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Fostering Innovative Work Behaviour Through Employee Voice: Mediating Role of Felt Obligation in Corporate Sector of Pakistan

Abstract

The main objective of the study is to investigate the link between employee voice behaviour and innovative behaviour with the mediating effect of felt obligation. Felt obligation and employee behaviour is theoretically relevant to innovative behaviour. A survey was conducted measuring employee voice, felt obligation and innovative work behavior among 393 employees of banking sector. Employee voice behaviour is positively related to innovative behaviour and this relationship is partially mediated by the felt obligation. The findings of the study show that employee voice behaviour is more predictive and has a significant effect on innovatieve work behaviour. That. Results also explain that felt obligation mediates the relationship of employee voice and innovative behaviour. In future researchers can conduct research by considering traditional organizational settings in public and pivate sector to validate these findings. This study has utilized field settings that have been rarely used in the past to examine the impact and purpose of employee voice behaviour and felt obligation. The study has also addressed the gap by analysing the role of personality factors other than the big five personality traits as an important contributor to the purposefulness of employee voice behaviour.

***Keywords**: Employee voice, innovative behavior, felt obligation, supportive voice*

Introduction

In the present digital era Innovative business ideas are considered a main tool of business development, which results in competitive advantage to the firms (Kremer, Villamor, & Aguinis, 2019). In the globalized and highly competitive business environment organizations have to learn and develop constantly if they want to survive in present and future. (Kalyar & Rafi, 2013). The rapidly changing organization's environment innovation has become a job description of employees. (Yeoh & Mahmood, 2013). Keeping in view the significance of employee innovative behavior, organizations tend to collect necessary information regarding the employee role and the dynamics that motivate them and the factors that affect the innovativeness of employees. Innovativeness at work place denotes to find out and search modern technology, introducing new schemes to attain targetss, using latest work methods to implement unique concepts (Yeoh & Mahmood, 2013). (Janssen, 2000) gave the concept of innovative work behavior which comprises generation of new ideas along with the promotion, realization and

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implementation. Past studies reveals that Innovative work behavior helps to implement the change, creativity and new knowledge that enhances the work performance of employee and ultimately the whole business performance (Shanker, Bhanugopan, Van der Heijden, & Farrell, 2017). Previous studies show that among the various factors employee voice is one of the important factor that affects the innovative work behavior. (Ahmed, Hassan, Ayub, & Klimoski, 2018). It is further evident from the past researches that when employees involve in the organizational matters through voice and felt obligation their innovativeness increases (Černe, Hernaus, Dysvik, & Škerlavaj, 2017). Employees are encouraged and motivated by the supportive voice and felt obligation to generate novel ideas.(Shanker et al., 2017). Another study reveals that the employees voice behavior determines the innovativeness of the workers (A. S.-Y. Chen & Hou, 2016). In order to cultivate an innovative environment business managers can introduce certain norms such as promoting interaction and and voice culture in the organization. (Rasheed, Shahzad, Conroy, Nadeem, & Siddique, 2017). Like wise to promote such culture and environment to share knowledge and ideas through speaking up. (S.-J. Chen, Wang, & Lee, 2018). It is evident from the past research that the employee are encouraged it builds confidence which in turn results in the creation of innovative ideas. The employee voice plays a vital role in influencing the innovative work behavior of the employees. Extensive review of literature in this context shows that the empirical literature to support this argument is not enough and there is need to study this notion in details. Present study aims to focus on the role of single type of voice that is supportive rather than the combined approach promotive and prohibitive voice. Further the study will examine the combined effect of voice and felt obligation on the innovative behavior of the employees and the interdependence on each other in the business environment especially in the corporate sector. The current study will highlight theoretical and practical information in Pakistani corporate sector about employee voice and felt obligation impacting innovative work behaviour. The study will address the gap in literature about the combined factors effecting the innovative work behaviour.

