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**COULD YOU TRANSFER MY VOICE TO  
THE LEADER?  
ANTECEDENTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF  
TRANSIT VOICE**

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Could You Transfer My Voice to the Leader?  
Antecedents and consequences of transit voice

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

September 2016

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## **ABSTRACT**

In voice research, voice has generally been viewed as an individual action; that is, one employee generates ideas and conveys them to the leader by him/herself. However, a recent study (Detert, Burris, Harrison, & Martin, 2013) suggests that employees regularly cooperate with one another in the voice process. To date, this phenomenon has received limited research attention. To fill this research gap, we introduce a cooperative voice tactic, transit voice, which is defined as a voice tactic by which employees (“informants”) speak out to their peers (“transferors”) and ask them to transfer their messages to leaders.

Drawing on extant theories on social status/power (e.g., Halevy, Chou & Galinsky, 2011; Keltner, Gruenfeld & Anderson, 2003), we investigate antecedents and consequences of transit voice in two field survey studies. In Study 1, results indicate that employee’s status was negatively related to the adoption of transit voice, and this relationship was strengthened when teams had low participative leaders and when teams had low competitive goals. The results of Study 2 showed 1) an interaction effect between informant’s status and transferor’s status on informant’s transit voice toward transferor, in that low status members were more likely to ask high status peers to engage in transit voice; 2) informant’s transit voice toward transferor was positively related to leader’s endorsement on that voiced issue; 3) informant’s transit voice toward transferor that was aggregated at the team level was positively related to team performance when teams had high leader–member exchange differentiation and low competitive goals.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

Voice behavior is defined as the “discretionary communication of ideas, suggestions, concerns, or opinions about work-related issues with the intent to improve organizational or unit functioning” (Morrison, 2011, p375). Voice has been associated with various organizational benefits, including promoting high-quality decisions (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Morrison & Milliken, 2000; Nemeth, 1997), facilitating an organization’s adaptation to environmental changes (LePine & Van Dyne, 2001), and helping organizations spot problems and improve working procedures (Katz & Kahn, 1978; LePine & Van Dyne, 1998). In view of these salient benefits, voice has received intensive research attention in the past decade. Since then, considerable knowledge on voice antecedents has been accumulated, and voice consequences have recently been explored (see Morrison [2014] for the latest review). However, except for a few recent studies (Whiting, Maynes, Podsakoff, & Podsakoff, 2012; Lam, 2013), studies on voice tactics with regard to *how* employees conduct voice have been almost nonexistent.

The study of voice tactics is urgently needed for several reasons. First, voice tactics are important decisions to be made once employees are determined to voice. Given that messages can be conveyed in different ways, employees must decide how to frame the messages, when to speak, whether to involve others, whether to speak forthrightly or politely, and so on (Dutton, Ashford, O’Neill, & Lawrence, 2001; Lam, 2013; Piderit & Ashford, 2003). These decisions are subject to various individual and situational factors, but thus far, knowledge is limited on which factors and how these factors might affect the choice of voice tactics (Morrison, 2011). This lack of knowledge of voice tactics may oversimplify the initial voice process.

Second, knowledge on voice tactics can allow researchers to further understand voice consequences. Voice can result in both positive and

negative effects (e.g., Detert, Burris, Harrison & Martin, 2013; Milliken, Morrison, & Hewlin, 2003; Van Dyne, Cummings, & Parks, 1995), and studies that clarify voice consequences are needed (e.g., Burris, 2012; Grant, 2013; MacKenzie, Podsakoff, & Podsakoff, 2011; Maynes & Podsakoff, 2014). Given that the manner by which employees conduct voice could also significantly shape voice consequences (Lam, 2013; Whiting et al., 2011), we must differentiate the effects of specific voice tactics to precisely articulate voice consequences. Finally, knowledge on voice tactics is particularly useful for practitioners. By knowing the effects of voice tactics, employees can become skilled in increasing voice efficacy and decreasing risks. Thus, they should be more willing to voice and are able to voice efficiently, thereby ultimately benefiting the collective (e.g., Dutton & Ashford, 1993; LePine & Van Dyne, 1998).

Recognizing these research gaps, this thesis aims to expand the literature on voice tactics. We propose a new voice tactic, *transit voice*, which is defined as a voice tactic by which employees speak out to their peers, and ask them to transfer their messages to leaders. For example, a junior employee, Tom, has a suggestion to improve the team project, but he is reluctant to directly speak up to the leader. Instead, he would tell his ideas to a senior coworker, Jane, and ask her to raise the issues to their leader.

Transit voice can be observed in reality, and its existence has been implicitly suggested in the literature. Previous studies on voice have suggested that the immediate voice recipients may not have sufficient resources or authority to address voice, and they often need to transfer it to another target. For example, McClean, Burris, and Detert (2013) showed that voice outcomes depended on whether voice recipients could obtain supports and resources from elsewhere in an organization. Burris (2012) stated that one way to endorse voice is to advocate it further to those with the necessary resources. Meanwhile, research on skip-level voice (Detert & Treviño, 2010; Liu, Tangirala, & Ramanujam, 2013) suggests that employees can realize that their immediate leaders sometimes lack resources to address the voiced issues. Thus, they might deliberate on whether they should speak to their immediate leaders, who are more approachable, or

directly speak to higher -level leaders, who have more power/resources. More importantly, a recent qualitative study (Detert et al., 2013) suggested that employees frequently cooperated with each other during the voice process. In particular, 41% of speakers had discussed their voiced issues with their peers before speaking up to their leaders. Thus, they incorporated input from peers and modified their voice contents. This phenomenon implies that employees have many opportunities to make leaders hear their ideas indirectly; employees could provide input to those who speak to leaders later. Therefore, extant voice research has implied that transit voice is a common voice tactic. However, it has not been explicitly explored in studies.

Transit voice merits research attention because it challenges the implicit assumption in most extant voice research that the one who generates ideas would also be the one who speaks up to leaders (e.g., Detert & Edmondson, 2011; Morrison, 2014; Pinder & Harlos, 2001). However, in transit voice, one member generates ideas and another member speaks up to leaders. That is, transit voice involves role differentiation and cooperation between team members. To understand transit voice, it is important to know how member differentiate their role with each other, i.e., which employees will take what roles. Furthermore, because transit voice is complex, whether it can have positive effects or merely wastes time or resources is a valid question.

Drawing on research on social status (e.g., Bales, 1950; Halevy et al., 2011; Keltner et al., 2003; Ridgeway & Berger, 1986), we contend that because status tends to differentiate psychological states and expected behaviors in members, status should also guide role differentiation and cooperation process in transit voice. More specifically, we propose that low status members often have stronger needs to share ideas, but that only high status members are more willing and more capable to speak up. When low- and high -status members take different roles and cooperate by transit voice, voice can be better used and can better benefit team performance.

This thesis presents a multi-level theoretical model to elaborate on the process of transit voice. First, at the individual level, we articulate why

and when low status members are likely to initiate transit voice. Drawing on the inhibition-approach model in the power literature (e.g., Keltner et al., 2003) and the functional perspective of status hierarchies (e.g., Bales, 1950; Halevy et al., 2011; Ridgeway & Berger, 1986; Ridgeway & Diekema, 1989), we propose that low status members pay more attention to details and are sensitive to threats and dangers, so they are more capable to discover new information and problems than high status peers. However, these states that are imposed by low status can also direct them to perceive the high costs of speaking up to leaders. Therefore, those low status members tend to adopt transit voice, by which they only take the role of generating ideas and ask others to assume the role of speaking up to leaders. In addition, we identify participative leadership and team competitive goals as two boundary conditions for the effect of status on transit voice. The adoption of transit voice should depend on the evaluation of the utility of directly speaking up to leaders, and the difficulty of cooperating with another peer in transit voice. We propose that participative leadership and team competitive goals should weaken the negative relationship between status and transit voice, because participative leadership tends to motivate low status employees to engage in upward voice, and because high team competitive goals can dampen the effect of status on guiding team coordination.

Second, at the dyadic level, we investigate the cooperative process of transit voice between team members. First, we investigate within teams who would ask whom to transfer the voice to leaders. Transit voice requires that one member depend on another to raise the voice to leaders. The function perspective of social hierarchy (e.g., Bales, 1950; Halevy et al., 2011) suggests that, to facilitate coordination and achieve collective success, low status members are expected to take the depending roles, whereas high status members are expected to take the contributing roles and be more capable to lead the teams. Accordingly, we propose that guided by those social expectations, low status members should ask high status peers to transfer the voice. Furthermore, because the persuasion literature suggests that messages that are transferred by third parties tend to be more persuasive

(e.g., Pfeffer, Fong, Cialdini & Portnoy, 2006; Inman, McDonald, & Ruch, 2004), we propose that transit voice can promote leaders to endorse voiced issues.

Finally, we explore the team-level consequences of transit voice. Given that transit voice could promote members to share ideas and promote leaders to endorse voice, we could expect in future that its benefits can transfer to team effectiveness. Therefore, we propose that transit voice can promote members to share unique ideas and increase the voice utility, and thereby improve team performance. Moreover, based on extant research (e.g., Deutsch, 1949, 1990; Ford & Seers, 2006; Li & Liao, 2014), We propose that 1) LMX differentiation can increase the information uniquely held only by a few members, and intensify the urgency for transit voice, and 2) low competitive goals in teams facilitate member's coordination in transit voice. Thus, the benefits of transit voice on team performance would be strengthened when teams have high LMX differentiation and low team competitive goals.

In conclusion, this thesis aims to contribute to voice literature in three major aspects. First, it responds to the call for more research on voice tactics (e.g., Lam, 2013; Morrison, 2011, 2014; Whiting et al., 2012). It introduces a new voice tactic, transit voice, and explores its antecedents and consequences, and then identifies the boundary conditions for its necessity and collective effectiveness. Second, this thesis enriches our understanding on voice consequences. Thus far, knowledge is limited on whether and when voice could be used to stimulate team improvement (e.g., Detert et al., 2013; McClean et al., 2013; Morrison, 2011). This thesis adds to this research vacancy by demonstrating the positive effects of transit voice on leader's endorsement and articulating when it might benefit team performance. Third, it contributes to the voice literature in general. By extending the present literature that implicitly assumes that voice is conducted by one single employee, this thesis argues that voice could also be a cooperative action, and that such cooperation between members might be needed for both employees and teams.

The remainder of this thesis is organized as follows. In Chapter 2,

we briefly review extant voice literature. In Chapter 3, we introduce transit voice as a new voice tactic, and investigate when and which employees have the need for transit voice. In Chapter 4, we investigate the dyadic-level process and consequences of transit voice. In Chapter 5, we present methodology and study results. In Chapter 6, discussion and implications are given. Figure 1 provides an overview of theoretical framework in this thesis.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Definition of voice

##### Histories of voice research

Voice has received intensive scholarly attention in the last decade. However, research on voice behavior can be traced back to the 1980s when scholars examined employees' responses to job dissatisfaction (Farrell & Rusbult, 1992; Rusbult, Farrell, Rogers, & Mainous, 1988; Withey & Cooper, 1989). Voice is first defined as “actively and constructively trying to improve conditions through discussing problems with a supervisor or co-worker, taking action to solve problems, suggesting solutions, seeking help from an outside agency like a union, or whistle-blowing” (Rusbult et al. 1988, p. 601). Followed by Hirschman’s (1970) exit–voice–loyalty model, these studies suggested that voice results from prior job satisfaction, job investment, and high-quality job alternatives (Rusbult et al., 1988, Withey & Cooper, 1989). Compared with current conceptualizations of voice, this early definition is broader in that it includes all efforts to address the issue of concern, but narrower in that it merely focuses on “dissatisfying conditions,” and in that motive for voice is only pro-self (Morrison, 2011). Notably, the definition has introduced the notion of voice as voluntary improvement-oriented communication (Morrison, 2014).

Voice is later discussed in the justice literature. Voice is considered an essential component of procedural justice, such that procedural justice exists if employees are given opportunities to “voice” their opinions or concerns in the decision -making process (Bies & Shapiro, 1988; Tyler, Rasinski, & Spodick, 1985). The research generally suggests that voice, as a manifestation of procedural justice, can increase employees’ working satisfaction and trust in leaders (e.g., Bies & Shapiro, 1988; Tyler et al., 1985). Although the justice literature has emphasized that voice opportunities exist, the literature does not consider the situation in which employees who are given the chance to voice may not use it. This is a much

more central situation in the contemporary voice literature (Avery & Quinones, 2002; Morrison, 2011).

In the late 1990s, voice was included in the extra-role behaviors literature (Van Dyne et al. 1995; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998; MacKenzie et al., 2011). Van Dyne and LePine (1998) labeled voice as a challenging extra-role behavior. They emphasized its conceptual and empirical distinctiveness both from in-role behavior and from affiliative extra-role behavior such as helping. This conceptualization of voice has driven much recent empirical research on voice, which views voice as discretionary behavior that is more concerned about the collective interests rather than only their own dissatisfaction (Morrison, 2014).

### **Definition of voice**

Morrison (2011) defines voice as “discretionary communication of ideas, suggestions, concerns, or opinions about work-related issues with the intent to improve organizational or unit functioning” (p375). This definition is consistent with conceptualizations of voice in most recent voice studies (e.g., Detert & Burris, 2007, Morrison 2011, Tangirala & Ramanujam 2008a,2008b, Van Dyne & LePine 1998), which have emphasized three most fundamental constituents of voice. First, voice is one type of communication, by which one individual verbally delivers his/her thoughts to another individual. Second, voice is discretionary. It is voluntarily initiated by employees, rather than required by job descriptions or managers. Third, voice is changing and improvement oriented. Voice emphasizes the constructive challenging of the status quo rather than mere criticism (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). Given that Morrison’s (2011) definition encompasses commonalities across recent voice definitions, this definition is adopted in the present study.

In addition, we narrow our discussion of voice in two major aspects. First, certain scholars have recently further broadened the concept of voice. One such extension is that voice can also be supportive, defending the status quo (Burris, 2012; Maynes & Podsakoff, 2014). This conceptualization of voice removes the “changing orientation” as one essential component of



voice, and the antecedents and consequences of the supportive/defensive voice differ significantly from the conventional challenging type (Burris, 2012). Given that the majority of literature continues to view “changing oriented” as the essence of voice, we concentrated on the challenging type of voice in this thesis, unless otherwise specified.

Second, the term voice is also used frequently in the human resource management (HRM) and industrial labor relations (ILR). The research addresses the formal mechanisms or practices for individual and collective employee inputs, including grievance procedures, suggestion systems, ombudsman services, employee-management meetings, non-management task forces, quality circles, work councils, and participative management (Boroff & Lewin, 1997; Dundon, Wilkinson, Marchington, & Ackers, 2004; Gordon, 1988; Hammer, Landau, & Stern, 1981; Spencer, 1986; Wood & Wall, 2007). Although some scholars adopt a broader conceptualization of workplace voice that integrates voice through formal channel (e.g., Klaas, Olson-Buchanan & Ward, 2012), we follow Morrison’s approach to exclude this formal voice in this thesis, because the central focus of these studies is not employees’ discretionary behavior but rather those formal mechanisms (Morrison, 2011).

### **Recent development**

In order to advance voice research, scholars have felt obliged to further classify voice and to distinguish unique features among different types of voice (see Table 1). Initial evidence has suggested that different types of voice tend to be predicted by different antecedents (e.g., Liang, Farh & Farh, 2012; Liu, Zhu & Yang, 2010), thereby resulting in different or even opposite outcomes (Burris, 2012; Detert et al., 2013). Therefore, to lump them together is problematic. Moreover, the classification of voice has also explicitly broadened the conventional research focus of voice, and emphasized that some types of voice have received intensive scholarly attention despite their counterparts having been overlooked. For example, we have intensively studied voice to direct leaders, but have accumulated

extremely limited knowledge on voice to skip-level leaders or to peers. Thus, future research on those unexplored yet vital voice types is needed.

### **Core Premises in Voice Literature**

#### **Voice is beneficial for organizations and should be encouraged**

The collective benefits of voice primarily drive scholars' research interests. The rich literature in group decision making (Shaw, 1981), strategy formulation (Bourgeois, 1985; Enz & Schwenk, 1991), innovation (Nemeth, 1997), and minority dissent (Nemeth, 1985; Nemeth & Wachter, 1983; Shaw, 1981) has indicated that the information from multiple perspectives or conflicting opinions can result in better decision quality and more innovations, thereby benefiting the unit performance. In addition, research on organization learning suggests that negative feedback is required for organizations to modify and correct the working procedures (Argyris, 1977; Argyris & Schon, 1978; Deming, 1986; March, 1991). Therefore, voice, which reveals novel information and negative feedback, is argued to be associated with a variety of positive consequences, which include team learning, improved work processes, error correction, innovation, the curtailment of illegal or immoral behavior, and crisis prevention (Detert & Edmondson 2011; Detert & Trevino, 2010; Edmondson, 2003; Grant 2013; LePine & Van Dyne 2001; Liang et al. 2012; Morrison & Milliken 2000; Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2012). By contrast, organization silence, or inadequacy of voice, may lead to detrimental effects, such as heavy accidents and organizational failures. Typical events include the implosion of Enron in 2001 (Milliken et al. 2003) and the space shuttle Columbia crash in 2003 (Greenberg & Edwards 2009).

Even though the majority of research assumes that voice is beneficial, the extant literature has not provided adequate evidence for the beneficial consequences of voice (as discussed in the "voice consequences" section).

#### **Voice is risky/ threatening, and employees often withhold their voice**

As a specific type of OCB, voice behaviors may result in increased visibility (Stamper & Van Dyne, 2001), promotion opportunities (Dutton &

Ashford, 1993), and favorable performance evaluations (Thompson, 2005). However, voice is inherently challenging (Van Dyne et al., 1995), and has a distinctly high possibility to result in undesirable social consequences (Kish-Gephart, Detert, Trevino & Edmondson, 2009; Morrison & Milliken, 2000; Van Dyne, Ang & Botero, 2003), for two major reasons. First, voice can be offensive and threatening to targets. Early studies have documented that individuals in general feel reluctant to communicate negative information, in a phenomenon known as the MUM effect (Rosen & Tesser, 1970). Voice aims to change the status quo, and the responsibility for the unsatisfactory situation can often be attributed to others in the team. Thus, speakers' voice can indicate others' incompetence or malpractice. Generally, given that leaders are in charge of the team, their legitimate power tends to heighten their dominance tendency and make them disdain opinions from subordinates; they may even punish behaviors that challenge their competency (Burriss, 2012; Morrison & Milliken, 2000). Research has proven that voice can sometimes lead to unfavorable performance appraisal (e.g., Burriss, 2012; Grant, 2013; Whiting et al., 2012). Therefore, the risks of offending others (especially leaders) and consequent personal harm often suppress voice behavior. Second, groups tend to prefer unity and harmony to dissent (Morrison & Milliken, 2000). The speakers' intention to benefit the organization often fails to be recognized, and leaders and peers may misinterpret voice as "bossiness, unsolicited interference, and an effort to undermine the credibility" of the organization (Tepper, Duffy, Hoobler, & Ensley, 2004: 457). Therefore, voice may damage speakers' social image and social capital, thereby causing them to be disliked or even isolated from social groups (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995).

Therefore, scholars have argued that for employees to remain silent is easier than to speak up. This premise has been well supported. Qualitative studies have found that a rather high portion (from 49% to 85%) of the interviewees reported that they had intentionally withheld information, suggestions, or opinions, instead of openly discussing or sharing them (e.g., Detert, Burriss & Harrison, 2010; Miceli, Near, & Dworkin, 2008; Milliken et al., 2003; Souba, Way, Lucey, Sedmak, & Notestine, 2011).

## **Antecedents of Voice**

Voice is a desired behavior because of its critical value for collective effectiveness and organization success. By contrast, its threatening and risky nature prevents employees from engaging in such behavior. Given this paradox, a majority of voice research in the past decade has focused on identifying its antecedents.

Scholars follow two major paradigms to identify voice antecedents. First, scholars are concerned with the motivation of voice behavior. Following the conceptualization of voice as an extra-role behavior, it should be driven by the employee's desire to help the work unit to perform more effectively (e.g., Ashford, Sutcliffe, & Chrisianson, 2009; Grant & Ashford, 2008). In support of this idea, empirical research has shown that voice is more likely to occur when employees have high level pro-social motives, when employees believe that they are responsible for constructive improvement in their organizations (Fuller, Marler, & Hester, 2006; Liang et al., 2012), when they are identified with the leader or working group (Liu et al., 2010; Tangirala & Ramanujam 2008a,b), and when they are customer orientated (Lam & Mayer, 2013). Although voice is extra-role behavior by definition, when employees are strongly devoted to their work, they are likely to perceive voice as in-role behavior (Van Dyne, Kamdar, & Joireman, 2008), or feel required and obliged to do so by moral norms (Liang et al., 2012).

Based on this logic, scholars identified certain voice antecedents by investigating factors that can trigger or strengthen prosocial motives. Individual trait-like factors are associated with such motives. Research shows that voice is predicted by conscientiousness (Nikolaou, Vakola, & Bourantas, 2008; Thomas, Whitman, & Viswesvaran, 2010) and empathy (Joireman, Kamdar, Daniels, & Duell, 2006). Moreover, based on the social exchange perspective, employees often offer their opinions regardless of personal risks to reciprocate the positive treatment from organizations or their leaders. Early research has shown that perceived organization support is positively related to voice (Ashford, Rothbard, Piderit, & Dutton, 1998).

Other recent examples indicate that voice is more likely to occur when the organizations show consideration toward employees by allowing flexible time arrangements (Ng & Feldman, 2012), and reduce employees' workloads with formal structure support (Parker, Johnso, Collins, & Hong, 2012). Similarly, a high level of leader–member exchange (LMX), which indicates a satisfying relationship with the leader, is also shown to predict voice (Burris, Detert, & Chiaburu, 2008; Hofmann, Morgeson, & Gerras, 2003). Furthermore, scholars have also investigated how specific leaders' behaviors affect employees' voice motivation. For example, transformational leadership can promote employees' identification with the leader and team, thereby encouraging more voice from employees (Liu et al., 2010). By contrast, abusive supervision can cause employees to decrease their psychological attachment to their work and thus inhibit voice (Burris et al., 2008). Finally, employees' within-team status also influences their felt obligation. For instance, the social network study by Venkataramani and Tangirala (2010) suggested that when employees are more socially influential, they may feel greater duties for the group and are more likely to engage in voice.

