

# Empowering Voices in Tech: The Role of Humility and Support in Sparking Employee Expression in the IT Sector

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## Abstract

*This study investigates the impact of Perceived Organizational Support (POS), Leader-Expressed Humility (LEH), and Organizational Culture (OC) on Employee Voice Behaviour (EVB) in the Information Technology (IT) sector of Karachi, Pakistan. POS and LEH were examined as independent variables, while OC was analyzed as a mediator. A structured survey was used to gather self-reported data from 350 full-time employees in the IT industry using validated instruments: 25 items for POS, 18 items for LEH, 22 items for OC, and 16 items for EVB. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was employed for data analysis. The results revealed that both POS and LEH significantly enhance EVB, with OC playing a mediating role. The study underscores the importance of supportive leadership and culture in promoting employee engagement and communication. Limitations include a correlational design and an industry-specific scope. Future research may explore longitudinal and cross-sectoral studies. This research contributes to organizational behaviour theory and offers practical insights for fostering EVB in hierarchical and culturally diverse contexts.*

**Keywords:** *Perceived Organizational Support, Leader-Expressed Humility, Organizational Culture, Employee Voice Behavior, Information Technology Sector, Pakistan*

**JEL Classification:** *C12, M12, D23*

## INTRODUCTION

As the world economy grows more dynamic, the IT sector plays the essential role of an innovative engine. Especially in Pakistan, where the technology industry is young and rapidly growing, leadership and organizational influence on communication behaviour has become a focus of interest (International et al., 2024). IT firms focus on innovation, flexibility, and improvement, making employee voice behaviour (EVB), an intentional and positive act of sharing ideas or concerns, imperative to organizational success (Botha & Steyn, 2023). Such

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a culture can foster improved problem solving, better decision making and ultimately a better and more competitive organization (Nizam & Hameed, 2023). Therefore, positive leadership styles that enhance a positive organizational environment and support engagement are central (Pattali et al., 2024). Such a style is when a leader expresses humility (LEH), where the leader admits to weaknesses, values subordinates, and embraces constructive criticism. Furthermore, the perceived organizational support (POS) is also another important factor that determines how employees feel regarding the expression of their ideas or concerns (Irawanto et al., 2023). This study seeks to explore the combined influence of leader-expressed humility and perceived organizational support on employee voice behaviour within Pakistan's IT sector, with organizational culture serving as a mediating factor.

Employee voice behaviour is becoming a core concept in organizational development, especially in industries where creativity is the key, such as the information technology industry. Voice behaviour creates the opportunity for employees to give their input on new ideas, changes, and areas that need enhancement, all of which are determinants of organizational development and change (Fournier et al., 2024). However, for employees to be willing to give their ideas out in any organization, some conditions must prevail, and these are: Leadership culture and organizational culture (OC) (Hasanuddin & Hermina, 2024). Past studies have identified that leaders expressing humility as a key factor that helps in creating the right environment (Chintakananda, 2023). Power distance has a negative impact on voice, and since humble leaders are likely to encourage subordinates to express themselves, they are likely to enhance voice behaviour. At the same time, the level of perceived support provided to the employees by the organization improves the level of employees' readiness to voice their opinions (Potnuru et al., 2023). When the employees are supported, they shall be willing to participate in voice extra-role behaviours for the understanding that their organization will support them (Rubbab et al., 2023). It is within this context that this study hypothesizes and tests the following: leaders expressed humility and perceived organizational support enhance employee voice behaviour, mediated by organisational culture.

Despite the growing recognition of the importance of employee voice in organizational success, especially in sectors like IT that thrive on innovation, there remains a significant gap in understanding the mechanisms that promote such behaviour. Specifically, while the role of leader-expressed humility in shaping positive employee behaviours has been explored to some extent (M. Ajmal et al., 2024) Research on how it directly influences employee voice behaviour is still limited. Moreover, most existing studies have been conducted in Western contexts, with little focus on countries like Pakistan, where cultural norms and power dynamics between leaders and employees may differ significantly (Aman et al., 2023). In Pakistani organizations, hierarchical structures often discourage employees from challenging authority, making it even more important to understand how humble leadership can counteract these tendencies (N. Ajmal et al., 2024). Similarly, while perceived organizational support is widely acknowledged as a critical factor in shaping employee behaviour, its interaction with leader humility and organizational culture in promoting voice behaviour remains underexplored. This study aims to fill these gaps by investigating how these variables work together to encourage or inhibit employee voice in the Pakistani IT sector.