Objectives of the study:

1- To analyze the impact of employee voice on the innovative work behavior among employees.

2- To investigate the impact of felt obligation on the innovative work behaviour among employees.

3- To investigate the impact of employee voice on the felt obligation among employees.

4- To investigate the mediating role of felt obligation in the relationship of voice and innovative work behaviour.

Employee voice

The pioneer to understand and recognize the voice behavior recommended that organizational failure is an inevitable phenomenon, but such activities that cause the decline of the organization and business setbacks are avoidable in future. (Hirschman, 1970). (Hirschman, 1970), also explained that such fading circumstances should be changed rather than to escape from the environment, he further elaborated that voice is an effort to bring changes rather than to stay quiet. Given that the voice may be considered as the change agent and change oriented phenomenon. Voice can change to modify the outputs, practices and policies of organizatios (Hirschman, 1970). Given that, influenced by this concept the scholars proposed that dissatisfaction of employees compel them to raise their voice to express their dissent on the certain organizational matter (Miceli & Near, 1984; O'Leary, 1994, 2019). In past researches scholars have seen a positive relationship between employee voice and various contextual and situational factors such as innovative behavior, job alternatives, job satisfaction, and leadership (Garner, 2016; Hassan, Hassan, & Batool, 2015).

Innovative work beaviour

(Abstein & Spieth, 2014), defined innovative work behaviour as a multidimensional process involving of different behaviours however it can be linked to three discrete levels that is development of unique ideas, promoting the new ideas and final stage is to implement the ideas. However innovative behavior can be defined as innovative concepts

applied practically (Hunter & Cushenbery, 2011; Mas-Tur & Bolufer, 2016). These concepts are dynamic and iterative and basic stages as well (Janssen, 2003). Hence, innovative behavior can be posited as having the below stages:

I. Idea Generation
II. Idea Promotion
III. Idea Implementation

In first stage i.e., idea generation stage organization provides a safe environment to employees enabling them to voice, unique thinking and novel ideas providing required resources for efficient processing (Huang, Krasikova, & Liu, 2016; Hunter & Cushenbery, 2011; Mas-Tur & Bolufer, 2016). Progressive organizational environment are considered favourable for creating new ideas and subsequently increase innovative work behavior in the employees. We can observe the example of the founder of Google who has always instigated the employees to think outside the box by creating a novel environment at the work place (Vise & Malseed, 2006). Besides, idea generation phase demands assurance that the stage will not minimize the process of idea promotion. (Divya & Suganthi, 2018). In these stages, organizations are required to support the ideas and implant these ideas into production process successfully (Hunter & Cushenbery, 2011; Newman, Kiazad, Miao, & Cooper, 2014). An organization must provide an environment where employees could take part in discussions and productive arguments and they may speak up regarding the idea promotion at certain times so, their leaders must acknowledge that innovative ideas are discussed and productive debates are taking place among their employees (Stensaker & Gooderham, 2015). Such practices will help in assessing the worth and practical importance of new ideas driving to the next stage of idea realization and implementation.

Felt Obligation

Felt obligation is an important self-concept that reveals the person's individual perception and thinking. Liu and Zhou (2017) have conducted representative statements about the felt obligation. (Culbert, 1974). Individuals notice that there is an obligation and responsibility what they perform in the organization (Culbert, 1974). Similar findings are observed in the work of Eisenberger, he has defined the perception of responsibility as the individual beliefs of working hard to accomplish the task successfully in the organization. Besides the motivation of felt obligation, the employee will exhibit the behavior which will be useful for organization (Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch, & Rhoades, 2001). Empirical research on the felt obligation reveals that to what extent employees should work hard and take active part in different kind of constructive activities in order to achieve organizational goals (Fuller, Marler, & Hester, 2006). Given that, it is a positive and subjective belief that assist organization to achieve goals, a massive study and data has also confirmed that the felt obligation is a subjective and positive individual conviction that benefits the organization. Meanwhile, an army of data has confirmed these perspectives, and it has become a main stream in academic circles (Fuller et al., 2006).

