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The Role Work Engagement and Psychological Safety in How Socially Responsible Human Resources Management Affects Employee Voice Behaviour

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

All procedures performed during research involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the relevant institutional and national research committees and with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards. Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants involved in this study.

Declarations

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Abstract

Purpose: This study explored the role of socially responsible human resource management (SRHRM) as a key driver of employee voice behaviour. The hypotheses included that these human resources management (HRM) practices strengthen employees' motivation to voice their opinions by increasing their work engagement (WE), thereby encouraging them to share their ideas and concerns about their organization more actively. The hypotheses also proposed that this effect is especially pronounced when employees experience a heightened sense of psychological safety.

Design/methodology/approach: A survey-based correlational study was conducted with a sample of 289 participants to analyse the proposed relationships between the selected variables.

Findings: The results indicate that SRHRM and WE are significantly associated with both promotive and prohibitive voice behaviour among employees. In addition, the moderated mediation model revealed that employees who perceive their organization as adopting SRHRM practices display higher levels of WE, which in turn increases these individuals' likelihood of engaging in both types of voice behaviour. This relationship is particularly strong for promotive voice when employees experience high levels of organizational psychological safety.

Research limitations/implications: The findings are limited by the cross-sectional research design, which restricts causal inference.

Practical implications: By adopting people-centred HRM practices, organizations can foster psychologically safe environments that enhance employees' willingness to engage in behaviour beneficial to their organization, such as WE and voice behaviours.

Originality/value: The results highlight the critical role of SRHRM and offer evidence-based insights into how interventions can foster positive employee behaviours and attitudes, including WE and voice behaviour.

Keywords: socially responsible human resource management, work engagement, employee voice behaviour, organizational psychological safety

Paper type: Research paper

Introduction

The increasing complexity of current organizational environments is propelled by vast technological advancements, demographic shifts, and economic transformations, which introduce heightened levels of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (Bennett and Lemoine, 2014). This complexity poses a significant challenge for company managers and their workforce. Effectively addressing this challenge requires a nuanced approach to people management based on finding a delicate balance between fostering financial growth and ensuring decent work standards. This process entails navigating the tension between the imperatives of maintaining organizational flexibility and safeguarding employees' well-being. To meet this challenge, managers must also acknowledge the pivotal significance of diversity and inclusion. These facets have important ethical underpinnings and function as key drivers of innovation, creativity, and overall organizational performance.

Human resource management (HRM) plays a significant role in this context, acting as a strategic mediator between the need to achieve organizational results and the mounting pressure from stakeholders and society to embrace socially responsible policies regarding the workforce. Most crucially, HRM should ensure the establishment and maintenance of good work environments (Voegtlin and Greenwood, 2016). These trends have contributed to the escalating importance of corporate social responsibility (CSR), which entails designing and implementing HRM policies and practices rooted in employee-oriented values (Pimenta *et al.*, 2024).

Socially responsible human resources management (SRHRM) integrates two areas of research—human resources management (HRM) and CSR—into an approach that treats employees as crucial stakeholders when defining organizational strategy (Barrena-Martínez *et al.*, 2017; Sancho *et al.*, 2018). SRHRM facilitates the implementation of CSR policies through people management that goes beyond traditional HRM interventions (Sancho *et al.*,

2018). Shen and Zhu (2011) identified three components of SRHRM: labour law legal compliance, employee-centred HRM, and CSR-facilitation HRM. These dimensions encompass specific facets such as meticulous adherence to legal standards promoting equal opportunities, workplace health and safety, adjusted work hours, a minimum wage, a work-life balance beyond legal requirements, and training programs. Other features include career advancement and employee involvement in workplace democracy and organizational affairs, as well as consideration for internal and external stakeholders' interests—with the overall aim of enhancing organizational effectiveness and sustainability.

Researchers have focused on how SRHRM affects employee behaviour (e.g., Barrena-Martínez *et al.*, 2017; Pimenta *et al.*, 2024) including, for example, job commitment, performance, and security; work engagement (WE); or employee voice behaviour (e.g., Pimenta *et al.*, 2024; Shen and Zhu, 2011; Vu, 2022, 2024; Zhao *et al.*, 2023). These positive behaviours and attitudes toward work can be seen as reciprocity mechanisms (Blau, 1964) that kick in when employees recognize the benefits generated by SRHRM practices (e.g., protection of workers' rights and welfare). In response, employees tend to engage in activities that benefit their organization, such as expressing ideas or suggestions for how to improve work processes (Liang *et al.*, 2012).

Although the evidence is still limited, studies have found a positive correlation between SRHRM and employee voice behaviour (e.g., Hu and Jiang, 2018; Vu, 2024; Zhao *et al.*, 2023). Employee voice refers to extra-role behaviour (Van Dyne and LePine, 1998) that takes the form of “communication of ideas, suggestions, concerns, problems, or opinions about work-related issues, with the intent to bring about improvement or change” (Morrison, 2023, p. 80). In the workplace, voice behaviours can be seen as the product of interactions between individuals and their social environment (Deci and Ryan, 2000), which intrinsically motivate them to take actions benefiting their organization.

SRHRM practices may thus have a positive impact on organizational citizenship behaviour, such as employee voice behaviour (e.g., Lee *et al.*, 2022; Van Dyne and Lepine, 1998), so the mechanisms underlying this relationship need to be examined thoroughly. These practices can encourage workers to put more effort into—and show greater dedication to—their work. This effect is still relatively underexplored (e.g., Jerónimo *et al.*, 2020; Pimenta *et al.*, 2024), but SRHRM practices appear to activate reciprocity norms and prompt employees to increase their WE. The latter engagement (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004) is characterized by high levels of energy, absorption, and dedication, namely, employees' positive response to the resources provided by their organization when it adopts SRHRM practices (Pimenta *et al.*, 2024).

The job demands-resources (JD-R) model (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007, 2024) suggests that WE acts as a mediating factor between SRHRM and employee voice behaviour. WE is characterized by a positive attitude toward work, so it enhances employees' tendency to offer ideas and suggestions for how their organization can develop (Li and Zheng, 2023). In particular, more enthusiastic workers who are inspired by their job will most likely contribute valuable ideas that benefit their company (e.g., Amabile *et al.*, 2005).

In addition, recent research has indicated that psychological safety plays a crucial role in fostering employees' voice behaviour (e.g., Chauhan *et al.*, 2024; Jabbar *et al.*, 2023; Liu *et al.*, 2022; Wang *et al.*, 2023) by moderating the relationship between WE and employee voice behaviour. Individuals' comportment on the job is significantly influenced by how they process social information in their workplace (Salancik and Pfeffer, 1978). More specifically, employees develop shared perceptions about the acceptability of expressing ideas and intervening in situations (Morrison, 2011). Psychological safety refers to positive beliefs regarding the expression of ideas and opinions in work contexts (Chauhan *et al.*, 2024), which

increases the likelihood of voice behaviour by reducing the perceived risk associated with this behaviour (e.g., Bransby *et al.*, 2024; Edmondson, 1999, 2004).

The present research was conducted in response to calls for studies analysing the impact of SRHRM on organizational behaviour (e.g., Omid and Zotto, 2022; Vu, 2024). The current investigation focused on employee voice behaviour. A careful review of the literature revealed no research on the role of WE and organizational psychological safety in the relationship between SRHRM and employee voice behaviour. Therefore, a correlational study was carried out to develop a moderated mediation model of the mediating role of WE in the relationship between SRHRM and both promotive and prohibitive voice in the workplace. Workers' level of organizational psychological safety was included as a boundary condition.

Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

SRHRM

A thorough review of the relevant literature was conducted, and the findings were incorporated into a series of hypotheses. Recent research has strengthened the evidence for a link between companies' socially responsible performance and their attainment of positive outcomes in terms of financial results and relationships with varied stakeholders (Barrena-Martínez *et al.*, 2017). Relationships with internal stakeholders are especially important in business contexts. Socially responsible policies and practices also tend to enhance firms' ability to attract talent (e.g., Duarte *et al.*, 2014) and encourage their workers to exhibit more organizational citizenship behaviour. These strategies additionally increase employees' willingness to remain with their organization, as well as fostering higher levels of identification with and commitment to that organization (e.g., Liu *et al.*, 2022; Paruzel *et al.*, 2021).

HRM has assumed a central, strategic role in business contexts. Managers are in a privileged position in terms of implementing practices and developing action plans that ensure

human resources policies are concretely and objectively aligned with CSR strategies and external requirements regarding companies' responsible behaviour (Martín-Alcázar *et al.*, 2005). HRM thus has a broader role than CSR in implementing socially responsible policies (Shen and Benson, 2016). According to Barrena-Martínez *et al.* (2017, HRM must go beyond only pursuing external stakeholders' interests:

[It also has to focus on] the ethical, social, human and working conditions of workers, promoting their satisfaction and proper development in the company, obtain[ing] . . . di[stinctive] . . . added value for companies as a result of this process, [and] increasing in the l[ong] term . . . [overall] employee . . . performance. (p. 56)

From this perspective, the SRHRM construct refers to HRM practices adopted by organizations to influence workers' attitudes and behaviours and facilitate the implementation of external CSR initiatives (Shen and Zhang, 2019). In more concrete terms, SRHRM goes beyond merely providing financial compensation or ensuring compliance with working conditions regulations. This approach encompasses people-oriented HRM strategies, such as flexible working hours and employee participation in decision-making processes, as SRHRM also includes practices that enhance companies' general CSR (e.g., rewarding employees' social performance). SRHRM further ensures compliance with legal requirements by fostering workplace diversity, promoting equality, and maintaining health and safety at work (Shen and Benson, 2016; Shen and Zhu, 2011). Sancho *et al.* (2018) suggest that SRHRM should additionally encompass training and continuous education, work-life balance, attention to diversity, communication, and professional career development.

SRHRM and Employee Voice Behaviour

Previous research has also found evidence that SRHRM is positively associated with various work-related behaviours and attitudes, for example, employee performance (Lee *et al.*, 2022), organizational identification processes (Chang *et al.*, 2021), organizational

citizenship behaviour (e.g., Newman *et al.*, 2016; Shao *et al.*, 2023), job satisfaction (Barrena-Martínez *et al.*, 2017), and employee well-being (Zhang *et al.*, 2022). These practices have also been linked to increased employee voice behaviour (e.g., Hu and Jiang, 2018; Zhao *et al.*, 2023). However, few studies have analysed the direct relationship between SRHRM and this behaviour (see Vu [2024] for an exception).

Employee voice behaviour refers to discretionary actions that seek to foster constructive changes proactively (Morrison, 2023; Van Dyne and LePine, 1998). This behaviour can manifest itself as either prohibitive voice, which highlights potentially harmful work practices that need to be eliminated, or promotive voice, which stresses opportunities and initiatives that may enhance operational efficiency (Liang *et al.*, 2012). Since voicing personal ideas can be risky, not all employees feel equally comfortable expressing their thoughts and feelings at work. Promotive voice is generally less risky because employees who engage in it are often seen as contributing to the organization's success (Liang *et al.*, 2012). Some researchers have reported that different types of employee voice behaviour can be traced to distinct predictors (Morrison, 2023).

Employees' behaviours and attitudes are often shaped by their perceptions and interpretations of their work environment (Gundlach *et al.*, 2003; Salancik and Pfeffer, 1978). SRHRM evidently fosters workplaces characterized by social cues related to safety and respect for diversity. In these environments, employees may actively participate in initiatives designed to enhance their organization, including identifying and addressing negative aspects of their workplace. However, some prior research has generated unexpected results. For instance, the likelihood of employees engaging in voice behaviour can increase under specific conditions, such as when workers' strong organizational identification combines with a perception that their organization's social performance is poor. This pattern occurs even in environments characterized by a high power distance culture (e.g., Kim and Rim, 2023).

Signalling theory (Connelly *et al.*, 2011; Guest *et al.*, 2021) posits that SRHRM sends signals to employees about expected behaviour, including the value their organization places on voice behaviour. For example, workers interpret green HRM practices (e.g., Garavan *et al.*, 2023) as indicating that their organization is committed to environmental sustainability. This perception fosters organizational citizenship behaviours (Ziyadeh *et al.*, 2024), especially the adoption of voice behaviour that promotes sustainability (Murillo-Ramos *et al.*, 2024). Similarly, frequent, clear, and salient SRHRM practices (Connelly *et al.*, 2011) can ensure that employees know their active participation is welcome, thereby encouraging their voice behaviour.

In addition, social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) suggests that the relationship between SRHRM and employee voice behaviour can be understood as a reciprocity mechanism (Blau, 1964; Newman *et al.*, 2016). That is, workers recognize the benefits they receive from SRHRM practices and respond with positive behaviours. These practices focus on safeguarding employees' rights and well-being, addressing their needs, offering opportunities for growth and development, promoting workplace democracy, and sharing power. SRHRM also fosters a sense of being valued and having reciprocal obligations by encouraging employee participation. This tactic in turn motivates workers to engage in activities beneficial to their organization, such as voicing ideas or suggestions that may improve work processes (Liang *et al.*, 2012).

The following hypothesis and subhypotheses were formulated for the current research based on the above findings:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): SRHRM is positively related to employee voice behaviour.

H1a: SRHRM is positively related to promotive voice behaviour.

H1b: SRHRM is positively related to prohibitive voice behaviour.

SRHRM, WE, and Employee Voice Behaviour

Little is known about the mechanisms underlying the relationship between SRHRM and employee voice behaviour due to the novelty and scarcity of research on this topic. Voice behaviour involves active participation in organizational life and implies that staff members feel deeply engaged in their company. WE, in this context, can be defined as “a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption” (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004, p. 295). Engaged employees generally demonstrate a persistent emotional and cognitive connection to their work, enabling them to overcome challenges; show enthusiasm, inspiration, and pride; and maintain high levels of concentration. This engagement allows workers to invest significant physical, cognitive, and emotional energy into their job and enhances their ability to generate ideas and identify ways to improve within their roles.

The theory of self-enhancement (Ferris *et al.*, 2015; Pfeffer and Fong, 2005) posits that individuals strive to view themselves—and to be perceived by others—in a positive light. WE thus reflects employees’ sense of competence and self-worth at work (Kahn, 1990). Similarly, voicing opinions is inherently a demonstration of individuals’ perceived influence and competence (Wei *et al.*, 2015).

According to Song *et al.* (2022), promotive voice allows employees to demonstrate their engagement by proposing innovative and original ideas for improving their organization, which stem from a strong physical and cognitive investment in their work. Prohibitive voice also reflects highly engaged employees’ sense of responsibility due to their strong relationship with their company, as they are unafraid to point out negative or dysfunctional aspects. In short, workers who are more dedicated to and immersed in their work are more likely to take actions they believe will contribute to organizational improvement and identify potential threats or difficulties.

The impact of SRHRM on WE also remains underexplored in the literature (e.g., Jerónimo *et al.*, 2020; Pimenta *et al.*, 2024), but a reasonable assumption can be made that, when HRM values employees and their work, those individuals will reciprocate in kind (Blau, 1964). In addition, SRHRM focuses on employee training and development, greater participation, and good working conditions, so workers perceive these practices as a valuable resource. According to the JD-R model (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007), this resource helps employees manage their job demands more effectively, which enhances their level of energy, absorption, and dedication to their work.

