Tactics of Speaking Up: The Roles of Issue Importance, Perceived Managerial Openness, and Managers' Positive Mood

Abstract

Extant voice research has focused mainly on the conditions under which employees speak up, but we have limited knowledge about *how* employees speak up. This study examines voice tactics, or the various ways in which employees express concerns to or share suggestions with their managers. Based on the notion that voice is a deliberative behavior, we draw upon a cost-benefit framework and propose that voice tactics are influenced by messages' characteristics, as well as managers' stable and temporal characteristics. Specifically, we examine the joint effects of issue importance, perceived managerial openness, and managers' positive mood on employees' public (vs. private) and formal (vs. informal) voice tactics. Across two independent studies, our findings demonstrate that employees tend to use public channels and formal procedures only when three conditions are met simultaneously: (a) the issue is important, (b) managers are perceived as being open to employee voice, and (c) managers are in a positive mood at the time of voicing. In addition, we found that speaking up via public channels or formal procedures is positively related to the success of voice.

Keywords

voice tactics, issue importance, perceived managerial openness, managers' positive mood

Voice refers to employees' voluntary behavior of communicating their work-related concerns to organizational leaders (Detert & Burris, 2007; Van Dyne, Kamdar, & Joireman, 2008), through which employees can influence managers by directing their attention to important trends, new ideas, or potential problems (Burris, 2012; Morrison & Phelps, 1999). Conceptualizing voice as a dichotomous choice between speaking up or remaining silent, scholars have focused mainly on identifying factors that may encourage or discourage employees' choice to voice to their managers (e.g., Burris, Detert, & Chiaburu, 2008; Detert & Burris, 2007; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998; see a recent review by Morrison, 2011). Although this line of research has invaluably informed us about when employees are likely to speak up, we know little about *how* employees voice out their concerns, or their voice tactics (Dutton & Ashford, 1993; Dutton, Ashford, O'Neill, & Lawrence, 2001; Morrison, 2011).

An investigation of employee voice tactics is important, because it allows us to develop a deeper understanding of employee voice as a deliberative and calculative behavior (Dutton & Ashford, 1993; Dutton et al., 2001). Specifically, past research has focused mainly on how employees' calculation of the risk of voice determines their decision to voice or not (e.g., Detert & Edmondson, 2011; Milliken, Morrison, & Hewlin, 2003). Speaking up or remaining silent, however, is only one aspect of voice, and engaging in voice behavior does not necessarily translate into positive outcomes, such as managers' attention and managerial implementation (Burris, Rockmann, & Kimmons, 2017). In the workplace, managers are often bombarded with many problems and issues and can attend to and endorse only a few (Mintzberg, 1973). One challenge for voicing employees is how to effectively attract managers' limited attention (Dutton & Ashford, 1993; Dutton et al., 2001) and minimize the personal risks associated with speaking up at the same time (Ashford, Rothbard, Piderit, & Dutton, 1998; Detert & Burris, 2007). Scholars thus have called for a "better understanding of

employees' choices about *how* to communicate concerns and suggestions" (Morison, 2011, p. 399), as how voice is delivered may substantially affect its outcomes. In this sense, one critical aspect of voice behavior that cannot be ignored is the tactics employees use to deliver messages to their managers. Our study accordingly answers an important question: What factors affect employees' decisions regarding voice tactics and how do they relate to the success of voice?

In particular, following the research of Dutton and Ashford (1993) and Dutton et al. (2001), we use two categories to conceptualize employee voice tactics. One category concerns the choice of channels for voice—whether the employee uses a public channel (e.g., weekly staff meetings) or a private channel (e.g., one-on-one conversations). This category of voice channel is labeled as the public voice tactic, referring to the extent to which employees use public channels over private channels to speak up. The other category concerns the formality of voice—whether speaking up through official and legitimized procedures (e.g., submitting a written report) or unofficial procedures (e.g., behind-the-scenes negotiations). This category of formality of voice is labeled as the formal voice tactic, referring to the extent to which employees use formal procedures over informal procedures to speak up.[1]

Building on the widely adopted cost-benefit framework in the voice literature (e.g., Detert & Burris, 2007; Farmer & Maslyn, 1999; Premeaux & Bedeian, 2003; Withey & Cooper, 1989), we develop a model to identify the major factors employees may consider to help them choose the "right" voice tactics. While scholars have used such a cost-benefit perspective to investigate factors that relate to employees' calculations of the potential costs

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[1] Note that the formal voice tactic refers to the use of formal *versus* informal procedures. The meaning of "formal/informal" here is different from Morrison's definition of voice as "informal and discretionary communication" (2014, p. 174), in which "informal" highlights voice as an extra-role, non-formally defined behavior.

and benefits of speaking up (e.g., Ashford et al., 1998; Detert & Burris, 2007; Withey & Cooper, 1989), we extend this perspective to theorize *how* employees speak up. Specifically, we propose that the public voice tactic and the formal voice tactic may bring utility benefits to voicers, because these tactics are more likely to drive managers to respond to the voiced issues and take action. This is because public and formal voice tactics tend to exert more normative pressure on managers to react (Cowan & Hodge, 1996; Dutton & Ashford, 1993; Wood, 2000), to be seen as more rational and reason-based by managers (e.g., Farmer, Maslyn, Fedor, & Goodman, 1997; Kipnis & Schmidt, 1988; Mowday, 1978; Schilit & Locke, 1982), and to be regarded as more legitimate ways of voicing in organizations (Dutton et al., 2001). We contend, however, that public and formal voice tactics may also carry image-damage costs for the voicers. Managers may view employees using public and formal voice tactics as being forceful and aggressive and as challenging their authority; managers may even regard them as trouble makers (e.g., Ashford et al., 1998; Dutton & Ashford, 1993; Huang, Xu, Huang, & Liu, 2018).

Hence, employees' cost-benefit calculations when choosing public and formal voice tactics may be determined by two main factors: characteristics of the voiced issues and managers' characteristics. Specifically, we focus on a key characteristic of voiced issues: *issue importance,* which is defined as the extent to which the content of voiced issues has implications for voicing employees' job performance. When voiced issues have strong implications for the voicing employees' performance, the employees are motivated to choose public/formal voice tactics over private/formal voice tactics in order to secure managers' reactions. Since public/formal voice tactics carry potential image-damage costs, the voicing employees may be motivated to consider the characteristics of their managers that might inform the degree of the costs of using these tactics. In line with previous literature, we

accordingly focus on *perceived managerial openness* to reflect managers' relatively stable pro-voice attitude (Detert & Burris, 2007; Edmondson, 2003) and *managers' positive mood* to reflect a relatively temporal state of managers' characteristics, providing auxiliary cues for employees' voice decisions (Gooty, Connelly, Griffith, & Gupta, 2010; Liu, Song, Li, & Liao, 2017; Van Kleef, De Dreu, & Manstead, 2010).

