Effect of perceived support on employee's voice behaviour through the work engagement: a moderator role of locus of control

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Abstract: This study primarily aimed to identify the direct effect of perceived support on the employees' voice behaviour in the workplace. It examined knowledge interactive impact of locus of control on the perceived support of work engagement. Accordingly, this study was built on literature of voice behaviour and as such, it employed a survey methodology. The study focused on a government sector firm, specifically Basra Electricity Production. The data collection tool used is the questionnaire and it was distributed to 333 employees in the firm. The collected data was analysed using AMOS version 22. Based on the results, work engagement fully mediates the relationship between perceived support and employee voice behaviour, while external locus of control moderated the relationship between perceived support and work engagement. Suggestions were provided for several avenues for future studies.

Keywords: perceived support; work engagement; employee voice behaviour; locus of control.

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1 Introduction

The importance of behaviour in the face of role or job requirements expectations in the workplace has long been recognised among scientist circles and this leads to benefits for organisations that are related to enhancing its performance (Lee and Steers, 2017; Bakker and Demerouti, 2017; Barrick et al., 2015). Based on recent studies, the attitudes of current organisations' directors towards the attention and adoption of views proposals and employees work ideas and their future in the organisation have been highlighted to be divergent in pas studies (e.g., Morrison, 2011; Mowbray and Herman, 2014; Andiyasari et al., 2017). Other studies like Lebel (2016) and Aryee et al. (2017) also evidenced that employees also voice out their opinions when they perceive security, through the comparison of speaking risks and the benefits from it (Van Dyne et al., 2003; Detert and Burris, 2007). Specifically, Detert and Burris (2007) revealed that employee's voice is

related to two elements; first, the set of signals the employee obtains from the organisation/organisational representative that may urge him to use his voice or refrain from doing so and the second is the assessment of the employee of the advantages that can be obtained against the risks of using voice.

Hence, in this study, the focus is placed on the voice behaviour concept for the purpose of providing insight into the motives and incentives of employees to use their voice and offer their feedback and suggestions. Accordingly, this study examines several precedents that may precipitate the use of voice, share decisions and provide and discuss opinions as suggested by Schipani et al. (2016) and Gomez (2016). Additionally, the study conducts tests on the precedents in light of their prediction of the voice behaviour of employees through a developed model that addresses the weaknesses in prior related researches (LePine and Van Dyne, 1998). This study examines the effect of perceived support (independent variable) on the employee's voice behaviour (dependent variable), with work engagement as the mediating variable. Perceived support refers to the awareness of the employee of the level to which the organisation appreciates their work and its commitment towards assisting them to satisfy their social requirements (Kurtessis et al., 2017). Meanwhile, work engagement refers to a positive mind state, promising work-cantered vigour, dedication and absorption of employees towards the organisation's goals and values (Knight et al., 2017). This is aligned with prior studies that investigated the relationship between the cognitive facet of perception, the behavioural attitudes and outcomes (Bishop et al., 2000; Chang et al., 2009; Tabatabaei and Bigdelli, 2015). Also, prior studies have evidenced that the employees' cognition is related to the attitude towards work variable (e.g., Yousef, 2017; Van den Heuvel et al., 2017) and in turn, work attitudes are related to behaviour (e.g., Brooks, 2014; Wu, 2015; Michel et al., 2015).

Added to the above mentioned sequence of relationship between the three variables, the present study tests the moderating effect of locus of control that past studies have evidenced on the cognitive perception-attitude relationship (e.g., Aubé et al., 2007; Agarwal and Agarwal, 2016). According to Edelaar et al., (2017), an individual may generally adapt to an environment that he perceives by modifying himself to match the environment. Along a similar line of argument, employees' voice behaviour has been shown to facilitate and precede work engagement (e.g., Kwon et al., 2016; Holland et al., 2016; Maymand et al., 2016). Some other studies advocated that employees' voice behaviour stems from work engagement and that voice behaviour perception is within the actual role such as Rees et al. (2013), Mowbray and Herman (2014) and Wu (2015) and along a similar line of examination, this study strives to conduct the same line of determination.

