

## The intermediary role of employee voice in the prediction of communication satisfaction by transactional leadership in aviation

### Havacılıkta etkileşimsel liderliğin iletişim doyumunu yordamasında çalışan sesliliğinin aracılık rolü

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#### Abstract

This study aimed to determine the intermediary role of employee voice in predicting communication satisfaction by transactional leadership in the aviation sector. The study collected data from 351 white-collar employees working in air taxi organizations operating in the aviation sector throughout Turkey by survey method. SPSS 23.0 and AMOS 24.0 programs were used in the analysis. Frequency analysis, factor analysis, descriptive statistics, the goodness of fit values, and correlation analyses were applied in the study. In addition, the structural equation modelling analysis was used to determine the intermediary role. As a result of the research findings, it was found that the employee voice plays a semi-mediating role in the effect of transactional leadership on the communication climate, communication with superiors, and feedback, which are among the sub-dimensions of communication satisfaction. As a result, it was determined that the employee voice had a partial intermediary role in the prediction of the communication satisfaction of the transactional leadership.

**Keywords:** Transactional Leadership, Employee Voice, Communication Satisfaction, Aviation

**JEL Codes:** M10, M12, M14

Submitted: 1/02/2023

Revised: 10/03/2023

Accepted: 20/03/2023

Online Published: 25/03/2023

#### Öz

Bu çalışmada, havacılık sektörü bünyesinde etkileşimsel liderliğin iletişim doyumunu yordamasında çalışan sesliliğinin aracılık rolünün saptanması amaçlanmıştır. Araştırmada Türkiye genelinde havacılık sektöründe faaliyet gösteren hava taksi işletmelerinde çalışan 351 beyaz yakalı çalışandan anket yöntemi ile veri toplanmıştır. Analizler SPSS 23.0 ve AMOS 24.0 programları ile yapılmıştır. Çalışmada frekans analizi, faktör analizi, betimsel istatistikler, uyum iyiliği değerleri ve korelasyon analizleri uygulanmıştır. Ayrıca aracı rolü belirlemek için yapısal eşitlik modellemesi analizinden yararlanılmıştır. Araştırmanın bulguları neticesinde etkileşimsel liderliğin iletişim doyumunun alt boyutları içinde yer alan iletişim iklimi, üst ile iletişim ve geri bildirim üzerindeki etkisinde çalışan sesliliğinin yarı aracı bir rol oynadığı bulunmuştur. Sonuçta etkileşimsel liderliğin iletişim doyumunu yordamasında çalışan sesliliğinin kısmi aracılık rolü olduğu saptanmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Etkileşimsel Liderlik, Çalışan Sesliliği, İletişim Doyumu, Havacılık

**JEL Kodları:** M10, M12, M14

**Citation:** Yılmaz, R., The intermediary role of employee voice in the prediction of communication satisfaction by transactional leadership in aviation, *bmij* (2023) 11 (1): 292-309, doi: <https://doi.org/10.15295/bmij.v11i1.2216>

## Introduction

In today's business life, organizations need to maintain their competitive structure and survive and be well-managed. Therefore, organisational managers must make the right decisions at the right time and constantly increase their efficiency and productivity by establishing clear and correct relationships with their employees to achieve this (Grossman & Veliga, 2005). Accordingly, the existence of a good leader is vital for an organization. Especially in the service sector, where competition is high, modern leadership types suitable for the employees come to the forefront. The relationships between leaders and employees significantly affect the organisation's functioning, especially due to the fragility of the service sector. In this case, the types of leadership that directly affect the perceptions and reactions of employees come to the forefront. The extent of the effects of transactional leadership, which is one of these leadership types, on employees is important. Transactional leadership focuses on the mutual relations between the leader and the employees to do a job, and the leader's guidance to the employees, in line with the previously determined objectives (Güney, 2020: 411; Koçel, 2014: 695). In this case, good communication between the leader and the employees is required to manage these relations well. In an organization with good communication, the perception of communication satisfaction, which expresses the satisfaction of the employees with the communication in the organization, increases (Crino and White, 1981; Nakra 2006: 42). In fact, some intermediary factors may be effective for increasing communication satisfaction. One of these factors is the employee voice, which is about the employees having views and suggestions for the organization, expressing their concerns, etc., for the organisation's benefit (Landau, 2017: 144; Alfayad and Arif, 2017: 151).

In general, the leadership relationships with different variables are limited to certain behaviours in the literature. Accordingly, in this study, the relationship between transactional leadership and different behaviours has been examined. In this context, this study aims to investigate the prediction of the communication satisfaction of the employees by the transactional leadership in the context of the aviation sector and to determine whether or not the employee voice has an intermediary role in this interaction.

It is considered that this study will have various contributions to the literature. In this direction, it is intended to determine the communication satisfaction status of employees with a high level of transactional leadership. In addition, it is tried to express how different intermediary factors, e.g., employee voice, are effective in the effect of transactional leadership on communication satisfaction. As a consequence, with this study, it is thought that significant findings will be obtained to examine how the intermediary role of the employee voice in predicting the communication satisfaction of the employees increases the positive outputs in the functioning of the organization (Odumeru and Ogbonna, 2013: 358-359; Tsai, Chuang and Hsieh, 2009: 826). Accordingly, the following parts of this study are designed: In the second part, transactional leadership, communication satisfaction, and employee voice are conceptually examined. The second part also explained the relationship between transactional leadership, employee voice, and communication satisfaction. At the same time, the methodology of the study is emphasized in the third part. Finally, in the last part, the fourth one, the conclusions were presented, and suggestions were made for researchers and the business world.

## Literature review

### Transactional leadership

Transactional leadership is an interactive process based on the mutual exchange relationship between the leader and employees to obtain certain benefits toward predetermined objectives (MacKenzie, Podsakoff, and Rich, 2001: 117). Transactional leadership focuses on the mutual relations between the leader and employees to do a job and the leader's behaviours (Koçel, 2014: 695). In this case, there is a mutual exchange between the leader and the employees in transactional leadership. However, this exchange takes place in line with predetermined objectives. Leaders and employees may have different objectives. However, these objectives are interrelated. Accordingly, mutual negotiation comes to the forefront instead of leaders and employees working together to achieve common interests in transactional leadership (Güney, 2020: 411).

Transactional leaders tell employees about their duties and roles and guide and motivate them to achieve their objectives. According to Burns (2003), transactional leaders try to increase the satisfaction of their employees by fulfilling their obligations consistently and not falling wide of the mark (Güney, 2020: 411). In addition, such leaders manage employees in line with formality and through bureaucratic authority (Tracey and Hinkin, 1998: 220). According to Podsakoff et al. (1990), transactional leaders put their expectations to employees plainly and encourage them in line with these expectations. In this case,

they motivate employees extrinsically (Afsar, Badir, Saeed and Hafeez, 2017: 311; Deichmann and Stam, 2015: 206).

