

A Key To Innovation: Role Of Voice, Emotional Intelligence And Self Efficacy

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Abstract

For organizational success the concept of employee voice and innovative behavior are very important as they nurture creativity, organizational learning, and absorption in the organizational environment. The current study examined the mediating role of two vital variables-self-efficacy and emotional intelligence in the relationship between employee voice and innovative behavior. A conceptual framework is built on social cognitive theory and emotional intelligence theory, which proposed that employees with high self-efficacy and emotional intelligence are more likely to engage in employee voice and innovative behavior. The findings also revealed that employees with high self-efficacy and emotional intelligence are more likely to involve in voicing behavior and positively influences their innovative behavior in the workplace. Practical implication highlighted that the organizations can augment innovative behavior by promoting a supportive and inclusive work environment that encourages employee voice, and by providing training and development opportunities to enhance employees' self-efficacy and emotional intelligence.

Key Words: *Employee voice, Self-Efficacy, Emotional Intelligence, Innovative Behaviour.*

Introduction

In Today's highly dynamic and competitive business world employee voice behavior and innovative behavior are considered crucial for organizational success (Rafique & Bukhari, 2022). Organizations are always in search of employees who are ready to engage in voicing behaviour like they suggest better ways to solve problems, share new ideas and enhance

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efficiency and productivity through innovation. However, it is also a fact that all employees in the organization are not involved in the employee voice behaviour (Botha & Steyn, 2022).

Literature reveals that two important individual level factors- emotional intelligence and self-efficacy are considered crucial to raise voice and influence innovative behaviour (Faig, Smith, & Dimitroff, 2023; Gozali, 2022; Hsiao, Chang, Tu, & Chen, 2011; Kumari, Abbas, Hwang, & Cioca, 2022). Objective of this study is to analyze the mediating effect of self-efficacy and emotional intelligence in the relationship between employee voice behavior and innovative behavior.

Innovative behaviour at the work place is deemed vital for an organization to compete and flourish in current fast paced business environment (Selvaraj & Joseph, 2020). The employee voice or speaking up in the organization is regarded as the key to unlock the innovative behaviour of the employees. However, this relationship of employee voice and innovative behaviour is complicated and subjected to various individual factors. This complex behaviour and the involvement of other factors prompt the researcher to conduct this study and examine the mediating role of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy (Ng & Lucianetti, 2016).

Self-efficacy is regarded as persons belief in their ability to perform a specific job with success, whereas emotional intelligence indicates the ability to recognize, comprehend, and control one's own and other's emotions (Bandura, 1977; Gozali, 2022; Hsiao et al., 2011; Sofiyan, Sembiring, Danilwan, Anggriani, & Sudirman, 2022). In their study, Ferdowsi and Razmi (2022) examined that relationship between employee voice and innovative behavior is mediated by emotional intelligence.

For managers who want to nurture a culture of innovation in the organization, it is very important to examine the role of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy in relationship with employee voice and innovative behaviour (Chen & Cheng, 2023).

Keeping in view the previous research, the need of the current study arises from the fact that, although there is a lot of research is conducted on employee voice and innovative behaviour, however the joint mediating role of emotional intelligence is self-efficacy is ignored and very little attention is paid in this area (Memon, Ooi, Khalid, & Ghani, 2021; Muavia, Hussain, Sahibzada, & Wan Ismail, 2022). As the past studies have established the positive relationship of employee voice behaviour and innovative behaviour, there is still a need to know about the underlying processes that establish this relationship. (Mohammad, Nazir, & Mufti, 2023; Morrison, 2023; Tsameti, Bellou, & Tsamantouridis, 2023). It is evident from past researches that employee voice behaviour is an antecedent of innovative behaviour (Botha & Steyn, 2022; Selvaraj & Joseph, 2020; Tsameti et al., 2023). Whereas it is not fully examined that how emotional intelligence and self-efficacy influence the relationship of employee voice and innovative behaviour (Gázquez Linares, Molero Jurado, Pérez-Fuentes, Martos Martínez, & Simón Márquez, 2023; Umrani, Tariq, Bodolica, Nawaz, & Pahi, 2023).

