



## A Meta-Analysis Study: The Relationship between Servant Leadership and Organizational Citizenship Behavior

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### ABSTRACT

**Introduction/Main Objectives:** This study examined the relationship between *servant leadership* and *organizational citizenship behavior* using a meta-analytic approach. The topic is essential because *servant leadership* emphasizes ethical conduct, empathy, and individual development contributing to organizational effectiveness. **Background Problems:** Previous studies have reported inconsistent findings regarding the influence of *servant leadership* on *organizational citizenship behavior* across various cultural and organizational contexts. This study examined the central question: *To what extent is the relationship between servant leadership and organizational citizenship behavior consistent and significant within Asian organizational contexts?* **Novelty:** This research synthesized 22 quantitative studies conducted across Asia, published from 2015 to 2024, making it the first regional meta-analysis to systematically explore the servant leadership and *organizational citizenship behavior* relationship. Prior research has been fragmented and dominated by Western perspectives, limiting comprehensive insights into collectivist Asian cultures. **Research Methods:** A meta-analysis was conducted using data from 6,023 participants. Statistical procedures, including effect size calculation ( $r$ ), Fisher's Z transformation, heterogeneity testing, and publication bias assessment, were conducted using JAMOVI version 2.6.26. **Finding/Results:** The results indicate a significant and positive correlation between servant leadership and *organizational citizenship behavior* ( $r = 0.359$ , 95% CI [0.274, 0.443]), demonstrating that a higher level of servant leadership is associated with stronger extra-role behaviors among employees. No evidence of publication bias was identified. **Conclusion:** *Servant leadership* plays a critical role in fostering extra-role behaviors among employees in Asian organizations. These findings underscore the importance of cultivating servant leadership practices to enhance collaboration, empathy, and sustainable organizational performance.

## 1. Introduction

Human resource management has increasingly emerged as a global strategic issue, one of which concerns extra-role behavior within organizations, commonly referred to as organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) (Bateman & Organ, 1983). According to Organ (1988), organizational citizenship behavior is an individual behavior that is indirectly recognized by the formal reward system and contributes to enhancing the organization's efficiency. Furthermore, organizational citizenship behavior reflects employee behavior that improves the efficiency and effectiveness of organizational performance without interfering with individual task performance (Organ, 1988).

A substantial body of research on organizational citizenship behavior has accumulated to date, highlighting its relevance in continued scholarly discussion. Organizational citizenship behavior has been shown to positively influence organizational performance (Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1997) and shape the organizational climate (Tagliabue et al., 2020), indicating that strong extra-role behavior contributes to enhanced performance and a healthier organizational environment. Additionally, organizational citizenship behavior is associated with higher job satisfaction (Biswas & Mazumder, 2017) and lower turnover intentions (Shareef & Atan, 2019). Organizational citizenship behavior also correlates with emotional intelligence, as employees who demonstrate higher levels of organizational citizenship behavior tend to exhibit stronger emotional intelligence (Turnipseed, 2018).

By prioritizing employee well-being, organizations foster greater commitment, optimal performance, and enhanced job satisfaction. Employees tend to exert extra effort and deliver performance beyond expectations when they work in a supportive and comfortable environment (Biswas &

Mazumder, 2017). Such behavior improves overall organizational effectiveness. According to Zhang et al. (2019), collaborative efforts by employees in accomplishing organizational objectives contribute meaningfully to these positive outcomes.

Katz and Kahn (1966) proposed three behavioral patterns necessary for achieving organizational effectiveness: joining and remaining within the organization, fulfilling required role activities, and engaging in spontaneous and innovative actions beyond prescribed tasks. These extra-role behaviors, referred to as citizenship behaviors, are indirectly valued because they are not formally standardized yet significantly enhance organizational efficiency and effectiveness (Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1997). Organ (1988) further explained that organizational citizenship behavior is driven by two broad categories of antecedents: internal factors, e.g., personality, commitment, job satisfaction, motivation, mood and external factors, e.g., organizational culture, leadership style, trust in leaders, and perceived organizational support. Among these external factors, servant leadership is identified as a key predictor of organizational citizenship behavior (Mekpor & Dartey-Baah, 2017).

Servant leadership emphasizes serving others as a central priority (Spears, 2002). According to Neuschel (2008), servant leadership is characterized by the leader placing the needs and interests of others above oneself, creating a reciprocal and trust-based relationship between the leader and followers. The focus of servant leadership is not merely guiding followers but also motivating them and facilitating their growth. This leadership style adopts a long-term developmental approach that fosters holistic changes in individuals' personal and professional lives (Choudhary et al., 2013).

Servant leadership is considered highly compatible with organizational citizenship

behavior because it targets not only organizational development but also employee growth (Margaretha & Prasetio, 2012). Leaders play a decisive role in shaping followers' attitudes and behaviors because their decisions, actions, and communications influence employees' willingness to engage in organizational citizenship behavior (Adewale & Ghavifekr, 2019). Empirical evidence has supported the relationship between servant leadership and organizational citizenship behavior (Zhao & Zhou, 2019).

Research has consistently demonstrated that servant leadership is closely associated with organizational citizenship behavior, as leaders can model exemplary behavior that followers emulate. However, leadership theories have continued to evolve, and no single leadership model is universally applicable across all organizational contexts (Khan & Nawaz, 2016). Identifying the most appropriate leadership style depends on multiple factors, including organizational culture, environment, structural complexity, legal frameworks, and psychosocial dynamics (Frangieh & Popescu, 2020).

Muhdar (2018) argued that several leadership styles are positively associated with organizational citizenship behavior. These include transformational, transactional, ethical, authentic, authoritative, charismatic, spiritual, and servant leadership. Eva et al. (2019) specifically highlighted that servant leadership is strongly linked to organizational citizenship behavior at both the individual and group levels. Similarly, Maharani (2019) found that servant leadership has a positive and significant effect on organizational citizenship behavior.

Multiple meta-analyses have examined the servant leadership and organizational citizenship behavior relationship. Kiker et al. (2019) found significant relationships between servant leadership and organizational citizenship behavior through

several variables, namely performance, job satisfaction, commitment, and trust. Zhang et al. (2019) also asserted that servant leadership predicts organizational citizenship behavior, job outcomes, in-role performance, creativity, and service quality, and these effects vary across cultural contexts and group-level conditions. Despite these findings, there have been some reported inconsistencies in the strength of the relationship and limited exploration of mediating or moderating mechanisms.

