

Interpersonal Effects of Feigned Emotions and Their Underlying Mechanisms

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Abstract

Pretend emotions refer to the phenomenon in emotional interactions where individuals display positive or negative emotions that do not actually exist, amplifying or suppressing their genuine emotions. As a result of strategic choice, the emotions exhibited by the expresser may not be genuinely experienced in the moment, yet can be convincing to some extent. Current research on pretend emotions remains relatively fragmented, with ongoing controversies regarding their interpersonal effects and underlying mechanisms. Existing literature primarily examines the interpersonal effects of pretend emotions through four perspectives: game processes, prosocial behavior contexts, organizational contexts, and leadership effectiveness, with relevant mechanisms encompassing affective responses of emotional recipients and perspective-taking mental processes. Future research could pursue in-depth and systematic investigations of pretend emotions by focusing on emotional recipients, group-level pretense, valence of pretend emotions, cognitive-neural mechanisms, and cultural factors.

Full Text

The Interpersonal Effects of Fake Emotion and Its Mechanisms of Action

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Abstract: Fake emotion refers to the process in emotional interactions where individuals display positive or negative emotions that do not actually exist, amplifying or suppressing their original feelings. As a product of strategic choice, the emotion displayed by the expresser may not be occurring at that moment, yet can be persuasive to some extent. Fake emotions are common in daily life,

but current research on this topic remains relatively fragmented, and there are still ongoing debates regarding the interpersonal influence of fake emotion and its underlying mechanisms. Existing literature primarily examines the interpersonal effects of fake emotion across four domains: game processes, prosocial behavior contexts, organizational situations, and leadership effectiveness. Related mechanisms include the affective reactions of emotion receivers and the internal process of “projecting oneself onto others.” Future research could conduct more in-depth and systematic investigations of fake emotion from perspectives such as the emotion receiver, group-level faking, the valence of fake emotion, cognitive neural mechanisms, and cultural backgrounds.

Keywords: fake emotion; emotional strategy; emotion perception; emotion interaction; emotion recognition

Emotion is a psychological phenomenon mediated by an individual’s needs and desires, involving internal subjective experiences accompanied by external expressions and integrating multiple levels of neural and chemical processes (Lindsley, 1951). Emotion is not a substance in our blood but rather a social experience organized through our performance and narration (Rosaldo, 1984), and a product of culture (Kövecses, 2000). In interactions, people treat emotion as a social and cultural product (Boehner, DePaula, Dourish, & Sengers, 2007) to transmit information and communicate effectively, enabling individuals to better adapt and survive. For instance, infants communicate with adults through emotion, while adults use emotion to understand their own and others’ physical and mental states. If human society were devoid of emotion, the social network would lose its connecting threads, reducing society to merely a collection of isolated points. Therefore, emotion plays a crucial role in social interactions, constitutes an indispensable part of our lives, intertwines with rationality, and represents one of our defining human characteristics (Peleckis, 2013).

As a purposeful behavior pattern involving reflective components (Dewey, 1895), emotion can be either passively triggered by identifiable events or actively generated as a means to achieve goals (Potworowski & Kopelman, 2008). In many social situations, people strategically manage or express their emotions to achieve their objectives. Strategic emotional expression represents an important emotional management capability that involves whether and how to express genuine or fake emotions. Whether genuine or feigned, strategic emotional expression can serve as an individual’s persuasive strategy to achieve desired effects to some extent (Potworowski & Kopelman, 2008). However, strategic emotional expression brings not only positive impacts but also disadvantages. Previous research shows that strategic expression of positive emotions (e.g., happiness) can help individuals develop long-term reciprocal relationships in potentially integrative environments (Kopelman & Rosette, 2008) while also producing numerous negative effects, including undermining others’ trust (Caza, Zhang, Wang, & Bai, 2015). Peleckis (2013) also notes that when people conceal their genuine emotions to maximize utility at work, unintended consequences emerge that adversely affect interpersonal relationships.

In social interactions, individuals often strategically select emotional expressions to achieve more desirable outcomes. Fake emotion represents a common emotional expression strategy, referring to the display of positive or negative emotions that do not actually exist during emotional interactions, amplifying or suppressing original feelings (Ekman & Friesen, 1975). Fake emotion is a behavior where an individual's emotional experience is inconsistent with their emotional display (童萍, 吴承红, 2008). During the process of faking emotion, the emotion displayed by the expresser may not be occurring at that moment, yet can achieve specific purposes by being persuasive to some extent. For example, an angry person might pretend to be sad to elicit greater sympathy; a customer might feign anger to prompt faster service; a patient might exaggerate pain to attract attention. Therefore, fake emotion, as a form of emotional information, widely exists in social interactions and profoundly influences various aspects of people's lives and work.

