

Differences in the Concepts, Antecedents, and Consequences of Promotive and Prohibitive Voice

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Abstract

This paper systematically reviews the differences in antecedents and consequences between promotive voice and prohibitive voice. The theoretical foundations for these differences include the Theory of Planned Behavior, Regulatory Focus Theory, Goal Orientation Theory, Social Expectancy Theory, Conservation of Resources Theory, Attribution Theory, Ego Depletion Theory, Cognitive Appraisal Theory, and Affective Events Theory. Corresponding to these theories, the antecedent differences between the two types of voice are reflected in voice-giver characteristics (e.g., personality, motivation), leadership styles and behaviors, leader-member exchange, and organizational-level factors (e.g., organizational politics, organizational justice); the consequence differences are manifested in voice-givers' work attitudes and behaviors (e.g., performance, job satisfaction), leader voice adoption, and team performance. Future research directions may include exploring the coexistence of the two types of voice within teams, cultural differences between the two types of voice, etc.

Full Text

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This paper systematically reviews the differences in antecedents and consequences between promotive and prohibitive voice. The theoretical foundations for these differences include the theory of planned behavior, regulatory focus theory, goal orientation theory, social desirability theory, conservation of resources theory, attribution theory, ego depletion theory, cognitive appraisal theory, and affective events theory. Correspondingly, antecedent differences manifest in voicer characteristics (e.g., personality, motivation), leadership styles and behaviors, leader-member exchange, and organizational-level factors (e.g., organizational politics, organizational justice). Consequence differences are reflected

in voicers' work attitudes and behaviors (e.g., performance, job satisfaction), managerial endorsement of voice, and team performance. Future research directions include examining the coexistence of both voice types within teams and cultural differences between them.

Keywords: voice behavior; promotive voice; prohibitive voice; theoretical mechanism

1 Introduction

Promotive and prohibitive voice represent the most common classification in voice research. In recent years, scholars have explored their differences in antecedents and consequences from various theoretical perspectives. For antecedents, Lin and Johnson (2015) applied regulatory focus theory to demonstrate how employees' regulatory foci influence their voice choices. Kakkar et al. (2016) grounded their work in goal orientation theory, finding that performance-approach orientation increases promotive voice while performance-avoidance orientation generates prohibitive voice. Qin et al. (2014) drew on conservation of resources theory to reveal that emotionally exhausted employees, driven by resource acquisition motives, are more likely to engage in prohibitive voice. For consequences, Li, Kark, and Morrison (2017) used regulatory focus theory to show that teams characterized by promotive voice foster a promotion focus in leaders, making them visionary, whereas teams with prohibitive voice create a prevention focus, resulting in rule-oriented leadership. Su et al. (2017) applied attribution theory to find that managers attribute promotive voice to prosocial and constructive motives, thereby improving performance evaluations, an effect not observed for prohibitive voice. Lin and Johnson (2015) utilized ego depletion theory to demonstrate that prohibitive voice generates greater self-depletion than promotive voice.

Although substantial knowledge has accumulated regarding the antecedents and consequences of these two voice types, these findings remain fragmented, hindering comprehensive understanding and future research. Therefore, this paper aims to systematically review relevant literature and offer suggestions for future voice research. We first introduce the concepts and distinctions between the two voice types, then examine theoretical explanations for their differential antecedents and consequences. Next, we present empirical research on influencing factors at the employee, leader, interpersonal, and organizational levels, followed by outcome variables at the employee, leader, and team levels. Finally, we propose future research directions. The overall framework is illustrated in Figure 1 [Figure 1: see original paper].

2.1 Concepts and Research Status of Promotive and Prohibitive Voice

Employee voice has garnered extensive attention from scholars worldwide over the past two decades due to its positive effects on team learning, innovation, or-

ganizational performance, and work unit effectiveness (e.g., Duan, 2011; Duan & Zhang, 2012; Burris, 2012; Morrison, 2011). Voice behavior refers to employees' proactive suggestions, opinions, or ideas to improve their team, department, or organization, with the primary purpose of improvement rather than criticism (LePine & VanDyne, 2001). As research has progressed, scholars have recognized voice as a multidimensional construct encompassing both improvement suggestions and problem reporting. Accordingly, Liang, Farh, and Farh (2012) distinguished between promotive voice—employees' proactive proposals of new ideas or suggestions to enhance organizational performance and operations—and prohibitive voice—employees' proactive identification of problems that may harm normal organizational functioning to prevent further damage.

