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# Perceived Organizational Support and Voice Behavioural Performance in Public Organizations in Nigeria

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**Abstract** – This study investigated the relationship between perceived organisational support and voice behavioural performance in selected public sector organisations in Nigeria. Two dimensions of employees' voice behavioural performance, which are, promotive voice behavioural performance and prohibitive voice behavioural performance were empirically examined. The organisational support dimensions explored are: employers support, supervisors support, and fellow employees support. A survey research design which employed the use of the questionnaire was used to collect the needed date from the respondents. Data which was generated from three hundred and fifty selected respondents were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as percentages analysis and inferential statistics such as multiple regression. The result of the study revealed that all the three dimensions of organisational support examined, that is, employers support, supervisors support, and fellow employees support were significantly related to promotive voice behavioural performance and prohibitive voice behavioural performance. It is recommended that public sector organisations in Nigeria should provide more support to its employees; direct heads of units and departments in the various ministries and government institutions to put measures in place to improve the well-being of their subordinates and also encourage employees to engage in prosocial behaviour as this might enhance behavioural voice performance.
**Keywords:** Perceived organisational support, prohibitive voice behaviour, promotive voice behaviour, Public Organizations, voice behaviour, public sector organisations

## 1. Introduction

Employee innovative behaviours enable organisations to gain a competitive advantage in a highly volatile and dynamic business environment occasioned by rapid technology changes and globalization (Zhang, Liang, & Li, 2022). Central to innovative behaviours in the workplace is employees' engagement in voice behaviours. This is because voice behaviour

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is an informal, discretionary and constructively verbal expression of innovative ideas that may challenge rather than criticize existing work practices to improve the wellbeing of the organisation (Guzman & Espejo, 2019). Voice behaviours can either take the form of *'promotive voice behaviour'*, which is employee's discretionary expression of constructive ideas to enhance existing work processes or *'prohibiting voice behaviour'*, which is employees' self-obligation of speaking out to stop unethical behaviours, errors and problems in the organisation (Liang, Shu & Farh., 2019).

Engaging in promotive or prohibiting voice behaviour among employees enhances work, team learning, and innovation (Wu & Du, 2022; Perera & Sathiyavel, 2020; Son, 2019). It also helps in the detection and prevention of errors, crises, and problems that could harm an organisation's existence and wellbeing (Wijaya, 2019). Unfortunately, most employees in the Nigerian workplace usually fear to voice out their innovative and creative ideas. Dania and Inegbenebor (2019) stated that such employees fear to speak up and question the credibility of existing work practices and the opinion of others which might be due to be labeled a nonconformist, rebel or clog in the wheel of progress resulting in them being sacked, demoted or victimized. Hence, this has posed a serious threat to quality service delivery especially by public service organisations in the country as they rely heavily on employee input in the discharge of their responsibilities.

Employees fear to engage in voice behaviours when the organisation is not well managed. Employees evaluate the costs of speaking up in terms of negative reactions from other employees. They evaluate whether the work climate is psychologically safe to express themselves and voice out their concerns about observed unethical behaviours without fear of being victimized, threatened or unjustly punished (Liang *et al*., 2012). The psychological safety (the belief of expressing an opinion without fearing harmful reactions from colleagues) of the organisation is however heightened with an increase in organisational support practices (Andiyasari, Matindas & Riantoputra, 2017).

Organisational support practices are how employees evaluate, judge, and believe that employer values their contributions and care for their well-being through the offering of valuable job resources at the level of the job task, reward system, interpersonal and social relation (Eder & Eisenberger, 2008). Such support practices are however evaluated from employer, supervisor and fellow employees' benevolent treatment, respect and assistance provided to employees in meeting their socio-emotional needs (Eder & Eisenberger, 2008). It is a truism that employees reciprocate perceived support from the organisation with the voluntary behaviour of voicing proactively to improve existing work practices and voicing reactively to stop unethical behaviours, errors and problems detected in the organisation following the norm of reciprocity in social exchange theory.

Public sector organisations in Nigeria have over the years been known for substandard quality service delivery, which has made them have a bad image and credibility. Recognizing this, successive governments have made a series of efforts to reform the public sector over the years. Unfortunately, these reforms have not yielded much success in addressing service delivery failure in public sector organisations probably because the

content of those reforms was not well designed and/or implemented to encourage promotive and prohibiting voice behaviours which are central in the delivery of high-quality service. This has made employees in public sector organisations in Nigeria often remain silent instead of voicing out their ideas, opinion and valuable information that could help their institutions improve on the quality of service delivery being offered to the public and society (Malami & Hassan, 2013).