Second, certain studies have followed the “efficacy-safety analysis” framework to identify voice antecedents. As discussed above, one key assumption in voice literature is that voice is risky. Thus, employees usually carefully evaluate its potential consequences before they decide to voice or not (Dutton, Ashford, O'Neill, Hayes, & Wierba, 1997; Kish-Gephart et al., 2009; Milliken et al., 2003). Thus, scholars consider voice “an intentional, ‘planned behavior’ occurring in an interpersonal context” (Liang et al., 2012, p73). In the “planning” stage, employees make two judgments: 1) voice efficacy/futility, which refers to employee's perception about whether engaging in voice will indeed bring desired outcomes, and (2) voice safety/risk, which refers to employee's perception of whether engaging in voice will result in personal consequences. Generally, employees are more likely to engage in voice when they perceive high efficacy and high safety, and are more likely to remain silent when they perceive high futility and high risk (Morrison, 2014).

The efficacy-safety calculation can be influenced by certain factors. Individual factors that indicate the belief of personal control over the voice process can increase voice efficacy and hence promote voice behavior. Such factors include emotion regulation knowledge (Grant, 2013), self-monitoring (Fuller, Barnett, Hester, Relyea, & Frey, 2007; Premeaux & Bedeian, 2003), organizational-based self-esteem (Liang et al., 2012), and workflow centrality (Venkataramani & Tangirala, 2010). By contrast, other individual factors that heighten voice risks could suppress voice. For instance, employees tend to withhold voice when they strongly hold the implicit theory of voice, which is the taken-for-granted belief that voice will result in negative consequences to self (Detert & Edmondson, 2011). Except for those employees' own attributes, leaders can considerably affect employees' calculation. Their behaviors and attitudes often serve as cues on which employees rely to evaluate voice efficacy and risks. For example, when leaders proactively seek suggestions and feedback from employees (Janssen & Gao, 2015; Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2012), when leaders demonstrates high emotional intelligence (Rego, Sousa, Pina e Cunha, Correia, & Saur-Amaral, 2007), and when leaders are change-oriented (Detert & Burris, 2007), employees tend to believe that their voice behavior is of high efficacy and safety. Finally, Morrison, Wheeler-Smith and Kamdar (2011) introduced the concept "voice climate" and emphasized that the beliefs on voice efficacy and risks can be shared among team members. The present study shows that voice climate was highly predictive of voice behaviors, after controlling for individual-level identification and satisfaction. Furthermore, the shared belief on high efficacy and safety of voice can also strengthen the relationship between individual-level factor (such as identification) and voice behavior. Few empirical studies have revealed how such a voice climate is formed. Theoretical discussion suggests that, as a collective-level cognition, voice climate may be shaped from the vicarious learning and salient events in the history of the group (Milliken et al., 2003). Some organization practices may also shape the voice climate. Research suggests that an effective whistle-blowing system can motivate individuals to whistle-blow by inflating its perceived efficacy

(Casal & Bogui, 2008; Trevino & Victor, 1992). Furthermore, whistle-blowing is more likely to occur when laws, regulations, or organizational policies can protect actors from retaliation (Miceli & Near, 1989; Miceli, Rehg, Near, & Ryan, 1999; Near & Dworkin, & Miceli, 1993). These studies can shed light on how team/organization level factors predict voice; however, in general, cross-level studies on voice continue to await further scholarly attention (Morrison et al., 2011).

### **Consequences of Voice**

Compared with significant progress on identifying voice antecedents, scholarly attention on voice consequences has been inadequate. The very limited research on voice consequences can be divided into two sub-questions: when voice can bring favorable or unfavorable personal consequences, and when it can benefit or harm the collective interests.

Given that voice is associated with both personal gains and losses, knowing the consequences that voice brings to speakers is important. Siebert, Kraimer and Crant (2001) first reported that voice was negatively related to two-year lagged promotions and salary increases. Later, however, Whiting et al. (2008) reported the opposite finding that voice was positively related to performance appraisal, unless the speakers had both poor past performance and low level of helping behavior. The mixed findings have stimulated more studies to identify the boundary conditions. Based on attribution theory, Grant, Parker, and Collins (2009) argued that proactive behaviors such as voice exceed the minimum requirements of the job, so leaders tend to make attributions to explain these behaviors by seeking out information about the intentions and motives that guided this behavior (Allen & Rush, 1998; Eastman, 1994; Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995). Grant and colleagues (2009) found that proactive behavior (the latent higher order construct that is aggregated by voice, issue-selling, and taking charge) positively predicted performance, especially when employees had high prosocial values and low negative affects. To further explore contingent factors on voice consequences, Whiting et al. (2012) conducted experiments

and found that when the speaker was trustworthy, when the suggestion included a solution, and when the speaker spoke up early rather than late in a process, voice could increase performance evaluation; the evaluation is mediated by voice recipients' perception of speaker's likableness, speaker's prosocial motivation, and voice constructiveness. Next, Burris (2012) examined how the contents of voice influence consequences by comparing the contents that support and challenge the status quo. The survey study showed that challenging voice was negatively related but that supportive voice was positively related to performance appraisal. Burris also conducted a scenario experiment and found that when challenging the status quo, voice could trigger the threatening feelings of recipients, and was not easy to be endorsed, thereby supporting the norm widely shared in previous literature. By contrast, supportive voice emphasized speaker's loyalty and was more likely to be endorsed. In addition, Grant (2013) found that when the speakers had sufficient knowledge on emotion regulation, voice was more likely to inflate performance evaluation. In addition, Burris et al. (2013) pointed out that managers and employees might form different perceptions regarding how often the focal employee engaged in prosocial voice, i.e., "speaking out" might not necessarily mean "being heard." They found that if employees overestimated their voice level, compared with the perception of managers, the employee was rated as a worse performer and was positively related to involuntarily turnover three months after the survey. The authors argued that negative outcomes of overestimation of one's prosocial behaviors is because overestimators are often perceived with low self awareness (e.g., Atwater & Yammarino 1992) and are labeled deceitful and hostile (e.g., Colvin, Block & Funder, 1995). Lam (2013) investigated voice tactics. Drawing on the politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987), Lam conceptualized direct vs. indirect voice tactics and found that direct voice increased voice endorsement but indirect voice increased speaker's likableness. Finally, recent studies suggest that voice consequences may depend on speaker's status (Howell, Harrison, Burris & Detert, 2015) and whether voice is promotive or prohibitive (Lin & Johnson, 2015).



The other important research question is when voice can benefit team effectiveness and when voice can harm it. Although the voice literature is largely built on the assumption that voice is beneficial to organizations, scholars have only recently begun to validate this assumption and explore its boundary conditions. As initial supporting evidence, several empirical studies have demonstrated the positive effects of voice on team performance (Detert et al. 2013; Erez, LePine, & Elms, 2002; MacKenzie et al. 2011, Nemeth, Connell, Rogers, & Brown, 2001; Perlow & Williams 2003; Walumbwa, Morrison & Christensen, 2012). However, scholars have realized that in addition to its well-recognized benefits, voice may also have detrimental effects on team effectiveness. From the resources-based view (e.g., Bergeron, 2007), voice may consume time, energy and other resources, because speakers usually need careful preparation before engaging in such risk behavior (e.g., Liang et al., 2012). However, their ideas may not be valued in the end (e.g., Burriss, 2012), thereby invalidating the invested resources. Furthermore, voice sometimes represents dissent and may lead to team conflicts (e.g., Tangirala et al. 2013). Then, even more resources are required to resolve conflicts and achieve consensus. Given that voice can occupy resources that can be otherwise allocated to in-role tasks, it may not always be preferable. Therefore, a certain level for voice behaviors may be optimal: voice can contribute to team effectiveness only before a certain point and afterwards, the detrimental effects of voice would exceed its beneficial effects, thereby dragging down team effectiveness (Ashford et al., 2009; MacKenzie et al., 2011; Morrison & Milliken, 2000). The study by MacKenzie et al. (2011) supported this hypothesis. They found an inverted-U shape relationship between lateral voice and team performance. This research also showed that the negative effects of lateral voice could be mitigated by high levels of helping and be magnified by low levels of helping. Moreover, McClean et al. (2013) found that voice decreased unit level turnover only when the leaders were both *willing* (operationalized as changing orientation of-the leader) and able (operationalized as leader's access to resources and participation in higher level decision making) to endorse the voiced issue.

Deter et al. (2013) investigated how different voice flow influenced team performance. Given that voice is directed from one to another, they studied four types of voice flow, namely, *upward voice*, from team members to the leader, *lateral voice* — from one member to another member within the team, *outbound voice* — from members in the focal team to leaders in other team, and *inbound voice* — from members in other teams to the leader in the focal team. They showed that upward voice and inbound voice increased team performance, whereas lateral and outbound voice actually decreased the team performance. They argued that upward and inbound voice are more likely to provide valuable and non-redundant information that benefits team performance; by contrast, lateral and outbound voice consumes resources but is less likely to bring improvements, at least not to speakers' own teams.

In short, the arguments on “resources” appear salient across studies on team-level consequences of voice. To enlarge the bright sides of voice, at least two conditions should be met: 1) the resources consumed in voice behaviors should be at a reasonable level; and 2) voice should be targeted to and be endorsed by those who have the resources needed to implement voiced issues.

A consolidation of all studies on voice consequences reveals that this line of research remains in the initial stage and should be pursued. In particular, further exploring unit-level outcomes of voice is urgent (Detert et al., 2013; Morrison, 2014). Extant studies have investigated the main effect of voice on unit-level effectiveness and shown mixed findings. Voice has both merits and drawbacks on team performance, but we know little about how to magnify its merits and remove its drawbacks. Therefore, future studies may continue this line by identifying boundary conditions for voice effectiveness. Moreover, given that voice can be classified into different types (e.g., Burris, 2012; Liang et al., 2012; Detert et al., 2013), the question arises of whether different voice types affect teams in different ways. However, only one study intentionally compared different voice flows, and showed that the voice flows have distinguished effects on team performance (Detert et al., 2013).

In general, more research attention has recently been directed on consequences of voice, but these sparse studies have not been adequate for us to build up systematic and comprehensive knowledge. Furthermore, to clarify voice consequences, another essential direction is to explore voice tactics, which is discussed separately in the next section.

### **Voice Tactics**

Although a few studies on voice consequences have identified several boundary conditions on voice effectiveness, most of the conditions cannot easily be manipulated at the time of voice. For example, the speaker cannot quickly modify his/her trustworthiness, past performance (Whiting et al., 2012), or emotion regulation ability (Grant, 2013). Therefore, ad hoc tactics should deserve more attention given their high practical values.

Research on issue selling may provide certain insights. Dutton and Ashford (1993) have identified several tactics that can help to successfully sell the issues. First, issue sellers should carefully package their issues. For example, one should carefully frame the content (e.g., more succinct), present the issue in emotional and novel manners, make two-sided rather than one-sided appeals, and bundle the issue with other important topics such as company profitability. Second, as regards the selling process, issue sellers should involve others (if so, who should be involved), wisely choose the channels, and adjust tactics formality to organization norms. The qualitative study (Dutton et al., 2001) re-classified important moves in issue selling into three sets: *packaging move*, *involvement move*, and *process move*. Moreover, this study found additional tactics as follows: emphasizing the logic, making continuous proposal, proposing incremental (not radical) changes, and choosing the right time to persistent, among others.

Theories of issue selling have been mostly developed in qualitative studies. By applying those theories in voice contexts, we can verify and extend these theories with quantitative studies, especially field-survey studies. Whiting et al. (2012) has addressed some of these tactics in their experimental studies. The results suggest that when messages provide a solution (*packaging*), and are delivered earlier at the project time (*timing*),

voice is viewed more positively and speakers receive higher performance evaluations.

This line of research can be extended in three basic directions. First, only two studies have directly examined voice tactics; furthermore, they only examined a limited number of voice tactics. However, many others merit exploration. One particular overlooked tactic is involving others, which has been continuously emphasized in the issue selling (e.g., Dutton & Ashford, 1993; Dutton et al., 2001) and social influence research (e.g., Kipnis, Schmidt, Wilkinson, 1980). Given that voice should promote collective benefits (Van Dyne et al., 1995), mutual benefits may lead employees to act cooperatively (e.g., Deutsch, 1949; Tjosvold, 1984). Moreover, contemporary literature has focused on tactics conducted by individuals, and on their consequences on individual levels. Examining involving others as a voice tactic can allow us to extend this line of research into the group level, and address the important research question of how employees can collectively engage in voice and promote collective benefits.

Second, in addition to investigating the effectiveness of specific voice tactics, scholars should also focus on to the underlying reasons why employees want to adopt certain tactics (Lam, 2013). Lam's study (2013) has demonstrated that if speakers perceived that leaders would be threatened, they would be more likely to soft their tone and express ideas in indirect ways. Similarly, the study has suggested that promoting manager's attention and enhancing one's credibility are the criteria for choosing issue selling tactics (Dutton & Ashford, 1993). Moreover, because individuals commonly conduct the efficacy-risks calculation before speaking up (cf. Morrison 2011; 2014), to increase efficacy and to decrease risks should be common underlying reasons why employees choose certain voice tactics. In short, antecedents of voice tactics are worthy of research attention.

Third, we should explore boundary conditions of the effectiveness of tactics. Given that individuals usually selectively adopt tactics, we should investigate the tactics that can best fit specific individuals and situations. For example, in Whiting et al.'s (2012) study, certain confounding factors could suppressed the positive effects of message framing. Identifying those

factors can allow speakers to make wise choices among different tactics. Furthermore, employees can intentionally eliminate or avoid factors that are detrimental to effectiveness of voice tactics. Thus, examination on boundary conditions of tactics effectiveness is important to use voice tactics and voice itself.

In conclusion, employees can increase their voice effectiveness by adopting varieties of voice tactics. Given the current limited knowledge on this area, more research is needed to identify voice tactics; such research should include exploration on their antecedents and consequences, as well as boundary conditions for their effectiveness.

### **Third-party Involvement**

A variety of literature has demonstrated the importance of third parties in workplaces. Important research topics include observers' reaction in injustice events (e.g., Blader, Wiesenfeld, Fortin, & Wheeler-Smith, 2013), effects of third-party supports on stress (e.g., Cohen, & Wills, 1985), mediation/arbitration in negotiation/conflicts (e.g., Arnold & O' Connor, 1999), and third-party effects on information processing (e.g., Ho & Levesque, 2005; Lau & Liden, 2008).

Voice often involves more than two parties. However, except for very few recent studies (Detert et al., 2013; Detert & Trevino, 2010; Liu et al., 2010; Liu et al., 2013), the majority of literature has merely considered voice the interaction between one single employee and his/her leader. However, several reasons can explain why the role of third parties deserves more attention.

First, employees may have several potential voice targets simultaneously and often need to consider to whom they should speak. For example, Detert and Trevino (2010) found that employees had many chances to communicate with senior managers, and sometimes they might skip their immediate managers and directly speak to skip-level leaders. One reason for such behavior is that employees can quickly gain access to important resources that are controlled only by those senior managers, but not by their immediate managers. A related study further showed that

employees could decide whether to speak to immediate leaders or skip-level leaders, based on relationship qualities between each two of the three parties (Liu et al., 2013). Similarly, a more recent interview study suggested that employees tended to raise larger scope issues to leaders and raise localized issues to relevant peers (Detert et al., 2013). These studies emphasize that voice efficacy and risks vary across different targets, and that selection of the voice target is a rather critical decision for speakers. In short, at the planning stage, voice behavior can already involve multiple parties.

Second, involving third parties in the voice process should bring beneficial effects. Voice can be viewed as attempts for upward influence. Extant research has identified several influence tactics that involve third parties. For example, Kipnis and coauthors have identified eight influence tactics, two of which involve third parties: upward appeals and coalition (Kipnis et al., 1980). Furthermore, Dutton et al. (2001) also listed involving others as one of three most important moves in issue selling. Involving others should have two salient benefits: 1) it can motivate leaders to invest more attention and 2) it can tap a broader range of resources (e.g., time) that can be used to convince leaders (Dutton & Ashford, 1993). Thus, many studies have suggested that involving others can help to successfully influence the targets (e.g., Burgelman & Sayles, 1986; Dean, 1987; Dutton & Ashford, 1993; Dutton et al., 2001; Lyles & Rheger, 1993). Given that voice behavior also aims to successfully influence others, speakers should also notice the merits of collective influence. Thus, employees may also consider and actually seek support from third parties.

Finally, voice is orientated toward change. By speaking up, employees attempt to obtain their leader's endorsement on those promoted changes. Certain changes may require resources that are only held by higher-level leaders (e.g., Detert & Trevino, 2010; Liu et al., 2013). At the same time, these changes are highly possible to influence and be influenced by coworkers. Even if the speakers believe that voice can benefit the groups, coworkers are not guaranteed to see eye to eye. To illustrate, when studying the effect of voice contents, Burriss (2012) provided a realistic scenario in which the staff of a transportation company discussed a new plan to

reorganize the bus routes during a weekly staff meeting. One employee thought that the planned maintenance time and personnel were insufficient and could cause future problems, whereas the other believed that the plan was practical and that those problems were unlikely to happen, so that changing the plan was unnecessary (Burris, 2012, p860). In this case, the latter seemed to view the former's voice as redundant rather than beneficial, and actually rejected the voice as the coworker. This study also implied that because such a plan (i.e., the status quo) usually represented the standing of leaders, leaders were more likely to endorse the view that was consistent with their self-standing rather than that that challenged it. Thus, voice may be more difficult to be endorsed once any other coworker supports the status quo. Additional, more direct evidence is a recent study that shows that employees often spoke to their coworker first and filtered out ideas that coworkers perceived as inappropriate before speaking up to the leaders (Deter et al., 2013). This indicates that employees may regard coworker endorsement as the prerequisite to further approach the leader. In either case, employee's voice tends to be subject to not only leaders' but also coworkers' evaluations.

This argument can be further supported by the related literature on idiosyncratic deals (*i-deals* for short), which is defined as personalized employment arrangements that are negotiated between individual workers and employers and intended to benefit both (Rousseau, 2001). Initiating *i-deals* is similar to voice because it also aims to bring beneficial changes. However, its contents are narrowed in that such changes are restricted to within one's own working arrangement. Even with such restriction, *i-deals* can still affect third parties. For example, one employee's flexible work hours can burden coworkers, or specific arrangements of one employee may be viewed as privileges and unfair by other coworkers (Lai, Rousseau & Chang, 2009; Rousseau, Ho, & Greenberg, 2006). Therefore, research has showed that if coworkers are unwilling to accept *i-deals*, implementing them successfully is highly difficult (Lai et al., 2009; Rousseau, 2005). Similarly, when the voiced issue involves the larger scope changes that are

highly relevant to coworkers, coworker's rejection could hinder these changes as well.

In summary, speakers can deliberately choose to whom they should speak, they can strategically seek support from third parties, and the implementation of aimed changes can be subject to third parties' endorsement. Given the important roles of third parties, more research is needed in this area.

### **Conclusion**

The intensive efforts in the past decade have resulted in impressive progress in voice research. However, salient research gaps await future exploration. In the following chapters, we continue the important but overlooked line of research on voice tactics. Particularly, we propose a new type of voice tactics: transit voice. By introducing this voice tactic, this thesis aims to explain how involving third parties in voice behaviors can promote leader's endorsement and team performance.



## CHAPTER 3

### TRANSIT VOICE: FOR WHOM AND WHEN

#### Introduction

Voice behavior usually requires effortful preparation and planning (e.g., Detert et al., 2013; Liang et al., 2012; Whiting et al., 2012). During the preparation, employees should make two important decisions: 1) whether they should engage in voice or not, and 2) how to voice if they eventually decide to do so. The first question has received considerable research attention to identify voice antecedents (cf. Morrison, 2014). However, few studies have addressed the second question. To better understand the voice process, we should further explore antecedents and consequences of different voice tactics (Morrison, 2011).

To the best of our knowledge, only two studies have directly investigated voice tactics. Whiting et al. (2012) investigated how message packaging and voice timing can affect the voice consequences. They found that when voice included a solution, when the speaker spoke up early rather than late in the process, voice could increase speaker's performance evaluation. Another study conducted by Lam (2013) showed that when speakers spoke up in a softer tone, more politely and indirectly, leaders would have more positive views on such speakers, but were less likely to endorse the voiced issues.

These tactics, however, presume that an employee would speak to and influence leaders individually, and bear all voice consequences by him/herself. However, social influence literature has emphasized that coalition, or involving others, can play a determinant role on influence attempts, especially upward influence (Kipnis et al., 1980; Dutton & Ashford, 1993; Dutton et al., 2001). Moreover, one recent interview study revealed that in nearly half of cases, employees discussed voiced issues with their peers (Detert et al., 2013). These evidences imply that whether to involve other coworkers could be an important judgment in the voice process; hence, for extant literature to only focus on individual voice tactics

while overlooking tactics that involve other coworkers is an incomplete approach.

