

ETHICAL LEADERSHIP, ETHICAL CULTURE, VOICE BEHAVIOUR, AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT: Employees are required to maintain positive interactions with one another in the workplace. This study advances the conversation of ethical leadership and ethical culture on employee performance, with voice behavior as a mediator. This study distributed 350 questionnaires to construction company employees in Bantul, Indonesia, and obtained a 153-response rate (43.71%). Structural equation modeling with Amos software is used to analyze the coded information. This study found a substantial link between ethical leadership, ethical culture, and voice behavior in increasing employee performance. Furthermore, voice behavior was discovered to mediate in both relationships. The finding implies a critical need to maintain positive conversations inside firms as they are part of job satisfaction indicators.

Keywords: Ethical Leadership, Ethical Culture, Voice Behavior; Employee Performance

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INTRODUCTION

All individuals within an organization must have harmonious connections with each other. They collaborate to enhance the progress of their workplace organization. The quality of employee performance is contingent upon their dedication and effectiveness in serving the firm (Jalali et al., 2023). Employee performance quantifies an employee's ability to effectively accomplish their objectives in the workplace and contribute to the attainment of broader corporate goals. This notion encompasses multiple assessment components, including originality, productivity, work quality, initiative, and proficiency in adapting and collaborating within teams.

The evaluation of employee performance also encompasses the assessment of adherence to standards of conduct, work principles, and organizational norms (Atatsi et al., 2019). Furthermore, employee performance can be assessed from a personal growth standpoint. In such instances, the evaluation encompasses enhancing skills, capabilities, and prospects for assuming greater responsibilities (Renne et al., 2020).

An employee's performance is influenced by various factors, including their work outcomes, approach to work, work ethic, and adaptability to changes in the work environment (Zhenjing et al., 2022). How individuals carry out their work, including productivity, adaptability, and uniqueness in their work approach, significantly impacts performance results (Naritasari et al., 2023). Furthermore, a crucial element of performance rating is employees' demeanor while carrying out their duties. Success is influenced by factors such as a positive attitude, enthusiasm, unwavering commitment to the goal, and active engagement in the work.

Ethical leadership is among the several aspects that might impact a team member's success (Dey et al., 2022). Ethical leadership fosters a culture where employees are motivated to make just and truthful choices, places a high value on integrity and openness in all work-related matters, and establishes a secure and motivating work atmosphere (Ejaz et al., 2022). Employees experience a sense of respect and empowerment, enabling them to express their opinions freely, offer constructive criticism, and contribute creative and groundbreaking ideas. Ethical leaders are inclined to provide positive feedback and assist employees in personal development. In essence, this enhances employee motivation, fosters their allegiance to the organization, and promotes active work involvement. Tame's (2021) research is part of earlier investigations that have yielded comparable results.

Another determinant that can impact employee performance is the ethical culture. When the ethical culture is robust, employees experience a sense of endorsement to adhere to moral ideals and prioritize integrity in all facets of their jobs (Sauser & Sims, 2007). Furthermore, ethical culture offers explicit directives for employees to navigate challenges and transformations. Employees believe that a moral framework guides their actions and assists them in making ethically sound judgments. Furthermore, this ethical culture fosters a work atmosphere that prioritizes open communication, enabling employees to express constructive

ideas and comments effectively. This assertion is corroborated by prior studies by Saban et al., (2020).

Their voice behavior can also influence employee performance in expressing the hopes and requirements of their organization. Employees' proactive engagement in providing valuable opinions, suggestions, and information to achieve company objectives, regardless of its direct relevance to their primary responsibilities, is referred to as positive voice behavior (Jha, 2022; Ng & Feldman, 2012). Typically, employees exhibit higher levels of commitment and engagement in the work environment when they feel at ease and appreciated, which enables them to express their opinions. Voice behavior can enhance innovation, team collaboration, and shared learning. Furthermore, employees will experience a heightened sense of responsibility in attaining organizational objectives, leading to improved motivation and engagement (Ge, 2020). Moreover, exchanging ideas and information can facilitate firms in making informed decisions and identifying areas for improvement. The research conducted by Su et al., (2017) is consistent with past studies that have reported similar findings.

Previous studies have identified a study vacuum regarding the correlation between ethical leadership and team member performance. Research conducted by Erdal & Altındağ (2020) indicates that leader ethics have no impact on staff performance, regardless of whether it is at a high or low level. A leader's adherence to ethical principles may have detrimental consequences if a superficial or insincere display lacks genuine support. A leader might engender skepticism or erode trust among personnel if they openly articulate moral beliefs but fail to exemplify them via their behavior. This can result in cynicism or disappointment among the team members, adversely impacting employee performance and motivation. Furthermore, when there is a discrepancy between a leader's moral dedication and immoral economic requisites, employees may face coercion to compromise their ethical values to attain financial objectives or profits. Such conflicts have the potential to generate internal discord and undermine employee morale, thereby impairing their performance.

This research aims to ascertain the role of voice behavior in mediating the relationship between ethical leadership (Dey et al., 2022), ethical culture (Sausser & Sims, 2007), and employee performance. Furthermore, this research will comprehensively analyze the factors that influence employee performance in construction services companies, with voice behavior as a mediating variable (Jha, 2022). Therefore, the research questions are: Can ethical leadership and culture improve employee performance? Second: Can voice behavior mediate the influence of moral leadership and ethical culture on team member performance? The findings of this empirical study will expand the range of contributions that can be used in further investigations, especially studies of voice behavior (along with its antecedent variables and consequences). This study adopts a quantitative approach utilizing Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to empirically examine the proposed relationships among ethical leadership, ethical culture, voice behavior, and employee performance. Data will be collected to test the hypothesized model. The findings are expected to extend the body of knowledge

by elucidating the mediating role of voice behavior in the relationship between ethical leadership, ethical culture, and employee performance.