Past studies have observed that the fear of victimization that characterized many Nigerian workplaces and fear of not getting another job make most employees avoid voicing out their ideas, opinions, and concerns about existing work procedures, lapses and problems (Akinwale, 2019; Jude & Emelifeonwu, 2019). They observed that the perceived cost of speaking up or voicing out ideas (engaging in voice behavioural performance) outweighs the benefits of voicing out concerns or ideas that will promote the wellbeing of public sector organisations in Nigeria. Moreover, the collectivist cultures with a high degree of power distance in Nigeria, which features absolute loyalty and respect for their superior in Nigerian organisation have made an expression of voice by employees in the form of opinions and suggestions on work-related issues very difficult (Malami & Hassan, 2013; Mordi & Oruh, 2017). Several studies such as Kanten & Ulker (2012); Andiyasari *et al.* (2017) and Ho (2017) on the relationship between perceived organisational support and voice behaviour were done outside Nigeria. Most of these studies focused on only the influence of supervisor support on voice behaviours while paying less attention to how perceived employer support and perceived fellow employee support interact with supervisor support in influencing the voice behaviours of employees. Against this backdrop, this study ascertains the relationship between the dimensions of perceived organisational support (employer support, supervisor support, fellow employees support) and voice behavioural performance among employees in selected public sector organisations in Edo State, Nigeria.

## 2. Literature Review

Since 1970 when Hirschman introduced the concept of voice, exit and loyalty as individual's reactions/response to dissatisfying conditions in the workplace, many studies in employment relations and organisational behaviour (OB) have renewed and developed interest in expanding the concept of employee's voice behavioural performance beyond employees voicing of dissatisfied experiences and expression of collective action in the form of unions. One of the studies in organisational behaviour (OB) that expand the concept of voice behavioural performance defined it as a form of extra-role behavioural performance that is concerned with expression of constructive challenge with the intention to improving rather than merely criticizing work practices through making of innovative suggestions for a change and recommending modifications to standard procedure even when other members of the organisation disagree with the suggestions (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). This definition aligned with the position of many studies that have

addressed concept of employee voice behavioural performance from organisational citizenship behaviours perspective as self-initiated, spontaneous sharing of ideas, suggestions, or opinions about work-related issues in a confidential manner with the goal of improving organisational performance (Morrison, 2014; Li *et al.*, 2017; Jada & Mukhopadhyay, 2019).

Employee voice behavioural performance is employees' expression of ideas about work-related issues to fellow employees or management responsible for implementing policies and programs, to enhance organisational wellbeing and competitiveness (Morrison, 2014). It is the liberty to engage in open communication with the intent to improve overall organisational functioning (Fischer *et al.,* 2019). It has also been described as discretionary speaking up to improve the work performance of others and the team as a whole (Podsak *et al.*, 2014).

Employee voice behavioural performance has also been defined as the free will to engage in verbal communication that challenges the current work-related practices aimed at enhancing workers' job performance and organisational productivity (Wijaya, 2019). Elucidating on employees' voice behavioural performance, several other authors defined voice behavioural performance as a discretionary active expression of opinion in constructive ways to advance, solve, and contribute to issues in the course of decision making in the organisation (Mowbray, Wilkinson & Tse, 2015), voluntary expressing suggestions for change that aim to improve the status quo (Li *et al.,* 2017), discretionary behaviour of speaking up to bring about desired results (Starzyk , Sonnentag & Albrecht, 2018), voluntary voicing out opportunities needed to enhance unit performance as well as or voluntary engaging in voicing detected problems, selling issues, and whistleblowing aimed at protecting, preventing or stopping unethical behaviours in an organisation (Podsak *et al.*, 2014).

Voice behavioural performance has been disintegrated into promotive and prohibitive voice behavioural performance Wu & Du, 2022; Wang, Xiao & Ren, 2022; Shepherd, Patzelt & Berry, 2019; Liang *et al.,* 2012).

*Promotive voice behavioural performance:* This is the expression of new ideas or suggestions for improving the overall functioning of the work unit or organisation (Perera & Sathiyavel, 2020; Liang *et al.*, 2012). Promotive voice behavioural performance is, therefore suggestion-focused (i.e., make suggestions of how to improve current work processes. It is concerned with employees' voluntary and discretionary expression of new ideas or suggestions for improving the overall functioning of their work unit or organisation.

*Prohibitive voice behavioural performance:* This describes employees' expressions of concern about work practices, incidents, or employee behaviour that is harmful to the organisation (Liang *et al.*, 2012). Prohibitive voice behavioural performance is problem-focused (Wang *et al.*, 2022; Perera & Sathiyavel, 2020; Starzyk *et al.*, 2018). It addresses problems about inefficiencies or poor performance. It is concerned with

employees' voluntary and discretionary expressions of concern about poor work practices and unethical behaviours harming the organisation (Liang *et al.,* 2019). Prohibitive behavioural performance is an expression of concerns or speaking up or out during meetings to prevent and stop inappropriate or unethical behaviours from harming the organisation (Botha & Steyn, 2022; Parker & Collins, 2010). It is a voluntary speaking up of ideas that are problem-focused, which may disagree with the opinion of management or immediate boss as well as co-workers but intended to enhance and overcome the suppression of work practices (Li *et al.,* 2017).

