

**THE EFFECT OF INDIVIDUAL-FOCUSED
TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP ON EMPLOYEE VOICE
IN CHINESE ORGANISATIONS**

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ABSTRACT

Employees' voice behaviours make active contributions to personal development and organisational functioning. The purposes of this thesis are to investigate how individual-focused transformational leadership influences employees' voice and deepens the understanding of the underlying mechanisms in the Chinese context.

A mixed-methods study was employed. The quantitative research involved a survey that was used to exam the relationship between individual-focused transformational leadership and voice behaviour and to identify possible variables affecting the relationship. Data were collected from 74 workgroups consisting of 74 group leaders and 294 subordinates. A qualitative research method was also used to shed further light on how leaders' behaviours influence employees' voice in the Chinese context. Twenty-five respondents participated in semi-structured interviews.

The results suggested that both leader–member exchange (LMX) and organisation-based self-esteem (OBSE) play mediating roles explaining the relationship between individual-focused transformational leadership and employees' voice behaviours.

The theoretical and managerial implications of the study are summarised and the limitations and directions for future research are described.

DECLARATION

I, Cong Pan, declare that no portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband and daughter.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Globalisation and China's fast-paced economic growth bring harsh challenges and competition to organisations. Employees' initiative and proactivity are primary competencies allowing organisations to compete effectively in the marketplace and achieve sustainable development (Crant 2000). Employee voice behaviour, defined as 'a promotive behaviour that emphasises the expression of constructive challenge intended to improve rather than merely criticise' (Van Dyne and LePine 1998, p.109) is regarded as a communicative and innovative form of personal initiative (Rank et al. 2004).

There is a consensus among researchers that employees' comments and suggestions make active contributions to enhancing employees' work. These contributions can take the form of making their jobs more effective (Burriss et al. 2013), providing them with personal developmental opportunities (Dutton and Ashford 1993), and accelerating their careers (Llopis 2012). Nevertheless, employee voice also contributes to improving organisational functioning (Detert and Burriss 2007; Liang et al. 2012), and organisational innovation and development (Morrison and Milliken 2000).

However, employees are often reluctant to express their opinions, particularly in the Chinese context, people have always been cautious to speak out (Zhang et al. 2015b). This reluctance to speak up and preference to remain silent about problems risks undermining organisational decision making and damages employee trust and morale (Milliken et al. 2003). Given the apparent importance of employees voice, it is necessary to better understand the conditions and mechanisms that favour or inhibit employees' speaking up with potentially valuable information. Thus, it is understandable that scholars have conducted a great deal of research on this topic. Substantial insightful and meaningful views have been proffered in the past decades to explain organisational silence and its antecedents and outcomes of voice or relatively discretionary expressions intended to affect the work context (e.g., Van

Dyne and LePine 1998; Morrison and Milliken 2000; Liang et al. 2012).

Scholars have contended that an expansive range of intrinsically and extrinsically focused factors affect employees' willingness to speak up. The first group of factors includes individual dispositions or differences in individual characteristics and capacities that influence how employees tend to think and behave (Motowildo et al. 1997; Crant 2003). The second group of factors are contextual, reflecting external forces that affect employees' willingness to speak up. For example, job and social stressors (Morrison 2014), and a negative workplace climate (Morrison and Milliken 2000), will inhibit voice in a particular context. The third set of factors deal with job and organisational attitudes and perceptions. For example, employees are easily engaged in voice when they perceive support from peers, supervisors, and the organisation (Liang and Gong 2013). And the fourth and final group of factors includes supervisor and leader behaviour that directly influences employee behaviour (Chamberlin et al. 2017). Leadership behaviours have the most definite impact on employees' willingness to exercise voice, especially for the best-performing employees (Detert and Burreis 2007).

Leadership is a significant issue for many organisations, particularly in the Chinese context. As the main authority figure, the leader plays an essential role in affecting employee behaviours and making employees feel it is safe—or worthwhile—to speak out about their opinions or concerns (e.g., Detert and Burreis 2007; Zhou and George 2001). Though most leaders consider themselves to be open-minded and willing to listen to different opinions, employees often remain silent on organisational issues and are usually afraid of sharing their insights openly (Morrison and Milliken 2000). This reflects employees' lack of trust in their managers' tolerance and magnanimity (Hsiung 2012).

Research on the relationship between leadership and employee voice behaviour is a remarkable academic field that has evolved into leadership theories. Notably, in recent years, research has demonstrated leader behaviours or attributes that are

receptive to employees' voice, including leaders' openness (Detert and Burris 2007), approachability (Milliken et al. 2003), team leader coaching (Edmondson 2003), developing a reciprocating relationship based on trust, loyalty, and affect (Van Dyne et al. 2008), and motivating and mentoring employees, as well as considering their needs first (Detert and Burris 2007). Various leadership styles, such as authentic leadership (Hsiung 2012), paternalistic leadership (Cheng et al. 2004; Zhang et al. 2015b), authoritarian leadership (Li and Sun 2015) and ethical leadership (Chen and Hou 2016) have also been investigated to understand the impact on encouraging or restricting employees' voice behaviour.

Leadership researchers regard leader–member exchange and transformational leadership as the most influential variables in supervisor and leader behaviours dealing with undifferentiated constructive voice (Chamberlin et al. 2017). Research has found that transformational leadership, a popular leadership style in Western countries, is positively related to employees' speaking up (e.g., Liu et al. 2010; Wu et al. 2011). Today there appears to be a consensus regarding an expansive range of correlates of voice and transformational leadership. However, some limitations in the research remain. This thesis seeks to contribute to the literature on voice and transformational leadership in the Chinese context.

1.1 Theoretical Gaps in the Literature on Leadership and Voice Research

Introduced by Burns (1978), the transformational leadership concept gained popularity in the mid-1980s and is now a mature theory. Research suggests that transformational leadership may be crucial in developing a social architecture capable of retaining and generating the intellectual capital necessary to meet the present organisational challenges (Bass 1997). Transformational leadership has been characterised as leadership provided by a leader who pays close attention to individuals, improves group and individual development by sharing a vision, and

inspires, motivates, and intellectually stimulates subordinates and followers (Yammarino and Bass 1990a). In the past several decades, this leadership style has enjoyed the reputation of explaining particularly effective leadership—indeed, implicitly or explicitly, it is regarded as the most effective form of leadership (Bass 1985; Conger and Kanungo 1987; Shamir et al. 1993).

A large portion of the literature has investigated the effects of transformational leadership on followers' behaviours. Research has found a strong positive relationship between transformational leadership and the following:

(1) Followers' performance, for example, in-role performance (Bass 1985; Bycio et al. 1995; Dvir et al. 2002; Waldman et al. 2001); extra-role performance, such as voice, innovative/creative performance (Detert and Burris 2007; Wu et al. 2011; Wang et al. 2011); and contextual performance (organisational citizenship behaviour—Cho and Dansereau 2010; Fuller et al. 1996; Wang et al. 2011)

(2) Followers' values and attitudes (Avolio and Bass 1988; Bass 1985; Bycio et al. 1995), for example, improving followers' self-esteem (Boal and Bryson 1988), decreasing followers' intent to leave (Bycio et al. 1995), and strengthening followers' commitment to the organisation (Barroso Castro et al. 2008)

Research has also demonstrated a relationship between transformational leadership and the growth of followers (Bass 1985), such as stimulating followers' intelligence (Jung et al. 2009) and creativity (Gumusluoglu and Ilsev 2009). However, some literature also points out the negative effects of transformational leadership. For example, to achieve the collective goal, a transformational leader closes down dissent among followers (Bass and Steidlmeier 1999).

In contrast to the studies showing a positive relationship between transformational leadership and employees' voice behaviour (Liu et al. 2010; Wu et al. 2011), Detert and Burris (2007) did not find a positive association between the two variables. They concluded that some of the transformational leadership behaviours may not present a clear signal that voice is desired (p. 881). The reason

may lie in transformational leadership's bivariate correlations—transformational leaders' behaviour may be seen as simultaneously empowering and confining. Accordingly, transformational leadership may influence employees' cooperative voice to benefit the organisation; it is also possible to remain silent based on the same cooperative motive (Wang et al. 2012).

Transformational leadership is a dual-level leadership model (Shamir and Kark 2013). The dominant constructs comprise leader behaviours and activities targeted at both groups and individuals. One is a group-focused level: the leader focuses on the group's identity, inspires the members to work together under a concordant vision, and encourages followers to pursue a shared value of the group. For example, a leader can articulate a vision and ideological goals (Bass 1985; Rafferty and Griffin 2004; Conger and Kanungo 1994; House 1977) and encourage team members to achieve group goals (Podsakoff et al. 1990; Shamir et al. 1993). The other is an individual-focused level: the leader cares about individual needs, promotes members' intelligence, and endeavours to build up a strong relationship between the leader and followers. Intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration (Bass 1985; Podsakoff et al. 1990; Rafferty and Griffin 2004) represent leaders' individual-focused behaviours.

Although the dominant constructs of transformational leadership theory state leaders' important and consentient behaviours on both individual and group levels (Bass 1985; Conger and Kanungo 1998; Podsakoff et al. 1990), prior research has regarded this leadership style as a holistic construct and has not distinguished between individual-focused and group-focused transformational leadership (Wang and Howell 2010). Further, when investigating the relationship between transformational leadership and voice behaviours, researchers do not explain the effects on voice exerted from different dimensions of transformational leadership behaviours. Scholars have, however, simultaneously tested the dual-level effects of transformational leadership on followers by including both individual- and group-

level outcomes (Wu et al. 2010). The findings reveal the discrepant, even contradictory effects influenced by different levels of leadership behaviours. In the field of voice research, few studies have investigated the separate construct of transformational leadership, except for Wang and Howell (2010), who examined voice in the presence of group-focused transformational leadership. They found that group-focused transformational leadership is positively associated with both cooperative voice and cooperative silence. They also found that value congruence increases employee voice and silence based on cooperative motives, moderated by differentiated transformational leadership.

Individuals' capabilities, behaviours and performance are important to an organisation. In this research, I concentrate on individual levels of transformational leadership and study individual-focused transformational leaders' behaviour and its influence on employee voice behaviours.

Leadership is considered a shared property; leaders are supposed to treat their followers similarly and identically (Klein and Kozlowski 2000). When studying the effects of transformational leadership on individuals and groups, prior research has simply assumed that all aspects of transformational leadership influence groups or individual members in similar ways (Klein and Kozlowski 2000). In comparison, within-group variation seems normal rather than exceptional when leaders face different group members (Liden and Graen 1980). In group management, effective leaders vary their behaviours in terms of followers' individual differences and contextual factors, such as resources and task structure (Zhang et al. 2015a). Leaders maximise the limited resources, understand followers' abilities and needs, provide personal mentoring, develop their potential, and enhance their self-efficacy (Wang and Howell 2010).

More recently, the literature has recognised that in group management, leaders will not treat individual followers identically. Researchers have endeavoured to

understand the consequences and underlying mechanisms of differentiated transformational leadership and investigated how leaders' differentiated behaviours among the individual members of the group impact the performance of the group and individual members (Zhang et al. 2015a).

Research on differentiated transformational leadership depicts that leaders' differentiated behaviours have detrimental effects on group effectiveness (Wu et al. 2010), team knowledge sharing (Cai et al. 2013), top management teams' effectiveness and firm performance (Zhang et al. 2015a), and organisational effectiveness (Kunze et al. 2013). Some researchers have found an opposite result, that differentiated leadership has positive impacts on employees' knowledge sharing (Li and Liu 2014) and organisational creativity (Sun et al. 2016). The inconsistent empirical findings of differentiated individual-focused transformational leadership need further investigation.

The research discussed above mainly concentrates on outcomes at the group and organisational levels. Few studies examine individual behaviours in a differentiated transformational leadership environment (Zhang et al. 2015c). Since leaders' differentiated leadership behaviour is a common phenomenon in organisations (Graen and Uhl-Bien 1995), and individuals are indispensable parts of a group, leaders need to realise the potential impacts of their differential leadership behaviours, as followers may compare with each other, which will affect their perceptions of working (Hirschhorn 1991; Nielsen and Daniels 2012).

In summary, the leader's behaviour is a powerful determinant of employees' organisational citizenship behaviour. The literature shows that transformational leadership is one of the most popular leadership styles studied by scholars (e.g., Detert and Burris 2007; Liu et al. 2010; Wang et al. 2012). Transformational leadership is also regarded as an applicable leadership theory verified and development in the Chinese context (Li and Shi 2008; Liu 2018; Li et al. 2006).

Previous research deems transformational leadership to be an overarching construct and does not provide a clear description of the relationship between transformational leadership and employee voice. It is necessary to study this relationship more precisely. Hence, this study will focus on the scope of individual-focused transformational leadership and investigate its effects on employee voice in the Chinese context.

I am also motivated to study the underlying mechanism, even though some mechanisms between transformational leadership and employee voice have been well documented in the literature. For example, researchers have found mediating variables such as psychological safety (Detert and Burris 2007), employee social identification and personal identification (Liu et al. 2010b), value congruence (Wang et al. 2012), leaders' voice expectation (Duan et al. 2016a), and employees' voice role perception (Duan et al. 2016a). Since most mediating variables are examined in a holistic construct of transformational leadership, this study aims to explore the underlying mechanism, which is more relevant to the individual-focused transformational leadership construct in China. Leaders' individual-focused behaviours provide personalised supports and resources to individuals, which may strengthen the exchange between leaders and members. Under leaders' individualised consideration and intellectual stimulation behaviours, employees' self-esteem in the organisation may be enhanced. Hence, leader–member exchange and employees' organisation-based self-esteem will be examined in this study.

In a real working environment, leaders may treat their subordinates differently. There is a need to rethink these relationships in the context of differentiated leadership environments in Chinese organisations. There is also a need to see if leaders' differentiated leadership behaviours will strengthen or attenuate leaders' individual-focused transformational leadership in leader-member exchange and employees' organisation-based self-esteem. Additionally, employees' individual dispositions — proactive personality will be tested as well.

1.2 Research Questions

In view of the current gaps in the literature, this research aimed to address the following research questions:

1. What are the impacts of individual-focused transformational leadership on employee voice behaviour in the Chinese context?
2. Is the relationship between individual-focused transformational leadership and employee voice mediated by leader-member exchange?
3. Is the relationship between individual-focused transformational leadership and employee voice mediated by employees' organisation-based self-esteem?
4. Is the relationship between individual-focused transformational leadership and leader-member exchange influenced by differentiated transformational leadership?
5. Is the relationship between individual-focused transformational leadership and employees' organisation-based self-esteem influenced by differentiated transformational leadership?
6. Is the relationship between individual-focused transformational leadership and leader-member exchange influenced by an employee's proactive personality?
7. Is the relationship between leader-member exchange and employee voice influenced by an employee's proactive personality?

There is much to be studied on employee voice behaviour in the Chinese context. This research narrows down the scope and answers the above questions by conducting a mixed-methods study. The preliminary quantitative study is designed to clarify how individual-focused transformational leadership influences employee voice behaviour, and what variables and mechanisms contribute to voice. Also, the study aims to examine the joint effects of individual and contextual factors on employee voice. The subsequent qualitative study seeks to gain a richer appreciation of how people think about their decisions to speak out.

1.3 Intended Contribution of This Thesis

This research is intended to make contributions in several ways.

First, consistent with previous efforts, this research demonstrates the importance of transformational leadership on employee voice behaviour, and finds that individual-focused transformational leadership has positive impacts on employee voice. Although research on leadership calls for distinguishing between leadership behaviours targeting a social unit and those directed at individuals (Kark et al. 2003), to date, much transformational leadership research treats the theory as an overarching construct, grouping together the two components: group-focused and individual-focused behaviours. This research emphasises individual-focused transformational leadership. The clarification of the construct domain for transformational leadership lays the foundations for further understanding how it affects voice behaviour.

Second, a theoretical model is developed to identify the underlying processes by which leaders' individual-focused behaviour influences employee voice. Two variables: leader–member exchange (LMX) and organisation-based self-esteem (OBSE) are clarified. The former is a relationship-based concept derived from reciprocity theory that describes how leaders develop different exchange relationships with their followers (Graen and Scandura 1987) and emphasises how one-on-one reciprocal exchanges between leader and employee develop and maintain the dyadic relationship (Wang et al. 2005). The latter is based on self-concept theory, defined as the degree to which individuals believe themselves to be capable and worthy as an organisational member (Pierce et al. 1989). Two hundred and ninety-four subordinates and seventy-four supervisors from various Chinese organisations were surveyed. The results indicate that LMX and OBSE are proximal in the individual-focused transformational leadership and voice behaviour research, and are processes that transmit the leaders' influence on employee voice.

In addition to addressing the effect of individual-focused transformational

leadership on employee voice, this study also explores the boundary conditions of the effect. Proactive personality, as an individual factor, and differentiated individual-focused transformational leadership as a contextual factor are examined. This study investigates whether employee proactive personality moderates the positive effect of individual-focused transformational leadership and LMX, LMX and voice; and whether differentiated transformational leadership moderates the negative effect of individual-focused transformational leadership on LMX and OBSE. Although the statistical results do not support the hypotheses, it is worthy to raise the questions.

Twenty-five interviews were carried out with both supervisors and subordinates. Interviewees share their perspectives on Chinese employees' voice behaviour. The qualitative study is helpful was to further shed light on how leader behaviour impacts employee voice, the underlying mechanisms and factors behind influences in the Chinese context.

1.4 The Organisation of This Thesis

The purpose of this research is to investigate how individual-focused transformational leadership affects employees' voice behaviour, explore the underlying mechanisms, and discuss how to develop a supportive leadership style for employees to express themselves freely in the Chinese context. This thesis is organised into seven chapters.

Chapter 1 is the introduction, which provides background for the research, raises research questions, and gives an overview of the structure of the research. Chapter 2 is a literature review, which provides a deep understanding of the past literature on voice behaviour and transformational leadership, and introduces their features in the current Chinese context. Chapter 3 proposes a research model in which I describe the variables organisation-based self-esteem (OBSE), leader–

member exchange (LMX), differentiated individual-focused transformational leadership, and proactive personality and develop hypotheses to illustrate their relationships. This chapter also introduces the research design. A mix-methods research design is employed in the research. Chapters 4 and 5 show the results of two empirical studies. Chapter 4 explains the procedures and methods used in this study and presents an analysis of quantitative data collection through a survey. Chapter 5 explores leadership and voice behaviour from both subordinates' and leaders' perspectives and clarifies their attributes and behaviours in the Chinese context through semi-structured interviews. The final chapter is a summary of the research findings. I analyse theoretical and practical implications and discuss limitations and future directions

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Why Voice Behaviour Matters

As a result of fierce competition, higher customer expectations for service and quality, organisations increasingly demand that their employees take the initiative, generate innovative ideas, speak up, and take on more responsibilities. Employees are encouraged to share information and knowledge and stand up for their opinions and beliefs (Nikolaou et al. 2008). Scholars also recognise the importance of employees' initiative behaviours, such as making constructive suggestions for change, in constantly improving organisations so they can remain competitive in the face of disruptive and rapid changes in technology, economics, society, and the business environment (e.g., Van Dyne and Lepine 1998; LePine and Van Dyne 2001). Indeed, researchers have reported that constructive forms of voice are highly relevant to both organisations and employees. It is expected that benefits to both organisations and employees will result when employees speak up concerning their ideas and suggestions (Van Dyne and LePine 1998; Detert and Burris 2007; Chamberlin et al. 2017).

For example, employees find new ways to do work, call management's attention to important issues that need to be addressed, and correct problems in existing work practices. Thus scholars suggest voice has a positive impact on organisational functioning (LePine and Van Dyne 1998). Research also illustrates that employees' voice is associated with organisational crisis prevention (Simola 2005), team learning (Edmondson 2003), and improved work process and innovation (Argyris and Schon 1978). Employees who speak up with constructive suggestions are regarded as essential for organisational innovation and development (Morrison and Milliken 2000) because innovation requires a context where employees feel free to exchange new ideas and question existing problems.

In addition, voice behaviour can also benefit employees who engage in such

behaviours. When employees contribute their ideas and opinions, they are viewed as active contributors (Chamberlin et al. 2017), more effective in their jobs (Burriss et al. 2013), and they will have more opportunities to interact and communicate with others and increase their visibility and interpersonal influence through sharing (Stamper and Van Dyne 2001). In particular, if supervisors recognise their ideas and opinions, employees may be rewarded with higher performance rating (Thompson 2005), which provides them with personal development opportunities (Dutton and Ashford 1993) and advances their careers (Llopis 2012). Employees who speak up may feel they are more valued and respected by their managers and organisations, especially when their input is implemented, which likely will enhance employees' enthusiasm to perform well (Burriss et al. 2013). Zhou and George (2001) found that when employees feel encouraged to express their opinions they will contribute more creative suggestions. Furthermore, research also shows voice is not only positively associated with employees' job performance, but also with their positive attitudes (e.g., Bies and Shapiro 1988). When employees' suggestions are considered by managers, they become more committed to the decisions made by the team and are more loyal to their team (Korsgaard et al. 1995).

Given the apparent importance of voice to both organisations and employees, organisations have enacted numerous policies and activities designed to involve employees in openly expressing their opinions on improving workplace practices or challenging organisational problems. Nonetheless, research shows that employees often do not feel comfortable voicing the issues that concern them (Milliken et al. 2003), as many employees believe that speaking up to bosses or discussions on workplace happenings is risky (Ryan and Oestreich 1998). Milliken et al. (2003) stated that the most frequently mentioned reason for remaining silent is that employees have concerns about being labelled negatively. As organisations are often intolerant of criticism, employees may be perceived as critics when speaking against existing practices. They are afraid to damage the relationship or

bring adverse consequences to others. Individuals often feel uncomfortable conveying negative information as they assume that recipients do not want to be told bad news (Conlee and Tesser 1973). Tesser and Rosen (1975) called this tendency to avoid undesirable messages as the MUM effect. Employees in organisations are most likely to filter those potential problems to positions that are higher than them, especially when they lack trust in their supervisors (Roberts and O'Reilly 1974).

Morrison (2014) also pointed out when employees believe speaking up will not make any difference, they will choose to keep silent. The perceived risk and cost of voice prevents employees from openly expressing their ideas (Stamper and Van Dyne 2001).

Given the importance of voice and the common phenomenon of employees' remaining silent, it should not be surprising that scholars have conducted a large amount of research on the subject (e.g., Fuller and Marler 2009; Milliken et al. 2003a; Morrison 2014). It is worth the effort to review the literature and further understand the underlying mechanisms.

2.2 A Review of the Literature on Voice

2.2.1 Main Streams

In the past few decades, the investigations of employee voice have included mainly two streams: EVLN (exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect) research and OCB (organisational citizenship behaviour—Hsiung 2012). The first stream, EVLN, regards voice as a constructive and active response to personal dissatisfaction on the job and organisational problems (Farrell 1983; Hirschman 1970). OCB describes voice as a form of extra-role behaviour in which employees proactively express constructive suggestions for change and promote the effective functioning

of the organisation (e.g., Van Dyne and LePine 1998). Although these two streams have different perspectives on the antecedent of voice behaviours, both of them regard voice as a positive behaviour.

Chamberlin et al. (2017) thought the original conceptualisation and the most influential classic theory of voice are often attributed to Hirschman (1970). Hirschman defined voice as ‘Any attempt at all to change, rather than to escape from, an objectionable state of affairs, whether through individual or collective petition to the management directly in charge, through appeal to a higher authority with the intention of forcing a change in management, or through various types of actions and protests, including those that are meant to mobilise public opinion’ (1970, p. 30). He proposed that employees respond to work dissatisfaction in two ways: *exit*—employees terminate the employment relationship and resign from the organisation or *voice*—employees raise the problems, discuss problems with their supervisors or peers, and seek help. He further discussed the relationship among loyalty, voice, and exit. More loyal employees are more likely to speak up and less likely to leave when they are dissatisfied.

Building on Hirschman’s discussion of responses to dissatisfaction with work, Farrell (1983) developed the EVLN framework. In addition to exit and voice, Farrell typology includes two more response categories, loyalty and neglect. Loyalty refers to employees passively but optimistically waiting for improving conditions. Neglect refers to making less effort and passively allowing the situation to worsen (Rusbult et al. 1988). In this framework, voice and loyalty are constructive responses, whereas exit and neglect are more passive and diffuse. In this context, voice does not just speak out about the problem and suggest solutions, but also takes unilateral actions to solve problems.

Although a great deal of research has been done on the antecedents of employee voice and personal dissatisfaction in the EVLN framework (e.g., Rusbult et al. 1988; Withey and Cooper 1989; Thomas and Au 2002), problematic

measurement tools have become one of the barriers to understanding the use of voice in addressing personal dissatisfaction (Liang 2007). Inconsistent empirical findings require more precise and accurate methods to be employed (Withey and Cooper 1989).

Some researchers have examined the role of voice in a more positive way as an organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB); such behaviour can lead to continuous organisational improvement (Organ 1988). OCB is defined as ‘individual behaviour that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognised by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organisation’ (Organ 1988, p. 4). OCB is regarded as an extra-role behaviour; it is a prosocial, work-related behaviour that is not specified in employees’ job duties and not recognised by the formal staff appraisal system. If employees do not perform these behaviours, it will not cause negative consequences (Brinsfield et al. 2009). However, when employees engage in work in favour of spontaneity, they will actively try to find solutions to improve individual, group, or organisational functioning (George and Jones 1997).

Van Dyne and LePine (1998, p. 109) defined voice as ‘promotive behaviour that emphasises the expression of constructive challenge intended to improve rather than merely criticise’. They believed voice is a kind of prosocial behaviour; employees speak out to prompt procedural, group, or organisational improvement. Botero and Van Dyne (2009) compared voice with similar concepts of employee dissent, upward dissent (Kassing 2002), and upward influence (Waldron 1999). They stated that voice is unique for its grounding in OCB and focuses on verbal expressions that are explicitly intended to benefit the group or organisation.

