

Employee Voice and Taking Charge

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

In this dissertation I aim to gain a better understanding of employee voice and taking charge through the interactions between employees' attitudes, personality, and experiences with leaders. To this end, the studies presented herein investigate how transformational leadership; different types of organizational commitment, and proactive personality jointly influence these behaviors.

In Study 1, I examined the impact of proactive personality on employees' aggressive voice, and the moderating role of organizational commitment on these relationships as a means of investigating when proactive individuals speak up for self-serving purposes (i.e., aggressive voice). The findings suggest that the relationship between proactive personality and aggressive voice is stronger when individuals have low perceived sacrifice commitment, or high lack of alternatives commitment.

Study 2 had two main goals. First, I examined whether transformational leadership impacts on employee voice and taking charge by impacting on employees' motivational state. The findings demonstrate that both work promotion focus and role-breadth self-efficacy mediated the transformational leadership-voice (taking charge) relationship, but affective commitment did not. Second, I tested whether the influence of transformational leadership on employee constructive voice (and taking charge) depends on followers' proactive personality. Findings suggest that followers' proactive personality moderates the transformational leadership-voice relationship such that the impact of transformational leadership on employee constructive voice is stronger amongst low proactive followers. Followers' proactive personality, however, did not

moderate the impact of transformational leadership on taking charge. Implications of the results are discussed and future research directions are offered.

## **PREFACE**

This thesis is an original work by Guilin Zhang. The research project, of which this thesis is a part, received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Project Name “Predictors of voice, taking charge and workplace aggression”, No. Pro00037172, 12/4/2014.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

As the contemporary work environment becomes more dynamic, jobs are often less well defined, employees are increasingly granted the discretion to broaden their responsibilities, and organizations may expect employees to go above and beyond their formal job requirements. The extent to which an organization's employees are willing to go above and beyond the call of duty can have tremendous implications for an organization's performance and ultimate success (Podsakoff, Ahearne, & Mackenzie, 1997). Concomitant with this increased focus on employees taking on a broader set of discretionary tasks, in the past few decades, the organizational behavior literature has given increased conceptual and empirical attention to broad constructs representing employee discretionary behaviors such as organizational citizenship behavior (OCB; Smith, Organ & Near, 1983) and proactive work behavior (Bateman & Crant 1993), as well as more specific forms of these behaviors such as employee voice (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998) and taking charge (Morrison & Phelps, 1999). These specific forms of discretionary behavior will be the focus of the two studies presented herein.

Voice and taking charge have conceptual overlap in that they both capture employees' active attempts to make constructive changes at work. However, they are conceptually distinct from each other inasmuch as they involve different types of employee behavior. Employee voice refers to employees' verbal expression of ideas to the supervisor with the intention of enlisting his or her help to make positive changes to

the work environment (Morrison, 2011; Van Dyne, Ang & Botero, 2003). An example of voice is when an employee talks to his or her supervisor about how their work process may be improved. Taking charge refers to voluntary behavioral efforts to directly affect change with respect to how work is executed (Morrison & Phelps, 1999). An example of taking charge is when an employee initiates a change in how his or her job is executed in order to be more effective.

Though the development of the concepts of voice and taking charge in organizations has emerged relatively recently (Morrison & Phelps, 1999; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998), the broader constructs of OCB and proactive employee behavior have a long and rich history and have influenced much of current conceptual understanding of voice and taking charge. In the following sections I will discuss the emergence of the literature on voice and taking charge, and I will frame these in terms of the broader literatures of OCBs and proactive employee behavior.

#### *Early development of the concepts of voice and taking charge in organizations*

Hirschman (1970) offered the first definition of employee voice as an employee's "attempt to change rather than to escape from an objectionable state of affairs, whether through individual or collective petition, to the management directly in charge with the intention of forcing a change in management" (p.30). In this early definition, voice was conceptualized as a possible response to organizational dissatisfaction, and one that was more desirable than alternative employee responses such as leaving the organization.

Building on Hirschman's definition, Farrell (1983) maintained that employee voice is a possible response to job dissatisfaction, but within the context of a more nuanced framework. He suggested that employees' responses to job dissatisfaction can be

conceptualized along two dimensions, namely the constructive-destructive dimension, and the active-passive dimension (Farrell, 1983). The constructive-destructive dimension describes whether employees will attempt to maintain or damage their relationship with their organization. The active-passive dimension captures whether the individual takes an active approach to solve the dissatisfactory situation, or passively waits while doing nothing. These two dimensions created a 2 by 2 matrix of possible employee responses to dissatisfaction that included voice (constructive-active), loyalty (constructive-passive), neglect (destructive-passive) and exit (destructive-active). Of these responses, voice was again considered the most desirable with the greatest potential to contribute to organizational functioning.

Building on Farrell's (1983) model, Hagedoorn and his colleagues (1999) suggested two modifications of Farrell's model. First, they suggested that Farrell's voice category was too heterogeneous and should be divided into at least two separate categories, namely, considerate voice and aggressive voice, yielding a model describing 5 possible employees' responses to job dissatisfaction (Hagedoorn, Van Yperen, Van De Vliert & Buunk 1999). Second, their conceptualization of the constructive-destructive dimension was somewhat different from Farrell's. Specifically, they conceptualized a constructive response as one in which the individual attempts to solve the problem in a way that addresses their own as well as the organization's concerns, whereas a destructive response refers to an effort to create a win for one's self, without consideration for the concerns of the organization (Hagedoorn et al, 1999). Therefore, employees can engage in considerate voice (i.e., constructive-active) wherein the individuals attempt to address the mutual interests of themselves and the organization, or

aggressive voice (i.e., destructive-active) wherein the individuals attempt to address only their personal interests. As in Farrell's model, possible alternative employee responses include exit (destructive-active), patience (constructive-passive; similar to Farrell's concept of loyalty) and neglect (destructive-passive) when they face a problematic event in the workplace (Hagedoorn et al, 1999). Van Dyne and her colleagues (2003) advanced Hagedoorn et al's perspective on voice by proposing that employees proactively engage in voice based on two possible underlying motives: cooperation or self-protection, with implications for whether an act of voice is likely to be pro-social or self serving (Van Dyne, Ang & Botero, 2003).

While these earliest conceptualizations of voice have focused on voice as a possible response to employee dissatisfaction, the literature on organizational justice or fairness gave rise to a different conceptualization of voice and its role in organizations. Organizational justice refers to employees' perceptions of whether they are treated fairly by their employing organization (Greenberg, 1987). In the justice literature, voice is seen as a desirable employee behavior that can, and ought to be, encouraged through organizational practices, as it enhances employees' perception that they are treated fairly by their employer. For instance, research on procedural justice suggests that when employees have a chance to voice their opinions, they tend to perceive that the procedure is fair (Greenberg, 2000; Thibaut & Walker, 1975) because it gives them a chance to influence an outcome of importance to them (i.e., it has an "instrumental effect"; Greenberg & Folger, 1983), and makes employees believe that they are trusted and treated as valuable group members (i.e., the "value-expressive effect"; Lind & Tyler, 1988). Recent studies have also shown that employees' perceptions of fairness (i.e.,

interpersonal mistreatment) can also impact their propensity to engage in voice (e.g., Pinder & Harlos, 2001), suggesting that justice perceptions and voice may emerge concomitantly. As will be discussed in the next section, more recent conceptualizations of voice have focused on it as a form of organizational citizenship behavior and proactive work behavior that may be motivated by the variety of experiences one has at work and one's own dispositions and attitudes.

The concept of taking charge emerged relatively recently, and emerged based on the recognition that 'conventional' forms of citizenship behavior (e.g., interpersonal helping and generalized compliance), while important, are not sufficient to ensure organizational success because organizations need employees who are willing to push further to challenge the status quo in constructive ways (Morrison & Phelps, 1999). Unlike voice that has only been regarded as a form of proactive behavior and citizenship behavior in its most recent conceptualizations, taking charge has developed within the domain of organizational citizenship behavior, and has consistently been regarded both as a form of proactive behavior and citizenship behavior (Morrison & Phelps, 1999).

As with employee voice, previous studies have shown that taking charge arises from a variety of workplace experiences and individual dispositions, including employees' felt obligation and positive perceptions of the work environment, procedural justice (Moon, Kamdar, Mayer & Takeuchi, 2008), and top management openness (Morrison & Phelps, 1999). Dispositional factors also matter, such that perceived self-efficacy (McAllister, Kamdar, Morrison & Turban, 2007), or being 'other-centered' (measured by duty or reliability) is positively related to taking charge, while being 'self-

centered' (measured by achievement striving) is negatively related to take charge (Moon et al, 2008).

*Current conceptualizations of voice and taking charge as forms of OCB and Proactive Work Behavior*

In recent years, employee voice and taking charge have largely been examined as forms of both organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and proactive work behavior (see Crant, 2000; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). OCB refers to employees' discretionary behavior that goes above and beyond formal job requirements and is not formally rewarded, but in aggregate promotes more effective functioning of the organization (Organ, 1988). Voice and taking charge have also emerged relatively recently in the literature on proactive work behavior. In a review of the proactive behavior literature, Crant (2000) defined proactive behavior as employees' efforts to take the initiative to improve the current circumstances in the organization rather than passively adapting to present conditions. Proactive behavior can take on different forms, ranging from general actions that might happen in a wide variety of situations (i.e., general proactive behaviors such as challenging the status quo such as voice) to behaviors that are narrower in scope (i.e., context specific behaviors such as feedback seeking; Crant, 2000).

Different lines of research converge to place voice and taking charge at the intersection of OCBs and proactive employee behavior. For instance, according to Crant (2000), while some proactive behaviors are in-role activities, others such as employee voice and taking charge should be considered extra-role behavior (i.e., OCBs), because they are not explicitly required or rewarded by the organization. Similarly, Van Dyne, Cummings and Parks (1995) presented a typology of OCB in which it is conceptualized

along two dimensions (i.e., affiliative/challenging and promotive/prohibitive). The affiliative/challenging dimension represents whether the extra-role behavior tends to preserve or challenge the status quo. Affiliative behavior includes any behavior that might be seen as helpful (e.g., helping other employees doing their work) and serves to solidify the individuals' relationship with the organization. Challenging behaviors refers to behaviors that involve challenging the status quo (e.g., criticizing the inefficiency of the work procedures). Even though these behaviors are risky and may damage the individuals' relationship with the organization, they are proactive in nature and potentially helpful. The promotive/prohibitive dimension describes whether the behavior is intended to encourage a desirable behavior or prevent an undesirable behavior as judged by the individual employee. Promotive behaviors include suggesting or implementing new ways of doing things, while prohibitive behaviors can be exemplified by reporting wrongdoings. Voice and taking charge are considered to be two forms of challenging/promotive OCBs as they both involve constructive efforts to improve the organization, and both are considered to be 'proactive', as they involve contesting the status quo (Van Dyne, Cummings & Parks, 1995). Taken together, voice and taking charge are both seen as helpful citizenship behaviors that are also proactive attempts to challenge the current state of affairs in the organization.

It is notable that OCB and proactive work behavior have two important distinctions. First, employees engage OCB in order to provide benefit to the organization. Proactive work behavior, however, may be driven by either pro-organizational or self-interested motives, such as when proactive work behavior is directed at facilitating the achievement of personal and career goals (Belschak & Den Hartog, 2010). Second, while



all proactive work behavior involves changing some aspects of the organization's status quo, some forms of OCB, such as interpersonal helping, do not involve making changes to the status quo, and therefore are not proactive work behavior. Consistent with current conceptualizations, I consider voice and taking charge to be proactive inasmuch as they both involve challenging the status quo. However, while they can be enacted as a form of OCB, I suggest that this is not necessarily the case, and that as some forms of voice or taking charge may be enacted in one's own self-interest.

#### *Perspectives on the underpinnings of Voice and Taking Charge*

The predominant focus of much of the empirical research on voice and taking charge has been on identifying factors that increase or decrease the amount of voice or taking charge that an employee engages in. There have been two dominant approaches to understand voice and taking charge. The first approach suggests that voice and taking charge can be explained by individual differences, including but not limited to personality traits, motivational states and work-related attitudes. For instance, voice is predicted by Big Five personality traits (Barrick & Mount, 1991), such that conscientiousness and extroversion are positively related to, and neuroticism and agreeableness are negatively related to voice (Le Pine & Van Dyne, 2001). In addition, voice and taking charge can also be predicted by individual motivational factors such as felt-responsibility and feelings of self-efficacy (Jiang, Farh & Farh, 2012; McAllister et al, 2008; Morrison & Phelps, 1999; Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008), or by perceptions and attitudes toward the work environment such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Burris, Detert & Chiaburu, 2008; Hagedoorn et al, 1999).

The second approach focuses on the organizational context in which voice and taking charge occurs and suggests that employees look for cues regarding whether these behaviors would be viewed favorably. For instance, studies have shown that one's position in organizational hierarchy, access to resources as well as formal upward feedback channel can predict employee voice (Fuller, Marler & Hester, 2006; Morrison & Milliken, 2000). Another stream of literature examines the impact of leadership. Leadership, in general, is considered to be one of the most important contextual factors in predicting employees' voice and taking charge, because supervisor's behavior provides cues that inform employees about whether it is worthwhile and safe to speak up or take charge (Morrison, 2011). Empirical studies have shown that supportive leadership characterized by high leader-member exchange, personal identification, ethical leadership, transformational leadership and managerial openness (see Detert & Burris, 2007; Liu, Tangirala, & Ramanujam, 2013; Liu, Zhu & Yang, 2010; Morrison & Phelps, 1999) is positively related to employee voice and taking charge.

#### *Overview of Study 1 and Study 2*

In the following two studies I examine potential dispositional (i.e., proactive personality), attitudinal (i.e., different forms of organizational commitment) and situational (i.e., transformational leadership) antecedents of voice and taking charge. In doing so, I aim to enhance the understanding of the means by which organizations can encourage proactive behaviors that can yield mutual advantages for the individual and the organization alike, while minimizing those behaviors that are enacted for purely self-serving reasons.

Study 1 will focus on understanding aggressive voice. Specifically, I will focus on various forms of individuals' organizational commitment including their affective commitment, and two sub-dimensions of continuance commitment (i.e., perceived sacrifice and lack of alternatives) in the relationships between proactive personality and aggressive voice. Overall, Study 1 will contribute to three streams of literature. First, it expands understanding of employee voice by recognizing that voice can, but is not necessarily enacted as a form of OCB. Second, Study 1 contributes to literatures on both proactive personality and organizational commitment by examining these constructs in more nuanced ways. With respect to proactive personality, Study 1 explores the idea that proactive personality can potentially lead to destructive outcomes, while the literature on proactive personality has predominantly tended to treat it as a uniformly positive trait. With respect to organizational commitment, Study 1 contributes to this literature by examining the distinctive moderating role of two dimensions of continuance commitment (i.e., perceived sacrifice and lack of alternatives) in the relationship between proactive personality and employee aggressive voice.

Study 2 focuses on constructive voice and taking charge. There are three main goals of Study 2. The first goal is to examine the impact of transformational leadership on these behaviors, wherein transformational leadership involves articulating an attractive vision of the future, encouraging employees to share ideas and concerns, and demonstrating caring and high expectations of employees (Bass, 1985). The second goal is to explore psychological processes that mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and voice and taking charge. Specifically, I examine the mediating role of employees' work promotion focus, role-breadth self-efficacy and

affective commitment as they represent aspects of the individuals' proactive motivational state (Parker, Bindl & Strauss, 2010). Third, I further explore the impact of followers' proactive personality and examine its potential moderating impact on the relationship between transformational leadership and voice and taking charge, respectively. In doing so, I examine three competing hypotheses, namely, the similarity-attraction, trait-leadership substitute, and dominance-complementarity, for how followers' proactive personality moderates the impact of transformational leadership. Study 2 enhances understanding of whether leadership (in this case transformational leadership) yields its best results with followers who are similar to or who complement the leader in important ways.

Overall, these two studies advance our understanding of why employees choose to engage in proactive and pro-social behaviour such as constructive voice and taking charge through examining the joint impact of an employees' proactive personality, along with aspects of the work environment over which an organization can exert some control such as transformational leadership and organizational commitment.

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## **CHAPTER 2**

### **The Impact of Organizational Commitment on the Relationship between Employees' Proactive Personality and Aggressive Voice**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Voice describes an employee's active attempt to improve their workplace by speaking up about their work-related advice to organizational leaders, providing leaders with information about emerging issues, trends in the marketplace, and the detection of errors (Morrison & Milliken, 2000). In a business world characterized by increasing complexity and rapid change, employees' voice can offer organizations an adaptive advantage and may be considered a critical source of organizational learning and improvement (Deter & Burris; 2007; Dutton & Ashforth, 1993; Morrison, 2011; Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008). Given the positive implications associated with employee voice, researchers and organizational leaders seek to understand the factors that promote employee voice and create facilitative conditions for employees to voice their work-related ideas and concerns.

