

Impact of Perceived Organizational Politics on Employee Voice behavior

Sami Ullah¹, Mudsir Ismail², Muddassar Bilal³, Umbrin Akbar⁴

^{1,2,3,4}Department of Business Administration. University of Sialkot

ABSTRACT

Purpose – This research investigates the interplay of perceived organizational politics, psychological safety, and employee voice behavior in Punjab's banking sector, with a focus on the moderating effect of political skills. Additionally, it explores how perceived organizational politics influence psychological safety and its subsequent impact on employee voice behavior dimensions.

Design/methodology/approach – This study surveyed 237 managers from commercial banks in Punjab, Pakistan, using convenience sampling and applied rigorous analytical methods, including confirmatory factor analysis, Harman's single factor test, reliability and validity assessments, correlation analysis, and multicollinearity checks. Hypotheses were tested in SPSS version 3.5 using the Hayes Macro Process (model no. 5) to examine various effects.

Findings – Perceived organizational politics strongly impact promotive and overall employee voice behavior, but not prohibitive voice behavior. There's a negative link between perceived politics and psychological safety, while a positive connection exists between psychological safety and all employee voice behaviors, with mediation and significant moderation effects in most cases, except for prohibitive voice behavior.

Research Implications – This study advances understanding of the interplay between perceived organizational politics, psychological safety, and employee voice behavior in the Punjab, Pakistan banking sector, offering insights for enhancing employee engagement and organizational performance in politically charged contexts. It also underscores the potential moderating impact of political skills.

Originality/value – This research uncovers the interplay between perceived organizational politics, psychological safety, and employee voice behavior, with political skills as a moderating factor, contributing valuable insights to both academia and practitioners for fostering positive organizational environments.

Keywords: Perceived Organizational Politics; Psychological Safety; Employee Voice Behavior; Political Skills; Banking Sector

Address of Correspondence

Mudsir Ismail
mudsir.pu@gmail.com

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1. INTRODUCTION

The increase in globalization, rapid development, and the influx of technology have caused the business environment today to become increasingly complex and highly competitive (Naqvi, 2020). The survival and success of firms nowadays are highly dependent on the ability of the firms to adjust and adapt to the dynamic business environment (Koçyiğit & Akkaya, 2020). Employers today are acknowledging the crucial role of employees in ensuring organizational effectiveness in these turbulent and competitive times (Singh, 2019). Employees are deemed as a major source of creativity, organizational learning, and innovation, which are important factors that contribute to organizational success (Basten & Haamann, 2018; Fischer et al., 2019).

Employee Voice behaviour (EVB) is regarded as crucial for organizational success because it has been linked to effective decision-making, enhanced organizational learning, innovation, increased organizational performance, and lower employee turnover and it helps the leadership of the organization to identify important issues (de Azevedo et al., 2020; Morrison & Milliken, 2000; Radley, 2022). At the individual level, employee voice behaviour has been linked to creativity, higher productivity, psychological health, and job success (Cha et al., 2017; Ng & Feldman, 2012; Yousaf et al., 2019).

Secondly, this study incorporates two types of EVB; promotive voice (PROMV) and prohibitive voice (PROHV). Much of the existing literature on EVB, has taken voice as a unidimensional variable, and has focused on the promotive aspect of voice (Morrison, 2014b; Naqvi, 2020). Voice was first divided by (Morrison, 2023) into PROMV and PROHV on the basis of content; while the former seeks to improve the status quo by suggesting new ideas; the latter seeks to identify harmful factors currently present in the status quo. Consequently research suggests that both of these voices may not relate to other variables in the same way (Chamberlin et al., 2017).

Additionally, this research also seeks to examine that how POP influences the PS of employees, and how the feeling of PS relates to EVB. Although much of the relevant

research indicates that PS perception may be linked positively to EVB, however there is limited empirical work available to support this (Sah et al., 2022). Moreover, some of the recent studies have also hinted that PS may not necessarily be linked to positive employee behaviors as previously believed. A study for instance found that PS reduces the average group motivation to work. Therefore this area requires more research (Deng et al., 2019).

Furthermore, this paper addresses the call of Bergeron and Thompson (2020), to explore the mediating effect of PS, and the moderating role of POS, among the association of POP and EVB. Malik et al. (2019) has also recommended that there is a need to test the moderating role of individual level constructs such as POS on the relationships between POP and others. PS refers to how comfortable employees feel at workplace to express their ideas, opinions, suggest solutions, file complaints, ask questions and to give honest feedback, without fearing any negative outcome (Carmeli & Gittell, 2009), whereas POS refers to the competency of an individual to adapt or change personal behavior in a way that it fits or suits the existing work environment (Tripathi & Tripathi, 2022).

1.1. Theoretical Significance

This study attempts to bridge the gap in literature by addressing the call of (Al-Nasrawi, 2023), to study the behavioural implications of POP and of (Tang et al., 2023), to study the individual and contextual factors which influence EVB. Therefore this study is important because it broadens the understanding of EVB by studying how POP influences it. (Liu et al. 2021) has also emphasized the need to explore that how contextual factors such as POP influence EVB, and has regarded this area of research under-developed. This study takes comprehensive view of EVB by incorporating two types of EVB; namely PROMV and PROHV (Liang et al., 2012), and by investigating the impact of independent, mediating and moderating variable on each type of employee voice behavior, as well as on EVB itself.

The few researches concerning POP and EVB have shown that they are both negatively associated (Bashir, 2021; Li et al., 2020), and much of the other literature has shown that organizational politics is generally related to negative employee attitudes

(Bodla & Danish, 2009), however it cannot be overlooked that other studies have also reported positive employee outcome in association with POP (Cheng et al., 2022). Some researchers have pointed out that political environments may encourage employees to engage in voice behavior more. Li et al. (2020) has highlighted that in political environments employees may use voice behavior as a behavioural strategy to secure their resources which are at risk, such as rewards, promotions, and positive performance reviews. Findings of another research have indicated that when POP is high employees gravitate more towards engaging in proactive behaviors (Shin et al., 2022). Another study has also indicated that employees do not always interpret workplace politics negatively as previously believed; employees at times consider it as an essential characteristic of any workplace (Landells & Albrecht, 2017). Therefore, how POP influences EVB require more research and this study attempts to contribute to this regard.