2 Theoretical framework and previous studies

2.1 Locus of control

According to Rothbaum et al. (1982) the classification of control can be divided into two primary categories namely primary and secondary category. The former refers to the actions that the individual takes to modify his external environment and make it adapt to himself, whereas latter refers to the individual's adaption to the external environment via self-change. Generally speaking, individuals have a higher tendency to opt for the former

rather than the latter, but with failure to do so, the secondary control is adopted in order to acclimatise.

Moreover, the primary control entails a direct action to modify the external environment, while the secondary one involves a cognitive mediation that is directed towards modifying the individual's evaluation and emotional responses to the environment (Rothbaum et al., 1982). In the secondary control, a significant personal variable known as locus of control is contained. The control concept can be attributed to Rotter (1966) via his social learning theory known as the locus of control reinforcement, positing that both rewards and punishments are basic behavioural determinants. Locus of control refers to the level to which an individual is convinced that his actions are what determine the outcome (Zigarmi et al., 2018). In other words, there is a difference between the working individual estimates and his beliefs concerning what is going on with them, with some attributing what happens to them to external causes and others to internal causes that originate from individual selves based on personal abilities and actions (George and Jones, 2012; Griffin and Moorhead, 2014).

Therefore, it can be stated that a consensus exists among past studies on the main dimensions of locus of control namely, internal and external dimensions (Rotter, 1966; George and Jones, 2012; Griffin and Moorhead, 2014). Internal locus of control, the belief that the ability, effort, skill and intelligence of an individual are what determine what happens (positive or negative). External locus of control, the belief that luck, fate, control of powerful people or the life complexity are what determine happenings.

2.2 Perceived support

Literature dedicated to management, including field researches and theories that attempt to provide insight into the employees-organisational relationship, have extensively touched upon perceived support topic (Mignonac et al., 2018). An increasing interest has been placed on the perception of support from their organisations-in that employees perceive that their perception of the organisation appreciating their work, contributions and attention to their welfare are what is most important as evidenced by their positive work outcomes (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002).

Added to the above, the perceived support can be explained using the theory of organisational support, indicating the level to which the organisation appreciates them and are committed to helping them and satisfying their social and emotional needs and their expectations for reward in lieu of good performance (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002). According to the organisational support theory (OST), employees have to perceive the level of the organisation's contributions, interests and welfare (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Kurtessis et al., 2017). Moreover, the awareness of the employees of the organisation's support lends them stability and safety in their workplace (Daskin and Tezer, 2012). Therefore, the top significant outcome of support is the positive attitude of the employee towards the organisation (Kurtessis et al., 2017) and with minimal support, employees may be inclined towards meeting their personal interests, forsaking the organisational interests (Riggle et al., 2009).

Some authors like Eisenberger et al. (1986) considered perceived support as a one-dimensional construct, whereas others had their worked based on the outcome of exploratory factors analysis, with the intention to categorise perceived support into two (supervisor support and organisational support) (Dawley et al., 2010). This division is

meant to generate results that are accurate and detailed (Bajaj and Krishnan, 2014) and thus, this study depends on the same divisions.

2.3 Work engagement

In the past, stress was placed on positive psychology – a field that scientifically examines human power and optimal performance (Shefer et al., 2018). The same attention has been placed on optimal performance in organisational psychology, with an attempt to investigate the positive strengths of human resources and psychic abilities that are measurable, developed and effectively managed to enhance workplace performance (Luthans, 2002). The important capacities include work engagement as the opposite of work burnout, where in the former, employees feel actively engaged with their work (Schaufeli et al., 2006).

Rather than focusing on a particular time and state, work engagement stresses on stability, pervasiveness and persisting cognitive-emotional state (Maslach et al., 2001). Employees who have high work engagement are equipped with the resources they require for high performance and these employees have the potential to create their own functional resources as time passes. This may not only be beneficial to the employee, but the organisation will also obtain competitive advantage (Bakker et al., 2008).

Several views of work engagement have been proposed, with the first view being that it is a measurable situation in three dimensions namely, energy, involvement and efficiency that is in contrast to burnout (exhaustion, cynicism and ineffectiveness) (Maslach et al., 1996). The second view is that work engagement comprises of three components, which are physical, emotional and cognitive (May et al., 2004) and the third one is that work engagement is an independent and specific concept that is adversely liked to burnout and it is a mental state towards work characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption (Maslach et al., 2001; Schaufeli et al., 2002). This study is based on the third view of work engagement.

