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Who Is Willing To Speak Up And Why? Examining Individual And Organizational Predictors Of Employee Voice Behavior In Higher Education Institutions

Jessie Socorro Arellano
University of Texas at El Paso

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JESSIE SOCORRO ARELLANO

Master's Program in Communication

APPROVED:

Yannick Atouba, Ph.D., Chair

Carlos A. Tarin, Ph.D.

Arthur A. Aguirre, Ph.D.

Stephen L. Crites, Jr., Ph.D.
Dean of the Graduate School

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my boys, who have always inspired me to pursue my educational goals. Thank you for being my personal cheerleaders and offering plenty of encouraging words and emotional support. I really appreciate the late night hugs during the endless nights of writing. I love you very much.

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by

JESSIE SOCORRO ARELLANO, B.A.

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Abstract

Employee voice behavior is central to the effectiveness, the development, and the adaptability of organizations to their environments. However, there is currently limited organizational research and knowledge on the factors that influence employee voice behaviors, especially in the context of higher education institutions. As such, the purpose of this study is to examine the predictors of employee voice behaviors in institutions of higher education. Specifically, this study examines the impact of key individual and organizational factors such as alumni status, organizational commitment, work motivation, communication climate, and organizational politics on employees' expression of promotive and prohibitive voice in higher education environments. 811 employees from a community college in the southwest of the United States participated in the study's online survey. The data was analyzed using frequency, two one-way ANOVA, correlations, and multiple regression analyses. The results of this study show that organizational factors are more important predictors of employee voice behaviors than individual factors. In other words, organizational environments' characteristics such as communication climate and perceived organizational politics are stronger or more important drivers of employees' voice behaviors in academia than employee alumni status, motivation, and organizational commitment. In addition, the fact that among all the variables examined, perception of communication climate was the strongest and most important predictor of employee voice behavior, is particularly noteworthy. That result suggests that the more employees in higher education institutions perceive that the communication climate is open and welcoming - i.e., where their voice matters or can make a difference - the more likely they are to speak up.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background

Employee voice has always been central to organizational functioning and assessment (Wijaya, 2019; Morrison, 2014; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). Taking a look at an organization through the voice of its employees can foster discovery for organizational success (Grant & Rothbard, 2013; Avey et al., 2012; Detert & Burris, 2007). Thus, organizations need to be able to depend on employee voice to foster their growth and achieve their goals. However, employee voices are subject to a great deal of control and are influenced by various individual and organizational factors (Detert & Treviño, 2010). According to Detert and Treviño (2010), an overwhelming majority of employees—93% of informants in their study—reported at least one instance of experiencing either supportive or inhibitive behavior from leadership regarding their voice. When one considers that finding and the potential cost of inhibitive behavior or employee voice suppression from leadership, which may involve the silencing of alternative viewpoints, dissent, workplace bullying, harassment, discrimination, and other organizational problems, further research on employee voice behavior is critical both to employee effectiveness and wellbeing and to organizational development. In fact the need for more employee voice research cannot be overemphasized given the pervasiveness of employee ill-treatment, its damaging effects in most if not all organizations (Hodgins & McNamara, 2017), and the key role employee voice plays in remedying this state of affair.

Several researchers have examined how the role of employee voice behavior in organizations can reflect both promotive and prohibitive dimensions. Liang and colleagues (2012) define promotive voice as behavior that can better the organization, such as employees making recommendations for possibilities or new ways to improve organizational processes. Prohibitive voice, on the other hand, is defined as a means to express concern on how to address

harmful situations that are already found within the organization (Liang et al., 2012). In other words, both promotive and prohibitive voice are positive behaviors with good organizational intentions such as seeking opportunities to speak up and contribute to address work related issues (Wilkinson et al., 2018). From this perspective, voice behavior can result in positive outcomes (Morrison, 2014). Examples include constructive suggestions (Milliken et al., 2003), reinforcement of values (Ashford & Barton, 2007), organizational improvement (Morrison, 2014) and overall organizational effectiveness (Jha et al., 2019). Furthermore, as exemplified by Mao and DeAndrea (2019), voice behavior can enhance employee well-being, such as speaking out about workplace wrongdoings as in the case of the #MeToo movement. By way of contrast, a voice that is silenced may have negative consequences on employee morale and thus on employee performance (Morrison, 2014). Employee silence can result from reluctance to discuss critical issues (Morrison & Milliken, 2000, Milliken et al., 2003), sensitive issues (Liang et al., 2012), dissatisfaction (Rusbult et al., 1988), injustice (Pinder & Harlos, 2001), or from employees having reservations about offering suggestions (Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008).

Institutions of higher education are no exception when it comes to the importance of employee voice to their success and to issues of voice promotion, silencing, and/or suppression. As it has been highlighted in research (e.g., Barrat-Pugh & Krestelica, 2019; Henning et al., 2017) voice in higher education is extremely important. For example, Fuller (2006) states that even though goals exist in academia to protect employees from administrative overpowering, employee voice issues persist. Duggan (2008) adds that "nonteaching staff are often marginalized, [and] their experiences and inputs, frequently discounted" (p. 47). Furthermore, in cases where neoliberalism has influenced institutions of higher education to operate like corporations, priority on making a profit has increased and the value given to academic resources

has decreased (Christensen-Madel, 2019; Slaughter & Rhodes, 2000) including the importance given to faculty voice (Donoghue, 2018; Ginsberg, 2011).

These instances of employee voice suppression are of further concern as researchers found frequent accounts of workplace harassment such as "gender harassment, workplace bullying, and mobbing" at all staffing levels in American colleges and universities (Henning, et al., 2017, p. 521). These and other forms of workplace harassment can result in stress, chronic health issues, and suicidal tendencies (Hodgins & McNamara, 2017; Einarsen & Mikkelsen, 2003; Hogh, Mikklesen & Hansen, 2011; Niedhammer et al., 2006; Hallberg & Strandmark, 2006; Hoel et al., 2004; Balducci et al., 2011; Barrat-Pugh & Krestelica, 2019; Wilson, 2010). Furthermore, communication tensions between academic staff, support staff, and students impacts teaching and learning processes (Bendermacher, et al., 2017). Thus, Fuller (2006) recommends catching potential problems in a way that "protects the dignity of workers so they won't be inhibited about voicing their concerns" (p. 55). In other words, it is beneficial to organizations to find ways to prevent employee voice suppression and create an organizational environment where employees feel safe to offer suggestions for improvement (i.e., promotive voice) or raise concerns and speak up about harmful issues (i.e., prohibitive voice). Not coincidentally, statistics appear to show a gap between institutional intentions and actual staff experiences (Barrat-Pugh & Krestelica, 2019). Relatedly, Dykstra-Devette and Tarin (2019) analyzed Karen Kelsky's (2017) crowdsourced survey on institutional failures related to sexual harassment as expressed via a blog by employees (mostly faculty) in academia. Examining employee voice behavior is thus especially critical during this time of widely reported unethical behavior seen in Hollywood, corporations, and in academia.

Detert and Burris (2007) note that it is valuable to understand what conditions affect voice behavior within organizational environments. Hence, recognizing the influences and value of employee voice is beneficial. It is therefore important to identify factors that may influence how employees use their voice. To avoid further crises of voice suppression and seeking to build upon facets of voice within organizations and academia, the present study concentrates on individual and organizational characteristics that may enable or constrain employee voice behavior at institutions of higher education.

Problem Statement

There is still a lack of extensive knowledge on factors that influence employee voice behavior, especially in the environment of higher education. Previous research has recognized the importance of voice behavior (Kassing, 2002; Botero & Van Dyne, 2009; Morrison, 2014), yet scholars have mainly focused on the voice behaviors of employees or supervisors working in for-profit organizational environments. Toward this end, scholars have examined voice behavior such as transformational leadership and managerial openness to employees in dining restaurants (Detert & Burris, 2007), manager and subordinate dyads in entertainment and service companies (Bai et al., 2019), supervisor and employee communication within the manufacturing industry (Wåhlin-Jacobsen, 2020), health workers in hospital environments (Fuller et al., 2007), and employees in the IT sector (Jha et al., 2019). In addition, it is important to note that most voice behavior research that exists examining perspectives in higher education relate almost exclusively to alumni students (Wijaya, 2019; Mao & DeAndrea, 2019). Yet, the phenomena of alumni employees' voice behavior has been neglected and much research remains to be done within the context of communication research. In fact, employee voice behaviors in universities and institutions of higher education remains understudied. The lack of examination or

knowledge on factors that influence employee voice behavior in higher education environments constitutes an important gap in organizational communication research and higher education studies, and is problematic and potentially damaging for institutions of higher education because employee voice can help increase employee loyalty and well-being, and generate other positive outcomes such as decreased employee turnover and mitigation of harmful issues such as workplace bullying and sexual harassment in institutions of higher education. This study represents an exploration and contribution to a gap in academic literature on predictors of employee voice behavior within higher education environments. In pursuit of unpacking predictors or determinants of employee voice, I investigated what factors enable or constrain employees in higher education institutions to speak up.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine the communication perspectives of employees in higher education institutions. Specifically, this research focuses on examining individual and organizational key factors such as alumni status, organizational commitment, work motivation, communication climate, and organizational politics that may explain or influence employee voice behavior. This study investigates and identifies the factors that shape employees' expression of promotive and prohibitive voice in higher education environments. In other words, my study aims to discover who is (not) willing (likely) to speak up and why?

Contributions of the Study

The contributions of this study are to discover what individual and organizational factors influence employee voice behavior in higher education institutions. This study represents an evaluation and comparability of antecedents of voice behavior. For example, this study helps formulate a different model for understanding and assessing promotive and prohibitive voice

behavior. In addition, it contributes where research remains to be executed in literature on key predictors of employee voice behavior. Furthermore, the goal of this study is not solely to better understand the communication construct of voice behavior in a particular context, but also to provide recommendations that are useful in increasing the value and contributions of employees to their colleges and universities, and, therefore contribute to improve those institutions.

Organization of the Study

To explain the organization of this study, following is an overview of the chapters in this thesis on voice behavior. This study consists of six chapters. The subsequent chapter, the literature review, briefly reviews previous research on voice behavior, and how it has been examined in communication research and other fields. The review pays close attention to definitions and the relation of factors that may influence employee voice behavior. In particular, it focuses on key antecedents that may explain or predict voice behavior in organizations such as alumni status, organizational commitment, work motivation, communication climate, and organizational politics. It looks at how these factors have been studied and their contributions to previous research. Furthermore, the research questions and hypotheses are introduced. The rationale for the questions and topics for this study are discussed including factors that are used as possible predictors of employee voice behavior.

In the methods chapter, the research design is discussed. First is an explanation of the context of who and from where the participants were gathered for this study. Following is an identification of the data collected, and how it was gathered and analyzed. Furthermore, there is a discussion and justification of the different variables included consisting of how they were measured and the statistical tests and/or procedures that were used to analyze the data, test the hypotheses, and answer the research questions.

Chapter 4 describes the results from the data and presents the findings of the study for each variable included in the analysis. Furthermore, it describes what was found and what it means in relation to the research questions and hypotheses. The statistical presentation of the results are provided in tabular and/or graphic format. It also describes what hypotheses were supported or not supported.

Chapter 5 presents an in-depth interpretation and synthesis of the results that were obtained in the study. It examines whether key factors or antecedents such as alumni status, organizational commitment, work motivation, communication climate, and organizational politics correlate and have a relationship with employee voice behavior of individuals in higher education. Furthermore, practical implications to institutions of higher education, limitations or weaknesses of the study, and recommendations for future research are discussed. The final chapter provides a review of the purpose, method, and analysis of the results of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Previous research has recognized the importance of employees' voice behavior in organizations. This section briefly reviews previous research on voice behavior, and how it has been investigated. The review demonstrates the centrality of voice in organizing and for organizational success. The review pays close attention to definitions and the factors that may influence employee voice behavior. In particular, it focuses on key individual and organizational antecedents that may explain or predict voice behavior in organizations such as alumni status, organizational commitment, work motivation, communication climate, and organizational politics. An analysis of the literature sets the foundation for the development of the research foci for the study to discover who is willing to speak up and why.

Employee Voice Behavior in Organizations

Voice is powerful and has been defined as the voluntary decision to provide information to improve organizational functions (Detert & Burris, 2007). Voice is also referred to as an articulation of constructive criticism (Van Dyne, et al., 2003) and as a source of recognizing dissatisfaction for improvement (Hirschman, 1970). Liang and colleagues (2012) define voice function as a means to talk about either what can be done better or what is harmful. Indeed, voice behavior can be challenging to organizations as it is perceived as having both favorable and unfavorable consequences. Several researchers have examined how the role of employee voice behavior in organizations can reflect both promotive and prohibitive aspects/dimensions (Bai et al, 2019; Mao & DeAndrea, 2019; Wilkinson et al., 2018; Liang et al., 2012; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). Liang and colleagues (2012) define *promotive voice* as behavior that can better the organization, such as employees that make recommendations for possibilities on new ways to improve organizational processes. *Prohibitive voice*, on the other hand, is defined as a means to

express concern on how to address harmful situations that are already found within the organization (Liang et al., 2012), such as to avoid malpractice (Mao & DeAndrea, 2019). In other words, both promotive and prohibitive voice are positive behaviors with good organizational intentions such as seeking opportunities to speak up and contribute to address work related issues (Wilkinson et al., 2018). However, promotive voice is behavior expressed to suggest new or creative ideas versus prohibitive voice that is behavior expressed to point out concern about existing practices or activities (Liang et al., 2012). To see a comparison of promotive and prohibitive voice behavior refer to table 1 (Comparative Table Regarding Promotive and Prohibitive Voice Behavior) in appendix A.

