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THRIVING AT WORK AS A MEDIATOR BETWEEN EMPLOYEE VOICE AND INNOVATIVE WORK BEHAVIOUR: EVIDENCE FROM INDONESIAN CIVIL SERVANTS

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ABSTRACT

Previous research investigating the relationship between employee voice (EV), thriving at work (TAW), and innovative work behavior (IWB) has yielded mixed findings. Some studies reported a direct influence of EV on IWB, while others found no significant association unless TAW was considered a mediating factor. This inconsistency reveals a theoretical gap in understanding the psychological mechanisms linking EV and IWB, particularly within the public sector. This study aims to examine the direct effects of EV on TAW and IWB and to explore the mediating role of TAW in the relationship between EV and IWB among Indonesian civil servants (ASN). A descriptive survey design was adopted in this research, utilizing simple random sampling to recruit 232 ASN respondents who completed a structured questionnaire. Data were analyzed using SmartPLS (SEM-PLS), involving tests for the outer model, inner model, and hypothesis testing to assess construct validity, reliability, and the statistical significance of relationships among variables. The findings demonstrate that EV significantly influences both TAW and IWB. Furthermore, TAW serves as a meaningful mediator in the link between EV and IWB. Employee voice plays a crucial role in fostering a psychologically positive state thriving which in turn enhances civil servants' capacity for innovation in the workplace. This study advances theoretical understanding by reinforcing the Social Exchange Theory (SET) and Conservation of Resources Theory (COR), and by integrating these frameworks to explain how social mechanisms (employee voice) and psychological states (thriving at work) jointly affect innovative behavior in the underexplored context of Indonesia's public sector. Government institutions are advised to foster a work climate that supports employee voice, ensures psychological safety, and promotes continuous learning in order to strengthen thriving and innovative behavior among civil servants.

KEYWORDS: Employee Voice (EV); Thriving at Work (TAW); Innovative Work Behavior (IWB); Social Exchange Theory (SET); Conservation of Resources Theory (COR).

INTRODUCTION

In the era of rapid technological development and intensifying global competition, organizations must continually adapt, innovate, and evolve to maintain performance and achieve long-term sustainability (Xu & Suntrayuth, 2022). Innovation has emerged as a key determinant of organizational success, empowering firms to launch new products, optimize operational processes, and effectively respond to dynamic market conditions (Salam & Senin, 2022). Within this framework, Innovative Work Behavior (IWB) defined as the creation, promotion, and realization of original and valuable ideas in the workplace plays a pivotal role in enhancing organizational agility and competitiveness (AlEssa & Durugbo, 2022). Employees who demonstrate innovative behavior contribute not only to immediate problem-solving but also to broader strategic goals that ensure the organization's sustainability (Wang et al., 2022).

However, fostering such behavior does not occur spontaneously. It necessitates an organizational culture that promotes openness, psychological safety, and employee participation (Janssen, 2000). Employee Voice (EV), defined as the discretionary act of conveying constructive feedback, ideas, or concerns aimed at improving organizational functioning (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998), stands out as a critical enabler of innovation. When employees are empowered to voice their perspectives and perceive their input as valued, they tend to exhibit higher levels of psychological engagement, ownership, and proactive behavior, which subsequently leads to greater innovation (Krupah, 2021).

The role of employee voice is well-supported by Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Blau, 1964), which posits that workplace relationships are grounded in reciprocal exchanges. When organizations are perceived as responsive to employee input, individuals feel morally obligated to reciprocate through positive behaviors such as creativity and innovation (Carmeli & Spreitzer, 2009). In tandem, Conservation of Resources Theory (COR) (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001) suggests that individuals strive to acquire, preserve, and build valuable resources—both tangible and psychological. By engaging in voice behavior, employees gain critical social and emotional resources such as trust, support, and recognition, which contribute to enhanced vitality and learning forming a positive resource gain spiral that fosters innovation (Fan et al., 2022).

