

Leader Reaction Mechanisms to Employee-Generative AI Suggestions: A Multi-Level Study from a Social Comparison Perspective

Authors: Han Yi, Ma Chaoyi, Zong Shuwei, Han Yi

Date: 2025-11-28T00:15:08+00:00

Abstract

The integration of GenAI into organizational decision-making has become an irreversible trend, yet academic research on GenAI advice adoption remains insufficient. In the leadership decision-making process, how do leaders compare and adopt recommendations from employees, GenAI systems, and employee-GenAI teams? What perceptual differences exist among leaders? To investigate this issue, this project adopts a social comparison theory perspective and, through five sub-studies, addresses the following five questions: 1) How should GenAI advice adoption be conceptualized? 2) What differences characterize leader adoption of employee versus GenAI advice? 3) What differences exist in leader adoption of employee-GenAI team advice? 4) How can the differential effects of employee-GenAI advice adoption be compared? 5) What are the distinct barriers and intervention mechanisms for employee-GenAI advice adoption? Ultimately, this research systematically constructs a multi-level model of leader adoption of employee-GenAI advice, offering a novel perspective for interdisciplinary theoretical development and providing practical guidance for organizations to optimize human-AI collaborative decision-making and mitigate technological risks.

Full Text

Preamble

The Differential Perception of Leaders' Response to Employee-GenAI Advice: A Multi-Level Study Based on Social Comparison Theory

Han Yi¹, Ma Zhaoyi², Zong Shuwei³

(¹ School of Business Administration, Zhongnan University of Economics and Law, Wuhan 430073, China)

(² School of Business Administration, Zhongnan University of Economics and

Law, Wuhan 430073, China)

(³ School of Business Administration, Southwestern University of Finance and Economics, Chengdu 611130, China)

Abstract

The integration of Generative AI (GenAI) into organizational decision-making has become an irreversible trend, yet academic research on GenAI advice adoption remains incomplete. In leadership decision-making processes, how do leaders compare and adopt employee advice, GenAI advice, and employee-GenAI team advice? What perceptual differences exist among leaders? To address these questions, this project adopts a social comparison theory perspective and conducts five interrelated sub-studies to resolve five core issues: (1) How should GenAI advice adoption be conceptualized? (2) What differences exist in leaders' adoption of employee versus GenAI advice? (3) How do leaders differentially respond to employee-GenAI team advice? (4) How can we compare the differential effectiveness of employee-GenAI advice adoption? (5) What distinct barriers and intervention mechanisms characterize employee-GenAI advice adoption? Ultimately, this research systematically constructs a multi-level model of leaders' adoption of employee-GenAI advice, offering new theoretical perspectives for interdisciplinary development and providing practical guidance for organizations to optimize human-AI collaborative decision-making and mitigate technological risks.

Keywords: leadership, GenAI advice, advice response, social comparison theory, perceived differences

Classification Code: B849: C93

1. Problem Statement

With the rapid development of Generative AI (GenAI) exemplified by ChatGPT, its impact on organizations has become increasingly significant (Liu & Tan, 2025; Rizzo et al., 2024). In workplace settings, GenAI is being introduced into decision-making contexts that previously relied entirely on human judgment (Kahr et al., 2024), profoundly influencing leadership decisions and optimizing management decision-making through advice based on large datasets and machine learning (Mahmud et al., 2023; Xu et al., 2025).

GenAI has opened new possibilities across multiple organizational domains, including clinical care (Duong & Solomon, 2023; Jeblick et al., 2024), education (Kasneci et al., 2023), arts and music (Civit et al., 2022; Oksanen et al., 2023), and design (Jiang et al., 2023). Unlike traditional AI that relies on historical data for prediction, GenAI generates novel content based on massive pre-trained datasets (Feuerriegel et al., 2024) and optimizes its algorithms through human feedback. This capability enables it to synthesize context-relevant novel content across multiple modalities—including text, images, audio, programming

code, simulations, and video (Tilton et al., 2023)—which can positively impact leadership decisions (Huang et al., 2024).

Introducing GenAI technology into the advice domain to promote leaders' adoption of its recommendations or "employee-GenAI" hybrid advice requires clarifying the underlying facilitating and inhibiting mechanisms. Specifically, how leaders evaluate and compare employee advice, GenAI advice, and employee-GenAI team advice to make adoption decisions represents a question of significant research value. This can be decomposed into five specific research questions.

First, how should GenAI advice adoption be defined? Current academic consensus remains elusive. Some scholars simply define it as individuals using GenAI-related products (Agraw et al., 2024), while others view it as a decision-making process of evaluation followed by selective acceptance (Zong et al., 2025). Although these divergent definitions each hold value, conceptual inconsistency not only impedes deeper exploration of GenAI advice adoption's core meaning but also hinders subsequent research advancement. Consequently, this study focuses on the core context of leaders' decision-making regarding employee-GenAI advice, defining GenAI advice adoption from a social comparison theory perspective as: a dynamic process in which leaders, after receiving advice from GenAI (or employee-GenAI collaborative teams), engage in multi-dimensional comparison with employee advice, form cognitive perceptions and emotional responses, and ultimately integrate the advice content into organizational decision-making schemes or directly implement its core measures. This definition emphasizes the dynamic "evaluate-then-select" process, aligning with leaders' realistic decision-making logic of weighing, reacting to, and implementing human-AI collaboration.

Second, what differences exist in leaders' adoption of employee versus GenAI advice? Academic opinion remains polarized. Some scholars argue that GenAI advice, suffering from insufficient explainability, accuracy controversies, and leaders' trust deficits, may induce numerous barriers, causing leaders to resist GenAI advice and trust employee advice instead (Mahmud et al., 2023). Others contend that even when neither human nor AI advice is perfect, their synthesis can enhance decision effectiveness (Sachin & Schecter, 2024; Choudhary et al., 2025). Moreover, adopting GenAI advice in workplaces helps reduce mechanical, repetitive work, thereby enhancing leaders' decision-making efficiency (You et al., 2022). Notably, the influence mechanisms of GenAI advice adoption in organizations may differ from traditional leader advice-taking, depending on leaders' differential perceptions of employee versus GenAI advice, including comparisons of advice sources or targets, dimensional comparisons, and motivational comparisons (Matthews & Kelemen, 2025). Therefore, exploring leaders' differential perception of employee and GenAI advice forms the logical foundation for understanding their trade-offs.

Third, what mechanisms underlie leaders' adoption of employee-GenAI team advice? As team composition evolves toward intelligent integration, leaders face new challenges when absorbing team recommendations. Traditional em-

ployee teams achieve consensus through social interaction and knowledge sharing (Bonaccio & Dalal, 2006), whereas GenAI teams generate synthesized recommendations through algorithmic integration and multi-modal optimization (Ikeda, 2024). These fundamentally different generation mechanisms can be understood across three dimensions: First, the paradox of diversity versus consistency in team advice. Employee team advice naturally exhibits heterogeneity, where cognitive differences among members may spawn viewpoint collisions or decision conflicts. This “pseudo-diversity” may cause leaders to underestimate GenAI team advice’s innovative potential or, conversely, overestimate its executability due to consistency (Böhm et al., 2023). Second, the cognitive tension between social identity and algorithmic authority. When evaluating employee team advice, leaders are influenced by social-emotional cues, member status, and prestige (Bonaccio & Dalal, 2006). GenAI teams lack social entity attributes, so their evaluation depends more on technical performance metrics and system transparency (Böhm et al., 2023). Even when GenAI team advice is superior, leaders may still reject it due to “algorithm aversion” (especially in ambiguous decisions) (Dietvorst et al., 2018), though understanding algorithmic principles may transform this into “AI appreciation” (Qin et al., 2025), reflecting deep conflict between technical and social rationality. Third, asymmetry in traceability and accountability. Employee team advice processes can be attributed through review records and responsibility allocation mechanisms (Mesmer-Magnus & DeChurch, 2009), whereas GenAI teams’ “black box” characteristics obscure decision pathways. Even with explainable AI techniques, their decision transparency cannot match human processes, potentially creating an “algorithmic agency paradox”—difficulty tracing nodes and assigning accountability when errors occur, yet inability to establish lasting trust when correct due to unclear contributions. Based on these considerations, this study investigates leaders’ differential perceptions across dimensions of recommendation quality, risk attributes, and social value among different team advice types.

