

Consequences of information source credibility: Test of a serially mediated latent variable model

Soumendu Biswas<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>PhD, Affiliation: OB&HRM, Management Development Institute, Gurgaon  
Email ID: [sbiswas@mdi.ac.in](mailto:sbiswas@mdi.ac.in), [soumendubiswas@gmail.com](mailto:soumendubiswas@gmail.com)

Cite this paper as: Soumendu Biswas, (2025) Consequences of information source credibility: Test of a serially mediated latent variable model. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 2 (4), 773-785

<b>KEYWORDS</b> <i>Employees’ perceptions of information source credibility, Information justice perceptions, Employees’ satisfaction with organizational communication, In-role performance, Job tensions, Structural equation modeling</i>	<b>ABSTRACT</b> The purpose of this study was to add to the literature on the implications of relevant and trustworthy organizational communication practices on employee attitudes and thereby on overall organizational effectiveness. As such, the linkages between employees’ perceptions of information source credibility and their in-role performance and job tensions particularly when such relationships are mediated by employees’ information justice perceptions and satisfaction with organizational communication were examined. Relevant theories and the literature were explored to assess the study constructs, postulate the study hypotheses, and assimilate them into a conceptual latent variable model. The constructs were operationalized using standard questionnaires. Data were collected from 816 managerial-level executives working in different organizations all over India. The data were then subjected to various statistical analysis procedures including path and mediation analyses as per structural equation modeling techniques. Based on the results of these analyses all the study hypotheses and the proposed conceptual latent variable model were empirically confirmed. Accordingly, the theoretical and practical implications of the findings were documented. The study concludes by noting its limitations and outlining scopes for future research..
---	--

1. INTRODUCTION

Employees of an organization explore, utilize, communicate, and disseminate information not only to meet a variety of in-role requirements but also to reduce ambiguities and ambivalences concerning their task-related decisions (Grawe & Ralston, 2019; Perkins, 2018; Thornton *et al.*, 2016). While the success of information sharing varies based on the communication channels that are utilized, an equally important but often overlooked factor is the extent of credibility manifested by the information source (Tenhiala & Salvador, 2014; Suzuki *et al.*, 2019). Furthermore, calls for research indicate that there still exists a need to examine the intermediary constructs between information source credibility and its outcomes (Gallo *et al.*, 2022; Peng & Lin, 2016). Other studies have revealed that such investigations are necessary to highlight the importance of information source credibility *vis-a-vis* enhanced employee performance and their perceptions of attenuation of work-related obstacles that together lead to demonstrable organizational effectiveness (Gorbatov & Lane, 2018; Shu *et al.*, 2022). As such, the purposes of this study were to fill up these research gaps and extend the current literature by investigating the paths linking employees’ perceptions of information source credibility (EPISC) and its outcomes in terms of employees’ augmented in-role performance (IRP) and reduced job tensions (JT) that may otherwise have arisen out of information perplexity.

According to the knowledge-based view (KBV) of the firm (Grant, 1996), effective communication in an organization contributes to organizational efficacy by pooling, coordinating, and concurring individual knowledge bases (Thomas, 2013). It gives employees a sense of their task significance and overall organizational objectives (Sandrin *et al.*, 2018). Within this framework, organizational communication is dependent on credible information that is systematic, structured, and easily conveyed (Brewster *et al.*, 2016).



While the KBV underlines the need for accurate information dissemination in an organization, the communication adaptation theory (Giles & Johnson, 1981) connotes how this dissemination may be perceived differently depending on the diversity of context and the individuals involved. In this connection, the information evaluation model (IEM) determines the degree of objective response to information cues (Eisend & Kuster, 2011). The IEM also indicates that the trustworthiness of the information source not only enhances the reliability of the information provider but also assures the receiver about the quality and relevance of the information received (Saruhan, 2014). Since information obtained from a legitimate source assures the receiver of information justice, one may posit information justice perceptions (IJPs) as a direct outcome of EPISC (Kidron *et al.*, 2016).

Further to the discussion above and in keeping with the model of perceptual fairness in general and interactional justice in particular, there have been calls for research *vis-à-vis* communication satisfaction as an immediate individual-level consequence of employees' IJPs (Komodromos *et al.*, 2019). This is because IJPs in an organization assure its members regarding the adequacy of the information received concerning their assigned tasks and while doing so, it eventually signals employees' satisfaction with the organization's communication processes and procedures culminating in the escalation of the overall organizational efficacy and effectiveness (Caldwell, 2014). Thus, based on a study of the relevant literature, the link between IJPs and employees' satisfaction with organizational communication (ESOC) was also noted as a potential area for further exploration (K & Ranjit, 2022).

In continuation, an overarching theory that dominates the employee-organizational literature is the social exchange theory (SET) which has proven to be a strong theoretical foundation for studies such as the present one (Blau, 1964). As per the SET, when employees enjoy certain benefits out of organizational policies such as transparency and satisfaction with organizational communication, they observe 'norms of reciprocity' by fulfilling their corresponding task obligations (Davis *et al.*, 2018; Kang & Sung, 2017). However, whether ESOC arising from candid information shared equally among concerned stakeholders helps reduce employees' skeptical and pessimistic attitudes and JT is yet to be extensively scrutinized (Chirumbolo *et al.*, 2006).

Based on the above discussion, two constructs *viz.* IJPs and ESOC were extracted as potential mediators. The following section reviews the literature on these study constructs to establish meaningful linkages among them.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

### *EPISC, IJPs, and ESOC*

Apart from being highly competitive, the contemporary business environment is marked by a deluge of information that is difficult to screen or evaluate critically (Duong *et al.*, 2020). Under such circumstances, the authenticity and dependability of not only the information received but also the expertise and legitimacy of the information provider at the source congregate to define EPISC (Abunyewah *et al.*, 2020; DeMuelenaer *et al.*, 2018). In an organization, EPISC plays an important role in determining information utility and its resultant applicability to employees' task-related activities (Peng *et al.*, 2016). Since employees' in-role information is often sourced from their professional co-workers, both departmental and non-departmental, the content of such information must be significant and conclusive to boost their performance effectiveness (Kaur & Dubey, 2014). So, it is suggested that EPISC may be considered one of the key factors of organizational communication policies, processes, and procedures to maintain employees' positive attitudes (Clarkson *et al.*, 2013). Once EPISC is established, the next step for organizations should be to ensure information adequacy such that organizational communication may fulfill its role as a key driver of employee performance and organizational success (Pfeiffer *et al.*, 2019).