Organisational behaviour has long been examined by researchers through the effect of the perception of employees on their ideas and behaviours (Babcock-Roberson and Strickland, 2010). Perceived support among employees is their belief that the organisation acknowledges and rewards their performance, leading to their commitment to the successes and goals of the organisation (Chung, 2017). Committed employees are happy and have a higher tendency towards work engagement and organisation engagement (Biswas and Bhatnagar, 2013). In fact, the employees' responses to the positive support are their perception of having to invest more in their work performance for its improvement (Babcock-Roberson and Strickland, 2010). Employee support practices contribute to increasing the positive feeling of comfort, safety and happiness in their work and thus increase their link to their work physically and mentally (Mahmood and Sahar, 2017; Murthy, 2017). This was also evidenced in the conclusion of several studies (e.g., Sulea et al., 2012; Biswas and Bhatnagar, 2013; Holland et al., 2016; Khanday and Siddiqi, 2017). Therefore, this study hypothesises that:

H1 Perceived support is positively related to work engagement.

2.4 Employee voice behaviour

The idea of employee voice behaviour was presented by Hirschman (1970) in his exit, voice and loyalty model that describes voice as a response to dissatisfaction. A few decades later, employee voice behaviour was considered as a form of extra-role behaviour (Van Dyne et al., 1995; LePine and Van Dyne, 1998). More recently, voice behaviour has become known as a form of proactive behaviour of the employee that lays emphasis on change, aiming to maximise the group's interest, where voice is behaviour of horizontal/vertical communication (Andiyasari et al., 2017). Stated clearly, it is a relaying of ideas, concerns, suggestions or opinions concerning work-related issues, with the aim of enhancing the performance at the workplace (Morrison, 2011).

Moreover, the employee often view voice risks to outweigh benefits (Chen et al., 2018) and as such, an employee will only use his voice when he feels it safe to do so, through his assessment of his contextual position (Van Dyne et al., 2003). Hence, it is pertinent to comprehend what prevents voice behaviour through regulatory limitations and what encourages it, which is the main focus of the present study. The employee voice is limited by two things; first; the signals from the leader, management or supervisor that may encourage voice raising or to steer clear of doing so and second, the assessment of the potential benefits to be received against the risks of raising voice (McClean et al., 2017).

Employee voice concept is different from the opposition concept as the latter is directed towards conscience and moral elements and not towards effectively doing things. Also, it is different from the complaint concept as the latter covers dissatisfaction expression and does not include change proposals. Lastly, the voice concept differs from in-role behaviours as such behaviours are job conditions and not voluntary actions (Lisbona et al., 2018).

The researchers mentioned the factors that motivate employees to use their voice (Andiyasari et al., 2017) and to this end, understanding the voice behaviour of employees is a crucial aspect in enhancing organisational performance (Cheng et al., 2013). In Rees et al.'s (2013) and Mowbray and Herman's (2014) studies, the authors explained the relationship between work engagement and voice behaviour among employees by stating that higher employee work engagement brings about perception of the voice as an in-role and this will result in more voice behaviours. On the other hand, low employee work engagement brings about the perception of the same as an extra-role and as such, will result in less voice behaviours. Employees, who are engaged in their work, relate to voice as in-role (Michel et al., 2015; Ilkhanizadeh and Karatepe, 2017) and as the core role and thus, this type of employees will be more engaged in expressing their opinions and information. A positive correlation was evidenced between work engagement and employee voice behaviour in Brooks (2014), Wu's (2015) and Ilkhanizadeh and Karatepe (2017) studies and thus, this study hypothesises that:

H2 Work engagement is positively related to employee voice behaviour.