Fourth, how do adoption effects differ between employee and GenAI advice? Existing research indicates GenAI differs significantly from humans in providing advice, particularly in algorithmic precision, scalability, and personalization capabilities (Baines et al., 2024; Kuosmanen, 2024). From the advisor’s perspective, GenAI advice’s transparency and explainability are key factors influencing leader trust. While enhanced transparency helps build trust (Baines et al., 2024), its effectiveness is constrained by advice accuracy (Schmitt et al., 2021). From the decision-maker’s perspective, leaders are more inclined to adopt GenAI advice when it aligns with their personal expectations (Mesbah et al., 2021). Regarding task fit, GenAI is often less favored than human advice in tasks requiring nuanced judgment (e.g., demand forecasting), but its potential in emotional tasks is gradually emerging as AI emotional understanding capabilities improve (Daschner & Obermaier, 2022). Thus, GenAI and employee advice effectiveness depends on multiple dimensions including trust, transparency, and task fit, yet existing research has not systematically examined leaders’ differential adoption effectiveness of employee-GenAI advice (Sturm et al., 2023). This study there-

fore asks: How do leaders judge effectiveness differences in employee-GenAI advice adoption? And how can we enhance the effectiveness of employee-GenAI advice adoption?

Fifth, what risk barriers characterize employee-GenAI advice adoption, and how can we intervene? Research shows trust is the core factor in leaders' GenAI advice adoption, particularly critical in low-risk contexts, while leaders evaluate advice accuracy and credibility more cautiously in high-risk decisions (Baines et al., 2024). Perceived accuracy and trust form complementary relationships, jointly shaping leaders' overall attitudes toward GenAI (Williams, 2020). Even when leaders hold positive attitudes toward GenAI, high-risk situations still require integrated judgment combining trust and accuracy (Chua et al., 2023). In summary, leaders' GenAI advice adoption is influenced by multiple factors including trust, perceived accuracy, and situational risk, yet the specific adoption mechanisms across different contexts remain unclear. This study therefore asks: What barriers do leaders face when adopting employee-GenAI advice? What are the corresponding intervention mechanisms? And how can leaders overcome these barriers to achieve effective adoption?

2. Research Status

As AI technology develops, decision-makers have access to increasingly diverse advice sources (Wei & Zhang, 2014; Li et al., 2022). Given the trend of GenAI's full participation in organizational decision-making, it is necessary to deeply investigate leaders' psychological mechanisms during decision-making to fully understand their differential perceptions of human versus GenAI advice and thereby optimize decision processes and enhance advice adoption effectiveness.

First, existing research inadequately explores boundary conditions of decision-makers' comparative responses to human-AI advice. Some studies focus on cognitive-psychological factors such as trust, algorithm aversion, and algorithm appreciation. Specifically, leaders' trust in GenAI is influenced by perceived accuracy (Williams, 2020); algorithm aversion demonstrates that even when GenAI advice is superior, leaders may still reject it due to inability to trace error responsibility (Dietvorst et al., 2018). Understanding algorithmic principles may lead some leaders to exhibit "AI appreciation" (Qin et al., 2025). Other research examines situational variables' moderating effects, such as decision-makers' greater propensity to adopt GenAI advice in data-driven tasks (You et al., 2022) versus preference for more ethically-affinitive employee advice in high-risk contexts (Jin et al., 2025). However, these studies focus on single dimensions, lacking integrated analysis of interactive variables like task type and advice strategy. In practice, decision-makers often employ diverse strategies across different task types, yet existing research has not fully revealed this dynamic influence mechanism. Future research must therefore more systematically examine boundary conditions in human-AI advice comparison and construct more comprehensive theoretical frameworks.

Second, current GenAI advice research suffers from limited scope. Existing studies focus on practical applications in organizations, exploring how different functional scenarios affect advice adoption, with results concentrated primarily in data-intensive fields while paying insufficient attention to more general management decision-making contexts. In practice, leaders do not always face data-driven tasks but rather complex decisions requiring trade-offs among employee emotions, team collaboration, and multiple dimensions. Existing research struggles to explain leaders' behavioral logic when weighing human versus AI advice in such scenarios. Although some studies mention human-GenAI integrated decision-making (Choudhary et al., 2025), proposing that multi-source collaborative advice outperforms single sources, these explorations remain at the effect verification level without deep analysis of decision-makers' emotional, cognitive, and behavioral reactions. Therefore, it is necessary to expand GenAI advice adoption research to the team level, examining responsibility attribution across three advice sources—employee, GenAI, and employee-GenAI teams—and how these attributions influence leaders' advice adoption.

Third, social comparison theory applications suffer from narrow dimensions and fragmented theoretical frameworks. While social comparison theory has been widely applied in traditional advice adoption research, focusing primarily on how ability or performance comparisons between advisors and decision-makers affect adoption behavior, its application in human-AI advice adoption contexts remains limited. When evaluating employee advice, leaders unconsciously engage in “upward comparison” and “downward comparison” (Matthews & Kelemen, 2025). During upward comparison, leaders may experience self-threat—especially when subordinates' advice implies their own incompetence—and reject advice to maintain self-esteem (Rizzo et al., 2024). Conversely, parallel and downward comparisons may increase advice adoption likelihood, particularly when advice appears helpful for improving organizational performance or personal capability (Perry-Smith & Mannucci, 2017). Research also identifies social comparison orientation as a key individual difference variable; leaders high in social comparison orientation attend more to employee advice and are more susceptible to employee performance influence, whereas those low in this orientation depend less on employee comparisons and focus more on advice quality itself (Gerber et al., 2018). These studies support the “comparison psychology → emotional response → adoption behavior” mechanism, but their application scenarios remain limited to human advice comparison. In human-AI advice adoption, although research finds leaders high in social comparison orientation may prefer GenAI advice to “avoid interpersonal conflict” (Rizzo et al., 2024), such studies only treat social comparison orientation as a moderating variable without deeply mining the theory's core dimensions, still failing to explain leaders' comparison logic regarding GenAI advice. In summary, social comparison theory's insufficient application manifests at two levels: at the dimensional level, no research has explored the roles of “social dynamic comparison, performance-reward comparison, and agency capability comparison” in human-AI interaction scenarios (Matthews & Kelemen, 2025); at the theoretical

application level, cross-level comparison mechanisms from individual to team remain unclarified. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen theoretical integration and coherence, expand application scenarios, and use social comparison theory as a core framework to construct a multi-level comparison model of differential perception in human-AI advice.

Finally, existing research shows low concern for practical issues. Most studies analyze antecedents of advice adoption, such as various objective performance metrics of algorithmic technology. Algorithmic accuracy enhances advice credibility, with high accuracy reducing decision risk and increasing leaders' GenAI advice adoption probability (Baines et al., 2024); explainability, as a key technical attribute, has been found to potentially cause leaders to question GenAI's explainability due to its "black box" nature (Ribeiro et al., 2016), triggering distrust (Glikson & Woolley, 2020). However, existing research lacks intervention strategy studies for practical issues like mitigating algorithm aversion, reducing identity threat, and optimizing team advice risks, greatly limiting practical guidance value. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze effective intervention strategies such as training and incentives to provide practical solutions for organizations to optimize human-AI collaborative advice adoption effectiveness.

