ROLE OF SHARED LEADERSHIP TO PROMOTE INNOVATIVE WORK BEHAVIOR: EVIDENCE FROM BANKING SECTOR

AYESHA JABEEN
DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF LAHORE, SARGODHA CAMPUS

MUNA I. ALYOUSEF
DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM, COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, UNIVERSITY OF HAIL, HAIL 81451, SAUDI ARABIA

NOOR-UL-AIN
DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF LAHORE, SARGODHA CAMPUS

YASSIR MAHMOOD*
DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF LAHORE, SARGODHA CAMPUS

HIRA ARSHAD
DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF LAHORE, SARGODHA CAMPUS

SUMAIRA SHAMOON
DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF LAHORE, SARGODHA CAMPUS

Abstract
Empirical research on the effects of Shared Leadership on Innovative Work Behavior is currently lacking, particularly when examined through the lens of Knowledge Sabotage. This study used Knowledge Sabotage as a mediator and Conscientiousness as a moderator variable to determine how Shared Leadership influences Innovative Work Behavior? A quantitative and cross sectional research methodology was employed to gather primary data from 287 employees who worked at different banks in Pakistan. SPSS and SMART PLS were used for data analyses. The proposed mediation and moderation effects were tested using regression analysis and Hayes' PROCESS (Model 4). The results showed that Innovative Work Behavior is significantly impacted by Shared Leadership. This study advances our knowledge of the dynamics of leadership in the banking industry and provides practical guidance for creating leadership strategies that reduce harmful knowledge practices and foster innovation.
Keywords: Shared Leadership, Knowledge Sabotage, Innovative Work Behavior, Banking Sector, Pakistan.

INTRODUCTION

In today's competitive workplace Innovative Work Behavior (IWB) accumulated an important role in shaping the effectiveness of an individual employee as well as an organization. IWB entails a deliberate process of designing, implementing and growing imaginative ideas to enhance the performance of individuals (Hock, 2025). Employees' innovativeness has become pertinent as organizations are trying to cope the changes in market requirements. Much research (Verkhohlyad & McLean, 2023; Khoshnaw and Karadaş, 2024) has been done to elaborate the ways in which managers could become more innovative leaders. A debile management may develop a toxic environment, which would affect both employees and environment of the organization.

IWB has been given great consideration in the present day business professional especially bearing in mind the need to remain competitive (Saleem et al., 2023). A creative organization stimulates employees to venture out and implement new ideas (Zhang, X. 2024). Innovative people may inspire others, form teams, and advance a culture of constant progress. Individual creativity is typically what drives a business's expansion and sustained success (Hussain et al., 2024). Research inculcated that employees have been demonstrating creativity at work and desire to improve their IWB. Yet IWB is considered extra role behavior and hence is generally invisible part of employees' work. Employees are naturally driven to reinterpret, develop, promote, and apply their ideas as a work enrichment reward for IWB (Wang et al., 2022).

Personal innovativeness also promotes competition and organizational growth. Instead of switching the responsibility to the person in charge, team members work on collaborative leadership; such dynamic and interactive functioning of influence is called Shared Leadership (Klasmeier et al.2025). During Shared Leadership, the members of the team are supposed to cooperate and assign attention, as well as take an equal role in decision

making (Aga et al., 2021). When team members experience feelings of being alone, unsupported, or ignorant, they tend to weaken and lose motivation, as well as creativity at work (Edmondson & Lei, 2020).

Organizations whom intend to create a rewarding system that supports an employee's IWB, it is imperative that each employee's knowledge mapping be completed (Yaqoob & Kitchlew,2022). Open information exchange promotes collaboration, productivity, and supports organizational growth. Knowledgeable employees are more confident, productive, and dedicated to the goals of the organizations (Yu et al. 2022). On the other hand, Knowledge Sabotage the willful falsification or hiding of facts may backfire. Knowledge Sabotage occurs when employees deliberately conceal, transform or distort information in, an attempt to prevent others utilize that knowledge effectively. This behavior may be as a result of personal conflicts, professional insecurities or unhealthy competition (Serenko 2018). It damages teamwork, creates misunderstandings, and erodes employee confidence. Corporate culture, growth, and competitive advantage are all progressively undermined by Knowledge Sabotage (Serenko 2018). Knowledge Sabotage may function as a detrimental link between shared leadership and IWB by interrupting the trust and information flow necessary for both employees and organizations. It is alarming how common knowledge sabotage is practiced at the workplace which hurts the victim, the company, and other stakeholders (Serenko 2018).

