

How Supervisors Respond to Employee Voice: An Experimental Study in China and Japan

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Abstract

To examine how supervisors respond to employee voice in the Asian context, we conducted a scenario-based experiment in China and Japan and investigated the effects of the target of voice (immediate supervisors or skip-level leaders), voicing employees' expertise, and supervisors' sense of power on supervisors' responses. Data from both samples showed that voicing employees' target of voice and expertise have significant effects on the overall evaluations rated by supervisors, 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.

Keywords: employee voice, target of voice, expertise, sense of power, China, Japan

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Employees' willingness to exercise voice, or speaking up with their valuable ideas or important concerns, plays an increasingly important role for organizational success (Morrison 2011). Previous literature has demonstrated that employee voice has significant benefits for organizations, groups, and individual actors (e.g., Bashshur and Oc 2015; Chamberlin et al. 2017; Detert et al. 2013; Morrison 2014). Consequently, there has been a rapidly growing body of research focusing on the antecedent factors that encourage employees to engage in voice (Morrison 2011). Recent research has demonstrated that managerial beliefs and behaviors also play a vital role in developing a climate of silence or voice (Fast et al. 2014; Liu et al. 2017; Milliken et al. 2003; Tangirala and Ramanujam 2012). Thus, examining how supervisors respond to employee voice is important (Burris 2012; Burris et al. 2017). In particular, it is critical to understand supervisors' responses in Asia.

Whereas the research conducted in Western countries shows that managers recognize and reward employees who exhibit voice (Burris 2012; Whiting et al. 2012), knowledge of how supervisors respond to employee voice in Asia is limited. Asian countries are generally high in power distance and collectivistic dimensions of national culture, which means that people respect hierarchy and that supervisors are endowed with great power (Hofstede 1994; Liden 2012). Such contextual and institutional characteristics may create different supervisors' behaviors and attitudes (Long et al. 2012). Thus, examining how supervisors respond to employee voice and exploring what factors influence the supervisors' responses in Asian countries are particularly important to voice literature.

To address the research gap, this study investigates the effect of employee voice on the supervisors' evaluations by focusing on three factors: The voice tactic, the characteristic of the voicing employee, and the characteristic of the supervisor. Regarding the voice tactic, we focus on the difference between an *immediate supervisor* and a *skip-level leader* as a target of voice. A skip-level leader is any leader in the

organization's formal chain of command above an employee's immediate supervisor (Detert and Trevino 2010). Regarding the characteristic of the employee, we examine the role of a voicing employee's expertise, defined as the extent to which a speaker is perceived to be capable of making correct assertions (Pornpitakpan 2004). Regarding the characteristic of the supervisor, we focus on a supervisor's sense of power, defined as the perception of one's ability to influence another person or other people (Anderson et al. 2012). We theorize that the target of voice and expertise will influence supervisors' evaluations of the voicing employees, which are mediated by the supervisors' liking of the voicing employees and their perceived threat against the voicing employees. We also theorize that the effects of the target of voice and the expertise of the voicing employee on supervisors' reactions differ according to supervisors' sense of power.

The present research aims to make several contributions to the literature. First, this study contributes to the voice literature by discussing the effect of the target of voice on supervisors' evaluations, which have been perceived as an important factor but have not been adequately studied theoretically or empirically (Liu et al. 2010; Morrison 2011). Second, this study deepens the understanding of voicing employees' expertise. Traditionally, voice from employees who have high expertise is viewed as positive from the perceptions of supervisors (Whiting et al. 2012). However, this study shows that supervisors might respond negatively toward expertise because of the perception of threat, especially when supervisors' sense of power is high. Third, this study extends the voice literature by developing and testing our theory and hypotheses in the non-Western setting. In particular, this study examines how supervisors respond to employee voice in China and Japan, where the nature of the employee-supervisor relationship, such as the degree of power distance between them, is somewhat different from the nature of the employee-supervisor relationship in Western countries.

THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

Employee Voice

Employee voice is defined as informal and discretionary communication by an employee of ideas, suggestions, concerns, information about problems, or opinions about work-related issues to persons who might be able to take appropriate action, with the intent to bring about improvement or change (Morrison 2014, p. 174). Although some scholars have recently expanded the conceptualization of voice by describing the different dimensions of voice (Liang et al. 2012; Maynes and Podsakoff 2014), this definition is an integrated conceptualization of voice, which reflects individuals' propensity to voluntarily provide change-oriented and constructive ideas (LePine and Van Dyne 1998). In addition, this definition is restricted to focus on the upward target, which indicates that the potential recipient of voice is a supervisor or another person who is in a higher position. This conceptualization deems appropriate for this study because we aim to examine the influence of upward voice on supervisors' evaluations. Moreover, this integrated conceptualization of voice can still be regarded as the dominant one, and dozens of studies related to the outcome of employee voice define and operationalize voice in terms of this view (Howell et al. 2015; Weiss and Morrison 2019; Whiting et al. 2012). Therefore, our study follows this view to examine how supervisors respond to employee voice.

Supervisors' Responses to Employee Voice

Employee voice is expected to have desirable outcomes for organizations, leaders, and employees. Despite the benefits, supervisors' responses toward employee voice are rather mixed, such that some studies report positive reactions to the voicing employees, whereas other studies report negative findings. For example, Van Dyne and LePine (1998) found that voice is positively associated with supervisors' ratings. Likewise, Whiting et al. (2008) demonstrated that voice has positive effects on performance evaluation decisions. More recently, Burris et al. (2017) suggested that managerial evaluations of voice are

influenced by the content of voice and indicated that managers tend to positively respond to employee voice when the issues are related to the work unit. Huang et al. (2018) found that supervisors tend to provide positive evaluations to employees who engage in a moderate frequency of voice compared with those who engage in voice rarely or very frequently.

On the contrary, it was found that voice has a negative relationship with career progression and is not significantly related to salary progression or promotions (Seibert et al. 2001). Managers tend to view suggestions expressed with negative emotions as complaints or criticisms, rather than as constructive recommendations for improvement (Grant et al. 2009). The ratings of performance tend to be negative when employee voice is challenging rather than supportive (Burris 2012; Maynes and Podsakoff 2014). Additionally, recent findings have shown that managers with low managerial self-efficacy feel personally threatened by and react defensively to employee voice (Fast et al. 2014). The managerial perceptions of the value of voice are apt to be negative when the issues are highly related to the profession (Burris et al. 2017).

One reason for the mixed findings is perhaps due to the lack of consideration of voice tactics as well as individuals' characteristics involved, considering that voice is an act of verbal expression from a sender to a recipient that includes two or more persons (Morrison 2011). Hence, we developed a model (see Figure 1) that draws on the voice tactic, the voicing employees' characteristic, and the supervisors' characteristic. We focus on the target of voice as the voice tactic because previous research indicates that voice is target-sensitive and more theoretical work is needed on this topic (Morrison 2011). We select expertise as the characteristic of a voicing employee because expertise is commonly identified as one dimension of source credibility that influences the reactions of voice recipients (Whiting et al. 2012). We select sense of power as the characteristic of a supervisor because it is a fundamental and pervasive factor to social relationships (Anderson et al. 2012; Keltner et al. 2003), and it has received relatively little

attention in the voice literature (Morrison et al. 2015). Integrating the power literature with the literature on voice, we propose that the target of voice and voicing employees' expertise have direct effects on supervisors' evaluations of the employees, and we theorized the mediating mechanism of two types of supervisors' emotions, namely liking and perceived threat, as well as the moderating role of supervisors' sense of power. We focus on the role of supervisors' emotions in our study because emotions play a critical role when supervisors evaluate subordinates' behaviors (Cardy and Dobbins 1986; Judge and Ferris 1993; Wayne and Ferris 1990). In our research context, liking is a particular type of emotion, which is a kind of psychological experience varying from positive to negative (Cardy and Dobbins 1986). On the other hand, perceived threat is another type of emotion. Threat is experienced as a type of stress, which can be perceived as a strong emotional response and can induce a desire to react defensively (Locke and Taylor 1990; Vecchio 2000). Supervisors may perceive threats when their subordinates have innovative ideas and have close relationships with senior management (Hamilton 1999; Yu et al. 2018). The extant literature shows that liking and perceived threat are two typical emotional responses that will influence individuals' attitudes toward their counterpart in communication (Hovland et al. 1953). In the following section, we explain the relationships between these variables in more detail and make theoretical arguments for the hypotheses.

