Employee Engagement and Employee Voice

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Abstract
Employee engagement is a pivotal element that affects organizational effectiveness. There is no doubt among academicians and practitioners alike the importance of having employees who are willing to go beyond their job descriptions. However, not every organization is lucky enough to have the type of employees that are engaged, which lead to continuous discussions in trying to determine why some organization have it and some don't. The employees whose voice is listened and taken into action by the management would feel appreciated and valued to the extend their participation in the organizations, beyond their job descriptions. Hence, this study postulates that the possible effect of employee voice may have on employee engagement. This paper aim to contribute to this area of knowledge by expanding insight on employee engagement and employee voice as it will bring benefits to the organization as a whole.
Keywords: Employee Engagement, Employee Voice.

Introduction
Employee engagement is pivotal as it can either help generate profit for the organisation or cause the organisation to suffer from losses. There are few countries have proven that disengaged workforce caused losses to the countries. In United States of America (USA), Bates (2004) highlighted that the disengaged workforce had cause the country to lose in productivity which was worth $300 billion annually. Hooper (2006) supported this claim stating that Australian economy had lost in $31 billion annually as the result of disengaged employees. In Malaysia, Jobstreet.com reported that more than half of the employees were not performing well in their workplace (Baha, 2016). The article highlighted that one of the contributing reasons was because the management's ignorance on the employee's voice. Accordingly, there are many issues that would occur if the employees are not engaged with the organisations.

Employee engagement is an excellent tool in helping the organisation to gain competitive advantage over others. Anitha (2014) advocated that an engaged employee is those who perform their role in excellence. In other words, an engaged employee are those who are willing to perform beyond his duty or task either during beyond working hours. According to aforementioned researcher, employees can be the most valuable assets in the organisation if they are well-managed (Anitha, 2014).

On top of that, one particular way of good employee's management is to effectively address employee's voice. A study by Takeuchi et al. (2012) and Tangirala et al. (2013) found a positive relationship between employee engagement and employee voice. According to

Liang et al. (2012) and Gruman and Saks (2014), employees are more prone to speak up when they have a greater sense of engagement, whereas, lower level of engagement resulted to lower level of employee voice. Consistent with this idea, empirical findings by Takeuchi et al. (2012) showed a positive relationship between engagement and voice when the organisation is open to input and action as well as giving quick feedback.

The concept of employee voice refers to the employees' ability to express their opinion. It refers to a broad range of employees 'have a say' on things that happened in the organisation. Reddington (2012) contended that there are three different ways how employees expresses themselves, employees either say it in direct way or indirect way, through collective representative or individual channel (Reddington, 2012). Consequently, employees are more likely to advance their ideas when they are exposed to perceived voice in those various mentioned channels.

To date, research on the direct relationship among engagement and voice is limited. Nevertheless, existing literature positively hint a relationship between employee voice and employee engagement in their work. Thus, this paper advocates further studies mainly on the empirical evidence on the relationship between employee engagement and employee voice. In the following section, the link between employee engagement and employee voice is further examined. The third section provides three dimensions of voice. The conceptual framework of the study is presented in the fourth section. Finally, the summary and conclusion are provided in the last section.

Literature Review
Engagement and Voice
The definition of voice as been defined by Morrison (2011) is, "the discretionary communication of ideas, suggestions, concerns or opinion about work-related issues with the intent to improve organisation or unit functioning". According to Van Dyne and LePine (1998), employee voice is a constructive behaviour for organisational performance rather than criticizes the employee. Table 2.1 offered several definitions of voice gathered from previous literature compiled by Morrison (2011). All the stated definitions hold common features as such from sender to receiver, individuals either able to choose to engage or otherwise and being constructive.

Table 2.1
Definitions of Voice (Morrison, 2011)

Author	Definition
Van Dyne and LePine (1998)	"Non-required behaviour that emphasizes expression of constructive challenge intended to improve rather than merely criticize" (p.854)
Van Dyne and LePine (1998)	"Making innovative suggestions for change and recommending modifications to standard procedure even other disagree" (p.109)
Van Dyne et al. (2003)	"Intentionally expressing rather than withholding relevant ideas, information and opinions about possible work-related improvements" (p.1360)
Detert and Burris (2007)	"The discretionary provision of information intended to improve organisational functioning to someone inside the organisation with the perceived authority to act even the information may challenge and upset the status quo of the organisation and its powerholders" (p.869)
Tangirala and Ramanujam (2008)	"Employees expression on challenging yet constructive opinions, concerns or ideas about work-related issues" (p.1189)

Basically, employee voice is to express opinions on way to enhance the current work process. Hence, this study defined employee voice as the act of expressing the thoughts, ideas, dissatisfactions and needs of oneself in a workplace constructively in order to improve the dissatisfying conditions.

The early study of voice was introduced by Hirschman (1970) under "Exit, Voice and Loyalty" literature. The aforementioned researcher was the first who considered voice as a solution to dissatisfaction with job (Kok et al., 2016). For instance, employees that are loyal to the organisation will express the dissatisfaction towards it. In contrast, disloyal and disengaged employees will leave the organisation (Brinsfield et al., 2009). In other words that is in relation to this study, an engaged employees will take the responsibilities to voice out the dissatisfaction to enhance to working process even there is disagreement from others meanwhile the disengaged employees will react the opposite way.

Extended to the Hirschman theory, researches proposed that voice is also a response to dissatisfaction in the workplace in the scope of the overall job satisfaction (Rusbult et al., 1988). According to Ellis et al. (2009), employees that fail to speak up are those who are not able to express themselves and often lead to frustration. As a result, they will become a disengaged employee (Stanford, 2002) that is lacking of motivation and drive. On the other hand, studies done by Olckers and Plessis (2015) found that the results of having clear communication and direction should bring the employees and organization way forward.

