Leader Voice Endorsement Transparency and Employee Voice Behaviour: The Moderating Role of Employee Workplace Status in the Sri Lankan Information Technology Sector

S. Manjula
Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Jaffna

L. Mayuran & T. Thasika
Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Jaffna

ABSTRACT: Employees' voice behaviour is increasingly recognized as an important source of information sharing, problem identification, innovation, and organizational learning. Drawing on Social Exchange Theory, this study examines the relationship between leader voice endorsement transparency and employee voice behaviour in the Sri Lankan Information Technology (IT) sector and tests whether employee workplace status moderates this relationship. Using a deductive quantitative design, data were collected from 235 employees through convenience sampling and analyzed using SPSS. Pearson correlation, linear regression, and moderation analysis were conducted. The results show a strong positive association between leader voice endorsement transparency and employee voice behaviour ($r = .61$, $p < .01$), and regression analysis indicates that leader voice endorsement transparency is a significant positive predictor of employee voice behaviour ($B = .55$, $\beta = .55$, $p < .001$). Employee workplace status also shows a significant positive main effect in the moderation model ($B = .21$, $\beta = .18$, $p < .001$). However, the interaction between leader voice endorsement transparency and workplace status is not statistically significant ($B = -.06$, $\beta = -.07$, $p = .100$). Therefore, H1 is supported, whereas H2 is not supported. The interaction coefficient is negative and does not provide evidence that the relationship is stronger for low-status employees or weaker for high-status employees. The findings therefore support the value of transparent leader communication as a predictor of employee voice, while not establishing workplace status as a boundary condition in this sample. The study contributes to the voice literature by examining leader voice endorsement transparency in a Sri Lankan IT context and by reporting a theoretically plausible but unsupported moderation hypothesis without overstating the statistical evidence. Practically, the findings suggest that organizations should make the criteria and reasoning used to evaluate employee suggestions clearer and provide consistent feedback across employees.

Keywords: Employee voice behaviour, Employee workplace status, Information Technology (IT) sector, Leader voice endorsement transparency, Social Exchange Theory (SET)

1 INTRODUCTION

Employee voice behaviour refers to the proactive expression of work-related ideas, concerns, or suggestions to improve other aspects of organizational functioning [22], [23] and is a vital source of innovation, flexibility, and effectiveness in organizational decision-making [2]. This is especially important for Sri Lankan IT firms, which are driven by rapid changes in technology and global competition that require the constant generation of ideas, the dissemination of information, and the active participation of employees. Despite recognizing the value of employee voice, many organizations continue to struggle with a critical issue: employees are sometimes reluctant to voice their

opinions because of their apprehensions about how leaders will appraise and respond to their suggestions [9], [27].

Existing research highlights several factors that influence leaders' endorsement of employee voice, such as the quality of employee suggestions [4], leader traits [8], [31], and characteristics of the employee who speaks up [21]. Yet, little attention has been paid to an important aspect: the clarity of the leader in communicating how he/she evaluates and endorses employee voice. This results in an endorsement "black box", which constrains employee comprehension of what makes good suggestions, and prevents greater engagement in voice behaviours [24].

To fill this gap, this study draws attention away from whether or not the endorsement happens, or the endorsement "event", and onto the transparency of the endorsement process, defined as leader voice endorsement transparency. Leader voice endorsement transparency refers to the degree of transparency around the criteria and decision-making process for endorsement by leaders. This study uses Social Exchange Theory to suggest that when leaders communicate transparently, it is a strong social signal that communicates social cues, which lessen the uncertainty and guide employee behaviour. Employees better understand the endorsement criteria and expectations with which to align their ideas and engage in constructive voice [40].

Additionally, this study proposes that employee workplace status moderates this link. This study suggests workplace status, or employees' perceived respect, prominence, and prestige within the workplace [11], [33], is a critical factor driving voice behaviour. Distinct from actual rank in the organization, workplace status is informally perceived social rank based on peer assessments [11], [39]. Lower workplace status employees perceive greater risks in speaking up because of their reduced political influence and opportunities to learn the norms of voice [32], [10].

In these circumstances, leader voice endorsement transparency is crucial. Openness helps to eliminate doubt and to increase employees' belief in their ability to provide valuable ideas and their confidence that they will be valued. This is consistent with the notion of voice efficacy, adapted from Bandura [1], i.e., the belief that one can successfully voice constructive ideas. As a result, leaders' communication of transparency in endorsing employee voice behaviour is expected to have a stronger positive effect on employee voice behaviour among employees at lower workplace status.

