INFLUENCE OF EMPLOYEES' FELT TRUST ON THEIR VOICE BEHAVIOR:THE ROLES OF ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTIFICATION ANH TEAM VOICE ATMOSPHERE

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Abstract

Based on social identity theory and social cognitive theory, this paper reveals the mechanism of employees' felt trust in their voice behavior. The analysis of the data from 400 questionnaires showed that employees' felt trust is positively related to their voice behavior. Organizational identification plays a role in mediating the relationship between employees' felt trust and their voice behavior. In addition, team voice atmosphere regulates the positive relationship between employees' felt trust and their voice behavior, and has an obvious and positive effect on organizational identification which mediates employees' felt trust and their voice behavior, that is, under an active team voice atmosphere, the mediating effect of employees' felt trust on individual voice behavior through organizational identification is stronger. This study aims to provide important guidance and practical significance for managers to reasonably improve employees' felt trust and promote their voice behavior.

Keywords: employees' felt trust; organizational identification; team voice atmosphere; voice behavior

Introduction

In the era of a knowledge-driven economy, the rapidly changing and complex market environment requires employees not only to complete their job responsibilities, more importantly, but also to work proactively rather than passively, think about what they should do for their employer instead of what the employer should do for them, and share common future with the enterprise. When enterprises encounter problems or bottlenecks in the process of development, employees should actively offer suggestions and put forward solutions or scenarios to the problems, contributing their wisdom to corporate decision-making.

However, in the practice of management, when enterprises need suggestions from employees, the latter is not active in making their voice, even keeps silent, showing an attitude that they have nothing to do with it. The main reason lies in that voice behavior is challenging and may bring about high-risk negative effects to employees. Felt trust is an individual's subjective perception, that is, trust is felt by employees subjectively from their superiors.

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Employees being aware of dependency from their superiors will consciously fulfill their promises to the superiors, and a good cooperation relationship will thereby be established (Lau, 2008). According to Salamon (2008), felt trust is used by employees to judge the degree of trust from their superiors, which is demonstrated by the degree of willingness of the employees to take risks from their behaviors based on the trust from their superiors. Many studies have shown that when employees have felt the trust of their employers, superiors, and colleagues, they will perform more active work behaviors, such as knowledge sharing, organizational citizenship behavior, and voice behavior (Lau, 2014; Nerstad, 2017).

Based on the above analysis, this paper studies how employees' felt trust affects individual voice behavior, and explores the mediating role of organizational identification and the regulating role of team voice atmosphere from the perspective of social identity theory and social cognition theory. This paper mainly studies the following two aspects. First, based on the social identity theory, it reveals an influencing mechanism of employees' felt trust in individual voice behavior from the perspective of organizational identification. Second, the team voice atmosphere is introduced to explain the relations of action among employees' felt trust, organizational identification, and individual voice behavior, providing certain theoretical support and practical reference for how to stimulate and promote more voice behaviors of employees by enhancing their felt trust.

Theoretical Basis and Research Hypotheses

Employees' felt trust and their voice behavior

Employees' felt trust includes two aspects: perception of dependency from the superior and perception of information disclosure from the superior. Superior dependency refers to the degree of the superior's dependency on his/her subordinates' knowledge, skills, and abilities in his/her behavior and decision-making process, which reflects employees' perception of their superior's trust from the perspective of the trustee. Superior information disclosure refers to the willingness of the superior to share sensitive information with his/her subordinates, that is, to reflect the employees' perception of the superior's disclosure of information from the perspective of the trustee (Lau, 2008). In an organization, the relationship between superiors and subordinates is vertical and binary. The difference in status and power between the two makes the role of trust more complex. The more power and higher status the truster has in the organization, the stronger role of trust behavior will play (Lau et al., 2008). Research has found that when employees perceive that they are trusted by their superiors, they will show more positive behaviors in line with their superiors' expectations (Kierein & Gold, 2000).

