

THE IMPACT OF MANAGERIAL CONSULTATION ON VOICE FUTILITY AND INTENT TO QUIT WITH TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AS MODERATOR: A MEDIATING ROLE OF FELT OBLIGATION TOWARDS CONSTRUCTIVE CHANGE

Muna Ibrahim G. Alyusef

Peng Cheng Zhang

Huazhong University of Science & Technology, Wuhan, PR CHINA
University of Hail, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Abstract

Employee voice is essential to the constructive progress of any organization. While many organizations have adapted to the culture of more open communication, some are still lagging behind in providing employees with the power to speak up to their supervisors. The barrier has led to general job employees' dissatisfaction frequently resulting in employee's intent to quit. Managerial consultation is, hence, essential to avoid such situations while a more supportive leadership provides employees with the motivation and inspiration they require to feel obliged to bring about positive change in their organizations. This study has proposed four hypotheses based on managerial consultation, voice futility, and intent to quit while transformational leadership and feeling obliged towards constructive change have been used as the moderator and mediator, respectively. The study concludes that there exists positive relationship between managerial consultation, voice futility, and intent to quit, provided that effective managerial consultation reduces the intent to quit and vice versa.

Keywords: Voice, managerial consultation, transformational leadership, organizational change, constructive change, employee motivation

Introduction:

Nowadays the hypercompetitive environment of the business world is driven by the suggestions and comments of employees aimed at improving organizational operations (Morrison & Milliken, 2000). It is simply not possible for top management to figure out all the necessary initiatives

(Senge, 1990). Voice denotes the expression of ideas and concepts either verbally or in writing that are concerned with job satisfaction or subsequent organizational problems, or the requirement to enhance workplace circumstances and personnel, team, departmental or organizational goals (Olson-Buchanan & Boswell, 2002). This study is concentrated on voice and voice behavior that is delineated as the behaviors incurred by employees/subordinates who want to bring about change in the organization. Latest studies have indicated that behaviors of employee voice consist of vital inputs, capable of steering organizations away from issues and towards positive outcomes of organizational performance (Aryee, Walumbwa, Mondejar, & Chu, 2014). Voice could be limited to individual actors and managers or it could be a representative for a team or the organization as a whole.

Several studies indicate that employee voice is necessary for constructive organizational goals, such as performance (Detert & Burris, 2007), extra-role conduct (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998), invention (Zhou & George, 2001), learning (Seibert, Kraimer, & Crant, 2001), employee retention (Podsakoff et al., 2014), collective leadership (Carson, Tesluk, & Marrone, 2007), and disaster avoidance and administration (Selart, Johansen, & Nesse, 2013); nonetheless, many employees still view voice as a risk to their job security and mental welfare (Aryee, Walumbwa, Mondejar, & Chu, 2014).

Management consultation is imperative in the encouragement of employee voice. Hence, an understanding of mediating and moderating variables related to employee voice must be explored to promote voice behaviors in an organizational setting (Edgar & Geare, 2005) and achieve its progressive organizational impacts (Maynes & Podsakoff, 2014). This study focuses on the exploration of individual and circumstantial precursors that form voice behaviors of employees as a management goal to improve organizational performance. It will further explore the intent to quit as a secondary outcome of ineffective management in improving voice futility. The study takes the mediating effect of “felt obligation for constructive change” (FOCC) and the moderating effect of transformational leadership on the relationship between managerial consultation, voice futility, and intent to quit.

Significance and the scope of proposed study

It is important to understand the various factors related to employee voice as it is an essential component in the improvement of organizational performance. The managerial role in encouraging employees to feel obliged towards bringing about constructive change is imperative as managers possess the power to enable employees to speak their mind. In an

environment where employee participation is not hindered, more constructive suggestions are achievable. In the competitive business world of today, the top management alone is unable to improve organizational goals. Moreover, without the encouragement of employee voice, personnel are bound to feel unimportant and unheard. This could lead to a higher intent to quit on the part of employees. Hence, this study signifies intent to quit as an opposing outcome to voice futility relating managerial consultation and the moderating and mediating factors to both the possible outcomes. In a way, this research describes two possible scenarios. In the case that managerial consultation is led by effective transformational leadership and employees feel a greater obligation towards constructive change because they are being encouraged to voice their opinions or the management fails to encourage employees and they do not feel obliged to bring about constructive change and their intent to quit is higher. Hence, this study contributes to a significant idea proposition by denoting that voice futility is likely to result in the decrease of intent to quit in employees and vice versa.