*2.2 Similarly and distinction between promotive and prohibitive voice behavioural performance*

Zhen & Maolin (2016) argued that promotive voice behavioural involves a deliberate and voluntary expression of constructive ideas to improve or change the existing work processes while prohibitive voice behavioural performance is speaking up to stop and prevent destructive or inappropriate behaviours. The two types of voice behaviour differ in behavioural content as the content of promotive voice behaviour is innovative suggestions or solutions to improve the status quo whereas the content of prohibitive voice is reactive to errors, poor performance, bad behaviours, and problematic employees harming the teams or organisations (Guzman & Espejo, 2019; Ding *et al.,* 2018) The conceptual line between the two forms of speech is the "promotive" versus "prohibitive" dichotomy, where the former is focused on realizing ideas and potential and the latter is focused on halting or preventing harm. Promotive voice content is also required to be future-oriented, as it focuses on future ways of doing things better, as opposed to prohibitive voice, which can draw attention to factors that have harmed the status quo (e.g., existing coordination problems) or factors that may cause harm to the organisation (e.g., practices that may lead to process inefficiencies) (Liang *et al.,* 2019). However, prohibitive aspect of voice behaviour is more impactful than the promotive voice in the process of developing innovative ideas and solutions in high corrupt and unethical velocity environments because it aimed at stopping and preventing process losses occasioned by employees' antisocial behaviours (Liang *et al.,* 2019).

*2.3 Perceived Organisational Support*

A foremost definition of perceived organisational support was put forward by Eisenberger *et al.,* (1986) as employee's evaluation, judgment, conception and belief that the organisation values their contributions and cares for their well-being. Eisenberger *et al.,* (1986) opined that employee wellbeing is associated with the fulfilment of psychological and emotional needs of employees through the provision of valuable job resources, which is usually located at the level of interpersonal and social relation (supportive team climate), assigned job task (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, performance feedback), and at the level of reward systems (fringe benefits and pay). They indicated that employees who receive valued resources from employers to perform their tasks are usually committed to their organisation. They further suggested that employees perceived their organisation as supportive when they are provided with fair reward systems (promotion,

pay, and developmental training opportunities) as well as favourable and fair job conditions (job security, autonomy and working hours). Flowing from these definitions, Eisenberger *et al.,* (1986) specifically maintain that perceived organisational support is concerned with meeting the socio-emotional needs of employees through the offering of jobs that is characterized by fair and favourable wages, promotions, job security, training, and development.

The sources of perceived organisational support flow from the favourable treatment attributed to the organisation as a whole. It lies more on proximal organisational representatives such as supervisors and workgroups, which employees identify within developing a discrete exchange relationship in the organisation (Kurtessis *et al.,* 2015). The benevolent or malevolent intentions of these organisational representatives toward employees play a key role in determining whether the organisation as a whole will be supported or otherwise by employees (Shoss *et al.,* 2013). This study categorizes perceived organisation support into employers, supervisors and fellow employees' support taking cognizance that their actions shape how employees identified with the organisation and evaluate organisational supportive behaviour.

*Perceived Employers Support:* Perceived employer's support is defined as the degree to which employees evaluate and expect employers to care about their wellbeing, value their contributions and willingness to fulfil their social-emotional needs through an offering of favourable organisational rewards and job conditions (Neves & Eisenberger, 2014). The favourable rewards include the offering of valuable pay increases, the quality work-life balance including sick leave and allowance, and the opportunity for promotion, which is the ability to move to a higher status level in an organisation (Kurtessis *et al.,* 2015). The most common favourable job conditions are job security, offering of autonomy in carrying out job including scheduling work, offering of fair work overload that employee can reasonably accomplish in a given time, provision of clear information about one's job responsibilities, and offering of friendly technologies, office, furniture and on the job and off the job training to expand employees skills and competence in carrying out the task (Eder & Eisenberger, 2008). In this study, employer support is seen as employees' judgment that employers care about their wellbeing, value their contributions and fulfil their social-emotional needs through the offering of favourable fair rewards (pay increases, sick leave, fringes benefits, developmental opportunities, promotion, training) and fair job conditions (air workload, quality operating systems).

*Perceived Supervisor Support:* Supervisor support is employee's perceptions of the amount and quality of help subordinate received from supervisors and how their supervisor evaluate their performance, care about contribution, appreciates their extra effort and show concern about their goals, interest, and well-being while making decisions that affect employees (Eisenberger *et al.,* 2014). Employees usually evaluate these actions and treatments they received from supervisors not just as supervisor support but also as organisational intent to support the emotional wellbeing of employees given the power the management of organisation vested on the supervisors to enact policies and norms that

provide continuity and prescribe role behaviours on individual employees (Shoss *et al.,* 2013) They perceived supervisor treatment as the effective tool through which an organisation communicates its support to the employees considering that supervisors are authorized and tasked to direct subordinates and distribute resources to them to perform assigned jobs (Neves & Eisenberger, 2014).