In summary, our study applies a cost-benefit framework to explore how issue importance, perceived managerial openness, and managers' positive mood jointly influence employees' choices of voice tactics, i.e., choosing public and formal voice tactics respectively. We make several contributions to the voice literature. First, a voice decision is more than a dichotomous choice of whether to speak up or remain silent (Morrison, 2011); rather, it is a deliberation of how best to deliver voice to managers. As an initial exploration, our study focuses on how employees use voice to influence high-power managers; more importantly, we employ the categories of voice channel (public vs. private channels) and formality of voice (formal vs. informal procedures) to conceptualize voice tactics. We thus extend voice research by examining the tactics employees use when speaking up. Second, prior literature on voice has largely overlooked the role of characteristics of voice messages in employees' decisions about voice (Morrison, 2011; Whiting, Maynes, Podsakoff, & Podsakoff, 2011). The extent to which issues that employees speak up are important varies, ranging from trivial to mundane to serious, and the extent of importance likely impacts how employees communicate the issues with managers and how their managers respond (Burris et al., 2017; Morrison, 2011). In this regard, our study provides evidence of and highlights the role of message characteristics (i.e., issue importance) in shaping employees' choice of voice tactics. Third, previous research has mainly investigated the effects of stable leadership behaviors, such as transformational leadership behaviors (e.g., Detert & Burris, 2007), and on-going interactions between leaders

and employees, such as leader-member exchange (LMX) (e.g., Van Dyne et al., 2008) on voice. Meanwhile, increasing evidence has shown that employees are also sensitive and responsive to managers' temporal characteristics and states, such as managers' moods, when determining whether to speak up (Kish-Gephart, Detert, Treviño, & Edmondson, 2009; Liu et al., 2017). We know little, however, about how managers' stable and temporal characteristics jointly shape the ways employees voice to their managers. Our study thus extends this line of research by considering how employees' perceptions of both stable and relatively temporal states of leaders' characteristics jointly shape employees' voice tactics. Finally, we know little about whether certain voice tactics are effective in increasing the chance of success in terms of attracting managerial endorsement and support to voiced issues. Taking our research step further, we also examine the effects of different voice tactics on the success of voice.

Theory and Hypotheses

Cost-Benefit Framework and Voice Tactics

Voice tactics are defined as the specific ways by which employees express their opinions, suggestions, or ideas to their managers (Dutton & Ashford, 1993). As a deliberative behavior (Liang, Farh, & Farh, 2012), voice often requires employees to engage in a careful estimate of its costs and benefits (Lam, Rees, Levesque, & Ornstein, 2018; Lee, 1993; Morrison, 2011; Morrison & Milliken, 2000; Morrison & Phelps, 1999). The cost-benefit framework has long been applied to understand whether and when employees will speak up. It is generally believed that employees are likely to voice when perceived benefits outweigh perceived costs (e.g., Detert & Burris, 2007; Goldberg, Clark, & Henley, 2011; Milliken et al., 2003). Empirical studies have applied this cost-benefit framework to analyze employees' decision of whether to speak up (e.g., Ashford et al., 1998; Detert & Burris, 2007; Premeaux & Bedeian, 2003; Withey & Cooper, 1989). For instance, Withey and Cooper (1989) adopted

this cost-benefit framework to predict employees' four different responses (i.e., exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect) to dissatisfaction in organizations and claimed that employees implicitly weigh possible benefits against potential costs when they think about how to respond. Ashford and colleague (1998) found that both perceived probability of success and image risk significantly related to female managers' willingness to sell gender-equity issues in their organizations. The cost-benefit framework thus plays an important role in explaining voice behavior.

Likewise, employees' decisions about *how* to bring up issues to managers could also be shaped by calculating the anticipated benefits and costs of using a particular tactic (Dutton & Ashford, 1993). The key to this cost-benefit estimation is that employees want to find an appropriate way through which speaking up will result in maximum benefits but minimum costs. The public voice tactic refers to the extent to which employees use public channels over private channels to speak up, and the formal voice tactic refers to the extent to which employees use formal procedures over informal procedures to speak up. We argue that compared with using private channels and informal procedures, voicing through public channels or formal procedures is more effective in drawing managerial attention to and actions upon the voiced issues, but these approaches carry potentially higher costs for employees.

Specifically, when issues are brought up publicly, managers are under pressure to respond properly to give the impression to the public that they are open, caring, and responsive to employees' concerns (Dutton & Ashford, 1993). In addition, as demonstrated by research on social persuasion, people tend to give more thoughtful analyses to persuasive efforts that occur in public contexts, because public contexts increase perceived accountability for judgment and raise normative pressures for being open and responsive (Cowan & Hodge,

1996; Wood, 2000). Moreover, speaking up in front of an audience may foster a more transparent and far-reaching spread of information. Through public channels, the voicing employees' viewpoints may be conveyed to not only the voice targets and coworkers, but also to higher-level managers, forcing the targets of upward voice to react properly or inducing high-level managers' attention and actions directly (Detert & Treviño, 2010).

Likewise, issues or problems crafted in a formal way are likely to be seen as more rational and reason-based (Farmer et al., 1997; Kipnis & Schmidt, 1988; Mowday, 1978; Schilit & Locke, 1982), thus driving managers to identify with and appreciate the issues (Ansari & Kapoor, 1987). Moreover, voice brought up in a formal fashion tends to be perceived as legitimate and as abiding by normative rules, and thus it is more likely to secure managers' attention and response (Dutton et al., 2001). Indeed, prior research has shown that employees believe that speaking up through formal channels plays an important role in ensuring the success of upward voice (Dutton et al., 2001).

Speaking up via public channels or formal procedures, however, might carry potential costs for employees. Essentially, voice implies that managers have neglected important work-related issues. Thus, speaking up publicly may make managers feel offended or threatened and trigger managers' defensive and negative reactions (Detert & Edmondson, 2011; Dutton & Ashford, 1993), which may translate into employees' possible costs, such as image damage (e.g., Ashford et al., 1998; Dutton & Ashford, 1993), as well as the loss of trust from managers, lower performance evaluations, lower likelihood of promotion in the future (e.g., Huang et al., 2018), and other explicit and implicit costs. Similarly, managers may view voice raised by formal procedures as presenting an overt challenge to their authority, creating a bad impression of the employees. When employees speak out on issues in a formal way, such as by submitting a written report, it becomes difficult for managers to avoid the voiced issues.

They may feel uncomfortable being somewhat forced to react to voice in such a formal manner, and they may even think that the employees are "making a big fuss." Moreover, employees may be concerned about whether raising issues in a formal way will leave a traceable record that will stigmatize them with a personal label (i.e., "trouble maker") (Dutton & Ashford, 1993). Employees are likely to see such a negative impression caused by speaking up via formal procedures as being costly to them.

In contrast, voice expressed via private channels or informal procedures may be less effective but carry fewer costs for employees. On one hand, employees may view speaking up using private channels as less effective, because it imposes less normative pressure on managers to respond to raised issues when no audience is involved (Detert & Edmondson, 2011; Dutton & Ashford, 1993). Similarly, voicing using informal procedures, taking the form of personal appeals, behind-the-scenes negotiations, or casual discussions, may appear to lack sufficient severity or legitimacy, and thus managers may not have a strong sense of obligation or responsibility to react to the voiced issues. On the other hand, concerning the possible lower costs, employees may regard voicing out issues in a private or informal way as not only saving managers' face but also creating a good impression that the employees possess the requisite social skills to offer suggestions in a "soft manner." As a result, delivering voice through private channels or informal procedures incurs less social cost for the voicers.

To sum up, both public and formal voice tactics have their respective pros and cons. When employees decide which tactics to use, a variety of message- and target-related factors may come into play to influence their choices (Morrison, 2011). We argue that issue importance, perceived managerial openness, and managers' positive mood jointly affect

employees' estimation of the costs and benefits associated with a particular voice tactic and determine whether they will use that tactic.

Issue Importance and Voice Tactics

In recent review papers, Morrison (2011, 2014) highlighted that voice may be shaped, at least in part, by voicers' desire to achieve positive self-relevant outcomes. An employee who offers a suggestion "is likely considering both how the change could improve the overall effectiveness and how it could improve the efficiency or ease with which she is able to do her job" (Morrison, 2011, p. 184). Likewise, in another two voice review papers, voice is regarded not merely as a pro-organization behavior to improve the current functioning of the organization and group; rather, voice behavior is theorized as being driven by the mixed motives of benefiting others as well as the self (Bashshur & Oc, 2015; Klaas, Olson-Buchanan & Ward, 2012). We therefore suggest that issue importance may reflect employees' self-interest motives and influence their choice of voice tactics.