The second hypothesis and its subhypotheses were developed for the present study to reflect the preceding findings:

Hypothesis 2 (H2): WE mediates the relationship between SRHRM and employee voice behaviour.

H2a: WE mediates the relationship between SRHRM and employee promotive voice behaviour.

H2b: WE mediates the relationship between SRHRM and employee prohibitive voice behaviour.

Moderating Role of Organizational Psychological Safety

Psychological safety is defined by Edmondson (2004) as “an internal state arising from interactions within a given context.” The cited author further expands the definition as follows:

[Psychological safety encompasses] individuals’ perceptions about the consequences of interpersonal risks in their work environment and beliefs about how others will respond . . . [to voice behaviours] such as asking a question, seeking feedback, reporting a mistake, or proposing a new idea. (p. 4)

This sense of safety encourages employees to take actions “without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status, or career” (Kahn, 1990, p. 708).

Social information processing theory (Salancik and Pfeffer, 1978) suggests that psychological safety is a result of employees’ evaluation of their organizational context, which significantly influences their behaviour and performance. More specifically, George (2008) asserts that signals related to safety are key contextual variables that influence creativity. Recent studies have indicated that psychological safety is a crucial precursor to organizational citizenship behaviour and knowledge sharing (e.g., Frazier *et al.*, 2017). The latter author argues that psychological safety depends on the existence of supportive work contexts.

The current research model included that HRM practices are central to fostering a psychologically safe environment when they prioritize workers’ interests, social responsibility, and ethics. Various authors (e.g., Ajmal *et al.*, 2024; Ye and Li, 2024) note that these people-centred management practices seek to find a balance between organizational prosperity and employee motivation, including encouraging workers to share their thoughts and ideas more actively. This approach generates a sense of belonging that contributes to employees’ psychological stability and makes them more inclined to engage in activities that benefit their organization, to express their opinions, or to provide suggestions. In addition, the quality of the relationships established with others such as leaders and coworkers has a significant positive effect on workers’ sense of psychological safety (May *et al.*, 2004; Newman *et al.*, 2017).

The literature indicates that perceived psychological safety at work enables employees to be themselves without fear of negative consequences. This sense of safety is thus a crucial condition for them to invest physically, cognitively, and emotionally in their work, so psychological safety is a precursor of WE (e.g., Adekanmbi and Ukpere, 2023; Chaudhary,

2021; Frazier *et al.*, 2017; Xu *et al.*, 2023). Taking a different approach, the present study included psychological safety as a potential moderating variable in the relationship between WE and employee voice behaviour because psychological safety stems from workers' evaluation of their work context. In particular, a psychologically safe, inclusive work environment may interact with WE (Liang *et al.*, 2012; Nelson, 2016) and encourage employees to pursue their goals and express opinions by reducing any discomfort they may experience when denouncing harmful practices.

This interaction may also reveal new opportunities to improve organizational functioning because high levels of psychological safety reduce employees' perception of the personal risk of voicing. More specifically, psychological safety appears to have a positive effect on levels of cooperation by encouraging information sharing and motivating workers to participate (Miao *et al.*, 2020). Employees will, therefore, be more prone to voice their ideas and suggestions when these individuals feel that their work environment is safe, especially in the presence of strong WE. When psychological safety is low, the fear of negative consequences for the self (e.g., retaliation and punishment) will be higher (Detert and Edmondson, 2011; Morrison, 2023), and the likelihood of voice behaviour will diminish even among strongly engaged employees.

To reflect the above findings, the current study's third hypothesis and subhypotheses were written as follows:

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Organizational psychological safety moderates the relationship between WE and employee voice behaviour so that the latter two variables are more frequently present when organizational psychological safety is high than when it is low.

H3a: Organizational psychological safety moderates the relationship between WE and employee promotive voice behaviour so that the latter two variables are more

frequently present when organizational psychological safety is high than when it is low.

H3b: Organizational psychological safety moderates the relationship between WE and employee prohibitive voice behaviour so that the latter two variables are more frequently present when organizational psychological safety is high than when it is low.

One reasonable expectation is that, in situations in which perceived psychological safety in the workplace is high, the indirect effect of SRHRM on employee voice behaviour through WE is stronger than when employees' perceived organizational psychological safety is low. SRHRM comprises a set of organizational policies and practices designed to enhance workers' sense of safety, which increases the likelihood that they will adopt behaviours and attitudes favourable to their organization (e.g., WE and voice behaviour). Settoon *et al.* (1996, p. 219) state that "positive, beneficial actions directed at employees by the organization and/or its representatives contribute to the establishment of high-quality exchange relationships that create obligations for employees to reciprocate in positive, beneficial ways." Workers thus become more likely to exhibit higher levels of energy and dedication to their work, along with a deeper understanding of problems, potentialities, opportunities, and challenges, which empowers them to actively engage in organizational life.

This outcome can be expected in particular when employees perceive the work environment as safe and open to ideas and questions because they believe that they can speak up without fear of punishment (Edmondson, 1999). They will be more prone to voice their concerns and opinions in order to resolve work-related issues. The final hypothesis and its subhypotheses were written for the present study to focus the research on a moderated mediating effect, as shown in the conceptual model in Figure 1:

Hypothesis 4 (H4): Organizational psychological safety moderates the indirect relationship between SRHRM and employee voice behaviour via WE so that this link becomes stronger when organizational psychological safety is high than when it is low.

H4a: Organizational psychological safety moderates the indirect relationship between SRHRM and employee promotive voice behaviours via WE so that this link becomes stronger when organizational psychological safety is high than when it is low.

H4b: Organizational psychological safety moderates the indirect relationship between SRHRM and employee prohibitive voice behaviours via WE so that this link becomes stronger when organizational psychological safety is high than when it is low.

Insert Figure 1

Method

Procedures and Participants

The methodology applied included non-probability sampling, which was used to distribute a cross-sectional survey to employees from diverse organizations. The data were collected online through the Qualtrics® software platform, and the questionnaire was distributed through professional social networks. The survey procedures adhered to the principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki, ensuring the participants' anonymity and the confidentiality of their responses. The respondents voluntarily agreed to take part in the survey. The informed consent form delineated the research objectives and participation

criteria, which included being over 18 years old and having worked within the same organization for a minimum of 6 months.

All incomplete questionnaires were discarded, which resulted in a sample of 289 employees. Most participants were female (61.2%), and their ages ranged between 18 and 65 years old (mean [M] = 35.51, standard deviation [SD] = 12.18). The average job tenure was 7.86 years (SD = 9.98), with 63.9% respondents having an open-ended contract. In addition, almost all the participants worked full-time (86.1%) in either a large company (41.0%) or a medium-sized organization (19.5%), while the remainder were employed in small or micro-organizations (39.6%).

Measures

The questionnaire was divided into three main sections: informed consent, items from measurement scales assessing the selected variables, and socioprofessional information. For each scale, each respondent's composite score was calculated by averaging the pertinent items. Higher scores indicate greater levels of the variables under analysis.

Predictor Variable: SRHRM

SRHRM was assessed utilizing Sancho *et al.*'s (2018) scale, which comprises 16 items organized into 5 dimensions of critical HRM domains: training and continuous development, work-life balance, attention to diversity, communication, and professional career. The participants expressed their level of agreement with each item on a Likert scale ranging from 1 ("Strongly disagree") to 5 ("Strongly agree"). For example, one item states, your organization "[r]ecognizes the importance of stable employment for your employees and society."

