



An empirical study on the impact of employee voice and silence on destructive leadership and organizational culture

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Abstract

This paper is an outcome of the business ethics course conducted during the third semester of the MBA course and aims to examine how a subordinate employee's response, either by raising a concern or being quiet to repeated misbehavior of the leader, impacts an organization. Primary data was collected from the employees of mid-sized IT companies in India using a five-point Likert scale questionnaire. Structural equation modeling has been used to analyze the data. Mediation analysis has been conducted to verify the mediating role of organizational culture. It is found that if an employee feels safe in an environment, they open up to suggestions or else suppress their thoughts to escape repercussion. The analysis shows that silence and voice in an organization have an impact on the organization's culture. The implications of this study show that leaders violate the integrity of the organization by vandalizing the organization's objectives, outcomes, assets, and well-being of the co-employees. Previous studies have not focused on the mediating role of organizational culture on employee voice or silence.

Keywords Destructive leader · Employee silence · Employee voice · Organizational culture · Organizational performance · Behavior · Teaching business ethics

Introduction

Artificial intelligence and automation are increasingly becoming the mainstay of today's business organizations. This increasing trend of automation has already replaced many erstwhile jobs. However, human influence is still an integral part of our organizations. Organizational leaders often believe that "our employees are

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our most important asset” (Gabčanová, 2011). An organization’s success or failure depends on the ability of the people working therein (Vineet Nayar, 2010). Unless and until there is innovation, creativity, and positive contribution from the employees, the organization cannot achieve its goals and vision. Hence, we may argue that an organization’s productivity is based purely on the “human Factor” (Başar et al., 2018; Anwar and Abdullah, 2021). Yet, researchers have been asking whether organizations are conscientiously developing the human factor in the organization (Başar et al., 2018).

Leadership quality and style are two prominent factors affecting employee morale in an organization (Oyerinde, 2020). Organizations must encourage employees to voice their opinions to make them an innovative and growing organization. An employee must feel free to express ideas, concerns, beliefs, and statements, or suppressing what they do not want to speak about is decided entirely by an employee (Morrison and Milliken, 2000). Previous studies have shown that there is always a relationship between the leadership style and the employee’s voice (Oyerinde, 2020). Research has shown that if leaders are willing to engage in their subordinates’ voices, the employees are encouraged to open up and put forward their views (Erdogan et al., 2011; Zehir et al., 2012). On the other hand, leader behavior can also lead to employee silence (Aboramadan et al., 2020).

Destructive leadership is a broad concept that covers various types of behavior and emotions of leaders. Similar to the idea of destructive leadership are toxic leadership (Goldman, 2006; Saqib and Arif, 2017; Mehta and Maheshwari, 2014), abusive behavior (Thau et al., 2009; Hayat et al., 2021), unethical and poor leadership (Albaum, 2014), bad leaders (Schyns and Schilling, 2013), leadership styles (Burns 2017), and narcissistic leadership (Aboramadan et al. 2020). Destructive leadership is one of a kind that leads to employee silence. These leaders sabotage the organization’s objectives, resources, and well-being of the co-employees by violating the agreed legal interest of the organization. Schmid et al. (2018) define a destructive leader as one who exhibits (1) follower-directed destructive behavior (who abuses employees), (2) organization director destructive behavior (who steals from and sabotages the organization), and (3) self-directed destructive behavior (who conspires against others for self-gain).

Destructive leadership behavior over time can become the defining aspect of an organization’s culture. The type of culture in an organization indicates the behavior and motive of the leader. The behavior of the leader and the organizational culture impacts the employee. Destructive leadership adversely affects the employee’s well-being and emotional quotient (Al-Madadha et al., 2021 Feddersen et al., 2020). Small and medium-sized organizations in India, where the power of the leaders is absolute, seem to exhibit this adverse impact more. Researchers also talk of job dissatisfaction’s effects as exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect (Farrell, 1983). In a healthy organization, employees may raise their voices which act as a warning for managing the problems in the organization. Leaders play a crucial role in creating this space for employee voice. In a leader-member exchange in an organization, voice plays a vital role (Liang and Yeh, 2019). Less the amount of trust and more the influence of narcissism and the destructive role of the leader, the voice is suppressed (Gao et al., 2011).

Researchers have proven that silence harms employee performance (Morrison and Milliken, 2000). Introducing employee voice can positively improve employee performance (Gao et al., 2011; Aboramadan et al., 2020; Detert et al., 2007). Employee behavior and motive lead to employee silence and voice. All of these impact organizational and employee performance (Zhang et al., 2020). But between all this, organizational culture plays a vital role in employee silence, voice, and destructive behavior. Based on the type of organization, the employee decides to speak or remain silent (John and Manikandan, 2019; Liu et al., 2020). A destructive leader can create a culture of silence over time.

A destructive leader is a person possessing traits like (a) abusive behavior, (b) aggressiveness at work, (c) bullying the employees, (d) unsupportive toward subordinates, (e) failure to give credit for the work done, (f) discouraging, and (g) threatening the employees (Schmid et al., 2018). Such behavior causes employee silence (Schilling and Kluge, 2009). Employees look for opportunities to avoid conflicts. Organizational support is vital for making the voice heard. The leader's vision, values, ethics, ideology, and belief form an organizational culture. The culture defines an employee's behavior within and outside the team and with the organization's leaders (Tsai, 2011; Olasupo, 2011). A healthy working environment keeps its employees motivated and looks after their well-being. Michaelson (2014) explored the role of leadership in creating an ethical environment where employee voice is fostered and has high levels of trust.

Hence, this paper will focus on providing insight into how a healthy organizational culture impacts employee silence or voice and mediating destructive leadership's role in creating this culture that suppresses employee voice. Furthermore, this paper aims to provide a conceptual contribution to finding which organizational culture leads to destructive leaders and how it impacts employee behavior. The scope of this study is limited to mid-scale information technology (IT) companies in Maharashtra, India. The authors felt the need to study destructive leadership because (1) as there is sizable research already undertaken on the positive impact of leadership on creating a culture of voice and (2) a felt experience of the role of the leaders in suppressing employee voice while working in the IT companies.

