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Investigating the influence of employee voice on public sector performance: The mediating dynamics of organizational trust and culture

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ABSTRACT

This study uses the Social Exchange Theory (SET) to examine the mediating influence that organizational trust and culture have on the link between employee voice and public sector performance. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was used to analyse data on 503 public sector employees. The study findings indicate that employee voice greatly improves organizational trust ($\beta = 0.914, p < 0.001$) and culture ($\beta = 0.893, p < 0.001$), which in turn have a favourable effect on performance in the public sector ($\beta = 0.395, p < 0.001$ and $\beta = 0.133, p < 0.002$, respectively). It has shown that in this connection, trust is a strong mediator ($\beta = 0.361, p < 0.001$) than culture ($\beta = 0.119, p < 0.001$). The findings highlight how crucial it is to support employee voice and trust in order to enhance performance outcomes in the public sector. These revelations have important ramifications for managers in the public sector who want to improve organizational dynamics and staff engagement tactics in order to increase productivity and effectiveness.

1. Introduction

Over the past few years, the public sector has become aware of how employees shape organizational outcomes (Jakobsen et al., 2023). One of the most important factors affecting organizational dynamics is the idea of “employee voice,” which refers to the thoughts, suggestions, and concerns expressed by employees in an organization (Paulet et al., 2021). Understanding the methods by which employee input contributes to these outcomes is crucial, as governments aim to improve the performance and effectiveness of the public sector. This study examines the link between employee voice and public sector performance by examining the mediating influences of organizational trust and culture. The significance of this research lies in its capacity to elucidate the underlying mechanisms that connect employee engagement to overall organizational effectiveness.

A rising body of research demonstrates how important engaged employees are to the advancement of service quality, organizational innovation, and overall performance in the public sector (Liang et al., 2017; Townsend et al., 2022). This study aims to expand our understanding of how employee opinions are articulated to directly influence organizational results. Based on this premise, the second research question examines the mediating roles that organizational trust and culture play in the relationship between employee voice and public

sector performance. The research that is currently available indicates that effective organizations must have both trust and culture (Galvin et al., 2021; Mahmud, 2022). However, it is still unclear exactly how these elements buffer the relationship between performance and voice for public sector employees. This study aims to bridge this gap by examining the ways in which organizational trust and culture facilitate employee voice penetration and influence overall organizational performance.

2. Theory and hypothesis development

One applicable theoretical framework is the Social Exchange Theory (SET), which is used in this study to examine how employee voice affects public sector performance with an emphasis on the mediating dynamics of organizational trust and culture. Established by Blau (1964) and Emerson (1976), Social exchange theory was first put forth by Homans (1958) and evolved by them. It offers a perspective on how people relate to one another in social settings by highlighting the sharing of resources and the reciprocity of social interactions.

As per SET (Blau, 1964; Emerson, 1976; Homans, 1958), people participate in social interactions with the hope of obtaining advantages and rewards. Employees in the public sector are free to communicate their thoughts, worries, and recommendations in the context of

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employee voice with the hopes of achieving beneficial results like improved job satisfaction, career development, or a positive work environment (Ashiru et al., 2022; Kwon & Farndale, 2020). By utilizing SET, raising concerns transforms into a social exchange in which workers put their efforts into the organization in the hopes of receiving positive outcomes (Liu et al., 2022).

Within the framework of social exchange theory, organizational trust and culture can play a crucial role as mediators. According to Denison (1990) psychological contract theory, trust can play a crucial role in social interactions. When employees have a high degree of trust in the organization, they are more inclined to express their ideas. A positive psychological contract is fostered when employees feel that the organization recognizes and respects their feedback, which increases the possibility that they will engage in voice behaviour (Akhimien & Kadiri, 2022).

Additionally, the framework for employee voice is greatly influenced by organizational culture (Ouyang et al., 2022). Four essential characteristics are highlighted in Rousseau (1995) organizational culture model: mission, perseverance, consistency, and involvement. More employee voice is likely to be heard in a workplace where employee participation is valued and encouraged (Liu et al., 2022).

Within this theoretical framework, employee voice takes on the role of internal social exchange within the organization, with organizational trust and culture serving as mediating factors that impact the overall performance of the public sector. Through the application of related concepts from organizational psychology and the Social Exchange Theory, the research provides a thorough understanding of the relationship between employee voice, trust, culture, and public sector performance.

2.1. Employee voice and organisational trust

The relationship between organizational trust and employee voice is crucial to the effectiveness and efficiency of public services (Marsden, 2007). In order to promote a better-informed decision-making process, employee voice is essential since it allows frontline workers and public servants to offer their observations and comments (Marsden, 2007). When dealing with complicated societal challenges, public managers find this participatory method especially pertinent (Jiang et al., 2022). Studies indicated that organizations that support employee voice see improvements in creativity and flexibility (Jiang et al., 2022; Qing & JinHua, 2023).

