I Am Sure I Can Speak Up: The Role of Efficacy on Employee Voice

by Unika Prihatsanti

I Am Sure I Can Speak Up:
The Role of Efficacy on Employee Voice

Unika Prihatsanti[1,2], Seger Handoyo[1] and Rahkman Ardi[1]

[1]*Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Airlangga*
[2]*Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Diponegoro*

Abstract: Employee voice is important to improve organizational function and effectiveness through the contribution of employees. Efficacy is defined as a belief in one's competence to cope with various pressing or challenging demands. This study aims to prove empirically the relationship between efficacy and employee voice. The study involved 163 research participants from various companies in Indonesia and those who answered online questionnaires. To measure general self-efficacy and employee voice, questionnaires were circulated via instant messaging application and several social media platforms. The participants answered some questions and fill out questionnaires. Based on a simple regression analysis, it is evident that efficacy can predict employee voice. It means that the higher the self-confidence, the higher the desire to produce voice and it is stronger in male participants. The limitation was that researchers did not control the type of work that may influence employee voice. Thus, the next researchers need to differ the working characteristics and other demographic data.

1   INTRODUCTION

Employee voice studies have drawn several researchers' attention in the last two decades. Although many researchers have identified several influential factors, further researches are still needed to provide a clearer insight into the antecedent of employee voice (Morison, 2011). Detert and Burris (2007), Van Dyne, Ang & Botero (2003) suggested that more researches are required to clarify and provide better precision relating to employee voice antecedents. Researchers have understood that an organization needs to identify its employees' voice behavior since it is one of the most reliable ways to ensure continuous improvement and competitiveness (Botero and Van Dyne, 2009). An organization requires input based on its employees' knowledge and ideas to adapt to the rapidly changing environment in order to compete against its competitors and to become the superior.

Therefore, many self-efficacy researches have been conducted in many fields such as health, athletics and business (Bandura, 1997). Most researches used Western populations, normally Americans (Klassen, 2004). Although it has been proven that employees' performance has become the major predictor, only a few have studied how self-efficacy functions in Eastern individuals. Klassen (2004) discovered that the level of efficacy depends on the cultural context where non-Western culture efficacy differs from Western culture.

Kozan (1997) stated that Asians appreciate co-operative behavior by accommodating conflict avoidance rather than competing with others. Based on that, employees will consider their behavior more carefully. If their behavior is considered negative, they will not do it. On the other hand, if their behavior is considered constructive, they will uphold it or even, in some cases, increase the frequency. This is also implemented in voice. When it is accepted as something constructive and has good intention, the employees will give out their voice. Park and Kim (2018) proved that cultural value has a significant role in influencing employee voice. Moreover, they explained that collectivism, face saving and conflict avoidance influence employee voice. This has shown the difference between Koreans and Americans.

There are several interesting reasons behind this research. First, Indonesia is the country with the biggest archipelago, which consists of 17,508 islands with more than 300 ethnicities or tribes.

Implied communication is the most appropriate term to describe the Indonesians' common communication style. This cultural standard is marked by symbolic and non-straight forward messages (Panggabean, Tjitra, and Murniati, 2011). Communication is an indirect, negative and hidden feedback (Hofstede, 1967). Hence, it has certain implications for employees' willingness to speak and provide suggestion to their supervisors. In line with Morison and Caitlin (2015), in reality, when an employee is facing the option of expressing his/her ideas concerning the current issues, they will choose to remain silent. Morison, Miliken and Hewlin (2003) discovered that 85% of professional employees and managers were aware of their failure in revealing the crucial things, which should have been the company's main attention. Only 51% indicated that they were comfortable speaking to their supervisor or the management concerning the current issues happening.

Second, some deeper reviews have summarized several research findings based on employee voice literature using the data from several decades in the past (Morrison, 2011, 2014; Ng and Feldman, 2012, Botero, 2013, Chamberlin, Newton and Lepine, 2017). In the review, a number of constructions were identified giving more confidence for the employees to express their ideas. Both theoretical and empirical literatures have shown different individual characteristics such as locus of central, proactive personality (Botero, 2013; Morrison, 2011, 2014), employees' attitude such as bond and work satisfaction (Morrison, 2011, 2014) and organization context such as the organization structure and support (Morrison, 2011, 2014) are the main predictors of voice. Other researchers considered that further researches can possibly influence the necessary voice process (LePine and VanDyne, 1998; Liang, Farh and Farh, 2012). According to the review, the cultural factor has not been the focus of the research. Therefore, employee voice has become the important topic to be studied. One rationale is by involving self-efficacy variable as the antecedent of employee voice.