2.5 The mediating role of work engagement

The theory of positive emotions posits that experiencing positive emotions produces and motivates thinking in the work place (Fredickson, 2001). This means that perceived positive support contributes to the positive feelings of employees and motivates their

positive attitudes and behaviours towards work and maximises work attachment and supporting colleagues. Because work engagement is an emotional state, it encourages positive attitudes as opposed to elements of cognition (Kahn, 1992). Work engagement is viewed to have a mediating role in the relationship between perceived positive about organisation and employees behaviours, such as, it mediates the perceived organisational politics-work outcomes relationship (Agarwal and Agarwal, 2016), as well as between leadership perception-organisational citizenship behaviour (Babcock-Roberson and Strickland, 2010). Other studies have also evidenced the mediating role of work engagement on the proactive personality-role performance relationship (Bakker et al., 2012), the relationship between perceived organisational support and person-organisation fit and organisational commitment and job satisfaction (Biswas and Bhatnagar, 2013). This mediating effect was also revealed between transformational leadership and employee voice behaviour by Wu (2015) and between perceived organisational support and extra-role behaviours by Sulea et al. (2012). Hence, this study proposes the following hypothesis for testing:

H3 Work engagement mediates the relationship between perceived support and employee voice behaviour.

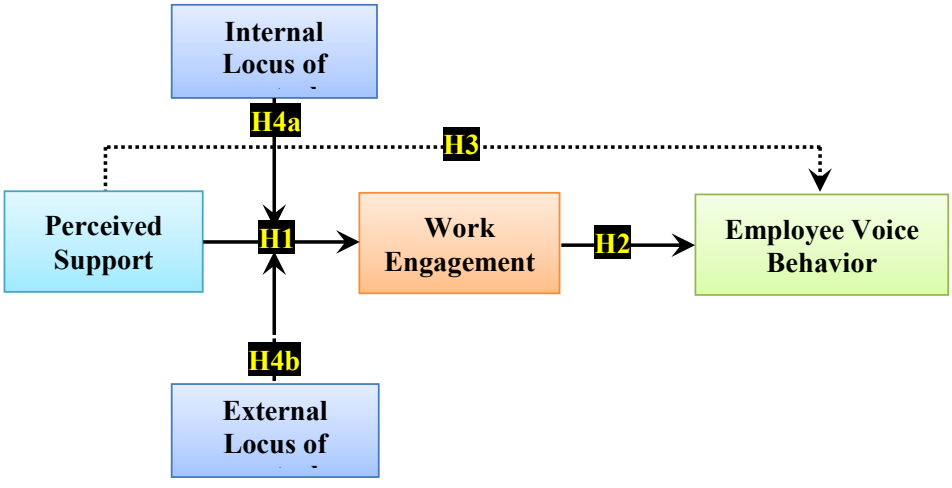
2.6 The moderating role of locus of control

Andiyasari et al. (2017) laid stress on the importance of determining the relationship between personal factors and contextual factors on employee behaviour and thus, this justifies the examination of the relationship between locus of control and perceived support. Moreover, the thinking and behaviour of employees at work may be explained by such relationship (Harris, 2005). Studies of this calibre include that by Aubé et al. (2007), who reached to the conclusion that locus of control intervention can address the negative impact of lack of perceived support. Specifically, internal locus of control works to minimise the requirement of perceived support for positive work response (Aubé et al., 2007; Bajaj and Krishnan, 2014), whereas external locus of control maximises perceived support as it reflects the outcome on the basis of what happens in the environment (Chiu et al., 2005; Bajaj and Krishnan, 2014). Individuals with high locus of control are more independent of the motivation that the environment provides (Semmer, 2000; Harris, 2005). External locus of control leads to increased negative impact of perceived support on negative emotions, while its internal counterpart does not change the positive effect of perceived support on positive emotions. Stated clearly, external locus of control with support minimises negative feelings, but internal locus of control fails to do so (Bajaj and Krishnan, 2014) and this result has been supported by other prior studies (Cummins, 1989; Parkes, 1991; Grob, 2000), leading to the following two proposed hypotheses:

H4a Internal locus of control weakens the relationship of perceived support and work engagement.

H4b External locus of control strengthens the relationship of perceived support and work engagement.

Figure 1 Study model (see online version for colours)



3 Method

3.1 Respondents and procedures

The study sample was selected through random sampling from five power stations in the General Company for Energy Production/Southern Region of Iraq, including Harithah, Nujeibeh, Al-Rumailah, Khor Al Zubair, Shuaiba and Shat Al Basrah. The study sample comprised of 333 employees out of a total of 2496. This is consistent with the equation provided by Thompson (2002).

$$n = \frac{N \times p(1-p)}{\left[\left[N - 1 \times \left(d^2 \div z^2\right)\right] + p(1-p)\right]}$$

This study employed the questionnaire as the instrument of data collection and it contains items, where the respondents were requested to select one of the alternatives in conjunction with them. The final questionnaire contained 50 paragraphs that addressed four variables gauged using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

3.2 Measures

Perceived support – the measurement scale for perceived support was adopted from Dawley et al. (2010) based on Eisenberger et al.'s (1986) study. It comprises of 11 items, with eight addressing perceived organisational support and three items addressing perceived supervisor support as exemplified by the items, "This organisation values my contribution to its well-being" and "I am very satisfied with my supervisor" respectively.

