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Research Article

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Barriers to Employee Voice: The Interplay between Mushroom Management and Work Alienation¹

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Keywords:

Mushroom management, work alienation, employee voice, social exchange theory, learned helplessness theory

Abstract: The aim of this study is to reveal the role of work alienation (WA) in the effect of the mushroom management (MM) approach on employee voice (EV) within the framework of social exchange theory (SET) and learned helplessness theory (LHT). In the study, data obtained from 337 white-collar workers in the service sector using convenience sampling were subjected to descriptive and structural analyses using statistical software. The analysis revealed that the mushroom management dimensions - inadequate information sharing (IIS) and anxiety of power loss (APL) - negatively affect employee voice. Moreover, it was found that the dimensions of IIS and APL increase work alienation. Furthermore, the results revealed that work alienation was found to partially mediate the relationship between mushroom management and employee voice.

JEL Codes: M10, M12, D23

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¹ It is declared that this article has been prepared in accordance with research and publication ethics principles.



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Araştırma Makalesi

Açık Erişim

Çalışan Sessizliğinin Önündeki Engeller: Mantar Yönetim ve İşe Yabancılaşma Arasındaki Etkileşim

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Anahtar Kelimeler:

Mantar yönetim, işe yabancılaşma, çalışan sessizliği, sosyal mübadele teorisi, öğrenilmiş çaresizlik teorisi

JEL Kodları: M10, M12, D23

Öz: Bu araştırmanın amacı sosyal mübadele teorisi ve öğrenilmiş çaresizlik teorisi ekseninde mantar yönetim yaklaşımının çalışan sessizliği üzerindeki etkisinde işe yabancılaşmanın rolünü ortaya koymaktır. Araştırmada, hizmet sektöründe faaliyet gösteren 337 beyaz yakalı çalışandan kolayda örnekleme yöntemiyle elde edilen veriler, istatistiksel yazılımlar aracılığıyla betimleyici ve yapısal analizlere tabi tutulmuştur. Yapılan analizler sonucunda mantar yönetim boyutlarından yetersiz bilgi paylaşımı ve güç kaybı endişesinin çalışan sessizliği üzerinde olumsuz bir etkiye sahip olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Mantar yönetim boyutlarından yetersiz bilgi paylaşımı ve güç kaybı endişesinin işe yabancılaşmayı artırdığı saptanmıştır. Ayrıca mantar yönetimin çalışan sessizliği üzerindeki etkisinde işe yabancılaşmanın kısmi aracı rol üstlendiği belirlenmiştir.

1. Introduction

Following the industrial society, the information society (Nath, 2017), shaped by technological, sociological, economic, and cultural changes, is creating a transformation that affects the functioning of organizations. In the information society, the sustainability of organizations is possible not only through employees performing their duties, but also through them expressing their opinions and contributing to the process. In this particular context, the concept of employee voice has been proven to be a significant predictor of positive organizational outcomes (Rasheed et al., 2017). Similarly, since encouraging employee voice benefits both employers and employees (Abdulgalimov et al., 2020), even small organizations have developed formal and informal programs to understand employee concerns and signal that expressed concerns are addressed by management (Wilkinson & Fay, 2011). However, given that Türkiye is characterized by a high-power distance culture (Hofstede, 2001), imbalances in the distribution of power are prevalent (Dursun, 2013), and inequality tends to be perceived as a normal and accepted aspect of social relations (Hofstede, 1993). When information is regarded as a source of power (Özbozkurt, 2024), the mushroom management approach (Birincioğlu & Tekin, 2018) which is characterized by the concentration of power and knowledge in a single center and the avoidance of information sharing tends to develop in parallel with power distance. Although it emerges as a product of this perception, it simultaneously represents the antithesis of an information society structure. To such an extent that Turkish organizations, representing centralized decision-making, strong leadership, and a limited delegation structure (Ronen, 1986), open the way for a mushroom management approach, thereby creating organizations that minimize voice behavior. High power distance also contributes to increased levels of alienation (Şeremet & Öztürk, 2024). Specifically, in organizations where decision-making authority and organizational control are concentrated in upper management, employees' perceptions of power distance are associated with a heightened tendency toward work alienation (Dalmış & Tokur, 2024). Therefore, power distance potentially affects outcomes such as employee voice and alienation from work in organizations where the mushroom management approach persists.

Workplace communication statistics suggest that 86% of employees and managers believe that the root cause of organizational failure is a lack of effective collaboration and communication (Kojic, 2025). However, mushroom managers legitimize the mushroom management approach because they want to keep the organizations technical information, such as patents and software, confidential (Demirkaya, 2023). Managers tend to adopt a mushroom management approach due to their managerial incompetence and their fear that employees may generate innovative ideas that surpass their own (Kılıç, 2015). Although communication is considered one of the fundamental determinants of organizational effectiveness, the preference for a mushroom management approach that transforms communication deficiencies into a conscious strategy in certain situations raises an unresolved issue in management literature and highlights the problem of how organizations should strike a balance between transparency and secrecy in their pursuit of success. This situation points to a structural dilemma arising from the fact that organizations position communication as an indispensable element of organizational success on the one hand, while on the other hand being able to use communication gaps as a strategic management instrument.

