

THE ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY AND WORK MOTIVATION IN ENHANCING EMPLOYEE VOICE BEHAVIOR

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Abstract. *This study aims to examine the role of psychological safety and work motivation in enhancing employee voice behavior. Voice behavior refers to employees' proactive actions in expressing ideas, suggestions, and constructive feedback to improve organizational effectiveness. However, many employees are reluctant to speak up due to perceived interpersonal risks, indicating the importance of both environmental and individual factors in encouraging such behavior. This study employs a quantitative approach using a survey method with a sample of 100 respondents. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale and analyzed using multiple linear regression. The results indicate that psychological safety has a positive and significant effect on voice behavior, while work motivation also has a positive and significant effect on voice behavior. Furthermore, both variables simultaneously have a significant influence on employee voice behavior. The coefficient of determination shows that 48.6% of voice behavior is explained by psychological safety and work motivation. In conclusion, creating a supportive work environment and enhancing employee motivation are essential to encourage employees to express their ideas and contribute actively to organizational improvement.*

Keywords: *Employee Voice Behavior; Motivation; Organizational Behavior; Psychological Safety; Work Environment*

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's increasingly dynamic and competitive business environment, organizations are required to continuously adapt to rapid technological advancements, globalization, and changing workforce expectations. To remain competitive and achieve sustainable growth, organizations need employees who are not only capable of performing their assigned duties but are also willing to contribute ideas, suggestions, and constructive feedback that can support organizational improvement and innovation. Such proactive behavior is commonly referred to as employee voice behavior, which has gained significant attention in organizational behavior and human resource management literature.

Employee voice behavior refers to the discretionary communication of ideas, concerns, information, or suggestions intended to improve organizational functioning rather than merely criticizing existing practices (Morrison, 2014). Employees who actively express their opinions can help organizations identify potential problems, improve operational efficiency, and generate innovative solutions. Furthermore, voice behavior contributes to better decision-making processes by providing managers with valuable insights from employees who are directly involved in daily organizational activities.

Despite its benefits, encouraging employees to speak up remains a significant challenge for many organizations. Employees may hesitate to express their opinions due to fear of negative consequences, such as criticism, social exclusion, damaged relationships with supervisors, or potential impacts on career advancement. In some organizational cultures, employees may perceive that voicing concerns or suggesting changes could be interpreted as challenging authority or disrupting workplace harmony.

One of the most influential factors that may encourage employees to engage in voice behavior is psychological safety. Psychological safety refers to an individual's perception that the workplace environment is safe for interpersonal risk-taking and that expressing opinions, questions, concerns, or mistakes will not result in embarrassment, punishment, or negative repercussions (Edmondson, 1999). In a psychologically safe environment, employees feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and ideas because they believe that their contributions will be respected and valued by supervisors and colleagues.

In addition to psychological safety, work motivation is another important factor that may influence employees' willingness to engage in voice behavior. Work motivation refers to the internal and external forces that initiate, direct, and sustain employees' efforts toward achieving organizational goals. Motivated employees generally exhibit higher levels of energy, persistence, commitment, and enthusiasm in performing their work responsibilities. They are more likely to take initiative, seek opportunities for improvement, and contribute beyond their formal job requirements.

Several previous studies have investigated the relationship between psychological safety and employee voice behavior, while others have focused on the influence of work motivation on proactive employee behaviors. However, limited research has examined the simultaneous role of psychological safety and work motivation in enhancing employee voice behavior, particularly in the context of contemporary organizations facing increasing uncertainty and competition. This research gap highlights the need for further investigation.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the role of psychological safety and work motivation in enhancing employee voice behavior. Specifically, the study seeks to analyze how psychological safety and work motivation contribute individually and collectively to employees' willingness to express ideas, suggestions, and concerns within the workplace.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Employee Voice Behavior

Employee voice behavior is defined as the voluntary expression of ideas, suggestions, concerns, or opinions by employees with the intention of improving organizational performance and effectiveness. Morrison (2014) describes employee voice behavior as a proactive communication process through which employees provide constructive input regarding work-related issues. Unlike employee silence, which involves withholding opinions or information, voice behavior reflects employees' willingness to contribute to organizational improvement and decision-making processes.

In today's highly competitive and rapidly changing business environment, employee voice behavior has become increasingly important. Organizations rely on employees not only to perform their assigned duties but also to identify problems, suggest improvements, and contribute innovative ideas. Employees who actively engage in voice behavior can help organizations detect potential risks, improve operational efficiency, and generate creative solutions to workplace challenges.