Voice "uniquely focuses on verbal expressions (directed up, down, or horizontally) that are explicitly intended to benefit the group or organization" (Botero & Van Dyne, 2009, p. 85). In other words, employees speak up to communicate ideas not only to colleagues or project team members but to upper management as well. From their perspective, Bai and colleagues (2019) note that the potential outcomes of discovering organizational weaknesses outweighs the risks of employee voice behavior. This in turn positively influences economic and quality aspects of a company (Avey et al., 2012; Detert & Burris, 2007; Grant & Rothbard, 2013). At the same time, Jha and associates (2019) recognized the importance of employee voice as a strategy to increase employee engagement. Ruck and colleagues (2017) further contribute that effective voice facilitates innovation, competiveness, and organizational emotional engagement. In addition, Wijaya (2019) explores drivers of voice engagement such as proactive personality and the quality of leader-member exchange relationships. Along this reasoning, scholars note leadership-voice relationship and the benefits of fostering employee voice behavior (Detert & Burris, 2007) and the patterns in which voice flows (Detert et. al, 2013). Another key claim

from scholars is that employee input can potentially benefit the organization by serving as a crisis prevention tool (Schwartz & Wald, 2003). Furthermore, as exemplified by Mao and DeAndrea (2019), voice behavior can enhance employee well-being, such as speaking out about workplace wrongdoings as in the case of the #MeToo movement.

By way of contrast, previous research has also identified some challenges and barriers that employees face in expressing voice such as voice suppression, silencing, feeling it is unsafe to speak up, and perceiving that upper management does not care about what they have to say. For instance, a voice that is silenced may have negative consequences on employee morale and thus on employee performance (Morrison, 2014). Employee silence can result from reluctance to discuss critical issues (Morrison & Milliken, 2000, Milliken et al., 2003), sensitive issues (Liang et al., 2012), dissatisfaction (Rusbult et al., 1988), injustice (Pinder & Harlos, 2001), or from employees having reservations about offering suggestions (Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008). In other words, voice suppression can result in deterring dialogue that can bring awareness of harmful situations. Relatedly, an investigation by Mao and DeAndrea (2019) examined the prohibitive aspect of voice behavior. In particular they looked into why employees may sometimes test the waters before deciding if it is safe and worthwhile to voice their concerns and the reasons why individuals feel the need to conceal their identity when disclosing critical information about an organization or department. Along the line of employees facing challenges to speaking up, research by Li and colleagues (2020) investigated how individuals in positions of power perceive and react to employee voice behavior as well as how engaging in voice behavior may be selfish if disregarding organizational goals. Consequently, manifestations of voice behavior can be challenging, because employees may be seen by others as villains and not necessarily as heroes (Wåhlin-Jacobsen, 2020). A further notion of challenges or hurdles

encountered by employees when trying to speak up can be found in Kassing's (2002) research exploring how employees express upward dissent as well as how employee suggestions are sometimes challenged by higher-ups (Wåhlin-Jacobsen, 2020). Furthermore, multiple levels of direct and indirect and hierarchical distance between employees influence communication (Detert & Treviño, 2010). For example, in cases of rankism, employees in positions of power misuse their authoritative power and negatively affect communication outcomes (Fuller, 2006). Schools, along with other types of organizations, are considered breading grounds for rankism (Fuller, 2006).

Because of the many facets of voice that either hinder or promote organizational health, Liang and colleagues (2012) strongly recommend additional research on factors affecting employee voice expression. Such that ignoring voice behavior might lead to negative effects of pseudo voice, which de Vries and colleagues (2012) refer to as having no intentions of considering employee input. Voice behavior is also a source of recognizing dissatisfaction or improvement (Hirschman, 1970). Previous research has found the following predictors of voice behavior: anonymity, safety, efficacy (Mao & DeAndrea, 2019); leader-member exchange and power distance (Botero & Van Dyne (2009); discursive psychology (Wåhlin-Jacobsen, 2020); transformational leadership and managerial openness (Detert and Burris, 2007); proactive personality and leader-member exchange (Wijaya, 2019); and ethical leadership and ethical climate (Bai et al., 2019). A few favorable outcomes of voice behavior include creativity and implementation of new ideas (Ng & Feldman, 2012). Bai and colleagues (2019) recommend additional research on "possible different antecedents, mechanism, consequences, and effect sizes" of employee voice (p. 1895). Let us not forget, however, that employees do not solely

exist within corporations. Employees, and consequently employee voice behavior, are also an integral part of educational environments.

Employee Voice Behavior in Higher Education

The core purpose of higher education is to disseminate knowledge that contributes to the well-being of students and communities (Clark, 1983). However several factors, such as the erosion of faculty voice, interrupts the ability of academic institutions to provide education (Sethares, 2020). Furthermore, employee staff input is often neglected (Duggan, 2008) as they are perceived as less capable than top-level staff of contributing to decisions (Blackmore et al., 2010; Henderson, 2005).

Notably, institutions of higher education are built upon extremely stratified environments (Henderson, 2005) from which tensions such as rankism and microaggressions can be received (Christensen-Mandel, 2019). Three main employee categorical levels found in colleges and universities are administrators, faculty, and general staff (Ginsberg, 2011). Staff are non-academic, non-instructional, and non-research personnel (Hocker, 2015; National Center for Education Statistics, 2017) that may include other professionals such as information technology specialists, accountants, admissions officers, and human resources employees (Ginsberg, 2011). Even though staff should be able to contribute to organizational processes, their voice is often underrepresented or ignored (Florenthal & Tolstikov-Mast, 2012; Barden, 2005; Rhoades, 2005; Whitchurch, 2007). Further examples where hierarchical tensions exist in academia are "senior faculty vs. junior faculty, staff vs. faculty, male vs. female, minority vs. nonminority, and STEM vs. non-STEM" (Trammel & Gumpertz, 2012, para. 2). In other words, the numerous hierarchical or power structures that exist within academic institutions lend themselves to fostering further ways in which employees can encounter challenges when speaking up.

Marginalized groups affected at lower-ranked positions are often women and people of color (Christensen-Mandel, 2019; Acker 1990; Berk, 2017; Chan, 2017; Lumby, 2013).

Education policies can also affect employee voice. For instance, Ginsberg (2011) notes that administrators in higher education try to avoid vocal employees by using policy codes as a form of voice suppression. Furthermore, Sethares (2020) finds a decrease in faculty voice in American higher education due to impacts of neoliberal policy reforms. Neoliberalism refers to an ideology that financial resources should be managed by private sectors rather than in government control (Saltman, 2012) and stresses the importance of profitability (Harvey, 2005). Institutions of higher education affected by neoliberal administration are managed similar to corporate entities (Donoghue, 2018). Ginsberg (2011) states that as a result of neoliberalism, faculty and other bottom level staff are seen more and more as expenditures and their shared governance and voice has declined. Furthermore, Donoghue (2018) analyzes that the fate of faculty shared governance will eventually cause the extinction of the humanities. This is disadvantageous to students' education of soft skills beneficial in the workforce such as communication, critical thinking, and the ability to adapt to changing organizational environments (Nussbaum, 2010). Sethares (2020) proposes that "by claiming their voice, engaging in dialog, and creating institutional structures which value faculty voice, faculty have the unique opportunity to address the very real social, economic, and personal needs of their students" (Sethares, 2020, pp. 83-84). In other words, faculty input and an organizational climate that values such input are key ingredients in a student's successful outcomes within the classroom and beyond.

In addition, Florenthal and Tolstikov-Mast (2012) explored the effects of a university's organizational culture on faculty and staff communication tensions. Their findings point to

enriched outcomes if and when staff are engaged in the decision processes. With regards to workplace bullying in higher education, research shows it is beneficial to use different voices for positive change, such that vocal change agents should be recruited (Barrat-Pugh & Krestelica, 2019) and staff experiences should be vocalized in order to initiate an organizational response (Hodgins & McNamara, 2017). Toward this end, research has also explored additional methods through which employees exercise their voice (Kelsky, 2017). Supplementing this area of research, Dykstra-Devette and Tarin (2019) analyzed Kelsky's (2017) crowdsourced survey on institutional failures expressed via a blog by employees (mostly faculty) in academia. The informal communication method was set up to "allow victims to find a safe way to anonymously report their experience of sexual harassment ... [and] for the academy as a whole to begin to grasp the true scope of this problem in academic settings" (Kelsky, 2017, para. 4). In other words, employees were given a safe zone in which to speak about and unofficially report unethical behaviors. Among the key findings are the varied issues that prevent employees from speaking up about what they witnessed, and worse yet, what they personally experienced. These findings merit further research on employee voice behavior given that ill-treatment is harmful to employee wellbeing (Hodgins & McNamara, 2017).

As demonstrated in the review of previous research on voice behavior, employee voice behavior has the potential to have important implications for an organization. In other words, the consequences of whether or not employees are willing to speak up and make suggestions have a tremendous impact on an organization. For these reasons, acknowledging the importance of employee voice and further contributing to research on voice behavior is critical. However, there is limited research on employee voice behavior within institutions of higher education. Therefore, in an attempt to contribute to the gap in literature on voice behavior of employees in

academia, the main goal of this study is to examine if, how, and why employees working in institutions of higher education participate in exercising voice behavior. As described in previous research, the study of promotive and prohibitive voice behavior is an area that is key to mitigate barriers and challenges to voice behaviors such as voice suppression, which can lead to detrimental personal and organizational outcomes. It is essential to study employee voice in the higher education context because not only is there currently very limited knowledge or research on voice behavior among employees in institutions of higher education, but there is also an apparent disconnect between the way communication within established organizational structures is intended versus the actual way it is perceived by and affects the employees. The disconnect appears to result in challenges and consequences such as to whether or not employees speak up about ways to improve the institution or about harmful situations that afflict colleagues or their own lives. Therefore, my first research question of this study tackles how and, specifically, how much employees in higher education institutions engage in voice behavior.

RQ1: How do employees in higher education institutions engage in voice behavior?

Individual Factors Influencing Voice Behavior

Alumni Status and Voice Behavior

In a previous study on student engagement behavior, alumni were defined as someone who enrolled in a course, completed from 15 to 30 credits, graduated, or any former student with an identified relationship with the college (Skari, 2014). Alumni are thought of as external members of educational institutions that many times support their alma mater. For example, Weerts and colleagues (2010) acknowledge the importance of alumni relations programs and the priority given to them. Most research regarding alumni, however, focuses specifically on financial donations (Clotfelter, 2001; McDearmon & Shirley, 2009; Le Blank & Rucks, 2009;

Okunade, 1993; Weeters & Ronca, 2008, 2009). Contributions to their alma mater often result from the prestige and identity provided from continued affiliation with the institutions (Pickett, 1986). Exploring the experiences of alumni could "provide the administrators of colleges and universities with practical guidance for influencing the perceptions and behaviors of a critical constituency" (Frey, 1981, p. 46). In other words, studying alumni is beneficial to institutions because they are an important group that can help support colleges. In an effort to pursue this goal, Li and colleagues (2015) examined the capacity of universities with regard to alumni faculty and their contributions to research project and student exchange programs. Another approach in research on alumni relationships with their universities can be found in alumni engagement similar to public relations efforts (Myers et al., 2016), especially when a strong alignment of values is perceived (Humphreys & Brown, 2002). For instance, Shen & Sha's (2020) research found that alumni engagement is "manifested through behaviors and affective bonds" (p. 7). Not all messages from alumni in regard to their alma mater, however, are constructive. In a study exploring the long-term effects of rapport, Frisby and associates (2019) found both favorable and unfavorable memorable messages. As such, the role of alumni can have polarizing effects of being supportive or detrimental to universities depending on their previous experience as a student with the college.

Scholars have noted alumni status outcomes to include memorable messages, organizational identification, and rapport (Frisby et al., 2019); organizational identification, construed external image, trust, satisfaction and perceived interorganizational competition (Myers et al., 2016); collaborative behavior (Li et al., 2015); financial contributions, participation in school functions, and college recruitment efforts (Mael & Ashforth, 1992). Frisby and colleagues (2019) recommend "future research could recruit alumni who are engaged

to reveal greater depth of insight into their motives for their continued support, focus on diversity and inclusion initiatives targeting other demographics, and could incentivize the survey" (p. 170).

As previous research shows, the role of alumni is important to institutions of higher education. Alumni belong to a membership group that may develop strong bonds with the institution and discover a strong connection with the values of the college. The bond is of particular importance when the alumni concurrently holds an employee position at their alma mater. It is therefore important to examine if an employees' pre-introduction to the organization influences or drives them to speak up at work. Previous research, however, has seldom examined whether there is a relationship between alumni status and employee voice experiences and if and how alumni who are employed at their alma mater differ in their promotive and prohibitive voice behavior from employees who are not alumni. To address this gap in the literature, I explore the unique relationship found in institutions of higher education between employees' alumni status and their voice behavior. For this study, alumni status is be defined as someone who has either graduated from or has taken at least one course at the institution. I anticipate that the voice behavior of alumni employees will differ from employees who are non-alumni. I expect that the previous exposure and possible strong attachment to the institution will likely make a difference in how employees engage in voice behavior. Alumni employees may be more likely have identified with the college faster than non-alumni and thus be more committed, fostering a stronger feeling and confidence that it is safe to speak up to suggest ideas or to talk about problems within the institution. For instance, as explored by Pickett (1986), alumni contributions may result from prestige and identity provided from their association with college. I expect that alumni status is a good predictor of employee voice behavior and thus, I argue that

alumni status has a positive relation to employee's expression of voice. Therefore I hypothesize the following:

H1: There is a positive relationship between employee alumni status and voice behavior.

H1a: There is a positive relationship between employee alumni status and promotive voice behavior.

H1b: There is a positive relationship between employee alumni status and prohibitive voice behavior.

Employee Organizational Commitment and Voice Behavior

Organizational commitment is a core concept in organizational research, especially in learning about employee work behavior (Mowday et al., 1979). For this present research, I turn to Porter and colleagues (1974) to establish a foundational definition of organizational commitment in terms of strength and identification. These scholars characterize commitment as "(a) a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values; (b) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization; and (c) a definite desire to maintain organizational membership" (Porter et al., 1974, p. 604). In other words, an employee that feels committed to an organization believes in, is dedicated to, and contributes to the mission of the organization. Furthermore, Meyer and Allen (1984) define organizational commitment as an emotional attachment. Not only is organizational commitment an attachment, but it can also represent levels of involvement (Allen & Meyer, 1990). In addition, Pratt (1998) associates it with the satisfaction an employee feels toward their organization. Several models have been utilized in researching organizational commitment (Meyer and Allen, 1991; O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986). One model posits three components including affective commitment or *want* to commit; continuance commitment or feeling they *must* commit; and normative commitment or

feeling they *ought to* commit (Meyer and Allen, 1991). Another model incorporates three different forms of commitment to include: compliance to gain rewards; identification to promote interests; and internalization of shared values (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986). Kim and colleagues (2018) found that "once committed employees derive necessary confidence about their organization from a fulfilled ideological contract, they are likely to engage in behaviors that are beneficial to their organization" (p. 1325). In other words, committed employees are more likely to feel comfortable to express ideas beneficial for organizational success.