How, then, do emotion receivers perceive others' fake emotions and become influenced by them? Since emotional expression is accompanied by identifiable cues, once these cues are perceived, the receiver's cognition, attitudes, and behaviors are affected by others' fake emotions. Previous research has found that preschool children can clearly distinguish between genuine and superficial emotions and understand many social display rules for controlling emotional expression (Banerjee, 1997). As facial expressions represent the most sensitive external manifestation of emotion, many researchers study emotion through expressions (Lindsley, 1951; Cacioppo & Gardner, 1999). In daily life, people may judge others' emotions based on language (Dellaert, Polzin, & Waibel, 1996; 林菡, 张侃, 2009), facial expressions (Cohen, Garg, & Huang, 2000), gestures (Glowinski, Camurri, Volpe, Dael, & Scherer, 2008; Kipp & Martin, 2009), and various other physiological cues (Castellano, Kessous, & Caridakis, 2008; Haag, Goronzy, Schaich, & Williams, 2004). Receivers may detect subtle nonverbal signals, such as the duration of emotional displays or asymmetrical facial contractions, to determine whether the emotional expression is genuine (Borod & Koff, 1984). Ekman and Friesen (1978) argued that untrained individuals' fake emotions significantly differ from typical facial expressions, often causing discrepancies between the emotion observed by receivers and the emotion the expresser attempts to fake (Padgett, Cottrell, & Adolphs, 1996), leading receivers to make unexpected responses. Consequently, professional poker players often hide their facial expressions with hats and sunglasses (Kappas, Bherer, & Thériault, 2000) to prevent opponents from making judgments based on uncontrollable emotional displays that could affect outcomes. Based on this, although fake emotion serves the expresser's personal purposes, whether it achieves the intended goal depends on whether the receiver can be successfully persuaded. Therefore, regardless of whether the expresser successfully fakes the emotion, the receiver's acceptance and interpretation of emotional cues constitute crucial mediators of fake emotion's interpersonal influence.

Based on the above discussion, the emotional expression process provides information for emotion judgment, which receivers can incorporate into their evalua-

tion systems for expressers (Van Kleef, 2009) and combine with the specific content of emotional expressions to infer the expresser's character traits (Van Kleef, Van Doorn, Heerdink, & Koning, 2011). During fake emotional expression, inconsistencies may exist between the emotional cues displayed by expressers and those perceived by receivers (Côté, 2005; Hochschild, 1983), and receivers can detect such inconsistencies (Côté, Hideg, & Van Kleef, 2013). In such cases, receivers infer the authenticity of the expressed emotion based on their own actual feelings. When receivers detect inauthentic emotions, they may interpret this as emotional dishonesty and lack of interest in interpersonal interaction (Frank, Ekman, & Friesen, 1993). However, receivers may also derive more positive experiences from these inauthentic emotions, which better promotes interpersonal interaction (Wong, 2013; Lechner & Paul, 2017). Therefore, how receivers perceive and interpret fake emotion determines its impact on the formation and development of interpersonal relationships.

Given the universality of emotion as information transmission in daily life and the possibility that receivers may perceive fake emotions, we aim to explore in greater depth the interpersonal effects of fake emotion and their mechanisms by reviewing relevant literature. In the following sections, we first systematically introduce the main research domains on fake emotion from four aspects of its interpersonal effects, then analyze the possible reasons why fake emotion influences interpersonal relationships, and construct a model of the pathways through which fake emotion produces interpersonal effects. Building on this foundation, we finally summarize current limitations in the field of fake emotion and propose suggestions for future research directions.

2 The Interpersonal Effects of Fake Emotion

In daily life, people often express inauthentic emotions to achieve certain purposes or meet specific requirements. Fake emotion not only affects the expresser's own psychological behaviors but also significantly impacts their interpersonal relationships. Based on a review of previous literature, the interpersonal effects of fake emotion can be triggered by either short-term, incidental faking or long-term, periodic faking. Therefore, according to periodicity and duration, fake emotion can be roughly divided into two categories:

The first category is short-term, incidental emotional faking. This arises when specific situations trigger or certain needs must be met, occurring in temporary, incidental contexts. In such situations, the purpose of faking is clear and specific, with each instance lasting relatively briefly, and people's decisions are easily influenced by the context and target of emotional usage (Rothman & Magee, 2016; Van Kleef, De Dreu, & Manstead, 2010; Van Kleef, 2009). Consequently, fake emotion varies across different occasions and purposes. Moreover, few studies in this domain have investigated how fake emotion generated in relevant contexts affects life or work beyond the situation, instead focusing primarily on its effects on situational outcomes (Hideg & Van Kleef, 2017; Tng & Au, 2014). The fake emotions examined in research on "game behavior" and "prosocial behavior"

typically involve relatively brief situational durations, with varying emotional targets, strategies, and ultimate purposes each time, and the same fake emotion rarely recurs repeatedly, with its pattern changing as purposes shift (Hideg, 2012; Hideg & Van Kleef, 2017; Methasani, Gaspar, & Barry, 2017). Therefore, the effects of fake emotion in these two contexts should belong to this category.

The second category is the effect of long-term, periodic emotional faking. This effect emerges from prolonged, repeated use of the same fake emotion. In such contexts, fake emotion not only influences people's work relationships but also significantly affects their daily lives outside work (Taxer & Frenzel, 2015; Brothridge & Grandey, 2002; Oc, Daniels, Diefendorff, Bashshur, & Greguras, 2019). In these situations, researchers believe individuals tend to use "emotional labor" (a form of labor requiring employees to display specific emotions to achieve job objectives) in their work, meaning individuals must use fake emotion during interactions with work targets (Hochschild, 1983). In previous literature, fake emotions in the domains of "organizational work" and "leadership behavior" can generally be classified into this category due to their relatively stable contexts and targets, as well as their persistent and repetitive characteristics.

The following content systematically explores the effects of fake emotion on personal interaction motivation, organizational efficiency, organizational processes, and sustained benefits in unrelated domains from these four perspectives. We hope that through in-depth discussion of these research domains, we can provide more systematic theoretical support for subsequent research on fake emotion.

