

# Voice Taking: An Integrative Literature Review

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## Abstract

Voice taking is of great significance to the voicer, the company, and decision maker. This article summarizes the empirical research about voice taking. The definition and research paradigm of voice taking are discussed. Then, the differences of measurement methods of voice taking are compared. Finally, the research on antecedent variable of voice taking was integrated and the future prospects of the empirical research were integrated.

## Keywords

Voice Behavior, Voice Taking

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## 1. Introduction

In the context of the information age, enterprises face greater risks and challenges. Only by keeping the enterprise innovative can it win in the competition (Blatt et al., 2006; Grant, 2013). By effectively voice taking, companies can improve innovation and enhance their own competitiveness. Research shows that voice has many benefits to the organization. For example, voice can increase employee job satisfaction, team performance (Frazier & Bowler, 2015), and reduce work stress (Greenberger et al., 1989). The importance of voice is widely recognized by the academia, and many scholars explore the antecedent variables of voice behavior to provide suggestions for improving employee voice behavior. However, in fact, voice is often not adopted or even suppressed. Because taking voice is risky to decision-maker. It not only challenges the status quo (Burris, 2012), but also brings inconvenience to stakeholders. This will prevent the positive effects of the voice and may even hurt employee motivation. Therefore, study in voice taking has important practical significance for organizations. This article attempted to summarize the conception, measurement, and antecedent variables of the voice taking, laying a foundation for the follow-up research.

Voice behavior is an organizational citizenship behavior which is constructive,

challenging (LePine & Van Dyne, 2001). It is a kind of out-of-role behavior which aims to improve the organization, not just criticism. Voice taking is the degree of recognition of superiors for voice made by employees (Burris, 2012). It is the process by which the decision-maker makes a final decision with reference to the voice (Gino & Schweitzer, 2008).

Some scholars divide the voice taking into nominal advice-taking and real advice-taking (Duan & Sun, 2019). Real advice-taking is accompanied by changes in implicit attitudes and behavioral; while nominal advice-taking refers to the decision-makers' strategy of taking on the surface in consideration of relationships and face, but the implicit attitude does not change or acting. In terms of measurement, they are slightly different from previous voice taking.

At present, researches on antecedent variables of voice behavior are abundant, but there are relatively few empirical studies about voice taking. Therefore, this study sorts out the empirical research on the voice taking to provide ideas and directions for later research on the voice taking.

## 2. Measure of Voice Taking

### 2.1. Measure in Experimental Scenarios

WOA, WOE formulas are suitable for the measurement of voice taking in experimental scenarios. WOA is measured by the degree to which decision makers change their decisions before and after they listen to their opinions (Harvey & Fischer, 1997; Yaniv, 1997). The calculation method is the ratio of the WOA equal to the change value of the final decision and the initial decision and the content of the suggestion and the change of the initial decision. The WOA value is between 0 and 1. The larger the WOA value, the higher the degree of voice taking. Similarly, WOE is the same way to measure voice taking (Yaniv & Kleinberger, 2000).

$$WOA = \frac{|\text{judgefinalestimate} - \text{judgeinitialestimate}|}{|\text{advisorrecommendation} - \text{judgeinitialestimate}|}$$

$$WOE = \frac{|\text{advisorrecommendation} - \text{judgefinalestimate}|}{|\text{advisorrecommendation} - \text{judgeinitialestimate}|}$$

The WOA and WOE formulas are more accurate in measuring decision makers' voice taking and are applicable to experimental scenarios. However, this measurement still has some shortcomings. First, when the content of the advice is consistent with the initial decision of the decision maker, the formula will lose its meaning because the formula denominator is zero. This does not mean that the recommendations have not been adopted, but it cannot be quantified using this measurement method. Second, Both the WOA and WOE formulas measure the voice taking by the ratio of absolute values. The WOE formula does not distinguish whether the decision maker's final recommendation is higher or lower than the advice, and the WOA formula does not distinguish the decision maker's original recommendation above or below the advice.