3. Research Proposal

Based on social comparison theory's three core dimensions—social dynamic comparison, performance-reward comparison, and agency capability comparison (Matthews & Kelemen, 2025)—this study constructs an integrated model of leaders' differential perception of employee-GenAI advice adoption. The research framework systematically unfolds through five interconnected sub-studies: Study 1 explores social comparison orientation as a boundary condition, examining its interactive effects on advice quality comparison and appreciation; Study 2 examines characteristic differences between two advice sources, using relative superiority as a moderator to analyze mechanisms affecting leaders' emotions, behaviors, and decision effectiveness; Study 3 tests effectiveness differences between the two advice types in task-oriented versus interpersonal work; Study 4 analyzes potential risks in employee teams, GenAI teams, and employee-GenAI collaborative teams from a team perspective, explaining how different advice risks influence leader decision-making through responsibility attribution processes; Study 5 clarifies how advisor psychological and functional barriers affect advice quality and how intervention strategies enhance collaborative advice quality in employee-GenAI teams. The overall research framework is shown in Figure 1 [Figure 1: see original paper].

3.1 Study 1: Social Comparison Orientation in Employee-GenAI Advice Quality

Based on social comparison theory, this study focuses on advice quality comparison between employees and GenAI, exploring how advice quality differences influence adoption behavior through leaders' emotional attitudes (appreciation

levels), introducing social comparison orientation as a boundary condition to reveal differential response mechanisms to both advice types and constructing an emotional response process model of leaders' reactions to employee-GenAI advice. The theoretical model is shown in Figure 2 [Figure 2: see original paper].

3.1.1 Advice Quality Comparison (Employee vs. GenAI) and Advice Appreciation Advice quality is a core antecedent influencing decision-makers' adoption willingness (Ikeda, 2024): high-quality advice significantly increases adoption likelihood, while low-quality advice enhances rejection probability (Yaniv, 2004). Advice quality judgment is complex and multidimensional. Existing research primarily uses scales developed by Goldsmith and MacGeorge (2000), Jones and Burleson (1997), MacGeorge et al. (2004), and Feng and MacGeorge (2010). These scales typically use single dimensions expressing helpfulness, appropriateness, sensitivity, efficacy, and supportiveness (MacGeorge et al., 2002; Goldsmith & MacGeorge, 2000; MacGeorge et al., 2004; Feng & MacGeorge, 2010), but these studies have not developed more refined advice quality measures.

Recently, organizational behavior and human resource management scholars have begun examining voice quality (Brykman & Raver, 2021; Farh et al., 2024; Ng et al., 2022; Parke et al., 2022; Wolsink et al., 2019; Jiang et al., 2025). Researchers have used dummy variables (0/1 variables indicating high/low voice quality) (Wolsink et al., 2019; Parke et al., 2022), single-dimensional scales (Ng et al., 2022), and multi-dimensional scales (Brykman & Raver, 2021). Brykman and Raver's (2021) four-dimensional scale measures voice principledness, feasibility, novelty, and organizational focus, providing a foundation for advice quality judgment.

Social comparison represents a "fundamental, universal, and powerful human tendency" (Corcoran et al., 2011). Based on social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954), leaders allocate cognitive resources and form differential appreciation attitudes by comparing employee and GenAI advice quality (Mussweiler, 2003; You et al., 2022). In other words, individuals' appreciation levels for different advice sources vary with their perceived advice quality (Pescetelli & Yeung, 2021). When perceiving GenAI advice quality as superior, leaders prioritize its instrumental value, increasing appreciation while simultaneously reducing appreciation for employee advice due to limited cognitive resources; conversely, when judging employee advice quality as superior, leaders enhance appreciation for employee advice and weaken recognition of GenAI advice (Dang & Liu, 2024; You et al., 2022).

Based on this discussion, we propose Propositions 1 and 2.

Proposition 1: When leaders perceive GenAI advice quality as higher than employee advice quality, their appreciation for GenAI advice increases positively (positive path), while indirectly decreasing appreciation for employee advice (negative path).

Proposition 2: When leaders perceive employee advice quality as higher than GenAI advice quality, their appreciation for employee advice increases positively (positive path), while indirectly decreasing appreciation for GenAI advice (negative path).

3.1.2 Advice Appreciation and Leader Advice Response Emotion is a key mediator connecting advice evaluation and adoption behavior. Positive emotions not only enhance individuals' liking for advice itself but also stimulate helping and generous behaviors (Ruan et al., 2024; Milyavsky & Gvili, 2024) and significantly increase trust in others (Jones & George, 1998). Therefore, positive emotions strengthen leaders' trust in advisors, thereby enhancing adoption willingness. Specifically, GenAI advice may be perceived as more capable in technical or mathematical tasks (Longoni & Cian, 2020), and leaders' appreciation for GenAI advice enhances their recognition of GenAI's capability advantages, increasing adoption willingness while potentially reducing acceptance of employee advice through contrast effects. Conversely, appreciation for employee advice leads leaders to value its alignment with organizational culture and emotional needs (Bailey et al., 2023), inclining them toward employee advice adoption and potentially generating rejection of GenAI advice (Logg et al., 2019).

In summary, leaders' appreciation levels for GenAI and employee advice directly influence their adoption willingness and, through emotional state changes, indirectly affect their acceptance attitudes toward the alternative advice source (Logg et al., 2019; You et al., 2022). This complex psychological mechanism reveals how leaders balance different advice sources and navigate trade-offs between appreciation and adoption. Based on this, we propose Propositions 3 and 4.

Proposition 3: Leaders' appreciation for GenAI advice positively influences their willingness to adopt GenAI advice but negatively influences their willingness to adopt employee advice.

Proposition 4: Leaders' appreciation for employee advice positively influences their willingness to adopt employee advice but negatively influences their willingness to adopt GenAI advice.

3.1.3 The Moderating Role of Social Comparison Orientation Social comparison orientation refers to individuals' tendency to actively seek or attend to comparisons with others in social situations. Gibbons and Buunk (1999) developed a scale measuring social comparison orientation, expressing that self-evaluation largely depends on others' performance. These individuals tend to connect what happens to others with themselves and are interested in others' characteristics and achievements under similar circumstances. Social comparison orientation resembles goal orientation in expressing a stable individual trait reflecting personality-driven differences. It is therefore positioned under the

social comparison theory umbrella but has a narrower scope, primarily indicating individual tendency or motivation (Gibbons & Buunk, 1999; Gerber et al., 2018).

Individuals high in social comparison orientation are sensitive to interpersonal relationships, easily influenced by others' performance, and prioritize social evaluation and interpersonal risk during decision-making (Gerber et al., 2018), whereas those low in this orientation rely less on social comparison for self-evaluation. This orientation difference moderates the relationship between advice quality comparison and advice appreciation: leaders high in social comparison orientation, due to high interpersonal sensitivity (Kämmer et al., 2023), prefer choices that avoid interpersonal risk. When facing high-quality employee advice, such leaders easily perceive upward comparison threats (worrying about their own competence being questioned) (Exline & Lobel, 1999) and concern themselves with adopting specific employees' advice to avoid triggering team conflict (Rizzo et al., 2024). GenAI advice, not involving interpersonal competence comparison, can avoid both self-threat and interpersonal conflict, making individuals high in social comparison orientation more willing to accept GenAI advice, while leaders low in this orientation focus more on actual decision contexts and more easily appreciate employee advice quality advantages.

We therefore infer that this individual trait may also differentially affect emotional reactions and behavioral outcomes across advice sources (Tai et al., 2024). Individuals high in social comparison orientation care more about others' opinions and are more susceptible to external reference influence, leading us to infer their potential preference for GenAI advice. Conversely, those low in this orientation prefer employee advice. In behavioral analysis of advice judgment, psychological weight allocated to a given advice source directly correlates with its adoption rate (Tversky & Koehler, 1994). Accordingly, we propose:

Proposition 5: For individuals high in social comparison orientation, the positive effect of GenAI advice quality on its appreciation level is amplified, while the positive effect of employee advice quality is attenuated.

Proposition 6: For individuals low in social comparison orientation, the positive effect of employee advice quality on its appreciation level is amplified, while the positive effect of GenAI advice quality is attenuated.

