



Envable Support: How and When Advantageous Voice Endorsement Fosters Employee Silence

Baihe Song¹ · Jingjing Ma² · Yaping Gong² · Zhe Shang³

Received: 22 July 2025 / Accepted: 30 June 2026
© The Author(s) 2026

Abstract

Leaders' support for employee voice is often assumed to encourage employees to speak up and share their ideas or suggestions rather than remain silent. However, existing research primarily focuses on how managerial support for voice leads to increased voice behavior and overlooks its impact on silence. As silence is not merely the absence of voice but a distinct construct, evidence linking managerial support for voice to more voice is insufficient to conclude that it reduces silence. In this paper, we examine how and when advantageous voice endorsement—employees' perception of receiving greater managerial support for their voiced ideas or suggestions compared to their coworkers—paradoxically increases subsequent silence. Drawing upon the *sensitivity about being the target of a threatening upward comparison* (STTUC) model, we argue that employees with advantageous voice endorsement experience heightened concern about being envied, which in turn leads to more silence. Furthermore, the positive indirect effect of advantageous voice endorsement on silence via concern about being envied intensifies for employees with higher levels of superficial harmony. Across one preregistered experiment and three multi-wave field studies, we found consistent support for our hypothesized relationships and ruled out several alternative mechanisms.

Keywords Silence · Advantageous voice endorsement · Concern about being envied

Introduction

Silence refers to an employee's intentional withholding of potentially important ideas, suggestions, or concerns about work-related issues (Morrison, 2014). It is not merely a lack of ideas, but a deliberate decision not to speak up despite

having insights to share (Van Dyne et al., 2003). Silence is pervasive in the workplace, with studies indicating that over 70% of employees report not raising issues they encounter (Milliken et al., 2003; Ryan & Oestreich, 1991). Silence carries substantial costs, including the loss of valuable insights, decreased employee performance, and even the downfall of organizations (Wang & Hsieh, 2013; Xu et al., 2015).

Understanding silence is particularly relevant to ethics. Organizations often fail to detect and address unethical issues or practices before they escalate due to employee silence (De Maria, 2006; Hendy & Tucker, 2021; Zhao et al., 2023). Silence has played a central role in several infamous corporate scandals, including Enron's accounting scandal, General Motors's ignition switch scandal, and Volkswagen's emissions scandal (Wang et al., 2024a, 2024b; Whiteside & Barclay, 2013). In the case of Enron, for example, employees who recognized deceptive practices chose not to voice out their concerns, allowing misconduct to persist and escalate until it was publicly exposed (Trinkaus & Giacalone, 2005). By remaining silent, employees fail to draw attention to illegal or immoral issues or practices (Knoll & Van Dick, 2013). As a result, silence hinders organizations from taking timely

✉ Jingjing Ma
maj@ust.hk

Baihe Song
bhsong1@bjtu.edu.cn

Yaping Gong
mnygong@ust.hk

Zhe Shang
zshang@bnu.edu.cn

¹ School of Economics and Management, Beijing Jiaotong University, Beijing, China

² Department of Management, School of Business and Management, The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Hong Kong, HKSAR, China

³ School of Government, Beijing Normal University, Beijing, China

actions to prevent unethical practices from developing into serious issues or scandals, therefore impeding the detection and correction of misconduct (Brooks et al., 2023; Lucas & Fyke, 2014).

To address these risks, scholars have extensively examined the antecedents of employee silence (see Hao et al., 2022, for a meta-analysis), with one prominent research avenue focusing on how leaders influence employee silence (Morrison, 2023). A widely held assumption in this line of research is that when leaders demonstrate support for employee voice, it encourages employees to speak up and reduces their tendency to remain silent when they have ideas or suggestions to share (Bowen & Blackmon, 2003; Miliken & Morrison, 2003). However, most existing studies have examined only one side of this assumption, primarily focusing on how and why managerial voice endorsement—the extent to which leaders support employees’ voiced ideas or suggestions (Burris, 2012)—increases employees’ subsequent voice behavior (Janssen & Gao, 2015; Ni et al., 2024a, 2024b; Rubenstein et al., 2023). This line of research highlights the role of leader support in promoting employees’ right to express concerns, ideas, or ethical issues, which is an important ethical principle in managing employees.

Notably, recent work highlights that silence is not merely the opposite of voice; instead, the mechanisms driving employees to speak up are distinct from those that lead them to (not) remain silent (Hao et al., 2022; Sherf et al., 2021). As such, evidence supporting the positive effect of managerial voice endorsement on voice is insufficient to conclude that such support also reduces employee silence. In fact, silence and voice can coexist: Employees may voice out their ideas or suggestions on certain issues while withholding their opinions on others (Whiteside & Barclay, 2013). This underscores the importance of examining employee silence directly (Detert & Edmondson, 2011).

Focusing on silence, we argue that research on managerial support for voice has missed the social comparison processes and corresponding complex implications for employee silence. Specifically, leaders may endorse not only the ideas of focal employees but also those of their coworkers (Poulton et al., 2024), and the level of endorsement inevitably varies across employees. According to Festinger’s (1954) theory of social comparison, individuals inherently evaluate their circumstances by comparing themselves to others. In organizational settings, employees often compare their achievements and experiences with those of their coworkers (e.g., Carlson et al., 2023; Reh et al., 2018). Particularly, employees are motivated to assess how leaders treat them relative to their coworkers (Koopman et al., 2020; Tang et al., 2022; Vidyarthi et al., 2010). Accordingly, a critical nuance overlooked is that employees do not evaluate managerial voice endorsement in isolation; instead, they observe leaders’ endorsement of their colleagues’ ideas or

proposals (Ni et al., 2024a, 2024b; Poulton et al., 2024) and gauge their received managerial voice endorsement relative to that of their peers. We use *advantageous voice endorsement* to capture this perception, and define it as the extent to which focal employees perceive a relative advantage in receiving managerial support for voiced ideas or suggestions over their coworkers. While previous studies assume that leaders’ support for voice encourages employees to speak up rather than remain silent (Brykman & Maerz, 2023; Janssen & Gao, 2015), we introduce social comparison as a novel angle to extend this assumption. We contend that when evaluated comparatively, managerial voice endorsement, which intends to support employees’ right to expression, can paradoxically increase employee silence, and hence undermine the very ethical principle it intends to support.

To elucidate how advantageous voice endorsement increases subsequent employee silence, we base our theory on the *sensitivity about being the target of a threatening upward comparison* (STTUC) model (Exline & Lobel, 1999). According to the STTUC model, individuals who outperform their peers often become wary of being perceived as threatening targets for upward social comparison. This heightened sensitivity triggers concerns about negative reactions from those who are outperformed, motivating individuals to protect themselves by downplaying their superior achievements and performance (Zell & Exline, 2010). By engaging in such self-deprecating actions, these outperformers attempt to reduce the perceived threat they pose to those who are outperformed and appease them (Henagan & Bedeian, 2009; Tai et al., 2024).

Building upon the STTUC model, we argue that employees who perceive advantageous voice endorsement may anticipate becoming targets of upward social comparison, as advantageous voice endorsement implies that they outperform their coworkers in receiving leaders’ endorsement of voice. Upward social comparison often generates interpersonal tensions that prompt the comparison targets to worry about others’ negative reactions against them (Exline & Lobel, 1999; Sun et al., 2021). Prior studies have identified envy as one of the most common negative reactions caused by upward social comparison (Bamberger & Belogolovsky, 2017; Tai et al., 2023). We thus propose that perceived advantageous voice endorsement engenders apprehensions about becoming targets of envy by colleagues, a psychological state encapsulated by the concept of “concern about being envied” (Lee et al., 2018; Vecchio, 2005). This concern, rooted in the fear of interpersonal backlash, may subsequently drive these individuals to choose silence as a strategic response, intentionally withholding their ideas or suggestions. Therefore, we contend that employees’ concern about being envied explains the positive indirect effect of advantageous voice endorsement on employee silence. Notably, we examine the mediating role of this concern in

conjunction with previously established cognitive (voice self-efficacy and psychological safety) and affective (fear and pride) drivers that can potentially influence employees' decision to voice out or remain silent (Huai et al., 2024; Kiewitz et al., 2016; Sherf et al., 2021; Yan et al., 2022).

Moreover, the STTUC model notes that individuals' harmony beliefs may act as boundary conditions, positing that the effects of outperforming others on outperformers' concerns can escalate "if the outperformer has a strong desire to maintain harmonious social relationships" (Exline & Lobel, 1999, p. 313). Drawing on the STTUC model, we investigate for whom advantageous voice endorsement is more likely to increase employees' concern about being envied and, consequently, their silence, by examining an individual difference in harmony belief: superficial harmony. Superficial harmony refers to an individual's inclination to believe that in order to protect self-interest, s/he must avoid disrupting interpersonal relationships (Leung et al., 2011). Previous research has revealed its presence across both Eastern and Western cultures (Gu et al., 2024; Leung et al., 2015). Individuals with higher superficial harmony are more sensitive to the potential risks and undesirable consequences of interpersonal relationships (Wei et al., 2015). Consequently, they often anticipate negative reactions from others during social interactions (Zhang & Wei, 2017). Therefore, employees with higher levels of superficial harmony are more likely to interpret advantageous voice endorsement as socially precarious, amplifying both their concern about being envied and subsequent silence.

