultivate an atmosphere that fosters employee growth (Monahan, 2012). Ultimately, the organizational climate is critical in influencing employee performance, illustrating the connection between individual performance and workplace dynamics.

*H9: Organizational climate affects employee performance*

## **5. Research methodology**

The study employed a quantitative methodology. A web-based questionnaire was used to gather data for the research's data-gathering procedure. This study used partial least square (PLS) structural equation modelling (SEM) and path analysis. PLS-SEM is a valuable tool for examining multidirectional interactions and internal dependencies among factors.

### **5.1. Data collection**

The survey was compiled using tools like the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). It has been determined that the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) is valid (Bass and Avolio, 1994). According to Rowold, it is a widely used standard tool for evaluating a variety of transformational, transactional, and non-leadership scales (Rowold, 2005). Other tools, such as the organizational citizenship behavior checklist, have been previously researched by authors such as Spector and Fox, amongst others (Spector and Fox, 2009).

A survey questionnaire was developed and shared among Imperial employees. Imperial, solely acquired by DP World in March 2021 and previously known as Imperial Logistics, is considered one of the largest logistics companies in Sub-Saharan Africa. It is an African-focused provider of integrated market access and logistics solutions. Its key sectors of operation are healthcare, consumer, automotive, chemicals, industrial, and commodities industries (Imperial Logistics, n.d.). The company has a staff strength of over 10,000 employees in South Africa alone. The survey was conducted using an online platform. The responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale, with participants selecting the response that best suited their opinion. The scale of the responses was categorized as follows: 1 = Strongly agree; 2 = Agree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Disagree; 5 = Strongly disagree. Appendix contains the final survey questionnaire.

## 5.2. Measurement instrument

The questionnaire was shared with all employees, and a total of 611 responses were received for this study. None of the responses received were removed as all were complete, thus providing 100% valid responses to the questions. This was achieved as the collection of responses was done exclusively through an online platform within the organization, and every item on the questionnaire was made mandatory. Participation in the survey was voluntary, and respondents could discontinue participation at any point during the data collection process; however, since all fields were mandatory, there was no missing data. The collected data was analyzed for possible inconsistencies to identify and eliminate suspicious response patterns and address response bias, ensuring data reliability and enhancing data validity (Hair *et al.* 2017). No inconsistencies or suspicious entries were observed.

Of the 611 participants, there were 343 (56.1%) female participants, 267 (43.7%) male participants, and 1 (0.2%) participant who preferred not to disclose. The responses were categorized into age groups with gaps, starting from below 18 years, 18-24, 25-31, and so on, up to the ages above 60. The age groups showed that the highest responses were received from people between the ages of 36 and 40, with a total count of 138 (22.6%), while the least number of responses were those from the age group below 18 years, with 1 response (0.2%). This method provides a structure for the potential data sub-setting for analyzing result trends and patterns across different genders and age cohorts.

The 10-times rule method is a popular means of estimating the minimum sample size in PLS-SEM (Hair *et al.* 2017). One variation of this method is based on the principle that the sample size should be more than 10 times the maximum number of inner or outer model linkages pointing to any latent variable in the model. The minimum sample size should only be approximated using the 10-times rule; however, researchers are advised to consider other suggestions such as those made by Cohen in his "Power Primer" article (Cohen, 1992). We made a conscious effort to collect sufficient data that would meet all levels of sample size requirements to eliminate all possible biases and data sufficiency demands. Hence, 611 data points were realized as opposed to the "10-times rule" approach, which is one of the most used techniques required for partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM).

## 6. Evaluation of the measurement model

Figure 2 shows the path weights and item loadings generated by SmartPLS. Reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity are the key metrics for the measurement mode in PLS-SEM (Hair *et al.* 2017). In this study, the hypotheses were tested at a significant level of 5%.

Table 1 shows the results of the construct's outer loadings. They all surpass the required minimum threshold of 0.70, and all the items load well onto their latent variables (Hair *et al.* 2019).

