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**The effect of training on employee voice in a performance
discussion**

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A research project submitted to the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration.

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ABSTRACT

This research sought to establish whether skills training in employee voice encourages employee voice utilisation in a one-on-one performance discussion and whether such utilisation has an effect on the employee's relationship with their line-manager. Organisations need to understand how to encourage the utilisation of employee voice, to ensure their employees remain engaged in the organisation and as such, the organisation remains competitive.

Ninety seven participants were divided into control and experimental groups, with the experimental group receiving skills training in employee voice. A pre-test and post-test experiment research design was used and the results were statistically analysed. Qualitative analysis supported these quantitative results. Qualitative analysis entailed collating comments received by the employees from their completed pre-test and post-test questionnaires as well as feedback from semi-structured, line-manager interviews.

Skills training was found not to be significantly related to employee voice utilisation, the line-manager relationship or satisfaction with the performance discussion, but as one composite measure were significant. A model was developed to accommodate the business environment and employees' personal attributes in addition to skills training to explain employee voice utilisation. The forum for which employee voice would be most effective may not be the one-on-one performance discussion.

KEYWORDS

Employee voice, Proactive behaviour, Authentic leadership, Performance evaluations, Skills training

DECLARATION

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before any degree or examination in any other University. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.

Lisa Bird

11 November 2013

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Thanks to God for being with me every step of the way.

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go” Joshua 1:9.

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CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
KEYWORDS.....	ii
DECLARATION.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
LIST OF FIGURES	viii
LIST OF TABLES	viii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM	1
1.1 Research problem.....	1
1.2 Research objectives	2
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	4
2.1 Understanding employee voice	4
2.2 Utilisation of employee voice.....	5
2.3 Skills training in utilising employee voice	10
2.4 Performance discussion for employee voice utilisation	11
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS.....	13
3.1 Hypothesis 1: Utilisation of employee voice	13
3.2 Hypothesis 2: Relationship with the line-manager.....	13
3.3 Hypothesis 3: Assessment of the performance discussion	14
CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	15
4.1 Introduction.....	15
4.2 Phase one: quantitative analysis.....	15
4.2.1 Research design	15
4.2.2 Unit of analysis and population of relevance	17
4.2.3 Sampling technique.....	17
4.2.4 Data collection	20
4.2.4.1 Demographic information	20
4.2.4.2 Pre-test questionnaire	21
4.2.4.3 Post-test questionnaire	21
4.2.5 Questionnaire format.....	22
4.2.5.1 Introduction.....	22
4.2.5.2 Pilot test	22
4.2.5.3 Pre-test questionnaire	23
4.2.5.4 Post-test questionnaire	24
4.2.6 Training	25
4.2.7 Phase one: research design limitations	26

4.3	Phase two: qualitative analysis	27
4.3.1	Research design	27
4.3.2	Unit of analysis and population of relevance	30
4.3.3	Sampling technique	30
4.3.4	Data collection	30
4.3.5	Phase two: research design limitations	30
4.4	Response rate	31
4.5	Data analysis	31
4.5.1	Introduction	31
4.5.2	Reliability analysis	31
4.5.3	Statistical tests	32
CHAPTER 5: RESULTS		33
5.1	Introduction	33
5.2	Reliability of scales	33
5.3	Demographics analysis	34
5.3.1	Gender type	37
5.3.2	Age category	37
5.3.3	Company tenure	38
5.4	Testing of assumptions	39
5.5	Part one: quantitative analysis	40
5.6	Part two: quantitative analysis	42
5.7	Hypothesis	44
5.7.1	Hypothesis 1: Utilisation of employee voice	44
5.7.2	Hypothesis 2: Relationship with the line-manager	45
5.7.3	Hypothesis 3: Assessment of the performance discussion	45
5.7.4	Conclusion	45
5.8	Qualitative results	46
5.8.1	Pre-test comments	46
5.8.2	Post-test comments	46
5.8.3	Semi-structured line-manager interviews	47
CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS		49
6.1	Introduction	49
6.2	Hypothesis 1: Utilisation of employee voice	50
6.3	Hypothesis 2: Relationship with the line-manager	51
6.4	Hypothesis 3: Assessment of the performance discussion	53
6.5	Research objectives	54

6.6	Implications for employee voice utilisation	55
CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION.....		58
7.1	Highlights of the main findings.....	58
7.2	Recommendations to stakeholders.....	58
7.3	Recommendations for future research.....	59
7.4	Implications for management	59
7.5	Conclusion	60
 REFERENCE LIST		 61
 Appendix 1 : Pre-test questionnaire		 66
Appendix 2 : Post-test questionnaire		66
Appendix 3: Semi-structured line-manager interview transcripts.....		70
Appendix 4: Demographic statistical results		94
Appendix 5: Statistical results in testing the assumptions		95
Appendix 6: Part one: quantitative analysis statistical results.....		95
Appendix 7: Part two: quantitative analysis statistical results.....		95

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: A model of the choice to remain silent	8
Figure 2: Pre-test post-test control group design	16
Figure 3: Sampling frame demographic information.....	19
Figure 4: Qualitative steps of the research design.....	28
Figure 5: Control group demographic information.....	35
Figure 6: Experimental group demographic information	36
Figure 7: Pre-test results per each composite measure	40
Figure 8: Post-test results per each composite measure	41
Figure 9: Comparison between the pre-test and post-test results per each composite measure	43
Figure 10: Comparison between the pre-test and post-test results per one combined composite measure	44
Figure 11: Effect of skills training to employee voice utilisation.....	55
Figure 12: Authentic leadership relationship with employee voice behaviour.....	56
Figure 13: Employee voice utilisation influences	57

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Summated scale per each composite measure.....	34
Table 2: Number of responses per gender of the participant	37
Table 3: Number of responses per age category of participant	37
Table 4: Number of responses per company tenure of participant	38
Table 5: Pre-test questionnaire comments per theme identified	46
Table 6: Post-test questionnaire comments per theme identified	46

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1 Research problem

Organisations operate in dynamic and demanding environments that require continuous assessment of their competitive advantage. Rees, Alfes, & Gatenby (2013) have identified employee engagement as being central to management maintaining a competitive edge. Bolino, Valcea, & Harvey (2010) and Grant, Parker, & Collins (2009) have also recognised that organisations who are operating in dynamic and competitive markets need their employees to not only passively perform assigned tasks but to anticipate problems and find ways to address them. The 'new employee' has been seen as "characterised by a transformed work role that goes beyond narrow task requirements and encompasses self-starting, proactive behaviours without the need for close supervision" (Belschak, Hartog, & Fay, 2010, p. 267). Organisations are seeking ways for employees to be more involved and engaged in their organisation and similarly employees are not only satisfied by completing assigned tasks but desire to be proactive in making suggestions or providing opinions. Employee voice is a relevant topic and is supported by Ng & Feldman (2013) who encouraged researchers to pay greater attention to voice in the current dynamic, working environment.

The concept of employee voice was first identified by Hirschman (1970) as a means for an employee to express dissatisfaction with the way in which an organisation was conducting its business. Employee voice has been further expanded into not just merely expressing dissatisfaction but also to include communicating creative ideas, providing solutions to identified problems, expressing frustration with processes or other departments and the like. Rees et al. (2013) identified a positive relationship between employee engagement and the utilisation of employee voice. Employee engagement could be optimised if employee voice were encouraged. Employee voice has benefits for both the employer and the employee (Kim, MacDuffie & Pil, 2010). Lavelle, Gunnigle, & McDonnell (2010) expand this idea by highlighting employee voice as beneficial for employees, because it can act as an effective communication tool with management, while the benefit for the employer is that it has the potential to improve work situations as well as communication within the organisation. A similar view has been expressed by Mackenzie, P. Podsakoff, & N. Podsakoff (2011) who noted that the benefits of employee voice expression are to assess the way tasks are performed and to bring to light areas for improvement. It is in order to maximise these benefits that it has become important for employers to "understand the conditions that facilitate employee communication behaviours such as voice" (Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008, p. 1198).

This research paper seeks to show that organisations need to understand how to encourage the utilisation of employee voice, to ensure their employees are more wholly engaged in the organisation and as such, the organisation remains competitive. It is this employee voice which is a demonstration of proactive behaviour that according to Wilkinson & Faye (2011) is an important issue for human resource professionals. It is important to have a better understanding of how to increase the utilisation of employee voice at an individual level, however in order to sustain such utilisation the working environment needs to continuously support such behaviour. Employee voice is not a single act but a way to continuously communicate within the organisation.

1.2 Research objectives

Employee voice or merely voice, to be used interchangeably in this paper, is a broad concept as it captures many constructs that can be communicated. Voice has been identified as “promotive behaviour that emphasises expression of constructive challenge intended to improve rather than merely criticise” (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998, p. 109). Although voice has been defined as behaviour of constructive challenge, it also includes making innovative and creative suggestions for change while recommending improvements to processes, even when others may disagree. Wilkinson, Dundon, Marchington & Ackers (2004) recognised employee voice as a way to a more open and constructive climate. In addition, it is not only between two parties and has a broader impact within the context of a working environment. It is this impact on the working environment that has caused the utilisation of employee voice to become a relevant and important topic. Takeuchi, Chen, & Cheung (2012) say it is critical for organisations to understand how to overcome or reduce their employee’s apprehension about speaking out.

The utilisation of employee voice is a positive tool for an organisation as it provides a means to improve the status quo and in so doing creates an engaging working environment. Although it is critical for organisations to encourage utilisation of voice, skills are required for employees to express their voice effectively. “Effective voice behaviour requires specific abilities and skills for identifying work-related problems and expressing opinions and ideas about those problems to others in the work group” (Janssen & Gao, 2013, p. 2) . Training in providing employees with these skills and abilities to express their voice is needed to increase the utilisation of employee voice and to strengthen the relationship between the employee and their line-manager.

Although employee voice involves providing suggestions and opinions, Milliken, Morrison, & Hewlin (2003) identified that the most frequently mentioned issues by employees were around the performance or the competence of a colleague or boss. This paper will look at the

expression of employee voice during the employee's scheduled one-on-one performance discussion, which is likely to be around performance management and career progression. Although what is actually said by the employee, during their one-on-one performance discussion is important, this research paper will focus on the overall assessment by the employee of the effectiveness of the one-on-one performance discussion as an opportunity to express employee voice. Morrison, Wheeler-Smith, & Kamdar (2011) have demonstrated that individual motivators and contextual facilitators of voice interact and therefore both need to be considered in research on voice behaviour. An employee will need to identify their own motivating factors and overcome their own apprehension in order to utilise their voice. In addition the employee will need to consider in what forum or context such utilisation will be most effective. It is not only the training or motivating factors that encourage employee voice but also the contextual facilitators.

Organisations need to understand how employee voice can be encouraged as open two-way communication may assist employees to be more engaged in the organisation and ultimately help it to achieve better performance. The data source for this research paper was employees within a retail bank in Gauteng, South Africa. The South African banking environment is very competitive and consists of four major banks, of which this bank is one. In order to maximise earnings, costs are monitored meticulously. Employees within the department of this bank are assessed by how many calls they make per hour. Employees and their line-managers are conscientious of the amount of time that they are away from their desk as this could result in low productivity for the department and a poor performance assessment.

This research has two objectives:

Research objective 1: Determine if skills training in expressing employee voice is an effective aid in promoting the use of employee voice.

Research objective 2: Determine if a scheduled one-on-one performance discussion is an effective platform to express employee voice.

Research objective 1 will be assessed by the degree of change in an employee's utilisation of their employee voice as well as the effect on the relationship between the employee and their line-manager. Research objective 2 will be measured by the employee's self-satisfaction assessment of their one-on-one performance discussion with their line-manager.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Understanding employee voice

Although this paper will be looking at the utilisation of employee voice, it is important to highlight that employee voice forms part of the wider construct of proactive behaviour. As cited in Bolino et al. (2010) proactive behaviours, which include seeking feedback (Ashford, Blatt & Walle, 2003), demonstrating initiative (Frese & Fay, 2001), building networks (Ashford & Black, 1996), seeking information (Morrison, 1993), helping others (Organ, 1988), taking charge (Morrison & Phelps, 1999), expressing voice (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998 and Van Dyne & LePine, 1998), and redefining work (Ashford & Black, 1996 and Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001), are associated with a number of positive consequences. This paper will utilise the insights obtained from employee voice literature as well as those around the broader concept of proactive behaviour.

Wilkinson et al. (2004) formed different constructs of employee voice, two of which are highlighted. Firstly, the paper looked at 'engagement' which is where organisations provide support and an open environment to express employee voice. Secondly, the paper looked at 'say about issues' which goes beyond merely providing an opportunity to express employee voice and requires an initiated action by the organisation's management. Bringing this together, employee voice involves expressing concerns within an open environment that is likely to require a response and possibly subsequent action by management. An employee is likely to have to overcome some internal obstacles (as an example, an introvert personality) before they exercise their employee voice. In addition, an employee would need to exercise self confidence in order to utilise their employee voice. If there is little acknowledgement or action by management after an employee has utilised their voice, it seems unlikely that an employee would utilise their employee voice in the same way again. An employee needs to feel part of an environment that is supportive of employee voice utilisation as well as experience action taken by management as a result of an employee expressing their voice. This is likely to demonstrate a culture for the employee that encourages the continuous utilisation of one's employee voice.

Morrison et al. (2011) noted that voice is a discretionary communication of ideas and suggestions which illustrates that it is a choice initiated by the employee. Employee voice behaviour is intentionally planned (Liang, C. Farh, & J. Farh, 2012). This idea was taken further in Bolino et al. (2010) who maintain that this discretion is actioned depending on the employee's view of the situational and dispositional factors. Employee voice is initiated by the employee and in so doing an action is anticipated by the organisation. This anticipated action by the employee calls for engagement with the employee around the communicated concerns

and perhaps even management actioning changes. Utilisation of employee voice suggests that a conversation is required. In describing employee voice Wilkinson et al. (2004) noted that employee voice is a two way communication of exchanging ideas or providing upward solutions to problems. This communication around ideas and suggestions is important but in addition establishing an environment where concerns or dissatisfaction can be expressed would form a steady foundation for this communication to continuously occur. The most prominent form of challenge oriented behaviour is employee voice (Mackenzie et al., 2011). In an environment where challenge of the status quo is welcomed and concerns can be freely expressed, a more open environment of communication is created. This open environment of communication is more likely to allow employees to bring creative ideas and solutions to problems, which would keep an employee engaged with the organisation. Ideally this constructive behaviour should benefit both the employee and the organisation.

Kim et al. (2010) and Lavelle et al. (2010) make a distinction between direct and indirect voice. Direct employee voice looks at the degree to which individual employees or groups of employees directly influence organisational decisions (Kim et al., 2010). Indirect voice involves other participants or factors (for example, employee unions). It is important to make this distinction between direct and indirect voice as a one-on-one performance discussion is between the employee and their line-manager and does not involve other participants, which makes it a direct form of voice. The other factors such as: group dynamics, telephone interruptions and the like are not at play. It is also much more difficult, to isolate training as an intervention tool with indirect voice as there are other dynamics at play. In light of this distinction this research paper will look at how direct voice is impacted by the expression of employee voice during the one-on-one performance discussions.

The above understanding of employee voice provides a basic perspective of what needs to be utilised and encouraged through skills training in employee voice.

2.2 Utilisation of employee voice

The benefits of facilitating employee voice were identified by Spencer (1986) as creating a means of problem resolution and high regard of the organisation's procedures in solving them. Participation, when it works, provides a win-win solution to an inherent organisational problem namely "how to satisfy workers' needs while simultaneously achieving organisational objectives" (Strauss, 2006, p. 778). Therefore, the positive aspects of utilising employee voice or even encouraging such utilisation are likely to benefit the employee, the organisation and management within the organisation. There are also different aspects of employee voice which essentially involve ensuring the employee is satisfied with their working environment and then following on from this, that the employee is engaged in communicating suggestions

and ideas that help steer the organisation to meet its objectives. Boxall and Macky (2008) however warned that although there are win-win outcomes, inherent tensions between parties need to be carefully managed when employees use their voice. This is because an employee may not have the required skill or technique to use their voice appropriately nor perhaps at the right time. Just as an employee without a required skill may place an organisation in difficulty, an employee without proactivity may also negatively impact an organisation (Bolino et al., 2010). It is therefore important to obtain the right balance between when to utilise employee voice and the appropriate use of employee voice.

Tangirala & Ramanujam (2008) noted the importance of identification with the organisation, attachment by the employee to their profession and perception of procedural justice as to when employees utilise their voice. The employee's discretionary use of their voice does not only consider the future outcome of such action but also takes into account the context of the environment. Trust in the organisation was suggested by Rees et al. (2013) as an important attribute to encourage employees to speak up. The expression of employee voice can be considered risky as it challenges the status quo and it is for this reason that the employee would need to believe in the organisation and that a level of fairness would prevail. Employee expression of voice may sometimes be interpreted as troublesome and singling out from the group, which according to Takeuchi et al. (2012) would cause employees to refrain from speaking up. It may seem easier for an employee to find their own means to overcome their dissatisfaction with an issue rather than speaking up and risk being isolated from their peers. However, this can lead to an employee becoming disengaged and could have negative consequences for the organisation.

The relationship between the employee and their line-manager was suggested by Rees et al. (2013) as an important attribute to encourage employees to speak up. In order to express one's voice in a business environment, Liu, Zhu & Yang (2010) highlighted the fact that the employee needs to be comfortable with their line-manager providing feedback as this will assist in overcoming fears of conflict or other social disadvantages associated with such behaviour. If the employee does not trust nor respect their line-manager, they are likely to accept, rather than challenge performance feedback provided by their line-manager. It is therefore important to not merely create an open environment of communication at an organisation level but at a more granular level between a line-manager and the employee. This ensures that each employee is engaged and promotes the organisation operating optimally. It is the business environment, the level of trust the employee has with the organisation as well as the employee's relationship with their line-manager that stand out as fundamentals to encourage employee voice utilisation as well as how they inter-link. Although

an employee could have a good relationship with their line-manager, if they do not trust the procedural justice system of the organisation it seems unlikely that they would speak-out as they would believe that although their line-manager would like to take action, they are inhibited in doing so.

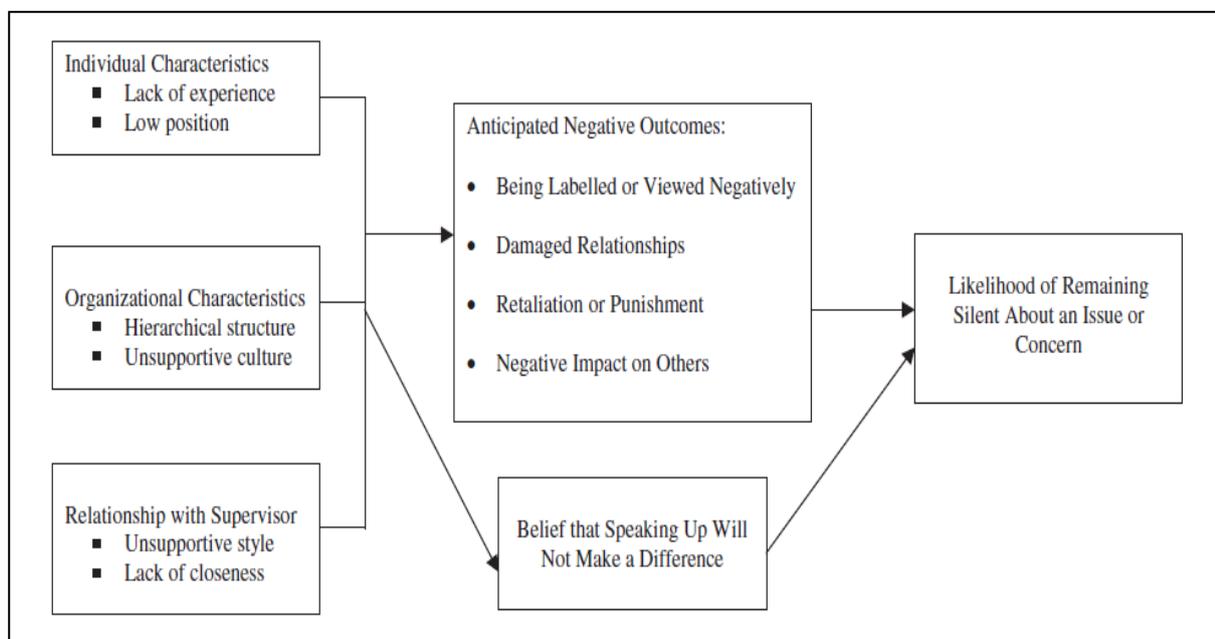
The utilisation of employee voice does not only assist with employee engagement but provides improved performance as a result and this would also benefit the organisation (Wilkinson et al., 2004). Dissatisfaction and feelings of hopelessness are likely to weigh heavy on the shoulders of employees and hamper performance if concerns cannot be raised or if raised concerns are ignored. Janssen & Gao (2013) showed that self-perceived status is an important aspect when assessing employee voice responsiveness. The rationale by an employee to express their voice does not only take into account their own feelings and concerns but also includes how the individual believes they fit in within the organisation. The position the employee holds in the eyes of the person to whom they are voicing their views, is also important. It is perceived that the more senior an individual is within an organisation, the more likely they will be and are able to affect the required action. It is this decision by the employee (as to whether they should utilise their voice or not) that negatively impacts the level of their performance as the employee is not only focused on their work outcomes but also on weighing up the possible outcomes if they were to utilise their voice. This moderate level of performance is likely to continue even once an employee has expressed their voice as they become pre-occupied with their actions rather than their job performance. Whiting, Maynes, N. Podsakoff, & P. Podsakoff (2012) studied the employee voice message, source and context variables and their effect on the participants' performance ratings. A link can be seen between employee voice and performance ratings. Stobbeleir, Ashford, & Luque (2010) further encouraged more insight into whether past performance was a factor in feedback seeking and although this may have an impact on employee voice utilisation, it was not considered as a variable factor in this research paper. This research paper's focus is on employee voice utilisation to assist in maintaining employee's engagement. The more engaged an employee is in their work, the more likely they are to provide better work outcomes. These better work outcomes, may or may not translate into a better performance rating for the employee but nonetheless provides a healthy working environment.

In the one-on-one performance discussions employees have the opportunity to discuss their performance with their line-manager. An employee's performance may have been hampered due to dissatisfaction within the working environment and perhaps, not being able to identify an earlier opportunity to express such dissatisfaction. The one-on-one performance discussion has been identified as an appropriate forum to assess employee voice utilisation, as within this

forum an employee is provided with the opportunity to express themselves. It is important to note that the one-on-one performance discussion occurs annually over a scheduled three week period, within the organisation from which the sample was drawn. The one-on-one performance discussion only happens at one point in time, and it is suggested that for further research a time-series analysis would be beneficial to identify whether a decrease in an employee's performance coincided with a decrease in their voice utilisation. Although past performance and comparisons of more than one one-on-one performance discussion would be useful in further understanding employee voice, this will not be investigated in this research paper.