Issue importance, a crucial message characteristic, touches upon a critical question for employees: "What will raising this issue bring me?" (Ashford & Barton, 2007, p. 224). When voiced issues are perceived by the voicing employees as having substantial implications for their own job performance, resolving the raised issues becomes potentially rewarding for them, because job performance is closely associated with a variety of proximal and distal benefits, such as accruing organizational rewards and attaining a more promising career in the organization (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Judge, Higgins, Thoresen, & Barrick, 1999). Thus, it is critical to ascertain whether voice tactics can ensure managers' attention to and endorsement of voiced issues, as positive managerial responses are the first step to solving the important problems that employees need to address. Hence, when an issue is important, employees are likely to be motivated to choose the tactics that have a higher chance of securing managers'

attention to and endorsement of the voiced issue, while being willing to bear the associated costs of image damage. As discussed, compared to using private channels and informal procedures, speaking up via public channels or formal procedures tends to be more effective in facilitating managers' attention and action. Accordingly, for important issues, employees tend to choose public over private channels and formal over informal procedures to speak up.

Hypothesis 1a. Issue importance is positively related to the public voice tactic, such that the higher the levels of issue importance, the greater the chance employees will use public channels rather than private channels.

Hypothesis 1b. Issue importance is positively related to the formal voice tactic, such that the higher the levels of issue importance, the greater the chance employees will use formal procedures rather than informal procedures.

Moderating Roles of Perceived Managerial Openness and Managers' Positive Mood

Although employees tend to use public and formal voice tactics to secure managers' positive reactions when issues are important, these tactics carry potential image-damage costs as well. Thus, employees are likely to look for contextual information cues to assess the potential costs (e.g., Ashford et al., 1998; Detert & Burris, 2007; Liu, Tangirala, Lam, Chen, Jia, & Huang, 2015; Whiting et al., 2011). From the employees' perspective, managers provide immediate and important cues for employees to assess whether a voice context is safe and favorable (Ashford et al., 1998; Detert & Burris, 2007), and thereby whether the cost of using public and formal voice tactics is high or low. As the stable and transient cues from managers, we cast perceived managerial openness and managers' positive mood, respectively, which previous research has consistently shown to affect employees' evaluation of their current voicing context (Detert & Burris, 2007; Edmondson, 2003; Gooty et al., 2010; Liu et al., 2017).

Specifically, one important informational cue from managers is their abiding attitude toward voice: perceived managerial openness (Detert & Burris, 2007; Edmondson, 2003), which refers to "subordinates' perceptions that their boss listens to them, is interested in their ideas, gives fair consideration to the ideas presented, and at least sometimes takes action to address the matter raised" (Detert & Burris, 2007, p. 871). Perceived managerial openness may influence employees' assessment of context favorability. On one hand, managers' behaviors that indicate openness to employee input are likely to decrease the salience of the power distance between managers and employees, thus leading employees to perceive lower costs of speaking up and providing them with a sense of psychological safety (Detert & Burris, 2007; Edmondson, 2003). On the other hand, employees are also likely to see fewer barriers to getting managers who are open to attend to their voice and believe that their ideas, suggestions, and concerns will be interpreted fairly, thus increasing employees' perception that their managers will regard their viewpoints as valuable (Avery et al., 2011; Detert & Burris, 2007; Milliken et al., 2003).

Although managers' relatively stable characteristics, such as openness, play an important role in employees' decisions on voice, recent studies suggest that managers' relatively temporal characteristics also greatly affect employees' voice decisions, sometimes even exerting additional influence above and beyond such stable contextual characteristics as leader-member exchange quality (e.g., Liu et al., 2017). Thus, building on the emotion-as-social-information (EASI) model and recent voice literature (e.g., Liu et al., 2017; Van Kleef et al., 2010), we argue that employees simultaneously consider relatively transient cues from managers, such as managers' mood, together with managers' openness when assessing the cost of particular voice tactics, because managers' mood helps employees evaluate the temporal social context and inform their social decisions (Gooty et al., 2010; Liu et al., 2017).

Managers' positive mood usually indicates goodwill and feeling secure about interacting with others (Forgas & George, 2001; Humphrey, 2002; Russell, 2003), facilitates attention to and accessibility of positive materials (Russell, 2003), and is associated with positive evaluative judgments (Carlson, Charlin, & Miller, 1988; Jones & George, 1998; Schwarz, 2000; Schwarz & Clore, 1983). By contrast, when managers are not in a positive mood, employees may experience more uncertainty and insecurity about expressing their concerns, even when the managers are generally perceived as being open to voice.

We therefore propose that while issue importance directs employees' attention toward the benefits of using public and formal voice tactics, information cues drawn from managers' stable and temporal characteristics may facilitate employees' assessment of the cost of choosing these voice tactics. Specifically, when perceived managerial openness and managers' positive mood are both high, employees who are motivated by important issues are more likely to use public channels and formal procedures and less likely to use private channels and informal procedures, because employees are likely to weigh the perceived benefits over costs associated with public channels and formal procedures. Under such conditions, employees would see the voicing context as a safe and favorable gateway to success, which is likely to make employees' estimation of benefits and costs associated with the two tactics tipping toward the benefits of using them. Employees are more likely to see how such tactics draw managers' attention to and endorsement of their voiced issues, while incurring minimal image-related costs. By contrast, private channels and informal procedures lack sufficient assertiveness to capture managers' attention and motivate managers' actions to address the raised issues. Employees are thus less likely to use private channels or informal procedures, because using such tactics means "playing a safe card" at the expense of losing opportunities to secure managers' attention and actions. Thus, we expect that when perceived

managerial openness and managers' positive mood are both high, employees who are driven by important issues are more likely to choose public over private channels and formal over informal procedures.

In contrast, when the voice context is less favorable (i.e., high managerial openness with low positive mood; low managerial openness with high positive mood; low managerial openness with low positive mood), employees tend to perceive that using public and formal voice tactics will have higher costs. The social context of high managerial openness with low positive mood or low managerial openness with high positive mood likely conveys inconsistent information or cues to employees, which makes employees perceive that this voicing context is less favorable and, in turn, more costly for employees and that using public and formal voice tactics may backfire. Thus, we argue that under the above unfavorable conditions, issue importance is less likely to lead to public and formal voice tactics, compared to under the conditions of high managerial openness and managers' positive mood, as employees' estimation of benefits and costs associated with the two tactics is likely to tip toward the costs of using them. Taken together, we predict that:

> *Hypothesis 2a.* Perceived managerial openness and managers' positive mood jointly
> moderate the relationship between issue importance and the public voice tactic, such
> that when managers are perceived as being more open to employee voice and their
> positive mood is higher, the higher the levels of issue importance, the more likely
> employees are to use public channels rather than private channels.
>
> *Hypothesis 2b.* Perceived managerial openness and managers' positive mood jointly
> moderate the relationship between issue importance and the formal voice tactic, such
> that when managers are perceived as being more open to employee voice and their

positive mood is higher, the higher the levels of issue importance, the more likely employees are to use formal procedures rather than informal procedures.

Figure 1 depicts the theoretical framework of our study. We conducted two studies to test our hypotheses. In Study 1, we collected time-lagged field survey data. In Study 2, we conducted a field survey integrated with a critical incident technique (Flanagan, 1954).

(Insert Figure 1 about here)

Study 1

Sample and Procedures

The survey was conducted at a large state-owned telecommunications company in China. We distributed paper-and-pencil surveys to 280 employees from different departments, including administrative, finance, sales, technology maintenance and support, and construction. We visited all respondents in person to brief them on the purposes of our research and to explain the procedures. Respondents received a cover letter explaining the study, a questionnaire, and a return envelope. To ensure confidentiality, respondents sealed the completed questionnaires in envelopes and returned them to us directly on site.