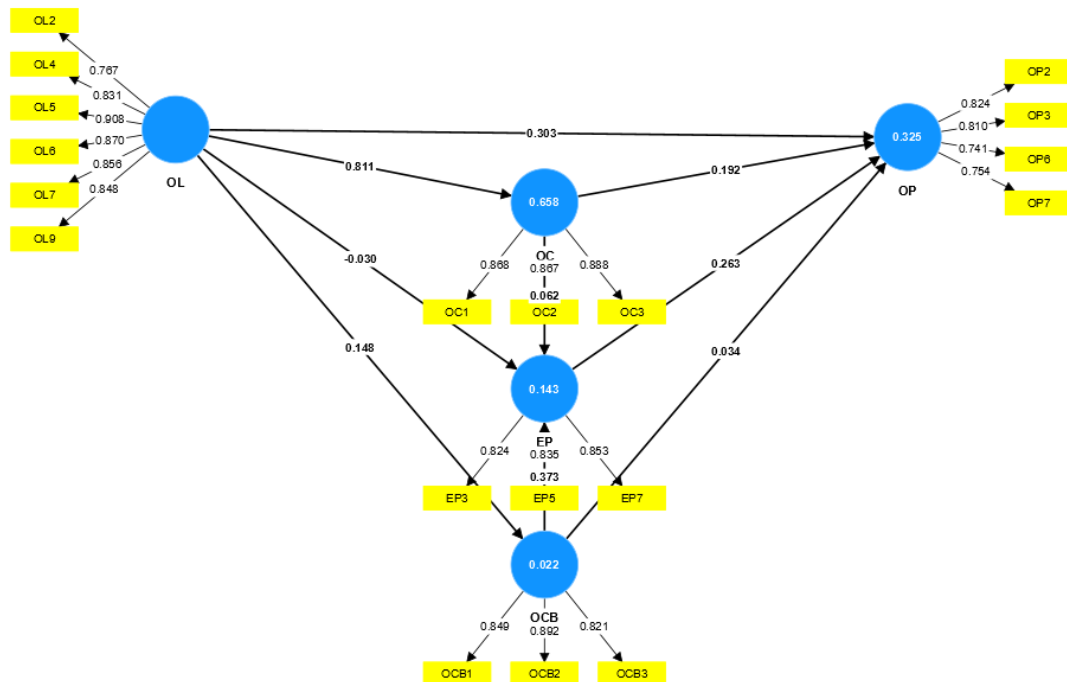


Figure 2. Model path weights and factor loading

Table 1. Outer loadings

	EP	OC	OCB	OL	OP
EP3	0.824				
EP5	0.835				
EP7	0.853				
OC1		0.868			
OC2		0.867			
OC3		0.888			
OCB1			0.849		
OCB2			0.892		
OCB3			0.821		
OL2				0.767	
OL4				0.831	
OL5				0.908	
OL6				0.870	
OL7				0.856	
OL9				0.848	
OP2					0.824
OP3					0.810
OP6					0.741
OP7					0.754

### 6.1. Construct reliability and convergent validity

A construction is considered to have attained internal dependability if its Cronbach's alpha value is 0.7 or higher. The model's strong reliability is demonstrated by Cronbach's alpha values, which range from 0.787 to 0.921 (Janadari *et al.* 2016). The composite reliabilities, Rho A and Rho C, both exceed 0.7, confirming the study's composite reliability and the internal consistency of the constructs.

Table 2 also indicates that each construct has an Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value greater than 0.50, showing that every construct meets the convergent validity requirement and effectively captures its underlying variation (Hair *et al.* 2017).

**Table 2. Construct reliability and convergent validity**

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_A)	Composite reliability (rho_C)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
EP	0.787	0.789	0.876	0.701
OC	0.846	0.853	0.907	0.764
OCB	0.815	0.814	0.890	0.730
OL	0.921	0.923	0.939	0.719
OP	0.791	0.802	0.864	0.613

## 6.2. Discriminant validity

The examination of discriminant validity was conducted using the Fornell-Larcker criterion. The Fornell-Larcker criterion requires that the square root of the AVE for a factor (shown on the diagonals) be greater than the correlation with all other factors (shown off the diagonals).

**Table 3. Fornell-Larcker criterion**

	EP	OC	OCB	OL	OP
EP	0.837				
OC	0.084	0.874			
OCB	0.376	0.124	0.855		
OL	0.076	0.811	0.148	0.848	
OP	0.315	0.464	0.202	0.484	0.783

Items were significantly loaded onto their respective constructs (Table 3), confirming discriminant validity and indicating that the constructs were valid measures of the individual constructs (Ab Hamid *et al.* 2017). This implies that each construct shares more variance with its associated indicators than any other.

## 7. Evaluation of the structural model

Having established that the model has met the measurement model evaluation criteria, the structural model can now be analysed, starting with the collinearity test.

### 7.1. Collinearity check

The level of collinearity is determined by using the values for the variance inflation factor (VIF). When evaluating the structural model for collinearity, the VIF value of each predictor construct should be between 0.20 and 5 (Cohen, 1978). Critical collinearity levels exist for predictor constructs with VIF values greater than 5. Collinearity poses a risk, affecting coefficient stability. A high correlation between predictors may hinder reliable path coefficient estimation. There is no risk of collinearity in the model, as shown in Table 4, where the VIF for each predictor construct is within the limits.