Liang et al. (2012) recognised that when employees are able to discharge their fear the perceived costs of expressing employee voice are minimised. However, remaining silent may make sense when employees fear that expressing their employee voice will cause a negative reaction by their line-manager and could result in the employee no longer being able to work in the organisation (Milliken et al., 2003). This has been expanded into a model illustrated in Figure 1 below showing other reasons why employees remain silent and do not use their employee voice to express concerns that may in fact benefit themselves and their organisation:

Figure 1: A model of the choice to remain silent



(Milliken et al., 2003, p. 1467)

It is important to understand why employees make a choice not to use their employee voice as providing interventions such as skills training, may not be enough. There are not only individual characteristics that inhibit employee voice utilisation, but the relationship with their line-manager as well as organisational characteristics also play a part. Providing tools and techniques for employee's to utilise their employee voice may assist the employee to overcome their own individual characteristics that are causing them to remain silent, but may not address the organisation characteristics. Additionally, employees may even be aware of tools and techniques for employee voice utilisation, but other factors are causing them to remain silent. There are benefits in employee voice utilisation, however such employees may be a challenge to a manager and such proactive behaviours may be used inappropriately (Bolino et al., 2010). For this reason, it is important to balance the identification and encouragement of employee's to use their voice and the timing and manner in so doing, making sure the latter is appropriate.

Once employee voice is initiated and then continuously encouraged, it should become easier for the employee to exercise their voice. Employee voice utilisation can be perceived as an organisation norm when the environment provides the necessary support for an employee to utilise their voice. If support for employee voice is visible within the working environment, it is likely that other employees will begin to utilise their voice and even do so continuously. It is when employees witness their line-managers or colleagues expressing employee voice and the organisation acceptance of this behavioural norm, that they can feel empowered to express their own voice (Avery, McKay, Wilson, Volpone, & Killham, 2011). Planned procedures and interventions can be put in place to encourage employee voice utilisation but the existence of a supportive business climate and culture is also important. A healthy business environment needs to be orchestrated by the employee and the organisation management. It is interesting to consider the contrast or connection between management and the employee around creating healthy perception (Kim et al., 2010). This research paper will look at the effectiveness of the relationship between the employee and their line-manager in relation to employee voice utilisation. It is the manner in which the employee and line-manager work together to create and sustain a healthy business environment, which encourages employee voice utilisation. The perception of the employee and line-manager relationship will be viewed both from the perspective of the employee as well as the line-manager. These perceptions will be compared to give an indication of the effectiveness of the relationship between these parties as well as whether the business environment is conducive as a stimulant for employee voice utilisation. An effective relationship between the employee and line-manager is likely to improve perceptions of the business environment being an environment of open communication and stimulation for employee engagement.

Insight into the advantages and disadvantages of utilising employee voice helps to understand what is required to encourage employee voice utilisation for the benefit of the employee and the organisation respectively.

2.3 Skills training in utilising employee voice

Mackenzie et al. (2011) suggested that training could help maximise the benefits and minimise the perceived negative consequences of challenge-oriented behaviour, in employee voice utilisation. It is further noted that employee voice is not only about bringing suggestions, opinions or problems but is also concerned with providing solutions. These solutions should not be restricted to business solutions, but should include ways in which the perceived working environment of the employee can be improved. Motivation related intervention processes were suggested by Tangirala & Ramanujam (2012) to be investigated further. Organisations can sustain competitive advantage and employee engagement by paying closer attention to employee skills development in order to encourage the utilisation of employee voice. Specific training and development programs could encourage employees to obtain knowledge and skills that encourage and enable the employee to overcome their fears and inabilities to express their voice effectively (Janssen & Gao, 2013). "Such specific voice activities require task-related expertise to seek, define, and diagnose problems as well as social skills to speak up and convince their supervisor and others to respond appropriately to their concerns" (Janssen & Gao, 2013, p. 17). This research paper has identified skills training as a possible intervention to encourage employee voice utilisation.

It is employees at all levels within the organisation that are likely to need training in using employee voice and listening to employee voice (Detert & Burris, 2007). This research paper will however not look at ways to encourage and train the line-manager for these empowering behaviours, although it might be beneficial for the organisation. The training of the line-managers would create a non-controlled variable in the experiment design. Furthermore, training of the line-managers would more likely focus on listening techniques and how to initiate required actions which would be different to the skills training required for the employee.

Skills training in employee voice should include the organisation's acceptance and even recognition of employees who have the courage and assertiveness to express their voice during their one-on-one performance discussion. "If labels like 'courageous' were attached to people who spoke up rather than labels such as 'troublemaker', the incentive structure for voice or silence would be quite different" (Milliken et al., 2003, p. 1473). Kim et al. (2010) also suggests boosting employee voice. More empowering behaviours have been suggested by Chen, Sharma, Edinger, Shapiro, & Farh (2011) to assist and encourage employees to

provide work related input that the organisation recognises and communicates to its employees. It is therefore important through the communication with their employees, that the organisation recognises that the skills training is not an aid to improve performance, but rather a mechanism to offer confidence and encouragement to employees to utilise their employee voice. At a very basic level, the skills training seeks to provide awareness among employees that they are able to speak-up and, as the organisation allows their employees to participate in the skills training that the organisation seeks to create a healthy business environment for employee voice utilisation.

Understanding employee voice and the advantages and disadvantages of employee voice utilisation contributes to a clearer understanding of the contents of the skills training required to encourage employee voice utilisation.

2.4 Performance discussion for employee voice utilisation

Budd, Gollan & Wilkinson (2010) identified new approaches to enhance our knowledge of employee voice and encouraged further research to “design more effective voice and participation mechanisms that serve the multiplicity of interests inherent in the modern employment relationship” (p. 308). It is important to not only have an understanding of employee voice but also to understand the ways and means in which it can be utilised. It has been noted by Wilkinson et al. (2004) that if employees lacked confidence or did not believe that their proactive behaviour would be taken seriously, there was little point in having a way to utilise employee voice at all. In order to overcome this lack of belief, Farndale, Hope-Hailey, & Kelliher (2011) suggested that creating practice guidelines for high commitment performance management that stimulate feelings of perceived justice amongst employees results in increased levels of employee commitment and trust in the employer. Trust and belief in the procedures of an organisation therefore are likely to assist an employee to believe that there will be acknowledgment by management and action will be taken if they express their voice. The one-on-one performance discussion is a forum whereby the employee and line-manager are provided with an opportunity to express their views around the employee’s performance. This is supported by Linna, Elovainio, Van den Bos, Kivimäki, Pentti & Vahtera (2012) who identified feedback discussions as providing both supervisors and employees with an opportunity to express their own views for consideration. The one-on-one performance discussions are a mechanism set-up by the organisation to instill trust and belief in the employee that the assessment of their performance is a fair and just process, as it provides a forum to discuss any concerns and dissatisfaction.

Skills training will be provided to an experimental group in order to encourage these employees to express these concerns, dissatisfaction and any other communication they feel

beneficial during their one-on-one performance discussion. There are other means by which an employee can utilise their voice, for example team meetings, one-on-one meetings with their line-manager, written communication with their line-manager and the like. The purpose of this research paper is not to find the best means for employee voice utilisation but to assess whether the one-on-one performance discussion is an effective means.

Organisations have become more dynamic and competitive which limits the time that management has to spend with their employees as more time needs to be spent on understanding their business and the environment in which it operates. Employees therefore have less of an opportunity to utilise employee voice. The findings of Detert & Burris (2007) highlight the significance of leadership in creating an environment of safety to express employee voice. The one-on-one performance discussion is at least an annual scheduled meeting between the employee and their line-manager. Due to the one-on-one performance discussion being a stipulated requirement of the organisation used in this research paper, it seemed an appropriate forum to experiment the use by employees of their voice, within this forum.

The one-on-one performance discussion provides a means for employee voice utilisation and it is proposed that introducing skills training could result in an increase in such utilisation during one-on-one performance discussions.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

As identified in the literature review, there are many benefits to the expression of employee voice but at the same time some employees may still choose to remain silent. Sufficient skills training could help to provide enough confidence for an employee to express their voice appropriately.

3.1 Hypothesis 1: Utilisation of employee voice

Null Hypothesis (H₁₀):

Skills training in expressing employee voice does not increase the utilisation by the employee of their employee voice during their one-on-one performance discussion.

Alternative hypothesis (H₁₁):

Skills training in expressing employee voice does increase the utilisation by the employee of their employee voice during their one-on-one performance discussion.

Although the frequent use of employee voice is a satisfactory measure of the success of the skills training intervention, it alone will not indicate the success of what is attained by expression of employee voice. Bolino et al. (2010) have made a suggestion to consider both the quantity and quality of proactive behaviour. The expression of employee voice may be rewarded positively by receiving greater visibility at work or could be received negatively as a result of being misunderstood (Liang et al., 2012).

Therefore the impact on the employee and line-manager relationship will also be assessed, as outlined in the second hypothesis.

3.2 Hypothesis 2: Relationship with the line-manager

Null Hypothesis (H₂₀):

There is no significant impact on the relationship with the employee's line-manager when the expression of employee's voice is utilised during a one-on-one performance discussion, after receiving skills training in expressing employee voice.

Alternative hypothesis (H2₁):

There is a significant impact on the relationship with the employee's line-manager when the expression of employee's voice is utilised during a one-on-one performance discussion, after receiving skills training in expressing employee voice.

The one-on-one performance discussion is a forum already used by organisations to facilitate communication between the line-manager and the employee. The third hypothesis is constructed to assess whether the one-on-one performance discussion is an effective forum to express one's voice.

3.3 Hypothesis 3: Assessment of the performance discussion**Null Hypothesis (H3₀):**

Utilising employee voice has no significant impact on the employee's satisfaction with the one-on-one performance discussion meeting.

Alternative hypothesis (H3₁):

Utilising employee voice enhances the employee's satisfaction with the one-on-one performance discussion meeting.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this research was to establish whether the participation of employees in skills training encouraged utilisation of their employee voice and whether such utilisation had a positive effect on the employee and line-manager relationship. It also aimed to establish if the one-on-one performance discussion was an effective forum to express employee voice based on the employee's assessment of their satisfaction with their one-on-one performance discussion. This assessment by the employee is independent of the actual performance rating provided to the employee.

A quantitative and qualitative analysis has been used for this research. The qualitative analysis was undertaken to support the results of the quantitative analysis. The research methodology section has therefore been split into two phases. The first phase is the quantitative analysis and the second phase is the qualitative analysis.

4.2 Phase one: quantitative analysis

4.2.1 Research design

A quantitative causal research methodology was used to establish if there would be a cause-and-effect relationship between skills training in expressing employee voice and the utilisation and effectiveness of such employee voice utilisation. The effectiveness was assessed based on the employee's perception of their relationship with their line-manager, before and after the utilisation of their employee voice. In addition a cause-and-effect relationship was also assessed between skillfully expressing ones voice in the one-on-one performance discussion and the employee's satisfaction with their one-on-one performance discussion.

According to Welman, Kruger, & Mitchell (2005) true experimental research has three specific characteristics:

1. There should be control over the independent variable
2. Random allocation must be made between groups
3. There should be control of nuisance variables

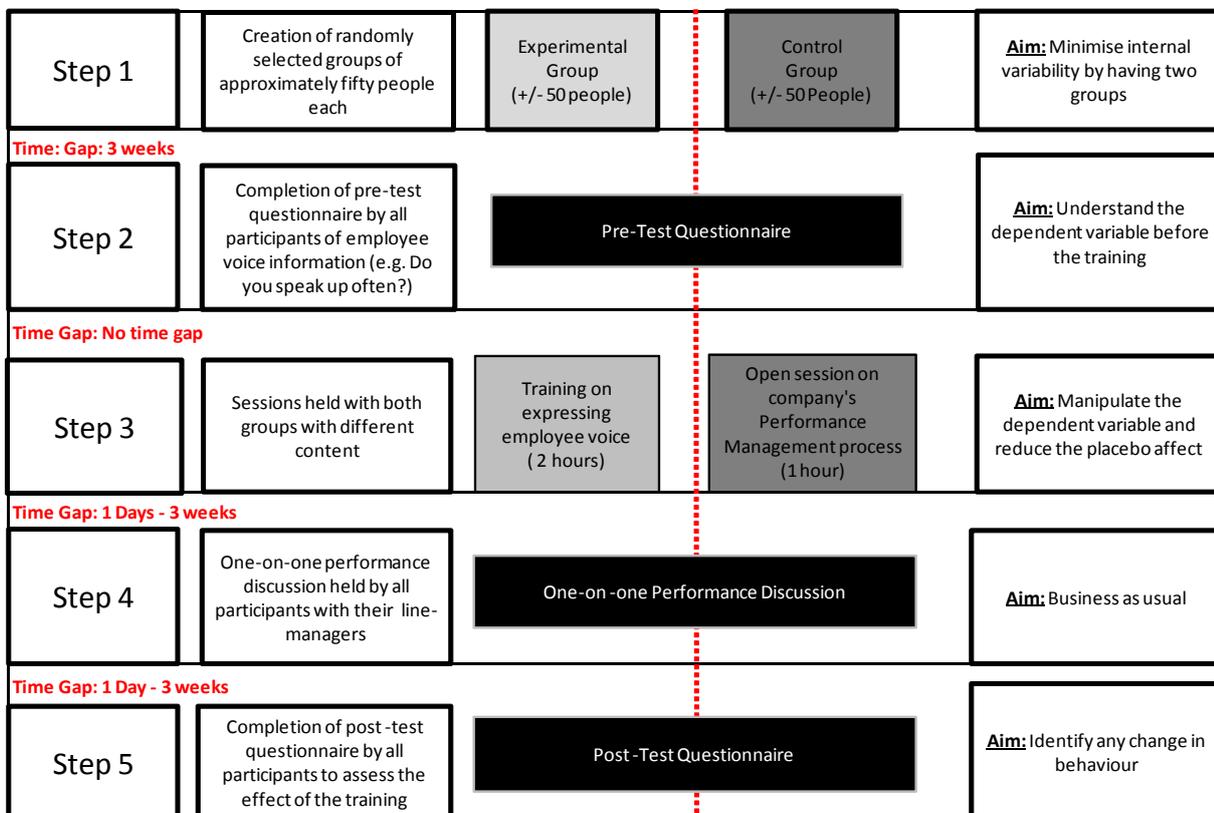
According to Saunders & Lewis (2012) the purpose of an experiment design is to study causality. This can be assessed by one variable (for example training "T") being investigated as the direct cause of another (for example increased utilisation of employee voice "U"). The first variable (T) must precede the latter variable (U) and if changes in the latter variable (U) can be related to changes only in the first variable (T) then causality can be inferred (Welman et al., 2005). In terms of this research paper, skills training in effectively utilising employee

voice would be the independent variable. The change in utilisation of employee voice, the employee's perception of their relationship with their line-manager and the employee's satisfaction with their one-on-one performance discussions were investigated as the dependent variables and their cause based on the influence of the independent variable. Importantly, the skills training provided on utilising employee voice preceded the one-on-one performance discussions.

The research was conducted as a pre-test post-test control group design. According to White (2002) this research design is particularly robust. This design is appropriate as it enables an assessment of variation between the groups as well as variations within the groups. Therefore the effectiveness of skills training can be assessed between the control and experimental group and within the control and experimental group, by comparing the pre-test and post-test results. The experiment design was considered appropriate as a cause-and-effect relationship was anticipated, and this would therefore assist further research in the area of employee voice.

The experiment design has been detailed in Figure 2:

Figure 2: Pre-test post-test control group design



The first step was the creation of two groups; the experimental group and the control group. The control and experimental groups were created by applying a random allocation based on the "Rand" function in Excel. The second step was the administration of a pre-test questionnaire which was to assist in understanding the dependent variable before any influence was inferred. The third step entailed the experimental group receiving professionally provided skills training in voice utilisation and the control group participating in an open communication session around the performance process at the bank used in this experiment. Both groups received training at similar times in order to reduce the placebo effect, so preventing one group being favoured over and above the other group. The fourth step was business as usual in terms of the one-on-one performance discussions held between all the participants and their respective line-managers. The fifth step entailed the administration and completion of the post-test questionnaire which was given to both groups of participants to determine if skills training in voice utilisation had an effect on the utilisation of employee voice in their one-on-one performance discussions. This was assessed within the groups, based on the pre-test and post-test questionnaire responses. A comparison was also made between the control and experimental groups.

4.2.2 Unit of analysis and population of relevance

The bank agreed to provide both access to their facilities and provide participants to conduct the research design. The list of participants provided were non-managers from different departments of the organisation. The unit of analysis was the employees of the bank. A sampling frame was provided by the bank that constituted a list of names of participants who would be able to be involved in the research design. Saunders & Lewis (2012) have defined the sampling frame as a complete list of participants that form the total population from which a sample can be derived. This was formed largely from departments where participants were able to take time out from their usual schedules in order to attend a training session and complete the required pre-test and post-test questionnaires.

4.2.3 Sampling technique

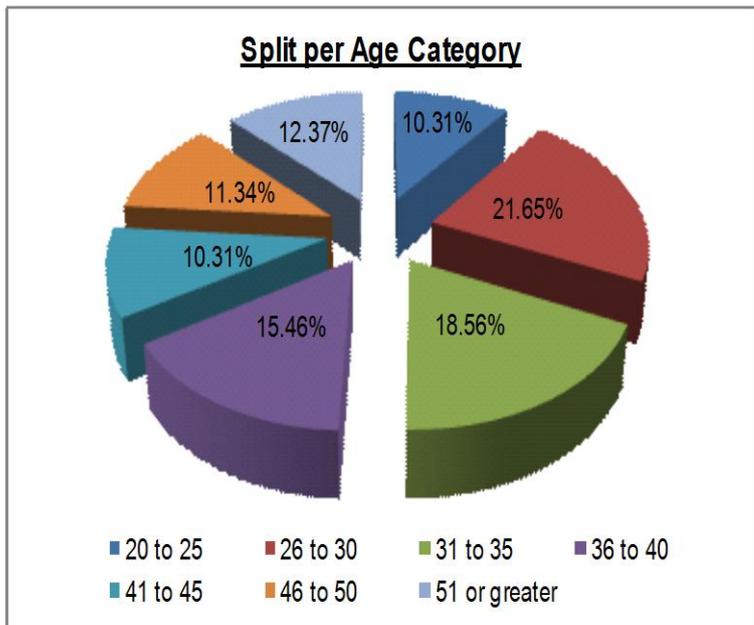
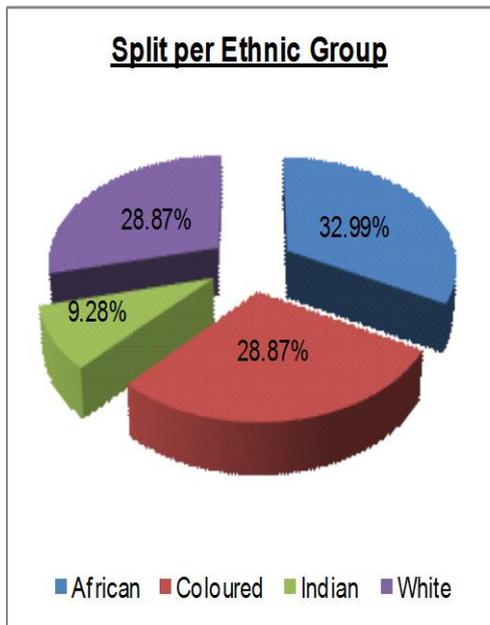
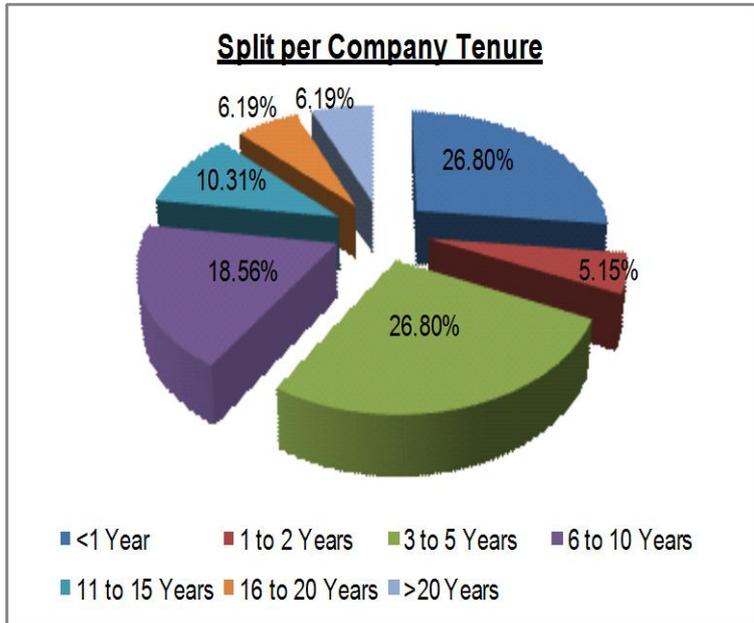
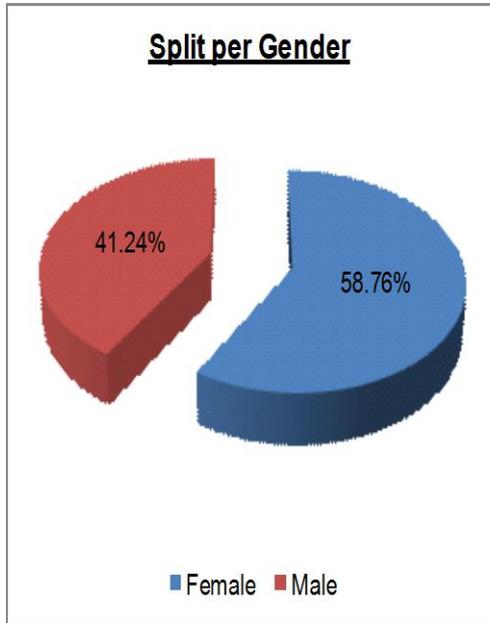
The allocation of participants between the experimental group and the control group was made using simple random sampling from the sampling frame provided. A random number was allocated to each participant and restricted to the total number of participants. The list was then sorted by numerical number and the first fifty participants were allocated to the experimental group and the remaining participants to the control group. Simple random sampling has been defined as "a type of probability sampling in which each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected at random and included in the sample" (Saunders & Lewis, 2012, p. 135). Once the experimental and control groups were formed,

observation analysis was performed to ensure that although the groups were allocated using a simple random sampling technique, there was adequate distribution between the two groups. A random sampling technique reduces the occurrence of any nuisance variables as the allocation between the control and experimental group has been performed randomly, with each participant having an equal chance of being selected for either group. This implies that the participants within the groups should be similar and therefore the groups are comparable. Also, this random sampling technique is a form of probability sampling and inferential statistics could be used to analyse the results.

