

The Role of Leadership Style on Employee Voice Behavior and Satisfaction: The Mediating Effect of Self-Efficacy

Mohammed L. Bello¹, Abdulrazaq K. AbdulKareem¹, Abdulrasaq A. Ishola¹, Isa Omolabi²,
and Rasaq Salman²

¹Department of Public Administration, University of Ilorin,
Ilorin, Nigeria

²Department of Business Administration, University of Ilorin,
Ilorin, Nigeria

Abstract—This research examined a model linking leadership style to employee voice behavior, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction. Data from 125 employees in the selected ministries and agencies in Kwara State were analyzed using partial least square-structural equation modeling. Results demonstrated that empowering leadership style positively predicted employee voice. In turn, increased voice opportunities reinforced employee self-efficacy tied to enactive mastery experiences. Employees who had input opportunities gained confidence in their capabilities. Finally, elevated self-efficacy perceptions mediated a positive relationship between employee voice and job satisfaction, conveying perceived control and competence. Findings suggest that a supportive leadership foundation transforms an upward spiral wherein involvement shapes affirming self-perceptions, fuelling workplace satisfaction. This study quantifies mediating mechanisms flowing from leadership style through voice participation and efficacy in ultimately predicting work satisfaction essential for public sector human capital development and accountability.

Keywords—Employee voice, leadership style, self-efficacy, employee satisfaction, public sector.

I. INTRODUCTION

Employee engagement and participation are indispensable drivers of organizational performance, innovation, and accountability within public institutions (Alamri, 2023). As the interface between administration and citizens, employee attitudes and conduct profoundly impact perceptions, trust, and outcomes of government agencies. Consequently, research across public administration disciplines prioritizes understanding antecedents of effective employee behaviors like speaking up, as well as job satisfaction predictive of commitment and retention (Yilmaz, 2023). Leadership plays an intrinsic role in mobilizing employee input, shaping key perceptual outcomes around competence, motivation, and satisfaction critical for a thriving workforce delivering quality public services (Vogel et al., 2023).

Employee voice is of focal interest which is conceptualized as voluntary expression of ideas, concerns, opinions, and

suggestions about work issues and problems, including dissent (Ghani and Malik, 2023). Employee voice provides indispensable benefits for public institutions through channeling employee insights on improving processes, systems, resource allocation, costs, service delivery, and more (Vadera and Aguilera, 2015). Particularly with tightening budgets amidst expanding societal needs, the innovations harvested from an empowered, vocal workforce become essential. Further, voice conveys information to leadership about problems requiring attention. Thus, understanding drivers of employee voice holds significance. Although definitions vary, transformational and empowering leadership approaches positively shape voice by inspiring involvement, expressing genuine care for staff welfare, providing developmental support, sharing organizational vision, and modeling ethical conduct (Zakkariya and Aboobaker, 2021). However, scholarly understanding of the complex mechanisms whereby leadership spurs voice remains scarce in the public sector research.

Equally important is perceptual and attitudinal outcomes associated with enhanced employee voice worthy of deeper investigation – namely, employee self-efficacy and job satisfaction. Perceived self-efficacy reflects one's belief in their capabilities to perform well and influence outcomes, shaping motivation, goals, perseverance, and ultimate task success (Massoudi, 2024). Efficacy profoundly impacts performance in public sector roles, particularly through goal choice, effort, and persistence (Alhadabi and Karpinski, 2020). Meanwhile, job satisfaction ties closely to employee intent to stay, absenteeism, client satisfaction, accountability, and stealing or misusing resources in public institutions (Eldor and Vigoda-Gadot, 2017). Given widespread issues with retention facing public agencies, drivers of satisfaction warrant attention (Ertas, 2015). Although some research explores efficacy and satisfaction outcomes related to organizational or national culture (Yon et al., 2016), less focuses on proximal leadership and expression mechanisms that potentially enhance these vital perceptual states.

This study addresses critical gaps through the lens of social exchange theory (SET) by examining the relationship between leadership approaches and employee voice behavior, and their subsequent effects on self-efficacy and job satisfaction. By analyzing these mediating mechanisms, we uncover how and why leadership enhances job satisfaction through employee voice empowerment. The findings, grounded in SET, provide practical insights for leadership development programs and organizational policies that can enhance employee participation opportunities, ultimately strengthening these two crucial attitudes among public administration personnel. This model guiding hypothesized relationships flows from recent literature on antecedents and outcomes of employee participation. First, transformational and empowering leadership providing autonomy support, respecting employees' viewpoints, involving staff in decision making, and seeking input positively predicted employee voice across cultural settings. Further, efficacy and satisfaction are fundamental needs employees seek through expressing voice (Wang et al., 2015), with research confirming links between voice behaviors and satisfaction tied to needs for belonging, involvement, and goal progress (Lu, 2023). Critically, Massoudi (2022) revealed supervisor-directed voice-enhanced performance which improved efficacy.

