When and How Employees Speak up to Leaders? An integrated Model of Employee Voice Behavior

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Abstract

Extant literature mainly examines the antecedents of employee voice behavior from different levels. However, little literature has integrated the antecedents, employee cognition, leader's response and effects of voice behavior. This paper tries to open the black box of interactive mechanism in voice behavior, namely, when and how employees speak up (to leaders) based on the social exchange theory (SET). In the first part, an integrated and dynamic model as the conceptual framework is presented and then we examine when employees speak up to their leaders from a multilevel perspective. The next part explores how employee voice flows in the so-called voice ecosystem, including employees' cognitive assessment, voice endorsement, voice adoption, risks and rewards of speaking up. Finally, this paper concludes with a discussion of this model's contributions and implications for future theory building and empirical research.

Keywords

Employee Voice Behavior, Speak Up, Cognitive Assessment, Risks, Rewards, Ecosystem.

1. Introduction

Ecosystem is the whole system,... including not only the organism-complex, but also the whole complex of physical factors forming *what we call the environment* (Tansley ,1947).

There are powerful norms and games within organizations that often prevent employees from saying what they know (Argyris, 1977).

As an important extra-role behavior, voice behavior is employees' active and voluntary behavior, which plays a significant role in organization running (Organ, Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 2006). Typically, employee's voicing suggestion is likely to promote constant improvement of the work (Ashford, Rothbard & Dutton, 1998). Except for the organization's management team, the only internal force driving organization development is employees, because their new ideas are capable of propelling continuous development of the organization (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). In addition, employees' voice behavior can be expected to correct the mistakes and update the working procedures (Zhou, George, 2001). In contrast, Morrison and Milliken (2000) viewed organizational silence as a barrier to change and development, as well as a significant demoralizing force in a pluralistic world.

Despite the importance of employee voice in organizations, not all employees voluntarily exercise this behavior. Research shows that, many employees in the organization think their environment is not safe (Milliken, Morrison & Hewlin, 2003). Voice behavior is risky, due to the risks it results in to the messenger such as trouble maker image, demotion, losing social capital and even involuntary turnover. Therefore, it is natural that, before making a decision to speak up, employee usually foresee the risks/cost and rewards/benefits. If the risks and rewards are unbalanced with risk outweighing the rewards, they are expected to be silent. Actually many scholars have agreed that voice behavior is the most difficult and complex to predict among the four behaviors in Hirschman's (1970) model of responses to dissatisfaction (Withey &Cooper, 1989; Rusbult et al., 1988; Van Dyne et al., 2003), due to the complex and vague attitudes of employees caused by individual risks.

With regards to the conditions of employee voice behavior, extant literature has dominantly researched the antecedents (Ashford, Rothbard, Piderit, & Dutton, 1998; Miceli & Near, 1992; Withey & Cooper, 1989) from three levels: organizational, supervisory (Detert & Burris, 2007) and individual levels. Some scholars have examined the influence of culture and power distance on employee voice (Dorfman & Howel, 1997; Farh , Hacket & Liang, 2007）. However, little literature has focused on the general picture that when employees probably conduct voice behavior or what kinds of conditions will give rise to employee voice. It is unanswered.

In terms of another question that how the employee voice flow in the organization, some scholars have examined some factors, effects or feedback after speaking up. For example, fear and perceived risks safety (Kish-Gephart, et al., 2009; Detert & Edmondson, 2007), agreement and disagreement between employees and leaders on voicing massage (Burris, Detert and Romney, 2013). But by and large, little research views employee voice flow in the organization as a system, integrating factor and exploring their interaction in this dynamic system.

Our objective is to explain when and how employee speaks up in organizations and the forces that both set this process in motion and reinforce it. Mainly based on the theory of SET, especially the norm of reciprocity, we also integrate works from several bodies of literature to explain two research questions: when and how employee launches the voice behavior. The two questions consist into the employee voice behavior ecosystem.

Some findings display that some multilevel variables influence employee's decision to speak up. But there is much that we do not know about conditions under which employee can be expected to take voice behavior. Little research on voice behavior pays attention to the interaction of individual and contextual factors (Lepine & Van Dyne, 1998). The first purpose of this study, therefore, is to see if we can identify conditions under which the employee is capable of speaking up in organization. Despite the numerous research streams suggesting before deciding whether to speak up about a particular issue, employees must develop a cognitive map of the risks and rewards. We know relatively little, however, about how the risks and rewards come and how they influence the decision to speak up. The second question aims to establish a dynamic and systematic mechanism of how the employee decides to speak up or not.

This research focus differs from these existing bodies of work in three ways. First, the extant research solely focuses on either how employee voice affects the leaders and organization, or on the perceived outcome's influence on employees voice behavior. This paper closes this gap by exploring the mutual influences and dynamic interaction between employee's voice behavior and its outcomes. Second, it provides a pioneering insight into conditions under which employees will speak up and how the voice flows in an ecosystem. Third, previous research on antecedents of employee voice behavior only examines variables at most on two levels from a separate perspective (Morrison and Milliken, 2000), e.g., contextual or individual level. Whereas this paper tries to see how contextual, supervisory, personal variables and cognition unanimously affect employee voice behavior from comprehensive multi-levels.

2. Literature Review

To carry out research in this paper, two aspects are based on extant literature. The first aspect is the antecedents of employee voice explored by scholars, which has been mentioned in previous text.

The other aspect in current literature this paper is developed on is the attributions to employee voice. As mentioned before, though the conditions and circumstances under which employee may speak up has not been clearly studied yet, we can still find the attribution from research on why employees keep silent. To date, the employee silence has been studied in many ways. For example, in Ryan and Oestreich's (1991) empirical study, they found the two most important reasons for not raising these issues were that respondents feared there would be negative repercussions for speaking up, and they did not believe that speaking up would make a difference. Research has shown that in order for employees to express their concerns, they must believe that doing so will be both effective and not

too personally costly (Ashford et al., 1998; Miceli & Near, 1992; Withey & Cooper, 1989). Sometimes, employees fear speaking up because leaders have been genuinely hostile about past suggestions, but this is relatively rare. More often, they are inhibited to speak up by broad, often vague, perceptions about the work environment (Detert & Edmondson, 2007).

In summary, the current literature attributes employee silence into the followings: first, employee voice is inhibited by fears or optimistic perceptions about risks and negative image brought by speaking up. Second, the outcome does not benefit the messenger or fail their expectations.

As far as our research questions is concerned, how to ensure employees are expected to speak up in organization, some researchers (Detert & Edmondson, 2007) have called for establishing a long-term system and cultural environment making employees feel safe when speaking up. Encouraging speech isn't simply a matter of removing obvious barriers, such as a volatile leader or the threat of a summary dismissal (though that would help). Nor is it a matter of putting formal systems in place, like hotlines and suggestion boxes. Making employees feel safe enough to contribute fully requires deep cultural change that alters how they understand the likely costs (personal and immediate) versus benefits (organizational and future) of speaking up (Detert & Edmondson, 2007). But what kind of system is needed and how to construct such system are still unanswered.