Transactional leadership has a reward and punishment system under several dimensions. According to Bass and Avolio (1999), in transactional leadership, employees need to be told what they need to do to get a specific reward, and incentives should be applied in line with *contingent rewards*, which is one of these dimensions. In the direction of the *management by exception passive*, if the performance of the employees is low and they do wrong work, they should be punished. In addition, in the direction of *management by exception active*, the leader must take corrective actions and guide employees to seek and prevent mistakes. As a result, employees try to do their duties more efficiently (Kark, Van Dijk and Vashdi, 2018: 187; Yukl, 2018: 322). In fact, according to Mosley, Pietri and Megginson (1996), transactional leaders have predetermined the degree of material or symbolic reward or punishment they will give employees due to their performances. They act accordingly (Yılmaz, 2012: 42). Elements such as safety measures, prestige, salary, etc., given to the employees are accepted as rewards. In addition, these researchers consider warning, discipline, wage restriction, etc., punishment (Yeşilyurt, 2015: 6). Transactional leaders are process-driven. They need to supervise the performance of the employees. In this way, they enable employees to perform their duties and achieve organizational goals with the reward and punishment system (Terekeci, 2008: 31).

Accordingly, Odumeru and Ogbonna (2013) expressed some of the characteristics of transactional leaders: Transactional leaders are aware of their responsibilities and act according to the organizational culture and goals. Transactional leaders are process-driven. Employee performance is also significant for transactional leaders. Such leaders use reward and punishment systems on their employees to achieve goals, do their job within standards and procedures, maintain the status quo, and are passive. Transactional leaders may also set standards to maintain the current order and provide the motivation of employees. In this case, they can motivate employees extrinsically (Odumeru and Ogbonna, 2013: 358-359; Terekeci, 2008: 31).

### **Employee voice**

According to Morrison (2011), employee voice is related to the voluntary expression of employees' suggestions, criticisms, views, ideas, and concerns that will be in the organisation's interest (Alfayad and Arif, 2017: 151). In other words, according to some authors, employee voice refers to expressing employees' interest in work-related issues, giving voice to their concerns, and offering solutions to problems. Their support in business-related decision processes (Park and Nawakitphaitoon, 2017: 3). Employee voice is about making opinions and suggestions for possible improvements in the organization, discussing problems with their superiors and colleagues, trying to solve these problems and asking for help from the required authorities (Rusbult, Zembrodt and Gunn, 1982; as cited in Landau, 2017: 144; Soyalin, 2019: 74). This concept is essentially about employees with different opinions expressing their constructive opinions and criticisms about work-related issues (Van Dyne and LePine, 1998; as cited in Alfayad and Arif, 2017: 151). In this case, employee voice has a significant place in organizational development.

Employees perceive employee voice as a good reason for better work-related conditions (Soyalin, 2019: 74). This concept is also related to the employees' opinions about the decisions and organizational policies within the organization as well as their views about the work (Wilkinson and Fay, 2011; as cited in Jena, Bhattacharyya and Pradhan, 2017: 358). Employee voice begins with the organization allowing employees to make their voice. Then, an environment that encourages employees to make a voice is created in the organization. Finally, it makes employees feel that their views are efficient in the decision-making process related to organizational issues (Fernandes and Awamleh, 2004; Alfayad and Arif, 2017: 151). According to MacLeod and Clarke (2011), employees in organizations with a good level of employee voice know that their thoughts are important and they make a difference for the organization.

The existence of direct and indirect voices in organizations can be specified as the dimensions of employee voice. Direct voice relates to employee contributions to assessments, meetings with superiors and other employees, employee engagement, etc. The indirect voice is related to union and outside representations, works councils, advisory committees, etc. (Park and Nawakitphaitoon, 2017: 3). In the literature, employee voice is generally examined under two titles. The first of these, the promotive voice, expresses the employees' suggestions and opinions to improve the organisation's and work units' functioning. The second type of voice, the prohibitive voice, is related to the employees' expressing their concerns about practices, activities, and employee behaviours that may harm the organization (Liang, Farh and Farh, 2012: 74).

According to some researchers, employee voice increases in parallel with employee productivity and job performance. In addition, employees in organizations with good employee voices can resist pressures more easily. In this case, according to some studies, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction of employees whose ideas are taken into account increase (Jena et al., 2017: 358; Park and Nawakitphaitoon, 2017: 1).

### **Communication satisfaction**

According to Thayer (1969), communication satisfaction is the one felt as a result of a person's good level of communication with another person or another person's good level of communication with him (Nakra, 2006: 42). According to some authors, communication satisfaction consists of communication between a person, organization, group and other individuals (Tsai et al., 2009: 826). Downs and Hazen (1977), who were the first researchers to use communication satisfaction, argued that communication satisfaction involves the person's total satisfaction related to the information flow and the outputs within the scope of this flow (Downs and Hazen, 1977: 68). For another author, communication satisfaction is the satisfaction of employees with the amount of information provided by the organization and their satisfaction with several aspects of communication (Kandlousi, Ali and Abdollahi, 2010: 53).

Essentially, communication satisfaction is a socio-emotional result of the interaction in communication between employees and the organization (Tsai et al., 2009: 826). In other words, employees' views and general communication perceptions about communication in the organization constitute communication satisfaction (Nakra 2006: 42). Terek et al. (2015) and Archon (2020) stated that it is important how employees perceive different aspects of feelings about communication in the organization, communication efforts, and communication itself.

According to some researchers, communication satisfaction is multidimensional (Kandlousi et al., 2010: 53; Downs and Hazen, 1977: 66). These dimensions are; (a) Communication climate, which includes communication at the individual and organizational levels. It is related to ensuring that employees are perceived as having good organizational communication, improving their motivation to higher levels, and encouraging employees to achieve certain organizational goals (Downs and Hazen 1977: 66). (b) Communication with superiors; relates to communication between subordinates and superiors. It is about the superiors listening to the subordinates and paying attention to what they say, guiding the employees in the face of their problems at work, etc. (Clampitt and Downs 1993: 8; DeConinck, Johnson, Busbin and Lockwood, 2008: 146). (c) Corporate information, also called "Satisfaction with General Organizational Perspective", includes all the information about the organization. It relates to the organization's objectives, financial standing, policies, new decisions, and the disclosure of government-related changes to employees, etc. (Clampitt and Downs 1993: 8; DeConinck et al., 2008: 146). (d) Horizontal and informal communication: It relates to the informal communication of employees with other employees. It includes the information that employees talk about among themselves (Downs and Hazen 1977: 67). Communication between employees with colleagues with the same job is a feature of informal communication. It is desired with this dimension to measure the level of gossip active in the organization, free and correct horizontal communication, and free and correct informal communication levels. (e) Personal feedback concerns superiors informing the employees about how they appraise their efforts and job performances (Eroğlu and Özkan, 2009: 55). (f) Media quality: It is related to the extent to which meetings are well organized, written directives are clear, and the degree to which the amount of communication is about right within the organization (Downs and Hazen 1977: 67; Derin and Tuna, 2017: 113). (g) Organizational integration: It is related to the communication satisfaction of individuals due to the employees being aware of the information about the working environment and the organization (Girişken, 2015: 32). (h) Subordinate Communication: It is related to the needs of the employees to obtain information about themselves and their performance at the individual level (Derin and Tuna, 2017: 113; Koç, 2020: 24).