In contrast to other forms of OCB, like helping behaviour, organisational loyalty, and compliance (Podsakoff et al. 2000), the inherent risks in voice differentiate it from other behaviours. Voice that challenges the status quo may cause the risk of being misunderstood and other unexpected consequences

(Morrison and Milliken 2000). Few supervisors will refuse subordinates' helping behaviours or civic virtue, whereas not all bosses are willing to be challenged by staff on current practices and policies.

Van Dyne et al. (1995) organised common behaviours into: affiliative versus challenging and promotive versus protective themes. Based on this framework, four types of behaviours can be identified: (1) affiliative-promotive (e.g., helping coworkers), (2) affiliative-protective (e.g., stewardship), (3) challenging-promotive (e.g., voice), and (4) challenging-protective (e.g., whistle-blowing). As a challenging-promotive behaviour, voice is intended to make positive changes or take the initiative to challenge the status quo (Chiaburu et al. 2008).

Van Dyne and LePine (1998) developed a six-item measure of voice behaviour derived from this conceptualisation, which has been used in a large number of studies (e.g., Fuller et al. 2004; Fuller et al. 2006; Seibert et al. 2001). These OCB research streams explaining voice behaviour as a form of citizenship behaviour are not limited to studies of job satisfaction; they also study voice from other angles, including individual demographics, personality traits, leadership behaviours, and organisational context.

Liang (2007) compared the two streams of literature, EVLN and OCB, and found they overlap conceptually with each other. Both frameworks focus on employees' attempts to influence the organisation through a voluntary set of voice behaviours. In the EVLN literature, voice is an active response to dissatisfaction with work conditions, such as speaking out about problems, suggesting solutions, or whistle-blowing. OCB emphasises voice as a way to express constructive ideas and suggestions based on cooperative motives. Building on the EVLN and OCB frameworks, many studies have examined voice mechanisms, and several scholars subsequently have provided more specific definitions of voice. These studies are summarised in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 The Literature on Voice Definition

Hirschman (1970, p. 30)	Any attempt at all to change, rather than to escape from, an objectionable state of affairs, whether through individual or collective petition to the management directly in charge, through appeal to higher authority with the intention of forcing a change in management, or through various types of actions and protests, including those that are meant to mobilise public opinion.
Folger et al. (1979, p. 2254)	Opportunity to express opinions and preferences or to present facts relevant to one's position in the context of decision making.
Van Dyne et al. (1995, p. 266)	... proactively challenging the status quo and making constructive suggestions.
LePine and Van Dyne (1998, p. 854)	Voice is when a group member makes an innovative suggestion for change to a standard operating procedure in order to improve workflow, even when such a suggestion might upset others.
Van Dyne et al. (2003, p. 1360)	Voice is the actor's motivation to withhold versus express ideas, information, and opinions about work-related improvements (rather than on the presence or absence of speaking up behaviour).
Premeaux and Bedeian (2003, p. 1538)	... openly stating one's views or opinions about workplace matters, including the actions or ideas of others, suggested or needed changes and alternative approaches or different lines of reasoning for addressing job-related issues.
Detert and Burris (2007, p. 870)	... involves sharing one's ideas with someone with the perceived power to devote organisational attention or resources to the issue raised.
Morrison et al. (2011, p. 375)	... discretionary communication of ideas, suggestions, concerns, or opinions about work-related issues with the intent to improve organizational or unit functioning.
Liang et al. (2012, p. 74)	... propose two types of voice – promotive voice and prohibitive voice. Promotive voice as employees' expression of new ideas or suggestions for improving the overall functioning of their work unit or organisation. Prohibitive voice describes employees' expressions of concern about work practices, incidents, or employee behaviour that are harmful to their organisation.
Maynes and Podsakoff (2014, p. 88)	... an individual's voluntary and open communication directed toward individuals within the organisation that is focused on influencing the context of the work environment.

According to the definitions in Table 2.1, some conclusions can be reached on the inherent characteristics of voice.

From the perspective of its purpose, voice behaviour is an intentional, planned

behaviour (Liang et al. 2012). The purposeful forms of voice are work-related improvements (Van Dyne et al. 2003) or forcing a change in management (Hirschman 1970). It differs from organisational dissent (Graham 1986), whistleblowing (Near and Miceli 1985), and upward influence (Waldron 1999), which are driven by dissatisfaction or attempting to attract attention to specific issues. Voice evolves from a desire to improve an organisation or benefit others through suggestions or addressing all kinds of issues (Premeaux and Bedeian 2003). Voice is not an affiliative behaviour, as challenging others or pointing out problems may affect interpersonal relationships. Thus, voice defined in this way is seen as more utilitarian and goal oriented. It aims to lead to a better outcome but not in a relationship (Chan 2014).

In addition to being a proactive behaviour related to changing the status quo, voice is a behaviour that allows employees to express their psychological needs (Gorden 1988). Van Dyne et al. (2003) differentiated types of voice based on three employee motives, which are disengaged, self-protective, and other-oriented motives. Accordingly, three specific types of voice are acquiescent voice, defensive voice, and prosocial voice.

From the perspective of the target audience, voice focuses exclusively on employee expression, especially on verbal expressions. Employees speak up not only directly to supervisors, for example, sharing their ideas with someone who has the perceived power to address the issue (Detert and Burris 2007), but also down to subordinates and horizontally to peers (Botero and Van Dyne 2009) by formal or informal communication.

From the perspective of the components of voices, according to Van Dyne et al. (2003), management research mainly includes two major conceptualisations of voice. The first regards voice as a due process procedure to facilitate employee participation in allocation decision making (e.g., Folger et al. 1979; Bies and Shapiro 1988). In this line of research, people think the decisions are fairer when

more voice and ideas can be expressed in the context of decision making. The other approach uses voice to describe the behaviour of speaking up about personal ideas, information, and opinions with relevance to employees' work or work organisation (e.g., LePine and Van Dyne 1998; Frese et al. 1999; Zhou and George 2001); or a behaviour of forcing a change in management (e.g., Hirschman 1970; Premeaux and Bedeian 2003). In addition to these two conceptualisations, Van Dyne et al. (2003) emphasised the voice's function from a motivation angle rather than a speaking-up behaviour.

In this view, the employee takes the initiative to improve organisational performance through the different forms of voice. Previous research focused more on voice as giving suggestions or improving existing work practices and procedures to benefit organisations, and less on individual concerns about existing practices or behaviours that may be harmful to their organisations (Liang et al. 2012). Van Dyne et al. (2003) broadened the scope of the definition of voice to include the expression of both constructive suggestions and concerns. Liang (2007) named these two forms promotive voice and prohibitive voice.

Promotive voice centres on expressing new ideas or suggestions to enhance the functioning of the work unit or organisation by doing new things. It is accompanied by innovative solutions or advice for improvement; such voice it is often framed as an expression of 'what could be' with positive intentions. Prohibitive voice describes employees' concerns about work practices, behaviours, or strategies that are harmful to the unit or organisation, with the intention of preventing negative consequences (Liang et al. 2012). It acts as an important function for organisational health, as it attempts to stop damaging or adverse behaviours and prevent problematic initiatives from taking place.

Liang (2007) compared the two forms of voice behaviour and identified the difference from three domains: First, from the behaviour angle, promotive voice focuses on raising new ideas or suggestions that are beneficial to the unit or

organisation, whereas prohibitive voice refers to doubts and critiques that are harmful to the organisation. Second, the former provides a solution or suggestions to improve the current situation, whereas the latter usually speaks out about the problems without any solution. Third, promotive voice brings about improvement and change that may benefit the unit or organisation, it usually does not make any person or authority feel challenged, and it is easily recognised by supervisors or other group members. In contrast, prohibitive voice often criticises the current situation, it is easily considered as complaints (Van Dyne et al. 1995), and leads to conflict, defensiveness, or destroying harmonious relationships in the unit. However, prohibitive voice is potentially more impactful than promotive voice, as it targets the potential immediacy of the harm, preventing the negative influences of process losses in a timely manner (Chamberlin et al. 2017). Although promotive voice tends to enhance positive effects to the organisation, in practice, it may cause extra workload or costs, and the organisation may not adopt and implement the suggestions immediately (Liang et al. 2012). The forms of promotive and prohibitive voice have been widely studied and cited in the current Chinese context (Jing 2012).

Consolidating the above definitions, in this thesis, voice is defined as a form of organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB). It is a proactive behaviour that aims to improve the workflow, change the status quo, or solve practical problems encountered in the unit or organisation by making an innovative or constructive suggestion, or states concerns, pointing out work-related issues to the supervisor or peers.

In this thesis, I limit my discussion of voice to the situations where employees have suggestions and ideas for improvements to their work or organisation. Employees' voice behaviours here represent their thoughtful opinions or decisions. Employees' mindless behaviour or silence due to lack of ideas is not in the scope of this research. Voice in this thesis does not mean that the suggestions must be

constructive or beneficial to the group or organisation, as this is restricted by employees' individual differences or the levels where they are in the organisation. Instead, it means that the primary intent is that employees want to bring about positive change or suggest a remedy for work-related issues, not to complain or advocate for their own interests. Voice is not limited to verbal behaviours, although most of the time it is expressed verbally (Hirschman 1970); it also involves actions like writing emails and memos (Withey and Cooper 1989).

2.2.2 The Prediction and Underlying Mechanisms of Voice Behaviour

Given the apparent importance of voice to employees and organisations discussed in the previous sections, it is essential to understand the conditions and underlying mechanisms that favour or inhibit such behaviour. Morrison (2014) divided the antecedents of voice behaviour into motivators and inhibitors. A motivating factor can be manager's openness behaviour, which strengthens employees' desire to speak up by increasing their psychological safety (Detert and Burris 2007). A second motivating factor is employees' individual characters; employees with proactive personality tend to take the initiative to voice (Crant et al. 2011). Inhibiting factors diminish employee voice and increase the tendency toward silence. For example, instrumental climate emphasises self-interest; employees in such a context perceive their efforts may not be valued and voice will be futile due to colleagues' egoism. The expectation of futility may lead to acquiescent silence (Wang and Hsieh 2013). In a working environment, various motivators and inhibitors operate through multiple mechanisms. Employees determine to voice only when the motivators are stronger than the restraining forces. In addition, Morrison (2014) further summarised the motivating and inhibiting factors into five categories:

- (1) Individual dispositions, which refer to fundamental characteristics, habits,

or personalities of individuals, and the tendency to act in a specified way (Cohrs et al. 2006). For example, proactive personality (Seibert et al. 2001), and assertiveness (Maynes and Podsakoff 2014), conscientiousness, and extraversion, three of the Big Five personality traits (LePine and Van Dyne 2001), are positively related to voice.

(2) Attitudes toward and perceptions of one's organisation and job, which indicate individuals' stable cognitive evaluation and interpretation of their work. Motivating factors in this category include employees' felt obligation for constructive change (Liang et al. 2012), organisational identification (Fuller et al. 2006a), job satisfaction (Rusbult et al. 1988; Thomas and Au 2002), and duty orientation (Tangirala et al. 2013). Besides, voice may be constrained if subordinates intend to leave the organisation (Burriss et al. 2008).

(3) Emotions, beliefs, and schemas refer to employee personal feelings, value, and their understanding of the work environment. For example, anger (Edwards et al. 2009), psychological safety (Liang et al. 2012), and perceptions of interpersonal justice (Takeuchi et al. 2012) motivate employee voice. *Zhongyong*, a traditional Chinese value system, is positively related to employee voice that is oriented to an all-encompassing view, rather than self-centred voice behaviour (Duan and Ling 2011). Employees' cognitive style preference also affect different styles of voice behaviour (Janssen et al. 1998).

(4) Supervisor and leader behaviour, such as leader-member exchange (LMX; Botero and Van Dyne 2009), transformational leadership (Liu et al. 2010b), top management openness (Mullen 2005), and trust in supervisors (Premeaux and Bedeian 2003).

(5) Contextual factors, such as group voice climate (Morrison et al. 2011), and organisational support (Farh et al. 2007).

Table 2.2 is based on Morrison's (2014) framework; it shows most of the motivators and inhibitors that have been found to date to influence voice behaviours.

Table 2.2 A Summary of the Antecedents of Voice Behaviour

	Motivators		Inhibitors	
Individual dispositions, characteristics, and background	Extraversion Proactive personality Assertiveness Conscientiousness Self-esteem Locus of control	Crant et al. (2011); LePine and Van Dyne (2001) Crant et al. (2011); Seibert et al. (2001) Maynes and Podsakoff (2014) Crant et al. (2011); LePine and Van Dyne (2001) Premeaux and Bedeian (2003) Premeaux and Bedeian (2003)	Achievement orientation Neuroticism Agreeableness Lack of experience Low position	Tangirala et al. (2013) LePine and Van Dyne (2001) LePine and Van Dyne (2001) Milliken et al. (2003) Milliken et al. (2003)
Job and organisational attitudes and perceptions	Organisational identification Felt obligation for change Job satisfaction Duty orientation	Fuller et al. (2006a) Liang et al. (2012) Rusbult et al. (1988); Thomas and Au (2002) Tangirala et al. (2013)	Detachment Powerlessness	Burris et al. (2008) Morrison and Rothman (2009)
Emotions, beliefs, and schemas	Anger Psychological safety Interpersonal justice <i>Zhongyong</i> Organisation-based self-esteem Cognitive style preference for adaption-innovation	Edwards et al. (2009) Liang et al. (2012) Takeuchi et al. (2012) Duan and Ling (2011) Liang et al. (2012) Janssen et al. (1998)	Fear Futility	Kish-Gephart et al. (2009) Morrison (2014)
Supervisor and leader behaviour	Management openness Consultation Leader–member exchange Supervisor–subordinate <i>guanxi</i> Trust in supervisors Authentic leadership Ethical leadership Transformational leadership Moral leadership	Detert and Burris (2007); Premeaux and Bedeian (2003) Edmondson (2003); Tangirala and Ramanujam (2012) Botero and Van Dyne (2009); Burris et al. (2008) Wang et al. (2019) Premeaux and Bedeian (2003) Hsiung (2012) Chen and Hou (2016) Liu et al. (2010b); Liu and Liao (2013) Dedahanov Alisher et al. (2016)	Abusive leadership Authoritarian leadership Lack of closeness Unsupportive style	Burris et al. (2008); Li et al. (2009) Dedahanov Alisher et al. (2016); Li and Sun (2015) Milliken et al. (2003) Milliken et al. (2003)
Other contextual factors	Group voice climate Caring climate Superficial harmony Organisational support Colleague support Access to resources Hierarchical position	Morrison et al. (2011) Wang and Hsieh (2013) Wei et al. (2015) Farh et al. (2007) Xie et al. (2015) Fuller et al. (2006b) Fuller et al. (2006b)	Climate of fear or silence Instrumental climate Hierarchical structure Power distance Low munificence Operating environments	Dutton et al. (1997) Wang and Hsieh (2013) Milliken et al. (2003) Botero and Van Dyne (2009) Morrison and Milliken (2000)

A review of voice literatures shows the research trends in the antecedents of voice. Earlier research highlights the effects of personal status and individual difference on voice behaviour, such as job satisfaction, personality (e.g., Rusbult et al. 1988; LePine and Van Dyne 2001). Recent studies focus on exploring the factors in the work context that may affect employees' willingness to speak up (e.g., Detert and Burris 2007; Farh et al. 2007). Among this contextual stream, supervisor and leader behaviour is considered a key factor that directly encourages or hinders employees' voice behaviour (Duan et al. 2016b; Morrison 2014).

Detert and Burris (2007) revealed two primary reasons leadership behaviours affect employee voice. The first is 'the resource dependency of subordinates in hierarchical settings' (Detert and Burris 2007, p. 870). Leaders are perceived to have the power to make decisions or invest resources. For the sake of obtaining more organisational resources or facilitating work progress, employees must voice their ideas with someone who is in a position of power or possesses resources. The second reason lies in leaders' authority to administer employees' rewards, punishments and promotions, remuneration and job assignments (Dépret and Fiske 1993). When leaders show their openness to employees' voice, employees perceive the anticipated benefits of voice outweigh its costs, which affect employees' willingness and motivation to speak up voluntarily. Thus, the effect of specific leadership behaviours on employee voice has received more attention recently.

Several empirical studies have been conducted to examine these relationships. Leaders' traits, behaviours, emotion, and relationships with subordinates are investigated by researchers to understand further how leadership influences employees' voice behaviour. Leaders' behaviours and attitudes, such as leader charismatic behaviours (Kwak 2012), managers' consultation (Tangirala and Ramanujam 2012), managerial openness (Detert and Burris 2007), responding to employees' ideas (Withey and Cooper 1989), and creating a safe working environment (Edmondson 2003) are positively related to employee voice. Leaders' abusive supervision (Burris et al. 2008) and unsupportive style (Milliken et al. 2003) will restrain employees from speaking out.

Different leadership styles have also been investigated to understand their impacts on employees' voice. Authentic leadership (Hsiung 2012) affects employee voice behaviours through positive employee mood and LMX quality. Transformational leadership is a powerful affecting factor of voice, which

motivates employees to voice by increasing employee psychological safety (Wu et al. 2011), social and personal identification (Liu et al. 2010b), and enhancing value congruence (Wang et al. 2012). Paternalistic leadership affects employee voice in two ways. On the one hand, benevolence and morality, two paternalistic leader behaviours, positively influence employee voice through LMX processes (Zhang et al. 2015b). On the other hand, its authoritarian behaviours will keep employee silent (Zhang et al. 2015b; Dedahanov Alisher et al. 2016).

The relationship between leaders and employees is also a determinant of employees' voice behaviours. Employees react favourably to voicing by LMX quality (Burriss et al. 2008; Botero and Van Dyne 2009; Wang et al. 2016), supervisor-subordinate *guanxi* (Wang et al. 2019), and their trust in supervisor (Premeaux and Bedeian 2003). Table 2.3 summarises some empirical studies related to leader and employee voice.

As Chamberlin et al. (2017) noted in their meta-analysis, LMX and transformational leadership are the most influential variables in supervisor and leader behaviours to undifferentiated constructive voice. Although numerous scholars have suggested that transformational leadership has significant effects on employee voice (e.g., Duan et al. 2017; Liu et al. 2010; Wang and Howell 2012; Wu et al. 2011), contrary to this prediction, Detert and Burriss (2007) did not find a positive relationship between them. Wang et al. (2012) tried to explain the inconsistent results from the perspective of transformational leadership's dual-level construct; it is necessary to study employee voice behaviours from different components of transformational leadership.

Table 2.3 A Summary of Leadership and Voice Related Studies

Authors	Measurement of Voice	Antecedents	Moderators & Mediators	Voice Behaviours	Outcome/Findings
Detert and Burris (2007)	Referencing Van Dyne and LePine (1998)'s verbal behaviour only Study 1: $\alpha = 0.90$; Study 2: $\alpha = 0.87$	Transformational leadership (TFL); Managerial openness	Moderator: Subordinate performance Mediator: Psychological safety	Subordinates' improvement-oriented voice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leader's openness is consistently related to voice. 2. Subordinate psychological safety partially mediates leader behaviours and subordinates' voice. 3. Leadership behaviours have the strongest impact on the voice behaviour of the best-performing employees.
Liu et al. (2010b)	Van Dyne and LePine (1998) $\alpha = 0.91$	Transformational leadership (TFL)	Mediator: Social identification Personal identification	Speaking out (voice toward peers); speaking up (voice toward the supervisor)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. TFL is positively related to both speaking out and speaking up through employee identifications. 2. Social identification is associated with speaking out, while personal identification predicts only speaking up. 3. TFL influences affiliative extra-role behaviour via both social identification and personal identification.
Wu et al. (2011)	Van Dyne and LePine (1998) $\alpha = 0.85$	Transformational leadership (TFL)	Mediator: Employee psychological safety Leader-member exchange (LMX) quality	Employee voice behaviour	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Transformational leadership is positively related to employee voice behaviour. 2. Mediated by employee psychological safety perceptions and LMX quality.
Wang et al. (2012)	Van Dyne et al. (2003) Cooperative voice: $\alpha = 0.88$; Cooperative silence: $\alpha = 0.89$	Group-focused transformational leadership	Moderator: Differentiated individual-focused transformational leadership Mediator: Value congruence	Follower cooperative voice and cooperative silence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Value congruence mediates the relationship between group-focused TFL and cooperative voice and silence. 2. High levels of differentiated TFL weaken the positive link between value congruence and cooperative voice. 3. High levels of differentiated TFL strengthen the positive link between value congruence and cooperative silence.
Duan et al. (2016a)	Van Dyne and LePine (1998) $\alpha = 0.91$	Transformational leadership (TFL)	Moderator: Personal identification Mediator: Leaders' voice expectation; Employees' voice role perception	Employee Voice Behaviour	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leaders' voice expectation and employees' voice role perception mediate the relationship between TFL and voice behaviour. 2. TFL strengthens employees' personal identification with the leader. Personal identification amplifies the proposed Pygmalion process.

(Table 2.3, continued)

Authors	Measurement of Voice	Antecedents	Moderators & Mediators	Voice Behaviours	Outcome/Findings
Hsiung (2012)	Van Dyne and LePine (1998) $\alpha = 0.92$	Authentic leadership	Moderator: Procedural justice climate Mediator: Employee positive mood; LMX quality	Employee voice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Authentic leadership is positively related to voice. 2. Employee positive mood and LMX quality mediate the relationship between authentic leadership and voice. 3. Procedural justice climate moderates the mediation effects of positive mood and LMX quality.
Li and Sun (2015)	Van Dyne and LePine (1998) $\alpha = 0.75$	Manager authoritarian leadership	Moderator: Leader identification Power distance orientation Mediator: Supervisor authoritarian leadership	Employee voice behaviour	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Supervisor authoritarian leadership negatively affects voice and mediates the negative relationship between manager authoritarian and employee voice. 2. Leader identification moderates the indirect negative effect of manager authoritarian leadership on voice via supervisor authoritarian leadership. 3. Power distance orientation moderates the direct negative effect of supervisor authoritarian leadership on employee voice behaviour.
Chen and Hou (2016)	Van Dyne and LePine (1998) $\alpha = 0.94$	Ethical leadership	Moderator: Innovation climate Mediator: Employee creativity	Employee voice behaviour	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Employee perceptions of ethical leadership are positively related to employees voice behaviour. 2. Voice behaviour is positively related to individual creativity. 3. Innovative climate moderates individual creativity and voice behaviour.
Dedahanov Alisher et al. (2016)	Van Dyne and LePine (1998) $\alpha = 0.946$	Paternalistic leadership	NA	Employee voice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Authoritarian leadership reduces employee voice which in turn impacts creativity. 2. Moral leadership facilitates creativity via employee voice.

(Table 2.3, continued)

Authors	Measurement of Voice	Antecedents	Moderators & Mediators	Voice Behaviours	Outcome/Findings
Premeaux and Bedeian (2003)	Self-developed instrument. $\alpha = 0.82$	Top management openness; Locus of control; Self-esteem; Trust in supervisor	Moderator: Self-monitoring	Speak up	Self-monitoring negatively moderates the relationships between the four antecedents and speaking up behaviour.
Kwak (2012)	Van Dyne and LePine (1998) $\alpha = 0.93$	Charismatic leadership	Moderator: Follower empowerment Mediator: Leader charisma; Leader charismatic behaviours and follower empowerment interaction	Follower voice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leader charisma mediates the effects of leader charismatic behaviours on follower voice. 2. If followers are more empowered, leaders' charismatic behaviours are less strongly related to leader charisma perceived by the followers. 3. Leader charisma mediates the interactive effects of leader charismatic behaviours and follower empowerment level on follower voice.
Tangirala and Ramanujam (2012)	Van Dyne and LePine (1998) $\alpha = 0.91$	Managers' consultation	Moderator: Perceived status of the manager; Employees' work self-efficacy; Overall job satisfaction; Mediator: Employees' perceived influence	Employees' upward voice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Managers' consultation is positively related to employees' upward voice mediated by employees' perceived influence, moderated by managers' status with the organisation and employees' work self-efficacy. 2. Employees' overall job satisfaction moderates the relationship between employees' perceived influence and their upward voice.
Li et al. (2009)	Liang and Farh (2008) Promotive voice $\alpha = 0.92$ Prohibitive voice $\alpha = 0.87$	Abusive supervision	Moderator: Perceived supervisory status Mediator: Perceived organisational support; Psychological safety	Promotive voice; Prohibitive voice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Abusive supervision is significantly negative related to both promotive and prohibitive voice behaviour, mediated by perceived organisational support. Psychological safety mediates prohibitive voice only. 2. Subordinates' perception of supervisory status in organisations moderated the relationship between abusive supervision and perceived organisational support, and psychological safety.

(Table 2.3, continued)

Authors	Measurement of Voice	Antecedents	Moderators & Mediators	Voice Behaviours	Outcome/Findings
Wang et al. (2016)	Farh et al. (2007) $\alpha = 0.77$	Leader–member exchange (LMX)	Moderator: Role clarity Mediator: Psychological empowerment	Employee voice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. LMX is positively related to employee voice. 2. Psychological empowerment mediated the positive relationship between LMX and employee voice. 3. Stronger role clarity strengthens the indirect relationship between LMX and psychological empowerment.
Botero and Van Dyne (2009)	Van Dyne and LePine (1998) Study 1: $\alpha = 0.90$; Study 2: $\alpha = 0.86$	Leader–member exchange (LMX); Individual cultural value orientation of power distance	Moderator: Power distance	Employee voice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In the United States, LMX is positively related to voice, power distance (PD) is negatively related to voice, and PD makes more of a difference in voice when LMX is high. 2. In Colombia, LMX and PD are both related to voice without interaction.
Burris et al. (2008)	Van Dyne and LePine (1998) $\alpha = 0.79$	LMX; Abusive supervision	Mediator: Psychological detachment	Subordinates' voice to supervisors	Psychological detachment mediates relationships between perceptions of leadership (LMX and abusive supervision) and voice.
Van Dyne et al. (2008)	Van Dyne and LePine (1998) Study 1: $\alpha = 0.91$ Study 2: $\alpha = 0.92$	LMX	Moderator: In role perceptions	Voice Helping	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In role perceptions enhance the LMX-voice relationship. 2. Viewing helping as in role behaviours buffer the negative effect of low-quality LMX on helping.