## 2.2. Scale of Voice Taking

From the perspective of voicer, some scholars have developed five item manager solicitation scales to measure the degree of seeking advice (Fast, Burris, & Bartel, 2014). Other scholars measure the voice taking from the perspective of decision-maker (Goldsmith, 2000). Both measurement scales tend to measure the degree of solicitation. They are suitable for measurement requests for voice.

Duan & Sun (2019) distinguished voice taking into nominal advice-taking and real advice-taking. Two types of voice taking can be measured by IAT and retest. The retest method is based on the difference between the pre-test and post-test selection results on the same material to determine which kind of voice taking the behavior belongs to. When the difference between the current test and the post test is small, the voice taking is real advice-taking. Otherwise, if the difference is large, it's nominal advice-taking. The IAT is to determine whether the decision maker real advice-taking by judging the degree of connection to words and the reaction of word classification (Greenwald et al., 1998; Duan & Sun, 2019).

At present, the most widely used voice taking is the five-item scale by Burris (2012). It measures the intent to taking advice from the perspective of the object of advice, and it measures the intent to endorse the voice and the intention to take action. The scale has good reliability and is consistent with the actual situation of the organization. However, this measurement will be subjectively affected by the supervisor.

## 3. Central findings of the Voice Literature

The factors influencing the voice taking can be divided into three aspects: the characteristics of the avoicer, the characteristics of the content and the decision-maker. These factors mainly affect the voice taking through the mediate variables such as trust, perceived loyalty, and perceived threat. Voice taking mainly affects voicer, the decision maker, and the organization. In the following, we will summarize empirical research from these aspects.

### 3.1. Antecedent

The characteristics of the voicer as the factors affecting the voice taking mainly include the professionalism or impact of the voicer, the relationship between the voicer and decision maker. Previous research has found that people are more willing to take the voice of professional voicer who they think have expertise (Harvey & Fischer, 1997). And at work, people are more willing to ask for help from an experienced and professional supervisor than a colleague (Nadler, Ellis, & Bar, 2003). At the same time, people have a higher evaluation of professional voice than unprofessional voice. Scholars have found that voice from people who are not close to the decision-maker are considered inappropriate, while voice from people who have a closer relationship are considered more positive (Goldsmith & Fitch, 2010).

The characteristics of the decision-maker as the factors affecting the voice taking mainly include gender and emotion. Voice taking may also depend on the gender of the decision-maker. Numerous studies suggest that there is subtle but potentially important differences between the way men and women provide support and respond to others' support (MacGeorge, Graves, Feng, Gillihan, & Burleson, 2004). Women are more susceptible to persuasion than men, and women are more likely to seek support than men. Other studies have attempted to show that gender affects voice taking in terms of adventurous differences between genders (Byrnes, Miller, & Schafer, 1999). Men are more prone to taking risks than women, because the difference in the perception of risk between men and women can lead to differences in risk tolerance between men and women (Magnan & Hinsz, 2005). But it's worth noting that the differences in risk-proneness caused by gender do not occur in all scenarios (Cecil, 1972; Wallach & Kogan, 1959).

The emotions of decision-makers influence the voice taking. First, individuals in positive emotions are more inclined to take risky behaviors (Deldin & Levin, 1986), because they overestimate the chances of success and underestimate the likelihood of failure (Isen, 1983). However, the current research about the effect of negative emotions on individual risk-taking behavior has not obtained consistent results. Some studies have found that negative emotions have a negative effect on risk-taking behavior (Deldin & Levin, 1986), while others have shown the opposite (Mano, 1992). Second, emotions can affect trust and thus influence the voice taking. Dunn and Schweitzer (2005) found that negative emotions can significantly reduce trust and positive emotions can increase trust. Other studies have found similar findings that positive emotions can increase favorability (Gouaux, 1971; Veitch & Griffitt, 1976), and increase trust in others (Jones & George, 1998). Trust in the voicer can increase the willingness to taking voice (Sniezek & VanSwol, 2001).