In addition, by incorporating PS as the mediator and POS as the moderator, this study fills in the gap identified by Bergeron and Thompson (2020), in the existing literature. Furthermore, this study builds upon the “Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory” (Ejaz et al., 2022) thereby adding to the existing literature by providing evidence that whether the said theory supports the proposed research model or not. This is also in congruence with the recommendation of Li et al. (2020), who in their study suggested that there’s a need to explore the relationship between POP and EVB through the lens of resource perspective.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Employee Voice Behaviour

EVB simply involves voluntarily speaking up to challenge the existing conditions or the current state of affairs at workplace with suggestions or constructive criticism so that the organizational performance can be enhanced (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). Morrison (2011) after thorough review of literature has identified 3 essential elements of employee voice; firstly, it involves a message being sent from a sender to a receiver verbally. Secondly, it is a voluntary act that an employee decides whether to engage in or not. Lastly, the objective of voice is to bring improvement in the status quo, or to bring a

positive change; the intention behind voice is not to merely criticize someone or something.

Constructs similar to employee voice behavior exist in organizational research literature, and people often confuse these constructs with EVB. Hence it is important to address the differences between them so that the understanding of the concept of employee voice behavior can be enhanced. These constructs include upward communication, whistle blowing, knowledge sharing and organizational dissent.

Knowledge sharing involves mutual sharing of ideas, skills, information, expertise and experiences (Mirzaee & Ghaffari, 2018). Cummings (2004) states that knowledge sharing involves collaborating with others for problems solving, developing new ideas, and sharing information related to work tasks in order to help others. This implies that unlike voice, knowledge sharing is a two-way interaction, is broader in scope and does not necessarily involve reporting an idea or suggestion to those in position of authority.

Organizational dissent can be considered as a subset of voice, therefore it is narrower in scope and it is more expected to be targeted to the upper management levels i.e. supervisors and managers (Kassing, 2002). It involves expressing dissatisfaction or contradictory opinion over the firm's decisions, activities or policies. This dissatisfaction may be regarding an individual, collective or ethical concern (Kassing, 1997).

The existing research suggest that personality characteristics like extraversion, openness to experience and conscientiousness positively influence EVB (Zare & Flinchbaugh, 2019). Other individual factors that impact employee voice behavior positively include organizational identification, moral identity and locus of control (Liu et al., 2022; Premeaux & Bedeian, 2003; Qi & Ming-Xia, 2014). Other studies have shown that leadership styles including transformational leadership, servant leadership and ethical leadership also positively influence EVB (Wang et al., 2018; Yan & Xiao, 2016; Yousaf et al., 2019). Similarly other contextual factors such as openness of the supervisor, job autonomy, ethical climate, organizational support, psychological safety, and employment status i.e. full time and part time, also influence EVB (Bergeron & Thompson, 2020; Dedahanov et al., 2018; Liang et al., 2012; Premeaux & Bedeian, 2003; Stamper & Dyne, 2001; Wang & Yen, 2021).

EVB has been positively associated with job satisfaction, lower turnover, psychological wellness, and creativity (Carnevale et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2016; Yousaf et al., 2019). Other studies have found positive linkages among EVB and career success, high performance ratings and workplace inclusion (MacKenzie et al., 2011; Naqvi, 2020; Weiss & Morrison, 2019). Other studies have also exhibited that it is positively associated with improved organizational performance and organizational innovation (de Azevedo et al., 2020; Morrison & Milliken, 2000).

However studies have shown that engaging in voice behavior is not always beneficial for the employee. Such as a study by Seibert et al. (2001) concluded that EVB is negatively associated with promotion and increase in salary. Similarly, Beenen and Pinto (2009) suggested that engaging in employee voice may lead to retaliation by management, interpersonal conflicts, and negative career repercussions such as loss of opportunities.

2.2. Perceived Organizational Politics

POP refers to the actions by the members of the organization that are perceived to be self-centered, and focused on pursuing one's own goals, without considering the impact of those actions on the goals of the other people in the workplace and the organization's goals. Simply put it refers to the extent to which the workplace is considered to be political by each employee (Ferris et al., 1996). Political environments are often described by power abuse, unfairness, uncertainty, favoritism, self-centered behaviors and manipulation (Ferris et al., 2000; Poon, 2003).

One of the first literatures on organizational politics emerged in 1950s (Riaz, 2013). Burns (1961) suggested that organizations were essentially a political sphere where individuals had to compete for scarce resources such as rewards; therefore, individuals tend to use others to achieve their goals which may not be attainable in other legal or authorized ways. Other scholars such as Blau (1968) and Astley and Sachdeva (1984) also made similar claims; that resource interdependence warrants political behavior.

Later, researchers such as Schein (1977), Gandz and Murray (1980), and Farrell and Petersen (1982) also contributed to the literature of organizational politics. Over the time period the literature on organizational politics shifted from discussing organizational

politics at macro level of the organization i.e. organizational as a political arena in 1970s, to micro level i.e. discussing the individual political behaviors in 1980s (Cavanagh et al., 1981; Harvey & Mills, 1970; Hochwarter et al., 2020). In the 1980s organizational politics was not necessarily viewed as a negative phenomenon, in fact researchers such as Pfeffer (1981) and , Bacharach and Lawler (1980) reasoned for its neutral and positive aspects.

Ferris and Kacmar (1992) suggest that individuals at workplace who benefit from the political environment view organizational politics in a positive light, whereas employees who get negatively affected by the political environment view it in a negative light.

2.3. Psychological Safety

PS basically refers to how comfortable employees feel at workplace to express their ideas and opinions, without fearing any negative outcome (Carmeli & Gittell, 2009). A study by Edmondson and Lei (2014a) writes that PS refers to what an employee expects in the form of response from his/her working colleagues when he/she shares; a new idea, gives honest feedback, asks questions and files a complaint. Organizations frequently ask their employees to put forward new ideas and to make suggestions for improvements, but doing so demands an interpersonal risk from the employees, especially if workers are not sure how their idea and suggestion will be received by the other colleagues (Newman et al., 2017). A study pointed out that employees tend to indulge in knowledge hiding behaviors and keep silence on important matters if they fear any negative outcomes or consequences (Bari et al., 2020). This implies that employees tend to share their ideas, if they feel safe and secure doing so.