2.1 The Interpersonal Effects of Fake Emotion in Behavioral Games

A game refers to a behavior in which, when multiple decision-making subjects' actions interact, each subject makes decisions beneficial to themselves based on available information and self-capability cognition (Suits, 1967). Games are an inevitable procedure in daily social interactions: consumers may bargain with shop owners to obtain more favorable prices; negotiators secure mutually acceptable terms through games; managers and employees also bargain over salary increases. During games, the intensity and type of emotions from both parties can influence outcomes. For example, in consumer markets, buyers' and sellers' perception of each other's emotional signals affects final pricing decisions. Specifically, in competitive environments, when one party displays more negative emotions, the other party is more likely to make price concessions (Bhattacharjee & Moreno, 2017). Therefore, both parties in games often adopt certain emotional strategies, with fake emotion being the most commonly used emotional strategy in gaming contexts, where individuals use emotional information to mislead opponents and achieve desired outcomes (Gino & Shea, 2012). Additionally, game parties may fake their emotions during interactions to influence the degree of information sharing (Steinel, Utz, & Koning, 2010), thereby prompting opponents to concede and maximizing their own benefits.

In game processes, emotion can be both an antecedent and a consequence (Gaspar & Schweitzer, 2013). Emotion is transmissible in interpersonal interactions (Filipowicz, Barsade, & Melwani, 2011), and emotional transmission is particularly crucial in games. One party's emotions can be transmitted to the other party and influence their decisions. Game players often need to use opponents' emotions as information sources, perceive and judge opponents' emotions, and directly affect game decisions and outcomes (Van Kleef, 2009). Consequently, sophisticated game players may fake their emotions during games, while experienced opponents similarly adopt corresponding emotional countermeasures. Tenbrunsel's (1998) research confirms this point, arguing that when negotiators' trust in their counterparts decreases, they are more likely to use "defensive deception" in negotiations. That is, fearing deception by opponents, they proactively employ deceptive strategies during games. Therefore, gaming is a process where both parties argue their cases, with emotion playing an important informational role. One party releases emotional information, while the other adjusts their emotional strategy based on interpretations of the opponent's emotions, forming feedback. In this process, fake emotion is widely used, as both parties attempt to achieve optimal results by displaying fake emotions or developing countermeasures against them.

Fake emotion also plays a role in the development of game relationships, potentially promoting or hindering the gaming process. People may use emotional strategies to fake their genuine emotions, amplifying, suppressing, or fabricating their emotional displays to make game outcomes more aligned with their expectations. However, once opponents perceive their fake emotions, results may deviate from expectations. For instance, expressing moderate anger can elicit concessions from negotiation opponents (Adam & Brett, 2018), so when individuals believe using emotional strategies benefits them in economic competition, they may deliberately exaggerate their anger to gain advantages (Andrade & Ho, 2009). However, false anger in negotiations yields only minor benefits and is detrimental to long-term relationship development, as fake anger provokes genuine anger in opponents and undermines their trust (Campagna, Mislin, Kong, & Bottom, 2016). Côté et al. (2013) found similar results, showing that participants were more likely to trust emotionally neutral individuals than those who faked anger. Additionally, Tng and Au (2014) examined the impact of genuine versus non-genuine emotions on negotiations, finding that when people perceived opponents' anger as inauthentic, they made fewer concessions. Adam and Brett (2018) also demonstrated that in game processes, high-level anger had more negative effects on outcomes because receivers considered the expressed anger level inappropriate.

In summary, games are not merely conducted at the negotiation table but permeate many aspects of daily life. Fake emotion is a frequently used strategy in gaming contexts and an important factor influencing game outcomes. On one hand, fake emotion can serve game players to some extent, maximizing benefits during games. On the other hand, fake emotion does not always successfully persuade game opponents and may even produce opposite effects. Different indi-

viduals have different interpretations of and reactions to emotions, so receivers' subjective perception of fake emotion influences their choice of emotional game strategies (Methasani, Gaspar, & Barry, 2017). Consequently, the effects of emotional faking may fall short of expressers' expectations.

2.2 The Interpersonal Effects of Fake Emotion in Prosocial Behavior

The impact of fake emotion on prosocial behavior is also a hot topic in relevant research. Prosocial behavior refers to voluntary actions that benefit others without expectation of reward (Andreoni, 1990). Emotional expression serves as a cue for inferring interaction partners' character and social intentions (Rothman & Magee, 2016; Van Kleef et al., 2010). Barasch et al.'s research indicates that regardless of whether emotional intensity is an antecedent or consequence of prosocial behavior, the stronger the expresser's emotion, the higher the prosocial level perceived by receivers. That is, before or after prosocial behavior occurs, the stronger the emotion displayed by the prosocial actor toward the recipient or relevant events, the more likely receivers are to perceive higher prosocial levels (Barasch, Levine, Berman, & Small, 2014). Based on this research, the pathways through which fake emotion influences prosocial behavior should include two hypotheses: First, since people generally wish to make good impressions on others, in prosocial contexts, when expressers fake their emotions to create favorable impressions, they may influence receivers' judgments. Second, when receivers believe the expresser wants to make a good impression on them, they may also tend to assume that expressers with high emotional intensity are faking emotions and adjust their emotional response strategies accordingly.

Based on these two hypotheses, we can infer that receivers' perception of whether emotions are genuine or not directly affects their attitudes and their own prosocial behavior. Research shows that when people believe their own or others' thoughts and behaviors conform to moral standards, they experience positive emotions such as liking and appreciation; otherwise, they experience negative emotions such as aversion and disgust (周详, 杨治良, 郝雁丽, 2007). Therefore, receivers' perception of emotional authenticity directly influences their attitudes, thereby affecting their prosocial behavior. Perceptions of emotional inauthenticity elicit negative reactions because when expressers attempt to display certain emotions (regardless of authenticity), but the specific emotions perceived by receivers do not match the expressers' intentions, receivers make corresponding inferences about the expressers' character: if receivers believe the expresser displayed inauthentic emotions, they may suspect the expresser is also hiding something on other important matters (Côté, 2005). For example, when an expresser attempts to convey sadness during a donation process, but the receiver fails to successfully receive this emotional information, it may affect their relationship. In such situations, for receivers, trust-related judgments are likely influenced by their assessment of the expresser's emotional authenticity (Chen, Saporito, & Belkin, 2011). Therefore, in receivers' eyes, the reliability of indi-

viduals expressing inauthentic emotions is undermined, and trust is damaged. Since trust is an important predictor of prosocial behavior (Bendapudi, Singh, & Bendapudi, 1996), this means that when receivers believe others' expressed emotions are inauthentic, their trust in that person decreases, and they become less willing to engage in prosocial behavior (Hideg, 2012). Hideg and Van Kleef's (2017) experiments showed that compared with fundraisers expressing genuine happiness (joy), donors donated significantly less when they perceived the fundraisers' displayed happiness as inauthentic.

