



The Mediating Role of Employee Voice between Despotic Leadership, Psychological Empowerment and Employee Performance

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ABSTRACT

This research effort aims to address the indispensable factor of employee voice, which impacts employee behavior and causes negative emotions. Despotic leadership is a crucial constituent of the workplace and impedes performance-related outcomes. Psychological empowerment facilitates positive behavioral outcomes, including employee voice and performance. This study contributes to the body of knowledge by explaining the role of employee voice in despotic leadership, psychological empowerment and employee performance. The banking sector of Pakistan is one of the remarkable sectors that provides employment and financial services, but it faces various controversial employee issues including leadership, psychological, and behavioral issues that impede performance. This research paper contributes to bridging the research gap in explaining how employee performance is influenced by despotic leadership and psychological empowerment with the mediation role of employee voice. Despotic leadership is an essential element in determining the working environment; psychological empowerment is important for employees' behavior that predicts employee performance. Most importantly, employee voice has central importance in at the workplace that predicts and impacts employee performance. Employee voice creates the working environment that the firm desires. The mediating role of employee voice tends to establish the relationship between despotic leadership, psychological empowerment and employee performance. The current paper focuses on front-line employees of bank in Punjab, as data was collected by employing a simple random sampling technique; the sample size was 310 employees from different banks in different cities. The collected data was later analyzed on Smart-PLS 4.0 for relationship assessment. The results depicted that despotic leadership negatively impacts employee voice and employee performance, while psychological empowerment positively influences employee voice and employee performance and is mediated by employee voice. Limitations and future research recommendations are given in the conclusion section.

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1. Introduction

The highly competitive business environment has pressured on employees to perform efficiently to achieve substantial standards. It has become a major challenge for firms to utilize employees to attain competitive advantage and foster benefits. The performance of employees is crucial in increasing productivity and organizational development. Organizational success and development are contingent on the performance of employees. Hence, effective policies are required to be devised to facilitate employees to enhance performance and to ensure improvements in employee effectiveness (Sabuhari, Sudiro, Irawanto, & Rahayu, 2020). The performance of employees is associated with behaviors that influence the workplace and

organizational outcomes. Performance depends upon the leadership approach that encourages employees to perform according to the desired goals of the firm (Howladar, Rahman, & Jewel, 2018). The employees' behavior relates to the incidental, multifaceted, and measurable elements that belong to employees' performance over a specific period. Personal traits are considered striking elements that predict performance-related outcomes; the skills and understanding of fundamental facts measure firms' productivity and performance (Sánchez-Hernando et al., 2021).

The abilities and receptiveness of employees determine their performance at the workplace. Internal motivation influences employees performance and has a striking effect; on the other hand, managers must ensure the appropriate working conditions for fostering the desired benefits and achieving the performance standards (Sabir et al., 2022). It is important to know how employees perceive their environment and strive to achieve well-being. Employee performance is referred to as the reciprocal of activities by employers and requirements of employees. The employers provide the working environment with physical, financial, and human resources to achieve the goals; the employees perform the activities according to the job description and accomplish the targets given by the employer to examine the required standards (Sparrow & Cooper, 2014). The emotional and intellectual involvement of employees influences employee performance (C. Li, Naz, Khan, Kusi, & Murad, 2019). Leadership has a significant role to play in organizational performance and success. Leaders influence the employees to perform by satisfying the job description and accomplishing the goals. The appropriate direction, chain of command, and control ensure the desired standards to perform the job, rewards and punishment are contingent on the employee's performance. Employee performance can be expressed as how efficiently an employee fulfills his/her duties and fetches long-term benefits financially and non-financially, and employee behaviour. The managers ensure the comparison of employees' performance and expected standards by shareholders and employers. Financial competitiveness is not only enough for organizational survival and requires employee commitment through HR practices and effective performance. Managers must handle the employees and embed their values and beliefs to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in accomplishing the tasks (Torlak & Kuzey, 2019).