Additionally, Conscientiousness a personality trait is introduced to the framework proposed by this study may influence the relationship between shared leadership and knowledge sabotage. Self-control, reliability, and accountability are the components that constitute conscientiousness as a personality trait. Employees with high conscientiousness are more likely to be organized, moral, and diligent at work thus they are more inclined to encourage creativity and less likely to compromise expertise when they exercise shared leadership (Han et al., 2021). The combination of these variables aimed at offering a more in depth explanation of how leadership styles influence innovation. With reference to previous studies (Serenko (2018; Liu et al. 2022; Islam, Ali, & Abdullah, 2025), this research proposed knowledge sabotage as a mediator between shared leadership and the IWB. The aim of the research is to test the mediating role of knowledge sabotage as a detrimental factor between shared leadership and IWB. Also, it suggested that conscientiousness play moderating role between the relationship of shared leadership and knowledge sabotage.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Innovative Work Behavior

Innovative Work Behavior refers to *"the generation, promotion, realization and implementation of novel and useful ideas that can improve a product, service, and work processes"* (Karimi et al., 2023). The intricacy of the IWB concept entails how workers enhance innovation at their workplace. The banking sector is a special kind of sector where there are most of the times the prevalence of risk aversion, height surpassing structures, procedures that are done in compliance with the laws. In consideration of the fact that financial landscape continues to restructure through the process of digital transformation, it is not only timely, but it is also highly beneficial to seek how employees contributes toward IWB. It is within the powers of the employees particularly managers to influence the growth of their businesses through generation of creative, useful ideas that can be shared and implemented towards products, services and internal operations within their organizations. This is particularly a good practice among the managers who do not just foster innovative capabilities among themselves but also create a lively atmosphere in the organization.

Shared Leadership

Shared Leadership is a standard in which decision making responsibilities are distributed between multiple team members rather than vested in a single leader (Soomro et al., 2024). Shared leadership forms a culture of open communication stimulating an exchange of ideas. When leadership is delegated, employees become extremely concerned and they tend to share more ideas as they feel a sense of accountability. Any team member can take up the leadership duties depending on his or her qualifications and the need of situation. The members in the group become more accommodating to the abilities of each other and become more appreciative to each other. When people work together in an environment that apprise an individual effort, they will be more than happy to support each other and work towards collective success.

Knowledge Sabotage

Knowledge Sabotage is *"an incident occurring when an employee intentionally provides incorrect knowledge to another or conceal knowledge from another while being fully aware that the knowledge in question is needed by and extremely important to the other party"* (Serenko 2018). This act is deliberate and premeditated, aimed at deceiving or denying other people vital information. An employee may deny the information in terms of operations, safety, productivity or decision making which can affect the entire structure of the organization. Notable elements of this type of sabotage include the complete awareness of the potential damage by the saboteur as well as his/her choice to engage in it anyway. Deliberate sabotage of the knowledge is severe misrepresentation of trust in business environment and demonstrates the harmful possibility of the knowledge-based malpractice at the workplace.

Conscientiousness

Conscientiousness encompasses the extent to which individuals are self-disciplined, dutiful, and achievement oriented (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Conscientious people are more likely to establish specific goals, put up great

effort to accomplish them, and successfully track their progress all of which improve performance and increase one's sense of accomplishment. Employees with high conscientiousness are generally careful, trustworthy, and meticulous, which make them credible in both personal and professional contexts. They typically hold themselves to high standards and endure adversity in order to accomplish their goals. Such people usually exhibit qualities like dependability, caution, organization, and a dedication to complete duties accurately.

