The relationship between ethical leadership style and employees' voice behavior (The mediating role of employees' psychological empowerment)

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Abstract:

This study aimed to examine the relationship between the ethical leadership style and the employees's Voice behavior through the mediating role of psychological empowerment by applying to public sector banks in Greater Cairo (National Bank of Egypt, Banque Misr, Banque du Caire). To achieve the objectives of the study, it was relied on taking a non probability sample to reach the target sample - and more specifically - the Snowball Sampling method, which had a size of 306 individuals with a response rate (80%). Research and test hypotheses through structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis, depending on the program (Smart PLS v.3). The Experimental results of the research resulted in a direct positive impact of ethical leadership on both the psychological empowerment of employee (as a mediator variable), and the employee's Voice behavior (as a dependent variable) in its two dimensions, the promotive voice behavior, and the prohibitive voice behavior. The results also showed the direct positive effect of psychological empowerment on the promotive voice behavior, while there was no effect of psychological empowerment on the prohibitive voice behavior. The research presented several recommendations that emphasize the importance of taking into account the selection of individuals with ethical potential, in addition to creating an ethical work culture that motivates subordinates (as future leaders) to follow ethical behaviors and limit unethical behaviors,

as well as the need to emphasize On what is called "Voice Safety" and "Voice Effectiveness," which means that individuals feel safe (lack of fears resulting from anticipating negative outcomes related to individuals' display of vocal behaviors)

Keywords: Ethical leadership, Psychological empowerment of employees, the employee's Voice behavior.

دراسة العلاقة بين نمط القيادة الأخلاقية والسلوك الصوتي للعاملين (الدور الوسيط للتمكين النفسي للعاملين)

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ملخص البحث:

هدف هذا البحث إلى فحص العلاقة بين نمط القيادة الأخلاقية والسلوك الصوتي للعاملين من خلال الدور الوسيط التفسيري للتمكين النفسي، وذلك بالتطبيق على بنوك القطاع العام بالقاهرة الكبرى (البنك الأهلي المصري، بنك مصر، بنك القاهرة). ولتحقيق أهداف الدراسة تم الاعتماد على أخذ عينة غير احتمالية للوصول إلى العينة المستهدفة – وبشكل أكثر تحديداً – أسلوب كرة الثلج Snowball Sampling، والتي بلغ حجمها 306 مفردة بمعدل استجابة (80%)، ثم تم إجراء التحليل الوصفي لعينة الدراسة وبنود قياس المتغيرات، ثم تلاه إجراء التحليل الاستنتاجي لمتغيرات البحث واختبار الفروض من خلال تحليل نمذجة المعادلة الهيكلية (SEM)، بالاعتماد على برنامج (.Smart PLS v.3). هذا وقد أسفرت النتائج التطبيقية للبحث عن وجود تأثير إيجابي مباشر للقيادة الأخلاقية على كلاً من التمكين النفسي للعاملين (كمتغير وسيط)، والسلوك الصوتي للعاملين (كمتغير تابع) ببعديه السلوك الصوتي الداعم، والسلوك الصوتي المانع. كما أوضحت النتائج التأثير الإيجابي المباشر للتمكين النفسي على السلوك الصوتي الداعم، بينما لم يكن هناك تأثير للتمكين النفسي على السلوك الصوتي المانع. وقدم البحث عدة توصيات تؤكد على أهمية الأخذ في الاعتبار اختيار الأفراد ذو الإمكانات الأخلاقية، بالإضافة إلى، خلق ثقافة عمل أخلاقية تحفز المرؤوسين (بإعتبارهم قادة المستقبل) على اتباع السلوكيات الأخلاقية والحد من السلوكيات الغير أخلاقية، كذلك ضرورة التأكيد على ما يسمى بـ "سلامة الصوت" و "فعالية الصوت" وهو ما يعني شعور الأفراد بالأمان (عدم وجود مخاوف ناتجة من توقع حدوث نتائج سلبية متعلقة بإظهار الأفراد للسلوكيات الصوتية).

الكلمات المفتاحية: نمط القيادة الأخلاقية، التمكين النفسي للعاملين، السلوك الصوتي للعاملين.

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1. Introduction

Today's business environment is complex and dynamic, highlighting the need for organizations to become more flexible and ready to deal with the various conditions that this environment can impose. Thus, organizations need to be more aware of the need to listen to workers in terms of making suggestions, opinions, information and concerns - so-called the workers' voice behaviour, enabling organizations to develop, alerting them to existing or potential problems, and making them prepared to face any emergency circumstances by improving their ability to make appropriate decisions in a timely manner. Organizations must therefore pay attention to motivating individuals to exhibit voice behaviour - defined as "the verbal expression of ideas, information and opinions with a positive motivation to make collaborative contributions to the organization" by giving them the opportunity to participate in their proposals, ideas and decision-making, as well as allowing them to raise concerns about work-related problems (Van Dyne et al., 2003).

Voice behavior here is divided into two types: promotive voice behaviour, which relates to individuals' expressions of future suggestions and ideas aimed at development, and prohibitive voice behaviour, which relates to individuals' expressions of problems or concerns about work-related actions that may not benefit the Organization or may harm it (Liang et al., 2012). It can therefore be said that the the employee Voice behaviour is based primarily on the idea of Challenge organizational conditions, but with the aim of building and improving (Van Dyne & Lepin, 1998). As a result, employee Voice behaviour by expressing suggestions, concerns and/or problems is likely to jeopardize their positions, especially if it disrupts established positions. And Because employee' voice behavior is risky (Premeaux & Bedeian, 2003; Detert & Burris, 2007), leadership style can be instrumental and have an effective role in creating a safe environment that motivates individuals to display voice behavior. Hence the importance of the role of ethical leadership - which is defined as leaders demonstrating ethical behaviors through the actions taken by the leader and personal relationships with subordinates (Brown et al., 2005) - in encouraging individuals to demonstrate voice behavior; This is because ethical leaders have the ability to create a safe environment when they act consistent with their principles, as well as ethical leadership has the ability to influence individuals and shape their behavior through individuals observing their ethical leaders' behavior. which in turn motivates individuals to display voice behavior (Brown et al., 2005; Svendsen et al., 2020).

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Then, taking them as role models and imitating them - which is consistent with Social Learning Theory (SLT) (Brown et al., 2005).

Although ethical leadership has an effective role with regard to individuals' extra-role behaviors such as employee voice behavior (Brown & Trevino, 2006; Mayer et al., 2009), the process that links ethical leadership style to employee voice behavior is complicated so involves the necessity of The existence of mediating variables that help ethical leaders enhance employee voice behavior (Hu et al., 2018).

Hence the importance of examining the role of psychological empowerment - which is defined as the internal motivation of individuals towards the job, which is represented by individuals' sense of the meaning of work, self-efficacy, selfe-determination and influence (Spreitzer, 1995) –in enhancing the vocal behavior of workers, because psychological empowerment creates in individuals motivation Greater and stronger at displaying voice behavior (Frazier & Fainshmidt, 2012; Raub & Robert, 2013).

1.1. Research Problem

It can be said that there is more need to be done to examine mechanisms examine the mechanisms that explain the relationship between ethical leadership and employee voice behavior (Lee et al., 2017; Yagmur & Elci, 2019; Cheng et al., 2019; Vu et al., 2020), and the psychological empowerment of employees is one of the mechanisms that can help ethical leaders instill and further enhance voice behavior among employees (Hu et al., 2018).

Thus, the research problem related to the fact that individuals' fear of the consequences that might be caused them to express their proposals makes them unwilling to demonstrate their voice behavior. Thus, the psychological empowerment of workers, which is supposed to be motivated by ethical leadership, maybe a reason to enhance employees' engagement in vocal behavior (Zahra, 2019). The research problem discussed can therefore be formulated in the form of the following question:

"What is the role of employees' psychological empowerment as a mediating variable in the relationship between ethical leadership style and employees' voice behavior?"

Under this main research question, there are several sub-questions as follows:

- Is there a direct influence relationship between the ethical leadership style and the dimensions of employees' voice behavior (promotive voice behavior and prohibitive voice behavior)?

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- Is there a direct influence between the ethical leadership style and the psychological empowerment of employees?

- Is there a direct influence relationship between the psychological empowerment of employees and the dimensions of employees' voice behavior (promotive voice behavior and prohibitive voice behavior)?

- To what degree does the psychological empowerment of employees explain the relationship between the ethical leadership style and the dimensions of voice behavior (promotive voice behavior and prohibitive voice behavior)?

1.2. Research Objectives

The main objectives of the research are to achieve the following

- Knowing the role of ethical leadership style in enhancing the dimensions of employees' voice behavior (promotive voice behavior and prohibitive voice behavior).

- Studying the relationship between ethical leadership style and psychological empowerment.

- Studying the relationship between psychological empowerment and employees' voice behavior (promotive voice behavior and prohibitive voice behavior).

- Identifying the mediating role of psychological empowerment in examining the effect of ethical leadership style on employees' voice behavior (promotive voice behavior and prohibitive voice behavior).

- Developing recommendations and proposals that can help leaders and organizations in the banking sector encourage individuals to engage more in vocal behaviors that involve provision of ideas, information, and suggestions (supportive voice), in addition to expressing interests and concerns related to work or factors that may detrimental the organization in a significant way. General (prohibitive voice behavior).

1.3. The significance of research

The significance of research is concentrated on two aspects: -

1.3.1. Theoretical significance:

- Contributing to studies that attempt to investigate the relationship between ethical leadership style and employees' voice behavior (promotive voice behavior and prohibitive voice behavior).

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- Contributing to studies that attempt to explore variables that could represent mediating psychological mechanisms in the relationship between ethical leadership style and employees' voice behavior (promotive voice behavior and prohibitive voice behavior).

- Trying to shed light on the significance of enhancing psychological empowerment, which in turn can lead to enhancing the dimensions of employees' voice behavior (promotive voice behavior and prohibitive voice behavior).