In line with these considerations, this study seeks to examine the influence of leader voice endorsement transparency on employee voice behaviour in the Sri Lankan IT industry, focusing on the moderating role of employee workplace status. In doing so, this study adds to the literature by extending Social Exchange Theory and emphasizing the role of leadership transparency in enhancing communication, inclusion, and innovation in organizations.

The following research questions will guide this research: What is the impact of transparency in leader voice endorsement on employee voice behaviour within the Sri Lankan IT sector? Does the employee workplace status moderate the relationship between leader voice endorsement transparency and employee voice behaviour? Consistent with these questions, the main objective of the research is to examine the impact of leader voice endorsement transparency on employee voice behaviour within the IT sector in Sri Lanka, with further emphasis on how the moderating factor is employee workplace status in Sri Lanka. In particular, the research will focus on examining the following relationship between leader voice endorsement transparency and employee voice behaviour: the moderating role of the employee's workplace status at the workplace in their relationship between leader voice endorsement transparency and employee voice behaviour. Additionally, the research aims to contribute to the development of Social Exchange Theory by pointing out the importance of transparent leadership practices in promoting mutual communication behaviours in organizations.

2 THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

2.1 *Leader voice endorsement transparency and employee voice behavior*

It is increasingly being recognized that Leader voice endorsement transparency is a significant leadership practice that determines employee voice behaviour, especially within knowledge-intensive sectors, like the

Sri Lankan IT sector. The concept of employee voice behaviour can be explained as discretionary sharing of ideas, suggestions, or concerns to enhance the effectiveness of the organization [30]. Although vital, in the case of uncertainty as to how the input will be measured, employees usually stay quiet as to whether the input will be measured fairly [9].

Using the Social Exchange Theory, workplace relationships are founded on reciprocity, where employees reciprocate positive attitudes and behaviour of the leader with positive responses [3]. In this regard, the transparency of the leader's voice may be theorized as a kind of supportive and unbiased treatment, a signal of respect, trust, and acknowledgment of employees' input.

To begin with, clear communication about the decisions on endorsements augurs more procedures with perceived fairness and organizational backing. Voice processes can be defined as being subjective in assessment and asymmetrical in terms of information between leaders and employees [13], [37]. By making it clear to the leaders how suggestions are evaluated and why specific ideas are supported, leaders decrease the uncertainties and enhance perceived equity. Previous studies indicate that fairness perceptions are the key determinants of favorable employee behaviours, and voice is one of them [8]. Such fair treatment, as suggested by Social Exchange Theory, enhances the social exchange relations, which motivates employees to reciprocate in positive ways, such as voice.

Second, the attitude of transparency associated with the leader's voice encourages trust because it explains the justification behind the decision-making procedures. Nepotism, prejudice, and favoritism among the employees can be reduced when they learn why their ideas can or cannot be implemented. One of the key processes in Social Exchange Theory is trust, as it underpins two-way relationships between leaders and employees [35], [36]. Empirical studies indicate that follower trust in their leaders leads to increased discretionary behaviours, such as employees speaking up, presenting ideas, and expressing concerns [33]. Therefore, transparency enhances trust, and this enhances employee voice behaviour.

Third, transparency in endorsement of voice by leaders is an indication of relational investment by leaders, indicating that employees are treasured members of the organization. This impression increases the feeling of duty and emotional attachment of employees to the company. According to Social Exchange Theory, when workers feel that there is a lot of organizational support, they feel obliged to reward the investment by acting in ways that are advantageous to the organization [14]. Employee voice behaviour may thus be interpreted as a positive reciprocity behaviour whereby employees will present ideas and suggestions in exchange for sustaining positive and transparent leadership behaviours.

Also, according to previous studies, the behaviours of leaders suggesting openness and support are crucial in facilitating voice behaviour [9], [30]. The transparency of endorsement processes by the leaders minimizes the perceived risk of speaking up, and they are able to provide a psychologically safe situation to the employees to share their opinions.

Leader voice endorsement transparency gains importance in the Sri Lankan IT sector, where innovation, knowledge sharing, and continuous improvement are essential for the success of the organization. Likely, when their ideas are viewed as being a real concern and fairly judged, employees would tend to voice their ideas as a way of reciprocating the favourable leadership treatment.