Overall, this paper examines how and when advantageous voice endorsement increases employee silence. Our paper aims to make several contributions. First, we extend the literature on silence by revealing how getting more endorsement for voiced ideas from leaders can paradoxically lead to more silence. We reveal concern about being envied as a perceived relational cost associated with receiving more voice endorsement, which in turn motivates employees to withhold important suggestions or ideas. By doing so, we extend the assumption that managerial support for voice invariably encourages employees to speak up rather than remain silent. Instead, we argue that managerial support for voice can generate unintended interpersonal costs when evaluated comparatively (Milliken & Morrison, 2003). Second, we expand the literature on voice by distinguishing the impact of advantageous voice endorsement from that of voice endorsement itself. While recent work has examined either employees' own managerial voice endorsement (Huai et al., 2024) or perceptions of coworkers' managerial voice endorsement (Ni et al., 2024a, 2024b; Poulton et al., 2024) in isolation, the existing literature still neglects the comparative assessments of these endorsements. By highlighting the social comparison perception of managerial voice endorsement, we offer a novel lens to understand the interpersonal

nuances of the post-voice-endorsement process (Kim et al., 2023). This shift redefines the roles of leaders and coworkers in voice outcomes, emphasizing interpersonal dynamics—where employees weigh their managerial voice endorsement against that of their coworkers—over the absolute level of managerial voice endorsement. Third, this paper extends the STTUC model. Although Exline and Lobel (1999) have contended that individual differences in harmony beliefs may affect reactions to outperformance, they have not theorized the specific boundary conditions (Tai et al., 2024; Zell & Exline, 2010). We advance the STTUC model by identifying superficial harmony, a specific harmony belief, as a boundary condition that influences outperforming individuals' experiences of STTUC-related concerns and their subsequent behaviors in the domain of outperformance. Lastly, our study offers insights into the paradoxical ethical role of managerial voice endorsement. While such practice supports employees' right to expression, it can paradoxically undermine ethics by fostering employee silence because endorsement often varies across individuals. Managers, therefore, should be aware of the unintended ethical consequences of practices intended to support ethics in organizations.

Theory and Hypotheses

Sensitivity about Being the Target of a Threatening Upward Comparison (STTUC) Model

The STTUC model is grounded in the broad social comparison theories (Exline & Lobel, 1999). It specifically focuses on situations in which individuals outperform their peers (Festinger, 1954; Tai et al., 2024), offering insights into how such outperformance shapes individuals' psychological concerns and behavioral responses to excelling. The central premise of this model is that outperformers become sensitive to the possibility of becoming a threatening target of upward social comparison by those they outperform. This sensitivity leads to STTUC-related concerns, particularly worries about provoking negative reactions from those who are outperformed (Exline & Lobel, 1999). The STTUC model identifies two key preconditions necessary for outperformers to develop these concerns (Exline & Lobel, 2001). First, outperformers must perceive that they are viewed as targets of upward social comparison by those they outperform. Specifically, they must hold the belief that their higher performance or achievements are recognized by those they outperform, thereby positioning them as benchmarks for upward comparison. Second, outperformers must also perceive that their superior performance elicits a sense of threat in the outperformed individuals. This entails the belief that the latter feels disadvantaged or vulnerable due to the comparison.

Furthermore, outperformers are motivated to behave strategically to mitigate their STTUC-related concerns (Exline et al., 2013). One common strategy that outperformers use is self-deprecation, wherein they downplay their superior accomplishments (Zell & Exline, 2010). By deliberately minimizing their achievements in the domain of outperformance, outperformers aim to reduce the threat they pose to those they outshine. For example, a high-achieving college student may intentionally reduce effort in coursework to alleviate concerns about being the target of upward social comparison among peers (Zell et al., 2020). Similarly, in the workplace, top-performing employees may purposefully underachieve to alleviate concerns that their achievements could foster social strain with coworkers who are overshadowed by their success (Henagan & Bedeian, 2009).

Advantageous Voice Endorsement, Concern About Being Envied, and Silence

In today's dynamic workplace, organizations increasingly rely on employees to proactively voice their ideas, suggestions, or concerns to identify organizational problems or misconduct, address unethical issues, and drive improvements (Parker et al., 2019; Reeves & Bristow, 2024; Weiss & Zacher, 2025). When a manager endorses a follower's voiced input, it signals the manager's acknowledgment of the follower's competency in effectively identifying and appropriately addressing work-related issues (Parke et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2023). Thus, receiving managerial voice endorsement is of importance to employees. The literature on social comparison suggests that people are naturally inclined to assess their standing relative to others in areas that are important to them (Festinger, 1954). In this paper, we propose that employees observe both their own and their coworkers' received managerial voice endorsement, forming perceptions of their relative performance in this area.

Managerial voice endorsement is a salient social cue in the workplace that often occurs publicly, such as in team meetings (Xu et al., 2020). Even if employees are not present when leaders endorse coworkers' voiced ideas or suggestions (Isaakyan et al., 2021), they can learn of these events through informal channels such as workplace gossip or peer discussions (Martinescu et al., 2019). Not surprisingly, recent studies have confirmed that employees can directly or indirectly observe managerial endorsement of their coworkers' voiced ideas (Ni et al., 2024a, 2024b; Poulton et al., 2024). Consequently, we suggest that employees are able to gather information about leaders' endorsement of both their own and their coworkers' voiced ideas and discern any differences. We use advantageous voice endorsement to capture this perception, which refers to the extent to which focal employees perceive a relative advantage in receiving managerial support for voiced ideas or suggestions over their

coworkers. Drawing on the STTUC model, we suggest that advantageous voice endorsement may increase employees' concern about being envied by coworkers, a typical manifestation of STTUC-related concerns.

According to the STTUC model, outperformers experience STTUC-related concerns only if two conditions are met: They believe they are targets of upward comparison and that others feel threatened by this comparison (Exline & Lobel, 2001). We argue that advantageous voice endorsement fulfills both conditions. First, previous studies suggest that individuals engaged in a social comparison tend to assume that others are also participating in it (Buunk & Gibbons, 2007; Festinger, 1954; Taylor & Lobel, 1989). Due to this assumed mutuality in comparative evaluations, employees perceiving superior endorsement relative to coworkers may infer that their coworkers recognize this imbalance and are aware of being outperformed in the domain of voice. As such, employees who perceive high advantageous voice endorsement are likely to feel that they are the target of upward social comparison by their coworkers.

Second, employees with high advantageous voice endorsement likely believe that their coworkers feel threatened by these comparisons. Managerial voice endorsement is crucial in the workplace because it reflects leaders' recognition of employees' capabilities (Poulton et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2023). This recognition links managerial voice endorsement to various valuable resources, such as higher performance evaluation and enhanced workplace status (Janssen & Gao, 2015; Parke et al., 2022). Superior performance in securing managerial voice endorsement implies greater access to these valued, and often limited, resources. Therefore, employees who perceive high advantageous voice endorsement may worry that their coworkers feel vulnerable and threatened by the prospect of resource deprivation.

Synthesizing the above argument, we contend that employees perceiving high advantageous voice endorsement meet both preconditions outlined in the STTUC model, making them more likely to experience STTUC-related concerns. Specifically, concern about being envied tends to emerge as a salient STTUC-related concern in this context. Envy refers to the pain or resentment one feels over another's good fortune (Parrott & Smith, 1993; Tai et al., 2012). It is triggered when someone lacks something desirable possessed by another (Vecchio, 2005). As a comparison-driven emotion, envy frequently arises in response to upward social comparisons in the workplace (Bamberger & Belogolovsky, 2017; Tai et al., 2023). Therefore, employees perceiving high advantageous voice endorsement may anticipate being envied by coworkers, given their disproportionate access to valued but scarce resources linked to managerial voice endorsement (Janssen & Gao, 2015; Poulton et al., 2024). To summarize, drawing on the STTUC model, we hypothesize

that advantageous voice endorsement elevates employees' concern about being envied.

Hypothesis 1 *Employees' advantageous voice endorsement is positively related to their concern about being envied by coworkers.*

The literature on envy has accumulated considerable evidence that being envied by coworkers has many negative consequences for employees (see Duffy et al., 2021, for a review). For example, envious coworkers may display various hostile behaviors toward envied employees, such as social undermining (Duffy et al., 2012), incivility (Koopman et al., 2020), and interpersonal counterproductive work behaviors (Khan et al., 2014). Additionally, employees who are worried about being envied often experience psychological strain such as discomfort and anxiety, which can diminish their job satisfaction, work engagement, and task performance (e.g., Lee et al., 2018; Liu et al., 2024). As a result, employees are motivated to take action to reduce the envy-driven repercussions (Puranik et al., 2019; Zell & Exline, 2010). In this paper, we suggest that to mitigate the concern about being envied by coworkers elicited by high advantageous voice endorsement, employees may display more silence behaviors.

Recent work has shown that silence is a construct distinct from voice and is not equal to merely the absence of speaking up (see Hao et al., 2022, for a meta-analysis). Instead, silence is a conscious and intentional decision to withhold ideas or suggestions when one has them (Morrison, 2014; Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008). The STTUC model posits that experiencing STTUC-related concerns can motivate outperformers to adopt appeasement strategies, such as self-deprecation, to downplay their outperformance (Exline & Lobel, 1999, 2001). Applying the STTUC model to the literature on silence, we view silence as a form of self-deprecating behavior that employees may adopt when concerned about being envied due to high advantageous voice endorsement. Specifically, employees who perceive themselves as outperforming coworkers in receiving leader support for voiced ideas or suggestions may deliberately choose to underachieve in subsequent situations to reduce their relative advantage in this domain (Henagan & Bedeian, 2009). For instance, they may intentionally withhold their input in subsequent team meetings or conversations with leaders, even when they have opinions that could have been shared, thereby avoiding further accentuating their advantage in gaining managerial voice endorsement. Doing so diminishes their threat potential and appeases coworkers (Zell et al., 2020).