Social information processing theory suggests that people's interpretation of information cues is socially contextualized; the same information may be assigned different meanings across social contexts (Lord & Smith, 1983). Individuals high in social comparison orientation tend to attribute (Kaufmann, 2021); those low in this orientation attend more to relational attributes of employee advice, more easily generating appreciation emotions when employee advice holds quality advantages, thereby adopting employee advice (Chen et al., 2025). Therefore, we propose:

Proposition 7: For individuals high in social comparison orientation, GenAI advice quality advantages positively influence leaders' willingness to adopt

GenAI advice by increasing appreciation for GenAI advice.

Proposition 8: For individuals low in social comparison orientation, employee advice quality advantages positively influence leaders' willingness to adopt employee advice by increasing appreciation for employee advice.

3.2 Study 2: Comparative Study on Decision Effectiveness of Employee-GenAI Advice Sources

Social comparison theory posits that individuals experience emotional reactions when comparing themselves with others (Dang & Liu, 2024), which subsequently affect their behavior (Matthews & Kelemen, 2025). Advice from various sources serves as important assistance for leaders' decision-making. Good advice can help leaders optimize decisions and improve decision effectiveness through cognitive supplementation and efficiency enhancement (Chakraborty et al., 2024). This study compares objective characteristic differences between advice sources, analyzing their influence on decision effectiveness through emotional mediation and advice adoption/rejection behavior mediation, and introduces relative superiority as a moderating variable. The theoretical model is shown in Figure 3 [Figure 3: see original paper].

3.2.1 Advice Source Comparison (Employee vs. GenAI) Explainability, availability, and accuracy are important dimensions for evaluating advice source quality, directly affecting decision effectiveness. Explainability determines whether advice is easily understood and trusted (Chakraborty et al., 2024); accuracy directly affects decision quality (Mahmud et al., 2022); availability influences decision efficiency (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014). These dimensions not only reveal advantages and disadvantages of different advice sources but also help leaders better select and rely on different advice sources during decision-making.

Explainability refers to advice's logical clarity, comprehensibility, and causal transparency (Miller, 2019). Employee advice, based on personal experience and organizational context, can articulate decision logic in natural language, conforming to human cognitive frameworks (Endsley, 2023; Minh et al., 2022). GenAI, constrained by its "black box," has underlying logic difficult for non-technical personnel to understand and may generate unreliable explanations with fabricated data sources, making its explainability weaker than human advice (Wesche et al., 2024).

Accuracy refers to the degree to which advice matches objective facts, optimal solutions, or task objectives (Mahmud et al., 2022), with performance highly dependent on task type and data quality. GenAI, leveraging big data and algorithmic advantages, is typically more objective and precise in data-intensive tasks (Wesche et al., 2024). However, in ambiguous situations, employees can improve advice accuracy through social insight and tacit knowledge (Davenport & Kirby, 2016), whereas GenAI may fail due to lack of social insight.

Availability refers to the convenience, response speed, and cost-efficiency of obtaining advice (Ramaul et al., 2024). High availability facilitates rapid response to decision needs. Employee advice is constrained by time-space coordination costs and organizational hierarchy, may be delayed by workload or filtered out through information channels (Morrison, 2011), and is limited by cognitive resources in processing large data volumes quickly and accurately (Luo et al., 2019). GenAI can overcome time-space constraints, providing 24/7 instant service with extremely high availability (Tong et al., 2021). Therefore, GenAI advice sources demonstrate stronger availability compared to human employees.

3.2.2 Positive Response Path: Advice Appreciation and Leader Advice Adoption GenAI advice's high availability and accuracy give it significant advantages in urgent or high-intensity decision contexts, easily triggering leaders' appreciation emotions and promoting advice adoption. Specifically, GenAI leverages massive data and algorithmic analysis to effectively avoid human cognitive biases (Glikson & Woolley, 2020), often making more accurate judgments than employee advice in structured tasks (Tong et al., 2021). GenAI's instant response characteristics can quickly meet decision needs, with efficiency advantages particularly prominent in emergency situations (Agrawal et al., 2022). In decision contexts emphasizing efficiency and data-driven approaches, GenAI can more efficiently provide objective, unbiased information, and this comprehensive advantage easily generates leader appreciation. Since emotional reactions affect subsequent behavior (Van Kleef, 2009), leaders' appreciation for GenAI advice transforms into positive cognition and trust, strengthening beliefs that GenAI helps solve problems and reduce risks, thereby inclining them toward adopting such advice. Based on this, we propose:

Proposition 9: Compared to employee advice, GenAI advice's advantages lead leaders to appreciate GenAI advice and consequently adopt it.

The ultimate purpose of advice adoption is to enhance decision effectiveness—achieving organizational goals by selecting optimal action plans (Burton et al., 2020). Its core manifests in objective decision quality and execution acceptance, such as rationality and timeliness (Shamim et al., 2020). Advice source explainability, accuracy, and availability are all closely related to decision effectiveness, with dimensionally superior advice more likely to optimize decision outcomes.

In the positive response path, GenAI gains leader appreciation and adoption through its high availability and accuracy advantages. Adopting such advice directly improves decision efficiency and scientific quality, reducing human cognitive bias, enhancing decision objectivity and accuracy (Glikson & Woolley, 2020), and accelerating response speed in emergencies. Therefore, adopting GenAI advice with key advantages typically positively influences decision effectiveness (Baines et al., 2024). We therefore propose:

Proposition 10: Advice source characteristics indirectly affect decision effec-

tiveness through the sequential mediation of advice appreciation and leader advice adoption.

3.2.3 Negative Response Path: Advice Aversion and Leader Advice Rejection Despite GenAI's obvious advantages in availability and accuracy, its "black box" operation results in low explainability, easily triggering leaders' negative reactions. Since GenAI decision processes often lack transparency, leaders struggle to understand the logic and generation mechanisms behind its advice (Burton et al., 2020; Glikson & Woolley, 2020). In contrast, employee advice is typically based on experience and intuition, making it easier for leaders to understand and accept (Doshi-Velez & Kim, 2017). Individuals prefer trustworthy information sources that are easy to understand (Hogg et al., 1995), so when leaders cannot comprehend GenAI advice, they easily experience distrust, anxiety, or even aversion (Glikson & Woolley, 2020). In complex or high-risk decision contexts, leaders need to fully understand advice logic to assume decision responsibility, and insufficient explanation exacerbates leaders' anxiety and distrust, generating aversion emotions (Ahn et al., 2021). In high emotional-involvement tasks, GenAI's lack of emotional resonance more easily triggers alienation and aversion (Longoni et al., 2019; Giroux et al., 2022). Such aversion emotions trigger leaders' loss aversion psychology, prompting them to reject GenAI advice to avoid uncertainty.

Based on this, we propose:

Proposition 11: Compared to employee advice, GenAI advice's disadvantages cause leaders to develop aversion toward GenAI advice and consequently reject it.

In the negative response path, low explainability makes GenAI advice susceptible to leader aversion and rejection. If GenAI advice is objectively high-quality, rejection causes leaders to miss opportunities for high-quality data and algorithmic support, leading to reliance on other information sources, increasing subjective judgment risk, and reducing decision accuracy and efficiency (Cecil et al., 2024). Aversion emotions inhibit adoption willingness (Glikson & Woolley, 2020), and leaders' rejection of high-quality advice may lead to suboptimal decisions, affecting decision rationality and execution effectiveness (Damen et al., 2008). We therefore propose:

Proposition 12: Advice source characteristics affect decision effectiveness through the sequential mediation of advice aversion and leader advice rejection.

3.2.4 The Moderating Role of Relative Superiority Leaders' subjective perceptions of advice sources also influence their reactions. Relative superiority—the degree to which leaders perceive an overall advantage of one advice source over another during comparison—is a key moderating variable (Choudhury & Karahanna, 2008). This perception forms an overall impression after "psychological processing" of objective characteristics and can amplify

or weaken objective characteristics' influence on subsequent emotional and behavioral reactions (Dang & Liu, 2022).

