Stallion Journal for Multidisciplinary Associated Research Studies
ISSN (Online): 2583-3340
Volume-5 Issue-4 || August 2026 || PP. 103-106 https://doi.org/10.55544/sjmars.5.4.12

Employee Voice and Managerial Responsiveness: Creating Organisational Conditions for Constructive Dissent

Dr. Stanley A. V. Paul[1]; Snr., Dr. Stanley A. V. Paul[2]; Jr., Dr. Andre Martin[3], Dr. Justin Joseph[4], Dr. Kobina Akim Wilson[5] and Dr. Genève Phillip-Durham[6]
[1,2,3,4,5,6]Professor, University of Excellence, Management and Business (U.E.M.B.), Georgetown, GUYANA

[1]Corresponding Author: principal@uemb.edu.gy

www.sjmars.com || Vol. 5 No. 4 (2026): August Issue

Date of Submission: 16-08-2026	**Date of Acceptance:** 23-08-2026	**Date of Publication:** 30-08-2026

ABSTRACT

Organisations often invite employees to raise concerns without establishing how those concerns will influence decisions. This separation between expression and response can weaken confidence in participation and conceal operational problems. Drawing on selected scholarship concerning employee voice, supervisory feedback, academic employment and procedural justice, this conceptual article examines managerial responsiveness as a distinct organisational capability. It proposes a response architecture comprising accessible entry points, impartial assessment, reasoned decisions, proportionate protection and visible follow-through. The analysis distinguishes constructive dissent from agreement, voice from adoption and silence from consent. It also addresses unequal access to decision-makers, confidentiality, representative participation and the risks of measuring voice through submission counts. The article argues that a credible system must make rejection explainable as well as make acceptance possible. Its contribution is a framework for evaluating what organisations do after an employee speaks, with practical implications for managers and a research agenda centred on the quality and consequences of organisational responses.

Keywords- employee voice; constructive dissent; managerial responsiveness; organisational silence; participation; procedural justice.

I. INTRODUCTION

An invitation to speak has limited value when employees cannot anticipate what will happen after they do so. A suggestion may enter a digital portal, a concern may be raised in a meeting, or a junior colleague may challenge a proposed decision. If no responsible person examines the issue, explains the outcome or checks for adverse consequences, the organisation has created a channel without creating a credible process. Constructive dissent is understood here as a reasoned challenge intended to improve a decision, identify a problem or protect legitimate organisational interests. It may be inconvenient, incomplete or expressed imperfectly. Managers who recognise only agreeable suggestions risk excluding precisely the information that challenges established assumptions. The criterion should be substantive relevance and good-faith engagement, not whether the contribution confirms managerial preferences. This article focuses on responsiveness: the organisational capacity to receive, evaluate and act upon employee contributions through an intelligible process. Responsiveness does not require accepting every recommendation. It requires appropriate attention, reasons and accountability. The distinction is central because an organisation can reject a suggestion fairly, while another can adopt it through a process that exploits the contributor or conceals how the decision was made.

Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0)

Stallion Journal for Multidisciplinary Associated Research Studies
ISSN (Online): 2583-3340
Volume-5 Issue-4 || August 2026 || PP. 103-106 https://doi.org/10.55544/sjmars.5.4.12

II. CONCEPTUAL APPROACH

The analysis draws purposively on seven scholarly articles published by Cambridge and Oxford university presses. Mori et al. (2024) map the fragmented employee-voice literature and emphasise the significance of context. Sibunruang and Kawai (2024) examine voice and supervisory developmental feedback. Lister et al. (2025) analyse voice and silence among early career academics. Hassard et al. (2017) examine organisational justice and stress among teachers facing uncertainty. The sources combine a knowledge map, empirical organisational research and a scoping review. They do not establish a universal causal model. The present article therefore uses them to identify relevant relationships and boundary conditions before developing a normative framework. No interviews, surveys or organisational observations were undertaken for this manuscript. The proposed architecture concerns ordinary organisational concerns, improvement proposals and dissent about decisions. Allegations of serious misconduct may require specialised investigative or legally protected reporting arrangements. An ordinary suggestion process should not be represented as a substitute for those mechanisms, and managers should identify when a matter needs referral.

