



Special issue paper

Voice resilience: Fostering future voice after non-endorsement of suggestions

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We draw on Gouldner's (1960, *Am. Sociol. Rev.*, 25, 161) norm of reciprocity to accomplish three goals: (1) theoretically depict the employee voice process as an exchange relationship that is maintained when both parties provide benefits 'in kind' to each other; (2) introduce the notion of *voice resilience*, defined as subsequent engagement in voice despite adversity in the process (i.e., voice non-endorsement); and (3) demonstrate the importance of voice safety as a key mechanism that facilitates voice resilience. When employees speak up to their leaders with suggestions for change, this behaviour is positively intended and represents a contribution to the leader and to the mutual relationship because voice is a risky behaviour. When leaders do not implement employee suggestions (non-endorsement of voice) but reciprocate by providing adequate explanations for non-endorsement, this should foster employee perceptions of voice safety and make it more likely that employees will speak up with suggestions in the future (subsequent voice). In sum, this mutual exchange of benefits, voice from the employee and adequate explanations for non-endorsement from the leader, should foster voice resilience. Results across two studies (field and laboratory) demonstrate that sensitivity of explanations for non-endorsement (not specificity) predicts follower's voice safety and subsequent voice. We discuss the theoretical implications of the more personal nature of sensitive explanations compared to the more descriptive and factual nature of specific explanations and consider the practical benefits of encouraging leaders and organizations to view the voice process as a mutual exchange relationship.

Practitioner points

- Organizations can offer training and development on how to maintain voice exchange relationships even when leaders do not endorse employee suggestions.
- Our work demonstrates that it is critically important for leaders to exhibit sensitivity in their non-endorsement responses to employee suggestions.
- If explanations in the voice process are delivered in a sensitive manner, our research shows that voice resilience can be achieved by fostering voice safety such that employees are significantly more likely to engage in subsequent voice.

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Maintaining the employee voice process is valuable for the survival and improvement of teams and organizations, even when suggestions are not endorsed. Within the voice process, saying ‘no’ to the suggestions of others is likely unpleasant yet inevitable, and yet, we lack an understanding of how to best navigate such situations. Our objective in this two-study paper is to offer a set of research-based recommendations that shed light on factors that make future voice more likely even when prior voice is not endorsed. We accomplish this objective by taking a unique perspective on the voice process as an ongoing *exchange relationship* and by demonstrating the potential for and a clear path to *voice resilience* (subsequent engagement in voice despite adversity in the process). Although voice non-endorsement may be unpleasant, the manner in which a leader says ‘no’ to follower ideas has important yet under-researched consequences that shape voice exchange maintenance.

Voice is the discretionary communication of change-oriented suggestions with the intention of benefiting the organization (Morrison, 2011; Van Dyne, Cummings, & Parks, 1995). Prior research has demonstrated a wide range of antecedents to voice behaviour, including climate (Morrison, Wheeler-Smith, & Kamdar, 2011), leader–member exchange (Burris, Detert, & Chiaburu, 2008; Van Dyne, Kamdar, & Joreman, 2008; Wang, Gan, & Wu, 2016), work-flow centrality (Venkataramani & Tangirala, 2010), duty orientation (Tangirala, Kamdar, Venkataramani, & Parke, 2013), voice efficacy (McAllister, Kamdar, Morrison, & Turban, 2007), organization-based self-esteem (Liang, Farh, & Farh, 2012; Liao, 2015), justice judgements (Takeuchi, Chen, & Cheung, 2012), career growth (Wang, Weng, McElroy, Ashkanasy, & Lievens, 2014), and felt responsibility for change (Fuller, Marler, & Hester, 2006). Although this research is important and shows that the field has a well-developed understanding of antecedents in the voice nomological network, most voice research has focused on the prediction of one-time, initial voice behaviour, without exploring the dynamics inherent in leader’s and organization’s ongoing need for employee ideas.

Consequences of voice include positive outcomes for both the voicer (e.g., felt control, positive job attitudes, low stress, positive public image) and the organization (e.g., high-quality decision-making, identification of errors, learning and development, group harmony) (see Burris, 2012; Burris, Detert, & Romney, 2013; Detert, Burris, Harrison, & Martin, 2013; Fast, Burris, & Bartel, 2014; Maynes & Podsakoff, 2013; McClean, Burris, & Detert, 2013; Seibert, Kraimer, & Crant, 2001; Whiting, Maynes, Podsakoff, & Podsakoff, 2012). Although research on outcomes of voice is also important and insightful, this stream of research tends not to address the issue of whether or not the leader endorses employee suggestions for change. This is problematic because leaders do not necessarily have the resources to implement suggestions and often have information followers lack that indicates some ideas may be inappropriate or unrealistic (Landau, 2009). Thus, voice non-endorsement is a leader dilemma that has received limited theoretical or empirical consideration.

Based on the above limitations, this paper focuses on ongoing voice behaviour, with an emphasis on predicting future voice in the context of voice non-endorsement. Understanding the relationship between non-endorsement and subsequent voice is important because organizations need change-oriented ideas on an ongoing basis. Even if the implementation of a suggestion is not appropriate or possible, leaders need to respond in ways that encourage employees to continue making suggestions for change. If the leader’s manner of handling non-endorsement prevents subsequent voice, this limits the potential benefits of voice to the organization, including individual, group, and unit performance (Detert *et al.*, 2013; Lam & Mayer, 2014; MacKenzie, Podsakoff, &

Podsakoff, 2011), originality (Van Dyne & Saavedra, 1996), team learning (Edmonson, 2003), and low turnover (McClellan *et al.*, 2013). Thus, we seek to uncover a path to voice resilience, defined as subsequent engagement in voice despite adversity (i.e., non-endorsement) in the process.

We aim to make three key contributions. First, we theoretically depict the voice process as an exchange relationship, based on Gouldner's (1960) norm of reciprocity. This highlights the importance of considering dynamics and leader reactions in the voice process. The ongoing nature of leader–follower relationships suggests that the voice process may be a special case of exchange in which leader responses to voice can have powerful implications for the maintenance of the exchange. Voice is a constructive exchange behaviour that triggers the possibility of ongoing reciprocal benefits between leaders and followers. With this, we begin opening the black box of whether and why leader reactions to voice influence subsequent voice.

Second, we uncover a path to voice resilience by adopting a novel perspective and focusing on voice outcomes after non-endorsement. We acknowledge the risky nature of speaking up with change-oriented suggestions (Kish-Gephart, Detert, Trevino, & Edmonson, 2009) and the reality that suggestions are not always endorsed (Burris, 2012; Landau, 2009). King, Newman, and Luthans (2016) defined resilience in the workplace as positive adaptation despite adversity. In line with that conceptualization, we introduce the notion that positive adaptation (i.e., voice exchange maintenance) following voice non-endorsement is possible when leaders provide adequate explanations despite non-endorsement.

Third, we highlight voice safety as a key mechanism fostering voice resilience in this exchange. Prior research demonstrates the importance of safety in predicting initial engagement in voice (e.g., Detert & Burris, 2007; Edmonson, 1999; Liu *et al.*, 2015) and moderating the relationship between individual differences and voice (Tangirala *et al.*, 2013). Going beyond this, we acknowledge voice safety as part of an ongoing process where leader reactions to prior suggestions for change influence voice safety and subsequent voice. This is important because most prior research fails to account for the possibility of such spill-over effects. In other words, we argue that voice behaviours do not occur in isolation and that previous voice exchange experiences may 'spill over' to affect voice safety and subsequent voice. Incorporating prior non-endorsement experiences into the voice process provides a more complete understanding of how voice safety can be maintained and how it facilitates subsequent voice.

The voice process as an exchange relationship

According to Gouldner (1960), social exchange is based on reciprocal interdependence and the *norm of reciprocity*. Reciprocity involves two obligations: responding in kind, such as helping someone who has provided you with help, and not injuring the other party (Gouldner, 1960). Reciprocal exchange does not include explicit bargaining (Molm, 2000, 2003) because social exchange theory posits that receiver's actions are contingent on the contributor's behaviour. This makes explicit guidelines of what exactly is considered 'reciprocal' difficult to define; however, each exchange partner's response to a specific exchange signals their reaction. Once the process is activated, each contribution has the potential to create a self-reinforcing cycle of exchange (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

Research shows that, in general, people expect that social exchange will result in reciprocity and there are negative repercussions when this expectation of reciprocity is

not met. Korsgaard, Meglino, Lester, and Jeong (2010) described the obligation to reciprocate a benefit received and expected reciprocity as key mechanisms that fuel social exchange. Results of their study showed that anticipated positive reactions and rewards play a significant role in organizational citizenship decisions – which is a domain that includes voice behaviour (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler (2002) demonstrated that most employees and employers have similar understandings of the norm of reciprocity and reported positive relationships between (1) employee contributions and employer obligations at later time points and (2) fulfilment of employer obligations and employee felt obligations. When reciprocity occurs repeatedly by both parties over time, trust and commitment develop, resulting in high-quality social exchange relationships (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Gergen, 1969). However, when expectations of reciprocity are not met, individuals tend to act less cooperatively and may even seek to punish the other party (Maxwell, Nye, & Maxwell, 2003). Thus, honouring and maintaining reciprocal social exchange relationships has important implications for leaders and followers. Here, we explore the voice process as a special case of a social exchange.