Initially the sampling frame of the employees was to be divided into strata. Saunders & Lewis (2012) advised that this ensures the strata will be represented in the same proportion in the two sampling groups as the whole population. Three strata were initially considered appropriate; one for company tenure, one for gender and one for age. Company tenure was to be measured in years and defined as how long the employee had been at this bank. In Grant & Ashford (2008) knowledge and skills were thought to be particularly pertinent to proactive behaviour therefore age and company tenure of the employee had been considered as valid strata. In dynamic environments, perceptions about job performance and gender may interact and this therefore created the need for the third stratum (Kidder & Parks, 2001). In research conducted by Tangirala & Ramanujam (2012) these same strata were considered. Although this was the initial intention, additional or alternative strata would also be considered depending on the distribution of the sampling frame and the information obtained from the Human Resource Personnel of the bank. Once the strata were created, the sample would be selected by simple random sampling. This sampling technique was considered appropriate as it would eliminate perception bias in the sampling frame and ensure that there is no ranking of the sampling frame.

Before the stratified random sampling technique was utilised the sampling frame was analysed for the suggested strata and this has been displayed in Figure 3:

Figure 3: Sampling frame demographic information



An observation analysis of the sampling frame illustrates that there is good distribution among the different categories highlighted. Due to the complication of having so many strata a simple random allocation between the two groups from the initial sampling frame was performed. An observation analysis of both groups was performed once the two groups were randomly created and no outliers were noted.

Based on the group allocation of the participants, the participants in each group were invited to attend a session, which was between two and three hours of training scheduled for the experimental group, or one hour scheduled for the control group. There were two sessions run for each group in order to create smaller groups that would allow optimal benefit for the participants from the sessions and encourage active participation.

On each day of the scheduled experimental training sessions, not all participants invited arrived. The department heads were called by the Human Resource Personnel in order for them to nominate other team members to attend the training. Although it seemed like a lot of change at the time, it only resulted in four additional participants. This was considered insignificant.

4.2.4 Data collection

4.2.4.1 Demographic information

The first method of data collection was from the sampling frame which included information as follows:

Employee Number	Age	Gender	Race	Years at the bank	Role Function	Line-manager
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This information was provided by the Human Resource Personnel of the bank and included all employees who were able to partake in the experiment. This information was initially needed to determine the three strata; age, gender and company tenure. It was useful to determine the comparability of the control and experimental groups.

For the purposes of this data collection a non-manager was considered an employee who has a line-manager that would be responsible for the arranging and completion of the one-on-one performance discussions with the non-manager. These non-managers have been referred to as employees of the organisation or participants in the research design, in this research paper.

4.2.4.2 Pre-test questionnaire

An electronic based pre-test questionnaire was to be sent via email by the Human Resource Personnel of the bank to each participant of the experiment. It was anticipated that there would be a higher response rate if the participants knew the person from whom the initial email was sent. The initial email was drafted by the researcher with the primary purpose of ensuring confidentiality of the participants who completed their pre-test questionnaires by requesting the participants to return their completed questionnaires electronically, via email to the researcher's personal email address. Furthermore, it was requested that the pre-test questionnaires be completed and sent to the researcher before the participants attended their allocated training session. This was to ensure that the pre-test information was collected and obtained before the participants were influenced by the training session that they were allocated to attend.

This method was however not followed as, the Human Resource Personnel distributed their own email requesting the participants to bring print outs of their completed pre-test questionnaires to the training that they were allocated to attend. In the instances where new participants were nominated to attend the training sessions on the day of the training, they were given pre-test questionnaires to complete in the training room. There were four such participants. Therefore some participants were placed under different conditions when they completed their pre-test questionnaire.

The researcher attended both sessions of the experimental group training and collected the pre-test questionnaires from those participants who attended the training. The researcher also administered the pre-test questionnaire for those participants who arrived at the training venue without a completed pre-test questionnaire. The pre-test questionnaires of the control group were collected by the Human Resource Personnel who conducted the control group training sessions.

4.2.4.3 Post-test questionnaire

The post-test questionnaire was administered electronically by email, to all after their respective training session and their one-on-one performance discussion with their line-manager. The initial email was sent by a Human Resource representative and the researcher followed up on the post-test questionnaires three or four times to ensure the maximum response rate in terms of the research design. Due to the timing of the one-on-one performance discussions and the training sessions the post-test questionnaire could have been completed by the employee up to a few weeks after their respective one-on-one

performance discussion. The completed post-test questionnaires were requested to be sent back to the researcher's personal email account to ensure confidentiality.

This was considered an appropriate approach, because as with the pre-test questionnaire it was anticipated that it is easier for participants to complete an electronic questionnaire as they utilise a computer in their daily functions and they would be able to complete the questionnaires in their own time and at their own pace.

4.2.5 Questionnaire format

4.2.5.1 Introduction

Questionnaires are appropriate when data is required by a large number of respondents in relation to the same issue (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). Both the pre-test and post-test questionnaires were to be administered electronically to ensure ease of completion, consistency due to the use of drop down lists embedded within the questionnaires and improved legibility of the responses including those made in the open comment boxes.

Each questionnaire was accompanied by a covering letter that explained the reason for the distribution of the questionnaire, a brief explanation of the context as well as the opportunity to withdraw from the experiment at any time. This was to ensure that participants completed the questionnaires on a voluntary basis. Contact details of the researcher were also given to provide assistance to any employees who had difficulty in completing the questionnaires and to ensure validity of the responses made by the employees. Each questionnaire also clearly stated that all information would be kept confidential. This was likely to provide a higher response rate as clear instructions were provided and completion was made easier through electronic design.

The pre-test and post-test questionnaires both included open and closed questions. The open questions were to allow participants to include additional information they felt would be useful to the research. The questions were constructed in such a way as not to be leading (that is seeking a specific response) or biased (that is favouring English speaking participants by using complicated English) and each question formed one construct in order to ensure valid and accurate results.

4.2.5.2 Pilot test

A pilot test was performed on the pre-test and post-test questionnaires to ensure that the questions would be understood, that they would not be misleading and the questions would provide the information required to meet the objectives of this research paper (Saunders &

Lewis, 2012). The selected participants for the pilot test was one Human Resource professional who has an understanding of ethical requirements that need to be considered when designing a questionnaire in a business context, two human behaviour specialists who understood employee voice, two people who work at a Bank, one person who has a good ethical standing, one representative of the Human Resource Personnel at the respective company and the professional trainer who was part of this experiment. This varied group of people provided insight into the quality of the questionnaire layout, their interpretation of the questionnaire requirements and their understanding of the questions. The comments provided by the participants of the pilot test were incorporated into the questionnaires where they were valid and appropriate. The main suggestions were around ease of format, consistency of language and suggestions on clearer instructions about completion of the questionnaires.

4.2.5.3 Pre-test questionnaire

The pre-test questionnaire was broken into two parts. The first part was to obtain demographic information provided in the sampling frame and to obtain additional information such as; highest education level, language of the employee and the like. The employee number of the participants was required, with the provision of their names as optional. The employee number was required as this was used to match the results of the pre-test questionnaire with the results of the post-test questionnaire, for the same participant. The second part of the pre-test questionnaire was broken up into four sections:

Section A: Utilisation of employee voice

Section B: Relationship with your line-manager

Section C: Performance discussion

Section D: Open space for comments

The first three sections were designed to tie into the three hypotheses that form part of this research paper. The last section was to obtain a better understanding of the participants and any other aspects that were not considered as part of the pre-test questionnaire. The first three sections had between 5 and 9 questions each, whereas the last section was an open space for the employee to provide any further comments. This format is supported by Grant et al. (2009) who have suggested that in order to obtain a balance between response bias and maintaining content and construct validity the number of questions per section should be minimised. The purpose of the pre-test questionnaire was to assess the demographics of each group as well as each employee's current status in relation to utilising their employee voice, their relationship with their line-manager as well as their comfort level around a one-on-one performance discussion.

Questions that were used in the pre-test questionnaire were adapted from items that measured employees' perceptions of the likelihood of having their opinions heard in a work environment work and promotive voice (Avery et al., 2011), organisational value and personal cynicism (Van Dyne, Graham, & Dienesch, 1994), interview questions (Milliken et al., 2003) and questions determined as part of this research paper.

The pre-test questionnaire has been included in Appendix 1.

4.2.5.4 Post-test questionnaire

The purpose of the post-test questionnaire was to achieve four objectives:

Objective 1: Understand if skills training was an effective tool to motivate and encourage the use of employee voice (that is utilisation of employee voice increased).

Objective 2: Understand if there was a noticeable behavioural and relational change between the employee and line-manager after the performance discussion as a result of the expression of voice.

Objective 3: Understand if the one-on-one performance discussion was an effective forum to utilise employee voice.

Objective 4: Obtain any additional information that was relevant to the above three objectives of the research design.

A 5-point likert-type scale was initially used for almost all the questions in the pre-test and post-test questionnaires. This was considered an appropriate method as it would be easy to compile and provide an equal positive and negative opportunity for the employee to respond (Welman et al., 2005). The type of scales were adapted for different sections within the questionnaires but kept consistent between the pre-test and post-test questionnaires so that the results between the pre-test and post-test could be compared.

The participants in the experimental group training expressed concerns, fears and lack of trust to utilise their employee voice. It was expected that the pre-test results would reflect low to average scores in relation to employee voice utilisation. However, there were skewed responses to the highest and second highest positive response category scores in the pre-test results. Response error is where some participants distort the truth when completing a questionnaire, mostly in order not to be perceived as doing some wrong (Weiers, 2011). Response error was managed in the design of this research by requesting the completed questionnaires to be sent to the researcher's personal email address. A lack of understanding of the research design or mistrust by the employees as to the use of the pre-test questionnaire

responses were considered as contributing factors for the skewed responses to the pre-test questionnaire. Due to the surprising skewness of the results as well as a disconnection between the comments in the training and the pre-test results, the post-test questionnaire was re-designed to ensure it was simpler, easier to follow and accommodated the desire to provide quick responses. The re-designed post-test questionnaire also sought to obtain a direct response from the employee to an experienced change in employee voice utilisation instead of a scaled response change, as there was little room for improvement based on the high responses to the pre-test questionnaires.

The re-designed post-test questionnaire had fewer questions and was simpler but did not compromise the integrity of the responses. The initial 5 point likert-scale was adjusted to a 3 point likert-scale. This was done to accommodate the low level of education of the respondents which had been identified through the pre-test questionnaire results. A 3 point likert-scale format requiring fewer responses was therefore considered an easier option. Due to the re-design of the post-test questionnaire, the pre-test questionnaire no longer directly matched to the post-test questionnaire. However, a match was determined based on summated scales as the sections were kept consistent.

The re-designed post-test questionnaire was not piloted due to the limited time frame in which the questionnaire needed to be re-designed and feedback from the initial pilot test was already taken into account.

The re-designed post-test questionnaire has been included in Appendix 2.

4.2.6 Training

The training provided to the experimental group was administered by a professional who has over ten years experience in encouraging and motivating the expression of employee voice. The training had the following purpose:

- To provide the insight, knowledge and skills on how to participate in mutually accountable performance discussions.
- To explain the role of the line-manager and participant in conducting performance conversations.
- To create a space to develop confidence in facilitating a results based conversation, with emphasis on tough conversations.
- To explain the elements of a successful performance conversation, and the importance of giving and receiving feedback.

The researcher was only able to attend one session of the full experimental group training and around seventy five percent of the second session for the experimental group training. The training was of a very high standard and the content was not something that had been provided to the participants before.

The control group was scheduled to receive training by a Human Resource consultant at the bank regarding the company's performance management process. However, the scheduled training sessions for the control group were used as an open forum for the participants to ask questions and raise concerns around the performance management process. The session of the Bank was shorter than the one hour initially allocated.

After the completion of this research report, the control group will receive the same training as the experimental group, if the training is assessed to have been effective in encouraging the expression of employee voice. This will ensure that all participants are treated fairly.

4.2.7 Phase one: research design limitations

The use of questionnaires as a research instrument has the following limitations:

- Response error; whereby some participants distort the truth when completing a questionnaire, mostly in order not to be perceived as doing some wrong (Weiers, 2011). This was anticipated to be managed by requesting the completed questionnaires to be sent to an independent, personal email address rather than to an employee of the bank.
- Non-response error; whereby everyone does not co-operate in returning the questionnaires or in providing detailed and constructive comments in the open sections provided within the questionnaire (Weiers, 2011). It is likely that the respondents who did not respond were more reluctant to share their personal experience, which if provided would have furnished additional, valuable insight.
- Sampling error; whereby a sample has been used rather than the total population (Weiers, 2011). As the sample was selected randomly, the population was thought to have been well represented within the sample selected.

All participants came from the same bank in the same province of South Africa. The environment within which the research was performed was considered to be a typical working environment, in relation to a South African context. However, the participants were not intellectually sophisticated and are managed by the amount of calls they make per hour. The employees had limited knowledge and experience in completing questionnaires. In addition, the more time they spent completing the questionnaires the less time they had to meet their work productivity requirements. Although a self-administered questionnaire design was initially

suggested, the company anticipated that it would create unwanted disruption in the work environment.

The response options in the re-designed post-test questionnaire likert scale were not ordered from low to high and therefore respondents might have been confused in their choice of response, leading to measurement error. Measurement error can be defined as “the degree to which the observed values are not representative of the ‘true’ values” (Anderson, Black, Hair, & Tatham, 1998, p. 9).

There was a time gap between the scheduled training sessions and the one-on-one performance discussions and likewise there was a time gap between the one-on-one performance discussions and the completion of the post-test questionnaire by the participants. Although there is likely to be an emotional reaction by the participant directly after the one-on-one performance discussion, it was anticipated that a more constructive and thought out response would be obtained within a short period after the performance discussion.

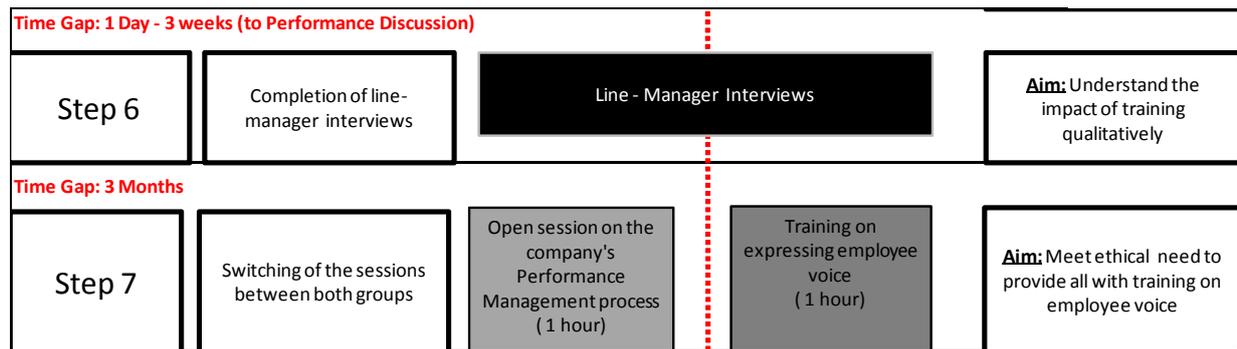
The sample size can impact the statistical tests by either being too small and insensitive or too large and overly sensitive (Anderson et al., 1998). The initial group size was around fifty participants per group but the participants who completed the post-test questionnaires (and therefore the total research design) were around twenty per group. Furthermore, based on the comments received by email or within the questionnaires participants were identified as contractors (and therefore did not receive one-on-one performance discussions) and participants for whom this was a first performance cycle (and therefore they were not able to make a comparison to their previous experience).

4.3 Phase two: qualitative analysis

4.3.1 Research design

Qualitative analysis was performed in order to obtain the views of the line-managers of the participants of this experiment. “More often researchers start by collecting data using a questionnaire, analyse the data statistically, and then use semi-structured interviews subsequently to understand the statistical relationships their analysis has revealed” (Saunders & Lewis, 2012, p. 152). This was to form the sixth step in the total research design as illustrated in Figure 4:

Figure 4: Qualitative steps of the research design



In step 6, the line-managers of the participants who completed the quantitative research design were contacted telephonically after the completion of the one-on-one performance discussions. Lastly in step 7, the training is to be reversed between the experimental and control group to ensure ethical practice is followed and that all employees will be treated fairly.

In a semi-structured interview a list of prepared questions is asked with the understanding that the order, the number of questions or any additional questions are determined by the interviewer during the interview (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). It was requested that the interviews be conducted at the company's offices to provide a safe, known environment and obtain face-to-face interaction with the line-managers. However, this was not possible and the line-managers were therefore contacted telephonically by the researcher. A telephonic interview does not allow the interviewer to observe any body language, facial expression or assist in building trust between the interviewer and the interviewee during the interview. Due to the limited time availability of the line-managers, the interviews were kept short and to the point, without undermining content validity. The telephonic interview was structured with four themed questions:

1. In terms of the one-on-one performance discussions recently held with your staff did you find that they were any different from what you had last year and if there was any individual who perhaps spoke more than they would have ordinarily done during the discussion?
2. I just want to understand from your perspective how you conduct your one-on-one performance discussions? How long are they? Do you give your staff an opportunity to talk or ask questions or to query their rating?
3. What in your view is the purpose of the performance discussion?
4. In your opinion and with your experience how can employee voice be encouraged?

A line-management survey was initially considered an appropriate research method as it would have provided an opportunity for all line-managers whose employees participated in the

experiment to provide feedback. The line-managers were thought to be a good source of information as they were the only other party involved in the one-on-one performance discussion and they would also be able to notice any behavioural changes in their employees as they work with them on a day-to-day basis. This analysis would assist in corroborating responses to the post-test questionnaire by the employee such as; behavioural and relationship changes that were experienced. The effectiveness is in "the eyes of the beholder" (Tsui, 1984, p. 88). A management survey was therefore considered appropriate to validate the responses received by the employees in their completed pre-test and post-test questionnaires.

However, the availability of the line-managers was subsequently highlighted as a concern due to additional work responsibilities over the time of this experiment. In addition, personal insight from the line-managers rather than information via a mechanical survey was anticipated to provide better insight for the purposes of this research paper.

Semi-structured interviews were therefore considered to be a better data collection instrument than a management survey for three reasons. Firstly, a better understanding of the banking environment highlighted a distressed environment whereby there appeared to be a lack of trust and procedural justice between the employees and their line-managers. Response and non-response error in relation to a management survey would probably have concealed further insight into the work environment. Therefore personal interaction with the line-managers through interviews was considered more likely to unveil insight into the working environment, in relation to utilisation of employee voice. Secondly, the employees in the experimental group training sessions expressed difficulty in communicating with their line-managers around matters over and above their daily work responsibilities. Although upward communication is known to be challenging, taking into account the nature of the work environment there was recognition that the negative aspects of upward communication in this environment could be exaggerated. Although this research paper sought to determine whether skills training had an effect on an employee's utilisation of their employee voice, there was an assumption that the line-manager of the employee would be a reasonable person. An interview would provide a better forum to assess the communication and behavioural style of the line-managers than a management survey. Lastly, personal intervention would be a better mechanism to obtain additional insight into employee voice utilisation as a semi-structured interview is not limited to pre-defined questions and possible responses.

4.3.2 Unit of analysis and population of relevance

Each line-manager of the employees that participated in the experiment was provided by the Human Resource Personnel as part of the initial sampling frame. The line-manager was identified as a person senior to the employee who would be conducting the one-on-one performance discussion with the employee. In other words the employee may not directly report to the identified line-manager who would have conducted the one-on-one performance discussion. However, the manager who participated in the one-on-one performance discussion with the participant of the experiment design has been classified for the purposes of this research paper as the line-manager of the employee.

4.3.3 Sampling technique

In order to obtain an appropriate sample the line-managers were ranked according to how many of their employees completed the experiment (that is completed the post-test questionnaire). The line-managers who had the most participants were contacted first as it was assumed they would more likely notice a change in behaviour as they had greater opportunity to do so. Furthermore, this would cover a larger portion of the participants involved in the experiment. Purposive sampling uses judgment to actively choose respondents who are most likely to answer the interview questions appropriately and meet the objectives of the research paper. This sampling technique is also beneficial when a small sample is required (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). The number of interviews were determined inductively by conducting interviews until data saturation was assumed to be reached (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).

4.3.4 Data collection

Once the order of sampling was determined, each line-manager was contacted telephonically. The researcher provided an introduction, the reasons for making contact and enquired whether an interview could be conducted. All interviews were recorded and notes were taken during the interview. The researcher thanked the line-managers for allowing their staff to participate in the experiment as well as for their time and participation in the semi-structured interview. A specialist was used to convert the recordings into written format. The transcripts have been included in Appendix 3.

4.3.5 Phase two: research design limitations

Due to time constraints of the line-managers only a short, telephonic interview could be performed. Additional time and the opportunity to have personal interaction with the line-managers would most likely have provided additional insights. In this work environment, the line-managers are assessed in a similar way to their employees as a percentage of

productivity over a set time base. Therefore, they also have limited influence on the performance process and on the way in which they are able to manage their employees.

Not all line-managers were interviewed which could have resulted in valuable insights being lost.

4.4 Response rate

There were initially forty seven participants allocated to the control group and fifty to the experimental group. One participant changed groups from the experimental group to the control group as a result of being unavailable on scheduled training days for the experimental group. There were four new participants who attended the experimental group training that did not form part of the initial sampling frame. The response rate for the experimental training was thirty one people (including the four new participants) out of fifty people and twenty eight people out of forty seven people for the control group. There were nineteen people in the control group and twenty three people in the experimental group who completed the post-test questionnaire.

4.5 Data analysis

4.5.1 Introduction

The pre-test and post-test questionnaire responses were captured onto a spreadsheet. The spreadsheet was formatted and consistency was imposed in terms of the likert-scale responses. The likert-scales were converted into nominal numbers, whereby the likelihood of accepting the null hypothesis was provided with a higher score. Therefore, as an example, Almost always = 5, Often = 4, Sometimes = 3, Seldom = 2 and Never = 1. Furthermore scores were reversed when the questions were negative. Reverse scoring is a “process of reversing the scores of a variable, while retaining the distributional characteristics, to change the relationships between two variables” (Anderson et al., 1998, p. 90). This technique was considered appropriate in the pre-test questionnaire for questions 1, 5 and 7.

For purposes of this research paper a confidence level of .95 was considered appropriate.

4.5.2 Reliability analysis

The summated scales concept is where several individual variables are grouped into a single composite measure (Anderson et al., 1998). Three composite measures were derived to correlate to the three hypotheses being tested. These were labeled as: “Employee Voice”, “Line-Manager Relationship” and “Performance Discussion Assessment”. The summated scales concept helps to overcome measurement error which is inherent in data gathering. Measurement error is defined as “the degree to which the observed values are not

representative of the 'true' values" due to a number of reasons, "ranging from actual errors (as an example, data entry errors) to the inability of individuals to accurately provide information" (Anderson et al., 1998, p. 9).