THEORETICAL REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Ethical Leadership (E.L.) and Voice Behavior (V.B.)

Ethical leadership, commonly referred to as ethics leadership, is a leadership style that prioritizes integrity, morality, and ethical principles. An ethical leader not only endeavors to accomplish corporate objectives but also gives precedence to moral principles while making choices and engaging with their team and other stakeholders. Ethical leaders exemplify commendable conduct and demeanor, uphold human rights, foster integrity, and contemplate the societal ramifications of their company choices (Qing et al., 2020). The study employed the ethical leadership theory proposed by Brown et al., (2005), which posits that ethical leadership is contingent upon the specific work environment and desired results. Specifically, when employees frequently encounter ethical dilemmas in their work, the ethical dimensions of leadership are more likely to impact their attitudes and behavior.

Leaders should cultivate ethical leadership qualities to effectively guide and direct others toward attaining objectives, particularly aligning with relevant ethical principles. These fundamental ethical qualities aim to ensure that their leadership operates effectively and efficiently to accomplish shared goals that align with established standards and principles. If a leader possesses these characteristics, numerous employees will feel secure in expressing their viewpoints and ensuring the ongoing functionality of the firm. Jin et al., (2022) elucidated that boss conduct significantly depends on employee voice due to two primary factors. Initially, employees vocalize their concerns to enable their leaders to focus on organizational issues and allocate resources to address them. Furthermore, leaders possess authority over administering penalties or rewards, influencing how employees express their opinions. Consequently, the behavior of employees in terms of vocalizing their thoughts is contingent upon the conduct exhibited by their leaders.

Research indicates that ethical leadership has a direct impact on vocal behavior. The investigation conducted by Jin et al., (2022) is one example of such studies. When a leader instills a feeling of safety and assures employees that they will be guided with integrity, it enhances their motivation to express their opinions to both the leader and their colleagues. Yukl et al., (2013) propose a range of criteria for assessing ethical leadership, including honesty, integrity, fairness, altruism, alignment of actions with stated ideals, communication of moral principles, and provision of ethical guidance. Given the provided description and empirical findings, we put forward the initial hypothesis for this investigation, which is as follows.

H1. Ethical leadership (E.L.) positively impacts voice behavior (V.B.).

Ethical Culture (E.C.) and Voice Behavior (V.B.)

Ethical culture refers to the collection of principles, convictions, and criteria that shape the conduct of individuals and groups within organizations concerning ethics and moral conduct (Roy et al., 2023). The ethical culture of an organization is determined by the values and morals that guide everyday existence. Unethical behaviors might lead to complications within an organization. Hence, a corporate organization must possess the capacity to prioritize ethical considerations in all of its operations.

The social morality theory elucidates society's impact on an individual's behaviors, attitudes, and cognitive processes. Furthermore, the virtue personality theory emphasizes the individual or human aspect rather than the outcomes or actions that result from it. Furthermore, according to the theological perspective, the moral value of an action is contingent upon the aims it seeks to achieve. Deontological theory posits that the moral worth of an action is determined by its responsibility. The inherent characteristics of an activity or deed allow us to ascertain its goodness, correctness, rationality, and morality. According to Chai (2020), ethical culture relies on individual ethical behavior and establishing a work environment that consistently promotes and applies ethical norms. Organizations with a robust ethical culture can cultivate a workplace atmosphere where every team member constantly adheres to and implements moral principles and ethical standards. This culture promotes and fosters ethical, solid conduct among employees in every aspect of their work. Employees place integrity as their top priority in their actions, feel encouraged to make accurate and equitable decisions and engage in honest and transparent communication. This phenomenon can be identified as vocal conduct, wherein employees express their viewpoints and suggestions for the firm's long-term viability; in a robust ethical setting, employees are encouraged and endorsed for their perspectives. Hence, the more moral the ethos within the firm, the higher the employee engagement.

Previous studies have demonstrated that ethical culture can impact vocal behavior, establishing a relationship between these variables. The survey by Akhmadi et al., (2023) is an example of such research. If a company possesses a robust and commendable ethical culture, its employees will unquestionably adhere to it, particularly in their vocal conduct. In this study, we utilize various variables to evaluate ethical culture, including clarity, congruency of supervisors, and discussability (Key, 1999). Given the description and empirical results provided, we put up the second hypothesis for this study.

H2. Ethical culture (E.C.) positively impacts voice behavior (V.B.).

Ethical Leadership (E.L.) and Employee Performance (E.P.)

Ethical leadership entails the integration of morality, motivation, and resilience within one's character while possessing a discerning understanding of what is morally correct and maintaining a harmonious disposition (Tamer, 2021). An ethical leader not only endeavors to accomplish corporate objectives but also places moral ideals at the forefront while making choices and interacting with

their team and other stakeholders. Ethical executives demonstrate reverence for human rights, foster a culture of integrity, and carefully contemplate the societal ramifications of their commercial choices. Furthermore, their actions and conduct establish a commendable precedent (Qing et al., 2020). Moreover, they are willing to accept criticism, demonstrate impartiality towards all team members, and cultivate a friendly work atmosphere. Brown et al., (2005) propose a theory of ethical leadership in this study, asserting that ethical leadership is contingent upon the specific job context and anticipated outcomes. In other words, the frequency of ethical dilemmas in employees' jobs determines how ethical aspects of leadership will impact their attitudes and behaviors.

