

The Sound of Leadership: The Impact of Aggressive and Assertive Communication Styles on Employee Voice and Resilience

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Keywords: Leadership Communication Styles Employee Voice Employee Resilience Leadership Communication Styles</p> <p>Received 9 August 2025 Revised 3 May 2026 Accepted 15 May 2026</p> <p>Article Classification: Research Article</p>	<p>Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to compare and contrast how two different communication styles from leadership impacts employee voice (how they speak up) and employee resilience (their ability to bounce back after a setback), namely; assertive communication vs verbally aggressive communication. There is much known about how leadership use of communication styles are important for influencing employee engagement and job performance, but very little research has been conducted on how the two opposing communication styles impact employees differently, and this study will develop a better understanding of how these dynamics of leadership theory relate to one another while further developing current literature by understanding their impact on important employee outcomes.</p> <p>Design/methodology/approach – Using an online survey collected from 296 employees across various industries, the researchers collected data using established scales measuring leadership communication styles, employee voice, and employee resilience. To test the hypothesized relationship between the variables, a path analysis was conducted.</p> <p>Results – Results indicate that you can positively impact employee voice and resilience through assertive communication, and while verbal aggression also was positively associated with employee voice, it had a negative impact on resilience.</p> <p>Discussion – Results reveal two dimensions in how workplace communication styles exert influence: Assertive communication and Verbal aggression. Assertive communication produces positive results while the use of verbal aggression has been associated with both positive and negative outcomes. The study offers an additional perspective for the development of leadership theories by identifying the importance of both of these forms of communication, with the emphasis placed on the dominant role that assertive communication plays in terms of both immediate task performance and extending beyond to include the development of the employee's adaptive behavior over the long-term.</p>

1. Introduction

Leader's communication and its relation between the mode of communication is directly associated with the effectiveness of leaders in an organization. Leadership communication happens to be one of the most important avenues through which trust among co-workers can be inculcated and maintained, a factor significantly contributing to organizational outcomes such as commitment, job satisfaction, and improved performance metrics (Yang et al., 2020). The other very significant aspect related to developing leadership lies in the mode or strategy used for communicating by a leader. Brown et al.(2019) evidenced various leadership communication styles and organizational commitment through leader-member exchange(LMX) wherein clear and supportive communication creates strong relational ties which consequently lead to employees' loyalty. Research on leadership communication as it relates to transformational and transactional leaders identified various communication techniques together with the effects of these techniques on employee outcomes. Motivating employees becomes effective when a transactional leader uses supportive and participative communication methods. Transformation leaders create a work environment that encourages open communication, which leads to increased job satisfaction and retention (Gashaye, et al., 2023).

Leadership style has a very complex relationship with communication because it lies in different aspects of workplace functioning such as engagement, performance, and satisfaction. Additional studies show that

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positive and encouraging communication helps create a positive organisational climate, thereby increasing employee satisfaction (Hariri, 2016; Susanto, 2024). However, the free-rein or "laissez-faire" style of leadership, in which leaders do not communicate or provide support to their followers, leads to lower levels of job satisfaction and overall inefficiency in the organisation (Asrar-ul-Haq & Kuchinke, 2016). The relationship between employee performance and the communication strategies that leaders use is also very strong. Leaders' clear communication of what they expect from workers helps in enabling workers to meet those expectations and even go beyond them. Leaders also use communication to inspire and motivate followers, thus making them work extra hard to realize the set goals (Adriansyah et al., 2020; Gemeda & Lee, 2020). Engagement is equally dependent on effective communication between leaders and employees or subordinates. Mikkelsen et al. (2015) found that competent leader communicators enhance employee engagement as well as retention through overall improvement in employee performance.

Research shows that leadership communication has direct effects on employees and meanwhile it also exerts influences on some organizational dynamics such as employee voice and resilience. Employee voice (the voluntary expression of ideas, concerns, and suggestions by employees) has been shown to be one of the most important drivers of an organization's ability to adapt and be effective (Ashiru et al., 2023). Previous research has demonstrated that leaders who create an opportunity for employee input and encourage employees to take risks when speaking up lead to greater team learning, performance, and innovation (Wijaya et al., 2022; Liao et al., 2021). Therefore, while leadership communication is a relational skill, it also serves the strategic purpose of creating an avenue for organizations to gather employee input and respond to changes in the environment.

Organizational functioning includes employee resilience as a critical component. Employee resilience can be described as a developing process that is governed by the available capacity of the individual(s) and available contextual enablers (Näswall et al. 2019). Employee resilience has been found to improve by providing employees with supportive leadership, psychological safety, and constructive communication environments. In addition, organizations can enhance the ability to be resilient by using resilient-building practices such as adaptive learning, ongoing training and development opportunities, and having efficient social networks. Therefore, organizations that create and implement these practices will be best equipped to continue performing at a consistent level when they are faced with uncertainty (Kuntz et al. 2017).