This paper offers several key contributions to the knowledge base of the field. First, it fills the literature void associated with the leader expressed humility and the relationship with the

employee voice behaviour, especially in the context of Pakistan's IT industry, in which leadership is more formal and less flexible. Second, the study extends the literature by including perceived organizational support as a key factor that helps in enhancing the understanding of the ways through which organizational factors encourage or suppress employee voice behaviour. Third, in the present study, the authors incorporate organizational culture as a mediator, thereby offering a more detailed account of the processes by which leadership and organizational support give rise to employee voice. The primary objective of this study is to investigate the impact of leader-expressed humility and perceived organizational support on employee voice behaviour in Pakistan's IT sector, with a focus on the mediating role of organizational culture. This research also resonates with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth, and SDG 16 on Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions. If the corporate culture supports employees' freedom to express their ideas, companies in the IT sector can help create a culture that supports the growth and development of new ideas to support the economic growth of a country (Shamsudin & Velmurugan, 2023).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Conservation of resources theory*

In the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory, Hobfoll et al. (2018) posited that people are driven to gain, maintain, and defend resources, which are personal assets, things, situations, and forces. These resources assist people in managing stress, and according to the theory, people work to attain more resources and ensure they do not lose them. Consequently, when resources are threatened or become scarce, there is stress, and people will act to regain or preserve their resources. Learnt in organizational contexts, COR theory has been used to explain how employees allocate their resources regarding leadership actions, working conditions, and organizations' support (Brennan et al., 2024).

The COR theory complements the model since it describes how the leadership style, in particular, the leaders' humility and organizational support, can be a source of psychological and emotional assets for the employees (Wang et al., 2024). While a leader expresses humility (LEH), it reveals psychological resources such as trust and engagement for the employees, and perceived organizational support (POS) provides emotional resources that facilitate proactive behaviours. Organizational culture (OC) intervenes in these relationships by fostering the support system that allows employees to freely share their creative concepts (EVB) (Bogale & Debela, 2024). The theory postulates that when resources are available, employees will especially opt for constructive behaviours such as voice because they believe they have adequate resources to deal with any negative consequences or stress that might ensue from such actions (Krefft et al., 2024).

### *Leader Expressed Humility*

LEH refers to a leader's demonstration of humility through behaviours such as acknowledging their limitations, appreciating others' contributions, and being open to feedback (Chintakananda, 2023).

### ***Perceived Organizational Support***

POS entails employees' perception that their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Kim et al., 2024).

### ***Organizational Culture***

OC stands for organizational culture and is a system of intrinsic assumptions, beliefs and values held by the members of an organization (Ezra & Charles, 2023).

### ***Employee Voice Behaviour***

EVB is the act by workers of forwarding suggestions, opinions or complaints to enhance organizational operations (Ullah et al., 2023).

### ***Perceived Organization Support and Employee Voice Behaviour***

Perceived Organizational Support (POS) reflects employees' belief that their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Kurtessis et al., 2017). POS fosters a sense of obligation in employees to reciprocate the organization's support through positive work behaviours, including voice behaviour, which entails expressing ideas or concerns to improve organizational processes (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Morrison, 2011). Building on Van Dyne & LePine (1998), POS can be viewed as lowering the perceived cost side of the risk–benefit calculus of voice, while simultaneously signalling organizational openness to change (Morrison, 2011). Although studies have not directly examined POS and employee voice behaviour, research suggests a positive connection (Bergeron, 2020). (Detert & Treviño, 2010) found that supportive organizational leadership fosters voice, implying that a supportive organization, as perceived through POS, may similarly encourage voice behaviour. When employees perceive strong organizational support, they feel encouraged to engage in voice behaviours due to a lowered perception of risk and an increased sense of psychological safety (Detert & Edmondson, 2011; Tucker et al., 2008). POS has been linked to several beneficial work outcomes, such as increased commitment and reduced turnover intentions (Kurtessis et al., 2017). This positive environment encourages employees to voice suggestions without fear, enhancing employee voice behaviour (Zou & Chen, 2022). Conservation of Resources (COR) theory supports this by highlighting that POS provides resources that promote voice behaviour. So, we conclude by proposing that:

**H1:** There is a relationship between perceived organizational support and employee voice behaviour.

### ***Leader humility and employee voice behaviour***

Leader-expressed humility is a positive interpersonal behaviour possessed by a leader in identifying the strengths and abilities of others, appreciating, and teaching them for further improvements, and identifying one's own weaknesses (Ansong et al., 2024). The conservation of resources theory can be a study base in identifying the relationship between a leader's expressed humility and fellow employees' voice behaviour (Dong et al., 2020) When the leader finds that the followers have a high degree of capabilities, there are higher chances that the leader will express humility, promoting a trust relationship between the leader and the followers

(Yang et al., 2019). A study by Chaudhuri et al. (2024) found that there is a relationship between leader-expressed humility and employee voice, and this relationship is stronger in short-tenured employees than in long-tenured employees. Crucially, humble leaders demonstrate fallibility, reducing hierarchical distance, which Van Dyne & LePine (1998) identify as a key inhibitor of voice. Leader-expressed humility can lead to positive and constructive employee voice, boosting follower relational energy as employees will feel that they are getting more psychological resources just by interacting with the leader (Ma et al., 2020). Ansong et al. (2024) state that leader-expressed humility and employee engagement are related to each other as a positive relationship between employee and leader is made, giving the employee the freedom to engage freely with the leader.

