

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND EMPLOYEE VOICE BEHAVIOR

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## **DEDICATION**

*To my beloved mother, father, siblings, wife, son and friends*

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

This study would not have been possible without the help and support of certain individuals. First, I would like express my sincere appreciation to my supervisor, Dr. Lily Suriani Mohd. Arif, for encouragement, guidance, critics and friendship. Without her continued support and interest, this thesis would not have been the same as presented here. A special thank you is also owed to my family and friends whose encouragement and support was invaluable throughout this process.

## **ABSTRACT**

This study intends to determine the relationship between transformational leadership and employee voice behavior among workers in XYZ Resort, Bintan, Indonesia. There are six dimensions of transformational leadership: articulating a vision, providing an appropriate model, fostering the acceptance of group goals, high performance expectations, individualized support and intellectual stimulation (Podsakoff, et al., 1990). A set of questionnaire consisted of instruments by Podsakoff, et al., (1990) in measuring transformational leadership and Van Dyne and LePine (1998) in measuring employee voice behavior were used. A total of 169 questionnaires were distributed using simple random sampling method and collected. Descriptive analysis results showed that in XYZ Resort, the level of transformational leadership and the level of employee voice behavior was high. The result also showed that transformational leadership was significantly correlated with employee voice behavior. And as expected, the result also showed that each of six dimensions of transformational leadership were significantly correlated with employee voice behavior.

**Keywords:** transformational leadership, TLI, leadership, employee voice, voice behavior

## **ABSTRAK**

Kajian ini dijalankan bertujuan untuk mengkaji hubungan antara gaya kepemimpinan transformasi dan tingkah laku bersuara pekerja di kalangan pekerja di XYZ Resort, Bintan, Indonesia. Ada enam dimensi dari kepemimpinan transformasi: menjelaskan visi, menyediakan model yang sesuai, menekankan penerimaan matlamat kumpulan, jangkaan prestasi tinggi, sokongan individu dan rangsangan intelektual (Podsakoff, et al., 1990). Satu set borang soal selidik yang mengandungi soal-selidik dari Podsakoff et al., (1990) untuk mengukur gaya kepemimpinan transformasi dan Van Dyne dan LePine (1998) untuk mengukur tingkah laku bersuara pekerja telah digunakan. Total 169 borang soal selidik telah diedarkan dengan menggunakan kaedah persampelan rawak mudah dan dikumpulkan. Hasil analisis deskriptif mendapati bahwa gaya kepemimpinan transformasi dan tingkah laku bersuara pekerja di XYZ Resort adalah pada tahap yang tinggi. Hasil dari analisis regresi juga menunjukkan bahwa gaya kepemimpinan transformasi mempunyai hubungan yang signifikan dengan tingkah laku bersuara pekerja. Dan seperti yang dijangka, terdapat juga hubungan antara tiap-tiap enam dimensi dari gaya kepemimpinan transformasi dengan tingkah laku bersuara pekerja.

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**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

N	-	Population
S	-	Sample
SD	-	Standard Deviation
SPSS	-	Statistical Package of the Social Sciences
TLI	-	Transformational Leadership Inventory

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

Voice behavior has a rich history in the organizational sciences. The interest in the concept of voice behavior has grown in the last decade. The interest were growing from those who focusing on a higher level performance of organization and from those desiring better systems from employee perspective (Dundon, Wilkinson, Marchington, & Ackers, 2004). The domain of voice is very broad and the constructs have emerged at different times and develop at different rates, resulting in a highly fragmented field (Brinsfield, Edwards, & Greenberg, 2009). The common approach uses the term of voice was to describe employees speaking up behavior such as proactively make suggestions for change. The term voice was to represent "the intentional expression of work-related ideas, information, and opinions" (Van Dyne, Ang, & Botero, 2003).

Employees' proactive behavior, voicing out suggestions and criticism to organization, bring numerous benefits (Cheng, Chang, Kuo, & Lu, 2014). Walumba & Schaubroeck (2010) posit that voice behavior can help organization to improve its functions and systems, which can enhances its effectiveness and survival (Detert & Burris, 2007). Similarly, Cheng et al., (2014) asserts that organizations' success depend on its members willingness to speak up and to share their ideas, intelligence, and concerns to the organization. This is because, according to Harrington (2001) and Fuller, Barnett, Hester, Relyea, & Frey (2007), in order for organization to be able to "doing things better" the inputs from the employees are very important, hence should be highly sought after. When employees express and voice their ideas to their leaders



or supervisors, better decisions are made. However, input from employees helps to improve the process of work and helps in solving and correcting work-related problems (Detert & Burris, 2007). In the functioning of work groups, employees voice also have an important role (Lepine & Van Dyne, 1998). A better understanding of the factors that motivating employees voice behavior, therefore, has both practical and theoretical significance (Cheng et al., 2014).