We collected two waves of data with a three-month time lag. At Time 1, we asked employees to report their perceived managerial openness and control variables. We received 254 usable questionnaires at Time 1. At Time 2, we asked employees to report managers' positive mood when they interacted with him or her in the last three months. We then asked the employees to report whether they had voiced any issues to their supervisors in the last three months. If they indicated "no," they were asked to stop filling out the questionnaire. If they indicated "yes," they were instructed to report issue importance and the tactics they used to voice the issues. As a result of this procedure, we deleted 11 participants from the total matched sample, yielding a final sample of 221 employees. The effective response rate was

79%. 53% of the sample was male, and the mean age and organizational tenure were 35.34

and 13.24 years, respectively; 78% had received a college education or above.

Measures

        Issue importance. Employees reported issue importance on a four-item measure

adapted from Ashford et al.'s (1998) study. The original measure concerned the importance of

gender equity. We adapted this measure to reflect the degree of importance of the issues to

employees, with the following questions: "How much do these suggestions and ideas matter

to you personally?," "Are these suggestions or ideas closely related to how well you can

perform at work?," "How important are these suggestions and ideas to you?," and "To what

extent do you think it will bring a negative influence on your work if you remain silent about

these suggestions and ideas?" (1 = *to no extent*, 4 = *to some extent*, 7 = *to a great extent*; α

= .70).

        Voice tactics. We adapted the measures of voice tactics from Dutton and Ashford's

(1993) and Dutton et al.'s (2001) research. We asked employees to answer the question:

"Through what means did you give suggestions and raise the issues to your managers?" Three

items were used for the public voice tactic (i.e., in departmental meetings, in routine meetings,

in public places with an audience; 1 = *almost never*, 5 = *very often*; α = .89), four items for the

formal voice tactic (i.e., submit a proposal, schedule a meeting for presentation, give a

presentation, give a written-report; 1 = *almost never*, 5 = *very often*; α = .82). High values of

these two measures indicate that employees used public channels and formal procedures more

frequently than less public channels and less formal procedures to speak up.

        Perceived managerial openness. Employees rated perceived managerial openness with

a seven-item, five-point scale adapted from the management openness scale from Ashford et

al. (1998) and Detert and Burris (2007). One sample item is, "Good ideas get serious consideration from my supervisor" (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*; α =.88).

Managers' positive mood. Managers' positive mood was measured by a four-item, four-point scale from Liu et al. (2015; e.g., enthusiastic, excited, relaxed, and calm). Participants were asked to evaluate their managers' positive mood during the last three months. Cronbach's alpha was .76 (0 = *never*, 3 = *very frequently*).

Control variables. Following the recommendations of Bernerth and Aguinis (2016), we considered several potentially relevant control variables, including employees' gender, age, education level, organizational tenure, and dyadic tenure with their direct supervisors, as those variables have been found to influence interactions between managers and subordinates (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998; Stamper & Van Dyne, 2001). We also considered proactive personality and employees' trust in managers, because proactivity may influence the tactics that employees choose (Piderit & Ashford, 2003) and employees' trust in managers reflects employees' assessment of the favorability of the voicing context (Ashford et al., 1998; Detert & Burris, 2007). To eliminate alternative explanations, it is important to parse out the variance caused by these potential control variables. That said, an examination of the bivariate correlations indicates that only trust was correlated with voice tactics. Comparisons between our hypotheses tests with and without this control variable yielded identical results. Thus, to maximize statistical power, we report the results only with employees' trust controlled. Trust was assessed using the seven-item, five-point scale developed by Robinson and Rousseau (1994; α = 86).

Data Analysis

We conducted hierarchical multiple regressions to test the hypotheses. We centered all independent variables at their grand mean (c.f., Aiken & West, 1991; Cohen & Cohen, 1983).

Although our data were nested (i.e., employees were nested in supervisors), a one-way

ANOVA revealed that there was no group difference for the four tactics. Indeed, when we

performed the analyses using a mixed-effects model with a random intercept for group

membership, we obtained essentially the same results as those using regression analyses.

Results

Preliminary analysis. Before the hypothesis testing, we first conducted a confirmatory

factor analysis (CFA) to examine the discriminant validity of our key variables (i.e., issue

importance, perceived managerial openness, managers' positive mood, public voice tactic,

and formal voice tactic). The results suggested that the hypothesized factor structure fit the

data well ($\chi^2 = 169.42$, *df* = 142; RMSEA = .03, CFI = .98, IFI = .98, TLI = .98). We then

conducted another CFA on the public and formal voice tactics, and the results showed that the

two-factor model ($\chi^2 = 18.77$, *df* = 13; RMSEA = .05, CFI = .99, IFI = .99, TLI = .98) yielded

a better model fit than the one-factor model ($\chi^2 = 288.99$, *df* = 14; RMSEA = .35, CFI = .53,

IFI = .54, TLI = .29). Table 1 shows the means, standard deviations, and correlations between

all key variables.

(Insert Table 1 about here)

Tests of hypotheses. As shown in Model 2s of Table 2, issue importance was

significantly related to the formal voice tactic ($\beta = .27$, $p < .001$) but insignificantly related to

the public voice tactic ($\beta = .10$, n.s.), supporting Hypothesis 1b. As shown in Model 4s, the

three-way interactive effects of issue importance, perceived managerial openness, and

managers' positive mood on voice tactics were significant for the public voice tactic ($\beta = .15$,

$p < .05$) and the formal voice tactic ($\beta = .12$, $p < .05$). To further test the three-way

interactions, we analyzed the simple slopes (cf. Aiken & West, 1991). The simple slope tests

revealed that only when perceived managerial openness and managers' positive mood were

both high was issue importance significantly and positively related to the public voice tactic ($\beta = .27$, $p < .05$) and the formal voice tactic ($\beta = .37$, $p < .001$), supporting Hypotheses 2a and 2b. We plotted the joint effects of perceived managerial openness and managers' positive mood on the relationships between issue importance and employee voice tactics in Figure 2.

(Insert Table 2 and Figure 2 about here)

Study 2

We conducted Study 2 to address three limitations of Study 1. First, we relied on a continuous scale to measure the public and formal voice tactics in Study 1, with high levels indicating a high frequency of using public or formal tactics. But we only assumed that low levels of public and formal voice tactics capture a high frequency of using private channels or informal procedures. This assumption needed to be further validated. Therefore, in Study 2, we asked participants to directly choose between public and private channels and between formal and informal procedures when speaking up to their managers. Second, Study 1 focused on employees' voiced issues during the last three months and examined the frequency of tactics used. Also, participants reported their managers' positive mood during the last three months. Study 2 more accurately identified and matched a particular voiced issue with a particular voice tactic used to express that issue and assessed managers' positive mood at the time when employees voiced that issue. Third, we aimed to validate our research by examining whether voice content (challenging voice versus supportive voice; Burris, 2012) affected our model in predicting voice tactics. Accordingly, we integrated the critical incident technique into our survey.

Moreover, in Study 2, we examined the relationships between voice tactics and the success of voice, thereby providing preliminary evidence that voice tactics have utility (see Figure 1). As we argued earlier, speaking up through public channels or formal procedures

(rather than private channels or informal procedures) is more beneficial for voicers in drawing managers' attention or actions. When speaking up via public rather than private channels, managers are under pressure to respond properly (Dutton & Ashford, 1993) and tend to analyze the voiced issue more meticulously (e.g., Wood, 2000), because public contexts increase managers' felt accountability for their judgement and normative pressures for being open and responsive (Cowan & Hodge, 1996; Wood, 2000). Similarly, voice expressed through formal instead of informal procedures tends to be perceived as following normative rules (Dutton et al., 2001) and more rational and reason-based, which make managers easier to identify with the voiced issues and willing to give attention and consideration to the issues (e.g., Farmer et al., 1997). Using public channels or formal procedures therefore facilitates a higher probability of voice success. We thus predicted that:

Hypothesis 3a. The public voice tactic is positively related to voice success, in that employees who use public channels rather than private channels are more effective in attaining success of voice.