These qualities closely match the operational requirements of the banking sector as the banks prioritize accuracy, regulatory compliance, customer trust, and risk management for which only high committed staff members are better able to manage intricate financial transactions, follow procedures, and reduce errors. Their diligence lowers the possibility of carelessness or dishonest behavior, fostering a safe and reliable financial environment. As they are more likely to encourage teamwork, maintain confidentiality, and take the initiative to address problems, conscientious employees are excellent assets for banking sector to boost performance.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Team Climate Theory (TCT) states that the feasible environment created through shared leadership encourages open communication and fearlessness of failure, hence strengthening the possibility of IWB. But, knowledge sabotage can perhaps be an intermediary, which makes it difficult to inculcate IWB. This knowledge sabotage may be as a result of feeling intimidated, being uncompetitive, or undervalued. Employees who work in unsupportive or hostile teams can intentionally conceal or fabricate information. Furthermore, in such team set up, individuals that are high on conscientiousness are lesser prone to willful knowledge sabotage. Such practices demoralize Shared Leadership, promote sabotage and kill creativity.

Shared Leadership and Knowledge Sabotage

Organizations' culture play key role in determining how frequently shared leadership and knowledge sabotage are practiced. Knowledge sabotage would occur less often when shared leadership is highly practiced in banks whose culture is more prone to openness, learning, and cooperation. However, in case of insufficiency of psychological safety, or prevalence of hierarchical thinking at the workplace, workers might be under pressure to conceal information as an act of self-defense against unpleasant experiences. To maintain a high level of integrity and effectiveness, it is important to improvise shared leadership in banking sector, which might minimize the risk of knowledge sabotage. Hence it is predicted that:

H1: Shared Leadership will have negative impact on Knowledge Sabotage.

Knowledge Sabotage and Innovative Work Behavior

Principally, IWB entails creation, advancement, and execution of new ideas and knowledge sabotage is generally hostile to it. IWB also includes singularity and realistic application of new ideas, processes, or products. Coming up with innovative financial products, improving the digital banking systems, automating business procedures all of these are regarded innovative operations of banks. Such programs enhance consumer delight, the flexibility of organizations, and competitiveness in the markets.

Knowledge sabotage is misleading, concealing, or distorting facts done by the team mates. In contrast to passive or indirect hiding of knowledge, sabotage is not accidental and reactive. It may assume a number of variants like lying about data to deceive other workers, providing false information or not disclosing vital facts. Employees may sabotage the knowledge on their own due to some interpersonal issues like lack of trust, be part of organizational politics, or fear to lose power. This makes workplace unpleasant and thus kills the collaboration and sharing of ideas, which are two essential components of creativity. Sabotage of information disrupts the relations and can cause the development of silos and even diminish the psychological safety at the team level. This kind of fragmentation prevents open communication that is required in brainstorming and pooling of ideas. On the other hand, banking personnel are likely to conceal information that can benefit others because they are pressured to perform better than their colleagues as they are evaluated for their achievements the only ladder available for their promotions. Ultimately, there exists a bearing, though not permanent, an inverse tie between knowledge sabotage and creative work practices. So it is put forth that:

H2: Knowledge Sabotage will have negative impact on Innovative Work Behavior.

Shared Leadership and Innovative Work Behavior

Shared Leadership has an important role to play in the context of IWB. IWB is deliberate creation, popularization and application of novel ideas in a team or organization with the desire to raise performance. Employees are psychologically comfortable when they are part of a team where leadership is distributed between team members to experiment new things. Such mechanisms enable banks to create an atmosphere that encourages open communication and minimize leadership hierarchies. It can assist to eliminate obstructions that normally slow down an innovation.

In banks, employees' creativity is an essential part that demands customer-centric solutions, digital transformation, and agility to respond to market changes. Because of shared leadership style, staff members are encouraged to take initiatives, share creative ideas, and experiment new tactics without fear of failure. This has led to apprise employees' engagement in innovation-related activities, like developing new financial services, optimizing internal processes, and enhancing customer satisfaction. By fostering a culture of collaboration and shared accountability, banking institutions may augment employees' creativity. Thus it is poised that:

H3 Shared Leadership will have positive impact on Innovative Work Behavior.

