

# Research on the Relationship Among Empowering Leadership Behavior, Perceived Organizational Status and Voice Behavior

Xiangjin Meng<sup>1, a</sup>, Lu Ma<sup>1,2, b</sup>

<sup>1</sup>School of Economics and Management, Guangxi University of Science and Technology, Liuzhou 545006, China;

<sup>2</sup>Business School, Guangxi University for Nationalities, Nanning 530006, China.

<sup>a</sup> 765672398@qq.com, <sup>b</sup> malu6655@163.com

**Abstract.** Based on the theory of social exchange, this paper studies the relationship among empowering leadership behavior, perceived organizational status and voice behavior. The study finds that empowering leadership behavior has a significant positive impact on voice behavior; perceived organizational status plays a mediating role between empowering leadership behavior and voice behavior. Empowering leadership behavior can positively influence the voice behavior through the internal conduction of perceived organizational status.

**Keywords:** empowering leadership behavior, perceived organizational status, voice behavior.

## 1. Introduction

In the new economic era, the rapid development of science and technology and the rapidly changing business environment have brought unprecedented opportunities and challenges to the organization. This requires organizations to have the core competitive advantage while being flexible, innovative and adaptable. The valuable insights generated by employees and leaders in improving products, services, and optimizing process and management communication contribute to organizational development [1]. Employees are the most direct practitioners in the organization. They are the most able to find deficiencies in their work and processes, and they have the most say in the problems that exist on the organization. As one of the forms of employee participation management, the voice behavior not only enables the leader to understand the employee's true view of the problem, but also increases the employee's initiative. In the actual workplace, the voice behaviors are more likely to occur to leader and employee. The leader acts as the direct target of the employee, and the leadership behavior directly affects the employee's voice behavior. Nowadays, organizational flat management has become a trend, and employees have taken on more tasks, which requires employees to have more work autonomy and more support from the organization, and leaders need empowerment to meet the requirements of employees. Social exchange theory believes that when employees receive resources and power given by the organization, employees will use their actions to give back to the organization. Leaders empower employees with more work autonomy through empowerment, and show concern, encouragement, trust and attention to employees. In addition, many studies have shown that the ideas and behaviors of employees in an organization are often closely related to employees' judgments and perceptions of their own status. When employees' perceived organizational status is at a high level, they feel respected by others in the organization and tend to use their unique qualities and abilities to actively contribute to the organization. How to improve perceived organizational status and influence employee behavior has attracted more and more scholars' attention [2].

Based on this, this study analyzes the impact mechanism of empowering leadership behavior on the voice behavior, in order to reveal the mechanism of interaction between empowering leadership behavior, perceived organizational status and voice behavior, and provides new research perspective of the development of the relationship between empowering leadership behavior and voice behavior.

## **2. Empowering Leadership Behavior and Voice Behavior**

Currently, the business environment is becoming more and more complex, and the level of competition among organizations is gradually increasing. Authorization has become a way for organizations to cope with environmental pressures. The concept of empowering leadership behavior is derived from the concept of authorization. Arnold et al (2000) believed that empowering leadership behavior is the process by which leaders enhance employee intrinsic motivation and initiative by empowering employees, providing guidance and support to employees, and facilitating employee participation in decision-making [3]. Voice behavior refers to the self-issuance of employees to point out problems with their work by suggesting and improving measures for the purpose of improving organizational effectiveness [4].

As part of the organizational context, the behavior of the leader affects the employee's behavioral outcomes. Leaders give employees enough trust, care and respect, which can motivate employees to perform more off-character behaviors while doing their jobs. On the one hand, social exchange theory believes that the interactive behavior of interpersonal communication is a process. In this process, people follow the principle of reciprocity to exchange resources. The resources used for exchange include both material resources and psychological resources. The leadership not only gives employees more work autonomy, but also shows care, encouragement, trust and attention to employees. According to the principle of reciprocity, employees also hope that they can return to the organization, contribute to the organization's goals, and then express their own suggestions and ideas. Leaders' encouragement and help to employees will increase enthusiasm for employees [5]. On the other hand, the leader, as the direct target of the employee, has the power to allocate resources in the organization and has the ability to determine the employee's ability to stay. Therefore, the employee will be more cautious about making the statement. Empowering leadership behavior creates an atmosphere of caring for employees and encouragement in the organization. When employees feel this atmosphere, employees will give a positive evaluation of the behaviors in the heart, so that they can act bravely [6]. Leaders empower employees to work, provide job guidance, and encourage employees to participate in decision-making, which encourage employees to be motivated, encourage employees to stop being silent, and make brave suggestions and ideas. In addition, most employees need to determine whether to adopt the voice behavior of the situation and the psychological security of the organization. The leader is an important part of the organizational situation, and its management behavior or decision-making characteristics will also influence the behavior. The voice behavior can bring higher leadership preferences to the employees themselves and get more support and help.

