The Influences of Trust in Leader on the Employees' Voice Behavior: The Mediating Role of Psychological Safety

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ABSTRACT

This research is based on the relevant research literature on the voice behavior, this study examines the influence of trust in leader on voice behavior. And this study examines the role of psychological safety as a mediating between trust in leader and voice behavior. This study uses SPSS for data analysis. The results of the study are as follows: This study explains the impact of trust in leader on psychological safety, and explains the impact of trust in leader on organization members' voice behavior, as well as the impact of psychological safety on organization members' voice behavior. And this study also explains the influence of psychological safety as an intermediary effect on trust in leader and voice behavior. Overall, the higher the level of organization members' trust in leader, the more they will increase the level of psychological safety of the organization members, which will prompt the organization members to make more voice behavior.

Keywords *Trust in leader, Voice behavior, Psychological safety.*

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1. Introduction

When internal members encounter various problems in the organization, they can use an alternative mode of voice behavior to help the organization find and solve the problem, and guide organization on the path of change. This emphasizes the significance of the voice behavior, no matter how well the society or organization has established systems and procedures, problems and reverse functions are inevitable (Na, 2021). Appropriate promote voice behavior can allow employees to show themselves well and get the affirmation and recognition of leaders, but suppressing employees' voice behavior may also be seen as a challenge to the authority of superiors (Lou et al., 2021). From the perspective of the leader's identification with subordinates, which is the inner psychological mechanism of the leader, the research perspective extends from the employee's own attitude and cognition to the leader's attitude and cognition. When employees express their opinions, they will affect the cognition, attitude and behavior of their superiors have an important impact (Wang & Qlan, 2021). Promoting constructive voice behavior is mainly emphasized by proposing new ideas and improving existing work practices, which are considered by the leader to be beneficial to the organization or superiors, and thus easier to be accepted (Shen & Mu, 2018). Therefore, organization emphasizes the need to voice behavior.

The purpose of the staff voice behavior is to improve or enhance the effectiveness of the organization's constructive voice behavior (Li & Tian, 2017). Organizations that are more active in voice behavior should have more comprehensive knowledge and information, more in-depth interaction, and different levels of creativity from other organizations (Deng et al., 2018). Therefore, it can be seen as a key factor to improve personal and organizational performance.

In terms of the positive effects of voice behavior, existing studies have explored the positive effects of staff on organizational performance, assessing employee performance, employee organizational justice, and employee psychological health. Organization members are knowledgeable and thoughtful resources that can provide constructive opinions. Their reasonable voice behavior is conducive to the innovation and development of the organization. Therefore, organization is increasingly encouraging staff to voice behavior (Yu & Zhao, 2013). In many cases, employees clearly recognize organizational problems, or have good suggestions and ideas, but they are difficult to put forward due to various reasons, which makes the company missed opportunities. Therefore, understand employees' voice behavior is of great significance to employees' effective motivation to voice behavior (Ren & Huang, 2011). Through the role of these voice behavior, it can be considered that the competitiveness of the organization can be improved and contribute to the development of the organization. Therefore, in organization, it is important to improve the voice behavior of members.

As an element of improving voice behavior, this research focuses on trust in leader.

Paying attention to the interpersonal trust between leaders and subordinates is conducive to the establishment of a trust mechanism within the organization, enabling employees to voice freely in an open environment. Through a comprehensive analysis of factors that affect constructive voice behavior, create an atmosphere of trust within the organization, improve the level of trust within the organization, allow employees to tell the truth in the organization, establish a voice mechanism, improve the quality of organizational decision, and ultimately benefit the organization longterm development (Ren & Huang, 2011).

If organizational members trust in leader, it plays a lot of roles in improving their own voice behavior. This means that leaders not only act in line with their own intrinsic moral values, recognize their own strengths and weaknesses, but also realize how members know themselves, and through the authentic leader of sharing information with members of the organization, lmprove the trust in leader of the members of the organization. Therefore, the members of the organization conduct voice behavior by trust in leader (Heo, 2019).