This chapter has three objectives. First, we introduce transit voice as a voice tactic, and highlight its potential benefits based on related literature in negotiation (e.g., Wall & Blum, 1991), social influence (e.g., Dutton & Ashford, 1993; Dutton et al., 2001), and persuasion (e.g., DeCarlo, 2005; Pfeffer et al., 2006). Second, we investigate the types of employees that need transit voice. In particular, drawing on the approach-inhibition model (Keltner et al., 2003; Morrison et al., 2015) and the functional perspective of status hierarchies (e.g., Bales, 1950; Ridgeway & Berger, 1986; Ridgeway & Diekema, 1989), we propose that because low status can increase perceived risks, inherent fear of directly speaking up to leaders, as well as the tendency to depend on peers, employees with lower status in a team are more likely to adopt transit voice. Third, we further explore the boundary conditions when the effect of status on transit voice is strengthened or weakened. In transit voice, employees choose to speak firstly to peers instead of leaders. Thus, the adoption of transit voice should be subject to how employees interact with leaders and how they interact with peers. We propose that the negative relationship between status and transit voice is weakened when leaders adopt participative leadership and when teams have competitive goals, because participative leadership can promote low status members to directly speak up to leaders, and competitive goals can disturb the pattern of how low and high status members interact with each other.

### **Transit voice as a voice tactic**

Transit voice is defined as a voice tactic by which employees speak out to their peers; the former ask the latter to transfer their messages to leaders. For clarity, we refer to those who provide the information and initiate the transit voice as “informants” (cf. Burris et al., 2013; Detert et al., 2013), and those who receive the transit voice as “transferors.”

The idea that voice recipients transfer voice to another target is not new. Extant voice literature has implicitly suggested that immediate leaders often act as the transferors between employees and higher-level leaders.

Burris (2012) has suggested that one essential action for leaders to endorse voiced ideas is “advocating them to higher levels of management” (p851). Voice outcomes could depend on whether immediate leaders were willing and able to do such transferring (McClellan et al., 2010). Given that employees can recognize that sometimes only higher-level leaders have the resources to address their issues (e.g., Liu et al., 2013; Detert & Treviño, 2010), employees actually speak up to leaders with the expectation that leaders can act as organizational representatives, and further communicate with the higher level leaders (e.g., Eisenberger et al., 2010; Likert, 1967). Therefore, immediate voice recipients may not be ultimate voice targets, and the voice process often involves such a transferring component.

Moreover, this transferring process should happen within teams as well. One recent qualitative study by Detert et al. (2013) revealed that among all cases in which peers were voice recipients, 48% of issues were concerned with the teams or organizations, and usually required leader’s supports to address them. However, the immediate voice recipient, the peer, was unlikely to address those issues. One reasonable explanation for employees to do so is that they expect their peers to transfer their ideas to leaders eventually. In addition, Detert et al. (2013) also found that in roughly 41% of the cases that concern speaking up to leaders, employees spoke to peers and sought peers’ inputs in advance. Then, they modified voice contents by incorporating peer’s inputs, and spoke to leaders eventually. From another perspective, this phenomenon could be viewed as employees actually transferring inputs from peers to leaders. In short, voice research has implied that transit voice actually happens often in the workplace.

Why do employees conduct transit voice? Various research lines have implied two major reasons for doing so (Andreoli & Worchel, 1978; Dutton & Ashford, 1993; Dutton et al., 2001; Grant & Hofmann, 2011; Kipnis et al., 1980; Pfeffer et al., 2006). First, transit voice might promote leader’s endorsement on voiced issues. Considerable literature has suggested that strategically involving others can increase the success in influencing or convincing an audience. For example, social influence literature suggests

that coalition with others is one predominant influence tactic, especially for upward influence attempts (Kipnis, et al., 1980). Similarly, research emphasizes that involving others is one of the most important steps in the issue selling process (Dutton & Ashford, 1993; Dutton et al., 2001). Furthermore, research in persuasion has provided direct evidence that asking third parties to transfer messages can eliminate audience suspicions on the promoted message and increase its persuasiveness (e.g., Grant & Hofmann, 2011; Inman et al., 2004; Pfeffer et al., 2006). Moreover, benefits of transit voice can be further magnified when informants purposely choose peers with desirable characters as the transferors. For instance, given that source credibility can increase persuasion (e.g., Andreoli & Worchel, 1978; Brock, 1967; Dean et al., 1971; McGinnies, 1973), communication strategists such as lawyers, politicians, and advertisers, often intentionally appoint credible individuals as their spokespersons for their advocacy (Harmon & Coney, 1982).

In short, involving third parties can bring numerous advantages in convincing audiences. Given that transit voice also involves peers as third parties, these advantages can be used to convince leaders to endorse the voiced issue.

Second, transit voice can help informants to avoid face-to-face conversation with leaders, and thus prevent some associated undesirable consequences. This point is particularly well-documented in research on negation and conflicts, which emphasizes that negotiators often appoint intermediaries to help to reach agreements (cf. Wall & Blum, 1991). Intermediaries are beneficial to reserve a harmonious relationship between two parties; hence, in a collective culture in which such relationships are emphasized, people are more likely to seek help from third parties to solve their conflicts than people in individualist cultures (Kozan & Ergin, 1998; Leung, 1987; Ting-Toomey et al., 1991). Furthermore, intermediaries can decrease the negative feelings that are associated with negotiations as well as create a more positive and comfortable atmosphere in the negotiation process (Coser, Kadushin, & Powell, 1982; Kurtzberg & Medvec, 1999; Rubin & Sander 1988).

In the voice context, informants are often afraid of damaging their relationship with leaders, and are worried about many negative personal outcomes (e.g., Liang et al., 2012; Milliken et al., 2003; Morrison & Rothman, 2009). Thus, relational concerns and negative feelings (such as fears and anxiety) are also salient. Therefore, similar to negotiators, informants need to buffer those negative feelings and to avoid relational damages by seeking help from third parties. Therefore, they may adopt transit voice instead of a direct face-to-face conversation with the leaders. To some extent, via transit voice, informants actually can transfer some risks to the transferors.

In conclusion, voice literature has implied the common existence of transit voice, and sizable related literature has suggested the potential benefits of transit voice. Given both common existence and potential benefits, transit voice merits research attention.

However, transit voice is not free of weaknesses. For example, in involving peers, transit voice introduces an additional step. This additional step might be complex and costly because extra time, energy, or other resources might be wasted in the communication and cooperation process. Furthermore, because transit heavily depends on peers to transfer the voice to leaders, it could decrease informants' control over the voice process, thereby resulting in uncertainty on whether messages can be actually and accurately conveyed to leaders. These drawbacks might offset, or even dominate, the abovementioned benefits. Therefore, as a voice tactic, transit voice best serves specific purposes, and should be adopted with justifications. Therefore, in the next section, we explore why such a tactic should be used and determine which informants should use it.

### **Status and transit voice**

In working teams, status is defined as “the prominence, respect, and influence individuals enjoy in the eyes of other group members” (Anderson et al., 2006, p1093). That is, higher status members in the group receive more attention and respect from lower status members; the former also have greater influence on the latter than do the latter on the former. In working

teams, members usually assign higher status to those who make greater contributions to the group success (e.g., Anderson et al., 2006; Blau, 1964; Frank, 1985; Ridgeway & Correll, 2006), or those with greater expertise and competence (Magee & Galinsky, 2008).

In the following section, we contend that low status heightens the internal desire to speak but simultaneously discourages the actual conduction of upward voice (i.e., directly speaking up to leaders). Transit voice can thus provide a middle way to solve this dilemma, and is more attractive for low status informants.

### **Low status as the voice motivator**

An important theoretical work on silence (Morrison & Milliken, 2000) has suggested three reasons why voice is demanded for individual purposes. First, employees could enhance self value if their suggestions are appreciated. Second, they could meet the need for control if they can speak and make a difference. Third, employees avoid cognitive dissonance when they do not have to intentionally suppress their true feelings and expressions. Extending this work, we argue that low status should magnify, rather than dampen, the need to be heard.

First, people generally have the desire to contribute to and be valued by the group (Baumeister & Leary 1995; Fiske, 2004). This fundamental need is deeply rooted and cannot be removed by low status. On the contrary, low status could even result in individual stronger motivation to contribute to the group. Given that low status represents low social attention, and because to be ignored thus is extremely painful (e.g., O'Reilly, Robinson, & Berdahl, 2014), employees with low status may have a stronger desire to increase their social visibility and recognition. One direct approach to gain status is to engage in prosocial behaviors (e.g., Flynn, 2003). Research (Van Kleef et al., 2013) shows that when being asked to represent their own group and to negotiate with the other group, peripheral members (i.e., those with low status) exerted greater effort and actually achieved better outcomes than did other members. Following this logic, given that providing constructive suggestions and valuable information are used to contribute to groups (Grant & Ashford, 2008; Van Dyne et al., 2003), we can expect that

employees with low status have stronger motivation to raise their suggestions or contribute their unique information.

Second, people have a strong and general desire to control their immediate environment, especially as regards decisions that affect them (Greenberger & Strasser, 1986; Parker, 1993; White, 1959; Wicklund, 1974; Wortman & Brehm, 1975). Although low status can reinforce the perception of lack of control, this internal desire cannot be reduced. On the contrary, the effect of psychological reactance predicts that lack of control should trigger an even stronger desire to gain it (Ashforth & Saks, 2000; Brehm, 1966; Wortman, Brehm & Berkowitz, 1975). Lack of control can motivate people to engage in change-oriented behaviors that them to psychologically assert their influence at work and thereby affirm their senses of personal control (Rothbaum, Weisz, & Synder, 1982). Expressing self-opinions is approach way for employees to gain a better sense of control (e.g., Lind & Tyler, 1988). In addition, voice is viewed as a type of response to dissatisfaction in its early conceptualizations (Farrell & Rusbult, 1992; Rusbult et al., 1988; Withey & Cooper, 1989). Although recent research has heavily focused on prosocial type of voice, by improving the overall team effectiveness, one is highly likely to create a better environment that facilities one's own work (Morrison, 2014). Given that people in a low social hierarchy generally experience less control and more dissatisfaction (e.g., Ng & Diener, 2014; Zimmerman & Reyna, 2013), they may have a greater need to improve their situations. Furthermore, because people with low status tend to receive little attention, their dissatisfaction may be hardly noticed and addressed, unless they proactively raise them. Thus, silence might be more costly for people with low status. A similar argument can be found in Tangirala & Ramanujam (2008b), which demonstrated a U-shaped curvilinear relationship between personal control and voice behaviors, because low personal control could also increase voice. Given that status strongly influences personal control (e.g., Keltner et al., 2003) and satisfaction (e.g., Lachman & Weaver, 1988), people with low status should have greater need to engage in voice.

Finally, voice is demanded in the first place because employees have

identified overlooked problems or have generated novel ideas that are worth sharing (Miceli et al., 2008; Morrison, 2014; Pinder & Harlos, 2001). If they have nothing to say, cognitive dissonance is not a concern and employees will comfortably remain silent. Employees with lower status are more likely to “have something to say.” First, low status may result from low LMX (e.g., Sparrowe & Liden, 2005), when relationships between the leader and employees are restricted to the exchange of material necessary for basic completion of work (Blau, 1964; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). However, because of the limited interactions with leaders, employees with low status are more likely to have access to information that is distant from that of leaders, and generate novel ideas. Research in creativity and social ties indicates that weak ties (i.e., acquaintances) but not strong ties (i.e., close friends) can increase one’s creativity (e.g., Granovetter, 1973; Simonton, 1999; Perry-Smith, 2006; Zhou, Shin, Brass, Choi, & Zhang, 2009), because close friends tend to confirm each other’s opinions and provide redundant information, whereas acquaintances are more likely to provide novel and diverse information. Similarly, leaders can receive information that is more novel from employees with whom the leaders have interacted less, i.e., those with low status. Second, low status directs individuals to focus more on details as well as to engage in effortful and deliberate information processing; by contrast, high status directs individuals to process information in a heuristic, abstract, and top-down fashion (e.g., Goodwin, Gubin, Fiske, & Yzerbyt, 2000; Fiske, 1993; Smith & Trope, 2006). Therefore, employees with lower status are more likely to uncover problems or information that has been overlooked by the leader, and view things from different perspectives, and thus have diversified or even conflicting opinions. In short, employees with lower status might have information that is more unique, and to avoid cognitive dissonance, they are motivated to speak up.

In conclusion, from the perspectives of enhancing self-value, restoring personal control, and decreasing cognitive dissonance, low status tends to increase employees’ internal desire to speak up. We are not arguing that high status will decrease the motivation for voice. That is, the relationship between status and the internal desire may not be linear. Instead, the



relationship could be U-shaped curvilinear (similar to the arguments of Tangirala and Ramanujam [2008b]). High status can also increase voice motivation but for other reasons. For example, high status employees may feel more obligations to initiate change (Brass, 1981; Keltner et al., 2008; Parker, Wall, & Jackson, 1997; Venkataramani & Tangirala, 2010).

### **Low status as the upward voice inhibitor**

Although the above discussion argues that low status employees may have a strong need to speak, they may not actually engage in upward voice. In fact, low status employees seldom speak up (cf. Morrison & Rothman, 2009). Research on the approach-inhibition model (Keltner et al., 2003; Morrison et al., 2015; Morrison & Rothman, 2009) may explain why low status inhibits upward voice.

The approach-inhibition model (e.g., Keltner et al., 2003) suggests that given that high status individuals often have advantages to achieve their goals and control their environments, high status tends to activate individual's approach system, thereby directing them to focus on rewards and opportunities, as well as to feel, think and behave in assertive and self-directed ways. By comparison, low status individuals usually have limited control on their environments, and their personal outcomes are easily influenced by others. Thus, low status tends to activate individual's inhibition systems, which direct them to focus on risks and threats, as well as to feel, think and behave in conservative and context-sensitive ways.

This model implies two major reasons for people with low status to avoid using upward voice. First, lower status members perceive higher risks and lower efficacy of upward voice. The approach-inhibition model (e.g., Keltner et al., 2003) suggests that lower status individuals are more sensitive to threats and punishments. For example, research suggests that provided uncertain and ambiguous events/information, individuals with low status individuals perceive higher levels of risks than do those with high status (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006; MacLeod & Mathews, 1988; Schwartz, Dodge, & Coie, 1993). Low status individuals might overestimate threatening emotion in their partners, such as anger, contempt, and disgust

(Anderson & Berdahl, 2002). Moreover, low status individuals tend to have decreased confidence and self-efficacy (e.g., Keltner et al., 2003; Kipnis, 1972)

Therefore, we expect that low status employees tend to overestimate voice risks and underestimate voice efficacy. They focus more on social cues that signal voice risks than to those that signal voice safety and efficacy. When the behaviors or emotions of leaders merely signal trivial voice risks, low status employees may ruminate over these behaviors/emotions and intensify their effects. If leaders' behaviors ambiguously imply their openness to voice, low status employees might easily overlook these cues, or interpret them in less positive ways than they should, and in turn underestimate voice safety and efficacy. Furthermore, their low confidence and low self-efficacy can make them believe that their opinions are not important, or they are not sufficiently capable to promote their opinions, persuade leaders, or make a difference. Given the overestimated voice risks and underestimated efficacy, low status employees are likely to withhold their upward voice.

Second, low status might lead employees to automatically refuse upward voice even without deliberating on its risks/efficacy. In addition to cognitive calculation, two salient emotions, fear and anger, have been identified for their direct but opposite effects on upward voice decision (Morrison, 2011; 2014). People often have the deeply rooted fear of challenging the authorities, so employees may form the habits of silence and automatically withhold upward voice (Detert & Edmondson, 2011; Edwards, Ashkanasy, & Gardner, 2009; Kish-Gephart et al., 2009). By contrast, observing wrongdoing can trigger strong anger, which creates an impulse for employees to report the situations to leaders, regardless of the costs of such actions (Edwards et al., 2009; Harvey, Martinko, & Douglas, 2009).

The approach-inhibition model (Keltner et al., 2003) implies that low status individuals are more likely to experience and express negative emotions such as fear, but are less likely to express aggressive emotions such as anger. More specifically, because status usually stems from expertise and competence in working teams (Magee & Galinsky, 2008),

performance of higher status employees should be more determinant to team effectiveness, and leaders should depend more on them to achieve team goals (e.g., Graen, 1976; Groysberg, Polzer, & Elfenbein, 2011). Leader's dependence should reduce the power disparity between those employees and leaders (Emerson, 1962), and in turn reduces their fear of challenging leaders. By contrast, the power/interdependence disparity between low status members and leaders are highly salient, which may magnify the fear for low status members to criticize leaders. Moreover, although whether low status individuals actually experience more or less anger than do high status ones is a point of debate, studies consistently shows that low status individuals are less likely to express their anger (Keltner et al., 2003). That is, although observing wrongdoing or unethical behaviors might trigger anger in low status employees, they may suppress their anger because they usually cannot ignore the high costs acting upon it (Morrison, 2011). By contrast, high status can lead employees to act at will (Keltner et al., 2003). When high status employees feel anger at wrongdoing, they tend to respond to their internal feelings and speak up to leaders. In short, because low status heightens the fear of speaking up but suppresses the anger that motivates upward voice on impulse, low status employees are more likely to withhold upward voice.

In conclusion, from both the perspective of systematical calculation on risk-efficacy and the perspective of automatic emotion-driving response, low status employees often withhold their voice from leaders, despite their internal desire to do so. Voice research has provided empirical evidence that low status employees have low levels of upward voice (e.g., Morrison et al., 2015; Venkararamani & Tangirala, 2010).

### **Low status as the transit voice promoter**

Low status has seemingly conflicting effects on voice. On the one hand, low status imposes the internal desire to engage in voice. On the other hand, low status inhibits upward voice. This dilemma may motivate low status employees to explore “middle ways” or alternative tactics to upward voice. Transit voice can serve as one such tactic.

In transit voice, low status employees can share ideas without directly challenging leaders. Transit voice allows the separation between the role of generating ideas and the role of speaking up to leaders in the voice process. Thus, low status employees can only take the former role and ask other peers to take the latter role. By doing so, they can both meet their needs to raise opinions, and avoid the risks and unpleasant feelings in upward voice. In transit voice, the immediate voice recipients are peers who do not have formal authority over informants, so speaking to peers is unlikely to result in severe punishment (Deter et al., 2013). Furthermore, leaders, but not peers, are usually primarily responsible for team practices and outcomes; therefore, the critics on teams that threaten leaders (e.g., Burriss, 2012) may not threaten peers. The atmosphere is not excessively unpleasant, and employees should feel that raising negative comments is easy (Coser et al., 1982; Kurtzberg & Medvec, 1999; Rubin & Sander 1988). In short, transit voice can safely allow low status employees to share their ideas.

However, although transit voice can free employees from interacting with leaders, it involves cooperation with peers instead. Difficulties may also arise in asking another peer to transfer ideas. First, to shift the risks of speaking to leaders to another peer may be considered selfish. Second, transit voice will shift the employee's control over the voice process to another peer, and require him/her to depend on the peer. Given these two considerations, even when employees decide not to engage in upward voice, they may not actually ask for help from peers. Drawing on the function perspective of social status (Bales, 1950; Berger, Rosenholtz, & Zelditch, 1980; Goffman, 1967; Halevy et al., 2011), we contend that low status employees are more likely to adopt transit voice because social norms help them to justify this seemingly "selfish" request, and encourage their dependence on others.

The function perspective of social status (e.g., Bales, 1950; Berger et al., 1980; Goffman, 1967; Halevy et al., 2011) suggests that status can facilitate group interaction by prescribing one's expected behaviors. In particular, to avoid group conflicts and chaos, only high status members are

expected to be dominant in groups; by contrast, low status members are expected to obey the decisions and commands made by their high status counterparts. At the same time, in exchange for the deference and submission from low status members, high status members are expected to take more responsibility and contribute more to groups. Individuals usually act upon these expectations, or otherwise they would face negative evaluation and even punishment. For example, if high status members fail to contribute to group, their status will be deprived; if low status members do not act submissively, they will lose critical resources that they cannot obtain by themselves (Anderson et al., 2006; 2008; Bowles, Babcock, & Lai, 2007; Magee & Galinsky, 2008).

On the basis of this perspective, voice to leaders is a behavior that is expected more from high than low status members. First, voice to leaders is an important way to proactively trigger team improvement and contribute to teams, and high status members are assigned with the responsibility to do so. Although speaking up involves risks, high status members usually feel obligated to take the risks for the collective interests (e.g., Venkataramani & Tangirala, 2010). Even if the environment strongly discourages upward voice, they may merely remain silent, but they cannot shift this responsibility to others. Second, employees can influence group decisions with voice to leaders. Voice to leaders shows one's attempt to lead and, to some extent, dominate groups. Given that high status members are expected to be dominant in teams, their voices are consistent with social expectation and tend to receive better outcomes than do those of low status members (Howell et al., 2015; Whiting et al., 2012). Therefore, high status employees should feel encouraged to directly speak up to leaders by themselves.

By contrast, social expectations do not obligate low status members to speak to leaders. Given the low privileges that they normally enjoy in the team, they are not required to contribute the most and take the risks of offending leaders for the collective. Instead, they are even encouraged to seek help and speak to peers first. An employee and his/her peers may not see eye-to-eye. When his/her voiced ideas are in conflict with his/her peers' viewpoints, directly speaking up to leaders also incurs the risks of offending

peers and hindering group harmony. Therefore, because low status members are expected to act submissively, for them to skip their peers and directly raise their opinions to leaders might be considered inappropriate. Detert et al. (2013) found that many employees discussed their situation with peers before speaking to leaders. We can further expect that lower status members are more likely to do so. During the discussion process, one possible approach to further show deference might be to depend on the peer and let the latter to take the leading role in the subsequent voice process. In short, the social expectations allow and even encourage low status members to shift the risky but dominating role of speaking to leaders to others; thus, low status members are more likely to adopt transit voice.

Overall, low status can lead to three consequences. First, it can trigger employees' internal desire to share ideas and raise opinions. Second, from the perspective of employee-leader interaction, lower status employees are less likely to engage in upward voice. Third, from the perspective of employee-peer interaction, lower status employees are more willing to depend on peers; lower status employees feel that such dependence is more justifiable. Thus, we can expect that they are more likely to adopt transit voice. Related evidence that supports this argument can be found in conflict and negotiation literature; the literature shows that individuals with low self-efficacy were more likely to seek mediation after an impasse in negotiation (Arnold & O' Connor, 2006). Given that low self-efficacy is often associated with low status (e.g., Keltner et al., 2003), we can expect low status to direct employees to seek help from peers when they must deliver challenging messages to the leaders.

