

## Supervisor-Subordinate Guanxi and Employee Silence

**Authors:** Zhou, Yiyong, Zhu, Yanhan, Zhou, Yiyong

**Date:** 2021-07-22T00:00:00+00:00

### Abstract

We examined the relationship between supervisor-subordinate guanxi (SSG) and employee silence (ES), and the moderating role of self-regulatory focus (SRF) works on such relationship. With both three dimensions of SSG (deference to supervisor, personal-life inclusion, and affective attachment) and two kinds of SRF (promotion and prevention focus) controlled by scenarios, the results from a survey of 230 part-time MPA program students in Mainland China indicated that (1) ES is positively related to deference to supervisor, affective attachment, and to a lesser extent, personal-life inclusion, and (2) the moderating effect of SRF is significant for the relationships between each dimension of SSG and ES, and specifically, there is less possibility for promotive subordinate to be silent than those with prevention focus in the workplace. The implications of our findings are discussed and suggestions made for future studies.

### Full Text

#### Who is Responsible for “Yes Men” ? Supervisor-Subordinate Guanxi and Employee Silence: The Role of Self-Regulatory Focus

Zhou Yiyong<sup>1,2,3</sup> and Zhu Yanhan<sup>1</sup> <sup>1</sup>School of Hanhong; School of Political Science and Public Administration, Southwest University, Chongqing 400715, China

<sup>2</sup>CAS Key Laboratory of Behavioral Science, Institute of Psychology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing 100101, China

<sup>3</sup>Department of Psychology, University of Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing, China

We examined the relationship between supervisor-subordinate guanxi (SSG) and employee silence (ES), and the moderating role of self-regulatory focus (SRF)

in this relationship. With both three dimensions of SSG (deference to supervisor, personal-life inclusion, and affective attachment) and two types of SRF (promotion and prevention focus) controlled through scenarios, results from a survey of 230 part-time MPA program students in Mainland China indicated that (1) ES is positively related to deference to supervisor, affective attachment, and to a lesser extent, personal-life inclusion, and (2) the moderating effect of SRF is significant for the relationships between each dimension of SSG and ES. Specifically, promotion-focused subordinates are less likely to remain silent than those with prevention focus in the workplace. The implications of our findings are discussed and suggestions made for future studies.

**Keywords:** Supervisor-subordinate guanxi; Employee silence; Self-regulatory focus

Organizations increasingly rely on diverse opinions from their employees to enhance organizational effectiveness and processes [?, ?] and to respond appropriately to dynamic business environments [?, ?, ?, ?]. Unfortunately, employee silence (ES) occurs in almost every type of organization worldwide and is emerging as a “big deal” in the organizational behavior field [?, ?]. Pinder and Harlos (2001) defined ES as “the withholding of any form of genuine expression about the individual’s behavioral, cognitive and/or affective evaluations of his or her organizational circumstances to persons who are perceived to be capable of effecting change or redress” (p. 334), which represents a harmful element that disrupts individual extra-performance [?, ?, ?, ?, ?], team performance [?, ?], organizational effectiveness [?, ?, ?], and continuous process improvement [?, ?]. Given these adverse influences of ES on both organizational-level development and individual-level behaviors, the antecedents of ES have drawn considerable attention over the past few decades in academic and practical fields [?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?].

The relationship with one’s supervisor has been proven to be the most important contextual factor influencing subordinates’ behaviors in Western contexts [?, ?]. Regrettably, indigenous empirical research for further verification remains under-researched in the field of organizational behavior [?, ?, ?, ?]. Consequently, the question of whether supervisor-subordinate guanxi (SSG), an indigenous Chinese construct that is not akin to the supervisor-subordinate relationship in Western culture, triggers the presence of “yes men” has been neglected to some degree. Additionally, researchers have not shown sufficient interest in the relationship between ES and employee attributes, which also significantly affect their behaviors [?, ?, ?, ?, ?].

Given the salience of these issues, our study aimed to integrate SSG with self-regulatory focus (SRF), an endogenous factor related to one’s behavioral outcomes [?, ?, ?, ?], to explore the relationships among SSG, SRF, and ES using individual samples from Chinese mainland.

## Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

### Supervisor-Subordinate Guanxi and Employee Silence

Guanxi, which refers to the establishment of relationships and connections [?, ?], along with group harmony and collectivism, constitutes core characteristics of the Eastern world. As an indigenous Chinese construct, supervisor-subordinate guanxi (SSG) includes deference to the supervisor, personal-life inclusion, and affective attachment [?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?]. This ubiquitous relationship represents the most critical interpersonal relationship in Eastern organizational settings [?, ?, ?, ?, ?]. Similar to the “ruler-subject relationship” from earlier historical periods, deference to the supervisor emphasizes that the subordinate should be devoted and obedient to the supervisor. The subordinate obeys the supervisor unconditionally, even when he/she disagrees with the supervisor’s decision. Personal-life inclusion means that the “subordinate and supervisor are included in each other’s private or family lives” [?, ?, ?]. Affective attachment is viewed as “an emotional connection, understanding, and willingness to care for one another in any circumstance” [?, ?, ?]. Characterized by caring and altruism, affective attachment emphasizes sharing and non-contingent help.

Immersed in a guanxi-oriented society, social relationships are characterized by a tendency to use family relationships as a model in other life domains [?, ?], especially in the Eastern world, where maintaining “good relations” is a key motivation for workers [?, ?, ?, ?, ?]. Members in communal relationships are affectively attached to each other, and they develop contract-based relationships through participation in social activities or related processes, such as home visits and meal sharing [?, ?]. Those social interactions attach significance to commitment to the intrinsic properties of relationships [?, ?, ?, ?] and are motivated by maintenance of an emotional connection or spiritual sharing between superiors and subordinates [?, ?]. Consequently, employees are more willing to withhold their different views to maintain a shared identification. Deference to the supervisor, however, stresses hierarchy and behavioral norms. Subordinates are supposed to show their obedience and deference to their leaders in an authority relationship [?, ?], especially in China with high power distance. Confucian teaching in Chinese culture also values authority and enhances deference to those of higher status [?, ?]. Thus, employees may be more likely to keep silent without any objections or complaints. Consequently, we propose that every single dimension of SSG exerts a strong positive influence on employee silence behavior.

**Hypothesis 1.** Employee silence will be positively associated with each dimension of supervisor-subordinate guanxi (deference to supervisor, personal-life inclusion, and affective attachment).

### Self-Regulatory Focus as a Moderator Between Supervisor-Subordinate Guanxi and Employee Silence

According to self-regulatory focus (SRF) theory, people engage in different atti-

tudes and behaviors by stimulating two fundamental motivational orientations, namely promotion focus and prevention focus [?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?]. Both of these situational SRFs are motivational orientations that stimulate employees' behavior to make contributions to their work, but in different ways [?, ?, ?, ?]. Promotion focus is associated with goals and strategies regarding aspirations and positive emotions, whereas prevention focus is related to "ought" goals involving the fulfillment of duties and obligations through vigilant responses [?, ?, ?]. Drawing from previous studies that different levels of SRF lead to different behavioral outcomes [?, ?] and that motivation influences individual potential willingness to engage in silent dissent [?, ?], we consider employees' SRF as a significant variable that may activate their work-related behaviors inherently and plays a substantial moderating role in the relationship between SSG and ES.

Promotion-focused individuals are more concerned about how to realize desired goals and improve the status quo, showing extreme passion and innovation in moving toward desired end-states [?, ?, ?, ?]. In the context of organizational crisis, they often pay attention to potential opportunities for change and improvement and employ eagerness strategies for identifying and exploiting paths to organizational success [?, ?], which makes it more possible for them to engage in extra-role behaviors such as voice. Conversely, people with a prevention focus are avoidance-oriented, sensitive to potential problems, and concerned about being in unfavorable situations [?, ?]. When confronted with organizational change, they usually experience high-activation negative emotion (e.g., anxiety) and attribute it to the failure of attaining ought goals, so they strive to finish their tasks responsibly and avoid negative outcomes. In other words, they emphasize adherence to rules and regard success as a stay of execution [?, ?]. Thus, we have reason to infer that they are more willing to withhold their different views from leaders. Accordingly, we anticipate that when employees have a prevention focus, the positive relationship between SSG and ES becomes stronger, and employees are more likely to be silent instead of speaking up their different opinions.