Literature review and research model

Employee voice and innovative work behaviour

Conservation of resources theory (COR) is a motivational theory it stands on the belief that a person is motivated to retain and protect and retain their existing resources and gain new resources. (Halbesleben, Neveu, Paustian-Underdahl, & Westman, 2014). Resources can be defined as things which an individual think that it is useful for goal attainment. (Halbesleben et al., 2014). The theory also proposes that individuals who do not indulge their self in situations where they think that the particular situation may lead them to loss of resources; so, they do not strive to gain ample resources after investing sizeable resources reasonably (Hobfoll, 2001).

Innovation and employee voice

Previous research on voice explained that the voice is not only limited to the conceptual border but it is an extra behavior of employees. (Dyne, Ang, & Botero, 2003; LePine & Van Dyne, 1998; Vandewalle, Van Dyne, & Kostova, 1995). Main idea behind these studies extends that the employees may involve in voice not only when they are satisfied but also when they want to point out and criticize something in the organization. That is the reason that voice is an extra role behavior that is not included in any one job responsibilities (Dutton & Ashford, 1993; Morrison, 2011). It is also significant to note, previous studies proposed that voicing behavior means to convey the thinking, notions, proposals and recommendations to those who have the ability to take appropriate measures to make necessary changes (LePine & Van Dyne, 2001; Morrison, 2014).

COR suggests that individuals utilize resources to achieve their targets (Halbesleben et al., 2014). Resources help employees to successfully implement the innovative ideas and enable to attain the goals. (Birkinshaw, Hamel, & Mol, 2008; Ng & Feldman, 2012; Walker, Damanpour, & Devece, 2011). In other words, employees are engaged in cognitive process to generate and convey ideas through voice by investing and using personal resources (Morrison, 2011). Following this logic, the proposed research posits that the ideas, opinion and recommendations which are communicated by the employees by voicing can be used to produce innovativeness at work place Actually, individual level voice behavior is associated with innovativeness and productivity (A. N. Li, Liao, Tangirala, & Firth, 2017). This reasoning infers that if the voice is recurring employees will have more new ideas that can be implemented as innovation. Contrary, if voice is occasional, employees will have only few ideas to speak up, and that can be used as input to implement as innovation. Empirical evidence also supports that voice results in innovation. Previous studies incline to hypothesize that innovative behaviour is a process beginning with ideas generation and ending at the implementation of the ideas (Janssen, 2000). Accordingly, research scholars have perceived this process consisting two phases (Bledow, Frese, Anderson, Erez, & Farr, 2009; Hammond, Neff, Farr, Schwall, & Zhao, 2011). In an innovation process the first stage focuses to point out the problem and originating ideas for problem solution, whereas the second phase put emphasis on assessing, choosing, and implementing ideas (Patterson & Kerrin, 2016). At the initial phase of innovative process, employees play a crucial role. According to Kesting and Ulhøi (2010) observed workforce as more innovative beings than managers as they outlie the managers in number and they can potentially spot new opportunity and create new ideas. Kesting and Ulhøi (2010) suggested that the workers have relevant comprehensive knowledge and have network outside the organizations thus they can think in a broader spectrum and can add innovation to their ideas given the above literature employee are a big source to generate and communicate valuable ideas. In the present research voice represents that the main aspects of the organizational scenario where employees raise voice and convey ideas. while the employees successfully implement innovative ideas which (Birkinshaw et al., 2008).

Based on the literature it is posited that:

Hypothesis 1: Employee voice is positively related to innovative work behaviour

Felt obligation, innovative work behaviour and employee voice

Social exchange theory suggests, there is a significant link between employee felt obligation and organizational consequences (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). (Cropanzano, Rupp, Mohler, & Schminke, 2001) stated that positive social exchange cause robust ideas of fairness and stimulate sense of obligation among employees so that they can return to their organization and management with beneficial behaviour.