Drawing from the understanding that supervisors play important role in the direction, evaluation, and coaching of employees as well as implementing policies and rules that are usually conveyed at the top management, it is believed that employees are more likely to perceived organisational support based on how supervisors treat them with dignity and respect, readiness to reward increased efforts, provision of fair information concerning how their performance outcomes are determined, discourage the promotion of self-interest often at the expense of rewards for individual merit (Kanten & Ulker, 2012). Moreover, perceived organisational support is reduced when supervisors engage in the self-oriented political behaviour of obtaining valued outcomes by acting in a self-serving manner, going along with ill-advised management decisions to secure valued outcomes, and allocating work based on favouritism rather than merit (Ho, 2017). This study views supervisor support as perceptions of the amount and quality of help employees received from supervisors and how their supervisor evaluates their performance, cares about contribution, appreciates their extra effort and shows concern about their goals, interest while making decisions that affect them.

*Perceived Fellow Employees Support:* Perceived fellow employees support is employees' evaluation that their colleagues care about their well-being, and readily make themselves available either voluntary or involuntary to help and assist them when experiencing heavy workload, defend them when absent and face with emotional, financial and physical distresses (Hayton *et al.,* 2012). It is the evaluation that co-workers usually help and favour each other, defend each other when the need arises and help each other in addressing work and non-work related challenges (Eisenberger *et al.,* 2014). Fellow employees support is the degree to which employees perceived other coworkers they are working with avail in selfless concern for their welfare, treat them with respect, with dignity and provide them with instrumental resources like information, expertise, professional advice, political access and advocacy, financial assistant, which are embedded in networks of stable social relationships. Co-employee is also perceived as supportive when he/she engaged in approval, praise, intimacy, and other emotional expressions that are required in fulfilling emotional and social identity needs (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011). The emotional expressions usually increase energy in the workplace and the development of trust, which mitigates the deleterious consequences of work stress and unsupportive supervision. Similarly, the favourable treatment received from a co-worker usually leads to a felt obligation of the recipient to help other members in the organisation to reach their objectives (Hayton *et al.,* 2012). Helping other employees with heavy workloads and work-related problems usually lead to greater productivity, but the social context of the work environment, created through the frequent interactions with others at work has the potential to satisfy the innate desire to belonging and affiliating with others and to form a

social network of individuals rely on for social and emotional support (Hayton *et al.,* 2012). In this study, fellow employees' support is employees' evaluation that colleagues care about their well-being, and readily make themselves available either voluntary or involuntary to help and assist them when experiencing heavy workload, defend them when absent and face with emotional, financial and physical distress.

*2.4 Theoretical Framework*

This study adopts organisational support theory (Eisenberger *et al.*, 1986). Organisational support theory is an employee's evaluation, judgment, conception, and belief that the organisation values their contributions and cares for their well-being, and treats them well through the offering of favourable rewards and job resources that meet and fulfil the psychological and emotional needs of employees. The theory opined that the fulfilment of multifaceted fair rewards and fair job conditions shape employees' perceived organisational support, which employees reciprocate (Eisenberger *et al.,* 2001). Employees reciprocate perceived low support with silence (Zill *et al.,* 2018). This is because they evaluate the cost and benefits of speaking up to prevent and stop inappropriate or unethical behaviours harming the organisation. The felt risk of presenting new ideas, opinions, errors observed and problems in the department usually increase with perceiving failure of the employer to fulfil pay increase, training, job security, career growth, earned allowance, good operating systems and other privileges that go with the job (Zill *et al.,* 2018). The consequences of offering a demeaning job may have ended in the promotion of self-impression and self-wellbeing, which may take the form of collaborating with colleagues in taking bribes and failure to speak up against their inefficiencies in work, which are harming most Nigerian workplaces.

*2.5 Review of Empirical Studies and Research Gaps*

Son (2019) revealed that gender and trust in supervisors moderate the influence of perceived supervisor's voice behaviour on employees' voice behaviour, with the influence of trust in supervisors on employees' voice behaviour remaining stronger for female employees. Xiang *et al.* (2019) examined the influence of procedural justice and interactional justice on employee voice behaviours and discovered that interactional justice and procedural justice influenced employees' voices through organisation-based self-esteem. They also observed the direct positive influence of interactional justice on the voice's behavioural performance.