Keeping in view the different contextual factors such as cultural norms, organizational values and style of leadership that may impact the relationship of employee voice and innovative behaviour. There is dearth of research work that particularly analyze the the function of contextual components in determining this connection in the Pakistani organizational context (Kumari et al., 2022; Umrani et al., 2023). This gap is a main hindrance for Pakistani organizations to build and design strategies to compete and thrive in the developed business world S(Rafique & Bukhari, 2022).

Even though there is an increased research work on the relationship of employee voice, self-efficacy, emotional intelligence and self-efficacy but there is scarcity of research in these areas in Pakistani organizations (Nazir, Shafi, Asadullah, Qun, & Khadim, 2021; Rasheed, Shahzad, & Nadeem, 2021). Moreover this gap in the knowledge is a big obstacle in the development of Pakistani organizations (Rafique & Bukhari, 2022). This gap in the research work on such important variables poses a number of challenges to Pakistani organizations (Sohail & Tahir, 2023; Umrani et al., 2023). This study aims to fill this gap by analyzing the mediating impact of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy and to provide the valuable body of knowledge, especially in Pakistani organizational settings. Given that, the present research proposes that emotional intelligence and self-efficacy plays significant role in the relationship between employee voice and innovative behavior.

Objective

The objective of the proposed study is to understand how self-efficacy and emotional intelligence play a mediating role in the relationship between employee voice behavior and innovative behavior.

1. Literature Review

1.1 Employee Voice Behaviour

Employee voice behaviour refers to communication of ideas, concerns, issues, opinions and suggestions, further the voice behaviour is discretionary and involuntary with the objective to bring betterment and positivity at the workplace (Morrison, 2023).

When organizations allow the employees to speak up freely, express their ideas without any fear and give suggestion independently, the decision making, problem solving, and innovation is much better as compared to those organizations where the culture of voicing is lacking. Employee voice behavior is conducive to build a positive culture that brings creativity, improvement and learning (Khan, Mowbray, & Wilkinson, 2023; Mohammad et al., 2023).

In addition, study of the past suggests that those organizations attract and retain top talent where the employee voice is supported and efficiently managed (Mohammad et al., 2023; Morrison, 2023). Likewise, if employees realize that their voice is attended effectively, and suggestions and opinions are given importance they are more loyal and committed to the organization. On the other extreme if the organizations do not hear the voice of employees and do not take into account employee voice behavior may face harm, like increased turnover, low morale, and loss of innovation and improvement (Tsameti et al., 2023).

1.2 Innovative Behaviour

Employees at the work place contribute to create, develop and implement the new ideas, procedures, policies and products that add value to the organization, the behaviour is called innovative behaviour (Shim, Park, & Chung, 2022). It is evident that the employees who have innovative behaviour are involved in two type of practices, that is they generate ideas and implement those ideas. Moreover, the employees with innovative behaviour are engaged in brainstorming, they frequently try new processes and technologies, find and suggest new ways

to solve the problems and take calculated risks to introduce new ideas and novel solutions. For organizational success and to gain competitive edge innovative behaviour is very significant and helpful for organizations to be adaptive to the changing environment (Opoku, Choi, & Kang, 2019; Wu, Li, Zheng, & Guo, 2020; Ye, Liu, & Tan, 2022).

Scholars have widely discussed the concept of innovative behaviour and there are more detailed definitions of innovative behaviour, but there is still an ambiguity that how innovative behaviour works at the workplace and what factors derive this behaviour (Garcia & Calantone, 2002; Gelaidan, Al-Swidi, & Al-Hakimi, 2023). The current study aims to address this issue by analyzing innovative behaviour with the interaction of different variables. Kanter (1988) discusses the different stages of innovative behaviour multi-stage process of innovation involves problem recognition and idea generation in the first stage, these stages include problem recognition and idea generation and converting the ideas into practical form. (Scott & Bruce, 1994). To be innovative at the workplace different stages of innovative behaviour require particular behaviour. Namely, the employees should be able to generate ideas to identify and recognize the problem and generate solution and implement the ideas to resolve the issues (Woodwark, Konrad, & Jung, 2022).

1.3 Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is a personality trait, that refers to the person's belief on his/her own abilities to perform a particular job and achieve a specific goal (Bandura, 1977). Self –efficacy is found positively connected to employee voice and innovative behaviour (Meyer, Niemand, Davila, & Kraus, 2022). Literature reveals that the employees who have self-efficacy in their personality, they are more confident to present their ideas and express their opinions, and are more involved in voice behaviour. (Meyer et al., 2022; Waddington, 2023). Likewise it is also found that self-efficacy is helpful to generate and implement new ideas it has a linkage with innovative behaviour (Waddington, 2023).