Van Dyne *et al.* (1995) conceptualized voice as challenging behaviour that is promotive. Voice is challenging because it suggests changes to the status quo. It can be risky and potentially damage relationships because some leaders are threatened by suggestions for change (Fast *et al.*, 2014). Voice may also be viewed as ‘bossy’ behaviour or an effort to undermine leadership if an organization views non-conforming behaviour negatively (Nemeth & Staw, 1989). Voice is promotive because it aims to cause action. Those who speak up with constructively intended suggestions think that their ideas could benefit the leader and the collective (Van Dyne *et al.*, 1995).

Leaders play a key role in the voice process because they are critical decision-makers who respond to employee suggestions for change. Leaders have the responsibility of determining whether to take employee ideas seriously, the extent to which they are willing to act on employee suggestions, and how they will communicate their reactions. Thus, leaders are gate-keepers, and the benefits of voice are contingent on their responses to the suggestions (Edmonson, 1999; Stamper & Van Dyne, 2001). To date, however, leader reactions to employee voice are an understudied aspect of the voice process (for notable exceptions, see Burris, 2012; Burris *et al.*, 2013; Chiaburu, Peng, & Van Dyne, 2015; Fast *et al.*, 2014), and we are unaware of research on how messages of non-endorsement influence this exchange. This is problematic because non-endorsement reactions may shed light on reasons why employees stop making suggestions.

When leaders take action based on employee suggestions, this represents a form of social exchange reciprocity. This is evidenced in positive follower reactions to endorsement such as having a sense of control and making meaningful contributions to the organization (Landau, 2009; Whiting, Podsakoff, & Pierce, 2008). Additionally, endorsement reinforces the perception that it is safe to speak up and that employee ideas are welcomed. In contrast, when a leader does not endorse employee suggestions, employees may conclude that the exchange lacks reciprocity. In line with this theoretical expectation, Landau (2009) found that when employee’s voice was not endorsed, employees did not intend to speak up in the future. More recently, De Vries, Jehn, and Terwel (2012) showed that employees often concluded that the leader never intended to consider their input when suggestions were not endorsed, and this caused them to feel deceived. Overall, results demonstrate that non-endorsement negatively predicts follower reactions and future voice intentions – damaging this exchange relationship. In an effort to offer a path forward, we develop the idea that the voice process may be viewed as an

exchange in which employees contribute their ideas for change, leader reactions signal their level of reciprocity, and high reciprocity can help to maintain this relationship, *even* when voice is not endorsed, leading to voice resilience.

We depict the voice process as a special case of exchange relationship by highlighting the value of leader reactions and how best this system can be maintained despite encountered difficulties. Gouldner (1960) states that ‘if a social system is to be stable there must always be some “mutuality of gratification”’ (p. 168). Thus, the stability of any social system, including the voice process, depends on mutually gratifying benefits exchanged, that is, on reciprocity in exchange. The norm of reciprocity serves a stabilizing function (Gouldner, 1960) and should facilitate stability in the voice process (subsequent voice) despite adversity such as non-endorsement. Despite limited current understanding of voice dynamics over time, this theoretical framework offers a useful guide for exploring and facilitating voice resilience and mutually beneficial exchange relationships.

Further, this perspective is fitting and useful because in reciprocal social exchanges, there is a ‘starting mechanism’ which initiates the social relationship (Gouldner, 1960). Starting mechanisms are described as entities that ‘help to initiate social interaction and [are] functional in the early phases of certain groups before they have developed a differentiated and customary set of status duties’ (p. 177). Exploring the dynamics of the voice process highlights the potential role of voiced suggestions, not only as a desired outcome, but also as a mechanism that initiates a voice exchange relationship. This relationship is based on the expected return of reciprocal benefits because as Gouldner (1960) states, ‘To requite a benefit, or to be grateful to him who bestows it, is probably everywhere, at least under certain circumstances, regarded as a duty’ (p. 171). Therefore, leader exchange decisions (e.g., messages communicated and manner in which they are communicated) are a responding signal that affects subsequent follower voice exchange perceptions and decisions.

The path to voice resilience

We integrate the voice and explanation literatures in the context of voice non-endorsement to highlight the importance of leader explanations that convey the message that even though an idea will not be implemented, the exchange relationship is safe and can be maintained. When delivering bad news in organizations, leaders often fail to provide adequate explanations because the message is negative. They want to avoid emotional distress to themselves and/or to the recipient or they may be, at times, concerned about potential litigation (Folger & Skarlicki, 2001; Smeltzer & Zener, 1992). Research, however, shows that adequate explanations for negative outcomes can positively influence attitudes (e.g., fairness judgements; Bies & Shapiro, 1988) and behaviours (e.g., turnover and theft; Brockner, DeWitt, Grover, & Reed, 1990; Greenberg, 1990). Importantly, Shaw, Wild, and Colquitt (2003) meta-analytic review of the effects of explanations demonstrated that employees were 43% less likely to retaliate after an unfavourable decision when they were provided with an adequate explanation.

From a social exchange norm of reciprocity perspective, adequate explanations address the two aspects of reciprocity (i.e., responding in kind and not injuring the other party). This is because adequate explanations from leaders acknowledge follower suggestions as positively intended contributions that deserve respect and thoughtful consideration – a form of positive reciprocity in the voice exchange relationship. Thus, leader’s adequate explanations for non-endorsement may be received as appropriate, reciprocal responses to follower’s suggestions signalling safety and fostering continued exchange.

Schein and Bennis (1965) introduced the idea of psychological safety, defined as the belief that the environment is safe for interpersonal risk-taking. Psychological safety is important for individuals to feel secure and capable of influencing change. Edmonson (1999) built upon this framework and argued that individual's safety beliefs about interpersonal relationships can affect learning behaviour (e.g., seeking feedback, sharing information, asking for help, and talking about errors). More specifically, she asserted that 'if the leader is supportive, coaching-oriented, and has non-defensive responses to questions and challenges, members are likely to conclude that the team constitutes a safe environment' (p. 356).

Previous research demonstrates that leader behaviours and characteristics predict follower's perceived safety. This includes transformational leadership (Carmeli, Sheaffer, Binyamin, Reiter-Palmon, & Shimoni, 2013), leader inclusiveness (words or deeds of a leader that indicate an invitation and appreciation for others' contributions; Nembhard & Edmonson, 2006), leader consultation (the extent to which the leader is seen as soliciting and listening to suggestions from employees; Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2012), as well as leader–follower relationship quality (i.e., shared goals, shared knowledge, and mutual respect; Carmeli & Gittell, 2009). Research also demonstrates negative relationships between abusive supervision and safety (Detert & Burris, 2007; Liu, Zhang, Liao, Hao, & Mao, 2016).

Specific to the voice context, individuals form perceptions of the extent to which it is safe to share ideas and suggestions – *voice safety*. Morrison's (2011) review of the voice literature described voice safety as one of the most important judgements made by potential voicers. When perceived voice safety is low, employees are concerned about negative repercussions for speaking up (Morrison & Milliken, 2000), such as damaging credibility, damaging social relations at work, or even career-related costs (e.g., negative evaluations or termination; Milliken, Morrison, & Hewlin, 2003). Thus, we explore specific leader behaviours (i.e., responses to voice behaviour) that should affect perceptions of voice safety, as a key mechanism for maintaining the leader–follower voice exchange relationship.

Overall, our aim is to present the potential for, as well as a clear path to, the concept of *voice resilience*. Resilience, generally, is defined as the phenomenon of positive adaptation or adjustment despite an encountered adversity (King *et al.*, 2016). We situate our work within the broader domain of research on resilience and note that resilience has been defined in many different ways. This includes as an individual difference, a psychological state, and as a behaviour. As relatively sparse research has examined behavioural resilience in adults or in work contexts (see Britt, Shen, Sinclair, Grossman, & Klinger, 2016), we focus on voice resilience as subsequent engagement in voice behaviour following prior voice non-endorsement. Our approach to resilience also focuses specifically on the employee–leader voice exchange process. We conceptualize and study voice as an ongoing, exchange relationship where employee voice starts the exchange process and leader reactions to voice, even when ideas are not endorsed, serves as an opportunity to demonstrate reciprocity and signal that voice is safe. Below, we develop specific hypotheses concerning the role of leader communication of voice non-endorsement, follower perceptions of voice safety, and implications for subsequent voice and maintenance of the voice exchange. Overall, our model depicts a path to voice resilience.