The multidimensional structure of SRHRM was supported by confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Thus, the composite solution encompassed all five dimensions (chi-square [χ^2]/degrees of freedom [df] = 2.16, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] =

0.063, comparative fit index [CFI] = 0.956, Tucker-Lewis index [TLI] = 0.942). The five-dimension approach yielded superior fit indices as compared to both a second-order solution ($\chi^2/df = 2.65$, RMSEA = 0.075, CFI = 0.932, TLI = 0.919) and a single-factor solution ($\chi^2/df = 3.44$, RMSEA = 0.091, CFI = 0.894, TLI = 0.878). Following Sancho *et al.*'s (2018) lead, a composite score was computed for each respondent based on the mean of the five dimensions (Cronbach's alpha [α] = .926).

Mediator Variable: WE

WE, in turn, was evaluated using Schaufeli *et al.*'s (2006) Utrecht WE Scale-9. This scale includes nine items (e.g., "At my work, I feel bursting with energy"). The participants rated each item on a Likert scale ranging from 1 ("Never") to 7 ("Always"). CFA confirmed the unidimensional structure of the scale, including all nine items ($\chi^2/df = 1.81$, RMSEA = 0.052, CFI = 0.990, TLI = 0.986, $\alpha = .938$).

Moderator Variable: Organizational Psychological Safety

Organizational psychological safety was assessed using seven items adapted from Edmondson (1999). The original scale was designed to measure team psychological safety, so the items were adapted for the present research by replacing "team" with "organization" in order to evaluate shared beliefs about organizational psychological safety. For instance, one item reads, "It is safe to take a risk in this organization." The respondents rated each item on a Likert scale ranging from 1 ("Strongly disagree") to 7 ("Strongly agree"). CFA confirmed the unidimensional nature of the seven-item scale ($\chi^2/df = 1.86$, RMSEA = 0.054, CFI = 0.990, TLI = 0.974, $\alpha = .829$).

Outcome Variables: Employee Promotive and Prohibitive Voice Behaviour

Employee voice behaviour was assessed using 10 items adopted from Liang *et al.*'s (2012) research. The scale included five items measuring employees' willingness to express new ideas about how to improve unit productivity (i.e., promotive voice) (e.g., I

“[p]roactively suggest new projects that benefit the work unit”). An additional five items measured workers’ comfort with expressing concerns about harmful practices, incidents, or behaviours (i.e., prohibitive voice) (e.g., I “[d]are to voice opinions on matters that might affect efficiency in the work unit, even if it may embarrass others”). The response scale ranged from 1 (“Never”) to 7 (“Always”). Higher scores indicate greater levels of both promotive and prohibitive voice behaviour.

CFA indicated that a second-order model is more appropriate than a single-factor solution for this measure (second-order model: $\chi^2/df = 1.64$, RMSEA = 0.047, CFI = 0.991, TLI = 0.987; single-factor solution: $\chi^2/df = 4.93$, RMSEA = 0.115, CFI = 0.936, TLI = 0.918). Composite scores for each participant were calculated by averaging their responses to the items measuring promotive voice behaviour ($\alpha = .935$), and prohibitive voice behaviour ($\alpha = .857$).

Assessment of Common Method Variance (CMV) and Measures’ Convergent and Discriminant Validity

The current study had a potential limitation, namely, that all the data were collected from a single source at one time. Reliance on a single source introduces the possibility of CMV, which can undermine the validity of the results (e.g., Bozionelos and Simmering, 2022; Podsakoff *et al.*, 2024). To address this concern, various precautionary measures were implemented during the survey construction phase.

First, the respondents’ anonymity was safeguarded, which ensured their answers were kept confidential. Second, steps were taken to alleviate evaluation apprehension, namely, emphasizing that the questionnaire items had no right or wrong answers. Last, diverse rating scales were employed to mitigate potential bias. These techniques have been shown to minimize moderate, acquiescent, and socially desirable responses quite effectively (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2024).

Harman's single-factor test was run using the data. This statistical technique relies on subjecting unrotated factors to exploratory analysis. In the present research, the results show that the first factor explains less than 50% of the total variance. More specifically, 33.22% of the variability can be attributed to this factor (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin = 0.94, Bartlett's test (861) = 8291.32, $p < .001$). The outcomes thus suggest that CMV does not significantly weaken the findings' validity or distort their interpretation.

CFA was also conducted to check whether the items assessing the five variables capture distinct constructs as opposed to reflecting CMV. The five-factor model fits the data well (i.e., RMSEA = 0.050, TLI = 0.920, CFI = 0.926). In contrast, the single-factor model and three other alternative models produced unacceptable fit statistics (Hu and Bentler, 1999; Marsh *et al.*, 2004). These results indicate that the five constructs have discriminant validity and again that no serious CMV is present in the data (see Table 1).

 Insert Table 1

Next, a latent factor model was created by adding an unmeasured latent factor to the five-factor model. All the items were allowed to load on their theoretical constructs and the latent variable. The results indicate the models fit the data well. (RMSEA = 0.043, TLI = 0.939, CFI = 0.946). The two models' goodness of fit was compared by checking the CFI difference (see Table 1 above). The CFI changed by .02 between models, which is below the recommended cut-off value of .05 (Bagozzi and Yi, 1990), suggesting that including a latent factor in the present model would produce no significant improvement in its overall fit. This finding substantially reduces the likelihood that CMV is present.

To ensure discriminant validity, the average variance extracted (AVE) values were estimated and compared to the squared correlations between all pairs of variables. The

composite reliability (CR) values range from .85 to .95, exceeding the cutoff point of .70 suggested by Hair *et al.* (2010). The AVE values are also above the recommended threshold of .50 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981), except for SRHRM (.48) (see Table 2). However, Fornell and Larcker (1981, p. 46) suggest that the latter value can still confirm “that the convergent validity of the construct is adequate, even if more than 50% of the variance is due to error, when the variable’s CR values surpass the recommended minimum.” Overall, the different analytical techniques verified the discriminant validity of the five constructs and the absence of significant CMV.

Insert Table 2

Results

Table 2 above presents the *M*, *SD*, and Spearman’s correlation coefficient values, which show that the main variables are all significantly intercorrelated based on the moderate correlation values (all $p < .05$). The one exception is the predicted strong correlation between employee promotive voice behaviour and prohibitive voice behaviour ($\rho = 0.71, p < .01$) arising from their inclusion in the same construct.

Gender is negatively correlated with employee prohibitive voice behaviour ($\rho = -0.12, p < .05$), indicating that men are more inclined to express doubts or concerns about harmful practices, incidents, or behaviours. In addition, age is positively correlated with employee promotive voice behaviour ($\rho = 0.16, p < .01$), suggesting that older workers tend to show more interest in voicing their new ideas about how to enhance their unit’s productivity. Tenure and work situation are also correlated with employee promotive and prohibitive voice behaviour (ρ between 0.13 and 0.16, $p < .05$). More specifically, senior employees are more likely to engage in voice behaviour, while workers dealing with more

precarious work conditions tend to avoid sharing their opinions. These socioprofessional variables were consequently included as covariates in subsequent analyses.

The moderated mediation effects were assessed using PROCESS macro for IBM SPSS Statistics 28 software (Hayes, 2022). Table 3 lists the results of the moderated mediation analysis for Model 14.

Insert Table 3

H1 proposed that SRHRM is positively related to both promotive (H1a) and prohibitive (H1b) employee voice behaviour. SRHRM has an overall statistically significant effect on promotive (unstandardized effect size $[b] = 0.58, p < .001$) and prohibitive voice behaviour ($b = 0.42, p < .001$), which confirms that these relationships exist (see Table 3 above). H1a and H1b were, therefore, supported.