In general, the endorsement of leader voice transparency enhances the social exchange relationships through fairness, trust, and perceived organizational support. All these are reasons why the employees would look forward to giving back by improving employee voice behaviour.

Thus, we propose that:

H1: Leader voice endorsement transparency is positively associated with employee voice behaviour among employees in the Sri Lankan Information Technology (IT) sector.

2.2 *Moderating Role of Employee Workplace Status*

Workplace status refers to an employee's perceived respect, prestige, and standing within the workplace and is conceptually distinct from formal organizational rank [12]. Prior research shows that status-related perceptions can be associated with meaningful workplace outcomes, including how employees are evaluated and how they participate in social and organizational interactions

[5], [12], [16], [19]. Research on employee voice also indicates that employees' perceptions of interpersonal risk, authority, responsiveness, and their own standing can shape their willingness to speak up [9], [10], [17], [30].

These arguments provide a theoretical basis for examining workplace status as a possible boundary condition. Employees with lower perceived workplace status may face greater uncertainty about whether their suggestions will be taken seriously and may therefore be more attentive to explicit cues concerning how leaders evaluate voice. Conversely, employees with higher perceived status may have access to other relational or informational resources that reduce their reliance on formal guidance. More recently, Ji et al. [18] similarly theorized that leader voice endorsement transparency may be especially consequential for employees with lower workplace status because such employees can rely more heavily on explicit leader guidance when deciding whether to speak up.

Accordingly, the present study tests, rather than assumes, whether workplace status changes the strength of the relationship between leader voice endorsement transparency and employee voice behaviour in the Sri Lankan IT sector. Because the proposed differential effect requires evidence from a statistically significant interaction, the hypothesis is evaluated solely on the significance of the interaction term

Thus, we propose that:

H2: Employee workplace status moderates the relationship between leader voice endorsement transparency and employee voice behaviour among employees in the Sri Lankan IT sector, such that the relationship is stronger when employee workplace status is low rather than high.

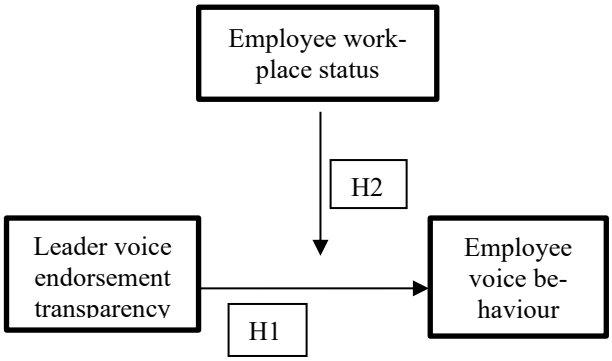


Figure 1. Hypothetical research model (source: Authors' compilation)

3 METHODOLOGY

The IT industry in Sri Lanka, one of the country's most dynamic sectors, is a relevant environment to assess employee voice behaviours [27]. Given the global competition, technological change, and innovation in IT firms, employee voice behaviour is crucial in this sector [40]. But factors such as workload, time constraints, and fast-paced work environments can affect employee voice behaviour; hence, effective leader communication is crucial [15].

This research takes a quantitative approach [20] to examine how leader endurance endorsement transparency influences employee voice behaviour, with employee workplace status as the moderator. A sample of Sri Lankan IT company employees was used.

The respondents were accessed using a convenience sampling technique, whereby the researchers used their networks to reach out to them. A non-probability sampling technique was chosen because it was practical and effective to reach those subjects who were readily available and who consented to take part, especially when time and resources were limited [38]. Despite the drawback of convenience sampling in generalizability, it has found extensive application in organizational studies where there is no easy access to the entire population. To achieve sufficient exposure to organizational practices and leadership behaviours, employees who had six months of experience in the IT sector were chosen as a study criterion. The survey used 235 responses (out of 400 questionnaires distributed) for data analysis, with an acceptable response rate.

The respondents' profile is consistent with the Sri Lankan IT industry workforce.

The participants were 57% males and 43% females, showing a somewhat equal gender representation. The largest proportion of participants was between the ages of 25 - 34, reflecting the youthfulness and dynamism of the industry. When it came to education, the majority of respondents held bachelor's degrees, with a sizeable number of respondents holding postgraduate degrees and certifications.

In terms of professional experience, most respondents possessed between 3 - 6 years of industry experience, followed by those with over 7 years, which indicates participants had sufficient experience in the intricacies of industry practices and leadership. Regarding job roles, participants held diverse positions across organizational levels: executives, middle managers, and senior managers/project managers, which provided varied information on the perceptions of leader transparency and employee voice behaviour.