The Proposed Conceptual Model

Although, most of the variables that are involved in this research have been studied in relation to one or another existing variable in the study, however, this study proposes a model that is rather complex. The main relationship examined in this exploration i.e., effect of managerial consultation on voice futility has been studied in the past; however, effect of managerial consultation in relation to FOCC and intent to quit has yet not been exhausted. The basic model of this study encompasses five variables. There is only one independent variable i.e., managerial consultation while there are two dependent variables i.e., intent to quit and voice futility.

The moderator is selected to be transformational leadership. Although ethical leadership has also been found to have a positive effect on voice futility, transformational leadership is chosen as it is a change-oriented style of leadership. The moderator is applied at the relationship between managerial consultation and FOCC as a transformational leader has the main attributes to motivate employees towards constructive change in the organization. However, FOCC and voice futility have a complex relationship as, in some cases, voice futility could be the independent variable that gives rise to FOCC. While, for the sake of this study, FOCC takes the lead and results in voice futility. Moreover, in a scenario where voice futility is not achieved, yet the employees feel an obligation towards change and are unable to do anything about it, they are more likely to quit the organization.

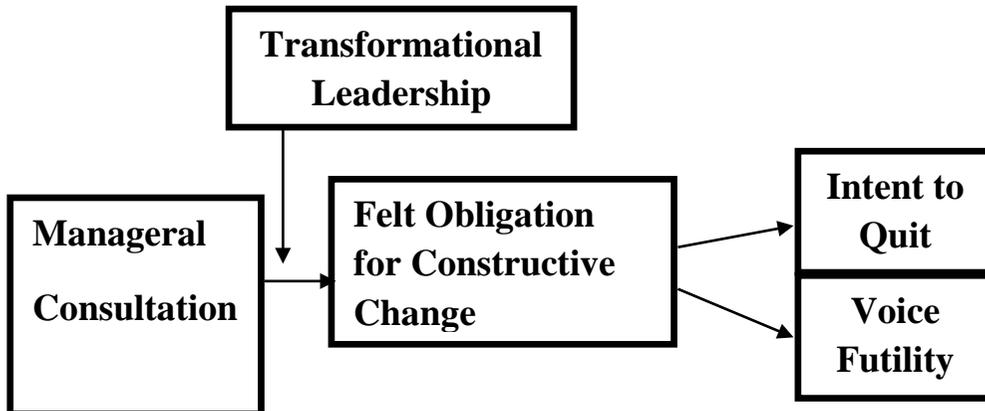


Figure 1: Conceptual Model

Managerial Consultation and Outcomes

Managerial consultation can be a significant cause or condition that can outcome to voice futility (Withey & Cooper, 1989). In their research, Withey and Cooper (1989) found that many employees quit from their jobs when they are not given enough room to express themselves in front of the management. Avery and Quiñones (2002) have distinguished the ideas of voice opportunity, observed voice opportunity, behavior of voice, and voice futility. They utilized a simulation activity in which 102 undergraduates contributed. The results indicated that supposed voice opportunity influenced voice behaviors while voice futility and behavior interacted in the formation of this relationship. However, this study has restricted validity outside of the setting in which it has been carried out. Nonetheless, it indicates the importance of management in opening prospects for employees to become more assertive in voicing their opinions. In another study, Piderit and Ashford (2003) have observed the role of women as managers in the promotion of expression of perceptions regarding gender equality problems in their workplaces. The results indicated that when managers speak up on a significant issue, the employees are likely to follow through. This research emphasized that managerial consultation aimed at encouraging voice is an indication of the same issues that affect manager too. Detert and Edmondson (2011) additionally contributed that management should further deliberate implicit theories of voice to effectively associate managerial consultation with voice.