*H1: Employee's status is negatively related to transit voice.*

### **Moderating effects of participative leadership and cooperative goals**

Lower status employees are more likely to adopt transit voice. In this section, we further explore how situational factors, namely, participative leadership and competitive goals in team, shape the negative relationship between employee's status and transit voice.

These two factors are the focus for two reasons. First, the adoption of

transit voice should not only depend on informant's individual factors, but also depend on the team factors. Leadership and team goal structures are two vital team-level factors that influence the team process. Examining them can allow us to understand who adopt a certain voice tactic and when it is adopted; these two considerations have not received significant research attention.

More importantly, these two factors are chosen from theoretical perspectives. The inhibition-approach model (Keltner et al., 2003; Morrison et al., 2015) and the function perspective of status (e.g., Halevy et al., 2011) indicate that the effects of status on one's behaviors should be contingent on boundary conditions. Based on these two theoretical perspectives, we propose that participative leadership and competitive goals are two important boundary conditions. Detailed discussion is provided in the following sections.

### **Moderating effects of participative leadership**

Participative leadership is defined as joint decision-making or shared influence in decision-making by leaders and members (Koopman & Wierdsma, 1998; Somech, 2003). In other words, this leadership describes whether a leader invites, values, and implements input from members. Thus, it should be most closely and directly related to voice behavior. Extant studies suggest that participative leadership can significantly encourage upward voice, because employees would perceive leaders as approachable and open-minded, and expect their voice to be accepted rather than belittled (Detert & Burris, 2007; Saunders, Shepard, Knight, & Roth, 1992).

Participative leadership should attenuate the effects of employee's status on transit voice, because it can eliminate the advantages of transit voice over upward voice. The approach-inhibition model of silence (Morrison et al., 2015) implies that low status tends to inhibit upward voice by biasing voice risk/efficacy perception, and by heightening habituated fear of upward voice and suppressing the anger for voice on impulse. Furthermore, Morrison and colleagues (2015) contends that leader's openness could weaken the positive relationship between employee's status

and upward voice. The reason is that low status individuals have strong needs to monitor the environment and thus, social cues are dominant in shaping their behaviors (Galinsky et al., 2008; Keltner et al. 2003). In the voice context, leader's openness should serve as such a vital cue, which encourages employees to speak to leaders despite their low status. To support this argument, the past study showed that when leaders explicitly invited members' contributions, members with low professional status also felt safe to speak up (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). Furthermore, both experimental and on-site survey studies (Morrison et al., 2015) showed that leader's openness weakened the positive relationship between member's within-team influence and upward voice: when leader's openness was high, both low and high influential informants were willing to speak to leaders. Similarly, participative leaders, by definition, are open to inputs from below, and hence should also encourage low status employees to speak up to leaders.

Therefore, when leaders adopt the participative style, even low status members are also likely to directly speak up to leaders, and neither high nor low status members would need transit voice. Status should thus be unrelated to the adoption of transit voice.

By contrast, if leaders do not actively involve all members in decision-making, low status employees would be markedly responsive to this social cue (Galinsky et al. 2008; Keltner et al. 2003). Low status and low participative leadership then jointly direct them to perceive high risks and low efficacy of upward voice. Thus, advantages of transit voice are emphasized and low status members are likely to adopt it. However, higher status informants are less sensitive to social cues (Galinsky et al. 2008; Keltner et al. 2003), and participative leadership is less determinate in their voice behaviors. Then, they should still favor upward voice more than transit voice. Therefore, only under low participative leadership can status differentiate between member's needs for transit voice, in that lower status members are more likely to adopt transit voice.

*H2: Participative leadership moderates the relationship between status and transit voice: employee's status is negatively related to transit*



*voice only when participative leadership is low but not high.*

### **Moderating effects of competitive goals**

Competitive goals are defined as the extent to which team members “believe one’s goal attainment precludes, or at least makes less likely, the goal attainment of others. If one succeeds, others must fail” (Alper, Tjosvold & Law, 1998, p36). For example, when members receive payments or bonuses that are based on their performance ranking among peers, they would perceive that they have competitive goals because they would obtain better personal outcomes if they performs better than do others.

Competitive goals can heighten members’ desire for high status (e.g., Deutsch, 1949, 1990; Darnon, Muller, Schragar, Panuzzo, & Butera, 2006; Johnson, Maruyama, Johnson, Nelson, & Skon, 1981; Toma, Vasiljevic, Oberlé, & Butera, 2013; Urda, 1997). The reason is that in such a situation, personal goals can be achieved only when one demonstrates competence that is superior to others and obtains a high performance ranking, which is equivalent to a high status ranking (e.g., Magee & Galinsky, 2008). Thus, team members put more efforts in their own tasks and look forward to the failure of others or even actively disrupt the performance of others (e.g., Charness, Masclet, & Villeval, 2013). Furthermore, members tend to inflate their own status and denigrate that of others. For example, studies have shown that under competitive goals, members evaluated themselves more positively than they did their peers, even when their actual performances were at a similar level (e.g., Butera & Mugny, 2001; Stroebe, Diehl, & Abakoumkin, 1992). Furthermore, when conflicts or mistakes were presented, competitive goals motivated members to focus on proving that they were right and that others were wrong (Darnon et al., 2006; Tjosvold, Yu, & Hui, 2004).

Given that competitive goals could cause contests in status, such goals could sequentially shape the effects of employee status on transit voice. The function perspective of status (Halevy et al., 2011) indicates that competitive goals in a team can weaken the function of status in providing

role expectations. On the one hand, given the desire for status, low status members would reduce their deference to high status members and perceive the need to demonstrate competence (Bendersky & Hays, 2012). Thus, they are likely to take the leading role and directly speak to leaders. On the other hand, because competitive goals lead to the devaluation of others' contributions (e.g., Butera & Mugny, 2001; Stroebe et al., 1992), high status members' contributions to the group cannot be fairly recognized and thus tend to be withdrawn (Kilduff, Willer, & Anderson, 2016). Therefore, high status members would feel no obligations to speak up for the team, because by doing so they take the personal risk of offending leaders (e.g., Burris, 2012). Instead, high status members might want to evade their duties and ask peers to transfer their ideas. In short, in this situation, no social norms obligate low status members to adopt transit voice, or obligate high status members to adopt upward voice.

By contrast, when teams have low competitive goals, because gaining higher status than others is not critical, they would expect interpersonal helping and coordination for mutual benefits (e.g., Tjosvold, 1984). Given the presence of these positive interactions, teams usually evolve clear role expectations on each member based on his/her status (e.g., Halevy et al., 2011; de Kwaadsteniet & van Dijk, 2010). That is, low status members are obligated to be submissive, because submission can help them to obtain critical resources from high status members and bring better personal outcomes (Hoffman, McCabe, Shachat, & Smith, 1994; Thompson, Wang, & Gunia, 2010). At the same time, high status members are also obligated to contribute more to the group and help others, because their contributions can be fairly recognized and result in others' deference. Accordingly, in the voice context, low status members may feel too aggressive to take the leading role and directly speak up to leaders. High status members cannot evade duties and shift risks of offending leaders to peers, so transit voice is not suitable for them. Therefore, status should have the significant effect on the appropriateness of adopting transit voice.

In conclusion, competitive goals can heighten member's competition for status, which would reduce status's effects on one's risks/rewards

cognition and dominance/deference behaviors. Therefore, the negative effect of status on transit voice should be more salient under low competitive goals and be attenuated under high competitive goals.

*H3: Competitive goals moderate the relationship between status and transit voice: employee's status is negatively related to transit voice only when teams have low competitive goals.*

## CHAPTER 4

### TRANSIT VOICE, LEADER'S ENDORSEMENT AND TEAM PERFORMANCE

Transit voice is a cooperative tactic between two peers, in which an informant asks a transferor to transfer information to leaders. To be precise, transit voice is a dyadic-level phenomenon. Chapter 3 only focuses on individual employees and investigates why low status employees are likely to initiate transit voice. However, the dyadic interaction process has not been explored.

The process of transit voice is more complex than upward voice. In upward voice, members who generate information are also those who speak up to leaders. By comparison, in transit voice, once an informant has decided to initiate transit voice, the informant must select an appropriate transferor, and asks him/her to transfer the issue to the leader. This dyadic interaction could be labeled as “informant’s transit voice toward transferor.”

As an extension of Chapter 3, this chapter strives for a richer understanding on the thorough process of transit voice. To do so, this chapter addresses four research questions: which members would take the role of informants, whom those informants would invite as the transferor, whether leaders could endorse the voice as informants expected, and how transit voice could influence the team performance.

We apply the status theory to address these questions. More specifically, the functional perspective of status (e.g., Bales, 1950; Halevy et al., 2011; Ridgeway & Berger, 1986; Ridgeway & Diekema, 1989) suggests that status tends to prescribe member’s expected behaviors, which could facilitate team cooperation and coordination, and then finally promote team success. Drawing on this perspective, we propose that low status members tend to ask high status members to transfer their voice, because (1) they are more willing to depend on others and (2) they tend to expect that high status members are more willing to help and more capable to convince leaders to endorse the voice. Furthermore, because transferors are often

appointed strategically and the third-parties involvement has advantages on persuading audience (e.g., Dean, 1987; Dutton & Ashford, 1993), we propose that leaders tend to endorse the voiced issues. Lastly, we propose that the cooperation between informants and transferors can help teams to better use resources, so transit voice might benefit team performance, especially when LMX differentiation is high and when teams have low competitive goals.

This chapter strives for the following contributions. First, it portrays a clearer picture of transit voice, with the full consideration of all actors in transit voice: informants, transferors, and its ultimate targets — leaders. Second, it demonstrates the possible benefits of transit voice. In reality, we can observe that transit voice happens commonly. However, we have not known whether this tactic can help employees to secure the leader's endorsement, or whether it merely wastes time and energy. By investigating the consequences of transit voice, it should provide valuable guidelines for practitioners, and assure the worthiness of future research attention. Third, it adds to the research line on team-level consequences of voice. The voice literature has suggested that the effect of voice on team performance is quite contingent on boundary conditions, and identifying those boundary conditions and clarifying team-level consequences of voice is needed (cf. Morrison, 2011; 2014). By proposing the moderating role of LMX differentiation and team competitive goals, it clarifies when transit voice could benefit team performance and when it should be adopted with caution.

### **Informant's transit voice toward transferor**

The function perspective of status (cf. Halevy et al., 2011) contends that status hierarchy can facilitate the team coordination and cooperation that is necessary to ensure collective success. In particular, status hierarchy can differentiate psychological states and behaviors between low and high status members. Generally, low status members tend to think and act in ways that depend on high status members and obey their commands, whereas high status members tend to think and act in ways that dominate others and lead teams. Based on this perspective, we propose that status also

differentiates members' role in transit voice: low status members will act as informants, and high status members will be appointed as transferors.

### **Low status members as the informant**

We propose that transit voice is more likely to be delivered from low than from high status informants. Transit voice requires informants to depend on transferors to deliver their ideas to leaders. Normally, dependence on others is not favorable, because it indicates an inferior position and creates disadvantages (e.g., Magee & Galinsky, 2008). However, based on the function perspective of status hierarchy (e.g., Bales, 1950; Halevy et al., 2011), if all members are trying to dominate others, within-team competition or conflicts will be intense, thereby hindering cooperation and collective outcomes. To achieve both collective and individual success, low status members are expected to depend on others. The collective perspective indicates that low status members usually lack expertise and ability, so their dominance would hamper but their dependence would benefit team performance (Anderson, Willer, Kilduff, & Brown, 2012). From the individual perspectives, depending on others signals low status members' deference to others, which can bring more resources than they could have by themselves, and lead to better personal outcomes. In other words, dependence of low status members can help teams to "enlarge the pie" (Halevy et al., 2011). Although low status members are allocated a smaller portion of the pie, they still gain more than when they act independently or compete with others. Therefore, given both collective and personal benefits, low status members are more willing to depend on others.

This argument is consistent with early research on expectation states theory (Berger, Conner & Fisek, 1982; Berger, Fisek, Norman, & Zelditch, 1977), which implies that low status individuals are expected to be submissive and they are obliged to behave in ways that confirm such expectations. For example, studies show that women (low status) demonstrate less dominative behaviors than men (high status) (e.g., Dovidio, Ellyson, Keating, Heltman, & Brown, 1988; Henley, 1977; Henley &

Harmon, 1985). When women experience stress, they are more willing to admit that they had severe problems and sought help from clinicians. By contrast, men are more likely to deny their incapability to cope with stress and will refuse to seek help (e.g., Carpenter & Addis, 2000; Kessler, Brown, & Boman, 1981). Similarly, research on help seeking suggests that help seeking indicates one's dependence on and submission to others, so individuals are likely to seek help when they accept low status position (e.g., Nadler, 2002). Further, the meta-analysis study (Twenge & Campbell, 2002) shows that low status is associated with low self-esteem, and low self-esteem has been identified as one important factor that leads to help seeking (e.g., Tessler & Schwartz, 1972; Nadler, 1991; Nadler & Fisher, 1986). That is, low status tends to impose the psychological states that encourage dependence on others.

Given that transit voice would require informants to depend on transferors, given these insights, we should expect that only low status members are likely to take such a submissive role in interactions. By contrast, high status would heighten the desire to dominate and make individuals overconfident in their ability (e.g., Fast, Sivanathan, Mayer, & Galinsky, 2012). Thus, they might perceive that they are capable of persuading leaders by themselves, and depending on others to transfer voice is unnecessary. Therefore, low status informants are more likely to initiate transit voice than high status informants.

*H4: Informant's status is negatively related to informant's transit voice toward transferor.*

### **High status member as the transferor**

By adopting transit voice, the informant needs to consider the specific peer from whom he/she would like to seek help. Transit voice should differ from complaining in its changing orientation, because voice is not to merely criticize the status quo but to trigger actual improvements (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). Thus, informants should demand that transit voice be delivered to leaders first and then be endorsed by leaders. Therefore, we propose that the informant is more likely to choose the transferor with

higher status, because they perceive that the high status peer is more likely to transfer the voice to leaders, and is more capable to persuade leaders to endorse voiced issues.

First, informants would perceive that higher status peers are more likely to transfer the voice to leaders. Based on the functional perspective of social status (Anderson et al., 2006; Bales, 1950; Berger et al., 1980; Goffman, 1967; Halevy et al., 2011), one's status and his/her contribution to groups are reciprocally related. Team members usually reward higher status to those who can contribute more to collective interests. By contrast, social norms are also formed that high status members should bear more responsibility for teams. Should high status members fail to do so, their status will be deprived. Applying this theory to voice context, we expect that higher status members speaking up to leaders is the social norm, because they are more obligated to contribute to the team and improve team effectiveness. Even though speaking up has the risks of offending leaders, their high status obligates them to take such risks for peers to exchange peer's respects and deference. Research has shown that higher status employees felt such an obligation and were more likely to speak up for the teams (Venkataramani & Tangirala, 2010).

In transit voice, if the informant selects a high status transferor, he/she tends to perceive that his/her request is warranted by the social norm, and thus the transferor is more likely to accept than reject the request. By contrast, it is against the social norm if the informant asks a low status peer to be the transferor. The informant tends to feel difficulty in justifying why he/she does not speak up by his/herself, and such an unreasonable request is very likely to be rejected. Therefore, to avoid rejection, the informant should ask a high status peer to be the transferor.

Moreover, informants should expect that higher status members are more capable to persuade leaders to endorse voice. Extant literature suggests that high status employees have two major advantages in persuading leaders. First, higher status members can better solicit leader's attention (e.g., DeBono & Harnish, 1988; Heesacker, Petty, & Cacioppo, 1983; Hovland, Janis, & Kelle, 1953; Tobin & Raymundo, 2009). High status members are



capable of bringing unwanted outcomes to audiences, so audiences must carefully scrutinize their information to take appropriate reactions (Clark & Wegener, 2013). Given that high status members contribute the most to teams, their performance should be critical for team outcomes (e.g., Groysberg et al., 2011). Therefore, leaders should be motivated to pay attention to their opinions and address their problems to facilitate their performance and prevent them from withdrawal behaviors (Kilduff et al., 2016). Second, high status often serves as a social cue that can bias leader's information processing and direct them to evaluate voice in positive ways. High status members usually are expected to have more competence and expertise than low status ones. Thus, information from the former tends to be automatically evaluated as more valuable and reliable than the same information from the latter (e.g., Anderson & Kilduff, 2009; Chaiken & Maheswaran, 1994; Tormala & Clarkson, 2007). Supporting this argument, a recent study (Howell et al., 2015) shows that leaders recognized and credited voice from high status members more than that from low status members.

Given that leaders are more likely to endorse voice from high status than from low status employees, this leader's behavioral tendency should provide a guideline for informants to choose transferors. Members often adapt their attitudes and behaviors to leader's attitudes and behaviors (e.g., De Dreu, & Van Kleef, 2004; Lau & Liden, 2008; Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). For example, members could recognize peers whom leaders trusted more, and then develop higher trust in those peers. Similarly, members should be able to realize that leaders are more likely to endorse voice from higher status members. If the informant expects leader's endorsement in voice, they should adapt their transit voice accordingly by choosing a high status peer as the transferor.

In short, the informant would perceive the high status peer as more willing to transfer the voice, and voice from this peer is more likely to be endorsed by the leader. Those perceptions should make appointing a high status peer more reasonable than appointing a low status peer. Therefore, the informant is more likely to adopt the more reasonable actions (Salancik

& Pfeffer, 1978), and to ask the high status peer to transfer the voice to the leader.

*H5: Transferor's status is positively related to informant's transit voice toward transferor.*

### **Interaction effects between informant's status and transferor's status**

We could further expect the interaction effect of informant and transferor's status on informant's transit voice toward transferor. That is, informants initiate transit voice toward high status members only when they have low status. As discussed, only when informants have low status would they be willing to depend on others to transfer their voice. Then, they begin to select transferors with higher status for promoting leader's endorsement. To support this argument, extant research shows that interpersonal helping is most desirable when the help receiver has low status and when the help provider has high status (e.g., Searcy & Eisenberg, 1992). Furthermore, research suggests that low status members even enhance self-image by associating with and submitting themselves to high status members (e.g., Gould, 2002; Pfeffer & Fong, 2005)

By contrast, high status informants would be reluctant to depend on others in the first place, even if one or a few peers with higher status than their own remain in the team. The reason is that because their status is already higher than many members in teams, the status difference between them and a higher status peer is limited and has a weakened effect on facilitating coordination. The small status difference might even encourages competition for status (e.g., Garcia, Tor, & Gonzalez, 2006; Garcia, Tor, & Schiff, 2013; Hoffman, Festinger, & Lawrence, 1954; Kilduff, Elfenbein, & Staw, 2010), which heightens both the reluctance to rely on the higher status peer, and the belief that the peer is unlikely to help them. Therefore, when informants have high status, peer's high status should have limited effects on motivating informants to depend on them.

In conclusion, transit voice should be most frequently requested by low status informant and toward high status transferor.

*H6: Transferor's status is positively related to informant's transit*

*voice toward transferor only when informant status is low but not high.*

### **Leader's endorsement**

*Leader's endorsement* is defined as leaders valuing voice and taking further actions based on it (Burriss, 2012). It is often the prerequisite for voice to lead desired changes, which can eventually benefit the employees and the team (Burriss, 2012; Detert et al., 2013; McClean et al., 2013).

Therefore, leader's endorsement should be a very critical outcome that employees evaluate during the voice process (Burriss, 2012).

In the above discussion, informants adopt transit voice because they expect that it can promote leader's endorsement, especially when they strategically appoint a high status transferor. Except for the benefits associated with high status transferors, literature has implied that transit voice with a general transferor may also facilitate persuasion.

First, transit voice can promote the leader to endorse voice because it can increase leader's attention on voice. Leaders often perceive one individual's voice as "trouble-making" or accidental noise, and ignore it (Milliken et al., 2003). One possible reason for this phenomenon is that one single employee has a very limited influence on group outcomes, so that leaders perceive a low need to react and a low cost to ignore the voice (Clark & Wegener, 2013). However, when transferors represent other peers in speaking up, leaders may notice that the voice is a shared or common concern. In other words, through transit voice, informants and transferors can form a coalition in that voice represents at least two employees. In contrast to single employee, a coalition of several employees could have a significant impact on the group. In this case, leaders should have a greater need to monitor the situation by heeding shared opinions from employees.

This argument is also consistent with existing research that emphasizes that collectives can secure more managerial attention than can individuals alone, and are more likely to succeed in issue selling or other upward influence attempts (e.g., Dean, 1987; Dutton & Ashford, 1993; Dutton et al., 2001; Kipnis et al., 1980). For example, proponents who ultimately successfully sold proposals, often sold "sideways" initially (Dean,

1987). Conversely, when people failed in their issue selling attempts, they often regretted not involving others (Dutton et al., 2001).

Similarly, we can expect that leaders should attach more attention to transit voice, which can increase their sequential endorsement on voice.

Second, transit voice can increase leader's agreement with voiced opinions. This is because certain norms guide interpersonal communication (Green, 1989; Grice, 1975; Shimanoff, 1980), and messages would appear more valid if communicators follow rather than violate these norms (Wyer, Budesheim, Lambert, & Swan, 1994). One salient norm is that one should be modest (Wyer et al., 1994). Once this norm is violated, audiences would only view speakers as boasting, and thus refuse to agree with their messages (Holtgraves & Srull, 1989; Wyer et al., 1994; Wyer & Gruenfeld, 1995; Wyer, Swan, & Gruenfeld, 1995).

Given that voice is to challenge the status quo, to some degree, the aim of informants is to convince leaders that their own opinions are better than the current knowledge. However, this aim tends to violate the "modest norm." Thus, leaders may only perceive that informants appear arrogant and overestimate their own ability, but not agree that the status quo is truly problematic.