The reliability of the single composite measures, created by the summation of scales can be tested by item-to-total correlation (the correlation of the item to the summated scale score), inter-item correlation (the correlation among items). The rule of thumb suggests that the item-to-total correlations should exceed 0.50 and that the inter-item correlations should exceed 0.3 (Anderson et al., 1998).

The diagnostic measure used is the reliability co-efficient that assesses the consistency of the entire scale, namely Cronbach's alpha which is the most widely used measure. The generally agreed upon lower limit is 0.70. However, one issue in assessing Cronbach's alpha is its positive relationship to the number of items in the scale (Anderson et al., 1998). Therefore the smaller the number of items in the scale, the less reliance can be placed on this measure and therefore item-to-total correlation was used.

4.5.3 Statistical tests

Analysis of variance ("ANOVA") is a statistical technique used to determine whether samples from two or more groups come from populations with equal means (Anderson et al., 1998). ANOVA was used to compare the control group results with the experimental group results, for the pre-test and post-test results.

Multivariate analysis of variance ("MANOVA") is an extension of ANOVA and accommodates more than one dependent variable. MANOVA is termed a multivariate procedure because it is used to assess group difference across multiple metric dependent variables simultaneously (Anderson et al., 1998). MANOVA was used to compare the pre-test to post-test results while simultaneously comparing the control group results to the experimental group results.

"The purpose of a repeated measures design is to control for individual-level differences that may affect the within-group variances" (Anderson et al., 1998, p. 330). The ANOVA and MANOVA statistical tests were performed as repeated measures. In order to sustain the most important assumption of independence, repeated measures is used when the same participant provides several measures over time and trends need to be identified. Repeated measures can account for this dependence and still determine whether any difference occurred across participants for the set of dependent variables (Anderson et al., 1998).

Acceptable p value has been assumed at 0.05.

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

The nature of the bank's working environment was highlighted when the researcher was an observer in the experimental training sessions. The following themes were identified:

1. Most of the participants were apprehensive as to the purpose of the training and whether any feedback would be provided to their line-managers. Once trust was established between the professional trainer and the participants, the participants began to become more vocal and open in relation to their working environment.
2. Some participants in the training felt that they had tried almost everything within their ability to improve their working environment and they believed that they were now at the mercy of their line-managers.
3. Most participants had a good understanding of employee voice, although some of the participants had not made a connection between their known understanding and the academic phrase, before the training session.
4. As a result of the participants believing that they had a satisfactory understanding of employee voice and they had mostly, previously experienced a negative outcome when it had been utilised, the participants strongly requested that their line-managers rather be trained on how to action and listen to their employee voice.
5. Lastly, but most importantly, there was a strong sense of a culture of victimisation. One participant went to the extent of crying while reflecting on her work environment where she is called names, spoken to behind her back and ridiculed in front of other colleagues.

The feedback from the Human Resource Personnel in relation to the control group's training was that the session was very inter-active and that they were provided with some valuable feedback which they intended to implement, where possible. The Human Resource Personnel also received favourable feedback in terms of the skills training provided to the experimental group.

5.2 Reliability of scales

The pre-test and post-test results were summated into composite measures and tested using Cronbach's alpha and average item-to-total correlation. The results have been included in Table 1:

Table 1: Summated scale per each composite measure

Summated scale	Number of items within the scale	Cronbach's alpha	Average item-to-total correlation
Original pre-test employee voice	7	.54	.17
Adjusted pre-test employee voice	6	.77	.37
Original post-test employee voice	3	.00	.06
Adjusted post-test employee voice	2	.52	.35
Pre-test line-manager relationship	6	.86	.52
Post-test line-manager relationship	6	.95	.78
Pre-test performance discussion assessment	5	.84	.54
Post-test performance discussion assessment	2	.86	.75

The pre-test employee voice summated scale was adjusted by removing question 5 of the pre-test questionnaire which was: "I highlight problems, even if that would hinder my relationships with my line-manager" in order to obtain a higher inter-consistency measurement. Likewise the post-test employee voice summated scale was adjusted by removing question 1.3 of the post-test questionnaire which was: "My ability to express my employee voice is".

There is high reliability in terms of Cronbach's alpha for all composite measures as the value is higher than .7, with the exception of the adjusted post-test employee voice. However, there are only 2 items within the scale. The item-to-total correlation has been used where only 2 items are within the scale as Cronbach alpha has a positive correlation to the number of items within the scale. Therefore a reliability co-efficient has also been placed on the adjusted post-test employee voice and post-test performance discussion assessment as the scores are higher than 0.3.

5.3 Demographics analysis

The results of the simple random allocation between the control and experimental group have been illustrated in Figure 5 and Figure 6:

Figure 5: Control group demographic information

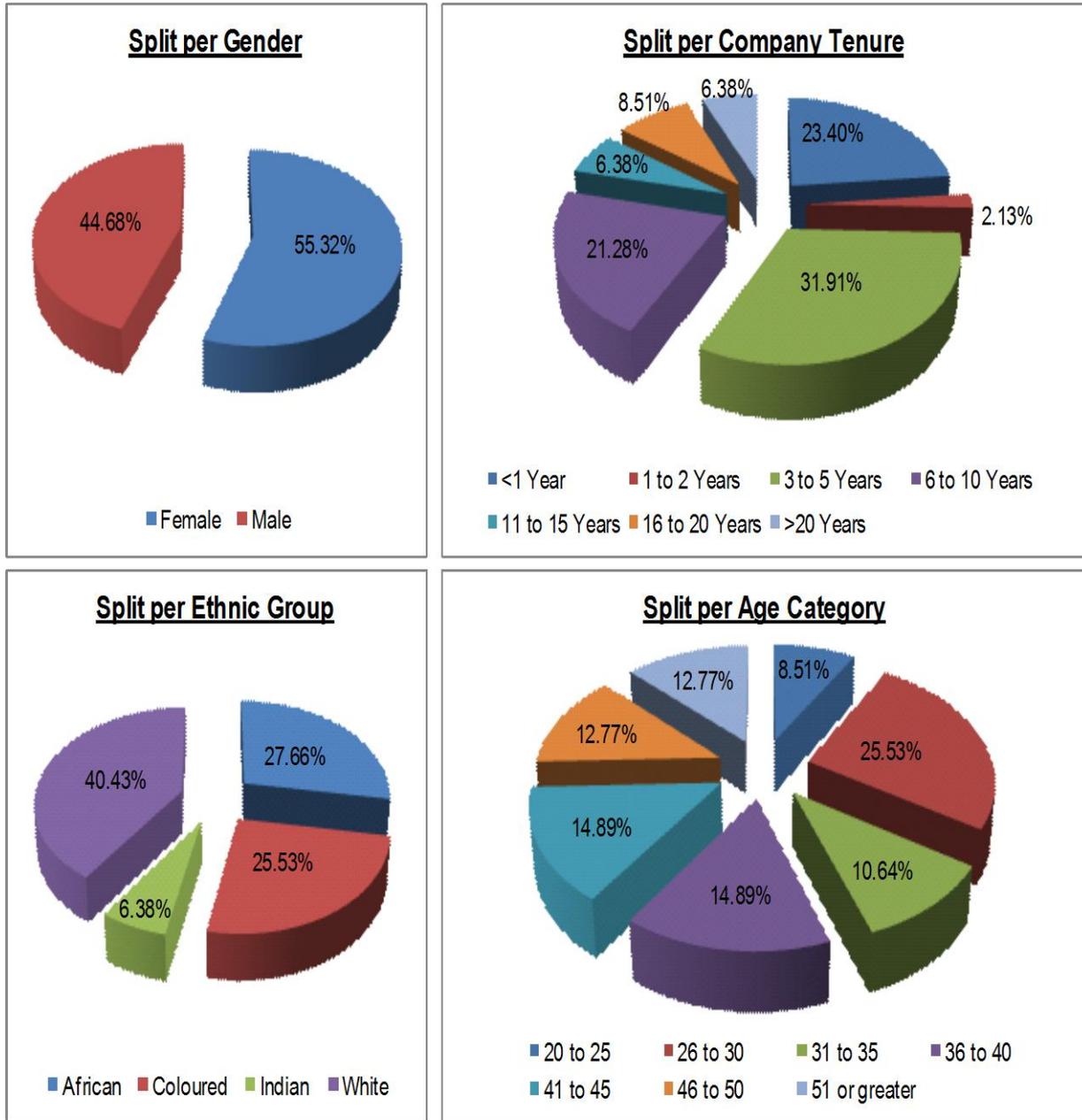
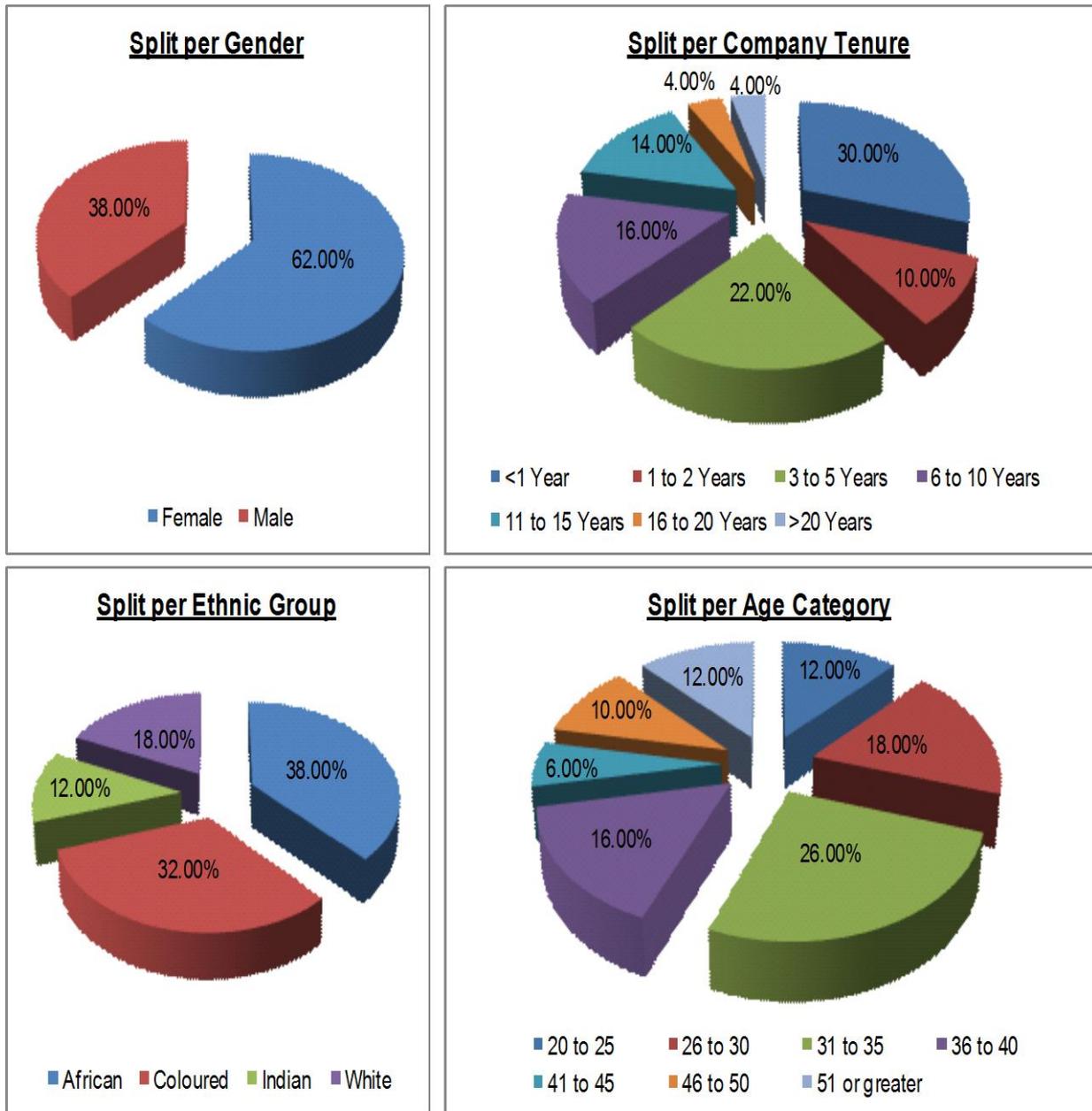


Figure 6: Experimental group demographic information



Based on simple random sampling between the two groups, the Figure 5 and Figure 6 illustrate that the groups are comparable in relation to these four categories.

5.3.1 Gender type

Table 2 illustrates the total number of responses received per gender of the respondent for the post-test questionnaire:

Table 2: Number of responses per gender of the participant

Gender of respondent	Control Group	Experimental Group	Total
Female	14	18	32
Male	5	5	10
Total	19	23	42

There appeared to be a better female response rate in terms of percentage, however there was a higher number of female participants. If there had been one more male respondent from the experimental and control group the percentage response rate would be similar.

A repeated measure ANOVA statistical test was used to determine the interaction effect between the treatment condition (that is between the pre-test and post-test). This was possible as the same participants took part in the pre-test and the post-test although more participants took part in the pre-test as opposed to the post-test as highlighted in the response rate analysis. In terms of gender of the respondents ($F(1,36) = 0.67, p = 0.42$) illustrates that the difference in gender type of the respondents was not significant as the p-value is not less than 0.05 and therefore changes between the pre-test and post-test is not dependent on the gender type.

5.3.2 Age category

Table 3 illustrates the total number of responses received per age category of the respondents for the post-test questionnaire:

Table 3: Number of responses per age category of participant

Age category of respondent	Control Group	Experimental Group	Total
24 years to 29 years	3	5	8
30 years to 34 years	3	3	6
35 years to 39 years	3	6	9
40 years to 44 years	4	1	5
Greater than 44 years	6	4	10
Total	19	19	38

A total of 4 respondents did not disclose their age. By observation there does not appear to be a poor response rate for any particular age category. Although there was a low percentage for the age category of 40 years to 44 years, there were only 5 participants and therefore the percentage format exaggerates the result.

A repeated measure ANOVA was used to determine the interaction effect between the treatment condition (that is between the pre-test and post-test). This was possible as the same participants took part in the pre-test and the post-test although more participants took part in the pre-test as opposed to the post-test as highlighted in the response rate analysis. In terms of the age category of the respondents ($F(1,32) = 0.002, p = 0.96$) illustrates that the difference in age category of the respondents was not significant as the p-value is not less than 0.05 and therefore changes between the pre-test and post-test is not dependent on the age category of the respondent.

5.3.3 Company tenure

Table 4 illustrates the total number of responses received per the company tenure category of the respondents for the post-test questionnaire:

Table 4: Number of responses per company tenure of participant

Company tenure of respondent	Control Group	Experimental Group	Total
< 1 year	1	2	3
1 year to 5 years	2	5	7
6 years to 10 years	6	3	9
11 years to 15 years	2	3	5
16 years to 20 years	6	4	10
Total	17	17	34

A total of 8 respondents either did not disclose their company tenure or their response was not understood. By observation there does not appear to be any outlining company tenure category where there was a poor response rate for a particular company tenure category other than those participants who have been with the company for less than one year. This can be understood as the post-test questionnaire was designed to compare the one-on-one performance discussion held recently with a one-on-one performance discussion held in the previous year and therefore the lack of response could be as a result of believing that a response was neither appropriate nor relevant.

A repeated measure ANOVA was used to determine the interaction effect between the treatment conditions (that is between the pre-test and post-test). This was possible as the same participants took part in the pre-test and the post-test although more participants took part in the pre-test as opposed to the post-test as highlighted in the response rate analysis. In terms of the company tenure category of the respondents ($F(1,36) = 0.05, p = 0.79$) illustrates that the difference in the company tenure category of the respondents was not significant as the p-value is not less than 0.05 and therefore changes between the pre-test and post-test is not dependent on the company tenure category of the respondent.

More statistical detail for demographic information has been included in Appendix 4.

5.4 Testing of assumptions

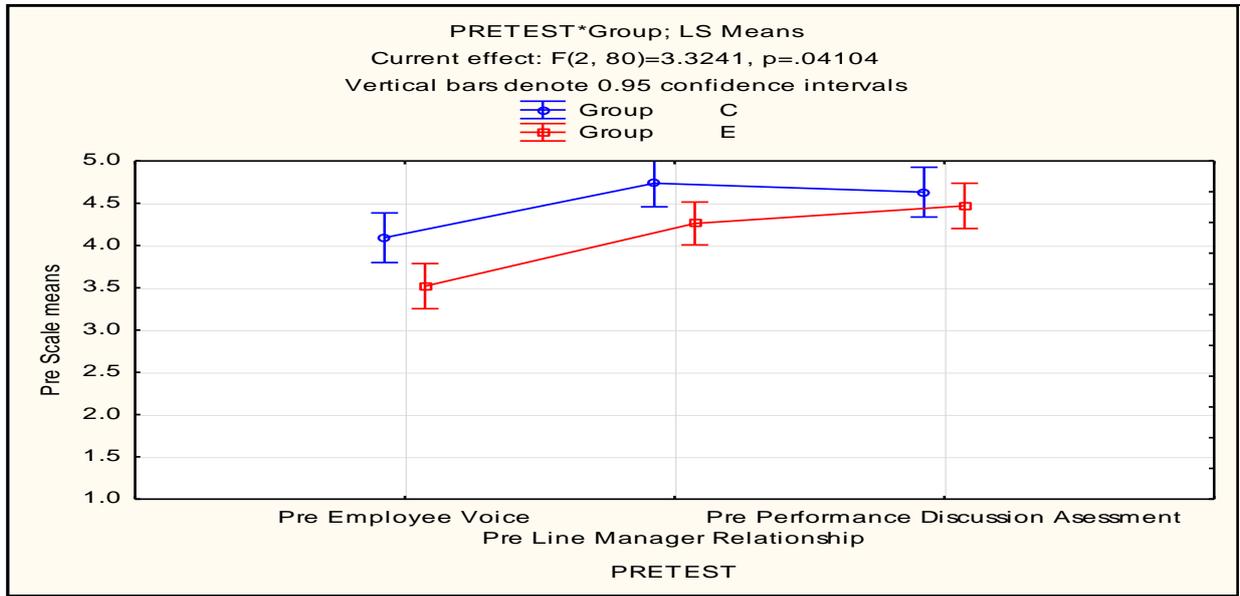
Internal validity refers to ascertaining whether the treatment provided to the experimental group really made the difference in the measurements obtained. In order to facilitate internal validity, it is best if participants are randomly allocated to the experimental or control groups in terms of an experiment design (Weiers, 2011). It was assumed that by using a simple random sampling technique that both groups, the experimental and control group, would be similar and therefore internal validity would exist.

Prior to testing the hypotheses within this research paper, the equality assumption was tested between the experimental and control groups in respect of the pre-test results. A non-directional t-test was performed comparing the experimental group to the control group using the 5 point-likert pre-test scales. After verifying the t-test for homogeneity of variance, the independent t -test assuming equal variances between the control and variable was used.

In using an independent groups t-test a significant difference was found in the composite measure for employee voice $T(40) = 2.92, p = 0.006$, with the mean of the control group being significantly higher than the experimental group, $M = 3.52, SD = 0.66$ and control group, $M = 4.09, SD = 0.59$. The results are significant as the p-value is less than 0.05. Similar results were found for the composite measure of the line-manager relationship $T(40) = 2.55, p = 0.015$, with the mean of the control group significantly higher than the experimental group, $M = 4.26, SD = 0.67$ and control group, $M = 4.74, SD = 0.50$. The results are significant as the p-value is less than 0.05. The results for the composite measure for the performance discussion assessment show $T(40) = 0.82, p = 0.42$, with the mean of the control group higher than the experimental group, $M = 4.47, SD = 0.55$ and control group, $M = 4.63, SD = 0.72$. Although the results are not statistically significant as the p-value is not less than 0.05 the directional change of the means are the same. In other words the mean of the control group is higher than the mean of the experimental group.

The results have been highlighted in Figure 7:

Figure 7: Pre-test results per each composite measure



Therefore the internal validity assumption did not hold for 2 out of the 3 composite measures with the third showing a definite difference in the same direction. Therefore the assumption that the control group and experimental group would be the same based on utilising a simple random sampling technique was not substantiated.

More statistical detail around all the testing of assumptions has been included in Appendix 5.

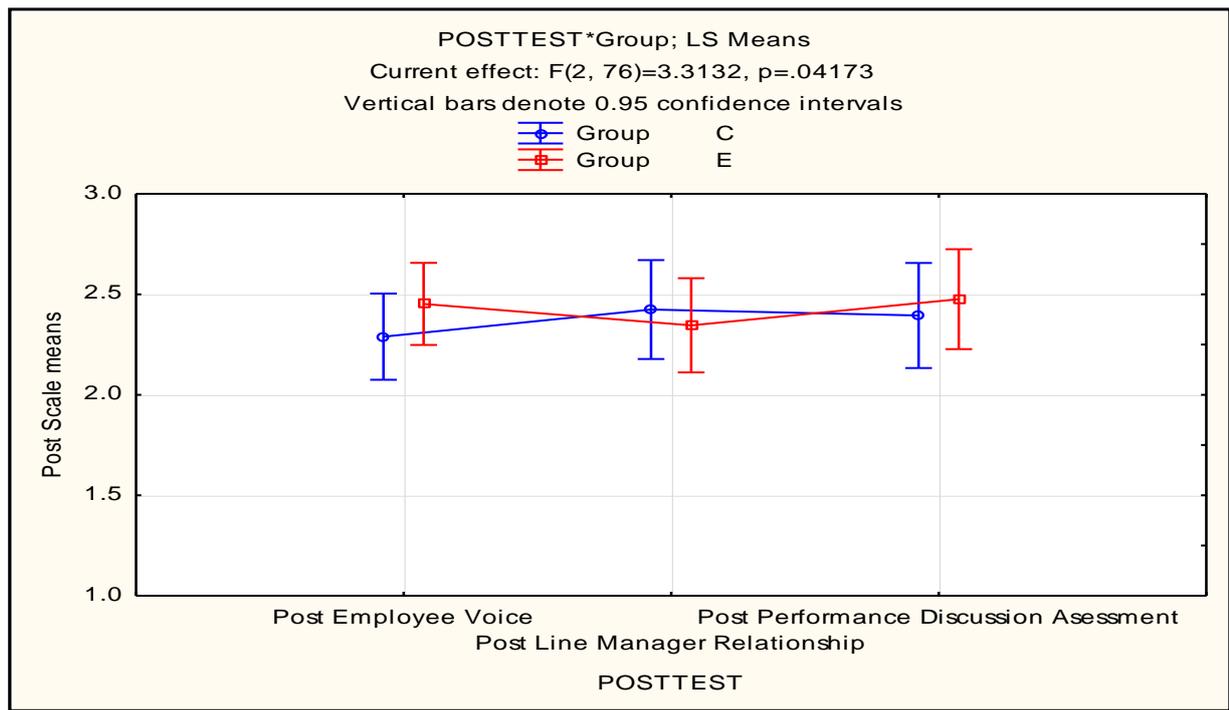
5.5 Part one: quantitative analysis

The pre-test results show that the mean of control group was higher on all the composite measures than the experimental group. This contradicts the assumption underlying the statistical technique when applying simple random sampling in that both the control group and experimental group are assumed to be similar. Because this assumption did not hold, the post-test results between the control and experimental groups were examined in isolation and not compared to the pre-test results. The actuality that the internal validity assumption did not hold was taken into consideration in the interpretation of the results. In other words the lack of equality between the two groups was considered.