3. SET and Employee Voice Behavior

Based on Blau's (1964) research, exchange is defined as a voluntary behavior undertaken by person motivated by getting returns from the other side, it happens when others make reaction to return, and stops when others don't make return behavior. The implicit condition of exchange is that the two parties achieve the purpose of mutual benefit through the exchange with their own unique resources; the core is self interest and mutual dependence (Lawler & Thye, 1999).

The exchange concept and the norm of reciprocity are important principles in SET (*Blau*, 1964). Both SET and the norm of reciprocity claim that individuals will return to his benefactor, the individual is to obtain the maximum personal interest by communication with others (Masterson & Lewis, 2000). Social exchanges of high quality will affect individual's expectation on the rewards' timeliness. The exchange relationship is in line with non-instrumental principle (Morrison& Robinson, 1997). In this case, both sides will not be so urgent for obtaining returns as in the transactional and economic exchanges. The social exchanges of high quality entail time and resource input from two parties (Blau, 1964), which will promote them to maintain this relation.

Blau (1964) believed that most human behaviors could be categorized into social exchange, but not all interactions were social exchange. It must be oriented towards ends that can only be achieved through interaction with others, and it must seek to adapt means to further the achievement of these ends. Based on these two standards, employee voice behavior can be explained by SET, as organization and employees are dependent and reciprocal. On the one hand, resting on their joint efforts, voice may affect the benefits and development of the two parties. On the other hand, both organization and employees have different choices in responding to other's different behaviors. For example, the organization can choose to refuse, ignore or adopt the employee voice. Likewise, the messenger has options ranging from keeping silent to actively speaking up. Besides, some research support the point that SET is an important theory explaining organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) (Settoon, Bennett & Liden, 1996).

When conducting social exchange either with their peers or organization, individuals will assess risk and benefits. SET advocates that in the process of establishing exchange relations, there are risks and uncertainty, and individuals will assess risks and uncertainty (Balu, 1964). Risk assessment is the starting point for people in establishing various exchange relations, and the assessment result will directly affect people's attitudes and behaviors towards exchanges (Molm, Takahashi & Peterson, 2000).

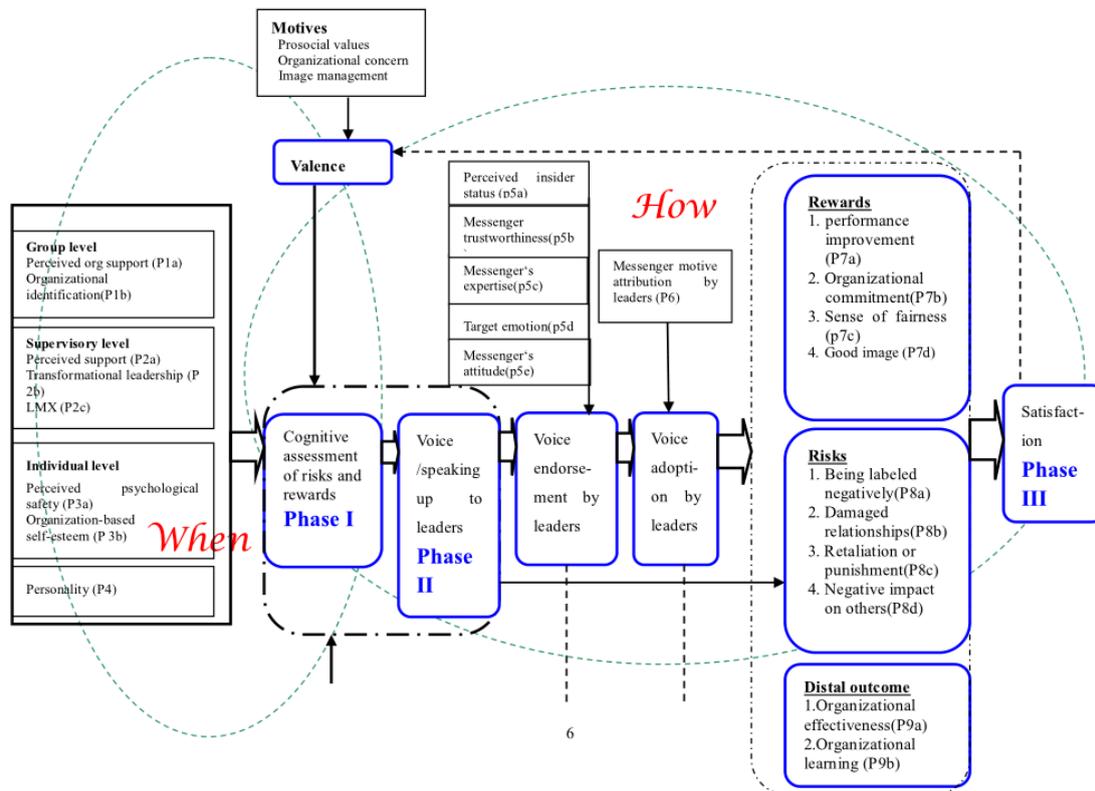## 4. Conceptual Framework

Figure 1.   Conceptual Framework

This integrated model solves the two questions when and how employees speak up to their leaders, with the employees' perceived assessment of risks and rewards as the conjunction.

In the first part of this model, we propose that, the multi-level variables will ultimately affect employee's decision to speak up through their assessment in cognition. That is, the multi-level variables are positively related to employee's perception in voice behavior, and the cognitive assessment of risks and rewards is the crux in the decision making process. Moreover, the valence and expectancy directly influence the cognitive assessment, and employee motive is the ultimate goal and individual internal driving forces of voice behavior. When all these conditions are met, the employee is expected to speak up in organizations. In this model, if the motive does not exist, the valence will also be eliminated. Therefore, the individual without motive would not speak up in organization.

Actually, our arguments are supported by some sources. First, some scholars argue that, before making any voice, there will have a decision making process assessing the costs and benefits, and this is a consciously expected risk assessment process (Withey & Cooper, 1989; Ashford, et al., 1998; Detert & Edmondson, 2007; Van Dyne et al., 2003). Second, our ideas are in line with some research generally claiming that employees will consider two important factors before making a decision to speak up: safety and utility (Withey & Cooper, 1989; Edmondson, 2003; Miceli & Near, 1992; Detert & Edmondson, 2006).

The second question that how employees speak up in organizations is another research target in this paper. We regard the voice flow as a dynamic and interactive ecosystem in organization. To keep this ecosystem balanced and sustainable, feedbacks of all the stakeholders should be included. We examine such a linked chain: cognitive assessment of risks and rewards—voice behavior/speak up—voice endorsement by leaders—voice adoption by leaders—outcomes (including risks, rewards and distal outcomes)—actual assessment of risks and rewards—feedback to cognitive assessment with valence and expectancy. Additionally, it should be noticed that, before the real exchange relations are formed, the rational cognitive assessment of risks and rewards decides to speak up or not, whereas

the actual risks and rewards assessment will also affect the coming decision making loop. In this ecosystem, the rules are norm of reciprocity and fairness. Employee should feel reciprocal in this exchange. In order to enable employees to actively offer advice, they must be convinced that the benefits of voice outweigh its costs (Fuller, et al., 2007; Gorden et al., 1988; Krefting and Powers, 1998; Detert & Burris, 2007).