The present study draws upon the theoretical framework of learned helplessness to investigate the role of work alienation in the relationship between mushroom management on employee voice. Additionally, it attempts to explore the extent to which organizations, which play a significant role in the formation of the

knowledge society structure, are influenced by established cultural phenomena such as power distance. The literature shows that mushroom management is addressed in relation to organizational commitment, organizational silence, and organizational cynicism (Aydın, 2022; Aydın, 2023; Günaltay et al., 2022; Gündüz & Özyer, 2022). The relationship between mushroom management and employee voice has not been directly addressed in the field literature, and no empirical study has been found that examines the interaction of alienation at work in this relationship and addresses these three variables.

The change in the ideal employee profile, the acceptance of knowledge as power, the lack of studies incorporating variables, the potential for employees' voice behaviors to create an advantage in today's competitive conditions, and the consideration of mushroom management as a strategic management approach have led to a focus on a paradox throughout this study. The objective of this research is to address the existing paucity of knowledge in this area and contribute to the literature from a theoretical perspective by revealing the interaction between variables. Furthermore, it aims to shed light on practical applications by demonstrating that managers who consciously limit interaction may build a flawed culture, increasing employees' tendency to disengage from their work and failing to capitalize on the potential positive outcomes of voice behavior, thereby taking misguided actions in the long term. Based on this information, the study is expected to guide managers and organizations who operate under the assumption that a limited communication policy has strategic and managerial gains, thereby contributing to the development of insights into management understanding.

2. Conceptual Framework

2.1. Mushroom Management

In the late 20th century, parallel to the growing concerns about management practices in organizations, mushroom management (Jianlan et al., 2025) emerged, initially shaped by bureaucrats' efforts to protect their power through secrecy regarding how things were done (Gunn, 1995). Mushroom management, conceptualized based on the method of growing mushrooms over time, represents a metaphor developed based on the fact that mushrooms grow when left in the dark and cease to exist when exposed to daylight (Öztürk & Aras, 2021). According to the metaphor that mushrooms are kept in the dark and fertilized to grow (Herman, 1997), managers, just like in mushroom cultivation, leave employees in the dark and only provide the necessary resources (Birincioğlu & Tekin, 2018). Similarly, just as mushrooms are left in a dark environment and fertilized regularly (Spacey, 2020), managers with a mushroom management perspective provide employees with the minimum resources necessary to perform their duties, while avoiding sharing critical factors such as job-related risks (Kılıç & Olgun, 2017), attempting to establish authority over their subordinates (Gök, 2025), and expecting tasks to be performed accordingly (Özel & Kalfaoğlu, 2023).

Mushroom management, which is used to describe work environments where managers are knowledgeable, employees are kept out of decision-making processes, there is a one-way flow of information from manager to employee, and there is no feedback mechanism (Fettahlioğlu & Erdoğan, 2024), resembles a black hole due to its uncertain structure and lack of information output (Baxter, 2005). According to this management approach, employees do not know why they are doing their jobs or what their purpose is (Aydın, 2022). Managers make decisions without consulting the team and are often in a negative relationship with them (Mar, 2011). During this process, information asymmetry arises between managers and employees (Aykul

& Gürer, 2025), and mushroom management leads to job turnover, potential missed opportunities, and overall failure (Laplante & Neill, 2006).

Mushroom management is addressed in the literature through four dimensions. The dimension reflecting problems related to information sharing is the insufficient information sharing dimension (Birincioğlu & Tekin, 2018), and managers' tendency to view information as a source of power and keep it from employees is explained by the fear of losing power (Damar & Eryeşil, 2023). In this situation, employees only have enough information to perform their jobs, while being excluded from strategic decision-making processes and experiencing weakened organizational commitment. The second factor, the fear of losing power, expresses managers' concerns that sharing information with employees will diminish their authority. This concern is based on managers' fear that their subordinates may appear more competent or innovative, and often leads to the suppression of creativity within the organization and the disregard of innovative ideas. The third factor, inadequate communication, encompasses communication between managers and employees that is mostly one-way, limited feedback channels, and an environment that does not allow employees to express themselves (Aydın, 2023). This situation causes employees to experience uncertainty about work processes, a decline in motivation, and the spread of a culture of silence. Finally, lack of participatory management refers to managers avoiding delegating authority and responsibility to employees and failing to support their participation in decision-making processes (Öztürk, 2024). This structure, which lacks participation, weakens employees' organizational commitment, increases the perception of exclusion in decision-making mechanisms, and in the long term, strengthens alienation from work and the intention to leave the job. These four factors comprehensively explain the negative effects of mushroom management on organizational behavior.

2.2. Work Alienation

The concept of alienation, which Hegel primarily addresses, is an important part of the development of the spirit in his philosophy and is a necessary transformation for the individual to progress (Debnath, 2020). Alienation is defined as a psychological state in which an individual experiences a sense of detachment from their surroundings, including both tangible objects and people, as well as from the perspectives and views held by others (Horowitz, 1966). Marx, stated that this situation was inevitable within the confines of capitalism (Erikson, 1986) and first theorized alienation as a result of wage labor (Archibald, 2009). Marx, foreshadowed alienation by discussing the meaninglessness of work, the lack of employee input in work-related processes, and the existence of perceptions regarding the extent to which an individual's skills are utilized during work (Shantz et al., 2014).