Hypothesis 3b. The formal voice tactic is positively related to voice success, in that employees who use formal procedures rather than informal procedures are more effective in attaining success of voice.

Sample and Procedures

We integrated a critical incident technique (Flanagan, 1954) in the survey design of Study 2. This technique relies on participants to recall events or experiences following certain instructions and then describe them in detail. It is thus helpful in matching a particular voiced issue with the tactic used and assessing managers' positive mood that are perceived by the participants at that time. This technique has been demonstrated to be valid and effective in studying many different events, such as mistreatment, justice, trust, conflict, and helping

behavior (e.g., Ambrose, Hess, & Ganesan, 2007; Aquino, Tripp, & Bies, 2006; Atwater et al., 2016; Korsgaard, Brodt, & Whitener, 2002; Mayer, Greenbaum, Kuenzi, & Shteynberg, 2009; Mitchell, Vogel, & Folger, 2015; Ouyang, Xu, Huang, Liu, & Tang, 2018; Ronan & Latham, 1974). Although there may be a potential bias in recalling events, research has also demonstrated that certain procedures aids in the accuracy and vividness of retrospection. First, we restricted the time window of the recalled incident within the last two weeks. Second, we asked participants to recall contextual details such as details associated with voicing a particular issue to a particular manager. This procedure has been demonstrated very helpful in recalling events accurately (e.g., Lang, Kozak, Miller, Levin, & McLean, 1980; Robinson & Clore, 2001).

Specifically, participants were asked to recall the details of an incident in which they had voiced an issue to their managers in the last two weeks. Participants randomly received instructions that depicted this voiced issue as (a) a very important, challenging type of voiced issue; or (b) a very important, supportive type of voiced issue; or (c) a less important, challenging type of voiced issue; or (d) a less important, supportive type of voiced issue. We provided explanations and examples of issue importance, challenging voice, and supportive voice to facilitate the participants' understanding. For example, the instructions for "a very important challenging type of voiced issue" were as follows: *Please think about work interactions with your supervisor in the last two weeks and reflect on whether you have proposed to your supervisor any work-related suggestions or ideas. If you did, please recall one suggestion or issue that you voiced to your supervisor that challenged or improved the status quo of your team, department, or organization. The purpose of the suggestion or idea was to improve rather than sustain the situation at work. For example, you spoke up to your supervisor about the problems within the department or unit; you gave suggestions to your*

supervisor on improving work procedures; you proposed ideas to your supervisor about how to improve efficiency or performance in the department or unit. This issue or suggestion was very important to you and it was closely related to how well you perform at your job. The implementation of this suggestion or issue would positively impact your work.

If participants indicated that they had an experience that matched the description, they were asked to "write several sentences to describe the recalled suggestion or issue." We had 42 to 54 participants match each of the four conditions. After completing the recall task, participants rated their perception of the manager's openness and their manager's mood when proposing the recalled issue, reported voice tactics of the recalled voice behavior, and rated the success of their voice. At the end of the questionnaire, they reported their age and gender, as well as the length of their dyadic relationship with their supervisor.

We administered the survey of Study 2 in a large life insurance company in China. We distributed the questionnaires to 235 full-time employees who are insurance salespersons, whose jobs consist mainly of selling insurance packages to people in the rural areas where the company branches are located. We visited the employees in person to explain the aim of our research and how to answer the questionnaire. The questionnaires were returned to us directly on site. The final sample was 193 full-time employees (37.4% male). Participants' mean age was 38.63 years (SD = 8.25), and the mean length of the dyadic relationship between participants and their supervisor was 3.36 years (SD = 2.98).

Measures

Different from Study 1, which relied on a continuous scale to measure public and formal voice tactics, we asked participants to choose between a public channel (e.g., in departmental meetings, in routine meetings) and a private channel (e.g., in private places, in places where only you and your supervisor are present; 0 = *private channels*; 1 = *public*

channels). Participants also reported through which means they proposed the recalled suggestion or idea: formal procedures (e.g., submit a proposal, schedule a meeting for presentation) or informal procedures (e.g., underground appeals, behind-the-scenes negotiations; 0 = *informal procedures*; 1 = *formal procedures*). Managers' positive mood was assessed with the same scale used in Study 1. Participants were asked to report the extent of their manager's positive mood at the time when they proposed the recalled suggestion or idea (1 = *to no extent*, 5 = *to a great extent*; α =.85). Perceived managerial openness to voice was evaluated with the same scale used in Study 1 (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*; α = .74). We used a four-item, five-point scale adapted from Burris (2012) to gauge the success of voice. One sample item is "To what extent did your supervisor support your suggestion?" (1 = *not at all*; 5 = *to a great extent*; α =.91).

As aforementioned, we controlled for voice content in predicting voice tactics. On one hand, given that challenging voice intends to alter, modify, or destabilize the status quo, whereas supportive voice intends to stabilize or preserve existing organizational practices (Burris, 2012), employees may feel that it is easy to engage in supportive voice publicly, but difficult to publicly criticize managers. On the other hand, regardless of its content, voice is fundamentally challenging and risky, given that the voice process involves many uncertainties (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). Thus, the psychological process of bringing up challenging voice may be similar to that of bringing up supportive voice, and our theoretical framework regarding voice tactics could be applied to both challenging and supportive voice. We used a dummy variable to control for voice content (0 = *supportive voice*; 1 = *challenging voice*).

Results

Manipulation check. Participants were instructed to respond to the scale of issue importance, the same scale used in Study 1, for manipulation check for issue importance.

Moreover, based on the study of Burris (2012), we used two items ("The raised suggestion or idea challenged or improved the status quo of my team, department, or organization" and "The purpose of the raised suggestion or idea was to improve the situation at work") for manipulation check for challenging voice, and two items ("The raised suggestion or idea stabilized or preserved the status quo of my team, department, or organization" and "The purpose of the raised suggestion or idea was to sustain the situation at work") for manipulation check for supportive voice. A five-point Likert scale (1 = *to no extent*, 5 = *to a great extent*) was used.

Participants in the high-issue-importance conditions (M = 3.92, SD = .83) were significantly more inclined than those in the low-issue-importance conditions (M = 3.11, SD = .95) to report that the raised issue was important (t (191) = 6.30, *p* < .001). Additionally, participants in the challenging-voice conditions (M = 3.28, SD = .97) were significantly more inclined than those in the supportive-voice conditions (M = 2.38, SD = .82) to report that the content of the raised issue was challenging (t (191) = 7.00, *p* < .001). Further, participants in the supportive-voice conditions (M = 3.21, SD = 1.12) were significantly more inclined than those in the challenging-voice conditions (M = 2.79, SD = .90) to report that the content of the raised issue was supportive (t (191) = 2.87, *p* < .01). Thus, our manipulations were successful.

Tests of hypotheses. Table 3 provides the means, standard deviations, and correlations of key variables. We tested our hypotheses using logistic regression analyses, because the dependent variables were dichotomous variables (Table 4). We used voice content as the control variable in Step 1, the three independent variables (i.e., issue importance, perceived managerial openness, and managers' positive mood) in Step 2, the three two-way interaction terms in Step 3, and the three-way interaction term in Step 4. As shown in Step 2 of Table 4, issue importance was significantly associated with the formal voice tactic (step *b* = 1.15, odds

ratio = 3.16, $p < .05$) but not the public voice tactic (step b = .40, odds ratio = 1.49, n.s.),

supporting Hypothesis 1b.

