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Research Paper

Employee Voice via Sustainable Performance Management: Empowerment and Ethical Leadership Impact

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ABSTRACT

Amid growing demands for corporate social responsibility in the tourism sector, understanding the factors that encourage employees to communicate constructive ideas and concerns is essential for organizational learning and sustainable hospitality management. This study examines the relationship between Sustainable Performance Management (SPM) and Employee Voice Behavior (EVB), focusing on the mediating role of Psychological Empowerment (PE) and the moderating role of Ethical Leadership (EL). A quantitative, cross-sectional survey was conducted among 300 frontline hotel employees in Greater Bandung, Indonesia, selected through stratified random sampling. The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling. The findings indicate that SPM is positively associated with both PE and EVB, while PE is positively associated with EVB. PE also partially mediates the relationship between SPM and EVB, indicating that psychological empowerment represents one pathway through which sustainable performance management is associated with employee voice. Furthermore, EL is positively associated with EVB but negatively moderates the relationship between PE and EVB. This finding suggests that the positive association between psychological empowerment and employee voice becomes weaker at higher levels of ethical leadership, although the underlying mechanism requires further investigation. The study contributes to sustainable human resource management research by integrating organizational performance practices, employee psychological states, and leadership context into a framework for understanding employee voice in the hospitality industry. The findings highlight the importance of developmental performance management, psychological empowerment, and leadership practices that preserve meaningful opportunities for employee participation.

Keywords: *Employee voice behavior; Ethical leadership; Hospitality industry; Psychological empowerment; Sustainable performance management.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Performance management systems (SPMS) are a new category of increasingly important human resource management (HRM) practices for organizations seeking to align business performance with their broader social, environmental, and ethical goals (Aguinis & Burgi-Tian, 2021). Within the global tourism and hospitality industry, where service quality is tightly linked to human capital, SPMS differs significantly from traditional performance management. While traditional approaches focus heavily on short-term financial outcomes and occupancy rates, SPMS concentrates on continuous development driven by value-based outcomes and sustainable hospitality practices (Paulet et al., 2021). This modern approach has profound implications for corporate sustainability, particularly in creating a high-involvement workplace climate where frontline hospitality employees feel secure and motivated to exhibit employee voice behavior.

Employee voice behavior is defined as the discretionary communication of ideas, suggestions, or concerns intended to improve organizational functioning (Morrison, 2023). In highly dynamic service environments such as hotels, resorts, and tourism agencies, the practice of voice is central to service innovation, service recovery, and operational process enhancement. This is especially vital for hospitality firms pursuing sustainability-related strategies, such as green lodging, waste reduction, or eco-tourism operations. Nevertheless, the willingness of frontline hospitality staff—who interact directly with guests—to voice their constructive opinions is structurally influenced by the overarching performance management design and their immediate psychological setting (Mowbray et al., 2022). Psychological empowerment, therefore, acts as one of the vital mediating mechanisms for transforming sustainable performance systems into actual voice behavior. Attempting to deploy sustainable initiatives is bound to fail if hospitality employees lack the confidence, perceived competence, and self-determination to share insights regarding service improvements (Llorente-Alonso et al., 2024). Key dimensions of psychological empowerment—meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact—can exert a powerful influence over employees' proactive behaviors in service delivery (Kim & Cho, 2024).

Simultaneously, ethical leadership has become a recognized management tool in moderating the relationship between performance frameworks and employee outcomes. Hospitality leaders who operate in a fair, conscientious, and communal manner are most likely to provide the psychological safety required for staff to speak up (Wen & Chi, 2023). In the hospitality sector, where hierarchies are traditionally rigid, this demonstration of ethical support from upper management improves employee trust in the evaluation system, thereby mitigating the fear of negative reprisals when suggestions or operational bottlenecks are brought to light (Amory et al., 2024). Recent empirical studies focusing on sustainability-driven firms indicate the importance of SPMS as an antecedent of high-involvement work climates that facilitate voice (Paulet et al., 2021). Similar patterns have been observed across complex organizational settings, where participatory management systems serve to mediate the relationship between empowerment and innovative behaviors (Alwali, 2024). Furthermore, empirical research within the Indonesian service and hospitality sectors underscores the indispensable role of ethical leadership in encouraging voice behaviors to correct unethical or ineffective field practices (Zainal et al., 2023).

Despite growing interest in sustainable human resource management and employee voice behavior, an important research gap remains in the tourism and hospitality literature. Previous studies have examined the relationships between performance management practices and employee voice, as well as the role of psychological empowerment in promoting proactive employee behavior (Morrison, 2023; Paulet et al., 2021). However, further investigation is needed to understand how sustainable performance management, psychological empowerment, and ethical leadership operate together in explaining employee voice behavior within hospitality organizations. In particular, the role of ethical leadership as a contextual factor that shapes the relationship between employees' psychological empowerment and their willingness to express constructive suggestions, concerns, and ideas requires further empirical examination.

This gap is relevant to hospitality organizations, where employees frequently encounter service failures, operational inefficiencies, and opportunities for environmental and social improvement. Although sustainable performance management may provide developmental feedback, transparent evaluation, and opportunities for employee participation, these practices do not necessarily ensure that psychologically empowered employees will consistently engage in voice behavior. The extent to which employees translate their sense of meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact into constructive communication may also depend on the leadership context in which they work. Ethical leaders promote fairness, integrity, accountability, and respectful communication; nevertheless, the extent to which ethical leadership strengthens or weakens the relationship between psychological empowerment and employee voice behavior remains an empirical question in the hospitality context.

Accordingly, this study examines the relationship between sustainable performance management and employee voice behavior, with psychological empowerment as a mediating mechanism and ethical leadership as a moderator of the relationship between psychological empowerment and employee voice behavior. Specifically, the study investigates whether sustainable performance management directly contributes to employee voice behavior, whether psychological empowerment mediates this relationship, and whether the strength of the relationship between psychological empowerment and employee voice behavior varies according to ethical leadership. The proposed relationships are examined using a quantitative, cross-sectional research design and Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4.0.

This study makes three contributions. First, it integrates sustainable performance management, psychological empowerment, employee voice behavior, and ethical leadership into a single explanatory framework. Second, it clarifies the mediating role of psychological empowerment in explaining how sustainable performance management is associated with employee voice behavior. Third, it examines ethical leadership as a boundary condition in the relationship between psychological empowerment and employee voice behavior, thereby providing a more differentiated understanding of how leadership context relates to employees' willingness to speak up. The findings are intended to inform hospitality managers and human resource practitioners seeking to develop performance management practices and leadership environments that support constructive employee communication and continuous organizational improvement.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Sustainable Performance Management and Employee Voice Behavior

Sustainable performance management (SPM) is defined as a continuous, forward-looking process in which employees are integrated into the organization's strategic success, long-term thinking is prioritized, and the multi-dimensional well-being of employees, the organization, and its broader social-environmental context are structurally respected (Aguinis & Burgi-Tian, 2021). Within the rapidly changing, high-innovation-demand context of the global hospitality industry, traditional performance appraisal systems that rely solely on retrospective financial indicators, rigid assessment cycles, and guest satisfaction scores are increasingly insufficient. In contrast, an SPM framework shifts the focus toward continuous employee development, reflective behavior-based feedback, perceived procedural fairness, and a high level of value-driven alignment (Wen & Chi, 2023). This strategic evolution is vital for hospitality firms to remain agile, reduce high turnover rates, and sustain competitive advantages in premium service delivery.