Work alienation is characterized by the extent to which an individual is disconnected from their work life (Hirschfeld & Feild, 2000). Therefore, this situation reveals that alienation developed more as a situational phenomenon than as a personal one (Tuna & Yeşiltaş, 2014). Indeed, work alienation is a generalized cognitive (or belief-based) attitude reflecting a psychological detachment from work to the extent that the individual perceives it as lacking the potential to meet their basic needs and expectations (Kanungo, 1971). To such an extent that individuals whose expectations are not met by the organization experience dissatisfaction and become alienated from their work (Kaya, 2021). As a result of this relationship, the tie between the employee and the organization weakens, communication breaks down, and alienation manifests itself (Karadaş & Özgün, 2023).

Work alienation is addressed in the literature through many factors. Seeman (1959) conceptualized the concept of alienation in five different ways: powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, isolation, and self-estrangement. Powerlessness arises when an individual develops the belief that they cannot change a situation in which their expectations and largely achievable possibilities are determined by others (Seeman, 1983). The meaninglessness of work is based on the individual's work not contributing to the processes and is considered an important component of alienation from work (Mottaz, 1981). Normlessness is the perception that established social norms are ineffective in guiding individuals' behavior toward achieving their personal goals (Sarfraz, 1997). Isolation refers to an individual's dissatisfaction with their relationships (Seçkin, 2020), while alienation represents perceptions that work processes develop independently and without the individual's contributions (Sarros et al., 2002).

2.3. Employee Voice

Voice behavior refers to containing innovative suggestions and transformations regarding standard methods (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998), carried out at the individual level (Özbolet & Şehitoğlu, 2018), in order to support the functional development of the organization (Detert & Burris, 2007), through various change-oriented approaches in situations that create dissatisfaction (Hirschman, 1970). Moreover, it is founded on the deliberate presentation of concepts and viewpoints related to the field of work (Van Dyne et al., 2003). Therefore, voice is regarded as any mechanism that enhances communication between employees and management, influences the sharing of problems (Dundon & Gollan, 2007), and provides employees with the opportunity to express opinions or participate in organizational functioning (Lavelle et al., 2010). In particular, in the organizational behavior literature, when voice behavior is explained, the concept has been interpreted not as a tool representing employees' collective interests independent of management, but as a form of individual expression (Barry & Wilkinson, 2022).

For a behavior to be considered as voice, it must be (a) explicitly communicated, (b) related to the organization, (c) directly relevant to the work environment, and (d) taken by someone within the organization (Maynes & Podsakoff, 2014). However, it is argued that voice behavior consists of two elements. The first encompasses employees communicating their complaints about work to management, while the other is based on employee participation in the organization's decision-making processes (McCabe & Lewin, 1992). By being involved in this process, employees can believe they have the potential to influence decisions and develop positive attitudes in the long term (Farndale et al., 2011).

2.4. Relationships between Variables and Research Hypotheses and Development of the Research Model

2.4.1. The Relationship between Mushroom Management and Employee Voice

In contemporary organizations, the sharing of information by management and the establishment of structures that allow employees to participate in decision-making processes and express their views serve to strengthen social relations. However, the presence of an organizational structure lacking transparency and participatory management core characteristics of the mushroom management approach compels employees to function merely as components within a mechanical system (Akduru & Arslantaş, 2021), thereby undermining social relationships. In the mushroom management approach, the decision-making process is formed without considering employees' opinions due to the limited sharing of information between managers and employees (Kılıç & Olgun, 2017; Smith, 2015). This situation may cause employees who

have a positive outlook on the work environment and exhibit voice behavior (Ng & Feldman, 2012) to avoid consciously expressing their opinions about their work (Van Dyne et al., 2003). The lack of feedback channels negatively influences employees' voice behavior (Morrison & Milliken, 2000).

The impact of mushroom management on employee voice can be examined from the perspective of social exchange theory (SET). SET encompasses reciprocal relationships that develop between individuals based on expectations (Blau, 1964). This reciprocity is important in encouraging and maintaining positive attitudes among individuals (Widegren, 1997). The theory has also been used in studies on employee voice (Chen, 2020). However, mushroom management creates the perception that employees' efforts go unrewarded, leading to negative effects by making them feel that their opinions are not taken into account (Tutuş & Düşükcan, 2025). Indeed, when employees notice that some information is being concealed, which is one of the key components of mushroom management (Kılıç & Olgun, 2017), the norm of reciprocity is damaged (Gouldner, 1960) and a violation of social exchange occurs. Mushroom management can reduce the employee's trust in the organization regardless of the reason (Ayhan & Güvener, 2024). This situation can undermine social exchange, which centers on the feeling of trust (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2012). Constructive and voluntary employee voice behavior (Detert & Burris, 2007) may disappear along with these obstacles.