Self-efficacy is a central concept by Bandura (1997) on social learning theory and refers to the confidence that people are competent and that their task completing effort will be effective. Bandura emphasized that self-efficacy works in a specific situation and is able to develop over time. Conversely, general self-efficacy is conceptualized as core self-evaluation, which is relatively stable over time and situation (Landau, 2009). General self-efficacy is a person's confidence on their competence in dealing with various pressuring demands while self-efficacy is limited to certain tasks. General self-efficacy can represent mastery experience. Life experience is the strongest factor influencing general self-efficacy. Employees gradually gain experience of success, which generates more specific self-efficacy such as the efficacy to speak. Researchers have proven that general self-efficacy is closely related to certain self-efficacy like occupational self-efficacy (Chen, Gully and Eden, 2001)

The correlation between general self-efficacy and social cognitive variable e.g. intention, implementation intentions, outcome expectancies, and self-regulation behavior-specific self-efficacy, health behaviors, well-being, and coping strategies were examined (Luszczynska, Scholz, and Schwarzer, 2005). Frese, Teng and Wijnen (1998) discovered the positive connection between self-efficacy and having ideas, a precursor to voice. Meanwhile, McNab and Worthley (2007) found that general self-efficacy is positively related to internal whistle blowing. Whistle blowing is similar to voice construct where a whistle blowing employee reveals another member's illegal, immoral or unofficial conduct to others or organizations. This behavior has wider scope, as it is not only a form of communication but also inappropriate behavior, which affects both internal and external elements of the organization. It is different from voice as it has a more specific focus, only on the information of inappropriate attitudes. Thus, it becomes more appealing to scrutinize the influence of general self-efficacy on employee voice. In general efficacy researches, it becomes a universal construction, which is related to optimism, self-regulation and self-esteem, and it is negatively related to depression and anxiety (Luszczynska, Donˇa and Schwarzer, 2005). Employee voice will emerge when employees believe that they have something to say and feel competent. Also, they will take risk if they think that they can gain something from their action, i.e. their suggestion brings positive changes to their organization.

Researches on voice have developed (1995 – now) by conceptualizing voice in various ways in literatures. Van Dyne and LePine (1998) considered voice as the extra behavior and defined it as employees' constructing expression, which has the purpose of improving the organization's function. The definition itself was well known explicitly as a form of behavior which has a vision to improve the organization's function and effectiveness by applying constructive ideas, opinions, suggestions

225

and comments. Since VanDyne and LePine (1998), there have been many researches exploring the dimension of voice. In general, in literature review (Burris, 2012, Klaas, Olson-Buchanan and Ward, 2012, Liang & Farh, 2012; Maynes and Podsakoff, 2014, Morrison, 2011, 2014; VanDyne and Ang, and Botero, 2003), voice has the scope as (a) providing ideas on new or better methods in doing something; (b) providing suggestions relating to doing something out of the box; (c) expressing concerns on job-related issues in the organization which was previously identified but has not been addressed; (d) providing opinion on potential transformation which can help to finish a project and work effectively. Those four items have main characteristics such as speaking with the intention of challenging or trying to change the status quo in order to improve the organization's function (Morrison, 2014). In this research, employee voice is defined as the unforced communication by employees to provide ideas, suggestions, attention, information and concern about issues or opinions relating to work to the right person to encourage improvement or change. Unforced means that it is not decided based on its role with no clear regulation and no consequence for the individual. Hence, deciding voice possesses more considerable challenges. Landau (2009) stated that there are four conditions in which an individual chooses to be more expressive or not. They are (1) it must be a message to deliver, (2) it must be considered as a part of responsibility, (3) it must be believed as an agent of change, (4) it must believe that the suggestion will be considered seriously and give impact to the organization.

From the explanation above, it is interesting to conduct further study on the role of self-efficacy in promoting employee voice from an Indonesian culture perspective. This can result in different output from Western culture (Morrison, 2011).

The research aims to prove empirically whether self-efficacy influences employee voice. The hypotheses proposed in this study are:

H1. Self-efficacy is connected to employee voice.

H2. There are gender differences between male and female workers. Male workers tend to be more vocal than female.

