Supervisors' Responses to Employee Voice Behavior: An Experimental Study in China and Japan

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Yunyue Yang[1*], Jie Li[2], and Tomoki Sekiguchi[3]

[1] Graduate School of Economics, Kyoto University, yang.yunyue.43v@st.kyoto-u.ac.jp

[2] School of Management, Shanghai University, China, mgmtli@i.shu.edu.cn

[3] Graduate School of Management, Kyoto University, tomoki@econ.kyoto-u.ac.jp

ABSTRACT

This study examines how supervisors respond to employee voice behavior in the Asian context considering the following factors: The target of voice, the expertise of the voicing employee, and the supervisor's sense of power. We conducted a scenario-based experimental study using Chinese and Japanese samples and found that speaking up to skip-level leaders rather than immediate supervisors was negatively related to the evaluations of voicing employees, which was partially mediated by liking in both samples and perceived threat in the Chinese sample. We also found that the expertise of voicing employees was positively related to the evaluations of voicing employees, but it also had a negative indirect effect on the evaluations through perceived threat against the employees in the Japanese sample. Moreover, for the Chinese sample, supervisors' sense of power moderated some of the effects of target of voice and the expertise of the voicing employees on supervisors' reactions. We discuss theoretical and practical implications and future research directions.

Keywords: voice, target, expertise, sense of power, China, Japan

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[*] Corresponding author

INTRODUCTION

Employees' willingness to exercise voice, or speaking up with their valuable ideas or important concerns, plays an increasingly important role for the organizational success (e.g., Liu, Zhu, & Yang, 2010; Morrison & Phelps, 1999; Morrison, 2011; Morrison, 2014). Previous literature has consistently demonstrated that employee voice behavior has significant benefits for organizations, groups, and individual actors (see Morrison, 2011). However, despite the value of employee voice behavior, many employees often keep silent rather than speak up (Morrison, 2011). This phenomenon might be more salient in the Asian countries such as China and Japan rather than in Western countries such as the United States (Zhang, Huai, & Xie, 2015). Because Asian countries are generally high in power distance and collectivistic dimensions of national culture, which means that people respect hierarchy and harmony (Hofstede, 1994), it would be difficult for Asian people to engage in voice, which is a challenging and risky form of upward communication.

On the other hand, because managerial beliefs and behaviors regarding employee voice also play a large role in developing a climate of silence or voice (Morrison & Milliken, 2000), it is crucial and meaningful to examine how supervisors respond toward employee voice behavior. Therefore, the main purpose of the current study is to investigate what makes supervisors positively or negatively respond to employee voice behavior by focusing on three factors: the target of voice, the characteristic of the voicing employee, and the characteristic of the supervisor. Regarding the target of voice, we focus on the difference between an *immediate supervisor* and a *skip-level leader* as a target of voice. A skip-level leader is any leader in the organization's formal chain of command above an employee's immediate supervisor (Detert & Treviño, 2010). Regarding the characteristic of the employee, we

examine the role of voicing employee's expertise, defined as the extent to which a speaker is perceived to be capable of making correct assertions (Pornpitakpan, 2004). Expertise is commonly identified as one dimension of source credibility, which will influence the reactions of voice recipients (Whiting, Maynes, Podsakoff, & Podsakoff, 2012). Regarding the characteristic of the supervisor, we focus on an supervisor's personal sense of power, defined as the perception of one's ability to influence another person or other people (Anderson, John, & Keltner, 2012).

Drawing on the attribution theory (Eastman, 1994; Weiner, 1985) and affect control theory (Heise, 1977, 1987), we theorize that the target of voice and the expertise of the voicing employee will influence supervisors' responses to an employee's voicing behavior. More specifically, these two factors predict supervisors' evaluations of voicing employees, which is partially mediated by the supervisors' liking of and their perceived threat against the voicing employees. We also theorize that the effects of the target of voice and the expertise of the voicing employee on supervisors' reactions differ according to the supervisors' sense of power. Our research model is depicted in Figure 1.

Insert Figure 1 about here

We test our theoretical model and hypotheses with a scenario-based experimental study using Chinese and Japanese samples, aiming to make significant contributions to the literature on employee voice in general and to the understanding the nature of voice and its consequences in the Asian context in particular.

THEORY AND HYPOTHESIS

Supervisors' Reactions to Voice Behavior

Responses to voice behavior, such as evaluations of voicing employees, have been investigated by prior literature. However, the results are rather mixed in that some studies report positive reactions to voicing employees, while other studies report negative findings. For example, Van Dyne and LePine (1998) argued that voice behavior is positively associated with supervisors' ratings. Likewise, Whiting, Podsakoff, and Pierce (2008) demonstrated that voice behavior has positive effects on performance evaluation decisions. In addition, researchers have found that raters like a voicing employee especially when the employee explicitly recommends a solution, the employee is high in trustworthiness, and speaking up is encouraged in the organization (Whiting, Maynes, Podsakoff, & Podsakoff, 2012).

On the contrary, it was found that voice has a negative relationship with career progression and is not significantly related to salary progression or promotions (Seibert, Kraimer, & Crant, 2001). Managers tend to view suggestions expressed with negative emotions as complaints or criticisms, rather than as constructive recommendations for improvement (Grant, Parker, & Collins, 2009). Burris (2012) found that ratings of performance were negatively related to employees' challenging voice. Additionally, recent findings show that managers with low managerial self-efficacy feel personally threatened by, and react defensively to, employee voice (Fast, Burris, & Bartel, 2014). Supervisors perceive threat especially when a voicing employee is engaging in challenging voice as opposed to supportive voice (Burris, 2012).

One of the reasons for the mixed findings regarding the responses to voicing behavior is that the extant studies have not fully considered the characteristics of the voicing employees

4

and supervisors as well as the voice target in a systematic manner. Therefore, our study

provides valuable contributions to the understanding of the complex relationship between

voice behavior and supervisors' reactions to the voicing employee.

Target of Employee Voice

In most conditions, employees choose immediate supervisors as targets to exercise

voice behavior because they have more daily interactions with their immediate supervisors

than with other leaders (Liu, Tangirala, & Ramanujam, 2013). However, employees may also

communicate directly with a leader who is above their immediate supervisor (i.e., a skip-level

leader) about their ideas and concerns (Detert & Treviño, 2010; Liu, Tangirala, &

Ramanujam, 2013). For example, employees tend to speak up to a skip-level leader when they

have a poor relationship with the immediate supervisor (Liu et al., 2013) or when they find

that the immediate supervisor often does not control the resources (Detert & Treviño, 2010).

We argue that supervisors might provide lower evaluations to a voicing employee

when he or she speaks up to skip-level leaders instead of speaking up to them directly.

According to attribution theory (Weiner, 1985), recipients are active agents because they seek

to understand the reason why the employee engaging in voice behavior (Lawler & Thye,

1999). Recipients are sensitive to the intentions of actors especially when behavior is

unexpected (Weick, 1995).

