

Leader Motivating Language and Employees' Intention of Voluntary Resource Contribution in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises: An Extended S–O–R Framework Approach

PhD. Mai Thi Dung
University of Labour and Social Affairs
<https://orcid.org/0009-0005-9863-3934>

Trinh Nam Binh
Foreign Language Specialized School

Abstract

The study examined the effect of leader motivating language on employees' intention of voluntary resource contribution in Vietnamese small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) by adopting the model of Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) framework. The study was conducted by distributing questionnaires to 93 participants and using the 5-point Likert scale. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) analysis was performed in SmartPLS to test the structural model. The results showed that leader motivating language positively predicted organizational trust ($\beta = 0.687$) and perceived collective efficacy ($\beta = 0.714$). Then, organizational trust ($\beta = 0.358$) and perceived collective efficacy ($\beta = 0.500$) had a positive effect on internal cohesion which further strongly predicted employees' intention of voluntary resource contribution ($\beta = 0.853$). All the structural hypotheses were supported at the significance level of 5%. The structural model explained 47.2% of the variance in organizational trust, 50.9% in perceived collective efficacy, 65.9% in internal cohesion, and 72.7% in the intention of voluntary resource contribution. Overall, the results emphasized the importance of organizational leadership and internal cohesion. Therefore, the study concluded that managers should strategically combine direction-giving, empathetic, and meaning-making language in management communication and strengthen organizational trust, collective efficacy, and inter-member cooperation.

Keywords: motivating language; organizational trust; collective efficacy; internal cohesion; resource contribution intention; small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

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I. Introduction

Nowadays, leveraging internal resources is imperative for enterprises to gain competitive advantages and increase adaptability (Teece, D. J., 2025). Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) tend to face resource scarcity, such as shortage of finance, human resources, technology, management capabilities, and network resources (Eggers, 2020; OECD, 2023). Hence, the performance of SMEs relies not only on their formal resources but also on the employees' knowledge sharing, bottom-up innovation, peer support, and extra efforts devoted to the organization. Those voluntary resource contributions, beyond formal job requirements, are critical for improving the operational efficiency, inter-member cooperation, and organizational adaptability (Podsakoff et al., 2009). Therefore, it is significant to explore the antecedents of employees' voluntary resource contribution in the SME context.

According to Motivating Language Theory, leaders can use direction-giving language to specify the task requirements and clarify the performance expectations, empathetic language to express care and concern about the employees, and meaning-making language to share the organizational vision and values (Mayfield et al., 1995). Through the appropriate use of motivating language, employees can reduce role ambiguity, obtain the perception of being cared for, and understand the importance of their contribution to the organization.

Numerous studies have found that leader motivating language positively relates to many employee outcomes, such as job satisfaction, job performance, and self-efficacy (Mayfield et al., 1998; Mayfield & Mayfield, 2012). In addition, Men et al. (2022) found that direction-giving, empathetic, and meaning-making language could jointly enhance followers' trust in leaders and the organization. Besides, Thelen et al. (2022)

highlighted that motivating language was positively related to pleasant psychological states and pro-organizational behavior, and Ling and Guo (2020) unraveled the mediating role of trust in leadership language on individual personal initiative. In particular, those language effects are more salient in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in which the organizational structure is relatively flat, and the communication between leaders and followers is more direct and frequent (Fasth & Tengblad, 2023).

Though there is a wealth of literature on the effect of leader motivating language, most studies only focus on single outcome, such as attitude, states of mind, or behavior. While in this study's scope, the whole transmission chain, from leader motivating language, through organizational trust and perceived collective efficacy, to the formation of internal cohesion and intention of voluntary resource contribution, is still not well-explored. Hence, this study focuses on the SME context in which the organization has limited resources, and the leader's communication can directly affect employees' cognition, relationships, and behavior.

This study aims to explore the structural mechanism of how leader motivating language drives SME employees' intention of voluntary resource contribution through organizational trust, perceived collective efficacy, and internal cohesion. This research combines Motivating Language Theory (MLT) and the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) framework to explicate the process of leadership communication affecting employees' intention of voluntary resource contribution. The study is expected to add more evidence to the leadership communication literature to reveal the process mechanism of leader motivating language and provide practical implications for SMEs to strengthen managerial communication and motivate employees' voluntary resource contribution.

II. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Theoretical Foundations

2.1.1. Motivating Language Theory

Motivating Language Theory (MLT) was proposed to unveil how leaders' language affects employees' cognition, affect, and behavior. According to Mayfield et al. (1995), leader motivating language includes three dimensions of elements whose function was to enable leaders to effectively fulfill their role in motivating employees:

- Direction-Giving Language: Utilized to clarify employees' goals, tasks, and objectives. Leaders provide the guidelines, performance criteria, and outcome requirements. Besides, this type of language also includes giving feedback, making sense of organizational change, and relating performance results to rewards and recognition. This language helps employees understand what they are supposed to do and how they are supposed to do it, reducing their uncertainty in the workplace and the associated negative outcomes (Mayfield et al., 1995; Men et al., 2022).

- Empathetic Language: Demonstrates care and concern for employees. Leaders use this language to show the employees that they are cared for, listen to their problems, and discuss their needs and concerns. This type of communication makes employees aware that their contribution is valued, and the leadership's support facilitates the sense of connection with the leader and enhances the leader-follower relationships (Mayfield et al., 1995; Men et al., 2022).

- Meaning-Making Language: Helps employees to understand the values and vision of the organization. Leaders use this language to share the organization's vision and connect their daily tasks to the big picture. This communication allows employees to realize the importance of their work and the value of their contribution to the organization and the team. In addition, this language also creates a shared cognitive frame and organizational identity (Mayfield & Mayfield, 2018; Men et al., 2022).