There are several factors and antecedents underlying the decision of employee to speak up or to remain silent, one of these factors is leadership style. In order to make effective decisions, to respond appropriately to dynamic business conditions, and to correct problems before they escalate, managers and organizational leaders need information from individuals throughout the organization (Morrison & Rothman, 2009). Employee voice is one among various channel, a management can utilize to receive critical information and feedback from individuals throughout the organization. However, some leader behaviors in ability to listen and to respond appropriately to employee voice (Ashford, Sutcliffe, & Christianson, 2009), limit the critical upward communication flow (Tourish & Robson, 2006).

Transformational leadership is a change-oriented style which focuses in influencing followers “by broadening and elevating followers' goals and providing followers with confidence to perform beyond the expectations specified in the implicit or explicit exchange agreement” (Dvir, Eden, Avolio, & Shamir, 2002). The dimensions of transformational leadership by Bass & Avolio (1994), which is intellectual stimulation, idealized influence, inspirational motivation and individualized consideration, could promote employees voice behavior (Liu, Zhu, & Yang, 2010). Several empirical findings also suggested that transformational leadership style has positive and significant effects on employees behavior of voice. Detert & Burris (2007) in their research has found that transformational leadership has positive relationship with employees speaking up behavior to the leaders. Shin & Zhou (2003) also found that transformational leadership was related positively to follower innovation behavior and creativity. Liu, et al. (2010) found direct positive effect from transformational leadership on voice behavior as a part of employee extra-role behaviors.

## 1.2 Problem Statement

The voice of workers in XYZ Resort is very important in order to overcome and decreasing the bad reviews from customer. Nowadays, business environment were complex and changing rapidly. Voice behavior plays a critical role in influencing organizational performance, hence its survival. This is due to increasing reliance on product and service innovations which demand quick responses to rapidly changing markets and severe competitions (Zhou & Long, 2012). Voice is important when an organization's environment is dynamic and new ideas facilitate continuous improvement (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998).

The concepts similar to voice have appeared in organizational literature for several decades. Morrison (2011) has noted some important differences between voice and other constructs, like issue selling, whistle-blowing, upward communication, and voice as a response to dissatisfaction. In this research, voice is viewed as a form of prosocial behavior, less self-focused, more other-focused, and intended to be constructive (Van Dyne et al., 2003). In other words, it is presumed that the driving motive for voice is the desire to help the organization or work unit perform more effectively or to make a positive difference for the collective (Ashford et al., 2009; Grant & Ashford, 2008). In this hypercompetitive environment, organizations face increasing challenges in problem solving and information processing. Open and continuous flow of communication with the members of the organizations expected. Through open communication, exchanges of ideas, thoughts and information between organizational members helps organization to flourish, become innovative and effective (Hsiung, 2012). According to Morrison & Rothman (2009) open communication allows organizational members to communicate their concerns, and suggestions with fearing the consequences of voicing out, hence, increase organization's effectiveness in making decisions, correcting problems and responding appropriately to the present dynamic business condition.

Morrison & Milliken (2000) stated that many organizations are in a paradox where most of the employees realize the truth about organization issues and problems but not to speak that truth to their leaders. Brinsfield (2009) stated that there are several

reasons for employees to remain silent, such as: to conform to perceived thinking of the group, through minimize conflict and reach consensus (Janis, 1972), refuse to deliver negative information because of the discomfort associated with delivering it (Conlee & Tesser, 1973), fear of isolation (Noelle-Neumann, 1974), organizational failure to respond in a positive way to employees' complaints (Peirce, et al., 1998), and feelings of hopelessness, means that employees belief that voicing is useless and will not make any differences (Pinder & Harlos, 2001). Morrison & Milliken (2000) stated that one of the fundamental antecedents of organizational silence is leaders' fear of negative feedback, means that leaders fear and feel threatened by receiving negative feedback, especially from subordinates. And when leaders receive the negative feedback, they may try to avoid the message, reject it as less accurate and legitimate, or offense the credibility of the source.