In addition, when they are concerned about being envied by coworkers, employees may seek to minimize interactions with coworkers to avoid provoking resentment and

hostility (Puranik et al., 2019). Silence allows employees to decrease interpersonal exposure and visibility in teams or organizations (Kish-Gephart et al., 2009). By remaining silent, employees can disengage from certain discussions and interpersonal communications, which decreases their likelihood of drawing further attention as targets of envy. Accordingly, we suggest that advantageous voice endorsement is positively related to concern about being envied by coworkers, which in turn prompts employees to engage in more silence behaviors subsequently.

Hypothesis 2 *Employees' concern about being envied by coworkers mediates the positive indirect effect of advantageous voice endorsement on silence.*

The Moderating Role of Superficial Harmony

Superficial harmony refers to individuals' tendency to avoid disrupting interpersonal relationships to protect their self-interest (Leung et al., 2011). While initially studied in Eastern contexts, subsequent studies have demonstrated that it is an individual belief relevant across both Eastern and Western cultures (Gu et al., 2024; Leung et al., 2015). It reflects dispositional differences in how individuals assess potential relational risks, prioritize interpersonal harmony, and navigate social interactions. Individuals high in superficial harmony are hypervigilant about potential interpersonal risks such as being socially sanctioned or negatively evaluated by others (Zhang & Wei, 2017). They value the instrumental benefits of maintaining harmonious relationships with others as a means to effectively minimize interpersonal risks (Chen et al., 2015). To maintain interpersonal harmony, they often adopt a self-defensive strategy in their interpersonal interactions (Wei et al., 2015). For example, they tend to concede to others' opinions or preferences to avoid conflicts, even at a personal cost (Zhang & Wei, 2017).

The STTUC model has theorized that individuals' harmony beliefs may act as boundary conditions of the effect of outperformance, suggesting that the intensity of its impacts on outperformers' concerns should increase among those who strongly wish to preserve harmonious interpersonal relationships (Exline & Lobel, 1999). Based on the STTUC model, we examine superficial harmony as a moderator of the relationship between advantageous voice endorsement and concern about being envied. We propose that superficial harmony amplifies this relationship by intensifying both preconditions necessary for STTUC-related concerns. First, employees with higher levels of superficial harmony are more attuned to potential interpersonal risks, rendering them more sensitive to cues suggesting that they have become upward social comparison targets. When perceiving attaining superior managerial voice endorsement compared

to coworkers, they are more inclined to assume that coworkers also recognize this difference and view them as better-off benchmarks in the domain of voice (Tai et al., 2024). Second, for employees high in superficial harmony, their pessimistic outlook predisposes them to focus on the potential negative aspects of interpersonal relationships with coworkers and expect to receive unfavorable treatment from their peers (Leung et al., 2011; Wang et al., 2014; Zhang & Wei, 2017). Thus, when perceiving themselves as receiving more managerial voice endorsement than their coworkers, they are more likely to anticipate that their coworkers may feel discomfort or resentment over being outperformed. This anticipation further prompts them to interpret their advantageous voice endorsement as a potential threat to their coworkers. Consequently, employees with higher levels of superficial harmony are especially prone to experience heightened concerns about being envied by their coworkers when they perceive high advantageous voice endorsement.

By contrast, employees low in superficial harmony are less preoccupied with interpersonal risks (Leung et al., 2011). They engage in social interactions with fewer defensive postures and are less likely to anticipate negative reactions from their peers (Wang et al., 2014; Zhang & Wei, 2017). Consequently, even when outperforming coworkers in receiving managerial voice endorsement, they are less inclined to perceive themselves as threatening comparison targets in the eyes of their coworkers, thereby experiencing attenuated worries about being envied by their colleagues.

Hypothesis 3 *Employees' superficial harmony moderates the relationship between advantageous voice endorsement and concern about being envied, such that the positive relationship is stronger for employees with higher rather than lower superficial harmony.*

We further propose our final hypothesis regarding the overall moderated mediation model. As we have argued, superficial harmony amplifies the extent to which employees become concerned about being envied when they perceive advantageous voice endorsement. Once triggered, this concern is further associated with the self-deprecation behavior of silence. Overall, we argue that superficial harmony strengthens the positive indirect effect of advantageous voice endorsement on employees' silence via concern about being envied.

Hypothesis 4 *Employees' superficial harmony moderates the positive indirect effect of advantageous voice endorsement on silence via concern about being envied, such that the positive indirect effect is stronger for employees with higher rather than lower superficial harmony.*

Overview of Studies

We examined our hypotheses across four studies¹ with complementary designs. To provide evidence of causality, we first conducted a preregistered experiment (Study 1) using a between-subjects vignette design to test the mediating effect of concern about being envied on the relationship between advantageous voice endorsement and silence. We then conducted three field studies with lagged survey designs using working adult samples from different countries (Study 2: China, Study 3a: United States, Study 3b: United Kingdom) to further examine our hypotheses and increase confidence in the generalizability of findings. We also accounted for the effects of several alternative pathways in these field studies. Our package of studies highlights how and when advantageous voice endorsement increases subsequent employee silence while addressing alternative explanations.

Study 1

Participants and Procedures

We recruited 200 full-time employees located in the U.S. or the U.K. to take part in this study via Prolific. Participants received £1 for their participation. A vignette-based, between-subjects experimental design was employed, and participants were randomly assigned to one of the two conditions (*advantageous voice endorsement: high vs. low*). They were instructed to adopt the role of an employee working at a finance company and read a vignette describing their work experiences. In the *high advantageous voice endorsement* condition, the vignette described that the focal employee's voiced ideas or suggestions are more frequently endorsed by the leader compared to those of coworkers (i.e., the leader always supports the employee's voiced opinions but only sometimes supports coworkers' voiced opinions). In the *low advantageous voice endorsement* condition, the vignette described that the employee's voiced opinions and those of coworkers are equally endorsed by the leader (i.e., the employee's voiced opinions are sometimes supported by the leader, and so are coworkers' voiced opinions). The full text of the scenarios is presented in Appendix A. After reading the vignette, participants completed measures of concern about being envied and silence. To minimize demand effects, the manipulation check was administered last, followed by demographic questions.

¹ The design, measures, and data analysis plan of Study 1 were preregistered at AsPredicted. An anonymized version of the pre-registration was submitted to Open Science Framework (OSF) at https://osf.io/p85he/?view_only=9103df55f39345869d0c5e4af4eb93f5.

As per our preregistered exclusion criterion, we excluded the participants who did not pass the attention check question (Please select “Strongly disagree”) and finally obtained 194 records for the data analysis. Most of the participants were female (61.86%). Their average age was 39.25 years ($SD = 10.79$). Most of them (61.86%) received a bachelor’s degree or above. Their average organization tenure was 7.24 years ($SD = 6.85$).

Measures

Concern about being envied was measured with Vecchio’s (2005) three-item scale. An example item is “You worry that some of your colleagues are envious of your accomplishments.” Responses range from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*.

Silence was measured using Van Dyne et al.’s (2003) five-item scale of defensive silence. An example item is “You avoid expressing ideas for improvements, due to self-protection.” We focused on defensive silence because it is most theoretically aligned with our STTUC-based model. Defensive silence is defined as a behavior “intended to protect the self from external threats” (Van Dyne et al., 2003, p. 1367) and is motivated by self-protection. This aligns directly with our theoretical argument that employees who are concerned about being envied due to high advantageous voice endorsement engage in self-deprecating behaviors in order to reduce potential negative reactions and hence protect themselves from peers. Participants were asked to envision how they would behave in the next team meeting. Responses range from 1 = *extremely unlikely* to 7 = *extremely likely*.

Results

The descriptive statistics and correlations among variables are presented in Table 1.

Manipulation check. Participants were asked to respond, “Compared to your colleagues, do you more frequently or less frequently receive your manager’s support for the ideas you propose?” Responses range from 1 = *least frequently* to 7 = *most frequently*. Participants in the high advantageous voice endorsement condition ($N = 95$, $M = 6.08$, $SD = 1.02$) scored higher than those in the low condition ($N = 99$, $M = 4.24$, $SD = .70$), $F(1, 192) = 217.00$, $p < .01$, Cohen’s $d = 2.10$. Hence, the manipulation was effective.

Hypotheses Testing

The ANOVA results showed that participants assigned to the high advantageous voice endorsement condition reported higher levels of concern about being envied ($M = 3.30$, $SD = 1.12$) than those assigned to the low advantageous voice endorsement condition ($M = 2.23$, $SD = .98$), $F(1, 192) = 50.55$, $p < .01$, Cohen’s $d = 1.02$. Hypothesis 1 was supported.

We then conducted a path analysis using Mplus 8.3 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2017) to test the mediation model. We found that advantageous voice endorsement was positively related to concern about being envied ($b = 1.07$, $SE = .15$, $p < .01$), and concern about being envied was positively related to silence ($b = .34$, $SE = .09$, $p < .01$). To test the indirect effect, we then conducted the Monte Carlo simulation with a parametric Bootstrapping based on 20,000 resamplings using R (Selig & Preacher, 2008). The indirect

Table 1 Means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations among study variables (Study 1)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Advantageous voice endorsement	–								
2. Concern about being envied	0.46**	(0.96)							
3. Silence	0.05	0.25**	(0.95)						
4. Gender	–0.00	0.10	0.08	–					
5. Age	–0.09	–0.18*	–0.20**	–.13	–				
6. Education 1	0.04	0.07	–0.02	0.05	–0.03	–			
7. Education 2	–.02	–0.00	.07	0.03	–0.16*	–.44**	–		
8. Education 3	–0.01	–0.10	–0.08	–0.07	0.23**	–.38**	–0.59**	–	
9. Organization tenure	–0.18*	–0.20**	–0.12	.00	0.52**	–.21**	–0.04	.24**	–
Mean	1.49	2.75	2.85	0.62	39.25	0.22	0.41	0.34	7.24
SD	0.50	1.18	1.35	0.49	10.79	0.41	0.49	0.47	6.85

$N = 192$ – 194 . Gender was coded as 0 = male, 1 = female. Education was originally measured with five response options: 1 = master’s degree or above, 2 = bachelor’s degree, 3 = high school, 4 = others, and 5 = prefer not to answer. We treated “5 = prefer not to answer” responses as missing values and treated “4 = others” as the reference category and thus created three dummy variables: Education 1 was coded as 1 = master’s degree or above, 0 = otherwise; Education 2 was coded as 1 = bachelor’s degree, 0 = otherwise; Education 3 was coded as 1 = high school, 0 = otherwise. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients are shown in parentheses

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed)

effect of advantageous voice endorsement on silence via concern about being envied was positive and significant ($estimate = .36$, $SE = .11$, 95% CI [.159, .605]), supporting Hypothesis 2.

