A Scoping Review of Global Higher Education Institution Staff Voice Behavior Studies from 2013 to 2023

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Abstract. Competition among higher education organizations is becoming increasingly fierce. Management needs to fully consider the ideas and opinions of staff for further enhance organizations' competitiveness. To investigate characteristics and emerging themes of higher education institution staff's voice behavior studies, a scoping review technique mapping key concepts and evidence gaps was used to identify 18 journal articles published from 2013 to 2023 from Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus. The search terms for related studies include voice behavior, employee voice, higher education, university, and college. The geographical scope of reviewed articles included both developed and developing countries and the adopted methodologies included both quantitative and qualitative methods. Descriptive and thematic analysis are used for data analysis in this study. It is found that research on employee voice behavior in higher education is growing but limited. Past studies mainly focused on university teachers, and more research was done in developing countries. Most studies are indexed in higher level journals. Additionally, several key emerging themes such as supervisor and leadership are identified. Future research could include more staff types, such as administrative staff, and prioritizing studies in developed countries to comprehensively understand employee voice behavior.

Keywords: higher education institution; scoping review; staff; voice behavior

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1. Introduction

It should be noted that higher education institutions have faced a series of challenges in recent years due to demographic changes (Ngoc et al., 2022), and digital transformation (Gkrimpizi et al., 2023). These challenges may include declining student enrollment, decrease in graduates' employment rate, digital transformation of organizations, reform of teaching methods, sustainable development, and other issues (Reilly & Reeves, 2022). Under such challenges, competition among higher education institutions is becoming increasingly fierce (Hart & Rodgers, 2023). To better meet the challenges and improve competitiveness, higher education institutions need to pay more attention to employees' voice behavior (e.g. speak up about policy, concern or feedback) as it is helpful to enhance the competitiveness of higher education institutions (Nasib et al., 2022).

Voice behavior refers to speaking up with ideas, problems, concerns and opinions regarding employer or employee interests, through either formal or informal mechanisms or channels (Mowbray et al., 2021). According to Friary et al. (2021), terms equivalent to voice behavior includes 'speak up' and 'employee voice'. Voice behavior plays an important role in organizations and empirical studies have proved that voice behavior could promote employee engagement, decrease fatigue, increase pride, buffer negative effects of abusive supervision, and enhance moral elevation (Cardon et al., 2021; Chen & Trevino, 2022).

According to Szromek and Wolniak (2020), staff voice behavior is crucial for the development of higher education institutions. However, it seems that higher education staff are confronted with voice behavior issues and difficulties (Liu, Wu, & Chen, 2023; Wang et al., 2023). For example, the phenomenon of 'keeping silent' at the workplace among higher education staff still exists (Aiston & Fo, 2021; Zeng & Xu, 2020). Higher education staff are still hesitant and reluctant to voice their opinions due to perceived risks (Wang et al., 2023). In some nations, cultural values like 'harmony' and 'obedience' influence employee behavior, creating a perception that voicing opinions or questioning decisions may disrupt unity and undermine authority (Liu, Wu, & Chen, 2023; Wang et al., 2023). These problems may lead to higher education institutions failing to understand staff insights, hindering the organization's improvement in competitiveness and causing it to be surpassed by competitors (Nasib et al., 2022).

It is noteworthy that the number of published papers related to employee voice behavior has been on the rise trend in the last 10 years (Morrison, 2023). However, literature reviews that evaluated staff voice behavior in the field of higher education institutions are still scarce (Mohammad et al., 2023). Existing review articles mainly focus on the field of healthcare (Friary et al., 2021; Lainidi et al., 2023), hospitality (Huang et al., 2023), and different types of business organizations (Mauro, 2016; Mohammad et al., 2023). Consequently, there may be a lack of a comprehensive overview and synthesis of existing research on employee voice behavior within higher education institutions. To address this gap and elucidate the current state and future directions of research on higher education staff's voice behavior, this investigation seeks to map existing studies

on staff voice behavior in higher education settings. The research questions of this study mainly includes:

1. What are the characteristics of voice behavior studies among higher education institution staff?
2. What are the emerging themes of higher education institution staff's voice behavior studies?