## **3. Mediating Role of Perceived Organizational Status**

### **3.1 The Impact of Empowering Leadership Behavior on Perceived Organizational Status**

In recent years, the organizational structure of enterprises has been flattening, and the work team has become a popular way of working. Employees have more freedom of work and autonomy. Empowering leadership behavior has also attracted the attention to scholars. Empowering employees to work, promoting employee participation in organizational decision-making, providing support and guidance to employees, focusing on team members' cooperation, and encouraging employees to participate in a goal setting are representative behaviors of empowering leadership behavior. First, when employees have autonomy in their work, influence in organizational decision-making, and feel that they are valued by their leaders, employee's perceived organizational status will increase [7]. Employees think they have received the attention to leaders and have more rights and resources in the organization. Secondly, one of the indicators of the level of individual status is work autonomy, employees with more autonomy at work and more freedom to control their work style, and more likely to think that they have a higher status in the organization [8]. They can arrange their work according to their own needs, and they can also enjoy the power that other employees do not have. Finally, perceived status arises from two or more interpersonal relationships and is an asset of interpersonal social relations. Empowering leadership behavior is conducive to establishing a good

quality relationship between leader and employee [9]. When leaders and employees get along well, leaders begin to pay attention to and inspect employees. Employees also regard this high-quality relationship as a resource. They believe that leaders will trust and value themselves more and help to increase their perceived organizational status. Therefore, we believe that empowering leadership behavior has a significant positive impact on perceived organizational status.

### **3.2 The Impact of Perceived Organizational Status on Voice Behavior**

The survival and development of employees in the organization need to do something different, and the criteria for judging whether to do or not should be balanced with or not, and often closely related to the judgment and perception of employees on their status. Perretti and Negro (2006) believe that perceived organizational status refers to the perception of an individual's relative social position or rank in an organization or team [10]. It describes the employee's judgment and perception of his or her status. In the organization, perceived organizational status will positively influence voice behavior. On the one hand, employees with high perceived organizational status can experience a higher level of competition needs, think that they are highly hoped by other colleagues, and are more confident about their own personal abilities. They also believe that they should shoulder more responsibilities and hope to be organized. Make a contribution and realize organizational goals as the driving force for your own progress [11]. Employees with high perceived organizational status actively monitor and control work processes that are beneficial to the organization's development and outcomes, which helps them identify problems and suggest improvements and ideas. In addition, employees with high perceived organizational status believe that they have the right to speak in the organization, and are less constrained by others when expressing their suggestions and ideas [12]. On the other hand, when there is a problem of the organization, employees with low perceived organizational status will think that they have a low status in the organization, belong to the "marginal person" of the organization, and rely on other employees in their work, thus reducing their own voice behavior [13]. Therefore, we believe that perceived organizational status has a significant positive impact on voice behavior.

In general, empowering leadership behavior enables employees to have more power and well-being, while allowing employees to feel the importance, care and respect that the organization attaches to them, thereby enhancing employees' perceived organizational status. The increase in perceived organizational status will make employees more "existent" and think that they are important to the organization, hoping to take on more responsibilities and prove their worth in the organization. In order to preferably develop the organization, employees will be more proactive in presenting their own suggestions and ideas to the leaders. Based on the above analysis, we believe that perceived organizational status has a mediating effect on empowering leadership behavior and voice behavior.

