



EXAMINING THE MEDIATING ROLE OF ORGANIZATIONAL TRUST ON THE EFFECT OF ETHICAL CLIMATE ON EMPLOYEE VOICE IN THE HEALTH SECTOR

SAĞLIK SEKTÖRÜNDE ETİK İKLİMİN ÇALIŞAN SESLİLİĞİ ÜZERİNE ETKİSİNDE ÖRGÜTSEL GÜVENİN ARACILIK ROLÜNÜN İNCELENMESİ

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study is to reveal whether organizational trust plays a mediating role in the effect of ethical climate perception observed in the health sector on employee voice. The population of the study, designed according to the quantitative research method, consists of private hospital employees in Istanbul, and the sample consists of 328 healthcare professionals working in a private hospital, reached by convenience sampling method. SPSS 27, AMOS 22 programs and Process Macro plugin were used in the analysis of the data obtained in the study. According to the findings of the research; organizational ethical climate positively and significantly affects employee voice and organizational trust plays a mediating role in this relationship. In the working environment where the organizational ethical climate is effective, the voice of the employees rises and the trust of the employees in their organizations increases, which strengthens the voice of the employees. Findings show that employees' ethical climate, voice and trust perceptions are related concepts.

Keywords: Ethical climate, employee voice, organizational trust.

Öz

Bu çalışmanın temel amacı; sağlık sektöründe gözlenen etik iklim algısının çalışan sesliliği üzerindeki etkisinde örgütsel güvenin aracı bir rol oynayıp oynamadığını ortaya koymaktır. Nicel araştırma yöntemine göre tasarlanan çalışmanın evrenini İstanbul ilinde özel hastane çalışanları oluşturmakta olup, örneklemini ise özel bir hastanede çalışan sağlık çalışanlarından kolayda örnekleme yöntemi ile ulaşılan 328 sağlık çalışanı oluşturmaktadır. Çalışmada elde edilen verilerin analizinde SPSS 27, AMOS 22 programları ve Process Macro eklentisi kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın bulgularına göre; örgütsel etik iklim, çalışan sesliliğini olumlu ve anlamlı bir şekilde etkilemekte ve örgütsel güven bu ilişkide aracı bir rol oynamaktadır. Örgütsel etik iklimin etkili olduğu çalışma ortamında, çalışanların sesi yükselir ve çalışanların örgütlerine olan güveni artarak bu durum çalışanların sesini güçlendirir. Bulgular çalışanların etik iklim, ses ve güven algılarının ilişkili kavramlar olduğunu göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Etik iklim, çalışan sesliliği, örgütsel güven.

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INTRODUCTION

Individuals working in health institutions may face behaviors and events that can have negative consequences. Incorrect or unethical behaviors in the health sector can be dangerous and even fatal. To prevent these negative consequences, it is crucial for organizations to establish an ethical climate that promotes trust and encourages individuals to speak up and prevent negative situations.

Ethics refers to the right and good way of life that emerges by questioning the criteria of action and value (Pieper, 1999: 29). Ethical climate, on the other hand, is a concept that explains the perspective towards ethical behaviors that are supported and rewarded by the organization (Guerci et al., 2015: 327). In this context, the management's perspective on ethical issues directs the attitudes and behaviors of the members (Martin & Cullen, 2006). The dissemination of ethical values within the organization is achieved through employee voice, which is the voluntary transmission of ideas, concerns, suggestions, and thoughts to senior management in order to correct or eliminate problematic situations that employees have witnessed or experienced (Morrison, 2011: 373-412).

Organizations' ability to adapt to changing conditions and survive depends on employees' ability to express their suggestions, ideas, and experiences clearly in the workplace, in order to gain a competitive advantage. Studies show that organizations where employees' voices are heard are more open to innovations, more creative, more efficient, and have lower job dissatisfaction rates. Establishing an ethical climate in organizations provides important advantages to organizations by creating an environment of trust (Demircan, 2003). When there are ethical codes in place, employees feel safer and more secure. Conversely, trust decreases in an organization without ethical codes. Common ethical values among members of an organization foster an environment of trust (Fukuyama, 2000: 257). Trust is a crucial factor in the healthcare sector. Building a cooperative relationship between patients and doctors and fostering a trustworthy environment within the organization are essential for providing quality healthcare services (Firth-Cozens, 2004: 56). When organizational trust decreases, it can lead to a decline in the commitment, performance, and motivation of healthcare workers (Altuntaş, 2008: 36; Shouksmith, 1994: 707).