Indeed, given that mushroom management manifests as structures characterized by high uncertainty, a closed system, and low levels of feedback (Yalap & Poyraz, 2023), it will negatively shape employee voice behavior (Morrison, 2011), which is based on the open expression of thoughts about the organization. Despite employee voice satisfaction being recognized as a force that increases participation (Ruck & Welch, 2012) and employees viewing their voice behaviors as constructive depending on their managers' behaviors (Avey et al., 2012), mushroom management appears to be an obstacle to a participatory and collaborative approach (Söyler, 2024).

H₁: Mushroom management negatively affects employee voice.

H_{1a}: Inadequate information sharing negatively affects employee voice.

H_{1b}: Anxiety of power loss negatively affects employee voice.

H_{1c}: Inadequate communication negatively affects employee voice.

H_{1d}: Lack of participatory management negatively affects employee voice.

2.4.2. The Relationship between Mushroom Management, Work Alienation and Employee Voice

The relationship between mushroom management, work alienation, and employee voice can be examined within the framework of learned helplessness theory (LHT). LHT was developed to explain motivation and cognitive deficits (Maier & Seligman, 1976) and was first tested on animals. The theory of learned helplessness, conceptualized for humans over time (Maier & Seligman, 2016) and made experimental (Hiroto, 1974), is explained as individuals developing a perception that their behavior does not reflect the outcome; associating this situation with general and unchanging causes with the idea that their future actions will continue along these lines, experiencing cognitive, motivational, and emotional breakdowns, and engaging in reluctant behavior (Kümbül Güler, 2018). Learned helplessness, characterized by the belief that personal actions have no effect on environmental circumstances (Çizel & Çizel, 2014); which involves

employees who are not outward-looking and refrain from sharing their feelings and thoughts phenomenon of mushroom management (Gündüz & Özyer, 2022), can be directly linked.

Learned helplessness, by reflecting the relationship between behavior and outcome, leads to the formation of negative thoughts about the future (Abramson et al., 1978). This perception may be associated with work alienation which represents employees who have become disengaged from their work. Work alienation is decisive in determining the relationship between employees' perceptions and behaviors toward their jobs (Aşık, 2018). Employees tend to become alienated from work by experiencing a lack of control over work activities (powerlessness) and feeling that they have no place in the work as a whole (meaninglessness) (Mottaz, 1981). An employee who has adopted a helplessness mindset must first believe in themselves in order to overcome organizational barriers (Tutar, 2007). However, managers with a mushroom management mentality argue that employees should not evaluate their work (Öztürk, 2024). Therefore, it is predicted that employees' tendency to become alienated from their work will increase as a reflection of the mushroom management approach. Similarly, employees in centralized and rule-based organizations generally experience feelings of alienation and helplessness (Tayfur, 2012).

H₂: Mushroom management positively affects work alienation.

H_{2a}: Inadequate information sharing positively affects work alienation.

H_{2b}: Anxiety of power loss positively affects work alienation.

H_{2c}: Inadequate communication positively affects work alienation.

H_{2d}: Lack of participatory management positively affects work alienation.

Learned helplessness, which is built on the belief that the response given will be ineffective (Miller & Norman, 1979), when exhibited against the status quo, voice behavior that involves risk (Detert & Burris, 2007) may influence. The behavior of voice, which refers to employees having a say in the organization's activities and decision-making mechanisms (Wilkinson & Fay, 2011), can be shaped by the level of work alienation (Mottaz, 1981) shaped by low future expectations.

Additionally, the literature reveals a finding that highlights the negative impact of work alienation on employee voice (Deniz & Çimen, 2024).

H₃: Work alienation negatively affects employee voice.

H₄: Work alienation mediates the effect of mushroom management on employee voice.

H_{4a}: Work alienation mediates the effect of inadequate information sharing on employee voice.

H_{4b}: Work alienation mediates the effect of anxiety of power loss on employee voice.

H_{4c}: Work alienation mediates the effect of inadequate communication on employee voice.

H_{4d}: Work alienation mediates the effect of lack of participatory management on employee voice.