2.2.3 Voice Behaviours in the Chinese Context

Employees' voice behaviours play an important role in organisational performance; however, many employees would rather keep silent when they are aware of the problems of organisations or have ideas for organisation improvement (Morrison and Milliken 2000). This phenomenon might be more noticeable in the Chinese context than in Western countries (Zhang et al. 2015b). As stated by two Chinese proverbs, 'Too much talk leads to error, careless talk makes trouble' and 'Speech is silver, and silence is gold'. Chinese people have always been cautious about making suggestions.

Some research attributes the differences in voice behaviours to the cultural and ideological context. For example, relationalism (or *guanxi*) is one of the cultural guidelines of Confucianism. It is a relationship-based mechanism that conveys harmonious social relationships and discourages discord. Hwang (1997-8) classified the interpersonal relationship of Chinese society into three categories: vertical in-group, horizontal in-group, and horizontal out-group. As a product of Chinese relationalism, in the vertical relationship, when one is facing a conflict situation with a superior, for the sake of protecting the superior's face, he or she may be tolerant and usually chooses indirect communication to express an opinion. This vertical in-group conflict resolution model illustrates the cultural mechanism that affects the voice behaviours of Chinese employees. Some scholars further examined the impacts of supervisor-subordinate *guanxi* on subordinates' voice behaviours. The result showed *guanxi* is positively related to employees' voice, with trust in the supervisor (Yan 2018) and psychological empowerment (Wang et al. 2019) partly mediating these correlations.

In both traditional and contemporary Chinese societies, Chinese people have long been known for favouring harmony and unity within social groups. To maintain a harmonious environment, challenges or disagreements from the majority, which may spoil interpersonal harmony, are not encouraged (Yang 1993). In the work unit, voice behaviours may be regarded as raising doubts and challenges to specific members or authority; this type of voice may jeopardise harmonious relationships in a working context, which is harmful to organisational effectiveness. Therefore, employees may feel anxious about expressing their dissent and fearful of being expelled (De Dreu and Van Vianen 2001).

Furthermore, traditional Chinese culture emphasises hierarchical order, which implies a deep reverence for power and status. Power distance determines people's attitudes and behaviours consistent with their hierarchical position (Landau 2009). The norms in high power distance cultures are likely to indicate speaking out is an inappropriate behaviour as it may undermine the power relationship structure in the organisation. Supervisors will be affected in some measure by the social-cultural values that lead to consciously counting employees' voice behaviours as either appropriate or inappropriate (Kwon and Farndale 2020).

Farh et al. (1997) pointed out that Chinese people are likely to be more submissive to authority. An authoritarian leader exercises absolute power of authority and requires subordinates to obey and fulfil tasks unquestioningly. Employees with an authoritarian leader believe their leader wants them to follow instructions with limited autonomy. They believe they will be scolded or punished if they do not obey. Research has been done to investigate employees' voice behaviours under authoritarian leadership (Dedahanov Alisher et al. 2016; Duan et al. 2018; Li and Sun 2015). The results showed a negative relationship between supervisor's authoritarian leadership and employee voice behaviour, while power distance orientation moderated the direct negative impact of supervisor authoritarian leadership on employee voice behaviour (Li and Sun 2015).

The doctrine of the mean (or *zhongyong*) is a doctrine of Confucianism. It means to maintain balance and harmony, and treat all things with unbiased neutrality. Yang (2009) proposed that *zhongyong* is a set of meta-cognitive practical thinking systems in which, when individuals deal with affairs in daily life, they will be guided to understand the problem, identify the key issues, decide on the best action plan, and so on. In the process of problem solving, *zhongyong* advocates thinking from an encompassing viewpoint, empathy, and pursuing a harmonious and balanced state of multiple parties. Under the influence of *zhongyong*, employees are likely to speak out with holistic opinions oriented to the complete picture, and negatively related to self-centred voice (Duan and Ling 2011).

The impacts of collectivism have also been investigated, and show a twofold effect on employees' voice behaviours. On the one hand, when collectivists experience a conflict between the collective interest and personal interests, they tend to express ideas that are beneficial to the organisation but may have potential adverse effects on themselves (Chen et al. 2013). On the other hand, collectivists

focus on the harmony of the group; if voices may undermine the harmonious environment, they will keep silent. Wei and Zhang (2010) found that employees driven by superficial harmony will have negative expectations for the results of suggestions, which leads to employees suppressing the expression of suggestions.

Individual voice behaviours can be understood from the perspective of cultural ideologies. The above paragraphs discuss some characteristics of voice behaviours influenced by traditional cultural values. However, with the tremendous changes in the society and outside environment, no doubt people's values and work attitude are gradually changing; accordingly, their work behaviours will be affected. These differences are contrary to conventional views on how employees should think and act (Solnet et al. 2012).

2.3 Transformational Leadership Literature

2.3.1 Transformational Leadership Theory

The rudimentary theories on charisma can be dated back to Weber (1947). Although charismatic leaders are supposed to exert a profound influence on followers' performance and motivation, these theories did not attract much interest until the transformational leadership concept was introduced by Burns (1978). Burns provided a theoretical explanation of transformational leadership from sociological, political, and psychoanalytic perspectives (Bass 1995). According to Burns (1978), transformational leadership can spur leaders and their followers to a higher level of morality and motivation. In contrast to the transactional leadership style, in which a leader exchanges rewards for subordinates' desired performance, transformational leaders are able to inspire followers to work toward a common goal, and change followers' values and expectations through the leaders' traits and personality.

Considerable debate exists on whether charismatic leadership is different from transformational leadership (Carless et al. 2000). Traditionally, charismatic leadership has been applied mainly to high-level leaders and distant leadership situations in a social and political context. However, the concept of charisma can be found at all levels of the organisation. Consequently, the current research on charismatic leadership faces the challenge of combining the studies of distant

charismatic leaders from a social-psychological perspective with the study of micro leadership in organisations (Shamir 1995).

Certain researchers conceive of charisma as one of the attributes of transformational leaders (Bass 1985; Bass and Avolio 1993; Conger and Kanungo 1987). For example, Bass and Avolio (1993) viewed charisma as one of the behavioural components that comprises the dimensions of transformational leadership. In the business world, many executives hold a contrary opinion; they postulate that charisma is not a compulsory quality for effectiveness compared with transformational ability, which executives should have (Conger 1999). 'Charismatic leaders, by definition, are transformational, but not all transformational leaders achieve their transforming effect through the charismatic effects produced by their personalities' (Pierce and Newstrom 2000, p. 270).

Some researchers regard charismatic leadership and transformational leadership as being without distinguishing differences (Conger 1999; Van Knippenberg and Sitkin 2013). In some contexts, they are often used interchangeably, for example, in studies that illustrate the strong convergence of charismatic leadership and transformational leadership (House and Shamir 1993). In the view of Van Knippenberg and Sitkin (2013, p. 3), the notions depend on 'the roots of the analysis', whether the labels are 'charismatic', 'transformational', or 'charismatic-transformational'. They refer to the same concept. In this study, I will use only the term 'transformational leadership'.

Transformational leadership theory gained in popularity in the mid-1980s. Pierce and Newstrom (2000) described the context of the rise of the theory: Organisations were in an uncertain and rapid change environment, encountered competition increasingly, and faced the internal dilemma of employee loyalty and commitment (Conger 1999). However, at that time, leadership research mainly emphasised managing daily activities, which did not address how the organisation managed chaos or faced internal and external challenges. A new type of visionary-focused theory concentrating on collective action and innovation was demanded (Van Knippenberg and Sitkin 2013). Other scholars ascribed the growth of researchers' interests in transformational leadership to its systematic conceptual framework (Conger and Kanungo 1987), which was less value-laden than other leadership theories (Conger 1999). Also, the development and widespread use of survey measures, such as the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Van

Knippenberg and Sitkin 2013), led to more empirical studies being conducted (House 1977).

Early research focused on identifying the characteristics of transformational leadership, clarifying the differences with transactional leaders (e.g., Bass 1991; Deluga 1988; Humphreys 2001), and the antecedents, development, and consequences of the conceptual frameworks. Most of the research was largely theoretical, with limited empirical studies. Although the conceptualisation of transformational leadership looked compelling, little systematic research was conducted to validate the concept until measurement tools were developed.

2.3.2 Conceptual Models of Transformational Leadership

Stimulated by the development of assessment tools, empirical studies of transformational leadership have been proposed by several scholars (e.g., Bass 1985; Conger and Kanungo 1994; Podsakoff et al. 1990). Different from the former leadership theories that emphasised a rational process, theories of transformational leadership focus on emotions and values (Yukl 1999). The models shown in Table 2.4 are highly representative and cited models in transformational leadership. These studies pay attention to leaders' behaviours and personal attributes. Leaders are recognised throughout as consistently showing their personal characteristics of self-confidence, dominance, and a strong conviction in their beliefs (House 1977) and their various behaviours. As shown in the table, researchers have different perspectives on the behaviours of transformational leaders, but there is considerable overlap on leader behaviours and activities. For example, articulating a vision and ideological goals is regarded as an important and consentient behaviour by all the researchers (Bass 1985; Rafferty and Griffin 2004; Conger and Kanungo 1994; House 1977). More than three authors identify encouraging team members to achieve group goals and acting as an appropriate model as behavioural elements of transformational leadership. Researchers also hold distinctive perspectives; for instance, only Conger and Kanungo (1987) claimed that transformational leaders show their characters on taking on high personal risks and self-sacrifice.

Table 2.4 Most Frequently Cited Transformational Leadership (TFL) Models

Behavioural component	House (1977)	Bass (1985)	Conger and Kanungo (1987)	Podsakoff et al. (1990)	Shamir et al. (1993)	Rafferty and Griffin (2004)
Articulating a vision	Goal articulation	Idealised influence/charisma	Vision and idealised goal	Identifying and articulating a vision	Appealing vision	Vision
Encouraging others to achieve a common goal	Making followers accept the goal and believe it can be accomplished			Fostering acceptance of the group goal	Emphasising ideological aspects of the work	
Inspiring others	Motivating arousal leader behaviour	Inspirational motivation			Expressing confidence that subordinates can attain them	Inspirational communication
Expecting high performance	Exhibiting high expectations and showing confidence			High performance expectation	Communicating high performance expectation	
Intellectual stimulation		Intellectual stimulation		Intellectual stimulation		Intellectual stimulation
Caring and supporting individual		Individualised consideration		Providing individualised support		Supportive leadership
Taking high risks			Taking on high personal risks, self-sacrifice			
Acting as a model	Role modelling			Providing an appropriate model	Modelling exemplary behaviour	
Others	Image building		Using unconventional behaviour Sensitivity to the environment		Self-confidence, emphasising collective identity	Personal recognition
<i>Focus on</i>	Leader characteristics: dominance, self-confidence, need for influence, and belief in own values	Leaders encouraging their followers to perform beyond expectation	Followers' perceptions of their leader's behaviour	Including all important elements of the TFL process identified in previous studies	Using motivational theory to explain the effects of charismatic leaders on their followers	Identifying five sub-dimensions of TFL demonstrating discriminant validity with each other

These dominant models influence the majority of the following studies. Most of the subsequent research empirically studied the effects based on these conceptual models, utilising assessment tools such as the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). In general, the results have verified the impact of transformational leadership on followers' attitudes, effort and behaviours, and team and organisation effectiveness.

2.3.3 Impacts of Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership has consistently achieved higher ratings of effectiveness and satisfaction than other leadership styles (Hater and Bass 1988). A large portion of leadership research investigates the effects of transformational leadership on followers' behaviours. As 'followers feel trust and respect toward the leader and they are motivated to do more than they are expected to do' (Yukl 1989, p. 272), it is believed and verified there is a strong and positive relationship with followers' performance, such as task performance (e.g., Bass 1985; Bycio et al. 1995; Dvir et al. 2002; Waldman et al. 2001); in-role performance, innovative/creative performance (Wang et al. 2011), and contextual performance (organisational citizenship behaviour—Cho and Dansereau 2010; Fuller et al. 1996; Wang et al. 2011). The enhancement of followers' satisfaction and trust in leaders results in lower employee turnover rates (Herman 1998).

Transformational leadership theory is also likely to affect followers' values and attitudes. The positive association between transformational leadership and followers' satisfaction is well documented (Avolio and Bass 1988; Bass 1985; Bycio et al. 1995). Transformational leader behaviours improve followers' self-esteem, give them the confidence to face challenges (Boal and Bryson 1988), decrease followers' intent to leave (Bycio et al. 1995), and strengthen followers' commitment to the organisation (Barroso Castro et al. 2008). Transformational leadership has also been shown to have a significant effect on both affective and normative organisational commitment to collectivist employees (Felfe et al. 2008).

Research also demonstrates the relationship between transformational leadership and the growth of followers. One distinguishing characteristic of transformational leaders is their ability to provide feedback and mentoring to their

followers, which enables followers to have an opportunity to mature (Bass 1985). Leaders stimulate followers' intelligence, encourage them to think out of the box, which helps followers become more creative and innovative (Jung et al. 2009). For instance, there is a positive relationship between transformational leadership and followers' creativity (Gumusluoglu and Ilsev 2009). Dvir et al.'s (2002) experiment built a conceptual framework encompassing three domains of follower development: motivation (in terms of their extra effort), morality (collectivistic orientation), and empowerment (critical-independent approach and specific self-efficacy).

Although the approaches and variables differ in the specific behaviours, they all share the common perspective that effective leaders transform or change followers' values, beliefs, and attitudes so that they are willing to perform beyond the basic requests of organisations (Podsakoff et al. 1990).

Yukl (1999) contended that these earlier theories of transformational leadership paid little attention to the conceptual weaknesses. He criticised most earlier theories for their lack of explicit constructs and insufficient explanation of the processes for transformational leadership influence. These leadership theories affect without explaining how the effects are achieved through the process (Shamir et al. 1993). Those limitations turned researchers to systematically investigating the mechanisms that mediate the variables to explain how the leaders' behaviours take effect.

Earlier research by Shamir et al. (1993) captured the mediating processes of transformational leadership effects. Van Knippenberg and Sitkin (2013) considered their work the only formal statement of a mediation model. Shamir et al. (1993) postulated that the motivational effects associated with charismatic leadership focused on the self-concept of the followers. Later, other researchers endeavoured to understand the processes and intervening mechanisms by which transformational leaders influence their followers. A similar outcome can be affected by different mediators. For example, the relationship between transformational leadership and followers' performance can be mediated by followers' attitudes, values, and beliefs, such as empowerment (Bartram and Casimir 2007), self-efficacy (Liao and Chuang 2007), positive moods (Tsai et al. 2009), perceived organisational and individual instrumentalities (Jiao et al. 2011), and leader–member exchange (Wang et al. 2005); or by followers' behaviour, such as organisational citizenship behaviour

(Boerner et al. 2007). The relationship between transformational leadership and followers' performance can also be mediated by the contextual environment, such as organisational service climate (Liao and Chuang 2007). 'A variety of different influence processes may be involved in transformational leadership' (Yukl 1998, p. 328).

In contrast to the extensive research on individual influence in the transformational leadership literature, researchers have been criticised for giving less consideration to transformational leadership as a group or organisational phenomenon (Dionne et al. 2004; Nielsen and Daniels 2012). Thus, some researchers have attempted to study the effects of transformational leadership from the group and organisational perspectives. The results show that transformational leadership brings about team and organisational effectiveness (Avolio and Bass 1988; Howell and Avolio 1993; Howell et al. 2005; Wang et al. 2011) and promotes organisational innovation (Gumusluoglu and Ilsev 2009). Transformational leaders can enhance group performance by advocating shared values, stimulating followers to transcend their personal interests for the collective objectives, and encouraging mutual trust and cooperation among group members (Shamir et al. 1993; Wang and Howell 2012).

Even if several conceptualisations have linked transformational leadership with group performance (e.g., Balthazard et al. 2002; Kahai et al. 2000; Waldman 1994), most studies have examined the outcomes either of individual followers or in the group context separately. For example, when researching group leadership, most researchers have investigated how leaders influence groups directly, emphasising only the groups' performance. They emphasise group-level analysis without considering individual-level processes in group contexts (Chen et al. 2007). However, in the real business environment, team performance relies on each group member's abilities and cooperation, and a group with capable employees may not perform well as a whole. A researcher who proposes to study the effectiveness of group performance needs to study the group phenomenon and consider how group-level perceptions may impact individuals' behaviours or attitudes (Nielsen and Daniels 2012). Researchers must simultaneously emphasise leader-follower interaction at the individual level and leader-team interaction at the group level (Wang and Howell 2010).

Despite receiving considerable attention, transformation leadership theory has

been accused of insufficient identification of negative effects (Yukl 1999). Some researchers have attempted to correct this by studying possible negative outcomes for followers or the organisation. For example, transformational leadership is found to have two faces; the outcomes of empirical studies sometimes look contradictory. Transformational leadership can contribute to the empowerment of followers, which connotes independence and autonomy. It may also lead followers to regard their leaders as extraordinary and become dependent on them. Thus, transformational leadership also weakens followers' independence (Howell 1988; Kark et al. 2003). Stevens et al. (1995) argued that transformational leadership is biased to favour some stakeholders (e.g., top management, customers), at the expense of others, such as employees.

2.3.4 Dual-Level Transformational Leadership Model

Kark and Shamir (2013) introduced a dual-level transformational leadership model built on Bass's (1985) theory. The first level is individual-focused: the leader cares about individual needs and endeavours to build up a strong relationship with followers. The other level is group-focused: the leader focuses on the group's identity, inspires the members to work together under a concordant vision, and encourages followers to pursue a shared value of the group. This dual-level model has attracted the attention of both practitioners and scholars, as group-focused leadership and individual-focused leadership usually coexist in the same team. This dyad model can comprehensively explain the impact of leaders on individuals and groups (Zhang et al. 2015c).

2.3.4.1 Group-Focused Transformational Leadership

Group-focused transformational leadership is derived from the average leadership style (Wu et al. 2010), which implies leaders view group members as a whole and treat all members in the same way (Zhang et al. 2015c). Group-focused transformational leadership aims to communicate a collective vision and the importance of group goals to followers, develop shared values and beliefs, motivate the groups to perform beyond their expectations and achieve high performance. The influence target is the whole group rather than individual followers within a group.

The leader behaves similarly toward each member of the group, and members have a similar experience of the leader's behaviours (Yammarino and Bass 1990a).

Kark and Shamir (2013) adopted Bass's (1985) theory and designated idealised influence and inspirational motivation as two group-focused transformational leadership behaviours. As leaders are focusing on common ground, they are more likely to influence the group as a whole. Drawing on other dominant transformational leadership theories, there are several dimensions of leader behaviours that influence a group. The first is to identify and articulate a vision. Leaders emphasise collective identity (Shamir et al. 1993), identify new opportunities for their units or organisations, articulate vision and collective mission, and display their values and convictions to followers (Podsakoff et al. 1990). The second dimension is to encourage group members to achieve a common goal. Leaders communicate an inspiring vision of the future to followers and motivate them to achieve high performance (Bass 1985; House 1977). The third set of behaviours is relevant to acting as a model. Leaders use exemplary behaviour, acting as role models for group members to follow, which is consistent with the value that the leaders advocate (Podsakoff et al. 1990; Shamir et al. 1993). The final dimension is team building. Leaders encourage teamwork, reduce frictions, and facilitate mutual trust and respect among the groups (Wang and Howell 2010). In this research, the study will refer to these four dimensions as group-focused transformational leadership behaviours.

2.3.4.2 Individual-Focused Transformational Leadership

Individual-focused leadership is grounded in situational leadership theories and leader-member exchange (LMX) theory (Wu et al. 2010). These theories suggest that, in group management, effective leaders vary their behaviours in accordance with followers' individual differences and contextual factors (e.g., resources, task structure). Wang and Howell (2010) defined individual-focused transformational leadership behaviour as behaviour that aims to empower individual followers to develop their potential and improve their abilities and self-efficacy. Leaders maximise the limited resources they hold (Zhang et al. 2015a) to affect their followers by focusing on their individual differences (Wu et al. 2010), understand followers' abilities and needs, provide personal mentoring, develop

their potencies, and enhance their self-efficacy (Wang and Howell 2010).

Kark and Shamir (2013) identified two typical behaviours in individual-focused transformational leadership, individualised consideration and intellectual stimulation. Individualised consideration refers to leader behaviours that recognise followers' differential needs, give personal attention and support, empower them, and treat them individually. Intellectual stimulation refers to leader behaviours that promote followers' intelligence, stimulate them to solve problems carefully and rationally, encourage followers to express ideas and act creatively (Bass 1995).

Communicating high performance expectation is another dimension raised by some researchers (e.g., House 1977; Podsakoff et al. 1990; Shamir et al. 1993). This refers to leaders' expectations for excellence on the part of their followers. Leaders encourage individuals to set high goals and show confidence in their abilities to achieve the goal. Rafferty and Griffin (2004) described personal recognition as a component of transformational leadership behaviour. When a leader praises or acknowledges a follower for achieving tasks or improving performance, personal recognition occurs. Personal recognition is regarded as an impersonal economic exchange and as an emotional exchange that has a positive impact on followers' self-efficacy and commitment (Rafferty and Griffin 2004).

2.3.5 Transformational Leadership in the Chinese Context

Since the 1980s, transformational leadership has been considered the most effective leadership style when compared with other leadership styles in Western countries (Bass 1985; Conger and Kanungo 1987; Shamir et al. 1993). Many researchers have developed measurement scales to fit different national cultural backgrounds and working environments.

When transformational leadership was introduced into China, it was also regarded as an applicable leadership theory in the Chinese context (Li et al. 2006; Liu 2018), as in collectivistic cultures, transformational leadership qualities such as cooperation, endurance, persistence, and obedience are emphasised. Organisational identity is strongly embraced; achieving common goals is socially oriented. Followers identify easily with the leader and organisation based on a mutual belief in a common purpose, which causes the followers to become more attached to the

group or organisation. Transformational leaders encourage their followers to transcend their own self-interests and work towards the shared vision of the group and to display high determination and persistence (House and Podsakoff 1996), and show courage and conviction in the organisation. Transformational leaders are likely to build cohesion through stimulating group members' intellect (Bass 1999). For example, Walumbwa and Lawler (2003) investigated the moderating effect of collectivism on the relationship between transformational leadership and facets of job satisfaction, organisational commitment and perceptions of organisational withdrawal behaviours in China, India, and Kenya, three collectivistic cultures. They found a positive relationship between transformational leadership and job satisfaction, coworker satisfaction, and organisational commitment, and a negative relationship with job and work withdrawal. The central role of the group in collectivist cultures is in line with some of the main values associated with transformational leaders (Jung and Avolio 1999).

A large number of Chinese scholars have studied the transformational leadership approach in the Chinese context further. Liu (2018) analysed 233 transformational leadership studies in the Chinese language published between 2005 and 2015, and found most of the literature comes from the management field, uses samples collected from Chinese firms, and focuses on the functions of the relationship between transformational leadership and outcome variables. In practice, Bass's (1985) four-construct model still dominates the transformational leadership field in Chinese academia (Liu 2018).

Employing a comparison with Bass's (1985) four-dimension construct model, which embodies idealised influence, inspirational motivation, individualised consideration, and intellectual stimulation, Li and Shi (2008) explored the structure of transformational leadership in China. They found that, in the context of Chinese culture, transformational leadership shows a four-factor construct, including articulating vision, charisma, moral modelling, and individualised consideration. The first two constructs are consistent with Bass's (1985) connotation of idealised influence and inspirational motivation. The differences lie at the individual-focused level. In Bass's (1985) concept, individualised consideration refers to leaders' behaviours that recognise followers' different needs, give them personal attention and support, and empower and treat them as individuals. In the Chinese context, individualised consideration emphasises not only the employee's work and

personal development but also the employee's life and family. The difference in the transformational leadership model between the West and China takes account of China's cultural background. According to Confucianism, an important aspect of Chinese culture is concerned with relationship and social propriety. The work organisation can be viewed as an extension of the family, where leaders take the primary role as a parental figure to maintain harmony (Rarick 2007). Therefore, followers' family and personal issues are seen as private in Western countries, whereas in China, the leaders' behaviours of looking after followers' personal life and family are more acceptable (Li and Shi 2008).

Another distinctive dimension of transformational leadership in China is 'moral modelling' (Li and Shi 2008, p. 578). In China's long history, leaders are developed on moral grounds. A superior person is advocated in Confucian culture (Mayer 1960); a leader should act as a model to his or her followers, to be able to educate followers, exert an implicit influence on them, increase his or her credibility, and achieve the organisation's goal (Fernandez 2004).

2.4 A Review of Differentiated Leadership

2.4.1 Leaders' Differentiated Behaviours

Leadership is deemed a shared property, and thus leaders are expected to treat their subordinates similarly. Previous studies assumed that transformational leadership's effects on individual followers are identical (Klein and Kozlowski 2000). Nowadays, the assumption has been replaced by focusing on the analysis of each supervisor-subordinate dyad (Liden and Graen 1980). Although a 'transformational leader was like a benevolent father who remained friendly and treated the respondent as an equal' (Bass 1985, p. 30), within-group variation seems normal rather than exceptional when leaders face different group members (Liden and Graen 1980).

