

# **The Effect of Locus of Control on Employee Silence in Political Parties in Taiwan**

by

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## ABSTRACT

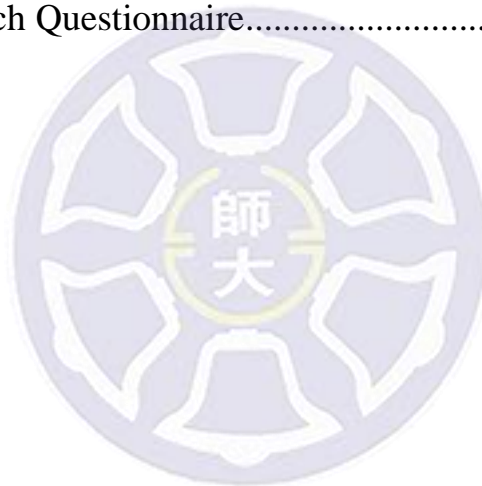
There has been an increasing interest in employee silence over the past ten years. Previous research indicates that employee silence is negatively related to employee performance, employee trust, motivation and morale (Vakola & Bouradas, 2005). However, little research pays attention to the moderating role of personality trait. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between locus of control and employee silence, and agreeableness and extraversion serve as moderators in the relationship. This study hypothesizes that locus of control has a positive impact on employee silence, and agreeableness and extraversion will moderate the relationship between locus of control and employee silence. This study adopted quantitative research design and paper-based questionnaires to test the research hypotheses. Samples of this study were 260 full-time employees in the nonprofit organization in Taiwan. IBM SPSS Statistics was used to do the descriptive, correlation and hierarchical regression analysis. Results show that external locus of control is positively and significantly associated with employee silence. Agreeableness strengthens the relationship between external locus of control and employee silence. And Extraversion weakens the relationship between external locus of control and employee silence.

*Keywords:* employee silence, locus of control, nonprofit organization, agreeableness, extraversion

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# CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the background, problem statement, purpose, research questions, significance, and key term definition of this study.

## **Background of the Study**

The conservative attitude held by employees, regardless of positive or negative influences, which keeps employees silent and withhold information from their superiors, is called employee silence. There has been an increasing research interest in employee silence over the past ten years. Previous research indicates that employee silence is negatively related to employee performance, employee trust, motivation and morale (Vakola & Bouradas, 2005). Furthermore, the information and details that can have some positive influences on the development of the organization or company can sometimes be hidden back inside from exposure by employees (Beer & Eisenstat, 2000). Literature suggests that factors which influence employees' decision to voice out or not can be classified into individual factors and contextual factors (Edwards, Ashkanasy, & Gardner, 2009). Individual factors, for example, Pinder and Harlos (2001) indicate that employees who are high in neuroticism and low in self-esteem are more likely to remain silence when they see problems and issues in the organization. This suggests that an individual characteristics can function as an important factor to determine someone will speak out or not when observing problems in the organization. This topic is especially important for non-profit organization such as political parties.

In the volatile and democratic background of the whole society in Taiwan, non-profit organization plays an important role to represent multiple opinions that public sectors overlook (Ciucescu, 2009). Therefore, breaking the silent environment in non-profit organization is crucial to accept perspectives from different parties in Taiwan. To this end, non-profit organizations not only need to encourage and train their existing workers to speak up when discovering any potential or current issues, but also make sure their potential workers are those who naturally like to voice. In other words, recruiting those with right personalities associated with voice tendency and behavior could be one of the effective approaches for non-profit organizations to create a work environment with a salient voice atmosphere. As literature has shown that one's personality trait is one of the influential factors of employee silence behavior, it is important for practitioners and researchers to identify which personality traits are important antecedents of employee silence behavior. This study thus intends to investigate a personality



trait, locus of control, to see if it is an important determinant of employee silence behavior.

According to the previous research, the definition of locus of control has been elaborated quite clearly and specifically. The extent to which people have confidence in controlling over a certain issue can be referred as locus of control, and this definition has been widely accepted and perceived; On one hand, people who believe they are the master of what happens in their life are internal locus of control. On the other hand, people who believe what happens in their life are due to external forces that they are unable to control belong to external locus of control (Rotter, 1954). Based on previous studies, locus of control is an important predictor of job motivation, job performance, job satisfaction, and leadership (Spector, 1982). For those who are internal control usually show higher degree of job motivation, job performance, job satisfaction, and leadership than those who are external control. In the literature, most previous studies on the topic of self-evaluation focus on the work-related outcomes in the workplace. However, little attention is paid to explore the relationship between locus of control and employee silence. Therefore, in order to provide comprehensive theoretical framework for future research, this study tries to investigate the relationship between locus of control and employee silence.

In addition, this study also proposes two other personality trait; agreeableness and extraversion would be two important moderator for the relationship between locus of control and silence behavior. Agreeableness refers to the number of sources from which one takes one's norms for right behavior. The behavioral tendencies are typically associated with this factor include being courteous, flexible, trusting, good-natured, cooperative, forgiving, soft-hearted, and tolerant (Barrick & Mount, 1991). In work contexts, agreeable employees show higher degrees of interpersonal competence (Witt, Burke, Barrick & Mount, 2002) and collaborate effectively when joint action is needed (Mount, Barrick, & Stewart, 1998). Therefore, it is reasonable that employees high on agreeableness are more inclined to perform organizational citizen behavior (OCB). Since voice behavior is kind of organizational citizenship behavior, it is reasonable to infer that agreeable employees will show more silence behavior instead of voicing their opinions because of harmony reasons.

Extraversion refers to the level of sensory stimulation with which one is comfortable. The behavioral tendencies used to measure this factor include being sociable, gregarious, assertive, talkative, and active (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Barrick (2005) have described extraversion as key dispositional determinant of social behavior. Based on the study which has been published before, extraversion and agreeableness are important predictors of OCB (Bakhshi, Kumar, &

Rani, 2009) Thus, those who are highly extraverted display more flexible behaviors that make them more likely to show OCB. We can infer that extraverts are more inclined to voice instead of keeping silent.

### **Problem Statement**

It has been discussed frequently in the organizational behavior literature that many organizations are facing a dilemma in which most employees are aware of some potential problems but do not speak up in the workplace (Huang, Vliert, & Vegt, 2005; Pinder & Harlos, 2001; Morrison & Milliken, 2000; Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008). Even though some organizations try to create a work environment in which it is safe for employees to share their opinions, when facing concerns or problems, most employees still choose to be silent instead of speaking out. Literature suggests that the causes of employees' unwillingness to speak out can be attributed to internal and external factors. Internal factors, for example, Premeaux and Bedeian (2003) indicate that personality traits such as self-esteem, self-monitor will affect employee voice behavior and Brinsfield (2013) indicates that neuroticism is positively related to employee silence. This suggests that a person's personality trait can function as an important factor to determine he or she will speak out or not when observing problems in the organization. Therefore, it is important for practitioners and researchers to identify important personality traits that can predict employee silence.

Although there already has a growing research interest on identifying important personality traits which can predict employee silence in the literature, little research has been done on the relationship between locus of control and employee silence, especially in nonprofit organization. Nonprofit organization is important because it represents public voices and is able to develop and improve public policies in a number of different ways. Having various parties' voice from different perspectives will help to see many ignored public issues. Furthermore, nonprofits organization also pushes forwards new forms of public policy nowadays in Taiwan (Agard, 2011). Thus, it is essential to identify important factors that lead to silence in nonprofit sectors in order to encourage multiple voices in the whole society.

In addition, existing research in employee silence also pays little attention to the association between agreeableness and extraversion and employee silence. Hence, in order to fill these gaps, this study aims to investigate whether locus of control has a significant relationship with employee silence, and whether two personality traits, extraversion and agreeableness, have significant moderating effect for the relationship between locus of control and employee silence.

## **Purpose of the Study**

This study has two main purposes. Firstly, this study aims to investigate the relationship between locus of control and employee silence. Secondly, this study aims to investigate how agreeableness and extraversion moderate the relationship between locus of control and employee silence.

## **Research Questions**

According to the research purposes, this study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. Is there any significant relationship between locus of control and employee silence?
2. Does agreeableness have a significant moderating effect on the relationship between locus of control and employee silence?
3. Does extraversion have a significant moderating effect on the relationship between locus of control and employee silence?

## **Significance of the Study**

### **Contribute to Organizational Management**

This study will help organizations to identify the reason why employees keep silent in the workplace, and try to find solutions to this problem. Breaking the silent atmosphere in the workplace will promote employees to voice, which will provide the organization useful suggestions to improve work performance and enhance organizational innovation. If we can create a safe environment for employees to voice their opinions in the organization, it will be beneficial to enhance job satisfaction and increase revenue at the same time.

### **Contribute to HR Practitioner**

In terms of recruiting and selection, three personality traits can be important indicators for selecting right new hires. If HR practitioners want to recruit employees that are more willing to voice their opinions, they should consider less on selecting those employees whose trait is positively related to employee silence during the recruiting and selecting process. Furthermore, for existing workforce, managers should pay a particular attention to those whose trait is positively related to employee silence and encourage those people to voice their opinions.