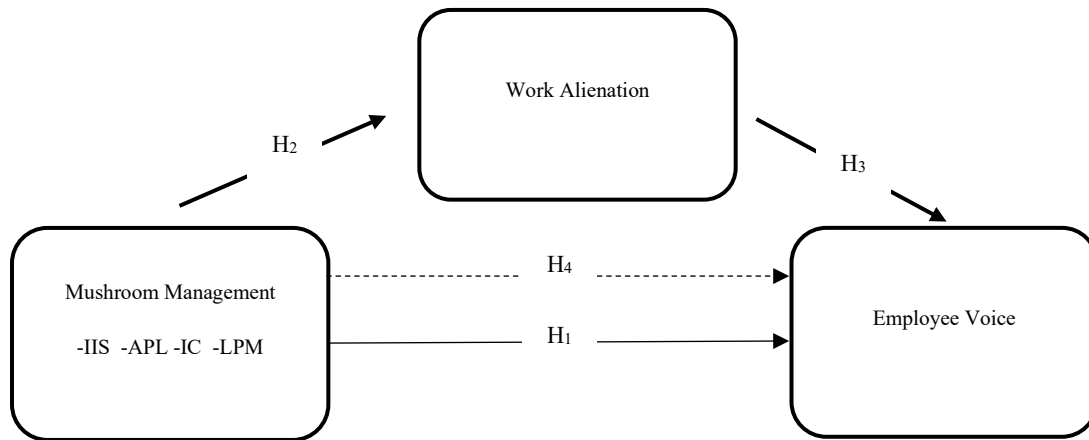


Figure 1. Research Model

Source: Created by the authors

3. Methodology

3.1. Population and Sample of the Research

The population of the study consists of white-collar workers operating in Istanbul and Konya. The sample of the study is limited to white-collar workers employed in the service sector. The convenience sampling method was employed in the selection of the sample. This method was chosen due to the researcher's limited accessibility and the need to conduct the data collection process efficiently. In this regard, due to the workload of white-collar workers in the service sector, the sampling has directed the research towards an "accessible" population based on voluntary participation. White-collar employees, as one of the core components of the information society structure (Porubčinová, 2015), play a prominent role (Alpaslan & Kutanis, 2007), directly reflecting the characteristics of this structure and providing organizations with a competitive advantage. There is no precise figure for the study population. However, considering that the literature generally accepts a sample size of at least 300 participants (Comrey & Lee, 1992), the dataset obtained from 337 employees using face-to-face and online methods demonstrates the adequacy of the sample.

3.2. Data Collection Tools

This research employs an empirical, quantitative survey design. The data collection method utilized is the questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of four sections. A 5-point Likert scale was used to measure the variables (1 = Totally Disagree, 5 = Totally Agree).

3.2.1. Mushroom Management Scale

The first section of the survey includes the Mushroom Management Scale developed by Birincioğlu and Tekin (2018). The scale consists of four dimensions and nineteen statements. Six statements cover the dimension of inadequate information sharing (IIS), five statements cover the dimension of concern about anxiety of power loss (APL), and four statements each cover the dimensions of inadequate communication (IC) and lack of participatory management (LPM). The scale consists of statements such as: "My superior (manager) thinks that some information should remain confidential."

3.2.2. Work Alienation Scale

The second section of the questionnaire includes the Work Alienation Scale developed by Hirschfeld and Feild (2000), adapted into Turkish by Özbek (2011), consisting of 10 statements and a single dimension. The scale includes statements such as: “*I find it difficult to imagine enthusiasm concerning work.*”

3.2.3. Employee Voice Scale

The third section contains the Employee Voice Scale, developed by Van Dyne and LePine (1998), consisting of six items and one dimension. The Turkish adaptation of the scale was developed by Çetin and Çakmakçı (2012). The scale includes statements such as: “*This particular co-worker develops and makes recommendations concerning issues that affect this work group.*”

3.3. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS 22.0 and AMOS 24.0 software packages. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was employed to assess the validity of the scales, and Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values were calculated. Cronbach's Alpha values were determined to establish the reliability of the scales used in the study. In addition, the normality test, which is a prerequisite for the Structural Equation Model (SEM), was performed. Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and tolerance coefficients were also calculated. Finally, SEM was used to determine the impact of mushroom management on employee voice, the mediating role of work alienation in this relationship, the effect of mushroom management on work alienation, and the effect of work alienation on employee voice.

3.4. Ethics Approval of the Research

Name of the ethics committee= Marmara University Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Date of ethical approval= 06/08/2025

Ethical approval document number= 2025-4

4. Findings

4.1. Frequency Analysis

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Demographic Characteristics	Total	%	Demographic Characteristics	Total	%
Gender	337	100	Educational Background	337	100
-Female	181	53.7	-Associate Degree	27	8
-Male	156	46.3	-Bachelor's Degree	162	48.1
Professional Seniority	337	100	-Master's Degree	144	42.7
-Less than 1 year	41	12.2	-Ph.D. Degree	4	1.2
-1-5 year	110	32.6	Age	337	100
-6-10 year	92	27.3	-18-24	22	6.5
-11-15 year	58	17.2	-25-30	128	38
-16-20 year	27	8	-31-40	133	39.5
-21 years and above	9	2.7	-41 age and above	54	16

Source: Created by the authors

According to Table 1, female (53.7%) and male (46.3%) employees participating in the study show a similar distribution, while employees with bachelor's (48.1%) and postgraduate (43.9%) education levels also show

a similar distribution. This finding suggests that the participants have attained a high level of education. However, it is seen that the sample group is largely composed of employees with 10 years or less of work experience (72.1%). Furthermore, considering that individuals aged 40 and under in Türkiye are in the development and experience-gaining phase of their working lives, the employees aged 40 and under who participated in the study mostly (84%) represent this period.

4.2. Validity, Reliability Analysis and Normality Test

Table 2. Goodness of Fit Values for the Scales

Variables	X ² Fit Test	CMIN/df (X ² /sd)	RMSEA	SRMR	GFI	CFI	NFI	TLI
MM	0.000	3.253	0.08	0.042	0.874	0.939	0.915	0.929
WA	0.000	2.320	0.063	0.027	0.953	0.987	0.977	0.983
EV	0.000	2.476	0.066	0.019	0.978	0.994	0.991	0.991
Acceptable Fit	p<0.01	≤5	≤0.08	≤0.08	≥0.80	≥0.85	≥0.80	≥0.80
Good Fit	p<0.05	≤3	≤0.05	≤0.05	≥0.90	≥0.95	≥0.95	≥0.95

Source: Schumacker and Lomax, 2010; Simon et al. 2010

Table 2 shows that the scales used in the study fall within the acceptable reference ranges specified in the literature and generally demonstrate good consistency. Additionally, it is observed that the factor loadings for the scales range from 0.76 to 0.93. Based on these values, all statements are considered to be at an “excellent” level (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2018). Findings regarding whether the scales are reliable and suitable for normal distribution are outlined in Table 3.

