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THE VALUE OF VOICE TO MANAGERS: EMPLOYEE IDENTIFICATION AND THE CONTENT OF VOICE

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Previous research on employee voice has aimed to understand the antecedents and outcomes of the frequency of speaking up. Yet, how these antecedents translate into outcomes may depend on what employees speak up about and its implications for implementation. We engage in three studies to explore what individuals speak up about, why they speak up about those things, and the consequences of voicing such content. First, through a qualitative field study, we find evidence for three dimensions of voice content: the importance of initiating change, the required resources to enact the desired change, and the interdependencies involved in implementing the desired change. Further, specific targets of identification—either one's local work unit or one's broader profession—shape whether the issues individuals raise take into account barriers related to resources and interdependencies. Next, in a quantitative field study, we find that voicing on issues related to one's work unit or profession mediates the relationship between employee identification and managers' valuation of voice. Finally, in an experiment, we manipulate importance, resources, and interdependencies of implementation and find these dimensions of voice content influence managerial value of voice. These results offer meaningful theoretical implications for the literatures on employee voice and identification.

Leaders often rely on employees to learn about problems and ideas for improvements, so that they can take corrective action, improve work functioning, and make more effective strategic decisions (Dutton & Ashford, 1993; Morrison, 2011). Previous research has devoted much attention to the factors that promote "employee voice"—speaking up more frequently about problems and improvement-oriented suggestions to superiors with the perceived power to take action (Detert & Burris, 2007; Dutton, Ashford, O'Neill, Hayes, & Wierba, 1997). Factors such as climate for voice (Morrison, Wheeler-Smith, & Kamdar, 2011), managerial behaviors to encourage voice (Detert & Burris, 2007; Detert & Treviño, 2010), and employee personality characteristics (LePine & Van Dyne, 2001) have all been shown to affect the frequency of employee voice. Despite some inconsistencies in understanding the relationship between employee attitudes such as loyalty and identification with voice (Burris, Detert, & Chiaburu, 2008; Liu, Zhu, & Yang, 2010; Withey & Cooper, 1989), these studies reliably indicate that, when leaders create an inclusive and open environment, employees will deem it safe and worthwhile to speak up, and consequently will be more likely to surface problems and volunteer their ideas and suggestions (Morrison, 2011).

More recent research has focused on how managers evaluate employees who speak up more or less frequently. On the one hand, managers often reward efforts to improve the organization and address problems that pertain to their immediate work environment (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998; Whiting, Podsakoff, & Pierce, 2008). These findings are attributed to managers' evaluating employees who

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speak up positively because such discretionary efforts are intended to be constructive and improve organizational functioning (Van Dyne, Ang, & Botero, 2003). On the other hand, despite a theoretical logic that managers should embrace feedback from below and top managers' proclamations that they want to hear from employees (Ricadela, 2011), other researchers have found that managers do not welcome employee voice and in fact question whether employees who speak up are truly loyal to the organization and its interests (Burris, 2012). This is especially true when the issue is deemed challenging rather than supporting (Burris, 2012; Maynes & Podsakoff, 2014), omits solutions (Whiting, Maynes, Podsakoff, & Podsakoff, 2012), or when employees are not effective in regulating emotions (Grant, 2013). This suggests that managers can sometimes have negative perceptions of or punish those who choose to voice (Seibert, Kraimer, & Crant, 2001), even when that employee strongly identifies with the organization (Riketta & Nienaber, 2007).

Implied in this research is that managers are evaluating not only *whether* someone speaks up, but *what* they are speaking up about. For instance, we know that employees can vary systematically in the types of issues they raise, such as whether they focus on problems (prohibitive voice) versus solutions (promotive voice; Liang, Farh, & Farh, 2012), whether the voice is constructive or defensive (Maynes & Podsakoff, 2014), or whether it contains a solution or not (Whiting et al., 2012). However, while this prior work has developed categorizations around the behavior of voice and specifically how it is manifested, it cannot speak to what it takes for managers to implement any one idea. Given that managers must allocate time and effort to enact any idea, it is likely that such barriers to implementation influence managerial judgments of value. For instance, employees may voice solutions (promotive voice) that require coordination among multiple stakeholders across the organization, or ones that only need the buy-in from one manager or department to be implemented. Employees may speak up about a problem (prohibitive voice) that yields either trivial or tremendous value if addressed. Or, the solutions offered may entail very expensive and resource intense commitments, or be quite economical to analyze and address. Thus, while some research on different types of voice has surfaced, voice is still considered a change-oriented extra-role behavior (Morrison & Milliken, 2000; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). As such, irrespective of whether or not a specific idea or solution was offered, addressing a concern implies that managers implement some change. Thus, the content of voice as it relates to the relative ease or difficulty of the implementation of that change should be relevant.

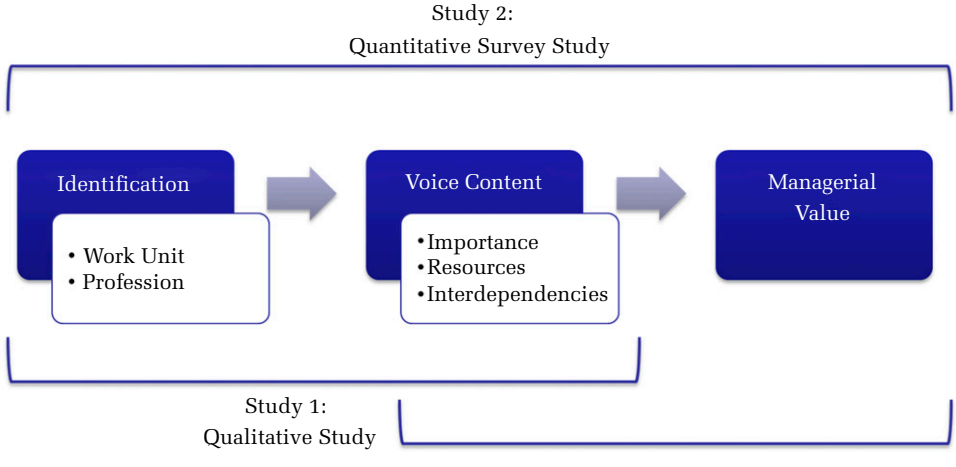
In short, employees likely speak up about a variety of topics that can vary in how important they are as well as what it would take for a manager to implement any change. The cognitive processes regarding why individuals choose to raise certain issues versus others are unclear, as are the processes underlying why managers may differentially value some ideas over others. Specifically, existing research has not (a) identified different dimensions of voice content that relate to the ease or difficulty of implementation for the manager; (b) explained the processes that lead employees to speak up, with ideas characterized by these dimensions; nor (c) conceptualized why managers may value some voice content and not others. By examining these questions, our research considers the likelihood that a particular issue that is of utmost concern to the employee speaking up may not also be easy for the manager to implement. If the ideas are not seen by managers as important or feasible to implement, they are likely to be less valued as well. Our core argument is that developing a greater understanding of the content of the ideas that employees raise, varying along dimensions that relate to these barriers and importance to implement, may lead to new insights into why employees speak up and how managers come to differentially evaluate those ideas.

To begin to understand what employees speak up about and how the content of voice impacts managerial evaluations of employees who speak up, we draw on and extend Hirschman's (1970) classic treatise on voice and exit behaviors. Hirschman argued that employees choose to voice their concerns and ideas, as opposed to exiting the organization, when they are loyal or "have that special attachment" to the organization (Hirschman, 1970: 77). More contemporary research has conceptualized this attachment as "organizational identification," which reflects the degree to which individuals use membership in the organization to define "who they are" (Pratt, 1998). When an employee cares about aspects of the organization and indeed begins to see the organization's successes as self-defining, they will expend the extra effort and take the calculated risk to speak up with improvement-oriented suggestions (Riketta, 2005; Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008a, 2008b). Despite some mixed empirical support (e.g., Burris et al., 2008), prior research has shown a link between organizational identification

and the frequency of upward voice (Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008a). We extend this work by considering how multifaceted employee identifications not only could influence the frequency of voice but also the content of what individuals deem important enough to say. Individuals can choose from any number of targets in or related to the organization as sources for identification (Becker, 1992; Gouldner, 1957). By focusing on more general conceptualizations of employee identification, most prior work has been unable to discern how identification with different facets of one's experience within the organization (e.g., as a member of the work unit versus a member of the profession operating within the organization) may be more robust in understanding not only the frequency of voice but also the content of what is voiced. For instance, different targets of identification are associated with the frequency of voice directed toward different targets (Liu et al., 2010). We argue that, because each target for identification likely influences what issues employees see as important, the extent to which employees identify with one aspect of the organization versus another should influence what employees voice about, and this content of voice is likely valued by managers in different ways. We focus on two targets of employee identification—work unit and profession (Abbott, 1992; Ashforth & Johnson, 2001)—as scholars have long noted that they represent two critical components of one's identity at work and can produce conflicting ideologies for how to behave at work (Gouldner, 1957). Specifically, we discuss how identifying with these two distinct targets may lead employees to speak up with ideas that have materially different characteristics (Ashford & Barton, 2007), some of which will be valued by managers, while others will not.

Our research examines employee identification and voice content—how the strength of employee work unit and professional identification influence the content of the ideas employees voice, and how this content subsequently affects the value that managers place on the ideas conveyed (see Figure 1 for an overview of the three empirical studies). This research contributes to the literature on employee voice and identity in the following ways. First, using qualitative interview data, we extend our understanding of voice by uncovering three key dimensions of voice content as it relates to implementation—(1) the importance of the issue being addressed, (2) the resources required to enact the change, and (3) the interdependencies involved in enacting the change. Second, using both qualitative and survey data, we show that the target of identification influences both the dimensions of the idea that is raised as well as the extent to which the issue is endorsed by managers. As such, this research extends Hirschman's (1970) framework by showing that identification can be targeted to different aspects of working in an organization, leading employees to see only those self-defining aspects of the organization that relate to the target of their identification (the local unit or broader profession) as important enough to speak up about. This also helps explain

FIGURE 1
Overview of the Three Empirical Studies



why some prior research has not found a consistent relationship between identification and broader frequency measures of voice (Burris et al., 2008; Liu et al., 2010); identification with one aspect of an organization may increase the frequency of voice content related to that aspect, but not others. Third, we build theory for why managers value some ideas more than others, and using both quantitative survey and experimental data, we show that managerial responses to voice are not simply a function of how frequently input is generically offered (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998), but, rather, the idea manifest with some content dimensions. Thus, managerial responses to voice may not only be a function of whether voice is expressed (Burris, 2012; Grant, 2013; Whiting et al., 2012), but, rather, what the content of voice implies for managerial implementation. Finally, this research builds on the identification literature that has long stated that having professional identification in an organizational context could have negative outcomes (Gouldner, 1957), a hypothesis that has received some empirical support (e.g., Hekman, Bigley, Steensma, & Hereford, 2009). What is added here is a specific pathway by which those with strong professional identification are not just behaving differently than those with strong work unit identification, but also may come to be seen in a negative light by organizational representatives.

THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

Multiple Identifications and Voice

Social identity theory and self-categorization theory state that individuals will categorize themselves into social groups based on their context (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1985; Turner, 1984) and that the sense of identification with these social groups can guide attitudes and behaviors as individuals draw upon these held identities to help them make sense of their world (Weick, 1995). Individuals can have multiple identifications as they work and live in environments characterized by many options for social categorization (Stryker, 1987). Any combination of social categories, both at work and outside of work, can be central depending on where individuals find meaning (Ashforth, Harrison, & Corley, 2008; Ashforth & Johnson, 2001; van Dick, van Knippenberg, Kerschreiter, Hertel, & Wieseke, 2008). Within the organization, for example, employees can identify with an individual, team, department, building, location, product line, organization, profession, industry, and so on. While not a new idea in the identity literature (Gouldner, 1957, 1958; James, 1890; Mead, 1934), the empirical study of multiple targets for identification at work simultaneously has only been undertaken more recently, with most comparing identification with local targets, such as one's organization, with broader targets, such as one's profession (e.g., Hekman et al., 2009).

Those studying multiple identifications have suggested that identification with different social categories is linked to different behaviors, cognitions, and employee outcomes. Pioneering this stream of research was Gouldner (1957, 1958), who discussed the tension between those occupying professional and organizational roles in the organization. This idea that different targets of identification will be associated with outcomes linked to that particular target has spurred a great deal of research on group and work unit identification in particular (Riketta & Nienaber, 2007). Group identification has been found to predict group-related attitudes and activities, such as group conformity, positive views of group members, and trust in the group (e.g., Ellemers & Rink, 2005; Kramer, Hanna, Su, & Wei, 2001; Olkkonen & Lipponen, 2006; Tyler & Blader, 2000), while identification with the work unit is a powerful predictor of work-related attitudes and behaviors such as job satisfaction (Becker, 1992) and performance (Becker, Billings, Eveleth, & Gilbert, 1996). Similarly, organizational identification is more strongly related to intent to leave the organization (an employee–organizational outcome) than is group identification (Riketta & van Dick, 2005). We take this general idea that the target of identification predicts behavior and outcomes proximal to that target into the realm of employee voice.

The act of speaking up encompasses several defining characteristics. First, it represents actions taken by employees to improve the organization on some dimension (Morrison, 2011). These comments aim to bring about positive change within the organization, rather than vent or complain (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). Yet, by trying to initiate some change, voice is inherently challenging, as it seeks modifications to the status quo (Detert & Burris, 2007). Consequently, managers may not always be receptive to what is suggested (Burris, 2012). Second, it is a discretionary, extra-role behavior, in that it is not required by any formal responsibility in an employee's job (Van Dyne, Cummings, & McLean Parks, 1995). Employees must volunteer these efforts and purposefully direct their behaviors to improving aspects of the organization. As a result, employees may choose to withhold some of their suggestions if they

are not psychologically invested in seeing those aspects of the organization improve (Burris et al., 2008; Hirschman, 1970). Because identification does not manifest itself equally across all aspects of the organization, employees are likely selective of which ideas they feel are meaningful to bring up with supervisors. As individuals view problems or issues at work and engage in sensemaking, they will draw on those identities most salient and most central to their self (Weick, 1995). This implies that, as the importance of seeing oneself as a part of the local work unit increases, issues that directly affect the work unit will be seen by individuals as more important to raise, as helping the work unit improves their sense of self. Similarly, if an individual derives meaning from their profession, they will likely view issues in the organization through a professional "lens" and raise issues that involve incongruences between who they are as a professional and what they experience as a professional at work.

Overview of the Studies

To further our understanding of what individuals voice about and the antecedents to such voice attempts, we engage in what Creswell (2003) referred to as a "sequential strategy"; in this case, a qualitative study followed by two quantitative studies. While we know that targets of identification generally predict attitudes and behaviors related to that target, how and when that might happen with regard to a specific behavior such as voice is not well known. Further, prior research has not attempted to classify the types of issues that employees raise with respect to implementation, nor how the issues are centrally relevant (or not) to the identifications they hold. We take a grounded approach, in Study 1, to open up the possibility for new conceptualizations of voice content, and to explore narratives around identification and resulting behavior (Ashforth & Johnson, 2001). In this study, we explore the content of voice, how individuals think about voice, and what they see as the implications of voicing on different topics. In doing so, we identify three dimensions of voice content—importance, resource, and interdependencies—and build theory for why identification with the work unit versus profession influence voice about work unit issues versus professional issues, which vary along these content dimensions.

Building from existing theory and the findings of the qualitative study, we develop specific hypotheses, which are then tested in two follow-up studies. In Study 2, a quantitative survey study of employees in a commercial real estate firm and a defense contracting company, we examine how an employee's target of identification (work unit vs. profession) influences voice about different issues (work unit vs. profession), which then is associated with managerial assessments of the value of that employee's voice. Finally, in an experiment (Study 3), we manipulate the three content dimensions of importance, resources, and interdependencies of implementation to show their causal link to the managerial valuation of ideas that are voiced.

STUDY 1

Methods

This study was conducted in the Emergency Department (the "ER") of a large hospital in the southern United States. The hospital is a Level I trauma center, meaning the ER can take any emergency patient, even those in the most severe need of assistance. We chose a hospital setting as the medical profession has typically been viewed as an ideal context in which to study multiple sources of identification and identification processes (Hekman et al., 2009; Pratt, Rockmann, & Kaufmann, 2006).

To identify participants in respect of whom we would be most likely to view how identification influences voice behavior, we selected for strong or weak identification with the organization (the hospital), the profession (e.g., nursing, ER doctor, ER technician), or the work unit (the ER). By selecting those with strong or weak identification with various targets, we are in essence looking at extreme cases (Eisenhardt, 1989), which should make the phenomenon, if present, easier to detect. To gather these individuals, we conducted a pre-interview questionnaire with a broad sample of nurses (RN), clinical technicians (CT), and doctors (MD) and asked them the five items in the Mael and Ashforth (1992) identification scale, but with multiple targets (organization, profession, and work unit). We used criteria of greater than $+1$ or less than -1 standard deviation on at least one of the identification scales to find a possible pool of individuals who had strong or weak identification with at least one of these three targets of identification. The nurse manager then found a subset of these individuals who would be able to complete an interview during their shift. The final group of informants included 7 doctors, 17 nurses, and 11 technicians. The interviews were conducted during each informant's shift in the ER

and lasted between 15 and 45 minutes. Each interview, which had a standard protocol, began with an open-ended discussion of the individual's work responsibilities and what it meant to them to be a member of this profession in this hospital. Each respondent was then asked about recent instances of voice, such as a time when they spoke up, what issue they spoke up about, why they spoke up about that particular issue, whom they spoke up to, and the perceived result of the voicing attempt. Respondents were also asked about the general types of issues they cared about and why. While this general outline was followed for the participants, each interviewer was also free to explore emergent issues in the interview (Spradley, 1979), such as instances when the individual wished they had spoken up but chose not to. All interviews were transcribed verbatim.

From the voice literature, we know why individuals choose to speak up (or not) and much about how management and features of the organization affect that choice. But we know comparatively little about voice content, especially as that content relates to implementation and particularly as it relates to multiple identifications. Thus, our approach is one of elaborating theory (Lee, Mitchell, & Sablynski, 1999; Vaughn, 1992), in that there is theory that exists regarding what individuals might care about (and thus speak up about), but there is a gap in determining how different targets of identifications might influence that voice content, the different dimensions of that content, and how that content may impact how managers perceive its value.

To analyze the interviews, we first engaged in open or substantive coding, a technique whereby each statement generated by each informant is given a code identifying exactly what was said (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The authors, based on notes, recollections, and reading of the transcripts, generated a list of first-order codes present in the data. While many of the codes were related to the theory at hand (e.g., strong professional identification), we also allowed for "in vivo" codes (Locke, 2001) to be added as a result of reading the transcripts (e.g., managerial control over implementing the idea being raised). We continually went back to the data and met so that we were in complete agreement on what a code was, whether to use the in vivo term or not, whether a code should be condensed with another, and so forth. It is from this stage of analysis that our first contribution emerged—that voice differed on whether it was related to the work unit or was more central to one's profession.

The final stage of analysis involved taking the first-order codes and engaging in axial and selective coding (Locke, 2001; Strauss & Corbin, 1990), whereby themes are derived from the codes, causal connections are made, and a theoretical story is written. It was in this stage of data analysis that we began to see how these codes regarding identification and voice content were related to each other. As our theoretical sampling was based on identifying individuals high and low on key categories for identification, we compared these groups against one another as we read the narratives of the individuals (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). As is typical in qualitative research, what guided our inquiry was not a perfect match to the emerging findings. For example, the organizational category turned out not to be important in explaining voice behavior. For a third example, being low in a source of identification did not seem to be related to specific patterns in voice content. After analyzing and re-analyzing the data until we reached theoretical saturation (Locke, 2001), what we did find was that strong identification in either work unit or profession seemed related to voice frequency, and that those expressing strong professional identification seemed less concerned about interdependencies and resources as compared to those strong in work unit identification.

The findings of Study 1, elucidated in the following sections, are centered on systematically understanding differences in the content of the issues individuals speak up about, then connecting individuals' identification to the content of the ideas they might speak up about.

Voice Content

Our first step in analyzing the qualitative data was to look at each of the voice attempts and corresponding issues that individuals discussed in the interviews. Within this group of 35 informants, there were 73 issues discussed. In all cases, informants not only identified specific problems but also had an accompanying suggestion (some well formulated, others more generic) of what change could be made to address the issue. Although ideas related to a number of unique issues were mentioned (e.g., staff–patient interactions, worker safety, staffing, scheduling, equipment issues, patient flow, etc.), these issues were analyzed as a set to uncover systematic differences in the content of what employees were raising when speaking up. The result was three dimensions that characterized the content of the ideas as they related to implementation: the importance of the issue being addressed, the resources required to implement the change, and the interdependencies

involved in carrying out the suggested change. Table 1 contains examples of these voice content dimensions along with the subcategories of each content dimension.

