



Leader's Voice Endorsement: A Literature Review and Prospects

Xiaolong Si*^{ID} and Lei Zhou

School of Business Administration, Guizhou University of Finance and Economics,
Guiyang 550025, China

* Correspondence: 470625097@qq.com

Abstract. Modern organizations face increasingly complex and dynamic environments, making it impossible for leaders to handle all problems solely through their personal capabilities. In such a context, the practice of leader's voice endorsement becomes particularly important, as it helps leaders better respond to external challenges by leveraging collective wisdom and experience to make faster and more accurate decisions. This study reviews the existing literature on leader's voice endorsement, clarifies the concept, identifies measurement methods, and summarizes the antecedents and outcomes found in prior research. Based on this review, the study proposes future research should further focus on defining the concept and measuring the dimensions of leader's voice endorsement, enriching the understanding of its antecedents and outcomes, and expanding the scope of its research subjects. This study can serve as a reference for scholars to understand the research progress on leader receptiveness to advice, while also helping organizations to correctly recognize and effectively leverage the positive effects of leader receptiveness to advice.

Keywords: Leader's Voice Endorsement, Future Research Directions, Voice Behavior.

1 Introduction

In the VUCA era (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous), organizations must continuously make decisions in response to environmental changes to ensure their development and maintain their competitive advantage. However, to gather diverse opinions and information and make decisions that are more comprehensive and in-depth, organizations need to listen to different viewpoints, allowing them to identify potential risks and opportunities, thereby avoiding biased or incorrect decisions. Leader receptiveness to advice provides employees with opportunities to express their opinions and participate in decision-making, breaking down barriers of information and knowledge and promoting cross-level information flow.

In practice, several well-known companies have demonstrated the positive effects of leader receptiveness to advice. For example, Kodak saved \$18.5 million by adopting advice, and IBM leaders incorporated employee suggestions into the company's

strategic planning and product development, which greatly promoted organizational growth. In summary, leader receptiveness to advice can encourage employees to exhibit more proactive behaviors, drive organizational innovation and continuous improvement, and foster a more open and inclusive organizational culture.

However, there are still significant theoretical gaps in the study of leader receptiveness to advice. To accelerate exploration in this area and enhance research on the effectiveness of leader receptiveness to advice, we systematically reviewed the relevant literature, summarized and outlined its concepts, antecedents, mechanisms, and outcomes, and proposed future research directions.

2 Concept of Leader's Voice Endorsement

In management research, the concept of leader's voice endorsement has yet to be unified. Based on a review of previous studies, this research proposes a definition of leader's voice endorsement behavior. The literature review reveals that early research related to leader's voice endorsement focused more on managerial openness, which has been identified as a leadership behavior particularly associated with encouraging employees to speak up. This laid a foundation for subsequent scholars to introduce the concept of leader's voice endorsement.

Additionally, the literature on advice taking offers insights into the development of the concept of leader's voice endorsement. Advice taking refers to the process of considering others' suggestions and ultimately making decisions based on them. It involves optimizing decision quality through others' suggestions, particularly in situations of uncertainty, complexity, or lack of sufficient information. The process of accepting advice is not merely about adopting others' opinions; it also includes evaluating the suggestions, selectively using the information, and integrating and applying it in decision-making. However, advice taking is a broad concept that frequently occurs in both work and daily life, generally referring to a decision-maker accepting advice to improve decision quality.

Morrison and Wheeler-Smith (2011) provided a definition of advice adoption from the employee's perspective [1]. They argued that the adoption of employee suggestions by leaders is measured by the extent to which employees perceive their voice as effective. In other words, when employees perceive that their suggestions have been adopted and valued by leaders, they view this instance of voice as an effective communication behavior—an example of high recognition and acceptance of employee voice.

The most widely used concept of leader's voice endorsement in academia is the one proposed by Burriss (2012), which refers to a leader's expression of support and approval for a particular viewpoint, opinion, suggestion, or idea within an organization [2]. This support can be demonstrated through words, actions, or policies, aiming to encourage and promote the consideration, acceptance, or adoption of team members' suggestions. It encompasses not only decision optimization but also workplace improvements and the correction of mistakes.

Based on the elaboration likelihood model of social persuasion, employees must adopt strategic approaches to influence their leaders' attitudes and behaviors in the

process of persuading leaders to endorse their voice. Persuasion theory typically involves the use of communication skills, logical arguments, emotional appeals, and relationship building to achieve the goal of leader's voice endorsement.

From a social exchange perspective, the process of leader's voice endorsement can be understood as a reciprocal exchange between leaders and team members. In this process, leaders create an environment conducive to information sharing and joint decision-making by accepting and valuing team members' suggestions, thus fostering mutual trust and cooperation.

