CAN SPEAKING UP REALLY HINDER THE PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT: *In today's dynamic environment, employees are becoming the most valuable asset to the organizations, because they are the main source who can add value to their organization by their commitment, creativity and high performance. But this all depends on how the employees are being treated by their organizations. (Burris, E. 2012). Sometimes employees tend to speak up and express what they feel about their work setting. Managers play a fundamental role in the voice process because they are supposed to have the power to address the raised issue (Ashford, Sutcliffe, & Christianson, 2009; Detert& Burris, 2007). The present study focuses on positive side of employee voice and the way it should be dealt with in order to gain more value for the organization This study investigates that how employee voice can lead to a better performance. It was assumed that the stance of employee voice depends on the manager/team lead/ supervisor of that employee as how the raised voice has been perceived and resultantly it can affect the performance of that employee. The validity of the instrument has been test through Confirmatory factor analysis in AMOS 19 and hypotheses were being tested by applying regression analysis on SPSS 19. In a sample of 239 employees of telecom sector of Pakistan, as hypothesized, employees who raised supportive type of voice were being considered as loyal to the organization and eventually they performed better. Employees who tend to raise challengeable voice were considered as threat and hence it hindered their performance.*

Keywords: Supportive Voice, Challengeable Voice, Managerial Perception, Job Performance

INTRODUCTION

Understanding voice has become a source of great attention over the past decade (Greenberg & Edwards, 2009; Morrison, 2011). It is argued that managerial behaviors can indicate that how encouraging the organizational context is to employee input (Morrison & Milliken, 2000). Therefore, when an employee speaks, besides the substance, the perception regarding that voice really counts. Detert (2010), examined that employee speaking up largely depends on managerial practices being followed by the immediate supervisor and organizational context. According to Burris (2012) employees are well aware of the sometimes vain nature of trying to change the status quo (Detert& Trevino, 2010) and there are definite threats linked with speaking up (Milliken, Morrison &Hewlin, 2003). Moreover, employees may or may not assess the value of their voice in the mind of their immediate supervisors. Because the consequences associated with employee voice majorly depend on the managerial perception of voice. If immediate supervisor perceives the raised voice as "loyal" and it actually is; will encourage that employee perform better by the having the joyful feeling of being heard and endorsed positively. As when positive ideas of employees are being heard and endorsed it brings creativity to their jobs (Zhou and George, 2001). Hence, we can safely conclude that results associated with employee speaking up depend on what manager thinks of that employee (Burris, E. 2012) which eventually is based on the type of voice raised by the employee as perceived by their manager.

Types of Voice: (Challengeable Versus Supportive Voice)

Maria (2011) defined voice as "the opportunity to express one's opinions with regard to the decision that needs to be made." This voice can (or cannot) be for the betterment of the decision depending upon the person who raises the voice. Organ (2006) articulates that manager may deny the idea generated by the employee if "It appears to be fairly general and do not specifically reflect making innovative suggestions for change and recommending modifications to standard procedures". So it is equally important that what type of idea has been generated or what kind of voice has been raised by the employee in order to get endorsed. Burris (2012) said that there are two types of voice that are usually raised by employees, i.e. supportive voice and challengeable voice. Besides that, Lewin and Mitchell (1992) also differentiate between mandated voice (e.g. co-determination and legislation) and voluntary voice (e.g. collective bargaining and negotiation) which is less related to the present study. So, it is important to figure out that which type of voice will lead to endorsement. Sometimes, managers get voice from below when their employees want to instigate "change rather than escape from an objectionable state of affairs" (Hirschman, 1970). Morrison (2011) defines voice as "discretionary communication of ideas, suggestions, concerns or opinions about work-related issues with the intent to improve organizational and unit functioning". Withey and Cooper (1989) recommended that voice is any activity that individuals direct toward improving the situation at work (Burris, 2012). These kinds of voice behaviors are considered as performance oriented or supportive voice. So, employees might be engaged in speaking up for the betterment of their organization. On the other hand, employees may tend to speak up to change the status quo which can become challenging for the organization. McCabe and Lewin (1992) articulated that voice is the appearance of protest or objection in an organizational context by employees. Voice can be considered as an expression of someone's dissatisfaction which leads that person to speak up against the grievance in a complaining manner (Dundon T, Wilkinson A, Marchington M, and Ackers P, 2004) that tends to be challenging for the management in a work context. This voice behavior has been addressed as challengeable voice in current study.