Insert Figure 1 about here

Target of Voice

In most conditions, employees choose immediate supervisors to exercise voice because they have more daily interactions with their immediate supervisors than with other leaders (Liu et al. 2013). However, employees may also approach the leaders who are above their immediate supervisors (i.e., skip-level leaders) with their ideas or concerns (Detert and Trevino 2010; Liu et al. 2013). For example, employees

tend to speak up to skip-level leaders when they have a poor relationship with the immediate supervisors (Liu et al. 2013) or when they find that the immediate supervisors often do not control the resources (Detert and Trevino 2010).

We argue that supervisors might provide lower evaluations to the employees when they speak up to skip-level leaders instead of speaking up to them directly. Based on the power literature, high-power individuals tend to have rule-based thinking, which suggests that when judging whether an act is right or wrong, they will focus on whether the act complies with existing rules and principles (Lammers and Stapel 2009). Correspondingly, high-power individuals are strict in their judgement on how people should behave (Lammers et al. 2010). When immediate supervisors perceive an employee bypassing themselves and reaching skip-level leaders with constructive and challenging ideas, they might judge the behavior is wrong because normal chain-of-command structures provide employees more opportunities to interact with immediate supervisors rather than skip-level leaders. In addition, supervisors might consider the behavior wrong is that employee voice specifically involves speaking up in ways intended to alter, modify, or destabilize (Burris 2012). In most cases, supervisors are taking charge of related issues. When an employee speaks up to skip-level leaders, the immediate supervisor observing this employee's behavior as a bystander might think that this employee is going against his/her decisions.

Conversely, if employees provide some suggestions or ideas directly to immediate supervisors, supervisors might be less likely to judge their behaviors are wrong than if the employees speak up to skip-level leaders. It is because supervisors sometimes respond to employee voice positively because voice can help supervisors who receive it become more successful (Burris 2012). Thus, we predict the following:

Hypothesis 1a. Supervisors give lower evaluations to voicing employees when they speak up to skip-level leaders rather than the supervisors directly.

The approach/inhibition theory of power (Keltner et al. 2003) posits that power activates the behavioral approach system (e.g., experience and expression of positive emotions), whereas powerlessness activates the behavioral inhibition system (e.g., experience and expression of negative emotions). Drawing on this perspective, we expect that supervisors like employees less (i.e., negative emotion) when their voice is targeted at skip-level leaders, which in turn causes negative evaluations of the voicing employees. It is because when supervisors witness their subordinates speaking up to a skip-level leader, they might consider them out of control and feel psychologically powerless, which might trigger negative emotions. Moreover, sometimes employees choose a skip-level leader as the target of voice because they perceive their immediate supervisors have no power to enact their ideas (Detert and Trevino 2010), which might deepen the supervisors' feeling of powerlessness. Besides, even if the employees' intention is to express opinions and ideas for work-related improvement, their immediate supervisors might view them as criticism or complaints about themselves in front of the skip-level leaders because the content of voice may include explicit disagreement and confrontation with supervisors (Grant et al. 2011). Because the powerful are sensitive to whether they are respected and admired (Mast et al. 2009), supervisors might not feel admired by the voicing employees and may thus like such subordinates less (Wayne and Liden 1995).

Liking is an integral part of the performance evaluation process (Cardy and Dobbins 1986; Judge and Ferris 1993; Wayne and Ferris 1990). When supervisors like an employee, they rate the employee more favorably and allocate more rewards to him/her (Cardy and Dobbins 1986; Judge and Ferris 1993; Tsui and Barry 1986). Thus, we hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 1b. The negative effect of exercising voice to the skip-level leaders rather than immediate supervisors on supervisors' evaluations is partially mediated by the supervisors' liking of the voicing employees.

Additionally, we expect that perceived threat will also play a mediating role, explaining the negative effect of voice targeted at skip-level leaders on supervisors' evaluations of the voicing employees. An immediate supervisor is in a high-level power position in relation to a subordinate but a low-level power position in relation to a leader who is beyond him/her. According to the approach/inhibition/avoidance theory of power (Anicich and Hirsh 2017), immediate supervisors, who occupy mid-level positions are more likely to adhere to organizational norms and pay greater attention to threats, especially when the situations are uncertain for them. From this insight, we predict that supervisors might feel threatened more when employees speak up to skip-level leaders instead of speaking up to them directly. This is because when employees exercise voice to skip-level leaders, supervisors might experience fear about whether they will be devalued by skip-level leaders. It may damage supervisors' images seen by skip-level leaders who might doubt their abilities, such as whether they can make appropriate decisions, because supervisors are taking charge of related issues in most cases (Burris 2012).

In addition, supervisors may also be uncertain about their images seen by employees. In general, immediate supervisors should be the first choice when employees have something to say because they have more time and opportunity to interact with each other. Yet, when employees choose skip-level leaders as the targets of voice instead of immediate supervisors, it may raise supervisors' suspicions that they may be perceived as incompetent and do not have enough power to resolve the problems by employees. Consistent with this perspective, previous research has shown that supervisors seek to protect their self-images or standing in their organizations, and supervisors may feel threatened about their images seen by leaders or other employees (De Dreu et al. 2008). With respect to the perceived threat, previous research has found that perceived threat is negatively associated with the ratings of employees (Fast et al. 2014). Thus, we hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 1c. The negative effect of exercising voice to the skip-level leaders rather than immediate supervisors on supervisors' evaluations is partially mediated by the supervisors' perceived threat against the voicing employees.

Expertise of the Voicing Employee

As stated earlier, expertise refers to the extent to which a speaker is perceived to be capable of making correct assertions (Pornpitakpan 2004). Previous research has suggested that employee expertise has many positive effects. For example, expertise is positively associated with agreement on opinions (Horai et al. 1974), advice taking (Feng and MacGeorge 2006), and positive ratings of performance. We argue that supervisors might provide higher evaluations to the voicing employees with high expertise rather than low.

According to the social persuasion theory, expert employees have credibility and accuracy, so their suggestions or ideas tend to be more accurate and reliable. Research has shown that people are more likely to implement feedback provided by an expert (Albright and Levy 1995), and Braunsberger (1996) found that a source high in expertise appears to lead to positive attitudes toward the endorser and the advertisement. In addition, if the voicing employee is high in expertise, supervisors might think that his/her voice could contribute to the effectiveness of the group or organization, as Horai et al. (1974) suggested that expertise contributes to inducing opinion agreement. Moreover, supervisors consider employee voice to be more constructive and to provide higher evaluations of job performance when the voicing employee is high rather than low in expertise (Whiting et al. 2012). Taken together, we expect that supervisors respond more positively when the voicing employee is high rather than low in expertise.

Hypothesis 2a. Supervisors provide higher evaluations for the voicing employee when the employee's expertise is high rather than low.