This study intends to test the influence of contrasting leadership communication styles, assertiveness and verbal aggressiveness, on employee voice behavior and resilience at work. The two selected styles occupy opposite ends of a continuum of direct communication: from constructive self-expression to destructive dominance (Infante & Wigley, 1986). Assertive leaders are open, respectful, confident in their communication; they facilitate cooperation and create psychological safety. Verbally aggressive leaders either be controlling or simply hostile toward creating fear and making people defensive leading eventually into emotional exhaustion (Yue et al., 2024).

Previous studies largely associate communication styles with other dimensions, such as leadership effectiveness and interpersonal outcomes (e.g., De Vries et al., 2010; Men, 2021). Very few recent studies explicitly orient specific leadership communication toward employee voice behavior and resilience. Most works conceptualize communication as a general leadership competency instead of treating it as a set of distinct behavioral styles likely to have different psychological consequences (Riggio & Reichard, 2008). The larger body of work on employee voice either focuses on leader-member exchange or empowerment mechanisms (Morrison, 2011; Liu et al., 2020) meanwhile barely addresses the antecedents of voice from a communicative perspective—specifically how communicative tone (constructive vs. destructive) encourages or discourages employees' willingness to speak up.

Similarly, while literature connects employee resilience with supportive leadership and a positive affective climate (Britt et al., 2016; Kossek & Perrigino, 2021), it has hardly been studied how negative communicative patterns such as verbal aggressiveness deplete psychological resources or, on the other hand, how assertive but respectful communication reinforces employees' adaptive capacity. This study attempts to fill this gap by exploring the impact of two less-researched dimensions of leader communication—assertiveness and verbal aggressiveness—on employee voice behavior and resilience.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Leadership Communication Styles

Literature lists several leader communication styles mostly under their defining characteristics and resultant implications on the interaction between leaders and followers. Of these, employee engagement remains highly sensitive to a particular quality or type of leadership communication. Leadership communications have been largely effective in enhancing employee satisfaction and commitment to the organization (Wikaningrum et al., 2018; Rosady & Syah, 2018). Openness and trust-inspiring effective leadership are built through clear channels of timely communication. Transparent communicators who involve their teams by instituting feedback mechanisms create an environment suitable for collaboration and innovation (Wikaningrum et al., 2018; Giri & Santra, 2008). The results revealed that developing inclusive communication practices as well as increasing intercultural awareness enhances inclusive communication which fosters cohesive employee relationships (Mushaathoni, 2025).

Yang et al. (2020) identified four leadership communication styles: supportive, clear, assertive and verbally aggressive. All of them influence subordinates' perceptions about their leaders as well as work in different ways. However, they play a critical role in team dynamics to employee performance leading eventually to levels of engagement. It is within this context that the present study has narrowed down specifically into investigating results emanating from two particular styles i.e., assertiveness and verbal aggressiveness.

Assertive leaders are defined as people who express their thoughts, feelings, and needs both confidently and respectfully (Townend, 2021). According to Yang et al. (2020), assertive communication makes leaders effective by clearly articulating what is expected in return and allowing openness through two-way communication channels. Employees' ideas promote better cooperation when assertive leaders enhance an environment that gives comfort for them to state out their ideas together with engagements discovered within such a setting. This form of communication becomes very important in organizations where success largely depends on commitment levels together with active participation (Susanto & Sofyan, 2024). Firms and establishments have recorded upward trends in their productivity graphs because workers communicate assertively to air their views concerning motivations and needs that call for immediate responses. Therefore, training programs should always incorporate components emphasizing personal understanding between employers or managers and employees (Balakrishnan et al., 2024). Susanto & Sofyan (2024) state results slightly similar to those attained here: organizational goals alignment leads to commitment toward the organization through an assertive communication strategy. Therefore, leaders shall be able to express what is expected of them clearly and confidently without ambiguity so that employees feel free to discover their potential through excellent performance.

Assertiveness in Conversations – In addition to performance-related impacts, the assertiveness of a leader's conversation also involves an effect on the relationship of the leader to both their team and the larger organization. Research by Manian & Sheth (2021) has shown that using assertive language increases a leader's credibility and the chance that their guidance and instructions will be rewarded and will motivate others to follow them regardless of gender. Therefore, it appears that employability and a heightened sense of self will help break down many of the traditional socio-economic barriers to achieving success through equity in the workplace. Accordingly, Payne et al. (1997) noted that the effectiveness of assertiveness, when used in conjunction with other interpersonal skills, such as being persuasive and active listening, contributes significantly to the ability of leaders to succeed in executing their functions, including the ability of female leaders to avoid negative consequences for failure to conform to established gender norms. Therefore, it is important for leadership development programs to incorporate assertiveness training into their programs to improve the effectiveness of their leaders, especially those with diverse backgrounds.