Hypotheses development

People are motivated to understand the reasons behind negative events (e.g., Louis, 1980; Wong & Weiner, 1981) and thus pay particular attention to explanations they

are given when the feedback is negative. Research demonstrates that the manner in which a negative decision is communicated influences perceptions of the decision process and the decision-maker (for a review, see Whitener, Brodt, Korsgaard, & Werner, 1998). Consistent with this assertion, research demonstrates that adequate explanations for negative outcomes are negatively related to feelings of anger and resentment (Folger, Rosenfield, & Robinson, 1983; Weiner, Folkes, Amirkhan, & Verette, 1987). We suggest that adequate explanations represent a form of reciprocity that dampens negative follower reactions to non-endorsement of voice.

We follow the suggestions of Bies, Shapiro, and Cummings (1988) to assess two key aspects of explanation adequacy: specificity and sensitivity. *Specificity* is defined as the extent to which the explanation provides detailed information about the reason for the decision. Specific explanations are concrete, not vague. *Sensitivity* is defined as the extent to which the manner in which the message is delivered shows sincere concern for the recipient. Sensitive explanations are thoughtful, not critical. Such a focus allows us to disentangle these two factors and avoid the lack of precision that can occur when dimensions are confounded or combined (Greenberg, 1993, 1994). Shaw *et al.* (2003) highlighted the importance of adequate explanations and potential changes in perception by stating that ‘cursory, unreasonable, or illegitimate explanations’ (p. 452) cause employees to believe that decision-makers could and should have acted differently. Thus, if a follower’s voice behaviour is rejected in an illegitimate and cursory manner, such as receiving a non-specific and insensitive explanation, the individual may conclude that the voice process is not a safe exchange system. Thus, we test whether the nature of explanation adequacy aligns with the norm of reciprocity in predicting voice safety.

This set of expected relationships aligns well with testing specific tenants of the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960). Reciprocity is not merely present or absent, but is quantitatively variable. In other words, benefits at one extreme would be identical and at the other logical extreme one party may give nothing in return for the benefits it has received. Each of these extremes is rare in social relations and it is more common to find intermediary cases where one party gives something slightly more or less than received (Gouldner, 1960). Further, the reciprocity norm stipulates that each return should be ‘roughly equivalent’ to what was received.

In terms of the specific adequacy tenet of *specificity*, Edmonson (1999) argued that ‘access to resources and information is likely to reduce insecurity and defensiveness’ (p. 356). Offering specificity of information in explaining a non-endorsement decision is one manner in which a leader may show that she or he is paying attention to and actively considering the suggestions being offered, in exchange for the input from followers (i.e., voice behaviour). This can signal to the voicer that this exchange relationship is valued by the leader and, thus, will be maintained in a safe manner. In terms of the second tenet *sensitivity*, we know from previous research that perceptions of sincerity mitigate negative reactions to explanations (Blumstein, 1974; Rubin, Brockner, Eckenrode, Enright, & Johnson-George, 1980) and that when leaders respond to followers with concern and care open and honest communication is facilitated (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Edmonson, 2003). Thus, sensitivity in voice non-endorsement explanations can convey respect and concern for the exchange partner, signalling that despite non-endorsement, it is safe to offer voice without fear of being dismissed or mistreated. Adequate non-endorsement explanations should show employees that their suggestions were considered, are valued, and that voicing does not put them at risk – even if the idea is not endorsed. In line with previous work, we expect that a specific explanation, as

opposed to non-specific, and a sensitive explanation, as compared to insensitive, will positively predict voice safety.

Considering the two elements of explanation adequacy for conveying non-endorsement as predictors of voice safety will allow us to shed light on similarities and differences in the two aspects of explanation adequacy and assess their effects on reciprocity via voice safety, and subsequent voice. Based on prior theory and research, we expect that both aspects of explanation adequacy are important and valuable (i.e., the exchange of specific information and sensitive consideration). Thus, we respond to the call of Gouldner (1960) that, 'the adequacy of these conceptual distinctions will be determined ultimately by empirical test' (p. 172) by testing the following hypothesized relationships:

Hypothesis 1a: Following voice non-endorsement, a specific explanation will result in greater voice safety perceptions than a non-specific explanation.

Hypothesis 1b: Following voice non-endorsement, a sensitive explanation will result in greater voice safety perceptions than a non-sensitive explanation.

The term psychological safety suggests a sense of confidence that other individuals in the exchange will not embarrass, reject, or punish one for taking risks. This confidence stems from mutual respect and trust among members (Edmonson, 1999). Research has shown that the sense of threat evoked in organizations by discussing problems or raising challenges limits individual's willingness to engage in problem-solving activities (Dutton, 1993; MacDuffie, 1997). This threat has the effect of reducing cognitive and behavioural flexibility and responsiveness (Staw, Sanderlands, & Dutton, 1981), potentially limiting learning (Argyrus, 1982). However, in order for an organization to discover gaps or errors in its plans or processes and make effective changes, employees must test assumptions and discuss differences of opinion openly. Psychological safety facilitates interpersonal risk-taking because it alleviates concerns about other's reactions to actions that have the potential for embarrassment or threat. Psychological safety positively predicts learning behaviour in teams (Edmonson, 1999). However, this theoretical model does not include dynamic interactions and subsequent consequences of psychological safety. Thus, we go beyond prior research and consider the effects of voice safety on subsequent voice following non-endorsement, with an emphasis on the role of leader explanations for non-endorsement in the voice exchange.

When employees have a sense of voice safety, they are more comfortable speaking up because they have less concern that engaging in voice will trigger negative consequences and they are more likely to exhibit voice resilience. Milliken *et al.* (2003) and Morrison and Milliken (2000) argued that safety predicts voice. Empirical research supports these arguments and has demonstrated that low safety negatively predicts information sharing and discussion of errors in teams (Edmonson, 1999). Liang *et al.*' (2012) two-wave study also showed a significant relationship between perceived safety and voice. In addition, a recent meta-analysis by Frazier, Fainshmidt, Klinger, Pezeshkan, and Vracheva (2017) demonstrated a positive relationship between perceived safety and voice. We build upon this research by suggesting that voice safety, in the context of voice non-endorsement, will predict subsequent voice, and reflect voice resilience in this leader-member exchange relationship.

Hypothesis 2: Following voice non-endorsement, voice safety will positively relate to subsequent voice.

The goal of this work is to present and test this model of voice resilience where subsequent voice occurs despite a prior undesirable experience (i.e., voice non-endorsement). We posit that the specificity and sensitivity of the non-endorsement explanation will predict voice safety and subsequent voice. An explanation of the stability of a pattern, as described by Gouldner (1960), requires investigation of ‘mutually contingent benefits rendered and of the manner in which this mutual contingency is sustained’ (p. 164). Gouldner (1960) also states that, ‘It cannot be merely hypothesized that reciprocity will operate in every case; its occurrence must, instead, be documented empirically’ (p. 164). Accordingly, we test mediation (via voice safety) of the relationship between explanation adequacy (specificity and sensitivity) and subsequent voice.

Hypothesis 3a: Voice safety will mediate the relationship between non-endorsement explanation specificity and subsequent voice.

Hypothesis 3b: Voice safety will mediate the relationship between non-endorsement explanation sensitivity and subsequent voice.

OVERVIEW OF STUDY I

To test the above Hypotheses, we first used a field sample of working adults and obtained data on actual experiences of voice non-endorsement including explanation adequacy, voice safety, and subsequent voice intentions. Our goal was to utilize a design high in external validity by examining employee responses to non-endorsement of their suggestions in the work setting.

STUDY I METHOD

Participants and procedure

We obtained data from 305 working adults in the United States using Amazon’s Mechanical Turk (MTurk) task system. Participants were selected based on (1) their performance on previous human intelligence tasks (HITs; self-contained tasks) that they completed to receive a reward, (2) approval ratings provided by previous HIT administrators, and (3) number of HITs approved. We used at least 95% approval ratings and completion of at least 1,000 previous HITs as cut-offs for eligibility to ensure the sample contained MTurk workers with reputations for successful and attentive completion of surveys. Mechanical Turk participants tend to be somewhat more demographically diverse than standard Internet samples, are significantly more diverse than typical American college samples, pay as much attention to directions as traditional samples, and provide data that are as reliable as those obtained via traditional methods (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011; Paolacci, Chandler, & Ipeirotis, 2010). Participants received ninety cents for completing the survey.