Examining the relationship between the ethical climate and employee voice, and the mediating effect of organizational trust as perceived by healthcare professionals can increase awareness and lead to improved organizational effectiveness and efficiency. The study aims to investigate this relationship and the role of organizational trust as a mediator. This study seeks to answer the question, "Is there a mediating role of organizational trust in the effect of organizational ethical climate on employee voice?" By considering the increasing importance of ethical climate, employee voice, and organizational trust for both managers and employees, this study will contribute to the existing literature.

When examining the literature, it is evident that many studies have explored the relationship between ethics and trust (Mulki, Jaramillo & Locander, 2006; Eser, 2007; Dönertaş, 2008; Eren & Hayatoğlu, 2011; Büte, 2011; Torun, 2013; Altaş & Kuzu, 2013; Bozkurt & Torun, 2014; Taşpınar, Şahin & Örselli, 2016; Agrawal, 2017; Gerçek, 2017; Aydan & Kaya, 2018) and between ethics and employee voice (Soyalın & Karabey, 2020; Erdem, 2021; Kılıç & Eser, 2022; Örucü, Hasırcı & Böcek, 2022; Saygın & Atalay, 2022). However, no study has been reached in the literature on the relationship between organizational ethical climate and employee voice, and how this relationship is mediated by organizational trust. Thus, this study aims to fill this gap by examining the perspectives of employees in the health sector

on ethical climate, employee voice, and organizational trust, and exploring the relationship between these factors through applied research.

1. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

1.1. Ethical Climate

Ethics is a philosophical discipline that dates back to antiquity. It examines the moral values of philosophy, and is derived from the Greek word "ethos", which means behavior and character (Pieper, 1999:29). Ethics evaluates values and value judgments such as wrong-right, bad-good, in the relations of individuals with others and society (Kaplan, 2009:344). Organizational climate is defined as the perceptions shared by employees about practices, behavior types, and procedures that are supported and rewarded within the organization (Schneider et al., 1998:151). Moran and Volkwein (1992) stated that organizational climate is formed by member interactions that shape and influence the behaviors seen in the organization. This interaction provides the basis for the interpretation of the values, attitudes, and situational norms of the organization. Different climates can exist within an organization for leadership, creativity, security, service, and success (Shacklock et al., 2011: 52). Since the 1960s, the idea that organizations have an ethical climate has been a topic of research in the business literature (Schluter et al., 2008: 305). Various expressions are used in the literature to describe ethical climate, such as ethical culture, ethical organizational climate, ethical environment, ethical climate, ethical business environment, and ethical element of organizational culture (Olson, 1998). The Ethical Climate Theory, first discussed in Victor and Cullen's 1988 study, has since been the subject of numerous studies and research. The ethical climate refers to the "common perceptions about how to deal with ethical problems and what constitutes ethically correct behavior." It also includes prohibitions, instructions, and permissions regarding the organization's moral responsibilities (Victor & Cullen, 1988; Biçer, 2017: 15-16). Additionally, the ethical climate serves as a "perceptual lens" that helps managers identify and resolve ethical dilemmas (Chouaib & Zaddem, 2013: 2).

The ethical climate of an organization refers to its rules, policies, and practices regarding moral consequences. It affects the behavior and decision-making processes of individuals (Martin & Cullen, 2006). However, factors such as the positions of employees within the organization and their working hours can cause the ethical climate to be perceived differently by different members of the organization (Victor & Cullen, 1988:102). The ethical climate affects employee behavior and relations within the organization, which in turn affects organizational results (Bulutlar & Öz, 2009: 273). Several factors can influence the ethical climate, such as profit, interest, efficiency, friendships, morality, social responsibility, rules, and laws. Determinants of ethical climate include organizational policies, structure, social structure, and leadership (Sims, 1992: 510; Victor & Cullen, 1988). These factors can positively or negatively affect the ethical climate of an organization. The ethical climate helps guide members of the organization to determine which problems fall within the scope of ethics and which do not. It also helps in understanding these problems and deciding on the criteria to be used in their resolution (Doğan & Kılıç, 2014: 271). Furthermore, the ethical climate not only indicates what the correct behaviors are within an organization, but also provides guidance on how to handle ethical problems when they arise (Peterson, 2002: 313). In this context, the ethical climate of an organization has a significant impact on the ethical behavior of its members. Unethical behavior refers to actions that are not socially or morally acceptable (Jones, 1991). This includes behaviors that cause harm to others in society by ignoring laws and organizational norms, and are considered illegal by society (Tonus & Oruç, 2012: 151-152). In organizations lacking an ethical climate, individuals may have to choose between their personal