In the team context, the variation of a leader's behaviour among team members represents a distinct leadership style called differentiated leadership or leader differentiation (Zhang et al. 2015a). A high level of differentiated leadership means a leader behaves differently toward his or her different members. For example, the leader provides more opportunities to certain team members than others,

encourages some followers' innovation and creativity, as well as critical thinking and problem solving, more frequently than others. Conversely, low levels of differentiated leadership depict a leader who treats his or her followers in a similar manner, provides support and instructions without obvious differences.

Researchers find that leader differentiation lies in different constructs of leadership style. Paternalistic leadership is a type of leadership that is prevalent in many business cultures, such as in the Middle East, Pacific Asia, and Latin America (Farh and Cheng 2000). It is defined as 'a style that combines strong discipline and authority with fatherly benevolence' (Farh and Cheng 2000, p. 91). It consists of two dimensions of behaviour, authoritarianism and benevolence. The former refers to the leader asserting authority and control. The latter describes how a leader shows concern for followers' personal well-being. Redding and Wong (1986) noticed that Chinese society has a strong tendency to human governance, which leads individuals to influence organisational decision making. This means that subordinates are not treated equally. The benevolence of leaders may vary from person to person. Cheng (1995) claimed paternalistic leaders divide their subordinates into insiders and outsiders in terms of three differential patterns: (1) whether there is a social relationship between the subordinate and the leader, such as relatives, classmates, and so on; (2) whether subordinates are loyal to the leader, obedient and willing to sacrifice personal interests for the leader's; (3) the ability and motivation of the subordinates to achieve the tasks assigned by the leader or organisation. The leader will show more benevolence and less authoritativeness to insiders; the opposite is true for outsiders.

Leader-member exchange (LMX) theory, which plays a significant role in studying how to shape important follower attitudes and behaviours (Harris et al. 2014), is based on the differential types of relationships that form between leaders and team members. The quality of the exchange relationship is influenced by (1) subordinates' aspects, for example, subordinate loyalty (Scandura and Graen 1984); (2) leaders' attributes, such as decision-making style (Graen 1989); (3) characteristics of the differentiated relationship between leaders and followers, for example, mutual trust (Liden and Graen 1980); and (4) environmental factors, for example, the cross-cultural arena (Wakabayashi et al. 1980).

As suggested by Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995), the development of LMX theory has gone through four stages. The prevailing approach to leadership is to assume

that leaders show consistent behaviour to all subordinates, which is called the average leadership style. The first stage of LMX posits that leaders develop various relationships with different subordinates. The second stage emphasises the explanation of the nomological network of the LMX construct. The third stage is to study the mechanism of how the leaders work with each subordinate to develop a relationship. The final stage is to explore how dyadic relationships can be organised, developed, maintained, and combined within and beyond the organisational system.

LMX differentiation is a group-level construct that refers to a leader developing different quality relationships with followers in the work group (Henderson et al. 2008), and these variances drive followers' behavioural and attitudinal reactions in turn. High differentiation suggests a high degree of within-group variation; there is a broad range in the quality of LMX relationships. LMX differentiation also refers to the contents of exchange (e.g., economic to social) that exist across leader-member dyads within a group. LMX differentiation seems common rather than the exception within organisations (Liden and Graen 1980).

2.4.2 Differentiated Individual-Focused Transformational Leadership

As introduced in the last section, leaders vary their behaviours based on followers' individual differences and contextual factors. According to Kark and Shamir's (2013) dual-level transformational leadership model, individual-focused transformational leadership behaviours differ with different followers, recognising individual needs, offering customised support, and encouraging followers to innovate and solve problems creatively. Differentiated individual-focused transformational leadership represents leaders' differentiated behaviour to their group members at a group level, especially in individualised consideration and intellectual stimulation.

Zhang et al. (2015a) compared several constructs of leader differentiation and analysed the differences of leader favouritism and differentiated individual-focused transformational leadership. Leader favouritism refers to a leader's unwarranted favouritism to some members within a team context (Dasborough et al. 2009); it is based on the leader's personal preferences. Unwarranted favouritism represents an ineffective leadership style. Followers are likely to experience negative emotions

(Dasborough et al. 2009). In contrast, effective transformational leaders vary their behaviours on the basis of followers' individual differences (e.g., abilities) and contextual factors (e.g., resources, task structure—Zhang et al. 2015a). Thus, from the perspective of the leader's intentions, differentiated individual-focused transformational leadership is more neutral, which is not related to the leader's personal preferences, but may simply reflect strategic considerations. Followers' reactions to differentiated transformational leadership is also different than their reactions to leader favouritism.

Differentiated transformational leadership is also frequently compared with LMX differentiation. The former pays more attention to the variation in a leader's specific behaviours in groups; the latter focuses on the distributions of more general leader–member relationships in groups (Wu et al. 2010). Even though these two concepts are different, they are also related. Differentiated transformational leadership illustrates that a leader varies his or her behaviour toward different team members. For instance, a leader pays more attention or gives more support to some members than to others, which cause different exchange relationships with followers to develop. Research also shows the effects of differentiated transformational leadership on team outcomes could be influenced through the effects of LMX differentiation as leader–member relationships are often used as proximal consequences of actual leader behaviours (Wang et al. 2005).

Although early transformational leadership research also studied dual-level leadership behaviours, that is group-focused level and individual-focused level, it did not reflect the interaction between leaders and individuals at different levels in a team. In a real work environment, a leader's behaviours toward individuals and teams exist simultaneously. The leader's different behaviours influence team performance, as well as individual employees' responses and attitudes. Differentiated transformational leadership exploring the multi-level theoretical model provides a new perspective for understanding transformational leadership behaviour (Zhang et al. 2015c).

Research on differentiated transformational leadership has been mainly from traditional psychological perspectives. The focus has been on the underlying psychological mechanisms through which transformational leadership affects team- and individual-level outcome variables, such as identification, leadership-member exchange, and self-efficacy. In social psychology, social identity theory and

reciprocity theory are used widely in the study of differentiated transformational leadership (Zhang et al. 2015c).

Social identity is a theory of group processes and intergroup relationships in terms of group phenomena (Terry and Hogg 1996). It is conceptualised as a cognitive construct. For example, Tajfel and Turner (1985) described social identification as specified by self-categorisation theory. People tend to classify themselves and others into different social categories, such as gender or age cohort; these categories are cognitively represented as prototypes abstracted from the members (Ashforth and Mael 1989). The definitions imply that membership in the organisation or group is linked to the individual's self-concept, either cognitively, emotionally, or both (Riketta 2005).

Through the perception of differentiated transformational leadership behaviours, team members identify themselves and others into different categories. Those who receive more leader attention develop a high level of leader identification and group identification, and are likely to count themselves as being in the in-group, which will eventually have an impact on teams and individuals.

Reciprocity is a social construct of people responding to an action that is perceived as either kind or unkind. Reciprocity states that in response to civil actions, people are frequently much more courteous and cooperative, and vice versa (Fehr and Gächter 2000). The theory explains that people evaluate the kindness of action not only from its consequences but also by the underlying motivation (Falk and Fischbacher 2011).

In a real work context, due to the limitation of time and energy, leaders may only provide personalised caring and intellectual stimulation to some subordinates (Erdogan and Bauer 2010), which will cause a variance of leadership behaviours in a team. In terms of the reciprocity theory, subordinates who are not inspired by leaders, or who receive less attention, may show little motivation to contribute their knowledge or have a low sense of identification with the team. In contrast, those team members who receive more encouragement or individualised consideration may classify themselves as an in-group and are likely to be more cooperative. Thus, through the reciprocity mechanism, differentiated transformational leadership will influence team performance, such as team knowledge sharing and team creativity (Cai et al. 2013) and individual performance, for example, task performance and personal initiative (Wang and Howell 2010).

Cai et al. (2013) explained the impacts of differentiated transformational leadership on team knowledge sharing and team creativity from a social network perspective. The social network theory provides a method to quantify social network structures. It is used in social science to study relationships and interactions between individuals, groups, organisations, or even entire societies (Sih et al. 2009).

In a team-level context, communication network density refers to the proportion of team members who exchange information with other team members. The difference in communication network density is the degree of difference between a given team member's communication network density and the communication network density of others. The higher the density divergence of team members' communication networks, the more only a small number of the team members exchange communication frequently. Most team members' communication networks are sparse.

A transformational leader stimulates subordinates' intelligence and encourages them to develop new ideas to solve problems. Subordinates have to communicate with other members to generate new thoughts. Therefore, subordinates have an inner motivation to improve their social network density with team members. A high-density social network is helpful for individuals to integrate and utilise the information and resources received from the social network. In an environment with a high level of differentiated transformational leadership behaviour, team members intend to build up a dense communication network with those who receive more attention and personal care from leaders. As a result, from the social network perspective, divergence in the communication network density among team members would affect the relationship between differentiated individual-focused transformational leadership and team or individual behaviours or attitudes.

The recent transformational leadership literature has tended to show that leaders' behaviours are not identical among all followers. Researchers have begun to understand the consequences and underlying mechanisms of differentiated transformational leadership. For example, Wu et al. (2010) tested the effects of individual-focused and group-focused transformational leadership behaviours on followers at the group level. They found that group-focused leadership facilitated group identification and collective efficacy, which positively contributed to group effectiveness. In contrast, differentiated individual-focused leadership within groups diminished group effectiveness by producing divergence in leader

identification and group members' self-efficacy. Zhang et al. (2015a) studied team research in top management teams (TMT), and revealed that focusing on every TMT member increased team effectiveness and firm performance, whereas both outcomes were decreased when there was differentiating among individual members. Cai et al. (2013) reported that team-focused transformational leadership had a positive effect on the team's knowledge sharing and creativity. However, differentiated leadership was detrimental to team knowledge sharing by promoting divergence in team members' communication network densities. Li and Liu (2014) found that differentiated transformational leadership had positive impacts on employees' knowledge sharing through leader-member exchange. Sun et al.'s (2016) research also showed team-focused and differentiated individual-focused transformational leadership styles were both beneficial to the promotion of organisational creativity, mediated by psychological empowerment.

Differentiated leadership style is a common phenomenon in organisations (Graen and Uhl-Bien 1995); the contradictory research findings on differentiated transformational leadership require further study of its impacts on employee voice behaviour.

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH MODEL AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Research Model Development

In terms of the literature review, transformational leadership influence employees' behaviours and performance through various variables. In this chapter, I intended to identify some factors affecting the relationships between leaders' individual-focused transformational behaviours and employees voices. The focus on these factors is based on several interrelated considerations: (1) They should be highly relevant to voice behaviours; (2) They should be affected by leaders' behaviours; (3) They should be common in the Chinese workplace.

3.1.1 Underly Mechanisms - Mediating Factors

Leader behaviour has a positive association with follower self-concepts through the motivational mechanisms, as an intervening variable, self-concept further affects follower behaviours (Shamir et al. 1993). Organisation-based self-esteem (OBSE) refers to individuals' self-perceived value as organisational members (Pierce et al. 1989). Leaders' individual-focused behaviour may make employees feel that they are valued and important in the organisation. According to cognitive consistency theory (Pierce and Gardner 2004), individuals' behaviours are consistent with their self-concept (Korman 1970). Employees with a high level of OBSE have a stronger self-concept in predicting employee responses (Pierce and Gardner 2004).

OBSE is an important element of Chinese core self-evaluation (Gan et al. 2007). Employees valued and respected as members of their specific organisations will develop pride and a sense of belonging based on these organisations (Pan et al. 2012). Thus, I employed OBSE as a variable explaining the followers' psychological processes in their voice behaviours.

According to Blau's (1964) social exchange theory, "Social exchange as here conceived is limited to actions that are contingent on rewarding reactions from others." (p. 6). Leader-member exchange begins as transactional social exchange and evolves into transformational social exchange (Graen and Uhl-Bien 1995).

Leaders' individual-focused transformational behaviour make followers receive intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, and followers may consequently take on responsibilities beyond their existing roles (Van Dyne et al. 2008).

Regardless of which Chinese cultural ideology is employed, the relationship between leaders and followers is valued and functions in distinctive ways (Lin et al. 2018). To better understand leader behaviour and employee voice in the Chinese context, leaders and followers exchange will be considered. Thus, leader–member exchange (LMX) is another variable on which I focused to explain in this thesis.

LMX theory is a leadership theory that receives attention from many researchers (Graen and Uhl-Bien 1995). It is a multidimensional concept containing various dimensions, it is difficult to use a single construct definition and operation. The measures of leader-member exchange as its central variable. Different measures mainly assess three subdimensions of mutual affect, perceived contribution to the exchange, and loyalty subdimensions proposed by Dienesch and Liden (1986) to address the multidimensionality of the LMX construct (Schriesheim et al. 1999).

3.1.2 Moderating Factors

Even though scholars always argue the positive consequences of transformational leadership, this strategy may not always lead to desirable outcomes. House et al. (1996) strongly support the importance of engaging dispositions and situational factors in explaining individuals' organisational behaviours. Proactive personality as a disposition captures the individual difference in taking the initiative to influence the environment (Bateman and Crant 1993). Thus, proactive personality is studied as moderating effects in the relationship between individual-focused transformational leadership and LMX; and between LMX and voice.

Individual-focused leaders vary their behaviours based on followers' individual differences and contextual factors. Under this situation, at a group level, within-group variation seems normal. Differentiated individual-focused transformational leadership represents leaders' differentiated behaviour to their group members, such as the behaviours of individualised consideration and

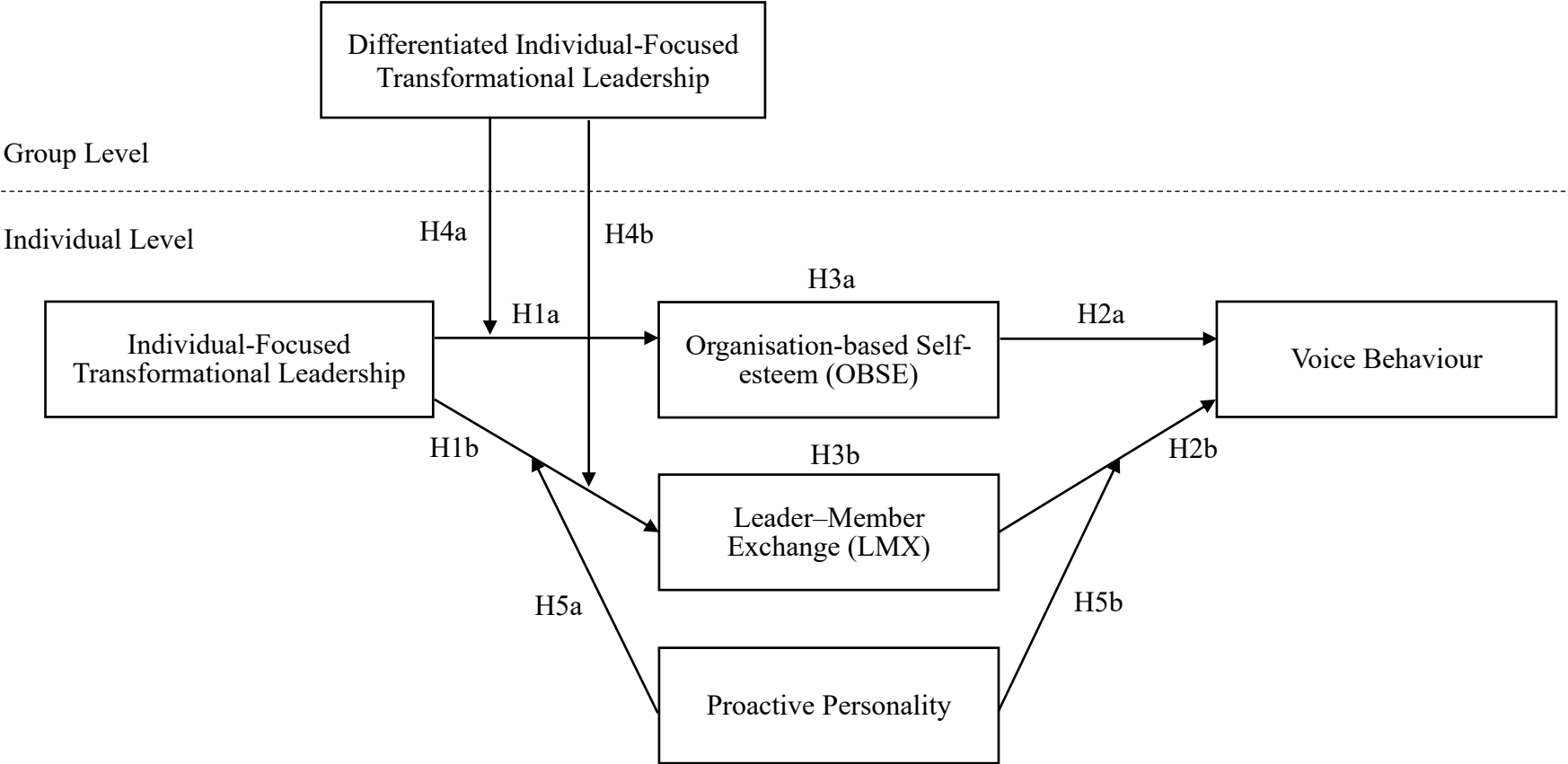
intellectual stimulation. This contextual factor may strengthen or attenuate leadership impacts on employee behaviours or attitudes. I examined the moderating role of differentiated individual-focused transformational leadership to understand its influence on the relationship between individual-focused transformational leadership and the two mediating variables.

3.1.3 Research Model

Therefore, four mechanisms will be explored in this study: organisation-based self-esteem (OBSE), leader–member exchange (LMX), differentiated individual-focused transformational leadership and proactive personality. The overall research model is illustrated in Figure 3.1.

In this framework, the purpose is to understand how the proposed mechanisms affect individual-focused transformational leadership and employee voice behaviour, and understand the influence of differentiated individual-focused transformational leadership and proactive personality in the Chinese context. Five hypotheses have been developed to examine the relationships among the different components.

Figure 3.1 Hypothesis Research Model



3.2 Hypotheses Development

3.2.1 Organisation-based Self-esteem (OBSE)

Self-esteem has been studied by a number of researchers to investigate its role in organisational models. Individuals with high self-esteem will develop favourable work attitudes and perform productively than those with low self-esteem (Korman 1976; Hollenbeck and Brief 1987). However, some scholars criticise the measures of self-esteem; they argued that rather than examining general self-esteem, it would be more appropriate to measure a more specific type of esteem (Tharenou 1979; Pierce et al. 1989). In recognition of the shortage of construct-validated measures of self-esteem in an organisational frame, Pierce et al. (1989) introduced “organisation-based self-esteem” (OBSE) to examine the effects of self-esteem with regard to organisation-based construct. They defined OBSE “as the degree to which organisational members believe that they can satisfy their needs by participating in roles within the context of an organisation” (p. 625).

OBSE refers to employees’ beliefs about their own value and competence as organisational members. Employees with high OBSE regard themselves as important, worthwhile members of their organisations (Rank et al. 2009). Pan et al. (2012) defined OBSE in the Chinese context, where employees are valued and respected as members of their specific organisations, thus developing pride and a sense of belonging based on these organisations. This definition places more emphasis on ‘relational selves’ and ‘collective selves’ in OBSE.

OBSE differs from the concept of self-esteem; it considers an employee’s self-evaluations and self-perceived value in the context of the workplace (Bowling et al. 2010). Comparing with general self-esteem, OBSE shows its own properties. General self-esteem is a higher-order construct, indicates the extent to which the individual believes the self to be capable, significant, successful and worthy (Coopersmith 1967, p. 5) and shaped from an aggregation of experiences, which exists prior to employment. While OBSE is one of the specific situation sub-dimensions, and in relation to an individual’s experience within an organisation (Pierce et al. 1989), it develops after one joins the organisation. Given the limited experience with their employers, the new employees’ OBSE may be mainly

influenced by their level of general self-esteem. However, with employees working in the organisation for a period of time, OBSE is likely to be less affected by general self-esteem and more affected by their personal experience within the organisation (Bowling et al. 2010). Thus, general self-esteem is relatively stable; OBSE will change based on the organisational context and employees' experience in a specific work unit.

The determinants of OBSE are mainly grounded in an employee's work and organisational experiences (Pierce and Gardner 2004), which can be categorised into (1) environmental variables, including organisation features, job characteristics, perceived organisational support and so forth (Bowling et al. 2010); (2) employee characteristics and personal experiences (Yin et al. 2014); and (3) interpersonal relationships in an employee's workplace (Pierce and Gardner 2004), social support from supervisors and co-workers (Bowling et al. 2010) and (4) leaders' management styles (Yin et al. 2014).

Researchers have examined the consequences of OBSE, hypothesising that OBSE affects employees' job attitudes, for example, affective commitment (Lee and Peccei 2007), job satisfaction (Thau et al. 2013; Tett and Meyer 1993), social identity (Bergami and Bagozzi 2000), turnover intention (Tett and Meyer 1993), and intrinsic work motivation (Hui and Lee 2000); and in-role and extra-role behaviours, for example, voice (Payne 2007), performance (Chen and Aryee 2007; Chen et al. 2005), and organisational citizenship behaviour (Tang and Ibrahim 1998).

Individual-focused transformational leaders vary their behaviours and maximise the limited resources they have to influence their followers based on each follower's individual differences and contextual factors. These leaders understand their followers' abilities and needs, provide personal mentoring, and develop their individual skills. These actions may implicitly signal to employees that they are respected, valued, and trusted by their supervisors and organisations and that they are viewed as capable, important organisational members. According to Baumeister (1999), employees' self-esteem emerges when they receive social messages from others who play significant roles in their lives. Employees with low levels of OBSE may doubt their new ideas are valuable to their organisations. Therefore, such employees would particularly benefit from transformational leaders who filled them with confidence (Rank et al. 2009).

Self-efficacy is another dimension in which to connect individual-focused transformational leadership and OBSE. The conceptualisation of self-efficacy refers to one's belief in his or her capacity to achieve a task or to deal with environmental demands (Bandura 1990). Leaders' individual-focused transformational leadership behaviours such as verbal persuasion and physiological arousal have been tested as the determinants of self-efficacy by many researchers (Nielsen et al. 2009; Pillai and Williams 2004; Liu et al. 2010a). In addition, OBSE has been reported to have a positive relationship with self-efficacy (e.g., Kark et al., 2003; Bowling et al., 2010). Highly self-efficacious employees believe that they will be likely to succeed when performing a specific task. They hold positive images of themselves and view themselves as important, meaningful, worthwhile organisational members. Beyond this, they are in full agreement with the statement 'When I start something, I usually can complete it' (Gardner and Pierce 1998, p.51).

Kark et al. (2003) explained the positive relationship between transformational leadership with OBSE from the perspective of empowerment. They pointed out two indicators related to OBSE from the concepts of empowerment defined by Spreitzer (1995): impact and competence. Impact means the degree to which an employee believes he or she can influence others and outcomes in the workplace, which fits the description of OBSE of an employee's feeling important and worthwhile in an organisation. Competence, defined as an employee's belief that he or she can skilfully perform, is consistent as well with OBSE's employee self-perceptions (Kark et al. 2003). Supervisors' empowering behaviours such as delegation, enhancing followers' abilities and encouraging employees to express their own ideas are typical behaviours of individual-focused transformational leaders (Dvir et al. 2002). Accordingly, I propose the following hypothesis:

H1a: Individual-focused transformational leadership is positively associated with employees' organisation-based self-esteem (OBSE).

Employees with high OBSE believe that they are valuable to their organisations, so they take on important roles among their colleagues. They are more likely to believe that their voices will be heard. LePine and Van Dyne (1998) found self-esteem to be positively associated with voice; that is, individuals with high levels of self-esteem speak more than individuals with low self-esteem. Liang et al.'s (2012) study showed that OBSE is reciprocally related to both promotive

voice and prohibitive voice.

In addition, Korman's (2001) dual motivational system provided a theoretical guide for the relationship between self-esteem and employees' behaviours (Bowling et al. 2010). When employees believe themselves can achieve high performance and perceive their organisation encourages them, and in this way, the self-enhancement motivational system emerges. The second motivational system, self-protective motivation, is activated when employees think they cannot achieve tasks and see employers using punishment to motivate employees.

Employees with high levels of OBSE precede self-enhancement motivation, generally holding attitudes that reinforce their beliefs that they are competent employees. In addition, they are more likely to use their voices if they believe their behaviours are likely to lead their organisations to succeed. In contrast, employees with low levels of self-esteem experience self-protection motivation, thinking they are not trusted and certainly not treasured by their organisations. Thus, they withhold suggestions and engage little in voice behaviours to avoid taking image risks in case their suggestions turn out to be wrong (Bowling et al. 2010).

Furthermore, self-consistency theory is another visible explanatory mechanism that was employed in this study to explain the attitudinal and behavioural effects of OBSE (e.g., Pierce and Gardner 2004). Korman (1970) predicted that individuals would be motivated to perform tasks with an attitude consistent with the self-images with which they approach that task situation. They will tend to find most satisfying those roles which are consistent with their self-cognitions. This means employees who have positive images of themselves will possess positive attitudes and behave in ways that strengthen these self-images (Pierce and Newstrom 2000). Thus, the following hypothesis is developed from the above discussion:

H2a: Employees' organisation-based self-esteem (OBSE) is positively associated with voice behaviour.

3.2.2 Mediation Effects of OBSE

I further propose that employees' organisation-based self-esteem is the mechanism through which leaders' individual-focused transformational leadership

behaviours are expected to influence employees' voice behaviours.