A study by Jada & Mukhopadhyay (2019) revealed that empowering leadership is the most suitable style to promote high-quality leader-member exchange (LMX) and "promotive and prohibitive" voice over transformational and ethical leadership. In a high power distance culture like India, Jada & Mukhopadhyay (2019) observed that empowering leadership has the greatest influence on promotive and prohibitive voice in high power. Li, Liang and Farh (2020) researched the influence of perceived organisational politics on promotive and prohibitive voice behavioural performance and discovered that perceived organisational politics negatively influence promotive and prohibitive voice behavioural performance

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through psychological uncertainty. They also observed that job autonomy lowered the negative impact of psychological uncertainty on promotional voice, while job security weakened the negative impact of psychological uncertainty on prohibitive voice.

Ho (2017) revealed that supervisor support significantly influences voice behavioural performance. Ho (2017) however found that subordinates' impression management motive reduces the influence of self-determined Prosocial motivation on voice behavioural performance while the influence of supervisor support on self-determined Prosocial motivation is mediated by psychological needs. Examining the influence of psychological ownership and perceived supports on employee's voice behavioural performance, Andiyasari *et al.* (2017) revealed that perceived supervisor supports, directly and indirectly, influence voice behavioural performance. Moreover, they found that psychological ownership mediates the influence of perceived supervisor support on voice behaviour.

In Nigeria, a study by Akinwale (2019) revealed that low level of voice behaviours was not influenced by collective representation but influenced by the level participation, management systems, supervisor-subordinate relationship, and commitment and communication exchange. Jude and Emelifeonwu (2019) examined the influence of employee voice and silence using the interview to collect data from 30 foreign and indigenous organisations in Nigeria. They discovered that employee silence was a result of the presence of fear of victimization in the Nigerian workplace, which was accentuated by Sub-Saharan culture and the status of the labour market. They also discovered that in the Nigerian mobile telecommunications business, using culturally relevant employee voice mechanisms within firms enhances employee voice and organisational performance, but failing to do so results in organisational failure.

Mordi and Oruh (2017) examined the influence of hosted cultural values on employees' voice behavioural performance in Nigeria's Petroleum Industry. They discovered that employee voice significantly different between managers and employees. They also found employees' silence, disengagement and voice marginalization in Nigeria's cultural environment possible because of high power distance and paternalism which characterized the Nigerian workplace.

*2.6 Research Gaps*

Few studies (Malami & Hassan, 2013; Mordi & Oruh, 2017; Akinwale, 2019; Jude & Emelifeonwu, 2019) on employees' voice behavioural performance in Nigeria paid more attention to promotive voice behavioural performance with little attention to "prohibitive" aspects of voice behaviour despite early definitions of voice as not only suggestion-focused voice (i.e., make suggestions of how to improve current work processes) which is promotive voice behavioural performance but also problem-focused voice (speaking out to stop unethical behaviours, to change the objectionable state of affairs, and address problems about inefficiencies, poor performance, and corrupt practices) in the

organisation. Besides this, they failed to examine the influence of organisational support on voice behavioural performance. The few studies (Kanten & Ulker, 2012; Andiyasari *et al.,* 2017; Ho, 2017) that examined the influence of perceived organisational support on voice behavioural performance were done outside Nigeria. They however focused mainly on the influence of supervisor support on voice behavioural performance. They, however, neglected how employer and fellow employees support directly and interact with supervisor support in influencing the voice behavioural performance of employees. Against these gaps, this study examines the influence of employer, supervisor and fellow employees' support on voice behavioural performance in a selected public organisation in Edo State, Nigeria.

*2.7 Research Hypotheses*

Based on the review of literature, research gaps identified, the following hypotheses was formulated and tested.

$H_1$: Perceived employer support is significantly related to promotive voice behavioural performance and prohibitive voice behavioural performance.

$H_2$: Perceived supervisor support is significantly related to promotive voice behavioural performance and prohibitive voice behavioural performance.

$H_3$: Perceived fellow employees' support is significantly related to promotive voice behavioural performance and prohibitive voice behavioural performance.

**3. Methodology of Study**

This study utilizes the survey research design. The population of the study comprises two thousand eight hundred and five (2805) employees from twenty-eight (28) government ministries and departments. The sample size for this study was determined using Yamane's (1967) propounded formula for selecting a sample size from a finite population.

The formula is:  $n = N1 + N(0.05)2$

Where e=0.05, 1=constant, N=population.

This calculation suggests that approximately 350 employees in public sector organisations in Edo State are sufficient at a 5% level of significance to form the sample size of this study. However, a 20% increase of each copy's questionnaire assigned to the different ministries across the 28 ministries and departments in Edo State was done. The increase in copies of the questionnaire administered in each of the ministries by 20% was done to cater for low responses and losses due to the inaccurate filling of some of the copies of the questionnaire to arrive at the exact number of the sample size or higher sample size. Out of 420 copies of the questionnaire distributed due to a 20% increase in the copies of questionnaires, 382 were retrieved but 369 were found valid and usable. Copies of

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questionnaires were distributed proportionately across the 28 ministries and departments in Edo State using stratified sampling techniques as:

$n_h = NhN^{\times}n$.