Despite their different foci, the two voice types share similarities. Both constitute challenging voice that challenges the status quo to promote organizational development rather than supporting existing operations, and both reflect constructive rather than defensive intentions (Maynes & Podsakoff, 2014). Additionally, both are extra-role behaviors rather than in-role behaviors (Liang et al., 2012). Consequently, some scholars have treated them as similar constructs, examining their shared antecedents and consequences (e.g., Li, Ling, & Fang, 2010; Zhang, Hu, & Qiu, 2014). Existing reviews have covered these aspects (e.g., Morrison, 2014), which this paper does not reiterate.

Increasingly, scholars have recognized differences between promotive and prohibitive voice, examining their distinct generation and influence mechanisms and corresponding antecedent and consequence differences from various theoretical perspectives (e.g., Liang et al., 2012; Lin & Johnson, 2015; Kakkar et al., 2016; Li et al., 2017). As evidence accumulates, a systematic overview of these differences becomes necessary. Theoretically, clarifying these distinctions deepens our understanding of employee voice as a phenomenon that cannot be generalized—promotive and prohibitive voice each possess unique generative principles, influencing factors, mechanisms, and consequences. Practically, both voice types are crucial for organizations. Only by clearly distinguishing them can managers effectively motivate and manage each type to realize their respective benefits.

2.2 Differences Between Promotive and Prohibitive Voice

Based on a comprehensive understanding of the two voice types' characteristics, we identify seven key differences. First, they differ in focus: promotive voice is suggestion-oriented, emphasizing gains, whereas prohibitive voice is problem-oriented, emphasizing loss prevention (Lin & Johnson, 2015). Second, they differ in temporal orientation: promotive voice is future-oriented and cannot immediately impact the organization, while prohibitive voice addresses past or current problems, providing timely damage control (Liang et al., 2012). Third, they differ in challenge level to the organization: promotive voice's good intentions are easily recognized, posing less challenge, whereas prohibitive voice, despite good intentions, questions existing practices and procedures, making

organizations more likely to perceive it as challenging (Burris, 2012). Fourth, they differ in risk to employees: promotive voice is generally welcomed and low-risk, while prohibitive voice may be viewed by managers as challenging and by colleagues as troublemaking, making it higher-risk (Morrison, 2014). Fifth, they differ in resource consumption: promotive voice requires substantial cognitive resources and time for creative ideas (Farh, Tangirala, & Liang, 2010), whereas prohibitive voice primarily consumes self-regulatory resources as employees must continuously self-regulate and control to manage personal risks, leading to self-depletion (Lin & Johnson, 2015). Sixth, they differ in information presentation: promotive voice frames information positively, while prohibitive voice frames it negatively. Seventh, they differ in solution provision: promotive voice proposes improvement methods, whereas prohibitive voice does not necessarily offer solutions to identified problems (Chamberlin, Newton, & LePine, 2017).

3 Theoretical Explanations for Antecedent Differences

Based on the potential risks and rewards of speaking up, employees carefully evaluate these factors before voicing (Detert & Burris, 2007). Research consistently shows that comprehensive risk-reward analysis significantly determines whether employees voice or remain silent (Morrison & Milliken, 2000). Kish-Gephart, Detert, Trevino, and Edmondson (2009) analyzed employee silence from a cognitive perspective, identifying fear of voice-related risks as a primary cause of silence and proposing voice efficacy as a construct to reduce silence and promote voice. Other scholars have examined factors that reduce employees' risk perceptions, finding positive effects of managerial openness and transformational leadership (Detert & Burris, 2007).

As voice content has been differentiated into promotive and prohibitive types, research has shifted from the voice-silence dichotomy to examining these two forms. Many studies continue to investigate antecedent differences from a risk perspective, finding that promotive voice is relatively less risky than prohibitive voice (Chamberlin et al., 2017). Consequently, in risk analysis, employees prefer promotive voice and avoid prohibitive voice. This explains why perceived voice risk particularly inhibits prohibitive voice (Wei, Zhang, & Chen, 2015), whereas psychological safety better predicts prohibitive voice (Liang et al., 2012). Beyond risk factors, scholars have employed other theories to explain antecedent differences, including the theory of planned behavior, regulatory focus theory, goal orientation theory, social desirability theory, and conservation of resources theory.