- Contributing to opening up a field for scientific research on this subject, through the information and recommendations that this research will provide that are likely to help researchers and those interested in the subject of the study.

1.3.2. Practical significance:

This research derives its practical significance from the significance of the application sector, as the banking sector is considered one of the most significance economic sectors, the most sensitive and influential in the growth of the economies of countries. It is one of the major pillars that are essential in building the financial and economic structure of countries. It is also considered one of the effective devices that are relied upon in developing And the development of various economic sectors, as the Egyptian banking sector represents the main component of the Egyptian economy and Egypt's financial system, as the sector continues to achieve high growth rates for its financial position, as well as profitability rates, as the banking sector represents about 90.2% of the total assets of the financial system, which represents a percentage 128% of GDP

1.4. Research hypotheses

In light of the research problem and objectives, the proposed research hypotheses can be formulated as follows**:**

The first hypothesis (H1): There is a direct and significant positive effect of the ethical leadership style on the voice behavior of employees.
The following sub-hypotheses branch out from this main hypothesis:

H1(a): There is a direct and significant positive effect of the ethical leadership style on promotive voice behavior.

H1(b): There is a direct and significant positive effect of the ethical leadership style on prohibitive voice behavior **.**

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The second hypothesis (H2): There is a direct and significant positive effect of the ethical leadership style on the employees' psychological empowerment.

The third hypothesis (H3): There is a direct and significant positive effect of employees' psychological empowerment on employees' voice behavior.

The following sub-hypotheses branch out from this main hypothesis:

H3(a): There is a direct and significant positive effect of employees' psychological empowerment on promotive voice behavior.

H3(b): There is a direct positive and significant effect of the employees' psychological empowerment on prohibitive voice behavior.

Fourth hypothesis (H4): Employees' psychological empowerment mediates the relationship between ethical leadership style and employees' voice behavior.

The following sub-hypotheses branch out from this main hypothesis:

H4(a): Psychological empowerment of employees mediates the relationship between ethical leadership style and promotive voice behavior.

H4(b): Psychological empowerment of employees mediates the relationship between ethical leadership style and prohibitive vocal behavior.

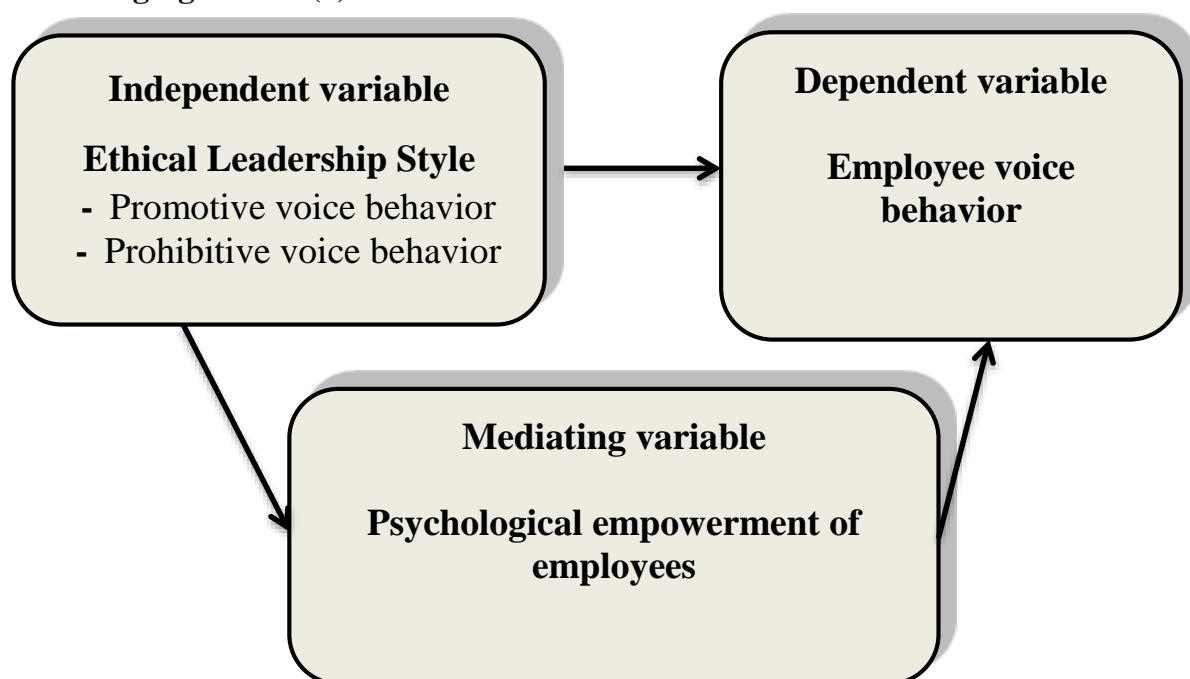**The following figure NO.(1) shows the research model:**

Figure No.(1) Research Model

2. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review:

The theoretical framework and literature review include an explanation of the concepts, dimensions and research variables , and a presentation of a number of previous studies related to the variables, as follows:

2.1. Theoretical Framework

The researcher in this section presents the concepts and variables of the research, as follows :

- **Ethical Leadership**

Ethical leadership can be defined through social learning theory as: "Leaders demonstrate correct behaviors to subordinates, and this occurs through actions and personal relationships and encouraging subordinates to adopt such behaviors through the process of two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making processes (Brown et al., 2005). This definition is the most appropriate to conceptualize the ethical leadership style. It has been used by many academic researches when dealing with theoretical and empirical aspects related to ethical leadership (Khokhar & Zia-Ur-Rehman, 2017). The definition of (Brown et al., 2005) explains that there are two aspects of ethical leadership:

The first aspect, "moral personal traits of the leader", can be seen as the moral nature of the leader's conduct, meaning that the leader possesses ethical characteristics such as: reliability, honesty, justice, motivation and integrity (Stouten et al., 2012; Hasen et al., 2013), sympathy, caring for and listening to others (Ruiz et al., 2011), conscience, respect and humility (Heres & Lasthuizen, 2010).

The second aspect of ethical leadership is the "ethical administrative traits of the leader" - the ethical leader who leads others to act ethically - which means that the leader demonstrates ethical standards in his actions when dealing with subordinates in a way that affect their behaviour and attitudes (Brown, 2007).

In this context, it can be argued that there are three basic ways or pillars by which ethical leaders positively influence the moral behaviour of subordinates: first, moral leaders modeling the role, which means leaders exhibiting ethical behavior to subordinates so that it is visible and clear enough for the subordinates to notice, as well as providing a good example on personal and professional levels. Second, leaders' promotion of ethical standards; By emphasizing ethical accountability,

This means consistently rewarding leaders with ethical behaviour and punishing ethical deviations to ensure that subordinates meet ethical standards. Third, two-way communication, which entails several tasks: demonstrating the values and ethics that decisions, tasks and attitudes must entail, clarifying standards and expectations of roles, providing guidance on the right course of action, explicit discussion, and enhancing individuals' sense of safty enough in order to be able to communicate with their leaders on ethical problems in particular and those they face in general (Trevino et al., 2000; Brown et al., 2005; Akker et al., 2009; Heres & Lasthuizen, 2010).

In addition to the above, there are many theories that explain how ethical leadership can affect organizational outcomes as well as individuals' attitudes and behaviors (Brown et al., 2005). As a result, researchers have shown great interest in theories that can help understand the ways in which individuals respond to ethical leadership style. For instance, **Social Learning Theory**, which is based on the idea that ethical leadership can influence individuals and shape their behaviors, meaning that individuals learn appropriate values and behaviors from their leaders by observing how these leaders behave (Brown & Trevino, 2006; Hansen et al., 2013), and by observing what leaders are rewarded or punished for, and observing which actions attract attention and which do not (Neubert et al., 2009). And **Social Exchange Theory**, which states that individuals tend to develop relationships according to the people they deal with, and the way they deal with them (Cropanzano & Michell, 2005). More clearly, subordinates interact with their leader in the way that their leader interacts with them. If the leader treats his subordinates fairly, honestly, attentively and other positive behaviors, the subordinates, in return, will react to these positive behaviors with positive behaviors as well (Cropanzano & Michell, 2005; Mayer et al., 2009). Conclude that the social exchange perspective is based on the principle of reciprocity (Hansen et al., 2013), And **Stakeholder Theory**, which explains that the organization must take into account social responsibility, which requires it to take into account the interest of other parties that are likely to be affected by it. Managers must design policies that will meet the needs of all stakeholders, and this is consistent with ethical leadership. This is consistent with ethical leadership in the fact that its social motivation is oriented towards the common good; it's most important traits being justice, caring for others, respecting them, selflessness, and selflessness.

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- **Psychological empowerment of employees**

Psychological empowerment has received a lot of attention from many researchers and practitioners; Because of its effectiveness over the results of the work that benefits the organization and its employees (Liden et al., 2000). the importance of the psychological empowerment process stems from the fact that it serves as an effective integrative construct aimed at motivate subordinates in the long-term towards achieving organizational success (Zhang & Bartol, 2010; Seibert et al., 2011).

Psychological empowerment is considered an important factor as a motivational mechanism that encourages employees to improve work-related results and behaviors (Abdulrab et al., 2017). Therefore, (Spreitzer, 1995) argues that psychological empowerment is considered a motivational construct consisting of four dimensions or four cognitions (Meaning of work, self-efficacy, Self-determination, Impact), meaning that these dimensions are combined to form the integrated framework for individuals perception/orientation (psychological empowerment) towards their job (Thomas & Velthous, 1990). Thus, the absence of any of the four dimensions reduces the degree to which an individual feels psychologically empowered (Spreitzer, 1995). Psychological empowerment is based on the idea of "individual cognition" or the cognitive/internal processes that occur once structural empowerment and/or leadership is successfully implemented (Bester et al., 2015).