Those three types of language play different roles in leader communication; direction-giving language makes clear the task requirements, empathetic language conveys care and concern, and meaning-making language explicates the value and importance of the task. The combined application of the three dimensions of motivating language ensures effective communication, i.e., making employees understand (direction-giving language), feeling cared for (empathetic language), and seeing the value (meaning-making language).

2.1.2. Stimulus–Organism–Response Model

The Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) framework of Mehrabian and Russell (1974) explicates how individuals respond to the environmental stimuli. In this model, external stimuli (Stimulus) affect individuals' cognitive, affective, or physiological states (Organism), which then lead to behavioral response or behavioral intent (Response).

As leadership communication is a part of the work environment that employees are exposed to, the study operationalizes leader motivating language (LML) as Stimulus. Organizational trust (OT), perceived collective efficacy (CE), and internal cohesion (IC) are defined as Organism. The Intention of voluntary resource contribution to the organization (VICR) is the Response of this framework. Those three Organisms in this study were classified into two levels:

- The first level includes OT and CE: Those two factors represent how employees perceive the trustworthiness of the organization and the collective's joint capability.

- The second level is IC: It indicates the bonding, cooperation, and shared goals among members.

Such a classification enables the study to explore the process from the perception of the organization and collective to the cohesion before the formation of behavioral intentions. Thus, combining Motivating Language Theory and the S–O–R framework provides a theoretical basis for understanding the function of leadership communication and how leader motivating language can affect employees' intention of voluntary resource contribution.

2.2. Literature Review

(1) Leaders' Motivating Language

Research on leaders' motivating language has mainly focused on their direct effect on the job performance and employee satisfaction. Mayfield et al. (1998) showed that leaders' motivating language has a positive effect on employees' job performance and satisfaction. Mayfield and Mayfield (2012) found that leaders' motivating language is positively associated with employees' trust about their ability to fulfill their requirements. These findings laid the foundation for the study's expansion from work-related outcomes to the cognitive and psychological mechanism of employees.

Recent studies have placed more emphasis on the process by which leadership communication is translated into employee attitudes and behaviors. Based on a survey of 393 full-time employees in the United States, Men et al. (2022) found that direction-giving, empathetic, and meaning-making language all have positive effects on employees' trust in their leaders and organizations. The satisfaction of psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness plays a mediating role in this process. Thelen et al. (2022) reported that leaders' motivating language can promote organizational citizenship behavior through employees' psychological characteristics. Ling and Guo (2020) also found that cognitive trust and affective trust mediate the relationship between leaders' motivating language and personal engagement. Qin et al. (2025) further identified the association of leaders' motivating language with overall supportive attitudes and behaviors towards organizations under different working conditions.

In general, the way leaders communicate can influence how employees evaluate their organizations, themselves, and work relationships. However, previous studies have mainly explored trust, self-efficacy, psychological need satisfaction, or other individual outcomes in isolation. The simultaneous channel through which leaders' motivating language affects organizational trust and perceptions of collective efficacy remain poorly understood, particularly among small and medium-sized enterprises.

(2) Organizational Trust, Perception of Collective Efficacy and Internal Cohesion

- Organizational trust (OT) reflects employees' expectations that the organization is competent, fair in its policies, and has integrity. Their expectations make employees willing to accept a certain level of dependence in their work relationships (Mayer et al., 1995). When the organization fulfills its commitments, is consistent in its actions, and cares about employees' interests, the employees in it tend to experience reduced in psychological defensiveness. Furthermore, they will also be much more willing to cooperate and maintain work relationships. Dai et al. (2022) found that organizational trust can promote organizational citizenship behavior through perceived alignment in organizational support and employee loyalty.

- Perceived collective efficacy (CE) refers to the belief in members' ability to coordinate and organize actions needed to achieve shared goals (Bandura, 1997). Collective efficacy concerns a group's ability for coordinated action. In the collective, work outcome is not only the result of the ability of members but also of their coordination capability. Elms et al. (2023) showed that

- Internal cohesion (IC) is conceptualized in this study as collective or group cohesion. The concept reflects the degree of attachment among members, their willingness to cooperate, and the extent to which they have a common drive towards collective goals. Beal et al. (2003) contends that group cohesion encompasses attraction among members, commitment to duty, and collective pride. Lieb et al. (2024) approach workgroup cohesion through social bonding, task orientation, and a sense of unity among members. From this perspective, IC emphasizes the quality of internal collaborative relationships in the collective.

The above-reviewed studies show that OT, CE, and IC all play important roles in the collaborative process and employees' positive behaviors. However, the literature has primarily examined these relationships separately. The simultaneous roles of OT and CE on IC thus need to be further explored in an integrated model.

(3) Voluntary Intention to Contribute Resources to the Organization

According to Ajzen (1991), behavioral intention reflects an individual's level of readiness and the anticipated effort to perform a particular behavior. Voluntary Intention to Contribute Resources to the Organization (VICR) refers to employees' intention to actively mobilize their personal resources to support the organization's operations and development. These personal resources may include time, knowledge, skills, experience, initiative, and personal relationships.

VICR is voluntary and proactive in nature, going beyond formal job requirements (Organ, 1988). Podsakoff et al. (2000) showed that this behavior can be manifested by helping colleagues, conscientiousness, proactive participation, and concern for collective interests. Thelen et al. (2022) described supportive behavior as employees' voluntary efforts to introduce, recommend, defend, or provide positive information about the organization.