According to the affect infusion model, information adequacy influences an individual's judgemental processes and perceptions (Mao *et al.*, 2018). That being so, in an organizational context, employees first monitor the credibility of the information received and then test its adequacy in fulfilling their role-related responsibilities (van Laer, 2014). Additionally, the literature indicates that the authenticity, utility, and suitability of information characterize employees' IJPs (Choi, 2011). This further implies that when IJPs support organizational communication practices that are in turn, related to complex managerial tasks, they enhance ESOC (McCabe & Sambrook, 2019; Starc *et al.*, 2019). In this connection and according to the affective events theory, a lack of information support results in frustration and dissatisfaction which in turn, restrains employees' overall job-related attitudes (Usadolo & Usadolo, 2019). Studies indicate that lack of trustworthy information is among the key factors that lead to negative attitudes and feelings of injustice among organizational staff including job apathy, cynicism, voluntary turnover, and JT (Kim *et al.*, 2017). Based on this discussion, the following hypotheses are posited.

*Hypothesis 1 (H1).* Regarding organizational communication policies and practices, higher levels of employees' perceptions of information source credibility are associated with favourable information justice perceptions.

*Hypothesis 2 (H2).* Employees' information justice perceptions have a positive linkage with employees' satisfaction with organizational communication.

### *ESOC, IRP, and JT*



The previous discussion puts forward the notion that in an organization ESOC can be conceptualized as a favourable appraisal of its communication practices especially when EPISC and IJPs have been confirmed (Jalalkamali *et al.*, 2018). In other words, when employees receive work-related information that is perceivably authentic and trustworthy in content, it creates an encouraging communication climate in the organization which further results in ESOC (Lai, 2016).

Ergo, ESOC and employees' performance specifically, their allocated IRP is a crucial topic in organizational communication literature (Jyoti & Sharma, 2017). It has been observed that ESOC has positively influenced employee productivity, socio-emotional and relational interactions among task group members, convictions of outcome certainty, psychological safety, and reliance on professional networks all of which culminate in higher levels of employees' IRP (Mazze *et al.*, 2019; Prabhu & Drost, 2017).

As per extant research, tensions and conflicts are common in organizations due to changes in their external and/or internal environment (Offstein *et al.*, 2014). Along with resource scarcity, change-related imbalances, and lack of person-organization goals and values alignment, communication inaccuracy and improperly conveyed information increase employees' JT which has been conceptualized as negative psychological repercussions faced by employees due to disruptive work environment (Bhatt, 2018; Riaz *et al.*, 2019). On the other hand, ample and reasonable information about their work in particular and their organization, in general, enhance ESOC and ultimately stimulate employees' job engagement and execution certitude by reducing ambiguities and anomalies (Oleksa-Marewska, 2020; Rosenberg, 2018). As such, the following hypotheses are propounded.

*Hypothesis 3 (H3).* Employees' satisfaction with organizational communication plays a facilitating role in enhancing their in-role performance.

*Hypothesis 4 (H4).* Higher levels of employees' satisfaction with organizational communication are associated with lower levels of job tensions.

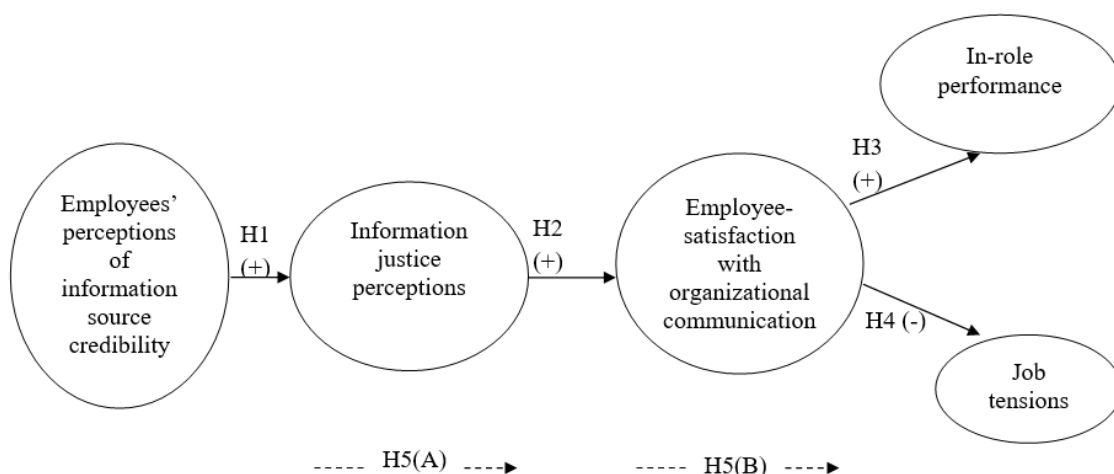
Additionally, the discussions so far create the bases for postulating the below-mentioned hypotheses.

*Hypothesis 5(A) (H5(A)).* Employees' information justice perceptions mediate the relationship between the information source credibility and their satisfaction with organizational communication.

*Hypothesis 5(B) (H5(B)).* Employees' satisfaction with organizational communication mediates the linkages between their information justice perceptions on the one hand and their in-role performance and job tensions on the other.

Apropos the preceding discussion, the following conceptual latent variable model (LVM) is proposed for further empirical verification.