**Table 4. Collinearity statistics**

	EP	OC	OCB	OL	OP
EP					1.167
OC	2.927				2.932
OCB	1.022				1.185
OL	2.947	1.000	1.000		2.948
OP					



## 7.2. Path analysis

Path analysis helps researchers determine which connections are significant and the relative strength of each path. The path coefficients indicate the strength of the relationships between the latent variables. Higher values of the path coefficient between two variables suggest a stronger relationship. As OP is the variable of interest in the research, the path coefficients between the latent variables are shown in Table 5.

The results of the structural model, as shown in Figure 2, indicate that OL has the strongest direct impact on OP (0.303), followed by EP (0.263) and OC (0.192), with OCB having the weakest impact (0.034). Furthermore, an  $R^2$  value of 0.325 indicates that the four constructions account for 32.5% of the variance in the endogenous construction, OP. The paths from OL to OP and EP to OP are likely significant based on their sizes, while the proposed path relationship between OCB and OP (0.034) is likely insignificant.

Based on the magnitude of the path coefficients, they are categorized as high impact when they are significantly larger than 0.5, moderate impact between 0.3 and 0.5, and low impact below 0.3 (Mohamed *et al.* 2018). Those that are not statistically significant or have magnitudes close to zero are considered to have no effect on the model and can be removed if they do not contribute meaningfully to the research question(s). From the results of Table 5, OL has a significant impact on OC and OP but moderately impacts OCB. It appears to have a negative effect on EP, which may likely be insignificant. It has the largest influence on OP.

**Table 5. Path coefficients of the structural model**

	EP	OC	OCB	OL	OP
EP					0.263
OC	0.062				0.192
OCB	0.373				0.034
OL	-0.030	0.811	0.148		0.303
OP					

## 7.3. Bootstrapping

Bootstrapping is a resampling method that helps determine how the sample statistics are distributed. The significance of a structural path can be evaluated using the t-statistic bootstrap procedure, which assesses model stability, significance, and confidence intervals. SmartPLS employs bootstrapping to produce t-statistics for significance testing of both the inner and outer models (Wong, 2013).

**Table 6. Bootstrap results showing the p-values**

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ( O/STDEV )	P values
EP -> OP	0.263	0.263	0.044	5.946	0.000
OC -> EP	0.062	0.063	0.081	0.768	0.443
OC -> OP	0.192	0.194	0.066	2.931	0.003
OCB -> EP	0.373	0.376	0.052	7.136	0.000
OCB -> OP	0.034	0.035	0.044	0.777	0.437
OL -> EP	-0.030	-0.031	0.082	0.372	0.710
OL -> OC	0.811	0.812	0.020	41.485	0.000
OL -> OCB	0.148	0.150	0.049	2.994	0.003
OL -> OP	0.303	0.301	0.069	4.393	0.000

The p-value of the bootstrap represents the probability of incorrectly rejecting a valid null hypothesis (presuming a significant path coefficient when none is present). The null hypothesis assumes there is no relationship between the factors. The p-values in Table 6 are estimated at a significance level of 5%. The results of this study (Table 6) support the hypothesis that OL significantly affects OP, OC, and OCB. The p-values for OC to EP (0.433), OCB to OP (0.437),

and OL to EP (0.710) are greater than the 0.05 threshold of the confidence level; therefore, we reject these three hypotheses.

The bootstrapping results for the paths from OC to OP, EP to OP, OCB to EP, and OCB to EP in the hypotheses have identical p-values of 0.000. Only three of the structural relations' pathways appear to not be significant, implying that the values of the path coefficients are not statistically different from zero and that the observed data are consistent with the null hypothesis of being zero. This suggests the absence of meaningful relationships between OL and EP, OC and EP, and OCB and OP.

In summary, evaluating the structural model by considering the path coefficients and the bootstrapping results indicates our model relationships' direct impact and significance. However, further evaluation is required to understand the mediating effect of the other factors on direct relationships. Consequently, an analysis of the factors' indirect effect and total effect on OP is performed to gain this insight.

#### 7.4. Indirect and total effects

In addition to assessing a construct's direct influence on others, researchers often examine its indirect effects through one or more mediating constructs. The total effect is the sum of the direct and indirect effects (Hair *et al.* 2019). The impact of indirect influence is often overlooked; however, this section explores the mediation roles of EP, OCB, and OB on the relationship between OL and OP. Table 7 presents the bootstrap values of the total indirect effects, while Table 8 displays the path-specific indirect effects.

**Table 7. Total indirect effect**

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ( O/STDEV )	P values	Decision
OC → OP	0.016	0.017	0.022	0.750	0.453	Not Significant
OCB → OP	0.098	0.099	0.023	4.287	0.000	Significant
OL → EP	0.106	0.107	0.070	1.521	0.128	Not Significant
OL → OP	0.181	0.183	0.054	3.331	0.001	Significant

It is imperative to evaluate how these indirect effects compare to the direct effects of OL on OP. Considering the results of the nine possible indirect paths in Table 8, only five paths show a link from OL to OP, and three of these five paths are not significant. In contrast, the paths from OL through OCB and EP to OP and from OL through OC to OP are the only two significant.