### **The relationship between transactional leadership, employee voice and communication satisfaction and hypotheses**

As a result of the transactional leadership behaviour in modern leadership approaches, the leader needs to try to protect the interests of the employees. The leader should also contribute to the interests of the organization and employees, create a mutual exchange process between the organization and employees and motivate employees in this direction (Yukl, 2018: 321-322). In this case, leaders who manage their relations with employees well can establish healthy communication. Accordingly, communication satisfaction, expressed as the level of information provided by the organization to the employees and the satisfaction of the employees against various aspects of communication, may increase (Kandlousi et al., 2010: 53). In organizations where transactional leadership is prevalent,

employees' expressing their constructive opinions and criticism about work-related issues, that is, the dominance of employee voice in the organization (Alfayad and Arif, 2017: 151), can raise the communication satisfaction of the employees to higher levels.

Social exchange theory and leader-member exchange theory explain the relationships between transactional leadership, employee voice, and communication satisfaction variables. Social exchange theory relates to employees' economic and non-economic gains in the context of the principle of reciprocity for the benefit of themselves and the organization (Blau, 1964). In this case, providing economic and non-economic gains to the employees shall increase the employees' positive attitudes in terms of individual and organizational aspects. In this sense, the positive benefits provided by the organization and the managers to the employees shall positively affect the communication satisfaction perceptions of the employees, which symbolizes the employee voice, in which the employees clearly express their views, and the quality communication between the employee and the organization. As a result, this will be for the benefit of the employees and the organization. On the other hand, the leader-member exchange theory explains the reciprocal relationship between managers and employees (Graen and Scandura, 1987). According to this theory, the leader can develop a high-level reciprocal and high-quality relationship with the employees and affect the employees. As a result, a positive impression can be formed on the employees with this relationship, which can be reflected in the organization (Liden and Maslyn, 1998). In this sense, as a result of this favourable impression the transactional leader gives, positive perceptions and attitudes of employees, such as employee voice and communication satisfaction, can increase. As a result, reciprocal communication between the organization and employees can increase with a good level of employee voice, which symbolizes the transparent sharing of employees' ideas, and communication satisfaction, which symbolizes the satisfaction created by the information flow between the organization and employees. However, the organization and its employees can obtain more positive outcomes. As a result, employees' communication satisfaction may reach a higher level through employee voice (Ataç, 2020: 1740).

Following the studies on the study's hypotheses, Terek et al. (2015) and Archon (2020) stated that transactional leadership positively predicts employees' perceptions of communication satisfaction. Bhatnagar et al. (2020) found that transactional leadership hurts employee voice. However, Amah (2018) and Zhang et al. (2020) attracted attention to a positive and significant relationship between transactional leadership and employee voice. This difference may be because employees create their voices according to different perspectives. Özbolat and Şehitoğlu (2018) stated that there is a significant and positive relationship between employee voice and communication satisfaction. Şener et al. (2018), on the other hand, mentioned that communication satisfaction positively affects employee voice.

In this context, Baron and Kenny's (1986) mediation model was used in the relationships between the variables and the structural equations to be created in the direction of the said studies to indicate the intermediary role of employee voice in predicting the communication satisfaction of transactional leadership. Accordingly, the research hypotheses are determined as follows:

H1: Transactional leadership positively predicts communication satisfaction.

H2: Transactional leadership positively predicts employee voice.

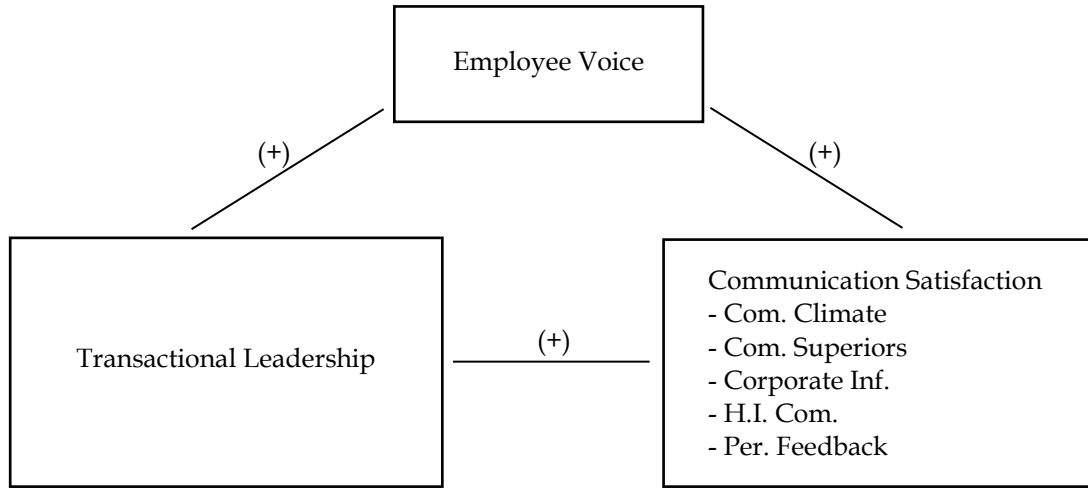
H3: Employee voice positively predicts communication satisfaction.

H4: Employee voice has an intermediary role in predicting communication satisfaction of transactional leadership.

## **Methodology**

### **Research model**

The conceptual model of the research was created in Figure 1 in line with the hypotheses developed to reveal the relationship between transactional leadership, employee voice, and communication satisfaction.



**Figure 1:** Conceptual Model of the Research

**Purpose and significance of the research**

This study, first of all, is focused on determining the communication satisfaction perceptions of the employees, which is one of the outputs due to the relations between transactional leaders and employees. In addition, it has been tried to express how different mediating factors, such as employee voice, are efficient in the effect of transactional leadership on communication satisfaction. In this sense, this study is significant for leaders to understand their employees better and act accordingly. In this respect, this study's main purpose is to evaluate the views of white-collar employees working in air taxi organizations operating in the aviation sector in Turkey about the variables of transactional leadership, communication satisfaction, and employee voice. In addition, it is aimed to make a small contribution to the literature since there is no study related to the intermediary role of employee voice in predicting communication satisfaction by transactional leadership. Another significant aspect of the research is how managers will increase their perceptions of job satisfaction by maximizing their interactional leadership characteristics. In addition, it is important that the analysis results regarding the mediating role of employee voice on the perceptions of employees' job satisfaction can be used to benefit organizations.