Where $n_h$ = sample size for stratum *h*, $_{Nh}$ = population size for stratum *h*;, N = total population.

Questionnaires were administered using purposive and convenient sampling techniques. This study operationalized and measured voice behavioural performance using the scale developed by Liang *et al.* (2012)) on promotive and prohibitive voice behavioural performance. The promotive voice behavioural performance consisted of 5 items while prohibitive voice behavioural performance also contains 5 items measured on a 5-point scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree). Organisational supports decomposed into employer supports, supervisor supports and co-worker supports were measured with questions items adapted from Eisenberger *et al.* (1986), Kraimer and Wayne (2004).

The value of Cronbach coefficient alpha of the employee voice behavioural and dimensions of organisational support range from the lowest value of 0.833 to a high 0.931 based on extant studies of Eisenberger *et al.* (1986), Kraimer and Wayne (2004), Liang *et al.* (2012). These values are within the acceptable values following the critical values of 0.70 to 0.95 suggested by Nunnally (1978) for determining the acceptable and good indicators of the reliability of the instrument.

The data collected from the sampled respondents were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics include percentages analysis. Inferential statistics such as multiple regression was used to test for the relationship between each of the dimensions of organisational support, and employee voice behavioural performance. The tests were done using Statistics Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 24.0 at 5% level of significance.

## 4. Findings and Discussion

### 4.1 Descriptive Statistics of Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

Out of 420 copies of the questionnaire distributed due to a 20% increase in the copies of questionnaires, 382 were retrieved but 350 were found valid and usable. Results indicate that 215 (61.4%) of the respondents were males while 135 (38.6%) were females. This shows that the majority of public sector workers investigated were males. The age distribution indicates that the majority of the respondents (120, 34.3%) were between 25years and below. This is followed by respondents within the age range of 26-35years. This category of respondents accounts for 24.3% of the total respondents. About 55 (15.7%) of the respondents were between 36-45years. Only 50 (14.3%) and 40 (11.4%) of the respondents were within the age of 46-55years and 56 years and above respectively.

Results also showed that the majority of the respondents have worked between 6-10years. This category of respondents accounts for 37.4% of total respondents. About 101 (28.9%) of the respondents have worked between 5years and below. Only 63 (18.0%) and 55 (15.7%) of the respondents have worked between 11-15years and up to 16years and above respectively. It can therefore be deduced that the majority of the respondents are experienced and have the requisite knowledge concerning the workings and practices of their organisations.

**Table 1: Demographic information of respondents**

| Variables | Categories | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Male | 215 | 61.4% |
| | Female | 135 | 38.6% |
| | Total | 350 | 100.00% |
| Age | 25years and below | 120 | 34.3% |
| | 26-35years | 85 | 24.3% |
| | 36-45years | 55 | 15.7% |
| | 46-55years | 50 | 14.3% |
| | 56years and above | 40 | 11.4% |
| | Total | 350 | 100.00% |
| Work Experience | 5years and below | 101 | 28.9% |
| | 6-10years | 131 | 37.4% |
| | 11-15years | 63 | 18.0% |
| | 16years and above | 55 | 15.7% |
| | Total | 350 | 100.00% |

Out of 420 copies of the questionnaire distributed due to a 20% increase in the copies of questionnaires, 382 were retrieved but 350 were found valid and usable. Results indicate that 215 (61.4%) of the respondents were males while 135 (38.6%) were females. This shows that the majority of public sector workers investigated were males. The age distribution indicates that the majority of the respondents (120, 34.3%) were between 25years and below. This is followed by respondents within the age range of 26-35years. This category of respondents accounts for 24.3% of the total respondents. About 55 (15.7%) of the respondents were between 36-45years. Only 50 (14.3%) and 40 (11.4%) of the respondents were within the age of 46-55years and 56 years and above respectively. Results also showed that the majority of the respondents have worked between 6-10years. This category of respondents accounts for 37.4% of total respondents. About 101 (28.9%) of the respondents have worked between 5years and below. Only 63 (18.0%) and 55 (15.7%) of the respondents have worked between 11-15years and up to 16years and above respectively. It can therefore be deduced that the majority of the respondents are experienced and have the requisite knowledge concerning the workings and practices of their organisations.

**Hypotheses Testing**

Regression analysis was conducted to test the model specifications formulated in the study. The regression analysis was split into two based on two models specified, of which model I represents hypothesized relationship between organisational support dimensions and performance of promotive voice behaviour while model II represents hypothesized relationship between organisational support dimensions and performance of prohibitive voice behaviour. The decision rule for accepting or rejecting the hypotheses formulated by the study was determined using a 0.05(5%) critical value. It specifically accepts the null hypotheses ($H_0$) on the condition that the calculated p-values must be greater than 0.05(5%) level of significance (critical value).