It is concluded that these four cognitive dimensions together constitute the basic core of psychological empowerment in the workplace (Houghton & Yoho, 2005). Which can be explained all of them as follows: **Meaning of work** refers to the self-assessment of the importance of an individual's function (Bester et al., 2015). This assessment relates to the purpose value of an individual's mission (Zorlu et al., 2019), which is judged by the compatibility between the purpose of work and the ideals, values and beliefs of the individual (Ertürk, 2012; Zorlu et al., 2019). Thus, the meaning is defined as the compatibility between the requirements of functioning and the values, beliefs and behaviours of individuals (Boudrias et al., 2004; Hochwälder & Brucefors, 2005). **self-efficacy**, expresses an individual's sense of ability to perform the necessities of the work to be performed (Çavus & Demir, 2010). In other words, it refers to the subjective belief that an individual has the skills and abilities to perform the work well (Boudrias et al., 2004; Hochwälder & Brucefors, 2005).

Therefore, if individuals lack confidence in their skills and abilities, they will not feel empowered by their superiors. Also, individuals' belief that they possess low self-efficacy makes them tends to avoid confronting their concerns and improve their perceived self-efficacy (Choong et al., 2011). **Self-determination,** indicates that the individual can decide for him/herself, regarding matters related to his or her job, and therefore Self-determination can be described as the individual's power of control over his job (Hochwälder & Brucefors, 2005; Çavus & Demir , 2010). It can also be defined as the freedom of the individual to initiate and continue work behavior and processes, and to make decisions regarding work methods, pace, and effort (Ertürk, 2012). **Impact,** This dimension relates to an individual's influence level on operational, strategic and executive work outputs/outcomes (Hochwälder & Brucefors, 2005; Çavus & Demir, 2010).

- ▪ **Employee Voice Behavior**

Management literature has noted the existence of two main approaches/perceptions of voice: **The first approach** is "voice as employee behavior," which describes speaking behavior such as individuals taking initiative on their own initiative "of their own free will" to present their ideas and suggestions in their desire to bring about change. **The second approach** to voice is "voice as an organizational process," which describes voice as an organizational process that is subject to legal procedures to facilitate individuals' participation in decision-making, to hear and discuss individuals' proposals on work-related matters (e.g., decision-making) (Van Dyne et al. , 2003).

In this paper we focus on the first approach of voice (voice as an employee behavior rather than an organizational process) which has recently become an essential element for organizations that want to enhance their competitiveness; It articulates new ideas and helps organizations correct mistakes and improve their competitive advantage (Morrison, 2011; Liang et al., 2012). Individuals's expression of ideas is an essential driving force for making good decisions and achieving organizational effectiveness (Morrison & Milliken, 2000).

Hence, the voice behavior of employees can be defined according to the literature related to organizational behavior as "individuals expressing their views or opinions on matters related to the organization, including actions or ideas related to others, as well as proposing changes, alternative methods or different ideas to address matters related to their job (Premeaux & Bedeian, 2003).

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It is clear from the foregoing that Voice behaviour as mentioned by (Morrison, 2011) can be distinguished as follows**: first**, Voice is the oral expression that occurs through sending a verbal message from the sender to the receiver. **Second,** voice behaviour of employees is constructive and positive in its purpose and intention, it's a communication aimed at changing and improving the organization's existing conditions (Lepine & Van Dyne, 2001; Van Dyne et al., 2003), that is, its goal is improvement and change positively and not merely to complain. (Morrison, 2011). Third, Employees' voice behaviour is optional/voluntary behavior; This is because individuals have the freedom whether to participate by speaking or to prefer silence.

2.2. Literature review and Research gap

The following is a review of the studies that have examined research variables:

- **Ethical Leadership**

Numerous studies have examined the impact of ethical leadership in different ways. Some studies have focused on examining the impact of ethical leadership as a whole, while others have focused on examining the impact of different dimensions of ethical leadership. Despite the differences in these studies, they all confirm the important role of ethical leadership in its impact on individual, social, and organizational results (Brown et al., 2005; Brown & Trevino, 2006). A study by (Addai et al., 2019) showed that ethical leadership has the ability to stimulate positive work behaviors among employees, such as organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior. Additionally, the availability of an appropriate organizational climate supports and encourages these behaviors.

According to (Agbim, 2018), ethical leadership has a positive correlation with organizational performance, social responsibility, and corporate governance. This result is consistent with the findings of (Amisano and Anthony's study, 2017), which confirmed that ethical leadership is positively related to social responsibility. Additionally, the study stated that ethical leadership has a positive impact on financial performance and the environment.

A study by (Engelbrecht et al., 2017) suggests that ethical leadership is directly linked to the job engagement of individuals working in various commercial organizations in South Africa. It is also indirectly linked by enhancing the trust of individuals in their leader. The integrity of the leader further increases the trust among individuals. This is in line with the findings of (Khuong and Dung, 2015), who found a direct impact of ethical leadership and rewards on enhancing the

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employees engagement based on their adherence to ethical principles/behaviors. They also found that these factors, along with organizational justice, indirectly impact the engagement of individuals working in a technology company in Vietnam by influencing their trust and, in turn, their job engagement.

In another context, many studies aimed to examine the different dimensions of ethical leadership and their impact on individual, social, and organizational outcomes. For instance, a study conducted by (Yozgat & Meşkiran, 2016) on 57 companies in Turkey found that ethical leadership dimensions, such as justice, role clarity, and power-sharing, are positively linked to employee satisfaction by enhancing their trust in their leaders. In addition, the empirical results of a study conducted by (Toyok & Kapusuzoglu, 2016) on 323 schools in the city of Duzce and its provinces showed that ethical leadership dimensions, such as ethical behavior, ethical climate, ethical communication, and ethical decision-making, are important determinants of organizational culture, which include democratic and participatory management, cooperation, support, trust, school-environment relationships, integration, and belonging.

▪ Psychological Empowerment

Empowerment has received significant attention from researchers and practitioners alike due to its significant impact on the outcomes that benefit both individuals and organizations (Liden et al., 2000). Psychological empowerment plays an important role as a motivational mechanism that stimulates employees to improve their performance and behaviors related to work (Abdulrab, 2017). Previous studies have shown consensus among researchers regarding the use of psychological empowerment dimensions developed by (Spreitzer, 1995), which include meaning, self-efficacy, self-determination, and impact.

On the one hand, Many studies have focused on clarifying the positive role that psychological empowerment can play in influencing the individual outcomes of employees. Some studies have shown that the relationship between psychological empowerment and positive attitudes in individuals may require mediation. For example, a study by (Shah et al., 2019) indicated that psychological empowerment first affects psychological capital, which in turn affects positive outcomes in individuals such as increased satisfaction, commitment, and reduced turnover intentions. Additionally, a study by (Ling et al., 2019) found that psychological empowerment of employee and job satisfaction act as important determinants for creating commitment among

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subordinates (emotional, normative, and continuance commitment), as applied to small and medium-sized companies in Malaysia.

On the other hand, within the framework of studies that have shown the positive role that psychological empowerment can play as a motivational and intermediary mechanism, a study conducted by (Liu et al., 2019) on approximately 157 companies in China revealed that psychological empowerment and psychological ownership act as important determinants to encourage individuals to engage in innovative behavior. The relationship was found to be stronger between innovative organizational climate and innovative behavior among individuals when individuals had a high level of psychological empowerment. This finding is consistent with the results of a study conducted by (Waheed et al., 2018), which demonstrated that subordinates' perception of performance appraisal quality has a positive impact on employees' psychological empowerment, which in turn stimulates individuals to engage in innovative behavior.

Despite many studies agreeing on the significant impact of psychological empowerment dimensions, it is not always the case. A study conducted by (Avan et al.,2016) concluded that the dimension of self-determination, as one of the psychological empowerment dimensions, has a significant effect on organizational silence, while the other dimensions (meaning, self-efficiency, and impact) had no effect on it.

- **Employees' Voice Behavior**

Various literature on the subject of employees voice behavior focuses on how to motivate subordinates to increase their engagement in voice behavior, using different methods. Some studies examine certain contextual factors that can influence subordinates' willingness to engage in voice behavior, such as the study by (Hu et al, 2015), where the dimensions of transformational leadership (incentives, personal care, virtue) have a positive impact on the two dimensions of voice behavior: promotive voice behavior an progibitive voice behavior. Additionally, organizational identity plays a partial mediating role in the relationship between transformational leadership and employees voice behavior.

Some studies have investigated the role of supervisor support in increasing subordinates' willingness to exhibit voice behavior and promoting positive outcomes. One such study was conducted on nurses in Australia, which found that supervisor support encourages individuals to engage in voice behavior, which in turn leads to increased job engagement and enhanced trust

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between leaders and nurses (Holland et al., 2017). These results were consistent with a study by (Andiyasari, 2017), which found that employees in an Indonesian construction company were more willing to exhibit voice behavior when they perceived their supervisor supported them. This support not only has a direct effect on voice behavior but also an indirect effect on increasing psychological ownership among employees, which in turn increases their engagement in voice behavior.

On the other hand, some studies have looked into different methods/systems that can act as contextual motivators and play an effective role in encouraging individuals to exhibit voice behavior. One of these systems is the high-performance work system. The results of a study conducted by (Miao et al., 2020) on 46 companies in China showed that the high-performance work system increases promotive voice behavior among individuals, provided that there is a psychological safety factor. that is, they will not be misunderstood or punished. Conversely, prohibitive voice behavior decreases. Additionally, the role of the high-performance work system in stimulating employees voice behavior leads to an increase in innovation.

In the context of studies that have shown the positive role that voice behavior can play in the social results of employees, a study conducted by (Li et al, 2017) found that promotive voice behavior increases team innovation, which in turn encourages individuals to increase productivity. On the other hand, prohibitive voice behavior increases team members' sense of psychological safety, which in turn encourages team members to increase compliance with safety regulations.