A review of empirical studies conducted between 2015 and 2024 indicates mixed results regarding the relationship between servant leadership and organizational citizenship behavior, including significant positive, non-significant positive, and even negative correlations. Several mediators have been identified in this relationship, such as leadership trust (Abid et al., 2015), psychological empowerment, and organizational justice (Khajehpour et al., 2016), employee cynicism (Aziz et al., 2017), other-orientation (Ozturk, 2020), organizational support (Beshlideh et al., 2018), interpersonal communication (Ezerman & Sintaasih, 2018), job satisfaction (Wahyu et al., 2019), affective and cognitive trust (Saleem et al., 2020), organizational commitment (Sadikin et al., 2020), work engagement (Shafi et al., 2020), organizational culture (Aminah et al., 2022; Naa et al., 2022), and emotional intelligence (Kumari et al., 2022). Moderating variables, such as group cohesion (Abid et al., 2015) and tenure (Thao & Kang, 2020), have also been identified.

Since previous research on servant leadership and organizational citizenship behavior has shown diverse and inconsistent findings, this meta-analysis aimed to examine the presence and stability of the correlation between servant leadership and organizational citizenship behavior by correcting for potential sampling errors. Establishing the consistency of this

relationship is crucial for ensuring the validity of conclusions and providing a reliable basis for practitioners seeking to apply servant leadership within organizational contexts.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Organizational Citizenship Behavior

The term organizational citizenship behavior refers to discretionary individual behaviors that go beyond formal job requirements. Organ (1988) conceptualized organizational citizenship behavior as voluntary, extra-role actions performed within an organization, which support colleagues and contribute to the effective and efficient functioning of organizational processes. Similarly, Robbins and Judge (2008) described organizational citizenship behavior as voluntary employee actions (undertaken without coercion), reflecting a willingness to provide assistance that exceeds prescribed job duties. According to Organ (1988), organizational citizenship behavior represents individual choices and initiatives that are not formally rewarded yet collectively enhance organizational performance. In other words, these behaviors are not part of official job descriptions, and employees are not penalized for failing to display them. Nielsen et al. (2012) further emphasized that organizational citizenship behavior encompasses individual actions that exceed obligatory roles and are not directly recognized by formal organizational systems, yet they facilitate improved organizational functioning.

Organizational citizenship behavior is also frequently defined as behavior that exceeds formal obligations, extra-role actions not directly tied to compensation, where individuals who exhibit such behaviors are considered to be good organizational citizens (Robbins & Coulter, 2010). This suggests that employees with high levels of organizational citizenship behavior do not receive monetary

rewards or specific bonuses for engaging in such behavior. Rather, organizational citizenship behavior reflects employees' prosocial actions aimed at contributing beyond what is formally expected. Organizational citizenship behavior includes a variety of behaviors, such as assisting coworkers, avoiding interpersonal conflict, safeguarding organizational property, showing respect for organizational norms, and complying with established workplace procedures. According to Organ (1988), organizational citizenship behavior consists of five dimensions: (a) altruism, (b) conscientiousness, (c) courtesy, (d) civic virtue, and (e) sportsmanship.

Altruism refers to voluntary actions aimed at helping individuals who are experiencing difficulties in organizational tasks or personal situations. Then, conscientiousness is described as behaviors that demonstrate one's effort to exceed minimal job requirements, reflecting a strong sense of responsibility. Courtesy refers to behaviors that maintain positive interpersonal relationships and prevent work-related conflicts among colleagues. Civic virtue relates to behaviors reflecting one's active involvement in and concern for organizational governance and sustainability. Lastly, sportsmanship is understood as tolerance and acceptance of less-than-ideal organizational conditions without complaining or engaging in negative behavior (Podsakoff et al., 2000).

Organ (1988) asserted that organizational citizenship behavior is influenced by two broad categories of factors: (a) internal factors (originating from within the individual) include personality, commitment, job satisfaction, motivation, and mood; and (b) external factors (from the organizational environment) include organizational culture and climate,

leadership style, trust in leaders, and perceived organizational support.

## 2.2 *Servant Leadership*

Greenleaf (1977) conceptualized servant leadership as a form of leadership grounded in an individual's intrinsic inclination to serve. According to him, servant leaders demonstrate a natural commitment to serving others with diligence, civility, and genuine concern by prioritizing the needs of others and acting in accordance with normative moral expectations. Similarly, Spears (2002) stated that a servant leader is someone whose desire to lead originates from a fundamental and natural desire to serve. Through conscious and intentional service, servant leaders inspire others to realize their aspirations and develop the capacity to lead. Neuschel (2008) further defined servant leadership as a leadership style rooted in a sincere inner motivation to serve first. Leaders who embody this genuine spirit of service positively influence followers and organizational productivity.

Servant leadership has also been described as a leadership approach that emphasizes care for the growth and well-being of followers, the community, and even the leader themselves, prioritizing collective interests over personal ambition (Vondey, 2010). It represents an interactive process in which leaders exert influence by serving, listening, and understanding the needs of their followers so that they may grow and reach their highest potential. Servant leaders extend their contribution beyond merely meeting the needs of others. They foster development, empower individuals, and create opportunities for followers to experience both material and emotional well-being.

Spears (2002) identified ten essential characteristics of servant leadership: (a) Awareness, which refers to the leader's self-

awareness and inner composure when serving others. (b) Building community, which explains how leaders cultivate a sense of collective identity within the organization. (c) Conceptualization, which reflects a leader's capacity to view organizational issues from a broad and strategic perspective. (d) Commitment to the growth of people, which emphasizes the leader's dedication to supporting individual development within the organization. (e) Empathy, which entails understanding and appreciation of others' thoughts and feelings. (f) Foresight, which refers to the leader's ability to anticipate future outcomes. (g) Healing, which is defined as the leader's capacity to help oneself and others recover from emotional challenges or setbacks. (h) Listening, which involves identifying followers' needs and helping them articulate their aspirations through attentive listening. (i) Persuasion, which refers to the leader's ability to influence others without relying on formal authority or coercive power. Then, (j) stewardship, which describes the leader's commitment to serve as a responsible caretaker of both organizational and stakeholder needs.

Liden et al. (2008) proposed that servant leadership is shaped by three key elements. The first element is context and culture, as leaders are shaped by the environments and cultural norms within their organizations. Then, there is follower receptivity, which determines the extent to which employees accept and respond positively to servant leadership behaviors. Third, emotional intelligence to lead and personal values, which enable leaders to simultaneously guide and serve their followers effectively.

## 2.3 *Servant Leadership and Organizational Citizenship Behavior*

Leadership constitutes a critical element in shaping and directing individual behavior

within organizations. Among various leadership approaches, servant leadership stands out for its emphasis on empathy, awareness, stewardship, empowerment, and a commitment to fostering the growth of others. Greenleaf (1977) conceptualized servant leadership as an orientation in which leaders place the interests of their followers above their own, prioritizing followers' development and well-being. In line with this view, Spears (1995) explained that servant leaders focus on empowering organizational members, elevating the needs of others, and nurturing followers' growth within the work environment. In contrast, organizational citizenship behavior refers to voluntary, discretionary behaviors that extend beyond formal job requirements and significantly contribute to organizational effectiveness (Organ, 1988).