Grounding this framework in Social Exchange Theory (SET) and Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET) provides a robust dual-mechanism to explain these behavioral dynamics. Under SET, the system-level characteristics of Sustainable Performance Management Systems (SPMS) serve as powerful signals of organizational care and investment, fostering a sense of reciprocity where employees feel obligated to repay the organization through constructive behaviors. Concurrently, CET explains how the informative and developmental attributes of SPMS nurture employees' self-determination and intrinsic motivation, thereby enhancing their internal psychological states. Among the most critical behavioral outcomes triggered by this high-investment HRM climate is employee voice behavior, which manifests as the

discretionary communication of ideas, operational concerns, or constructive suggestions to improve overall organizational functioning (Morrison, 2023). In the high-touch hospitality sector, where frontline employees serve as the critical interface between the brand and the consumer, the willingness to exhibit voice behavior is heavily contingent upon the design of the appraisal system. Previous literature demonstrates that when SPMS are perceived as transparent, developmental, and structurally ethical, they significantly enhance employees' psychological safety and intrinsic motivation to actively speak up (Wilkinson et al., 2020).

Empirical evidence consistently verifies that sustainable, supportive HR practices positively predict proactive behaviors across diverse service touchpoints (Kim & Beehr, 2020). Incorporating sustainability metrics—such as rewarding green initiatives, ethical service recovery, and collaborative teamwork—builds deep organizational trust, which encourages frontline staff to voice both helpful service innovations and early warnings about operational vulnerabilities (Ashiru et al., 2022). This dynamic is particularly indispensable in the people-centric hospitality industry, where the spontaneous insights and discretionary behaviors of employees directly determine service quality, agility, and operational excellence. Consequently, contemporary hospitality literature suggests that SPM must be viewed as an strategic enabler of proactive performance rather than a mere punitive measurement tool, tightly linked to broad corporate sustainability and long-term service growth (Podgorodnichenko et al., 2022). Based on these theoretical and empirical underpinnings, it is argued that a well-implemented SPM system will structurally foster a safe environment that drives hospitality staff to actively articulate constructive inputs. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Sustainable Performance Management has a significant positive effect on Employee Voice Behavior within the hospitality industry.

2.2. Sustainable Performance Management and Psychological Empowerment

Sustainable Performance Management Systems (SPMS) constitute a proactive organizational approach aimed at enhancing the traditional performance appraisal architecture through continuous, transparent feedback, structured employee development, and equitable evaluation systems that balance long-term sustainability objectives with individual employee welfare (Wen & Chi, 2023). Grounded in Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET) as a primary theoretical lens, SPMS fundamentally deviates from conventional, compliance-driven performance appraisals by shifting the structural focus from rigid, retrospective metrics to iterative processes and ethical values that foster workplace fairness and continuous competency development, (Aguinis & Burgi-Tian, 2021). Under CET, the informative and development-oriented nature of sustainable appraisals satisfies employees' intrinsic needs for competence and autonomy, thereby serving as a critical driver of psychological states. Within the hospitality industry, where emotional labor is intense and frontline service delivery is highly interdependent, such inclusive and growth-oriented appraisal frameworks are crucial. When hospitality organizations move away from punitive, guest-complaint-centric metrics and instead implement SPMS, they cultivate a high-involvement service culture where employees feel genuinely valued, organizationally supported, and intrinsically motivated.

Consequently, psychological empowerment emerges as a critical psychological and motivational consequence of a well-perceived SPM framework. Psychological empowerment is defined as a multi-dimensional motivational construct manifested in four distinct cognitive perceptions: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact regarding one's organizational role (Pradhan & Panda, 2021). Performance management systems that are structurally designed and perceived by frontline hospitality staff as socially just, highly participative, and developmental serve to reinforce these four cognitive dimensions. Specifically, by involving hospitality personnel in collaborative goal-setting and providing constructive, future-oriented feedback, SPM clarifies how individual service roles contribute to the establishment's broader sustainability and service-quality goals, thereby enhancing the perception of *meaning* and *impact* (Zainal et al., 2023). Furthermore, the developmental and supportive nature of SPM bolsters employees' beliefs in their own service capabilities (*competence*) and grants them operational autonomy in service recovery scenarios (*self-determination*).

This structural relationship is strongly supported by empirical findings in organizational behavior and social sciences. For instance, Lewandowski & Cirella (2023) demonstrated that developmental performance appraisals significantly enhance employees' perceptions of autonomy and competence, which subsequently drives intrinsic motivation through the expanded operational discretion afforded by the appraisal process. Similarly, Singh et al. (2022) verified that when performance rules are procedurally fair and evaluation systems are resilient, ongoing transparent feedback engenders deep organizational trust and facilitates rich, proactive engagement among service employees.

Despite these insights, a distinct research gap persists within the hospitality and tourism literature. While general human resource practices have been linked to psychological outcomes, empirical studies exploring the direct structural impact of sustainable, eco-centric performance systems (SPM) on the psychological empowerment of frontline hospitality staff remain scarce, particularly within rapidly developing tourism hubs like Indonesia. In the fierce, highly competitive hospitality landscape of major urban tourist destinations, implementing SPM is no longer just an administrative tool to monitor service standards; it is a strategic necessity to unlock employee initiative and foster collaborative resilience among service and support staff to satisfy modern eco-conscious travelers. Based on these theoretical and empirical lines of argument, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Sustainable Performance Management has a significant positive effect on Psychological Empowerment among hospitality industry employees.

2.3. *Psychological Empowerment and Employee Voice Behavior*

Psychological empowerment is a multidimensional motivational construct defined by four distinct cognitive dimensions: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact (Pradhan & Panda, 2021). Grounded in the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model and Social Cognitive Theory, a strong sense of empowerment cognitively reorients employees toward both their in-role and extra-role task behaviors, as they perceive themselves to be highly competent, self-determined, and influential within the organizational structure. In the high-pressure environment of the hospitality industry, these psychological resources are vital drivers of proactive employee behaviors. When frontline hospitality staff—such as guest relations, food and beverage personnel, or housekeeping crews—possess these psychological strengths, they exhibit higher levels of job performance, service satisfaction, and discretionary behaviors like employee voice, which entails the voluntary communication of ideas, concerns, or innovative suggestions to optimize service delivery and organizational functioning (Morrison, 2023; Bakker & Wang, 2020).