## **4. Summary**

This study finds that empowering leadership behavior has a significant positive impact on voice behavior, and perceived organizational status plays a mediating role between empowering leadership behavior and voice behavior. Empowering leadership behavior is one of the important reasons that affect employee's voice behavior. It is an important improvement direction for enterprise managers to lead by example, participate in decision-making, provide guidance, share information and care for their subordinates. Managers can choose the most satisfactory leadership styles for employees. As the direct representative of employee performance evaluation, the leader expresses the concern and support for the development of subordinates through empowerment, and creates an atmosphere of active speech in the organization, thereby improving the status of subordinates' perception and stimulating the initiative of the speech.

In the business practice of the enterprise, on the one hand, the leader should guide the voice behavior through positive leadership behavior. Managers can support the development of employees, encourage independent decision-making, and guide the results of the goals, to convey the signals of

identification and care to employees, strengthen their position perception, and then contribute to the organization. Improve the psychological awareness of employees and enhance the internal motivation of expressing opinions. On the other hand, leaders need to raise the level of employee's perceived organizational status and enhance the internal motivation of expressing opinions. Leaders need to communicate regularly with the lower and upper levels to jointly develop a target action plan and ensure that frontline workers are confident in completing the task, and they must pay attention to individual differences in employees and have targeted and flexible management. In addition, Leaders should create an organizational atmosphere that are relaxed and advocates. When employees feel this kind of organizational atmosphere, they will be more willing to provide their opinions and ideas to the leaders, thus promoting organizational development.

## References

- [1]. Botero I C, Van Dyne L. Employee Voice Behavior: Interactive Effects of LMX and Power Distance in the United States and Colombia. *Management Communication Quarterly*, Vol. 23 (2009) No. 1, p. 84-104.
- [2]. Stoner J, Perrewé P L, Munyon T P. The role of identity in extra-role behaviors: Development of a conceptual model. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, Vol. 26 (2011) No. 2, p. 94-107.
- [3]. Arnold J A, Arad S, Drasgow R F, et al. The empowering leadership questionnaire: the construction and validation of a new scale for measuring leader behaviors. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*. Vol. 21 (2000) No. 3, p. 249-269.
- [4]. Lepine J A, Dyne L V. Predicting voice behavior in work groups. *Journal of Applied Psychology*. Vol. 83 (1998) No. 6, p. 853-868.
- [5]. Detert J R, Burris E R. Leadership behavior and employee voice: Is the door really open? *Academy of Management Journal*. Vol. 50 (2007) No. 4, p.869-884.
- [6]. Deng Yulin, Wang Jie, Zhang Long. Empowering leadership behavior, voice efficacy and voice behavior. *Enterprise Economy*. Vol. 37 (2018) No. 8, p.132-138.
- [7]. Eisenberger R, Stinglhamber F, Vandenberghe C, et al. Perceived supervisor support: Contributions to perceived organizational support and employee retention. *Journal of Applied Psychology*. Vol. 87 (2002) No. 3, p.565-573.
- [8]. Swider B W, Zimmerman R D, Boswell W R, et al. Understanding your standing: Multiple indicators of status and their influence on employee attachment. *Corporate Reputation Review*. Vol. 14 (2011) No. 3, p.159-174.
- [9]. Yin Kui, Liu Yongren, Li Yuanxun. A research on the interactive impact among employee's political skill, voice behavior and perceived organizational status. *Modern Finance and Economics-Journal of Tianjin University of Finance and Economics*. Vol. 33 (2013) No. 2, p.65-71.
- [10]. Perretti F, Negro G. Filling empty seats: How status and organizational hierarchies affect exploration versus exploitation in team design. *Academy of Management Journal*. Vol. 49 (2006) No.4, p.759-777.
- [11]. Fast N J, Chen S. When the boss feels inadequate: power, incompetence, and aggression. *Psychological Science*. Vol. 20 (2010) No.11, p.1406-1413.
- [12]. Gong Y, Huang J C, Farh J L. Employee learning orientation, transformational leadership, and employee creativity: The mediating role of employee creative self-efficacy. *Academy of management Journal*. Vol. 52 (2009) No.4, p.765-778.

- [13]. Janssen O, Gao L. Supervisory responsiveness and employee self-perceived status and voice behavior. *Journal of Management*. Vol. 41 (2015) No.7, p.1854-1872.