Practical, ethical leadership profoundly impacts the shaping and enhancement of employee performance. By adopting a leadership style rooted in integrity, ethical ideals, and morality, a leader establishes a work environment that influences employee conduct and contributions. Ethical leaders foster a culture where colleagues are motivated to uphold identical moral principles, leading to heightened employee motivation, accountability, and involvement. Ethical leadership fosters an all-encompassing and principled work environment, facilitating transparent and sincere communication, encouraging productive criticism, and empowering employees to take initiative and exhibit innovation. Consequently, this increases productivity, enhanced work quality, and improved teamwork (Metwally et al., 2019). Prior research on the correlation between these factors indicates that ethical leadership has the potential to influence team member performance. A study by Tamer (2021) found a positive correlation between team member performance and the degree of ethical leadership exhibited by their boss. Given the description and empirical results, we put up the third hypothesis for this study.

H3. Ethical leadership (E.L.) positively impacts team member performance (E.P.).

Ethical Culture (E.C.) and Employee Performance (E.P.)

The dynamic interplay of formal and informal ethical systems in shaping an ethical culture, an integral component of the corporate culture, is called ethical culture. The system can affect employees' ethical conduct (Resende et al., 2022). Establishing an ethical culture relies on individuals adhering to ethical conduct and fostering an environment that consistently advocates for and implements ethical ideals. Chai (2020) asserts that honesty, transparency, and responsibility are fundamental to a robust ethical culture. Organizations that place a high value on ethical culture will give utmost importance to principles such as honesty, justice, and the protection of human rights. Leaders and individuals at different levels will help maintain and enhance this culture by setting a positive example, engaging in honest communication, and making decisions based on ethical principles. According to social morality, an action is deemed good or evil, suitable or improper, or moral or immoral based on its alignment with society's values, norms, and laws.

Furthermore, the virtue personality theory posits that endeavors toward moral development should result in establishing an exemplary and superior character. Furthermore, following religious doctrine, an action is deemed ethical

if it yields favorable outcomes and, conversely, produces unfavorable outcomes. According to deontological theory, the goodness or badness of an action is determined by its duty.

An organization characterized by a robust ethical culture fosters a workplace where every team member consistently upholds and applies moral principles and ethical norms. This culture promotes ethical conduct among employees in all facets of their work. Employees are encouraged to communicate transparently and candidly, prioritize ethical behavior, and make accurate and impartial judgments. Furthermore, an ethical culture establishes explicit directives for employees when confronted with intricate or uncertain circumstances. They can resort to the ethical values ingrained in the organizational culture to guide their activities. Furthermore, an ethical culture promotes efficient collaboration and beneficial criticism. When employees know that the firm places moral principles as a top priority, they are more inclined to be motivated and perform at their highest level of competence (Ay & Kumkale, 2020).

Prior research on the correlation between these factors indicates that ethical culture has the potential to influence employee performance. A study by Saban et al. (2020) found a positive correlation between the quality of the moral culture inside a company and the subsequent improvement in team member performance. Given the description and empirical results provided, we put up the fourth hypothesis for this study.

H4. Ethical culture (E.C.) positively impacts team member performance (E.P.).

Voice Behavior (V.B.) and Employee Performance (E.P.)

One of the proactive measures employees perform is to actively address any aspects of their work environment that may need change. Voice actions exemplify active acts. Constructive criticism, suggestions for improvement, or guidance can enhance productivity, efficiency, or the quality of work. Within a corporate environment that fosters open communication, employees experience a sense of security and appreciation while expressing their viewpoints, even if their perspectives diverge from those of the leader or the general public. According to Afsar et al. (2019), voice behavior refers to expressing ideas, directives, opinions, and creative thinking that motivate individuals inside an organization to embrace and execute beneficial suggestions. This study utilizes Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behavior, which posits that attitudes toward behavior, subjective standards, and perceptions of behavioral control can accurately forecast the intention to partake in different forms of conduct.

A team member can contribute valuable insights, recommendations, and knowledge to enhance the company's performance, even if these contributions are only sometimes aligned with their core responsibilities. The term "voice behavior" encompasses the behaviors performed by employees. When employees have a sense of ease and appreciation that enables them to express their viewpoints, they typically exhibit higher commitment and involvement in the work environment. This can be achieved by enhancing shared learning, team collaboration, and innovation. Furthermore, employees will experience a

heightened sense of responsibility in contributing to company objectives, enhancing their motivation and involvement. Moreover, exchanging ideas and information can also aid firms in making informed decisions and identifying areas for improvement.

Prior research has revealed that vocal behavior can impact team member performance concerning these characteristics. One study by Su et al. (2017) highlights the significance of voice behavior in enhancing team member performance. The research suggests that when employees feel their voices are acknowledged, they become more driven to go above and beyond, mainly when dealing with challenges. This study uses a single indication, specifically speaking out, to evaluate speech behavior (Elsaied, 2019). Considering the above description and empirical findings, we put out the fifth hypothesis in this study, which follows.

H5. Voice behavior (V.B.) positively impacts team member performance (E.P.).

Voice Behavior (V.B.)