Work engagement – work engagement variable was measured using Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) by Schaufeli et al. (2002). It comprises of three dimensions

and 17 items, with six items addressing vigour, five items addressing dedication and six items addressing absorption. These variables are exemplified by the statements, "When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work", "To me, my work is challenging" and "When I am working, I forget everything else around me", respectively. The scale reliability and validity were verified in different contexts/countries and the scale has been extensively utilised.

Employee voice behaviour – the measurement scale utilised to measure employee voice behaviour was adopted from Van Dyne and Le Pine (1998) and it consists of six items (e.g., "develops and makes recommendations concerning issues that affect this work group"), considering the construct is uni-dimensional, with a reliability of 0.86.

Locus of control – the WLCS scale by Spector (1988) was used to measure this variable, consisting of 16 items, divided into each locus of control dimension; internal locus of control and external locus of control, exemplified by "A Job is what you make of it" and "Getting the job you want is mostly a matter of luck", respectively. 3.3 The moderating role of locus of control

4 Data analysis

4.1 Preliminary confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)

The model fit was assessed using structural equation modelling (SEM) by obtaining model fit and obtaining the best model (see Table 1). The study used AMOS, V. 22 and followed several indicators:

1 root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) and its confidence interval

2 standardised root mean square residual (SRMR)

3 comparative fit index (CFI)

4 incremental fit index (IFI)

5 normed fit index (NFI)

6 ratio between X2/df.

The model is deemed to be acceptable when RMSEA and SRMR values are lower than 0.08 as established in Arbuckle (2006) and Browne and Cudeck (1993) and the values of CFI, IFI and NFI are equal to or over 0.90 as suggested by Bentler and Bonett (1980), Hair et al. (2009) and Hu and Bentler (1999). As for the ratio between X^2/df, it should be lower than 2.5 as established by Arbuckle (2006).

In the first model (single factor), it was tested in a way that the entire variables were treated as one latent factor and the results obtained were as follows; X^2/df = 4.41; CFI = 0.58; IFI = 0.46; NFI = 0.48; RMSEA = 0.22; SRMR = 0.24. Meanwhile, in model 2 (two-factor), the testing included employee voice behaviour (the first latent factor) and other factors designated to be the second latent factor. The results obtained were as follows; X^2/df = 3.93; CFI = 0.64; IFI = 0.58; NFI = 0.59; RMSEA = 0.18; SRMR = 0.20. This was followed by testing model three (three-factor), where employee voice behaviour was tested as the first latent factor, perceived support as the second one and work engagement and locus of control as the third ones. The obtained results are as follows; X^2/df = 2.66; CFI = 0.79; IFI = 0.74; NFI = 0.78; RMSEA = 0.10;

SRMR = 0.11. In the final model, Model 4, all the variables and their associations with latent variables were tested, obtaining the following results; X^2/df = 1.44; CFI = 0.97; IFI = 0.97; NFI = 0.96; RMSEA = 0.06; SRMR = 0.07.

The above results are summarised in Table 1, with the indicators of the four-factor model as the best one. The model is characterised by constructs with discriminant validity and it contains the optimum data of the study sample (Hair et al., 2009). Added to this the findings in the table indicate that majority of the relationships between the indicator and latent variables were found to be statistically significant.

Table 1 Assessing the model fit

Models	*X^2/df*	*CFI*	*IFI*	*NFI*	*RMSEA*	*SRMR*
Model 1	4.41	.58	.46	.48	.22	.24
Model 2	3.93	.64	.58	.59	.18	.20
Model 3	2.66	.79	.74	.78	.10	.11
Model 4	1.44	.97	.97	.96	.06	.07

4.2 Descriptive statistics

The values of means, standard deviations and correlations among the variables are tabulated in Table 2. From the table, it is evident that a positive relationship was found between perceived support and work engagement and employee voice behaviour. A positive and significant relationship was also found between work engagement and employee voice behaviour ($p < .01$) and between external locus of control and perceived support, as well as between work engagement and employee voice behaviour ($p < .01$). On the contrary, no significant relationship was found between internal locus of control and perceived support and employee voice behaviour. This goes the same for internal locus of control and work engagement ($p < .05$).