Importance of issue. The first content dimension in which ideas varied was in the importance of the issue being raised if implemented. It was clear from the informants that some problems were literally life or death and needed urgent attention, while others were more minor issues that should be solved but were not as pressing. It was also the case that some issues were more persistent problems (e.g., how to handle intoxicated patients), which, while important, were not of immediate concern to the ER. To help us categorize the importance content dimension of the issues voiced, we used parts of the framework on moral intensity (Jones, 1991), which describes how judgments of morally charged situations vary along issue-contingent dimensions, such as magnitude and severity, that describe how objectionable or innocuous a particular action is. We borrow from this framework as such features are likely to spur voice behaviors among employees and would influence the likelihood of managers responding favorably.

The first set of distinguishing characteristics had to do with the *severity* of the problem being addressed by the voice attempt. We defined this subcategory as the level of consequences of not enacting the proposed change. For instance, an issue that influences whether a life is at stake is more severe than something less critical, like more minor injuries or issues without clear and immediate patient or worker safety implications. As one technician (9CT)[1] noted when speaking up about improving the ER's protocol for handling psychiatric ("psych") patients:

> . . . this patient had a knife attached to his belt. And, at that point, I just stepped out of the room and called security—we need to make sure that this gentleman can get out of his clothes and I don't want any problems, anything can go wrong just like that . . . So, I brought this [issue of checking psych patients] to the attention of the nurses.

Others similarly brought up issues of keeping psych patients safe in their beds (7CT), along with a more general suggestion of needing more police presence in the ER (20RN) to prevent serious injury or crime. In contrast, others spoke up on less severe issues, such as improving the computerized input forms (16CT) or increasing the time for lunch breaks (1RN).

The second subcategory of importance was *magnitude*, defined as the number of individuals the change, if enacted, would impact. Many of those in the ER voiced about issues that affected each and every patient, as this nurse (4RN) did when speaking up about moving patients around: "So, if anything, [patients] just feel like they're getting moved around too much, and some of these patients, if they don't get an actual physical room, they feel like they weren't really seen." Others voiced about issues such as the cafeteria staying open later (24CT) or the need for more triple pumps (15CT) or cat scans (6CT) in the ER—all of which would affect a large number of both staff members and patients. On the contrary, others spoke up about their own idiosyncratic problems with the uniforms (8RN), their own frustration that others don't turn off lights in the ER (3CT), or even how bodies are stored in the morgue (9CT). While potentially good ideas, fewer people were affected by these problems and by the proposed solutions.

Resources to Enact Change

The second content dimension that separated the issues from one another was the level of resources required in order to enact the suggested change. Inherently, voice involves asking people with more power to take action on the ideas raised, and this power is frequently pertinent to the resources required to adequately address the issue (McClean, Burris, & Detert, 2013). The two categories of resources to implement in which ideas most clearly differed were "financial resources" and "human resources." The former represents the money needed to enact the change, while the latter represents the amount of time and effort management and staff would have to allocate to enact the change.

While some ideas raised required few financial resources at all, such as the suggested change in uniform scrub tops (8RN), or the need to put in a glass partition to protect the check-in nurse (20RN), others involved significant financial resources, such as the need for hiring more nursing staff. As one doctor (17MD) noted: "We were very short staffed for a long time as far as nurses . . . so you come on as a physician first shift and you're supposed to have 13 nurses and you've only got six, and how are you going to run an emergency department with only six nurses?" The need to address staffing deficiencies was also voiced by the nurses, who commented that overall staff is

[1] Identifiers such as this refer to a unique informant code. "CT" refers to a clinical technician, "RN" refers to a nurse or a nurse practitioner, and "MD" refers to a doctor.

TABLE 1
Study 1: Voice Content Dimensions

Content Dimension: IMPORTANCE OF IMPLEMENTATION	
Subcategory	**Examples**
Severity: the level of the consequences of *not* enacting this change	**Potential Severe Consequence**: [*In speaking up about the need for more police in the ER*] "They tried to cut back on our [police] staffing that we had here, and we absolutely refused and pitched a fit . . . we had a nurse that got beat up in one of our rooms by a psych patient. She ended up leaving the ER for that, and that devastated us." (20RN)
	No Severe Consequence: [*In speaking up about the need for more time to buy new scrubs*] ". . . the two members of management came into the break room and found donated scrubs and told me that these were suitable for me to wear. So now I'm wearing a scrub top that is four sizes too big, that catches on tables, that shows everybody all of my boobs . . . I found it incredibly ridiculous that I was not given an appropriate amount of time to change something." (8RN)
Magnitude: the number of stakeholders the change, if enacted, would affect	**Many Stakeholders Affected**: [*In speaking up about the need for nurses to have more authority to act without doctor approval*] "Other hospitals, they'll go ahead and start protocol so [as a nurse] you'll be able to draw labs, order X-rays, etc. . . . Here, unfortunately, we have to wait for that doctor . . . Because the doctors have to be onboard and feel comfortable with the nurses saying 'Okay,' you know, 'This patient comes in for abdominal pain, we order X, Y, and Z,' you know, 'That's what they typically order is X, Y, and Z.' I think the doctor has to feel comfortable with the nursing staff to be able to do that." (30RN)
	Few Stakeholders Affected: [*In speaking up about enforcement of personal appearance policies*] "It is illegal to have fake nails. Fake nails or no jewelry on the nails. I can't tell you how many people have fake nails. The majority of them are charge nurses and supervisors. Why? Because they think, 'Oh, we don't do patient care so it's okay.'" (28RN)
Content Dimension: RESOURCES TO IMPLEMENT	
Subcategory	**Examples**
Financial: the financial resources needed to enact the change	**Expensive to Address**: [*In speaking up regarding staffing shortages*] "But, as a charge nurse, it's definitely I would say the No. 1 issue would be staffing deficiencies. And I know that management would give us all the staff that we wanted were it that easy. It's a monetary/budgetary type of issue." (1RN)
	Inexpensive to Address: [*In speaking up about the need to have everyone put supplies away*] "I go and put supplies away that normally would probably get thrown away. I just—I gather them up and I put them back in the supply room." (3CT)
Resources: the human resources required to enact this change	**Significant Time Needed**: [*In speaking up about the need for nurses to get more training*] "I've seen a lot of nurses that have worked crash and they don't even know how to roll a trauma patient off a backboard. And I don't think that is optimal standard of care. I don't think, if you've not had a trauma certification, that you should even be able to step foot in crash. I think you should be properly trained." (28RN)
	Significant Time Not Needed: [*In speaking up about the need for more equipment*] "We do not have enough monitors, things that we need are lacking. Things break down and you don't have stuff here like monitors." (24CT)
Content Dimension: INTERDEPENDENCIES OF IMPLEMENTATION	
Subcategory	**Examples**
Managerial Control: the degree to which the manager has formal authority to decide on implementation	**Under Manager's Control**: [*In speaking up about the need to have norms around supplying stockrooms*] "A lot of us [in the ER] have different definitions of something being stocked, and it also comes to who trained you . . . So, there'll be times where I'll relieve a person and then they'll tell me, 'You're fully stocked,' and I go in the room and it's half the linens that I need for the whole day." (27CT)
	Not Under Manager's Control: [*In speaking up about the ER doctor compensation system*] "ER doctors get paid differently than other doctors. ER doctors get paid based on the patients they see, the critical time hours they clock, and all of that. Whenever they work in that team triage area, they don't get paid . . . So they don't really have a lot of motivation on their side." (11RN)

TABLE 1
(Continued)

Content Dimension: INTERDEPENDENCIES OF IMPLEMENTATION	
Subcategory	**Examples**
Stakeholder Involvement: the degree to which enacting change requires participation and agreement from stakeholders within and across organizational units	**High Stakeholder Involvement**: [*In speaking up about the need to share equipment across the hospital*] "We had an issue with the triple pumps that we use to infuse drugs. We recently changed them over in the hospital and it was something that was sort of spearheaded by someone elsewhere in the hospital and so the process, as it turned out, it's not a very functional process. It doesn't work very well for us and it ends up with the ER frequently having no triple pumps, which is sort of scary for us." (15CT) **Low Stakeholder Involvement**: [*In speaking up with a remodeling suggestion for the ER*] "It was like a little corral for the backboards, and they were all bloody and just kind of thrown in there . . . But that was a big eye sore. And so, when we had another director at the time, I remember telling her 'Hey, look, we're always having to cover this area or move things around so it doesn't look bad. Can we put up a wall and a door or something?' And she got it going. And, sure enough, now it's enclosed." (16CT)

lacking (1RN), including at night when many problems arise (25RN), and a lack of staff contributes to errors (22RN). The nurses and doctors were not the only ones to voice ideas requiring a significant level of financial resources. As one technician (6CT) noted: "We need more than two CAT scans because . . . we need one CAT scan that's dedicated to trauma or stroke." Another technician noted the need for a patient monitor in each and every room (24CT). The other common ideas requiring significant financial resources were keeping the cafeteria open at night (2CT) and simply having more beds in the ER (17MD).

Human resources, defined here as the amount of managerial and staff time and effort needed in order to enact the change, also were required to implement ideas. There were several types of ideas that would require significant time on the part of the manager, such as the idea to update staff on the status of prior voice attempts (10RN), the need to better inform staff and solicit feedback around implementing changes (12RN), and the idea to involve more staff in the staff scheduling process (23RN). Multiple technicians (6CT, 14CT) voiced about involving paramedics more in the ER, in terms of administering medications but also playing a role in crash cases, both of which would involve the development of new standardized protocols for the ER. While enacting these ideas could require financial resources, the main barrier to implementing them is that it would take a significant amount of time on the part of the manager.

Interdependencies of enacting change. The last dimension around voice content that distinguished one voice attempt from another was that of the interdependencies involved with enacting the suggested change. While some voice attempts were quite simple and straightforward requests under the purview of management for the ER, others were quite complicated in terms of who would be required to see the change come to fruition. The two subcategories we identified are related to managerial control and stakeholder involvement.