There have been several approaches to the exploration of commitment. For example, one study approached commitment exploring the experiences of fresh graduates pertaining to the work environment suggesting that organizational commitment is impacted by training received (Jusoh, 2011) and referenced Ashforth and Saks (1996) discovery that socialization aspects and other experiences occurring at the beginning of employment with an organization foster organizational commitment. A different approach by Meyer and colleagues (Meyer et al., 2002) noted the importance of looking at a lack of organizational commitment and its possible effects such as negative links to stress and conflict within work or family environments. A further view of commitment as presented by Allen (2017) is that of fluidity as influenced by organizational climate such that favorable climates are related to favorable organizational commitment. Favorable commitment attitudes, though, are not instant and take time to develop (Mowday et al,, 1979). Once committed, however, commitment can be favorably conveyed through different methods such as words and actions (Allen, 2017). Commeiras and Fournier (2001) note that "organizational commitment is a useful construct for understanding employee behavior" (p. 239). In other words, studying if employees' behavior is influenced by their felt commitment to an organization, such as willing to speaking up about issues, is important to organizations.

Previous scholars have noted organizational commitment predictors to include: emotional connection and communication with other members (Allen, 2017); organizational identification (Ashforth et al., 2008); callings, ideology-based psychological contact (Kim et al., 2018); perceived obligation to remain in the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990); and employee satisfaction (Men, 2014). In addition, scholars have found organizational commitment outcomes to include organizational citizenship behaviors (Allen, 2017); job performance (Kim et. al, 2018); and turnover intentions, attendance, performance as well as well-being (Meyer et al., 2002).

This look at previous research on organizational commitment reveals a tendency for organizational commitment to be associated with positive outcomes such as loyalty and support of and engaging in behaviors that are beneficial to the organization. In other words, organizational commitment is the tendency for people to feel a strong sense of identification with the organization and its values, put in more effort for organizational success, and a desire to continue to be a part of the organization, in that employees may have a stronger sense of involvement. I thus expect that organizational commitment will impact and drive employees to speak up and contribute to attaining organizational goals such as suggesting ways for improvement or expressing concern about issues affecting them or their students. As shown in Allen's (2017) research, committed employees are more likely to show or express their commitment through words and actions. Previous research has not really considered the impact of commitment on employee voice behavior, especially within the context of employees in higher education. Thus, an exploration of the relation between organizational commitment and promotive and prohibitive voice behavior is warranted. I argue that the more tendency there is to put more effort into the job as a result of organizational commitment, the more likely

employees are influenced to want to speak up. Therefore, I will explore the relationship between commitment and voice behavior, in particular of the organizational commitment effects on employees in higher education institutions such as engaging in employee promotive and prohibitive voice behaviors which leads me to hypothesize the following:

H2: There is a positive relationship between employee organizational commitment and voice behavior.

H2a: There is a positive relationship between employee organizational commitment and promotive voice behavior.

H2b: There is a positive relationship between employee organizational commitment and prohibitive voice behavior.

Work Motivation and Voice Behavior

Motivation is the driving force for acting or engaging in something (Singh, 2016). In organizational environments, motivation is the reason why employees work hard (Herzberg, 1976). Thus, understanding motivation is key for meeting successful organizational productivity outcomes (MacDonald et al., 2019). There are various types of motivation factors (Marciano, 2010; Ryan & Deci, 2000). For example, Mayo (2003) found increased performance motivated by the attention given to employees and if their surroundings support them. On the other hand, Lee and colleagues (2012) discovered complex neurophysiological activity to be intrinsic motivators. A study by Singh (2016) found employee motivation to be influenced by recognition as well as respect and rapport. Examples of motivating factors that encourage loyalty are managerial and organizational trust (Hubbell & Chory-Assad, 2005) and decent work (Ferraro et al., 2019) which help support employees through difficult times (Herzberg, 1976). Motivation outcomes include that it leads to work goal attainment (McCormick & Ligen, 1985) in an

ongoing process (Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006), as well as better occupational health resulting from autonomous motivation (Moller et. al., 2019). Not all motivation, however, fosters beneficial organizational outcomes. For instance, excessive work motivation may cause employee fatigue, stress, or burnout which may reduce the quality of job performance and increase turnover rates (Popescu, 2015).

According to the self-determination theory, work motivation varies in types and across individuals and can range from *amotivation*—which is a person's lack of motivation—to *controlled motivation*—which is motivation due to the pressure an employee feels to do something—to *autonomous motivation*—which is motivation due to a person's own willingness to do something (Moller et al., 2019; Ferraro et al, 2018; Gagné et al., 2015). According to Gagné et al (2015), work motivation is a multi-dimensional construct that encompasses six different types of motivation. The first type or dimension of work motivation is *amotivation*, which is the absence of motivation or an employee's lack of effort. The second type is *extrinsic regulation – social*, that is felt motivation for social reasons such as employees motivated because they are seeking approval or respect. A third type is *extrinsic regulation – material*, that is felt motivation for material reasons such as an employees motivated because they are seeking financial gain or job security. The fourth type is *introjected regulation*, which is felt motivation from internal pressures such as employees that are motivated because they are trying to avoid feeling shame or guilt. The next type is *identified regulation*, which is felt motivation from employees because they identify with and feel shared values or meaning with the organization. The final type is *intrinsic motivation*, which is doing the job for its own sake such as employees motivated because the job and/or job tasks are interesting or enjoyable. Posch and scholars (2019) presented additional types of extrinsic motivation such as rewards, self-worth, and

importance and coherence of goals and values. What the self-determination theory shows us is that there are different sources of motivation that drive people to be motivated at work. In other words, some people may be driven by money while others may be driven to avoid looking like they are not a team-player, yet others might be driven by the joy they get from the work. Table 2 (Motivation Self-determination Dimensions) in appendix A provides a summary and illustrations of the 6 different types of work motivation according to self-determination theory.

Employee work motivation has been widely examined in previous research, though very rarely in organizational communication literature. Previous research has identified several predictors of work motivation including motivating language (Sun et al., 2016), income groups, punishment, performance, goals/values, and regulations (Posch, 2019), money, autonomy, recognition, culture of respect, trust, and rapport (Singh, 2016), justice (Hubbell & Chory-Assad, 2005), solidarity and job satisfaction (MacDonald et al., 2019), and need satisfaction, autonomy-support, leadership style, and job design (Gagné et al., 2015). In terms of outcomes, work motivation has been found to predict job performance and organizational citizenship behavior (Sun et al., 2016), workaholic behavior and work engagement (Popescu, 2015), trust (Hubbell & Chory-Assad, 2005); and vitality, emotional exhaustion, commitment, proficiency, adaptivity, proactivity, job effort and turnover intention (Gagné et al., 2015). MacDonald and colleagues (2019) recommend future research incorporates and examine links between work motivation and other outcomes that have heretofore been overlooked or under examined.

The previous research on work motivation essentially shows that employees' motivation is important to consider when examining their organizational behaviors and different types of motivation can impact job experiences. For example, motivation may drive people to be interested in their job and participate in voicing suggestions to benefit the organization. At the

same time, however, if a person is motivated by a paycheck, they may not likely be driven or find it necessary to speak up at work. I thus think further research to determine a relation between work motivation and voice would be beneficial to colleges and universities to help measure what motivation types matter in encouraging employees to speak up about issues within the institution. Previous research has not extensively examined the impact of work motivation on employee voice behavior, especially in academia. Consequently, in an effort to explore the understudied possible link between employee work motivation and employees' willingness to speak, I will explore if and how work motivation is tied to employee voice behavior in higher education. Since previous studies have found motivation to predict job performance and organizational citizenship behavior (Sun et al., 2016), I think that there is likely to be a relation between employees' work motivation and voice behavior. Indeed, it intuitively makes sense to think that organizational behavior is, at least in part, determined by employees' work motivation. Yet, there is very little research to date that has specifically considered and investigated the link between employee work motivation and their voice behaviors. This study will look into possibly identifying which motivation types may be strong drivers for employee voice behaviors that can actually matter to the organization such as speaking up to give constructive suggestions or to give advice against harmful behaviors. Furthermore, I will explore if some types of motivation matter more than other types in predicting employees' voice behavior in higher education. Therefore, I ask following research questions:

RQ2: Is there a relationship between employee work motivation and voice behavior?

RQ2a: Is there a relationship between employee work motivation and promotive voice behavior?

RQ2b: Is there a relationship between employee work motivation and prohibitive voice behavior?

Organizational Factors Influencing Voice Behavior

Organizational Communication Climate and Voice Behavior

Organizational communication climate exists within organizational climates and shapes relationships within organizations (Pettit et al., 1997). It is found to be a critical link between an organization and its members (Guzley, 1992; Falcione, Susman & Herden, 1987; Kozolwski & Doherty, 1989) and paves the way to organizational efficiency (Nordin et al. 2014). Tagiuri (1968) defined climate as an organizational quality that not only captures the attributes of the communication environment but is also telling of the experiences and factors that influence the behavior of its members. Later dimensions were added to include human resource primacy, communication flow, motivational practices, decision-making practices, technological readiness, and lower-level influence (Taylor & Bowers, 1972; Pace, 1983). From this definition sprouted the conceptualization of communication climate as a separate construct (Poole, 1985; Welsch & LaVan, 1981). This supports Gibb's (1961) illustration of an overarching communication climate. Dennis (1974) refers to organizational communication climate as part of an internal environment that "embraces a general cluster of inferred predispositions identifiable through reports of members' perceptions of messages and message-related events occurring in the organization" (p. 29).

Communication climates can be characterized in a variety of ways including defensive and supportive climates (Forward et al., 2011). For example, communication may be attributed to polar behaviors such as closemindedness and openness or neutrality versus empathy (Gibb, 1961; Rothwell, 2007). Open communication climates may exist where characteristics of

support, participation, and trust are present (Buchholz, 1993). The openness of a communication climate is important to consider because its relative existence or nonexistence can foster favorable or unfavorable relationships with employees (Sias, 2005). Pace and Faules (2006) agree noting that dimensions of communication climate include trust, joint decision-making, honesty, openness and listening. Communication climate also shapes information flow such as free flow of information (Demirel & Tosuner-Fikes, 2014) as it "encourages or hinders horizontal, upward, or downward communication among the employees" (Nordin et al., 2014, p. 1046) and can directly affect job performance (Goris, et. al., 2000). In addition to information flow, information adequacy is also important in establishing the breadth of the organizational communication climate (Walden & Westerman, 2018). For instance, employees value the importance of feedback on job performance and organizational issues (Rhee & Moon, 2009). Employees' perceptions of communication climates can help gage their overall feelings about the organization (Nordin, et. al, 2014). As concluded by Rulianna and colleagues (2018), communication climate is important in understanding what encourages employees' actions. Communication environments are also of value in determining what sparks or prohibits employee work enthusiasm and behavior (Lantara, 2019).

Predictors of communication climate found by scholars include superior-subordinate communication, information quality, openness, and upward communication (O'Connell, 1979), information richness (Stein, 2006), organizational tenure (Ploeger & Bisel, 2013), transformational leadership (Men, 2014), symmetrical internal communication and relationship quality with the organization (Kim & Rhee, 2011), and communication preferences (amount, channels, types of communication), decision making, leadership, motivation and goal setting (Guzley, 1992), and perception of the flow of information (White et al., 2010). Outcomes found

by previous research include employee performance and job satisfaction (Goris, et. al, 2000; Lantara, 2019; Ruliana et al, 2018); advocacy (White et al., 2010); employee commitment (Nordin, 2014); and reduced turnover intentions (Kang & Sung, 2017).

Previous studies on organizational communication climate reveal a trend in positive outcomes such as advocacy and reduced turnover intentions which are beneficial to the organization. Organizational communication climate in this study refers an employee's perception that the organization listens to and cares about their input. In that sense, it is consistent with Atouba, Carlson, and Lammers's (2019) concept of *employee work participation*, which assesses how much an employee perceives that the organization values their input when making decisions related to organizational activities or their job position. It is essentially a measure of the openness of the communication climate within the organization, such that employees' voices are valued. In other words, organizational communication climate refers to whether or not an employee feels their input is welcome and that their opinions, ideas, or voices matter. Therefore, I expect that communication climate can help nurture employee voice behaviors. Previous research is limited when looking at perceptions of organizational communication climate among employees in academia and its relation to voice behavior. Thus, an exploration of the relation between organizational communication climate and promotive and prohibitive voice behavior is important because the way it is perceived by employees in higher education institutions influences and might encourage or inhibit their voice behavior. I argue that a positive relationship is likely to exist between communication climate and voice behavior. Indeed, I expect that the more employees perceive that the organizational communication climate is open and welcoming or that their voice matters and can make a difference, the more likely

they are to speak up and express ways in which to do things better or to call attention to failures that exist within the institution. Therefore, I hypothesize the following:

H3: There is a positive relationship between perceived organizational communication climate and voice behavior.

H3a: There is a positive relationship between perceived organizational communication climate and promotive voice behavior

H3b: There is a positive relationship between perceived organizational communication climate and prohibitive voice behavior

Organizational Politics and Voice Behavior

Organizations are political systems wherein organizational politics exist in the form of employee perceptions of members' behavior as "self-serving, contradictory to organizational objectives, and premeditated to cause individuals, groups, or entities harm" (Hochwarter & Thompson, 2010, p. 1372). These types of politically induced actions within organizations are viewed as dysfunctional, and negative (Gandz & Murray, 1980; Mintzberg, 1983; Voyer, 1994). That is, organizational politics reflects actions by members motivated by the specific intentions of personal benefit without care about other member's well-being (Kacmar & Baron, 1999) or having agendas to influence others for their own gain while creating a disadvantage for others (Sussman et al., 2002). Nye and Witt (1993) studied constructs of organizational politics such as going along with the flow for personal gain and note that organizational politics may be a reflection of how employees feel and perceive the general organizational climate, supporting previous findings that suggest organizational politics should be compared with scales measuring organizational climate (Kacmar & Ferris, 1991).