**Figure I. The proposed latent variable model (LVM) and the hypothesized links**



### 3. METHOD

#### *Sample and procedure*

Data for this study were collected through a random survey conducted in multiple organizations spread across India. With exact data not available for the workforce population, the sample size was approximated using the method when the population is infinite (Liu, 2014). With an *a priori* moderate effect size of .30, desired statistical power level of .80, the



number of unobserved variables as 42 and the number of observed variables as 33, and a probability level of .05, the minimum sample size required to detect effect was 266 and the recommended minimum sample size was 778 (Westland, 2010).

A step-by-step approach was adopted to collect data for this study. First, the yellow pages business directory of India was consulted to randomly select 40 organizations from all over the country. Then, the human resource (HR) departments of these 40 organizations were contacted and approval was sought for data collection. Eight out of these 40 organizations allowed their employees to take part in the study survey. Three of these eight organizations were from the manufacturing sector and were involved in businesses related to automobiles, paints and chemicals, and iron and steel products. The remaining five were from the services sector and were engaged in businesses such as life insurance, banking, hotels and hospitality, tax consultancy, and the print media. Thereafter, a list of participants who agreed to fill up the study questionnaire was prepared. A cover letter explaining the study purpose, a brief profile of the researcher, a pledge of respondent anonymity, and an assurance that the data being collected was only for academic purpose and served no commercial interest was attached along with each questionnaire. About 1900 study questionnaires were distributed of which 816 filled and usable forms were returned. Thus, the response rate of this survey was about 43 percent.

It may be noted that all respondents of this survey were full-time managerial cadre executives in their respective organizations. Their average age was 34.39 years and their average work experience was 10.90 years. While 446 respondents belonged to organizations belonging to the manufacturing sector, the remaining 370 were from organizations in the services sector. Further, 468 of the respondents were males and 348 were females. Moreover, 92 of the respondents were from the senior-, 404 were from the middle-, and 320 were from the junior-level of managerial cadres of their respective organizations.

#### *Measures*

All the five study constructs namely, EPISC, IJPs, ESOC, IRP, and JT were measured using a five-point Likert scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

*EPISC.* EPISC was measured with the seven-item source credibility inventory developed and reported by Ellis (1992). A sample item from the inventory was 'When an employee in this organization says something, you can really believe it's true'. Two out of the seven items had to be reverse-scored. The Cronbach's alpha internal consistency reliability index for this measure was .79.

*IJPs.* Five items reported by Kim (2009) were used to measure employees' IJPs. This measure was derived from the scale originally developed by Colquitt (2001). An example of the scale items was 'This company has been candid in its communication'. The internal consistency reliability for this measure as per its Cronbach's alpha value was .81.

*ESOC.* Four items from the 36-item job satisfaction survey developed and reported by Spector (1997) and which specifically captured communication satisfaction were used to measure ESOC. Three out of the four items were reverse-scored. An example of the items used was 'Communication seems good within this organization'. The Cronbach's alpha reliability index for this measure was .75.

*IRP.* Employees' IRP was measured using 10 items out of the 16-items employee performance inventory reported by Lynch *et al.* (1999). A sample item of this inventory was 'Employees in this organization adequately complete assigned duties'. One of the 10 items had to be reverse-scored. The Cronbach's alpha index denoting the measure's internal consistency reliability was computed as .77.

*JT.* JT of employees was measured with the seven-item inventory developed by House and Rizzo (1972). An example of the items used was 'Employees in this organization work under a great deal of tension'. The internal consistency reliability as per the measure's Cronbach's alpha was .86.

*Control variables.* For all subsequent analyses, respondents' age, work experience, the sector (1 = manufacturing and 2 = services) to which their organization was affiliated, their gender (1 = male and 2 = female), and the level of management (LoM) (1 = senior, 2 = middle, and 3 = junior) to which they belonged in their respective organizations were treated as control variables. These variables were chosen as per research similar to the present one (Kim *et al.*, 2020).

## **4. RESULTS**

### *Common method bias*

A single latent factor approach was utilized to test the presence of latent variable common method bias (CMB) (Siemens *et al.*, 2010). A common latent variable model (CLVM) associating the indicators of all the study variables namely, EPISC, IJPs, ESOC, IRP, and JT was tested against the conceptual LVM as proposed earlier to inspect differences in model fit. The comparative-fit-index and the incremental-fit-index of the proposed model were .96 and .96, respectively whereas the same indices were .73 and .73 for the CLVM. As such, the CLVM could not be accepted and this eliminated the risk of CMB in the proposed LVM.

### *Evaluation of the measurement model*



The measurement model was tested by scrutinizing its reliability and validity as the main criteria of assessment (Ramayah *et al.*, 2011). According to Hair *et al.* (2017), a composite reliability (CR) value greater than or equal to .70 and an average variance extracted (AVE) value greater than or equal to .50 indicate acceptable levels of construct reliability and convergent validity, respectively. As per Table I, the CR values ranged from .72 to .78 thus establishing construct reliability while the AVE values varied between .53 and .68 demonstrating convergent validity. The discriminant validity of the measures was assessed by comparing the AVE with the squares of the intercorrelations between the study variables (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). As per the results denoted in Table I, the squares of the intercorrelations between the study variables were less than the AVE values which provided evidence of discriminant validity (Koufteros, 1999). Additionally, discriminant validity was also examined using the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) method which requires the true correlation values between the latent variables to be less than .85 (Henseler *et al.*, 2016). As shown in Table I, these values spread from .44 to .75, thus providing further substantiation of discriminant validity.

**Table I. Evaluation of the measurement model**

Variables	C.R.	1	2	3	4	5
1. EPISC	.87	.53				
2. IJPs	.80	.32	.62			
		(.66)				
3. ESOC	.81	.14	.31	.68		
		(.48)	(.74)			
4. IRP	.72	.15	.09	.52	.58	
		(.44)	(.59)	(.75)		
5. JT	.82	.41	.06	.05	.02	.67
		(.73)	(.49)	(.72)	(.67)	

*Note.*  $n = 816$ ; C.R. is 'Composite reliability'; The diagonal values of the matrix represent the average variance extracted while the off-diagonal values are the squares of the inter-correlations between the study variables; Off-diagonal values in parentheses are results of the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) analysis; 'EPISC' is 'Employees' perceptions of information source credibility', 'IJPs' is 'Information justice perceptions', 'ESOC' is 'Employee satisfaction with organizational communication', 'IRP' is 'In-role performances' and 'JT' is 'Job tensions'.