2 METHOD

2.1 Procedure

The survey was conducted from April to May 2018 and was administered online. The link was distributed on various social media and chat rooms via several instant messaging apps. All of them were informed about the purpose of the research and assured about their identity anonymity and the confidential status of the data.

2.2 Participants

Participants were employees from various companies in Indonesia involving 163 participants. Participants were mostly females (58.9%), and males (41.1%). Their level of education ranged from secondary school 8%, diploma 6.1%, Bachelor's degree 63.8%, post-graduated 22.1% with age ranged between 20 and 60 years old.

2.3 Measures

2.3.1 Employee Voice

Employee voice was measured using a 5-point Likert scale by applying the Liang, Farh and Farh (2012) scale which consisted of 10 items. Participants were asked to provide responses describing their voice by selecting the option of never, rarely, sometimes, often and always with coefficient alpha employee voice 0.86.

2.3.2 Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy was measured using the Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995) scale. General Self Efficacy scale developed was converted into many languages including Indonesian. The psychometric instrument's characteristics have been tested in 25 countries and the results have confirmed the assumption that it can work inter-culture (Scholz, et al., 2002). The coefficient alpha of GSE is 0.88.

2.4 Data Analysis

Linier regression analysis was used to investigate whether self-efficacy would influence employee voice. An independent t-test was also implemented to distinguish male and female employee voice. The hypotheses of the research were that self-efficacy contributes to employee voice and there is a difference between male and female employee voice.

Table 1: Determinant of Self-Efficacy to Employee Voice (N = 163)

Variables	Unstandardized B	SE	F	p-value	aR^2	VIF	Power (1-β)
Self-Efficacy							
Constant	24.870	3.202	13.032	.000*	.069	1.000	1.00
GSE	0.354	0.098		.000*			

SE = standard error, aR^2 = adjusted R^2, VIF = collinearity diagnostics, 1-β = achieved statistical power, *p < 0.01.

Statistical analysis used JASP (JASP Team, 2008). Researchers also examined the effect size and post hoc or achieved statistical power for hypothesis using G*Power (Faul, et al., 2007).

3 RESULTS

The regression analysis results show correlation between self-efficacy and employee voice (r=0.274, p<0.001), which means that self-efficacy is a strong predictor of employee voice. This assumption would be subsequently confirmed with linear regression analysis (Table 1).

Independent sample t-test shows different employee voice from both male and female subjects. Levene's test showed both group variances were equal, so independent sample t-test with equal variances assumption was used. Employee voice (t(163)=3.713, p=0.00, d=0.591) was significantly different across the groups.

Data of respondents (n = 163) showed that 92 respondents (54.6%) tended to be silent, while 71 respondents (43.6%) chose to vote. The self-efficacy data showed 88 respondents (54%) had low efficacy and 75 respondents (46%) had high efficacy.

4 DISCUSSION

This research is aimed to prove empirically the correlation between self-efficacy and employee voice. Results have proven that self-efficacy holds a key role in employee voice. Employee voice is verbal behavior, which aims for direct correction specifically to the person in charge in an organization (Detert and Burris, 2007). General self-efficacy is related to several organizational behaviors such as work performance (Judge and Bono, 2001) and extra-role promotive behaviors. General self-efficacy may also influence whether they believe that their behavior can really make a difference. Employees will only take risks if they perceive some benefits for their action. When they are confident, they are able to tell their supervisors about their ideas, suggestions or concerns to provide positive changes to their organization (Morrison, 2011).

Kish-Gephart. et al. (2009) described two reasons causing the emergence of voice behavior. First, employees with high voice effectiveness tend to consider that the environment around them is still manageable with a low level of threat. Researches also showed that personal self-control has a positive correlation with voice (Tangirala and Ramanujam, 2008). Second, employees believe that they have survived the challenge in speaking up. One challenge that hampers employee voice is the high personal cost when management refuses to even consider the voice which may potentially cause the loss in employees' confidence, respect, promotion opportunity or career progress as their suggestion is considered a threat and may harm others' feelings (Milliken, Morrison and Hewlin, 2003). Voice is considered as something risky and stressful (Ng and Feldman, 2012). However, when employees believe that the management appreciates their voice, the fear of personal cost will reduce.