Leader-expressed humility can bring creativity out of employees, fostering a more creative attitude, and this attitude is seen more in employees working in R&D teams, as their leaders have a greater chance of bringing out creativity in their employees (Yang & Xu, 2022). In Japan, presenteeism (where employees continue to work while sick or unwell) is a serious concern, but leader-expressed humility can create an environment where employees feel empowered to voice their concerns, giving them psychological safety and help in reducing presenteeism. (Matsuo et al., 2024). Leader-expressed humility can result in many aspects of employee behaviors, including but not limited to; follower trust in the leader (Cho et al., 2020; Liborius & Kiewitz, 2022), employee voice and team voice (Choi et al., 2024; Jia et al., 2024; Ma et al., 2020; Tan, 2022; Zhou & Chen, 2022; Zou & Chen, 2022; Ma et al., 2020), employee creativity and crafting (Liu et al., 2024; Son & Lee, 2023; Yang et al., 2019). To align with the previous research, the developed hypothesis is:

**H2:** There is a relationship between leader humility and employee voice behaviour.

### ***Organizational Culture, Perceived Organizational Support and Employee Voice Behaviour***

Culture in organizations refers to shared values, norms, and practices that shape how members interpret and react to their environment (Ouchi & Wilkins, 1985). A supportive culture can convert POS from a static perception into a dynamic resource-sharing norm, thereby amplifying its voice, enabling potential (Morrison, 2011). Past studies have shown a relationship between perceived organizational support (POS) and employee voice behaviour (EVB) through various mediators, such as psychological safety and job satisfaction (Chen et al., 2018; Li et al., 2013); Ullah et al., 2023). These mediators, similar to organizational culture, shape employees' perceptions and behaviors in response to organizational support. Organizational culture has also been identified as a mediator in various relationships with different independent and dependent variables. For example, it has mediated the relationship between transformational leadership and work outcomes (Burton & Peachey, 2014) and organizational performance and CEO values (Berson et al., 2005), underscoring its mediating role. Conservation of Resources Theory supports this relationship, as POS aids resource accumulation through culture. Accordingly, we conclude by hypothesizing:

**H3:** Organizational Culture mediates the relationship between perceived organization support and employee voice behaviour.

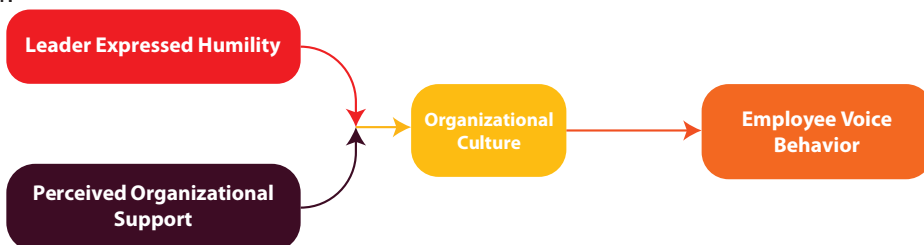
## **Organizational Culture, Leader Humility and Employee Voice Behaviour**

The concept of organizational culture was first introduced in the 1970s, and scholarly attention was given to the concept in the mid-1980s (Glynn, 2013). Culture can be best defined as the phenomena of how someone sees the world, what idea of the world someone has, and the behaviours being expressed (Schien, 1990). Organization culture is a set of values, norms, rules, and regulations that guide and act as the bottom line of any organization (Cote, 2023; Ouchi & Wilkins, 1985). Developed by Hobfoll (1989), the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory states that individuals are motivated to obtain, retain, and protect their resources, which include personal characteristics, objects, conditions, and energies (Salanova et al., 2006). There is little evidence of organizational culture as a mediator in the relationship between leader-expressed humility and employee voice behaviour. However, organizational culture was used as a mediator in the past literature, e.g., (Babu & Kushwaha, 2024; Bagga et al., 2023; Helalat et al., 2023; Sadeghi et al, 2023; Tran, 2023; Umuteme & Adegbite, 2023; Wiroonrath et al., 2024). Humble leaders' model collective learning norms that crystallize into cultural artefacts open communication channels, mistake tolerance rituals, and shared speak up" scripts (Owens & Hekman, 2012). These cultural cues, in turn, normalize voice behaviour (Morrison, 2011) and ensure the resource gains from LEH are institutionalized rather than leader-dependent.