Employee voice behavior can take various forms, including expressing suggestions for improving work processes, reporting organizational problems, sharing innovative ideas, and providing constructive feedback to supervisors. Such behavior enables organizations to benefit from employees' knowledge, experience, and perspectives. Furthermore, employees who are encouraged to speak up often develop stronger organizational commitment and engagement because they feel their opinions are valued and respected.

2.2 Psychological Safety

Psychological safety refers to an individual's perception that the workplace environment is safe for interpersonal risk-taking. The concept was introduced by Edmondson (1999), who defined psychological safety as a shared belief that team members can express themselves freely without fear of embarrassment, rejection, criticism, or punishment. Psychological safety creates an atmosphere where employees feel comfortable sharing ideas, asking questions, admitting mistakes, and offering feedback.

Psychological safety is particularly important because voice behavior often involves interpersonal risks. Employees may fear that expressing opinions could lead to negative evaluations, conflict with colleagues, or disapproval from supervisors. When employees perceive a lack of psychological safety, they may choose to remain silent even when they possess valuable information that could benefit the organization. As a result, organizations may miss opportunities for improvement and innovation.

A psychologically safe work environment is characterized by trust, respect, support, and open communication. Leaders play a critical role in establishing psychological safety by encouraging participation, listening to employee concerns, appreciating diverse viewpoints, and responding constructively to feedback. Previous studies have found that psychological safety enhances learning behavior, knowledge sharing, creativity, innovation, employee engagement, and team effectiveness (Edmondson, 1999; Nemphard & Edmondson, 2006).

2.3 Work Motivation

Work motivation refers to the internal and external forces that initiate, direct, and sustain employees' efforts toward achieving organizational goals. According to Robbins and Judge (2017), motivation is the process that determines the intensity, direction, and persistence of an individual's behavior in pursuing objectives. Motivation influences how much effort employees invest in their work and how committed they are to achieving desired outcomes.

Work motivation can be categorized into intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation arises from personal satisfaction, enjoyment, achievement, and self-development gained from performing work activities. Employees who are intrinsically motivated engage in their work because they find it meaningful and rewarding. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation is driven by external rewards such as salary, bonuses, promotions, recognition, and job security.

Highly motivated employees generally demonstrate greater enthusiasm, commitment, persistence, and initiative in performing their tasks. They tend to exceed minimum job requirements, seek opportunities for improvement, and actively contribute to organizational success. Motivated employees are also more likely to engage in proactive behaviors, including helping colleagues, participating in organizational activities, and expressing constructive suggestions for workplace improvement (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

2.4 Hypotheses Development

Based on the literature discussed above, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Psychological safety has a positive and significant effect on employee voice behavior.

H2: Work motivation has a positive and significant effect on employee voice behavior.

H3: Psychological safety and work motivation simultaneously have a significant effect on employee voice behavior.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a quantitative research approach with a descriptive and verificative research design. The quantitative approach is chosen because the study aims to examine the influence of psychological safety and work motivation on employee voice behavior through statistical analysis. Data were collected using a cross-sectional survey method.

The study was conducted at private sector companies in South Tangerang, Indonesia. Data collection was carried out from February to April 2026. The population of this study comprised all employees working in the selected organizations. A purposive sampling technique was applied to select 100 respondents who met the predetermined criteria, including being full-time employees with at least one year of work experience.

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to the respondents. The questionnaire consisted of three sections measuring the three main variables: psychological safety, work motivation, and employee voice behavior. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Psychological safety was measured using an adapted version of Edmondson's (1999) scale comprising seven items. Work motivation was measured using twelve items adapted from Robbins and Judge (2017). Employee voice behavior was measured using ten items adapted from Morrison (2014).

The validity of the questionnaire was assessed using Pearson product-moment correlation, and reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Items with a correlation value above 0.30 and a reliability coefficient above 0.70 were considered valid and reliable. All measurement items met the validity and reliability thresholds.

Data analysis was performed using multiple linear regression analysis to examine the influence of psychological safety and work motivation on employee voice behavior. Prior to regression analysis, classical assumption tests were conducted, including normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests, to ensure the appropriateness of the regression model. The statistical analysis was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 25.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Research Results

The descriptive statistics revealed that respondents generally perceived moderate to high levels of psychological safety ($M = 3.87$, $SD = 0.62$), work motivation ($M = 3.94$, $SD = 0.58$), and employee voice

behavior ($M = 3.72$, $SD = 0.67$). These results suggest that the majority of respondents felt relatively safe in their work environment and were motivated to contribute to organizational improvement.

The classical assumption tests confirmed that the data met the requirements for multiple linear regression analysis. The normality test using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method indicated that residuals were normally distributed ($p > 0.05$). The variance inflation factor (VIF) values for both independent variables were below 10, indicating no multicollinearity issues. The Glejser test confirmed the absence of heteroscedasticity in the regression model.