2. Methodology

This paper adopted the document analysis method, and the specific research type was a scoping review, an integral part of the methodology used to ensure clarity, and transparency, and prevent inadequate reporting (Mazlan et al., 2023). According to Arksey and O'Malley (2005), the scoping review technique systematically maps key concepts, evidence, and research gaps within a field, providing a broad overview of existing literature without assessing study quality. Compared with systematic review and meta-analysis, the scoping review is more flexible as it takes all the related studies that adopt different methods into account (Peters et al., 2015). As mentioned above in the introduction, literature review articles that focus on higher education institution staff voice behavior were almost blank. Therefore, it is appropriate to use the scoping review methodology for a more comprehensive understanding of the research status of employee voice behavior in higher education institutions. This scoping review will comprehensively map existing research on staff voice behavior in global higher education institutions, highlighting key themes, gaps, and trends to guide future studies and policy development (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). This method ensures broad exploration of the topic without restricting diverse study designs and contexts (Peters et al., 2015).

To better conduct the scoping review, this study adopted the Arksey and O'Malley (2005) framework, later expanded by Levac et al. (2010). Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) framework facilitates the identification and quality assessment of all literature relevant to the chosen topic, thereby more effectively building a scoping review (Levac et al., 2010; Mazlan et al., 2023). The framework includes five stages: (1) identify research questions; (2) identify relevant studies; (3) screen to remove redundant articles; (4) chart the data; and (5) collate, summarize, and report the results.

2.1 Stage 1: Identifying Research Questions

The research questions for this scoping review were developed using Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) framework. Two main questions were formulated: 1) What are the characteristics of voice behavior studies among higher education institution staff? This question examines the scope, methodologies, and attributes of existing studies. 2) What are the emerging themes of higher education institution staff's voice behavior studies? This question identifies common trends, concepts, and gaps in the literature. This framework ensures a comprehensive review of both structural and thematic aspects of staff voice behavior research. on staff voice behavior in higher education.

2.2 Stage 2: Identifying Relevant Studies

This study was drawn primarily from two main journal articles databases: Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus. The electronic age has spurred the rapid expansion of various online databases, allowing for targeted literature citations. WoS and Scopus are widely utilized databases spanning various academic disciplines, offering extensive coverage. Scopus encompasses over 21,500 journals from 5,000 publishers, including citations from diverse sources like journal articles, books, patents, and conference papers. It provides a comprehensive overview across multiple fields. Similarly, WoS covers around 11,000 journals in over 45 languages across science, social sciences, arts, and humanities. Additionally, WoS facilitates connections between related annotations by domain experts. Hence, both WoS and Scopus served as reliable data sources for this study. The search strategy (see Table 1) involved using a comprehensive string of keywords derived from prior research and a thesaurus, such as voice behavior, employee voice, higher education, university, and college, combined with Boolean operators (OR and AND). Ultimately, a total of 68 studies were identified from the Scopus database and 46 from the WoS database.

Table 1: Search string

Database	Search string
Scopus	TITLE-ABS-KEY ('voice behavior' OR 'voice behaviour' OR 'employee voice' OR 'speak up') AND ('higher education' OR 'university' OR 'college') AND ('staff' OR 'employee')
WoS	TS=('voice behavior' OR 'voice behaviour' OR 'employee voice' OR 'speak up') AND ('higher education' OR 'university' OR 'college') AND ('staff' OR 'employee')

2.3 Stage 3: Screening to Remove Redundant Articles

To identify high-quality papers that could address the research questions, clear inclusion and exclusion criteria were established as listed in Table 2. For document type, this study mainly considered journals (research articles) and conference proceedings, while journals (reviews), book series, books, and chapters in books were excluded. This study included only publications from the past decade (2013-2023) that focused on voice behavior among staff in higher education institutions. In addition, only articles written and published in English were considered, thereby avoiding difficulties and confusion in language translation. From the 114 articles identified at the previous stage, 29 were excluded due to inconsistent document type, 20 due to duplication, 47 due to absence of empirical data, lack of open access, or irrelevance to higher education institutions' voice behavior, and 18 ultimately met the study criteria.

Table 2: Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Language	English	non-English
Timeline	2013-2023	<2013
Document Type	Journal (research articles), Conference proceeding	Journals (review), book series, books, chapters in books

2.4 Stage 4: Chart the Data

After the screening process, the fourth stage involved tabulating the obtained data (18 identified studies) into Microsoft Excel to aid the thematic and comparative analysis. A structured data extraction framework ensures consistency and comprehensiveness in capturing key research details. The process is to systematically record author, year of publication, geographical location, study design, sample population, research focus, etc. Part of the extracted data are summarized in Table 5, providing a detailed overview for thematic classification and comparative evaluation.

