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# Promotive Voice, Leader-member Exchange, and Creativity Endorsement: The Role of Supervisor-Attributed Motives

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**Abstract:** Employee voice is perceived as an approach with both significant advantages and disadvantages. The current study aims to analyse the behaviours of supervisors when endorsing the ideas of employees who raise promotive voices and consider the employees positively for the development of quality relationships. Specifically, 970 employees were recruited from various small and medium enterprises (SMEs), including manufacturing and electronics companies, in Pakistan for the current study participation. Data collection was conducted in two stages through two sources (supervisors and subordinates) before examining the collected data on the Mplus software for random coefficient regression analyses. Subordinates' promotive voice was significantly and positively correlated to the Leader-Member-Exchange (LMX) quality and creative idea endorsement when supervisors interpreted the voice as driven more by performance enhancement motives instead of impression management motives. The findings suggested that performance enhancement motives and impression management motives would produce contrasting material consequences for subordinates. The present study limitations and future research directions were also discussed.

**Keywords:** Promotive Voice, Leader-Member Exchange, Creativity Endorsement, Impression Management Motives, Performance Enhancement Motives, Voice Behaviour

## 1. Introduction

Promotive voice refers to an individual's discretionary expressions of personal ideas intended to positively influence the workplace, which is recognised as a key driver of organisational innovation and effectiveness (Chamberlin, Newton & Lepine, 2017; Liang, Shu & Farh, 2019a; Soomro, Memon & Shah, 2021). Most past studies investigating employee voice revealed that organisations are increasingly proactive in encouraging employees to express personal ideas (Afsar, Shahjehan, Shah & Wajid, 2019; Wang, Hsieh & Wang, 2020). Past scholars also reported that organisational innovation could be significantly enhanced by frequent and diverse employee voices (Azevedo, Schlosser & McPhee, 2021; Farh & Chen, 2014; Liang, Shu & Farh, 2019b) when respective supervisors validated and endorsed the expressed ideas (Ahmad, Samreen, Kee, Zain-ul-Abdeen & Muhammad Kamran, 2022; Zhang, Jiang, Adeel & Yaseen, 2018). Subsequently, enterprises would thrive on employees' creative ideas and suggestions (Ahmad et al., 2022; Zhou, Oldham, Chuang & Hsu, 2022), with employees constantly voicing personal perspectives regarded as active contributors (Soomro et al., 2021).

Prior researchers emphasised that managers, who play a significant role in the employee voice process, possess the authority to consider different expressed opinions (Ashford, Sutcliffe & Christianson, 2009; Burris, 2012). As such, employee input is highly dependent on managerial behaviours, with managers determining the appropriateness of employees' contributions and social interactions (Liang & Yeh, 2020) to the respective work unit (Morrison & Milliken, 2000). Employees would also be required to understand that personal notions are occasionally rejected (Detert & Treviño, 2010), with a potential risk involved when raising a promotive voice (Li & Zhong, 2020; Liang & Yeh, 2020; Milliken, Morrison & Hewlin, 2003). Accordingly,

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employees would be more willing to provide input when perceiving sufficient supervisor support (Ashford et al., 2009; Burris, 2012; Burris, Detert & Chiaburu, 2008), as employees wish to provide promotive voices regarding work environments while avoiding social risks when personal ideas are not endorsed. Hence, managerial responses and attributions are pivotal to developing an environment conducive to employee voice, social interactions, and work performance. Investigating managerial reactions and the relevant underlying mechanism to employee promotive voice attributed by supervisors is crucial to determine the behaviours of supervisors when endorsing the ideas of employees who raise promotive voices and perceiving the employees positively for the development of optimal relationships.

A promotive voice is a constructive approach seeking to advance other employees' ideas or suggestions to improve the work unit (Algoe & Haidt, 2009; Chen & Trevino, 2022; Morrison, 2014). Previous academicians demonstrated two different types of motives associated with employee voice, namely prosocial motives and impression management motives (Ashford & Cummings, 1983; Grant, 2008; Lam, Huang & Snape, 2007). A supervisor would rationalise subordinates' behaviours through the attribution of subordinates' intentions (Thomas & Pondy, 1977), which would either positively or negatively influence subsequent social interactions and evaluations (Cheng, Lu, Chang & Johnstone, 2013). When attributing employee behaviour to prosocial motives, supervisors would exhibit specific behaviours that positively influence employee performance reviews (Johnson & Whang, 2002; Lam et al., 2007). Contrarily, employee behaviour ascribed to impression management motives would diminish the relationship between employees' feedback-seeking behaviour and the leader-member exchange (LMX) quality (Lam et al., 2007; Schlenker, 1980): defined as the development of dyadic relationship between a supervisor and his/her subordinate based on mutual trust, respect, and mutual obligation (Graen & Scandura, 1987; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). The present study aimed to examine both motives attributed by a supervisor to employees' promotive voices, which would assist in determining the influence of supervisors' attribution on the relationship between employee promotive voice and the LMX quality.