In the next section, the pre-test results are compared to the post-test results, after the different likert scales between the two tests were normalised.

The results have been highlighted in Figure 8:

Figure 8: Post-test results per each composite measure



The difference in means between the control and experimental groups was not significantly different for the post-test results, although there was a change in direction between the experimental group and control group for 2 out of 3 of the composite measures. The results have been broken down and analysed per composite measure.

In relation to the composite measure for employee voice, $T(39) = 1.29, p = 0.20$. The mean of the experimental group, $M = 2.48, SD = 0.5$ is higher than the control group, $M = 2.29, SD = 0.42$. After taking into account comparability, the means are not significantly different as the p-value is not less than 0.05 but there has been a change in direction. The experimental group has a higher mean than the control group, which is different to the pre-test results where the mean of the control group was higher than the mean of the experimental group.

In relation to the composite measure for the line-manager relationship, $T(39) = 0.29, p = 0.77$. The mean of the control group, $M = 2.42, SD = 0.45$ is higher than the experimental group, $M = 2.38, SD = 0.59$. After taking into account comparability, the means are not significantly different as the p-value is not less than 0.05 which is a different result than in the pre-test where the results were deemed to be significant for the line-manager relationship composite measure.

In relation to the composite measure for the performance discussion assessment, $T(39) = 0.46, p = 0.65$. The mean of the experimental group, $M = 2.48, SD = 0.62$ is higher than the control group, $M = 2.39, SD = 0.49$. After taking into account comparability, the means are not

significantly different as the p-value is not less than 0.05 but there has been a change in direction. The experimental group has a higher mean than the control group, which is different to the pre-test results where the mean of the control group was higher than the mean of the experimental group.

More statistical detail has been included in Appendix 6.

The results in this section show an observed directional change between the experimental and control group in the post-test results. A comparison between the pre-test and post-test results was therefore considered as this may provide more conclusive results. There were different likert scales used for the pre-test compared to post-test questionnaires and therefore the questionnaire responses would need to be normalised. This is explored in the next section.

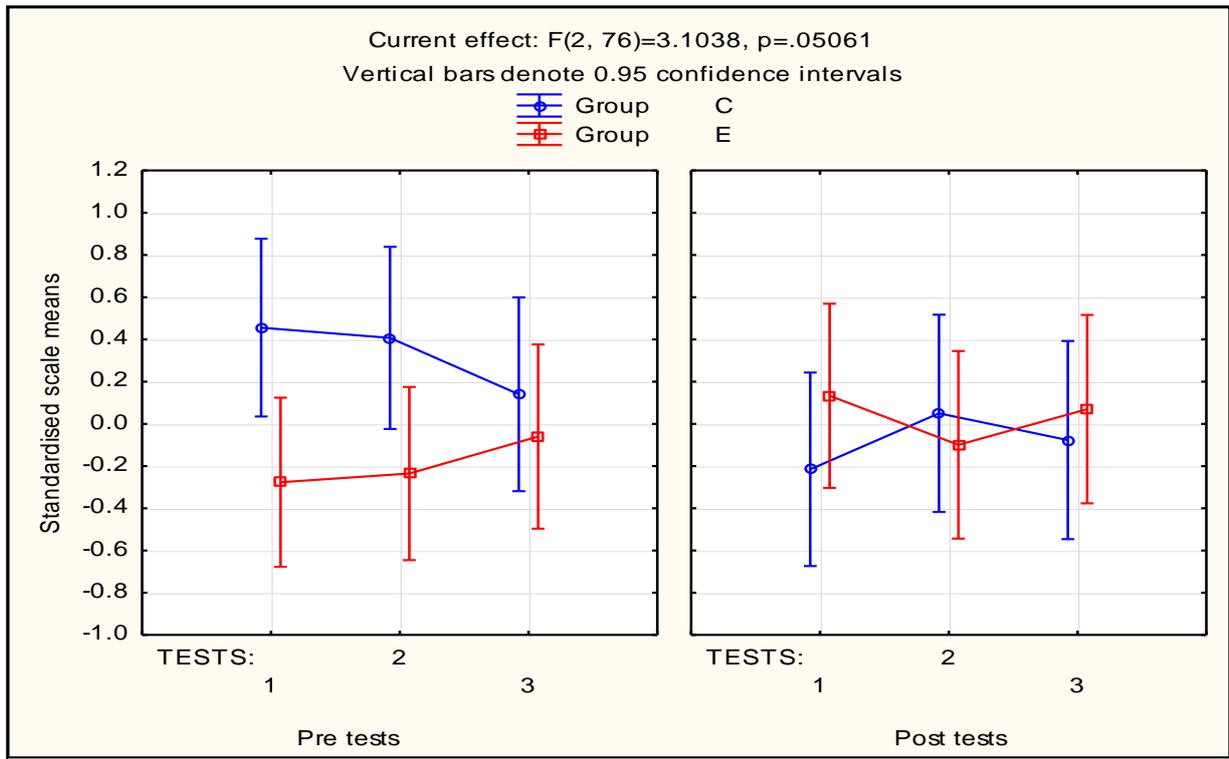
5.6 Part two: quantitative analysis

In order to compare the pre-test results to the post-test results the likert scales needed to be standardised. The pre-test questionnaire used a 5 likert-scale whereas the post-test questionnaire used a 3 likert-scale. "The most common form of standardisation is the conversion of each variable to standard scores (also known as Z scores) by subtracting the mean and dividing by the standard deviation for each variable" (Anderson et al., 1998, p. 489). This process of standardisation made the scales comparable between the pre-test and post-test results.

A repeated measure MANOVA was conducted on the three composite measures (that is employee voice, line-manager relationship, performance discussion assessment) used in the pre-test and post-test questionnaires, comparing the experimental and control groups. In addition the three composite measures were grouped as one measure. This single measure was then compared between the experimental group and control group as well as the pre-test and post-test results.

The initial results have been highlighted in Figure 9:

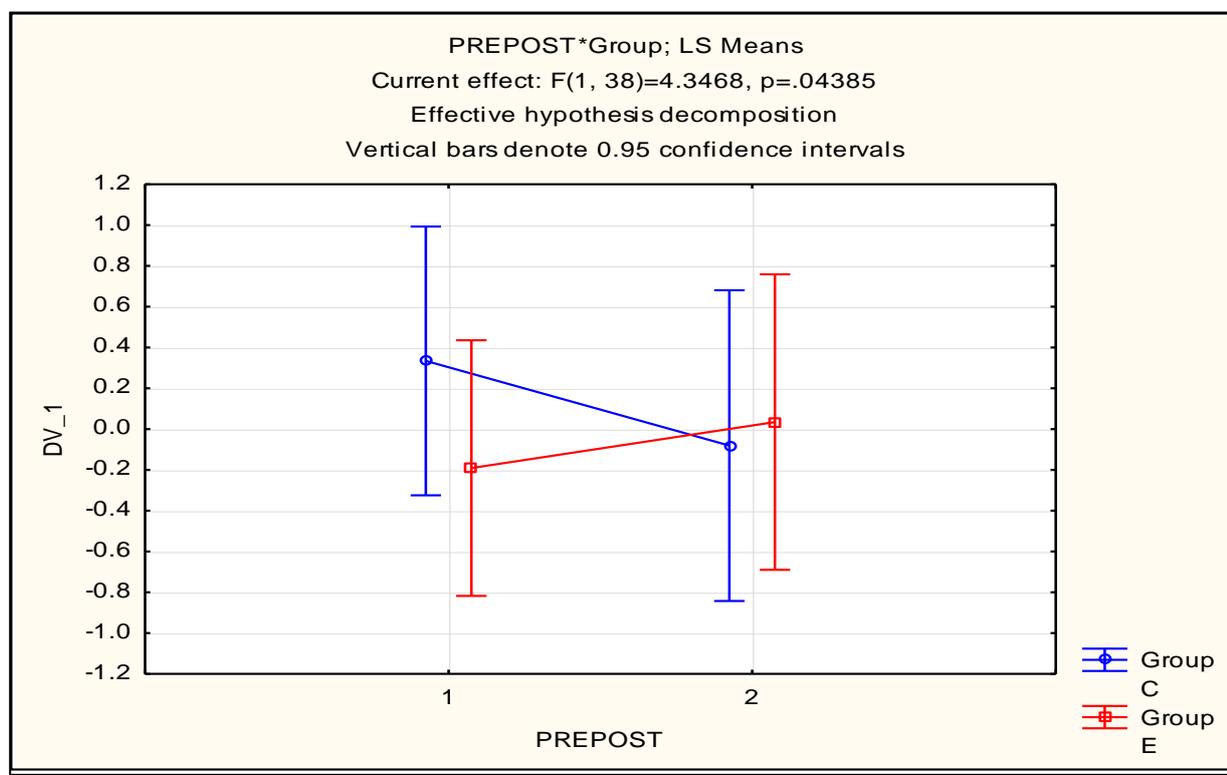
Figure 9: Comparison between the pre-test and post-test results per each composite measure



The three means from the pre-test and post-test results were not significantly different, ($F(1, 38) = 0.38, p = 0.54$) as the p value is not less than 0.05 however, the pattern of the means were different for the control and experimental groups. The mean of the experimental group is now higher than the mean of control group for 2 out of the 3 composite measures. Also, there was a similar pattern for the third composite measure although the mean of the control group remained higher than the mean of the experimental group.

The three composite measures were grouped as one measure to see if the difference might be significant when measured by a larger scale. The three composite measures were combined to create a single measure of satisfaction with the expression of voice. In comparing the two groups as well as the pre-test and post-test results, the differences between the means of the pre-test and post-test results were significantly different for the two groups ($F(1,38) = 4.35, p = 0.04$), when grouped as one measure. This has been illustrated in Figure 10 and the statistical detail has been included in Appendix 7.

Figure 10: Comparison between pre-test and post-test results per one combined composite measure



5.7 Hypothesis

5.7.1 Hypothesis 1: Utilisation of employee voice

Null Hypothesis (H1₀):

Skills training in expressing employee voice does not increase the utilisation by the employee of their employee voice during their one-on-one performance discussion.

Alternative hypothesis (H1₁):

Skills training in expressing employee voice does increase the utilisation by the employee of their employee voice during their one-on-one performance discussion.

Therefore the null hypothesis is accepted as when the control and experimental groups were compared with the standardised pre-test and post-test results the p value was not significant.

5.7.2 Hypothesis 2: Relationship with the line-manager

Null Hypothesis (H2₀):

There is no significant impact on the relationship with the employee's line-manager when the expression of the employee's voice is utilised during their one-on-one performance discussion, after receiving skills training in expressing employee voice.

Alternative hypothesis (H2₁):

There is a significant impact on the relationship with the employee's line-manager when the expression of the employee's voice is utilised during a one-on-one performance discussion, after receiving skills training in expressing employee voice.

Therefore the null hypothesis is accepted as when the control and experimental groups were compared with the standardised pre-test and post-test results the p value was not significant.

5.7.3 Hypothesis 3: Assessment of the performance discussion

Null Hypothesis (H3₀):

Utilising employee voice has no significant impact on the employee's satisfaction with the one-on-one performance discussion meeting.

Alternative hypothesis (H3₁):

Utilising employee voice enhances the employee's satisfaction with the one-on-one performance discussion meeting.

Therefore the null hypothesis is accepted as when the control and experimental groups were compared with the standardised pre-test and post-test results the p value was not significant.

5.7.4 Conclusion

Each null hypothesis has been accepted, as each composite measure analysed independently did not show a statistically significant difference. However, when the three composite measures were combined into one composite measure, there was a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results of the experimental and control group. In order to understand these results further, qualitative analysis was performed.

5.8 Qualitative results

Comments were obtained from the pre-test questionnaire, the post-test questionnaire as well as from the semi-structured interviews with the line-managers of the employees who participated in this experiment.

5.8.1 Pre-test comments

There were a total of twenty two comments received in relation to the pre-test questionnaire responses. The responses have been themed as per Table 5 below:

Table 5: Pre-test questionnaire comments per theme identified

Theme	Number of respondents
Victimisation	10
Fear	4
Trust or doubt of the relationship with their line-manager	6
Positive response	2

Two participant's responses stood out and have been included below:

- "One reason: Victimisation"
- "Because sometimes the truth can put you in trouble and people take you as a spy when you do that. I once express myself about like that and it got me in trouble were by my line-manager told me will show then I ask why she just said I will see"

The pre-test questionnaire was designed to allow for open comments around employee voice however, in light of what was provided it can be understood why so few comments were provided. The participants seem to have lost trust within their organisation as well belief in procedural justice. This links into the observations observed during the training sessions.

5.8.2 Post-test comments

Although the comments section of the post-test questionnaire was adjusted to attempt to influence a higher response rate, there were limited comments provided by the respondents. There were thirteen responses received, with two of them not related to employee voice utilisation. The responses have been themed as per Table 6 below:

Table 6: Post-test questionnaire comments per theme identified

Theme	Number of respondents
Already positive relationship with line-manager	3
Management should have been selected for the training	4

Two participant's responses stood out and have been included below:

- “I believe that the training on this program was a shock because of all the negative comments made in general and was mainly directed to the line-managers who should be responsible for the people that they manage. I felt that the training provided should have been more for our managers instead of the staff that work under them. My previous discussion experience compared to the latest was almost similar but, because of this training I felt more confident to express my issues openly but, I still felt very intimidated. So in fear of being victimised and targeted I feel that neither my insights nor views matter in this questionnaire.”
- “My manager came in to the discussion prepared to tell me this I have discussed this with the line-manager and this is what we decided on. I tried very very hard to express how I felt this was not taken in to consideration.”

Although, there were limited comments received it is evident that the perception of the organisation culture is that employee voice utilisation is neither acknowledged nor encouraged.

5.8.3 Semi-structured line-manager interviews

There were six interviews performed and electronically recorded. Although the list of line-managers were ranked per their number of employees involved in the experiment, the interviewer moved down the list where the contact numbers provided proved incorrect, line-managers were not available and the like. There were a total of six line-managers contacted but due to their being more than one participant having the same line-manager, there were nineteen participants of the experiment reached.

Out of the six line-managers interviewed five line-managers noticed no change between the one-on-one performance discussions held this year in relation to their one-on-one performance discussions held in the previous year. The one line-manager, who noticed a change, did not necessarily attribute the change to the training provided. This particular line-manager was involved in a legal process around victimisation in relation to themselves (as a line-manager), and therefore a change in the one-on-one performance discussion was anticipated, irrespective there having been skills training provided.

Two out of the six line-managers indicated that they meet with their employees more regularly than the annual one-on-one performance discussion. Three of the line-managers indicated that the performance discussion is more a statistical process as the performance of their employees is based on whether or not they have met pre-defined targets. Therefore there is limited need for a discussion, as the one-on-one performance discussion is about presenting,

factual information. Two line-managers indicated their discussions are around one hour. There were two line-manager comments that stood out:

- “Look, ... Very different individuals behaving differently. You’ll find ones that are very talkative and some that are very quiet. Those are the ones where I think you may just need to sit and have a discussion with them. If I do not know what’s happening in your life, I won’t know, basically. So if you do not speak to any of the staff, if you do not speak to me, I won’t know what’s happening. And the other thing, it’s the only reason why your staff do not speak to you, ...is they do not trust you, basically. If there’s no trust to speak about their personal issues or something more important at work, because there’s no such person that, you know, that wouldn’t want to speak to his colleagues. No, I mean, you’re here for 8 hours a day. You need to give trust. I think the first thing you need to know how to trust your staff and how to get your staff to trust you, basically. You can train them, you can train any person about anything, you know, assertiveness, this, that whatever, and they go for training, but what they take actually out of it is different”.
- “Absolutely. You reach a stage where you just feel, and I mean mine were so bad, it was going to go to legal action, defamation of character and everything else involved in that ... So I’ve gone the hard way and I’m still up till today not scared to stand up for myself...”.

The interviews highlighted that there is a disconnection between the participants and the line-managers although the perception of the organisation culture seems the same.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

6.1 Introduction

The research design used was a pre-test, post-test control group design which is a standard design used for research purposes. Several circumstances in the bank from which the sample was drawn made it difficult to implement the design exactly as intended. Firstly, the participants seemed more focused on how their answers to the pre-test questionnaire would be perceived or judged rather than ensuring open and honest responses to each question. Secondly, the organisation culture expressed by the participants in the training session was one of victimisation and mistrust between the employees and their line-managers. Thirdly, there was little hope expressed by the participants in believing their working environment would change. It appeared that the participants had tried to do what they believed was within their sphere of control to bring about change, with little success. In analysing the results, the participants' frame of mind, the organisation culture as well as the lack of buy-in by the participants was therefore considered.

These challenges in the data collection were identified from the pre-test results and observations in the training sessions. In order to obtain data that would still meet the research objectives and take into account the challenges identified, the post-test questionnaire was adjusted in order to make it easier for the participants to complete the questionnaire and it was emphasised that responses would remain confidential. The post-test questionnaire was also adjusted to obtain a direct response around voice utilisation as there was little room to have a positive change in a scaled response, due to the high scores from the pre-test results. Furthermore the research design focused more on the qualitative aspects and the highlighted themes identified. The line-managers were also interviewed rather than given a questionnaire in order to better understand the working environment, reasonableness of the line-manager's communication and to obtain a more open response to questions.

The participants allocated to the control group were to receive training around the performance management process of the bank. The session conducted by the Human Resource Personnel turned into an open discussion around the process and was very interactive. Employees were given an opportunity to express their views, more so than in the formal training provided to the experimental group. Participants in the control group were likely to have expressed their concerns in the training session and therefore would be less inclined to express their views, again, in their one-on-one performance discussions. The open session provided to the control group rather than training could therefore have been a factor in the limited change observed between the pre-test and post-test results.

It is noted that there was no impact in the different gender, age and company tenure of the participants.

The next section is broken into each hypothesis tested. In each section the hypothesis result is summarised with methodological and substantive reasons.

6.2 Hypothesis 1: Utilisation of employee voice

The first hypothesis set-out to determine whether skills training in expressing employee voice would have an effect on the utilisation by the employee of their voice. The quantitative analysis showed that there was no statistically significant impact when looking at this hypothesis independently and therefore the null hypothesis was accepted. It was expected that if an employee was given the required tools and techniques to better express themselves that they would increase the use of their employee voice. It was anticipated that the more comfortable and confident an employee was in utilising their employee voice, the more likely they would be to do so.

“Any employee can engage in proactive behaviours if the situation allows for it” (Bolino et al., 2010, p. 327). Although skills training in employee voice can assist an individual employee, the organisation environment also needs to provide the required support for such proactive behaviour. As illustrated in Figure 1 of this research paper, it is not only individual characteristics that cause employees to remain silent, but also organisational characteristics, such as an unsupportive culture. The results in Takeuchi et al. (2012) also support this view of the importance of the creation of a fair and just workplace to encourage employee voice utilisation. The qualitative results from the pre-test questionnaire demonstrate that the employees felt victimised and are managed with a sense of fear rather than there being an inclusive management style and a sense that the employee feels part of a larger team. These individual factors or personal attributes could be an introvert personality, inability to trust, low self-esteem and the like.

Skills training provide the tools and techniques for an employee to be confident to utilise their employee voice, however the choice to utilise one’s voice is that of the employee. “Sometimes employees choose to speak and sometimes they choose to be silent” (Milliken et al., 2003, p. 1454). The utilisation of employee voice is a choice, irrespective of the amount of known skill in expressing employee voice. Additionally Liang et al. (2012) considered the proactive behaviour of utilising employee voice as an intentional planned behaviour. Because it is an employee’s choice to speak-up it is a planned action, an employee would have taken into account individual and organisation factors, before utilising voice even though employee voice skills are held.

The quantitative results were not statistically significant, however it is important to note that there was change in direction of the means between the pre-test results and the post-test results. In the pre-test results the mean of the control group was higher than the mean of the experimental group however in the post-test results the mean of the experimental group was higher than the mean of the control group. In analysing these results two things need to be taken into account. Firstly, the control group and experimental group participants had different means in the pre-test results however both groups had high responses that they utilise their employee voice. As a result the pre-test results scores were very high and there was little room for the post-test results to show a significant change. Secondly, the organisation culture did not seem to facilitate the use of one's voice. Therefore, although not significant, the change in direction from the pre-test results to the post-test results should not be disregarded.

6.3 Hypothesis 2: Relationship with the line-manager

The second hypothesis set-out to determine whether there was an impact on the relationship between the employee and their line-manager as a result of the employee utilising their voice. The quantitative analysis showed that there was no significant impact and therefore the null hypothesis was accepted. It was expected that there would be an impact on the employee and line-manager relationship whether or not the impact was perceived as positive or negative.

Although the utilisation of employee voice may impact the employee's relationship with their line-manager, the employee's assessment as to the ability of their line-manager to initiate action also needs to be considered. Tangirala & Ramanujam, (2012) considered the potential sense of perceived influence of the line-manager in enhancing employees' upward voice. It may not only be the relationship between the employee and their line-manager that is important but also the perceived influence which the employee believes the line-manager would be able to exert to achieve action. The one comment in the post-test questionnaire highlights that although the line-manager of the participant in this questionnaire acknowledged the utilisation of the employee of their voice, their own line-manager had already made a decision. This was further supported in one of the manager's interviews whereby they themselves were also victimised. The utilisation by an employee of their voice, does not only impact their line-managers but also managers that are higher in the organisation hierarchy. Employees who witness their line-managers and colleagues speaking-up within the organisation receive a powerful message around the behaviour norms of the work environment (Avey, Wernsing, & Palanski, 2012).

The qualitative pre-test results indicate that most employees do not trust or perhaps just doubt the validity of their relationship with their line-manager. The organisation environment seemed

to have completely broken down whereby most employees were not able to speak-up even though they felt they have a solid relationship with their line-manager. In such an organisation environment, it seems more important to mend the fundamentals of an employee and line-manager relationship before encouraging employees to utilise their voice. Although this study focused on whether skills training could benefit the employee, it seems that this cannot be done in isolation of the environment that is created by the line-manager to facilitate such proactive behaviour. The results of Avey et al. (2012) suggest that ethical leadership may influence an employee's wellbeing by encouraging employees to voice their dissatisfaction and even suggest ways to improve. This is supported by Walumbwa & Schaubroeck (2009) that suggested ethical leadership appeared to promote more effective employee behaviour because ethical leaders should support an environment in which employees feel free to identify problems and opportunities.