Valence refers to the strength of an individual's preference for receiving a reward, like the definition in Vroom's Valence-Expectancy model. It's an expression of the value he places on a goal (outcome or reward). Specifically it describes the depth of the want or preference of an employee for extrinsic or intrinsic rewards brought by voice behavior.

Expectancy refers to rewards probability and voice effectiveness. Its meaning is slightly different from that in Vroom's Valence-Expectancy and Porter/Lawler's Expectancy model which explains the efforts-rewards probability. Voice behavior is complex and risky. As mentioned previously, in social exchange, the two parties' obligation is unspecified and the rewards is not time-bound (Blau, 1964). So expectancy in our model is more complex and should be expected in long term.

Motive is the ultimate goal and individual internal driving forces of voice behavior. Based on the causes studied by Rioux & Penner (2001), this paper believes that three motives are behind the voice behavior: prosocial values, organizational concern and impression management. The former two are altruistic, and impression management is instrumental and self-serving.

5. Conceptualizing and characterizing employee voice behavior

Table 1. Definitions of employee voice behavior

Researcher	Definition
Albert (1970)	Any attempt at all to change rather than to escape from an objectionable state of affairs.
Van Dyne & Lepine (1998)	Promotive behavior that emphasizes expression of constructive challenge intended to improve rather than merely criticize. Voice is making innovative suggestions for change and recommending modifications to standard procedures even when others disagree.
Lepine & Van Dyne (2001)	Promotive, challenging form of proactive behavior that involves constructive change-oriented communication intended to improve the situation.
Van Dyne, Ang &B Otero (2003)	Express work-related ideas, information.
De Dreu&Van Vianen (2001)	The extent to which members express views and opinions and search for new and alternative methods and strategies to perform the task.
Premeanx & Bedeian (2003)	Speaking up as openly stating one's view opinions about workplace matters, including the actions or ideas of others, suggested or needed changes, and alternative approaches or different lines of reasoning for addressing job-related issues.
Detert& Burris (2007)	Providing information to manager for improving the efficiency of organizations.

Although the definitions of voice behavior are various, generally, voice behavior refers to the constructive and change orientated verbal behavior for the purpose of improving the environment (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998), it may be possible to challenge the "status quo" or make the leader "embarrassed" (Detert & Burris, 2007). In this paper, we employee Lepine & Van Dyne's (2001) definition of employee voice behavior that it is promotive, challenging form of proactive behavior that involves constructive change-oriented communication intended to improve the situation, which is mainly achieved through speaking up to the leaders. Voice behavior is multidimensional. Some scholars (Detert & Trevino, 2010) make no difference between speaking up and voice behavior. This research mainly examines when and how employees speak up to their leaders.

As the proactive and voluntary extra role behavior, voice behavior has the following characteristics: (1) It is not written or prescribed in the job description; (2) It is not recognized in the formal reward system; (3) Performance in voice behavior will not lead to punishment (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). (4) Voice behavior is employees' rational behavior after weighing the potential risks and benefits in their cognition, only when the potential benefits outweigh the potential risks will employees be likely to make their voice behaviors. (5) The purpose of voice behavior is to improve the status quo of the organization, enhance organizational efficiency or reduce the mistakes in decision making or event. (6) It may cause a negative public image or label (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995; Milliken et al., 2003) or losing social capital (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Liu, Zhu, &Yang, 2010).

6.   Variables in different levels

6.1 Perceived organizational support

Perceived organizational support (POS) refers to global beliefs held by employees regarding the extent to which their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986). Eisenberger et al. used this concept to denote a top-down commitment in organizations. Employees make the evaluation and judgment about organization's attitudes after perceiving how the organization treats them. Such a commitment perception will affect employee's behavior and performance in work. In line with SET and norm of reciprocity, when perceiving the organization's high support, employees probably have the sense of obligation to return the organization. Then they are expected to improve their extra-role behavior including voice behavior to support the organization. POS motivates employees to show care for the organization's welfare (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986). On the contrast, the decrease of perceived organizational support will lower employee's sense of responsibility, which may inhibit employee voice behavior. They will not speak out their good ideas and use silence as the return to the organization, to keep the exchange balanced.

Proposition 1a: *The perceived organizational support is positively related to employee voice behavior.*

6.2 Organizational identification

Organizational identification is defined as a perceived oneness with an organization and the experience of the organization's successes and failures as one's own (Mael & Ashforth, 1992). Theoretically, employees with high levels of work-group identification are expected to be more likely than those with low levels of workgroup identification to engage in voice behaviors that are aimed at improving the performance of that work group (Venkataramani, & Tangirala, 2010). Because, first, they feel emotionally intertwined with the work group, using the word *we* rather than *they* when referring to the work group, and they experience both its successes and failures personally and intensely (Pratt, 1998). Second, employees with high organization identification are likely to take their behavior for the standpoint of the group norms and values, due to the integration of organization norms and values into their self-concept. They believe that they are inseparable member of the group and their interests are connected with fate of the organization. Then they are more likely to "evaluate the several alternatives of choice in terms of their consequences for the specified group" (Simon, 1997, p. 284), and strongly consider the costs to the work group of holding back important concerns or opinions (e.g., Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008a), and they are therefore driven to actively contribute to the goals of their work group (Mael & Ashforth, 1992).

As mentioned before, voice behavior is voluntary, which is not officially written in the job descriptions and required by the organization. Some researchers suggest how the employee perceives the relations between self with organization considerably affect the decision to speak up or not. Identification allows the individual to vicariously partake in accomplishments beyond his or her powers (Katz and Kahn, 1978) and can render personally harmful activities worthwhile insofar as they aid the larger self (Staw, 1984; Mael & Ashforth, 1992). When recognizing the target and value of the organization, the employee will tend to choose voice behavior or other extra-role behavior, such as helping. Liu et al. (2009) studied the effects of identification on voice behavior, with personal

identification and social identification as the predictors. They found that personal identity was more closely related to speaking up and the social identification can significantly predict speaking out. In addition, employee identification can also explain the relationship between transformational leadership and employee voice behavior. Fuller's (2006) finding indicates that, comparing with outside prestige and internal respect, Organizational identification is voice behavior variables to predict more direct (Fuller, Hester, Frey, Relyea& Beu, 2006). Riketta's empirical study also shows that organization identification is strongly related to extra-role behavior.