Yang et al. (2020) defined verbally aggressive leaders as those who use insults, hostile language, or intimidation. When they are present, workplaces become toxic because trust suffers and cooperation collapses. This finding tallies with that of Yue (2023), who found a general trend leading to low employee morale and job satisfaction associated with much negative behavior in the workplace when verbal aggressiveness is high between superiors and subordinates at work. All this points to the fact that leader managers should practice positive and constructive communication because verbal aggressiveness creates a climate of fear and anxiety in working environment which significantly influences employees to engage counter productive work behaviors

(Yue et al., 2023). Verbal aggressiveness has wider implications in precipitating a larger organizational culture wherein employee engagement gets dissipated (Kim et al., 2022). Bekiari (2016) reported a similar phenomenon from the field of education. Instructor aggressiveness kills student intrinsic motivation which eventually leads to poor performance. The effects are quite damaging and seem to be standing firm across different organizational setups. An exploration into styles of leadership, therefore, brings out more subtle interaction between verbal aggressiveness and effectiveness or ineffectiveness in leadership. A study by Bardas et al., very recent-2024 pinpoints this connection further emphasized aggressive communication symptomatic of a wider autocratic leadership behavior pattern.

2.2. Employee Voice Behavior

Employee voice behavior is an integral part of organizational behavior that entails the voluntary communication of ideas, concerns, or opinions from employees regarding the improvement of processes and practices within a company or resolving issues within their workplace. Voice behavior has always been seen as a constructive way to challenge the established norms and ways of operating in an organization and create positive change within that organization (Chou & Barron, 2016; Ouyang et al., 2023). The early concept of the employee voice was based on Hirschman's model and viewed it as an alternative to exit strategies, i.e. how employee voice could actually change the dynamics of an organization even when employees remain with the company (Ouyang et al., 2023). Over time, the employee voice has grown from being seen as simply an act of communicating information to being considered a strategically important part of sustaining an organization and improving its performance. For example, Naqvi (2020) states that organizations need to take advantage of employee voice in order to be able to maintain their resilience in times of rapid change and uncertainty, as well as that being resilient is based on employee participation through voice. In the same way, Weiss & Morrison (2019) say that employee voice is a driver of innovation and adaptability and that creating a culture that supports voice is essential for success in a changing environment.

The antecedents of employee voice behavior range from the personal to the relational and contextual. On an individual level, a proactive personality and satisfaction depict strong predictors of voice behavior (Wijaya et al., 2018:2; Zhang et al., 2014:810). Perceived organizational support is another important factor in the relational aspect that determines whether an employee feels safe enough to express his or her thoughts because he or she perceives value and support from the organization (Bergeron & Thompson, 2020; Cheng et al., 2019). And here again enters fear—a negative outcome—where most people whisper instead of speaking up loud—adverse reactions either from supervisors or colleagues may also silence someone's willingness toward exhibiting such behavior (Hsiung, 2012:350). Transformational leadership has been found by several researchers as a type that creates this kind of climate hence enhances employee voices through supportive leaders who make employees feel safe (Park et al., 2022; Anwar et al. 2023).

Leaders high on assertive behavior communicate self-confidently but with due respect to others, signaling that differing opinions are welcome in creating psychological safety which acts as a facilitator between communicative behaviors and employee voice (Yang et al., 2020; Men, 2021). Communicative assertiveness enhances perceived authenticity and fairness of a leader to build strong relational bases required for voicing (Tedone & Bruk-Lee 2022). Employees develop tendencies toward imitating assertive communicative behavior. Constructive voices proactively address issues rather than defensively remaining silent when an assertive role model exists (Renger et al., 2019). Respect forms part of interactively articulated assertion from wherein intra-group respect can evolve as its antecedent (Renger et al., 2019). A supportive voice climate defined by safety and encouragement to speak up fosters greater engagement in voice behavior (Frazier & Bowler, 2015; Bergeron & Thompson, 2020:3).

Verbal aggressiveness is a barrier to voice behavior. Verbal aggressiveness is defined as communication aimed at attacking another person's self-concept rather than addressing the issues constructively (Yue et al., 2024). Verbally aggressiveness causes employees to develop cynicism toward the organization and inhibit their voices, Liu et al. (2020) found that supervisor verbal aggressiveness creates a negative emotional culture of anger, tension, and frustration. In high power-distance or collectivist cultures Ladegaard (2012) found leader verbal aggressiveness to be construed as a relational norm violation and thus discourages upward communication. Aggressive remarks—sarcasm with hostility generates fear either of retaliatory aggression or humiliation and may lead to defensive silence. Therefore, it was hypothesized that;

H1: (a) Assertiveness positively affects employee voice behavior, while (b) verbal aggressiveness negatively affects employee voice behavior.