Increased globalization and an escalated workforce have caused organizations to adopt change management strategies and transformational leadership style, and organizational culture mediates strongly between the two (Bagga et al., 2023). In the past, mediators were used to describe the relationship between leader-expressed humility and employee voice behavior such as psychological safety and work engagement (Kerse & Ozdemir, 2023), perceived leader effectiveness (Tan, 2022), employees' prosocial motivation and organizational concern (Zhou & Chen, 2022), psychological safety and self-efficacy (Zou & Chen, 2022). Since there is not much previous literature on the relationship between leader-expressed humility and employee voice behaviour mediated by organizational culture, evidence was gathered on whether organizational culture has been used as a mediator in the past and whether there is use of a mediator in assessing the relationship between leader-expressed humility and employee voice behaviour. In contrast to the previous research, the hypothesis being developed is:

**H4:** Organizational culture mediates the relationship between leader-expressed humility and employee voice behaviour.

Based on the abovementioned literature, the following research framework is proposed for the hypotheses testing, as shown in Figure 1. The proposed model illustrates the mediating role of organizational culture in the relationships between leader expressed humility and employee voice behaviour, and between perceived organizational support (POS) and employee voice behavior.



**Figure 1.** *Proposed research framework (Source(s): Authors' creation)*



## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### *Research design*

This study adopts a correlational research design to determine the strength and direction of the relationships between the variables. This design is well-suited for identifying patterns and connections, helping to establish whether these variables are interrelated and how changes in one may influence others. The study examines the associations among these constructs using data collected through a structured online survey. Participants are invited to complete the questionnaire electronically, ensuring convenience and timely responses. The details of the sources of the items used in the construct are provided in Table 1. However, the measuring scale for this study is attached in the Appendix.

To analyze the data, this study employed Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). This method was selected over Covariance-Based SEM (CB-SEM) because PLS-SEM is more appropriate for exploratory and prediction-oriented research. It is also better suited for complex models with multiple constructs and paths, particularly when the data may not meet multivariate normality assumptions. Additionally, PLS-SEM performs well with smaller to moderate sample sizes, making it an ideal choice for this study involving 257 respondents.

### *Population, Sampling and Sampling Technique*

The population for this study comprises employees working in Information Technology (IT) sector organizations based in Karachi, Pakistan. The IT sector is chosen because it encompasses fast-paced work environments where leadership and organizational culture play critical roles in influencing employee behaviour, including voice behavior. The employees are expected to have significant workplace experience to provide insights into the impact of leader-expressed humility and organizational culture on voice behaviour.

A purposive sampling technique is employed to select the participants. Purposive sampling is particularly suitable for this study because it allows the researcher to target individuals who are more likely to possess relevant experiential knowledge of organizational dynamics, thereby enhancing the relevance and validity of responses. This non-probability sampling method ensures that the chosen respondents meet the specific criteria relevant to the research objectives, such as working in the IT sector and having the necessary experience to respond meaningfully to the survey questions. Using Daniel Super's prior sample size calculator, the sample size is determined to be a minimum of 257 employees. However, the study plans to collect data from a maximum of 287 respondents for improved statistical power and reliability. This larger sample size ensures a robust analysis of the relationships among the variables.

### *Research Instrument*

The research instrument used for this study consists of four constructs, each adapted from established and validated scales (see Table 1). The first construct, Employee Voice Behaviour, was adapted from (Liang et al., 2024). This construct consists of 10 items measured on a 1-5 Likert scale. Sample item: "I proactively suggest new projects which benefit the work unit". It has demonstrated excellent reliability, with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.95. Perceived Organizational

Support (POS), this construct, consisting of 8 items, is sourced from (Eisenberger et al., 1986), and is measured on a 1-5 Likert scale. Sample item: “My organization values my contribution to its well-being”. The reliability for this scale is high, with a Cronbach’s Alpha of 0.96. Leader Expressed Humility, the third construct, is adapted from (Owens et al., 2013) It consists of 9 items and is rated on a 1-5 Likert scale. Sample item: “My manager actively seeks feedback, even if it is critical“. It has demonstrated strong reliability, with a Cronbach’s Alpha of 0.93. Organizational Culture, the fourth construct, adapted from (Haq et al., 2023). This construct comprises 13 items measured on a 1-5 Likert scale. Sample item: “I work in detail”. It has shown acceptable reliability, with a Cronbach’s Alpha of 0.812.

**Table 1.** *Summary of Research Instrument*

Variable	Authors / Source	No. of Items
Employee Voice Behavior	(Liang et al., 2024)	10
Perceived organizational support	(Eisenberger et al., 1986)	8
Leader Expressed Humility	(Owens et al., 2013)	9
Organizational Culture	(Haq et al., 2023)	13

**Common method variance**

In this survey-based study, the possibility of Common Method Variance (CMV) is acknowledged, as it can occur when both independent and dependent variables are measured using the same method. Harman's single-factor test is conducted to assess CMV. Additionally, inter-construct correlation checks are performed to identify any multicollinearity issues that could distort the findings. Preventative steps, such as improving question clarity and ensuring anonymity, are also in place to minimize CMV risks.

**RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS**

***Use of Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling and Statistical Package For The Social Sciences***

The core objective of this research is to assess the relationships between perceived organizational support (POS), leader-expressed humility (LEH), organizational culture (OC), and employee voice behaviour (EVB) through a mediation model. To investigate these relationships, the survey method was employed, targeting employees and managers from the IT sector in Karachi, Pakistan.