Given the role played by superiors in organizational management, this paper holds that the perception of superiors' trust is an important organizational factor to promote subordinates' voice behavior. According to the social exchange theory, on the one hand, risks and benefits perceived by employees are the internal psychological mechanism of voice behavior (Detert & Edmondson, 2007). When their expected voice behavior may bring about large benefits with small risks, employees will show more active voice behavior in the organization or work process; otherwise, employees will restrain their voice behavior and keep silent. The dependency of superiors means that their behaviors and decisions are more dependent on the knowledge, skills and judgment of their subordinates. The perception of dependency of superiors improves the confidence of employees in the value and success of their voice behaviors to a certain extent. Information disclosure by superiors means that superiors often communicate with subordinates about their work and personal feelings. The perception of information disclosure by superiors strengthens the identity of friends between superiors and subordinates. In addition, being trusted reflects a positive evaluation from others, which is often interpreted as being partial or a kind of favor. According to the principle of reciprocity, when they perceive that they are trusted by superiors, employees will conduct

altruistic behaviors in return for favors from their superiors. Therefore, they will actively execute instructions from superiors to complete organizational tasks at work and convert the trust from superiors into work efficiency. In addition, they are more able to find problems and put forward effective and feasible suggestions at work.

On the other hand, the perception of being trusted by a superior conveys a sense of empowerment and confidence to subordinates, which will encourage the subordinates to exhibit more in-role and out-of-role behaviors. According to the social exchange theory, when employees perceive that they are trusted by their superiors, they are more likely to achieve a successful relationship exchange (Blau, 1964). Dependency and information disclosure from superiors means that subordinates need to perform some behaviors in return, one of which is voice behavior. Voice behavior is often understood as a risky behavior that changes the status quo and challenges the authority of leaders. Lack of felt trust from superiors will reduce employees' expectation that their suggestions will be adopted. Even if they find problems at work and are confident in their suggestions, the risk characteristics of voice behavior may be more prominent if they are not trusted by their superiors. The failure of voice behavior will affect their image in the organization. Employees will reduce their voice behavior in consideration of their gain and loss, and pros and cons. In addition, superiors' distrust will also reduce subordinates' sense of responsibility and obligation to the organization, inhibiting their motivation for voice behavior, and thus reducing voice behavior or performing no voice behavior. On this basis, this paper proposes the following hypothesis:

H1: Employees' felt trust has positive effects on individual voice behavior

The mediating role of organizational identification

Organizational identification specifically reflects the application of social identity theory in organizations, which can be used to reveal the association and mechanism of action between employees and organizations. According to the social identity theory, social identity belongs to psychological identification in nature and may be regarded as the degree of consistency after members of an organization experience the organization and make a comparison with themselves. Employees constantly look for ways to improve self-esteem and self-concept through their organization. When employees perceive that they are trusted, they will experience attention, acceptance, and respect from the organization and thereby have positive organizational identification, which is helpful for employees to internalize and support the code of conduct, values, and objectives of the organization, and is conducive to improving their overall attitude and behaviors. Employees with a high sense of organizational identification take matters of the organization as theirs because of their sense of oneness with the organization and will be more likely to make suggestions when they have found problems in the organization. Meanwhile, it is more likely for employees with a high sense of organizational identification to connect themselves with the organization, and they will show stronger organizational commitment and more organizational citizenship behaviors (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000). Furthermore, organizational commitment can promote voice behavior, and the latter is a kind of challenging organizational citizenship behavior (Van Dyne & Lepine, 1998). In addition, voice behavior is quite risky, and employees with a high sense of organizational identification are more likely to give suggestions without fear of risk. Some research shows that organizational identification positively affects voice behavior, and interpersonal discrimination has an indirect influence on voice behavior through such two intermediation chains as "interactive justice 一 organizational identification" and "procedural justice 一 organizational identification". This shows that organizational identification can transmit the effects of other variables on the voice behavior. On this basis, this paper proposes the following hypothesis:

H2: Employees' felt trust is positively related to organizational identification.

H3: Organizational identification is positively related to individual voice behavior.

H4: Organizational identification plays a mediating role between employees' felt trust and individual voice behavior.

