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Using a Process Model to Develop and Expand Employee Voice Scales

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ABSTRACT

Employee voice at its simplest refers to having a say in the workplace. The concept of employee voice has gathered interest from the employment relations, human resource management and organisational behaviour disciplines over recent years. We take an inclusive view of voice in this article rather than one from a single discipline. We discuss the importance of examining the various dimensions and attributes of voice and with a process model of voice, conduct two studies to develop, test and produce 15 voice scales. Theoretical and practical implications and future research directions are discussed.

1 | Introduction

Since the earliest days of studying employee voice at work, it has been regarded as an important topic. Since the early 1990s, there has been a disciplinary separation of employment relations (ER), industrial relations (IR), human resource management (HRM), and organisational behaviour (OB) voice research. However, the last decade has seen multiple reviews attempting to bring these streams back into conversation with one another (e.g., Bashshur and Oc 2015; Barry and Wilkinson 2021; Mowbray, Wilkinson, and Tse 2015; Morrison 2023; Wilkinson, Barry, and Morrison 2020). In the most rudimentary (and somewhat simplified) terms, the ER discipline has focused on structures and processes of voice, while the OB field has been more individually focused, with both streams converging within the HRM realm.

This article aims to provide an important methodological, empirical, and theoretical contribution to the employee voice literature. It seeks to expand the common ground across the disciplines through the development of 15 validated scales that measure employee voice as a process. This process-based approach enables the measurement of employees' perceptions of their experiences, encompassing their motivation to voice, their opportunities and frequency of voicing, union support, and the outcomes of voice. Additionally, our process-based approach includes evaluating specific inhibitors of employees' voice, such as fear, social outcomes, and conflict, offering a comprehensive range of factors that encourage or deter voice behaviours in the workplace.

The disciplines differ significantly in their conceptualisation and study of voice, as demonstrated below. However, here we adopt a broad perspective on employee voice. We apply the inclusive definition provided by Wilkinson et al. (2020): 'the ways and means through which employees attempt to have a say, formally and/or informally, collectively and/or individually, potentially to influence organisational affairs relating to issues that affect their work, their personal interests, and the interests of managers and owners' (p. 5). Indeed, employee voice encompasses a wide range of work-related topics and interests (e.g., working conditions, compensation and benefits, workplace policies and procedures) and can occur through various mechanisms.

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Summary

- What is currently known?
  - At its simplest, employee voice refers to having a say in the workplace.
  - The conceptualisation of employee voice differs across the Employment Relations, Human Resource Management and Organisational Behaviour disciplines.
  - The most commonly used and validated employee voice scales come from an Organisational Behaviour background.
- What this paper adds?
  - Explanation of employee voice being a very broad construct with various dimensions that should be explored through a scale development paper.
  - Expanding the voice scales literature by designing measures that can be used in any workplace context, discipline and research design (i.e., cross-sectional and longitudinal).
  - Identification and development of scales that are primarily focused on employee voice from an Employment Relations and Human Resource Management perspective.
- The implications for practitioners
  - For managers and supervisors—employee voice plays an important role in the workplace, however, the concept of speaking up in the workplace is not straightforward and has different dimensions and layers that need to be recognised.
  - For employment relations and human resource management practitioners—further development of the potential dimensions of employee voice in the workplace may be important to better understand how other factors—internal and external—may influence how an employee's behaviour to voice.

In this study, we focus specifically on the dynamic between employees and their managers, recognising that this hierarchical relationship is a fundamental aspect of employee voice. While recent research has expanded to include peer-to-peer voicing (Kougiannou and Mendonca 2021; Loudoun et al. 2020; Walker 2021), our scales are designed to measure voice within the context of worker–manager interactions. By establishing this boundary condition, we acknowledge the specific context of our research and provide clarity on the scope of our scales.

2 | Background to Employee Voice Research

Modern scholarly analysis of employee voice in management has been conducted within the ER/IR,[1] HRM, and OB disciplines since the 1970s. These fields of literature, however, differ in their focus regarding aspects and the measurement of employee voice. The ER/IR voice literature primarily examines the formal mechanisms that enable employees to have a say in decision-making (Freeman, Boxall, and Haynes 2007; Markey and Townsend 2013) on issues related to their work and the interests of managers and owners (Dundon and Rollinson 2011; Wilkinson, Donaghey, Dundon, and Freeman 2014), with an emphasis on collective voice mechanisms, such as works councils, collective bargaining, and social partnerships as a counterbalance to management power.

HRM voice emphasises the development and implementation of systems and structures that facilitate employee input and feedback, such as establishing voice systems, employee surveys, and grievance procedures (Barry and Wilkinson 2021; Marchington 2007; Huang, Wilkinson, and Barry 2024). Barry and Wilkinson (2021, 5) note that 'HRM is much more concerned than OB with systems and structures for voice', underscoring its focus on formal mechanisms. However, HRM voice is often critiqued for adopting a unitarist perspective (Kaufman 2007), potentially overlooking the adversarial elements of the employment relationship central to IR. From an HRM perspective managers, rather than employees determine the mechanisms to be used, potentially allowing for voice without influence (Kaufman and Taras 2010).

In contrast, OB voice research conceptualises voice as a behaviour that is informal, prosocial, and discretionary (Van Dyne and LePine 1998). OB voice focuses on individual and micro-level factors that shape how employees express their thoughts, feelings, and concerns at work. Rooted in psychological theories, it emphasises attitudes, perceptions, and relationships in influencing employee voice. OB voice is characterised as a constructive, extra-role behaviour that challenges the status quo and promotes organisational improvements (Morrison 2023; Van Dyne and LePine 1998).

We also note that there is a body of existing work that summarises the different conceptualisations of employee voice across disciplines (see Barry and Wilkinson 2021; Huang, Wilkinson, and Barry 2024; Mowbray, Wilkinson, and Tse 2015; Wilkinson, Barry, and Morrison 2020). Given this and the fact that we are working with these conceptualisations and are not seeking to change them, we do not re-summarise their findings but direct readers to these sources for an overview of employee voice conceptualisations. Our focus in this paper is to explore dimensions of employee voice through scale development.

Nevertheless, employees must have something that motivates them to voice, as well as an opportunity to raise their concerns (Wilkinson et al. 2021). The motivation and intention to voice stem from a combination of material and psychological incentives. In essence, 'most of our understanding of voice motivation comes from the pro-social voice literature, which considers voice as a means to contribute to organisational improvements or change, rather than as a countervailing source of power capable of questioning and challenging management or correcting employee dissatisfaction' (Townsend et al. 2020, 4). These authors further suggest that, regardless of the disciplinary approach to employee voice research, there is ample evidence that employees are often motivated to have a say in the workplace. However, they depend on opportunities and pathways to express their voice, with outcomes that may or may not be satisfactory to all parties. This paper aims to identify the ways, means, motivations, opportunities, contextual factors and outcomes for employees to have a say through the development of scales.

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3 | Background to Voice Scale Development

In recent years, conceptual reviews on employee voice have sought to clarify different research viewpoints and establish connections between them. Mowbray, Wilkinson, and Tse (2015) discussed the evolutionary separation between HRM/ER and OB voice research in an attempt to link the disciplines. Bashshur and Oc (2015) conducted a multi-level review to understand 'when voice matters.' Huang, Wilkinson, and Barry (2024) sought to theorise the boundaries between OB, HRM, and IR voice by examining specific organisational contexts that may affect employee voice behaviour. Morrison (2023) consolidated the body of work on employee voice and silence published over the past decade. Although these review articles cover substantial conceptual ground, we argue that developing and publishing a broader array of voice scales will enable the disciplines to progress through more interconnected empirical studies of employee voice in the workplace.

Existing voice scales, such as Van Dyne and LePine's (1998), exhibit strong psychometric properties. However, Morrison (2011) argues that they contain inconsistencies with the OB voice definition, raising concerns about content validity. Van Dyne and LePine's (1998) and Liu et al.'s (2010) scales primarily measure individual-level proactive and defencive voice behaviours. However, they often fail to account for the broader organisational context, such as the influence of collective bargaining, union support, and formal voice mechanisms, which are key elements for a comprehensive ER perspective. Similarly, Tangirala and Ramanujam's (2008) and Liang et al.'s (2012) scales provide valuable insights into individual voice actions but neglect critical ER components like collective voice mechanisms and organisational power dynamics, which are essential for understanding the complexities and outcomes of voice behaviour in diverse workplace settings.

Moreover, widely known scales, such as Edmondson's (1999) Psychological Safety Scale, evaluate the environment that facilitates voice but do not capture the impacts of structural (e.g., HR policies) or institutional (e.g., collective voice mechanisms) aspects crucial to ER (Huang, Wilkinson, and Barry 2024). Instead, they focus on individual perceptions of safety. These limitations underscore a significant gap in addressing both the individual and collective dimensions of voice within organisational settings.