Based on the literature review, the researcher concludes the following:

- Though literature confirms that the relationship between ethical leadership and individual work-related outcomes can be interpreted through a number of individual and contextual factors as mediating mechanisms, these studies have not examined various factors. This means that there is still a need for further efforts to examine the impact of these factors on the relationship between ethical leadership and individual work-related outcomes.

- Literature indicates the need for more focus on conducting research to examine the role of ethical leadership style in stimulating individuals' extra-role behaviors, which represent a crucial necessity for achieving organizational effectiveness, especially in government organizations.

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- More efforts are needed to examine the various mediating mechanisms that explain the relationship between ethical leadership and employees' voice behavior, especially the role of psychological empowerment in this relationship.

- This study aims to fill the gap related to examining the role of psychological empowerment as a mediating mechanism in the relationship between ethical leadership and the dimensions of employees' voice behavior (promotive voice behavior and prohibitive voice behavior).

3. Research Methodology

This part of the research presents the types of data and their sources, the measures of the variables, the research population and its sample, and the statistical methods used and their results, as follows:

3.1. Data types and sources

Two main types of data were relied upon to conduct this research; this is as follows:

3.1.1. Secondary data:

In this research, the secondary data related to the theoretical aspect consisted of information related to the research variables, including ethical leadership style, psychological empowerment of employees, and voice behavior of employees. This information, such as concepts, characteristics, and dimensions, was obtained by reviewing previous literature found in research papers, publications, and periodicals. Additionally, data on any of the research variables was collected from official websites about public sector banks, including the number of employees in each bank.

3.1.2. Primary data

The primary data - related to the field aspect - represented the attitudes of employees in the public sector banks, the subject of the research, regarding to ethical leadership and its relationship to the employees' psychological empowerment and the employees' voice behavior. This data was collected through a survey list that was prepared and distributed to the respondents specifically for this purpose .

3.2. Research variables

- **Independent variable: Ethical leadership style:** This variable has been measured through 10 statements, based on a scale (Brown et al., 2005), with the use of a five-point Likert scale instrument . distances ranging from completely agree = 5 and completely disagree = 1.

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- **The mediating variable: Employees' psychological empowerment:** This variable has been measured through 12 statements, based on the scale (Spreitzer, 1995), with the use of a five-point Likert scale instrument . distances ranging from completely agree = 5 and completely disagree = 1.

- **Dependent variable: Employees' voice behavior:** These dimensions have been measured through 10 statements (5 statements for Promotive voice behavior, and 5 statements for Prohibitive voice behavior), based on the scale (Liang et al., 2012), with the use of a five-point Likert scale instrument. Distances range between completely agree = 5 and completely disagree = 1.

3.3. Research Population and Sample

3.3.1. Research Population

The research population is represented by all employees of public sector banks, namely the National Bank of Egypt, the Bank of Egypt, and the Banque du Caire. The total number of employees in these banks was 47,553 for the fiscal year 2019/2020.

3.3.2. Research Sample

The research was conducted on a sample size of 384 units, which corresponds to a population size of 47,553. A total of 384 questionnaires were distributed to the targeted sample for collecting primary data. Out of these, 306 filled questionnaires were received, which were considered valid and usable for the study.

3.3.3. Sample Type

The research relied on a non-probability sampling method to reach the target sample - more specifically - the Snowball Sampling method. This method relies on random selection of an initial group of respondents, who in turn nominate subsequent respondents (Malhotra, 2010). This method has been chosen due to the difficulty of reaching a sample frame (data related to the sampling units in the study population) due to the privacy of the data related to the application sector in question (government banks).

3.4. Statistical methods used in research

To conduct statistical analysis, a range of statistical methods have been relied upon to analyse field data collected through the survey list, as shown below:

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3.4.1. Descriptive analysis

This part presents the descriptive analysis of the search sample, explaining its most important characteristics, as well as the descriptive analysis of the statements (items) related to measuring the research model variables, explaining missing values (missing data occurs when the sample unit does not answer one or more questions whether intentionally or unintentionally Hair et al., 2014) - and determines how to deal with this values; Based on central tendency measures: the arithmetic mean (average) of respondents' answers, which shows the respondents' tendencies towards agreeing or rejecting the variables' items. in addition to, the calculation of the standard deviation to measure the extent of dispersion in the data around the mean, as well as the skewness and kurtosis to determine the extent to which data deviate from normal distribution; using the SPSSv.20 Social Science Statistical Package Programme.

Table No. (1) Descriptive analysis of items measuring variables

	code	valid responses	Minimum	maximum	arithmetic mean (average)	standard deviation	skewness	Standard error of skewness	kurtosis	Standard error of kurtosis
Ethical Leadership	EL-1	306	1	5	3.67	1.162	-.620	.139	-.475	.278
	EL-2	306	1	5	3.80	1.055	-.683	.139	-.214	.278
	EL-3	306	1	5	3.74	1.147	-.683	.139	-.381	.278
	EL-4	306	1	5	3.80	1.119	-.806	.139	-.065	.278
	EL-5	306	1	5	3.70	1.116	-.646	.139	-.290	.278
	EL-6	306	1	5	3.82	1.069	-.778	.139	.027	.278
	EL-7	306	1	5	3.72	1.069	-.711	.139	-.078	.278
	EL-8	306	1	5	3.85	.966	-.845	.139	.656	.278
	EL-9	306	1	5	3.75	1.068	-.581	.139	-.350	.278
	EL-10	306	1	5	3.74	1.091	-.762	.139	-.075	.278
Psychological empowerment	PE-1	306	1	5	4.12	.947	-1.044	.139	.777	.278
	PE-2	306	1	5	4.25	.722	-.466	.139	-.784	.278
	PE-3	306	1	5	4.11	.800	-.364	.139	-.924	.278

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	PE-4	306	1	5	4.10	.907	-.952	.139	.849	.278
	PE-5	306	1	5	4.13	.901	-1.053	.139	1.130	.278
	PE-6	306	1	5	4.01	.894	-.607	.139	-.026	.278
	PE-7	306	1	5	3.82	1.031	-.723	.139	-.030	.278
	PE-8	306	1	5	3.92	1.068	-.947	.139	.388	.278
	PE-9	306	1	5	3.80	1.065	-.813	.139	.136	.278
	PE-10	306	1	5	3.97	.991	-.882	.139	.402	.278
	PE-11	306	1	5	4.04	.968	-.844	.139	.159	.278
	PE-12	306	1	5	3.92	.981	-.562	.139	-.519	.278
Promotive Voice behavior	**Prom Voi- 1**	306	1	5	3.59	1.306	-.572	.139	-.824	.278
	Prom Voi- 2	306	1	5	3.72	1.185	-.779	.139	-.220	.278
	Prom Voi- 3	306	1	5	3.88	1.101	-.967	.139	.363	.278
	Prom Voi- 4	306	1	5	3.77	1.137	-.809	.139	-.088	.278
	Prom Voi- 5	306	1	5	3.82	1.095	-.717	.139	-.246	.278
Prohibitive Voice Behavior	**Proh Voi- 1**	306	1	5	3.81	1.067	-.546	.139	-.553	.278
	Proh Voi- 2	306	1	5	3.88	1.060	-.672	.139	-.369	.278
	Proh Voi- 3	306	1	5	3.77	1.007	-.466	.139	-.601	.278
	Proh Voi- 4	306	1	5	3.50	1.207	-.402	.139	-.829	.278
	Proh Voi- 5	306	1	5	3.74	1.210	-.756	.139	-.372	.278

The results shown in Table (1) can be commented on as follows:

- It is clear from the results of the table that the minimum and maximum values range between (1–5), and these values are the range of the five-point Likert scale, therefore this indicates that all the values that were entered have been coded correctly and there are no values that are abnormal from the scale values.

- The results of the table also show that the number of valid lists per item for per variable is (306), which is the number of valid lists after excluding the lists that are not valid for analysis as a result of duplication of answers or incompleteness of the list, which means that the respondents answered all the questions in 306 lists. Thus, There are no missing values/data.

- As for the independent variable related to the ethical leadership style, the values of the arithmetic means range between (3.67) for the statement (My supervisor listens to individuals'

suggestions) and (3.85) for the statement (My supervisor is considered a role model in doing things in the ethically correct way) - That is, the arithmetic mean revolves around Approximately around the value of 4 - meaning that the respondents' answers tend to agree to some extent with the statements related to this variable. indicating that the leaders communicate with subordinates, pay attention to listening to their suggestions, and demonstrate ethical behaviors to subordinates, making them a role model for individuals.

- Concerning the mediating variable related to the employees' psychological empowerment, the arithmetic mean values range between (3.80) for the statement (I participate in making decisions related to my job), and (4.25) for the statement (The requirements for performing my job tasks do not conflict with my personal values) - that is, the mean values The arithmetic range is approximately 4 – meaning that respondents tend to somewhat agree with the statements/items measuring this variable. This reflects the power to control certain matters (for example: their freedom to make certain decisions related to their job), and it also becomes clear that there is consistency between work requirements and individuals' personal values and beliefs.

- As for the dependent variable related to employee' voice behavior, the arithmetic mean values range between (3.50) for the statements (I report problems when they arise even if that will negatively affect my relationship with co-workers), which belongs to the dimension of Prohibitive voice behavior, and (3.88) in the two statements (I sometimes make sure to present ideas for new plans that benefit the work unit, and I report things that may affect work efficiency even if that would embarrass others), which belong to the dimensions of Promotive voice behavior and Prohibitive voice behavior, respectively - that is, The arithmetic mean values are approximately 4 - which indicates that the respondents' answers tend to agree to some extent on the items measuring this variable. This reflects that individuals are interested in reporting the problems they face without fear that this will negatively affect their relationship with co-workers. It also demonstrates individuals' interest in presenting new ideas that serve their work and reporting any problem that may diminish the efficiency of such work.