Theoretically, psychologically empowered employees are more equipped to express their voice because they believe their insights possess genuine value (*meaning*), feel capable of articulating them effectively (*competence*), enjoy the professional autonomy to act (*self-determination*), and trust that their suggestions can positively reshape institutional practices (*impact*) (Chen & Treviño, 2022). In hotel operations, this psychological state transcends passive compliance, creating a profound culture of psychological ownership. This cognitive ownership holds frontline staff internally accountable for bringing forth service-recovery ideas, highlighting hidden operational defects, and taking an active role in problem resolution. For instance, empirical research by Makwetta et al. (2021) establishes that employees with elevated psychological empowerment are significantly more likely to engage in both promotive voice—offering innovative solutions for growth—and prohibitive voice—warning against practices that could harm service quality. Similarly, empowerment serves as a vital psychological buffer that facilitates a psychologically safe work environment, releasing frontline hospitality staff from the fear of negative reprisals and fostering open communication and creative service orientation (Liu et al., 2023).

Within the hospitality sector, these socio-psychological dynamics are highly critical yet distinct. Frontline service workers are often the first to notice service failures, safety hazards, or gaps in environmental sustainability practices, such as food waste or energy inefficiencies. Empowered hospitality personnel are more likely to participate actively in service governance, engage in conversations related to operational continuous improvement, and openly voice concerns regarding emerging challenges that directly affect hospitality service quality. Despite these linkages, a notable

research gap exists concerning the specific structural relationship between psychological empowerment and employee voice within the Indonesian hospitality landscape. Given that unique local hospitality work cultures, strict service hierarchies, and evolving sustainable HRM practices can heavily influence this dynamic, exploring this path is essential. Unlocking these mechanisms will determine how individual cognitive empowerment can be leveraged to drive constructive employee voice within sustainability-focused hospitality brands. Based on these theoretical and empirical underpinnings, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Psychological Empowerment has a significant positive effect on Employee Voice Behavior within the hospitality industry.

2.4. The Mediating Role of Psychological Empowerment

Within contemporary organizational behavior and management literature, psychological empowerment is widely recognized as a pivotal mediating mechanism through which macro-level macro-organizational practices are translated into micro-level employee behaviors. Grounded in Cognitive Evaluation Theory and Social Exchange Theory, psychological empowerment functions as an intrinsic form of task motivation manifested through four distinct cognitive states: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact (Pradhan & Panda, 2021). Extensive empirical research demonstrates that psychological empowerment effectively bridges the gap between structured contextual resources—such as progressive leadership styles, strategic performance frameworks, or constructive work climates—and critical behavioral outcomes, including service innovation, organizational engagement, and employee voice behavior (Llorente-Alonso et al., 2024; Singh et al., 2022). Sustainable performance management systems (SPMS) that systematically prioritize future-oriented feedback, individualized developmental appraisal, and transparent procedural justice cultivate an ecosystem where employees feel intrinsically valued, structurally trusted, and organizationally supported (Parker & Grote, 2022; Schermuly et al., 2022). These institutional support systems serve as critical signaling mechanisms that clarify role expectations while simultaneously elevating frontline workers' perceived autonomy and professional competence (Chen & Treviño, 2022).

In the high-touch hospitality sector, where frontline service employees regularly navigate diverse guest interactions and unpredictable operational demands, this indirect psychological pathway is uniquely critical. The structural features of an SPMS framework do not automatically trigger proactive service behaviors; rather, they operate by reshaping the psychological state of the workforce (Wen & Chi, 2023). When hospitality personnel perceive that their performance appraisal system is designed to sustain their long-term well-being and professional growth, it fosters a profound sense of workplace credibility and psychological safety (Kim & Cho, 2024; Mowbray et al., 2022). This cognitive shift provides the precise motivational mechanism required for sustainable performance management to influence employee voice behavior, as frontline staff feel cognitively secure and organizationally driven to articulate innovative ideas or highlight latent service failures without fear of negative repercussions (McCarthy et al., 2020).

This structural mediating pathway is robustly supported by empirical evidence across the broader service literature. For instance, (Huang et al., 2023) verified that psychological empowerment significantly mediates the relationship between high-performance work practices and employee advocacy behaviors within complex service-driven organizations. In a dynamic service market like Indonesia, hospitality brands face intense competition and rising demands for eco-friendly and socially responsible tourism practices. Frontline hotel staff are often the first to recognize operational bottlenecks, environmental waste, or service recovery opportunities; however, their willingness to speak up remains heavily dependent on whether they feel structurally empowered by their firm's appraisal architecture. Despite its practical urgency, there remains a notable research gap in the hospitality literature regarding how this psychological mediation mechanism functions within developing Southeast Asian service sectors. Bridging this theoretical gap is essential to clarify how institutional sustainable human resource frameworks can be leveraged to drive open, proactive communication and continuous quality improvement in tourism operations. Based on these theoretical foundations and empirical arguments, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Psychological Empowerment significantly mediates the relationship between Sustainable Performance Management and Employee Voice Behavior within the hospitality industry.

2.5. *The Moderating Role of Ethical Leadership*

Ethical leadership represents a contextual factor that may shape how employees translate their psychological empowerment into constructive workplace behavior. Ethical leaders demonstrate integrity, fairness, accountability, and concern for employees, while establishing expectations for responsible conduct and open communication. In hospitality organizations, where frontline employees regularly encounter service-related problems and opportunities for improvement, these leadership characteristics may influence whether employees feel comfortable expressing suggestions, reporting operational concerns, and proposing changes to existing practices (Brown et al., 2005; Zainal et al., 2023).

Psychological empowerment reflects employees' perceptions of meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact in their work. These perceptions can motivate employees to take initiative and communicate ideas that may improve service quality and organizational functioning. However, feeling empowered does not necessarily mean that employees will always express their views. Employee voice behavior also involves interpersonal and organizational considerations, including whether employees expect their contributions to be treated fairly and whether speaking up is perceived as appropriate within the prevailing leadership context (Morrison, 2023). Ethical leadership may therefore serve as a contextual condition that influences the extent to which psychological empowerment is translated into employee voice behavior.

From a social exchange perspective, ethical leaders can establish relationships characterized by trust, fairness, and reciprocal respect. Employees may respond to such treatment by contributing constructive suggestions and raising concerns that support organizational improvement. Ethical leadership may also influence how employees interpret their autonomy and influence at work. Nevertheless, the direction and strength of this moderating relationship should not be assumed in advance. In some circumstances, ethical leadership may reinforce the positive relationship between psychological empowerment and voice by making employees feel safer when expressing their views. In other circumstances, established ethical procedures and formal communication channels may alter the extent to which individual empowerment is associated with additional voice behavior. These possibilities make the moderating role of ethical leadership an empirical question that warrants examination in hospitality organizations.