The performance of employees is a crucial driving force behind the survival of firms, and well-performing employees contribute to organizational success and efficiency. The firms strive to shape strategies for enhancing performance and measure from time to time for organizational success. The processes and projects have to be initiated for attaining the desired performance results; it has been explained that the set of employee behaviours and competencies influence the performance of employees to achieve the objectives and goals (Imran & Tanveer, 2015). Employee performance is one of the fundamental concerns of the firm to achieve the desired and better results and success according to the standards. Employees are the most crucial resource for a firm that performs fair and significant acts at the workplace in the public or private sectors. Employee satisfaction helps in achieving higher performance standards. The firms exert possible efforts to satisfy the employees to harvest the performance that positively influences and fosters long-term objectives and goals (Van Der Lippe & Lippényi, 2020). National development depends upon the banking and financial sectors that provide funds for growth and success. Banking sector employees exhibit subpar performance, behave as self-centered and don't endorse strategies of the firm to achieve the targets (Setiawan & Umam, 2024). It has been reported that some employees are found to indulge in fraudulent activities, violate rules and regulations and gratuities, and overlook the guidelines of the firms. The development of such behaviour that violates banking practices occurs due to demotivation, the ratio of resigning increased, higher stress levels, and worse attitudes and ethics (Hasan, Nikmah, & Sudarmiati, 2022). Due to various factors, banking units face diverse issues related to employees in terms of dissatisfaction, managerial issues, compromised commitment, employee turnover, organizational change, inappropriate leadership style, and corporate culture (Hasan, 2023).

1.1. Problem Statement

These issues and challenges negatively impact performance and are demonstrated in the lower performance level, satisfaction, commitment and behavioural negative outcomes with emotional issues (Pang & Lu, 2018). Job satisfaction and performance are correlated; in prior literature, it has been well-defined that lower satisfaction reduces performance. Studies have been made on assessing the performance of employees influenced by the level of satisfaction. The satisfaction must be ensured to boost the performance (Al-dalahmeh, Masa'deh, Abu Khalaf,

& Obeidat, 2018). Organizations are found to be more successful if employees are pleased with their jobs, and financial and non-financial aspects (Gogan, Artene, Sarca, & Draghici, 2016). The leadership style tends to enhance or decrease performance with appropriate culture and innovativeness of employees' behaviour through shared values (Naqshbandi & Tabche, 2018). The culture of the firm depends upon various factors; however, leadership is an important element that influences and contributes to culture while ensuring innovation and progress. Therefore, it is required to place effective leadership and management approaches for innovation and creativity in the workplace. Further, leadership styles also influence working behaviour and performance-related outcomes in diverse sectors (B. Javed, Khan, & Quratulain, 2021). Effective leadership is the necessity of time for a fruitful workplace environment that influences employees' work-related attitudes and increases the motivation to enhance productivity and performance. The positive side of leadership brings positive changes and positivity to the workplace environment, and the negative or dark side of leadership is considered as the absence of effective leadership that brings negative consequences to the workplace (2006). Previously, researchers have coined various terminologies of dark leadership traits including abusive leadership Liang and Brown (2022), destructive leadership (P. Li, Yin, Shi, Damen, & Taris, 2024), transformational leadership (Jia, Chen, Mei, & Wu, 2018), transactional leadership (B. Javed, Fatima, Yasin, Jahanzeb, & Rawwas, 2019), authentic leadership (B. Javed, Khan, & Quratulain, 2021), inclusive leadership (D. T. Javed, Mahmood, Khan, & Ullah, 2021) and personalized charismatic leadership (Hazzam & Wilkins, 2023).

1.2. Significance

This research effort incorporates the despotic leadership associated with an inclination of leaders' personal dominance and authority of individual leaders to protect self-interest and self-aggrandizement and manipulation. The arrogance of leaders, unforgiving behaviour, bossy style, and striving for supremacy negatively impact the attitude and behaviour of employees (Rasool, Naseer, Syed, & Ahmed, 2018). The above-stated occurrence negatively influences and hampers organizations in achieving goals and objectives. The prior literature has embarked on the phenomenon of despotic leadership that impacts distress, increases work-family conflict, hampers emotions, creates emotional exhaustion, increases turnover intention, lowers performance, reduces commitment, and causes job dissatisfaction. The inappropriate approach of leadership pushes the employees into negative emotions and behaviours such as deviance and counterproductive work behaviour (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2018; Hu, Dong, Li, & Wang, 2023). Psychological empowerment decreases employee burnout (Monje-Amor, Xanthopoulou, Calvo, & Abeal Vázquez, 2021). Researchers have expressed the phenomena of psychological empowerment on various factors including satisfaction, performance, stress and commitment. Empowering employees is considered an excellent managerial approach that increases performance. It is also explained as enabling a higher motivation level and personal efficacy development. It has been stated in prior literature that empowerment enriches the individual's belief and self-efficacy (Hsieh, Lee, & Tseng, 2022). The motivational aspect, personal orientation, and cognitive orientation are referred as psychological empowerment in performing the task at the workplace. It is established as a motivational resource that increases the employees' level of engagement towards job responsibilities. It also increases team engagement and influences performance (M. Malik, Sarwar, & Orr, 2021). Verbal expression is a powerful tool for employees that contributes to the workplace through opinions, it's not only courageous for managers but conveys opinions as a manifestation of ideas uttered by employees. The firms are required to recognize the fact that highly motivated and efficient employees contribute to the firm by raising their voices. The speaking behaviour isn't only related to projecting interest but to conveying the ideas of employees. The verbal behaviour and employee voice express the opinion for the constructive aspect of the organization (Setiawan & Umam, 2024). The employee's behaviour is impacted by various factors; specifically, the voice is expressed as a 'soft' management approach. The capacity of employees to raise the voice of employees contributes to effective decision-making in an organization. A productive corporation is required between employer and employees for the achievement of long-term sustainability and to enhance the economic welfare of employees (Emelifeonwu & Valk, 2019). The purpose of employee voice strategies is to encourage and facilitate internal stakeholders to become an integral part of the decision-making process through expression, concerns and suggestions within the workplace. The organizational working environment and success is based on the employee's value and empowerment given to them that encourage to contribute (Agabe, 2024).