values and the interests of the organization. Ethical violations resulting from such a situation can impose significant costs on organizations (Eren & Hayatoğlu, 2011: 123-124).

The ethical climate has an effect on job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intention to leave. Managers who are aware of this can take steps to create a positive perception of the ethical climate (Schwepker, 2001: 40). Different types of ethical climates require different management strategies. Therefore, managers should first determine the ethical climate in the organization to strengthen their strategies and the ethical behavior of the members of the organization (Deshpande, 1996: 319). A positive relationship exists between the ethical climate and organizational commitment and job satisfaction. As the level of the ethical climate increases, turnover decreases, and employee performance improves (Mulki et al., 2006; Valentine & Barnett, 2003). When members of the organization have clear standards for distinguishing between ethical and unethical behaviors, they develop a positive attitude towards their organizations (Valentine & Barnett, 2003). In other words, as organizational members' satisfaction with their organization increases, so does their commitment to it (Raabe & Behr, 2003; Ramaswami & Singh, 2003).

There have been several studies on ethical climate in the health sector, including those by Hashish and Aly (2017), Güngören, Orhan & Kurutkan (2013), Borhani et al. (2012), Şahin and Dündar (2010) and Huerta (2008). Olson (1998) developed the Hospital Ethical Climate Scale in a study on compatriots in the USA and found that nurses face significant ethical challenges. In their study on nurses working in hospitals, Bahçecik and Öztürk (2003) and Karagözoğlu et al. (2014) concluded that nurses perceive the hospital's ethical climate positively.

1.2. Employee Voice

Today, employees have become an important part of organizations, giving them the power to express themselves (Spreitzer, 1996: 483-504). In this changing process, managers have started to allow different ideas and suggestions by including employees in decision-making processes. Examining employee voice behaviors is important in terms of expressing the wishes and concerns of employees about their organizations. Since the 1970s, studies on sound and silence have been included in the literature. The concept of silence was first defined in 1970 in the book "Exit, Voice and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations and States" written by Albert O. Hirschman. Hirschman proposes that in the face of unpleasant situations in an organization, individuals exhibit two types of behavior: "exit" and "voice". Exit refers to leaving the organization without attempting to solve the problems or addressing the issues that are not working within the organization. On the other hand, voice refers to employees making efforts to correct problems or issues within the organization and raising their concerns through complaints and vocalized criticisms (Hirschman, 1970: 272).

Voice refers to taking action to solve problems, offering suggestions, requesting help from various organizations, and making efforts to improve working conditions (Landau, 2017: 144). In other words, voice is not only criticism but also includes behaviors that encourage organizational improvement and aim to offer suggestions for change (Kassing, 2002: 187-209). Voice is important for job satisfaction, productivity, and performance increase. The concept of voice is based on the idea that employees have the right to participate and contribute directly or indirectly to the decision-making processes in the organization (Hodson, 2001). Employee voice facilitates dialogue between management and employees and offers employees an opportunity to clearly express their concerns and ideas to influence organizational policies and decisions (Holland, Allen, & Cooper, 2013: 3148).

Organizations aim to increase productivity by utilizing the intellectual capital within the organization. To achieve this, organizations should listen to the voices of their employees and create suitable working environments that encourage the expression of ideas and thoughts. When organizational silence occurs, it can lead to decreased effectiveness of change processes, increased withdrawal behaviors, and decreased motivation and job satisfaction (Morrison and Milliken, 2000: 706-725). On the other hand, when employees express their thoughts clearly, through the behavior of voice in the organization, it leads to positive outcomes such as better decision-making processes, rapid detection and correction of problems, effective management of the change process, prevention of failures, recognition of opportunities and threats, and bringing innovative and creative perspectives to the organization. This also provides opportunities for employees to express their concerns and ideas (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Holland et al., 2013; Grant, 2013).