**Table 8. Specific indirect effect**

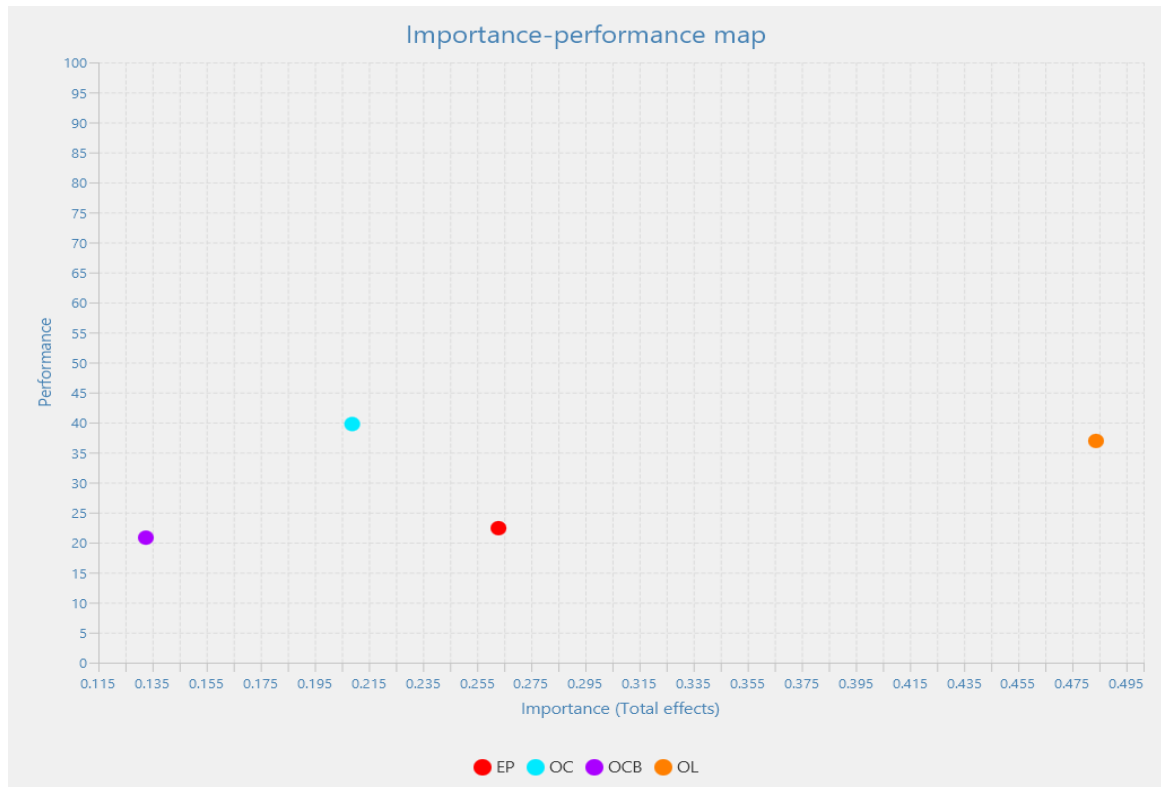
	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ( O/STDEV )	P values	Decision
OL → OCB → EP → OP	0.015	0.015	0.006	2.514	0.012	Significant
OCB → EP → OP	0.098	0.099	0.023	4.287	0.000	Significant
OL → OC → OP	0.156	0.158	0.054	2.862	0.004	Significant
OL → OCB → OP	0.005	0.005	0.007	0.719	0.472	Not Significant
OL → OCB → EP	0.055	0.056	0.020	2.811	0.005	Significant
OL → OC → EP → OP	0.013	0.014	0.018	0.745	0.456	Not Significant
OL → EP → OP	-0.008	-0.008	0.022	0.366	0.714	Not Significant
OL → OC → EP	0.051	0.051	0.067	0.761	0.446	Not Significant
OC → EP → OP	0.016	0.017	0.022	0.750	0.453	Not Significant

**Table 9. Total effect**

	Original sample(O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ( O/STDEV )	P values	Decision
EP -> OP	0.263	0.263	0.044	5.946	0.000	Significant
OC -> EP	0.062	0.063	0.081	0.768	0.443	Not Significant
OC -> OP	0.209	0.211	0.072	2.878	0.004	Significant
OCB -> EP	0.373	0.376	0.052	7.136	0.000	Significant
OCB -> OP	0.132	0.134	0.048	2.731	0.006	Not Significant
OL -> EP	0.076	0.076	0.051	1.497	0.135	Not Significant
OL -> OC	0.811	0.812	0.020	41.485	0.000	Significant
OL -> OCB	0.148	0.150	0.049	2.994	0.003	Significant
OL -> OP	0.484	0.484	0.037	13.166	0.000	Significant