One essential psychological condition that connects EV and IWB is Thriving at Work (TAW). Thriving, defined as a dual psychological state of vitality and learning, reflects an employee's growth, energy, and capability in the workplace (Spreitzer et al., 2005). Thriving individuals are generally more engaged, resilient, and adept at channeling their psychological energy into creative and productive outcomes (Porath et al., 2012). According to COR theory, thriving can be seen as a mechanism for psychological resource accumulation, enabling employees to better innovate and implement novel ideas (Koçak, 2019). Empirical research supports this assertion, with evidence indicating that thriving mediates the effects of supportive organizational behaviors on innovation outcomes (Yousaf et al., 2019).

Despite increasing interest in these constructs, empirical research integrating EV, TAW, and IWB within a unified conceptual model remains limited—particularly in developing or collectivist societies where hierarchical norms and high power distance often hinder open communication (Bas, 2022). Many existing studies focus on employee voice or thriving in isolation, without thoroughly exploring their interdependent influence on innovation (Fan et al., 2022; Rafique & Bukhari, 2022). Additionally, most findings stem from Western organizational contexts, raising questions about their applicability to cultural settings that prioritize harmony and respect for authority.

To address these gaps, the present study investigates the mediating role of TAW in the relationship between EV and IWB. By integrating SET and COR theories, this study aims to offer a holistic understanding of how social interactions and psychological states converge to facilitate innovation at the individual level. The findings are expected to enrich theoretical knowledge on workplace innovation and offer practical guidance for building a supportive and thriving organizational climate that nurtures innovation from within.

DEVELOPMENT HYPOTHESIS AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Employee Voice (EV) on Innovative Work Behaviour (IWB)

Employee Voice (EV) refers to employees' willingness and behavior to express constructive ideas, suggestions, concerns, or opinions regarding organizational operations and job-related matters. The rationale for positing a positive relationship between EV and Innovative Work Behavior (IWB) lies in EV's role in fostering open communication, psychological safety, and active engagement elements that are essential precursors to innovation in the workplace.

A growing body of empirical evidence supports this theoretical link. For example, Botha (2022) found that supportive and constructive forms of employee voice are strongly and positively correlated with IWB, even more so than other organizational factors such as leadership style or innovation climate. This is because EV empowers employees to contribute proactively and creatively to organizational development, enabling the generation and execution of new ideas. Further, Noerchoidah (2025) emphasized that EV mediates the relationship between authentic leadership and IWB, revealing that voice behavior enhances psychological empowerment, which in turn boosts innovative capacity. Similarly, Ghani (2023) demonstrated that the positive impact of employee engagement on IWB is mediated by voice behavior, underscoring the critical function of EV in translating internal motivation into tangible innovation outcomes.

Taken together, these findings highlight that the hypothesis of a positive impact of EV on IWB is grounded in solid empirical and theoretical foundations. As such, organizations striving to cultivate innovation should actively promote a culture where employee voice is recognized, supported, and integrated into the decision-making process.

Employee Voice (EV) on Thriving at Work (TAW)

Employee Voice (EV) has a significant positive impact on Thriving at Work **(**TAW), as supported by several theoretical and empirical studies. Thriving at work, defined as a psychological state where employees experience both vitality and learning, fosters employee engagement and motivation. Research by Sugiono (2023) and others confirms that EV encourages a climate of openness and psychological safety, which nourishes employees' thriving by making them feel heard, valued, and empowered to contribute ideas. Studies have further shown that behaviors such as supervisor helping increase EV, partly through their effect on employees' thriving at work (Fan et al., 2022). Recognition and appreciation from coworkers and leaders for employees' voiced input act as crucial job resources, strengthening thriving by providing motivation and support (Weiss et al., 2022). Additionally, thriving at work mediates the relationship between leadership behaviors and employee voice, indicating that when employees thrive psychologically, they are more likely to engage in voice behaviors (Shusha, 2025). Thus, EV promotes TAW through facilitation of psychological resources and social support in the workplace, making it an essential driver for enhancing employees' vitality, learning, and proactive work behaviors.