However, this unwanted reaction of leaders could be reduced if voice is delivered from the third party perspective. When positive attributes were described from the third party perspective, the focal individual was perceived more likable, than when described from the first party perspective (Pfeffer et al., 2006; Inman et al., 2004). That is, audience liked the focal individual more when the statements were made in the form "*he* is a helpful person" than "*I* am a helpful person". Even when participants knew that the third parties had some common interests with the first party, this effect remained significant (Pfeffer et al., 2006).

Similarly, in the voice context, when speaking highly of other's opinions, transferors will not violate the modest norm, and messages will appear more acceptable. To illustrate, the statements "*his/her* dissent is reasonable" and "*his/her* suggestion is valuable" should be more acceptable than the statements "*my* dissent is reasonable" and "*my* suggestion is

valuable.” Thus, if transferors speak up on behalf of informants, voice tends to better follow the modest norm, and leaders are more likely to endorse it.

Third, transit voice can affect the leader’s attribution on voice motives. Given that voice is an extra-role behavior (e.g., LePine & Van Dyne, 1995), leaders tend to explore why employees conduct such behavior that has exceeded the basic work requirements (Crant, 2000; Grant & Ashford, 2008). Although voice is by definition a pro-social behavior (Morrison, 2011), leaders easily perceive that employees engage in voice to promote self-interest (Ashford et al., 2009; Morrison & Milliken, 2000). Research showed that voice could lead to positive personally outcomes only when leaders attribute voice motives as pro-social but not as pro-self (Grant & Ashford, 2008). That is, leader’s attribution on voice motives is a common immediate response to voice and a key determinant of its consequences.

Transit voice could direct leaders to attribute voice as pro-social. This argument is based on the theory of attributional suspicion (DeCarlo, 2005; Ham & Vonk, 2011; Oza, Srivastava, & Koukova, 2010; Vonk, 1998, 1999; Williams, Fitzsimons, & Block, 2004). This theory states that when speakers have personal gains from outcomes that are promoted by the message, audiences are more likely to suspect speaker’s real intention and are less convinced by promoted messages. However, if third parties are hired to transfer messages, audiences are more likely to be convinced. For example, when a third party delivered a speech to inspire employees to work hard, employees actually performed better in sequential tasks, compared with when the leader delivered the same speech; this effect was mediated by employees’ suspicions on speaker’s real intention (Grant & Hofmann, 2011).

In transit voice, transferors speak for their peers instead of for themselves. In other words, transferors tend to help the informant but not to strive for personal gains. Accordingly, leaders are more likely to attribute transferors’ voice as pro-social than pro-self. For instance, in the interview, an employee reported that he/she spoke to the leader and asked that another employee join his/her own working group (Detert et al., 2013, p633).

However, the number of employees in the department was limited, and this

change could lead to another group losing one employee. Then, leaders might doubt whether such a request is for one group's convenience or for the whole department's effectiveness. By contrast, if one employee from other working groups transfers the same message, leaders are more likely to view such voice as a pro-social behavior because the speaker (i.e., transferor) advocates other's interests, whereas his/her own interests are unaffected by the promoted change. Ultimately, leaders are more likely to endorse voice. In short, transit voice should signal more pro-social motives of voice to leaders, and increase leader's endorsement.

In conclusion, transit voice can solicit leader's attention, increase leader's agreement with voice, and suppress leader's suspicions on pro-self motivation. These effects should promote leaders to ultimately endorse voice.

*H7: Informant transit voice toward transferor is positively related to leader's endorsement.*

## **Transit voice and team performance**

### **Benefits of transit voice on team performance**

Responding to the recent call for research on team-level consequences of voice, (cf. Morrison, 2014), we explore when transit voice can benefit team performance. Given that team performance is a team-level construct, the analysis should be shifted from the dyadic to the team level, and team-level transit voice should be used as the predictor (e.g., Hitt, Beamish, Jackson & Mathieu, 2007). Transit voice, as a tactic, is most applicable for certain, but not all, informants and transferors. Thus, we may not expect that teams have low variance of dyadic transit voice. We adopt the additive model (Chan, 1988) and define *transit voice* at the team-level as the simple summation of dyadic level transit voice.

Transit voice can benefit team performance in two major ways. First, transit voice can benefit group decision making by correcting the biased information pools. The biased information sampling model (Strasser & Titus, 1985) suggests that teams often rely on the biased information pool that contains only information shared by most members. To improve

decision quality, information that is uniquely held by a single individual is most essential (e.g., Hinsz, Tindale, & Vollrath, 1997; Johnson, Hollenbeck, Humphrey, & Ilgen, 2006; Mesmer-Magnus & DeChurch, 2009).

Transit voice can further provide unique information in addition to upward voice. Extant research has identified individual factors that promote/inhibit upward voice (cf. Morrison, 2014). That is, within the same groups, only certain employees are willing to engage in upward voice, but others are very reluctant to do so. Moreover, some of those voice antecedents tend to affect the contents of voice. For example, the previous chapter has emphasized that status influences individuals' cognition styles (Keltner et al., 2003), thereby simultaneously shaping the information/ideas that they can generate and their voice efficacy-safety calculation. Therefore, the "silence group" is highly likely to have information that is different from the "active group." Therefore, upward voice from active groups tends to provide similar information, but teams cannot get the unique information that is held specifically by the silence groups.

Transit voice, however, can solve this problem. Given that speaking to peers is low-risk, individuals are less calculating when speaking to peers than to leaders (Detert et al., 2013). As discussed in Chapter 3, members with low status would remain silent when facing leaders; however, they may be willing to speak to their peers. Therefore, with high frequency and low caution, transit voice increases the chances for employees to share unique information with peers.

Second, transit voice can promote the leader's endorsement and can avoid wasting of resources. OCB consumes time and energy, which could be otherwise invested in tasks performance; therefore, conducting more OCB may lower in-role performance (Becker, 1965; Bergeron, 2007; Hockey, 1997). Moreover, challenging and prohibitive types of OCB consumes more resources do than the affiliative types. However, if one's OCB can be reciprocated by leaders or coworkers, his/her resources are refilled and thus task performance may not be harmed (Bergeron, 2007).

Voice, as a challenging type of OCB (Van Dyne et al., 1995; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998), tends to consume substantial resources. As a result,

voice may hinder individuals from completing their tasks well, which in turn drags down aggregated team performance (DeGoey, 2000; Edmondson, 1999; Lind & Kulik, 2009). However, if resources that are invested in voice can lead to improvements or changes that “reciprocate” by saving resources in future tasks, voice can lead to total resource gains and benefit team performance. Conversely, if voice cannot successfully trigger improvements, those resources are completely wasted, and voice should harm team performance. To support this point, the research shows that if voice could be implemented, voice decreased unit-level turnover (McClellan et al. 2013).

Transit voice can better beget leader’s endorsement than can upward voice and lateral voice. As discussed above, transit voice is more persuasive than upward voice, especially when informants have low status and transferors have high status. Furthermore, employees sometimes engage in lateral voice, by which they merely raise issues to peers but do not expect peers to transfer issues to leaders (Deter et al., 2013). In this case, peers may waste many resources because they cannot secure leader’s support to actually implement ideas or solve problems (Deter et al., 2013). Compared with lateral voice, transit voice has the “transferor transit voice towards leader” process, which can solicit leader’s support and eventually trigger improvements. Therefore, transit voice can facilitate voice to trigger actual improvements and save resources in future, which in turn improves team performance.

### **Boundary conditions for positive effects of transit voice on team performance**

Transit voice can solicit unique information and promote leader’s endorsement, thereby tending to benefit team performance. However, the beneficial consequences of transit voice should depend on leader’s behaviors and team environment. More specifically, we propose that *LMX differentiation* and *competitive goals* should moderate the relationship between transit voice and team performance.

#### ***LMX differentiation***



The first merit of transit voice is that it transfers unique information, which, however, relies on the assumption that informants do possess information unknown by other members. In reality, unlike in experimental studies, members cannot passively receive information from researchers. Informants may only have shared information. Then, transit voice is redundant and cannot improve team performance. Accordingly, we propose that high LMX differentiation can increase information divergence and thus strengthen the benefits of transit voice on team performance.

LMX quality represents the degree to which leaders exchange resources and support with their subordinates (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975). Some leaders develop close relationships and frequently exchange of high value resources with only some members but not with others; other leaders may develop similar relationships with all members (Liden, Erdogan, Wayne, & Sparrowe, 2006). *LMX differentiation* refers to the variability in the quality of LMX relationships within teams (Liden et al., 2006; Li & Liao, 2014).

When LMX differentiation is higher, transit voice is more likely to provide unique information because members tend to have more information unshared in the first place. This argument is based on a large body of theory of research that suggests that frequent interaction causes the convergence of opinions, perceptions, and beliefs (e.g., Berger & Luckman, 1966; Klein, Conn, Smith, & Sorra, 2001; Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978; Weick, 1979). For example, Rentsch (1990) found that members of the same interaction group shared a similar understanding on organization events, whereas members in different interaction groups had divergent understanding. Furthermore, Krackhardt and Kilduff (1990) found that employees who worked together had shared understanding on working environment.

LMX differentiation tends to cause information to be unshared among members, because it can cause the formation of subgroups and members in different subgroups have limited interaction. Literature suggests that members tend to develop close relationships with those with a similar level of LMX, and that members with different levels of LMX often have limited

interactions or conflicting opinions (e.g., Li & Liao, 2014; Tse, Lam, Lawrence, & Huang, 2013; Sias & Jablin, 1995). The direct evidence is the study by Ford and Seers (2006), which shows that LMX differentiation decreased member's agreements on perceptions of working culture. That is, higher LMX members tend to share opinions with leaders, whereas lower LMX members are likely to have different opinions. In addition, Sias and Jablin (1995) argued that high LMX differentiation might decrease the within-team information sharing. The lack of information sharing may emphasize the urgency for transit voice, which serves a way for members to communicate. By conducting transit voice, the lower LMX members would raise information that is more unique than that of high LMX subgroups, who transfer those ideas to leaders later.

By contrast, when LMX differentiation is low, all members tend to form one united interaction group (Ford & Seers, 2006). By frequent discussion and coordination, members will interpret the events from the same perspectives and their ideas resemble those of each other. Then, no members will have information that is unique from other peers. Although the shared understanding could benefit team coordination (e.g., Li & Liao, 2014), transit voice becomes unnecessary. As long as employees speak to leaders with upward voice, they predominantly capture ideas from all members. By conducting transit voice, informants only provide redundant information, which has limited benefits on team performance beyond upward voice.

Notably, LMX differentiation is the focus here, instead of status differentiation. The major reason is that status differentiation does not cause separation of interaction subgroups. By contrast, the function perspective of status (cf. Halevy et al., 2011) suggests that status differentiation promotes interaction and cooperation among team members by providing interaction guidelines (e.g., Greer & Van Kleef, 2010; Keltner, Van Kleef, Chen & Kraus, 2008; Magee & Galinsky, 2008; Overbeck, Correll, & Park, 2005; Owens & Sutton, 2001; Tiedens & Fragale, 2003). In addition, LMX differentiation can cause status differentiation because members with higher LMX can obtain more resources from leaders, thereby helping them to gain

higher status than others (e.g., Liden et al., 2006). However, high status differentiation might not mean LMX differentiation, because status can be institutionalized through other mechanisms (e.g., Berger et al., 1977; Bunderson, 2003). For example, leaders would develop equal relationships with every member when they adopt transformational or servant leadership (Henderson, Liden, Glibkowski & Chaudhry, 2009), but members could still significantly differ in their expertise or performance and thus differ in status (e.g., Magee & Galinsky, 2008). In this case, low status individuals remain likely to prefer transit voice, but their ideas may not be unique from other members. Therefore, status differentiation may influence how often individuals would adopt transit voice, but LMX differentiation should influence whether transit voice can benefit team performance by soliciting unique information.

*H8: LMX differentiation moderates the relationship between informant transit voice and team performance: informant transit voice is positively related to team performance only when LMX differentiation is high.*

### ***Competitive goals***

The second benefit of transit voice is that it can promote implementation of voiced ideas and avoid wasting of resources. However, compared with upward voice, transit voice involves cooperation between members. When members cannot cooperate effectively, they may waste many resources needed for in-role tasks. Then, collective benefits of transit voice should be largely diminished. In this section, we propose that competitive goals can significantly influence the cooperation process and thus moderate the relationship between transit voice and team performance.

Competitive goals means that team member's goals attainments are negatively related, so that the success of one means the failure of the other (Alper et al., 1998). The theory of cooperation and competition (Deutsch 1949, 1990) states that competitive goals can heighten the motivation to exploit others and the fear of being exploited. Furthermore, it tends to create high distrust and harm cooperation among members. When teams encounter

difficulties or failures, members would focus on protecting and defending themselves; thus, they would blame each other rather than work together to solve problems (Tjosvold et al., 2004).

Competitive goals can diminish the benefits of transit voice. First, appointing transferors under high competitive goals is costly. As mentioned above, transferors actually take the personal risks of offending leaders to help the informants and contribute to teams. However, competitive goals could discourage members to conduct such pro-social behavior because it would only result in own losses but hardly be reciprocated (e.g., Puffer, 1987). When all members tend to avoid the disadvantaged role as transferors, informants need extra efforts to negotiate with peers to appoint transferors. This negotiation process may take substantial resources from in-role tasks, which dragging down team performance (Bergeron, 2007; Nielsen, Bachrach, Sundstrom, & Halfhill, 2012). Moreover, even with considerable effort, informants may still fail to appoint a transferor. Ultimately, ideas and information were not transferred to leaders, and transit voice provides no benefits to team effectiveness. Therefore, under high competitive goals, transit voice consumes resources but may be ineffective, and its benefits on team performance are limited.

Second, under high competitive goals, transit voice tends to be pro-self and result in team conflicts but not effectiveness. Employees often make suggestions that benefit only a few members, but do not benefit or even harm the others (Ashford et al., 2009; Grant & Ashford, 2008; Morrison & Milliken, 2000). This pro-self voice provides one with advantages over others. Given that competitive goals direct members to seek for such advantages (Butera & Mugny, 2001; Quiamzade, Mugny, & Darnon, 2009), members are highly likely to initiate pro-self than pro-social transit voice. However, leaders tend to evaluate pro-self voice negatively (Grant & Ashford, 2008) and refuse to implement the corresponding suggestions. Furthermore, other members with different interests could also form coalitions and voice opposite issues. Under competitive goals, diversified opinions are more likely to trigger conflicts than constructive discussion or team creativity, and thus may harm team performance (Alper

et al., 1998; Tjosvold et al., 2004). Therefore, under competitive goals, transit voice, as a specific way to raise diversified opinions, may not benefit team performance either.

In conclusion, under competitive goals, transit voice would be conducted in ineffective ways, which may offset its potential benefits on team performance. By contrast, when teams have low competitive goals, team members tend to perceive that their interests are positively correlated and strive for a mutually beneficial situation. Transferors, especially those with high status, will then be willing to help. Hence, informants do not have to waste many resources to appoint transferors. In addition, transit voice tends to be pro-social, so leaders and other members would evaluate it positively and implement voiced suggestions or address voiced problems. No additional resources are needed to deal with team conflicts. Therefore, under low competitive goals, transit voice can be conducted effectively and benefit team performance as expected.

*H9: Competitive goals moderate the relationship between informant transit voice and team performance: aggregated informant transit voice at the team level is positively related to team performance only when teams have low competitive goals.*

# CHAPTER 5

## METHODOLOGY

### Overview

We conducted two pilot studies to develop the scale of transit voice and two on-site studies to test hypotheses. Pilot Study 1 was to generate the initial items for the scale of transit voice and Pilot Study 2 was to purify these initial items and validate the scale. Study 1 tested Hypotheses 1–3 with a cross-sectional survey study. Study 2 tested Hypotheses 4–10. In Study 2, the round-robin design (Warner, Kenny, & Stoto, 1979) was adopted to collect data from multiple sources and at two waves, and the data was analyzed with the social relation model (SRM; Kenny, 1994; Snijders & Kenny, 1999).

### Pilot Study: Scale Development

Given that transit voice is a new construct, we conducted pilot studies to develop and validate the measurement scale of transit voice. Following the major steps that were suggested in the scale development literature (Hinkin, 1995; 1998) we conducted two pilot studies as illustrated below.

#### Pilot Study 1: Item generation

The first step was to generate an initial items pool. To do so, we adopted the critical incidents method (Flanagan, 1954). By this approach, researchers recruit participants with relevant experience to provide critical incidents that best represent the focus concept and derive items from those incidents.

A total of 57 students from the MBA program in a Hong Kong university participated in this study. They were all part-time students with real life working experience. Their average age was 33.23 years old, and average working tenure was 10.83 years. Of the respondents, 56.4% of them were female. Furthermore, 18% of them were front-line

employees, 22% were front-line managers, 58% were middle level managers, and 2% were senior managers or higher. They were asked to recall and to write an essay to describe an incident in which they either engaged in transit voice as informants/transferees, or observed that their colleagues conducted transit voice. Given that items would be used in sequential studies that would be conducted in China, both instructions were given in Chinese and participants were required to write in Chinese.

A total of 9 participants (15.8%) reported an incident in which they had asked their colleague to transfer their voice to leader; 35 (61.4%) reported an incident in which their colleague asked them to transfer his/her voice to leader; 10 (17.5%) reported an incident in which they observed how their colleagues conduct transit voice; and 3 (5.3%) reported that they had never experienced or observed any of these three situations. Repeated words and frequent behaviors in these reported incidents were retrieved to generate items on transit voice. Then, four doctorate students in the business school were appointed to evaluate the degree to which each item represented the definition of transit voice (also see Liang et al. 2012). Finally, this step resulted in a set of initial items that include 11 items that described informants' transit voice toward transferor ("*transit voice*" for short in the following sections).

### **Pilot Study 2: Scale purification and validation**

The purposes of this study were to further examine the initial items, eliminate the unqualified items, and test the discriminant validity. A total of 220 students from a part-time MBA program in China were asked to fill in the questionnaires, which included initial items of transit voice, as a part of their coursework. Hoelter (1983) suggests that the sample size for a scale purification/validation study should be 200 or above; the sample size of this study fulfilled this requirement. Of all the participants, 36% were female. The average age was 35.36 years, and the average working tenure was 12.49 years. Of the participants, 20.0%

were front-line employees, 23.2% were front-line managers, 39.3% were middle level managers, and 24.6% were senior managers or higher.

The questionnaire included the scale of transit voice (11 items) that was generated in Pilot Study 1. In addition, the questionnaire included other variables to test the convergent and discriminant validity. Those measures were as follows: upward voice (seven-item scale developed by Liang et al. [2012]), lateral voice (six-item scale adapted by Liu et al. [2010] from Van Dyne & LePine [1998]), and coalition (four-item scale developed by Yukl, Seifert & Chavez [2008]). All items followed seven-point scales (1= never; 7= frequently).

## **Results**

*Scale purification:* First, items that compose a scale should be highly interrelated (e.g., Churchill, 1979; DeVellis, 1991). Therefore, items that have low inter-item correlation should be dropped. In this study, all items of transit voice had sufficient inter-item correlations that were all above the convention cut-off value .4 (Kim & Mueller, 1978). Second, variances of items would be checked. Those with extremely low variances (square term of standardization) should be deleted, because low variances cannot differentiate individuals' rating on the focal construct (DeVellis, 1991). Therefore, items with variances that are below 1.5 should be eliminated (see also Bennett & Robinson, 2000). In this study, all items had variances above 1.5. Therefore, all items satisfied these two criteria and none of them were deleted after these two steps.

Third, although early voice theories conceptualize voice as one dimension factor, scholars recently suggested that voice contents should be divided into promotive and prohibitive types (e.g., Liang et al., 2012; Lin & Johnson, 2015). Thus, confirmative factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to compare the two-factor model, in which items were loaded into two factors following the recent theory; and the one-factor model, in which items were loaded into one single factor. For transit voice, results showed that the two-factor model had better fit ( $\chi^2= 179.43$ ,  $df =43$ ;



CFI=.93; RMSEA=.12) than did the one-factor model ( $\chi^2= 245.66$ ,  $df=44$ ; CFI=.90; RMSEA=.14), and the chi-square difference test was significant ( $\Delta \chi^2= 66.23$ ,  $df =1$ ,  $p <.001$ ). Furthermore, items with highly correlated errors should be removed (Bagozzi & Yi, 1983; Danes & Mann, 1984). Thus, items with highest modification indices and lowest squared multiple correlations were deleted one by one (also see Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2006). In this step, items 1, 2, 3, 10 were removed. After these steps, seven items remained and the final model had a notable improvement in model fit ( $\chi^2= 17.2$   $df = 13$ . n.s.; CFI=.99; RMSEA=.04). Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics and CFA loadings for all items.

*Convergent & discriminant validity:* The purpose of this step is to ensure that the focal scales correlate with but are distinguishable from existing scales that measure similar constructs (Campbell & Fiske, 1959). Convergent validity requires that focal scales correlate with those related scales, whereas discriminant validity requires those correlations at a reasonably low level. This study investigated convergent and discriminant validity via two steps. First, correlations between transit voice and related constructs were examined to see whether they were at a moderated level. Second, for constructs with which transit voice were significantly correlated, CFA was conducted to check whether the model that separated the correlated construct from transit voice had better fit than the model lumping up them together (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988).

Transit voice was compared with three related constructs: lateral voice, upward voice, and coalition. Table 3 shows the correlations among those variables. It shows that as expected, transit voice was significantly related to upward voice and coalition. Thus, transit voice was convergent with related variables. Furthermore, those significantly correlations between transit voice and other constructs were all below .8, thereby indicating that multicollinearity was not a concern (Lewis-Beck, 1980). These results provide initial evidence for discriminant validity (e.g., Ferris et al., 2005).

Moreover, transit voice was not significantly correlated to lateral voice. The reasons might be that although both transit voice and lateral voice occurred between coworkers, the contents and the threatened nature of voice differed significantly. In lateral voice, speakers directly raise coworker's personal problems, which might be offensive to the direct voice target. By comparison, in transit voice, the informant tends to point out problems about the team or leaders, rather than about the voice target, so such an act might be less offensive. In short, these correlation results could be explained more by the contents and underlying risk of voice than by the surface voice targets.