2.3. Employee Resilience

Employee resilience is the ability of a person to positively accommodate pressure, stress or change at work. Behaviors and attitudes associated with employee resilience are reflected in how workers bounce back from setbacks, keep performing under adversity, and succeed despite difficulty (Näswall et al., 2019; Li & Tong, 2021; King et al., 2015). Therefore, highly performing cultures develop beyond individual attributes of personal strength because workplace culture as an organizational factor substantially enables or constrains the capacity for strength development through leadership support and resource availability (Kuntz et al., 2017; Kuntz et al., 2016; Wilkinson & Rennaker, 2022). This paper argues that building employee resilience should become a top priority in today's organizations characterized by constant dynamism since resilient employees have mastered managing stress resulting from any form of change they eventually channel into positive energy towards their teams and entire organization(s) (Li & Tong, 2021.; Good et al., 2023).

Research studies indicate that through the use of specific interventions aimed at developing resilience in individuals, as well as implementing supportive practices within organisations, there is a positive impact on both individual and organisational outcomes (Kuntz et al., 2017; Zahoor, 2024). For instance, Kuntz et al. (2017) highlighted the significance of resilience enhancing programs, whereby the employee and organisation have a mutually beneficial relationship and provide opportunities for ongoing competency and resources to develop.

In addition, research demonstrates (Good et al., 2023; Paul et al., 2016; Boakye et al., 2022) that there are strong relatedness between an Employee's resilience and Psychological Well-Being and Job Satisfaction. Resilient employees tend to have lower intention to turnover and higher level of employee engagement, while demonstrating greater Organisational Citizenship behaviours. This is important for not just the Employee's Well-Being but also the overall performance of an organisation.

Assertiveness means a direct but considerate articulation of thoughts, which inspires employees to speak about their needs, manage stress constructively, and develop coping confidence (Imroz, 2023; Zhou & Vasudevan, 2024). According to Yang et al., (2020), leaders who are assertive build trust and psychological safety hence leaders who communicate assertively model emotional balance and respectful feedback that leads to team resilience. Assertiveness aids employees to deal with unknowns in a confident manner through developing cognitive flexibility and resilience in their work environment (Sanchez-Garcia & Nunez-Rios, 2025). It has been shown that through reflective learning, proactive coping enables resiliency (Imroz, 2023). Therefore, the behavior of developing resiliency can come from this form of proactive coping behaviour.

On the other hand, verbal aggressiveness may possibly erode employee resilience by creating chronic stress, fear, and emotional exhaustion. As put forward by Agarwal (2019), employees develop learned helplessness when they are constantly exposed to verbal aggression and eventually refrain from adaptive coping. Continuous exposure increases cortisol responses that decrease emotional endurance resulting in burnout (Molero Jurado et al., 2018). Turnover as well as absenteeism due to aggressive communicative behaviors is reported more in such organizations where aggressive communication prevails (Agarwal; 2019). Verbal aggressiveness blocks the path of resilience because it communicates hostility instead of support whereby trust is reduced while cynicism is triggered- key barriers to resilience (Yue et al., 2024). Therefore, it was hypothesized that;

H2: (a) Assertiveness positively affects employee resilience, while (b) verbal aggressiveness negatively affects employee resilience.

3. Method

3.1. Research Model and Hypotheses

This paper compares and contrasts the effects of two totally opposite forms of direct leader communication, assertiveness and verbal aggressiveness, on employee voice behavior and resilience. Assertiveness permits safe self-expression while aggressiveness is indicative of a hostile dominance accompanied by emotional strain (Infante & Wigley, 1986; Yue et al., 2024). Much has been written about leadership, particularly effective

leadership communication (De Vries et al., 2010; Men, 2021), but very little yet about how specifically toned communications from leaders toward employees influence willingness to speak up among employees or their ability to adjust proactively toward stress. This paper attempts to address that gap in the extant literature by discussing destructive versus constructive communication styles with respect to behavioral as well as psychological outcomes manifested by employees. According to the literature the research hypothesis were formulated as follows:

H1: (a) Assertiveness positively affects employee voice behavior, while (b) verbal aggressiveness negatively affects employee voice behavior.

H2: (a) Assertiveness positively affects employee resilience, while (b) verbal aggressiveness negatively affects employee resilience.

The research model of the study is given in Figure 1.

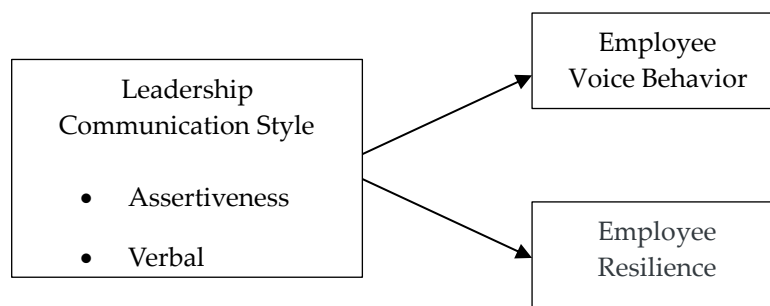


Figure 1: Research Model

A quantitative research design was undertaken to test empirically the hypothesized relationships between assertiveness, verbal aggressiveness, employee voice behavior and resilience. Quantitative research allows testing statistical relationships among variables and developing generalizable knowledge about organizational workforces (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Hair et al., 2020). It is most appropriate for behavioral studies investigating causal and correlational dynamics within workplace communication and psychological constructs (Podsakoff et al., 2012).