The concept of PS was first talked about in 1965 by Edgar Schein and Warren Bennis in the context of organizational change (Edmondson & Lei, 2014b). They suggested that psychological safety facilitates organizational change by reducing the learning anxiety and defensiveness of employees (Schein & Bennis, 1965). Then in 1990, Kahn provided a new perspective on psychological safety, by identifying it as one of the instrumental factors that influence employee's engagement at work. He proposed and proved that when employees feel psychologically safe they feel free to express themselves emotionally, cognitively and physically at workplace rather than holding themselves

down (Kahn, 1990).

Furthermore researcher have pointed out that much of the research on PS has been conducted on teams; considering PS as a group level construct, however limited research is available as to how PS plays out at organizational and individual level (Edmondson & Lei, 2014b). The researchers have insisted that cross cultural comparisons across countries as well as industries are needed; because in certain cultures employees are not comfortable to disagree openly with their superiors or to pose ask questions because such acts are considered disrespectful and impolite.

2.4. Political Skill

Pfeffer (1981) and Mintzberg (1983) were one of the very first researchers to use the term POS. Pfeffer (1981) suggested that POS refers to a person's skill to influence others in a way that is socially acceptable. Later it was defined as the accurate perceptiveness of an individual to understand other people, and then to use that information to control people to engage in behaviors that help in the advancement of personal or organizational objectives (Ferris et al., 2005). POS basically reflects ability of an individual to adapt or change personal behavior in a way that it fits or suits the existing work environment in pursuit of personal and organizational goals (Liu et al., 2007).

POS reflects a set of four social competencies; social astuteness which indicates the skill to discern others people's motives, and to understand the context of social settings in which the interaction is taking place and then to adjust one's behavior accordingly to meet the personal objectives, interpersonal influence; which refers to the person's skill to persuade others in informal subtle ways so that the intended response can be achieved, networking ability; it refers to a person's capability to easily connect with people and develop good rapport and lastly, apparent sincerity; which means the ability to conduct oneself in a way, that others perceive the individual as authentic, genuine and high in integrity (Ferris et al., 2005).

A construct that is often confused with political skill is social intelligence (Kimura, 2015). POS and social intelligence are independent constructs; while both reflect an individual's ability to accurately read others, POS also involves the ability to utilize that information to meet personal objectives. Secondly, while POS is a precise construct that

is utilized to examine the interactions at workplace; to see how individual utilize their understanding of self and others to meet their personal goals, social intelligence is a general skill that is important in one's everyday life (Harris et al., 2007).

Studies have established that there is a positive influence of POS on EVB, impression and image management, effectiveness of leader, follower effectiveness, work unit performance team performance (Brouer et al., 2013; Douglas & Ammeter, 2004; Harris et al., 2007; Hung et al., 2012; Treadway et al., 2004). Another study also found that POS of the leader served as a predictor of follower organizational commitment, through various mediating variables such as perceived organizational support and job satisfaction (Treadway et al., 2004). Research also shows that POS helps to counter or buffer the negative repercussions of stressors at workplace and of burnout (Jawahar et al., 2007; Perrewé et al., 2000).

2.5. Hypotheses Development

2.5.1 Perceived Organizational Politics and Employee Voice Behaviour

“Social Exchange theory” states the human social relationships are essentially dependent on an exchange process in which each individual determines the risks and benefits of the relationship and that this exchange process is committal in nature (Homans, 1958). This suggests that when employees get favorable and positive treatment from the employer, they give back to the organization, by adopting behaviors and taking decisions that benefit the organization (Organ, 1990).

This theory helps to explain why factors such as organization support, organizational justice, transformational leadership and organization's ethical climate are associated with positive employee attitudes such as satisfaction, lower turnover, lower absenteeism, higher productivity and contextual employee performance (Elçi & Alpan, 2009; Meyers et al., 2020; Sun & Wang, 2017; Tenhiälä et al., 2013), and why, POP is related to lower employee engagement, high stress, lower employee performance, and high turnover intention (De Clercq & Pereira, 2021; Haroon et al., 2017; Landells & Albrecht, 2019). Researches that have studied the relationship between POP and EVB, have reported similar findings; these studies show that POP is related negatively to EVB (Bergeron & Thompson, 2020; Li et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2021).

Similarly, other researchers have linked perceived organizational politics to work performance (Brouer et al., 2006). Eldor (2016) also suggests that employees in political environments gravitate towards more proactive and creative behaviours. Landells and Albrecht (2017) writes that employees don't always view workplace politics negatively, in fact some employees consider organizational politics as a necessary characteristic of workplace, which benefits both the organization and the employees.

It is also pertinent to mention that, because PROMV and PROHV are different in terms of message that they deliver, they may not relate to other variables in the same way (Chamberlin et al., 2017). However, the limited number of studies that have incorporated both types of voice have shown, that PROMV and PROHV both relate negatively to negatively to POP (Li et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2021). Therefore, how POP influences voice behaviour requires more research. Therefore, following hypotheses are proposed:

H1a: *POP is associated with PROMV.*

H1b: *POP is associated with PROHV.*

H1c: *POP is associated with EVB.*

2.5.2 Perceived Organizational Politics, Psychological Safety and Employee Voice Behaviour

When an employee engages in speaks up he takes a personal risk because speaking up can have negative consequences for oneself (Fast et al., 2014). Because EVB is challenging in nature, and the intention behind it is not easily recognizable, it is usually not well received by the parties to whom it is targeted (Morrison, 2014a). Pointing out problems can have negative implications for others, while suggesting new ideas may create more work for others, and lead to difference of opinion at workplace which may further translate into a dispute among coworkers (Milliken et al., 2003). Some of the other potential consequences of speaking up include retaliation by management, negative performance reviews, strife in interpersonal relationships, and loss of status (Detert & Treviño, 2010).

Therefore employees feel more inclined to engage in voice behavior if the anticipated benefits of speaking up are more than the anticipated costs (Morrison, 2011). But because highly political environments are considered to be uncertain, unfair, marked by self-

interested behaviors and there is an interplay of power dynamics, employees feel less confident about their cost-benefit appraisal, and hence are less likely to take the risk of speaking up (Burris, 2012; Rosen, Chang, et al., 2009). When POP is high, employees do not feel comfortable expressing themselves because they are not sure if their contributions and ideas will be well received or if they will be recognized and valued for their contributions (Hochwarter et al., 2003).