**Hypothesis 2.** Self-regulatory focus moderates the positive relationships between each dimension of supervisor-subordinate guanxi and employee silence, such that the relationship is stronger under conditions of employees with prevention (vs. promotion) focus.

## Method

### Participants and Procedure

This study used an experimental design to investigate the positive relationship between each dimension of SSG and ES, and the moderating role of SRF in this relationship (Hypotheses 1 and 2). A total of 230 part-time MPA program students (63.8 percent male;  $M_{age} = 29.17, SD = 3.307$ ;  $M_{tenure} = 6.01, SD = 2.337$ ) from three universities on the Chinese mainland participated in the ex-

periment. They were enrolled in Management, Organizational Behavior, and the Practice of Social Research courses as part of their program.

Independent variables (SSG and SRF) were manipulated using a scenario procedure. The experimental design was a 3 (affective attachment, personal-life inclusion vs. deference to supervisor)  $\times$  2 (promotion vs. prevention) group design. Participants were randomly assigned to one of six groups and asked to imagine themselves as the employee described, then make a decision regarding the scenario. People with a promotion focus were described as aggressive, innovative, and strongly desiring an ideal state, while people with a prevention focus were described as cautious, conservative, and risk-avoidant. The experiment was conducted in 20 minutes with paper and pencil. All participants received approximately \$3 (20 RMB) in remuneration. To ensure the reliability and confidentiality of participants' responses, all were told that there were no right or wrong answers and that all information was given anonymously and would only be used for research purposes. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to conducting the experiment, and they were allowed to withdraw at any time during the experiment process.

## Measures

The SSG scale [?, ?] was based on Chinese culture, and the SRF scale was originally in English. Two English scales were translated into Chinese using back-translation, and the process was reviewed by two experts in English to ensure accuracy.

*Supervisor-subordinate guanxi.* We used the 12-item self-report Multifactor Supervisor-Subordinate Guanxi Questionnaire (SSGQ) [?, ?] to measure SSG. The SSGQ scale measured various aspects of affective attachment, personal-life inclusion, and deference to supervisors with 4 items each, and the alphas of three dimensions were , respectively. The affective attachment dimension includes items such as “My supervisor and I always share thoughts, opinions, and feelings about work and life.” A sample item from the personal-life dimension is “During holidays, my supervisor and I call or visit each other.” The deference to supervisor dimension measures situations such as “I am willing to obey my supervisor unconditionally.”

*Self-regulatory focus.* We used the 18-item self-report Promotion/Prevention Scale [?, ?, ?, ?] to measure individual SRF. Respondents rated each item on a 9-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (not at all true of me) to 9 (very true of me). Sample items from the promotion focus include “I frequently imagine how I will achieve my hopes and aspirations” and “I typically focus on the success I hope to achieve in the future.” The prevention focus includes items such as “I am anxious that I will fall short of my responsibilities and obligations” and “I often worry that I will fail to accomplish my academic goals.” The effectiveness of the SRF manipulation was assessed by two items following the scenario from 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much so): “To what extent do you consider yourself a promotion-focused person?” and “To what extent do you consider yourself a

prevention-focused person?” Cronbach’s alpha reliability for this scale was .

*Employee silence.* A single item was used to measure the extent to which participants were willing to be silent. Participants rated “To what extent did you agree with your leaders’ opinion with consideration about your guanxi?” on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (extremely disagree) to 7 (extremely agree). Cronbach’s alpha reliability was .

*Control variables.* We controlled for participants’ age, gender, education, and tenure because of their potential effects on silence behavior (). Age as a continuous variable was self-reported in years. Gender was dummy coded (0 = men, 1 = women). Education was measured on an ordinal scale ranging from 1 (completed bachelor’s degree) to 4 (obtained doctorate). Tenure was measured on an ordinal scale from 1 (less than 2 years) to 4 (10 or more years).