In the field of public management, where the authority and reputation of governmental establishments are critical, organizational trust is similarly important (Beesley & Hawkins, 2022). Citizens' trust in the government and employees' faith in the organization are two aspects of the multidimensional concept of trust in public management. An environment of trust is created within the organization when staff members feel that their opinions count and that their efforts are respected (Shahid, 2018). Citizens' external trust can be positively impacted by his internal trust, which is essential for productive collaboration among public servants (Belokonev et al., 2022).

The function of leadership in organizational behaviour is crucial in determining the culture that supports or impedes employee voice and organizational trust (Qing & JinHua, 2023). Proficient public executives understand the significance of fostering an atmosphere that promotes candid conversation and honours a range of viewpoints (Marsden, 2007; Qing & JinHua, 2023). A culture of trust where employees feel comfortable voicing their ideas without fear of retaliation is fostered within the organization by the leadership's support for employee voice (Qing & JinHua, 2023). External stakeholders receive this trust in turn, which strengthens perceived legitimacy.

Organizational behaviour is a field where the dynamic link between employee voice and organizational trust is critical (Abayomi & Quadri, 2022; Dias et al., 2021). Fostering a culture that promotes employee engagement and trust becomes crucial as public managers struggle with

the challenges of serving diverse constituents (Dias et al., 2021). This helps to develop public trust, which is essential for efficient governance in the public sector and improves the internal operations of organizations.

H₁. Employee voice positively influences organisational trust

2.2. Employee voice and organisational culture

The interaction between employee voice and organizational culture in the context of public management and organizational behaviour has a significant impact on the successful and responsive delivery of public services. (Adeinat et al., 2019; Kaufmann et al., 2019). Employee voice refers to the active involvement of employees in voicing their ideas and proposals, which helps with decision-making and organizational development (Paulet et al., 2021). The involvement of employees is crucial in organizational settings due to the varied interests of stakeholders (Palumbo Pinto et al., 2022). This allows for well-informed decision-making and the creation of policies that suit the demands of the public.

How employee voice is welcomed and integrated in to organizations is influenced by organizational culture (Adeinat et al., 2019). An organization's culture establishes standards for appropriate conduct, acceptable communication, and the degree to which staff members feel free to voice their ideas (de Oliveira et al., 2023). Employee voice is encouraged in an organization with a good and inclusive culture that values diversity of thought and creates a safe space for employees to express their opinions (Kregel et al., 2022; Romanyshyn, 2020). De Oliveira et al. (2022) maintains that public employees have a greater sense of ownership and participation as a result of this cultural support for employee input.

Leadership is crucial in determining how organizational culture encourages or discourages employee input (Tirtayasa, 2019). Successful public executives understand the significance of fostering an environment that values cooperation, promotes candid communication, and actively solicits employee input (Paais et al., 2020). A more dynamic and adaptable public environment results from leaders who support an inclusive and transparent culture that gives workers the freedom to express their thoughts and concerns (Paais et al., 2020; Tirtayasa, 2019).

One of the most important aspects of organizational success is the interaction between employee voice and organizational culture (Isaakyan et al., 2021). Enhanced decision-making procedures, employee engagement, and organizational effectiveness are all facilitated by a supportive and valued organizational culture (Paais et al., 2020). Developing a culture that values and embraces employee voice is crucial for encouraging creativity and responsiveness in the service of the public interest.

H₂. Employee voice positively influences organisational culture

2.3. Employee voice and public sector performance

Organizational effectiveness depends on the interaction between employee voice and public sector performance (Kaufmann et al., 2019). Employee voice refers to the way in which government workers actively participate in sharing their thoughts, ideas, and concerns (Townsend et al., 2022). Isaakyan et al. (2021) indicate that promoting employee voice enhances public sector performance by utilizing the expertise and perspectives of frontline workers, who are frequently closest to the issues that residents encounter. It can result in better informed decision-making and the creation of policies that are more in line with community demands when public employees feel empowered to express their opinions (Isaakyan et al., 2021; Kaufmann et al., 2019).

The quality of services rendered to citizens is closely associated with the performance of the public sector (Negri & Dincă, 2023). Service delivery is enhanced in organizations where employee voice is valued and encouraged (Kaufmann et al., 2019). Public management involves a

wide range of stakeholders and is complex, it benefits from a participatory approach where staff members offer their professional skills to the decision-making process. This inclusive strategy improves the public sector's capacity to successfully address societal concerns while also fostering a sense of responsibility among personnel (Kazho & Atan, 2022).

In order to actually improve public sector performance, employee feedback must be translated into actionable improvements in leadership (Tirtayasa, 2019). Proficient leaders understand the significance of fostering an atmosphere in which workers are at ease voicing their thoughts and feel that their input is appreciated (Wang et al., 2019). Research indicates a positive correlation between enhanced organizational performance in the public sector and leadership endorsement of employee voice (Li, 2008; Song et al., 2022). A culture of continuous improvement is fostered by leaders that value employee feedback and take it seriously, which benefits the public they serve (Liang et al., 2017).