3.2. The Population and The Sample

The population in this study was made up of full-time employees in Istanbul. Data was collected using a convenience sampling method. Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling method that selects subjects who are most accessible and willing to participate. This sampling method is used quite often within the field of organisational behaviour because the target population tends to be very large and relatively concentrated within a geographic area, while at the same time being made up of many different types of employee groups from various sectors (Etikan et al., 2016; Saunders et al., 2019). Access to participants was achieved through professional networks, contacts at their respective companies, and through online groups comprised of employees from their respective organisations, such as LinkedIn. The target sample size to achieve 95% confidence and a 5% margin of error is around 384 respondents; therefore, 384 questionnaires were distributed to employees, with 305 completed questionnaires returned; resulting in a response rate of 79.4%. The completed questionnaires were then screened and incomplete/inaccurate responses were removed from the data set (Hair et al., 2020); this left 296 completed questionnaires to be used for final analysis.

The socio-demographics of the sample are as follows: Gender (46% female, 54% male); Age group: 25-34 (47%), 35-44 (37%), 45-54 (13%), 55 and above (3%). 13% of the respondents were employed in education, 24% were employed in retailing, 10% were employed in logistics, 14% were employed in finance, 27% were employed in production, and 11% were employed in service.

3.3. Measurement and Data Collection

All measurement instruments were adapted from validated preexisting scales. Specifically, assertiveness and verbal aggressiveness were measured using scales developed by Yang et al. (2020), employee voice behavior was assessed using the scale by Van Dyne & LePine (1998), and employee resilience was measured using the scale by Näswall et al. (2019). Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("strongly

disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"). Assertiveness was measured by five items, verbal aggressiveness was measured by four items, employee voice behavior was measured by six items and employee resilience was measured by nine items. In total 24 items were used to measure all the variables. The original Cronbach's alpha values of the scales were as follows: for assertiveness it was 0,83 , for verbal aggressiveness it was 0,80, for employee voice behavior it was 0,95 , for employee resilience it was 0,90.

Since the measurement instruments used in this study were originally developed in English, a translation-back translation process was employed to ensure semantic, conceptual, and functional equivalence of the items. This method follows the widely accepted cross-cultural adaptation procedures outlined by Brislin (1970), and later refined by scholars in organizational and psychological research (Douglas & Craig, 2007). The researcher translated the items into Turkish, after that another independent bilingual expert performed a back translation into English. Discrepancies between the original and back-translated versions were discussed and resolved. The final translated version was pilot tested on a small group of employees (n = 20) to ensure that the items were comprehensible and contextually relevant. Feedback from pilot participants confirmed the clarity and readability of the instrument.

Data were collected using an online survey questionnaire. Online questionnaires are considered efficient and scalable with the possibility of reaching a varied population of employees from different industries (Evans & Mathur, 2018). It reduces interviewer bias as well because respondents can provide their answers anonymously hence encouraging candid self-reports on measures pertaining to communication and resilience (Saunders et al., 2019). The anonymity provided by online surveys can reduce bias and improve the accuracy of responses to sensitive questions, enhancing data reliability (Harris-Waller et al., 2016:340).

3.4. Data Analysis

Normality was checked in the values of skewness and kurtosis. Reliability and structural validity of the scales were tested by Cronbach's alpha coefficient, composite reliability, and validity tested by confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) (Hair et al., 2020). Discriminant validity was later on tested through comparison between the square root of AVE values for each construct with correlations between constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The research hypotheses have been tested by Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The statistical programs used include SPSS 29.0 and AMOS.

4. Result

4.1. The Validity and Reliability of Measurement

A total of 296 valid questionnaires were used for the analysis. Normality was checked in terms of skewness and kurtosis, both within ± 2 standard errors of their measures (Kline, 2015). After normality check, accuracy and validity check of the measurement model has been performed. CFA was conducted to check the structural validity of the scales. Reliability was checked by Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha \geq 0.70$), composite reliability (CR ≥ 0.70) by the recommended thresholds suggested by Hair et al. (2020).

Table 1: CFA Results and the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients

Items	Λ	C.R.	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha Coef.
Assertiveness		0,828	0,548	0,817
as1	0,729			
as2	0,623			
as3	0,810			
as4	0,786			
Verbal Aggressiveness		0,904	0,703	0,920
ag1	0,743			
ag2	0,844			
ag3	0,823			
ag4	0,932			

Employee Voice Behavior		0,954	0,777	0,951
vo1	0,936			
vo2	0,907			
vo3	0,873			
vo4	0,755			
vo5	0,884			
vo6	0,921			
Employee Resilience		0,943	0,675	0,943
re1	0,857			
re3	0,757			
re4	0,802			
re5	0,867			
re6	0,876			
re7	0,746			
re8	0,84			
re9	0,815			