In this study, VICR reflects employees' intention to mobilize various types of personal resources for the organization. VICR is particularly significant for small and medium-sized enterprises, which often face constraints in terms of financial resources, human capital, technology, managerial capabilities, and access to external resources (Cardon & Stevens, 2004; Eggers, 2020; OECD, 2023). Under such circumstances, employees' willingness to share knowledge, propose initiatives, participate in activities, or connect the organization with resources from their personal networks can help offset the lack of formal resources.

2.3. Proposed Research Model

The proposed research model is developed by integrating Motivating Language Theory and Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) model to explain the role of leadership communication in the workplace (Mayfield et al., 1995; Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). In the model, leaders' motivating language (LML) is regarded as a stimulus from the environment of the organization, which cannot directly lead to employees' intentions and behaviors. First of all, LML can bring about organizational trust (OT) by providing information for the employees on the organization, as well as enhancing their perception of collective efficacy (CE). On the one hand, trust makes the employees confident when they deal with the organization. On the other hand, collective efficacy makes the employees believe that they can perform coordinated actions to achieve the shared goal. The two factors above enable the employees to strengthen the internal cohesion (IC), which encourages them to devote more time, knowledge, skill, and resources to the organization. Therefore, the proposed model highlights the mechanism that LML affects OT and CE, OT and CE promote IC, and then IC influences employees' voluntary intention of contributing resources (VICR) to the organization.

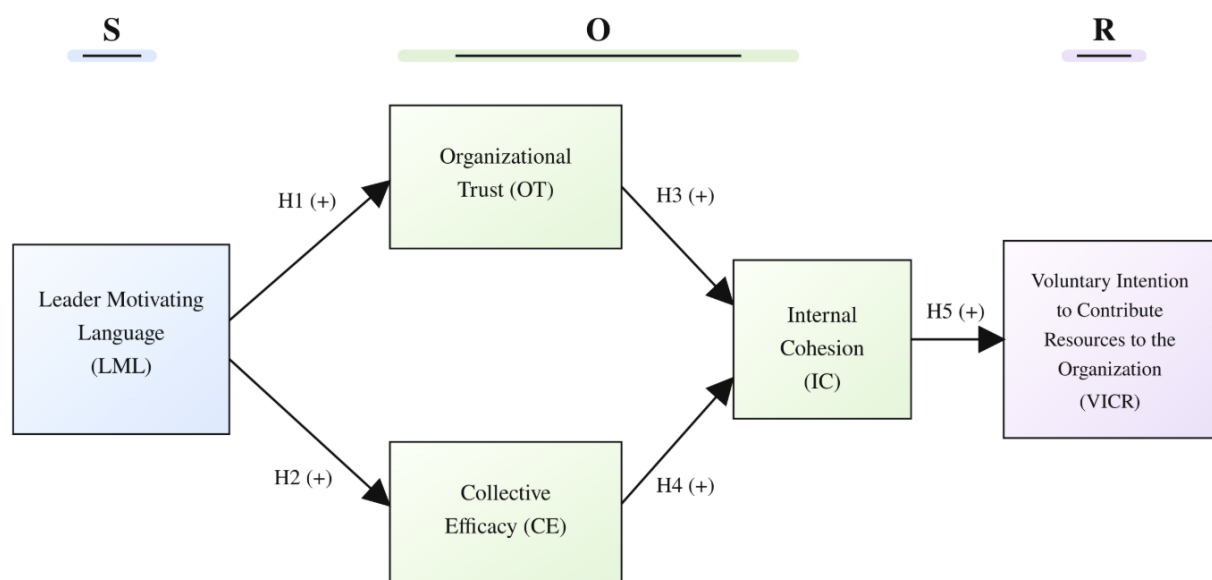


Figure 1. Proposed research model

Source: proposed by the Research Team

Development of the Research's analysis:

Leaders' language gives cues to employees through which they evaluate the organization. Direction giving language clarifies goals and expectations, assisting employees in assessing the organization's managerial capability and consistency. Empathetic language indicates care and goodwill, whereas meaning-making language aids employees in understanding shared values and common orientations. Men et al. (2022) provided evidence

showing that all three types of leaders' motivating language (LML) positively influenced employees' trust in their leaders and the organization. Ling and Guo (2020) also found trust as a mediator in the process of LML being transformed into individual initiative. This study therefore posits the following hypothesis:

H1: Leaders' motivating language positively affects organizational trust.

Perceived collective efficacy emerges from signals concerning shared goals, coordination capability, and the group's prospects for successfully accomplishing tasks. Direction-giving language assists members in understanding their responsibilities and how to coordinate with each other. Empathetic language motivates them to communicate and seek support, whereas meaning-making language links individual efforts to the collective's shared purpose and achievements. Mayfield and Mayfield (2012) demonstrated that LML was positively related to employees' self-efficacy. Men et al. (2022) also found that LML contributed to the fulfillment of employees' psychological need for competence. Although individual-level evidence predominates, the findings indicate that clear, supportive, and goal-oriented communication might enhance employees' positive evaluations of the collective's capacity for action. This study therefore posits the following hypothesis:

H2: Leaders' motivating language positively affects perceived collective efficacy.

When employees believe that the organization honors its commitments and cares for collective interests, they are more likely to share information and cooperate constructively. They are also more likely to align personal goals with those of the organization. Dai et al. (2022) demonstrated that organizational trust promoted organizational citizenship behavior through organizational identification and employee loyalty. The two psychological states might reinforce employees' sense of membership, shared responsibility, and attachment to fellow members. Although empirical evidence directly relating OT and IC is still limited, the above arguments suggest that trust might be a precursor to collective cohesion. This study therefore posits the following hypothesis:

H3: Organizational trust positively affects internal cohesion.