1.3. The research aims and objectives

This study intends to address the burning issue of front-line employees' performance in banking sector. The study unveils the role of negative leadership traits that impact employee behaviour, and psychological empowerment that predicts employee performance. Most importantly, employee voice is an essential element at working environment that impact employee's behaviour. The study focused on employee performance influenced by despotic leadership, and psychological empowerment through employee voice.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Despotic leadership, employee voice and employee Performance

The concept of leadership refers ethical process that brings the organization change for all of the individuals who are involved within the organization it brings peace, goodness for employees, fairness and prosperity (Lee, Lyubovnikova, Tian, & Knight, 2020). Leadership builds strong relationships with the employees by providing a flexible working environment where employees of the firm participate, contribute and put their efforts into performing the objectives and goals of the organization (PAAIS & PATTIRUHU, 2020). Despotic leadership develop negative relationship with the employees and affects the performance and emotions of the individuals in the workplace and the well-being of the employees and significantly influences the intention to leave of the individuals (Zhou, Rasool, Yang, & Asghar, 2021). Supercilious, exploitation and dictatorship are the negative characteristics of the despotic leadership. Despotic leader prefers themselves and works for their own benefits and concerns (Zhou et al., 2021). Leaders perform positive roles and influence the workplace, communities and social circle, the success of the firms is the victory of the leader and when the effort of the leader goes wrong firms suffer inverse impacts on performance and growth (Khan, Mubarak, Khattak, Safdar, & Jaafar, 2022; Nurani, SAMDIN, NASRUL, & SUKOTJO, 2021). In the field of psychology and behavioural management, despotic leadership and counterproductive behaviour is a well-known phenomenon (Wijayati, Rahman, Fahrullah, Rahman, Arifah, & Kautsar, 2022). Unfavorable behaviour and actions that violate the norms and values of the firm and impact the goodwill, despotic leaders cause higher unproductivity, and employees indulge in counterproductive work behaviour; the aggressive behaviour causes stress and frustration and eventually impacts performance (Jabeen & Rahim, 2020). Despotic leadership and employee behavior are associated, which means despotic leadership creates negative counterproductive work behaviour, which leads to dissatisfaction with the job, increased individual turnover intention, less commitment to work, absenteeism, and employee productivity (Brender-Ilan & Sheaffer, 2019). Research efforts have been made to assess the relationship between cynicism and despotic leadership. It has been explored that psychological thwarting mediates the relationship (Mohammad, 2015; Mukarram, Hussain, & Mukarram, 2023).

Despotic leaders are found to be critical of employees and ignore their voices, which leads to negative behavioural outcomes. The employees dislike unfair behaviour and adverse consequences due to unhappiness and the strictness of despotic leaders. This phenomenon overall reduces employee performance. The behaviour of the leader negatively impacts the emotions of employees and increases the turnover intention, and reduces creativity (Kremer, Villamor, & Aguinis, 2019; O. F. Malik, Shahzad, Waheed, & Yousaf, 2020). Despotic leaders are lower on the ethical side, sensitivity, and personal commitments; a leader's poor and harsh treatment creates negative emotions and social exchange devastates the relationships. The negative treatment of employers may be responded to unwantedly by the employees, as negative behaviour of employees reduces the contribution of employees due to unheard voices and employees indulge in silence. The silence of employees harms creativity and innovation as silence hinders sharing ideas and organizational success (Guo, Decoster, Babalola, De Schutter, Garba, & Riisla, 2018). The previous literature has depicted that despotic leaders hurt the employee's voice behaviour, reduce creativity, and increase turnover intention (Kasi, Bibi, & Karim, 2020). The researcher intends to determine direct relationships among despotic leadership approach and employee's voice to predict employee performance.