Table 3. Findings of Validity, Reliability Analysis and Normality Test

Factors	α	CR	AVE	Skewness	Kurtosis
Mushroom Management	-	0.97	0.68	-.572	-.713
- IIS	.933	0.93	0.70	-.574	-.498
- APL	.892	0.89	0.63	-.389	-.657
- IC	.915	0.92	0.73	-.481	-.505
- LPM	.897	0.90	0.69	-.343	-.704
Work Alienation	.966	0.97	0.74	-.258	-1.355
Employee Voice	.966	0.97	0.83	.322	-1.456

Source: Created by the authors

For composite validity, the CR value must be above 0.60 and the AVE value must be above 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). According to Table 3, composite validity is achieved in all factors, and the structures show high internal consistency with a Cronbach's Alpha value of at least 0.89. These findings support the reliability and validity of the measurement tools employed. Additionally, the relevant variables have skewness and kurtosis values between -1.5 and +1.5, indicating that the data conform to a normal distribution. It is evident that the assumption of normality is met, given that the corresponding values range between -2 and +2. (George & Mallery, 2024).

4.3. Structural Equation Model and Hypotheses Testing

In the first stage, the measurement model was tested and the model fit indices were examined. The model fit indices (Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit Test=0.000; Chi-Square/df=1.782; RMSEA=0.048; RMR=0.039; GFI=0.864; CFI=0.964; NFI=0.922; TLI=0.961) were found to be acceptable (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010; Simon et al., 2010), and the measurement model was validated. In addition, the Durbin–Watson coefficient was calculated (1.868) to detect potential autocorrelation issues among the dimensions. According to Montgomery et al. (2012), if the error terms are independent, the Durbin–Watson value is expected to be

close to 2. Accordingly, no autocorrelation problem was encountered in the model, and the assumption of independence of the error terms was satisfied.

Additionally, VIF and Tolerance values were examined to identify a potential multicollinearity problem among the independent variables (VIF=2.967; 2.806; 2.897; 2.702; Tolerance=0.337; 0.356; 0.345; 0.370). A VIF value above 10 indicates a multicollinearity problem (Kutner et al., 2004). A tolerance value below 0.20 is considered concerning, whereas a value below 0.10 almost certainly indicates a severe multicollinearity problem (Menard, 2010). In this context, the VIF and Tolerance values are within acceptable ranges. The Structural Equation Model developed based on these criteria is shown in Figure 2.

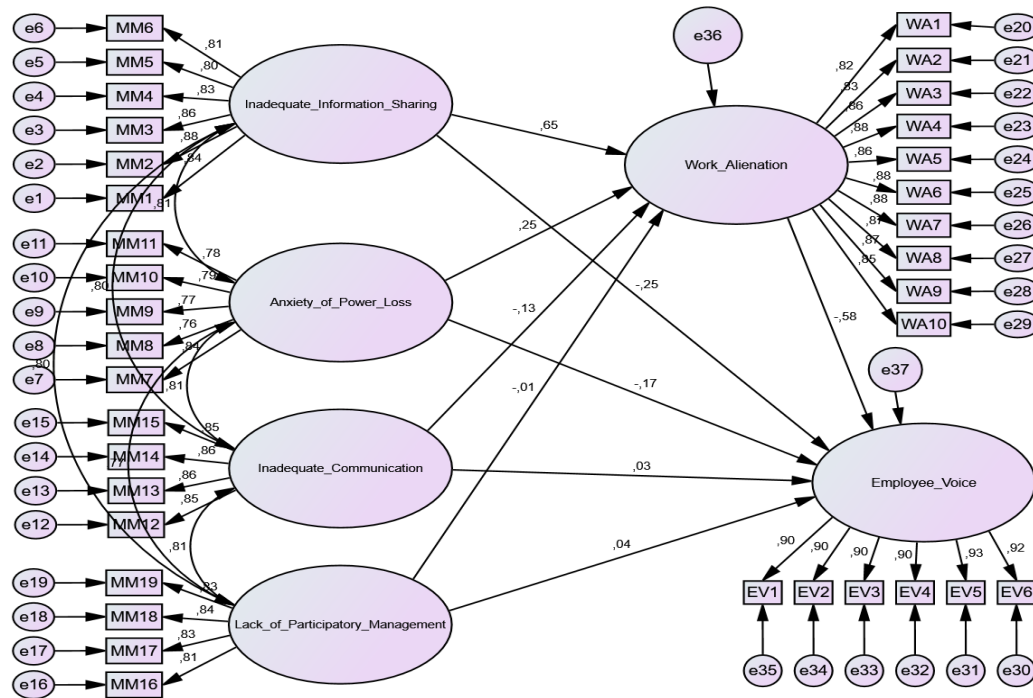


Figure 2. Model for the Mediating Role of WA in the Effect of MM on EV

Source: Created by the authors

The effect directions, coefficient values, and significance results related to the main and sub-hypotheses in the model are detailed in Table 4.