### Manipulation Check

To control for alternative explanations of our findings, we performed a twofold manipulation check. We controlled for scenario realism with one item developed by Fedor and colleagues [?, ?], captured on a 5-point scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). We also used an expert panel drawn from four university faculty members comprising professors who have published research papers on guanxi and personality. According to the definitions and items for SSG and SRF, all four judges stated that the scenario captured the nature of three different dimensions of SSG and two types of SRF. Thus, the scenario manipulation was considered successful.

## Results

### Manipulation Checks

A 3 (affective attachment, personal-life inclusion vs. deference to supervisor)  $\times$  2 (promotion vs. prevention) analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed that participants described as ambitious, innovative, and eager considered themselves more promotion-focused relative to those characterized as vigilant, prudent, and conservative ( $M = 5.92, SD = 1.807$  vs.  $M = 2.04, SD = 1.870$ , respectively,  $F = 255.728, p = .001$ ). These participants also perceived themselves as being less prevention-focused in the same situation ( $M = 2.18, SD = 1.760$  vs.  $M = 5.87, SD = 1.794$ , respectively,  $F = 247.446, p = .001$ ).

After the manipulation checks, we performed a univariate ANOVA to test the effects of SSG and SRF on ES while controlling for demographic characteristics (age, gender, and tenure). Levene’s test of equality of error variance showed that the error variance of ES was equal across groups ( $F = 1.645, p = .149$ ). The between-subjects ANOVA showed that both main effects were significant. Significant differences were present between the three dimensions of SSG ( $F = 8.175, p = .001$ ) and the two types of SRF ( $F = 75.592, p = .001$ ) on ES. For the main effect of SSG on ES, ES was positively related to deference to supervisor ( $M = 4.64, SD = 1.538$ ), affective attachment ( $M = 3.83, SD = 1.728$ ), and to a

lesser extent, personal-life inclusion ( $M = 3.77, SD = 1.589$ ). Thus, Hypothesis 1 was supported.

The two-factor interaction test ( $SSG \times SRF$ ) showed that the moderating effect of SRF was significant ( $F = 6.351, p = .002, \text{Adjusted } R^2 = .306$ ). Thus, Hypothesis 2 was supported (see Fig. 1 [Figure 1: see original paper]).

**Fig. 1. The Moderating Effect of Self-regulatory Focus.**

SSG = supervisor-subordinate guanxi; Focus = self-regulatory focus; Silence = employee silence

In the affective attachment situation, relative to promotion-focused subordinates, prevention-focused subordinates were more apt to remain silent when they had valuable suggestions that differed from their supervisors' opinions ( $M = 4.89, SD = 1.371$  vs.  $M = 2.79, SD = 1.380$ , respectively). The same pattern was observed for both the personal-life inclusion ( $M = 4.79, SD = 1.298$  vs.  $M = 2.77, SD = 1.158$ , respectively) and deference to supervisor situations ( $M = 4.97, SD = 1.614$  vs.  $M = 4.30, SD = 1.392$ , respectively).

## Discussion

This study aimed to determine whether SSG leads to ES when subordinates have valuable but dissenting thoughts from their supervisors in the workplace, and to examine the moderating role of SRF in this relationship. To our knowledge, although current research makes great contributions to the silence literature, studies on ES have not gained as much attention as voice behavior research [?, ?]. Additionally, indigenous empirical research on employees' behavior remains underdeveloped [?, ?], and SSG theory is still in the early stage of development [?, ?]. Our study attempts to fill this void by investigating the relationships among SSG, SRF, and ES. As expected, there are significant positive relationships between each dimension of SSG and ES and a significant moderating effect for SRF. The implications and suggestions for future studies are as follows.