2.5 Stage 5: Collate, Summarize, and Report the Results

Important characteristics of selected articles such as location, publication year, participants, study settings, and study design, themes were discussed. Common themes and key findings from the selected articles were compiled to understand the extent of emerging themes of higher education institution staff's voice behavior studies. Through further review of the full text of the selected papers, the articles were either assigned to the current theme or given a new theme label. As shown in Table 5, a total of 9 themes were identified. The main theme of these selected articles is 'supervisor and leadership'.

2.6 Data Selection Process Based on PRISMA

To identify relevant articles on higher education staff voice behavior, this investigation adhered to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) guidelines developed by Moher et al. (2015). PRISMA prevents illogical decisions, including standard and data extraction, reduces overlapping efforts, and increases collaboration. Therefore, PRISMA is best suited for this study because it provides a clear, transparent framework for systematically reviewing and reporting literature, ensuring comprehensive documentation of the scoping review process and enhancing the reproducibility and reliability of findings (Moher et al., 2015).

Following the search strategies stated in the above part, 114 articles were found (68 for Scopus, 46 for WoS) based on the search string. Then, after being screened by the inclusion and exclusion criteria, a total of 85 results was found. Twenty articles were excluded due to duplication and from the remaining 65 articles, 47 were further excluded due to not being based on empirical data, could not be accessed and were not focused on voice behavior among higher education staff based on a detailed review of the full text. Ultimately, 18 articles were identified

as relevant and meeting the criteria for inclusion in this study. The overall PRISMA process is developed in Figure 1.
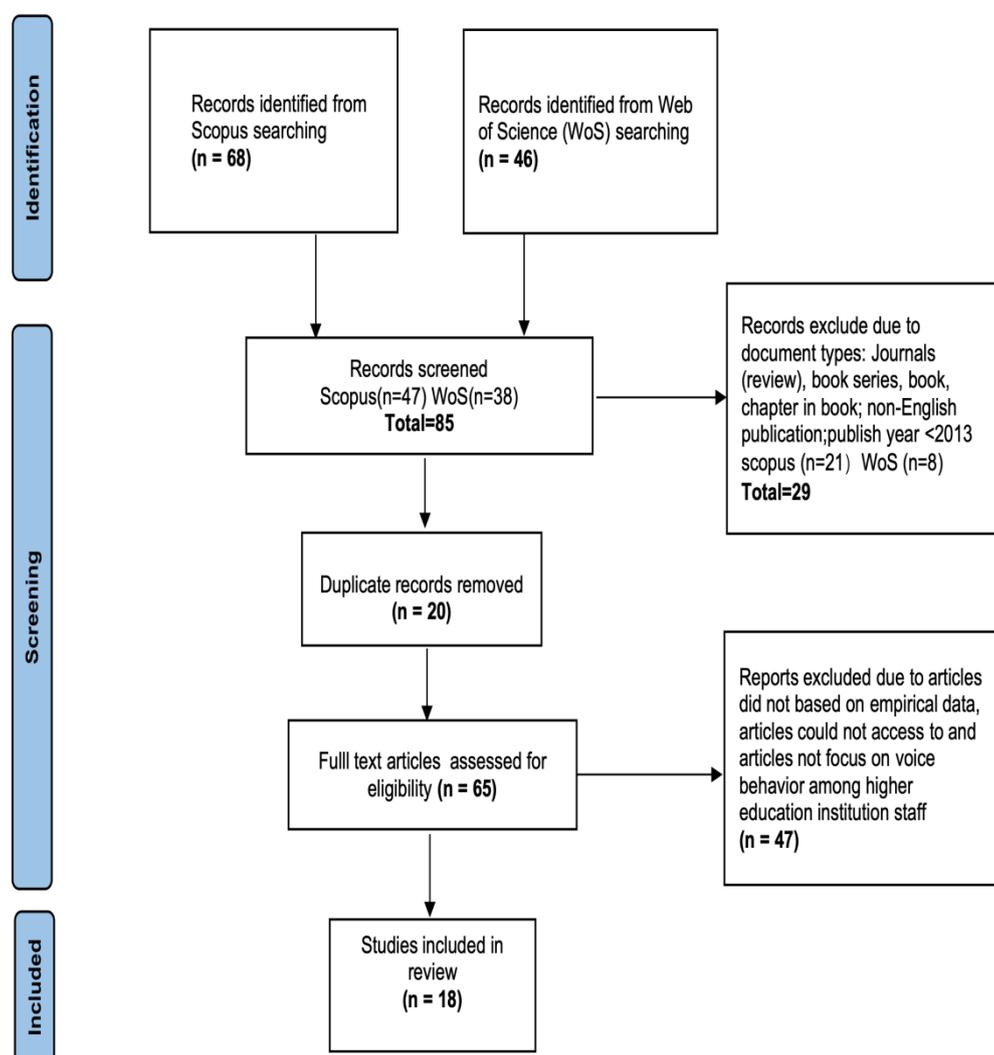