Discussion of Study 1

In Study 1, we adopted a vignette-based, experimental design and found that advantageous voice endorsement was positively related to concern about being envied, which in turn was positively associated with silence. These results provided initial support for our Hypotheses 1 and 2, demonstrating the internal validity of our findings. We then conducted Study 2 using multi-wave field data to establish the external validity of our findings. Study 2 also served two additional purposes. First, it tested the proposed mediation effect while controlling for two alternative cognitive mechanisms (voice self-efficacy and psychological safety) that have been established as key factors influencing whether employees choose to speak up or remain silent (Sherf et al., 2021; Yan et al., 2022). Second, Study 2 measured and examined both silence and voice as outcome variables, allowing for a direct comparison of their antecedents. While silence and voice are both conceptually related as involving employee communication, previous studies have demonstrated that they are two distinct constructs (Hao et al., 2022). Silence reflects the intentional withholding of input, whereas voice reflects the proactive expression of ideas or concerns (Morrison, 2014). Critically, silence does not equal a lack of voice, as employees may display low levels of voice simply because they do not have ideas to express (Birnbaum et al., 2025). In contrast, silence reflects instances in which employees possess ideas but deliberately choose to withhold them (Van Dyne et al., 2003). Although scholars have called for research to differentiate the nomological networks of silence and voice (Detert & Edmondson, 2011; Whiteside & Barclay, 2013), most studies continue to examine them separately. By measuring both voice and silence simultaneously, Study 2 addresses the question of how silence and voice differ by demonstrating that their predictors are distinct.

Study 2

Participants and Procedures

We recruited 190 full-time public administration employees enrolled in a weekend training course at a university in northern China. Data was collected at two time points with a two-week time interval. We chose a two-week interval as recent studies (e.g., Poulton et al., 2024) have suggested that a two-week interval is appropriate to assess the consequences of managerial voice endorsement. In addition, our

choice of time interval aligns with participants' schedules: The participants were full-time employees who attended a weekend training course every two weeks, and we administered each wave of the survey during these training course sessions. Coordinating our data collection with this schedule allowed for a consistent and feasible process and helped reduce concerns about common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2012). At Time 1, participants were asked to report managerial endorsement of their own voiced ideas or suggestions (hereafter referred to as self MVE), managerial endorsement of their coworkers' voiced ideas or suggestions (hereafter referred to as coworker MVE), and their demographic information. At Time 2, participants answered questions regarding their concern about being envied, psychological safety, voice self-efficacy, silence, and voice.

Among the 190 participants we invited, 182 provided responses at Time 1, and 135 provided responses at Time 2. We finally obtained 133 matched records for data analyses, yielding an overall response rate of 70%. The majority of the participants were female (63.16%) and were in the age range of 26–30 years old (52.63%). Most of them (82.71%) received a bachelor's degree. Their average organization tenure was 3.81 years ($SD = 2.49$).

Measures

Following the translation-back-translation procedure (Brislin, 1980), we generated the Chinese versions of all scales used in this study. Unless otherwise noted, all measures were anchored on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*).

Advantageous voice endorsement. We used polynomial regression analysis to test the effect of advantageous voice endorsement on concern about being envied and silence. Advantageous voice endorsement was operationalized as the incongruence between self MVE and coworker MVE in the polynomial regression. We measured self MVE and coworker MVE by adapting three items from Burris's (2012) scale. An example item of self MVE (coworker MVE) is "My supervisor supports my (my coworkers') ideas." Responses ranged from 1 (*never*) to 7 (*always*). In addition, following prior studies that use difference scores to measure individuals' perceptions of differences (Han & Pollock, 2021), we also assessed advantageous voice endorsement by calculating the difference score between self MVE and coworker MVE. We utilized polynomial regression analysis as the main analysis and reported the results using the difference score approach in the supplementary analyses. The findings using both approaches were largely consistent.

Concern about being envied was measured using the same scale as in Study 1.

Psychological safety was measured with four items adapted from Liang et al.'s (2012) scale. A sample item is "I can freely express my thoughts."

Voice self-efficacy was measured with Tangirala et al.'s (2013) three-item scale. A sample item is "I am self-assured about my capabilities to speak up on work-related issues."

Silence was measured with Tangirala and Ramanujam's (2008) five-item scale. A sample item is "Although I had ideas for improving work-related practices in my team, I did not speak up."

Voice. Although our research model focuses on silence, we measured voice following the suggestion of Sherf et al. (2021) to differentiate silence and voice in terms of their nomological network. We measured voice with Liang et al.'s (2012) five-item promotive voice scale. A sample item is "I raised suggestions to improve my team's working procedure."

Control variables. As noted above, we controlled for psychological safety and voice self-efficacy as two alternative mediators. Excluding or including these two variables in the data analysis did not change the significance of our results. In addition, following previous studies that investigated the antecedents of feelings of being envied and silence (Madrid et al., 2015; Sun et al., 2021), we controlled for demographics, including employee gender, age, education level, and organization tenure. Excluding or including these demographic control variables in the data analysis did not change the significance of our results.

Analytical Strategy

Polynomial regression analysis is an advanced approach to test the consequences of the (in)congruence between two predictors (Edwards & Parry, 1993). It allows researchers to model all possible combinations of two predictors, including the congruence line, which reflects cases where the two predictors match with one another at each of their values, and the incongruence line, which indicates cases where the two predictors mismatch with one another at each of their values (Barranti et al., 2017). This analysis approach is widely used by recent organizational studies to operationalize social comparison perceptions (e.g., Xu et al., 2024; Yoon et al., 2023).

Following recent studies' practices, we grand-mean-centered self MVE (X) and coworker MVE (Y) to mitigate potential multicollinearity. Using the grand-mean-centered self MVE and coworker MVE, we then estimated the three higher-order polynomial terms (X^2 , $X \times Y$, Y^2). To test the effects of the (in)congruence of self MVE and coworker MVE on concern about being envied (Z), we estimated the following equation:

$$Z = b_0 + b_1X + b_2Y + b_3X^2 + b_4X \times Y + b_5Y^2 + e$$

The coefficients obtained from this equation were used to draw a three-dimensional response surface plot to provide a visual representation of the effects of the (in)congruence of self MVE and coworker MVE on concern about being envied (Edwards & Parry, 1993). We plotted self MVE and coworker MVE on the perpendicular horizontal axes and concern about being envied on the vertical axis.

In this study, as we were interested in the difference between self MVE and coworker MVE, we specifically focused on the incongruence line, which ranged from low self MVE and high coworker MVE (i.e., low advantageous voice endorsement) to high self MVE and low coworker MVE (i.e., high advantageous voice endorsement). To support the hypothesized positive effect of advantageous voice endorsement on concern about being envied, the slope of the incongruence line (estimated as $b_1 - b_2$), as an indicator of advantageous voice endorsement, should be positive and significant. It indicates that concern about being envied is greater when employees perceive high advantageous voice endorsement compared to when they perceive low advantageous voice endorsement. Shown in the response surface plot, the shape of the surface should have an upward ridge along the incongruence line ($X = -Y$).

Further, to test the mediation effect, we utilized the slope of the incongruence line as the first-stage path estimate; the second-stage path estimate was calculated by regressing silence on concern about being envied after controlling for the five polynomial terms. Following recent methodological recommendations (e.g., Liao et al., 2023; Rosen et al., 2020; Yoon et al., 2023), we did not use the block variable approach to test the indirect effect, as it conflates the effects of all patterns of (in)congruence into a single omnibus term, making it impossible to disentangle the unique effect of our focused incongruence line. Using the block variable approach did not change the significance of the results.

Results

Table 2 reports the descriptive statistics and correlations of all study variables.

Confirmatory factor analysis. To evaluate the discriminant validity of the study variables, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The results demonstrated that the seven-factor measurement model (self MVE, coworker MVE, concern about being envied, psychological safety, voice self-efficacy, silence, and voice) produced a satisfactory fit ($\chi^2 = 475.66$, $df = 278$, CFI = .930, TLI = .918, RMSEA = .073, SRMR = .044), and it fitted the data better than the other alternative measurement models (all $\Delta\chi^2$ with $p < .01$).