Some of the research on organizational politics includes different findings. Using a political lens to examine members' motives and behaviors, Sussman and colleagues (2002) found significant differences in the types of methods used between work tasks and messages motivated by political means, such as face-to-face or email communication behaviors. These findings support Farrell and Peterson's (1982) description of behaviors motivated politically as extra-role behaviors that create "the distribution of advantages and disadvantages within the organization" (1982, p. 405).

In turn, Wiltshire and colleagues (2014) examined the role of personality dimension in predicting relationships between perceptions and reactions to organizational politics. They found that perceptions of highly political communication environments foster more job stress, counterproductive work behavior, and less job satisfaction (see also Zettler and Hilbig, 2010). At the same time, Rosen and colleagues (2014) investigated variables that would, and as it turned out, did demonstrate how organizational politics influence employees' behaviors. Additionally, Landells & Albrecht (2019) explored several tenets including the driving forces of gossip and rumors. More recently, Li et al. (2020) stated that "when a feeling of uncertainty results from organizational politics, employees lack certainty about whether their voice will ultimately change the status quo and produce desired outcomes" (p. 447). In other words, when employees feel people in the organization only care about themselves, then they may become disillusioned and feel their voice would not make a positive difference. Furthermore, their study found that organizational politics negatively affects promotive and prohibitive voice behavior (Li et al., 2020) which in consistent with Landells and Albrechts's (2019) finding that organizational politics has a negative effect on employee's feeling their work is meaningful.

Predictors of organizational politics previously found in research include psychological uncertainty (Li et al., 2020), honesty-humility (Wiltshire et al., 2014), and relationships, communication, resources, reputation, and decisions (Landells & Albrecht, 2019). Outcomes found include counterproductive work behavior, impression management behavior, and job stress (Wiltshire et al., 2014; Landells & Albrecht, 2019), voice behaviors (Li et al., 2020), job strain, exchange relationship, and contextual performance (Rosen et al., 2014), and indirect effects on engagement (Landells & Albrecth, 2019). Thus, exploring organizational politics is of importance in order to deter detrimental consequences that directly hinder organizational success by triggering strain such as stress, burnout, and job dissatisfaction (Hotchwarter et al., 2003; Miller et al., 2008; Chang et al, 2009; Vigoda-Gadot & Talmud, 2010). Along the lines of engagement, Li and colleagues (Li et al., 2020) recommend future research "explore how different conceptualizations of organizational politics influence employee voice" (p. 464).

Previous research on organizational politics reveals that organizational politics drives varied outcomes. Organizational politics refers to the perception that a tendency exists for employees to care more about personal gain or put their personal interests above the organizational interest. Previous studies suggest that higher perceived organizational politics decreases employees' willingness to participate in organizational processes. In particular, research has found a negative link between organizational politics and promotive and prohibitive voice (Li et al., 2020). In other words, the more/stronger employees perceive organizational politics at work, or that people are self-serving, the less they are likely to feel safe about speaking up at work. Thus further research on the effects of organizational politics is important. What is missing from research, however, is a specific look at organizational politics outcomes of employees in academia such as counterproductive work behaviors. I feel that further research

into how organizational politics affects employee voice in institutions of higher education is warranted in order to attempt to discover ways in which to mitigate employee's feeling that their voice does not matter. I expect, in line with previous studies, that the more an employee in academia perceives organizational politics at work or that other employees, especially upper management, are primarily self-serving in their behaviors, the less likely they are to feel safe to speak up about issues that they are aware of or are experiencing themselves. Thus, I believe and argue that perceptions of organizational politics in higher education institutions will likely have a negative effect on employee voice behavior which leads me to hypothesize the following:

H4: There is a negative relationship between perceived organizational politics and voice behavior.

H4a: There is a negative relationship between perceived organizational politics and voice behavior.

H4b: There is a negative relationship between perceived organizational politics and voice behavior.

Literature Conclusion

Although there is a substantial amount of scholarly literature regarding employee voice behavior and relevant topic areas of interest within communication environments, voice behavior has not received a lot of attention within the domain of institutions of higher education. As demonstrated in previous research, it is critical to study voice behavior within environments of higher education. Not only can academia gain knowledge for institutional development and potentially deter neoliberal effects, there is also a necessity to discover means to encourage employee voice behavior. Therefore, this study contributes to the need to further understand this phenomenon. The areas examined in the literature review recognize specific variables and reflect

both individual and organizational factors that could shape, enable, or constrain employees' voice behaviors.

Chapter 3: Methods

In this chapter, I review the research design. First is an explanation of the context of who and from where the participants were gathered for this study. I briefly describe the demographics of the participants who contributed to this study through the survey. These demographics show age, gender, education level, ethnicity, race, years of employment, employee category, employee status and alumni status. Next, the procedure of how the survey was distributed and the steps throughout are examined. After that, the measurements and what variables were used and how they were measured in the study are described. Finally, how the data was analyzed is discussed.

Setting

This study was conducted at El Paso Community College (EPCC), a two-year institution of higher education located in the southwestern United States. This community college has graduated more than 80,000 students over the last 50 years and employs on and off close to 3,000 employees on average. It is located district-wide throughout its five campuses and administrative services center. The faculty and staff support the college mission that provides for accessible quality and affordable education that prepares students for academic, professional and personal growth and advance the regional workforce (El Paso Community College, n.d.). I chose this educational institution because as an employee at this institution, my membership was helpful in negotiating rapid access to participants of this place of work that meet the research criteria in a prompt timeframe. According to Tracy (2013), one of the most convenient places to start research/fieldwork is right where you are – in your own workplace, culture, social group, classroom, vacation destination, or watering hole.

EPCC was temporarily closed to the public during the research study due to a pandemic. All non-essential employees were working remotely from provisional settings in their personal residence via distance technology. School closures were enacted five months prior to the study per an executive order from the state governor intended to further contain the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Only limited essential staff were working on-site to ensure continued critical college operations. The majority of services provided by college transitioned to a virtual format, including class instruction, student services, and administrative services.

Participants

The sample procedure used was purposive convenience sampling. The participant characteristic criteria were restricted to active employees at EPCC, excluding student workers. Volunteer participants were recruited using online methods and the traditional recruitment of word-of-mouth. The online methods included distribution of a recruitment letter to an electronic mailing list of 3,975 full-time and part-time employees. The list of email addresses of potential participants was provided by the Institutional Research Department at EPCC through an external request for research assistance/information for active employees meeting the sample criteria. EPCC Institutional Research employee ethnicity statistical report from payroll data indicates that out of the 3,975 employees listed as active, only 2,314 employees received a paycheck during the month the link to the survey was accessible. Employees not teaching or on leave without pay, and recent retirees or separated employees not yet purged from the EPCC database system are not included in the monthly employee statistic total for the reporting month reflecting the participant sample population. Thus, the actual number of targeted employees for this study is 2,314.

Participants for this study indicated age ranges between the intervals of 18 to 24 and 70 plus years of age. Every respondent must have consented online to the study before participating in the self-administered survey. The data was collected via QuestionPro, a web-based survey software. After that, the data was exported to the Windows version of the IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 26 for statistical analysis. In a recruitment effort to produce the sample of respondents, I sent emails and called EPCC colleagues to briefly discuss the study and what was required of the participants. I asked them to encourage their co-workers to participate in the study. In addition, I sent an email to the leaders of the three constituency groups at EPCC (Faculty Association, Professional Staff Association, and Classified Staff Association) and asked them to encourage members of their corresponding associations to participate in the study. Furthermore, I asked the Associate Vice President responsible for the division I work for at EPCC to present the study at a cabinet leadership meeting to recruit administrator participation. To further encourage participation, all respondents that completed the survey were automatically entered in a random prize drawing for a chance to win one of three Amazon.com gift cards with a $100 value.

This survey was open and made available to EPCC employees for about a month. After the survey was deployed, seven survey reminders were sent, approximately two reminders per week and one reminder on the last day that the survey was open. The results gathered 876 respondents who opened and started the survey, 811 respondents who consented and agreed to participate, 688 (78.5%) respondents that answered all the questions on the survey, and 123 respondents that did not consent or dropped out of the survey. The percentages reported do not account for the missing data. The response rate yielded a proportional sample size of

approximately 20% of the target population listed as active (3,975) and 35% of the target population reported from payroll data (2,314).

The sample included 467 (58.7%) females, 318 (39.9%) males, 2 (.3%) other, and 9 (1.1%) who preferred not to answer. In terms of education level, the sample includes 9 (1.1%) participants with a high school diploma, 58 (7.3%) with some college, 161 (20.2%) with an associate degree, 156 (19.6%) with a bachelor's degree, 348 (43.7%) with a master's degree, and 64 (8%) with a Ph.D. When reporting ethnicity, there were 613 (77.3%) respondents who identified as Hispanic/Latinx ethnicity and 180 (22.7%) who did not. Looking at the race data, 600 (75.7%) respondents identified as white, 10 (1.3%) as black or African American, 11 (1.4%) as Asian/Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian, 21 (2.6%) as Native American, 73 (9.2%) as multiracial, and 78 (9.8%) as other. Reported employment ranged from less than one year to 50 years. The average length of employment was 14.4 years, the median 11 years, and mode 4 years.

When indicating employee category, there were 238 (30%) classified staff, 130 (16.4%) professional staff, 37 (4.7 %) administrator, and 388 (48.9%) faculty. Faculty tenure was reported as 42 (10.8%) on a tenure track, but not tenured; 107 (27.5%) tenured; and 240 (61.7%) not on a tenure track. In terms of employee status, the sample included 459 (58%) full-time and 332 (42%) part-time employees, with only 188 (23.7%) indicating they have another paid job or occupation. When identifying alumni status at EPCC, there were 249 (31.5%) respondents that have taken at least one credit course at EPCC, 332 (42%) that graduated from EPCC, and 210 (26.5%) that have never taken a credit course at EPCC. The distribution rates of gender, ethnicity, and employee status of survey respondents are comparatively proportional to rates represented on EPCC monthly employee demographic data. For example, following are

percentages from the respondents compared to percentages reported on the EPCC data respectively: females, 58.7% to 57.5%; males, 39.9% to 42.5%; Hispanic, 77.3% to 79.5%; full-time, 58% to 52.9%; and part-time, 42% to 47.1%.

Procedure

Before conducting the survey, a proposal was sent to the Institutional Review Boards at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) and EPCC and was approved. The survey was developed with the help of my advisor using questions and scales from previous research and studies. A pilot survey was created to observe and look for any flaws and errors that could be changed to improve the final survey. I recruited EPCC employees that met the sample population criteria and would be willing to take the pilot survey and provide feedback on what they felt was difficult to understand or could be changed. Fourteen participants completed the pilot survey and the majority provided constructive feedback. Comments were provided on how some of the questions were worded, the font size of the scale items, and the options provided for age demographics. The survey was revised taking the comments into consideration along with additional errors that my advisor and I found when reviewing the results. For example, in order to improve anonymity to respondents, the options to indicate participant age were changed from specific age to age intervals.

The final copy of the survey went live and was deployed on Monday, September 24th and was officially closed on Monday, October 19th. The survey was administered via QuestionPro and then the data was exported to SPSS for statistical analysis. The three winners of the prize drawing for participating in the study and completing the survey were randomly selected by QuestionPro and notified via email two weeks after the closing of the survey. The survey contained questions that asked participants about their attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors

concerning the topics of interest in the study. There were 811 participants who agreed and were directed to the survey and whose data was recorded.

Measurement of Control Variables

Age. Participant responses show 35 were within 18 to 24 years old, 41 were within 25 to 29 years old, 56 were within 30 to 34 years old, 79 were within 35 to 39 years old, 91 were within 40 to 44 years old, 87 were within 45 to 49 years old, 82 were within 50 to 54 years old, 112 were within 55 to 59 years old, 94 were within 60 to 64 years old, 68 were 65 to 69 years old, and 46 were 70 and above years old.

Gender. Respondents chose from (1) female, (2) male, (3) other, or (4) prefer not to answer. More participants were females than males. The number of respondents was 467 (58.7%) females, 318 (39.9%) males, 2 (.3%) other, and 9 (1.1%) preferred not to answer.

Education level. Respondents chose from (1) high school diploma, (2) some college, (3) associate degree, (4) bachelor's degree, (4) master's degree, and (5) Ph.D. Among the participants, 9 (1.1%) indicated their highest educational level as a high school diploma, 58 (7.3%) as some college, 161 (20.2%) as an associate degree, 156 (19.6%) as a bachelor's degree, 348 (43.7%) as a master's degree, and 64 (8%) as a Ph.D.

Ethnicity. Respondents chose from (1) YES or (2) NO regarding whether they were of Hispanic/Latinx ethnicity. There were 613 (77.3%) respondents who identified as Hispanic/Latinx and 180 (22.7%) who did not.

Race. Respondents choose from (1) White, (2) Black or African American, (3) Asian/Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian, (4) Native American, (5) Two or more races/multiracial, and (6) other. Looking at the race data, 600 (75.7%) respondents identified as white, 10 (1.3%)

as black or African American, 11 (1.4%) as Asian/Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian, 21 (2.6%) as Native American, 73 (9.2%) as multiracial, and 78 (9.8%) as other.

Years of Employment. This variable measured the number of years an employee has worked for the organization. The length of employment options for the respondents ranged from less than 1 year to no more than 50 years at the college, in correlation to the foundation of the institution. Respondents indicated years of employment from less than one year to 50 years. The average length of employment was 14.4 years, the median 11 years, and mode 4 years.

Employee category. Employee category represents the employee status with organization. Respondents' employee category ranged from (1) classified, (2) professional, (3) administrator, to (4) faculty. A classified staff member is an employee whose primary job is technical, clerical, secretarial, and/or maintenance support services (El Paso Community College, 2018, 3.07.04). A professional support staff member is an employee whose primary responsibility is providing support in a specialized professional, service, support, or instructional role for operational functions. The professional support employee may have supervisory responsibilities (El Paso Community College, 2018, 3.07.03). An administrator is an employee who is responsible for providing planning and operational leadership in the development, implementation and management of major district-wide operational functions (El Paso Community College, 2018, 3.07.01). A faculty member is an employee whose primary job is instruction or are designated counselors or librarians (El Paso Community College, 2019, 3.07.02). This nominal measure is included as a control variable. When indicating employee category, there were 238 (30%) classified staff, 130 (16.4%) professional staff, 37 (4.7 %) administrator, and 388 (48.9%) faculty. Faculty tenure was reported as 42 (10.8%) on a tenure track, but not tenured; 107 (27.5%) tenured; and 240 (61.7%) not on a tenure track.