Proposition 1b: *Organizational* identification *is positively related to employee voice behavior.*

6.3 Perceived supervisor support

Eisenberger et al. (2002) defined perceived supervisor support as the extent to which the employees believe that the supervisor recognizes their contribution, and supports and concerns their well-beings. As the spokesman and resources distributor, the direct supervisors can influence employee's affect, attitudes and behaviors in work and organization, and they can apply the legitimate power in organization to exerting unique influence on the subordinates (Dineen, Tomlinson & Lewicki, 2006). In practice, when employee perceives that the supervisor is encouraging, supporting or appreciating his or her job, he or she may try to speak more. Generally, three reasons supporting this point. First, perceived supervisor support may influence employee's judgment about voice behavior effectiveness. If perceiving that the supervisor cannot help avoid, at least reduce the risks and costs of voice behavior, and is reluctant to provide necessary resource, employees will possibly give up speaking up. In contrast, when the supervisor encourages employees' work-improving behaviors, different but innovative ideas and organization learning, and is perceived to be willing to provide help with resource and affect support (Gorge, 1993), employees will tend to believe voice behavior is more feasible and that their new ideas will be endorsed and adopted. Besides, employees usually try to find clues in working environment to reduce uncertainty and increase predictability, and the supervisor's behaviors are reliable source for them (Erber & Fiske, 1984; Rousseau & Greller, 1994). Then, employees can have a good sense of the supervisor's expectation of the employee's role through observing the supervisor's behavior. On the one hand, this recognition and expectation is capable of encouraging employees to actively express their ideas and suggestion (Eden, 1984; Oldham and Cummings, 1996). On the other hand, to meet the supervisor's expectation and get further recognition, the perceived supervisor support will promote the employee to actively work and take more voice behavior.

Second, the perceived supervisor support the affect employees' judgment about the safety in speaking environment and voice behavior's valence. In accordance with SET, perceived supervisor support makes employees feel that they are obligated to help the supervisor to achieve the objective in work (Eisenberger et al., 2002; Stinglhamber & Vandenberghe, 2003). This sense of obligation will propel employees to undertake more extra-role behaviors. Additionally, employees tend to believe that supervisor with support is more willing to listen and accept their suggestion, which will make the employees believe that their voice behaviors are meaningful and useful. As mentioned previously, voice behavior is risky and even challenging the supervisor, and employees usually assess its risks through the supervisor's behaviors (Milliken, et al., 2003). When perceiving the supervisor is respecting and concerning their value and well-beings, they are expected to believe that sincere communication is non-risk for them.

Thus it is proposed that: Proposition 2a: *Perceived supervisor support is positively related to employee voice behavior.*

6.4 Transformational leadership

Ehtiyar and Yanardag (2008) argued that, whether leaders in organizations advocated and encouraged employees to openly express their views was one of the important factors affecting employees' voice behavior. Similarly, Morrison and Milliken (2000) claimed that, one of the important reasons that employees gave up their voice was the leader's personal bias. The leaders do not believe the

authenticity of the information provided by the subordinates, the think debate and disagreement will cripple organizational effectiveness.

A number of specific transformational behaviors, including individualized consideration and inspirational motivation (Bass, 1985), should be related to the voice calculus (Detert & Burris, 2007). Transformational leadership is willing to accept and adopt proactive and changing behavior (Bass, 1985). Bass et al. (1989) pointed out that, transformational leaders encouraged their subordinates to creatively solve problems beyond compliance with formal agreements. All such the specific behaviors of transformational leadership as enthusiasm, leadership charisma, personal care and intellectual stimulation may motivate employees in employee voice. Charisma will evoke subordinate's affective identification to the leaders, so that they are more willing to support leaders' actions in improving organizational performance. Charismatic leader describe the desirable vision and high expectations to subordinates, will inspire their enthusiasm for the work, strengthen the subordinates' commitments to the organization goal and vision in the future, which will encourage the subordinates to speak out their ideas supporting organization's development (Bass, 1985); Personalized care behavior reflects the leaders can take the initiative to listen to the voice of the employees, compassionate their hard work, care for every employee unique ability, interest and achievement motivation. It could facilitate communication between leaders and subordinates and stimulate the subordinates to speak out opinions and suggestions (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Intellectual stimulation emphasizes that actively create open environment, the pursuit of new knowledge and respect the innovation initiative, which will stimulate the initiative of employees, and actively to change the organization's status quo (Bass, 1985). These transformational leadership behaviors are conducive to maintain employees' original motivation and make it put into actions (Milliken et al., 2003). More importantly, the openness attitude demonstrated by leaders to their subordinate will facilitate their subordinates perceive that voice behavior with the potential risk is less likely to cause loss to them, thereby reducing power distance between leader and employees (Edmondson, 2003).

Also, as the extra role behavior, voice behavior requires employees to make extra efforts and assume certain risks. Through building vision and models, transformational leaders encourage subordinates to accept and strive for organization's overall objectives, beyond personal interest, closely combine their goals with organization's success (Shamir et al., 1993; Kark, Shamir, & Chen, 2003). Transformational leadership, through the vision of incentives, personalized care, role models enable subordinate form to promotion oriented, pay more attention to work outcome, thus being positively innovative and risk-taking (Kark & Van Dijk, 2007). In addition, studies on employees' creativity finds that because transformational leadership encourage subordinates to be innovative, subordinates believe that they have the ability to make new ideas , to challenge the status quo (Shin & Zhou, 2003; Gong, Huang, & Farh, 2009). To conclude, the transformational leadership convinces the employee that they are willing and able to have the ability to have voice behavior.

Proposition 2b: *Tramsformational leadership is positively related to employee voice behavior.*

6.5 Leader member exchange (LMX)

LMX is the concept describing the quality of relations between leader and the member. In LMX of high quality, leader is more likely to give employees more encouragement, support, trust and even information and resources, employees are more motivated to express their point of view. Based on SET and the norm of reciprocity, when employees believe that they are being treated well, they should feel a need to reciprocate this favorable treatment and should contribute to the organization above and beyond the call of duty. High-quality LMX will make subordinate have the reciprocal perception. To shoulder the reciprocal responsibility to leader, employee are often more willing to return the leader. It is this return or exchange notion that profound influences employee attitudes toward the organization, which is shown through behavior or attitude in work. In this circumstance, active voice behavior will be one of the possible choices for employees.

LMX theory points out that the leader will develop different exchange relationships with every subordinate, including low-quality and top-down LMX and high-quality LMX. In low-quality LMX,

the leader and the subordinate only have the formal relationship, and the subordinate mainly undertakes the in-role work. Whereas, in high-quality exchange, the relations between leaders and subordinates will go beyond the formal authority and develop mutual trust, mutual support and mutual benefit relationship, in this case, subordinates, are often willing to conduct more extra-role tasks (Liden & Graen, 1980). Besides, the high-quality LMX will make attached to the organization, thus to make the voice behavior. Van Dyne, Kamdar and Joireman (2008) argued that employees would be more likely to engage in voice when they perceived a high-quality LMX relationship with their supervisor, voice role perception moderating their relations. In other words, when employee perceive the voice behavior to be a part of their job, the relations between LMX and voice behavior is more obvious.

Proposition 2c: *LMX is positively related to employee voice behavior.*

6.6 Psychological ownership

Psychological ownership refers to people's sense of ownership (Pierce, Kostova, & Dirks, 2001). In the research on organizational behavior, scholars focus on organization psychological ownership, viewing the organization as the target of ownership (Pierce, Kostova & Dirks, 2001). The organization enables employees have the sense of psychological ownership because it meets three kinds of needs: home, self-efficacy, self-identity (Van Dyne &Pierce, 2004). As discussed previously in this paper, when employees speak up in organizations, they tend to consider risks and benefits. Employees' assessment of the risks in the voice is negatively related to their psychological safety. When psychological safety is stronger, employees' perceived risks will be lower (Edmondson, 2003; Piderit & Ashford, 2003; Milliken, Morrison, & Hewlin, 2003). Organization Psychological ownership includes the sense of home, which will make people realize that it is safe in the organization, thereby reducing the risk of voice. On the other hand, with organization psychological ownership, employees regard organization as a part of their own life, their positive emotion and sense of responsibility to the organization will be produced so as to stimulate extra-role behaviors to protect and improve the organization (Vande Walle, Van Dyne, &Kostova, 1995; Pierce et al., 2001). For voice behavior, when employees have the belief that the organization is partially owned by them, the interests of the organization are also positively related to their own interests, they will speak out their suggestion or ideas to leaders and peers to improve organizational effectiveness and competitiveness, as well as to benefit themselves.