"Managerial control" was defined as the degree to which the manager had formal authority or not to make the suggested implementation. One nurse (8RN), for example, was frustrated with the fact that the ER managers changed how they defined when holidays occur: "[The ER managers] can pick and choose how they want to deal with things. And, for instance, on a Thanksgiving holiday, it was up to the department to determine when they were going to say that holiday was." In this case, the nurse was voicing an idea that the ER management could theoretically address on their own if they wanted to, similar to the aforementioned ideas of uniform scrub tops (8RN) and better communication of policy changes (12RN). In contrast to this was the popular topic of how triage doctors are paid, an idea beyond the control of ER management since doctors do not technically work for the hospital: "As physicians, we really disliked the policy of having this triage doctor who doesn't own the patient, who doesn't think they have to work through the problem." (17MD)

"Stakeholder involvement" was defined as the degree to which enacting change required participation and agreement from stakeholders within and across organizational units. This became a defining feature of

many voice attempts, particularly around dealing with psych and intoxicated patients. As noted by this nurse (10RN) when voicing about psych patients: "We get such high volume of psych patients . . . it's not just our problem. It's a city problem. All the other facilities have that. I'm sure they get the same amount, but it just feels like, when you're here, you only see here. And you only know what you get, and it's like—so crazy." Another nurse (22RN) noted other problems that need to be fixed among the various individuals and entities that look after these patients:

> Sometimes, we hold a lot of psychiatric patients. And, sometimes, they tend to get forgotten because they're not ER patients. Like, they'll be here for 27 hours, and no one has offered them a shower. Or I just got—this morning—I came in to two psychiatric holds who had been here over six hours. Nobody ordered them any food. They're still in those crappy ER stretchers.

These problems are high on stakeholder involvement because of the various organizations involved (social services, hospital, police, etc.) in the treatment of psych and intoxicated patients.

Stakeholder involvement was also increased to the degree that stakeholders did not agree on how to address an issue. One of the more controversial practices in the ER had to do with patient flow. Under the ER system in place, patients would be ferried to multiple nurses and multiple doctors doing different tasks so that the patient could get out of the ER more quickly. One doctor (17MD) disagreed with the fundamental aim of this system, in voicing about problems with patient flow: "[Management thinks] time [to get out of the ER] is the most important thing and I don't think time is the most important thing. [As a patient] I think feeling like I am listened to is the most important thing." Another nurse (12RN) highlighted the low consensus around this: "Some [nurses] are in the mindset where they like to keep their patient and they don't want anybody else to deal with their patient and they think it's poor patient care to have the patient moved so many times . . . it decreases the continuity for the patient." For a manager, this change represents a difficult challenge because, first, consensus must be addressed before the change could be successfully implemented.

Identification and Voice Content

With the content of the voiced ideas defined in terms of the three content categories, we began to see patterns in terms of the relationship between the target of identification and voice content. While organizational identification did not help differentiate voice content, we did see differences in voice content for those having strong identification with their profession and those having strong identification with their work unit. As the two central targets for identification in this sample were with the work unit, or ER, and the profession of health care, we focus on each of those in turn.

Work unit (ER) identification. Many of the staff derived meaning from being an employee of this ER, as noted by the following nurse (12RN): "It means a lot to work here at [this ER] to me . . . because we get to do a lot of things, see a lot of things, try a lot of things, you know—we like to lead the way and I like being a part of that." These individuals described an environment in which they were proud of where they worked and the opportunities being at the ER afforded them in terms of medical challenges, unique patient population access, and clinical education. There was a sense among these individuals that the ER offered a unique and privileged work environment in comparison to other ERs. For example, one technician (16CT) stated: "This was, like, the place to be. This was, like, where all the action was. This was where all the adrenaline-seeking people [were]—and, if you wanted to learn something, you would learn here." One of the nurses (10RN) expressed similar sentiments when asked about how she derived meaning from work:

> [This ER] is a—if I had to be honest—I feel like I'm privileged to work here. I feel like—it means a lot to work here [at this hospital] to me . . . I don't feel like I'm better than any of the nurses that are out there in the city, but I feel like I'm privileged to be part of this team at [this ER].

A doctor (35MD) summed up these feelings well with the following comment: "Pride. I've been here for a long time and I would not consider working at another place." The way in which this particular ER evoked a sense of pride in many of these individuals indicated a strong sense of work unit identification.

Work unit (ER) identification and voice content. Holding the work unit as a meaningful part of their self-concept drove these individuals to voice frequently on issues that related most to the work unit and its functioning, generally centering on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the ER. As a technician (2CT) noted: "[This ER] is my home, so I'm—I'm trying to invest in it and make it a better place."

When discussing what they voice about and why, the individuals with strong work unit identification

tended to voice ideas that either required few resources or, if requiring resources, acknowledged the resource constraints involved in implementation. As one nurse (11RN) noted in speaking about improving patient flow, an issue commonly addressed by many: "... if we're not showing improvement on how efficiently we get patients in and out, pretty much, then we could potentially lose money." In addressing the issue, this nurse was framing her voice attempt in terms of addressing the potential resource constraints faced by the manager. Another technician (3CT) made a similar statement regarding patient flow, framing it in a way that highlighted the resources constraints of management:

> It just always goes back to hospitals and losing money. How do we lose money? Because people get tired of waiting in the waiting room ... I mean, in this tough economic time, there are people who are losing their jobs ... [so] let's try to help the ones that are here by keeping it efficient and flowing.

Additionally, those strong in work unit identification brought ideas that had lower stakeholder involvement. Examples of this include the technician (16CT) who voiced about the idea to install a wall to hide "bloody backboards" from the media (see Table 1), the nurse (20RN) who voiced about adding a glass partition for the check-in nurse, and even the doctor (35MD) who voiced about having an administrative assistant manage the residents to improve their experience. None of those suggestions involved multiple stakeholders, and all of these changes could be implemented solely at the discretion of the ER management. Those with strong work unit identification also seemed to focus on ideas more likely to have broad consensus between employees and managers. For example, one nurse (21RN) voiced about patient care, but framed her idea (feeding patients) in a way that highlighted the improvement in patient survey scores, which are critical to hospital performance and thus likely to be attractive to multiple stakeholders: "Sometimes, the patients are here for hours ... and they don't get fed ... It seems like such a small thing, but I think that would go a long way with our HCAP [patient satisfaction] scores. It might be something tiny for us, but, for them, it's like they were taking care of me."

Professional identification. Professional identification is indicated by an individual deriving meaning from the *work* they are doing, such that how they define themselves is tightly intertwined with the tasks that they do (Pratt et al., 2006). In the ER, what defined those with strong professional identification were narratives centered on how doing the work of a doctor, technician, or nurse provided great meaning to them. Perhaps this nurse (22RN) stated it best: "Well, I still, even after 17 years, really love being a nurse. I'm one of those rare cats. I just really like the ... I like the immediate results of emergency medicine. I like people coming in really sick and getting them better, or at least finding out why they're sick. I like the interaction with the patients." A doctor (31MD) similarly noted the importance of being focused on patient care, and highlighted in another part of his interview how efficiency was not a strong motivator for him/her: "The most important thing to me is to provide the best care that we can." This was also apparent among some of the technicians, as can be seen in this quote:

> In the emergency room, I like to take care of patients, people in general. That's probably why I've been in this field for such a long time and it doesn't matter if—whatever—you get difficult patients, some people that are very intoxicated and they'll try to punch you and they'll try to kick you ... But it doesn't bother me ... whatever bad things are going [on], my job is to take care of the patient. (9CT)

While having strong professional identification of course did not preclude individuals from also having strong work unit identification and vice versa, individuals tended to be clear in whether they were deriving meaning from being a part of the ER or being part of the profession.

Professional identification and voice content. Those who identified strongly with the profession spoke up with ideas that were consistent with one's identity as a professional. Similar to those with strong work unit identification, those strong in professional identification raised issues of importance to implement. In general, they described an environment in which they are able to grow and express their professional identities, with motives primarily centered on "helping people" and "patient care." As one nurse (29RN) noted: "I am a big advocate for patient care. I am a big advocate for how you treat these people when they come through the door. So, yes, I am the squeaky wheel. I am forever in those [managers'] offices."

In contrast to those with strong work unit identification, many of the individuals with strong professional identification voiced ideas with high degrees of interdependencies or ideas that required significant resources. They seemed to care deeply about issues related to their work as a professional, and, as a result, were not as concerned about the

complexities involved in implementing the ideas they voiced. As one nurse (25RN) noted: "Staffing is terrible at night and it's always terrible on weekend nights. And it's definitely terrible at 3:00 a.m. in the morning. There'll be weekends that you'll go down to seven nurses." Requesting more staff is voicing an idea with significant financial resource implications. A doctor (17MD) similarly stated: "We have a department that doesn't have enough beds for the number of patients that we need to see. [While] patient satisfaction is an important thing, having people not have heart attacks in your waiting room is a pretty important thing [too]." Finding more beds would not only require significant financial resources, but also likely require significant involvement of multiple stakeholders, given the need to coordinate with other units to make such a change.

This distinction between how those strong in professional identification versus those without expressed voice is characterized well by this doctor (18MD), who was voicing about staff shortages:

> Ultimately, it shouldn't be about [patient satisfaction] for me personally. That's the hospital agenda. For me, it's patient safety. For me, as an ER doctor, I care more about patients not having bad outcomes than patients being satisfied. Call me crazy, but it doesn't seem like the push recently here has been let's do everything we can to minimize our bad outcomes; it's let's do everything we can to get better patient satisfaction scores. That to me seems pretty ridiculous, but it is what it is.

That is, he or she was not interested in voicing content that might engender broad consensus with management (i.e., "let's help improve patient satisfaction scores"). Instead, he/she was focused on voicing content that reflected what was central and meaningful to him/her in terms of professional–patient outcomes.

One perhaps surprising finding was that quite often those voicing on professional or work unit issues could be addressing the *same topic*—the "professional" or "work unit" refers to the content that the voicer provides when addressing the issue. Take staffing, for instance; this was clearly a work unit problem that many individuals wished to voice about. Someone with strong professional identification might advocate for more staff to cover busy periods on the weekends when the ER is understaffed. In that case, their strong identification leads them to voice and their professional identification leads them to voice with content that does not take into account managerial barriers to implementation (e.g., the financial resources to implement hiring more staff on weekends—18MD). Someone with strong work unit identification, on the other hand, may present an idea for looking at peak times in the ER so that staff can be allocated more efficiently throughout all seven days, or for offering much cheaper training for new staff to get up to speed (e.g., 3CT). In these cases, addressing the staffing topic could be addressed without incurring additional costs of hiring. Thus, they were addressing the same problem, but with an idea that contained less resources required for implementation.

In sum, strong identification at work was associated with frequent voice attempts, as individuals sought to improve their work environment. Not surprisingly, individuals with strong work unit or professional identification were similar in addressing issues high in importance. Their concern for the unit and for the profession led them to think broadly about significant problems they believed affected many individuals in the workplace. Where we saw divergence, however, was around the resources and the level of interdependencies needed in order to enact the suggested change. Individuals with strong professional identification seemed to raise ideas that related most specifically to them as a professional and often required significant resources and interdependencies to successfully implement. In contrast, individuals with strong work unit identification raised ideas that were situated within the local work unit and thus were characterized by what was feasible to implement in terms of the required resources and interdependencies. Thus, despite the topics voiced being similar among employees who identified with the profession versus the work unit, what differentiated the voice content centered on the implications of the suggestions for implementation.

