

Research Paper

The Role of Leadership Support in Facilitating Organizational Change and Its Influence on Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the critical role of leadership support in facilitating organizational change and its influence on Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) among employees in the private sector. Drawing upon transformational, ethical, servant, and situational leadership theories, the research explores how various leadership styles and practices affect employees' willingness to go beyond their formal roles during change initiatives. Utilizing a qualitative research design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 11 participants comprising both leaders and employees. Thematic analysis revealed that leadership behaviors—such as transparent communication, emotional support, ethical conduct, and responsiveness—play a significant role in shaping a supportive organizational climate that nurtures OCB. Findings show that when leadership is perceived as accessible, empathetic, and empowering, employees exhibit increased engagement, adaptability, and proactive collaboration. Conversely, inadequate leadership support often led to disengagement and resistance to change. This study underscores the importance of intentional leadership strategies in enhancing both change outcomes and organizational citizenship behaviors.

Keywords: *Leadership Support, Facilitating Organizational Change, Organizational Citizenship Behaviour*

Organizational Transformation and the Need for Leadership

Organizational change has become an essential feature of 21st-century business, driven by factors such as technological advancements, shifting consumer expectations, competitive pressures, regulatory changes, and internal inefficiencies. In this volatile and dynamic environment, change is not optional for organizations seeking to remain competitive and sustainable. However, the success of any change initiative largely depends on effective leadership.

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The Role of Leadership Support in Facilitating Organizational Change and Its Influence on Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

Leaders play a central role in initiating, guiding, and sustaining change. Their support is not just about allocating resources but also about building trust, encouraging participation, and creating psychological safety. Leaders must ensure that employees understand the rationale behind change, feel involved in the process, and are empowered to contribute constructively. When this support is present, it often leads to higher levels of Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB)—voluntary, non-rewarded actions that enhance organizational functioning.

Defining Leadership Support

Leadership support is defined as the active and intentional involvement of leaders in motivating, guiding, and enabling employees through direction, communication, resource provision, and emotional encouragement. It includes creating a respectful environment, recognizing achievements, setting clear goals, and building trust.

Supportive leaders maintain open lines of communication and prioritize relationship-building based on trust, respect, and shared goals. According to Bryson (2004), leadership is irreplaceable and essential for strategic development and service quality.

Moreover, leadership support is vital in change management, as it helps reduce resistance and confusion while sustaining momentum during transitions. Employees tend to feel more secure, confident, and committed when their leaders are consistently present and responsive throughout the change process.

Types of Leadership and Their Influence on OCB

The introduction classifies several leadership styles, analyzing how each affects organizational change and employee behaviors:

1. Transformational Leadership – Inspires employees through vision, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. This style is highly effective in promoting OCB such as altruism and civic engagement.
2. Transactional Leadership – Relies on rewards and punishments. While less effective in fostering innovation, it can still promote OCB traits like conscientiousness when fairness and consistency are present.
3. Democratic Leadership – Involves employees in decision-making and encourages open dialogue. This participatory style enhances ownership, trust, and the likelihood of civic behaviors.
4. Autocratic Leadership – Centralized decision-making with minimal input from employees. While effective in crises, it often reduces employee morale and suppresses OCB in the long term.
5. Laissez-faire Leadership – Minimal involvement and guidance from the leader. This hands-off approach is ineffective during change and often results in disengagement and reduced OCB.
6. Authentic Leadership – Based on transparency, ethical behavior, and self-awareness. Authentic leaders foster trust, psychological safety, and voluntary engagement in change processes.

Theoretical Frameworks Supporting Leadership's Role

The introduction explores multiple theories of leadership to provide conceptual depth:

- Transformational Leadership Theory (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985): Leaders elevate performance through motivation and individualized support.

The Role of Leadership Support in Facilitating Organizational Change and Its Influence on Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

- Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory: Emphasizes the quality of leader-employee relationships and how high-trust relationships lead to higher OCB.
- Servant Leadership (Greenleaf, 1970): Focuses on putting employees' needs first, building a supportive and inclusive culture.
- Path-Goal Theory (House, 1971): Leaders adapt their style to employee needs to eliminate obstacles and support goal attainment.
- Authentic Leadership Theory (Avolio & Luthans, early 2000s): Emphasizes genuine leadership that promotes openness and integrity.
- Situational Leadership Theory (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969): Advocates for flexible leadership styles based on employee readiness and maturity.