Data were collected from 287 participants and cleaned using SPSS, reducing the final dataset to 257 valid responses. SPSS facilitated the initial data screening, and the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) technique was applied using Smart PLS for the primary analysis. The PLS-SEM method was chosen for its ability to handle complex models, incorporating both endogenous and exogenous variables, and is especially useful for predictive modelling (Franziska & Alina, 2024).

***Respondent Profile***

The respondents had a nearly balanced gender distribution, with 51.8% female and 48.2% male participants. Age-wise, the largest group of respondents (42.4%) fell within the



20-25 years category, followed by 25-30 years (34.2%), 31-34 years (12.8%), and 35 years or above (10.5%). Educational attainment showed that most respondents (80.2%) held graduate degrees, with smaller proportions holding undergraduate (14.8%) and doctoral degrees (5.1%), as shown in Table 2.

In terms of experience in the IT sector, 31.1% had over four years of experience, while others had 0-1 years (28.4%), 2-3 years (30%), and 3-4 years (10.5%) of experience. Regarding their hierarchical positions, 67.3% were at the middle level, while 32.7% were at the entry level. These demographic details provide an insightful overview of the sample population and highlight the diversity in education, experience, and roles, which contribute to the robustness of the results.

**Table 2.** *Sample Demographic*

Demographic		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	124	48.2
	Female	133	51.8
Age	20-25 years	109	42.4
	25-30 years	88	34.2
	31-34 years	33	12.8
	35 and above	27	10.5
Education	Undergraduate	38	14.8
	Graduate	206	80.2
	Doctorate	13	5.1
Hierarchy	Entry level	84	32.7
	Middle level	173	67.3
Year of Experience	0-1 year	73	28.4
	2-3 years	77	30.0
	3-4 years	27	10.5
	above 4 years	80	31.1

### ***Outer model measurement***

In the PLS-SEM approach, validating the outer model measurement is critical before proceeding with structural modelling. In this study, the outer model was assessed through composite reliability (CR), Cronbach's Alpha, and factor loadings, which confirmed the internal consistency and reliability of the constructs. Table 3 presents the reliability and validity scores, indicating that all constructs met the required thresholds for these indicators. The results of the Reliability and Validity analysis are summarized in Figure 2.

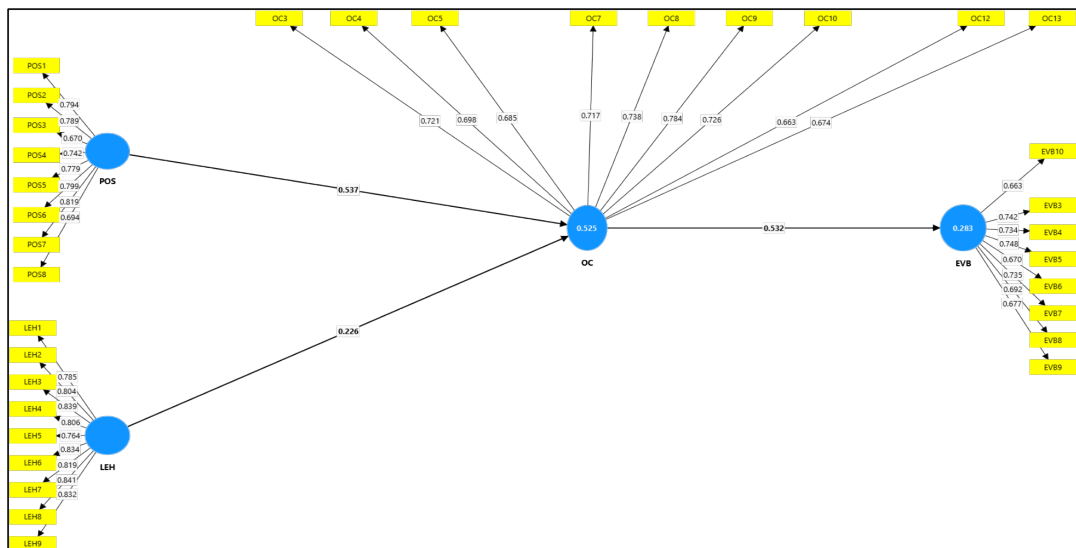
### ***Convergent validity***

Convergent validity was verified by analyzing the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct. The AVE measures the shared variance between observed variables and their latent constructs, with a threshold of 0.50 indicating adequate convergent validity (Cheung et al., 2024). Table 3 reveals that the AVE values for all constructs were greater than the threshold, except for the construct of Employee Interaction (EI), which fell short of the recommended level. This suggests that all constructs, except EI, exhibit strong convergent validity, confirming that the measurement items effectively represent their respective constructs.

These results confirm the convergent validity of most of the constructs, as the majority of AVE values surpass 0.50.