Efficient public management is contingent upon the correlation between public sector performance and employee voice (Kaufmann et al., 2019). Creating an environment that supports different viewpoints and promotes employee involvement enhances decision-making, service performance, and organizational effectiveness as a whole. In order to achieve optimal public sector performance, it is imperative to change in order to meet the demands of various communities. One way to do this is by identifying and exploiting employee contributions through effective employee voice channels.

H3. Employee voice positively influences public sector performance

2.4. Organisational trust and public sector performance

The legitimacy and credibility of government institutions are contingent upon public trust in public organizations, and this in turn affects the performance of the public sector (Dias et al., 2021). Because citizens are more likely to have faith in government agencies, they believe to be trustworthy, studies show a positive correlation between organizational trust and increased performance in the public sector (Belokonev et al., 2022). Performance in the public sector is closely linked to the people's opinion of the government's reliability and is not only influenced by operational efficiency (Bargsted et al., 2022).

Internal and external trust among public employees is two of the many facets of trust in public organizations. For public employees to collaborate and function as a team, internal trust is very important. This has an impact on the performance of the public sector as a whole (Zeffane et al., 2017). Employee collaboration, information sharing, and teamwork are all enhanced in an environment of trust, and these behaviours are particularly beneficial for public sector organizations.

Building employee dedication and a positive organisational culture require trust in the leadership (Gustafsson et al., 2021). Building and maintaining trust within a team is a key responsibility of effective public executives, as it is essential to accomplishing organizational objectives (Sarmawa et al., 2020). Employees are more likely to be motivated, engaged, and dedicated to helping public sector programmes succeed overall when they have faith in their leaders and the institution (Vargas-González & Toro-Jaramillo, 2021).

A crucial component of efficient public management is the relationship that exists between organizational trust and public sector performance. Public servants' internal dynamics and how the public perceives the legitimacy of the government are both influenced by trust. Establishing and preserving trust in public institutions is a continuous effort that calls for strategic leadership as well as a dedication to openness and responsibility. Building and maintaining organizational trust is crucial to attaining success for internal and external stakeholders.

H4. Organisational trust positively influences public sector performance

2.5. Organisational culture and public sector performance

One of the most important factors influencing public sector performance is organizational culture. The values, customs, and common beliefs that direct the conduct of its members are established by the culture of an organization (Adeinat et al., 2019). Research suggests that the functioning of public sector organizations is greatly impacted by organizational culture, which affects decision-making procedures to public services provided (de Oliveira et al., 2023). Performance can be enhanced by an organizational culture that supports the objectives and principles of good public management.

Public servant behaviour is significantly influenced by organizational culture, where responsiveness and service delivery are vital (Romanyshyn, 2020). A culture that places a strong emphasis on transparency, accountability, and a dedication to public service can improve the performance of the public sector and create a healthy work environment (Morris & Klesner, 2010; Thanetsunthorn, 2022). On the other hand, a dysfunctional organizational culture can undermine public confidence and obstruct collaboration and performance.

Organizational culture is heavily shaped and influenced by public leadership (Sarmawa et al., 2020). Setting the tone for the organization, reiterating desired cultural values, and fostering an atmosphere that encourages high performance are all crucial tasks for effective leaders (Asencio, 2016). A good and flexible organizational culture is fostered by leadership, and this increases staff motivation, engagement, and a sense of shared purpose in accomplishing public sector goals (Sarmawa et al., 2020).

Effective public management requires an understanding of the connection between organizational culture and public sector performance (Purwadi et al., 2020). Decision-making, employee satisfaction, and service delivery can all be strengthened by a strong corporate culture that upholds the ideals of public service (Purwadi et al., 2020). Azeem et al. (2021) holds that public managers need to be aware of how organizational culture affects performance and take proactive measures to cultivate a culture that upholds the principles and objectives of efficient public management. Building a strong organizational culture is essential to attaining long-term success as public sector organizations continue to adapt to changing problems.

H5. Organisational culture positively impacts public sector performance

2.6. Organizational trust, employee voice and public sector performance

Trust, according to Social Exchange Theory (SET), is the cornerstone for mutually beneficial interactions between employees and their employers (Bolazs, 2021). Campagna et al. (2020) discovered that high levels of trust within an organization are linked to higher employee commitment, work satisfaction, and overall performance. Organizational trust is significantly more important in the public sector because of the specific issues associated with accountability, openness, and public scrutiny (Keefer & Vlaicu, 2022). However, little is known about organizational trust mediating between employee voice and public sector performance, especially when seen from the standpoint of SET.

Another essential element of successful organizational performance is employee voice, which is described as the voluntary expression of thoughts, ideas, concerns, or views about matters pertaining to the workplace (Townsend et al., 2022). According to SET, workers who believe there is a high degree of organizational trust are more inclined to speak up because they believe their opinions will be heard and appreciated. Research by Morrison (2023) indicates that encouraging employee voice can result in better decision-making, creativity, and problem-solving.