Table 2 Means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations among study variables (Study 2)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Self MVE	(0.96)											
2. Coworker MVE	0.78**	(0.97)										
3. Concern about being envied	0.17*	0.06	(0.95)									
4. Silence	−0.01	−0.05	0.50**	(0.97)								
5. Voice	0.46**	0.50**	−0.01	−0.22*	(0.96)							
6. Psychological safety	0.40**	0.41**	−0.06	−0.17*	0.52**	(0.91)						
7. Voice self-efficacy	0.37**	0.37**	−0.17*	−.17*	0.73**	0.46**	(0.94)					
8. Gender	−0.03	−0.13	−0.04	0.06	−0.20*	−0.11	−0.17*	−				
9. Age	0.03	0.01	−0.07	−.08	0.10	.01	.12	−0.10	−			
10. Education 1	0.17*	0.13	0.11	.03	0.06	0.09	−.04	.13	−0.16	−		
11. Education 2	−0.18*	−0.12	−0.12	−0.02	−0.06	−0.08	.04	−.14	.17*	−0.97**	−	
12. Organization tenure	0.06	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.12	0.03	0.16	−0.04	.16	−.02	0.02	−
Mean	4.49	4.37	3.75	3.91	4.88	4.41	4.99	0.63	3.41	0.17	.83	3.81
SD	1.16	.99	1.35	1.27	0.95	1.18	0.94	0.48	0.62	0.37	.38	2.49

$N=133$. Gender was coded as 0=male, 1=female. Age was coded as 1=below 18 years old, 2=18–25 years old, 3=26–30 years old, 4=31–40 years old, 5=41–50 years old, 6=51–60 years old, and 7=above 60 years old. Education was originally measured with five response options: 1 = middle school and below, 2 = high school/vocational high school, 3 = associate degree, 4 = bachelor's degree, and 5 = master's degree or above. No participant selected "1 = middle school and below" or "2 = high school/vocational high school". We treated "3 = associate degree" as the reference category and thus created two dummy variables: Education 1 was coded as 1 = master's degree or above, 0 = otherwise; Education 2 was coded as 1 = bachelor's degree, 0 = otherwise. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients are shown in parentheses

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed)

Hypotheses Testing

We conducted a polynomial regression analysis using Mplus 8.3 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2017). The results are presented in Table 3 and Fig. 1 and the corresponding response surface is presented in Fig. 2. As shown, advantageous voice endorsement was positively related to concern about being envied ($estimate = .85$, $SE = .21$, $p < .01$). This result indicated that employees tended to have more concern about being envied when their MVE was higher than that of coworkers (i.e., high advantageous voice endorsement) compared to when their MVE was lower than that of coworkers (i.e., low advantageous voice endorsement). This finding was consistent with the response surface shown in Fig. 2, which demonstrated an upward ridge along the incongruence line. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was supported. Concern about being envied was positively related to silence ($b = .47$, $SE = .10$, $p < .01$). To test the indirect effect, we then conducted a Monte Carlo simulation with a parametric Bootstrapping based on 20,000 re-samplings using R (Selig & Preacher, 2008). The indirect effect of advantageous voice endorsement on silence via concern about being envied was positive and significant ($estimate = .40$, $SE = .12$, 95% CI [.188,.659]), supporting Hypothesis 2.

Regarding the controlled mechanisms, results showed that advantageous voice endorsement was not significantly related to psychological safety ($estimate = -.24$, $SE = .21$, $p = .26$) or voice self-efficacy ($estimate = -.00$, $SE = .20$,

$p = .99$). Psychological safety was not significantly related to silence ($b = -.11$, $SE = .11$, $p = .31$), nor was voice self-efficacy ($b = -.03$, $SE = .13$, $p = .83$). The indirect effects of advantageous voice endorsement on silence via psychological safety ($estimate = .03$, $SE = .04$, 95% CI [−.037,.130]) and voice self-efficacy ($estimate = .00$, $SE = .01$, 95% CI [−.054,.058]) were both non-significant.

Additionally, we found that concern about being envied was not significantly related to voice ($b = .06$, $SE = .04$, $p = .15$) whereas psychological safety ($b = .15$, $SE = .07$, $p < .05$) and voice self-efficacy ($b = .58$, $SE = .09$, $p < .01$) were both positively related to voice, supporting the notion that silence is not merely the opposite of voice as their predictors varied.

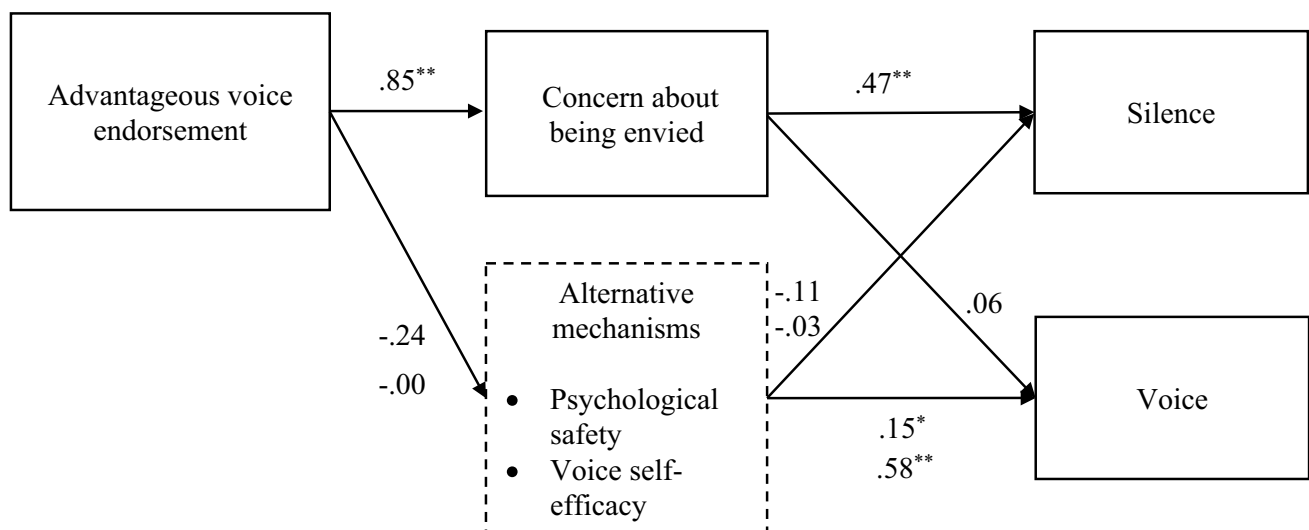
Supplementary analyses. In addition to the polynomial regression analysis, we used the difference score between self MVE and coworker MVE to operationalize advantageous voice endorsement. The results are presented in Table S1 in Appendix B. We found that advantageous voice endorsement was positively related to concern about being envied ($b = .37$, $SE = .13$, $p < .01$), and concern about being envied was positively related to silence ($b = .47$, $SE = .10$, $p < .01$). The indirect effect of advantageous voice endorsement on silence via concern about being envied was positive and significant ($estimate = .18$, $SE = .07$, 95% CI [.049,.319]). These results were consistent with those based on the polynomial regression analysis.

Table 3 Results of polynomial regression analysis (Study 2)

	Concern about being envied		Psychological safety		Voice self-efficacy		Silence		Voice	
	Est	SE	Est	SE	Est	SE	Est	SE	Est	SE
<i>Polynomial terms</i>										
<i>b1</i> Self MVE (<i>X</i>)	0.43**	0.11	0.16	0.11	0.19*	0.09	−0.08	0.17	0.01	0.06
<i>b2</i> Coworker MVE (<i>Y</i>)	−0.42**	0.13	0.39**	0.13	0.19	0.13	0.03	0.18	0.18*	0.08
<i>b3</i> X^2	−0.20*	0.09	0.05	0.07	0.08	0.05	0.03	0.13	0.03	0.03
<i>b4</i> $X \times Y$	0.08	0.16	0.34*	0.17	−0.22	0.15	−0.11	0.27	−0.10	0.08
<i>b5</i> Y^2	0.20	0.20	−0.48**	0.16	0.14	0.16	0.11	0.20	0.06	0.08
<i>Congruence line ($X=Y$)</i>										
Slope (<i>b1</i> + <i>b2</i>)	0.01	0.13	0.55**	0.10	0.37**	0.09				
Curvature (<i>b3</i> + <i>b4</i> + <i>b5</i>)	0.08	0.11	−0.09	0.05	0.00	0.05				
<i>Incongruence line ($X=−Y$)</i>										
Slope (<i>b1</i> − <i>b2</i>)	0.85**	0.21	−0.24	0.21	−0.00	0.20				
Curvature (<i>b3</i> − <i>b4</i> + <i>b5</i>)	−0.08	0.34	−0.77*	0.34	0.44	0.31				
<i>Mediators</i>										
Concern about being envied							0.47**	0.10	0.06	0.04
Psychological safety							−0.11	0.11	0.15*	0.07
Voice self-efficacy							−0.03	0.13	0.58**	0.09
<i>Control variables</i>										
Gender	−0.24	0.24	−0.19	0.19	−0.22	0.15	0.21	0.21	−0.10	0.11
Age	−0.17	0.19	−0.02	0.15	0.11	0.14	−0.07	0.16	0.04	0.09
Education 1	−0.19	0.35	0.24	0.26	−0.21	0.23	1.37**	0.24	−0.10	0.10
Education 2	−0.46*	0.21	0.16	0.19	−0.04	0.15	1.45**	0.20	−0.23*	0.10
Organization tenure	0.02	0.05	−0.02	0.03	0.05*	0.02	0.02	0.03	0.01	0.02
R^2	0.10		0.23		0.22		0.28		0.61	

$N=133$. MVE=managerial voice endorsement; Est.=the unstandardized estimate; SE=standard error. Gender was coded as 0=male, 1=female. Age was coded as 1=below 18 years old, 2=18–25 years old, 3=26–30 years old, 4=31–40 years old, 5=41–50 years old, 6=51–60 years old, and 7=above 60 years old. Education 1 was coded as 1=master's degree or above, 0=otherwise; Education 2 was coded as 1=bachelor's degree, 0=otherwise