In addition, in Step 4, the three-way interaction effect of issue importance, perceived

managerial openness, and managers' positive mood was significant on the public voice tactic

[step b = 1.05, odds ratio = 2.77, $p < .05$; χ^2 (1, N = 193) = 4.27, $p < .05$]. Simple slope tests

(Aiken & West, 1991) suggested that when perceived managerial openness and managers'

positive mood were both high, issue importance was significantly and positively related to the

use of public rather than private channels (β = .62, $p < .01$); when perceived managerial

openness was low and managers' positive mood was high, the relationship was also

significantly positive (β = .41, $p < .05$); however, the two simple slopes were statistically

different from one another (t = 2.12, $p < .05$). We plotted the three-way interaction effect in

Figure 3. Hypothesis 2a was thus supported.

(Insert Tables 3 and 4 and Figure 3 about here)

Similarly, as shown in Table 4, the three-way interaction effect of issue importance,

perceived managerial openness, and managers' positive mood was significant on formal voice

tactic [step b = 1.10, odds ratio = 2.53, $p < .05$; χ^2 (1, N = 193) = 3.84, $p < .05$]. We further

performed simple slope tests to examine the three-way interaction effect (Aiken & West,

1991). The simple slope tests showed that only when perceived managerial openness and

managers' positive mood were both high was issue importance significantly and positively

related to the use of formal rather than informal procedures (β = .48, $p < .05$), supporting

Hypothesis 2b. The three-way interaction effect is plotted in Figure 3.

We then tested Hypotheses 3a and 3b (Table 5). Consistent with our predictions, after

controlling for voice content (challenging/supportive voice), using public channels was more

likely than using private channels to lead to the success of voice (β = .15, $p < .05$), and using

formal procedures was more likely than using informal procedures to result in the success of voice ($\beta = .17$, $p < .05$). Hypotheses 3a and 3b were thus supported. We also found that public and formal voice tactics mediated the interactive effects of issue importance, perceived managerial openness, and managers' positive mood on success of voice.

(Insert Table 5 about here)

Discussion

The present research attempted to explain employees' decisions regarding how to speak up to managers. We examined the characteristics of both messages and managers. Specifically, we examined how issue importance, perceived managerial openness, and managers' positive mood jointly influenced employee voice tactics. Across the two studies, we found that employees do not easily utilize public channels and formal procedures to speak up, even though using these two tactics has a higher chance of securing managers' attention and endorsement, as suggested by sporadic evidence in the literature and demonstrated by our Study 2. Only when managers' stable and transient characteristics simultaneously suggest a safe and favorable context for voice are employees motivated by issue importance to speak up publicly and formally.

Theoretical Implications

These two studies extend previous voice research in several ways. First, whereas previous studies have focused mainly on whether or not employees speak up, our study examines *how* employees speak up and what factors affect their decisions regarding voice tactics. Our findings suggest that employees are more reluctant to adopt public and formal means to voice. For employees to speak up publicly and formally, the first, though not necessarily the sufficient, condition is that the content of voice matters to voicing employees. Issue importance pertains to substantial benefits that employees may gain from voice behavior,

which motivates them to use voice tactics that they perceive will ensure managers' attention or actions. Motivation alone, however, is not sufficient for employees to take risks unless their managers reduce their concerns by projecting an image of being an open leader and by exhibiting positive emotions. It is the combination of both the stable and transient characteristics of managers that makes employees feel that using public channels and formal procedures will be safe and profitable.

Second, Morrison (2011) recently called for theory-development efforts focusing on the role of specific dimensions of voice messages in the voice decision process. In our study, we empirically tested this idea by focusing on the importance of message in terms of its implications for employees' job performance, and the findings showed that message importance is a key factor predicting employee voice tactics. On one hand, these results advance our knowledge of how the characteristics of voice content affect employees' different voice decisions. On the other hand, our findings reveal that voice may not be driven only by pro-social motives, as prior research has suggested (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998; Morrison, 2011; Morrison & Phelps, 1999; Withey & Cooper, 1989), but that it also can be motivated by individuals' instrumental self-concern—in our case, the importance of the message for their own work performance (Burris et al., 2017; Van Dyne, Ang, & Botero, 2003). Issues with strong implications for employees' work performance are a key driving force for employees to make an effort to voice up and to find the right tactics to maximize beneficial outcomes. This instrumental motive of voice has been largely overlooked in the literature. The main streams of voice research on the determinants of voice have focused primarily on individual differences in personality (e.g., LePine & Van Dyne, 2001; Wu, Parker, Wu, & Lee, 2018), employees' attitudes (e.g., Deery, Iverson, Buttigieg, & Zatzick, 2014; Withey & Cooper, 1989), or contextual factors (e.g., Detert & Burris, 2007; Knoll & Redman, 2016; Lam &

Mayer, 2014). The nature of voiced issues, ideas, and suggestions, however, has largely escaped voice researchers' attention (Morrison, 2011). Future research would benefit from investigating the role of issues in voice decisions and processes.

Third, while consistent with findings from a recent study on the roles of voice dyads' stable and transient features in affecting voice actors' psychological safety (Liu et al., 2015), our study extends this line of research by providing more evidence that being an open manager is not adequate to mitigate employees' concerns about risky moves of voice. Rather, it is also important for pro-voice managers to regulate their emotions and moods to be consistent with their open attitude toward voice. Interestingly, in Study 2, we found that when managers expressed positive mood without being perceived as an open leader, employees also tended to use public or formal ways to speak up. This finding implies that managers' temporal states or characteristics, such as positive mood, should not be overlooked when examining employee voice behavior, because such states or characteristics provide valuable information or cues for employees' decision-making. Our study thus highlights that both stable and transient characteristics of leaders are important in affecting whether and how employees voice.

Finally, we also add value to the voice literature by making an initial attempt to examine the consequence of using public and formal voice tactics. Speaking up through public channels or formal procedures indeed increases the possibility that the voice will be successful, because such approaches are more likely to draw managers' attention and strengthen their perception that the expressed issues or ideas are important and valuable (e.g., Dutton et al., 2001; Wood, 2000). By investigating the antecedents and outcomes of voice tactics, our study provides a sketch of an important topic of voice research, voice tactics.

Limitations and Future Directions

The results and implications of the present study should be interpreted in light of several limitations. First, despite implementing a time lag and other procedures suggested by Podsakoff et al. (2003) to reduce potential concern about a common method problem (e.g., separating the measurement of the predictor and the criterion variables, protecting respondent anonymity, and reducing evaluation apprehension, thus counterbalancing the question order), our field study is not immune to common method bias (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Although the key variables in our model require perception or evaluation from the employees' side and consistent findings regarding high-order effects (three-way interactive effects) across the two studies, we encourage researchers to investigate voice tactics by using data from different sources to further validate our theory and findings. Further, regarding the assessment of managers' positive mood, future research could employ a more temporal, dynamic approach, such as the experience sampling method (Reis & Gable, 2000; Wheeler & Reis, 1991), to more accurately capture its within-person variation and in turn examine its relationship with employee voice behavior.

Second, message characteristics can have multiple dimensions, including content, valence, importance, and urgency (Ashcraft, Kuhn, & Cooren, 2009; Lee, 1993; Miceli & Near, 1992; Sonenshein, 2006). Although in Study 2 we tried to explore whether the content of voice (i.e., challenging voice versus supportive voice; Burris, 2012) would affect employees' decisions regarding voice tactics, we did not find the type of voice to influence employees' decisions on voice tactics. Given the recent development of categorization (e.g., Liang et al., 2012; Maynes & Podsakoff, 2014), future research may benefit from exploring how different voice categorizations are associated with different voice tactics.

Third, we theorized and tested leaders' stable and temporal characteristics to indicate the favorability of the voicing context and found that leaders' characteristics play an

important role in shaping employees' decisions regarding voice tactics. Researchers could also explore how relational and contextual factors, such as leader-member exchange, team climate, and voice norms, influence employees' choice of voice tactics.