**Research population and sample**

The research population comprises approximately 450 nonmanagerial white-collar employees working in air taxi organizations throughout Turkey's aviation sector. The purposive sampling method was used in the research (Gürbüz and Şahin, 2018: 132). Since the data of seven of the 358 questionnaires collected for the research were missing, 351 questionnaires were considered a sample. In this context, a sample size of 351 population was accepted with a 5% margin of error within the 95% confidence limit (Gürbüz and Şahin, 2018).

**Data collection tools of the research**

The research was conducted with a face-to-face survey method of data collection. Employees were provided to fill out the questionnaires by distribution and collection method. Ethics committee approval for the survey presented to the participants in the study was obtained by the Deanship of the Faculty of Economics, and Administrative Sciences, Selcuk University, with the decision of the Scientific Ethics Review Committee dated 27/12/2022 and numbered 19/220. Scales with proven validity and reliability in the literature were used to test the study's hypotheses. The survey form consists of three parts. In the first part, the scales used regarding the research variables of the participants are listed as follows:

*Transactional Leadership Scale:* It is a six-item scale developed by Bass (1985) within the MLQ scale and adapted into Turkish as a single sub-dimension, as in the original scale, by Çeri-Booms (2009) by conducting a validity and reliability study.

*Employee Voice Scale:* It is a six-item scale developed by Van Dyne and LePine (1998) and adapted into Turkish as a single sub-dimension, as in the original scale, by Cetin and Çakmakçı (2012) by conducting a validity and reliability study.

*Communication Satisfaction Scale:* It is a 38-item scale developed by Downs and Hazen (1977) and adapted into Turkish as eight sub-dimensions, as in the original scale, by Girişken (2015), by conducting validity and reliability studies.

This study analysed the data with SPSS 23.0 and AMOS 24.0 programs. A 7-point Likert scale was used in the analyses. It was scaled as Never=1, Seldom=2, Rarely=3, Sometimes=4, Often=5, Very Often=6, and Always=7.

## Research findings

### Demographic information

According to demographic characteristics, 28.5% (100) of the participants were female, and 71.5% (251) were male. 75.2% (264) of the participants were married, and 24.8% (87) were single. 4.80% (14) of the participants were between 20 and 25 years old, 6.6% (66) of them were between 26 and 30 years old, 44.2% (155) of them were between 31 and 35 years old, 17.7% (62) of them were between 36 and 40 years old, 19.4% (68) of them were between 41 and 45 years old, and 8.3% (29) of them were 46 years old and above. 4.8% (17) of the respondents were high school graduates, 33.9% (119) of them were college graduates, 53.0% (186) of them were bachelor's, and 8.3% (29) of them were Master's degree/PhD graduates. Participants have been working in the same organization as follows: 5.1% (18) of them less than one year, 45.0% (158) of them between 1 and 5 years, 21.7% (76) of them between 6 and 10 years, 7.7% (27) of them between 11 to 15 years, 15.7% (55) of them between 16 to 20 years and 4.8% (17) of them 21 years and above. The total employment period of the participants is as follows: 1.1% (4) of them had less than one year, 5.4% (19) of them between 1 and 5 years, 38.7% (136) of them had between 6 and 10 years, 17.9% (63) of them between 11 and 15 years, 21.1% (74) of them between 16 and 20 years and 15.7% (55) 16 years and above.

### Validity and reliability analysis

This part examined the variables' reliability and validity using exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses. While exploratory factor analysis was applied through principal components and the varimax rotation method in the research, confirmatory factor analysis was applied with the maximum likelihood technique. In addition, the variables' goodness of fit values and the factor structure's accuracy were also determined (Gürbüz and Şahin, 2018: 344).

The exploratory factor analysis found that factor loadings of transactional leadership ranged from 0.501 to 0.891, factor loadings of employee voice between 0.468 and 0.863, and factor loadings of communication satisfaction between 0.455 and 0.826. While a factor loading of 0.30 is sufficient for social sciences, it is much more preferred to have factor loadings of 0.45 or higher (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2013: 68). The KMO value for transactional leadership is 0.772. Bartlett test is at ( $p < .05$ ) level, the KMO value for employee voice is 0.753, and Bartlett test is at ( $p < .05$ ) level, and the KMO value for communication satisfaction is 0.760, and the Bartlett test is at ( $p < .05$ ) level. As a result, KMO values are above 0.70. Bartlett's test is at ( $p = .000 < .05$ ) level because it is significant (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2013: 68). The total variance explained for transactional leadership is also 38.64%, and the total variance explained for employee voice is 35.45%. The total variance explained for communication satisfaction is 52.40%. It is sufficient for the total variances explained to be above 0.30 for one-dimensional variables and above 0.50 for multidimensional variables (Büyüköztürk, Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz ve Demirel 2016: 112). In this case, the explained variances of the variables are at an acceptable level. It was also found that the eigenvalues of the transactional leadership and employee voice variables were above one and composed of 1 dimension each. It was found that the eigenvalues of the communication satisfaction variable are composed of 5 sub-dimensions above 1. As a result of the analysis, the dimension named "subordinate communication" was removed from the scale because there were no participants in the leader position among the participants. T6 and T5 dimensions, on the other hand, were also removed from the scale because they could not measure the leadership variable exactly, their factor loadings were low, and they remained below the standard eigenvalue. They decreased the explained total variance and goodness of fit values and were below the standard regression coefficient, and the remaining dimensions were reanalysed. Since the eigenvalues of the other variables are above 1, they are at a reasonable level (Gürbüz and Şahin, 2018: 320). Figure 2 shows confirmatory factor analyses related to transactional leadership and employee voice.

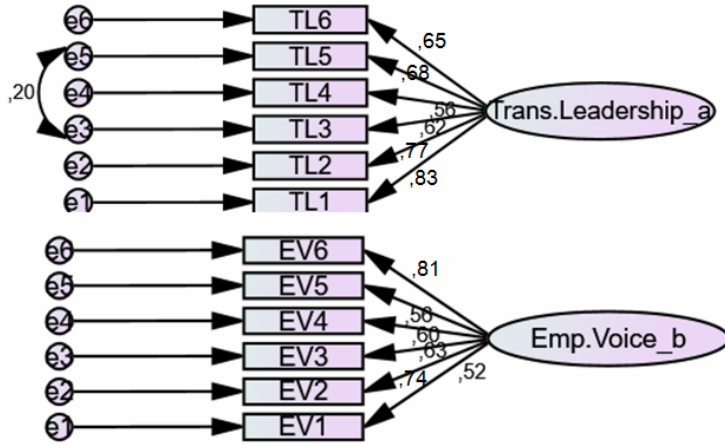


Figure 2: Confirmatory Factor Analysis for Transactional Leadership and Employee Voice

In order to provide better goodness of fit in the fit indices (GFI, CFI, and NFI) of the transactional leadership scale in Figure 2, the TL3-TL5 expressions were modified. It was determined that the confirmatory factor analysis values of the transactional leadership scale ranged between 0.56 and 0.83. In addition, the confirmatory factor analysis values of the employee voice scale were found to range between 0.52 and 0.81. Factor loading values above 0.40 indicate they are acceptable (Hair, Anderson, Tatham and Black 1998: 89). Confirmatory factor analysis of communication satisfaction is also shown in Figure 3.

