From Idea Endorsement to Idea Implementation: A Multilevel Network Approach toward Managerial Voice Implementation

Abstract

Endorsing employee voice is one thing; implementation is another. Although organizational research has paid an increasing interest in examining managers' psychological endorsement of employee voice, it is still unclear what factors can affect managers' actual implementation of endorsed voice. Drawing on the theory of planned behavior, we develop a conceptual model of managerial voice implementation and conceptualize it as a manager's reasoned action that is affected by the manager's motivation, felt obligation, and perceived control in relation to implementation. We further explain how social network characteristics across multiple levels in the team can facilitate the manager's psychological impetus for voice implementation. Finally, we discuss the theoretical and practical implications of this manager-centric and network-based framework of managerial voice implementation.

Keywords:

Managerial voice implementation; employee voice; social networks; Simmelian ties; centrality; network closure.

Employee voice, defined as a discretionary behavior centering on the expression of constructive opinions, concerns, or ideas about work-related issues, has received increasing research attention in the organization and management fields over the past two decades (LePine and Van Dyne, 1998; Milliken et al., 2003). Work groups and organizations have been found to perform better when employees can speak up about their ideas, suggestions, and concerns (Detert et al., 2013; Li et al., 2017). As a result, extensive research efforts have been devoted to exploring multilevel predictors of employee voice, including team leadership (e.g. Detert and Burris, 2007), task arrangement (e.g. Ohly et al., 2006), and employees' personal characteristics (e.g. Tangirala and Ramanujam, 2008).

Despite the rapid progress in voice research from the sender-centric perspective, researchers (e.g. Burris, 2012; Burris et al., 2017; Fast et al., 2014; Howell et al., 2015) have only recently started to pay attention to the receiver's (i.e. manager's) reactions to voice. There is a particular interest in managerial voice endorsement, which refers to a manager's psychological recognition and valuation of voiced ideas and their preparations for incorporating the endorsed ideas into work practices (Burris, 2012). For instance, employee factors such as employee trustworthiness (Whiting et al., 2012) and status cues (Howell et al., 2015) and leader factors such as managerial self-efficacy (Fast et al., 2014) have been found to influence managerial voice endorsement. Research has also suggested that managers are more likely to endorse employee voice when voicers exhibit their voice in a supportive form rather than in a challenging form (Burris, 2012), when voicers provide solutions to the problems identified and make their recommendations early (Whiting et al., 2012), or when voicers are direct about their suggestions (under the condition that voicers are credible or polite) (Lam et

al., 2018). Moreover, a high level of voice endorsement occurs when initiating change is important, requires limited resources, and involves less interdependencies of implementation (Burris et al., 2017).

However, the extant literature has paid little attention to examining the managers' continued behavioral responses to endorsed ideas in the workplace, such as their implementation of endorsed ideas, partly because of the assumption that endorsed voice will be ultimately implemented at work. This omission is unfortunate because "ideas are useless unless used" (Levitt, 1963: 79). Voice endorsement indicates a manager's positive attitude toward and thus a certain level of motivation to implement suggested ideas; however, the actual behavior of initiating changes in organizations also depends on the manager's beliefs regarding whether this change is really necessary and can be implemented successfully (Ajzen, 1991). The gap between voice endorsement and voice implementation may be particularly salient in a team context because an endorsed idea may go against other team members' opinions, challenge their status quo, and even threaten their personal interests and welfare. In other words, to initiate a change through implementing endorsed voiced ideas, managers should consider other team members' attention and attitudes to these particular ideas in the broader team context.

Thus, the purpose of this paper is to develop a theoretical model that unravels the process through which managers engage in voice implementation, that is, converting endorsed voice into managerial practices in the workplace. We draw on the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1985, 1987, 1991) and propose that despite the high functional value of endorsed voice, implementation of endorsed voice is jointly determined by managers' motivation, felt obligation, and perceived control in relation to implementation. Then, by integrating the

literature on social networks, voice, and the theory of planned behavior, we develop a social network approach to understanding managerial voice implementation by scrutinizing how the social network architectures across multiple levels within the team facilitate the actual implementation of endorsed voice by enhancing the manager's psychological impetus for implementation.

Research on managerial responses to employee voice

Organizational scholars have performed extensive work on employee voice, and researchers have conducted several literature reviews of these prior studies (e.g. Morrison, 2011, 2014). The vast majority of prior voice research, as suggested in these reviews, is sender-focused and has sought to explore factors that can motivate employee voice. Based on this prior work, we next briefly review the very few recent studies that have employed a receiver-centric perspective.