Perceived Managerial Reactions

While the primary motivation of this study was to examine the content of voice and the role that employee identification played in speaking up about one type of content versus another, individuals also commented on their experience of speaking up in terms of how their managers responded. Individuals with a strong sense of work unit identification perceived a more positive reaction from management than those with only strong professional identification. Consistent with the voice literature (e.g., Dutton, et al., 1997), this positive attitude toward management may be due to a perception that management did listen to their ideas. For example, one doctor (35MD) noted that, "My opinion is that my administrative

contacts do listen, they do try to solve problems. They are very approachable, they're not judgmental." Similarly, a nurse (11RN) noted:

> Here, I feel like they actually do take care of [staff training deficiencies]. For the most part . . . management and education listen, and they [have staff] go through a remediation program and everything else, which ends up being better for the department and for the newer nurse.

We argue this managerial response may be due in part to the content of what is raised, and whether such ideas relating to the work unit or broader profession differ in terms of the barriers to implementation. The more barriers managers face in implementing an idea, the less likely the idea will be seen as beneficial or valuable. The informants spoke to this several times, including one nurse (30RN) who referred to the interdependencies of changing how the ER interfaces with the rest of the hospital versus making changes internal to the ER:

> I think [management is] more hesitant about initiating things that would change the ER's structure as a whole . . . As far as protocols, that's a big thing. That's a big thing for the ER that it's gonna have to be evaluated. As far as flow through triage, that's a pretty big thing for the ER, but, as far as, like, equipment and supplies, things like that, small things, if we have an issue with equipment or supplies or beds or whatever, they're pretty quick about responding to that and changing that.

Another nurse (13RN) and a technician (14CT), respectively, spoke similarly about resource constraints:

> Well, I see they're very concerned about, obviously, finances and there's a push to, well, anyways, they're very concerned about finances. So, they're trying to do all these things to save money, and I understand that changing around the flow of care in the department would be probably initially costly. We'd have to have a bunch of meetings. Does everyone understand? Can we do this? And try out different staffing.

> [Our manager is] more of a numbers guy than he is a personnel manager . . . if this fits in with the budget, then maybe we can do this but we don't have . . . the resources to fix this issue. So we're not going to pay any attention to it at all. We're not going to put it on the back burner. We're [going to] just kind of forget about it for now.

Thus, when managers are only doing "what benefits or bothers them" (8RN), the voice attempts that garner more favorable attention are those involving fewer barriers to implementation. The other implication of this is that individuals who raise more ideas involving significant resources or interdependencies will be seen as offering less valuable ideas.

Discussion

The results surfacing from the interviews suggest three broad implications. First, our qualitative data revealed that the ideas employees voiced varied on three overarching content dimensions: the importance of addressing the issue, the resources required to enact the change, and the interdependencies involved in successfully implementing the change. While some of these dimensions connect with issue-contingent evaluations related to moral issues (Jones, 1991), others are solely relevant to organizational contexts where resources are deployed and implementation issues must be worked through. The dimensions of voice content as they relate to how the suggestion might be implemented depart from prior research on voice in which the predominant focus has been either on the frequency of speaking up (e.g., Van Dyne & LePine, 1998) or categorizing the voice behavior itself (e.g., Liang et al., 2012; Maynes & Podsakoff, 2014).

Second, while all individuals with strong identification voice often and on important issues to address, we found that individuals who exhibited strong work unit identification spoke up with ideas relating to the work unit that were characterized by requiring less resources and interdependencies to implement. In contrast, individuals with strong professional identification voiced ideas that contained significant barriers to implementation in terms of resources and interdependencies. Thus, as Ashford and Barton (2007) argued, voice is a natural manifestation of one's identifications by providing an appropriate avenue to publicly display behaviors that uphold the values that are consistent with those identifications. Thus, while informants often spoke of similar topics (e.g., patient flow or access to equipment), those with stronger professional identification voiced ideas that incurred significant resources and interdependencies to implement, whereas those with stronger work unit identification voiced ideas that were mindful of the realities of the limited resources and latitude the work unit had to implement the suggestions. This is because identification affects what issues and events people notice, gives meaning to those events, and spurs consideration of actions considered possible and desirable based on that sensemaking (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991; Weick, 1995). Identifying with the local work

unit spurs individuals to notice work unit issues—those that can feasibly be accomplished within the local work unit. Identifying with the broader profession leads employees to notice issues that are aligned with what they believe is central to their profession, despite the ideas requiring significant resources and stakeholder management to implement.

Finally, we found suggestive evidence that employees encounter materially different managerial responses to voice about some types of content versus others. Employees who spoke up with ideas related to their profession perceived more negative reactions by their managers in terms of explicit punishments or lack of action taken, whereas employees who spoke up with ideas centered on helping their work unit experienced more receptive managerial responses. Although these results suggest different managerial responses depending on the content of voice, there are limitations in the design of the first study that warrant a level of caution in interpreting the results as they pertain to managerial reactions. Specifically, we asked employees to report their perception of their manager's response; we did not explicitly assess how managers respond to different types of voice content. Finally, although we interviewed employees with a variety of professional backgrounds, all were in the health care industry. Therefore, we wanted to explore the influence of employee identification in a different context with other types of professional associations. In a follow-up study, using quantitative survey data, we sought to address these shortcomings to more explicitly assess the managerial evaluations of voice offered by employees with varying levels and targets of identification.

STUDY 2

As our findings from Study 1 indicate, the strength of identification with different facets of an organization likely changes the content of what employees voice and subsequently the extent to which managers value what is said. Specifically, not all ideas are seen as relevant and valuable by managers. While, in Study 1, we focused specifically on the dimensions in which ideas differ—importance, resources, and interdependencies—what we suggest, building from those findings, is that those with a strong sense of identification in each area care about different domains. Those strong in work unit identification voice on issues they see as related to the problems of the work unit, and those strong in professional identification voice on issues they see as related to what they see as central to being a professional.

Managerial work is characterized by brevity, variety, and fragmentation (Mintzberg, 1973). Many report that they could easily spend their entire time at work dealing with problems and the array of people who would like their attention, and still have more to deal with the next day (Kurke & Aldrich, 1983). Facing these demands, managers must sift through huge, diverse sets of information in order to try to identify the key fires to be put out and how to do so (Kotter, 1982). Thus, it is likely that a particular issue of utmost concern to the employee speaking up must also be pertinent to the immediate problems of the manager in order for the manager to see the idea as valuable. If the idea is not centrally relevant to the local manager's set of tasks, it may be seen, by necessity, as a lower priority or concern for the manager. Managers are simply too busy and face too diverse a set of problems and possibilities to be motivated to recognize, see the value of, and act on every suggestion from below (Dutton & Ashford, 1993). Perhaps this is one reason why managers and employees disagree on voice and whether such ideas offer any utility if implemented (Burris, Detert, & Romney, 2013). This suggests that certain ideas from employees may not merit managerial attention and subsequently will not be perceived as valuable.

We argue that managers will value voice offered from employees who are voicing to address issues pertaining to the local work unit versus the broader profession. Ideas that are more locally relevant are likely to be deemed as high value among managers. Because managers are charged with managing the accomplishment of their unit's goals (Fenton-O'Creevy, 1998), they may be particularly attuned to ideas that help resolve the local work unit's problems. Ideas that help the unit function more effectively, alter its strategic objectives to produce better results, or resolve problems that prevent the completion of tasks in a timely fashion should all help managers do their job better. Additionally, as we observed in Study 1, these ideas also are likely to require less resources and interdependencies to solve the problems identified. Because managers likely have a higher degree of authority and control over issues related to the work unit, they are more aware of how making changes at the local level, and not involving other stakeholders, could provide benefits to the unit (Detert & Treviño, 2010).

In contrast, issues that relate to the profession are conceptualized more broadly and may not be easily implemented given local constraints. For example, in Hekman et al.'s (2009) study in the medical industry, professionally identified physicians advocated

for higher-cost operating equipment and more nurses to provide the best care for the patients, regardless of hospital policy and budgets. As we identified in Study 1, the result of this professional identification leads individuals to raise ideas that may require coordination beyond the local manager's authority, as these ideas can have far-reaching implications for how the organization is run and how other work units operate. These issues also may require significantly more resources to resolve. Managerial attention to such comments might actually (a) detract from managers' focus on matters for which they are compensated and evaluated, and (b) serve only to make managers aware of their own limited authority and control to address the issue (a realization preferably avoided). In short, one reality of managerial work is that managers are seldom looking for additional and possibly difficult problems that require coordination across unit boundaries or do not readily solve immediate and local problems (Kotter, 1982). As a result, managers may come to view such comments as not valuable and relevant to pursue.

Because, as we found in the first study, the issues that are more central to employees' identifications are those that they see as more important, the target of employee identification should shape what ideas they raise and hence have implications for how these ideas are valued by managers. As employees identify more strongly with the local work unit, they should speak up with ideas related to the work unit, and should be seen by managers as offering more valuable ideas. As employees identify more strongly with the profession, they should speak up with ideas more related to the profession, and should be seen by their managers as offering less valuable ideas. Thus, we formally hypothesize that voice related to the profession or work unit should mediate the relationship between the strength of employee identification with each target and how managers value employee ideas.

Hypothesis 1a. Employee voice related to the work unit is positively related to managerial perceptions of the value of voice.

Hypothesis 1b. Employee voice related to the profession is negatively related to managerial perceptions of the value of voice.

Hypothesis 2. Voice related to the work unit versus the profession will mediate the relationship between the target of employee identification and managerial perceptions of the value of voice.

Participants and Procedure

We collected data from employees in two separate organizations. The first organization was a small commercial real estate development firm consisting primarily of engineers, accountants, real estate purchasers and bidders, and building managers. For this study, we solicited 58 employees across all departments. The second organization was a large national defense contractor. We solicited 130 participants from one of their recruiting departments. These individuals were performing functions such as recruiting, designing performance systems, and managing various human resources projects. Across both organizations, 97 employees (26 and 71, respectively) completed responses to all questions in two surveys for a final response rate of 52%. Managers were also asked to participate by evaluating each of the employees under their supervision. Twenty-seven managers provided ratings for all employees. Results across the two organizations were similar, and thus we combined them into a single set of analyses. The surveys were administered in two waves, which were approximately two months apart. In the first wave, only employees were surveyed, and the variables assessed at this wave included work unit identification, professional identification, and several control variables. In the second wave, employees were surveyed to assess the frequency of employee voice about issues related to the work unit and profession. At this time, managers also assessed the value of employee voice. Unless otherwise indicated, all measures used a 7-point Likert scale, where 1 was "*strongly disagree*" and 7 was "*strongly agree*." All surveys were confidential; we used employee names to match the survey responses from managers and then removed all identifying information for further analyses.