The dynamics between servant leadership and organizational citizenship behavior can be understood through the lens of social exchange theory (SET) introduced by Blau (1964) and the leader-member exchange theory (LMX) developed by Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995). Both theories posit that relationships between leaders and followers are built upon reciprocity, whereby positive actions by one party elicit positive responses from the other. In organizational settings, such reciprocal behaviors may include assisting colleagues, fostering a positive work climate, engaging in organizational activities, and demonstrating commitment to organizational objectives (Podsakoff et al., 2000). When leaders adopt a servant leadership style characterized by emotional support, empathy, and developmental opportunities, followers perceive these actions as forms of social investment. Consequently, followers are motivated to reciprocate through behaviors that benefit the organization, which are manifested in increased organizational citizenship behavior (Liden et al., 2008). In this sense,

organizational citizenship behavior represents a behavioral expression of reciprocity as outlined in SET.

Servant leadership cultivates positive relational exchanges marked by trust, respect, and mutual concern for well-being (Eva et al., 2019). When followers perceive that leaders genuinely attend to their needs and personal development, they have higher motivation to contribute beyond their formal responsibilities. Within the framework of social exchange, these additional contributions materialize as organizational citizenship behavior, reflecting followers' responses to fair, supportive, and relationally enriching leadership practices. Accordingly, servant leadership promotes organizational citizenship behavior through psychological mechanisms grounded in trust, loyalty, and affective commitment to the organization (Pletzer et al., 2021). Based on the theoretical foundation provided by social exchange theory and its implications for the relationship between servant leadership and organizational citizenship behavior, the following hypothesis was proposed:

*H1: Servant leadership is positively related to organizational citizenship behavior.*

### 3 Method, Data, and Analysis

This study employed a non-experimental design using a meta-analysis and correlational quantitative approach. The research procedures adhere to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines (Page et al., 2021). Meta-analysis was conducted to synthesize findings from multiple prior studies to determine whether the hypotheses tested in those studies are supported or rejected (Retnawati et al., 2018). It also serves to examine the consistency of research outcomes, particularly when previous studies reported varying results, some revealing strong or weak relationships, and

others reporting significant or non-significant effects. Assessing this variability is essential for establishing the robustness of the observed relationships.

This meta-analysis adopted a comparative study approach, which aims to evaluate the relationship between variables by analyzing effect sizes and study characteristics (Retnawati et al., 2018). In this approach, the relationship between variables is treated as a covariance between two constructs, allowing researchers to determine the presence and magnitude of relationships across studies (Retnawati et al., 2018).

### 3.1 Research Literature Search

The literature search was conducted using a digital platform provided by Tarumanagara University (<https://fakultas-psikologi-untar.remotexs.co/>) and various reputable scientific databases, e.g., the American Psychological Association (APA), Academica, Atlantis Press, AOSIS, Elsevier, Emerald Insight, Growing Science, HRMARS, Mendeley, PsycINFO, ResearchGate, SagePub, ScienceDirect, Sciendo, Sustainability, SpringerLink, Taylor & Francis, and Wiley. The keywords employed in the search process were both English and Indonesian, including "servant leadership" OR "kepemimpinan melayani" OR "pemimpin pelayan" AND "organizational citizenship behavior" OR "perilaku warga organisasi" OR "perilaku peran ekstra".

The search was restricted to published scientific literature from 2015 to 2024. This period was selected because the conceptualization and measurement of servant leadership had become more consistent and standardized, enabling greater comparability across studies. It also corresponds with notable shifts in organizational dynamics and a rise in research on the servant leadership and

organizational citizenship behavior relationship, making the available evidence more relevant to workplace contexts. Limiting the search to this timeframe ensured that the meta-analysis incorporated recent literature with stronger methodological rigor, thereby enhancing the validity and relevance of the synthesized findings.

This study focused exclusively on quantitative empirical research. Therefore, publications like book chapters, theoretical reviews, systematic reviews, case studies, and other non-quantitative documents about servant leadership and organizational citizenship behavior were excluded. The initial search identified 183 open-access articles. These articles were subsequently screened and evaluated based on the predetermined inclusion criteria required for conducting the meta-analysis.

### 3.2 Research Inclusion and Exclusion

To identify articles relevant to the objectives of this study, a set of inclusion and exclusion criteria was established. The inclusion criteria were as follows: (a) empirical studies that examined the variables of servant leadership and organizational citizenship behavior; (b) articles written in English and published in reputable international journals; (c) articles published within the last ten years (2015-2024); (d) studies conducted in Asian countries based on the rationale that both developed and developing nations within the region share similar contextual characteristics, including cultural norms and environmental condition; and (e) studies that reported sufficient statistical information for meta-analytic computation, including sample size ( $n$ ), correlation coefficient ( $r$ ), chi-square value,  $t$ -value, or  $p$ -value.

Studies that did not meet these criteria were excluded. The exclusion criteria included: (a) articles that were not available in full text or

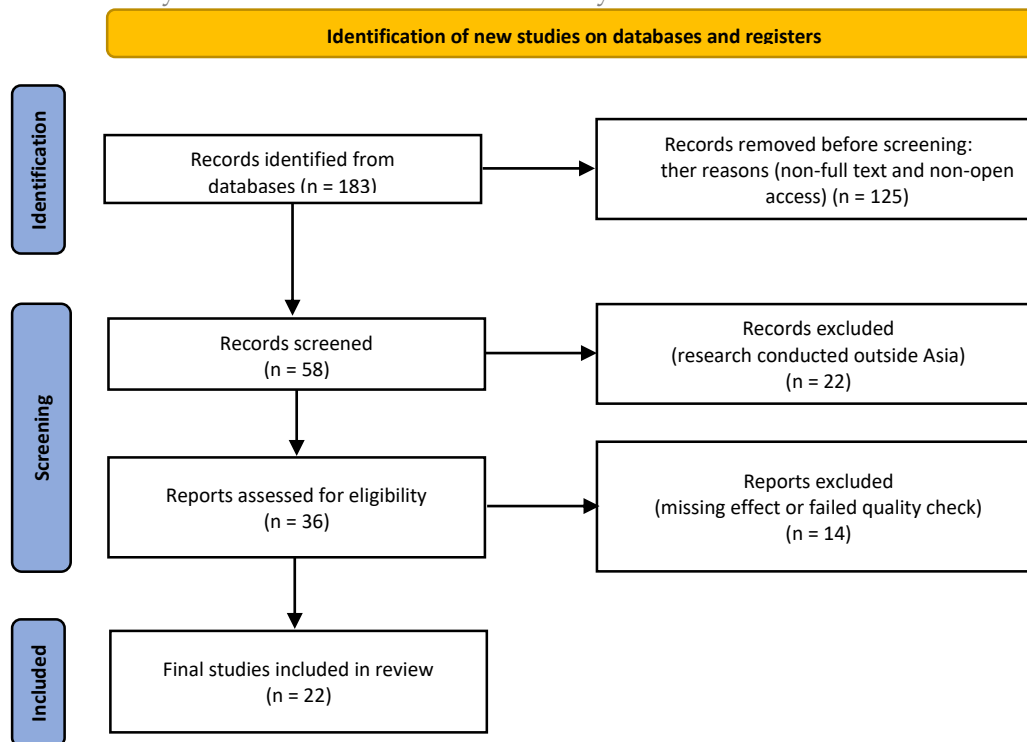
were not open access; (b) publications written in languages other than English; (c) Studies conducted outside the Asian context (e.g., in Africa, the Americas, Australia, or Europe); and (d) studies that did not provide essential statistical indicators, e.g., correlation coefficients, t-values, or p-values.