Figure 1: Flow diagram of the selection process using PRISMA (Zakaria et al., 2021)

3. Research Results
3.1 Characteristics of Studies
3.1.1 *Number of articles published by year*
Figure 2 reveals that, out of the 18 examined articles, the majority (six) were released in 2023, while 2020 and 2022 each saw three articles. The remaining five articles were mainly distributed across earlier years, with one publication each in 2013, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2021. This reflects that, with time, more and more scholars began to pay attention to the voice behavior of higher education staff.
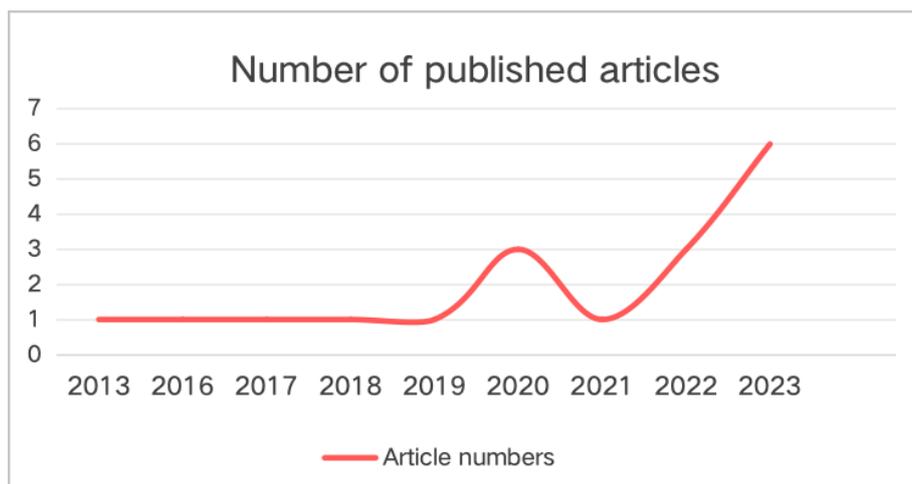
Figure 2: Number of published articles from 2013 to 2023

3.1.2 *Study locations*

Figure 3 summarizes the key characteristics of the selected articles in this study. Regarding the study location, it can be ascertained from Figure 3 that both single and multiple locations are included. Most studies were conducted in China (four articles, 22%) and Australia (three articles, 16%). Then, there were two articles in Iran (11%) and Turkey (11%), respectively. The remaining countries having one article (each 5%) published included India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Switzerland, Turkey, and the United States of America. There were also two studies (each 5%) conducted in multiple countries. The research by Schwappach and Sendlhofer (2020) examined the perspectives of nurses and doctors in Switzerland and Austria, whereas Loewenbrück et al. (2016) concentrated on physicians across three hospitals located in Germany, Japan, and the United States of America.
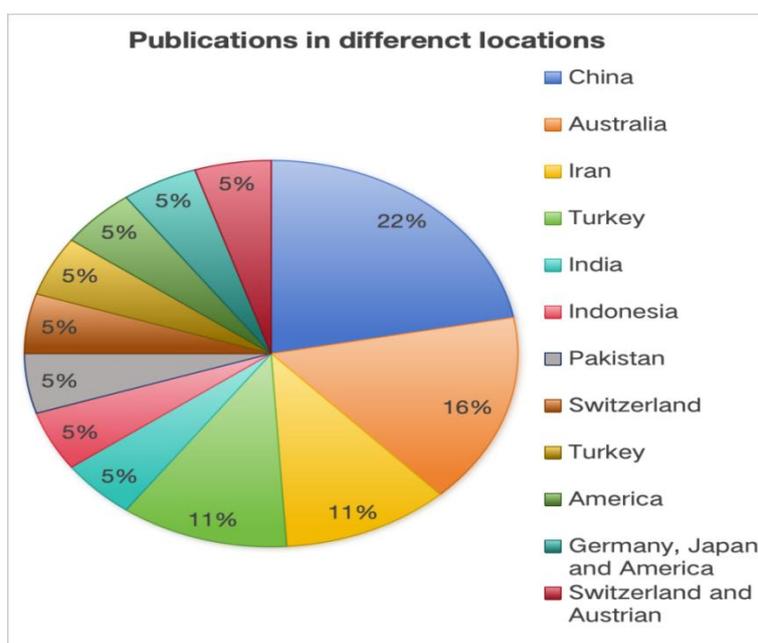

