

# Workplace Democracy and Supply Chain Dynamics in Thailand: Mediating Role of Employee Voice

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**Abstract**— Effectiveness of supply chain in manufacturing organizations can never be completely efficient without contribution and participation of employees. For such a need, workplace democracy seems the only sane solution to ensure better agility and negotiation at supply side of the firm. This study has aimed to analyze the impact of workplace democracy on supply chain negotiation and agility in mediating role of employee voice. Sample was the employees of different colleges and universities of Thailand. The gathered data was then analyzed on SPSS and AMOS for statistical and hypotheses testing. Results have revealed that workplace democracy have significant impact on both supply chain negotiation and agility. At the same time, employee voice was also found as significant mediator in given relationships. Employee voice's role as mediator was a unique contribution in literature through this study and it also has important implications for manufacturing sector of Thailand and other countries that they have to nourish democracy at their workplaces. Literature has also enriched with empirical evidence of these novel linkages and future research indications have also been given in this study.

*Key Words:* Workplace Democracy, Employee Voice, Supply Chain Negotiation and Supply Chain Agility

## 1. Introduction:

Supply chain agility refers to the aspect that how an organization deals with certain changes and fluctuations in business world [1]. These changes may be of any nature such as changes in processes and practices used in the organization, changes in the external environment etc. All these changes have their own impacts on the business performance and

are mostly unexpected. So we can say that supply chain agility is the process of swiftly responding to any unexpected fluctuation in the business or economic world [2; 34; 35]. No doubt these unexpected changes are a part of business world, so it is the duty of every organization to be prepared already to cope with these fluctuations effectively and efficiently for the improvement of their organization's performance.

Supply chain negotiation can be defined as the process of making compromise in which the needs of two actors of a supply chain can be managed [3]. It results in the improvement of relationships between the actors of a supply chain and thus improves the overall performance. Negotiation in a supply chain is important because successful negotiations result in the positive impact on organization's overall performance and improved coordination and collaboration of parties involved in the supply chain [4].

Workplace democracy is an important concept which refers to the use of democratic processes such as voting, public debating etc. at the workplace. In case of voting, the weight age of every vote in the organization is equal to others [5]. In some organizations, voting is used for certain purposes that are specific to a specific city or specific area. But for some time, workplace democracy has been diminished due to which only selected people make decisions in certain areas; these decisions are though to be biased because of no involvement of every person of the organization [6]. A new practice of workplace democracy has been popular in the form

of employee ownership, in which employees have share in the business and thus get voting rights and work harder for the success of the organization. Employees' opinions and ideas are also considered while making important decisions for the business leading towards the participatory management. There

are many advantages of workplace democracy including increased employees involvement, increased productivity and higher profits, many creative ideas from different minds while making important decisions in the firm [7].



**Figure 1:** Employee Voice

Figure 1 shows the factors that make up the employees' voice. Employee voice or freedom of speech refers to the level to which an organization welcomes the ideas, suggestions and opinions of employees without any pressure [8]. Employee voice benefits an organization in many ways; increases profitability and productivity, positive image of the organization, more employee engagement, whistle blowing is some of them. Employee voice makes employees of an organization satisfied and more involved in their jobs, leading toward participative management where employees are valued. Employee oriented approach leads to loyalty and dedication by employees [9]. Traditionally, employee voice has not been in practice but now it has earned special place in almost every organization leading towards the success and better performance of the organization. Workplace democracy has an important impact on supply chain agility and supply chain negotiations as it improves the collaboration of actors involved in the supply chain. It increases the productivity and performance of any organization [10]. Unfortunately, in Thailand workplace democracy is not that much in practice which results into poor supply chain agility and negotiation. Other developing and developed

countries are also facing same issues because they have not made enough efforts to promote workplace democracy, repressed employees' voice and absence of freedom of speech. If this problem prevails for a longer span, it may result in decrease in productivity and profits due to the disturbance in supply chain negotiation and agility [11]. So it is the need of the hour to solve this issue as soon as possible by promoting workplace democracy and employees' freedom of speech, which ultimately improves supply chain negotiation and agility. Many studies and researches have been conducted to study the supply chain negotiation and agility and few studies show the impact of workplace democracy on supply chain supply and negotiation [12]. But no study has shown the mediating impact of employee voice between the above-mentioned variables. A research paper, thus has recommended studying the mediating impact of employee voice between workplace democracy and supply chain agility and negotiation [13]. The main objectives of this study are as follows:

- Analyze the significant impact of workplace democracy on supply chain agility in organizations of Thailand

- Analyze the significant impact of work place democracy on supply chain negotiation in organizations of Thailand
- Analyze the mediating role of employee voice between work place democracy and supply chain agility in organizations of Thailand
- Analyze the mediating role of employee voice between work place democracy and supply chain negotiation in organizations of Thailand

In Thailand, economy is growing at significant rate and all its sectors such as manufacturing, agriculture,

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Strategic Governance Theory

Strategic Governance Theory (SGT) [16] is largely used by many researchers in their articles and researchers [17] because of its importance in the manufacturing sector and in the development of business strategies with the involvement of supply chain dynamics (SCD). SCD [18] that is related to any firm or an organization furthermore includes the partnership of supply chain to further elaborate different themes, concepts and theories related to workplace democracy and SCD. This theory of SG explains the strategic dimensions of strategic logistics, management and marketing by the introduction of business strategies and IOT implications. Supply chain management develops the concept of SG theory, while initiating the qualitative managerial development analysis as per various empirical studies [19] available on this study. This theory designs a curriculum for the calculation of the involvement of the governance from supply chain governance. Whereas, current governance strategies are related to the issues of the industries that are handled beyond any legislation intervention, however facilitators, barriers makers and those who want to maintain the sustainability of the business along with the manufacturing outcomes, has to focus on the theoretical concepts of theory of SG. Nevertheless, managerial implications depend on the integration at strategic level for the future extension of the governance. Theory of strategic governance is often motivated by the fact that companies develop different strategies that depends on the requirement of the company's employees, its policy and its

tourism, services etc. are its important assets as they are helping in making its economy better [14]. Looking towards the significance, many studies and researches have been conducted in order to study in this regard. These studies have helped the organizations improving workplace democracy and thus making supply chain and negotiation better. Employee voice is also being promoted in all the sectors, which has a positive impact in reference to productivity and performance [15]. Government of Thailand is also taking interest in this regard by devising favorable policies for workplace democracy.

operation to adapt to the supply chain dynamics which will mitigate disruptions. Employees of certain companies work according to the instructions designed by SG theory that promotes SCD, while the employees customize themselves according to supply chain optimization stage to control and manage all kind of disruption. There can be clear similarities between the practices of the employees of a company and the concepts of theory of SG [20] in the promotion of proper decision making under the domain of SCD. This theory enables the employees to work at the societal level and also at the individual level, while making appropriate decisions for business planning and also to gain success. Expert knowledge can be required in the process of decision making which is considered one of the fundamental applications of theory of SG.

### 2.2. Workplace Democracy Relationship with Supply Chain Negotiation

Studies by [1] believe that workplace related to any organization, company, enterprise or a firm has a complete different set up of democracy between the employees, staff members and management groups who try to work as a 'one unit' while making or taking any decision related to their company, they try to take expert knowledge from their seniors who they believe will guide them properly, they try to make a business plan while involving the decision of all the staff members, crew members or managers, in order to produce something novel, unique and long lasting, moreover that would be in the favor of the company's reputation. Theory of SG suggest that employees work depends on the strategies and approaches related to supply chain negotiations (SCN) [7]

because the workplace democracy criteria differs from one department to another, one sector to another and from one company to another. For this purpose employees has to maintain a single democracy strategy within their workplace that will further develop the SCN for the creation of smaller initiatives towards the business management. Every small or big initiative demonstrates multiple strategic principles that are designed for the employees, which can be applied to a small area or department of the business. Workplace democracy [21] is usually handled by the department of human rights, which can prove to make sustainable decisions and carry out standardized planning with the involvement of SCN, certainly to present effective ideas through potential decision making strategies. To maintain the democracy of the workplace for a longer time, employee ownership is considered as the fundamental form of SCN, due to which employee can have equity rights, and they can easily gain equity shares. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**H1:** Workplace democracy has a significant impact on Supply chain negotiation.