Building on these arguments, this study conceptualizes ethical leadership as a moderator of the relationship between psychological empowerment and employee voice behavior. The moderation hypothesis focuses on whether the relationship between psychological empowerment and employee voice behavior varies according to the level of ethical leadership, rather than on whether ethical leadership moderates the relationship between sustainable performance management and psychological empowerment. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5: Ethical leadership moderates the relationship between psychological empowerment and employee voice behavior in the hospitality industry.

The research framework integrates the direct relationship between Sustainable Performance Management (SPM) and Employee Voice Behavior (EVB), the relationship between SPM and Psychological Empowerment (PE), and the relationship between PE and EVB. Psychological empowerment is proposed as the mediating mechanism through which SPM is associated with EVB. Ethical Leadership (EL) is incorporated as a moderating variable that conditions the relationship between PE and EVB. Accordingly, the framework includes the direct effects represented by H1–H3, the indirect effect represented by H4, and the moderating effect of EL on the PE–EVB relationship represented by H5. Figure 1 presents the hypothesized relationships among the four constructs.

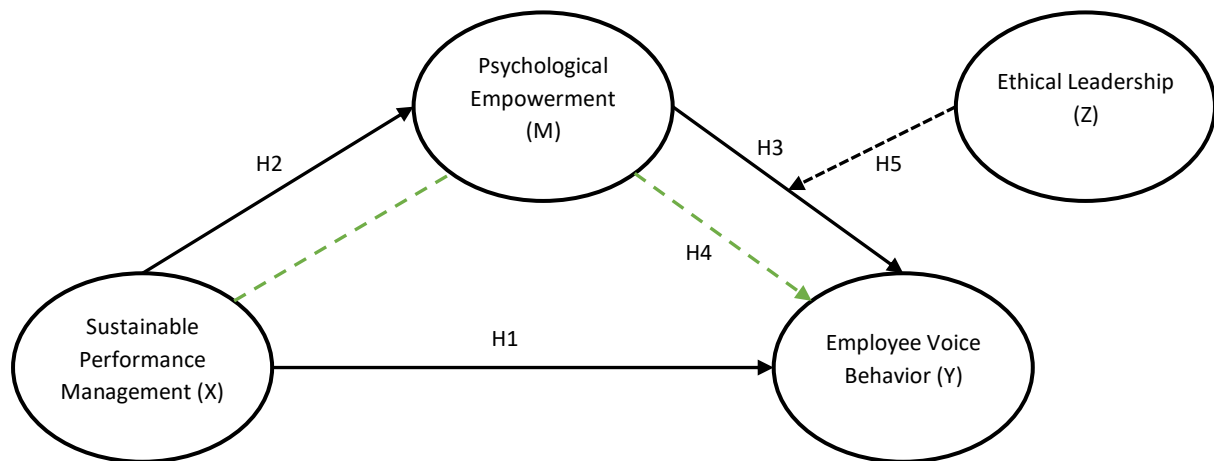


Figure 1. Research Framework
Source: Primary data processed by authors (2026)

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

The present study uses a quantitative research design. This approach is highly suitable for the verification of hypotheses and the confirmation of theoretical models through empirical data, enabling the statistical analysis of relationships between sustainable performance management, psychological empowerment, ethical leadership, and employee voice behavior. A quantitative strategy was preferred since it makes use of a standardized *modus operandi*, thereby ensuring clear-cut ways to measure and test initial effects systematically (Hair et al., 2019), which aligns with the structural requirement of testing both complex mediation and moderation paths simultaneously. Within this methodological framework, individual frontline employees from selected hotels and hospitality establishments serve as the primary unit of analysis, while the unit of observation consists of the operational service and administrative staff members who participate actively in performance-related processes and daily service deliveries within their institutions.

3.2. Population and sample

The target population for this study includes 1,200 active employees from selected star-rated hotels and hospitality establishments in the Greater Bandung area. To determine the minimum required sample size for rigorous empirical testing, Slovin's formula was applied with a 5% margin of error, resulting in a representative sample size of 300 respondents to ensure adequate statistical power. In order to guarantee a proportional representation of respondents across different functional lines within each hotel department, the study employed a stratified random sampling technique. The target population was explicitly divided into two major operational strata: frontline service staff (including food and beverage, housekeeping, and front office personnel) and administrative-managerial support staff. Respondents were then randomly selected from each strategic stratum. This sampling design effectively minimizes sampling bias, accounts for the structural heterogeneity of the hospitality workforce, and enhances the external validity of the empirical findings.

To provide a comprehensive and transparent overview of the sampling framework, the precise distribution of the target population and the corresponding sample allocation within each operational stratum has been systematically mapped. This structured breakdown details the proportional weight of both frontline service and administrative-managerial staff across the selected 4-star and 5-star hotel segments. Accordingly, the detailed distribution of the population and the final research sample used for subsequent empirical testing is explicitly presented in Table 1 below.

Tabel 1. Population and Sample Distribution

No	Hotel Classification	Operational Stratum	Target Population (N)	Percentage (%)	Calculated Sample Size (n)
1	4-Star Hotels (Selected)		720	60	180
		Frontline Service Staff (F&B, Housekeeping, Front Office)	540	45	135
		Administrative Support Staff (HR, Finance, Back Office)	180	15	45
2	5-Star Hotels (Selected)		480	40	120
		Frontline Service Staff (F&B, Housekeeping, Front Office)	360	30	90
		Administrative Support Staff (HR, Finance, Back Office)	120	10	30
All Selected Establishments		Combined Strata	1,200	100	300

Source: Selected 4-star and 5-star hotels in Greater Bandung, Primary Data Processed (2026)

3.3. Measurement and Instruments

A structured, self-administered questionnaire was utilized for data collection by adopting validated measurement instruments from established previous studies to fit the service dynamics of the hospitality sector. For the sustainable performance management variable, the eco-centric and developmental performance indicators were adapted from Armstrong & Taylor (2023) and de Waal (2020), focusing on sustainable service standards and resource stewardship. Psychological empowerment was measured using the four-dimensional scale developed by Pradhan & Panda (2021), which evaluates frontline staff's cognitive perceptions of meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact within their service roles. Furthermore, employee voice behavior was evaluated using the measurement items developed by Mowbray et al. (2022) to capture proactive suggestions and constructive service recovery inputs. Finally, ethical leadership was constructed based on the scale by Wen & Chi (2023), assessing the moral and supportive behaviors of hotel supervisors and general managers. All questionnaire items were recorded using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), to ensure robust interval-level data for subsequent statistical processing via structural equation modeling.