(Janssen, 2000) defined innovative work behaviour as an intentional creation for introducing and applying new ideas within an organization for the group so that the work role benefits the organization of the group. Furthermore innovative work behaviour is the idea generation promotion and realisation. Innovative work behaviour is not a formal contract that is explicitly stated between the employees and there expectation of work roles in the organisation. Innovative work behaviour are also called extra role behaviours that are purely discretionary behaviours, so the organizational reward system does not formally recognise such behaviours (Organ, 1988).

Employees engaging in innovative work behaviours likely benefit the organisation or the group or even individual employees so that they perform their task more effectively. It can also be stated as failing to employ innovative behaviours at the work place is not desecration of the contract between the employees and organisational work rules, so there are no adverse consequences for failing to get involve in innovation at work place. It makes more sense that innovative work behaviours are more likely to be the result of intrinsic motivations open employee and the way they perceive the outcomes of psychological contract fulfilment.

The alleged obligation to contribute towards growth of an organization is directly impacted as employees feel that they have met expectations of the psychological contract fulfilled by the employer. According to this it is proposed that if the organization meet the expectation of employees their perceived obligation motivate to carry out innovative work behavior. Given that when employees have a perception that their obligations are being fulfilled by their employers they are more likely involved in discretionary and voluntary behaviours and they are more willing to perceive an obligation towards benefiting the organisation. Whereas, contrary to the argument when the employees have a perception that there is some contract violation between the employers and employee agreement; they feel that they do not require to carry out discretionary behaviours and they are not as they are not formally rewarded by the organization (Ramamoorthy, Flood, Slattery, & Sardessai, 2005).

Hypothesis 2: Felt obligation is positively related with innovative work beaviour.

Social exchange theory and voice behavior

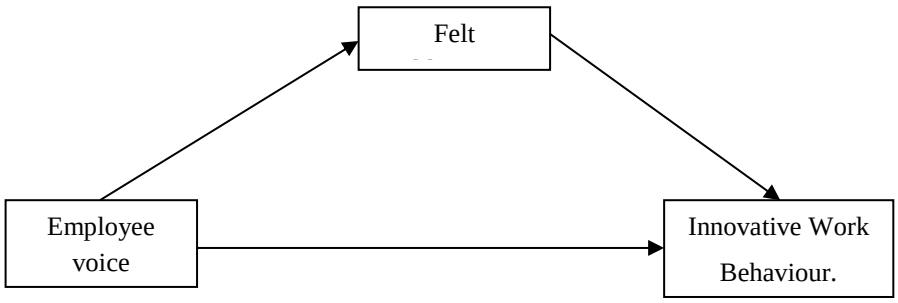
There's a significant link between employee felt obligation and organisational outcomes as suggested by social exchange theory. Social exchange theory has been adopted by the past researchers as the most widely used theoretical framework. Voice behaviour is change oriented communication and it is constructive in nature that intends to identify the problems in a workplace and provide with procedures and processes for the improvement of the work environment (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998). Within an exchange agreement the norm of reciprocity posits that when one person makes a move the other person reciprocates positively to have an improves relationship quality (Blau, 1964; Morrison, 2011). This process of reciprocation acts like a self-reinforcing cycle for each subsequent reciprocating act (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Gouldner, 1960). With the passage of time the quality of social relationships continue to enhance and improve as posited in the norm of reciprocity (Molm, Whitham, & Melamed, 2012); (Shore, Coyle-Shapiro, Chen, & Tetrick, 2009). Felt obligation within an organisation refers to the beliefs of employees that they are responsible to act and serve the organisation in the interest of their employers (Eisenberger et al., 2001). Past researchers have shown social exchange process and felt obligation as a mechanism of interaction between the employers and their employees (Eisenberger et al., 2001; Fuller et al., 2006). Felt obligation is incurred in the employees as a result of the imbalance in social exchanges with their employers. When the organisations provide employees with positive treatment and valued reward this imbalance results in exchange of relationship among employees(Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960). In the current research felt obligations to the organisation have been examined predicting voice behaviour's in the organisation. Particularly (Choi, 2007); (Liang, Farh, & Farh, 2012) observed significant positive relationship between voice behavior and felt obligation to bring out constructive change in an organisation. However, the researchers didn't collect data on felt obligation as a whole in an organizational context; felt obligation was measured as speaking up instead of reciprocation or social exchange in an organization. There are three main reasons that the employees reciprocate within an organisation although exercising voice is risky. Firstly, employees don't have to wait or they are never asked to perform voice behaviour rather they are self-initiated and when they feel responsible in an organisation they are likely to carry out voice behaviour. Second, when the employees raise voice, they are gratified instantly by the fellow workers so they start reciprocating. Third, voice behaviour plays a very important role in a way that organisations start functioning creatively and innovatively. (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998). Therefore, employees consider voice as a considerable way of reciprocation and so it can be predicted as:

Hypothesis 3: voice is positively related to felt obligation

Mediating role of felt obligation

The phenomenon of felt obligation of employees denotes the perception of work force that they should work profoundly and take active part in the constructing behavior which is useful at work place. (Eisenberger et al., 2001; Mossholder, Settoon, & Henagan, 2005). Felt obligation refers to a personal and encouraging thoughts that the employees should think positive about the well-being of the organization and assist the organization to achieve its targets (Fuller et al., 2006). As social exchange theory states that when felt obligation is demonstrated by the favourable treatment of the organization the employee express the feelings of obligations to balance social exchange (Liang et al., 2012). Employees take initiative and repay the organization and feels obligated when they receive positive treatment. Employee voice behaviour is an extra role and voluntary behaviour, employees cannot be forced to initiate suggestion (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998). The current study assumes that felt obligation can mediate the relationship between employee voice and innovative behaviour. When workforce is treated fairly they respond more positively and new ideas are generated in their minds and they reciprocate the organization. Built on social exchange theory, when a person gets social benefits they may develop the feelings of obligation towards those who are the source of benefits to them (Blau, 1964). Felt obligation is personal trait that prompt the employees to think that the organization is kind, concerned and fair to the employees this feeling influences the employees to realize that the organization cares about employees., thus the employees are encouraged to respond such actions by involving in constructive and innovative behaviour. Social exchange theory posits that, the responsible and fair gesture displayed by a party then other party engenders the feelings of obligations to reciprocate by engaging in such behaviours that is needed at the work place (Blau, 1964). Thus the employees can have a extensive ambition to develop a long-term positive attitude and social exchange relationship with the organization. (Skiba & Wildman, 2019). Felt obligation may be a striking feature of those who believe in a responsible organization. As the felt obligation of the employees increased they are more inclined to involve in voice behaviour. Felt obligation is the mental trait of employees who are actively responsible for their work, this reasoning may reflect the internal motivation of employees. The feeling of responsibility in the organization may lead to this thinking that the employee's work is not limited to accomplish daily and routine work rather it may compel the employee to perform for the improvement of the organization. This argument may suggest that the felt obligation of the employee may have some relationship witht the innovation at the work place. Whereas the voice is a spontaneous and extra-role behavior of employees and they cannot be compelled for suggestion and new ideas (Chiaburu, Marinova, & Van Dyne, 2008). A growing body knowledge provides the evidence that supports the argument that felt obligation is a vital force for employees to demonstrate various proactive behaviors (Basit, 2017; Fuller et al., 2006; Greenfield, 2009; Ng & Feldman, 2015). Based on the literature this study proposed that felt obligation will mediate the relationship between employee voice behavior and innovative behavior, based on the above arguments, following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 4: Felt obligation mediated the relationship of employee voice and innovative work behaviour.