#### Configural invariance tests

The results of the configural invariance tests confirmed that the measures were invariant between the various groups, that is, sector ( $\Delta\chi^2=613.2$ ,  $\Delta df=1001$ ,  $p=1.00$ ), gender ( $\Delta\chi^2=1662.7$ ,  $\Delta df=1589$ ,  $p=.99$ ), and LoM ( $\Delta\chi^2=1355.6$ ,  $\Delta df=1382$ ,  $p=.69$ ) and therefore, the results obtained applied consistently to all groups considered in the present study.

#### Descriptive statistics, intercorrelations, and internal reliabilities

Table II reports the means, standard deviations, intercorrelations, and Cronbach's alpha reliability indices of the key study variables. As expected, EPISC correlated significantly and positively with IJPs ( $r = .57$ ,  $p \leq .01$ ) as did IJPs with ESOC ( $r = .56$ ,  $p \leq .01$ ). Moreover, there was a significant positive ( $r = .72$ ,  $p \leq .01$ ) and a significant negative ( $r = -.23$ ,  $p \leq .01$ ) correlation between ESOC and IRP and ESOC and JT, respectively. Additionally, the values on the diagonal of Table II represent Cronbach's alpha reliability indices per key study variable.

**Table II. Descriptive statistics, inter-correlations, and alpha reliability indices**

Values (→)	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Variables (↓)												
1. Age	34.39	3.91	1.00									
2. Work experience	10.90	3.63	.95	1.00								
3. Sector	1.86	.34	.04	.08	1.00							
4. Gender	1.19	.39	.39**	.37**	-.01*	1.00						





5. LoM	2.21	.57	.43*	.43	.12	.06**	1.00					
6. EPISC	3.62	.65	.01**	.09	.37**	-.14*	.09**	(.79)				
7. IJPs	3.15	.77	.03	.06*	.53**	.16*	-	.57**	(.81)			
							.24**					
8. ESOC	3.73	.77	.07**	.03**	-.47	.32**	.29	.38**	.56**	(.75)		
9. IRP	3.61	.45	.01**	.02	-	-	-.10	.39**	.30*	.72**	(.77)	
					.12**	.20**						
10. JT	2.78	1.01	-.04*	-.05*	.07*	-	-	-	-	-	-.14*	(.86)
						.12**	.08**	.64**	.24**	.23**		

Note.  $n = 816$ ; \*  $p \leq .05$ , \*\* $p \leq .01$ ; SD, Standard Deviation. Cronbach's Alpha reliability indices are reported in parentheses on the diagonal; short forms are as mentioned in the previous tables and text.

#### Path analyses result for the proposed model

The paths connecting the main study variables were tested through simultaneous regression methods using the structural equation modeling (SEM) procedures. Accordingly, IJPs regressed significantly and positively on EPISC (standardized  $\beta = .56$ ,  $p \leq .01$ ) as did ESOC on IJPs (standardized  $\beta = .54$ ,  $p \leq .01$ ) thus supporting H1 and H2, respectively. Moreover, IRP regressed significantly and positively on ESOC (standardized  $\beta = .34$ ,  $p \leq .01$ ) leading to the acceptance of H3. Finally, JT regressed significantly and negatively on ESOC (standardized  $\beta = -.28$ ,  $p \leq .01$ ) resulting in the acceptance of H4. While these paths representing the hypothesized associations between the study variables were depicted in Figure I earlier, the results of this analysis are presented in Table III below.

**Table III. Regression analyses result for the proposed LVM<sup>♦</sup>**

Values (→)				
Paths(↓)	Unstandardized coefficients (b)	Standardized $\beta$ estimates	C.R. <sup>†</sup>	Remarks
EPISC → IJPs	.73	.56	9.79	H1 accepted
IJPs → ESOC	.70	.54	11.57	H2 accepted
ESOC → IRP	.51	.34	7.47	H3 accepted
ESOC → JT	-.25	-.28	-7.14	H4 accepted

Note.  $n = 816$ ; short forms are as mentioned in the previous table(s) and text; <sup>♦</sup>LVM' is 'Latent Variable Model'; <sup>†</sup>C.R. is 'Critical Ratios', a recommended basis for testing the statistical significance of SEM components.  $C.R. \geq \pm 1.96$  indicates significance at the 95% level and  $C.R. \geq \pm 2.58$  indicates significance at the 99% level

#### Mediation analyses through competing LVMs

The influence of mediation in the proposed conceptual model (see Figure I) was examined by adopting a sequential mediation approach. For this purpose, four competing LVMs were assessed using three absolute and four comparative fit indices. The absolute fit indices comprised the normed  $\chi^2$ , the goodness-of-fit index (GFI), and the root-mean-square-error-of-approximation (RMSEA). The comparative fit indices included the comparative-fit-index (CFI), the incremental-fit-index (IFI), the normed-fit-index (NFI), and the relative-fit-index (RFI). As per the literature, the suggested cutoffs for  $RMSEA \leq .06$ ,  $1.00 \leq \text{normed } \chi^2 \leq 3.00$ , and for all the fit-indices that is, GFI, CFI, IFI, NFI, and  $RFI \geq .90$  (Byrne, 2001). Following these suggested cut-offs, a model could be accepted for further analyses only if it met these minimum acceptable threshold values.