The regulating effect of team voice atmosphere

Team voice atmosphere refers to the social and interpersonal relationship atmosphere that team members can perceive to affect their voice behavior, including such four dimensions as smooth voice atmosphere, leader acceptance atmosphere, teamwork atmosphere, and interpersonal harmony atmosphere. Previous research on atmosphere found that shared belief formed at the team level, namely, team atmosphere, has a significant impact on the behavior of team members (Kuenzi & Schminke, 2009). Speaking of voice behavior, team voice atmosphere, as a reflection of team members' shared and consistent psychological cognition of the external environment of voice behavior, should be an important reason for team members to conduct voice behavior. Considering that voice behavior may challenge the existing workflow and decision-making mechanism, individuals will weigh the possible risks and benefits of voice behavior before they make it (Detert & Burris, 2007).

Team voice atmosphere provides a kind of preset information for team members with voice behavior intentions to guide them to decide whether to make voice behavior or not. First, smooth voice atmosphere reflects the policy support of the whole unit or organization that ensures employees' voices or suggestions. It is also a reflection of the relaxed and democratic communication atmosphere created. Research shows that establishing channels for voice behavior in organizations can improve employees' perception of procedural justice and enable them to participate in voice behavior more actively (Van Prooijen et al., 2004). The smoother the voice atmosphere is, the more effective channels for voice behavior can be found by team members, and their perception of voice behavior opportunities is improved accordingly. It is thus easier for them to make voice behavior.

Second, the acceptance atmosphere of leaders reflects the willingness, acceptance, and tolerance of the direct superior of the team as the recipient of voice behavior. Research showed that whether leaders accept, encourage, and advocate employees to express their opinions freely is one of the important reasons for employees' voice behavior (Detert & Burris, 2007). In teams with a high level of leadership acceptance atmosphere, if direct superiors encourage subordinates to express their ideas openly at any time and anywhere, regardless of whether they are right or wrong, it can reduce team members' perception of the risk of voice behavior and stimulate their voice behavior. On the contrary, if leaders seldom ask for opinions from subordinates, and show antipathy, indifference to or even criticize team members' voice behavior, it will inhibit their voice behavior.

Third, the teamwork atmosphere reflects the atmosphere or spiritual performance when team members play a collective role in the process of carrying out work tasks and look for solutions and ideas with joint efforts. The higher the level of teamwork atmosphere is, the better team members can work with an ownership spirit to offer advice or suggestions for execution and progressing of teamwork.

Fourth, an interpersonal harmonious atmosphere reflects the interpersonal relationship between team members at the workplace and in private life. A harmonious interpersonal relationship is a basis for making a mutual voice among team members. Greenberg and Edwards (2009) also pointed out that internal factors of the social dynamic system at the workplace would affect employees' voice behavior. The higher the level of the atmosphere of interpersonal harmony, the more social support is felt by team members, and they are more likely to show voice behavior.

To sum up, according to social cognitive theory, human activities are jointly determined by the external environment, human behavior, and individual cognitive process. The team voice atmosphere belongs to the external environment, felt trust and organizational identification belong to the individual cognitive process, and individual voice behavior is human behavior. Under the external environment of team voice behavior, felt trust,

organizational identification, and voice behavior will be regulated by the team voice atmosphere. It has a significant regulating effect on the relationship between employees' felt trust and voice behavior, the relationship between organizational identification and voice behavior, and the mediating effect of organizational identification on employees' felt trust and voice behavior. On this basis, this paper proposes the following hypothesis:

H5: Team voice atmosphere plays a significant and positive regulating role in the relationship between organizational identification and individual voice behavior. Compared with a gloomy team voice atmosphere, the positive relationship between organizational identification and individual voice behavior is stronger in an active team voice atmosphere.

H6: Team voice atmosphere plays a significant and positive regulating role on the mediating effect of organizational identification over employees' felt rust and individual voice behavior. Compared with a gloomy team voice atmosphere, the mediating effect of employees' felt trust in individual voice behavior through organizational identification is stronger in an active team voice atmosphere.

Research design

1. Research samples

In this study, 436 questionnaires were distributed to employees in Nanning, Liuzhou, Guilin, and other municipalities of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region (GZAR), China. After eliminating the ones with wrong, missing, and casual answers, 400 valid questionnaires were collected, with an effective rate of 91.7%. In terms of the structure of the samples, male employees are the majority, accounting for 52% of the total samples; In terms of age structure, the majority of employees are young people, 65.3% of whom are under 40 years old; In terms of educational background, 55.6% of the respondents have a bachelor degree or above; In terms of working years, 62.2% of the respondents had worked for more than 10 years.