Each theory reinforces the idea that leadership support enhances employee engagement, adaptability, and willingness to go beyond formal job duties—hallmarks of OCB.

Organizational Change Models and Leadership's Role

Two major models of organizational change are reviewed:

1. Lewin's Change Model (1947) – Divides change into three stages:
 - Unfreeze – Leaders raise awareness and prepare for change.
 - Change (Transition) – Leaders guide implementation with training and communication.
 - Refreeze – Leaders solidify new practices into organizational culture.
2. Kotter's 8-Step Model (1996) – Outlines a stepwise leadership-driven process for implementing sustainable change:
 - Creating urgency
 - Forming a guiding coalition
 - Developing and communicating a vision
 - Removing barriers
 - Celebrating short-term wins
 - Sustaining momentum
 - Embedding change into culture

Both models demonstrate that consistent, clear, and proactive leadership is central to guiding successful change and minimizing resistance.

In addition, the ADKAR model (Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability, Reinforcement) by Jeff Hiatt focuses on individual-level change, reinforcing that leadership support must address personal transitions as well as organizational systems.

Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB)

OCB refers to voluntary, non-contractual behaviors that support organizational success. Introduced by Dennis Organ (1988), its five key dimensions are:

1. Altruism – Helping others with work.
2. Conscientiousness – Exceeding basic responsibilities.
3. Sportsmanship – Maintaining a positive attitude amid challenges.
4. Courtesy – Preventing conflict through respectful interaction.
5. Civic Virtue – Actively participating in organizational life.

OCB becomes especially critical during times of change when employee morale, clarity, and structure are disrupted. Supportive leadership encourages employees to maintain positive

The Role of Leadership Support in Facilitating Organizational Change and Its Influence on Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

attitudes, collaborate with others, and go beyond their formal roles to contribute to a smooth transition.

Linking Leadership Support and OCB

The introduction concludes that supportive leadership fosters trust, commitment, and proactive behavior. Leaders who engage ethically, communicate transparently, and respond empathetically help employees cope with uncertainty and inspire them to take ownership of the change process. In contrast, lack of leadership support can lead to disengagement, confusion, and resistance.

Theoretical perspectives such as Social Exchange Theory, Organizational Support Theory, and Transformational Leadership Theory further affirm the connection between supportive leadership and enhanced OCB.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Fugate (2012): Highlights a research gap in understanding leadership's *integrated* role in organizational change. Proposes a model showing how leaders influence employee reactions and change outcomes.
2. Academic Journals (2011): Compares leadership styles in relation to OCB. Finds transformational leadership has the strongest positive impact on employees' discretionary behavior.
3. State University of Jakarta Study: Shows that leadership and organizational support both enhance OCB and service quality. Recommends improving both for better institutional performance.
4. Abdullahi, Anarfo & Anyigba (2020): In Ghanaian SMEs, transformational and democratic leadership boost OCB. Emotional intelligence improves the impact of autocratic leadership.
5. Musaiywa (n.d.): Stresses that leadership is essential for managing change, helping secure employee buy-in and supporting successful transitions through motivation and clear vision.
6. ScienceDirect (2024): Finds mixed outcomes: autocratic, democratic, and transactional leadership aided change in Ethiopian universities, but transformational leadership had a negative effect—highlighting the importance of context.
7. Amir (n.d.): Examines servant leadership and finds it significantly enhances OCB. Also notes that perceived organizational support (POS) acts as a positive moderator.
8. Ndoja & Malekar (2020): Reviews OCB antecedents—leadership, fairness, support, and culture—and links OCB to competitive advantage through stronger teamwork and voluntary contributions.
9. IJCRT (2018): Reinforces that OCB enhances organizational effectiveness, especially in competitive settings, by encouraging employees to act beyond formal roles.
10. Jahagirdar & Bankar (n.d.): Explores the five dimensions of OCB (altruism, conscientiousness, etc.) and their importance in promoting a healthy and effective workplace culture.
11. Junnaid, Miralam & Jeet (n.d.): During COVID-19, resilient and people-focused leadership proved crucial in maintaining engagement and performance amid external disruptions

The Role of Leadership Support in Facilitating Organizational Change and Its Influence on Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

METHODOLOGY

Aim: The aim of this study is to explore how leadership support facilitates organizational change and its subsequent impact on Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) among private sectors.