Figure 3: Number of published articles in different locations

3.1.3 *Methodological characteristics*

For the study design, most articles used the quantitative method (14 articles), and a few articles used the qualitative method (4 articles). In 14 quantitative studies, 13 articles used the cross-sectional survey design, and one article used the experiment design. All four qualitative studies used the case study design.

3.1.4 *Participant and research setting*

According to Table 3, the reviewed literature comprises 18 articles with diverse participant groups. The majority (8 articles) focus on teachers, followed by healthcare professionals, including doctors and nurses (4 articles). Administrative staff are the primary subjects in 2 articles, while 2 other studies examine both academic and administrative staff. One article investigates teachers and their supervisors, and another explores administrative staff and their supervisors. Moreover, the study settings of the reviewed articles primarily comprised university schools and faculties (13 articles), followed by university hospitals (4 articles) and university unions (1 article). From this point of view, the teachers of university schools and faculties were the main research objects of the voice behavior research of higher education staff.

Table 3: Number of articles with different participants and research settings

Participants	Article numbers	Research setting	Article numbers
teachers	8	university schools and faculties	13
doctors and nurses	4		
administrative staff	2	university hospitals	4
academic and administrative staff	2		
teachers and their supervisors	1	university union	1
administrative staff and their supervisors	1		

3.1.5 *Influence of articles*

The influence of the article is also a significant characteristic. Table 4 presents the number of citations, journal impact factor, and financial support for the selected articles. 33% (6 articles) had an impact factor between 6 and 10, 56% (10 articles) between 1 and 5 and 11 to 15 and 11% (2 articles) between 16 and 20. Most articles were published in journals with impact factors of SJR Q1 (7 articles) and SJR Q2 (6 articles). The SJR (SCImago Journal Rank) ranks journals based on citation counts and citing journals' prestige. In contrast, the SSCI (Social Sciences Citation Index) ranks social science journals by citation impact, both serving as key metrics for assessing academic influence (Chen, 2019). Additionally, among the 18 identified articles, only four received financial support, mainly from three national government departments and one well-known university, indicating that research on employee voice behavior in higher education institutions still receives attention. Overall, articles with higher impact include paper 3 (Tan et al., 2019),

paper 4 (Mowbray, 2018), and paper 15 (Wang et al., 2023), while those with lower impact include paper 18 (Sholekar & Shoghi, 2017) and paper 7 (Zeng & Xu, 2020).

Table 4: Citations, journal factor and funder of higher education institution staff voice behavior studies

Scope of citations	Journal factor	Funder	Paper code	Proportion
1-5	SJR Q1 (2 articles) SJR Q2 (1 article) SSCI Q1 (1 article) SSCI Q2 (1 article)	National Office for Philosophy and Social Sciences (1 article)	[8] [10] [12] [15] [16]	28%
6-10	SJR Q1 (2 articles) SJR Q2 (2 article) SSCI Q2 (1 article) ESCI Q4 (1 article)	Switzerland National Fund (1 article)	[5] [9] [11] [14] [17] [18]	33%
11-15	SJR Q2 (3 articles) SJR Q1 (1 article) SJR Q3 (1 article)	Federal Office of Health (1 article); Guangdong Pharmaceutical University (1 article)	[1] [2] [6] [7] [13]	28%
16-20	SJR Q1 (2 articles)	/	[3] [4]	11%

3.2 Emerging Themes of Studies

According to Table 5, the reviewed articles covered multiple themes across 18 articles, mainly distilling nine themes.