### **Contribute to Research**

Although many studies in the literature have discussed the variables (locus of control,

employee silence, agreeableness and extraversion) of this study, very few focuses on the connection between locus of control and employee silence. Also, limited number of studies consider the moderating effect of big five personality trait. For researchers, this study will help them uncover internal factors that lead to employee silence in the organization. This study can thus contribute to the current literature by addressing these research gaps.

## **Definition of Terms**

### **Employee Silence**

The definition of employee silence has been discussed widely according to the research which has been published before. It refers to the circumstances where employees are either intentionally or unintentionally involuntarily sharing any information or details that can be of great importance to a certain organization to which they belong (Pinder & Harlos, 2001). What mentioned above occurs mostly when employees are not willing to report what they have perceived to their managers, supervisors or anyone that is assuming a higher rank of position (Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008). In this study, I adopt employee silence definition from Pinder and Harlos (2001).

### **Locus of Control**

Based on previous study, locus of control is considered to be an important personality variable in organizational research and theory (Spector, 1982). Furthermore, it is view as a stable trait, not easily changed over time. Those who have confidence in holding the full control over their own life and believe they can attribute their great success to their efforts spent on work show the sign that they possess an internal locus of control. On the other hand, those who have the tendency to ascribe their success or failure to the impacts that occur outside have an external locus of control. What mentioned above implies that people with an internal locus of control tend to blame themselves for any failure that they perceive whereas those with an external locus of control may well impute any challenges and failure to the factors that they believe they fail to impose any influences on (Rotter, 1954). A recent review study regarding future research directions for locus of control also adopt Rotter's definition (Galvin, Randel, Collins, & Johnson, in press).

### **Extraversion**

In psychology, the Big Five personality traits are five broad factors or dimensions of personality discovered through empirical research (Goldberg, 1993). These factors are

neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience. Each factor consists of a number of more specific traits. For example, extraversion includes such related qualities as sociability, excitement seeking, and positive emotions (Goldberg, 1993).

Extraversion is a person's tendency to seek stimulation in the company of others. This personality dimension includes attributes such as trust, altruism, kindness, affection, and other prosocial behaviors (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Extraversion focuses on sociability and where individuals derive their energy from. Low scores on this dimension tend to indicate a more internal source of energy, while high scores denote an external source of energy. The six facets of extraversion include warmth, gregariousness, assertiveness activity, excitement-seeking and positive emotions.

Extraversion is the state of primarily obtaining gratification from outside oneself. Extraverts tend to enjoy human interactions and to be passionate, loquacious, self-assured, and sociable. Extraverts are energized and thrive off being around other people. They take pleasure in activities that involve large social gatherings, such as parties, community activities, public demonstrations, and business or political groups. They also tend to work well in groups (Watson & Clark, 1997). In this study, I adopt Barrick and Mount's (1991) definition.

### **Agreeableness**

The first personality model, Big Five, was developed by McCrae and Costa (1985) and is the most widely used model to generally describe how a person engages with the world. The model includes five primary categories, or dimensions. Agreeableness is one of dimensions (John & Srivastava, 1999).

Agreeableness is a person's tendency to be compassionate and cooperative toward others (Thompson, 2008). In contemporary personality psychology, agreeableness is one of the five major dimensions of personality structure, reflecting individual differences in cooperation and social harmony. Those who score high for agreeableness may show the characteristics of being dependable, generous and honest. Most of the time, they have the tendency to be mild-mannered and regard loyalty as a value of significant importance. On the opposite, those who have a low score for agreeableness tend to have low expectations of other people, which may give rise to the result that they can be sneaky. Generally speaking, they tend to be suspicious of others, instead of showing any trust toward other people surrounding them. In this study, I adopt Thompson's (2008) definition.







## **CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW**

In this chapter, researcher reviewed the literature about locus of control, employee silence, agreeableness, extraversion and the relationship among locus of control, employee silence, agreeableness and extraversion.

### **Employee Silence**

According to the literature, silence behavior occurred in 1970s. Previous research indicates that employees keep silent due to different reasons, and one is that individuals simply choose to remain silent because they do not want to become bad news communicators for negative message. It is called mum effect (Rosen & Tesser, 1970). Literature suggests that silence can be divided into organizational and individual level (Morrison & Milliken, 2000). Morrison and Milliken (2000) first introduce that organizational silence is a collective behavior, which is the employee's decision to hide their thoughts and concerns about the organization

Organizational level silence pays attention to organizational level silence behavior, including various forms of phenomenon (e.g., low participation in the meeting, low employee voice behavior, collective silence behavior in the meeting). Organizational level silence has been considered to be a collective behavioral as well. Organizational level silence means that the flow of silence is from the top to the bottom in organization level, while individual level silence means that the flow of silence is from the bottom to the top.

Employee silence puts emphasis on entry level employees, but organizational level silence views the organization as a whole. In other words, organizational level silence focuses on situational factors such as organizational structure and culture will affect the whole organizations' communication style and most employees' voice intention. On the other hand, employee level silence focuses on personal factors such as personality traits which will affect an individual's intention to voice out (Knoll & Dick, 2013).

Employee silence has been viewed as an individual behavioral instead of the one from the organization itself, and this phenomenon has not yet caught researchers' much attention.

It refers to situations where employees withhold information that might be useful to the organization of which they are a part, whether on purpose or not (Pinder & Harlos, 2001). Previous study has already categorized employee silence behavior into many different forms, such as quiescence, acquiescence, defensive, prosocial and protective silence (Brinsfield, 2009, 2013; Dyne, Ang, & Botero, 2003 ; Knoll & Dick, 2013; Perlow & Repeating, 2009; Pinder & Harlos, 2001).



Pinder and Harlos (2001) first divide employee silence into two categories, which are quiescence and acquiescence silence. They define the term quiescent silence as deliberately hiding useful information because of personal fears. This is similar to Morrison and Milliken's (2000) concept on organizational silence. However, acquiescent silence means to be submissive. Acquiescence is a deeper level of silence than quiescence. Furthermore, acquiescent silence means that people think their advice is useless.

Previous study defines defensive silence as hiding related ideas, information, or opinions as a way of self-protection, based on fear (Dyne, Ang, & Botero, 2003). Defensive silence is an intended and initiative behavior with an eye to protecting oneself from external threats. Dyne and the rest authors (2003) also refers prosocial silence as hiding work-related problems in order to benefit other people or the organization –depending on altruism or cooperative motivation. Compared to defensive silence, the use of prosocial silence is derived from the intention of protecting others, rather than by fear of getting negative results for the "self" (Dyne, Ang, & Botero, 2003). Brinsfield (2009) also defines that prosocial silence is the consequence of a misunderstanding, renaming this type of silence as relational silence.

Another type of silence is protective silence. Morrison and Milliken (2003) indicate that maintaining a good relationship in the workplace is one of the most essential reasons of silence. Employees choose to be silent instead of speaking up what is wrong in their organizations is because they consider others will not approve them. Therefore, silent employees never express their opinion to avoid conflict in the workplace. Another form of protective silence is that employees believe that sharing their ideas may determine the success and failure of the organization. In order to maintain their own reputations and images, employees decide to remain silent in the workplace (Perlow & Repenning, 2009).

Knoll and Dick (2013) conclude four forms of employee silence, including acquiescent silence, quiescent silence, prosocial silence and opportunistic silence. Acquiescent silence, quiescent silence and prosocial silence are based on previous concept. Their conceptualization on acquiescent silence, quiescent silence and prosocial silence are similar with Pinder and Harlos' (2001) definition.

Opportunistic silence refers to strategically withholding work-related ideas, information, or opinions with the goal of achieving an advantage for oneself while accepting harm of others. Based on previous studies, Brinsfield (2013) concludes six kinds of employee silence which are deviant silence, relational silence, defensive silence, diffident silence, ineffectual silence and disengaged silence. Relational silence is similar to prosocial silence. Conceptualization on

defensive silence is closed to Pinder and Harlos' concept in 2001. Deviant silence is a kind of detrimental behavior in the workplace, which stands for employee remains in silence for the purpose of making their manager or colleague to do the wrong decision (Brinsfield, 2013).

Generally speaking, deviant silence has been thought of as quite fatal behavior in the workplace since it symbolizes those employees who tend to keep silent on purpose with a view to leading their managers, supervisors and coworkers to make any wrong decision that may impose negative influences on the development of a certain organization.

Diffident silence consists of insecurities, self-doubt and uncertainty in terms of a situation and to what to say. Being afraid of suffering from embarrasses or being terminated from a job may contribute to the vicious situation where wrong decisions may be made.

Ineffectual silence is related to the general belief that speaking up would not be useful in effecting change relative to the focal issue, situation, or concern. Relevant reasons for voice and silence have previously been proposed in the literature (Morrison & Milliken, 2000). Disengaged silence is separating selves from work roles based on feeling unable to make a difference (Brinsfield, 2013).