2. Measurement of variables

Mature scales at home and abroad or scales used by many scholars are adopted in this study. Each item adopts a Likert7-point scale scoring method to measure such four main variables as employees' felt trust, organizational identification, individual voice behavior, and team voice atmosphere.

Employees' felt trust: The scale compiled by Gillespie (2003) was used. The scale has a total of 11 items, including such representative items as "My direct superior will try to involve me in and make me exert an influence on things that are important to him", etc. The Cronbach's α value of this scale is 0.857.

Organizational identification: The measurement tool of organizational identification developed by Chenney (1987), including a total of 12 items, was used. There are such representative items as "I am very proud of being an employee of the company", "I am willing to spend the remaining time of my career in the company", etc. The Cronbach's α value of this scale is 0.861.

Individual voice behavior: The Workplace Anxiety Scale compiled by Liang et al. (2012) was used. It has a total of 10 items. Representative items such as "I will proactively point out the problems that may affect the normal operation of the company and propose solutions", etc. are included. The Cronbach's α value of this scale is 0.793.

Team voice behavior climate: The scale compiled by Frazier and Bowler (2015) was used, which has a total of 6 items, including representative items such as "The company encourages employees to make suggestions on issues affecting the team", etc.. And the Cronbach's α value of this scale is 0.925.

Data analysis and result

1. Confirmatory factor analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis is used to verify the convergent validity of the variables in this study, which is determined by indexes of average variation extraction (AVE). Formell and Larcker (1981) believed that latent variables presented better convergence when the AVE was greater than or equal to 0.4. Table 1 shows that the cumulative explained variance ratios of all variables are above 60% and KMO fluctuates around 0.9, which conforms to the judgment criteria of each index. This proves that the scale has very good construct validity, and all the items of the measuring tools in the questionnaire can precisely and effectively reflect the to-be-measured variables. In addition, the AVE value of each variable is above 0.4, the CR value is greater than 0.85, indicating satisfactory fitting optimization indexes and the RMSEA indexes are lower than 0.05, indicating good convergence. All these show that the scale in this paper has better convergent validity.

Table 1 - Validity and reliability test of scales

Variable name	Cumulative explained variance ratio	KMO	AVE	CR	Fitting optimization index
Employees' felt trust	66.60%	0.901	0.446	0.889	x2/df=1.169, RMSEA=0.021, CFI=0.997, TLI=0.996, IFI=0.997, NFI=0.981
Organizational identification	70.99%	0.879	0.504	0.918	x2/df=1.889, RMSEA=0.047, CFI=0.988, TLI=0.975, IFI=0.988, NFI=0.975
Team voice atmosphere	72.80%	0.930	0.674	0.925	x2/df=0.475, RMSEA=0.010, CFI=0.989, TLI=0.999, IFI=1.0.998, NFI=0.997
Employees' voice behavior	65.35%	0.866	0.430	0.882	x2/df=0.672, RMSEA=0.023, CFI=0.999, TLI=0.9998, IFI=0.996, NFI=0.991

2. Correlation analysis

The mean value, standard deviation, and correlation coefficient of each variable in this study are shown in Table 2. Data suggest that correlations among variables are consistent with the previous hypotheses of the study: employees' felt trust is significantly and positively related to their voice behavior ($\gamma=0.411$, $p<0.01$) and organizational identification ($\gamma=0.576$, $p<0.01$). Organizational identification is significantly and positively related to individual voice behavior ($\gamma=0.424$, $p<0.01$).

Table 2 - Mean values, standard deviations of major variables, and correlation coefficients between variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Gender	1							
2. Age	0.016	1						
3. Education	-0.015	0.001	1					
4. Working years	0.043	0.960	-0.161	1				

5. Employees' felt trust	0.076	-0.029	-0.031	-0.020	1			
6. Individual voice behavior	0.065	-0.012	0.073	-0.018	0.411**	1		
7. Organizational identification	0.071	0.038	-0.013	0.047	0.576**	0.424**	1	
8. Team voice atmosphere	-0.011	-0.007	-0.022	-0.014	0.390**	0.362**	0.366**	1
Mean value (M)	1.480	5.271	2.614	2.576	3.945	3.904	4.145	4.018
Standard deviation (SD)	0.500	1.126	0.864	1.565	1.256	1.109	1.155	1.616