Voice behavior refers to an team member expressing their thoughts, ideas, and opinions about their leader or interests, formally or informally. This can occur due to the team member's responsibilities or personal motivations (Aryanto et al., 2021). Employees who possess innovative ideas can contribute to company innovation, while a varied range of viewpoints from employees can aid executives in making more astute decisions. Vocal behavior benefits firms as it can effectively deter unethical conduct, enhance team member engagement and commitment and foster creativity.

In this study, voice behavior is crucial as a mediator variable in the correlation between ethical leadership and team member performance. Furthermore, vocal behavior acts as a conduit that links the impact of these characteristics to enhanced team member performance. Guzman & Espejo (2019) elucidated that allowing employees to express their thoughts, offer constructive feedback, and actively engage in their work environment can enhance overall performance. Vocal behavior, when employed by a mediator, can favor team member performance through many means. Initially, vocal conduct can aid in identifying issues or chances for enhancement that have gone unnoticed without team member input. Furthermore, when employees perceive that their opinions are acknowledged and they are involved in making decisions, it will likely enhance their motivation to excel in their performance. Ultimately, vocal conduct can foster innovation, collaboration, and knowledge exchange.

Under the guidance of an ethical leader, employees are inclined to feel at ease in voicing their thoughts and ideas. Employees can enhance their performance by having the chance and backing to express their viewpoints, offer valuable input, and actively engage in the firm's advancement. Through verbal communication, employees can effectively express ideas, opinions, and recommendations that enhance work procedures, foster creativity, and elevate the quality of products or services. In a setting characterized by a robust ethical culture, where these behavioral expressions are highly regarded and promoted,

employees are motivated to engage in honest and transparent communication, prioritize integrity in their conduct, and make accurate and equitable choices.

Zhang et al., (2015) propose that effective leadership directly influences employees' self-perception, subsequently affecting their willingness to express their opinions and ideas in the workplace. This study investigates the influence of leadership on employees' perception of voice behavior, which in turn affects their performance (Uddin et al., 2013). Moreover, this work culture fosters a professional atmosphere, prioritizing accessible communication and enabling employees to express constructive ideas and feedback. Engaging in voice behavior creates opportunities for team members to learn and share information collectively (Rasheed et al., 2017). Prior research has extensively examined voice behavior as a mediator in variable connections, revealing that voice behavior effectively mediates the relationship between two variables. According to these data, our sixth and seventh hypotheses propose that voice behavior mediates ethical leadership, ethical culture, and team member performance, with overall presentation in Figure 1.

H6. Voice behavior (V.B.) as a mediator between ethical leadership (E.L.) and team member performance (E.P.)

H7. Voice behavior (V.B.) as a mediator between ethical culture (E.C.) and team member performance (E.P.)

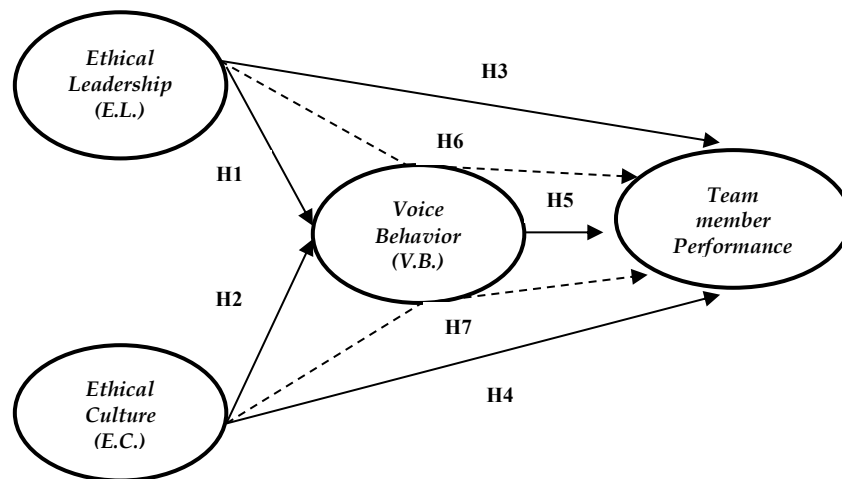


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a quantitative methodology. The population of this study consisted of 350 employees from construction companies located in Bantul, Indonesia. Each participant included in the study is regarded as a research sample in the saturated sampling strategy employed. Of all the employees sent with the questionnaire, 153 completed the questionnaire using Google Forms.

The assessment of ethical leadership (E.L.) involves the utilization of seven indicators suggested by Yukl et al. (2013). These indicators include honesty, integrity, fairness, altruism, consistency of behavior with stated beliefs, communication of ethical ideals, and provision of ethical advice (15 statements). The measurement of ethical culture (E.C.) involves three measures suggested by

Key (1999), namely clarity, congruency of supervisors, and discussability (18 statements). Elsaied (2019) proposed utilizing the act of speaking out as a metric for assessing voice behavior (V.B.) (6 statements). Employee performance (E.P.) is evaluated by three indicators, including efficiency, planning, creativity, and innovation, as suggested by Tabouli et al., (2016) (13 statements). This means that there are a total of 52 lines in the questionnaire. The data was analyzed using the structural equation model (SEM), and AMOS version 22 was utilized for data processing.