In addition to proposing voice opportunity, managerial consultation is able to form employee voice directly. Tangirala and Ramanujam (2012) examined their employee voice model that is founded on the precursors of management consultation and observed impact on work. They directed a multisource review involving 640 nurses alongside their managers

contributed. The results revealed that consultation certainly enhanced voice sharing with the management and that perceived influence moderated this association. They additionally moderated the influence of employees while overall job satisfaction of employees moderated the willingness to utilize influence to exhibit upward voice. This research is associated to the supposed model of the paper in its relationship of motivation and leadership variables. It exhibited that consultation may be a significant independent variable that forms voice. Nonetheless, consultation activities and its outcomes related to voice can also rely on the cultural values of the employees. Power distance or the manner in which power is divided in an organization is based on culture, which can influence how employees act towards consultation activities (Summereder, Streicher, & Batinic, 2014).

Aside from the agreement that combines voice and management expectations regarding voice behavior, managerial consultation can produce trust and direct to behaviors of empowerment. Supposing the reality of interpersonal trust makes it possible for individuals to consider it acceptable to be exposed and to encounter (Colquitt, Scott, & LePine, 2007). In case that the employees believe managerial consultation to be supportive of voice, this makes them more likely to encounter risks in voicing their ideas, problems or propositions as they have faith in the management. In another research, Gao, Janssen and Shi (2011) observed whether or not empowering behaviors of leadership moderated the relationship between voice and faith in the management. They conducted interviews of 314 employees from a telecommunication enterprise in China. Results indicated that empowering behaviors enhanced the positive correlation between employee voice and trust. Leadership behaviors that encourage empowerment were democratic decision making, coaching, and informing. Coaching is related to the attributes of transformational leadership (Gao et al., 2011). This research proposed that managerial consultation operates better on the promotion of voice in cases where leadership behaviors of empowerment and trust are combined. These explorations, however, should additionally elaborate how such behaviors can lead to positive employee voice.

Proposition 1: Managerial consultation is positively related to voice futility.

Detert and Burris (2007) have observed the link between two kinds of change-based leadership and employee voice. These leadership styles are transformational leadership and openness of management. Their sample included 3,149 employees of a restaurant chain in addition to 223 managers. The results revealed that openness of management encourages voice. The limitations of this study are its inability to provide generalized results to be applied in various industries and how such openness is mediated by leadership forms.

The degree to which employees view their managers as contemplative and open-minded towards feedback and suggestions of employees regarding work-related problems is vital to manager discussion (Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2012). When dealing with behavior of employee voice, manager consultation makes a substantial difference between employees that possess dominating personalities and a greater degree of self-efficacy (Klaas et al., 2012). In a subsequent research, Venkataramani, Green, & Schleicher (2010) discovered the influence manager consultation has on employee voice to be higher as the power and influence of manager and leader increases. In simpler words, the more the influence and positional power a leader or manager has, the stronger the empowerment and protection is felt by the employees from their consultation when the interactions are constructive.

Managerial consultation has the capacity to form a voice climate for a group by encouraging open communication and constructing confidence (Morrison et al., 2011). Similarly, Creed (2003) states it to be imperative that all voices are included in the managerial consultation without any bias or discrimination. He argues that a voice lost is the same as an identity lost, hence, managerial consultation should be as comprehensive as possible to encourage voice and to eliminate silence. These explorations indicate a gap in the existing literature regarding social diversity and its influences on behaviors of voice. In an environment where employees are encouraged to speak up, they are likely to feel greater job satisfaction and their intent to quit may be lowered. Several procedure may intercede wither to produce satisfaction for the employees or dissatisfy them to the extent that they may want to quit the organization. Past researches have suggested and examined numerous moderators in order to explain the relationship between satisfaction at job and employee turnover (Mobley, Griffeth, Hand, & Meglino, 1979; Price, 1977).

Proposition 2: Managerial Consultation has a positive impact in reducing intent to quit of the employees.

Felt obligation for constructive change

“Felt obligation for constructive change” (FOCC) forms the extent by which subordinates are motivated to create newer procedures and to solve issues in their respective organizations (Fuller et al., 2006). Various factors can influence “felt obligation for constructive change”. These include personality attributes of the employees. LePine and Van Dyne (2001) devised and examined an assumptive model of behavior of voice. They utilized the theory related to individual difference by Motowidlo, Borman, and Schmit's (1997) in the comprehension of contextual task performances. This theory suggests that the nature of associations that can be viewed as

indicators of voice rely on the connection required for task execution (LePine & Van Dyne, 2001). The results indicated that proactive behavior towards work is a vital psychological precursor to voice. Proactive behavior of work may be an underlying apparatus for wanting constructive change in the organization and, in this way, it could be linked to felt obligation for constructive change.