When supervisors witness a subordinate engaging in voice behavior to the leaders

above them rather than speaking up to them directly, they may try to make sense of the

voicing employee's motives. Usually, employee voice behavior is intended to alter, modify, or

destabilize the current situation (Burris, 2012), and in most cases, immediate supervisors are

taking charge of the issues that are related to the voice content. Therefore, when an employee

speaks up to skip-level leaders, the immediate supervisor who witnesses such a behavior might think that this employee is going against his/her decisions. Although the employees may intend to express some opinions and ideas for work-related improvement, their immediate supervisors might view it as criticism or complaint about themselves in front of skip-level leaders because the content of challenging forms of voice may include explicit disagreement and confrontation with supervisors (Grant, Gino, & Hofmann, 2011). Thus, the supervisors may attribute the behavior of speaking up to skip-level leaders as instrumental and self-serving motives and respond negatively to this employee.

On the contrary, if the voicing employee speaks up directly to his or her supervisor, it is more likely than the case of speaking up to a skip-level leader to positively react to the voice behavior because the supervisor may consider this behavior is intended to make work-related improvement and attribute to altruistic motives. Besides, supervisors sometimes respond to employee voice behavior positively because voice can help supervisors to be more successful (Burris, 2012). Thus, we predict the following:

Hypothesis 1a. Supervisors will give lower evaluations to voicing employees when

they speak up to skip-level leaders rather than the supervisors directly.

Previous researchers have demonstrated that supervisors' evaluations of their subordinate behaviors will be influenced by supervisors' emotions toward subordinates (Cardy & Dobbins, 1986; Judge & Ferris, 1993; Wayne & Ferris, 1990). Consistent with this fact, we argue that the effects of target of voice on supervisors' evaluations of the voicing employees will be partially mediated by the two types of emotional reactions: Liking and perceived threat. We choose these two types of emotional reactions because liking and perceived threat are two typical affective responses which will influence the individuals'

attitudes in the communication theory (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953). Hovland and

colleagues (1953) suggest that the effects of a communicator (an individual speaker who

communicates directly to people and gives his/her views on an issue) are mediated by the

attitudes toward him/her that are held by recipients. The attitudes stem in part from the desire

to like the communicator and the fear of the communicator. Because voice behavior is viewed

as an act of communication (Pauksztat, Steglich, & Wittek, 2011), the idea that liking and

perceived threat are mediators is consistent with the above view of communication.

We expect that supervisors like the voicing employee less when his/her target of voice

behavior is skip-level leaders, which in turn causes the negative evaluations of the voicing

employees by the immediate supervisors. In general, employees usually have more

opportunities and time for interacting with their immediate supervisors compared with their

skip-level leaders (Likert, 1967). Therefore, when the supervisors witness that their

subordinates speak up to skip-level leaders, they may feel that they are ignored. In addition,

the supervisors may view the act as criticism or complaint about themselves in front of skip-

level leaders (Grant et al., 2011). Therefore, the supervisors might not feel admired by the

voicing employee and thus less like such subordinate (Wayne & Liden, 1995).

Liking is an integral part of the performance evaluation process (Cardy & Dobbins,

1986; Judge & Ferris, 1993; Wayne & Ferris, 1990). When supervisors like an employee, they

rate the employee more favorably, allocate more rewards to him/her, and are less likely to

discipline the employee (Cardy & Dobbins, 1986; Fandt, Labig, & Urich, 1990; Judge &

Ferris, 1993; Tsui & Barry, 1986).

Thus, we hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 1b. The negative effect of exercising voice behavior to the skip-level leaders rather than immediate supervisors on supervisors' evaluations is partially mediated by the supervisors' liking of the voicing employees.

Additionally, we expect that supervisors' perceived threat will also have a mediating effect on the negative effect of voicing to the skip-level leaders on supervisors' evaluations of the voicing employees. In general, supervisors view employees who more frequently engage in challenging forms of voice as personally threatening (Burris, 2012). Because the employees' voice behavior may implicitly or explicitly criticize the supervisors (Burris, 2012) and the supervisors seek to protect their self-image or standing in their organization (De Dreu, Nijstad, & van Knippenberg, 2008), a supervisor may have a feeling of threat about his/her image as seen by leaders or other employees.

With respect to the perceived threat, some studies have found the mediating role of threat between employee voice and supervisors' reactions. For example, Burris (2012) found that managerial perceptions of threat mediated the negative relationship between the challenging form of voice and endorsement of the ideas. Fast and colleagues (2014) found that managers with low managerial self-efficacy experience increased threat to their ego when an employee speaks up, which in turn leads to the negative rating of the employee. These studies show that supervisors' perceived threat caused by employee voice will result in negative responses. Thus, we hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 1c. The negative effect of exercising voice behavior to the skip-level leaders rather than immediate supervisors on supervisors' evaluations is partially mediated by the supervisors' perceived threat against the voicing employees.

8

Expertise of Voicing Employee

As stated earlier, expertise refers to the extent to which a speaker is perceived to be capable of making correct assertions (Pornpitakpan, 2004). Previous research suggests that employee expertise will have many positive effects. For example, expertise is also positively associated with agreement on opinions (Horai, Naccari, & Fatoullah, 1974), advice taking (Feng & MacGeorge, 2006), and positive ratings of performance. We argue that supervisors might provide higher evaluations to a voicing employee when his or her expertise is high rather than low.

According to the social persuasion theory, an employee with high expertise has credibility and accuracy, so his or her suggestions or idea tend to be more accurate and reliable. Research shows that people are more likely to implement feedback provided by an expert (Albright & Levy, 1995), and Braunsberger (1996) finds that a source high in expertise appears to lead to positive attitudes toward the endorser and the advertisement.

In addition, if a voicing employee is high in expertise, supervisors might think his/her behavior could contribute to the effectiveness of the group or organization, as Horai and colleagues (1974) find that expertise contributes to inducing opinion agreement. Moreover, supervisors consider voice to be more constructive and provide higher evaluations of job performance when the voicing employee is high rather than low in expertise (Whiting et al., 2012). Taken together, we expect that supervisors respond more positively when the voicer is high rather than low in expertise.

> *Hypothesis 2a. Supervisors provide higher evaluations for the voicing employee when the employee's expertise is high rather than low.*

As discussed in developing Hypotheses 1b and 1c, we predict that the supervisors'

emotional reactions toward the voice behavior will mediate the effect of the voicing

employees' expertise on the supervisors' evaluations of the employees. Prior research

indicates that constructive workplace behaviors are positively related to a supervisor's

affective regard for the employee (Johnson, Erez, Kiker, & Motowidlo, 2002). A voice

behavior is one typical type of constructive behaviors which has important benefits for

organizations and work groups (Morrison, 2011). Supervisors may respond more favorably

when the voicing employees are high rather than low in their expertise because such

employees are more likely to figure out accurate problems and have abilities to find solutions

to resolve the problems (Whiting et al., 2012). It would make the supervisors' job easier and

hence enhance the supervisors' liking for the subordinates, which influences the positive

evaluations of the subordinates. Thus, we hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 2b. The positive effect of the expertise of voicing employees on

supervisors' evaluations is partially mediated by the supervisors' liking of the voicing

employees.

Although we predicted that the voicing employees' expertise has a direct and positive

effect on the evaluations of the employees, we anticipate that there is another indirect effect of

expertise on the evaluations that is negative, which is mediated by perceived threat as an

emotional reaction. In other words, there will be two different paths from the expertise of the

voicing employees to the evaluations of the employee: one positive path dominated by the

cognitive evaluations of the employees, and the other negative path dominated by the

perceived threat against the employees.