According to different research fields and purposes, scholars would use different terms to describe employee silence. Among all these different definitions, this study adopts Pinder and Harlos'(2001) general definition of employee silence, which refers to situations where employees keep back useful information to the organization, to capture employees' silence behavior. Their definition is one of the most widely used one in the literature.

It has been discussed frequently in the organizational behavior literature that many organizations are caught in a dilemma in which most employees know the truth about particular issues but do not speak up in the workplace (Huang et al., 2005; Morrison & Milliken, 2000; Pinder & Harlos, 2001; Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008). Even though some organizations try to create a work environment in which it is safe for employees to share their opinions, when facing concerns or problems, most employees still choose to be silent instead of speaking out. Literature suggests that the causes of employees' unwillingness to speak out can be attributed to internal and external factors. Internal factors, for example, Premeaux and Bedeian (2003) indicate that personality traits such as self-esteem, self-monitor will affect employee voice behavior. However, little research has done on the relationship between locus of control and employee silence, especially in nonprofit organization. Drawing on the literature, the current study aims to explore whether another personality trait, locus of control, will also influence the employee silence behavior.

## **Locus of Control**

Although Judge and Bono (2001) research is comprehensive and is the first article to explore that locus of control is related to several work outcomes, yet their study is a qualitative research. Later, Judge and colleagues (e.g., Bono & Judge, 2003; Judge & Bono, 2001; Judge, Locke, Durham, & Kluger, 1998) propose that locus of control is one of the four components (along with self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy, and emotional stability) of a higher-order construct called core self-evaluation. Core self-evaluation represent self-assessment about themselves and their self-value. Ng, Sorensen and Eby (2006) also propose that internal locus is positively related to positive work outcomes, such as positive task and social experiences, and greater job motivation.

Based on the framework of Rotter's (1966) social learning theory, internal-external locus of control represents the degree to which an individual views success and failure as being based on personal belief. Highly internal people are those who perceive their own efforts as the most important element to attain success. For those who are highly external, they attribute little value to initiative, because they believe that success and failure are completely unrelated to ability and hard work. Namely, the stronger the perceived relationship between initiative and success, the more worthwhile initiative becomes and the more likely it is to be demonstrated.

The internal-external control dimension developed by Rotter (1966) refers to the degree to which an individual believes that his/her reinforcements are contingent upon his/her own behaviors. The internally oriented individual believes that the reinforcements follow as a consequence of his/her own behavior; while, conversely, the externally oriented individual believes that reinforcements are controlled by forces independent of his behavior (i.e., fate, luck, chance, or other individuals).

Rotter (1966) believes that actions, or behaviors, are determined by the interaction of personality and environment. This research use Rotter's social learning theory (1954) to provide theoretical framework for locus of control. Rotter believes that everyone has a personality that is built up over time, based on our experiences and reactions to those experiences. Thus, social learning theory is a theory of learning and social behavior which indicates that new behaviors can be obtained by observing and imitating others (Bandura, 1971). This theory also shows that behavior is determined by the way an individual -- the personality that has developed over time - reacts to his or her environment. Therefore, the way you become an internal control person or not is depending on the learning process of your own personal experience. Every critical incident you encounter will influence the way you react toward your

life.

Since the study of Rotter in 1966 dealing with the locus of control construct, there has been increasing interest in the relationship between locus of control and performance of managers (Durand & Shea, 1974). The basis for this relationship is usually based on the argument that those who ascribes responsibility for their performance to themselves tend to suppose that they can lead to certain changes in their working environment, which in turn contributes to an increase in their motivation. Andrisani and Nestel (1976) also provide evidence that success in the workplace tends to make employee become internal control orientated.

A number of researchers investigate locus of control in different fields. For example, one previous study focuses on the impact of locus of control on job search behavior (Caliendo, Cobb-Clark, & Uhlenhorff, 2015) using a data set by using newly unemployed individuals in Germany. The finding indicates that those who are internal locus of control search more and that individuals who believe that their future outcomes are determined by external factors have lower reservation wages.

A recent study by Lepp , Barkley and Karpinski (2015) tests a path model examined how locus of control (LOC) is related to cell phone use and behavioral outcomes. The definition of LOC in this study is not related to total daily cell phone use, but to use at inopportune times and circumstances. The finding shows that an internal locus of control individuals may lessen some of the negative outcomes related to high frequency cell phone use; on the contrary, those who are more external locus of control may have difficulty in controlling use at inopportune times and the negative effects associated with high frequency use may be exacerbated.

Another recent interesting study focuses on the relationship between locus of control and savings behaviors (Cobb-Clark, Kassenboehmer, & Sinning, 2016). In this study, the researcher considers locus of control to be a psychological concept that captures individuals' beliefs about the causal relationship between their own behavior and life events. The finding suggests that households with an internal locus of control person save more in terms of levels and, in some cases, as a percentage of their permanent incomes. Although the locus-of-control gap in savings rates is largest among rich households, the gap in wealth accumulation is particularly large for poor households. Furthermore, this study also reveals that households with an internal reference person are in a better position to save in forms that are harder to access than otherwise similar households with an external reference person.

A systematic review on the literature shows that the research trend on locus of control is

quite different between the past and the present literature. Different from these prior studies, the current study further identifies the relationship between locus of control and employee silence.

### **Locus of Control and Employee Silence**

Locus of control (LOC) represents the degree to which people believe that they have control over the outcome of events in their lives, as opposed to external forces beyond their control (Rotter, 1954). People with a strong external locus of control tend to believe that the things which happen in their lives are out of their control, and tend to attribute success, failure and upcoming events to fate, luck, or influence of powerful others. In other words, employees with a strong external locus of control may be more passive and tend to think they cannot control the expected results they want in the workplace. This kind of people may feel that even speaking out in the workplace, their opinions will not necessary be taken by others and thus would not make any substantial change. Employees with strong external locus of control might be less willing to speak out and choose to be silence. Therefore, the following hypothesis is developed:

*Hypothesis 2. Locus of control is positively related to employee silence.*

### **The Role of Agreeableness as a Moderator**

A number of researchers investigate agreeableness in different fields. For example, one previous study focuses on the role of emotion recognition ability in service contexts using a data set by using individuals in service center of a large retail bank (Doucet, Shao, Wang, & Oldham, 2016). The finding indicates that service employees' emotion recognition ability helped enhance their job performance. However, the positive effect of emotion recognition ability on job performance was only statistically significant when employees' agreeableness or cognitive ability was low.

A recent study by Peñacoba, Rodríguez, Carmona and Marín (2018) try to analyze the possible differences between high and low agreeableness in relation to coping strategies and psychiatric symptoms in pregnant women. The finding shows that higher levels of agreeableness were associated with positive reappraisal and problem-solving, and lower levels of agreeableness were associated with overt emotional expression and negative self-focused coping. Women with low agreeableness had poorer mental health, especially in the first trimester. These findings should be taken into account to improve women's experiences during pregnancy.



Another recent interesting study focuses on the relationship between agreeableness, anger and vengefulness (Sindermann et al., 2018). Furthermore, this study also indicates similar patterns in both nations to explain vengefulness; namely (high) ANGER and (low) agreeableness as significant predictors for both vengefulness scales across cultures.

A systematic review on the literature shows that the research trend on locus of control is quite different between the past and the present literature. Different from these prior studies, the current study further identifies the relationship between agreeableness and employee silence.

A number of existing psychologists conclude that there are five kinds of personality traits. The five broad personality traits are extraversion, agreeableness, openness, conscientiousness and neuroticism (Goldberg, 1990). Graziano, Jensen-Campbell and Hair (1996) indicate that compared with the other four dimensions, the agreeableness dimension is probably the most concerned with interpersonal relationships. Agreeable individuals consider interpersonal relationship is important. They are usually thoughtful, helpful, accommodating, trustworthy, and tend to compromise their interest with others (Rothmann & Coetzer, 2003). Research shows that agreeableness is correlated to prosocial behaviors, such as helping (Graziano & Eisenberg, 1997). High-agreeable people are more likely to help others under different circumstances. Low-agreeable people are more likely to help others when the costs of helping are relatively low. Agreeableness is also related to two of the major dimensions of prosocial emotions, namely empathic concern and personal distress (John & Srivastava, 1999).

Agreeableness has a number of dimensions. Trust, altruism, kindness, affection and other prosocial behaviors are all the predictors to measure agreeableness. Those who are low in this trait tend to be more competitive and even manipulative while those who high in agreeableness tend to be more cooperative, so they may less likely to express different or conflict opinions to others in the organization. Therefore, this study proposes employees with agreeable personality is positively related to employee silence. We can also conclude that high-agreeable people are more likely to hide their true feeling and show more prosocial silence because they want to benefit the organization and maintain a better interpersonal relationship in the workplace. Moreover, previous research also indicates that agreeableness is negatively related to voice behavior (LePine & Van Dyne, 2001), which means that high-agreeable people are inclined to remain silent in the workplace. Therefore, agreeableness may function as an important moderator for the relationship between locus of control and employee silence. Therefore, the following hypothesis is developed:

*Hypothesis 2. Agreeableness will moderate the relationship between locus of control and employee silence. Specifically, under high level of agreeableness, the positive relationship between locus of control and employee silence will be stronger.*

### **The Role of Extraversion as a Moderator**

A recent study by Blackwell, Leaman, Tramposch, Osborne and Liss (2017) investigate whether extraversion, neuroticism, attachment style, and fear of missing out (FOMO) were predictors of social media use and addiction. The finding shows that only fear of missing out predicted social media addiction. Attachment anxiety and avoidance predicted social media addiction, but this relationship was no longer significant after the addition of FOMO.