Reciprocal trust and open communication foster an environment that is supportive and collaborative (Thanetsunthorn, 2022), which in turn enhance organizational performance (Zeffane et al., 2017). However,

there is a lack of empirical evidence specifically linking organizational trust and employee voice to public sector performance. Public sector performance is a multidimensional construct that includes efficiency, effectiveness, and the quality of public services provided (Mustea et al., 2021). While there is considerable research on the factors influencing public sector performance, integrating SET to explore the mediating role of organizational trust in the relationship between employee voice and public sector performance remains underexplored.

H6. Organizational trust mediates the relationship between employee voice and public sector performance.

2.7. Organizational culture, employee voice and public sector performance

Employee behaviour and organizational effectiveness are significantly influenced by the culture of the organization (Duan et al., 2022). It includes common values, attitudes, and customs that shape how workers relate to one another and carry out their jobs (Fietz & Günther, 2021). According to Social Exchange Theory (SET), an environment where trust and reciprocity are valued by both the organization and its workforce encourages workers to go above and beyond the call of duty (Anwar et al., 2023). Strong, encouraging cultures may boost employees' engagement, work happiness, and general performance (Duan et al., 2022).

Innovation and organizational development depend on employee voice, which is the freely expressed thoughts, recommendations, or concerns about matters pertaining to the workplace (Jha et al., 2019). According to SET, employees are more inclined to participate in voice behaviours when they perceive a positive organizational culture that is marked by trust and support because they feel that their contributions will be recognised and rewarded (Jo & Ellingson, 2022). According to studies by Morrison (2023) a culture that values employee voice may enhance decision-making, spur creativity, and strengthen an organization's capacity for problem-solving. The literature, particularly in the public sector, is noticeably lacking in its examination of the mediating role of organisational culture between employee voice and public sector performance. Unexplored is the use of SET integration to investigate the functions of employee voice and organizational culture in improving public sector performance.

H7. Organizational culture mediates the relationship between employee voice and public sector performance.

3. Methodology

With the help of 503 public sector employees within a range of affiliations and professional backgrounds, the simple random sampling technique was able to ensure that respondents were inclusive and representative. By using this method, the findings have a higher degree of external validity and are thus more transferable to other public sector environments. To minimise selection bias and guarantee that every responder had an equal chance of being selected (Noor, Tajik, & Golzar, 2022). Based on Noor, Tajik, and Golzar (2022) research, this approach improves the sample's representativeness, resulting in more dependable and broad conclusions. In order to guarantee varied representation, the survey design necessitated meticulous planning to encompass a broad variety of populations. Employing professional networks and the internet, the survey was disseminated through email invites and partnerships with organizations in order to reach a large number of people and improve response rates.

The main statistical method used to examine the data was Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS SEM). The choice of PLS SEM was based on its capacity to handle intricate connections between variables, particularly in scenarios with modest sample sizes. Based on the study model's multidimensionality and the aim to investigate complex relationships, PLS SEM provided an adaptable and potent

method for evaluating the measurement and structural models at the same time.

PLS SEM's ability to handle latent variables with reflective and formative indicators, which makes it well-suited for the complex and diverse character of the study aims, further supported the choice to utilize it. This methodological decision was made with the intention of guaranteeing a thorough and precise analysis of the links within the conceptual framework, which strengthen the validity of the study's conclusions.

3.1. Constructs, variables and measures

The study adopted scales for the various constructs from Tran et al. (2023), renowned for his work in understanding and assessing organizational culture, with frameworks including alignment with values (3a), open communication (3b), inclusivity (3c), leadership support (3d), team dynamics (3e), and feedback (3f). Matsunaga (2015) who made significant contributions in developing feedback systems for employee voice and proactive behaviour with items including Open Communication Channels (1a), Feedback Systems (1b) and Leadership Accessibility (1c). Li and Sun (2015), developed foundational frameworks for Organizational Trust, including communication transparency (2a), consistency in decision-making (2b), leadership credibility (2c), empowerment (2d), and employee involvement (2e). Zakaria et al. (2011) who also contributed to Public Sector Performance indicators.

The constructs and the indicators that go along with them are shown in Table 1. Using the shared data points in the dataset, the indicators with data missing by less than 5% were mean-replaced. There were a few missing values that needed to be removed, which limited the dataset to 503 respondents.

Using all 24 indicators from the study, which 4 constructs, Harman's single factor analysis was performed to determine if common method bias was present. Factors with eigenvalues larger than one were extracted using an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) conducted without rotation. The outcomes demonstrated that some components had

Table 1
Constructs, indicators, and data source.

SN	Latent Variable	Indicator	Data Sources
1a	Employee Voice (EV)	Open Communication Channels	Field survey
1b		Feedback Systems	
1c		Leadership Accessibility	
1d		Inclusive Decision-Making	
1e		Cultural Acceptance	
1f		Employee Engagement	
2a	Organisational Trust (OT)	Communication Transparency	Field survey
2b		Consistency in Decision-Making	
2c		Leadership Credibility	
2d		Empowerment and Autonomy	
2e		Fair Treatment	
2f		Employee Involvement	
3a	Organisational Culture (OC)	Alignment with Values	Field survey
3b		Open Communication	
3c		Inclusivity	
3d		Leadership Support	
3e		Team Dynamics	
3f		Feedback and Recognition	
4a	Public Sector Performance (PSP)	Service Delivery Quality	Field survey
4b		Financial Management	
4c		Policy Implementation	
4d		Citizen Engagement	
4e		Public Trust	
4f		Operational Efficiency	

eigenvalues higher than one. To be more precise, 41% of the variation was explained by the first component. This study with 503 respondents does not consider common technique bias to be a serious problem because the proportion is below the 50% criterion.