Table 1 displays the ultimate results of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) for the research model. This includes average variance extracted (AVE), composite reliability (CR), and Cronbach's alpha coefficients. Prior to running CFA, items were checked for their loadings and reliability. Two items (as5 and re2) with loadings less than 0.50 were removed to enhance construct validity (Hair et al., 2020). After this modification, CFA was run on the remaining items to check measurement model validation. The CFA showed good fit of model for combined scales ($\chi^2=552.86, df=166, \chi^2/df=3.33, CFI=0.941, GFI=0.889, IFI=0.942, TLI=0.918, NFI=0.919, RMSEA=0.065$) (Hair et al., 2020). All standardized factor loadings ranged between 0.623 and 0.932 and are highly significant ($p < 0.001$). Convergent validity is achieved since all constructions reach acceptable minimum threshold values both in CR as well as AVE.

Discriminant validity was assessed following the criterion by Fornell and Larcker (1981). The test shows how empirically unique a certain construct is compared to other constructs available in the model. Discriminant validity becomes evident when the square root of AVE for each construct is larger than its correlation with any other construct, thus indicating more shared variance between the indicators associated with that construct and itself than any other latent variable (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). As seen in Table 2, the square root of AVE for every construct is greater than its correlation with any other construct; hence discriminant validity can be safely stated.

Table 2. Discriminant Validity Test Results

	Assert.	Ver. Aggr.	E.Voice B.	E.Resiliencee
Assertiveness	(0,741)*			
Verbal Aggressiveness	-0,233**	(0,838)		
E. Voice Behavior	0,578	0,064	(0,881)	
E. Resilience	0,640	-0,153	0,715	(0,821)

Notes: Square root of constructs' AVEs are reported in parentheses. **Correlations between constructs.

4.2. Hypothesis Testing

Prior to testing the hypotheses through path analysis, the structural model's goodness-of-fit indices were evaluated (see Table 3).

Table 3: Structural Model's Goodness-of-Fit

Metric	Default Model	Saturated Model
CMIN	642,226	0
CMIN/DF	3,916	-

GFI	0,900	1
NFI	0,926	1
CFI	0,938	1
TLI	0,912	-
RFI	0,910	-
IFI	0,938	1

As it is seen in Table 3, the values indicated an acceptable model fit, the path analysis was performed, and the hypotheses were subsequently tested (Hair et al., 2020). The structural model is given in Figure 2.

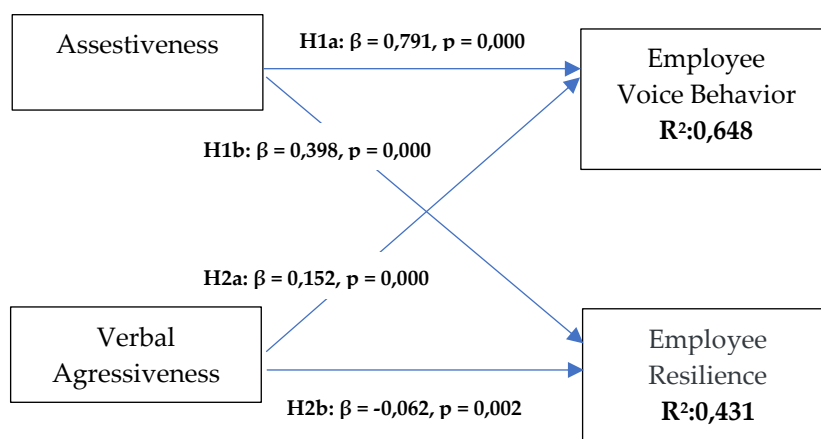


Figure 2: The Structural Model

The findings from the hypothesis test are displayed in Table 4. According to the data, assertiveness positively affects employee voice behavior ($\beta = 0,791, p < 0,001$); while it positively affects employee resilience ($\beta = 0,398, p < 0,001$). Moreover, it was found that verbal aggressiveness negatively affects employee resilience ($\beta = -0,062, p < 0,005$) but positively affects employee voice behavior ($\beta = 0,152, p < 0,001$).

As a result of the path analysis, all the hypotheses were supported, however, H1b (verbal aggressiveness negatively affects employee voice behavior) was not supported since verbal aggressiveness affects employee voice behavior not negatively but positively. The explained variance (R^2) was 0,648 for employee voice behavior, 0,431 for employee resilience. The R^2 values indicate the proportion of variance in the dependent variables explained by the independent variables in the model. The value of 0,648 shows that the model is effective at predicting why employees speak up or remain silent. In other words, it implies that assertiveness and verbal aggressiveness capture the majority of the drivers of employee voice behavior. Besides that, the value of 0,431 represents a moderate to large effect. It indicates that the model explains 43.1% of the variance in employee resilience.