It can be noted from the results (Table 9) that the mediating effects of OC, EP, and OCB increase the impact of OL on OP to 48% (Direct Effect: 0.303 plus Indirect Effect: 0.181). Additionally, what can be observed from the model is that the direct effect of OL on OP is the more dominant effect. This is understandable, given that OL-OC-OP and OL-OCB-EP-OP paths are the only significant indirect paths from leadership to performance. Furthermore, considering the moderating effect of EP and OCB individually on the relationship between OL and OP seems not significant, but their joint impact is notable. However, the mediating impact of OC on the relationship between OL and OP appears significant.

## 7.5. Variance account factor



**Figure 3. Importance-Performance map analysis**

In PLS-SEM applications, the IPMA is particularly helpful in generating new insights and conclusions. According to Ringle and Sarstedt, the IPMA allows prioritizing constructions to enhance a specific target construct (Ringle and Sarstedt, 2016).

OL is the most significant predictor, as it has the greatest relative influence on the target variable and the highest importance on the map, at approximately 48%, indicating that a single unit increase in OL will result in an effect of about 48% increase in OP. EP has the second highest importance at 26%, slightly over half of OL's. Although OC demonstrates the highest performance comparatively, it does not exert a strong effect, as its importance is at 20%. OCB has the least impact, with the importance at 13%.

### 7.7. Coefficient of determination $R^2$ and $R^2$ adjusted

The power of the predictions of this model was assessed using the  $R^2$  value of the endogenous variables. Hair *et al.* stated that  $R^2$  values of 0.75, 0.5, or 0.25 for endogenous latent variables could, as a rule of thumb, be regarded as considerable, moderate, or weak, respectively, in social science research (Hair *et al.* 2019). The results of the model shown in Table 11 indicate that the  $R^2$  values were found to be weak for EP (0.143), OCB (0.022), OP (0.325), and moderate for OC (0.658).

The adjusted R-squared values provide insights into model fit. The adjusted R-squared values were 0.140 for EP, 0.658 for OC, 0.021 for OCB, and 0.322 for OP. These values indicate the proportion of variance explained by the model while adjusting for the number of predictors, thereby aiding in the model's parsimony.

**Table 11. R-squared and R-squared adjusted**

	R-square	R-square adjusted
EP	0.143	0.140
OC	0.658	0.658
OCB	0.022	0.021
OP	0.325	0.322

### 7.8. Effect size $f^2$

According to Cohen's guidelines, values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 indicate small, medium, and large effects of the exogenous latent variable when evaluating  $f^2$ , (Cohen, 1988). If the effect size is less than 0.02, there is no effect. Evaluating effect size is essential for determining the practical significance of the findings. Hair *et al.* highlights the importance of disclosing effect sizes (Hair *et al.* 2017). Researchers can gain a more comprehensive understanding beyond statistical significance by incorporating effect size measures, which enable them better to interpret the real-world significance of relationships within the model. Table 12 demonstrates the significant impact of the relationship between OC and OL (1.927), which is large. A medium effect of 0.159 is observed between EP and OCB, while small effects are noted in the relationships between OCB and OL (0.022), OL and EP (0.088), and OL and OP (0.046). The  $f^2$  values for the remaining relationships indicate insignificant effects between OC and EP (0.002), OL and EP (0.000), OCB and OP (0.001), and OC and OP (0.019).

**Table 12. Effect size  $f^2$**

	EP	OC	OCB	OL	OP
EP					0.088
OC	0.002				0.019
OCB	0.159				0.001
OL	0.000	1.927	0.022		0.046
OP					

### 7.9. Predictive Relevance $Q^2$

A blindfolding technique was employed to determine the model's predictive relevance. According to Wong, Stone-Geisser's  $Q^2$  value assesses the model's predictive relevance and accuracy (Wong, 2013). When the  $Q^2$  values exceed zero, it indicates that the model has predictive relevance and that the values are well reconstructed. In this study, the model's predictive ability is demonstrated by the  $Q^2$  values for the investigated constructs (EP = 0.001, OC = 0.657, OCB = 0.017, OP = 0.229), as displayed in Table 13, all the values above zero. Greater predictive relevance is indicated by higher  $Q^2$  values, confirming the model's capacity to predict the desired results.