Research Questions

1. To evaluate the extent of leadership support provided during organizational change in the private sector.
2. To examine the relationship between leadership support and employees' OCB during organizational change.
3. To identify the leadership practices and behaviors that most effectively foster OCB during change initiatives.
4. To provide actionable recommendations for private sector staff to improve their role in facilitating change and enhancing OCB.

Research Method

A qualitative approach was chosen as the research method for this investigation. A method which allows rich insights into participants' experiences, attitudes, and social contexts (Creswell, 2013) instead of testing preconceived notions, qualitative research uses an inductive approach that lets theories and themes surface from data.

Thematic analysis will be used to examine the data. The approach allows for the identification of recurring themes and meanings associated with employee response, support systems, and leadership behaviors during change initiatives. Qualitative approach was more suitable for this research because it allowed for greater depth and significance based on an individual's experiences of leadership support on organizational change with its impact on organizational citizenship behaviour in their job roles.

Method of Data Collection

Semi- Structured Interview method was used for collecting data for this study. Semi structured interviews, which are frequently used in exploratory studies where the goal is to obtain in-depth insights into participants' experiences, opinions, and behaviours, were used to collect data for this qualitative study. This provides a fluid yet regulated approach that lets participants freely express their ideas in their own words while allowing the researcher to delve into pre-established themes.

According to Gallio et al. (2016), semi-structured interviews are those that employ an adaptable interview guide with open-ended questions that permit follow-up and probing enquiries to examine ideas that come up throughout the discussion. This approach is especially well-suited for comprehending intricate social phenomena and subjective experiences since it finds a compromise between the rigidity of standardised interviews and the spontaneity of unstructured discussions (Gill et al., 2008).

Sample Description

The data was collected from sample size of 11 individuals, the sample was divided into leaders and employees. The sample for this study's data collection is gathered using the purposive sampling approach.

The Role of Leadership Support in Facilitating Organizational Change and Its Influence on Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

Procedure

Data collection took place in February 2025. Interviews were conducted both in- person and over the phone, recorded on a mobile device, and then verbatim transcriptions of every interview was made. Of the fourteen participants, ten were people the interviewer knew; the remaining four were enlisted through people the interviewer knew. Every participant was contacted and explained the research's specifics. Many participants opted for telephone interviews, although a small number consented to in-person interviews at their homes or in a café where they felt more comfortable and could talk more freely and candidly about the research issue. Simple questions were posed to all participants to provide a sense of comfort and establish rapport between interview and interviewee. A semi-structured interview guide was also carefully prepared in advance to assist the interviewer in maintaining appropriate structure and flow while conducting the interviews. All participants were posed standardized series of questions about their role of leadership support with organizational change and as well as their impact on organizational citizenship behaviour. The questions were for the most part, framed as open-ended questions. It was made sure that language was comprehensible and understood by each participant being interviewed. Upon transcription, the data was subjected to coding, analysis, and interpretation. By multiple listening and reading of the transcribed interviews, the process of transcription facilitated in depth understanding of the topic. Once all the data were transcribed meticulously, the coding process commenced. Keyword codes were applied for labelling or classifying the text, which are regarded as the fundamental element of qualitative research (Sarantakos, 1998).

Following the coding process, the data were analysed, categorized, and sub-divided into themes with sub- themes. Each of the emerging themes was assigned a unique code.

Limitations of the study

The researcher encountered several challenges during the conduct of this study. First and foremost, there is a need to exercise caution in generalizing findings from the small sample size. For the purposes of improving a better scrutiny of the study, it is beneficial to conduct research on a broader and more complex level in any form of study. Nevertheless, the use of semi-structured interviews enabled the gathering of detailed and insightful information from the participants. Although it required a long time to conduct the interviews, it has proven to be a highly effective technique for getting people to reveal information in a very open and transparent way. Through this, the researcher was able to learn in-depth about the professional experiences of the 11 corporate people and how it affected their overall experiences.