Past researchers demonstrated that subordinates with high-quality LMX relationships would receive more positive organisational outcomes, such as social support, resource access, higher creativity evaluation scores, and personal idea endorsement by supervisors (Ahmad et al., 2022; Dulebohn, Bommer, Liden, Brouer & Ferris, 2012; Khalili, 2018; Urbach & Fay, 2021; Zhang et al., 2018). Furthermore, a promotive voice could be conducive to the endorsement of ideas, as workplace behaviour might improve the LMX quality. Accordingly, the current study investigated the mediating role of the LMX quality in the relationship between subordinates' promotive voice and supervisors' endorsement of subordinates' ideas. Summarily, this study sought to fulfil three research objectives. Specifically, the current study explored the relationship between subordinates' promotive voice and LMX quality and the influence of supervisors' attributions of subordinates' motives on the association between promotive voice and LMX quality. This study also appraised the mediating role of LMX quality in the correlation between promotive voice and idea endorsement. The findings contributed practical and theoretical significance in delineating the effects of promotive voice on creative idea endorsement.

## **2. Theoretical Background and Hypotheses**

### **2.1. Managerial Responses to Employee Voice**

Employees may convey different types of voices within a firm, such as whistleblowing (revealing information about illegal activities), ethical championing (escalating an issue to support an ethical decision), moral objection (proactive moral complaints), and prosocial voice (a change-oriented expression of ideas, information, and opinions). Nonetheless, past empirical research did not prioritise the informal voice communicated in workgroups (Chen & Trevino, 2022; Liu, Chen & Wen, 2020). A promotive voice commences with an ethical voice, wherein employees express concerns to colleagues and supervisors (Culiberg & Mihelič, 2017). Employee promotive voice is associated with two major managerial response types. Managerial endorsement of subordinates' ideas would be triggered when employees convey a promotive voice.

The endorsement is demonstrated through managerial confidence to implement transformations (Fast, Burris & Bartel, 2014), managerial channelling of valuable resources, managerial cultivation of a conducive environment for creativity (Khalili, 2018; Zare & Flinchbaugh, 2019), and managerial support and validation of creative ideas (Ahmad et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2018). Therefore, persuading managers to endorse personal ideas would be a desirable outcome for subordinates' promotive voices (Chen & Trevino, 2022). Meanwhile, managers evaluate employees who express concerns for others and categorise which subordinates are trustworthy and respectful (Martin, Guillaume, Thomas, Lee & Epitropaki, 2016; Premru, Černe & Batistič, 2022). Previous scholars discovered that subordinates expressing concerns for peers or colleagues received positive evaluations from managers with an improved LMX quality (Duan, Lapointe, Xu & Brooks, 2019). The finding posited that endorsing employees' ideas would contribute to LMX quality improvement (Ahmad et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2018).

### **2.2. Promotive Voice and Idea Endorsement**

The employee promotive voice would affect the quality of relationship building between an employee and a supervisor, with managerial evaluations of the employee's ideas simultaneously influenced. Past academicians continuously emphasised the importance of promotive voice (Ashforth, Gioia, Robinson & Trevino, 2008; Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Gentile, 2010; Near & Miceli, 1995) as a discretionary workplace behaviour. Initially, the voice was conceptualised as an individual expressing concerns about ethical issues at work (Hirschman, 1970; Near & Miceli, 1995). Subsequently, researchers propounded that employees might constructively express

opinions on an issue or individual (Morrison, 2014) or challenge peers' or colleagues' ideas (Kish-Gephart, Detert, Treviño & Edmondson, 2009; Liang & Yeh, 2020). Chen and Trevino (2022) defined promotive voice as employees voicing an issue to protect and improve other colleagues' welfare.

Promotive voice specifically involves the intention to communicate other individuals' concerns constructively (Kish-Gephart et al., 2009; H.-L. Liang & Yeh, 2020). Nevertheless, the voice might challenge the contemporary situation and demand a change in the current policies, practices, and decisions (Wellman, Mayer, Ong & DeRue, 2016). Employees engage in a promotive voice to provide alternative approaches for goal achievement (Zhou & George, 2001) and the improvement of organisational effectiveness (Dutton & Ashford, 1993). Concurrently, a promotive voice actively explores future opportunities by pinpointing the current dissatisfaction areas (Chamberlin et al., 2017; Gorden, 1988; Graham, 1986; Vandewalle, Van Dyne, & Kostova, 1995). Managers would interpret promotive voice as positive messages when the received communication messages are embedded with constructive intentions for the general welfare (Liang, Farh & Farh, 2012). Managers would be more receptive to improvement-oriented behaviours and endorse the ideas of employees exhibiting improvement-oriented behaviours (Burris, 2012). Thus, the following hypothesis was proposed:

**H1:** *Managers endorse the ideas of employees who engage in a promotive voice.*

### 2.3. Promotive Voice and the LMX Quality

Promotive voice involves conveying ideas and suggestions in an upward communication channel to improve organisational functioning (Chamberlin et al., 2017; LePine & Van Dyne, 1998; Liang & Yeh, 2020). Employees with promotive voices signal a higher personal effort to the respective managers in driving positive changes at work and occasionally challenging the status quo for organisational improvements compared to counterparts with less promotive voices (Chamberlin et al., 2017; Huang, Xu, Huang, & Liu, 2018). The workplace demeanour would enhance employees' quality relationships with managers (Liang & Yeh, 2020). Past research revealed that employees who are frequently involved in promotive voice behaviours would receive more positive managerial responses and perceptions (Berger & Calabrese, 1974; FISEK, 1991). The finding is owing to employees who express personal opinions for positive change and improvements are considered to possess constructive and positive intentions for the organisation (Liang & Yeh, 2020), which would enhance quality relationships or LMXs with managers (Chamberlin et al., 2017; McClean, Boixo, Smelyanskiy, Babbush & Neven, 2018). As promotive voices clarify role expectations (Wellman et al., 2016) and create a positive impression (Cheng et al., 2013), leaders or managers support and reward the employees with higher respect levels. Resultantly, high-quality LMXs are facilitated between supervisors and subordinates (Liang & Yeh, 2020). Correspondingly, the present study hypothesised as follows:

**H2:** *Promotive voice is positively correlated to the LMX quality.*

### 2.4. The Moderating Role of Supervisor-Attributed Motives for Promotive Voice

Prior scholars demonstrated that supervisors' reactions toward subordinates are affected by personal attributions of specific subordinates' demeanours (Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Green & Mitchell, 1979; Kelley, 1967; Lam et al., 2007). Supervisors categorise two different subordinates' motives, namely impression management and performance enhancement motives (Ashford & Cummings, 1983). Performance enhancement motives are attributed when supervisors interpret subordinates' specific behaviours as achievement-focused. Conversely, supervisors who regarded a behaviour as ingratiating and suspicious driven by the intention to manifest a positive personal image would ascribe the motive as impression management (Lam et al., 2007). Hence, supervisors appreciate and reward subordinates' performance-focused behaviour by reciprocating with social support, career development opportunities, positive performance evaluations, and trust development (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Kacmar, Witt, Zivnuska, & Gully, 2003). The positive process is conducive to the development of quality LMXs (Lam et al., 2007).

Supervisors would perceive the behaviour as manipulative and tend to develop a negative attitude toward the subordinates (Eastman, 1994) when employees attempt to impress the respective supervisors. Similarly, a negative perception of untruthful, unreliable, and calculating actions would be established (Crant, 1996) when employees discern other colleagues' ingratiating and insincere demeanours. Simultaneously, the respective voices of negatively-perceived employees would be considered and evaluated as manipulative. Supervisors would be less inclined to support and reward employees with unscrupulous intentions (Lam et al., 2007; Morrison & Bies, 1991). The current study posited that supervisors' attribution of employees' motives would influence the relationship between subordinates' promotive voice and the LMX quality. Two relevant hypotheses were propounded as follows:

**H3:** *The positive association between promotive voice and the LMX quality is stronger when supervisors interpret employee behaviour as driven by performance enhancement motives.*

**H4:** *The positive association between promotive voice and the LMX quality is weaker when supervisors interpret employee behaviour as driven by impression management motives.*

### 2.5. The Mediating Role of the LMX Quality

Previous studies assessing promotive voice revealed that employees communicating constructive and creative ideas to ensure organisational improvements would be beneficial for corporate development (Maynes & Podsakoff, 2014). Constructive behaviour allows employees to evaluate personal workplace demeanours and encourages

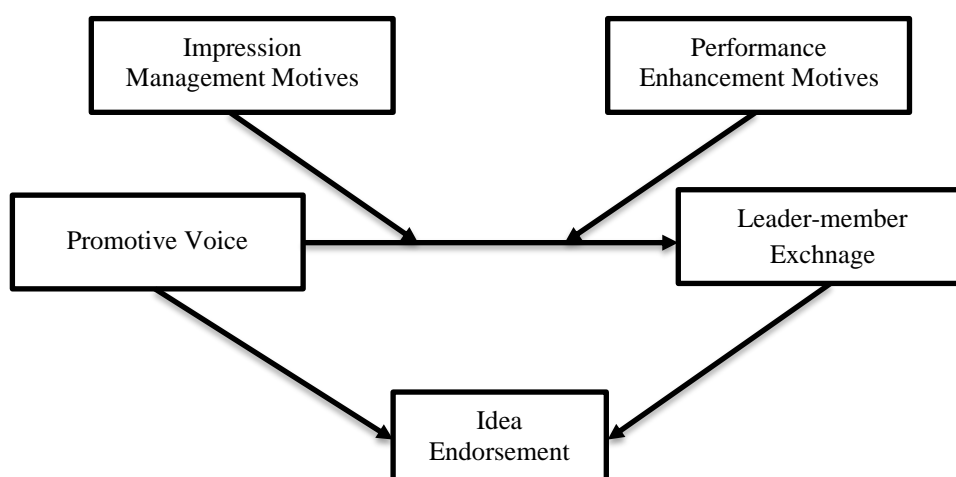
supervisors to provide more organisational resources and positive treatments (Cheng et al., 2013; He, Morrison & Zhang, 2021; Weiss, Weiss & Zacher, 2022). Subordinates with higher resource accessibility would possess comprehensive control of job executions, which boosts work performance evaluations. Several researchers also discovered that employees who assisted in expressing other colleagues' concerns constructively would accurately evaluate personal performance and the work environment (Cheng et al., 2013; J. Liang et al., 2012). The employees would also obtain higher ratings for task performance from peers or superiors (Chen & Trevino, 2022; Zare & Flinchbaugh, 2019).