4. Data analysis and findings

Utilizing SmartPLS 3.2.9 and the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) approach described by Hair et al. (2013). The theories were then examined in light of the information. In accordance with suggested procedures for reflective models (Hair et al., 2019; Sarstedt & Moisescu, 2024), the study assessed the measurement model first. There were several characteristics that were evaluated, such as indicator reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity, and internal consistency reliability. The importance of the route coefficients and the fit of the structural model were then closely examined. A thorough grasp of the study’s conclusions was aided by the interpretation of the data, which was guided by pertinent criteria (see Fig. 1).

4.1. Evaluation of measurement model

As advised by Sarstedt and Moisescu (2024) the reflective measurement model was assessed by looking at indicator loadings, convergent validity, discriminant validity, and internal consistency reliability. The evaluation’s findings are displayed in Table 2. In order to guarantee efficient construct assessment, indicator loadings were examined, adhering to (Hair et al., 2019) recommended criterion of at least 0.708. Even though not every loading at first satisfied this requirement, loadings that fell below the predetermined cutoff were eliminated in a later model iteration. As seen in Fig. 2, after this revision, all other factors showed acceptable loadings over the 0.708 criterion.

Employee voice, organizational trust, organizational culture, and public sector performance are the constructs whose reliability and validity metrics are shown in Table 2. With values ranging from 0.759 to 0.909, Cronbach’s Alpha shows strong internal consistency for every construct. Another reliable indicator, the rho A values, which range from 0.803 to 0.929, are likewise strong (See Table 2). Indicating the constructs’ consistency and dependability within the assessment methodology, Composite Reliability scores surpass the suggested cutoff point of 0.70 (Sarstedt & Moisescu, 2024).

The Fornell-Larcker Criterion, shown in Table 3, evaluates discriminant validity by evaluating the correlations between each construct and the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for that construct. For every construct, the diagonal values correspond to the square root of the AVE. Diagonal values greater than off-diagonal correlations confirm discriminant validity, according to Hair et al. (2019) and Sarstedt and Moisescu (2024). As an example, the AVE’s square root for employee voice is 0.914, higher than the correlations it has with public sector performance (0.896), organizational trust (0.891), and organizational culture (0.893). Comparably, the square root of AVE for organizational trust is 0.951, which is higher than the correlations for employee voice (0.914), organizational culture (0.831), and public sector performance (0.894). Strong discriminant validity is shown by the

Table 2
Construct reliability and validity.

Construct	Cronbach’s Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Employee voice	0.909	0.929	0.938	0.793
Organisational Trust	0.759	0.803	0.890	0.803
Organisational culture	0.845	0.855	0.928	0.865
Public sector performance	0.873	0.887	0.923	0.799

consistency of this pattern across all constructs. These results highlight how unique each variable is inside the measurement model and validate how they individually contribute to the study’s larger conceptual framework. The values in Table 4 show the degree of correlation between each indicator and its corresponding construct (see Table 4). In general, convergent validity is confirmed by the bulk of the items displaying increased loadings on their assigned constructs (Hair et al., 2019; Sarstedt & Moisescu, 2024).

4.2. Evaluation of the structural model

As shown by the beta coefficients and p-values in Table 5, employee voice has a strong direct impact on organizational trust, organizational culture, and public sector performance. The beta coefficient for H₁ is 0.914, and the p-value is 0.000, suggesting a highly significant and robust positive effect. Additional evidence for the strength of this link comes from the high T statistic (127.001). According to this, employees’ faith in the organization is greatly increased when they feel free to voice their ideas and concerns. The importance of employee voice in creating a trustworthy workplace culture is highlighted by this significant association.

Another substantial and statistically significant beneficial effect is shown by H₂ beta coefficient, which is 0.893 with a p-value of 0.000. The correlation’s strength is confirmed by the T statistic (99.312). It may be inferred from this that employee voice is essential in creating a culture that is supportive of open communication inside the organization. The significance of promoting employee voice in fostering a positive and effective organizational culture is underscored by this discovery.

Although not as strong as the impacts on trust and culture, H₃ beta coefficient is 0.471 with a p-value of 0.000, showing a significant positive influence. This conclusion is supported by the T statistic (9.088). According to this, employee input has a direct impact on public sector performance, although not as much as it does on organizational trust and culture. It does, however, highlight the importance of employee voice in raising the efficacy and efficiency of public sector operations.