As social proxies, personnel are consistently under the impact of social values that point towards the preconceived or approved manners of behaving and thinking. There are two basic kinds of norms: descriptive or injunctive (Schultz et al., 2007). A third kind of norms is the personal or ethical values. These values describe the personal perceptions of right and wrong (Conner & McMillan, 1999). Felt obligation towards constructive change is directly related to the personal norms of the employees. In an environment where employees feel like they are being heard and appreciated, they are likely to feel that they are required to think in the best interest of the organization. Hence, it makes them more determined to suggest positive change while voicing their opinions as opposed to not being able to express themselves.

Proposition 3: Felt obligation towards constructive change will mediate the relationship between managerial consultation, voice futility, and intent to quit.

Situational Factor

a) Transformational Leadership

Transformational leaders are the agents of organizational change. They possess the ability to inspire their followers to extend and raise their aims and increase their self-confidence. By their empowerment, the followers perform beyond the expected standards directed in their job agreements. Transformational leadership gathers individuals into a team and then motivates them to work towards a common goal. The main components of a transformational leadership are simulation on the intellectual level, motivation, idealized effect, and individual innovation (Bass, 1985) that could encourage voice behavior of employees. Liu, Zhu, and Yang (2010) have hypothesized voice to be sensitive to its targeted audience and classify voice behaviors into two dominant types in any workplace. The first type is speaking out to colleagues while the other is speaking up to managers. They proposed that transformational leadership supports both of these types of voice behaviors. Liu et al. (2010) conducted a survey consisting of 191 Chinese employees from various industries and companies. Results indicated that social identification anticipates voice behaviors while personal identification anticipates upward voice. The research exhibited how

transformational leadership influences behavior of voice by promoting social and individual identification of employees.

Several studies have connected transformational leadership and the moderating effect it has on the relationship between stressors and employee voice (Zhang et al., 2014; Cavanaugh et al., 2000; Zhang et al., 2015). While job satisfaction has also played a significant part in related research, employee turnover is also related to leadership styles. A more promoting and encouraging leadership style induces employees' trust in the management and motivates them to stay with the organization. While in cases where authoritative or rigid forms of leadership are applied when employees feel that they are unable to express themselves, a higher turnover is observed.

Proposition 4: Transformational leadership will moderate the link between managerial consultation, voice futility, and intent to quit. High/ low transformational leadership will strengthen/ weaken the effect of managerial consultation on voice behavior and intent to quit.

Conclusion

In conclusion of the above discussion, it can be proposed that managerial consultation has a positive impact on voice futility and intent to quit. While managerial consultation encourages employee voice, it decreases the intent to quit of employees by providing them greater job satisfaction. The mediating effect of felt obligation for constructive change indicates that managerial consultation is indeed effective if employees feel that they oblige to bring about positive change in the organization and are free to express their ideas and opinions. In the time of crisis, employee voice can improve the organizational performance by suggesting innovative ideas. However, with a rigid kind of leadership, the employees could be too threatened by rejection. It could lead them to not expressing their ideas and hinder the organization's growth. Hence, transformational leadership which supports employees' empowerment can moderate the link between managerial consultations and feeling obliged towards constructive change. While in an environment where employees are not given room to express their ideas, and they desire a change to occur in the organization, such individuals are more likely to quit and find another organization that will provide them a more comfortable setting. Moreover, without feeling obliged towards constructive change, employees are less likely to trust the management's decisions and it could promote an overall environment of unease and discomfort. Further studies should explore managerial consultation's impact in terms of diversity in promoting voice behaviors.