As the available literature substantiates that the perceptions of PS tend to influence EVB, and that the POP affects the individual perceptions of PS at work (Liang et al., 2012; Rosen et al., 2014), therefore it can be contended that PS mediates the association among POP and EVB. A study that by examined the mediating role of psychological uncertainty on the negative association between POP and, PROMV and PROHV; it concluded that psychological uncertainty does meditates this relationship in the case of both voices (Li et al., 2020). Similarly a study by Walumbwa and Schaubroeck (2009) probed the association between ethical leadership and EVB, this study proved that this association was partially mediated by PS. Another study conducted in Egypt that collected data from 268 employees and 56 of their supervisors also showed that supportive leadership influences EVB and this relationship is fully mediated by PS (Elsaied, 2018). Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H2a: There is a negative relationship between POP and PS.

H2b: There is a positive relationship between PS and PROHV.

H2c: There is a positive relationship between PS and PROMV.

H2d: There is a positive relationship between PS and EVB.

H2e: PS mediates the relationship between POP and PROMV.

H2f: PS mediates the relationship between POP and PROHV.

H2g: PS mediates the relationship between POP and EVB.

2.5.3 Perceived Organizational Politics, Employee Voice Behavior and Political Skill:

Being politically skilled involves having the talent to understand others in a way that

it helps to enhance personal goals, as well as to achieve organizational goals (Blickle et al., 2008). Politically skilled employees have high perceptive abilities; as a result they are quick to read others and understand their motivations; they utilize their judgments to modify their conduct that suits the given situation in order to meet their personal objectives (Frieder et al., 2019). Research shows that politically skilled people are skillful communicators, they're good at networking, and have the ability to influence others (Andrews et al., 2009; Li & Kong, 2015).

Liu et al. (2007) writes that social awareness, and the ability to adapt or change their personal behavior in a way that fits or suits the existing work environment, allows the politically skilled employees to engage in voice behavior effectively because they know what needs to be said, when it needs to be said, where it needs to be said and how it needs to be said. A study by Kapoutsis et al. (2011) found that in environments where the POP is low, in those environments as the POS of employee increases so does the employee performance, whereas in environments where the POP is high, as the POS increases, there is no such influence on the job performance. Andrews et al. (2009) argues that this is because highly political environments are negatively and strongly related to organizational justice perceptions hence there is little incentive available for employees to deliver their best at work, when they know they will not be fairly treated or rewarded for it. This suggests that employees who are politically skilled may not engage in voice behavior when POP is high. The literature suggests that employees who have POS are good at understanding, that which behavior would be beneficial for them to pursue their personal goals in a given situation, hence they are able to adjust their behaviors accordingly. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H3a: *POS of employees moderate the relationship between POP and PROMV.*

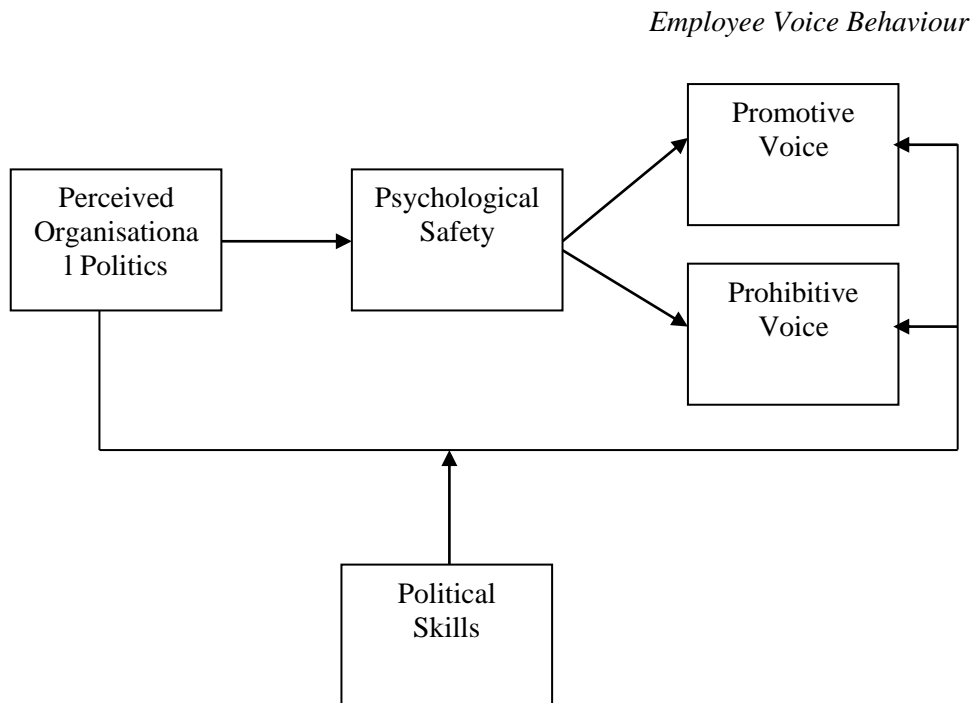
H3b: *POS of employees moderate the relationship between POP and PROHV.*

H3c: *POS of employees moderate the relationship between POP and EVB.*

2.5. Conceptual Model

Figure 1

Conceptual Model



3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

Commercial banking sector of the province of Punjab, Pakistan was opted as the target industry for this study. Commercial banking sector was selected for this study, because previous researches related to perceived organizational politics and employee voice behaviour and related constructs (Khan et al., 2019; Malik et al., 2019; Naz & Sandhu, 2020), were primarily conducted in Pakistan's telecommunication sector and higher education sector, so selection of commercial banking sector for this study

provided a fresh context to study the concerned variables. Moreover it is relevant and important to state that almost 95% of the financial sector of Pakistan is represented by the banking industry (Yusufzai, 2017).

Data was collected from a total of 237 respondents belonging to the following major cities of Punjab: Rawalpindi, Lahore, Faisalabad, Multan, Jhelum and Sialkot using convenience sampling. Considering time constraints, unwillingness of banks to share their list of employees, and the general reluctance of subjects towards filling surveys, it was decided to use convenience sampling because these factors made it necessary to have a relevant contact in the bank, in order to approach banks and to get the surveys filled.

For data collection survey strategy was used, which is a primary source of data collection. The questionnaires were administered in English. The questionnaires were distributed among the concerned bank employees by visiting the bank branches in Sialkot, in person. To collect data from rest of the cities, an online survey link was prepared and floated.