**Table 2: Organisational Support and Promotive Voice performance (Model I Testing)**

| Model | | B | Std. Error | P-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Unstandardized Coefficients** | | | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | -0.265 | 0.084 | 0.002 |
| | PES | 0.224 | 0.014 | 0.000 |
| | PSS | 0.275 | 0.030 | 0.000 |
| | PFES | 0.598 | 0.032 | 0.000 |
| R Square | Adjusted R Square | | F | Sig. |
| 0.826 | 0.825 | | 578.733 | 0.000[b] |

**Keys:** PMVBP=Promotive Voice Behavioural Performance
PHVBP = Prohibitive Voice Behavioural Performance
PES =  Perceived Employer Support
PSS =  Perceived Supervisors Supports
PFES =           Perceived Fellow Employees Supports

The R-squared value of 0.826 in the regression is the strength of the model. It indicates the goodness of fit of the model. It also suggested that the combined three (elements) forms of organisational support in the regression model predict and explain 83% of the systematic variation in promotive voice performance even after the models have been adjusted for the degree of freedom. This indicates that the model is good and effective for policy making toward addressing, sustaining and improving employees engagement in promotive voice performance in the context of selected public sector organisations in Edo State.

The  F-statistic of 578.733 at a p-value of .00000, which is less than 5% critical value was observed in the regression imply the existence of a significant linear relationship between organisational support and employees' promotive voice behavioural performance in public sector organisations in Edo State. Breaking organisational support into its components/dimensions, it was observed that P-Value of 0.00000 is less than 5% critical value (level of significance) for each of the dimensions (employer, supervisor and fellow employees' supports) of organisational support in the model. The P-value and it's coefficient in the model show that the three dimensions of organisational support (employer, supervisor and fellow employee's supports) of organisational support

significantly and positively influence promotive voice performance among employees in Edo State public sector organisations.

**Table 3: Organisational Support and Prohibitive Voice Performance (Model II Testing)**

| | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Model** | B | Std. Error | P-value |
| 1 | (Constant) | -0.122 | 0.155 | 0.432 |
| | PES | 0.070 | 0.026 | 0.008 |
| | PSS | 1.518 | 0.056 | 0.000 |
| | PFES | -0.705 | 0.059 | 0.000 |
| R Square | Adjusted R Square | | F | Sig. |
| 0.714 | 0.712 | | 304.480 | 0.000[b] |

**Key:** PMVBP=Promotive Voice Behavioural Performance
PHVBP = Prohibitive Voice Behavioural Performance
PES = Perceived Employer Support
PSS = Perceived Supervisors Supports
PFES = Perceived Fellow Employees Supports

The R-squared value of 0.714 in the regression is the strength of the model. It indicates the goodness of fit of the model and the effectiveness of the model in addressing, sustaining and improving engagement in prohibitive voice performance among employees in public sector organisations in Edo State. It specifically demonstrated that the combined three (elements) forms of organisational support in the regression model predict and explain 71.4% of the systematic variation in engagement in prohibitive voice performance among employees. But after the model has been adjusted for the degree of freedom, the combined three (elements) forms of organisational support in the regression model predict and explain 71.2% variation in promotive voice performance while other variables (s) not included in the model capture 28% variation in engagement in prohibitive voice performance among employees in Edo State public sector organisations.

The F-statistic of 578.733 at a p-value of 0.00000, which is less than 5% critical value was observed in the regression imply the existence of a significant linear relationship between organisational support and engagement in prohibitive voice performance among employees in public sector organisations in Edo State. Breaking the organisational support into its components/dimensions, the least p-values observed in each dimension (employer, supervisor and fellow employees' supports) of organisational support in the model was 0.008. The p- values and its coefficient specifically suggested that each dimension (employer, supervisor and fellow employees' supports) of organisational support significantly related to promotive voice performance in the context of Edo State public

sector organisations. In regards to the direction of the relationship, it was discovered that fellow employee support negatively influences engagement in prohibitive voice performance among employees in the public sector organisations in Edo State while employer and supervisor support have a positive influence.

This study found out that all the three dimensions of organisational support (employer, supervisor and fellow employees' supports) of organisational support significantly influence promotive voice performance and prohibitive voice performance among employees in Edo State public sector organisations. This finding is consistent with our apriori expectations derived from the theoretical framework (organisational support theory) that employees reciprocate perceived organisational support practices with voice promotive behavioural performance. This is because perceived supports are the mechanism through which employees are psychologically empowered to voice out their ideas and go beyond the call to duties to express concern about work practices, incidences, and harmful work behaviour that might harm the organisation (Liang *et al.,* 2012).