Supervisors act as agents of their organisations, directly evaluating and guiding subordinate performances. Thus, employees will regard their supervisors' favourable or unfavourable attitudes toward them as indicative of the organisation's position (Eisenberger et al. 2002). As employees are most likely to communicate and acquire knowledge from their immediate supervisors, they may estimate their own value based on how their supervisors treat them. Therefore, supervisors' attitudes and behaviours toward employees tends to affect their OBSE.

As an antecedent of OBSE, effective leaders' behaviours influence employees' self-efficacy (Kark et al. 2003), self-esteem (Baumeister 1999), and intrinsic motivation (Tang and Ibrahim 1998). Individual-focused transformational leadership recognises followers' personal needs, provides special attentions, promotes followers' intelligence, and encourages followers to express ideas and creatively accomplish tasks. Supervisors' support and personal considerations are signals that express their recognition of subordinates, increasing the likelihood that employees' self-perceived value will be enhanced. In addition, this will encourage employees to view themselves as important and competent within their employing organisations, thereby affecting their levels of organisation-based self-esteem.

As discussed earlier, OBSE reflects an employee's personal belief in her or his capability to influence a group or organisation. That is, employees with high levels of OBSE tend to perceive themselves as important and worthwhile within their employing organisations. These motivational implications greatly increase when individuals believe that they can perform required tasks and bring changes to their teams or organisations. Thus, employees will be motivated to speak up with ideas and to express their concerns in the workplace. In summary, the above reasoning leads to the following hypothesis:

H3a: OBSE mediates the relationship between individual-focused transformational leadership and employee voice.

3.2.3 Leader–Member Exchange (LMX)

Transformational leadership theory is leader-focused and attempts to explain specific leader behaviours and their effects on individual, group and organisational

performance. Another contrasting leadership perspective prevalent in the academic literature is leader-member exchange (LMX) theory, which is more relationship-based, explicitly emphasising how one-on-one reciprocal social exchanges between leader and follower develop and maintain the dyadic relationship (Wang et al. 2005).

LMX theory describes how leaders develop different exchange relationships with their followers (Graen and Scandura 1987). Hollander (1978) defined exchange relationships as mutually influencing processes that lead to the development of social relationships. During leaders and followers' transactions, followers may receive intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, such as salary raises, more authority, promotions and increased trust. By the same token, leaders may gain loyalty, esteem and recognition from their followers (Basu and Green 1997).

According to LMX theory, leaders treat each follower differently. Leaders may build special, higher-quality exchange relationships with their most trusted followers, who are referred to as in-group members (Dansereau et al. 1975). Leaders provide these members with great support, care, and trust. In return, followers give leaders their loyalty and support (Krishnan 2004). On the other hand, the out-group includes the remaining followers within the group, who maintain formal relationships with leaders, focusing more on the terms of employment (Graen and Scandura 1987). These followers fulfil the requirements of their positions and are compensated with the monetary and nonmonetary benefits stipulated in their contracts (Basu and Green 1997).

A high-quality LMX relationship promotes affective bonding, accompanied by largely unstated mutual expectations of reciprocity between leaders and followers (Wang et al. 2005). This relationship begins from a predominantly transactional exchange, in which mutual trust, respect, and loyalty are earned. But it is not limited to transaction exchange, In reality, it relies more on social exchanges that of a transformational variety (Graen and Uhl-Bien 1995). Gerstner and Day (1997) stated that the process of transformational leadership seems conceptually similar to developing the unique exchange relationship between leaders and followers that is central to LMX. Although transformational leadership and LMX appear to conceptually overlap, transformational leadership comprises certain leader behaviours that directly influence the development and maintenance of LMX relationships (Wang et al. 2005).

Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) introduced the Leadership Making Model to describe three phases in the life cycle of LMX development — ‘stranger’, ‘acquaintance’, and ‘partner’. The stages are the LMX evolution from emphasising the leader’s differentiation of subordinates to how the leader works with each person to develop a partnership with them. Wang et al. (2005, p. 423) used these phases to explain transformational leadership building and to strengthen high-quality LMX. In the stranger stage, the transformational leader will expand the follower’s responsibilities, offer more benefits if the follower can achieve the assigned tasks. When the motivation of a follower changes from satisfying immediate self-interests through transactional exchange to a desire for longer-term and collective interests, the transformation characteristic of mature LMX relationships emerges (Wang et al. 2005). A transformational leader’s charismatic character garners personal identification from followers, which enhances their sense of self-worth by internalising the leader’s values and behaving in accordance with the leader’s behaviour. This process will help the followers gain recognition from their leader, and strengthen their relationships, resulting in a higher quality of social exchange with their leaders.

In a similar vein, individual-focused transformational leadership behaviours include providing individualised support to followers, simulating their intelligence, and setting high performance expectations. These behaviours make followers feel they are valued by leaders. In this way, followers gain recognition and take on more responsibilities, producing a higher quality of social exchange with their leaders. Basu and Green (1997) interpreted two dimensions of individual-focused transformational leadership – intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration – as intangible rewards within a dyadic social exchange. These are consistent with the finding that transformational leadership embodies an element of higher-order transactional leadership, reflecting leaders’ and followers’ expectations of mutual trust and their reciprocal exchange obligations (Goodwin et al. 2001). Based on the previous arguments and research, I propose the following hypothesis:

H1b: Individual-focused transformational leadership is positively associated with LMX.

The quality of the followers’ relationships with their supervisors is part of what

critically determines their beliefs in how well they are being treated. When followers believe they are being treated well, they will take the initiative to reciprocate this favourable treatment by contributing to the organisation above and beyond the call of duty. Such behaviours have been shown to predict higher levels of affiliative organisational citizenship behaviours, such as voicing and helping (Van Dyne et al. 2008).

In recent organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) literature, voice is described as a specific form of proactive and extra-role behaviour that occurs when employees express their suggestions for changes to benefit the group or organisation (LePine and Van Dyne 2001). Voice can be directed up, down or horizontally, and the commonest situation is that employees speak to their supervisors (Botero and Van Dyne 2009). As this usually challenges the status quo in groups or organisations, employees may take a risk if they speak up in their organisations. Thus, their relationships with their supervisors will affect their judgement on voice behaviours (Hsiung 2012).

In a high-quality LMX relationship, employees have more access to communicating and exchanging ideas with their supervisors, giving them more opportunities to voice concerns (Botero and Van Dyne 2009). When employees have greater trust in their supervisors, they can express their opinions more openly, without worrying about being misunderstood. Perceiving lower personal risk and cost in voice behaviour makes employees more likely to speak (Hsiung 2012). Wang et al. (2016) stated that when employees feel they are valued by supervisors, they benefit from stronger support and responsiveness, and they may consequently take on responsibilities beyond their existing roles to help their organisations through voice behaviours (Van Dyne et al. 2008). Hsiung (2012) regarded high-quality LMX as a partnership level. More specifically, when employees understand their supervisors' perspectives, they can incorporate these concerns and expectations into achieving collective goals. In this type of relationship, employees may not consider their personal risks to be primary issues, thus having higher intrinsic motivation to improve the work environment by making constructive suggestions to enhance group or organisational practices (Deluga 1994).

In contrast, with low-quality LMX, outgroup members have more formal, restricted relationships that are based on economic exchange. Employees in low-LMX relationships have less access to their supervisors. Low trust, few rewards and

limited resources may cause such employees to perceive a high cost to speaking out in their organisations (Botero and Van Dyne 2009).

Given the previous discussions on LMX and voice, one may expect that the higher the quality of LMX, the more employees will be likely to express their ideas for ways to improve work in groups or organisations. This thinking leads to the following hypothesis:

H2b: LMX is positively associated with voice behaviour.

3.2.4 Mediation Effects of LMX

Specific individual-focused transformational behaviours should be related to employees' voices (Detert and Burris 2007). For example, individualised consideration reflects the notion that each employee has his or her own features, interests, capabilities, and that should be heeded (Bass and Avolio 1993). Leaders demonstrating individualised consideration toward their followers can encourage two-way communication with their employees (Bass and Riggio 2006). In addition, leaders' behaviours on promoting followers' intelligence, stimulating them to creatively solve problems and establishing an open environment will increase followers' competence and commitment. These behaviours will help followers to feel responsible to contribute to the group or organisation (Senge 1991), inspiring them to improve the status quo. Consequently, followers should be more willing to take on extra roles in their work units and to voice comments aimed at group or organisational improvement. For example, Wu et al. (2011) studied a matched sample of 213 supervisor–subordinate dyads in Chinese companies, finding that transformational leadership is positively related to employee voice behaviour.

The previous section discussed how transformational leadership behaviour is closely related to the exchange relationship between leaders and followers. Individual-focused transformational leaders not only care about their followers' feelings but also strive to develop their followers' personalities. They connect organisational development with employees' personal growth. Thus, when leaders demonstrate transformational leadership behaviours, they often develop positive social exchange relationships with their followers. A high level of leadership exchanges will give followers a sense of reciprocity, making them more willing to

reward leaders in order to express their reciprocal responsibilities to leaders. This kind of mentality will affect employees' attitudes toward the organisation, manifesting them in the employees' work behaviours or attitudes (Shore and Tetrick 1991). This could include improving employee job satisfaction and organisational commitment or encouraging employees to actively speak up to improve the operation of the organisation (Wu et al. 2011).

Since individual-focused transformational leadership is helpful for developing high-quality LMX – and high-quality LMX encourages employee voice behaviours – LMX quality should play a mediating role in the relationship between individual-focused transformational leadership and voice behaviours. The following hypothesis is developed:

H3b: LMX mediates the relationship between individual-focused transformational leadership and employee voice.

3.2.5 The Moderating Role of Differentiated Individual-Focused Transformational Leadership

Differentiated individual-focused transformational leadership is a group-level construct. This refers to the variation of individual-focused transformational leadership behaviours from the same leader among followers (Wu et al. 2010). In addition, this construct indicates that a leader treats each of his or her followers in a distinct way. In a team, the leader may provide more support or opportunities to certain members than to others, spend more time mentoring their problem-solving abilities or provide more intellectual challenges to some than to others.

According to social identity theory, a social identity is a person's perspective that he or she belongs to a social category or group (Abrams and Hogg 1998), where people hold a common social identification or view themselves as members of the same social category. Through a social comparison process, people categorise themselves with in-group members and label those who differ from themselves as out-group members (Stets and Burke 2000).

Employees in a group with high level of differentiated leadership will experience a high level of variation, and these differences will provoke social categorisation processes (Van Knippenberg and Schippers 2007). A high level of

differentiated individual-focused transformational leadership leads to the coexistence of in-group and out-group members (Wang et al. 2012), with the former enjoying a better relationship with the supervisor than the latter (Wu et al. 2010). In-group members, who receive more attention and support from leaders, are more likely to highly assess their own value to the organisation, thus their OBSE will be enhanced. In addition, they will more easily develop close relationships with leaders due to intrinsic rewards. If, on the other hand, employees perceive that their supervisors pay them little attention compared with others, this may implicitly signal that they are not trusted or valued by their supervisors. That is, they are out-group members and they may have less access to their supervisors. Thus, when differentiation is high, employees are likely to categorise themselves on this basis. When subgroup or individual identities are more salient than whole group identities, weaker relationships may exist between individual-focused transformational leadership and OBSE and LMX.

A low level of differentiated, individual-focused transformational leadership means that a leader does not behave differently toward any of his or her followers. That is, all of the team members get similar attention from their supervisor. Under these circumstances, members can socially categorise themselves into the overall group (Harris et al. 2014). Thus, in a workgroup context characterised by low levels of individual-focused transformational leadership differentiation, the effects of leaders' individual-focused behaviour on employees' OBSE will be obvious. By the same token, the individual-focused transformational leadership will strengthen the exchange between leader and members at low levels of differentiated transformational leadership .

In summary, differentiated individual-focused transformational leadership may play a moderating role in the relationships between individual-focused transformational leadership (IFTL), OBSE and LMX. Thus, the following hypotheses are developed from the above discussion:

H4a: The relation between IFTL and OBSE is moderated by differentiated individual-focused transformational leadership, such that the relationship between IFTL and OBSE will be stronger at low levels of differentiated IFTL than at high levels.

H4b: The relation between IFTL and LMX is moderated by differentiated individual-focused transformational leadership, such that the

relationship between IFTL and LMX will be stronger at low levels of differentiated IFTL than at high levels.

3.2.6 The Moderating Role of Proactive Personality

Organisations are relying more upon employee initiatives due to heightened competition and continuous innovation (Zhang et al. 2012). On this subject, Parker (1998) acknowledged that proactive personality was positively related to individuals' participation in organisational improvement initiatives. According to Bateman and Crant (1993, p. 105), someone with a proactive personality is 'one who is relatively unconstrained by situational forces, and who effects environmental change'. This describes a dispositional and behavioural tendency at the individual level to take personal initiative to directly alter and influence one's environment. Proactive people are characterised as showing initiative to look for opportunities and seek solutions, persevering to bring about meaningful change (Bateman and Crant 1993). They actively seek solutions to organisational problems which are not necessarily within their formal responsibilities. Moreover, proactive employees are more likely to take initiative to create new circumstances and achieve their goals, and they are less likely to endure undesirable conditions (Crant 2000). In contrast, people with low levels of proactive personality do not question the status quo, fail to look for opportunities, and passively adapt to their work conditions and environments (Zhang et al. 2012).

Proactive personality originates from social cognitive theory (Fuller and Marler 2009), which is a learning theory including three determinants: person, behaviour, and environment, which continuously interact with each other (Bandura 1986). Employees live in a social environment, and in their pursuit of influencing this environment, proactive employees are relatively unconstrained by situational forces. That is, they identify opportunities, seek allies and gather social support to achieve their objectives (Zhang et al. 2012). The key distinct feature of proactive personality and behaviour is an active rather than passive approach toward work (Bateman and Crant 1993).

Proactive personality is associated with positive individual and organisational outcomes (Kim et al. 2009). For example, proactive employees will actively

participate in organisational improvement initiatives (Parker 1998). Furthermore, people with proactive personalities are apt to establish positive social exchange relationships with their leaders to gain value information and better perform their jobs (Li et al. 2010). Such people understand the value of establishing relationships with people who have resources or those who may help their careers (Thompson 2005). Fuller and Marler (2009) used career success as a broad organising framework, meta-analysing 313 correlations from 107 studies. They found that there is a positive relationship between proactive personality and LMX.

In contrast, people with low levels of proactive personality do not question the status quo, they are more restricted by environment, and passively adapt to and endure their work conditions and current circumstances (Zhang et al. 2012). The different reactive orientation toward to the environment between proactive and passive employees may lead the different behaviours. Proactive people may be likely to develop quality relationships with their leaders and to gain attention from the leaders in a “weak” situation. Thus, the following hypothesis is developed:

H5a: The relation between individual-focused transformational leadership (IFTL) and LMX is moderated by proactive personality, such that the relationship between IFTL and LMX will be stronger at lower levels of proactive personality than at higher levels.

As discussed in the previous session, in a high-quality LMX relationship, employees perceive low cost and tend to express their opinions more openly (Hsiung 2012). Employees in low-quality LMX relationship have less opportunities to access to their supervisors, which may negatively affect employees to voice (Botero and Van Dyne 2009). Employees with a proactive personality tend to actively participate in organisational improvement initiatives (Parker 1998) and take personal initiative to directly change and influence the environment or solve problems before they occur (Bateman and Crant 1993), which are not necessarily within their formal responsibilities. Voice behaviour, which is regarded as extra-role behaviour (Brinsfield et al. 2009), actively make colleagues and supervisors aware of potential problems. There is a common link between employees’ proactive behaviour and voice behaviour that they put effort into identifying potential opportunities and problems and take the initiative to suggest potential solutions (Crant et al. 2011). Proactive individuals are expected to more actively exchange

with supervisors in a low level of LMX, and articulate ideas in order to achieve the results (Fuller and Marler 2009); Passive employees will be affected largely by the environment. Therefore, the following hypothesis is developed:

H5b: The relation between LMX and employee voice is moderated by proactive personality, such that the relationship between LMX and employee voice will be stronger at low levels of proactive personality than at high levels.

The above discussion provided a theoretical model for identifying appropriate mechanisms between individual-focused transformational leadership and voice behaviour. Individual and contextual factors affecting employee voice were reviewed based on an additional review of existing literature on OBSE, LMX, and proactive personality. Differentiation in leadership behaviour was also examined. In summary, this section lay the foundation for examining the relationship between individual-focused transformational leadership and employee voice behaviour. Five hypotheses were presented to explain the mediating roles of OBSE and LMX and the moderating effects of differentiated transformational leadership and proactive personality. Moving forward, the following chapter will discuss the research methods used to empirically test the hypothesised relationships.

3.3 Research Design

To address the questions raised in this thesis, a mixed methods methodology was employed to enrich a compressive understanding of leadership influencing employee voice behaviours. Mixed method research is a research design for collecting, analysing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study (Creswell and Creswell 2005, p. 317). Its central premise is to provide an in-depth perspective and a better understanding of study phenomena through the integration of qualitative and quantitative approaches than either alone can offer (Creswell and Creswell 2005).

A quantitative research method identifies and explains complicated relationships of multiple factors and predicts an outcome from one or more predictors (Creswell 2009). Survey research is the most common quantitative

methodology for the collection of data from respondents representing a well-defined population. In addition, it enables the researcher to gather vast amounts of data in a relatively time-efficient manner (Cassell 2013). In this study, the quantitative method was used to examine the relationship between individual-focused transformational leadership and voice behaviour to identify possible variables affecting this relationship. A survey for both supervisors and subordinates was conducted through online questionnaires to test the hypotheses mentioned in the last section.

At the same time, a qualitative research method was conducted to study the research questions in depth (McMillan and Schumacher 2006). Semi-structured interviews with supervisors and subordinates were executed in this research through face-to-face or telephone interview. Their main purpose was to further shed light on how leader behaviour impacts employee voice, the detailed mechanisms and factors behind this phenomenon, and these factors affect voice behaviour in the Chinese context.

Mixed methods research attempts to use multiple approaches to answer research questions (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004). According to Greene et al. (1989), a mixed-method design with a *complementarity* intent is to employ qualitative data, for example, data collecting through interview methods to elaborate the results derived from quantitative data, such as survey. In a complementarity mixed-method study, qualitative and quantitative methods are used to measure different angles of a phenomenon. Beyond this, these strategies seek elaboration and enhancement of the results from one method through the results from the other method (Greene et al. 1989). Through utilising inherent method strengths and counteracting inherent method biases – as well as those of other sources – the validity of constructs can be increased (Small 2011). In this study, a small sample of interview data was collected not merely for illustration but also to provide a depth of interpretation that was unavailable from the survey.

In this study, both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed to study the behaviours of employees' immediate supervisors. The impacts of skip-level leaders would not be investigated.

CHAPTER 4 DATA ANALYSIS AND HYPOTHESES TESTING

In this study, I tested the effect between individual-focused transformational leadership and employee voice behaviour through quantitative methods. I collected survey data and conducted statistical analyses to examine the relationships among individual-focused transformational leadership, LMX, OBSE, differentiated individual-focused transformational leadership, proactive personality and employee voice behaviour.

4.1 Participants and Data Collection Procedures

Since this research proposed to study the impacts of individual-focused transformational leadership on voice behaviours in the Chinese context, the survey was conducted in various workgroups of local organisations, institutions, and foreign enterprises operating their businesses in mainland China. From January to April 2019, using snowballing methods, a total of 88 workgroups were invited to answer online questionnaires through my personal contacts. The sample was derived from different industries and functions in several metropolises, including Beijing, Shanghai, Chengdu, Guangzhou and Shenzhen, located in different areas in China. The diverse task contexts and organisational settings of the sample were intended to enhance the generalisation of the findings.

Both group leaders and their group members in the workgroup were invited to participate in the study. Telephone and email follow-ups at regular intervals were used to improve the response rate. All participants were briefed on the purpose of the research and were also informed that their participation was voluntary and that the data collected in the survey would be kept confidential. That is, their answers would not be accessible to anyone other than the researcher and would be reported only in this thesis or in academic journals.

Two sets of questionnaires were distributed: One was for group leaders, and the other was for group members (subordinates). The group leaders completed the first questionnaire, in which the leader was invited to rate each group member's voice behaviours. Leaders' personal demographic characteristics and group information were also requested. On the other hand, the group members answered

the questionnaire for subordinates, which examined five key measures: his or her leader's transformational leadership behaviours (including individual-focused transformational leadership and group-focused transformational leadership), LMX, subordinates' OBSE, and proactive personality. The questionnaire also asked for each group member's name and demographic information. Leader names were also requested to be written down on both the leader and subordinate questionnaires to match the data.

I required that at least 3 group members respond to the questionnaires before retaining data for that group. After removing unmatched questionnaires (i.e., only the group leader or only group members completed the survey) and those with missing values, as a result, the final sample contained 74 workgroups. The response rate was 84%, which consisted of 74 group leaders and 294 employees of various organisations from diverse industries across mainland China. Group size ranged from 3 to 25 members, with an average of approximately 5 members. Furthermore, these 74 workgroups represented a wide range of industry types. According to the Chinese Industrial Classification for National Economic Activities (CSIC, Rev.2002), these industries were classified into several main industrial categories: education (14.86%); financial intermediation and real estate (13.51%); manufacturing (13.51%); information transmission, computer services and software (12.16%); services (10.82%); culture, sports and entertainment (10.81%); wholesale and retail trade (8.11%); transport, storage and post (5.42%); public administration (4.05%); healthcare (4.05%); construction (1.35%); and agriculture (1.35%).

By using t-tests to compare early and late respondents across age and group tenure of group members, no sign of non-respondent bias was observed (Armstrong and Overton 1977). A series of ANOVA analyses also showed that there were no significant differences between the dropped groups and the retained groups in terms of demographic variables or the average values of the main variables in the study.

Table 4.1 displays the demographic information of the participants in this study. Of 294 group members, 55.78% were female, and 44.22% were male. Their average age was 32.23 years (SD = 6.54), with average organisational tenure of 3.25 years (SD = 3.53). Subordinates' highest education level was listed as follows: 1.70% of them held PhDs, 19.73% had master's degrees, 57.14% had bachelor's degrees, 18.37% held three-year college diplomas, and 3.06% had graduated from secondary

schools.

Of the group leaders and supervisors, 39.19% were female, and 60.81% were male. Their average age was 40.82 years (SD = 6.30). On average, they had been employed in their company for 7.21 years (SD = 5.48). Among them, 13.51% had PhDs, 45.95% had master's degrees, 29.73% held bachelor's degrees, and 10.81% had graduated from three-year colleges.

Table 4.1 Demographics of the Participants

Demographics	Group Members (N = 294)		Group Leaders (N = 74)	
	Number	Percent %	Number	Percent %
Gender				
Male	130	44.22	45	60.81
Female	164	55.78	29	39.19
Age				
Less than 25	41	13.95	--	--
26–30	103	35.03	2	2.70
31–35	72	24.49	11	14.87
36–40	43	14.63	24	32.43
41–45	21	7.14	20	27.03
45 or older	14	4.76	17	22.97
Educational Background				
PhD or Doctorate	5	1.70	10	13.51
Master	58	19.73	34	45.95
Bachelor	168	57.14	22	29.73
College/Higher Diploma	54	18.37	8	10.81
High School	9	3.06	--	--
Organisation Tenure				
Less than 1 year	73	24.83	3	4.05
1–5 years	157	53.40	28	37.84
6–10 years	44	14.97	18	24.32
More than 10 years	20	6.80	25	33.78
Number of Group Members				
1–3	83	28.23	27	36.49
4–6	148	50.34	36	48.65
7–10	49	16.67	6	8.11
More than 10	14	4.76	5	6.76

4.2 Measures of Study 1

As described earlier, group members provided the ratings of leader–member exchange (LMX), organisation-based self-esteem (OBSE), proactive personality, and their immediate leaders' transformational leadership behaviours. The former three factors were proposed to be three differential mechanisms. Conversely, in the group leaders' questionnaire, leaders rated each group member's voice behaviour.

4.2.1 Measurement Instruments

The measurement instruments were adapted and developed from existing scales that had been verified and widely used in previous research. Unless otherwise indicated, all items were measured on a Likert-type scale. As the survey was conducted in Chinese organisations, the items and scales were translated from English into Chinese. Four participants were invited to do the first draft of translated questionnaires to examine whether there were any ambiguous statements. Finally, back translation was performed to ensure an accurate depiction of the exact meanings of the translations and make them appropriate for the Chinese context.

To ensure the measurement instruments' accuracy, consistency and applicability, I performed a set of confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) to validate the factor structure of the variables as well as the proposed measurement instruments. Construct validity would be involved in answering the questions such as: To what extent is this test culture-free (Cronbach and Meehl 1955)? How well to translate or transform a concept or behaviour that is a construct into a functioning and operating reality (Taherdoost 2016). CFA is an appropriate model for interpreting construct validity (Bagozzi et al. 1991). Cronbach's alpha was tested as the measure of internal consistency reliability.

Table 4.2 shows the measurement instruments for different variables that were examined in this study and the goodness of fit indices were derived from both confirmative factor analysis and their Cronbach's Alpha.