Another rationale for researching this topic emerges from the experience of teaching values. This paper is an outcome of research conducted as part of the business ethics course. Two hundred fifty students take a business ethics course. Though students are initially skeptical, the cases and class discussions make a lasting impression on their minds. This research paper is an immediate result of the course as the student took up the topic of a destructive leader and conducted an empirical study of the information technology companies based out of Pune. So far, no research documents the impact of ethics teaching on employee voice.

The paper has seven sections. The report begins with the introduction, the reason for selecting this topic, issues, and outcomes. The following section talks about the literature review and conceptual framework. The "Research and methodology" section is about the research method used for collecting the data. In the "Data analysis and findings" section onward, the paper shows the data analysis and results, discussion and implication, limitations, and future scope.

Literature review

This section explains destructive leadership, characteristics, types of destructive leadership, employee behavior concerning employee voice, employee silence, and organization culture. This paper has described the relationship between each of these variables.

Organizations today are competing in a complex and competitive market environment. In such an environment, the leader's behavior may turn the organization's success into failure (Saqib and Arif, 2017). The unethical behavior of the leaders is considered detrimental to overall organizational performance. Previous studies (Baig et al., 2021; Burns, 2017; Fowlie and Wood, 2009; Kellerman, 2004) have argued that there are consequences of toxic leadership behaviors (TOXL) on subordinates and organizational components (Mehta & Maheshwari, 2014) in the workplace.

Toxic leadership or destructive leaders are characterized by abusive supervision, harassing subordinates, vanity, and petty tyranny. However, there is not enough research in this area. Most of the literature view both constructive and destructive as caused by a combination of factors involving leaders, followers, and the environment (Hayat et al., 2021; Padilla et al., 2007; Saks and Ashforth, 1997). Schyns and Schilling (2013) opines that turning a blind eye to destructive leadership is also detrimental to an organization. In another review of destructive leadership, Ryan et al. (2021) point to a dearth of research on destructive leadership.

Toxic leadership behaviors are a series of dysfunctional conduct that a leader demonstrates to fulfill his needs and personal motive and to gain an advantage by compromising the trust of the people, team, and organization (Schmidt, 2014). Goldman (2006) further explained that organizational climate or environment can become toxic due to the toxic leader's destructive and derailed behaviors, which subordinates imitate. Sing et al. (2018) view toxic leadership with fear and say it is the most menacing form of leadership.

Toxic leadership is considered a debilitated and disrupted type of leadership that is destructive to individuals and organizations at large (Indradevi, 2016; Martinko et al., 2013; Mehta and Maheshwari, 2014). Scholars have mentioned that destructive leaders affect the mental health of an individual by increasing stress and work pressure, reducing job satisfaction (Bhandarker and Rai, 2019; Erickson et al., 2015), and impacting employee's peace of mind (Burris et al., 2008), resulting in the decrease of employee efficacy (Erickson et al., 2015; Krasikova et al., 2013). The researchers have also demonstrated the impact of altering organizational outcomes (Schyns & Schilling, 2013; Tepper, 2007; Xu et al., 2015).

Supervisors who are detrimental ideally adopt the characteristics of being ego-centric, obstinate, laid-back attitude, and mean (Shaw et al., 2011). They play blame games and showcase disturbing traits (Battigalli et al. 2019). Employees working under them are usually cautious and slow to act as they perceive their leader as a threat. Destructive leaders create an atmosphere among their employees that tends to be a threat, resulting in employees being watchful of their

expression and work. In such situations, the subordinates usually prefer silence to safeguard themselves and their position and want to refrain from being termed as troublemakers (Wu et al., 2018; Khalid and Ahmed, 2016; Morrison, 2011). Leaders can be a threat to individuals and their organizations in various ways. There are “types” of destructive leaders based on analyses conducted on a sample by classifying them into seven clusters (Shaw et al., 2011). Destructive leadership impacts financial performance, makes employees rage, reduces confidence, and leads them into “political” behavior (Shaw et al., 2011).

The seven types of destructive leaders are as follows: “the destructive leader” who makes decisions based on inadequate information. They possess characteristics like lying, unethical behavior, failure to deal with new technologies, inability to adapt to changes, and being incapable of making precise decisions (Schmid, 2018). “The diminished capacity leader” is ineffective at influencing and negotiating and does not have the skillsets to cope with the job (Sarker and Jie, 2017). “The micro-leader” is a person who micromanages and is over-controlling (Mishra et al., 2019). “The bipolar leader” fails to resolve internal disputes, practices nepotism, and exhibits inconsistent and erratic behavior (Schmid, 2018). “The isolated leader” is someone who does not seek information from others, is ineffective in coordinating and managing issues, is unwilling to change his mind, and listens to others. “The neurotic, borderline personality disorder leader” acts in a manner that keeps him separated from the groups in the organization and demonstrates harassment. “The evil leader” only thinks about irritating the employees, ways to torture them mentally, portraying unethical behavior, and being ignorant toward others (Berne, 2020).

Role of ethics education

There is an increased demand for introducing business ethics courses as part of the MBA curriculum. The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) probably has been one of the first professional bodies to set the trend and urge universities under them to incorporate ethics into their curriculum (Swanson, 2004). Abend (2013) points to the increased reporting of ethical violations in business and the starting of journals and associations to discuss business ethics during the late 1970s, which continued till the early 1990s. The past decade has seen a phenomenal increase in business ethics publications. Mahanta and Goswami (2020) point out that ethics education improves employees’ emotional intelligence. Tormo-Carbó et al. (2018) argue that even after facing numerous financial crises resulting from unscrupulous individuals and organizations, the business ethics course largely remains a stand-alone subject in most universities. Even Gündoğdu et al. (2018) argue similarly and lament that the business studies curriculum has not integrated business ethics education. Ishak and Hussain (2013) explore the role of business ethics education as an enabler in developing moral awareness among future business leaders. Fernando and Muralidheeran

(2019) argue that in India, Xavier Labour Relations Institute (XLRI) started business ethics for the first time as a separate course.