Another recent interesting study focuses on the relationship between neuroticism, extraversion, and online self-presentation among young adults. In this study, the researcher consider young adults high in neuroticism reported presenting their ideal and false self on Facebook to a greater extent whereas those low in extraversion reported engaging in greater online self-exploratory behaviors. The findings suggest that young adults who are experiencing emotional instability may be strategic in their online self-presentation perhaps to seek reassurance, and those who have self-doubt further explore themselves online.

A systematic review on the literature shows that the research trend on extraversion is quite different between the past and the present literature. Different from these prior studies, the current study further identifies the relationship between extraversion and employee silence.

Previous research indicates that Big Five personality traits can predict vocational outcomes (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Hough, 1992; Salgado, 1997; Tett, Jackson, Rothstein, & Reddon, 1999). Based on trait activation theory (Tett & Burnett, 2003), a person will have different levels of personality trait, which will predict different future behaviors. In other words, work-related cues that activate different personality trait also lead to different work related behavior. Sociability, talkativeness, assertiveness and excitability can determine the definition of extraversion (Costa & McCrae, 1990). People who are high in extroversion tend to seek out social stimulation and opportunities to engage with others (Ashton, Lee, & Paunonen, 2002). They tend to be enthusiastic and action-oriented individuals (Olakitan, 2011). Prior to the action of speaking up about their true opinions as for extroverts, those people who are perceived as introverts have the tendency to ponder on the essential aspects. Extroverts also tend to find such social interactions refreshing and they actually obtain energy from such exchanges. If

provided a choice between spending time alone and spending time with other employee in the workplace, an extrovert will most often choose to spend time with a group. On one hand, people who are categorized as introverts tend to suppress their own opinions and may refrain from expressing them out, whom can be called aloof; on the other hand, those who possess the opposite characteristics of introverts are much more used to conveying their thoughts regarding an issue (Oxford, Holloway, & Horton-Murillo, 1992). Because of this reason, other people generally find that extroverts are easier to get to know in the organization (Oxford, Holloway, & Horton-Murillo, 1992) .We can conclude that in group situations, extroverts are more likely to talk often and assert themselves. In this study, the author considers extraverts are more likely to voice in the organization and introverts are inclined to be silent in the workplace.

Previous research also revealed that extroversion is positively related to self-esteem (Watson, Suls, & Haig, 2002). People with high self-esteem, they tend to speak up, calmly and kindly telling others their opinions and what their own wants and needs are. Therefore, extravert people will be more likely to voice their opinions in the workplace, and less likely to withdraw some important information as well. Introverts are those who are relatively low in extroversion. They are inclined to be more sedate, reserved and less took part in social situations. We can infer that extraverts are less likely to show more silence behavior in the workplace than introverts. Therefore, extraversion may function as an important moderator for the relationship between locus of control and employee silence.

Therefore, the following hypothesis is developed:

*Hypothesis 3. Extraversion will moderate the relationship between locus of control and employee silence. Specifically, under high level of extraversion, the positive relationship between locus of control and employee silence will be weaker.*





## CHAPTER III METHODOLOGY

The research framework, hypotheses, sample, data collection, measurement and questionnaire design were be introduced in this chapter.

### Research Framework

In this study, the independent variable is locus of control. The dependent variable is employee silence. Agreeableness and extraversion serve as the moderator on the relationship between locus of control and employee silence. The research framework is shown in Figure3.1.

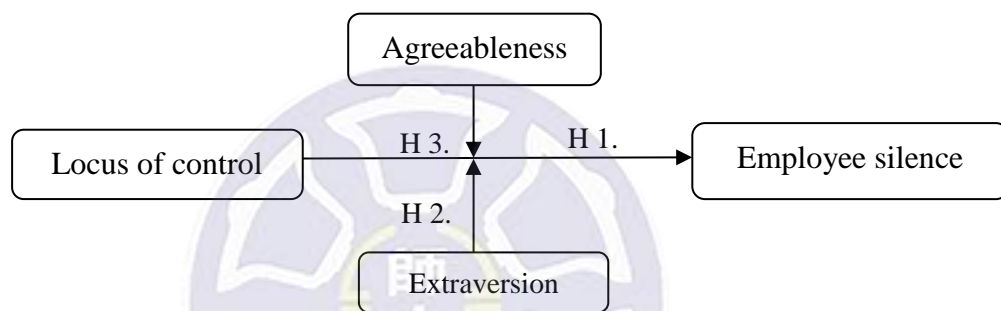


Figure3.1 Research Framework

### Research Hypotheses

The hypotheses of this study are proposed as followed:

Hypothesis 1. Locus of control is positively related to employee silence.

Hypothesis 2. Agreeableness will moderate the relationship between locus of control and employee silence. Under high level of Agreeableness, the positive relationship between locus of control and employee silence will be stronger.

Hypothesis 3. Extraversion will moderate the relationship between locus of control and employee silence. Under high level of extraversion, the positive relationship between locus of control and employee silence will be weaker.

### Research Sample

Sample of this study were employees from nonprofit organizations. This study mainly focus on employees working in KMT and DPP Party. Convenient and snowball sampling were

used to reach more participants. A total of 302 participants filled the self-report questionnaire and there are 260 responses meeting the criterions.

The researcher choose political party employees to be sample because of following reasons. Since creating and maintaining a shared organizational value and culture is important for the operation of political parties (Jaskyte, 2004), employees' communications with their supervisors and colleagues are thus essential. Therefore, examining determinant factors of employee silence behavior in political parties is very important.

## **Research Design**

This study adopts a quantitative research design in order to examine the correlations among testing variables. Through questionnaire instruments, the quantitative data was collected. This study was used inferential statistics to test the hypotheses after the accomplishment of the data collection.

## **Questionnaire Design**

The questionnaire comprises four parts measuring four variables of research interest: locus of control, employee silence, agreeableness and extraversion. The questions used to measure all variables were derived from previous published studies in the literature. The survey contains five major sections. Section one contains six questions measuring locus of control, which was adopted from Lumpkins (1985) brief version of Rotter's (1966). Section two contains seven questions testing employee silence from Vakola and Bouradas (2005). Section three contains ten questions testing extraversion. Section four contains ten questions testing agreeableness. Section five deals with respondents' demographic information such as gender, age, educational backgrounds ..., etc.

Since our target samples were non-profit organization employees in Taiwan, all the questions were translated into Chinese, and then translated back into English (back translation) by 2 professors who are fluent in both languages.

## **Instrumentation**

The measurements used in this study were introduced in this section. The full questionnaire with instructions and measurements are presented in the Appendix: Measurements and Questionnaire.

## **Employee Silence**

The measurement items were from the scale developed by Vakola and Bouradas (2005). The measure of employee silence contained seven items. An example item is: “how often do you express your disagreement regarding companies’ issues”. The Cronbach’s alpha was 0.87. Responses were designed on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Higher score indicates a greater degree of employee silence behavior.

### **Locus of Control**

The measurement of locus of control was adopted the Lumpkins (1985) brief version of Rotter’s (1966). According to Lumpkin’s research, the Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  coefficient of locus of control is 0.68. The measurement of locus of control contained six items. It included two dimensions, internal loci of control and external loci of control.

### **Agreeableness**

The scale of agreeableness items were derived from IPIP (International Personality Item Pool; Goldberg, 2001) which was used to evaluate subjects’ five personality dimensions: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience. Each personality construct included 10 items (five worded positively and another five worded negatively). The measurement of agreeableness contained 10 items. There are four reversed questions. The higher score indicated that the person considered himself or herself has greater degree of agreeableness. The Cronbach’s alpha of this scale was 0.82. Responses were designed on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

### **Extraversion**

The scale of extraversion items were also derived from Goldberg (2001). The measurement of extraversion contained 10 items. There are five reversed questions. The higher score indicated that the person considered himself or herself has greater degree of extraversion. The Cronbach’s alpha of this scale was 0.87. Responses were designed on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

### **Control Variable**

Past studies have proposed that employee silence are influenced by gender (Brinsfield, 2009). Therefore, in order to minimize the influence of common method variance and clarify the correlations among locus of control, employee silence, agreeableness and extraversion, this study will control this variable.

Gilligan (1982) suggested that women's behavior are more relationship-oriented, therefore, when women voice their opinions they usually need to take other people's social relations and social acceptance into consideration. Therefore, compared to male, female show more silence behavior. Based on the study which has been published before, this study regards gender as control variable.