Table 4.2 Measurement Instruments

Variable Measure	χ^2	df	CFI	SRMR	Cronbach's Alpha
Voice behaviour (VB)	57.624	9	0.934	0.044	0.858
Organisation-based self-esteem (OBSE)	74.302	14	0.940	0.043	0.870
Proactive personality (PP)	158.657	27	0.910	0.055	0.866
Group-focused transformational leadership (GFTL)	272.023	86	0.951	0.048	0.958
Individual-focused transformational leadership (IFTL)	140.430	18	0.916	0.076	0.866
Leader-member exchange (LMX)	45.487	9	0.955	0.044	0.860

Voice behaviour (VB). Van Dyne and LePine's (1998) six-item voice measurement tool has been used often in earlier studies (Fuller et al. 2006a; Detert and Burris 2007). This scale has shown favourable psychometric properties in previous studies (Liang 2007). In the survey, group leaders were requested to provide ratings of each of their respective direct reporters' voice behaviours on a 7-point response scale (1 = 'strongly disagree' to 7 = 'strongly agree'). Items included 'He or she (this employee) speaks up and encourages others to get involved in issues that affect this work unit'; 'He or she speaks up with ideas for new projects or changes in procedures'; 'He or she develops and makes recommendations concerning issues that affect this workgroup'; 'He or she gets involved in issues that affect the quality of work-life in this workgroup'; 'He or she communicates his/her opinions about work issues to others in this group even if his/her opinion is different and others in the group disagree with him/her' and 'He or she keeps well informed about issues where his/her opinion might be useful to this workgroup'. A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) for the construct with six items revealed that the data fit well ($\chi^2 = 57.624$, $df = 9$; CFI = 0.934, SRMR = 0.044). In addition, Cronbach's alpha of 0.858 was obtained for this construct.

Organisation-based self-esteem (OBSE). Pierce et al.'s (1989) ten-item scale was adopted in the study, a device that has been widely used in many studies in the Chinese context (e.g., Arshadi and Hayavi 2013; Chen and Aryee 2007). Group members answered the items on a 7-point response scale (1 = 'strongly disagree' to 7 = 'strongly agree'). Example items included the following: 'I can make a difference around here', 'I am trusted around here' and 'I am effective around here'.

Nevertheless, there were three items that produced factor loading below the cut-off value ('I am valuable around here' was 0.461; 'I am helpful around here' was 0.485; and 'I am cooperative around here' was 0.339). Considering that removing these three items did not severely reduce the content validity while improving the convergent validity, I decided to remove these three items and use the remaining seven items. The CFA test for the construct with seven items revealed that it fit the data well ($\chi^2 = 74.302$, $df = 14$; CFI = 0.940, SRMR = 0.043). Finally, Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.870.

Proactive personality (PP). Proactive personality was assessed with the abridged version of Bateman and Crant's (1993) seventeen-item proactive personality scale. The version comprised ten items that presented the highest average factor loading, based on results reported by Bateman and Crant (1993), and presented evidence for validity and reliability by Seibert et al. (1999, 2001). Group members evaluated themselves on a 7-point response scale (1 = 'strongly disagree' to 7 = 'strongly agree'). The sampled questions included 'No matter what the odds, if I believe in something I will make it happen' and 'I love being a champion for my ideas, even against others' opposition'. However, there was one item that presented a factor loading value lower than the cut-off value ('I am always looking for better ways to do things' was 0.373). To ensure the validity of this construct, I deleted this item and used the remaining nine items. A CFA test for the construct with the nine items revealed that it fit the data well ($\chi^2 = 158.657$, $df = 27$; CFI = 0.910, SRMR = 0.055). Cronbach's alpha was 0.87 for the nine items.

Group-focused transformational leadership (GFTL). The items for the construct of group-focused transformational leadership were taken from Podsakoff et al.'s (1990) fifteen-item subscale. This scale had already been translated and used in several Chinese management studies (e.g., Wang et al. 2005; Zhang et al. 2015). Four corresponding manifest indicators were measured: (1) identifying and articulating a vision (five items, e.g., 'The leader has a clear understanding of where we are going'); (2) providing an appropriate model (three items, e.g., 'The leader provides a good model for me to follow'); (3) fostering the acceptance of group goals (four items, e.g., 'The leader gets the group to work together for the same goal') and (4) expecting high performance (three items, e.g., 'The leader shows us that he/she expects a lot from us'). Responses were obtained on a scale ranging from 1 ('strongly disagree') to 7 ('strongly agree'). A confirmatory factor analysis

for the fifteen items revealed that a higher-order, group-focused transformational leadership factor effectively explained common variance among the four leadership components ($\chi^2 = 272.023$, $df = 86$; $CFI = 0.951$, $SRMR = 0.048$). Accordingly, I collapsed the sub-dimensions into an overall group-focused transformational leadership construct. Cronbach's alpha was 0.958.

As suggested by previous research (e.g., Kirkman et al., 2009; Wu et al., 2010; Zhang et al. 2013), this thesis conceptualised group-focused transformational leadership as a group-level construct. As a shared group property, according to Chan's (1998) referent-shift consensus models, lower-level units composed by consensus are conceptually distinct though derived from the same individual-level units (p.236). Within-group agreement and between-group variability must be calculated to justify data aggregation. The R_{wg} statistic was used to assess within-group agreement on group-focused leadership (James et al. 1984). A high level of agreement implies there was enough shared perception among group members that an average of individual responses can represent the group-level concept (Newman and Sin 2009). On the other hand, within-group consensus of individuals (lower-level elements) was required to form the group's higher-level constructs. The inter-member agreement and reliability, or the intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) is then calculated to assess the appropriateness of aggregating individual answers from each subordinate to a group level (James 1982). ICC(1) is the proportion of total variance, which can be explained by group membership. ICC(2) is a reliability index for group mean scores, with high values indicating that aggregate measures of a group-level construct have relatively low within-group variance (Bliese 2000). In this study, the ICC(1) value was 0.24, which was within the normal range in organisational research. The ICC(2) value was 0.55, reaching the desired level suggested by Klein et al. (2000). These results supported aggregating the individual scores to the group level.

Individual-focused transformational leadership (IFTL). This construct was assessed using Podsakoff et al.'s (1990) individual-focused transformational leadership subscale. Two indicators were based on an eight-item scale, including (1) individual consideration (four items, e.g., 'The leader shows respect for my personal feelings') and (2) intellectual inspiration (four items, e.g., 'The leader has stimulated me to rethink the way I do things'). The rating scale ranged from 1 ('strongly disagree') to 7 ('strongly agree'). These two indicators were highly

correlated, so this study combined them into the single factor of individual-focused transformational leadership (e.g., Wu et al. 2010; Zhang et al. 2013). A confirmatory factor analysis for the eight items revealed that a higher-order individual-focused transformational leadership factor fit the data well ($\chi^2 = 140.430$, $df = 18$; CFI = 0.916, SRMR = 0.076). Cronbach's alpha was 0.866.

Differentiated individual-focused transformational leadership (DIFTL). The individual-focused transformational leadership items were used to form indicators that were subsequently aggregated to the group level. As suggested by Chan's (1998) dispersion model, the variance in the individual-level leadership scores of each group was taken as group-level differentiated individual-focused transformational leadership (e.g., Zhang et al. 2015a). Thus, it was operationalised by using the coefficient of variation (Harrison and Klein 2007). This was calculated by dividing the within-group standard deviation of the individual-focused leadership measure by the within-group mean score of the same variable. The larger the coefficient of variation, the more dispersion existed in group members' perceptions of individual-focused transformational leadership (Wu et al. 2010).

Leader-member exchange (LMX). The way to measure of LMX has changed over the years. Considerable theorising and scale developments have appeared in different investigations, including a four-item scale instrument (Liden and Graen 1980), Graen et al.'s (1982) seven-item scale and Wakabayashi et al.'s (1990) sixteen-item scale. In addition, different measures were used to test the dimensionality of LMX (Graen and Uhl-Bien 1995). The seven-item LMX scale was employed in this study; only group members were asked to reply to the LMX questionnaire, so the one-time measurement was used here (Howell and Hall-Merenda 1999). Items included 'How well does your leader (follower) recognise your potential?', 'Regardless of how much formal authority your leader has built into his or her position, what are the chances that your leader would use his or her power to help you solve problems in your work?' and 'I would characterise my working relationship with my supervisor to be extremely effective'. However, the item 'I would characterise my working relationship with my supervisor to be extremely effective' presented low factor loading (0.534). To improve the validity of the construct, I removed this item and used the remaining six items. Conclusions from the CFA testing demonstrated that the six-item LMX measure fit the data well ($\chi^2 = 45.487$, $df = 9$; CFI = 0.955, SRMR = 0.044). A Cronbach alpha of 0.86 was

obtained for this construct.

4.2.2 Control Variables

Previous studies have found that individual differences influence employees' voice behaviours, such as demographics and personality (LePine and Van Dyne 2001). In this study, sets of variables were controlled to eliminate spurious relationships, including the age and gender of respondents. Liang (2007) explained that education level is related to individual capability to obtain knowledge and insights, which affects voice behaviours. Education level was reported by respondents on a five-item scale: high school or below, college/diploma, bachelor's, master's or PhD/DBA. In addition, organisational tenure enhanced the degrees of knowledge about the firm and degrees of familiarity with the organisations' cultures, leaders' working styles and daily operations, which could all influence employees' voice behaviours. Thus, I controlled the organisational tenure.

4.3 Analytical Approach

Given the experiment's two-level nature, in which employees were nested within groups, a two-level analysis was needed. A multilevel path analysis was therefore employed to test the hypotheses with Mplus 8.3. Mplus is a statistical modelling programme that allows the analysis of cross-sectional and longitudinal data, as well as single-level and multilevel data (Muthén and Muthén 2010).

I specified differentiated individual-focused transformational leadership (i.e., the moderator) and group-focused transformational leadership (i.e., the control variable) at Level 2 and individual-focused transformational leadership (independent variable), OBSE and LMX (mediators), as well as proactive personality (the individual level moderator) at Level 1.

4.4 Analysis and Results of Study 1

4.4.1 Measurement Model and Discriminant Validity

Before conducting a structural model analysis to examine relationships of variables, I performed a confirmatory factor analysis to assess the overall model fit

of the measurement model. The model fit assessment is based on the comparative fit index (CFI), with the traditional cut-off value of 0.90 (Bentler 1990). In addition, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) is applied to assess the lack of model fit. An RMSEA value of 0.05 or less indicates a close fit, whereas a value between 0.05 and 0.08 suggests a reasonable model-data fit (Browne and Cudeck 1992; Xia and Yang 2019).

Beyond affirming the fit of the measurement model as a baseline model, I performed a series of CFAs to analyse alternative models combining various construct groups to test discriminant validity. Chi-square difference tests were used to compare alternative models.

Table 4.3 summarises the measurement model analyses and discriminant validity assessment results. A measurement model consisting of six latent constructs (five constructs related to the hypotheses plus one control variable) was fitted to the data ($N=294$). The results showed a good fit for the six-factor model ($\chi^2 = 1053.004$, $df = 512$; $CFI = 0.902$, $RMSEA = 0.060$). In addition, all factor loadings were significant at the 0.05 level. Comparisons of the baseline model with all the alternative models based on chi-square difference tests revealed that the baseline model fit the data best. Specifically, I compared the baseline model with five-factor models (combining LMX and PP, $\Delta\chi^2 = 615.792$, $\Delta df = 5$, $p < 0.001$; or LMX and OBSE, $\Delta\chi^2 = 515.303$, $\Delta df = 5$, $p < 0.001$); four-factor models (combining LMX, PP, and OBSE, $\Delta\chi^2 = 879.613$, $\Delta df = 9$, $p < 0.001$; or combining LMX, OBSE, and GTL, $\Delta\chi^2 = 1213.305$, $\Delta df = 9$, $p < 0.001$); three-factor models (combining LMX, PP, OBSE and GTL, $\Delta\chi^2 = 1687.98$, $\Delta df = 12$, $p < 0.001$; or combining LMX, PP, OBSE, and VB, $\Delta\chi^2 = 1465.838$, $\Delta df = 12$, $p < 0.001$) and a two-factor model (combining LMX, PP, OBSE, GTL and VB, $\Delta\chi^2 = 2280.513$, $\Delta df = 14$, $p < 0.001$). According to these statistics, the measurements appeared to exhibit acceptable values and validity.

Table 4.4 lists the means, standard deviations, correlations, and square roots of the average variance extracted (AVE) of all the variables and control variables at the individual and group levels. In particular, the diagonal values in parentheses were greater than the off-diagonal elements in the corresponding rows and columns, which further supported the discriminant validity of the study variables.

Individual-focused transformational leadership was positively related to voice behaviours ($r = 0.162$, $p < 0.01$). On the other hand, individual-focused

transformational leadership was positively related to two mediating mechanisms ($r = 0.332, p < 0.01$ for OBSE; and $r = 0.591, p < 0.01$ for LMX). OBSE ($r = 0.238, p < 0.01$) and LMX ($r = 0.249, p < 0.01$) were positively related to voice behaviours.

Table 4.3 Comparison of Measurement Models

Model	χ^2	df	$\Delta\chi^2$	RMSEA	CFI	SRMR
Base model (six-factor model)	1053.004	512	N/A	0.060	0.902	0.055
Five-factor model (combining LMX and PP)	1668.796	517	615.792**	0.087	0.791	0.085
Five-factor model (combining LMX and OBSE)	1568.307	517	515.303**	0.083	0.810	0.082
Four-factor model (combining LMX, PP, and OBSE)	1932.617	521	879.613**	0.096	0.744	0.095
Four-factor model (combining LMX, OBSE and GFTL)	2176.309	521	1123.305**	0.104	0.700	0.105
Three-factor model (combining LMX, PP, OBSE and GFTL)	2740.984	524	1687.98**	0.120	0.598	0.109
Three-factor model (combining LMX, PP, OBSE and VB)	2518.842	524	1465.838**	0.114	0.639	0.114
Two-factor model (combining LMX, PP, OBSE, GFTL and VB)	3333.517	526	2280.513**	0.135	0.491	0.127

* $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$.

Table 4.4 Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations

Variable	M	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Individual level ^a											
1. Gender	0.44	0.50	1								
2. Education	2.99	0.75	-0.047	1							
3. Age	33.23	6.554	0.171**	0.165**	1						
4. Org. tenure	3.25	3.53	0.041	-0.024	0.456**	1					
5. IFTL	5.73	0.76	-0.132*	0.070	-0.016	0.104	(0.73)				
6. OBSE	5.04	0.76	0.099	0.017	0.142*	0.155**	0.332**	(0.73)			
7. LMX	5.47	0.80	0.062	0.033	0.166**	0.098	0.591**	0.512**	(0.72)		
8. PP	5.01	0.73	0.058	0.051	0.044	0.067	0.286**	0.627**	0.398**	(0.71)	
9. VB	5.51	0.87	-0.017	-0.004	0.170**	0.153**	0.162**	0.238**	0.249**	0.304**	(0.71)
Group level ^b											
1. Group size	5.37	2.9									
2. GFTL	6.02	0.71	0.011	(0.86)							
3. DIFTL	0.11	0.06	0.016	-0.075							

^a n=294. ^b n=74

Diagonal values in parentheses are the square roots of the variance shared between the constructs and their measurements.

For discriminant validity to be established, the diagonal elements must be greater than the off-diagonal elements in the corresponding rows and columns.

* $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$.

4.4.2 Hypotheses Testing

Effects of individual-focused transformational leadership (H1). Hypotheses 1a and 1b examined that individual-focused transformational leadership (IFTL) would have a positive effect on OBSE and LMX, respectively. As summarised in Table 4.5, IFTL was positively related to OBSE ($\beta = 0.489, p < 0.01$) and LMX ($\beta = 0.645, p < 0.01$). These findings supported Hypotheses 1a and 1b.

Effects on voice behaviour (H2). H2a and H2b examined that both OBSE and LMX would have positive effects on employees' voice behaviour. As shown in Table 4.5, OBSE was positively related to voice behaviour ($\beta = 0.17, p < 0.01$), as was LMX ($\beta = 0.15, p < 0.01$). Accordingly, H2a and H2b were supported.

Mediation through OBSE and LMX (H3). Furthermore, H3a and H3b examined the mediating effects of OBSE and LMX on the relation between IFTL and voice behaviour. To test for the indirect (mediation) effects of IFTL on employees' voice behaviour via OBSE (H3a) and LMX (H3b), I applied the bootstrapping procedure in Mplus. Specifically, I drew on the coefficients of the direct paths (IFTL→OBSE and OBSE→VB; IFTL→LMX and LMX→VB) to calculate the product of the direct paths that formed the indirect paths of IFTL→OBSE→VB and IFTL→LMX→VB. I then used bias-corrected percentile bootstrap to generate a 95% confidence interval (CI) for IFTL→OBSE→VB and IFTL→LMX→VB (Preacher 2015). The bootstrap was based on 5,000 re-samples. The interval provided evidence of the significance of indirect effects when the interval for an indirect effect does not include zero. These results appear in Tables 4.5 and 4.6.

Table 4.5 Structural Model Paths, Significance and Results (n=294)

Hypotheses	Unstandardized Estimate	t-value	Results
H1a IFTL → OBSE	0.489	3.83**	Supported
H1b IFTL → LMX	0.645	5.44**	Supported
H2a OBSE → VB	0.17	2.40*	Supported
H2b LMX → VB	0.15	2.04*	Supported
H4a IFTL × DIFTL → OBSE	-1.172	-1.41	Not supported
H4b IFTL × DIFTL → LMX	-0.49	-0.654	Not supported
H5a IFTL × PP → LMX	0.01	0.06	Not supported
H5b LMX × PP → VB	-0.05	-0.72	Not supported

Controls: Age (0.02, $t = 2.37$) on VB are significant. Others are not significant.

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

In Table 4.6, I indicated the indirect effects of IFTL on employees' voice behaviour through OBSE and LMX. After completing 5,000 bootstrapping, I obtained a 95% CI of [0.012, 0.111] for the mediating path of IFTL→OBSE→VB, and [0.024, 0.169] for the mediating path of IFTL→LMX→VB. The results showed that the mediating effect of OBSE on the relation between IFTL and employees' voice behaviour was significant, and the mediating effect of LMX on the indirect path of IFTL→LMX→VB was significant as well. According to these results, H3a and H3b were supported.

Table 4.6 Mediating Test Results

Mediating path	Point estimate	Correct bias percentile bootstrap 95% confidence interval ¹		
		Lower	Upper	Results
H3a IFTL→OBSE→VB	0.055	0.012	0.111	Supported
H3b IFTL→LMX→VB	0.095	0.024	0.169	Supported

1. The number of bootstrap samples is 5000.

The moderating effect of differentiated individual-focused transformational leadership (H4). H4a and H4b proposed that differentiated individual-focused transformational leadership (DIFTL) would moderate the relation between IFTL and OBSE, as well as the relation between IFTL and LMX. The results showed that the moderating effects were not significant (H4a: $\beta = -1.172$, $t = -1.41$; H4b: $\beta = -0.49$, $t = -0.654$). Thus, H4a and H4b were not supported.

The moderating effect of proactive personality (H5). H5a proposed that proactive personality would positively moderate the relation between IFTL and LMX. H5b proposed that proactive personality would positively moderate the relation between LMX and voice. To test these two moderating effects, both IFTL, proactive personality, and LMX were centred at the grand mean value. The results in Table 4.5 show that the moderating effects were not significant (H5a: $\beta = 0.01$, $t = 0.06$; H5b: $\beta = -0.05$, $t = -0.72$). Accordingly, H5 was not supported.

Finally, all control variables except employee age were not significant, and there were no substantial changes in path coefficients whether control variables were included or excluded. In addition, employee age was positively related to employee voice behaviour ($\beta = 0.02$, $t = 2.37$).

4.5 Validity and Reliability of Study 1

Validity and reliability are used to evaluate the quality of research; they reflect how well a technique, method or test measurement variables. Validity is the degree to which a measure accurately reflects the concept being measured. Reliability is the extent to which the same instrument provides a consistent, similar score when measuring an attribute (Pellissier 2007). In the survey study, several steps were employed to increase the level of validity and reliability.

(1) Designing the questionnaires

The measurement instruments adopted in this study had already been widely used in many studies, particularly in the Chinese context, and have been thought of as generally possessing excellent internal construct validity. The original instruments were English versions. I translated the questionnaires into Chinese to make it easier for the respondents to understand the questions. In order to avoid any mistakes or omissions, I employed a translator to translate the contents from Chinese back into English without access to the original version. The translator was asked to comment on any item perceived to be equivocal, and back translation was performed to ensure accurate descriptions of the questionnaires. Four participants were invited to do the survey as a pilot to check if there were any ambiguous instructions. The questionnaires were also sent for comment to my supervisor, an expert in this field. Having an adequate number of scale responses enabled the respondents to be able to differentiate their answers (Fowler 2014). The Likert scale responses in this study varied along a continuum of seven categorical answers. Studies have proved that Likert scales can work well with up to five categories when Cronbach's alpha reliability ratings exhibits high ratings (Swanson and Holton 2005). To enhance the construct validity, I used a set of confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) to validate the proposed measurement instruments. Cronbach's alpha was reported to ensure the internal consistency reliability.

(2) Collecting the data

Snowball sampling, a non-probability sampling technique, was adopted to collect the data. To produce more valid, generalisable results, I recruited participants from diverse backgrounds. For example, participants' geographical locations spanned several Chinese metropolises, such as Beijing (in northern China), Shanghai (in eastern China), Chengdu and Yinchuan (in western China), and

Guangzhou and Shenzhen (in southern China). In addition, the participants came from different industries, including education and training, manufacturing, healthcare, finance, retail, IT and so forth, as well as various types of organisations. The latter comprised state-owned enterprises, private companies, foreign companies, government and others. During the data collection process, respondents were informed that their replies could contribute knowledge and would be kept confidential, and they were encouraged to rigorously fill in the questionnaires.

(3) Analysing and testing the data

Since the data was collected over a few months, T-tests were conducted to examine non-respondent bias. Cronbach's alpha is the most commonly used of these tests to determine the internal consistency of an instrument. An acceptable reliability score is one that is 0.7 and higher (Heale and Twycross 2015). As displayed in Table 4.2, the Cronbach's alpha ratings were categorised as generally high, from 0.858 to 0.958.

4.6 Discussion of Study 1

The purposes of this study were to examine how individual-focused transformational leadership impacts voice behaviour and to understand the interactive patterns and underlying mechanisms between leader behaviour and employee voice. I conducted a survey to collect the data and used Mplus to test the hypotheses. Table 4.7 lists a summary of these hypotheses.

Table 4.7 A List of the Hypotheses

Hypotheses		Status
H1a	Individual-focused transformational leadership is positively associated with employees' organisation-based self-esteem (OBSE).	Supported
H1b	Individual-focused transformational leadership is positively associated with LMX.	Supported
H2a	Employees' organisation-based self-esteem (OBSE) is positively associated with voice behaviour.	Supported
H2b	LMX is positively associated with voice behaviour.	Supported
H3a	OBSE mediates the relationship between individual-focused transformational leadership and employee voice.	Supported
H3b	LMX mediates the relationship between individual-focused transformational leadership and employee voice.	Supported
H4a	The relation between individual-focused transformational leadership (IFTL) and OBSE is moderated by differentiated individual-focused transformational leadership, such that the relationship between IFTL and OBSE will be stronger at low levels of differentiated IFTL than at high levels.	Not Supported
H4b	The relation between individual-focused transformational leadership (IFTL) and LMX is moderated by differentiated individual-focused transformational leadership, such that the relationship between IFTL and LMX will be stronger at low levels of differentiated IFTL than at high levels.	Not Supported
H5a	The relation between individual-focused transformational leadership (IFTL) and LMX is moderated by proactive personality, such that the relationship between IFTL and LMX will be stronger at lower levels of proactive personality than at higher levels.	Not Supported
H5b	The relation between individual-focused transformational leadership LMX and voice is moderated by proactive personality, such that the relationship between LMX and voice will be stronger at lower levels of proactive personality than at higher levels.	Not Supported

4.6.1 Effects of Individual-Focused Transformational Leadership on OBSE

Organisation-based self-esteem (OBSE) reflects the self-perceived value of employees as organisation members acting in an organisational environment. It is a self-evaluation for employees of their self-perceptions as important, talented, and valuable within their employing organisations (Pierce and Gardner 2004). According to Pierce et al.'s (1989) research, managerial respect is one of the determinants of OBSE. Individual-focused transformational leaders understand employees' abilities, respect their personal needs, and encourage employees' intelligence, which may lead employees to perceive that they are valued and respected by their organisations. The result of this study ($\beta = 0.489, p < .01$) also

supported that there is a positive relationship between individual-focused transformational leadership and employees' OBSE. I will further discuss how individual-focused transformational leadership affects OBSE in the Chinese context in Chapter 6.

4.6.2 Effects of OBSE on Voice Behaviour

The results of this study ($\beta = 0.17, p < 0.01$) showed that OBSE has a positive impact on voice behaviour. These figures further verified LePine and Van Dyne's (1998) conclusion that employees' self-esteem is positively associated with voice, and that individuals with high levels of self-esteem tend to speak out more than those with low self-esteem. When employees feel they are valued by their organisation, and encouraged by their leader, they will believe they are likely to lead their organisation to succeed. They are more concerned about the development of the organisation, often expressing opinions that may be helpful. Liang et al. (2012) also found that OBSE had interactive effects on both promotive voice and prohibitive voice. They explained the relationship based on the theory of planned behaviour. When people can utilise the necessary resources to perform a certain behaviour, they are more motivated to perform it because they are more likely to perceive a high degree of control. Voice behaviour is intentional, "planned behaviour" occurring in an interpersonal context (p. 73). OBSE may affect employees' perceptions of behavioural control of voice.

4.6.3 Mediation Effects of OBSE

The findings suggested that leaders' individual-focused transformational leadership behaviours influence employees' voice behaviours via employees' OBSE. To some extent, this lent support to the contention that an employee's self-concept plays a mediating role between the organisational leader's management practice and the employee's work performance (Erez and Earley 1993).