**Table 3. Convergent validity and reliability**

Construct	Item	P-values	Factor Loadings	Cronbach Alpha	CR	AVE
Employee Voice Behaviour	EVB3	0.000	0.742	0.858	0.889	0.502
	EVB4	0.000	0.734			
	EVB5	0.000	0.748			
	EVB6	0.000	0.67			
	EVB7	0.000	0.735			
	EVB8	0.000	0.692			
	EVB9	0.000	0.677			
	EVB10	0.000	0.663			
Leader Expressed Humility	LEH1	0.000	0.785	0.936	0.946	0.663
	LEH2	0.000	0.804			
	LEH3	0.000	0.839			
	LEH4		0.806			
	LEH5	0.000	0.764			
	LEH6		0.834			
	LEH7		0.819			
	LEH8		0.841			
	LEH9		0.832			
Organizational Culture	OC3	0.000	0.721	0.879	0.903	0.508
	OC4	0.000	0.698			
	OC5	0.000	0.685			
	OC7	0.000	0.717			
	OC8	0.000	0.738			
	OC9	0.000	0.784			
	OC10	0.000	0.726			
	OC12	0.000	0.663			
	OC13	0.000	0.674			
Perceived organizational support	POS1	0.000	0.794	0.896	0.917	0.581
	POS2	0.000	0.789			
	POS3	0.000	0.670			
	POS4	0.000	0.742			
	POS5	0.000	0.779			
	POS6	0.000	0.799			
	POS7	0.000	0.819			
	POS8	0.000	0.694			



**Figure 2.** Reliability and Validity Analysis

### **Discriminant validity**

Discriminant validity ensures that constructs in the model are distinct and not overly correlated with one another. It was assessed using (Lim, 2024) criterion, which compares the square root of the AVE with the correlations between constructs. Table 4 reveals that the diagonal elements (square roots of AVE) are greater than the corresponding off-diagonal correlation values, confirming discriminant validity across the constructs.

The results establish the discriminant validity as per Fornell and Larcker's criterion, showing that each construct is sufficiently distinct from others.

**Table 4.** Discriminant Validity

	<b>EVB</b>	<b>LEH</b>	<b>OC</b>	<b>POS</b>
EVB	0.709			
LEH	0.441	0.814		
OC	0.532	0.636	0.713	
POS	0.46	0.764	0.709	0.762

### **Structural model and hypothesis testing**

With the outer model validated, we evaluated the inner structural model. This involved analyzing the relationships between the constructs and testing the developed hypotheses. The standardized path coefficients, as shown in Figure 3, were used to assess the significance of the relationships. Table 5 summarizes the hypothesis testing results.

### **Hypothesis Testing Results**

The results indicate that perceived organizational support (POS) significantly influences employee voice behaviour (EVB) with a coefficient of 0.289 and a p-value of 0.000. Similarly, leader-expressed humility (LEH) also showed a positive and significant impact on employee voice behaviour with a coefficient of 0.124 and a p-value of 0.007.

Table 5. Summary of Hypothesis

Hypothesis	Estimates	SD	T-values	P-values	Decision
H1: POS -> EVB	0.289	0.054	5.252	0.000	Accept
H2: LEH -> EVB	0.124	0.044	2.710	0.007	Accept

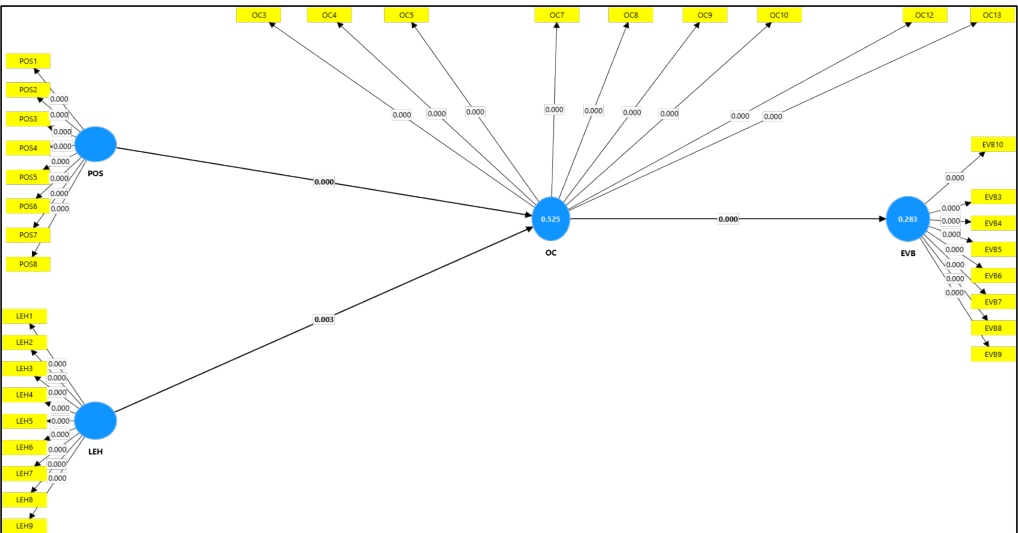


Figure 3. Hypothesis Testing

These findings confirm that both POS and LEH play significant roles in promoting employee voice behaviour in organizations.

