(1) Ng, T. W. H. and Feldman, D. C. (2012). Employee voice behavior: A meta-analytic test of the conservation of resources framework. *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 33, 216–234. doi: 10.1002/job.754

INTRODUCTION

- voice: "constructive change-oriented communication intended to improve the situation" (LePine and Van Dyne, 2001)
- "positive voice" - improving the situation at work
- voice in the work ~ positive attitudes toward jobs and org.
- research within **social exchange theory** (Blau, 1964) - **norm for reciprocity** (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005): individuals satisfied with their work envi. use more actively their voice. Assumption that employees use voice to regulate social exchanges w/others.
- What about the **possibility to regulate personal resources as well?** Voice as a response to stress, to protect resources, accumulate more resources (*resources* acc. to **conservation of resources** (COR) theory - Hobfoll, 1989: limited personal res. and motivation to protect/save them). Voice instrumental to achieve it (costs some res. but if used strategically may conserve/give more in return)
- stress-voice relationship? Fear of wasting energy in using voice or stronger using it to obtain another res.?
- obtaining meta-analytic data to test the stress-voice usage relationship, formulation of pairs of **competing hypotheses**:

1. Job stressors and strains are negatively/positively related to voice
2. Social stressors and strains are negatively/positively related to voice
3. Organizational stressors and strains are negatively/positively related to voice
4. Voice behavior is negatively/positively related to in-role performance, creativity, and implementation of new ideas

METHOD

- looking for **field studies** published in or before 2010, which examined employee voice and its correlates:
  - keywords: employee voice, suggestions, opinions, and ideas etc., + conf.papers, dissertations/via ref.lists
  - wanted: voice behavior at the individual level of analysis (not group-wise or org.-wise)
  - wanted: correlations between voice and any other key variables in the study
  - only those that operationalized voice as **"positive"**
- 55 articles, 2 unpublished dissertations, 1 conference paper = 66 independent studies
- **51 % USA**, 40 % other Western countries 9 % Asia
- 3 % -1990, 18 % 1990-1999, **79 % 2000-**
- 71 %: **self-report measures of voice**, avg.rel.: α=0.77; for rest: α=0.88

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

- ad H1) employees who reported higher levels of job stressors and strains also reported less use of *voice*
- ad H2) social stressors and strains are negatively related to voice, stronger than H1
- ad H3) organizational stressors and strains are negatively related to voice
- in all cases support for resource conservation tenet (7/10 signif.)
- ad H4) opposite, here resource acquisition premise is valid („voice behavior is positively related to in-role performance, creativity, and implementation of new ideas")

Discussion

- COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989) is a useful alternative lens (to the reciprocation) for
  1. explaining the motivation behind the use of voice and for
  2. the effects of voice on performance behavior
- resouce conservation argument works for H1-H3, resource acquisition for H4
- **„exercising voice depletes resources; therefore, when employees already face major workplace stressors, they are less likely to offer their ideas and suggestions"**
- **„voice contributes to overall productivity because voice enables employees to acquire resources that can be used to improve performance in other domains."**
- *Catch-22*-style result: „workplace stress creates a negative spiral effect; employees who are highly

stressed are less able to accrue additional resources to turn around their future job performance … and vice versa"

- „up to some optimal point, stress motivates employees to keep focus and to work hard at the task at hand. After that point, too much stress may lead employees to divert their attention to conserving and protecting resources instead."
- since *Human Relations School* 1940-1950s „managers have been urged to encourage employee voice", benefir of positive recirocation… but the willingness depends on the level of stress –> inhibits the use of voice
- „key to energizing greater voice behavior is improving workplace conditions for employees"
- **360-degree performance appraisals** might be more appropriate than supervisor ratings alone when assessing voice

own discussion to the article