- On the other hand, in order for the data to be considered to follow a normal distribution, this requires that the values of Skewness = kurtosis = zero. However, in research in the field of social sciences that are applied to humans, it is not possible to obtain a normal and accurate

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distribution of data. Therefore, it is normal for the data to deviate from the normal distribution, but in a specific proportion so as not to significantly affect the results of the analysis, and therefore it must range between (-3 to +3) for the skewness values, and range between (-10 to + 10) for the kurtosis values (Kline, 2015). In addition, the deviation of the skewness values does not have a fundamental effect on the results, and the deviation of the kurtosis values decreases in effect when the sample size increases beyond 200 individuals (Pallant, 2011). This is evident from Table (4/3). The sample of the current research exceeded (200 individuals), given the skewness and kurtosis values in the table, we will find that all values of skewness do not exceed (3) as an absolute value, and all values of kurtosis do not exceed (10) as an absolute value. Therefore, this deviation is acceptable.

Based on the foregoing, the data can be considered data can be considered tracking a normal distribution; Hence, this data can be relied upon to carry out deductive analysis.

3.4.2. Inferential analysis

This part presents the practical application of the structural equation modeling (SEM) method to the current research model, both measurement and structural. The first part involves the assessment of the measurement model, which describes the relationships between latent variables and their measures/indicators (Hair et al., 2014), The measurement of this model depends on the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) method - which allows testing the hypothesis that there is a relationship between The measured variables (items) and the latent variables (constructs) behind them by confirming whether the number of factors and the loading of its indicators correspond to what is expected based on theory (i.e., by identifying the measured variables that determine each latent construct) (Malhotra, 2010), To ensure the criterion of validity of the construct of both types (convergent validity and discriminant validity), followed by confirmation of the criterion of reliability of the scales. The second part involves the assessment of the structural model, which explains how the latent variables relate to each other and determines whether the relationship between them exists or does not exist (Malhotra, 2010, p. 694). Each is clarified as follows:

Step 1: Confirmatory Factor Analysis

This statistical analysis was conducted to test the validity and reliability of the measures before starting to test the research hypotheses, by formulating and assessment the theoretical model.

Then, modifying it by deleting certain items, in case those items have weak or multiple loading coefficients Loading on more than one variable at the same time. Thus, arriving at the Measurement Model (this model is what we're testing to become the structural model). This is explained as follows:

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM):

Structural equation modeling is relied upon to test multiple research hypotheses, the relationships between which are intertwined, using Smart PLS v3.2, where this software enables analysis of a series of regressions more easily and accurately than multiple regression analysis. It can analyze data that deviates from a normal distribution, as well as analyze more than one level of measurement (First vs. Second order), and more than one type of measurement (Formative vs. reflective), and also the possibility of conducting the analysis without goodness-of-fit indicators that measure the extent to which the (theoretical) research model agrees with the actual data, as only validity and reliability are sufficient (Hair et al., 2014).

In order to analyze the data, the researcher will be following a two-stage approach known as SEM. This approach involves conducting a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) in the first stage, followed by testing hypotheses in the structural model (which integrates the measurement model with relationships). The first stage of analysis consists of six main steps that must be followed to ensure the validity and reliability of the analysis before moving on to the second stage. The first step is to identify the variables, their measurement items, levels, and types of measurement.

The second step is to define and draw the relationships between the variables. The third step is to evaluate the theoretical model based on the validity and reliability of each variable separately. The fourth step is to improve the theoretical model. The fifth step is to arrive at the measurement model. Finally, the sixth step is to evaluate the measurement model using the same evaluation indicators of The theoretical model (Hair et al., 2010; Hair et al., 2014; Malhotra, 2010), which can be shown as follows:

First and second: The researcher indicates the possibility of integrating both steps into the Smart PLS, as shown in Figure (2), which illustrates the theoretical model with its variables, measurement levels, measurement types, and the relationships between variable
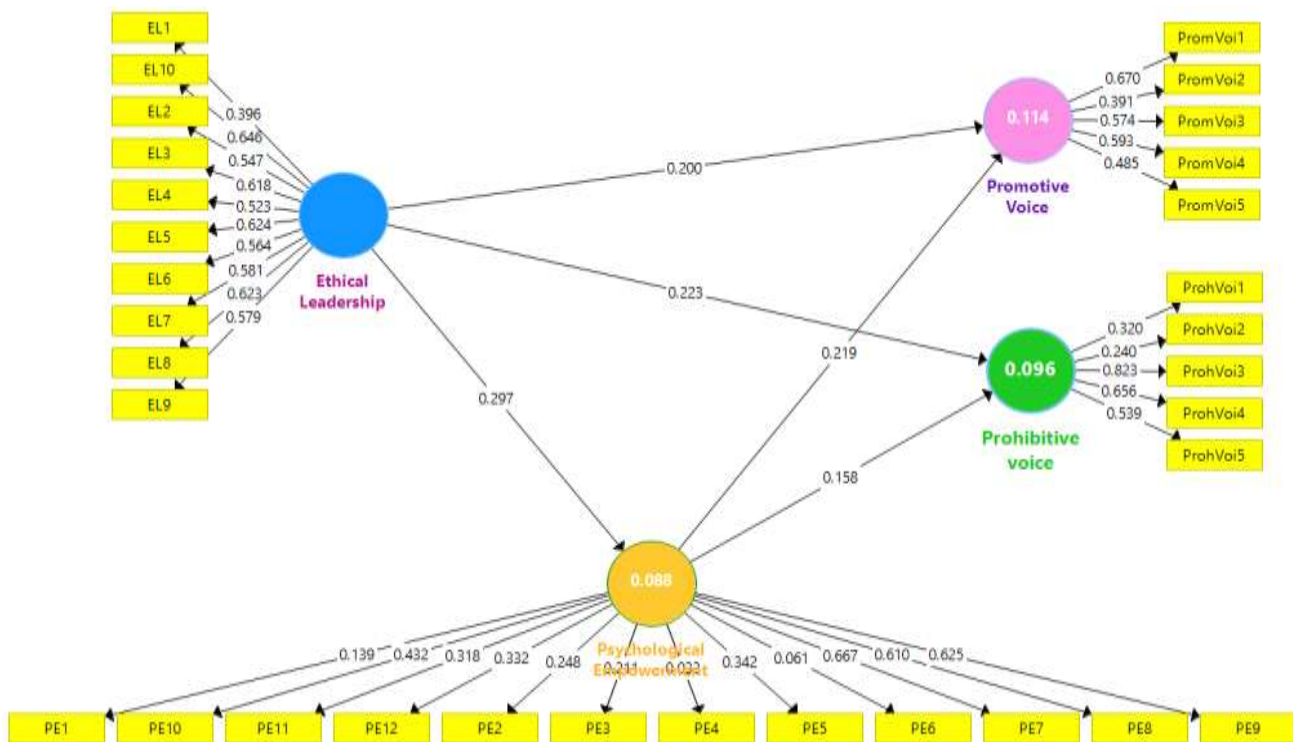
Figure No. (2) Theoretical model

From figure (2), it is evident that there is one exogenous (independent) variable, which is ethical leadership style. The endogenous (dependent) variable is the employee' voice behavior, while the Exogenous-endogenous (Mediator) variable is the employees' psychological empowerment. All latent variables were measured using a reflective form of the variable, where measurement items can be interchanged or deleted without affecting the components of the variable. Additionally, all variables in the study were measured at a high-order measurement level.

Table (2) shows the loading coefficients values of items on their respective variables, which measures the item reliability. Based on this value, we can determine which group of items achieves a high correlation with one factor/variable (Hair et al., 2010). Three possibilities exist regarding the loading value of the items: the first possibility is to delete the item if its loading coefficient is less than 0.40, the second possibility is to nominate it for deletion if its loading coefficient is between 0.40 and 0.70, and the third possibility is to retain it if its loading coefficient exceeds or equals 0.71.

Table (2) the loading coefficients for items in the theoretical model

Items Measurment items	Factor loading coefficients			
	EL	PE	Prom-voi	Proh-voi
EL-1	0.396			
EL-2	0.547			
EL-3	0.618			
EL-4	0.523			
EL-5	0.624			
EL-6	0.564			
EL-7	0.581			
EL-8	0.623			
EL-9	0.579			
EL-10	0.646			
PE-1		0.139		
PE-2		0.248		
PE-3		0.211		
PE-4		0.033		
PE-5		0.342		
PE-6		0.061		
PE-7		0.667		
PE-8		0.610		
PE-9		0.625		
PE-10		0.432		
PE-11		0.318		
PE-12		0.332		
PromVoi-1			0.670	
PromVoi- 2			0.391	
PromVoi-3			0.574	

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PromVoi-4			0.593	
PromVoi-5			0.485	
ProhVoi- 1				0.320
ProhVoi-2				0.240
ProhVoi-3				0.823
ProhVoi-4				0.656
ProhVoi-5				0.539

It is evident from table (2) that there are some measurement items with loading coefficients lower than the criterion loading coefficient of 0.708. This suggests the possibility of improving the theoretical model. Most of the item loading coefficient values for the items do not exceed the required standard value of 0.708%, and all values that achieve less than 0.4 should be removed. All values that exceed 0.4 are potential candidates for removal, provided that the the rest of evaluation criteria, which we will present later, are stable. There is only one value, ProhVoi-3, which achieved 0.823 and therefore should be kept without controversy.

Thirdly, the theoretical model is evaluated based on two criteria, validity and reliability. The validity is tested first using two components: convergent validity and discriminant validity. Once the validity is established for each variable in the model, only then can the reliability analysis be conducted using its two components. This process is explained below in more detail:

Testing the convergent validity criterion for the theoretical model scales

Convergent validity measures the degree to which the measurement items (variables) positively correlate with each other to measure the latent factor (the underlying variable) (Malhotra, 2010). It is one of the criteria used to evaluate the measurement model.