Burris (2012) conducted three studies using both survey and experimental designs to systematically examine managerial responses, including voice endorsement and the perceived performance of voicing employee, to different types of voice. The results of the three studies provided convergent support for the central prediction that managerial reactions to employee voice depend on the type of voice displayed (i.e. the message): Employees engaging in challenging voice behavior faced lower levels of endorsement and lower overall perceived performance than those engaging in supportive voice behavior. Extending this pioneering work, Burris and colleagues (2017) delved into the specific content of issues delivered in voice behavior and found that managers were more likely to endorse voice with ideas that demonstrated a higher level of importance, required fewer resources to implement, and were

less complex to implement.

Burris and colleagues focused exclusively on employee-centric factors that affect managerial responses to voice, whereas Fast et al. (2014) developed a manager-centric framework and examined how managers' own factors influence their reactions to employee voice. Through a field study and a follow-up experimental study, the authors revealed that managers with lower levels of managerial self-efficacy (the belief in one's capability to successfully meet the elevated competence expectations associated with managerial roles) were more averse to voice in terms of reduced voice solicitation behavior, which in turn decreased future employee voice.

These scarce studies suggest that managers' reactions to voice are determined not only by the content (e.g. quality and type) of voice but also by managers' own beliefs about their competence in successfully utilizing endorsed ideas to initiate constructive changes at work. Therefore, although employee voiced ideas are functionally useful to the team or the organization, managers who are likely to psychologically endorse these ideas according to the extant literature may not take any actions to implement these ideas and make changes at work if they lack sufficient psychological impetus for implementation. Drawing on the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991), we next conceptualize managerial voice implementation as a reasoned action that is proximally driven by managers' motivation of, felt obligation toward, and perceived control over implementation.

Managerial voice implementation as a planned behavior

We regard managerial response to employee voice as a dynamic process in which a manager first endorses a voiced idea and then implements this idea in work procedures or practices. The

central focus of this paper is on the second stage of managerial voice implementation, when endorsed ideas are converted into managerial practices that would generate beneficial outcomes (e.g. improved organizational efficiency and effectiveness). This two-stage distinction between the endorsement and implementation of voice is consistent with Dutton and Ashford's (1993) framework of issue selling, which differentiates managers' attention to issues from their subsequent actions. Given that the objective of managerial response to employee voice is to improve group or organizational effectiveness by initiating organizational change (Morrison and Milliken, 2000), the conceptual distinction between voice endorsement and voice implementation is also consistent with the organizational change literature, which differentiates successive phases in implementing a change (Armenakis et al., 1999; Galpin, 1996; Kotter, 1995; Lewin, 1947).

The theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1985, 1987, 1991) is widely used to predict engagement in reasoned actions and challenging behaviors in organizations (Armitage and Conner, 2001). The central tenet of this theory is that individual behavior is proximally triggered by three psychological factors: (1) positive attitude toward a given behavior, which refers to an individual's overall motivation to perform this behavior, (2) perceived norms, which refer to an individual's beliefs that performing a given behavior is desirable to and supported by certain referent individuals or groups, and (3) perceived behavioral control, which refers to the extent to which an individual believes that he/she is capable of performing a given behavior and has control over this performance. According to the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1985, 1987, 1991), these three psychological factors have a synergetic effect on individual behavior.

The theory of planned behavior has also been used to predict employee voice, which can be regarded as an individual's planned behavior resulting from his/her deliberate cost-and-benefit analyses (Dutton et al., 1997; Milliken et al., 2003). Most related studies have drawn on the theory of planned behavior to test the influences of employees' motivational factors on voice (e.g. Cheng et al., 2005, 2006; Michel et al., 2015; Neuwirth and Frederick, 2004). Liang et al. (2012), however, provided a more complete picture of how employee voice is predicted by the three psychological states outlined in theory of planned behavior. In this research, the authors demonstrated that employee voice can be jointly predicted by psychological safety (a proxy of positive attitude toward voice), felt obligation for making constructive changes (a proxy of norms), and organization-based self-esteem (a proxy of one's perceived behavioral control). In particular, they found that felt obligation and organization-based self-esteem were most strongly related to employee promotive voice, while psychological safety was most strongly related to employee prohibitive voice.