III. WHY EXPRESSION AND INFLUENCE DIVERGE

Voice and influence are related but distinct. An employee may be permitted to speak while lacking access to the evidence, agenda or decision-makers that shape the outcome. Participation can consequently become ceremonial. A meeting records that views were invited, but the relevant decision has already been settled or the contribution is excluded from the material considered. Mori et al. (2024) show that employee voice has been studied through different research traditions and that context requires greater attention. This matters for practice because a single mechanism can serve different purposes. A team improvement meeting, a representative consultation and a confidential concern process involve different power relationships. Treating them as interchangeable can conceal which interests the organisation has actually enabled employees to express. Managers also influence voice through their responses to imperfect contributions. A concern may contain an incorrect detail but still identify a real weakness. Dismissing the entire contribution because of that error discourages further clarification. Conversely, accepting an allegation without examination can harm other employees. Responsiveness requires separating the quality of the initial presentation from the obligation to assess the underlying issue fairly. Silence is similarly ambiguous. It can reflect agreement, uncertainty, fatigue, fear, lack of relevant information or a judgement that speaking will accomplish nothing. Managers should not infer consent from the absence of objections when the conditions of participation remain unknown. Nor should they assume that every silent employee possesses an unexpressed criticism. The appropriate response is to examine access and incentives rather than assign a motive without evidence.

IV. SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIPS AND STRUCTURAL POWER

Supervisors are important because they can translate contributions into action or prevent them from reaching a wider audience. Sibunruang and Kawai (2024), using matched employee and supervisor data from Japan, identify relationships connecting employee voice, performance evaluations and developmental feedback. Their study supports attention to the supervisory environment; it does not establish that a particular feedback technique will produce equivalent outcomes in every organisation. A constructive supervisory response begins by clarifying the issue before evaluating the employee's attitude. Questions about evidence, affected processes and possible alternatives can improve the contribution. Questions that imply disloyalty or demand that the employee prove an entire solution before raising a concern can make the invitation to speak conditional on resources the employee does not possess. Relational quality alone is insufficient. Employees may depend on the same supervisor for contract renewal, desirable assignments and references. Lister et al. (2025) highlight power asymmetries and complex employment arrangements in their review of early career academic voice and silence. The analysis is especially relevant to institutions where junior staff rely heavily on a small number of senior colleagues. The practical implication is that organisations need alternatives to the immediate line manager. An employee should be able to raise a concern about a supervisory decision without requiring that supervisor's permission. Alternatives must nevertheless have defined responsibilities. A nominally independent contact who cannot investigate, refer or obtain a response may provide reassurance without effective recourse. Evidence on leadership further specifies this relationship. Jeung and Yoon (2018), studying 306 employees of a Korean business conglomerate, found positive relationships between humble and empowering leadership and prosocial voice. Their model also linked power-distance orientation and psychological empowerment to the relationship. These findings support examining employees' experienced capacity to contribute, rather than relying solely on a manager's declaration of openness. They do not establish a universal leadership intervention or eliminate the need for formal protection where speaking carries material risk.

Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0)

Stallion Journal for Multidisciplinary Associated Research Studies
ISSN (Online): 2583-3340
Volume-5 Issue-4 || August 2026 || PP. 103-106 https://doi.org/10.55544/sjmars.5.4.12