1.4 Emotional Intelligence

An American psychologist Salovey and Mayer in 1990 introduced the idea of emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence indicates individual's capability to recognize, comprehend and control or normalize one's own sentiments as well as the feelings of others.(Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Another definition of emotional intelligence states that According to Lopes (2016), emotional intelligence is a set of interconnected capabilities involved regulating and managing the emotions. There are three components of emotions such as emotion evaluation, emotion management, understanding and presentation of emotions, as emphasized by (Faig et al., 2023; Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2016). Literature on emotional intelligence recommends that individuals with increased emotional intelligence have the capacity to manage and control their emotions and also understand the emotions of others. (Duckett & Macfarlane, 2003). It is evident from the literature employees with elevated emotional intelligence effectively perform their job and are more productive for organization (Kulshrestha & Sen, 2006). Further, a positive relationship has been found between employee voice, emotional intelligence and innovative behaviour (Goldberg et al., 2019). Emotionally intelligent employees are able to better manage their communication, they communicate and express their ideas effectively and are involved in voicing behaviour (Faig et al., 2023; Ye et al., 2022). Furthermore, emotional

intelligence is a tool to develop employees' ability to realize the emotions and perspective of others', that leads to more creative and innovative ideas (Shin, Woodwark, Konrad, & Jung, 2022).

1.5 Employee Voice Behavior and Innovative Behavior

In the field of organizational behaviour employee voice behavior and innovative behavior has gained a central place and contribute to organizational development (Afsar, Shahjehan, Shah, & Wajid, 2019; Lee, Choi, & Kang, 2021; Shin et al., 2022). Employee voice behavior and innovative behavior are studied as individual, organizational, and contextual factors, and they produce positive results for the individuals (Badru, Karadas, & Olugbade, 2022; Tsameti et al., 2023). In today's dynamic business environment only those organizations can thrive that effectively support and promote employee voice behavior and innovative behavior (Shin et al., 2022). Employee voice behaviour and innovative behaviour are positively related concepts. Further research in this field can be more productive and valuable for the organizations and will be helpful to determine the mechanisms and dynamics of employee voice behavior and innovative behavior, and their implications for organizational success. (Morrison, 2023; Opoku et al., 2019; Tsameti et al., 2023; Younas, Wang, Javed, & Haque, 2022). Employee voice is a predictor of innovative behaviour, when employees at the work place independently raise their voice in the form of opinion and ideas, it can arouse a sense of creativity, produce new ideas, and facilitate innovation within the organization (Rafique & Bukhari, 2022; Shim et al., 2022). Furthermore, innovative behavior is considered as an outcome of employee voice behavior, that is employee who raise voice they generate and implement new ideas while they are performing their job (Rafique & Bukhari, 2022; Selvaraj & Joseph, 2020; Shin et al., 2022). For innovative employees raising voice is very important to share their ideas, brain storming, and to collaborate with other employees and top management to give a practical shape these novel ideas. (Molero Jurado, Pérez-Fuentes, Oropesa Ruiz, Simón Márquez, & Gázquez Linares, 2019; Sofiyan et al., 2022). Given that, voicing behavior and innovative behavior can strengthen each other. Hence, literature proves that employee voice behavior is positively linked with innovative behaviour (Botha & Steyn, 2022; Molero Jurado et al., 2019; Wu et al., 2020).

Hypothesis 1 employee voice is positively associated with innovative behaviour.

1.6 Mediating Role of Self-Efficacy and Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence and self-efficacy as a mediator in relationship between employee voice and innovative behaviour remained the topic of interest in previous researches (Chen & Cheng, 2023; Molero Jurado et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2020). Self-efficacy considered as the personal characteristic of individual. It is the trust and perception about oneself to perform the task effectively and achieve goals successfully, whereas emotional intelligence refers to the ability to identify and control one's own emotions and those of others (Chen & Cheng, 2023; Saeed, Zafar, & Hanif, 2022; Zhao & Qin, 2021).

