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Promoting Prosocial Behaviors through Leadership: The Role of Line Managers in Fostering Individual Sustainability

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Abstract This research investigates the role of line managers in encouraging prosocial behavior that improves sustainability at the individual level in organizations. Based on a meta-analysis of the last ten years of research literature consisting of 15 studies, it underlines the impact of transformational, servant, and inclusive leadership on the level of trust, emotional commitment, and shared purpose within the organization. Its emergent culture and internal climates strengthened leadership's impact on fostering prosocial behavior. Benefits include enhanced employee well-being, improved productivity, and heightened engagement. This study highlights the emotionally responsive leadership and the appreciation of organizational culture needed to perpetuate prosocial behavior, offering actionable insights for leadership and organizational transformation. This study approaches sustainability from a social perspective, framing “individual sustainability”¹ as the employee's ongoing capacity for well-being and interpersonal engagement within the organization.

Keywords prosocial behaviors; managerial influence; transformational leadership; organizational sustainability; individual sustainability; employee well-being

1. Introduction

The growing demand for sustainable organizational practices has underscored the critical role of line managers in fostering prosocial behaviors within the workplace [1]. Prosocial behaviors are voluntary interpersonal acts with no explicit requirement that benefit the organization, reinforce personal sustainability, and establish effective teamwork, promoting a collaborative organizational culture [2]. This analysis explores how line managers cultivate and influence prosocial processes among employees, thus promoting healthy individual well-being and organizational resilience. By synthesizing existing literature, this study highlights the intersection of managerial and leadership practices with prosocial behavior and sustainability goals.

Organizations today face the dual challenge of achieving performance objectives while promoting the well-being of their employees. In responding to this challenge, the social responsibility pillar has emerged as a core element focusing on equity, access, and positive social relationships [3]. Organizational management and employees implement these principles through line managers who work directly with employees and report to the organizational leaders [4]. Line managers interact with different employees, influencing their attitude toward work, morale, motivation, and overall level of engagement in the workplace. They, therefore, play a strategic role in overseeing the development of prosocial culture within the organizational setting.

The importance of prosocial behaviors in the workplace cannot be overstated. Evidence from studies such as Podsakoff et al. (2000) [5] and Ehrhart et al. (2006) [6] suggests that prosocial behaviors increase team cohesiveness, decrease interpersonal conflict, and increase individual satisfaction levels in the workplace. Furthermore, prosocial behaviors are congruent with the overall use of individual sustainability, which states that the employee should function optimally and have long-lasting positive health [5–7]. However, the mechanisms by which line managers

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¹ The term “individual sustainability” in this study refers to the ongoing well-being and engagement of employees. It should not be conflated with environmental or macroeconomic interpretations of sustainability but rather aligns with the social dimension of sustainable organizational practices.

shape these behaviors still lack systematic examination, necessitating a comprehensive synthesis of the existing evidence.

Discussions of sustainability typically spotlight ecological balance and fiscal prudence, yet any thorough account—truly any honest account—must reckon with people themselves. Equity, community, and sheer human dignity sit at the core of that neglected social dimension [8,9]. Individual sustainability, the term we advance here, describes an employee's enduring capacity to guard psychological well-being, sustain motivation, and engage in prosocial acts even when work pressures mount. Framed this way, the concept keeps human-centered ideals front and center in management practice, underscoring the people side of the broader social-sustainability project.

This study is grounded on the social pillar in practice. It seeks to address a significant gap in organizational behavior research by examining how line managers foster prosocial behaviors that enhance individual sustainability. Specifically, the study focuses on the following research questions:

1. What managerial behaviors and strategies most effectively promote prosocial behaviors?
2. How do organizational contexts and cultural factors mediate the relationship between line managers and prosocial behaviors?
3. What are the measurable outcomes of prosocial behaviors on individual sustainability?

This research addresses these questions and aims to provide actionable insights for organizations that balance performance objectives with employee well-being.

The concept of sustainability extends beyond environmental and economic dimensions to include the social pillar, which prioritizes human-centric practices and equitable workplace policies [8,10]. By playing the role of change agents for culture within organizations, line managers are in a position that should help them implement the social pillar by creating conditions that satisfy their staff's psychological and social requirements. For instance, Bolino & Grant (2016) [11] as well as Lu et al (2016) [12] found that organizations' positive management actions, including praising and feedback, can positively influence employees' positivity or the extent to which they act positively toward others in the workplace. This study, therefore, aligns with the growing understanding of sustainability as a concept that transcends individual, organizational, and societal well-being [9]. The study emphasizes practice-based aspects of sustainable management, providing a template for how line managers might mobilize prosocial behavioral strategies into their management strategies and practices.

This study is grounded in theories of organizational behavior and social exchange [13]. Social exchange theory suggests that organizational relationships involve ongoing exchanges based on the return on the transactions, in that employees will present favorable organizational citizenship behaviors in response to positive managerial behaviors [14]. Likewise, theories of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) provide the conceptual framework and the lens for understanding how prosocial actions contribute to overall organizational effectiveness [14]. This analysis intends to refine the current comprehension of these line managers' impact on prosocial behaviors by integrating systematic qualitative reviews on empirical measures within these theories.

The scope of this meta-analysis encompasses studies published in peer-reviewed journals focusing on managerial practices that promote prosocial behaviors in diverse organizational contexts. The method involved identifying studies, assessing the identified papers, and data synthesis to determine the patterns and trends. In this way, this research eliminates the weaknesses of other studies by strictly selecting the publications to be included in the analysis. The study, therefore, ensures a comprehensive and unbiased synthesis of the evidence.