3.1 Theory of Planned Behavior

According to the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991), individuals' motivation to engage in planned behavior is influenced by three factors: positive attitudes toward the behavior, perceived normative pressure, and perceived behavioral control. As an organizational citizenship behavior, voice can benefit

employees through improved performance evaluations and promotion opportunities (Morrison, 2014). However, unlike “cooperative” citizenship behaviors such as helping, voice possesses an inherently challenging nature that may embarrass superiors by challenging the status quo or burden colleagues, leading to negative evaluations of the voicer (Burris, 2012). Liang et al. (2012) integrated these considerations, applying the theory of planned behavior to voice by conceptualizing it as a planned behavior in interpersonal contexts. Corresponding factors include employee psychological safety, felt responsibility for constructive change, and organization-based self-esteem, each differentially affecting the two voice types. Specifically, felt responsibility for constructive change and organization-based self-esteem correlate more strongly with promotive voice, while psychological safety correlates more strongly with prohibitive voice.

3.2 Regulatory Focus Theory

Regulatory focus theory posits that individuals manage and regulate their cognition, emotion, and behavior when pursuing goals (Gamache, McNamara, Manor, & Johnson, 2015), distinguishing between promotion focus and prevention focus. These foci differ significantly in goals, strategies, and emotions (Lin & Johnson, 2015). Promotion focus sets ideal goals and actively approaches them, employs innovative strategies, and experiences high-arousal positive emotions like excitement when envisioning ideal goals. Prevention focus sets danger states and strives to avoid them, employs vigilant strategies, and experiences high-arousal negative emotions like anxiety when envisioning danger states. Correspondingly, promotive voice proposes improvements to work processes, focuses on ideal goals, employs innovative strategies, and accompanies positive emotions. Prohibitive voice identifies problems to prevent losses, focuses on danger states, employs vigilant strategies, and accompanies negative emotions. Research has examined how different regulatory foci predict different voice types, finding that promotion-focused employees prefer proposing improvement measures, while prevention-focused employees prefer recommending cessation of improper practices (Lin & Johnson, 2015; MacMillan, Hurst, Kelley, Howell, & Jung, 2019). Chamberlin et al.’s (2017) meta-analysis also identified focus orientation differences as an important theoretical basis for antecedent and consequence distinctions.

3.3 Goal Orientation Theory

Goal orientation theory (Carver & Scheier, 1998) views behavior as both a response to stimuli and a process of achieving predetermined goals through sequential actions. The theory distinguishes between learning goals and performance goals, with performance goals further divided into performance-approach and performance-avoidance orientations. Approach orientation reflects individuals’ tendency to demonstrate competence, actively pursuing ideal goals, being more sensitive to environmental opportunities and rewards, and exhibiting more approach behaviors. Avoidance orientation reflects individuals’ tendency to avoid

having their competence questioned, making them more sensitive to environmental dangers and inclined to protect themselves from performance damage (Carver, 2006). Approach-oriented employees are more cognitively sensitive to opportunities and rewards that enhance their performance and competence (Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996), more likely to consider methods for achieving ideal goals, and their voice content contains more promotive elements. Avoidance-oriented employees are more cognitively sensitive to threats that damage their performance and competence (Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996), more likely to consider methods for avoiding danger states, and their voice content contains more prohibitive elements. Building on this, Kakkar et al. (2016) integrated goal orientation theory with the two voice types, finding that performance-approach orientation predicts improvement suggestions, while avoidance orientation predicts identification of workplace dangers.

3.4 Social Desirability Theory

Although employee voice benefits organizations, employees often “know but do not speak.” This can be attributed to two factors: uncertainty about whether voice will be adopted (perceived voice efficacy) and fear of retaliation (perceived voice risk) (Morrison, 2011, 2014). When employees believe their voice will be valued and personal risk is low, they are more likely to speak up. Voice efficacy and risk align with social desirability theory (Paulhus, 2002), which posits that agentic and communal motives underlie self-presentation. Individuals consider whether their behavior aligns with social expectations before acting, exhibiting behavior only when it meets such expectations. Agentic motives drive individuals to actively present a positive self-image, such as dominance and competence (Lalwani, Shavitt, & Johnson, 2006), resulting in higher perceived voice efficacy. Communal motives drive individuals to avoid behaviors that reduce their agreeableness and friendliness, resulting in higher perceived voice risk (Paulhus & John, 1998). Empirical research has found that perceived voice efficacy predicts promotive voice, while perceived voice risk inhibits prohibitive voice. Additionally, power distance undermines perceived voice efficacy, and surface harmony increases perceived voice risk (Wei et al., 2015).