Mediation Analysis

The mediation effect of organizational culture (OC) on the relationships between POS, LEH, and EVB was examined using the bootstrapping method recommended by (Mustafa et al., 2016). The results indicate that OC mediates the effects of both POS and LEH on EVB. The mediation effects were significant, with the bootstrapped results showing p-values below 0.05 for both mediation paths, thus supporting the hypotheses related to mediation as shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Summary of mediation analysis

Hypothesis	Estimates	SD	T-values	P-values	Decision
H3: POS x OC -> EVB	0.289	0.054	5.252	0.000	Accept
H4: LEH x OC -> EVB	0.124	0.044	2.710	0.007	Accept

Predictive relevance of the model

The predictive relevance of the model was tested using the R-squared values (R<sup>2</sup>), which assess the model's explanatory power. In this study, the R<sup>2</sup> value for employee voice behaviour was 0.283, indicating moderate predictive accuracy. According to (Peng, 2012) R<sup>2</sup> values above 0.19 indicate weak predictive accuracy, while values above 0.33 and 0.67 reflect moderate and substantial accuracy, respectively.

Thus, the  $R^2$  value of 0.283 reflects a moderate level of predictive relevance for the model in predicting employee voice behaviour, affirming the overall effectiveness of the proposed research framework as shown in Table 7.

**Table 7.** Summary of  $R^2$  value of the endogenous latent variable

Endogenous latent variable	Predecessor variables	$R^2$ Values	Level of Predictive
Accuracy			
Employee voice behaviour	Perceived organization behavior Leader-expressed humility	0.283	Moderate

**Table 8.** Hypotheses Assessment Summary

Hypothesis	Relationship	Estimate	P-Value	Result
H1	POS → EVB	0.289	0.000	Accepted
H2	LEH → EVB	0.124	0.007	Accepted
H3	POS × OC → EVB (Mediation)	0.289	0.000	Accepted
H4	LEH × OC → EVB (Mediation)	0.124	0.007	Accepted

## DISCUSSION

This research aims to establish the role of POS, LEH, and OC on the EVB in the Information Technology (IT) sector of Karachi. This paper has established that employee voice behaviour, which is essential in enhancing organization's flexibility and creativity, is significantly influenced by the organization's support, leadership's humility, and overall culture. The result of this study is consistent with the expectations set in previous studies, such as (Liang et al., 2024) and (Eisenberger et al., 1986), proving that both POS and LEH have a positive relationship with EVB, and OC plays the role of a mediator.

The study's results confirm that when employees feel valued by their organizations (high POS), they are more likely to engage in EVB, corroborating prior studies that underline the critical role of POS in encouraging employee engagement and initiative (Detert & Treviño, 2010). Similarly, LEH positively impacts EVB, suggesting that leaders who demonstrate humility foster an environment where employees feel comfortable voicing their ideas and concerns. These outcomes align with existing literature, which suggests that humble leadership styles are integral in creating trust and open communication within teams (Ali et al., 2021). Additionally, the role of OC as a mediator between POS, LEH, and EVB highlights the importance of a supportive and adaptable culture in reinforcing the impact of leadership and organizational practices on employee behaviour. Overall, Table 8 summarizes the hypotheses assessment and tells how this study advances our understanding of how supportive and humble leadership, paired with a positive organizational culture, can facilitate voice behaviour among employees in fast-paced work environments like the IT sector. Moreover, this study aligns with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8, which promotes "decent work and economic growth" emphasizing the importance of fostering environments that encourage employee participation and voice, critical for sustainable organizational development.

## **CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### ***Conclusion***

This study provides theoretical implications for the study and analysis of employee voice behavior in organizations, especially in the IT sector of a developing country. It also contributes to POS, LEH, and OC by showing that these constructs are not only distinct but also how they collectively impact EVB through a single integrated model. Namely, this paper focuses on OC as a mediator, contributing to developing the organizational behavior theories that incorporate the COR theory and leadership models. Based on the PLS-SEM analysis, this study supports the hypothesized relationship that OC strengthens the influence of POS and LEH on EVB by providing a better conceptual understanding of how organizational culture enhances these relationships.

It also extends the leader humility literature, which is a comparatively new area of investigation, to a high-power distance culture like Pakistan, where voice is not necessarily valued. Therefore, this paper proves that LEH has a positive impact on EVB and that humble leadership can enhance communication irrespective of cultural barriers in hierarchical organizations. In addition, this study contributes to a scarce literature on employee voice behavior in developing countries, especially in Pakistan, where the organizational processes may vary from those operating in Western countries. Therefore, the findings offer a productive reference point for studies of voice behavior and organizational support across various cultural and industrial contexts.