The multiple linear regression analysis yielded the following equation: Voice Behavior = $0.412 + 0.387$ (Psychological Safety) + 0.341 (Work Motivation). The regression coefficient for psychological safety ($b = 0.387$, $t = 5.214$, $p < 0.001$) was positive and statistically significant, indicating that higher levels of psychological safety were associated with greater employee voice behavior. Similarly, the regression coefficient for work motivation ($b = 0.341$, $t = 4.783$, $p < 0.001$) was positive and significant, confirming that higher work motivation was associated with increased employee voice behavior.

The simultaneous F-test revealed that both psychological safety and work motivation together had a significant effect on employee voice behavior ($F = 45.32$, $p < 0.001$). The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.486$) indicated that psychological safety and work motivation explained 48.6% of the variance in employee voice behavior, while the remaining 51.4% was explained by other factors not included in this study.

4.2 Discussion

The finding that psychological safety has a positive and significant effect on employee voice behavior is consistent with previous research. Edmondson (1999) argued that psychological safety is a critical antecedent of open communication and proactive behavior in organizations. When employees perceive their workplace as safe for interpersonal risk-taking, they are more willing to speak up, share ideas, and express concerns without fearing negative consequences. This study's results support and extend Edmondson's foundational work by demonstrating the significant role of psychological safety in encouraging employee voice behavior in the Indonesian organizational context.

The positive and significant effect of work motivation on employee voice behavior is also consistent with existing literature. Deci and Ryan (2000) argued through Self-Determination Theory that intrinsically motivated employees tend to engage in proactive behaviors because they perceive their actions as meaningful contributions to organizational success. Similarly, Robbins and Judge (2017) emphasized that motivated employees are more likely to go beyond their formal job requirements and actively participate in organizational improvement activities. The results of this study confirm that work motivation serves as an important driver of employee voice behavior.

Furthermore, the simultaneous significant influence of psychological safety and work motivation on employee voice behavior supports the theoretical perspective that these two factors operate as complementary mechanisms. Employees who feel psychologically safe but lack sufficient motivation may still hesitate to speak up due to insufficient personal drive. Conversely, highly motivated employees who do not feel psychologically safe may withhold their ideas due to fear of negative interpersonal consequences. Therefore, organizations need to cultivate both a psychologically safe environment and a motivating work culture to effectively promote employee voice behavior.

4.3 Research Implications

The findings of this study have several important theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, this study contributes to the organizational behavior literature by providing empirical evidence of the simultaneous influence of psychological safety and work motivation on employee voice behavior in the context of Indonesian private sector organizations. The findings support the integration of Edmondson's (1999) psychological safety framework and Deci and Ryan's (2000) Self-Determination Theory in explaining employee voice behavior.

Practically, the findings suggest that organizations should invest in creating psychologically safe work environments by training leaders to exhibit inclusive, supportive, and non-punitive behaviors. Leaders should actively encourage employee participation, listen to concerns without judgment, and appreciate diverse perspectives. Additionally, organizations should implement motivation-enhancing strategies such as recognition programs, career development opportunities, performance-based incentives, and meaningful work assignments to boost employee motivation and foster a culture of continuous improvement through voice behavior.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the role of psychological safety and work motivation in enhancing employee voice behavior among employees in private sector organizations in South Tangerang, Indonesia. The findings demonstrated that psychological safety has a positive and significant effect on employee voice behavior, confirming that employees who perceive their workplace as safe for interpersonal risk-taking are more willing to express ideas, suggestions, and concerns. Similarly, work motivation was found to have a positive and significant effect on employee voice behavior, indicating that motivated employees are more inclined to contribute actively to organizational improvement.

Furthermore, the simultaneous analysis revealed that psychological safety and work motivation together explain 48.6% of the variance in employee voice behavior, highlighting the importance of both factors as complementary determinants of employee voice behavior. These findings underscore the need for organizations to cultivate both psychologically safe environments and motivating work cultures to promote employee voice behavior effectively.

The practical implications of this study suggest that managers and organizational leaders should prioritize creating inclusive, respectful, and supportive work climates where employees feel comfortable speaking up. Simultaneously, organizations should implement effective motivation strategies to drive employee engagement and proactive organizational contributions.

Future research should consider examining additional factors that may influence employee voice behavior, such as leadership style, organizational culture, and team dynamics. Longitudinal research designs could also provide deeper insights into the temporal dynamics of psychological safety, work motivation, and voice behavior. Furthermore, comparative studies across different industries and organizational contexts could enhance the generalizability of the findings.

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