While many well-established voice scales exist, we argue that current measures do not fully capture the breadth of the employee voice construct, and more refined dimensions of voice still need to be developed (see Morrison 2011). Additionally, the understanding of voice as a temporal construct is largely neglected in the voice scale literature (Morrison 2023; Townsend et al. 2020). Furthermore, there is a notable absence of validated scales that measure voice based on worker interests, reflecting a traditional ER/IR perspective. Recent research further highlights the need to reconsider existing voice scales to better reflect modern workplace dynamics. Begum and Çakar (2019) suggest that many existing scales focus primarily on traditional employee voice, lacking the capacity to validate contemporary dimensions. The evolving nature of employee voice is also evident in the work of Miles and Muuka (2011), who note the impact of technology and social media on voice mechanisms, which have shifted control from organisations to employees. Pfrombeck et al. (2023) propose a broader definition of voice in their Hierarchy of Voice framework, incorporating both prosocial and self-interested motivations, and advocating for a dyadic approach that considers both the voicer and the target. These perspectives collectively underscore the pressing need for updated, comprehensive employee voice scales that capture the complexities of modern workplace communication.

Most existing employee voice scales are conceptualised from an OB standpoint. However, the OB definition of voice has been critiqued by ER/IR voice scholars, including Barry and Wilkinson (2015) and Kaufman (2015). Both authors critique the OB perspective for its narrow focus on individual, prosocial behaviours aimed at organisational improvement, which excludes other forms of voice, such as dissent or grievance expression. Barry and Wilkinson (2015) argue that OB literature overlooks the collective nature of voice, which is central to ER research, and fails to address contextual factors such as organisational culture and power dynamics. Kaufman (2015) adds that OB's individualistic approach neglects broader institutional contexts, including external economic conditions, governance issues, and formal mechanisms such as employee councils. These critiques highlight the failure of the OB perspective to fully capture the complexity of the employee voice construct. They call for a more integrated approach that includes both individual and collective dimensions, as well as structural and contextual influences on voice behaviour.

In line with recommendations from Morrison (2011) and critiques by Barry and Wilkinson (2015) and Kaufman (2015), this article seeks to address these gaps by providing validated scales to measure various aspects of the full employee voice experience. Drawing from our extensive review of the employee voice literature across multiple disciplines and epistemological approaches, we undertook an ambitious study aimed at developing and validating a set of employee voice scales that can be applied across different fields and used in both cross-sectional and longitudinal studies. This work not only holds scholarly significance but also offers novel measures for future researchers to engage in advanced quantitative assessment and analysis of voice pathways. We now turn to outline the two studies conducted to develop and validate these employee voice process scales.

4 | Materials & Methods

The remainder of this section is organised as follows: First, we provide an overview of the two studies conducted—namely, the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) study and the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) study. Next, we introduce each scale, grouped according to the conceptual framework. Each scale is presented in a structured format, including a definition of the scale, an explanation of its significance, an acknowledgement of similar scales, a summary of the scale's EFA results, and then the CFA for that scale group.

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5 | Study 1: Scale Development and Exploratory Factor Analysis

5.1 | Conceptual Framework

The initial stage of this study was to draw together a conceptual framework of employee voice as a process from the initial motivation of the individual to voice, consider the organisational contextual factors that provided (or limited) the opportunity to voice, and consider a range of potential outcomes of voice. We primarily drew upon the Employee Voice Pathways (EVP) Model by Townsend et al. (2020) to establish a process framework. Our framework (Figure 1) is a simplified version of the EVP Model, highlighting clustered linear stages of a voice pathway in the organisation.

The research team collated a range of existing voice scales (e.g., comfort with voicing) and other related scales (e.g., supportive voice climate) to generate 143 potential items. These items were grouped into themes labelled 'motivation', 'opportunity', 'contextual factors', and 'outcomes'. The themes were formed based on the pathways model, following an examination and discussion of each voice scale developed (i.e., the purpose of the scale and how voice 'moves' within the scale).

For example, Attempts to Voice at Work can be described as a component of the inception of voice behaviour in the workplace, similar to Voice Motivation and Comfort with Voicing. This led to the emergence of the themes of motivation and opportunity. We argue that these themes reinforce the notion of voice as a dynamic behaviour that evolves to reach an outcome. Furthermore, they allow us to classify where voice originates, how it progresses, what influences it, and where it ultimately leads. This conceptualisation enables us to view voice differently from authors such as Bashshur and Oc (2015) and Townsend et al. (2020).

5.2 | Contact With Expert Judges

In line with recommendations from Boateng et al. (2018), we consulted expert judges to evaluate each item on the scales for content relevance, representativeness, and technical quality. These expert judges were independent of the study and not involved in the development of the item pool. Boateng and colleagues recommend involving five to seven judges; accordingly, six judges were contacted, all of whom provided valuable feedback.

The six expert judges were selected based on their extensive academic and practitioner expertise in employment relations, human resource management, and labour economics, with a specific focus on employee voice and silence. They are highly regarded scholars, having authored widely cited publications in leading journals, and they brought diverse perspectives from disciplines such as economics, sociology, and industrial relations. Their research backgrounds span areas including employee voice, collective bargaining, employment regulation, and the impact of globalisation on employment. Based on the feedback provided by the expert judges, and after modifying certain items, we proceeded to launch two studies through Prolific.

5.3 | Sample

Based on the pre-screen options available from Prolific, the sample was filtered using the following criteria. Participants were required to be between the ages of 18 and 70 and employed full-time. We specifically selected participants from the UK, the US, and Canada, not only due to their likelihood of English fluency but also because their well-established labour market practices and advanced economies provide a relevant context for studying employee voice mechanisms (Freeman, Boxall, and Haynes 2007). These countries' organisational structures are particularly conducive to exploring the dynamics of employee voice, making them ideal for our study.

Additionally, participants were required to work in one of the following employment sectors: education and training, finance, government and public administration, hospitality and tourism, or retail. The organisations they worked for had to fall into one of the following categories: small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), large private enterprises, or publicly listed/traded enterprises (e.g., listed on a stock exchange). These types of organisations are more likely to have established voice mechanisms and avenues. We selected these sectors due to their varied reliance on formal and informal voice mechanisms, with each sector presenting unique opportunities for employee feedback to influence operations, compliance, or service quality. This diversity enabled us to cover a broad spectrum of voice contexts, which was essential for our scale development study.

According to Prolific, approximately 9000 participants met these criteria. For Study 1, we surveyed 250 participants. The gender distribution of the sample was evenly split, with 125 (50%) male and 125 (50%) female respondents. The average age of the participants was 36.27, with a median age of 34. In terms of

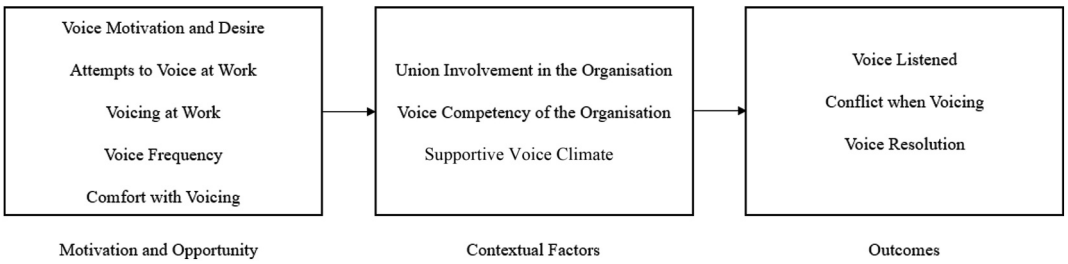


FIGURE 1 | Conceptual framework for Study 1.

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ethnicity, 23 (9.2%) of the respondents identified as Asian, 11 (4.4%) as Black, 12 (4.8%) as Mixed, and 204 (81.6%) as White.

5.4 | Data Collection

The online survey was designed using LimeSurvey and distributed, administered, and managed via Prolific. Participants who volunteered to take part were provided with a link to the survey and were compensated for their time through Prolific. The survey required participants to complete voice-related scales that assessed their organisation's commitment to voice, as well as their personal motivation, attempts, and frequency of voicing in the workplace. While demographic information such as work experience and educational level was not collected through the survey, details including age, gender, and ethnicity were obtained from Prolific's database. Participants were guaranteed anonymity throughout the study.

5.5 | Data Analysis

For all scales, the EFA was conducted using SPSS. When a scale demonstrated clear sub-dimensions, these are also detailed. Supporting Information S1 is available to view the complete results of the EFA for all scales.