### **Pilot Test**

The questionnaire was mainly composed by LOC scale, employee silence behavior scale and the big five personality trait scale .When the data was collected, the researcher conducted a pilot test to examine the internal reliability.

There are 40 participants from Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) completing the questionnaire and their age ranging from 24 to 58. Among them, there were 22 female and 18 male, 22 with bachelor degree and 18 with master degree in Taiwan.

After data was collected from these 40 participants, a reliability test was done using SPSS. The Cronbach alpha value of each variable were 0.58 for LOC, 0.92 for employee silence, 0.87 for agreeableness and 0.82 for extraversion.

According to George and Mallery (2003), Cronbach Alpha value represented for the internal consistency of the item, ranging from 0.6 to 0.7 is acceptable, from 0.7 to 0.8 is good; furthermore, over 0.9 is excellent. As a result, the overall measurement adopted in this study had a good reliability according to the results that pilot test indicated.

### **Data Collection**

Snowball and convenient sampling approach were used for data collection. Participants received an e-mail with the link directing to the webpage of the survey while also encouraging them forwarding the email to as many of their friends as possible. Data collection period was lasted three months from July to August in 2017. After all the data was collected, the completed responses were analyzed through the following methods discussed in the next part.

### **Data Analysis**

IBM SPSS 22.0 was used to perform data analysis. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to test the reliability and validity of our measurement. Simple liner regression was performed to test hypothesis 1 and two individual hierarchical regression analysis were conducted to test hypothesis 2 and 3.

## **Descriptive Analysis**

Descriptive statistics can help people have the whole images of the collected data. The researcher will use frequency distribution which including numbers and percentage to show the demographic information in this study, such as gender, age, tenure, education level and position level. The mean and standard deviation were utilized to investigate all the variables in this study, including locus of control, employee silence, agreeableness, extraversion and control variables.

## **Pearson Correlation Analysis**

The liner relation between two continuous variables could be described as correlation, and researches adopted coefficient of correlation, also called Person's product-moment correlation coefficient (Person's  $r$ ) to display the degree of the correlation. When the absolute value of Person's  $r$  is closer to 1, the degree of the correlation is stronger. Also, the Person's  $r$  is positive means the correlation is positive; on the contrary, the Person's  $r$  is negative means the correlation is negative. In this study, correlation analysis was used to examine the relationship between control variables and locus of control, employee silence, agreeableness, and extraversion.

## **Hierarchical Regression Analysis**

Hierarchical regression analysis was used to examine that does the interaction of locus of control, agreeableness and extraversion have influence on employee silence, in order to test the hypotheses 2 and 3 of this test. Control variables were put at the first model, and then the locus of control, agreeableness and extraversion were at the second model. Lastly, the interaction term of locus of control, agreeableness and extraversion were at the third model.

## **Research Procedure**

### **Determine the Research Topic**

After discussions about the research topic with my thesis advisor for several times and reviewing the literature at the same time, a research topic mainly focus on political party employee's silence behavior in KMT and DPP Party was determined.

### **Review the Literature**

The researcher continuously reading the articles related to the variables, employee silence, locus of control, agreeableness and extraversion to get more background knowledge.

## **Finalize the Framework and Instruments**

After determined the thesis framework, the researcher kept finding appropriate scale for every variables. The reliability and validity of each measurement were examined as well. At last, the questionnaires for each variable were chosen after discussing with thesis advisor ; any revision for this research was adjusted accordingly.

## **Establish the Research Background, Purpose, Questions and Hypotheses**

Researchers have discussed employee silence behavior in recent five years, which it is relatively a new research topic .Furthermore, the researchers mainly focusing on employees working in political party is quite rare in Taiwan. After reviewing the related literatures, the research background, purpose, questions and hypotheses were developed.

## **Data Collection**

The sample of this study was chosen by convenience sampling and snowball sampling. An explicit instruction and research purpose were demonstrated in the on-line questionnaire, and the scale was sent though the Internet. After 2 months, the data collection process was done.

## **Conduct the Pilot Test**

In order to check the internal reliability of the data, conducting a pilot test is a must.

## **Analyze the Data and Discuss the Findings**

After data was collected, researcher used statistical software including SPSS and M plus to analyze the data. Descriptive analysis, Pearson correlation analysis and hierarchical analysis were conducted in this research.



## CHAPTER IV RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter shows the result after analyzing the data collected of relationship among locus of control, agreeableness, extraversion, employee silence. Locus of control consists of two dimensions-internal control and chance. Hypotheses examined in this research were (1) Locus of control is positively related to employee silence. (2) Agreeableness will moderate the relationship between locus of control and employee silence. Under high level of Agreeableness, the positive relationship between locus of control and employee silence will be stronger. (3) Extraversion will moderate the relationship between locus of control and employee silence. Under high level of extraversion, the positive relationship between locus of control and employee silence will be weaker. Pearson correlation and hierarchical regression analysis were used to examine the hypotheses.

Table 4.1

### *Summary of Hypothesis Results*

Hypothesis	Description	Result
H1	External locus of control is positively related to employee silence.	Supported
H2	Agreeableness will moderate the relationship between locus of control and employee silence. Under high level of Agreeableness, the positive relationship between locus of control and employee silence will be stronger.	Supported
H3	Extraversion will moderate the relationship between locus of control and employee silence. Under high level of extraversion, the positive relationship between locus of control and employee silence will be weaker.	Supported

### **Reliability**

Reliability test was used to examine the quality of the scale adopted. There were 7 items measuring the dependent variable, Employee Silence. The Cronbach alpha value was 0.918. As for independent variable, LOC, 6 items were used to measure it and the Cronbach alpha value was 0.60. Furthermore, the Cronbach alpha value of agreeableness' 10 items was 0.85.



Lastly, the Cronbach alpha value of extraversion's 10 items was 0.91.

Table 4.2

*Reliability Scale: LOC, Employee Silence, Agreeableness and Extraversion (N=260)*

Scale	Item Number	Cronbach Alpha Value
External LOC	6	.60
Employee Silence	7	.92
Agreeableness	10	.85
Extraversion	10	.91

### **Descriptive Statistics of Participants**

Explicit demographic information about 260 participants was revealed in this part. Factors that were included were:

- Gender
- Age
- Educational Background
- Annual Income

The sample of this study consists of 96 males (36.9%) and 164 females (63.1%). The majority of respondents are within 23 to 50 years old (82.7%) with a high educational background (83.3% have college degree or higher). While 51.2% respondents have an annual income less than \$40000, 28.1% respondents have an annual income within \$40001 to \$60000; 5.4% respondents earn at least \$80000 or higher, and 0% respondents were unwilling to report their annual income information. 84.2% were employees working in KMT Party and Democratic Progressive Party with an average age of 37. There are 61.53% employees working less than 5 years. Only 6.15% works from 5 to 10 years in the company. The rest 32.3% works over 10 years in the current organization.

Table 4.3

*Participants Demographic Statistics (N=260)*

Category	Item	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Gender	Female	164	63.1
	Male	96	36.9
Educational Background	Senior high school	20	7.7
	College	22	8.5
	Bachelor Degree	136	52.3
	Master Degree	75	28.8
Age	Doctor Degree	7	2.7
	Under 20	1	0.03
	21-30	112	43.07
	31-40	51	19.61
	41-50	51	19.61
Tenure	51 and over	45	17.30
	Under 5	160	61.53
	5-10	16	6.15
	10 and over	84	32.30
Annual Income	Less than \$40000	132	51.2
	\$40001 to \$60000	72	28.1
	\$80000 or \$100000	14	5.4
	Higher than\$100000	42	16
Organization	DPP	100	38
	KMT	100	38
	Other organizations	60	36

### Descriptive and Correlation Analysis

This session examines whether significant correlations exist among ESB, LOC, EXA and AGR .Table 4.4 presents the mean, standard deviation, correlation, and reliability.

Table 4.4

*Mean, Standard Deviation, Correlation and Reliability of Variable (N=260)*

Variable	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4
1.LOC	3.2468	.47738	(.60)			
2.ESB	2.9786	.68697	.322**	(.92)		
3.EXA	3.1731	.57433	.246**	-.374**	(.91)	
4.AGR	3.7031	.43138	.204**	.284**	.444**	(.85)

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ 

Note: LOC=Locus of control, ESB=Employee Silence Behavior, EXA=Extraversion, AGR=Agreeableness; Number in parenthesis is Cronbach alpha value

Table 4.4 presents the means, standard deviations, and correlations among all the constructs of the research interest. The results show that all the constructs are positively correlated ( $p < 0.01$ ) and Cronbach's Alpha reliability scores for most of the constructs are above 0.7, indicating good reliability of all the measurements except for LOC.

As table 4.4 shows, we found a significant positive correlation between LOC and employee silence behavior ( $r=.322, p < .01$ ). Therefore, H1 is supported. In addition, these LOC scores did correlate positively with extraversion ( $r=.246, p < .01$ ) and agreeableness ( $r=.204, p < .01$ ). Furthermore, employee silence behavior is also positively correlated with extraversion ( $r=-.374, p < .01$ ) and agreeableness ( $r=.284, p < .01$ ). Finally, our analysis showed that these extraversion is highly correlated with agreeableness at the same time ( $r=.444, p < .01$ ).

### Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Before testing the hypotheses, the researcher perform CFA to evaluate the fit of our data to a measurement model by using M Plus. As noted by Joreskog (1993, p. 309), "since chi-square is  $N - 1$  times the minimum value of the fit function, the chi-square test tends to be large in large samples." Because of the large effect of sample size on the chi-square values (and associated p values), other fit indices were also selected to measure the fit of the tested models (Nunkoo, Ramkissoon, & Gursoy 2013). The fit between the measurement model and data was thus assessed by the following standard indices: comparative fit index (CFI) = .90; Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) = .90. Furthermore, the indicators of residuals, standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) = .061, and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) =

0.079. All of the above indicated that the measurement model fit the data well and the overall fit indices were appropriate.

### Hierarchical Regression Analysis

The last session showed the correlation between each variable. Based on the result which has been discussed before, locus of control is positively related to employee silence. Therefore, this part is going to present the hierarchical regression analysis result to examine the relationship among locus of control, extraversion, agreeableness and employee silence.

Table 4.5

*Results of Moderating Effect of Agreeableness for the Relationship Between LOC and Employee Silence (N=260)*

Variable	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	Beta	t-value	Beta	t-value	Beta	t-value
Gender	.074	1.194	.065	1.135	.063	1.115
LOC			.275**	4.703	.274**	4.708
AGR			.220**	3.768	.184**	3.027
LOC×AGR					.117*	1.965
$R^2$	.005		.155		.167	
$\Delta R^2$	.005		.149**		.012*	
$F$	1.426		22.856**		3.862*	

\* $p < .05$ . , \*\* $p < .01$ .

Notes: Two-tailed tests of significance. N = 260. DV = Employee Silence.

Table 4.5 presents the results of one hierarchical regression analysis for the moderating effect of agreeableness fit on the relationship between LOC and employee silence. LOC×AGR interaction term ( $\Delta R^2 = .012$ ,  $p < .05$ ) adds significant incremental variance, indicating that agreeableness does play a significant moderating role for the relationship between LOC and employee silence. The interaction plot is then created using the result numbers to show a clear moderating effect of agreeableness. As figure 4.1 indicates, subjects who perceive high agreeableness report significantly higher silence intentions than do those who perceive low agreeableness when the LOC effect is high. This provides support for H2, that agreeableness will moderate the relationship between locus of control and employee silence. Under high level of Agreeableness, the positive relationship between locus of control and employee silence will be stronger.

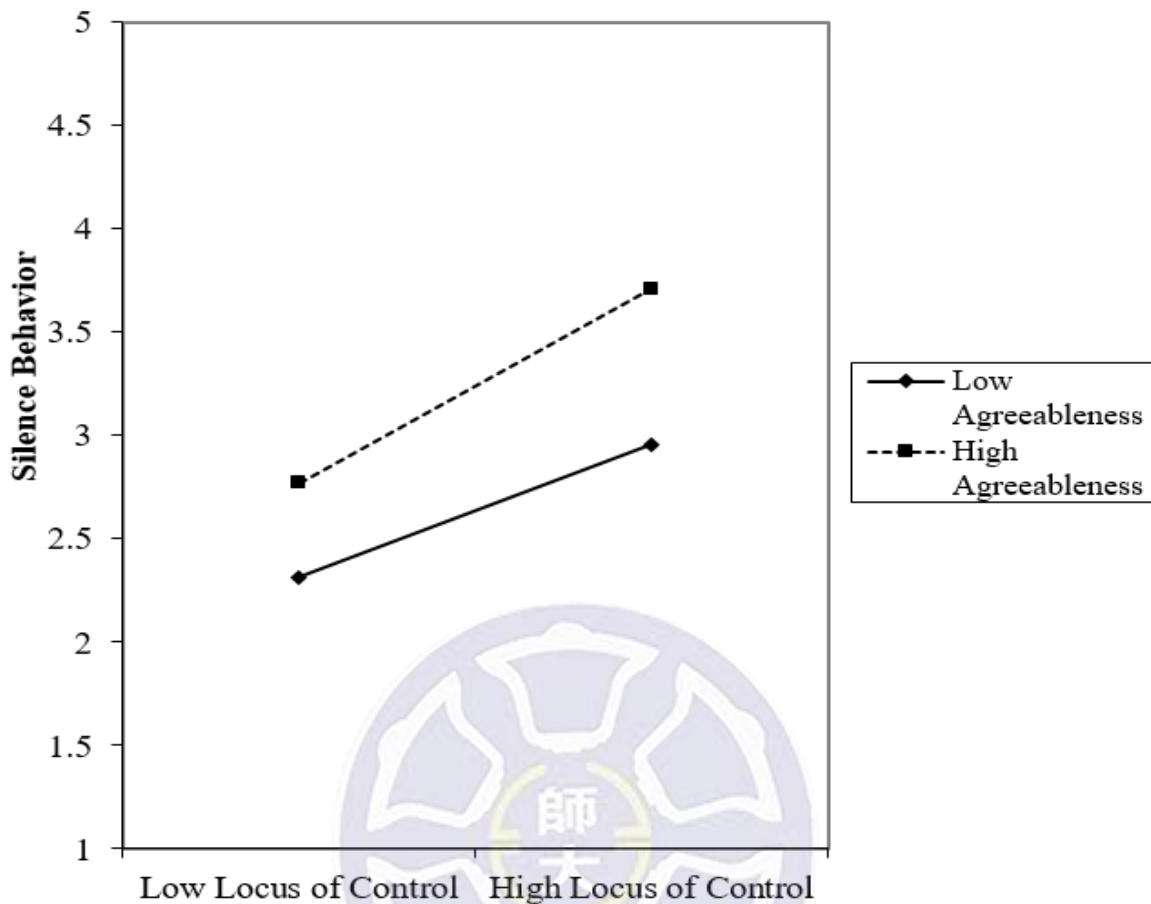


Figure 4.1 The moderating effect of agreeableness in the relationship between locus of control and employee silence.

Table 4.6 indicates the results of one hierarchical regression analysis for the moderating effect of extraversion on the relationship between LOC and employee silence. LOC×EXA interaction term ( $\Delta R^2 = .013, p < .05$ ) shows significant incremental variance, indicating that extraversion does play a significant moderating role for the relationship between LOC and employee silence. The interaction plot is then created using the result numbers to show a clear moderating effect of extraversion. As figure 4.2 indicates, subjects who perceive high extraversion report significantly lower silence intentions than do those who perceive low extraversion when the LOC effect is high. This provides support for H3, that extraversion will moderate the relationship between locus of control and employee silence. Under high level of extraversion, the positive relationship between locus of control and employee silence will be weaker.

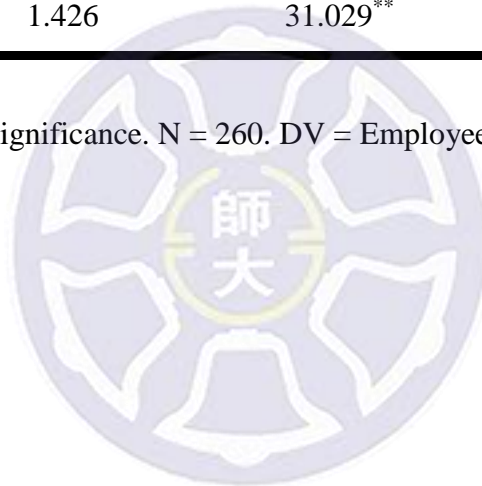
Table 4.6

*Results of Moderating Effect of Extraversion for the Relationship Between LOC and Employee Silence (N=260)*

Variable	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	Beta	t-value	Beta	t-value	Beta	t-value
Gender	.074	1.194	.050	.895	.042	.749
LOC			.245**	4.263	.239**	4.187
EXT			.309**	5.371	.306**	5.344
LOC×EXT					.115*	2.076
$R^2$	.005		.198		.211	
$\Delta R^2$	.005		.192**		.013*	
$F$	1.426		31.029**		4.309*	

\* $p < .05$ . , \*\* $p < .01$ .

Notes: Two-tailed tests of significance. N = 260. DV = Employee Silence.