An employee with high expertise has influence over other people (Georgesen &

Harris, 1998) because expertise is one type of power (French & Raven, 1960). Compared with

an employee with low expertise, an employee with high expertise has a higher ability to make

other people agree with his/her suggestions or ideas because expertise contributes to opinion

agreement (Horai et al., 1974). Consequently, there is a possibility that when an expert speaks

up with his/her suggestions for change, people will agree with him/her and then doubt the

decisions made by the supervisors. The formal position of the supervisor often provides status

or social esteem in the eyes of others (French & Raven, 1960). People are greatly influenced

by their roles and, indeed, experience a great deal of pressure to meet the expectations

associated with their roles (Biddle, 1986). Compelling evidence supports the idea that

managers, as occupants of roles with formal power over subordinates, experience a strong

need to demonstrate superior personal competence at work (Fast et al., 2014). Therefore,

voice behavior exhibited by the employees with high expertise might make supervisors

perceive more threat than the employees with low expertise.

Based on the above evidence that perceived threat influences the supervisors'

reactions, we expect that supervisors' perceptions of threat will mediate the negative

relationship between the voicing employees' expertise and the evaluations of the employees.

Taken together, we hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 2c. There is a negative indirect effect of the expertise of voicing employees

on supervisors' evaluations of the employees, such that the effect is partially mediated

by the supervisors' perceived threat against the voicing employees.

Moderating Role of Sense of Power

Power is often defined as the capacity to influence others, and it primarily stems from the control over valuable resources and the ability to administer rewards and punishments (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006; Emerson, 1962; Goldhamer & Shils, 1939; James, Demaree, & Wolf, 1984; Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003). Power can also be viewed and studied as the psychological state that occurs when a person perceives that he or she is capable of influencing others (Anderson et al., 2012; Galinsky, Gruenfeld, & Magee, 2003; Magee & Galinsky, 2008; Morrison, See, & Pan, 2015). This psychological state is a personal sense of power, defined as the perception of one's ability to influence another person or other people (Anderson et al., 2012).

Prior research has examined how personal sense of power influences cognition and behavior (Galinsky et al., 2003; Galinsky, Magee, Inesi, & Gruenfeld, 2006; Keltner et al., 2003; Tost, Gino, & Larrick, 2012). We predict that supervisors sense of power will moderate the positive relationship between target of voice and perceived threat, and the relationship between expertise and perceived threat, such that the relationships will be stronger when supervisors' sense of power is high rather than low, and ultimately influence the supervisors' ratings of the evaluation.

Affect control theory (Heise, 1977, 1987; Robinson, Smith-lovin, & Wisecup, 2006) suggests that individuals carry with a "fundamental meanings" regarding other persons or behaviors. Fundamental meaning means that individuals define the situation, which includes the evaluation of self, others, or behaviors with meanings (Robinson & Smith-lovin, 1992). This theory indicates that individuals seek consistency between fundamental meanings and transient meaning (i.e., that which they experience at a given moment). When the fundamental

meanings and transient meaning reveal a deflection or contradiction, an emotional reaction occurs (Turner & Stets, 2006). For example, if the transient meaning is more negative than the fundamental meaning, individuals feel more negative or less positive emotions.

According to this theory, we argue that supervisors, especially those who have high sense of power tend to have a fundamental meaning that they do not need to rely on other persons' suggestions or take the perspectives of others because they have a high level of confidence in their own opinions, and they tend to experience an inflated perception of personal control (Fast, Gruenfeld, Sivanathan, & Galinsky, 2009; Galinsky et al., 2006; See, Morrison, Rothman, & Soll, 2011; Tost et al., 2012). When they witness their subordinates engaging in voice behavior targeted to their leaders, or when a subordinate with high expertise speaks up to them with their valuable ideas which might challenge the status quo, they would feel unable to influence them and consider that their behaviors are out of their controls (negative transient meanings). Therefore, a negative emotional reaction will occur (Turner & Stets, 2006).

We expect that the feeling of threat might be the result of negative emotional reaction because the inconsistent between a supervisors' fundamental meaning and transient meanings will make supervisors feel a loss of face (Ho, 1976; Kim & Nam, 1998). Asian managers are very concerned with *face* (Ho, 1976; Hu, 1944), and face concern has a significant influence on individuals' behaviors (Kim & Nam, 1998). Loss of face is a dangerous signal that a supervisor feels that his/her face is being threatened, especially when the supervisor attributes face loss to external attribution (Ho, 1976; Redding & Ng, 1982). Ultimately, this stronger external attribution may bring about negative consequences such as providing low evaluation when the supervisors feel threatened.

Taken together, we predict the following:

Hypothesis 3a. Target of voice will be negatively associated with evaluations through perceived threat, conditional upon supervisors' sense of power, such that the negative relationship between target of voice and evaluations is strengthened for supervisors with high rather than low sense of power.

Hypothesis 3b. Expertise will be negatively associated with evaluations through perceived threat, conditional upon supervisors' sense of power, such that the negative relationship between target of voice and evaluations is strengthened for supervisors with high rather than low sense of power.

METHOD

Samples

Chinese and Japanese samples were used in this study. To test our hypotheses, we conducted a scenario-based experiment study in China and Japan. We used different sampling procedures and rating sources across two studies to demonstrate strong evidence of the validity and generalizability of our results (Wright & Sweeney, 2016).

Chinese sample. We collected data from 244 Chinese employees through exponential non-discriminative snowball sampling technique (Dudovskiy, 2016). The procedure of this sampling technique is to recruit the first subject to the sample group and ask this subject to provide multiple referrals (Dudovskiy, 2016). In our study, we invited dozens of employees from a wide variety of occupations to participate in an anonymous survey. After they finished the questionnaires, we asked them to post an electronic survey link on the social network sites (SNS), where users developed a network of friends, relatives, and co-workers to share

14

information. After two weeks, a total of 244 participants responded to our survey. A full list of conditions is reported in Table 1.

Of all participants, 55.3% of them were female and 44.7% of them were male. Their average age was 31.7 years ($SD = 6.2$). As for the educational background, 77.9% of them had a bachelor's degree, 16.4% of them had a master's degree, and 5.7% had a high-school diploma. A majority of 65.6% were married. Participants were employed in a variety of occupations, including construction/manufacturing (29.1%), public sectors (14.8%), finance (13.5%), information technology (5.3%), healthcare (4.5%), services (4.1%), transportation (3.7%), and other workplaces (25.0%). On average, their managerial experience was 2.6 years ($SD = 4.4$).

Japanese sample. We collected data from 136 Japanese employees. A full list of conditions is reported in Table 1. We gathered data mainly from two sources. First, same as the Chinese sample, we invited dozens of employees from a wide variety of occupations to participate in an anonymous survey. After they finished the questionnaires, we asked them to post an electronic survey link on the SNS, where users developed a network of friends, relatives, and co-workers to share information. Second, one professor at a Japanese university helped us send questionnaires to companies' supervisors in a management semester. With these two ways, we received 155 samples in total. After deleting the missing data, there are 136 samples.

Of all participants, 19.9% of them were female and 80.1% of them were male. Their average age was 41.5 years ($SD = 12.6$). As for the educational background, 75.0% of them had a bachelor's degree, 16.2% of them had a master's degree, and 8.8% had a high-school diploma. Participants were employed in a variety of occupations, including

15

construction/manufacturing (25.7%), finance (14.0%), information technology (11.0%),

services (8.1%), retail (7.4%), healthcare (5.1%), public sectors (5.1%), transportation (3.7%),

and other workplaces (19.9%). On average, their managerial experience was 7.5 years (SD =

9.8).