Table 4: The Hypotheses Testing Results

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	
E.Voi.B	<---	Assert.	0,791	0,079	10,008	0,000	H1a supported
E.Voi.B	<---	V.Aggr.	0,152	0,038	3,983	0,000	H1b not supported
E.Res.	<---	Assert.	0,398	0,05	8,026	0,000	H2a supported
E.Res.	<---	V.Aggres.	-0,062	0,02	-3,155	0,002	H2b supported

5. Discussion

The present study aimed to explore how two distinct leadership communication styles assertiveness and verbal aggressiveness affect employee voice behavior and employee resilience. The study adds to the literature on leadership and organizational behavior with a fine understanding of the effects that styles in leader communication may have, particularly an extremely composite role played by verbal aggressiveness.

First, results show as clearly as possible that assertive leader communication has strong positive effects on employee voice behavior and resilience. Leaders who are confident and firm in expressing their own views

create environments where employees feel psychologically safe to articulate their thoughts and ideas (Yang et al., 2020). Previous research slightly connected this finding to a result showing that assertive communication encourages open discussion leading to collaboration and innovation. The effect of resilience found here means developing coping mechanisms for thriving amidst workplace challenges introduced through clear-and-confident communications; hence support from earlier works by Kuntz et al.(2017) and Good et al. (2023) on clarity-and-support-based leadership practice being important in creating resilient workforce.

Surprisingly, the results show that verbal aggressiveness has a positive effect on employee voice behavior though much less than assertiveness. While it was hypothesized that verbal aggressiveness would have a negative effect on voice behavior, in some contexts, the results show that verbally aggressive leaders might inadvertently invoke employees to speak up as a defense or due threat perceived by such communication. This unexpected finding partially supports H1b and provides an alternative view of the conventional assumption regarding verbal aggressiveness being totally detrimental; this is in line with new perspectives that employee voice may sometimes be from negatively aroused emotions rather than purely supportive conditions (Yue, 2023). However, importantly noted is the fact that the effect size was smaller compared to assertiveness and overall tone of verbal aggressiveness still came out as negative toward resilience.

Aggression was confirmed as having a negative effect on resilience, consistent with prior research (Yue et al., 2023; Bardas et al., 2024). Employees who experience hostile or intimidating communication are unlikely to respond dynamically toward workplace challenges. Verbally aggressive interactions destroy the notion of psychological safety and trust which is considered an important factor in building resilient teams.

Results showed that verbal aggressiveness had a positive effect on employee voice behavior and a negative effect on employee resilience. This makes an interesting case for the complex nature of aggressive communication at organizations because both effects work simultaneously. There is, therefore, a possibility that verbally aggressive leaders or coworkers motivate outspoken behavior among employees as either confrontation or defensive type of voice since more than one condition can be true inside an organization-under certain conditions this result will hold true while under other conditions it may not hold true at all inside the same organization(Liu et al.,2020). Sometimes employees respond to leader aggression by engaging in challenging or reactive voice which attempts to assert control or protect self-esteem against dominance. Fast et al. (2014) argued that under controlling or authoritarian leadership, employee voice behavior may not necessarily be a substantive contribution but an expression of frustration or resistance to perceived mistreatment. Thus, the upward positive path may reflect reactive voice even though this type of nonconstructive speaking up is motivated by emotional tension rather than an intention for organizational improvement.

The negative effect of verbal aggressiveness on resilience also supports a well-established body of literature which indicates that hostile and disrespectful communication patterns destroy psychological safety, trust, and coping resources. Verbal aggressiveness is defined as personal attacks and hostility rather than issue-oriented feedback (Infante & Wigley, 1986). A climate high in such communication will gradually erode the confidence among employees about their abilities to bounce back from stress situations; hence they become emotionally exhausted with lowered adaptive capacity (Yue et al., 2024; Molero Jurado et al., 2018). This finding is in line with Conservation of Resources theory-or COR theory-(Hobfoll 2011) that states resilience is depleted and burnout vulnerability increases when stressors threaten by way of 'resource loss' i.e., Self-efficacy and organizational trust as key psychological antecedents of resilience are usually manifested in the higher levels among employees who were not exposed to verbally aggressive communication (Tedone & Bruk-Lee, 2022). Verbal aggressiveness may thus make the workplace more vocally expressive but eventually demoralizes and wears down workers' psychological health and strength.

To sum up, it appears that verbal aggressiveness can provoke short-term behavioral responses-such as a reactive or defensive voice while speaking-and develops long-term psychological harms mostly on resilience and emotional stability. As an organizational communicator, you must learn to differentiate between assertive and aggressive statements and build respect in your conversations to promote healthy communications and to foster both an individual's ability to be assertive as well as healthy well-being (Yue et al., 2024).

These results have substantial practical implications. Leadership development programs should include components on training leaders to be assertive without being aggressive in expressing themselves, and

articulating clearly the consciousness of long-term effects that verbal aggressiveness has on employees' welfare and organizational culture as a whole. More practically oriented voice encouraging programs should ensure that an organizational climate is safe and supportive before pushing employees to use their voices.