Integrating across these findings, a model is proposed wherein leadership style sparks greater voice behavior among employees. Enhanced voice then contributes to higher employee self-efficacy tied to the validating; control experiences generated through successfully voicing ideas. In turn, elevated efficacy is expected to fuel higher job satisfaction due to associated feelings of competence, accomplishment, and engagement. Essentially, leadership provides the foundation for voice, which enhances efficacy and satisfaction sequentially. Further, efficacy may transmit effects of voice on satisfaction, acting as a mediator. Therefore, analyzing this conceptual model helps unpack the black box explaining how leadership spurs satisfaction, with critical mediating mechanisms around voice behavior and employee self-perceptions.

Practically, confirming these relationships provides an actionable pathway for public sector administrators to optimize two vital outcomes for organizational health through empowering employee participation. Leadership serves as the linchpin – when supervisors express genuine care for staff, respect diverse views, develop personnel, and implement suggested improvements, they prompt a cascade whereby employees reciprocate through enhanced input. This participation then validated, reinforces competence perceptions fuelling intrinsic motivation and satisfaction. Findings can shape leadership training, evaluation practices, and voice mechanisms policy for public institutions.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Leadership Style

Leadership style has been extensively studied as an important driver of employee attitudes, behaviors, and organizational performance. A considerable body of research has examined how different leadership approaches, such as transformational, ethical, autocratic, and servant leadership, relate to key outcomes (Afsar and Umrani, 2020; Alamri, 2023; Aldholay et al., 2018; Amundsen and Martinsen, 2014). Transformational leadership, involving articulating an inspiring vision, providing intellectual stimulation, offering individualized support, and role modeling high ethical standards, strongly predicts employee satisfaction, commitment, trust, engagement, and lower turnover intentions (Day et al., 2014; Singh et al., 2020). By expressing genuine care and concern for followers' needs and goals, transformational leaders elicit greater effort and performance from employees. Empowering leadership that fosters participation in decision-making by encouraging independent action and expressing confidence in high subordinate abilities also enhances employee motivation, creative behaviors, job satisfaction, and effectiveness (Amundsen and Martinsen, 2014; Lundqvist et al., 2023). Servant leaders who prioritize fulfilling followers' needs and ambitions over their own similarly invoke greater dedication, involvement, and creativity from employees (Liden et al., 2014).

Ultimately, research converged on leadership emphasizing care, inclusiveness, modeling integrity, providing opportunities for growth, and empowering staff participation as most constructive for employee and organizational success across sectors. Research shows that there is continuing efforts at clarifying cultural boundary conditions around optimal leadership in public institutions, as well as quantifying specific mechanisms transmitting leadership style to employee perceptual, attitudinal, and performance outcomes (Elnaghi et al., 2019). Therefore, understanding intricacies in these complex interrelationships can inform leadership training and organizational initiatives supporting employee thriving essential for public sector accountability and social impact.

B. Employee Voice

Employee voice reflects a vital concept capturing the expression of ideas, opinions, concerns, and suggestions

about work issues by personnel. Organizations benefit greatly when employees speak up to identify problems or opportunities and propose solutions as this sparks learning, innovation, and continual improvement (Morrison, 2014; Morrison, 2023). Thus, understanding the drivers of employee voice holds significance. Definitions characterize voice as discretionary, promoting policies, practices, or behaviors for the collective good (Lai et al., 2020; Van Dyne and LePine, 1998). Motives further classify voice as prohibitive, aimed to prevent harm versus promotive to achieve gains. Voice takes diverse forms including making formal suggestions to managers, communicating collectively through unions, participating to shape decisions, publicly advocating change, expressing dissent through grievances, activism, or whistleblowing. Researchers distinguish voice from related constructs like organizational citizenship behaviors which lack the challenging, change-focused emphasis of voice.

A predominant theoretical lens examines leadership style shaping voice. Transformational, empowering leaders respecting followers' perspectives, and supporting involvement strongly predicted voice behaviors across cultures (Yilmaz, 2023). These leaders provide psychological safety to encourage expressing concerns. They also implement voiced ideas, giving employee's confidence their input spurs actual improvements. Additional antecedents such as organizational norms supporting participation, low power distance culture, psychological safety, procedural justice facilitating input, and individual differences around proactivity and moral courage related positively to employee voice as well (Chamberlin et al., 2017).

Outcomes of voice also gained attention. Potentially, voice affords benefits for institutions and employees through enabling upward information flow solving problems and reducing misconduct (Akinwale, 2019). However, researchers acknowledge many organizations implicitly discourage critical, change-oriented communication. Beyond organizational advantages, emerging evidence shows voice reinforces individual capabilities and efficacy too by providing enactive mastery experiences. In essence, understanding intricacies around motives, types of speaking up, individual and contextual drivers, and trickle-down impacts remains imperative for realizing the instrumental and intrinsic rewards of protected, promoted employee voice across sectors.