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed)


Fig. 1 Results of polynomial regression analysis (Study 2). $N=133$. All paths presented in this figure were estimated with control variables. The results of the unstandardized estimate are presented. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed)

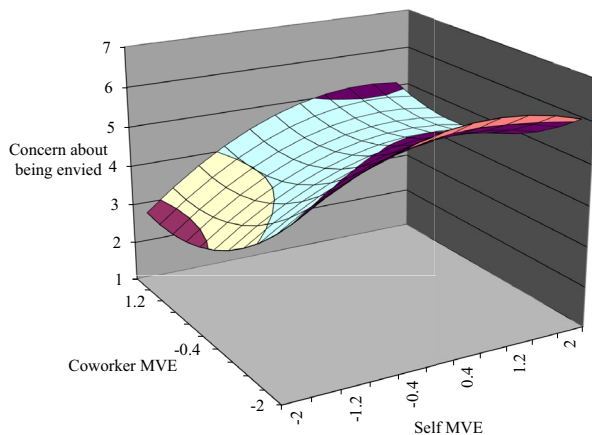


Fig. 2 Concern about being envied as predicted by the (in)congruence of self MVE and coworker MVE (Study 2)

Discussion of Study 2

In Study 2, we replicated the findings of Study 1 using a field sample of Chinese working adults. Consistent with Hypotheses 1 and 2, we found that advantageous voice endorsement was positively related to concern about being envied and generated a positive indirect effect on silence via this concern. We also ruled out two alternative mechanisms by demonstrating that the mediation effects of psychological safety and voice self-efficacy on the relationship between advantageous voice endorsement and silence were non-significant. Moreover, in Study 2, we distinguished the predictors of silence from those of voice. Specifically, we found that concern about being envied was positively associated with silence, but was unrelated to voice. In contrast, psychological safety and voice self-efficacy were both positively related to voice but were not significantly associated with silence. These findings demonstrate that silence and voice differ in their antecedents, suggesting that they are influenced by different mechanisms. As such, our findings echo Sherf et al.'s (2021, p. 115) call for “separating the question ‘Why are people speaking up or not?’ into two distinct questions—‘Why are people speaking up?’ and ‘Why are they keeping silent?’”.

Building on the findings of Study 1 and Study 2, we conducted Studies 3a and 3b to test the full moderated mediation model. Notably, while the results of Study 2 using the polynomial regression approach and the difference score approach largely converged, demonstrating the robustness of our findings, both of these approaches serve as indirect measures of advantageous voice endorsement. In Studies 3a and 3b, following the approach used by existing studies on social comparison (e.g., Vidyarthi et al., 2010), we adopted a more direct operationalization to measure advantageous voice endorsement. Furthermore, to establish the

generalizability of our findings, Studies 3a and 3b collected multi-wave data from working adults located in countries with cultures different from China. Additionally, Study 3a extended our investigation by controlling for two affective pathways (pride and fear; Huai et al., 2024; Kiewitz et al., 2016), together with the two cognitive pathways accounted for in Study 2.

Study 3a

Participants and Procedures

We recruited 400 full-time employees located in the U.S. via Prolific, an online crowdsourcing platform that has been utilized by previous research to collect data from field samples (e.g., Chen & Treviño, 2022; Fatimah et al., 2024; Isaakyan et al., 2021). To be eligible, participants were required to (a) be employed full-time, (b) work in the U.S., and (c) use English as their first language. Participants completed three surveys separated by two-week intervals. Similar to Study 2, we selected a two-week interval between the data collection waves because prior work has indicated that this duration is appropriate for assessing the consequences of managerial voice endorsement (e.g., Poulton et al., 2024). Additionally, previous research has suggested that a two-week interval is suitable for investigating the consequences of envy-related perceptions (e.g., Li et al., 2024). At Time 1, participants reported their advantageous voice endorsement, self MVE, superficial harmony, leader-member exchange (hereafter referred to as LMX), and demographics. At Time 2, participants answered questions regarding their concern about being envied, psychological safety, voice self-efficacy, fear, and pride. At Time 3, participants reported their silence and voice behaviors. Participants received £2 for their completion of each survey, and those who completed all three surveys received an additional £1.

Among the 400 participants who completed the Time 1 survey, 367 provided responses at Time 2, and 352 provided responses at Time 3, yielding an overall response rate of 88%. After excluding 19 participants who did not pass the attention check question (Please select “Strongly disagree” or “Never”) in any of the three surveys, we finally got 333 matched records for data analyses. Among the 333 participants, 61.26% were male. Their average age was 41.34 years ($SD = 10.61$). Most of the participants (76.58%) had at least a bachelor's degree. Their average organization tenure was 8.58 years ($SD = 7.07$).

Measures

Unless otherwise noted, all responses were anchored on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

Advantageous voice endorsement. Following prior studies that developed items to directly capture individuals' perceptions of differences (Vidyardhi et al., 2010), we adapted Burris's (2012) five-item scale to directly measure the extent to which employees perceive a relative advantage in receiving managerial support for voiced ideas or suggestions over their coworkers. An example item is "My supervisor more frequently supports my ideas, compared to my colleagues' ideas." Compared with those indirect approaches to assess advantageous voice endorsement (i.e., using the incongruence line in polynomial regression analysis or the difference score between self MVE and coworker MVE), one advantage of this direct approach is that it allows the evaluation of the impact of advantageous voice endorsement while simultaneously controlling for the effect of self MVE in the data analysis.

Concern about being envied, psychological safety, voice self-efficacy, silence, and voice. We measured these variables using the same scales as in Study 2. Silence and voice were rated with a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 7 (*always*).

Fear was measured with Kiewitz et al.'s (2016) four-item scale. An example item is "I feel nervous."

Pride was measured with Huai et al.'s (2024) three-item scale. An example item is "I feel proud."

Superficial harmony was measured with Leung et al.'s (2011) eight-item scale. An example item is "In order to maintain harmony, people might have to give up principles of justice in handling matters."

Control variables. As noted above, we controlled for four alternative mediators (psychological safety, voice self-efficacy, fear, and pride). Among them, fear and pride are two affective pathways not assessed in Study 2. We measured and controlled for fear alongside pride because they represent avoidance- and approach-oriented emotional responses that could emerge from advantageous voice endorsement. On the one hand, receiving advantageous voice endorsement highlights that the focal employee's capability to identify and address organizational issues is well recognized by the leader, which can elicit an approach-oriented emotion of pride (Huai et al., 2024). On the other hand, receiving superior support from the leader can sometimes pose risks to and be experienced as emotionally uncomfortable by the recipient, as it may prompt a generalized apprehension about possible negative outcomes, such as experiencing greater scrutiny or being criticized more harshly for future failure. As such, employees who perceive advantageous voice endorsement may experience the avoidance-oriented emotion of fear

(Kiewitz et al., 2016; Wang & Hsieh, 2013). By controlling for both fear and pride, we aimed at ruling out these emotional reactions as alternative explanations for our proposed mechanism based on concern about being envied.

Beyond these alternative mediators, we also controlled for self MVE when assessing the effect of advantageous voice endorsement on outcomes. Self MVE was measured with Burris's (2012) five-item scale. An example item is "My supervisor supports my ideas." Furthermore, we controlled for employees' LMX, because the quality of relationships with leaders may influence employees' interpersonal relationships and silence behavior at work (Cooper et al., 2018; Xu et al., 2015). We measured LMX by adapting three items from Vidyardhi et al.'s (2010) scale. An example item is "I have a good relationship with my supervisor." In addition, as in Study 2, we controlled for demographics, including employee gender, age, education level, and organization tenure. Excluding or including these control variables in the data analysis did not change the significance of the results.

Results

Table 4 reports the descriptive statistics and correlations of all study variables.

Confirmatory factor analysis. To evaluate the discriminant validity of the study variables, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The results demonstrated that the eleven-factor measurement model (advantageous voice endorsement, self MVE, superficial harmony, LMX, concern about being envied, psychological safety, voice self-efficacy, fear, pride, silence, and voice) produced a satisfactory fit ($\chi^2 = 1574.49$, $df = 1025$, $CFI = .964$, $TLI = .961$, $RMSEA = .040$, $SRMR = .047$), and it fitted the data better than the other alternative measurement models (all $\Delta\chi^2$ with $p < .01$).

Hypotheses Testing

The path analysis results are presented in Table 5 and Fig. 3. As shown, advantageous voice endorsement was positively related to concern about being envied ($b = .45$, $SE = .05$, $p < .01$), and concern about being envied was positively related to silence ($b = .12$, $SE = .05$, $p < .05$). The indirect effect of advantageous voice endorsement on silence via concern about being envied was positive and significant ($estimate = .06$, $SE = .02$, 95% CI [.008, .103]). Therefore, Hypotheses 1 and 2 were supported.

Meanwhile, we tested the mediation effects of the four alternative mechanisms. As shown, advantageous voice endorsement was negatively related to psychological safety ($b = -.16$, $SE = .05$, $p < .01$) and it was not significantly related to voice self-efficacy ($b = .07$, $SE = .05$, $p = .15$), fear ($b = .06$, $SE = .05$, $p = .22$), or pride ($b = .09$, $SE = .06$, $p = .14$).