Although speaking up in organizations requires deliberate preparation by employees, incorporating employees' voiced ideas into work practices requires a deliberate calculation of pros and cons by managers. Thus, it is reasonable to draw on the theory of planned behavior to propose that managers' deliberate actions in relation to voice implementation depend on the extent to which managers are motivated to implement endorsed ideas, feel obliged to implement them due to normative pressure, and have control over the implementation process. It is worth noting that our framework of managerial voice implementation assumes that voice is already endorsed by managers. It is thus suggested that managers recognize the instrumental value of voice (Burris, 2012). It is also suggested that the manager is in alignment with the

voicing employee due to their shared recognition of the instrumental value of voice. In this situation, the implementation motivation derives mainly from managers' expected benefits to themselves and other team members, their felt obligation to implement derives mainly from their expected benefits to and support from other team members, and perceived control over implementation derives mainly from managers' personal resources in the organization. All of these psychological phenomena should be shaped by social network architectures in teams, which the voice literature has previously examined.

Social network research in the voice literature

The central tenet of social network research is that actors are embedded in structured networks of interconnected social relations that offer opportunities for and constraints on behavior (Brass et al. 2004). In general, social network architectures can be understood at three different levels: 1) the dyadic level focuses on the specific relationship quality between two actors, 2) the nodal level focuses on the local network structure of a focal actor's social relationships with other members, and 3) the group level focuses on the global network structure of team members' interconnected social relationships (Burt et al., 2013). There has been long-lasting calls for multilevel organizational network studies (Brass et al., 2004; Moliterno and Mahony, 2011). Yet, the extant network-based voice research has rarely adopted a multi-level perspective to the network architectures.

In general, most of the voice literature has focused on the nodal level, highlighting how interacting partners' structural positions (i.e. network centrality) in networks (i.e. instrumental networks, or expressive networks) exert an effect on individual or unit outcomes. For instance, employees with a high level of network centrality are shown to have a high possibility of

speaking up (Pauksztat et al., 2011; Venkataramani and Tangirala, 2010; Venkataramani et al., 2016), and their voice is also easier for managers to recognize (Howell et al., 2015). Similarly, Detert et al.'s (2013) work demonstrated that choosing voice recipients who possess influence potential and control in an organization (i.e. a leader rather than a coworker) facilitates voice implementation and thus benefits unit effectiveness. Other research has posited that employees are part of multiple dyadic exchanges in organizations, and thus highlighted the effects of dyadic relations and the larger social networks in which they are embedded on employees' voice behavior. For instance, Liu et al. (2013) emphasized the socially embedded nature of vertical social exchanges in organization and, in particular, determined that the surrounding dyadic relationships in which employees are embedded plays an important role of affecting their choice of voice targets. More recently, Sherf et al. (2018), at the group level, examined how voice distribution among team members undermines utilization of expertise and team performance, demonstrating the devastating effects of voice centrality on team performance.

The extant literature has suggested that employees' social network characteristics have significant impacts on their voice behaviors and subsequent outcomes of voice in organizations. However, this line of work has largely adopted an employee-centric view and focused on a single level of the network, neglecting a holistic examination of network architectures across multiple levels in a team context. What more lacking is the examination of how these multilevel network characteristics can work together and affect managers' implementation of their endorsed ideas voiced by team members. Next, we develop a multilevel network approach toward managerial voice implementation and discuss how network architectures at multiple levels affect the psychological process of managerial voice implementation.

A multilevel network approach toward managerial voice implementation

Managerial voice implementation is a vital stage in which constructive ideas and solutions voiced by employees are translated into improved work practices. It is also a challenging and risky behavior that requires both tangible and intangible resources from managers. Figure 1 depicts our conceptual framework, revealing the psychological process through which multilevel network characteristics affect managerial voice implementation. We first focus on the influences of dyadic ties between the manager and the voicing employee (dyadic level), followed by the discussion of the impact of the manager's and the voicing employee's network centrality (nodal level). We finally theorize how a team's overall network closure among all team members (group level) affects voice implementation.

Strong and Simmelian ties between the manager and the voicing employee

The defining nature of a social network is a set of actors connected with a set of ties or relations (e.g. friendship, communication, and advice). Thus, a dyadic tie, which represents the relation between two actors, is the most fundamental component of an actor's network. In this paper, we focus on a manager's general dyadic tie with the voicing employee, which is conceived as multiple types of relations, such as friendship, advice-seeking, and professional relations. This multiplexity of social ties stems from the fact that leaders often develop both instrumental relations (e.g. work flows) and socio-emotional relations with their employees at workplace (e.g. Brass, 1992; Ibarra and Andrews, 1993). The quality of a dyadic social relation or the strength of a tie can be characterized as a function of duration, intimacy, exchange frequency, and emotional closeness (Granovetter, 1973, 1982). Compared with weak ties, strong ties are generally associated with stronger interpersonal trust, reciprocity, and interest alignment

between two actors (Hansen, 1999; Krackhardt, 1992).