### 3.3 Research Study Selection

A total of 183 records were identified through database searches using the keywords “servant leadership” and “organizational citizenship behavior” for the publication period of 2015-2024. After removing articles that were not available in full text or not open access, 58 articles

remained for screening. During the screening stage, 22 articles were excluded because they did not meet the criteria for publication characteristics or were conducted outside the Asian context. The remaining 36 full-text articles were assessed for eligibility. At this stage, studies were evaluated based on the availability of required statistical information and the fulfillment of the quality assessment criteria. Ultimately, 22 studies met all inclusion criteria and were retained for quantitative synthesis in the meta-analysis. The detailed flow is depicted in the PRISMA diagram (Figure 1).

**Figure 1.** The Study Selection Process for Meta-Analysis Based on the PRISMA Flow Diagram



### 3.4 Research Inclusion and Exclusion

The methodological rigor of studies included in the meta-analysis was systematically re-evaluated through a comprehensive and structured screening procedure. This procedure determines the relevance, methodological adequacy, and overall eligibility of the studies identified during the article search through several stages of

feasibility assessment. The feasibility assessment was conducted using the quality assessment tool for observational cohort and cross-sectional studies developed by the National Institutes of Health (NIH, 2023), which provides a widely recognized framework for evaluating the methodological soundness of non-experimental research designs. The instrument encompasses four principal

criteria, each comprising five to six specific evaluative questions that assess: (a) article characteristics; (b) participant characteristics; (c) measurement quality; and (d) reported outcomes. A detailed explanation of each criterion is provided in Table 1.

In its original form, the NIH assessment tool employs a dichotomous response format ("yes" or "no") for each item. However, for the purposes of this study, the researchers modified the scoring system to enhance clarity, transparency, and consistency in evaluating the completeness of information reported by each study. Specifically, each item was assigned a numerical score of "1" if the required information was explicitly stated in the article and "0" if the information was absent, unclear, or not explicitly documented. The cumulative score obtained by summing the values across all items served as the final quality score for each study. Based on this scoring system, studies with a total score of over 2.50 were deemed eligible for inclusion in the meta-analysis, whereas those scoring less than 2.50 were classified as ineligible.

To ensure reliability and consistency in the coding process, all articles were independently assessed by the primary author using the modified scoring framework. Ambiguous or insufficiently reported items were subsequently reviewed with the second and third authors to establish a shared interpretation of the assessment criteria and reach consensus. Although formal statistical indicators of inter-rater reliability were not computed, coding reliability was reinforced through cross-checking, alignment of interpretive standards, and systematic verification across reviewers.

A comprehensive evaluation of potential research bias, e.g., participant selection, measurement procedures, and analytical approaches, was also conducted. Overall, the included studies demonstrated adequate efforts to address common sources of bias and provided sufficient methodological clarity. A summary of the quality assessment results for all reviewed studies is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Article Quality Assessment and Reporting Criteria

Criteria	Score	
Study Characteristics	5 ---	Provides complete information about the study (author and year of publication; study title related to SL and OCB variables; journal name, volume, and issue number; country of publication; author's university and country of origin; study design)
	1 ---	Does not provide the required information completely
Participant Characteristics	6 ---	Provides information about participant demographics (number of participants, gender, age of participants, length of employment, name of workplace, and other criteria for participants)
	1 ---	Does not provide all the required information
Measurement	6 ---	Provides information about the measurement methods used (author and year of the theory used; implementation of each variable dimension; number of measurement items; examples of measurement items;

Criteria		Score
	1 ---	measurement tool references; reliability and validity information) Does not provide the required information completely
Statistical Analysis	5 ---	Provides information about the results (analysis program used; statistical value reports; use of images or tables; interpretation of statistical reports; research conclusions)
	1 ---	Does not provide the required information completely

### 3.5 Research Inclusion and Exclusion

The dataset for this study (i.e., chi-square values, t-values, and p-values) was subsequently converted into effect sizes ( $r$ ) for analysis (Borenstein et al., 2009). Fisher's Z transformation was employed to calculate both the effect sizes and their standard errors, with all computations performed using the Comprehensive Meta-Analysis software.

A heterogeneity test was conducted to determine whether the effect sizes across the included studies reflected a common underlying effect or varied significantly (Retnawati et al., 2018). The effect sizes of the studies were standardized and analyzed to assess the strength of the relationship under the proposed hypotheses. The heterogeneity analysis also served as an assumption test for the application of the random-effects model. Effect size estimates were visually represented using a forest plot with a 95% confidence interval.

A publication bias analysis was carried out to ensure that the meta-analytic findings were not distorted by systematic bias (Retnawati et

al., 2018). Publication bias typically occurs due to discrepancies in sample sizes across studies and the greater likelihood of significant findings being published compared to nonsignificant ones. This selective publication tendency leads to an overrepresentation of studies with significant results, as journals are more inclined to accept such manuscripts. To detect potential publication bias, Begg and Mazumdar's rank correlation test and Egger's regression test were performed, both of which were evaluated using a funnel plot. All statistical analyses in this study were conducted using the JAMOVI 2.6.26 software.