3.5 Conservation of Resources Theory

Conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989, 2002) posits that resources are limited, and individuals strive to avoid resource loss to conserve resources. When resources are depleted, individuals seek to acquire resources to maintain necessary activities. Promotive voice requires substantial cognitive resources and time for innovative ideas and solutions (Farh, Tangirala, & Liang, 2010). Although prohibitive voice is riskier, it does not consume as many cognitive resources or as much time as promotive voice (Morrison, 2014; Liang et al., 2012). Therefore, driven by resource conservation motives, employees avoid promotive voice (Qin et al., 2014). When resource acquisition motives dominate—for instance, when employees face significant stress—the opposite occurs. Pro-

hibitive voice can promptly stop improper practices, whereas promotive voice requires time to take effect. In such situations, employees are more likely to engage in prohibitive voice to immediately alleviate their stress rather than rely on promotive voice that focuses on the organization's future ideal state. Qin et al. (2014) found that under resource conservation motives, emotional exhaustion negatively affects promotive voice, while under resource acquisition motives, emotional exhaustion positively predicts prohibitive voice.

4 Review of Antecedents

After theoretically explaining the generation mechanisms of the two voice types, we now review empirical research at the employee level (e.g., personality traits, needs/motives/emotions, work-related factors), leader level (e.g., leadership styles, behaviors), interpersonal level (e.g., leader-member exchange, supervisor-subordinate guanxi), and organizational level (e.g., organizational politics, organizational justice).

4.1 Employee Level

Voice type is first influenced by employees' personality traits, followed by psychological needs, motives, and emotions, and finally by work-related factors such as work attitudes, values, experiences, characteristics, and position levels.

4.1.1 Personality Factors Research on personality antecedents of the two voice types has examined different personality traits' distinct effects. Based on the similarity between the two regulatory foci and the two voice types, Lin and Johnson (2015) found that promotion-focused employees prefer promotive voice, while prevention-focused employees prefer prohibitive voice. Similarly, the two goal orientations correspond to the two voice types: performance-approach orientation predicts promotive voice, while performance-avoidance orientation predicts prohibitive voice (Kakkar et al., 2016). Additionally, employee conscientiousness, extraversion (Liu, Liao, & Liao, 2014), and authenticity (Knoll & Dick, 2013) are important predictors of prohibitive voice, whereas prosocial orientation (Sanner, Ziauddin, & Chou, 2017) and contextual communication orientation (Ward, Ravlin, Klaas, Ployhart, & Buchan, 2016) inhibit both voice types, with stronger effects on prohibitive voice.

4.1.2 Needs, Motives, and Emotions Regarding psychological needs, employees with high affiliation needs voice proactively to build good LMX with leaders, and this need more strongly predicts promotive voice because it is less challenging and more recognized by leaders, better facilitating LMX development (Kong, Huang, Liu, & Zhao, 2017). In terms of motives, concern for organization, prosocial motives, and impression management motives positively affect both voice types (Chen, Li, & Lu, 2016). Emotionally, Qin et al. (2014) found that employees make different voice choices under varying levels of emotional exhaustion: as exhaustion increases from low to moderate, it negatively

affects promotive voice; as exhaustion increases from moderate to high, it positively predicts prohibitive voice.

4.1.3 Work-Related Factors Regarding work attitudes, some research treats promotive voice as creative behavior, finding that engaged employees with higher creativity generate more such voice (Kong, Chu, Mondejar, & Allen, 2016). For job satisfaction, it positively correlates with promotive voice. Its relationship with prohibitive voice varies: older employees voice more when satisfied, but for new-generation employees, both high and low satisfaction can lead to prohibitive voice (Yan & Ma, 2018). Among work values, comfort and security negatively affect both voice types, while ability and growth and status and independence positively affect both (Zhan, Yang, & Luan, 2016). Organization commitment—both organizational and union commitment—positively affects both voice types, with union commitment having stronger effects, particularly on prohibitive voice (Hu, Zhang, Shan, & Zhang, 2018). Regarding career attitudes, employees with high career calling have stronger felt responsibility for constructive change and optimism, leading to more of both voice types (Chen, May, & Schwoerer, 2016; Zhang, Yang, & Chen, 2018). Additionally, employee position level (MacMillan et al., 2019), job autonomy (Dedahanov, Rhee, & Gapurjanova, 2018), and existing work defects (Shepherd, Patzelt, & Berry, 2019) are important factors for prohibitive voice, while work experience more strongly affects promotive voice (Li, Li, & Zhu, 2016).