Note: ** and * represent $p < 0.01$ and $p < 0.05$ respectively

3. Test of common method variance

Due to the restrictions of objective conditions, data from the same source are used in this study. To avoid common method variance, the Harman single-factor test method is adopted for analysis and judgment. If only a factor is analyzed or the explanatory power of a certain factor is especially strong in the analysis results of factors that have been tested as being unrotated, it can be determined that there is a common method variance. Exploratory factor analysis is conducted for all items of variables in the questionnaire, and principal component analysis is applied to extract factors with a characteristic root greater than 1. Results in Table 3 show that there are 5 factors whose extracted characteristic roots are greater than 1 without rotation, and the first factor explains a variance of 35%, which does not exceed the criterion of 50%, with a cumulative explanation rate of 71.5%. Therefore, it can be concluded that the common method variance in this study is not serious.

Table 3 - Exploratory factor analysis

	Initial eigenvalue			Eigenvalue after extracting component		
Component	Eigenvalue	Percentage of explained variance	Percentage of cumulative explained variance	Eigenvalue	Percentage of explained variance	Percentage of cumulative explained variance
1	9.626	35.652	35.652	9.626	35.652	35.652
2	3.263	12.086	47.738	3.263	12.086	47.738
3	2.676	9.912	57.650	2.676	9.912	57.650
4	1.984	7.348	64.998	1.984	7.348	64.998
5	1.754	6.497	71.495	1.754	6.497	71.495

Note: 1. The part with an eigenvalue less than 1 is omitted; 2. Analysis method: Principal component analysis

4. Hypothesis test

Hierarchy regression analysis is conducted to verify the relations of hypotheses in this study (see Table 4).

Table 4 - Hierarchy regression results

Variables	Organizational identification		Employees' voice behavior				
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
Control variables							
Gender	0.067	0.024	0.065	0.036	0.034	0.027	0.102
Age	-0.090	-0.061	-0.072	-0.034	-0.051	-0.034	-0.004
Education	0.009	0.024	0.084	0.080	0.095	0.088	0.071
Working years	0.132	0.120	0.062	0.006	0.053	0.019	0.001
Independent variable							
Employees' felt trust		0.576***			0.411***	0.251***	
Mediating variable							
Organizational identification				0.423***		0.279***	0.243***
Moderating variables							
Team voice atmosphere				0.555***			0.327***
Interaction							
Organizational identification × Team voice atmosphere							0.090***
R^2	0.007***	0.337***	0.010***	0.188***	0.010***	0.178***	0 .400***
ΔR^2	-0.003***	0.328***	0.000***	0.177***	0.000***	0.168***	0.389***
F	0.740	39.969***	1.000	18.205***	1.000	17.065***	37.312***

Note: ***, ** and * represent $p < 0.001$, $p < 0.01$, $p < 0,05$ respectively

(1) Test of direct effect

Regression analysis is conducted to test hypothesis 1. Firstly, the control variables (gender, age, education, working years) are put into a regression equation, then the independent variable (employees' felt trust) is introduced, and finally, the relationship between employees' felt trust and individual voice behavior is tested. Table 4 shows the result of the regression analysis. From Model 5, after controlling related variables, employees' felt trust is significantly and positively related to individual voice behavior (β=0.411, P<0.001). Therefore, hypothesis H1 is supported by relevant data.

(2) Test of mediating effect

The steps for mediating effect proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986) are used in this study to test the mediating effect of organizational identification. When making regression analysis, the control variables (gender, age, education, working years) are put into a regression equation first, then the independent variable (employees' felt trust) is introduced, and finally, the mediating effect of organizational identification on employees' felt trust and individual voice behavior is tested. Table 4 shows that employees' felt trust has a positive prediction of organizational identification (β=0.576, p<0.001), and organizational identification can predict positive individual voice behavior (β=0.423, p<0.001). Therefore, hypotheses 2 and 3 are supported.