Support for the mediating influence of OBSE is explicable according to cognitive consistency theory (Pierce and Gardner 2004), which assumes that individuals are motivated to engage in behaviours that are consistent with their self-concept (Korman 1970). OBSE has emerged as a stronger self-concept in predicting employee responses (Pierce and Gardner 2004). Self-enhancement motivation theory may be another mechanism to explain OBSE's mediating role. Under this

theory, individuals with both low and high self-esteem share the basic need to enhance their levels of self-esteem (Sedikides et al. 2003). When employees see an opportunity to achieve high-performance goals, driven by each individual's intrinsic motivation, employees with high self-esteem believe they can achieve these goals. In contrast, individuals with low self-esteem lack confidence in their abilities to succeed, tending instead to control damage (Campbell 1990). Effective leaders behaviours increase employees' intrinsic motivations (Tang and Ibrahim 1998), and leaders who provide meaningful work and empowerment will produce highly self-enhancing employees (Korman 2001).

Individual-focused transformational leaders care about their employees' personal needs, inspire employees to think in order to motivate them and enhance employees' self-perceived value. These behaviours encourage employees to feel important in their organisations, believing they have a good chance of leading their organisations to succeed. Employees with high levels of OBSE will feel obligated to speak out in these cases.

4.6.4 Effects of Individual-Focused Transformational Leadership on LMX

Leader-member exchange (LMX) theory delineates how leaders develop different exchange relationships with their followers (Graen and Scandura 1987). LMX is a one-on-one reciprocal social exchange between leader and follower to develop and maintain the dyadic relationship (Wang et al. 2005). Although several studies support a positive association between transformational leadership and LMX (e.g., Wang et al. 2005; Tse 2008), some researchers criticise their use of a broadly defined measure of transformational leadership to study this relationship (O'Donnell et al. 2012). For example, Deluga (1992) analysed data from 145 U.S. Navy offices and found that two transformational factors, individualised consideration and charisma, predict LMX. Shunlong and Weiming (2012) studied 251 MBA, EMBA, and enterprise staff members from the Pearl River Delta region in China. They also found that transformational leadership had a significant positive relationship to leader-member exchange, mostly from the dimensions of morale modeling and individualised consideration.

The results here indicated a positive association between individual-focused transformational leadership and LMX ($\beta = 0.641$, $p < 0.01$). Transformational leaders provide individualised support, personal care for their followers, and set

high expectations. These behaviours make followers feel they are in-group members and valuable to their leaders and organisations. In return, such followers are loyal and supportive to leaders (Krishnan 2004), producing a stronger relationship between the two.

4.6.5 Effects of LMX on Voice Behaviour

When followers believe they have high-level exchanges with their leaders, they will take the initiative to reciprocate this favourable treatment. That is, their behaviours will likely reach higher levels of affiliative organisational citizenship, which includes voicing and helping (Van Dyne et al. 2008). The findings verified the hypothesis that LMX is positively associated with voice behaviour ($\beta = 0.14, p < 0.01$). With a high level of LMX, trust will be established between employees and their supervisors with a close exchange, reducing employees' risks and enabling them to express their opinions more openly, without being concerned they will be misunderstood. At the same time, benefiting from more robust supports and responsiveness of supervisors, employees will be willing to take responsibilities beyond their own roles and improve organisational effectiveness through voice behaviours (Van Dyne et al. 2008).

4.6.6 Mediation Effects of LMX

In addition, the results showed that individual-focused transformational leadership can also influence employee voice through LMX. The mediating role of LMX in the relationship between transformational leadership and organisational citizenship behaviours is based on the notion that a high-quality LMX relationship reflects an affective bonding accompanied by unspecified expectations of reciprocity to a large extent (Wang et al. 2005). Transformational leaders are particularly effective in eliciting personal identification from their followers that will enhance followers' sense of self-worth. As an exchange, followers commit themselves to a higher degree of engagement of organisational functioning and spend more time and energy than the contract requires (Graen et al. 1982). Such a high-quality LMX contributes to employee to take up greater responsibilities to express their ideas in order to enhance the work and improve organisational development. Therefore, it follows that LMX quality plays a mediating role that explains the relationship between individual-focused transformational leadership

and voice behaviours.

4.6.7 Moderation Effects of Differentiated Individual-Focused Transformational Leadership

In the thesis, I wanted to examine whether differentiated transformational leadership moderated the negative effect of individual-focused transformational leadership and LMX and OBSE. I expected stronger relationships between individual-focused transformational leadership and OBSE and LMX with lower levels of differentiated individual-focused transformational leadership. However, the findings did not support these hypotheses (4a and 4b).

Zhang et al. (2015c) have suggested that researchers study differentiated transformational leadership within a cultural context. The differentiated transformational leadership approach was proposed and developed in the context of Western culture. Whether its research results have universal applicability and cross-cultural consistency remains to be verified. In Chinese contexts, subordinates are distinguished by whether they are members of the in-group or out-group (Cheng 1995); leaders take differentiated behaviours between the groups. In traditional Chinese high-power distance culture, subordinates are more likely to accept a leader's differentiated behaviour. The findings of Farh et al. (1997) took this a step further and contended that if individuals are traditional, their perceptions of whether they have been treated fairly do not significantly affect their behaviours.

4.6.8 Moderation Effects of Proactive Personality

In addition, I failed to produce support for Hypothesis 5a and Hypothesis 5b. Proactive personality moderated the relationships neither between individual-focused transformational leadership and LMX, nor between LMX and voice. These results were surprising and counterintuitive because several scholars have studied dispositional explanations for attitudes and behaviour in organisations, and there has been a substantial amount of evidence from previous empirical studies supporting the positive outcomes of proactive personality on employees behaviours (e.g., Bateman and Crant 1993; Li et al. 2010; Seibert et al. 1999; Zhang et al. 2012).

There are possible explanations for the unexpected results. Proactive people are relatively unconstrained by situational forces, and they tend to take the initiative to change the status quo (Crant 2000). However, Davis-Blake and Pfeffer (1989)

argued that individuals' dispositions and behaviours are significantly affected by the organisational situation in which they participate. For some time, dispositional effects are likely to be essential in a relatively weak environment, while in powerful situations, dispositions may have only a limited effect on individual responses within a strong organisation setting (Mischel 1977). Trait activation theory underscores the importance of the person-situation interaction to explain individual outcomes based on personality-relevant cues that emerge in situations (Tett and Guterman 2000). Proactive employees' outcomes may differ depending on the context, as their proactive behaviour is elicited only under specific cues (Li et al. 2010). For example, traditional Chinese culture emphasises hierarchical order, power distance determines people's attitudes and behaviours to be accordant with their hierarchical position (Landau 2009). Thus, employees' proactive personalities in high-power distance cultures are likely to have a limited impact on whether they express themselves actively or exchange ideas with their leaders.

Moreover, although individual dispositions are stable and unchangeable, individuals have a high degree of responsiveness and adaptability to their organisational environments, so their personality traits will change in response to organisational situations (Davis-Blake and Pfeffer 1989).

CHAPTER 5 QUALITATIVE STUDY

Despite the quantitative results suggesting that individual-focused transformational leadership has a positive impact on employee voice behaviour through LMX and OBSE, there was much that remained unknown regarding how these factors work in the Chinese context. Therefore, an interview-based study was conducted to enhance understanding of leaders' influences on employee voice behaviours and discover how and why individual-focused transformational leadership behaviours influence voice in Chinese organisations.

5.1 Data and Methodology

5.1.1 Participants and Samples

The interviews were conducted in July and August 2019. Participants were asked to provide their perspectives on leader behaviour and employee voice in semi-structured interviews. To investigate the different foci of leaders and organisational members, interview data were collected from both managers and subordinates. A snowball sampling technique was used. After each interview, the interviewee was asked to recommend people from a different organisation and industry to participate in an interview.

To ensure variety, I recruited 25 interviewees from diverse organisations across an array of industries, including finance, manufacturing, government, education, healthcare, and technology. They ranged from administrative staff to CEOs. Among the participants, 48% were subordinates, and 52% had managerial roles within a team or company. In addition, 40% of participants were male, and 60% were female. Their work experience ranged from one to 30 years. Furthermore, supervisors and leaders had an average of 21 years of work experience, whereas subordinates had an average of 11 years of experience. Tenure in the current job ranged from two months to 30 years. Participants' organisational information was also collected, and Table 6.1 details the sample demographics.

Table 5.1 Demographics of the Interview Samples

No.	Interview methods	Title	Managers or subordinate	Gender	Work experience (years)	Tenure in current jobs (years)	Industry	Organisation type
1	Telephone	BD Manager	Subordinate	Female	14	2.5	Manufacturing	State-owned company
2	Face to Face	Consultant	Subordinate	Female	19	10	Education	Non-profit
3	Face to Face	Consultant	Subordinate	Female	20	3 months	High-tech	Private
4	Face to Face	Director	Subordinate	Female	14	5	Education	Non-profit
5	Face to Face	Sales Manager	Subordinate	Male	12	1	Trade	Private
6	Face to Face	Associate Director	Manager	Female	28	8	Financial service	Private
7	Face to Face	Founder & CEO	Manager	Female	22	5	IT	Private
8	Telephone	CEO	Manager	Female	26	12	Manufacturing	Private
9	Telephone	Administrative Officer	Subordinate	Female	5	4	Real estate	Private
10	Telephone	Financial Planner	Manager	Female	15	10	Insurance	Multinational
11	Telephone	CIO	Manager	Male	18	18	Chemistry	Multinational
12	Telephone	General Manager	Manager	Male	30	2	Healthcare	State-owned company
13	Face to Face	CIO	Manager	Male	27	10	Consulting	Multinational
14	Telephone	Office Manager	Subordinate	Female	16	16	Training	Non-profit
15	Telephone	General Manager	Manager	Female	7	5	Fine arts	Private
16	Telephone	Supply Chain Manager	Manager	Male	13	13	IT	Multinational
17	Telephone	HR Supervisor	Subordinate	Male	6	5	High-tech	Private
18	Telephone	Investment Manager	Subordinate	Female	6	6	Financial service	Private
19	Telephone	Designer	Subordinate	Female	3	2	E-commerce	Private
20	Telephone	Director	Manager	Female	30	30	Government	Government
21	Telephone	Department Head	Manager	Male	27	16	Education	Non-profit
22	Telephone	Doctor	Subordinate	Male	17	17	Medical	Non-profit
23	Telephone	Project Manager	Manager	Male	13	2 months	Electronic	Private
24	Telephone	General Manager	Manager	Female	12	2	Entertainment	Private
25	Face to Face	Teaching Assistant	Subordinate	Male	1	1	Training	Private

5.1.2 Interview Protocols and Data Collection

Interview protocols for supervisors (leaders) and subordinates were developed to elicit interviewees' general feelings, as well as detailed behavioural examples (see Appendices III and IV). Each interview began with a brief description of the study. The interviewees were told it was being conducted to investigate factors related to leaders' individual-focused transformational behaviours and employee voice and that they would be asked about their experiences regarding, and perceptions of, leader behaviour and employee voice in the workplace.

Following the introduction, the respondents were first asked for to describe their jobs. If the respondents reported that they were subordinates, they were asked (a) under what circumstances would they speak out, and (b) what would affect their willingness to speak out. After the respondents provided their initial reflections on their voice behaviours, I asked more specific questions concerning the influence of their leaders' behaviours on voice. The respondents were then asked to give examples of times when their leaders had either appeared unwilling to listen or gladly accepted their views. Next, the interviews focused on the influence that leaders' individual-focused behaviours had on voice.

If the respondents led a company or group, they were first asked about their perspectives on their subordinates' voice behaviours. For example, they were asked (a) what affected subordinates' willingness to speak out, or (b) what specific behaviours or measures motivated employees to speak out. Next, the respondents were requested to provide details or identify situations that could help 'capture the richness found in personal stories' (Milliken et al. 2003, p. 1458), thus reducing any concerns pertaining to whether the respondents had provided their actual experiences or had merely complied with the interviewer's instructions (Detert and Treviño 2010).

The interviews lasted 25–80 minutes. To ensure that participants were free to express themselves, the interviews were conducted at convenient locations or by telephone. All but one of the 25 interviewees agreed to be recorded. After the interviews, I transcribed all of the tapes and sent the transcriptions to the interviewees for validation.

To alleviate the potential social desirability problem (Arnold and Feldman 1981), the following methods were used:

- (1) The interviews were anonymous, and the respondents provided

information regarding their industries and the natures of their companies only. They did not need to provide actual company names.

(2) The respondents had the right to refuse to answer questions if they had any privacy concerns.

(3) I promised that all of their personal information and individual responses would be kept confidential and that their feedback would be analysed at the aggregate level.

5.1.3 Data Coding and Analysis

Content analysis was employed to study the interview transcripts. The content coding followed the procedural guidelines provided by Miles et al. (2014) and employed an inductive process for developing and defining a coding scheme (cf., Dutton et al. 1997). I first read each transcript repeatedly to extract meaning and explore frequently mentioned keywords and phrases, then grouped the latter based on similar meanings. Subsequently, I built code categories and generated a comprehensive list of all of the perceived characteristics, issues, and factors that the respondents mentioned. I then clustered similar ideas and characteristics to create themes and conducted preliminary coding to categorise respondents' statements. I repeated this process several times to ensure that there were no overlaps or ambiguities. Finally, the interview data was gathered in an interview results table.

5.1.4 Validity and Reliability of Study 2

According to Miles et al. (2014), a consistent and stable study, well-established interview procedures, and thoughtful interview processes improve the validity and reliability of interviews. This research took several steps to increase the levels of validity and reliability. First, interview protocols were based on the research objectives to ensure that the questions asked of participants were consistent. Next, before beginning the main interviews, three participants were invited to participate in trial interviews. Finally, based on these trial interviews, the interview protocols were amended to avoid any ambiguous, inappropriate, or irrelevant questions.

Interview research reliability is not measured numerically, but it can be improved if interview questions are asked as consistently as possible (Leedy and Ormrod 2010). When collecting the data for this study, the definition of voice, the

key features of individual-focused transformational leadership behaviours, and the interview questions were described clearly to ensure that the participants fully understood the questions. With the consent of the interviewees, all interviews, save one, were recorded and transcribed. Following this process, the transcripts were sent to the interviewees for their approval prior to data analysis. In the case of the respondent who asked not to be recorded, a detailed transcript was written immediately after the interview.

5.2 Results and Findings

5.2.1 Factors That Affect Employees' Voice Behaviour

The question “Under what an occasion/situation/time would you (for subordinates) or your subordinates (for leaders) speak out?” was used to promote discussions with the interviewees. Although the question did not address the relationship between leader behaviour and employee voice directly, it helped identify the factors that influence employees' decisions to speak out and how the respondents thought about these factors.

Respondents indicated a range of factors and antecedents that influence speaking out. Using Morrison's (2014) classification, I grouped the factors into five main categories: (1) supervisor and leader behaviours, capability, and characteristics (for example, leader's openness, leader-member exchanges, and abusive behaviours); (2) employee emotions, beliefs, and schemas (for example, psychological safety, and futility); (3) individual dispositions and background, such as a proactive personality; (4) work-related issues; and (5) contextual factors, such as organisational voice climate.

Table 5.2 lists the categories and frequencies of the factors that respondents mentioned, with separate columns for feedback from supervisors and subordinates. As most respondents talked about more than one factor, the percentages of all factors totalled more than 100%.

Table 5.2 Frequency Data on the Factors Reported to Affect Employee Voice

	Percentage of respondents who mentioned this factor	
	Supervisors	Subordinates
Supervisor and leader behaviours, capabilities, and characteristics <i>e.g., openness, abusive behaviour</i>	69%	83%
Employee emotions, beliefs, and schemas <i>e.g., self-esteem, fears, impressions they make on others</i>	46%	50%
Individual dispositions and background <i>e.g., personality, experience</i>	69%	33%
Work-related issues <i>e.g., solving problems, or improving the status quo at work</i>	69%	75%
Contextual and other factors <i>e.g., organisational voice climate, industry characteristics</i>	100%	50%

The interviews results suggest that from subordinates’ perspectives, supervisor and leader issues were the most important determinants affecting employee voice. Eighty-three percent of subordinates reported that their supervisors or leaders’ behaviours and attitudes were the main factors affecting their decisions to speak out. Supervisors agreed on the importance of leader and supervisor behaviours and characteristics. In total, 69% of supervisors mentioned this factor. However, they believed that contextual factors – for example, organisational voice climate – played more important roles in employee voice than supervisor or leader behaviours. In fact, every supervisor raised this issue. One of the supervisors said:

‘If the company’s voice culture has been established, leaders’ influence continues, but it is not that important.’

– Female, Manufacturing industry

Subordinates held different views from supervisors on the more decisive factors influencing voice behaviour. One of the subordinates complained that:

‘Our company encourages us to speak up, even carries out some rewarding policies. He [the supervisor] seems to welcome our comments, but it is a fake democracy. Even if we give a suggestion, he still acts in his own way, and he never listens to you. Over time, we will cease to comment.’

– Female, Training industry

Detert’s (2010) analyses confirmed that immediate supervisors strongly influence employee voice perceptions. They can support or inhibit speaking up, and the impact they make is greater that of the overall organisational climate set by the

leaders at the top.

Another important factor affecting subordinate voice was work-related issues. In this study, 75% of subordinates asserted that they would speak out if they encountered difficulties or problems at work that might cause serious losses to their work units or if they found some method to improve their organisation's operations. In addition, 69% of supervisors affirmed that work-related issues constituted an influencing factor. One leader explained that work-related issues were associated with employees' own interests. That is, if employees did not speak out regarding problems they could not handle, their performance or bonuses could be affected.

Moreover, 69% of supervisors thought that employees' individual dispositions and backgrounds – for example, their personalities or work experiences – affected their use of voice. However, only one-third of subordinates mentioned this factor.

5.2.2 Leader Factors Affecting Employee Voice

Interviewees were then invited to focus on the leaders, and they mentioned many different aspects of leaders' behaviours and characteristics that influenced their voice behaviours and stemmed primarily from direct personal interactions and vicarious experiences. In addition to this subordinate feedback, supervisors also shared their subordinate experiences, that is, middle managers talked about one of their immediate supervisors, while leaders in organisations shared their previous experiences as subordinates.

The findings showed that supervisors and leaders contributed to employees' positive voice perceptions by being seen as open, authentic, or empathic; they inhibited subordinate voices when they were perceived as abusive, unsupportive, or autocratic (Burriss et al. 2008; Detert and Burriss 2007; Hsiung 2012; Milliken et al. 2003). I identified several main categories for classifying these factors. Table 5.3 lists the factors that were perceived to affect employee voice within each category, along with the percentages of respondents who mentioned these factors. As most respondents provided more than one factor, the percentages add up to more than 100%. In addition, each statement was assigned a + or - to indicate whether the speaker was assigning a supportive (+) or inhibiting (-) influence on voice to that factor.

Table 5.3 Leader Factors Affecting Employee Voice

Factor	Percentage of respondents who mentioned this factor
Responsiveness	
Recipients are responsive, regardless of whether concerns/suggestions are appropriate or not (+)	60%
Employee voice is futile (-)	44%
Supervisors/leaders support or take actions if employees' suggestions are valid (+)	36%
Supervisors/leaders handle employee's concerns promptly/seriously (+)	32%
Supervisors/leaders are autocratic (-)	24%
Approachability	
Supervisors/leaders are friendly/easy to communicate with (+)	40%
Supervisors/leaders trust and empower employees (+)	36%
Supervisors/leaders are open to employee voice (+)	28%
Fear/Stress involved in taking a concern to supervisors/leaders (-)	20%
Supervisors/leaders' abusive behaviour (-)	16%
Fear of retaliation or punishment (-)	12%
Relationship with supervisors	
Good relationships with supervisors/leaders (+)	20%
Relationship is distant; unfamiliar with supervisors/leaders (-)	16%
Fear of damaging a relationship with supervisors/leaders (-)	12%

The first category, responsiveness, refers to the extent to which supervisors and leaders are willing to handle or respond to employee voice (Saunders et al. 1992). Within this category, the most frequently mentioned factor was that subordinates expected to receive their supervisors' comments and feedback, regardless of whether their observations were accepted or not (60%). Another most frequently mentioned concern about speaking up was the feeling of futility, 44% of respondents discussed the feeling that voice was not worth the effort and would not make a difference. The quotes below involve the factors of responsiveness:

'If my opinion can be adopted, I will be more motivated. However, I [once] mentioned [an opinion] several times, [and] my boss didn't accept it. I lost my interest in voice.'

– Male, Medical industry

'He [the supervisor] will help us solve the problems promptly. If he thinks your opinion is very good, he will give you feedback or implement it immediately.'

– Female, Real estate industry

'My former boss was emotional. If she was in a bad mood, she didn't listen to you at all. She always found fault with the employees she didn't like, even if the opinions they raised were very good.'

– Female, Real estate industry

'I remember once our CEO came to the workshop to inspect the work, and I reflected on a problem with him. My suggestion was executed quickly. Later, when I met him on the road, he recognised me and asked

me if there was any improvement and thanked me for my advice. I was very happy at that time and felt that he was really willing to listen to [our] opinions, regardless of our positions.'

— Female, Manufacturing industry

The second category, approachability, refers to the degree to which supervisors make the voicing process more certain (Saunders et al. 1992, p. 255). In this category, 40% of respondents said supervisors' friendly attitudes and easy-going characteristics positively influenced their willingness to speak up. Respondents also shared their unhappy experience in speaking up regarding supervisors' abusive behaviour, fear of punishment. The following quotes illustrate the factors of approachability.

'He [the superior] is quite open-minded. We can put forward any opinions or ideas directly. He will accept and implement workable suggestions.'

— Male, High-tech industry

'My supervisor is very nice, he is like my mentor. I am happy to communicate with him, and tell him my thoughts.'

— Male, Training industry

'Some bosses are authoritarian and don't like employees to reflect on problems, because it makes them feel like they are incompetent.'

— Female, Manufacturing industry

'I once raised a different opinion in a meeting. He scolded me in front of everyone. He asked me to shut up and said my comments were rubbish. [I was] very hurt.'

— Female, High-tech industry

'I had a very bad experience with my ex-boss. The new boss is quite different; I know I'm safe to speak out, [and] even if [I offer] criticisms, I'm no longer worried about being punished.'

— Female, High-tech industry

Relationships with supervisors were mentioned by some respondents. The quotes list below reflect the factors in this category.

'We cooperate very well. He believes in my ability, and I trust him. I'm willing to speak out, because [my voice] can help him and me.'

— Female, Education industry

'He [my colleague] raises his concerns and suggestions without any hesitation... They [my boss and that colleague] have known each other for more than 20 years. They are very close, [and] he never worries about the impact.'

— Male, Medical industry

5.2.3 How Individual-Focused Transformational Leadership Behaviours

Motivate Employee Voice

Following the discussion of which leader factors affected voice, interviewees were asked how their supervisors motivated them to speak out or inhibited them from doing so. Once more, supervisors shared their experiences with their immediate or former supervisors. The purpose of this exercise was to further understand how individual-focused transformational leadership behaviours influence employ voice and what are the underlying factors?

As a guide, I used Podsakoff et al.'s (1990) individual-focused transformational leadership descriptors. Two key individual-focused dimensions are associated with a transformational leader (Podsakoff et al. 1990) — “Providing Individualised Support”, which refers to leaders exhibiting behaviour that respects followers and considers their feelings and personal needs, and “Intellectual Stimulation”, which refers to leaders engaging in behaviour that stimulates their followers to re-examine their assumptions about their work and rethink how it can be performed.

Interviewees were briefly introduced to the featured behaviours associated with individual-focused transformational leadership and then asked whether their immediate supervisors exhibited these behaviours when the immediate supervisors interacted with them and how/why these behaviours affected their (interviewees’) voice.

Notably, the interviewees reported the positive influence of leaders’ individual-focused behaviours on their voice. Three categories were determined in relation to voice and supervisors’ individual-focused leadership behaviours, each of which contained several dimensions. Table 5.4 illustrates the frequency distributions for the dimensions mentioned by interviewees.

Table 5.4 Interviewees’ Perceptions of Employee Voice Related to Individual-Focused Transformational Leadership Behaviours

Category	Dimensions	Frequency
Psychological perception	Trust	16
	Encouragement and motivation	13
	Recognition	9
	Being valued	7
	Affection	5
	Psychological ownership	4
	Empowerment	4
Socially related exchange dimensions	Support	13
	Understanding	10
	Mutual respect	7
	Relationship	3
	Loyalty	2
Personal development	Personal development	6
	Coaching and mentoring	3

The most frequently mentioned category involved employees’ psychological perceptions. Respondents thought that they were trusted (64% of respondents) and encouraged (52%) when supervisors/leaders engaged in individual consideration and intellectual stimulation, motivating them to speak up, as seen in the following quotes:

‘He [my former supervisor] gave me a free hand in the task [I proposed]. I could ask him for help whenever I encountered difficulties. He trusted me, and I liked to speak up more.’

– Female, Entertainment industry

‘He [my supervisor] always consults me before launching a new plan. If my suggestion is good, he will push it forward. I think he takes me seriously. I love to share my thoughts with my colleagues.’

– Female, Education industry

‘He [my supervisor] encourages us to think out of the box. He listens to my opinion seriously and gives me full respect. I feel I am valuable here. Even if I have little experience, I love to speak out and contribute.’

– Female, Real estate industry

Some respondents explained the impacts of leaders’ behaviours using socially-related exchange dimensions.

‘He [the department head] cares for me and believes in my ability. I’m willing to speak out, because [my voice] can help him.’

– Female, Education industry

‘My former boss didn’t care about us. If I had a good idea, I wouldn’t put it forward. I knew that even if the plan was implemented, it would be difficult for me to achieve. I rarely received support and resources from him [my former boss].’