Mediating Role of Knowledge Sabotage

According to TCT, a supportive team atmosphere is one that promotes collaboration, openness, and shared responsibility. In a more empowered and inclusive team environment that is promoted by shared leadership, everyone feels responsible for the group's achievements and is motivated to offer suggestions. This is consistent with TCT focus on participatory approach, which guarantees that team members can freely share ideas without worrying about repercussions or criticism. Shared leadership in a banking sector can create an environment that inspires employees to propose new financial services, goods or practices, which in turn results in more creative approaches at the workplace. Therefore, shared leadership directly impacts the team environment by fostering the trust, collaboration, and collective decision-making which is necessary for innovation.

Conversely, Knowledge Sabotage can backfire by creating a hostile or competitive team atmosphere where employees deliberately hide or distort information to undermine others. In this case, knowledge sabotage acts as a barrier between shared leadership and IWB. Knowledge Sabotage can impede the free flow of ideas, inhibit information sharing, and reduce collaboration all of which can eventually stifle innovation. If bankers feel that their ideas or contributions are being overlooked, they may become disengaged, demotivated, or reluctant to express their opinions. This can lead to a vicious loop in which the innovation process is slowed down and the potential benefits of shared leadership are lost. These arguments provide the bases to express that:

H4: Knowledge Sabotage mediates the relationship between Shared Leadership and Innovative Work Behavior, such that when Shared Leadership is high Knowledge Sabotage will be low and Innovative Work Behavior will be high.

Moderating Role of Conscientiousness

Conscientiousness in leadership is especially important in the banking industry, where accuracy, reliability, and quick decision are crucial. These executives are committed to create an environment where employees are valued and treated with dignity in addition to achieve organizational goals. Businesses need the conscientiousness, particularly social and self-awareness, in order to promote the shared leadership and demote knowledge sabotage. However, when individuals involve themselves in struggling to gain a high status or attain power, it gives birth to egotism, rivalry, and mistrust and hence causes knowledge sabotage.

In order to prevent knowledge sabotage and encourage shared leadership, banking executives need to remain alert. Team members feel more empowered to take initiatives, assign work, and offer ideas when these leaders support shared leadership. By fostering trust among staff members, this inclusive approach lessens the tension and anxiety that frequently result in knowledge sabotage. The combination of shared leadership techniques along with conscientious leadership ensures improved creativity, stronger team cohesion, and easier information interchange in a profession where precision, adherence, and quick decision-making are crucial. However, since people may still act carelessly or selfishly, shared leadership may not be sufficient to stop knowledge sabotage in teams with low levels of conscientiousness. Thus, conscientiousness enhances the impact of shared leadership in reducing knowledge sabotage by facilitating a more reliable workplace.

H5: Conscientiousness moderates the relationship between Shared Leadership and Knowledge Sabotage such that when conscientiousness is high, the relationship will be weak.
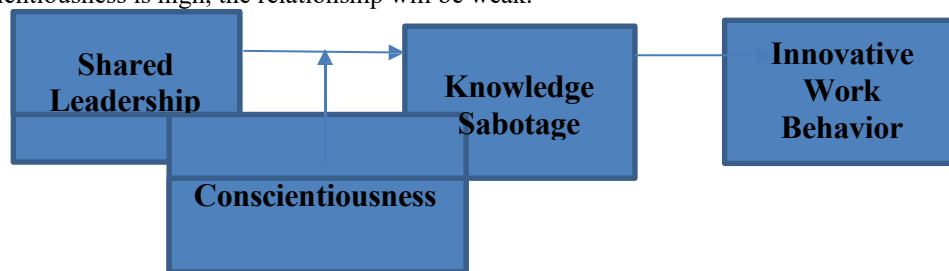

FIGURE 1 Proposed Research Model

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data

To achieve the objective of the research, this study is based on primary data obtained through survey questionnaire under cross sectional settings. Primary data reduces the chances of having erroneous or out-dated information. A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed among banking employees (across whole Pakistan) using purposive sampling which is sufficient to meet the minimum requirement of survey research (Sekaran, and Bougie, 2016). In return. 287 questionnaires were received back yielding a response rate of 89.6%.