It is thus evident that, from the perspectives of risk and return assessment, organization psychological ownership is expected to stimulate the employee's voice behavior.

Proposition 3a: *Psychological* ownership *is positively related to employee voice behavior.*

6.7 Organization-based self-esteem

Organization-based self-esteem (OBSE) refers to an individual's beliefs about his/her own capabilities and social worth in the workplace (Pierce et al., 1989)—is likely to influence employees' perceptions of behavioral control over work behaviors, particularly for behaviors that require considerable social and political maneuvering, such as voice (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998; Liang, 2012). OBSE reflects the employee's self-perceived value as an organization member. High OBSE employees usually perceive themselves to be important, efficient and valuable, while low OBSE employees tend to believe themselves are not important in the organization. So OBSE is individual's self-perceived importance based on role perception in the organization. Those believing that they are valuable and meaningful for the organization will feel strong sense of achievement and success, which is the endogenous motivation for individuals to make the job related behavior.

The positive effect of OBSE on the employee's work attitude and behavior has been examined by many scholars (Pierce & Gardner, 2004). Research shows that employees of high OBSE are more willing to participate in the organizational activities and undertake useful organizational behaviors, such as voice behavior. LePine &Van Dyne (1998) proposed individuals with high self-esteem are more willing to engage with their work environment. This is mainly because human beings have the

basic needs of self-consistency and self-enhancement. Employees with high OBSE tend to have the self-concept of organizational trust and appreciation. In order to keep self- consistency with such positive self-concept, they often take voice behavior, to maintain the self-evaluation consistent with their behaviors. In contrast, employees with low OBSE do not have the self-concept of organizational trust and appreciation. Consistent with this negative self-concept, they lack internal motivation to participate in voice behavior. Liang, Farh & Farh (2012) found that OBSE has positive effect on employee promotive as well as prohibitive voice behavior. Therefore, employees with high OBSE will have a stronger intrinsic motivation perform voice behavior.

Proposition 3b: *OBSE is positively* related *to employee voice behavior.*

6.8 Perceived psychological safety

Perceived psychological safety is defined as a belief that employees think engagement in risky behaviors will not bring loss to them (Edmondson, 1999). It is a perception after long-term interpersonal interaction between the employees, or between employees and leaders, which can be viewed as a concept measuring loss when undertaking risky behaviors. As we discussed in previous part of this paper, employees would consider the costs before conducting voice behavior, including potential losses and threats to them. If the voice is not adopted or has failed result, it may have a negative impact on employee's self image, position and work. Therefore, when employees perceive the risk in voice is high, they will tend not to do. On the contrary, if employees perceive that their self image, position and work will not be adversely affected, and even they can obtain some interests (such as organizational appraisal, position promotion etc.), consequently, the benefits of voice outweigh the costs, leading to a more positive evaluation of voice (Liang, 2012).. Therefore, perceived psychological safety is considered to be an important cognitive variable affecting employees' voice behavior (Edmondson, 2003). It can make the individual freely demonstrate the self, without worrying that this behavior will affect the individual's position, or career and image (Kahn, 1990). In addition, it makes the members willing to assume tasks needing innovation and courage to complete (Schein & Bennis, 1965).

Employees with high psychological safety are more likely to show and express themselves without worrying that their behavior and words will incur negative impact on their image, position and career. Both Edmondson's (2003) and Liang's (2008) research have shown that, when having higher psychological safety, their attitude towards voice behavior will be more active. Van Dyne et al.(2008) found that, interpersonal relationship and trust among employees will be better, if their psychological safety is higher. In this situation, voice behavior is safe, because it will lead to minimal risk and supervisor's recognition. Conversely, employees who fear significant personal losses from speaking up (e.g., restricted career mobility, loss of support from superiors and peers) are likely to choose "defensive" silence (Van Dyne et al., 2003). Therefore, when employees perceive that their psychological safety is high, their voice behaviors will greatly increase.

Proposition 3c: *Perceived* psychological *safety is positively related to employee voice behavior.*

6.9 Proactive personality

Proactive personality is a personality trait taking the initiative to influence and improve the current environment or to create a new environment, as a challenge to current situation rather than to be passively adapted to the current situation (Crant, 1995). Employees with high proactive personality will not passively adapt themselves to the environment they do not like, but spontaneously adopt a positive approach to overcome obstacles and difficulties, and actively change the environment or the complete tasks. In contrast, employees with low proactive personality are more easily influenced by environment. Thompson found employees of high proactive personality will actively participate in organization's various activities, and find a solution to the organizations' development problems, and get useful information from other places to improve their work efficiency (Thompson, 2005). At the same time, voice behavior is a proactive voluntary extra role behavior requiring proactive personality. Actually, some scholars have found that proactive personality and employee voice behavior are in significantly positive correlation, employees with high personality tend to openly put forward their

views and perspectives (Crant, Kim&WangJie, 2011). Furthermore, the assertive (LePine and Van Dyne 2001), proactive type of people (Detert and Burris 2007) who engage in more voice behavior are also likely to be vigilant in improving other aspects of their job performance.

Proposition 4: *Proactive* personality *is positively related to employee voice behavior.*

The establishing process of a social exchange can be divided into 3 different phases: assessment of risk in exchange relations, tentative exchange, and establishing stable and sturdy exchange relations (Bauer &Green, 1996). Building on this logic, we divide the whole employee voice process into three phases: cognitive assessment of risks and rewards, tentative exchange, and establishing stable and sturdy exchange relations.

7. Phase I Cognitive assessment of risks and rewards

Risk perception means employees' perception about various risks and rewards possibly affecting career development, life and health, which are probably brought by voice behavior. If loss and benefit caused by risk is balanced, people will be more likely to accept this exchange (Scott, 1987, Cook，Yamagishi, Cheshire, Cooper，Matsuda & Mashima, 2005). Therefore, risk perception is the starting point for the establishment of a social exchange relationship. Specifically, employees will accept the exchange with organization when assessment on benefits and loss in their voice behavior indicates that benefit is greater than loss.

8. Phase II Tentative exchange

This phase is named tentative exchange, in which the two parties begin to take action for exchange but are still uncertain about the possible risks and rewards of speaking up. This phase is like a bridge connecting the cognitive assessment of risk and actual assessment of risk.