Table 4 Means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations among study variables (Study 3a)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1. Advantageous voice endorsement	(0.98)															
2. Concern about being envied	0.41**	(0.94)														
3. Silence	-0.05	0.24**	(0.96)													
4. Voice	.47**	0.16**	-0.18**	(0.98)												
5. Psychological safety	0.13*	-0.14**	-0.38**	0.35**	(0.94)											
6. Voice self-efficacy	0.27**	-0.06	-0.34**	0.45**	0.61**	(0.94)										
7. Fear	-0.08	0.21**	0.41**	-0.21**	-0.40**	-0.51**	(0.96)									
8. Pride	0.31**	0.08	-0.33**	0.50**	0.56**	0.48**	-0.39**	(0.94)								
9. Superficial harmony	0.15**	0.25**	0.16**	0.02	-0.07	-0.06	0.16**	0.04	(0.83)							
10. Self MVE	0.52**	0.06	-0.37**	0.49**	0.53**	0.46**	-0.32**	0.55**	0.12*	(0.97)						
11. LMX	0.32**	-0.03	-0.49**	0.32**	0.55**	0.47**	-0.39**	0.56**	0.06	0.77**	(0.96)					
12. Gender	-0.12*	-0.00	0.07	-0.10	-0.12*	-0.18**	0.16**	-0.02	-0.07	-0.14**	-0.13*	-				
13. Age	-0.05	-0.04	-0.02	0.06	0.06	0.14**	-0.14**	0.11*	-0.12*	-0.06	-0.03	0.06	-			
14. Education 1	0.10	0.14*	0.05	0.08	-0.07	-0.05	0.05	-0.01	0.08	0.03	-0.01	0.12*	-0.02	-		
15. Education 2	-0.03	-0.06	-0.06	-0.01	0.05	0.00	-0.03	-0.01	-0.04	-0.04	-0.04	0.00	-0.04	-0.63**	-	
16. Organization tenure	0.09	0.01	-0.09	.16**	0.10	.15**	-0.06	0.12*	-0.01	0.05	0.01	0.01	0.49**	-0.10	0.02	-
Mean	3.97	2.52	1.91	3.42	4.85	5.50	2.00	4.98	4.18	5.31	5.73	0.39	41.34	0.24	0.56	8.58
SD	1.59	1.50	1.34	1.73	1.61	1.27	1.27	1.67	1.03	1.22	1.24	0.49	10.61	0.43	0.50	7.07

Notes. $N = 319$ – 333 . MVE = managerial voice endorsement. LMX = leader-member exchange. Gender was coded as 0 = male, 1 = female. Education was originally measured with five response options: 1 = master's degree or above, 2 = bachelor's degree, 3 = high school, 4 = others, and 5 = prefer not to answer. No participants selected "4 = others". We treated "5 = prefer not to answer" responses as missing values and treated "3 = high school" as the reference category and thus created two dummy variables: Education 1 was coded as 1 = master's degree or above, 0 = otherwise; Education 2 was coded as 1 = bachelor's degree, 0 = otherwise. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients are shown in parentheses

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed)

Table 5 Results of path analysis (Study 3a)

	Concern about being envied		Psychological safety		Voice self-efficacy		Fear		Pride		Silence		Voice	
	Est	SE	Est	SE	Est	SE	Est	SE	Est	SE	Est	SE	Est	SE
<i>Study variables</i>														
Advantageous voice endorsement	0.45**	0.05	-0.16**	0.05	0.07	0.05	0.06	0.05	0.09	0.06	0.06	0.04	0.24**	0.06
Superficial harmony	0.26**	0.07	-0.15	0.08	-0.13*	0.06	0.21**	0.07	-0.01	0.09	0.16**	0.06	-0.09	0.08
Advantageous voice endorsement × Superficial harmony	0.08*	0.03	-0.01	0.04	0.02	0.03	0.02	0.04	0.03	0.05	0.01	0.03	-0.01	0.04
Concern about being envied											0.12*	0.05	0.02	0.06
<i>Alternative mediators</i>														
Psychological safety											-0.03	0.05	0.01	0.07
Voice self-efficacy											-0.04	0.07	0.31**	0.08
Fear											0.18**	0.07	0.08	0.07
Pride											-0.03	0.05	0.31**	0.06
<i>Control variables</i>														
Self MVE	-0.17	0.11	0.50**	0.11	0.21*	0.09	-0.11	0.10	0.34**	0.12	-0.01	0.09	0.41**	0.10
LMX	-0.00.09	0.09	0.40**	0.11	0.29**	0.10	-0.34**	0.09	0.47**	0.11	-0.42**	0.09	-0.33**	0.10
Gender	0.07	0.16	-0.18	0.15	-0.32*	0.13	0.34**	0.13	0.23	0.15	0.01	0.12	-0.16	0.16
Age	-0.00	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.02*	0.01	-0.02**	0.01	0.02*	0.01	0.01	0.01	-0.00	0.01
Education 1	0.27	0.22	0.00	0.23	-0.08	0.18	-0.09	0.20	-0.13	0.23	-0.23	0.18	0.53*	0.25
Education 2	0.01	0.18	0.23	0.20	0.03	0.16	-0.17	0.17	0.01	0.20	-0.25	0.16	0.28	0.20
Organization tenure	-0.00	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.01	-0.02*	0.01	0.02	0.01
R ²	0.24		0.38		0.31		0.23		0.37		0.35		0.43	

N = 333. MVE = managerial voice endorsement. LMX = leader-member exchange. Est. = the unstandardized estimate; SE = standard error. Gender was coded as 0 = male, 1 = female. Education 1 was coded as 1 = master's degree or above, 0 = otherwise; Education 2 was coded as 1 = bachelor's degree, 0 = otherwise

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed)

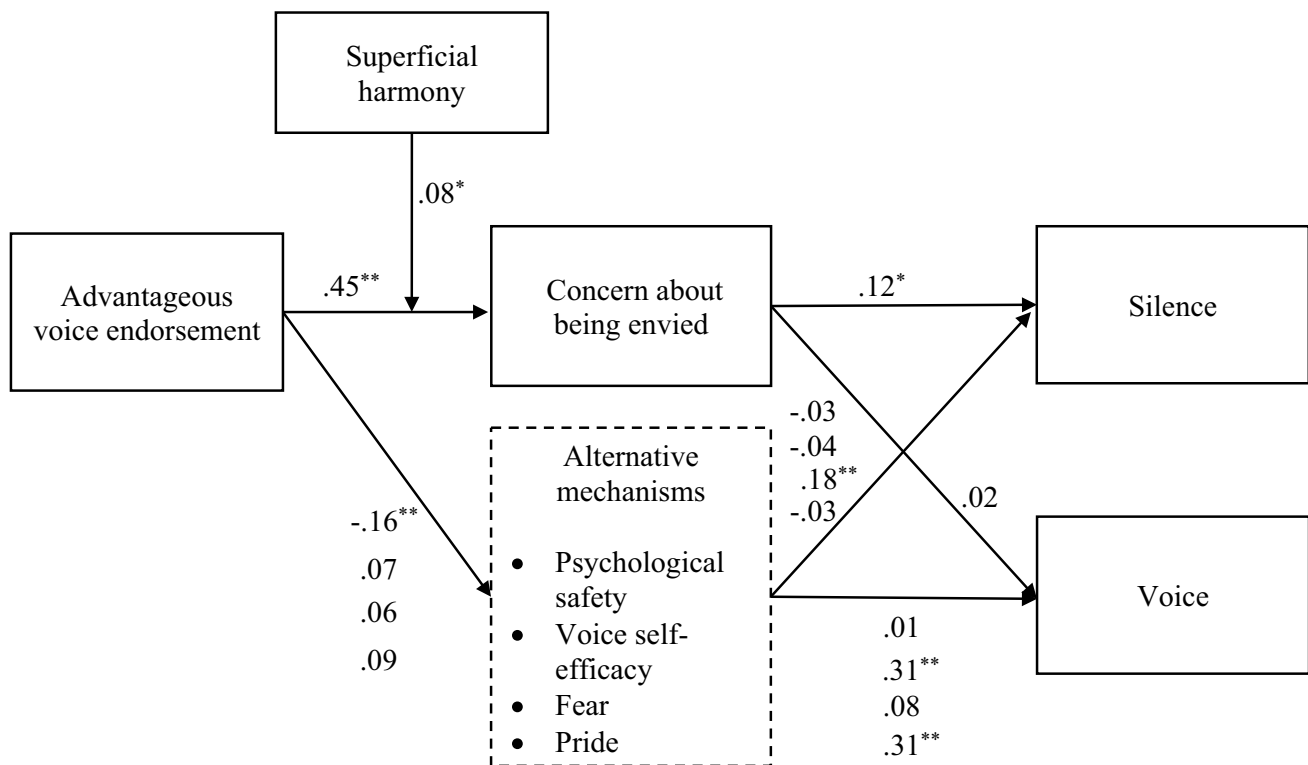


Fig. 3 Results of path analysis (Study 3a). $N=333$. All paths presented in this figure were estimated with control variables. The results of the unstandardized estimate are presented. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed)

Among the four, only fear was positively related to silence ($b = .18$, $SE = .07$, $p < .01$), while the relationships between the other three variables and silence were all non-significant. The indirect effects of advantageous voice endorsement on silence via psychological safety ($estimate = .00$, $SE = .01$, 95% CI $[-.012, .021]$), voice self-efficacy ($estimate = -.00$, $SE = .01$, 95% CI $[-.018, .008]$), fear ($estimate = .01$, $SE = .01$, 95% CI $[-.004, .035]$), and pride ($estimate = -.00$, $SE = .00$, 95% CI $[-.015, .008]$) were all non-significant.

The interaction effect of advantageous voice endorsement and superficial harmony on concern about being envied was significant ($b = .08$, $SE = .03$, $p < .05$). We then followed Aiken and West (1991) and displayed the interaction plot in Fig. 4. As predicted, advantageous voice endorsement produced a stronger positive effect on concern about being envied when superficial harmony was higher (+1 SD; $b = .53$, $SE = .06$, $p < .01$) as compared to when it was lower (−1 SD; $b = .37$, $SE = .06$, $p < .01$) (diff: $b = .15$, $SE = .07$, $p < .05$). Hypothesis 3 was supported.