One of the biggest obstacles to organizational development is silence, which can cause a lack of trust and knowledge within the organization. Silence can take on many forms, including exclusion, pressure, blocked communication channels, trivialization, and silence itself (Akbarian et al., 2015: 178). Organizational silence is a dangerous obstacle that negatively affects the growth of the organization, preventing change and development (Morrison & Milliken, 2000: 706-707). Furthermore, silence can negatively impact the creativity of the organization, as well as prevent important opportunities for organizational development (Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008). Employee voice is an important concept for organizations. Most researchers emphasize that organizational effectiveness is crucial in increasing productivity and argue that these behaviors support organizational development (Shockley-Zalabak & Ellis, 2000: 375-386). In addition, ensuring employee participation in decision-making and establishing open communication channels in the organization can increase employee commitment and job satisfaction. However, some employees may view speaking out as dangerous, as it may require struggling with the current situation even in the absence of supporters (Van Dyne, Ang & Botero, 2003: 1359-1392). If the manager wants employees to share their experiences and talk about problems in the organization, he must convince them that he is willing to listen (Milliken, Morrison, & Hewlin, 2003: 1453-1476). The persuasion process depends on whether there is an effective and efficient communication network and harmony between the manager and the employees. For this to be established, there must be trust and a proper communication channel within the organization (Schein, 1981: 43-52). Although the concept of employee voice contributes to the organization, managers often perceive such behaviors as threats and challenges, creating risky situations for employees (Grant, 2013: 1703). These risks may entail harmful consequences, such as dismissal, demotion, loss of position, or humiliation (Detert & Burris, 2007: 870; Fast, Burris & Bartel, 2014: 1015). Therefore, organizational trust plays a crucial role in assessing such risks.

1.3. Organizational Trust

Trust is a concept inherent in human beings that involves honesty and sincerity (Şenturan, 2014: 177). On the other hand, organizational trust refers to the belief that an employee will be truthful and committed to doing what is required (Gilbert & Tang, 1998). Organizational trust also involves members of an organization believing that their activities will benefit their leaders and fellow members (Laschinger, Finegan & Shamian, 2001:8).

Organizational trust encompasses several factors, including the provision of organizational justice, management support for members, meeting the needs and desires of members, increasing social relations within the organization, and promoting cooperation among members (Neves & Caetano, 2006: 355). Trust is a fundamental factor in establishing both individual and organizational relationships (Dirks, 1999). Organizational trust enhances the

ability of members to work together and positively impacts their performance. When organizational trust is established, members become more innovative, motivated, and perform their roles and tasks more effectively. Creating a trusting environment reduces organizational conflict and stress, ensuring the continuity of organizational success and productivity (Halis, Gökğöz & Yaşar, 2007:187). For an organization, trust is important for cooperation, successful socialization, and effective teamwork. Trust helps to reduce risks and costs in the long run (Connell, Ferres & Travaglione, 2003). A high level of trust in an organization is related to increased commitment and job satisfaction, decreased turnover, effective communication between members, and increased performance (Cook & Wall, 1980; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). According to Asunakutlu (2002: 11), organizations with a culture of trust are more likely to perform well and thrive even in challenging conditions. Trust is crucial in the healthcare industry, where quality service depends on establishing a trustworthy organizational environment. When organizational trust is low, it can negatively impact employee commitment, job satisfaction, and ultimately the quality of service provided (Firth-Cozens, 2004: 56). Numerous studies have been conducted on organizational trust in the health sector, including those by Halıcı, Söyük & Gün (2015), Okello & Gilson (2015), Ayden & Özkan (2014), Bahrami et al. (2012), Tekingündüz & Tengilimoğlu (2013) and Durukan & Akyürek (2010).