In addition to the moderate level correlations as initial evidence, discriminant validity of focal scales was further given evidence with CFA. First, transit voice was compared with upward voice. Given that upward voice also includes two dimensions: promotive and prohibitive (Liang et al. 2012), the baseline model (Model 1a) consists of four factors: promotive and prohibitive transit voice, and promotive and prohibitive upward voice; these factors were compared with alternative three-factor, two factor, and one-factor models. Results indicated that Model 1a had the best fits (see Table 4), which supported that transit voice was distinguishable from upward voice.

Second, transit voice was compared with coalition. Similar steps were conducted, and results (Table 4) also show that baseline models (Model 2a) had better fit than did other alternative models, thereby supporting that transit voice could be distinguished from coalition.

Moreover, the above analysis indicates that although CFA results confirmed that transit voice had two dimensions, the correlations between dimensions were rather high ( $r = .84$  for informant transit voice and  $r = .64$  for transferor transit voice). This ambiguous situation is not uncommon, and previous literature (e.g., Seers, Petty & Cashman, 1995; Tse, Dasborough & Ashkanasy, 2008; Liao, Liu & Loi, 2010) suggests that when a scale had two distinguishable but highly correlated dimensions, it could be treated as a unitary dimension scale, i.e., all items could be lumped together to calculate the scale score. Following

this convention, transit voice also could be treated as a one-dimensional scale. In addition, two more reasons could support this operation. First, as the first explorative studies of transit voice, this thesis focuses on the commonality rather than differences of promotive and prohibitive types of voice. Thus, to distinguish these two dimensions at this stage is theoretically unnecessary. Second, in this study, the results of discriminant validation indicate that, although viewing transit voice as two-dimensional scales had best model fit, viewing them as one-dimensional scales (e.g. Model 1b in Table 4) also revealed acceptable fits. Therefore, transit voice can also be treated as one-dimensional scale in subsequent studies and analysis.

### **Study 1**

In Study 1, a cross-sectional survey was conducted to test Hypotheses 1–3. A total of 510 employees in 11 companies of a city in western China were invited to participate in this study. To ensure variety in the sample, these 11 companies were in different industries, and participants were from different departments, including marketing, accounting, R&D, general administrative, and technology maintenance. Research assistants briefed the research purposes, assured the confidentiality, and distributed questionnaires to participants on site. After participants completed the questionnaires, they were asked to submit it to research assistants immediately. In the end, 320 questionnaires were returned, which corresponded to a response rate of 62.7%. The final sample was 51% female, with an average age of 31.84 years old and average organization tenure of 7.92 years. Of the sample, 62.1% had an undergraduate degree or higher.

### **Measures**

*Status*: Participants rated on status with the six-item scale developed by Anderson et al. (2006). Sample items included “How much do you receive respect from other group members?” and “How much do you make valuable contributions to the group?” (1 = “not at all”; 7 = “a great deal”).

*Participative leadership:* Participants rated participative leadership with the six-item scale from the Empowering Leadership Questionnaire (Arnold, Arad, Rhoades & Drasgow, 2000). One sample item was “My immediate supervisor uses our suggestions to make decisions that affect us” (1= “strongly disagree”, to 7 = “strong agree”).

*Transit voice:* Participants reported how often they engage in transit voice. The seven-item scale developed in the pilot study was adopted (1 = “never”; 7 = “always”). We conducted CFA to confirm the dimensions of the scale. Similar to Pilot Study 2, the two-factor model ( $\chi^2= 66.50$ ,  $df=13$ ; CFI=.97; RMSEA=.11) had better fit than did the one factor model ( $\chi^2= 117.85$ ,  $df=14$ ; CFI=.93; RMSEA=.15), with a significant chi-square difference ( $\Delta \chi^2= 51.35$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p <.001$ ). Moreover, although the CFA results suggested two dimensions of transit voice, these two dimensions had a high correlation (.89). Following previous conventions (e.g., Seers et al., 1995; Tse et al., 2008; Liao et al., 2010), transit voice was treated as a one-dimensional scale, in that all items of the two dimensions are lumped together to calculate a scale score.

*Competitive goals:* Competitive goals were measured with the five-item scale developed by Alper et al. (1998). Sample items were “team members structure things in ways that favor their own goals rather than the goals of other team members” and “team members have a ‘win-lose’ relationship” (1= “strongly disagree”, to 5 = “strong agree”).

*Control variables:* To rule out alternative explanations for transit voice and focal individual outcomes, the following variables were controlled for. First, we controlled for demographic variables as gender, age, education level, and organizational tenure. These variables significantly influence voice behaviors (e.g., Frese, Teng, & Wijnen, 1999; Stamper & Van Dyne, 2001), and are commonly controlled in many voice studies (e.g., Burriss et al., 2008; Liang et al., 2012; Morrison et al., 2011). Second, we controlled for LMX (measured with the seven-item scale developed by Graen and Uhl-Bien [1995]), because it may influence the perceived risks and efficacy of upward voice and thus influence transit voice behaviors. Third, we control for TMX (measured with the 10-item scale developed by

Seers et al. [1995]), which tends to influence member's interaction (Seers, 1989; Tse et al., 2008). Finally, we controlled for *upward voice* and *lateral voice* (both variables were measured with the same scales used in the Pilot Study 2), to demonstrate that transit voice have different nature from these two other types of voice. All control variables were reported by participants, i.e., employees.

## **Results**

### ***CFA analysis***

First, the distinctiveness of key variables in sequential regression analysis should also be tested. CFA was adopted to distinguish among informant transit voice, status, participative leadership, and competitive goals. Results show that the four-factor model fitted data best (see Table 5) and indicates the discriminant validity of variables.

### ***Descriptive statistics***

Table 6 shows the mean, standardizations, and correlations of focal variables. The table shows that among three types of voice, lateral voice happened most frequently, whereas transit voice happened least frequently. The results were consistent with the previous study, which suggests that voicing to leaders involved more risks and was conducted with more caution, whereas voicing to coworkers was safer and happened more often (Deter et al. 2013). Unsurprisingly, transit voice happened least, because it served only as a “substitution” of upward voice. Moreover, frequency analysis shows that only 26.7% of respondents had a score lower than 2 (“never” to “seldom” engaging in transit voice) on transferor transit voice, which indicates that most respondents (72.3%) had such experiences at least once or occasionally. Therefore, transit voice, despite its low frequency, should be a common voice strategy.

### ***Design effect***

In this study, employees were nested within departments, and departments were nested within companies. This nested structure tends to

violate the data independence, so design effects were calculated. The design effect for company level was 5.86, and the design effect for the department level was 1.58. Given that the conventional cut-off value is 2 (<http://www.statmodel.com/>), results of design effects suggested that data was non-independent within companies, but relatively independent within departments. Thus, the two-level multilevel model that incorporates individual-level and company-level effects should be most appropriate. Furthermore, a three-level model that included group-level effects was also conducted, but the results were fundamentally the same with the two-level model. The following section only reports the two-level model results (see also Deter et al., 2013), which was processed with the mixed model function in SPSS 19.

### ***Hypothesis testing***

Hypothesis 1 predicts that informant's status is negatively related to informant's transit voice. As shown in Table 7, informant's status was negatively related to informant's transit voice ( $b = -.15, p < .05$ ). Thus, the hypothesis was supported.

Hypothesis 2 predicts the interaction effect between informant status and participative leadership on transit voice. Results show that such interaction was significant ( $b = .16, p < .05$ ). The simple slope tests (c.f. Aiken & West, 1991) further revealed that when participative leadership was low, informant status was negatively related to informant transit voice ( $b = -.31, p < .05$ ); but when participative leadership was high, informant status was not significantly related to informant transit voice ( $b = .01$ ; see Figure 2). Thus, the hypothesis was supported.

Hypothesis 3 predicts the interaction effect between informant status and perceived competitive goals on transit voice. This interaction was significant ( $b = .21, p < .01$ ). The simple slope tests (c.f. Aiken & West, 1991) further revealed that when perceived competitive goals were low, informant status was negatively related to informant transit voice ( $b = -.35, p < .01$ ). However, when perceived competitive goals were high, informant status was not significantly related to informant transit voice ( $b = .06$ ; see Figure

3). Thus, Hypothesis 3 was supported.

## **Study 2**

In order to test Hypotheses 4–9, we conducted another survey study in which dyadic data was collected with the round-robin design (Warner et al., 1979). That is, except for reporting self-description information, each member (i.e., actor) evaluated different team members (i.e., target) one by one on the same items; concurrently, he/she was rated by all those team members on those items as well. Furthermore, to provide stronger evidence for the hypothesized direction of causality, we collected data in two waves, with one month in between. More specifically, at Time 1, participants rated the status of other team members one by one, and also reported whether each team member had asked them to transfer voice to leader (i.e., transit voice). At Time 2, participants rated whether leaders had endorsed their ideas that were transferred by each other member. Thus, focal IVs and DVs were respectively collected from the transferors' and informants' perspectives. Data from multi-sources at multi-waves should minimize the concerns on common method variance (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003).

The survey was conducted in a large state-owned bank in a western city in China. The bank had roughly 80 small branches in the city, and each of those branches consisted of 8–10 employees and could be viewed as a “working team.” The typical scope of work of the employees included banking counter services (e.g., helping customers' saving/withdrawing/transferring cash and settling bills), promoting financial products to individual customers, and lending mortgages/loans to individuals or companies. Most of these tasks demanded cooperation within and even between working teams. During their work, employees needed to frequently interact with customers, and often encountered unexpected requests from customers. Furthermore, employees often needed to proactively approach customers/companies to compete with other banks. Given the high level of team cooperation, job uncertainties, and market competition, various types of voice, as important components of

communication, might have a salient role on individual and team effectiveness.

A total of 275 front-line employees were randomly selected from 55 working teams of the banks (i.e., five members per team) and 55 leaders of those teams were invited to participate in this study. Research assistants briefed participants of the research purposes and distributed to them the questionnaire and a return envelope. To ensure confidentiality, participants completed questionnaires, sealed them in the return envelopes, and returned them directly to research assistants on site.

After matching data from two-waves and deleting unpaired dyads, 713 dyads of 222 team members from 48 teams remained, thereby resulting in an effective response rate of 80.7%. Of member samples, 65% were female. The average age and organizational tenure was 30.23 and 6.71, years respectively. A total of 48 leader questionnaires were returned, and the response rate was 87.3%. Of leader samples, 49% were female. The average age and organizational tenure was 37.38 and 14.71 years, respectively.

## **Measures**

*Status:* At Time 1, members reported status of other team members one by one with the three-item scale developed by Anderson et al. (2001). Sample items included “How well respected is this person in this team?” (1= not respected at all; 7=respected a great deal). Team members had high agreement on each member’s status, with ICC(1)=.18, Median  $R_{wg}$  =.89 (George & Bettenhausen, 1990); thus, the focal member’s status was calculated as the mean score of the rating of all other members from the same team. A similar approach was also adopted in previous studies (e.g., Liu et al., 2014; Van der Vegt, Bunderson & Oosterhof, 2006).

*Informant transit voice:* At Time 1, members rated how often their team members asked them to transfer voice with the seven-item scale developed in the pilot studies.

*LMX differentiation:* At Time 1, members reported LMX with the seven-item scale developed by Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995). One sample item is “what are the chances that this leader would use his or her power to



help you solve problems in your work?” (1 = “none”, to 5 = “very high”). LMX differentiation was operationalized as the standardized deviation of LMX within each team.

*Competitive goals:* At Time 1, members rated competitive goals with the same scale in Study 1. It showed high agreement among team members (median Rwg = .78; ICC(1) = .12). Thus, team-level competitive goals were calculated as the group mean of individual means.

*Leader’s endorsement:* At Time 2, participants were asked to recall leader’s response after each other member transferred their ideas/suggestions, with rating on five-item scale adapted from Burris (2012) was adopted. Sample items were “After this colleague transferred my suggestions/ideas, my leader implemented my suggestions” and “My leader values my ideas” (1 = “strongly disagree,” to 5 = “strongly agree”).

*Team performance:* At Time 2, we measure team performance with a 7-items scale adapted from Van der Vegt and Bunderson’s (2005). Team leaders were asked to evaluate team’s effectiveness, quality, achievement, productivity, task completion, mission fulfillment, and overall performance. One sample item was “This team works effectively (1 = “strongly disagree,” to 7 = “strongly agree”).

*Control variables:* First, we controlled demographic variables, upward voice, and lateral voice of both informants and transferors. These variables were measured with the same scales and identically as in Study 1, except that upward voice was rated by leaders rather than by self.

Additionally, we controlled for relationship quality with the Coworker Exchange Scale developed by Sherony and Green (2002) (e.g., “How would you describe the relationship with this colleague?” 1 = “very bad”, to 5 = “very good”). Good relationship quality between the informants and the transferors represents historically positive interactions and leads to high trust in each other (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995); thus, informants are highly likely to choose closer friends as transferor. In addition, we controlled for leader’s feedback seeking from transferors, because such behaviors in leaders might solicit voice in individuals (Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2012).

## **Data Analysis**

Two different statistical techniques were used to test H4-H7 and H8-H9 separately.

Testing H4-H7 involves individual-level IVs and the dyadic-level DVs. The data had a complex nested pattern, in which dyadic relationships were nested within individuals, and individuals were nested within teams. To analyze this type of data, we conducted a multilevel analysis using the hierarchical linear modeling macro of the social relations model (SRM; Kenny, 1994; Snijders & Kenny, 1999). SRM analysis is capable of partitioning variance into different levels, namely the group, actor, target, and dyadic levels. The SRM technique has been adopted by recent organizational behavior research (de Jong, Van der Vegt, & Molleman, E. 2007; Lam, Van der Vegt, Walter, & Huang, 2011).

We conducted regression analyses to test H8 and H9. The dependent variable, team performance, was at the team level, and thus, all lower-level independent variables were aggregated to the team level as their group mean (see Van der Vegt et al. [2006]) for a similar approach).

In order to minimize the likelihood of multicollinearity, the focal IVs were centered at their grand means before computing the interaction terms and sequential analysis (Aiken & West, 1991).

## **Results**

### ***Descriptive Statistics***

Table 8, 9, 10 show the means, standard deviations, and zero-order Pearson correlations of all focal variables.

### ***Variance Partitioning:***

In order to partition variances, we calculated the null models that included only dependent variables but not independent variables. For transit voice, 21.62% of the variance was attributed to the group, 60.40% to the transferors (i.e., reporter of DV), 2.02% to the informants, and 15.96% to dyadic effects. For leader's endorsement, 17.55% of the variance was

attributed to the group, 64.15% percent to the informant (i.e., reporter of DV), and 18.30 % to dyadic effects. These results suggested that a substantial portion of the variance in focal DVs resided in the dyadic relationship.

### ***Hypothesis Testing***

Hypotheses 4 and 5 predict that transferor's status is positively related and informant's status is negatively related to informant transit voice. As shown in Table 11, the main effects of both informant ( $b = .01$ ) and transferor's status ( $b = .11$ ) on informant transit voice were not significant. Thus, these two hypotheses were not supported.

Hypothesis 6 predicts the interaction effect between informant's status and transferor's status on transit voice. Results indicated that the interaction effect was significant ( $b = -.11, p < .05$ ). The simple slope test (c.f. Aiken & West, 1991) further revealed that when informant had low status, transferor's status was positively related to target's endorsement ( $b = .23, p < .01$ ). By contrast, when the actor had lower status, simple slope tests showed that actor's voice was not significantly related to target's endorsement ( $b = .00$ ; see Figure 4). Hence, Hypothesis 6 was supported.

Hypothesis 7 predicts that informant's transit voice is positively related to leader's endorsement. Results showed that informant transit voice was positively related to leader's endorsement ( $b = .05, p < .05$ ). Thus, Hypothesis 7 was supported.

Hypothesis 8 predicts that LMX differentiation moderates the relationship between informant transit voice and team performance. Informant transit voice varied significant among groups ( $F = 15.65 (47, 155), p < .000$ ). Result showed that the interaction term was significant ( $b = .22, p < .05$ , see Table 12). The simple slope test showed that when LMX differentiation was high, informant transit voice was positively related to team performance ( $b = .37, p < .05$ ); when LMX differentiation was low, informant transit voice was not significantly related to team performance ( $b = .07$ ; see Figure 5). Hence, Hypothesis 8 was supported.

Hypothesis 9 predicts that competitive goals moderate the relationship

between informant transit voice and team performance. Results showed that the interaction term was significant ( $b = -.32, p < .01$ , see Table 12). The simple slope test showed that when competitive goals were low, informant transit voice was positively related to team performance ( $b = .47, p < .01$ ). When competitive goals were high, informant transit voice was not significantly related to team performance ( $b = -.17$ ; see Figure 6). Hence, Hypothesis 9 was supported.

## CHAPTER 6

### DISCUSSION

This thesis introduces transit voice as a useful tactic. In Study 1, member's status was negatively related to transit voice, and participative leadership and competitive goals weakened such a negative relationship. That is, low status informants were more likely to use this tactic than high status members, especially when teams had participative leaders and low competitive goals. Study 2 has further shown that low status informants tended to appoint high status peers as the transferors to jointly engage in transit voice. Moreover, Study 2 has demonstrated two beneficial effects of transit voice. First, transit voice could promote leader's endorsement; second, it could benefit team performance when teams had high LMX differentiation and low competitive goals. In general, these results show that status is important in guiding member's cooperation in transit voice. Furthermore, transit voice is desirable for individuals and teams, but its necessity and benefits are contingent on leader's attributes and team competitive environment.

In Study 1, the negative relationship between informant's status and transit voice was supported (Hypothesis 1). However, in Study 2, the hypothetical main effect of informant's status on informant's transit voice toward transferor was not supported (Hypothesis 4). A possible explanation for this seeming inconsistency is that transit voice was measured at different levels in two studies. In Study 1, transit voice was measured at the individual level, i.e., how frequently informants adopt transit voice toward unspecified peers as transferors. The score on transit voice reflected the summation of such behavior by the informant toward all transferors. However, in Study 2, transit voice was measured at the dyadic level with the round-robin design, i.e., how frequently the informant asked a specific transferor to engage in transit voice. However, as regards the costs of data collection and length of questionnaire, only approximately half of the members in a working team were randomly selected to participate in the

study, and those participants were asked to report their interaction with only those selected, but not with all peers. Thus, in certain teams, a low status informant frequently engaged in transit voice with a certain transferor, but this transferor was not included in the sample. That is, the low status informant actually engaged in transit voice, but his/her actions were not reflected in the data. Then, the mean of informant's transit voice toward all transferors was underestimated and the degree of such underestimation varied among difference cases; such a scenario might deflate the significance of the negative relationship between informant's status and his/her transit voice behavior. For the same reason, the main negative effect of transferor's status on transit voice (Hypothesis 5) toward him/her was also weakened in this study.

Furthermore, Study 1 showed the unexpected result that competitive goals in the team had a main positive effect on transit voice. Similarly, Study 2 also showed the positive significant correlation between competitive goals and transit voice. These results seem counter-intuitive because competitive goals tend to hinder cooperation between members (Deutsch 1949, 1990). However, a possible reason for these unexpected findings is that transit voice does not require mutual help. Informants initiate transit voice for seeking help from transferors. When transferors spoke to leaders and improved their working procedures or environments, informants might reciprocate in future by showing deference and respect to transferors. However, it is equally possible that informants only seek a "free ride" but pay nothing back. Given that high competitive goals would motivate members to exploit peers (Deutsch 1949, 1990), informants were more likely to enjoy their "free ride" than pay back. In this case, informants would perceive the low costs of transit voice, and be more likely to initiate it. In other words, transit voice tends to serve as a tactic for "exploiting" competitors, which is especially desired under a highly competitive environment.

### **Theoretical implications**

As its first implication, this work contributes to the limited knowledge on voice tactics (Lam, 2013; Morrison, 2011; 2014; Whiting et al. 2012) in four ways. First, it introduces a new type of voice tactic, transit voice. Transit voice is common in reality and is determinative to voice outcomes, and thus merits future research attention. Second, it adds to our understanding on when and why a certain voice tactic would be adopted. By showing the interaction effects of member's status and participative leadership/competitive goals on transit voice, it demonstrates that selection of voice tactics is a joint function of personal and situational factors, and that one tactic may not be always superior to another. Third, it underscores the benefits of voice tactics. Previous research suggests that voice from low status informants rarely achieve good results (e.g., Howell et al. 2015). However, present studies suggest that by adopting appropriate tactics, such as transit voice, low status members also have chances to make leaders endorse their ideas. That is, certain factors detrimental to voice consequences are not unresolvable; instead, voice tactics, when strategically adopted, might remove or compensate for these drawbacks. Fourth, the majority of extant studies only focused on how tactics affect leader's evaluation on speaker or voice (e.g., Lam, 2013; Whiting et al. 2012). By contrast, by demonstrating that transit voice could facilitate team performance under high LMX differentiation or low competitive goals, the present study (Study 2) proves that voice tactics could significantly affect team-level outcomes. Taken together, these results emphasize the importance of voice tactics, and future research should continuously explore when transit voice or other voice tactics should be adopted and how they may promote beneficial outcomes.

Second, this work complements current voice literature by incorporating multiple actors and allowing cooperation in voice process. Whereas the extant voice literature has mostly viewed voice as a behavior that is initiated and conducted by a single employee, only one pioneering study suggests that employees often cooperate with peers to elaborate upon voice contents (Detert et al., 2013). The present study supports the latest cooperative view of voice and further extends it in two ways. First, by

introducing transit voice, voice cooperation may not be limited to elaborate information; by contrast, cooperation may exist in various ways during voice processes, such as separating the role of gathering information and the role of persuading leaders to different members. Second, by showing the positive effects of transit voice on promoting leader's endorsement and team performance, this study suggests that the peer's cooperation in voice process is not only common, but also useful. Research efforts should be directed toward developing a comprehensive understanding on voice process that involves more than one employee.