More importantly, in this phase, persuading leaders to endorse and eventually adopt their suggestions is a substantive outcome that employees assess when speaking up (Detert & Trevino, 2010; Dutton et al., 1997; Burris, 2012). Endorsement and adoption are two different conceptions and stages in employee voice behavior. The first reason is that, voice behavior is the direct interaction between employees or employee and the supervisor. Endorsement does not mean actual action, which is comparatively easier, while adoption is usually conducted after deliberate consideration. Secondly, voice behavior is challenging and sometimes critic to the leaders and even breaks their vested interests. Sometimes, prohibitive behavior may make the leaders lose face. The leaders will take their vested interests and image into consideration before adopting new ideas or suggestion.

8.1 Perceived insider status

Perceived insider status is advanced based on leader-member exchange theory (Grean, Dansereau, & Minami, 1972), reflecting the extent to which employees perceive themselves to be organization insiders (versus outsiders). Leaders have different exchange relationship with different subordinates. The relationship quality distinguishes two different identities insiders and outsiders. The perception of belonging to an organization is based on the presence of boundaries that differentiate in-group individuals from out-group employees (Masterson & Stamper, 2003). Stamper and Mastersom (2003) believed that the in-group identity cognition referred to personal space as the group member and cognition of acceptance, namely the degree that individual can perceive him or her as the in-group membership in a certain organization. The cognition of insider identity may improve employee responsibility and role of obedience in a group and organization.

Proposition 5a: Messenger's insider status affects voice endorsement by leader.

8.2 Messenger trustworthiness

Trustworthiness refers to the extent to which the voicing employee can be relied upon to identify issues and make suggestions that are intended to be in the best interests of the organization (Colquitt, Scott, & LePine, 2007; Whiting et al., 2012). Trustworthiness of messenger will affect the voice endorsement and the target's evaluation on the voice performance. First, when a voicing employee is

highly trustworthy, observers are more likely to attribute the suggestions offered to prosocial rather than self-serving motives because they believe that the behavior is intended to benefit the organization, leading observers to evaluate the voicing employee more favorably (Kelley & Michela, 1980; Whiting et al., 2012). Second, because trust is an important factor in the formation of interpersonal liking (McAllister, 1995; Whiting et al., 2012), trustworthy employees generally are in good interpersonal relations and have the advantage in personal liking, compared with the untrustworthy employees. Leaders are more likely to view messenger from the trustworthy employees as more reliable and feasible in the affective manners. Additionally, when a voicing employee is highly trustworthy, observers are more likely to attribute the suggestions offered to prosocial rather than self-serving motives because they believe that the behavior is intended to benefit the organization, leading observers to evaluate the voicing employee more favorably (Whiting et al., 2012). .

Therefore, the voices from trustworthy employees are more likely to be accepted and evaluated positively.

Proposition 5b: Messenger trustworthiness affects voice endorsement.

8.3 Messenger's expertise

Expertise refers to the extent to which the voicing employee possesses the knowledge necessary to make credible suggestions (Eagly et al., 1978; Whiting et al., 2012). When the employee with high expertise speaks up, especially in the field he or she is professional, leaders tend to think such voices are more credible and reliable. First of all, people are expected to admire the employees having profound knowledge and professional background. Leaders believe that suggestions and ideas from professionals can bring more success because such kind of people may have much successful experience. Second, professional people generally have done more successful jobs and have better achievement in some tasks than those who are not professional. Practice speaks loudly than words. Their successful stories and knowledge have impressed people deeply, so, affectively, people are more likely to accept their advice. In addition, people will have no choice except to accept the voices from employee with expertise, when considering suggestion or solution from an expert employee, in the filed in which others are incompetent. Thirdly, in nature, voice behavior is a special behavior challenging the status quo, which requires that the messengers should have expertise and profound background to make their suggestion, comments and ideas more pervasive, credible or even authoritative.

Proposition 5c: Messenger's *expertise affects voice endorsement.*

8.4 Leader's emotion

Voicing suggestion endorsement involves a complex decision process. Researchers have argued that complex decision processes in advice taking are most susceptible to the influence of affect (e.g., Fiedler, 1991; Forgas, 1995, 1999a, 1999b, 2002; Gino and Schweitzer, 2008). Jones and George (1998) conjectured that, experiencing positive moods or emotions may cause one to have more positive perceptions of others and see the world through "rose-colored glasses", resulting in a heightened experience of trust in another person.

The negative emotions will increase the optimism, doubt, or even critics in the eyes of the receptive people, so they will not accept the advice from others easily. Gino and Schweitzer (2008) support this argument by examining how the incidental emotions influence the advice taking. Their research result shows that participants who experienced incidental gratitude relied upon advice more than did participants in the neutral condition, and participants in the neutral condition relied upon advice more than did participants who experienced incidental anger.

Proposition 5d: Leader's emotion affects *voice endorsement.*

8.5 Messenger's attitude and communication styles

In their research, Kim et al. (2009) indicate the important role of employee attitude (cynical versus trusting) and employee communication styles (aggressive versus diplomatic) in managerial reactions to voicing discontent. They find that when cynical (rather than trusting) employees voice discontent

with a company's unethical practices, South Korean managers are less likely to provide social support toward the employees. The discontent voiced by cynical (rather than trusting) employees may be seen as disruptive (Andersson & Pearson, 1999).

Communication styles play an important role in how people assess the messenger and the message (Alberti & Emmons, 1986). To effectively use voice, one must not only speak up about one's ideas, but also do so in a way that is noticeable or heard by important stakeholders (Kish-Gephart et al., 2009; Liang, 2012). Depending on the communication style used, a message might be viewed as sincere and worthy of a considered response, or conversely, it might elicit defensiveness, denial, and actions designed to discount the messenger (Kim et al., 2009). Voice in an aggressive manner may be viewed as deliberately changing or attacking, which would engender criticism and denial in natural response of the leader.

Proposition 5e: Messenger's attitude and communication style affect voice endorsement by leader.

8.6 Leader's attribution of messenger's motive

Attribution theory suggests that people possess an inherent tendency to search for causes of observed behaviors, whether their own or others'. Leader's adoption of voicing suggestions (such as partially or wholly adoption of the voice, or totally denial) are influenced by imputed motives. Employee behaviors at work are regularly interpreted by co-workers, supervisors, and subordinates (Ang and Van Dyne, 2003). The motive attributed to the behavior will affect the adoption and evaluation of the voicing suggestions proposed by employees. In Eastman's (1994) findings, the motives contributed to the OCB are altruistic motives and instrumental motives. Logically, it seems likely that the altruistic motive attributed to voice behavior would display the image of the messenger as good citizenship, which will make people feel less relaxed and deliberative in considering the proposed suggestions and comments. On the contrast, instrumental motives present the messenger a selfish-calculus and purposeful impression, which would arouse psychological defense in considering the suggestions and ideas. Behaviors associated with altruistic motives are likely to positively influence performance judgments, whereas those associated with instrumental motives may be devalued or discounted (Podsakoff et al., 1993). If leaders perceive that the complaining employee is concerned with ensuring the company behaves ethically, they may be more receptive in understanding the employee's objections and may even respond favorably. However, if leaders perceive that the employee is questioning a corporate decision only to embarrass the leader, the latter may dismiss the issue and even respond negatively (Kim et al., 2009).