In summary, although current research on fake emotion's impact on prosocial behavior remains fragmented and lacks systematicity, most studies consistently indicate that fake emotion negatively affects others' prosocial behavior levels. This may be because prosocial behavior is relatively pure: when people are unaware of emotional faking, high-level emotions can indeed stimulate prosocial behavior to some extent; however, when people perceive others' fake emotions, their prosocial behavior levels decrease substantially.

2.3 The Impact of Fake Emotion on Work Performance and Relationships in Organizational Contexts

In organizational work, people also consciously manage their displayed expressions and body language (Hochschild, 1983) to fake emotions during interactions with work targets. Emotional faking is also an important emotional regulation strategy in organizational contexts. Generally, both deep acting and surface acting are common forms of fake emotion in organizational work, possessing certain proactive and purposeful characteristics (傅慧, 段艳红, 2013). Deep acting refers to fake emotional displays where the expresser's internal experience more closely matches their public expression, resulting in relatively more genuine emotional displays and more positive effects. Surface acting refers to fake emotional displays where the expresser's genuine emotional experience does not match their displayed emotion, producing more unintended effects (Côté, 2005; Grandey, 2003). Since deep acting produces emotional experiences closer to genuine emotions, the fake emotion discussed below refers to surface acting.

In organizational environments, people often must learn to fake their emotions to fulfill organizational expectations (Harrison & Stephens, 2019; Miller, Considine, & Garner, 2007). In this process, fake emotion affects work performance and organizational performance (Ute, Jonas, & Günter, 2010) and has significant negative impacts on expressers themselves. Research shows that employees' frequent faking of happiness can predict lower customer satisfaction (Bujisic, Wu, Mattila, & Bilgihan, 2014; Wang, Nguyen, Johnson, & Groth, 2017; Delpechtre & Beeler, 2017) and reduce customers' trust in service providers (Cameron & Payne, 2011; Wang & Groth, 2014). Additionally, emotional dissonance resulting from using fake emotion at work leads to employee dissatisfaction (Pugh, Groth, & Hennig-Thurau, 2011), negatively affecting overall organizational communication efficiency and climate (Muchinsky, 1977), ultimately reducing organizational performance. Research on teachers also indicates that long-term

emotional faking reduces teachers' well-being, ultimately affecting their work effectiveness and teacher-student relationships (Taxer & Frenzel, 2015; Gray, Wilcox, & Nordstokke, 2017). In other work domains, such as research on police officers, people's trust in police is related to their perception of the authenticity of officers' positive emotions: the more people believe officers' positive emotions are genuine, the more they tend to believe those officers perform better at work, whereas the more they believe such emotions are faked, the less they trust officers' work performance (Gelderen, Konijn, & Bakker, 2011). Similarly, in medical settings, the more doctors fake or conceal their emotions, the lower patient satisfaction becomes (Yagil & Schnapper-Cohen, 2016). Some researchers also argue that more surface acting significantly predicts poorer mental health levels (黄敏儿, 吴钟琦, 唐淦琦, 2010) and higher levels of emotional exhaustion (胡君辰, 杨林锋, 2009). Thus, Brotheridge and Grandey argue that more surface acting is more likely to induce self-alienation outside work and higher levels of job burnout (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Zhan, Wang, & Shi, 2016). In short, as an emotional strategy, fake emotion is widely used across various industries and profoundly affects both employees and their relationships with emotional interaction targets. Numerous research results show that the degree to which employees fake emotions at work is associated with more negative interpersonal effects and poorer work performance.

On the other hand, some research indicates that fake emotion can sometimes positively affect employee work performance and relationships. Groth et al. found that employees' inauthentic happiness did not affect customers' evaluations of service quality (Groth, Hennig-Thurau, & Walsh, 2009), likely because faking positive emotions is unrelated to service satisfaction (Wang & Groth, 2014). Additionally, Wong's (2013) research shows that consumers' views on emotional authenticity vary, and expressing and amplifying positive emotions helps achieve workplace interaction goals. Lechner and Paul's findings also confirm this point: customers experiencing positive emotions perceive frontline employees' positive emotional displays as more genuine, regardless of their objective authenticity level (Lechner & Paul, 2017).

Based on this literature review, current research has not reached unified conclusions regarding the nature of fake emotion's interpersonal effects in organizational work processes. Even when facing the same emotion, different receivers have different subjective feelings about the expresser's emotional authenticity, producing different effects on receivers' attitudes and behaviors (Hideg, 2012). Hideg and Van Kleef (2017) propose that an important moderating variable affecting fake emotion's effects is receivers' dialectical thinking. Since dialectical thinking allows people to consider issues from different perspectives, resulting in diverse thinking outcomes, it leads to diversified effects of fake emotion on interpersonal relationships. Wang and Groth's (2014) research suggests that fake emotion's effects may be related to familiarity: relatively speaking, customers familiar with employees are less sensitive to employees' suppression of negative emotions and less likely to perceive employees' genuine emotions. In summary, fake emotion's effects in organizational contexts are moderated by multiple

variables. When applying relevant research findings to reduce fake emotion's negative effects and promote employee interpersonal relationships and productivity, we must also consider details such as audience personality characteristics, task features, and work environment characteristics.