A substantial positive effect is shown by H₄ beta coefficient of 0.395 and a p-value of 0.000. The importance of this association is highlighted by the T statistic (11.195). This indicates that improved performance in the public sector is correlated with stronger organizational trust, underscoring the significance of trust as a necessary element of efficient public sector operations. Enhanced performance results are the result of collaboration and more efficient operations inside the organization, which are facilitated by trust.

Though it is less than the other direct impacts, the statistically significant positive effect is shown by H₅ beta coefficient of 0.133 and the p-value of 0.002. The statistical significance is confirmed by the T statistic (3.178). This suggests that although organizational culture has a favourable impact on performance in the public sector, that impact is not very great. However, maintaining performance advances in the public sector requires cultivating a healthy organizational culture.

Table 6’s indirect impacts illustrate how organizational trust and culture, which are influenced by employee input, impact public sector performance. A substantial positive indirect impact is shown by the beta coefficient of 0.361 for (H₆) Employee Voice - > Organizational Trust - > Public Sector Performance indirect effect, with a p-value of 0.000. Strong evidence of this mediation effect is provided by the T statistic (11.441). Thus, employee voice builds organizational trust, which leads to better performance, and improves public sector performance. The significance of organizational trust as a mediator in optimising the advantages of employee voice is underscored by this. Employee voice may lead to improved performance results, and the significant indirect effect emphasizes that trust is a crucial mechanism (see Table 7).

A statistically significant positive indirect impact is shown by the beta coefficient of 0.119 for (H₇) Employee Voice - > Organizational Culture - > Public Sector Performance indirect effect, with a p-value of 0.001. Supporting the importance of this mediation effect is the T

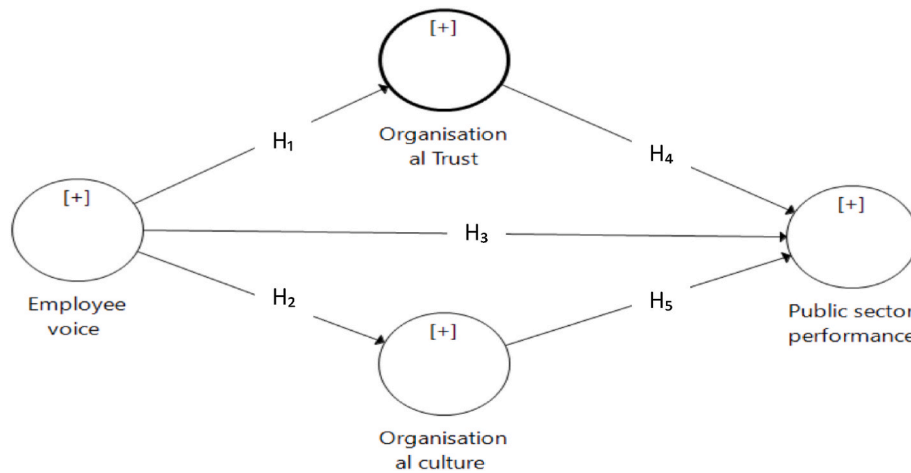


Fig. 1. Conceptual model.

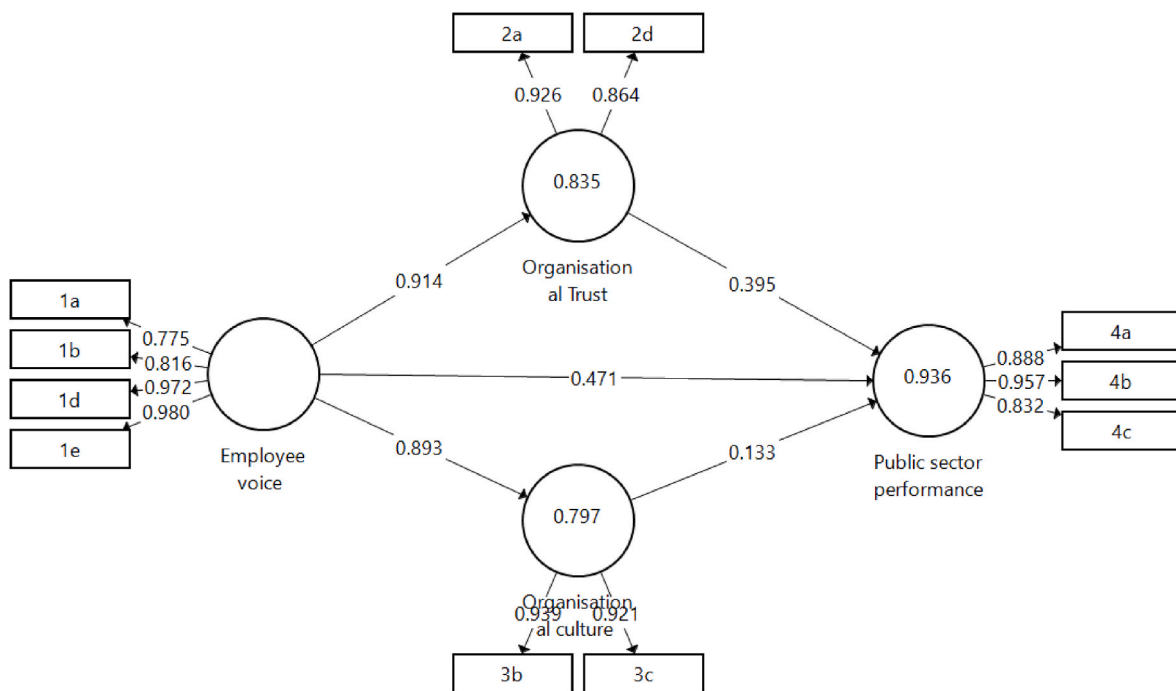


Fig. 2. Indicator loadings.