1.4. The Relationship Between Ethical Climate, Employee Voice and Organizational Trust

Organizational ethical climate is one of the factors that affect employee voice. The literature shows that employees in organizations with an ethical climate that values ethical values are more likely to exhibit vocal behaviors. There is a direct relationship between ethical climate and employee voice, as demonstrated by studies conducted by Brown, Trevino and Harrison, (2005), Walumbwa and Schaubroeck (2009), Gentile (2010), Chen and Hou (2015), Lee et al. (2017), Paşa and Işık (2017) and Soyalin (2019). The ethical climate in an organization is expected to encourage employees to exhibit vocal behaviors (Brown & Trevino, 2006; Meydan, Köksal & Kara, 2016). The ethical climate in an organization guides employees through laws, regulations, ethical codes, and rules to determine which behaviors are ethical and which are unethical. Thus, employees who observe unethical behavior in the organization are more likely to report it to top management rather than remain silent. Based on these views, the following hypotheses have been developed:

H1: Employees' perception of the ethical climate has a positive effect on employee voice.

Organizations with ethical principles have a strong trust network, whereas organizational trust decreases in organizations without ethical principles. The formation of an ethical climate within an organization supports trust and communication among employees (Fukuyama, 2000: 257). Studies show that organizational trust is an important variable that affects the ethical climate of the organization (Diffie-Couch, 1984; Sonnenburg, 1994; Cummings & Bromiley, 1995; Fukuyama, 2000; Hounq Chien & Jo Ann, 2015; Tüzün, 2017). The literature indicates that the ethical climate positively and significantly affects organizational trust, reduces uncertainty, and provides a safe environment for employees (Mulki et al., 2006; Dönertaş, 2008; Büte, 2011; Eren & Hayatoğlu, 2011; Altaş & Kuzu, 2013; Torun, 2013; Taşpınar et al., 2016; Simha & Stachowicz-Stanusch, 2015; Ensari & Karabay, 2016). Based on these opinions, the following hypotheses have been developed:

H2: Employees' ethical climate perception levels have a positive effect on organizational trust.

When employees feel confident in their organizations, their negative perceptions about employee voice will decrease. In this context, security can be considered an antecedent for the emergence of employee voice behaviors in the organization. While there are many studies examining the relationship between organizational trust and organizational silence (Timuroğlu & Alioğulları, 2019; Çalışkan, Köroğlu & Taşkın, 2018, etc.), there are relatively few examining the effect of organizational trust on employee voice and the relationship between the two (Saygın & Atalay, 2022; Derin, 2017).

H3: Employees' organizational trust levels have a positive effect on employee voice.

Upon examination of literature, no study has found that organizational trust plays a mediating role in the relationship between organizational ethical climate and employee voice behavior. However, the hypotheses proposed above suggest that ethical climate has a positive effect on both employee voice and organizational trust, which in turn has an effect on employee voice behavior. Therefore, it can be inferred that organizational trust serves as a mediator between organizational ethical climate and employee voice.

Based on these considerations, the following hypotheses have been developed:

H4: Organizational trust plays a mediating role in the effect of employees' organizational ethical climate perception on employee voice.

The theoretical model and hypotheses for the variables are presented in Figure 1 within the scope of the research. The model identifies "Organizational Ethical Climate" as the independent variable, "Employee Voice" as the dependent variable, and "Organizational Trust" as the mediating variable.



Figure 1. Research Model

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Population and Sample of the Research

The population for this research consists of healthcare workers employed in a private hospital affiliated with the Provincial Health Directorate in Istanbul. Data was collected using the convenience sampling method, which was preferred for its ease, affordability, and speed of data collection compared to other sampling techniques. Ethical permissions were obtained from the Ethics Committee of Cyprus World Peace University (WPU-ETK-2023-11) to collect research data. The chief physician of two private hospitals in Istanbul was interviewed, and permission was requested to conduct the research by explaining the purpose of the study. One of the chief physicians granted permission for the research to be conducted. A face-to-face questionnaire was administered to the hospital employees after obtaining permission. According to Ural and Kılıç (2018), studies in social sciences require 100 to 400 samples. However, Bryman and Cramer (2001) suggest that a sample size ten times the number of questions in the questionnaire is sufficient. Since the questionnaire form had 25 statements, 500

questionnaires were prepared and administered to the participants. The study obtained 328 survey data, which is considered to be representative of the entire population (Ural & Kılıç, 2018).