Role of ethics curriculum in creating an ethical work culture

Members of an organization learn its cultural practices that developed over a long period and then are handed down to the next generations. Similarly, workplace ethics too must be understood and transferred. Guha (2016) and Albaum (2014) argue that ethics education should lead to sustainable living and improved voluntarism. Crucial to this process is an understanding of universal values. Hence, business schools should prioritize business ethics education (Varma, 2019). When this university started teaching business ethics, it was in the background of this increasing reporting of corporate fraud. Corporate fraud and corruption had already become the topic of national debate. Students in this paper explored the issue of employee silence and employee voice that lead to increased corruption in business organizations.

Building hypothesis

Employee silence

Employee silence affects the efficiency of an organization (Cullinane and Donaghey 2020). Usually, silence begins at a personal level (Brinsfield et al., 2009) and can occur at the organizational level in all verticals. When people avoid conversations within, it becomes contagious. They defined silence as the paucity of being vocal and involving an array of discernment, inner feelings, and proneness, such as dissent or acceptance. Silence is of two types: (1) optional silence and (2) forced or respectful silence. The former represents voluntary waiver, while the latter stands for obedience (Chehraghi et al., 2015).

We have seen that an employee's motive can lead to silence. There are three types of silence. Pinder and Harlos (2001) proposed acquiescent silence. Dyne et al. (2003) have identified defensive silence and insular behavior. This fear can be of quitting or termination, fear-based safeguarding traits. Hence, silence is used as a defensive mechanism. In their paper, John and Manikandan (2019) give a positive angle and call silence prosocial, based on altruism and cooperation.

Acquiescent silence: Acquiescent silence indicates pull-back behavior resulting in disengagement, stagnation, disinterest, ignorance, negligence, and a let-go attitude. In an organization, people have a mindset that they are incapable of making any difference and should surrender to situations. As a result, they fail to express their views, thoughts, ideology, or suggestions (Chehraghi et al., 2015; Cullinane and Donaghey, 2020). Employees with acquiescent silence behavior refrain from providing knowledge and information and show deliberate action and a passive demeanor.

Defensive silence: Defensive silence behavior has emotions full of fear, worry, and fright, especially in an individual who provides information. Individuals hesitate to give suggestions, opinions, thoughts, or comments to safeguard themselves from

problems (Avey et al., 2012). This behavior is to protect themselves from internal and external threats. This behavior is intentional and non-passive (Chehraghi et al., 2015; Cullinane and Donaghey, 2020).

Prosocial silence (social): In an organization, suppressing the voice to benefit the positive employee relationship between each other and within the team gives rise to prosocial silence. The primary motive of the subordinates is to protect positive relations, team spirit, collaboration, and cooperation (Milliken et al., 2003). Their act is non-passive and intentional. Like defensive silence, in prosocial silence, one hesitates to express views, improvements, changes, information, suggestions, and opinions while simultaneously being aware of the decisions.

The personality of the leader, the follower, or the culture and values of the organization may also influence silence (Schilling and Kluge, 2009). In an organization where subordinates hang back to share their opinion, information, or ideas only because of their leader, their behavior has created an environment of non-cooperation (Morrison, 2014; Cullinane and Donaghey, 2020).

Employee voice

Previous research has studied and analyzed the behaviors associated with the voice. Employee voice is an expression of speech or a response to situations. According to Van Dyne and LePine (1998), employee voice is defined as “encouragement of the actions and responses that accentuates productive way of displaying challenges to improvise the systems.” The phenomenon of “voice” signifies the set of actions to refine and enhance equitable acumen and encourage the engagement of employees in the decision-making process (Zehir et al., 2012; Zehir and Erdogan, 2011). In their work, Wilkinson et al. (2018) have stressed that being vocal reflects an employee’s attitude linked with speaking; for example, when workers actively communicate their ideas for improvement.

Additionally, voice has various manifestations: behavior of conversing, communicating, genuine acknowledgment, or being expressive. Memon and Ghani (2020) explore the angle of psychological contract behind employee voice. Dyne et al. (2003) have proposed a model which has categorized employee voice into three types which are as follows.

Acquiescent voice: Studies have shown that they opt for the acquiescent voice depending on an employee’s motive. An individual who feels surrendering decides whether or not to express his views, ideology, information, suggestions, and thoughts. Submissive noise is non-cooperative conduct depending on a person’s emotions. Gradually, employees have to agree to statements and submit to conditions concerning inducement (Howard and Holmes (2019). Acquiescent voice is less passive and is per information, thinking, and suggestions related to work in an organization (Dyne et al., 2003).

Defensive voice: Morrison and Milliken (2000) have termed defensive voice as an act of self-protection. Individuals with this behavior indulge in strategy-making, which does not involve risk. Individuals show defensive voice behavior when people are afraid of the repercussion or are penalized for discussing the issues of the organization to safeguard themselves. Some behaviors include shifting attention,

criticizing others, apologizing, justifying, condemning, and using tactics of denying to protect oneself, in which voices act as a reflex to threat and terror (Howard and Holmes, 2019).

Prosocial voice: Researchers on a wide scale consider prosocial voice as a personal trait intending to social benefit. Van Dyne and LePine (1998) and Howard and Holmes (2019) describe the social voice as a person's voluntary commitment to an organization. This voice focuses on a collaborative motive rather than criticizing the scenario. It is a transformation of ideas, views, opinions, and suggestions emphasizing success and improvement. It leads to the creation of a positive environment for others, a non-passive behavior that is deliberate and focuses on benefiting other individuals.