Design and Procedures

To examine the hypotheses, we employed a 2 (high sense of power versus low sense

of power) × 2 (skip-level leader target versus immediate supervisor target) × 2 (high expertise

versus low expertise) full-factorial, between-subjects experimental design in China and Japan.

First, we conducted in-depth interviews with 8 full-time Chinese employees to develop

scenarios, most of them involved in project teams. Therefore, we created scenarios based on

voice behavior occurring within a project team setting. The project was described as

expanding business overseas and composed of an immediate supervisor (participants were

asked to play the role of this supervisor), a skip-level leader (supervisor A) and several

subordinates. Subordinate B was one team member who exhibiting voice. Each scenario

depicted subordinate B's voice behavior occurring in this project team.

According to Anderson et al. (2012), we manipulated immediate supervisor A's sense

of power such that participants were asked to imagine whether they had power over other

team members. We manipulated target of voice in terms of the definition of voice behavior.

Since Detert and Treviño (2010) found that leaders two levels above the respondent (e.g., "my

boss's boss") were the most frequent skip-level leaders mentioned by informants, we

manipulated skip-level leader as supervisor A's boss. We manipulated employee expertise by

varying their knowledge about marketing and global business. In the high expertise condition,

the voicing employee (subordinate B) was described as knowing much about the overseas

issues and marketing. On the other hand, the voicing employee was described knowing little about overseas issues and marketing in the low expertise condition. The complete scripts for the manipulations are presented in the Appendix.

We invited 23 Japanese master students to read the scenarios depicting the manipulations. All of them can distinguish the different manipulations. After that, we conducted the scenario-based study. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the eight different hypothetical vignettes, which were followed by a series of questions. After reading their assigned scenario, they are required to imagine themselves in the scenario and to indicate their responses. Participants' demographic information was also collected in the questionnaires.

Measures

All the materials in this study were presented in Chinese and Japanese. Following the back-translation procedures, we translated the measures into Chinese and Japanese to retain all the meanings of the items (Brislin, Lonner, & Thorndike, 1973). All scales were assessed using a 7-point Likert response format (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree).

Liking (of the voicer). We adapted Wayne and Ferris's (1990) 4-item scale to measure participants' liking of the voicing employee. Example items include "I like subordinate B" and "I would get along with subordinate B." The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this scale was .91 in Chinese sample and .90 in the Japanese sample.

Perceived threat. We adapted five items from Menon, Thompson, and Choi (2006) to assess participants' perceived threat of the voicing employee. Sample items include "How likely is it that you will lose status in the organization if your superiors heard subordinate B's comments?" and "How likely is it that your supervisors will question your ability to devise an

effective plan if your superiors heard subordinate B's comments?" The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this scale was .86 in the Chinese sample and .83 in the Japanese sample.

Overall evaluations. We adapted Allen and Rush's (1998) reward recommendation scale to measure participants' overall evaluations of the voicing employee in the Chinese sample. The reward recommendation scale consists of salary increase, promotion, high profile project, public recognition, and opportunities for professional development. Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this scale was .87. We adapted Allen and Rush's (1998) performance evaluation scale to measure participants' overall evaluations of the voicing employee in the Japanese sample. Performance evaluation consists of 4 items: "subordinate B makes an important contribution to the organization", "subordinate B is a vital part of the organization", "subordinate B is extremely valuable to the organization", and "subordinate B would be extremely costly for the organization to replace." Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .92.

Manipulation Checks

To verify whether our manipulations were successful, the participants were asked to respond to the following questions: "If your subordinate B has a lot of ideas about the project, he/she would express to you directly" (direct-level target); "Compared to other colleagues, subordinate B knows more about marketing and global business of our company" (high expertise); "In this project team, you have a lot of power over other people" (high sense of power). All items were rated on a 7-point Likert response scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

The results of these checks were supportive of the manipulations in both Chinese and Japanese samples. The average ratings for the "skip-level target" condition tended to be low (average $M = 2.50$ for Chinese sample, and $M = 2.25$ for Japanese sample), and the average

ratings for the "direct-level target" condition tended to be high ($M = 5.43$ for Chinese sample, $M = 6.21$ for Japanese sample). The average ratings for "high expertise" condition tended to be high (average $M = 5.46$ for Chinese sample, $M = 5.95$ for Japanese sample), and the average rating for the "low expertise" conditions tended to be low (average $M = 2.31$ for Chinese sample, and $M = 1.76$ for Japanese sample). The average ratings for "high sense of power" condition tended to be high (average $M = 5.08$ for Chinese sample, $M = 5.78$ for Japanese sample), and the average ratings for the "low sense of power" condition tended to be low (average $M = 1.97$ for Chinese sample, $M = 2.14$ for Japanese sample). In addition, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) comparisons of the ratings on the high and low conditions for each specific manipulation indicated that their differences were significant (all ps < .01). Taken together, the results indicated that high and low level manipulations depicted significantly different levels of the conditions.

Analytical Approach

First, we examined means, standard deviations, and inter-correlations for the study variables. Second, we performed a series of analysis of variance (ANOVA) to test the main effects (Hypothesis 1a and 2a). Third, we tested the indirect effects using the PROCESS macro developed by Hayes (2013), which is an extension of the SPSS macro developed by Preacher, Rucker, and Hayes (2007). We tested the mediating effects of liking and perceived threat (Hypothesis 1b, 1c, 2b, and 2c) by utilizing Model 4 of the PROCESS macro. Then we combined the moderator of sense of power and tested the moderated-mediation (Hypothesis 3a and 3b) model by utilizing Model 7 of the PROCESS macro. The continuous measures were mean centered prior to testing the hypotheses (Aiken & West, 1991).

RESULTS

Measurement Validity

To assess the validity of our measures, we performed confirmatory factor analyses
(CFAs) on all questionnaire items using R 3.4.0 in combination with the package "lavaan"
(Rosseel, 2012). Since the original measures consisted of too many indicators, we reduced the
number of indicators for each latent construct. We used parceling techniques when conducting
the CFAs because parceling techniques produce more reliable latent variables than do
individual items by reducing item-specific random errors and thereby increasing the reliability
of the model (Little, Cunningham, Shahar, & Widaman, 2002). We used the factorial
algorithm (item-to-construct balance) technique (Little et al., 2002) to create three parcels for
the study variables, which are liking, perceived threat, and overall evaluations. The proposed
three-factor baseline model showed an excellent fit to the Chinese data ($\chi^2[24] = 84.77$, $p
< .001$; CFI = .96; IFI = .96; RMSEA = .10; SRMR = .06). The proposed three-factor baseline
model showed acceptable to the Japanese data ($\chi^2[24] = 80.75$, $p < .001$; CFI = .94; IFI = .94;
RMSEA = .13; SRMR = 0.10). These results provide support for the validity of the measures
used in this study (Browne & Cudeck, 1992).

Hypothesis Testing

Descriptive statistics. Table 2 presents means, standard deviations, and the
intercorrelations for both Chinese and Japanese samples. Reliability coefficient for each
variable is also shown in the correlation matrix when available. The results provide
preliminary evidence for the expected effects of voice target and expertise on the outcome
variables.