References:

- Aryee, S., Walumbwa, F. O., Mondejar, R., & Chu, C. W. L. (2014). Core self-evaluations and employee voice behavior: Test of a dual-motivational pathway. *Journal of Management*, 20(10), 1-21. doi:10.1177/0149206314546192
- Avery, D. R., & Quiñones, M. A. (2002). Disentangling the effects of voice: The incremental roles of opportunity, behavior, and instrumentality in predicting procedural fairness. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87(1), 81-86. doi:10.1037//0021-9010.87.1.81
- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Englewood Cliff, N. J.: Prentice-Hall.
- Bass, B.M. (1985). *Leadership and performance beyond expectation*. New York: Free Press.
- Burris, E.R. (2012). The risks and rewards of speaking up: Managerial responses to employee voice. *Academy of Management Journal*, 55(4), 851-875.
- Burris, E. R., Detert, J. R., & Romney, A. C. (2013). Speaking up vs. being heard: The disagreement around and outcomes of employee voice. *Organization Science*, 24(1), 22-38. doi:10.1287/orsc.1110.0732
- Carson, J. B., Tesluk, P. E., & Marrone, J. A. (2007). Shared leadership in teams: An investigation of antecedent conditions and performance. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 50(5), 1217-1234.
- Cavanaugh, M. A., Boswell, W. R., Roehling, M. V., & Boudreau, J. W. (2000). An empirical examination of self-reported work stress among U.S. managers. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 85, 65–74.
- Chin, T. (2013). How ethical leadership encourages employee voice behavior in China: The mediating role of organizational harmony. *International Business Research*, 6(10), 15-24.
- Colquitt, J.A., Scott, B.A., & LePine, J.A. (2007). Trust, trustworthiness, and trust propensity: A meta-analytic test of their unique relationships with risk taking and job performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92, 902–927.
- De Dreu, C.K.W., & Vianen, A.E.M. (2001). Managing relationship conflict and the effectiveness of organizational teams. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 22(3), 309-328. doi:10.1002/job.71
- Detert, J.R., & Burris, E.R. (2007). Leadership behavior and employee voice: Is the door really open? *The Academy of Management Journal*, 50(4), 869-884.
- Detert, J. R., & Edmondson, A. C. (2011). Implicit voice theories: Taken-for-granted rules of self-censorship at work. *Academy of Management Journal*, 54(3), 461-488.
- Dundon, T., Wilkinson, A. Marchington, M., & Ackers, P. (2004). The meanings and purpose of employee voice. *The International Journal of*

- Human Resource Management*, 15(6), 1149-1170. doi:10.1080/095851904100016773359
- Detert, J. R., & Treviño, L. K. (2010). Speaking up to higher-ups: How supervisors and skip-level leaders influence employee voice. *Organization Science*, 21(1), 249-270. doi:10.1287/orsc.1080.0405
- Edgar, F., & Geare, A. (2005). HRM practice and employee attitudes: Different measures - different results. *Personnel Review*, 34(5), 534-549. doi:10.1108/00483480510612503
- Fuller, J. B., Marler, L. E., & Hester, K. (2006). Promoting felt responsibility for constructive change and proactive behavior: Exploring aspects of an elaborated model of work design. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 27(8), 1089–1120. doi:10.1002/job.425
- Gao, L., Janssen, O., & Shi, K. (2011). Leader trust and employee voice: The moderating role of empowering leader behaviors. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 22(4), 787-798. doi:10.1016/j.leaqua.2011.05.015
- Hirschman, A. O. (1970). *Exit, voice, and loyalty: Responses to decline in firms, organizations, and states*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Holland, P., Cooper, B. K., Pyman, A., & Teicher, J. (2012). Trust in management: The role of employee voice arrangements and perceived managerial opposition to unions. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 22(4), 377-391. doi:10.1111/1748-8583.12002
- LePine, J. A., & Van Dyne, L. (2001). Voice and cooperative behavior as contrasting forms of contextual performance: Evidence of differential relationships with big five personality characteristics and cognitive ability. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86(2), 326-336. doi:10.1037/0021-9010.86.2.326
- Li, Y., & Sun, J. (2015). Traditional Chinese leadership and employee voice behavior: A cross-level examination. *Leadership Quarterly*, 26(2), 172.
- Liu, W., Tangirala, S., & Ramanujam, R. (2013). The relational antecedents of voice targeted at different leaders. *The Journal of Applied Psychology*, 98(5), 841-851. doi:10.1037/a0032913
- Liu, W., Zhu, R., & Yang, Y. (2010). I warn you because I like you: Voice behavior, employee identifications, and transformational leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 21(1), 189-202. doi:10.1016/j.leaqua.2009.10.014
- Loi, R., Ao, O. K. Y., & Xu, A. J. (2014). Perceived organizational support and coworker support as antecedents of foreign workers' voice and psychological stress. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 36, 23-30. doi:10.1016/j.ijhm.2013.08.001
- Morrison, E.W. (2011). Employee voice behavior: Integration and directions for future research. *The Academy of Management Annals*, 5(1), 373-412. doi: 10.1080/19416520.2011.574506