Research has suggested a strong role of personality traits as a driver of employee voice. Previous research has identified personality factors such as extroversion, agreeableness (LePine & Van Dyne, 2001), locus of control and self-esteem (Premeaux & Bedeian, 2003) as correlates of voice. In this study I focus on the role of proactive personality, that is, an individual dispositional tendency to make changes to one's environment with the goal of improving the environment (Bateman & Crant, 1993).



According to Bateman and Crant (1993), proactive individuals tend to seek out opportunities to bring about meaningful change, take the initiative to act on these opportunities, and persevere in their efforts, as compared to low proactive individuals. Proactive personality is conceptually related to employee voice inasmuch as voice involves speaking up with the intention of solving perceived work-related problems. Meta-analytic evidence (Fuller & Marler, 2009; Tomas, Whitman & Chockalingam, 2010) also suggests that proactive personality is positively related to voice and this impact persists even when the Big-Five personality traits are controlled (Crant, Kim & Wang, 2011; Parker & Collins, 2010).

However, despite the extant empirical studies supporting the positive relationship between employee's proactive personality and voice, there are two notable gaps in the literature. First, proactive personality has been viewed as a positive construct. However, some empirical findings and even the conceptualization of proactive personality suggest that the impact of proactive personality may not be uniformly positive (Bateman & Crant, 1993; Campbell, 2000; Chan, 2006). For instance, highly proactive employees will attempt to make changes, even when doing so is opposed by others (Bateman & Crant, 1993), which can reduce employee's job satisfaction, affective commitment and job performance (Campbell, 2000; Chan, 2006). Further, while employee voice has been widely recognized to be a type of organizational citizenship behavior (e.g., Van Dyne & LePine, 1998), employee voice is not always enacted with pro-social intentions, nor does it always yield positive outcomes for organizations (Van Dyne, Ang & Botero, 2003). However, the possibility that voice is enacted for self-serving reasons has been only discussed theoretically, but largely overlooked by empirical research.

To this end, in the present study, I focus on aggressive voice that is enacted for more self-serving reasons. I propose that proactive personality is positively related to aggressive voice. Examining the motivational underpinnings for employees' decision to engage in voice has implications for the organization as well as for employees. Indeed, a previous study found that pro-social voice is likely to be appreciated by supervisors and leads to favorable performance evaluations, while self-serving voice tends to be ignored and punished (Grant, Parker & Collins, 2009).

Second, there have been calls in the past decade for more research on the factors that moderate the impact of personality variables on behaviour (Barrick, Mount & Judge, 2001; Hough, 2003). In the present study, I strive to explore boundary conditions under which proactive personality is positively related to aggressive voice by examining the impact of organizational commitment because it represents a general underlying mindset employees have about their organization, which has been found to drive both employees task performance and their discretionary behaviour at work (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Given this, organizational commitment may signify a motivational state, with different types of commitment facilitating (or hindering) employee aggressive voice.

## **2.2 Literature Review and Hypotheses Development**

### *2.2.1 Proactive personality and voice*

Even though recent conceptualization of voice has reviewed it as a type of OCB (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998), Van Dyne and her colleagues (2003) proposed that employees proactively engage in voice either based on two possible underlying motives: cooperation or self-protection, with implications for whether an act of voice is likely to

be pro-social or self serving (Van Dyne, Ang & Botero, 2003). In the present study, I focus on *aggressive voice*, that is, employees speaking up with the intention to maximize their own personal interests, without consideration for the concerns of the organization (Hagedoorn et al, 1999). Examples of aggressive voice include defining a problem one is concerned about in self-serving ways or being overly persistent with one's superior in order achieve one's goals (Hagedoorn et al, 1999).

Proactive personality is expected to predict aggressive voice. From a conceptual standpoint, proactive personality ought to be related to employee voice as an aspect of proactive behaviour. Meta-analytic evidence suggests that this is the case (Fuller & Marler, 2009). This relationship has been found to persist even when the Big-Five personality traits are controlled (Crant, Kim & Wang, 2011; Parker & Collins, 2010). Therefore, I propose that:

***Hypothesis 1: Proactive personality is positively related to aggressive voice.***

### *2.2.2 Organizational commitment and employee voice*

Organizational commitment refers to the bond between employees and the organization. It is conceptualized as a multi-dimensional construct and scholars have identified three types of commitment, namely affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991), each of which represents an individuals' underlying mindset towards their organization and what is keeping them connected to it (Meyer & Hercovitch, 2001).

Affective commitment is defined as an emotional attachment to the organization wherein the individual identifies with, is involved in and enjoys membership in the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1991). Employees with high levels of affective

commitment truly care about their organization and feel strong ties to it, making them more willing to engage in pro-social behavior on behalf of the organization such as OCBs (Meyer, Becker & Vandenberghe, 2004; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch & Topolnysky, 2002).

Continuance commitment occurs when employees are committed to the organization because the perceived costs associated with leaving the organization are high (e.g. loss of pension, job-specific skills or work relationships) or because they perceive that they have no other options (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Continuance commitment has been negatively associated with job performance and positively related to unfavorable outcomes such as stress and work-family conflict (Meyer et al, 2002). When continuance commitment is high, individuals tend to care about themselves first and foremost and focus on personal goals, gains and losses, rather than organizational goals (Johnson & Chang, 2006).

Previous studies suggest that continuance commitment has two dimensions, namely perceived sacrifice (PS) and lack of alternatives (LoAl) and they have different implications for individual behavior and motivation (see Bentein, Vandenberg, Vandenberghe & Stinglhamber, 2005; McGee & Ford, 1987; Powell & Meyer, 2004). PS refers to the personal sacrifice or losses that individuals believe would result from leaving the organization, while LoAl is defined as being stuck in the organization because there are few job opportunities in the market (Vandenberghe & Panaccio, 2012). In the present study, I examine PS and LoAl as two separate dimensions of continuance commitment because I believe they influence employee voice through different mechanisms, which will be explained further in the following section. In short, PS may discourage employees

from engaging voice because individuals with high levels of PS are more sensitive to the risks associated with speaking up (Power & Meyer, 2004; Vandenberghe, Panaccio & Ben Ayed, 2011). LoAI may discourage employees from engaging voice because employees with high levels of LoAI are motivated to protect their resources through performing minimum requirement at work (Vandenberghe & Panaccio, 2012). I will develop hypotheses regarding the moderating impact of each of affective commitment, PS, and LoAI, respectively. I am not looking at normative commitment because meta-analysis results (Meyer et al, 2002) show that normative commitment has less strong relationships with outcome variables than would affective commitment and continuance commitment. Furthermore, there has been research debate of whether affective commitment and normative commitment are distinguishable constructs (Bergman, 2006; Meyer & Parfyonova, 2010).

### *2.2.3 The moderating impact of affective commitment*

Affective commitment may also moderate the relationship between proactive personality and aggressive voice. For employees who are affectively committed, organizational goals and interests are more salient. Therefore, they tend to behave in ways that are in the organization's best interest (Johnson & Chang, 2006) and eschew behaviors that have the potential to damage their employer, such as aggressive voice. Indeed, affective commitment has shown to negatively relate to counterproductive outcomes (Tepper, Henle, Lambert, Giacalone & Duffy, 2008). However, people with low levels of affective commitment may not be as motivated to protect their organization. Therefore, I propose:

***Hypothesis 2:*** *The relationship between proactive personality and aggressive voice is stronger when affective commitment is low.*

#### *2.2.4 The moderating impact of PS*

PS is positively associated with an individuals' investment in a job, such as the number of years they have been on the job, nontransferable skills they have developed, and their relationship with the organization and supervisor (Vandenberghe & Panaccio, 2012). When PS is high, people perceive that their work affords them the opportunity to obtain valuable resources and that they perceive they could not find elsewhere and do not want to lose the advantages they enjoy with their current organization (Power & Meyer, 2004). When PS is high; employees are motivated to achieve career success (e.g. pay raises, promotions) within the organization. They care about the economic as well as socioemotional benefits associated with the organizational membership (e.g. challenging work or prestige). Employees would also perceive moving to another organization as potentially stressful situation as it would result in the loss of valuable resources (Vandenberghe, Panaccio & Ben Ayed, 2011).

Indeed, PS is positively related to certain types of proactive behaviors such as feedback seeking and network building, and these behaviors have been found to contribute to individual career success and future resource accumulation (Vandenberghe & Panaccio, 2012). However, high PS employees would avoid actions that may reduce their job security and career performance, such as engaging in voice (Seibert, Kraimer & Crant, 2001). Therefore, PS may prevent proactive employees from engaging aggressive voice because the cost associated with voice is magnified due to their fear of losing valuable resources.

Therefore, I expect:

***Hypothesis 3:*** *The relationship between proactive personality and aggressive voice is lower when PS is high.*

#### *2.2.5 The moderating impact of LoAI*

Employees with high levels of LoAI feel trapped in their current job and consider it to be a source of stress (Vandenberghe, Panaccio & Ben Ayed, 2011). These employees tend to adopt an avoidance attitude and perform the minimum requirements at work (Vandenberghe & Panaccio, 2012). Aggressive voice requires employees to invest time and energy to conceptualize an idea, articulate the idea to others, defend it to counterarguments, and deal with any ensuing conflicts that changing the status quo might generate (Luria, Gal, & Yagil, 2009), all of which consume time and energy. Similarly, Bolino & Turnley (2005) found that individuals who take greater initiative at work experience higher personal costs including role overload and work-family conflict. As a result, when employees are confronted with stressful situations (e.g., lack of alternatives), they may be better off conserving resources by avoiding voice as a self-protective strategy (Hobfoll, 1989). Indeed, in a recent meta-analysis examining the relationships between organizational stressors and employee voice, an inverse relationship was found between employees experiencing higher levels of organizational stressors and voicing their concerns, supporting resource conservation argument of COR (Ng & Feldman, 2012). I therefore propose:

***Hypothesis 4:*** *The relationship between proactive personality and aggressive voice is lower when LoAI is high.*

## 2.3 METHOD

### 2.3.1 *Participants and procedure*

Questionnaires were distributed online through the data-collection agency ‘Qualtrics’, which is an academic research project connecting researchers with adult individuals who have expressed an interest in participating in social research. Qualtrics facilitates online research by distributing email participation requests to a subsample of their participant roster. For the present study the target participants were full-time employees (self-employed individuals were excluded). At time 1, participants received an email, which contained a letter of introduction and the questionnaire, which asked participants questions about their demographic characteristics (i.e., age and gender). Participants were required to complete measures of proactive personality and organizational commitment. As a way of reducing common method variance, a second email was sent out to the same participants two weeks after the initial email. This Time 2, survey asked participants to respond to scales of constructive voice and aggressive voice. At Time 1, 1030 participants completed the survey, among which there were 605 males and 425 females, with an average age of 42.8. At Time 2, 447 out of 1030 completed the survey (for a retention rate of 43.4%, typical of this time wave with electronic surveys), among which there were 215 males and 232 females, with an average age of 40.

### 2.3.2 *Measures*

*Aggressive voice* was measured through the aggressive voice scale (Hagedoorn et al, 1999). The scale contains 7 items, and participants were asked to indicate on a seven-point scale (1=almost never; 7=almost always) how frequently they engage in each type



of behaviour. Sample items include “I try to prove in all possible ways to my supervisor that I am right”; “by definition, I blame the organization for the problem” and “I describe the problem as negatively as possible to my supervisor”. ( $\alpha=0.83$ )

*Proactive personality.* Proactive personality was assessed using the 10-item shortened version of Bateman and Crant’s (1993) Proactive Personality Scale (PPS; Seibert, Crant & Krainer, 1999;  $\alpha=0.79$ ). Responses are indicated on a 7-point scale (1=strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree). Sample items include “If I see something I don’t like, I fix it” and “if I believe in an idea, no obstacles will prevent me from making it happen.”

*Affective commitment.* Affective commitment was measured through the Affective Commitment Scale (Meyer, Allen, & Smith, 1993;  $\alpha=0.86$ ). Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree with each statement on a 5-point scale. (1=strongly disagree; 7=Strongly agree) Example items include “I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization” and “I would be happy to work at my organization until I retire.”

*PS and LoAl types of continuance commitment.* PS and LoAl commitment were measured using Powell & Meyer’s (2004) organizational commitment scale. It included three items measuring PS and six items measuring LoAl (PS scale  $\alpha=0.81$ ; FA scale  $\alpha=0.78$ ). A PS example item is “I would not leave this organization because of what I would stand to lose” and an FA example item is “I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this organization”.

*Control variables.* Demographic, dispositional and situational factors that have been found to impact voice were controlled. Demographic and dispositional factors

include age, gender, extroversion and agreeableness. Situational factors include job satisfaction, job autonomy and psychological safety.

## **2.4 RESULTS**

### *2.4.1 Descriptive statistics and measurement model*

The means, standard deviations, intercorrelations, and reliability coefficients for all measures are shown in Table 2.1.

-----Insert Table 2.1 about Here-----

Before testing the hypotheses, I compared the fit of the hypothesized model of organizational commitment and employee voice to that of plausible alternative models are the results are shown in Table 2.2. The hypothesized model (the five-factor model) describes affective commitment, PS and LoAI, constructive voice and aggressive voice as separate dimensions. As shown in Table 2, compared to alternative models of organizational commitment and voice, the measurement model (i.e., the five-factor model), which describes affective commitment, PS, LoAI, constructive voice and aggressive voice as separate dimensions, has the best fit to the data (CFI=0.86; SRMR=0.08; RMSEA=0.08). These results suggest that the five focal variables are distinct and that common method variance does not appear to be the primary driver of the shared variance between them.

-----Insert Table 2.2 about Here-----

### *2.4.2 Test for sampling bias*

Of the 1030 employees who responded to the survey at time 1, 447 also responded to survey at time 2 and 583 observations from time1 were thus excluded from

the study. To examine whether there were systematic differences between those who responded at time 2 and those who did not, I performed a set of independent sample T-tests comparing the two groups on the seven control variables: age, gender, extroversion, agreeableness, job autonomy, psychological safety and job satisfaction. There are no significant differences between participants who responded to Time 2 and those who did not on any of these study variables, suggesting little basis for concluding that there were meaningful differences between the two groups.

#### *2.4.3. Hypothesis testing*

To test the focal hypotheses, I performed a series of hierarchical linear multiple regressions. For each regression, in step 1, I entered the control variables of employees' age, gender, extroversion, agreeableness, job autonomy, job satisfaction and psychological safety. In step 2, proactive personality was entered into the regression. In step 3, organizational commitment was entered into the regression. In Step 4, the relevant commitment and proactive personality interaction effects were entered. As per Aiken and West (1991), the predictors were centered prior to forming the interaction terms.

The regression results for the moderating impact of affective commitment on aggressive voice appear in Table 2.3.

-----Insert Table 2.3 about Here-----

Proactive personality was found to positively relate to aggressive voice ( $B=0.12$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), supporting Hypothesis 1. Both affective commitment ( $B=0.08$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and LoAI ( $B=0.10$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) were positively related to aggressive voice. As predicted in Hypothesis 2, the relationship between proactive personality and aggressive voice was attenuated by affective commitment ( $B=-0.04$ ,  $p<0.05$ ).

Results of a simple slope analysis support the notion that proactive personality is only significantly related to aggressive voice amongst employees with medium or low affective commitment ( $B=0.10, p<0.05$ ;  $B=0.17, p<0.001$  respectively; See Table 2.5). When affective commitment is high, proactive personality is not significantly related to aggressive voice ( $B=0.04, p>0.05$ ). The interaction effect is shown in Figure 2.1. Main effects emerged for some of the control variables including extroversion ( $B=0.09, p<0.05$ ) and job autonomy ( $B=0.07, p<0.05$ ) positively related to aggressive voice, while age ( $B=-0.09, p<0.01$ ) and agreeableness ( $B=-0.15, p<0.001$ ) negatively related to aggressive voice.