As discussed in developing Hypotheses 1b and 1c, we predict that the supervisors' emotional reactions toward the voice will also mediate the effect of the voicing employee's expertise on the supervisors' evaluations of the employee. Prior research indicates that employees' constructive workplace behaviors are positively related to supervisors' affective responses (Johnson et al. 2002). Employee voice is one typical type of constructive behavior that benefits organizations and work groups (Morrison 2011). Supervisors may respond more favorably when voicing employees are high rather than low in expertise because such employees are more likely to figure out accurate problems and to have the ability to solve the problems (Whiting et al. 2012). It would make the supervisors' job easier and hence enhance the supervisors' liking of the employees, which influences the employees' positive evaluations. Thus, we hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 2b. The positive effect of the expertise of the voicing employee on supervisors' evaluations is partially mediated by the supervisors' liking of the voicing employee.

Although we predicted that the voicing employee's expertise has a direct and indirect positive effect on his/her evaluations, we anticipate that there is another indirect effect of expertise on the evaluations that are negative, which is mediated by perceived threat as an emotional reaction. In other words, there will be two different paths from the expertise of the voicing employee to the evaluations of the employee: one positive path dominated by the cognitive evaluations of the employees, and the other negative path dominated by the perceived threat against the employees.

Employees with high expertise have influence over other people (Georgesens and Harris 1998) because expertise is one type of power (French and Raven 1960). Compared with employees with low expertise, employees with high expertise have higher abilities to make other people agree with their suggestions or ideas because expertise contributes to opinion agreement (Horai et al. 1974). Consequently, when a highly expert subordinate speaks up with his/her suggestions for change, people may agree with

him/her and then doubt the decisions made by the supervisors, which might make supervisors feel threatened. It is because supervisors are greatly influenced by their roles and, indeed, experience a great deal of pressure to meet the expectations associated with their roles (Biddle 1986). Compelling evidence supports the idea that supervisors, as occupants of roles with formal power over subordinates, experience a strong need to demonstrate superior personal competence at work (Fast et al. 2014). When employees with high expertise exhibit voice, it may create an incompetent leader image, which makes supervisors view these employees as potential threats (Chun et al. 2018; Morrison and Bies 1991). In particular, Asian supervisors are very concerned with face (Ho 1976; Hu 1944). Constructive ideas from expert subordinates might create an inferior leader image by exposing supervisors' incompetence in the eyes of others (Chun et al. 2018), which might make them feel a loss of face and feel threatened. Therefore, voice exhibited by subordinates with high expertise rather than low might make supervisors perceive more threat.

Based on the above evidence that perceived threat influences the supervisors' reactions, we expect that supervisors' perceptions of threat will mediate the negative relationship between the voicing employee's expertise and the evaluations of the employee. Taken together, we hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 2c. There is a negative indirect effect of the expertise of the voicing employee on supervisors' evaluations of the employee, such that the effect is partially mediated by the supervisors' perceived threat against the voicing employee.

Moderating Role of Supervisors' Sense of Power

A personal sense of power is a psychological state or the perception that one person is capable of influencing others (Anderson et al. 2012; Galinsky et al. 2003). Integrating the recent advances in the power literature, we predict that supervisors' sense of power will moderate the relationship between the target of voice and perceived threat, as well as the relationship between expertise and perceived threat, such

that the relationships will be stronger when supervisors' sense of power is high rather than low and will ultimately influence the supervisors' ratings of employee performance.

Previous research has indicated that because power increases optimism, power holders are generally less sensitive to potential threats (Anderson and Galinsky 2006; Inesi 2010). However, in our research context, we predict that supervisors tend to be sensitive to the potential threats associated with employee voice especially when they have a high sense of power. First, power can lead to risk avoidance and promote conservative decisions when the individuals are power-motivated and when their position of power is unstable (Maner et al. 2007). Because high-power individuals desire to hold onto power and protect the status quo (Fiske 2010), they tend to be self-protective and subject to loss aversion, especially when the potential losses are salient (Isen et al. 1998; Maner et al. 2007; Tiedens et al. 2007). Second and related, the supervisors in our research context are assumed to occupy mid-level positions as explained earlier. This type of supervisors with a high sense of power tend to avoid risks and fear the loss of power because their power in the middle of the hierarchy is relatively unstable (Anicich and Hirsh 2017). Moreover, employee voice typically challenges the status quo (Morrison 2011), which can further cause the power of mid-level supervisors unstable. Therefore, employee voice targeted at skip-level leaders and the voice from an employee with high expertise might be salient in the eyes of supervisors with a high sense of power, which might increase their perception of threat.

On the contrary, supervisors with a low sense of power tend to focus on the perspective of others and give more to others (Galinsky et al. 2015). According to Fiske (1993), low-power individuals are more likely to depend on others to achieve goals or enhance decision quality. In addition, low-power individuals also tend to be concerned with having a pleasant interaction with others (Copeland 1994). As a result, supervisors with a low sense of power might be more sensitive to gains and less sensitive to loss when subordinates speak up to skip-level leaders or when the voice is from an employee with high expertise.

Therefore, they might be less likely to feel threatened compared with those supervisors who have a high sense of power. Taken together, we predict the following:

Hypothesis 3a. Supervisors' sense of power moderates the negative indirect effect of the target of voice on evaluations through perceived threat, such that the indirect effect is stronger when the sense of power is high rather than low.

Hypothesis 3b. Supervisors' sense of power moderates the negative indirect effect of expertise on evaluations through perceived threat, such that the indirect effect is stronger when the sense of power is high rather than low.

METHOD

Samples

To test our hypotheses, we conducted a scenario-based experiment study in both China and Japan. We used different sampling procedures and rating sources across two studies to demonstrate strong evidence of the validity and generalizability of our results (Wright and Sweeney 2016).

Chinese sample. We collected data from 244 Chinese employees through an exponential non-discriminative snowball sampling technique (Dudovskiy 2016). The procedure is to recruit the first subject to the sample group and to ask this subject to provide multiple referrals. In our study, we invited dozens of employees from a wide variety of occupations to participate in an anonymous survey. After they finished the questionnaires, we asked them to post an electronic survey link on the social network sites (SNS), where users developed a network of friends, relatives, and coworkers to share information. After 2 weeks, a total of 244 participants responded to our survey. A full list of conditions is reported in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

Of all participants, 55.3% of them were female, and 44.7% of them were male. Their average age was 31.7 years ($SD = 6.2$). As for the educational background, 77.9% of them had a bachelor's degree, 16.4% of them had a master's degree, and 5.7% had a high school diploma. A majority of 65.6% were married. Participants were employed in a variety of occupations, including construction/manufacturing (29.1%), public sectors (14.8%), finance (13.5%), information technology (5.3%), health care (4.5%), services (4.1%), transportation (3.7%), and other workplaces (25.0%). On average, their managerial experience was 2.6 years ($SD = 4.4$).

Japanese sample. We collected data from 136 Japanese employees. The full list of conditions is reported in Table 1. We gathered data mainly from two sources. First, same as the Chinese sample, we invited dozens of employees from a wide variety of occupations to participate in an anonymous survey. After they finished the questionnaires, we asked them to post an electronic survey link on the SNS, where users developed a network of friends, relatives, and coworkers to share information. Second, one professor at a Japanese university helped us in sending questionnaires to companies' supervisors in a management semester. With these two methods, we received 155 samples in total. After deleting the missing data, there were 136 samples.

Of all the participants, 19.9% of them were female, and 80.1% of them were male. Their average age was 41.5 years ($SD = 12.6$). As for the educational background, 75.0% of them had a bachelor's degree, 16.2% had a master's degree, and 8.8% had a high school diploma. Participants were employed in a variety of occupations, including construction/manufacturing (25.7%), finance (14.0%), information technology (11.0%), services (8.1%), retail (7.4%), health care (5.1%), public sectors (5.1%), transportation (3.7%), and other workplaces (19.9%). On average, their managerial experience was 7.5 years ($SD = 9.8$).