Insert Table 2 about here

Tests of main effects. First, we performed a multivariate analysis of variance

(MANOVA) on the ratings of the potential mediators and dependent variable. The

multivariate *F* values for the main effects of target and expertise on these variables were both

significant (at *p* < .01 level). In addition, the interaction between target and expertise on those

variables were nonsignificant. Therefore, we conducted a series of univariate ANOVAs to

examine our hypotheses. The results of the ANOVAs for both Chinese and Japanese samples

are shown in Table 3. Additionally, Table 3 provides the partial eta-squared estimates

associated with each factor.

Insert Table 3 about here

Hypothesis 1a predicted that target of voice had an effect on overall evaluation. We

found support for this hypothesis in both samples. As shown in Table 3, target of voice had

significant effects on overall evaluation in both the China ($F = 61.63$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .20$) and

Japan ($F = 16.29$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .11$) samples. Moreover, analysis of the marginal means

indicated that mean ratings of overall evaluations was lower in the skip-level leader condition

($M = 3.69$ in Chinese sample, and $M = 3.53$ in Japanese sample) than in the immediate

supervisor condition ($M = 4.85$ in Chinese sample, and $M = 4.43$ in Japanese sample).

Hypothesis 2a predicted that expertise of the voicing employee had an effect on

overall evaluations. We found support for this hypothesis in both samples. As shown in Table

3, expertise had significant effects on overall evaluation in both the China ($F = 11.18$, $p < .01$,

$\eta_p^2 = .04$) and Japan ($F = 9.21$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$) samples. Analysis of the marginal means

indicated that mean ratings of overall evaluation was higher when expertise of the voicing employee is high (M = 4.54 in Chinese sample, and M = 4.34 in Japanese sample) rather than low (M = 3.99 in Chinese sample, and M = 3.64 in Japanese sample).

Tests of mediations. Following the tests of the main effects, we tested the potential mediating effects by utilizing Model 4 of the PROCESS macro. Table 4 and Table 5 present the total direct and indirect effects on Chinese and Japanese samples respectively. Consistent with the ANOVAs, Table 4 and Table 5 also provide support for Hypothesis 1a and Hypothesis 2a. As shown in these two Tables, target of voice has a significant effect on overall evaluations in both the China (95% CI ranges = -1.46 to -0.87, which does not include zero) and Japan samples (95% CI ranges = -1.34 to -0.46, which does not include zero). Expertise has a significant effect on overall evaluations in both China (95% CI ranges = 0.22 to 0.86, which does not include zero) and Japan samples (95% CI ranges = 0.24 to 1.15, which does not include zero).

Insert Table 3 about here

Insert Table 4 about here

Hypothesis 1b predicted that liking partially mediated the relationship between target of voice and overall evaluations. We found support for Hypothesis 1b in both samples. As shown in Table 4 and Table 5, we observed that the confidence intervals for the indirect effect of target of voice on overall evaluation through liking excluded the value of zero in both China (-1.33 to -0.81) and Japan (-1.38 to -0.68) samples. These results suggest that liking meditate the relationship between target of voice and overall evaluation.

Hypothesis 1c predicted that perceived threat partially mediated the relationship between target of voice and overall evaluations. We found support for the hypothesis in the Chinese sample but not in the Japanese sample. As shown in Table 4 and Table 5, the confidence intervals for the indirect effect of target of voice on overall evaluation through perceived threat excluded zero for the Chinese sample (-0.28 to -0.03), but not for the Japanese sample (-0.29 to 0.01).

Hypothesis 2b predicted that liking partially mediated the relationship between expertise and overall evaluations. This hypothesis was not supported because Table 4 and Table 5 demonstrated that the direct effect between liking and expertise was not significant either in the Chinese sample or in the Japanese sample.

Hypothesis 2c predicted that perceived threat partially mediated the relationship between expertise and overall evaluations. Here, we found support for the hypothesis in the Japanese sample but not in the Chinese sample. As shown in Table 4 and Table 5, the confidence intervals for the indirect effect of expertise on overall evaluation through perceived threat excluded zero for the Japanese sample (-0.37 to -0.03), but not for the Chinese sample (-0.22 to 0.01).

Tests of moderated mediation. Hypothesis 3a predicted conditional indirect effects of target of voice on overall evaluation via perceived threat moderated by supervisors' sense of power. This hypothesis was not supported because Table 3 demonstrated that the moderating effects on the relationship between target of voice and perceived threat were not significant either in the Chinese sample ($F = 2.07$, n.s., $\eta_p^2 = .01$) or in the Japanese sample ($F = 0.62$, n.s., $\eta_p^2 = .00$).

Hypothesis 3b predicted conditional indirect effects of expertise on overall evaluation

via perceived threat moderated by supervisors' sense of power. We found support for this

hypothesis in the Chinese sample but not in the Japanese sample. As shown in Table 3, the

moderating effect of sense of power on the relationship between expertise and perceived

threat was significant in the Chinese sample ($F = 5.21$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$) but not in the

Japanese sample ($F = 0.02$, n.s., $\eta_p^2 = .00$). We extend to examine the conditional indirect

effects using the PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2013) specifying model 7. We generated 95%

bootstrap bias-corrected intervals for the indirect effect conditioned by sense of power on the

basis of 5,000 bootstrap samples. The findings for Hypothesis 3b are presented in Table 6 and

Table 7.

Insert Table 6 about here

Insert Table 7 about here

The results in Table 6 show a significant positive moderating effect of sense of power

between expertise and perceived threat ($B = 0.74$, $p < .05$, CI: 0.10 to 1.39). More specifically,

Table 7 shows CIs for bootstrap tests at two sense of power values: (1) sense of power is low

(= 0), and (2) sense of power is high (= 1). The CIs are considered statistically significant if

the range between the low and high CIs do not include zero (Hayes, 2013). The bootstrap CIs

for the indirect effect when sense of power is low (0) (-0.11 to 0.19) includes zero, showing

that there is no significant indirect effect under this condition. In contrast, under conditions

when sense of power is high (1), there is a significant indirect (mediated) effect of expertise

on overall evaluation through perceived threat (95% CI ranges = -0.42 to -0.06, which does

not include zero). The results provide support for Hypothesis 3b. The graph of the significant interaction is shown in Figure 2.

Insert Figure 2 about here

DISCUSSION

In this study, we examined the effects that target of voice and expertise of the voicing employee have on supervisors' overall evaluations of the employee and explored the potential mediating effects of liking and perceived threat. We also examined the moderating role of supervisors' sense of power. Our findings in China, indicate the following: (a) When supervisors evaluate employees who exhibit voice behavior, the target of voice is vital. Specifically, speaking up to skip-level leaders is negatively related to evaluations of the voicing employee, and liking and perceived threat mediate the relationship; (b) When the voicing employee's expertise is high rather than low, supervisors evaluate the employee more positively, but at the same time, they perceive more threat from the voicing employee; (c) There is an indirect negative relationship between expertise and supervisors' overall evaluations through perceived threat moderated by supervisors' sense of power, such that the effect will be stronger for supervisors who have high sense of power rather than low.

Consistent with the results from the Chinese sample, our findings in the Japanese sample indicate that (a) when supervisors evaluate employees who exhibit voice behavior, the target of voice is vital. Specifically, speaking up to skip-level leaders is negatively related to evaluations of the voicing employee, and liking mediates the relationship; (b) When the voicing employee's expertise is high rather than low, supervisors evaluate the employee more positively, but at the same time, they perceive more threat from the voicing employee. In

25

addition, our findings in the Japanese sample indicate that perceived threat mediates the relationship between expertise and overall evaluation. In contrast, the moderating role of sense of power was not significant.