ANALYSIS			
SNO	THEMES	SUB – THEMES	VERBATIMS
1	The role of Leadership Communication in organizational change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The significance of consistent, transparent and unambiguous message. • Communication tactics based on leadership that foster trust. • How inadequate communication affects workers' adaptability and confidence. 	<i>'They established transparent communication channels, Leaders shared detailed update on reason for change. Regular team meetings, email updates were informed. They encouraged two-way dialogue. Empathy and respect were shown. Employee concerns were responded with action.'</i>
2	Leadership	How teamwork and motivation are	<i>'If I talk about me and my</i>

The Role of Leadership Support in Facilitating Organizational Change and Its Influence on Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

SNO	THEMES	SUB – THEMES	VERBATIMS
	Support And its effect on Employee Engagement and OCB	fostered by leadership guidance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The connection between OCB variances and leadership behaviours. • The part that leadership plays in fostering a supportive and cooperative workplace culture 	<p><i>team. We all were happy with the leadership support by our leader.</i></p> <p><i>His constant support, clear communication, his training automatically brought a positive change. We all were encouraged to go beyond our duties.'</i></p> <p><i>'Culture is highly performance driven with a strict focus on deadlines and results. Support from management is limited.'</i></p>
3	Ethical and Responsible Leadership in change management	Methods of decision-making that promote diversity and justice. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How ethical leadership affects worker participation and trust. • Accountability for leadership in transition management. 	<p><i>'Yes, there were moments which is natural during any major change.</i></p> <p><i>We hold open discussions, acknowledged employee concerns and offer additional support where needed.'</i></p> <p><i>'We made it a priority to act with transparency and fairness. Decisions were not only effective but considerate of the people they impact.'</i></p>
4	Leadership Interventions in Addressing Employee Resistance and challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategies for handling opposition and dissatisfaction. • Leadership's responsiveness in conflict resolution. • The consequences of delayed or ineffective leadership intervention. 	<p><i>'Recently I remember an employee who was struggling with change. They voiced their concerns multiple times but initially we didn't take immediate action. We expect them to adapt on their own. The productivity denied.'</i></p> <p><i>Looking back, we realize that as leaders we could have been more attentive to employees. There were delays in setting up quiet zones which added to frustration.</i></p>
5	Leadership Strategies to Strengthen OCB during change initiatives	Acknowledgement and gratitude serve as OCB motivators. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactive leadership actions that promote staff participation. • Initiatives led by leaders to 	<p><i>'Yes, in my team we had higher level of OCB. We were more proactive in assisting others, took initiative in solving problems and showed a greater commitment to</i></p>

The Role of Leadership Support in Facilitating Organizational Change and Its Influence on Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

SNO	THEMES	SUB – THEMES	VERBATIMS
		promote resilience and adaptation.	<i>teamwork.’</i> <i>Yes, some employees were resistant to change. Leaders managed that by actively listening to us. Highlighting long term benefits. Instead of being rigid they were flexible.</i>
6	The Impact of Leadership on Employee Wellbeing and Workplace Atmosphere	Gratitude and acknowledgement are OCB motivators. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactive leadership initiatives that encourage employee involvement. • Leader-led programs that encourage adaptability and resilience. 	<i>‘I’ve noticed that teams feel more engaged and take more ownership of their work, which has led to better efficiency overall. In an industry that moves as fast as ours, this shift is exactly what we need to stay ahead.’</i> <i>‘Yes, I’ve noticed differences in Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) based on the level of leadership support provided. When leaders actively support the Agile transition—by being transparent, offering guidance, and recognizing efforts, employees tend to go the extra mile. They collaborate more, proactively help colleagues, and show greater commitment to team success.’</i>
7	Future Leadership Improvements For Effective Change Management	Improving the accessibility and visibility of leadership. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggestions for enhancing change leadership strategies. • Resources and instruction to improve leadership assistance during changes. 	<i>‘Since Agile thrives on open communication, leaders should foster an environment where employees feel safe to voice concerns, share ideas, and challenge the status quo without fear of backlash. Agile promotes self-organizing teams, so leaders should continue to delegate decision-making power while providing the necessary resources and guidance.’</i>

DISCUSSION

1. The Role of Leadership Support in Driving Change

Leadership support, as described by the participants, involves more than giving instructions or setting goals. It includes clear communication, emotional encouragement, resource allocation, and consistent presence. Especially during change, these actions help to ease uncertainty and build a sense of psychological safety. When employees feel supported, they are more likely to stay engaged, take initiative, and align themselves with the organization's vision.