Research Methodology

Sample

Quantitative approach was used to test the hypotheses while following past researches (Aryee, Walumbwa, Mondejar, & Chu, 2017; R. Li, 2015; Morrison, 2011; Podsakoff, Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Maynes, & Spoelma, 2014; Zare & Flinchbaugh, 2019).

The data of the current study is collected through purposive convenient sampling and it is a cross sectional study. The response rate of the current study is 76%. The sample of the current study is gathered from banking professionals and equals (*N*=393) from two public sector banks of Pakistan; bank X (*N*=190) and for bank Y (*N*=203) . The data in the current study is collected from the employees belonging to various tiers in the banking sector such as grade I, II, III officers and assistant vice presidents. While collecting the data from the participants all the ethical guidelines were followed such as the respondents were told that the data gathered from them will only be used for research purpose and their participation in the study is voluntary and they can quit at any moment if they feel so and they were told that their anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained. The participants of the study were thanked in the end for their valuable contribution and precious time for the research. The sampling characteristics and frequency distribution is given below in table 1.

TABLE 1
Frequencies of the demographic variables of the sample.

Categories	Total Sample (*N*=393)	Bank X (*n*=190)	Bank Y (*n*=203)
	F	*f*	*f*
Gender (N=390)			
Males (297)		145	152
Females (93)		44	49
Missing (3)			
Marital Status			
Married		108	145
Single		70	62
Missing (8)			
Position in organization (393)			
Asst.vice president		50	70
Officer Grade-1		65	55
Officer Grade-1I		40	35
Officer Grade-1II		35	43
Missing (0)			

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Measures

Employee Voice

Scale on employee Voice Scale is designed by Maynes and Podsakoff (2014). Out of four dimensions of voice in the scale, only one dimension, the supportive voice of employee is measured in the current study. The data on the measure is collected on a 5- point rating Likert scale whereas one is strongly agree and five is strongly disagree on a continuum. The alpha reliability of the subscale supportive voice was 0.89 (Maynes & Podsakoff, 2014).

Innovative Behavior

5-point likert scale with six items to measure innovative behaviour is developed by Scott and Bruce (1994).scale ranges from 1 is "not at all" and 5 is "to an exceptional degree". The Chronbach alpha reliability of Innovative Behaviour Scale came out to be 0.89 (Scott & Bruce, 1994) whereas, in the current study it is 0.85.

Felt Obligation

The Felt Obligation Scale was developed by Eisenberg et al., (2001). This scale consists of six items that were used to assess felt obligation in this study. The items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale with 1= Strongly Disagree to 5 - Strongly Agree. The coefficient alphas of these items were .81.

Data analysis and results

Measurement model

Data analysis is performed in smart PLS 3, measurement model exhibits the connections between the parent constructs and the items variables. Measurement model assesses factor loadings, composite reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity. Firstly, measurement model estimates the factor loading. Loadings >0.60 are recommended, loadings greater than 0.60 indicates that 50% indicator's variance is explained by the construct and provides acceptable reliability. In the present model factor loading of all parent construct are in desirable range whereas only one item FO1 is deleted due to low factor loading (Gefen & Straub, 2005). Secondly, in measurement model composite reliability which is an internal consistency. (McGaw & Jöreskog, 1971). Values on higher side show higher level of reliability. For instance, acceptable values of reliability are between 0.60 and 0.70 for exploratory research whereas in explanatory research values between 0.70 and 0.90 ranges are acceptable (Diamantopoulos, Sarstedt, Fuchs, Wilczynski, & Kaiser, 2012). Another measure of internal reliability is Cronbach's alpha that has the similar thresholds, Cronbach's alpha but has lower values as compared to the values of composite reliability. In particular, Cronbach's alpha is a less accurate measure of reliability, as the items are not weighted, whereas, composite reliability is more accurate and has the higher because items are weighted based on individual loadings and construct indicators (Hair, Risher, Sarstedt, & Ringle, 2019). Thirdly, the convergent validity is measured through average variance extracted (AVE). threshold value for the AVE is .50 (Hair et al., 2019)(Ringle, Sarstedt, Mitchell, & Gudergan, 2020). Hence the construct has convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). table 2. Fourthly, discriminant validity is another component of measurement model (Hair et al., 2019). It is measured through Hetrotrait Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) the most conservative approach to measure HTMTratio is the value of HTMT ratio is less than 0.90. The discriminant validity in the current study lies below 0.90 the threshold value of Heterotrait Monotrait (HTMT) Ratio procedure. (Henseler, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2015) has indicated the conservative threshold value of HTMT less than or equal to 0.90 can help in determining discriminant validity. (Table 3).