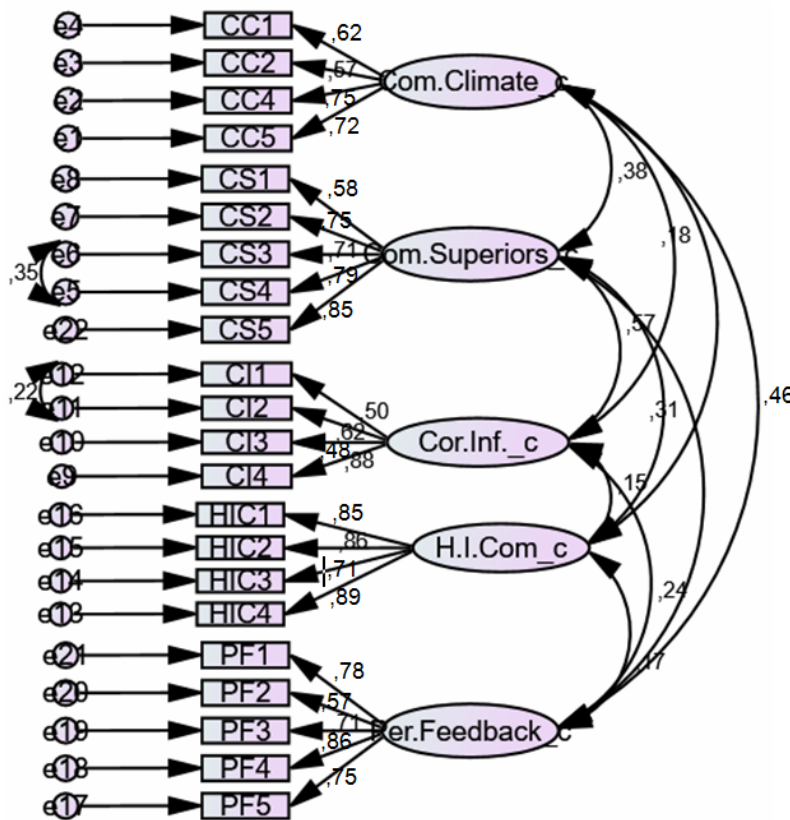


Figure 3: Confirmatory Factor Analysis for Communication Satisfaction

The item related to the communication climate (CC3) in Figure 3 was removed from the scale because the standard regression coefficient remained below 0.40 and decreased the goodness of fit values. Confirmatory factor analysis was carried out again. CS3-CS4 and CI1-CI2 items were modified to achieve higher fair values of CFI and NFI related to the scale. Confirmatory factor analysis values of the communication satisfaction scale were found to vary between 0.50 and 0.89. In this case, factor loading values above 0.40 indicate they are acceptable (Hair et al., 1998: 89).

Whether the model predicted in the structural equation model is supported in terms of data is found through fit indices (Gerbing and Anderson, 1992). In this context, the goodness of fit values of transactional leadership, employee voice, and communication satisfaction are shown in Table 1.



**Table 1:** Goodness of Fit Values for Variables

	$\Delta X^2/df$	GFI	CFI	NFI	RMSEA
Transactional Leadership	3.577	0.956	0.938	0.914	0.057
Employee Voice	3.158	0.947	0.915	0.911	0.032
Communication Satisfaction	3.436	0.926	0.913	0.907	0.051
<b>Normal Fit</b>	$\leq 2$	$\geq 0.95$	$\geq 0.95$	$\geq 0.95$	$\leq 0.05$
<b>Acceptable Fit</b>	$\leq 5$	$\geq 0.90$	$\geq 0.90$	$\geq 0.90$	$\leq 0.08$

Source: Schumacker and Lomax, 2004; Joreskog, 1996: 310.

According to Table 1, from the goodness-of-fit values of transactional leadership, the acceptable fit was found for  $\Delta X^2/df$  (3.577), CFI (0.938), NFI (0.914) and RMSEA (0.057), and the normal fit was obtained for GFI (0.956). Furthermore, it was found, from the goodness-of-fit values of employee voice, that acceptable fit was obtained for  $\Delta X^2/df$  (3.158), GFI (0.947), CFI (0.915) and NFI (0.911), and the normal fit was achieved for RMSEA (0.032). Finally, it was found, from the goodness-of-fit values of communication satisfaction, that acceptable fit was found for  $\Delta X^2/df$  (3.436), GFI (0.926), CFI (0.913), NFI (0.907) and RMSEA (0.051). Accordingly, the fair values are reasonable (Schumacker and Lomax, 2004: 97; Joreskog, 1996: 310).

**Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis**

In this part, correlation analysis was performed for the relationship between descriptive statistics and transactional leadership, employee voice, and communication satisfaction variables. This is shown in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis Table for Variables

Scales	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Trans. Leadership	5.58	.92	(.83)							
2. Emp. Voice	5.24	.94	.442**	(.80)						
3. Com. Satisfaction	5.51	.86	.344**	.326**	(.88)					
4. Com. Climate	5.49	.85	.521**	.465**	.425**	(.78)				
5. Com. Superiors	5.25	.79	.084	.238**	.337**	.042	(.72)			
6. Corporate Inf.	4.10	.68	.123*	.57	.149*	.263**	.268**	(.71)		
7. H.I. Com.	5.21	.71	.47	.134*	.083	.336**	.317**	.246**	(.76)	
8. Per. Feedback	5.33	.75	.349**	.257**	.353**	.146*	.246**	.146**	.250**	(.74)

\* p < .05 ve \*\*p < .01 ( ) Cronbach's Alpha  
 Transactional Leadership: (Min.-Max.): Skewness= -.446 ; Kuttosis= .542  
 Employee Voice (Min.-Max.): Skewness= -.549; Kuttosis= .558  
 Communication Satisfaction and its Sub Dimensions (Min.-Max.): Skewness= -.555 ; Kuttosis= .641

According to Table 2, while the highest average mean belongs to transactional leadership (5.58), the lowest average belongs to corporate information (4.10). The skewness values of the variables are between -.446 and -.555, while the kurtosis values are between +.542 and +.641. In this case, the skewness and kurtosis coefficients are between -1.5 and +1.5 and are reasonable according to the test of normality (Kalaycı, 2010: 51; Tabachnick and Fidell, 2013: 68). Finally, the reliability coefficients of all variables exceeded the normal value of 0.70 (DeVellis, 2012: 111). According to the correlation analysis, there is the highest correlation between transactional leadership and communication climate ( $r=.521$ ;  $p=.000$ ), while the lowest correlation is between transactional leadership and corporate information ( $r=.123$ ;  $p=.006$ ).

