

# THE INVISIBLE EFFECTS OF SELF-COMPASSION ON ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR THROUGH WORK-LIFE QUALITY AND PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL TRANSPARENCY: THE CASE OF RUBBER INDUSTRY

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## **Abstract**

The current study conducts on 406 employees who are working in rubber companies in Vietnam. The novelty of study shows the invisible effects of self-compassion is a catalyst to moderate impacts of work-life quality (WLQ) and perceived organizational transparency (POT) on organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). As a result, if the company wants self-compassion of employees does not negatively affect to negative performance, it needs to take care of employee's self-compassion (COM) as more as possible, because COM strengthen an association between WLQ and OCB as well as between POT and OCB. Additionally, employees' OCB improves when organizational transparency is taken seriously. Also, POT not only mediates the relationship between transformational leadership (TLE) and OCB, but also between TLE and WLQ.

**Keywords:** Transformational Leadership, Self-Compassion, Organizational Citizenship Behavior, Perceived Organizational Transparency.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Transformational leadership (TLE) is in part of positive changes of an organization. It contributes to distress employees and creates a work-life quality (WLQ). It is reasonable to assert that employees' work-life quality (WLQ) is influenced by transformative leadership (Hermanto et al., 2024). Research by Al-shami et al. (2023) indicates that both the work-life quality (WLQ) of employees and the presence of a positive workplace environment influence organizational citizenship behavior (OCB).

Several empirical studies have explored the link between TLE and OCB. Therefore, Hermanto et al. (2024) and Qalati et al. (2022) have demonstrated that TLE can inspire employees to go beyond their formal job responsibilities by fostering a sense of belonging and commitment to the organization.

According to Shahzad et al. (2018), TLE fosters a friendly and voluntary work environment in which people can contribute to their work. TLE can be effective in boosting OCB in companies with strong performance pressures, such as the Vietnamese rubber sector. Employees who regard their leaders as supportive and trustworthy are more likely

to engage in flexible actions that benefit organizational effectiveness, as previously demonstrated (Ete et al., 2022).

Employee self-compassion (COM) has been the subject of some earlier research. Neff (2023), for instance, examines the connection between COM and wellbeing. Employees can conquer the highs and lows of their inner self by studying COM. Steindl et al. (2021) demonstrated that COM enhances adaptive coping mechanisms, which helps employees manage the pressures of maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

While the intersection of emotional well-being and organizational outcomes has been extensively studied in organizational behavior literature, significant gaps remain, particularly concerning the role of COM as a moderating factor in high-stress, labor-intensive industries like the Vietnamese Rubber Industry. Although there is a growth of researching on COM, the role of COM as the moderator impacting on the relationship between WLQ and OCB and on the relationship between POT and OCB has been limited.

Wooten et al. (2024) found a significant contribution of COM to regulation strategies, which is not enough to conclude its role to contribute the link between WLQ and OCB of employees. This is drawn as a research gap that this study wants to fill in. In addition, WLQ is influenced by COM and its dependence on POT has not been previously identified. This study will address an additional gap.

Most studies on compassion in the workplace have focused on compassion towards others, such as empathy and prosocial behavior (Steindl et al., 2021), while Wooten et al. (2024) confirm maltreatment is one of reasons contributing to emotion dysregulation toward negative self-compassion. However, the studies often overlook the importance of COM of employees, but not popular for employees engaging the Vietnamese Rubber Industry and its invisible effects on OCB through WLQ and POT.

In the subsequent section, the paper's structure is established through a literature evaluation. The subsequent step is the research methodology. Quantitative methods are presented with testing results in empirical analysis. Following this, conclusions and discussions are assessed.

## **2. BACKGROUND THEORY AND RELEVANT CONCEPTS**

### **Social Exchange Theory (SET)**

SET based on theory of economic exchange and present changes in labor behavior toward expectation and life quality (Blau, 1964). SET enables the comprehension of concealed behaviors in the context of relationships. This theory is consistent with the expectations of employees and the benefits that a company provides.