Thriving at Work (TAW) on Innovative Work Behaviour (IWB)

Thriving at Work (TAW) has a significant positive influence on Innovative Work Behaviour (IWB), as supported by extensive theoretical and empirical evidence. Thriving at work is defined as a psychological state in which employees experience both vitality feeling energized and learning continuously improving their capabilities. This state fosters a conducive mindset for creative problem-solving and innovation (Abid, 2015). Employees who thrive are more vigorous, motivated, and confident in their ability to propose and implement innovative ideas (Carmeli & Spreitzer, 2009). Research shows that thriving employees are not only more engaged but also more open to change and willing to take risks, key antecedents of innovative behaviors in organizational settings (Rahmat, 2022). Moreover, studies such as those conducted in Indonesian governmental and startup contexts confirm the direct impact of thriving at work on employee innovation, reinforcing the role of vitality and learning in driving proactive and creative work actions (Arofah et al., 2024; Rahmat, 2022). Thus, thriving at work acts as a crucial psychological mechanism that energizes and equips employees to contribute novel and useful ideas, enhancing organizational innovation and competitive advantage.

Employee Voice (EV) on Innovative Work Behaviour (IWB) Mediated by Thriving at Work (TAW)

Thriving at Work (TAW) has a significant positive influence on Innovative Work Behaviour (IWB), as supported by extensive theoretical and empirical evidence. Thriving at work is defined as a psychological state in which employees experience both vitality feeling energized and learning continuously improving their capabilities. This state fosters a conducive mindset for creative problem-solving and innovation (Abid, 2015). Employees who thrive are more vigorous, motivated, and confident in their ability to propose and implement innovative ideas (Carmeli & Spreitzer, 2009). Research shows that thriving employees are not only more engaged but also more open to change and willing to take risks, key antecedents of innovative behaviors in organizational settings (Rahmat, 2022). Moreover, studies such as those conducted in Indonesian governmental and startup contexts confirm the direct

impact of thriving at work on employee innovation, reinforcing the role of vitality and learning in driving proactive and creative work actions (Arofah et al., 2024; Rahmat, 2022). Thus, thriving at work acts as a crucial psychological mechanism that energizes and equips employees to contribute novel and useful ideas, enhancing organizational innovation and competitive advantage.

Based on the conceptual and hypothesis framework, the model is illustrated in Figure 1.

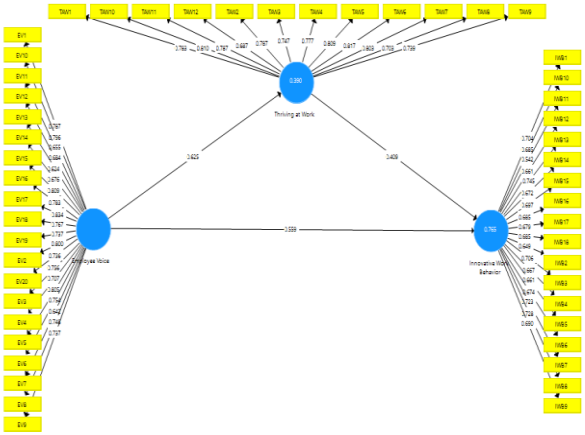

Figure 1: Research Model
(Source: SmartPLS output processed data, 2025)

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive survey design with a quantitative research approach. A probability sampling technique was used, specifically simple random sampling, to select 232 civil servants (ASN) in Cilegon City as respondents. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed both online and offline over the period from August to September 2025. Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling with Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS), a method suitable for analyzing complex relationships among latent variables with a moderate sample size.

The analytical process in this study was structured into two core phases: the evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) and the assessment of the structural model (inner model). The measurement model aimed to confirm the validity and reliability of the constructs through several statistical indicators, including factor loadings, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE). A construct was deemed reliable if it demonstrated composite reliability values above 0.70 and considered valid when its AVE exceeded the threshold of 0.50, with each indicator ideally showing a loading value greater than 0.60.