3.4. Data Collection Procedure

To guarantee the clarity, reliability, and validity of the research instrument within a high-touch service environment, a pilot test was performed with 30 hospitality respondents prior to full deployment. The internal consistency and construct validity of the scales were rigorously evaluated using confirmatory metrics; all targeted constructs demonstrated high reliability, with Cronbach's alpha (α) coefficients well above the acceptable threshold of 0.70. Furthermore, the standardized outer loading factors for all measurement items across the constructs ranged from 0.832 to 0.937, significantly exceeding the stringent statistical benchmark of 0.70. This confirms excellent convergent validity and ensures that all indicator items possess strong explanatory power for their respective latent variables, requiring no deletions. Following the successful validation of the pilot assessment, the final surveys were administered using a hybrid deployment approach designed to accommodate the diverse shift schedules of hotel staff. The questionnaires were distributed simultaneously in a traditional paper-and-pencil format directly at the properties and electronically via mobile-friendly online forms. This dual approach was critical to secure maximal geographical coverage and optimize overall response rates across the selected hospitality institutions without disrupting daily service operations.

3.5. Data Analysis Techniques

Structural Equation Modeling with Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) was deployed for data analysis, utilizing the SmartPLS version 4.0 software application. This approach was chosen because it is highly appropriate for complex structural models that simultaneously include mediation and moderation paths, accommodates non-normal data distributions without distorting results, and shows robust performance in moderate sample sizes (Hair et al., 2019). Following standard statistical protocols, the analysis process followed a strict two-step approach, beginning with the measurement model assessment to evaluate convergent validity, discriminant validity, and construct reliability of the latent variables, followed by the structural model testing to analyze path coefficients and significance levels using the bootstrapping method, alongside the evaluation of the model's explanatory power through R^2 values (Hair et al., 2019). This rigorous quantitative approach ensures a thorough empirical exploration of how sustainable performance management, coupled with psychological mechanisms and leadership behaviors, structurally supports employee voice behaviors among frontline staff and support personnel within the hospitality industry.

The structural model was evaluated using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPLS 4.0. The analysis examined the direct relationships between Sustainable Performance Management (SPM), Psychological Empowerment (PE), Employee Voice Behavior (EVB), and Ethical Leadership (EL), as well as the mediating role of PE and the moderating role of EL. The direct effects were assessed through the estimated path coefficients and their corresponding bootstrapping statistics. The indirect relationship between SPM and EVB through PE was examined to evaluate the proposed mediation hypothesis.

To test the moderating hypothesis (H5), an interaction term between Ethical Leadership and Psychological Empowerment ($EL \times PE$) was included in the structural model predicting Employee Voice Behavior. The moderation effect was evaluated using the interaction coefficient, t-statistic, and p-value obtained from the PLS-SEM analysis. A statistically significant interaction coefficient indicates that the relationship between PE and EVB varies according to the level of EL. The sign of the coefficient indicates the direction of this conditional relationship. Accordingly, H5 concerns the moderating effect of EL on the relationship between psychological empowerment and employee voice behavior in the hospitality industry, operationalized as the path $EL \times PE \rightarrow EVB$.

4. RESULT

4.1. Outer Model Assessment

In Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), an outer model assessment is recommended to assess the measurement properties of each construct in the research model. Specifically, this process involves checking outer loadings to measure the reliability of indicators; composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) for assessing construct reliability and convergent validity; and discriminant validity, which determines that the constructs are empirically different (Hair et al., 2019; Henseler et al., 2015). In addition, the other loadings should be higher than 0.70 for each indicator to ensure that they indicate their latent constructs strongly (Hair et al., 2019). A construct reliability (CR) above 0.70 and an average variance extracted (AVE) over 0.50 indicate that both measures were adequate in terms of their estimated values on the respective indicators of convergent validity. We used the rooting of the AVE approach that suggests that each construct should be significantly higher from its correlation with other constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), or we looked at the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) Ratio, which needs to have a value lower than 0.90 according to (Henseler et al., 2015). The results of the outer model evaluation are provided in Supplementary Figures & Tables: Figure 2, Table 2, Table 3, and Table 4.

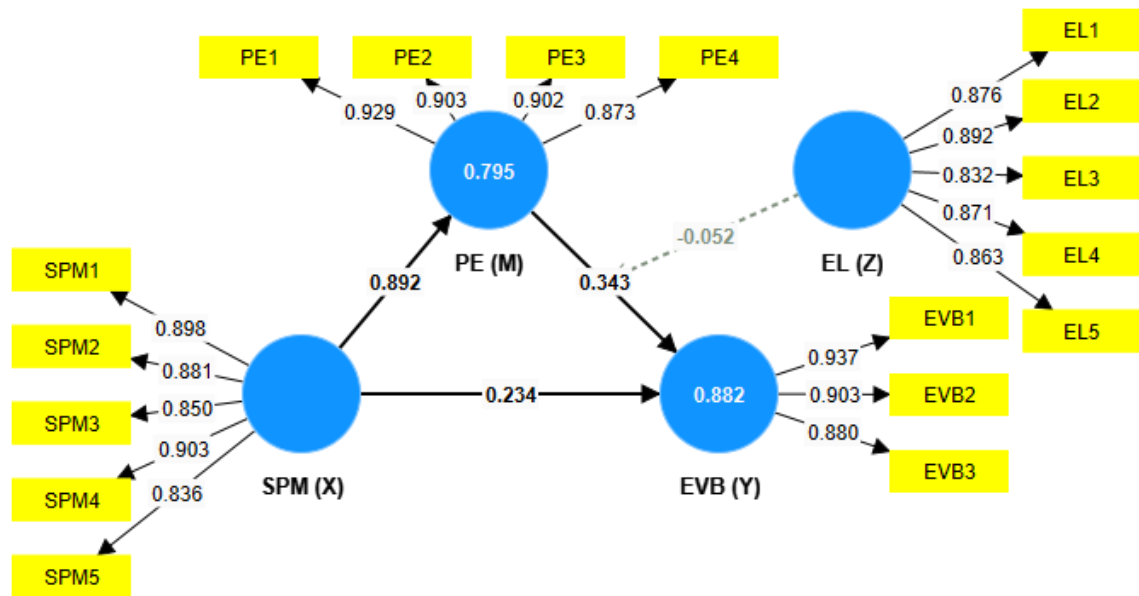


Figure 2. Outer Model

Source: Primary data processed via SmartPLS 4.0 (2026)

This is a visual representation of the outer model analysis (indicator loadings) for each construct in the study as displayed in Figure 2. As can be seen, all indicators have outer loading values above the recommended cut-off limit of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2019), thus indicating high reliability of the indicator variables. For instance, the CRI ranges from 0.873 to 0.929 for Psychological Empowerment (PE), from 0.836 to 0.903 for Sustainable Performance Management (SPM), from 0.832 to 0.892 for Ethical Leadership (EL), and from 0.880 to 0.937 for Employee Voice Behavior (EVB). These findings indicate that the items consistently assess their respective latent variable. The values on the latent variable scores included in blue circles also suggest moderate to high levels of construct contribution. This estimation stands for the measurement model before a structural testing that demonstrates its reliability and validity.