In order to confirm the study measures reliability and their internal consistencies, this study used Cronbach's alpha and from Table 2, the values of Alpha (in parenthesis) all exceed 0.70, indicating statistical acceptability in administrative and behavioural field of study (Sekaran, 2003; Pallant, 2011).

Table 2 Descriptive statistics, correlations and scale reliabilities

		Mean	*Std. deviation*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
1	Employee voice behaviour	2.72	.765	(.849)				
2	Internal locus of control	2.90	.869	.089	(.905)			
3	External locus of control	3.29	.788	.522**	.114*	(.871)		
4	Perceived support	2.84	.626	.490**	.022	.352**	(.850)	
5	Work engagement	2.72	.714	.531**	.113*	.515**	.492**	(.893)

Note: N = 333. Alpha reliabilities appear in parentheses. *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

4.3 Testing hypotheses

With regards to the conditional indirect effects (moderating and mediating), they were tested using PROCESS Procedure of SPSS macro Release 2.16 (Model 9) as suggested by Hayes (2013). The study model hypotheses were tested and the results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Testing hypotheses

Y = employee voice behaviour (EVB)
X = perceived support (PS)
M = work engagement (WE)
W = internal locus of control (INLOC)
Z = external locus of control (EXLOC)
Sample size = 333

Variable	*Point estimate*	*SE*	*t*	*p-value*	*Lower limit*	*Upper limit*	*Results*
			Outcome: WE (direct effect)				
PS (a)	.357	.092	3.849	.000	.268	.445	Support
INLOC	.248	.100	2.449	.005	.142	.354	Support
PS*INLOC	.058	.059	.915	.727	.094	.022	Not supported
EXLOC	.341	.109	3.103	.000	.232	.451	Support
PS*EXLOC	.413	.062	6.362	.000	.374	.453	Support
			Outcome: EVB (direct effect)				
WE (b)	.516	.054	9.393	.000	.409	.623	Support
PS ($\hat{C}$)	.105	.062	1.706	.088	–.016	.227	Not supported
			Indirect effect				
PS → WE → EVB	.184	.049	3.862	.000	.110	.258	Support
			Total effect				
PS → EVB (C)	.289	.051	5.459	.000	.201	.377	Support

Note: Number of bootstrap samples for bias-corrected bootstrap confidence intervals: 5000, Level of confidence: 95%.

Table 3 shows that the direct effect hypotheses [H1(a), H2(b): $p < .01$] are accepted indicating that a direct effect exists from perceived support to work engagement and one from work engagement to employee voice behaviour. However, no direct effect as detected from perceived support to employee voice behaviour ($\hat{C}$). This shows that the effect of perceived support on employee voice behaviour is only via work engagement.

Lastly, as for the moderating effects [H4(a) and H4(b)], the results indicated that (H4b) is supported, where the moderating effect of external locus of control was evidenced between perceived support and employee voice behaviour ($p < .01$). Stated clearly, external locus of control contributes to the relationship between perceived support and work engagement. On the other hand, there was no evidence to support

(H4a), indicating no moderating effect of internal locus of control on the relationship between perceived support and employee voice behaviour.

5 Discussions

This study attempted to determine the effect of perceived support, using the theories of social exchange and organisational support, on employee voice behaviour, with work engagement as a mediating variable and external and internal locus of control as moderating variables. It assumes that internal locus of control interacts with perceived support to minimise the effect on work engagement and external locus of control with perceived support to maximise the effect on work engagement. This is justified by the argument that an individual with external locus of control is more sensitive to his surrounding workplace environment that that with internal locus of control. Four major hypotheses were tested consistent with prior studies (Bishop et al., 2000; Chang et al., 2009; Tabatabaei and Bigdelli, 2015), where several outcomes were reached that can be summarised in the following points.