After the measurement model was validated, the structural model analysis was conducted to examine the hypothesized causal relationships among latent variables. This phase included interpreting the R-squared (R^2) values, which reflect the explanatory power of the exogenous constructs in predicting the variance of the endogenous variables. A higher R^2 suggests a stronger predictive capability of the model.

The final step involved hypothesis testing to determine the statistical significance of the proposed paths. This was executed using bootstrapping techniques within the PLS-SEM framework, focusing on the path coefficients, T-statistics, and P-values. A relationship was considered statistically significant if the P-value was below 0.05 and the corresponding T-statistic exceeded the critical value of 1.96, indicating that the estimated parameter was meaningfully different from zero and that the hypothesized relationship held empirical support.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Based on Table 1, most respondents are man, have a working period between 10 and 19 years, and hold a Master's degree (S2). The majority are between 50 and 60 years old, with only a few younger or older respondents. This demographic profile provides an overview of the dominant groups in the study sample, indicating that the respondents are generally experienced, highly educated, and within their productive working age.

Tabel 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Woman	98	42.24
	Man	134	57.76
Length of Service/	1-9 Years	40	17.24
	10-19 Years	101	45.53
	20-30 Years	91	39/22
Final Education	High/Vocational School	1	043
	D3	3	1.29
	S1	95	40.95
	S2	131	56.47
	S3	2	0.86
Types of Finishes	30-39	10	4.31
	40-49	103	44.40
	50-60	119	51.29

(Source: 2025 Data Processing Results)

Uji Validitas dan Reliabilitas

The Indicators are considered valid if they have a recommended standard loading value of more than 0.5-0.7 (Hair, J. F., 1998). The EV variable has twenty indicators with loading factor values all above 0.6.IWB variables have 18 indicators with loading factor values all above 0.6. TAW variables have 12 indicators, with the loading factor values

all above 0.6. Further testing of the measurement model, i.e., composite reliability, is seen from Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values. The Composite Reliability Value is> 0.7, and the research AVE value is> 0.5, so all constructs in the above variables have reliability values that can be said to be reliable.

Table 2 shows the reliability test results, which showed a satisfactory number, namely, the value of all variables above the threshold of 0.70. This shows that the instruments used are high in consistency and stability. Thus, it can be concluded that all the constructs of this research have become fit measuring tools and have good reliability.

Tabel 2: Reliability Test Results

Variabel	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Limit	Result
Employee Voice	0.957	0.961	0,7	Reliabel
Thriving at Work	0.932	0.940	0,7	Reliabel
Innovative Work Behaviour	0.938	0.946	0,7	Reliabel

(Source: SmartPLS output processed data, 2025)

Table 3, the results of the AVE test show that all variables have an AVE value above 0.5, which means that they have a good validity construct. Then, to observe the inner model, we look at the extent of the direct influence of exogenous latent constructs (EV, TW, and IWB) on endogenous variables. This test was carried out by measuring the R^2 value and the influence test between variables (hypothesis testing), with the results of the structural model.

Tabel 3: Results of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) Test

Variabel	AVE Value	AVE Value Limit	Results
Employee Voice	0.554	0,5	Fulfilled
Thriving at Work	0.515	0,5	Fulfilled
Innovative Work Behaviour	0.596	0,5	Fulfilled

(**Source: SmartPLS output processed data, 2025)**

Table 4 The model for Innovative Work Behaviour shows a strong relationship, meaning the predictors explain a large portion of the variation in the outcome. In contrast, the model for Thriving at Work shows a moderate relationship, where the predictors explain a moderate portion of the variation, indicating a weaker but still meaningful connection., with an SRMR value of < 0.10 (0.095).