-----Insert Table 2.4 about Here-----

-----Insert Figure 2.1 about Here-----

Table 2.5 shows the results of hierarchical regression results for the moderating impact of PS on aggressive voice. As predicted, PS interacted with proactive personality to predict aggressive voice ( $B=-0.06, p<0.05$ ), supporting Hypothesis 3. Simple slope analysis results show that proactive personality is positively related to aggressive voice amongst employees with low ( $b=0.17, p<0.001$ ) or medium ( $b=0.10, p<0.05$ ) PS. When PS is high, proactive personality is not significantly related to aggressive voice

-----Insert Table 2.5 and Table 2.6 about Here-----

-----Insert Figure 2.2 about Here-----

The hierarchical regression results examining the moderating impact of LoAI are shown in Table 2.6. Contrary to Hypothesis 4, LoAI moderated the relationship between proactive personality and aggressive voice ( $B=0.08, p<0.01$ ) and this relationship is strengthened under high LoAI. The simple slope analysis shows that proactive personality

is only positively related to aggressive voice when LoAI is medium ( $b=0.11$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) or high ( $b=0.23$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). When LoAI is low, proactive personality is not significantly related to aggressive voice (see Table 2.10 and Figure 2.4).

-----Insert Table 2.7 and Table 2.8 about Here-----

-----Insert Figure 2.3 about Here-----

## 2.5 DISCUSSION

The present study replicates and extends prior research examining the impact of proactive personality on employee voice. Specifically, based on theories suggesting that voice is not a unitary construct (Van Dyne et al, 2003) herein, I look at aggressive voice that is characterized by self-serving underlying motivations. Furthermore, organizational commitment was examined as a potential moderator because it reflects employees' attitude about, and orientation toward their organization, which may impact aggressive voice. Findings from the present study suggest proactive personality was positively related to aggressive voice and the relationship is stronger when affective commitment is low, when PS is low, and when LoAI is high.

### 2.5.1 Theoretical Contributions

The present study makes three broad theoretical contributions. First, the present study advances the literature on proactive personality by demonstrating that employee proactivity does not necessarily have uniformly positive implications for the organization. Consistent with previous empirical work, I found that proactive employees are more likely to voice their work-related concerns than their less proactive peers (Fuller & Marler, 2009). However, the motives that underpin an employees' decision to engage

in voice are critical to delineating the benefit (or harm) that can be proffered from acts of voice. This study shows that proactive individuals are more prone to engage in aggressive voice compared to less proactive employees.

Second, affective commitment also moderates the relationship between proactive personality and aggressive voice. The results suggest that proactive personality is only positively related to aggressive voice when affective commitment is low. When affective commitment is high, there was no significant relationship between proactive personality and aggressive voice. This contribute to literatures on commitment by showing that affective commitment not only motivates employees to reciprocate their organization with pro-social behaviors, it also deviant them from destructive behavior such as aggressive voice.

Third, the findings regarding the impact of PS and LoAI suggest that these two forms of continuance commitment exert unique impact on proactive personality-aggressive voice relationships. PS interacted with proactive personality to predict aggressive voice. I found that the relationship between proactive personality and aggressive voice is weakened by PS, while it is amplified by LoAI. Given that PS is associated with one's perceived investment in the organization, in hindsight, this finding is perhaps not surprising. PS seems relate to a self-protectionist motivation that quells one's desire to engage in aggressive voice, which may threaten one's future status (or perhaps job security) in the organization.

In the present study, both affective commitment and PS commitment weakened the positive impact of proactive personality on aggressive voice. This is not surprising given research suggesting that organizational support positively predicts affective

commitment (Rhoades, Eisenberger & Armeli, 2001). Scholars have identified three antecedents of perceived organizational support, namely fairness, supervisor support as well as organizational rewards and favourable job conditions (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002), all of which might also contribute to the development of PS because they increase the “side-bets” associated with leaving the organization. Indeed, consistent with previous findings (McGee & Ford, 1985; Powell & Meyer, 2004), in the present study PS is positively related to affective commitment ( $r=0.55$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), while negatively related to LoAI ( $r=-0.13$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), indicating that it is conceptually more closely related to affective commitment than to LoAI. It is consistent with the notion that PS represents internally regulated motivation (e.g. sense of empowerment) to gain more personal resources (Vandenberghe & Panaccio, 2012). This finding also contradicts with the proposition that LoAI is an antecedent of perceived sacrifice commitment (Powell & Meyer, 2004).

One interesting finding in the present study is the positive relationship between LoAI and aggressive voice. Similarly, Tangirala & Ramanujam (2008) also showed that when personal control is low, employees are more likely to engage in voice because their lack of control creates a dissatisfying state that motivates employees to attempt to create change by speaking up. This finding is also buttressed by research on the conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989), which advocates that individuals are motivated to accumulate more resources and protect their current resources. Although in a meta-analytic study on COR, scholars found support for the resource conservation tenet of COR, suggesting that employees experiencing stress are mainly motivated to protect their current resources (Ng & Feldman, 2012), in the present study examining the impact of proactive personality, I found support for the resource acquisition tenet, indicating that

individuals are motivated to accumulate more resources through aggressive voice in stressful situations (i.e., lack of alternatives). It is likely those proactive individuals are more active in dealing with stress and choose to acquire more resources, rather than merely conserve their current resources.

Contrary to expectation, the relationship between proactive personality and aggressive voice was stronger amongst employees with high LoAI. Indeed, the results show that employees who are most likely to engage in aggressive voice are those who are high in both proactive personality and LoAI, indicating that proactive employees who feel stuck in their job because they cannot find employment elsewhere are most likely to speak up for self-serving purposes. Conversely, proactive employees with low LoAI commitment are less likely to demonstrate aggressive voice because they perceive that they can easily find a job elsewhere if they choose to do so. Indeed, proactive individuals tend to have higher job search self-efficacy and entrepreneurial cognitions, suggesting that they feel capable of pursuing opportunities across organization boundaries (Ashford & Taylor, 1990; Briscoe, Hall, & DeMuth, 2006; Fugate et al, 2004; Fuller & Marler, 2009). When LoAI commitment is high and the individual perceives that there are few viable alternatives aggressive voice may be more likely.

The present study also contributes to the debate whether continuance commitment is a unidimensional or multidimensional construct. Herein, PS and LoAI were found to be two separate dimensions of continuance commitment and they have distinct implications for employee voice (Allen & Meyer, 2000; Powell & Meyer, 2004; Taing et al, 2011; Vandenberghe & Panaccio, 2012). PS and LoAI both moderated the impact of proactive personality on aggressive voice, but in different directions. PS attenuates the association



between proactive personality and aggressive voice, while LoAI strengthens this relationship. PS may lead to favourable outcomes since it reflects internal regulation and has motivational attributes (Vandenberghe & Panaccio, 2012), while LoAI captures most negative implications of continuance commitment (Taing et al, 2011). The present study also suggests that one possible reason why continuance commitment has low predictive validity for individual work behaviour is that it has been examined unidimensionally in past research (e.g., Meyer et al, 2002).

### *2.5.2 Practical implications*

Several practical implications can be drawn from the present study. First, in order to decrease aggressive voice, the organization can create a work environment that makes the employees affectively committed. Given that perceived organizational support (POS) is shown to be the best predictor of affective commitment (Meyer et al, 2002), organizations wanting affectively committed employees must demonstrate their own commitment by providing a supportive work environment. Among the things they can do to show support are to treat employees fairly, provide strong leadership and organizational reward and favourable job conditions (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). At the very least, under conditions of PS commitment the tendency for proactive individuals to engage in aggressive voice is quelled.

Furthermore, organizations should be aware that proactive employees can be, but are not always an asset. Indeed, in the absence of affective commitment (or at the very least, PS commitment), proactive employees, particularly those who feel trapped in their company, are more likely to engage in aggressive voice.

### *2.5.3 Limitations and Future Research*

One limitation of the present paper is that all the data are based on self-report. However, the voice measures were collected at a different time from the rest of measures, reducing the risk of common method variance. It is recommended that future research collect voice measures from a different source (e.g., supervisors, coworkers). Further, the conceptual rationale provided for this study explicates, to some extent, the ways in which organizational commitment may interact with proactive personality to affect employee voice. However, this study does not explicitly examine the mediating mechanisms that mediate the effect of combined proactive personality and employees' decisions to engage in voice. Future studies should examine possible mediating mechanisms through which proactive personality and organizational commitment interact to predict voice. For instance, it is likely that high PS may increase the perceived risk of speaking up, which in turn makes employees less likely to engage in aggressive voice. Third, the present paper examines the impact of affective commitment, PS and LoAI respectively. Future research should examine the impact of organizational commitment profiles on employee voice, rather than focus on one single commitment dimension.

## **2.6 CONCLUSIONS**

These findings indicate that the positive relationship between proactive personality and aggressive voice is amplified by LoAI, while is mitigated by PS. This offers empirical evidence that PS and LoAI are two separate dimension of continuance commitment. LoAI leads to a feelings of entrapment, represents the negative side of continuance commitment and captures self-serving mindset better than PS, which has

motivational attributes and can lead to desirable outcomes such as citizenship behaviour (Vandenberghe et al, 2007).

For organizations hoping to encourage employees voice and improve the organizational functioning, they can hire individuals with high proactive personality. However, organizations should be aware that high proactive personality is not always an asset and does not necessarily lead to positive outcomes. Proactive individuals are more likely to engage in aggressive voice as well, especially when they feel entrapped in the organization with limited alternative employment opportunities. Organizations and managers should also adopt policies and practices to enhance affective commitment, which makes proactive employees less likely to engage in aggressive voice.

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Table 2.1 Intercorrelations of variables

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Age	4.23	1.09	1											
2. Gender	1.52	0.50	0.004	1										
3. Extroversion	4.94	1.05	-.12*	-.01	1									
4. Agreeableness	5.73	0.95	.06	.06	.44**	1								
5. Job autonomy	5.18	1.35	-.02	-.01	.18**	.29**	1							
6. Job satisfaction	5.09	1.59	.01	-.02	.28**	.34**	.57**	1						
7. Psych safety	4.87	1.41	-.04	-.02	.25**	.27**	.63**	.61**	1					
8. AC	4.71	1.49	.02	-.03	.35**	.36**	.48**	.74**	.61**	1				
9. PS	4.56	1.24	.10*	-.01	.15**	.19**	.28**	.54**	.35**	.55**	1			
10. LoAI	4.24	1.37	-.01	.06	-.16**	-.16**	-.17**	-.23**	-.22**	-.23**	-.13**	1		
11. PP	5.19	0.93	-.18**	.03	.53**	.40**	.41**	.32**	.35**	.36**	.15**	-.11*	1	
12. Aggressive V	2.45	0.72	-.16**	-.04	.04	-.16**	.01	-.10*	-.02	-.02	-.11*	.20**	.11*	.11*

Note:

AC= affective commitment

PS= perceived sacrifice

LoAI= lack of alternatives

\* Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

\*\* Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)



Table 2.2 Fit statistics for alternative organizational commitment and voice measurement models

Model	Chi-Square	d.f.	Chi-Square/d.f.	SRMR	RMSEA	CFI	TLI
One-factor model	4202.16	299	14.05	0.18	0.17	0.4	0.34
Two-factor model	3251.21	298	10.91	0.16	0.15	0.54	0.5
Three-factor model	3067.95	296	10.36	0.17	0.15	0.57	0.53
Four-factor model (CC as one)	2285.38	293	7.80	0.14	0.12	0.69	0.66
Four-factor model (voice as one)	1987.34	293	6.78	0.13	0.12	0.74	0.71
Five-factor model	1191.27	289	4.12	0.08	0.08	0.86	0.84

Note:

SRMR=standardized root means square residual; RMSEA=root mean square error of approximation; CFI= comparative fit index; TLI=Tucker-Lewis index.

One-factor model=all commitment and voice items loading on one factor.

Two factor model=all commitment items loading on one factor and all voice items loading on a second factor.

Three factor model= affective commitment items loading on one factor, PS and LoAI loading on a second factor and all voice items loading on a third factor.

Four factor model (CC as one)= affective commitment, constructive voice and aggressive voice loading on separate factors, all PS and LoAI loading on a forth factor.

Four factor model (voice as one)=affective commitment, Ps, LoAI loading on separate factors, all voice items loading on a forth factor.

Five-factor model=each commitment and voice dimension loading on a separate model.

Table 2.3 Hierarchical regression results for aggressive voice: the moderating role of affective commitment

Model		Aggressive voice							
		B	S.E.	B	S.E.	B	S.E.	B	S.E.
1	(Constant)	3.28	0.28	3.03	0.30	2.60	0.33	2.59	0.33
	Gender	-0.05	0.07	-0.05	0.07	-0.06	0.07	-0.05	0.07
	Age	-0.09**	0.03	-0.07*	0.03	-0.07*	0.03	-0.07*	0.03
	Extroversion	0.09*	0.04	0.05	0.04	0.06	0.04	0.06	0.04
	Agreeableness	-0.15***	0.04	-0.17***	0.04	-0.17***	0.04	-0.17***	0.04
	Job autonomy	0.07*	0.03	0.04	0.03	0.04	0.03	0.04	0.03
	Psychological safety	0.00	0.03	-0.002	0.03	-0.01	0.03	-0.004	0.03
	Job satisfaction	-0.07	0.03	-0.07*	0.03	-0.07*	0.03	-0.08*	0.03
2	Proactive personality			0.12**	0.05	0.10*	0.05	0.10*	0.05
3	Affective commitment					0.08*	0.04	0.08*	0.04
	PS					-0.06	0.03	-0.05	0.03
	LoAI					0.10***	0.03	0.10***	0.02
4	PP*AC							-0.04*	0.02
	R <sup>2</sup>	0.074		0.088		0.132		0.140	
	ΔR <sup>2</sup>			0.014**		0.044***		0.008*	

Table 2.4 Simple slope analysis results for aggressive voice: the moderating impact of affective commitment

Level of moderator	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>
-1.49 (low affective commitment)	0.17	0.05	3.01	0.00	0.06	0.27
0.00	0.10	0.05	2.19	0.03	0.01	0.19
1.49 (high affective commitment)	0.04	0.06	0.63	0.53	-0.08	0.15

Table 2.5 Hierarchical regression results for aggressive voice: the moderating role of PS

Step		Aggressive voice			
		<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i>
3	(Constant)	2.60	0.33	2.54	0.33
	Gender	-0.06	0.07	-0.05	0.07
	Age	-0.07*	0.03	-0.07*	0.03
	Extroversion	0.06	0.04	0.06	0.04
	Agreeableness	-0.17***	0.04	-0.17***	0.04
	Job autonomy	0.04	0.03	0.05	0.03
	Psychological safety	-0.01	0.03	-0.01	0.03
	Job satisfaction	-0.07*	0.03	-0.08*	0.04
	Proactive personality	0.10*	0.05	0.10*	0.05
	Affective commitment	0.08*	0.04	0.09*	0.04
	PS	-0.06	0.03	-0.05	0.03
	LoAI	0.10***	0.03	0.10***	0.03
	PP*PS			-0.06*	0.03
4	R <sup>2</sup>	0.132		0.142	
	ΔR <sup>2</sup>			0.009*	

Table 2.6 Simple slope analysis results for aggressive voice: the moderating impact of PS

<i>Level of moderator</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>
-1.24 (low perceived sacrifice)	0.17	0.06	3.11	0.00	0.06	0.28
0.00	0.10	0.05	2.21	0.03	0.01	0.19
1.24 (high perceived sacrifice)	0.03	0.06	0.50	0.61	-0.08	0.14

Table 2.7 Hierarchical regression results for aggressive voice: the moderating role of LoAI

Model		Aggressive voice			
		<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i>
3	(Constant)	2.60	0.33	2.72	0.33
	Gender	-0.06	0.07	-0.07	0.06
	Age	-0.07*	0.03	-0.06	0.03
	Extroversion	0.06	0.04	0.05	0.04
	Agreeableness	-0.17***	0.04	-0.16***	0.04
	Job autonomy	0.04	0.03	0.04	0.03
	Psychological safety	-0.01	0.03	-0.01	0.03
	Job satisfaction	-0.07*	0.03	-0.08*	0.03
	Proactive personality	0.10*	0.05	0.11*	0.05
	Affective commitment	0.08*	0.04	0.08*	0.04
	PS	-0.06	0.03	-0.07*	0.03
	LoAI	0.10***	0.03	0.08**	0.03
4	PP*LoAI			0.08**	0.03
	R2	0.132		0.152	
	R2			0.019**	

Table 2.8 Simple slope analysis results for aggressive voice: the moderating impact of LoAI

Level of moderator	<i>b</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>
-1.38 (low lack of alternatives)	-0.002	0.06	-0.04	0.97	-0.11	0.11
0.00	0.11	0.05	2.45	0.01	0.02	0.20
1.38 (high lack of alternatives)	0.23	0.06	3.77	0.00	0.11	0.34