It is obvious from the past literature that self-efficacy and emotional intelligence can play a role of mediator in relationship between employee voice behavior and innovative behavior (Ferdowsi & Razmi, 2022; Gázquez Linares et al., 2023; Pan, Fan, Wang, & Li, 2022; Wu et

al., 2020). Researchers found that employees with elevated self-efficacy and emotional intelligence are engaged in voice behavior, which leads to amplified innovative behavior (Gázquez Linares et al., 2023; Saeed et al., 2022).

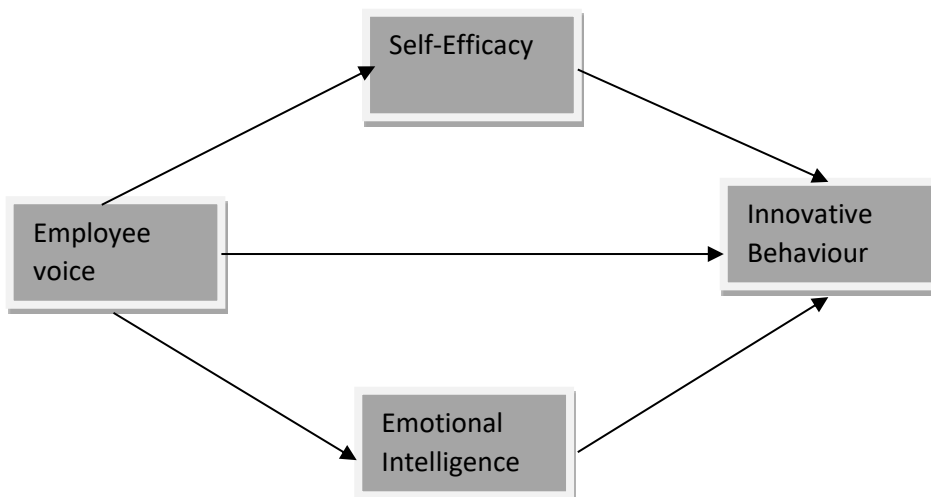
In a study conducted by Deng et al. (2022) it is evident that emotional intelligence can act as the mediator in relationship between voice behavior and creativity. Authors further found that high emotional intelligence can help employees to regulate their emotion and communicate effectively, that causes increased innovative behaviour.

Given that, from the above literature it is suggested that employees with high self-efficacy and emotional intelligence can better express their ideas and perspectives and can perform more innovatively.

Hypothesis 2: Self-efficacy mediates the relationship of employee voice and innovative behaviour.

Hypothesis 3: Emotional intelligence mediated the relationship of employee voice and innovative behaviour.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study



2. Research Methodology

A cross sectional design is adopted in the current study. Measurement scales are adapted and validated. The study aims to investigate the mediating role of self-efficacy and emotional intelligence in the relationship between employee voice behavior and innovative behavior.

2.1 Sample and Sampling Technique

The study's target population was the teachers from various educational institutions. Data was collected from different institutions to ensure generalizability. Samples were selected through convenience sampling technique to select a sample of 300 teachers. The inclusion criteria for the study ensured that employees who have been working in their current organization for at least six months. The study maintained the privacy and confidentiality by obtaining informed consent and ensuring that the collected data is kept confidential and secure.

Data was entered in IBM SPSS vol.26. Descriptive and inferential statistical analysis was also conducted by using SPSS. Mediation analysis was done in Andrew Hays process Macros.

2.2 Measurement Tools

All scales in the study were already established. Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS), developed by Schutte and colleagues based on Salovey and Mayer's (1990) model of EI was used in this study. This scale measures EI based on self-report responses to 33 items that evaluates the emotional intelligence of self and others. The scales measured the responses to each item by using a 5-point likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The original EIS had demonstrated high internal consistency (Cronbach's α ranging from 0.87 to 0.90), whereas in the current study α is 0.91 (Schutte et al., 1998).

In this study, the short version of the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) was used to measure self-efficacy. The scale consists of 12 items on five-point likert scale. The reliability for the original 12-item scale is 0.90 whereas in the current study α value for the scale is 0.81 (Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

To measure employee voice behaviour the study adapted the scale developed by (Liang, Farh, & Farh, 2012) cronbach's α for the current study is 0.84. Innovative Behavior Scale developed by (Janssen, 2000).

2.3 Data Analysis

Table 1 gives the descriptive statistics reliability of the constructs, correlation, mean, standard deviation. As the table presents all measure and values are within the acceptable range. A strong positive correlation between employee voice behaviour and innovative behaviour is evident. Hence hypothesis 1 is supported by these results.