As stated, four competing LVMs were tested and these were labeled as LVM1, LVM2, LVM3, and LVM4. LVM1 comprised EPISC as the latent exogenous variable and IRP and JT as the latent endogenous variables excluding EPISC and ESOC thus exemplifying a model with no mediation. LVM2 included IJPs as the only mediator while LVM3 comprised ESOC as the single mediator between EPISC as the latent exogenous and IRP and JT as the latent endogenous variables. Finally, LVM4 represented the conceptual model proposed in Figure I earlier with IJPs as the first-order and ESOC as the second-order



mediator between EPISC as the latent exogenous and IRP and JT as the final latent endogenous variables. While inspecting the absolute and the comparative fit indices of the four LVMs only those related to LVM4 were found not only to be above the recommended threshold but also had the best fit. For LVM4, the absolute fit indices that are, normed  $\chi^2$  was 2.79, GFI was .95, and RMSEA was .04 while the comparative fit indices that are, CFI and IFI were both .93, NFI was .91, and RFI was .90. In keeping with these results which conformed to the recommendations of Chin *et al.* (2003), LVM4 was chosen against the other three LVMs for further empirical analyses. The results are presented in Table IV below.

**Table IV. Analysis of competing LVMs**

Models(↓) Values (→)	Fit Indices						
	Absolute Fit Indices			Comparative Fit Indices			
	Normed $\chi^2$	GFI	RMSEA	CFI	IFI	NFI	RFI
LVM1 (no mediation)	4.15	.84	.08	.78	.78	.73	.71
LVM2 (mediation with the first-order mediator only that is, IJPs)	4.08	.83	.07	.80	.80	.78	.76
LVM3 (mediation with the second-order mediator only that is, ESOC)	4.06	.85	.07	.84	.84	.83	.81
LVM4 (mediation with all mediators)	2.79	.95	.04	.93	.93	.91	.90

Note. n = 816; short forms are as mentioned in the previous table(s) and text; Minimum acceptable values of the fit indices are as mentioned in the text.

*Additional meditation analyses for the accepted LVM*

While the application of the SEM procedures established IJPs and ESOC as significant mediators between EPISC on the one hand and IRP and JT on the other and precluded problems of correlated measurement errors, it was decided to conduct the Sobel's (1982), the Aorian's (1944), and the Goodman's (1960) tests as per the z-prime method (MacKinnon *et al.*, 2002) to discount the possibilities of Type-I error and explore the strength of mediation. Also, the ratios of the indirect to the total effects were computed and labeled as 'percentage of mediation'. These results are presented in Table V below.

Further, additional mediation analyses as per the procedures suggested by MacKinnon *et al.* (1995) were also conducted. Two conditions of mediation were checked by these procedures namely, (i) whether the direct paths from the primary antecedent to the final consequent variables were greater than the indirect paths through the designated mediators and (ii) whether the direct paths remained significant under conditions of mediation. Since the answers to both these questions were in the affirmative, all mediators in the accepted LVM that is, LVM4 were considered *quasi*-mediators as stated in Table V below.

A final test of mediation was performed on LVM4 using the AMOS 24.0 plugin for indirect effects (Gaskin & Lim, 2018). According to the results of this analysis, all mediated paths in LVM4 were found significant which led to the acceptance of H5(A) and H5(B). The results of this test are presented in Table VI below.

**Table V. Additional Analysis of Mediation**

Paths (↓) Values (→)	Additional Mediation Tests			Percentage of mediation	Path Analyses		Results of the additional mediation analyses
	Sobel's test	Aorian's test	Goodman's test		Whether regression estimate of (direct paths) > (paths under mediated condition)?	Whether regression estimate of (paths under mediated conditions) is significant?	
EPISC → IJPs → ESOC	7.78**	7.76**	7.79**	39.58			All

IJPs → ESOC → IRP	6.09**	6.07**	6.11**	30.33	YES	YES	variables designated as mediators fulfill the <i>quasi</i> -mediator role
IJPs → ESOC → JT	-7.76**	-7.78**	-7.74**	34.87			

Note. n = 816; \*\*p ≤ .01; short forms are as mentioned in the previous table(s) and text.

**Table VI. Specific indirect effects**

Indirect Path	Unstandardized Estimate	P-Value	Standardized Estimate
EPISC --> IJPs --> ESOC	0.51	0.00	0.49***
EPISC --> IJPs --> ESOC--> IRP	0.31	0.00	0.27***
EPISC --> IJPs --> ESOC--> JT	-0.57	0.01	-0.45**
IJPs --> ESOC --> IRP	0.45	0.04	0.31*
IJPs --> ESOC --> JT	-0.21	0.04	-0.13*

Note. n = 816; \* p ≤ .05, \*\*p ≤ .01, \*\*\*p ≤ .001; short forms are as mentioned in the previous table(s) and text

## 5. DISCUSSION

The results of the data analysis procedures documented above confirmed all the study hypotheses and the acceptance of the conceptual model presented in Figure I above and empirically tested as LVM4. The following sections elaborate on the theoretical and practical implications of these results.

### *Theoretical implications*

This study investigated the linkages between EPISC and its outcomes that are, IRP and JT through a sequence of mediators viz. IJPs and ESOC, respectively, and attempted to expand the literature linking information source credibility to its outcomes and its impact on overall organizational effectiveness and excellence.

In present times and in the context of business organizations, information overload in terms of sources and quantities often leaves the recipient with little to explore its authenticity. Accordingly, the acceptance of H1 illustrates the application of the information foraging theory (Pirulli & Card, 1999) whereby the importance of filtering information sources serve as a more practical approach for acquiring legitimate information as opposed to refining information while allowing for unreliable sources.

Furthermore, the results establish evidence that EPISC provides information receivers with the perception of information adequacy and utility which in turn, define their IJPs. From a theoretical perspective, this implies that when employees, as information receivers, discern EPISC, they refer to the same source consistently as a reliable repository, and as such, this illustrates the applicability of the referent cognitions theory (Folger & Cropanzano, 2001). Consequently, as depicted by the assertion of H2, IJPs create an overall climate of employee satisfaction, in this instance, ESOC, that contributes to intra-organizational collaboration and effectuality.

The acceptance of H3 and H4 has theoretical implications from the point of view of the media richness theory (MRT) (Daft & Lengel, 1986). While the MRT specifically considers a communication medium as rich if it is unequivocal in terms of the information it carries, the results of this study show that EPISC also contributes towards the same end by promoting superior IRP and attenuating employees' JT through their IJPs and ESOC.