Measures

Work unit and professional identification. To measure work unit and professional identification, we used two separate four-item measures from Mael and Ashforth (1992). The items were "If someone were to criticize [my work unit/my profession], it would feel like a personal insult," "I am very interested in what others think about [my work unit/my profession]," "If I were to talk about [my work unit/my profession], I would say 'we' rather than 'they,'" and "[My work unit's/My profession's] successes are my successes." Cronbach's α for this four-item scale was .90 for work unit identification and

.85 for professional identification for employees, and .82 for work unit identification and .87 for professional identification for managers.

Voice related to the work unit versus profession. Voice related to the work unit versus profession was measured with two items each, adapted from Detert and Burris (2007), that asked employees to indicate how frequently they spoke up about issues related to the work unit or profession. The two items were "I give [my manager] suggestions related to concerns about my [work unit/profession]" and "I challenge [my manager] to deal with issues related to my [work unit/profession]." Employees were asked to respond on a 7-point Likert scale, where 1 was "*never*" and 7 was "*always*." Cronbach's α was .84 for the two-item measure of voice about issues related to the work unit and .89 for the two-item measure of voice about issues related to the profession.

Managerial assessment of the value of voice. We used a two-item measure to assess the degree to which managers valued their employees' suggestions. Each manager was provided a list of all of his or her employees by name, and was then asked to respond to each set of questions for each individual employee. The two items were "The ideas that my employee brings me are useful" and "My employee's ideas have a lot of value for improving things around here." Cronbach's α for this two-item measure was .94.

Control variables. We accounted for several alternative explanations of voice and employee performance as suggested by previous research. First, employee demographics such as tenure can affect how employees are evaluated for speaking up (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). Therefore, we controlled for tenure within the team by asking each employee how long they had been working within their team (in years). Second, broad employee attitudes such as job satisfaction have been shown to positively influence employee voice behaviors (Farrell & Rusbult, 1992; Rusbult, Farrell, Rogers, & Mainous, 1988). Thus, we controlled for job satisfaction using four items from Hackman and Oldham's (1975) job diagnostic survey. A sample question from the survey is, "Generally speaking, I am very satisfied with my job." Cronbach's α for this four-item scale was .86. Third, we included a control variable for voice-specific attitudes. We controlled for psychological safety, as it has been shown to increase voice behavior because it indicates that the risks associated with speaking up are minimized (Detert & Burris, 2007). We used a three-item measure, whereby participants were asked to rate the degree to which they agreed with the following statements: (1) "It is safe to give my opinions at work," (2) "It is safe for me to speak up around here," and (3) "It is safe for me to make suggestions at work." The Cronbach's α for this three-item measure was .96. Fourth, we controlled for the quality of the relationship between the employee and the manager with a measure of leader–member exchange (LMX), as LMX may influence the managerial evaluations of employees (Gerstner & Day, 1997). Finally, we included the manager's identification with the work unit and profession as control variables, as the extent to which managers identify with each target could influence how they interpret and value voice.

Analysis Strategy

Because leaders rated multiple employees, it calls into question whether our data are fully independent. The ICC(1) was .36 ($F_{(27,\ 69)} = 2.99$, $p < .01$), indicating that a significant portion of the variance in managerial ratings of the value of voice was due to the leader level. We therefore employed multilevel analyses to explicitly model this nonindependence (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002).

Results and Discussion

Table 2 is a summary of the means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations for all variables in our study. To assess the factor structures of the control variables and independent variables (job satisfaction, psychological safety, LMX, profession and work unit identification) obtained from employees, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (Bentler & Dudgeon, 1996). We specified a 5-factor structure, which achieved acceptable fit with the data, $\chi^2(142) = 346.19$, comparative fit index = .93, root mean square error of approximation = .07. All factor loadings were statistically significant and in the expected directions. Chi-squared difference tests showed that all alternative nested models achieved significantly poorer fit. These analyses provide support for the expected factor structure of the variables.

We first report the results from the model just including the control variables predicting the managerial evaluation of voice (see Model 1 in Table 3) and the model including the main effects of the independent variables (see Model 2). In Model 3, we find that the frequency of voice about issues related to the profession is negatively associated with managerial assessments of the value of employee voice ($t_{(88)} = -4.17$, $p < .001$), while the frequency of voice

TABLE 2
Descriptive Statistics and Zero-Order Correlations

Variable	Mean	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Tenure in the work unit	3.53	3.40										
2. Job satisfaction	5.47	1.32	.06									
3. Psychological safety	5.50	1.37	.02	.46**								
4. LMX	5.63	1.27	.11	.54**	.32**							
5. Manager identification with the work unit	5.11	1.36	−.28**	−.16	−.22*	−.11						
6. Manager identification with the profession	6.38	.57	.26*	−.02	−.14	.05	−.02					
7. Employee identification with the work unit	5.81	1.25	−.13	.23*	.22*	.17	−.04	.08				
8. Employee identification with the profession	5.06	1.34	−.13	.13	−.04	.01	−.20*	.04	.29**			
9. Frequency of voice related to the work unit	3.99	1.56	−.07	−.02	.19	−.01	.12	−.16	.33**	.04		
10. Frequency of voice related to the profession	3.61	1.47	−.15	−.14	.09	−.08	.09	−.04	.08	.21*	.65**	
11. Value of voice	5.56	1.13	−.08	.02	.00	.00	.03	.05	.35**	−.03	.36**	.01

$N = 97$.
*$p = .05$
**$p = .01$

about issues related to the work unit is positively associated with manager ratings of voice value ($t_{(88)} = 5.63$, $p < .001$). This model also explains significantly more variance than the model with only the control variables ($\Delta -2$ log likelihood = 21.19, $p < .01$). We estimate the variance explained by each model following the procedure described by Bliese (2002). To compute R^2 for the managerial assessment of the value of voice, we compared the level-1 variance component of the null model with the level-1 residual variance of Model 3. Results suggest that the addition of the two voice variables explained 22% of the variance in the managerial assessment of the value of voice overall, and an additional 15% of the variance when compared to Model 1 with just the control variables. These findings support Hypotheses 1a and 1b.

We next tested for the presence of mediation (Hypothesis 2). In Models 5 and 6, we entered the control variables and the identification variables, respectively, in predicting the frequency of voice about issues related to the work unit. We find that identification with the work unit is positively and significantly related to the frequency of employee voice about issues related to the work unit ($t_{(88)} = 3.26$, $p < .01$), while the identification with issues related to the profession is not significantly related ($t_{(88)} = .25$, *ns*). This model increases the variance explained in the model ($\Delta -2$ log likelihood = 6.35, $p < .05$). In Models 7 and 8, we entered the control and identification variables in predicting the frequency of voice about issues related to the profession. Correspondingly, we find that identification with the profession is positively and significantly related to the frequency of employee voice about issues related to the profession ($t_{(88)} = 2.52$, $p < .01$), while the identification with issues related to the work unit is not significantly related ($t_{(88)} = .-.03$, n.s.). This model increases the variance explained in the model ($\Delta -2$ log likelihood = 6.91, $p < .05$). Additionally, in Model 4, we show that the voice variables are significantly related to managerial perceptions of voice value, even when including the identification variables ($t_{(86)} = 4.42$, $p > .01$ and $t_{(86)} = -3.45$, $p > .01$) for voice about issues related to the work unit and profession, respectively.

We formally test for mediation using bootstrap procedures to construct bias-corrected confidence intervals based on 1,000 random samples with replacement from the full sample (Hayes, 2013; Shrout & Bolger, 2002). The 95% confidence interval for the indirect effect of voice about issues related to the work unit in explaining the relationship between identification with the work unit and managerial value of voice excludes zero [0.04, 0.36], indicating statistical significance and supporting mediation. Similarly, the 95% confidence interval for the indirect effect of voice about issues related to the profession in explaining the relationship between identification with the profession and managerial

TABLE 3
Multilevel Analyses

Variables	Managerial Value of Voice				Frequency of Voice Related to the Work Unit		Frequency of Voice Related to the Profession	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
Control Variables								
Constant	5.39** (1.88)	5.11** (1.87)	4.11* (1.76)	4.08* (1.81)	4.92* (2.30)	3.44 (2.21)	3.54 (2.19)	1.99 (2.23)
Tenure in work unit	−.01 (.04)	.00 (.04)	−.04 (.03)	−.02 (.03)	.02 (.05)	.05 (.05)	−.03 (.05)	.00 (.05)
Job satisfaction	.08 (.11)	.05 (.10)	.05 (.09)	.03 (.09)	−.07 (.15)	−.17 (.14)	−.17 (.14)	−.23 (.14)
Psychological safety	.00 (.10)	−.06 .09	−.05 (.09)	−.07 (.08)	.27* (.13)	.24 (.13)	.20 (.13)	.24 (.13)
LMX	−.07 (.11)	−.08 (.11)	−.05 (.10)	−.06 (.10	−.06 (.15)	−.06 (.14)	−.05 (.14)	−.03 (.14)
Manager identification with the work unit	.07 (.26)	−.04 (.11)	−.07 (.10)	.15 (.25)	−.37 (.31)	−.50 (.28)	.02 (.29)	−.05 (.29)
Manager identification with the profession	−.03 (.11)	−.05 (.25)	.26 (.24)	−.06 (.11)	.14 (.13)	.19 (.12)	.05 (.13)	.12 (.13)
Independent Variable								
Employee identification with the work unit		.37** (.09)		.23* (.09)		.43** (.13)		.00 (.13)
Employee identification with the profession		−.13 (.08)		−.06 (.08)		.03 (.12)		.30** (.12)
Mediator Variable								
Frequency of voice related to the work unit			.48** (.09)	.39** (.09)				
Frequency of voice related to the profession			−.37** (.09)	−.32** (.09)				
Leader-level variance	.31 (.20)	.35 (.21)	.32 (.18)	.38 (.20)	.20 (.20)	.07 (.16)	.17 (.20)	.17 (.20)
−2 log likelihood	310.55	301.27	289.36	289.62	365.53	358.18	362.47	355.56
Δ −2 log likelihood		9.28**	21.19**	20.93**		6.35*		6.91*
Pseudo R^2	.07	.11	.22	.22	.05	.20	.06	.15

$N = 97$. Unstandardized coefficients are reported, with standard errors in parentheses.
*$p < .05$
**$p < .01$

perceptions of value also excludes zero [−.24, −.01], indicating mediation. In contrast, voice about issues related to the profession does not statistically mediate the relationship between identification with the work unit and voice value [−.12, .07], and nor does voice about issues related to the work unit statistically mediate the relationship between identification with the profession and voice value [−.07, .10]. This provides support for Hypothesis 2. The frequency of voice about issues related to the work unit mediates the relationship between identification with the work unit and managerial perceptions of voice value, and the frequency of voice about issues related to the profession mediates the relationship between identification with the profession and managerial value.