Table 1 Bivariate Correlations Among the Study Variables with Alpha-Reliability, Mean, and Standard Deviation of the Variables.

	1	2	3	4
1 Employee Voice	1			
2 Self-efficacy	.408**	1		
3 Innovative Behaviour	.741**	.494**	1	

4	Emotional Intelligence	.936**	.430**	.718**	1
	A	.84	.81	.85	.91
	M	38.683	44.047	28.537	127.308
	SD	6.96	8.31	4.98	19.10

3. Results

3.1 Mediation Analysis

Mediation analysis is run in IBM SPSS v.23 using Process by Andrew Hays. The results show that there is a significant indirect effect of self-efficacy in relationship between the employee voice and innovative behaviour. Direct effect that is the effect of employee voice on innovative behaviour with the inclusion of self-efficacy as mediator is also significant. Hence there is a partial mediation of self-efficacy is found in the model, so the hypothesis 2 is also accepted.

Table 2 Mediating Effects of Self-efficacy and Emotional Intelligence in Relationship between Employee Voice and Innovative Behaviour

Relationship	Total Effect	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	CI	p		Conclusion
					UL	LL	
EV->SE->IB	0.52	0.46	.067	0.044	.093	.000	Partial Mediation
EV->EI->IB	0.52	0.39	0.13	0.018	0.35	.000	Partial Mediation

Emotional intelligence was second mediator in the model. Results also highlighted that there is a significant direct of emotional intelligence in the model and indirect effect is also significant, so emotional intelligence is partially mediating the relationship of employee voice and innovative behaviour. Hence third hypothesis is also accepted table 2

4. Discussion

It is clear from the analysis that self-efficacy and emotional intelligence significantly mediate the relationship of employee voice and innovative behaviour. The study indicated that employees with elevated self-efficacy and emotional intelligence are more inclined to engage in voicing and are more innovative; these findings are consistent with previous studies (Wu & Wang, 2022; Carmeli et al., 2010).

Employee voice and innovative behavior are important for organizational success, as the voice behaviour give opportunity to employees to speak up and share their ideas, suggestions and concern, which in turn support the organization to improve its performance. Further the study explored that emotional intelligence and self-efficacy intervene between the relationship of employee voice and innovative behaviour. According to results of this study teachers who have control on their emotions and understand other's emotions and feelings are more involved in voice behaviour and can perform their jobs more innovatively. Likewise, the teachers who believe in their ability to perform at the work place are engaged in voicing behaviour and more

innovative than those who do not have the trait of self efficacy. These results are also proved from the previous studies (Chen & Cheng, 2023; Gázquez Linares et al., 2023; Meyer et al., 2022).

4.1 Implications

Theoretically, the model analyzed in the study contributes to the realm of human resource management. The constructs in this study are related to the personal character of individuals that can help organizations to outperform and gain competitive advantage. Thus, the study provides a theoretical insight to understand these constructs. The joint mediating effect of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy provides a new insight for human resource managers. Finally, teacher's voice and innovative behaviour is influenced by personal characteristics the self-efficacy and emotional intelligence. To contribute and to gain competitive advantage organization specially teaching institute can identify new ways to develop and support these skills and qualities, by better understanding these relationships.

The study can have significant implications for organizations. The study gives the insight that how individual traits can influence the relationship of employee voice and innovative behaviour.

This can help organizations to plan more effective strategy to promote innovation in employees. Organizations can develop training programs to enhance emotional intelligence and self-efficacy. Moreover, organizations should development an environment and culture that encourage and support employee voice behaviour and facilitate innovative behaviour at the work place. Employee voice should be given values and rewards, which can improve the chance for employee's engagement and innovative behaviour.

4.2 Limitations

There are some limitations, first the study used a cross sectional design that cause the restrictions to draw causal inferences. In order to overcome these short comings further studies should use longitudinal study design. Secondly, in the present study convenience sampling technique is used, which reduces the generalizability of the findings. To improve and ensure generalizability in future, random sampling techniques should be used in the researches.

Thirdly, the findings of the study are limited to only one type of organizations. To remove this potential limitation relationship with other variables should be analyzed such as contextual factors like organizational culture and style of leadership in addition to the model under study.

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