Furthermore, when the mediating variable (organizational identification) is added to employees' felt trust and individual voice behavior for hierarchical analysis, organizational identification can predict positive individual voice behavior (β=0.279, p<0.001), and the positive effect of employees' felt trust on individual voice behavior is diminished (β value changed from 0.411 to 0.251) when the organizational identification is added. However, the

regression coefficients of the independent variable (employees' felt trust) and the dependent variable (individual voice behavior) are still significant (β=0.251, p<0.001). From the above analysis, hypothesis 4 is verified.

(3) Test of regulating effect

The results in Table 4 indicate that both organizational identification and team voice atmosphere have a significantly positive effect on individual voice behavior (β=0.423, p<0.001; β=0.555, p<0.001). The interaction of organizational identification and team voice atmosphere has a significantly positive effect on individual voice behavior (β=0.090, p<0.001). And the regression coefficient of organizational identification and individual voice behavior and that of team voice atmosphere and individual voice behavior is still significant (β=0.243, p<0.001; β=0.327, p<0.001). The overall explanation rate of the model has been increased to 38.9%. From the above analysis, hypothesis 5 is verified.

(4) Regulated mediating effect

To test the regulated mediating effect, the testing method for regulated mediation proposed by Preacher (2007) and Hayes (2013) is adopted, and the plug-in unit PROCESS 3.3 of SPSS is used for the Bootstrap test. According to the models and hypotheses in this study, the model sample corresponding to the plug-in unit is Model 14. The sample size is set to 5,000, the non-parametric percentile method is selected for Bootstrap, and the test is conducted under a 95% confidence interval. At the same time, a standard deviation is added or subtracted according to the mean value, and organizational identification is divided into high and low levels. The variables have been standardized before testing the data.

Table 5 - Analysis results of regulated mediating effect

| Team voice atmosphere | Employees' felt trust--->Organizational identification--->Individual voice behavior | | | | | |
| | Indirect effect under different conditions | | | Regulated mediating effect | | |
	Effect value	Standard error	Confidence interval	INDEX	Standard error	Confidence interval
M-SD	0.0207	0.0207	[-0.0460,0.0865]	0.0456	0.0135	[0.0193,0.0724]
M	0.0943	0.0266	[0.0428,0.1465]			
M+SD	0.1679	0.0266	[0.1008,0.2373]			

As shown in Table 5, in the mediation path of Employees' felt trust--->Organizational identification--->Individual voice behavior, when the team voice atmosphere is gloomy, the indirect effect of employees' felt trust on individual voice behavior through organizational identification is 0.0207, and the confidence interval is [-0.0460,0.0865], including 0. When the team voice atmosphere is active, the indirect effect of employees' felt trust on individual voice behavior through organizational identification is 0.1679, and the confidence interval is [0.1008,0.2373], excluding 0. According to the research of Hayes (2013), INDEX is an important indicator to determine the presence or absence of a regulated mediating effect. Only when the indicator is not 0 significantly, the presence of a regulated mediating effect can be determined. The data in the table show that the INDEX value is 0.0456 for the regulated mediating effect in the path of Employees' felt trust--->Organizational identification--->Individual voice behavior, and the confidence interval is [0.0193,0.0724], excluding 0. To sum up, when the team voice atmosphere is active, the positive effect of employees' felt trust in individual voice behavior through organizational identification is stronger. Therefore, hypothesis 6 is verified.

Conclusions and outlook

1. Conclusions

Based on the social exchange theory and the social cognitive theory, this paper takes organizational identification as the mediating variable and team voice atmosphere as the regulating variable to build a theoretical model of employees' felt trust affecting individual voice behavior. Through the 400 questionnaires released to corporate employees in such municipalities as Nanning, Liuzhou, and Guilin of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China, the following conclusions are made: employees' felt trust will positively affect individual voice behavior. Organizational identification plays a role in mediating the relationship between employees' felt trust and their voice behavior, and team voice atmosphere plays a regulating role.

2. Theoretical significance

(1) Bring in a new theoretical perspective for research on the individual voice behavior of employees

In previous research on factors affecting individual voice behavior, domestic and foreign scholars have proposed rich theoretical constructs and conducted empirical studies accordingly. However, most of the studies focused on formal organizational behaviors or organizational relations, rarely on the influence of employees' felt trust on individual voice behavior. In this paper, the theoretical concept of employees' felt trust is regarded as a factor influencing individual voice behavior. Relevant theories are applied to illustrate the relationship between the two and an empirical study is conducted for testing, to find out the mechanism of employees' felt trust affecting individual voice behavior. This brings in a new theoretical perspective for the study of individual voice behavior.