The measures for all variables were adopted from extant literature. The measure of shared leadership was adopted from Avolio et al. (2003) which consist of 20-items. Innovative work behavior was assessed by four items instrument developed by Kang and Lee (2017). Knowledge sabotage and conscientiousness measures were acquired from perotti et al. (2024) consisting eight and thirteen items respectively. All of these variables were ranked on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1= strongly disagree and 5= strongly agree). Data analyses techniques like

descriptive statistics, normality test, reliability, correlation and regression analyses were performed using SPSS and SMART PLS.

RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSES

Descriptive Statistics

The demographics' details depicts that most of respondents were male (67%) that is common to any eastern culture. Also majority of respondents were young (72%, age 25-30), highly educated (Masters and above 76%) having relatively lesser experience (64%, 1-5 years). (see table 1).

TABLE 1 Profile of Respondents

Variable	Description	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	92	32.1%
	Male	195	67.9%
Age	25 to 30 years	208	72.5%
	31 to 35 years	59	20.6%
	36 to 40 years	11	3.8%
	Above 40 years	9	3.1%
Marital status	Unmarried	184	64.1%
	Married	103	35.9%
Educational level	Bachelor	68	23.7%
	Masters	116	40.4%
	MPhil	95	33.1%
	Above MPhil	8	2.8%
Designation	Supervisor/worker	175	60.9%
	Middle level management	90	32.8%
	Director level	12	4.2%
	CEO's	10	3.5%
Experience	1 to 5 years	186	64.8%
	6 to 10 years	67	23.3%
	11 to 15 years	34	11.0%
	16 to 20 years	0.00	0.00%

Data Normality and Reliability Analyses

For the purpose of having high order data analyses it was needed to verify the normal distribution of data which is evaluated through skewness and kurtosis. The results indicated that the values of skewness and kurtosis of all variables lied in the normal range of ±2 (George, 2011). Also, internal consistency of data was checked by Crochbach's Alpha (α). These results are demonstrated in table 2. On the other hand the reliability of all variables were above acceptable range of .70 (Nunnally, 1978).

TABLE 2 Data Normality and Reliability

Variable	Std. Dev	Skewness	Kurtosis	α (Reliability)
Shared Leadership	0.6789	-0.362	0.247	0.72
Innovative Work Behavior	0.4872	-1.000	1.354	0.83
Knowledge Sabotage	0.5638	-0.763	0.040	0.84
Conscientiousness	0.3876	-1.007	1.689	0.70

Correlation Analyses

The linear associations among variables are portrayed in table 3. Results show that shared leadership is positively correlated with the innovative work behavior (r=.29), negatively correlated with knowledge sabotage (r= -.17). Also, knowledge sabotage is negatively correlated with innovative work behavior (r= -.42).

TABLE 3 Correlation Analyses

Variable	Shared Leadership	Innovative Work Behavior	Knowledge Sabotage	Conscientiousness
Shared Leadership	1			
Innovative Work Behavior	.148**	1		
Knowledge Sabotage	.312**	.651**	1	
Conscientiousness	.213**	.504**	.534**	1

** p< 0.05

Hypothesis Testing Through Regression

Regression analysis is tool use to describe relationship among variables but also define effect and cause of the relationship. Hypotheses were developed during the literature preview now being tested by using the SPSS twenty for the acceptance and rejection of hypothesis.

TABLE 4 Regression Analyses

No.	Relationships		B	T	P
1	Shared Leadership	Knowledge Sabotage	-.18	-3.2	.001
2	Knowledge Sabotage	Innovative Work Behavior	-.44	-8.7	.000
3	Shared Leadership	Innovative Work Behavior	.31	5.3	.000

Mediation Analysis

Hayes (2012) PROCESS was technique to test the main effect of meditational Analysis. The bootstrapping technique for the robust testing of hypotheses is also used. Results are demonstrates in table 5. The LLCI and ULCI don't pass the '0' affirming the mediating hypothesis.