Research has revealed that strong ties facilitate mutual help and collaboration, knowledge transfer, and advice giving and taking between the two actors (Granovetter, 2005). In the voice literature, research has demonstrated that strong ties between leaders and employees facilitate employee voice behavior (Van Dyne et al., 2008). We argue that strong ties also encourage managerial implementation of employee voice. Given that endorsed voice usually indicate high functional value to the working group (Burris et al., 2017), the motivation to implement the voiced ideas mainly derives from the manager's attitude, that is, his/her beliefs that the implementation will lead to positive outcomes (Ajzen, 1991). When having strong ties with managers, employees are more likely to propose constructive and supportive ideas or suggestions that are consistent with the manager's values and personal interests (Lazarsfeld and Merton, 1954; Suitor and Keeton, 1997). Indeed, research on social homophily has demonstrated that people who share strong personal ties tend to be similar in professional beliefs, opinions, and values (Ibarra, 1992; Monge and Contractor, 1997; Suitor and Keeton, 1997). In the organizational context, McDonald and Westphal (2003) further demonstrated that potential external advisors who share strong relationship ties (i.e. friendship ties) with a focal manager should be especially likely to confirm the manager's strategy-related beliefs. In sum, we argue that the manager should have stronger motivation to implement ideas proposed by employees to whom they are linked with strong ties rather than weak ties.

Proposition 1: A manager will have higher motivation to implement the endorsed voice when the manager and the voicing employee are linked by a strong tie.

A manager's behavioral decision to initiate change is not only prompted by his/her motivation but also triggered by situational pressure (Ajzen, 1991). In the voice context, the manager's voice implementation is not only "pulled" by the expected benefits, but also "pushed" by some shared norms or group pressures. Specifically, the manager will feel obligated to roll out constructive changes by implementing the voiced ideas when his/her interaction with the voicing employee is monitored by their shared co-clique members.

Simmel's (1950) theory of triadic structures provides a more nuanced perspective in understanding dyadic ties by considering the broader network ties behind the two actors. Krackhardt (1998) also noted the importance of third party ties for dyadic relations and showed that Simmelian ties (i.e., strong ties embedded in a clique) are stronger, more durable, and better able to produce agreement between actors than sole-symmetric strong ties (i.e., regular strong ties). Specifically, a Simmelian tie exists when the two actors are reciprocally and strongly tied to each other and both are reciprocally and strongly tied to at least one common third party (Krackhardt, 1999). Compared with sole-symmetric strong ties, Simmelian ties are associated with more role constraints to both actors because they are both embedded in a clique of individuals who have less autonomy to act independently and more normative pressure to act on behalf of the subgroup's collective interests and welfare (Krackhardt, 1999). By mitigating competition and self-interest, Simmelian ties facilitate the development of shared goals and common interests (Tortoriello and Krackhardt, 2010).

Network scholars regard Simmelian ties as qualitatively distinct from regular strong ties because the two actors are subject to the group norms enforced by their shared cliques (Krackhardt, 1999). In the process leading to voice implementation, although a strong tie

between the manager and the voicing employee can enhance the manager's motivation to implement the endorsed voice, their shared clique members may generate normative pressure to the manager and thus strengthen the manager's felt obligation to implement the endorsed voice. Thus, we contend that the local social structure around the dyadic tie between the manager and the voicing employee will provide additional impetus for managerial voice implementation. In the presence of a Simmelian tie between the manager and the voicing employee, the manager should feel both motivated and obliged to implement endorsed ideas.

Proposition 2: A manager will have higher motivation and felt obligation to implement the endorsed voice when the manager and the voicing employee are linked by a Simmelian tie.

Despite the strong motivation for expected benefits and felt obligation compelled by clique norms, a manager may not engage in the implementation process if the voiced idea is dominated by merely a small set of team members while other team members are indifferent to the issue. Indeed, when voice is predominantly emanating from only a few members in a team, the utilization of members' expertise and team performance might be undermined (Sherf et al., 2018). To fully reveal the social dynamics of voice implementation, we go beyond dyadic ties between managers and voicing employees, and examine the effects of the manager's and voicing employees' network positions within the team network. In particular, we discuss the implications of the informal power arising from their network centrality.