Convergent validity is measured separately for each variable and is indicated by the average variance extracted (AVE). The AVE value should not be less than 0.5, indicating that the items measuring the latent variable explain 50% of it (Hair et al., 2010, Hair et al., 2019). This value can be calculated using the following formula (Malhotra, 2010): (sum of the squared standardized loadings)/(number of standardized loadings), and it should be constructed before building discriminant validity. Table (3) shows the convergent validity coefficients for each variable of the model separately.

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Table No. (3) Convergent validity coefficients of the theoretical model

Latent variables	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Ethical Leadership - EL	0.330
Psychological empowerment – PE	0.154
Promotive voice – Prom voi	0.304
Prohibitive voice – Proh voi	0.312

It is evident from Table NO. (3) , that the theoretical model lacks to convergent validity, as the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each measure is below the benchmark value of 50%. This means that the items of each measure cannot explain the variance/variable in an acceptable proportion. Therefore, some adjustments need to be made after identifying and examining the other criteria.

Testing the discriminate validity criterion for the theoretical model measures

To demonstrate discriminant validity (which refers to the extent to which the measure used can distinguish the latent construct that is measure from other variables in the model), we need to show that the measure being used can distinguish the latent construct being measured from other constructs in the model. This is achieved by loading individual observed variables (items) on only one latent construct, assuming that a set of observed variables represents only one latent construct (this concept is known as unidimensionality). Discriminant validity can be can be inferred through calculating the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of each variable with other variables. The HTMT ratio should be less than 0.9 for discriminant validity to be achieved. If it is greater than 0.9, it indicates that items are loaded on more than one factor/variable (Henseler et al., 2015; Hair et al., 2019).

Table No.(4) Heterotrait – Monontrait Ratio (HTMT)

Latent Variable	Ethical Leadership	Prohibitive Voice	Promotive Voice
EL			
PE	0.520	0.553	0.606
Prom voi	0.449	0.597	
Proh voi	0.446		

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It is clear from Table (4) that the HTMT coefficients between each variable and the others are less than 0.9. This means that each set of items loaded onto a single factor without any multiple loading on any other variable. As a result, the theoretical model achieves the required discriminatory validity.

Testing the reliability criterion for theoretical model measures

This criterion was tested to ensure the reliability of measures previously used for the same research variables. The measurement items applied at a certain time may differ, so it is important to ensure the consistency and reliability of the measurement items used (Malhotra, 2010). Reliability is indicated by two measures: the first measure is Cronbach's Alpha (CA), which is the traditional criterion for measuring the consistency and reliability of measures. The value of Cronbach's Alpha is related to the number of items measuring the variable, so the fewer the number of items, the more likely it is that the value of Cronbach's Alpha will decrease (Hair et al., 2014). The second measure is Composite Readability (CR), which estimates internal consistency based on the individual consistency of each item, and is considered the best measure for reliability in structural equation modeling analysis (Hair et al., 2014). composite reliability ranges from 0 to 1, where higher values indicate higher levels of composite reliability (Hair et al., 2014). Specifically, its value should not be less than 0.6, as stated by (Hair et al., 2010), and the value would be more satisfactory if it exceeds 0.7 (Hair et al., 2014). This is illustrated in the table below.

Table (5). Reliability Criterien Results

Latent Variables	Cronbach's Alpha (CA)	Composite Readability (CR)
EL	0.774	0.829
PE	0.450	0.614
Prom voi	0.439	0.679
Proh voi	0.386	0.659

It is evident from Table (5) that the ethical leadership variable achieved a high level of reliability, whether judged through the Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which exceeded 70%, and through the composite reliability, which exceeded 80%. These are very satisfactory values. However, the remaining variables (namely the prohibitive voice behavior, promotive voice behavior, and psychological empowerment) did not achieve the required reliability for the

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Cronbach's alpha, as their values did not exceed 60%. Nevertheless, these measures achieved an acceptable level of reliability in terms of the composite reliability, as their values exceeded 60%. As previously mentioned, the composite reliability coefficient is the best measure for assessing reliability in the analysis of the structural equation model, as it estimates the internal consistency according to the individual consistency of each item (Hair et al., 2014.)

   After evaluating the theoretical model and identifying its shortcomings, the theoretical model was processed and improved by deleting some weakly loaded items. Each time the model was re-run, special attention was paid to the convergent validity and composite stability. When the model's validity and composite reliability measures were met, the deletion process was stopped, and this model was adopted as a measurable model.

  Forth, to improve the theoretical model, items with a loading factor less than 0.4 should be deleted. then deleting the remaining items with the lowest loading (less than 0.708, but higher than 0.4),Then, items with a loading factor between 0.4 and 0.708 should be deleted as well. The remaining items should be re-evaluated until the model reaches the convergent validity for all variables (Hair et al., 2014). This process is illustrated in Figure (3), which represents the measurement model that hypotheses will be tested according to.

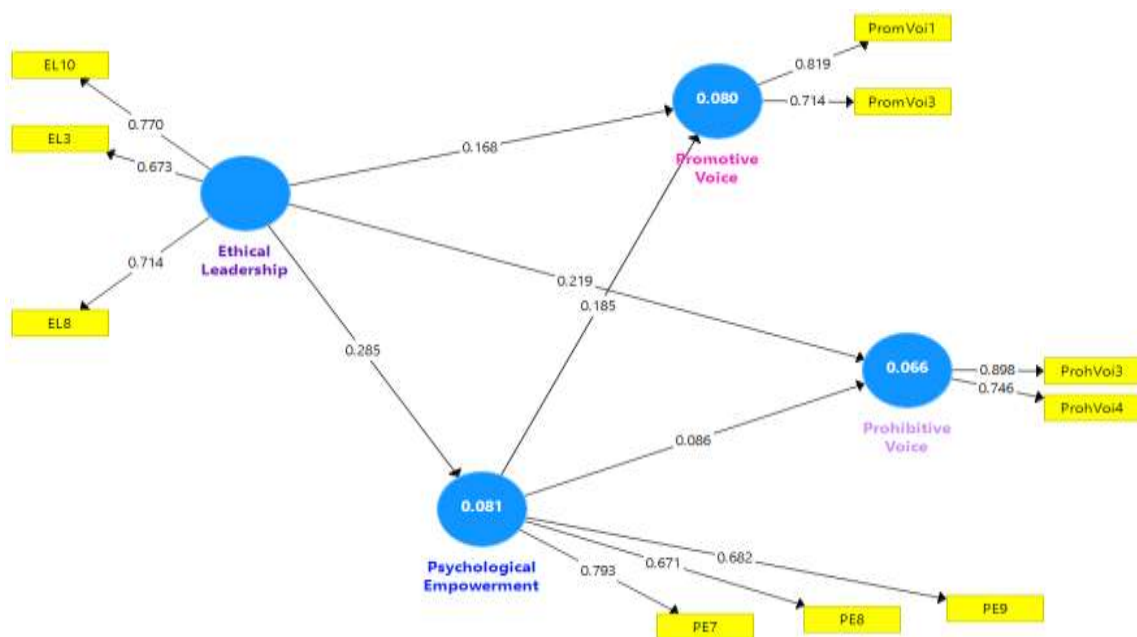Fifth, Measurement model (improved theoretical) can be clarified in the following figure.

Figure No. (3) Improved measurement model

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Loading coefficients for measurement items in the measurement model

Table (6) shows the standard loading coefficients for the measurement items appeared in the improved model as shown in the following table No. (6):

Table (6) Loading coefficients for measurement items in the measurement model

Items Measurment items	Factor loading coefficients			
	EL	PE	Prom-voi	Proh-voi
EL-10	0.770			
EL-3	0.673			
EL-8	0.714			
PE-7		0.793		
PE-8		0.671		
PE-9		0.682		
Prom Voi-1			0.819	
Prom Voi-3			0.714	
Proh Voi-3				0.898
Proh Voi-4				0.746

It is evident from Table (6) that most of the loading coefficients for measurement items exceeded the required standard value of 0.71. However, some of the items nominated for deletion are the measurement items with loading coefficients lower than 0.708, which are values that range between 0.40-0.70 (EL3, PE8, PE9). Nonetheless, the deletion process was stopped because the rest of the criteria were stable, as will be explained later on.

Sixth, evaluate the measurement model, which can be displayed in Table (6), showing the convergent validity coefficients, the discriminant validity construction mechanism and its two types of reliability. It should be noted that discriminant validity reflects the ability to measure the differentiation of a particular variable from other variables, and therefore its ability to make a unique contribution. Each group of items should measure only one latent variable (unidimensionality), as measured by the HTMT coefficient for each variable with other variables, which should not exceed 0.9 (Henseler et al., 2015). Once the validity has been constructed with its two components, it is possible to verify its reliability (Hair et al., 2010; Hair et al., 2014; Malhotra, 2010) as follows:

Table No. (7) Evaluation of the measurement model

Latent variable	Reliability		Validity				
	Cronbach's Alpha (CA)	Composite Readability (CR)	Convergent Validity using (AVE)	Discrimenant Validity using (HTMT)			
				EL	PE	Prom voi	Proh voi
EL	0.537	0.763	0.518				
PE	0.540	0.760	0.514	0.504		0.554	0.226
Prom voi	0.309	0.741	0.590	0.542			0.118
Proh voi	0.547	0.809	0.681	0.442			

It is evident from Table (7) that :

▪ All variables in the Outer Model (measurement model) are characterized by convergent validity. This means that the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) coefficient, which should be higher than 0.5 (Hair et al., 2014), for each variable has exceeded the required standard of 0.5. This indicates that the construct (latent variable) explains more than 50% of the variance in its indicators (observed variables) (Hair et al., 2014). The AVE coefficient ranges from 0.514 for the psychological empowerment variable of employee to 0.681 for the prohibitive voice behavior variable. Therefore, the measurement model has convergent validity.