4.2 Leader Level

Whether and what type of employees voice is closely related to leaders' styles and behaviors. Extensive literature has examined how different leadership styles and behaviors affect the two voice types.

4.2.1 Leadership Styles Regarding positive leadership styles, transformational leadership has been comprehensively studied. It promotes both voice types by making employees perceive work meaning (Chen, Wang, & Lee, 2018), enhancing LMX (Jada & Mukhopadhyay, 2019), strengthening organizational identification (Hu, Zhang, & Wang, 2015), and providing job autonomy (Svensen, Unterrainer, & Jönsson, 2018). Authentic and humble leadership have also been examined for their effects on prohibitive voice: authentic leadership enhances employee hope, team psychological safety, and authentic followership (Liu & Liao, 2015), while humble leadership boosts voice efficacy (Zhang, Zhang, & Cui, 2017). Servant leadership increases both voice types by enhancing employees' sense of obligation (Arain, Hameed, & Crawshaw, 2019). Different leadership styles have varying effects: empowering leadership better promotes both voice types than transformational and ethical leadership (Jada & Mukhopadhyay, 2019). Research on differential effects of the same style is limited, though Chamberlin et al.'s (2017) meta-analysis found that ethical leadership and leader openness better promote promotive voice. Regarding negative leadership styles, research has focused on abusive supervision, which

undermines both voice types by damaging organization-based self-esteem (Yan, 2012) and psychological safety and perceived organizational support (Li, Ling, & Liu, 2009).

4.2.2 Leader Behaviors Leaders' emotions, words, and behaviors convey psychological cues that affect employee voice. Leaders' positive emotions enhance psychological safety, facilitating promotive voice (Liu et al., 2015), whereas negative emotions reduce employees' liking and trust in leaders, inhibiting promotive voice (Song, 2018). Verbally, leader encouragement significantly motivates both voice types (Mayfield & Mayfield, 2017). Leader forgiveness and information sharing behavior promote prohibitive voice through psychological safety and insider status cognition, respectively (Zhang & Zhang, 2017; Chen, Fan, Zhang, & Yu, 2017). Additionally, Li et al. (2010) found that supervisor trust and psychological ownership are important mechanisms through which leader support affects both voice types, while Han and Hwang (2019) explained the positive effect of leader support from a psychological capital perspective.

4.3 Interpersonal Level

Workplaces consist of groups with interpersonal interactions, primarily between superiors and subordinates (manifested as LMX or supervisor-subordinate guanxi) and among colleagues.

4.3.1 Supervisor-Subordinate Guanxi and LMX Social exchange theory views voice as employees' way of reciprocating leaders. Research shows that LMX enhances psychological safety and meaningfulness, prompting employees to voice to repay leaders (Song et al., 2017). In nonprofit organizations, LMX particularly encourages reporting organizational problems (Pei, Pan, Skitmore, & Feng, 2018). Supervisor-subordinate guanxi also positively affects both voice types, possibly through trust in supervisors (Yan, 2018), psychological empowerment and ownership (Wang, Wu, Liu, Hao, & Wu, 2019), and enhanced psychological safety and reduced face concerns (Liang, Yu, & Fu, 2019).

4.3.2 Colleague Relationships Positive colleague influences include support, trust, respect, and workplace friendship. Specifically, colleague support enhances felt responsibility for constructive change, promoting promotive voice (Xie, Ling, Mo, & Luan, 2015) but poorly predicts prohibitive voice (Loi, Ao, & Xu, 2014). Colleague trust positively affects both voice types without significant differences. Colleague respect enhances positive emotions and control beliefs, promoting both voice types (Ng, Hsu, & Parker, 2019). Workplace friendship more strongly predicts promotive than prohibitive voice (Sun, Yin, & Li, 2015). Regarding negative relationships, workplace ostracism inhibits both voice types by frustrating psychological needs (Wu et al., 2019) and undermining group belongingness (Wu, Wang, & Lu, 2018).

4.4 Organizational Level

Voice results from the interaction between organizational environment and employee personality. Recent research has accumulated knowledge about organizational influences on both voice types, focusing on interpersonal justice, organizational politics, and organizational practices.