Some of our hypotheses were not supported in China but supported in Japan. For example, our Chinese data did not support the hypothesis regarding the mediation effect of perceived threat between expertise and supervisors' evaluations whereas the results from our Japanese data provided support for this hypothesis. One possible reason for this finding is that supervisors in China may differentiate between their feeling of threat and the evaluations of the voicing employee. Whereas supervisors' liking of the voicing employee is mainly determined by their assessment of whether the voice behavior is deviant from organizational norms and/or useful for organizational effectiveness, their perceived threat is mainly related to their personal interest (e.g., their maintenance of power) rather than the organizational good or effectiveness. Therefore, Chinese supervisors may use the information of liking consciously or unconsciously for the overall evaluations of the voicing employee. However, they are reluctant to link the perception of threat, which is more personal, with the overall evaluations of the employee that should be done from the organizational perspective.

Some of our hypotheses were not supported in Japan but supported in China. For example, our Japanese data did not support the hypothesis regarding the moderated mediating role of supervisors' sense of power whereas the results from our Chinese data provided support for this hypothesis. One possible reason for this finding is that supervisors in Japan may feel threatened when an employee with high expertise engaging in voice behavior regardless of their sense of power.

Theoretical Implications

Our study and findings extend the theory of voice behavior and make significant contributions to deepen the understanding of the nature of voice and its consequences in the Asian context. First, this study theorized and empirically tested the effect of the target of voice (immediate supervisor or skip-level leader as a voice target) on supervisors' reactions to the voicing employee, which is seldom discussed (except Detert, Burris, Harrison, & Martin, 2013). Past studies pointed out that voice is target sensitive and that it is vital to discuss the target of voice more (Liu et al., 2010). We responded to this call for research and examined the relationship between the target and outcomes of voice from the supervisors' perspective. More importantly, our findings contribute to the deeper understanding of leadership influence in Asia. Asia is characterized by cultures that are high in power distance and high in collectivism (Hofstede, 2001), and hence leaders in Asian countries tend to have high power distance between themselves and their followers (Liden, 2012). Supervisors are endowed with great power and control inherent in their positions, and ensure the compliance of followers (Liden, 2012). Consistent with this perspective, our findings in Chinese and Japanese samples indicate that supervisors' responses to employee voice behavior are subjected to the target of voice. Supervisors tend to provide low evaluations to the voicing employee when he/she engages in voice behavior with skip-level leaders because they may perceive this behavior as challenging their power and authority. We argue that this effect might be especially salient in Asia because supervisors in Asian countries have a strong tendency to maintain the power distance between themselves and followers (Farh, Earley, & Lin, 1997; Liden, 2012).

Second, we demonstrated that the voicing employee's expertise is an important factor to understand supervisors' reactions to the voicing employee. Our study revealed that the

relationship between expertise and supervisors' reactions is more complex than it might have been thought. That is, when the voicing employee's expertise is high, it produces both positive and negative reactions from supervisors such that it leads to better evaluations but also leads to worse evaluations because of supervisors' feelings of threat. In the Japanese sample, our findings suggest that supervisors will perceive more threat when the voicing employee's expertise is high rather than low, and ultimately make them evaluate the voicing employee negatively. In the Chinese sample, our findings show that the negative indirect effect of expertise on the evaluations depends on supervisors' sense of power. To put it differently, our findings in China suggest that especially when the power distance between voicing employees and their immediate supervisors is large, employees with high expertise could significantly being evaluated negatively by their supervisors because of the feeling of threat. More interesting, our findings also indicate that even though supervisors provide high evaluations to the voicing employee who has high expertise, they don't show high liking toward this employee.

Our findings seem to be inconsistent with previous research, which suggests that the powerful individuals tend to be more likely to take action in competitive interactions and engage in risky behaviors (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006; Galinsky et al., 2003), and hence supervisors might be less likely to perceive threat from employee voice behavior even though the voicing employee has high expertise. We suggest that Asian people's face concern may be useful to clarify the difference because concern for face is of utmost important in Asia (Ho, 1976; Hu, 1944; Redding & Ng, 1982). In high power distance cultures of Asia, one of the core cultural norms is that supervisors tend to use authoritarian control to ensure the compliance of followers (Liden, 2012). In this condition, rejected by followers or not treated

respectfully by followers will be more likely to make supervisors feel face loss, which is a dangerous signal of the feeling of threat. When an employee engages in voice behavior with the supervisor, especially when this employee has high expertise, it may strengthen the feeling of face loss because the challenging ideas or suggestions from an expert are more likely to be accurate and challenge the decisions made by the supervisors themselves. Therefore, supervisors in Asia tend to provide low evaluations to the voicing employee who has high expertise because of the feeling of threat.

Third, the current findings extend the voice literature by discussing the outcome of voice in a non-western setting. Ng and Feldman (2012) conducted a meta-analytic test related to employee voice behavior. They performed a comprehensive search for the voice studies published in or before 2010, and they observed that above 90% of the studies were conducted in the Western countries and only 9 percent in Asian countries. Over the years research on voice has been extended to Asian countries (Cheng, Lu, Chang, & Johnstone, 2013; Gao, Janssen, & Shi, 2011; Zhang et al., 2015). Therefore, the concept of voice was initially proposed and studied in the Western countries. This study contributes to the voice literature by discussing the nature of voice behavior in Asia, especially about how Asian supervisors respond to the voice behavior.

Taken together, our findings contribute to the deeper understanding of what makes supervisors respond differently toward employee voice behavior by integrating the voice target (immediate supervisors or skip-level leaders), the voicing employee's characteristics (expertise), and supervisors' characteristics (sense of power) in one model.

Practical Implications

Our findings provided several practical contributions for both managers and employees. First, upward communication is vital to the organization. By speaking up to those who occupy positions that are hierarchically higher than their own, employees can help stem illegal and immoral behavior, address mistreatment or injustice, and bring problems and opportunities for improvement to the attention of those who can authorize action (Detert & Edmondson, 2011). However, our findings also suggest that immediate supervisors do not like employees speaking up to skip-level leaders and would give them negative evaluations for doing so. Employees' anticipation of these kinds of consequences will keep them silent, even when they need to speak up to skip-level leaders for reasons to improve organizational effectiveness.

One possible solution is to create an open communication climate where employees and managers can exchange ideas including ones that challenge the status quo. Providing communication training to all members of the organization could contribute to creating such an environment. It could not only make supervisors aware that the organization needs the input from first-line employees but also make employees aware that it is safe to exhibit voice behavior in the organization.

Second, our findings suggest that for employees who exercise voice, a high level of expertise could be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, their suggestion could be welcomed and receive a positive response. On the other hand, the suggestion may increase perceived threat by supervisors, which may harm the voicing employees' career in the long run. Therefore, employees should be careful when speaking up in the workplace and express an appropriate level of expertise. In particular, considering that China and Japan are the

countries with a power-distance culture (Hofstede, 1994), the supervisors in China and Japan tend to be more likely to have high sense of power.

Third, when employees need to speak up to supervisors, they are advised to take into account the sense of power their immediate supervisors have. It may not be desirable for employees to speak up when their immediate supervisors' sense of power is high because it could damage the employees' career opportunities within the organization (e.g., reducing the chance of promotion due to low performance evaluations).