Constructive opinions view ideas, suggestions, and changes related to work for organizational leaders as essential stepping stones (Liu et al., 2017). Researchers Fast et al. (2014) describe leaders as supervisors and should concede how important it is to have knowledge sharing among their employees. Many academic articles have explored the antecedents to upward voice behavior: (a) employee-centered antecedents such as morale and appreciating the work you do (Van Dyne and LePine, 1998), (b) mental health safety (Detert et al., 2007), and (c) feeling responsible for intending to change that is beneficial (Liang et al., 2012). They also discuss situational antecedents such as team strength, self-reliant workgroups, and satisfaction within the group.

Supervisors who are open to changes, understanding, and practice being ethical leaders always motivate their subordinates and support them in expressing their views (Detert and Treviño, 2010; Liu et al., 2017). An employee would always analyze the pros and cons of speaking up, considering the internal and external factors. Such actions play a vital role in deciding to execute voice behavior or practice silence (Morrison & Milliken, 2003). Past study has demonstrated that power lies in the hands of the manager to recompense or exploit voice behavior (Detert et al., 2007); managers play a crucial role in creating an environment where employees feel secure and worthy to speak up.

Organization culture

Organizational culture is a shared way of understanding the organization. It allows people to see and understand organizational situations and events uniformly (Davies et al., 2000). It encompasses physical and non-physical aspects of an organization that helps members behave in a particular manner. Culture is passed on to successive generations (Al-Madadha et al., 2021; Westrum, 2004; Olasupo, 2011). Culture can be positive and negative, but it impacts the relationships within an organization. This research paper looks at organizational culture, as Westrum (2004) explained, as pathological or power-oriented, bureaucratic or rule-oriented, and generative or performance-oriented.

Pathological organizational culture is a power-oriented culture. Here, the leader uses information as a weapon against subordinates to punish or sabotage them.

These organizations discourage cooperation, and people are apprehensive about taking up responsibilities. On the occurrence of an incident, it only leads to (Garcia et al., 2017). Jack Welch of GE introduced GE workout to avoid this culture of shirking responsibility out of fear of consequences (Slater and Prichard, 2004). Fear of the leader rules in this organization.

A bureaucratic organization is a rule-oriented organization. Rules by the book are all that matter. Cooperation is on a moderate scale, and responsibilities are accepted. Such organizations do not welcome changes willingly (Titchkosky, 2020). Leaders use rewards and punishment to get subordinates' compliance. Leaders are not averse to using spies to find offenders and may also use the divide and rule policy to get perfect obedience (Grice, 2019).

A generative organization is a performance-oriented organization focusing on the mission and outcome. There is regular communication of information. On the occurrence of an incident, they probe for investigation and treat it as a learning opportunity (Garcia et al., 2017). A leader in this kind of organization takes up the role of catalyst or facilitator rather than someone who exercises power and influence.

In the first two types of organizations, employees are averse to taking initiatives. As a result, no innovation happens, and organizations tend to decline (Slater and Prichard, 2004). In these organizations, employees tend to remain silent even when they know things are not good. Voicing concerns is viewed as an act of dissent and often faces punishment and harassment (Park and Peterson, 2006; Spreitzer and Sonenshein, 2004). Conversely, a generative culture promotes employee voice and creates ways and means to allow employee voice (Knoll and van Dick, 2013).

Based on the literature review, the following hypotheses have arrived.

- H1:** Destructive leadership has a negative impact on organizational culture
- H2:** Employee voice has a negative effect on destructive leadership
- H3:** Employee silence has a significant negative impact on destructive leadership

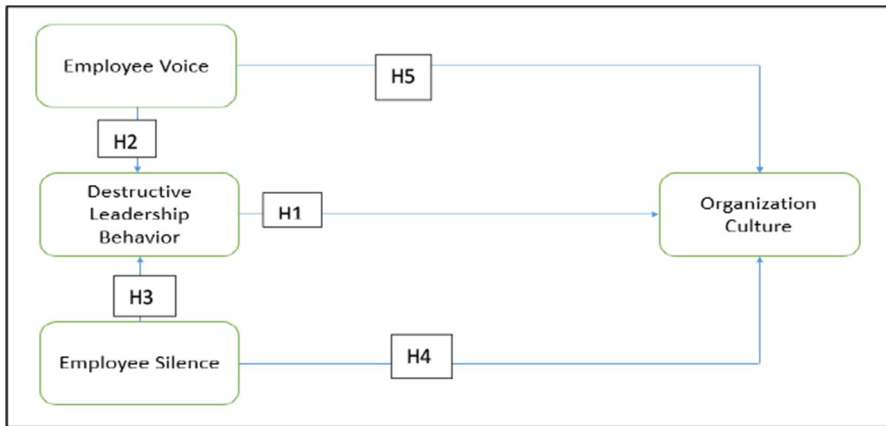


Fig. 1 Conceptual model

H4: Destructive leadership is a mediator between employee silence and organizational culture

H5: Destructive leadership is a mediator between employee voice and organizational culture (Fig. 1)

Research methodology

The researchers adopted an applied research approach using a descriptive method. The data was collected using a five-point Likert scale questionnaire. The data was collected using a survey among mid-scale IT companies based in Pune, India, with an employee strength of 250–300. Organizations with small employee sizes are ideal for understanding the leadership impact as most of these are individual-centered, and leaders make all the decisions here. Pune is one of the top three IT hubs in India, with over 700 small sizes IT companies operating out of Pune and employing around 140,000 employees. Hence, a sample size of 200 is identified. The researchers collected the data through emails and LinkedIn contacts. The respondents also have at least two years of work experience in an IT firm. This questionnaire included four sections: seven questions for employee silence (Ang et al., 2003), six questions for employee voice (Ang et al., 2003), eight questions for destructive leadership (Shaw et al., 2011), and seven questions for organizational culture (Vakola and Bouradas, 2005). Since we are dealing with a large population, we collected at least seven responses per question to ensure a good analysis. The researchers collected 189 samples (Onwuegbuzie and Collins, 2007) during the summer of 2020. The research was conducted during the Covid-19-induced lockdown and depended on an online survey to collect the data. For data analysis, researchers used structural equation modeling using SPSS AMOS.