H2 posited a mediating effect of WE on the link between SRHRM and employee promotive (H2a) and prohibitive voice behaviour (H2b). The results confirm the proposed hypotheses as SRHRM has significant indirect effects via WE on both promotive ($b = 0.27, p < .001$) and prohibitive voice behaviours ($b = 0.14, p < .05$). SRHRM also has a significant direct impact on promotive ($b = 0.28, p < .05$) and prohibitive voice behaviour ($b = 0.29, p < .001$), but this impact is smaller than the total effect, thereby indicating that the mediation is partial.

H3 in turn proposed that organizational psychological safety moderates the relationship between WE and employee voice behavior. In other words, the more strongly workers feel that the surrounding psychological climate is safe, the stronger the association between WE and their promotive (i.e., H3a) and prohibitive voice behavior (i.e., H3b) becomes. As seen in Table 3 above, significant positive interactions were found between the

variables ($b_{\text{promotive}} = 0.12, p < .01, b_{\text{prohibitive}} = 0.10, p < .05$). H3 was thus supported by the data. Figures 2 and 3 depict the conditional effect of organizational psychological safety on the link between WE and employee promotive and prohibitive voice behavior.

 Insert Figures 2 and 3

Finally, H4 postulated that organizational psychological safety also moderates the indirect effect of SRHRM on employee voice behavior via WE. Thus, this impact becomes bigger when workers' sense of safety is stronger as opposed to when it is weaker. The indexes of moderated mediation presented in Table 3 above indicate that this effect exists only for promotive voice behavior ($b = 0.08, 95\%$ confidence interval $[.01, .15]$), which supports H4a. Figure 4 is a visual representation of the linear function relating organizational psychological safety to the indirect impact of SRHRM on employee promotive voice behavior through WE. In addition, the index for prohibitive voice behavior is not statistically significant ($b = 0.06, 95\%$ confidence interval $[-.01, .13]$) despite the results being in the same direction, so no empirical support was found for H4b.

 Insert Figure 4

Overall, the full model explains 29% and 16% of the unique variance of promotive ($F[8, 280] = 14.27, p < .001$) and prohibitive voice behavior ($F[8, 280] = 6.50, p < .001$), respectively. For the effects of the covariates on employee voice behavior, see Table 3 above. Figure 5 contains the moderated mediation model confirmed by the above findings.

Insert Figure 5

Discussion

As described in the previous sections, this research examined the relationships between SRHRM, WE, organizational psychological safety, and employee voice behaviour. The results confirm that SRHRM positively influences employees' promotive and prohibitive voice behaviour, which corroborates the findings of previous studies (Hu and Jiang, 2018; Liao *et al.*, 2022; Vu, 2024; Zhao *et al.*, 2023).

The present results also suggest that SRHRM enhances WE. More specifically, employees who perceive their organization as committed to implementing SRHRM practices tend to become more strongly committed to their organization and work. These individuals show higher levels of dedication to—and energy while doing—their tasks. This finding aligns with previous research (Jerónimo *et al.*, 2020; Pimenta *et al.*, 2024) that found that SRHRM elicits positive responses from employees, who then reciprocate with high levels of WE out of gratitude for the resources provided by their organization.

The current results further confirm the presence of a positive relationship between WE and employee voice behaviour (Liu *et al.*, 2021). Together, these findings suggest that the link between SRHRM and employee voice behaviour is mediated by WE. Employee voice behaviour evidently reflects the level of dedication and energy that staff members invest in their work, which in turn is these individuals' way of reciprocating for their organization's SRHRM practices.

The results further indicate that the connection between SRHRM and employee voice behaviour, when mediated by WE, becomes stronger if individuals also experience psychological safety. This finding reinforces prior studies by suggesting that organizational

psychological safety is a boundary condition for employee voice behaviour (e.g., Lee *et al.*, 2023). The confirmed moderated mediation effect is especially evident in workers' tendency to offer suggestions and ideas about how to improve organizational processes (i.e., promotive voice).

Notably, the influence SRHRM exerts through WE remains significant but is less pronounced for voice behaviour involving problem identification or expressing criticism. In these cases, psychological safety does not significantly alter this relationship, although workers reporting moderate or high psychological safety and higher WE tend to engage more often in prohibitive voice behaviour. This type of voice behaviour involves personal risk-taking, making psychological safety a critical factor in choices to exhibit this behaviour (Lee *et al.*, 2024).

The above findings diverge somewhat from previous research (Chauhan *et al.*, 2024; Kakkar *et al.*, 2016), which suggests that additional factors might be part of these dynamics. One component to consider is the role of dispositional traits (Edwards and Cable, 2009). For instance, an avoidance orientation could cause employees to take risks (e.g., engaging in prohibitive voice) only when they feel genuinely threatened at work (Kakkar *et al.*, 2016). Human-centred management approaches such as SRHRM can minimize perceived threats, thereby diminishing avoidance orientation. Another plausible explanation for these unexpected results is that, even in psychologically safe environments, employees may fear that expressing prohibitive concerns could disrupt team harmony or have negative repercussions (Cai *et al.*, 2022; Xi *et al.*, 2012).

Finally, the evidence indicates that employee voice behaviour is strongly influenced by job conditions, especially job stability. Thus, staff members who experience greater stability (i.e., open-ended contracts) are more likely to speak up in the workplace than those with more precarious jobs. This finding aligns with researchers' observation that employees'

perception of strong internal CSR can foster more positive work-related behaviours and attitudes (López and Costa, 2024).

Theoretical Implications

This study produced findings that have important theoretical implications. First, the research addressed calls for further investigations of the impact SRHRM has on organizational contexts (Omidi and Zotto, 2022). The present results indicate that future studies should continue to explore the complex dynamics that shape the relationship between specific HRM approaches and employee voice behaviour (Vu, 2024). For example, increasing numbers of scholars are examining the effect of digital HRM on employee work behaviour (e.g., Hu and Lan, 2024). In addition, researchers have to prioritize critical analyses of macro-level processes and the contextual factors affecting positive work comportment, such as employee voice behaviour (Hu and Jiang, 2018).

Second, the above results underscore the importance of applying various theories when analysing the links between different variables. For instance, social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) specifies the mechanisms that drive employees to adopt positive behaviour in response to HRM practices focused on individuals' well-being. More specifically, workers need to perceive their workplace environment as fostering decent work and prioritizing employees' welfare, including a good work-life balance or staff development. This approach to HRM fosters a sense of reciprocity that encourages workers to engage in behaviour that benefit their organization (Luu *et al.*, 2022).

Last, the findings show that employees adjust their behaviour based on the messages communicated through organizational practices, as proposed by signalling theory (Guest *et al.*, 2021). The results are also consistent with information processing theory (Salancik and Pfeffer, 1978) as the way employees process the information made available in their environments is a crucial determinant of their attitudes and behaviours on the job. SRHRM

practices must emphasize democratic participation and power-sharing to send strong signals that can raise workers' level of psychological safety when they voice their opinions in the workplace.

Practical Implications

This study additionally provided insights with significant practical implications. Organizations should treat SRHRM as a strategic element of sustainable development. Managers need to develop and implement HRM practices that ensure compliance with legal requirements while promoting diversity, equality, workplace health and safety, employee development, and work-life balance. For example, work teams should include diversity and complementarity as prominent features to foster organizational activities that acknowledge individuality and highlight the value-creating potential of a heterogeneous workforce. SRHRM also implements work processes and strategies that support remote work or offer employees flexibility in their daily routines. These key factors encourage workers to participate and engage more deeply with their tasks and to adopt behaviours and attitudes that primarily benefit their organization.