Table 3

Fornell-Larcker criterion.

Construct	Employee voice	Organisational Trust_	Organisational culture	Public sector performance
Employee voice	0.914			
Organisational Trust_	0.891	0.951		
Organisational culture	0.893	0.831	0.930	
Public sector performance	0.896	0.894	0.882	0.936

statistic (3.218). The implication is that employee voice indirectly improves performance in the public sector by promoting a healthy organizational culture. Cultural factors have an important intermediary role, even if their mediation impact is not as strong as that of organizational trust. Though less of an indirect effect, employee input still has a major impact on performance through the cultural route.

5. Discussion of results

The data analysis provides insights into the relationship between public sector performance, organizational trust, employee voice, and organizational culture. The measurement model demonstrated robust reliability and validity metrics, underscoring the importance of methodological rigor in evaluating complex organizational phenomena and confirming the study's theoretical foundations.

According to the first hypothesis (H₁), employee voice significantly

Table 4
Cross loadings.

Indicators	Employee voice	Organisational Trust_	Organisational culture	Public sector performance
1a	0.775	0.627	0.533	0.713
1b	0.816	0.788	0.907	0.809
1d	0.972	0.896	0.831	0.912
1e	0.980	0.905	0.856	0.931
2a	0.945	0.926	0.814	0.921
2d	0.658	0.864	0.658	0.738
3b	0.866	0.796	0.939	0.883
3c	0.792	0.748	0.921	0.751
4a	0.903	0.849	0.763	0.888
4b	0.907	0.909	0.885	0.957
4c	0.727	0.743	0.708	0.832

increases organizational trust. This hypothesis is highly supported by the data, which have a p-value of 0.000 and a beta coefficient of 0.914. This result is in line with other research emphasizing the value of employee voice in building trust in the workplace. Morrison (2023) for example, made clear that workers are more inclined to trust their leaders and the organization as a whole when they see that they are respected and heard. Similarly, Jo and Ellingson (2022) discovered that open lines of communication improve management-employee trust, supporting the notion that employee voice is essential to fostering organizational trust.

According to the second hypothesis (H₂), employee voice has a favourable impact on organizational culture. This hypothesis is supported by the high positive effect, as shown by a beta coefficient of 0.893 and a p-value of 0.000. This is consistent with earlier study by Ouyang et al., (2022), who suggested that promoting employee voice fosters a psychologically secure work environment in which staff members feel free to speak their opinions and concerns. Furthermore, it has been shown by Abane et al. (2022) that better levels of engagement and alignment with organizational values result from an inclusive organizational culture that actively integrates employee input. The idea that encouraging employee voice is crucial for developing a healthy organizational culture is supported by this research.

The third hypothesis (H₃) proposed a direct relationship between employee voice and public sector performance. With a p-value of 0.000 and a beta coefficient of 0.471, the data are consistent with this theory. It is a major influence, but not as important as its impact on trust and culture. Studies like those conducted by Kim et al. (2022), who discovered that public sector participatory decision-making procedures result in better performance outcomes, support this conclusion. Furthermore, research by Sluiter et al. (2022) showed that giving voice to workers in the public sector increases their enthusiasm and commitment, which in turn improves organizational performance. The aforementioned references substantiate the significance of employee input in propelling enhancements in performance within the public domain.

A substantial positive effect is found with a beta coefficient of 0.395 and a p-value of 0.000 for the fourth hypothesis (H₄), which investigated the link between organisational trust and public sector performance. Zeffane and BaniMelhem (2017) earlier study, which shown that trust inside organizations promotes improved cooperation and collaboration two factors necessary for excellent performance supports this conclusion. Furthermore, as noted by Campagna et al. (2020), trust promotes more effective and efficient organizational operations by lowering the

Table 5
Hypothesis results.

Hypothesis	Relationships	Beta coefficient	P Values	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	Decision
H ₁	Employee voice - > Organisational Trust_	0.914	0.000	0.007	127.001	Supported
H ₂	Employee voice - > Organisational culture	0.893	0.000	0.009	99.312	Supported
H ₃	Employee voice - > Public sector performance	0.471	0.000	0.052	9.088	Supported
H ₄	Organisational Trust - > Public sector performance	0.395	0.000	0.035	11.195	Supported
H ₅	Organisational culture - > Public sector performance	0.133	0.002	0.042	3.178	Supported

need for stringent controls and monitoring. According to this research, trust has a crucial role in improving public sector performance, which supports the findings of the current investigation.