C. Self-Efficacy

Employee self-efficacy, reflecting the belief in one's ability to successfully execute job duties, profoundly shapes motivation, perseverance, and work performance (Alhadabi and Karpinski, 2020). As a core perception influencing how individuals approach challenges, set aspirational goals, and respond to failure, self-efficacy holds significance for organizational behavior. According to foundational theory, self-efficacy involves distinct dimensions around magnitude, strength, and generality distinguishing it from related concepts such as self-esteem, outcome expectations, and locus of control (Bandura and Walters, 1977). Further,

mastery experiences succeeding at tasks, social modeling of success, social persuasion affirming competence, and psychological states shape efficacy appraisals.

Extensive scholarship links efficacy to vital work outcomes (Turek et al., 2023). Employees higher in efficacy exhibit greater engagement, effort, persistence, goal level, resilience, and analytic strategies facilitating success (Alomar et al., 2023). Longitudinally efficacy forecasts career trajectories through career planning, exploration, decidedness, and stability (Lent and Hackett, 1987). Leaders higher in leadership efficacy also perform better by visualizing success, setting stretch team goals, cultivating follower potentials, and conveying confidence. Emerging work finds efficacy influencing and empowering job characteristics, participation in decision-making, and perceived organizational support on satisfaction and commitment (Iis and Yunus, 2016).

Given beneficial downstream effects, antecedents of efficacy gained attention most recently. Foundational work reveals transformational, empowering leadership cultivates collective and employee efficacy essential for ambition and initiative (Amundsen and Martinsen, 2014). Additional research shows implementing employees' voiced suggestions validates competence, boosting efficacy through enactive mastery – though limited work quantifies this empirically (Avery et al., 2022). In essence, efficacy remains vital for unlocking potential and tackling challenges in organizational life through cognitive, motivational, affective, and decision pathways.

D. Employee Satisfaction

Job satisfaction represents a vital workplace attitude, reflecting the degree to which employees feel positively or negatively about the overall work situation and environment (Arshad et al., 2022). Given extensive ties of satisfaction to valued outcomes such as employee retention, performance, organizational citizenship behaviors, client perceptions, safety, and well-being, understanding drivers holds importance across sectors. Dynamics around compensation, job design, leadership style, growth opportunities, organizational culture, and justice all potentially impact satisfaction appraisals (Hsieh and Kao, 2022).

Among the most scrutinized contributors, leadership style demonstrates consistent linkages to satisfaction. Transformational and empowering leadership providing inspiration, respecting employee voices, offering autonomy, and driving purpose correlates strongly to fulfillment (Breevaart et al., 2020). By expressing care for workers' needs and providing developmental support, such leaders enhance perceived competence and social belongingness needs, which translate into enjoyment. Contrastingly, abusive and authoritarian supervision reliably undermines satisfaction (Bekkers and Homburg, 2002). Beyond leadership approach, perceived organizational support meeting socioemotional needs predicts contentment (Bono et al., 2007). Organizations promoting balance, wellness, inclusive norms, and corporate social responsibility also experience higher average worker satisfaction. Across industries, fair pay, safe working

conditions, opportunities for advancement, and positive work relationships remain pivotal to keeping employees happy.

Outcomes associated with satisfaction also make clear why engendering positive worker attitudes matters. Satisfied employees exhibit significantly lower turnover intentions, partially stemming from social and emotional ties developed at satisfactory workplaces (Park, 2020). Happy workers also demonstrate higher productivity and role dedication (Abu-Shamaa et al., 2015; Ahmad and Jasimuddin, 2021; Ahmad et al., 2012). They engage in more organizational citizenship behaviors benefitting teams and colleagues by providing help, endorsements and flexibly managing heavy workloads during crises. In addition, frontline worker satisfaction transfers to customer perceptions of service quality. Combined, these manifold advantages compel organizations to continually monitor and enhance employee attitudes around the work experience. Regular pulse surveys, open comment forums, stay interviews, and analytics on sick time usage represent some measurement methods to track, report, and improve satisfaction over time. Ultimately, concerted efforts to foster workplace happiness can profoundly impact institutional success.

E. Hypothesis Formation: Leadership Style, Employee Voice, Self-Efficacy, and Employee Satisfaction: The Nexus

The attitudes and behaviors of employees serve as critical determinants of organizational performance, with increasing interest in the mechanisms that shape key outcomes such as employee voice and satisfaction (Avey et al., 2012). Leadership represents a pivotal antecedent shaping employee attitudes and willingness to speak up. Studies link transformational and empowering leadership approaches involving inspiration, vision, intellectual stimulation, and development of subordinates with enhanced employee voice (Mokhber et al., 2018). For instance, Liang et al. (2012) revealed such leadership boosted speaking up by enhancing employee commitment and perceived organizational support. Further, Wang et al. (2017) showed caring, supportive leaders reduced perceived “image risk” of voicing concerns. Contrastingly, transactional, and authoritarian leadership often weaken voice by undermining psychological safety (Duan et al., 2017). In essence, studies converge on leadership that inspires involvement and implements ideas promoting employee expressions of concerns, suggestions, and opinions.