2.4 The Impact of Fake Emotion on Leadership Effectiveness

Leadership effectiveness reflects leadership capability but represents not only the leader's individual contribution but also the outcomes of the entire organizational team's work under leadership. It is the result of dynamic interactions among leaders, followers, work, and environment. Genuine emotional expression promotes team performance. For example, Moon et al. found that perceiving leaders' more genuine emotional expressions toward customers enhanced employees' identification with and trust in leaders, thereby improving employee work performance (Moon, Hur, & Choi, 2019). Weiss et al. found that leaders who expressed genuine emotions experienced reduced work stress as employee interactions increased, while leaders who preferred faking emotions experienced gradually increasing work stress (Weiss, Razinskas, Backmann, & Hoegl, 2017). For most organizations, member interactions are important media for team information sharing (Patrashkova-Volzdoska, McComb, Green, & Compton, 2003; 葛宝山, 刘牧, 2014). Meanwhile, interaction, communication, and trust are key factors affecting leadership, team performance, and creativity (Boies, Fiset, & Gill, 2015). Therefore, for leaders, fake emotion may negatively affect leadership effectiveness by influencing the quality of organizational members' interactive communication. For instance, generally, when leaders display humility, employees feel more confident expressing their authentic selves; however, when doubting the authenticity of leaders' humility, the emotional relationship between employees and leaders becomes fragile (O'et al., 2019), ultimately reducing leadership effectiveness.

Although fake emotion may negatively affect leadership effectiveness, in many contexts, genuine emotions do not help improve leadership effectiveness. Much existing literature indicates that honesty, openness, and trust are hallmarks of good relationships, that genuine emotional expression facilitates social interaction (Hareli & Hess, 2012; Niedenthal & Brauer, 2012), and benefits team innovation (季先江, 2011). However, genuine emotions do not always work in workplace leadership. Research shows no significant difference in perceived leader effectiveness between leaders who are inauthentic but virtuous and those who are authentic but unethical (Bartsch, Mansur, & Ramus, 2018). Positive traits in leaders do not necessarily elicit positive responses from followers. When leaders have stronger principles, employees actually fake more, typically creating an appearance of conformity by pretending to be agreeable and displaying values that match the organization (Hewlin, Dumas, & Burnett, 2017). Liraz and Guttman (2018) also found that sometimes displaying genuine negative emotions does not help form or strengthen workplace interpersonal relationships

but is more likely to produce negative effects. That is, when employees perceive leaders displaying genuine negative emotions, it is more likely to damage relationship quality.

Furthermore, employees' use of fake emotion also negatively affects leadership effectiveness. Generally, to meet organizational consistency demands in actual workplace settings, employees may typically choose to hide their negative emotions to conceal their genuine feelings (Salmela, 2005). However, when employees conceal their genuine emotions and managers happen to be skilled at emotion perception, the expression of fake emotions damages workplace interpersonal relationship quality even more (Xu, Liu, & Guo, 2014). Leadership effectiveness is not only a test of the leader's facilitative effect on the entire team but also an important indicator of healthy interaction within the organizational team. When the relationship between leaders and subordinates cannot maintain a healthy state, leadership effectiveness is inevitably affected.

As previously discussed, fake emotion has both positive and negative effects on leadership effectiveness. This leads to situations where fake emotion damages the relationship between leaders and employees in some contexts, while in others, it becomes an adaptive workplace quality. In complex workplace environments, leaders need subordinates' satisfaction with and loyalty to the organization to exert leadership effectiveness effectively, while subordinates value the degree of personal self-actualization as important workplace content. How leaders and employees coordinate their relationship to enable leaders to steer better, subordinates to execute leaders' intentions, complete goals with quality and quantity, and maximize leadership effectiveness—adjusting emotional strategies and using fake emotion plays an important role in solving these problems.

3 Mechanisms of the Interpersonal Effects of Fake Emotion

Due to the complexity of interpersonal interactions, the effects of fake emotion on interpersonal relationships are multifaceted. Therefore, current research conclusions on fake emotion's interpersonal influence do not show purely positive or purely negative effects. However, the view that fake emotion, as an emotional strategy transmitting important information, has extensive and profound effects on daily interactions is undeniable. Meanwhile, inconsistent conclusions also suggest that fake emotion's effects on interpersonal interactions are likely moderated by other variables, involving different mechanisms or pathways. So how does fake emotion affect interpersonal interactions across various domains? What are the pathways and mechanisms through which fake emotion influences interpersonal interactions?

Figure 1 [Figure 1: see original paper] The Pathway of Fake Emotion's Interpersonal Effects

Simply put, the pathways through which fake emotion influences interpersonal relationships can be summarized as three routes (Figure 1): First, from the expresser's perspective, when expressers fake emotions for impure purposes, two

interpersonal outcomes emerge: one is successful faking, where receivers believe the expresser's emotional display. In this situation, fake emotion's interpersonal effects are largely consistent with those of normal emotional displays, as both can arouse receivers' corresponding emotions to some extent. The other outcome is failed faking, where receivers can more or less perceive the inauthenticity of the expresser's emotional display, and the results in this situation are more complex because this is a dynamic process of interaction among expressers, receivers, and the environment. The expresser's motivations and traits, the receiver's cultural type and reasoning ability, and the fake emotion context all influence the receiver's behavioral decisions, which in turn provide feedback prompting expressers to revise their emotional strategies. Therefore, when anticipating fake emotion's effects from the expresser's perspective, two possibilities emerge: successful faking or detected faking.