Organizational culture has a favourable impact on public sector performance, according to the fifth hypothesis (H₅). The findings support this theory, but with a rather small impact, with a beta coefficient of 0.133 and a p-value of 0.002. This supports the conclusions of Cameron and Quinn (2006), who contended that good performance, particularly in the public sector, requires a strong, adaptable organizational culture. Moreover, Fietz and Günther (2021) stressed that employee behaviour and attitudes are shaped by organizational culture and organizational trust which serves as mediating constructs in this study as confirmed in H₆ and H₇. These examples emphasise the significance of developing a good organizational culture and trust to produce long-term performance gains in the public sector, notwithstanding the moderate impact size in the current study.

6. Conclusions

This study’s rigorous examination of the relationships between employee voice, organizational trust, organizational culture, and public sector performance using PLS SEM has yielded significant insights into the dynamics within public sector organizations. Employee voice has a significant impact on organizational culture and trust, as demonstrated by the empirical research results, which offer solid support for the postulated linkages. Furthermore, the research underscores the noteworthy influence of employee voice on public sector performance, stressing the mediation role that organizational culture and trust play in shaping organizational outcomes. The findings are consistent with prior research (Duan et al., 2022; Mahmud, 2022; Purwadi et al., 2020; Iddrisu and Adam (2024), demonstrating the beneficial relationships that exist between public sector performance outcomes, culture, and

Table 6
Indirect effects.

Effects	Beta coefficient	P Values	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	Decision
Employee voice - > Organisational Trust - > Public sector performance	0.361	0.000	0.032	11.441	Supported
Employee voice - > Organisational culture - > Public sector performance	0.119	0.001	0.037	3.218	Supported

Table 7
R square.

Construct	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Organisational Trust_	0.835	0.834
Organisational culture	0.797	0.796
Public sector performance	0.936	0.935

trust. The primary distinguishing factor of the study's unique contribution is its restricted emphasis on the public sector context and the use of Social Exchange Theory. Employee voice has a major impact on trust, culture, and performance, as evidenced by the highly significant beta coefficients associated with it. This emphasizes how, in order to increase organizational effectiveness, public sector organizations must prioritize systems that support and magnify employee voice.

The findings of this study are pertinent to scholars and practitioners working in public management. This work provides the groundwork for the development of focused interventions and management methods inside public sector organizations by emphasizing the crucial role that employee voice plays in fostering trust, culture, and ultimately performance outcomes. In light of the distinct attributes of public sector openness, accountability, and citizen satisfaction, the study emphasizes that organizational leaders ought to cultivate a culture that values and promotes employee engagement. In this approach, public sector organizations can better harness employee voice to promote trust, serve community needs more effectively and cultivate a positive working culture.

6.1. Implication for practice and theory

The study's conclusions have a big impact on practice, especially for organizations in the public sector. Managers in the public sector should aggressively promote and enable open communication channels, as evidenced by the significant positive association between employee voice and organizational trust. Establishing procedures like open-door policies, suggestion boxes, and frequent feedback sessions may make workers feel appreciated and acknowledged, which will increase trust in the organization. Furthermore, encouraging employee voice may result in a more positive organizational culture, which is essential for aligning staff values and promoting employee engagement. Therefore, executives in the public sector should place a high priority on fostering an inclusive workplace where staff members feel free to voice their opinions and concerns since doing so can enhance organizational performance.

By providing an actual illustration of the complex function of employee voice, this study advances the theoretical body of knowledge in the fields of organizational behaviour and public sector management. Improved organizational culture and enhanced trust are two benefits of employee voice that the study bolsters and expands upon. These factors ultimately result in higher performance. Based on these results, theoretical models of organizational performance should include employee voice as a crucial antecedent in addition to mediating variables like trust and culture in order to offer a more complete picture of the dynamics that exist inside public sector organizations.

6.2. Limitations of the study

This study has limitations even with its contributions. The study's exclusive emphasis on public sector organizations may have limited how broadly the conclusions may be applied to other organizations. The dynamics of the public sector, including political influences and bureaucratic institutions, might differ greatly from those in the private or nonprofit sectors, which limits the conclusions' generalizability outside of public situations. To guarantee that the findings are more broadly applicable, future research might solve this constraint by including a variety of organizations.

The cross-sectional structure of the data restricts the ability to draw conclusions about causality, even though the study used sophisticated statistical techniques to examine the correlations across factors. The temporal linkages and causal pathways between employee voice, organizational trust, culture, and public sector performance over time might be better understood through longitudinal research, even though mediation analyses were used to examine indirect impacts. A deeper understanding of these links might be gained by longitudinal studies, which would enable researchers to watch how shifts in organizational

trust, culture, or employee voice affect performance results.

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Issah Iddrisu: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Methodology, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization.
Bawah Mohammed: Writing – review & editing, Methodology, Formal analysis.

Declaration of competing interest

The author declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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