## Theoretical Implications

First, our study contributes significantly to the understanding of guanxi literature and extends the ES research domain. The primary contribution lies in examining whether the three individual dimensions of SSG could induce ES independently. Unlike the basic principle of mutual trust and appreciation, which suggests that closer interpersonal relationships between subordinates and supervisors correlate with greater communication [?, ?, ?, ?], each individual dimension of SSG is positively and significantly related to ES, specifically under conditions of deference to supervisor. Our findings challenge research showing that SSG, via the mediating effect of leaders' trust, is negatively related to ES [?, ?], and highlight the significant role played by deference to supervisor, which has not received sufficient attention in Li et al.'s (2012) study with a unidimensional measure of SSG. Furthermore, our findings verify previous explorations of the relationship between employees' obedience to authority and their consequent

silence behavior. For instance, Lu and Xie (2013) found that even when subordinates have concerns about established politics or decisions, they are more willing to keep silent since they fear their dissents would provoke the leader. It is not uncommon in Chinese society that people, under the influence of traditional Confucianism and social values, attach much importance to maintaining good relationships with supervisors and are reluctant to voice dissent given the risk of relationship breakdown. “Silence is gold” ; considering the potential benefits of guanxi, subordinates view SSG establishment as a shortcut to promotion, so they are more willing to remain silent to please their supervisors, even at the cost of collective interests.

Second, our findings provide insight into the moderating effects of SRF on the relationships between each individual dimension of SSG and ES, and further verify previous studies on its impact on work-related attitudes. Prevention-focused subordinates are more likely to remain silent than those with a promotion focus when encountering workplace dilemmas. Guided by needs for security and fulfillment of responsibility [?, ?], prevention-focused subordinates seek “ought” goals and fear being in mismatched or undesirable situations [?, ?]. Therefore, they are more inclined to be “yes men” who obey instructions instead of speaking up their dissents. Our findings verify previous research that promotion and prevention focus, both of which guide employees’ behavior to improve work-related outcomes [?, ?], must challenge authority to express suggestions or concerns [?, ?]. It can be found that prevention-focused people are more sensitive to leaders’ authority.

### **Practical Implications**

Our findings offer several practical implications for human resource management. First, our study can be regarded as a call for public organizations that supervisors should maintain an appropriate distance from their subordinates to reduce the negative influence of SSG on ES and encourage subordinates to voice their opinions. Considering the bureaucracy- and obedience-centered culture in China, it is strongly recommended that supervisors monitor their authoritarian behavior. From an institutional perspective, more work needs to be done to restrict and decentralize supervisor power. For instance, expanding upward feedback channels, both public and private, to gather different opinions before making decisions. Regarding specific targets of upward communication [?, ?], supervisors should be more approachable and responsive, attending to subordinates’ feelings and needs. Additionally, there should be more equal and face-to-face communication between supervisors and subordinates to cultivate subordinates’ sense of belonging and motivate them to voice their thoughts more frequently.

Second, our study provides deeper understanding of the driving forces behind employees’ job motivation and decisions for human resource managers. Since prevention-focused people are more sensitive to perceived risk and tend to make safe choices [?, ?, ?, ?], one approach is enhancing transparency in performance-assessment systems and resource allocation to remove deficiencies in psycholog-

ical safety and collapse the “wall of silence.” Additionally, supervisors should give subordinates timely and constructive feedback to enhance their enthusiasm and innovative actions. Moreover, it is critical to organize cohesive and multidisciplinary work groups in which subordinates feel free to speak up, exchange information, and cooperate, thereby building a sense of trust and identification and effectively reducing their tendency to remain silent.

### **Limitations and Directions for Future Research**

There are several potential limitations in the current study. First, the measure of SRF was developed in a Western context with proven reliability and validity, but it may not be suitable for Chinese people. Additionally, participants were recruited from three universities in Chinese mainland. Data from more areas and groups are needed to generalize our results. Furthermore, since our findings are based on Chinese culture, the positive relationship between SSG and ES may not be as strong in other cultures, especially in Western contexts that are less similar to Chinese culture. We suggest that future studies verify our conclusions from a multicultural perspective.

### **Acknowledgment**

This research was supported by grants from the National Natural Science Foundation of China (71402148).