Theoretically, it raises more questions that in the real situation there is a positive relationship between verbal aggressiveness and voice behavior. Future studies can therefore look at possible moderating variables both at an individual employee characteristic level-for instance proactive personality or emotional intelligence-and organizational conflict management culture which may explain conditions under which verbal aggressiveness results in higher voice behavior rather than silence.

This study slightly nuances the understanding of the vital role that leadership communication styles play in key employee outcomes. Assertiveness is conceived as an unmitigated good fostering both voice behavior and resilience while verbal aggressiveness emerges in a more complicated way, possibly fostering voice behavior but at a major cost to employee resilience. The findings slightly underline the imperative for healthy communication practices by leaders toward attaining sustainable organizational success.

Assertive communication has a bearing on personal and collective resilience, hence organizational resilience. Assertive communication uplifts the leader's personality to inspire employees toward motivations for commitments resulting in resilient workforces as noted by Deinert et al. (2015). According to Lappalainen (2017), assertiveness counts among socio-emotional skills with positive organizational outcomes manifested through engaged employees and minimal misunderstandings within the workplace. More so, Marsal (2021) found that when supported by advanced technological means of today's leaders' intangibles can become new indirect communication channels or digital forms-of-engagement strategies.

6. Limitations and Further Research

There are quite a few limitations to this study, which in turn open up interesting potential avenues for further research. First, cultural or industry-specific norms were not considered in the analysis; such norms may very well shape how employees perceive and respond to aggressive communication (e.g., hierarchical versus egalitarian workplace cultures). Contextual factors need to be incorporated by future studies if findings similar to those reported here are found again elsewhere. Second, other dimensions of communication style beyond assertiveness and aggressiveness-perhaps supportiveness and clarity-deserve exploration with respect both employee voice as well as resilience since these two forms happen occupy opposite ends on the directness continuum between assertiveness/aggressiveness(Yang et al.,2020). Supportiveness, expressiveness, and clarity are basically conceptualized as interactional or relational communication styles. They have not been included in the present model of this study (Richmond, McCroskey, & Hickson, 2018). Future research may apply an extended framework to empirically investigate supportiveness and clarity that create psychological safety as complementary communication dimensions resulting in positive employee outcomes. Third, future models should integrate additional predictors-such as psychological safety and job autonomy-to better explain variance in employee voice behavior. Nuanced insights can be gained by determining boundary conditions-for example, a crisis situation-under which aggressive communication might temporarily encourage voice. Fourth, the sample size (n=296) is relatively small. The data provide a reasonable basis for either exploratory or context-specific insight but may not fully represent the broader population to which the study intends to generalize. The results are indicative rather than fully generalizable. Lastly, research should focus on potential moderators- organizational climate, conflict management practices,and individual differences (e.g., emotional intelligence)-for a clearer understanding of mechanisms underlying these relationships. Gaps identified would enhance both theoretical as well practical applications of leadership communication research.

7. Conclusion

This study demonstrates the determinative role of leadership communication styles in critical employee outcomes, particularly voice behavior and resilience, thereby adding empirical clarity to the largely conceptual propositions found within existing literature. This means that an assertive leader-a person who confidently states expectations while showing due respect for others as a demonstration of trust and clarity reinforcing psychological safety as relational conditions permitting employees to express both freely significantly adaptive toward work challenges-demonstrates increased levels of such behaviors. Therefore, assertiveness is emerging as the preferred mode of communication that ensures both behavioral engagement (voice) and

psychological well-being (resilience). The findings add a twist to the story of verbal aggressiveness. Breaking the usual assumptions, verbal aggressiveness showed a significantly positive relationship with voice behavior—largely and relatively smaller in effect size than assertiveness. This could mean that verbally aggressive communication invokes pressure-reactive or defensive voice; employees speak up not because they feel safe or valued but because they are "pressured," threatened, or compelled to protect themselves. The same style of communication had a negative effect on resilience, manifesting its long-term damaging effects on emotional stability, coping capacity, and psychological resources. The dual pattern thus emerged: sustainable healthy performance depends on certain conditions which short-term expression through verbal aggressiveness destroys.

Aggressiveness and assertiveness are not merely 'tones' or styles of delivery. Once again, the results support a basically mechanistic psychological distinction between the two. Aggressiveness fosters and sustains resilience through openness and collaboration while it is actually verbal aggressiveness that creates a tension atmosphere draining resources regardless of any apparent increase in voice behavior at a surface level. Leaders should encourage communication based on respect, clarity, and confidence rather than hostility or intimidation.

The study adds to the earlier theoretical works on leadership communication by showing a much more nuanced effect of destructive styles and importantly that voice behavior is not always indicative of a healthy work environment. Communication-focused leadership development training reinforces this finding and provides future researchers with an entry point toward investigating boundary conditions for negative communication to provoke reactive voice. Assertive verbal communication, as opposed to performance-sustaining or aggressively oriented verbal communication environments, should be promoted by organizations targeting employee well-being.

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