Employees generally have a long-term perspective toward social exchange ties in the workplace and expect to derive benefits from these relationships (Wayne et al., 1997). Extrinsic benefits pertain to rewards employees obtain from the firm for exemplary performance, while intrinsic benefits are the internal gratifications employees derive from their successful performance, such as self-efficacy (Cooper & Jayatilaka, 2006).

While SET introduces principles regarding the causal relationship between employees and the organization, it fails to address how internal emotions, such as WLQ and COM, influence an employee's commitment and devotion to the company.

As a result, the current study wants to address the study of how self-compassion moderates the effects of work-life quality and perceived organizational support on organizational citizenship behavior within the framework of SET theory.

### **Transformational leadership (TLE)**

TLE is a leadership style that has been extensively studied and widely recognized for its ability to inspire and motivate employees to achieve higher levels of performance and personal development (Bass et al., 2003). Unlike transactional leadership, which focuses on the exchange of rewards for performance, TLE seeks to elevate the motivations and values of both leaders and followers, resulting in profound changes within the organization (Bass & Bass, 1997).

### **Work-Life Quality (WLQ)**

WLQ determines if an employee is satisfied with an organization's working environment, income, and social welfare programs (Ventegodt et al., 2003). WLQ of workers is assessed based on the equilibrium between their professional and personal lives inside the firm (Syamsuddin et al., 2020). Employee well-being, job happiness, and overall productivity are dependent on having a positive work-life quality.

When individuals prioritize achieving WLQ, they are more inclined to be actively involved, driven, and dedicated to their professions (Ton et al., 2021). Kossek et al. (2011) emphasize the relevance of organizational efforts that promote work-life balance, such as flexible working arrangements and health promotion programs. These approaches improve not only WLQ but also organizational outcomes such as attendance and employee engagement.

### **Self-compassion (COM)**

COM is a concept that is drawn from the emotions of an individual when they achieve positive outcomes or encounter unforeseen challenges in their personal and professional lives (Steindl et al., 2021). For an organization, an employee's COM is derived from the context of work, the leader's concern for their quality of life and a pleasant working environment (Backman et al., 2024).

COM arises from a caring motivational system and can be textured by a range of emotions and behavioral responses, all of which will be contextual to the suffering encountered (Steindl et al., 2021). Compassion is a response to the distress and suffering being experienced by others or oneself (Kim et al., 2020), with two distinct functional processes, including the motivation to attend to or engage with suffering, and the motivation to take helpful action.

### **Perceived Organizational Transparency (POT)**

POT, as defined by Schnackenberg et al. (2021), denotes the organization's intention to communicate business information (both positive and negative) to its stakeholders, in which employees are included. It is crucial for transformational leaders to prioritize the interests of both internal and external stakeholders to preserve information transparency. Honesty, a leadership quality, effectively encourages leaders to communicate accurate information to the constituents of their organizations, thereby improving the value of the organization and the behavior of its employees (Ete et al., 2022).

The concept of POT is closely linked to organizational trust. When an organization pays attention to transparency in both relationships and decision-making, employees demonstrate greater trust in their leaders and the organization itself. POT may be considered a component of organizational cultural structure. Ruppel et al. (2022) assert that transparency in communication correlates with elevated trust levels, which in turn enhances organizational commitment and diminishes turnover intentions.

### **Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB)**

OCB is a concept that has been used to influence the performance of individuals by regulating an organization. OCB is a term that refers to the voluntary actions that employees take that, despite not being part of their formal job responsibilities, contribute to the company's overall efficiency and effectiveness (Wooten et al., 2024).

These activities, which are frequently driven by the enthusiasm, contentment, and engagement of employees with the organization, are indispensable for the development of a collaborative and supportive work environment.

OCB refers to the voluntary actions and behaviors of employees that go beyond their formal job requirements and contribute to the overall effectiveness and success of an organization (Hermanto et al., 2024). These discretionary behaviors are not part of an employee's job description, but they play a crucial role in creating a positive and collaborative work environment.