Data analysis and findings

Table 1 shows Cronbach's alpha value for questions sectioned by constructs. Chronbach's alpha tells you whether the respondents understand the questions. For employee silence, the alpha value is 0.752; for employee voice, the alpha is 0.697, slightly below the standard value. For destructive leadership and organizational culture, the alpha value is 0.7.

Table 2 shows the convergent validity. It tests whether the respondents understood the questions correctly. The statistical value of AVE for the factors is

Table 1 Cronbach's alpha value for individual constructs

Construct	No. of questions	Cronbach's alpha
Employee silence	7	0.752
Employee voice	6	0.697
Destructive leadership	8	0.824
Organizational culture	7	0.816

Table 2 Convergent validity

Latent Variable	AVE (average variance extraction)
Employee silence	0.5427
Employee voice	0.4822
Destructive leadership	0.5771
Organizational culture	0.5170

approximately equal to or greater than the threshold cutoff value of 0.5 (Brunner and Süß, 2005). The AVE score for constructing employee voice is 0.4922, which is lesser than the threshold value of 0.5. According to Valentini and Damásio (2016), discriminant validity and composite reliability should be evaluated in a case where AVE is lower than 0.5. Varma

Discriminant validity further shows whether the measurements that are theoretically not related are unrelated and need to analyze the square root of AVE (average variance extracted). This value must be more than the correlation of the latent variables. For this study model, the value in Table 3 for all the constructs is acceptably higher than the latent variable correlation.

In this study, we have also used composite reliability to measure the internal consistency in scale items (Brunner and Süß, 2005). Composite reliability indicates the shared variance among the observed variables of a latent construct. It is also called internal consistency reliability.

$$\text{the Composite Reliability} = \frac{(\sum \text{Standardized Loading})^2}{(\sum \text{Standardized Loading})^2 + \sum \text{Measurement Error}}$$

Composite reliability for the measurement model should be greater than 0.6; the measurement model silence, destructive leadership, and organizational culture have the required internal consistency between the indicator variables. For the measurement model voice, the composite reliability is slightly lesser than 0.6. Table 4 shows the composite reliability values for the four constructs.

The data is analyzed using the structural equation model (SEM) by AMOS Software. This model helps to find the impact of the observed and (hidden) latent variables. Hence, this model is also called casual modeling, where we find the estimates that show the effect of one component on the other. Figure 2 shows the

Table 3 Discriminant validity

Latent variable	Employee silence	Employee voice	Destructive leadership	Organizational culture
Employee silence	0.736682			
Employee voice	-	0.694406		
Destructive leadership	0.669	0.159	0.759671	
Organization culture	-0.354	-0.319	-0.641	0.719027

Table 4 Composite reliability

Construct	The number of questions	Consistency reliability value
Employee silence	7	0.7676
Employee voice	6	0.5706
Destructive leadership	8	0.8442
Organizational culture	7	0.7015

SEM path diagram. The path analysis is significant if the degree of freedom and the chi-square value are relative.

The hypothesis is tested by postulating the relationship pattern to find if there is a relationship between observed variables and their underlying latent constructs using CFA. If the p -value is less than 0.05, then the path is significant with a confidence level of 95%; else, the significance path is not accepted. Table 5 shows the weighted regression with unstandardized estimates, standardized estimates, standard error, critical ratio, and significance of path coefficients (p -value).

Table 6 shows the correlation between the constructs. Ideally, the correlation value should lie between -1 and 1 . Correlation indicates that the value nearest to -1 has a negative correlation, and the value nearest to 1 has a positive correlation.

The goodness of fit describes the consistency and compatibility of the model with the data (Kalantari, 2009, p. 127). Usually, success is measured using the Chi-square index. The desirability for the fitness of the model is present when the probability value of the model is less than 0.05, the value for RMSEA is lower than 0.08, and the value for CFI, TLI, or NFI, IFI, and NFI is higher than 0.9 (Bentler and Bonett, 1980). Table 7 shows various measures for the goodness of fit, which signifies that the model is appropriate.

Mediation analysis calculates the direct effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable, the indirect effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable through a mediating variable, and the total effect. The result is significant if the P -value is less than 0.05 at a 95% confidence interval. Figure 3 shows the mediation analysis diagram.

According to hypotheses H4 and H5, destructive leadership is the mediating variable. The researchers tested the mediation between employee silence, destructive leadership, and organizational culture. The direct effect of silence on organizational culture is -0.04 with a significance of 0.684; since the p -value is more than 0.05, the direct effect is insignificant. The indirect effect of silence on organizational culture through destructive leadership is -0.399 with a significant p -value. The total effect is -0.439 with a significant p -value. Mediation analysis between voice, destructive leadership, and organizational culture shows a direct effect of 0.083 with 0.54 significance. The data shows that the immediate effect is not significant. The indirect effect is 0.306 with a value of 0.023, and the total effect is 0.389 with 0.011 significance. The research proves that destructive leadership behavior is a mediating variable.