2.2. Measurement Tools

The scales used in the research are well-structured and have been frequently used in previous studies. These scales have also been used in recent research on healthcare professionals (Şimşek, 2021; Saygın & Atalay, 2022).

To measure ethical climate, a one-dimensional, 7-item ethical climate scale developed by Schwepker (2001) was used. This scale was adapted to Turkish by Çiçek (2016) through a validity and reliability study. The scale is in a 5-point Likert type, graded from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Totally Agree). Sample statements from the scale include "The hospital where I work has policies regarding ethical behavior" and "At my institution, the code of ethics is written and formal".

To determine the trust of the employees in their organization, a one-dimensional organizational trust scale consisting of 8 statements, developed by Whitener et. al (1998), was used. This scale was adapted to Turkish by Tokgöz and Seymen (2013) by conducting a Turkish validity and reliability study. The scale is in a 5-point Likert type, graded from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Totally Agree). Sample statements of the scale are "The level of trust between the managers and employees in the hospital where I work is very high" and "The hospital where I work has an honest and fair operation".

To measure employee voice, the employee voice scale, which was developed by Van Dyne and LePine (1998) and consists of 6 expressions, was used. This scale was adapted to Turkish by Çetin and Çakmakçı (2012) by conducting a Turkish validity and reliability study. The scale is in a 5-point Likert type, rated from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always). Sample statements of the scale "I openly express my views on matters concerning the hospital I work for and encourage others to be involved", "Even though I know that my other friends at my hospital do not agree with me, I share my thoughts on work-related issues with them." is in the form.

2.3. Data Analysis

SPSS 27 and AMOS 22 were used to analyze the data obtained in this study. The analysis began with frequency analyses to determine the demographic structure of the sample. Then, the validity and reliability of the scales used in the research were assessed. Next, correlation analysis was performed to determine the relationship between the variables, after checking for normality. Finally, a regression-based Process Macro was used to test the research hypotheses, specifically Model 4 with a 95% confidence interval of 5000 bootstrapping.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Descriptive Statistics About the Sample

Demographic findings of the participants participating in the study are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Categories	n	%
Gender	Female	195	59,45
	Male	133	40,55
Marital status	Married	177	53,96
	Single	151	46,04
Occupation	Doctor	51	15,55
	Nurse / Midwife	114	34,76
	Medical Officer/Technician	98	29,88
	Administrative Staff	65	19,82
Age	30 and less	146	44,51
	31-40	122	37,20
	41-50	47	14,33
	51 and above	13	3,96

Of the total participants, 195 are women and 133 are men. Among them, 177 participants are married, while 151 participants are single. In terms of profession, 51 participants are doctors, 114 participants are nurses/midwives, 98 participants are health officers/technicians, and 65 participants are administrative staff. Regarding age, 146 participants are 30 years old or younger, 122 participants are between the ages of 31-40, 47 participants are between the ages of 41-50, and 13 participants are 51 years old or older.

3.2. Validity and Reliability Analysis

To measure the reliability of the scales, Cronbach alpha and composite reliability values were calculated and are presented in Table 2. The ethical climate scale has a Cronbach alpha value of 0.852 and a composite reliability value of 0.882. The organizational trust scale has a Cronbach alpha value of 0.826 and a composite reliability value of 0.889. The employee voice scale has a Cronbach alpha value of 0.893 and a composite reliability value of 0.915. In reliability analysis, Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values are expected to be 0.70 and above (Sürücü & Maslakçı, 2020; Sürücü, Şeşen & Maslakçı, 2023). Therefore, based on the information given, it can be concluded that the scales used in this research are reliable.

In order to check the validity of the scales, average variance extracted (AVE) values were considered. AVE values that are 0.5 or higher are generally acceptable. Furthermore, the $\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$ values of the variables (shown in Table 3) are greater than their own cross-correlation value. These results are significant in providing evidence that the variables used in the study are valid (Sürücü, Şeşen & Maslakçı, 2023).