Table 5: Emerging themes of higher education institution staff's voice behavior

Emerging themes	Paper code
supervisor and leadership (5 articles)	[7] [10] [14] [15] [16]
organizational culture and power (3 articles)	[8] [17] [18]
performance (3 articles)	[4] [11] [14]
group work (2 articles)	[6] [9]
career satisfaction (1 article)	[12]
employee involvement and participation (1 article)	[5]
psychological capital (1 article)	[2]
work ethics (1 article)	[1]
workplace justice (1 article)	[3]

As seen in Table 5, the nine themes are: supervisor and leadership (5 articles), organizational culture and power (3 articles), performance (3 articles), group work (2 articles), career satisfaction (1 article), employee involvement and participation (1 article), psychological capital (1 article), work ethics (1 article), and workplace justice (1 article). 'Supervisor and leadership' was the most discussed theme while the next most discussed were 'organizational culture and power', and 'performance'.

4. Discussion
4.1 Review of Study Characteristics
On the basis of Figure 2 and Table 4, these data indicate that higher education institution staff voice behavior studies are an emerging research direction as the number of studies begins to grow rapidly after 2021. Notwithstanding the limited number of studies, they generally demonstrate high quality, with the majority (13 articles) being indexed in SJR Q1-Q2 journals and three studies receiving funding support from national government departments.

According to Figure 3 regarding the number of published articles in different locations, the research interests of the scholars primarily focus on China (22%) and Australia (16%). In Chinese organizations, cultural values like 'harmony' and 'obedience to authority' shape employee behavior, leading to the perception that expressing opinions or challenging decisions disrupts organizational harmony and challenges authority (Liu, Wu, & Chen, 2023; Wang et al., 2023). Consequently, employees are less inclined to speak up, fearing social inappropriateness or disrespect. This is exacerbated by the cultural emphasis on power distance, where hierarchical structures are accepted and leadership decisions are seldom questioned. This belief further discourages employees from voicing concerns or feedback, making 'no voice' more pronounced in China than in developed countries. Empirical studies indicate that this lack of voice behavior negatively impacts organizational management and development (Budd et al., 2018), highlighting the need for a more open environment where staff feel empowered to express their views. Organizations can improve their operational efficiency and overall performance when employees are encouraged to openly express their opinions (CIPD, 2024).

In contrast, studies on voice behavior in countries like Australia have highlighted different dynamics. Research from Barnes and Zimmerman (2013), Mowbray (2018), and Mowbray et al. (2021) revealed that voice behavior in Australian higher education settings often faces challenges due to the interference of union members and line managers. These studies show how union voices and managerial authority can suppress the voices of general staff, pointing to the complex power relations that influence voice behavior in such settings. According to Workday (2019), staff in Oceania report the highest levels of voice behavior compared to other continents, which may reflect a more open and participatory organizational culture in this region. However, these studies also suggest that it is not just the predictors of voice behavior that deserve attention, but also the interference factors that can obstruct employees from expressing their opinions. These factors include the role of unions (Barnes & Zimmerman, 2013), line

managers (Mowbray et al., 2021), and organizational structures (Mowbray, 2018), which can inadvertently stifle voice behavior, even in environments where open communication is encouraged.

Based on Table 3 regarding the number of articles with different participants and research settings, it is apparent that the participants of the reviewed articles were mainly teachers from university schools and faculties. In reviewed articles, 'teachers' were also mentioned as 'faculty members', 'academic staff', and 'academicians'. 'Teachers' in a higher education context mainly refer to individuals who are employed by a university to teach, research, and provide academic support (Mastrokoukou et al., 2022). Therefore, teachers' voices are also important for higher education organizations' development. Although higher education institutions build many voice channels such as trade unions, teachers' representative congress, principal reception day staff complaint hotline, and so on, teachers' voice seems to still face many issues. Higher education institution teachers are still afraid to speak their opinions, and, therefore, their voice behaviors were not active (Liu, Wu, & Chen, 2023; Wang et al., 2023; Zeng & Xu, 2020). Furthermore, it is found that some female teachers tend to keep silent in the workplace (Aiston & Fo, 2021). These issues align with the need for strategies to promote psychological safety, and inclusive leadership, enhancing diversity and inclusion in higher education institutions in China (Liu, Mao, et al., 2023).