6 | Study 2: Confirmatory Factor Analysis

6.1 | Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework (Figure 2) for the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was developed based on the findings from Study 1. Key differences include: Attempts to Voice at Work were split into two subfactors, Voicing Up and Freedom to Voice; Comfort with Voicing was divided into Safe to Voice and Voice Confidence; and Conflict when Voicing was separated into Fear of Voicing and Conflict from Voicing. We argue that the EFA facilitated the identification of these subfactors, enabling us to flesh out more specific dimensions of voice.

For the original 3-item Union Involvement in the Organisation (UIO) scale, an additional item was included for the CFA, resulting in a total of 4 items. The added item, 'In my organisation, unions are consulted when big decisions are made', enriches the scale's depth, content, and ability to measure an organisation's union involvement. Similarly, an additional item was included in the Conditional Voicing (CONV) scale, bringing it to 4 items for the CFA. This scale demonstrated a Cronbach's alpha of 0.751 and can be seen in Table 1. Unlike the Voice Frequency (VF) scale, the CONV scale uses a 5-point Likert-type response format (1 = 'strongly disagree', 5 = 'strongly agree').

6.2 | Sample

We applied the same sample criteria from Study 1 to Study 2; however, 450 participants were surveyed for Study 2, with none of the participants from Study 1 included again.

In this study, 213 participants (47.33%) identified as male, and 237 (52.67%) identified as female. The average age of respondents was 37.89, with a median age of 36. In terms of ethnicity, 59 participants (13.11%) identified as Asian, 14 (3.11%) as Black, 18 (4%) as Mixed, 13 (2.89%) as Other, and 346 (76.88%) as White.

6.3 | Data Collection

We applied the same data collection approach from Study 1 to Study 2.

6.4 | Confirmatory Factor Analysis

We performed the CFA using MPlus (Version 8.7). We also performed the CFA according to the groups illustrated by our conceptual framework for this study (Figure 2). Given the items we are using involve a 5-item scale and are unlikely to form a normal distribution we utilise robust Maximum Likelihood (MLR) method of estimation with robust standard errors as this is more appropriate with 5-item scales.

7 | Motivation and Opportunity Voice Scales

7.1 | Voice Motivation (VM) and Voice Desire (VD)

The Voice Motivation (VM) Scale was designed to measure an employee's motivation to express their voice at work, a key factor associated with job satisfaction (Siengthai and Pila-Ngarm 2016), commitment (Gruman and Saks 2014), and turnover intention, all of which influence workplace relationships and efficiency (Antoncic and Antoncic 2011). Understanding employee motivation to voice is crucial for addressing

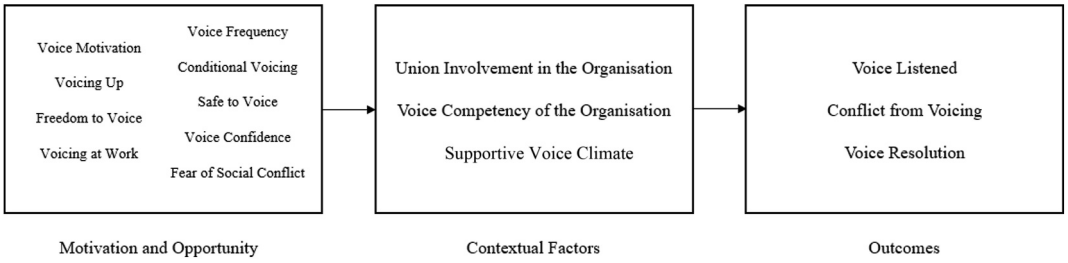


FIGURE 2 | Conceptual framework for Study 2.

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TABLE 1 | Motivation and opportunity voice scale items and loadings.

Motivation and opportunity voice scales		Factor loadings
Voice motivation (AVE = 0.581)	1. I am motivated to speak up at my workplace	0.785
	2. Speaking up is something that I am motivated to do	0.801
	3. I am not interested in speaking up at work	0.750
	4. If there are issues to be discussed, I generally like to stay quiet	0.817
	5. I am the kind of person who actively speaks up about issues at work	0.776
	6. I speak up at work because I want to not because I have to or am asked to	0.632
Voicing up (AVE = 0.703)	1. I make attempts to express my thoughts about issues in the workplace	0.837
	2. I make efforts to ensure my voice is heard in the workplace	0.870
	3. I freely express my views and concerns in the workplace	0.777
	4. I speak up at work	0.868
Freedom to voice (AVE = 0.643)	1. I never have problems finding a way to speak up to the organisation about anything that I'm concerned about	0.722
	2. I never feel like I am cut off when expressing my views or concerns	0.750
	3. I always have an opportunity to express my views or concerns in the workplace	0.842
	4. I can express my views and concerns freely at work	0.884
Voicing at work (AVE = 0.583)	1. I actively come forward with suggestions to improve organisational affairs	0.646
	2. I always speak up to ensure everything is in order	0.753
	3. I always speak up if I feel like something is wrong	0.831
	4. I always speak up to resolve a problem in the workplace	0.810
	5. I communicate my concerns with my manager if I feel something is wrong	0.781
	6. I speak to my manager if I have concerns about something	0.730
	7. I raise concerns with my manager about any organisational issue	0.783
Voice frequency (AVE = 0.747)	1. I speak up at work	0.888
	2. I make suggestions at work whenever I can	0.845
	3. I have a tendency to express my voice at work	0.901
	4. I come forward with suggestions	0.823
Conditional voicing (AVE = 0.452)[a]	1. I only speak up if my peers do too	0.661
	2. I express my voice only if there is an issue that concerns me	0.647
	3. Whether I speak up at work depends on my mood[a]	0.507
	4. I only speak up at work about issues if they affect me greatly	0.836
Safe to voice (AVE = 0.859)	1. I feel safe when I express my opinion at work	0.936
	2. I know I am safe when I express my concerns about issues at work	0.948
	3. My organisation is a safe space for me to speak up about what I genuinely think	0.897
Voice confidence (AVE = 0.721)	1. I never worry about anything when I speak to my manager	0.885
	2. I do not worry about what my manager may think of me if I speak up	0.814
	3. I believe I can speak up in the workplace without retribution	0.848
Fear of social conflict (AVE = 0.707)	1. I am worried about what others might think whenever I raise a suggestion	0.875
	2. I am afraid that what I think does not match what others think	0.886

(Continues)

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TABLE 1 | (Continued)

Motivation and opportunity voice scales	Factor loadings
3. I fear that speaking up might ruin my reputation or status in the workplace	0.778
4. I am scared that when I speak up, I might end up embarrassing myself in front of everyone	0.822

[a]The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for the Conditional Voicing scale is slightly below the recommended threshold, primarily due to one item (Item 3). When this item is removed, the AVE of the remaining three items (1, 2, and 4) improves to 0.518. This is above a reasonable threshold for scale validity. This suggests that the scale could either be retained as a 3 item scale or be further refined by adjusting the problematic item. A potential improvement to the scale if future researchers would prefer a 4 item scale could involve rewording the problematic item (3): 'Whether I speak up at work depends on my mood' (which is somewhat complex) to something more straightforward that also fits with the other 3 items better. A suggested wording would be: 'I only express my voice when I am in the right mood'. This adjustment would likely improve the scale and the AVE. This has not however been tested.

matters that affect working lives. This scale also provides insights into how employees perceive their organisation's voice competency and climate, as workplace emotions can significantly drive motivation (Barsade and Gibson 2007).

Initially, we developed 18 items for the VM scale and submitted them to expert judges for evaluation. After receiving and incorporating their feedback, the research team reduced the VM scale from 18 items to 8, ensuring it accurately represented this voice dimension. The scale uses a 5-point Likert response format (1 = 'strongly disagree', 5 = 'strongly agree').

While we acknowledge the scale by Ng et al. (2022), it is limited to measuring motivation for making high-quality suggestions. In contrast, the VM scale takes a broader approach, capturing an employee's motivation to express their voice on any work-related matter they feel compelled to address, not just high-quality suggestions. The VM scale was initially adapted from concepts in prior research (Ng et al. 2022) and subsequently refined through expert feedback and empirical testing to strengthen the voice motivation construct. For the EFA results, see Supporting Information S1: Table 1 in Appendix A.

We also examined a related construct, the Desire to Voice (DV) Scale. Initially, we measured motivation and desire as separate dimensions. The DV scale was designed to assess an employee's active and individual desire to speak up at work. Measuring this dimension of voice provides insight into how employee voice intention may be more strongly associated with individual perceptions, personalities, and feelings, rather than organisational processes and environments.