H₁: Leadership style influences employee voice in a public organization.

Leadership also cultivates critical employee self-efficacy beliefs. Transformational leaders expressing confidence in and articulating inspiring future visions to subordinates enhance follower self-efficacy essential for ambition and initiative (Nging and Yazdanifard, 2015). In addition, empowering leadership behaviors allowing autonomy and highlighting competence lift employees’ task-specific self-efficacy (Amundsen and Martinsen, 2014). Some studies reveal mediating mechanisms such as employee emotional identification and engagement transmit leadership style to heightened efficacy (Carasco-Saul et al., 2015). In essence,

support-based, empowering leadership is pivotal for bolstering employees’ confidence to succeed at work tasks.

H₂: Leadership style influences employee self-efficacy in a public organization.

Recent research has begun exploring whether employees voicing concerns, opinions, and ideas within public organizations can shape important self-perceptions like self-efficacy. Some studies such as Liang et al. (2012) revealed employee voice expressed toward supervisors enhanced subordinates’ work engagement and performance, which, in turn, improved followers’ confidence in their work abilities and likelihood of future success. Building on previous findings, emerging studies propose that speaking up at work may directly contribute to beliefs in one’s personal and political efficacy. Raising ideas, challenging issues, and advocating changes allows employees to see their voice connect to meaningful results (Morrison, 2023). These “enactive mastery experiences” strengthen beliefs that one can create change through self-expression. In essence, early theory and evidence points to an upward spiral – employee voice leads to observable organizational accomplishments aligned with voiced concerns, which then reinforces voice confidence and future efforts to speak up. This resonates in public and civic contexts, wherein participating in an organization’s decision processes can shape not just work outcomes but perceived capacity to impact social issues.

H₃: Employee voice in a public organization impacts employee self-efficacy.

Additional theoretical rationale elucidates why voice would enhance self-efficacy (Avery et al., 2022). The act of vocalizing ideas, challenging ineffective practices, and making suggestions provides learning opportunities to strengthen competencies and abilities over time. Further, voice gives employees a forum to apply their perspectives and knowledge to organizational issues. When leadership implements voiced suggestions, it validates the value of employees’ input and affirms their ability to recognize and solve problems. These mastery moments build proof of one’s effectiveness, spurring greater efficacy to accomplish goals. An expanding area of research provides indications that employee voice serves as an antecedent that shapes work attitudes itself (Bashshur and Oc, 2015). Voice reinforcing experiences allow employees to flex their knowledge and abilities, provide developmental challenges, and influence processes, all means of enhancing felt competence at work. This study’s model reflecting voice’s positive impact on efficacy aligns with these recent findings on voice as a precursor cultivating perceptual and motivational states beneficial for employees and institutions. Additional scholarship must further test the effects of voice specifically tied to implementation on efficacy over time using longitudinal methods. However, preliminary theory and evidence suggests employee participation through voice can profoundly shape work attitudes driving behaviors.

H₄: Employee voice in a public organization determines employee satisfaction.

More so, outcomes of interest here – employee voice, efficacy, and job satisfaction – exhibit critical interlinkages. Avery et al. (2022) demonstrated voice boosted satisfaction

directly by fulfilling needs to belong and self-determination, and indirectly by enabling learning and goal progress. Meanwhile, strong efficacy beliefs consistently predict job satisfaction across contexts, given associated feelings of appreciation, control, and engagement (Song et al., 2020). Recent work shows efficacy partially mediates voice effects on satisfaction (Hu et al., 2024). Ultimately, literature details cascading connections between leadership antecedents and employee attitudinal outcomes fundamental for organizational success.

H₅: Self-efficacy influences employee satisfaction in a public organization.

H₆: Self-efficacy mediates the relationship between employee voice and employee satisfaction.

III. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This study examining connections between leadership style, public sector employee voice behaviors, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction has its theoretical underpinnings in SET (Cropanzano et al., 2017). At the heart of SET lies, the premise that interactions between interdependent parties can give rise to obligations and mutually beneficial exchanges over time. More specifically, when one party provides support, resources or acts of service to another party, this generates perceptions within the recipient that they “owe” the other party something in return for their beneficial treatment (Gouldner, 1960). In essence, the provision of benefits from one party is reciprocated with similar tangible or intangible benefits from the other party, resulting in enduring, reciprocal exchange relationships.