Finally, as an initial exploration, our study examined voice tactics regarding two aspects of voice process: the voice channel and the formality of voice. Voice tactics, however, are far more complex than what we have studied. For example, researchers could further explore whether employees should form a coalition to voice, whether employees should package the voice with two-sided evidence, or whether employees should infer their supervisors' accountability for the voiced issues (Dutton & Ashford, 1993). Relatedly, it is also possible that an employee will use multiple voice tactics to express an issue to the manager, for instance, expressing the issue by giving a formal presentation in an individual office meeting with the manager (combining formal procedures and a private channel) or raising the issue formally and then explaining it informally to the manager (combining both formal and informal procedures). It would be important for future research to explore the use of multiple voice tactics (e.g., voice tactic profiles).

Practical Implications

Our study has several practical implications. First, voice is not a simple dichotomous behavior that involves either speaking up or remaining silent. When employees decide to speak up, it begins a journey involving a set of decisions of how to effectively and comfortably sell issues to managers. Different tactics have their own pros and cons. In our study, as an initial exploration, we focused on the public voice tactic (public *versus* private channels) and the formal voice tactic (formal *versus* informal procedures). Although using public channels or formal procedures appears to be more effective in inducing managers' attention and endorsement, these tactics tend to be risky. We found that employees are very

cautious about speaking up publicly and formally. Not only do they need a strong motivation, but they also need to feel that it is safe and comfortable to speak up. Our results showed that when employees have important issues to voice, it is also necessary to have an open manager who is in a good mood.

Second, we found that having a strong motivation is the core reason that employees are willing to take risks to speak more assertively by using public and formal means. When issues are not very important, employees may instead speak privately or informally or even remain silent. This finding suggests that managers should have a deep understanding of employees' calculative concerns underlying their voice tactics. When issues are brought up publicly or formally, managers should understand that employees will not voice in this way unless the issues they voice are really important to them.

Third, our study suggests that managers' stable characteristics and transient characteristics play important roles in employees' voice tactics. Having one without the other is not adequate to predict voice tactics, especially those voice tactics that could be effective but also risky at the same time. Indeed, this finding concurs with the emotional leadership research (Humphrey, 2002) showing that regulating emotional displays has an important influence on subordinates' proactive behavior and thus plays a substantial role in leadership effectiveness (Salovey & Mayer, 1989; Wong & Law, 2002). This points to an important and interesting implication for managers: Managers should closely monitor their own expressions of emotions.

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Table 1. Means, standard deviations, and correlations among the variables, Study 1.

	Variables	Means	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Trust	3.77	.75	--					
2	Issue importance	3.21	.69	.10	--				
3	Perceived managerial openness	3.84	.74	.72***	.10	--			
4	Managers' positive mood	1.83	.46	.32***	.18*	.48***	--		
5	Public voice tactic	3.01	.94	.19*	.10	.17*	.14	--	
6	Formal voice tactic	2.79	.95	.10	.27***	.18*	.17*	.39***	--

Note. $N = 221$. High values of public voice tactic mean that employees use public channels more frequently than less public channels to speak up; high values of formal voice tactic mean that employees use formal procedures more frequently than less formal procedures to speak up.
* $p < .05$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 2. Results of three-way interaction effects of issue importance, perceived managerial openness, and managers' positive mood on voice tactics, Study 1.

Variables	Public voice tactic				Formal voice tactic			
	M1	M2	M3	M4	M1	M2	M3	M4
Trust	.18	.08	.08	.04	.17	-.02	-.01	-.04
Issue importance (IM)		.10	.10	.03		.27***	.29***	.23**
Perceived managerial openness (MO)		.07	.12	.14		.16	.21	.23*
Managers' positive mood (PM)		.05	.07	.06		.00	.03	.02
IM x MO			.00	.12			.02	.13
IM x PM			.04	.09			.09	.13
MO x PM			.15*	.14*			.19**	.17*
IM x MO x PM				.15*				.12*
ΔR^2	.04	.01	.05	.02	.03	.09	.06	.02

Note. N = 221. * p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p < .001.

Table 3. Means, standard deviations, and correlations among the variables, Study 2.

	Variables	Means	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Voice content	.50	.50	--					
2	Issue importance	3.52	1.02	.07	--				
3	Perceived managerial openness	4.00	.75	-.07	-.01	--			
4	Managers' positive mood	3.22	1.07	-.07	.34***	.45***	--		
5	Public voice tactic	.41	.49	.00	.09	.23**	.13	--	
6	Formal voice tactic	.34	.48	.02	.13	.31***	.19*	.32***	--
7	Success of voice	3.38	1.18	.00	.45***	.35***	.55***	.23**	.23**

Note. $N = 193$. Voice content: challenging voice = 1, supportive voice = 0. Public voice tactic: public channels = 1, private channels = 0. Formal voice tactic: formal procedures = 1, informal procedures = 0.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 4. Logistic regression analyses predicting voice tactics with issue importance, perceived managerial openness, and managers' positive mood, Study 2.

Step	Variables	Public voice tactic					Formal voice tactic				
		Step b	SE	Odds ratio	χ^2 (df)	Max-rescaled R^2	Step b	SE	Odds ratio	χ^2 (df)	Max-rescaled R^2
1	Voice content	.44	.38	1.55	1.31 (1)	.02	.19	.39	1.21	.24 (1)	.02
2	Issue importance (IM)	.40	.40	1.49			1.15*	.44	3.16		
	Perceived managerial openness (MO)	.27	.25	1.31			.62*	.29	1.87		
	Managers' positive mood (PM)	.11	.22	1.11	2.97 (3)	.06	.34	.24	1.41	16.04 (3) **	.16
3	IM x MO	.00	.52	1.00			-.24	.78	.79		
	IM x PM	-.05	.46	.95			1.46*	.60	4.29		
	MO x PM	.41	.23	1.50	3.20 (3)	.08	.32	.32	1.37	10.8 (3) *	.21
4	IM x MO x PM	1.05*	.45	2.77	4.27 (1) *	.14	1.10*	.52	2.53	3.84 (1) *	.26

Note. $N = 193$. Entries are unstandardized beta weights. Voice content: challenging voice = 1, supportive voice = 0. Public voice tactic: public channels = 1, private channels = 0. Formal voice tactic: formal procedures = 1, informal procedures = 0. Max-rescaled R^2 values were calculated based on the formula from Nagelkerke (1991). * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 5. Results of voice tactics predicting success of voice, Study 2.

Variables	Success of voice			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Voice content	-.02	-.02	-.05	-.02
Public voice tactic		.23**		.15*
Formal voice tactic			.24**	.17*
ΔR^2	.00	.05	.06	.07