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The results of our study should be viewed in light of its limitations. First, the target of voice manipulated in our scenario was limited to an informal situation. According to Detert and Treviño (2010), there are also formal chances for employees to meet skip-level leaders. Supervisors' responses might be different when employees speak up to skip-level leaders in formal situations (e.g., conference, seminar) rather than informal situations (e.g., private talking, coffee room) like our study. Therefore, the theoretical and empirical work in the future could compare and contrast the effect of the target of voice in formal and informal situations.

Second, we did not explicitly examine the differences in the content of voice. Employees may bring up different kinds of issues to different leaders (Liu et al., 2013), which might result in different responses from immediate supervisors. For example, Burris (2012) found that supervisors view employees who engage in more challenging forms of voice as worse performers than those who engage in supportive in supporting forms of voice. Therefore, future research on this topic could consider the nature of the voice content such as whether it is more challenging or more supportive.

Third, since we relied on scenarios to manipulate the target of voice, expertise, and sense of power, the limitations pertaining to the use of "paper people" in a scenario experiment remain. Some researchers point out that paper-people methodologies might produce different results than studies using more realistic stimuli (Wendelken & Inn, 1981; Whiting et al., 2008). Therefore, future research should extend the findings of this investigation by using different methodologies such as field studies.

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Table 1. Summary of Scenario Conditions and Outcomes of Voice

					Liking		Threat		Overall evaluation	
China										
Condition	Target of voice	Expertise	Power	N	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
1	Skip-level	High	High	34	3.26	1.49	4.17	1.26	4.04	1.25
2	Skip-level	High	Low	31	3.61	1.09	4.52	1.19	3.85	1.20
3	Skip-level	Low	High	29	3.00	1.34	3.74	1.21	3.46	1.07
4	Skip-level	Low	Low	29	2.43	1.15	4.06	1.21	2.59	1.08
5	Immediate	High	High	29	4.98	1.20	3.19	1.35	4.90	0.95
6	Immediate	High	Low	28	5.24	0.93	3.20	1.19	4.79	1.21
7	Immediate	Low	High	32	5.12	1.10	2.46	0.89	4.62	1.24
8	Immediate	Low	Low	32	5.01	1.11	3.34	1.18	4.36	1.00
Japan										
Condition	Target of voice	Expertise	Power	N	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
1	Skip-level	High	High	20	3.26	1.24	3.40	1.43	3.90	1.46
2	Skip-level	High	Low	14	3.04	1.36	3.64	1.61	3.75	1.32
3	Skip-level	Low	High	18	3.13	0.63	2.68	0.98	3.35	1.29
4	Skip-level	Low	Low	17	2.81	1.29	3.20	1.04	3.12	1.41
5	Immediate	High	High	15	4.75	0.90	2.67	1.03	4.82	1.06
6	Immediate	High	Low	16	4.55	1.71	2.84	1.15	4.95	1.28
7	Immediate	Low	High	16	4.19	1.06	2.43	0.72	4.19	1.05
8	Immediate	Low	Low	20	4.19	1.22	2.36	0.67	3.93	1.34

Table2. Summary of Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
China								
1. Target	.50	.50						
2. Expertise	.50	.50	.06					
3. Sense of power	.51	.50	.01	.02				
4. Liking	4.08	1.57	-.64**	.09	.00	(.91)		
5. Threat	3.52	1.29	.37**	.11†	-.10	-.50**	(.86)	
6. Overall evaluations	4.08	1.32	-.45**	.21**	.07	.67**	-.29**	(.87)
Japan								
1. Target	.51	.50						
2. Expertise	.48	.50	.03					
3. Sense of power	.51	.50	.09	.06				
4. Liking	3.72	1.36	-.49**	.11	.03	(.90)		
5. Threat	2.89	1.20	.27**	.20*	-.05	-.37**	(.83)	
6. Overall evaluations	3.98	1.37	-.33**	.25**	.03	.73**	-.22*	(.92)

Note. N_{China} = 244; N_{Japan} = 136. SD = standard deviation.

Internal reliabilities (coefficient alphas) appear in parentheses on the diagonal.

For target manipulation, 0 = immediate supervisor target, 1 = skip-level leader target; for expertise manipulation, 0 = low expertise, 1 = high expertise; for power manipulation, 0 = low sense of power, 1 = high sense of power.

*p < .05. **p < .01. †p < .10

Table 3. Two-way Analysis of Variance

Predictor	Liking			Perceived threat			Overall Evaluation		
	MS	F	η_p^2	MS	F	η_p^2	MS	F	η_p^2
China									
Target	242.34	163.20**	0.40	54.55	37.64**	0.13	82.56	61.63**	0.20
Expertise	4.33	1.75	0.01	4.74	2.86†	0.01	17.96	11.18**	0.04
Target * Sense of power	-	-	-	2.97	2.07	0.01	-	-	-
Expertise * Sense of power	-	-	-	8.44	5.21*	0.02	-	-	-
Japan									
Target	60.17	42.21**	0.24	14.41	10.80**	0.07	37.55	16.29**	0.11
Expertise	2.76	1.49	0.01	7.97	5.76*	0.04	16.35	9.21**	0.06
Target * Sense of power	-	-	-	0.83	0.62	0.00	-	-	-
Expertise * Sense of power	-	-	-	0.03	0.02	0.00	-	-	-

Note. For target manipulation, 0 = immediate supervisor target, 1 = skip-level leader target; for expertise manipulation, 0 = low expertise, 1 = high expertise; for power manipulation, 0 = low sense of power, 1 = high sense of power. η_p^2 = partial eta-squared.

*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$. †$p < .10$

Table 4. Direct and Indirect Effects for Chinese Sample

	B	*SE*	*t*	*p*	LLCI	ULCI
Direct effects						
Target → Liking	-1.99	0.16	-12.77	**	-2.30	-1.69
Target → Perceived threat	0.95	0.15	6.14	**	0.64	1.25
Target → Overall evaluations	-1.16	0.15	-7.85	**	-1.46	-0.87
Expertise → Liking	0.26	0.20	1.32		-0.13	0.66
Expertise → Perceived threat	0.28	0.16	1.69	†	-0.05	0.60
Expertise → Overall evaluations	0.54	0.16	3.34	**	0.22	0.86
Indirect effects	Effect	Boot SE	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI		
Target → Liking → Overall evaluations	-1.04	0.13	-1.33	-0.81		
Target → Perceived threat → Overall evaluation	-0.14	0.07	-0.28	-0.03		
Expertise → Liking → Overall evaluations	0.14	0.11	-0.06	0.37		
Expertise → Perceived threat → Overall evaluations	-0.09	0.06	-0.22	0.01		

Note. $N = 244$. Bootstrap sample size = 5000. SE = standard error. LL = lower limit; CI = confidence interval; UL= upper limit.