Within public sector organizations, leadership and employees inherently operate in a relationship of interdependence and resource exchange (Imam et al., 2023). Leadership relies on employees’ skills, time, and engagement to achieve organizational goals, while employees depend on leadership for compensation, developmental opportunities, role clarity, and support resources. Given this interdependence, SET proposes that high levels of supportive behavior demonstrated by either party can set off a beneficial cycle of exchanged social resources (Zhao and Detlor, 2023). For example, when leadership provides empowering opportunities, implements employee suggestions for improvement, recognizes employee contributions publicly, and offers mentorship, these supportive actions likely invoke

a felt obligation within employees to reciprocate accordingly (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Employees feel indebted and driven to pay back to leadership through behaviors and attitudes that meet leadership priorities, help strengthen the organization, and fuel ongoing cycles of mutually rewarding social exchange with leadership.

This study’s model (Figure 1) depicts this type of exchange relationship at play. It proposes leadership support drives critical employee reciprocation in the form of enhanced voice behavior and self-efficacy, ultimately also boosting job satisfaction (Patnaik et al., 2023). Here, employee voice reflects one means by which employees feel compelled to “give back” to those leaders who empower them, by increasing voicing of creative suggestions (Burriss et al., 2013). Similarly, supportive resources from leaders boost efficacy as employees strive to elevate performance to reciprocate exchange.

Applying SET to employee behaviors, when leadership provides support, resources, and opportunities for employees, this cultivates perceptions of obligation wherein employees reciprocate with attitudes and behaviors that align with leadership priorities and benefit the organization (Eisenberger et al., 2002). For instance, transformational and empowering leadership that offers developmental opportunities, respects employees’ perspectives, and implements their suggestions would be viewed as supportive exchanges. These leadership behaviors engender feelings of obligation, indebtedness, and the need to reciprocate. In this study’s model, reciprocation manifests through enhanced employee voice and self-efficacy. Employees feel compelled to “give back” by increasing their voicing of concerns, ideas, and input as well as gaining confidence in their job duties (Liang et al., 2012). In providing the initial supportive exchange through good leadership, employees feel psychologically safe and empowered to take a more proactive role, reciprocating leadership’s commitment through greater initiative (Walumbwa et al., 2010). Subsequently, higher employee voice and self-efficacy contribute to greater satisfaction – another beneficial return outcome reinforcing the fruitful exchange relationship between leadership and employees (Breevaart et al., 2020).

A. Conceptual Model

This study aims to unpack the complex interlinkages between four key variables that impact outcomes for public

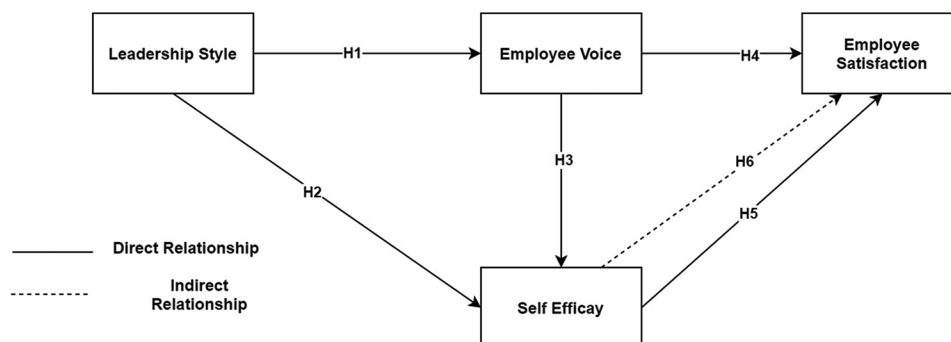


Fig. 1: Conceptual model.

sector organizations: leadership style, employee voice behavior, employee self-efficacy, and employee satisfaction. The central premise guiding the research is that the type of leadership style exhibited in a public organization shapes two crucial employee attitudes: the willingness of employees to speak up with proactive ideas and suggestions for improvement (employee voice) as well as employees' self-efficacy, meaning their confidence in their own ability to carry out job responsibilities effectively and succeed. Specifically, the model suggests that leaders who model openness, tolerate opposing views, provide coaching and development opportunities, and have mechanisms in place for implementing employees' voiced ideas will cultivate greater employee voice behaviors. When employees feel psychologically safe to communicate concerns, challenge current approaches, and make recommendations, employee voice thrives. Simultaneously, supportive, empowering leadership also boosts employees' self-efficacy by expressing confidence in them, building their competencies, and setting them up for success. Importantly, the study proposes that enhanced employee voice behaviors then circle back to strengthen employees' self-efficacy even further. When leadership gives employees chances to speak up and their voices are heard, it validates their ideas and affirms their ability to identify improvements, catalyzing enactive mastery experiences that reinforce confidence in their capabilities.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The methodology for this study involved a quantitative research design to examine the relationship between leadership style and employee voice in the workplace, as well as its impact on self-efficacy and employee satisfaction. The study used a purposive sampling technique to select a sample of 125 employees from five ministries and agencies in Kwara State Civil Service in Nigeria. Kwara State is located in the North-Central part of Nigeria. The purposive sampling technique was used because the study focused on a specific population. A questionnaire was used to collect data from the sampled population. Content validation of the questionnaire was carried out by four public administration experts. The experts reviewed the questionnaire for clarity, relevance, and consistency with the study's objectives. The experts provided feedback, which was used to revise and improve the questionnaire. A pilot study was conducted with 17 respondents to test the reliability and validity of the questionnaire. The pilot study aimed to identify potential issues with the questionnaire and ensure respondents understood the questions. Based on the results of the pilot study, minor revisions were made to the questionnaire. The data collected were analyzed using structural equation modeling-partial least squares (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS 4 software. This technique was suitable for analyzing the relationships between latent variables and manifest variables in a model, making it an appropriate choice for this study. The analysis was conducted in two stages. The first stage

involved the assessment of the measurement model, while the second stage involved testing the structural model.