We removed 101 respondents because they had not experienced voice non-endorsement from their leader. To further ensure data quality, we removed 7 participants who incorrectly completed an attention check item that asked them to skip the question. This gave us a final sample of 197 participants (64.59% of 305 = useable responses). The

sample was 80% Caucasian, 6.3% African American, 7.9% Asian, 4.2% Hispanic or Latino, 1.1% biracial, and .5% Native Hawaiian participants. Average age was 36.38 years ($SD = 10.79$ years); 51.6% were female, and 82.1% worked full-time. Nearly half of the sample (41.5%) had undergraduate degrees, 33.5% completed some college, 18.1% earned a graduate degree, and 6.9% completed high school.

Participants completed the survey via the online Qualtrics platform. Each participant described a time when they provided an idea or suggestion to their leader that was not endorsed and gave a detailed account of their non-endorsement experience (see Appendix A for examples of non-endorsement experiences). Participants also answered questions about adequacy of the explanation they received from their leader for non-endorsement, their sense of voice safety, and willingness to engage in subsequent voice. Participants then provided personality and demographic information.

Measures

We used previously validated measures and responses were on five-point scales ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

Predictors

We assessed explanation adequacy (i.e., specificity and sensitivity) with nine items adapted to describe explanations for voice non-endorsement (Shapiro, Buttner, & Barry, 1994). Four items assessed specificity (e.g., 'My leader gave specific reasons for not using my idea'; $\alpha = .83$). Five items measured sensitivity (e.g., 'My leader seemed sensitive in their communication'; $\alpha = .89$).

Mediator

We used a 3-item scale adapted from Edmonson's (1999) team psychological safety scale. We adapted items to focus on individual-level psychological safety in the voice process instead of general safety at the team level ($\alpha = .95$). An example item: 'It is safe for me to make suggestions'.

Outcome

We assessed subsequent voice intentions with six items from Kassing's (2000; $\alpha = .82$) voice propensity scale. An example item reads: 'After this experience. . . I was willing to make suggestions about correcting inefficiencies'.

Controls

Previous research has demonstrated that gender, tenure, and proactive personality may predict voice (Crant, 2003; Detert & Burris, 2007; Stamper & Van Dyne, 2001), so we included these variables as controls in the analyses. We used the 10-item Proactive Personality Scale (Seibert, Crant, & Kraimer, 1999; $\alpha = .88$) because Crant (2003) identified proactive personality as the strongest personality correlate of voice.

STUDY 1 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Confirmatory factor analysis using MPlus, with listwise deletion and maximum likelihood estimation (Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2012), demonstrated good fit for the hypothesized 5-factor model: explanation specificity, explanation sensitivity, voice safety, voice intentions, and proactive personality ($\chi^2 [340] = 649.85$; CFI = .89; SRMR = .06). This model was superior ($\Delta \chi^2 [4] = 92.90, p < .001$) to a plausible, alternative 4-factor model that combined explanation specificity and sensitivity ($\chi^2 [344] = 742.75$; CFI = .86; SRMR = .07).

Table 1 summarizes means, standard deviations, and correlations for Study 1. We tested our hypotheses by specifying a structural equation model with paths from observed variables: explanation specificity and sensitivity to voice safety, and from voice safety to subsequent voice intentions (see Figure 1). In this model, we controlled for proactive personality in the prediction of voice intentions. The hypothesized structural model had acceptable fit: $\chi^2 [2] = 11.65$; CFI = .88; SRMR = .07.¹ As would be expected with a well-fitting model (Kelloway, 2015), there were no modification indices suggested that would result in improved model fit. Contrary to our expectations, the hypothesized path from explanation specificity to voice safety was not significant ($\gamma = -.00, p = .98, SE = .09$; 95% LLCI: $-.21$, 95% ULCI: $.19, ns$). In support of our expectations, hypothesized paths from explanation sensitivity to voice safety ($\gamma = .31, p = .00, SE = .12$; 95% LLCI: $.11$, 95% ULCI: $.51$) and from voice safety to voice intentions ($\gamma = .35, p = .00, SE = .05$; 95% LLCI: $.23$, 95% ULCI: $.44$) were significant. Direct paths from (1) explanation specificity to voice intentions and (2) explanation sensitivity to voice intentions were also tested. The path from explanation specificity to voice intentions was not significant ($\gamma = .15, p = .05, SE = .07$; 95% LLCI: $-.00$, 95% ULCI: $.30, ns$), and the path from explanation sensitivity to voice intentions was also not significant ($\gamma = -.09, p = .21, SE = .08$; 95% LLCI: $-.26$, 95% ULCI: $.05, ns$). Thus, Hypothesis 1a was not supported and Hypotheses 1b and 2 were supported.

Next, we estimated the indirect effects of explanation specificity and sensitivity on voice intentions, via voice safety, in MPlus (Kelloway, 2015; MacKinnon, Fairchild, & Fritz,

Table 1. Study 1 means, standard deviations, and correlations

	M	SD	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
(1) Gender	0.48	0.50	–						
(2) Tenure	5.04	4.55	-.05	–					
(3) Proactive personality	3.90	0.54	.03	.04	–				
(4) Explanation specificity	3.19	1.00	-.01	.05	.10	–			
(5) Explanation sensitivity	3.43	0.88	.08	.02	.10	.68**	–		
(6) Voice safety	4.11	0.78	.14	.04	.23**	.22**	.30**	–	
(7) Voice intentions	3.62	0.86	.07	.06	.30**	.21**	.13	.36**	–

Notes. $N = 197$. Gender: 0 = female, 1 = male. Response scales: 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

** $p < .01$.

¹ We tested a model that included gender and tenure as control variables as well in the prediction of voice intentions, but that model evidenced poor fit to the data: $\chi^2 [6] = 54.94$; CFI = .40; SRMR = .14. Gender ($\gamma = .05, p > .05, ns$) and tenure ($\gamma = .01, p > .05, ns$) did not significantly predict voice intentions.

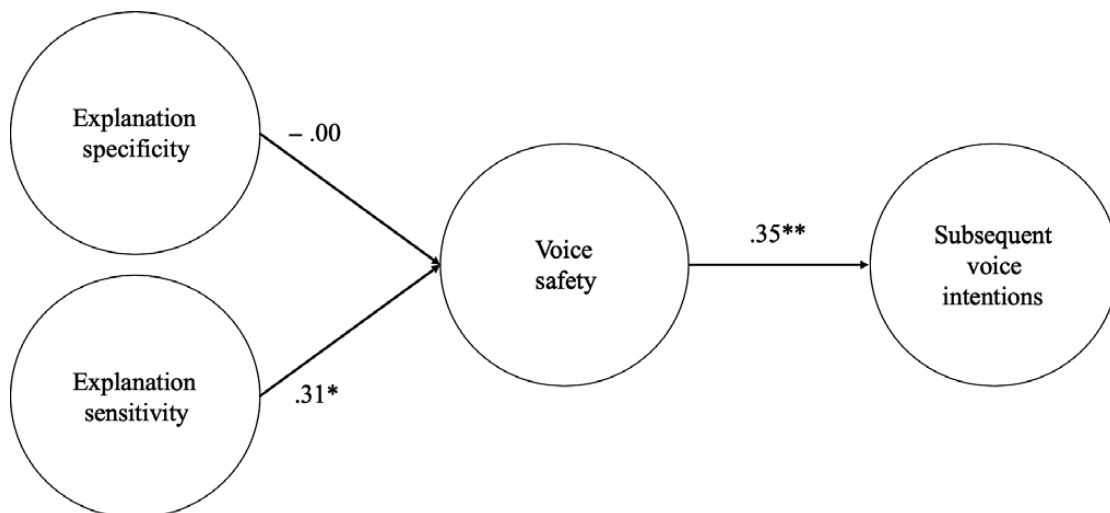


Figure 1. Structural model of voice resilience in study 1. Note. Standardized path estimates are reported in the figure. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

2007). Explanation specificity did not have a significant indirect effect on voice intentions via safety (estimate = $-.00$, $p = .98$, $SE = .02$; 95% LLCI: $-.05$, 95% ULCI: $.05$, *ns*), and explanation sensitivity evidenced a significant indirect effect (estimate = $.09$, $p = .01$, $SE = .03$; 95% LLCI: $.03$, 95% ULCI: $.16$). Hypothesis 3a was not supported and Hypothesis 3b was supported.