A number of researchers have conceptualized general self-efficacy in wide-scope and stable

Table 2: The different employee voice between male and female (N = 163)

Dependent Variables	Gender	n	Mean	SD	Levene's Test	t	df	p	Cohen's d	Power (1-β)
EV	Male	67	38.19	4.819	.222	3.713	161	.000	0.591	1.00
	Female	96	35.03	5.691						

Notes: 1-β = achieved statistical power, *p < 0.01.
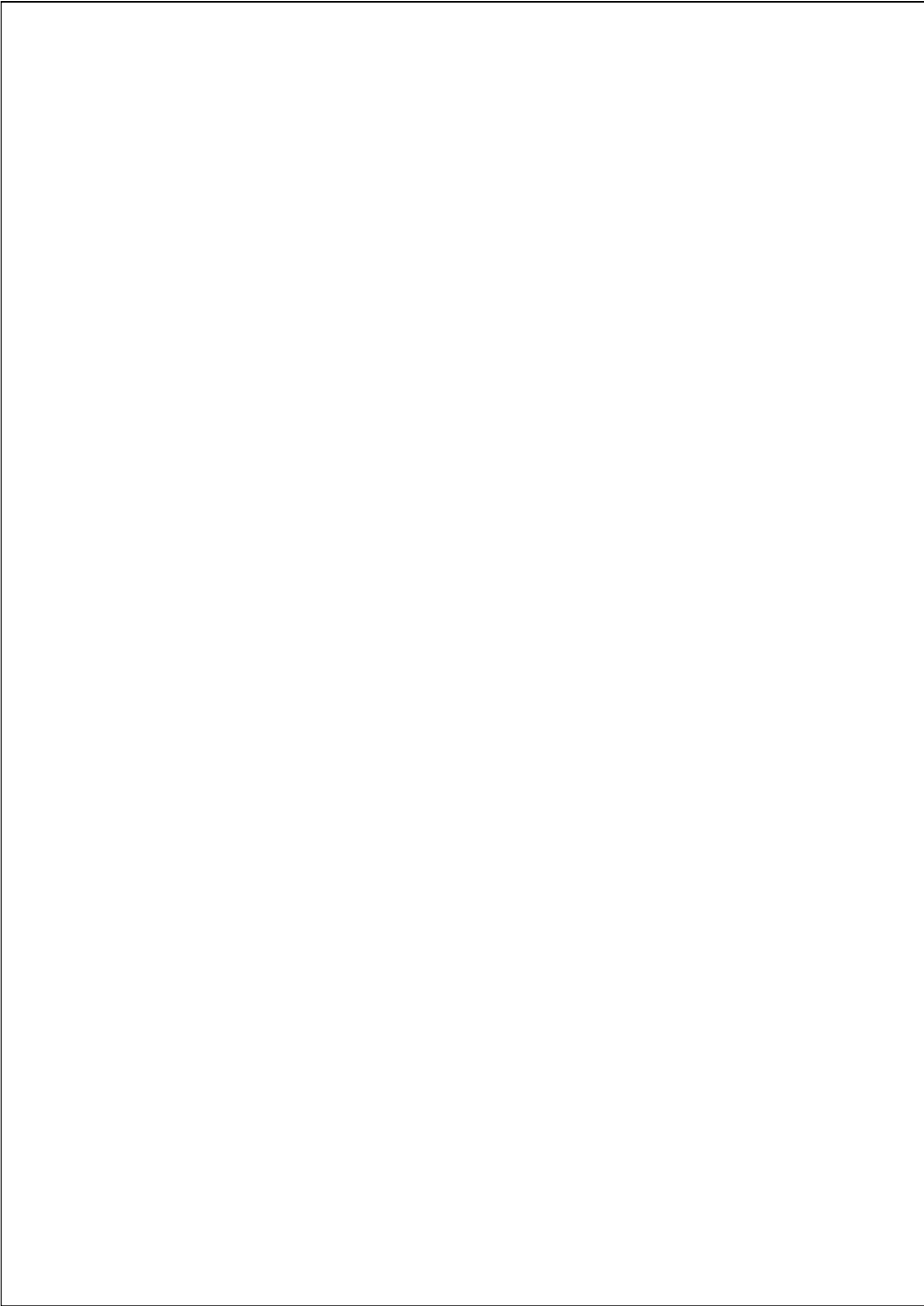
personal competence when dealing with stressful situations (Schwarzer and Jerusalem, 1995). This means that a high level of voice efficacy must be present before speaking up. The result is in-line with Duan, Kwan and Ling (2014) who proved that general efficacy gives rise to voice efficacy, which eventually will lead to employee voice.