Network centrality of the voicing employee and the manager

Power is an important consideration in facilitating the process of voice implementation

(Grant et al., 2011; Urbach and Fay, 2018). In organizational settings, managers normally have higher formal authority power than other team members. Yet, managerial power is occasionally offset by labor factors that can lead to employees' power (Wright, 2000), such as the degree to which employees work as a collective (e.g., labor union) in order to enforce change (i.e., associational power) and the degree to which there is a tight labor market that provides scarce recruits and substitutes for employees (i.e., structural power). Moreover, employees can also gain informal power from their informal social structures in the organization, particularly from their network centrality within team social networks (Astley and Sachdeva, 1984; Tichy and Fombrun, 1979). Given that our theoretical framework emphasizes how social network characteristics in a team context affect the psychological process of managerial voice implementation, we focus on how the informal power, originated from one's network centrality, of both the voicing employee and the manager affect managerial voice implementation.

An individual's network centrality can be measured by different network index, including in-degree centrality, closeness centrality, and betweenness centrality (Brass and Burkhardt, 1993). These centrality measures reflect an individual's power in different aspects. Specifically, in-degree centrality indicates the number of others who send a tie to the focal actor (called *ego* in network terms) and serve as the available alternatives for the ego. In other words, in-degree centrality represents an individual's informal influence on others and it is positively associated with personal influence among co-workers (Venkataramani and Tangirala, 2010). In addition, closeness centrality indicates the ego's independent assess to others in a network by summing the lengths of all shortest paths linking the ego to every other actor within the network (Brass, 1984; Freeman, 1979). Thus, closeness centrality reflects an individual's informal

power in terms of the extent of social resources that are available to the focal person. Finally, betweenness centrality indicates the ego's potential control over others because it measures the extent to which the ego stands on the shortest path between pairs of other actors (Freeman, 1979). These centrality measures together offer a comprehensive assessment of managers' and voicing employees' informal power with a team.

Prior research has demonstrated that network centrality plays an important role in influencing an employee's willingness to speak up (Pauksztat et al., 2011; Venkataramani and Tangirala, 2010; Venkataramani et al., 2016). Extending these prior work, we argue that the voicing employee's network centrality can also facilitate managerial voice implementation because employees who occupy central network positions have greater access to and control over relevant resources (Brass, 1984, 1985; Burkhardt and Brass, 1990; Krackhardt, 1990), exhibiting pressure to the manager and thus strengthening the manager's felt obligation to implement the endorsed idea.

Proposition 3: A manager will have higher levels of felt obligation to implement the endorsed voice when the voicing employee has high centrality within the team network.

Although the voicing employee's informal power has significant influence on managerial voice implementation by affecting the manager's felt obligation, the manager's perceived control over implementation is also vital in facilitating a manager's implementation of the endorsed ideas (Ajzen, 1991). A manager's belief of her ability to control her own action and the team's collective actions in implementing a voiced idea is largely determined by his/her sense of personal power, and in particular, the informal power derived from his/her structural

position within the team social network. Therefore, drawing from the aforementioned network research on intra-organizational power, we argue that a manager with higher network centrality tends to have stronger perceived control over implementing the endorsed voice.

Proposition 4: A manager will have higher perceived control of implementing the endorsed voice when the manager has high centrality within the team network.

Network closure within the team

Unlike voice endorsement that is mainly determined by the manager's own affect and cognitions in relation to voice (Burris, 2012), voice implementation often requires collective efforts and concerted actions of multiple team members. Thus, the overall network characteristics of the team is also an important determinant for the manager's decision to implement an endorsed idea. At the highest level of team network architectures, network closure indicates the cohesiveness of a team, which in turn determines the manager's expectations of efficiency and success in implementing the endorsed voice.

Network closure is often measured by density, i.e., the number of ties in a network divided by the maximum number of ties that are possible (Kilduff and Brass, 2010). A network with high closure often reduces uncertainty via close monitoring, promotes knowledge transfer and collaboration (Reagans and McEvily, 2003), and strengthens collective values and goals. This is because people in dense network usually have higher willingness to cooperate with each other due to their shared norms, mutual trust, and reputational concern (Coleman, 1988, 1990). In the process leading to managerial voice implementation, network closure can facilitate the integration and synthesis of team members' individual efforts and resources to deal with

situational uncertainty associated with organizational changes. Thus, network closure is considered as an ideal condition for implementing novel and useful ideas in organizations (Perry-Smith and Mannucci, 2017). Drawing from these arguments, we posit that high network closure (high density of the team network) provides the manager with more compatible resources and concerted support to implement the endorsed voice, which in turn enhances the manager's perceived control of voice implementation.

Proposition 5: A manager will have higher perceived control of implementing the endorsed voice when there is high network closure within the team.