3.2. Measurement Scales

All the four were measured utilizing a “5 point likert scale”. Anchors for all the scales range from “Strongly disagree” to “Strongly Agree”. The scale to measure POP, was adopted from (Vigoda, 2001). The scale consisted of a total of six items, including one negatively worded item. The scale to measure EVB was adopted from (Liang et al., 2012) ; this scale comprises of total 10-items; 5-items for measuring PROMV and 5-items for measuring PROHV. To measure PS, the scale was also adopted from (Liang et al., 2012). This scale comprises of 5-items, including one negatively worded item. Lastly to measure POS, the scale was adopted from the study of by Ferris et al. (1999). This scale comprises of 6-items. To view items of each scale, refer to the questionnaire given in the Appendix-1.

3.3. Data Analysis Procedures

For data analysis version 26 of SPSS software was utilized. Firstly, data screening was done; it involved three steps; running missing values analysis, then box plots were utilized to identify any outliers in the data and lastly, the normality of data was determined by using the values of skewness and kurtosis, as well as through histograms

and normality graphs. After data screening, descriptive statistics were calculated for the demographics of the respondents which included frequencies and percentages. After this, Kaiser-Meyer Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's test were conducted to make sure that the dataset was fit for confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Then factor analysis was conducted, and factor loadings were calculated. This helped to ensure the convergent and discriminant validity. Then, Harman single factor test was conducted to address any common method bias (CMB) issue. To further determine the validity and the reliability of the data; the values of average variance extracted (AVE), composite reliability (CR) and cronbach's alpha were calculated. Then descriptive statistics including minimum and maximum values, mean, standard deviation and Pearson correlation analysis was conducted. Then multicollinearity was determined by calculating the values of variance inflation factor (VIF) and tolerance. Lastly, to test the hypotheses; the direct effects, mediation and moderation effects; Hayes process macro SPSS version 3.5, model 5 was used (Hayes, 2013).

4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

CFA helps to establish the construct validity. Construct validity shows the extent to which the instrument being used measures what it is supposed to measure. The two subtypes of construct validity are discriminant validity (DV) and convergent validity (CV) (DiStefano & Hess, 2005). If DV and CV of the measures is not established then the results drawn on the basis of those measures would be incorrect (Lehmann, 1988).

For DV to exist the items related to a construct should load on the same construct strongly as compared to the other constructs (Farrell & Rudd, 2009). For CV to exist all the items measuring the construct must only load onto that factor (Alarcón et al., 2015). The table 4 shows the standard factor loadings (SFL) for each construct once the items causing issues with DV and CV were removed. The removed items have also been indicated in the table below.

A total of 6-items were removed in the preliminary factor analysis. The details of factor analysis i.e., rotated component matrix, and the items removed, have been

illustrated in Appendix-2. The values of SFL should ideally be above 0.7, however, a value greater than 0.5 is also acceptable (Abzari et al., 2014; Hair Jr et al., 2010). The table below shows that all the items had a factor loading greater than 0.5.

Table 1.

Factor Analysis

Constructs	Items	SFL
Political Skill	POS1.	.693
	POS2.	.741
	POS3.	(Item removed)
	POS4.	.639
	POS5.	.728
	POS6.	.540
Perceived Organizational Politics	POP1.	.700
	POP2.	(Item removed)
	POP3.	.790
	POP4.	.898
	POP5.	.858
	POP6.	.851
Psychological Safety	PS1.	.707
	PS2.	.834
	PS3.	.784
	PS4.	(Item removed)
	PS5.	(Item removed)
Promotive Voice	PROMV1.	.674
	PROMV2.	.869
	PROMV3.	.823
	PROMV4.	.756
	PROMV5.	.777
Prohibitive Voice	PROHV1.	.643
	PROHV2.	.784
	PROHV3.	(Item removed)
	PROHV4.	(Item removed)
	PROHV5.	.583

Note. N = 237.

4.2. Common Method Bias (CMB)

CMB refers to the variance that occurs not due to the constructs but due to the measurement method, or in other words it is when the instrument introduces bias and therefore variations in responses (Tehseen et al., 2017). To check the data for CMB; Harman's Single Factor test was used. The results displayed in table 5 shows that the first factor only accounted for 31.22% of the total variance. If the single factor accounts for variance that is less than 50% then CMB is not a concern (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The table below shows that CMB is not a problem in this dataset.

Table 2.

Results of CMV Analysis

Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loading		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	6.854	34.270	34.270	6.244	31.222	31.222

Note. N = 237.

4.3. Validity and Reliability Tests

To further determine the validity of the data as well as the reliability of the data, the values of average variance extracted (AVE), composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach's alpha were calculated. The minimum acceptable value of AVE is 0.5, and for CR it is 0.7 (Alarcón et al., 2015). However Lam (2012), suggests that in any case the value of AVE is less than 0.5, but the value of CR is greater than 0.6, then the value of AVE would be considered acceptable. For Cronbach's alpha the general standard is that the value should be more than 0.7, but if the items in a given scale are less than 10 then a value of more than 0.5 is also deemed good (Pallant, 2007). Table 6 below shows that Cronbach's alpha is above 0.7 for all variables, the values of CR are also above 0.5 for all variables, and the values of AVE are also above 0.5 for all variables except for 2 variables, however the CR values of these variables are greater than 0.6. Therefore, all the values meet the

prescribed standards.

Table 3

Variables	N	No. of Items	AVE	CR	Cronbach's Alpha
POS	237	5	0.452	0.802	.800
POP	237	5	0.676	0.912	.839
PS	237	3	0.603	0.820	.881
PROMV	237	5	0.612	0.887	.900
PROHV	237	3	0.456	0.712	.745

Reliability and Validity Statistics

Note. POS = Political skill, POP = Perceived Organizational Politics, PS = Psychological Safety, PROMV = Promotive Voice, PROHV = Prohibitive Voice.

4.4. Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables

The mean shows the average value in each data set, whereas the standard deviation (Std. Dev.) shows the dispersion of data or how much was the data spread out around mean. A low standard deviation shows low dispersion, while higher standard deviation value shows higher dispersion of data (Mishra et al., 2019). The minimum and maximum values show the minimum and maximum values in each data set. The table 7 below shows the mean, Std. Dev., and the minimum and maximum values.

Table 4.

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Minimum	Maximum
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Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

POS	237	16.92	2.77	6.40	21
POP	237	3.21	1.09	1	5
PS	237	3.59	1.06	1.33	5
PROMV	237	3.89	.818	1.60	5
PROHV	237	3.76	.838	1.33	5

Note. POS = Political skill, POP = Perceived Organizational Politics, PS = Psychological Safety, PROMV = Promotive Voice, PROHV = Prohibitive Voice, Std. Dev. = Standard Deviation.