When employees believe that the collective has the capability to coordinate its efforts and achieve its goals, they are more likely to actively participate in shared work. Belief in collective efficacy sustains members' efforts and reinforces their expectations of the outcomes of coordination. Elms et al. (2023) demonstrated that collective efficacy was associated with interaction processes and group performance. Beal et al. (2003) also highlighted the relationships among task cohesion, unity, and collective outcomes. The studies suggest that positive evaluation of collective capability might facilitate conditions under which members reinforce their cooperation and attachment to the collective. This study therefore posits the following hypothesis:

H4: Perceived collective efficacy positively affects internal cohesion.

When internal cohesion is present, employees are willing to devote extra time, share knowledge, propose initiatives, or mobilize personal resources for the benefit of the organization. Voluntary behaviors oriented toward collective interests therefore constitute the basis of contributions beyond formal role requirements (Podsakoff et al., 2000). Thelen et al. (2022) also demonstrated that positive psychological conditions might promote organizationally supportive behavior. To investigate the direct relationship between IC and VICR, this study posits the following hypothesis:

H5: Internal cohesion positively affects employees' voluntary intention to contribute resources to the organization.

III. Research methodology

3.1. Measurement scale and questionnaire design

This study employed a quantitative approach to test the relationships in the proposed model. The questionnaire included 18 observed variables measuring five constructs: leader motivational language, organizational trust, collective efficacy, internal cohesion, and employees' voluntary intention to contribute resources. The measurement scales were adopted and adapted from previous studies. The VICR scale, in particular, was developed by the research team based on theories of behavioral intention and the voluntary nature of resource contribution in employee behavior. The measurement items are presented in Table 3.

The observed variables were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1, "Strongly disagree," to 5, "Strongly agree." Before the official survey, the questionnaire was pilot-tested with five employees from the target research population to assess the clarity, comprehensibility, and appropriateness of the wording. The feedback collected was used to revise the wording and presentation before the questionnaire was transferred to Google Forms for data collection: <https://forms.gle/8wmtjNyVLXEX8Un18>

Table 1. Research measurement scale

Code	Observed Variables	SOURCE
	Leaders' Motivating Language (LML)	
LML1	My direct supervisor clearly communicates the goals, tasks, and expectations related to my work.	Mayfield et al. (1995); Men et al. (2022)
LML2	My direct supervisor guides me on how to perform tasks when I need support.	
LML3	My direct supervisor frequently recognizes and encourages employees' efforts.	
LML4	My direct supervisor shows concern for employees' difficulties, emotions, and needs.	
LML5	My direct supervisor inspires employees with a vision and shared goals for the organization.	
	Organizational Trust (OT)	
OT1	I believe that the organization fulfills its commitments to employees.	Mayer et al. (1995); Nyhan & Marlowe (1997)
OT2	I believe that the organization's decisions are oriented toward common and long-term interests.	
OT3	I believe that the organization manages and uses its resources responsibly.	
	Collective Efficacy (CE)	
CE1	I believe that the employee collective in my organization has sufficient capacity to accomplish shared goals.	Bandura (1997); Riggs & Knight (1994)
CE2	When facing difficulties, our collective can coordinate its efforts to find effective solutions.	
CE3	My team or unit is capable of adapting effectively to changes in the workplace.	
	Internal Cohesion (IC)	
IC1	I feel committed to the organization's goals and development direction.	Beal et al. (2003); Lieb et al. (2024)
IC2	I proactively coordinate with my colleagues to accomplish shared tasks.	
IC3	I feel enthusiastic and responsible when contributing to the organization's collective activities.	
	Voluntary Intention to Contribute Resources to the Organization (VICR)	
VICR1	I feel committed to the organization's goals and development direction.	Research team adapted from Ajzen (1991); Organ (1988); Podsakoff et al. (2000)
VICR2	I proactively coordinate with my colleagues to accomplish shared tasks.	
VICR3	I feel enthusiastic and responsible when contributing to the organization's collective activities.	
VICR4	I feel committed to the organization's goals and development direction.	

Source: Compiled and adapted by the research team.

3.2. Data Collection and Research Sample

The target population of this study was the employees at small and medium enterprises. The convenience and snowballing sampling strategies were adopted in this study. First, the questionnaire was distributed among the accessible employees. Those who provided their responses were asked to provide the contact details of other employees with similar features (Etikan et al., 2016).

After the data screening process, 93 responses were selected for further analysis. The screening involved identifying the complete questionnaires, determining the response accuracy, and selecting the ones corresponding to the target population. The sample size was considered small; thus, the analysis results should be carefully interpreted since the power of PLS-SEM also depends on the effect size, which can be small with a limited sample (Hair et al., 2022).

3.3. Data Processing and Analysis

The data were analyzed using the SmartPLS software based on the PLS-SEM method. This approach was selected because it is suitable for the analysis of complex models with multiple latent variables and structural relations using a small sample size (Hair et al., 2022). The analysis involved two stages: measurement model analysis and structural model analysis.

The measurement model analysis involved the assessment of the outer loadings, Cronbach's alpha, and composite reliability to determine the convergent validity. Factor loading and AVE (average variance extracted) were utilized to examine the discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Henseler et al., 2015).

The structural model was examined using the VIFs (variance inflation factors), path coefficients, and their p-values obtained using the bootstrapping method with 5000 iterations. The significance level was set at 0.05. The bootstrapping method was chosen to assess the direct and indirect effects (Hair et al., 2022). The structural model's predictive relevance was evaluated using the R^2 and f^2 indicators (Hair et al., 2022).

IV. Research Results

4.1. Descriptive Statistics and Sample Characteristics

The survey yielded 93 valid responses from employees working in small and medium-sized enterprises. The participants' characteristics were summarized according to gender, age, educational attainment, length of employment with their current organization, job position, and the managerial level of their immediate supervisor. All 93 responses were used for the descriptive statistical analysis and PLS-SEM model analysis.