To sum up, the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1985, 1987, 1991) posits that attitude, norms, and perceived control will have synergetic effects on individual behavior. Our theoretical model suggests that a team's social network characteristics have significant impacts on the manager's motivation, felt obligation, and perceived control regarding voice implementation. Taking these arguments together, we postulate that multilevel network characteristics will interact to influence the manager's actual engagement in voice implementation—the manager is most likely to implement an endorsed voice in the condition where his/her motivation, felt obligation, and perceived control are at the highest level.

Proposition 6: A manager is most likely to implement an endorsed voice when the manager and the voicing employee both have high network centrality and are linked with a Simmelian tie, and when there is high network closure within the team. This is because the manager's motivation, felt obligation, and perceived control are at the highest level in these circumstances.

Discussion

Theoretical implications

Although a vast number of studies have examined the driving forces, underlying mechanisms, and contextual boundaries for employee voice in the organizational context, a scholarly understanding of what factors can affect how managers incorporate voiced ideas into work practices is lacking. Drawing on the theory of planned behavior and social network research, we develop an integrative framework of managerial voice implementation delineating how social network characteristics in a team facilitate the manager's motivational, normative, and controllability beliefs regarding voice implementation. Our conceptual framework has substantive implications for organizational voice scholarship.

First, our conceptual model highlights the pivotal role of managerial discretion in implementing endorsed employee voice. By differentiating between voice endorsement and voice implementation, our model provides more nuanced insights for understanding managers' behavioral responses to employee voice in the organizational context, which has garnered increasing scholarly attention in the voice literature (e.g. Burris, 2012; Burris et al., 2017; Fast et al., 2014; Howell et al., 2015). Whereas prior research findings have suggested that managers' decisions to endorse employees' ideas depend largely on the utility perceptions of these ideas, our conceptual model suggests that the implementation of these ideas, despite their potential utility, is mainly determined by managers' cognitive evaluations of personal gains (motivation), normative pressure (felt obligation), and controllability. Knowing these psychological impetuses for managerial voice implementation is vital for understanding the bottom-up process of organizational change and innovation emanating from employee voice.

Second, our model contributes to the extant literature on the consequences of employee voice. Specifically, scholars have just started to pay attention to managers' affective, cognitive, and behavioral reactions to voice (Burris, 2012; Fast et al., 2014), producing scarce and inconsistent empirical findings regarding the effects of voice on voicing employees (Burris, 2012; Grant, 2013; Howell et al., 2015; Whiting et al., 2012). Although recent research on voice endorsement has attempted to address these conflicting findings by exploring why managers tend to have different psychological reactions to employees who speak up on issues with different content, in different ways, and under different contexts (Burris, 2012; Burris et al., 2017), managers' psychological endorsement of voiced ideas does not equate to managers' positive attitude toward or treatment of voicing employees. Our focus on the facilitating factors of managers' implementation of voiced ideas represents a considerable extension of research on the consequences of employee voice by highlighting the missing link in voice implementation between employee voice and the ultimate enhancement of organizational functioning, performance, and effectiveness (Detert et al., 2013; MacKenzie et al., 2011).

Furthermore, we underscore multilevel network characteristics of the team as the social drivers for the actual implementation of endorsed voice. At the dyadic level, although prior research has demonstrated that the quality of dyadic relationship can affect the voicing employee's choice of target (Liu et al., 2013), our model emphasizes the influence of dyadic ties on the recipient—suggesting that a strong tie (particularly a Simmelian tie) between the voicing employee and the manager provides the micro-foundation for the manager's motivational and normative impetus for voice implementation. At the individual level, most of prior voice research has examined the voicing employee's network centrality in the voice

process (e.g., Venkataramani and Tangirala, 2010, Venkataramani et al., 2016), our model scrutinizes the influences of network centrality from both the voicing employee and the manager on the process from voice endorsement to voice implementation. On the one hand, consistent with research findings in the labor relation literature (Wright, 2000; Piven, 2008), we highlight the role of voicing employees' informal power (i.e., network centrality) in pushing forward the voice implementation process. On the other hand, our model provides solid theoretical support for Detert et al.'s (2013) finding that employee voice can be transformed into a unit's effectiveness only when it is targeted to managers who maintain adequate power to take actions. At the team level, organizational innovation research suggests that team members' network closure plays a vital role in leading them to break barriers and implement their novel and useful ideas in the workplace (Perry-Smith and Mannucci, 2017). In a similar vein, our model emphasizes the importance of network closure in teams in transforming employee voice into beneficial organizational outcomes.