Table 2. Outer Loading

Variable	Indicators	Item Code	Loading Factor
Sustainable Performance Management (SPM) (X)	Goal Alignment	SPM1	0.898
	Continuous Feedback	SPM2	0.881
	Participation	SPM3	0.850
	Development Focus	SPM4	0.903
	Fair Evaluation	SPM5	0.836
Psychological Empowerment (PE) (M)	Meaning	PE1	0.929
	Competence	PE2	0.903
	Self-determination	PE3	0.902
	Impact	PE4	0.873
Employee Voice Behavior (EVB) (Y)	Promotive Voice	EVB1	0.937
	Prohibitive Voice	EVB2	0.903
	Supportive Voice	EVB3	0.880
Ethical Leadership (EL) (Z)	Integrity	EL1	0.876
	Fairness	EL2	0.892
	Role Modeling	EL3	0.832
	Accountability	EL4	0.871
	People Orientation	EL5	0.863

Source: Primary data processed via SmartPLS 4.0 (2026)

The outer loading assessment presented in Table 2 confirms robust indicator reliability across all four latent constructs. Rather than merely reflecting acceptable statistical thresholds, the high magnitude of these loading factors—ranging from 0.832 to 0.937—demonstrates strong convergent

validity, indicating that more than 69% of the variance in each item is explained by its respective underlying construct (Hair et al., 2019). This uniform empirical strength ensures that the indicator items are highly representative measures of SPMS, PE, EVB, and EL within the hospitality context, providing a solid and statistically sound foundation for subsequent structural model estimation.

Table 3. Construct Reliability and Validity

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
SPM (X)	0.923	0.926	0.942	0.764
PE (M)	0.924	0.925	0.946	0.814
EVB (Y)	0.892	0.893	0.933	0.822
EL (Z)	0.917	0.922	0.938	0.752

Source: Primary data processed via SmartPLS 4.0 (2026)

Table 3 presents the results of the construct reliability and validity tests for the four research constructs, namely SPM, PE, EVB, and EL. All constructs display respectably high Cronbach's Alpha values (≥ 0.892), which implies excellent internal consistency. Nearly all constructs achieve a composite reliability (rho_c) value greater than the suggested threshold of 0.70, therefore indicating strong construct reliability (Hair et al., 2019). Moreover, all constructs also have the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) higher than 0.50, which indicates that more than half of each construct's variance is explained by its indicators, thus meeting convergent validity requirements for factor analysis. These results suggest that all latent variable constructs utilized in the model are measurable with reliability and validity for further exploration of structural relationships.

Table 4. Discriminant Validity

	EL (Z)	EVB (Y)	PE (M)	SPM (X)
EL (Z)	0.867	0.740	0.710	0.800
EVB (Y)	0.740	0.907	0.780	0.860
PE (M)	0.710	0.780	0.902	0.840
SPM (X)	0.800	0.860	0.840	0.874

Source: Primary data processed via SmartPLS 4.0 (2026)

Table 4 presents the Fornell-Larcker criterion, which checks for discriminant validity by comparing the square root of AVE with correlations between constructs. The diagonal value elements (in bold) correspond to the square root of the AVE, and they are greater than their correlation values with other constructs in that same row and column. This implies that each of the constructs has decent discriminant validity—it is unique and cannot be mistaken for other constructs. So, the model of this study fulfilled the necessary criteria for discriminant validity to go through the further analysis.

4.2. Inner Model Assessment

The structural model was assessed using path coefficients, the coefficient of determination (R^2), and predictive relevance (Q^2). Path coefficients indicate the direction and strength of the relationships between constructs, while R^2 represents the proportion of variance in an endogenous construct explained by its predictors (Hair et al., 2019). Predictive relevance was assessed using the Q^2 values obtained from the procedure applied in SmartPLS 4.0. Positive Q^2 values indicate predictive relevance for the endogenous constructs evaluated using the applicable procedure (Shmueli et al., 2019). The results of the structural model assessment are presented in Tables 5–7.

Table 5. Path coefficients

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
SPM (X) -> EVB (Y)	0.234	0.220	0.112	2.079	0.038
SPM (X) -> PE (M)	0.892	0.892	0.019	47.566	0.001
PE (M) -> EVB (Y)	0.343	0.346	0.079	4.354	0.001
EL (Z) -> EVB (Y)	0.354	0.366	0.098	3.601	0.001
EL (Z) x PE (M) -> EVB (Y)	-0.052	-0.049	0.015	3.343	0.001

Source: Primary data processed via SmartPLS 4.0 (2026)

Table 5 presents the path coefficients and corresponding bootstrapping results. Sustainable Performance Management (SPM) has a positive and statistically significant relationship with Employee Voice Behavior (EVB) ($\beta = 0.234$, $t = 2.079$, $p = 0.038$), supporting H1. SPM also has a positive and statistically significant relationship with Psychological Empowerment (PE) ($\beta = 0.892$, $t = 47.566$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H2. In addition, PE is positively and significantly associated with EVB ($\beta = 0.343$, $t = 4.354$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H3. Ethical Leadership (EL) also has a positive and statistically significant direct relationship with EVB ($\beta = 0.354$, $t = 3.601$, $p < 0.001$).

The interaction between EL and PE in predicting EVB is negative and statistically significant ($\beta = -0.052$, $t = 3.343$, $p = 0.001$). This finding supports H5 and indicates that EL moderates the relationship between PE and EVB. The negative interaction coefficient suggests that the positive association between PE and EVB becomes weaker as EL increases, within the estimated model. This result concerns the conditional relationship between PE and EVB and should not be interpreted as evidence that EL reduces PE itself.

Table 6. R-squared (R^2)

	R-square	R-square adjusted
EVB (Y)	0.882	0.881
PE (M)	0.795	0.795

Source: Primary data processed via SmartPLS 4.0 (2026)

Table 6 presents the coefficients of determination for the endogenous constructs. The R^2 value for Employee Voice Behavior (EVB) is 0.882, with an adjusted R^2 of 0.881. This indicates that the predictors included in the structural equation for EVB account for 88.2% of its variance in the estimated sample. The R^2 value for Psychological Empowerment (PE) is 0.795, with an adjusted R^2 of 0.795, indicating that SPM accounts for 79.5% of the variance in PE. These values indicate substantial explanatory power for the two endogenous constructs within the estimated model. However, R^2 values should be interpreted as measures of explained variance rather than as stand-alone evidence of model stability or robustness.

Table 7. Predictive relevance (Q^2)

	SSO	SSE	$Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)$
SPM (X)	1500.000	547.087	0.635
PE (M)	1200.000	396.255	0.670
EVB (Y)	900.000	353.159	0.608
EL (Z)	1500.000	571.736	0.619

Source: Primary data processed via SmartPLS 4.0 (2026)

The Q^2 results indicate predictive relevance for Psychological Empowerment (PE) and Employee Voice Behavior (EVB), with values of 0.670 and 0.608, respectively. These positive values suggest that the model demonstrates predictive relevance for the endogenous constructs evaluated. The interpretation is restricted to the constructs and predictive-relevance procedure represented in the reported results.