The researcher used SPSS to analyze the data, which included descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and regression analysis to investigate the relationships in the data. Moreover, moderation analysis was conducted to examine the moderating effect of employee workplace status on the link between leader voice endorsement transparency and employee voice behaviour.

3.1 *Measures*

The instruments used in the study were in English since English is considered to be the predominant language at work in the Sri Lankan IT industry. Our questionnaire comprised scales adapted from previous research for accuracy and reliability.

3.1.1 *Leader Voice Endorsement Transparency*

Leader voice endorsement transparency was assessed using the six-item scale adapted from Ji et al. [18]. The measure assesses the extent to which leaders communicate the criteria, procedures, and reasoning used to evaluate and endorse employee suggestions. An example item is: "My supervisor adequately explains how to evaluate and endorse employee suggestions." Responses were recorded on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree. The scale demonstrated high internal consistency in the present study, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.91. Higher scores indicate greater perceived transparency in the leader voice endorsement process.

3.1.2 *Employee Voice Behaviour*

Employee voice behaviour was assessed by using the well-known and validated 6-item scale designed by Van Dyne and LePine [22]. This measures the extent to which employees actively share ideas, suggestions, and concerns at work. A typical item is: "I generate and recommend actions dealing with issues regarding my work". Items were rated on a 7-point scale (1 = never, 7 = always). It had high reliability (Cronbach's α = .90 or higher).

3.1.3 *Employee Workplace Status*

To measure employee workplace status, we adapted a 5-item scale from Djurdjevic et al. [12] that reflects individuals' status, prestige, and reputation in the workplace. The scale includes items such as: "I have a high level of respect and recognition in my organization." The scale was measured using a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree). The Cronbach's α value was .85 or higher.

3.1.4 *Data Reliability and Validity*

The measures were adapted from established literature, supporting content validity. Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. All reported coefficients exceeded .70, indicating acceptable to high internal consistency. The study did not report factor analysis or other construct-validity tests; therefore, the manuscript does not claim additional forms of validity beyond the use of established measures and the reported reliability evidence.

4 PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

4.1 *Reliability test*

Table 1. Reliability analysis (Cronbach's alpha)

Variable	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Leader Voice Endorsement Transparency	6	0.91
Employee Voice Behaviour	6	0.90
Employee Workplace Status	5	0.85

(Source: SPSS Output)

All variables exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating high internal consistency and reliability.

4.2 *Correlation Analysis*

Table 2. Correlation analysis (Pearson correlation)

Variables	Leader voice endorsement transparency	Employee Voice Behaviour	Employee Workplace Status
Leader voice endorsement transparency	1		
Employee Voice Behaviour	0.61**	1	
Employee Workplace Status	0.28**	0.35**	1

** $p < 0.01$

(Source: SPSS Output)

There is a strong positive relationship between leader voice endorsement transparency and employee voice behaviour ($r = 0.61$, $p < 0.01$), supporting initial expectations.

4.3 *Regression Analysis*

Table 3. Model summary

R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error
0.61	0.37	0.36	0.52

(Source: SPSS Output)

4.4 *ANOVA Test*

Table 4. ANOVA table

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	45.21	1	45.21	167.85	0.000
Residual	76.35	233	0.33		
Total	121.56	234			

(Source: SPSS Output)

Table 5. Coefficients table

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.25	0.21	-	5.95	0.000
Leader-voice endorsement transparency	0.55	0.04	0.55	12.96	0.000

(Source: SPSS Output)

Leader voice endorsement transparency has a statistically significant positive effect on employee voice behaviour ($B = .55$, $\beta = .55$, $p < .001$). Therefore, H1 is supported.

4.5 *Moderation Analysis (Interaction Effect)*

Table 6. Model summary (moderation model)

R	R^2	Adjusted R^2
0.63	0.40	0.38

(Source: SPSS Output)

Table 7. Coefficients table (moderation model)

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.18	0.22	-	5.36	0.000
Leader voice endorsement transparency	0.52	0.05	0.52	10.40	0.000
Workplace Status	0.21	0.06	0.18	3.50	0.001
Leader voice endorsement transparency × Workplace Status (Interaction Term)	-0.06	0.04	-0.07	-1.65	0.100

(Source: SPSS Output)

The interaction term is negative but not statistically significant ($B = -.06$, $\beta = -.07$, $t = -1.65$, $p = .100$). Accordingly, there is insufficient statistical evidence that employee workplace status changes the strength of the relationship between leader voice endorsement transparency and employee voice behaviour. The negative sign may be reported descriptively, but it must not be interpreted as evidence of a stronger relationship at low workplace status or a weaker relationship at high workplace status. Therefore, H2 is not supported.