Work is a central component of many people's lives, and its perceived meaning is a crucial component in the way staff members relate to their company. The perception that organizations adopt people-oriented management practices constitutes a competitive advantage because SRHRM enables companies to retain talent and makes them more attractive to potential employees. For instance, HRM should include developing and employing practices that enable workers to balance their personal life with professional demands, promote equal pay for men and women, and prioritize job stability.

These tactics are fundamental to ensuring that SRHRM is a strategic part of organizations' overall management. Human resources managers must thus be given the

opportunity, voice, and necessary resources to design and implement practices rooted in people-focused, ethical, and social responsibility principles.

From a broader perspective, the current findings offer insights crucial to both public employment policy design and organizational practices. Labor legislation can become more closely aligned with sustainable development goals—especially those that promote economic growth, decent work, and social welfare—by prioritizing diversity, inclusion, workplace equity, and work-life balance. These strategies are essential for fostering value creation within organizations and positioning companies as key contributors to more just and human-centred societies.

Concurrently, the present results underscore the potentially transformative effect of integrating CSR principles into HRM practices. Future human resources managers should be trained to respect these guiding values as a way to strengthen employees' relationship with their organization and strengthen positive outcomes for individuals, businesses, and societies. Together, these implications emphasize the interconnected role of public policies and organizational strategies in shaping a sustainable, socially responsible future.

Limitations and Future Research

Regardless of these notable contributions, this study had various limitations. First, its cross-sectional design meant that CMV issues could be present. Measures and strategies were implemented to address this problem, as suggested by Podsakoff *et al.* (2024), but the current findings may still be influenced by the antecedent–consequent relationship between SRHRM, WE, and employee voice behaviour. Thus, the results should be interpreted with care. To reduce the risk of CMV, future research can conduct longitudinal analyses with data collected at multiple time points to distinguish more fully between predictor, mediator, and outcome variables.

Second, all the variables were assessed using data from a single group of respondents. Additional studies should be carried out to mitigate common source bias by gathering data from diverse sources. Last, the data were collected from a convenience sample, so the participants' assessments relied on their interpretation of what constitutes effective and consistent SRHRM practices. To strengthen the validity of the present findings, researchers could focus on organizations whose level of corporate engagement with SRHRM can be clearly defined in advance.

Conclusion

This study successfully expanded the research on—and improved the understanding of—the role of SRHRM, especially as a contextual factor that promotes employee voice behaviour. Analyses were conducted of the mediating role of WE and influence of psychological safety. The results highlight the significance of people-oriented HRM practices as a competitive advantage for organizations today.

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Table 1*Fit Indices*

Models	χ^2 (<i>df</i>) <i>p</i> -value	χ^2/df	RMSEA	TLI	CFI
Model 1: Five-factor model (SRHRM + WE + PSYSAF + VOICEPROM + VOICEPROH)	1387.71 (802) $p < .001$	1.730	0.050	0.920	0.926
Model 2: Four-factor model (SRHRM + WE + PSYSAF + VOICEPROM and VOICEPROH merged)	1455.92 (806) $p < .001$	1.806	0.052	0.912	0.918
Model 3: Three-factor model (SRHRM + PSYSAF + WE, VOICEPROM, and VOICEPROH merged)	2922.88 (810) $p < .001$	3.608	0.094	0.716	0.733
Model 4: Single-factor model (all merged)	4337.32 (812) $p < .001$	5.342	0.121	0.118	0.121
Model 5: Latent method factor model (SRHRM + WE + PSYSAF + VOICEPROM + VOICEPROH + Latent method factor)	1177.62 (755) $p < .001$	1.559	0.043	0.939	0.946

Source(s): Authors' own creation

Notes. χ^2 = chi-square; *df* = degrees of freedom; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; TLI =

Tucker-Lewis index; CFI = comparative fit index; SRHRM = socially responsible human resource management;

WE = work engagement; PSYSAF = organizational psychological safety; VOICEPROM = employee promotive

voice behaviour; VOICEPROH = employee prohibitive voice behaviour.

Table 2

Mean (M), Standard Deviation (SD), Correlation, Cronbach's Alpha, Squared Correlation, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) Values

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	CR	AVE
1. Gender ^a	—	—	—										
2. Age	35.51	12.18	.01	—									
3. Tenure	7.86	9.98	−0.02	0.65**	—								
4. Work situation ^b	—	—	−0.10	−0.39**	−0.50**	—							
5. Promotive voice	4.52	1.34	.01	.16**	.13*	−0.16**	(.94)	0.50	0.24	0.08	0.12	.94	.75
6. Prohibitive voice	4.26	1.28	−0.12*	.11	.15*	−0.13*	0.71**	(.86)	0.09	0.03	0.07	.85	.53
7. Work engagement	4.82	1.15	−0.07	.18**	.01	.02	0.49**	0.30**	(.94)	0.23	0.21	.95	.68
8. Organizational psychological safety	4.64	1.23	−0.08	−0.07	−0.17**	.07	0.28**	0.16**	0.48**	(.83)	0.30	.87	.50
9. SRHRM	3.37	0.79	−0.13*	−0.03	−0.12*	−0.05	0.34**	0.27**	0.46**	0.55**	(.93)	.93	.48

Source(s): Authors' own creation

Note. *M* = mean; *SD* = standard deviation; CR = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted; SRHRM = socially responsible human resources management.

^a Gender: 0 = male, 1 = female; ^b Work situation: 0 = open-ended contract, 1 = other precarious condition; Spearman's correlations below the diagonal; squared correlations in bold above the diagonal; Cronbach's alphas in parentheses.

p* < .05, *p* < .01.

Table 3*Moderated Mediation Analysis*

	WE (M)		VOICEPROM (Y ¹)		VOICEPROH (Y ²)			
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>		
<i>Model 1</i>								
Constant			2.23***	0.45	2.94***	0.44		
SRHRM (X)			0.58***	0.10	0.42***	0.09		
Gender ^a			0.11	0.15	−0.26	0.15		
Age			0.01	0.01	0.00	0.01		
Tenure			0.00	0.01	0.01	0.01		
Work situation ^b			−0.36*	0.17	−0.29	0.17		
			$R^2 = .16; F(5, 283) = 10.53^{***}$		$R^2 = .11; F(5, 283) = 9.73^{***}$			
<i>Model 2</i>								
Constant	−3.04***	0.37	3.51***	0.48	3.46***	0.50		
SRHRM (X)	0.62***	0.08	0.28*	0.11	0.29**	0.11		
WE(M)	—	—	0.46***	0.07	0.26***	0.08		
PSYSAF (W)	—	—	0.06	0.07	−0.01	0.07		
M*W	—	—	0.12**	0.04	0.10*	0.04		
Gender	−0.02	0.12	0.13	0.14	−0.25	0.14		
Age	0.03***	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.01		
Tenure	−0.01	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.01		
Work situation	0.23	0.14	−0.46**	0.16	−0.33*	0.16		
	$R^2 = .23; F(5, 283) = 16.61^{***}$		$R^2 = .29; F(8, 280) = 14.27^{***}$		$R^2 = .16; F(8, 280) = 6.50^{***}$			
<i>Moderated mediation model (mediator, WE; moderator, PSYSAF)</i>								
Conditional indirect effects			<i>b</i>	BootSE	95% BootCI	<i>b</i>	BootSE	95% BootCI
Low PSYSAF (−1 SD)			0.19	0.07	0.06, 0.35	0.08	0.07	−0.04, 0.23
Middle PSYSAF (0 SD)			0.28	0.06	0.17, 0.42	0.16	0.06	0.06, 0.29
High PSYSAF (+1 SD)			0.38	0.08	0.23, 0.55	0.24	0.08	0.10, 0.41
Index of moderated mediation			0.08	0.04	0.01, 0.15	0.06	0.04	−0.01, 0.13