### **References**

- Bond, M. H., & Hwang, K. K. (1986). Top management innovations in banking: Does the composition of the top team make a difference? *Strategic Management Journal*, 10(1), 107-124. <http://doi.org/10.1002/smj.4250100709>
- Brinsfield, C. T. (2013). Employee silence motives: Investigation of dimensionality and development of measures. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 34(5), 671-697. <http://doi.org/10.1002/job.1829>
- Chang, C. C., Lin, B. C., & Chang, S. S. (2011). The relative advantages of benefit overlap versus category similarity in brand extension evaluation: The moderating role of self-regulatory focus. *Marketing Letters*, 22, 391-404. <http://doi.org/10.1007/s11002-010-9131-0>
- Chen, C. C., Chen, X. P., & Huang, S. S. (2013). Chinese guanxi: An integrative review and new directions for future research. *Management and Organization Review*, 9(1), 167-207.
- Chen, G. Q., & Tjosvold, D. (2007). Organizational values and procedures as antecedents for goal interdependence and collaborative effectiveness. *Asia Pacific J Manage*, 25(1), 93-112. <http://doi.org/10.1007/s10490-007-9038-3>
- Chen, Y., Friedman, R., Yu, E. H., Fang, W. H., & Lu, X. P. (2009). Supervisor-subordinate guanxi: Developing a three-dimensional model and scale. *Manage-*

*ment and Organization Review*, 5(3), 375-399. <http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1740-8784.2009.00153.x>

Claudia, S., Kai, S., Devin, G. R., Katharina, S., & Halszka, J. (2014). A motivational determinant of facial emotion recognition: Regulatory focus affects recognition of emotions in faces. *PLOS ONE*, 9(11), 1-9. <http://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0112383>

Detert, J. R., & Edmondson, A.C. (2011). Implicit voice theories: Taken-for-granted rules of self-censorship at work. *Academy of Management Journal*, 54(3), 461-488. <http://doi.org/10.5465/AMJ.2011.61967925>.

Fedor, D. B., Davis, W. D., Maslyn, J. M., & Mathieson, K. (2001). Performance improvement efforts in response to negative feedback: The roles of source power and recipient self-esteem. *Journal of Management*, 27(1), 79-97. [http://doi.org/10.1016/S0149-2063\(00\)00087-8](http://doi.org/10.1016/S0149-2063(00)00087-8)

Fiske, A. P. (1991). The cultural relativity of selfish individualism: Anthropological evidence that humans are inherently sociable. In M. Clark (Ed.), *Review of personality and social psychology: Altruism and prosocial behavior*, vol. 12: 176-214. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Förster, J., Higgins, E. T., & Bianco, A. T. (2003). Speed/accuracy decisions in tasks performance: Built in trade-off or separate strategic concerns. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 90, 148-164. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0749-5978\(02\)00509-5](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0749-5978(02)00509-5)

Grant, A. (2013). Rocking the boat but keeping it steady: The role of emotion regulation in employee voice. *Academy of Management Journal*, 56(6), 1703-1723. <http://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2011.0035>

Han, Y., & Altman, Y. (2009). Supervisor and subordinate Guanxi: A grounded investigation in the People's Republic of China. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 88(1), 91-104. <http://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-008-9827-8>

Higgins, E. T. (1997). Beyond pleasure and pain. *American Psychological Association*, 52, 1280-1300. <http://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.52.12.1280>

Holtzhausen, L., & Fourie, L. (2011). Employees' perceptions of institutional values and employer-employee relationships at the North-West University. *Journal of Public Affairs*, 11(4), 243-254. <http://doi.org/10.1002/pa.417>

Johnson, R. E., Chang, C.-H., & Yang, L. (2010). Commitment and motivation at work: The relevance of employee identity and regulatory focus. *Academy of Management Review*, 35, 226-245. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5465/AMR.2010.48463332>

Kark, R., Katz-Navon, T., & Delegach, M. (2015). The dual effects of leading for safety: The mediating role of employee regulatory focus. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 100(5), 1332-1348. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0038818>