A. Analysis

The study employed the SEM-PLS to conduct the analysis with the aid of SmartPLS 4. The sample as shown in Table I consisted of 64% male and 36% female employees, with the majority of participants (65%) falling between the ages of 30 and 45. There are 17% of the respondents within the age of 20 and 29, while 18% are above 45 years. The majority of participants (71%) had worked in their current position for more than 5 years and had spent more than 10 years in public service. The majority of the respondents have a bachelor degree, 33% have post-graduate degree, 10% have post-secondary certificates, and 7% have other forms of education.

B. Measurement Model

The measurement model was assessed through factor loadings, convergent validity, and composite reliability, as shown in Table II. All factor loadings exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.7, indicating that the items measured their intended constructs. The convergent validity and composite reliability were within acceptable ranges, indicating that the constructs were reliable and valid. Furthermore, the discriminant validity was evaluated, with the results indicating that the Heterotrait and Monotrait values were below the 0.85 benchmark, as shown in Table III. Therefore, it can be concluded that there are no discriminant validity issues in the data set.

C. Structural Model

The structural model examined the hypothesized relationships among the variables of leadership style, employee voice, self-efficacy, and employee satisfaction. Six hypotheses were tested using PLS-SEM analysis. The results as shown in Table IV provide support for all six hypothesized relationships in the model. Specifically, leadership style was a significant positive predictor of employee voice ($\beta = 0.46, P < 0.01$), supporting H_1 . Leadership style also exhibited a direct positive relationship with self-efficacy ($\beta = 0.35, P < 0.01$), consistent with H_2 . Further, employee

TABLE I
RESPONDENTS DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Variables	Percentage	Frequency
Gender		
Male	64	80
Female	36	45
Age		
20–29	17	21
30–45	65	81
Above 45	18	23
Educational qualification		
Post-secondary	10	13
Bachelor degree	50	63
Post-graduate	33	40
Others	7	9

TABLE II
RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Constructs	Items	Loadings	CA	CR	AVE
Leadership style					
The leadership in my organization communicates a compelling vision of the future.	LS1	0.84	0.76	0.79	0.58
The leadership in my organization treats staff as individuals, supporting and encouraging their development.	LS2	0.78			
The leadership in my organization gives employee autonomy over how they organize and complete work activities.	LS3	0.72			
The leadership in my organization takes staff opinions into consideration when making decisions.	LS4	0.81			
The leadership in my organization challenges assumptions and stimulates innovative thinking.	LS5	0.77			
The leadership in my organization provides recognition when staff perform well	LS6	0.82			
Employee satisfaction					
My job measures up to the expectations I had when I took the position.	ES1	0.85	0.81	0.86	0.74
I feel appreciated for the contributions I make in this organization.	ES2	0.82			
My job provides contentment during the working hours of my day	ES3	0.88			
Overall, I find my work fulfilling and engaging.	ES4	0.87			
Self-efficacy					
I feel confident in my ability to successfully perform my job duties.	SE1	0.85	0.74	0.78	0.58
I can effectively deal with unexpected challenges within my role.	SE2	0.83			
I possess the skills and capabilities to have an impact in my organization.	SE3	0.75			
I feel able to complete my key tasks independently without relying heavily on others.	SE4	0.77			
Employee voice					
I feel comfortable expressing my opinions and ideas at work.	EV1	0.89	0.81	0.89	0.69
I am encouraged to share my thoughts and suggestions about work-related issues.	EV2	0.84			
My supervisor listens to and acts on my feedback.	EV3	0.81			

TABLE III
DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY

Variables	Employee satisfaction	Employee voice	Leadership style	Self-efficacy
Employee satisfaction				
Employee voice	0.26			
Leadership style	0.42	0.38		
Self-efficacy	0.37	0.52	0.28	

voice positively predicted self-efficacy ($\beta = 0.59, P < 0.01$), affirming H_3 . Employee voice also had a positive impact on employee satisfaction ($\beta = 0.28, P < 0.01$), validating H_4 . In addition, self-efficacy positively influenced employee satisfaction ($\beta = 0.44, P < 0.01$), as proposed in H_5 . Finally, the prediction that self-efficacy mediates the relationship between employee voice and employee satisfaction was supported ($\beta = 0.22, P < 0.01$), confirming H_6 . The model fit was strong, explaining 46.9% of variance in employee voice and 55.8% of variance in employee satisfaction.