2.2. Psychological empowerment, employee voice and employee performance

The function of psychological empowerment as a mediator between employees' behaviour and workplace spirituality. Psychological empowerment was found to be a striking mediator between workplace spirituality and employee behavior (Bantha & Nayak, 2021). Proactive behaviour and psychological empowerment have a strongly favorable effect on work behaviour, modulated by job characteristics (Gultom, Suroso, & Gasjirin, 2022). The favorable and

considerable impact of proactive behaviour and workplace spirituality on behaviour is mediated by psychological empowerment (Shanker, Bhanugopan, Van Der Heijden, & Farrell, 2017). Self-efficacy significantly impacts an individual's propensity to engage in IWB (Musannip Efendi Siregar, Nur Supriadi, Setyo Pranowo, Ende, & Jayanti Harahap, 2022). The association among servant leadership, psychological empowerment, job crafting and behavioural context is reported. The study explored the role of employees' psychological perspective and how job crafting predicts servant leadership and behaviour (M. M. Khan et al., 2022). Researchers have done several studies to demonstrate that psychological empowerment, the factor that people work for social change, tends to be associated with sharing information. Psychological freedom, plus some other conditions, such as transformational leadership made nurses open-minded in their practices at work. Psychological empowerment is seen in employees' information-disclosing intentions and an increasing correlation (Hu et al., 2023). Lack of knowledge management might cause difficulties in performing their work roles and roles through servant leadership supported by psychological empowerment. The share of psychological power was revealed as a determining factor absent when providing project success information to the staff, thus linking with the project success (M. M. Khan et al., 2022). In one of the studies, Supriyanto, Ekowati, Rokhman, Ahamed, Munir, and Miranti (2023) analysed how leadership by empowerment may serve as a predictor of innovation in higher education institutions. Through research, the team found that combining several factors, such as psychological empowerment, was one of the main predictors of employee behaviour.

Prior literature has reported psychological empowerment and innovative capacity are linked through the mediation effect of employee voice. The study revealed that employee voice significantly influences innovativeness, psychological empowerment also increases the innovativeness of employees, and the indirect effect of voice (Krupah, 2021). Another research study depicted relation between behavior and empowerment but no effect on prohibited voice behavior (Master of Business Administration, Mohamed, Bashry, Assistant Professor, Ali, & Assistant Professor, 2024). Voice behavior has been expressed through empowerment leadership and psychological empowerment. The results revealed that empowerment leadership significantly predicts voice behaviour, further psychological empowerment influences voice behaviour (Jackson Makwetta, Deli, Atta Sarpong, Sifameni Sekei, Zaman Khan, & Emfosi Meena, 2021). Voice behaviour is also predicted by customer power through psychological empowerment (Yoo, 2017). The researcher argues that psychological empowerment influences voice behaviour and employee performance significantly.