Employee status. Respondents chose from (1) full-time and (2) part-time. The sample included 459 (58%) full-time employees and 332 (42%) part-time employees.

Alumni Status. Respondents chose from (1) have taken a credit course, (2) graduated from, or (3) have never taken a credit course. When identifying alumni status at EPCC, there were 249 (31.5%) respondents that have taken at least one credit course at EPCC, 332 (42%) that graduated from EPCC, and 210 (26.5%) that have never taken a credit course at EPCC.

Measurement of Independent Variables

There were 5 different sections and multiple scales that make up the independent variables that were used in this study. The scales are the organizational commitment scale, the multidimensional work motivation scale, the communication climate scale, and the perception of organizational politics scale. The list of all the items that were used for each of the scale independent variables is provided in tables 3 - 5 (List of Scale Variables and Items) in appendix A.

Organizational commitment. Employee organizational commitment was measured using a scale that was adapted from Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979). The scale includes 15 items that measure felt commitment to the organization. Six items were reverse coded. The scale included items such as "I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help EPCC be successful." The higher scores on this scale show more felt commitment to the organization. The items were measured using a seven-step Likert scale ranging from (1) "strongly disagree" to (7) "strongly agree." The alpha reliability for this scale was good at .85 (M = 5.50, SD = 0.89).

Work motivation. Work motivation was measured using a multidimensional motivation scale that was adapted from Gagné et al. (2015). The scale measures the extent to which

employees are motivated by various sources/drivers/needs to put effort into their work. The multidimensional work motivation measure consists of six dimensions or types of motivations. These are *extrinsic regulation – social, extrinsic regulation – material, introjected regulation, identified regulation, intrinsic motivation,* and *amotivation.* The 6 types of motivation are measured in subscales and the items on the subscales respond to the item stem "why do you or would you put effort into your current job?" The items on the subscales were measured using a seven-step Likert scale ranging from (1) "strongly disagree" to (7) "strongly agree."

The first subscale measured *extrinsic regulation – social*, that is felt motivation for social reasons such as seeking approval or respect from others. This subscale included three items such as "because others (e.g. supervisor, colleagues, family, clients...) will respect me more." The higher score indicated that the individual is highly motivated by the expectation of social gain. The alpha reliability for this subscale was good at .85 (M = 4.06, SD = 1.59).

The second subscale measured *extrinsic regulation – material*, that is felt motivation for material reasons such as seeking financial gain or job security. This subscale included three items such as "because I risk losing my job if I don't put enough effort in it." The higher score shows more perceived motivation for material gain. The alpha reliability for this subscale was respectable at .77 (M = 3.57, SD = 1.57).

The third subscale measured *introjected regulation*, which is felt motivation from internal pressures such as avoidance of shame or guilt. This subscale included four items such as "because otherwise I feel bad about myself." The higher score shows more perceived motivation from internal pressures. The alpha reliability for this subscale was good at .80 (M = 5.16, SD = 1.42).

The fourth subscale measured *identified regulation*, which is felt motivation from identifying with shared values or meaning. This subscale included three items such as "because I personally consider it important to put efforts in this job." The higher score shows more perceived motivation from identified shared values. The alpha reliability for this subscale was excellent at .91 (M = 6.45, SD = 0.83).

The fifth subscale measured *intrinsic motivation*, that is doing the job for its own sake such as because it is interesting or enjoyable. This subscale included three items such as "because I have fun doing my job." The higher score shows more perceived motivation for its own sake. The alpha reliability for this subscale was excellent at .94 (M = 6.14, SD = 1.10).

The final subscale measured *amotivation*, which is the absence of motivation or no effort. This subscale included three items such as "I don't put effort into my job, because I really feel that I'm wasting my time at work." The higher score shows more perceived lack of motivation. The alpha reliability for this subscale was excellent at .92 (M = 1.53, SD = 1.05).

Communication climate. Perception of communication climate was measured using a scale adapted from Atouba et al. (2019). The employee work participation scale measures a respondent's perceptions about the organization's communication climate through employee work participation, which assesses how much an employee perceives the organization values their input when making decisions related to organizational activities or their job position. It is essentially a measure of the openness of the communication climate within the organization, such that employees' voices are valued. This scale included five items such as "my colleagues and superiors are genuinely interested in what I have to say." The items were measured using a seven-step Likert scale ranging from (1) "strongly disagree" to (7) "strongly agree." The higher

score shows the employee perceived more interest in their input from the organization. The alpha reliability for this subscale was excellent at .93 (M = 4.89, SD = 1.51).

Perception of organizational politics. Perceived organizational politics was measured using a scale adapted from Landells and Albrecht (2019). The scale measured the degree of perceived self-serving behaviors on different dimensions including using relationships, use of communication channels, personal reputation, influencing decision-making, and controlling resources. This scale included fifteen items such as "at EPCC, people abuse their authority by making decisions that benefit themselves." The items were measured using a seven-step Likert scale ranging from (1) "strongly disagree" to (7) "strongly agree." The higher score shows more perceived politically influenced behaviors. The alpha reliability for this scale was excellent at .98 (M = 3.79, SD = 1.60).

Measurement of Dependent Variable

Voice behavior. Voice behavior was measured using a scale that was adapted from Liang et al. (2012). The scale measured the degree to which an employee voices suggestions or recommendations for organizational success. Two types of voice behavior are categorized into subscales. The items on the subscales were measured using a seven-step Likert scale ranging from (1) "strongly disagree" to (7) "strongly agree."

The first subscale measured *promotive voice*, which is voice behavior meant to express new ideas for improving the function of the organization. This subscale included five items such as "I proactively voice out constructive suggestions that help EPCC reach its goals." The higher score shows more felt expression of promotive voice. The alpha reliability for this subscale was excellent at .94 (M = 4.92, SD = 1.40).

The second subscale measured *prohibitive voice*, which is voice behavior meant to express concern about practices or activities that are harmful to the organization. This subscale included five items such as "I speak up honestly about problems that might cause serious loss to EPCC, even when/though dissenting opinions exist." The higher score shows more felt expression of prohibitive voice. The alpha reliability for this subscale was good at .88 (M = 4.86, SD = 1.24).

Analysis

To examine and answer the first research question of the study, frequency tables are provided in appendix A to highlight the various ways that employees reported engaging in voice behaviors. One table (Table 6) was created showing employee promotive voice behavior results, a second (Table 7) showing employee prohibitive voice behavior, and a third (Table 8) showing voiced and reported unethical/unfair behavior. To examine and test the first hypothesis, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to test if promotive or prohibitive employee voice behavior have a positive relationship with alumni status.

To examine and answer the second research question and test the second, third, and fourth hypotheses, correlation and multiple linear regressions were conducted. Table 9 shows the descriptive statistics of all the main variables in this study before examining the relationships between them. First, a bivariate correlation was conducted to test which variables are correlated/have a relationship to one another. The variables included in this measure were organizational commitment, extrinsic regulation – social, extrinsic regulation – material, introjected regulation, identified regulation, intrinsic motivation, amotivation, communication climate, perception of organizational politics, promotive voice, and prohibitive voice. Once this data was gathered, it was recorded into a correlation matrix table (Table 10).

Next, multiple linear regressions were conducted to evaluate the prediction of which control variables (age, gender, education level, ethnicity, race, years employed, employee category, employee status, and alumni status) and independent variables (organizational commitment, extrinsic regulation – social, extrinsic regulation – material, introjected regulation, identified regulation, intrinsic motivation, communication climate, and organizational politics) are related to the dependent variables (promotive and prohibitive voice behavior). Tables 11-12 can be referred to below in appendix A.

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter describes and explains in detail the results from the analysis of the data gathered from the survey administered and presents the findings of the study for each of the predictor variables included in the analysis. The data was collected via QuestionPro, a web-based survey software. After that, the data was exported to the Windows version of the IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 26 for statistical analysis. The chapter provides the data analysis' results and what they mean in relation to the research questions and hypotheses. It describes what hypotheses were supported or not supported. The statistical presentation of the results are provided in tabular and/or graphic format in appendix A.

Employee Voice Behavior

Tables 6, 7, and 8 below provide the frequencies of employee voice behavior. Looking at table 6, it shows that in general, participants within the organization reported that they slightly agree that they engage in promotive voice. The highest mean among the promotive voice items is the item that states "I raise suggestions to improve EPCC's working procedures." The second highest mean item was for the item that states "I proactively develop and make suggestions for issues that may influence EPCC." The lowest mean item was for the item which states that "I proactively suggest new projects which at beneficial to EPCC." The means between the lowest two items was not by much of a difference.

Table 7 shows that in general, participants within the organization reported that they slightly agree that they engage in prohibitive voice. The average mean reported for prohibitive voice items was slighter lower than the average reported for promotive voice items. The highest mean among the prohibitive voice items was for the item which states that "I speak up honestly about problems that might cause serious loss to EPCC, even though dissenting opinions exist."

The second highest was mean was for the item that states "I advise other colleagues against undesirable behaviors that would hamper job performance." The lowest mean item was for the item which states "I voice out opinions on things that might affect efficiency at EPCC, even if that would embarrass others."

Table 8 shows that on average participants reported that they agree to voice unethical/unfair voice behavior, meaning they are willing to engage in talking about unethical/unfair behaviors. The highest mean for voicing unethical/unfair behavior was for the item which states that "I speak up or voice my concerns when I see evidence of racial, sexual, or homophobic harassment or discrimination at EPCC." Table 8 also shows that in general, participants within the organization reported that they sometimes engage in reporting unethical/unfair behavior. The highest mean for reporting unethical/unfair behavior was for the item which states that "you report your coworkers' inappropriate/unethical behavior to the appropriate personnel." The results in the three frequency tables help answer research question #1 that asked how employees in higher education institutions engage in voice behavior. Results show that employees are likely to participate in expressing promotive and prohibitive voice, and in voicing inappropriate/unethical behavior. The results indicate, however, that employees are less willing to report inappropriate/unethical behavior than to talk about it. This is reflected in a sizeable difference between the means of the voicing and reporting items.

Variables Influencing Employee Voice Behavior

Hypothesis #1 tested for a positive relationship between employee alumni status and both promotive and prohibitive voice behavior. Two one-way ANOVAs were performed to compare the three alumni status categories in terms of promotive and prohibitive voice behaviors. The tests showed no significant relationship for promotive voice [$F(2,738) = .88$, $p = .42$], nor for

prohibitive voice [$F(2,738) = .13$, $p = .88$]. Those results indicate that hypothesis #1 was not supported and there is no relationship between alumni status and voice behavior.

Table 10 presents the correlation matrix of study variables. All the variables were matched to determine whether the change in the score for a variable is correlated with the change in score on a second variable. The table basically shows which variables have a significant correlation with one another, indicated by a significant level at $p < .05$ or $p < .01$. The variables that are significantly correlated with promotive voice behavior include organizational commitment ($r = .25$, $p < .01$), identified regulation ($r = .18$, $p < .01$), intrinsic motivation ($r = .20$, $p < .01$), amotivation ($r = -.08$, $p < .05$), communication climate ($r = .32$, $p < .01$), and perception of organizational politics ($r = -.10$, $p < .01$). The variables that are significantly correlated with prohibitive voice behavior include organizational commitment ($r = .19$, $p < .01$), identified regulation ($r = .13$, $p < .01$), intrinsic motivation ($r = .15$, $p < .01$), and communication climate ($r = .20$, $p < .01$). These results provide some preliminary indications of significant relationships between predictor variables and employee voice behavior.

Table 11 shows the results of a multiple linear regression performed to examine what variables were the best predictors for promotive voice behavior. The multiple linear regression determined that identified regulation ($\beta = .10$, $p < .05$), communication climate ($\beta = .37$, $p < .01$), and perceptions of organizational politics ($\beta = .15$, $p < .01$) were the only significant predictors for promotive voice behavior, after accounting for the effects of all other predictors in the model.

Table 12 shows the results of a multiple linear regression performed to examine what variables were the best predictors for prohibitive voice behavior. The linear regression determined that only communication climate ($\beta = .24$, $p < .01$), and perceptions of organizational politics ($\beta = .11$, $p < .05$) were significant predictors for promotive voice behavior.

The results do not support hypothesis #2 which states there is a positive relationship between organizational commitment and (a) promotive and (b) prohibitive voice behavior. There is no significant relationship between organizational commitment and either promotive or prohibitive voice behavior, at least not a direct one.

Research question #2 asked whether there was a relationship between employee work motivation and (a) promotive and (b) prohibitive voice. There was a significant relationship between one work motivation type, *identified regulation*, and promotive voice behavior. However, there was no significant relationship between any work motivation types and prohibitive voice behavior.

Hypothesis #3 which states that there is a positive relationship between perceived communication climate and (a) promotive and (b) prohibitive voice behavior was supported. The results support hypothesis #3 and show there is a significant relationship between perceived communication climate and both promotive and prohibitive voice behavior.

Hypothesis #4 which states there is a negative relationship between perceived organizational politics and (a) promotive and (b) prohibitive voice behavior was not supported. The results, instead and very surprisingly, indicate a positive relationship between perceived organizational politics and both promotive and prohibitive voice behavior.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The purpose of this research study is to examine individual and organizational predictors of employee voice behavior in higher education institutions. The factors that I examined in this study on voice behavior were alumni status, organizational commitment, work motivation, perceived communication climate, and perceived organizational politics. The results of the study show three predictors, namely work motivation, organizational communication climate, and organizational politics that influence promotive voice behavior. Additionally, the results show that organizational communication climate and perceived organizational politics affect prohibitive voice behavior. Furthermore, the results show that alumni status and organizational commitment were not at all (directly) related to either promotive or prohibitive employee voice behavior. The following sections present an in-depth explanation of the meaning of the results for the main variables, the implications, and the limitations and suggestions for future research.

Employee Voice Behavior

The first research question asked how employees in higher education engage in voice behavior. The results show that employees at EPCC are likely to engage in both promotive and prohibitive voice behavior, and in voicing inappropriate/unethical behavior. What this means is that employees in academia appear to be likely willing to speak up to offer suggestions for how to improve the institution and are also likely willing to express concern when they are aware of harmful situations or incidents within EPCC or if they saw unethical behavior such as sexual harassment. This result further illustrates what Detert & Burris (2007) define as voice that is powerful; in this study in particular, that employees in academia are likely willing to volunteer information to improve the institution. Furthermore, it supplements Liang and colleagues (2012)

research on functions of employee voice that includes to talk about what can be done better or what is harmful.