According to Liu., Yu. and Huang (2018) studies, trust in leader has a positive effect on employees' voice behavior. In the transitional period when competition is becoming increasingly fierce and the external environment is constantly changing, how to improve the innovation capability of the organization is a key issue facing the organization. Organizational innovation depends on the innovation of members. Therefore, allowing members to actively voice in the organization and propose new ideas is an important way to achieve organizational innovation (Liu et al., 2018). On this basis, this research focuses on improving voice behavior, emphasizing the importance of trust in leader. When subordinates trust the leader and the organization, provide more voice behavior to the organization (Shi et al., 2018).

Therefore, this study predicts that trust in leader will improve members' voice behavior. In this context, the trust in leader a plan to increase the influence of members' voice behavior, focusing on psychological safety.

In general, this research focuses on exploring how to increase voice behavior. In this regard, clearly identify the role of enhancing the trust in leader and the voice behavior of the members. The mediating effect of psychological security is further used to illustrate the plan for increasing the influence of trust in leader on voice behavior. It also shows the role of trust in leader. Therefore, this study wants to reveal the level of voice behavior based on the level of psychological safety. Hope to verify this through the mediating effect of psychological safety. In general, this research hopes to propose a plan to increase the level of voice behavior and discuss future research directions related to this.

2. Literature review

2.1 Trust in leader

Trust in leader refers to the willingness and tendency of leaders to bear the risk of injury based on the credibility of subordinates and expect subordinates to respond to achieve organizational goals (Ding & Lin, 2007). Trust in leader can be seen as the leader's sincerity and respect for the subordinates, and then it is fair in the distribution, adjustment and evaluation of the work.

The so-called trust in leader refers to the belief that employees give up their supervision and precautions, are willing to expose their own shortcomings, and believe that the leader will not harm them (Zhong et al., 2019). Trust in leader will affect whether employees can focus on creating value for the organization, including fulfilling their role responsibilities, and demonstrating off-role behaviors, such as organizational citizenship behavior (Wei & Long, 2009). If employees recognize the trust of the leader, it can encourage employees to show organizational expectations (Zhang & Jiang, 2018). Trust in leader promotes the establishment of a closer relationship between employees and leaders, allowing employees to get closer to the leader psychologically, and to regard the leader as "their own person" (Ye et al., 2016). As employees and department heads often contact and communicate in their daily work, personalized trust can more influence employees' attitudes and behaviors. In this case, the negative behavior of subordinates can be effectively suppressed (Zhang, 2017). There are more contacts and exchanges between employees and their direct leaders. The level of employees' personal trust in their direct leaders affects their work attitudes and behaviors. The level of trust depends largely on the attitudes and behaviors of the leaders. Service leader show the influence of constructive voice behavior on the level of employees' trust in leader (Xu & Li, 2018).

Trust in leader refers to the trust shown by employees to their leaders (Fu & Zhong, 2020). Trust in leader has a negative impact on the turnover intention of the work group (Ye et al., 2016). The humble leadership has a positive influence on the employees' voice behavior, and the trust of employees in their leader has a partial mediating effect between the humble leadership and the employees' voice behavior (Zhu & Li, 2017). Trust in leader plays a mediating role in the relationship between service leadership and voice behavior (Xu & Li, 2018). Trust in leader has an obvious negative impact on the job satisfaction of kindergarten teachers (Zhang & Jiang, 2018).

2.2 Psychological safety

Psychological safety refers to the formal and informal organizational practices and procedures that guide and support open and trusting interaction in the work environment (Baer & Frese, 2003). Psychological safety can be seen as the trust psychology of the members of the organization

in the specific organizational environment.

Organizational psychological safety refers to the organization's consensus on the safety of personnel risk burden (Edmondson, 1999). Maintaining a good psychological safety atmosphere helps to establish team learning and organizational learning, guide employees to actively disclose abuses, implement innovations, and improve employee participation and commitment levels (Ling et al., 2010). When working in a team with a higher sense of psychological safety, team members provide more innovative suggestions or ideas to enrich the team discussion process (Yang & Zhang, 2012). Establishing a high level of team psychological safety will help eliminate team employees' concerns about personnel risks, thereby improving the quality of team reflection and team innovation (Zhang & You, 2014). In a team with a strong sense of psychological safety, when others disagree with themselves, team members can boldly express their own opinions while respecting the opinions of others (Li et al., 2014). Voice behavior is dangerous, so psychological safety is an important factor affecting constructive Voice behavior (Liu et al., 2018).