## 4 Result and Discussion

### 4.1 Research Inclusion and Exclusion

This meta-analysis incorporated 22 empirical studies that examined the relationship between servant leadership and organizational citizenship behavior. These studies were published from 2015 to 2024. The results of the quality assessment and feasibility evaluation are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Summary of Article Quality Assessment and Reporting

Study ID	Year	Author	Score				Total Score	Note
			SC	PC	MT	SA		
1	2015	Abid et al.	.80	.67	.50	.80	2.77	Pass
23	2022	Aminah et al.	.80	.83	.50	.80	2.93	Pass
33	2024	Aydoğan and Özer.	.80	.67	.67	.80	3.10	Pass

Study ID	Year	Author	Score				Total Score	Note
			SC	PC	MT	SA		
6	2017	Aziz et al.	.80	.67	.50	.80	2.77	Pass
7	2018	Aziz et al.	.80	.67	.50	.80	2.77	Pass
27	2023	Bahari.	.80	.83	.50	.80	2.93	Pass
8	2018	Beshlideh et al.	.80	.67	.50	.80	2.77	Pass
4	2016	Deng.	.60	.67	.50	.80	2.57	Pass
<b>9</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>Ezerman and Sintaasih.</b>	<b>.80</b>	<b>.33</b>	<b>.50</b>	<b>.80</b>	<b>2.23</b>	<b>Fallen</b>
35	2024	Farooqui et al.	.80	.67	.50	.80	2.77	Pass
31	2024	Gao and Huang.	.80	.50	.67	.80	2.77	Pass
25	2022	Hanaysha et al.	.80	.83	.67	.80	3.10	Pass
<b>34</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>Hanilesta and Putranto.</b>	<b>.60</b>	<b>.67</b>	<b>.33</b>	<b>.80</b>	<b>2.40</b>	<b>Fallen</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>Harwiki.</b>	<b>.80</b>	<b>.33</b>	<b>.33</b>	<b>.80</b>	<b>2.27</b>	<b>Fallen</b>
28	2023	Kartono et al.	.60	.67	.50	.80	2.57	Pass
<b>3</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>Khajehpour et al.</b>	<b>.60</b>	<b>.17</b>	<b>.50</b>	<b>.80</b>	<b>2.07</b>	<b>Fallen</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>Kumar and Hamid.</b>	<b>.80</b>	<b>.17</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>.80</b>	<b>1.57</b>	<b>Fallen</b>
22	2022	Kumari et al.	.80	.83	.67	.80	3.10	Pass
2	2015	Leem and Lee.	.80	.50	.50	.80	2.60	Pass
36	2024	Lu et al.	.60	.83	.50	.80	2.73	Pass
<b>19</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>Mariana et al.</b>	<b>.80</b>	<b>.17</b>	<b>.67</b>	<b>.80</b>	<b>2.43</b>	<b>Fallen</b>
<b>26</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>Naa et al.</b>	<b>.80</b>	<b>.83</b>	<b>.33</b>	<b>.80</b>	<b>2.77</b>	<b>Fallen</b>
<b>32</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>Nelwan et al.</b>	<b>.60</b>	<b>.17</b>	<b>.33</b>	<b>.80</b>	<b>1.90</b>	<b>Fallen</b>
14	2020	Ozturk.	.80	.67	.50	.80	2.77	Pass
<b>10</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>Perkasa et al.</b>	<b>.80</b>	<b>.17</b>	<b>.50</b>	<b>.80</b>	<b>2.27</b>	<b>Fallen</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>Priyono et al.</b>	<b>.80</b>	<b>.17</b>	<b>.67</b>	<b>.80</b>	<b>2.43</b>	<b>Fallen</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>Sadikin et al.</b>	<b>.80</b>	<b>.17</b>	<b>.33</b>	<b>.80</b>	<b>2.10</b>	<b>Fallen</b>
16	2020	Saleem et al.	.80	.67	.67	.80	2.93	Pass
18	2020	Shafi et al.	.80	.83	.50	.80	2.93	Pass
29	2023	Subhaktiyasa et al.	.80	.83	.50	.80	2.93	Pass
<b>24</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>Suhardi et al.</b>	<b>.80</b>	<b>.83</b>	<b>.33</b>	<b>.80</b>	<b>2.77</b>	<b>Fallen</b>
<b>30</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>Susanto.</b>	<b>.80</b>	<b>.17</b>	<b>.33</b>	<b>.80</b>	<b>2.10</b>	<b>Fallen</b>
17	2020	Thao and Kang.	.80	.67	.67	.80	2.93	Pass
20	2021	van Hoven et al.	.60	.83	.67	.80	2.90	Pass

Study ID	Year	Author	Score				Total Score	Note
			SC	PC	MT	SA		
13	2019	Wahyu et al.	.80	.50	.50	.80	2.60	Pass
15	2021	Wulandari et al.	.80	.17	.67	.80	2.43	Fallen

Note. SC = Study characteristics; PC = Participant characteristics; MT = Measurement tools; SA = Statistical analysis

Of the 36 articles initially screened, 22 met the established eligibility criteria and were included in the final analysis. Twelve studies were classified as having moderate methodological quality, with total scores ranging from 2.57 to 2.77 across all assessment criteria. These studies were Abid et al. (2015), Aziz et al. (2017), Aziz et al. (2018), Beshlideh et al. (2018), Deng (2016), Farooqui et al. (2024), Gao and Huang (2024), Kartono et al. (2023), Leem and Lee (2015), Lu et al. (2024), Ozturk (2020), and Wahyu et al. (2019). Their classification as moderate quality primarily reflects unmet requirements in several critical indicators about study characteristics, measurement adequacy, and the clarity of reported outcomes.

The remaining ten articles demonstrated high methodological quality, with total

scores ranging from 2.90 to 3.10. These studies were conducted by Aminah et al. (2022), Aydoğan and Özer (2024), Bahari (2023), Hanaysha et al. (2022), Kumari et al. (2022), Saleem et al. (2020), Shafi et al. (2020), Subhaktiyasa et al. (2023), Thao and Kang (2020), and van Hoven et al. (2021).