According to the social exchange theory, the LMX quality significantly mediated the relationship between promotive voice and creative idea endorsement. The significant mediation could be contributed by promotive voice behaviours in clarifying role expectations for leaders and subordinates, which would be beneficial for organizations and quality relationships between leaders and employees with adequate promotive voices (Cheng et al., 2013; Liang et al., 2012; Morrison, 1993). Concurrently, promotive voice demeanours could maintain a positive image of subordinates for respective superiors (Ashford & Tsui, 1991; Chamberlin et al., 2017). Additionally, subordinates who maintain quality relationships or LMXs with supervisors would enhance personal creative performance on assigned tasks (Vila-Vázquez, Castro-Casal & Álvarez-Pérez, 2020; Xie et al., 2020), with higher job evaluations from supervisors (Ahmad et al., 2022). Prior studies manifested improved creative performance and higher evaluation scores for employees possessing quality LMXs with superiors. Quality LMXs stimulate leaders in providing additional support, valuable resources, and opportunities for employee growth and development (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Kacmar et al., 2003; Mulligan, Ramos, Martín & Zornoza, 2021; Zhang et al., 2018).

While promotive voice is consistently demonstrated to positively impact employees' creative performance (Liang et al., 2019b; Liu et al., 2020), promotive voice is also disclosed to moderately influence work-related performance (Song, Gu, Wu & Xu, 2019). The influence is significant when supervisors interpret subordinates' work behaviours as driven by impression management motives (Fuller, Barnett, Hester, Relyea & Frey, 2007; Liao, Zhou, Guo & Li, 2019). Accordingly, the present study posited that supervisors' attribution of subordinates' motives would influence the relationship between promotive voice and creative idea endorsement. Supervisors' attribution of employees' motives in raising promotive voices would influence the social interaction process between superiors and subordinates. A promotive voice would be more positively correlated to creative idea endorsement and higher LMX quality when supervisors attributed employees' motives in conveying promotive voice as performance enhancement. Contrarily, when employees' promotive voice was ascribed with impression management motives, a detrimental effect would be posed to quality LMX development and creative idea endorsement by supervisors. Two corresponding hypotheses were postulated as follows:

**Hypothesis 5:** *The LMX quality mediates the interactive effect between promotive voice and performance enhancement motives on creative idea endorsement.*

**Hypothesis 6:** *The LMX quality mediates the interactive effect between promotive voice and impression management motives on creative idea endorsement.*



**Figure 1.** Research Model

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1. Participants and Procedure

The current study collected data from 970 employees in various small and medium enterprises (SMEs), including manufacturing and electronics companies, in Pakistan. All participants were full-time employees with personal contacts. With formal approval from the organisational management, the employees were recruited for voluntary participation after explaining the research objectives. The present study also approached senior managers from the aforementioned industries and discussed the study significance and objectives for voluntary participation. Data collection was conducted in two stages through two sources (supervisors and subordinates). Promotive voice data were collected from supervisors, while subordinates responded to the LMX and control variables. After two



fortnights of the initial data collection phase, follow-up data were collected from the same participants (Ng et al., 2010; Rosen & Jordan, 2009). Supervisors responded to the variables of employees' creative idea endorsement, impression management motives, and performance enhancement motives. Initially, 970 surveys were distributed to subordinates and the respective 80 supervisors for self-completion. The average number of employees in a work unit was 7.15.

A total of 751 subordinates (77.4% response rate) and 80 supervisors completed the surveys at the first data collection stage. In the second stage, the same supervisors responded to 631 subordinates (65.05% response rate). After excluding inconsistent and incomplete data, our final qualified samples consisted of 572 subordinates (58.96% response rate) and 80 supervisors. The final sample consisted of 43 % female and 57% male, with 38.5% possessing a Bachelor's degree and 61.5% with a Master's degree. The average respondent age was 31.64 years old, with an average working experience of 9.55 years, average experience with the current organisation of 6.18 years, and average experience with the current position of 2.32 years. Before analysing the collected data, ensuring the potential integration of the data collected from different organisations was essential. A t-test was performed to validate the variables, in which the results demonstrated no significant difference between different enterprises (promotive voice:  $t(572) = 1.71, p > 0.05$ ; LMX:  $t(572) = 1.63, p > 0.05$ ; idea endorsement:  $t(572) = -1.38, p > 0.05$ ; impression management motives:  $t(572) = -1.19, p > 0.05$ ; performance enhancement motives:  $t(572) = -1.36, p > 0.05$ ).