Design and Procedure

To examine the hypotheses, we employed a 2 (high versus low sense of power) $\times$ 2 (skip-level leader target versus immediate supervisor target) $\times$ 2 (high versus low expertise) full-factorial, between-subjects experimental design in China and Japan. First, we conducted in-depth interviews with eight full-time Chinese employees to develop scenarios, most of them involved in project teams. Therefore, we created scenarios based on voice occurring within a project team setting. The project was described as expanding business overseas and composed of an immediate supervisor (participants were asked to play the role of this supervisor), a skip-level leader (supervisor A), and several subordinates. Subordinate B was one team member who exhibited voice. Each scenario depicted subordinate B's voice occurring in this project team.

According to Anderson et al. (2012), we manipulated the immediate supervisor A's sense of power, such that participants were asked to imagine whether they had power over other team members. We manipulated target of voice in terms of the definition of employee voice. Since Detert and Trevino (2010) found that leaders' two levels above the respondent (e.g., "my boss's boss") were the most frequent skip-level leaders mentioned by informants, we manipulated the skip-level leader as supervisor A's boss. We manipulated employees' expertise by varying their knowledge about marketing and global business. In the high expertise condition, the voicing employee (subordinate B) was described as knowing much about the global issues and marketing. On the other hand, the voicing employee was described as knowing little about global issues and marketing in the low expertise condition. The complete scripts for the manipulations are presented in the Appendix.

We invited 23 Japanese master students to read the scenarios depicting the manipulations. All of them could distinguish between the different manipulations. After that, we conducted a scenario-based study. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the eight different hypothetical vignettes, which were

followed by a series of questions. After reading their assigned scenario, they were required to imagine themselves in the scenario and to indicate their responses. Participants' demographic information was also collected in the questionnaires.

Measures

All the materials in this study were presented in Chinese and Japanese. Following the back-translation procedures, we translated the measures into Chinese and Japanese to retain all the meanings of the items (Brislin et al. 1973). All scales were assessed using a 7-point Likert response format (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*).

Liking (of the voicing employee). We adapted Wayne and Ferris's (1990) 4-item scale to measure participants' liking of the voicing employee. Example items include "I like subordinate B" and "I would get along with subordinate B." The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this scale was 0.91 in the Chinese sample and 0.90 in the Japanese sample.

Perceived threat. We adapted five items from Menon et al. (2006) to assess participants' perceived threat of the voicing employee. One sample item is "How likely is it that you will lose status in the organization if your superiors heard subordinate B's comments?" The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this scale was 0.86 in the Chinese sample and 0.83 in the Japanese sample.

Overall evaluations. We adapted Allen and Rush's (1998) reward recommendation scale to measure participants' overall evaluations of the voicing employee in the Chinese sample. The reward recommendation scale consists of salary increase, promotion, high-profile project, public recognition, and opportunities for professional development. Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this scale was 0.87. We adapted Allen and Rush's (1998) performance evaluation scale to measure participants' overall evaluations of the voicing employee in the Japanese sample. Performance evaluation consists of four items: "subordinate B makes an important contribution to the organization," "subordinate B is a vital part of the

organization,” “subordinate B is extremely valuable to the organization,” and “subordinate B would be extremely costly for the organization to replace.” Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was 0.92.

Manipulation Checks

To verify whether our manipulations were successful, the participants were asked to respond to the following questions: “If your subordinate B has a lot of ideas about the project, he/she would express to you directly” (direct-level target); “Compared to other colleagues, subordinate B knows more about marketing and global business of our company” (high expertise); and “In this project team, you have a lot of power over other people” (high sense of power). All items were rated on a 7-point Likert response scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

The results of these checks were supportive of the manipulations in both Chinese and Japanese samples. The average ratings for the “skip-level target” condition tended to be low (average $M = 2.50$ for Chinese sample, and $M = 2.25$ for Japanese sample), and the average ratings for the “direct-level target” condition tended to be high ($M = 5.43$ for Chinese sample, $M = 6.21$ for Japanese sample). The average ratings for the “high expertise” condition tended to be high (average $M = 5.46$ for Chinese sample, $M = 5.95$ for Japanese sample), and the average rating for the “low expertise” conditions tended to be low (average $M = 2.31$ for Chinese sample, and $M = 1.76$ for Japanese sample). The average ratings for the “high sense of power” condition tended to be high (average $M = 5.08$ for Chinese sample, $M = 5.78$ for Japanese sample), and the average ratings for the “low sense of power” condition tended to be low (average $M = 1.97$ for Chinese sample, $M = 2.14$ for Japanese sample). In addition, analysis of variance (ANOVA) comparisons of the ratings on the high and low conditions for each specific manipulation indicated that their differences were significant (all $p < 0.01$). Taken together, the results indicated that high- and low-level manipulations depicted significantly different levels of the conditions.

Analytical Approach

First, we examined means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations for the study variables. Second, we performed a series of ANOVAs to test the main effects (Hypotheses 1a and 2a). Third, we tested the indirect effects using the PROCESS macro developed by Hayes (2013). We tested the mediating effects of liking and perceived threat (Hypotheses 1b, 1c, 2b, and 2c) by utilizing Model 4 of the PROCESS macro. Then we combined the moderator of sense of power and tested the moderated-mediation (Hypothesis 3a and 3b) model by utilizing Model 7 of the PROCESS macro. The continuous measures were mean centered prior to testing the hypotheses (Aiken and West 1991).

RESULTS

Measurement Validity

Because we manipulated the independent variable, the predictor and outcome were rated from different sources. However, the mediators and outcome were provided by the participants, which may inflate our findings (Podsakoff et al. 2003). Thus, we conducted a Harman's single-factor test to ensure that our results were not attributed to common method variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The results revealed no evidence of this concern for both Chinese and Japanese samples. To assess the validity of our measures, we performed confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) on all questionnaire items using R 3.4.0 in combination with the package "lavaan" (Rosseel 2012). Since the original measures consisted of too many indicators, we reduced the number of indicators for each latent construct. We used parceling techniques when conducting the CFAs because parceling techniques produce more reliable latent variables than individual items by reducing item-specific random errors and thereby increasing the reliability of the model (Little et al. 2002). We used the factorial algorithm (item-to-construct balance) technique (Little et al. 2002) to create three parcels for the study variables, which include liking, perceived threat, and overall evaluations. The proposed three-factor baseline model showed an excellent fit to the Chinese data ($\chi^2[24] = 84.77, p < 0.001$; CFI = 0.96; IFI = 0.96; RMSEA = 0.10; SRMR = 0.06). The proposed three-factor baseline model

was shown to be acceptable to the Japanese data ($\chi^2[24] = 80.75, p < 0.001$; CFI = 0.94; IFI = 0.94; RMSEA = 0.13; SRMR = 0.10). These results provide support for the validity of the measures used in this study (Browne and Cudeck 1992).

Hypothesis Testing

Descriptive statistics. Table 2 presents means, standard deviations, and the intercorrelations for the Chinese and Japanese samples. The reliability coefficient for each variable is also shown in the correlation matrix when available. The results provide preliminary evidence for the expected effects of voice target and expertise on the outcome variables.

Insert Table 2 about here

Tests of main effects. First, we performed a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) on the ratings of the potential mediators and dependent variable. The multivariate F values for the main effects of target of voice and expertise on these variables were both significant (at $p < 0.01$ level). In addition, the interactions between target of voice and expertise on those variables were non-significant. Therefore, we conducted a series of univariate ANOVAs to examine our hypotheses. The results of the ANOVAs for the Chinese and Japanese samples are shown in Table 3. Additionally, Table 3 provides the partial eta-squared estimates associated with each factor.