## **3. HYPOTHESES AND RESEARCH MODEL**

### **The link between TLE and WLQ**

TLE originates personal value not only for the leaders but also for employees (Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987) and generates positive regulations for the company. As found by Qalati et al. (2022), employees' performance significantly depends on TLE.

In fact, the existing relationship between TLE and WLQ is verified by some prior scholars. Such Azizah et al. (2020) approached on respondents who are lecturers of Islamic university and found their happy work and satisfaction depended on transformational leaders.

In the context of the Vietnamese Rubber Industry, where employees often face physically demanding tasks and stressful work conditions, the role of transformational leadership in

enhancing quality of work-life is particularly relevant. By fostering a supportive and empowering work environment, TLE can help employees manage the challenges of their work, thereby improving their overall WLQ. Based on arguments mentioned, the hypothesis statement is claimed as below

H1: A positive change in transformational leadership positively makes an increase in work-life quality of employees.

### **The link between TLE and POT**

TLE will foster an environment that enhances employee trust in the organization. Enhanced trust significantly influences employee performance (Albu & Flyverbom, 2019). Likewise, Ruppel et al. (2022) found that the presence of TLE alters the transparency policy about employee rights and responsibilities.

H2: A positive change in transformational leadership positively makes an increase in perceived organizational transparency.

### **The link between POT and WLQ**

POT is a critical factor in shaping employees' perceptions of their work environment, particularly in relation to trust, fairness, and communication. According to Ruppel et al. (2022), once employees perceive their organization with transparency, they are more likely to feel valued and respected, leading to a more positive work environment. This is also confirmed by Guo (2022), accordingly, a positive change in POT causes a positive variation in employee satisfaction. Whereas employee satisfaction is the causal prerequisite of WLQ. With the arguments above, the hypothesis is considered as below.

H3: A positive change in perceived organizational transparency causes an increase in work-life quality of employees.

### **The role of WLQ mediating the link between TLE and OCB**

TLE is widely recognized for its ability to inspire, motivate, and develop employees, leading to enhanced job performance and organizational commitment. TLE engages in behaviors that not only align individual goals with organizational objectives but also foster a positive and supportive work environment.

TLE is known to encourage employees to go beyond their formal job requirements, often resulting in increased OCB (Qalati et al., 2022). WLQ plays a crucial role in influencing employee behavior, including their willingness to engage in OCB (Hermanto et al., 2024).

A high quality of work-life is associated with increased job satisfaction, better work-life balance, and a greater sense of well-being, all of which are important predictors of OCB. As a result, the hypothesis is stated below.

H4: Work-life quality mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational citizenship behavior.

### **The role of POT mediating the link between TLE and OCB**

With the point of thinking POT as mediator between TLE and OCB, it can verify that it has not been popular, but POT basically causes changes in employee's thinking to OCB. According to Qalati et al. (2022), TLE is characterized by its ability to inspire, motivate, and instill a sense of purpose and commitment among employees.

TLE engages in behaviors that encourage employees to exceed their job expectations, often leading to higher levels of OCB (Hermanto et al., 2024). This partly means that POT can mediate the link between TLE and OCB. As a result, the hypothesis is considered as below.

H5: Perceived organizational transparency mediates the relationship between transformational leaders and organizational citizenship behavior of employees.

### **The role of COM moderating the link between quality of WLQ and OCB**

Employees' COM can negatively impact their level of satisfaction at work. Employees who practice self-compassion for an extended period of time may be at risk of experiencing a decline in their work-life balance.

According to Al-shami et al. (2023), WLQ is impacted by a pleasant workplace, whereas OCB is highly dependent on workplace satisfaction. Therefore, the hypothesis is regarded as follows.

H6: Self-compassion strengthens the relationship between work-life quality and organizational citizenship behavior.