### 3.2. Measures

The five-item promotive voice variable was rated by supervisors on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 as "never" to 7 as "very often" with high reliability ( $\alpha = 0.86$ ; Liang et al., 2012). A sample item is "This subordinate raises suggestions to improve the unit's working procedure". The seven-item LMX variable rated by subordinates was measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 as "extremely ineffective" to 7 "extremely effective" with adequate reliability ( $\alpha = 0.93$ ; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). A sample item is "How would you characterise your working relationship with your leader?". The five-item creative idea endorsement variable rated by supervisors was assessed on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 as "very unlikely" to 5 as "very likely" with high reliability ( $\alpha = 0.76$ ; Ahmed, Adeel, Ali & Rehman, 2019; Burris, 2012). A scale item is "How likely is it that you will support this person's creative ideas when talking with your supervisors?".

The 5-item impression management motive variable was rated by supervisors on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 as "strongly disagree" to 5 as "strongly agree" with sufficient reliability ( $\alpha = 0.87$ ; Allen & Rush, 1998; Lam et al., 2007). Supervisors were asked about the extent of perceiving subordinates' promotive voice as driven by impression management motives. A scale item for impression management motive is the "Desire to enhance his or her image". The two-item performance enhancement motive rated by supervisors was appraised on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 as "strongly disagree" to 5 as "strongly agree" with high reliability ( $\alpha = 0.82$ ; Lam et al., 2007). Supervisors were asked about the extent to which they perceived subordinates' promotive voice as driven by performance enhancement motives. A scale item is the "Desire to discover what his or her responsibilities are". Different demographic and contextual variables might influence quality relationship development between supervisors and subordinates (Bauer & Green, 1996; Liden, Wayne & Stilwell, 1993; Maslyn & Uhl-Bien, 2001) and employees' creative idea endorsement by supervisors (Ahmed et al., 2019; Burris, 2012). Thus, this study controlled the control variables of gender, age, education, experience year with the current organisation, experience year with the current position, and the total year of working experience.

## 4. Data Analysis

The Mplus version 7.0 software was employed for all data analyses. Employees were nested into different workgroups with multiple reporting lines based on respective assignments and projects. Simple regression could underestimate the standard error due to the potential interdependence among study variables (Bauer & Curran, 2003). Therefore, random coefficient regression analyses are recommended for a study with potential interdependence between variables (Scherbaum & Ferrer, 2009) with MLR. The analysis was performed on the Mplus software to account for the current samples with similar characteristics (Ahmad et al., 2022; Erdogan, Bauer & Walter, 2015). Furthermore, the output produced by the software for random coefficient models could not be applied to model fit indicators. Instead, the Satorra-Bentler scaled chi-square test employing the log-likelihood method would be more suitable (Muthén & Muthén, 2010). Before conducting any analysis, mean centring was performed for all study variables and relevant interactions (Aiken, West & Reno, 1991).

## 5. Results

Descriptive statistics and zero-order correlations among study variables are depicted in Table 1. Hierarchical multiple regressions were conducted for random coefficient models, hypothesis testing, and mediation effects (Muller, Judd & Yzerbyt, 2005). Specifically, the creative idea endorsement variable was regressed on the promotive voice variables in the presence of all control variables (gender, age, education, the experience year with the current organisation, the experience year with the current position, and the total year of working experience). The significant coefficient ( $\beta = 0.149, p \leq .01$ ) confirmed the positive effect of promotive voice on creative idea endorsement, thus supporting H1. Simultaneously, the LMX variable was regressed on the promotive voice variable with all control variables. The significant coefficient ( $\beta = 0.148, p \leq .01$ ) corroborated the positive effect of promotive voice on the LMX quality, hence supporting H2.

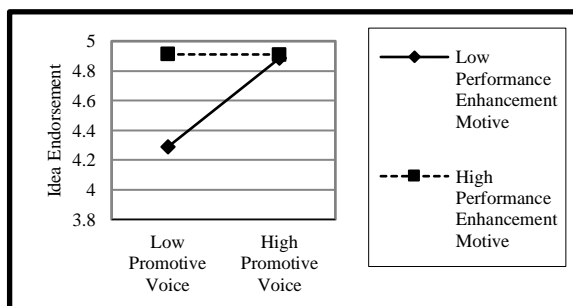
**Table 1:** Means, Standard Deviation, and Correlation among study variables.