As per H5(A) and H5(B), first source credibility and then IJPs followed by ESOC are significant antecedents that act as acceptable guides to what information recipients consider as cues for trustworthy and unbiased organizational communication practices leading to favourable outcomes, thus corroborating with the fairness heuristics theory (Proudfoot & Lind, 2015). Accordingly, the results related to the confirmation of H5(A) and H5(B) were also theoretically inferred.

### *Practical implications*





Among the practical implications, the results of this study suggest that managers should appraise both formal and informal communication channels of their respective organizations while searching for information sources and cross-check them to establish EPISC. Indeed, based on their merits, managers may contemplate including certain informal communication practices as a part of the formal organizational communication policies.

Second, managers can take up coaching and mentoring roles to help their co-workers to not only identify the latter's IRP parameters but also to seek out viable sources to achieve the same. In this manner, managers can contribute to organizational efficiency and effectiveness through improved organization-wide performance management and its consequent fit with employee appraisal methods that enhance employee IRP while reducing their JT.

Third, managers should encourage their peers and subordinates to identify plausible information sources and share the same with all organizational members. This would contribute to overall improvements in employees' IRP, reduced negative attitudes arising out of JT, and all in all, improved organizational accomplishments.

Finally, reductions in possible oversights arising out of miscommunication result in enhanced employees' IJPs and ESOC which, if aggregated, shall contribute not only to the individual but also to overall organizational success.

#### *Socio-cultural implications*

The present study was conducted with inputs from employees who were Indians by origin and working in organizations based in India. As such, the outcomes of this study in terms of the empirical acceptance of the proposed conceptual model that is, LVM4 have certain socio-cultural implications, too.

Given that India is a country that is marked by high levels of collectivism and power distance, both IJPs and ESOC highlight a shared perception of employees' collective role clarity and interpersonal accord. The smooth flow of information from reliable sources through trustworthy channels that are consensually acceptable as satisfactory organizational communication practices not only has a positive influence on employees' IRP and a restrictive impact on their JT, but also results in augmented levels of work-related harmony and reduced inter-personal conflicts, grievances, and disputes at the workplace. In this way, the national and social culture permeates through organizational pores in creating a concordant organizational culture while maintaining a favourable organizational climate.

## **6. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH SCOPE**

The results of this study and its subsequent implications should be interpreted within the ambits of certain limitations.

First, this study was conducted among managerial cadre executives working at various levels in their respective organizations. As such, the accepted LVM that is, LVM4 omits the viewpoints of all employees of these organizations notwithstanding their official designations. Second, having been carried out in Indian organizations and with all respondents being Indians by descent, the results of the study precluded cross-national comparisons.

Next, the cross-sectional design of the study ruled out the possibility of cross-temporal inferences. As such, the study makes no causal claims about the hypothesized relationships among the study variables.

Finally, by considering only permanent and full-time employees as respondents, the study excluded part-time and/or contractual stakeholders and their perspectives on the study variables and their hypothesized linkages.

The above-mentioned limitations may be considered as future areas of possible research.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

To conclude, this study attempted to connect EPISC with employees' IRP and their JT through their IJPs and ESOC as significant intervening variables. This was represented by a conceptual LVM which was empirically investigated by comparing it with competing LVMs. Besides the study hypotheses, of all the four LVMs that were tested, LVM4 which established *quasi*-mediation by IJPs and ESOC as the first- and the second-order mediators respectively was found most acceptable. The results of the data analyses and their theoretical and practical implications were then noted. The study concluded by recording its limitations and future research scopes arising therefrom.

## **REFERENCES**

- [1] Abunyewah, M., Gajendran, T., Maund, K., & Okyere, S. A. (2020). Linking information provision to behavioral intentions: Moderating and mediating effects of message clarity and source credibility. *International Journal of Disaster Resilience in the Built Environment*, 11(1), 100–118.
- [2] Aorian, L. A. (1944). The probability function of the product of two normally distributed variables. *Annals of Mathematical Statistics*, 18(2), 265–271.
- [3] Bhatt, H. C. (2018). Leadership styles and quality of work life in small and medium style enterprises of Kumoun region of Uttarakhand. *Journal of Strategic Human Resource Management*, 7(1), 23–32.