Second, from the receiver's perspective, receivers may be persuaded by expressers' fake emotions or may successfully detect the faking. Corresponding to the two situations above, when receivers are persuaded by fake emotions, their reactions or decisions are consistent with their performance when perceiving genuine emotions. When receivers successfully detect fake emotions, they adjust their emotional strategies based on this information. However, a third special situation exists: the expresser does not fake emotions, but the receiver believes they have. In this case, receivers adjust their emotional expression in the same way they would when dealing with fake emotions. Therefore, even when facing the same emotion, if subjective feelings about the emotion's authenticity differ, receivers will develop different attitudes and behavioral approaches toward expressers (Hideg, 2012). Due to individual differences and situational complexity, people are often constrained by their own limitations and inevitably make errors when analyzing and responding to received emotional information, leading to different emotional coping strategies. We believe that the interpersonal impact of emotion in this situation is also brought about by "fake emotion."

In summary, whether from the expresser's or receiver's perspective, the receiver's perception of fake emotion is a crucial factor determining how fake emotion works. How receivers perceive and interpret emotions will decisively affect interpersonal interactions between both parties. Based on this, we will explore the mechanisms of fake emotion's interpersonal effects from the receiver's perspective.

Combining previous emotion research, we roughly attribute the mechanisms of fake emotion's interpersonal influence to two types: first, the receiver's affective reaction, that is, emotional arousal triggered by emotional transmission and contagion; second, "projecting oneself onto others," or speculating about others from one's own perspective.

3.1 Interpersonal Effects Triggered by Affective Reactions

Affective reaction may be one mechanism of fake emotion' s effects. "Affective reaction" refers to emotional behaviors triggered in receivers by situational features and the liking experiences generated by observing others' emotional displays (Van Kleef, 2009). The affective reaction process is also a process of emotional transmission (Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1993). Broadly defined, emotional transmission refers to the process where receivers' emotional states and expressions converge with those of expressers, triggered by others' emotions (Hoffman, 2002). During affective reactions, expressers' emotions can arouse receivers' corresponding emotions. An individual' s emotional state can influence others' emotional perception; thus, when expressers successfully fake their emotions, receivers experience emotional resonance, which affects their behavioral attitudes. The existence of affective reactions enables people to achieve prosocial and self-serving goals through emotional strategies (Cialdini, 2001). Moreover, the affective reaction mechanism may be exploited by those with impure purposes to create manipulative scenarios for achieving certain goals (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). For example, in donation contexts, fundraisers may exaggerate their sadness levels to obtain more donations. When donors are influenced by the exaggerated sadness, experience affective reactions, and subsequently develop corresponding levels of sympathy, they are more likely to make donation decisions benefiting the fundraiser. This partly explains why people are willing to risk exposure by faking emotions. In short, although the degree of receivers' emotional reactions to the same emotion may vary due to different interpretations of emotional information, it is undeniable that receivers' emotional reactions constitute positive feedback to expressers and represent an important mechanism through which fake emotion produces interpersonal effects.

3.2 Interpersonal Effects Triggered by "Projecting Oneself onto Others"

"Projecting oneself onto others" may also be a behavioral mechanism of fake emotion' s effects. This phrase means measuring or speculating about others using one' s own psychology. Based on a review of previous literature, we explain "projecting oneself onto others" from two perspectives: First, in social interactions, receivers stand from their own perspective and, based on their own naive experiential theories (such as beliefs and preferences) combined with contextual factors, speculate about others' behavioral causes, make judgments about the authenticity of others' emotional behaviors, and adjust their own reactions. The perspective holding this view is primarily "Theory-Theory." The second orientation suggests that in the process of fake emotion's effects, receivers imagine themselves in the other party' s situation, simulate the psychological processes the other party might experience, and simultaneously predict the other party' s genuine reactions. They then combine these predictions with the other party' s actual reactions to judge the authenticity of the emotional behavior and adjust their coping strategies. The perspective representing this orientation is

best exemplified by “Simulation-Theory.”

3.2.1 Theory-Theory

This orientation posits that people can infer others’ mental states from their behaviors, environment, or other cues based on their own knowledge and experience, such as their cultural type (Hideg, 2012) and reasoning ability (Hideg & Van Kleef, 2017), and accordingly speculate about and analyze the other party’s psychological and behavioral characteristics (Wellman, 1990). In fake emotion contexts, receivers may detect discrepancies between expressers’ genuine emotions and displayed emotions by combining their own experience with environmental cues (Côté et al., 2013). Because of these perceived discrepancies, receivers can make what they consider to be judgments about emotional authenticity without necessarily knowing the expresser’s genuine inner feelings. For example, when a gift-giver receives very joyful feedback from the recipient, they may not believe the emotion is as strong as displayed because they inadvertently learned that the recipient owns a better alternative to the gift. In this case, the gift-giver may use these small clues to speculate about the motivation behind the recipient’s emotional display: whether it is out of politeness or genuine happiness, thereby generating corresponding emotional reactions. Subsequently, receivers infer the expresser’s character traits or behavioral motivations from their emotional displays: when they speculate through certain clues that the expresser has faked their emotions, receivers may believe the expresser is also hiding something on other important matters (Côté, 2005), thus influencing their subsequent behaviors and attitudes (Van Kleef, 2009). In short, Theory-Theory emphasizes standing from the receiver’s own perspective and attributing the other party’s emotions based on existing knowledge and experience.