Finally, our conceptual model contributes to the emerging work on integrating psychological and network perspectives in organizational scholarship (Casciaro et al., 2015). In particular, our model considers multilevel team network phenomena and managerial psychological phenomena as intertwined in the organizational voice setting. We delineate how managers' psychological dynamics for voice implementation is shaped by the team social structures across different levels of network architectures, including strong and Simmelian ties linking the manager and the voicing employees, the manager and voicers' network centrality, and network closure of the team. This network-psychological integration greatly enhances our understanding of organizational voice phenomena by synthesizing insights from both domains.

Limitations and directions for future research

Notwithstanding the ways in which our framework contributes to the voice literature, we recognize several theoretical limitations of our conceptual model that merit attention in future research. Here, we highlight four issues with particular salience. First, although we seek to differentiate managerial voice endorsement from managerial voice implementation and identify factors that can facilitate the movement across these two stages, the major focus of our conceptual model is on the premise that employee voice has already been endorsed by managers. Although this phenomenon is prevalent in organizations, it is theoretically possible that employee voice is rejected by managers because of their expected low possibility of implementation. In other words, the voice endorsement and voice implementation stages may not be as purely separate and independent as our model assumes.

Second, relatedly, by considering voice endorsement as the underlying context of our conceptual model, we also differentiate determining factors of voice implementation from determining factors of voice endorsement. Drawing from prior research findings (Burris et al., 2013; Burris et al., 2017), we assume that managers' psychological endorsement of voice is mainly determined by their perceived utility of the voiced ideas. The expected utility of voice, however, may also influence managers' attitude toward implementation, which in turn affects their actual, planned behavior of voice implementation. In other words, despite the discussion of transforming endorsed voice into work practices through implementation, we are still unable to provide an integrative framework that can point to the most direct and influential factors determining managers' voice endorsement decisions and voice implementation activities.

Third, the specific focus of managers' and team members' network characteristics as

the antecedents of voice implementation is undoubtedly incomplete. We neglect other psychological mechanisms that can directly influence managerial voice implementation. For example, managers' self-efficacy could also be a proximal antecedent because self-efficacy has been found to predict a variety of challenging and proactive behaviors (Morrison and Phelps, 1999; Speier and Frese, 1997). Despite our leader-centric perspective, the voicing employee could also use different upward influencing strategies (Farmer et al., 1997) to increase the likelihood that his/her voiced idea is implemented by managers. Building such a model may be a first step toward developing a receiver-centric framework for voice research and understanding factors that can influence how managers deal with employee voice. A next step may be to apply our framework to explore more antecedents, mechanisms, and boundary conditions for managerial voice implementation.

Finally, even though this model seeks to explain the ongoing process of managerial voice implementation, it is not sufficient to portray the complex dynamics underlying the process from employee voice to managerial voice implementation. For instance, we have not directly addressed any temporal issues by considering more nuanced interrelationships among antecedents of voice endorsement and antecedents of voice implementation. It is possible that the content of voice is the most influential factor deciding managers' perceived utility of voice and in turn voice endorsement; as the implementation unfolds, however, managers may regard the same content of voice as less useful or even more harmful and ultimately reject the voiced idea. These interrelationships are insightful and worthy of further exploration, but they are beyond the scope of our framework. We thus encourage future studies to extend our model by expanding on the consequences of the implementation stage. For instance, future researchers

can pay more attention to voicing employees' affective, cognitive, and behavioral reactions to managerial voice implementation. In so doing, the understanding of the dynamic and ongoing process of employee voice and managerial voice implementation will be more complete.

Implications for practice

Given the desirable consequences of employee voice and the crucial role of manager responses to employee voice, organizations must take prudent steps to facilitate managers' implementation of the ideas voiced by employees. Our model offers some practical implications both for executive managers who seek to make constructive changes in the workplace and for policy makers who seek to establish effective policies and activities to improve organizational functioning and effectiveness.

Despite the psychological recognition and endorsement of employee voice, implementing voiced ideas in organizations is still challenging for managers. Our model suggests that there is a deliberate evaluation process whereby managers weigh the costs and benefits associated with implementing endorsed ideas voiced by employees. Specifically, to increase the likelihood of voice implementation, both the voicing employees' and managers' social network ties and structure within their managed teams are important because they can enhance managers' motivation, normative pressure, and controllability regarding implementation. One straightforward suggestion for managers is to develop strong social network ties with every team member and encourage team members to develop strong network ties with others. This structure of network ties in a team, according to our framework, is most beneficial for managerial voice implementation.