5 DISCUSSION

The study examined the relationship between leader voice endorsement transparency and employee voice behaviour and tested whether employee workplace status moderated this relationship in the Sri Lankan IT sector. The results provide clear support for the direct relationship but do not provide statistical support for the proposed moderation.

First, leader voice endorsement transparency was strongly and positively associated

with employee voice behaviour ($r = .61$, $p < .01$), and it remained a significant positive predictor in the regression model ($B = .55$, $\beta = .55$, $p < .001$). This finding is consistent with the broader employee voice literature showing that leadership behaviours and contextual signals influence whether employees consider speaking up worthwhile and safe [9], [30], [31]. It is also directly consistent with Ji et al. [18], who found that greater transparency regarding the criteria used to endorse employee suggestions was associated with greater employee voice. In the present study, the finding suggests that when leaders explain how suggestions are assessed and why ideas are accepted or not accepted, employees are more likely to contribute work-related ideas, concerns, and suggestions.

From a Social Exchange Theory perspective, transparent communication can be understood as a positive relational signal that communicates respect, procedural clarity, and attention to employees' contributions [3], [8]. Employees may reciprocate such treatment through constructive discretionary behaviour, including voice. However, because the study is cross-sectional, this interpretation should be presented as a theoretical explanation of the observed association rather than as proof of a causal exchange process.

Second, the regression model explained approximately 37% of the variance in employee voice behaviour ($R^2 = .37$), and the overall model was statistically significant ($F = 167.85$, $p < .001$). These findings indicate that leader voice endorsement transparency is an important predictor within the present sample. Nevertheless, the unexplained variance also indicates that other factors identified in the voice literature, such as psychological safety, leader openness, trust, perceived efficacy, and organizational context, may additionally shape employee voice [9], [10], [30], [31].

Third, the proposed moderating role of employee workplace status was not supported. Although workplace status had a significant positive main effect in the moderation model ($B = .21$, $\beta = .18$, $p < .001$), the interaction between workplace status and leader voice endorsement transparency was not statistically significant ($B = -.06$, $\beta = -.07$, $p = .100$). The correct conclusion is therefore that the present data do not demonstrate that workplace status changes the strength of the relationship between leader voice endorsement transparency and employee voice behaviour.

The negative interaction coefficient should not be described as partial support, directional support, weak moderation, or restrained but significant moderation. A coefficient in the hypothesized direction without statistical significance does not establish the proposed interaction. The result may instead be discussed as a theoretically interesting but unsupported pattern that warrants replication with adequate statistical power and, ideally, designs that reduce common-method and cross-sectional limitations.

This non-significant result is informative because prior research does not require every plausible contextual factor to moderate in every organizational setting. Workplace status is a meaningful construct in organizations [12], and status-related processes have been linked with voice and supervisory responsiveness [17]. However, the present Sri Lankan IT sample did not provide evidence that status altered the effect of leader voice endorsement transparency. One possible explanation is that other contextual mechanisms may be more proximal to employees' decisions to speak up, such as voice efficacy, psychological safety, leader responsiveness, or trust. This is an inference for future research rather than an empirical explanation established by the current data.

Overall, the findings support transparent leader communication as a significant predictor of employee voice behaviour. They also show that workplace status is positively associated with voice in the model but is not established as a boundary condition for the transparency-voice relationship in this study. This distinction between a significant main effect and a non-significant interaction is essential to the interpretation of the results.

6 THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

The primary theoretical contribution of this study lies in extending the empirical examination of leader voice endorsement transparency to the Sri Lankan IT context. The results support the proposition that transparency about how employee suggestions are evaluated is positively associated with subsequent employee voice. This complements the broader voice literature, which emphasizes the importance of contextual

and leadership signals in shaping employees' decisions to speak up [9], [30], [31], and is directly aligned with the recent conceptualization and evidence reported by Ji et al. [18].