Table 2.
Factor loading, chronbach's alpha, composite reliability and average variance extracted.

	Loadings	Alpha	CR	AVE
Felt obligation		0.819	0.870	0.530
FO2	0.752			
FO3	0.825			
FO4	0.789			
FO5	0.752			
FO6	0.726			
Innovative Behaviour		0.847	0.887	0.568
IB1	0.742			
IB2	0.774			
IB3	0.793			
IB4	0.719			
IB5	0.812			
IB6	0.769			
Supportive Voice		0.835	0.884	0.604
SUP1	0.828			
SUP2	0.820			
SUP3	0.776			
SUP4	0.766			
SUP5	0.711			

Table 3.Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	FO	IB	SUPVOICE
FO			
IB	0.712		
SUPVOICE	0.168	0.244	

Structural model

The structural model measures the relationships between the constructs and determine the paths. H1 is evaluating the positive correlation between supportive voice and innovative behaviour. The results show significant impact of voice (total effect) on IB (β 0.126, t 3.007, p <0.003) thus supporting H1. H2 is evaluating the considerable impact of FO on IB. The results reveal significant impact of FO on IB (β 0.591, t 15.267, p < 0.000) supporting H2 consequently. H3 states voice significantly impacts FO. Voice has a significant impact on FO (β 0.135, t 2.721, p < 0.007 hence supporting H3 as well. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4 Hypohesis Testing Path coefficient

	Path coefficient	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics	p Values
H1: SUPVOICE -> IB	0.126	0.042	3.007	0.003
H2: FO -> IB	0.591	0.039	15.268	0.000
H3: SUPVOICE -> FO	0.135	0.049	2.721	0.007

Mediation analysis

H4 is testing the mediating role of FO in relation between voice and IB. According to the results a significant and positive total effect was found (β =0.205, t = 4.032, p < 0.000). with the involvement of mediator into the model the effect was decreased but the direct effect was also found significant (β = 0.126, t= 3.007, p<0.003) while the indirect effect with the inclusion of mediator into the analysis was found significant (β = 0.080, t = 2.721, p < 0.007). Hence, the results reveal a partial mediation. This shows that the relationship between voice and innovative behaviour is mediated by felt obligation. Consequently, H4 is accepted (see Table 5).

Table. 5 Mediation

Total effect voice>IB Original Sample (O)		Direct Effect Voice > IB		Indirect effect of Voice on IB				
Coefficient	P-value	Coefficient	P-value		Coefficient	SD	T value	P-value
0.205	0.000	0.126	0.003	H4: Voice>FO>IB	0.080	0.029	2.721	0.007