It is important for managers to understand how to promote and encourage employees' voice. One way of promoting voice, according to Chan (2014), Detert (2007), Liu, et al. (2010) and Shin & Zhou (2003) is through transformational leadership. Burns (1978) posit that transformational leaders have a high competence and accomplishment to promote and encourage employees' participation in organizational process. Transformational leaders are argued to be able to stimulate employees' creativity and enthusiasm by encouraging employees to improve themselves. Transformational leaders are also change-oriented, they influence followers "by broadening and elevating followers' goals and providing followers with confidence to perform beyond the expectations specified in the implicit or explicit exchange agreement" (Dvir et al., 2002). The dimensions of transformational leadership should all promote and stimulate employees' voice behavior (Liu et al., 2010). Transformational leadership as an important style of leadership has an important influence on the corporate culture formation, but its impact and mechanism on employee voice behavior have not been deeply studied (Hu, Zhang, & Wang, 2015).

Lagoi is one of tourism destination located in Bintan Island, a Province of Kepulauan Riau, Indonesia. At the beginning of its establishment in 1996, only tens of thousands average of tourist came to visit, but now the number of visitors annually has reached more than four hundred thousand ("Haluan Kepri," 2013). If compared to

1996, the number of visitors in 2013 were increased almost forty times. But based on the data from Statistics of Kepulauan Riau Province (2014), the number of visitors keep declining since 2011. The numbers of visitors in 2011 were 337,353, has been decreased to 336,547 in 2012, and then also decreasing to 318,154 in 2013. There are several international class resorts, hotels, spas, and golf courses in Lagoi, one of them is XYZ Resort. The decreasing number of visitors in Lagoi and the large number of resort in Lagoi means that the business environment become more competitive and will affecting the numbers of visitors in XYZ Resort. As seen on the data from Statistics of Kepulauan Riau Province (2014), the number of visitors of XYZ Resort keep declining since 2011. The numbers of visitors in 2011 were 16,060, has been decreased to 15,567 in 2012, and then also decreasing to 13,295 in 2013.

Another problem for XYZ Resort is the number of bad review from customer were increasing since 2011 as seen on trip advisor website ([www.tripadvisor.com](http://www.tripadvisor.com), 2014) as a website that providing reviews of travel related content from customer. The number of bad review were increased from 9 to 11, in 2011 to 2012. In 2013, the numbers of complain were also increased to 19. Based on the bad review on this site, from 2011 to 2013 customers keep complaining the same thing. They like to complain about bad services, not worth of money, insects, cleanliness, and food. XYZ Resort need to overcome all of this bad review in order to increase customers' satisfaction and keep their resort competitiveness in market. Jian, Xin, & Zhao-hong (2009) stated that indirect or online complaint behavior indicates company unresponsiveness of customers' direct complaining. The unresponsiveness might be caused by the employee in XYZ Resort did not express customers complain to leaders and they also did not communicate their ideas, opinion and information about how to solve customers' complaint, making decisions, correcting problems and responding appropriately to complaints itself. Therefore, it is important for leaders in XYZ Resort to enhance the employee voice in order to overcome any problems that might be caused by the lack of employee voice.

### **1.3 Research Question**

Based on the literature and arguments presented above, the following research questions are established:

1. What is the relationship between transformational leadership style and voice behavior?

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

1. To determine the level of transformational leadership style in XYZ Resort.
2. To determine the level of employees' voice behavior in XYZ Resort.
3. To examine the relationship between transformational leadership style and voice behavior among workers at XYZ Resort.
4. To examine the relationship between high performance expectations and voice behavior among workers at XYZ Resort.
5. To examine the relationship between individualized support and voice behavior among workers at XYZ Resort.
6. To examine the relationship between intellectual stimulation and voice behavior among workers at XYZ Resort.
7. To examine the relationship between articulating a vision and voice behavior among workers at XYZ Resort.
8. To examine the relationship between providing an appropriate model and voice behavior among workers at XYZ Resort.
9. To examine the relationship between fostering the acceptance of group goals and voice behavior among workers at XYZ Resort.

## **1.5 Scope of Study**

The respondents of this study are workers in XYZ Resort. This study adopts the survey method, which involves distributing and collecting questionnaire. This study focusing on employee voice and transformational leadership style. The transformational leadership measurement uses Transformational Leadership Inventory (TLI) instrument by Podsakoff, et al. (1990). TLI instrument measuring six dimensions: articulating a vision, providing an appropriate model, fostering the acceptance of group goals, high performance expectations, individualized support and intellectual stimulation. This study use a six item employee voice questionnaire generated and validated by Van Dyne & LePine (1998) to measure employees' voice. Based on several studies leadership style has high importance in the degree of voice behavior among employees.