Interpersonal justice enhances psychological empowerment, increasing promotive voice but not significantly affecting prohibitive voice (Sun, Shi, & Lan, 2018). Organizational politics creates psychological uncertainty, negatively affecting both voice types. Regarding mitigation, job autonomy and job security play different moderating roles (Li, Liang, & Farh, 2018). High-performance work systems enhance perceived organizational support (Miao, Zhou, Liu, Pan, & Liu, 2015), developmental performance appraisal improves job satisfaction (Zhang et al., 2014), and participative decision-making opportunities make employees feel trusted (Chen, 2017). Organizational voice practice procedures effectively stimulate promotive voice but are less effective for prohibitive voice (Knoll & Redman, 2016). Additionally, Wei et al. (2015) found that for employees valuing surface harmony, creating a good voice climate facilitates prohibitive voice, while for those valuing power distance, organizational empowerment promotes promotive voice. Externally, organizational social responsibility creates a caring climate that enhances both voice types, with stronger effects on promotive voice (Wang, Zhang, & Jia, 2019).

4.5 Summary of Antecedent Theories and Review

The review reveals that because the two voice types share conceptual 内涵, they have many common antecedents without significant differential effects. These include individual-level proactivity and job autonomy, leader-level positive styles and behaviors, interpersonal-level LMX, supervisor-subordinate guanxi, and colleague relationships, and organizational-level high-performance work systems and participative decision-making opportunities. However, their unique conceptual characteristics also produce distinct antecedents. Regulatory focus theory and goal orientation theory explain differential effects from personality traits, while planned behavior theory and social desirability theory explain differences from organizational and leader perspectives. Conservation of resources theory explains differences through emotional stress. Beyond individual differences, leader and organizational theories primarily address risk, showing that prohibitive voice is more susceptible to safety and support factors, while promotive voice is more influenced by efficacy and responsibility factors.

5 Theoretical Explanations for Consequence Differences

Several theories also explain differences in the consequences of the two voice types, including regulatory focus theory, attribution theory, ego depletion theory, cognitive appraisal theory, and affective events theory.

5.1 Regulatory Focus Theory

Regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1997) not only explains why employees engage in different voice types but also why different voice leads to different outcomes. Team members can stimulate the entire team to pursue ideal goals through promotive behavior or guide the team to identify problems through prohibitive behavior. Empirical research shows that team-level promotive voice stimulates achievement-related goals, creating a team promotion focus that emphasizes opportunities and innovation, thereby enhancing team productivity. Team prohibitive voice drives safety-related goals, creating a team prevention focus that emphasizes risk monitoring, thereby enhancing team safety performance (Li, Liao, Tangirala, & Firth, 2017). Similarly, Liang, Shu, and Farh (2019) found that team promotive voice helps mobilize diverse knowledge and improve knowledge utilization, promoting team innovation, while team prohibitive voice fosters a reflective climate that also enhances innovation. Furthermore, the two voice types differentially affect leaders: team promotive voice fosters a promotion focus, creating visionary leadership, whereas team prohibitive voice fosters a prevention focus, creating rule-oriented leadership (Li et al., 2017).

5.2 Attribution Theory

Attribution theory (Heider, 1958) suggests that people tend to explain others' behaviors to better predict and control their environment, with their reactions depending on attributed motives. Identifying motives behind behavior affects leader evaluations of subordinates (Cheung, Peng, & Wong, 2014). When employees voice, leaders typically consider their motives, and different voice types trigger different attributions, leading to inconsistent evaluations. Promotive voice's constructive motives are usually easily recognized, leading leaders to adopt such suggestions. Although prohibitive voice also reflects organizational concern, it points out improper practices for which leaders are primarily responsible, causing leaders to view it as a challenge to their authority and reject it (Burris, 2012). Research shows that leaders adopt promotive voice when perceiving loyalty but reject prohibitive voice when perceiving threat (Burris, 2012; Hassan, Batool, & Hassan, 2016). Similarly, managers attribute promotive voice to prosocial and constructive motives, improving performance evaluations, an effect not found for prohibitive voice (Su et al., 2017).

5.3 Ego Depletion Theory

Ego depletion theory posits that individuals have limited resources for self-control when engaging in self-regulatory activities (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Muraven, & Tice, 1998). Activities requiring self-control and regulation consume regulatory resources, leading to ego depletion, cognitive fatigue, emotional exhaustion, and weakened willpower (Hagger, Wood, Stiff, & Chatzisarantis, 2010). Different activities produce varying depletion levels: resisting temptation and regulating negative emotions cause greater depletion, while intrinsically motivated activities do not deplete and may enhance concentration

and persistence (Beal, Weiss, Barros, & MacDermid, 2005). Both voice types can cause ego depletion to some extent, but differently. Promotive voice envisions ideal organizational states, often accompanied by excitement and positive emotions that provide motivational approach functions, helping employees concentrate and reduce ego depletion. Prohibitive voice envisions organizational damage and worries about negative consequences, easily triggering anxiety and fear that cause substantial ego depletion (Liang et al., 2012). Lin and Johnson (2015) found that promotive voice reduces ego depletion, whereas prohibitive voice increases it.