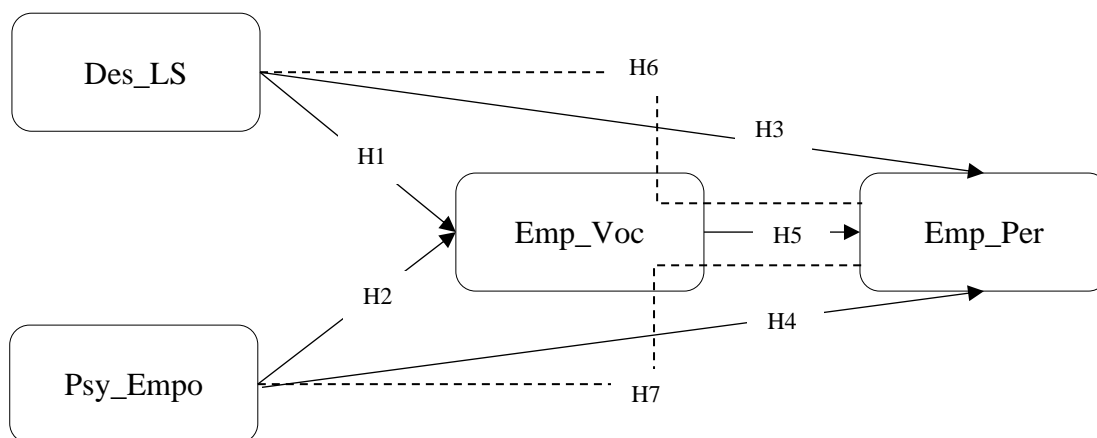
2.3. Mediating Role of Employee Voice

This research study focuses on employee voice as the mediating variable, which is one of the prime concerns in the workplace due to its striking impact on performance-related outcomes. Researchers have reported that social norms are an important factor in increasing the importance of voice behaviour that alters performance-related outcomes. The behaviour of employees is argued to be a significant to job satisfaction. Voice behaviour enables firms to foster employee commitment, retention and collective learning. Voice behaviour is reported to be associated with personal empowerment that contributes to firms' performance. Voice behaviour creates the feeling of personal congruence that alignment of personal values at the workplace. Employees prefer to express their concerns, willingness and opinions, which increases the sense of affiliation and impacts the firm in various perspectives. Employee voice and disenchantment emotionally impact the employees if any factor creates a hurdle for their voice to be heard (Avey, Wernsing, & Palanski, 2012). Previously, researchers have focused on assessing the relationship between employee voice and organizational innovation. Voice behaviour promotes creative ideas and innovative solutions (Shahnaei & Long, 2015). Employee voice and innovation are positively significant, and a further significant mediating effect was evident (Rasheed, Shahzad, Conroy, Nadeem, & Siddique, 2017). The research effort has been made to determine the intention to stay influenced by spiritual leadership through employee voice behaviour. Reportedly, voice behavior and spiritual leadership related to turnover intention, and the relation between employee vision and intention to stay was mediated by voice (Ka & Aboobaker, 2021). The researcher in the present study argues that despotic leadership and psychological empowerment influence employee performance, but employee voice is an important mediating variable.

3. Research Methodology

This study is quantitative in nature and conducted on banking sector employees to determine the role of employee voice in predicting employee performance. It examines the relationship between variables of framework shown in Figure 1. This research effort aims to shape the guidelines for dealing with despotic leadership approaches and psychological empowerment to predict employee performance through employee voice. This study adopted a quantitative research method to gather and analyse the collected data to determine the relationships. The data was collected through questionnaires from the banks in south Punjab, including different cities such as 1) Bahawalnagar, 2) Bahawalpur, 3) Lahore, 4) Multan and 5) Sahiwal from private banks and front-line employees are the unit of analysis. Five major banks were selected for data collection, including Habib Bank Limited, Bank Al-Habib, MCB Bank, Allied Bank Limited, and United Bank Limited. Simple random sampling was employed for data collection as the population of banking employees was available on the annual reports of each bank. A total of 1600 employees in selected cities and banks were found as part of the population of the study. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table 310 should be the sample size. The researcher distributed 450 questionnaires as it is suggested to distribute more than the sample size to achieve the required responses (Zikmund, Babin, Carr, & Griffin, 2010). Figure 1 below shows the research framework.

Figure 1: Research Framework



Note: Emp_Per (Employee Performance), Des_LS (Despotic Leadership), Psy_Emp (Psychological empowerment), Emp_Voc (Employee Voice)

3.1. Hypothesized statements

The hypothesized statements are depicted in Figure 1 above.

- H1: Despotic Leadership influences the employee Voice among banking employees in Punjab
- H2: Psychological Empowerment influences the employee voice among banking employees in Punjab
- H3: Despotic Leadership influences the employee performance among banking employees in Punjab
- H4: Psychological Empowerment influences the employee performance among banking employees in Punjab
- H5: Employee Voice predicts the Employee Performance among banking employees in Punjab
- H6: Employee Voice mediates the relationship between despotic leadership and employee performance among banking employees of Punjab
- H7: Employee Voice mediates the relationship between psychological empowerment and employee performance among banking employees in the Punjab

3.2. Measurement Scales

The measurement scales were adopted from previous studies. Despotic leadership has a six-item measurement scale taken from Rasool et al. (2018). The 12-item measure taken from Spreitzer (1995) for psychological empowerment. The six-item to measure of employee voice was used from Weber and Avey (2019). The five-item measurement scale of employee performance was used from C. Li et al. (2019).

4. Analysis and Discussion

Smart-PLS was utilized for the analysis phase. First, demographic analysis is presented, followed by an analysis including an assessment of reliability and validity, and later the relationship was assessed. Out of 450, the researcher received 300 responses, and 15 were discarded due to incomplete sections. The 61% complete responses were received, which is acceptable for conducting the analysis. Out of 275, 103 females and 172 male members participated in the survey. 245 had a Master's degree, and 30 had an undergraduate degree. In terms of monthly income, 150 had a monthly income higher than 100,000 PKR, 110 had between 80,000 and 100,000 and the remaining 15 had lower than 80,000 PKR per month.

4.1. Measurement Model Assessment

The reliability and validity of variables including despotic leadership, psychological empowerment, employee voice and employee performance. The reliability is determined on the basis of alpha (α) and the average variance extract (AVE) is determined for validity. The values for alpha (α) must be greater than 0.70 to assess reliability. The cutoff point for AVE is 0.50 for acceptability. Reliability and validity results are in Table 1 below.