### ***Theoretical Implications***

This study provides theoretical implications for the study and analysis of employee voice behaviour in organizations especially in the IT sector in a developing country. It also contributes to POS, LEH, and OC by showing that these constructs are not only distinct but also how they collectively impact EVB through a single integrated model. Namely, this paper focuses on OC as a mediator, contributing to developing the organizational behaviour theories that incorporate the COR theory and leadership models. Based on the PLS-SEM analysis, this study supports the hypothesized relationship that OC strengthen the influence of POS, LEH and EVB by providing a better conceptual understanding of how organizational culture enhances these relationships.

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## ***Managerial Implications***

The findings from this study provide several managerial implications for managers and leaders who want to encourage employee voice behaviour in the workplace. First, the perceived organizational support, that is, POS, should be high for employees to open up and give constructive criticisms. Managers can do this by acknowledging their employees and ensuring they have the resources to fulfil their duties effectively and by giving them steady feedback and encouragement. Such practices help to remind an employee that they are wanted and should contribute positively to the achievement of the organizational goals. Organizations aiming to support SDG 8 can achieve this by fostering a culture that encourages employees to participate actively in problem-solving and decision-making processes.

Thus, leader-expressed humility (LEH) is another antecedent of employee voice. Friendly leaders who are also humble enough to accept that they are wrong or to solicit opinions from other people are likely to encourage employees to contribute their ideas and to come forward with their grievances. Consequently, emerging leadership training programs that foster humility, openness, and active listening will likely be very useful. Moreover, there is a mediating role of organizational culture (OC), which means that the attempts to create an effective, inclusive, flexible, and supportive OC are unattainable. Therefore, managers should work to ensure that the organization has a POS and LEH which support the positive effects on EVB, through promoting transparency, inclusiveness and responsiveness. Managers can enhance their organisation's fluidity, creativity, and workforce contentment by promoting both humble leadership and a supportive culture. Humble leaders who openly acknowledge employees' inputs create a collaborative atmosphere, reinforcing employee loyalty and productivity. This is particularly relevant for SDG 16, which promotes inclusive and participatory decision-making. Implementing these managerial practices can make organizations more adaptable, innovative, and resilient, aligning with the broader objectives of sustainable economic growth and social inclusion outlined in the SDGs.

## ***Limitations***

Nevertheless, there are certain limitations to this study, which are discussed below to highlight the research avenues for future research. First, it used a correlational study design, which hampers the determination of causality between POS, LEH, OC, and EVB. The future research could use longitudinal research designs that would enable them to analyze the changes in these relations over time. Furthermore, the study relied on self-reported data, which, despite efforts to control for common method variance (CMV), may still introduce bias. Using a mixed-methods approach, incorporating qualitative interviews or observational data could provide a more nuanced understanding of the factors that drive EVB.

One of the limitations is that the study is confined to the IT sector in Karachi, Pakistan, so there might be less extension of the result to other sectors or other areas of Pakistan. Further research could extend the sample to cover different industries and states to establish whether the pattern detected in this study applies to other kinds of organizations and cultures. Cross-country studies would also be helpful, especially where there are different dimensions of culture and leadership in developed and developing countries. Moreover, this study focused on three antecedents of EVB: POS, LEH, and OC. It is also suggested for future research to examine other potential mediating variables, including job satisfaction, organizational commitment and transformational leadership, which may also affect EVB.

Lastly, while this study confirmed OC's mediating role, the mechanisms through which it mediates the relationships between POS, LEH, and EVB were not explored in detail. The research could explore further how certain characteristics of OC, namely adaptability, supportiveness, and empowerment, facilitate the culture of voice behaviour.

### **Recommendations**

The findings from this study provide several managerial implications for managers and leaders who want to encourage employee voice behavior in the workplace. First, the perceived organizational support (POS) should be high for employees to open and give constructive criticism. Managers can do this by acknowledging their employees, ensuring they have the resources to fulfil their duties effectively, and giving them regular feedback and encouragement. Such practices help remind employees that they are valued and should contribute positively to the achievement of organizational goals. Organizations aiming to support SDG 8 can achieve this by fostering a culture that encourages employees to participate actively in problem-solving and decision-making processes.

Leader-expressed humility (LEH) is another critical antecedent of employee voice. Friendly leaders who are humble enough to accept mistakes or solicit opinions from others are more likely to foster a psychologically safe environment. Consequently, emerging leadership training programs that emphasize humility, openness, and active listening will be highly beneficial. Moreover, the mediating role of organizational culture (OC) underscores the importance of cultivating an inclusive, flexible, and supportive organizational environment. Managers should work to ensure that POS and LEH are reinforced by a culture that promotes transparency, inclusiveness, and responsiveness.

By promoting both humble leadership and a supportive culture, managers can enhance organizational agility, employee satisfaction, and innovation. Humble leaders who value employee input create collaborative and committed work environments, reinforcing loyalty and productivity. These practices align with SDG 16, which promotes inclusive and participatory decision-making. Ultimately, applying these managerial insights can help organizations become more resilient and adaptive, contributing to sustainable economic growth and workplace equity.

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