Insert Table 3 about here

Hypothesis 1a predicted that the target of voice had an effect on overall evaluations. We found support for this hypothesis in both samples. As shown in Table 3, the target of voice had significant effects on overall evaluations in the Chinese ($F = 61.63, p < 0.01, \eta_p^2 = 0.20$) and Japanese ($F = 16.29, p < 0.01, \eta_p^2 = 0.11$) samples. Moreover, analysis of the marginal means indicated that mean ratings of the overall

evaluations were lower in the skip-level leader condition ($M = 3.69$ in the Chinese sample, and $M = 3.53$ in the Japanese sample) than in the immediate supervisor condition ($M = 4.85$ in the Chinese sample, and $M = 4.43$ in the Japanese sample).

Hypothesis 2a predicted that expertise of the voicing employee had an effect on overall evaluations. We found support for this hypothesis in both samples. As shown in Table 3, expertise had significant effects on overall evaluations in the Chinese ($F = 11.18, p < 0.01, \eta_p^2 = 0.04$) and Japanese ($F = 9.21, p < 0.01, \eta_p^2 = 0.06$) samples. Analysis of the marginal means indicated that mean ratings of the overall evaluations were higher when expertise of the voicing employee was high ($M = 4.54$ in the Chinese sample, and $M = 4.34$ in the Japanese sample) rather than low ($M = 3.99$ in the Chinese sample, and $M = 3.64$ in the Japanese sample).

Tests of mediations. Following the tests of the main effects, we tested the potential mediating effects by utilizing Model 4 of the PROCESS macro. Tables 4 and 5 present the total direct and indirect effects on the Chinese and Japanese samples, respectively. Consistent with the ANOVAs, Tables 4 and 5 also provide support for Hypotheses 1a and 2a. As shown in these two tables, the target of voice has a significant effect on overall evaluations in the Chinese (95% CI = [-1.46, -0.87]) and Japanese samples (95% CI = [-1.34, -0.46]). Expertise has a significant effect on overall evaluations in the Chinese (95% CI = [0.22, 0.86]) and Japanese samples (95% CI = [0.24, 1.15]).

Insert Table 4 about here

Insert Table 5 about here

Hypothesis 1b predicted that liking partially mediated the relationship between the target of voice and overall evaluations. We found support for Hypothesis 1b in both samples. As shown in Tables 4 and 5,

we observed that the confidence intervals for the indirect effect of the target of voice on overall evaluations through liking excluded the value of zero in the Chinese (95% CI = [-1.33, -0.81]) and Japanese (95% CI = [-1.38, -0.68]) samples. These results suggest that liking mediates the relationship between the target of voice and overall evaluations.

Hypothesis 1c predicted that perceived threat partially mediated the relationship between the target of voice and overall evaluations. We found support for the hypothesis in the Chinese sample but not in the Japanese sample. As shown in Tables 4 and 5, the confidence intervals for the indirect effect of the target of voice on overall evaluations through perceived threat excluded zero for the Chinese sample (95% CI = [-0.28, -0.03]) but not for the Japanese sample (95% CI = [-0.29, 0.01]).

Hypothesis 2b predicted that liking partially mediated the relationship between expertise and overall evaluations. This hypothesis was not supported because Tables 4 and 5 demonstrated that the direct effect between liking and expertise was not significant in the Chinese or the Japanese sample.

Hypothesis 2c predicted that perceived threat partially mediated the relationship between expertise and overall evaluations. Here, we found support for the hypothesis in the Japanese sample but not in the Chinese sample. As shown in Tables 4 and 5, the confidence intervals for the indirect effect of expertise on overall evaluation through perceived threat excluded zero for the Japanese sample (95% CI = [-0.37, -0.03]) but not for the Chinese sample (95% CI = [-0.22, 0.01]).

Tests of moderated mediation. Hypothesis 3a predicted conditional indirect effects of the target of voice on overall evaluation via perceived threat moderated by supervisors' sense of power. This hypothesis was not supported because Table 3 demonstrated that the moderating effects on the relationship between the target of voice and perceived threat were not significant either in the Chinese sample ($F = 2.07$, n.s., $\eta_p^2 = 0.01$) or in the Japanese sample ($F = 0.62$, n.s., $\eta_p^2 = 0.00$).

Hypothesis 3b predicted conditional indirect effects of expertise on overall evaluation via perceived threat moderated by supervisors' sense of power. We found support for this hypothesis in the Chinese sample but not in the Japanese sample. As shown in Table 3, the moderating effect of sense of power on the relationship between expertise and perceived threat was significant in the Chinese sample ($F = 5.21, p < 0.01, \eta_p^2 = 0.02$) but not in the Japanese sample ($F = 0.02, n.s., \eta_p^2 = 0.00$). We extend to examine the conditional indirect effects using the PROCESS macro (Hayes 2013) specifying Model 7. We generated 95% bootstrap bias-corrected intervals for the indirect effect conditioned by sense of power on the basis of 5,000 bootstrap samples. The findings for Hypothesis 3b are presented in Tables 6 and 7.

Insert Table 6 about here

Insert Table 7 about here

The results in Table 6 show a significant positive moderating effect of sense of power between expertise and perceived threat ($B = 0.74, p < 0.05, 95\% \text{ CI} = [0.10, 1.39]$). More specifically, Table 7 shows CIs for bootstrap tests at two sense of power values: (1) sense of power is low ($= 0$), and (2) sense of power is high ($= 1$). The CIs are considered statistically significant if the range between the low and high CIs does not include zero (Hayes 2013). The bootstrap CIs for the indirect effect when sense of power is low (0) include zero ($95\% \text{ CI} = [-0.11, 0.19]$), showing that there is no significant indirect effect under this condition. In contrast, under conditions when sense of power is high (1), there is a significant indirect (mediated) effect of expertise on overall evaluation through perceived threat ($95\% \text{ CI} = [-0.42, -0.06]$). The results provide support for Hypothesis 3b. The graph of the significant interaction is shown in Figure 2.

Insert Figure 2 about here

DISCUSSION

In this study, we examined the effects that the target of voice and expertise of voicing employees have on supervisors' overall evaluations of the employees, as well as explored the potential mediating effects of liking and perceived threat. We also examined the moderating role of supervisors' sense of power. Our findings are summarized in Table 8.

Insert Table 8 about here

The findings from the Chinese sample indicate the following: (a) When supervisors evaluate employees who exhibit voice, the target of voice is vital. Specifically, speaking up to skip-level leaders is negatively related to evaluations of the voicing employees, and liking and perceived threat mediate the relationship, (b) when the employees who exhibit voice are high in expertise rather than low, supervisors evaluate them more positively, but at the same time, supervisors perceive more threat from the voicing employees, and (c) there is an indirect negative relationship between expertise and supervisors' overall evaluations through perceived threat moderated by supervisors' sense of power, such that the effect will be stronger for supervisors who have a high sense of power rather than a low sense. Our findings from the Japanese sample indicate the following: (a) Consistent with the results from the Chinese sample, the target of voice has an effect on supervisors' perceptions of employee voice, such that speaking up to skip-level leaders is negatively related to evaluations of the voicing employee, and liking mediates the relationship; and (b) when the voicing employees' expertise is high rather than low, supervisors evaluate the employee more positively, but at the same time, they perceive more threat from the voicing employee. In addition,

our findings in the Japanese sample indicate that perceived threat mediates the relationship between expertise and overall evaluations. In contrast, the moderating role of sense of power was not significant.

Some of our hypotheses were not supported in the Chinese sample but were supported in the Japanese sample. For example, the Chinese sample did not support the hypothesis regarding the mediation effect of perceived threat between expertise and supervisors' evaluations, whereas the results from our Japanese data provided support. One possible reason is that supervisors in China may differentiate between their perception of threat and the evaluations of the voicing employee. Whereas supervisors' liking of the voicing employees is mainly determined by their assessment of whether the voice is challenging organizational norms and/or useful for organizational effectiveness, their perceived threat is mainly related to their personal interest (e.g., their maintenance of power) rather than the organizational benefits or effectiveness. Therefore, Chinese supervisors may use the information of liking consciously or unconsciously for the overall evaluations of the voicing employee. However, they are reluctant to link the perception of threat, which is more personal, with the overall evaluations of the employee that should be done from the organizational perspective.