The study also contributes by distinguishing between what is theoretically proposed and what is empirically demonstrated. Workplace status was tested as a moderator because status-related perceptions can shape organizational interactions and voice-related processes [12], [17]. However, the non-significant interaction means that the study does not extend theory by establishing workplace status as a boundary condition in this relationship. Instead, it provides a useful null finding: in this sample, the effect of leader voice endorsement transparency on employee voice did not significantly differ across levels of workplace status.

This result also refines the application of Social Exchange Theory. The significant direct relationship is consistent with the idea that positive and transparent treatment may be reciprocated through constructive employee behaviour. However, the study does not provide direct evidence that workplace status systematically changes this exchange process. Future studies should test the underlying mechanisms more directly, for example by examining voice efficacy, trust, perceived procedural fairness, or psychological safety as mediating processes and by assessing theoretically grounded moderators with stronger design-based evidence.

Accordingly, the theoretical implication is not that workplace status weakly or directionally moderates the relationship, but that the proposed status-based boundary condition was not demonstrated in the present data. Reporting this result accurately strengthens the credibility of the study and provides a clearer basis for future research.

7 PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings provide several practical implications for managers and organizations in the Sri Lankan IT industry. Because leader voice endorsement transparency was a significant positive predictor of employee voice behaviour, managers should clearly communicate how employee suggestions are evaluated, what criteria are used when deciding whether an idea can be adopted, and why particular suggestions are accepted, modified, deferred, or rejected. Such communication can reduce ambiguity and provide employees with clearer information about how to participate constructively.

Organizations should also establish consistent feedback practices. Formal idea-submission channels, transparent evaluation criteria, documented response processes, and timely feedback can help ensure that employees understand what happens after they speak up. These practices are consistent with the broader literature emphasizing the importance of contextual signals and leader responses in sustaining employee voice [9], [30], [31].

The practical recommendations should not claim that low-status employees benefit more from transparency, because the moderation hypothesis was not supported. Instead, organizations should apply transparent and respectful voice processes across employees regardless of perceived workplace status. Status differences may still be relevant to inclusion and participation, but this study does not provide statistical evidence that status changes the effectiveness of leader voice endorsement transparency.

Leadership development programmes may therefore focus on explaining evaluation criteria, listening to employee input, providing specific reasons for decisions, and responding consistently to both accepted and rejected suggestions. The aim should be to create a reliable voice process rather than to target a particular status group on the basis of an unsupported interaction.

8 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

These research findings are influential to the areas of interest, and they make an indelible mark on the transparency of leader voice endorsement and its effects on employee voice behaviour in the Sri Lankan IT industry. Nevertheless, there are a number of limitations to the interpretation of the results.

To begin with, the research was based on self-administered questions gathered via questionnaires, which could have led to the emergence of common method bias (CMB) and bias associated with responses (social desirability and consistency effects) [20], [36]. Even though the self-report scale is suitable due to the perceptual quality of such

constructs as voice behaviour and workplace status, in future research, multi-source data might prove to be more effective in adding strength to the results, e.g., supervisor ratings, peer ratings, etc.

Secondly, a cross-sectional research design does not allow for determining the causal relationship between leader transparency and employee voice behaviour. Although the analysis of correlation and regression has found significant levels of association, they do not establish directionality. There is a need for longitudinal designs or time-lag designs to develop causal dynamic relations and changes over time in the future [34]. Strengthening causal inference could be accomplished through experimental methods as well.

Thirdly, the research was carried out using convenience sampling and based on employees of a few IT firms in Sri Lanka. This can restrict its ability to generalize the results to the larger IT industry or other industries. Further research needs to employ probability sampling methods and use a larger sample, with variation in organizational sizes, geographical location, and industries, to enhance the external validity.

Fourthly, the moderating position of employee workplace status was investigated in this study, but with a weak and statistically insignificant moderation effect. This implies that other contextual or psychological issues could be having a greater role to play. The subsequent studies are to investigate further moderators (psychological safety, leadership style (e.g., transformational or inclusive leadership), organizational culture, trust in leadership, and emotional intelligence), which will give deeper responses on the question of when and how often leader transparency can affect voice behaviour. Future studies could also examine additional potential moderating variables, such as voice efficacy, leader-member exchange, and perceived organisational support. These variables may provide further insight into the conditions under which leader voice endorsement transparency is more likely to encourage employee voice behaviour.

Lastly, this paper is rooted in Social Exchange Theory, which deals mostly with reciprocal interactions between leaders and employees. Informational theoretical approaches like Social Identity Theory or Conservation of Resources Theory may be incorporated in future studies so as to have an overall interpretation of employee voice behaviour. Also, qualitative methods (e.g., interviews or focus groups) may help to reveal subtle details of how employees may view leader transparency in the context of actual organizations.