- Morrison, E.W. (2014). Employee voice and silence. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 1, 173–97.
- Morrison, E. W., Wheeler-Smith, S. L., & Kamdar, D. (2011). Speaking up in groups: A cross-level study of group voice climate and voice. *The Journal of Applied Psychology*, 96(1), 183-191. doi:10.1037/a0020744
- Motowidlo, S. J., Borman, W. C., & Schmit, M. J. (1997). A theory of individual differences in task and contextual performance. *Human Performance*, 10, 71-83.
- Ng, T. W. H., & Feldman, D. C. (2012). Employee voice behavior: A meta-analytic test of the conservation of resources framework. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 33(2), 216-234. doi:10.1002/job.754
- Ng, T. W. H., & Feldman, D. C. (2013). Changes in perceived supervisor embeddedness: Effects on employees' embeddedness, organizational trust, and voice behavior. *Personnel Psychology*, 66(3), 645-685. doi:10.1111/peps.12025
- Olson-Buchanan, J. B. (1996). Voicing discontent: What happens to the grievance filer after the grievance? *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 81(1), 52-63. doi:10.1037/0021-9010.81.1.52
- Olson-Buchanan, J. B., & Boswell, W. R. (2002). The role of employee loyalty and formality in voicing discontent. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87(6), 1167-1174. doi:10.1037//0021-9010.87.6.1167
- Piderit, S. K., & Ashford, S. J. (2003). Breaking silence: Tactical choices women managers make in speaking up about gender-equity issues. *Journal of Management Studies*, 40(6), 1477-1502. doi:10.1111/1467-6486.00388
- Premeaux, S. F., & Bedeian, A. G. (2003). Breaking the silence: The moderating effects of self-Monitoring in predicting speaking up in the workplace. *Journal of Management Studies*, 40(6), 1537-1562. doi:10.1111/1467-6486.00390
- Rusbult, C. E., Farrell, D., Rogers, G., & Mainous, A. G. (1988). Impact of exchange variables on exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect: An integrative model of responses to declining job satisfaction. *Academy of Management Journal*, 31(3), 599-627.
- Seibert, S. E., Kraimer, M. L., & Crant, J. M. (2001). What do proactive people do? A longitudinal model linking proactive personality and career success. *Personnel Psychology*, 54(4), 845-874. doi:10.1111/j.1744-6570.2001.tb00234.x
- Tangirala, S., & Ramanujam, R. (2008). Exploring nonlinearity in employee voice: The effects of personal control and organizational identification. *Academy of Management Journal*, 51(6), 1189-1203.
- Tangirala, S., & Ramanujam, R. (2012). Ask and you shall hear (but not always): Examining the relationship between manager consultation and

employee voice. *Personnel Psychology*, 65(2), 251-282. doi:10.1111/j.1744-6570.2012.01248.x

Van Dyne, L., & LePine, J. A. (1998). Helping and voice extra-role behaviors: Evidence of construct and predictive validity. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 41(1), 108-119.

Withey, M. J., & Cooper, W. H. (1989). Predicting exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 34(4), 521-539.

Zhang, Y., Huai, M., & Xie, Y. (2015). Paternalistic leadership and employee voice in china: A dual process model. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 26(1), 25-36. doi:10.1016/j.leaqua.2014.01.002

Zhang, Y., Lepine, J. A., Buckman, B. R., & Wei, F. (2014). It's not fair ... or is it?: The role of justice and leadership in explaining work stressor-job performance relationships. *Academy of Management Journal*, 57(3), 675-697. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5465/amj.2011.1110>

Zhou, J., & George, J. M. (2001). When job dissatisfaction leads to creativity: Encouraging the expression of voice. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 44(4), 682-696.