Third, it extends the present safety-efficacy calculation paradigm (cf. Morrison, 2011, 2014) by suggesting that informants do not only calculate the differences between upward voice and silence, but also compare between voice tactics. The present study challenges the implicit view that factors that prohibit prohibiting voice would also promote silence, and suggests that factors as upward voice promoters (prohibitors) may encourage (discourage) alternative tactics to voice. In particular, although low status prevents upward voice, it may encourage transit voice. This provides a direction for exploring other voice tactics. Reviewing voice prohibitors is a promising direction, as is seeking solutions for those obstacles. These solutions could serve as voice tactics. For example, literature suggests that leader's low openness significantly discourages voice. To solve this problem, employees might increase leader's openness by manipulating leader's positive mood before speaking up (Grant, 2013; Liu et al., 2015).

Fourth, it adds to literature on voice consequences at the team level. A previous study showed that speaking to peers might be harmful to team performance (Detert et al. 2013). However, the present study (Study 2) extends this point and suggests that speaking to peers might also benefit team performance if peers were willing to transfer voice to leaders, especially when environments encourage such cooperation. Moreover, although certain scholars posit the collective benefits of voice (e.g., Erez et al., 2002; MacKenzie et al., 2011, Nemeth et al., 2001; Perlow & Williams 2003; Walumbwa et al., 2012), a few studies have indeed showed negative



effects of voice (e.g., Ashford et al. 2009; Deter et al. 2013; MacKenzie et al., 2011; Morrison & Milliken, 2000). The present study classifies this mixed view on voice by demonstrating the moderating role of competitive goals: the benefits of voice may be dominant under low competitive goals but the drawbacks of voice may be salient when teams have competitive goals.

Last, this work should enrich status/power research. First, our work underscores that the effect of status on member's behaviors could be contingent on leader's behaviors and team goal structures. In line with our theorizing, we found that leader's openness and team competitive goals can shape the relationship between status and transit voice. By proposing and testing these boundary conditions, we advance inquiry theories to the "more complex context theories" (Bamberger, 2008). Second, it adds empirical evidences to the status/power theories by testing these theories in real organization settings. It has been noticed that perhaps due to the complexity of real organizations, the application and development of status/power theories in organization research has lagged that in other disciplines (Morrison, 2010). For example, The inhibition-approach model has been intensively relied on the experimental evidences, which might amplify the effects of power/status, because participants were usually colleague students who relatively lack experiences in the inquiry domain and researchers could manipulate more salient and stable power/status than that in real life (Keltner et al., 2003). Our work conducts field survey studies and shows that low status members would adopt transit voice, which is a more conservative and cautious tactic than upward voice, which supports the approach-inhibition model (Keltner et al., 2003) and its tenet that low status could activate individuals' inhibition systems. Besides, our work provides supports to the functional perspective of social status (e.g., Halevy et al., 2011). Our work shows that status indeed guided members to differentiate their roles during their cooperation in voice, and such role differentiation might promote team performance. These results highlight the importance of status on individual's behaviors, dyadic interaction, and collective effectiveness. In short, with consideration of boundary conditions of

status/power theories, our work demonstrates the usefulness of these theories in organization research, which should encourage researchers' future pursuit on this domain.

### **Limitations**

The present study has several limitations. First, in Study 1, all the data were cross-sectional and from a single source. The single-source data may increase the likelihood for significant results, but this problem is not a major concern when moderating effects are tested (MacKinnon, Lockwood, Hoffman, West, & Sheets, 2002). Study 2 adopted the advanced design and collected data from multiple sources with a time lag. However, findings should not be interpreted as unambiguously indicating causality. Further evidence based on panel data or experimental studies are needed to confidently claim causality.

Second, the scale of transit voice was validated with only one pilot study. Considering the costs of collecting data, the sample size was slightly beyond the minimum requirements (Hoelter, 1983). Although the scale was also validated and showed good results in Study 1, improved validation of the scale is needed based on more and larger samples.

Third, the generalizability of our findings may be a concern. All data were collected from companies in China, where culture is characterized as high collectivism and high power distance (Hofstede, 1980). On the one hand, the collectivism may inflate individual's collective actions, such as transit voice. In an individualistic culture, privacy might be a severe concern and individuals might generally avoid sharing critical information with coworkers. On the other hand, high power distance represents high respect for social hierarchy, which may amplify the effects of status differences on social interaction (Hofstede, 1980). In low power distance culture, low status members may feel safe in speaking to leaders, thereby reducing the attractiveness of transit voice. Alternately, low status employees may not perceive vital differences between high status peers and themselves, thereby weakening the effects of status on transit voice. Therefore, further research is needed to test theories in different cultures.

Fourth, this study makes certain underlying assumptions without testing. For example, it argues that low status informants would perceive transit voice safer than upward voice. Future studies may test this assumption by incorporating “psychological safety” as a mediator. In addition, it argues that low status informants are likely to choose transit voice rather than silence, because silence can prevent them from fulfilling personal control and belongingness, as well as increase cognitive discordance. However, individuals may have a dispositional low need for control (e.g., Rijk, Blanc, Schaufeli, & Jonge, 1998), low expectation of being valued by group (e.g., DeWall & Richman, 2011), or have family supports to curb cognitive discordance from work (e.g., Procidano & Heller, 1983). Thus, future research may validate these assumptions by investigating the moderating effects of these factors on the relationship between informant’s status and transit voice.

### **Future research directions**

This work suggests several future research directions. First, it does not distinguish between promotive and prohibitive transit voice, or between pro-social and pro-self transit voice. Extant research shows that prohibitive and pro-self upward voice tends to be riskier and more difficult to be endorsed than the other two types of voice (e.g., Liang et al. 2012; Lin & Johnson, 2015; Maynes & Podsakoff, 2014). Accordingly, we can expect that voice contents and motives influence the preference between transit voice and upward voice. For example, when the voiced content is prohibitive and motive is pro-self, transit voice is more likely to be adopted. Alternately, under high competitive goals, informants may like to adopt prohibitive and pro-self transit voice but adopt promotive and pro-social upward voice instead. Future research could test these hypotheses.

Second, the present study (Study 2) only tested leader’s endorsement and team performance as consequences of transit voice, but transit voice should have other effects. For example, transit voice may influence employees’ well-being. When informants’ ideas are endorsed, they may feel valued by the group and have increased satisfaction in their job (e.g.,

Morrison & Milliken, 2000). Furthermore, transit voice may also lead to negative results such as conflicts between peers. Future research may explore these consequences of transit voice.

Finally, this work suggests that coworkers should have important roles in the voice process. In addition, when they help to transfer ideas to leaders, they may affect other aspects. For example, peers may support or oppose the voiced issues even after leaders have endorsed them. Exploring the other roles of peers or those that other third parties might play in voice process is worthy of attention.

### **Practical implications**

This work offers several practical implications. First, employees should be aware that they do not have to remain silent and suffer stress when they want to say something but do not dare do so. The results showed that informant transit voice was positively related to transferor transit voice, thereby suggesting that their peers were actually willing to help once asked. Furthermore, results show that transit voice could lead to leader's endorsement. Therefore, informants, especially those with low status, should consider this tactic when preparing voice.

Second, the results show that when leaders do not adopt the participative style, low status members are more likely to adopt transit voice. That is, transit voice provides an indirect way for non-participative leaders to gather information from low status employees. Thus, leaders do not have to seek everyone's opinions personally; they may also encourage high status members to transfer ideas from peers. However, this practice should be applied with caution. The present studies showed that the relationship between status and transit voice was weakened (Study 1) and that transit voice could not benefit performance (Study 2) when teams have high competitive goals. Such results suggest that under high competitive goals, teams would lack social norms (such as status and expected behaviors) to guide members to cooperate in transit voice, and transit voice cannot bring positive effects. Therefore, leaders should not rely on those high status members to gather information when teams are designed with competitive

goals. Instead, they should directly encourage inputs from low status members, for example, by adopting participative leadership.

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**Table 1 Classification of Voice**

Classification Criterion	Voice Types	References
Voice Content	<i>Promotive voice</i> : constructive suggestions which can improve existing work practices and procedures	Liang, Farh & Farh, 2012; Maynes & Podsakoff, 2014
	<i>Prohibitive voice</i> : concerns about existing or impending practices which may harm the organizations	
Voice Content	<i>Supportive voice</i> : voice intended to stabilize or preserve existing organizational policies or practices	Burris, 2012; Maynes & Podsakoff, 2014
	<i>Challenging voice</i> : intended to alter, modify, or destabilize status quo	
Motives of Senders	<i>ProSocial Voice</i> : voice based on cooperative motives.	Van Dyne, Ang & Botero, 2003
	<i>Defensive voice</i> : voice based on fear – with the goal of protecting the self	
	<i>Acquiescent voice</i> : voice based on feelings of resignation.	
Voice Recipient	<i>Upward voice</i> : voice towards direct leaders/supervisors ( <i>direct upward voice</i> ) or higher-level leaders ( <i>skip-level upward voice</i> )	Detert et al., 2013; Detert & Trevino, 2010; Liu et al., 2010
	<i>Lateral voice</i> : voice towards peers	

**Table 2 Items with Confirmatory Factor Loadings**

<b>Informant transit voice</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D.</b>	<b>Item-total correlations</b>	<b>CFA loadings</b>			
				<b>Model 1</b>		<b>Model 2</b>	
				<b>Promotive</b>	<b>Prohibitive</b>	<b>Promotive</b>	<b>Prohibitive</b>
Item1. I ask my peer to transfer important information to our leader.	3.32	1.43	.63	.65			
Item2. I try to make my peer speak to our leader through discussing my suggestions with him/her.	3.59	1.39	.62	.63			
Item3. I ask my peer to represent me to raise suggestions at meetings.	3.09	1.46	.74	.77			
Item4*. I ask my peer to say goods words for me in front of our leader, in order to get leader's supports on my suggestions.	2.76	1.57	.83	.88		.89	
Item5*. I ask my peer to help me to convey my suggestions on team polices/operation to our leaders	2.86	1.51	.86	.91		.90	
Item6*. I ask my peer to seek leader's feedback on my suggestions, to see whether my suggestions work.	3.04	1.52	.81	.85		.88	
Item7*. I try to make my peer report problems to our leader through discussing these problems with him/her.	3.28	1.40	.81		.85		.87
Item8*. I ask my peer to incorporate my views when he /she report problems to our leader.	3.37	1.40	.78		.82		.81
Item9*. I ask my peer to transfer problems I discovered to our leader.	3.15	1.41	.85		.91		.92
Item10. I purposely remind my peer of problems dampening team effectiveness before he/she speaks to our leader.	3.42	1.37	.75		.81		
Item11*. I ask my peer to remind leader to solve problems in my work.	3.02	1.47	.79		.84		.82

Note: N = 220. All items use a 7-point scale with anchors of 1 = never and 7 = frequently. \*: items kept in the final scales.

**Table 3 Descriptive Statistics, Zero Order Correlations, and reliabilities for Pilot Study 2**

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 Promotive transit voice	2.90	1.43	(.92)					
2 Prohibitive transit voice	3.21	1.27	.85**	(.92)				
3 Promotive upward voice	4.46	1.28	.19**	.21**	(.93)			
4 Prohibitive upward voice	4.10	1.12	.30**	.31**	.71**	(.84)		
5 Lateral voice	4.76	1.12	-0.02	0.09	.4**	.39**	(.94)	
6 Coalition	3.70	1.32	.47**	.40**	.18*	.31**	.41**	(.91)

Note: N=220

\*  $p < 0.05$

\*\*  $p < 0.01$

\*\*\*  $p < .001(2\text{-tailed})$ .



**Table 4 Scale discriminative validation for Pilot Study 2**

		$\chi^2/df$	$\Delta \chi^2/df$	CFI	TLI	IFI	NFI	RMSEA
<b>Transit voice (TV) and upward voice (UP)</b>								
Model 1a	Four factors two dimensions of TV; two dimensions of UP	197.57/98		.96	.96	.96	.93	.07
Model 1b	Three factors two dimensions of TV combined to one factor	239.35/101	41.78***/3	.95	.94	.95	.92	.08
Model 1c	Three factors promotive TV and promotive UP combined to one factor	1018.07/101	820.50***/3	.66	.60	.67	.64	.20
Model 1d	Three factors prohibitive TV and prohibitive UP combined to one factor	647.05/101	449.48***/3	.80	.76	.80	.77	.16
Model 1e	Two factors promotive TV and promotive UP combined to one factor; prohibitive TV and prohibitive UP combined to one factor	1338.19/103	1140.62***/5	.54	.47	.55	.53	.23
<b>Transit voice (TV) and coalition</b>								
Model 2a	Three factors two dimensions of TV; coalition	61.43/41		.99	.99	.99	.97	.05
Model 2b	Two factors two dimensions of TV combined to one factor	107.20/43	45.77***/2					
Model 2c	Two factors promotive TV and coalition combined to one factor	467.70/43	406.27***/2	.79	.73	.79	.77	.21
Model 2d	Two factors prohibitive TV and coalition combined to one factor	497.88/43	436.45***/2	.77	.71	.78	.76	.22
Model 2e	One factor all items combined	592.71/44	531.28***/3	.76	.70	.76	.73	.23

Note: N=220; \*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ (2-tailed).

**Table 5 Scale discriminative validation for Study 1**

		$\chi^2/df$	$\Delta \chi^2/df$	CFI	TLI	IFI	NFI	RMSEA
Model 1	Four factors <i>Status, participative leadership, competitive goals, transit voice</i>	607.99/269		.92	.91	.92	.87	.06
Model 2	Three factors <i>Status and participative leadership combined to one factor</i>	1644.07/272	1036.08***/3	.69	.63	.69	.65	.13
Model 3	Three factors <i>Participative leadership and transit voice combined to one factor</i>	1687.07/272	1079.08***/3	.68	.62	.68	.64	.13
Model 4	Three factors <i>Participative leadership and competitive goals combined to one factor</i>	1645.12/272	1037.13***/3					
Model 5	Three factors <i>Competitive goals and transit voice combined to one factor</i>	1132.96/272	524.97***/3	.69	.63	.69	.65	.13
				.81	.77	.81	.76	.10

Note: N= 320

\*  $p < 0.05$

\*\*  $p < 0.01$

\*\*\*  $p < .001$ (2-tailed).

**Table 6 Descriptive statistics, zero order correlations, and reliabilities for Study 1**

	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1 Gender	.51	.60	-											
2 Age	31.84	7.79	-.02	-										
3 Organizational tenure	7.92	7.16	.13*	.81**	-									
4 Education	4.56	.88	.01	-.40**	-.33**	-								
5 Upward voice	3.72	1.15	-.16**	.14*	.07	-.01	(.93)							
6 Lateral voice	4.43	1.11	-.07	.14*	.12*	-.04	.52**	(.91)						
7 TMX	3.35	.50	.08	.20**	.18**	.02	.38**	.54**	(.83)					
8 LMX	3.36	.65	-.05	.19**	.12*	.01	.40**	.28**	.40**	(.84)				
9 Status	4.85	1.05	-.09	.19**	.16**	-.02	.35**	.39**	.45**	.36**	(.85)			
10 Participative leadership	5.04	.93	.00	.09	.08	.02	.11	.14*	.12	.31**	.20**	(.85)		
11 Competitive goals	2.90	.98	.00	-.03	-.07	-.12*	.11	.09	-.02	-.14*	.00	-.24**	(.85)	
12 Transit voice	2.66	1.18	-.09	-.03	-.10	.01	.34**	.15**	.09	.02	-.03	-.13*	.35**	(.92)

Note: N= 320

\*  $p < 0.05$

\*\*  $p < 0.01$

\*\*\*  $p < .001(2\text{-tailed})$ .

**Table 7 Mixed model results on transit voice (Study 1)**

		Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
		Estimate	S.E.	Estimate	S.E.	Estimate	S.E.	Estimate	S.E.
<b>Control Variables</b>									
1	Gender	-.11	.12	-.12	.12	-.01	.14	.01	.13
2	Age	-.01	.01	-.01	.02	-.01	.02	-.01	.02
3	Organizational tenure	-.02	.02	-.01	.02	.00	.02	.00	.02
4	Education	.01	.08	.01	.08	-.02	.09	-.04	.09
5	Upward voice	.36***	.07	.37***	.06	.40***	.07	.41***	.07
6	Lateral voice	.00	.07	.02	.07	-.08	.08	-.09	.08
7	TMX	.12	.16	.18	.16	.17	.18	.30	.18
8	LMX	-.21*	.10	-.16	.11	-.07	.13	-.11	.13
<b>Independent variable</b>									
9	Status			-.15*	.07	-.14	.09	-.14	.08
<b>Moderators</b>									
10	Participative leadership (PL)					-.04	.07	-.07	.07
11	Competitive goals (CG)					.32***	.07	.24**	.07
<b>Interactions</b>									
12	Status X PL							.16*	.07
13	Status X CG							.21**	.06
	$\chi$		850.37		840.52		631.86		618.61
	$\Delta\chi$				9.85**(1)		208.66***(2)		13.25**(2)
	$\Delta R^2$				.02		.10		.04

Note: N= 320. \*: p < 0.05 \*\*: p < 0.01 \*\*\*: p < .001(2-tailed).

**Table 8 Descriptive statistics, correlations and reliabilities for focal variables in the Social Relation Model in Study 2 (Individual level)**

	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1 Dyadic tenure	2.47	1.58	-												
2 Gender	0.65	.47	.00	-											
3 Age	30.20	5.17	.28**	.02	-										
4 Education	3.08	.49	-.16*	.09	-.28**	-									
5 Organizational tenure	6.75	5.40	.25**	.01	.87**	-.36**	-								
6 Upward voice	3.55	1.30	.06	.01	-.01	.00	.02	(.94)							
7 Lateral voice	4.91	.98	.05	.00	.04	-.02	.06	.08	(.90)						
8 LMX	3.67	.71	.01	-.08	.04	-.02	.03	.06	.22**	(.89)					
9 Relation quality	3.52	.69	-.06	-.08	-.16*	-.07	-.13	.11	.21**	.56**	(.90)				
10 Feedback seeking	5.22	1.07	-.02	-.04	.06	.03	.05	.00	.25**	.60**	.53**	(.89)			
11 Status	5.29	.72	-.07	.13	.13*	.02	.11	.30**	.09	.00	.06	-.03	(.87)		
12 Informant transit voice	2.72	1.43	.07	-.13	-.01	.02	-.10	-.02	.07	.20**	.29**	.28**	0.02	(.92)	
13 Leader's endorsement	4.68	.89	.09	-.05	.12	-.03	.05	.16*	.12	.10	.11	.11	.21**	.35**	(.93)

Note: N= 222

\*  $p < 0.05$

\*\*  $p < 0.01$

(2-tailed).

**Table 9 Descriptive statistics and correlations for focal variables in the Social Relation Model in Study 2 (Dyadic level)**

	Mean	S.D	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1 Dyadic tenure	2.40	1.93	-									
2 Transferor's gender	.65	.47	.00	-								
3 Informant's gender	.63	.47	-.02	-.01	-							
4 Transferor's age	30.25	5.28	.24***	.00	.03	-						
5 Informant's age	30.32	5.29	.23***	.04	-.01	.19***	-					
6 Transferor's education	3.07	.49	-.14***	.11**	.02	-.29***	-.04	-				
7 Informant's education	3.08	.51	-.12**	.02	.10	-.04	-.29***	.03	-			
8 Transferor's organization tenure	6.86	5.55	.21***	-.01	.02	.89***	.16***	-.37***	-.02	-		
9 Informant's organization tenure	6.97	5.54	.24***	.03	-.02	.16***	.88***	-.02	-.37***	.12**	-	
10 Transferor's upward voice	3.56	1.31	.11**	.00	.05	-.03	.00	.02	-.02	.01	.04	-
11 Informant's upward voice	3.60	1.31	.08*	.06	.02	-.03	-.03	-.03	.00	.02	-.01	.63***
12 Transferor's lateral voice	4.91	.98	.04	.00	.03	.00	.04	-.01	-.01	.02	.02	.07
13 Informant's lateral voice	4.94	.96	-.01	.06	.05	.03	.01	-.01	-.02	.01	.02	.02
14 Transferor's LMX	3.64	.71	.02	-.09*	.05	.03	-.04	-.01	.07	.03	-.08*	.07
15 Informant's LMX	3.65	.71	-.03	.06	-.08*	-.05	.07	.08*	-.02	-.09	.07	.00
16 Relation Quality	3.49	.81	-.01	-.08*	.05	-.17***	-.04	-.06	.03	-.14***	-.06	.11**
17 Leader's feedback seeking	5.18	1.07	-.01	-.05	.04	.06	-.08*	.01	.04	.06	-.09*	.01
18 Transferor's status	5.30	.72	-.05	.12**	.09*	.07	-.04	.03	-.05	.07	-.01	.33***
19 Informant's status	5.29	.69	-.03	.09	.10**	-.07*	.08*	-.05	.02	-.04	.06	.15***
20 Informant transit voice	2.65	1.46	.06	-.13***	.00	-.04	.04	.00	.03	-.10**	.01	.00
21 Leader's endorsement	4.68	1.30	.12**	-.04	.00	.06	.02	-.03	-.07	.03	.02	.12**

(To continue)

	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	22
11 Informant's upward voice	-										
12 Transferor's lateral voice	.02	-									
13 Informant's lateral voice	.08	.11**	-								
14 Transferor's LMX	.04	.21***	.01	-							
15 Informant's LMX	.05	-.01	.23***	.09	-						
16 Relation Quality	.18***	.16***	.02	.45***	-.01	-					
17 Leader's feedback seeking	.04	.24***	.01	.59***	.05	.44***	-				
18 Transferor's status	.15***	.08*	.09*	.02	.15***	.05	-.01	-			
19 Informant's status	.31***	.10**	.09*	.19***	.03	.39***	.21***	.42***	-		
20 Informant transit voice	.05	.03	-.03	.15***	.03	.27***	.24***	.01	.07*	-	
21 Leader's endorsement	.07	.04	.07	.03	.18***	.04	.04	.12	.02	.21***	-

Note: N=713 dyads from 222 team members within 48 teams

\*  $p < 0.05$

\*\*  $p < 0.01$

(2-tailed).