### **The role of COM moderating the link between POT and OCB**

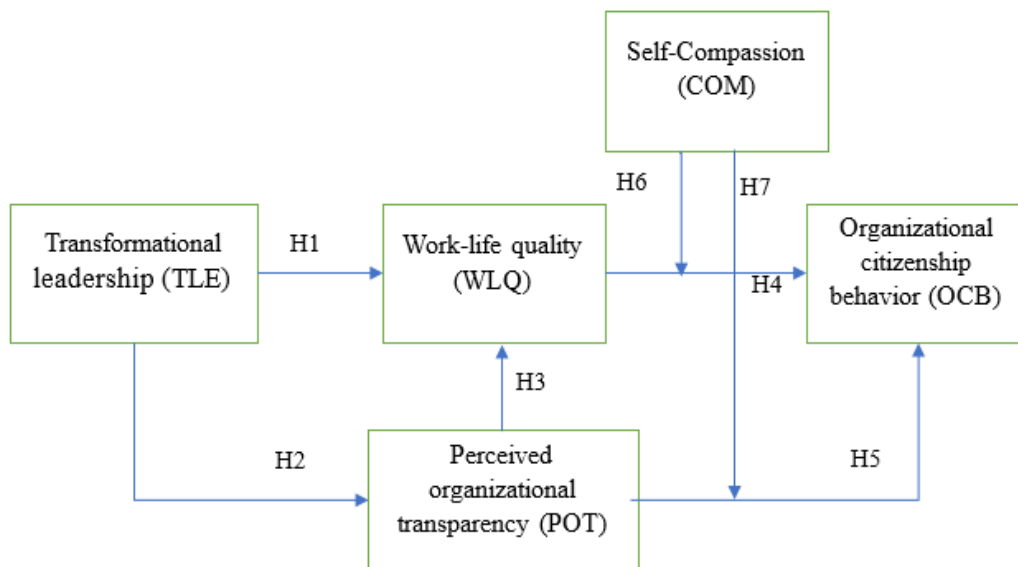
COM is a complex presentation originating from a happy or unhappy mentality. Once COM happens, employees expect to find out what is coming to them. Although the role of COM as a mediator that contribute the relationship between POT and OCB is not established publicly, COM is found as a reason contributes emotional strategy rules of the organization (Wooten et al., 2024).

Employees exhibiting high COM are able to sustain an optimistic perspective and participate in OCB, even when they see organizational transparency as insufficient or erratic. COM can mitigate the adverse effects of insufficient transparency by assisting employees in coping with emotions of irritation, confusion, or betrayal that may arise from ambiguous communication or perceived lying within a company (Neff, 2023).

As a result, the hypothesis is considered as below.

H7: Self-compassion strengthens the relationship between perceived organizational transparency and organizational citizenship behavior.

With arguments drawn from prior scholars, the research model is depicted in figure 1. Accordingly, seven hypotheses are claimed.



**Figure 1: Research Model**

### Data Collection

Respondents must be employees of rubber enterprises in Vietnam who have been engaged for more than 12 months. This decision mitigates bias, as respondents with fewer than 12 months of employment at the organization are unable to answer the questions specified in the questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed to respondents via two channels: one being direct, which entails providing respondents with a paper copy of the questionnaire. Another option accessible via a link that responders can obtain through email and social media platforms, such as ZALO (widely used in Vietnam). The survey employs a convenient sampling method, with a finalized sample size of 406 employees. SmartPLS3 software is utilized to test hypotheses.

### 4. EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

As mentioned previously, the survey was conducted among employees working in rubber companies. Results of descriptive statistics are seen in table 1. Of the 406 observations, 61.8% are male and 38.2% are female. A little big disparity between male and female, this can be explained that the rubber sector often uses male labors rather than that of female, due to job characteristics.