When leaders perceive GenAI's relative superiority as high, they are more likely to focus on its advantages. Even when GenAI advice objectively suffers from insufficient explainability, leaders may still tend to appreciate and adopt it. Superiority perception can enhance GenAI capability credibility (Shrestha et al., 2019), strengthen decision confidence (Marocco et al., 2024), thereby reinforcing appreciation emotions and adoption intentions and improving decision effectiveness. Conversely, when leaders perceive GenAI advice sources' relative superiority as low, they are more likely to focus on disadvantages, amplifying negative cognition (Dietvorst et al., 2015), strengthening aversion emotions toward GenAI, reducing error tolerance willingness, and increasing tendency to reject GenAI advice (Glikson & Woolley, 2020).

Based on this, we propose:

Proposition 13: Relative superiority strengthens the positive response path; when leaders perceive GenAI advice sources' relative superiority as high, they more easily appreciate and adopt such advice, thereby improving decision effectiveness.

Proposition 14: Relative superiority weakens the negative response path; when leaders perceive GenAI advice sources' relative superiority as low, they more easily develop aversion and reject such advice, thereby reducing decision effectiveness.

3.3 Study 3: Comparative Study on Interactive Effects of Employee-GenAI Advice Content and Advice Strategy

Based on social comparison theory, this study explores how GenAI advice versus employee advice content (task-oriented vs. interpersonal work) and advice strategy (direct vs. indirect voice) influence advice effectiveness. This study aims to reveal the mediating mechanisms of leader identity threat and identity affirmation in interpersonal versus task-oriented work affecting decision effectiveness, and analyze differential effects of employee versus GenAI advice in upward/downward comparison. The theoretical model is shown in Figure 4 [Figure 4: see original paper].

3.3.1 Differential Effectiveness of Employee-GenAI Interpersonal Work Advice Social comparison theory emphasizes that individuals tend to evaluate their own abilities and perspectives through comparison with others (Festinger, 1954). In interpersonal work, employees are more inclined to compare themselves with human advisors who share similar backgrounds and experiences. Human advisors can provide more emotionally resonant and contextually adaptive advice, helping employees better understand and accept advice content and improving decision effectiveness. Colleague advice, as a prosocial behavior, enables employees to perceive "goodwill" and support from

colleagues (Zhang et al., 2019). In contrast, GenAI lacks emotional resonance and interpersonal interaction capability, struggling to provide advice that meets employees' emotional needs, resulting in lower decision effectiveness (Baines et al., 2024).

Social comparison also affects individuals' cognition of their own work performance and effort levels. Employees observe and compare each other's performance and outcomes at work (Matthews & Kelemen, 2025). When receiving advice from colleagues, employees are more likely to view it as mutual assistance based on shared goals and experiences, thus being more willing to adopt and implement the advice. Additionally, colleague advice enhances employees' "sense of being valued," and this support from organizational members motivates them to reciprocate with higher investment, thereby improving work performance (Zhang et al., 2019). Conversely, GenAI advice lacks this social relationship-based motivational effect, making it difficult to significantly improve performance like employee advice can (Baines et al., 2024). We therefore propose:

Proposition 15: In interpersonal work advice, employee advice effectiveness is significantly higher than GenAI advice.

3.3.2 Differential Effectiveness of Employee-GenAI Task-Oriented Work Advice In task-oriented work contexts, the focus of social comparison differs. GenAI possesses powerful data processing and rapid analysis capabilities, enabling it to simulate human thinking processes and intelligent behavior, granting machines independent production task execution ability (Aghion et al., 2017). When facing tasks requiring substantial data support and rational analysis, individuals evaluating advice effectiveness view GenAI as an information-advantaged reference object. In contrast, employee advice may be insufficient in data processing speed and information comprehensiveness, making GenAI advice often demonstrate higher effectiveness in such contexts. GenAI's unique deep learning and autonomous decision-making functions can provide employees with new insights and valuable decision recommendations for task work. For standardized, procedural task work, GenAI can replace or optimize repetitive, redundant, or inefficient work (Chui et al., 2016), with its generated advice providing precise, standardized operational guidance that helps reduce error rates and improve work efficiency and quality. Employees' performance is influenced by personal skill levels and work attitudes, while GenAI advice's stability and accuracy make it more competitive in improving work performance. Therefore, GenAI advice yields higher work performance than employee advice. We propose:

Proposition 16: In task-oriented work advice, GenAI advice effectiveness is significantly higher than employee advice.

3.3.3 The Mediating Role of Leader Identity Threat and Advice Rejection In interpersonal work contexts, social comparison prompts leaders

to focus on their own identity cognition. According to social comparison theory, upward comparison (comparing with superior others) can motivate self-improvement, while downward comparison (comparing with inferior others) can enhance self-esteem and confidence. Employee advice may trigger upward comparison between leaders and employees. If leaders perceive such advice as implying challenges to their work status or competence, they easily develop resistant emotions. Research confirms that when leaders perceive capability or status gaps with advisors, their perceived value and adoption willingness for that advice decrease (Duan & Wei, 2012). Leaders may also experience psychological threat or inequality, subsequently affecting advice adoption behavior (Han & Xiao, 2020). When employees advise leaders, it may be interpreted as challenging leader authority or offending face, implying employee superiority, which easily generates identity threat. As authority figures, leaders under face and competence threat further tend to reject employee advice. Therefore, identity threat and advice adoption behavior play a chain mediating role between advice and advice effectiveness. We propose:

Proposition 17: When advice content is interpersonal, compared to employee advice, GenAI advice more easily triggers leader identity threat, leading to advice rejection and ultimately lower advice effectiveness.

Proposition 18: When advice content is task-oriented, compared to GenAI advice, employee advice more easily triggers leader identity threat, leading to advice rejection and ultimately lower advice effectiveness.

3.3.4 The Mediating Role of Leader Identity Affirmation and Advice Adoption In task-oriented work contexts, leader identity affirmation and advice adoption play a mediating role. When facing advice from employees and GenAI, leaders consciously or unconsciously engage in social comparison, subsequently influencing their self-identity cognition and judgment.

Research shows that leaders' openness traits are closely related to employee advice adoption rates. Leaders with open attitudes show higher advice adoption likelihood (Detert et al., 2007). Pei and Wu (2023) note that employees' constructive opinions are more easily adopted when leaders perceive them; when employees combine organizational goals with leader concerns and propose suggestions in positive, constructive ways, adoption likelihood further increases. This adoption behavior represents both positive feedback and value affirmation for advice and can motivate employees to continue making suggestions, thereby improving overall advice effectiveness (Zhang et al., 2020). Thus, leader identity affirmation promotes advice adoption behavior, with both forming a chain mediation between employee advice and advice effectiveness. We propose:

Proposition 19: When advice content is task-oriented, compared to employee advice, GenAI advice more easily promotes leader identity affirmation, thereby driving advice adoption and ultimately higher advice effectiveness.

Proposition 20: When advice content is interpersonal, compared to GenAI ad-

vice, employee advice more easily promotes leader identity affirmation, thereby driving advice adoption and ultimately higher advice effectiveness.

3.3.5 Differential Moderating Effects of Direct and Indirect Voice Strategies In Chinese society that values interpersonal harmony, there is a principle of “praising in public, admonishing in private.” Even when disagreements exist, people tend to communicate privately, demonstrating face-saving behaviors. This suggests that different voice strategies may differentially affect leaders’ face threat perception. For example, direct voice may make leaders feel humiliated or offended (MacGeorge et al., 2004), while indirect voice poses relatively weaker face threat. Voice strategies can be divided into direct and indirect: direct voice involves transparent, direct information transmission, but this direct approach may be perceived as threatening because it implies subordinates are instructing superiors, demonstrating superior subordinate knowledge and capability while declaring that leaders’ previous decisions or plans require correction or are erroneous (Dalal & Bonaccio, 2010). In contrast, indirect voice involves employees proposing suggestions in humble, respectful ways that preserve leader dignity (Dillard et al., 1997). When using this strategy, employees consider superiors’ feelings, thereby increasing leader information acceptance. Indeed, indirect voice is also considered a manipulative advice strategy (Han et al., 2017); employees using this approach consider leaders’ feelings, enhancing leader acceptability. Although direct voice is not defined as hostile toward the speaker, it easily creates impressions of disrespect and arbitrariness, thus affecting leaders’ identity threat perception, while indirect voice may affect leader identity affirmation. This study therefore proposes:

Proposition 21: The effect of advice content on advice rejection through leader identity threat is moderated by direct voice strategy.