**Findings regarding the structural equation model**

In this part, the structural equation model, one of the multivariate statistical analyses, was used (Gürbüz and Şahin, 2018: 339). According to the four conditions of the mediation model of Baron and Kenny (1986), 1) The independent variable should significantly predict the dependent variable 2) The independent variable should significantly predict the mediating variable. 3) The mediating variable should significantly predict the dependent variable 4) The mediating variable should have a full or semi-mediating effect between the independent and dependent variables (Gürbüz, 2019: 108).

Accordingly, depending on four conditions, the structural equation model determined the intermediary role in this study. In this context, the goodness of fit values and hypotheses related to the structural equation model is presented under four conditions.

**Findings related to transactional leadership and communication satisfaction**

While GFI (.962) and CFI (.953) values, which are goodness-of-fit values created to measure the prediction of communication satisfaction by transactional leadership, have a normal fit,  $\Delta X^2/df$  (3.367), GFI (.931), NFI (0.912) and RMSEA (0.071) values have acceptable fit. In this case, the goodness of fit values is sufficient (Schumacker and Lomax, 2004; Joreskog, 1996: 310). In addition, the structural equation model coefficients were examined to determine the accuracy of the hypothesis (H1) regarding the prediction of communication satisfaction of transactional leadership. Structural equation model coefficients for the paths specified in the model are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3:** Structural Equation Model Coefficients for Transactional Leadership and Communication Satisfaction

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Std. $\beta$	Std. Error	C.R.	P	R <sup>2</sup>
Com. Climate	<--- Trans. Leadership	.28	.062	4.660	.021	.37
Com. Superiors	<--- Trans. Leadership	.34	.074	4.702	.006	.31
Corporate Inf.	<--- Trans. Leadership	.07	.071	1.070	.238	.16
H.İ.Com.	<--- Trans. Leadership	.26	.066	3.968	.031	.29
Per. Feedback	<--- Trans. Leadership	.34	.084	4.084	.007	.33

According to Table 3, transactional leadership significantly and positively predicted communication climate ( $\beta = .28, p = .021$ ) and horizontal communication ( $\beta = .24, p = .032$ ) at  $p = 0.05$  level. It was also observed that transactional leadership explained 37% of communication climate and 29% of horizontal communication, respectively. It was also observed that transactional leadership significantly and positively predicted communication with superiors ( $\beta = .34, p = .006$ ) and personal feedback ( $\beta = .34, p = .007$ ) at  $p = 0.01$  level. Besides, it was seen that transactional leadership explained 31% of communication with superiors and 33% of personal feedback, respectively. Thus, the first condition, and thus the H1 hypothesis, was partially accepted. In addition, the structural equation model for predicting communication satisfaction by transactional leadership is presented in Figure 4. It is seen in Figure 4 that transactional leadership significantly and positively predicted employee voice ( $\beta = .26, p = .021$ ) at  $p = 0.05$  level. It was also observed that transactional leadership explained 35% of employee voice. Thus, the second condition and thus the H2 hypothesis was accepted. Employee voice was found to significantly and positively predict communication climate ( $\beta = .33, p = .031$ ) and personal feedback ( $\beta = .32, p = .037$ ) at  $p = 0.05$ . In addition, it was seen that employee voice explained 39% of the communication climate and 36% of the personal feedback, respectively. The employee was observed to significantly and positively predict communication with the superiors ( $\beta = .30, p = .022$ ) at the  $p = 0.01$  level. In addition, it was seen that employee voice explains 34% of communication with superiors. Thus, the third condition and, thus, hypothesis H3 were partially accepted.

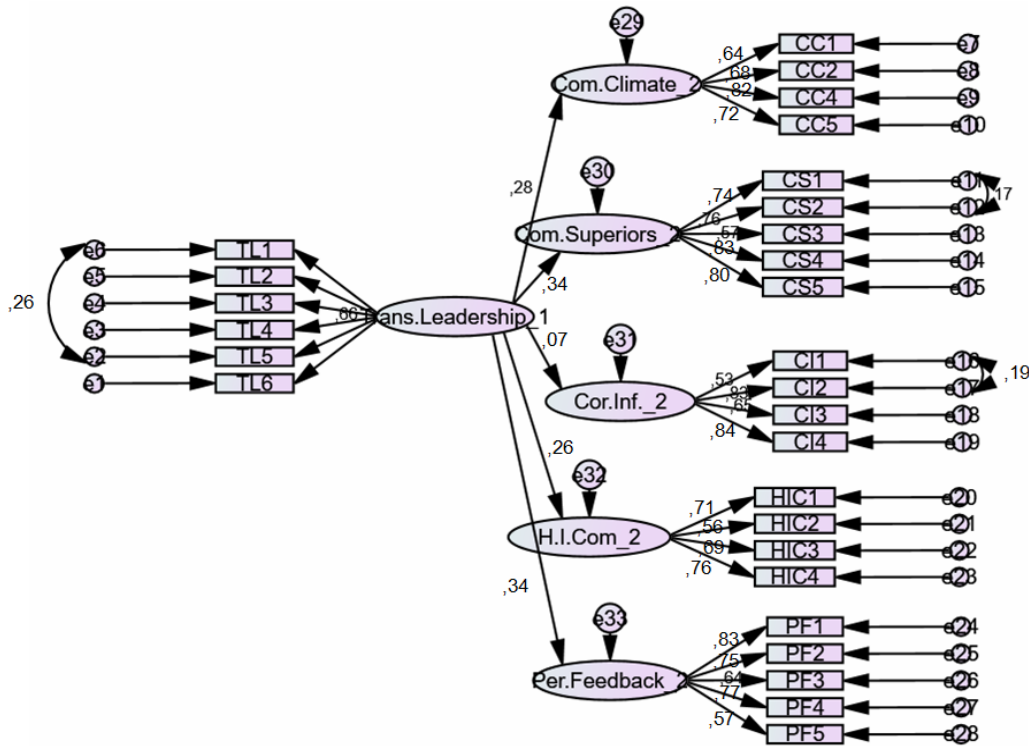


Figure 4: Structural Equation Model for Transactional Leadership and Communication Satisfaction (Model 1)

**Findings related to the mediating effect of employee voice in the effect of transactional leadership on communication satisfaction**

In this part, the mediating effect between the variables has been tried to be determined by the structural equation model. While the GFI (.960) value, which is one of the goodness-of-fit values created to measure the mediating effect, has a normal fit, it has an acceptable fit for  $\Delta X^2/df$  (3.246), CFI (.945), NFI (0.911) and RMSEA (0.072). In this case, the goodness of fit values are in the standard range and are sufficient to explain the model's data (Schumacker and Lomax, 2004; Joreskog, 1996: 310). In addition, in Table 4, hypotheses regarding the intermediary role of employee voice in predicting transactional leadership communication satisfaction were examined using structural equation model results.