Table 2: Characteristic of the Survey Sample

Criterion	Group	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	16	17,2
	Female	71	76,3
	Other	6	6,5
Age	Under 25 years	74	79,6
	From 25 to under 35 years	12	12,9
	From 35 to under 45 years	6	6,5
	45 years and above	1	1,1
Educational attainment	Intermediate/college	34	36,6
	University degree	17	18,3
	Postgraduate degree	11	11,8
	Other	31	33,3
Length of employment with the current organization	Less than 1 year	63	67,7
	From 1 to under 3 years	17	18,3
	From 3 to under 5 years	5	5,4
	5 years or more	8	8,6
Current job position	Employee	40	43,0
	Team leader/department head	10	10,8
	Deputy team leader/deputy department head	8	8,6
	Other	35	37,6
Total		93	100,0

Source: Research team's survey results

The composition of the survey sample shows a relatively substantial gender imbalance. Of the 93 participants, female respondents accounted for 76.3%, representing 71 individuals; male respondents accounted for 17.2%, representing 16 individuals; and 6.5% selected another gender category. The findings may therefore reflect the perceptions and evaluations of female employees more strongly.

Regarding age, most participants were under 25 years old, accounting for 79.6% of the total sample, or 74 respondents. Participants aged 25 to under 35 accounted for 12.9%, while those aged 35 to under 45 and those aged 45 or above accounted for 6.5% and 1.1%, respectively. This distribution indicates that the sample consisted predominantly of young workers. Consequently, the findings may particularly reflect younger employees' perceptions of leaders' motivating language, evaluations of the work environment, and intentions to contribute resources to the organization.

In terms of educational attainment, the intermediate or college group represented the largest proportion, at 36.6%, corresponding to 34 respondents. Participants who selected "Other" accounted for 33.3%, followed by those with a university degree at 18.3% and those with a postgraduate degree at 11.8%. Thus, the sample demonstrated a certain level of diversity in educational attainment.

The distribution of respondents by length of employment with their current organization was relatively consistent with the age profile of the sample, as most participants were under 25 years old. Specifically, 67.7% of respondents, or 63 individuals, had worked for their current organization for less than one year. Those with one to under three years of tenure accounted for 18.3%, those with three to under five years accounted for 5.4%, and those with five years or more accounted for 8.6%. The findings were therefore derived primarily from employees with relatively short tenures in their current organizations. Their perceptions of leaders and the organization may consequently have been influenced substantially by relatively recent experiences during organizational entry and adjustment to the work environment.

With respect to job position, the sample included both employees and individuals holding managerial positions at different levels, although employees constituted the largest group. Employees accounted for 43.0% of the sample, representing 40 respondents. Team leaders, group leaders, and department heads accounted for 10.8%, while deputy team leaders, deputy group leaders, and deputy department heads accounted for 8.6%. A total of 35 respondents, representing 37.6% of the sample, selected "Other" as their job position.

When respondents were asked to identify the leader they had in mind while answering the questions concerning leaders' motivating language, the results were as follows:

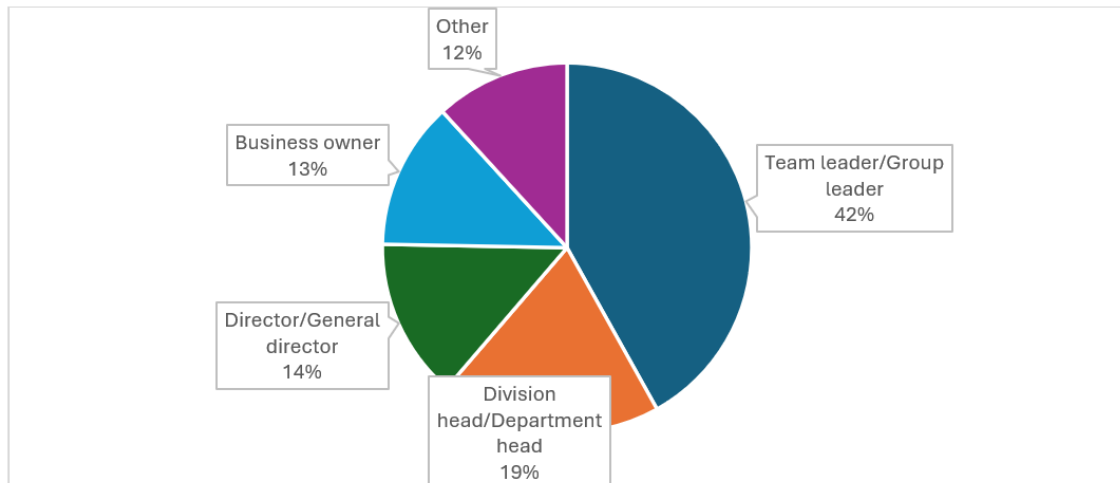


Figure 2. Management level identified by respondents as their direct leader

Source: Research team's survey results

The results show that 41.9% of participants identified their immediate leader as a team leader or group leader, representing 39 respondents. Department heads or heads of divisions accounted for 19.4% of respondents, directors or general directors accounted for 14.0%, business owners accounted for 12.9%, and other leaders accounted for 11.8%. These findings indicate that most participants evaluated leaders' motivating language based on their day-to-day communication with their immediate supervisors.

4.2. Model and Hypothesis Testing

4.2.1. Results of the Proposed Model Assessment

Assessment of Observed-Variable Quality

The research team carry out assessing the quality of the observed variables by examining their outer loadings (Table 3). According to Hair et al. (2022), an outer loading of 0.708 or higher indicates that the latent construct explains more than 50% of the variance in the observed variable. Accordingly, the observed variable meets the required indicator reliability threshold and may be retained in the model.