The DV scale consisted of four items, which used a 5-point Likert response format (1 = 'strongly disagree', 5 = 'strongly agree'). We acknowledge a similar scale developed by Van Dyne, Ang, and Botero (2003). However, their scale evaluates an employee's voice behaviour from a managerial or supervisory perspective. In contrast, our scale allows employees to self-reflect on their behaviour. For the EFA results, see Supporting Information S1: Table 2 in Appendix A.

However, feedback from our panel of experts and a consensus within the research team revealed significant conceptual overlap between some items from the VM and VD scales. As a result, we merged key items from both scales (e.g., 'I want to speak up at my workplace whenever I can' from the VM scale and 'I want to speak up to make significant changes at work' from the DV scale). Additionally, the items were further reduced, resulting in a smaller but more precise scale that accurately represents the construct. For the EFA results, see Supporting Information S1: Table 3 in Appendix A.

7.2 | Attempts to Voice at Work (AVW)

The Attempts to Voice at Work (AVW) Scale was designed to enable employees to self-evaluate their efforts to voice, a topic that has received limited academic attention. We argue that allowing employees to express their voice is crucial for achieving organisational outcomes such as identification, commitment, and satisfaction (Atouba, Carlson, and Lammers 2019; Gruman and Saks 2014). Successful voice attempts create a reinforcing cycle, where employees are more likely to speak up again, as voicing is regarded as a form of human dignity and a democratic right (Gorden 1988). Measuring this dimension also provides insights into related voice outcomes, as voicing attempts are influenced by a supportive voice climate and the organisation's competency in handling employee voice. If employees perceive the organisation as unsafe or unresponsive, they may refrain from voicing altogether.

The AVW scale initially comprised 14 items during the planning phase, which was later reduced to 8 items for the EFA based on expert feedback. Influenced by Matsunaga's (2015) work on employee voice communication, the scale was adapted to specifically measure employees' active efforts to voice concerns and ideas in the workplace. Matsunaga's original scale focused on a preparatory and passive approach to voicing (e.g., 'I would get ready...' and 'I would wait until...'), whereas this adaptation aimed to capture active attempts and the freedom to express views. The EFA revealed two distinct factors: 'Voicing Up,' which measures employees' attempts to express thoughts, and 'Freedom to Voice,' which assesses their freedom to voice concerns. The EFA explained 78.50% of the total variance, with reliability coefficients of $\alpha = 0.936$ for Voicing Up and $\alpha = 0.855$ for Freedom to Voice. See Supporting Information S1: Appendix B for the EFA results.

7.3 | Voicing at Work (VW)

The Voicing at Work (VW) Scale was designed to measure the primary intent behind why an employee speaks up at work. To

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fully benefit from employee voice, it is essential to understand the goals and contexts that encourage voicing. This scale helps identify situations that promote employee voice and measures employees' beliefs about when it is appropriate to speak up. In doing so, it provides insights into voice intentions and the perceived opportunities to express concerns or suggestions. While improving organisational affairs may not always align with employees' best interests, the VW scale captures employees' efforts to voice concerns regardless of whether their interests align with those of the organisation. Additionally, the VW scale, when used in conjunction with other scales, has the potential to differentiate between organisational-focused interests, shared interests, and employee-focused interests.

The VW Scale was developed by examining and adapting elements from Liu, Zhu, and Yang's (2010) scale, which focused on speaking up to supervisors and speaking out to colleagues within a constructive OB framework. Our adaptation broadened the concept to encompass a wider range of voicing contexts, not limited to constructive outcomes. The VW scale originally comprised 8 items, using a 5-point Likert response format (1 = 'strongly disagree', 5 = 'strongly agree').

The scale was subsequently refined based on EFA results. Items that did not contribute significantly to the scale's reliability or content depth were removed, leading to a final 7-item version. The EFA revealed a single factor explaining 58.18% of the total variance in the original scale, with the refined version explaining 63.97% of the variance. The final version demonstrated strong reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.905. For the EFA results, see Supporting Information S1: Appendix C.

7.4 | Voice Frequency (VF)

The Voice Frequency (VF) Scale was designed to measure how often an employee expresses their voice in the workplace. It is important for organisations to assess employees' self-evaluation of their voice frequency, as this dimension is closely tied to other aspects of voice, such as motivation, desire, and the organisation's voice competency. For instance, a motivated employee is more likely to voice frequently compared to an unmotivated one.

The VF Scale, initially inspired by Maynes and Podsakoff (2014) and Liu, Zhu, and Yang (2010), was adapted to measure the general frequency of voice expressions in the workplace, expanding its scope beyond constructive suggestions or organisational improvement. Based on expert feedback and empirical analysis, the scale was refined and reduced from 12 items to 4 core items, improving its focus and reliability. Using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = 'never', 5 = 'always'), the EFA revealed two factors: 'Voice Frequency,' measuring the general frequency of voice expression, and 'Conditional Voicing' (CONV), which examines conditions influencing voice frequency. The VF scale explained 80.58% of the variance with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.933. The CONV subfactor, though insufficient to form a standalone scale, was reworked into a 4-item measure for the CFA. For the EFA results, see Supporting Information S1: Appendix D.

7.5 | Comfort With Voicing (CWV)

The Comfort with Voicing (CWV) Scale was designed to measure an employee's psychological comfort with voicing in the workplace. The CWV scale aims to examine an employee's perception of whether it is safe to speak up based on various workplace aspects. Different aspects of what is important to an employee when considering exhibiting voice behaviour are measured, including: what they think individually (i.e., their personal perceptions of their comfort with speaking up), perceptions of what co-workers think, perceptions of what their managers think, and what employees think of their organisation (i.e., employees' perceptions of the organisation as a whole, specifically how they view the organisation's overall openness to voice and the extent to which the organisational culture encourages speaking up without fear of retribution). We argue that this underlying dimension of employee voice has links to motivation, frequency, desire, and attempts to voice at work and therefore should be addressed and understood.

The CWV Scale, firstly inspired by Edmondson's (1999) psychological safety scale and Eisenberger et al.'s (1986) perceived organisational support scale, was adapted to focus specifically on an employee's comfort with voicing in the workplace, distinguishing it from broader concepts of psychological safety and support. This adaptation involved tailoring items to specifically measure aspects such as safety and confidence in voicing. Following expert feedback and empirical analysis, the scale was amended to refine its focus, resulting in a reduction from 20 initial items to 6 across two sub-dimensions. This amendment enhanced the scale's clarity and conceptual depth. The EFA revealed two sub-dimensions: 'Safe to Voice' and 'Voice Confidence', which explained 73.66% of the total variance. The final 6-item scale showed strong reliability, as evidenced by the high Cronbach alphas of 0.931 for 'Safe to Voice' and 0.866 for 'Voice Confidence'. Participants could respond to the scale with (1 = 'strongly disagree', 5 = 'strongly agree'). See Supporting Information S1: Appendix E for the EFA results.

8 | CFA: Motivation and Opportunity Voice Scales

The Motivation and Opportunity group of measures (Figure 2—see Table 1 for the items) contained the following groups of multi-item scales: Voice Motivation (VM - 6 items), Voicing Up (VU - 4 items), Freedom to Voice (FTV - 4 items), Voicing at Work (VW - 7 items), Voice Frequency (VF - 4 items), Conditional Voicing (CONV - 4 items), Safe to Voice (STV - 3 items), Voice Confidence (VCON - 3 items), and Fear of Social Conflict (FSC - 4 items). This group of scales reported the following CFA results: Chi square = 12,577.689, DF = 741, RMSEA = 0.067, CFI = 0.885, TLI = 0.872, SRMR = 0.065, Chi square/DF = 16.974. The standardised factor loading values of the 6 items in the VM scale ranged from 0.632 to 0.817; the 4 items in the VU scale ranged from 0.777 to 0.870; the items in the FTV scale ranged from 0.722 to 0.884; the 7 items in the VW scale ranged from 0.646 to 0.831; the 4 items in the VF scale ranged from 0.823 to 0.901; the 4 items in the CONV scale ranged from 0.507 to 0.836; the 3 items in the STV scale ranged from 0.897 to 0.948; the 3 items in the VCON scale ranged from 0.809 to 0.883;

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and the 4 items in the FSC scale ranged from 0.778 to 0.822. We can infer that each scale and each measurement item (observed variable) in the Motivation and Opportunity group has a good explanatory power for its corresponding dimension (latent variable).

9 | Contextual Factors Voice Scales

9.1 | Union Involvement in the Organisation (UIO)

The Union Involvement in the Organisation (UIO) Scale was developed to assess employees' perceptions of union presence and effectiveness within their organisations. The scale was informed by previously validated measures, including Shore et al.'s (1994) perceived union support scale, Mellor et al.'s (1999) perceived union effectiveness scale, and adaptations from Eisenberger et al.'s (1986) perceived organisational support scale, with organisational references adjusted to union contexts. This adaptation focused on specifically measuring the impact of union involvement on organisational outcomes.