▪ By reviewing the HTMT indicator, appears that all variables in the improved measurement model have the required discriminant validity. The HTMT coefficient, which should not exceed 0.90 (Henseler et al., 2015) for each variable with the other variables in the model, has achieved a value less than 0.9. Thus, the measurement model has discriminant validity.

▪ After reviewing the reliability indicators, it turns out that the Cronbach's alpha coefficient did not achieve the required value for all measures. However, as previously mentioned, Cronbach's alpha coefficient is a traditional standard for measuring reliability, and its value is sensitive to the number of measure items. Therefore, it is better to rely on the composite reliability coefficient, as it estimates internal consistency based on the individual consistency of each item (Hair et al., 2014). The composite reliability coefficients (CR) reached values greater than 70%, which are very satisfactory proportions. Thus, all variables in the measurement model are reliable, as the composite reliability coefficients range from 0.741 for the promotive voice

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behavior variable to 0.809 for the prohibitive voice behavior variable. This is consistent with the rule that the composite reliability coefficient value should be greater than 0.70 (Hair et al., 2014). Therefore, the measurement model variables are characterized by the required reliability.

3.4.3. Testing the structural model and the research hypotheses :

Once the measurement model evaluation is satisfactory, the next step in evaluating SEM-PLS results is to evaluate the structural model (Hair et al., 2019). After ensuring the validity of the measurement model (i.e., the variables' measures are valid and reliable), the focus shifts from assessing the relationships between latent constructs and their indicators (measurement model evaluation) to examining the nature and size of the relationships among latent constructs and each other (structural model evaluation) (Malhotra, 2010).

The following structural model (4) illustrates the relationships among the exogenous latent constructs (External Latent Variables), which include the independent variable (ethical leadership style), the exogenous-endogenous latent constructs (Mediator), which include the mediating variable (employee psychological empowerment), and the endogenous latent constructs (Internal Latent Variables), which include the dependent variable (employee voice behavior) in its two dimensions. Direct relationships were tested first, followed by testing indirect relationships through the mediating variable. Figure (4) shows the structural model of the study, displaying the results of the research hypotheses.
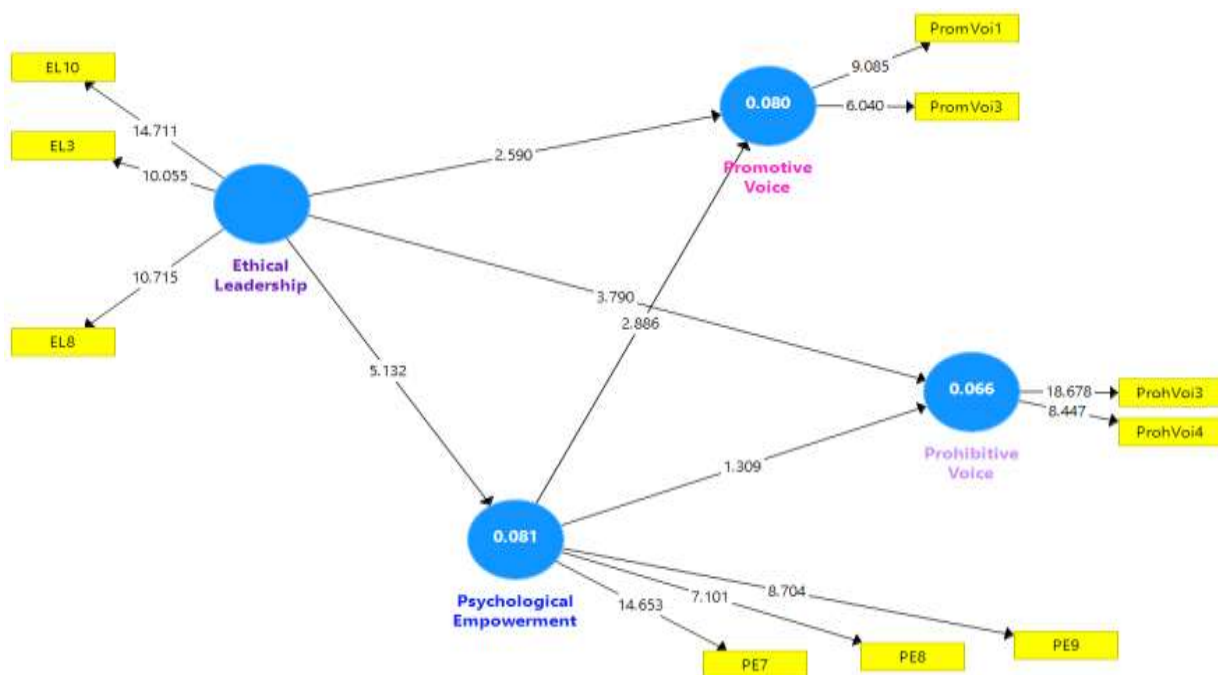

Figure No. (4) The structural model and the results of hypothesis testing

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3.4.3.1. Results of testing research hypotheses - direct relationships

The results of the Hypothesis testing results were judged through are evaluated through four levels of confidence, which determine whether the result is accepted or not (Hair et al., 2014). These levels are:

1. ****A confidence level of 99.9%. In this case, the significance level (p-value) is less than 0.001, and the calculated t-value is greater than ±3.29 (the tabulated t-value).

2. ***A confidence level of 99%. Here, the significance level (p-value) is less than 0.01, and the calculated t-value is greater than ±2.58 (the tabulated t-value).

3. **A confidence level of 95%. In this level, the significance level (p-value) is less than 0.05, and the calculated t-value is greater than ±1.96 (the tabulated t-value).

4. *A confidence level of 90%. Here, the significance level (p-value) is less than 0.1, and the calculated t-value is greater than ±1.65 (the tabulated t-value).

Furthermore, the testing results of the research hypotheses- direct relationships - can be displayed in the following table:

Table No. (8) The research hypotheses results - direct relationships

Research Hypothesis		Standard Value βeta (β)	Calculated t-value	significance level (p-value)	Result
Hypothesis (H1): There is a direct and significant positive effect of the ethical leadership style on the voice behavior of employees.					
H1	**EL→ voi**	**0.269**	4.855	**0.000**	****Accepted
H1(a): There is a direct and significant positive effect of the ethical leadership style on promotive voice behavior.					
H1a	**EL→ Prom voi**	0.168	2.590	**0.010**	**Accepted
H1(b): There is a direct and significant positive effect of the ethical leadership style on prohibitive voice behavior .					
H1b	**EL→ Proh voi**	0.219	3.790	**0.000**	****Accepted

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Hypothesis (H2): There is a direct and significant positive effect of the ethical leadership style on the employees' psychological empowerment.					
H2	**EL → PE**	0.265	4.646	**0.000**	****Accepted
hypothesis (H3): There is a direct and significant positive effect of employees' psychological empowerment on employees' voice behavior.					
H3	**PE → voi**	0.200	3.492	**0.000**	****Accepted
H3(a): There is a direct and significant positive effect of employees' psychological empowerment on promotive voice behavior.					
H3a	**PE → Prom voi**	0.185	2.886	**0.004**	***Accepted
H3(b): There is a direct positive and significant effect of the employees' psychological empowerment on prohibitive voice behavior.					
H3b	**PE → Proh voi**	0.086	1.309	**0.191**	**Not** Accepted

According to Table No. (8), it is evident that:

▪ the first main hypothesis (H1) was accepted at a significance level less than (0.001), which means that there is a direct and significant positive effect of ethical leadership on

▪ voice behavior at a rate of (26.9%), at a confidence level of (99.9%). This suggests that ethical leadership is able to enhance individuals' willingness to demonstrate voice behavior.

Also, with regard to the sub-hypotheses of the first main hypothesis, the hypotheses can be tested as follows.

- The first sub-hypothesis (H1/a) was accepted at a significance level less than (0.05), which means that there is a direct and significant positive effect of ethical leadership on promotive voice behavior at a rate of (16.8%), at a confidence level of (95%). indicating that ethical leadership in the organizations in question has the potential to enhance individuals' willingness to provide constructive suggestions and opinions (promotive voice behavior) that benefit the organization.

- The second sub-hypothesis (H1/b) was accepted at a significance level less than (0.001), which means that there is a direct and significant positive effect of ethical leadership on prohibitive voice behavior at a rate of (21.9%), at a confidence level of (99.9%).

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This suggests that ethical leadership in the organizations in question has the ability to make individuals feel safe and unafraid to speak up about issues and concerns related to their work (i.e., promoting prohibitive voice behavior).

▪ The second main hypothesis (H2) was accepted at a significance level less than (0.001), which means that there is a direct and significant positive effect of ethical leadership on the employees' psychological empowerment at a rate of (26.5%) at a confidence level of (99.9%). This indicates the important role of ethical leadership in enhancing the psychological empowerment of employees.

▪ the third main hypothesis (H3) was also accepted at a significance level less than (0.001), which means that there is a direct and partial significant positive effect of the employee' psychological empowerment on employee' voice behavior at a rate of (20%), at a confidence level of (99.9%). This indicates the important role of psychological empowerment in promoting voice behavior.

Also, with regard to the sub-hypotheses of the third main hypothesis, the hypotheses can be tested as follows.

- first sub-hypothesis (H3/a) was accepted at a significance level less than (0.01), which means that psychological empowerment of employee has a direct and significant positive effect on promotive voice behavior at a rate of (18.5%), at a confidence level of (99%). This indicates that enhancing the psychological empowerment of employees has a positive impact on enhancing promotive voice behavior among employees.

- The second sub-hypothesis (H3/b) was not accepted at a significance level greater than (0.05) and a degree of confidence less than (95%), which means that there is no direct positive significant effect of employee' psychological empowerment on prohibitive voice behavior. This indicates that Psychological empowerment among employees does not play a role in enhancing individuals' willingness to display prohibitive voice behavior.