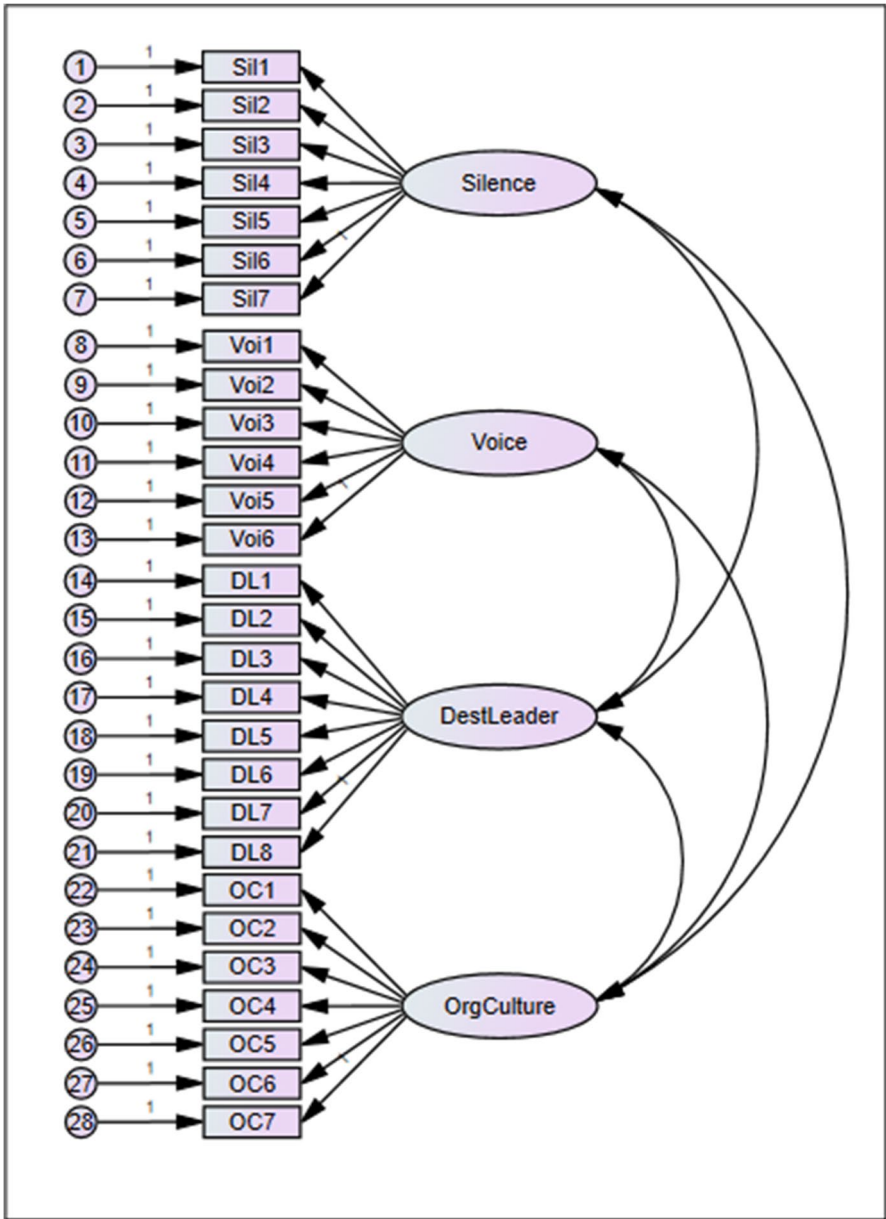


Fig. 2 SEM path diagram

Discussion and implication

Most authors observe that toxic/destructive leaders are detrimental to individual and organizational growth. The current study focused on the impact of destructive

Table 5 Confirmatory factor analysis

Variable	Standardized estimates	Unstandardized estimates	Standard error	Critical ratio	Significance co-efficient (p-value)	Result
Sil1←Silence	.608	.858	.158	5.421	***	Significant
Sil2←Silence	.660	1.025	.179	5.720	***	Significant
Sil3←Silence	.720	1.120	.186	6.020	***	Significant
Sil4←Silence	.456	.567	.130	4.366	***	Significant
Sil5←Silence	.466	.647	.146	4.442	***	Significant
Sil6←Silence	.450	.593	.137	4.322	***	Significant
Sil7←Silence	.584	1.000				
Voi1←Voice	-.147	-.248	.195	-1.272	.203	Not Significant
Voi2←Voice	-.473	-1.070	.367	-2.918	.004	Significant
Voi3←Voice	-.472	-1.066	.366	-2.915	.004	Significant
Voi4←Voice	-.557	-1.089	.357	-3.053	.002	Significant
Voi5←Voice	.284	.658	.302	2.181	.029	Significant
Voi6←Voice	.427	1.000				
DL1←DestLeader	.678	1.022	.121	8.474	***	Significant
DL2←DestLeader	.689	.980	.113	8.641	***	Significant
DL3←DestLeader	.737	1.019	.108	9.413	***	Significant
DL4←DestLeader	.702	1.140	.129	8.845	***	Significant
DL5←DestLeader	.787	1.111	.108	10.246	***	Significant
DL6←DestLeader	.810	1.000				
DL7←DestLeader	.683	.827	.097	8.549	***	Significant
DL8←DestLeader	-.324	-.387	.104	-3.721	***	Significant
OC1←OrgCulture	.482	.827	.169	4.903	***	Significant
OC2←OrgCulture	.604	1.191	.200	5.948	***	Significant
OC3←OrgCulture	.675	1.139	.175	6.500	***	Significant
OC4←OrgCulture	.621	1.111	.183	6.083	***	Significant
OC5←OrgCulture	.652	1.000				
OC6←OrgCulture	-.504	-1.103	.216	-5.099	***	Significant
OC7←OrgCulture	.689	1.283	.194	6.600	***	Significant

Table 6 Correlation

			Estimate
Silence	<-->	DestLeader	.669
DestLeader	<-->	OrgCulture	-.641
Silence	<-->	OrgCulture	-.354
Voice	<-->	DestLeader	.159
Voice	<-->	OrgCulture	-.319

leadership and the organizational culture on employee silence and voice in the organization. Table 8 shows the results of hypothesis testing.