A key role of unions is to resolve workplace issues by providing a platform for employee voice and acting as representatives during bargaining negotiations. Collective employee voice through unions contributes to productivity, workplace safety, and employment rates (Bryson 2004; Mellor, Barnes-Farrell, and Stanton 1999; Wilkinson et al. 2014). Developing a scale to measure this type of employee voice highlights the contextual factors in the workplace that facilitate and process voice.

The UIO scale used a 5-point Likert-type format (1 = 'strongly disagree', 5 = 'strongly agree') and underwent EFA, which revealed a single factor explaining 80.52% of the total variance. The 4-item scale demonstrated excellent reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.946. For the EFA results, see Supporting Information S1: Appendix F.

9.2 | Voice Competency of the Organisation (VCO)

The Voice Competency of the Organisation (VCO) Scale was designed to evaluate how effectively employees believe their organisation manages employee voice, a dimension that has received little attention in existing literature. While related scales assess general organisational competency or manager support, they do not specifically address how voice is handled (e.g., Bryson, Charlwood, and Forth 2006). We consider manager support an aspect of organisational competency because it fosters open communication, builds trust, and enhances employee engagement (Holland, Cooper, and Sheehan 2017). Understanding how employees perceive voice management is crucial for examining voice dynamics in the workplace. The VCO scale plays a critical role in identifying opportunities for voice, which can lead to key outcomes such as the desire to voice, motivation to voice, and voice frequency. Organisations that effectively consider and incorporate employee voice are likely to see increased voice behaviour from their employees.

Initially, the VCO scale comprised 17 items. It was adapted from general organisational competency measures and specific elements from Bryson, Charlwood, and Forth (2006). Based on expert feedback aimed at achieving parsimony, the scale was refined to focus on 4 core items that effectively capture the organisation's competence in managing voice. These modifications clarified the scale's focus and ensured its relevance and precision in measuring the intended constructs. Unlike other measures, our scale evaluates the inclusion and effectiveness of voice mechanisms and avenues implemented by organisations, which are factors we argue are essential for effectively expressing voice behaviour from an employee perspective.

The VCO scale used a 5-point Likert-type format (1 = 'strongly disagree', 5 = 'strongly agree') and underwent EFA, which revealed a single factor explaining 81.42% of the total variance. The scale demonstrated excellent reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.923. For the EFA results, see Supporting Information S1: Appendix G.

9.3 | Supportive Voice Climate (SVC)

The Supportive Voice Climate (SVC) Scale was designed to measure employees' perceptions of their organisation's voice environment. Assessing how employees feel their voices are treated at work is crucial, as this perception significantly influences their decision to speak up (Morrison 2023). For example, if an employee strongly agrees that their organisation values their input, they are more likely to express their voice. Conversely, if they disagree, they may refrain from voicing concerns, leading to silence. A workplace that encourages and supports voice fosters more frequent and open employee voice behaviour.

Among the 143 items submitted to expert judges, 18 items were related to the supportive voice climate. These items were based on a review of the voice literature and existing voice scales. The SVC scale was developed using elements from existing scales, including Van Dyne and LePine's (1998) employee voice scale, which conceptualises voice as an extra-role behaviour. Additionally, insights from Frazier and Bowler (2015) informed the focus on organisational environments that support or discourage voice. This scale was specifically adapted to measure organisational climate rather than individual extra-role voice behaviour, capturing the context in which employee voice is either encouraged or stifled.

Following feedback from expert judges, the scale was refined for parsimony, reducing the initial 18 items to 8 items for the EFA. The 8-item scale uses a 5-point Likert-type format (1 = 'strongly disagree', 5 = 'strongly agree'). The EFA revealed a single factor that accounted for 75.36% of the total variance. The SVC scale demonstrated exceptional reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.952, confirming its robust ability to capture the supportive voice environment within organisations. For the EFA results, see Supporting Information S1: Appendix H.

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10 | CFA: Contextual Factors Voice Scales

The Contextual Factors group (Figure 2—see items in Table 2) contained the following scales: Union Involvement in the Organisation (UIO - 4 items), Voice Competency of the Organisation (VCO - 4 items), and Supportive Voice Climate (SVC - 8 items). This group of scales reported the following CFA results: Chi square = 4879.936, DF = 120, RMSEA = 0.087, CFI = 0.928, TLI = 0.914, SRMR = 0.038, Chi square/DF = 40.666. The standardised factor loading values of the 4 items in the UIO scale ranged from 0.798 to 0.943; the 4 items in the VCO scale ranged from 0.779 to 0.877; and the 8 items in the SVC scale ranged from 0.694 to 0.877. As such, we can infer that each scale and each measurement item (observed variable) in the contextual factors group has a good explanatory power for its corresponding dimension (latent variable).

11 | Outcomes Voice Scales

11.1 | Voice Listened (VL)

The Voice Listened (VL) Scale was designed to measure employees' perceptions of how their voice is listened to by their manager. It focuses on managerial responsibilities in receiving, handling, and processing employee voice from the employee's perspective. This scale provides valuable insights into how employees view their manager's approach to facilitating voice within the organisation. Examining this dimension is important, as it highlights variations in managerial responsiveness, which can be linked to other voice-related scales, such as the Voice Competency of the Organisation (VCO) scale.

Initially developed with 6 items, the VL scale was tailored to assess managerial responsiveness to employee voice. Based on

TABLE 2 | Contextual factors voice scale items and loadings.

Contextual factors voice scales		Factor loadings
Union involvement in the organisation (AVE = 0.762)	1. My organisation encourages union involvement in relevant workplace matters	0.801
	2. The communication between union/staff representative groups and my organisation is effective	0.939
	3. Consultation between union and management in my organisation is effective	0.943
	4. In my organisation, unions are consulted when big decisions are made	0.798
Voice competency of the organisation (AVE = 0.694)	1. My organisation has introduced systems that help employees' views be heard effectively	0.849
	2. My organisation has policies that help ensure that when employees have a problem there is a way that these can get heard	0.825
	3. My organisation makes effective use of feedback from its employees	0.779
	4. My organisation gives lots of opportunities for employees to speak up and give feedback	0.877
Supportive voice climate (AVE = 0.691)	1. Employees are encouraged to speak up and highlight management decisions that they disagree with or consider problematic	0.829
	2. Employees are encouraged to raise issues with management decisions at work	0.821
	3. Employees are in a supportive environment where they can freely express their voice	0.843
	4. Employees are encouraged to speak up if they have concerns or issues about organisational affairs	0.877
	5. Employees have easy-to-access forums to convey their opinions or thoughts about workplace issues	0.694
	6. Employees are given the opportunity to speak up about issues that concern them	0.831
	7. Employees are in an environment where their voices are taken into consideration	0.874
	8. My organisation encourages employees to have their say about things that matter to them	0.869

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expert feedback aimed at enhancing the scale's focus and parsimony, it was refined to include 4 items that most accurately represent the construct. The scale uses a 5-point Likert-type format (1 = 'strongly disagree', 5 = 'strongly agree'). An example item is: 'If I raise concerns to my manager, they always listen.'

The EFA for the VL scale revealed a single factor that explained 82.19% of the total variance. The scale demonstrated excellent reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.927, indicating its effectiveness in capturing employees' perceptions of being listened to. For the EFA results, see Supporting Information S1: Appendix I.

11.2 | Conflict When Voicing (CNV)

The Conflict when Voicing (CNV) Scale was designed to measure an employee's perspective about the potential conflicts that may arise should they express their voice in the workplace. While earlier research often emphasised a consistently negative relationship between conflict and trust, recent studies suggest that the relationship is more nuanced. Specifically, managing conflict cooperatively can strengthen trust, as individuals with cooperative goals are more likely to foster open-minded discussions that lead to constructive resolutions (Tjosvold, Wan, and Tang 2016). Moreover, employee voice is linked to successful dispute resolution, which can reduce employees' intentions to quit (Van Gramberg et al. 2020), and trust plays a pivotal role in enabling voice behaviours that support positive conflict outcomes (Prouska et al. 2024). These findings suggest that trust and conflict can reinforce each other under certain conditions, emphasising the importance of employee voice and cooperative conflict management in enhancing trust. In a related matter, literature also highlights the potential for constructive conflict, where appropriately managed disagreements, can actually enhance trust and collaborative efforts within teams (Balliet and Van Lenge 2013; Yin et al. 2022). Such cooperative conflict management not only maintains but can improve relationship quality, impacting both trust and voice behaviour within organisations.