RESULTS

Questionnaires were distributed to all employees of a construction services company in Bantul, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, using the saturated sampling method. A total of 153 questionnaires were filled out, with a response rate of 43,71%. The demographic attributes of the participants are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondent Descriptive Statistics

Demographic Factor	Descriptive Statistics
Gender	Male: 56 (36,6%) Female: 97 (63,4%)
Age (year)	< 21: 3 (2,0%) 21- <26: 27 (17,6%) 26- <31: 55 (35,9%) 31- <36: 45 (29,4%) 36- <41: 19 (12,4%) ≥ 41: 4 (2,6%)
Length of Work (year)	< 1: 9 (5,9%) 1 - <4: 42 (27,5%) 4 - <7: 67 (43,8%) 7 - <9: 29 (19,0%) ≥ 9: 6 (3,9%)

In the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) test, 52 statement items are considered valid if the supporting factor exceeds 0.50. The items, totaling 52 statements, all meet the requirements that the CFA number is more significant than 0.50, so they are declared valid. The results of validity testing are in Appendix 1. Furthermore, the construct reliability is comprised in Table 2.

Table 2. Reliability Testing Results

Variable	Σ loading	Σ loading2	C.R.	Decision
Employee Performance	9.469	89.662	0.904	Reliable
Voice Behavior	4.737	22.439	0.826	Reliable
Ethical Leadership	12.070	145.685	0.923	Reliable
Ethical Culture	14.010	196.280	0.933	Reliable

In reliability testing, all variables are considered reliable if the construct reliability (C.R.) value exceeds 0.70. After testing, the results show that the C.R. values for the four variables are more than 0.7, as presented in Table 3.

Five criteria are declared suitable, as illustrated in Table 3. The overall research model can be declared acceptable if one or two criteria are declared fit. Consequently, no modifications to the model will be made, and the subsequent

analysis will proceed. Additionally, the research model yielded some results that were deemed unsatisfactory, including chi-square results (1854.383) and probability (0.000). The fit category is determined based on the following values: DF (1268), RMSEA (0.055), CMIN/DF (1.462), TLI (0.903), and CFI (0.907).

Table 3. Goodness-of-Fit Test Results

Goodness Of Fit	Cut-off Value	Research Model	Criteria
Degree of Freedom (D.F.)	Positive	1268	Fit
Chi-Square	Expected to be Small	1854.383	Not Fit
Significant probability	≥ 0.05	.000	Not Fit
RMSEA	0,05 - 0,08	.055	Fit
CMIN/DF	≤ 2.0	1.462	Fit
TLI	≥ 0.90	.903	Fit
CFI	≥ 0.90	.907	Fit

Source: Processed data (2024)

Hypothesis testing involves evaluating the critical ratio (C.R.) value, considered significant if it exceeds 1.96. The significance value (α) is typically 5% or lower than 0.05. Therefore, if the C.R. has three stars (***) attached, it indicates a meager value, less than 0.001. The results of the direct effect hypothesis test in this study are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Direct Effect Hypothesis Test Results

Paths		Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Ethical Leadership	→ Voice Behavior	.343	.074	4.626	***
Ethical Culture	→ Voice Behavior	.274	.067	4.070	***
Ethical Leadership	→ Employee Performance	.131	.066	1.996	.046
Ethical Culture	→ Employee Performance	.130	.060	2.171	.030
Voice Behavior	→ Employee Performance	.526	.095	5.569	***

It was determined that the probability value for the first hypothesis was 0.000 (***) or less than 0.05, indicating statistical significance. Additionally, the critical ratio (C.R.) value was 4.626, which is greater than the threshold of 1.96. The results indicate a strong and positive correlation between ethical leadership and voice behavior factors, thus confirming the acceptance of the first hypothesis in this study. When examining the second hypothesis, it was discovered that the probability value was 0.000 (***) or less than 0.05, indicating statistical significance. Additionally, the critical ratio (C.R.) value was 4.070, which is greater than the threshold of 1.96. The findings suggest a solid and meaningful correlation between the ethical culture and voice behavior factors, thereby confirming the acceptance of the second hypothesis in this study.

Testing the third hypothesis yielded a probability value of 0.046, less than 0.05, and a critical ratio (C.R.) value of 1.996, more significant than 1.96. The findings demonstrate a clear and substantial correlation between ethical leadership and employee performance measures, therefore confirming the acceptance of the third hypothesis in this study. Upon testing the fourth hypothesis, a probability value of 0.030, which is less than 0.05, was obtained. A critical ratio (C.R.) value of 2.171, more significant than 1.96, was also observed.

The findings suggest a solid and meaningful correlation between the ethical culture variables and team member performance, thereby confirming the acceptance of the fourth hypothesis in this study.

Upon testing this fifth hypothesis, it was discovered that the probability value was 0.000 (***) or less than 0.05, indicating statistical significance. The critical ratio (C.R.) value was also 5.569 or greater than 1.96. The results demonstrate a clear and substantial correlation between the speech behavior factors and employee performance, confirming this study's fifth hypothesis's acceptance.

Mediation Effect

If the magnitude of the standardized direct effect exceeds that of the standardized indirect effect, it is concluded that the variable association cannot be mediated. Conversely, if the standardized direct effect is smaller than the standardized indirect effect, it is concluded that the variable association is mediated indirectly. The information is displayed in Table 5.

Table 5. Standardized Direct Effect and Indirect Effect

Path	Variable	Ethical Leadership	Ethical Culture
Direct Effect	V.B.	.328	.384
	E.P.	.158	.149
Indirect Effect	V.B.	.000	.000
	E.P.	.176	.206

Table 7 was used to compare the direct and indirect impact test findings. The sixth hypothesis had a standardized direct effect value of 0.158 and a standardized indirect effect value of 0.176. Hypothesis seven yielded a standardized direct effects value of 0.149 and a standardized indirect effects value of 0.206, as in Figure 2.