To sum up, although this paper has added to the body of knowledge by emphasizing the role of transparent leadership in stimulating employee voice in the Sri Lankan IT industry, the study in the future studies in response to these shortcomings will build the theoretical bases and practical implications.

9 CONCLUSION

This study concludes that leader voice endorsement transparency is positively associated with employee voice behaviour in the Sri Lankan IT sector. The findings support the view that clear and transparent communication about how employee suggestions are considered can encourage employees to express their ideas and concerns. However, the study did not find evidence that employee workplace status significantly changes this relationship. Overall, the findings highlight the importance of transparent leadership practices in encouraging employee voice while suggesting that other contextual factors may better explain differences in voice behaviour.

REFERENCES

[1] Bandura, A. (1997). Self-efficacy: The exercise of control. W. H. Freeman.

[2] Bashshur, M. R., & Oc, B. (2015). When voice matters: A multilevel review of the impact of voice in organizations. Journal of Management, 41(5), 1530-1554.

[3] Blau, P. M. (1964). Justice in social exchange. Sociological Inquiry, 34(2), 193–206.

[4] Brykman, K. M., & Raver, J. L. (2023). Persuading managers to enact ideas in organizations: The role of voice message quality, peer endorsement, and peer opposition. Journal of Organizational Behavior, 44(5), 802-817.

[5] Bunderson, J. S. (2003). Recognizing and utilizing expertise in work groups: A status characteristics perspective. Administrative Science Quarterly, 48(4), 557–591.

[6] Burris, E. R. (2012). The risks and rewards of speaking up: Managerial responses to employee voice. Academy of Management Journal, 55(4), 851–875.