5.4 Cognitive Appraisal Theory

The transactional theory of stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) suggests that workplace demands exceeding individual coping abilities create work stress. Individuals encounter various stressors and cognitively appraise them to determine their impact and controllability. Team voice is an important stressor triggering managerial cognitive appraisal because it challenges the status quo and demands action to improve procedures or solve problems (Liang et al., 2012; LePine & Van Dyne, 2001). Managers may also perceive team voice as questioning their performance, qualities, and abilities, intensifying cognitive appraisal (Fast, Burris, & Bartel, 2014). Whether managers make positive or negative appraisals depends on voice type. When team voice is promotive, facilitating managerial growth, managers conduct challenge appraisals, generating challenge stress and addressing employee needs. When team voice is prohibitive, threatening managerial interests, managers conduct hindrance appraisals, generating hindrance stress and causing emotional exhaustion (Sessions, Nahrgang, Newton, & Chamberlin, 2019).

5.5 Affective Events Theory

Affective events theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) suggests that employee behavior and performance are determined not only by personality and attitudes but also by fluctuating workplace emotions. Affective events are meaningful, unusual workplace occurrences that influence emotions (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Voice represents employees' proactive investment and is meaningful for both employees and organizations. As extra-role rather than in-role behavior, voice constitutes an important affective event that influences emotions. Different voice types affect emotions differently. Promotive voice proposes improvements, constituting a challenging task that helps solve problems and enhances self-control, representing a positive affective event associated with positive emotions (Starzyk, Sonnentag, & Albrecht, 2018). Prohibitive voice reports problems with negative emotions, but its purpose is not merely criticism—it aims to draw organizational attention to problems. Employees may actually reduce their concerns and negative emotions after voicing prohibitive concerns (Beehr, King, & King, 1990). Based on this analysis, Starzyk et al. (2018) applied affective events theory to voice, using a diary study to examine post-meeting emotional

changes. They found that while promotive voice did not significantly enhance positive emotions, prohibitive voice significantly reduced negative emotions.

6 Review of Consequences

Research on the consequences of the two voice types is relatively scarce, primarily examining effects on employees, leaders, and teams. Employee-level outcomes include performance, job satisfaction, emotions, ego depletion, and status. Leader-level outcomes include voice endorsement, leadership type, and emotional exhaustion. Team-level outcomes mainly involve team performance and innovation.

6.1 Employee Outcomes

Regarding individual performance, findings are inconsistent, but promotive voice generally improves leaders' performance evaluations more than prohibitive voice. This may occur because managers perceive different motives: they perceive loyalty from promotive voice but threat from prohibitive voice (Hassan et al., 2016). Similarly, supervisors attribute prosocial and constructive motives to promotive voice but not prohibitive voice (Su et al., 2017). However, some research finds that moderate-frequency prohibitive voice can also improve performance evaluations through perceived constructiveness (Huang, Xu, Huang, & Liu, 2018). Additionally, promotive voice may enhance subsequent performance by strengthening self-efficacy when adopted (Li & Qi, 2017). For job satisfaction, both voice types enhance it by strengthening self-efficacy (Song, He, Wu, & Zhai, 2018). Regarding employee status, findings are mixed: some research suggests only men gain status through promotive voice (McClean, Martin, Emich, & Woodruff, 2018), while others find both voice types enhance status, with prohibitive voice having stronger effects (Weiss & Morisson, 2018). For intrinsic effects, although prohibitive voice causes ego depletion, it can reduce negative emotions, while promotive voice does not cause depletion but also does not significantly enhance positive emotions (Lin & Johnson, 2015; Starzyk et al., 2018).