**Table 10 Descriptive statistics and correlations for focal variables in the regression model Study 2 (team level)**

	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1 Age	30.23	3.30	-										
2 Gender	.65	.23	.18	-									
3 Organizational tenure	6.71	3.33	.92**	.18	-								
4 Education	3.09	.29	-.33*	.05	-.42**	-							
5 Upward voice	3.54	1.18	-.10	.12	-.04	.00	-						
6 Lateral voice	4.89	.56	.21	.21	.20	-.08	.07	-					
7 Individual performance	5.89	.54	.09	.30*	.11	.08	.16	.09	(.89)				
8 Informant transit voice	2.81	.99	.14	.01	.09	.18	-.03	.09	.05	-			
9 LMX differentiation	.62	.27	.40**	.31*	.35*	-.27	.06	.01	.05	-.12	-		
10 Competitive goals	2.74	.54	.15	-.07	.25	-.03	-.13	.10	.11	.63**	-.15	(.85)	
11 Team performance	5.51	.72	-.10	.29	-.04	.17	.27	.18	.77**	.14	-.02	.12	(.87)

Note: N= 48 teams

\*  $p < 0.05$

\*\*  $p < 0.01$

(2-tailed).



**Table 11 Social relation model results (Study 2)**

Steps and variables	Informant voice						Leader's endorsement			
	Model 1a		Model 1b		Model 1c		Model 2a		Model 2b	
	<i>b</i>	<i>S.E</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>S.E</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>S.E</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>S.E</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>S.E</i>
<b><i>Control variables</i></b>										
1 Dyadic tenure	.03	.02	.03	.02	.03	.02	.03	.02	.03	.02
2 Transferor's gender	-.23	.18	-.24	.18	-.24	.18	-.03	.06	-.02	.06
3 Informant's gender	-.03	.07	-.04	.07	-.03	.06	.09	.18	.08	.18
4 Transferor's age	.08	.03	.07	.03	.07	.03	.01	.01	.01	.01
5 Informant's age	.02	.01	.01	.01	.01	.01	.02	.03	.02	.03
6 Transferor's education	-.14	.19	-.17	.19	-.17	.19	.02	.06	.04	.06
7 Informant's education	-.02	.07	-.02	.07	-.02	.07	-.19	.18	-.19	.18
8 Transferor's organization tenure	-.10**	.03	-.10**	.03	-.10**	.03	.00	.01	.00	.01
9 Informant's organization tenure	-.02	.01	-.02	.01	-.02	.01	-.03	.03	-.02	.03
10 Transferor's upward voice	-.09	.08	-.12	.09	-.13	.09	.04	.04	.05	.04
11 Informant's upward voice	.04	.04	.03	.04	.03	.04	-.03	.08	-.03	.08
12 Transferor's lateral voice	.02	.09	.03	.09	.03	.09	.01	.03	.01	.03
13 Informant's lateral voice	.02	.03	.02	.03	.02	.03	.03	.09	.03	.09
14 Transferor's LMX	-.03	.15	-.02	.15	-.03	.15	-.04	.05	-.04	.05
15 Informant's LMX	-.02	.05	-.02	.05	-.02	.05	.36**	.13	.36**	.13
16 Relation Quality	.36***	.05	.36***	.06	.36***	.06	.07	.04	.06	.04
17 Leader's feedback seeking	.21*	.10	.23*	.10	.23*	.10	.00	.03	-.01	.03

(To continue)

<i>Independent variables</i>											
18	Transferor's status (TS)		.11	.10		.12	.10	.08*	.04	.07	.04
19	Informant's status (IS)		.01	.05		.01	.05	-.07	.10	-.06	.10
<i>Interaction</i>											
20	TS * IS					-.11*	.05	.05	.04	.05	.04
<i>Mediator</i>											
21	Informant transit voice									.05*	.02
	$\chi^2$	1891.64		1890.44		1886.09		1781.02		1775.84	
	$\Delta\chi^2$			1.60(2)		4.35*(1)				5.18*(1)	

Note: N=713 dyads from 222 team members within 48 teams

\*  $p < 0.05$

\*\*  $p < 0.01$

\*\*\*  $p < .001(2\text{-tailed})$ .

**Table 12 Regression results on team performance (Study 2)**

		Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
		Estimate	S.E.	Estimate	S.E.	Estimate	S.E.	Estimate	S.E.
<b>Control Variables</b>									
1	Average Age	-.11*	.05	-.12*	.05	-.15*	.06	-.14*	.05
2	Gender (female percentage)	-.02	.33	.00	.33	-.09	.36	-.23	.34
3	Average organizational tenure	.04	.05	.05	.05	.08	.06	.07	.05
4	Average education	.23	.27	.18	.28	.17	.28	.33	.26
5	Upward voice	.06	.06	.06	.06	.04	.06	.12	.06
6	Lateral voice	.30*	.13	.32*	.14	.32*	.14	.15	.13
7	Average Individual performance	.88***	.14	.89***	.14	.92***	.15	1.04***	.13
<b>Independent variable</b>									
8	Informant transit voice (ITV)			.06	.08	.13	.10	.15	.09
<b>Moderators</b>									
9	LMX differentiation (LD)					.00	.08	.00	.07
10	Competitive goals (CG)					-.13	.11	-.16	.10
<b>Interactions</b>									
11	ITV x LD							.22*	.10
12	ITV x CG							-.32*	.11
	R <sup>2</sup>	.70		.71		.73		.81	
	ΔR <sup>2</sup>			.01		.02		.08*	

Note: N=48 \*  $p < 0.05$  \*\*  $p < 0.01$  \*\*\*  $p < .001(2\text{-tailed})$ .

**Figure 1 Theoretical Framework**

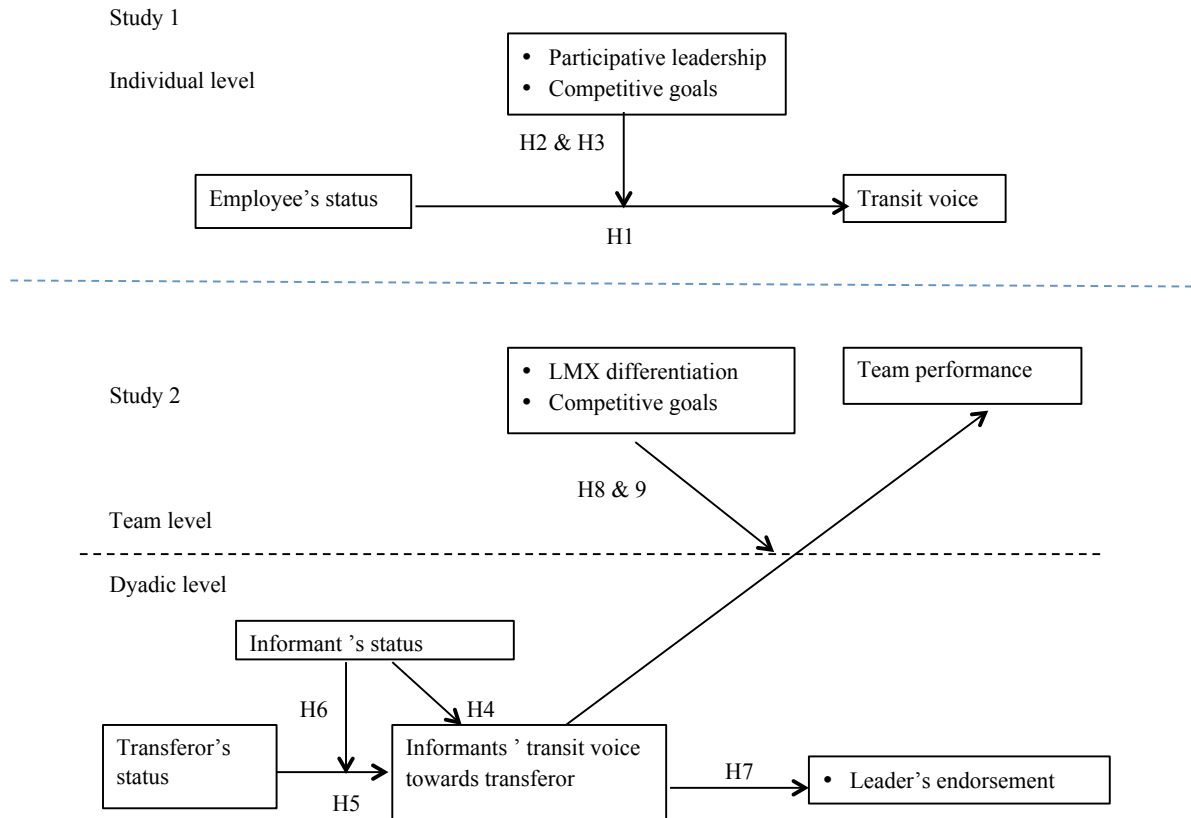


Figure 2 Interaction effect of employee's status and participative leadership on transit voice

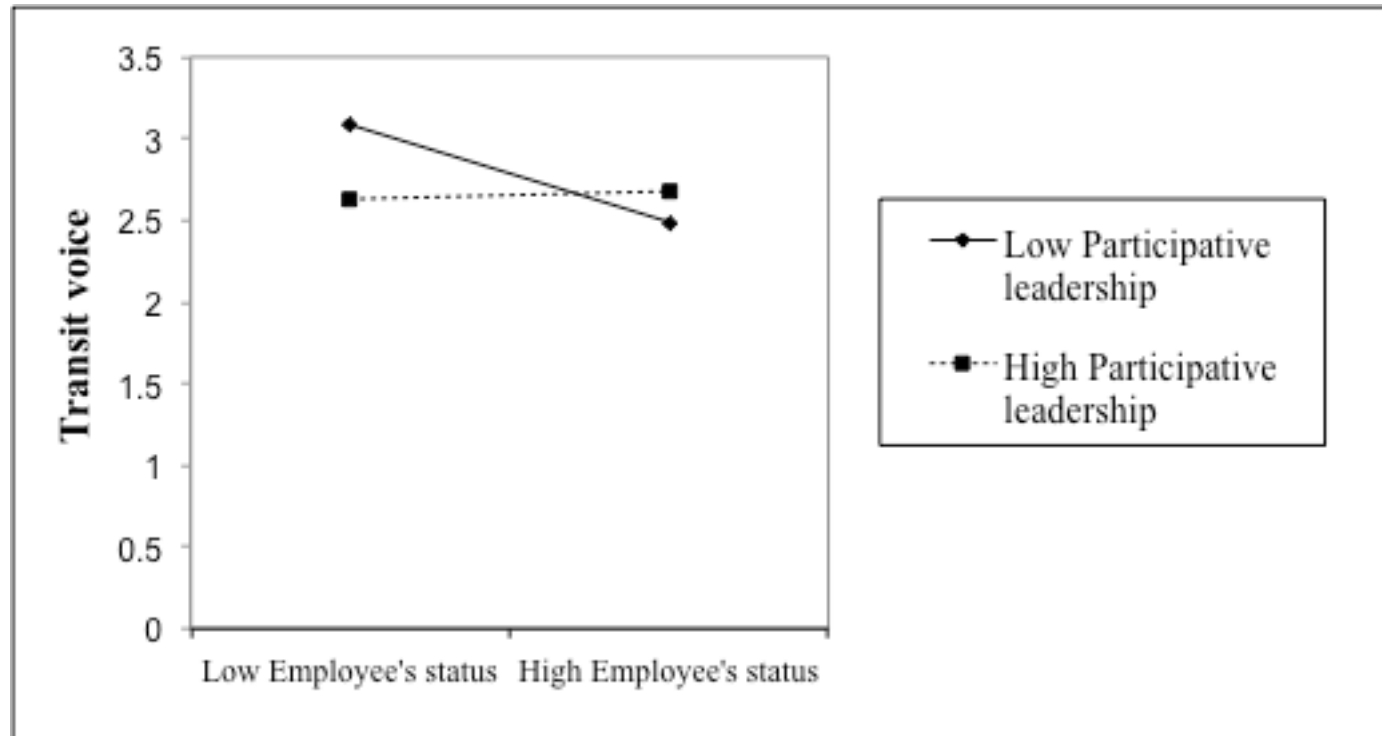


Figure 3 Interaction effect of informant status and competitive goals on informant transit voice

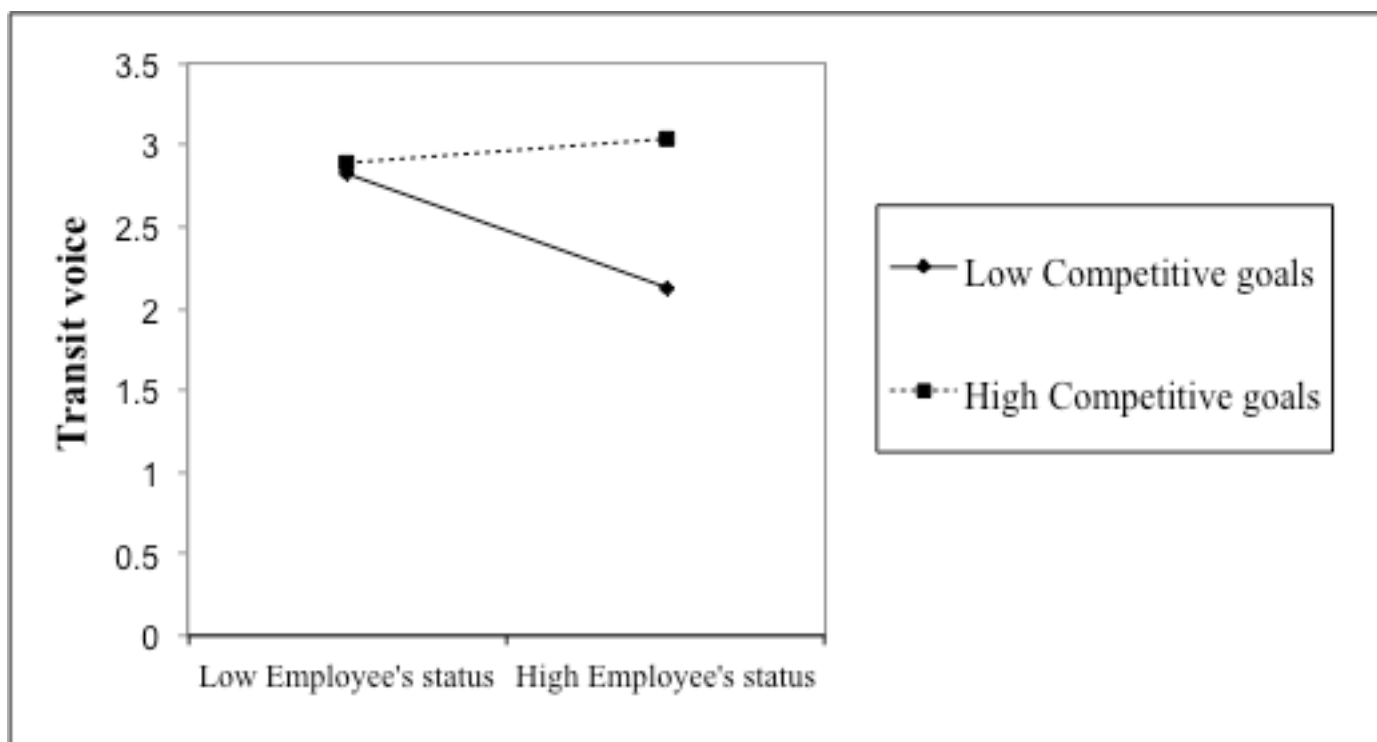


Figure 4 Interaction effect of transferor and informant's status on informant transitiv voice

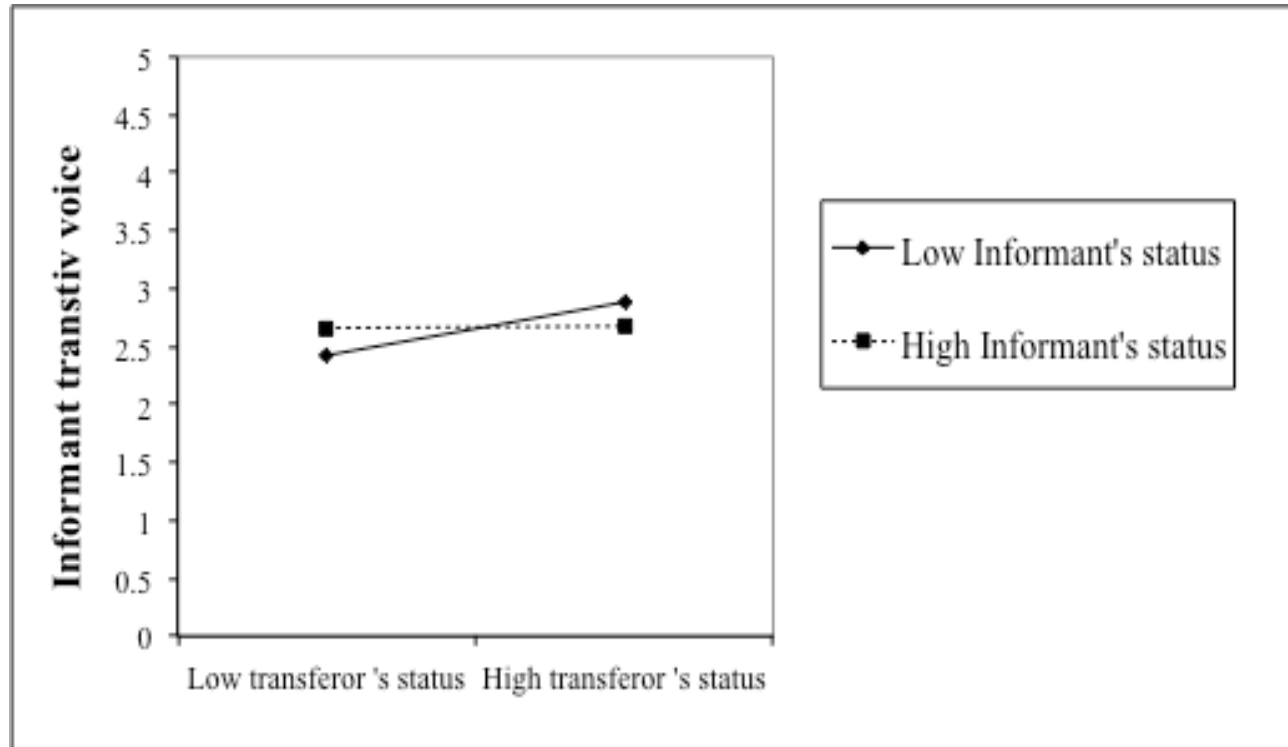


Figure 5 Interaction effect of informant transit voice and LMX differentiation on team performance

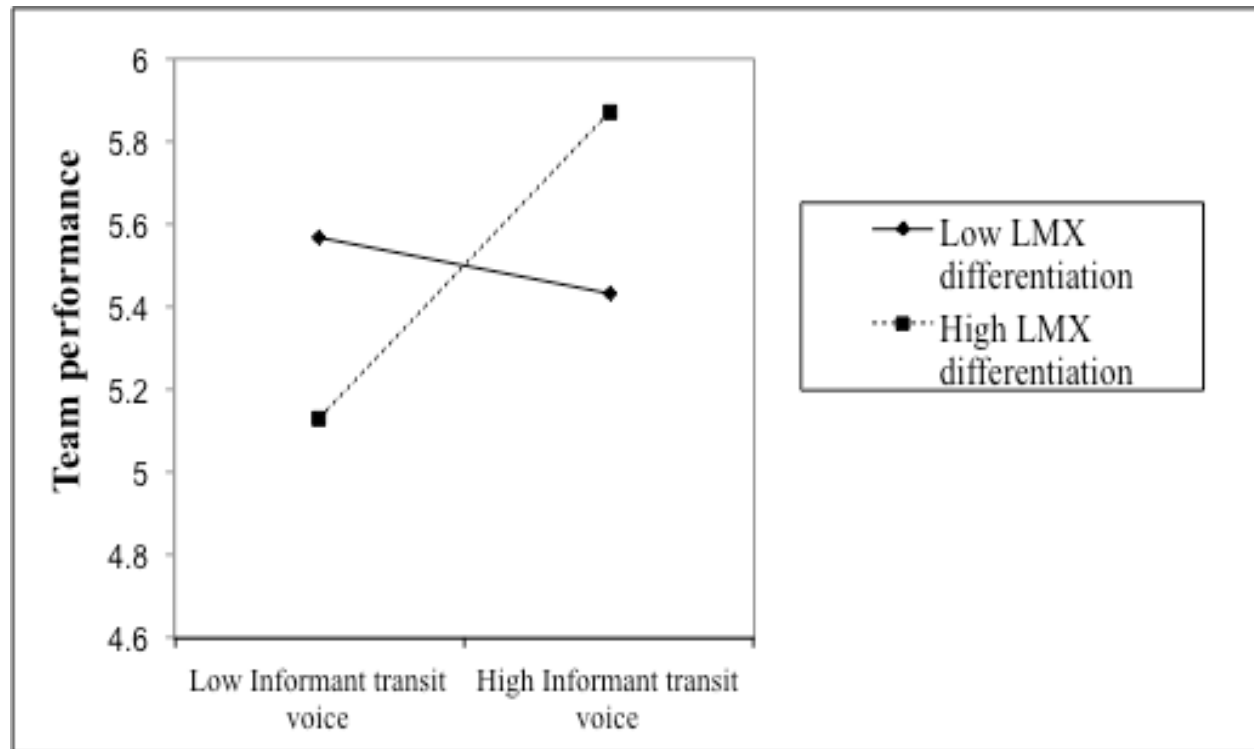




Figure 6 Interaction effect of informant transit voice and competitive goals on team performance