Tabel 4: R Square

Variable	R^2	R^2 Adjusted	Categories
Innovative Work Behaviour	0.765	0.763	Strong
Thriving at Work	0.390	0.388	Moderate

(Source: 2025 Data Processing Results)

Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis test used an alpha value of 5% and a t-statistic of 1.96. The hypothesis testing criteria are to accept Ha and reject H0 if the p-value < 0.005, while reject Ha and accept H0 if the p-value > 0.005

Tabel 5: Direct, Indirect, and Hypothesis Test Results

Hypothesis	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Value	Decision
EV -> IWB	0.559	0.567	0.048	11.699	0.000	Supported
EV -> TAW	0.625	0.630	0.049	12.723	0.000	Supported
TAW -> IWB	0.400	0.400	0.051	7.948	0.000	Supported
EV-> TAW -> IWB	0.255	0.252	0.039	6.496	0.000	Supported

(Source: 2025 Data Processing Results)

DISCUSSION

The results of the study indicate that Employee Voice (EV) exerts a positive and statistically significant influence on Innovative Work Behavior (IWB). This finding implies that the greater the employees' willingness to voice their ideas, suggestions, and constructive criticisms, the higher their tendency to engage in innovative actions at work. When employees feel psychologically safe and free to express themselves, they are more likely to actively participate in the processes of idea generation, development, and implementation. This underscores the critical role of voice behavior in cultivating an organizational culture that is open, collaborative, and innovation-oriented.

These findings are consistent with prior research. Krupah (2021), for instance, found that employee voice acts as a mediator between psychological empowerment and innovative behavior. Similarly, Tsameti et al. (2021) highlighted the role of voice behavior in enhancing idea realization within public sector organizations. Rafique and Bukhari (2022) also emphasized that voice behavior contributes to innovative outcomes in the creative industries by promoting open communication, which serves as a foundation for the emergence of new ideas that can enhance organizational performance. Collectively, these studies reinforce the notion that a work environment that supports open dialogue and employee participation fosters adaptability and

innovation. Hence, the current findings affirm that employee voice should not be viewed merely as a form of upward communication but as a multifaceted social and psychological mechanism that significantly contributes to innovation within organizations.

The study also found that Employee Voice (EV) has a positive and statistically significant effect on Thriving at Work (TAW). This suggests that when employees are encouraged to express their ideas, opinions, and aspirations openly, they are more likely to experience a thriving psychological state characterized by vitality (a sense of energy) and learning (continuous growth in skills and competence). Employees who feel safe and heard within their organizational environment tend to be more motivated, enthusiastic, and inclined to engage in self-improvement and skill development.

Voice behavior, therefore, functions not only as a means of communication but also as a psychological mechanism that fosters employee growth and well-being in the workplace. In this context, employee voice acts as a social trigger that enhances trust and emotional connection with the organization, which in turn fuels positive energy and a drive to learn and progress.

This finding aligns with prior empirical studies. Fan et al. (2022) demonstrated that supervisor helping behavior enhances TAW through increased voice behavior, emphasizing that the act of speaking up fosters learning and energy among employees due to perceived managerial support. Bas (2022) also noted that employee voice plays a vital role in cultivating a thriving work environment, as opportunities to speak up make employees feel valued and in control, thereby boosting confidence and job satisfaction. Similarly, Yousaf et al. (2019) found that ethical leadership and voice freedom contribute to thriving at work by creating a psychologically safe and supportive atmosphere.

The results also confirm that Thriving at Work (TAW) positively and significantly influences Innovative Work Behavior (IWB). In other words, the more employees experience high levels of vitality (energy and enthusiasm) and learning (ongoing development and competence-building), the more likely they are to demonstrate innovative behaviors. Employees who feel energized and are continually improving their skills are intrinsically motivated to explore new approaches, take initiative, and contribute to enhancing work processes and outcomes within their organizations.

Thus, thriving at work serves as a psychological foundation for creativity, proactive behavior, and innovation in the workplace. This finding is consistent with the research of Koçak (2019), which showed that thriving fully mediates the relationship between person-job fit and innovative behavior indicating that employees who feel aligned with their jobs exhibit innovation because they are in a thriving state. Chen et al. (2020) further found that leader helping behavior promotes innovation via enhanced thriving and employee voice, positioning thriving as a psychological bridge that links social support to innovation.