In terms of age groupings, most employees who participated in the survey are between the ages of 26 and 35 years old, which accounts for 36.5% of the total, followed by the age group of 36 to 45 years old, which accounts for 35.2% of the total. Those who are between the ages of 18 and 25 make up the remaining category, which accounts for 20.7% of the total, while those who are 40 years old or older make up the smallest number, which is 7.6%. Regarding educational credentials, the individuals who possess a university degree constitute the biggest percentage, which stands at 74.9%. This is

followed by individuals who possess a high school education, which accounts for 17.2%, and finally, individuals who possess graduate degrees as 7.9%.

In addition, the results of descriptive statistics present information about respondents who are employed in various departments. Specifically, 24.9% of respondents are employed in sales departments, followed by sales departments with 24.5%, information technology departments with 17.2%, human resources departments with 13.5%, finance and accounting departments with 11.1%, and others with 8.9%. Consequently, the opinions of participants on their interpretations of transformational leadership, perceived organizational transparency, self-compassion, and organizational citizenship behavior differ throughout different departments. This characteristic will quite effectively bolster the research goals of the thesis.

**Table 1: Respondent's Profile**

Survey		Frequency	Percent
Survey	Face to face	305	75.1
	Online	101	24.9
	Total	406	100
Gender	Male	251	61.8
	Female	155	38.2
	Total	406	100
Age	18 – 25 years old	84	20.7
	26 – 35 years old	148	36.5
	36 – 45 years old	143	35.2
	46 – 60 years old	31	7.6
	Total	406	100
Department	Human resource	55	13.5
	Finance & accounting	45	11.1
	Sales	101	24.9
	Technology	99	24.5
	Information technology	70	17.2
	Others	36	8.9
	Total	406	100
Income	>5 – 15 million VND/month	80	19.7
	>15 – 25 million VND/month	159	39.2
	>25 – 35 million VND/month	65	16.0
	>35 – 45 million VND/month	58	14.3
	>45 million VND/month	44	10.8
	Total	406	100
Education	High school	70	17.2
	Undergraduate	304	74.9
	Graduate	32	7.9
	Total	406	100

Source: Own survey

#### *Testing research model with constructs*

As developed, five constructs enclosed in the research model, such as transformational leader (TLE) with four items, perceived organizational transparency (POT) with four



items, work-life quality (WLQ) with three items, self-compassion (COM) with three items, and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) with four items. As shown in table 2, loading values items meet reliability conditions, which values of Cronbach Alpha, loading, composite reliability are larger than 0.7 (Hair et al., 2017). Additionally, the average variance extracted (AVE) is higher than 0.5. The rate of HTMT of constructs in the model is less than 0.90 at all, this result confirms the existing of discriminant validity (Table 3). As a result, the quantitative method meets reliability conditions, converge, and discriminant validity (Sarstedt et al., 2019).

**Table 2: Components with reliability and validity**

Construct	Items	Loading	Alpha	CR	AVE
Transformational leader (TLE)	TLE 1	0.738	0.720	0.877	0.704
	TLE2	0.746			
	TLE3	0.692			
	TLE4	0.772			
Work-life quality (TLE)	WLQ1	0.835	0.789	0.877	0.704
	WLQ2	0.852			
	WLQ3	0.830			
Perceived organizational transparency (POT)	POT1	0.823	0.867	0.909	0.715
	POT2	0.852			
	POT3	0.859			
	POT4	0.848			
Self-Compassion (COM)	COM1	0.687	0.604	0.784	0.549
	COM2	0.784			
	COM2	0.748			
Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB)	OCB1	0.866	0.870	0.911	0.720
	OCB2	0.818			
	OCB3	0.822			
	OCB4	0.885			

**Table 3: The result of Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)**

	COM	OCB	POT	PTOxCOM	TLE	WLQ	WLQxCOM
COM							
OCB	0.416						
POT	0.388	0.825					
PTOxCOM	0.073	0.030	0.025				
TLE	0.769	0.442	0.624	0.123			
WLQ	0.368	0.889	0.845	0.046	0.487		
WLQxCOM	0.088	0.064	0.044	0.815	0.094	0.017	