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Gender	0.58	0.49										
2. Age	31.64	7.92	0.101 *									
3. Education	2.56	0.50	0.073	0.025								
4. Experience Year with the Current Organisation	6.18	2.68	- 0.003	0.236 **	- 0.127 **							
5. Experience Year with the Current Position	2.32	0.67	0.009	- 0.108 **	- 0.038	0.147 **						
6. Total Year of Working Experience	9.55	4.94	- 0.123 **	0.473 **	- 0.053	0.513 **	- 0.065					
7. Promotive Voice	3.73	1.25	- 0.104 *	- 0.040	0.128 **	0.002	0.008	0.078				
8. Performance Enhancement Motive	3.97	1.05	- 0.0030	- 0.048	0.081	- 0.058	0.028	- 0.027	0.135 **			
9. Impression Management Motive	3.44	1.17	0.003	0.054	0.074	- 0.031	- 0.074	0.026	0.372 **	0.208 **		
10. Leader-Member Exchange	3.60	1.27	0.018	0.005	- 0.070	0.001	- 0.017	0.007	0.128 **	0.141 **	0.051	
11. Creative Idea Endorsement	4.04	1.05	- 0.085 *	- 0.110 **	0.039	- 0.092 *	0.002	- 0.018	0.193 **	0.185 **	0.187 **	- 0.055

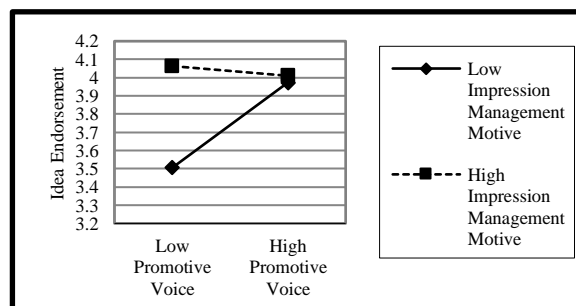
*Notes.* Observations = 374; Clusters = 37; Average Cluster Size = 7.150; Gender was coded as 0 = Female, 1 = Male; Education was coded as 1 = College Graduate, 2 = bachelor's degree, 3 = Master's Degree, 4 = Doctoral Degree; Professional Experience was measured in years. S.E. = standard error. <sup>a</sup> Experience with the Current Organisation; \*  $p < .10$ ; \*\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .01$ .

Source: Calculated by the author

The idea endorsement variable was regressed on promotive voice in the presence of the interaction between promotive voice and performance enhancement motive and all control variables. The significant coefficient ( $\beta = -0.114$ ,  $p \leq .01$ ) demonstrated the negative effect of performance enhancement motive on the relationship between promotive voice and idea endorsement, although a relevant hypothesis was not proposed. Meanwhile, Figure 2 portrays through the interaction plot the positive mediation effect of low performance enhancement motives on the association between promotive voice and idea endorsement, with a contrary mediation result in the presence of high-performance enhancement motives. Additionally, the significant coefficient ( $\beta = -0.089$ ,  $p \leq .01$ ) revealed the negative effect of impression management motives on the relationship between promotive voice and idea endorsement. Figure 3 depicts through the interaction plot the negative mediation effect of high impression management motives on the correlation between promotive voice and idea endorsement. Conversely, low impression management motives positively influence the relationship. Both findings suggested that supervisors would be less predisposed to endorse subordinates' ideas when attributing subordinates' promotive voice as manipulative or with impression management motives.



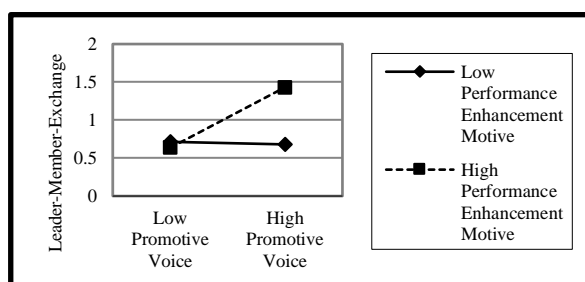
**Figure 2.** Interaction of Promotive Voice and Performance Enhancement Motive for Idea Endorsement



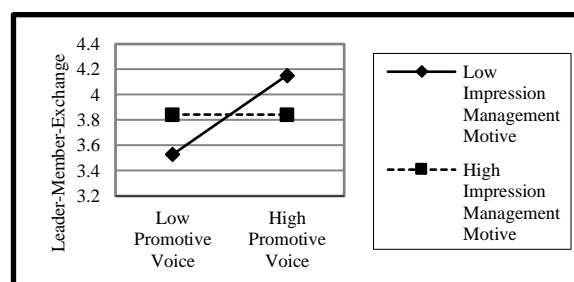
**Figure 3.** Interaction of Promotive Voice and Impression Management Motive for Idea Endorsement

The LMX variable was regressed on the promotive voice variable in the presence of the interaction between promotive voice and performance enhancement motives and all control variables. The significant coefficient ( $\beta = 0.158$ ,  $p \leq .05$ ) confirmed the positive effect of performance enhancement motives on the relationship between promotive voice and the LMX quality. Figure 4 illustrates through the interaction plot the positive mediation effect of high performance management motives on the relationship between promotive voice and the LMX quality.