Organizational change—whether it involves shifts in structure, technology, strategy, or culture—can often feel overwhelming. For such changes to be effective and accepted, there must be visible leadership involvement, open communication, and a shared sense of purpose. Leaders act as bridges between high-level strategy and on-the-ground execution, and their support directly impacts how employees respond to transformation.

2. Linking Leadership and OCB

OCB refers to those voluntary behaviours that aren't necessarily part of someone's job description but make a workplace function better—like helping a colleague, taking initiative, or showing a positive attitude in tough times. The participants shared that these behaviours become more common when leadership is empathetic, communicative, and involved. In other words, OCB doesn't just appear on its own; it grows in environments where people feel seen, heard, and valued.

Themes Emerging from the Study

Theme 1: Communication as a Cornerstone of Change

One of the strongest themes that came through was the importance of open, honest, and consistent communication. Participants emphasized how valuable it was when their leaders kept them informed about upcoming changes and the reasons behind them. Whether through regular team meetings, email updates, or one-on-one check-ins, leaders who communicated clearly helped reduce uncertainty. Employees shared that when communication was two-way—when they could ask questions and receive genuine responses—they felt more secure and more motivated to support the change. This kind of transparent environment encouraged OCB because people felt involved and respected.

Theme 2: Support Builds Engagement

Beyond communication, participants repeatedly spoke about the importance of leadership support in building a motivated and engaged workforce. Those who worked under supportive managers—leaders who recognized their work, provided feedback, and made resources available—described being more inclined to go beyond their formal responsibilities. One participant said that their entire team felt encouraged to "go beyond our duties" simply because their leader made them feel confident and capable. In contrast, others working in highly results-driven environments, with little managerial support, described low morale and limited engagement. This suggests that OCB thrives in spaces where leaders create a culture of encouragement and empowerment.

Theme 3: Ethical and Fair Leadership Encourages Participation

Several participants pointed out that fair and transparent decision-making by leaders had a big impact on how employees responded to change. When leaders acted ethically and with consideration for how changes would affect their teams, trust was strengthened. Employees

The Role of Leadership Support in Facilitating Organizational Change and Its Influence on Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

were more willing to participate, offer feedback, and stay committed. One participant shared how their leadership team made a deliberate effort to include employees in decisions and to explain not just what changes were happening, but why. This approach made staff feel respected and motivated to contribute, even in challenging times.

Theme 4: How Leaders Address Resistance Matters

Change often brings discomfort, and some resistance is natural. However, what stood out in the responses was how leadership response can either escalate or ease this resistance. Delays in addressing concerns led to frustration and even drops in productivity. In contrast, when leaders listened, responded early, and took concerns seriously, employees felt valued and were more likely to adapt positively. Some leaders admitted they learned this through experience, realizing that addressing issues early could have prevented unnecessary stress among staff.

Theme 5: Reinforcing OCB Through Leadership Strategies

Many participants described how specific actions by their leaders—like showing appreciation, acknowledging contributions, and encouraging teamwork—directly led to stronger OCB. These leaders didn't just wait for employees to adapt; they actively created conditions for positivity and resilience. Employees responded by helping others, taking initiative, and showing dedication to team success. One employee noted how flexible and attentive leadership turned resistance into cooperation, demonstrating the direct link between thoughtful leadership and discretionary effort.

Theme 6: Supporting Wellbeing Through Leadership

Participants also highlighted that leadership plays a key role in shaping the emotional and psychological wellbeing of teams. Leaders who emphasized emotional intelligence, inclusivity, and open feedback created healthier work environments. In such cultures, OCB was more noticeable teams were engaged, resilient, and proactive.