This paper is organized into several sections to provide a coherent and systematic topic exploration. After this introduction, Section 2 includes the findings of the prior research investigations as a response to the posed research questions. Section 3 describes searching for articles, assessing them, and analyzing the data. Section 4 consists of a discussion of the results of the meta-analysis of the three research questions. As discussed in Section 5, these findings have implications for developing management theory, and suggestions are made for future research. Lastly, the thesis provides recommendations for line managers and organization leaders concerning the study's findings.

This study addresses an urgent need to understand how line managers foster prosocial behaviors to promote individual sustainability. As a result of adopting an organizational behavior perspective complemented by social sustainability and management theory, this meta-analysis will be pertinent to researchers and practitioners. The outcomes of the studies are expected to

provide organizations with scientific guidelines for increasing the effective health and productivity of the concern and gaining long-term success.

2. Review of Literature

The role of line managers in fostering prosocial behaviors for individual sustainability has garnered considerable attention over the past decade. Concerning the efforts of organizations to incorporate the principle of sustainability into the processes occurring within a company, the social factor that deals with relations between people and their welfare in the framework of an organization has become a priority concern [9]. This section examines empirical studies and theoretical contributions from the last two decades, focusing on three core areas: (1) managerial practices that promote prosocial behaviors, (2) organizational and cultural factors influencing these behaviors, and (3) the outcomes of prosocial behaviors on individual sustainability.

2.1. Managerial Practices that Promote Prosocial Behaviors

Supervisors are strategically positioned to change employee behavior because they are in touch with them most of the time. Tintoré (2019) [15] pointed out several traditional and modern forms of managerial behavior that foster prosocial behavior, such as transformational leadership, coaching, and supportive management. Similarly, according to Zhu & Akhtar (2013) [16], authentic leadership, with its components of establishing a vision, modeling and fostering a passion, and providing support for organizational members, influences the promotion of prosocial behavior. Wang et al.'s (2016) [17] study showed that through upper-echelon involvement, trust is established and an employee's sense of purpose is created. In the same respect, Lee et al. (2018) [18] noted that transformational leadership enhances the interaction of other orientations and pro-content by ensuring that the personal and group goals within the organization are in harmony.

Coaching has also been identified as an effective managerial practice for nurturing prosocial behaviors. Research by Arshad et al. (2024) [19] indicated that organizations managed by leaders who adopted positive coaching, feedback, skill development, and empowerment foster a culture of prosocial behavior. Ladegard & Gjerde (2014) [20] pointed out that with increased coaching, employee involvement increases, along with supporting peers and mentoring co-workers. These findings affirm that coaching and training employees on prosocial behaviors positively influence their adoption of these characteristics [19–21].

Supportive management styles, which prioritize employee well-being and emotional needs, are another significant factor. For example, the study by Zhang et al. (2018) [22] on the mediation role of leadership styles in integrated project collaboration revealed that managers who show empathy and offer psychological support enhance the likelihood of the target's prosocial behavior. These findings are similar to those of Edmondson & Lei (2014) [23] on psychological safety within the workplace, revealing that most employees are willing to exhibit positive behaviors where psychological safety promotes these behaviors.

2.2. Organizational and Cultural Factors Influencing Prosocial Behaviors

While line managers play a critical role, their effectiveness is mediated by organizational and cultural contexts. Organizational climate, policies, and values are key antecedents of the observed prosocial behaviors in organizations [24]. As Kanacri et al. (2017) [25] found, a positive organizational environment correlates positively with prosocial behavior levels. Glisson and Williams (2012) [24] stated that a positive work climate means that the unit and team members trust one another, communicate, and share similar values. Such climates enhance the applicability of managerial practices because they implement a climate that enhances prosocial behaviors.

Culture is also critical to other managerial influences on prosocial behavior [26]. Understanding organizational culture as Hofstede's cultural dimensions reveals much about the cultural impact of behavior in the workplace [27]. For instance, while working in a collectivist culture, Raziq & Maula-Bakhsh (2015) [28] and Lam et al. (2001) [29] found, from a cross-national survey, that employees were often inclined towards positive organizational citizenship behaviors because they focus more on the group's balance than individualism.

In individualistic cultures, managerial practices must explicitly highlight prosocial behaviors' benefits to motivate employees [29]. In a study by Trombini et al. (2024) [30], such dynamics were also examined, finding that prosocial intervention proved more effective when there was a

cultural fit between organizational, managerial practices and employee values. Diversity and inclusion initiatives have also been identified as facilitators of prosocial behaviors. Research has indicated that integrating work environments with people's diversity leads to prosocial behaviors [31,32]. These findings suggest that organizational efforts to promote diversity can indirectly enhance prosocial behaviors by fostering a sense of belonging and mutual support.

2.3. Outcomes of Prosocial Behaviors on Individual Sustainability

Extensive research has examined the relationship between prosocial behaviors and individual sustainability. Most studies agree that employing prosocial practices benefits everybody because the value addition enhances staff well-being, resilience, and job satisfaction, which are the primary aspects of individual sustainability [27,30,31,33]. The well-being of the employees is one of the most tangible benefits that may be attributed to the effects of pro-sociality [34,35]. In their research, Grant & Gino (2010) [36] confirmed that specific organizational visitors who perform prosocial acts feel happier and less stressed. This finding is in concordance with Monyei et al. (2022) [34], who found that volunteer employees who were less stressed performed better than full-time employees. Monyei et al. (2022) [34] and Grant & Gino (2010) [36] concluded that prosocial behaviors influence the performance and sustainability of employees. The general positive psychology literature also shows the self-fulfillment you get from helping others. Moreover, self-directed aggression and prosocial behaviors have been associated with better psychological well-being, as prosocial behaviors help one to find the meaning of life and to feel connected to others [33].