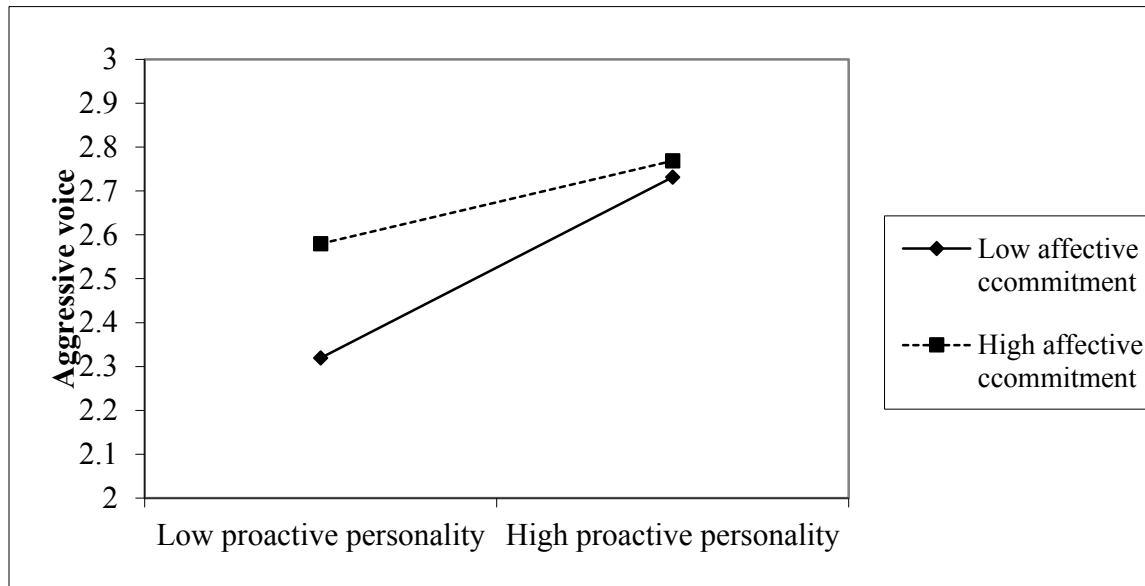


Figure 2.1 The interaction effect of proactive personality and affective commitment on aggressive voice



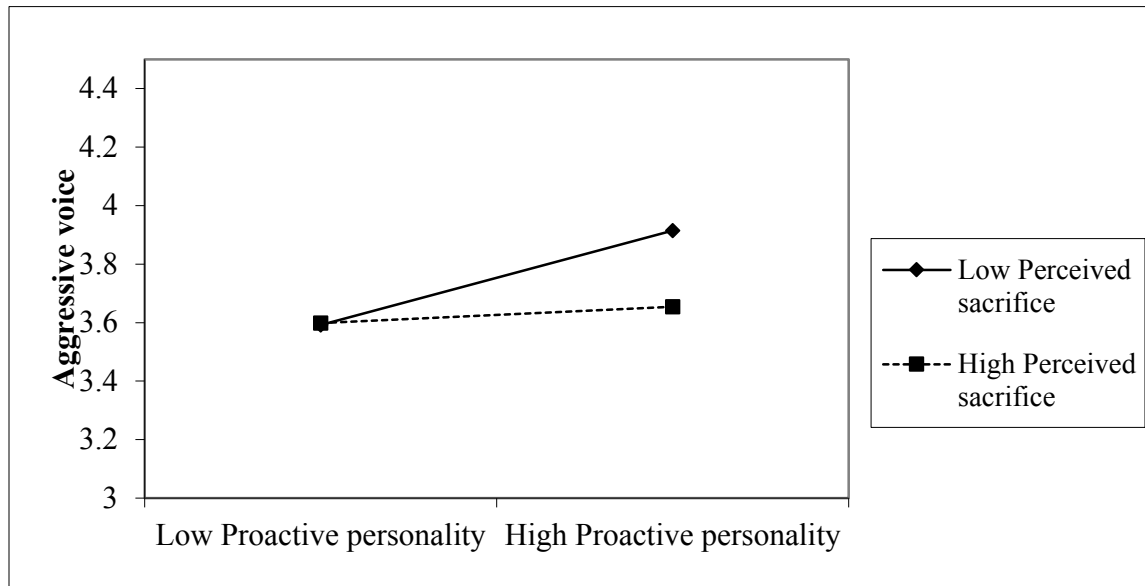


Figure 2.3 The interaction effect of proactive personality and PS on aggressive voice

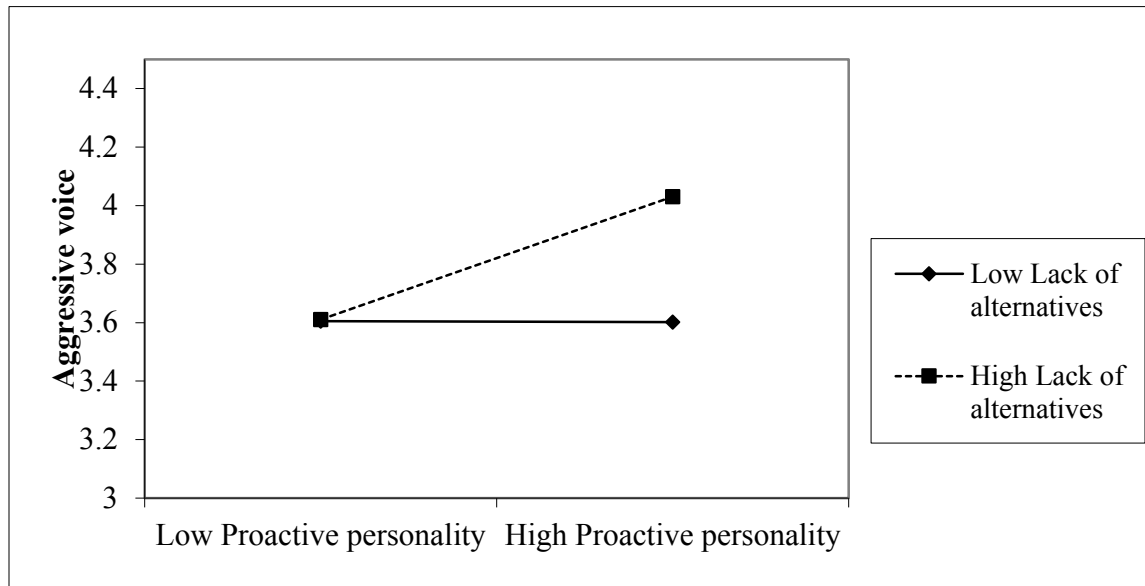


Figure 2.4 The interaction effect of proactive personality and LoAl on aggressive voice

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **Transformational Leadership and Employees Voice and Taking Charge: Exploring the Mediating Mechanisms and the Role of Followers' Proactive Personality**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

As the contemporary business environment becomes increasingly more competitive, organizations are becoming more reliant on employees to take the initiative to develop, share, and implement ideas (Morrison, 2011; Morrison & Phelps, 1999). Over the past few decades, much research focus has been placed on understanding and encouraging employees' discretionary behavior that goes beyond minimal job requirements, and that challenges the status quo in a way that is constructive for the organization, such as through employee voice and taking charge (Crant, 2000; Morrison & Phelps, 1999; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine & Bachrach, 2000; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998).

Voice is defined as the discretionary communication of ideas, suggestions, concerns, or opinions about work-related issues with the intent to improve organizational or unit functioning (Morrison, 2011). Taking charge refers to individual voluntary and constructive efforts to bring about positive changes that challenge the present state of organizational functioning (Morrison & Phelps, 1999). Voice and taking charge are similar to the extent that both are concerned with employees' active involvement in constructive change at work. However, they are conceptually distinct. Employees who

engage in voice tend to focus on the problem and create positive change through challenging others and speaking up, while employees who take charge focus on solution and work to implement their own new ideas or practices. Extant literature offers considerable evidence to suggest that employee voice and taking charge can promote a number of positive outcomes to both the individual employee and the organization (see Morrison, 2011 for a review).

However, despite the benefits associated with voice and taking charge, engaging in these activities can be potentially risky for employees. Employees who express their concerns, make suggestions, or take the initiative to change the organization are implicitly pointing out problems and confronting established and shared systems of beliefs and routines, which can lead to negative personal outcomes (Burris, 2012; Seibert, Kramer & Crant, 2001). Furthermore, voice can lead to a negative public image or even damage one's relationship with others and career progression (Fuller, Barnett, Hester, Relyea & Frey, 2007; Milliken, Morrison & Hewlin, 2003; Seibert, Kraimer & Crant, 2001).

Since leaders are often the target of voice and have the authority to implement employees' suggestions, one emerging stream of literature has emphasized the impact of supervisory and leaders' behavior on employees' voice. Prior literature has documented that leaders that are open and supportive, think unconventionally, and create a shared belief among their team members that they are safe to take interpersonal risks create facilitative conditions for employee voice (Detert & Burris, 2007; Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009). Conversely, when managers are averse to employee voice and

taking charge, employees tend to feel reluctant to engage in voice or take initiative (Fast, Burris & Bartel, 2014).

One style of leadership that may be particularly helpful in understanding employee voice and taking charge is transformational leadership. Transformational leadership is a style of leadership that emphasizes the value of followers' work, serves to address their higher-order needs, and encourages them to transcend their personal interests for the collective benefit of the organization (Bass, 1985). The literature on transformational leadership has demonstrated its positive impact on followers' proactive, pro-social behavior including employee voice (Detert & Burris, 2007; Liu, Zhu & Yang, 2010), creative performance (Wang, Oh, Courtright, & Colbert, 2011) and organizationally focused proactive behaviors (Strauss, Griffin & Rafferty, 2009). These outcomes are not surprising, given that transformational leadership is designed to facilitate higher levels of employee motivation, not only in terms of employee task performance but also in terms of the employees' willingness to go above and beyond the call of duty. As such, transformational leadership may be a particularly practical way for organizations to encourage employees' voice and taking charge.

There are two goals of the present study. The first goal is to examine the impact of transformational leadership on voice and taking charge, with a particular focus on the underlying mediating mechanisms. I use the model of proactive motivation as a theoretical framework and propose that transformational leadership influences followers' motivational state, which in turn leads to employee voice and taking charge (Parker, Bindl & Strauss, 2010). Drawing on well-established theories including regulatory focus, social cognitive and social exchange theories, I hypothesize that the relationship between

transformational leadership and employee voice and taking charge will be mediated by followers' work promotion-focus, role-breadth self-efficacy and affective commitment, representing the followers' intrinsic motivation and perceived ability to perform voice and taking charge, as well as positive emotional connection to the organization, respectively. This will contribute to theory by elucidating the underpinnings of employees' willingness to engage in voice and taking charge. To date, no prior research has simultaneously tested different perspectives to explain the influence of transformational leadership on followers' voice behavior and taking charge.

The second goal of the present study is to examine the moderating impact of followers' proactive personality on the relationship between transformational leadership and each of voice and taking charge, respectively. In doing so, I adopt the 'contingency view' of leadership by showing that the impact of leadership may depend, to an extent, on followers' personality characteristics. Indeed, according to Parker et al.'s (2010) framework, contextual factors (e.g., leadership) interacts with individual differences (e.g. personality traits) to predict the individual proactive motivational state, which in turn leads to employees changing situation behavior. Empirical evidence also suggests that the influence of transformational leadership on a variety of employee outcomes depends on the personal attributes of followers (Gilmore, Hu, Wei, Tetrick & Zaccaro, 2013).

## **3.2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT**

### *3.2.1 The impact of transformational leadership*

Bass (1985) conceptualized transformational leadership in terms of four broad coexisting behavioral elements. Idealized influence refers to role modeling behavior that

serves to benefit the organization rather than one's own self-interest. Inspirational motivation refers to providing a sense of meaning to employees about their work by articulating an appealing future vision of the organization that might result from their work efforts. Intellectual stimulation refers to encouraging employees to be creative and challenge existing ways of thinking at work. Individual consideration refers to the provision of mentorship and caring about individual employees.

From a conceptual standpoint, it is reasonable to expect that transformational leadership should facilitate employee voice and taking charge. According to Bass (1985), through intellectual stimulation, transformational leaders encourage employees to explore new approaches to old problems and inspire followers to make constructive changes to the status quo, either by offering suggestions (i.e., voice) or by initiating new ways of doing things (i.e., taking charge). Through inspirational motivation, transformational leaders make organizational missions salient and arouse followers' motivations to transcend their own self-interest to promote the good of the collective. In doing so, they can inspire employees' motivation to go above and beyond the call of duty through voice and taking charge. Through idealized influence, transformational leaders serve as role models for followers, and since transformational leaders are change-oriented (Liu, Zhu & Yang, 2010), proactive and creative (Bass, 1985), observing transformational leaders actively seeking solutions for organizational problems, followers are more likely to focus on solving problems and become less concerned about risks associated with voice and taking charge. Through individualized consideration, transformational leaders can develop a high quality exchange relationship with followers, which in turn, predict followers' willingness to reciprocate leaders' support and enhanced positive attitudes

towards the organization, increasing their motivation to engage in voice and taking charge (Liu et al, 2010; Wang, Law, Hackett, Wang, & Chen, 2005; Zohar & Tenne-Gazit, 2008).

Indeed, empirical studies have supported the positive relationship between transformational leadership and employee voice. Liu et al (2010) found that transformational leadership predicts two types of voice, namely speaking up (voice directed towards one's supervisor) and speaking out (voice directed towards one's peers). Detert and Burris (2007) also found that transformational leadership is positively related to employees' improvement-oriented voice. Based on these conceptual arguments and empirical findings, I hypothesize that:

***Hypothesis 1.a:*** Transformational leadership is positively related to employee voice.

***Hypothesis 1.b:*** Transformational leadership is positively related to employee taking charge.

In this study, I draw on Parker, et al.'s (2010) framework of proactive motivation to explicate the impact of transformational behaviors and employee voice and taking charge through several mediators. Three components of proactive motivational states, namely "reason to", "can do" and "energized to" capture the individuals' intrinsic motivation, perception of their behavioral control and activated affect respectively (Parker et al, 2010). Specifically, "reason to" motivation relates why someone is proactive resulting from intrinsic, integrated and identified motivation. "Can do" motivation arises from perceptions of self-efficacy. While "energized to" motivation refers to activated positive affective state that promotes proactive behavior. Applying this



proactive motivation model to the work context, I operationalize “reason to” as “work promotion focus”, “can do” as “role breadth self-efficacy”, and “energized to” as “affective commitment”. Each of the mechanism will be discussed more fully in the following section.

### *3.2.2 Promotion focus as a mediator*

According to Parker et al (2010), “reason to” motivation refers to the strong internal driving force for proactive behavior such as voice and taking charge. Specifically, “reason to” motivation arises from someone that is self-determined to perform proactive goals. The “Reason to” motivation addresses why individuals choose to improve work conditions through efforts involving voice and taking charge. Scholars have suggested that individuals will be more likely to set and strive for proactive goals such as voice and taking charge when they find these behaviors enjoyable and intrinsically rewarding (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Parker et al, 2010).

According to regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1997), individuals have two self-regulation systems (i.e., promotion focus and prevention focus) and those with promotion focus tend to find voice and taking charge more rewarding. Promotion focus regulates the achievement of rewards, and focuses individuals on ‘promotion goals’, such as hopes, wishes and aspirations. Individuals characterized with strong promotion focus are more willing to take risks, and are more sensitive to the opportunity to obtain rewards through their actions. Prevention focus, on the other hand, regulates the avoidance of punishment and focuses individuals on ‘prevention goals’, that is, upholding one’s duties, obligations and responsibilities, which taken together represents the individual’s “ought self,” or the perceived expectations of others for which failure to live up to may lead to punishment

(Higgins, 1997). Consequently, individuals characterized by strong prevention focus are more sensitive to the avoidance of punishment, and will be less inclined to take risks.

Employee's regulatory focus has important implications for their preference for change versus stability, as well as their attitude towards risk-taking (Lieberman, Idson, Camacho & Higgins, 1999; Spanjol & Tam, 2010). Promotion-focused individuals are prone to creative thinking, open to change, and more sensitive to positive outcomes (Friedman & Forster, 2001). Prevention-focused individuals, however, prefer stability to change, and are more sensitive to negative outcomes (Lieberman, et al, 1999; Spanjol & Tam, 2010; Wu, McMullen, Neubert & Yi, 2008;). Dewett & Denisi (2007) suggested that individuals with higher levels of promotion focus are more likely to engage in change-oriented citizenship behavior such as voice and taking charge, while those with prevention focus are more likely to engage in citizenship behaviors that maintain the status quo, such as interpersonal helping. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that individuals high on promotion focus are intrinsically motivated to engage in change-oriented citizenship behaviors, such as voice and taking charge.