4.5. Pearson Correlation Analysis

The results of Pearson Correlation Analysis are given below in table 8. The value of correlation ranges between -1 to +1. The absolute value of the correlation determines the strength of the relationship i.e. the closer the value to 1 the stronger the association, while sign exhibits the direction of the association among the variables (Taylor, 1990) .

The table shows that POP is negatively related to PROMV ($r = -.047$, $p > 0.05$), PROHV ($r = -.096$, $p > 0.05$), and EVB ($r = -.073$, $p > 0.05$); however, the relationship between these variables is insignificant. The table shows that the correlation among POP and PS is significantly negative ($r = -.398$, $p < 0.05$); this implies that when there is high POP, employees feel less psychologically safe. Furthermore, the table also shows that PS is significantly positively associated to PROMV ($r = .422$, $p < 0.05$), PROHV ($r = .451$, $p < 0.05$) and EVB ($r = .484$, $p < 0.05$). This indicates that when employees feel psychologically safe, they are more willing to adopt voice behavior. Lastly, the correlation analysis also shows that POS is significantly positively associated to PROMV ($r = .536$, $p < 0.05$), PROHV ($r = .627$, $p < 0.05$) and EVB ($r = .637$, $p < 0.05$).

Table 5.

Correlation Analysis

Variables	POS	POP	PS	PROMV	PROHV	EVB
POS	1					
POP	.096	1				

PS	.452**	-.398**	1			
PROMV	.536**	-.047	.422**	1		
PROHV	.627**	-.096	.451**	.581**	1	
EVB	.637**	-.073	.484**	.938**	.827**	1

Note. N = 237,

POS = Political skill, POP = Perceived Organizational Politics, PS = Psychological Safety, PROMV = Promotive Voice, PROHV = Prohibitive Voice, EVB = Employee Voice Behavior.

** . Correlation is significant at $p < 0.01$ level (2-tailed).

4.6. Hypotheses Test

The value of R square shows the percentage of total variability in the dependent variable explained by the model or the predictor variables in the model, in other words it represents the predictive strength of the model (Frost, 2019). If the p-value of the model fitness test i.e. ANOVA/F-test, is greater than 0.05, it suggests that the predictor variables do not help to predict the criterion variable, or the model does not accurately captures the observed relationship in the data, in simple words the model is useless (Tranmer & Elliot, 2008)

Table 10(a) shows the model summary for POP i.e., independent variable and PS i.e., the dependent variable. The results show that the R square is .1587, which means that 15.87% of the variation in PS is caused by POP. The table also shows that the p value is less than 0.05, which indicates significance; this means that the model is a good fit.

Similarly, table 10(b) shows PROMV as the dependent variable, and POP, PS, POS and the interaction term as the predictor variables. The model summary shows that 36.78% of the variability in the criterion variable is caused by these predictor variables. The results are also significant because $p < 0.05$ hence the model is a good fit. Additionally, table 10(c) and 10(d) show the model summary for the outcome variables PROHV and EVB respectively, both tables show that the model is a good fit.

Table 6(a).

Model Summary

Constant	R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	Df2	p
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POP	.3983	.1587	.9526	44.3165	1.000	235.000	.0000
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Note. N = 237,

Dependant Variable: PS = Psychological Safety.

**. Result is significant at $p < 0.05$ level.

Table 6(b).

Model Summary

Constant	R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	Df2	p
POP	.6065	.3678	.4301	33.7448	4.000	232.000	.0000
PS							
POS							
POP*POS							

Note. N = 237,

Dependant Variable: PROMV = Promotive Voice.

**. Result is significant at $p < 0.05$ level.

Table 6(c).

Model Summary

Constant	R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	Df2	p
POP	.6564	.4308	.4063	43.9040	4.000	232.000	.0000
PS							
POS							
POP*POS							

Note. N = 237,

Dependant Variable: PROHV = Prohibitive Voice.

**. Result is significant at $p < 0.05$ level.

Table 6(d).

Model Summary

Constant	R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	Df2	p
POP	.6912	.4778	.2903	53.0631	4.000	232.000	.0000

PS
 POS
 POP*POS

Note. N = 237,

Dependant Variable: EVB = Employee Voice Behavior.

**. Result is significant at $p < 0.05$ level.

4.7. Direct Effects

The table 7 below shows the direct effects among the concerned variables of this study. The coefficient values represent the values for beta (B) i.e. unstandardized (Hayes, 2013). The sign with the value of coefficient exhibits whether the relationship among the variables is positive or negative. The results show that POP significantly positively influences PROMV ($B = .840, p < 0.05$). This means that when there's an increase of one unit in the independent variable i.e., POP, there will be an increase of .840 units in the dependent variable i.e., PROMV.

The results also establish that POP significantly positively influences EVB ($B = .573, p < 0.05$), whereas the relationship between POP and PROHV is negative and insignificant ($B = -.398, p > 0.05$). Therefore H1a, and H1c are accepted and H1b is rejected. However, at this point it is important to mention that the correlation among POP and PROMV ($r = -.047, p > 0.05$) and between POP and EVB ($r = -.073, p > 0.05$) was insignificant as indicated by table 8; however the direct effect in both cases is significant. Pandey and Elliott (2010) suggests that is normal for relationships which were previously insignificant to become significant, or for relationships to change their direction when more variables are added to the equation i.e. multiple linear regression, hence a previously insignificant relationship may become significant when an important variable which was earlier missing is included hence variation in the dependent which was previously not accounted for can be explained and the results then may become significant.

The table exhibits that there is a significant negative influence of POP on PS ($B = -.389, p < 0.05$). This suggests that when there is higher perception of politics employees

tend to feel less psychologically safe. In other words, when the perception of organizational politics increases by 1 unit, the psychological safety falls by .389 units. Therefore, H2a is accepted.

The results also show that PS significantly positively influences PROMV ($B = .195$, $p < 0.05$), PROHV ($B = .181$, $p < 0.05$) and EVB ($B = .189$, $p < 0.05$) overall. Hence H2b, H2c, and H2d are accepted.

Table 7.