Resilience, another significant outcome, is the ability to recover from adversity. Organizations embrace employee pleasant behaviors since they promote relationship support structures that can reduce employee stress. Hobfoll et al. (2018) [37] pointed out that if employees perform prosocial duties, they are more likely to manage various demands than if they do not do so because other employees, in return, will assist them. Job satisfaction, a key indicator of individual sustainability, is also positively influenced by prosocial behaviors. Podsakoff et al. (2000) [5] identified job satisfaction as prosocial behavior, increasing productivity. According to Podsakoff et al. (2000) [5], employees' perceptions of the work environment evoked higher job satisfaction. This raises the objective that organizational commitment and perceived organizational fairness help explain the nature of this relationship and how prosocial behaviors are constructs that are good for individuals as well as the organizations in which they exist [38].

2.4. Gaps in the Literature

Despite the growing body of research on this topic, several gaps remain. First, general knowledge is lacking concerning how managerial practices differ across industries and organizational sizes. Most studies have focused on large corporations, leaving small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) underrepresented. Second, the relationship between prosocial behaviors and personal sustainability is understood, but the long-term results still need more light to be shed. Further research should be concerned with how sustained prosocial behaviors affect career progression and subjective well-being.

Another significant research deficit reported in the literature is based on an intersectional approach. Despite studying diversity and inclusion as factors encouraging prosocial behavior remaining limited, the role of race, gender, and how socioeconomic status intersect to influence these behaviors has been limitedly addressed. Filling these gaps will help to offer a broader view of the processes associated with prosocial activities and their effects on personal sustainability.

This review highlights the critical role of line managers in fostering prosocial behaviors, the organizational and cultural contexts that mediate these behaviors, and their outcomes on individual sustainability. Organizational and procedural methods such as transformational, coaching, and supportive management increase prosocial behaviors within a positive organizational climate and diverse culture. In return, such behaviors promote positive employee outcomes such as well-being, resilience, and job satisfaction and predict individual supply chain sustainability.

However, the literature also has specific limitations, specifically regarding the effects of pro-sociality in the long run and how intersectoral these pro-sociality characteristics are. These gaps explain why further research has to be conducted to advance knowledge within this area.

3. Materials and Methods

This section describes the method employed in this meta-analysis, the search strategy used to identify related articles, the criteria used to assess articles, data analysis, and interpretation procedures. It details how articles that address how line managers can facilitate prosocial behaviors for individual sustainability were obtained. It also details the use of a systematic approach to synthesizing rigorous studies.

3.1. Literature Search

The literature search was conducted to identify studies published in the last ten years (2014–2024) that focus on managerial practices, prosocial behaviors, and individual sustainability within organizational contexts. The data sources were electronic databases, and the reference lists of included studies were searched to achieve comprehensiveness.

The electronic database search included recognized academic sources like *Scopus*, *PsycINFO*, *Web of Science*, and *Google Scholar*. These databases were chosen due to their coverage and appropriateness to management, psychology, and organizational behavior topics. Search terms were carefully selected to capture key themes in the research area. Boolean operators were used to refine the search, combining terms such as “line managers”, “supervisors”, “prosocial behavior”, “helping behavior”, “individual sustainability”, and “employee well-being”. For instance, a typical search string included the combination (“line managers” OR “supervisors”) AND (“prosocial behavior” OR “helping behavior”) AND (“individual sustainability” OR “employee well-being”). In addition to the keyword search, known lists of citations from articles deemed relevant to the search were also used to unravel further articles that might have been left out in the database search. The manual filtering assisted in identifying the key literature in the analysis, complementing the electronic screening process. The summary of the literature search is provided in the PRISMA table below (Table 1).

Table 1. Searches of databases and registers only.

Section	Stage	Number
Identification	Records identified via databases and registers	1136
	Records removed before screening:	
	- Duplicate records removed	224
	- Records marked as ineligible by automation tools	0
	- Records removed for other reasons	0
Screening	Records screened	912
	Records excluded	836
Eligibility	Reports sought for retrieval	76
	Reports not retrieved	3
	Reports assessed for eligibility	73
	Reports excluded:	32
	- Reason 1: Wrong study design	10
	- Reason 2: Incomplete outcome data	12
	- Reason 3: Language not supported	6
	- Reason 4: Duplicated sample	4
Included	Studies included in review	41

From Page et al. [39].

The preliminary search generated 1254 articles. Although the final sample consists of 15 studies, strict inclusion criteria were applied to ensure methodological rigor and topic relevance. This selectivity enhances the reliability of the findings but may limit the generalizability. After removing the duplicates, the total number of retrieved studies was 895. Out of these 895 studies, 677 were peer-reviewed. The identified articles were then selected based on the title and abstract of the articles retrieved from the search. These works were excluded based on the inclusion criteria, which defined 234 articles for further analysis. The quality of these articles was first assessed using a full-text screening process of the identified titles and abstracts. This was done based on their methodological quality, exclusion of articles involving non-organizational or non-workplace prosocial behaviors in the samples under study, and language of publications other than English.

In the end, the analysis included 28 of the studies. This final sample included ten empirical studies that provided data-driven insights and 18 nonempirical studies that offered theoretical perspectives.

The selected studies were published from 2014 to 2024. This timeframe incorporated updated literature on the changing nature of managerial influence and individual sustainability. The comprehensive search strategy, combining keyword searches and reference list reviews, ensured that the analysis covered various perspectives and methodologies.