V. A MANAGERIAL RESPONSE ARCHITECTURE

The first component is accessible entry. Employees should know where different concerns belong, what information is useful and whether they can raise an issue privately. Multiple entry points may be necessary for geographically dispersed staff, shift workers and employees with limited access to formal meetings. Accessibility concerns time, language and organisational position as well as technology. The second component is acknowledgement with responsibility. Receipt should identify who will assess the issue and when the employee can expect an update. A generic automated message provides evidence of submission but does not establish ownership. The responsible person should clarify whether the matter concerns an improvement proposal, an individual grievance, a collective issue or a potentially serious allegation. The third component is proportionate examination. Low-cost operational suggestions may need a short feasibility review. Concerns involving safety, discrimination or substantial financial consequences require a different level of scrutiny. Proportionality should be based on the potential significance of the issue, not the status of the contributor. A junior employee can identify a consequential problem. The fourth component is a reasoned decision. Acceptance should specify the action, owner and intended timing. Rejection should explain the relevant constraint or evidential judgement. Deferral should state what information or condition would permit reconsideration. These distinctions prevent an indefinite pending status from becoming a convenient way to avoid accountability. The fifth component is follow-through. The organisation should check whether promised action occurred and whether the concern was actually addressed. Where confidentiality permits, it should communicate what changed. Employees need evidence that the process can influence practice, but that communication should not reveal personal details or imply that a disputed allegation has been established without appropriate examination.

VI. FAIR REJECTION AND THE QUALITY OF REASONS

A credible voice system must accommodate disagreement. Some suggestions are incompatible with legal obligations, financial capacity or other legitimate priorities. Others identify a problem accurately but propose an ineffective remedy. Managers should explain these distinctions so that rejection does not automatically communicate indifference. Consider a hypothetical employee who proposes removing a quality check because it delays service. The manager may have good reason to preserve the check. A responsive decision would explain the risk it controls, examine whether the delay can be reduced and acknowledge the operational problem. A dismissive decision would simply state that the procedure is mandatory without investigating whether its implementation can improve. Reasons should be sufficiently specific to permit understanding and challenge. Invoking strategy, confidentiality or commercial sensitivity in every difficult case weakens the process. Some information genuinely cannot be disclosed, but the organisation can usually explain the type of consideration involved and whether an independent review has occurred. Confidentiality should delimit explanation, not eliminate accountability altogether.

The quality of reasons also provides a learning opportunity. A contribution that cannot be implemented now may become useful when conditions change. Recording the reasoning prevents the organisation from repeatedly revisiting the same proposal without remembering why it was accepted, rejected or deferred. The form of expression also affects what managers recognise. Ren et al. (2022) developed a measure of implicit voice and used supervisor–subordinate data to examine its relationships with face concerns and endorsement. Indirect expression was associated with favourable supervisory responses, particularly when supervisors could infer its meaning. This suggests that a response process should accommodate carefully phrased concerns and requests for clarification. Requiring every employee to deliver an unambiguous public challenge may exclude information from people navigating a delicate relationship with authority.

VII. PROTECTION, REPRESENTATION AND UNEQUAL PARTICIPATION

Employees evaluate formal assurances against observed consequences. A contributor who receives fewer opportunities after challenging a decision may interpret the sequence as retaliation even when a manager offers another explanation. Organisations need processes for examining such concerns fairly, including relevant records and independent review. Protection should be operational rather than merely rhetorical. Anonymity can reduce some barriers but creates trade-offs. It may limit follow-up, make details harder to verify and prevent individual feedback. Confidential reporting allows communication with the contributor while restricting disclosure, but it depends on trust in how information is handled. Neither arrangement is universally superior. The choice should reflect the nature of the issue and the organisation's capacity to maintain its promises. Individual voice should coexist with representative mechanisms. Problems involving workload, scheduling or organisational restructuring may affect groups whose interests cannot be adequately represented through isolated suggestions. Collective participation can help identify patterns and reduce dependence on a particularly confident individual. It also requires clear mandates and attention to employees who are less visible within the representative process.

Hassard et al. (2017) associate justice-related perceptions with teachers' experiences during organisational uncertainty. Their findings support taking perceived influence seriously, while their setting limits generalisation. The

Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0)

recommendation here is that major change processes should explain which matters remain open to influence and which constraints are already fixed. Consultation loses credibility when its scope is ambiguous.