4.3. Testing Mediation Effects

Mediation testing is an important step within Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to determine whether and how much of the effect of an independent variable on a dependent variable follows through a mediator. Factor mediation typically involves the Total Effects (TE) and Specific Indirect Effects (IE) (Hair et al., 2019; Sarstedt et al., 2022), which clarify whether the mediation effect is partial or full, as well as if the indirect effects are statistically significant. The indirect effect reflects the path through the mediator, and the total effect covers both direct and indirect effects. When using regression, bootstrapping is encouraged to determine whether these effects are significantly different than zero (Hayes & Rockwood, 2020). The importance of mediation can be justified if the indirect effect is significant and the confidence interval does not contain zero. The mediation testing results for this study are displayed in Table 8 and Table 9 below.

Table 8. Total Effects

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
SPM (X) -> EVB (Y)	0.540	0.529	0.099	5.433	0.001
SPM (X) -> PE (M)	0.892	0.892	0.019	47.566	0.001
PE (M) -> EVB (Y)	0.343	0.346	0.079	4.354	0.001
EL (Z) -> EVB (Y)	0.354	0.366	0.098	3.601	0.001
EL (Z) x PE (M) -> EVB (Y)	-0.052	-0.049	0.015	3.343	0.001

Source: Primary data processed via SmartPLS 4.0 (2026)

Table 8 presents the total effects estimated in the structural model. The total effect of Sustainable Performance Management (SPM) on Psychological Empowerment (PE) is positive and statistically significant ($\beta = 0.892$, $t = 47.566$, $p < 0.001$). SPM also has a positive and statistically significant total effect on Employee Voice Behavior (EVB) ($\beta = 0.540$, $t = 5.433$, $p < 0.001$). In addition, PE has a positive and statistically significant effect on EVB ($\beta = 0.343$, $t = 4.354$, $p < 0.001$). Ethical Leadership (EL) also shows a positive and statistically significant effect on EVB ($\beta = 0.354$, $t = 3.601$, $p < 0.001$). The interaction between EL and PE has a negative and statistically significant coefficient ($\beta = -0.052$, $t = 3.343$, $p = 0.001$), consistent with the moderation result reported in Table 5. These findings describe the estimated relationships among the constructs; the indirect pathway through PE is examined separately in Table 9.

Table 9. Specific Indirect Effects

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
SPM (X) -> PE (M) -> EVB (Y)	0.306	0.309	0.073	4.203	0.001

Source: Primary data processed via SmartPLS 4.0 (2026)

Table 9 presents the specific indirect effect of Sustainable Performance Management (SPM) on Employee Voice Behavior (EVB) through Psychological Empowerment (PE). The indirect effect is positive and statistically significant ($\beta = 0.306$, $t = 4.203$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H4. The direct effect of SPM on EVB also remains statistically significant ($\beta = 0.234$, $t = 2.079$, $p = 0.038$), as reported in Table 5. Taken together, these results are consistent with partial mediation, indicating that PE accounts for part of the relationship between SPM and EVB while a significant direct relationship remains. This conclusion assumes that the direct and indirect effects were estimated in the same structural model.

4.4. Testing Moderation Effects

Central to the process of moderation effects is assessing whether how strongly or in which direction one thing relates to another varies as a consequence of being at some level of a third thing, which is called a moderator. In SEM (Structural Equation Modeling), moderation is usually tested by employing

an interaction term, which is the outcome of multiplication between predictor and moderator variables (Hair et al., 2019). It enables researchers to test whether the moderator has a significant impact on the relationship between an independent and dependent variable (Henseler et al., 2015). In Partial Least Squares – Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), a significant interaction effect signals that moderation is at work, and this interaction term lends interpretation as per the sign-magnitude-significance of the related coefficient (Sarstedt et al., 2022). These kinds of analyses are especially valuable when it comes to determining conditional effects within more elaborate behavioral models. Table 10 below shows the results of the moderation tests.

Table 10. Interaction Term Moderating Effect

Moderating Effect	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
EL (Z) × PE (M) → EVB (Y)	-0.052	-0.049	0.015	3.343	0.001

Source: Primary data processed via SmartPLS 4.0 (2026)

Table 10 reports the moderating effect of Ethical Leadership (EL) on the relationship between Psychological Empowerment (PE) and Employee Voice Behavior (EVB). The interaction term (EL × PE → EVB) has a negative coefficient ($\beta = -0.052$) and is statistically significant ($t = 3.343$, $p = 0.001$). Therefore, H5 is supported. The negative coefficient indicates that the positive relationship between PE and EVB becomes weaker as EL increases within the estimated model. This finding should be interpreted as a moderating effect on the PE–EVB relationship, rather than as evidence that EL directly reduces PE or EVB. Further interpretation of the conditional relationship would require examining the estimated simple slopes or conditional effects at different levels of EL.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings provide empirical evidence of the relationships among Sustainable Performance Management (SPM), Psychological Empowerment (PE), Ethical Leadership (EL), and Employee Voice Behavior (EVB) in the hospitality industry. SPM has a positive and statistically significant relationship with EVB, indicating that performance management practices characterized by transparent evaluation, developmental feedback, employee participation, and alignment with longer-term organizational objectives are associated with employees' willingness to express constructive ideas and concerns. This finding is consistent with research emphasizing the importance of sustainable human resource practices and organizational conditions in supporting employee voice Jia et al. (2023); Ajmal et al. (2025) and Chen & Treviño, 2022) In hospitality settings, where employees regularly observe service problems and opportunities for operational improvement, performance management may provide a formal context in which such observations can be communicated.

The empirical findings demonstrate that Sustainable Performance Management (SPM) has a positive and significant relationship with Psychological Empowerment (PE). This finding is consistent with the theoretical arguments of Pradhan & Panda (2021), who associate empowerment with employees' perceptions of meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact within their roles. By integrating sustainable performance practices with a commitment to environmental and community objectives (Aguinis & Burgi-Tian, 2021; Molina-Azorin et al., 2021), hospitality firms can create work environments that support employees' psychological empowerment and motivation to deliver quality service. This finding highlights the dual function of SPM: it serves not only as a performance evaluation mechanism for monitoring service and operational outcomes but also as a managerial approach associated with employee development and organizational improvement. In this respect, SPM may contribute to sustainability-oriented organizational practices by connecting performance expectations with employee participation, developmental feedback, and longer-term organizational objectives.

The positive relationship between PE and Employee Voice Behavior (EVB) supports the organizational behavior perspective that psychologically empowered employees are more likely to communicate constructive ideas, suggestions, and concerns (Pradhan & Panda, 2021; Morrison, 2023). In the fast-paced and demanding hospitality sector, employees' willingness to contribute to operational

and organizational improvement may be associated with their perceptions that their work is meaningful, their professional capabilities are recognized, their autonomy is respected, and their contributions can influence workplace outcomes (Ajmal et al., 2025). This relationship is particularly relevant to sustainability-oriented hospitality organizations, where employees may identify opportunities to improve service delivery, resource efficiency, and environmental practices, including green lodging initiatives and sustainable waste management (Burhan et al., 2023). The findings therefore indicate that PE is an important employee-level factor associated with voice behavior, although the extent to which empowerment translates into voice may also depend on the organizational and leadership context.