Discussion

The current research is conducted to analyze the connection between voice, innovative behavior and felt obligation. Establishment of anticipated relationships confirms the voice based environment in the organization. The study proved a considerable impact of voice on innovative behaviour. It is evident from the outcomes that the current study matches the findings of the past researches where the positive relationship between voice and innovative behavior was established. (Dirgeyasa & Ansari, 2015; Ng & Feldman, 2012, 2015; Sifatu, Sjahruddin, Fajriah, Dwijendra, & Santoso, 2020). This shows that at the work place, when organization allows the employees to speak up regarding organizational matters, the employee feel obliged to initiate, promote and employ new ideas for the betterment of the organization. This further strengthens the views that employees with voice behavior can work innovatively and they feel it as obligation to speak and introduce new ideas in the organization. (Ng & Feldman, 2015). The study found a significant impact of supportive voice on innovative behavior. The results validated that voice is an extra role proactive behaviour of employees. Employees with felt obligation raise their voice and they produce innovative ideas through voice (Bos, 2014). This leads to increased innovative behaviour which in turn increases the creativity amongst the employees (Tsai, 2018). This shows that Voice is a change oriented and positive capability, whereas felt obligation is personal cognitive state of the employee (Campbell, 2018).

The study proved a profound impact of felt obligation on innovative behavior. Results validated the finding of previous researches and findings of the present research match with the past studies (Wu & Wu, 2017). The results exhibit the phenomenon of reciprocity norms, when employee works in an organization and receive benefits and feel free to speak up he feel obligated to work innovatively and creatively for the organization. Finally, the outcomes of this study offer important pragmatic insight into the indirect influence of voice on innovative behaviour through the mediation of Felt obligation. The findings of the research highlight that FO mediates the relationship of voice and innovative behaviour. Previous studies also found the mediating role of felt obligation.(Liang et al., 2012).

Conclusion

The literature presented a generally neglected, but vital constructs and ideas, voice and felt obligation guarantee assures that innovativeness in employee performance. This paper demonstrates one of the preliminary attempts to produce and test a unique model that links voice to innovativeness of the employees with the involvement of felt obligation which is a personal trait. This research enhances the voice and felt obligation literature by presenting that voice can significantly enhance the innovative behaviour that have a significant role in improving the overall organizational performance. The findings of this research render that voice is necessary for organizational success and to generate, promote and implement new ideas for overall organizational development. Policymakers and managers should come up with a deliberate plan to promote voice culture and foster felt obligation to encourage employees to behave innovatively.

Implications

The proposed relationships between employees' supportive voice and felt obligation and innovative work behaviour is contributing theoretically. The study has more broadly contributed in the development of studies that have linked employee relationship between organisational behaviour and organisational development and it is showing the evident support to the already existing literature and contributing to organisational innovative behaviour. The study is further adding knowledge to the studies that need to understand the predictors and outcomes of innovative work behaviour and it is also adding a number of benefits of supportive voice for the organisations. The study focused on the gaps in the existing literature and address the relationship between supportive voice and innovative work behaviour and it has stimulated area of research for the future researchers. Moreover, the study is also ascertaining the predictive role of supportive voice that plays a vital role in the development of felt obligation and facilitate the employees in Idea creation and implementation within an organisation. The study is also providing empirical evidence about the supportive voice which is influencing innovative work behaviour among employees. Practically the results favour organisational support theory and exchange theory that has deep emphasis on the antecedents and outcomes of felt obligation among employees. The model of the study is validating and helping the managers to point out potential of development among employees through supportive voice and therefore they can aim at improving the skill set of the employees and improve their internal motivation and felt obligation so that they can

pursue for innovative work behaviour in the organisation. The findings of this study suggest that voice behaviour in an organisation is aligned to innovativeness and it also enables better performance outcomes.

Limitations of the study and future research directions

No studies are without limitations; so, the limitation to the study also acknowledged. The data of the current study has been only collected from the banking sector of Pakistan, thus highlighting the need for replicating the study in different organisations. Another limitation of the study can be seen as only studying one aspect of voice behaviour that is supportive voice whereas other types of voice behaviour can also be studied by the future researchers. Finally, it can also be suggested that the future researchers must work on factors other than felt obligation such as self-efficacy and locus of control as mediators so, that different predictors and outcome variables can be tested with different types of voice behaviour.

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