The first conclusion is the positive effect of perceived support on work engagement, indicating that the employees' perception of their environment has a positive effect on their attitude and such an effect can be emotional (response to the perception of positive/negative things). The second conclusion is the full mediating effect of work engagement on the relationship between perceived support and employee behaviour, as the direct relationship between the two latter variables was equal to zero. This indicates that perceived support effect on employee voice behaviour is only via work engagement. This supports prior literature findings that advocated a logical sequential relationship between perception (cognition), attitude (emotion) and behaviour (outcome) (Biswas and Bhatnagar, 2013; Saks and Gruman, 2014; Agarwal and Agarwal, 2016). The third conclusion is the moderating role of locus of control. In the past studies, the interactive role of internal and external locus of control were examined individually, with the results evidencing different interaction signs, particularly when it comes to perceived support relationship via reduced internal locus of control (positive relationship) and via increased external locus of control (Bajaj and Krishnan, 2014). This study evidenced the moderating role of external locus of control as evidenced by the increased strength of the relationship between perceived support and employee voice behaviour, but no moderating role of internal locus of control was evidenced.

Furthermore, the positive awareness of employees regarding their organisations adds and influences their level of thinking and hence, modifying the collective thinking of employees about the organisation will lead to changes in attitudes and urges employees to be attached to their jobs and more willing to effectively and efficiently perform tasks (Biswas and Bhatnagar, 2013; Chung, 2017). The result of the present study evidences the same in that staff members who perceive that their organisation and supervisors support them are more willing to work, are stable and satisfied with their jobs, invest more effort on their jobs and are more attuned to their work performance (Sulea et al., 2012; Biswas and Bhatnagar, 2013; Holland et al., 2016).

Added to the above, work engagement motivates employees to perform extra-role as if they were performing in-role performance. Stated clearly, the employees' engagement with their work is increased, with their modified view of extra-role as in-role (Rees et al.,

2013; Mowbray and Herman, 2014). In relation to this, employee voice behaviour is one of the extra-role performance (Michel et al., 2015) and it is affected by the work engagement level as mentioned. Employees harbouring a strong work attitude are highly motivated to voice out their opinions and provide useful work information, even to the others disagreement. They provide work information and work external and internal to the department viewing it as moral and professional duty to the organisation they work for. Hence, it can be stated that this result is consistent with prior studies (e.g., Brooks, 2014; Wu, 2015; Michel et al., 2015).

The results obtained from this study also supports the full mediating role of work engagement between perceived support and employee voice behaviour and this is consistent with prior literature that supported the effect of cognitive component on the behavioral component via the emotional component (e.g., Sulea et al., 2012; Rich et al., 2010; Biswas and Bhatnagar, 2013; Tabatabaei and Bigdelli, 2015; Agarwal and Agarwal, 2016). This is supported by the lack of support on the direct effect hypothesis (sans the mediating variable), despite the signs that show the existence of such effect in prior studies (Van Dyne et al., 2003; Chen and Chiu, 2008; Janssen and Gao, 2015; Andiyasari et al., 2017). These support the way behaviour is formed via the relationship of the intellectual awareness of something (perception) and its effect on the emotional awareness of something (attitude) and the solid expression that attitude forms behaviour.

Finally, it is notable that despite the lack of moderating role of internal locus of control in perceived support and work engagement relationship, there is a direct effect of internal locus of control on work engagement, suggesting that the former is akin to perceived support in terms of its positive influence on work engagement. This may be attributed to the fact that individuals having internal locus of control will not require high support from either the organisation or the supervisor to enhance his work. This is notable in a sense that the variable obtained low mean in comparison to other variables. On the basis of the above results, the theoretical and managerial implications of the study are provided in the next paragraphs along with the study limitations and suggestions for future studies.

6 Managerial Implications

This study has several practical implications that are discussed under this title. First, it is important for managers to pay attention to the perceptions of employees, how to modify them and to eradicate the variables influencing their positive feelings in the organisation. Majority of managers appear to focus merely on the way to obtain positive behaviours among employees, while steering clear of the behaviours formation and composition. Managers have to be aware of that the effect on attitudes will not generate required behaviours for some time as the attitudinal changes affects the behaviours dependent on them. Hence, forming long-term emotions can enable the development of positive attitudes and behaviours that stays for a long time and this is possible through the influence of the perceptions of employees.