Research has shown that regulatory focus could either be shaped by chronic dispositions, or primed by situational cues, such as leadership (Brockner & Higgins, 2001; Kark & Van Dijk, 2007). Brockner & Higgins (2001) suggest that leaders can influence followers' promotion focus through the use of rhetoric that focuses on an ideal state to be achieved, a concept with considerable theoretical overlap with that of the inspirational motivation component of transformational leadership. Kark and Van Dijk (2007) showed that servant leadership, a construct similar to transformational leadership relates to creative and risk-taking behavior through followers' promotion focus. Moss

(2009) also explicated that transformational leadership is positively related to followers' promotion focus through inspirational communication, which makes salient to employees the positive outcomes from their actions. Based on the this conceptual and empirical evidence, I propose:

***Hypothesis 2.a:*** *The relationship between transformational leadership and employee voice is mediated by followers' promotion focus.*

***Hypothesis 2.b:*** *The relationship between transformational leadership and employee taking charge is mediated by followers' promotion focus.*

### *3.2.3 Role-breadth self-efficacy as a mediator*

According to the model of proactive motivation, the “can do motivation” mainly centers on perceptions of self-efficacy (Parker et al, 2010). High self-efficacy is especially important for proactive behavior such as voice and taking charge because they entail potential risks (e.g., taking charge involves changing the situation, which can lead to resistance and skepticism from others). Individuals therefore need to feel confident about voicing their opinions and taking charge before they act. General self-efficacy refers to individuals' belief in their capability to organize and execute the course of action required to achieve certain goals (Bandura, 1997). It plays an important role in employees' actual task performance through the individual choice of goals, goal-directed activities, and emotional reactions and persistence in the face of challenges and obstacles (Bandura, 1997). However, to date, the impact of self-efficacy on discretionary behavior has been relatively overlooked. In the few studies that have examined this relationship, general self-efficacy has been positively related to taking charge (McAllister, Kamdar,

Morrison & Turban, 2007; Morrison & Phelps, 1999) and personal initiative (Frese, Garst & Fay, 2007).

Parker (1998) extended the concept of self-efficacy to include employees' discretionary behavior and developed the concept of role-breadth self-efficacy. Role breadth self-efficacy refers to employees' perceived capability of carrying out a broader range of work behavior that extends beyond those tasks prescribed to the individual by the organization (e.g., discretionary and proactive behavior). As the present study focuses on employees' voice and taking charge, both of which are discretionary and proactive in nature, I examine the mediating impact of role-breadth self-efficacy, rather than general self-efficacy. Given that voice and taking charge involve challenging the status quo in one's workplace and overcoming barriers, they are more difficult to perform compared to other forms of citizenship such as compliance and helping, therefore, they may require a higher level of self-efficacy (McAllister et al, 2007),

According to Bandura (1986), individuals can gain self-efficacy from vicarious efficacy information (i.e., through modeling, wherein individuals observe others successfully performing the focal behavior) and verbal persuasion (wherein individuals are convinced by another person that they are able to successfully perform the behavior). Transformational leadership can impact followers' role-breadth self-efficacy through both channels. Transformational leaders are change-orientated and proactive and can serve as role models for their followers (Crant & Bateman, 2000). When employees observe transformational leaders behaving proactively, they are likely to perceive that they have the ability to perform similar behaviors. Verbal persuasion is particularly likely to influence individual self-efficacy when it comes from someone who possesses the

position to evaluate the individual's performance (such as a work supervisor; Bandura, 1986). Transformational leaders could also boost employees' RBSE through articulating a positive vision of the organization, delivering high performance expectations and expressing confidence in follower's abilities to perform beyond expectations and contribute to the mission and goals of their organization (Dov Eden, Avolio & Shamir, 2002; Shamir, House & Arthur, 1993).

Empirical studies have supported the notion that transformational leadership influences followers' proactive and extra-role behavior through enhancing their general self-efficacy (Salanova, Lorente, Chambel, & Martinez, 2011; Strauss et al, 2009; Walumbwa, Avolio & Zhu, 2008). Ohly & Fritz (2007) also found that when both general self-efficacy and RBSE were included, only the latter significantly related to proactive work behavior. I therefore hypothesize that:

***Hypothesis3.a:*** *The relationship between transformational leadership and employee voice is mediated by followers' RBSE.*

***Hypothesis3.b:*** *The relationship between transformational leadership and employee taking charge is mediated by followers' RBSE.*

#### *3.2.4 Affective commitment as a mediator*

The last component in the proactive motivation model is the "energized to" motivation, which refers to an affect-related motivational state that can affect employee behavior. Empirical studies have shown a positive link between employees' positive affective state and setting challenging goals, taking charge, information seeking, feedback-seeking and networking (Ashforth, Sluss & Saks, 2007; Fritz & Sonnentag, 2007; Ilies & Judge, 2005). In the work context, affective commitment is an indicator of

work-related positive affect. Affective commitment reflects an employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and psychological engagement in their organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Scholars have suggested that affective commitment is an attitudinal indicator of the extent to which an employee perceives him or herself to be in a high quality social exchange relationship with their organization (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Colquitt et al, 2013). In contrast to the economic exchange which refers to the exchange of tangible resources with a short-term focus, social exchange relationships are subjective, relationship-oriented contracts characterized by mutual socio-emotional benefits which develop over time (Blau, 1964). According to norm of reciprocity, employees will reciprocate such high quality relationships with desirable work attitudes and behavior (Blau, 1964). While there are a number of possible indicators of a perceived positive social exchange relationship between an employee and his or her organization (e.g. leader-member exchange), I opted to focus on affective commitment as conceptual and preliminary empirical evidence suggests a link between both transformational leadership and affective commitment, as well as between affective commitment and voice, respectively.

Empirical evidence suggests that transformational leadership impacts followers' work behavior via an impact on employees' affective commitment, rather than other plausible social exchange indicators such as building high quality personal relationships (Herman, Huang & Lam, 2013). Meta-analytic evidence also suggests that organizations wanting affectively committed employees must demonstrate their own commitment by providing employees with a supportive work environment, such as through experiencing transformational leadership (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch & Topolnysky, 2002).

Transformational leaders are able to exert an impact on followers' affective commitment by making the work environment intrinsically rewarding through several means (Avolio, Zhu, Koh & Bhatia, 2004). Through inspirational motivation, transformational leaders articulate an appealing vision of the organization based on the employee's work, thus linking individual interests with that of the group and making the organization's goals more salient to the employees (Shamir, House & Arthur, 1993). Employees are then psychologically attached to the organization and willing to transcend their personal-interests to collective well-being (Walubwa et al, 2009). Further, through showing respect and confidence in their followers, transformational leaders are able to bring a high degree of trust and loyalty of the followers to the extent that followers are willing to identify with, and stay with the organization, even under difficult circumstance (Bass, 1998).

Previous studies have also supported the positive association between affective commitment and voice (and taking charge). Scholars have suggested that the emotional component of affective commitment may motivate people to take actions to attain desired outcomes (e.g., Cacioppo, Gardner, & Berntson, 1999; Crant, 2000), and plausibly this action may involve engaging in voice and taking charge. Further, affectively committed employees care about and feel strong ties to their organization (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001), and are therefore likely to exert effort towards taking the initiative to help the organization, a concept very similar to taking charge (e.g., Belschak & Den Hartog, 2010; Den Hartog, De Hoogh & Keegan, 2007). Affective commitment has also been observed in meta-analysis to be positively related to various types of OCBs (LePine, Erez & Johnson, 2002; Meyer et al, 2002; Organ & Ryan, 1995). Overall, this evidence suggests that individuals who have a higher levels of affective commitment are intrinsically

motivated to serve the organization and likely to feel an obligation to engage in behaviors that have positive implications for their organization (Strauss, Griffin & Rafferty, 2009; Thomas, Whitman & Viswesvaran, 2010). I therefore hypothesize that:

***Hypothesis 4.a:*** *The relationship between transformational leadership and employee voice is mediated by followers' affective commitment.*

***Hypothesis 4.b:*** *The relationship between transformational leadership and employee taking charge is mediated by followers' affective commitment.*

### *3.2.5 The moderating effect of followers' proactive personality*

While models of leadership tend to offer specific leader behaviors that bring about positive employee outcomes, the success of leadership is recognized as a social process that involves interactions between the leader and the followers (Hollander, 1992). Scholars have noted that followers' personality traits are an important but a relatively underexplored source of variance in understanding the leadership process (Ehrhart & Klein, 2001; Klein & House, 1995; Kirkman et al, 2009; Lord, Brown, & Freiberg, 1999). Based on having different personality characteristics, followers may differ in their preference for different types of leaders. For instance, even though transformational leadership has been related to a variety of favorable work-related outcomes, it can be perceived as arrogant, pushy and overconfident by followers that do not favor such a leadership style (Ehrhart & Klein, 2001). Previous studies have shown that individuals' personal characteristics including power distance orientation, extroversion, and conscientiousness impact followers' preference towards and the effectiveness of transformational leadership behaviors (Ehrhart & Klein, 2001; Kirkman et al., 2009; Moss and Ngu, 2006). Although there is a growing interest in the influence of follower



characteristics on employees' perceptions and reactions to transformational leadership (De Vries, Roe & Taillieu, 2002; Ehrhart & Klein, 2001; Nubold, Muck, & Maier, 2013), research on interactions between leadership and follower characteristics is still relatively scarce.

It is plausible that proactive personality impacts the effectiveness of transformational leadership. Proactive personality is defined as an individual's disposition toward taking the initiative to influence their environment (Bateman & Crant, 1993). People with a strong proactive personality tend to seek out opportunities to improve the situations in which they find themselves and tend to persevere with these improvement efforts until they are able to bring about meaningful changes (Seibert, Kraimer & Crant, 2001). Three separate and competing theoretical positions predict that the relationship between transformational leadership and OCB should be contingent on followers' proactive personality, but each of these theories suggests a different pattern of interaction. Specifically, the similarity—attraction hypothesis, the trait-leadership substitute hypothesis and the dominance complementarity hypothesis generate competing hypotheses, and will be articulated more fully in the next sections.

#### *Similarity-Attraction Hypothesis*

The key proposition of the similarity attraction hypothesis is that individuals will be attracted to individuals or organizations that they perceive share values and characteristics similar to their own (Schneider, Smith & Goldstein, 2000). In a classic article from the literature on romantic relationships, Byrne (1971) suggested that similarity leads to attraction because it facilitates dyadic interactions through fostering a sense of familiarity and safety. A more recent empirical study suggested that both attitude

and personality trait similarity predict attraction and relationship quality (Herbst, Gaetner, & Insko, 2003). In the workplace context, studies have suggested that when individuals perceive a similarity between themselves and their organization, they are more likely to remain in the organization, report higher job satisfaction and organizational commitment (O'Reily, Chatman & Caldwell, 1991).

Applying the similarity-attraction hypothesis to the leader-subordinate relationship, it is reasonable to propose that employees are likely to be drawn to and react positively to leaders with whom they perceive they share similar attributes. Indeed, according to leader-member exchange theory (Liden, Sparrowe & Wayne, 1997), leaders are more likely to develop high quality exchange relationship with subordinates that are similar to them (Bernerth, et al., 2008). Zhang, Wang and Shi (2012) suggest that the congruence of proactive personality between the leader and follower is related to better leader-member exchange (LMX), which in turn affects employees' job satisfaction, affective commitment and job performance. Piccolo & Colquitt (2006) also found the impact of transformational leadership on followers' task performance and OCBs was stronger for followers who perceive high LMX.

While the aforementioned studies highlight how a leader who is perceived as similar is more likely to be looked upon favorably by subordinates, research also suggests that subordinates personality may impact on one's preference for transformational leadership when the personality attributed of the follower converge with the typical behavior of transformational leaders. For instance, followers' extraversion was related to preference for transformational leadership (Felfe & Schyns, 2006, 2010; Keller, 1999), wherein transformational leadership involves extraverted behaviors such as relationship

building and communication (Bono & Judge, 2004). Given a previous meta-analysis suggesting that transformational leadership behavior is positively associated with leaders' proactive personality (Deluga, 1998), it may be plausible that employees with high proactive personality will be particularly attracted to and contented with a transformational leader who role model proactivity and support these efforts in subordinates, resulting in a greater likelihood of employees engaging in voice and taking charge. I therefore propose:

***Hypothesis 5.a:** The relationship between transformational leadership and employee voice is stronger when followers' proactive personality is higher.*

***Hypothesis 5.b:** The relationship between transformational leadership and employees' taking charge is stronger when followers' proactive personality is higher.*

#### *Trait-Leadership Substitute Hypothesis*

The trait-leadership substitute model developed by Kerr and Jemier (1978) suggests that certain subordinate characteristics, or task or organizational factors can serve as “substitutes” for leadership (Kerr & Jemier, 1978), and conversely, that leadership can compensate for the lack of dispositional characteristic on the part of an employee to yield positive employee behavior. For instance, Gilmore, Hu, Wei, Tetrick & Zaccaro (2013) found that trait positive affectivity could substitute for the impact of transformational leadership on promoting creative performance. They suggest that followers with high levels of trait positive affectivity have access to more diverse information from memory, think more divergently and therefore naturally generate more novel ideals (Gilmore et al, 2013). Therefore, such employees will naturally possess the

stimulation and inspiration to bolster their creative performance, and benefit less from the influence of transformational leadership. De Hoogh & Den Hartog (2009) also found that charismatic leadership could reduce employee burnout more effectively for individuals with a low internal locus of control, because these employees are prompt to seek help and support from their leaders as compared to employees with high internal locus of control. They also found that charismatic leadership reduced burnout more effectively for less emotionally stable employees. This finding supports the leadership-substitutes model because they suggest that when individuals possess dispositional characteristics (such as high internal locus of control) that could buffer them from burnout, the effect of charismatic leadership in terms of reducing burnout is weakened. Previous studies have also shown that role breadth self-efficacy, generalized self-efficacy, self-esteem and core self-evaluation could serve as substitutes for leadership in relation to proactive behavior, motivation and performance (Den Hartog & Belschak, 2012; Nubold et al, 2013; Rank et al, 2009; Speier & Frese, 1997). Overall, these studies support the leadership substitute model by suggesting that leadership can compensate for the lack of certain desirable dispositional characteristics on the part of employees.

There is reason to believe that employees with low proactive personality may have more to gain from transformational leadership. Results from a meta-analysis suggest that proactive personality is related to voice behavior and taking charge across situations (Fuller & Marler, 2009). Greguras & Diefendorff (2010) asserted that individuals with proactive personality are more likely to set goals consistent with their own values, leading to higher need satisfaction, which in turn predicts OCBs. These empirical studies support the idea that employees with high proactive personality should be self-motivated

to engage in OCBs such as voice and taking charge, and therefore the organization should receive relatively little incremental benefit from the presence of transformational leadership for these individuals. It is therefore reasonable to hypothesize that:

***Hypothesis 6.a:*** *The relationship between transformational leadership and employee voice is stronger when followers' proactive personality is lower.*

***Hypothesis 6.b:*** *The relationship between transformational leadership and employee taking charge is stronger when followers' proactive personality is lower.*

#### *Dominance Complementarity Hypothesis*

The dominance complementarity hypothesis suggests that effective interpersonal interaction requires dominant, assertive behavior from one party and submissive, passive behavior from another party (Carson, 1969). Applied to the leader-follower relationship, this hypothesis suggests that when leaders behave dominantly, they may expect followers to be more submissive (Kiesler, 1983). The complementarity between leader and followers' dominance disposition has important implications for leadership effectiveness. For instance, Grant, Gino & Hofmann (2011) drew on dominance complementarity theory and found that followers' proactivity interacts with leadership styles in predicting group performance, such that best team performance is achieved when either low proactive employees were paired with an extraverted leader or when high proactive employees proactivity were paired with a less extraverted leader. They suggested that extraverted leaders are less receptive to follower's proactivity, which could be viewed as an attempt to gain dominance in the relationship. It is notable that in a meta-analysis, Bono and Judge (2004) found that extraversion was the best personality predictor for

transformational leadership. Bass (1985) also asserted that transformational leaders engage more self-determining behaviors and they can be perceived as assertive and bold, less receptive to followers' upward influence, including voice.

According to the dominance complementary hypothesis, the combination of highly proactive followers with transformational leaders will lead to reduced voice and taking charge. Conversely, a higher level of voice and taking charge is achieved through complementarity such as when transformational leaders are paired with less proactive followers or less transformational leaders are paired with more proactive followers. It has been suggested by scholars that this moderation effect is especially important since it changes the effect of leader behavior in criterion variables from positive to negative and explains why certain leadership behaviors help in some situations but hurt in others. Based on these theoretical and empirical findings, it is reasonable to hypothesize that:

***Hypothesis 7.a:*** Transformational leadership is positively related to employee voice when followers' proactive personality is low and negatively related to employee voice when followers' proactive personality is high.