Table 3. Outer Loadings of the Constructs Influencing Employees' Voluntary Intention to Contribute Resources

	CE	IC	LML	OT	VICR
CE1	0.828				
CE2	0.889				
CE3	0.823				
IC1		0.878			
IC2		0.827			
IC3		0.917			
LML2			0.861		
LML3			0.877		
LML4			0.823		
LML5			0.866		
OT1				0.864	
OT2				0.890	
OT3				0.831	
VICR1					0.777
VICR2					0.896
VICR3					0.860

VICR4					0.846
LML1			0.848		

Source: Results of the research team's testing

The results presented in Table 3 below indicate that the outer loadings of all 18 observed variables range from 0.777 to 0.917. Thus, each of the observed variables has a value higher than the suggested 0.708 minimum (Hair et al., 2022). Consequently, no observed variables were removed at this stage of analysis. The results demonstrate preliminary reliability of indicators, which allows proceeding to the assessment of scales' internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity.

Assessment of Scale Reliability

The reliability of constructs influencing employees' voluntary intention to contribute resources was assessed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Internal consistency reliability and convergent validity were evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, rho_A, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE).

Table 4. Reliability Coefficients (Cronbach's Alpha) and Composite Reliability of the Constructs Influencing Employees' Voluntary Intention to Contribute Resources

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
CE	0.803	0.811	0.884	0.718
IC	0.845	0.846	0.907	0.765
LML	0.908	0.910	0.931	0.731
OT	0.827	0.833	0.897	0.743
VICR	0.867	0.872	0.909	0.716

Source: Results of the research team's testing

The results in table 4 show that the Cronbach's alpha and rho_A of the constructs are all above the threshold of 0.7, suggesting satisfactory internal consistency reliability. Composite reliability (CR) of the constructs ranges from 0.7 to 0.95 and average variance extracted (AVE) values are all above 0.5 (Hair et al., 2022). These results are satisfactory since they meet the recommended criteria for internal consistency reliability and convergent validity (Hair et al., 2022). The constructs can, therefore, be used for further analysis.

Discriminant Validity

The discriminant validity was tested using the Fornell-Larcker criterion (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). As shown in table 5, the square root of AVE of each construct was higher than the correlations between the construct and all other constructs in the model (Fornell-Larcker, 1981). Based on this criterion, the constructs in this study have satisfactory discriminant validity, supporting the discrimination between latent constructs in the proposed model.

Table 5. Fornell-Larcker criterion for the research model of factors influencing employees' voluntary intention to contribute resources

	CE	IC	LML	OT	VICR
CE	0.847				
IC	0.781	0.875			
LML	0.714	0.622	0.855		
OT	0.785	0.750	0.687	0.862	
VICR	0.846	0.853	0.706	0.789	0.846

Source: Results of the research team's testing

The f2 value indicates the effect size of a construct (factor) when it is removed from the model. f2 values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 correspond to small, medium, and large effects, respectively (Cohen, 1988). An effect size below 0.02 is considered to indicate no effect.

Table 6. Summary of f² Values

	CE	IC	LML	OT	VICR
CE		0.281			
IC					2.665
LML	1.039			0.895	
OT		0.144			
VICR					

Source: Results of the research team's testing

The results in Table 6 show the effect sizes of the variables as follows:

- The belief in leadership motivation (LML) has a large effect on collective efficacy (CE), with $f^2 = 1.039$. It also has a large effect on organizational trust (OT), with $f^2 = 0.895$
- Collective efficacy (CE) has a medium effect on internal cohesion (IC), with $f^2 = 0.281$. Meanwhile, organizational trust (OT) has a small effect on IC, with $f^2 = 0.144$.
- Internal cohesion (IC) has the largest effect in the model on employees' voluntary intention to contribute resources to the organization (VICR), with $f^2 = 2.665$

Thus, all relationships in the model have significant effect sizes. The effects of IC and VICR are the strongest.

4.2.2. Results of evaluating effect sizes using the structural model

Evaluation of influential relationships

The relationships and effect sizes of the factors influencing employees' voluntary intention to contribute resources, as analyzed using SmartPLS, are illustrated in Figure 3.

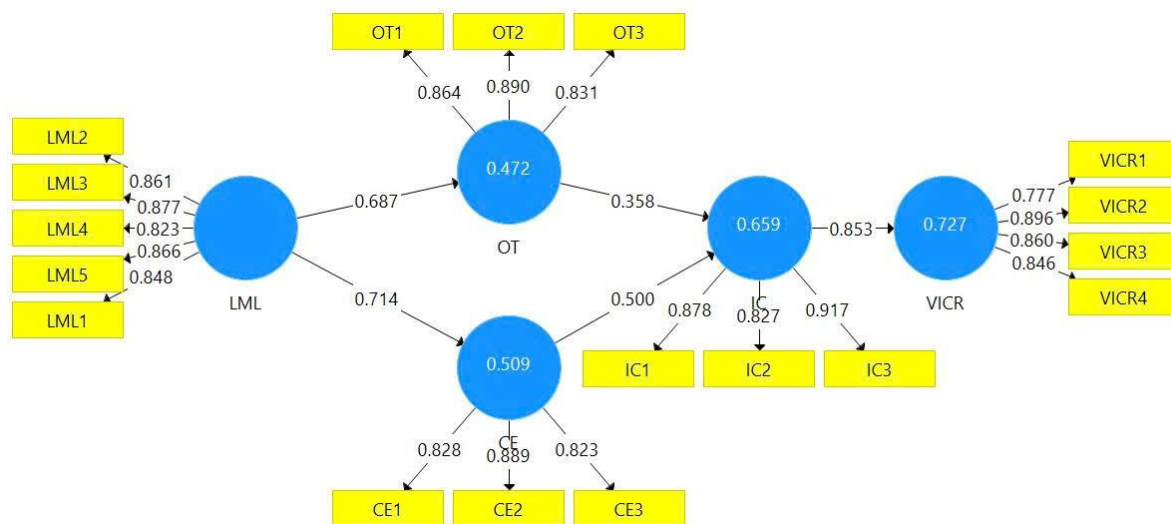


Figure 3. Factors influencing employees' voluntary intention to contribute resources in small and medium-sized enterprises