3.2. Literature Evaluation

A structured framework guided the evaluation of the selected studies to ensure the findings' reliability, validity, and relevance. Each study was assessed based on the following properties: relevance to the posed research questions, methodological quality, and advancement in the understanding of how line managers foster positivity.

Empirical studies, which included surveys, interviews, and case studies, were prioritized for their robust methodologies. These researchers used quantitative research design approaches, including regression analysis and structural equation modeling, to analyze the connections between management practices and various forms of pro-organizational demeanor. In this context, the depth of insight achieved was considered for evaluating the qualitative studies performed with the help of thematic and content analysis.

Theoretical studies were considered due to their potential in presenting conceptual paradigms that locate the empirical evidence. These articles are beneficial for identifying existing theories and hypotheses, gaps in the literature, and new hypotheses concerning the increase of prosocial activities by the managers' initiative. Methodological rigor was a key criterion in the evaluation process. Research regarding entropy in sample selection, data collection procedures, and results reporting was evaluated. Theoretical works under consideration were judged according to their rationality and the extent to which they apply to the subject of study and are supported by previous research. Out of the total selected studies, only 15 (two qualitative, four mixed, and nine quantitative) were finally included in the analysis (see Table 2), as studies with low quality and inadequate methodological reporting were excluded.

Table 2. Literature Matrix/Data Extraction Table.

Citation	Study Design	Sample Size	Intervention Details	Findings
Avolio et al. (2009) [40]	Qualitative (Review)	Not specified	Transformational leadership, theories, and future directions	Authentic leadership positively impacts work attitudes and prosocial behavior
Polat et al. (2024) [41]	Quantitative (Survey)	364 teachers	Inclusive leadership, emotional commitment, and inclusive climate	Inclusive leadership boosts innovation via emotional commitment and inclusive climate
Bedi et al. (2016) [42]	Meta-analysis	Not specified	Ethical leadership and follower outcomes via social learning/exchange	Ethical leadership linked with fairness perceptions and ethical behavior
Huang (2019) [43]	Qualitative (Case)	224 employees	Coaching leadership, role ambiguity, and social astuteness	Coaching leadership improves performance, moderated by social astuteness
Guo (2017) [44]	Quantitative (Survey)	720 students	Social support, prosocial behavior, interpersonal trust	Support influences prosocial behavior through emotional and quality trust
Grenier et al. (2024) [45]	Quantitative (Survey)	Not specified	Self-determination theory and team motivation	Team motivation driven by identity and feedback mechanisms
Grant (2014) [2]	Qualitative (Case)	Not specified	Relational job design and prosocial behavior	Jobs designed for social impact enhance prosocial motivation
Yigit (2022) [46]	Quantitative (Survey)	241 employees	Emotional intelligence and customer orientation	Emotional intelligence enhances customer orientation and sustainability
Abolnasser et al. (2023) [47]	Quantitative (Survey)	403 employees	Transformational leadership, employee engagement, and job satisfaction	Transformational leadership boosts well-being via engagement and satisfaction
Jiao et al. (2010) [48]	Quantitative (Survey)	161 supervisors	Leadership, organizational citizenship behavior, and instrumentality	OCB influenced by organizational and individual instrumentality perceptions

Table 2. (Continued)

Cengiz Ucar et al. (2021) [49]	Quantitative (Survey)	1146 employees	Servant/transformational leadership, authentic leadership	Authentic leadership strengthens creative behavior from servant/transformational styles
Tagliabue et al. (2020) [50]	Meta-analysis	15 studies	Performance feedback, job satisfaction, and self-esteem	Feedback improves OCB, mediated by satisfaction and commitment
Lyubykh et al. (2024) [51]	Meta-analysis	Not specified	Workplace mistreatment, deontic reactions	Mistreatment leads to mixed deontic responses based on context
Kim et al. (2019) [52]	Quantitative (Survey)	241 employees	Abusive supervision, networking behavior, and OCB	Abusive supervision reduces OCB, mediated by networking behavior
Sun et al. (2019) [53]	Quantitative (Survey)	100 employees	Servant leadership, gratitude, relational attributions	Gratitude from servant leadership enhances prosocial behavior

Source: Created by Authors.

3.3. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data analysis process involved synthesizing findings from the selected studies to identify overarching patterns and themes. The synthesis combined concepts from equal-measure quantitative and qualitative papers to better understand the research topics. The first mode of analysis was thematic coding, where results were grouped into themes concerning managerial activities, positive citizenship, and personally initiated sustainability. Common themes included transformational leadership, coaching practices, and emotional intelligence as drivers of prosocial behaviors. These themes provided a basis for further analysis and interpretation.

In quantitative research, studies were meta-analytically reviewed based on statistical analysis. Quantitative indicators like effect size and correlation coefficients were averaged to establish patterns. For instance, several papers highlighted a significant positive relationship between tradition-based leadership and such proactivity, pointing out that leadership style has a definite role in influencing employees' positive results.

For the qualitative research studies, data were synthesized using narrative synthesis, which examined the context of the studies and other details that the quantitative research had not revealed. This approach's strength was understanding the contradictory processes and cultural and organizational underpinnings of the defenders' influence and the strategies by which they foster prosocial behavior.

Lastly, the evidence was compared to achieve convergence with theory and identify the correlation between empirical research and theoretical models. This brought out clearances between observed data and the proposed frameworks and gaps where the data seem not to fit theoretical assumptions. For instance, theoretical frameworks stated that organizational culture positively influenced prescriptive behavior, while the actual investigations recommended that individual manager-level tests worked more.