***Hypothesis 7.b:*** Transformational leadership is positively related to employee taking charge when followers' proactive personality is low and negatively related to employee taking charge when followers' proactive personality is high.

The overall hypothesized model is presented in Figure 3.1.

### **3.3METHOD**

#### *3.3.1 Data and Sample*

Data were obtained through “Qualtrics ”, an online data-collection agency that connects researchers with adults who have expressed an interest in participating in research. In order to examine the impact of transformational leadership, I requested the participation of full-time employees who have a direct supervisor and have been working on their current organization for over 3 months. Those who were eligible and willing to participate received an online survey invitation, a letter of introduction, and a link to the questionnaire. In order to eliminate common method variance, I collected data at 2 time points. At Time 1, participants were asked to respond to scales on their proactive personality, affective commitment, role-breadth self-efficacy and demographic information (e.g., age, tenure, and gender). Two weeks later, participants received another survey asking them to report on scales of voice and taking charge. There were 1454 participants who completed the survey at Time 1, and of those, 427 also completed the survey at Time 2. I choose a two-week time lag because of the significant increase in attrition common to electronic surveys with a time lag longer than two weeks. In the final sample of 427 employees, 50 percent were male, with a mean age of 35, and an average organizational tenure of 3.25 years.

#### *3.3.2 Measures*

Unless otherwise noted, each of the following scales was measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1=strongly disagree; 7=strongly agree). Table 1 provides correlations

and descriptive statistics for the study variables. The reliability statistics for the scales used in the present study were excellent.

*Transformational Leadership.* 22- item transformational leadership inventory (TLI) was used to assess transformational leadership (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman & Fetter, 1990). Participants are asked to access the extent to which their supervisor demonstrates specific transformational behaviour. Example items include “my supervisor has stimulated me to think about old problems in new ways” and “my supervisor leads by example ” ( $\alpha=0.956$ ).

*Affective commitment.* Affective commitment was measured through Meyer & Allen’s scale (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Participants are asked about the extent to which they emotionally attached to their organization. Example items include “I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization” and “I would be happy to work at my organization until I retire.” ( $\alpha=0.873$ ).

*Role-breadth self-efficacy.* Parker’s (1998) 10-item scale was used to measure role breadth self-efficacy. Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they are comfortable engaging in a variety of behaviours at work, such as “designing new procedures for your work area” and “making suggestions to management about ways to improve the working of your section”. ( $\alpha=0.943$ )

*Work promotion focus.* The 9-item work promotion focus scale was used (Neubert, Kacmar, Carlson & Chonko, 2008) to measure participants’ tendency to achieve aspiration and accomplishment. Sample items include “I take chances at work to maximize my goals for advancement” and “My work priorities are impacted by a clear picture of what I aspire to be” ( $\alpha=0.918$ ).



*Proactive personality.* Proactive personality was assessed by the shortened (10-item) version of Bateman and Crant's (1993) Proactive Personality Scale (PPS) developed by Seibert et al (1999). Employees are asked about the extent to which they are motivated to make changes to the environment. Sample items include "If I see something I don't like, I fix it" and "if I believe in an idea, no obstacles will prevent me from making it happen." ( $\alpha=0.937$ )

*Constructive voice.* The 6-item constructive voice scale developed and validated by Van Dyne and Lepine (1998;  $\alpha=0.90$ ) was used to measure employees pro-social voice behaviour. Employees indicate how frequently each statement fit their own behaviour. Sample item are "I give constructive suggestions to improve my work" and "if my colleague make mistakes in their work, I would point them out and help them correct them". ( $\alpha=0.941$ )

*Taking Charge.* A 10-item scale was used to measure employees' taking charge (Morrison & Phelps, 1999). Sample items are "I often try to adopt improved procedures for doing my job" and "I often try to implement solutions to pressing organizational problems". ( $\alpha=0.956$ )

*Control variables.* I controlled for employees characteristics that can affect key relationships in the present model: gender, age, education, extroversion, conscientiousness, job autonomy and job satisfaction.

### 3.4 RESULTS

#### *3.4.1 Descriptive statistics and measurement model*

Table 3.1 shows the descriptive statistics and zero-order correlations for the major study variables. Before testing the hypothesis, I compared the fit of the hypothesized model of to that of plausible alternative models. The hypothesized model (the seven-factor model) describes transformational leadership, promotion focus, affective commitment, role-breadth self-efficacy, proactive personality, voice and taking charge as separate dimensions. As shown in Table 3.2, compared to alternative models, the measurement model (i.e., the seven-factor model) has the best fit to the data. These results suggest that the seven focal variables are distinct and that common method variance does not appear to be the primary driver of the shared variance between them.

-----Insert Table 3.1 and 3.2 about Here-----

#### *3.4.2 Test for sampling bias*

I performed a set of independent sample T-tests comparing the two groups (participants who completed both time 1 and time 2 survey and those who only completed on time1) on the seven control variables: age, gender, education, extroversion, conscientiousness, job autonomy and job satisfaction. None of the differences was significant and the data suggested little basis for concluding that there were meaningful differences between the two groups.

### 3.4.3 Hypothesis test

I used the SPSS “PROCESS” macro model 5 to test the hypotheses in the present study. SPSS PROCESS macro uses ordinary least squares (OLS) to estimate moderated mediation models with multiple mediators. It provides estimation for direct and indirect effects in simple and multiple mediator models, two way and three way interactions along with simple slopes and regions of significance for probing interactions, conditional indirect effects in moderated mediation models with a single or multiple mediators and moderators. Bootstrap and Monte Carlo confidence intervals are implemented for the inference of indirect effects, including various measurements of effect size.

#### *The mediating impact of promotion focus, role-breadth self-efficacy and affective commitment*

Table 3.3 presents the results pertaining to the individual mediators in the conceptual model in the prediction of employee voice. Transformational leadership was significantly related to promotion focus ( $B=0.34, p<0.001$ ), role-breadth self-efficacy ( $B=0.27, p<0.001$ ) and affective commitment ( $B=0.66, p<0.001$ ). Promotion focus ( $B=0.13, p<0.05$ ) and role-breadth self-efficacy ( $B=0.45, p<0.05$ ) were positively related employee voice. Affective commitment, however, was not significantly related to employee voice. When the mediators were entered the regression, transformational leadership was not significantly related to voice. Therefore, promotion focus and role-breadth self-efficacy fully mediated the impact of transformational leadership on employee voice, supporting Hypotheses 2a and 3a. Affective commitment did not mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and employee voice and therefore Hypothesis 4a was not supported. Notably, results suggest that the control

variables of extroversion ( $B=0.14$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and job autonomy ( $B=0.11$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) were related to employee voice.

-----Insert Table 3.3 about Here-----

Table 3.4 presents the results pertaining to the individual mediators in the conceptual model in the prediction of employee *taking charge*. Again, transformational leadership was significantly related to promotion focus ( $B=0.34$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), role-breadth self-efficacy ( $B=0.27$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) and affective commitment ( $B=0.66$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Promotion focus ( $B=0.15$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and role-breadth self-efficacy ( $B=0.45$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) were positively related to employee taking charge, therefore Hypotheses 2b and 3b were supported. Affective commitment was not significantly related to taking charge, thus Hypothesis 4b was not supported. In terms of the control variables, older employees ( $B=0.1$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and those with higher levels of job autonomy ( $B=0.12$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) were more likely to engage in taking charge.

-----Insert Table 3.4 about Here-----

#### *Moderating effect of proactive personality*

With respect to the moderating impact of proactive personality on the relationship between transformational leadership and employee *voice*, the regression results for mediated moderation model through the PROCESS macro (see Table 3.2) indicated that there was a significant interaction between followers' proactive personality and transformational leadership in predicting voice ( $B=-0.07$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), and the relationship between transformational leadership and employee voice was stronger amongst low proactive personality followers.

As a robustness check, I performed an additional hierarchical regression to re-examine the moderating impact of followers' proactive personality in the relationship between transformational leadership and voice. In the first step, the control variables of gender, age, education, extroversion, conscientiousness, job autonomy and job satisfaction were entered into the regression. In step 2, the main effects of transformational leadership and proactive personality were entered into the regression. In step 3, the interaction term of transformational leadership x proactive personality was added in the regression model. Table 3.5 shows the results of the hierarchical regression and the results were consistent with the regression of mediated moderation from SPSS PROCESS macro. The interaction of transformational leadership and proactive personality was significantly related to voice ( $B=-0.08$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) (see Figure 3.2). The main effects for both transformational leadership ( $B=0.11$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and proactive personality ( $B=0.47$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) were also positively related to employee voice.

-----Insert Table 3.5 and Figure 3.2 about Here-----

I conducted a single slope analysis to examine the nature of the interaction effect and found that transformational leadership was only significant related to employee voice amongst low proactive followers ( $0.115$ ,  $p<0.05$ ,  $-1SD$ ). For high proactive employees, the relationship between transformational leadership and employees was non-significant ( $-0.0145$ ,  $p>0.05$ ,  $+1SD$ ; see Table 3.6). Therefore, Hypothesis 6a (the leadership-trait substitute hypothesis) was supported, while Hypotheses 5a and 7a were not. Furthermore, the impact of proactive personality on voice was significant ( $B=0.47$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), supporting hypothesis 1a.

-----Insert Table 3.6 about Here-----

With respect to the moderating impact of proactive personality on the relationship between transformational leadership and employee *taking charge*, results from both PROCESS MACRO (see Table 3.4) and the hierarchical regression results (see Table 3.7) indicated that the interaction between transformational leadership and proactive personality did not predict employees' taking charge<sup>1</sup>. The plot for interaction effect was demonstrated in Figure 3.3. Therefore, Hypotheses 5b, 6b and 7b were not supported<sup>2</sup>. Transformational leadership was not positively related to taking charge; therefore, Hypothesis 1b was not supported.

### 3.5 DISCUSSION

The purpose of the present study was two-fold. First, the present study strives to examine the impact of transformational leadership on voice and taking charge, with a particular focus on the mediating psychological mechanisms. Second, it explores the moderating role of followers' proactive personality on the impact of transformational leadership. The theoretical and practical implications will be discussed below.

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<sup>1</sup> Even though Table 3.7 results indicate that transformational leadership is not significantly related to taking charge, this may happen due to a sample size or other extraneous factors, making there was not enough to predict the effect that actually exists (See Shrout & Bolger, 2002). Work promotion focus and RBSE still mediate the impact of transformational leadership on taking charge.

<sup>2</sup> In order to take a closer look at the nature and form of the two-way interactions, I tested the moderating impact of proactive personality on the relationship between transformational leadership and each of work promotion focus, role-breadth self-efficacy and affective commitment respectively. The results indicated that followers' proactive personality only moderated the impact of transformational leadership on work promotion focus, such that the positive relationship between transformational leadership and followers' work promotion focus is stronger among high proactive employees, supporting the similarity attraction hypothesis

### *3.5.1 Theoretical contribution and practical Implications*

As expected and consistent with previous findings (Detert & Burris, 2007; Liu, Zhu & Yang, 2010), in the present study, the results from hierarchical regression indicate that transformational leadership is positively related to followers' voice. Further, drawing on Parker, et al.'s (2010) model of proactive motivation, I expected that this relationship would be mediated by followers' promotion focus, RBSE and affective commitment. I found that the relationship between transformational leadership and voice and taking charge was mediated by subordinates' promotion focus and RBSE, but not affective commitment. The impact of transformational leadership on promotion focus is likely to occur through behaviors such as intellectual stimulation in which employees are motivated to share ideas and they are provided a safe environment to do so. This can serve to encourage employees to take a greater promotion focus, or to direct their efforts towards their aspirations and improving their work environment. Given the change-oriented and risky nature associated with voice and taking charge, it is not surprising that individual preferences towards risk-taking and making changes, as reflected by work-promotion focus, was found to be significant.

The impact of transformational leadership on RBSE is likely to occur through leadership behaviors such as role-modeling a range of desirable behaviors to employees and by verbally persuading employees that they are capable of delivering high performance expectations. Transformational behaviors can thereby make employees confident that they are able to take a broad, proactive role at work (as captured by RBSE), and in turn they are more likely to engage in voice and taking charge. Previous studies have suggested that voice and taking charge is more difficult to perform than

other forms of OCBs such as interpersonal helping or compliance. This may explain the lack of relationship between role-breadth self-efficacy and easier forms of OCB such as interpersonal helping in previous research (McAllister et al, 2007).

Contrary to expectation, affective commitment did not emerge as a significant mediator in the relationship between transformational leadership and voice or taking charge. This is consistent with some previous studies that have also failed to show the positive association between affective commitment and employee voice (Burris, Detert & Chiaburu, 2008; Graham & Van Dyne, 2006). One possible reason is that while some affectively committed employees may choose to take initiative and go above and beyond job requirements to engage in voice and taking charge, other affectively committed employees may develop an allegiance to the status quo and become reluctant to make changes to current practices (Ashford & Barton, 2007).

The second goal of the present study was to examine the moderating role of proactive personality in the relationship between transformational leadership and employee voice and taking charge. With regard to employee voice, consistent with leadership-trait substitute theory (Nubold, Muck & Maier, 2013), I found that the impact of transformational leaders on employee voice was stronger amongst low proactive employees. This finding indicates that the influence of transformational leadership may substitute for followers' low proactive personality and encourage even low proactive employees to find new ways of doing things and making changes to the status quo. Given that employees with high proactive personality are dispositionally prone to voice and taking charge (Crant & Bateman, 1993), the incremental benefit of transformational leaders is not as strong as for low proactive employees. Employees with low proactive



personality, on the other hand, are more responsive to the presence of transformational leaders in terms of employee voice and they will benefit more from this leadership style.

With regard to employees taking charge, the results indicated that the impact of transformational leadership on taking charge was not moderated by followers' proactive personality. In retrospect, this is perhaps not surprising given that voice, but not taking charge, involves working with one's supervisor or leader (Morrison, 2013; Morrison & Phelps, 1999). It may be the case that whereas low proactive employees, in the presence of a transformational leader may be motivated to engage in voice because it is visible and salient to the leader. However, taking charge is not necessarily as visible given that taking charge often occurs outside of the presence of the leader, and a low proactive employee may be less motivated to engage in behaviors that are not as easily recognized. However, high levels of proactive personality and job autonomy are significantly related to employees' taking charge, suggesting that organizations that want to encourage employee taking charge should look for proactive employees and provide employees the discretion and freedom to perform their job duties. This is consistent with previous finding that less constraint at work is positively related to individual taking charge behavior (Chiaburu & Baker, 2006).

### *3.5.2 Limitations and future research*

In interpreting the findings, I recognize the limitations of the present study. First, the nature of our data, single-source and self-report may have lead to inflated relationships among the measures. However, the fact that I have collected measurement of predictors and criteria variables at two different time points should have reduced common method variance significantly (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff,

2003). In addition, measures that reflect individuals' personality, attitudes (e.g., affective commitment) and motivational states (e.g., work promotion focus) are unlikely to be accurately accessed through sources other than self-report (e.g., peer report). Thus, using self-report data may be the most appropriate strategy for the present research questions.

Another limitation of the present study is that even though the results only support trait-leadership substitute and similarity attraction hypothesis, I believe that dominance-complementarity might be supported under certain circumstances. For instance, in cultures high on power distance, where leaders and norm expect more obedience from subordinates (Hofstede, 1980), high proactivity from followers might be perceived as challenge to authorities, thereby leading to reduced voice and taking charge.

Future work should also address the conditions that under which followers' personality moderate the impact of transformational leadership, such that similarity-attraction, leadership-trait substitute, or dominance complementarity might occur. It will add on contingency view of leadership by showing whether leadership and certain personality can complement or substitute for each other.

### **3.6 CONCLUSIONS**

In sum, the present study explores the impact of transformational leadership on employee voice and taking charge. It contributes to understanding of transformational leadership by showing that transformational leaders can facilitate employee voice and taking charge through priming followers' promotion focus and role-breadth self-efficacy. It also contributes to literatures on organizational citizenship behavior by revealing that challenging OCBs such as voice and taking charge have different antecedents from the easier to perform, affiliative types (i.e., generalized compliance and interpersonal

helping). Related to this, this contributes to literatures on voice and taking charge by showing that these potentially risky behaviors depend on one's perceived motivation to improve the status quo (via promotion focus) and one's capability to take more broad and proactive role (via RBSE). Given that transformational leadership can be trained (Kelloway, Barling & Helleur, 2000), this may offer organizations an efficient way of improving voice and taking charge. Finally, the finding that proactive personality moderates the relationship between transformational leadership and voice (but not taking charge) suggests that for low proactive employees, the encouragement and opportunity to get recognized for their proactivity (via voice) may be especially motivational.