TABLE 5 Mediation Analysis

Relationships		B	t	P
Shared Leadership	Knowledge Sabotage	-.18	-3.2	.001
Knowledge Sabotage	Innovative Work Behavior	-.44	-8.7	.000
Shared Leadership	Knowledge Sabotage and IWB	.21	4.6	.001
Shared Leadership	Innovative Work Behavior	.31	5.3	.000
Bootstrap results for the indirect effects **Effect TC**		SE 0.80	LLCI 0.03	ULCI 1.593

Moderating effect of Conscientiousness

The results (in table 6) showed that significant positive relationship exists between Conscientiousness and Shared Leadership (β= .18, p= .005). The interaction term (C x KS) has also significant effects as a moderator (β = .232, p= .000, LLCI= .2467, ULCI= .6767). Conscientiousness was found to have positive impact on shared leadership and knowledge sabotage.

TABLE 6 Moderation Analysis

Variable	B	S.E	T	P	LLCI	ULCI
SL	.18	.001	2.31	.005	-.48	.84
C	.63	.272	2.32	.000	.097	1.163
SL*C	.232	.074	-3.14	.002	.087	.377

Convergent Validity

The degree of empirical correlation between two conceptually similar measurements is known as convergent validity. It guarantees that comparable constructs produce comparable outcomes and is a crucial part of construct validity.

TABLE 7 Convergent Validity

Construct	R ho_A	Composite Reliability	AVE
Shared Leadership	.723	.876	.662
Knowledge Sabotage	.836	.854	.745
Innovative Work Behavior	.846	.899	.675
Conscientiousness	.708	.849	.582

Discriminant Validity using HTMT ratio
In this research researcher use (Hair et al., 2019) approach and adopted the Heterotrait Monotrait (HTMT) ratio in examining the discriminant validity of variable of this study by using SMART PLS. In below Table 4.8 all the variables were below 0.950 and fulfilled discriminant validity criteria using the HTMT ratio. (Zainol et al., 2023).

TABLE 8 Discriminant Validity

VARIABLES	Shared Leadership	Knowledge Sabotage	Innovative Work Behavior	Conscientiousness
Shared Leadership	**0.813**			
Knowledge Sabotage	0.55	**0.866**		
Innovative Work Behavior	0.78	0.65	**0.763**	
Conscientiousness	0.73	0.43	0.67	**0.822**

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Shared leadership plays a vital role to promote employees' innovative behavior within banks through promotion of team work. This eventually allowed to share the leadership across banks and minimize knowledge sabotage. Businesses especially banks will more likely to contribute to innovative work behavior leading to success and further developments. As the findings indicated that those individuals who tend to take the position of an unofficial team leader demonstrate greater innovative gestures. The results suggested that shared leadership, as an independent variable, has a positive impact on the development of IWB. However, this connection is partly mediated by knowledge sabotage, through which the advantages of IWB as of shared leadership become fade.

This research also accentuated that conscientiousness is capable of increasing the favorable effects on the negative relationship between shared leadership and knowledge sabotage. According to the team climate theory, positive environment will enhance IWB, decrease the Knowledge Sabotage and create space for shared leadership. Ineffective team culture will counter any attempts at shared leadership, promote sabotaging, and limit creativity even with delegated leadership. Conscientiousness defends against the negative climate fallouts and preserves the benefits of mutual leadership through encouraging moral, constructive, and collaborative behavior. Therefore, establishing favorable team climate does not only foster innovation, but it also facilitates the development of shared leadership particularly when such individual traits as conscientiousness are provoked.

Limitations and Future Research Directions
Despite the study's novelty and contributions, a few limitations should be addressed in future research attempts. Self-reported results may have been biased due to social desirability or inaccurate self-evaluation of the characteristics like knowledge sabotage, innovative work behavior and conscientiousness. Because of the cross-sectional research approach, it was difficult to identify the causal relationships between shared leadership, innovative work behavior and knowledge sabotage variables. The generalizability of the results may be restricted by cultural and contextual factors that were not fully taken into account in this investigation. These elements, particularly shared leadership and innovative work behavior, might also affect the dimensions that were assessed. Finally, the lack of thorough investigation into the possible intricacy and complexity of this conduct would have resulted in the omission of numerous examples or justifications for knowledge sabotage in commercial settings.

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