Table 4. Parameter Estimates for the Effect between Variables

Hypotheses	Independent Variables	Dependent Variables	β	S.E.	C.R.	p
H _{1a}	IIS	Employee Voice	-.341	.106	-3.212	.001**
H _{1b}	APL	Employee Voice	-.256	.100	-2.330	.020**
H _{1c}	IC	Employee Voice	.037	.104	.357	.721
H _{1d}	LPM	Employee Voice	.066	.104	.632	.527
H _{2a}	IIS	Work Alienation	.651	.097	6.703	***
H _{2b}	APL	Work Alienation	.282	.106	2.657	.008**
H _{2c}	IC	Work Alienation	-.139	.102	-1.367	.172
H _{2d}	LPM	Work Alienation	-.006	.102	-.056	.956
H ₃	Work Alienation	Employee Voice	-.786	.073	-10.752	***

Source: Created by the authors

According to Table 4, it was determined that among the dimensions of mushroom management, IIS and APL negative and statistically significant effect on employee voice ($\beta = -.341$; $p < 0.001$; $\beta = -.256$; $p < 0.001$). Whereas IC and LPM do not have a significant effect on employee voice ($\beta = .037$; $p > 0.001$; $\beta = .066$; $p > 0.001$). Based on these results, hypotheses H_{1a} and H_{1b} were supported, while H_{1c} and H_{1d} were not supported.

Furthermore, it was found that IIS and APL, as dimensions of mushroom management, have a positive and statistically significant effect on work alienation ($\beta = .651$; $p < 0.001$; $\beta = .282$; $p < 0.001$). Whereas IC and LPM do not have a significant effect on work alienation ($\beta = -.139$; $p > 0.001$; $\beta = -.006$; $p > 0.001$). Accordingly, hypotheses H_{2a} and H_{2b} were supported, while H_{2c} and H_{2d} were not supported.

In addition, it was determined that work alienation has a negative and statistically significant effect on employee voice ($\beta = -.786$; $p < 0.001$). Based on this result, hypothesis H_3 was supported.

The mediation analysis was performed using 5000 bootstrap resamples at a 95% confidence level. In analyses employing the bootstrap method, the 95% confidence interval should not contain zero for the hypothesis to be considered statistically significant (Gürbüz, 2019).

Table 5. Structural Equation Model Findings for the Mediating Role

Hypotheses	Independent Variables	Mediator Variable	Dependent Variable	β			Confidence Intervals		p
				β_t	β_d	β_i	LLCI	ULCI	
H_{4a}	IIS	Work A.	E. Voice	-.853	-.341	-.512	-.721	-.326	0,000
H_{4b}	APL	Work A.	E. Voice	-.478	-.256	-.222	-.430	-.065	0,007
H_{4c}	IC	Work A.	E. Voice	.147	.037	.110	-.065	.310	0,223
H_{4d}	LPM	Work A.	E. Voice	.070	.066	.004	-.178	.197	0,956

Source: Created by the authors

Note: β = Standardized beta coefficient, β_t = total effect, β_d = direct effect, β_i = indirect effect; Bootstrap resampling = 5000; Confidence Level = 95%

According to Table 5, it was determined that work alienation plays a statistically significant mediating role in the effect of inadequate information sharing on employee voice ($\beta_i = -.512$; confidence interval = $-.721$ to $-.326$; $p < 0.05$). Similarly, work alienation was found to have a statistically significant mediating role in the effect of anxiety of power loss on employee voice ($\beta_i = -.222$; confidence interval = $-.430$ to $-.065$; $p < 0.05$). On the other hand, it was identified that work alienation does not have a mediating role in the effect of IC and LPM on employee voice. Based on these findings, hypotheses H_{4a} and H_{4b} were supported, whereas H_{4c} and H_{4d} were not supported. It was determined that work alienation plays a partial mediating role in the effect of the IIS and APL dimensions of mushroom management on employee voice.

5. Conclusion and Discussion

In the information society, where knowledge is valued as power, the sustainability and competitive advantage of organizations largely depend on access to information, its sharing, and effective use. However, in a mushroom management approach, employees have limited access to information, are excluded from important strategic decisions and policies, and are only informed to the extent necessary to perform their duties. This situation conflicts with the principles of transparency, participation, and collective intelligence envisioned by the knowledge society. It increases employees' tendency toward alienation, leading to their exclusion from decision-making processes, a diminished sense of their impact on organizational operations, and the restriction of voice behaviors.

Learned helplessness, associated with uncontrollable and negative events (Miller & Seligman, 1975), is conceptualized as the belief developed by individuals that they will not achieve their goals even if they react (Boddez et al., 2022). When evaluated from the perspective of the learned helplessness theory on which this study is built, it can be stated that the mushroom management approach, adopted by managers who refrain from sharing information with employees, keep decision-making processes under strict control, and produce solutions without engaging in idea exchange, (Yorgancıoğlu Tarcan et al., 2021), strengthens the theoretical foundations of the research.