These results suggest that leader sensitivity in explaining voice non-endorsement functioned as a reciprocal exchange (despite non-endorsement) and is key to facilitating follower's sense of voice safety in the exchange relationship. Results also showed that explanation sensitivity predicts future voice intentions via its effect on voice safety. In sum, when leaders offer a reciprocal response to voice and explain voice non-endorsement in a sensitive manner, this behaviour facilitates maintenance of a positive voice exchange relationship (i.e., voice resilience).

OVERVIEW OF STUDY 2

In Study 2, we aimed to bolster and extend the effects observed in Study 1 in a number of ways. Going beyond Study 1, we manipulated explanation adequacy (specificity and sensitivity) and examined effects on voice safety and subsequent, actual voice behaviour. The goal was to replicate the effects of Study 1, controlling for potential confounds via experimental design and random assignment, and to assess effects on actual, observed voice behaviour. We collected data at two points in time and controlled for Time 1 scores to allow for testing of causal relationships between explanation adequacy and subsequent reactions to voice non-endorsement in the exchange relationship.

STUDY 2 METHOD

Participants

We recruited participants via an online university human subjects pool. Participation was voluntary and students received course credit. Data collection involved two 30-minute online survey sessions completed via the Qualtrics survey platform.

Of the 532 participants who completed the Time 1 session, 462 (86.84%) provided suggestions that allowed voice non-endorsement responses, and of these 260 (56.28%) participated in the Time 2 session. We removed 37 cases because individuals failed two attention checks. This resulted in a final useable sample of 223 participants (41.92% of initial sample).²

The sample included 83.9% females, with a mean age of 19.87 ($SD = 2.12$). The ethnicity of the sample was 77.9% Caucasian, 9.9% Asian, 5.0% African American, 3.6% biracial, 2.7% Hispanic or Latino, and .9% Native American individuals. In addition, 92.3% of the participants had work experience, and half of the sample was currently employed (50%).

Design and procedure

We developed manipulations of explanation specificity and sensitivity based on previous research (Frey & Cobb, 2010; Ployhart, Ryan, & Bennett, 1999; Shapiro *et al.*, 1994). *Specificity* was the degree to which the explanation of voice non-endorsement was detailed. *Sensitivity* was the degree to which the explanation was sincere and delivered carefully (see Appendix B for study manipulations). A separate pilot sample of 26 participants read one of the randomly assigned manipulation scripts and completed nine manipulation check questions rating explanation specificity (four items; $\alpha = .86$) and sensitivity (five items; $\alpha = .88$) (Shapiro *et al.*, 1994). We removed six participants who failed the attention check items instructing them to leave certain questions unanswered, resulting in a usable sample of 20 (78%) participants. T-tests demonstrated significant differences between the high specificity ($M = 3.65$, $SD = 0.82$) and low specificity ($M = 2.18$, $SD = 0.78$) conditions, $t(19) = 4.95$, $p < .01$, as well as between the high ($M = 3.65$, $SD = 1.00$) and low sensitivity ($M = 2.92$, $SD = 0.94$) conditions, $t(19) = 3.79$, $p < .01$, supporting the effectiveness of the manipulations.

In the experimental study, participants worked as interns for a marketing firm that was developing advertisement materials for businesses frequented by students (e.g., coffee shop, online textbook provider). We used these target markets so that participants were familiar with the products and services and would feel capable of offering suggestions based on their own understanding of what is attractive to student customers. At Time 1, participants read background information about their marketing firm (see Appendix C for company and internship information) reviewed marketing materials created by their supervisor for a client (see Appendix D for Time 1 marketing materials), and then had the opportunity to provide voluntary, written suggestions to their supervisor for ways to improve the materials. Participants were assured that they were not required or expected to provide suggestions to their leader about these materials, but that they could offer ideas if they wished to try and help their leader. This framing is in line with the conceptualization of voice as extra-role, citizenship behaviour (e.g., Morrison, 2011). At Time 2 (3–4 days later), participants received written explanations from their supervisor for why their suggestions were not endorsed (i.e., voice non-endorsement). Participants who did not provide suggestions at Time 1 did not receive a non-endorsement message

² We ran comparative analyses to determine whether those who completed T1 and T2 were demographically different from those who only completed T1. Results demonstrated that the two samples did not differ in age ($t[502] = .96$, $p = .99$; 95% LLCI: -1.82 , 95% ULCI: $.53$), employment status (50% of each group was currently employed), or ethnicity (about 70% of each sample was ethnic majority members). The samples did evidence gender differences, as more women (proportionally) tended to complete Time 2 measures (T1: 66% female; T2: 83% female).

and were removed from the final, useable sample. Participants who provided suggestions at Time 1 were randomly assigned to one of four conditions at Time 2: 2×2 (explanation specificity: low or high; explanation sensitivity: low or high) that manipulated adequacy of the explanation they received for voice non-endorsement. After receiving the explanation for why their Time 1 suggestions were not endorsed by their supervisor, participants viewed a second set of marketing materials (created by their same supervisor) for a different client of the marketing firm. Participants then had a second opportunity to voluntarily provide suggestions to their supervisor for improving the new set of marketing materials (see Appendix E for Time 2 marketing materials) and were again reminded that providing suggestions was not part of their job description or required.

Measures

Predictors

We used the randomly assigned conditions 0 (*low*) or 1 (*high*) for explanation specificity and sensitivity as our independent variables. In addition, participants rated the specificity and sensitivity of the explanation they received at Time 2, using the same scales as those used in Study 1 and the Pilot Study (specificity: $\alpha = .84$; sensitivity: $\alpha = .85$).

Mediator

We assessed voice safety at Time 1 ($\alpha = .83$) and again after receiving the non-endorsement explanation for their Time 1 suggestions. We used the same voice safety scale as in Study 1 (Time 2 voice safety: $\alpha = .89$).

Outcome

We coded actual voice behaviour – the number of suggestions shared with the leader at Time 2 (0–5).

Control variables

To provide a rigorous test of our predictions, we controlled for Time 1 variables (Time 1 voice safety and voice behaviour). This allowed us to assess the effects of voice non-endorsement explanation adequacy on subsequent safety perceptions and voice behaviour, above and beyond Time 1 factors. We also controlled for proactive personality (using the same scale in Study 1; $\alpha = .82$).

STUDY 2 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

We first conducted independent samples *t*-tests between individuals in the explanation specificity and sensitivity conditions rating the corresponding characteristic (i.e., explanation specificity ratings for low and high specificity conditions; explanation sensitivity ratings for low and high sensitivity conditions). Results differed significantly between groups for specificity (low: $M = 1.79$, $SD = 0.67$; high: $M = 2.33$, $SD = 0.76$), $t(221) = -5.67$, $p < .01$, and sensitivity (low: $M = 2.36$, $SD = 0.73$; high: $M = 2.97$, $SD = 0.73$), $t(221) = -6.21$, $p < .01$.

Confirmatory factor analysis demonstrated superior fit ($\Delta \chi^2 [2] = 240.36, p < .001$) for the hypothesized 3-factor model (voice safety T1, voice safety T2, and proactive personality; $\chi^2 [101] = 283.35$; CFI = .87; SRMR = .07) compared to a 2-factor model that combined voice safety at each time point ($\chi^2 [103] = 523.71$; CFI = .69; SRMR = .11).

Table 2 reports means, standard deviations, and correlations for Study 2. We tested study hypotheses by specifying a structural equation model with paths from observed variables: manipulated explanation specificity and sensitivity to voice safety, and from voice safety to subsequent voice behaviour (see Figure 2). In these analyses, we controlled for Time 1 voice safety in the prediction of Time 2 voice safety, and Time 1 voice behaviour and proactive personality in the prediction of voice behaviour.³ The hypothesized structural model had good fit: $\chi^2 [6] = 12.31$; CFI = .93; SRMR = .05. There were no modification indices suggesting improved model fit. Contrary to our expectations, but in line with Study 1, the hypothesized path from explanation specificity to Time 2 voice safety was not significant ($\gamma = .05, p = .47, SE = .06$; 95% LLCI: $-.08$, 95% ULCI: $.16, ns$), controlling for Time 1 voice safety. In support of our expectations, and also in line with Study 1, the hypothesized path from explanation sensitivity to voice safety ($\gamma = .25, p = .00, SE = .04$; 95% LLCI: $.17$, 95% ULCI: $.31$) was significant, when controlling for Time 1 voice safety. In terms of voice behaviour, voice safety at Time 2 was a significant predictor of subsequent voice, despite non-endorsement ($\gamma = .22, p = .00, SE = .02$; 95% LLCI: $.17$, 95% ULCI: $.26$), controlling for voice behaviour at Time 1 and proactive personality.