Direct Effects

Hypothesized Path	Coeff	SE	t	P	LLCI	ULCI
POP → PROMV	.840	.228	3.690	.0003	.392	1.289
POP → PROHV	.127	.221	.572	.5677	-.309	.563
POP → EVB	.573	.187	3.061	.0025	.204	.941
POP → PS	-.389	.0585	-6.657	.0000	-.504	-.274
PS → PROMV	.195	.0494	3.941	.0001	.0973	.2918
PS → PROHV	.181	.0480	3.767	.0002	.0862	.275
PS → EVB	.189	.0406	4.669	.0000	.1095	.269

Note. $N = 237$,

POS = Political Skill, POP = Perceived Organizational Politics, PS = Psychological Safety, PROMV = Promotive Voice, PROHV = Prohibitive Voice, EVB = Employee Voice Behavior.

**. Direct effect is significant at $p < 0.05$ level (2-tailed).

4.8. Mediating Analysis

The indirect effect helps to determine whether the relationship among the predictor and the criterion variable can be explained by the mediating variable (Abu-Bader & Jones, 2021). The indirect effect is said to be significant if zero does not lie within the bootstrapped lower level and upper level confidence interval range (Namazi & Namazi, 2016). The table 12 shows that PS significantly mediates the association among POP and PROMV, between POP and PROHV and as well as between POP and EVB. Therefore, we accept H2e, H2f and H2g. It is important to point out that since the direct effect of

POP on PROHV was insignificant ($B = -.398, p > 0.05$) as indicated in table 11, but the indirect effect is significant as indicated in table 12, this indicates full mediation (Hair et al., 2021). This means that PS fully explains the relationship between the POP and PROH, and if the effect of mediating variable is controlled the relationship between both the variables becomes insignificant. Hayes (2018) contends that significant indirect effect is enough to prove mediation, and in such cases the significance of total and direct effect becomes irrelevant.

Another important thing that needs attention here is that the indirect effect in all three cases is negative. This is because the direct effect of POP on PS is negative ($B = -.389, p < 0.05$), whereas the direct effect of PS on employee voice for all three cases is positive, as indicated in table 11.

In simple terms this means that when POP increases, the PS decreases hence employee voice behavior decreases.

However, when direct effects of POP are considered on PROMV ($B = .840, p < 0.05$) and EVB ($B = .573, p < 0.05$) as presented in table 11, the results show that they are both positive i.e., which means that when POP increases the voice behavior also increases. When the direct and indirect effect are both significant but have opposite signs it indicates competitive mediation or also sometimes known as inconsistent mediation (Hair et al., 2021; Zhao et al., 2010).

Table 8.

Indirect Effects

Hypothesized Path	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
POP → PS → PROMV	-.0757	.0269	-.1316	-.0275
POP → PS → PROHV	-.0703	.0210	-.1113	-.0289
POP → PS → EVB	-.0737	.0222	-.1189	-.0331

Note. N = 237,

POS = Political Skill, POP = Perceived Organizational Politics, PS = Psychological Safety, PROMV = Promotive Voice, PROHV = Prohibitive Voice, EVB = Employee Voice Behavior.

**. Based on 5000 bootstrap samples.

4.9. Moderating Analysis

Table 13 below shows the results for the moderating effects. The results demonstrate that POS significantly negatively moderates the association of POP and PROMV ($B = -.0450$, $p < 0.05$), and between POP and EVB ($B = -.0301$, $p < 0.05$). This means that the direct positive association among POP and PROMV ($B = .573$, $p < 0.05$), and between POP and EVB overall ($B = .573$, $p < 0.05$), as indicated by table 11, is weakened by the political skill. On the other hand the results indicate that the POS does not moderate the association among POP and PROHV ($B = -.0053$, $p > 0.05$), because the p value is greater than 0.05, and zero falls within the lower and upper confidence interval, thus indicating insignificant impact (Namazi & Namazi, 2016; Rice, 1989). Therefore, we accept H3a and H3c, and reject H3b.

Table 9.

Moderation Effects

Hypothesized Path	Coeff	SE	t	P	LLCI	ULCI
POP*POS → PROMV	-.0450	.0132	-3.418	.0007	-.0709	-.0191
POP*POS → PROHV	-.0053	.0128	-.4163	.6776	-.0305	.0199
POP*POS → EVB	-.0301	.0108	-2.785	.0058	-.0514	-.0088

Note. $N = 237$,

POS = Political Skill, POP = Perceived Organizational Politics, PROMV = Promotive Voice, PROHV = Prohibitive Voice, EVB = Employee Voice Behavior.

**. Moderation is significant at the $p < 0.05$ level.

4.10. Summary of Hypothesis

Table 10.

Summary of Hypotheses

No.	Hypotheses:	Results:
H1a:	POP is associated with PROMV	Accepted
H1b:	POP is associated with PROHV	Rejected
H1c:	POP is associated with EVB	Accepted

H2a:	There is a negative relationship between POP and PS	Accepted
H2b:	There is a positive relationship between PS and PROHV	Accepted
H2c:	There is a positive relationship between PS and PROMV	Accepted
H2d:	There is a positive relationship between PS and EVB	Accepted
H2e:	PS mediates the relationship between POP and PROMV	Accepted
H2f:	PS mediates the relationship between POP and PROHV	Accepted
H2g:	PS mediates the relationship between POP and EVB	Accepted
H3a:	POS of employees moderates the relationship between POP and PROMV	Accepted
H3b:	POS of employees moderates the relationship between POP and PROHV	Rejected
H3c:	POS of employees moderates the relationship between POP and EVB	Accepted
	No. of Rejected hypotheses: 2 No. of Accepted hypotheses: 11 Total hypotheses: 13	

5. DISCUSSION

The results reveal that POP has a significant positive influence on PROMV, as well as over EVB. This finding is contrary to the previous research which have found negative relationship between POP and EVB (Bergeron & Thompson, 2020; Li et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2021). However, these results are in line with Landells and Albrecht (2017) and Li et al. (2020) who have proposed that in highly political environments, employees may employ voice behaviour as a behavioural strategy to secure their own interests. This is also supported by Hobfoll (1989) who proposed that individuals tend to utilize their existing resources to guard and preserve their other resources when they're at risk. Therefore, as highly political environments pose a threat to an employee's resources; the employee responds by utilizing his voice i.e., a personal resource to secure his resources

which may include bonuses, promotions, job, social status, etc. This is because EVB has been linked to career success, high performance ratings, and workplace inclusion (MacKenzie et al., 2011; Naqvi, 2020; Weiss & Morrison, 2019). However, as far as the PROHV is concerned, the results demonstrate that there was an insignificant relationship among POP and PROHV.