In contrast to voicing about unethical/unfair behavior, on average people indicated that they only sometimes agree to report unethical/unfair behavior. This appears to indicate an interesting shift; that while people are willing to speak up and discuss unethical/unfair behavior, they are less likely to formally report it. This may be due to the perceived risks and penalties that they may incur when formally reporting an incident. For example, people may be willing to talk to coworkers about something they saw or call out somebody at a meeting or in private to intervene or try to make unethical or abusive behavior stop. However, people are less willing to formally file a report to formal administrative structures because they might feel they are putting someone's or their own job in jeopardy, and they are not willing to sacrifice that. Another risk of reporting versus talking about unethical/unfair behavior may be the fear that comes from losing anonymity. Employees might feel secure to confide in co-workers to keep their identity a secret; however, filing a report may require employees to expose their identity. This result is consistent with Mao and DeAndrea's (2019) examination of prohibitive behavior predictors such as anonymity, safety, and efficacy, that indicates employees may test the waters before they decide if it is safe and worthwhile to disclose their identity. It also supplements Dykstra-Devette and Tarin's (2019) analysis of how organizational policies sometimes discourage individuals to report harassment. Furthermore, employees may be less willing to report harmful incidents to avoid being seen as a snitch or villain, as is found by Wåhlin-Jacobsen (2020).

The data from the responses reveals that there is definitely a gap between speaking up about unethical/unfair behavior and reporting it. By their own admission, employees at EPCC are less willing to formally report incidents of unethical/unfair behavior. What we can take away

from this result is that perhaps institutional administration should review their reporting policing to finds ways that enable employees to feel more confident and safe in the reporting process.

Alumni Status

The first hypothesis tested for a positive relationship between employee alumni status and a) promotive and b) prohibitive voice behavior. I expected that alumni status would have a positive relationship to employee voice behavior due to alumni employees' pre-experience and perhaps stronger commitment to the institution that could translate to feeling more comfortable and/or compelled to speaking up, because previous research had shown that alumni engagement is expressed through behaviors and bonds (Shen & Sha, 2020). Surprisingly, however, the results indicate the hypothesis is not supported and therefore not consistent with forms of alumni engagement. What this appears to suggest is that an employee's pre-introduction to EPCC does not appear to influence or drive their propensity to speak up at work. The extent to which they offer suggestions or voice concern is not influenced by whether or not they have taken a course or graduated from EPCC. What we can learn from this result is that alumni status is not necessarily a strong influencer of commitment and expressions of commitment and that alumni and non-alumni seem to respond the same in their voice behavior. Their same levels of reporting willingness to speak up may be attributed to other factors, such as organizational culture or communication climate.

Organizational Commitment

The results do not support the second hypothesis which stated that there would be a positive relationship between organizational commitment and a) promotive and b) prohibitive voice behavior. I had expected a positive relationship between organizational commitment and employee voice behavior because as seen in previous research, like Allen & Meyer (1990),

commitment can manifest into several levels of involvement, such that committed individuals could possibly feel a willingness to exert effort to speak up. However, the findings show there is no significant relationship between organizational commitment and either promotive or prohibitive voice behavior. What this appears to imply is that at EPCC people who indicate they feel high organizational commitment were not more likely to speak up at work than those who felt low organizational commitment, after considering other factors. What we can learn is that an employee's felt level of commitment to an organization does not necessarily lead to more willingness to speak up and discuss harmful issues or suggest creative ways to do things; although employees' commitment to the organization is important and can manifest itself in a variety of ways, other factors likely play a more important role in determining employees' voice behaviors. Given that there were positive correlations between organizational commitment and both promotive and prohibitive voice behavior, it is possible that these relationships are only indirect, mediated, or impacted by other variables such as perceptions of the organizational communication climate, organizational politics, or work motivations. Future research should explore those possibilities to clarify the relationship between organizational commitment and voice behavior.

Work Motivation

The second research question asked if there was a relationship between employee work motivation and (a) promotive and (b) prohibitive voice behavior. I expected that work motivation would be a potential driver of voice because previous research (Sun et al., 2016) has found relationships between work motivation and job performance and organizational citizenship behavior. Therefore, motivated employees may be more willing to speak up and suggest ways to improve job performance. As suspected, the results showed a relationship between work

motivation and employee voice behavior. However, there was no relationship found between work motivation and prohibitive work behavior. In regards to promotive voice behavior, the relationship was limited to only one type of motivation. The results show there was a significant relationship between *identified regulation* and promotive voice behavior. The relationship between *identified regulation* and promotive work behavior is positive. Thus, the data indicates that *identified regulation* is a good driver for employee promotive voice behavior. *Identified regulation* is a motivation type that is autonomous, meaning that it is self-endorsed, such as an individual being motivated because of the job's meaning. What this appears to suggest is that at EPCC, the more an employee indicates they are motivated because they find meaning or value in their work, the more likely they are willing to speak up and share suggestions on how to improve institutional processes. This is probably happening because their job is of personal importance to them. Examining the partial relationship of this finding could be of further research interest, such as looking into what could be the reason why motivation did not show a link to prohibitive voice. Organizations could possibly consider that perhaps, even for motivated employees, the expression of prohibitive voice behavior may still be thought of as having risky "strings attached" and reconsider their willingness or lack thereof to speak up about harmful situations.

Communication Climate

The results support the third hypothesis which states there is a positive relationship between perceived organizational communication climate and (a) promotive and (b) prohibitive voice behavior. In this study, organizational communication climate refers to an employee's perception that the organization listens to and cares about their input. Essentially, it is a measure of the openness of the communication climate and whether or not an employee feels their input is welcome and their opinions, ideas, or voices matter to the organization. Given the trend of

outcomes found in previous communication climate research such as increased employee performance and job satisfaction (White et al., 2010), tendency to stimulate advocacy (White et al., 2010) and a sense of belongingness to the organization (Atouba, Carlson, & Lammers, 2019), I expected that the more an employee perceived the organizational communication climate to be open and inclusive, the more likely they would be willing or inspired to speak up in ways to benefit the organization or advocate against harmful situations that hinder organizational success or employee well-being. The results show there is a significant and positive relationship between perceived communication climate and both promotive and prohibitive voice behavior. The data indicates that communication climate is a predictor for both promotive and prohibitive voice behavior. What is of particular interest in this relation is that among all the variables examined in this study, communication climate was the strongest and most important predictor of voice behavior. The link between communicate climate and voice behavior appears to imply that the more employees at EPCC perceive that the communication climate is an open and welcoming environment where their voice matters or can make a difference, the more likely they are willing to speak up and express ways in which to do things better or to call attention to failures that exist within the institution. In other words, the communication climate can help nurture employee voice behavior. What we can learn is that developing an environment where employees perceive their input is valued within the organization can foster a climate of inclusion and equity of voice.

Organizational Politics

The results do not support the fourth hypothesis which stated that there is a negative relationship between perceived organizational politics and (a) promotive and (b) prohibitive voice behavior. I expected a negative relationship because previous research has shown that

organizational politics outcomes are counterproductive to work behavior (Wiltshire et al., 2014). Surprisingly, however, results were contradictory to my expectations. Even though the results show a link between organizational politics and voice behavior, the relationship was not a negative one; in fact, results indicate significant positive relationships between perceptions of organizational politics and both promotive and prohibitive voice behavior. What this appears to suggest is that at EPCC, the more an employee perceives that people within the organization care more about their personal gain or put their personal interest above the organizational interest, the more likely they are to engage in suggesting improvement or express concern about harmful factors. This is probably happening because the more an employee feels that counter productivity is occurring, the more they feel that speaking up about it may help deter further self-interests. This outcome warrants further research as it is surprisingly inconsistent with previous literature findings reported, as recently as this past year (Li et al., 2020).

Implications

In this study on voice behavior, the focus was centered on the voice behaviors of employees at higher education institutions. Given the limited literature on employee voice behaviors at colleges and universities, the following implications of the findings may likely be of substantial interest to board members, administrators, top management, leaders, and employees at educational institutions.

First, leadership involved in systemic reviews could take a more refined look at their reporting policies to provide ways that enable employees to feel more confident and safe with the reporting process. Discovering ways to break down the barriers that inhibit employees to report misconduct could be beneficial to educational institutions to mitigate the suppression of employee voice and thus possibly bring awareness of unethical/unfair behaviors that might help

reduce further incidents. The voice behaviors found to be expressed more frequently by employees were promotive and prohibitive voice, and voice about unethical/unfair behavior. Notably, however, employees are far less likely to report unethical/unfair behavior. According to the results, employees are not willing to officially report colleague misconduct or inappropriate behavior. The result further highlights previous findings regarding anonymity, safety, and efficacy (Mao & DeAndrea, 2019); and organizational policies as barriers to reporting inappropriate behaviors (Dykstra-Devette and Tarin, 2019; Kelsky, 2017). Clearly, at colleges and universities, such as EPCC, more attention to how and if reporting processes are effectively used by employees to express voice is warranted.

Second, leadership could consider developing human resources development strategies built upon the self-determination theory to nurture employee motivation and thus foster employees to speak up. The data from this examination indicates that *identified regulation*, a motivation type that is autonomous, meaning that it is self-endorsed, is a good driver for employee promotive voice behavior. This is most likely because their job is of personal importance to them. It may be practical for institutions of higher education to promote self-manifested value of performing work tasks and the "instrumental value it represents," (Gagné, 2015, p. 179) which shapes employee voice behavior.

Third, leadership at institutions of higher education could encourage favorable communication environments like encouraging supervisory level employees to solicit and seriously consider employees to speak up and provide input in decision making and academic governance to minimize neoliberal tendencies (Sethares, 2020). In addition, leadership should require employees in positions of power to attend ethics training in an effort to help reduce effects of rankism among stratified and hierarchical employee categories. Communication

climate is one of the organizational factors examined that had a strong relationship with both promotive and prohibitive employee voice behavior. Notably, it was the strongest and most important predictor of voice behavior among all the variables examined and thus prioritizing the conditions to foster a favorable communication climate is essential. In addressing information flow and openness, colleges and universities are "building relational capital with employees that help them feel both trusted and imbued with the tools to do their job" (Walden & Westerman, 2018, p. 605).

Fourth, leadership could put forth efforts to eliminate perceptions of unfairness so that the efforts on employee voice behavior can focus more on improving other aspects in the organization. Unexpectedly, the data indicate significant positive relationships between perceptions of organizational politics and both promotive and prohibitive voice behavior. By shifting the focus away from organizational politics factors like gossip, employees could instead concentrate on suggesting ways to mitigate unfair/unethical behaviors that may be detrimental to their or colleagues health and wellbeing.

In addition, this study also suggests implications for what to minimize. Human resource leadership involved in hiring processes should concentrate less on alumni status and consider other factors such as a candidate's motivation for the job and whether or not the potential employee will be willing to speak up to contribute to institutional success. According to the results of this study, neither alumni status nor organizational commitment foster significant relationships with employee voice behavior. Therefore, when planning efforts to encourage employees to be more vocal, leadership should focus on organizational factors, such as communication climate.

Limitations and Future Research

Although this study of individual and organizational predictors of employee voice contributes to our understanding of voice behavior in higher education institutions, the findings should be understood taking into consideration some limitations of the study. The limitations include sample size, location of targeted college, physical working environment of target population, college workplace sites, and employee category response rates.

The first limitation was the participant sample size, composition, and diversity. The sample of employees that completed the entire survey may not necessarily generalize the population of all community colleges. A larger sample size involving more community colleges across the nation could provide more generalizable results. Future research should consider stronger recruitment efforts to generate a more sizeable, diverse, and representative group of participants from within the target population.

A second limitation was location of the targeted college. EPCC has a unique environment compared to other community colleges with respect to location and its distance from other community colleges. Located at the west-most point in the state of Texas, EPCC is the only non-for-profit community college in the city, compared to other community colleges in Texas that are closer in proximity to competing community colleges. Perhaps this accounts for alumni status not having a relationship with employee voice behavior. EPCC is the only community college option in the city which may foster a strong culture among its employees that may impact a similar sense of identification to that of alumni employees. Future research should consider targeting employees from more than one college or university.

A third limitation was the COVID-19 conditions and related changes that affect the target population. All non-essential employees were working remotely from provisional settings in their personal residence via distance technology due to on-site restrictions in an effort to prevent the spread of a viral pandemic. COVID related changes and impacts on employee health and wellbeing could have potentially affected both the participation rate in the study as well as how employees/respondents answered items/questions. Future research should duplicate the research study when employees are working under more normal/typical conditions or perhaps consider longitudinal investigations of the targeted population.

A fourth limitation was college workplace sites. EPCC has five campuses and an administrative services center located throughout the district. Perceptions of communication environments may differ for employees depending on which campus they are assigned to, or whether they work at multiple sites. This was not controlled for in this study, but future studies examining such organizations should probably account for possible differences across sites.

A fifth limitation was employee category response rates. The percentage of responses reported from each employee category does not reflect the actual ratio of employee category percentages as reported from EPCC Human Resources for the corresponding time-frame of the study. For instance, classified staff only show a valid response rate of 30% compared to the actual percentage of 44%. Future research could purposively target respondents according to categorical ranking percentages to represent a more generalized employee population.

Notably, employees categorized as classified staff belong to the lowest level in the hierarchical categories at the college. Their response rate may indicate the presence of rankism at EPCC which may suggest employees do not feel safe to express their voice. Coincidentally, an employee that participated in the pilot study reached out to me after the live survey was

deployed to all employees, expressing concern over possible retaliation from upper management for completing the pilot survey. The employee informed me that a member from upper management sent an email to employees under the corresponding division discouraging them from participating in the research study. This may very well be an example of an employee's misuse of their authoritative power to suppress employee voice behavior.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The objective of this study was to examine the communication perspectives of employees in higher education institutions. Specifically, this research focused on the role of key individual and organizational factors that may explain or influence employee voice behavior such as alumni status, organizational commitment, work motivation, communication climate, and organizational politics. The goal of this study was not solely to better understand the communication construct of voice behavior in a particular context, but also to provide recommendations that are useful in increasing the value and contributions of employees to their colleges and universities, and, therefore contribute to improve those institutions. In pursuit of unpacking predictors or determinants of voice, I investigated what factors enable or constrain employees in higher education institutions to speak up.