– Female, High-tech industry

Another source of employee motivation to speak out came from feedback that was helpful to their personal development. The following quotes summarize interviewees' responses in this regard:

'If the proposal I raise is not perfect, my boss will discuss the problems with me. Sometimes he will ask colleagues from relevant departments to join the meeting to further clarify the ideas and analyse the feasibility.'
— Male, Training industry

'I love to speak up; fortunately, my supervisor always gets back to me soon and gives me some guidance. I will compare his feedback and my suggestions, try to understand his perspective and way of thinking, [and determine] if there is a gap between us. It is a process of self-development.'
— Male, High-tech industry

5.3 Discussion of Study 2

The purpose of this qualitative study was to enhance my understanding of the factors influencing employee beliefs about speaking out at work and how leaders' individualised behaviours affect employee voice. The findings suggested that, in the eyes of interviewees, supervisors and leaders' behaviours were determinants in keeping employees silent or motivating them to express their opinions. The results of the interviews were consistent with previous literature (e.g., Botero and Van Dyne 2009; Premeaux and Bedeian 2003).

Leaders' individual-focused transformational behaviour toward employees, such as showing personal care, stimulating their intelligence, mentoring and coaching, will enhance the quality of exchange between the leaders and the employees. The leader–member exchange is the process of leaders and employees building up mutual understanding and trust. In this process, employees feel they are valued, trusted, and recognised by their leaders or organisations, which will increase their psychological safety, enhance their sense of psychological ownership, and improve their organisation-based self-esteem. Under these circumstances, employees are willing to express their opinions.

However, if employees' voices have not been heard or respected, they may speak up only for work-related issues or problems related to their specific tasks. They will not give suggestions or point out problems that fall outside their in-role responsibilities, such as concerns with organisational affairs or the future work

environment. Thus, once employees speak out, it is important for supervisors and leaders to listen and provide feedback (Milliken et al. 2003). If the suggestions or criticisms are beneficial to the group or organisation, leaders' reactions by giving affirmation and encouragement, and perhaps even implementing the suggestions, will promote employee voices. If employees' ideas are imperfect, it is beneficial for them to know where the problem lies, how the idea can be improved, or why their suggestions cannot be implemented. Generally, employees will show understanding if leaders explain the reasons to them, and some of them appreciate the feedback from leaders who help them grow.

This finding triangulated the quantitative results of this research, which are that individual-focused transformational leadership affects voice behaviours through building up LMX and enhancing employees' OBSE. As summarised from the interviews, subordinate respondents said LMX was one of the common factors that motivated them to speak out. Respondents also said that some leader behaviours made employees feel they were trusted and valued by their leaders and organisations. Thus, their self-concepts in the organisation were enhanced, which further promoted their willingness to speak. When triangulation is used in research, the findings are more accurate (Denzin 2009).

CHAPTER 6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 An Overview of the Findings

As a form of extra-role behaviour (Brinsfield et al. 2009), voice behaviour possesses three intrinsic characteristics, namely, discretionary, challenge-oriented, and potentially risky (Liu et al. 2010b). Due to these characteristics, employees usually evaluate the cost-benefit of voice behaviour before speaking (Milliken et al. 2003). Given the essential role of employee voice behaviour in their personal development and an organisation's success (e.g., Burriss et al. 2013; Detert and Burriss 2007), researchers have endeavoured to examine the motivators and inhibitors of employee voice (e.g., Van Dyne and Lepine 1998; Morrison and Milliken 2000; Edmondson 2003).

Among the various antecedents of voice, supervisors and leaders' behaviours are important factors. Researchers have paid much attention to understanding how an effective leader enhances employee voice. Leaders' characteristics and behaviours, such as openness, and consultation, and their relationships with team members have been investigated (e.g., Burriss et al. 2008; Detert and Burriss 2007; Liu et al. 2010; Tangirala and Ramanujam 2012). In particular, transformational leadership is regarded as one of the determinant factors motivating employees to speak out (e.g., Duan et al. 2016; Liu et al. 2010b; Liu and Liao 2013; Zhou and Long 2012). Although most literature states that transformational leadership has a positive influence on employee voice, some researchers have failed to find a significant relationship between the two items (e.g., Detert and Burriss 2007). Current research on transformational leadership suggests differentiating group-focused and individual-focused transformational leadership (Kark and Shamir 2013). This study answers that call. Rather than relying on an overarching construct, the study concentrates on individual transformational leadership behavioural components.

The primary purpose of this research was to investigate how the individual-focused transformational leadership components influence individuals' voice behaviours in Chinese organisations. Moreover, the results deepen the understanding of the underlying mechanisms that systematically shape voice

behaviour at work. The study used multiple approaches to answer its research questions. Both survey and interview data were collected from managers, leaders, and their subordinates. A quantitative method was used to examine the relationship between individual-focused transformational leadership and voice behaviour, with mediating roles assigned to LMX and OBSE. The qualitative method was useful for investigating complementarity and further explaining the reasons behind the emergence of specific relationships.

The results showed that both LMX and OBSE play mediating roles in explaining the relationship between individual-focused transformational leadership and employee voice behaviour. In addition, differentiated transformational leadership was used as a contextual factor to examine the moderating effect of individual-focused transformational leadership on LMX and OBSE. Finally, proactive personality as an individual disposition was employed to test the moderating effect of individual-focused transformational leadership and LMX, and LMX and voice behaviour. Neither of them found the moderating effects.

6.2 Theoretical Implications

Leadership is a process that involves the interplay of factors within a situation, not just within a person. It calls for certain types of action and modes of behaviour (Murphy 1941). Early leadership studies focused on leaders' individual characteristics; however, as leaders do not possess common traits, it is impossible for empirical studies to investigate leadership impacts on the basis of personal traits (Johns and Moser 1989). A plethora of research has also found that few traits can guarantee leadership effectiveness. For example, it was discovered that followers who had the same traits as their leaders were less likely to become leaders; thus, the relationship between these traits and effective leadership is not significant (Fleenor 2006). Critiques of the leader trait paradigm prompted scholars to consider how leaders' behaviour predicts effectiveness (Derue et al. 2011). Scholars have suggested that studying leader behaviour is more feasible than studying leadership from a research perspective (Johns and Moser 1989).

Conceptually, Bass and Riggio (2006) defined transformational leadership as "leadership is charismatic, and followers seek to identify with the leader and

emulate him or her. The leadership inspires followers with challenge and persuasion, providing both meaning and understanding. The leadership is intellectually stimulating, expanding the followers' use of their abilities. Finally, the leadership is individually considerate, providing the follower with support, mentoring, and coaching" (p. 5). The components of transformational leadership have evolved with developments in both conceptualisation and measurement. "Individualised Consideration" and "Intellectual Stimulation" have been identified as two key behavioural components of this type of leadership (Bass 1995; Kark and Shamir 2013; Podsakoff et al. 1990). Hence, this study concentrated on individual transformational leadership behaviours and investigated their impacts on employee voice. Doing so can diminish the inconsistencies in, or even contradictory consequences of, considering transformational leadership's two subconstructs (Wu et al. 2010).

This study provides theoretical implications for, and contributions to, the existing literature in several ways. It elaborates on the underlying factors affecting voice behaviour. This research also verifies the mediating role of LMX in the positive relationship between individual-focused transformational leadership and voice behaviour.

The Michigan Leadership Studies classified leaders as employee-centred and job-centred. They identified three critical characteristics of effective leaders: task-oriented behaviour, relationship-oriented behaviour, and participative leadership. Meanwhile, the Ohio State leadership theories underscored two broad leadership behaviours: people-oriented and task-oriented. Transformational leadership can be regarded as either directive (task-oriented) or participative (people-oriented) leadership (Bass 1999; Bass and Riggio 2006). Individual-focused transformational leadership is a people-oriented style of leadership that concentrates primarily on behaviours unilaterally targeting subordinates, and LMX research examines the two-way exchanges between leaders and subordinates. The findings suggest that transformational leaders can encourage their subordinates to speak up through building and nourishing high-quality exchanges among dyadic partners, thus enhancing subordinates' receptivity to extra-role behaviour (Wang et al. 2005). Leaders' individual-focused behaviours as related to subordinates, such as providing mentoring and coaching and caring for their needs, are personally experienced and interpreted by subordinates, resulting in a process by which leaders

and members build up an exchange. As posited by social exchange theory and due to the norm of reciprocity, when subordinates perceive that they are valued and treated well by the leader or the organisation, they should feel a need to repay the leader or organisation for this treatment by going beyond their duties to contribute to the organisation. This result is corroborated and enriched by the qualitative data collected from the interviews. In the interviews, respondents indicated that their voice behaviours were enhanced by high-quality exchanges with their supervisors.

In addition, this study identifies a psychological mechanism for voice: organisation-based self-esteem (OBSE). The influence of individual-focused transformational leadership on voice behaviour can be regarded as an intrinsic motivation process that enhances employees' self-concepts. Leaders' individual-focused behaviours can motivate employees' voices through enhancing their self-evaluations and leading them to believe that they are important to the group or organisation.

Interviewees stated that one of the reasons why they were willing to speak up was they felt a sense of ownership of their organisation. Psychological ownership is a phenomenon in which employees have possessive feelings about the target (Van Dyne and Pierce 2004). Employees sense that they can create, make decisions, and manage work in their own way, thus stimulating their sense of responsibility and enabling them to feel psychological ownership of their jobs (Ghafoor et al. 2011). Driven by the sense of belonging and responsibility, they tend to engage in positive behaviours, actively participate in organisational development, raise constructive suggestions, and generate a high level of organisational commitment. OBSE encompasses employees' views of themselves as important members of the organisation, as the psychology of possession extends their self-concept (Van Dyne and Pierce 2004). When employees feel the organisation is their personal psychological property, they will have positive self-assessments of themselves as members of that organisation. Several studies have found a positive link between psychological ownership and OBSE (e.g., Van Dyne and Pierce 2004; Pan et al. 2012).

Pan et al. (2012) pointed out that in the collective-based Chinese cultural environment, psychological ownership is more than a sense of ownership of an object, a task, or a company. It also reflects a sense of ownership of the

organisation's reputation or achievements. They found that the Chinese face-saving tradition leads people to pay more attention to the achievements of their organisations and their brands. Therefore, for Chinese employees, pride and value may be the core elements of OBSE.

The interview results show that respondents over the age of 35 usually mentioned the term psychological ownership, while younger employees rarely talked about it. The reason for this shift may lie in the lower positions occupied by these younger employees, their relative lack of experience within the organisation, or their different ideas on work compared to the seniors. Future research is suggested to study on how to improve the younger generation's psychological ownership or OBSE in the Chinese workplace.

This study's results do not support the hypothesis that the relationship between individual-focused transformational leadership and OBSE or LMX is conditional on differentiated individual-focused transformational leadership in such a manner that stronger differentiated transformational leadership tends to weaken the relationship. Zhang et al. (2015c) contended the differentiated transformational leadership approach was developed in the context of Western culture, the application in the China has not been verified. They thought Chinese employees are more likely to accept a leader's differentiated behaviour. The findings of Farh et al. (1997) supported the proposition, in the Chinese context, if individuals are traditional, their perceptions of whether they have been treated fairly do not significantly affect their behaviours.

The moderating effects of proactive personality on individual-focused transformational leadership and LMX and LMX and voice are not supported. Davis-Blake and Pfeffer (1989) posit that individual dispositions may only have a limited effect on individual responses and behaviour within an organisation because dispositional effects are greatly affected by the organisational setting (Mischel 1977). According to the trait activation theory, proactive employee behaviour outcomes are elicited only under certain situations (Li et al. 2010). Additionally, although individual dispositions are stable, individuals are highly responsive and adaptable to the environment; hence, personality traits change in response to organisational context (Davis-Blake and Pfeffer 1989).

6.3 Managerial Implications

Findings from this research suggest several implications for managerial practices in terms of enhancing employees' voice behaviour.

Leaders' individualised behaviour, for example, simulating employees to question assumptions, rethink problems, change an old situation in a new way, recognising individual differences, and pay special attention to each individual follower's needs for achievement, positively motivates employees to speak out. Under this style of leadership, creativity is encouraged, and employees' ideas are not criticised even when they differ from the leaders' ideas.

This study finds that employees' OBSE significantly promotes voice behaviour. Managers can be more caring when it comes to work progress, provide timely feedback, and affirm the achievements and contributions of their subordinates, all behaviours which make the subordinates feel that they are valuable and vital to the organisation. In the Chinese organisational context, elderly employees are more likely to have a sense of psychological ownership, which has been found to have a positive association with employees' OBSE (Van Dyne and Pierce 2004; Pan et al. 2012). Sharing the organisational mission, vision, and existing difficulties and actively engaging young employees in management decisions is instrumental to enhancing young employees' psychological ownership and OBSE (Zhao et al. 2018).

The positive mediating effect of LMX on employee voice suggests managers engaging in high-quality exchanges with employees. The findings show that individual-focused transformational leadership behaviours are instrumental to developing high-quality LMX relationships. In particular, Chinese employees with low traditionality are highly sensitive to LMX (Hui et al. 2004). It is suggested that managers create open and easy-going environments to encourage employees to express their opinions freely. However, it is worth acknowledging the potential negative effects of extreme cases of LMX. Jiang et al. (2014) proposed that in Chinese organisations, where leaders usually have more power, high LMX involves high job demands, perhaps resulting in more pressure on employees and leading to exhaustion. This situation is more likely to occur when leaders are low on moral integrity.

One of the reasons why an employee will keep silent is their belief that even

if they speak out, it will not make any difference or receive a response (Milliken et al. 2003). The results of the interviews indicated that a leader's responsiveness was the most frequently mentioned factor affecting voice. Therefore, in addition to listening to opinions or critiques, establishing an effective feedback system may be a useful way to motivate and enable employees to speak out. For example, regular exchange meetings or staff forums could be set up.

Employees from different generations have their own unique values and behaviour patterns (Ren et al. 2018). Management are suggested putting in a lot more effort into understanding and respecting generational characteristics and use different ways to engage different generations.

6.4 Limitations and Future Research

There are several limitations in this thesis that need to be addressed in future research. First, transformational leadership consists of two constructs, namely, the individual-focused, and group-focused constructs. These two dimensions exist and function simultaneously. The present study only investigated the individual-focused approach's reaction to voice. As group-focused transformational leadership targets a whole group rather than individual members within the group (Wu et al. 2010), its effect on voice may be different. Studying the effects of leadership behaviours on voice should focus on more than just individual members or groups, as multi-level studies can be used to examine individuals within a group. Future research could study the interplay between the two constructs of transformational leadership and the impacts of dual-level transformational leadership on voice.

Second, this study made a preliminary attempt to study Chinese employees' behaviour patterns in the contemporary context qualitatively. The conclusions in this regard are based on a relatively small sample. It is essential for future research to study larger and more varied datasets. When respondents were asked to share their experiences, their recollections may not have been as accurate as they were portrayed. For the supervisors, especially, there may have been a social desirability bias that made them describe occurrences in positive ways (Milliken et al. 2003). For example, one supervisor thought he was very open to employees' suggestions. However, his subordinate held the opposite view.

Third, this study defines voice as proactive extra-role behaviour intended to change the status quo, solve problems, or benefit the unit or organisation. However, voice can also be interpreted as a personal complaint or a challenge to authority. Voice can be classified differently according to context, purpose, or audience as promotive or prohibitive voice (Liang et al. 2012), as well as supportive, constructive, defensive, or destructive voice (Maynes and Podsakoff 2014). This research treats voice as a holistic concept and does not address how leadership behaviour influences different forms of voice. The interview results show that to maintain a harmonious work environment, Chinese employees tend to speak in promotive rather than prohibitive voice. Future work examining leaders' reactions to voice could benefit from identifying the specific attributes and contents of different voice behaviours.

Fourth, the findings are based on samples drawn from mainland China. Thus, conclusions apply to Chinese organisations only. Various Western measurement instruments were employed in this study, and, although the scales were used and validated successfully in a Chinese context, it is recommended that future research examines the effects of Chinese cultural factors more systematically and develops more appropriate assessment tools for the Chinese context.

Finally, this study investigated the effect of individual-focused transformational leadership on employee voice. Considering the trait approach's limitations in empirical studies, two behavioural components of transformational leadership – “Individualised Consideration” and “Intellectual Stimulation”—were employed as measurements of individual-focused transformational leadership. There is a limitation in using the leadership process to measure the concepts while using leadership traits to frame the research. Furthermore, the behavioural approach focuses on leaders and managers' daily work and examines what they actually do on the job (Yukl 1989). The data collected from samples is more likely management data describing leaders and managers' daily management. Using team-management data as a proxy for leadership is another limitation of this study.

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APPENDIX I QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LEADERS

- I. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements on ***each of your group member's voice behaviour***? Please list all your immediate subordinates' names and select the most appropriate one based on your daily observation of your subordinates.

1. He or she speaks up and encourages others to get involved in issues that affect the group.

Subordinates' Names	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Moderately disagree	4 Neither agree nor disagree	5 Moderately agree	6 Agree	7 Strongly agree
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. He or she speaks up with ideas for new projects or changes in procedures.

Subordinates' Names	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Moderately disagree	4 Neither agree nor disagree	5 Moderately agree	6 Agree	7 Strongly agree
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. He or she develops and makes recommendations concerning issues that affect this work group.

Subordinates' Names	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Moderately disagree	4 Neither agree nor disagree	5 Moderately agree	6 Agree	7 Strongly agree
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. He or she gets involved in issues that affect the quality of work life in this work group.

Subordinates' Names	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Moderately disagree	4 Neither agree nor disagree	5 Moderately agree	6 Agree	7 Strongly agree
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. He or she communicates his/her opinions about work issues to others in this group even if his/her opinion is different and others in the group disagree with him/her.

Subordinates' Names	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Moderately disagree	4 Neither agree nor disagree	5 Moderately agree	6 Agree	7 Strongly agree
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. He or she keeps well informed about issues where his/her opinion might be useful to this work group.

Subordinates' Names	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Moderately disagree	4 Neither agree nor disagree	5 Moderately agree	6 Agree	7 Strongly agree
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

II. I would like to have some demographic information about you, please answer accordingly.

7. How long have you worked for this organisation? _____ Years _____ Months
8. What is your position in the organisation? _____
9. How many team members are there in your team? _____
10. Is it a temporary group? _____ Yes _____ No
11. Please briefly describe the team responsibility: _____
12. Please, indicate your gender. _____ Male _____ Female
13. What is the year of your birth? _____ Years _____ Months
14. What is your educational background? _____
15. What is your name? _____

Thanks for your cooperation.

APPENDIX II QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SUBORDINATES

If there are no specific statements, all the scales in this questionnaire are followed by this instruction:

1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Moderately disagree;
4 = Neither agree nor disagree; 5 = Moderately agree; 6 = Agree; 7 = Strongly agree.

I. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements on ***your group leader's (immediate supervisor's) performance*** when he/she leads the whole group? Please choose the most appropriate answer.

1. My leader has a clear understanding of where we are going.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. My leader paints an interesting picture of the future for our group.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. My leader inspires others with his/her plans for the future.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. My leader is able to get others committed to his/her dream.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. My leader is always seeking new opportunities for the organisation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. My leader provides a good model for me to follow.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. My leader leads by 'doing', rather than simply by 'telling'.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. My leader leads by example.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. My leader gets the group to work together for the same goal.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. My leader fosters collaboration among work groups.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. My leader encourages employees to be 'team players'.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. My leader develops a team attitude and spirit among employees.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. My leader shows us that he/she expects a lot from us.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. My leader insists on only the best performance.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. My leader will not settle for second best.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

II. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements on ***your group leader (immediate supervisor)*** when he/she deals with you? Please choose the most appropriate answer.

16. My leader acts without considering my feelings (R).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. My leader shows respect for my personal feelings.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. My leader behaves in a manner thoughtful of my personal needs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. My leader treats me without considering my personal feelings (R).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. My leader has stimulated me to rethink the way I do things.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. My leader challenges me to think about old problems in new ways.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. My leader asks questions that prompt me to think.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. My leader has ideas that have challenged me to reexamine some of my basic assumptions about my work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

III. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements on your ***group leader*** (***immediate supervisor***)? Please choose the most appropriate answer.

24. Do you usually know how satisfied your leader is with what you do?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Not sure	Fairly often	Often	Very often
25. How well does your leader understand your job problems and needs?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Not a bit	A little	A fair amount	Not sure	Fairly	Quite a bit	A great deal
26. How well does your leader (follower) recognise your potential?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Not at all	A little	Fairly	Not sure	Moderately	Mostly	Fully
27. Regardless of how much formal authority your leader has built into his or her position, what are the chances that your leader would use his or her power to help you solve problems in your work?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	None	Small	Fairly	Not sure	Moderately	High	Very high
28. Regardless of the amount of formal authority your leader has, what are the chances that he or she would 'bail you out' at his or her expense?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	None	Small	Fairly	Not sure	Moderately	High	Very high
29. I have enough confidence in my leader that I would defend and justify his or her decision if he or she were not present to do so.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Moderately disagree	Neutral	Moderately agree	Agree	Strongly agree
30. I would characterise my working relationship with my supervisor to be extremely effective.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Extremely ineffective	Ineffective	Worse than average	Average	Better than average	Effective	Extremely effective

IV. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements on ***yourself***? Please choose the most appropriate answer.

31. I can make a difference around here.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32. I am taken seriously around here.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
33. I am important around here.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
34. I am trusted around here.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
35. There is faith in me around here.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
36. I count around here.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
37. I am valuable around here.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
38. I am helpful around here.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
39. I am efficient around here.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
40. I am cooperative around here.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

V. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements on ***yourself***? Please choose the most appropriate answer.

41. I am constantly on the lookout for new ways to improve my life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
42. Wherever I have been, I have been a powerful force for constructive change.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
43. Nothing is more exciting than seeing my ideas turn into reality.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
44. If I see something I don't like, I fix it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
45. No matter what the odds, if I believe in something I will make it happen.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
46. I love being a champion for my ideas, even against other's opposition.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
47. I excel at identifying opportunities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
48. I am always looking for better ways to do things.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
49. If I believe in an idea, no obstacle will prevent me from making it happen.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
50. I can spot a good opportunity long before others can.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

VI. I would like to have some demographic information about you, please answer accordingly.

51. Please, indicate your gender. _____ Male _____ Female
52. What is the year of your birth? _____
53. What is your educational background? _____
54. How long have you worked for this organisation? _____ Years _____ Months
55. How many team members are there in your team? _____
56. What is your immediate supervisor's name? _____
57. What is your name? _____

Thanks for your cooperation.

APPENDIX III INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR LEADERS

Introduction

Thank you once again for being willing to participate in the interview. This interview is to document the possible process of leaders' individual-focused transformational behaviours influencing employees' voice. I will ask you about your experiences and perceptions of leader behaviours and employee voice in the workplace.

Before the interview, I would like to tell you something about voice behaviour, so that you can understand and respond clearly. Voice here is considered a constructive behaviour intending to change the work practice, behaviour or environment in a way that benefits the unit or organisation. Employees seek to improve organisational functioning through expressing ideas and suggestions on opportunities or through critiquing the existing deficiencies and show their concerns about behaviours that harm their organisation.

The interview will last approximately half an hour to one hour. There are no right or wrong or desirable or undesirable answers. I would like you to feel comfortable with saying what you really think and how you really feel.

Tape Recorder Instructions

If it is fine with you, I will be tape-recording our conversation. The purpose is so I can get all the details and at the same time be able to carry on an attentive conversation with you. I assure you that all your replies and comments will be kept confidential. I will be compiling a report that will contain all interviewees' comments without any reference to individuals.

Questions

1. Can you briefly describe your work background? (industry, company information, work experience, tenure, position, numbers of team members)
2. Under what an occasion/situation/time would your subordinates speak out?
3. What do you believe motivates your subordinates to voice or inhibits them from speaking up?

4. Can you give me an example of a particular meeting or situation where your subordinates had different opinions/views? How did you handle the different voices?
5. When your subordinate's idea conflicts with yours, what happens?
6. Have you ever had a situation where your subordinate' voice made you feel uncomfortable? Can you give me a specific example?
7. What have you done to motivate your employees to voice out? Can you give me any examples?

APPENDIX IV INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR SUBORDINATES

Introduction

Thank you once again for being willing to participate in the interview. This interview is to document the possible process of leaders' individual-focused transformational behaviours influencing employees' voice. I will ask you about your experiences and perceptions of leader behaviours and employee voice in the workplace.

Before the interview, I would like to tell you something about voice behaviour, so that you can understand and respond clearly. Voice here is considered a constructive behaviour intending to change the work practice, behaviour or environment in a way that benefits the unit or organisation. Employees seek to improve organisational functioning through expressing ideas and suggestions on opportunities or through critiquing the existing deficiencies and show their concerns about behaviours that harm their organisation.

The interview will last approximately half an hour to one hour. There are no right or wrong or desirable or undesirable answers. I would like you to feel comfortable with saying what you really think and how you really feel.

Tape Recorder Instructions

If it is fine with you, I will be tape-recording our conversation. The purpose is so I can get all the details and at the same time be able to carry on an attentive conversation with you. I assure you that all your replies and comments will be kept confidential. I will be compiling a report that will contain all interviewees' comments without any reference to individuals.

Questions

1. Can you briefly describe your work background? (industry, company information, work experience, tenure, position)
2. Please tell me about an occasion/situation/time in which you did speak out.
3. What do you believe motivates you to voice or inhibits you from speaking up?

4. Can you give me any examples when you gave a suggestion to your immediate leader, and he or she appeared unwilling to listen? Or he or she was willing to accept? What did you feel?
5. How does your leader motivate your voice? Can you think of a specific instance that your leader has done something to motivate your voice?
6. Do you think there is room for improvement in your voice behaviour?