Managerial Perception of Threat or Loyalty

Employee loyalty is a more action-oriented concept because it deals with the behavior of the employees (DuboV &

Heaton, 1999; McCusker & Wolfman, 1998). That's why managers can perceive that whether or not an employee is loyal with the organization. As said by Jacob and Nussler (2010) that the contractual relations between employer and employee can become a reason of employee disloyalty. So it can be concluded that, if manager perceives that employee is loyal to the organization, he is more likely to be heard and endorsed (Burris, 2012). As argued by Shore, Barksdale, and Shore (1995) that employees who are seen by managers as satisfying the objectives of the organization were regarded as more loyal. On the other hand, the managerial perception of threat about the employee can cause certain risks for employee (Burris, 2012). It can be accomplished that if manager found employee as a threat or found him engaged in challengeable voice, he will discourage the idea and will give less weight to it. Gray (2010) says that the people show discomfort while speaking up. It is perhaps because they assess the weight given to their opinion prior to convey, whereas it can or cannot be a true assessment (Detert, 2010). Basically the managers administer a major role in the voice progression because they are supposed to have the authority to attend the communicated issue. (Ashford, Sutcliffe, & Christianson, 2009; Detert& Burris, 2007). Therefore, it is really important that how the voice has been treated. Deetz (1992) in his study portrayed the procedure of muting of some people by the use of power just because the voice material was considered to be challenging. It shows that challengeable voice is not likely to be endorsed or even heard. This is certain that such people become disappointed by the described treatment to their voices. Nobody likes to be treated like threat even if he/she is actually challenging the status quo. Janis (1982) postulated that managers tend to mute the voice which appears to be challenging to the pre-set practices thus depicting their perception of threat towards challenging voice.

Thus, whenever a voice is raised, it is being perceived positively (as being loyal) or negatively (as a threat) by the manager in organizational context.

Hypothesis 1: Managers perceive employees who more frequently engage in challengeable voice as a threat.

Hypothesis 2: Managers perceive employees who more frequently engage in supportive voice as being loyal to the organization.

Job Performance

Job performance is the major concern for any for-profit organization. Jankingthong and Rurkkhum (2012) explained two types of employee behaviors that are essential for organizational effectiveness: task performance and contextual performance (Borman & Motowidlo,1993).

2.5.1-Task performance

Task performance is that type of performance in which employee actually performs the task and actually engaged with the products and materials. These are the tasks that indirectly support organization's core competencies (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997; Werner, 2000). This type of performance has been taken in to account for current study.

2.5.2-Contextual Performance:

Contextual performance refers to that type of performance in which employees are not directly involved in performing the main functions. But they in directly add value to the organization in social or psychological context (Werner, 2000).

Performance and related elements of performance, such as organizational citizenship behavior (OCB: Bateman and Organ, 1983; Smith *et al*., 1983), organizational behavior (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986), and job creativity (Van Dyne *et al*., 1995), add value to the organization. Therefore, it can be argued that employees with raised performances are asset and actually add value to the organization.

It has been observed that employees usually perform better when they find their teams as cooperative and environment as supportive (e.g., Hage & Dewar, 1973; Norburn & Birley, 1988) which is directly linked with the managerial perception in present study.

Werner (2007) postulates that employees are better in performing their task when they find the task as related to their skills. Therefore, we can say that tasks are performed better mainly for two reasons; environmental conditions and skillfulness of workers. Lefkowitz (2010) explained that much of the task performance is related with the supervisory behavior of superiors. He argued that if employees are recognized for their efforts and are being rewarded on and off, it will enhance their performance. Besides rewarding this Lefkowitz (2010) also argued that employees will perform better if their superiors are friendly towards them. Performance has a great connection with personality type of a person.

Lefkowitz (2010) conducted a meta-analysis on personality type and task performance. It was argued that a person performs better if he/she shows openness to experiments and is agreeableness. Anyhow, overall the study concluded that if a person more open as compared to others, his performance will be better. Therefore, literature clearly supports the phenomenon that if employees tend to speak up for the betterment of the organization must be a good performer.

Gary *et* al(1991) postulated that task performance has its connection with the goal setting. If goals are being set according to the skillfulness of the employees they tend to perform better. Further Martin (1997) and Lefkowitz (2010) in their studies explained that task performance largely depends on the goals attached with the competency and capacity of the employees. Most of the times when employees are not performing well, it is because they have been assigned the duties that don't match their competency. This thing reveals two aspects; one is skillfulness and the other one is superior's involvement in understanding employee's nature and mindset.

Stated by Burris (2012) that research on voice proves that employee speaking up is positively related with task performance (Nemeth, 1997), team performance (Dooley & Fryxell, 1999) and organizational performance (Argote & Ingram, 2000). Therefore, present study intends to find out the relationship between employee voice and job performance of the employees through mediating role of managerial perception.