VIII. EVALUATING RESPONSIVENESS

Submission volume is an inadequate measure of success. More contributions may indicate confidence, recurring problems, repeated submissions or a poorly designed process. Fewer contributions may indicate improvement or withdrawal. Evaluation should therefore combine process information with evidence about employees' experiences and the substance of decisions.

Useful process measures include acknowledgement time, time to a reasoned decision, overdue actions and the proportion of deferred matters subsequently reviewed. Qualitative review should examine whether reasons address the actual concern. A rapid response that misunderstands the issue is not necessarily better than a slower, properly explained investigation. Organisations should also examine distribution. Contributions may come disproportionately from senior staff, particular departments or employees with secure contracts. This pattern warrants investigation without assuming that every group should submit identical numbers. The question is whether participation opportunities and consequences differ in ways that undermine fair access.

Research could test whether reasoned rejection sustains future participation more effectively than unexplained rejection, and whether alternative reporting routes reduce dependence on supervisory relationships. Longitudinal designs would help distinguish temporary enthusiasm from durable change. Employee accounts should be considered alongside decision records and implementation evidence. Measurement should distinguish the purposes of expression. Sun et al. (2024) developed and validated a safety-voice scale in Chinese organisational settings, identifying promotive and prohibitive dimensions. That distinction separates suggestions for improvement from warnings about unsafe conditions. It supports the proposed use of different response pathways and time expectations for different concerns. The instrument's contextual development also cautions against importing a questionnaire unchanged: an institution should examine whether employees interpret its items consistently and whether its categories reflect the risks they actually encounter.

IX. LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The framework is conceptual and draws on a selective literature. Organisational size, employment arrangements, national institutions and the substantive issue may alter its operation. It should therefore guide diagnosis and design rather than function as a universal compliance checklist. Local evaluation is necessary before attributing improvements in performance or retention to a voice initiative. Constructive dissent becomes organisationally useful when expression is connected to responsible examination, intelligible decisions and visible follow-through. Managers need not agree with every contribution, but they should be able to explain how it was considered. A credible system protects access, recognises power differences and treats rejection as a decision requiring reasons. These conditions make employee voice a substantive part of organisational judgement rather than an invitation whose consequences remain uncertain.

REFERENCES

[1] Hassard, J., Teoh, K., & Cox, T. (2017). Organizational uncertainty and stress among teachers in Hong Kong: Work characteristics and organizational justice. *Health Promotion International, 32*(5), 860-870. https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/daw018

[2] Jeung, C.-W., & Yoon, H. J. (2018). When leadership elicits voice: Evidence for a mediated moderation model. *Journal of Management & Organization, 24*(1), 40-61. https://doi.org/10.1017/jmo.2017.42

[3] Lister, V., Kosiol, J., Meissner, E., & Fitzgerald, A. (2025). Tell us how it is: Unravelling the dynamics of academic voice and silence. *Journal of Management & Organization, 31*(1), 256-285. https://doi.org/10.1017/jmo.2024.41

[4] Mori, M., Cavaliere, V., Sassetti, S., & Caputo, A. (2024). Employee voice: A knowledge map to provide conceptual clarity and future research directions. *Journal of Management & Organization, 30*(6), 1873-1899. https://doi.org/10.1017/jmo.2022.89

[5] Ren, R., Ma, L., Chen, Z. X., Wang, H., & Ju, D. (2022). Implicit voice delivery: Its antecedents, consequences, and boundary conditions. *Management and Organization Review, 18*(1), 43-72. https://doi.org/10.1017/mor.2021.37

[6] Sibunruang, H., & Kawai, N. (2024). The proactive nature of employee voice: The facilitating role of supervisor developmental feedback. *Journal of Management & Organization, 30*(4), 1100-1118. https://doi.org/10.1017/jmo.2023.38

[7] Sun, Y., Jiang, Y., Luo, X., Zhang, Y., & Wu, X. (2024). Development and validation of employee safety voice scale in the Chinese organizational context. *Journal of Management & Organization, 30*(2), 223-247. https://doi.org/10.1017/jmo.2022.73

Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0)