The behavior included is the way in expressing concern related to the current work practice. Therefore, employees' confidence will affect their urge in raising their voice concerning the organizational issues whether it can produce certain innovation or organization evaluation. The efficacy felt represents a person's confidence in using their skill in resisting temptation, dealing with stress and mobilizing resources required to deal with several situational demands (Bandura, 1997). After several actions, employees with high self-efficacy have put in more effort and survived better than those with low efficacy. As a result, the ones with high self-efficacy have realized that they can overcome any obstacle and focus on the opportunity.

Results also prove that there are differences in employee voice of female and male workers. There is a tendency that male workers are more able to speak up than female. Males tend to participate more especially in task-related issues. That males tend to initiate communications and provide their opinions, whereas females tend to be more reactive and strive for consensus (Strodtbeck and Man cited by LePine and VanDyne, 1998). Females may have lower confidence that they will be heard above members.

This research provides a theoretical contribution in explaining the correlation between self-efficacy and employee voice, which also provides a practical contribution. Respondents in this study had low efficacy levels and tended to choose not to speak. Thus, providing practical implications for managers can provide opportunities to improve efficacy with positive experiences. Self-efficacy has become a part of an organization's responsibility, which provides the means to develop employees' personal capacity. With the increasing employee self-efficacy, employees will also believe that they have the competence to do something which results in the employees' responsibility in giving their finest contribution to the corporation in form of ideas and suggestions in order to improve the organization's performance.

4.1 Limitation & Future Research Direction
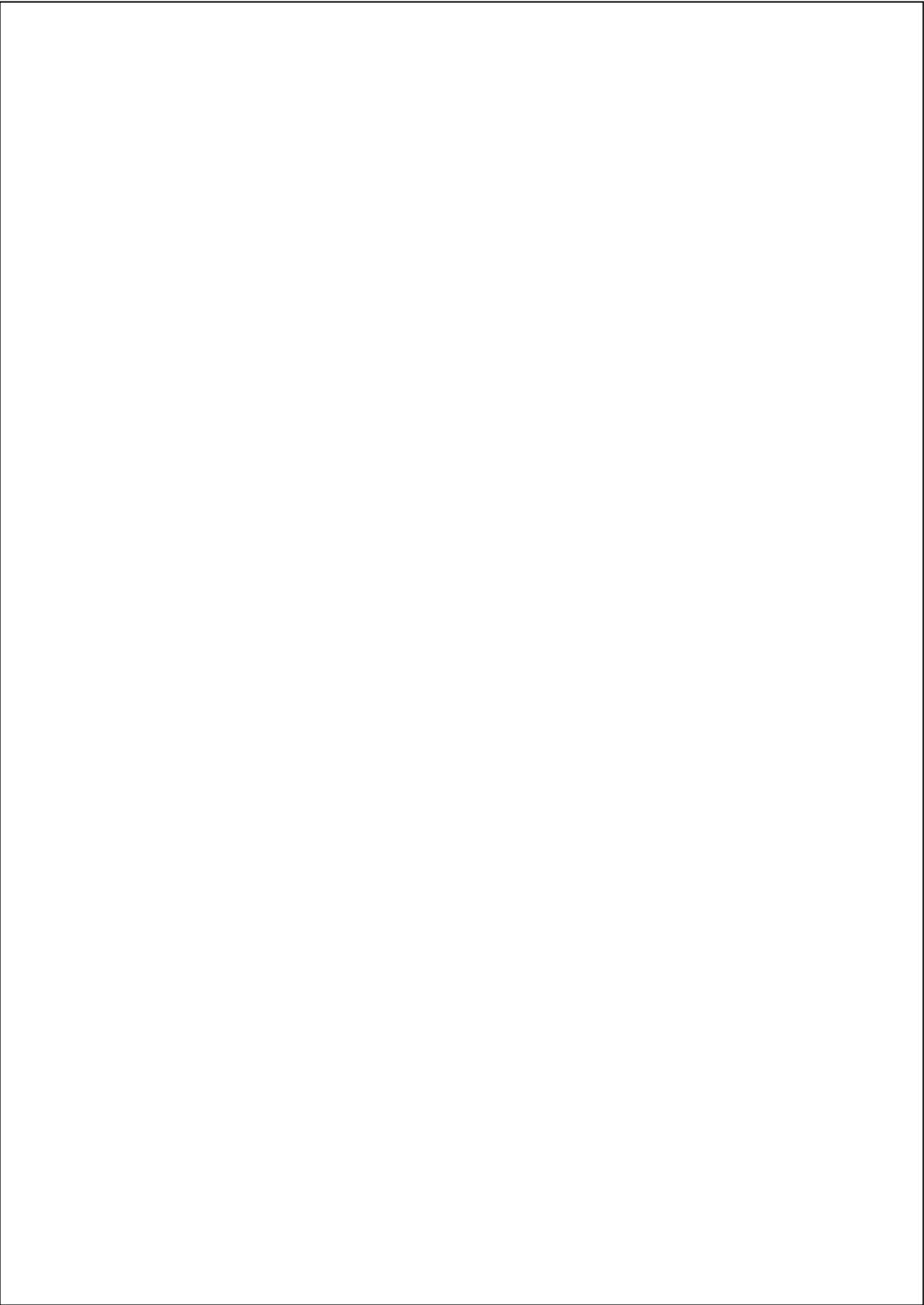
Employee voice is considered crucial for employees'