The finding that employer support significantly and positively influences both promotive and prohibitive voice behaviours collaborate the empirical position of Tucker, *et al.* (2008) that employer supports for voice safety has a direct influence, as well as interact with coworker supports and perceived supervisor support in influencing employee safety voice (speaking out in an attempt to change unsafe working conditions). It also confirms the position of Jada and Mukhopadhyay (2019) that empowering leadership, which is a form of employer support, is the most suitable style for encouraging promotive and prohibitive voice in a high-power distance country. This suggested that high power distance has a significant influence on the extent to which employees feel to speak up on issues that affect them and the organisational well-being (Jude & Emelifeonwu, 2019), voice performance in Nigeria (Mordi & Oruh, 2017), increase fear of being labelled negatively, and subsequently resulting employees' silence behaviours (Fapohunda, 2016), and reluctant in employees' expressing their creative ideas, opinions, and suggestions that disagree with other members at top positions of the organisation (Umar & Hassan, 2017) can be mitigated when employee perceived employer support.

The finding that supervisor supports significantly and positively influence both promotive and prohibitive voice aligned with the position of (Andiyasari *et al.,* 2017) who stated that perceived supervisor support, directly and indirectly, influence voice behavioural performance through psychological ownership. This is in tandem with the metal analysis of (Chamberlin, Newton, and Lepine, 2017) that supervisor and leader behaviour has a significant influence on employees' expression of constructive prohibitive and promotive voice behaviour. It also agreed with Son (2019) that trusts in supervisors moderates the influence of perceived supervisor's voice behaviour on employees' voice behaviour. The results also support the empirical position of Ho (2017) that supervisors' support significantly influences voice behavioural performance. It is also consistent with the study of Lebel (2016) that employees would speak up by sharing ideas when their supervisors are open to accepting advice from subordinates. Similarly, the finding confirms a study by

Akinwale (2019) that low level of voice behaviours was influenced by the supervisor-subordinate relationship. This is supported by (Amah and Okafor (2008) that top management attitude and supervisors' attitude (handling of suggestions, problems, conflict in the workplace) influence employee silence behaviour measured with how employees do you express disagreement with your managers concerning company issues.

Lastly, the finding of this study showed that perceived fellow employee has a positive influence on promotive voice performance but negatively influence prohibitive voice performance. This confirms the position of Tucker, *et al.* (2008) that perceived coworker support for voice behaviour influences employee safety voice. It also supports the study of Fapohunda (2016) and (Mordi & Oruh, 2017), (Umar & Hassan, 2017) that the fear of being labelled negatively by coworkers make employees in Nigerian organisations reluctant to voice out their opinions and errors observed in their departments, units and organisations. It also aligned with the study of (Umar & Hassan, 2017) that the fear of negative of being seen as rebellious and an antagonist by the organisation and coworkers discourage employees from pointing out errors detected, unethical practices and speaking up. As Dania and Inegbenebor (2019) observed that fear of speaking up is the most prevalent form of fear in the workplace in Nigeria. It also explains why collectivist cultures, which feature absolute support and receive gifts and help from one another increase fear expressions of ideas, opinions, and suggestions that disagree with other members (Umar & Hassan, 2017).

## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The conclusion derived from this study is that perceived employer support reduces the fear of engaging in promotive and prohibitive voice behavioural performance. Similarly, it concludes that an increase in perceived supervisor support reduces the fear of employees engaging in promotive and prohibitive voice behavioural performance. Drawing from the empirical revelation of this study, management of public sector organisations in Nigeria should provide more support to its employees. They should also show greater care for their employees' well-being. This can be accomplished by offering attractive packages that allow employees to quickly obtain assistance, aid, or a secured property (home, car, or furniture) loan. Flexible work, frequent promotion, quality medical care, favourable sick leave policies, on-the-job training, fair compensation, and a stipend or bonus for extra performance, including extended working hours, are attractive incentives that might encourage employees to engage in promotive voice behaviour and prohibitive voice behaviour. They should also be more committed to providing across-the-board pay increases when the need arises. Heads of departments and units should be directed that to show more concern about the well-being of their subordinates. Management of public sector organisations in Nigeria should make a concerted effort to encourage employees to engage in prosocial behaviour of helping one another. Management of public organisations in Nigeria should make an effort to foster a helpful and caring workplace atmosphere. Employees that exhibit altruistic behaviour offer to assist other employees with excess workloads and those who require particular financial and non-financial support can be

recognized with an award or other form of recognition. More so, the management of public sector organisations in Nigeria should reward employees who frequently treat other colleagues politely, with respect, and courtesy. They should also award, recognize and praise employees who frequently offer information, professional advice, and advocacy and promote the welfare of other employees.

## 6. Suggestions for Future Research

Future studies should be conducted to ascertain the influence of perceived organisational support on job alienation in the Nigerian workplace. Moreover, an attempt should be made by future studies to extend the geographical scope of this study by using data from employees of tertiary institutions and private sector organisations in Nigeria to examine the link between perceived organisational support and employee voice behavioural performance.

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