Moreover, while our CNV scale items measure potential risks of voicing concerns, such as reputational damage or interpersonal tension, effective conflict management strategies are important. When properly managed, such conflicts can transform into opportunities for improving trust and collaboration. For instance, training managers to handle voiced concerns constructively can reduce employee fears and encourage open communication, thus fostering a supportive and engaging work environment.

The CNV scale was developed with 14 items inspired by related scales from Brinsfield (2013), who explored various aspects of silence, and Matsunaga (2015), who examined peer-mediated communication. However, our focus is specifically on the fear of social conflict and potential negative outcomes from voicing concerns, such as 'I am worried about what others might think whenever I raise a suggestion' and 'I do not express my voice because I cannot handle the trouble it would cause'. After receiving feedback from expert judges, the scale was refined and reduced to 10 items to enhance its focus and applicability. The scale can be responded with (1 = 'strongly disagree', 5 = 'strongly agree'). The CNV Scale underwent EFA which revealed two factors: 'Conflict from Voicing' and 'Fear of Social Conflict,' explaining 72.87% of the total variance. The scale showed strong reliability, with Cronbach's alphas of 0.901 for 'Conflict from Voicing' and 0.895 for 'Fear of Social Conflict.' See Supporting Information S1: Appendix J for the EFA results.

11.3 | Voice Resolution (VR)

The Voice Resolution (VR) Scale was designed to measure employees' perspectives on what happens after they express their voice, specifically focusing on how management takes action to resolve the issues raised. This scale evaluates the effectiveness of management in handling voice behaviour. An employee's perception of voice outcomes is closely linked to their motivation, desire, and frequency to voice, making it a critical area of investigation (Detert and Burris 2007; Morrison 2023; Tangirala and Ramanujam 2012). For instance, if managers respond effectively, employees are more likely to continue voicing their concerns. Additionally, this scale is strongly connected to contextual voice factors, such as the Voice Competency of the Organisation (VCO) and the Supportive Voice Climate (SVC).

The VR scale was influenced by the concepts of supervisor support from Rhoades et al.'s (2001) and Greenhaus et al.'s (1990) supervisory support scales. However, it was specifically tailored to measure the resolution of issues raised by employees, focusing on managerial responses to voice rather than general supervisory support. The VR scale comprised 4 items, using a 5-point Likert-type format (1 = 'strongly disagree', 5 = 'strongly agree'). An example item is: 'If I raise concerns to my manager, they generally respond well.'

The EFA revealed a single factor that explained 85.16% of the total variance. The scale demonstrated excellent reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.941, indicating its effectiveness in capturing employees' perceptions of how management resolves raised issues. For the EFA results, see Supporting Information S1: Appendix K.

To distinguish between employers' attitudinal and behavioural responses, it is important to note that items such as 'If I raise concerns to my manager, they generally respond well' capture an employer's positive attitude towards employee voice. However, a positive attitudinal response does not necessarily equate to taking action on employees' ideas or recommendations. While our items indicate that managers listen to and welcome voice, the VR scale also measures the behavioural response—whether management takes tangible steps to address employees' concerns. This dual focus ensures the scale provides a comprehensive measure of voice resolution, encompassing both perceived support and the actual implementation of employees' suggestions.

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12 | CFA: Outcomes Voice Scales

The outcomes group (Figure 2—see items in Table 3) contained the following scales: Voice Listened (VL - 4 items), Conflicts from Voicing (CFV - 6 items), and Voice Resolution (VR - 4 items). This group of scales reported the following CFA results: Chi square = 3833.884, DF = 91, RMSEA = 0.081, CFI = 0.942, TLI = 0.929, SRMR = 0.039, Chi square/DF = 42.130. The standardised factor loading values of the 4 items in the VL scale ranged from 0.799 to 0.882; the 6 items in the CFV scale ranged from 0.659 to 0.857; and the 4 items in the VR scale ranged from 0.851 to 0.907. Based on the CFA, we can again infer that each scale and each measurement item (observed variable) in the outcomes group has a good explanatory power for its corresponding dimension (latent variable).

13 | Factor Structure Testing Across Country Sub Samples

As the sample utilised for the CFA testing included sub samples from three countries, US, UK, and Canada, we carried out invariance testing for each set of CFA to ensure the factors structures were robust across the subset of country responses. This involves setting the factor structures and factor loadings as equal/invariant across the three country samples and comparing the fit of these CFA structures with a model that allows the factor loadings to vary across the countries. With each of the CFA sets tested in the study, setting the factor loadings as invariant across the countries did not reduce the fit of the factor structures significantly. With the first CFA (motivation and opportunity) the test of differences which tests an invariant set of assumptions with factor loadings (across countries) versus the variant model, was not significant (Chi diff = 52.79, DF diff = 60, $p = 0.734$), this was also the case for the second set of CFA, contextual factors (Chi diff = 37.24, DF diff = 26, $p = 0.071$), and the third set, outcomes of voice (Chi diff = 20.41, DF diff = 22, $p = 0.558$). Thus, the measures were shown to be invariant across the country sub samples, rendering further support for the measures.

13.1 | Dependent Variables

We used affective commitment (AC), job satisfaction (JS), and turnover intention (TI) as our dependent variables, as these are well-established constructs that have been widely used in employee voice research. Affective commitment and job satisfaction are consistently negatively associated with turnover intention in the literature. Well-being was also included as a dependent variable to assess an employee's state of mind regarding their workplace at the time of the research.

Additionally, we included employee entitlement beliefs (EEB) as a dependent variable due to its potential connection with voicing at work—whether through complaints, suggestions, or raising concerns—and the belief that the workplace owes the employee something (entitlement). Previous research has demonstrated relationships between workplace attitudes, such as affective commitment, job satisfaction, and turnover intention, and employee entitlement (e.g., Harvey and Harris 2010).

Affective commitment was measured using Allen and Meyer's (1990) scale. Job satisfaction was measured with Johlke and Duhan's (2000) scale. Turnover intention was assessed using Meyer et al.'s (1993) scale. Well-being was measured with Warr's (1990) scale, while employee entitlement beliefs were assessed using Westerlaken et al.'s (2017) scale.

TABLE 3 | Outcomes of voice scale items and loadings.

Outcomes of voice scales		Factor loadings
Voice listened (AVE = 0.730)	1. If I raise concerns to my manager, they always listen	0.799
	2. If I raise concerns to my manager, they always respond	0.882
	3. If I raise concerns to my manager, I'm always given an answer	0.875
	4. If I speak up to management, I am always given a response	0.861
Conflict from voicing (AVE = 0.639)	1. Speaking up at my workplace might cause conflict in the workplace	0.659
	2. People don't speak up at work because they tend to get in trouble	0.757
	3. Speaking up at work just causes problems	0.857
	4. Expressing your views at my work place is more trouble than it is worth	0.850
	5. I do not express my voice because I cannot handle the trouble it would cause	0.809
	6. I think speaking up would cause tension at my workplace	0.849
Voice resolution (AVE = 0.789)	1. If I raise concerns to my manager, they generally get resolved satisfactorily	0.890
	2. If I raise concerns to my manager, I tend to get given an answer that I am happy with	0.851
	3. If I raise concerns to my manager, they generally respond well	0.906
	4. My manager does a good job of responding to any concerns I raise	0.907

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Silence (SIL) was also included as a dependent variable, as it is closely linked to employee voice. Silence was measured using Detert and Edmondson's (2011) scale. Donaghey et al. (2011) highlight that silence can serve as a form of self-protection in hierarchical workplace environments. Additionally, Hickland et al. (2020) discuss the concept of silencing, where organisational structures and practices actively suppress employee voice, maintaining managerial control and reducing conflict.

By integrating these employment relations (ER) perspectives, we provide a more nuanced understanding of silence in the workplace. This approach recognises that silence is not merely the absence of voice but can also be a deliberate strategy shaped by organisational dynamics and power relations. Including employee entitlement beliefs further allows us to explore how perceptions of entitlement may influence an employee's likelihood to engage in voice behaviours or remain silent.

The correlation table (Table 4) presents findings that align with expectations based on the psychometric results of each scale, findings consistently supported in the literature, and some unexpected results.

Firstly, all our voice scales demonstrated significant positive correlations with each other, as anticipated, since each scale represents a component of employee voice. However, the subfactors Fear of Voicing and Conflict from Voicing (part of the Conflict when Voicing scale) were exceptions, as they did not exhibit significant positive correlations with the other voice scales. Our results show a strong and significant relationship between the other voice scales, which is evident in Table 4. This highlights the interconnectedness of voice behaviours measured by scales such as the Supportive Voice Climate scale, which aims to encourage voice. Similarly, silence exhibited a significant negative correlation with the voice scales, as expected, and a significant positive correlation with Conflict When Voicing. These findings reinforce the theoretical link between silence and conflict in voicing situations (Kusum and Yadav 2024).