performance (Van Dyne and Le Pine, 1998) and the organization's effectiveness (Dettert and Burris, 2007). This research has applied social cognitive theory and provided an insight into several issues relating to general self-efficacy. Although Van Dyne and LePine (1998) reported that employee voice in form of self-report was stable from time to time and positively related to co-workers' and supervisors' judgment, it has common method bias. Therefore, the next researchers need to make use of other resources to obtain the data. Second, researchers did not control the type of work, which may influence employee voice, so the next researchers need to differ the working characteristics and other demographic data such as how long they have worked, education background and age. Third, this research used one data source, which was employees with the possible common method bias. The next researchers need to consider obtaining the data from other sources such as co-workers or supervisors.

REFERENCES

Bandura, A., 1997. *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control.* New York: Freeman.

Botero I.C., and Van Dyne L., 2009. Employee voice behavior interactive effects of LMX and power distance in the United States and Colombia. *Management Communication Quarterly*, [e-journal] 23, pp.84-104. https://doi.org/10.1177/0893331890933541S

Burris, E.R., 2012. The risks and rewards of speaking up: Managerial responses to employee voice. *Academy of Management Journal*, [e-journal] 55, pp.851–875. https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2010.0562

Chamberlin, M., Newton, D.W., and Lepine, J.A., 2017. A meta-analysis of voice and its promotive and prohibitive forms: Identification of key associations, distinctions and future research direction. *Personnel Psychology*. [e-journal] 70, pp.11-71. https://doi.org/10.1111/peps.12185

Chen, G., Gully, S. M., and Eden, D., 2001. Validation of a new general self-efficacy scale. *Organisational Research Methods*, [e-journal] 4, pp.62–83. https://doi.org/10.117/109442810141004

Detert, J.R., and Burris, E.R., 2007. Leadership behavior and employee voice: Is the door really open. *Academy of Management Journal*, [e-journal] 50 (4), pp. 869-884. https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2007.26279183

Duan, J, Kwan, H,K., and Ling, B., 2014. The role of voice efficacy in the formation of voice behaviour: A cross-level examination. *Journal of Management & Organization*, [e-journal] 20, pp.526-543. https://doi.org/10.1017/jmo.2014.40