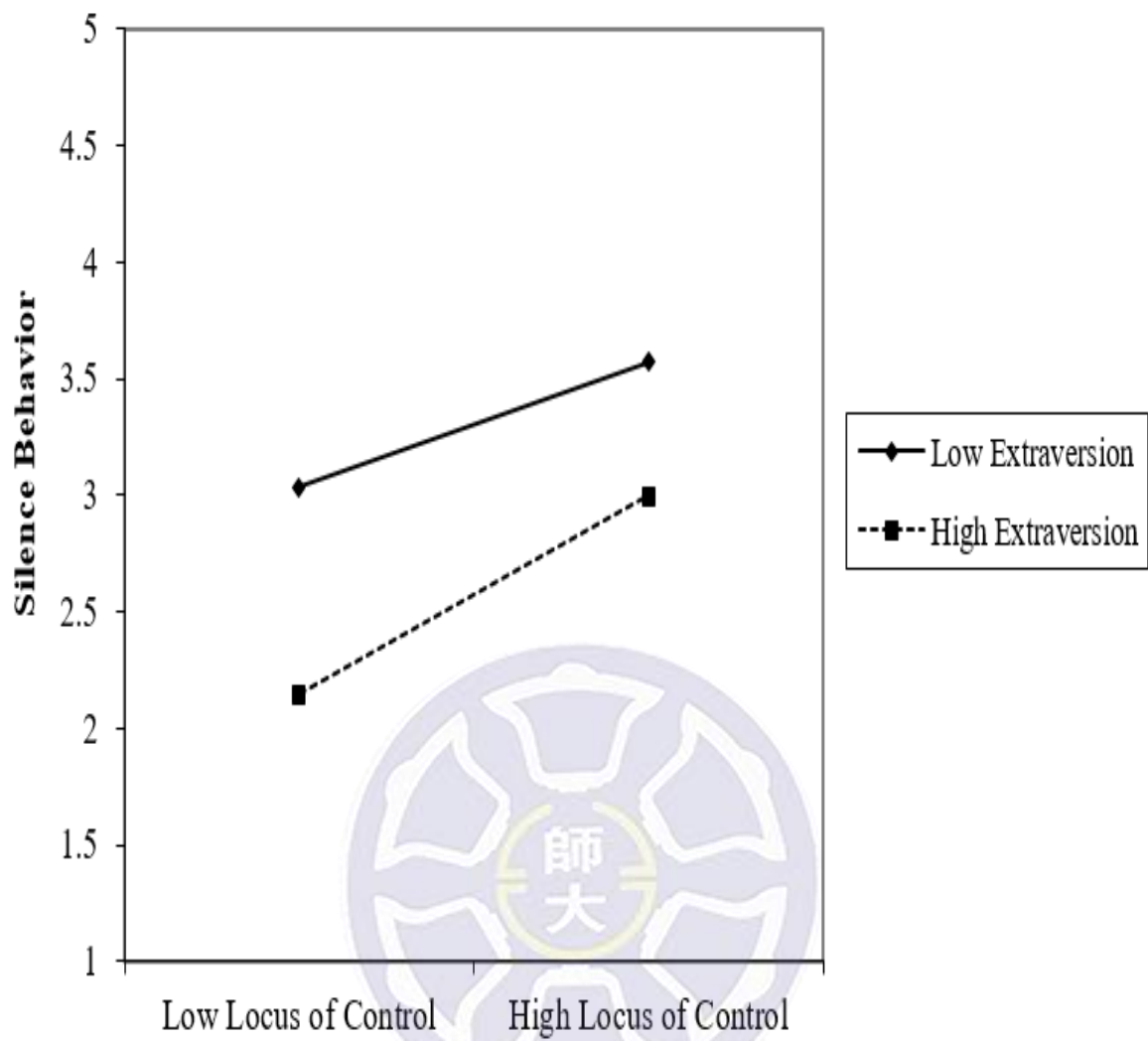


Figure 4.2 The moderating effect of extraversion in the relationship between locus of control and employee silence.

## Discussion

This research is conducted to investigate the relationship among LOC, agreeableness, extraversion and employee silence. After examining the correlation and regression analysis, it is suggested that external locus of control has a significantly positive impact on employee silence. Namely, people with higher level of locus of control, the more silence behavior individuals will demonstrate in the organization. This result is similar to the finding of previous studies. For example, Pinder (2001) indicated that external locus of control is positively related to employee silence. In this study, Pinder investigates the relationship between several personality trait and silence behavior. The finding reveals that those who are external locus of control, high communication anxiety and low self-esteem will show more silence behavior within cultures of injustice.

This study also suggests that employees who are extravert is more likely to express their views and suggestions in the organization, and this finding is also in accordance with Lepine and Van Dyne study published in 2001. Lepine and Van Dyne (2001) conduct a laboratory study of 276 individuals replicate previous finding for cooperative behavior as a form of contextual performance and extend previous study by providing evidence that voice maybe another of contextual performance. Their findings suggest that conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness related more strongly to task performance than to voice behavior or cooperative behavior. Their study also reveals that the possibility of bidirectional relationship with personality characteristic across different dimensions of job performance.

Many previous studies also show that dispositional factors are likely to affect voice. Among one of the most comprehensive investigations of dispositional predictors, LePine and Van Dyne (2001) examine the relationship between voice within work groups and each of the Big Five personality dimensions (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Consistent with their predictions, they find voice to be more frequent among employees who are high on both conscientiousness and extraversion. When explaining these findings, they argue that individuals who are more conscientious are more willing to engage in conversations about how to improve things, whereas extraverted individuals are more comfortable with speaking up. Also consistent with their hypotheses, they find an inverse relationship between voice and both neuroticism and agreeableness. These findings make sense as well. Individuals who are high on the neuroticism dimension will be more nervous about voicing, and those who are highly agreeable will tend to go along with the status quo rather than challenging it.



Based on trait activation theory, traits influence behavior only in relevant situations (Tett & Guterman, 2000). We can infer that those who are high in extraversion trait will speak up under certain situations. Therefore, it is important to provide them incentives suitable for different individual traits. Personality traits also represent people's thinking, value, and behaviors. Personality traits are quite stable—someone who scores high on a certain dimension like agreeableness is expected to be willing to maintain harmonious relationship with others in different situations and organization. In this study, we find that people's agreeableness is positively correlated to silence behavior as well. Managers who are more agreeable are accustomed to follow the rule can perform better especially under low autonomy circumstances, and their work performance are better. Agreeableness may be more rule compliant and cooperative and therefore perform better when given a high degree of structure with pursuing the objective of the job. Therefore, those who are high in agreeable tends to follow the rule, which means that they will be more likely to show silence behavior (Barrick & Mount, 1993). These traits shape the behavior of employees who perform extra role in the organization. Therefore, we can conclude that personality trait plays an important role for employees' voice intention.

Because most of the sample came from KMT party and DPP Party in Taiwan, this kind of organization is quite bureaucratic and hierarchical. People are often loath to reveal information that could be considered to be negative or damaging to those above them in an organizational hierarchy (Roberts & O'Reilly, 1974; Ryan & Oestreich, 1991). This unwillingness to speak up, and the silence or information withholding that it gives rise to, has the potential to undermine organizational decision making and error-correction and to damage employee trust and morale (Argyris & Schon, 1986; Beer & Eisenstat, 2000; Janis, 1982; Morrison & Milliken, 2000; Tamuz, 2001). Yet, as the above quote illustrates, remaining silent may make sense when it is considered from the perspective of the employee who fears that his or her manager will react negatively to the upward communication of concerns and may react further by taking steps that undermine the employee's ability to work in the organization.

Based on Milliken (2003) research, bureaucratic organization will strengthen the atmosphere of employee silence. Therefore, it is important to enhance communication between management and employees in such organization. This study enhances the previous studies' finding by providing a much more detail examination of agreeableness and extraversion regarding silence behavior in Taiwan's nonprofit organization.

## **Chapter V CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter indicates conclusion of this study based on the findings provided in the previous chapter and the limitation caused by research samples. Moreover, some suggestions and recommendations for future study are demonstrated in the last session.

### **Conclusions**

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship among locus of control, agreeableness, extraversion and employee silence. Table 5.1 demonstrates the results of the data analysis of this research, elaborated by a more explicit statement of each supported hypothesis.

#### **External Locus of Control was Positively Related to Employee Silence.**

The finding of this study show that external locus of control is positively related to employee silence. Based on the result of this study, personality trait does play an important role in voice intention. People with internal LOC are described as having more self-confidence. When they discover some potential problems in the workplace, they believe they can make changes if they try to speak out. Instead, for those employees who are external LOC, they demonstrate a more negative attitudes towards their work, therefore; when they identify potential problems in the workplace, they are more likely to hide their true thought and consider speaking up will make no difference.

#### **Agreeableness Strengthened the Relationship Between Locus of Control and Employee Silence.**

The results indicate that agreeableness moderates the relationship between locus of control and employee silence. People who are high in agreeableness tend to value harmony in the workplace, which means that they are more likely to avoid speaking up when the problems might cause conflict. Therefore, it is crucial to avoid selecting agreeable employees in terms recruiting and selection if the organization want to solicit more people willing voice. Furthermore, the organization should shape a safe environment and provide incentives to motivate agreeable employees to speak up as well.

#### **Extraversion Weakened the Relationship Between Locus of Control and Employee Silence.**

The current study also presents that extraversion moderates the relationship between locus of control and employee silence. People with high extraversion are considered to be more talkative and sociable, which means that extroverts tend to talk more often and voice their

opinions in the organization. LePine and Van Dyne (2001) indicated that out-going employees are more inclined to speak up than introverts in the workplace. Therefore, recruiting extravert employees might be a good way to benefit nonprofit organization.