Table 4: Structural Equation Model Coefficients for Mediating Effect

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Std. $\beta$	Std. Error	C.R.	P	R <sup>2</sup>
Emp. Voice	<--- Trans. Leadership	.26	.051	5.116	.021	.35
Com. Climate	<--- Emp. Voice	.33	.063	5.316	.031	.39
Com. Superiors	<--- Emp. Voice	.30	.061	4.966	.022	.34
Corporate Inf.	<--- Emp. Voice	.06	.066	0.939	.175	.36
H.I.Com.	<--- Emp. Voice	.08	.079	1.012	.162	.16
Per. Feedback	<--- Emp. Voice	.32	.069	4.665	.037	.36
Com. Climate	<--- Trans. Leadership	.27	.073	3.753	.032	.42
Com. Superiors	<--- Trans. Leadership	.29	.080	3.624	.006	.34
Corporate Inf.	<--- Trans. Leadership	.02	.086	0.267	.336	.18
H.I.Com.	<--- Trans. Leadership	.31	.067	4.671	.030	.35
Per. Feedback	<--- Trans. Leadership	.32	.071	4.520	.037	.42

In Table 4, it was seen that transactional leadership significantly and positively predicted employee voice ( $\beta = .26, p = .021$ ) at  $p = 0.05$  level. It was also observed that transactional leadership explained 35% of employee voice. Therefore, the second condition and, thus, the H2 hypothesis were accepted. It was found that employee voice significantly and positively predicted communication climate ( $\beta = .33, p = .031$ ) and personal feedback ( $\beta = .32, p = .037$ ) at  $p = 0.05$  level. It was seen that employee voice explained 39% of the communication climate and 36% of the personal feedback, respectively. It was observed that the employee voice significantly and positively predicted communication with the superiors ( $\beta = .30, p = .022$ ) at  $p = 0.05$  level. It was also observed that employee voice explained 34% of communication with the superiors.

.022) at the  $p = 0.01$  level. In addition to this, it was seen that employee voice explains 34% of communication with superiors. Therefore, the third condition and, thus, the H3 hypothesis were partially accepted.

In addition to including employee voice, a mediator variable, the model observed that transactional leadership predicted the communication climate at the ( $\beta = .27, p = .032$ ) level and explained 42% of the communication climate. According to Model 1, it was observed that the  $\beta$  coefficient decreased (.28  $\rightarrow$  .27) and the  $R^2$  value increased (0.37  $\rightarrow$  0.42), and the  $p$ -value remained at the  $p = 0.05$  level and did not lose its significance. It supports the partial mediating effect. In addition, it was seen that transactional leadership predicted communication with superiors ( $\beta = .29, p = .005$ ) and explained 34% of communication with superiors. According to Model 1, it was observed that the  $\beta$  coefficient decreased (.34  $\rightarrow$  .29), the  $R^2$  value increased (0.31  $\rightarrow$  0.34), and the  $p$ -value was at  $p = 0.01$  and did not lose its significance. It supports the effect of partial mediation. It was observed that transactional leadership predicted personal feedback ( $\beta = .32, p = .037$ ) and explained 42% of personal feedback. According to Model 1, it was observed that the  $\beta$  coefficient decreased (.34  $\rightarrow$  .32) and the  $R^2$  value increased (0.33  $\rightarrow$  0.42), and the  $p$ -value was at  $p = 0.01$  and did not lose its significance. It supports the effect of partial mediation.

In addition, Sobel, Durbin Watson, Tolerance, VIF, and significance ( $p$ ) values were examined on the variables to approve the mediating effect and to determine no multicollinearity problem. It was found for all sub-dimensions of communication climate, communication with superiors, and personal feedback that the Sobel test was above 1.96. At a reasonable level (Puspita, Nugroho and Banun 2020: 291), Durbin Watson values were between 1.5 and 2.5 and at a reasonable level (Kalaycı, 2010: 264), Tolerance values were higher than 0.2 (Büyüköztürk, 2009: 100), the VIF values are less than 10 (Hair et al., 2003; as cited in Bezirgan and Koç, 2014: 925), and the significance value ( $p < .000$ ) is at reasonable levels. Accordingly, it was found that the employee voice plays a semi-mediating role in predicting the communication climate, communication with the superiors, and personal feedback of the transactional leadership. As a result, the fourth condition, and hence hypothesis H4, was partially accepted. In addition, the structural equation model of the mediating effect of employee voice is presented in Figure 5.

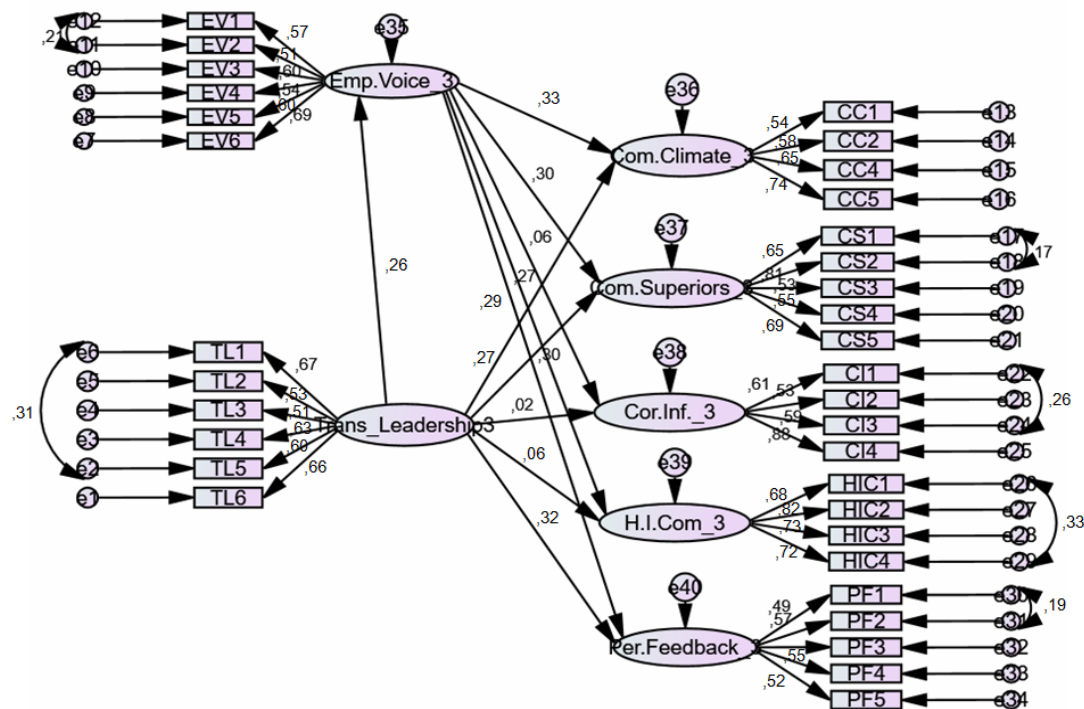


Figure 5: Structural Equation Model for Mediating Effect (Model 2)

### Conclusion and recommendations

Transactional leaders can increase employee communication satisfaction by guiding employees to achieve the organisation's goals, creating a mutual exchange process, and motivating employees in this direction (Tracey and Hinkin, 1998: 220; Tsai et al., 2009: 826). However, some mediating variables, such as employee voice, can improve communication satisfaction. In this sense, communication satisfaction

can reach higher levels using employee voice, which is related to employees expressing their views and criticisms about work-related issues (Alfayad and Arif, 2017: 151).