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Table 3.1 Descriptive Statistics and Zero-order Correlations (N=427)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Age	1													
2. Gender	-0.01	1												
3. Education	-0.07	-0.05	1											
4. Extroversion	-.11*	0.00	0.02	1										
5. Conscientiousness	.13**	0.08	-0.03	.43**	1									
6. Job autonomy	-0.03	-0.02	0.07	.19**	.21**	1								
7. Job satisfaction	0.002	-0.02	0.01	.29**	.20**	.57**	1							
8. Transformational leadership	-.12*	0.004	0.06	.26**	.14**	.52**	.65**	1						
9. Prevention focus	-0.01	0.08	-0.05	.30**	.43**	.30**	.30**	.35**	1					
10. Role-breadth self-efficacy	-.13**	-0.09	.23**	.43**	.33**	.47**	.37**	.43**	.36**	1				
11. Affective commitment	0.06	-0.03	0.01	.31**	.25**	.46**	.73**	.59**	.27**	.40**	1			
12. Proactive personality	-.18**	0.04	.13**	.53**	.35**	.42**	.33**	.36**	.49**	.64**	.29**	1		
13. Voice	-0.03	-0.06	.17**	.42**	.29**	.43**	.33**	.37**	.38**	.63**	.37**	.58**	1	
14. Taking charge	-0.04	-0.02	.15**	.35**	.25**	.42**	.29**	.31**	.39**	.60**	.29**	.58**	.90**	1

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3.2 Fit statistics for alternative measurement models

Model	Chi-Square	<i>d.f.</i>	Chi-Square/ <i>d.f.</i>	SRMR	RMSEA	CFI	TLI
One-factor model	20425.86	2555	7.99	0.128	0.147	0.416	0.399
Five-factor model	10095.28	2545	3.97	0.097	0.084	0.753	0.745
Six-factor model	8449.11	2540	3.33	0.079	0.074	0.807	0.8
Seven-factor model	8336.02	2534	3.29	0.079	0.073	0.81	0.803

Note: SRMR=standardized root means square residual; RMSEA=root mean square error of approximation; CFI= comparative fit index; TLI=Tucker-Lewis index.

One-factor model= items for proactive personality, promotion focus, affective commitment, role-breadth self-efficacy, transformational leadership, voice and taking charge loading on one factor.

Five-factor model=proactive personality, voice and taking charge loading on the same factor;

Six-factor model=voice and taking charge loading on the same factor.

Seven-factor model=each variable loading on a separate model.

Table 3.3 PROCESS macro results for voice

Predictors	Dependent variables											
	Voice			Promotion focus			Role-breadth self-efficacy			Affective commitment		
	B	SE	t	B	SE	t	B	SE	t	B	SE	t
Constant	1.21*	0.58	2.08	4.82***	0.05	97.89	3.76***	0.04	102.66	4.57***	0.06	81.02
Gender	-0.08	0.08	-0.96									
Age	0.10	0.04	2.32									
Education	0.04	0.04	0.96									
Extroversion	0.14**	0.05	2.77									
Conscientiousness	-0.02	0.06	-0.35									
Job autonomy	0.11**	0.04	2.61									
Job satisfaction	-0.06	0.04	-1.47									
Promotion focus	0.13*	0.06	2.24									
Role-breadth self-efficacy	0.45***	0.08	5.96									
Affective commitment	0.08	0.04	1.86									
Transformational Leadership	0.05	0.05	1.08	0.34***	0.04	9.00	0.27***	0.03	9.54	0.66***	0.04	15.23
Proactive personality	0.21**	0.07	2.80									
TL*PP	-0.07*	0.03	-2.17									

Note: \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Table 3.4 PROCESS macro results for taking charge

Predictors	Dependent variables											
	Taking charge			Promotion focus			Role-breadth self-efficacy			Affective commitment		
	B	SE	t	B	SE	t	B	SE	t	B	SE	t
Constant	1.62**	0.60	2.69	4.82***	0.05	97.89	3.77***	0.04	103.14	4.57***	0.06	81.02
Gender	-0.01	0.09	-0.11									
Age	0.10*	0.04	2.23									
Education	0.02	0.04	0.36									
Extroversion	0.04	0.05	0.78									
Conscientiousness	-0.05	0.06	-0.72									
Job autonomy	0.12*	0.04	2.90									
Job satisfaction	-0.04	0.05	-0.86									
Promotion focus	0.15*	0.06	2.51									
Role-breadth self-efficacy	0.45***	0.08	5.75									
Affective commitment	0.03	0.05	0.61									
Transformational Leadership	-0.01	0.05	-0.23	0.34***	0.04	9.00	0.27***	0.03	9.55	0.66***	0.04	15.23
Proactive personality	0.31***	0.08	4.03									
TL*PP	-0.05	0.03	-1.53									

Table 3.5 Hierarchical regression results for voice

	Step 1				Step 2				Step 3			
	B	SE	$\beta$	T	B	SE	$\beta$	t	B	SE	$\beta$	t
Constant	0.48	0.48		0.99	2.62	0.52		5.03	2.72	0.52		5.23
Gender	-0.13	0.10	-0.05	-1.31	-0.17	0.09	-0.07	-1.93	-0.17	0.09	-0.07	-1.96
Age	0.01	0.05	0.01	0.31	0.08	0.04	0.08	1.96	0.08	0.04	0.07	1.86
Education	0.17***	0.05	0.14	3.54	0.12**	0.04	0.10	2.74	0.11*	0.04	0.09	2.41
Extroversion	0.35***	0.05	0.31	6.61	0.17**	0.05	0.15	3.13	0.18***	0.05	0.16	3.32
Conscientiousness	0.13	0.07	0.09	1.91	0.06	0.07	0.04	0.87	0.05	0.07	0.03	0.76
Job autonomy	0.28***	0.04	0.32	6.55	0.17***	0.04	0.19	3.82	0.16***	0.04	0.18	3.77
Job satisfaction	0.03	0.04	0.04	0.79	-0.02	0.04	-0.03	-0.49	-0.02	0.04	-0.02	-0.45
Transformational leadership					0.10*	0.05	0.11	2.21	0.11*	0.05	0.12	2.40
Proactive personality					0.48***	0.06	0.38	7.61	0.47***	0.06	0.37	7.45
TL*PP									-0.08*	0.03	-0.08	-2.19
R <sup>2</sup>	0.333				0.425				0.431			
$\Delta R^2$					0.092***				0.007*			



Table 3.6 Single slope analysis for employee voice

PP	<i>Effect</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>
Low proactive personality	0.116	0.058	1.999	0.046	0.002	0.229
Medium proactive personality	0.051	0.047	1.075	0.283	-0.042	0.143
High proactive personality	-0.014	0.054	-0.271	0.787	-0.120	0.091

Table 3.7 Hierarchical regression results for taking charge

	Step 1				Step 2				Step 3			
	B	SE	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	B	SE	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	B	SE	$\beta$	<i>t</i>
Constant	0.82	0.50		1.64	3.16	0.53		5.92	3.23	0.53		6.05
Gender	-0.04	0.10	-0.02	-0.43	-0.09	0.09	-0.04	-0.99	-0.09	0.09	-0.04	-1.01
Age	0.00	0.05	0.00	-0.07	0.07	0.04	0.07	1.65	0.07	0.04	0.06	1.57
Education	0.15**	0.05	0.13	2.97	0.09*	0.05	0.08	2.08	0.08	0.05	0.07	1.85
Extroversion	0.28***	0.06	0.25	5.16	0.07	0.06	0.07	1.33	0.08	0.06	0.07	1.47
Conscientiousness	0.12	0.07	0.08	1.61	0.02	0.07	0.02	0.34	0.02	0.07	0.01	0.26
Job autonomy	0.31***	0.05	0.35	6.75	0.18***	0.04	0.20	3.99	0.18***	0.04	0.20	3.96
Job satisfaction	0.00	0.04	0.00	-0.06	-0.03	0.04	-0.04	-0.71	-0.03	0.04	-0.04	-0.67
Transformational leadership					0.05	0.05	0.05	1.01	0.05	0.05	0.06	1.13
Proactive personality					0.58***	0.07	0.46	8.96	0.57***	0.07	0.45	8.84
TL*PP									-0.06	0.04	-0.06	-1.60
R <sup>2</sup>	0.271				0.392				0.396			
$\Delta R^2$					0.122***				0.004			

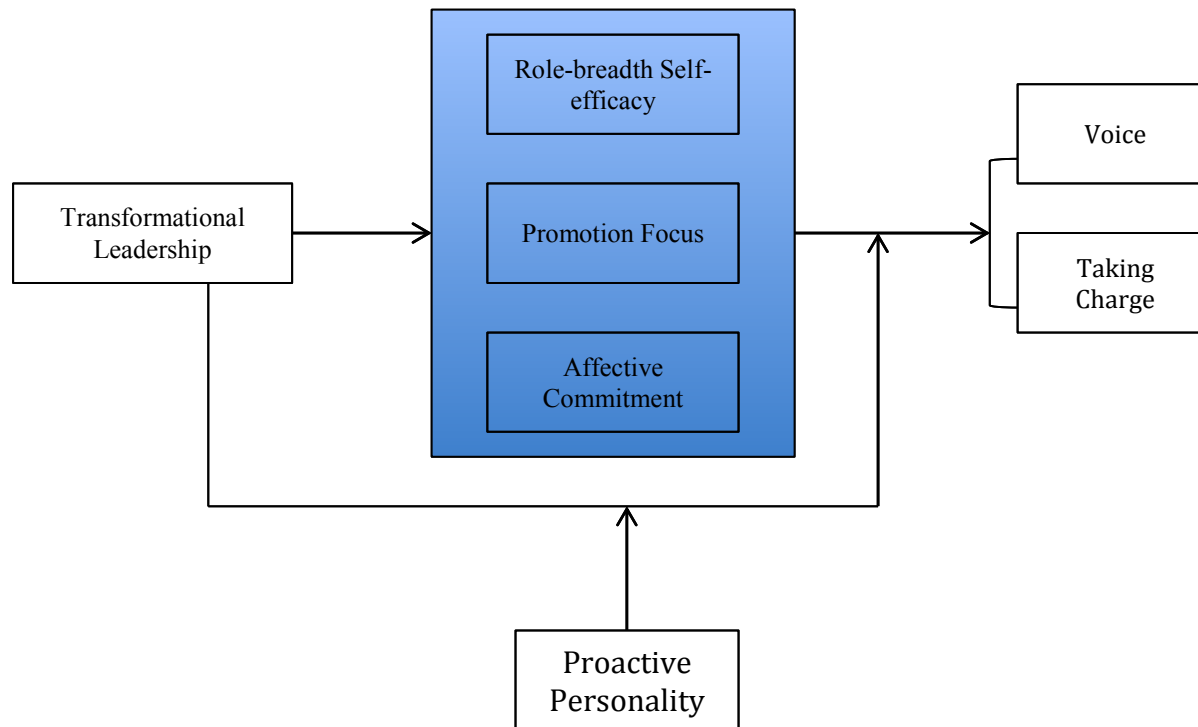


Figure 3.1 Hypothesized model

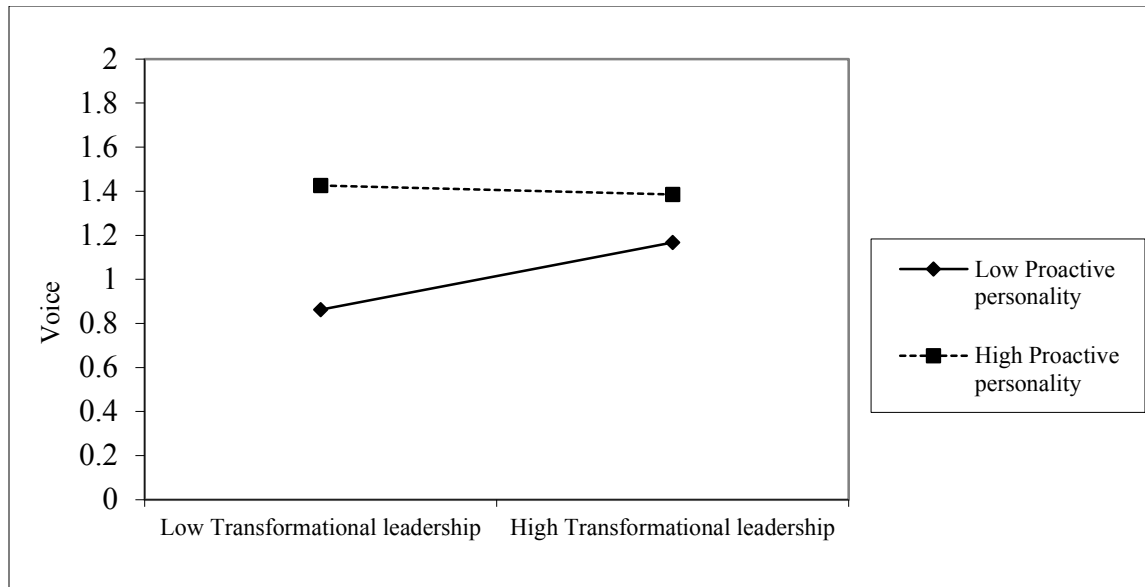


Figure 3.2 Interaction effect of transformational leadership and followers' proactive personality on employee voice

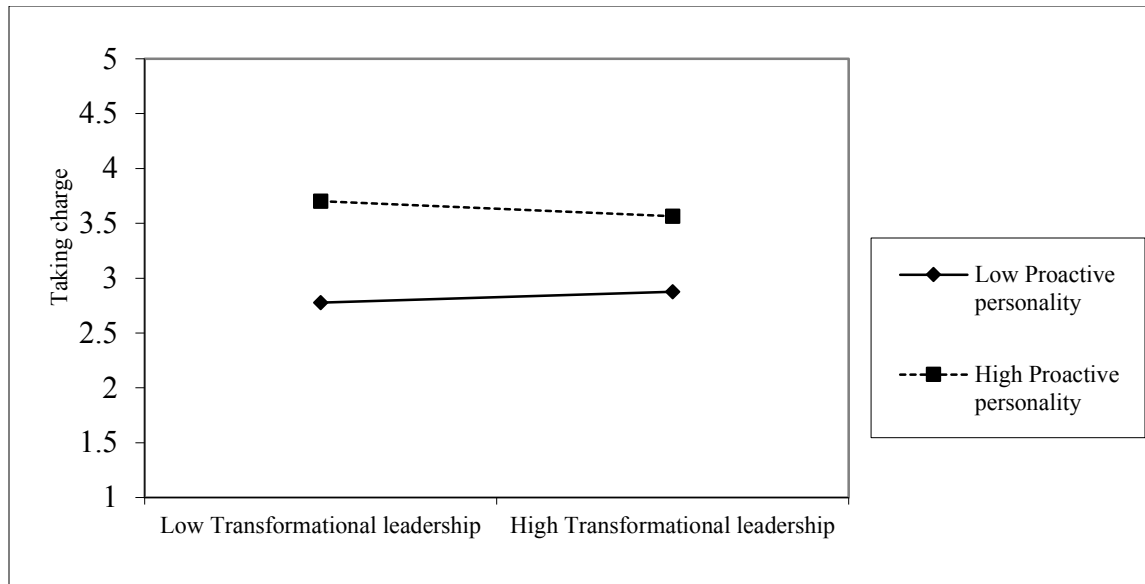


Figure 3.3 Interaction effect of transformational leadership and followers' proactive personality on employee taking charge

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **CONCLUSION**

Understanding employee voice and taking charge is important given the implications of employees' proactive behavior in the rapidly changing contemporary business environment (Dutton & Ashford, 1993; Morrison, 2011; Morrison & Phelps, 1999). In the present studies, I have sought to contribute to a better understanding of voice and taking charge by examining how situational (i.e., transformational leadership) and personal differences (i.e., proactive personality and organizational commitment) jointly influence these behaviors.

In Study 1, I examined the impact of proactive personality, a dispositional factor that has been found to relate to aggressive voice, and I examined the moderating role of various types of organizational commitment on this relationship. The findings demonstrate that proactive individuals are more likely to engage in aggressive voice compared to their less proactive peers. I also found that the relationship between proactive personality and constructive voice is stronger when affective commitment is low. In contrast, proactive employees are mostly likely to engage in aggressive voice when they perceive lack of alternative employment opportunities or lack of sacrifice associated with leaving their current job.