Table 2. Reliability and Validity Analysis of Variables

	Factor Loadings	Cronbach's Alfa	CR	AVE
<i>Ethical Climate:</i>		0,852	0,882	0,520
EC1	0,581			
EC2	0,695			
EC3.	0,681			
EC4	0,774			
EC5	0,806			
EC6	0,725			
EC7	0,766			
<i>Organizational Trust:</i>		0,826	0,889	0,505
OT1	0,611			
OT2	0,787			
OT3	0,755			
OT4	0,588			
OT5	0,744			
OT6	0,747			
OT7	0,762			
OT8	0,662			
<i>Employee Voice:</i>		0,893	0,915	0,646
EV1	0,877			
EV2	0,689			
EV3	0,805			
EV4	0,841			
EV5	0,688			
EV6	0,895			

Upon examining Table 2, it is evident that the factor loads of the variables are 0.5 or greater. This suggests that the expression has the ability to effectively represent the relevant factor (Sürücü, Yıkılmaz & Maslakçı, 2022).

3.3. Correlation Analysis

Before conducting the correlation analysis, the distribution of the data was examined. To test for normality, the kurtosis and skewness values were checked (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). According to Tabachnick and Fidell, data is considered to have a normal distribution if the kurtosis and skewness values fall between -1.5 and +1.5. The ethical climate scale scores used in the study had a skewness of -0.748 and a kurtosis of 0.982, the organizational trust scale scores had a skewness of -0.555 and a kurtosis of 0.863, and the employee voice scale scores had a skewness of 0.254 and a kurtosis of 0.777 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Since the data was normally distributed, Pearson correlation values were used for the correlation analysis.

Table 3. Correlation Analysis Results

Variables	Mean	Sd.	1	2	3
1. Ethical Climate	3,78	0,77	(0,721)		
2. Organizational Trust	3,45	0,71	0,458**	(0,711)	
3. Employee Voice	3,74	0,65	0,555**	0,502**	(0,804)
Kurtosis			-0,748	-0,555	0,254
Skewness			0,982	0,863	0,777

Values in parentheses represent \sqrt{AVE} .

The results of the correlation analysis (Table 3) indicate that ethical climate has a positive correlation with organizational trust ($r=0.458^{**}$, $p<0.05$) and employee voice ($r=0.555^{**}$, $p<0.05$). Furthermore, there is a positive correlation between organizational trust and employee voice ($r=0.502^{**}$, $p<0.05$).

3.4. Hypothesis Tests

The Process Macro, frequently used in recent studies, was employed to test the research hypotheses. It has been suggested that simple mediator or simple moderator models in Process Macro yield more reliable results than Baron and Kenny's (1986) causal steps method (Sürücü, Şeşen & Maslakçı, 2023). Therefore, Process Macro was used for hypothesis testing. In the Process Macro, the significance of the effect is determined by the lower and upper confidence intervals instead of the “p” significance value. The effect is considered significant if the lower and upper confidence intervals do not include zero. The results of the hypothesis tests are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Hypothesis Tests

Effect Path	β	Standard error	%95 Confidence Interval	
			LLCI	ULCI
Ethical Climate > Organizational Trust	0,425	0,162	0,168	0,592
Ethical Climate > Employee Voice	0,501	0,144	0,102	0,348
Organizational Trust > Employee Voice	0,493	0,235	0,369	0,666
Ethical Climate > Organizational Trust > Employee Voice	0,248	0,122	0,244	0,485

Analysis results indicate that ethical climate has a positive impact on both organizational trust ($\beta=0.425$, $p<0.05$, $CI=0.168$; 0.592) and employee voice ($\beta=0.144$, $p<0.05$, $CI=0.102$; 0.348). Additionally, organizational trust has a positive effect on employee voice ($\beta=0.493$, $p<0.05$, $CI=0.369$; 0.666).

Furthermore, there is a significant effect of ethical climate on employee voice through organizational trust ($\beta=0.248$, $p<0.05$, $CI=0.244$; 0.485), as the lower and upper confidence intervals do not contain zero. These findings support Hypotheses 1, 2, 3, and 4.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

For organizations to sustain their lives and provide competitive advantage, it is important for them to work harmoniously and effectively with all their units. Creating an ethical climate within the organization is crucial for building trust among its members. Organizational trust is a key factor that promotes healthy communication, enables expression of organizational problems, and encourages sharing improvement ideas. This research examines the mediating role of organizational trust in the relationship between organizational ethical climate and employee voice. The findings indicate that a positive ethical climate strengthens employee voice, provided that ethical rules are established within the organization. The study also shows that a positive ethical climate in the organization enhances employees' perception of their voice, and that organizational trust plays a mediating role in this interaction between organizational ethical climate and employee voice.