Table 1

S#	Constructs	Alpha	AVE
1	Emp_Per	0.792	0.561
2	Des_LS	0.912	0.694
3	Psy_Emp	0.917	0.522
4	Emp_Voc	0.865	0.600

Note: Emp_Per (Employee Performance), Des_LS (Despotic Leadership), Psy_Emp (Psychological empowerment), Emp_Voc (Employee Voice)

The above details demonstrated that all values for reliability and validity are acceptable, as each construct was higher than a cutoff point. This satisfied the conditions of Hair, Sarstedt, Ringle, and Mena (2012). The construct validity is achieved as all values for AVE are higher than the cutoff point.

4.2. Discriminant validity

Fornell and Larcker (1981) criteria was used for assessing discriminant validity. The correlational values of same variable should remain higher than other values, which means the intersecting value of each column should be higher than other variables for acceptable discriminant validity. Results of the Discriminant validity is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2

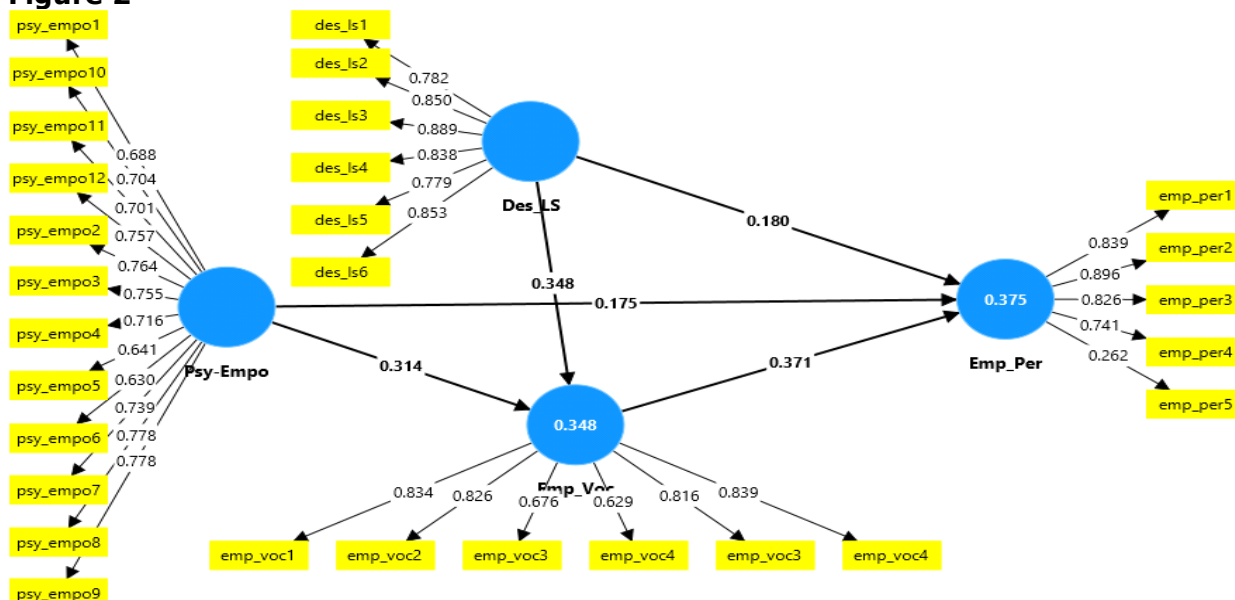
Constructs	Des_LS	Emp_Per	Emp_Voc	Psy_Empo
Des_LS	0.833			
Emp_Per	0.479	0.749		
Emp_Voc	0.531	0.557	0.775	
Psy_Empo	0.584	0.472	0.517	0.722

Note: Emp_Per (Employee Performance), Des_LS (Despotic Leadership), Psy_Emp (Psychological empowerment), Emp_Voc (Employee Voice)

As shown in above table the intersectional correlational value of each variable is higher than the correlational values with other variables. The bold diagonal values present the achieved discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

The figure-2 below is a measurement model assessment taken from Smart-PLS 4.0

Figure 2



Note: Emp_Per (Employee Performance), Des_LS (Despotic Leadership), Psy_Emp (Psychological empowerment), Emp_Voc (Employee Voice)

4.3. Structural Equation Model (SEM)

This section investigates the relationship between the framework constructs according to the hypothesized statements. The bootstrapping method is utilized to investigate the relationships between variables. The relationship is determined by the β -value, t-statistics and p-value; the significance of the relation is examined on the t-value, which must remain higher than 1.96, and the p-value should remain lower than 0.05 for acceptability (Hair et al., 2012).