The insight from the line-manager interviews seems to indicate a disconnection between the employee and their line-manager. The line-managers interviewed felt that they support their employees, they have regular discussion with them and they understand that they need to build trust between themselves and their employees. However, as shown in the post-test questionnaire comments, employees tried to utilise their voice but felt their views were not taken into consideration. Although there is a disconnect between the line-manager and the employee, what is perceived as the organisation norm to encourage employee voice should withhold. "When a norm exists in an organisation that speaking up is valued, managers are much more likely to view employee voice behaviour as being an important part of employee job performance" (Whiting et al., 2012, p. 163). Managers who wish to encourage more voice need to ensure that their team environment is one in which employees feel collectively confident that they can use their voice successfully and that in so doing will neither be punished or ignored (Morrison et al., 2011). The team environment created by the line-manager concerning the acceptance of voice utilisation as well as the organisation norms are important factors considered by employees in deciding whether they will utilise their employee voice or not.

The comments in the pre-test questionnaire also highlight that it should not only be the employees who are trained around employee voice utilisation, but the training should also expand to their line-managers too. Detert & Burris (2007) suggested that employees at all levels are likely to need training in both the use and acknowledgment of upward information. Skills training is likely to have helped the employees to better utilise their employee voice but line-managers should also be provided with similar training for their own enrichment as well as training on the receipt and acknowledgement that needs to be given when their employees

utilise their voice. The comment by one of the line-managers that employees can be trained on many things, but the way they utilise such training is important. It is interesting that the same line-manager recognised that building trust is the most fundamental component.

The study conducted by Takeuchi et al. (2012) demonstrated that organisations should develop an environment where those in positions of authority routinely treat their employees with respect and dignity. This may be done by providing proper training for managers on interpersonal skills and ways of improving morale in their employees. Skills training in utilising employee voice is important for the employee and the line-manager. However, the feeling of safety between the employee and the line-manager also needs to be considered. The employee needs to feel that their opinion is respected and that if they were to utilise their employee voice, regardless of the way it was expressed or what was expressed, they would be treated with dignity. As in the literature review Morrison et al. (2011) demonstrated that individual motivators and contextual facilitators of voice interact and therefore both need to be considered in research on voice behaviour. It is the point of connection of these factors that is important.

The quantitative results showed that the mean of the control group was higher than the experimental group in the pre-test results as well as in the post-test results. However the gap between the two groups narrowed between the two test results. Although the results were not statistically significant it is important to consider the employee's perception of the culture of victimisation on their ability to express their voice.

6.4 Hypothesis 3: Assessment of the performance discussion

The third hypothesis set-out to determine whether the employee utilisation of their voice had an impact on their one-on-one performance discussion. The quantitative analysis showed that there was no significant impact and therefore the null hypothesis was accepted. It was expected that if an employee was given the required tools and techniques to better express themselves, they would feel that the one-on-one performance discussion was constructive and useful. It was anticipated that the more comfortable and confident an employee was in utilising their employee voice, the more open and constructive the one-on-one performance discussion would be.

The timing of employee voice was considered by Whiting et al. (2012) as an important consideration in employee voice utilisation. The same message could be interpreted differently due to the chosen time to express voice. "Because suggestions made at a point when nothing can be done about them are not likely to be implemented, they will have no impact on

organisational functioning, and therefore observers may perceive this sort of behaviour as less constructive than the same type of voice offered at an earlier time “(Whiting et al., 2012, pg. 162). The one-on-one performance discussions were expected to be a suitable forum to utilise employee voice, as they are intended to facilitate a discussion between the employee and line-manager around performance. Although the one-on-one performance discussion is already a scheduled event, the climate within an organisation around performance assessment and related remuneration compensation is challenging. The line-managers are under a lot of pressure to complete the organisation’s process and have many one-on-one performance discussions over a short period of time. Similarly, the employees are apprehensive around their performance ratings and how they will be assessed regarding their performance over the year period in which they have been working. The employees are unlikely to challenge the status quo during this time, as they could risk receiving a lower performance rating, which would ultimately affect their earnings.

The organisation environment and the level of commitment that the employee feels to the organisation are also important factors. The study by Ng & Feldman (2013) illustrated that the level of employee embeddedness is also related to the amount of use of constructive voice, even though it often involves some risks.

The quantitative results were not significant, however it is important to note that there was a change in direction of the means between the pre-test results and the post-test results. In the pre-test results the mean of the control group was higher than the mean of the experimental group, but in the post-test results the mean of the experimental group was higher than the mean of the control group. In analysing these results two things need to be taken into account. Firstly, the control group and experimental group participants had different means in the pre-test results however both had high responses that they utilise their employee voice. Secondly, the organisation culture did not seem to facilitate the use of one’s voice. Therefore, although not significant, the change in direction from the pre-test results to the post-test results should not be disregarded.

6.5 Research objectives

The first research objective was to assess whether skills training would improve voice utilisation either in quantity, through increased utilisation, or quality, through a change in the line-manager relationships. The second research objective was to understand whether the one-on-one performance discussion would be an effective platform for an employee to utilise

their voice which would be assessed by the employee's perception of their one-on-one performance discussion.

The quantitative results per each hypothesis were not statistically significant however combining the ratings obtained for employee voice utilisation, employee's relationship with their line-manager and the performance discussion forum collectively led to the results being statistically significant. This is expanded in the next section. The qualitative results highlight that there is was disconnection between the line-managers and their employees and the organisational culture did not provide the required psychological safety for employees to utilise their voice.

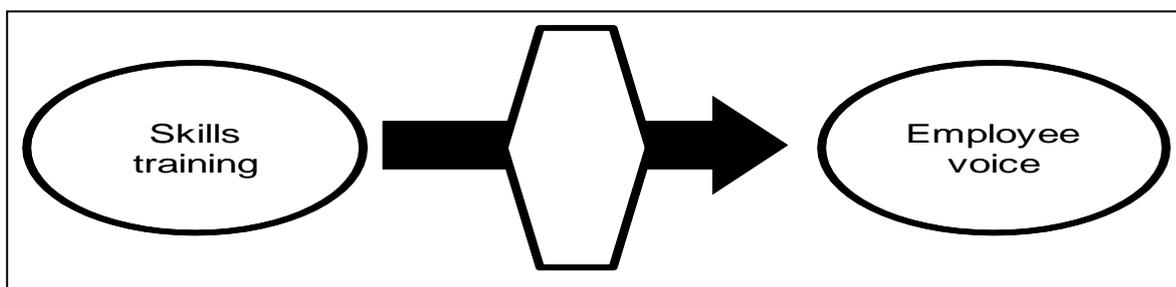
Although there were concerns around the sample of participants used, the results obtained are meaningful and assisted in meeting the research objectives. Firstly, skills training is an effective aid to encourage voice utilisation however the relationship with one's line-manager and the organisational climate needs to be considered in relation to the employee skills training. Secondly, the one-on-one performance discussion may not be the most effective platform to utilise employee voice as this relies on the employee and line-manager relationship and the timing of the discussions may be within a tense atmosphere.

6.6 Implications for employee voice utilisation

Despite the organisation climate, the statistics are informative because they do suggest that the training had some impact, despite the atmosphere and the unexpectedly high control group pre-test score in relation to employee voice utilisation.

This research paper set-out to determine whether skills training had an effect on employee voice utilisation. The initial objective has been shown in Figure 11:

Figure 11: Effect of skills training to employee voice utilisation

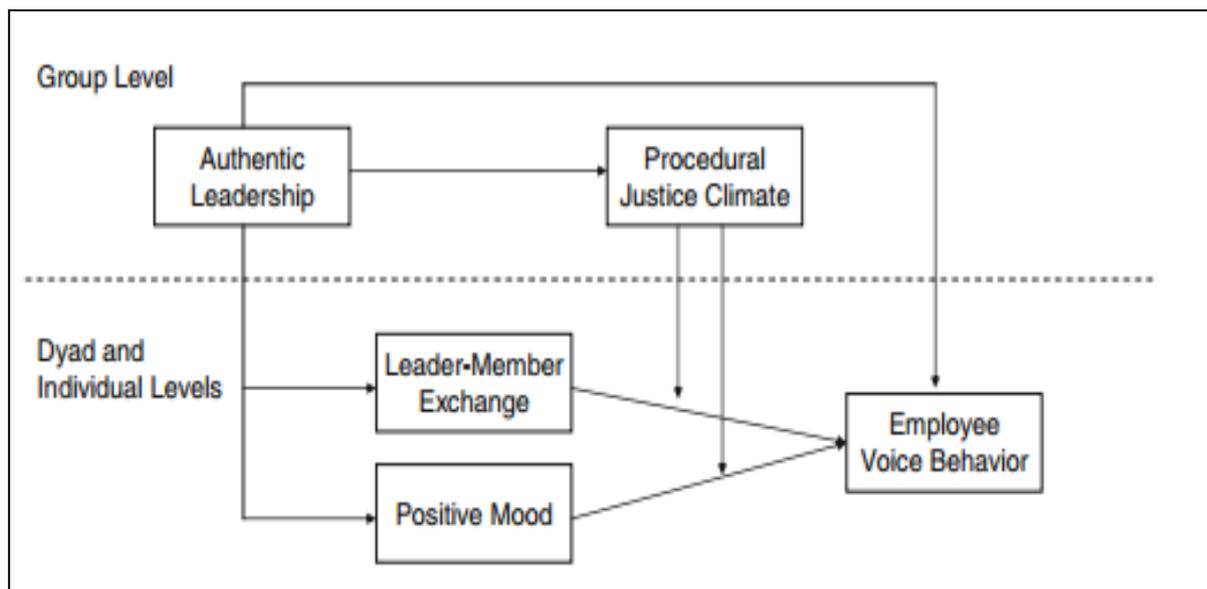


The discussion of the results highlighted that there are other factors in-between that need to be considered. Additionally, there was a statistically significant finding when creating one composite measure, which included employee voice utilisation, relationship with line-manager and the performance discussion assessment.

The context in which employees choose to speak-up, according to Whiting et al. (2012), is particularly important. The detail of the context was further expanded into organisation norms, the timing of the voice and the environment dynamics (Whiting et al., 2012). Although voice may be encouraged through skills training, the context in which an employee's voice is to be utilised also needs to be considered.

A model developed by Hsiung (2012) makes a distinction between individual level and group level as illustrated in Figure 12:

Figure 12: Authentic leadership relationship with employee voice behaviour



(Hsiung, 2012, p. 350)

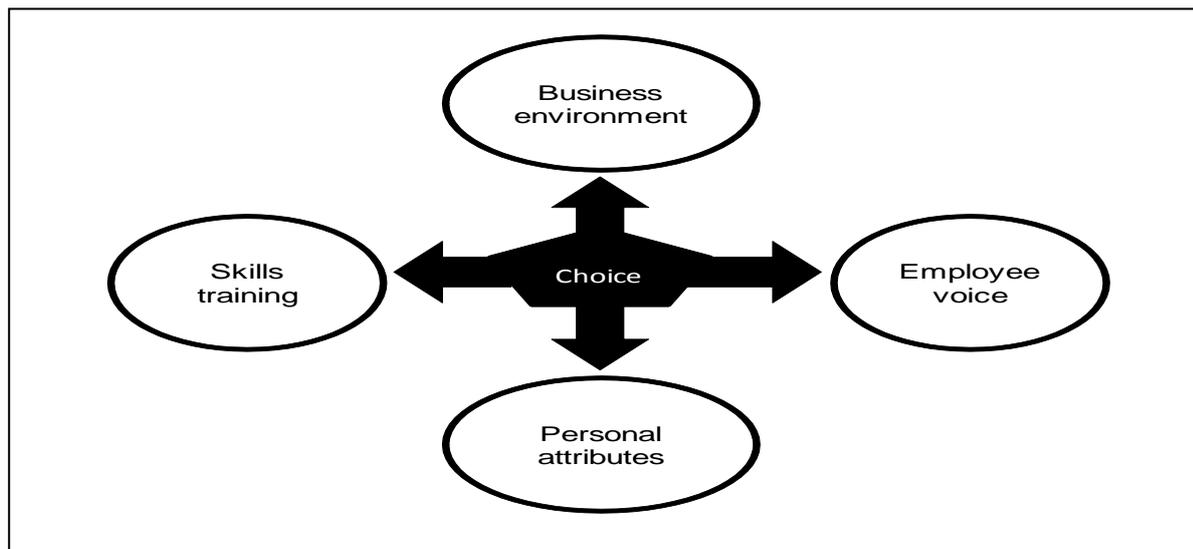
This research paper looked at the individual level but in so doing identified that the effectiveness of the interaction at the individual level is dependent on the status of the group level. Hsiung (2012) showed that authentic leaders are more capable of spreading positive influences and developing positive relational exchanges with their employees. This positive influence motivates employees and assists them to utilise their employee voice. The study also showed that authentic leadership has a group level effect as employees perceive their organisation as a just environment where they can speak-up safely. Although Hsiung (2012) research was directed around authentic leadership, its results show that leadership, the organisation environment and the relationship between the employee and their line-manager are important factors in employee voice behaviour and are inter-connected. For simplicity these collectively have been called 'business environment'.

The employee is more likely to express their employee voice if they feel they are communicating with an authentic leader and that the organisation norms recognise employee

voice utilisation. Skills training has an effect on employee voice behaviour however, the business environment needs to facilitate the employee exercising their voice. Personal attributes also seem important, which entails self-confidence, level of language skill, courage and the like. This model has therefore been taken a bit further and incorporates the findings of this research paper.

To this extent the following model has been derived and illustrated in Figure 13:

Figure 13: Employee voice utilisation influences



Therefore although skills training is an important element of employee voice utilisation, the employee's personal attributes, the employee's perception of their leader and the employee's experience of the organisation norms (the business environment) all need to be considered, for an employee to utilise their voice. It is also noted that each measure in this research paper assessed independently did not show statistically significant results, however when they were combined into one composite measure the results were statistically significant.

This provides two important implications for employee voice utilisation. Firstly, the choice by the employee to utilise their employee voice is not only dependent on skills training but there are other factors that also need to be considered, some which have already been identified. The amount of influence these different factors have on the employee's choice to utilise their voice is also important. Secondly, a combination of factors into one measure resulted in statistically significant results. The factors may not be independent and it is more the optimal combination that encourages voice utilisation. It may therefore be more relevant to identify an optimal balance rather than to assess factors independently. Further research could examine the inter-connection between these components or their independence of one another. This may help determine if there is causality.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION.

7.1 Highlights of the main findings

Firstly, skills training around employee voice is an important tool for employee voice utilisation. However the type, level and participants of the skills training would still need to be investigated. Secondly, employee voice utilisation cannot be isolated from the organisation climate nor the relationship between the line-manager and the employee. Thirdly, the forum for which employee voice would be most effective may not be the one-on-one performance discussion. Lastly, the use of employee voice is at an individual's discretion and is not only dependent on the level of skills held to better utilise ones voice.

7.2 Recommendations to stakeholders

Employee voice is a relevant and interesting theoretical topic that is becoming more applicable in the current dynamic environment in which organisations operate. It is therefore important for stakeholders to not only understand the theoretical concept of employee voice but to also understand how utilisation of employee voice can be encouraged. It is through the utilisation of one's employee voice, that employees feel engaged with their organisation and the related organisation is able to maintain their competitive advantage.

Skills training is an interesting intervention to assist employees to utilise their employee voice, but it needs to form part of a broader understanding of the organisation. Employees utilise their voice after their own perceived satisfaction, as to their choice to speak-up, of the organisation climate as well as the authenticity of the leadership. It is recommended that stakeholders (such as, line-managers, senior managers and the Human Resource Personal) seek to understand the perception of the level of psychological safety that employees feel within the organisation. Furthermore, stakeholders need to ensure that line-managers acknowledge, respect and encourage employees who utilise their employee voice. This is not only important for the relationship between the line-manager and the employee, but it also provides other employees with a better understanding of the organisation norms and value it places on people who utilise their employee voice. Stakeholders should understand that it is not only the employees that need to be encouraged to use their voice but a culture needs to be cultivated that encourages the continuous use of voice. In this way employee voice utilisation becomes perceived as being accepted as normal.

7.3 Recommendations for future research

The research results obtained are enlightening but must be considered in terms of some research limitations and recommendations for future research. Firstly, the sample of participants was selected from one bank and the responses may be isolated instances. Further research could reveal whether this is an isolated occurrence or whether this is characteristic of this particular bank, of banks in general or even work relations generally in South Africa. Secondly, employee voice utilisation is a sensitive topic and can be perceived as troublesome. Further research should consider better initiatives to brief participants around the confidentiality and data collection process in conducting research. Although the pre-test and post-test questionnaires both included confidentiality clauses, it appeared that participants were still unsure as to whether or not this clause would be upheld throughout the experiment. Perhaps discussions rather than the use of questionnaires should be considered. Thirdly, skills training was only provided to employees and not to their line-managers to ensure all variables within the experiment design were controlled. Further research could investigate how skills training in employee voice or open discussions around organisation culture in accepting and encouraging employee voice in deciding which is more effective in increasing employee voice utilisation. In addition, further research could investigate training provided to line-managers around encouraging and acknowledging employee voice within the teams that they manage. Fourthly, there was no insight as to what actually happened during the one-on-one performance discussions other than the employee and line-manager's perception after the event. Further research could look at the effect of an independent party (such as a qualified coach) being present during the one-on-one performance discussion to obtain an objective view as to the effectiveness of the discussion, the use by the employee of their voice as well as the line-manager's reaction to the employee's voice utilisation. This would also support the further research encouraged by Morrison et al. (2011) to look not just at the extent to which people voice, but also at how and what they voice. Fifthly, performance of the employees was not considered in this study. The past performance and related ratings of the employees was unknown as was the change or effect on the performance ratings obtained by the employees. Further research could look at a time series analysis as to the impact on performance ratings in relation to employee voice utilisation.

Further research could also examine the inter-connection between the business environment, personal attributes and skills training or their independence of one another.

7.4 Implications for management

Management, of this organisation, would need to consider if the responses to the pre-test and post-test questionnaires as well as the feedback from the line-manager interviews are reliable data sources based on response and non-response error. Furthermore, management should

consider if these results appeared isolated to this area within the bank or if this is indicative of the bank culture as a whole.

Authentic leadership is linked to employee voice behaviour and management would need to consider whether an environment has been created that encourages employee voice utilisation. Although skills training may provide employees with the confidence and ability to better utilise their voice, if they do not believe or trust the environment in which they operate they are unlikely to take the risk to utilise their employee voice. Employees could even become disengaged and the competitive advantage of the organisation could be lost.

Organisation culture and the organisation norms have a significant role to play in employee voice utilisation. Employees do not only assess their own ability and their own relationship with their line-manager but they also consider the broader context in which they operate. Employees also observe how other employees are treated when they speak-up. As seen in the comments, some employees even label people being spies.

Management of other organisations needs to be continuously cognisant of the environment that they create and in which their employees operate. The perception of organisation norms influences an employee's utilisation of their voice and it may become difficult for management to quickly change such perception. Skills training is an important tool and technique for employee voice utilisation, but more than skills training alone needs to be provided to employees to encourage voice utilisation and to maintain their engagement in the organisation.

7.5 Conclusion

Employee voice is an interesting and relevant topic. The one-on-one performance discussion may be a viable opportunity to have an open discussion with one's line-manager, however, it may not be the most appropriate forum to express employee voice. Employee voice is complex and involves many dependencies. It is important to understand the context of the research environment as it is only when employee voice is perceived by the employee as being important, that such utilisation can be truly assessed. Skills training has an impact on employee voice utilisation but needs to be further assessed in a more optimal research environment.

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Appendix 1: Pre-test questionnaire



This questionnaire is part of a research paper on Employee Voice within an organisation. This is a pre-test questionnaire to obtain an understanding of how you utilise and perceive Employee Voice. Employee Voice can be defined as “promotive behaviour that emphasises expression of constructive challenge intended to improve rather than merely criticise.”¹ This questionnaire will help us understand whether training had an impact on your Employee Voice utilisation and perception, and should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time without penalty. All data will be kept confidential and you will remain anonymous. If you have any concerns please contact me or my supervisor per the details below:

Researcher: Lisa Bird
Email: Lisa8Bird@gmail.com
Phone: 083 570 7248

Research Supervisor: Jonathan Cook
Email: Cookj@gibs.co.za
Phone: 011 771 4366

There are two sections to complete:

Section 1 General and Demographic Information

Section 2 Pre-Test on utilisation of Employee Voice, performance discussion, relationship with your Line Manager?

Thank-you for your time

1. Van Dyne, L., & LePine, J. A. (1998). Helping and voice extra-role behaviours: Evidence of construct and predictive validity. *Academy of Management Journal*, 41(1), 108–119.

To maintain confidentiality, all information will be aggregated and no individual information will be made available

Section 1

General and Demographic Information

General Information

Please type in the blue fields

Employee Number

(This is required to match your pre-test questionnaire with your post-test questionnaire)

First Name (Optional)

(This would assist in matching your pre-test questionnaire with your post-test questionnaire)

Last Name (Optional)

Demographic Information

Please use the drop down list

Gender

Home language

Highest completed level of education

Years at current company

Years of work experience

Section 2 : Pre Test Questionnaire broken into 3 sections

- Section A: Utilisation of Employee Voice
- Section B: Relationship with my Line Manager
- Section C: Performance Discussion Assessment
- Section D: Comments

21 Questions



- 9 Questions
- 6 Questions
- 6 Questions

Employee Voice:

When you speak up about something or provide a suggestion or opinion:
 e.g: What do you see as my career path?
 e.g: Can we have regular team meetings?

Section A: Utilisation of Employee Voice

Please indicate your response, one per statement, with a cross (X)

Almost Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never	N/A
---------------	-------	-----------	--------	-------	-----

- 1 Utilisation of my Employee Voice will result in a negative outcome
- 2 During my one-on-one performance discussion I can speak freely regarding my current company
- 3 I provide opinions or suggestions to my Line Manager regularly (i.e. at least once a month)
- 4 I feel it is my responsibility to the organisation to express my own opinions or suggestions to my Line Manager
- 5 I highlight problems, even if that would hinder my relationships with my Line Manager
- 6 I feel comfortable to express my honest opinion regarding my performance with my Line Manager
- 7 When I previously utilised my Employee Voice with my Line Manager, there were negative outcomes (where you haven't utilised your Employee Voice please indicate N/A)
- 8 When I utilised my Employee Voice, the relationship with my Line Manager became.... (where you haven't utilised your Employee Voice please indicate N/A)
- 9 What would cause you to hesitate to utilise your Employee Voice or why would you not utilise your Employee Voice?