### **Research Limitation**

This study has several limitations. Because of the time limitation, the researcher only adopt quantitative method in this research. It is highly recommended to adopt qualitative and quantitative simultaneously in the future. Since quantitative approach has a notable limitation in that it is difficult to investigate the real opinions from the participants in this study.

Data was mainly collected from KMT and DPP in Taiwan because of the time limit and the researcher's connections, this might cause sample bias contributing to limitations of results generalizability. Furthermore, data for this study was collected only from one nation (i.e., Taiwan), so whether the proposed model of this study can be applied to different samples from different countries is questionable. Future studies should be conducted on a cross-national sample to address this generalizability concern. Common method bias is also another limitation that need to be noticed. Data utilized were self-reported and all independent and dependent variables were obtained from the same raters (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). This research did not separate the source of independent and dependent variables due to great difficulties in linking the data together while protecting subjects' anonymity. It is strongly recommended that future studies should set stricter research procedures to minimize this issue.

Cross sectional design is another limitation of this study, which could limit the ability to observe the changing patterns of subjects across time. It might also cause misidentification of the causal relationship between independent and dependent variables. Future research should address such issues by using longitudinal analysis to detect and monitor variations and trends among subjects.

The last limitation of this study is social desirability bias. Since this questionnaire concludes some sensitive questions, it is better to prevent the participant's managers to gather the data in the organization. Otherwise, the participants of this study won't be very honest when they answer certain questions in this study. Therefore, it is highly recommend researcher to pay attention to this problem in the future.

### **Implications of the Study**

The findings of this study provide some implications for nonprofit organizations, especially for Taiwan's political parties. Findings clearly indicate that an individual's personality trait is likely to influence his/her intention to voice in the workplace .Therefore,

developing strategies to create an open-minded environment is the first important task. This study will help organizations to identify the reasons why employees keep silent in the workplace from personality perspective, and try to find solutions to this problem. Breaking the silent atmosphere in the workplace will promote employees to voice, which will provide the organization useful suggestions to improve work performance and enhance organizational innovation. If we can create a safe environment for employees to voice their opinions in the organization, it will be beneficial to enhance job satisfaction and increase revenue at the same time.

In terms of recruiting and selection, big five personality trait and locus of control can be important indicators for selecting right new hires. If HR practitioners want to recruit employees that are more willing to voice their opinions, they should consider less on selecting those employees whose trait is positively related to employee silence during the recruiting and selecting process. Based on the results of this study, HR practitioners should consider attracting and recruiting more employees who are more internal rather than external locus of control since external locus individuals are likely to remain silent when they see problems and issues in the organization. In addition, HR practitioners should target those who are more extravert but less agreeable since these two personality traits are found to weaken and strengthen employee silence behavior, respectively. Likewise, for existing workforce, managers should pay a particular attention to those whose trait is positively related to employee silence and encourage those people to voice their opinions.

Trait activation theory can also help an organization understand how to optimally motivate workers by offering them rewards suited to their individual traits. When organizations understand how different organizational cues lead to expression of traits, this knowledge allows organizations the opportunity to create situations that "activate" the traits they most value, and to select employees based on those traits. However, to understand fully the traits needed for different occupational roles, including team contexts, management scholars recommend organizations conduct Personality-Oriented Work Analyses to improve selection and promotion processes.

Specifically, it is important to train and encourage those who are more external locus of control to voice their opinions. Since employees working in the political party usually shared the same organizational culture and value, it is difficult for such organization to accommodate various point of view. Based on the researcher's personal experience, most of them consider members who express different opinions and concerns for the organization as troublemakers

or rebels in the political party. However, more and more young generations start joining political parties and become one of the important groups of political parties. Younger generations also like to challenge and voice their opinions. Therefore, political parties should start considering taking different views and opinions as positive. Nowadays, many political parties already tend to gather young people's opinions and recruit new blood from Generation Y. Therefore, motivating introverted, external locus of control and agreeable employees to voice in such organization becomes a priority.

Although previous studies in the literature have discussed the variables (self-esteem, employee silence, neuroticism) of this study, very few focus on the connection between locus of control and employee silence. Also, a limited number of studies considered the moderating effect of agreeableness and extraversion. For researchers, this study will help them uncover internal factors that lead to employee silence in the organization. This study can thus contribute to the current literature by addressing these research gaps.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

For future researchers, studies can further investigate whether the western country will get the same result just like in Taiwan. Because Taiwan belongs to Chinese culture, it is questionable that this research can fit into western cultures. Moreover, for the future researcher, studies can adopt the qualitative approach and quantitative approach at the same time. Since the data are gathered through questionnaires instead of the interview, some employees' opinions and suggestions for their organization and manager cannot be comprehensively obtained.

Since this research has several limitations (social desirability bias), it is important to prevent such bias in the future. Therefore, during the data collection process, the researcher need to protect the participants' privacy in order to make sure their manager cannot view the questionnaire without researcher's permission. Researchers should also fully inform participants that their participation is completely anonymous and has no information that will identify them. Since employees in political parties might feel sensitive to take the survey, future research should strive to create a safe and comfortable status for participants to respond the survey questions more truly and accurately.



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## APPENDIX A

### Research Questionnaire

#### 問卷調查

親愛的先生/女士您好：

我是台灣師範大學國際人力資源發展研究所的研究生孫永信，目前正在執行一項研究，此研究目的在於調查非營利組織員工本身的個人特質以及對於目前工作環境各方面的看法，因此非常需要您寶貴的意見並花 10 到 15 分鐘時間填寫以下的問題，對於以下您所提供的任何答案和資訊是完全匿名且保密的，請放心並依真實情況來作答，此次調查結果將會對非營利組織在人力資源管理層面提供有益的建議。若對此問卷或此研究有任何疑問，請與我聯繫！感謝您的參與。

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Requirement:

我是目前正在非營利組織工作的正職員工



第一部分

以下問題是關於您本身對於人生命運掌控的看法，請根據以下敘述勾選同意或不同意的程度。(1 等於非常不同意；5 等於非常同意)

	非常不同意 1	不同意 2	中立 3	同意 4	非常同意 5
當我計畫要做一件事時，我幾乎確定我可以做到	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
人們能將事情做對是仰賴能力，與運氣無關	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
我自己可以控制發生在我身上的事	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
人們在生活中所發生很多不愉快的事都是因為運氣不佳所導致	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
我時常覺得我無法掌控發生在我身上的事	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
要找到一份好工作主要取決於在對的時間和對的地點	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

第二部分

就以下幾個方面，您會向您直屬主管提出您自身建議的頻率是(1 等於從不；5 等於總是)

	從不 1	偶爾 2	有時 3	經常 4	總是 5
關於公司事務方面	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
關於您所在部門事務方面	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
關於您自身工作方面	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
關於自身工作滿意度相關的問題，例如薪資和工作條件各方面...等。	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

就以下幾個方面，您認為自己向直屬主管提出不同意見開口難易的程度是(1 等於很難；5 等於很容易)

	很難 1	難 2	適中 3	容易 4	很容易 5
關於公司事務	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
關於您所在公司部門事務	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
關於您自己的工作	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

第三部分

下列問題是有關於您對社交場合的喜好程度，請根據下列問題勾選同意或不同意的程

度。

(1 等於非常不同意；5 等於非常同意)

	非常不同意 1	不同意 2	中立 3	同意 4	非常同意 5
我喜歡派對聚會的生活	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
我享受在社交場合和他人相處的時刻	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
和他人相處時我會開啟聊天話題	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
我在派對聚會中會和很多不同的人聊天	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
我不介意自己成為別人關注的焦點	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
我是個不多話的人	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
我在人群中喜歡當個隱形人	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
和他人相處時我的話並不多	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
我不喜歡成為他人關注的焦點	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
我在陌生人面前是沉默寡言的	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

下列問題是有關於您對周遭人們的相處型態，請根據下列問題勾選同意或不同意的程度。

(1 等於非常不同意；5 等於非常同意)

	非常不同意 1	不同意 2	中立 3	同意 4	非常同意 5
我對他人的事情是感興趣的	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
我對他人的感受是有同理心的	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

我富有同情心	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
我會利用時間幫助他人	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
我會試著感受他人的情緒	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
我會試著讓他人感到安心	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
我對他人的事情並不感興趣	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
我有話直說常冒犯他人	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
我對他人的問題和麻煩並不感興趣	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
我不怎麼關切他人的議題	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### 第五部份：個人基本資料

1. 請問您的年齡為？\_\_\_\_\_ (歲)
2. 請問您的性別？0女性1男性
3. 請問您在現任公司服務年資為？\_\_\_\_\_ (年)
4. 請問您的教育程度？1高中/職2專科3大學4碩士5博士
5. 請問您所屬的單位是什麼？1民進黨2國民黨3其他非營利組織
6. 請問您的年收入多少？1 \$40000以下2 \$40001到\$60000 3 \$80000

問卷到此結束，感謝您的作答！