One respondent mentioned how teams under supportive leaders took more ownership of their work, leading to greater efficiency and morale, especially during the fast pace of Agile implementation.

Theme 7: A Call for More Accessible and Empowering Leadership

Finally, the study found a clear desire among participants for more **visible and empowering leaders**, particularly in fast-moving, Agile workplaces. Employees expressed the need for managers who are available, approachable, and able to support autonomous decision-making. They appreciated leaders who were not just directing from above but actively participating in team development, guiding without micromanaging, and ensuring resources were in place. The importance of psychological safety was emphasized employees wanted the freedom to voice concerns or suggest changes without fear of backlash.

Final Reflections

In conclusion, this study shows that successful organizational change and the emergence of strong Organizational Citizenship Behaviour are closely tied to how leaders support their teams. Whether through communication, empathy, ethical conduct, or timely interventions, leadership sets the tone for how employees engage with change. When employees feel supported, they respond with loyalty, initiative, and collaboration—all of which are essential for long-term organizational success.

The Role of Leadership Support in Facilitating Organizational Change and Its Influence on Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

On the other hand, the absence of leadership support can lead to resistance, disengagement, and a breakdown in trust. The findings suggest a growing need for **future-focused leadership**—one that blends clarity with compassion, structure with flexibility, and authority with empowerment. As organizations continue to evolve, especially in Agile or hybrid environments, leaders must adapt to not only drive change but to bring people along with it.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to explore how leadership support influences organizational change and encourages employees to engage in Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB)—those voluntary actions that go beyond formal job requirements but contribute significantly to a positive work environment. Through in-depth interviews with both leaders and employees from private sector organizations, the research uncovered a clear and consistent theme: effective leadership plays a central role in how change is experienced and embraced.

One of the strongest insights to emerge was the importance of clear, consistent, and empathetic **communication**. Leaders who explained the rationale behind changes, welcomed feedback, and created space for open dialogue helped employees feel informed and valued. This type of communication reduced uncertainty, built trust, and made employees more likely to take initiative, collaborate with others, and support the change process—key elements of OCB.

Beyond communication, participants emphasized the impact of **supportive leadership behaviours**, such as encouragement, recognition, and being present. Employees felt more engaged and motivated when leaders were actively involved and made an effort to support them emotionally and professionally. These leaders helped foster a culture where individuals felt empowered to go above and beyond their formal responsibilities—not out of obligation, but out of a genuine commitment to their team and organization.

Ethical and fair leadership also stood out as a key influence. Leaders who demonstrated transparency, fairness, and compassion earned the trust of their employees. This trust led to higher levels of participation and cooperation during change, as employees were more willing to adapt when they felt their leaders had their best interests in mind.

The study also explored how leaders handle **resistance to change**, a common and natural reaction in any organization. It became clear that leadership responses—whether timely and empathetic or delayed and dismissive—had a direct impact on morale. Leaders who acknowledged concerns and acted quickly helped shift resistance into collaboration, whereas poor communication or lack of involvement often resulted in disengagement.

Additionally, the findings showed that many leaders actively used **strategies to encourage OCB**, such as showing appreciation, recognizing individual contributions, and promoting teamwork. These actions helped build a sense of ownership and accountability among employees, even during periods of uncertainty.

Finally, participants highlighted how leadership influences not just behaviour, but the overall **emotional climate and wellbeing** of the workplace. Leaders who emphasized emotional intelligence, inclusiveness, and autonomy created environments where employees

The Role of Leadership Support in Facilitating Organizational Change and Its Influence on Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

felt safe, supported, and motivated. In fast-paced, agile organizations, this kind of leadership was particularly valuable.

In conclusion, this research reaffirms that leadership support is not just beneficial—it is essential. It shapes how employees experience change, how they respond to challenges, and how willing they are to contribute beyond what is expected.

Organizations seeking to drive successful transformation must invest in leadership development that prioritizes empathy, transparency, and empowerment. When leaders show up for their people, especially during times of change, they create the foundation for resilience, collaboration, and long-term success.

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The Role of Leadership Support in Facilitating Organizational Change and Its Influence on Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

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Conflict of Interest

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