V. DISCUSSION

This study examined a conceptual model of how leadership style impacts employee voice, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction within public sector institutions. Structural equation modeling analysis found full empirical support for the proposed framework of relationships using data from 125 Kwara State Civil Service employees. Findings contribute uniquely to research on organizational behaviors in public administration in several aspects discussed below by: (a) Affirming a sequential path from leadership to satisfaction through voice and efficacy, (b) revealing efficacy's mediating effects, and (c) providing practical implications to amplify employee participation yielding

perceptual benefits congruent with public service values and performance.

First, results validated the hypothesized model flows linking leadership as an initial motivation subsequently impacting intermediate voice behavior and self-efficacy states ultimately elevating job satisfaction consistent with theory. Prior work established leadership style as an antecedent tied to participation and input behaviors (Mitonga-Monga et al., 2012; Pol, 2020). Further, Morris and Hackman (1969) suggested voice enhances efficacy and satisfaction in meeting self-determination needs. This study closes gaps by confirming this precise seven-stage sequence wherein supportive, empowering leaders promote voice behaviors among employees, voice involvement boosts self-efficacy, and efficacy heightens job satisfaction. Finding full empirical confirmation of the process through which leadership cascades to fuel satisfaction makes a key scholarly contribution. Evidence here articulates an explanatory pathway illuminating the psychological impacts of participative, transformational leadership on perceptual mediators, and attitudinal outcomes holding significance for employee success (Ahmad et al., 2023).

Second, results reveal the intermediating function of employee self-efficacy beliefs in transmitting the effects of employee voice on job satisfaction. Studies confirm efficacy as a mediating by product of voice implications for satisfaction and performance (Dedahanov et al., 2019; Gyensare et al., 2019). This study's findings that efficacy only partially mediated the relationship between voice and satisfaction begin to quantify this mediating role. Given strong links between efficacy and outcomes such as effort, persistence, goal setting, and resilience, documenting self-efficacy as a psychological mechanism continuing the supportive downstream benefits of voice holds value. Results agree with self-determination

TABLE IV
HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Relationships	β	T-value	P-value	Decision
H ₁ : Leadership style -> Employee voice	0.46	4.48	0.00	Supported
H ₂ : leadership style -> Self-efficacy	0.35	2.88	0.00	Supported
H ₃ : Employee voice -> Self-efficacy	0.59	6.72	0.00	Supported
H ₄ : Employee voice -> Employee satisfaction	0.28	2.56	0.00	Supported
H ₅ : Self-efficacy -> Employee satisfaction	0.44	4.16	0.00	Supported
H ₆ : Employee voice -> Self-efficacy -> Employee satisfaction	0.22	4.86	0.00	Supported

R²: Employee voice=0.469, Employee satisfaction=0.558

models where voice fosters satisfaction through competence and autonomy needs but further pinpoints the portion of the relationship flowing through intervening on-the-job mastery and capability perceptions. In essence, affirming empirical evidence of sequential impacts culminating in satisfaction provides practical evidence to compel public sector focus on participative development initiatives.

A. Theoretical Implications

This research examining linkages between leadership, employee voice, self-efficacy, and satisfaction in public agencies carries several meaningful theoretical implications. First, findings support tenants of SET (Cropanzano et al., 2017) within the leadership-follower relationship in revealing employee perceptions and reciprocating behaviors tied to supportive, empowering leadership. Results confirm SET's proposition that exchange parties feel obligated to respond beneficially when the other party passes a favorable treatment (Gouldner, 1960). Here, when public sector leaders respect staff input, develop subordinates, and implement suggestions, this cultivates felt indebtedness leading employees to "pay back" through enhanced participation and efficacy (Moin et al., 2024). Quantifying sequential impacts whereby leadership spurs reciprocal voice and efficacy attitudes validates assumptions around reciprocation cycles driving mutual commitment and value creation between exchange partners.

Second, findings affirm theoretical extensions of SET into "organization support theory" highlighting the distinct effects of socioemotional resources alongside material exchanges (Kurtessis et al., 2017). Beyond tangible rewards, factors such as respect, affiliation, fairness, and care also elicit reciprocity (Kieserling, 2019). Results newly demonstrate socioemotional support through implementing employee ideas similarly invokes reciprocal positive responses. This affirms assumptions about the unique effects of cultivating a sense of value and belonging through non-material social exchange.

In addition, the study provides confirmatory support for research on transformational and empowering leadership (Cheong et al., 2019). Models propose such leadership empowers followers, provides developmental support, expresses confidence in high potential, and role models ethical conduct, invoking higher participation, motivation, and initiative. This aligns with confirmed patterns here among public sector personnel experiencing greater inclusion, involvement, and efficacy under similar leadership. Findings also concur with extensions of this work into

"leader-member exchange theory" highlighting two-way, trust-based relationships between leaders and followers (Hassan et al., 2013). High quality leader exchanges indeed facilitated supportive resources exchanged for beneficial staff attitudes here.