3.2.2 Simulation-Theory

In contrast to “Theory-Theory,” another theory is “Simulation-Theory.” Simulation-Theory 主张 that people typically understand others’ thoughts through simulation processes, attributing by simulating the same state as the target in their own minds (Von Eckardt, 1994). Using the gift-giving example again, when giving a gift, people may place themselves in the recipient’s state of mind and speculate about the recipient’s reaction upon receiving the gift. When the displayed emotion is inconsistent with expectations—for instance, being too intense or too flat—they redefine this emotional display and adjust their response. This is a reasoning process where receivers reshape the other party’s behavior during interaction (Van Kleef, 2009). In this process, they deduce the initial state corresponding to the other party’s emotion, place themselves in it, operate the entire process through their own cognitive processes, complete the speculation (Goldman & Sripada, 2005), and make corresponding judgments and reactions based on the other party’s actual performance.

In short, the core argument of Theory-Theory is to infer target information and make corresponding reactions from one's own perspective, based on one's own experiential theories. Simulation-Theory, however, stands from the other party's perspective, simulating similar states and conducting deductions. The debate between these two theories has persisted for years. However, setting aside philosophers' and psychologists' specific arguments, we can find that whether attributing from one's own perspective or the other party's perspective, both theories involve people speculating about others' emotional behaviors from their own standpoint. Receivers infer the emotions the other party feels due to events based on their emotional display state. When the other party's displayed emotion does not match the emotion receivers speculate they should feel, they may perceive the expresser's emotions as inauthentic and believe the expresser has faked emotions, adjusting their coping strategies accordingly. Receivers' speculations may be correct, and the expresser's faking strategy fails; or their speculations may be incorrect, meaning the expresser did not fake emotions, but the receiver perceived fake emotions. Under this bias, regardless of whether the expresser's emotional faking succeeds, fake emotion's interpersonal effects begin to form. In conclusion, people are often constrained by their own knowledge and experience, unable to completely free themselves from their own thoughts to think from others' perspectives, thus creating asymmetry between the "perceived other" and the "actual other." When the "perceived other" dominates emotional behavioral interactions, various interpersonal influences brought about by fake emotion emerge.

4.1 Researching the Interpersonal Effects of Fake Emotion from the Receiver's Perspective

Existing research in relevant fields has mostly focused on the impact of fake emotion on expressers' own psychological and behavioral outcomes. For example, in game research, scholars have primarily focused on how expressers' faking of anger affects their own game outcomes (Andrade & Ho, 2009). In organizational work research, scholars have paid more attention to fake emotion's effects on expressers' interpersonal relationship quality and work performance (Ute, Jonas, & Günter, 2010). However, few studies have examined, from the receiver's perspective, the conditions under which receivers more easily detect fake emotions and their corresponding emotional coping strategies. Therefore, future research could explore fake emotion's interpersonal effects from the receiver's perspective. For instance, after receivers perceive and process emotional information from other individuals in the environment and make corresponding emotional behaviors, they could receive experimental feedback. Through this manipulation, receivers learn whether their perceived "fake emotion" is accurate, allowing further investigation of how receivers adjust their coping strategies. Additionally, the multiple factors involved in social interaction processes—such as expressers' own traits, receivers' own traits, and bilateral emotional relationships—interact with each other (Rapoport, 1976). However, current research mostly focuses on a single factor, such as only examining expressers' behavioral reactions in fake

emotion contexts or the personal benefits they obtain, without simultaneously considering attitudinal and behavioral changes of both parties during emotional interactions. Therefore, future research could also examine emotional strategy adjustments and related effects of both fake emotion expressers and receivers in interactive contexts.

4.2 Research on Group Fake Emotion

In social contexts, emotion's impact at the individual level differs from its impact at the group level (Cameron & Payne, 2011; Fischer & Manstead, 2008). A group is a collection of people with bonds who can interact (Shaw, 1981). Individual behavior is deeply influenced by group processes, bearing obvious group imprints. Current research on fake emotion primarily focuses on individuals, such as examining fake emotion's effects on individual behavioral attitudes or final benefits. However, few studies have examined the effects of individual fake emotion on groups or the effects of group fake emotion on individuals or groups. People's social lives cannot exist apart from groups, and group emotion has important social significance for group members and other groups interacting with them. Therefore, systematically exploring the influencing factors and psychological behavioral effects of group fake emotion also has important theoretical value and practical significance.

Generally, when a group of people share common goals and use the same emotional strategy to interact with another group, does the common variable of emotional faking also have certain effects on individuals within the emotional expression group? Specifically, future research could explore the roles played by intragroup emotional transmission and group common goals in the formation of group fake emotion, or study the psychological characteristics of individual group members from the perspective of the receiving group in group fake emotion contexts. Additionally, different valences of fake emotion may also affect group relationships, and future research could examine the impact of different fake emotion valences on intragroup and intergroup relationship quality.

4.3 Similarities and Differences in the Effects of Fake Emotion Valence on Interpersonal Outcomes

In actual emotional events, people are rarely affected by only a single type of emotion. Current research on fake emotion's interpersonal effects mostly focuses on only one induced emotion. The advantage of such research is that it can clearly understand the role of a specific valence of fake emotion in interpersonal relationships within a single study, but the conclusions from single-emotion studies have relatively limited application scope and certain ecological validity limitations. For example, multiple game studies have examined the effects of faking anger, with results confined to the finding that successful faking of anger can gain more concessions (Adam & Brett, 2018), while failed faking of anger leads to greater losses (Tng & Au, 2014). These studies clearly demonstrate

the role of faking anger in interpersonal relationships but fail to integrate and compare different fake emotions. However, actual game contexts often involve multiple emotional strategy choices, and faking anger is not the only approach. Single-emotion studies cannot compare fake emotions of different valences or arousal levels to provide better emotional choice strategies. Moreover, few previous studies have simultaneously examined the differences in interpersonal effects between positive and negative fake emotions within a certain scope. As mentioned earlier, the lack of consistent conclusions regarding fake emotion' s interpersonal effects may likely result from differences in the types and valences of emotions induced in studies. Therefore, future research could attempt to compare the similarities and differences in interpersonal effects of fake emotions of different valences across various contexts and explore the similarities and differences in receivers' attribution methods and related mechanisms under different fake emotion valences.