4.3.1. Hypothesis H1

Hypothesis H1 intends to determine the relationship between despotic leadership and employee voice. The study argues that leadership style impacts employees' behavior, which means despotic leadership influences the employee voice. Despotic leadership is considered the dark side of personality, which reduces the positive outcomes and increases negative emotions. The notion of the study is that despotic leadership in banks reduces employee performance. Table 3 presents the results and significance of the direct and indirect relationships. The result shows that ($\beta = -0.379$; t-value = 4.725, and p-value = 0.000), which means the relationship is significant based on the statistical grounds.

Hypothesis H2 investigates the relationship between psychological empowerment and employee voice. The results show that the relationship is significant based on the ($\beta = 0.307$; t-value = 3.956, and p-value = 0.000), as shown in Table 3.

Hypothesis H3 examined the relationship between despotic leadership and employee performance. The researcher argues that despotic leadership reduces employee performance because it negatively impacts behavior due to negative emotions. The result shows that there is a significant relationship between despotic leadership and employee performance, the significance is determined on the basis of ($\beta = -0.108$; t-value = 2.375, and p-value = 0.018).

Hypothesis H4 assesses the relationship between psychological empowerment and employee performance as it is argued that psychological empowerment predicts the employees' behavior. The relationship is significant on the basis of ($\beta = 0.182$; t-value = 2.076, and p-value = 4.361).

Hypothesis H5 determines the relationship between employee voice and employee performance, it has been argued that ensuring employee voice increases performance-related outcomes. The results show the values ($\beta = 0.343$; t-value = 4.361, and p-value = 0.000) values. Table 3 presents the result and depicts the significance of the relationships.

Table 3

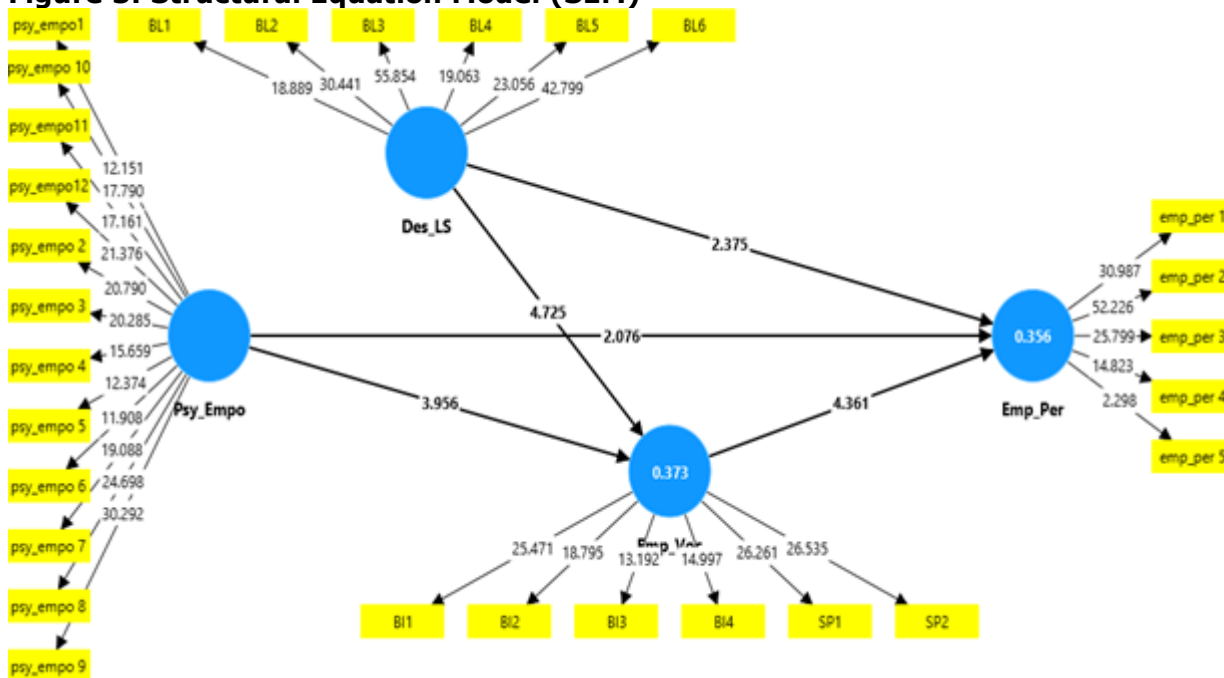
S#		β	t-stat	p-value
Direct Relationships				
H1	Des_LSEmp_Voc	-0.379	4.725	0.000
H2	Psy_EmpoEmp_Voc	0.307	3.956	0.000
H3	Des_LSEmp_Per	-0.108	2.375	0.018
H4	Psy_Empo Emp_Per	0.182	2.076	0.038
H5	Emp_VocEmp_Per	0.343	4.361	0.000
Mediating Effects				
H6	Des_LSEmp_VocEmp_Per	-0.130	3.286	0.001
H7	Psy_EmpoEmp_VocEmp_Per	0.105	2.798	0.005