(2) Expand the applicability of the theoretical concept of employees' felt trust

Employees' felt trust is taken as a major factor influencing individual voice behavior, and explanatory research is used to test the theoretical construct's authenticity and validity in the Chinese context from the perspective of employees in Chinese organizations. Meanwhile, the empirical research method with a questionnaire is used to test the applicability of the scaling mode of employees' felt trust.

(3) Enrich the theoretical research of individual voice behavior

Taking employees' felt trust as an independent variable, organizational identification as a mediating variable, team voice atmosphere as a regulating variable, and individual voice behavior as a causal variable, this paper explores in depth the mechanism of how employees' felt trust affects individual voice behavior and conducts exploratory research to test its theoretical rationality, applicability, and validity. In addition, the mediating factor (organizational identification) and the regulating factor (team voice atmosphere) in the influence of employees' felt trust on individual voice behavior are tested specifically using a questionnaire. This paper offers a new perspective for the research on the influence of employees' felt trust on individual voice behavior.

3. Management implications

(1) The management should attach importance to the significant influence of employees' felt trust on individual voice behavior in organizations.

It is found in research that employees' felt trust positively affects individual voice behavior. Employees' felt trust is divided into the perception of dependency from the superior and the perception of information disclosure from the superior, and individual voice behavior includes active voice and inhibitive voice. The management should correctly understand and predict the influence of trust on employees' voice behavior, and release a signal of trust in employees in a targeted way according to their personality traits and abilities in practice. Meanwhile, the management should proactively understand the employees' feelings and work dynamics, and ensure the employees' perception of trust from the management. Only after the

employees have felt the trust, their motivation can be stimulated, so that they can take the initiative to offer advice and suggestions when they find problems.

(2) Improve employees' sense of organizational identification and stimulate their active voice behavior

According to research, organizational identification plays a role in mediating employees' felt trust and individual voice behavior. Organizational identification is an important factor influencing individual voice behavior. Employees who have perceived dependency or information disclosure from the superior will have a stronger sense of organizational identification, and show more active voice behavior. Therefore, the management should keep an open mind and create a harmonious and inclusive organizational atmosphere, so that employees can experience care from the organization, harmonious interpersonal relations, and a fair competitive environment. In this way, employees' acceptance and identification of the organization at heart can be improved, and their initiatives of offering advice and suggestions can be stimulated.

(3) Create a relaxed team voice atmosphere and alleviate employees' pressure of active voice

From the research conclusions, a highly active team voice atmosphere will better regulate the relationship between employees' felt trust and individual voice behavior. Therefore, the management must create an active team voice atmosphere for employees from their perspective, encourage them to proactively offer advice and suggestions through multiple incentives, alleviate the employees' voicing pressure and decrease their risks through the institution and human care.

4. Limitations and outlook

There are still some limitations and shortcomings in this study, which need further exploration in the future. First, limited by human, financial and material resources, and time, and under the influence of the COVID-19 epidemic, the author could not go to more cities/provinces/countries and more enterprises to collect investigation samples, but just selected samples from enterprises in such municipalities as Nanning, Liuzhou, and Guilin in Guangxi, China. 436 questionnaires were released, and 400 valid questionnaires were collected after removing those with wrong, forgotten, and casual answers. The sample size was small, and cross-section data was used, so the general applicability of the research conclusions needs to be further verified. Second, the data in this study were mainly collected through questionnaires, and all the items in each questionnaire had been completed by the same person. Though the variables had been isolated, there are still some same-source variances in the results inevitably. Therefore, it is suggested to use more and better research methods at home and abroad for reference in future research and collect data from enterprises in different regions and fields at various levels, to reduce same-source variances to the greatest extent. Third, there are many factors influencing individual voice behavior, but due to limitations in the emphasis and length of this paper, organizational identification is introduced as a mediating variable in the research only from the perspective of felt trust. Future research may explore in depth the mechanism of some undiscussed variables affecting individual voice behavior.

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