Proposition 22: The effect of advice content on advice adoption through leader identity affirmation is moderated by indirect voice strategy.

3.4 Study 4: Comparative Study on Responsibility Mechanisms in Employee-GenAI Team Advice Response

Based on attribution theory, this study analyzes potential risks in employee teams, GenAI teams, and employee-GenAI collaborative teams, exploring their differential effects on leader advice adoption or rejection. It constructs a “advice risk—leader response” model to reveal different influence mechanisms of three team advice risks on leader decision-making. Furthermore, it clarifies the intervention mechanism of responsibility attribution to explain how different team advice risks affect leader decisions through responsibility definition processes. The theoretical model is shown in Figure 5 [Figure 5: see original paper].

3.4.1 Team Advice Risk and Leader Advice Response Employee-GenAI team advice presents three main forms: employee team advice, GenAI team

advice, and employee-GenAI team collaborative advice. Different advice types carry differential risks, leading to different leader advice responses:

(1) Employee Team Advice Risk and Leader Advice Response

Employee team advice typically originates from team members' daily observations, experiences, and reflections. While reflecting frontline experience, it carries certain risks: (a) cognitive bias risk—personal experience, cognitive biases, and emotional factors may cause partial or distorted information (Kahneman et al., 2011); (b) information overload risk—large volumes of advice may overwhelm management, making effective information screening difficult (Graf & Antoni, 2023); (c) hierarchical pressure risk—employee advice may be non-objective, catering to leader preferences due to power structures or performance pressure (Pfrombeck et al., 2023). These risks weaken employee team advice credibility, prompting leaders to seek more objective alternatives. GenAI team advice, relying on big data analysis and algorithmic optimization, provides systematic, objective decision support (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014). Employee-GenAI collaborative advice can balance employee creativity and GenAI efficiency, compensating for employee team advice limitations to some extent (Cheng et al., 2023). Based on this, we propose:

Proposition 23: Employee team advice risk leads leaders to reject employee team advice and adopt GenAI team advice or employee-GenAI team collaborative advice.

(2) GenAI Team Advice Risk and Leader Advice Response

Although GenAI team advice possesses data processing advantages, it still faces multiple risks: (a) algorithmic bias risk—input data may contain historical biases or incompleteness (Nelson, 2019), potentially leading to unfair decisions; (b) over-reliance risk—long-term dependence on GenAI may weaken employees' autonomous decision-making ability, team innovation, and adaptability (Hagendorff, 2020). Blind trust arising from ignoring GenAI technical limitations further damages decision quality (Jakubik et al., 2022); (c) data privacy and security vulnerability risk—GenAI's reliance on large-scale data may trigger data leaks, threatening personal privacy and enterprise security.

When GenAI system advice cannot meet diverse decision-making needs, leaders may revert to employee experience and creative advice, believing employee advice better reflects actual conditions and interpersonal factors. Meanwhile, the complementary advantages of employee-GenAI collaborative advice also make it a superior choice (Cheng et al., 2023). We therefore propose:

Proposition 24: GenAI team advice risk leads leaders to reject GenAI team advice and adopt employee team advice or employee-GenAI team collaborative advice.

(3) Employee-GenAI Collaborative Team Advice Risk and Leader Advice Response

Employee-GenAI collaborative advice attempts to integrate human-AI advantages but carries more complex risks: (a) collaboration conflict risk—human-AI

cognitive inconsistency or goal conflict (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014); (b) responsibility definition risk—difficulty in clarifying responsibility 归属 when decision errors occur (Cheng et al., 2021); (c) cognitive inertia risk—employees’ over-reliance on GenAI advice in collaborative decision-making leads to agency degradation, a social loafing phenomenon particularly significant in complex tasks; (d) ethical conflict risk—when GenAI advice conflicts with employee values, it may trigger ethical controversies (Siau & Wang, 2020).

Consequently, the complexity of employee-GenAI collaborative advice risk places leaders in decision dilemmas, unable to trust employee advice alone yet also difficult to fully endorse GenAI advice, leading to overall rejection of all three team advice types. Based on this, we propose:

Proposition 25: Employee-GenAI collaborative advice risk leads leaders to reject all three types of team advice.

3.4.2 The Mediating Role of Responsibility Attribution Based on attribution theory, this study deeply explores the internal mechanisms through which the three types of employee-GenAI team advice risks affect leader advice response, focusing on how employee team responsibility attribution, GenAI team responsibility attribution, and shared responsibility attribution influence leader decision-making behavior at three levels. This study clarifies how different advice risks shape leader team advice response processes through responsibility attribution patterns.

First, employee team advice risk influences leader decisions through employee team responsibility attribution. When employee team advice exhibits cognitive bias or information overload, leaders tend to make internal attributions, attributing problems to employees’ capability limitations or motivational factors. This employee team responsibility attribution leads to neglecting employee advice (Aschauer et al., 2024) and turning to more objective GenAI advice or collaborative advice. Second, GenAI team advice risk influences leader decisions through GenAI responsibility attribution. When facing GenAI advice’s algorithmic bias or data security issues, leaders make technical attributions, assigning responsibility to systematic defects, thereby rejecting GenAI advice and seeking human experience supplementation in employee advice or collaborative advice. Third, employee-GenAI collaborative team advice risk influences leader decisions through shared responsibility attribution. When collaborative advice results are unsatisfactory, leaders form shared responsibility attribution, not fully blaming either GenAI or employees (Cheng et al., 2021).

(1) The Mediating Role of Employee Team Responsibility Attribution

When employee advice fails to meet organizational expectations or shows deviation, managers tend to attribute failure to employees’ personal abilities or subjective motivations rather than external factors, a process called internal attribution (Weiner, 1985). According to attribution theory, when managers

attribute employee advice failure to personal capability or emotional factors, it triggers negative evaluation, leading to employee advice rejection (Shaver, 2016). In contrast, leaders view GenAI team advice's algorithmic objectivity and employee-GenAI collaborative advice's human-AI complementarity as more reliable choices (Cheng et al., 2023). We therefore propose:

Proposition 26: Employee team responsibility attribution mediates the relationship between employee team advice risk and leader advice response (rejecting employee team advice, adopting GenAI team advice or employee-GenAI team collaborative advice).

(2) The Mediating Role of GenAI Team Responsibility Attribution

According to attribution theory, GenAI team advice failure often triggers responsibility attribution to the GenAI system, particularly when its advice fails to solve problems (Miller, 2019). GenAI system advice quality may be affected by data bias, incomplete data, or algorithmic errors (Nishant et al., 2024), and leaders attribute GenAI system failure to technical defects or data issues rather than external environmental influences. This attribution weakens leaders' trust in GenAI, making them believe its advice lacks controllability and leading to GenAI team advice rejection. In contrast, employee team advice's human controllability and collaborative advice's human supervision advantages are more easily recognized (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014). Although advice with human participation may contain cognitive bias, it is typically more transparent and understandable than pure GenAI systems' "black box" nature. Based on human-machine comparison psychology, leaders prioritize adopting employee team advice and employee-GenAI collaborative advice. We therefore propose:

Proposition 27: GenAI team responsibility attribution mediates the relationship between GenAI team advice risk and leader advice response (rejecting GenAI team advice, adopting employee team advice or employee-GenAI team collaborative advice).