The findings of the study revealed the different effects of mushroom management dimensions on employee voice and work alienation. In particular, IIS and APL had a significant and negative impact on employee voice. Managers' avoidance of sharing information with employees and their attempts to maintain authority out of fear of losing power led employees to the sense of exclusion from the process of decision-making and to suppress their voice behaviors. This result parallels studies in the literature that associate mushroom management with organizational silence and low participation behaviors (Morrison & Milliken, 2000; Akduru & Arslantaş, 2021).

Additionally, it has been determined that these two dimensions increase employees' levels of work alienation. In particular, limiting information sharing weakens employees' perception of meaning in work processes and reinforces alienation. This finding is consistent with Seeman's (1959) dimensions of powerlessness and meaninglessness. The perception that employees lack both influence over work processes and a voice in decision-making mechanisms has been demonstrated to increase the tendency towards alienation, thereby further weakening voice behavior. Therefore, the study concluded that work alienation plays a partial mediating role in the relationship between IIS, APL, and employee voice. This result is consistent with the study by Deniz and Çimen (2024), which reveals the negative effect of work alienation on employee voice. This finding can also be seen as a reflection of power distance, a concept introduced to the literature by Hofstede. Indeed, Hofstede (2001) argues that Türkiye society has a high-power distance. This situation has become part of the cultural code of Türkiye society (Çağlar, 2001); therefore, managers tend to protect their power in line with cultural values.

However, the other two dimensions of mushroom management, IC and LPM, did not have a significant effect on employee voice. The fact that the IC and LPM dimensions of mushroom management do not have a significant impact on employee voice points to a dialectical paradox. Although this result may seem to contradict the literature at first glance, it makes sense when considering the sample structure of the study. This is because the research was conducted primarily in corporate structures and companies with active human resources departments. In such organizations, HR policies provide mechanisms that support employee voice behavior, strengthen communication channels, and limit the effects of managers' authoritarian attitudes. The human resources department's role as an "employee advocate" (Ulrich, 1996) may have prevented the negative effects of inadequate communication and lack of participatory management from becoming statistically apparent by reducing employees' potential tendencies toward silence and alienation. Because HR professionals, in their role as employee advocates, work in collaboration with managers and employees to take on the responsibility of communicating employees' concerns and needs to management. (Ulrich, 1996).

On the other hand, the fact that IC and LPM dimensions do not have a significant effect on employee voice can be interpreted as a manifestation of the established management structure within the organization. This finding can be grounded in Chester Barnard's (1938) Zone of Indifference Theory. According to the theory,

there is an area within the organizational hierarchy where individuals accept certain managerial practices or directives without questioning them. In this context, managers' tendencies to withhold information or postpone participatory management behavior can be considered by employees as a normal outcome of the existing structure. Since the Zone of Indifference is an element surrounding the formal organizational system (Peck, 1987), it can be directly linked to the mushroom management approach.

Demographic findings also support these results. It is evident that the majority of participants possess a high level of education and under 40 years of age brings generational differences into focus. It is believed that young and highly educated employees use communication channels more effectively, are more open to feedback mechanisms, and find it easier to express themselves using technological tools. In this context, the characteristics of the employees in the sample can be considered an important factor explaining why some hypotheses were not supported.

In general, this research reveals that the mushroom management approach directly negatively affects employee voice and that work alienation is a pivotal factor in this process. Increasing information sharing, taking employee opinions into account, and overcoming fears of losing power will contribute to the development of a culture of voice within organizations. Furthermore, it is crucial that organizations' human resources policies focus on practices that support employee voice behavior and reduce alienation.

The findings indicate that it is critical for managers to adopt an open attitude toward information sharing and to facilitate employee involvement in decision-making processes. Specifically, it is recommended to: (i) establish transparent communication mechanisms, (ii) develop formal platforms to encourage employee suggestions, (iii) implement leadership training to reduce managers' concerns about loss of power, and (iv) strengthen the role of human resources departments as employee advocates. These steps will strengthen the culture of voice and increase innovative capacity within organizations.

In conclusion, the study makes significant contributions both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, it fills a knowledge gap in the literature by testing the relationship between mushroom management, work alienation, and employee voice within the framework of learned helplessness theory. Practically, it provides strong evidence to managers and decision-makers that transparent information sharing and participatory management practices will increase organizational commitment, motivation, and innovation in the long term.

Since this study is limited to white-collar employees, conducting research in different sectors, among blue-collar workers, or within diverse cultural contexts would enhance the generalizability of the findings. Moreover, longitudinal studies could examine how demographic factors such as age, generational differences, and educational level shape the relationship between mushroom management and employee voice. In-depth qualitative interviews may also provide an understanding of employees' perceptions of mushroom management. Finally, future research could explore how the influence of mushroom management evolves under conditions of digital transformation and remote work.

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9. Ethics Committee Statement: The Marmara University Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has approved this study with its decision dated 06/08/2025 and numbered 2025-4, and ethical principles have been adhered to throughout the study.

10. Data Availability: The data used and the analyses performed are both appropriate to the scope of the study.

11. Use of Artificial Intelligence: This study utilized artificial intelligence tools limited solely to language editing purposes.

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