[7] Carnevale, J. B., Huang, L., Crede, M., Harms, P., & Uhl-Bien, M. (2017). Leading to stimulate employees' ideas: A quantitative review of leader-member exchange, employee voice, creativity, and innovative behavior. Applied Psychology, 66(4), 517–552.
[8] Cropanzano, R., & Mitchell, M. S. (2005). Social exchange theory: An interdisciplinary review. Journal of Management, 31(6), 874–900.
[9] Detert, J. R., & Burris, E. R. (2007). Leadership behavior and employee voice: Is the door really open? Academy of Management Journal, 50(4), 869-884.
[10] Detert, J. R., & Edmondson, A. C. (2011). Implicit voice theories: Taken-for-granted rules of self-censorship at work. Academy of Management Journal, 54(3), 461–488.
[11] Dirks, K. T., & Ferrin, D. L. (2002). Trust in leadership: Meta-analytic findings and implications for research and practice. Journal of Applied Psychology, 87(4), 611–628.
[12] Djurdjevic, E., Stoverink, A. C., Klotz, A. C., Koopman, J., da Motta Veiga, S. P., Yam, K. C., & Chiang, J. T. (2017). Workplace status: The development and validation of a scale. Journal of Applied Psychology, 102(7), 1124-1147.
[13] Dutton, J. E., Ashford, S. J., O'Neill, R. M., Hayes, E., & Wierba, E. E. (1997). Reading the wind: How middle managers assess the context for selling issues to top managers. Strategic Management Journal, 18(5), 407-423.
[14] Eisenberger, R., Huntington, R., Hutchison, S., & Sowa, D. (1986). Perceived organizational support. Journal of Applied Psychology, 71(3), 500-507.
[15] Hosseini, E., Foroudi, P., Ed-Dafali, S., & Salamzadeh, A. (2025). Hearing faculty members' voice: A gendered view on knowledge sharing. Journal of Knowledge Management, 29(2), 480-511.
[16] Howell, T. M., Harrison, D. A., Burris, E. R., & Detert, J. R. (2015). Who gets credit for input? Demographic and structural status cues in voice recognition. Journal of Applied Psychology, 100(6), 1765-1784.
[17] Janssen, O., & Gao, L. (2015). Supervisory responsiveness and employee self-perceived status and voice behavior. Journal of Management, 41(7), 1854–1872.
[18] Ji, X., Liu, B., Zhang, X., & Xu, M. (2026). Paving the path to employee voice: Leader voice endorsement transparency and its impact on voice behavior. Applied Psychology, 75(1), e70071.
[19] Kim, S., McClean, E. J., Doyle, S. P., Podsakoff, N. P., Lin, E., & Woodruff, T. (2022). The positive and negative effects of social status on ratings of voice behavior: A test of opposing structural and psychological pathways. Journal of Applied Psychology, 107(6), 951–970.
[20] Krosnick, J. A. (1999). Survey research. Annual Review of Psychology, 50(1), 537–567.
[21] Lam, C. F., Lee, C., & Sui, Y. (2019). Say it as it is: Consequences of voice directness, voice politeness, and voicer credibility on voice endorsement. Journal of Applied Psychology, 104(5), 642-661.
[22] LePine, J. A., & Van Dyne, L. (1998). Predicting voice behavior in work groups. Journal of Applied Psychology, 83(6), 853. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/0021-9010.83.6.853
[23] LePine, J. A., & Van Dyne, L. (2001). Peer responses to low performers: An attributional model of helping in the context of groups. Academy of Management Review, 26(1), 67–84.
[24] Li, J., Barnes, C. M., Yam, K. C., Guarana, C. L., & Wang, L. (2019). Do not like it when you need it the most: Examining the effect of manager ego depletion on managerial voice endorsement. Journal of Organizational Behavior, 40(8), 869-882.
[25] Liao, C., Liden, R. C., Liu, Y., & Wu, J. (2021). Blessing or curse: The moderating role of political skill in the relationship between servant leadership, voice, and voice endorsement. Journal of Organizational Behavior, 42(8), 987-1004.
[26] Magee, J. C., & Galinsky, A. D. (2008). Social hierarchy: The self-reinforcing nature of power and status. Academy of Management Annals, 2(1), 351-398.
[27] McKearney, A., Prouska, R., Tungtakanpoung, M., & Opute, J. (2023). The influence of national culture on employee voice in small and medium enterprises: A cross-cultural perspective. Employee Relations: The International Journal, 45(2), 478–494.
[28] Milliken, F. J., Morrison, E. W., & Hewlin, P. F. (2003). An exploratory study of employee silence: Issues that employees don't communicate upward and why. Journal of Management Studies, 40(6), 1453-1476.
[29] Morrison, E. W. (2011). Employee voice behavior: Integration and directions for future research. Academy of Management Annals, 5(1), 373-412.
[30] Morrison, E. W. (2014). Employee voice and silence. Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior, 1(1), 173–197.
[31] Morrison, E. W. (2023). Employee voice and silence: Taking stock a decade later. Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior, 10(1), 79–107.
[32] Morrison, E. W., & Rothman, N. B. (2009). Silence and the dynamics of power. In J. Greenberg & M. S. Edwards (Eds.), Voice and silence in organizations (pp. 111-134). Emerald Group Publishing.
[33] Pearce, J. L. (2011). Status in management and organizations. Development and Learning in Organizations: An International Journal, 25(6), 3-5.
[34] Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Lee, J. Y., & Podsakoff, N. P. (2003). Common method biases in behavioral research: A critical review of the literature and recommended remedies. Journal of Applied Psychology, 88(5), 879–903.
[35] Rousseau, D. M. (1998). Why workers still identify with organizations. Journal of Organizational Behavior, 19(S1), 217–233.

[36] Rousseau, D. M., Hornung, S., & Kim, T. G. (2009). Idiosyncratic deals: Testing propositions on timing, content, and the employment relationship. Journal of Vocational Behavior, 74(3), 338–348.
[37] Rubenstein, A. L., Xia, Y., Lan, Y., Morrison, H. M., & Newton, D. W. (2025). Strengthening supervisor bonds but impairing coworker relations? The divergent effects of voice endorsement. Journal of Management, 51(4), 1619–1644.
[38] Stratton, S. J. (2023). Population sampling: Probability and non-probability techniques. Prehospital and Disaster Medicine, 38(2), 147–148.
[39] Triana, M. D. C., Richard, O. C., & Yücel, I. (2017). Status incongruence and supervisor gender as moderators of the transformational leadership to subordinate affective organizational commitment relationship. Personnel Psychology, 70(2), 429-467.
[40] Tsameti, A., Bellou, V. M., & Tsamantouridis, K. (2023). Employee voice and innovative behavior in the public sector. International Journal of Public Administration, 46(1), 56–68.
[41] Weijters, B., Geuens, M., & Schillewaert, N. (2010). The individual consistency of acquiescence and extreme response style in self-report questionnaires. Applied Psychological Measurement, 34(2), 105–121.