The so-called psychological safety refers to an individual's overall cognitive evaluation of the quality of life according to the criteria he chooses in the cognitive evaluation of his own life, as well as his satisfaction with life (Park, 2019). Psychological safety has a positive impact on employees' learned behavior, voice behavior, innovation, job commitment, and work outcome (Ling et al., 2010). The team atmosphere has a direct and indirect positive influence on the research ability of graduate students through the mediating of the team's psychological safety (Li et al., 2014). Psychological safety has a significant positive effect on learning by failures (Tang et al., 2014). Psychological safety completely mediating the influence of psychological capitals on employees' innovative behavior (Wang et al., 2017). Psychological safety is the influence of the psychological resilience of the mediating on the creativity of knowledge workers (Wang & Zhang, 2018). Psychological safety plays a mediating role in the relationship between trust in leader and voice behavior (Liu et al., 2018).

2.3 Voice behavior

Voice behavior is defined as discussing problems with leaders or colleagues, proposing solutions, seeking help or exposing the organization to improve the situation (Rusbult, 1986). Voice behavior can be regarded as a member of the organization to voice from a personal point of view, aiming at the current problems or disadvantages of the organization.

Voice behavior means that members of the organization have formed their own views on the current state of the organization and raised this point during the organization's public debate. Voice behavior are critical to the staff's personal and organizational efficiency (Shi & Wang, 2014).

When expressing opinions to others, staff will carefully evaluate the risks and benefits of voice behavior (Li & Sun, 2015). Employees' voice behavior is vital to the survival and development of the organization (Chen et al., 2016). The purpose of the employees' voice behavior is to improve or enhance the effectiveness of the constructive voice of the organization (Li & Tian, 2017). Improve employees' psychological capital level, so that employees can actively voice, and contribute their own strength to the development of the organization (Song, 2018).

Voice behavior refer to the voice of members of the organization, with the purpose of improving the operational efficiency of the organization (Chen et al., 2016). Insulting management has a significant negative impact on the voice behavior of organization members (Ren & Huang, 2011). Affective involvement plays a mediating role between employee-organizational value matching and voice behavior (Ma et al., 2015). Prosocial behavior and facilitating voice and restraining voice all have obvious and significant positive effects (Chen et al., 2016). Facts have proved that substitutes for leadership have a positive influence on the creative behavior and voice behavior of members (Song, 2016). Organizational trust obviously plays a mediating role in the voice relationship between authorized leadership and employees (Lu et al., 2017).

2.4 Trust in leader and psychological safety

When employees appear in an organizational environment with a higher trust atmosphere, their psychological safety will be higher (Li & Yan, 2007). Trust in leader improves the group's psychological safety and indirectly reduces the group's intention to leave (Ye et al., 2016). When members of an organization have trust in leaders, colleagues, and the organization, they can be convinced that the organizational environment is safe and improve their sense of psychological safety (Shi, 2017). Trust in leader can greatly improve the psychological safety of employees with higher power distances (Liu et al., 2018). Thus, trust in leaders leads to a high level of psychological safety.

Hypothesis 1: *Trust in leader will positively impact on psychological safety.*

2.5 Trust in leader and voice behavior

Within the organization, including colleagues, direct leaders and organizations, trust can promote the voice behavior of the members of the organization (Duan & Tian, 2011). Trust within an organization is the source of an organization's competitive advantage, enabling employees to tell the truth, thereby improving voice behavior (Ren & Huang, 2012). Managers should establish harmonious interpersonal relationships with lower-level employees, establish good colleague relationships, and encourage employees to voice (Shi et al., 2018). When the members of the

organization trust the leader and the organization, provide more voice behavior to the organization (Shi et al., 2018). Thus, trust in leader leads to a high level of voice behavior.