Supervisors would ascribe employees' behaviour as performance-driven when the behaviour was highly motivated by performance enhancement motives. The significant coefficient ( $\beta = -0.107, p \leq .05$ ) corroborated the negative effect of impression management motives on the relationship between promotive voice and the LMX quality. Meanwhile, Figure 5 demonstrates the positive mediation effect of low impression management motives on the association between promotive voice and LMX quality through the interaction plot. Supervisors would interpret subordinates' behaviour as manipulative when the behaviour was driven by strong impression management motives. Resultantly, H3 and H4 were supported.



**Figure 4.** Interaction of Promotive Voice and Performance Enhancement Motive for Leader-Member Exchange



**Figure 5.** Interaction of Promotive Voice and Impression Management Motive for Leader-Member Exchange

The mediation effects were discovered through the hierarchical regression analysis results (Muller et al., 2005). Table 2 displays that the interaction between performance enhances motives ( $\beta = -0.114, p \leq .01$ ) and impression management motives ( $\beta = -0.089, p \leq .01$ ) significantly impacted idea endorsement, which supported Model 1 by fulfilling the first mediation requirement. Similarly, Model 2 was supported by the significant coefficient ( $\beta = 0.148, p \leq .01$ ) affirming the positive effect of promotive voice on LMX quality, which satisfied the second requirement. Model 3 was also supported with the fulfilment of the third mediation requirement by the significant coefficient ( $\beta = 0.104, p \leq .05$ ) of the LMX variable on idea endorsement. As the interaction between performance enhancement motives ( $\beta = -0.079$ , insignificant) and impression management motives ( $\beta = -0.061$ , insignificant) was insignificant, the fourth requirement for mediation was also fulfilled.

**Table 2:** Summary of Hierarchical Random Coefficient Regression Analysis Results

Predictor	Model 1: Creative Idea Endorsement		Model 2: Leader-Member Exchange		Model 3: Creative Idea Endorsement	
	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE
<b>Control Variables</b>						
Gender	- 0.106	0.098	0.097	0.117	- 0.100	0.095
Age	- 0.014 *	0.006	0.002	0.007	- 0.014 **	0.005
Education	0.028	0.108	- 0.239	0.131	-0.014	0.098
Experience Year with the Current Organisation	- 0.039	0.021	- 0.003	0.027	-0.035	0.020
Experience Year with the Current Position	0.014	0.062	- 0.039	0.088	0.015	0.060
Total Working Experience	0.014	0.010	- 0.002	0.012	0.014	0.010
<b>Independent Variable</b>						
Promotive Voice	0.149 *	0.061	0.148*	0.072	0.108	0.056
<b>Moderators</b>						
Performance Enhancement Motive					0.147 **	0.055
Impression Management Motive					- 0.081	0.043
<b>Mediator</b>						
Leader-Member-Exchange					0.104 **	0.039
$\Delta \chi^2 (\Delta df)$	5706.63 (6) ***		3925.99 (6) ***		7153.97 (9) ***	
$\Delta R^2$	0.113		0.044		0.179	
<b>Independent Variable</b>						
Promotive Voice	0.572 **	0.196	- 0.475 *	0.220	0.609 **	0.213
<b>Moderator</b>						
Performance Enhancement Motive	0.580 **	0.203	- 0.429 *	0.190	0.440 *	0.198
<b>Interactive Effect</b>						
Promotive Voice X Performance Enhancement Motive	- 0.114 *	0.046	0.158 **	0.052	-0.079	0.041
$\Delta \chi^2 (\Delta df)$	3181.147 (8) ***		3550.73 (8) ***			
$\Delta R^2$	0.698		0.067			
<b>Independent Variable</b>						
Promotive Voice	0.389 *	0.155	0.493 **	0.187	0.609 **	0.213
<b>Moderator</b>						
Impression Management Motive	0.459 **	0.165	0.400 *	0.201	0.367 *	0.157
<b>Interactive Effect</b>						
Promotive Voice X Impression Management Motive	- 0.089 *	0.040	-0.107 *	0.054	- 0.061	0.034
$\Delta \chi^2 (\Delta df)$	2545.34 (8) ***		2809.49 (8)			
$\Delta R^2$	0.179		0.022			
<b>Mediator</b>						



Leader-Member-Exchange					0.015 ***	0.005
Interactive Effects						
Leader-Member-Exchange X Performance Enhancement Motive					0.010	0.038
Leader-Member-Exchange X Impression Management Motive					- 0.028	0.030
$\Delta \chi^2 (\Delta df)$					2132.196 (11) ***	
$\Delta R^2$					0.188	
<i>Notes.</i> Observations = 572; Clusters = 80; Gender was coded as 0 = Female, 1 = Male; Education was coded as 1= College Graduate, 2 = Bachelor's Degree, 3=Master's Degree, 4=Doctoral Degree; Professional Experience was measured in years. S.E. = standard error; * $p < .10$ ; ** $p < .05$ ; *** $p < .01$ ; $\Delta \chi^2$ refers to Satorra–Bentler scaled chi-square difference test: Muth'en and Muth'en (1998–2010): $\Delta df$ is change in degrees of freedom. $R^2$ is the proportional reduction in error variance (Snijders & Bosker, 2012).						