Second, the emphasis on the employee work engagement among managers is what could precipitate the display of extra-role behaviours. For this, managers should be aware that work engagement is frequently an emotional component (attitudinal), where attitude requires positive indicators towards employees and obtaining a positive attitude requires

an organisational environment with open channels that can absorb varying views and opinions.

Third, majority of individuals harbour external locus of control and as such, their attitudes and emotions can be their response to their environment and not their principles and values. Hence, organisational support and supervisors' support are the best evidence of the positive intention of the organisation towards fulfilling employees' interests (Eisenberger et al., 1986). In relation to this, the organisation, through its policies, has to attract human resources that have internal locus of control as they will not require significant financial support. Such employment can be confirmed by using special testing procedures via interviews and by interviewers that are able to analyse the employees' locus of control.

Lastly, perceived support will eventually establish continuity, stability and development of organisation (Daskin and Tezer, 2012). The current study model testing shows that a feedback process assisting in the determination of mistakes and failures is proactively conducted via employees' voice. In this regard, the information, perspectives and views of employees are used to develop work and procedures and to contribute to organisational development.

7 Limitation and future research

The present study model attempted to contribute in explaining the way behaviour is developed, particularly employee voice behaviour but throughout the study, there are some notable limitations that future studies should take into consideration. This study made use of the electricity industry employees, from five power plants located in southern Iraq. The current study results therefore cannot be depended on in all sectors, unless they are first tested in such sectors or different cultures for the results to be generalisable.

The second limitation is the exclusion of other variables and in this regard, pursuing universal theory should involve the testing of other variables like those of cognitive perception nature (perceived organisational politics, perceived organisational justice, etc.), or attitudinal variables with emotional nature (psychological contract, organisational commitment, etc.) or those of behavioural nature, whether positive or negative (e.g., organisational citizenship behaviour, reverse behaviours, etc.). It is suggested that the study model is examined using two mediating variables – more specifically, aside from work engagement (employee's attitude towards the job), organisational trust (employee's attitude towards the manager) can be examined as the second mediating variable. Lastly, the study employed a cross-sectional approach and as such, longitudinal studies are required to provide detailed causal explanations and to support the obtained outcomes.

8 Conclusions

This article aimed to identify the effect of perceived support on the employees' voice behaviour in the workplace. It assessed knowledge interactive impact of locus of control on the perceived support of work engagement. The study focused on a government sector

firm, specifically Basra Electricity Production. On the whole, the present study findings show that the employees' perception is significant when examining or understanding the formation of behaviour and the attitudinal component (positive psychology). Employees' perception can produce individual and collective attitudes towards the organisation, where employees, failing to change/control the behaviour of the organisation towards himself, will have a higher tendency to change his behaviour towards the organisation instead. Added to this, a significant external locus of control role is evidenced in this study to determine individual's organisational awareness in what is referred to as "locus of control reinforcement".

It is important for managers to pay attention to the perceptions of employees, how to modify them and to eradicate the variables influencing their positive feelings in the organisation. Managers have to be aware of that the effect on attitudes will not generate required behaviours for some time as the attitudinal changes affects the behaviours dependent on them. Moreover the employee work engagement among managers is what could precipitate the display of extra-role behaviours. For this, managers should be aware that work engagement is frequently an emotional component (attitudinal), where attitude requires positive indicators towards employees and obtaining a positive attitude requires an organisational environment with open channels that can absorb varying views and opinions. Further majority of individuals harbour external locus of control and as such, their attitudes and emotions can be their response to their environment and not their principles and values. Hence, organisational support and supervisors' support are the best evidence of the positive intention of the organisation towards fulfilling employees' interests. Hence the current study showed that a feedback process assisting in the determination of mistakes and failures was proactively conducted via employees' voice. n the whole, the present study findings show that the employees' perception is significant when examining or understanding the formation of behaviour and the attitudinal component (positive psychology). Employees' perception can produce individual and collective attitudes towards the organisation, where employees, failing to change/control the behaviour of the organisation towards himself, will have a higher tendency to change his behaviour towards the organisation instead. Added to this, a significant external locus of control role is evidenced in this study to determine individual's organisational awareness in what is referred to as "locus of control reinforcement".

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