### **2.3. Workplace Democracy Relationship with Supply Chain Agility**

Studies by [10] and the theory of SG, builds a connection between the initiatives, produced by workplace democracy that revitalizes the efficiency and affectivity of supply chain dynamics which further influences the form of supply chain agility (SCA), in the field of sustainability business performance. SCA [5] is considered one of the dynamics of SCD, which is influenced by sustainable workplace democracy. Workplace democracy means that it provides complete freedom of speech, negotiations, communication and decision making to the employees, so that they can produce better results, better decisions and appropriate solutions to the problems and challenges that they face. HRM department enables democracy to [22] educate employees and management team or groups to work with collaboration and to take advices from those who are more experienced, more professional and more qualified. Agility of supply chain [23] also associates itself with the workplace democracy and human rights that enhances the work performances, work sustainability related to employees abilities.

Theory of SG builds a relationship with organizational dissent to support the perceptions of workplace democracy and workplace freedom of speech which further elevates the idea of SCA. Theory suggests that individual capacity and potential within a workplace should create certain incentives, where capacities and potential of many people collectively joins on a similar agenda of working peacefully and successfully. This collective agenda can enable individuals to develop self-esteem, increase their confidence level with an increase in SCA and performance level. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**H2:** Workplace democracy has a significant impact on Supply chain agility.

### **2.4. Mediating Role of Employee voice between Workplace democracy and supply chain negotiation**

Theory of SG [24] highlights the actions and activities of employees within a workplace democracy that gives rise to SCN on strategic basis. Theoretical evidences suggest that many theories are applied on the phenomenon of SCN and workplace freedom of speech. As due to diversity and globalization many people and employees especially are moving from one country to another [32], where they move from one company to another, so the diversity in companies promotes the availability of workplace democracy and which further promotes the liability of SCN within the employees and working sector. However, workplace freedom of speech is correlated with employee's job satisfaction, organizational commitment and organizational identification. Cultural diversity often alters the way of employee voice that act as a mediator between workplace democracy and SCN. In the workplaces which consists of diverse nations, diverse cultural population and different ethnic groups [25] for them workplace democracy is very important which portrays a significant impact on SCN. However, as per different political, social and economic situations in a society can affect an individual's communication behaviors within a workplace of an organization as per HRM studies [26]. Workplace with different ethnic groups also might give rise to ethnicity disputes, where certain topics that are related to economic, social and political issues are considered to figure out long debates, so for this purpose

employee voice plays a major role in solving certain social and political issues with the help of SCN involvement. Employee voice is an essential aspect for the maintenance of the peaceful society. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed

**H3:** Employee voice has a significant mediating role between the relationship of workplace democracy and SCN

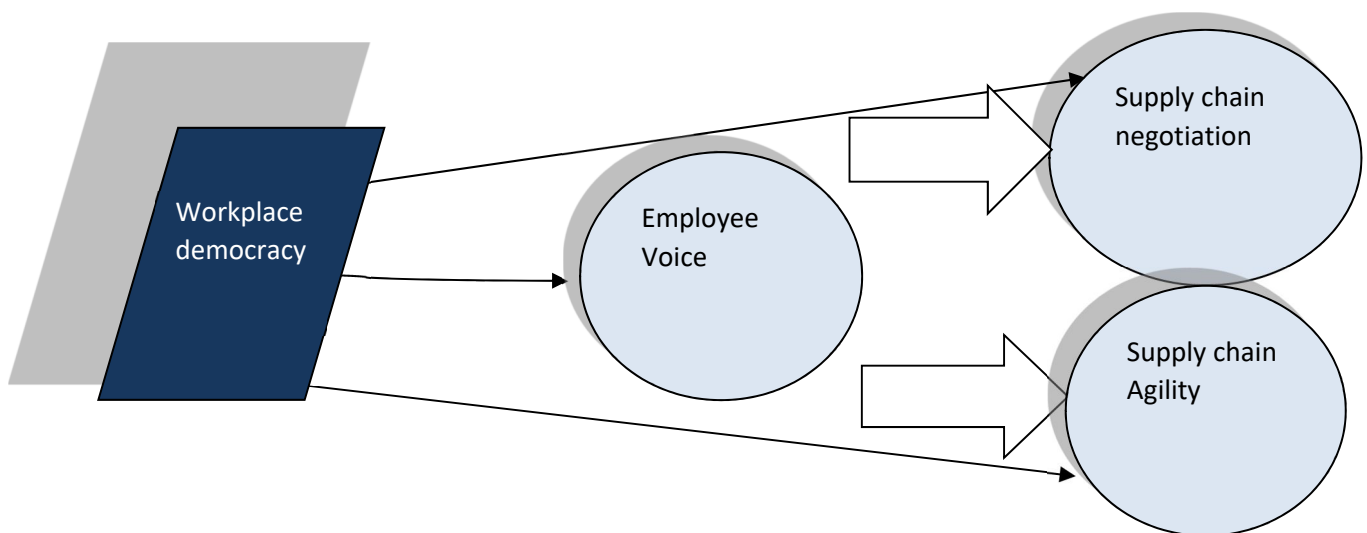
### 2.5. Mediating Role of Employee voice between Workplace Democracy and Supply Chain Agility

Employee voice [27] enables the growth of positive incentives, views and perceptions within an employee to create a sustainable working environment. Theory of SG also depends on the terms of governance in a workplace where democracy or a say of employees is being followed while furthermore, [28] SCA also enhances the effect of sustainability performance related to business capabilities of an organization [33]. SG also gives proper instructions to how to deal with organizational dissents within the workplace and time frame of SCA. Workplace policies and practices

usually are complied together after studying the situation of an organizational workplace, where more focus is on the employee voice that should involves open and explicit way of communication between the employees, that might possess higher level of satisfaction and commitment towards organization. Those employees who have a say in policy making or decision making, they can easily maintain higher quality relationship with supervisors and those have a greater involvement in organization processes, while their voice have greater tendency to convey their message and point of view. This tendency of communication can benefit the employees, working in a democratic place where SCA is committed with job satisfaction and organizational commitments. Therefore, workplace freedom of speech [29] is also because of employee voice which relates the voice with the workplace element of profitability. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**H4:** Employee voice has a significant mediating role between the relationship of workplace democracy and SCA.

#### Model:



## 3. Research Methodology

### 3.1. Population and Sample Selection

This research study has been accompanied in order to examine the impact of workplace democracy on supply chain dynamics, with the intervention of employee voice. Researcher has been selected the Thailand manufacturing industries, in order observed the impact of study. In textile and automotive

industry, researcher observed the workplace democracy as all the employees involved in the decisions and they share the responsibility of organization with management and high authorities. Researcher has been conducted this study on these industries of Thailand, in order to observe how the intervention of employee voice in workplace democracy facilitate the supply chain agility and

supply chain negotiation. In sampling, researcher has to select the sample size carefully, because it has to be large enough while using the covariance-based approach in SEM (Hazen et al., 2015). For sample size calculation, researcher used (Klein, 2015) idea which states that formula number of questions\*10 provide us with exact sample size. After the calculation, sample size has been selected is 598 respondents among which the questionnaire has been distributed. Out of 300, only 287 responded only 287 considered valid because other responses have been considered invalid. Researcher has been used purposive sampling techniques in order to select the employees as respondents because employees can better explain how the intervention of their opinions and authority facilitate the supply chain agility and negotiation

### 3.2. Data Collection Methods and Procedures

For the collection of primary data from respondent, questionnaire has been used as data collection method. [33] survey instrument has been used as a starting point in development of questionnaire, as it ensured that all the items of questionnaire must be in accordance what actually the study want to researched. Moreover, before finalizing the questionnaire all items have been verified by implementing the pilot study, in which 23 respondents randomly selected and they responded whether items are understandable or not understandable. Content validity of scale has been checked from other industrial practitioners. Researcher used online questionnaire technique for administering the questionnaire, questionnaires have been mailed to employees of Thailand companies and they conveniently solved them according to their own opinion.