Source: Results of the research team's testing

The results of the bootstrap analysis used to evaluate the relationships in the model are presented in Table 7. At the 5% significance level:

The leadership motivational factor (LML) has a positive effect on organizational trust (OT), with $\beta = 0.687$, T-statistic = 9.717, and P-value = $0.000 < 0.05$. Hypothesis H1 is accepted.

The leadership motivational factor (LML) has a positive effect on collective efficacy (CE), with $\beta = 0.714$, T-statistic = 12.832, and P-value = $0.000 < 0.05$. Hypothesis H2 is accepted.

Organizational trust (OT) has a positive effect on internal cohesion (IC), with $\beta = 0.358$, T-statistic = 3.094, and P-value = $0.002 < 0.05$. Hypothesis H3 is accepted.

Collective efficacy (CE) has a positive effect on internal cohesion (IC), with $\beta = 0.500$, T-statistic = 3.997, and P-value = $0.000 < 0.05$. Hypothesis H4 is accepted.

Internal cohesion (IC) has a positive effect on employees' voluntary intention to contribute resources to the organization (VICR), with $\beta = 0.853$, T-statistic = 27.339, and P-value = $0.000 < 0.05$. Hypothesis H5 is accepted.

Table 7. Path coefficients of the structural model

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
CE => IC	0.500	0.494	0.125	3.997	<0.001
IC => VICR	0.853	0.860	0.031	27.339	<0.001
LML => CE	0.714	0.719	0.056	12.832	<0.001
LML => OT	0.687	0.695	0.071	9.717	<0.001
OT => IC	0.358	0.369	0.116	3.094	0.002

Source: Results of the research team's testing

The results indicate that LML has a more significant effect on CE than on OT. Between the two factors affecting IC, CE has a more substantial effect than OT. In particular, IC has an extremely significant effect on VICR, with coefficient $\beta = 0.853$.

Evaluation of the coefficient of determination R^2

The results of the PLS Algorithm analysis provide the **R^2 value**, which reflects the extent to which the independent variables explain the dependent variable. According to Hair et al. (2016), R^2 values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 are considered substantial, moderate, and weak, respectively.

Table 8. Coefficient of determination R^2

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
CE	0.509	0.504
IC	0.659	0.651
OT	0.472	0.467
VICR	0.727	0.724

Source: Results of the research team's testing

For collective efficacy (CE), the results show that $R^2 = 0.509$ and adjusted $R^2 = 0.504$. Thus, LML explains 50.9% of the variance in CE.

For organizational trust (OT), $R^2 = 0.472$ and adjusted $R^2 = 0.467$. Thus, LML explains 47.2% of the variance in OT.

For internal cohesion (IC), $R^2 = 0.659$ and adjusted $R^2 = 0.651$. Thus, CE and OT explain 65.9% of the variance in IC.

For employees' voluntary intention to contribute resources to the organization (VICR), $R^2 = 0.727$ and adjusted $R^2 = 0.724$. Thus, IC explains 72.7% of the variance in VICR.

V. Discussion of results and managerial implications

5.1. Discussion of results

The outcome of the hypothesis testing shows that all five hypotheses were accepted at $p < 0.05$. Overall, the relationships in the model were positive, though with different effect sizes. Specifically, LML affects CE and OT, and these two states jointly promote IC, which increases VICR.

Firstly, IC has the most substantial effect on VICR, with $\beta = 0.853$ and $f^2 = 2.665$, explaining 72.7% of the variance of VICR. Mechanistically, the finding is coherent with the view of Beal et al. (2003), according to which cohesion emerges via connections between members, commitment to tasks, and pride in the collective. Podsakoff et al. (2000) also found that cooperation, support, and the proactive involvement of members are key elements of voluntary behavior beyond formal requirements. However, as these studies do not directly explore the intention to contribute multiple kinds of personal resources simultaneously, the findings of this study advance the evidence by showing that internal cohesion can be transformed into the willingness to contribute time, knowledge, skills, initiatives, and personal relationships to the organization. Such a finding is particularly meaningful for small and medium-sized enterprises, in which formal resources are often limited, and the direct coordination between members plays an important role (Eggers, 2020).

Leader motivational language (LML) has a positive effect on CE with $\beta = 0.714$ and $f^2 = 1.039$. Mayfield and Mayfield (2012) revealed that motivational language is positively related to employees' confidence in completing tasks. Men et al. (2022) also found that leaders' motivational communication helps satisfy employees' psychological need for competence. While these studies mainly explore competence at the individual level, the current findings contribute to the evidence by extending it to the perception of collective ability to take action. In small and medium-sized enterprises, where leaders often directly participate in discussions with employees,

clarifying objectives, methods of coordination, and the significance of the work may help members build more positive evaluations of the collective ability.