This study collected data from the respondents in the target population to answer the research questions and hypotheses previously stated. To test and analyze the data, two one-way ANOVA were conducted in addition to frequency, correlation, and multiple regression analyses. The findings from this study are beneficial and contribute to communication research because it shows if, how, and why employees in higher education institutions participate in voice behavior.

In sum, what we can take away from the results of this research study on predictors of employee voice behavior in higher education institutions is that they suggest that organizational factors are more important predictors of employee voice behavior than individual factors. In other words, organizational environments' characteristics such as communication climate and perceived organizational climate are stronger or more important drivers of employees' voice behaviors in academia than employee alumni status, motivation, and organizational commitment. In addition, the fact that among all the variables examined, communication climate was the

strongest and most important predictor of employee voice behavior, is particularly noteworthy. That result suggests that the more employees in academia perceive that the communication climate is an open and welcoming environment where their voice matters or can make a difference, the more likely they are willing to speak up.

This study represents an exploration and contribution to a gap in academic literature on predictors of employee voice behavior within higher education environments. What we can take away is that employees at colleges and universities are more influenced in their desire to participate in expressing their voice by organizational factors than by individual factors. Exerting efforts to nurture these drivers of voice behavior may not only benefit the success of the institutions, but may very well be a catalyst for building diversity and equity of voice that supports a collective dialogue.

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Appendix A

Table 1: Comparative Table Regarding **Promotive and Prohibitive Voice Behavior**

Promotive Voice	Promotive & Prohibitive Voice	Prohibitive Voice
• suggesting new ways to do something	• speaking up	• discussing activities that are already happening
• suggesting creative activities	• extra-role behavior	• suggesting activities/behaviors should stop or change
• points out how to improve upon	• helpful to organization	• points out what is wrong or harmful
• intended for future activities	• voiced with good intentions	• intended for current activities
• constructive suggestions	• results from sense of responsibility	• advise against undesirable behaviors

Source: Adapted from Liang et al., 2012; Mao & DeAndrea, 2019

Table 2: **Motivation** Self-Determination Dimensions

Category	**Amotivation**	**Controlled Motivation**		**Autonomous Motivation**		
Feel You Must → → → → → → → → *Feel You Want To*						
Type	Amotivation	Extrinsic Regulation - Social	Extrinsic Regulation - Material	Introjected Regulation	Identified Regulation	Intrinsic Motivation
Reason	Lacking motivation or effort	Seeking approval or respect	Seeking financial gain or job security	Avoiding feeling shame or guilt	Feeling shared values or meaning	Enjoying or for the fun of it
Item Sample	I don't know why I'm doing this job, its pointless work	To avoid being criticized by others	Because I risk losing my job if I don't put effort into it	Because I have to prove to myself that I can	Because putting efforts in this job has personal significance to me	Because the work I do is interesting

Item Stem: Why do you or would you put efforts into your current job?
Source: Adapted from Gagne et al., 2015; Ferraro et al., 2018; Moller et al., 2019

Table 3: List of Scale Variables and Items: **Voice and Organizational Commitment**

Variable	Item
Promotive Voice (α = .94)	I proactively develop and make suggestions for issues that may influence EPCC.
	I proactively suggest new projects which are beneficial to EPCC.
	I raise suggestions to improve EPCC's working procedures.
	I proactively voice out constructive suggestions that help EPCC reach its goals.
	I make constructive suggestions to improve EPCC's operations.
Prohibitive Voice (α = .88)	I advise other colleagues against undesirable behaviors that would hamper job performance.
	I speak up honestly about problems that might cause serious loss to EPCC, even when/though dissenting opinions exist.
	I voice out opinions on things that might affect efficiency at EPCC, even if that would embarrass others.
	I point out problems when they appear at EPCC, even if that would hamper/damage relationships with other colleagues.
	I proactively report coordination problems at EPCC to the appropriate personnel.
Organizational Commitment (α = .85)	I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected to help EPCC be successful.
	I praise EPCC to my friends as a great organization to work for.
	I feel very little loyalty to EPCC.
	I would accept almost any type of job assignment to keep working for EPCC.
	I am proud to tell others that I am part of EPCC.
	For me, EPCC is the best of all possible organizations for which to work.
	I could just as well be working for a different organization as long as the type of work was similar.
	Often, I find it difficult to agree with EPCC's policies on important matters relating to its employees.
	It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave EPCC.
	Deciding to work for EPCC was a definite mistake on my part.
	I am extremely glad that I chose EPCC to work for over other organizations I was considering at the time I joined.
	I really care about the fate of EPCC.
	EPCC really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance.
	There is not too much to be gained by sticking with EPCC indefinitely.
	I find that my values and EPCC's values are very similar.

Table 4: List of Scale Variables and Items: **Motivation**

Variable	Item
Motivation Extrinsic Regulation - Social (α = .85)	To get approval from others (e.g., supervisor, colleagues, family, clients …). Because others (e.g., supervisor, colleagues, family, clients …) will respect me more. To avoid being criticized by others (e.g., supervisor, colleagues, family, clients …).
Motivation Extrinsic Regulation - Material (α = .77)	Because others (e.g., employer, supervisor …) will reward me financially only if I put enough effort in my job. Because others (e.g., employer, supervisor …) offer me greater job security if I put enough effort in my job. Because I risk losing my job if I don't put enough effort in it.
Motivation Introjected Regulation (α = .80)	Because I have to prove to myself that I can. Because it makes me feel proud of myself. Because otherwise I will feel ashamed of myself. Because otherwise I will feel bad about myself.
Motivation Identified Regulation (α = .91)	Because I personally consider it important to put efforts in this job. Because putting efforts in this job aligns with my personal values. Because putting efforts in this job has personal significance to me.
Motivation Intrinsic (α = .94)	Because I have fun doing my job. Because what I do in my work is exciting. Because the work I do is interesting.
Amotivation (α = .92)	I don't put effort into my job, because I really feel that I'm wasting my time at work. I put little effort into my job, because I don't think this work is worth putting efforts into. I don't know why I'm doing this job, it is pointless work.

Table 5: List of Scale Variables and Items: **Communication Climate and Organizational Politics**

Variable	Item
Communication Climate ($\alpha = .93$)	When a decision is made involving my expertise, I am involved in the decision. I have adequate opportunities to express my views at EPCC. My colleagues and superiors are genuinely interested in what I have to say. My voice matters at EPCC. Top management at EPCC actively listens to employees' input when making decisions.
Perception of Organizational Politics ($\alpha = .98$)	At EPCC, people kiss up to other people to achieve the outcomes they desire. People improperly use their relationships to bypass EPCC's rules/processes. At EPCC, people cultivate relationships in order to get personal benefits. Gossip drives the way that people interpret what goes on at EPCC. Gossip is the primary way in which information is shared at EPCC. Rumors are central to people's understanding of what is happening at EPCC. At EPCC, individuals stab each other in the back to make themselves look good. At EPCC, people try to make themselves look good by making others look incompetent. At EPCC, people undermine others' credibility behind their backs. At EPCC, people use their position to influence decisions to benefit themselves. At EPCC, people abuse their authority by making decisions that benefit themselves. At EPCC, people pretend to consult and invite input even though decisions have already been made. People build up resources to increase their personal power, not to benefit EPCC. Too often, people at EPCC unfairly obtain resources that could be better used elsewhere. Resources are unfairly allocated based on individual influence rather than EPCC's priorities.

Table 6: Frequency Table Regarding Employee **Promotive Voice Behavior**

	M	SD	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Promotive Voice (*M* = 4.92, *SD* = 1.40)									
I proactively develop and make suggestions for issues that may influence EPCC.	4.96	1.57	30 (4.0%)	47 (6.3%)	28 (3.8%)	154 (20.8%)	151 (20.4%)	220 (29.6%)	112 (15.1%)
I proactively suggest new projects which are beneficial to EPCC.	4.85	1.60	30 (4.0%)	57 (7.7%)	32 (4.3%)	171 (23.0%)	144 (19.4%)	204 (27.5%)	104 (14.0%)
I raise suggestions to improve EPCC's working procedures.	5.00	1.53	28 (3.8%)	43 (5.8%)	26 (3.5%)	147 (19.8%)	166 (22.4%)	225 (30.3%)	107 (14.4%)
I proactively voice out constructive suggestions that help EPCC reach its goals.	4.87	1.53	27 (3.6%)	49 (6.6%)	33 (4.4%)	167 (22.5%)	160 (21.6%)	217 (29.2%)	89 (12.0%)
I make constructive suggestions to improve EPCC's operations.	4.93	1.50	26 (3.5%)	44 (5.9%)	24 (3.2%)	175 (23.6%)	155 (20.9%)	227 (30.6%)	91 (12.3%)

M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, N (Valid Percent)

Table 7: Frequency Table Regarding Employee **Prohibitive Voice Behavior**

	M	SD	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Prohibitive Voice (*M* = 4.86, *SD* = 1.24)									
I advise other colleagues against undesirable behaviors that would hamper job performance.	5.01	1.52	30 (4.0%)	32 (4.3%)	32 (4.3%)	164 (22.1%)	140 (18.9%)	240 (32.3%)	104 (14.0%)
I speak up honestly about problems that might cause serious loss to EPCC, even when/though dissenting opinions exist.	5.15	1.45	18 (2.4%)	33 (4.4%)	25 (3.4%)	156 (21.0%)	146 (19.7%)	242 (32.6%)	122 (16.4%)
I voice out opinions on things that might affect efficiency at EPCC, even if that would embarrass others.	4.58	1.56	39 (5.3%)	57 (7.7%)	41 (5.5%)	202 (27.2%)	170 (22.9%)	167 (22.5%)	66 (8.9%)
I point out problems when they appear at EPCC, even if that would hamper/damage relationships with other colleagues.	4.70	1.50	30 (4.0%)	49 (6.6%)	42 (5.7%)	189 (25.5%)	180 (24.3%)	185 (24.9%)	67 (9.0%)
I proactively report coordination problems at EPCC to the appropriate personnel.	4.88	1.55	31 (4.2%)	40 (5.4%)	39 (5.3%)	174 (23.5%)	151 (20.4%)	210 (28.3%)	97 (13.1%)

M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, N (Valid Percent)

Table 8: Frequency Table Regarding Employee **Unethical/Unfair Voice Behavior**

	M	SD	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Voice about unethical/unfair behavior (*M* = 5.59, *SD* = 1.26)									
I speak up or voice my concerns when I see people being treated unfairly at EPCC.	5.46	1.37	13 (1.8%)	16 (2.2%)	33 (4.4%)	113 (15.2%)	120 (16.2%)	277 (37.3%)	170 (22.9%)
I speak up or voice my concerns when I see people being abused, bullied, or inappropriately treated at EPCC.	5.65	1.35	11 (1.5%)	17 (2.3%)	15 (2.0%)	112 (15.1%)	97 (13.1%)	264 (35.6%)	226 (30.5%)
I speak up or voice my concerns when I see evidence of racial, sexual, or homophobic harassment or discrimination at EPCC.	5.67	1.37	11 (1.5%)	16 (2.2%)	17 (2.3%)	117 (15.8%)	83 (11.2%)	254 (34.2%)	244 (32.9%)
	M	SD	Never	Rarely	Occa-sionally	Some-times	Often	Very often	Always
Report unethical/unfair behavior (*M* = 4.08, *SD* = 1.89)									
You report colleagues' misconduct to the appropriate personnel.	3.93	2.00	96 (12.9%)	138 (18.6%)	85 (11.5%)	144 (19.4%)	91 (12.3%)	61 (8.2%)	127 (17.1%)
You report your coworkers' inappropriate/ unethical behavior to the appropriate personnel.	4.24	2.09	82 (11.1%)	126 (17.0%)	70 (9.4%)	144 (19.4%)	75 (10.1%)	63 (8.5%)	182 (24.5%)

M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, N (Valid Percent)

Table 9: Descriptive Statistics of Main Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Organizational Commitment	5.50	.89
Extrinsic Regulation- Social	4.06	1.59
Extrinsic Regulation- Material	3.57	1.57
Introjected Regulation	5.16	1.42
Identified Regulation	6.45	.83
Intrinsic Motivation	6.14	1.10
Amotivation	1.53	1.05
Communication Climate	4.89	1.51
Perception of Organizational Politics	3.79	1.60
Promotive Voice	4.92	1.40
Prohibitive Voice	4.86	1.24

Table 10: Correlation Matrix of Study Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1 Organizational Commitment	1	0.07	0.00	.13**	.38**	.53**	-.38**	.57**	-.47**	.19**	.25**
2 Extrinsic Regulation-Social	0.07	1	.54**	.31**	0.04	0.06	.11**	.11**	-0.03	0.00	-0.04
3 Extrinsic Regulation-Material	0.00	.54**	1	.33**	-0.05	0.01	.14**	.11**	-0.02	-0.06	-0.06
4 Introjected Regulation	.13**	.31**	.33**	1	.33**	.19**	-.13**	.12**	-0.02	0.00	0.00
5 Identified Regulation	.38**	0.04	-0.05	.33**	1	.62**	-.50**	.24**	-.12**	.13**	.18**
6 Intrinsic Motivation	.53**	0.06	0.01	.19**	.62**	1	-.44**	.41**	-.29**	.15**	.20**
7 Amotivation	-.38**	.11**	.14**	-.13**	-.50**	-.44**	1	-.17**	.22**	-0.07	-.08*
8 Communication Climate	.57**	.11**	.11**	.12**	.24**	.41**	-.17**	1	-.66**	.20**	.32**
9 Perception of Organizational Politics	-.47**	-0.03	-0.02	-0.02	-.12**	-.29**	.22**	-.66**	1	-0.05	-.10**
10 Prohibitive Voice	.19**	0.00	-0.06	0.00	.13**	.15**	-0.07	.20**	-0.05	1	.67**
11 Promotive Voice	.25**	-0.04	-0.06	0.00	.18**	.20**	-.08*	.32**	-.10**	.67**	1

*indicates significant at .05 level, **indicates significant at .01 level.