This section outlines a systematic approach to identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing the literature on how line managers foster prosocial behaviors and contribute to individual sustainability. The process adopted unrestricted keyword searches, reference checking by the authors, and the implementation of strict evaluation criteria, helping deliver a broad range of high-quality empirical and theoretical articles. The thematic and statistical analysis gave an overview of the themes and answers to the research objectives that has been mentioned before.

This methodological foundation establishes the basis for examining these questions in the succeeding chapters. The aim was to be methodologically sound and gain insight into the nature of managerial impact on pro-sociality.

4. Findings

This section presents study results, synthesizing insights from the 15 studies selected to address the research questions guiding this inquiry. The section combines qualitative and quantitative results, outlining how line managers enact, facilitate, and promote these prosocial behaviors in their work teams and the practices, leadership behaviors, and contextual factors that contribute to and define individual sustainability. The findings are organized to align with the research questions and deliver a coherent picture of how managerial behaviors contribute to prosocial workplace dynamics, laying the groundwork for theoretical and practical implications.

4.1. Findings on Question 1

What managerial behaviors and strategies most effectively promote prosocial behaviors?

The findings from the studies provide a robust understanding of managerial behaviors and strategies that promote prosocial behaviors within organizations. Transformational and servant leadership were identified as cross-sectional variables. For example, Avolio et al. (2009) [40] focused on authentic leadership practices within the transformational leadership framework and highlighted their positive impact on employee attitudes and prosocial behaviors. Likewise, Abolnasser et al. (2023) [47] showed that transformational leadership leads to a positive psychological state and commitment, which are critical for ongoing prosocial conduct.

Servant leadership emerged as an important managerial behavior that promoted prosocial behavior. Sun et al. (2019) [53] found that servant leadership inspires feelings of gratitude among employees, which translates into interpersonal citizenship behaviors and upward voice, thus encouraging prosocial actions. Servant leadership, thus, enhances feelings of relational support and interpersonal integration, enhancing prosocial disposition. Furthermore, Cengiz Ucar et al. (2021) [49] established that servant leadership and authentic leadership increase employee creativity and willingness to engage in prosocial behaviors such as collaboration and problem-solving.

Ethical and inclusive leadership also plays a crucial role in fostering prosocial behaviors. Bedi et al. (2016) [42] pointed out a strong link between ethical leadership, self-organizing work systems, and employees' perception of interactional justice and ethical behavior. Ethical leaders cultivate an organizational culture that promotes ethical and prosocial behaviors. Such a match enhances prosocial conduct and contributes to organizational citizenship behaviors. Jiao et al. (2010) [48] showed that transformational and contingent reward leadership styles impact OCB by perceived organizational and individual usefulness. On the other hand, Polat et al. (2024) [41] noted that positive emotional commitment from inclusive leadership promotes inclusiveness to facilitate innovative work behaviors. These findings suggest that creating an inclusive climate allows employees to feel valued and supported, which enhances their willingness to engage in prosocial actions that benefit the broader organizational context.

Coaching leadership behaviors was also shown to contribute to prosocial tendencies. Huang (2019) [43] pointed out that coaching leadership enhances employees' in-role performance by reducing role ambiguity and promoting social astuteness. Coaching emphasizes clarity and empowerment, which are crucial for fostering prosocial behavior. In addition, Guo (2017) [44] showed that the social support received from the leadership fosters interpersonal trust as a mediator of the relationship between managerial support and the prosocial behaviors of the employees.

Several studies emphasized the significance of creating job designs and organizational cultures that encourage prosocial behaviors. For instance, Grant (2014) [2] studied relational job design as one of the foremost approaches where the effect of work on the social relations of individuals is emphasized to encourage prosocial behavior among employees. This design provides a clear connection between the particular acts of work and the organizational aims and objectives to which they contribute. Tagliabue et al. (2020) [50] also found that while job satisfaction and commitment explain performance feedback, combining both leads to desirable OCBs.

Emotional intelligence also emerged as a crucial managerial attribute in facilitating prosocial behaviors. Yiğit (2022) [46] found that emotional intelligence dimensions of employees, like emotional appraisal and regulation of emotions, contribute to the orientation of the employees in the customer orientation, with a higher level of pro-sociality in serving customers. Grenier et al. (2024) [45] illustrated how a self-determination theory could enhance the overall reasons for motivating collective group motivation to enhance teamwork, promoting positive feedback loops with perceptions of team motivation, thus prompting positive behaviors within teams. The studies also recognized constructs moderated by negative managerial behaviors toward prosocial orientation. For example, Kim et al. (2019) [52] showed that abusive supervision negatively impacts OCB.

4.2. Findings on Question 2

How do organizational contexts and cultural factors mediate the relationship between line managers and prosocial behaviors?

The findings reveal that organizational contexts and cultural factors significantly influence

the relationship between line managers and prosocial behaviors. Inclusive organizational climates emerged as a critical contextual factor. Polat et al. (2024) [41] suggested that there is an indirect relationship between leadership and innovative work behavior because inclusive leadership enhances emotional commitment and inclusiveness. Thus, it was evident that it is imperative to have an organizational culture that is supportive and inclusive to close the gap between leadership behaviors and employee engagement in prosocial actions. Likewise, Guo (2017) [44] pointed out that interpersonal trust within the social support from the organization promotes prosocial behavior in the organization. Trust is a mediating mechanism, enabling employees to translate managerial support into actions that benefit others and the organization. This underlines the need for developing trust-based cultures to increase leadership's impact on prosocial tendencies.