Our voice scales that demonstrated the strongest correlations with well-being were Voice Resolution and Safe to Voice. This finding suggests two key factors that may significantly influence well-being. Firstly, the steps that management takes to resolve issues raised by employees appear particularly important for well-being. Previous research indicates that leaders' receptivity to employee voice—such as their responsiveness to concerns raised by employees—significantly impacts voice behaviour (e.g., Janssen and Gao 2015). Secondly, an employee's perception of how safe it is to speak up at work seems to play a critical role in well-being (Duan et al. 2020). This aligns with the Safe to Voice scale, which measures how worry-free and stress-free employees feel about voicing at work. Similarly, the Well-Being scale (Warr 1990) measures job-related affective well-being and mental health, assessing factors such as how often one's job makes them feel tense, uneasy, or worried. Employees who rate their organisation highly on safety to voice are likely to report higher levels of well-being, as they perceive their work environment as safe for expressing voice without fear of retribution. Morrison (2014) highlighted that an employee's decision to voice largely depends on their perceptions of whether it is safe and worthwhile or harmful and meaningless to do so, depending on the context. This further underscores the connection between perceived safety to voice and employee well-being.

Supportive Voice Climate (SVC) and Voice Resolution (VR) are the two voice scales with the strongest correlations with affective commitment. This suggests that the organisational climate in which employees work significantly influences their emotional attachment to the organisation (Hughes et al. 2008). Research indicates that organisational leaders play a pivotal role in fostering employee voice by demonstrating openness and responsiveness, thereby creating a safe environment that encourages voice (Detert and Burris 2007). By establishing structured voice mechanisms and cultivating a culture of trust and psychological safety, leaders institutionalise and nurture voice behaviours. These actions enhance the voice climate and model desired behaviours (Edmondson 1999; Morrison 2011; Walumbwa and Schaubroeck 2009). Furthermore, by providing training, leaders equip employees with the necessary skills to engage in voice behaviours, thereby strengthening the organisation's capacity for voice (Nembhard and Edmondson 2006). Empirical evidence also demonstrates that leaders significantly influence the voice climate (Frazier and Bowler 2015). This finding further suggests that when organisations actively endorse, embrace, and resolve employee voice, they foster a sense of belonging in the workplace, which explains the strong correlations with affective commitment. Employees are likely to feel a stronger sense of belonging when their work environment aligns with what they consider appropriate and meaningful. Moreover, integrity, as defined in Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman's (1995) Integrative Model, helps build trust by ensuring consistency between an organisation's actions and its stated values. When employees perceive this alignment, their sense of belonging and commitment naturally improves, reinforcing their engagement and trust in organisational leadership.

Voice Resolution (VR) is the scale with the strongest correlation with turnover intention, highlighting its critical role in addressing withdrawal cognitions from a voice perspective. This finding emphasises the importance of how organisations manage and resolve employee voice, as unresolved voice can contribute to employees' intentions to leave. Among the voice scales, VR consistently demonstrates the strongest correlations with all the outcomes, underscoring its significance. This result reinforces the notion that resolving employee voice is essential for fostering positive organisational outcomes. Addressing employee concerns effectively not only reduces turnover intention but also strengthens other aspects of employee engagement and commitment (Rafiq et al. 2019; Shuck, Reio, and Rocco 2011).

It is worth noting that the key voice scales correlating with silence are Voice Motivation and Voicing at Work, both showing negative correlations. Silence is not merely the absence of voice but a deliberate decision not to speak up, even when an employee has important information to share, such as a problem, proposal, or concern (Milliken, Morrison, and Hewlin 2003). This aligns with the finding that Voice Motivation and Voicing at Work, while conceptually distinct, are negatively associated with silence. The former reflects an employee's willingness and desire to speak up, while the latter captures their voice intentions or belief in their ability to voice.

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TABLE 4 | Means, standard deviations, and correlations for the CFA.

	Mean	SD	Age	Gender	VM	VU	FTV	VAW	VF	CONV	STV	VCON	UIO	VCO	SVC	VL	FSC	CFV	VR	JS	TI	AC	WB	EEB	SIL
Age	37.70	10.26	1	0.03	−0.02	−0.06	−0.11*	−0.02	−0.02	−0.07	−0.12**	−0.08	−0.04	−0.01	−0.07	−0.09	−0.11*	0.05	−0.09	0.19**	−0.14**	−0.00	0.10*	−0.22**	−0.03
Gender	1.54	0.51		1	0.00	0.00	−0.10*	−0.04	0.01	−0.02	−0.04	−0.07	0.02	−0.05	−0.06	−0.04	0.03	0.02	−0.01	0.15**	−0.07	0.04	−0.04	−0.12**	0.03
VM	3.33	0.83			1	0.77**	0.46**	0.75**	0.80**	−0.54**	0.38**	0.41**	0.15**	0.33**	0.37**	0.34**	−0.53**	−0.52**	0.36**	0.41**	−0.22**	0.22**	0.33**	0.11*	−0.62**
VU	3.54	0.89				1	0.51**	0.78**	0.77**	−0.48**	0.41**	0.39**	0.17**	0.33**	0.40**	0.30**	−0.40**	−0.46**	0.32**	0.38**	−0.20**	0.27**	0.29**	0.16**	−0.56**
FTV	3.31	0.89					1	0.55**	0.46**	−0.28**	0.72**	0.67**	0.37**	0.67**	0.73**	0.65**	−0.32**	−0.64**	0.64**	0.39**	−0.45**	0.49**	0.52**	0.12**	−0.51**
VAW	3.57	0.78						1	0.78**	−0.41**	0.44**	0.47**	0.16**	0.39**	0.43**	0.43**	−0.40**	−0.49**	0.42**	0.37**	−0.22**	0.27**	0.36**	0.18**	−0.60**
VF	3.33	0.82							1	−0.46**	0.37**	0.37**	0.13**	0.32**	0.39**	0.35**	−0.41**	−0.43**	0.35**	0.37**	−0.20**	0.26**	0.30**	0.22**	−0.56**
CONV	3.03	0.78								1	−0.17**	−0.21**	−0.04	−0.20**	−0.22**	−0.13**	0.48**	0.33**	−0.12*	−0.19**	0.16**	−0.11*	−0.21**	0.11*	0.38**
STV	3.54	1.01									1	0.76**	0.38**	0.63**	0.71**	0.66**	−0.31**	−0.71**	0.68**	0.39**	−0.46**	0.48**	0.55**	0.08	−0.53**
VCON	3.27	1.04										1	0.29**	0.51**	0.59**	0.65**	−0.41**	−0.69**	0.65**	0.34**	−0.41**	0.38**	0.52**	0.13**	−0.56**
UIO	2.69	1.08											1	0.39**	0.38**	0.33**	−0.07	−0.23**	0.33**	0.29**	−0.29**	0.32**	0.27**	0.02	−0.21**
VCO	3.24	0.98												1	0.85**	0.55**	−0.19**	−0.49**	0.62**	0.35**	−0.45**	0.50**	0.46**	0.10*	−0.41**
SVC	3.28	0.91													1	0.63**	−0.22**	−0.58**	0.65**	0.38**	−0.49**	0.53**	0.53**	0.12*	−0.43**
VL	3.57	0.92														1	−0.17**	−0.52**	0.82**	0.38**	−0.40**	0.42**	0.49**	0.12**	−0.40**
FSC	2.77	1.05															1	0.52**	−0.16**	−0.21**	0.16**	−0.05	−0.30**	0.01	0.52**
CFV	2.55	0.92																1	−0.56**	−0.41**	0.44**	−0.35**	−0.52**	0.06	0.62**
VR	3.42	0.94																	1	0.45**	−0.50**	0.53**	0.55**	0.08	−0.43**
JS	4.50	1.25																		1	−0.57**	0.57**	0.55**	−0.01	−0.40**
TI	3.62	2.08																			1	−0.61**	−0.65**	0.14**	0.37**
AC	4.11	1.22																				1	0.51**	0.09	−0.31**
WB	3.55	0.94																					1	0.02	−0.45**
EEB	3.29	0.70																						1	0.01
SIL	2.17	0.92																							1

Note: $N = 450$.
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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Of particular interest is the finding that Conflict from Voicing has a strong positive correlation with silence. This suggests that conflict may be a key mechanism driving employees to remain silent at work. Fear of conflict or negative consequences when voicing concerns may discourage employees from speaking up, reinforcing silence (Morrison 2014). Ultimately, while many of the voice scales exhibit similar magnitudes of relationships with the dependent variables, the strength and direction of these correlations vary. These variations help illuminate the implications of different dimensions of voice in the workplace, offering insights into how specific features of voice behaviours and barriers influence organisational dynamics.