Some of our hypotheses were not supported in the Japanese sample but were supported in the Chinese sample. For example, the Japanese sample did not support the hypothesis regarding the moderated mediating role of supervisors' sense of power, whereas the results from our Chinese data provided support for this hypothesis. One possible reason is that supervisors in Japan may feel threatened when voice is exhibited by employees who are high in expertise regardless of their sense of power.

Theoretical Implications

Our findings extend the theory of employee voice and make significant contributions to deepen the understanding of the nature of voice and its consequences in the Asian context. First, this study theorized and empirically tested the effect of the target of voice (an immediate supervisor or a skip-level leader as a

voice target) on supervisors' reactions to the voicing employees, which is seldom discussed (except Burris et al. 2017; Detert et al. 2013). Previous studies pointed out that voice is target sensitive and that it is vital to further discuss the target of voice (Liu et al. 2010). We responded to this call for research and examined the relationship between the target and outcomes of employee voice from the supervisor's perspective. More importantly, our findings contribute to the deeper understanding of leadership influence in Asia. Asia is characterized by cultures that are high in power distance and high in collectivism (Hofstede 2001), and hence leaders in Asian countries tend to have high power distance between themselves and their followers (Liden 2012). Supervisors are endowed with great power and control inherent in their positions and ensure the compliance of followers (Liden 2012). Consistent with this perspective, our findings in the Chinese and Japanese samples indicate that supervisors' responses to employee voice are subjected to the target of voice. Supervisors tend to provide low evaluations to the voicing employees when their voice behaviors are targeted at skip-level leaders because supervisors may perceive that voicing employees' behaviors are challenging their power and authority and that these employees are out of control. We argue that this effect might be especially salient in Asia because supervisors in Asian countries have a strong tendency to maintain the power distance between themselves and followers (Farh et al. 1997; Liden 2012).

Second, we demonstrated that voicing employees' expertise is an important factor to understand supervisors' reactions to the voicing employees. Our study revealed that the relationship between expertise and supervisors' reactions is more complex than it might have been thought. That is, even though supervisors will positively evaluate the voicing employees when they are high in expertise, it does not mean that supervisors like them. Moreover, our findings in both Chinese and Japanese samples indicate that supervisors will feel threatened when the voicing employees are high in expertise. In the Japanese sample, when supervisors feel threatened, they will provide low evaluations to the voicing employees. On the contrary, the Chinese sample indicates that supervisors' perception of threat will not result in low

evaluations of the voicing employees. However, if the supervisors are high in sense of power, which means that these supervisors think they have high power over others, they will feel threatened more and assign less favorable performance ratings.

These findings seem to be inconsistent with previous research, which has suggested that powerful individuals are more likely to take action in competitive interactions and engage in risky behaviors (Anderson and Galinsky 2006; Galinsky et al. 2003), and hence supervisors might be less likely to perceive threat from employee voice even though the voicing employees have high expertise. We suggest that Asian people's face concern may be useful to clarify the difference because concern for face is of utmost importance in Asia (Ho 1976; Hu 1944; Redding and Ng 1982). In high power distance cultures of Asia, one of the core cultural norms is that supervisors use authoritarian control to ensure the compliance of followers (Liden 2012). In this condition, being rejected by followers or not being treated respectfully by followers is more likely to make supervisors feel loss of face, which is a dangerous signal of the perception of threat. When employees exhibit voice, especially when employees are high in expertise, it may strengthen the feelings of loss of face because the challenging ideas or suggestions from highly expert employees are more likely to be accurate and to challenge the decisions made by the supervisors themselves. Therefore, supervisors in Asia tend to provide low evaluations to the voicing employees who have high expertise.

Third, the current findings extend the voice literature by discussing the relationship between employee voice and supervisors' responses because research on how supervisors respond to voice has been quite limited (Burris 2012; Weiss and Morrison 2019; Whiting et al. 2012). In particular, we discussed the outcome of voice in a non-Western setting. Ng and Feldman (2012) conducted a meta-analytic test related to employee voice. They observed that more than 90% of the studies were conducted in the Western countries and only 9% in Asian countries. Over the years, research on employee voice has been extended to

Asian countries (Matsunaga 2015; Park and Nawakitphaitoon 2018; Wang et al. 2016; Zhang et al. 2015; Zhu et al. 2018). Therefore, the concept of voice was initially proposed and studied in Western countries. This study contributes to the voice literature by discussing the nature of voice in Asia, especially with respect to how Asian supervisors respond to employee voice.

Taken together, our findings contribute to the deeper understanding of what makes supervisors respond differently toward employee voice by integrating the voice tactics (the target of voice), the voicing employees' characteristics (expertise), and supervisors' characteristics (sense of power) in one model.

Practical Implications

Our findings provided several practical contributions for both managers and employees. First, upward communication is vital to the organization (Detert and Edmondson 2011). Employee voice targeted at those who are in positions of authority is important and necessary for an organization to function effectively (Morrison 2014). However, our findings suggest that immediate supervisors do not like employees speaking up to skip-level leaders and would give them negative evaluations for doing so. Employees' anticipation of these kinds of consequences will keep them silent, even when they need to speak up to skip-level leaders for reasons to improve organizational effectiveness. One possible solution is to create an open communication climate where employees and managers can exchange ideas, including those that challenge the status quo. Providing communication training to all members of the organization could contribute to creating such an environment. It could not only make supervisors aware that the organization needs input from first-line employees but could also make employees aware that it is safe to exhibit voice in the organization.

Second, our findings suggest that for employees who exercise voice, a high level of expertise could be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, their suggestions could be welcomed and receive a positive response. On the other hand, the suggestions may increase perceived threat by supervisors, which may

harm the voicing employees' career in the long run. Therefore, employees should be careful when speaking up in the workplace and express an appropriate level of expertise.

Third, when employees who have high expertise need to speak up to supervisors, they are advised to consider the sense of power their immediate supervisors have. It may not be desirable for employees to speak up when their immediate supervisors' sense of power is high because it could damage the employees' career opportunities within the organization (e.g., reducing the chance of promotion due to low-performance evaluations). In particular, considering that China and Japan are countries with high power-distance culture (Hofstede 1994), the supervisors in China and Japan tend to be more likely to have a high sense of power.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

This study has limitations that can point to promising directions for future research. First, the target of voice manipulated in our scenario was limited to an informal situation. According to Detert and Trevino (2010), there are also formal chances for employees to meet skip-level leaders. Supervisors' responses might be different when employees speak up to skip-level leaders in formal situations (e.g., conference, seminar) rather than informal situations (e.g., private talking, coffee room), as in our study. Therefore, the theoretical and empirical work in the future could compare and contrast the effect of the target of voice in formal and informal situations.

Second, we discussed employee voice as an undifferentiated construct, and we did not explicitly examine the differences in the content of voice. Recently, scholars have argued that research should specify the type of voice (Chamberlin et al. 2017; Morrison 2011). Liang et al. (2012) distinguished between two types of employee voice: promotive voice and prohibitive voice. Maynes and Podsakoff (2014) developed four types of voice: supportive, constructive, defensive, and destructive. Past studies have shown that supervisors' response toward employee voice is mixed. The reason for the mixed finding might be a lack of

consideration for the content of voice. To the best of our knowledge, when discussing how supervisors respond to employee voice, most of the studies took an undifferentiated approach rather than focused on one specific type of voice (except Burris 2012). When employees engage in voice, they may bring up different kinds of issues to different leaders (Liu et al. 2013), which might result in different responses from immediate supervisors. Therefore, future research on this topic could consider the type of voice.