### 3.3. Analysis of Validity, Reliability and Common Bias

Reliability has been analyzed by SPSS and examined by criterion which entails that according to [32] Cronbach's  $\alpha$  has to be greater than 0.70. Validity has been analyzed by AMOS but criteria used to examine convergent validity and discriminant validity assessment are different. For convergent validity, three criteria have been examined for the assessment. One is items loading  $\lambda$  which has to be greater than 0.70 as its values were strong at 0.75 or at above,

second is composite construct reliability which has to higher than specific limit 0.80 and third is average variance extracted and its threshold range is greater than 0.50. Coming towards discriminant validity assessment, criterion has been examined states that square root of AVE has to be greater than all other correlated constructs [37].

When the respondent used same measures provided by common rater [21] for both independent and dependent variables then common bias has been originated. In this study, respondents tried to respond the set of variables such as workplace democracy, employees voice and supply chain dynamics. In order to test the risk of common bias method in this study researcher has been used Harman's single factor test. This test has been conducted in order to checked whether most of constructs accounted for by single factor or not, because if 50% of variance accounted for by single factor then risk of common bias has been observed. Results report that different factors used for most of constructs such as 87% of variance interpreted by factor solution and 18% of variance interpreted by one factor. Hence, it has been ensured that risk of common bias not present in this study.

### 3.4. Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing is essential in order to report which hypothesis is accepted or which is rejected. Structure equation model has been used for testing the hypothesis and it runs on AMOS. Path analysis approach used under SEM for hypothesis testing. In this study, hypotheses have been tested includes impact of workplace democracy on supply chain dynamics, in mediating role of employee's voice. Direct, indirect and total effect and significance of hypotheses have been analyzed under path analysis in order to assessed the acceptance or rejection status of hypotheses.

### 3.5. Measures

WD was measured with the scale developed by [24], with the help of five items that were taken on a five-point Likert scale. Then EV was assessed by the scale developed by the researcher [22] and here four items were taken on a five-point Likert scale and were assessed. SCN was measured by a scale developed by [23] four items were taken and measured on a five-point Likert scale. Finally, SCA was measured by the

scale developed by [19] and five items were taken which were measured on a five-point Likert scale.

#### 4. Empirical Results

##### 4.1. Demographical Results

The study was conducted in Thailand and data was from 300 participants and the number of respondents was 287. The associations with the help of a self-organizational questionnaire were analyzed by using SPSS and Amos. It is very important to conduct the prerequisite analysis in order to check the reliability,

normality, and validity of the data. The researcher applied the frequency distribution test in order to check the respondent profile. The findings showed that 120 males and 167 females participated in this study. 23 of the participants had graduation degree, 136 respondents had done post-graduation. Whereas, 118 respondents had master's degree and 10 had another degree. The participants included 234 people in age range 21 to 30 years, 42 people in age range 31 to 40 years, 9 people in age range of 41 to 50 years and only 2 participants were of age more than 50.

**Table 1. Descriptive Statistics**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
WPD	287	1.00	5.00	3.6228	1.04009	-.934	.144
EV	287	1.00	5.00	3.5871	1.10746	-.787	.144
SCN	287	1.00	5.00	3.6153	1.06832	-.891	.144
SCA	287	1.00	5.00	3.4639	1.12096	-.560	.144
Valid N (listwise)	287						

Table no. 1 is showing that there is no outlier in the given data as the maximum values lie in the threshold range of 5-point Likert scale, as the skewness value is

somewhere between -1 and +1 which is the threshold range of normality assumption and so the data is normal and is valid to go for further testing.