Applying the software program of SmartPLS, the estimated model resulted in Figure 2. Accordingly, 49% of variations in work-life quality (WLQ) is explained by transformational leadership (TLE) and perceived organizational transparency (POT), while 64% of variations in organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) is explained by WLQ and POT. As shown in table 4, the relationship between TLE and WLQ and between TLE and POT are both significant at any level. As a result, total effects of TLE positively influences WLQ and POT, this means that the hypothesis of H1 and H2 is supported. The moderating function of COM is seen in the substantial interactions of WLQxCOM and POTxCOM,

which are both statistically significant at the 1% level. Consequently, the impact of WLQ on OCB is greatly influenced by COM. This indicates that the COM of employees has a moderating effect in the relationship between the quality of work and the organizational citizenship behavior of employees. Therefore, hypothesis 6 is validated. The influence of POT on OCB is likely to be strongly moderated by COM. This indicates that employees' COM plays a regulating function in the relationship between POT inside the company and the conduct of employees in terms of their commitment and dedication to the organization. Conclusion, hypothesis 7 is confirmed. That means “self-compassion strengthens the relationship between perceived organizational transparency and organizational citizenship behavior”

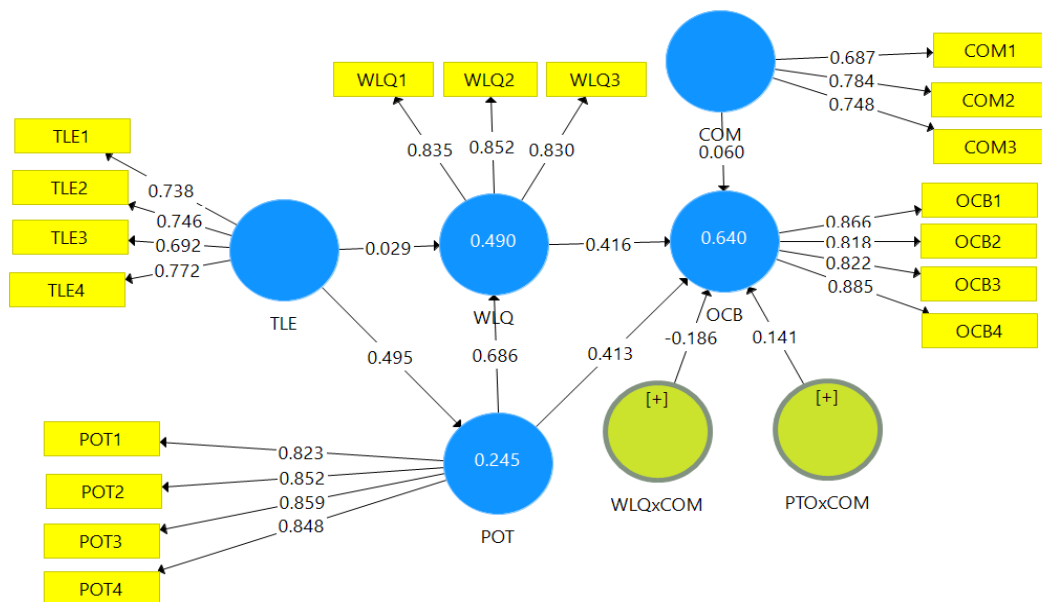


Figure 2: Estimated model

Table 4: Relationships amongst factors and total effects

Relationship	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values
COM -> OCB	0.060	0.061	0.031	1.948	0.052
POT -> OCB	0.413	0.413	0.060	6.860	0.000
POT -> WLQ	0.686	0.685	0.039	17.426	0.000
PTOxCOM -> OCB	0.141	0.139	0.062	2.274	0.023
TLE -> POT	0.495	0.496	0.040	12.523	0.000
TLE -> WLQ	0.368	0.370	0.040	9.185	0.000
WLQ -> OCB	0.416	0.418	0.055	7.571	0.000
WLQxCOM -> OCB	-0.186	-0.185	0.059	3.141	0.002

The combined indirect effects of the link between POT and OCB (0.285), between TLE and OCB (0.358), and between TLE and WLQ (0.399) (table 5) are statistically significant.