Finally, since we relied on scenarios to manipulate the target of voice, expertise, and sense of power, the limitations pertaining to the use of “paper people” in a scenario experiment remain. Previous research found that studies using paper people manipulation may result in larger effect sizes than that in using direct observation designs (Murphy et al. 1986). Besides, the evaluation of paper people might be altered in light of whether participants have interactions with a real person or not (Gorman et al. 1978). For example, in our scenario experiment, we asked participants to imagine themselves as supervisors and let them evaluate the paper people who are engaging in voice. The evaluations of paper people might be difficult to be imagined for the participants who do not have the experience to evaluate subordinates. In order to avoid potential problems, we carefully manipulated the independent variables to make scenarios approximate real-life situations. In addition, we compared those respondents who have managerial experience with those who have no managerial experience in both Chinese and Japanese samples by reanalyzing our data, including “managerial experience” as a moderator. All the hypotheses were still supported at the same significance levels. Therefore, managerial experience had no effect on our results. We suggest that future research could extend the findings of this investigation by using different methodologies such as field studies.

Despite the limitations, this study enriches understanding of the outcome of voice, more specifically in how supervisors respond to employee voice in the Asian context. Although our study extends the voice literature by discussing the target of voice, voicing employees’ expertise, and supervisors’

sense of power, there is still much to know what impact supervisors' responses to employee voice, especially in the Asian context.

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Table 1. Summary of Scenario Conditions and Outcomes of Voice

					<u>Liking</u>		<u>Threat</u>		<u>Overall evaluation</u>	
<i>China</i>										
Condition	Target of voice	Expertise	Power	N	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
1	Skip-level	High	High	34	3.26	1.49	4.17	1.26	4.04	1.25
2	Skip-level	High	Low	31	3.61	1.09	4.52	1.19	3.85	1.20
3	Skip-level	Low	High	29	3.00	1.34	3.74	1.21	3.46	1.07
4	Skip-level	Low	Low	29	2.43	1.15	4.06	1.21	2.59	1.08
5	Immediate	High	High	29	4.98	1.20	3.19	1.35	4.90	0.95
6	Immediate	High	Low	28	5.24	0.93	3.20	1.19	4.79	1.21
7	Immediate	Low	High	32	5.12	1.10	2.46	0.89	4.62	1.24
8	Immediate	Low	Low	32	5.01	1.11	3.34	1.18	4.36	1.00
<i>Japan</i>										
Condition	Target of voice	Expertise	Power	N	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
1	Skip-level	High	High	20	3.26	1.24	3.40	1.43	3.90	1.46
2	Skip-level	High	Low	14	3.04	1.36	3.64	1.61	3.75	1.32
3	Skip-level	Low	High	18	3.13	0.63	2.68	0.98	3.35	1.29
4	Skip-level	Low	Low	17	2.81	1.29	3.20	1.04	3.12	1.41
5	Immediate	High	High	15	4.75	0.90	2.67	1.03	4.82	1.06
6	Immediate	High	Low	16	4.55	1.71	2.84	1.15	4.95	1.28
7	Immediate	Low	High	16	4.19	1.06	2.43	0.72	4.19	1.05
8	Immediate	Low	Low	20	4.19	1.22	2.36	0.67	3.93	1.34

Table2. Summary of Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
<i>China</i>								
1. Target	0.50	0.50						
2. Expertise	0.50	0.50	0.06					
3. Sense of power	0.51	0.50	0.01	0.02				
4. Liking	4.08	1.57	-0.64**	0.09	0.00	(0.91)		
5. Threat	3.52	1.29	0.37**	0.11†	-0.10	-0.50**	(0.86)	
6. Overall evaluations	4.08	1.32	-0.45**	0.21**	0.07	0.67**	-0.29**	(0.87)
<i>Japan</i>								
1. Target	0.51	0.50						
2. Expertise	0.48	0.50	0.03					
3. Sense of power	0.51	0.50	0.09	0.06				
4. Liking	3.72	1.36	-0.49**	0.11	0.03	(0.90)		
5. Threat	2.89	1.20	0.27**	0.20*	-0.05	-0.37**	(0.83)	
6. Overall evaluations	3.98	1.37	-0.33**	0.25**	0.03	0.73**	-0.22*	(0.92)

Note. $N_{China} = 244$; $N_{Japan} = 136$. SD = standard deviation. Internal reliabilities (coefficient alphas) appear in parentheses on the diagonal.

For target manipulation, 0 = immediate supervisor target, 1 = skip-level leader target; for expertise manipulation, 0 = low expertise, 1 = high expertise; for power manipulation, 0 = low sense of power, 1 = high sense of power.

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$. † $p < 0.10$

Table 3. Two-way Analysis of Variance

Predictor	<u>Liking</u>			<u>Perceived threat</u>			<u>Overall Evaluation</u>		
	MS	F	η_p^2	MS	F	η_p^2	MS	F	η_p^2
<i>China</i>									
Target	242.34	163.20**	0.40	54.55	37.64**	0.13	82.56	61.63**	0.20
Expertise	4.33	1.75	0.01	4.74	2.86†	0.01	17.96	11.18**	0.04
Target * Sense of power	-	-	-	2.97	2.07	0.01	-	-	-
Expertise * Sense of power	-	-	-	8.44	5.21*	0.02	-	-	-
<i>Japan</i>									
Target	60.17	42.21**	0.24	14.41	10.80**	0.07	37.55	16.29**	0.11
Expertise	2.76	1.49	0.01	7.97	5.76*	0.04	16.35	9.21**	0.06
Target * Sense of power	-	-	-	0.83	0.62	0.00	-	-	-
Expertise * Sense of power	-	-	-	0.03	0.02	0.00	-	-	-

Note. For target manipulation, 0 = immediate supervisor target, 1 = skip-level leader target; for expertise manipulation, 0 = low expertise, 1 = high expertise; for power manipulation, 0 = low sense of power, 1 = high sense of power. η_p^2 = partial eta-squared.

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$. † $p < 0.10$

Table 4. Direct and Indirect Effects for the Chinese Sample

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	LLCI	ULCI
Direct effects						
Target → Liking	-1.99	0.16	-12.77	**	-2.30	-1.69
Target → Perceived threat	0.95	0.15	6.14	**	0.64	1.25
Target → Overall evaluations	-1.16	0.15	-7.85	**	-1.46	-0.87
Expertise → Liking	0.26	0.20	1.32		-0.13	0.66
Expertise → Perceived threat	0.28	0.16	1.69	†	-0.05	0.60
Expertise → Overall evaluations	0.54	0.16	3.34	**	0.22	0.86
Indirect effects						
	Effect	Boot SE	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI		
Target → Liking → Overall evaluations	-1.04	0.13	-1.33	-0.81		
Target → Perceived threat → Overall evaluations	-0.14	0.07	-0.28	-0.03		
Expertise → Liking → Overall evaluations	0.14	0.11	-0.06	0.37		
Expertise → Perceived threat → Overall evaluations	-0.09	0.06	-0.22	0.01		

Note. *N* = 244. Bootstrap sample size = 5000. SE = standard error. LL = lower limit; CI = confidence interval; UL= upper limit.

p* < 0.05. *p* < 0.01. †*p* < 0.10

Table 5. Direct and Indirect Effects for the Japanese Sample

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	LLCI	ULCI
Direct effects						
Target → Liking	-1.33	0.15	-6.50	**	-1.73	-0.93
Target → Perceived threat	0.65	0.20	3.29	**	0.26	1.04
Target → Overall evaluations	-0.90	0.22	-4.04	**	-1.34	-0.46
Expertise → Liking	0.29	0.23	1.22		-0.18	0.75
Expertise → Perceived threat	0.48	0.20	2.40	*	0.09	0.88
Expertise → Overall evaluations	0.69	0.23	3.04	**	0.24	1.15
Indirect effects						
	Effect	Boot SE	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI		
Target → Liking → Overall evaluations	-1.00	0.18	-1.38	-0.68		
Target → Perceived threat → Overall evaluations	-0.10	0.08	-0.29	0.01		
Expertise → Liking → Overall evaluations	0.20	0.16	-0.13	0.53		
Expertise → Perceived threat → Overall evaluations	-0.16	0.09	-0.37	-0.03		

Note. *N* = 136. Bootstrap sample size = 5000. SE = standard error. LL = lower limit; CI = confidence interval; UL= upper limit.

p* < .05. *p* < .01.