Furthermore, this study concluded that PS mediates the relationship among POP and PROMV, between POP and PROHV, and between POP and EVB. This suggests that as the perception of organizational politics increases, PS decreases and so does EVB. These findings are consistent with other studies; for instance Yin et al. (2019) found that PS mediates the association among transformational leadership and knowledge sharing. Similarly Payne and Katrinli (2020) found that the association among interactional justice and innovative behavior is mediated by PS. It is important to note that In the case of prohibitive voice, full mediation was proved; this suggests that relationship between POP and PROHV exists only because of the mediating variable i.e. PS. This is an important ascertainment, because it means that there is no direct relationship between POP and PROHV; it suggests the POP affects the PS of employees which in turn affects the PROHV. This is consistent with the finding of Li et al. (2009) which suggested that PS fully mediates the relationship between abusive supervision and PROHV but partially between abusive supervision and PROMV.

Politically skilled employees are high in social astuteness as compared to the employees who do not possess POS (Ferris et al., 2005), therefore when POP is high, politically skilled employees are quick to assess that their working environment is marked by unfairness, manipulation and self-interested behaviors (Chang et al., 2009), hence they adapt their behavior accordingly, and do not voice their concerns, or point out problems because they understand that speaking up in political environments is risky, and they would not be valued for their feedback or may even face retaliation (Detert & Edmondson, 2011).

5.1. Theoretical Implications

This study provides empirical evidence that PROMV and PROHV do not relate to other variables the same way as suggested by (Chamberlin et al., 2017). Secondly, this

study addresses the call of Li et al. (2020) to study the relationship between POP and EVB using resource perspective. The few researches that have studied this relationship, and have attempted to explain this relationship through the lens of “COR” theory (Hobfoll, 1989), found that employees are less likely to engage in voice behavior in political environments (Bergeron & Thompson, 2020; Liu et al., 2021). These studies suggest that highly political environments are psychologically taxing for individuals, which depletes their resources, leaving them with fewer resources i.e. energy to engage in discretionary behaviors such as voice (Chang et al., 2009; Lin & Johnson, 2015).

Contrary to previous researches, this study found that POP positively influences PROMV and EVB. This finding provides a fresh perspective to the theory, and affirms what Hobfoll (1989) had also proposed that individuals not only strive to protect their resources, but when individuals feel that their resources are at risk they tend to utilize their existing resources to protect them or to gain more resources. This means that in political environments, employees use voice i.e., a personal resource, as a behavioral tool to secure their resources i.e. job security, promotion, bonus, positive performance rating, etc. This finding is in line with the study of Eldor (2016) who found that employees tend to be more creative and proactive in highly political environments. This finding adds to the existing literature of how organizational politics contributes to positive employee attitudes.

5.2. Managerial Implications

EVB is essential for effective functioning of the organization because it helps to point out problems at the workplace that hamper the routine operations and it allows employees to share their ideas for how these problems can be solved, or the operations at the workplace can be improved. Decision makers therefore consider EVB crucial for organizational success because it allows them to have access to information that may not be otherwise available to them. Workplace politics on the other hand, is an undeniable reality of every organization. Therefore, it is important for decision makers to understand that how organizational politics influences EVB at workplace.

The results of this study show that the decision of employees to engage in voice behavior is sensitive to their perception of organization politics. The results of this study

show that POP influences PROMV and EVB positively. This suggests that high POP encourages employees to engage in proactive behaviors such as voice thereby bringing improvement in the workplace. The literature suggests that there might be two explanations for this; either the employees do not necessarily interpret organizational politics as a negative phenomenon and consider it an important and necessary part of the workplace as suggested by Eldor (2016) and Landells and Albrecht (2017), or in political environments employees tend to utilize voice as a tool for impression management to secure their interests. It is therefore important for managers and decisions makers to understand the intention or motivation behind employee voice behavior in political environments.

5.3. Limitations and Future Recommendations

Firstly, due to time constraints, lean resources to access banks and the general reluctance of people to fill surveys, data was collected from a total of 237 respondents using convenience sampling which is a non-probability sampling technique. Future studies can be conducted with larger sample sizes and using a probability sampling technique so that the findings of those researches are more generalizable (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Secondly, this study uses, the employee voice scale that incorporates two dimensions of voice; PROMV and PROHV (Liang et al., 2012). Future studies can utilize the EVB scale developed by Lebel et al. (2011); which has three dimensions of voice namely; problem focused, suggestion focused and opinion focused voice; to see how the concerned variables influence each dimension of employee voice.

Moreover, future researches can test a moderated mediation model by examining how the indirect association between POP and EVB through PS is moderated through individual factors such as moral identity (Bhatti et al., 2020), , extraversion (LePine & Van Dyne, 2001) or professional commitment (Pangestu & Rahajeng, 2020); such that this indirect relationship would be weaker in presence of these factors. Studying the association between these variables would allow to explore that how individual level and group level factors work in conjunction with each other to influence EVB, as suggested by Bergeron and Thompson (2020) and Morrison (2014b).

Additionally, in future studies to reduce the biasness of the data, the supervisors can

be asked to rate the voice behavior scale for employees instead of employees self-reporting for voice behaviors, this would help to counter the CMB concerns (Podsakoff et al., 2012). Moreover new studies have documented that organizational politics is interpreted by employees differently, while some employees may interpret it negatively, others may consider it an essential part of workplace, therefore how employees interpret organizational politics determines how they respond to it hence future researches can take into account the different conceptualizations of organizational politics (Landells & Albrecht, 2017).

Furthermore, this study targets the commercial banking sector of Punjab, Pakistan, so future studies can target other industries to see if similar results are achieved; such as health care industry, where not speaking up can have serious implications (Edmondson, 2003). Lastly, this study can also be implemented across various cultures, to see how perception of organizational politics influences voice behavior in those particular cultures; for instance this research model can be implemented in Malaysia that presents a cultural context where there is low uncertainty avoidance (Hoftede et al., 2010; Rahman & Ramli, 2018). It is important to state that the proposed hypotheses in this study were general, and were not culture or industry focused, yet it is true that industry specific factors such as job market saturation and cultural factors do exert influence on the results, so by studying the same model in context of different industries and cultural contexts would allow cross industrial and cross cultural comparisons.

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