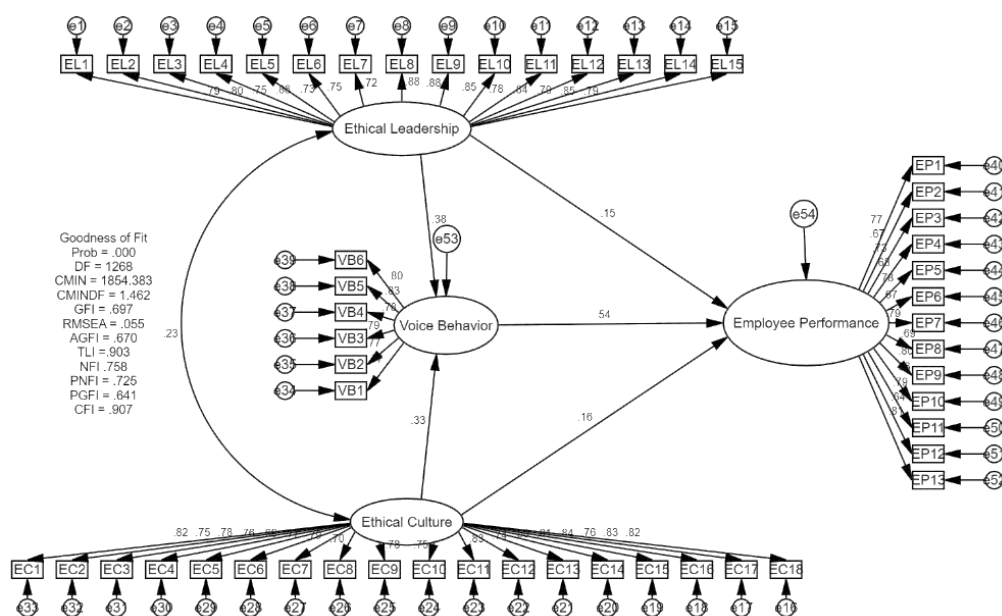


Figure 2. SEM Final Research Model Output

DISCUSSION

Empirical testing of the initial premise demonstrates that ethical leadership exerts a favorable and noteworthy influence on voice behavior. The findings indicate that implementing ethical leadership by leaders, both for themselves and for others in the organization, leads to the emergence of voice conduct. Leaders must possess significant ethical attributes to accomplish mutually agreed-upon objectives that align with relevant principles and criteria. If a leader possesses these characteristics, a substantial number of employees will feel secure enough to express their ideas and viewpoints, thus ensuring the continued functioning of the firm. Multiple prior research supports the conclusions of this study (Roy et al., 2023; Akhmadi et al., 2023). The responses of research participants who worked for 4 to 7 years were 43.8%, while 27.5% worked for 1 to 4 years. This data influenced the company's level of ethical leadership. This can be interpreted as an indication that ethical leadership has successfully fostered voice behavior.

After analyzing the question items, it is clear that the employees of a construction services company located in Bantul, Yogyakarta, recognize that their leaders prioritize the collective interest over their interests. This is particularly evident in the item "My supervisor prioritizes the interests of other people above his interests," which has the highest average value for ethical leadership. This unquestionably impacts the behavior of employees when expressing their viewpoints. They articulate their values, objectives, and ideas in a composed manner, while also effectively conveying any challenges that arise—employees who work less than the standard full-time hours. With the overarching objective of advancing the well-being of all, the employees of the construction services company located in Bantul, Yogyakarta are confident that its leaders will work diligently to address and resolve all concerns and opinions fairly and morally.

The study conducted by Jin et al., (2022) demonstrates that the conduct of their supervisors dramatically influences the expression of employees' opinions, and this dependence may be attributed to two key factors. Initially, employees vocalize their concerns to allow their bosses to focus on organizational issues and allocate resources to address them. Furthermore, leaders have authority over disciplinary measures or rewards, influencing employees' voice behavior. Greater moral integrity in a leader correlates with increased employee engagement and initiative.

The empirical findings of the second hypothesis demonstrate a robust and statistically significant relationship between ethical culture and vocal behavior. This experiment indicates that a strong ethical culture fosters a workplace where employees consistently abide by morally solid norms and standards. The employees are incentivized by this culture to exhibit ethical behavior in all aspects of their work. Employees are encouraged to engage in honest and open communication, prioritize integrity in their behavior, and make accurate and equitable decisions. This phenomenon can be referred to as vocal conduct, as employees express their viewpoints and suggestions for the sustenance of the

organization; in a robust ethical setting, employees are encouraged to share their perspectives. The level of employee activity is directly proportional to the strength of the organization's moral culture.

Upon examining all the question items, it is evident that the ethical culture exhibits significantly high average and category scores. This demonstrates that the employees of the construction services company located in Bantul, Yogyakarta, have a commendable ethical culture within their organization. This ethical culture includes measures to proactively deter unethical conduct inside the workplace, establishing ethical conduct as the norm, and other related initiatives. The outcomes of this study are corroborated by prior research. An instance may be found in the survey conducted by Akhmadi et al., (2023), which elucidates a strong and meaningful correlation between verbal communication patterns and the establishment of an ethical society. Hence, it is evident that employees will conform to the company's robust and ethical culture, particularly regarding verbal etiquette.