Hypothesis 2: *Trust in leader will positively impact on voice behavior.*

2.6 Psychological safety and voice behavior

Strengthen the psychological safety of employees, so that employees dare to voice for themselves and the results of the organization, without worrying about the negative impact on themselves (Yuan & Liu, 2016). Provide employees with a free, safe and reliable working environment, improve their psychological safety, and promote voice behavior (Xu, 2016). The lower the employee's psychological safety, the lower the possibility of expressing their thoughts and voice on organizational issues (Jing, 2017). Employee with a high sense of psychological safety believe that voice behavior is their own internal role, that voice has more advantages than disadvantages, and are willing to provide voice to the organization (Shi & Zhao, 2020). Thus, psychological safety leads to a high level of voice behavior.

Hypothesis 3: *Psychological safety will positively impact on voice behavior.*

2.7 The mediating role of psychological safety

Ethical leadership partly improves the psychological safety of employees and promotes the occurrence of voice behavior (Duan, 2012). Trust improves the psychological safety awareness of the members of the organization and reduces the job stress of the members of the organization (Han et al., 2017). Trust in leader reduces the risk awareness of members of the organization in voice behavior, and has a mediating effect on voice behavior through the influence of psychological safety (Liu et al., 2018). After the trust in leader is evaluated by the employees, it meets the psychological safety needs of the members of the organization and demonstrates the voice behavior (Huang et al., 2019). Therefore, trust in leader may improve psychological safety, and a higher level of psychological safety may increase the voice behavior of members of the organization. Overall, trust in leader can improve the voice behavior of organization members through the mediating of psychological safety.

Hypothesis 4: *Psychological safety will mediate the relationship between trust in leader and voice behavior.*

3. Method

3.1 Research sample characteristics

This research conducted an empirical study on employees working in Chinese SMEs. A total of 336 questionnaires were used for empirical analysis. In terms of demographic characteristics of this study, in terms of gender, there are 146 (43.5%) males and 190 (56.5%) females.

In terms of age, there are 185 people (55.1%) under 20-29 years old, 95 people under 30-39 years old (28.3%), 46 people under 40-49 years old (13.7%), and 9 people under 50-59 years old (2.7%), 1 person (0.3%) is over 60 years old.

In terms of educational background, 18 (5.4%) graduated from elementary school and below, 45 graduated from high school (13.4%), 211 graduated from university (62.8%), 53 graduated with master's degree (15.8%), graduated with doctoral degree or above 9 People (2.7%).

In terms of positions, there are 218 ordinary staff (64.9%), 70 (20.8%) intermediate staff, 10 senior staff (3%), and 38 other staff (11.3%).

In terms of how long they have worked at the SME, 104 people (31%) have been there between 0-2 years, 78 people (23.2%) have been there between 2-5 years, 86 peoples (25.6%) have been there between 5-8 years, 31 people (9.2%) have been there between8-12 years, and 37 people (11%) have been there12 years and more.

3.2 Measurement

3.2.1 Trust in leader

Trust in leader means as an input to communication, but it can also be seen as a direct result of interactions between subordinates or team members and team or organization leaders (Burke et al., 2007). In this study, we used the tools from McAllister to measure the trust in leader of employees working in Chinese SMEs (McAllister, 1995). Items were completed on a Likert five-point scale with 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=undecided, 4=agree, and 5=strongly agree. The sample items included "We have a sharing relationship. We can both freely share our ideas, feelings, and hopes." and "This person approaches his/her job with professionalism and dedication.".

3.2.2 Psychological safety

Psychological safety refers to the ability of individuals to survive in a safe society and establish stable relationships with members of the society, thereby obtaining a state of peace and satisfaction (Alsalkhi, 2019). In this study, we used the tools from Liang., Farh, and Farh to measure the psychological safety of employees working in Chinese SMEs (Liang et al., 2012). Items were

completed on a Likert five-point scale with 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=undecided, 4=agree, and 5=strongly agree. The sample items included "In my work unit, I can express my true feelings regarding my job." and "Nobody in my unit will pick on me even if I have different opinions.".