4.4.1 Research Through Feedback Comparison

The cognitive neural mechanisms of psychological effects have been a popular research topic in recent years. However, current exploration of the cognitive neural mechanisms underlying fake emotion' s effects remains relatively scarce. In previous research, scholars have used various technical methods such as eye-tracking (Calvo, Gutiérrez-García, Averó, & Lundqvist, 2013; Hossain, Gedeon, Sankaranarayana, Apthorp, & Dawel, 2016), EEG (Alhagry, Aly, & El-Khoribi, 2017; Murugappan, Juhari, Nagarajan, & Yaacob, 2009), and functional magnetic resonance imaging (Gur et al., 2002) to study fake emotion recognition from cognitive and neural perspectives. Previous research has also explored the cognitive physiological mechanisms of fake emotion, such as comparing the physiological process characteristics of people' s discrimination between genuine and fake emotions to reveal fake emotion' s physiological mechanisms. For instance, researchers using eye-tracking technology found that compared with genuine smile stimuli, people fixated longer on the mouth and eyes of fake smiles (Calvo et al., 2013), while observers' pupils dilated more when facing fake smile stimuli (Hossain et al., 2016). These studies have demonstrated to some extent that fake emotion may involve different cognitive physiological processes or neural mechanisms.

However, few studies have directly focused on the cognitive neural mechanisms of fake emotion' s interpersonal effects. In daily interpersonal relationships, individuals interact with each other. In social interactions, fake emotion receivers are also emotion expressers, and emotion expressers are often also receivers. Therefore, future research could provide feedback to examine the cognitive physiological processes when individuals act as receivers and expressers, or become receivers again, before and after receiving feedback in fake emotion contexts. Future research could utilize more effective technical methods (such as ERP, fMRI, fNIRS, and TMS) to explore the temporal characteristics of brain regions involved in cognitive processing during individuals' fake emotion

recognition processes and investigate cognitive neural intervention methods that promote people' s recognition of fake emotion, further expanding the breadth and depth of research in the field of fake emotion' s interpersonal effects.

4.4.2 Research from the Perspective of Periodicity/Incidence of Fake Emotion

Future research could also investigate the cognitive neural mechanisms of fake emotion from the perspective of periodicity and sustainability. As mentioned earlier, fake emotions in organizational contexts and leadership effects may be long-term, periodic emotional expressions, while fake emotions in game processes and prosocial behavior are generally short-term, incidental emotional displays. Based on a review of previous research, we find that studies on organizational behavior and leadership effects show considerable inconsistency regarding whether fake emotion has negative effects on interpersonal relationships under similar circumstances, whereas studies on game processes and prosocial behavior mostly indicate that exposure of fake emotion harms interpersonal relationship quality and negatively affects outcome benefits (Côté, 2005; Tng & Au, 2014). These results largely suggest that the effects and corresponding cognitive neural processes of long-term periodic fake emotion are moderated by more variables and involve more complex mechanisms.

Current research mostly uses behavioral experiments to observe changes in behavioral indicators in corresponding contexts, but no studies have analyzed or compared the cognitive neural mechanisms of fake emotion from the perspective of periodicity or sustainability, nor have studies examined whether long-term or periodic fake emotion causes structural or functional changes in relevant brain regions. Therefore, future research could address these gaps by creating corresponding contexts to explore and compare the differences in cognitive neural mechanisms when expressers use fake emotion repeatedly over the long term versus occasionally in the short term, specifically including examining whether activated brain regions are consistent or whether cognitive processing time courses differ. Additionally, future research could compare whether cognitive neural mechanisms differ when people who achieve different interpersonal outcomes due to long-term repeated use of fake emotion employ fake emotion, further revealing the reasons for different conclusions regarding fake emotion' s effects in organizational labor and leadership effectiveness.

4.5 Fake Emotion and Culture

DeVos and Hippler (1969) argued that human psychology and behavior are determined and constrained by culture; therefore, no research can exist apart from cultural contexts. As an important psychological process, emotion is also influenced by culture and interacts with it (Kitayama & Markus, 1994), profoundly affecting individuals' psychological and behavioral outcomes. In different cultural backgrounds, individuals' emotional expression and understand-

ing also show certain differences. For example, research on emotion regulation processes across 23 countries found that participants from collectivist cultures scored higher on emotion suppression, while those from individualist cultures scored relatively lower (Matsumoto, Yoo, & Nakagawa, 2008). Other research found that participants from individualist countries were more polarized in their treatment of positive and negative emotions, showing stronger behaviors of pursuing positive emotions and avoiding negative emotions, whereas in collectivist cultures, this phenomenon of pursuing positive emotions and avoiding negative emotions was less intense and more balanced (Miyamoto, Ma, & Wilken, 2017). Although many studies have explored the relationship between emotion and culture, few have examined cross-cultural differences in the psychological and behavioral effects of fake emotion. Therefore, future research could explore the effects of fake emotion on different components of interpersonal relationships across different cultural backgrounds, such as the similarities and differences in the functions and effects of fake emotion across cultural contexts or how it interacts with subcultural characteristics. Additionally, issues such as how receivers in different cultures interpret fake emotion and the differences in thresholds for determining fake emotion across cultural backgrounds deserve further in-depth exploration.

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Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.

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