Hypothesis 3: Managerial Perception of loyalty mediates the relationship between supportive voice and job performance

Hypothesis 4: Managerial perception of threat mediates the relationship between challengeable voice and job performance

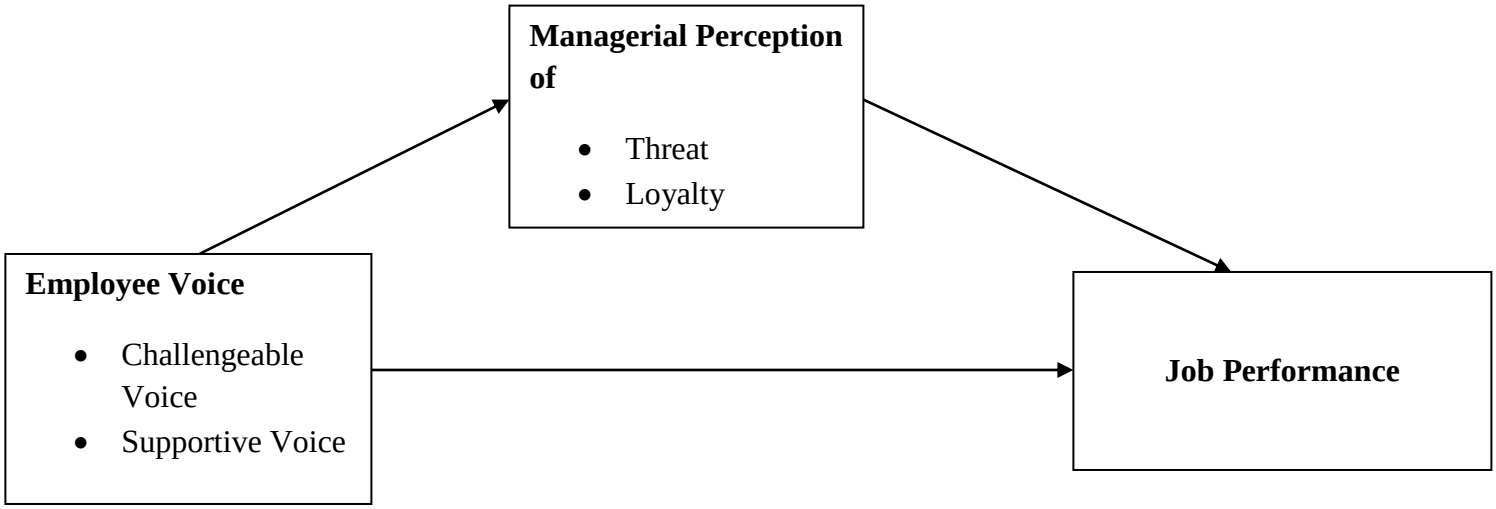

Figure-1

METHODOLOGY

Research Setting, Participants, and Procedures

Data was collected from 239 employees and their respective managers/team leads/supervisors of telecom sector of Pakistan by simple random sampling technique. Data was collected through well designed questionnaire-distributed and collected by the researcher herself. Standardized and closed ended questions were used in questionnaire and a 5- point Likert scale was used to measure the responses for this study. Self-administered questionnaires were used for this research. The response rate was approximately 79.6 % as 239 complete and accurate questionnaires were being received from a total of 300 distributed questionnaires.

Questionnaires were being coded and then the supervisor/team lead/in charge were asked to fill in the last part o of the questionnaire for the particular employee based on the code assigned to him/her. The second section of the questionnaire was comprised of the items measuring managerial perception of threat and loyalty, which are mediator for the current study.

The given table includes the list of companies along with their regional offices and the responses collected from each company.

Table-1

Name of the Company	Regional Offices	Questionnaire Administered	Responses
Warid	2	50	41
Ufone	2	50	32
Telenor	2	50	45
Mobilink	3	50	40
Zong	1	50	33
PTCL	1	50	48
PTCL	11	300	239

Measuring Instruments used in study were adapted from literature, developed by scholars, after their permission. Given is the detail about the instrument used for the study along with the reliability of each construct:

Employee Voice Behavior

To gauge employee voice in terms of supportive voice and challengeable voice the instrument developed by Dyne and LePine (1998) was used. It includes 3 items for challengeable voice behavior and 6-items for supportive voice behavior.

Managerial Perception of Threat and loyalty

For managerial perception of loyalty I used 6-item scale of Mayer and Davis' (1999) measure of the benevolence dimension of trust to measure loyalty.