#### 4.2 Participants

The included studies encompassed participants from diverse organizational settings across multiple Asian countries. The overall sample comprised employees from both public and private institutions, including healthcare organizations, educational institutions, and industrial and manufacturing sectors. Sample sizes across the studies varied substantially, ranging from 36 to 835 participants. A detailed summary of participant characteristics for each study is presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Summary of Study Participants

Study ID	Year	Author	N	Participant Characteristics	Country
1	2015	Abid et al.	202	Employees of public organizations (banking, education, and transportation sectors)	Pakistan
23	2022	Aminah et al.	103	Human resource employees at the headquarters of the financial and development supervisory agency	China
33	2024	Aydoğan and Özer.	266	Employees of three private hospitals belonging to a healthcare group	Turkey
6	2017	Aziz et al.	212	Employees of organizations in the service sectors (i.e., education, transportation,	Pakistan

Study ID	Year	Author	N	Participant Characteristics	Country
7	2018	Aziz et al.	307	telecommunications, banking, auditing, and consulting) Employees of organizations in the service sectors (i.e., education, transportation, telecommunications, banking, and marketing)	Pakistan
27	2023	Bahari.	466	Employees of public secondary schools	Malaysia
8	2018	Beshlideh et al.	230	Employees of the cement manufacturing company	Iran
4	2016	Deng.	302	MBA training employees	China
35	2024	Farooqui et al.	622	Lecturers of state university	Pakistan
31	2024	Gao and Huang.	835	Lecturers of state university	China
25	2022	Hanaysha et al.	213	Administrative staff and academic staff of state university	United Arab Emirates
28	2023	Kartono et al.	298	Employees of PT Bank Artha Graha Internasional	Indonesia
22	2022	Kumari et al.	422	Managerial and non-managerial employees in the manufacturing services industry	Pakistan
2	2015	Leem and Lee.	88	Employees of community federal credit unions	Korea Utara
36	2024	Lu et al.	335	Private company employees	China
14	2020	Ozturk.	36	Industrial workers and members of entrepreneur associations	Turkey
16	2020	Saleem et al.	261	Head of departments in a state university	Pakistan
18	2020	Shafi et al.	264	Employees of public and private banking companies	Pakistan
29	2023	Subhaktiyasa et al.	120	Lecturers of a state university	Indonesia
17	2020	Thao and Kang.	148	Employees of engineering companies	Vietnam
20	2021	van Hoven et al.	203	Employees of public primary and secondary schools	Iran
13	2019	Wahyu et al.	90	Permanent non-academic employees at a university	Indonesia

Note. N = Number of Participants

#### 4.3 Correlation Consistency Test

The results of the random-effects meta-analysis indicate a statistically robust correlation between servant leadership and

organizational citizenship behavior ( $r = 0.359$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , 95% CI [0.274, 0.443]), confirming that the estimated effect size is both statistically significant and unlikely to

be the result of sampling error. Accordingly, the research hypothesis is supported.

The correlation coefficient falls within the moderate range, suggesting that servant leadership demonstrates a meaningful and substantive influence on the development of organizational citizenship behavior across diverse empirical contexts. This level of consistency implies that, although the strength of the relationship may vary across individual studies, the overall pattern remains stable and coherent within the aggregated dataset. A comprehensive summary of the statistical findings and effect size distribution is presented in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Consistency of Correlation

Random Effects Model					
k	n	r	p	Confidence Interval (95%)	
				Lower	Upper
22	6.023	.359	<.001	.274	.443

Note. k = Number of studies used; n = Number of research samples; r = Correlation coefficient estimator; p = Level of significance; IC = Confidence intervals

#### 4.4 Heterogeneity Test

The heterogeneity test was conducted to examine whether the effect sizes across the included studies demonstrated consistent or varying correlations (Retnawati et al., 2018). According to the established criteria, heterogeneity is indicated when the I<sup>2</sup> value is ≥50%, the Q value exceeds the degree of freedom (df), and the p-value is <0.05. Under these conditions, the assumption of heterogeneity is accepted, and a random-effects model is applied. Conversely, if the I<sup>2</sup> value is ≤50%, the Q value is less than df, and the p-value is >0.05, the homogeneity assumption is accepted, and a fixed-effects model is used (Retnawati et al., 2018).

In this study, the analysis of 22 articles examining the relationship between servant leadership and organizational citizenship behavior employed a random-effects model. The results indicated substantial heterogeneity across studies (I<sup>2</sup>= 94.56%; Q=526.061; df = 21.000; p < 0.001). These findings confirm that the observed variations in effect sizes are not attributable to sampling error alone. The complete heterogeneity test results are presented in Table 5 along with the corresponding forest plot (Figure 2).

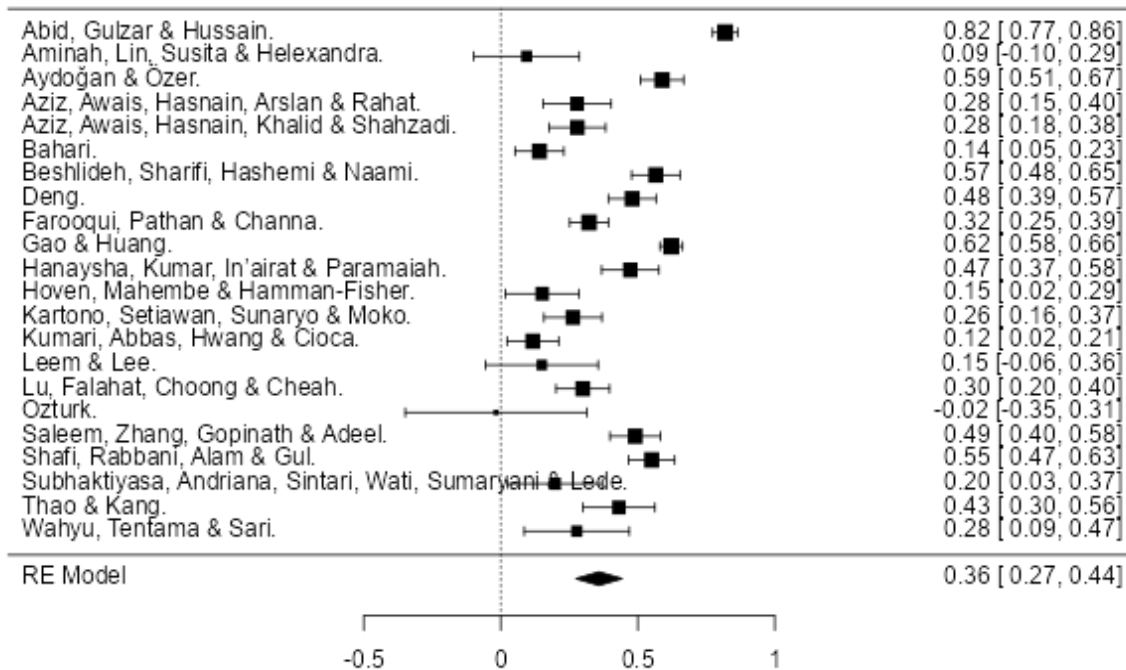
**Table 5.** Heterogeneity Test

Heterogeneity Statistics					
k	n	I <sup>2</sup>	df	Q	p
22	6.023	94.56 %	21,000	526.061	<.001

Note. k = Number of studies used; n = Number of study samples; I<sup>2</sup> = Heterogeneity; df = Degree of freedom; Q = Cochran's Q; p = Level of significance

The forest plot (Figure 2) illustrates the effect sizes of the individual studies and their respective positions. The results indicate that, among the 22 included studies, only one demonstrated a negative effect size, specifically the study by Ozturk (2020), which appears on the left side of the plot. In contrast, twenty-one studies reported positive effect sizes, positioned on the right side of the plot. Further examination of sample sizes reveals that the studies conducted by Leem and Lee (2015) and Wahyu et al. (2019) were conducted on relatively small samples yet yielded statistically significant results. Conversely, the study by Ozturk (2020), which also utilized a small sample size, did not produce statistically significant findings.