Table 13. Predictive relevance $Q^2$	
	$Q^2_{\text{predict}}$
EP	0.001
OC	0.657
OCB	0.017
OP	0.229

### 8. Findings

The primary aim of the research was to assess the direct relationship between organizational leadership and organizational performance and the moderate effects of employee performance, organizational citizenship behavior, and organizational climate on this relationship. The relationship was investigated using SmartPLS, and the measurement model's construct reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity were confirmed. Examining the VIF for each predictor construct further showed no collinearity.

The path analysis of the model output indicates that, compared to all other factors, OCB has the least influence on organizational performance. Furthermore, the model suggests that leadership has no effect on employee performance, a moderate impact on OCB, and a significant impact on organizational climate and performance. Leadership has the greatest impact on performance. Bootstrapping was used to determine the significance of the impacts of leadership on the three variables using the p-values. Of all the nine path weights of the structural relations of the total effect, six of the paths were found to be significant, while the remaining three were deemed insignificant.

An evaluation of the direct and indirect effects of the model indicated that although the total effect of leadership on organizational performance was nearly 50%, the direct effect of leadership remains the most significant, and certain factors appear to have neither direct nor indirect effects. Analyzing the individual moderate impacts of employee performance and OCB on the relationship between leadership and organizational performance seems insignificant; however, their joint effect is collectively significant. From the model, all the path analysis, direct effects and indirect effects suggest that leadership has the largest direct impact on organizational performance.

Research findings utilizing variance account factor analysis have demonstrated a significant partial mediation effect in the relationship between organizational leadership and organizational performance. This suggests that while leadership directly influences performance, a substantial portion of this relationship is mediated through various factors. The variance account factor indicates partial mediation in the relationship between leadership and performance; however, the threshold guide indicates an absence of mediation in the relationship between organizational climate and organizational performance. The importance-performance map analysis shows that leadership is the most significant predictor, as it has the highest importance and the greatest relative influence on organizational performance. The model suggests that increasing one unit of leadership influence will increase organizational performance by approximately 48%.

As the effect size is crucial for identifying the practical importance of the results, the most significant impact of the relationship is observed between organizational climate and

organizational leadership. A moderate relationship (medium effect) is indicated for OCB and employee performance, while the  $f^2$  values for the other relationships suggest they are insignificant. Furthermore, regarding the predictive relevance of the factors, the high  $Q^2$  values signify strong predictive relevance and confirm the ability of the model to predict the dependent variables since all values are greater than zero.

## 9. Discussion

This work's findings provide theoretical and managerial implications, which are discussed starting with the theoretical implications.

This research confirms the transformational leadership model, showing that it significantly influences organizational performance, and that leadership creates a positive organizational climate that impacts employee performance, especially when augmented by organizational citizenship behavior. The positive organizational climate cultivated by such leadership leads to increased employee satisfaction, engagement, and a conducive work environment. This study confirms previous research indicating that transformational leadership significantly improves organizational performance (Bui *et al.* 2021; Alhashedi *et al.* 2021). The more effectively a leader adopts a transformational leadership style, the better the organization performs.

Results further indicate that the leadership of an organization has minimal influence on whether employees are individually productive. Employees, on their own and amplified by OCB, drive their performance within the organization, thus enabling it to excel. Fernandez had earlier observed that the impact of leadership on employee performance remains inconclusive, finding minimal correlations between them, and this study appears to confirm that, rejecting the hypothesized relationship (Fernandez, 2008). Peters *et al.* and Thompson and Vecchio also found inconclusive evidence of the direct impact of leadership on employee performance (Peters *et al.* 1985; Thompson and Vecchio, 2009). This suggests that the employees are responding not to the direct influence of the leadership but rather to the culture created by themselves and their colleagues, which in turn affects their productivity.

Imperial Logistics is a large organization with a strong employee base. This implies that there are multiple levels between the management team and the ground staff, making it likely that the leadership does not engage in the operational activities and is thus deemed not to be visible to the employees. The findings may differ if the organization were smaller in size, allowing leadership to establish a different type of relationship through the mediating factors considered in this study.

Leadership's impact, however, is experienced more on the environment in which the employees work. The model shows that leadership positively influences OCB and the workplace climate, which enables the organization to excel. It is essential to note that the operating climate is the environment that the organization's management creates, while OCB reflects the behavior of the employees towards each other. The element that is shown to affect how the employees are performing independently is OCB. This study showed that the employees are more comfortable and responsive with their colleagues through OCB. Therefore, leadership may drive organizational performance further through its indirect yet significant effect via OCB and organizational climate.