4.2 Review of Emerging Themes
According to Table 5, it is evident that the main emerging themes are supervisor and leadership (paper 7; paper 10; paper 14; paper 15; paper 16). Supervisors and leadership significantly influence employees' propensity to engage in behaviors such as speaking up, offering feedback, and suggesting improvements (Morrison, 2023). Supervisors and leaders establish the organizational climate and set the tone for communication, which can either facilitate or inhibit voice behavior. Studies have emphasized the role of leadership styles—such as transformational leadership—in fostering an environment where employees experience psychological safety to express ideas (Wang et al., 2023). Leadership also moderates how employees perceive the risks and benefits of speaking up, with servant leadership styles associated with increased voice behavior (Khan et al., 2023). The influence of leadership on voice behavior in higher education is shaped by institutional structures and demands for innovation in academia (Gbobaniyi et al., 2023). This underscores the pivotal role of leadership in shaping an organizational culture that promotes openness and communication.

In addition, 'organizational culture and power' is also an emerging theme which include paper 8, paper 17 and paper 18. Organizational culture and power significantly shape staff's willingness to express ideas and concerns (Gan 2020; Loewenbrück et al., 2016; Sholekar & Shoghi, 2017). Studies show hierarchical structures, power imbalances, and cultures lacking transparency can suppress voice behavior, while inclusive cultures and empowering leadership foster open communication and engagement (Lu & Gursoy, 2024). The theme of 'performance' (paper 4; paper 11; paper 14) is also in correspondence with existing studies which indicate that when staff feel empowered to speak up, it leads to higher job

satisfaction and improved performance outcomes (Ashiru et al., 2022; Burris et al., 2023).

From Table 5, it can be concluded that several themes such as career satisfaction (paper 12), employee involvement and participation (paper 5), psychological capital (paper 2), work ethics (paper 1) are less evident. According to Morrison (2023), these themes may be classified into 'individual factors' for voice behavior, while supervisor and leadership, and 'organizational culture and power' may be related with contextual factors. Table 5 verifies the research status that voice behavior studies both considered individual and contextual factors (Ashfan et al., 2024).

Based on the findings under the analysis of emerging themes, it is concluded that research on higher education staff primarily focused on the predictors, outcomes, and challenges of voice behavior. These predictors were generally categorized into three main types: leader-related factors (6 papers), contextual factors (2 papers), and staff-related factors (5 papers). These factors are crucial in determining when and how staff members choose to engage in voice behavior. While the predictors of voice behavior were well-explored, there was a noticeable gap in research on the outcomes of voice behavior among higher education staff. This aligns with the findings of Morrison (2023) and Mohammad et al. (2023), who highlighted the scarcity of studies examining the consequences of voice behavior in academic settings. Among the 18 reviewed articles, only one study by Khorshid et al. (2023) directly addressed the outcomes of voice behavior, revealing that voice behavior can promote entrepreneurial orientation under the effect of transformational leadership within higher education institutions. This underscores the importance of exploring not only the factors that influence voice behavior but also the potential benefits or drawbacks of speaking up in academic contexts.

In addition to the lack of research on outcomes of voice behavior, there is also a limited body of work addressing the issues surrounding voice behavior in higher education. Only three papers further explored staff's voice behavior challenges which opens numerous opportunities for future research (Mohammad et al., 2023). Mowbray (2018) found line managers face various obstacles in their voice behavior, particularly when it comes to the strategies they employ for expressing their opinions to their superiors. Barnes and Zimmerman (2013) explored how trade unions may manipulate the voice behavior of staff, influencing whether and how employees express concerns. Furthermore, Mowbray et al. (2021) examined how employer-driven voice initiatives can sometimes undermine employee-driven voice, highlighting a potential conflict between organizational goals and staff interests. These results underscore the intricacy of voice behavior in higher education, where administrators and employees' voice behaviors are hindered, but staff—especially those in lower power positions—are more vulnerable to voice suppression.

4.3 Practical Implications and Recommendations

The practical implications of this study underscore the significance of fostering an environment that facilitates and integrates staff voice behaviors into decision-making processes. A primary implication is that higher education institutions should prioritize the establishment of supportive and psychologically safe climates wherein staff members feel empowered to express their opinions without apprehension of repercussions. Leadership plays a pivotal role, as transformative leadership styles—characterized by openness, inclusivity, and active listening—have been demonstrated to promote voice behavior (Duan et al., 2022).