- [4] Blau, P. M. (1964). *Exchange and Power in Social Life*. New York, NY: Wiley.
- [5] Brewster, C., Gooderham, P. N., & Mayrhofer, W. (2016). Human resource management: The promise, the performance, the consequences. *Journal of Organizational Effectiveness: People and Performance*, 3(2), 181–190.
- [6] Byrne, B. M. (2001). *Structural equation modeling with AMOS: Basic concepts, applications, and programming*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- [7] Caldwell, J. (2014). Interactional justice dimensions and organizational trust: An investigation into the moderating effects of stress and a three-way interaction. *Journal of Organizational Culture, Communication, and Conflict*, 18(2), 25–43.
- [8] Chin, W. W., Marcolin, B. L., & Newsted, P. R. (2003). A partial least squares latent variable modeling approach for maximum interaction effects: Results from a Monte Carlo simulation study and an electronic-mail emotion/adoption model. *Information Systems Research*, 14(2), 189–217.
- [9] Chirumbolo, A., Callea, A., & Urbini, F. (2020). Job insecurity and performance in public and private sectors: A moderated mediation model. *Journal of Organizational Effectiveness: People and Performance*, 7(2), 237–253.
- [10] Choi, S. (2011). Organizational justice and employee work attitudes: The federal case. *The American Review of Public Administration*, 41(2), 185–204.
- [11] Clarkson, J. J., Valente, M. J., Lione, C., & Tomala, Z. L. (2013). Motivated reflection on attitude-inconsistent information: An exploration of the role of fear invalidity in self-persuasion. *Personality and Social Psychology*, 39(12), 1559–1570.
- [12] Colquitt, J. A. (2001). On the dimensionality of organizational justice: A construct validation of a measure. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86(3), 386–400.
- [13] Daft, R. L., & Lengel, R. H. (1986). Organizational information requirements, media richness, and structural design. *Management Science*, 32(5), 554–571.
- [14] Davis, G., Mete, M., & Whelan, S. (2018). When employer brand image aids employee satisfaction and engagement. *Journal of Organizational Effectiveness: People and Performance*, 5(1), 64–80.
- [15] DeMuelenaer, S., DePelsmacker, P., & Dens, N. (2018). Power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and the effects of source credibility on health risk message compliance. *Health Communication*, 33(3), 291–298.
- [16] Duong, H. T., Nguyen, L. T. V., & Vu, H. T. (2020). With whom do consumers interact? Effects of online comments and perceived similarity on source credibility, content credibility, and personal risk perceptions. *Journal of Social Marketing*, 10(1), 18–37.
- [17] Eisend, M., & Kuster, F. (2011). The effectiveness of publicity versus advertising: A meta-analytic investigation of its moderators. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 39(6), 906–921.
- [18] Ellis, B. H. (1992). The effects of uncertainty and source credibility on attitudes about organizational change. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 6(1), 34–57.
- [19] Folger, R., & Cropanzano, R. (2001). Fairness theory: Justice as accountability. In J. Greenberg & R. Cropanzano (Eds.), *Advances in Organizational Justice* (pp. 1–55). Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press.
- [20] Fornell, C., & Larcker, D.F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18(1), 39–50.
- [21] Gallo, J., Walton, A., Shah, N., Halstead, S., & Bryant, C. (2022). Investigating the interaction between the feedback orientation & the feedback environment on employee performance. *The Journal of Management and Engineering Integration*, 15(1), 57–69.
- [22] Gaskin, J., & Lim, J. (2018). Indirect effects, AMOS plugin. *Gaskination Statwiki*, Retrieved from [http://statwiki.kolobkcreations.com/index.php?title=Main\\_Page](http://statwiki.kolobkcreations.com/index.php?title=Main_Page) (accessed 9 November 2022).
- [23] Giles, H., & Johnson, P. (1981). The role of language in ethnic group relations. In J. C. Turner & H. Giles (Eds.), *Intergroup Behavior* (pp. 199–243). Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- [24] Goodman, L. A. (1960). On the exact variance of products. *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, 55(292), 708–713.
- [25] Gorbatov, S., & Lane, A. (2018). Is HR missing the point on performance feedback? *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 59(4), 1–10.
- [26] Grant, R. M. (1996). Toward a knowledge-based theory of the firm. *Strategic Management Journal*, 17(S2), 109–122.



- [27] Grawe, S. J., & Ralston P. M. (2019). Intra-organizational communication, understanding, and process diffusion in logistic service providers. *International Journal of Physical Distribution and Logistics Management*, 49(6), 662–678.
- [28] Hair, J. F. J., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2017). *A Primer on Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)*. London, UK: Sage Publications.
- [29] Henseler, J., Hubona, G., & Ray, P.A. (2016). Using PLS path modeling in new technology research: updated guidelines. *Industrial Management and Data Systems*, 116(1), 2–20.
- [30] Hough, C., Green, K., & Plumlee, G. L. (2015). Impact of ethics environment and organizational trust on employee engagement. *Journal of Legal, Ethical and Regulatory Issues*, 18(3), 45–62.
- [31] House, R. J., & Rizzo, J. R. (1972). Role conflict and ambiguity as critical variables in a model of organizational behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 7(3), 467–505.
- [32] Jalalkamali, M., Iranmanesh, M., Nikbin, D., & Hyun, S. S. (2018). An empirical analysis of the effects of humor on communication satisfaction and job performance in international joint ventures in Iran. *Journal of Management and Organization*, 24(2), 295–311.
- [33] Jyoti, J., & Sharma, P. (2017). Empirical investigation of a moderating and mediating variable in between mentoring and job performance: A structural model. *Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 33(1), 55–67.
- [34] K, J., & Ranjit, G. (2022). Organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior: The mediating role of psychological ownership. *Journal of Organizational Effectiveness: People and Performance*, 9(1), 1–19.
- [35] Kang, M., & Sung, M. (2017). How symmetrical employee communication leads to employee engagement and positive employee communication behaviors: The mediation of employee-organization relationships. *Journal of Communication Management*, 21(1), 82–102.
- [36] Kaur, T., & Dubey, R. K. (2014). Employee reviews on company independent sites and its impact on organizational attractiveness: Role of information realism, person-environment fit, and source credibility framework. *Business: Theory and Practice*, 15(4), 390–397.
- [37] Kidron, A., Tzafrir, S. S., & Meshoulam, I. (2016). All we need is trust: Trust and human resource management. *Team Performance Management*, 22(3/4), 139–155.
- [38] Kim, H-S. (2009). Examining the role of information justice in the wake of downsizing from an organizational relationship management practice. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 88(2), 297–312.
- [39] Kim, J., Lee, S., & Byun, G. (2020). Building a thriving organization: The antecedents of job engagement and their impact on voice behavior. *Sustainability*, 12(18), 1–17.
- [40] Komodromos, M., Halkias, D., & Harkiolakis, N. (2019). Managers' perceptions of trust in the workplace in times of strategic change: The cases of Cyprus, Greece, and Romania. *EuroMed Journal of Business*, 14(1), 2–20.
- [41] Koufteros, X.A. (1999). Testing a model of pull production: A paradigm for manufacturing research using structural equation modeling. *Journal of Operations Management*, 17(4), 467–488.
- [42] Lai, C. S. (2016). The effect of individual market orientation on sales performance: An integrated framework for assessing the role of formal and informal communications. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 24(3), 328–343.
- [43] Liu, X.S. (2014). *Statistical Power Analysis for the Social and Behavioral Sciences: Basic and Advanced Techniques*. New York, NY: Routledge/Taylor and Francis Group.
- [44] Lynch, P. D., Eisenberger, R., & Armelli, S. (1999). Perceived organizational support: Inferior versus superior performance by wary employees. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 84(4), 467–483.
- [45] MacKinnon, D. P., Lockwood, C. M., Hoffman, J. M., West, S. G., and Sheets, V. (2002). A comparison to test mediation and other intervening variable effects. *Psychological Methods*, 7(1), 83–104.
- [46] MacKinnon, D. P., Warsi, G., & Dwyer, J. H. (1995). A simulation study of mediated effect measures. *Multivariate Behavioral Research*, 30(1), 41–62.
- [47] Mao, Y, Wong, C-S., Tao, X., & Jiang, C. (2018). The impact of affect on organizational justice perceptions: A test of the affect infusion model. *Journal of Management and Organization*, 24(6), 893-916.
- [48] Mazzei, A., Butera, A., & Quaratino, L. (2019). Employee communication for engaging workplaces. *Journal of Business Strategy*, 40(6), 23–32.
- [49] McCabe, T. J., & Sambrook, S. A. (2019). A discourse analysis of managerialism and trust amongst nursing