Table 6. Results of PROCESS (Model 7) Analysis for the Chinese Sample

Outcome variable			Perceived threat			
Variables	B	SE	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	LLCI	ULCI
Expertise	-0.10	0.23	-0.41		-0.55	0.36
Sense of power	-0.61	0.23	-2.66	**	-1.07	-0.16
Expertise × Sense of power	0.74	0.33	2.28	*	0.10	1.39
<i>F</i>			3.44			
<i>R</i>			0.20			
<i>R</i> ²			0.04			
Outcome variable			Overall evaluation			
Variables	B	SE	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	LLCI	ULCI
Perceived threat	-0.32	0.06	-5.32	**	-0.44	-0.20
Expertise	0.63	0.15	4.08	**	0.33	0.94
<i>F</i>			20.36			
<i>R</i>			0.38			
<i>R</i> ²			0.14			

Note. N = 244. B = unstandardized conditional indirect effect. SE = standard error. CI = confidence interval

p* < .05. *p* < .01.

Table 7. Conditional Indirect Effect Result for the Chinese sample

Mediator: Perceived threat	Indirect Effect	SE	LL 95% CI	UL 95% CI
Sense of power (0)	0.03	0.07	-0.11	0.19
Sense of power (1)	-0.21	0.09	-0.42	-0.06

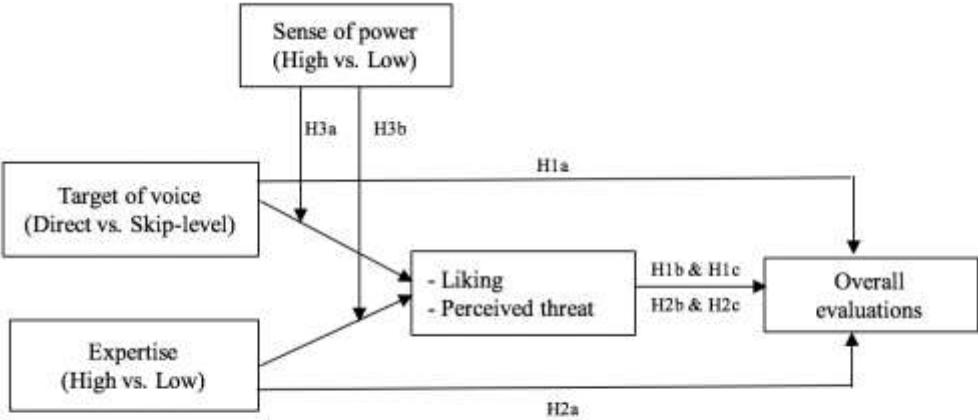
Note. Bootstrap sample size = 5000. LL = lower limit; CI = confidence interval; UL= upper limit

Table 8: Summary of the Results of Hypothesis Testing

Hypotheses	Chinese sample results	Japanese sample results
H1a (direct effect of target of voice on overall evaluations)	S	S
H1b (indirect effect of target of voice on overall evaluations through liking)	S	S
H1c (indirect effect of target of voice on overall evaluations through perceived threat)	S	NS
H2a (direct effect of expertise on overall evaluations)	S	S
H2b (indirect effect of expertise on overall evaluations through liking)	NS	NS
H2c (indirect effect of expertise on overall evaluations through perceived threat)	NS	S
H3a (indirect effect of target of voice on overall evaluations through perceived threat moderated by sense of power)	NS	NS
H3b (indirect effect of expertise on overall evaluations through perceived threat moderated by sense of power)	S	NS

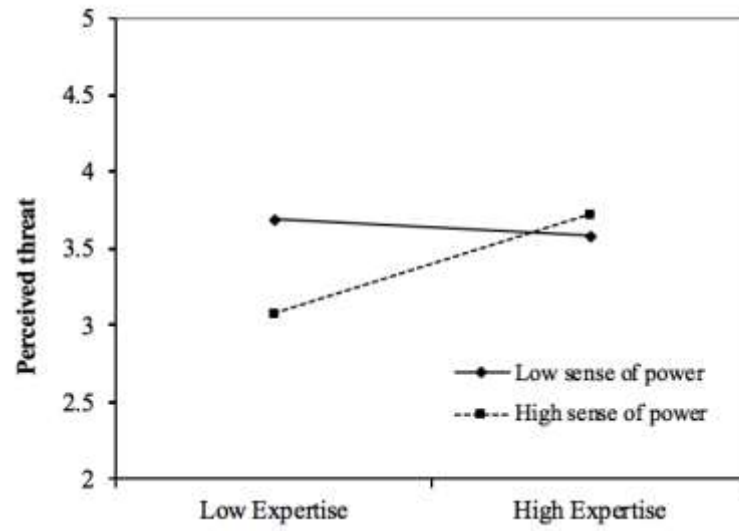
Note. S = supported; NS = not supported

Figure 1. Overall Hypothesized Model



Note. H = Hypothesis

Figure 2. Interaction of Employees' Expertise and Supervisors' Sense of Power on Perceived Threat



APPENDIX

Variable	High-level manipulation	Low-level manipulation
Supervisors' sense of power (Anderson et al. 2012)	<i>High sense of power</i> Suppose that you were a department head of a company. This company is planning to expand its business overseas and you are in charge of this project. In this company, you have a lot of power. You have the power to decide work contents, personnel reshuffles, subordinates' salary, and so on. The members of this project will perform according to your direction.	<i>Low sense of power</i> Suppose that you were a department head of a company. This company is planning to expand its business overseas. Although you are in charge of this project, you don't have a lot of power. Thus, you don't have a lot of power to decide work contents, personnel reshuffle, subordinates' salary, and so on. The members of this project almost not perform according to your direction.
Target of voice (Detert and Trevino 2010)	<i>Skip-level leader target</i> One day, in a weekly meeting, you reported that you decide to expand business within Asia and your supervisor A was also in this meeting. After the meeting, you found that you had forgotten some documents in the meeting room, so you returned back. When you were approaching to the meeting room, you found that your subordinate B and your supervisor A were talking quietly in the meeting room. You heard B said that "related to this project, I think tapping into the American market is better than into the Asian market and is good for the future of our company." Besides that, B told a lot of problems related to the project to supervisor A. You didn't hear the problems from B before, and you know that B always behaves like this from other members.	<i>Immediate supervisor target</i> One day, in a weekly meeting, you reported that you decide to expand business within Asia and your supervisor A was also in this meeting. After the meeting, you found that you had forgotten some documents in the meeting room, so you returned back. On your way back to the meeting room, you met a subordinate B and he said that he has something to tell you. B said that "related to this project, I think tapping into the American market is better than into the Asian market and is good for the future of our company." Besides that, he told a lot of problems related to the project to you. This subordinate B always talks to you with his ideas about work-related issues like this.
Employee expertise	<i>High expertise</i> Subordinate B knows much about global issues and has a good knowledge of marketing.	<i>Low expertise</i> Subordinate B doesn't know much about global issues and has little knowledge about marketing.

Scenarios were originally written in Chinese and Japanese