3 Measurement of Leader's Voice Endorsement

So far, the measurement methods for leader's voice endorsement are not yet fully developed, and empirical studies vary in their choice of measurement approaches. When measuring advice taking, many scholars use the Weight of Advice (WOA) to calculate the degree of advice taking. This method assesses the weight an individual assigns to advice by using a ratio. The WOA value ranges from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating a higher level of advice taking. The calculation formula is as follows:

$$\frac{|f-i|}{|a-i|}$$

In this context, f represents the final advice, i stands for the initial advice, and a denotes the advice from others. Some scholars also measure related variables using scales. For example, Saunders et al. (1992) developed a 6-item scale to measure responsiveness to voice, with sample items such as "My boss gives high priority to handling employee concerns" [3]. Additionally, Fast et al. (2014) created a 4-item scale for willingness to implement voice following a rigorous scale development procedure, with sample items like "I would revise my plan and incorporate others' comments" [4].

The leader's voice endorsement scale developed by Burris (2012) offers a richer understanding, capturing not only the leader's recognition of employee voice but also their willingness to act upon it. This scale includes five items and has been widely adopted by many scholars, sample item is "How likely is it that you will take this person's comments to your supervisors?" [2].

In summary, existing literature mostly measures leader's voice endorsement as the degree of recognition given to subordinates' suggestions. Future research should focus on further developing a more comprehensive scale for measuring leader's voice endorsement.

4 The Antecedents of Leader's Voice Endorsement

4.1 Characteristics of Voice

The characteristics of employee voice have a multifaceted impact on leader's voice endorsement, as these features determine whether a suggestion will attract a leader's attention, be seriously considered, and ultimately be adopted. Factors such as the

quality of content, the source of the suggestion, timing, innovation and risk, frequency, goals, and motives directly affect the process of leader's voice endorsement [5]. These characteristics determine the persuasiveness, credibility, and feasibility of the suggestions, influencing whether leaders are willing to listen to, accept, and endorse employees' suggestions.

Zhang and Chen (2023) based on categorization theory, proposed that there is an inverted U-shaped relationship between the frequency of employee voice and leader's voice endorsement; that is, both high and low frequencies of voice can lead to a decrease in leader's endorsement, while a moderate frequency can motivate managers to support employee voice more actively [6].

For managers, the context in which employee voice occurs can also influence leader's endorsement. From the perspective of face management, scholars have noted that employee suggestions made in public may lead managers to underestimate the constructive value of those suggestions due to concerns about the negative impact on their reputation, whereas private suggestions tend to make managers focus more on their constructive aspects. Furthermore, perceived threats to reputation may lead leaders to reject or limit their endorsement of employee voice.

More direct subordinate voice often results in managers being less willing to endorse, and leaders typically prefer to endorse either purely promotive or prohibitive voice rather than mixed voice, as individuals tend to handle consistent information more easily, making the voice processing smoother. Voice quality is also considered an important antecedent of leader's voice endorsement, with higher-quality suggestions receiving more recognition.

4.2 Characteristics of Voicer

The characteristics of the voicer, such as credibility, expertise, status, and the quality of their relationship with the leader, significantly influence the likelihood and extent of leader's voice endorsement. Research indicates that employees with proactive personalities who establish positive interpersonal relationships are more likely to have their suggestions accepted when managers perceive a closer connection with the voice-giver. Additionally, employee task performance is also believed to have a significant positive impact on leader's voice endorsement. According to the elaboration likelihood model of social persuasion, Li et al. (2021) suggest that the credibility of the voice-giver is a key factor in persuading leaders to accept suggestions [7].

4.3 Characteristics of Leader

Additionally, some research explores the potential influences on leader's voice endorsement from the perspective of the managers themselves. For example, Li et al. (2019) points out from a self-depletion perspective that managers with high levels of self-depletion tend to process information consistent with their own views and reject inconsistent information to maintain the status quo, reducing the effort they put into handling suggestions and thereby decreasing voice endorsement [7].

According to Duan et al. (2023), managers with promotive psychological ownership of the team are more likely to view employee suggestions as behaviors that actively create value for the organization, thereby increasing leader's voice endorsement. In contrast, managers with preventive psychological ownership, who aim to avoid potential risks and costs, are more inclined to reduce endorsement [8].