Note: Emp_Per (Employee Performance), Des_LS (Despotic Leadership), Psy_Emp (Psychological empowerment), Emp_Voc (Employee Voice)

Hypothesis H6 addresses the mediation role of employee voice between despotic leadership and employee performance. The researcher claims that employee voice mediates the relationship between exogenous and endogenous constructs. This means the employee’s voice establishes the relationship between despotic leadership and employee performance. The results in Table 3 demonstrate a significant mediation relationship between despotic leadership and employee performance. Figure 3 presents the structural equation model extracted from Smart-PLS 4.0.

Hypothesis H7 also determines the mediating role of employee voice in influencing psychological empowerment and employee performance. The researcher has argued in subsequent sections that in the presence of employee voice, employee performance is influenced by psychological empowerment.

Figure 3: Structural Equation Model (SEM)



Note: Emp_Per (Employee Performance), Des_LS (Despotic Leadership), Psy_Emp (Psychological empowerment), Emp_Voc (Employee Voice)

The above figure 3 is extracted from Smart-PLS and presents a structural equation model (SEM). It shows the significance of relationships between constructs of the framework.

4.4. Implications

This research paper focuses on the prime phenomenon of employee performance in the banking sector. The private banking sector is facing challenges, issues and problems related to behavior for various reasons, including work-life balance, work-family conflicts, stress, well-being, leadership approach, psychological stress, empowerment, and so on.

This paper incorporated the crucial factor of leadership, the despotic type of leader, which has been considered as a major challenge. The banking employees were found to be having contradictory approaches to managers and higher-tier operational practices. The study suggested shaping and training higher management with positive and supportive approaches that enable the employees to harvest long-term benefits.

Despotic leadership is devastating to working environment that negatively impact the employee's behavior, there is a dire need to address the issues of despotic approach at workplace that hinder performance.

Psychological empowerment is an essential element of the workplace; the psychological approach impacts employees' behavior. Psychologically distracted employees are harmful for the organization and fail to achieve the organizational objectives. It has been suggested to develop strategies to foster psychological peace that impact performance and assist in achieving organizational goals and objectives.

Employee voice has grabbed the attention of researchers due to its importance at the workplace. The ignored employees create issues such as negative emotions, stress, counterproductive, turnover intention and lower performance. Higher-tier banking must be able to develop such internal mechanisms that consider incorporating the employee's consent and include it in decision-making to eradicate communication issues and clarify purpose and objectives.

Employee performance is crucial for firms' success; this study claims that appropriate leadership tends to predict employee performance by effectively listening to employees. There is need to address the leadership dilemma, ensuring psychological empowerment and employee voice for achieving employee performance.

5. Conclusion

This research effort focused on the burning issue of employee voice, which is influenced by various factors and impacts behavioral aspects. Banking sector employees face higher levels of stress, family conflicts, and work-life balance, which also project behavioral issues. The study incorporated the crucial issue of despotic leadership in the banking sector, which causes the occurrence of various negative emotions. Psychological empowerment has prime importance in increasing employee performance and employee voice. The study focused on employee performance compromised due to inappropriate leadership style, psychological empowerment issues and employee voice. It was depicted that despotic leadership reduces employee performance and ignores employee's consent. There is a negative significant influence of despotic leadership on employee voice and employee performance. Psychological empowerment increases employee performance and supports the employee's voice to be heard in addressing the employee's issues. The banking sector is required to focus and develop strategies to ensure the appropriate leadership that certifies the importance of employees' voices. The current leadership is reported to be inappropriate, which significantly reduces employee performance. Psychological empowerment was found to be influential for employee voice and employee performance. Most importantly, employee voice tends to play a crucial role in between the relationships of despotic leadership, psychological empowerment and employee performance. The banking sector needs to focus on establishing a mechanism for ensuring the employee voice that opposes the inappropriate leadership style and increases the practices of psychological empowerment, which collectively predicts employee performance. This study was limited in research approach, which focused on front-line employees, but the upper tier's point of view is ignored. In future, researcher should incorporate the opinion of the upper tier towards operational activities. The study was limited in sample size, and future research efforts can be made to compare the upper tier and operational core to shape effective strategies for employees and organizations to foster long-term benefits.

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