Freese, M, Teng, E, and Wijnen, C., 1999. Helping to improve suggestion system: Predictors of making
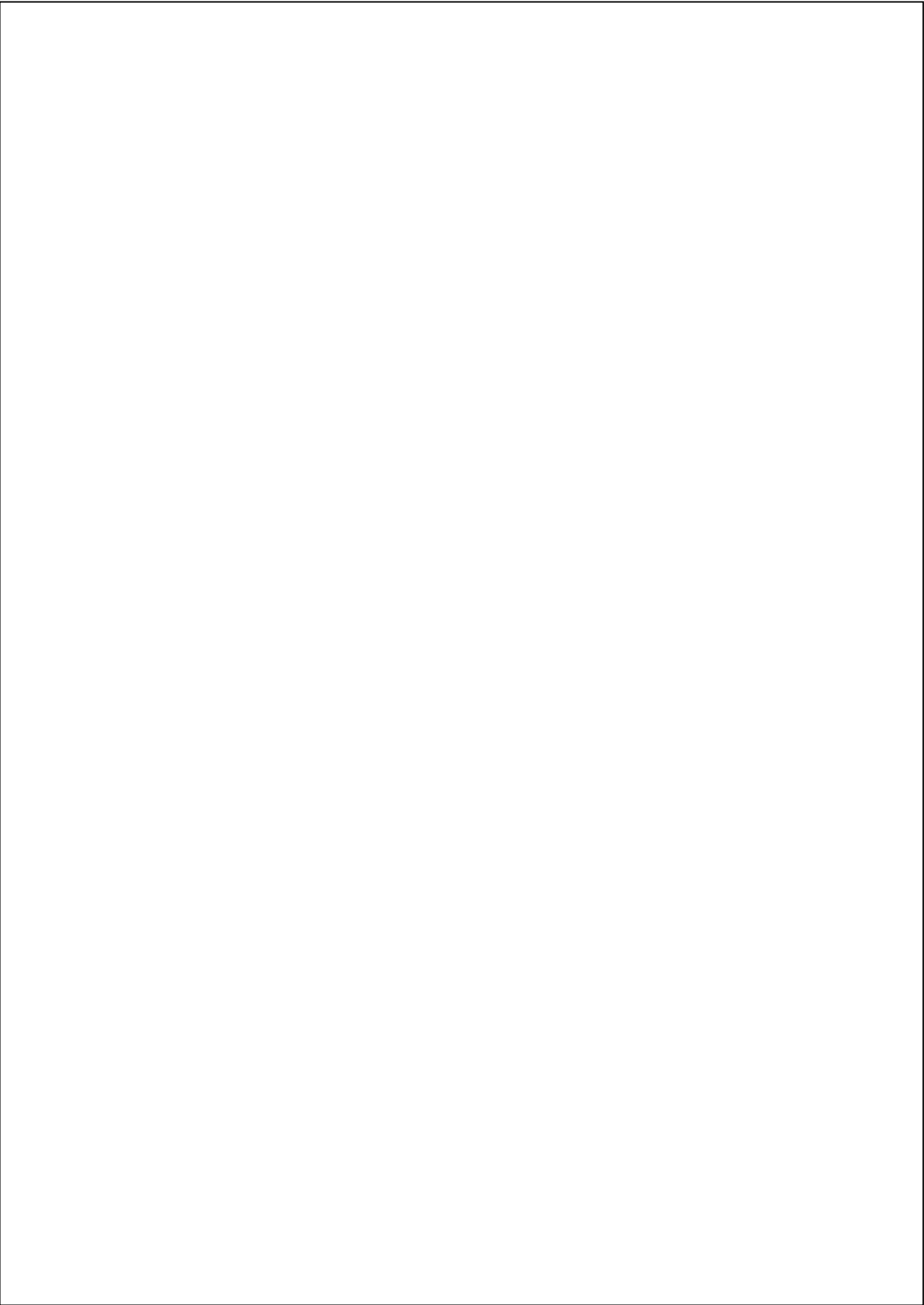
suggestions in companies. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 20(7), pp.1139-1150

Hirschman, A.O., 1970. *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press.

Judge, T.A., and Bono, J.A., 2001. Relationship of core self evaluation traits-self-esteem, generalized self efficacy, locus of control, and emotional stability with job satisfaction and job performance: A Meta-Analysis, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86(1), pp. 80-92

Kish-Gephard, J.J., Detert, J.R., Trevino, L.K., and Edmondson, A., 2009. Silenced by fear. *Research in Organization* Behavior, [e-journal] 29, pp.163-193. 10.1016/j.riob.2009.07.002.

Klaas, B.S., Olson-Buchanan, J.B., and Ward, A.K., 2012. The Determinants of Alternative Forms of Workplace Voice : An Integrative Perspective. *Journal of Ma*nagement, [e-journal] 38(1), pp.314-345. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0149206311423823

Landau, J., 2009. To speak or not to speak: Predictors of voice propensity. *Journal of Organizational Culture, Communication and Conflict,* pp.13(1), 35-52

LePine, J.A., and Van Dyne, L., 1998. Predicting voice behavior in work group. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 83 (6), pp.853-868.

Liang, J., Farh, C.I., and Farh, J-L., 2012. Psychological antecedents of promotive and prohibitive voice: A two-wave examination. *Academy of Management Journal*, [e-journal] *55,* pp.71–92. https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2010.0176

Luszczynska, A., Gutiérrez-Doña, B., and Schwarzer , R., 2005. General self-efficacy in various domains of human functioning: Evidence from five countries. *International Journal of Psychology,* [e-journal] 40, pp.80-89. https://doi.org/10.1080/00207590444000041

Luszczynska, A., Scholz, U., and Schwarzer , R., 2005. The general self-efficacy scale: Multicultural validation studies. *The Journal of Psychology*, 139 (5), pp.439-457.