5 The Consequences of Leader's Voice Endorsement

Researching the outcomes of leader's voice endorsement is significant because it reveals the specific impacts of leaders accepting and supporting employee suggestions on both the organization and individuals. Leader's voice endorsement can enhance decision quality, promote organizational innovation, improve the work environment and employee satisfaction, increase organizational adaptability, and build team cohesion. Existing research on leader's voice endorsement primarily focuses on subsequent voices [9], possibly because, in practice, leader's voice endorsement often aims at the adoption and implementation of suggestions as the final goal. Thus, focusing on subsequent suggestions helps optimize the leadership decision-making process and enhances employee engagement. Additionally, the complex psychological and behavioral dynamics involved in initial suggestions present greater challenges, making subsequent suggestions a more prominent research focus.

Additionally, Wu et al. (2021) proposed based on conservation of resources theory that leader's voice endorsement can replenish the resources depleted by employees during the suggestion process, thereby enhancing their positive emotions and increasing their engagement in subsequent work. Scholars have also explored the potential impact of leader's voice endorsement on colleagues from an observer's perspective [10].

6 Conclusion

In summary, the research on leader's voice endorsement has primarily focused on how subsequent employee voice impacts leader decisions, highlighting the importance of advice implementation and its role in optimizing decision-making processes. However, future studies should further explore the multidimensional nature of leader advice taking, including refining and standardizing its measurement methods. Additionally, it is crucial to investigate more antecedents and consequences of leader advice taking, such as individual leader characteristics, organizational culture, and the impact on organizational outcomes like performance, innovation, and employee engagement. These explorations will deepen our understanding and provide actionable insights for enhancing leadership effectiveness and organizational success.

6.1 Future Research

There is still significant room for advancement in the research on leader's voice endorsement. Future scholars can explore the following areas:

First, future researchers need to conduct a deeper exploration of the concept of leader's voice endorsement to comprehensively understand its multidimensional characteristics, specific manifestations, and mechanisms in different contexts. Additionally, efforts should be made to refine and standardize the measurement methods of leader's voice endorsement, developing more normative and universally applicable measurement tools and indicators to enhance the validity and comparability of research findings. This will not only contribute to theoretical development but also provide more precise guidance for organizational practices, promoting the effective application and improvement of leader's voice endorsement in real-world settings.

Second, future research can further explore more antecedents and outcomes of leader's voice endorsement. Specifically, it can examine various factors influencing leader's voice endorsement, such as the leader's personal traits, organizational culture, and the presentation style of suggestions. Additionally, the research could investigate the consequences of leader's voice endorsement, such as its impact on organizational performance, decision quality, innovation capability, employee satisfaction, and team collaboration. This will help to comprehensively reveal the complex mechanisms of leader's voice endorsement and provide more theoretical foundations and practical guidance for effective management and improvement in practice.

References

1. Morrison, E. W., Wheeler-Smith, S. L., Kamdar, D.: Speaking up in groups: a cross-level study of group voice climate and voice. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 96(1), 183 (2011).
2. Burris, E. R.: The risks and rewards of speaking up: Managerial responses to employee voice. *Academy of Management Journal* 55(4), 851–875 (2012).
3. Saunders, D. M., Sheppard, B. H., Knight, V., Roth, J.: Employee voice to supervisors. *Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal*, 5, 241-259 (1992).
4. Fast N. J., Burris E. R., Bartel C. A.: Managing to stay in the dark: managerial self-efficacy, ego defensiveness, and the aversion to employee voice . *The Academy of Management Journal*, 57(4):1013-1034 (2014).
5. Brykman, K. M., Raver, J. L.: Persuading managers to enact ideas in organizations: The role of voice message quality, peer endorsement, and peer opposition. *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 44(5), 802–817 (2023).
6. Zhang, L., Chen, H.: From opportunity to threat: the non-linear relationship between voice frequency and job performance via voice endorsement. *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources*, 62(1), e12368 (2024).
7. Li, J. C., Barnes, C. M., Yam, K. C., Guarana, C. L., Wang, L.: Do not like it when you need it the most: Examining the effect of manager ego depletion on managerial voice endorsement. *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 40(8), 869–882 (2019).
8. Duan, J. Y., Wang, X. T., Xu, Y., Shi, L. X. Y.: Why and how manager promotive and preventive psychological ownership influence voice endorsement. *British Journal of Management* 35(1), 487–502 (2024).
9. Isaakyan, S., Sherf, E. N., Tangirala, S., Guenter, H.: Keeping it between us: managerial endorsement of public versus private voice. *Journal of Applied Psychology* 106(7), 1049–1062 (2021).
10. Wu, S., Kee, D. M. H., Li, D., Ni, D.: Thanks for your recognition, boss! A study of how and when voice endorsement promotes job performance and voice. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 706501 (2021).

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