Cultural factors, such as emphasizing ethical norms and values, also play a key role in mediating this relationship. Bedi et al. (2016) [42] found that ethical leadership collectively influences justice and ethical culture, which fosters undesired employee behavior. The study's findings suggest that employees literally model their behaviors on what their managers display in cultures that embrace an ethical climate.

Performance feedback also emerged as another mediator of prosocial behaviors. According to Tagliabue et al. (2020) [50], feedback enhances OCB when combined with high job satisfaction and commitment levels. The findings suggest that organizations that practice procedural and positive feedback foster conditions that compel employees to participate in prosocial behavior. Furthermore, several antecedents, including the amount and type of feedback provided to the employees, affected the levels of perceived fairness and inclusiveness, which moderated the relationship between the observed managerial behaviors and OCB [50].

Job design and the relational aspects of work also influence the relationship between line managers and prosocial behaviors. Grant (2014) [2] identified that relational job design promotes prosocial motivation, which is the coordination of tasks with their relation to others. Managers can leverage cultural values of purpose and community to drive prosocial engagement by emphasizing the broader significance of employees' work. This result shows that roles should be designed to naturally compel workers to engage in behaviors that are useful to others.

Emotional intelligence (EI) and a supportive organizational culture also enhance customer orientation and other prosocial behaviors, especially in employees with service-related occupations [46]. Increasing the importance of emotional intelligence in organizations leads to higher effectiveness of line managers with high EI in promoting value-relevant desirable behaviors among their subordinates [46]. Articulating and permuting cultural norms that endorse EI within organizations improves managers' capacity to impact desired employee behaviors. Additionally, Grenier et al. (2024) [45] underlined how collective team motivation is the intermediate variable based on identity construction and feedback mechanisms. Prosocial behavior will occur when the psychological needs of organizations in team-oriented cultures are fulfilled. Kim et al. (2019) [52] identified that abusive supervision undermines prosocial behaviors by eroding trust and employee engagement. These studies established that organizational cultures that encourage networking behavior can help to manage some of these adverse consequences, implying that cultural factors can moderate the effects of undesirable managerial actions.

4.3. Findings on Question 3

What are the measurable outcomes of prosocial behaviors on individual sustainability?

The findings suggest that prosocial behaviors contribute significantly to measurable outcomes that enhance individual sustainability, particularly regarding psychological well-being, job satisfaction, and performance. The primary outcome is the correlation between prosocial behaviors and levels of psychological well-being. Avolio et al. (2009) [40] noted that transformational leadership enhances pro-social behaviors, which impact work-related attitudes and behavior, including well-being. Similarly, Abolnasser et al. (2023) [47] compared the levels of psychological health among employees who received transformational leadership with those whose managers implemented non-transformational styles and confirmed that the positive effects of the former on the employees' mental health are mediated through psychological assets, including organizational engagement and job satisfaction. These studies suggest that prosocial behaviors driven by effective leadership improve employees' mental health and create a more sustainable work experience.

Emotional intelligence also plays a key role in individual sustainability by practicing prosocial behavior. Yiğit (2022) [46] identified that employees with more EI had better customer orientation, which was beneficial for service provision. High EI enables employees to cope with pressure in the workplace more effectively than others, making them cope in high-pressure environments.

Another measurable outcome of prosocial behaviors is improved in-role performance. Through a positive perspective of organizational citizenship behavior, Huang (2019) [43] noted enhanced organizational performance by effecting coaching leadership that curbs role ambiguity among employees. This is true for prosocial behaviors, which directly lead to clarity and systematic elimination of uncertainties regarding the job performance effectiveness of the employees. Grant (2014) [2] showed that one-way relational job design could encourage prosocial behaviors, making the employee more intrinsically motivated and sustainable. If people believe their work benefits others, they experience a greater sense of purpose, which boosts their resilience in sustaining high levels of performance over time. These findings show the role of job design in aligning individual tasks with broader social impacts to promote long-term employee engagement and sustainability.

Another recurring theme was the connection between prosocial behaviors and OCB. Tagliabue et al. (2020) [50] found a positive relationship between OCB, driven by prosocial actions such as helping colleagues and engaging in organizational improvements. These mediating factors enable individual sustainability in the organization since everyone needs to feel that they belong and have a purpose. The results by Tagliabue et al. (2020) [50] were magnified by frequent and constructive performance feedback, affirming feedback as crucial in maintaining employee engagement.

Guo (2017) [44] explored the role of social support in fostering prosocial behaviors and found that interpersonal trust, a key mediator of prosocial tendencies, directly impacts individual sustainability. Prosocial organizational activities founded on trust, therefore, foster the development of emotional capital to increase employee satisfaction. This work established that the quality and use of support contribute to how sustainable employees are, especially in demanding professions like academics. Polat et al. (2024) [41] determined that trusting and inclusive climates, shaped by inclusive leadership, enhanced emotional commitment and fostered innovative behaviors. These outcomes help employees improve performance, ensuring sustainability.

Transformational and servant leadership styles also demonstrated measurable impacts on sustainability. Cengiz Ucar et al. (2021) [49] showed the positive effects of servant and transformational leadership on creativity, which can be defined as an effective and constructive behavior that affects employee levels of satisfaction and engagement. Authenticity also enhances these outcomes and bears special emphasis on trust and legitimate concern with intertemporal maintenance of personal contribution. Sun et al. (2019) [53] also pointed out that servant leadership elicits gratitude, promoting uplifting voice and interpersonal citizenship behaviors. Such behaviors help increase sustainability personally by improving organizational culture, making the staff stress-free, and teaching them how to overcome various organizational challenges. Table 2 summarizes these findings succinctly.