**Figure 2.** Forest Plot Study ES (BB, BA)



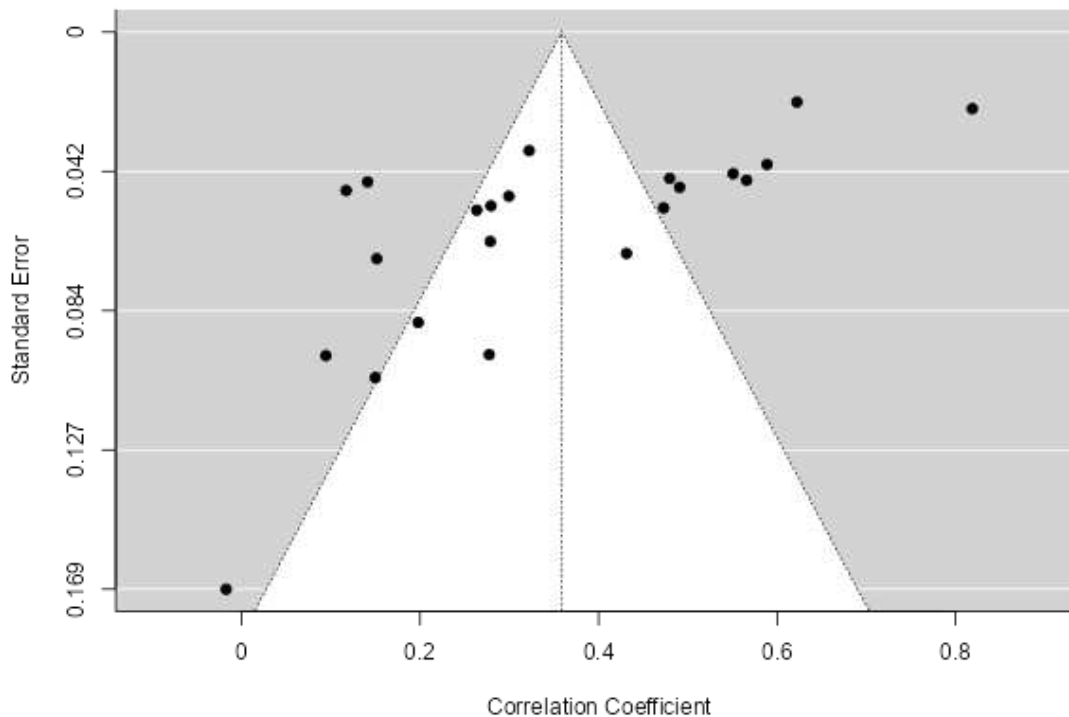
**4.5 Publication Bias Test**

The publication bias test was conducted to identify potential bias, using Begg and Mazumdar’s rank correlation and Egger’s regression analysis based on the funnel plot. In a funnel plot, studies with larger sample sizes typically cluster toward the top of the graph, whereas studies with smaller sample sizes are distributed toward the bottom. In assessing funnel plot asymmetry, a p-value <0.05 indicates evidence of publication bias, whereas a p-value >0.05 suggests the absence of bias (Retnawati et al., 2018).

**Table 6.** Publication Bias Test

Time Name	Value	p
Fail - Safe N	7,299.000	< .001
Begg and Mazumdar Rank Corr	-.065	.696
Egger's Regression	-1.783	.075
Trim and Fill Number of Studies	4,000	.

The results of Begg and Mazumdar’s rank correlation ( $z=-0.065$ ;  $p=0.696$ ,  $p>0.05$ ), and Egger’s regression test ( $t=-1.783$ ;  $p=0.075$ ,  $p>0.05$ ) indicate that there is no publication bias in this meta-analysis. Thus, the results can be considered robust and free from systematic reporting bias. The complete results of the publication bias test are presented in Table 6 along with the funnel plot (Figure 3). A funnel plot is a widely used diagnostic tool for examining the presence of publication bias within meta-analytic research. In this plot, the vertical axis typically represents the study precision; often operationalized through sample size or standard error, while the horizontal axis displays the estimated effect size. Under conditions of no publication bias, studies with higher precision cluster near the true effect size, whereas studies with lower precision disperse more widely, collectively forming a symmetrical, inverted funnel shape.

**Figure 3.** Funnel Plot

In the present meta-analysis, the observed distribution of effect sizes relative to their standard errors demonstrates a clearly defined and relatively symmetrical funnel pattern. This symmetrical dispersion of data points around the pooled effect estimate (center line) indicates that the included studies are not systematically skewed toward larger or smaller effects, thereby reducing concerns regarding selective reporting or the non-publication of null findings. This visual interpretation is further substantiated by the results of Egger's regression test, which yielded a non-significant coefficient. The non-significant Egger test provides additional statistical confirmation that small-study effects or publication bias are unlikely to have influenced the aggregated results.

Considering both the graphical and statistical evidence, the findings of this meta-analysis are stable and methodologically sound. The absence of notable publication bias strengthens the reliability, representativeness, and generalizability of

the synthesized effect sizes across the body of research examined.

#### 4.6 Discussion

This meta-analysis synthesized findings of 22 empirical studies examining the relationship between servant leadership (SL) and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), with a primary focus on research conducted in Asian contexts. Overall, the analysis revealed a consistent positive association between servant leadership and organizational citizenship behavior ( $r = 0.359$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , 95% CI [0.274, 0.443]). This moderate effect size indicates that a higher level of servant leadership is associated with increased organizational citizenship behavior among employees, underscoring the relevance of service-oriented leadership in fostering employees' discretionary contributions to organizational functioning (Borenstein et al., 2009).

Among the 22 studies analyzed, 19 reported a significant positive relationship between servant leadership and organizational

citizenship behavior, whereas three studies reported non-significant findings. The inconsistencies observed in these three studies can be attributed to contextual and methodological variations. For example, Leem and Lee (2015) incorporated alternative explanatory factors and used measurement strategies that might not have accurately captured the servant leadership construct. Ozturk (2020) included demographic factors, such as age, gender, education, and job position, as control variables, which could have attenuated the direct relationship between servant leadership and organizational citizenship behavior. Similarly, Aminah et al. (2022) emphasized mediating mechanisms rather than direct correlations, which might explain the insignificant effect. Taken together, these variations highlight the importance of contextual and methodological characteristics in shaping the relationship between servant leadership and organizational citizenship behavior.