Maynes, T.D., and Podsakoff, P.M., 2014. Speaking more broadly: An examination of the nature, antecedents, and consequences of an expanded set of employee voice behaviors. *Journal of Applied Psycholog,* [e-journal] 99 (1), pp.87-112. 10.1037/a0034284

McNab, B.R., and Worthley, R., 2008. Self-efficacy as an interpersonal predictor for internal whistleblowing: A US and Canada examination. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 79(4), pp.407-421

Morrison, E.W. 2011., Employee Voice Behavior: Integration and Directions for Future Research, *The Academy of Management Annals*, [e-journal] 5(1), pp.373-412.

https://doi.org/10.1080/19416520.2011.574506

Morrison, E. W. 2014., Employee voice and silence. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*. [e-journal] 1, pp.173–197. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-031413-091328

Milliken, F.J., Morrison, E.W., and Hewlin, P., 2003. An exploratory study of employee silence: issues that employees don't communicate upward and why. *Journal of Management Studies*. [e-journal] 40, pp.1453–1476. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-6486.00387

Ng, T.W.H., and Fieldman, D.C., 2012. Employee voice behavior: A meta-analytic test of the concervation of resources framework. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*. [e-journal] 33, pp.216–234. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.754

Schwarzer, R., and Jerusalem, M., 1995. Generalized Self-Efficacy scale. In J. Weinman, S. Wright, & M. Johnston, Measures in health psychology: A user's portfolio. Causal and control beliefs (pp. 35-37). Windsor, UK: NFER-NELSON.

Scholz, U., Gutiérrez-Doña, B., Sud, S., and Schwarzer, R., 2002. Is general self-efficacy a universal construct? *European Journal of Psychological Assessment,* 18(3), pp.242-251

Tangirala, S., and Ramanujam, R., 2008. Exploring nonlinearity in employee voice: The effects of personal control and organizational identification. *Academy of Management Journal.* [e-journal] 51, pp.1189–1203. 10.5465/AMJ.2008.35732719

Van Dyne, L.V., and LePine, J.A., 1998. Helping and voice extra-role behavior: evidence of construct and predictive validity. *Academy of Management. Journal*, 41,pp.108–119

Van Dyne, L.V., Ang, S, and Botero, I.C., 2003. Conceptualizing employee silence and employee voice as multidi- mensional constructs. *Journal of Management Studies*, [e-journal] 40, pp.1359–1392. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-6486.00384

I Am Sure I Can Speak Up: The Role of Efficacy on Employee Voice

15 Brent MacNab, Richard Brislin, Reginald Worthley. "Experiential cultural intelligence development: context and individual attributes", The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 2012
Publication

<1 %

16 Haina Zhang, Xia Zhou, Ying Wang, Malcolm H. Cone. "Work-to-family enrichment and voice behavior in China: The role of modernity", Frontiers of Business Research in China, 2011
Publication

<1 %

17 Hsin-Hua Hsiung, Wei-Chi Tsai. "The Joint Moderating Effects of Activated Negative Moods and Group Voice Climate on the Relationship between Power Distance Orientation and Employee Voice Behavior", Applied Psychology, 2017
Publication

<1 %

18 Sajjad Nazir, Amina Shafi, Muhammad Ali Asadullah, Wang Qun, Sahar Khadim. "How does ethical leadership boost follower's creativity? Examining mediation and moderation mechanisms", European Journal of Innovation Management, 2020
Publication

<1 %

19 www.jstage.jst.go.jp
Internet Source

<1 %

20 Xiaoshuang Lin, Zhen Xiong Chen, Herman H. M. Tse, Wu Wei, Chao Ma. "Why and When Employees Like to Speak up More Under Humble Leaders? The Roles of Personal Sense of Power and Power Distance", Journal of Business Ethics, 2017

Publication

<1 %

| Exclude quotes | Off | Exclude matches | Off |
| Exclude bibliography | On | | |

I Am Sure I Can Speak Up: The Role of Efficacy on Employee Voice

FINAL GRADE

/0

GENERAL COMMENTS

Instructor