3.2.3 Voice behavior

Voice behavior not only refers to criticism, but also refers to actions that promote the emphasis on constructive challenges, the purpose of which is to improve (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). In this study, we used the tools from Van Dyne, and LePine to measure the voice behavior of employees working in Chinese SMEs (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). Items were completed on a Likert five-point scale with 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=undecided, 4=agree, and 5=strongly agree. The sample items included "This particular co-worker helps others in this group learn about the work." and "This particular co-worker fulfills the responsibilities specified in his/her job description.".

4. Results

4.1 Exploratory factor analysis and reliability analysis

In terms of measurement, we use measurement tools that have been repeatedly used in previous studies and have obtained feasibility. In addition, in order to verify the appropriateness of the configuration of the variables, the main principle component analysis is used in the exploratory factor analysis, and the examines method is used for the analysis in the rotation method. The results of the exploratory factor analysis are as follows.

The variables proposed in this study are divided into three independent factors: trust in leader, psychological safety and voice behavior. Looking at the question items of each measurement variable in detail, the trust in leader is composed of 11 question items. The question item measuring this variable is divided into a factor of 1 from 0.586 to 0.796.

As a factor of 2, psychological safety is composed of 5 question items, and the question items for measuring this variable range from .661 to .810.

As a factor of 3, the voice behavior is composed of a total of 6 question items, and the question items for measuring this variable range from .621 to .759.

Eigen value of variables showed, from 1.514 to 9.415 are more than 1, the KMO value is .942 (sig=.000), so factor analysis between variables is appropriate. Through these results, trust in leader, psychological safety, and voice behavior are divided into independent factors. The following table is the result of exploratory factor analysis. The results of reliability analysis showed that trust in leader=.918, psychological safety=.867, and voice behavior=.825. The values of Cronbach's were higher than 0.7. Therefore, the reliability is valid and acceptable.

Table 1. The result of exploratory factor analysis

Variable	Items	Composition			Cronbach's Alpha
		1	2	3	
Trust in leader	1	0.604	0.229	0.360	
	2	0.668	0.270	0.270	
	3	0.652	0.350	0.247	
	4	0.714	0.271	0.284	
	5	0.592	0.276	0.235	
	6	0.724	0.310	0.127	0.918
	7	0.796	0.040	0.029	
	8	0.586	0.386	0.178	
	9	0.600	0.229	0.269	
	10	0.718	0.284	0.123	
	11	0.669	0.095	0.180	
Voice behavior	1	0.177	0.182	0.684	
	2	0.097	0.099	0.759	
	3	0.167	0.228	0.730	0.867
	4	0.159	0.243	0.631	
	5	0.201	0.064	0.675	
Psychological safety	1	0.371	0.083	0.621	
	2	0.229	0.661	0.323	
	3	0.227	0.787	0.224	0.825
	4	0.346	0.722	0.180	
	5	0.341	0.678	0.134	
	6	0.207	0.810	0.093	
Eigen value		9.415	1.887	1.514	
Variance (%)		42.796	8.577	6.883	
Cumulative (%)		42.796	51.373	58.256	

KMO=.942(sig=.000)

4.2 Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis

The results of the descriptive statistics in this study are as follows: On mean, trust in leader=3.594, psychological safety=3.600, and voice behavior=3.721. In addition, in terms of standard deviation, trust in leader=0.650, psychological safety=0.732, and voice behavior=0.581.

The following is an analysis of the correlation between the variables.

  1. Trust in leader is positively related to psychological safety ($r=.661$, $p<.001$).

  2. Trust in leader is positively related to voice behavior ($r=.563$, $p<.001$).

  3. Psychological safety is positively related to voice behavior ($r=.493$, $p<.001$).

Table 2. The result of descriptive statistics and correlation analysis

	Deviation	Standard deviation	Trust in leader	Psychological safety	Voice behavior
1. Trust in leader	3.594	0.650	-		
2. Psychological safety	3.600	0.732	.661***	-	
3. Voice behavior	3.721	0.581	.563***	.493***	-

***: $p<.001$, **: $p<.01$, *: $p<.05$, †$=p<.1$

4.3 Regression analysis

This study uses single and multiple regression analysis to conduct hypothesis testing to verify the influence and mediating effect of various variables. The analysis sequence is as follows.