Source(s): Authors' own creation

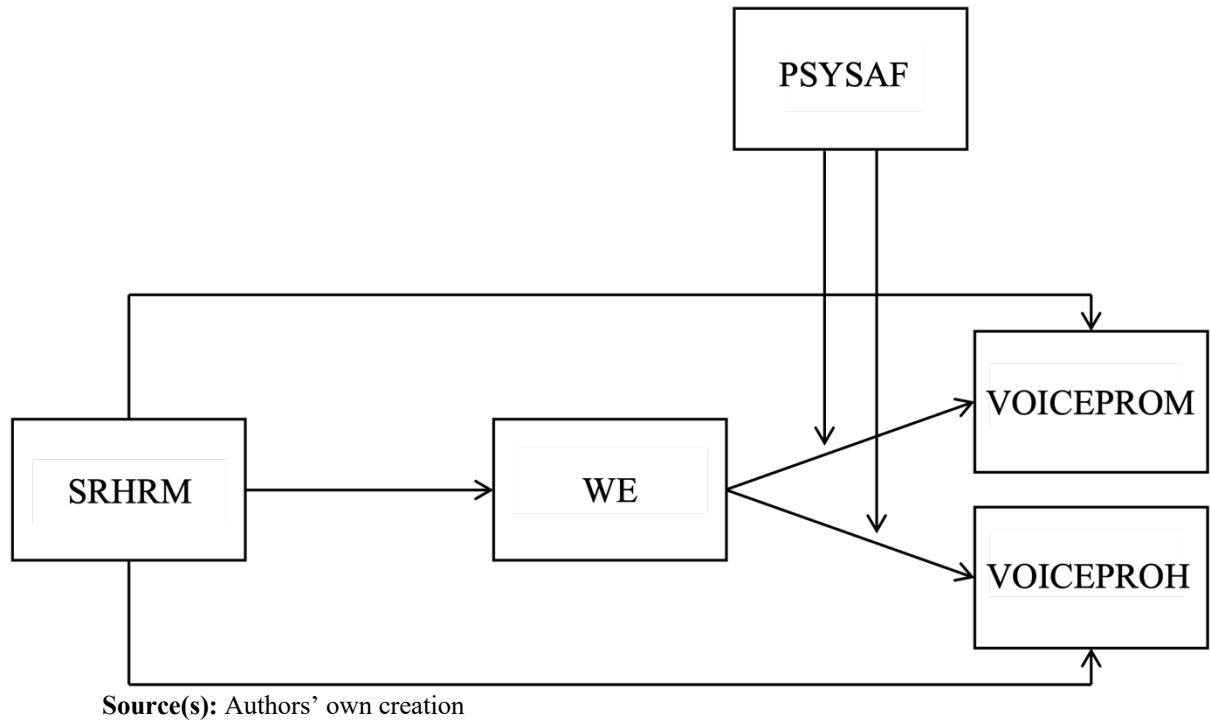
Note. SRHRM = socially responsible human resources management; WE = work engagement; PSYSAF = organizational psychological safety; VOICEPROM = employee promotive voice behaviour, VOICEPROH = employee prohibitive voice behaviour; b = unstandardized effect size; SE = standard error; R^2 = coefficient of determination; $BootSE$ = bootstrap standard error; $BootCI$ = bootstrap confidence interval.

^aGender: 0 = male, 1 = female; ^b Work situation: 0 = open-ended contract, 1 = other precarious condition.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Figure 1

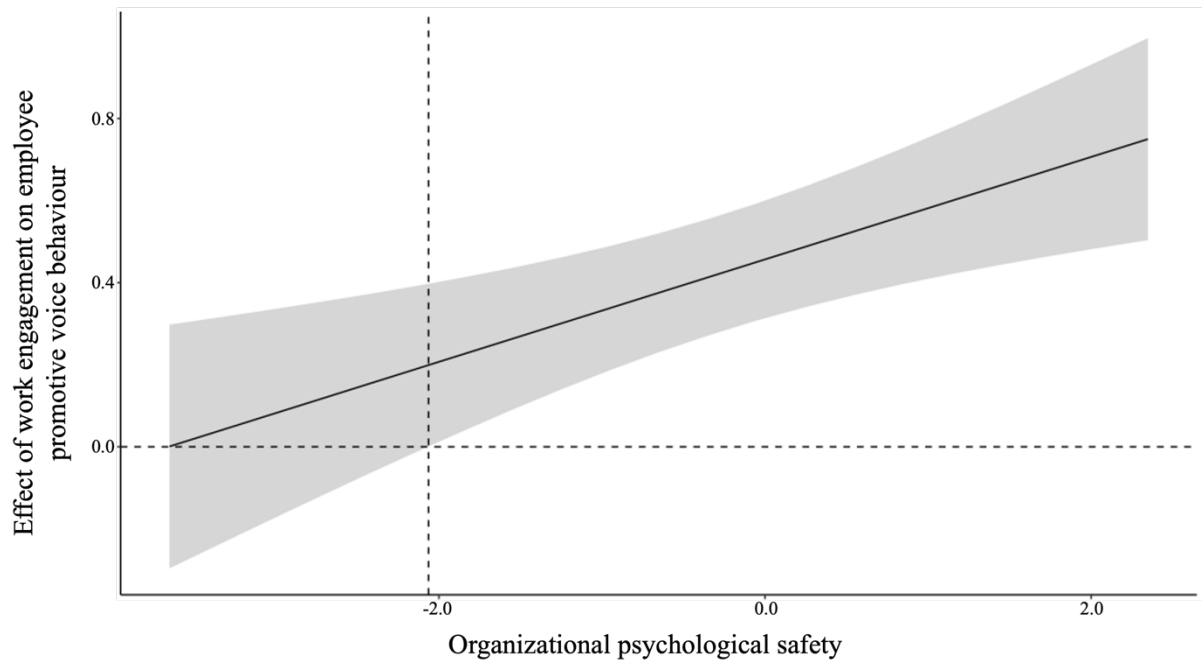
Conceptual Model



Note. SRHRM = socially responsible human resources management; WE = work engagement; PSYSAF = organizational psychological safety; VOICEPROM = employee promotive voice behaviour; VOICEPROH = employee prohibitive voice behaviour.

Figure 2

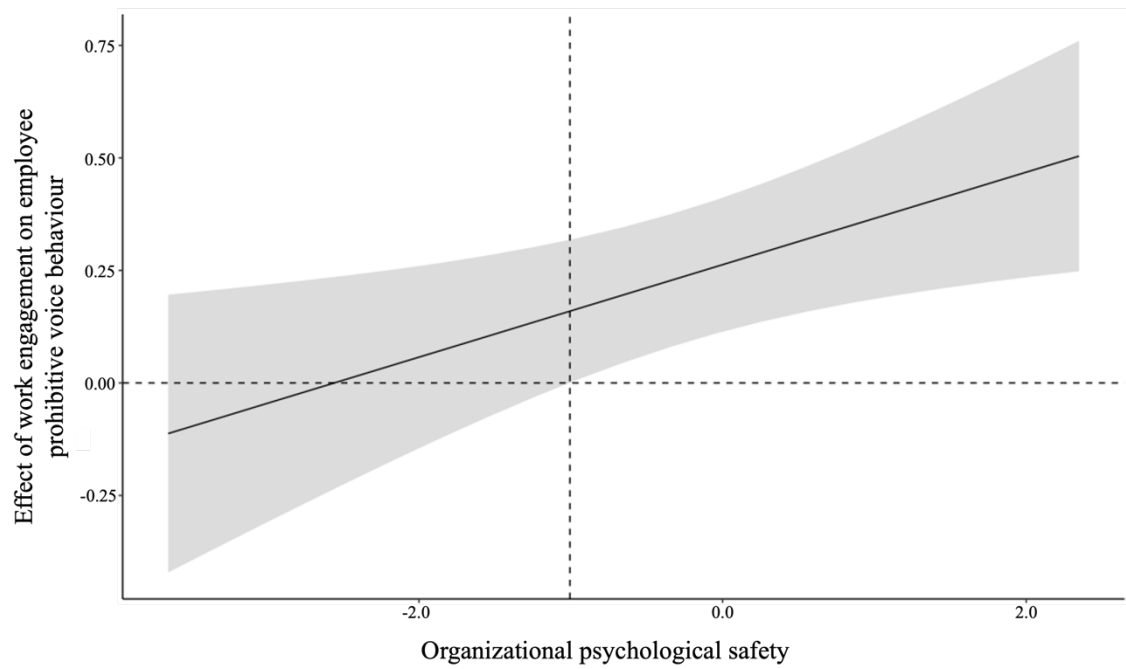
Conditional Effect of Organizational Psychological Safety on Relationship Between Work Engagement and Employee Promotive Voice Behaviour