The second level of meaning that the leaders' attribution of employee motive in speaking up will affect the adoption of suggestions is that sometimes the actual motive is misattributed by the observers. Ang and Van Dyne (2003) had verified the idea that motives behind both silence and voice were likely to be misattributed, such that there is a mismatch between motive and outcomes received. Accuracy of observer attributions will probably engender outcomes consistent with employee actual motives, while misattribution or inaccurate attribution will cause low voice adoption and low trust.

Proposition 6: Messenger motive attribution by the leader affects voice adoption.

Outcome

Rewards

Basically potential benefits of voice behavior can be divided into 2 categories: one is the formal reward given by organization after the voice behavior, such as bonuses and promotions. The other informal is informal rewards to employees, which can be categorized into two aspects: Voice behavior can demonstrate the employee's potential leadership, to identify the problems and find solutions are the trait of outstanding leadership. Second, leaders may feel that this employee actively concern for organization, this behavior can bring good image to the messenger.

8.7 Performance improvement

In order to make practicable voice behavior, employees need to spend their wisdom and resources thinking, researching and finding better or good solutions to the existing problems within the

organization. Then they will communicate or present their views and opinions to others. This is a communicative individual and collective innovation oriented process. In order to get recognition or appreciation from their leaders, people have to endeavor to find more feasible and creative ideas, which can produce effective results. As LePine and the Van Dyne pointed out (2003), innovation originated from finding and advancing new ideas and proposals challenging existing programs and practice. To some extent, through voice behavior, employees will allow employees to improve innovation performance by their initiative.

Voice behaviors also have an impact on employees' individual performance. Because voice behaviors, especially those with valuable suggestion or ideas, often demonstrating their work attitude and the ability in work (Stamper & Van Dyne, 2001), are likely to get the leaders' recognition, so as to help the messenger obtain higher scores in performance evaluation (Thompson, 2005). Put simply, individual's active voice behavior can let the leader see his or her serious and thoughtful working attitudes. In summary, through reasonable suggestions based on personal wisdom and the ability to work, one can display high working ability, and improve the good impression and evaluation in the minds of the others in a certain extent.

The managerial perspective of the good voicing suggestions by a subordinate should be good for that subordinate's performance because voice could be potentially useful for improving the organization and thereby for the leader's own performance or outcomes as well. Consequently, leaders who think they are receiving useful discretionary input from employees are more likely to give employees higher performance ratings, particularly in settings where performance is hard to capture with objective metrics (Whiting et al. 2008). Indeed, Van Dyne and LePine et al. (1998) found that supervisory ratings of employee voice were positively related to employees' overall performance evaluations. Additionally, leaders may see voice as a sign of concern for the organization and its well-being (Hirschman 1970) and therefore reward this commitment (Shore et al. 1995).

Proposition 7a: Performance improvement is one of the rewards caused by voice adoption.

8.8 Organizational commitment

Organizational commitment is defined as an employee's belief in and acceptance of an organization's goals and values, a willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organization, and a desire to maintain membership in the organization (Mowday et al., 1979). The reasons for voice behavior may improve organizational commitment can be found in the followings. First, when employees see that their suggestions or comments affect decision making in organizations, they feel encouraged and valued to contribute more though voice behavior because they view this kind of influence as the participation in management. For instance, employees who felt their input was considered by leaders became more committed to the decisions made and were more attached to their team (Korsgaard et al. 1995; Burris, Deter and Romney 2013). Second, Eisenberger et al. (1986) found that an employee's organizational commitment is strongly influenced by the extent to which the employee perceives that the organization is committed to him or her. Employees whose voicing suggestions affect the working procedures or decision making result may feel obliged to return with organizational commitment. Therefore, participation in decision making, particularly in times of major organizational change, is one important driver of increasing employees' commitment to organizations (Elaine et al, 2011. Purcell et al. 2003).

Proposition 7b: Organizational commitment is one of the rewards caused by voice adoption.

8.9 Employee sense of fairness

Some scholars have pointed out, sense of fairness is the most significant influence exerted by voice behavior on organization. Studies have shown that, with the increase of employee voice behavior, their sense of fairness, control and job satisfaction will increase (Huntonetal, 1998). Indeed, the frequency and extent of the voices that are accepted and adopted are the important factors affecting sense of fairness and job satisfaction. Derek's (2002) research showed that, the perceived voice opportunities were more likely to result in perceived procedural justice. When the voice adoption rate

was low, voice behavior would have a negative impact on perceived procedural justice. In other words, employee making many voices but not adopted by the leaders will possibly perceive procedural justice.

Proposition 7c: Employee sense of fairness is one of the rewards caused by voice adoption.

8.10   Good image

Voice behavior is likely to help enhance the messengers' image, because it reflects their ability to work and then enhance people's perceptions of their abilities in organizations, namely competency (Stamper & Van Dyne, 2001). Also voice process may also let others perceive that the messengers are actively concerning and caring about the organization, which is expected to bring good reputation to them (Thompson, 2003); In addition, voice behavior can demonstrate the messengers' leadership, one key trait in leadership is to promote change (Kotter, l990). Empirical study also shows that voice behavior, especially the creativity in finding problems, giving suggestions and advancing solutions, is one important characteristic of a good leader (Morrison & phelps, 1999).

For the instrumentality, voice behavior is viewed as a kind of impression management behavior. To build a good impression is one of its intrinsic motivations. Employees' active behavior can be regarded as a kind of impression promotion tactics.

Proposition 7d: Good image is one of the rewards caused by voice adoption.

Risks

At the same time voice behavior also has certain risks, the potential risks are mainly that, voice behavior is likely to be misunderstood by managers as "complain" and "carp". Especially the inhibitive voice challenging existing management status is likely to be viewed by leaders as a personal challenge, which will cause the messenger revenge, demotion, and even dismissal. Informal risk may be that the messenger's good image is damaged and the social capital is lost (Milliken, et al., 2003) because of inappropriate voice.

From the perspective of impression management, Fuller et al. (2007) proposed that the reason that employees gave up their own point of view was that they were afraid that others might regard this behavior as a criticism, which probably harm their impression to others. Generally, the negative influence on the messenger can be summarized as demotion, troublemakers label, damaging relations with others, retaliation or punishment, damaging the interests of others and losing social capital. Most of the literature focuses on the informal and invisible risks such as image damage, negative label and loss of social capital, which is also the biggest concern and fear for employee when speaking up, thus this paper also mainly focus on these risks.

The most frequently mentioned reason for remaining silent was the fear of being viewed or labeled negatively, and as a consequence, damaging valued relationships (Milliken, Morrison and Hewlin, 2003). According to the anticipated risks damaging the image of employees having voice behavior in Morrison and Milliken's interview study, the main possible negative outcome for the individuals will be the followings: Be labeled or viewed negatively (30% of respondents' answer in interview), including be labeled as a troublemaker or complainer and as a tattletale. Damaging a relationship (27.5%), including loss of trust and respect and loss of acceptance and support. Feelings of futility (25%), including speaking up will not make a difference and recipient will not be responsive. Retaliation or punishment (22.5%), including losing job and not getting promoted. Negative impact on others (20%), including upset or embarrass someone and make someone get in trouble. The possible outcome will make others to feel threatened or to become defensive.