The research aimed to investigate the relationships among organizational ethical climate, employee voice, and organizational trust for employees in the health sector. Specifically, the study examined whether organizational trust mediates the relationship between organizational ethical climate and employee voice. All hypotheses related to this question were confirmed, indicating that organizational ethical climate, employee voice, and organizational trust have a positive influence on one another. These findings align with those of previous studies, such as Soyalm and Karabey's (2020) research on health workers. Upon examining the research findings;

- It has been concluded that the organizational ethical climate, one of the variables in this research, has a positive and significant impact on employee voice ($p < 0.05$). Previous studies in the literature have shown results that are consistent with the findings of the first hypothesis. Erdem (2021), Peng and Wei (2020), Qi and Liu (2017) and Meydan et al. (2016) reported in their research that increasing the organizational ethical climate can reduce employee silence behaviors and that there is a positive correlation between the organizational ethical climate and employee voice.
- The second hypothesis of the study determined that organizational ethical climate has a significant and positive effect on organizational trust ($p < 0.05$). This result is consistent with previous studies in the literature that also found positive relationships between ethical climate and organizational trust (Eser, 2007; Bozkurt & Torun, 2014; Agrawal, 2017; Gerçek, 2017; Aydan & Kaya, 2018; Erdem, 2021). In the health sector, Simha and Pandey (2021) found positive relationships between organizational ethical climate and organizational trust in their research on healthcare professionals in India. Aydan (2017) observed positive and significant relationships between ethical climate and trust in their study on the health sector. Noh and Jung (2016) concluded in their studies on the health sector that ethical climate has a positive effect on organizational trust, and that trust increases as the ethical climate in the organization increases. In studies on pharmaceutical company employees, Mulki et al. (2006) also found positive relationships between ethical climate and trust.
- In the third hypothesis of the study, it was found that organizational trust had a positive and significant effect on employee voice ($p < 0.05$). Previous studies support this finding. For example, Saygın and Atalay (2022) found that organizational trust is an important determinant of employee voice in the health sector. Similarly, Derin (2017) found positive relationships between organizational trust and employee voice among faculty members. Therefore, the findings of the third hypothesis of the current study are consistent with previous research.

- Based on the final hypothesis of the study, it was concluded that organizational trust plays a mediating role in the impact of organizational ethical climate on employee voice. A literature search revealed no prior research on the relationship between organizational ethical climate, employee voice, and the mediating influence of organizational trust. However, Zeng and Xu (2020) examined the effect of ethical leadership on the extra-role behaviors of 205 faculty members in China. They obtained significant results. Empirical evidence shows that the perception of ethical leadership increases faculty members' tendency to use their voices. Organizational trust plays a mediating role in this effect. In other words, when the ethical leader's approach creates a perception of an ethical organizational climate, employees' organizational trust increases. This positive interaction further could increase employees' voice behavior. Therefore, the findings of the current study support the existing literature.

When examining research, it is clear that organizational ethical climate, employee voice, and organizational trust have positive effects on the organization. The study found that employees who perceive an ethical climate in the organization trust their organization and can express their opinions openly without fear. Conversely, if employees do not perceive their organization as ethical and trustworthy, organizational silence may occur.

Furthermore, a positive and significant relationship can be inferred between organizational ethical climate and employee voice. These two concepts work together to strengthen organizational trust. Specifically, the positive and significant effect of employee voice on organizational trust confirms the hypotheses and the research model.

The research was conducted on employees at a private hospital affiliated with the Provincial Health Directorate in Istanbul. It focused on examining the mediating effect of organizational trust on the relationship between organizational ethical climate and employee voice. The literature could benefit from repeating this research in different sectors. Additionally, research on concepts such as job satisfaction, commitment, exclusion, and justice could be conducted on different samples. While this research uses a quantitative research method, it could also be conducted using qualitative or mixed methods.

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