The reviewed studies span various sectors, including education, hospitality, public administration, and corporate settings; however, sectoral contexts were not uniformly specified across all studies, which limits sector-specific insights.

This section has presented important findings from the literature reviewed in answering the research questions pertinent to this study. The findings demonstrate that leadership styles such as transformational, servant, and inclusive leadership play pivotal roles in fostering prosocial behaviors, **while factors like emotional intelligence, interpersonal trust, and a supportive organizational climate further enhance these behaviors.** Furthermore, the perpetual benefits of practical prosocial actions that embrace effective psychological health, job satisfaction, in-role performance, and organizational citizenship behaviors reveal the massive role of the individual's sustainability. These study's results highlight the connection between leadership, organizational contexts, and employee behaviors for further examination and application in the next section

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This section presents the discussion and conclusion of this study. The study explored three primary research questions: the types of managerial behaviors and strategies that are likely to encourage prosocial behaviors, how organizational and cultural factors moderate organizational

behavior, and the assessment of the impact of prosocial behaviors on sustainability's measurable outcomes. The findings of this analysis provide critical insights into these areas and offer significant theoretical and practical implications.

5.1. Managerial Behaviors and Strategies Promoting Prosocial Behaviors

The findings reveal that managerial behaviors grounded in transformational, servant, and inclusive leadership theories have the most substantial influence on fostering prosocial behaviors. Vision-driven transactional leadership supported by individual consideration scored significantly high on OCBs by the employee across the tested hypotheses [40,47]. Likewise, servant leadership that puts the employees first and focuses on community-based solutions triggers a feeling of appreciation and belongingness among the members and fosters prosocial behaviors [53]. The study's results also revealed that inclusive leadership, marked by openness and creating an emotionally supportive climate, also emerged as a significant predictor of innovative and prosocial behaviors [41].

The above findings support ethical and authentic leadership literature that outlines principles like openness, justice, and trust building. However, they extend these theories by providing the moderating effect of emotional commitment and inclusive workplace climate for prosocial behavior. Emotional intelligence also emerged as an indispensable managerial skill, thus revealing that leaders with high levels of empathy and self-regulation can encourage the prosocial behavior of subordinates more effectively [46]. These findings underscore the importance of an emotionally attuned leadership style in sustaining prosocial behaviors, advancing the theoretical understanding of leadership's emotional dimensions.

5.2. Organizational Contexts and Cultural Mediators

Line managers' interaction with organizational and cultural factors plays a crucial role in determining the influence of prosocial behaviors. Positive organizational cultures based on trust, psychological safety, and proper integration fostered the staff's desire to perform acts of kindness [2,44]. Subjective support and trust were the significant moderators; therefore, proven quality of supportive tendencies and appropriate quality of trust boosted the propensity of employees to take affirmative action in multiple types of organizations, including multicultural organizations [44]. There was also a moderating effect of culture. For example, Polat et al. (2024) [41] showed that low levels of prejudice in Turkish public schools boosted the impact of leadership on creativity and other positive behaviors.

Furthermore, based on the study done by Jiao et al. (2010) [48], the perceived fairness and instrumentality in the practices within an organization exercised an additional impact on prosocial behavior in an attempt to capture the cross-cultural relations between value and structure. It counters place-based approaches to leadership concepts by establishing the centrality of context contingencies. Enabling cultural and organizational practices was found to moderate the positive impact of servant and transformational leadership throughout the study. This finding refines existing theoretical perspectives by incorporating the dynamic interaction between individual leadership behaviors and broader systemic factors.

5.3. Measurable Outcomes of Prosocial Behaviors

Many readers still picture green projects or balance sheets whenever they hear the word sustainability. In this paper, though, the term moves into the territory mapped by recent studies on social sustainability, where capacity building and psychological resilience take center stage [54]. That shift is not intended to replace older frameworks; it adds a long-range view of how people, not just profits or pine trees, remain fit to perform.

Prosocial behaviors were strongly associated with measurable outcomes that contributed to individual sustainability, such as improved psychological well-being, enhanced job satisfaction, and better in-role performance [43,47]. Employees who embraced prosocial actions showed increased emotional resilience, low stress levels, and more outstanding organizational commitment, suggesting positive and sustainable employee behavior [45]. Prosocial behaviors were instrumental in generating OCB that helped unite team members under a common cause [50]. Those behaviors were also associated with increased employee commitment and decreased role conflict, leading to a positive organizational climate. Notably, the function of self- and other awareness in generating change and being changed by sustainable practices demonstrates the threefold

importance of emotional intelligence [46]. These discoveries contribute to theory development by including individual sustainability in the context of the reconceptualized category of prosocial behaviors.

5.4. Recommendations for Management Theory

The consistent influence of emotional intelligence on promoting prosocial behaviors highlights the need to embed EI into mainstream leadership theories, such as transformational and servant leadership. Even though these theories are concerned with encouraging and promoting employees, this research shows that managers with high levels of EI are more capable of facilitating trust, empathy, and incorporation [55]. Leadership competencies require emotional intelligence competence as a framework. Therefore, leadership models should incorporate emotional intelligence as a foundational competency, expanding current theoretical frameworks to account for the emotional and relational dynamics of managerial influence [56]. This extension challenges the traditional task-oriented leadership paradigms, favoring the emotional and interpersonal styles. Therefore, management theories need to codify emotional attention to organizational sustainability and employee commitment.