Based on the studies done by Van Dyne and LePine (1998) stated that, job satisfaction in specific work situation may resulted better if the employees were been given chances to voice the disagreement. In the working environment, employees must interact with one another and from that interaction will determine the feeling of satisfaction and engagement towards the working process (Van Dyne and LePine, 1998). The aforementioned studies also highlighted that those who are satisfied with the working environment will be highly motivated, they are willingly to express new ideas and take initiative to engage and

communicate ideas in the organisation. Those who have high engagement in the workplace are more likely to offer suggestion in improving the working process as compared to those who are dissatisfied.

In the voice literature, engagement can be seen as an act to express views in a supportive working environment (Goldberg et al., 2011). According to Hassan et al. (2015), having highly motivated employees could encourage them to think and speak for the growth of the organisation. Liang et al. (2012) found that employees are more likely to speak up when they have a greater sense of engagement. The less engagement is perceived to be, the fewer likely employees will voice out concerns. In other words, organisation should provide platforms for the employees to voice out concern and ideas as it would strengthen the bonding and engagement between the entities.

Consistent with this idea, empirical findings showed a positive relationship of engagement and voice when it is open to input and action (Takeuchi et al., 2012). As described by Tangirala et al. (2013), voice shown to be more likely when managers engaged and give input in consultative behaviours which signal receptivity to employee voice. Liu et al. (2013) examined the relationship of engaging the voice with leaders and the study found that employees are more likely to engage in voice with those in a higher level of hierarchy. This is due to those in higher position has greater likelihood to act upon. It is no doubt that engagement has to offer psychological benefits to the employees.

Multidimensional Voice

The employee voice classification in this paper is based on previous literature from Van Dyne et al. (2003), which explains multidimensional framework of employee voice. There are three types of employee voices and motives which are prosocial voice with the motive of constructive and cooperative behavior towards others, defensive voice with the motive of self-protection which subject to fear and acquiescent voice with the motive of disengaged expression of behavior as presented in Table 2.2. These three types of voices could produce different results towards employee engagement. Further explanations of the types of voices are as follows:

Table 2.2
Multidimensional Framework of Employee Voice

Types of Employee Voice	Descriptions
Prosocial Voice	Portrays a constructive behavior in improving work performance and the organization.
Defensive Voice	An act of self-protection based on fear.
Acquiescent Voice	The motive of disengaged and ignorance expression of behavior.

Prosocial Voice

Prosocial voice portrays a constructive behavior in improving work performance and the organisation. This type of behavior prioritizes others as the individuals who willing to speak up for the sake of others. As mentioned by Durak (2012), prosocial voice can be considered as the organisational citizenship behavior. According to Gao et al. (2011), prosocial voice refers to the employee's ability to voice out issues that occur in the organisation for the purpose of enhancement of the other employees based on trust so that they will perform better. Prosocial voice is to describe about feelings, ideas and knowledge pertaining the work

task. However, according to Van Dyne et al. (2003), not everyone in the organisation will perceive prosocial voice as a positive behavior that should be implemented in among the employees in the organisation.

Defensive Voice

Defensive voice can be referred as an act of self-protection. However, there are also situations where the employees voice out opinion for the sake of the organisation instead of concerning to protect themselves (Kok et al., 2016). Based on the prior work done by Ellis (2009), which specifically focus on defensive voice, the literature introduced the types of defensive voice which are instrumental and expressive, the intensity of defensive voice which are high intensity and low intensity, the target of defensive voice which are peer and supervisor as the factors of communication appropriateness perceived and also non-verbal communication responses. Voice can be viewed in many angles with different type of behavior and intensity level. As been defined by Ellis et al. (2009), voice is an act of workers utter complains and criticism whenever they are being treated unequally to achieve personal freedom. The act of speaking defensively may create a positive attitude towards job and organisation (Ng and Feldman, 2012). For instance, by speaking up defensively may persuade employees to ask others for help if they feel burden, thus, it will increase their self-motivation and work performance.

Acquiescent Voice

Acquiescent voice is related to the motive of disengaged and ignorance expression of behavior. According to Harvey (1988), individuals tend to express ignorance along the opinion of the majority of people as to maintain their conformity. The individuals did not border to take burden to express their voice. Pluralist ignorance is one of the examples of acquiescent voice (Kok et al., 2016). Pluralist ignorance considers individual assume that his idea is unique and he expresses it along with the opinions of others. Indeed, the other person seem not agree with the idea yet the idea seems to be dominant (Van Dyne et al., 2003). According to Sehitoghi (2010), within this behavior, employees express the ideas that is not represented their opinions and knowledge. It can be considered as the individual is not willing to spend more time to find better solution and accept it as it is.

Conceptual Framework

This study intended to introduce the antecedents of employee voice which is employee engagement. Studies on employee voice has been discussed where empirically the studies shown positive relationships between employee engagement and employee voice.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Conclusion, Limitation and Future Research

Review of the literature has indicated a strong connection between employee engagement and employee voice. Despite the importance of employee engagement and employee voice, relatively little research has been done in both areas. Thus, this paper hopes to further advocates and contributes to empirical evidence on the relationship between employee engagement and employee voice. However, major limitation of the study is on the absent of data to empirically test and confirm the hypothesized relationship. Therefore, a future research should consider to test the hypothesis as well as to confirm the conceptualized model in providing significant implications to the organization.

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