The empirical findings of the hypothesis testing demonstrate a clear and substantial correlation between ethical leadership and enhanced employee performance. This test indicates that leaders who exemplify ethical ideals will inspire their staff to emulate their behavior. Under moral management, employees are urged to prioritize integrity and openness in all work aspects and make prudent and equitable choices. In addition to that, moral leaders also contribute to the establishment of a secure and motivating work environment. Employees have a sense of esteem and are given the authority to express their viewpoints, offer constructive criticism, and contribute valuable suggestions (Basalamah, S.A., 2023). Moral leaders additionally tend to offer constructive criticism and aid in employees' personal growth. In essence, this leads to a boost in employee motivation, their allegiance to the company, and their active involvement in their tasks (El Junusi, R., & Mubarak, F. K., 2021).

Upon examining the question item with the highest average score, specifically "My supervisor prioritizes the interests of other people above his interests," it becomes evident that employees of construction services company acknowledge that their leaders prioritize the collective interest over their interests. By prioritizing common interests or the interests of others, leaders can effectively appreciate perspectives, ideas, goals, and more, significantly boosting employee enthusiasm for work. Consequently, employees' performance will improve as they will experience a sense of appreciation for their viewpoints. Multiple prior studies corroborate the conclusions of this investigation. Tamer (2021) demonstrates that ethical leadership exerts a favorable and substantial influence on staff performance. The more exemplary the moral leadership, the higher the level of staff performance.

The empirical findings from the experimentation of the fourth hypothesis demonstrate a clear and noteworthy correlation between ethical culture and employee performance, indicating a positive and substantial influence. When a company has a robust ethical culture, employees are encouraged to exhibit integrity in all aspects of their job. An ethical culture additionally furnishes employees with explicit instructions for managing challenges and transitions. Employees believe that a moral framework guides their actions and assists them

in making ethically sound judgments. Moreover, this ethical work culture fosters an atmosphere that prioritizes open communication, enabling employees to express constructive ideas and opinions.

When considering all the question items, the ethical culture of the construction services company located in Bantul, Yogyakarta, demonstrates consistently high average and category ratings. This indicates that the personnel of the organization possess a commendable ethical culture. This ethical culture includes measures to proactively deter unethical conduct inside the workplace, establishing ethical conduct as the prevailing standard, and other pertinent factors that necessitate careful consideration. Undoubtedly, this is a source of great pride for the personnel. These findings align with the studies conducted by Sapada et al., (2017) and Saban et al., (2020), which concluded that ethical culture has a favorable and substantial impact on employee performance. Enhanced ethical culture inside a company directly correlates with improved employee performance.

The empirical findings of the fifth hypothesis indicate that vocal conduct exerts a favorable and statistically significant influence on employees' productivity. The findings suggest that when employees experience a sense of ease and recognition in expressing their viewpoints, they are inclined to exhibit higher levels of involvement and commitment in their work. This can enhance shared learning, innovation, and team communication. Verbal communication fosters a sense of engagement among employees in the pursuit of company objectives. This will improve their motivation and involvement. Moreover, the act of exchanging ideas and information can facilitate firms in making informed decisions and identifying areas for improvement.

According to the average score of the survey questions, the highest response, "Certain employees inform me about issues when their viewpoints could be beneficial to me," suggests that employees of a construction services company located in Bantul, Yogyakarta, continue to express themselves, both by seeking assistance for the problems they encounter and by sharing their opinions and offering support to one another. This undoubtedly enhances team member performance, as colleagues are eager to engage in idea exchange and offer assistance through comments, opinions, and so forth. These circumstances foster a conducive working atmosphere for employees, enhancing job satisfaction and sustaining daily motivation. The research conducted by Su et al., (2017) validates the results, showing that vocal or voice behavior has a notable and beneficial impact on employee performance. Enhanced employee performance can be achieved by fostering a work environment that encourages the active expression of ideas and opinions. This is due to their heightened level of engagement in verbal communication and the exchange of ideas with others.

The findings from the experiment on the sixth hypothesis indicate that voice conduct can mediate between ethical leadership and employee performance. The third hypothesis revealed a direct, positive, and significant correlation between ethical leadership and employee performance. Despite the inclusion of voice behavior as a mediating variable, the influence of ethical leadership on employee performance remains consistently favorable and significant. Vocal behavior may

enhance the impact of a leader's moral leadership on improving workforce performance.

The test results indicate that voice conduct serves as a mediator, facilitating the connection between ethical leadership and the enhancement of employee performance. If employees are given the flexibility and encouragement to express their thoughts, offer valuable feedback, and actively engage in organizational development, it can significantly enhance employee performance. The speaking style facilitates the articulation of employees' thoughts, input, and suggestions, so enhancing work processes, fostering innovation, and improving the quality of products or services. The research findings presented here are novel and consistent with prior studies, such as Lee et al., (2021), who investigated the role of voice behavior as an intervening variable and found that it effectively mediated between the two variables.

The findings from the experiment on the seventh hypothesis indicate that speech conduct can moderate the impact of ethical culture on employee performance. The fourth hypothesis revealed ethical culture's direct, beneficial, and considerable impact on employee performance. Despite including voice behavior as a mediating element between these two variables, the influence remains consistent; ethical culture continues to have a favorable and substantial impact on employee performance. Vocal conduct may have a role in fostering or executing an ethical environment within the organization, leading to enhanced staff efficiency.

The test results indicate that employees are motivated to engage in sincere and transparent communication, emphasize ethical conduct in their behavior, and make accurate and impartial decisions when they operate within a work environment that fosters a robust ethical culture, where such behaviors are highly esteemed and actively promoted. Moreover, this work culture philosophy fosters a work atmosphere prioritizing accessible communication, enabling employees to express constructive ideas and feedback. Participation in voice behavior creates opportunities for team members to engage in collective learning and information sharing. The findings of this study present novel insights that align with prior research, including the work of (Jin et al., 2022), which investigated the role of voice behavior as an intervening variable and demonstrated its ability to mediate between the two variables.