6.2 Leader Outcomes

Due to differences in challenge level and information presentation, leaders prefer adopting promotive over prohibitive voice, possibly viewing the latter as more challenging (Burris, 2012). How can prohibitive voice be adopted? Research finds that high-ranking employees with distant leader relationships have their prohibitive voice more readily adopted (MacMillan et al., 2019). Integrating both voice types, Wei and Zhang (2014) found that higher employee expertise increases adoption of promotive voice, but for prohibitive voice, adoption occurs only when both supervisor status and subordinate expertise are high; when supervisor status is low, even high subordinate expertise does not lead to adoption. Similarly, authentic leaders prefer adopting promotive voice from high-expertise

employees (Zhang, Liang, & Li, 2017). The two voice types also affect leaders: team promotive voice fosters a promotion focus, creating visionary leadership, whereas team prohibitive voice fosters a prevention focus, creating rule-oriented leadership (Li et al., 2017). Additionally, team voice can cause leader emotional exhaustion (Sessions et al., 2019).

6.3 Team Outcomes

Team performance findings are inconsistent. Some research finds that the two voice types enhance different performance dimensions: team promotive voice improves productivity, while team prohibitive voice improves safety performance (Li et al., 2017). Others argue that only promotive voice enhances team performance through team reflection, whereas prohibitive voice triggers negative emotions that hinder performance (Zhang, Ling, Xie, & Liu, 2017). Human resource management practices for both voice types enhance team innovation performance (Shin, Woodwark, & Jung, 2017). For team innovation, promotive voice makes teams more open to discussing ideas (Guzman & Espejo, 2019). Liang et al. (2019) found that team promotive voice enhances innovation through both knowledge utilization and team reflection, whereas prohibitive voice enhances innovation only through team reflection. Regarding team creativity, some researchers suggest that team promotive and prohibitive voice may cause task conflict and relationship conflict, respectively, hindering team creativity (Takeuchi, Zhang, & Zhou, 2018).

6.4 Summary of Consequence Theories and Review

Several conclusions emerge. First, regulatory focus theory primarily explains differences in leader and team outcomes, such as leadership type, team performance, and innovation. Second, attribution theory and cognitive appraisal theory mainly explain leader-level outcome differences, such as voice endorsement and emotional exhaustion. Third, ego depletion theory and affective events theory primarily explain individual intrinsic effects, such as ego depletion and emotional changes. Notably, regarding employee status, McClean et al. (2018) used expectation states theory to find that only men gain status through promotive voice, whereas Weiss and Morisson (2018) used status attainment theory to find that both voice types enhance status, with prohibitive voice having stronger effects. Thus, the relationship between voice types and organizational status requires deeper theoretical and empirical investigation.

7 Future Directions

Based on our review of conceptual distinctions, theoretical mechanisms, and antecedent and consequence research, we identify that organizational-level research on both voice types' generation and outcomes is relatively limited, and theoretical explanations for their differential antecedents and consequences need deeper exploration. Therefore, we call for future research in the following areas.

First, although existing research has used regulatory focus theory, goal orientation theory, ego depletion theory, and cognitive appraisal theory to explain differences, these theories primarily address personality traits. Other perspectives lack theoretical integration, such as the interpersonal perspective on relationships with the two voice types and the situational perspective on how contexts determine voice type choice. Thus, identifying theoretical explanations from alternative perspectives represents a promising direction.

Second, research shows that both voice types benefit teams. However, in practice, most teams are either promotion-focused (opportunity-oriented but overly risky) or prevention-focused (risk-averse but overly conservative). Effective teams need both foci, with members able to voice promotively or prohibitively as situations demand. Future research should examine how to develop “both offensive and defensive” teams that balance innovation and risk prevention.

Third, while promotive voice generally brings positive change and is attributed to prosocial motives, power-motivated managers may reject it as a power-seeking tactic (Urbach & Fay, 2018). Prohibitive voice, though questioning existing practices, can be adopted when voiced by high-ranking, high-expertise employees (MacMillan et al., 2019). Understanding why and how managers adopt different voice types has significant practical implications.

Fourth, as social desirability theory (Paulhus, 2002) suggests, individuals tend to exhibit socially desirable behaviors, but cultural orientation shapes this expression. Individualistic cultures exhibit “self-deceptive enhancement”—unrealistically positive self-views and displays of ability and uniqueness—whereas collectivistic cultures emphasize impression management, focusing on group identity and managing impressions to meet organizational expectations (Lalwani et al., 2006). We propose that in individualistic cultures, employees engage in promotive voice to demonstrate competence and avoid prohibitive voice to prevent competence questioning. In collectivistic cultures, promotive voice may stem from impression management to gain support, while prohibitive voice is avoided to prevent social rejection but may be exhibited when organizationally expected. Thus, voice type choice in collectivistic cultures depends more on organizational expectations, whereas in individualistic cultures it depends more on individual factors. Examining these cultural differences represents an interesting future direction.

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