First, this study examines the influence of the independent variable trust in leader on the subordinate variable's psychological safety. Then, this study examines the influence of the independent variable trust in leader on the subordinate variable's voice behavior. Third, this study examines the influence of the independent variable psychological safety on the subordinate variable's voice behavior. Finally, the mediating variables of psychological security are tested.

Hypothesis 1, for trust in leader will a positive impact on psychological safety. The analysis results show that trust in leader does have a positive impact on psychological safety ($\beta=.661$***, $p<.001$). Therefore, Hypothesis 1 is supported. The following table is the regression analysis result table of trust in leader to psychological safety.

Table 3. Effect of trust in leader on psychological safety

Distinction	Psychological safety		
	β	t	VIF
Trust in leader	0.661***	16.081	1.000
R^2	0.436		
$\varDelta R^2$	0.435		
F	258.603***		

***: $p<.001$, **: $p<.01$, *: $p<.05$, †$=p<.1$

Hypothesis 2, for trust in leader will a positive impact on voice behavior. The analysis results show that trust in leader does have a positive impact on voice behavior (β=.563***, p<.001). Therefore, Hypothesis 2 is supported. The following table is the regression analysis result table of trust in leader to voice behavior.

Table 4. Effect of trust in leader on voice behavior

Distinction	Voice behavior		
	β	t	VIF
Trust in leader	0.563***	12.439	1.000
R^2		0.317	
$\varDelta R^2$		0.315	
F		154.729***	

***: p<.001, **: p<.01, *: p<.05, †= p<.1

Hypothesis 3, for psychological safety will a positive impact on voice behavior. The analysis results show that psychological safety does have a positive impact on voice behavior (β=.493***, p<.001). Therefore, Hypothesis 3 is supported. The following table is the regression analysis result table of psychological safety to voice behavior.

Table 5. Effect of psychological safety on voice behavior

Distinction	Voice behavior		
	β	t	VIF
Trust in leader	0.493***	10.369	1.000
R^2		0.244	
$\varDelta R^2$		0.241	
F		107.525***	

***: p<.001, **: p<.01, *: p<.05, †= p<.1

Hypothesis 4, setting it as a sense of psychological safety will produce a positive mediating effect in the relationship between trust in leader and voice behavior. The analysis results show that psychological safety (β=0.216***, p<.001) has indeed produced a positive mediating effect. Therefore, Hypothesis 4 is supported. The following table shows the results of the analysis of the mediating effect of psychological safety.

Table 6. Mediating effect of psychological safety

Subordination variable: Voice behavior					
Distinction	Model 1			Model 2		
	β	t	VIF	β	t	VIF
Trust in leader	0.563***	12.439	1.000	0.420***	7.097	1.774
Psychological safety				0.216***	3.652	1.774
R^2(Adj-R^2)	0.317(.315)			0.343(0.339)		
$\varDelta R^2$(Adj-R^2)	-			0.026(.0024)		
F	154.729***			86.891***		

***: $p<.001$, **: $p<.01$, *: $p<.05$, †$= p<.1$

5. Conclusions

5.1 Conclusions and implications

This research focuses on employees working in small and medium-sized enterprises in China and explores how to improve their voice behavior. In addition, this study also verified the influence of trust in leader of organization members on voice behavior. This study also verified the influence of trust in leader of the members of the organization on the psychological safety. The influence of members' psychological security on voice behavior was tested. This study also examined the mediating role of psychological safety in the relationship between trust in leader and voice behavior. The results of this research and future research directions are as follows.