Source(s): Authors' own creation

Figure 3

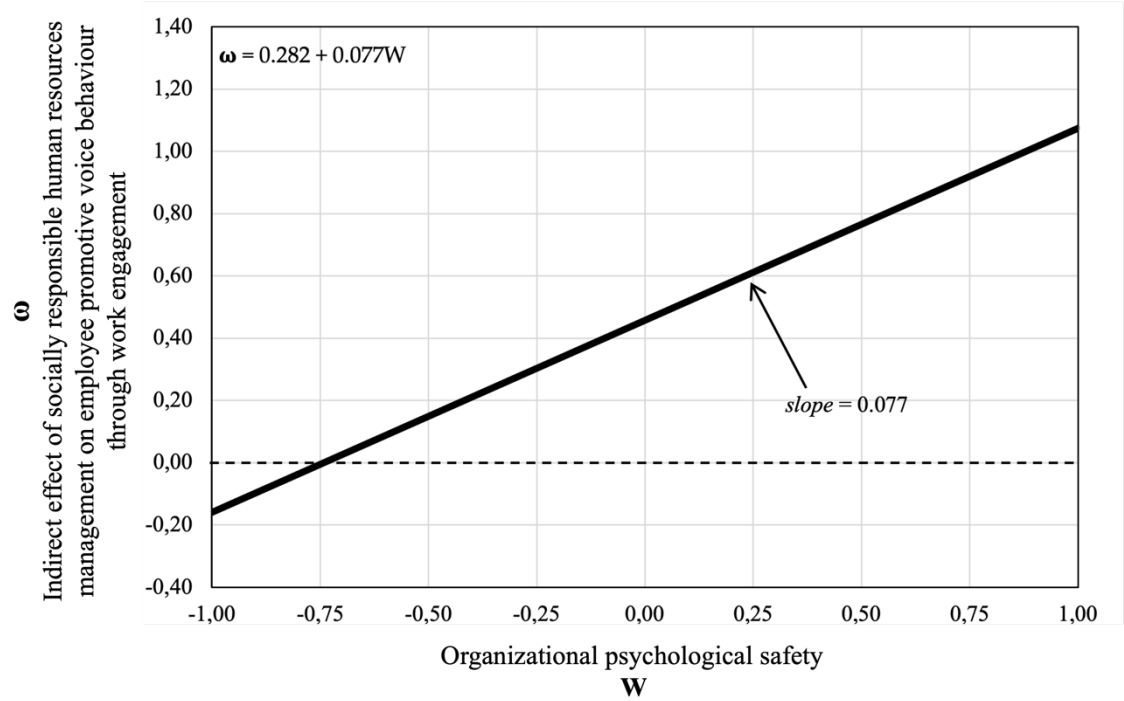
*Conditional Effect of Organizational Psychological Safety on Relationship Between
Work Engagement and Employee Prohibitive Voice Behaviour*



Source(s): Authors' own creation

Figure 4

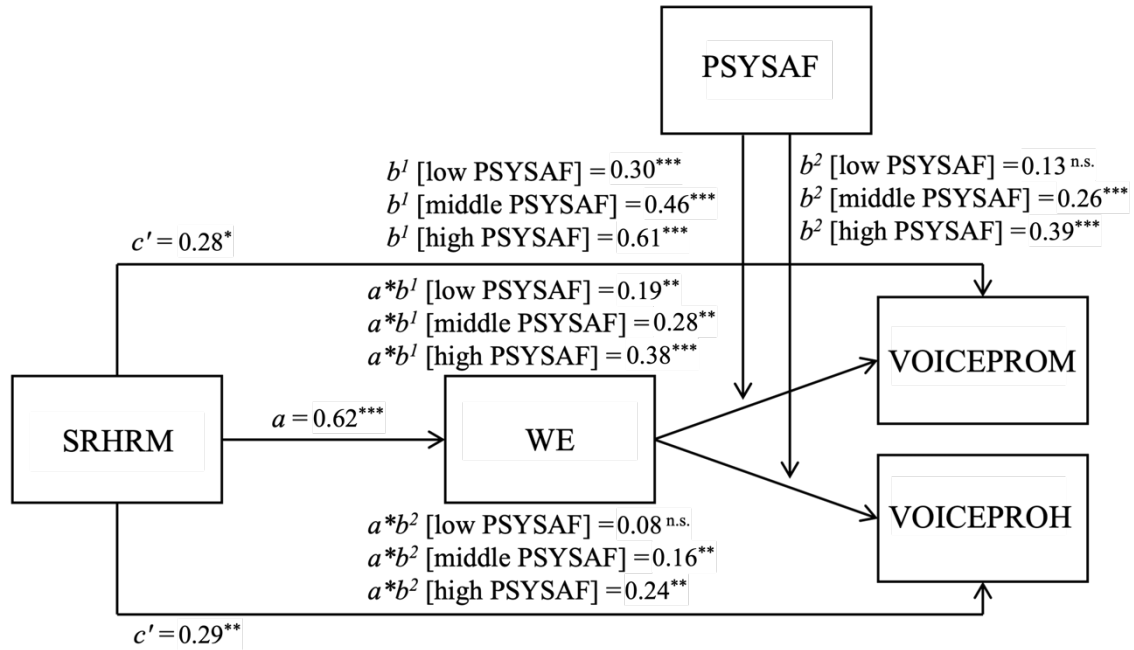
Visual Presentation of Linear Function Relating Organizational Psychological Safety to Indirect Effect of Socially Responsible Human Resources Management on Employee Promotive Voice Behaviour Through Work Engagement



Source(s): Authors' own creation

Figure 5

Moderated Mediation Model



Source(s): Authors' own creation

Note. SRHRM = socially responsible human resources management; WE = work engagement; PSYSAF = organizational psychological safety; VOICEPROM = employee promotive voice behaviour;

VOICEPROH = employee prohibitive voice behaviour.; a = path; c' = direct effect; b^1 = conditional effect of PSYSAF on relationship between WE and VOICEPROM; b^2 = conditional effect of PSYSAF on relationship between WE and VOICEPROH; $a*b^1$ = indirect effect of SRHRM on VOICEPROM moderated by PSYSAF; $a*b^2$ = indirect effect of SRHRM on VOICEPROH moderated by PSYSAF; low PSYSAF = -1 standard deviation; middle PSYSAF = 0 standard deviation; high PSYSAF = +1 standard deviation; all values unstandardized.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$, n.s. = non-significant.