Source: Calculated by the author

## 6. Discussion

Subordinates' promotive voice was significantly and positively correlated to the LMX quality and creative idea endorsement by supervisors who interpreted the behaviour as driven by performance enhancement motives rather than impression management motives. The findings suggested that performance enhancement motives and impression management motives produced contrasting material consequences for subordinates. Subordinates' promotive voice driven by impression management motives would lead to lower levels of creative idea endorsement and LMX quality development compared to the counterparts with promotive voice attributed to performance enhancement motives. Hence, supervisors would focus on the promotive voice of subordinates and the underlying motives of constructive behaviour.

### 6.1. Theoretical Contributions

The current study contributed to management literature by expanding research on promotive voice behaviour. Specifically, this study investigated the influence of promotive voice on LMX development and creative idea endorsement. The current study discovered that promotive voice would lead to both positive and negative outcomes when the motives for the behaviour were attributed differently by supervisors. Several past studies examined managerial reactions and reported positive outcomes (Liang & Yeh, 2020; McClean et al., 2018; Venkataramani & Tangirala, 2010; Whiting, Podsakof & Pierce, 2008), while other scholars revealed mixed or negative findings (Burris, 2012; Klaas & DeNisi, 1989). Hence, the present study addresses the inconsistency by discovering that managerial reactions toward subordinates' promotive voice depend on supervisors' attribution of motives. Impression management motives would elicit an unfavourable reaction from the managers, whereas the attribution of performance enhancement motives would result in positive outcomes.

The present results provided a deeper understanding of the outcomes involving subordinates' promotive voice behaviours. Previous studies demonstrated the benefits of subordinates' promotive voice with constructive motives to organisations, which would enhance employees' perceived value to the organisations (Whiting et al., 2008). The positive effects of a promotive voice should also be simultaneously considered with the LMX quality and creativity endorsement in the presence of subordinates' motives. Past LMX findings suggested that impression management motives might be negatively associated with LMX quality (Dockery & Steiner, 1990; Wayne & Liden, 1995). Employee motives might also be significantly associated with employee creativity (Benedek, Bruckdorfer & Jauk, 2020). Nevertheless, supervisors' attribution of subordinates' motives was scarcely examined in LMX and creativity research (Benedek et al., 2020; Bowler, Paul & Halbesleben, 2019; Wulani, Handoko & Purwanto, 2022). As such, the present study contributed to the existing literature by disclosing that a supervisor's attribution of employee motives would significantly determine subsequent reactions toward subordinates' promotive voice. Supervisors' attribution of employee motives is integral to LMX development and the subsequent creative approaches applied by employees in work. Summarily, supervisors' attribution of subordinates' motives is crucial to the development of quality relationships and the process of creative idea endorsement.

### 6.2. Practical Implications

Employees who suggest constructive ideas to work environments perceivably reflect more career advancement opportunities (van Dijk, van Engen & van Knippenberg, 2012). Nonetheless, rewarding and encouraging employees' promotive voice does not consider managerial reactions towards the development of quality LMX and the creative ideas of subordinates. Prior researchers discovered that supervisors might exhibit demeanours and express words impeding upward communications (Burris, 2012; Morrison & Milliken, 2000). As such, employees might prefer not to provide beneficial suggestions to the organisations. Organizational initiatives in facilitating employees' promotive voice would be ineffective when employees believe that the organisational context is unfavourable to personal input. The current findings could assist employees in understanding that supervisors appreciate work-related efforts compared to impression management behaviours. Organisations should also develop personality and leadership development programmes for both supervisors and subordinates. The programmes should be designed to enhance the communication level between subordinates and supervisors. Furthermore, specific leadership development programmes should focus on training leaders to be open and receptive to subordinates' ideas. Negative managerial reactions could be reduced by training managers or supervisors to regard employees' promotive voice as a growth opportunity. Thus, organisations should reward subordinates who provide constructive suggestions while training managers to comprehend the importance of

employees' suggestions. The training will shift managers' focus from the communication approaches employed by subordinates by concentrating on the conveyed ideas.

## 7. Study Limitations

Several study limitations exist, especially in the data collection method. The data were collected from employees after obtaining formal approval from the management, with the management subsequently communicating to the employees about the current study. Although data were collected at two stages from two different sources, bias could be present in the study results. The employees might provide inaccurate data, which would decrease finding generalisability while increasing error-related variances for the observed relationships between the study variables. Therefore, a replication of this study is recommended with an experimental design in a more homogenous sample to ensure sufficient outcome generalisability. Meanwhile, data collection is also recommended from other sources, such as collecting data from colleagues, to provide a comprehensive understanding of employee promotive voice and relevant consequences.

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