Note. $N = 193$. Voice content: challenging voice = 1, supportive voice = 0. Public voice tactic: public channels = 1, private channels = 0. Formal voice tactic: formal procedures = 1, informal procedures = 0.
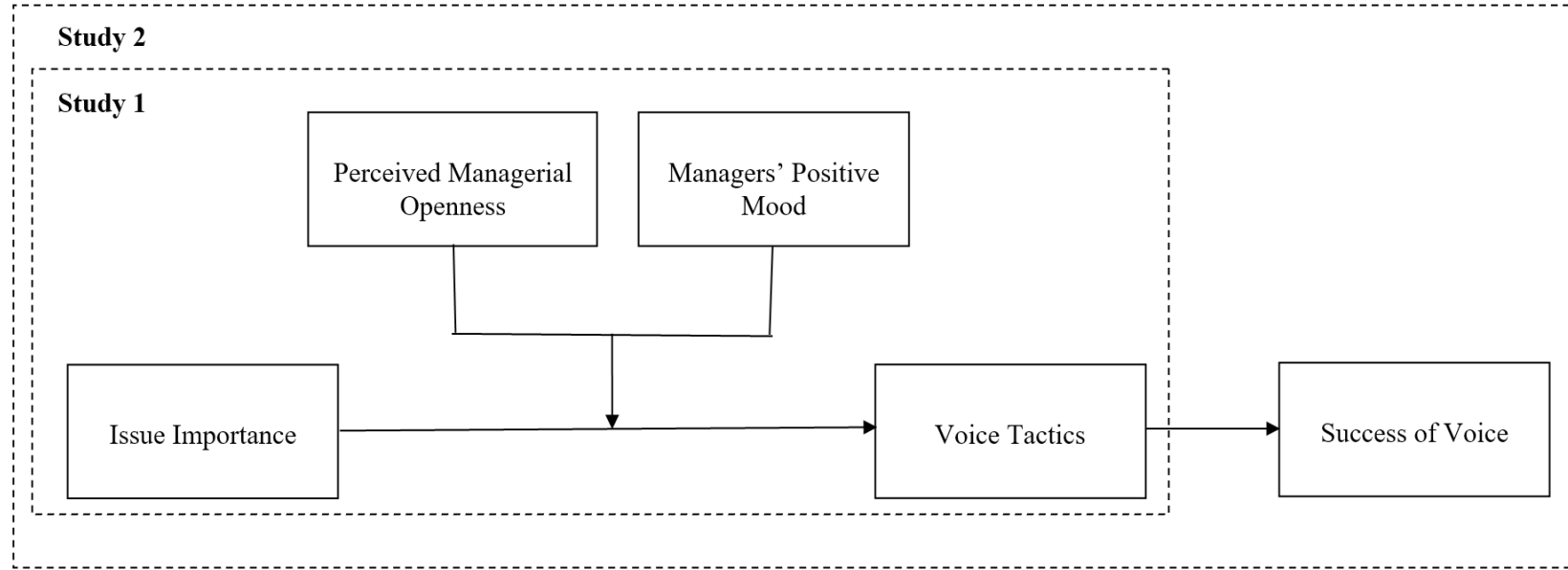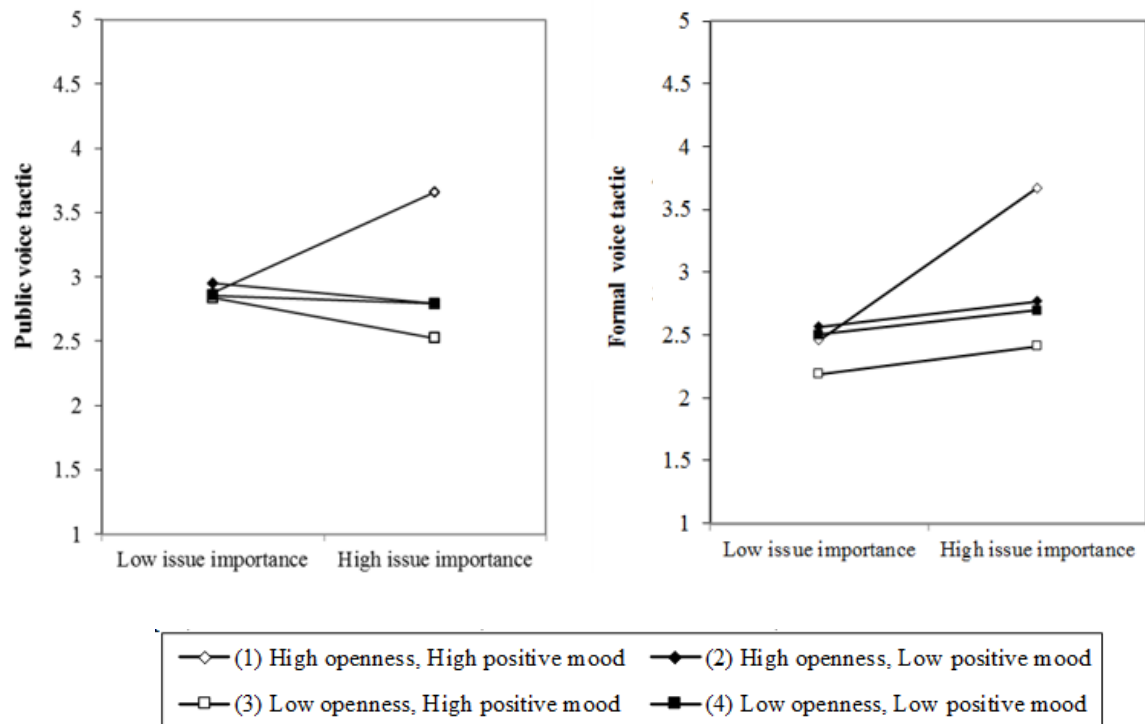* $p < .05.$ ** $p < .01.$

Figure 1. Theoretical framework.

Figure 2. Three-way interaction effects of issue importance, perceived managerial openness, and managers' positive mood on voice tactics, Study 1.
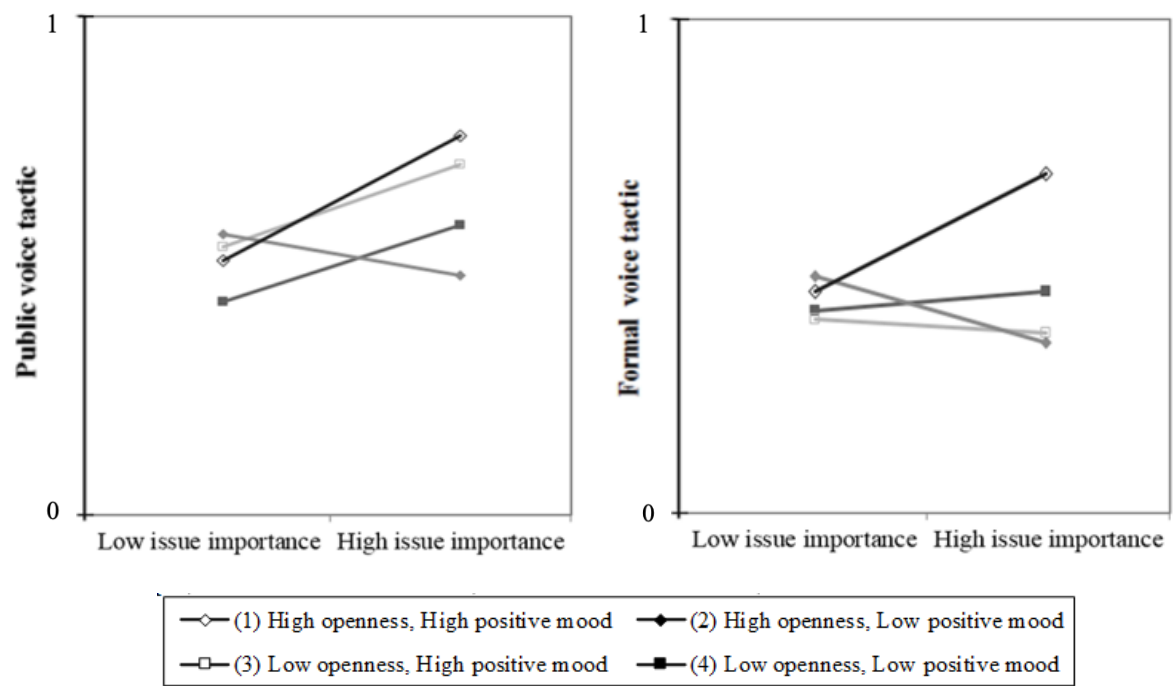
Figure 3. Three-way interaction effects of issue importance, perceived managerial openness, and managers' positive mood on voice tactics, Study 2.