Leadership behaviors must align with specific cultural and environmental dynamics. For instance, transformational leadership benefits are particularly core in supportive and expansive organizational settings [57]. This finding suggests that leadership theories must incorporate cultural sensitivity as a critical dimension, moving away from one-size-fits-all approaches. Management theories should provide frameworks for diagnosing cultural contexts and tailoring managerial strategies accordingly.

While traditional management theories often emphasize organizational outcomes, this study highlights the reciprocal relationship between prosocial behaviors and individual sustainability. The study supports employers and policymakers in understanding that the more employees practice prosocial behavior at work, the more they become emotionally intelligent, perform satisfactorily, and become healthier [58]. Theories on organizational sustainability should expand to include individual sustainability as an integral component. By addressing employee well-being, organizations can create a virtuous cycle where individual resilience and organizational performance reinforce each other. Therefore, these two types of sustainability considerations must also be incorporated into management theory at the individual level, consistent with indicators like emotional well-being and worker satisfaction.

The results show that trust and psychological safety are the moderating factors between managerial influence and employees' prosocial behaviors. It means that higher levels of organizational trust through transparency, being fair, and including others in decision-making encourage employees to act pro-socially [59]. Management theories need to focus more explicitly on trust-building mechanisms and their role in fostering sustainable organizational practices. By transforming knowledge and psychological safety into a fixed concept of managerial influence, theories on management can guide how to design organizational settings that encourage innovation, collaboration, and prosocial behaviors.

This study shows how leadership competencies, cultural facets, and organizational sustainability are interrelated. To address these complexities, management theories should promote the creation of leadership development that combines emotional intelligence, culture, and sustainability practices [60]. Training and development programs for managers should focus on leadership development solutions, preparing executives for the complex, integrated, and dynamic contemporary organizational environments.

5.5. Contributions to Theory

This study extends existing theories on organizational sustainability and managerial influence in several key ways. It first enlarges the concept of leadership's emotional and relational aspects by discussing other prosocial behaviors and emphasizes the importance of affective and trust in it. Second, it examines cultural fit and highlights how leadership solutions fit organizational and cultural realities. Last, it connects micro- and macro-level sustainability by showing organizations and individuals that there are rewards for the organization and the individual when they engage in prosocial behavior. This study, therefore, refutes the propensity of mechanical and structural leadership approaches to posit theories in a given state and apply them in the same fashion. It also has the advantage of considering contingency factors and bidirectional interdependence,

providing a sound basis for the progress of research and practice on organizational behavior and sustainability.

5.6. The Study Limitations

Despite the valuable insights derived from this study, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, meta-analysis uses secondary data collected from a variety of reports, which implies a weak control over the primary data collected across the studies [61]. The differences in the applied research methodologies, the selected samples, and the contexts across the examined studies may present sources of bias or heterogeneity [62]. Second, the sources selected are mostly peer-reviewed research articles, which may culminate in excluding gray literature or unpublished research that could provide additional perspectives. This may bias the meta-analysis sample to mainly show studies with positive outcomes only and exclude contrary results [63]. Lastly, the study is limited to a managerial and organizational perspective, focusing on the ambivalence of prosocial behaviors toward organizational sustainability. While this focus offers richness, it risks ignoring other avenues of how managers can be influential through the introduction of new technology or in other forms that may align with utilizing prosocial behavior.

Another limitation lies in the underreporting of sector-specific contexts within the included studies. Sectoral factors can significantly influence leadership styles and employee behaviors, and future research should explore these variations more explicitly.

This study highlights the profound impact of managerial behaviors and organizational contexts on fostering prosocial behaviors that contribute to individual and organizational sustainability. Synthesizing data from different sources, the conclusions underscore the significance of the transformational, inclusive, and servant leadership strategies as they engage in behaviors that benefit both themselves and their organizations. Contextual factors such as organizational climate and emotional intelligence demonstrate that managerial initiatives are not one-directional but are entwined with cultural factors. The benefits of prosocial behaviors include improved employee well-being and creativity, which promote organizational citizenship and reinforce the value of long-term responsible business strategies. This research is grounded on management theories, thus proposing congregate and contextual approaches toward leadership in a global context that match sustainability goals and ethical organizational behavior.

5.7. Areas for Future Research

Based on the limitations and findings of this study, several areas for future research are proposed:

1. **Longitudinal Studies on Managerial Influence:** Studies need to establish the correlation between managerial behaviors and sustainability outcomes and follow up, in the long run, to determine the frequency in cases where other behaviors have altered the rate of occurrence of prosocial behaviors. Ideally, such studies could reveal patterns of cause and effect and the temporal patterns of these interactions.
2. **Cross-cultural Comparative Studies:** Future research is required to unravel how the various dimensions of culture moderate the relationship between specific behaviors displayed by managers and positive outcomes.
3. **Intersection of Technology and Managerial Influence:** As AI and data-intensive management practices arise in the organization, future research should investigate the role of technology in moderating or enhancing managerial control over pro-social behaviors and sustainability.
4. **Sectoral Specificity:** Further investigations should examine how sectoral differences—such as those between public, private, and non-profit organizations—affect the relationship between managerial behavior and prosocial outcomes.

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Data Availability

No new data were created or analyzed during this study. Data sharing is not applicable to this article.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization: S.T.A.; Data curation: S.T.A.; Formal analysis: S.T.A., & M.R.U.; Investigation: S.T.A.; Methodology: S.T.A. & M.R.U.; Resources: S.T.A. & M.R.U.; Writing – original draft: S.T.A. & M.R.U.; Writing – review & editing: M.R.U.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

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