With the exception of the particular indirect effects of TLE -> WLQ -> OCB, which are not significant, all other specific indirect effects are substantial (Table 5).

**Table 5: Total indirect effects**

Relationship	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values
COM -> OCB					
POT -> OCB	0.285	0.287	0.043	6.633	0.000
POT -> WLQ					
PTO_CO -> OCB					
TLE -> OCB	0.358	0.359	0.032	11.270	0.000
TLE -> POT					
TLE -> WLQ	0.339	0.340	0.034	9.905	0.000
WLQ -> OCB					
WLQ_CO -> OCB					

**Table 6: Specific indirect effects**

Relationship	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values
TLE -> POT -> OCB	0.205	0.204	0.029	7.168	0.000
POT -> WLQ -> OCB	0.285	0.287	0.043	6.633	0.000
TLE ->POT -> WLQ ->OCB	0.141	0.143	0.027	5.169	0.000
TLE -> WLQ -> OCB	0.012	0.012	0.016	0.739	0.025
TLE -> POT -> WLQ	0.339	0.340	0.034	9.905	0.000

The hypotheses are checked and validated using the quantitative technique. Table 6 shows that seven hypotheses have been confirmed. This finding presents compelling evidence that supports the notion that the research gap has been successfully addressed. It is addressed in the next section.

**Table 7: Hypotheses confirmed**

Hypotheses	Confirmation
H1: A positive change in transformational leadership positively makes an increase in work-life quality of employees	Supported
H2: A positive change in transformational leadership positively makes an increase in perceived organizational transparency	Supported
H3: A positive change in perceived organizational transparency causes an increase in work-life quality of employees	Supported
H4: Work-life quality mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational citizenship behavior	Supported
H5: Perceived organizational transparency mediates the relationship between transformational leaders and organizational citizenship behavior of employees	Supported
H6: Self-compassion strengthens the relationship between work-life quality and organizational citizenship behavior	Supported
H7: Self-compassion strengthens the relationship between perceived organizational transparency and organizational citizenship behavior	Supported

## 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The analysis of the results from the Vietnamese rubber industry provides critical insights into the relationships between transformational leadership (TLE), perceived organizational transparency (POT), work-life quality (WLQ), compassion behavior (COM), and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). The empirical results verify a significant association between TLE and WLQ. This is consistent with Hermanto et al. (2024). The direct impact of TLE on WLQ signifies that leaders concentrate on and engage in efforts to foster work-life balance.

The current study also discovered that POT is significantly influenced by TLE. This discovery is partly comparable to that of Guo (2022). Therefore, TLEs prioritize transparency, and open communication can cultivate an environment in which employees feel informed and engaged in organizational processes, thereby fostering trust. This finding partially aligns with the Vietnamese rubber industry, where employee engagement is contingent upon transparency and trust.

A substantial association exists between WLQ and OCB, which is relevant to Hermanto et al. (2024). This research indicates that individuals who feel a high quality of work life are more inclined to engage in actions that are beyond their formal job responsibilities, so favorably impacting the firm. In addition, Hosseini et al. (2020) also confirmed the existence of the significant relationship between WLQ and OCB.

The novelty of this study is that COM's moderating effect shapes the connections between WLQ and OCB as well as between POT and OCB. Particularly when employees experience high WLQ and POT, compassion among employees increases their likelihood of OCB. Compassion employees are more suited to recognize and meet the needs of their colleagues, therefore fostering a friendly and sympathetic workplace. This finding is an academic contribution to the social exchange theory. That means employees' self-compassion strengthens the association between work-life quality and organizational citizenship behavior of employees and the association between perceived organizational transparency and organizational citizenship behavior.

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