Additionally, the model's findings suggest that there is no statistically significant association between OCB and organizational performance. Interestingly, several other studies have also failed to establish a direct causal relationship between these variables, reinforcing the model's findings. OCB does not seem to contribute directly to organizational performance but instead stimulates employees to be more productive, thus positively influencing performance only indirectly. The study's results highlight that employee performance and OCB contribute to organizational outcomes, although they are more effective in the presence of strong leadership and a supportive climate (Podsakoff *et al.* 2009). Employees who engage in behaviors beyond their required roles, driven by supportive leadership, are more likely to enhance company performance. This was evident when Imperial Logistics launched the Imperial Values, which increased employee participation at the depot level. With a catchphrase of "We Are One", all employees were made to feel united through song and dance. The results from the launch led to

improvements in inter-departmental (and even intercompany) relationships, which were palpable in the support observed at events hosted by one department, with employees from other departments attending to show support and participate. In the year that the Imperial Values were launched, the business reported significant growth.

The study's findings suggest (though not limited to) three focal points regarding direct relationships. Firstly, how leadership conducts business has the most significant impact on the organization's performance. Secondly, employees are more sensitive to the environment that leadership creates for them to work in rather than how the leadership appears to be directly associated with them. Lastly, employee engagement and motivation among themselves, enhanced by OCB, affect their organizational performance, thereby allowing them to thrive. Additionally, the mediating effects of all the factors together contribute less than what leadership alone contributes to performance. While it should be noted that the mediating effect exists, leadership remains the greatest driver of the organization's performance.

Based on these findings, the managerial implication of the study is that leadership training and development in companies should focus more on strategic planning, resource deployment, direction-setting, and creating an enabling environment that promotes programs fostering interpersonal relationships among employees rather than trying to engage all staff members personally. The organization's leadership should concentrate on creating a work environment directly related to business performance while encouraging the employees to establish the necessary interpersonal relationships essential for their personal motivation, contributing to their productivity. The motivation for the employees comes from their direct relationships amongst themselves through OCB.

Consequently, it may be more beneficial for the leadership to eliminate hierarchical or multi-layered management. Many researchers have argued that a flatter organizational structure is ideal for facilitating teamwork and enhancing interpersonal relationships among employees, allowing them to interact more. That is where the contact relationship is impactful.

Furthermore, by implementing policies that recognize and reward organizational citizenship behaviors, employee morale and performance can be further enhanced. Companies must foster an organizational climate prioritizing teamwork, confidence, and open communication. Creating this type of atmosphere enhances employee performance and encourages OCB, as employees tend to go above and beyond when they feel valued and supported (Podsakoff *et al.* 2009). It can be advised that when the leadership considers how to increase the organization's performance, they need to focus more on the environment they are creating, as it is observed that the climate indeed influences how employees conduct themselves in the workplace.

Additionally, management should implement regular performance evaluations incorporating employee feedback regarding leadership effectiveness and organizational climate. This can help identify areas for improvement and ensure that leadership practices align with employee expectations and organizational goals (Yukl, 2008). A comprehensive strategy that incorporates leadership development, organizational climate improvement, and recognition of OCB is likely to yield substantial improvements in company performance.

## 10. Conclusion

The study aimed to understand the possible interactive effects of organizational leadership on the performance of a logistics company in South Africa, considering mediating factors such as organizational climate, employee performance, and organizational citizenship behavior. Data was collected from Imperial Logistics through a questionnaire and analyzed using the SmartPLS software. The measurement model was analyzed for construct reliability and convergent and discriminant validity. After collinearity checks, the coefficient of determination, effect size, and predictive relevance were determined for the structural model.

Positive relationships were confirmed for most of the hypotheses, while three relationships were statistically insignificant. A further examination of the factors' mediating effect confirmed the presence of mediation; however, leadership remained the greatest driver of the organization's performance.

Future research could explore the longitudinal impacts of organizational climate, employee performance, and organizational citizenship behavior across different industries for broader insights. Prioritizing leadership development and managing organizational environment can create a synergistic impact, promoting a high-performance culture essential for thriving in South Africa's competitive logistics industry.

The transformational leadership theory asserts that leaders who inspire and create environments that motivate and develop their teams foster higher employee engagement and productivity through OCB. Theoretically, it validates leadership's critical role in driving adaptive behaviors in dynamic environments. Managerially, adopting transformational practices can improve workforce engagement and achieve strategic goals by effectively aligning organizational objectives.

This study highlights the intricate interplay between leadership, organizational climate, employee performance, and OCB in enhancing company performance. Thus, embracing transformational leadership proves integral in shaping a dynamic, positive organizational culture that propels sustained success and growth. For logistics companies in South Africa and beyond, investing in leadership development and nurturing a positive organizational climate are essential strategies for achieving superior performance outcomes.