The characteristics of suggestion include the type of voice. The type of the voice will affect voice taking. For example, Burris (2012) found that supportive voice is easier to get recognized by managers than challenging voice, because challenging voice challenges stakeholder authority, and taking such voice may bring more risks.

### **3.2. Mediator and Moderator**

At present, there are few studies on the mediating and moderating variables about voice taking. The perceived loyalty and threat of the content of the suggestions will affect the possibility of voice taking. The higher the perceived loyalty, the higher probability of voice taking is. The stronger the threat from the voice, the less possibility of voice taking is. The level of trust of decision-maker in the voicer and the self-confidence of the decision-maker will also affect the voice taking. Generally speaking, the more confident the decision-maker is, the less likely he is to take voice. Because the confident decision-maker will tend to think

that his decision is the best decision and less consider other people's voice (See, Morrison, Rothman, & Soll, 2011). However, some studies believe that self-confidence will increase the possibility of voice taking, because confident decision-makers will be more confident in their status and rights, and they will have a weaker perception of the threat brought by voice. The level of trust in voicer can influence their voice taking (Sniezek & Van Swol, 2001), decision-makers are more receptive to voice from people they trust.

### 3.3. Consequence Variable

Consequences of the voice taking include three factors: influence on the voice, the decision-maker, and the organization.

For decision-makers, when advice is adopted, it can improve the quality of decision-making and confidence of decision-making (Sniezek et al., 2004). For Advocates, when voice is taking, it can improve voicers' self-efficacy and personal creativity (Chen & Hou, 2016). For organizations or team, voice taking will promote team learning and team innovation, reduce turnover, and increase organizational effectiveness (Chen & Hou, 2016). Previous research found that voice taking is beneficial to improving decision accuracy (LePine & VanDyne, 1998), team performance (Frazier & Bowler, 2015; Liu et al., 2017).

## 4. Conclusion

By combing and summarizing related literatures in the past, we find that there is no uniform standard in the academic on the definition of voice taking. The current definition of the concept of voice taking is vague and inconsistent.

The measurement of voice taking is relatively simple. The WOA and WOE formulas are suitable for the measurement in experimental scenarios. Most of the other scales are developed based on the perspective of managers and employees. But in practice, voice behavior is not limited to the relationship between superiors and subordinates, but also among peers. In the future, we can consider exploring voice from different relationships.

On the whole, the empirical research about voice taking is relatively rare. The research mainly focuses on the dependent variables before the voice taking. However, there are few studies on mediator and moderator, especially researches from the perspective of managers to investigate the psychological mechanism of why not take advice are relatively rare. Future research can strengthen the study of outcome variables, mediator and moderator.

The form of voice is diverse. Previous studies have distinguished voice of different natures based on the method of voice, and the motivation of voice. Different types of voice have different impacts on voice taking. For example, Burris (2012) examined the difference between the impact of supportive voice and challenging voice on voice taking. In order to fully understand the psychological factors and mechanisms affecting decision makers in the process of endorsing voice, it is necessary to explore the psychological differences among deci-

sion-makers in endorsing voice from the perspective of the types of suggestions in the future. In the future, we can strengthen the research on the psychological mechanism of voice taking.

The previous literature does not lack research on the factors that influence the voice taking. But they all explore the influence of these factors on the voice taking from the aspects of the voicer, the decision-maker or the content of the voice individually. In the actual organizations and enterprises, these factors are usually combined to affect decision makers. For example, the type of voice may have influence on the voice taking, and this effect may be affected by the personality characteristics of decision-maker. Therefore, in order to better understand the psychological mechanism of decision makers in the process of voice taking, it is necessary to explore it from various aspects in the future, and investigate the interaction of the two on the voice taking.

### Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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