- professionals. *The Irish Journal of Management*, 38(1), 38–53.
- [50] Offstein, E. H., Kniphuisen, R., Bichy, D. R., & Childers Jr., J. S. (2014). Strengthening reliability in high hazard industries: Reconciling tensions for impact. *American Journal of Business*, 29(2), 125–145.
- [51] Oleksa-Marewska, K. (2020). Organizational climate as a mediating factor between occupational stress and prosocial organizational behaviors in knowledge-based organizations. *European Research Studies Journal*, XXIII(2), 741–762.
- [52] Peng, J.-C., & Lin, J. (2016). Linking supervisor feedback environment to contextual performances: The mediating effect of leader-member exchange. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 37(6), 802–820.
- [53] Peng, L., Liao, Q., Wang, X., & He, X. (2016). Factors affecting female user information adoption: An empirical investigation on fashion shopping guide websites. *Electronic Commerce Research*, 16(2), 145–169.
- [54] Perkins, S. J. (2018). Processing developments in employee performance and reward. *Journal of Organizational Effectiveness: People and Performance*, 5(3), 289–300.
- [55] Pfeiffer, B. E., Deval, H., Silvera, D. H., Cronley, M. L., & Kardes, F. R. (2019). The effect of message credibility, need for cognitive closure, and information sufficiency on thought-induced work attitudes. *Marketing Letters*, 30(2), 193–205.
- [56] Pirolli, P., & Card, S. (1999). Information foraging theory. *Psychological Review*, 106(4), 643–675.
- [57] Prabhu, V. P., & Drost, E. A. (2017). Managerial communication and intent to remain with the organization: Examining an empirical model of factors affecting retention of Israeli employees. *Journal of Organizational Psychology*, 17(6), 156–174.
- [58] Proudfoot, D., & Lind, E. A. (2015). Fairness heuristics theory, the uncertainty model, and fairness at work. In R. S. Cropanzano & M. L. Ambrose (Eds.), *Oxford Library of Psychology: The Oxford Handbook of Justice in the Workplace* (pp. 371–385). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- [59] Ramayah, T., Lee, J.W.C., & In, J.B.C. (2011). Network collaboration and performance in the tourism sector. *Service Business*, 5(4), 411–428.
- [60] Riazi, S., Xu, Y., & Hussain, S. (2019). Workplace ostracism and knowledge hiding: The mediating role of job tension. *Sustainability*, 11(20), 1–16.
- [61] Rosenberg, A. (2018). Taking apart structural change: The constitutive role of communication in relieving tensions. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, 26(2), 368–381.
- [62] Sandrin, E., Trentin, A., & Forza, C. (2018). Leveraging high-involvement practices to develop mass customization capability: A contingent configurational perspective. *International Journal of Production Economics*, 196(C), 335–345.
- [63] Saruhan, N. (2014). The role of corporate communication and the perception of justice during organizational change process. *Business and Economics Research Journal*, 5(4), 143–166.
- [64] Shu, M., Zhong, Z., & Ren, H. (2022). Voice contributes to creativity via leaders' endorsement especially when proposed by extraverted high performance employees. *Psychology Research and Behavior Management*, 15, 213–226.
- [65] Siensen, E., Roth, A., & Oliveira, P. (2010). Common method bias in regression model with linear, quadratic, and interaction effects. *Organizational Research Methods*, 13(3), 456–476.
- [66] Sobel, M. E. (1982). Asymptotic interval for indirect effects in structural equation models. In S. Leinhardt (Ed.), *Sociological methodology* (pp. 290–312). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- [67] Spector, P. (1997). *Job satisfaction: Application, assessment, causes, and consequences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- [68] Starc, J., Neuberg, M., & Erjavec, K. (2019). Nurses' satisfaction with the use of communication channels by their managers in Croatia and Slovenia. *Journal of Contemporary Management Issues*, 24(2), 81–94.
- [69] Suzuki, M., Ando, N., & Nishikawa, H. (2019). Intra-organizational communication and its consequences. *Management Decision*, 57(1), 71–85.
- [70] Tenhiala, A., & Salvador, F. (2014). Looking inside glitch mitigation capability: The effect of intraorganizational communication channels. *Decision Sciences*, 45(3), 437–466.
- [71] Thornton, L. M., Esper, T. L., & Autry, C. W. (2016). Leader or lobbyist? How organizational politics and top supply chain manager political skill impacts supply chain orientation and internal integration. *Journal of Supply Chain Management*, 52(4), 42–62.



- [72] Usadolo, S. E., & Usadolo, Q. E. (2018). The impact of lower level management on volunteers' workplace outcomes in South African non-profit organizations: The mediating role of supportive supervisor communication. *Voluntas: International Journal for Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 30(3), 244–258.
- [73] van Laer, T. (2014). The means to justify the end: Combating cyber harassment in social media. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 123(1), 85–98.
- [74] Westland, J.C. (2010). Lower bounds on sample size in structural equation modeling. *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications*, 9(6), 476–487

fffff