Critically, results substantiate emerging extensions proposing that beyond impacting performance, leadership also enhances follower work attitudes tied to needs fulfillment (Breevaart et al., 2020). Transformational leadership fulfills higher-order intrinsic needs. The empirical links found between supportive leadership and employee voice and efficacy attitudes affirms this perspective. Furthermore, the study provides quantitative backing for recent theoretical models viewing participative, empowering work designs themselves as antecedents improving psychological states and behaviors. Voice did enhance efficacy perceptions, supporting assertions of developmental, validating effects. Overall, mapping the leadership-to-efficacy-to-satisfaction path leveraging voice involvement contributes multiple confirmations of and extensions to motivational assumptions within leadership theory.

B. Practical Implications

Findings from this research on connections between leadership, voice, efficacy, and satisfaction in public sector contexts offer several tangible practical implications for administrators and policymakers. First, results comprehensively demonstrate that leadership support stands as the essential foundation for catalyzing a surge of positive employee perceptions, participation, and strengthened workplace attitudes. As transformational and empowering leadership behaviors directly predicted both critical employee voice behavior and self-efficacy, investing in developing supportive supervisor skills remains imperative (Nging and Yazdanifard, 2015). Training programs teaching coaching techniques, change management processes seeking input, ethical decision-making valuing stakeholder needs, and continuous improvement systems can help institutionalize participation. Further, incorporating metrics on idea implementation rates and employee survey engagement responses into manager evaluation criteria can incentivize empowering approaches.

In addition, findings reveal employee voice mechanisms themselves represent a vital practical tool for strengthening worker attitudes such as efficacy beliefs and satisfaction through validating competence (Duan et al., 2022). Administrator training should provide guidance on

implementing forums for employee voice around improving policies, practices, resource allocation, and service delivery. Innovations laboratories, citizen panels, and digital networking platforms can elicit insights from all stakeholders (Vadera and Aguilera, 2015). Further, public forums, collaborative task forces, and participative budgeting give citizens themselves opportunities to voice priorities. Beyond one-off suggestion boxes, instituting consistent procedures for soliciting input, evaluating ideas, communicating decisions, and celebrating contributors publicly helps engage employees through voice.

Ultimately, study results comprehensively demonstrate the pivotal role of leadership in sparking a chain of reinforcing positive employee perceptions tied to needs fulfillment. However, this hinges on providing developmental support and worker participation opportunities – not just inspiration. Practically, agency heads must emphasize, monitor, and reward managerial commitment to soliciting and integrating employee input aimed at growth and improvement. Metrics tracking participation rates, implementation of voiced ideas, and worker survey measures of inclusion and supervisor support should enter performance management processes. Structurally, public institutions could appoint ombudspersons or participative management steering committees to formally assess bottlenecks in information flows. Revamping antiquated protocols insulating decision makers helps realize the manifold dividends, both instrumental and intrinsic, of soliciting the insights and involvement of personnel across hierarchical levels.

VI. CONCLUSION

This research examined the linkages between leadership behaviors, employee voice, self-efficacy, and employee satisfaction. Quantitative analysis of survey data from 125 public sector employees largely confirmed the hypothesized framework of relationships. Analysis integrated across variables at different levels helps unpack the sequence and underlying mechanisms translating positive forms of leadership into employee satisfaction. Findings showed that leadership style serves as a crucial initiator that can spark a chain of positive employee perceptions and attitudes. Transformational and empowering leadership providing developmental support, respecting staff input, and offering voice opportunities correlate strongly with enhanced employee participation. Furthermore, employee voice involvement itself acts an agentic state shaping work attitude. Voice opportunities reinforce employee self-efficacy indicating beliefs in one's ability to capably accomplish goals.

Through voicing concerns, ideas, and suggestions, employees gain confidence through mastery experiences of seeing their input implemented. More so, strengthened self-efficacy perceptions transmit further benefits by substantially explaining enhanced job satisfaction. Efficacy links to greater perceived control, competence, and engagement that translate to workplace contentment. Efficacy also mediates

the relationship between voice and satisfaction, conveying part of the benefits of participation to satisfaction. Ultimately, a supportive leadership foundation provides the essential catalyst for triggering an upward spiral where employee voice leads to self-affirming belief states ripe to fuel workplace happiness and engagement. Leadership matters greatly – but largely through prompting participation yielding reinforcing perceptions and attitudes. Findings from this study carry important practical implications by demonstrating that satisfaction and its related retention and performance benefits hinge on instituting structures and leadership training eliciting perceptions of support, inclusion, and competence. Further research can continue clarifying intermediary processes in the leadership-to-satisfaction pathway generalizable across public agencies.

VII. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

VIII. DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data for this study are available on reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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