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## Appendix

### Survey Disclaimer:

Bennitta Senyatsi, a PhD Industrial Engineering candidate at the University of Pretoria, is conducting this research to fulfil her qualification requirements. This survey investigates the interactive impacts of leadership, organizational climate, and organizational citizenship behavior on company performance. In this survey, we do not ask for any personal identifiable information and pledge anonymity. The results of the questions will only be used for analytical purposes, and only numerical results will be displayed. Participation is voluntary, and you can withdraw at any time without consequences or penalty. Your individual responses will not be given to any third party whatsoever. The survey will take about 10 minutes to complete. Kindly note that by proceeding to the survey, you imply that you understand and agree to the provisions of this disclaimer. If you have any questions relating to the survey or the study, kindly reach me at [bennitta.s@gmail.com](mailto:bennitta.s@gmail.com). Thank you.

### Participants Biographical Information

Gender	Male	Female	Do not wish to disclose							
Age	under 18	18 to 24	25 to 30	31 to 35	36 to 40	41 to 45	46 to 50	51 to 55	56 to 60	Above 60
Race	Black	White	Colored	Indian	Non-South African	Do not wish to disclose				
Education Level	No Formal Education	Primary School	High School	College Certificate	Diploma	Degree	Honors	Masters	Doctorate	Post-Doctoral
Total Years of Employment	0-1	1 to 3	3 to 5	5 to 8	8 to 10	10 to 15	15 to 20	20 to 25	more than 25	
No. of years at CURRENT employment	0-2	2 to 3	4 to 5	6 to 8	9 to 10	11 to 15	16 to 20	21 to 25	more than 25	
No. of years at PREVIOUS employment	0-3	3 to 3	5 to 5	7 to 8	10 to 10	12 to 15	17 to 20	22 to 25	more than 25	

This survey investigates the interactive impacts of leadership, organizational climate, and organizational citizenship behavior on company performance. In this survey, we do not ask for any personal identifiable information and pledge anonymity. The results of the questions will only be used for analytical purposes, and only numerical results will be displayed. Participation is voluntary, and you can withdraw at any time without consequences or penalty. Your individual responses will not be given to any third party whatsoever. The survey will take about 10 minutes to complete.

If you have any questions relating to the survey, kindly reach me at [bennitta.s@gmail.com](mailto:bennitta.s@gmail.com)

Thank you.

Bennitta Senyatsi

FACTOR	CODE	QUESTION
Employee Personality Traits	EPT	Understand why people act the way they do and how their personalities are structured.
Organizational Leadership	OL	Employee views on leadership and authority figures and how that influences their behavior and attitudes in the workplace
Organizational Climate	OC	Understanding how your leadership, strengths and weaknesses affect others, as well as establishing the climate for a group or organization
Organizational Citizenship Behavior	OCB	Acts directed toward the organization that benefit the organization (OCBO), and acts directed toward co-workers that help with work-related issues (OCBP).
Employee Performance	EP	Establishing the difference between Task, Contextual, Adaptive Performances and Counterproductive Behavior
Organizational Performance	OP	Establishing the difference between Task, Contextual, Adaptive Performances and Counterproductive Behavior
FACTOR	CODE	QUESTION
Organizational Leadership	OL 2	Our leaders do spend time teaching and coaching the staff whenever the staff needs assistance from them.
	OL 4	Our leaders go beyond self-interest for the good of the company and staff whenever working in teams.
	OL 5	Our management team acts in ways that build the staff's respect for them at work.
	OL 6	Our organization's leaders act in ways that build the staff's respect for them at work.
	OL 7	Our management team emphasizes the importance of having a collective sense of mission when working as a team.
Organizational Climate	OL 9	Our management satisfactorily works with the staff.
	OC 1	There is always a good working dynamic within the organization
	OC 2	There is a "family feeling" atmosphere in the organization.
Organizational Citizenship Behavior	OC 3	In our organization, there is trust towards our management team.
	OCB 1	I helped a co-worker learn new skills and/ or shared some job knowledge with them.
	OCB 2	I helped new employees get oriented to the job and our organization.
Organizational Performance	OCB 3	I offered suggestions for improving the work environment at our organization/ department.
	OP 2	Our customers are happy with our products and services offerings, not limited to Customer Satisfaction (CSAT) and Net Promoter Score (NPS)
	OP 3	Our organization is very proactive rather than reactive in its operations.
	OP 6	Our organization has grown in business, i.e., more clients/ suppliers/ product offerings have been added in the past two years.
	OP 7	Our organization's brand image has improved, i.e. locally and internationally, posted the COVID-19 pandemic.
Employee Performance	EP 3	I always deliver what is expected of me in my work
	EP 5	I consistently exceed the expectations of my manager/ supervisor on my assigned work.
	EP 7	I always meet the target set out for me in my work.

Note: \* Five-point Lickert items scale. \*\* Questions are either modified or retained as the authors' own.