According to the study, it was first found that transactional leadership significantly and positively predicts communication climate and horizontal communication concerning the hypotheses. It may be because, due to the domination of transactional leadership in an organization, employees feel motivated to achieve organizational goals and think there is positive communication among themselves. According to the results, it was also found that transactional leadership significantly and positively predicted communication with superiors and personal feedback. This may be related to the guidance of the employees in solving their problems by the transactional leader, who informs the employees in line with the organizational goals and enables them to do their work and make the employees feel that they are given clear and net feedback. In addition, this may be because being informed by the leader about the efforts and performance of the employees positively affects the employees. The study also found that transactional leadership significantly and positively predicted employee voice because transactional leaders allow employees to express their views and criticisms for the organisation's benefit. The study also found that the employee voice predicted the communication climate and personal feedback significantly and positively. This may be because employees think that they receive positive feedback from the leader while expressing their suggestions and criticisms and that the organisation has a good communication climate. The study also found that the employee's voice significantly and positively predicted communication with the superior. It may be because employees explicitly express their views and suggestions about the job to their leaders, positively affecting their communication with their superiors. Finally, the study found that the employee voice plays a semi-mediating role in predicting the communication climate, communication with the superiors, and feedback of the transactional leadership. It may be because the transactional leader allows the employees to express their views, suggestions, and criticisms about the work and causes the employees to think that the communication in the organization is positive. In addition, it may be because the leader listens and guides the employees and informs them about their performance. As a result, the employees feel that their communication satisfaction is at a high level, albeit partially.

In the literature, few studies related to the study's hypotheses except for the mediating effect. One of these studies is "Relating leadership style to communication satisfaction: An explanatory study in full-time working adults in the United States" by Archon (2020). In this study, data obtained from 110 employees, who were working in several industrial sectors in the USA, were used. As a result of this study, he found that transactional leadership positively predicted communication satisfaction. In this case, our study is similar to the result of this study. However, our study also examined transactional leadership's prediction of communication satisfaction sub-dimensions. Terek et al. (2015) found that transactional leadership positively affects communication satisfaction in their study titled "The impact of leadership on the communication satisfaction of primary school teachers in Serbia". In this case, our study is similar to the result of this study. However, unlike the other studies, our study also examined the prediction of communication satisfaction sub-dimensions by transactional leadership. In the study "Employee engagement in Nigeria: The role of leaders and boundary variables" conducted by Amah (2018), with 300 employees working in five different organizations in Nigeria, it was found that the relationship between transactional leadership and employee voice is significant and positive. In this case, our study is similar to the result of this study. In their study titled "Negative mood and employee voice: The moderating role of leadership" conducted by Zhang et al. (2020) with 48 superiors and 224 organization employees, they found that transactional leadership positively predicted negative mood and employee voice. In this case, our study is similar to the result of this study. However, while our study discussed employee voice as a single dimension, the study, as mentioned above, discussed this variable as two dimensions.

Özbolat and Şehitoğlu (2018) found a significant and positive relationship between employee voice and communication satisfaction in the study titled "The relationship between employee voice and communication satisfaction: A research in the banking sector" with 392 Turkish bank employees. In this case, our study is similar to the result of this study. However, our study also examined transactional leadership's prediction of communication satisfaction sub-dimensions. Furthermore, Şener et al. (2018) stated that communication satisfaction positively predicted employee voice in a study titled "Communication satisfaction as a predictor of positive voice behaviour", conducted with 223 employees in a hospital in Turkey. In addition, Şener et al. (2018) found a positive relationship between communication climate, communication with superiors, horizontal and informal communication, organizational integration and feedback, and employee voice. In this case, our study is similar to the result of this study. However, our study also examined the prediction of employee voice by different communication satisfaction sub-dimensions.

While it is seen in previous studies that the mediating variables discussed in the relationships between interactive leadership, employee voice, and communication satisfaction are generally related to employee behaviours, it was determined that there is no study on employee attitudes and perceptions. In this sense, the present study makes a difference compared to other studies by examining the intermediary role of employee voice in predicting the communication satisfaction of transactional leadership. However, there is no relevant study in the literature, so it makes a small contribution. Conducting the research with white-collar employees in the aviation industry sector operating in the service sector, which has a variable structure, is another contributing feature of the study. Besides that, keeping the sample small, carrying out it in a certain time of time, including employees from the specific sector, and performing it in a limited number of organizations might be the limitations of this study. As another limitation, the AMOS program was used in the study, and data having no normal distribution cannot be discussed in this program. In this direction, different statistical programs such as SmartPLS can be used in future studies, and data that do not have a normal distribution can be examined. In future studies, research can be conducted on the relationship between leadership styles, communication satisfaction, and employee voice.

Important conclusions have been made for researchers and business people within the scope of the research's recommendations. Accordingly, the positive outcomes of the role of employee voice in the organization, which increases the communication satisfaction perceptions of the employees in an organization where transactional leadership is at the forefront, should be considered. These outputs provide important details for organizational leaders to see the results of their attitudes and behaviours. In this direction, the research conclusions can offer a different perspective for leaders to peak their leadership styles. In this case, it is unavoidable for a leader to emphasise the employee's voice and provide proper and open communication. In this sense, increasing the communication satisfaction of employees can only be possible with the right leadership behaviours, such as transactional leadership. The right leadership behaviours, on the other hand, can help employees bring their perceptions and attitudes to the next level by creating a more productive work environment. Therefore, the study especially guides in presenting studies that will guide leaders and human resources managers. In addition, sector comparisons can be made if the study is applied to a different sector. In relevant future studies, it might be recommended to perform studies on other types of leadership.

**Peer-review:**

Externally peer-reviewed

**Conflict of interests:**

The author has no conflict of interest to declare.

**Grant Support:**

The author declared that this study had received no financial support.

**Ethics Committee Approval:**

Ethics committee approval was received for this study from Selçuk University, Deanship of the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, with the decision of the Scientific Ethics Review Committee on 27/12/2022 and 19/220 document number.

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