- Lanaj, K., Chang, C. H., & Johnson, R. E. (2012). Regulatory focus and work-related outcomes: a review and meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 138(5), 998-1034. <http://doi.org/10.1037/a0027723>
- LePine, J. A., & Van Dyne, L. (2001). Voice and cooperative behavior as contrasting forms of contextual performance: Evidence of differential relationships with big five personality characteristics and cognitive ability. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86(2), 326-336. <http://doi.org/10.1037//0021-9010.86.2.326>
- Lin, S. H., & Johnson, R. E. (2015). A suggestion to improve a day keeps your depletion away: Examining promotive and prohibitive voice behaviors within a regulatory focus and ego depletion framework. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, in press. <http://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000018>
- Liang, J., Farh, C. I. C., & Farh, J. L. (2012). Psychological antecedents of promotive and prohibitive voice: A two-wave examination. *Academy of Management Journal*, 55(1), 71-92. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5465/amj.2010.0176>
- Lockwood, P., Jordan, C. H., & Kunda, Z. (2002). Motivation by positive or negative role models: Regulatory focus determines who will best inspire us. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84(4), 854-864. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037//0022-3514.83.4.854>
- Lu, J., & Xie, X. J. (2013). "Research on employee silence behavior: A review based on Chinese family enterprise" . *Asian Social Science*, 9(17), 47-52. <http://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v9n17p47>
- Milliken, F. J., Morrison, E. W., & Hewlin, P. F. (2003). An exploratory study of employee silence: Issues that employees don't communicate upward and why. *Journal of Management Studies*, 40(6), 1453-1476. <http://doi.org/10.1111/1467-6486.00387>
- Morrison, E. W. (2014). Employee voice and silence. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 1, 173-197. <http://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-031413-091328>
- Morrison, E. W. (2011). Employee voice behavior: Integration and directions for future research. *The Academy of Management Annals*, 5(1), 373-412. <http://doi.org/10.1080/19416520.2011.574506>
- Pinder, C. C., & Harlos, H. P. (2001). Employee silence: quiescence and acquiescence as responses to perceived injustice. In M. R. Buckley, J. R. B. Halbesleben, & A. R. Wheeler(Eds.), *Research in Personnel and Human Resource Management* (pp. 331-369). [http://doi.org/10.1016/S0742-7301\(01\)20007-3](http://doi.org/10.1016/S0742-7301(01)20007-3)
- Scholer, A. A., & Higgins, E. T. (2011). Promotion and prevention systems: Regulatory focus dynamics within self-regulatory hierarchies. In Baumeister RF, Vohs KD (Eds.), *Handbook of self-regulation: Research, Theory and Application* (pp.143-161). [http://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601\(08\)60381-0](http://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601(08)60381-0)

Tangirala, S., & Ramanujam, R. (2012). Ask and you shall hear (but not always): Examining the relationship between manager consultation and employee voice. *Personnel Psychology*, 65(2), 251-282. <http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.2012.01248.x>

Van Dyne, L., Ang, S., & Botero, I. C. (2003). Conceptualizing employee silence and employee voice as multidimensional constructs. *Journal of Management Studies*, 40(6), 1359-1392. <http://doi.org/10.1111/1467-6486.00384>.

Wang, P., & Ye, X. (2014). A Review of Supervisor-Subordinate GuanXi.

Wei, L. Q., Liu, J., Chen, Y. Y., & Wu, L. Z. (2010). Political skill, supervisor-subordinate guanxi and career prospects in Chinese firms. *Journal of Management Studies*, 47(3), 437-454. <http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2009.00871.x>

Zhang, K., Song, L. J., Hackett, R. D., & Bycio, P. (2006). Cultural boundary of expectancy theory-based performance management: A commentary on DeNiSi and Pritchard' s performance improvement model. *Management and Organization Review*, 2(2), 279-294. <http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1740-8784.2006.00044.x>

Zhang, L., Deng, Y. L., & Wang, Q. (2014). An exploratory study of chinese motives for building supervisor-subordinate guanxi. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 124(4), 659-675. <http://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-013-1899-4>

Zhang, Y., Lepine, J. A., Buckman, B. R., & Wei, F. (2014). It' s not fair. Or is it? The role of justice and leadership in explaining work stressor-job performance relationships. *Academy of Management Journal*, 57(3), 675-697. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5465/amj.2011.1110>

Zhang, Z. X., Shi, J. Q., & Liu, J. (2013). Advances and frontiers in research of organizational behavior and leadership. *Advances in Psychological Science*, 24(3), 317-326. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3724/SP.J.1042.2016.00317>

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

*Source: ChinaXiv –Machine translation. Verify with original.*