FUTURE STUDY

This research is full of its limitations. The findings of this research about ethical culture cannot be extrapolated due to its limited scope, which solely concentrates on a single organization. The impact of ethical culture varies significantly, particularly concerning a company's work culture grounded on moral principles. Each organization possesses its unique work culture, even within the same surroundings. Hence, to attain more comprehensive outcomes, forthcoming studies should investigate ethical culture across several organizations within the same domain, such as analyzing two or more companies under state-owned enterprises or the government concurrently, to acquire more extensive insights.

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Appendix 1. Validity Testing Results

Item	Statements	Loading Factor	Declaration	Item	Statements	Loading Factor	Declaration
EP1	I am dedicated, serious, and responsible in my work.	0.769	Valid	VB1	Specific employee suggestions regarding methods to enhance work practices within my department	0.773	Valid
EP2	I work professionally and carry out work efficiently.	0.668	Valid	VB2	A specific employee prompts others to address work-related concerns with me in my work unit.	0.770	Valid
EP3	I perform my work according to existing policies and procedures.	0.725	Valid	VB3	A specific employee communicates his or her opinions regarding work-related matters to me, even if they differ from my own and I disagree with them.	0.788	Valid
EP4	I am satisfied with the work I do.	0.683	Valid	VB4	A specific employee keeps me apprised about issues when his or her opinion could be beneficial to me.	0.779	Valid
EP5	I plan work before setting goals that need to be achieved	0.776	Valid	VB5	A specific employee becomes embroiled in matters that have an impact on the quality of life in my work unit.	0.828	Valid
EP6	I plan work and its achievements according to the planned schedule.	0.672	Valid	VB6	A specific employee approaches me with suggestions for new initiatives or modifications to work procedures.	0.799	Valid
EP7	I plan the work before starting to carry it out.	0.793	Valid				
EP8	I improved my ability to focus on completing assigned work	0.686	Valid	EC1	Individuals are urged to accept full accountability for their conduct at this organization.	0.824	Valid
EP9	I am careful to make changes in working methods every period	0.797	Valid	EC2	The top managers of these organizations represent high ethical standards.	0.747	Valid
EP10	I avoid repeating what other people do in solving work-related problems.	0.659	Valid	EC3	A few of my colleagues are engaged in immoral conduct.	0.783	Valid
EP11	I feel bored repeating the same procedures in doing work.	0.787	Valid	EC4	When an employee sees unethical behavior, they are more likely to report it.	0.756	Valid
EP12	I can express ideas and solutions quickly in dealing with work-related problems.	0.645	Valid	EC5	Ethical behavior is the norm in this organization	0.683	Valid
EP13	I can express my thoughts fluently and freely.	0.809	Valid	EC6	Punishments for unethical behavior are strictly enforced in this organization	0.775	Valid
EL1	My leader is a person of honest and trustworthy	0.793	Valid	EC7	Top managers regularly demonstrate that they care deeply about ethics.	0.789	Valid
EL2	My leader admitted his mistake and was ready to take responsibility for it.	0.800	Valid	EC8	In these organizations, unethical behavior is commonplace.	0.704	Valid
EL3	My leader considers honesty and integrity to be important personal values	0.752	Valid	EC9	Unethical behavior is punished in this organization.	0.780	Valid
EL4	My leader has a profound commitment to ethical and moral principles.	0.864	Valid				

Item	Statements	Loading Factor	Declaration	Item	Statements	Loading Factor	Declaration
EL5	My leader can be trusted to fulfill his promises and commitments.	0.728	Valid	EC10	In this organization, individuals who exhibit integrity are highly regarded.	0.745	Valid
EL6	The leader demonstrates fairness and impartiality in task allocation to his employees.	0.750	Valid	EC11	Top managers guide decision-making in an ethical direction.	0.831	Valid
EL7	The leader demonstrates objectivity while reviewing the performance of team members	0.717	Valid	EC12	My coworkers in this organization are very ethical	0.737	Valid
EL8	The leader prioritizes the interests of others over his own.	0.882	Valid	EC13	Management disciplines unethical behavior when it occurs.	0.795	Valid
EL9	Despite the difficulty, My leader acts ethically and fairly.	0.881	Valid	EC14	Ethical behavior is valued in this organization.	0.812	Valid
EL10	My leader ensures that his actions are consistent with his stated values	0.849	Valid	EC15	Top managers are models of ethical behavior.	0.836	Valid
EL11	My leader is against the utilization of immoral methods to improve performance.	0.783	Valid	EC16	Employees in these organizations accept the organization's rules and procedures regarding ethical behavior.	0.765	Valid
EL12	My leader communicates clear ethical standards to his employees.	0.842	Valid	EC17	Organizational rules and procedures regarding ethical behavior serve to maintain the organization's public image.	0.828	Valid
EL13	My leader ensures that staff are held accountable for adhering to ethical principles in their work.	0.787	Valid	EC18	Employees assume that people who violate organizational rules and procedures regarding ethical behavior still receive formal organizational rewards	0.820	Valid
EL15	My leader exemplifies dedication and self-sacrifice for the company.	0.791	Valid		E.P.: Employee Performance E.L.: Ethical Leadership V.B.: Voice Behavior E.C.: Ethical Culture		