(3) The Mediating Role of Shared Responsibility Attribution

Employee-GenAI collaborative advice can combine AI's technical advantages with employee creativity (Yue & Li, 2023). However, this collaboration also carries potential risks that may originate from either technical defects or human operational limitations. When employee-GenAI collaborative advice results are unsatisfactory, leaders form shared responsibility attribution, not fully attributing responsibility to either GenAI or employees (Cheng et al., 2021).

This attribution may trigger leaders' emotional and cognitive conflicts, mediating managers' decision behavior (Weiner, 1985). Emotionally, when responsibility is shared, managers may develop distrust toward both GenAI and employee advice because failure cannot be clearly attributed to a single party (Schoenherr & Thomson, 2024). Unclear responsibility boundaries may cause managers to distrust all advice, no longer inclined to adopt any party's suggestions, choosing to avoid decision risk (Jakubik et al., 2022). Ultimately, leaders reject employee, GenAI, and collaborative team advice due to inability to clearly assign

accountability. We therefore propose:

Proposition 28: Shared responsibility attribution mediates the relationship between employee-GenAI collaborative team advice risk and leader advice response (rejecting all three types of team advice).

3.4.3 The Moderating Role of Leader Advice Risk Preference Leader advice risk preference refers to leaders' tolerance for potential risks when evaluating team advice. Leaders exhibit individual differences in risk preference degree (Tversky & Kahneman, 1992), which moderates the path through which advice risk influences leader response via responsibility attribution. Risk-averse leaders are more sensitive to responsibility ambiguity; even with low risk levels, they may strengthen negative responsibility attribution due to accountability issues and consequently reject advice. Risk-seeking leaders attend more to advice's potential value, may tolerate certain risks, weaken negative effects of responsibility attribution on advice adoption, and attempt to adopt and optimize controllable risks (such as local cognitive bias or correctable technical defects).

Proposition 29: Advice risk influences leader advice response through team responsibility attribution, moderated by leader advice risk preference.

3.5 Study 5: Comparative Study on Barriers and Intervention Mechanisms in Employee-GenAI Advice Response

Based on social comparison theory, this study explores advisor psychological and functional barriers and their impact on advice quality. It examines differential leader reactions to employee and GenAI advice and tests how intervention strategies enhance collaborative advice quality in employee-GenAI teams. The theoretical model is shown in Figure 6 [Figure 6: see original paper].

3.5.1 Advisor (Employee vs. GenAI) Barrier Comparison In workplace settings, employees may face psychological and functional barriers when comparing themselves with GenAI. At the macro level, Rjab et al. (2023) use the Technology-Organization-Environment (TOE) framework to categorize AI adoption barriers into three major categories—technological, organizational, and environmental—with 18 specific aspects. Booyse and Scheepers (2024) divide advice adoption barriers into human social dynamics, restrictive regulations, creative work environments, lack of trust and transparency, dynamic business environments, loss of power and control, and ethical concerns. At the micro level, advice barriers are divided into two major categories: functional barriers and psychological barriers. Functional barriers include usage barriers, value barriers, and risk barriers; psychological barriers include traditional barriers and impression barriers. Since this study's comparison objects are individuals and teams, we adopt Mahmud et al.'s (2023) micro-level concepts of psychological and functional barriers. Functional barriers arise from people's perceptions of substantive changes required for technology adoption (such as usage patterns,

value, and risk), including usage barriers, value barriers, and risk barriers. Psychological barriers stem from conflicts between existing beliefs and innovative ideas, focusing on emotional-cognitive levels, while functional barriers focus on capability-technical levels (Mahmud et al., 2023).

According to social comparison theory, employees may face psychological and functional barriers when comparing themselves with GenAI (Matthews & Kelemen, 2025). Correspondingly, when employees perceive controllable barriers between themselves and GenAI, this comparative pressure may transform into self-improvement motivation, promoting advice quality improvement (Yang et al., 2025). However, if perceived barriers are too large, they may trigger anxiety or reduced self-efficacy, thereby weakening motivation (Edwards et al., 2024). Comparative pressure may cause self-doubt and affect performance (Matthews & Kelemen, 2025). Large gaps often lead to negative emotions and helplessness; employees may defensively devalue GenAI advice to maintain self-esteem, inhibiting their own advice quality improvement (Böhm et al., 2023). Compared to motivation enhancement under low barriers, excessive barriers may weaken employee confidence and performance (Van & Jenna, 2021). We therefore propose competing propositions:

Proposition 30: Advisor barrier comparison (psychological barriers, functional barriers) influences employee advice motivation comparison. When employees perceive barriers, they trigger positive self-improvement motivation, thereby improving advice quality.

Proposition 31: Advisor barrier comparison (psychological barriers, functional barriers) influences employee advice motivation comparison. When employees perceive barriers, they devalue GenAI advice quality, thereby reducing advice quality.

3.5.2 The Mediating Role of Advice Motivation Comparison Social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954) posits that when employees perceive capability gaps with GenAI, they may improve work performance through enhancement motivation to close the gap (Wesche et al., 2022). Enhancement motivation helps employees provide higher-quality advice, thereby increasing leader advice adoption likelihood (Cao et al., 2025). Therefore, in the comparison process between employees and GenAI, enhancement motivation typically promotes advice quality improvement, with high-quality advice further strengthening leader trust and ultimately improving leader advice adoption probability (Rizzo et al., 2024).

Conversely, low employee motivation affects advice quality and subsequently influences leader feedback. According to social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), leader feedback on advice typically depends on employee performance. If employees fail to improve advice quality due to low motivation, leaders are more likely to reject advice (Cao et al., 2025). Social comparison theory indicates that when employees perceive large barriers, psychological pressure may in-

crease, reducing advice quality and ultimately causing leader advice rejection (Wood, 1996). Research proves that when employees' GenAI advice acceptance is low, negative emotions affect advice quality (Wiesche et al., 2024). Additionally, excessively high GenAI evaluation standards may weaken employee confidence, inhibit advice behavior, and even affect organizational innovation climate (SimanTov-Nachlieli, 2025). Under such multiple pressures, employee advice quality easily declines, triggering negative leader feedback. We therefore propose:

Proposition 32: Advice motivation comparison positively mediates the relationship between advisor barrier comparison and leader advice adoption. Barriers trigger positive advice motivation, improve advice quality, and thereby promote leader advice adoption.

Proposition 33: Advice motivation comparison negatively mediates the relationship between advisor barrier comparison and leader advice rejection. Barriers trigger negative advice motivation, reduce advice quality, and thereby increase leader advice rejection.

3.5.3 The Moderating Role of Advice Infighting Advice infighting refers to opinion disagreements and conflicts among team members regarding advice content, which may stimulate employees' competitive awareness in team work and subsequently affect their advice motivation and behavior (Bucher et al., 2024). Its core characteristics relate to task conflict, team conflict, and employee voice dissent (Kim & Cho, 2024). Research shows that when team members develop disagreements around advice content, such conflict may affect employees' advice willingness, advice quality, and ultimate leader feedback (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2015).

Moderate advice infighting can be viewed as task conflict—rational debate around advice content (Jehn, 1995). Moderate task conflict benefits stimulating member cognitive diversity and competitive awareness, thereby improving advice quality and team performance (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). In this process, to stand out in advice competition, employees may pay more attention to data support and content innovation, thereby optimizing advice strategies (Ng & Feldman, 2012; Popelnukha et al., 2022).

However, if infighting exceeds rational bounds, it may evolve into relationship conflict, damaging team cooperation (Wibberley & Saundry, 2016). Employees may then perceive competition as threatening, generating anxiety and distrust, and reducing advice willingness (Hyman, 2018). Additionally, high levels of advice conflict may weaken employees' emotional investment, inclining them toward silence or reduced constructive advice (Mowbray et al., 2022). Especially when internal team trust levels are low, members may adopt defensive strategies such as avoiding advice competition, reducing information sharing, or even refusing collaboration (Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008).