Researchers Memon and Ghani (2020) argued in their paper that organizations that promote the voice behavior of employees tend to grow as per industry

Table 7 Measures of goodness of fit

Measures of goodness of fit	Acceptable value	Index value
Probability value	<0.05	0.000
RMSE (root mean square error of estimation)	<0.08	0.077
CFI (induced fit)	>0.9	0.92
TLI (Tucker-Lewis index)	>0.9	0.90
IFI (incremental fit index)	>0.9	0.92
NFI (normed fit index)	>0.9	0.93

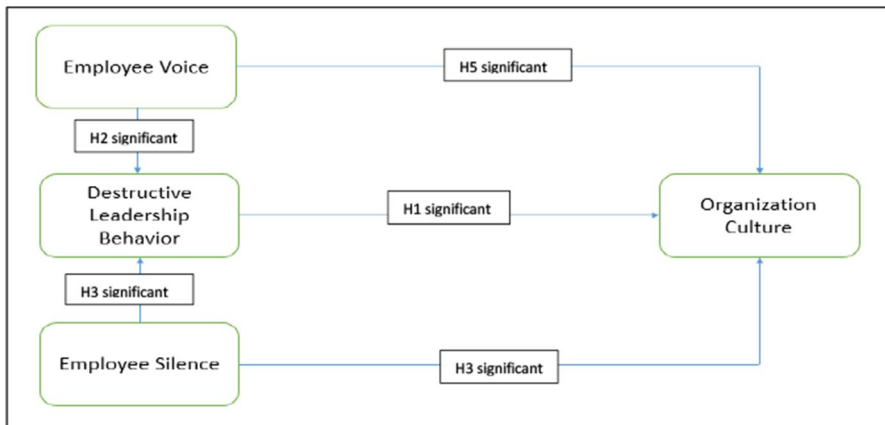


Fig. 3 Mediation analysis diagram

Table 8 Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Structural path	Standardized estimates	Unstandardized estimates	S.E.	C.R.	p-value	Result
H1	DestLeader → Org-Culture	-0.64	-0.25	0.53	-4.742	***	Significant
H2	Voice → DestLeader	-0.32	-0.06	0.030	-2.172	0.030	Significant
H3	Silence → DestLeader	0.67	0.41	0.091	4.533	***	Significant
H4	Silence → DestLeader → OrgCulture						Significant
H5	Voice → DestLeader → OrgCulture						Significant

standards. For knowledge organizations, the need for employee voice is greater. Knowledge workers need to show positive voice behavior to grow and sustain themselves. Varma (2019) argued that business ethics teaching in business schools helps employees become aware of the toxic organizational culture and use voices to

improve the culture. Enderle and Niu (2013) studied the role of voice and silence in Chinese organizations. They found that a positive culture that encourages open communication enhances human capabilities, fosters creative intercultural diversity, promotes sustainable growth encourages employee voice, and is thriving. This research focused on whether employees perceive the organization as encouraging voice or silence. What is the role of a destructive leader in creating a destructive culture that stifles voice and promotes silence? In India, where there is a high sense of social hierarchy and a very volatile and poor economy, employees do not generally voice their concerns out of fear of losing their job. Hence, silence on issues relating to ethical practices is the norm (Roberts and David, 2017).

Hypothesis H1 states that destructive leadership negatively impacts organizational culture. The p -value for this hypothesis is significant. The study has illustrated that leader shows their traits based on the type of destructive leadership (Shaw et al., 2011). It is their behavior that reflects their personality, being destructive or not. Such an organization impacts the employee's well-being, working culture, employee growth, and team interest. According to the Westrum (2004) model, an organization practicing pathological culture is a power-oriented culture. In such organizations, a destructive leader tends to impact culture. There is a non-cooperative environment on the occurrence of incident responsibilities that are not shared but rather blamed on subordinates. A destructive leader portrays a selfish motive, thus impacting organizational culture. The general perception is that most IT companies in India follow an egalitarian work culture modeled after western companies. However, this research tells us that, in reality, employees feel that destructive leaders contribute to creating a culture that stifles employee voice. It is encouraged to have a favorable psychological contract between employees and the organization to help employees voice for a more productive organization (Memon and Ghani, 2020).

Hypothesis H2 states that employee voice has a positive impact on destructive leadership. The hypothesis is significant as the p -value is <0.05 . The findings show that when an employee is vocal about their views, thoughts, opinions, and suggestion, there is an impact on the leader who is destructive behavior. Though employees have a motive behind their voice, either acquiescent, defensive, or prosocial (Ang et al., 2003), it helps reduce the effects of destructive leadership in the organization. An organization where employees voice out tends to have an open culture where every incident is new learning; responsibilities are shared, creating collaborative strategies. Employees feel valued and worthy and showcase higher performance and efficiency, resulting in a higher organizational outcome. Başar et al. (2018) studied the employee of an Istanbul bank and found that when ethics take priority, destructive leadership tends to get suppressed. In such a scenario, employee voices become part of the organizational culture.

Hypothesis H3 states that employee silence has a negative impact on destructive leadership. The p -value for this hypothesis is significant. Empirical findings revealed that an organization has a pathological culture (Westrum, 2004), where power is a prime driver. Fear, self-protection, or social motive against destructive leadership makes subordinates suppress their views, problems, and shareable knowledge. Employees tend to remain silent, and there is an increase in destructive leadership. Such organizations do not have a cooperative collaboration

environment, failing which destructive leaders are in power and destroy an employee's well-being. The present findings go along with the previous studies as it illustrates that employee silence significantly negatively impacts destructive leadership (Goldman, 2006; Schilling & Kluge, 2009; Tepper, 2007; Xu et al., 2015). Indiparambil (2019) studied the negative impact of on-the-job surveillance of employees. Tan et al. (2021) look at social reliability in organizations. Silence often forces employees to shut up rather than voice their concerns. It is probably one reason India is still struggling to enact a whistle-blower policy. Employee silence can embolden the leaders to become more destructive in due course.

Hypothesis H4 states that destructive leadership is a mediator between employee silence and organizational culture. Mediation analysis has proven that the impact of employee silence on organizational culture is not significant, but with destructive leadership as a mediator, the impact is significant. Studies have shown that when employee engagement and interest are low, the organizational environment is affected and hurts organizational performance. This research corroborates Saqib and Arif (2017), who studied employee silence as the mediating factor between leadership and culture, and Aboramadan et al. (2020), who studied narcissistic leadership as someone that contributes to a silent culture in organizations.