**Table 2. Rotated Component Matrix <sup>a</sup>**

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
WPD1	.661			
WPD2	.743			
WPD3	.823			
WPD4	.829			
WPD5	.825			
WPD6	.814			
WPD7	.830			
WPD8	.817			
EV1			.768	
EV2			.803	
EV3			.805	
EV4			.856	
EV5			.857	
EV6			.885	
SCN1				.802
SCN2				.830
SCN3				.857
SCN4				.810
SCN5				.756
SCA1		.810		
SCA2		.871		
SCA3		.875		
SCA4		.877		
SCA5		.884		
SCA6		.885		
SCA7		.863		

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

The above table is showing the RCM values, almost all of the indicators are showing the factor loading

more than 0.7, it means that all of the indicators are eligible to be added in the further hypothesis testing

because all factor loadings are in suitable threshold level and in a suitable and valid range. moreover,

there is no cross-loading data shown in RCM so, data is good to go for further testing.

**Table 3.** Convergent and discriminant validity

	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	SCN	WPD	EV	SCA
SCN	0.940	0.758	0.354	0.942	<b>0.871</b>			
WPD	0.955	0.727	0.340	0.975	0.548	<b>0.853</b>		
EV	0.957	0.790	0.354	0.988	0.595	0.583	<b>0.889</b>	
SCA	0.962	0.782	0.268	0.991	0.454	0.518	0.383	<b>0.884</b>

The results of convergent and discriminant validity show that the overall model is a good fit because the composite reliability of each variable is more than 70% and average variance extracted is more than 50% while the discriminant validity shows that

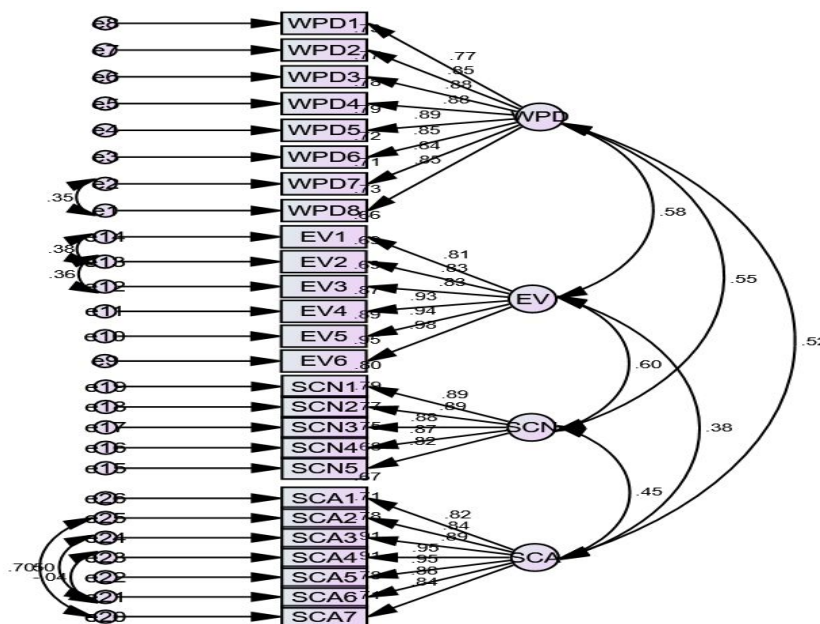
loading of each variable discriminates from others. Every variable has maximum loading with itself as compared to with others so these validities prove the authenticity of collected data.

**Table 4.** Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Indicators	Threshold range	Current values
CMIN/DF	Less or equal 3	2.663
GFI	Equal or greater .80	.826
CFI	Equal or greater .90	.946
IFI	Equal or greater .90	.946
RMSEA	Less or equal .08	.076

Here, CMIN is less than 3, GFI is greater than .80, CFI is greater than .90, IFI is greater than .90 and RMSEA is less than .80. So, the table 4 is showing

that the indicators lie in the valid range so the data is good to go. Screenshot of CFA is given below