Therefore, advice infighting can be viewed as a dynamic team advice conflict

phenomenon with potentially facilitative or inhibitive effects. Moderate advice competition can stimulate employees to improve advice quality and enhance organizational performance, but excessive competition may damage team trust, inhibit advice behavior, and affect innovation capability (Kim & Cho, 2024). We therefore propose:

Proposition 34: Advice infighting strengthens the effect of barrier comparison, thereby enhancing positive advice motivation effects and improving advice quality.

Proposition 35: Advice infighting weakens or reverses the effect of barrier comparison, thereby triggering negative advice motivation effects and reducing advice quality.

3.5.4 Intervention Strategies Intervention strategies (such as training, incentives, and support) can effectively enhance employee motivation and self-efficacy, thereby improving work performance (Dai et al., 2024). Research shows that employees receiving external support and resources maintain higher work motivation and demonstrate stronger adaptability when facing challenges (Newby et al., 2021). Effective intervention strategies can improve employee advice quality through dual pathways: first, skill training and psychological support can enhance employees' ability and confidence to cope with barriers, thereby improving self-efficacy and advice quality (van den Heuvel et al., 2015). Second, intervention strategies can help employees adapt to technological change and leverage their advantages, significantly increasing high-quality employee advice behavior, especially in complex technical environments (Na-Nan & Sanamthong, 2020; Kim & Cho, 2024).

However, if intervention strategies do not match employees' actual needs, they may not enhance confidence but instead increase frustration and helplessness (Dai et al., 2024). When employees perceive large gaps with GenAI technology that organizational training cannot effectively bridge, their advice motivation significantly decreases, even generating negative emotions. According to social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954), ineffective interventions reduce self-efficacy and inhibit advice behavior (Xavier & Korunka, 2025). For example, training content divorced from actual needs, lack of long-term tracking and feedback mechanisms, or inappropriate incentive systems may make employees feel their efforts are unrecognized, reducing work motivation (Wang & Chuang, 2024) and advice willingness (Kim et al., 2020).

Therefore, the role of intervention strategies in employee advice depends on implementation effectiveness. Effective training and incentive measures can enhance employee self-efficacy, improve work motivation, and elevate advice quality (Schemmer et al., 2023). Ineffective interventions may backfire, inhibiting advice behavior (Newby et al., 2021). Managers must therefore provide personalized support based on employees' actual conditions to ensure intervention strategies play positive roles (van den Heuvel et al., 2015). We propose:

Proposition 36: Effective intervention strategies strengthen positive incentive effects, thereby enhancing the effect of employee advice quality on leader advice adoption.

Proposition 37: Ineffective intervention strategies weaken positive incentive effects or even generate negative effects, thereby strengthening the effect of devaluing GenAI advice quality on leader advice rejection.

4. Theoretical Construction

Based on social comparison theory's three dimensions—social dynamic comparison, performance-reward comparison, and agency capability comparison (Matthews & Kelemen, 2025)—this paper systematically reveals the differential perception mechanism of leaders' adoption of employee versus GenAI advice in organizational management contexts, constructing a multi-level theoretical framework. This framework aims to explore leaders' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral reactions to employee-GenAI advice adoption and their dynamic influence mechanisms, providing scientific foundations for organizational decision optimization, human-AI collaborative effectiveness enhancement, and AI governance. The paper's theoretical contributions are manifested in four aspects.

First, this paper expands social comparison theory's application boundaries and dimensional system, building a multi-dimensional human-AI comparison framework that achieves theoretical breakthrough from human-to-human to human-to-AI comparison. Traditional social comparison theory focuses primarily on human-to-human comparison, but GenAI's technological breakthroughs present new non-human comparison objects. This paper extends social comparison theory to human-AI comparison scenarios, integrating a comparison framework of social dynamic comparison, performance-reward comparison, and agency capability comparison, clarifying this framework's key role in leaders' reactions to GenAI advice. By introducing comparisons across advice sources, advice characteristics, advice content, advice quality, advice adoption risks, and advice adoption barriers, this paper not only enriches social comparison dimensions but also reveals unique cognitive and emotional mechanisms in human-AI comparison, providing new theoretical pathways for social comparison theory's evolution in the AI era.

Second, this paper constructs a cross-level integrated model of leader human-AI advice response from individual to team levels. The research extends from individual-level advice quality perception, emotional response, and behavioral adoption to team-level responsibility attribution, risk perception, and intervention mechanisms, forming a complete theoretical chain from micro-cognition to macro-decision-making. By introducing team-level mediators and moderators such as responsibility attribution and advice infighting, this paper reveals internal mechanisms through which team advice risk influences leader decision-making, compensating for existing research gaps in team-level human-AI collaborative advice adoption mechanisms and enriching social comparison theory's

research levels at the team level.

Third, this paper proposes and validates an intervention strategy framework for the double-edged sword effect of GenAI advice adoption. It systematically identifies that while GenAI advice enhances decision efficiency and objectivity, it may simultaneously trigger negative effects such as identity threat, responsibility ambiguity, and trust crisis. By introducing advisor barrier comparison and intervention strategies, this paper not only reveals mechanisms through which barriers affect advice motivation and quality but also constructs an intervention path model. This can help enterprises identify intervention levels for human-AI advice adoption and provide pathways and assistance for future research on intervention strategies for human-AI team advice adoption.

Fourth, this paper promotes interdisciplinary integration among management, psychology, and AI research. It integrates social comparison theory, attribution theory, advice adoption theory, and AI trust research to construct a multi-theoretical cross-disciplinary research framework. By combining GenAI technical attributes such as explainability, availability, and accuracy with psychological and social variables like social comparison orientation, identity threat, and responsibility attribution, this paper not only theoretically expands the depth of human-AI interaction research but also provides an operational variable system and model paradigm for subsequent cross-disciplinary research.

References

- Duan, J., & Wei, Q. (2012). The structure of advice efficacy and its role in employee voice behavior. *Acta Psychologica Sinica*, 44(7), 972–985.
- Han, Y., & Xiao, S. (2020). Why leaders reject advice: An explanation based on motivational social perspective. *Foreign Economics & Management*, 42(08), 68–80.
- Han, Y., Dong, Y., Hu, X., & Xie, Y. (2017). Research on employee voice strategies and their effectiveness. *Journal of Management*, 14(12), 1777–1785.
- Li, S., Chen, J., Song, A., Wang, M., & Duan, J. (2022). Factors influencing people's acceptance of AI advice. *Psychology: Techniques and Applications*, 10(4), 202–214.
- Liu, W., & Tan, W. (2025). *Human-machine-environment system fusion intelligence: Possibilities beyond human intelligence*. Tsinghua University Press.
- Pei, Q., & Wu, Q. (2023). Employee voice and manager advice-taking: A moderated mediation model. *Modern Marketing*, 2023(12), 119–121.
- Wei, X., & Zhang, Z. (2014). When do superiors adopt promotive or prohibitive voice? The influence of superior status and subordinate expertise. *Management World*, (1), 132–143.
- Xu, L., Zhao, Y., & Yu, F. (2025). Moral behavior advice from AI supervisors

is less complied with (Special Issue on AI Psychology and Governance). *Acta Psychologica Sinica*, 57(1), 1–23.

Zhang, K., Shi, J., & Luo, W. (2020). How advice adoption promotes employee voice: An integrated mechanism based on goal self-organization perspective. *Acta Psychologica Sinica*, 52(02), 229–239.

Zong, S., Yang, F., Long, L., & Han, Y. (2025). Promotion or inhibition? The double-edged sword effect of GenAI advice adoption on creativity. *Advances in Psychological Science*, 33(6), 905–915.

Zhang, R., Yan, S., & Shao, Q. (2019). Research on the influence mechanism of colleague advice on employee task performance. *Journal of Lanzhou University (Social Sciences)*, 47(04), 73–82.

The English references section follows exactly as provided in the original Chinese text, preserving all citations and formatting.

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

Source: ChinaXiv — Machine translation. Verify with original.