Organizations can implement several policies and programs to facilitate the process of

managerial voice taking. As our model suggests that strong voicer-manager dyadic ties have a positive effect on managerial voice implementation, organizations can consider adding "voicing to leaders" as an important in-role responsibility for employees who share strong ties with their leaders. These employees, who can work as voice surrogates, may play a strong role in enhancing an organization's constructive changes and effective functioning. Moreover, network-building HR practices that enhance employees' team cohesion and mitigate team conflicts, such as cultivating a collaborative environment and establishing conflict negotiation mechanisms in work teams, can be especially effective because they can facilitate a consistent norm and support from different parties to promote managers to act. Lastly, organizations can establish leadership training and development programs that seek to increase managers' political skills in reconstructing voice networks, especially when different subgroups hold different opinions. This is a difficult issue, but once solved, it could significantly contribute to managers' perceived control over voice implementation, which is well worth future exploration.

Conclusion

Drawing on the theory of planned behavior and the social network literature, we present a conceptual model of managerial voice implementation that specifies how multilevel network characteristics within a team affect managers' actual implementation of endorsed employee voice. As with any theoretical framework, a next step is to empirically test our propositions in the organizational context. We hope that this manager-centric and network-based framework encourages researchers to further investigate managers' affective, cognitive, and behavioral reactions to employee voice and the implications for employees and the organization.

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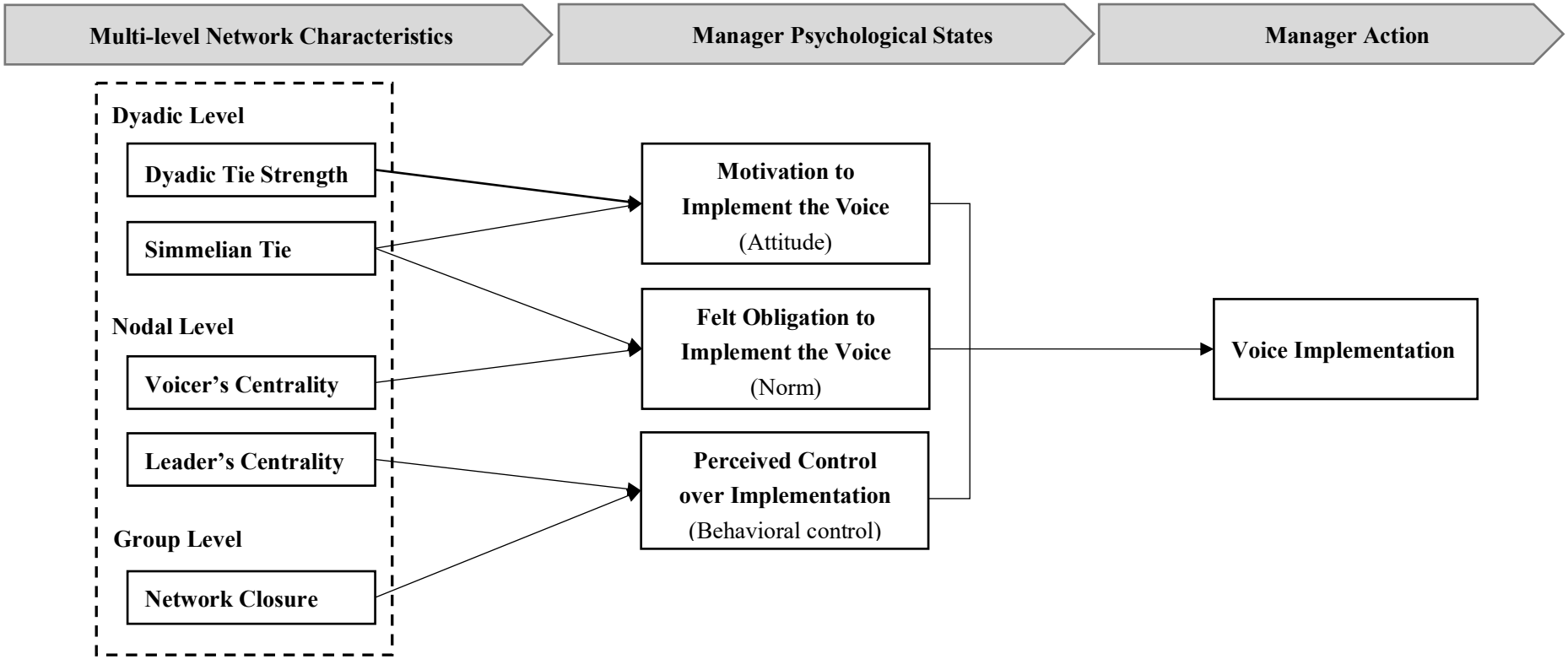

Figure 1. Conceptual Model Overview