

Understanding Employee Voice in the Asian Context

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Although considerable attention has been devoted to exploring the antecedents and outcomes of employee voice, the voice literature still has following important gaps and unresolved issues: (a) Despite the fact that a wide range of antecedents have been examined, one overlooked yet important issue is the understanding of how language diversity influences employee voice; (b) although previous researchers have tried to understand the managerial responses to employee voice by exploring the effects of the content of voice, characteristics of the voicer, characteristics of the recipient, and contextual characteristics, these factors have been discussed in isolation and have rarely been integrated into one model; and (c) the majority of voice research has been conducted in the Western context, with limited understanding in the Asian context. In this dissertation, I aim to enhance the understanding of voice by solving these three issues. I start by providing a framework to understand why and how language barriers shape voice and proactive helping in multinational teams (MNTs). Specifically, I propose that language barriers impede team members' voice and proactive helping in terms of the linguistic perspective, whereas language barriers facilitate employee voice and proactive helping in terms of the power perspective. In addition, I argued that these two paradoxical perspectives coexist by taking time into account. I further considered another language-related factor (i.e., English language proficiency) as a predictor of voice in multinational company (MNC) subsidiaries. Using a sample of Chinese employees working in MNC subsidiaries in China, I found that local employees' English language proficiency was positively associated with their voice directed toward expatriates. I also address the importance of the mediating role of trust in expatriates and the moderating role of MNC's country-of-origin. Regarding the outcomes of voice, I explore how supervisors respond to employee voice using a scenario-based experiment in China and Japan by integrating the effects of the target of voice (immediate supervisors or skip-level leaders), voicing employees' expertise, and supervisors' sense of power on supervisors' responses. Both of these data showed that voicing employees' target of voice and expertise have significant effects on the overall evaluations for them, partially mediated by liking or perceived threat. Moreover, data from the Chinese sample showed that supervisors' sense of power moderates the effect of voicing employees' expertise on supervisors' responses. Essentially, I conducted the study in the context of China and Japan so as to expand the understanding of existing voice research. Finally, I discussed the theoretical and practical implications of the findings, limitations, and directions for future research.