In Study 2, I examined the impact of transformational leadership on employee voice and taking charge. This study had two main goals. First, I examined how transformational leadership behaviours impacted on employee voice and taking charge through followers' proactive motivational state, as indicated by three mediators –work

promotion focus, RBSE and affective commitment. The findings demonstrate that both work promotion focus and RBSE mediate the transformational leadership-voice (taking charge) relationship, but affective commitment did not. Second, I examined the influence of transformational leadership on employee voice and taking charge depending on followers' proactive personality. Findings suggested that followers' proactive personality moderates the transformational leadership-voice relationship such that the impact of transformational leadership on employee voice is stronger amongst low proactive followers. Followers' proactive personality, however, did not moderate the impact of transformational leadership on taking charge.

#### ***4.1 Theoretical contributions***

My dissertation makes several theoretical contributions. First, it contributes to literatures on voice and taking charge by demonstrating these employee behaviors are jointly influenced by employee personality and other perceptual factors. While proactive personality seems to encourage voice, whether (or how) it is enacted depends on other factors more closely related to individual's perception of the work environment. With respect to Study 1, although extant conceptual work has suggested that employee voice can be enacted based on both pro-social and self-serving motives (Van Dyne et al, 2003), this study examined how aggressive, self-serving forms of voice can be influenced by the type of commitment employees have to their organization. Specifically, proactive employees are more likely to engage in aggressive voice when PS is low, or when LoAI is high. I found that the positive impact of proactive personality on aggressive voice was stronger when affective commitment or perceived sacrifice is lower. The positive impact of proactive personality was stronger when lack of alternatives commitment is higher.

The findings suggest that when proactive employees truly care about their organization, or perceive they have valuable resources in the organization, they are less likely to engage in aggressive voice. When proactive individuals perceive they have no other employment opportunities, they are more likely to engage in self-serving voice.

This finding contributes to literatures on organizational commitment by showing that continuance commitment is a conceptually nuanced such that PS and LoAI are two dimensions of continuance commitment and they have distinctive implications for employee voice. This facilitates an understanding of the mindset that may influence individuals' motivation to engage in voice. Specifically, affective commitment represents' individual motivation to reciprocate their organization with pro-social behavior and are less likely to engage in aggressive behavior. In addition, PS is characterized with a sense of valuable resources and it prevents employees from any behavior that may endanger their employment, including voice. Last but not least, proactive individual characterized by lack of alternative commitment feel entrapped within the organization and they are likely to express their frustration against their organization through self-serving voice.

Study 2 also suggests that voice and taking charge are jointly influenced by employee personality and their perceptions of their workplace experiences. Specifically, this study explicates the leaders' role in employee voice and taking charge. Previous studies have shown that transformational leadership influence employee voice through subordinates' perceptions of psychological safety (Detert & Burris, 2007) and social identification (Liu, Zhu & Yang, 2010). The results from Study 2 demonstrate additional channels through which transformational leaders impact on employee voice include



followers' work promotion focus and RBSE, illustrating the importance of transformational leaders in priming subordinates regulatory focus and perceived behavioral control in taking more broad work responsibilities. It also suggested that having proactive employees does not guarantee that they will engage in more constructive proactive behavior such as voice and taking charge. The extent to which proactive employees will behave on behalf of the organization depends on their perceptions of their work environment.

Second, this dissertation extends the literature on proactive personality in two ways. First, by showing that employees' proactive personality is not always advantageous to organizations. Even though prior conceptual studies have suggested that proactive personality is not inherently good and therefore does not necessarily always lead to desirable outcomes, to date, empirical research has mainly focused on the positive implications of proactive personality (Crant, 2000). Study one in particular demonstrates that proactive personality can lead to both constructive (i.e. constructive voice) and destructive outcomes (i.e. aggressive voice). Second, Study 1 addresses recent calls for more research to examine boundary conditions under which proactive personality will lead to favorable or unfavorable outcomes (Chan, 2006). Study 1 contributes to this line of literature by demonstrating that organizational commitment is one such boundary condition that may influence the extent to which proactive employees may choose to engage in aggressive voice.

Third, and related to the previous point, the present findings highlight that organizational factors (i.e., transformational leadership) can effectively substitute for low levels of employee proactive personality when it comes to encouraging voice. Therefore,

organizations can be less reliant on employees' proactive personality to cultivate pro-social proactive behavior through building a supportive work environment characterized by transformational leadership.

Finally, Study 2 makes two relatively more minor and related contributions. This study suggests that voice and taking charge are two separate constructs, with transformational leadership having more influence on employees' voice than it does on taking charge. It extends McAllister et al's (2007) findings by showing that not only affiliative OCBs and challenging OCBs are motivated by different factors; different challenging OCBs also have distinct antecedents. In addition, Study 2 addresses a noted gap in transformational leadership research by examining the role of the follower's personality in the effectiveness of transformational leadership. The findings suggest that followers' personality does matter, and that less proactive followers, can benefit more from the presence of transformational leadership than their less proactive peers in terms of voice.

### ***Reflections on Studies 1 and 2***

Overall, both Study 1 and Study 2 suggest that individual personal traits and situational factors jointly determine employees voice and taking charge. Study 1 shows that proactive personality does not always lead to favorable outcomes, and individual work attitudes (i.e., organizational commitment) moderate this relationship. Study 1 suggests that a positive attitude can make proactive employees less likely to engage in aggressive voice. Study 2 complements on Study in two ways. First, Study 2 examined two constructive proactive behaviors, voice and taking charge. Study 1 shows that positive work attitude (i.e., affective commitment and perceived sacrifice) can reduce the

likelihood proactive individuals engage in aggressive voice. Study 2 explicates how situational factors (i.e., transformational leadership) can compensate the lack of proactive personality on behalf of the employees to predict employee voice and taking charge. Given that both affective commitment and perceived sacrifice can be cultivated through practice and effort, the two studies suggest that organizational can not only encourage less proactive individuals to engage more constructive proactive behavior, but also make proactive individuals to engage less destructive proactive behavior through building a supportive work environment. Second, Study 2 also builds on Study 1 in that it directly measures employees' motivational state. Even though Study 1 suggests that perceived sacrifice makes employees to avoid risky behavior, and lack of alternatives makes employees perform minimum requirement, it did not directly measure those motivation states directly. To fill in this limitation of Study 1, Drawing on Parker et al's (2010) model of proactive motivation, Study 2 confirmed that transformational leaders influence employees voice and taking charge through followers' promotion focus and role-breadth self-efficacy.

Overall, my dissertation explored the interaction between personality traits, work attitude, motivation, and leadership to predict both constructive and destructive proactive work behavior. It demonstrates that organizations can be less reliant on employees' proactive personality to cultivate constructive proactive behavior, and while at the same time make proactive employees engage in less destructive proactive behavior. My dissertation also shows that individual motivation is the proximal antecedent for individual behavior, which mediates the impact of personal and situational factors.

#### ***4.2 Practical implications***

My dissertation has important implications for organizations that aim to encourage employee pro-social, proactive behavior such as voice and taking charge. First, given the role proactive personality plays in both voice and taking charge, organizations that expect more employee proactive behavior could hire proactive employees.

Organizations should also be aware of the challenges associated with using personality test in screening. For instance, job applicants are motivated to fake their responses in order to match the profile of an ideal job candidate (Martin, Bowen, & Hunt, 2002), which reduce the predictive power of the test. Furthermore, organizations should also tailor the test questions relate to the job requirements in order to reduce the concerns of violations of privacy.

However, the present studies suggest that being proactive alone does not guarantee employees will demonstrate their proactivity in a pro-social manner. A more direct yet effective way of encouraging voice and taking charge is by creating conditions that lead these behaviors. Organizations need to build a supportive work environment characterized by motivating job design, organizational justice and effective leadership, which makes employees affectively committed and perceive high sacrifice associated with leaving the company to promote constructive voice and discourage aggressive voice. Given that transformational leadership can be trained (Kelloway, Barling & Helleur, 2000), this may offer organizations an efficient way of improving voice and taking charge. To achieve this goal, organizations can provide trainings to managers and leaders to make them demonstrate more transformational behaviors.

Overall, the two studies suggest that organizations can become less reliant on individuals' proactive personality to encourage employees voice and taking charge through providing a supportive work environment characterized by affective commitment and transformational leadership. While this may involve great effort on the part of the organization, it also suggests that organizations can exert some control over these outcomes.

These two studies also have limitations. First, Study 1 only focuses on the negative proactive behavior, namely, aggressive voice. A second limitation of Study 1 is that even though it proposed that organizational commitment would impact on individuals' motivation to reciprocate the organization and take risks, it did not directly measure this motivation. Third, data for Studies 1 and 2 are collected together. However, the concern is reduced since the variables used in Studies 1 and 2 do not overlap. Further, all the data are self-reported data, it is recommended that future research use data that collected from different sources. Last but not least, these two studies do not include information about whether the employees are unionized. It is possible that whether an individual is a union member impact their likelihood to speak up.

#### ***4.3 Future research***

There are some interesting new directions where future research can extend the present findings. First, future research can integrate literatures on silence and examine when employees choose to (or not to) speak up. Pinder & Harlos (2001) define employee silence as "the withholding of any form of expression about the individuals' evaluation of his or her organizational circumstances to person who are perceived to be capable of effecting change". Therefore, employee silence goes beyond simply the absence of voice

and low level of voice does not indicate the presence of silence. Scholars have suggested the motives underlying silence can be complex as well (Morrison & Milliken, 2003; Van Dyne et al, 2003). It would be interesting to examine whether employees' decision to speak up or not to speak up are determined by the same factors. Second, it would be interesting to examine the impact of transformational leadership on voice and taking charge through longitudinal design and paired data. Third, recent studies in organizational commitment have been advanced to explain how different forms combine to influence behavior (see Meyer, Stanley, & Parfyonova, 2012). In the future, it would be interesting to examine how affective commitment, perceived sacrifice commitment, and lack of alternatives commitment combine to influence employee voice.

Overall, my dissertation examines how person (i.e., proactive personality and organizational commitment) and contextual (i.e., transformational leadership) factors jointly determine employee voice and taking charge. My finding suggests that organizations can facilitate voice and taking charge through hiring proactive employees. In addition, organizations should strive to build a supportive work environment that makes employees affectively committed, perceive the cost associated with leaving the company is high, and provide transformational leadership. In contrast, if proactive employees feel entrapped it, their proactivity will demonstrate in a destructive manner.

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## APPENDIX

### Scales of Study 1

#### Proactive Personality.

*Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statement (1=strongly disagree; 7=strongly agree).*

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

#### Affective Commitment

*Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statement (1=strongly disagree; 7=strongly agree).*

1. I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization.
2. I really feel as if this organization's problems are own.
3. I do not feel as strong sense of "belonging" to my organization. (R)
4. I do not feel "emotionally attached" to this organization. (R)
5. I do not feel like "part of this family" at my organization. (R)
6. This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me.

#### CC: Lack of Alternatives

*Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statement (1=strongly disagree; 7=strongly agree).*

1. I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this organization.
2. One of the few negative consequences of leaving my organization would be the scarcity of available alternatives.
3. What keeps me working at this company is the lack of opportunities elsewhere.

#### CC: Perceived Sacrifice

*Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statement (1=strongly disagree; 7=strongly agree).*

1. I have invested too much time in this organization to consider working elsewhere.
2. Leaving this organization now would require considerable personal sacrifice.
3. For me personally, the costs of leaving this organization would be far greater than the benefits.
4. I would not leave this organization because of what I would stand to lose.

5. If I decided to leave this organization, too much of my life would be disrupted.
6. I continue to work for this organization because I don't believe another organization could offer the benefits I have here.

#### Constructive Voice

*Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statement (1=strongly disagree; 7=strongly agree).*

1. I develop and make recommendations concerning issues that affect this work group.
2. I speak up and encourage others in this group to get involved in issues that affect the group.
3. I communicate my opinions about work issues to others in this group even if my opinion is different and others in the group disagree with me.
4. I keep well informed about issues where my opinion might be useful to this work group.
5. I get involved in issues that affect the quality of work life here in this group.
6. I speak up in this group with ideas for new projects or changes in procedures.

#### Aggressive voice

*Please indicate how often you engage in the following behavior at work? (1=Not at all; 7=Always)*

1. Describe the problem as negatively as possible to my supervisor.
2. Try to win the case.
3. Deliberately make the problem sound more problematic than it really is.
4. Being persistent with my supervisor in order to get what I want.
5. Starting a "fight" with my supervisor.
6. Try to prove in all possible ways to my supervisor that I am right.
7. By definition, blame the organization for the problem.

### Scales of Study 2

#### Affective Commitment

*Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statement (1=strongly disagree; 7=strongly agree).*

1. I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization.
2. I really feel as if this organization's problems are own.
3. I do not feel as strong sense of "belonging" to my organization. (R)
4. I do not feel "emotionally attached" to this organization. (R)
5. I do not feel like "part of this family" at my organization. (R)
6. This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me.

#### Work Promotion Focus

*Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statement (1=strongly disagree; 7=strongly agree).*

1. I take chances at work to maximize my goals for advancement.

2. I tend to take risks at work in order to achieve success.
3. If I had an opportunity to participate on a high-risk, high-reward project I would definitely take it.
4. If my job did not allow for advancement, I would likely find a new one.
5. A chance to grow is an important fact for me when looking for a job.
6. I focus on accomplishing job tasks that will further my advancement.
7. I spend a great deal of time envisioning how to fulfill my aspirations.
8. My work priorities are impacted by a clear picture of what I aspire to be.
9. At work, I am motivated by my hopes and aspirations.

#### Role-breadth Self-efficacy

*Please indicate how confident would you feel to do the following behavior at work... (1=Not at all confident; 7=very confident)*

1. Analyzing a long-term problem to find solution?
2. Representing your work area in meeting with senior management?
3. Designing new procedures for your work area?
4. Making suggestions to management about ways to improve the working of your section?
5. Contributing to discussions about the company's strategy?
6. Writing a proposal to spend money in your work area?
7. Helping to set targets/goals in your work area?
8. Contacting people outside the company (e.g. suppliers, customers) to discuss problems?
9. Presenting information to a group of colleagues?
10. Visiting people from other departments to suggest doing things differently?

#### Transformational Leadership

*Please recall the behavior of your direct supervisor, how often does she or he engage in the following behavior? (1=not at all; 7=always)*

1. Is always seeking new opportunities for the unit/department/organization.
2. Paints an interesting picture of the future for our group.
3. Has a clear understanding of where we are going.
4. Inspires others with his/her plans for the future.
5. Is able to get others committed to his/her dream of the future.
6. Fosters collaboration among work groups.
7. Encourages employees to be "team players".
8. Gets the group to work together for the same goal.
9. Develops a team attitude and spirit among his/her employees.
10. Acts without considering my feelings. (R)
11. Shows respect for my personal feelings.
12. Behaves in a manner that is thoughtful of my personal needs
13. Treats me without considering my personal feelings.
14. Shows us that he/she expects a lot from us.
15. Insist on only the best performance.
16. Will not settle for second best.

17. Leads by “doing” rather than simply “telling”.
18. Provides a good model to follow.
19. Leads by example.
20. Has provided me with new ways of looking at things, which used to be puzzle for me.
21. Has ideas that have forced me to rethink some of my own ideas I have never questioned before.
22. Has stimulated me to think about old problems in new ways.

#### Voice

*Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statement*

*(1=strongly disagree; 7=strongly agree).*

1. I develop and make recommendations concerning issues that affect this work group.
2. I speak up and encourage others in this group to get involved in issues that affect the group.
3. I communicate my opinions about work issues to others in this group even if my opinion is different and others in the group disagree with me.
4. I keep well informed about issues where my opinion might be useful to this work group.
5. I get involved in issues that affect the quality of work life here in this group.
6. I speak up in this group with ideas for new projects or changes in procedures.

#### Taking Charge

*Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statement*

*(1=strongly disagree; 7=strongly agree).*

1. I often try to adopt improved procedures for doing my job.
2. I often try to change how my job is executed in order to be more effective.
3. I often try to bring about improved procedures for the work unit or department.
4. I often try to institute new work methods that are more effective for the company.
5. I often try to change organizational rules or policies that are nonproductive, or counterproductive.
6. I often make constructive suggestions for improving how things operate within the organization.
7. I often try to correct a faulty procedure or practice.
8. I often try to eliminate redundant or unnecessary procedures.
9. I often try to implement solutions to pressing the organizational problems.
10. I often try to introduce new structures, technologies, or approaches to improve efficiency.