## **1.6 Significance of Study**

The importance of this study can be viewed in several aspects, which are helpful to several parties. For researcher, this study was expected to bring additional information and insight about the relationship between transformational leadership style and employee voice behavior. Researcher also expected to bring information for XYZ Resort about the existing condition of their organization related to their leadership and voice, which can be useful for them.

For academic field, this study was expected as a source of information and feedback for the organization about the importance relationship of transformational leadership style and voice behavior. During the workplace, employees often have ideas, information, and opinions to improve work and organizations in a constructive ways. By knowing about what are the factors that can trigger the voice behavior, this study expected to contribute to nourish ideas, information and opinions in organization. The findings of the study is a value-added that can contribute to the academic field for future references for those who want to do further research in transformational leadership style and voice behavior.

## **1.7 Conceptual and Operational Definition**

### **1.7.1 Transformational Leadership**

According to Burns (1978), transformational leadership is a leader that has a goal to encourage followers to exceed their own interests and do tasks beyond simple leader-member transactions for the importance of the groups or organization. According to Bass & Avolio (1994) transformational leaders are those who stimulate and inspire followers to both achieve extraordinary outcomes and, in the process, develop their own leadership capacity, characterized by four factors: idealized influence (charisma), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.

In this study, transformational leadership represent as a "leader that making contact with others or influencing others in a way that valuable things are exchanged, tasks are completed, and both leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality. A leaders who consistently demonstrates six behaviors: articulating a vision, providing an appropriate model, fostering the acceptance of group goals, high performance expectations, individualized support, and intellectual simulation" (P. M. Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Bommer, 1996; P. M. Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Morrman, & Fetter, 1990).

### **1.7.2 Voice**

There are several notable definitions of voice. Recently, the organization literature viewed voice as a form of prosocial behavior, less self-focused and more focused on other people. Van Dyne & LePine (1998) define voice as Promotive behaviors that emphasize expression of constructive challenges, intend to improve rather than just criticize. Make innovative recommendations for change and suggesting modification to standard procedure even if other disagree. Van Dyne, Ang, & Botero (2003) define voice as intentionally expressing rather than withholding relevant

information, opinions and ideas regarding possible work-related improvement. Premeaux & Bedeian (2003) stated that voice is openly saying individual's view or opinion regarding things in workplace, including others ideas or actions, suggested or needed change, and different approaches of considering for solving task related problems. Detert & Burris (2007) defined voice as the voluntary providing information meant to enhance organization function to leader in the organization with the authority to acts, even though the information may challenge the organization status quo and its powerholders. Verbal behaviors that is intended to improve and aimed at a certain targets that have power in the organization in question. Tangirala & Ramanujam (2008) defined voice as discretionary communicating concerns, ideas, opinions or suggestions regarding work related problem intended to improve the functioning of organization or units.

The definition of voice that used in this research were consistent with the definition from Morrison (2011) who defined voice as "discretionary communication of ideas, suggestions, concerns, or opinions about work-related issues with the intent to improve organizational or unit functioning".

## **1.8 Structure of the Study**

This study were consists of five chapters. Chapter one provide a brief introduction about transformational leadership and employee voice behavior. This chapter elaborate the basics theories related to transformational leadership and employee voice behavior, significance of the study, problem statement, scope of the study, and definition of term related. Chapter two provide an in depth theoretical base of transformational leadership and employee voice behavior. This chapter will also provide a conceptual and theoretical framework of the study to synthesis the hypotheses of the study. Chapter three explain the methodology that were used to measure the variables of this study, including an explanation about sample and population, sampling technique and data collection. Chapter four will provide the result of the study and analysis of the data based on literature review that used by this



study. Chapter five will conclude and provide the summary of the result of the research, including recommendations and limitations of this study.

## **1.9 Summary**

As stated before, nowadays organization needs to keep changing to face environment changes. In this hypercompetitive environment, there is increasing challenges in problem solving and information processing. It is critical for managers to understand how to promote the voice of employees'. Organizations, managers and organizational leaders need their employees' ideas, thoughts and information from throughout the organization for innovation to flourish and enhance the effectiveness of the organization. Leaders have a critical role to encourage employee to express their ideas, thoughts and information. Transformational leadership is a change-oriented style, leader with transformational characteristics are important to promote employees voice.

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