The overall positive result aligns with theoretical perspectives suggesting that servant leadership fosters organizational citizenship behavior by emphasizing service, empathy, humility, moral stewardship, and follower development. Leaders who prioritize followers' needs and growth are better positioned to cultivate positive extra-role behaviors (Aydoğan & Özer, 2024; Lu et al., 2024). Prior research has demonstrated that servant leadership strengthens motivation, relational quality, and inspiration in subordinates (Liden et al., 2008; Lee et al., 2020; Gao & Huang, 2024), which in turn strengthens the likelihood that employees will voluntarily contribute to organizational well-being beyond their formal responsibilities. These findings align with theoretical perspectives emphasizing the role of service-oriented leadership in fostering prosocial behaviors beyond their formal roles (Thao & Kang, 2020; Frangieh &

Popescu, 2020). Leaders' decisions, relational behaviors, and interpersonal interactions play a central role in shaping employees' affective responses, identification, and optimism toward their organization (van Dierendonck, 2010; Khan & Nawaz, 2016). Accordingly, servant leaders who prioritize humility, ethical conduct, and service to followers are well-positioned to cultivate organizational citizenship behavior as a critical behavioral resource to achieve organizational objectives (Russell, 2016).

In addition to these primary findings, this meta-analysis identified a high level of heterogeneity among the included studies ( $I^2 = 94.56\%$ ,  $Q = 526.061$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), suggesting that observed effect size variations could not be attributed to sampling error alone. This heterogeneity has important theoretical implications. First, it suggests that the relationship between servant leadership and organizational citizenship behavior is likely contingent on contextual factors. Variations in cultural values, such as collectivism, power distance, relational norms, and hierarchical expectations, may shape both how servant leadership is enacted by leaders and how followers interpret service-oriented behaviors. Such cultural contingencies imply that servant leadership may not operate uniformly across settings, thereby reinforcing the need to integrate socio-cultural dimensions into leadership theories.

Second, the heterogeneity may also stem from methodological diversity across studies, including differences in measurement instruments, operationalizations of the servant leadership variable, sampling frames, and the organizational sectors. This diversity indicates that servant leadership operates through multiple theoretical pathways and that its influence on organizational citizenship behavior could be moderated by follower characteristics, organizational

climates, or organizations' structural features. Consequently, the heterogeneity observed in this meta-analysis highlights the theoretical complexity of servant leadership and calls for more frameworks that account for and incorporate boundary conditions and contextual moderators. Despite this variability, the overall positive effect demonstrates that servant leadership remains a robust predictor of organizational citizenship behavior across different contexts.

Given that most included studies were conducted in Asia, the findings of this meta-analysis also contribute to a broader understanding of servant leadership within Asian cultural contexts. Asian societies are generally characterized by a high degree of collectivism, strong relational norms, and elevated power distance (Rockstuhl & Van Dyne, 2018). These cultural features align closely with core servant leadership values, e.g., humility, interpersonal care, moral responsibility, and group-oriented behavior. As employees in collectivist contexts tend to highly value relational harmony and reciprocate leaders' service-oriented behaviors with stronger discretionary contributions (Choi & Cho, 2025), servant leadership may be particularly salient in Asian settings. The positive effect sizes observed across the predominantly Asian studies thus support the theoretical proposition that servant leadership is culturally embedded. Practically, this suggests that organizations in Asia may benefit from leadership development initiatives that emphasize humility, service, and follower-centeredness. For researchers, these findings emphasize the importance of theorizing servant leadership as a culturally contingent construct and examining how Asian cultural dimensions may moderate its influence on follower outcomes.

Therefore, the high degree of heterogeneity underscores the theoretical complexity of servant leadership as a construct and suggests the need to incorporate moderators, such as cultural values, job characteristics, and relational dynamics. Despite this variability, the overall positive effect suggests that servant leadership remains a robust predictor of organizational citizenship behavior across diverse contexts.

The publication bias analysis revealed no evidence of systematic bias, indicating that the aggregated effect size is reliable and not influenced by selective reporting. Given the substantial body of research across sectors and populations observed in the included studies, the findings of this meta-analysis offer credible evidence regarding the positive influence of servant leadership on organizational citizenship behavior.

Several limitations warrant acknowledgment. The included studies span a variety of sectors but remain heavily concentrated in Asian contexts, which limits the generalizability of findings to other cultural regions. This meta-analysis also did not examine subdimensions of servant leadership or organizational citizenship behavior, reducing the granularity of theoretical interpretations. Additionally, potential mediators and moderators, e.g., job autonomy, trust, cultural values, or psychological safety, were not systematically tested, which might contribute to the high heterogeneity observed.

Future research should consider sector-specific analyses (e.g., education, healthcare, public service) to refine contextual interpretations. Expanding research beyond Asian contexts would facilitate more comprehensive cross-cultural comparisons and illuminate the moderating role of cultural dimensions. Examining mediating and moderating mechanisms and analyzing

construct sub-dimensions would provide a deeper understanding of the processes through which servant leadership influences organizational citizenship behavior. Finally, experimental or longitudinal designs would strengthen causal inferences and contribute to a more theoretically grounded and contextually sensitive understanding of servant leadership. A more diversified methodological and contextual approach can foster a richer theoretical understanding and offer stronger practical guidance for organizations seeking to cultivate servant leadership and enhance organizational citizenship behavior.

## 5 Conclusion and Suggestion

This study examined the relationship between servant leadership and organizational citizenship behavior by conducting a meta-analysis of 22 empirical studies published from 2015 to 2024 across Asia, involving a total of 6,023 participants. The findings indicate a positive and significant relationship between servant leadership and organizational citizenship behavior ( $r = 0.359$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). This result suggests that the greater the implementation of servant leadership within an organization, the higher the likelihood that employees will engage in discretionary behaviors that contribute to organizational effectiveness.

These findings address the research question and empirically support the hypothesis that servant leadership plays a critical role in fostering positive employee behaviors that extend beyond formal job descriptions. The results also highlight the theoretical relevance of servant leadership as a leadership style that can promote prosocial, cooperative, and contribution-oriented actions among employees.

From a practical standpoint, the study implies that organizations may adopt servant leadership to effectively cultivate a

productive, harmonious, and contribution-driven work culture. Implementing servant leadership can also help create a more collaborative, caring, and supportive work environment, ultimately enhancing organizational performance and employee well-being.

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References marked with (\*) are studies included only in the first meta-analysis; References marked with (\*\*) are studies included in the first meta-analysis and contributed to the effect sizes.

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