We also tested (1) a direct path from explanation specificity to voice behaviour and (2) a direct path from explanation sensitivity to voice behaviour. The path from explanation specificity to voice behaviour was not significant ($\gamma = .02, p = .77, SE = .06$; 95% LLCI: $-.11$, 95% ULCI: $.13, ns$). And the path from explanation sensitivity to voice behaviour was not significant ($\gamma = -.09, p = .05, SE = .05$; 95% LLCI: $-.18$, 95% ULCI: $.00, ns$). Thus, Hypothesis 1a was not supported and Hypotheses 1b and 2 were supported.

Next, we estimated the indirect effects of explanation specificity and sensitivity on voice behaviour, via voice safety in MPlus (Kelloway, 2015; MacKinnon *et al.*, 2007). Explanation specificity did not have a significant indirect effect on actual voice behaviour,

Table 2. Study 2 means, standard deviations, and correlations

	M	SD	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
(1) Gender	0.16	0.37	–						
(2) Proactive personality	3.74	0.46	.03	–					
(3) Specificity condition	0.52	0.50	.06	.02	–				
(4) Sensitivity condition	0.50	0.50	.00	-.11	-.03	–			
(5) Voice safety T1	3.86	0.61	.02	.26**	.04	-.13*	–		
(6) Voice safety T2	3.73	0.67	.11	.12	.05	.08	.37**	–	
(7) Voice behaviour	0.76	0.43	.10	-.06	.14*	.01	-.02	.14*	–

Notes. $N = 223$. Gender: 0 = female, 1 = male. Explanation specificity and sensitivity condition: 0 = low, 1 = high. Voice Behaviour: 0 = no voice, 1 = voice. Response scales: 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

³ We tested a model that included gender as an additional control variable and that model evidenced worse fit to the data, $\chi^2 [8] = 20.10$; CFI = .87; SRMR = .07. Also, gender did not significantly predict voice behaviour (gender: $\gamma = .10, p > .05, ns$).

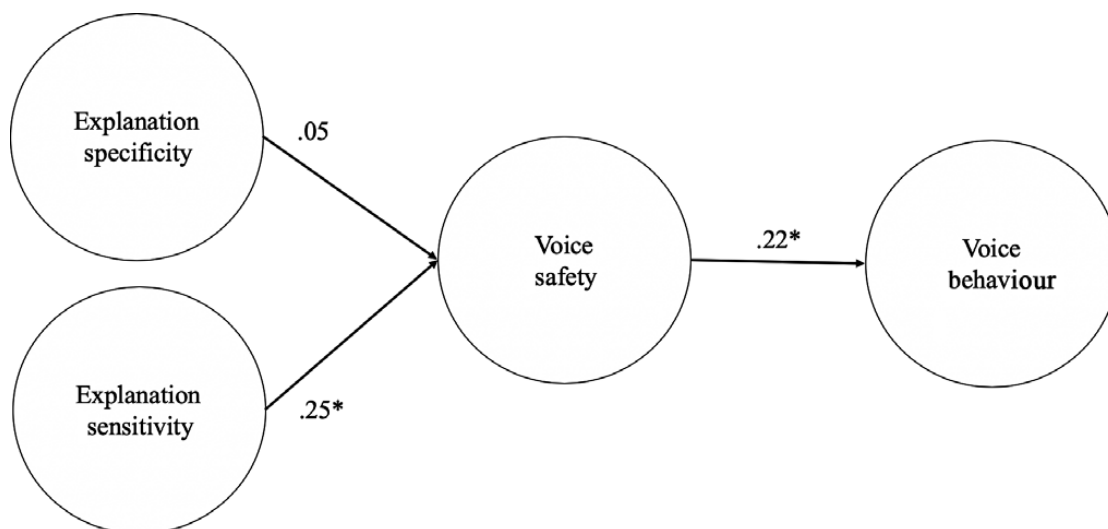


Figure 2. Structural model of potential voice resilience in study 2. Note. Standardized path estimates are reported in the figure. * $p < .05$.

via voice safety (estimate = .03, $p = .47$, $SE = .04$; 95% LLCI: $-.06$, 95% ULCI: $.11$, *ns*). In contrast, and consistent with Study 1, explanation sensitivity had a significant indirect effect (estimate = .17, $p = .00$, $SE = .03$; 95% LLCI: $.11$, 95% ULCI: $.24$) on actual voice behaviour. Thus, Hypothesis 3a was not supported but Hypothesis 3b was supported.

Overall, results of Study 2 replicated and extended findings of Study 1. Study 2 allowed for experimental control of potential confounds that may have affected field study results and also included measures of Time 1 variables, which allowed us to test for *changes* in subsequent voice safety and behaviour due to experimental manipulations. Random assignment to conditions provides evidence of internal validity. Results demonstrated that explanation sensitivity when delivering voice non-endorsement facilitated voice safety in the leader–follower exchange relationship, even when voice was not endorsed. Results also demonstrated that voice safety predicted subsequently voice behaviour. The consistency of observed effects across field (Study 1) and controlled laboratory (Study 2) settings strengthens our confidence in these relationships. In sum, when leaders sensitively communicated voice non-endorsement (relational leadership), this maintained the exchange relationship and conformed to the norm of reciprocity. Restated, results suggest that sensitive communication of non-endorsement facilitates stability and maintenance of social exchange relationships with leaders, via voice safety.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

In this two-study paper, we have described voice as an exchange relationship between leaders and followers, examined how leader reactions to voice influence subsequent voice, and assessed the effects of explanation adequacy on voice safety and subsequent voice (i.e., voice resilience). Combined, the two studies offer evidence of both external and internal validity, showing that the nature of leader's explanation sensitivity in explaining voice non-endorsement influences subsequent follower voice safety and voice. Results also demonstrate that voice safety mediates the relationship between explanation sensitivity and subsequent voice.

Theoretical and practical implications

Findings from these two samples provide useful theoretical and practical implications and offer new and exciting avenues for future research. We argued that the manner in which voice non-endorsement is communicated by a leader (adequacy of the explanation) is a form of social exchange reciprocity that has implications for subsequent voice of followers. *Voice resilience* occurs when voice non-endorsement is followed by subsequent voice. This is important because prior research has tended to examine voice as a one-time event, limiting the potential to uncover and understand predictors of *subsequent* voice beyond initial engagement in this exchange. To our knowledge, this is the first research on subsequent voice as a behavioural outcome of the voice process. Demonstrating voice resilience is also an important theoretical contribution because managers do not always have the time or resources to act upon employee suggestions and yet they need employees to continue making suggestions on an ongoing basis. Thus, our conceptualization and results predicting subsequent voice offer a new perspective on the voice process that highlights the value of future research on subsequent voice.

One of the most striking findings is the consistent support for explanation sensitivity across independent samples and measures. This is important because results also consistently rule out explanation specificity as another characteristic of leader communication of voice non-endorsement that might have implications for the voice resilience process. We suggest that the more powerful explanatory role of voice non-endorsement explanation sensitivity may be due to the more personal and relationship-oriented nature of sensitivity compared to the more objective and factual nature of specificity. When leaders communicate voice non-endorsement with sensitive explanations, they show sincere concern for the employee and this reinforces the mutually beneficial nature of the relationships and facilitates subsequent willingness and actual voice behaviour. Thus, the manner in which non-endorsement is explained influences follower's reciprocal responses and maintenance of the voice exchange relationship. Given that neither study demonstrated an effect for voice specificity, findings suggest that the more objective and factual nature of explanation specificity is less important to maintaining the voice exchange process. Restated, results suggest that heteromorphic reciprocity – exchanges that are concretely different but may be roughly equal in value – was important here for the reciprocal voice exchange, rather than homeomorphic – exchanges that are roughly, concretely alike. Thus, the theoretical premise that lies at the core of social exchanges (roughly equivalent exchanges that need not be concretely equivalent) applies to the voice exchange process. This finding has important theoretical implications for future voice research and may also be relevant to other positively intended employee contributions that are risky, such as taking charge, whistleblowing, and other behaviours.

We note that the consistent lack of support for the effect of explanation specificity on safety and subsequent voice is consistent with research on justice perceptions, which highlights that people focus on relational considerations in their assessments of decisions made by authority figures. People tend to be attentive to the tone and quality of social processes and are more willing to comply with these when they feel valued (Tyler & Lind, 1992). Similarly, Edmonson's (1999) qualitative data also demonstrated that follower's interpretations of other's intentions play a crucial role in openness to feedback. When followers believed that leaders intended to be helpful rather than critical, receivers were more likely to interpret negative feedback as friendly.