Furthermore, the mediation analysis supports the role of PE as a psychological mechanism linking SPM with EVB. The findings indicate that SPM is associated with EVB both directly and indirectly through PE. This pattern is consistent with partial mediation, suggesting that psychological empowerment explains part, but not all, of the relationship between sustainable performance management and employee voice behavior. This finding aligns with the general proposition that employees' psychological perceptions help explain how organizational practices are associated with individual behavioral outcomes Vu et al. (2021) and Burhan et al. (2023). SPM is therefore associated with EVB through both a direct relationship and an indirect pathway involving PE. In practical terms, hospitality organizations should avoid treating performance appraisal solely as an administrative compliance process. Instead, hotel managers and human resource practitioners should implement performance management practices that support employees' perceptions of competence, meaningfulness, self-determination, and impact, thereby creating conditions that may encourage employees to express ideas and contribute to continuous improvement.

A central finding concerns the moderating role of Ethical Leadership (EL) in the relationship between PE and EVB. The results support the proposition that EL moderates this relationship negatively. This indicates that the positive relationship between psychological empowerment and employee voice behavior becomes weaker as perceived ethical leadership increases within the estimated model. Importantly, this moderating effect should be distinguished from the direct relationship between EL and EVB, which is positive. Thus, ethical leadership is positively associated with employee voice behavior, while its interaction with psychological empowerment indicates that the strength of the PE–EVB relationship varies according to the level of ethical leadership. The negative moderation does not mean that ethical leadership reduces psychological empowerment, nor does it establish that ethical leadership is generally detrimental to employee voice.

This moderating result offers a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between leadership and employee voice in hospitality organizations. Ethical leadership is commonly associated with fairness, integrity, accountability, and an organizational environment that supports responsible conduct and open communication (Wen & Chi, 2023). However, the present findings suggest that the strength of the relationship between psychological empowerment and employee voice varies according to the leadership context. One possible interpretation is that ethical leadership and psychological empowerment may provide partially overlapping forms of support for employee voice. When employees perceive their leaders as fair and trustworthy, the leadership environment may itself provide a basis for communicating ideas and concerns. Consequently, the additional association between psychological empowerment and voice behavior may become weaker at higher levels of ethical leadership. This interpretation is a possible explanation rather than a mechanism directly established by the findings. Further research examining the conditional relationship between these variables would help clarify the processes underlying this moderation pattern. The finding should therefore be interpreted as evidence of a negative moderating relationship rather than conclusive proof that ethical leadership substitutes for employee initiative or creates a specific “comfort zone” effect.

Taken together, the findings contribute to the understanding of employee voice behavior by integrating organizational practices, individual psychological mechanisms, and leadership context within a single framework. SPM has positive relationships with both PE and EVB, while PE mediates the relationship between SPM and EVB. At the same time, EL has a positive direct relationship with EVB and a negative moderating role in the PE–EVB relationship. These results suggest that sustainable

performance management, psychological empowerment, and ethical leadership should be considered complementary but analytically distinct elements of the organizational environment. The findings also provide a basis for further research into how leadership conditions influence the relationship between employees' psychological resources and their willingness to speak up. Future studies could examine whether the observed moderation pattern is replicated across different hotel categories, employee groups, and organizational settings.

For hospitality practitioners, general managers, and human resource executives, the findings highlight the importance of designing performance management systems that extend beyond short-term financial indicators and occupancy rates. Evaluation frameworks can incorporate developmental feedback, fair performance criteria, employee participation, and sustainability-related objectives while ensuring that employees understand how their contributions relate to service quality and organizational improvement. Such practices may support employees' perceptions of competence, meaningfulness, and self-determination. At the same time, ethical leadership should be accompanied by explicit opportunities for employees to express suggestions, identify service problems, and raise concerns. Managers should communicate that fairness, integrity, and accountability are intended to support—not replace—frontline participation and initiative. Accessible feedback channels, constructive responses to employee suggestions, and follow-up on reported concerns may help translate a supportive leadership environment into sustained opportunities for employee voice.

At the policy and industry level, the findings may inform tourism authorities, regional governments, and industry organizations seeking to promote responsible and sustainable hospitality practices. Sustainable tourism guidelines and industry development programs could encourage hotels to integrate transparent performance management, employee development, ethical leadership, and meaningful employee participation into their organizational practices. Such initiatives should not focus exclusively on environmental or service-performance indicators but should also recognize the importance of employee involvement in identifying and addressing operational issues. Although the present study does not directly test the effectiveness of certification programs or government policies, its findings provide an empirical basis for considering the connections between sustainable performance management, psychological empowerment, ethical leadership, and employee voice when developing initiatives aimed at strengthening responsible and sustainable hospitality organizations.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This study examines the relationships between Sustainable Performance Management (SPM), Psychological Empowerment (PE), Employee Voice Behavior (EVB), and Ethical Leadership (EL) in the hospitality industry. The findings indicate that SPM is positively associated with PE and EVB, while PE is positively associated with EVB. PE partially mediates the relationship between SPM and EVB, suggesting that psychological empowerment is one mechanism through which sustainable performance management relates to employees' willingness to express ideas and concerns.

EL has a positive direct relationship with EVB but negatively moderates the relationship between PE and EVB. This finding indicates that the positive relationship between empowerment and employee voice becomes weaker at higher levels of ethical leadership, although the underlying mechanism requires further investigation. Overall, this study contributes to sustainable human resource management by integrating performance management practices, psychological empowerment, and leadership context to explain employee voice behavior in hospitality organizations.

6.1. Recommendations

Hospitality managers should integrate sustainability objectives into performance management through transparent evaluation criteria, fair feedback, and recognition of employees' contributions to service quality and responsible operations. Managers should also strengthen psychological empowerment by providing meaningful autonomy and opportunities for participation, while establishing accessible channels for employee voice. Ethical leadership development should emphasize openness to suggestions, constructive responses to concerns, and follow-up on employee feedback. At

the industry level, hotel associations and tourism stakeholders may encourage fair performance management and employee participation as components of sustainable hospitality practices.

6.2. Limitations and Further Study

This study is limited by its cross-sectional design and its focus on hotel employees in Greater Bandung, Indonesia, which may constrain causal interpretation and generalizability. Future research could use longitudinal designs, multi-source data, and samples from different regions and hospitality settings to examine the stability of the proposed relationships. Further studies should also investigate why ethical leadership weakens the positive relationship between psychological empowerment and employee voice, including the potential roles of psychological safety, communication climate, and perceived managerial openness.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors have read, reviewed, and approved the final manuscript for publication and declare that this work has not been published elsewhere.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author(s) declare that they have no competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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