Managerial Perception of Threat was measured by the 6-item scale of Menon, Choi, and Thompson's (2006)

Job Performance

Job performance was being measured by 7-item self-rating scale developed by William and Anderson (1991).

The responses on managerial perception of threat and loyalty were being conducted by the manager/team lead/supervisor of the actual respondent as prescribed earlier.

Results and findings

SPSS 19 and AMOS 19 were being used to conduct the analysis. The reliability of the instrument was being assessed through Cronbach Alpha reliability check. Normally Cronbach's Coefficients value of above 0.70 is considered suitable and scale with this value and greater is considered reliable (Murphy and Balzer, 1989).

Table-2

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of items
Challengeable Voice	0.84	3
Supportive Voice	0.87	6
Managerial Perception of Threat	0.82	6
Managerial Perception of Loyalty	0.96	6
Job Performance	0.92	7

All the items are reliable to be used. The validity of the questionnaire was being analyzed through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) in AMOS. CFA confirms the construct items by having GFI= 0.881, CFI=0.911, NFI= 0.912 and CMIN/DF = 4.025. None of the factor had factor

loading below than 0.4 therefore, none of the items were removed.

After confirming the reliability and validity of the instrument, the regression analysis was being conducted. Preacher and Hayes, (2008) Multiple Regression was applied in order to gauge the mediating effect of managerial perception of threat/loyalty.

Table-3

IV=Challengeable Voice Mediator= Managerial perception of Threat DV=Job Performance

Variable	Coefficients	SE	T	P
IV → Mediator	0.5978	0.0450	8.8391	0.000
Mediator → DV	-0.2587	0.0530	-4.8833	0.000
IV → DV	-0.3006	0.0384	-7.8230	0.000
IV → MED → DV	-0.5977	0.0423	-4.6722	0.001
Adj. R square	0.2721			
P value	0.000			

Table-4

IV=Supportive Voice Mediator= Managerial perception of Loyalty DV=Job Performance

Variable	Coefficients	SE	T	P
IV → Mediator	0.7837	0.0956	8.1935	0.000
Mediator → DV	0.3370	0.0411	8.1928	0.000
IV → DV	0.2772	0.0685	6.9661	0.000
IV → MED → DV	0.4131	0.0686	31.053	0.000
Adj. R square	0.3483			
P value	0.000			

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION:

We can safely conclude that employees with supportive voice behavior are perceived as loyal by their managers and hence they perform better (Table-4). Similarly employees with challengeable voice behavior tend to be poor performers while mediating the role of managerial perception of threat. Employees who challenge the status quo are seen as threat (Burris, 2012). Results show that there is strong positive relationship between challengeable voice and managerial perception of threat which supports the findings of Burris (2012). Mangers view employees who more frequently engage in challengeable voice as a threat to the organization (Detret 2010). Table-3 shows that at β-value of 0.59 the relationship of challengeable voice and managerial perception of threat is significant. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is accepted fully that managers perceive employees as threat who amore frequently engage in challengeable type of voice. Table-3 shows that challengeable voice negatively relates with job performance and the value of the coefficient goes from -0.3006 to -0.5977 when managerial perception of threat was mediated. Hence, hypothesis 3 is also fully accepted. Results of table-4 show that managers perceive those employees as being loyal to the organization who more frequently exhibit supportive voice behavior.The β-value of 0.7 shows that there is a strong positive relationship between supportive voice and managerial perception of loyalty. So, hypothesis-2 has been fully accepted. Burris (2012) argued that employees are being perceived as loyal if their voice behavior is performance oriented and our study supports that argument. Relationship between supportive voice and job performance becomes even stronger (coefficient value goes from (0.2772 to 0.4131)) when managerial perception of loyalty was mediated which confirms hypothesis 4 to be true.

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to demonstrate that how employees can be beneficial for their companies even when they speak up. The results show that employees at telecom sector do perform better if perceived as loyal. Hence the perception of manager about employees depends on the frequently shown behavior on the part of employees. Yet, people are the blood of the organization and can prove to be an asset. Value can be added to the organization if employees are heard and endorsed. This study concludes that if managers are considerate to the voices of employees at telecom sector of Pakistan, employees can add value to their organizations through their enhanced performance.

Despite of the fact that challenging voice can also sometimes enhance performance not to challenge status quo, but to do something novel, my study revealed that challengeable voice is always perceived as a threat and thus treated accordingly. Consequently, it hinders the performance of the people even in a dynamic zone like telecom.

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