In sum, we find evidence that the frequency of voice relating to the work unit and the profession mediates the relationships between work unit and professional identification and the extent to which managers place value on the ideas raised. That is, we provide evidence that the voice related to each domain shapes how managers come to value the ideas that employees voice, which are shaped by the target of employee identification. Our logic relies on the findings of Study 1 to make the link that voice related to the work unit and profession are characterized by differing levels of resources and interdependencies to implement what is suggested, which has implications for how managers value those ideas. However, neither study robustly links the dimensions of voice content—importance, resources, and interdependencies—with managerial valuation of voice. Thus, we conducted a laboratory experiment to formally text the causal links between these dimensions of voice content and managerial value of voice.

STUDY 3

Following from our findings in the two prior studies, we propose that managers differentially value voice content in terms of implications for implementation. Rather than judging the value of employee voice on the basis of frequency in speaking up, managers are likely to take the content of each idea into consideration as they evaluate voice and decide whether to endorse the suggestions made for implementation. Given constraints placed on managers (Kotter, 1982), we argue that the three dimensions outlined in Study 1—importance, resources required, and interdependencies of the idea—impact how managers evaluate voiced ideas. Specifically, as outlined above, ideas that seem less important, require a high level of resources, and are highly interdependent are less likely to be perceived as valuable and therefore endorsed by managers less than ideas that seem important, require less resources, and can be implemented without other stakeholders.

Hypothesis 3. Ideas that demonstrate a low level of importance will receive less managerial endorsement than ideas that demonstrate a high level of importance.

Hypothesis 4. Ideas that involve a high level of resources to implement will receive less managerial endorsement than ideas that involve a low level of resources to implement.

Hypothesis 5. Ideas that involve a high level of interdependency to implement will receive less managerial endorsement than ideas that involve a low level of interdependency to implement.

Participants, Procedure, and Measure

We collected data from 396 respondents who were working full-time as managers using Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk) online survey administration system, which has been shown to provide reliable data (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011). The average age was 34, and 41% of the participant sample was female. On average, they had spent six years working at their current organization and had more than three years of managerial experience. Participants were randomly assigned to one of six scenarios, which was either high or low on one of the three dimensions of voice content. In each of the six possible manipulations, participants were asked to adopt the role of a manager in a scenario in which a subordinate speaks up with an idea.

The *importance* scenario was set within an engineering company in which an employee speaks up about reinforcing a building material for a recent bridge project. In the high importance manipulation, not implementing the change could lead to severe negative consequences for a large number of people, whereas, in the low importance manipulation, not implementing the change likely would have no severe consequences and affect a small number of people. The context of the *resource* scenario was an accounting company in which an employee speaks up with an idea about junior staff traveling to client sites. In the high resource manipulation, the change in travel policy requires a large increase in travel

costs, whereas, in the low resource manipulation, it only requires a minor increase in travel budgets. The *interdependency* scenario featured a consulting company in which an employee speaks up with an idea to improve the client management system. In the high interdependency manipulation, the client management system requires input and coordination from five different offices of the consulting company, whereas, in the low interdependency manipulation, it only requires input from the employee's local office. All of the scenarios and manipulations are presented in Appendix A. Following the scenario, participants were first asked a few questions to check the manipulation, and then to rate their extent of endorsement for the idea voiced by the employee.

Managerial endorsement was measured using a 5-item scale developed by Burris (2012) adapted for each scenario. Items included "I would take [Taylor/John/Michelle]'s idea to my supervisor," "I would support [Taylor/John/Michelle]'s idea when talking with my supervisor," "I think [Taylor/John/Michelle]'s idea should be implemented," "I agree with [Taylor/John/Michelle]'s idea," and "[Taylor/John/Michelle]'s idea is valuable" (1 = "*strongly disagree*" to 5 = "*strongly agree*"). The scale demonstrated high internal consistency for all three scenarios ($\alpha = .93$ for importance, $\alpha = .94$ for resources, and $\alpha = .93$ for interdependencies).

Results and Discussion

Manipulation checks. We ran three *t*-tests to check our manipulations for each dimension of voice content: importance, resources, and interdependencies. As expected, managers who received the high importance manipulation ($M = 4.06$, $SD = .71$) rated the idea as being significantly more important than managers who received the low importance manipulation ($M = 2.80$, $SD = .77$; $t_{194} = -11.97$, $p < .05$). Similarly, managers who received the high resource manipulations rated the idea as needing significantly more resources ($M = 4.36$, $SD = .70$) than managers who received the low resource manipulation ($M = 2.99$, $SD = .74$; $t_{99} = -9.52$, $p < .05$). Lastly, managers with the high interdependencies manipulation rated the idea as more dependent on other sources for implementation ($M = 3.86$, $SD = .75$) than did managers with the low interdependencies condition ($M = 2.36$, $SD = 1.02$; $t_{97} = -8.36$, $p < .05$).

To test our hypotheses, we ran three *t*-tests that compared managers who received high versus low manipulations along each dimension. We found significant differences for each dimension between managers. Specifically, managers rated ideas high on importance ($M = 4.17$, $SD = .81$) significantly higher than ideas low on importance ($M = 3.87$, $SD = .78$), supporting Hypothesis 3 ($t_{194} = -2.56$, $p < .05$). Managers rated voice characterized by a high level of resources as significantly less valuable ($M = 3.27$, $SD = 1.00$) than voice characterized by a small amount of resources ($M = 4.13$, $SD = .74$; $t_{90.58} = 4.93$, $p < .05$), supporting Hypothesis 4. Lastly, managers with the high interdependency condition ($M = 3.99$, $SD = .75$) endorsed the idea less than managers in the low interdependency condition ($M = 4.27$, $SD = .51$; $t_{86.44} = 2.26$, $p < .05$), supporting Hypothesis 5. In summary, Study 3 provides support for managers' factoring in more than just the frequency of voice when gauging the value of employee's ideas. Through a controlled experiment, we find that the content of voice (as outlined by our previous qualitative findings) matters, such that ideas that seem more important, require less resources, and are less complex to implement garner greater managerial support.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Our research focuses on the how the target of employee identification influences the content of what is voiced and how this content influences how managers value employee voice. Most existing studies of voice seek to explain the frequency with which it is offered or how managers evaluate individuals as they speak up more often (Morrison, 2011). Extending this research, we present evidence that the content of voice differs in the following ways: the importance of the issue to implement, the resources required to successfully implement the desired changes, and the interdependencies of implementing such change. We then show how the dimensions of content manifest differently depending on the strength of identification with the work unit versus profession. Finally, our results highlight how managerial evaluations of the value associated with different voice content vary. In three studies—an inductive qualitative study, a quantitative survey study, and a formal experiment—we show the significant role that the target of employee identification plays in shaping the content of voice as it applies to implementation and the value managers place on such voice content. These results offer meaningful theoretical contributions to the literatures on employee voice and identification.

Theoretical Implications

The primary contribution of this paper brings into focus the content of voice, which can vary in importance and the barriers to implement. The literature on voice has long examined the factors that promote the frequency with which employees speak up with improvement-oriented ideas (Detert & Burris, 2007; LePine & Van Dyne, 2001; Morrison et al., 2011; Withey & Cooper, 1989). By a similar account, research has explored how managers evaluate employees who speak up more versus less frequently (Burris, 2012; Seibert et al., 2001; Whiting et al., 2008, 2012). Yet, little research has centered on the content employees may speak up about and whether such content can be differentially predicted and differentially associated with outcomes. The results from our studies collectively show that the content of employee voice varies on three dimensions: the importance of the issue being addressed, the requisite resources to effectively enact such change, and the interdependencies inherent in implementing the change. Moreover, our results point out that different antecedents vary in the strength with which they are associated with the voice content dimensions, and that the dimensions are not uniformly related to how managers evaluate employees who speak up. Thus, rather than predicting or understanding the outcomes of any and all voice, our research underscores the importance of disentangling the content of what is voiced and its implications for what is specifically suggested for implementation from the frequency with which it is offered. We also suggest that ideas requiring significant resources and interdependencies to implement are materially different from those that are less demanding of resources and have fewer interdependencies, as are the evaluations that managers attach to employees who contribute such ideas.

More specifically, using the lens of identification, we found that the specific targets with which employees identify shape the ideas they bring to managers. Previous research has long noted that employees' attachment to the organization can lead them to speak up in ways to improve its functioning, rather than consider exiting the situation or other counterproductive behaviors (Hirschman, 1970). This research has characterized attachment as general loyalty or commitment to the organization (Burris et al., 2008; Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008a), or a silent behavioral response to declining satisfaction (Farrell, 1983). However, empirical evidence of the relationship between general conceptualizations of identification with the organization and the overall frequency of voice has been mixed (Burris et al., 2008; Rusbult et al., 1988; Withey & Cooper, 1989). Alternatively, our research suggests that identification can be directed toward different aspects of the organization such as the local work unit or the broader profession and thus be more robust in predicting specific behaviors that manifest from these different attachments. In our qualitative study and our quantitative survey study, we found that stronger identification with the work unit and profession were differentially associated with voice relating to work unit issues or to one's profession, which are characterized by different implications for implementation. Employees with stronger work unit identification spoke up with ideas requiring less resources and interdependencies to implement. In contrast, employees with stronger professional identification spoke up about issues related to what they believe is central to their profession—ideas that often required significant resources and coordination with many stakeholders to implement. Thus, our findings suggest that employees have a more fine-tuned calculus when deciding what issues are the most important to voice about, rather than speaking up more broadly about any and all topics (cf. Detert & Burris, 2007). The desire to go above and beyond the call of duty by speaking up may manifest in different content and is contingent on the specific facets of the organization with which employees identify.

In our second study, we found that voice relating to the work unit versus profession impacts how voice is perceived by managers. Our results provide one plausible explanation for why the frequency of voice sometimes leads to positive outcomes for employees (e.g., Whiting et al., 2008) and other times leads to negative outcomes (e.g., Burris, 2012) by showing that employee voice is valued differentially depending the specific content. Voice content is valued more as it relates to work unit issues and less as it relates to profession issues. These findings highlight that the issues that employees care about and think are important to speak up about are not always valued by managers. Further, in the third study, we found that managers take into account the perceived importance, resources, and interdependencies to implement an idea when assessing value judgments to the idea. Overall, we suggest that crafting issues in a way that highlights the benefits for the local work unit and its managers is a vital step to increasing an idea's perceived value and likelihood of implementation (cf. Sonenshein, 2006). Thus, our results

clarify how the outcomes of voice may depend on both the frequency and the content of what is voiced.