Propositions 8a, 8b, 8c and 8d: being labeled negatively, damaged relationships, retaliation or punishment, and negative impact on others are the risks brought by voice behavior.

Distal outcome:

8.11   Organizational effectiveness

Voice behavior is an important driver in the process of organizational change, many scholars believe that employees' voice behavior is necessary to the healthy development of organization (Morrison & Milliken, 2000). Many serious problems will happen in organizations if there is no employee's voice behavior. A typical result is that employees may follow the authoritative views in without critical thinking. At the same time, voice behavior is also considered as the first step in the innovation process (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998). Only when their ideas are expressed and shared, then can employees create successful innovation.

Therefore, to understand the process and reasons of employee voice is particularly important to stimulate the innovation. Voice behavior is beneficial to the individual, as it helps the messenger establish the image that he or she is capable (Stamper & Van Dyne, 2001), and get higher scores in performance evaluation (LePine &Van Dyne, 1998).As the reflection of employees' rights of citizenship in organizations, it will improve their sense of fairness and ownership to the organization, by allowing employees to speak up their views on the organization, and ultimately facilitates the organization to become attractive.

Voice behavior is considered as the first step of innovation and organizational change (Lepine &Van dyne, 1995, Scottt & Bruce, 1994), on the one hand, the organization encourages employees to make their voice, more voice opportunities people feel, the more they can improve their job satisfaction (Derek, 2002) and organizational commitment (Landau, 2009); on the another hand, voice channels will be opportunities for employees to express dissatisfaction with the organization, correct mistakes, improve process and solve problems (Zhou & George, 2001). On the contrast, lack of reasonable voice channels is likely to result in serious problems for the organization, such as high turnover and organizational instability.

Proposition 9a: Organizational effectiveness is one the distal outcomes of voice adoption.

8.12   Organizational Learning

Voice can also improve Organizational Learning activities. Compared to those team members always keeping silent, those who often advance and communicate ideas with team members free can better learn new working methods (Edmondson.2003). Edmondson (2003) argued that this kind of communication within the team was the sparking of various thoughts, producing creative ideas. She proved voice behavior's influence on team learning by using an interdisciplinary action group as the object of study. Moreover, she believed that in a team, the new business's successful implementation would be decided by members' comfort and ease of speaking up.

Nowadays, in order to adapt to the increase their competitiveness, many organizations undertake organizational change. Employees' voice will play critical roles in continuously sustaining the organization's development and effectiveness. Peter Deruk (1969) remarked, organizations needed the employees' views put in to make things better. Erez，LePine & Elms(2002) also supported this point in their research.

Proposition 9b: Organizational learning is one the distal outcomes of voice adoption.

9.   Phase III Actual assessment and feedback

In this phase, both the leader and messenger have a clear understanding of the actual outcome of the voice behavior. The actual risks and rewards may be totally consistent with those in messenger's cognition before speak up, may be slightly different or may be totally different. Whether or not, the actual outcome will have great impact on messenger's assessment through valence and expectancy, and on next round exchange.

9.1 Discussion and conclusion

This paper integrates important variable in employee voice behavior and develops an ecosystem of how and when employee speak up in organizations, building the dynamics and interaction between employee cognition and contextual variables. Through the above examination, we can make at least

three conclusions. First, none of these variables in contextual as well as individual level can wholly predict when employee will speak up to their leaders. Actually, when employee is expected to speak up entails joint conditions, it's a complex result of cognition assessment, contextual, personality and motive. Second, before speaking up, employees assess the perceived risks and rewards may bring by voice behavior in their cognition. They not only assess the influences from organization and leader, also the valence and expectancy in voice behavior. Finally, the employee voice behavior ecosystem includes the messenger, the leader, the message, emotions, context, perception and voice outcome, they interact with each other into a mechanism. In this ecosystem, every phase is indispensable. In accordance with SET, the balance of this system requires the organization to establish a continuous mechanism encouraging employees to voice their suggestions and ideas.

9.2 Contributions

This paper contributes to current literature and further research at least in the following three aspects. First, this paper examines the contextual variables as well as the employee's cognition. As Wilkinson et al. (2004) observed, the simple existence of employee voice systems and practices would not necessarily deliver the long-term psychological aspects of voice in terms of employees' believing and having confidence in those mechanisms. Hence, it is important to examine employee perceptions of voice, rather than simply whether voice mechanisms exist (Farndale, et al., 2011). Second, we explore how the voice outcome is produced not only from the leader's perspective, but also from the joint and interactive dynamics of both messengers and leaders, which facilitate this paper to fully capture how the outcomes including rewards and risks are formed. Burris, Detert and Romney (2013) also agreed that considering either perspective (the managerial or subordinate perspective) alone does not fully capture how voice is related to employee outcomes. Finally, we close one blank in current literature by examining how the actual risks and rewards affect employee voice. Many scholars have realized that an initial motivation to speak up is likely to manifest in behavior only when the net perceived benefits outweigh potential costs (Detert & Burris, 2007), but they do not explore how the actual risks and outcome affect employee's decision making to speak up.

9.3 Limitations

This paper is not an empirical research, other equally variables may be missed out in our model. We try to put all major variables in every level into our model based on logic and literature. However, due to the complexity of voice behavior (risky and promotive nature), it is likely that many other factors, whether big or small, play important roles in the ecosystem. Therefore, further empirical study in such field will be necessary to explore these factors.

Secondly, because sometimes the risks and rewards brought by employee voice behavior can not be seen or assessed in short term, the model we proposed cannot be applied to explaining some phenomena in reality. It will take enormous time and effort to overcome employees' widely shared and deeply imbedded perception that speaking up is unwise (Morrison and Milliken, 2000).

Finally, this paper does not give a clear picture about which variable we examined in the model is more important in employee voice behavior. In other words, we do not examine the weight of every variable in this paper. Thereby, how to examine the result of missing any variable is unanswered in this paper.

9.4 Implications

Due to the importance of variables discussed in this paper for employee voice behavior, we know that when the employee is expected to speak up. In practice, to collect innovative ideas and suggestions, leaders should encourage employee through a multi-level management measures, because no single variable can wholly predict employee voice behavior. SET tells us that, to establish and maintain a long-term and continuous exchange between employee and organization, such exchange should be balanced. This paper analogizes the mechanism of employee-organization and employee-peer voice exchange as ecosystem. In this system, many factors may influence the employee voice behavior. Thereby, in attributing why the employee is silence, mangers or the peer should consider the other

factors such as the leader, context and even organization culture, instead of merely focusing on the messenger.

This paper reminds us that, thanks to the unique natures of voice behavior, e.g. risky and misunderstanding, in some sense, employee tend to view it as a risky behavior. The fears and risks have been the main obstacle. Thus, in order to encourage employee to speak up, directly, managers and the HR department should try to ensure the employee that voice behavior is safe and valued by creating chances and conditions conducive to voice behavior. Employees might also contribute more if they could balance the untested, intangible costs they've been assuming against rewards that went beyond personal acknowledgment of speaking up—that is, to something tangible. One possibility would be for leaders to tailor their reward systems so that employees share more directly in the cost savings or revenue streams they help create by volunteering ideas (Detert & Edmondson, 2007).

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