*p < .05. **p < .01. †p < .10

Table 5. Direct and Indirect Effects for Japanese Sample

	B	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Direct effects						
Target → Liking	-1.33	0.15	-6.50	**	-1.73	-0.93
Target → Perceived threat	0.65	0.20	3.29	**	0.26	1.04
Target → Overall evaluations	-0.90	0.22	-4.04	**	-1.34	-0.46
Expertise → Liking	0.29	0.23	1.22		-0.18	0.75
Expertise → Perceived threat	0.48	0.20	2.40	*	0.09	0.88
Expertise → Overall evaluations	0.69	0.23	3.04	**	0.24	1.15
Indirect effects	Effect	Boot SE	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI		
Target → Liking → Overall evaluations	-1.00	0.18	-1.38	-0.68		
Target → Perceived threat → Overall evaluation	-0.10	0.08	-0.29	0.01		
Expertise → Liking → Overall evaluations	0.20	0.16	-0.13	0.53		
Expertise → Perceived threat → Overall evaluations	-0.16	0.09	-0.37	-0.03		

Note. $N = 136$. Bootstrap sample size = 5000. SE = standard error. LL = lower limit; CI = confidence interval; UL= upper limit.

*p < .05. **p < .01.

Table 6. Results of PROCESS (Model 7) Analysis for Chinese Sample

Outcome variable	Perceived threat					
Variables	B	SE	*t*	*p*	LLCI	ULCI
Expertise	-0.10	0.23	-0.41		-0.55	0.36
Sense of power	-0.61	0.23	-2.66	**	-1.07	-0.16
Expertise × Sense of power	0.74	0.33	2.28	*	0.10	1.39
F			3.44			
R			0.20			
R²			0.04			
Outcome variable	Overall evaluation					
Variables	B	SE	*t*	*p*	LLCI	ULCI
Perceived threat	-0.32	0.06	-5.32	**	-0.44	-0.20
Expertise	0.63	0.15	4.08	**	0.33	0.94
F			20.36			
R			0.38			
R²			0.14			

Note. N = 244. B = unstandardized conditional indirect effect. SE = standard error. CI = confidence interval
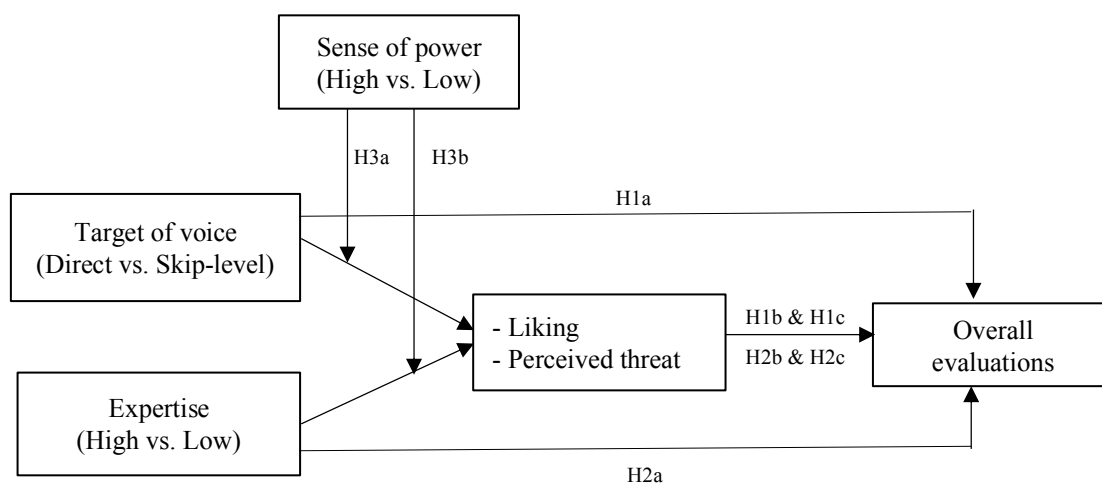
*p < .05. **p < .01.

Table 7. Conditional Indirect Effect Result for Chinese sample

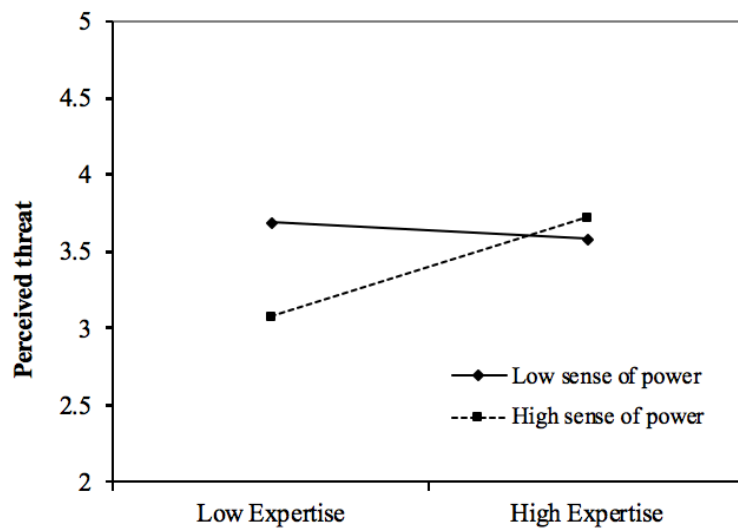| Mediator: Perceived threat	Indirect Effect	SE	LL 95% CI	UL 95% CI
Sense of power (0)	0.03	0.07	-0.11	0.19
Sense of power (1)	-0.21	0.09	-0.42	-0.06

Note. Bootstrap sample size = 5000. LL = lower limit; CI = confidence interval; UL= upper limit

Figure 1. Overall Hypothesized Model

Note. H = Hypothesis

Figure 2. Interaction of Employees' Expertise and Supervisors' Sense of Power on Perceived Threat

Variable	High level manipulation	Low level manipulation
Supervisors' sense of power (Anderson, John, & Keltner, 2012)	*High sense of power* Suppose that you were a department head of a company. This company is planning to expand its business overseas and you are in charge of this project. In this company, you have a lot of power. You have the power to decide work contents, personnel reshuffles, subordinates' salary and so on. The members of this project will perform according to your direction.	*Low sense of power* Suppose that you were a department head of a company. This company is planning to expand its business overseas. Although you are in charge of this project, you don't have a lot of power. Thus, you don't have a lot of power to decide work contents, personnel reshuffle, subordinates' salary and so on. The members of this project almost not perform according to your direction.
Target of voice (Detert & Trevino, 2010)	*Skip-level leader target* One day, in a weekly meeting, you reported that you decide to expand business within Asia to other people and your supervisor A was also in this meeting. After the meeting, you found that you had forgotten some documents in the meeting room, so you returned back. When you were near to the meeting room, you found that your subordinate B and your supervisor A were talking quietly in the meeting room. You heard B said that "related to this project, I think tapping into the American market is better than Asian market and is good for the future of our company." Besides that, B told a lot of problems related to the project to supervisor A. You didn't hear the problems from B before and you know B always behaves like this from the other members.	*Immediate supervisor target* One day, in a weekly meeting, you reported that you decide to expand business within Asia to other people and your supervisor A was also in this meeting. After the meeting, you found that you have forgotten some documents in the meeting room, so you returned back. On your way back to the meeting room, you met a subordinate B and he said that he has something to tell you. B said that "related to this project, I think tapping into the American market is better than Asian market and is good for the future of our company." Besides that, He told a lot of problems related to the project to you. Not only this time, He always talks with you about his ideas about company issues before.
Employee expertise	*High expertise* Subordinate B knows much about the overseas issues and has a high knowledge about marketing.	*Low expertise* Subordinate B doesn't know much about overseas issues and has a little knowledge about marketing.

Note. Scenarios were originally written in Chinese and Japanese.