<input type="checkbox"/>					
<input type="checkbox"/>					
<input type="checkbox"/>					
<input type="checkbox"/>					
<input type="checkbox"/>					
<input type="checkbox"/>					
<input type="checkbox"/>					

Much Better	Somewhat Better	Stayed the Same	Somewhat Worse	Much worse	N/A
-------------	-----------------	-----------------	----------------	------------	-----

<input type="checkbox"/>					
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Section B: Relationship with my Line Manager

Please indicate your response, one per statement, with a cross (X)

Almost Always	Sometimes	Unknown	Rarely	Never	N/A
---------------	-----------	---------	--------	-------	-----

- 10 I have an open and honest relationship with my Line Manager
- 11 My Line Manager listens to my opinions and suggestions when I express them
- 12 My Line Manager has a good understanding of what I do
- 13 I will utilise my Employee Voice because I trust my Line Manager
- 14 My Line Manager understands how I am performing in my job
- 15 I believe that my Line Manager will action my opinions or suggestions, where possible

<input type="checkbox"/>					
<input type="checkbox"/>					
<input type="checkbox"/>					
<input type="checkbox"/>					
<input type="checkbox"/>					
<input type="checkbox"/>					

Section C: Performance Discussion Assessment

Please indicate your response, one per statement, with a cross (X)

Almost Always	Sometimes	Unknown	Rarely	Never	N/A
---------------	-----------	---------	--------	-------	-----

- 16 I do express my Employee Voice during the one-on-one performance discussion
- 17 I usually feel comfortable during my one-on-one performance discussion with my Line Manager
- 18 I feel my one-on-one performance discussions are constructive and useful
- 19 I have an opportunity to speak during my one-on-one performance discussion
- 20 I feel the one-on-one performance discussion is a two-way communication between my Line Manager and myself
- 21 I speak approximately this amount of the total time of the performance discussion

<input type="checkbox"/>					
<input type="checkbox"/>					
<input type="checkbox"/>					
<input type="checkbox"/>					
<input type="checkbox"/>					

Please indicate your response, one per statement, with a cross (X)

0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
----	-----	-----	-----	------

Section D: Comments

If you feel there is anything that should be known that hasn't been addressed as part of this questionnaire please comment here

<input type="checkbox"/>					
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Appendix 2: Post-test questionnaire



GORDON INSTITUTE
OF BUSINESS SCIENCE

University of Pretoria

This questionnaire is part of a research paper on Employee Voice within an organisation. Employee Voice can be defined as “promotive behaviour that emphasises expression of constructive challenge intended to improve rather than merely criticise.”¹ This is a post-test questionnaire to find out whether the training session held before your performance discussion had an impact on your voice utilisation and perception, and should take 15 minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time, without penalty. **All data will be kept confidential and you will remain anonymous.** If you have any concerns please contact me or my supervisor per the details below:

Researcher: Lisa Bird
Email: Lisa8Bird@gmail.com
Phone: 083 570 7248

Research Supervisor: Jonathan Cook
Email: Cookj@gibs.co.za
Phone: 011 771 4000

Thank-you for your time!

1. Van Dyne, L., & LePine, J. A. (1998). Helping and voice extra-role behaviors: Evidence of construct and predictive validity. *Academy of Management Journal*, 41(1), 108–119.

Section 1 : Post Test Questionnaire

Confidential

To maintain confidentiality, all information will be aggregated and no individual information will be made available

Employee Number

Length of time of your performance discussion (e.g. 30 minutes)

Section 2 : Post Test Questionnaire

12 Questions

Please indicate your response, one per statement, with a cross (X)

1 Compared to what you felt before the training and your latest performance discussion:

1.1 My relationship with my Line Manager is

<input type="checkbox"/>	Better
<input type="checkbox"/>	Worse
<input type="checkbox"/>	Same

1.2 My Line Manager's perception of me is

<input type="checkbox"/>	Better
<input type="checkbox"/>	Worse
<input type="checkbox"/>	Same

1.3 My ability to express my Employee Voice is

<input type="checkbox"/>	Better
<input type="checkbox"/>	Worse
<input type="checkbox"/>	Same

1.4 The outcome if I expressed my Employee Voice now would be

<input type="checkbox"/>	Better
<input type="checkbox"/>	Worse
<input type="checkbox"/>	Same

2 Were you given an opportunity to express your Employee Voice during your latest performance discussion

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

3 Did you make use of any opportunity to express your Employee Voice during your latest performance discussion

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

3.1 If yes, compared to previous performance discussions, I expressed my Employee Voice

<input type="checkbox"/>	More
<input type="checkbox"/>	Less
<input type="checkbox"/>	Same

4 Compared to previous performance discussions, the level of comfort I felt during my performance discussion was

<input type="checkbox"/>	Better
<input type="checkbox"/>	Worse
<input type="checkbox"/>	Same

5 Compared to previous performance discussions, the constructive value of the performance discussion was

<input type="checkbox"/>	Better
<input type="checkbox"/>	Worse
<input type="checkbox"/>	Same

6 Did you feel the performance discussion conversation was

<input type="checkbox"/>	One-way only
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mostly one way
<input type="checkbox"/>	Two-way conversation

7 I spoke approximately this amount of the total time of the performance discussion

<input type="checkbox"/>	0%
<input type="checkbox"/>	25%
<input type="checkbox"/>	50%
<input type="checkbox"/>	75%
<input type="checkbox"/>	100%

8 Compared to what you felt before the training and your latest performance discussion:

8.1 I feel my assessment of my relationship with my Line Manager as being open and honest is

<input type="checkbox"/>	Better
<input type="checkbox"/>	Worse
<input type="checkbox"/>	Same

8.2 I felt my Line Manager's openness to opinions and suggestions during my performance discussion was

<input type="checkbox"/>	Better
<input type="checkbox"/>	Worse
<input type="checkbox"/>	Same
<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A

Where no expression of Employee Voice was made

9 I feel the likelihood of my Line Manager asking me to express my opinions or suggestion in the future is

<input type="checkbox"/>	Higher
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lower
<input type="checkbox"/>	Same

10 I feel the likelihood of my Line Manager acting on my opinions or suggestions, where possible, is now

<input type="checkbox"/>	Higher
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lower
<input type="checkbox"/>	Same

11 As a result of utilising my Employee Voice during my performance discussion:

11.1 I feel my Line Manager's understanding of my performance on the job is now

<input type="checkbox"/>	Better
<input type="checkbox"/>	Worse
<input type="checkbox"/>	Same
<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A

Where no expression of Employee Voice was made

11.2 I feel the level at which I can trust my Line Manager is now

<input type="checkbox"/>	Better
<input type="checkbox"/>	Worse
<input type="checkbox"/>	Same
<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A

Where no expression of Employee Voice was made

12 Please provide any insights, experiences or thoughts you may have about expressing your Employee Voice as we are interested in finding out what can or could promote Employee Voice and any insights would be very valuable:

(The more detailed and constructive the comments, the more useful they are to the overall results of the research)

Appendix 3: Semi-structured line-manager interview transcripts

Interview 1

Respondent: Who's speaking?

Lisa: It's Lisa.

Respondent: Lisa?

Lisa: Yes, I think I sent you an email. I can maybe just give you some contacts. Do you have, can I have maybe just two minutes of your time?

Respondent: Sorry, I can't hear you properly, my dear. Can you speak up a little bit.

Lisa: Ja, my name's Lisa and I'm phoning in connection with, I think some of your staff members attended some training about a month ago in terms of the training that was held on a Friday or a Tuesday morning for about two and a half hours and there was also a training session that was held for about an hour around performance discussions and employee voice.

Respondent: Yes

Lisa: Ok, Do you perhaps, ok so I'm just running that research through the HR department whereby we effectively provided some training to your staff and with that training they obviously then had the performance discussions with their managers and we just wanted to conduct some interviews with the managers to see if, I guess, the training had any impact on the performance discussion. I just wanted to know if it's possible just to ask you one or two questions.

Respondent: Ok, Lisa. How long will it take approximately my dear 'cause we're actually very busy today, you know with it being month-end and all that.

Lisa: It will take literally like about two or three minutes. I've only got like two or three questions.

Respondent: About two minutes, ok two minutes will be fine, Lisa.

Lisa: Or you can just cut me off if you run out of time. So the first question we have here I think we had what two members who attended the training. I just want to know in terms of the performance discussion you had with your staff if you found that any of them if they were any different from what you had last year and if there was any individual who perhaps I guess spoke more than they would have ordinarily during their discussion?

Respondent: Ok Lisa I you know I've got a very open relationship with my staff ok so there wasn't, I can't say that anything changed really.

Lisa: Ok no that's great. That's great. And you know I just want to understand from your perspective how you conduct those performance discussions. You know how long they are, if you give your staff perhaps an opportunity to talk or ask questions or to query their rating?

Respondent: Yes, we do that all the time hey Lisa. We actually do it, we don't specifically wait for the PDP's, we do it right through the year.

Lisa: Right through the year?

Respondent: Yes, my angel.

Lisa: OK. And for the performance discussion how long does it generally take?

Respondent: It takes approximately half an hour to an hour when we do the discussions. 'Cause then you know you have a look at everything to do the performance but then the job as well, you know what's happening on the work going forward and everything.

Lisa: Ok great. And then the last question I just have is in terms of the research is to see whether or not people are able to or how we can perhaps encourage people to I guess ask more questions or to perhaps have a more open relationship with their managers so I guess in your in instance you know you feel that you do have an open relationship with your staff but I guess we're looking in the context whereby a staff member doesn't feel that there is an open relationship with their manager and how best they can go about addressing that. So it might not be in your instance now but I guess perhaps any advice or input that you would be able to provide to myself or to I guess another manager to kind of create that open relationship...or... How would you go about doing that? How would you perhaps go about encouraging someone to talk out if perhaps they were shy or perhaps you know they've got an issue they're perhaps not so willing to address? How would you go about perhaps obtaining that information?

Respondent: Ok Lisa, what we do we discuss ok and then I will ask the questions if there is one and when I see they're hesitant then we leave it but then just get back to me the same time when I feel you know they have more confidence to discuss the problem, when they feel free to discuss the problem.

Lisa: So you kind of ask them if they've, you kind of tell them that they that you are open and then you kind of encourage them to come back to you with one of the problems that they are experiencing I guess.

Respondent: Ja what they're experiencing yes. But like I say, yes you know, with us we're actually very close. We're only three in the department, the two analysts and then myself. So we do that on a daily basis and when we have our work done, meetings, we also address everything.

Lisa: Great. That's all I have..

Respondent: Like I said, you know, we got an open relationship and if I've got a problem we discuss it if they've got a problem we discuss it the same, we don't wait until the bubble bursts. We dealing with stuff as it comes, so I think that actually works for us in the department.

Lisa: Great, thank you so much for your time. That's all I had to ask. Thanks a lot.

Respondent: You're more than welcome Lisa. But not month-end hey Lisa.

Lisa: No, I know that's why I just had a quick chat. Thank you very much hey.

Respondent: It's fine Lisa. Enjoy your day.

Lisa: Same to you. Bye now ...

Interview 2

Lisa: Hi ... it's Lisa Bird speaking. I'm just phoning in connection with an email I think I sent you with regards to some training that I'd given your staff members. I'm not sure if you've got a few minutes just to have a quick chat?

Respondent: When, now Lisa?

Lisa: If you've got time, if you don't then I....

Respondent: Sure, sure.

Lisa: Just to give you some context. I've been doing some research with the HR department . I'm a student at the Gordon Institute of Business Science and I was just looking at some research in terms of whether or not training would be able to encourage employees to express their employee voice, so, in other words, just to see whether or not people are able to speak up more about issues or concerns they have within the workplace. So I think what I have here two of your staff members attended that training. The one was a two and half training that was held on a Friday afternoon or Tuesday morning.

Respondent: Ja, ja

Lisa: Ja Ok. So I'm just phoning in connection with that. So what we've done is, the staff members have filled out a post-test questionnaire and they've obviously now had the performance discussions with yourself. And I just wanted to perhaps just, not to spend too much of your time, just to work out whether or not you felt kind of from last year whether or not there was any difference in the performance discussion or there was any individual you felt spoke out more than they would have normally or if you thought it was perhaps just the same as it was last year?

Respondent: I think there isn't really anything different because I'm not sure what to, you know what the staff said on the you know when you did the training with them or whatever, but as far as I'm concerned there isn't any major issues and

Lisa: Great

Respondent: Ja so the performance management, the performance thing went well according to.. ja so

Lisa: Great. No that's ok. The question kind of in the relationship thing was just kind of then, how do you, you know, how do you normally conduct your performance discussions in terms of how long they are, I guess, how often they are and if you kind of encourage people at the

end of the discussion or during the discussion whether or not they are able to ask any questions or raise any concerns that they've got.

Respondent: Ja, sure, that we do like say on a monthly or bi-monthly, ag not monthly, two monthly or quarterly informal thing, you know. We do have the normal performance rating that is done, I think, now also quarterly, that is the formal one. And then the informal ones we do you know us with them at any time whenever they would like to discuss or whenever I have things to discuss with them and they ask, actually you know they ask questions, if they're not happy with something they'll ask me or if they want to discuss something with me they gladly do that, no hassles.

Lisa: Great. How long is that normally, how long is that discussion normally or how long was the last discussion that you perhaps you had now the last month?

Respondent: Say, maybe like fifteen minutes, twenty minutes, fifteen to half an hour, or fifteen maybe. It depends on the issue really, it depends on what needs to be discussed.

Lisa: Sure.

Respondent: But normally it's like say fifteen to half an hour or so. It's not like long hourly discussions.

Lisa: Ok. No that's ok. And then I just wanted to ask in perhaps terms of your management experience, it sounds as if you've obviously got a good team, you know, and if you've got a good relationship with them,

Respondent: I should hope so.

Lisa: Ja... so say in a sense perhaps you know you would have to give advice to a manager who perhaps didn't have a good relationship or perhaps their staff weren't able to express themselves more, how would you perhaps encourage an employee or what do you think are the main attributes to encourage an employee to speak up? You know, what do you think you have to have in order for them to speak up more?

Respondent: Sorry Lisa, I didn't get the question. You'd like to know how would I encourage somebody to speak up?

Lisa: Yes. In a work environment.

Respondent: You know I my team the people that work in my team know that if there's an issue, if they have problem with anything, they have to speak up. You cannot be working with somebody you know for more than eight, nine, ten hours a day and be miserable or be

unhappy or whatever and I mean we're here for the same purpose, we're not here to, to, you know we all know what we're here for. So you have to, if you have a problem, sort it out so that we can you know have a nice good working relationship and that's what I tell my teams all the time and that's what they do. You know, actually I hope they do, because if they have issues with me or something's bothering them, they speak to me, they don't go speak to other people. That's what I tell people, don't go speak to other people and make stories about stuff, go talk to people, talk to me.

Lisa: Ja, exactly. So you'll kind of encourage them to do that, would be your...

Respondent: Yes, that's what I do. And not only my team, other teams you know other people too, other people that have problems, I say to them: go did you speak to the person? Did you sort it out with the person?

Lisa: Exactly. Exactly.

Respondent: No. You shouldn't make stories with other people. At the end of the day, it's just work and you're still not happy and you're miserable, and it's not good to work like that, because we spend lots of our time here at work.

Lisa: Exactly.

Respondent: About ten hours a day. So...

Lisa: Exactly. No, that's why we ask you. There's some circumstances where that's not possible. It doesn't happen. Just, I think, trying to work out perhaps what tools we can provide or what research is out there in order for that to happen. So, that's been great. Thanks very much for your time. That's all the questions I really had and thanks for allowing your staff to go on the training. It was much appreciated.

Respondent: It's a pleasure.

Lisa: Great. Thanks,

Interview 3

Respondent: Sorry, I didn't hear you.

Lisa: Sorry, my name's Lisa. I'm just phoning in connection with a, I think I sent you an email, with regards to some research I'm doing in terms of my thesis at

Respondent: Ja.

Lisa: I'm not sure if you recall the email or if you just want me to let me just explain quickly.

Respondent: Hmm

Lisa: So, I'm currently a student at the Gordon Institute of Business Science and I'm doing my thesis around whether or not training has an impact on employees utilising their employee voice. I think some of your staff members attended some training courses.

Respondent: Yes

Lisa: I'm not sure if you recall that?

Respondent: Yes, yes, I do.

Lisa: Do you perhaps just have two or three minutes just that I can maybe just ask you one or two questions just around that process and just give you some context?

Respondent: Ok, no problem.

Lisa: So, like I say I'm just kind of conducting some research and the way, the approach that I did was in terms of an experiment design and what that entails is that we effectively split a group, the population into two groups, one being the control group and one being the experimental group. The control group we provided training that was an hour that was conducted by HR just to explain the general ... performance management process and there was also, the second group was the experimental group whereby we conducted a two and a half hour training session which was on a Friday afternoon or Tuesday morning whereby we had a professional trainer who kind of used her skills to help people have more constructive conversations around their performance discussion and perhaps try utilise their employee more around their concerns or suggestions or opinions that they may have. So after that we then ran a post-test questionnaire which your staff would have completed and then, as part of that process, just to collaborate some of those results we just wanted to ask the managers one or two questions about their experiences of the performance discussion. So, just in line with that I think one of the questions we just wanted to ask was whether or not you felt that

there was any difference in terms of your experience of this year's performance discussion, I guess, compared to last year or any other discussions that you had and whether or not there was maybe a specific individual who kind of stood out or who you thought might express themselves more than they would ordinarily have done previously?

Respondent: Yes. Hello?

Lisa: Hi. hi

Respondent: Sorry, are you phoning from a cell phone?

Lisa: Yeah.

Respondent: Oh, so that's why it's breaking up all the time.

Lisa: Sorry about that, did you hear the question that I asked or should I just repeat it?

Respondent: Sure. You broke up halfway through now. You asked if I noticed any changes?

Lisa: Yes, exactly, and whether or not there was perhaps an individual that you felt kind of stood out or kind of acted differently than they would have done previously?

Respondent: Uh, with me it's very different. It's very difficult to answer that question too.

Lisa: That's ok.

Respondent: I say it's very difficult for me to answer that question.

Lisa: Oh, ok.

Respondent: Because I've been going through a rather difficult period over the last one a half years in the department, so for me it's very difficult to answer that. Um, I don't know how can I say it? Is there any way that I could call you back?

Lisa: Ja, sure. No problem.

Respondent: I think I'd rather need to call you back.

Lisa: Sure, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to upset you.

Respondent: No, no, no, it's not anything that like that. It's just that I, I, it's difficult for me to answer.

Lisa: That's ok. That's ok, that's no problem.

Respondent: Ja, ok fine. When can I call you back?

Lisa: Um, whenever you've got a free moment, maybe a bit later today, if that suits you, or tomorrow or...?

Respondent: No, I'll call you a bit later today.

Lisa: And do you have my number there, or should I give it to you?

Respondent:

Lisa: Yes, and my name's Lisa.

Respondent: Alicia?

Lisa: It's Lisa, L-I-S-A.

Respondent: Oh, Lisa! Oh, ja, I'm sure I saw an email coming from you.

Lisa: Yes, exactly.

Respondent: I'll phone you back, because there is a lot of obstacles right now.

Lisa: Ja, no, that'd be great. I think whatever feedback you are able to provide, that'd be great, but if you feel uncomfortable, that's also ok, but

Respondent: Right now is not the time to, ja, where we sitting really and so on.

Lisa: No, that's ok, that's ok.

Lisa: Thank you so much, hey.

Respondent: Ok I'll give you a call.

Lisa: Thank you, thank you, bye now.

Respondent: ... speaking, good afternoon.

Lisa: Hi there, it's Lisa speaking again. I think I phoned you the other day with regards to my research?

Respondent: Hmm, hmmm. Ja, I called you back but there was no answer to your phone.

Lisa: Yes, I was in a meeting. I'm sorry about that. I just wanted to know if maybe now's a better a time or you, I think you were at your desk the last time. Do you perhaps have some time now or is it perhaps still not the best time to phone?

Respondent: No, you can speak to me now.

Lisa: Ok. Great. So, yeah, like I was saying, I'm just kind of doing some research, and in terms of that research I think some of your staff members went on some training?

Respondent: Yes.

Lisa: And so just in connection with that, I think I'm not sure, sorry if I've said this before or not, but effectively I just want to, your staff went on training, we then asked them to complete a post-test questionnaire, they also would have had the performance discussions with you. And now we're just looking to perhaps chat to some of the managers to see whether or not they felt that the performance discussions were any different to how they were last year?

Respondent: Well, like I said, I've had a lot of problems with the staff over the last year, so you know I actually don't know what they put down in their post-assignment or pre-assignment or whatever you've given them, so I don't know what is their grudge like or if there was any grudge or whatever, so..

Lisa: Oh no, that's ok. That's actually not what this is about. This is just to work out just from your perspective, in terms of what you feel, so the question is really is to say whether or not, during this performance discussion whether or not, you found the staff perhaps spoke out more, they were more frustrated, they had a better attitude, a worse attitude, it's just more from your perspective. I haven't looked at their comments in relation to you and that's not really the purpose of my research. So if you're able just to perhaps provide that kind of insight it would be great, but if you're not comfortable, that's also ok.

Respondent: Yes. Look, they had to change in some ways for the better, because the matter was discussed at higher level, the problems that we had in the department, so I'd say, compared to last year, it was better this year.

Lisa: Great. That's really great news. And perhaps then just in relation to that, how do you normally, maybe you did it differently this year, but how do you normally conduct your performance discussions or how did you conduct them this year in terms of how long they were, do you kind of encourage two-way communication?

Respondent: No well, for the past five years that I've been working with them, it's always the same. I sit down, we have a chat, we do discuss the reasons why down here, why up there, you know the scoring. So we do normally have a full discussion, so nothing's changed as far as that's concerned.

Lisa: Ok, and did, and how long is that discussion normally would you say?

Respondent: It doesn't take long. Because, look, workwise they're excellent. So, reasons, you know, the other little things, it's not... Look, we had an on-going problem for about a year and because that was taken up with higher authority it's not a problem, it went quite well, it's quick, about fifteen minutes. About fifteen minutes.

Lisa: Ok great. And then the last question I just had, perhaps in your experience, perhaps then with what you're dealing at the moment, the purpose of my research was to see whether or not training has an impact or is able to you know ...the training course is able to help an employee be able to express themselves more within the workplace. I just want to know maybe from your perspective or experience, what ideas you would have or what you think attributions there are in terms of encouraging someone to utilise their voice, I mean, what kind of perhaps needs to be in place or how do you perhaps go about encouraging someone to speak up more or to speak about issues that they perhaps have?

Respondent: First, from my side I'm a very vocal person it's not a problem for me to speak up, but for the others I think there could be a bit of a hiccup. I've gone through the victimisation story, because when you do speak up you do get victimised I can tell you.

Lisa: Ok.

Respondent: So, I've gone through it, I've gone through it. I know what it's like to be victimised for a whole year and a half, so people just needs to be a bit more open. That's what I think should happen in this place, and it's not. They say they're open, but they're not. There's no transparency here whatsoever.

Lisa: That's the thing. And that's what we're just trying to work out how that can perhaps be improved.