By parsing apart the unique effects of specificity and sensitivity as elements of explanation adequacy on perceptions of voice safety and demonstrating the importance of sensitivity, we identify a novel predictor of voice safety, which is a critical psychological

state that fosters subsequent voice, especially following voice non-endorsement. Uncovering the significant effect of explanation sensitivity on subsequent voice safety supports our arguments about the importance of adequate explanations as a way to meet the social exchange norm of reciprocity. Given that norms are not tangible guidelines that can be easily, explicitly outlined, it is valuable to begin uncovering ways in which leaders can behave that are consistent with the norm of reciprocity even when delivering messages of non-endorsement. Importantly, our results show the powerful benefits of maintaining reciprocity in the exchange relationship. This finding demonstrates the value of integrating the explanation adequacy and voice literatures, as well as considering voice as an exchange relationship.

Further, our findings show sensitivity and safety as important to voice resilience, and may suggest that they are also important in understanding resilience more broadly, that is, for other adversities. For example, this work may have implications for (and encourage future research concerning) the role of supervisor sensitivity and follower perceived safety in enabling individuals to successfully overcome experiences such as not getting a promotion or dealing with making an error. This work offers a first look at factors facilitating voice resilience and is useful for future endeavours in the resilience domain concerning workplace adversities – which, as an area of research, is relatively underdeveloped and not well understood (see Britt *et al.*, 2016; King *et al.*, 2016).

Our findings also have important, useful practical implications. Given that many employee ideas for change cannot be endorsed (Landau, 2009), our results highlight the practical importance of providing sensitive explanations for why employee suggestions cannot be endorsed. Specifically, it is critically important for leaders to exhibit sensitivity in their non-endorsement messages to employees. It would be useful for organizations to offer training and development on how to maintain the voice exchange relationship and achieve follower voice resilience. As demonstrated in our study, explanation sensitivity facilitated subsequent voice and should allow organizations the opportunity to benefit from future employee ideas for change. In addition, it may be valuable to help employees understand that extenuating circumstances sometimes prevent implementation of potentially good ideas. It also would be useful to provide justification for why complete explanations cannot be revealed for strategic or confidentiality reasons. If such explanations are delivered in a sensitive manner, this should maintain the voice exchange relationship and followers should engage in subsequent voice.

Overall, in terms of both theoretical and practical implications, this work shows the usefulness of the construct of voice resilience for understanding the initiation and maintenance of the voice exchange process despite the potential for non-endorsement decisions.

Recommendations for future research

Given our results demonstrating effects of explanation sensitivity on subsequent voice processes, it would be useful to consider boundary conditions that change the nature of the relationships we demonstrated. Potential moderators include environmental and individual factors. Perhaps justice climate, leadership style, or job type are boundary condition that strengthen (or weaken) the relationships of voice safety with subsequent voice outcomes. Culture is also among such potential conditions. In illustration, Gouldner (1960) highlighted that, ‘This norm functions differently in some degree in different cultures’ (p. 171). Thus, cultural norms, traditions, and expectations are important boundary conditions that future work should explore as a potential qualifier of the effects

of non-endorsement on subsequent voice. Also, voice resilience may be of particular interest to organizations seeking to foster inclusion for underrepresented groups. Researchers should consider and examine how voice non-endorsement may have different effects for women and minorities, who may interpret non-endorsement as a signal regarding identity safety, beyond voice safety.

In addition, future work should consider varied ways (e.g., verbal v. written) of conveying non-endorsement of voice and comparisons between explanations and no response at all. This would further expand our understanding of the role that leaders play in the voice exchange process. Future empirical work also should examine leader reactions to other types of voice behaviour (e.g., preventive voice or supportive voice) and effects on voice safety and subsequent voice. As another idea, it would be interesting to consider whether employees change the type or quality of voice they use after non-endorsement. For example, individuals may shift away from promotive voice (aiming to change the status quo) and instead engage in supportive voice (aiming to support the status quo) after non-endorsement (Burriss, 2012). This also supports the value of considering the content and *quality* of voiced ideas in future research.

Qualitative comments collected in this research (Study 1; see Appendix A for examples) also offer fruitful ideas and practical suggestions for future research. Multiple comments highlighted attributions regarding non-endorsement (e.g., rejection due to higher-ups [Comment 10], budget constraints [Comments 2 and 8], and rejection due to manager not agreeing with the suggestion [Comment 7]). Whether the manager versus some external entity is seen as the source or cause of non-endorsement may alter voice resilience. Future research would do well to explicitly examine the *content* of voice non-endorsement messages-beyond sensitivity and specificity of the information, what is the information? For example, content factors such as accuracy of information in the non-endorsement or misunderstanding (i.e., being rejected based on a false premise [Comments 4 and 5]) would likely negatively impact the followers' perceptions about this voice exchange process.

We also recommend that research consider other conceptual frameworks (beyond our focus on social exchange and reciprocity) as the basis for thinking about leader and follower responses to voice. For example, leadership theories may shed light on the types of leaders who facilitate voice resilience, beyond transformational (e.g., participative, servant, ethical) leadership. Additionally, the feedback literature may offer insights into the types of feedback that foster voice resilience and ongoing voice, even after voice non-endorsement.

In this study, we focused on follower perceptions of voice safety as influenced by leader's actions. Future research may consider other levels of analysis and other outcomes. For example, it may be fruitful to assess non-endorsement in the context of unit or organizational climate for voice safety, and the extent to which this has implications for group and organizational outcomes. Thus, future research should build up our work by examining additional theoretical and empirical links to voice outcomes.

Limitations

Our use of a multi-study design with two unique samples including a field sample of working adults and time-lagged assessment of the voice process in an experiment strengthens our confidence in the overall pattern of relationships demonstrated in these studies. The current findings, however, should be interpreted in the light of potential limitations. First, the cross-sectional design in Study 1 prevents inferences about causality,

and the use of self-report raises issues of potential same-source bias. We addressed these limitations, however, with the experimental design and rater coding of voice behaviours in Study 2. This provides greater confidence based on the replication of the general pattern of results across the two studies. Second, the student sample in the experiment in Study 2 may limit generalizability to other work contexts. Sample demographics, however, indicated that almost all participants had work experience and half were currently employed, highlighting their experience with leader–follower interactions and norms. In addition, we utilized a task and work setting appropriate for the population, to ensure alignment of sample, methods, and interpretation.

Conclusion

Voice in the workplace is important and valuable for leaders and followers. This work presented voice, not only as a desirable outcome, but as a part of the social exchange relationship where leader reactions to voice facilitate or detract from the ongoing exchange. We focused on the realistic potential of having to say ‘no’ to follower suggestions. This focus offered us a ripe opportunity to uncover the presence of and a way towards achieving voice resilience. Overall, results demonstrated that leaders can foster voice safety in the exchange relationship by sensitively delivering explanations for voice non-endorsement. We hope others build on this notion of voice resilience and continue to expand our understanding of the mutuality of social exchange relationships.

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Appendix A: Study I Examples of employee voice non-endorsement experiences

Directions: The following open-ended question will ask you to reflect on a time in which you proposed an idea or suggestion in your organization and your idea **was not** supported or implemented

* You may take the next few minutes to reflect and remember a time in which one of your ideas/suggestions were not taken.*

Please answer the following questions as completely and honestly as possible

Please write all details about your experience of making a suggestion or proposing an idea that was not implemented:

- 1: It was during a conference call in which 4 senior people, including myself, participated from different locations. It was a stressful situation because of the particulars – we had to decide on consequences, which might include termination or even criminal action, of two persons who had violated our drug and alcohol policy, and we also had to come up with a plan for refreshing everyone in the organization on the policy itself. My proposal that we hold small group discussions, rather than a large, more stressful meeting, was met with scorn by my supervisor. He actually dismissed my idea out of hand, then said, ‘I have to go now’, and got off the call. I was embarrassed and also a bit shocked at his rude tone, which I thought was unwarranted
 - 2: I proposed to my supervisor that we should automate some of the manual processes that we do at month-end to shorten the close schedule, but it was turned down due to costs factors
 - 3: I work at a hotel and we charge no shows. If we are full each front desk person gets a bonus. I suggested to the manager that we check in no shows to sell out more frequently because they have to be charged anyway. This way everyone wins because the more we sell out the better the manager looks to corporate. She said not
 - 4: I suggested we stagger pickup times to the opposite hours when Histology was doing them so we wouldn’t be fighting for the same equipment. She said it was a good idea but it would effect patient care. I said it wouldn’t because the specimens would be waiting in line for the machines to free up but it didn’t seem to register with her
 - 5: The database had duplicated customers in it, so when mailings went out, several went to the same customer. I was told there was no easy way to fix it but after some research, I found out that wasn’t true. When I brought it up, I was told the amount of labor that would have to go into deleting the duplicates wouldn’t make it profitable. Just forget about the customers who call and complain
 - 6: I suggested we hold group conferences where all of the student’s teachers and the student’s parents met as one group rather than the parents meeting individually with each teacher. While the principal understood the concept and agreed with some of it, she felt the parents would feel overwhelmed
-