First of all, this research confirms that trust in leader will increase the level of voice behavior. This explains that in SMEs, the more employees trust in leader, the more their voice behavior will improve. The voice behavior of the members of the organization help the organization in many ways, and are also a necessary part of the organization's innovation and development (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). Voice behavior is considered to be an important variable to solve problems and improve work efficiency. Not only at the overall level of the organization, but also in the team process or collaboration process, it shows that the guidance of managers plays a very important role in the improvement of voice behavior (Zhang, 2019). Based on this, we can fully see the importance and role of voice behavior. Therefore, this study shows that trust in leader plays a key role as an important factor in improving voice behavior.

Secondly, trust in leader improves the level of psychological safety of the members of the organization. In this regard, in order to increase the psychological safety of the employees of

Chinese SMEs, it is necessary to pay full attention to this point and formulate relevant plans and policies to guide and encourage organizational members to trust in leader. Psychological safety gives people the willingness to reduce their intentional self-protection, change their personal habits, learn actively in the organization, and have the courage to try, which helps to complete their work harder (Lee, 2020). Increase employees' psychological safety and let them dare to create (Wang & Zhang, 2018). Therefore, it is very important to improve psychological safety.

Third, this research confirms that psychological safety will improve the level of voice behavior. This shows that the more stable the psychological safety of employees working in SMEs, the more they can improve their voice behavior. The cooperative conflict management method can increase the psychological safety of employees, allowing employees to freely express work-related opinions when they conflict with their leaders (Zhang et al., 2015). Unspoken rules make it difficult for employees to judge the impact of these rules on their behavior and reactions, thereby reducing their psychological safety, and thus affecting the voice behavior of members of the organization (Yu et al., 2015). Through this, it fully embodies the role of voice behavior and psychological safety in the organization. This shows that psychological safety plays a key role as an important factor in enhancing voice behavior.

Fourth, it is found that psychological safety plays an active mediating role in the relationship between trust in leader and voice behavior. Ethical leadership improves the psychological safety of employees to a certain extent, and promotes the occurrence of voice behavior (Duan, 2012). Therefore, the mediating effect of enhancing the sense of psychological safety plays a very important role in the organization members of Chinese small and medium-sized enterprises. Therefore, Chinese small and medium-sized enterprises should pay more attention to how to manage employees' trust in leader to promote voice behavior, and at the same time pay more attention to the mediating role of psychological safety between the two. In addition, measures and policies to promote psychological safety should be formulated to increase the use of psychological safety on trust in leader and voice behavior. By improving employees' psychological safety, they can be encouraged to focus on their work.

5.2 Limitations and direction of future research

First of all, in this research, we examine the influence on voice behavior by focusing only on trust in leader as an independent variable. According to previous research, some other variables have also been used in the research of voice behavior. For example, humble leadership is the best way to increase the voice behavior of members of an organization (Xin et al., 2021). In a study on the mechanism of humble leadership influencing organizational members' suggestive behavior,

humble leadership, self-efficacy, and LMX were used as variables that influence the voice behavior. Therefore, in future research, in addition to trust in leader, it is also necessary to explore various other variables that affect the voice behavior.

Second, only focus on psychological safety as a parameter that affects the level of voice behavior. In this study, we studied the media effect of psychological safety, but in 2019, Shang et al conducted a study on the impact of innovative passion and knowledge sharing intention on employee creativity. Through research on self-determination theory, innovation passion, organizational citizenship behavior, knowledge sharing, and employee creativity, the moderating effects of psychological safety can also be confirmed (Shang et al., 2019). In future research, in addition to the mediating role of psychological safety, it is also necessary to study and verify the moderating role of psychological safety in the causal variables that affect voice behavior and trust in leader.

Third, we only focused on variables that have a positive influence on the voice behavior of the members of the organization. However, in other previous studies, there have also been some variables that have a negative influence on the voice behavior. For example, unspoken rules[60] and job stress[36] are variables that have a negative impact on the organization's voice behavior. This has been confirmed in previous studies. Therefore, it is necessary to classify the positive variables that are aimed at increasing the voice behavior of the organization members and the negative variables that may reduce the voice behavior of the organization members, and test their effectiveness.

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