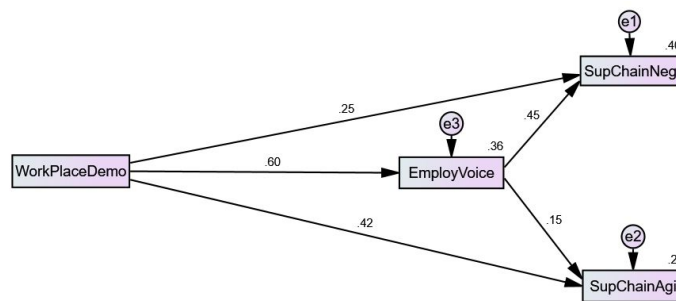


**Figure 2: CFA**  
**Table 5. SEM**

Total effect	WPD	EV
EV	.597***	.000
SCA	.504***	.147**
SCN	.519***	.452***
Direct effect	WPD	EV
EV	.597***	.000
SCA	.417***	.147**
SCN	.249***	.452***
Indirect effect	WPD	EV
EV	.000	.000
SCA	.088*	.000
SCN	.270***	.000

WPD has 59.7%, 50.4% and 51.9% positive and significant impact on EV, SCA and SCN respectively. EV has 14.7% and 45.2% impact on SCA and SCN respectively. directly, WPD has

59.7%, 41.7% and 24.9% impact on EV, SCA and SCN. whereas, EV has 14.7% and 45.2% impact on SCA and SCN respectively. Indirectly, WPD has 8.8% and 27% impact on SCA and SCN respectively.



**Figure 3: SEM**

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

### 5.1. Discussion

The aim of this study was to know about the impact of workplace democracy (WD) on supply chain negotiation (SCN) and supply chain agility (SCA), this study took employee voice (EV) as a mediator between WD and SCN and between WD and SCA. The first hypothesis proposed in the study was that, “WD has a significant impact on SCN”, this hypothesis is accepted keeping the research work of RM. Mason as base it is accepted that workplace democracy provides the employees with the authority to negotiate and integrate the functions of a supply chain to produce maximum potential in the

manufacturing department and contributes in the overall efficiency of the firm [30]. The second hypothesis proposed was that, “WD has a significant impact on SCA”, this hypothesis is accepted relating to the fact that PM. Swafford in a research paper stated that SCA is important to run a system smoothly, mostly when it is related to the supply chain of that system and WD is important here, in order to run everything in accordance with the benefits of the firm and its stakeholders. The third hypothesis proposed in the study was that, “EV acts as a significant mediator between WD and SCN”, this hypothesis is accepted as well as NC [31]. Suresh in the journal of management stated that WD provides

the employees with the necessary voice for the basic rights so for the implication of WD, EV is very important as it will play a significant role in implementing WD on SCN. The fourth hypothesis proposed by the study was that, "EV plays a significant mediating role between WD and SCA", this hypothesis is accepted on the basis of research publications of H. Liu and W. Ke, that shows that a significant and positive relationship exists between WD and EV that accelerates and increases SCA, as the processes of any firm need SCA for proper operations [10].

### 5.2. Conclusion

This study was conducted with the purpose to know the relationship between WD and SCN and between WD and SCA. This study took EV as a mediator between the variables. The tools used for the purpose of data collection were questionnaires and data from 287 employees of different colleges and universities of Thailand was collected. The collected data was exposed to rigorous testing techniques and it was concluded that WD significantly and positively impacts SCN and SCA. This study also proved that EV is an important mediator between SCA, SCN and WD.

### 5.3. Implications of the Study

This study highlighted the importance of a very important and least discussed variable that is the mediating role of employee voice. After considering the importance of WD from the results of this study, organizations can practically create an environment of WD in order to empower the employees for dedicated efforts and profitable results. The policies of the organizations can be framed in a democratic way rather than a centralized way.

### 5.4. Limitations and Future Research Recommendations of the Study

The purpose of the study was to analyze WD generally but data was collected from biased and limited resources only, future researchers can expand the sample type and size. Future researchers can also take other mediating variables like employee attitude into account in order to analyze the problem from a different direction and perspective. The problem of centralized systems and inefficiency is globally prevailing so this problem needs to be addressed

globally, this way the problem can be placed, tested and verified in different setups and organizations.

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