Additionally, earlier studies by Spreitzer et al. (2005) and Carmeli & Spreitzer (2009) concluded that individuals who thrive at work are more likely to demonstrate proactive, creative, and initiative-driven behaviors in response to workplace challenge all key traits of innovative work behavior. Based on these findings, thriving at work emerges as a crucial psychological mechanism in cultivating innovation. Employees who thrive possess a positive energy that drives them to think openly, solve problems creatively, and generate new value for their organizations

The study further reveals that Thriving at Work (TAW) mediates the relationship between Employee Voice (EV) and Innovative Work Behavior (IWB). This indicates that the impact of employee voice on innovation is not only direct but also occurs indirectly through the psychological state of thriving. When employees are provided with opportunities to voice their opinions, ideas, and suggestions without fear of negative consequences, they tend to feel more appreciated, empowered, and enthusiastic about their work. These positive emotions enhance their psychological vitality and drive for continuous learning, which subsequently motivates them to be more creative, proactive, and innovative in completing their tasks.

In essence, thriving at work acts as a psychological bridge that links employee voice with innovation by transforming social expression into cognitive and emotional resources that fuel innovative outcomes. This mediation pathway illustrates how psychological flourishing can serve as a catalyst for organizational innovation.

These findings are supported by existing literature. Fan et al. (2022) found that supervisor helping behavior fosters both employee voice and thriving at work, which together contribute to enhanced innovative behavior. Similarly, Yousaf et al. (2019) established that thriving mediates the relationship between ethical leadership and innovation, emphasizing its role as a key psychological mechanism that connects positive

social conduct with improved performance outcomes. Additionally, Koçak (2019) and Chen et al. (2020) highlighted thriving as a crucial conduit through which proactive behaviors like voice result in innovation within organizations. Collectively, these studies and the current findings reinforce the view that positive psychological states like thriving are central to converting open communication into valuable organizational creativity.

From a practical standpoint, this evidence has significant implications for human resource management. Organizations should cultivate a work climate that actively encourages employee voice, where individuals feel psychologically safe, respected, and free to express their thoughts. Such an environment not only fosters thriving but also stimulates the emergence of innovative ideas aligned with performance enhancement. Inclusive and supportive leadership plays a pivotal role in sustaining this dynamic, as leaders who are receptive to input help build the psychological safety necessary to sustain the voice–thriving–innovation chain.

CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND LIMITATIONS

The present research set out to investigate both the direct and indirect linkages among Employee Voice (EV), Thriving at Work (TAW), and Innovative Work Behavior (IWB). The empirical results confirmed that all proposed hypotheses were statistically substantiated. In particular, EV was shown to have a positive effect on both TAW and IWB, while TAW itself exhibited a significant positive influence on IWB. Additionally, the mediating role of TAW in the relationship between EV and IWB was clearly established, underscoring the presence of an essential psychological pathway through which innovation at work is facilitated.

These outcomes offer strong empirical support for the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001), which posits that individuals are inherently motivated to accumulate, safeguard, and amplify valuable resources. In the context of this study, employee voice serves as an intentional and forward-looking behavior through which employees cultivate essential psychological and social resources—such as interpersonal trust, organizational support, and professional recognition. These resources, in turn, foster a state of thriving at work, characterized by elevated levels of vitality and continuous learning. As employees thrive, they become more capable of converting these internal resources into creative and actionable solutions, thereby enhancing their innovative performance.

Ultimately, the path model EV → TAW → IWB represents a positive resource gain cycle, in which proactive communicative efforts trigger psychological enrichment that culminates in innovation. This conceptualization contributes meaningfully to the organizational behavior literature by empirically validating the role of thriving as a key mediating mechanism. More broadly, the findings highlight that workplace innovation is not solely the result of structural or technical enablers, but also arises from the internal growth and social engagement of employees. Such insights deepen our understanding of how individual-level behaviors and psychological conditions interact to drive innovation in contemporary organizational settings.

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