3.4.3.2. Results of testing research hypotheses - indirect relationships

The indirect relationships (mediation effect) were tested between the independent variable (ethical leadership style) and the dependent variable with its two dimensions (promotive voice behavior and prohibitive voice behavior) through the mediator variable (psychological empowerment), where the extent of psychological empowerment mediation in the relationship

between ethical leadership and the employees' voice behavior was tested as a single unit (first order), to determine the results of the main indirect hypothesis. Then the extent of psychological empowerment mediation in the relationship between ethical leadership and the two dimensions of the employees' voice behavior (promotive voice behavior and prohibitive voice behavior) was measured, each of them separately, from Through two steps: the first, which is to determine the significance of the direct and indirect effects, and the second, which is to determine the extent of mediation or non-mediation of the mediating latent variable between the independent and dependent latent variables, and in this case we have 3 possibilities (Hair et al., 2017), as follows:

▪ If the direct and indirect effect is significant, the mediator becomes a partial mediator.

▪ If the direct effect is not significant and the indirect effect is significant, the mediator becomes a total mediator.

▪ If the direct effect is significant and the indirect effect is not significant, the mediation is rejected .

Table No. (9) Testing the research hypotheses - indirect relationships - psychological empowerment of employees

Research Hypothesis		Direct effect		Indirect effect (Total effect)		Result
		Standard Value βeta (β)	significance level (p-value)	Standard Value βeta (β)	significance level (p-value)	
Hypothesis (H4): Employees' psychological empowerment mediates the relationship between ethical leadership style and employees' voice behavior.						
H4	EL→ PE→ voi	0.269	**0.000**	0.053	**0.007**	**Partially Mediation**
H4(a): Psychological empowerment of employees mediates the relationship between ethical leadership style and promotive voice behavior.						
H4a	EL→ PE→ Prom voi	0.168	**0.010**	0.053	**0.014**	**Partially Mediation**
H4(b): Psychological empowerment of employees mediates the relationship between ethical leadership style and prohibitive vocal behavior.						
H4b	EL→ PE→ Proh voi	0.219	**0.000**	0.024	**0.212**	**NoT Mediation**

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According to Table No. (9), it is evident that:

▪ The fourth main hypothesis (H4) was accepted at a significance level of less than (0.01), meaning that ethical leadership partially and indirectly affects voice behavior by (5.3%), with a confidence level of (99%). This indicates that enhancing ethical leadership for the psychological empowerment of employees has a positive impact on promoting their voice behavior.

In terms of the sub-hypotheses of the main hypothesis, the following can be tested:

- The first sub-hypothesis (H4/a) was accepted at a significance level of less than (0.05), meaning that ethical leadership indirectly influences supportive vocal behavior by psychological empowerment by (5.3%), with a confidence level of (95%). In comparison to the direct impact of ethical leadership on promotive voice behavior (16.8%), it becomes clear that the direct impact of ethical leadership on voice behavior is greater than the indirect impact (i.e., with psychological empowerment as a mediator). Therefore, psychological empowerment is considered a partial mediator between ethical leadership and promotive voice behavior.

- The second sub-hypothesis (H4/b) was Rejected at a significance level of greater than (0.05) and a confidence level of less than (95%), meaning that ethical leadership does not indirectly affect prohibitive voice behavior through psychological empowerment. Therefore, psychological empowerment is not considered a mediator between ethical leadership and prohibitive voice behavior. This suggests that enhancing ethical leadership for the employee' psychological empowerment does not promote their prohibitive voice behavior.

4. Summary of Results

This research resulted in a set of theoretical and empirical results; which can be explained as follows:

The theoretical results of the research

This part presents the most prominent theoretical results related to the theoretical aspect of the research, in light of what was seen in the review of previous literature related to the research variables. This is as follows:

▪ Although the literature addresses the relationship between ethical leadership style and employees' voice behavior, it emphasizes that there is still a need to conduct more research

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that would examine the role of the various mediating mechanisms that explain the relationship between ethical leadership and employees' voice behavior.

- Although the literature explores the relationship between ethical leadership style and individual work-related results, it emphasizes the need to examine more individual and contextual factors that could have a positive role in the relationship between ethical leadership style and individual work-related results.

- Some literature has focused on examining the relationship between ethical leadership style and the dimension of prohibitive voice behavior, but it has indicated the need to examine more mechanisms that could have an effective role in strengthening the relationship between ethical leadership and prohibitive voice behavior.

- The literature indicates the need to pay more attention to examining the role of psychological empowerment in influencing workers' voice behavior. In particular, there is interest in examining the role of psychological empowerment in explaining the relationship between ethical leadership style and employees' voice behavior.

The empirical results of the research

This part provided a summary of the most important results reached in relation to the field results of the research, as follows:

- Evaluating the theoretical model, identifying its shortcomings, and addressing them resulted in arriving at the measurement model (improved theoretical model), which defines the dimensions and statements that belong to the variable associated with them.

- Evaluating the Measurement Model showed that the convergent validity of the variables (indicators) exceeded the required standard value, as the extracted variance coefficient (AVE) was greater than (0.5), which indicates the association of each latent variable with its measurement items.

- Evaluation of the measurement model showed that the discriminant validity of the variables (indicators) achieved the required standard value, as the HTMT coefficient for the variables was less than (0.9), which expresses the differentiation of the items of each variable from the rest of the variables in the model.

- All variables (indicators) are characterized by internal consistency, as the values of the composite reliability coefficient (CR) exceeded the required standard value (0.70), which means that these measures can be relied upon at later times.

- Evaluating the structural model resulted in several results related to hypothesis testing, as

  - The research resulted in a direct positive impact of ethical leadership on both the psychological empowerment of employee (as a mediator variable), and the employee's Voice behavior (as a dependent variable) in its two dimensions, the promotive voice behavior, and the prohibitive voice behavior.

  - The results also showed the direct positive effect of psychological empowerment on the promotive voice behavior, while there was no effect of psychological empowerment on the prohibitive voice behavior.

  - In addition, the results showed the positive role of psychological empowerment in the relationship between ethical leadership and promotive voice behavior, while psychological empowerment had no role in the relationship between moral leadership and prohibitive voice behavior.

5. Recommendations

In light of the results of testing the research hypotheses, a set of proposed recommendations can be formulated, as follows:

1- It is important to consider selecting individuals with ethical potentials, through:

  - Relying on selective choice and avoiding bias and favoritism, by including the ethical leadership characteristics within the elements of the job description (the conditions that must be met to fill the position), and selecting individuals who meet these characteristics. For example; Integrity, reliability, selflessness, respect for others, and the desire for the common good .

2- It is necessary to enhance the concept of ethical leadership in an organization, through the following:

  - Including the ethical dimension within leadership development programs. Necessary training must be provided to leaders in order to strengthen their ethical traits. For example, conducting training courses and practical workshops that qualify leaders to become ethical leaders, with the help of specialized agencies in providing courses related to leader development and growth. Additionally, periodic educational seminars can be held to raise awareness among leaders about the characteristics of ethical leadership that were mentioned in the initial recommendation.

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- Continuously evaluating leaders and holding them accountable (for example, granting rewards for compliance with ethical standards, and applying punishment for non-compliance). Leaders can be evaluated through surveys of subordinates regarding leaders' adherence to ethical leadership, or by holding meetings between top management and subordinates, and in both cases, they can be asked whether they follow the approach of ethical leadership or not.

3- Creating an ethical work culture that motivates subordinates (as future leaders) to follow ethical behavior and mitigate unethical behavior, through:

- Discussing with subordinates regarding the necessary ethical behaviors, values, and guidelines related to how to deal with common work-related issues or problems (e.g., work difficulties, conflicts, and conflicting interests).

- Distributing codes of conduct for desirable ethical behavior, implementing reward and punishment measures, and linking incentive and promotion systems to the degree of commitment to ethical standards.

4- It's crucial Providing arrangements that allow leaders to listen to their subordinates and guide discussions in meetings, rather than imposing their opinions on their subordinates. For example, direct meetings, open discussions, honest and transparent interactions with subordinates can be conducted using various electronic applications such as GoToMeeting, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Skype for Business.

5- In addition, leaders can hold sessions where subordinates are asked to identify problems or difficulties that hinder their work. They can then ask for their suggestions on appropriate solutions and identify opportunities that can be exploited to improve performance, rather than blaming them for previous issues.

5. Future studies

In light of the theoretical and practical results obtained from the research, this study proposes some relevant observations and future suggestions as follows:

- This research examined the employees' psychological empowerment as one of the predictors of only two forms of employees' voice behavior, namely, promotive voice behavior and prohibitivs voice behavior. Therefore, future research can examine the relationship between the psychological empowerment and other forms of voice behavior such as acquiescent voice, defensive voice, social voice, and ethical voice.

- This research addressed the role of ethical leadership in influencing both the psychological empowerment and employees' voice behavior without examining the effect of its dimensions. Therefore, future research may focus on examining the effect of ethical leadership dimensions such as justice, role clarity, and power sharing on these variables.

- The aim of this research is to identify the role of ethical leadership in shaping the perceptions of subordinates about work (psychological empowerment of workers) - as one of the psychological factors - to encourage individuals to show employees' voice behavior. Therefore, future research may seek to explore and examine other psychological factors that may have a positive role in the relationship between ethical leadership and employees' voice behavior, such as psychological safety and psychological ownership.

- Future research may seek to examine the effect of other leadership styles (such as transformational leadership, servant leadership) or other organizational phenomena with ethical content (such as ethical efficacy, ethical climate, and error management climate) on shaping organizational behaviors.

- This current research was conducted only on the public sector without the private sector, so future work may be interested in conducting the same research with a distinction between the two sectors "comparative study".

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