

Predicting Employee Voice Behavior Based on Ethical Leadership and Organizational Justice: The Mediating Role of Psychological Safety

Laura. Sánchez Romero¹, Aisha. Mohammed², Selin. Karaca³

¹ Department of Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Autonomous University of Madrid, Madrid, Spain

² Department of Leadership and Organizational Change, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada

³ Department of Business Administration and Management, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey

* Corresponding author email address: aisha.mohammed@ualberta.ca

Editor

Mohammed Abdul Imran Khan
Department of Financial
Management and Economics,
Dhofar University, Oman
mimran@du.edu.om

Reviewers

Reviewer 1: Mehrdad Bayat
Assistant Professor, Department of Management, Payam Noor University, Tehran,
Iran.
Email: bayatmehrdad60@pnu.ac.ir
Reviewer 2: Abbas Monavari
Professor, Management Department, Tehran University, Tehran, Iran.
Email: amonavar@ut.ac.ir

1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

In the Introduction paragraph discussing ethical leadership, the sentence “Ethical leadership may therefore encourage employees to communicate concerns because it signals that decisions will be approached responsibly” is plausible but presently relies more on narrative reasoning than on an explicitly articulated theoretical mechanism. The authors should anchor the proposed relationships in a clearly identified theory or integrated theoretical framework, such as social learning theory, social exchange theory, uncertainty management theory, or psychological safety theory. The manuscript would benefit from specifying which theory explains the direct effect of ethical leadership on voice, which explains the effect of organizational justice on psychological safety, and why psychological safety is expected to mediate both pathways.

In the Introduction paragraph beginning with “Organizational justice constitutes another important antecedent,” organizational justice is described as comprising distributive, procedural, interpersonal, and informational justice. However, the hypothesized structural model treats organizational justice as a single overall latent construct. The authors should provide

a stronger conceptual and measurement rationale for aggregating these four dimensions rather than modeling them separately or as first-order dimensions under a second-order factor. Because the four forms of justice may have differential associations with psychological safety and employee voice, the manuscript should report whether a higher-order measurement structure was tested and whether it demonstrated better or comparable fit relative to plausible alternative models.

In the Psychological Safety measurement paragraph, the manuscript states that Edmondson's seven-item Team Psychological Safety Scale was "adapted to refer to the participant's immediate work environment." This adaptation raises an important level-of-analysis issue. Edmondson's instrument was developed to capture team psychological safety, whereas the current analyses appear to operationalize psychological safety as an individual perception. The authors should explicitly distinguish individual psychological safety perceptions from a shared team-level climate and justify analyzing the construct at the individual level. If respondents were nested within identifiable teams or organizations, intraclass correlations and design effects should also be considered before using a conventional single-level SEM.

In the final paragraph of the measurement section, the authors state that procedural remedies were used "to minimize common-method response problems," including anonymity and reassurance that there were no right or wrong answers. These are appropriate procedural precautions, but they do not establish that common-method variance was negligible. Because ethical leadership, organizational justice, psychological safety, and voice behavior were all measured from the same respondents in the same survey, the authors should conduct and report an empirical assessment of common-method bias. A theoretically defensible latent common-method factor model or comparison with a single-factor CFA would be more informative than relying exclusively on Harman's single-factor test.

In the Data Analysis subsection, the manuscript states that "convergent validity was examined using standardized factor loadings, composite reliability, and average variance extracted, whereas discriminant validity was evaluated by examining whether the constructs demonstrated adequate empirical distinctiveness." This description is incomplete because the specific discriminant-validity criterion is not identified. The authors should report whether the Fornell-Larcker criterion, HTMT ratio, latent-factor correlations, or constrained-model comparisons were used. Numerical discriminant-validity results should be presented rather than stating only that discriminant validity was satisfactory, particularly because ethical leadership, organizational justice, and psychological safety are conceptually related and moderately to strongly correlated.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the new document.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

In the Methods subsection "Study Design and Participants," the sentence "Participants were recruited using a combination of purposive and convenience sampling through professional networks, organizational contacts, employee-oriented online platforms, and electronic invitations" requires considerably greater procedural detail. The manuscript should specify the Canadian provinces or territories represented, the approximate recruitment period, the platforms or channels used, whether organizations formally facilitated recruitment, whether participants received compensation, and whether duplicate participation was prevented. These details are essential for evaluating selection bias and the external validity of the resulting sample.

In the Methods paragraph reporting that "A total of 347 employees initially accessed and completed the study questionnaire" and that 326 remained in the final sample, the exclusion process should be reported more transparently. The authors should indicate exactly how many cases were excluded for each criterion, including missing data, ineligibility, patterned responding, unusually short completion time, or other quality-control criteria. The definition of "substantially incomplete questionnaires" and "careless responding" should also be operationalized. A brief participant-flow description would improve reproducibility and reduce ambiguity concerning post hoc sample cleaning.

In the Study Design and Participants section, the manuscript does not report how the target sample size of 326 was justified before data collection. Given that structural equation modeling was used, the authors should provide an a priori sample-size or statistical-power justification based on the expected model complexity, anticipated effect sizes, desired power, and significance

level. Reliance only on conventional participant-to-parameter ratios would be insufficient; preferably, the authors should report a Monte Carlo power analysis or another SEM-appropriate approach. This addition would demonstrate that the sample was adequate not only for model estimation but also for detecting the indirect effects central to the study.

In the Data Collection Tools subsection, the manuscript states that employee voice behavior was measured using “the Employee Voice Behavior Scale developed by Van Dyne and LePine.” The exact number of items, original publication details, scoring procedure, and at least one representative item should be reported consistently. More importantly, the authors should verify that the six-item form reported in Table 2 corresponds exactly to the cited version of the instrument. If items were adapted, shortened, or reworded for the Canadian context, the nature of these modifications and any pilot testing or content-validity assessment should be explicitly described.

In the paragraph describing Colquitt’s Organizational Justice Scale, the manuscript indicates that “wording [was] adapted only where necessary to maintain consistency with the organizational context.” This statement is too vague for a validated measurement instrument. The authors should specify exactly which items were modified and why, and explain whether the response anchors remained identical to the original scale. Even minor wording changes can alter content validity and factor structure. If the instrument was adapted, evidence of expert review, cognitive pretesting, or pilot testing should be provided before claiming that the original scale’s psychometric properties can be assumed to apply.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the new document.

2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.