LML has a positive effect on OT with $\beta = 0.687$ and $f^2 = 0.895$, explaining 47.2% of the variance of OT. This finding is directly coherent with Men et al. (2022), who revealed that three types of language, namely directive, empathetic, and meaning-making language, all contribute to enhancing employees' trust in leaders and the organization. In the view of Motivational Language Theory, clear direction, attentive communication, and the association of work with shared values offer cues for employees to evaluate the organization's competence, goodwill, and consistency (Mayfield et al., 1995). In the context of small and medium-sized enterprises, leaders' communication may become an important source of information for employees to build trust, as the distance between leaders and employees is often smaller.

For IC, CE has a positive effect with $\beta = 0.500$ and $f^2 = 0.281$, which corresponds to a medium effect size. This finding is coherent with Elms et al. (2023), who identified collective efficacy as related to the processes of interaction and the effectiveness of group performance. When employees are able to coordinate with each other and accomplish their goals, they have stronger grounds to participate actively, maintain trust, and be engaged with their work.

OT has a positive effect on IC with $\beta = 0.358$ and $f^2 = 0.144$. While the effect size is small, the result is significant in the context of the study. Dai et al. (2022) revealed that organizational trust can promote organizational citizenship behavior through organizational identification and employee loyalty. Though their study did not directly explore internal cohesion, the findings of Dai et al. (2022) provide ground for explaining that trust helps reduce defensiveness and promote the tendency for cooperative behavior. The current results add direct evidence for the effect of OT on IC.

5.2. Managerial Implications

Based on the research results, this study proposes the following managerial implications to promote employees' voluntary intention for contributing resources in small and medium-sized enterprises.

First, the enterprise should enhance the ability of the line leader to exert motivational language. As suggested by Mayfield et al. (1995), motivational communication includes directive, empathetic, and meaning-making language. Therefore, the leader should articulate objectives and requirements, recognize employees' efforts and listen to their concerns, and help them understand how their work fits into the shared goals. However, since this study operationalized LML as an aggregated construct, the moderating role of different language types cannot be inferred.

Second, the manager should emphasize enhancing employees' collective efficacy perception.

This finding implies that cohesion is not only related to the relationship between group members but also to the extent to which the group believes it has the ability to collaborate and achieve its goals. Therefore, the enterprise should shift its attention from motivating individual contributions to enhancing collective capability. Firstly, the team's objective should be specified and associated with each member's responsibilities; task allocation should be made based on employees' capabilities, experience, and complementary advantages, and coordination mechanisms should be established to address possible challenges. The manager should organize knowledge sharing, peer coaching, experience exchange, and collaborative problem-solving activities so employees can better understand their abilities and the strengths of other members. When implementing the task, the leader should provide timely feedback that focuses on overall performance, effective collaboration, and improvement directions. The employees' accomplishment should be acknowledged at a collective level to inspire their confidence in the team's capability in completing the task. This managerial implication is aligned with the finding of Elms et al. (2023), which reveals that collective efficacy is correlated with the interaction process and the group's performance.

Third, the enterprise should enhance employee trust by improving management's transparency, consistency, and accountability.

According to Mayer et al. (1995), trust is formed based on the assessment of the trustor of the trustee's ability, benevolence, and integrity. Therefore, the line leader should provide timely and complete information about the goal, plan, change in the environment that may affect employees, and the rationale behind management's decision-making. In addition, the enterprise should fulfill its promise about employee benefits, opportunities, and working conditions. The principles should be reflected in the task allocation, performance evaluation, and recognition of employees' contributions. This result is consistent with the mechanism proposed by Dai et al. (2022) that organizational trust can drive organizational citizenship behavior through organizational identification and employee loyalty. Therefore, trust establishment should be regarded as a process of gathering consistent decisions and actions in daily management practice, instead of focusing on single communication from the leaders.

Fourth, the enterprise should value internal cohesion since IC has the greatest direct influence on VICR. The manager should provide conditions and platforms for employees to collaborate, share knowledge, and participate in collective activities. The channels for collecting employee initiatives, intergroup exchange activities,

and effective recognition formats should be established to motivate employees to devote their time, expertise, skills, and resources to the organization. For a resource-constrained small and medium-sized enterprise, strengthening leadership communication and internal cohesion is an effective way to enhance the utilization of existing resources.

VI. Conclusion

The results of this study contribute to the discussion on applicability of S-O-R model and Motivational Language Theory in explaining employees' voluntary intention to contribute resources. Leaders' motivational language positively influences organizational trust and collective efficacy which in turn foster internal cohesion. Internal cohesion among all the factors has the strongest effect on the employees' voluntary intention to give contributions.

In terms of theory, this study clarifies the mechanism of how motivational language works by a psychological mediation chain consisting of organizational trust, collective efficacy, and internal cohesion. This study enriches the literature on S-O-R model by providing the evidence of applicability in the exploration of employee behavior in the context of small and medium-sized enterprises.

In terms of practice, this study suggests that managers should make use of directive, empathetic, and meaning-making language and enhance collective efficacy, trust, and cohesion of their group to motivate employees to voluntarily contribute their time, knowledge, skills, and initiatives.

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations. First is that a convenience sample combined with snowball sampling method was used which might lead to biased results due to the relatively small sample size and the fact that data were collected at one point in time. Hence, the generalizability of the results and the causal inferences drawn from the study are limited. Second is that despite the presence of three theoretical components in the model, shortened scale with five indicators was used and LML was treated as a uni-dimensional construct, which might not fully reflect the multidimensionality of motivational language.

Future studies might involve larger samples which could be representative of the whole population and employ longitudinal or multisource designs to examine the relationships between LML and employees' voluntary contribution behaviors as well as actual contribution made by employees. In addition, LML should be further tested as a higher-order construct, which subsumes directive language, empathetic language, and meaning-making language as its lower-order factors, so that the specific effects of each type of language could be identified. The model could be further developed by including such variables as leaders' style, organizational culture, job characteristics, and size of the enterprise.

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