Continued

Appendix A. (Continued)

7: I work with a group of about 15 women. The 15 of us do not typically work all together at once, rather we are broken up in to different areas. Sometimes, I find that these areas tend to become insular and instead of working as a group, we tend to view the situation as us against them. Everyone works harder than everyone else, and it seems like there can be an awful lot of bickering and whining. I had recommended to my supervisor that I thought this problem could be alleviated if we periodically changed locations. This way people would realize that we all work hard, and that mistakes happen. Your coworkers aren't necessarily doing something to be nasty, sometimes that's just the nature of the beast. I felt this would help make people more empathetic, and more cooperative. My supervisor is of the opinion that people just need to learn how to get along with each other and solve their differences, so we stayed in our present locations

8: There is a great deal of work that needs to be done at the building I work in. It is just me and my supervisor there full time. The other members of the unit are only there 1 weekend a month. I suggested here recently that we attempt to get approval to bring a couple of our unit members in during the week to assist in beautifying the building. He agreed that it needed to be done, but due to budget cuts we weren't going to attempt to get approval

9: I proposed an idea about how our work loads are performed. I wanted to change it so that the work is evenly distributed among the workers. We'll perform the same amount of work, just not concentrated in such a short amount of time. I told a manager my idea and he was interested in it at first. About a week later, I went to the same manager to talk about my idea, and he said that it was dismissed. He said after looking at it some more, he felt implementing the idea would drop productivity

10: I suggested that we have a sale on certain seafood because it was getting near the expiration date and we would have to throw it out. We get bonuses for not wasting anything, so I didn't want it to go to waste. I told my team leader who brought it up to the manager, but due to a contract with the supplier we were unable to reduce the price below what had already been established. My team leader said it was a good idea, but we couldn't do it

Appendix B: Study 2 manipulations of explanation specificity and explanation sensitivity

High specificity and high sensitivity	Dear Ms./Mr. (last name here),I regret to inform you that your ideas for improving the marketing materials for Yellow Bean Cafe cannot be implemented because, unfortunately, I do not have sufficient time to make such changes. Each marketing project is assigned a deadline and your ideas could not be carried out before that date. To properly execute the ideas you suggested would require about 5 extra days in the timeline.Since not having your ideas supported may be frustrating, I hope that this letter is helpful in explaining the decision.Sincerely, Emery Fillmore
High specificity and low sensitivity	Hello,I am writing to inform you that your ideas for improving the marketing materials for Yellow Bean Cafe will not be implemented because I do not have sufficient time to make such changes. Each marketing project is assigned a deadline and your ideas could not possibly be carried out before that date. To properly execute the ideas you suggested would require at least five extra days in the timeline.Since your ideas were not supported due to time constraints, this letter is meant to explain the decision.-Emery Fillmore
Low specificity and high sensitivity	Dear Ms./Mr. (last name here),I regret to inform you that your ideas for improving the marketing materials for Yellow Bean Cafe cannot be implemented because, unfortunately, there are constraints in the organization.Since not having your ideas supported may be frustrating, I hope that this letter is helpful.Sincerely, Emery Fillmore
Low specificity and low sensitivity	Hello,I am writing to inform you that your ideas for improving the marketing materials for Yellow Bean Cafe will not be implemented because there are constraints in the organization. Therefore, your ideas were not adopted.-Emery Fillmore

Appendix C: Study 2 company and internship information

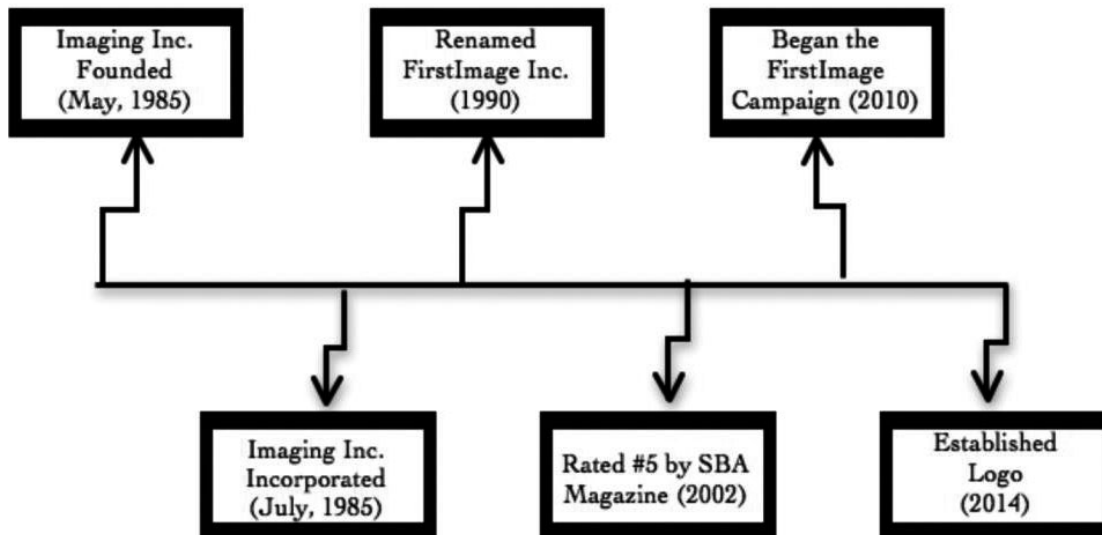
FirstImage Incorporated



Below is information about our organizational history, mission, and structure.

We hope this information will guide your next steps on this exciting marketing journey!

FirstImage Inc. Timeline



Mission statement

‘Our mission at FirstImage Inc. is to provide top-notch publicity and marketing to a wide range of organizations through branding, promotion and PR services. We specialize in the creation of marketing plans and materials that provide our clients with necessary advice and imaging. We aim to help businesses become well-known, and to establish strong partnerships in the process’.

Employees and tasks

Marketing Interns – Conduct market research analyses

Marketing Intern Job Description. The marketing intern role has a strategic focus on analysing market trends and compiling findings into clear and organized reports. Each intern will oversee two local regions and will be charged with creating innovative ways to improve FirstImage’s exposure in those two regions.

Appendix D: Study 2 Marketing materials – client 1 time 1

FirstImage Inc. **Client Information**



Client: Yellow Bean Cafe

Client Services: Yellow Bean Café is a coffee shop and bakery that provides dining services and study space to its customers

Client Goal: Attract more customers to the “Happy/Study Hour” each day from 6-7p.m.

Target Population: The primary focus is on attracting undergraduate and graduate student customers

Marketing Budget: \$2,150 per university

FirstImage Inc. **Marketing Plan**



- Create a marketing flyer for the organization
- Emphasize the benefits of visiting this organization from 6-7p.m.
- Ensure student-focused advertising is created
- Make promotion more accessible to current students by:
 - Placing 10 flyers in each campus building
 - Placing 30 flyers in each campus bookstore and dining hall

FirstImage Inc. Flyer



~YELLOW BEAN CAFÉ~



Do you have lots to do but little to spend??

We've got the ideal space and daily specials for you!

Come on out to: @ Yellow Bean Café

Happy/Study Hour 223 Grant Way Blvd.

every weekday from 6-7pm

Bring your student ID for half off all menu items!

Appendix E: Study 2 marketing materials – client 2 time 2

FirstImage Inc. Client Information



Client: Book Smarts Co.

Client Services: Book Smarts Co. is an online bookstore that provides new and used textbooks to students.

Client Goal: Make students aware of its products and services.

Target Population: The primary focus is on attracting undergraduate and graduate student customers

Marketing Budget: \$1,765.00 per university

FirstImage Inc. Marketing Plan



- Create a marketing flyer for the organization
- Emphasize how this organization is different from its competitors
- Create a catch phrase that students will identify with
- Create brand awareness by placing 30 flyers in each dining hall and dormitory
- Place 50 flyers in all on-campus study halls

FirstImage Inc. Flyer



Book Smarts Co.

"Using smarts to complete your book buying process!"

BENEFITS OF BOOK SMARTS CO:

- No more waiting in line
- 30-day money back guarantee
- The first online store that trades books!

Visit us online at www.BookSmarts.org