Several key recommendations are as follows. First, higher education institutions should establish systematic mechanisms for collecting staff feedback, such as regular surveys, forums, and feedback sessions, to empower staff and promote transparency (Lee & Dong, 2023). Second, institutions should invest in cultural change initiatives emphasizing trust, equality, and respect, particularly in hierarchical environments where power distance may discourage staff from voicing opinions (Hao & Han, 2022). Finally, higher education institutions can integrate voice behavior practices into their structure by linking them to broader objectives, such as stimulating innovation and boosting staff involvement (Shin et al., 2022).

4.4 Future Research Directions

This study identified several gaps by conducting the scoping review, affording researchers scope for future research directions about higher education institution's voice behavior study. Firstly, the study sites are mainly in Asia and Oceania, but less in North America and Europe. However, according to Workday (2019), North America and Europe are fewer vocal regions. Future studies can further explore the voice behavior of higher education workers in North America and Europe and the specific influencing mechanism.

Secondly, although researchers have done a lot to examine the relationship between different types of predictors (including leader, staff, and contextual related factors) and voice behaviors, there is limited research that focuses on individual factors and organizational contextual factors jointly. In addition, there are still few studies examining the influence of higher education staff's organizational perception on their voice behavior. Therefore, future studies may consider studying higher education staff's voice behavior from the perspective of both individual and organizational factors.

Thirdly, according to Section 3.1.4, most of the reviewed papers (13 articles) adopted a quantitative cross-sectional survey design, but fewer (3 articles) adopted the qualitative design. Although not providing a quantitative cross-sectional survey design was efficient for collecting data, it couldn't provide information about how variables change over time and may not capture the full complexity of individuals' experiences or perspectives (Ahmad et al., 2019). Therefore, future studies may consider using a more qualitative, and longitudinal design to better understand higher education institution staff's voice behavior issues and outcomes.

5. Conclusion and Limitations

Regarding higher education institution staff's voice behavior characteristics (research question 1), this study analyzes the publication time, study location, methodology, participants and research setting, and article influence of 18 identified papers. Higher education institution staff voice behavior research is growing, but publications remain limited from 2013 to 2023. More research was conducted in developing countries than developed countries, with the most studies originating from China. The majority of articles employ quantitative methodologies rather than qualitative approaches. Selected studies predominantly focused on university teachers, not all staff types. Although citation counts are not high, most studies are indexed in high-level journals, and several received financial funding from national government departments and well-known universities.

As for the emerging themes of higher education institution staff voice behavior studies (research question 2) there are nine emerging themes explored by the selected articles, which include: supervisor and leadership, organizational culture and power, performance, group work, career satisfaction, employee involvement and participation, psychological capital, work ethics, and workplace justice. The number of articles on supervisor and leadership theme is the largest. Both individual and contextual factors are considered in these themes.

The study results' relevance was validated through a rigorous scoping review process. This involved selecting peer-reviewed research published from 2013 to 2023, adhering to stringent inclusion and exclusion standards. Each study underwent systematic examination to uncover recurring themes and patterns related to staff voice behavior in higher education institutions. This approach ensured findings represented the most up-to-date and pertinent information in the field. To enhance accuracy and practical relevance, results were compared against expert insights and established theoretical frameworks, bolstering the reliability and real-world applicability of the findings.

This study has both theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, this research contributes to understanding the factors influencing staff voice behavior in higher education by synthesizing global studies and highlighting the role of leadership, culture, and power dynamics. Practically, it recommends that institutions implement systematic feedback mechanisms and leadership development programs to foster a culture of openness, trust, and staff engagement, thereby improving organizational effectiveness and innovation.

This study has several limitations. Firstly, it only included a limited number of articles from the WoS and Scopus, potentially missing relevant articles. Future research should consider a wider range of databases like Google Scholar, ProQuest, Sage, Springer, ScienceDirect, and Taylor Francis, which are significant sources for social science. Secondly, not all synonyms of 'voice behavior' were included in the search string. For instance, 'discourse behavior' is also used to refer to 'voice behavior' in some studies. Future research should incorporate 'discourse behavior' in the search string for more comprehensive results. Thirdly,

this study primarily found articles from developing countries, with fewer from developed countries. Future research should review articles published before 2013 to determine if there are richer research results on voice behavior among higher education staff in developed countries. Lastly, with regard to the publication timeline, given the ongoing nature of publishing, additional pertinent articles may be released subsequent to 2023, potentially influencing findings or providing novel insights. Future researchers should take into consideration this temporal framework and incorporate newly published articles to ensure a more comprehensive and current review of the topic.

6. Acknowledgement

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