Hypothesis H5 states that destructive leadership is a mediator between employee voice and organizational culture. Mediation analysis has proven that the impact of employee voice on organizational culture is not significant, but with destructive leadership as a mediator, the impact is significant. When employees voice their views, thoughts, and concerns against destructive leadership, it improves organizational outcomes, goals, and performance.

Employees usually hesitate to voice their concerns regarding their organization. When deciding not to share information, leaders are leading to the deterioration of the decision-making and problem-solving process (Fleming and Rutherford, 1986; Morrison and Milliken, 2000). The result of the current work corroborates with earlier works (Tepper, 2007). The study also investigated the relationship between feedback avoidance and deviant behavior. In all these, silence is the means the employee uses toward their abusive supervisor (Thau et al., 2009; Xu et al., 2015).

Hobfoll's conservation of resources theory has explained that when a supervisor regularly demonstrates behavior such as apathy, ignorance, abuse, and toxicity, the employee's stress and burnout create a perception of lack of consideration and participation. The leaders showcase a threat of depleting the resources as they remain silent to safeguard their position. Alongside, subordinates are silent and conserve to share their views if the leaders show disinterest and rage against them. They end up adjusting to the culture rather than trying to bring change.

The leader having destructive behavior takes advantage of this situation for his benefit without considering the impact on the organization. An organization that has generative culture shows openness toward all the employees (Westrum, 2004). They are open to changes and accept the views of not only the leader but also the subordinates. In such an environment, the employee would freely provide suggestions and ideas for improvement. If an incident occurs, the team shares the responsibility and takes the situation as a learning opportunity. In a generative organization, the

employee voice on destructive leadership positively impacts the organization's culture as it helps the organization meet its vision and employee satisfaction.

Implications

Every organization should step toward having an open cultural environment. Open culture enhances collaborative work in strategic decision-making, operations, and outcomes. It leads to experimentation and continuous learning rather than blaming. Organizations should have provisions to identify the destructive behavior of individuals and timely monitor them. Human resource management should have policies addressing destructive leadership behavior and necessary actions against the same.

In line with the results of the sample collected from mid-scale organizations in Maharashtra, researchers conclude that in an organization, employee voice and silence depend on the motive and behavior of the leader. At the same time, it depends on the type of culture the organization possesses. A leader might be ethical or destructive, but if a subordinate's voice is heard, then a destructive leader's percentage might reduce. Employee voice brings a positive effect on organizations that have destructive leadership. Often organizations reflect the general society. Currently, we see a general trend to suppress people's voices, and this is also true in organizations. Silence is slowly becoming a culture in our society, and this can be dangerous as this will give rise to destructive leadership. Organizations must deliberately create a culture of voice rather than silence.

Conclusion

The research studied the impact of employee voice and silence on destructive leadership and the relationship between organizational culture. The study's results revealed that employee silence and voice impact destructive leadership and how destructive leadership plays an important role in mediating between organizational culture and employee voice – silence. Therefore, it is the organization's responsibility to take needful steps in curbing destructive leadership. Encouraging employee voices will help employees to speak up and bring forth innovative ideas without fear.

This study is cross-sectional, and the people who responded to the survey were subordinates. Secondly, the data was collected from mid-scale IT industries in Maharashtra, which limits the generalizability of the paper's findings to other cultures and contexts. The study results advocate the addition of many possible variables that may moderate or mediate between destructive leadership, voice, silence, and organizational culture. The researchers may replicate this study in other provinces, regions, and areas for higher validity.

Also, the cross-sectional design has its disadvantages. Establishing the causality between the destructive personality and the silence or voice relationship is difficult. Hence, there is a need for future researchers to find a relationship by using behavioral experiments or panel studies. In future scope, researchers could consider a leader's perspective, for example, a leader's trust in subordinates as an important catalyst

in the destructive personality – silence, voice relationship. Furthermore, they can compute the emotional quotient of employees and leaders based on the organizational culture they belong to. Therefore, in the next phase, researchers may study possible catalysts, such as power distance (Lin et al., 2018) and perceived organizational support.

The paper also recommends that business schools across should have business ethics integrated into their curriculum, and faculty members should encourage to discuss ethical issues. This research will empower employees to voice their concerns more accurately and often.

Appendix. Questionnaire

Silence

1. You fear speaking up to your leader about a change that happened
2. You withhold relevant information concerning work to keep yourself safe
3. You keep your problems or issues hidden because you will be judged
4. You keep silent for the betterment of the team/department
5. You passively keep ideas about solutions to a problem to yourself
6. You would withhold your ideas and thoughts to bring change in organizational culture because you have resigned
7. You remain quite against your leader's behavior because your job is at stake

Voice

8. You express solutions to problems with a cooperative motive in benefiting the organization
9. You see your leader is being on unethical grounds, you speak up against him/her without fearing the consequences
10. You raise concern against the management to support a co-worker
11. You speak up if your thoughts do not align with the Organization's culture
12. You express your ideas by agreeing with your leader to shift the attention from yourself
13. Only because your group agrees over a solution do you back it due to low self-efficacy on that Content.

Destructive leadership

14. Your leader makes a decision based on Inadequate information and blames the team
15. Your leader is not open to changes or new suggestions
16. Your leader's decisions keep changing without intimation and are always unclear
17. Your leader Micro- Manages and wants everything under his control
18. Your leader showcases favoritism and exhibits inconsistency

19. Your leader acts in an insular manner relative to other people in your organization
20. Your leader bully's you and encourages other unethical behavior
21. Your leader gives recognition for the work you do to keep you motivated

Organization Culture

22. Organizational culture contributes to your development
23. You feel comfortable sharing your opinions at all-hands meeting
24. Your leader shows interest in your well being
25. On the occurrence of an incident, responsibilities are shared
26. The organizational culture encourages collaborative work
27. In your organization, failure leads to blaming
28. Novelty and Openness are welcomed in your organization's culture

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