Respondent: It needs to be improved, but how I can't tell you how to do that, hey.

Lisa: No that's ok. I think that's just what we're trying to look at, 'cause I think until it is an open and transparent environment, will people speak up about their real issues, you know, it just becomes a philosophical conversation.

Respondent: As you say, it's transparency, you can speak up and you can speak your mind, but there's always somebody in the background that's going to make it sour.

Lisa: Exactly.

Respondent: But doing that, it then that's where it eventually becomes a whole victimisation story. That's what happens. So it's very difficult, but I don't mind standing up and I've done that and I stand up for myself.

Lisa: Ja, you have to sometimes I think, hey?

Respondent: Absolutely. You reach a stage where you just feel, and I mean mine were so bad, it was going to go to legal action, defamation of character and everything else involved in that ... So I've gone the hard way and I'm still up till today not scared to stand up for myself...

Lisa: Well, that's a good thing.

Respondent: As long as I know that I am right and I know what I'm saying you know legally it's 100%, whatever.

Lisa: Ja, exactly. Great, that's been very good insight. Thanks a lot for your time and I hope things work out for you in your role. Thanks, Bye

Interview 4

Respondent: Regarding? Research?

Lisa: Yes, I'm not sure, I think some of your staff attended some training courses that I ran about a month ago.

Respondent: Uh-uh

Lisa: It was in terms of I kind of, there was a training course I think for an hour that was conducted by ... and there was another training course that was about two and half hours on a Friday or a Tuesday morning that was conducted around employee voice?

Respondent: Yes, ok.

Lisa: So I'm just phoning in connection with that. I'm not sure if you've got a few minutes just so that I can maybe just explain that and kind of just ask you one or two questions which would just be about five minutes?

Respondent: That's fine, ja.

Lisa: Like I was saying I'm currently working full time, but I'm a student at the Gordon Institute of Business Science whereby I'm conducting my research around whether or not training has an effect on the employees utilising their employee voice. So practically that basically just means would training help staff be able to speak up more and have more constructive conversations with their managers perhaps specifically around performance discussions. So, the way that the research was conducted was through an experiment design whereby we split the group into what is referred to as a control group and an experimental group whereby the control group was offered like I say an hour training just around the general ... performance management process and there was a longer session for about two and a half hours whereby we had a professional trainer who worked on techniques to be able to express yourselves more constructively and effectively within an organisation. After that training, the staff would've had their normal performance discussions I guess with yourself and they then completed a post-test questionnaire to see whether or not the training was effective. Just to collaborate some of that information, we just wanted to ask some of the managers, one or two questions just to see whether or not the results are consistent and that's kind of the purpose of this informal conversation. So, just from your perspective, what we're looking for, or what I would like to ask is whether or not, in your experience, I think I don't know exactly who attended the training I think I've got five people here, but whether or not you found there was any difference in the performance discussions that you had this year compared to perhaps last

year or whether or not there was any specific person you felt really stood out or was kind of who acted differently to what they would have previously?

Respondent: Ok. To me it was normal, the same as the previous times. It was normal, same as the previous time, so there was nothing, other questions being asked or something like that.

Lisa: Ok, and did you find that, if you don't mind me asking you, how do you normally run the performance discussions in terms of how long they are or whether or not it's a one or two-way conversation, do you perhaps ask yourself whether or not they have any questions or concerns?

Respondent: Ok. They are two-way conversations, usually about an hour. Ja, we do ask questions or input.

Lisa: When, perhaps, I understand that the ... process is kind of a self-assessment and then the manager also provides their assessment on a balanced scorecard approach. So if the employee perhaps rates themselves higher, in a sense, I think say it was a 4.2 and perhaps you rate them as a 2 or 3, how do you perhaps approach that conversation in terms of addressing the misalignment between their expectations of themselves and I guess your expectation of them or assessment of them?

Respondent: Ok well, you need to provide the facts as to why you're saying it's lower and, ja and then, there always seems to be some sort of confusion, but you know like, a 3 is if you're doing what is required of you, all the more ...are like I'm a 5, but you need get the facts and you need to explain to them the ratings or the scale ratings.

Lisa: Ok great. And then maybe just more generally speaking, like I say this exercise was to see whether or not training was, created any effect whether or not they kind of expressed themselves more, they were more comfortable with the performance discussion and in terms of your feedback, or your staff, that perhaps wasn't the case and that's ok. So, we just kind of want to maybe understand more generally and I guess from your experience, within ... and I guess your larger management experience, how you would perhaps, in your assessment, how you would perhaps encourage an employee to speak up more and utilise their employee voice, how you would perhaps create that kind of environment or culture within the workplace?

Respondent: How do you mean encouragement?

Lisa: Ja. How would you perhaps, say there's someone who's quiet or you see someone's kind of got some issues or concerns, how would you perhaps encourage them to speak out about those or perhaps, I guess, have a constructive conversation with you as their manager?

Respondent: Well, frequent one on one discussions on a weekly basis, if you can get to know your staff member.

Lisa: So you do that on a weekly basis?

Respondent: Yes.

Lisa: Ok...Sorry, I interrupted you, you said know your staff member...

Respondent: Ja, one-on-one discussions and then overall monthly department discussions and then also on the balanced scorecard we actually get rated to come up with new ideas and ways of working as well and there's a portion on that as well.

Lisa: So you almost kind of encourage them to come up with more ideas and more innovative kind of thinking?

Repondent: Ja, try something new, ja.

Lisa: Ok. No that's ok. That's kind of all I had, so thanks very much for your time and thanks for allowing your staff to attend the training. I think it provides some useful insights for my research, I really appreciate that. Great, thanks. Enjoy your day. Bye.

Interview 5

Respondent: Sure

Lisa: Great thank you very much. So maybe just to give you some context, like I said, my name's Lisa and I'm currently a student at the Gordon Institute of Business Science and through Tracy and the HR team we kind of got approval through the management line to conduct some research around whether or not training is an effective tool to encourage the utilisation of one's employee's voice.

Respondent: Yes.

Lisa: So the way that we did that training is, and I think as you'd probably be aware, we kind of used an experiment design whereby we split the groups into two groups, one being the control group and one being the experimental group, and the control group was offered kind of standard ... training for about an hour and the experimental group was offered training for about two and a half hours around being able to effectively express their employee voice, and after that training we asked, the employees went for their performance discussions which I think you would have conducted, and they then completed a post-test questionnaire and we have those results.

Lisa: Now, just to try and corroborate some of those results we just wanted to perhaps chat to some of the managers just to get some insights into their experiences in terms of this year's performance discussions and whether or not you felt that the performance discussion was any different from perhaps the one's that you conducted last year.

Respondent: Ok.

Lisa: I'm not sure if you had a different experience in terms of the performance discussions that you had you know generally speaking because I think you probably wouldn't be aware of who exactly attended the training, but also perhaps if there was any particular individual who perhaps stood out that you thought perhaps might have benefited from the training, if at all?

Respondent: Well, could you just ask a little more questions and so on.

Lisa: Ok. So do you think they kind of spoke more than they did previously?

Respondent: Previously, yes, yes. But you see also what we do is normally we have our one-on-ones throughout, you know, the month and so on and we do explain that it's based on like your stats and overall performance and you have to constantly perform

Lisa: Hello?

Respondent: Hello, hi sorry I thought the phone died for a bit. Yes?

Lisa: Sorry, I think I just kind of lost you there, but you said you had one-on-ones throughout the month?

Respondent: Yes, ok, yes and then we'll normally show them the stats, and how they're doing and what they need to concentrate on and stuff like that.

Lisa: Ok, so are you saying that you feel they've got a good understanding of what performance they're measured on, I guess?

Respondent: Ja. Yes.

Lisa: Ok. And I understand it's part of the ... process that they are required to do a self-assessment and then you also then I guess do an assessment to provide their rating and where there's the discrepancy or misalignment between their assessment and yourself, what is your approach in terms of I guess addressing perhaps some of those concerns or misalignments, I guess?

Respondent: I don't understand what you're saying.

Lisa: So, if a, I'm not exactly sure of your rating scale, but say if one of your people who report to you kind of gave themselves a rating of a 4 or 4.2 I think it is, and say you gave them a rating of 3, and so obviously there's a misalignment between how they rate themselves, they obviously rates themselves higher than what you did, how would go about addressing that misalignment?

Respondent: Ok. What we normally do is, ok, like especially with us we work in a call centre, ok, so we normally have a minimum where you have to take 65 calls per day, ok, so just for example if they're rating them a 4.2, then I will normally show them the stats to say this it, you have not reached your rating of 65 calls per day and so on.

Lisa: Ok.

Respondent: So we work on that.

Lisa: So it's quite statistical driven, to say that if you haven't made the calls you can't be rated on a certain rating scale, I guess?

Respondent: Yes, ok, it's with regards to your calls and it's with regards to how you address and how you assist customers as well.

Lisa: Ok.

Respondent: How many like compliments you get, and so on.

Lisa: Ok. Sorry how do you, if you don't mind me asking, how do you go about conducting the performance discussions generally speaking?

Respondent: We've been on, I've been on courses.

Lisa: Oh, you've been on courses?

Respondent: General management course, yes.

Lisa: But do you, is it kind of like one-on-one, is it kind of something that, is it kind of 5 minutes, is it an hour, do you allow the employee to perhaps ask questions?

Respondent: Hour, hour.

Lisa: It's an hour, hey?

Respondent: Yes, an hour discussion.

Lisa: And do you feel it should be a one-way conversation between you and the employee or do you feel it should be kind of a two-way conversation?

Respondent: Two-way conversation.

Lisa: Two-way.

Respondent: Me giving input and the employee giving input.

Lisa: Ok. And then just the last question I have, is just to, like a say the training's kind of around seeing whether or not we can encourage employees to speak more about, I guess, their concerns or opinions or improvements or suggestions that they have for the greater organisation. And so, the question I just wanted to ask you, in your experience and opinion, how do think it would be best or how do you think you could perhaps encourage someone to speak out, I guess?

Respondent: Normally by asking more questions.

Lisa: So, the more, if you ask and kind of encourage them, then they are more likely to kind of say more?

Respondent: Yes, and also, like especially with myself, right, whenever we meet, we always like encourage them to come up with ideas on how to work better and how to work smarter. I

won't just say, listen this is the way we have to do it, ok, and we go away. We always come to a compromise on how to work a little bit better and how to work smarter.

Lisa: Ok. That's great.

Respondent: Actually then I put it out on the table and that is when I get more feedback from them.

Lisa: Ja.

Respondent: Then they are more open also for us to for us to work as a team.

Lisa: Ok. Great. That's very insightful. I really appreciate your time and the time of your staff being able to come to the training.

Respondent: Thank you too... you know, I'm one of those managers, I was just speaking to my leader and saying, you know, that I'm always encouraging my staff to learn more, you know. Like sometimes if it's quiet, then I'll get them and I will tell them, now listen here, go learn something little bit more by investigation, go to another working out department, working the whole fraud process, learn a little bit more so that you can understand the full process of what we are all about in our department.

Lisa: Ja, people...

Respondent: And, you know, they are actually very keen in doing that as well, they're very open to learning and listening.

Lisa: Ja, I think that's the thing, I think some people are just kind of focused in their own little space and I think, like you say, if they are encouraged to kind of work out their error, they actually benefit everyone, I think.

Respondent: Yes it does, it does benefit all of us.

Lisa: Great. Thank you so much for your time and I hope you have great day.

Respondent: Thank you very much.

Interview 6

Respondent: The way I look at it, we're very diverse, so if someone has something to say, they know about it already. Why would you think that training will help you do or ask questions?

Lisa: I think some people don't know how to kind of I guess conduct a constructive conversation, so I think some people might ask questions or query things but it's more kind of or can be perceived as kind of I guess attacking their manager or kind of come across in quite an aggressive perhaps even an abusive way to some extent and I guess the other side some people are perhaps not really, are perhaps of the quieter, introvert kind of nature and so they kind of don't have the confidence or necessarily the techniques in order to kind of utilise their voice, so the idea was that perhaps training and perhaps providing some kind of forum of I guess encouragement, would perhaps encourage them more to speak out about their concerns or

Respondent: So would that training be for people that are specifically in a specific personality group or is it just normal training throughout the group?

..... so you give them a choice as well?

Lisa: Exactly. So the way we did it from a research perspective, is that, effectively it's kind of the classic experiment design which is whereby you kind of look at an entire population and you split the groups equally kind of more on demographic statistics, so the same age and race and that kind of stuff, and you split up the two groups. So the one group is called the control group and with that group you just kind of provide them kind of standard training which was actually around the performance process at ..., so it's just generic training and the other group we split in terms of, and they're called the experimental group, and that's where we offered the longer training which is about two and a half hours, and that's where we gave specific training around being able to express yourself more effectively within a performance discussion, I guess, taking ownership of your own kind of performance. And so the idea of that test is to say whether or not the performance, the people who were in the experimental group, had a more, they felt, or in their own perception, they had a more constructive performance discussion or they felt they were able to express themselves more and whether or not they were able to express themselves more effectively and you, effectively, compare those results to your control group who now has just had the generic training, and you try and work out whether or not the training group, the trained group had more of an impact than the generic training group. That's kind of the theory. Practically speaking, which is what I think you're addressing, which is also true, is to say that if theoretically the training proves to be relevant or

appropriate, and kind of create more of a constructive discussion, then you could perhaps select certain people you feel you would like to hear more from or you feel might not be able to express themselves as clearly or as constructively, could perhaps then attend such a training on a, going forward.

.....(very faint)

Lisa: So kind of on that, I guess, my kind of questions were whether or not, you obviously were kind of aware of the training, but I guess you weren't possibly aware of who was in which group and who wasn't actually part of the training at all I guess, so I guess my question was more than kind of holistically, I think, unless it's maybe a specific person you maybe thought acted kind of differently, was your experience of the performance discussions you had over the last couple of weeks, whether or not you felt there was any difference from last year or something that really stood out or that you would perhaps want to would be able to communicate I guess?

Respondent: No, to be honest, I've been doing this for years now which is quite a bit. I've seen no difference, honestly speaking.

Lisa: No that's ok.

Respondent: My discussions went well . My guys understood. I don't know. I haven't seen a difference in it.

Lisa: No that's OK.

Respondent: You know where, because when they do come back, I ask them, you know, was the training good and stuff like that so, they said no they need to ask the right questions. So we say ok fine, we need to have a discussion, let's go for it. But my performance appraisals went smoothly as they do year after year, to be honest.

Lisa: No that's ok. And what is your, you know how do you perhaps conduct the performance discussions generally speaking, I mean what is your I guess approach?

Respondent: Face to face.

Lisa: Face to face?

Respondent: Face to face discussions and we have a list of your responsibilities that you do on a daily basis and you've got stats and targets that you need to meet, basically. So everything is documented and basically you have targets to meet, you know, what you've

done for the month. If you don't reach your target, you know, this is what it is, stuff like that. So it's basically target-based as well.

Lisa: Ok. And do you feel that the have an opportunity to speak or to question or do you kind of ask them?

Respondent: Sure, ja. Think you must remember that when we start we look at their balance score cards and first they rate themselves and then we rate them. So basically, they already see exactly what they should think about or what they could rate themselves as. Then eventually, when it comes down to target, then we see if the ratings will come down or would increase, actually. Then we actually look at the targets and stuff like that. They're very open-minded, if they ask why then we show them the stats why and that's where the mistake was.

Lisa: So if there's a discrepancy, you just kind of show them the stats and they kind of get a good sense of exactly where they went wrong?

Respondent: Ja.

Lisa: And sorry, just my last question is just really to understand from your perspective, and obviously you've had a lot of experience, but in terms of how you would perhaps suggest in your personal opinion, how you could perhaps encourage employees to speak up more about their concerns or about their kind of experience at work, I guess, and maybe your team maybe, like you say, they do speak up, and that's ok, but if you were to work with a different team who may be more quieter or and kind of perhaps didn't have the right opportunities, how would you think would be the best way to go forward with that I guess?

Respondent: Look, Very different individuals behaving differently. You'll find ones that are very talkative and some that are very quiet. Those are the ones where I think you may just need to sit and have a discussion with them. If I don't know what's happening in your life, I won't know, basically. So if you don't speak to any of the staff, if you don't speak to me, I won't know what's happening. And the other thing, it's the only reason why your staff don't speak to you, is they don't trust you, basically. If there's no trust to speak about their personal issues or something more important at work, because there's no such person that, you know, that wouldn't want to speak to his colleagues. No, I mean, you're here for 8 hours a day. You need to give trust. I think the first thing you need to know how to trust your staff and how to get your staff to trust you, basically.

You can train them, you can train any person about anything, you know, assertiveness, this, that whatever, and they go for training, but what they take actually out of it is different.

Lisa: Ja, exactly.

Respondent: You know what I'm saying? You can train a person how to answer the phone but it doesn't mean that when he comes back to his desk that's the why he's going to do it.

Lisa: No, exactly.

Respondent: Exactly. So they all need to learn and work according to themselves, their pace. But I think when it comes to, to, you know...I just think it's up to the individuals and their managers, to be honest.

Lisa: But, I guess, the question is how do you go about building that trust or do you think that if trust is not established and there's kind of a mistrust within the relationship it's actually in the best interests for both parties to kind of separate I guess?

Respondent: No, no employee will just come to their manager and open up their hearts, wholeheartedly.

Lisa: No sure.

Respondent: You know, you might get a few, but no-one would unless you start prompting them to do so. You know, if you show no interest, they're not going to come to you at all.

Lisa: Exactly. I think that's what we're trying to do.

Respondent: So I think, first of all, it needs to be on a one-on-one basis of staff, team leaders and manager. You tell them this is where you stand, this is who I am and then from there take it. I think the one-to-ones are very very important. Look not so much with all, you do have people that are very outspoken and they will come to you and chat and stuff like that. The people that are generally quiet, are the people you will need to pay attention to, because you don't know what's actually happening in that mind of theirs, you know. It's like that.

Lisa: Exactly.

Respondent: So, look training is training, but what they actually take out of it and how they use it, I think everyone will behave differently.

Lisa: Exactly, but I think that's almost the challenge, is trying to work out you know, everyone's different f I think some managers, it sounds as if you've thought about it, you've got a lot of techniques, but I think some managers, I'm not saying that's within ..., I'm saying more generally that some managers just aren't interested and it's trying to work out what the

employee can do in that instance, you know, instead of resorting to moving somewhere else. So that's kind of what we trying to test I guess.

Respondent: Ja, you know, everyone is different, and some managers are very very busy and here there is just no time. But at least if every second or third month you have a one-on-one if you just take it, you know, if you just get a basic conversation going and show that you do show something, you know, that you do have interest.

Lisa: Exactly. I agree.

Respondent:Compared to nothing only when it's performance discussion and stuff like that. So I would say it this way, but to actually get the person to open up and start to speak up and the only way they'll do that is if they actually trust the business, or they trust the manager or the team leader. That's the only way.

Lisa: Exactly. No I agree with that. Great, thanks so much for taking the time. It just makes it more useful in terms of the results we've received, cause we've actually, I'm not sure I mentioned it, we've actually sent out questionnaires to your staff before the training and after the training to see whether or not the training was effective, and obviously we've got some feedback with regards to that and we're just using this exercise to see and collaborate, I guess some of that feedback.

Respondent: No that's fine. The course went very well, so.

Lisa: Thank you so much. Enjoy your day. Bye now.

Appendix 4: Demographic statistical results

Gender

Effect	Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance (MATCHED only All data merged3) Sigma-restricted parameterisation Effective hypothesis decomposition; Std. Error of Estimate: .8527206				
	SS	Degr. of (Freedom)	MS	F	p
Intercept	431.4571	1	431.4571	593.3680	0.000000
Group	0.0087	1	0.0087	0.0120	0.913373
Gender	0.4918	1	0.4918	0.6764	0.416256
Group*Gender	0.4845	1	0.4845	0.6662	0.419731
Error	26.1768	36	0.7271		

Age category

Effect	Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance (MATCHED only All data merged3) Sigma-restricted parameterisation Effective hypothesis decomposition; Std. Error of Estimate: .8443841				
	SS	Degr. of (Freedom)	MS	F	p
Intercept	568.2462	1	568.2462	796.9963	0.000000
Group	0.2030	1	0.2030	0.2847	0.597319
Age category	0.3296	1	0.3296	0.4623	0.501444
Group*Age category	0.0015	1	0.0015	0.0021	0.963653
Error	22.8155	32	0.7130		

Company tenure

Effect	Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance (MATCHED only All data merged3) Sigma-restricted parameterisation Effective hypothesis decomposition; Std. Error of Estimate: .8357065				
	SS	Degr. of (Freedom)	MS	F	p
Intercept	469.5336	1	469.5336	672.2937	0.000000
Group	0.0374	1	0.0374	0.0536	0.818305
Company Tenure	1.8618	1	1.8618	2.6657	0.111249
Group*Company Tenure	0.0516	1	0.0516	0.0739	0.787317
Error	25.1426	36	0.6984		

Appendix 5: Statistical results in testing the assumptions

Variable	Mean (C)	Mean (E)	t-value	df	p	F-ratio (Variances)	p (Variances)
Pre Employee Voice	4.092105	3.519565	2.918692	40	0.005745	1.261255	0.622454
Pre Line-manager Relationship	4.736842	4.260870	2.554225	40	0.014555	1.767511	0.223684
Pre Performance Discussion Assessment	4.631579	4.469565	0.822460	40	0.415691	1.693935	0.239345

Appendix 6: Part one: quantitative analysis statistical results

Variable	Mean (C)	Mean (E)	t-value	df	p	F-ratio (Variances)	p (Variances)
Post Employee Voice	2.289474	2.477273	-1.29233	39	0.203849	1.421916	0.454478
Post Line-manager Relationship	2.424561	2.375758	0.29227	39	0.771631	1.725414	0.246604
Post Performance Discussion Assessment	2.394737	2.476190	-0.45727	38	0.650083	1.623576	0.306025

Appendix 7: Part two: quantitative analysis statistical results

Effect	Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance (STANDARDISED MATCHED only All data merged3) Sigma-restricted parameterisation Effective hypothesis decomposition; Std. Error of Estimate: 1.813628				
	SS	Degree of Freedom	MS	F	p
Intercept	0.1406	1	0.140617	0.042750	0.837300
Group	2.5140	1	2.514031	0.764317	0.387473
Error	124.9915	38	3.289249		
INDICATE	0.0061	2	0.003029	0.012513	0.987567
INDICATE*Group	1.3613	2	0.680642	2.812030	0.066348
Error	18.3955	76	0.242047		
PREPOST	0.5399	1	0.539867	0.382654	0.539877
PREPOST*Group	6.1327	1	6.132709	4.346822	0.043849
Error	53.6123	38	1.410849		
INDICATE*PREPOST	0.0828	2	0.041422	0.171020	0.843128
INDICATE*PREPOST*Group	1.5035	2	0.751756	3.103824	0.050612
Error	18.4074	76	0.242203		