Employee entitlement beliefs demonstrated positive correlations with several of our voice scales, including Voice Motivation, Voicing Up, Freedom to Voice, Voicing at Work, Voice Frequency, Conditional Voicing, Voice Competency of the Organisation, Supportive Voice Climate, and Voice Listened. This is a noteworthy finding, as entitlement is often associated with high levels of confidence, which may enable individuals with elevated entitlement to be more influential and persuasive (Kipnis and Lane 1962). Consequently, these individuals may feel more motivated to voice more frequently in the workplace.

Another explanation for the positive relationship between entitlement and the aforementioned voice scales is that entitled employees, who believe life should align with their personal ideologies (Campbell et al. 2004), may use voice behaviour as a means to realise this belief. In simple terms, entitlement reflects a strong belief that one deserves more desirable rewards and preferential treatment compared to others (O'Leary-Kelly, Rosen, and Hochwarter 2017). This connection makes sense, as dissatisfaction (a hallmark of entitlement) may drive employees to speak up to potentially influence or enact changes in their favour. Entitled employees may use voice as a channel to express dissatisfaction and seek change. However, it is also possible that silence may occur when employees perceive that voicing concerns will not lead to favourable outcomes.

14 | Discussion

The aim of this study is to make a significant contribution to the voice literature by adopting an ER/IR perspective to develop, test, and validate key components of employee voice that have received limited academic attention. These components were measured in workplace settings by surveying full-time employees through an online platform.

Our study produced 15 voice scales: Voice Motivation, Voicing Up, Freedom to Voice, Voicing at Work, Voice Frequency, Conditional Voicing, Safe to Voice, Voice Confidence, Union Involvement in the Organisation, Voice Competency of the Organisation, Supportive Voice Climate, Voice Listened, Fear of Voicing, Conflict from Voicing, and Voice Resolution. While some of these scales bear similarities to other well-known constructs, they are designed with distinct purposes. For example, Comfort with Voicing shares similarities with Edmondson's (1999) concept of team psychological safety. However, our scale is specifically tailored to explore the potential consequences of expressing employee voice behaviours.

This study expands the voice literature by developing and validating scales that capture diverse aspects of employee voice in the workplace. These scales have broad applicability and can be administered in various organisational contexts. Across the 15 scales, comprising a total of 69 items, the results demonstrate acceptable reliability levels. Additionally, we have discussed and clarified the importance and distinctions between our scales and previously validated constructs in the field of voice research.

Our scales go beyond measuring individual-focused attitudes to evaluate the organisational structures and contexts that facilitate or inhibit such attitudes (e.g., Voice Confidence and Voice Listened scales). This approach is central to ER as it highlights power dynamics and incorporates formal mechanisms such as unions and collective bargaining. This broader perspective is equally important for HRM, where there is interest in evaluating formal processes alongside informal ones.

The scales in this study provide tools to measure and assess the effectiveness of voice mechanisms. For instance, the Union Involvement in the Organisation scale for ER offers insights into how effectively unions are integrated into organisational processes. Practical implications of these findings are explored later in this section. By integrating ER and OB elements, our scales capture both the act of voicing and the organisational response, as well as the systematic facilitators or inhibitors of voice. For example, the Supportive Voice Climate scale addresses ER concerns about workplace democracy while also aligning with HRM interests in fostering a positive organisational climate.

Finally, our scales measure direct outcomes such as managerial response and conflict resolution, as well as broader impacts like changes in organisational policies and employee satisfaction. This comprehensive approach provides deeper insights into the dynamics of employee voice (Barry and Wilkinson 2015; Kaufman 2015). By incorporating these interdisciplinary perspectives, our scales represent significant advancements over existing OB-focused scales.

14.1 | Theoretical Implications

This study makes a theoretical contribution to the literature by developing and utilising quantitative analyses to propose 15 scales for evaluating and measuring key components of employee voice in the workplace. Our scales define specific dimensions of voice, enabling the measurement of key characteristics such as motivation, opportunities, climate, and frequency. Since individual interests often diverge from organisational interests, developing scales that capture these aspects of the employee voice experience represents a significant contribution to the voice literature.

As discussed, while many validated voice scales exist, they primarily reflect OB interests and do not represent the full voice experience. The scales presented in this study provide OB researchers with an opportunity to broaden the scope of their work, aligning with recent reviews (Morrison 2023; Wilkinson, Barry, and Morrison 2020).

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Additionally, our study advances understanding of implicit voice theories (IVTs). IVTs emphasise how employees' internal beliefs, particularly self-protective IVTs, influence their motivation to speak up. These beliefs, which focus on the perceived risks of voicing concerns—such as conflict, fear, or reputational harm—can inhibit voice behaviours, even in the presence of formal organisational structures. Recognising IVTs offers a more comprehensive understanding of the psychological barriers to employee voice, explaining why some employees remain silent despite the availability of voice mechanisms. By addressing these internal factors, organisations can foster a more supportive voice climate that encourages employees to speak up (Detert and Edmondson 2011).

In terms of further theoretical development, this research is grounded in the ER/IR paradigm and contributes to the voice and silence literature by framing voice within the zone of reciprocity, as discussed by Kilroy, Dundon, and Townsend (2023) in their application of social exchange theory. The zone of reciprocity refers to the mutually beneficial exchanges between employees and organisations, where voice serves as an expression of employees' contributions within the social contract. Our scales provide an empirical means of measuring how well organisations foster and reciprocate employee voice, advancing this theoretical framework into practical application.

14.2 | Practical Implications

This paper offers several practical implications. Firstly, we produced validated scales to measure various dimensions of employee voice, providing organisations with tailored tools to assess and enhance voice-related processes. For instance, the Conditional Voicing (CNV) scale can help managers identify and address factors that discourage voice due to fear of conflict, thereby fostering a more supportive voice climate. Similarly, the Voice Competency of the Organisation (VCO) scale enables organisations to evaluate the effectiveness of voice channels in managing and resolving employee concerns.

Secondly, our scales can guide management training by pinpointing areas for improvement in responsiveness and supportiveness. For example, the Voice Listened (VL) and Voice Resolution (VR) scales can inform training programmes aimed at developing skills in active listening, timely and transparent responses to voice, and managing interpersonal conflicts. The Supportive Voice Climate (SVC) scale provides insights into how organisations can cultivate an environment where voice is encouraged, valued, and effectively utilised.

Furthermore, our scales can serve as tools to monitor, evaluate, and measure the quality of employee voice. Findings from the VR scale, for example, can help organisations identify feedback that is high-quality, relevant, and contributes to meaningful organisational improvements.

14.3 | Future Directions

Our aim was to capture the essence of voice dimensions across contemporary workplaces and organisations, providing a foundation for future researchers to advance our understanding of employee voice. While these scales offer a robust framework for measuring voice, we anticipate that future researchers will identify additional dimensions and components of voice that warrant academic attention and further scale development.

Although this study presents a broad range of voice scales, new dimensions and components related to voice are likely to emerge as the field evolves. We hope this study serves as a significant resource, inspiring further exploration into uncharted aspects of voice. By building on this work, researchers can deepen our understanding of relationships between different concepts in the literature and uncover connections across disciplines. For example, personality may play a crucial role in shaping employee voice behaviour. Given the complexity and breadth of personality as a concept, we encourage future researchers to investigate its influence on voice.

Another promising avenue for future research is to explore how these scales capture changes in voice over time within organisations. Findings from longitudinal studies would provide valuable insights into the factors influencing the voice pathway (Townsend et al. 2020) and how these factors contribute to achieving organisational outcomes over time.

15 | Conclusion

The goal of this study was to develop and test scales to evaluate and measure employee voice in modern workplaces. Fifteen distinct voice scales were found to be both reliable and valid. By integrating subjective perceptions and behavioural outcomes from an employee's perspective, this study contributes to the interdisciplinary employee voice literature and offers valuable insights for managers and organisations.

Importantly, this study not only contributes to academic knowledge of employee voice but also introduces innovative tools that enable future researchers to conduct advanced quantitative analyses of voice pathways. These scales enhance our comprehension of the dimensions that influence employee voice and offer reliable tools for evaluating and measuring them in workplace settings. Furthermore, the findings underscore the significance of these dimensions in predicting employee voice behaviours, contributing to both theoretical and practical advancements in the field.

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Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Endnotes

[1] We regard ER and IR as interchangeable terms for the purposes of this paper.

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