Table 11: Multiple Regression Analysis Results Predicting **Promotive Voice Behavior**

Predictions	Model 1		Model 2	
	B	**β**	**B**	**β**
Age	0.01	0.01	-0.01	-0.02
Gender	0.05	0.02	0.06	0.03
Education Level	0.08	0.06	0.09	0.07
Ethnicity	0.04	0.01	0.15	0.04
Race	0.06	0.08*	0.06	0.08*
Years employed	0.01	0.10*	0.01	0.09*
Employee category	0.07	0.06	0.02	0.02
Employee status	-0.58	-0.21**	-0.62	-0.22**
Alumni status	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.00
Organizational Commitment			0.15	0.09
Extrinsic Regulation- Social			-0.05	-0.06
Extrinsic Regulation- Material			0.02	0.02
Introjected Regulation			-0.04	-0.04
Identified Regulation			0.17	0.10*
Intrinsic Motivation			0.03	0.03
Amotivation			0.06	0.04
Communication Climate			0.34	0.37**
Perception of Organizational Politics			0.13	0.15**
R^2	0.08**		0.23**	
ΔR^2	0.08**		0.15**	

*indicates significant at .05 level, **indicates significant at .01 level.

Table 12: Multiple Regression Analysis Results Predicting **Prohibitive Voice Behavior**

Predictions	Model 1		Model 2	
	B	**β**	**B**	**β**
Age	0.00	-0.01	-0.02	-0.04
Gender	0.14	0.07	0.16	0.08*
Education Level	0.06	0.06	0.07	0.07
Ethnicity	-0.11	-0.04	-0.03	-0.01
Race	0.04	0.05	0.04	0.06
Years employed	0.02	0.15**	0.02	0.15**
Employee category	0.00	0.00	-0.03	-0.03
Employee status	-0.35	-0.14**	-0.35	-0.14**
Alumni status	-0.01	-0.01	-0.02	-0.01
Organizational Commitment			0.12	0.08
Extrinsic Regulation- Social			0.02	0.02
Extrinsic Regulation- Material			-0.02	-0.03
Introjected Regulation			-0.03	-0.04
Identified Regulation			0.13	0.09
Intrinsic Motivation			0.04	0.03
Amotivation			0.04	0.04
Communication Climate			0.20	0.24**
Perception of Organizational Politics			0.08	0.11*
R^2	0.06**		0.14**	
ΔR^2	0.06**		0.08**	

*indicates significant at .05 level, **indicates significant at .01 level.

Appendix B

EPCC Employee Communication Perspective Survey

Communication Perspectives of Higher Education Employees:
The Case of EPCC

This is an invitation to participate in this study. This consent form will provide you with information on the research project, what you will need to do, and the associated risks and benefits of the study. Your participation is voluntary. Please read carefully. It is important that you fully understand the study in order to make an informed decision about whether you choose to participate or not.

Purpose
The purpose of this study is to examine the communication perspectives of employees in higher education institutions, with a specific focus here on El Paso Community College (EPCC). Specifically, this study will investigate employees' experiences and perceptions of organizational communication at EPCC. Essentially, the goal here is to examine employees' communicative experiences at EPCC as well as their perceptions of the organization.

Procedures
Participating in this study is completely voluntary, and you will not be penalized in any way if you decide not to participate in this study. Please keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers. Just answer each question as honestly as possible. You should simply provide the answers that best express your opinions. You will also be asked to provide some basic information about your demographic characteristics, but no information will be used to identify you specifically. Your feedback will be kept confidential, and you will not be contacted after your participation in this study. It should take you approximately 20-25 minutes to complete this survey.

Benefits
Your participation is extremely valuable and constitutes a key contribution to organizational development, communication research, and organizational science. Indeed, no serious organizational diagnosis, evaluation, or change can be undertaken without the input or voice of the organization's employees. This study represents an opportunity for you to share your input and your voice on various important matters related to employees' experiences at EPCC. Your participation could lead to a better understanding and, ultimately, the improvement of higher education organizations and employees' experiences within them. Essentially, this study can give new insight into increasing the value and contributions of employees to their colleges and universities, and, therefore contribute to improve those institutions.

Risks and Discomforts
There are no anticipated risks or discomforts beyond those encountered in everyday life.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Your employee email address will be kept separate from and will not be associated with your responses on the survey. Your study-related information will be kept confidential. No participants will be identified in any publication or presentation of research results; only aggregate data will be used.

Voluntary Participation
To participate in this study, you must be **18 years or older** and be **a current employee** of El Paso Community College. Taking part in this research study is entirely voluntary. You may choose not to participate or discontinue your participation at any time without penalty. Your participation in this study will remain confidential.

Compensation Information
In addition to the benefits outlined above, and as an additional incentive to participate in the study, once you consent to the study and complete the survey, you will automatically be entered in a random drawing for one of three Amazon.com gift cards with a $100 value. At the end of the data collection period, winners will be randomly selected by QuestionPro survey software and will be notified and receive compensation via email.

Contact Information
If you have any questions or concerns about this research you may contact Jessie Arellano through email at jsarellano2@miners.utep.edu or Dr. Yannick Atouba at yatouba@utep.edu. Both UTEP and EPCC IRB have approved this study. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant or complaints about the research you may call the *UTEP* IRB at 915-747-6590 or email them at irb.orsp@utep.edu.

Consent Statement and Signature
I have read this consent form and understand that moving forward and answering the survey items will represent my agreement to participate in this study. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

- I have read the consent form and agree to participate in this study.
- I have read the consent form and do not agree to participate in this study.

Appendix C

EPCC Employee Communication Perspective Survey

Part 1: Demographics

In this section, we are interested in getting some background information about you. Thanks!

What year were you born? _____

What is your gender?
a. Female
b. Male
c. Other
d. Prefer not to answer

What is your highest education level?
a. High school diploma
b. Some college
c. Associate degree
d. Bachelor's degree
e. Master's degree
f. Ph.D.

Are you of Hispanic/Latinx ethnicity?
a. Yes
b. No

What is your race?
a. White
b. Black or African American
c. Asian/Pacific Islander/ Native Hawaiian
d. Native American
e. Two or more races/multiracial
f. Other _____

How many years have you been employed at EPCC? _____

What is your primary employee category?
a. Classified staff
b. Professional staff
c. Administrator
d. Faculty

d1. **Are you on a tenure track?**
a. I am on a tenure track, but not tenured
b. I am tenured

c. I am not on a tenure track

What is your current employee status?

a. Full-time
b. Part-time

Do you have another paid job or occupation besides your current job at EPCC?

a. Yes
b. No

What is your alumni status at EPCC?

a. I have taken at least one credit course at EPCC
b. I graduated from EPCC
c. I have never taken a credit course at EPCC

Part 2: About your voiced experiences at EPCC

In this section, we are interested in how you use your voice in the organization or when interacting with other employees. Please read each of the following statements carefully and rate your level of agreement with each of them. There are no right or wrong answers; just be as honest as possible in indicating how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Thanks!

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I proactively develop and make suggestions for issues that may influence EPCC.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I proactively suggest new projects which are beneficial to EPCC.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I raise suggestions to improve EPCC's working procedure.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I proactively voice out constructive suggestions that help EPCC reach its goals.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I make constructive suggestions to improve EPCC's operation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I advise other colleagues against undesirable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

behaviors that would hamper job performance.							
I speak up honestly about problems that might cause serious loss to EPCC, even when/though dissenting opinions exist.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I voice out opinions on things that might affect efficiency in EPCC, even if that would embarrass others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I point out problems when they appear at EPCC, even if that would hamper/damage relationships with other colleagues.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I proactively report coordination problems at EPCC to the appropriate personnel.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I speak up or voice my concerns when I see people being treated unfairly at EPCC.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I speak up or voice my concerns when I see evidence of racial, sexual, or homophobic harassment/discrimination at EPCC.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I speak up or voice my concerns when I see people being abused, bullied, or inappropriately treated at EPCC.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am often afraid to really speak my mind at EPCC.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I often worry about voicing my concerns at EPCC.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I have been discouraged from voicing my ideas and opinions at EPCC.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

When it comes to keeping your opinions, ideas, or concerns to yourself or share them, how often do you do the following at EPCC?

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Some times	Often	Very often	Always
You choose to remain silent when you have concerns.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Although you have ideas for improving your department you do not speak up.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
You say nothing to co-workers about problems you notice.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
You keep quiet instead of asking questions when you want to get more information.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
You report colleagues' misconduct to the appropriate personnel	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
You remain silent when you have information that might help prevent an incident.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
You report your coworkers' inappropriate/unethical behavior to the appropriate personnel	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

Part 3: About your attitudes towards EPCC

In this section, we are interested in how you feel about EPCC and your role in it. Please read each of the following statements carefully and indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of them. There are no right or wrong answers; just be as honest as possible in indicating how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Thanks!

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected to help EPCC be successful.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I praise EPCC to my friends as a great organization to work for.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel very little loyalty to EPCC.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would accept almost any type of job assignment to keep working for EPCC.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am proud to tell others that I am part of EPCC.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
For me, EPCC is the best of all possible organizations for which to work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I could just as well be working for a different organization as long as the type of work was similar.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Often, I find it difficult to agree with EPCC's policies on important matters relating to its employees.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave EPCC.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Deciding to work for EPCC was a definite mistake on my part.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am extremely glad that I chose EPCC to work for over other organizations I was considering at the time I joined.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I really care about the fate of EPCC.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
EPCC really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
There is not too much to be gained by sticking with EPCC indefinitely.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I find that my values and EPCC's values are very similar.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Part 4: About your job effort at EPCC

In this section, we are interested in why you put effort in your job at EPCC. Why do you or would you put effort into your current job at EPCC? Please rate your level of agreement with the statements below reflecting your motivations for putting effort into your job at EPCC. There are no right or wrong answers; just be as honest as possible in indicating how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Thanks!

Why do/would you put efforts into your current job at EPCC?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
To get approval from others (e.g., supervisor, colleagues, family, clients …).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Because others (e.g., supervisor, colleagues, family, clients …) will respect me more.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To avoid being criticized by others (e.g., supervisor, colleagues, family, clients …).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Because others (e.g., employer, supervisor …) will reward me financially only if I put enough effort in my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Because others (e.g., employer, supervisor …) offer me greater job security if I put enough effort in my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Because I risk losing my job if I don't put enough effort in it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Because I have to prove to myself that I can.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Because it makes me feel proud of myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Because otherwise I will feel ashamed of myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Because otherwise I will feel bad about myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Because I personally consider it important to put efforts in this job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Because putting efforts in this job aligns with my personal values.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Because putting efforts in this job has personal significance to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Because I have fun doing my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Because what I do in my work is exciting.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Because the work I do is interesting.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Because putting efforts into one's job is the right thing to do.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I don't put effort into my job, because I really feel that I'm wasting my time at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I put little effort into my job, because I don't think this work is worth putting efforts into.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I don't know why I'm doing this job; it is pointless work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Part 5: About your perceptions of organizational communication at EPCC

In this section, we are interested in your perceptions of organizational communication at EPCC. Please read each of the following statements carefully and rate your level of agreement with each of them. There are no right or wrong answers; just be as honest as possible. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Thanks!

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
There is adequate two-way information between staff	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

and top management at EPCC.							
At EPCC, communication is generally accurate.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I understand what EPCC's top priorities are.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
At EPCC, communication is generally timely.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
At EPCC, communication is generally useful/helpful.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
EPCC's communication motivates and stimulates an enthusiasm for meeting its goals.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The people at EPCC have great ability as communicators.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
EPCC's communication makes me identify with it or feel a vital part of it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I receive in time the information I need to do my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Conflicts are handled appropriately through proper communication channels.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When a decision is made involving my expertise, I am involved in the decision.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I have adequate opportunities to express my views at EPCC.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My colleagues and superiors are genuinely interested in what I have to say.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My voice matters at EPCC.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Top management at EPCC actively listens to employees' input when making decisions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

EPCC has been clear and transparent about its approach, strategy, and/or decisions for managing the COVID-19 crisis.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I receive adequate information from EPCC to help me deal with the challenges and uncertainties associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Communication from EPCC during this COVID-19 pandemic has been generally effective.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
EPCC has taken appropriate actions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Overall, I am happy with the quality of communication at EPCC.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Part 6: About your perceptions of the organizational environment at EPCC

In this section, we are interested in your perceptions of the organizational environment at EPCC. Based on your experiences at EPCC so far, please rate your level of agreement with each of the statement below. There are no right or wrong answers; just be as honest as possible in indicating how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Thanks!

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
At EPCC, people kiss up to other people to achieve the outcomes they desire.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
People improperly use their relationships to bypass EPCC's rules/processes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
At EPCC, people cultivate relationships in order to get personal benefits.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Gossip drives the way that people interpret what goes on at EPCC.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Gossip is the primary way in which information is shared at EPCC.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Rumors are central to people's understanding of what is happening at EPCC.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
At EPCC, individuals stab each other in the back to make themselves look good.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
At EPCC, people try to make themselves look good by making others look incompetent.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
At EPCC, people undermine others' credibility behind their backs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
At EPCC, people use their position to influence decisions to benefit themselves.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
At EPCC, people abuse their authority by making decisions that benefit themselves.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
At EPCC, people pretend to consult and invite input even though decisions have already been made.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
People build up resources to increase their personal power, not to benefit EPCC.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Too often, people at EPCC unfairly obtain resources that could be better used elsewhere.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Resources are unfairly allocated based on individual influence rather than EPCC's priorities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Are there barriers/challenges to the expression of employees' voice at EPCC? If yes, which one(s)?

What change(s), if any, do you wish to see in the communication environment of EPCC?

Vita

Jessie Arellano holds a B.A. in Organizational and Corporate Communication from the University of Texas at El Paso, where she is currently pursuing an M.A. in Communication. Her research focuses on organizational communication, looking at voice behaviors of employees at higher education institutions. In 2020, she presented a paper, *The Masked Singer: Exploring How Alumni Status Influences Employee Workplace Identity through Communication Perspectives,* at the first annual University of New Mexico Four Corners Graduate Conference.

Professionally, Jessie has dedicated her efforts to grant development and compliance management over the last 19 years. She is a Grant Specialist at El Paso Community College, where she has assisted in submitting numerous successful grant proposals that support the College and the El Paso community.

Contact Information: jsarellano2@miners.utep.edu