Our study also contributes to the research on identification by broadening the investigation beyond employee attitudes and behaviors to also examine managerial attitudes. That is, most studies of identification are focused on how identities change how individuals think and behave (e.g., Hekman et al., 2009), or on how the characteristics of the organization or job influence whether a specific identification is held or not (Pratt et al., 2006). While valuable, our results show that the impact of employee identification extends to influence the manager's perception of the employee and the valuation of ideas and suggestions that the employee gives. This provides greater gravity to the importance of understanding identification in organizational contexts where identities could work against one another (Wang & Pratt, 2007). Our research echoes the call for a more complete view of how employee identification influences important dynamics in organizations.

Limitations

Our research is subject to a number of limitations that suggest directions for future inquiry. First, despite the robustness of most of our findings over three distinct contexts, statements about the generalizability and direction of causality must await the results of research in additional settings and research designs. For example, because of the nature of the cross-sectional design of our first two studies and our measures, we cannot fully rule out reverse causality. It may, for instance, be the case that positive managerial response received from speaking up about issues related to the work unit might reinforce their level of identification with the work unit. Additionally, our studies did not fully demonstrate all mechanisms underlying our arguments. For example, we did not design a study wherein we manipulated the target of employee identification and showed how this influenced the voice content dimensions. Future research might design field studies that examine these relationships over time or utilize experimental methods to more robustly demonstrate the causal linkages in our theory (McGrath, 1982). Future research might also consider conducting a construct development study to more formally create measures of the voice content dimensions of importance, resources, and interdependencies.

While we found that two targets—the local work unit and the profession—best explained voice content, there are many different targets or social groups with which employees could identify that might affect voice behavior. For instance, other research has examined organizational identification (Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008a) and commitment to an immediate supervisor (Liu et al., 2010) or top management (Becker, 1992). It is likely that each unique target of identification would differentially influence the extent to which the content of employee ideas would be seen as valuable by their direct supervisors (Burris, 2012). Further, although we identified particular subdimensions of content, we did not theorize which subdimensions might be more or less important in influencing managerial value. Future research would benefit from formally conceptualizing the conditions under which one dimension of voice (e.g., resources to implement) or one subdimension of voice (e.g., financial resources vs. time and effort) would influence the value assigned by managers.

Finally, we limited our investigation to only examine the judgments of value from direct supervisors. It could be that managers from other units or skip-level leaders (Detert & Treviño, 2010) would value the suggestions made differently than direct supervisors. For instance, higher-level leaders may be more attuned to issues that affect the broader organization and profession, rather than more local operational problems or opportunities for improvement. Future research could explore the trade-offs associated with directing voice related to certain topics to particular targets who would be more or less open to that specific topic or content. Thus, the choice for voice may not only depend on how well employees "read the wind" on the general favorability of a context (Dutton et al., 1997), but also on their judgments of the receptivity of specific managers to specific topics.

Practical Implications and Conclusions

Our research recognizes the important role of employee identification and the different content areas about which employees can speak up. Although fostering a level of identification to the organization is often thought of as beneficial for the organization, our findings point out that such identification may be beneficial only if it manifests in ways that are consistent with what managers value. This suggests that employees should take caution in routinely speaking up to managers with issues that require significant resources or interdependencies to implement. Repeatedly speaking up with issues that

are difficult for an immediate supervisor to implement may create a sense of futility (Detert & Treviño, 2010) and frustration over a lack of a positive managerial response. When needing to speak up about issues that are difficult to implement, it may benefit them to think about directing these issues elsewhere in the organization, or to take the time to craft how to sell a particular issue in a way that also profits, or at least does not incur significant resources for, the local work unit. In addition, they may seek to gather information about the resource constraints or interdependencies in implementing suggested changes before formally speaking up. Doing so may help them better position the issues they would like addressed by accounting for the realities of change implementation.

For managers, our research points to how they may miss important and valuable ideas because they are more attuned to suggestions that do not directly ask for resources or involve multiple constituencies to implement. Employees very well may identify critical problems, yet, because they are not well versed in the extent to which resources are available or the realities of implementing suggested changes, managers could fail to benefit from identifying potential problems. As such, managers may benefit from separating the evaluation of the issue to be addressed from the development of solutions for the particular issue.

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APPENDIX A: RESOURCE, INTERDEPENDENCY, AND IMPORTANCE MANIPULATIONS

RESOURCES SCENARIO SETUP

Constellation Limited, located in Dallas, Texas, is a company that specializes in tax accounting for public companies in the Southeastern United States. Constellation has a corporate culture emphasizing strong ethics and professionalism, and, consequently, its employees stay very up to date on all new accounting standards in the industry. Once a month, the management team holds a meeting with employees to give updates on client trends, operational issues, and other office policy updates. Then, each manager splits off with his/her own team to discuss specific team issues.

You are a manager at Constellation and have been with the company for four years. During the most recent team meeting, John, a junior tax accountant who has been with the firm for one year and reports to you, presented the following idea.

John's Idea

Because only the more senior employees of the tax preparation team get to travel to clients to communicate in person, John feels like the lower-level employees are missing out on valuable client face time experience. Without any client face time during the first two years on the job, John believes that newer employees are not being trained well enough on client relationship management. Also, no travel in the first two years on the job paints an unrealistic picture of work as a tax accountant, which John believes leads to turnover once people begin to travel more frequently.

High resources. Specifically, John proposes that lower-level employees should travel with the senior employees to the client site for *every* project. The lower-level employees can shadow the senior employees while on site and eventually help communicate information to the client as well. This will require a significant investment in the travel budgets for each tax accounting team. In your team's case, this would mean an increase of 50% of your team's travel budget, *a substantial increase in resources* allocated to travel. John thinks the costs are justified in terms of better employee training and less future turnover.

Low resources. Specifically, John proposes that only one lower-level employee from the project team should travel with the senior employees to the client site at the very end of every project. This lower-level employee can shadow a senior employee while on site and take notes to share with the other lower-level team members once they return to Dallas. Client managers would ensure that each lower-level employee gets on-site experience at least once in their first two years. This will require a very small increase in the team's travel budget. In your team's case, this would mean an increase of only 5% of your team's travel budget, *a very small increase in resources* allocated to travel. John thinks that the costs are justified in terms of better employee training and less future turnover.

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT SCENARIO SETUP

Silver Creek Associates, headquartered in Boston, Massachusetts, is a consulting company that specializes in

marketing- and sales-focused projects for businesses all along the east coast. To be closer to its clients, Silver Creek has four additional locations in other major cities along the east coast. Silver Creek has a corporate culture emphasizing going the extra mile for the client and solving tough problems, so its consultants have outstanding client relationships. Once a month, the management team at each of the five office locations holds a meeting with local employees to give updates on client projects, operational issues, and other office policy updates. Then, each manager splits off with his/her own team to discuss specific team issues.

You are a manager at the Silver Creek Associates' office in Philadelphia and have been with the company for four years. During the most recent team meeting, Michelle, a junior analyst whom you are managing and has been with the firm for one year, presented the following idea.

Michelle's Idea

Because a large portion of the client base for Silver Creek, especially in the Philadelphia office, is made up of family-owned businesses with unique business practices, employees often find the company's main online client management system inadequate. Michelle feels that Silver Creek should use a different client management system that is more customizable. This would allow for more detailed information storage on clients. Further, the one Michelle recommends is comparably priced per month with the current system, with no additional fees required. Michelle states that currently employees waste time continually trying to relearn the ins and outs of each client through disorganized notes from prior consultants that are not easily accessible via the current client management system. These concerns limit employees' ability to quickly brief themselves about the client while traveling, leading to inefficiencies and difficult client interactions.

High stakeholder involvement. Specifically, Michelle proposes that *all* of the Silver Creek Associates offices should simultaneously switch to the different client management system. This would address the limitations of the current system with the added benefit of allowing each location access to the history on all of the other locations' clients. Switching to the new system at all Silver Creek offices will require *a significant amount of coordination* between the five different Silver Creek office locations. In order to ensure comprehensive and up-to-date information for each client and a seamless transition, *all five office directors* will need to first approve the new system and then agree to the same timeline for roll out. Once this is complete, all Silver Creek employees would need to be trained on the new client management system in the same time frame. Michelle thinks the idea is worth the coordination effort because it will improve client service and consequently client satisfaction.

Low stakeholder involvement. Specifically, given this is an issue mostly for the Philadelphia office, Michelle proposes that only the Philadelphia office should switch to the different client management system. This would address the limitations of the current system in the Philadelphia office. Switching to the new system at only the Philadelphia office will require *very little coordination* between the five different Silver Creek office locations. *Only the Philadelphia office director* will need to approve the new system and develop a roll out timeline based on his/her sole preferences. Once this is set, only the Silver Creek employees working in Philadelphia would need to be trained on the new client management system. Michelle thinks the idea is worth the effort because it will improve client service and consequently client satisfaction.

IMPORTANCE SCENARIO SETUP

The ABS Engineering Company, located in Sacramento, is a civil engineering company that specializes in creating public bridges and tunnels across California. ABS has a corporate culture that emphasizes project efficiency and cost savings for its clients, so its employees seem to always complete their projects in time and under budget. Once a month, the management team holds a meeting with employees to give updates on client projects and other office administrative issues. Then, each manager splits off with his/her own project team to discuss specific project issues.

You are an engineering project manager at ABS and have been with the company for four years. During the most recent team meeting, Taylor, a junior engineer who has been with the firm for one year and reports to you, presented the following idea.

Taylor's Idea

On the most recent bridge project, ABS used a new concrete mix product during construction that was cheaper than what they used to use, which helped their clients save money. However, after reading more outside research on the durability of this new product, Taylor believes that it may not last as long as ABS originally projected. Taylor feels that ABS needs to reinforce this latest bridge project in order to maintain ABS's reputation for excellence in the community.

High importance. Specifically, Taylor proposes that the bridge needs to be reinforced because a collapse of this bridge in particular would be *extremely dangerous* for anybody traveling across it, as there is a three-story drop to the creek below. Also, this is a high-traffic bridge, which means that a bridge collapse would *impact a large number of people*.

Low importance. Specifically, Taylor proposes that the bridge needs to be reinforced because faster-than-expected deterioration of this bridge would be *visually unappealing* to the people who use it. Also, this bridge connects a sparsely populated rural area to the local city, so bridge deterioration would *impact a small number of people* who live in that area.