We further found that the positive indirect effect of advantageous voice endorsement on silence via concern about being envied was stronger when superficial harmony was higher ($estimate = .07$, $SE = .03$, 95% CI $[.011, .122]$) as compared to when it was lower ($estimate = .05$, $SE = .02$, 95% CI $[.007, .089]$). The difference in these indirect effects was

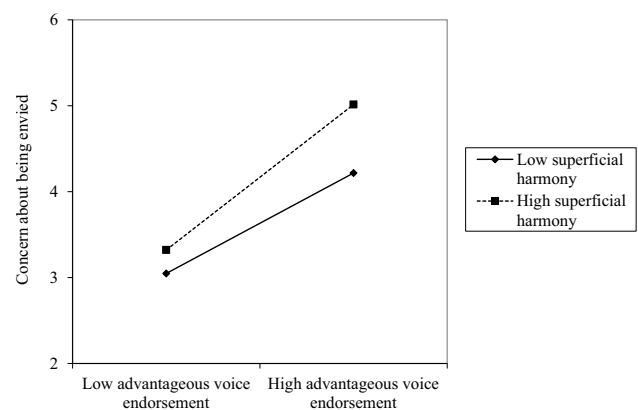


Fig. 4 The moderation effect of superficial harmony on the relationship between advantageous voice endorsement and concern about being envied (Study 3a)

significant ($estimate = .02$, $SE = .01$, 95% CI $[.001, .046]$), supporting Hypothesis 4.

Additionally, we found that voice self-efficacy ($b = .31$, $SE = .08$, $p < .01$) and pride ($b = .31$, $SE = .06$, $p < .01$) were positively related to voice. In contrast, concern about being envied, psychological safety, and fear were not significantly related to voice, sharply contrasting with the predictors of

silence (i.e., concern about being envied and fear). Consistent with Study 2, these results supported the distinct nomological networks of voice and silence.

Last but not least, the results suggested that the impacts of advantageous voice endorsement and managerial voice endorsement itself diverged, as self MVE was not significantly related to concern about being envied ($b = -.17$, $SE = .11$, $p = .11$) but was positively related to psychological safety ($b = .50$, $SE = .11$, $p < .01$), voice self-efficacy ($b = .21$, $SE = .09$, $p < .05$), and pride ($b = .34$, $SE = .12$, $p < .01$).

In summary, Study 3a replicated the findings of Study 2 and provided support for the overall moderated mediation model. Notably, Study 2 and Study 3a utilized different approaches to measure advantageous voice endorsement. To ensure consistency across different operationalizations of advantageous voice endorsement, we conducted Study 3b in which we incorporated both the direct and indirect measures of this focal variable. Furthermore, in Study 3b, we aimed to replicate the moderation effect of superficial harmony while controlling for the potential influence of an alternative moderator—deep harmony. There exist two typical types of harmony beliefs—superficial harmony and deep harmony (Leung et al., 2011; Wang et al., 2014). Unlike superficial harmony that addresses an avoidance-oriented interpersonal tendency, deep harmony reflects a genuine desire for interpersonal harmony and indicates an approach-oriented tendency to handle interpersonal tensions and conflicts (Chen et al., 2015). As such, we do not expect deep harmony to strengthen the relationship between advantageous voice endorsement and concern about being envied. We seek to distinguish the moderating effects of these two different types of harmony beliefs.

Study 3b

Participants and Procedures

We collected data by recruiting 350 full-time employees located in the U.K. via Prolific. Same as Study 3a, eligible participants should (a) be employed full-time, (b) work in the U.K., and (c) use English as their first language. We asked participants to complete two surveys with a one-week time interval. We used a shorter interval in Study 3b to test the robustness of our findings across different temporal windows and examine whether the hypothesized effects emerge within a shorter timeframe. A one-week interval is also widely used in recent studies that examine the outcomes of managerial voice endorsement (e.g., Howard et al., 2022; Huai et al., 2024). At Time 1, participants answered questions about their advantageous voice endorsement, self MVE, coworker MVE, superficial harmony, deep harmony, and demographics. At Time 2, participants were asked to

report their concern about being envied and silence. Participants received £1.5 for their completion of each survey.

Among the 350 participants who completed the Time 1 survey, 328 provided responses at Time 2, yielding an overall response rate of 93.71%. After excluding seven participants who did not pass the attention check question (Please select “Strongly disagree”) in any of the two surveys, we finally got 321 matched records for data analyses. Among the 321 participants, 56.39% were male. Their average age was 40.17 years ($SD = 10.40$). The majority of the participants (68.54%) had at least a bachelor’s degree. Their average organization tenure was 8.94 years ($SD = 7.90$).

Measures

Unless otherwise noted, all responses were anchored on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

Advantageous voice endorsement. In Study 3b, we utilized both the direct and the indirect approaches to assess advantageous voice endorsement. The direct approach was the same as we used in Study 3a, and we presented the main data analysis results based on this approach. The indirect approaches were the polynomial regression and difference score approaches, the same as we used in Study 2, and we reported the corresponding data analysis results in the supplementary analyses. The findings using different approaches were largely consistent.

Concern about being envied, silence, and superficial harmony. We measured these variables using the same scales as in Study 3a.

Deep harmony was measured with Leung and colleagues’ (2011) twelve-item scale. An example item is “Having an ability to interact with others harmoniously is vital for achieving major successes.”

Control variables. Same as Study 2 and Study 3a, we controlled for employees’ demographics (i.e., gender, age, education level, and organization tenure). We also controlled for both self MVE and coworker MVE when assessing the effect of advantageous voice endorsement using the direct approach. Excluding or including these control variables in the data analysis did not change the significance of the results.

Results

Table 6 reports the descriptive statistics and correlations of all study variables.

Confirmatory factor analysis. To evaluate the discriminant validity of the study variables, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Given that the deep harmony measure includes twelve items, we used an item parceling technique to create two parcels (Hall et al., 1999).

Table 6 Means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations among study variables (Study 3b)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Advantageous voice endorsement	(0.98)												
2. Self MVE	0.42**	(0.96)											
3. Coworker MVE	-0.01	0.54**	(0.94)										
4. Concern about being envied	0.39**	0.10	-0.09	(0.94)									
5. Silence	0.07	-0.23**	-0.14*	0.19**	(0.94)								
6. Superficial harmony	0.17**	0.09	0.08	0.25**	0.18**	(0.83)							
7. Deep harmony	0.16**	0.29**	0.24**	0.08	-0.02	0.43**	(0.90)						
8. Gender	-0.17**	-0.05	0.05	-0.05	0.03	-0.06	-0.01	-					
9. Age	-0.09	-0.11*	-0.06	0.01	-0.07	-0.05	-0.02	-0.04	-				
10. Education 1	-0.02	-0.06	0.05	-0.01	-0.03	0.02	0.01	0.10	-0.06	-			
11. Education 2	-0.01	0.04	0.09	-0.00	-0.03	0.04	0.04	-0.02	-0.07	-0.52**	-		
12. Education 3	0.03	0.02	-0.14*	0.01	0.06	-0.07	-0.05	-0.06	0.13*	-0.36**	-0.61**	-	
13. Organization tenure	0.13*	-0.01	-0.03	0.07	-0.05	-0.02	0.08	-0.07	0.56**	-0.16**	-0.08	0.24**	-
Mean	3.82	5.17	5.14	2.39	2.05	4.10	5.07	.44	40.17	.24	.46	.30	8.94
SD	1.49	1.10	.93	1.40	1.19	.96	.80	.50	10.40	.43	.50	.46	7.90

N = 314–321. MVE = managerial voice endorsement. Gender was coded as 0 = male, 1 = female. Education was originally measured with five response options: 1 = master's degree or above, 2 = bachelor's degree, 3 = high school, 4 = others, and 5 = prefer not to answer. We treated "5 = prefer not to answer" responses as missing values and treated "4 = others" as the reference category and thus created three dummy variables: Education 1 was coded as 1 = master's degree or above, 0 = otherwise; Education 2 was coded as 1 = bachelor's degree, 0 = otherwise; Education 3 was coded as 1 = high school, 0 = otherwise. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients are shown in parentheses

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed)

Each parcel was calculated using the average of six items. The results demonstrated that the seven-factor measurement model (advantageous voice endorsement, self MVE, coworker MVE, superficial harmony, deep harmony, concern about being envied, and silence) produced a satisfactory fit ($\chi^2 = 1214.00$, $df = 474$, CFI = .910, TLI = .900, RMSEA = .070, SRMR = .055), and it fitted the data better than the other alternative measurement models (all $\Delta\chi^2$ with $p < .01$).

Hypotheses Testing

The path analysis results are presented in Table 7 and Fig. 5. As shown, advantageous voice endorsement was positively related to concern about being envied ($b = .36$, $SE = .05$, $p < .01$), and concern about being envied was positively related to silence ($b = .12$, $SE = .05$, $p < .05$). The indirect effect of advantageous voice endorsement on silence via concern about being envied was positive and significant ($estimate = .04$, $SE = .02$, 95% CI [.007, .085]). Hypotheses 1 and 2 were supported.

The interaction effect of advantageous voice endorsement and superficial harmony on concern about being envied was significant ($b = .12$, $SE = .05$, $p < .01$). The interaction plot is shown in Fig. 6. As predicted, advantageous voice

endorsement produced a stronger positive effect on concern about being envied when superficial harmony was higher ($+1 SD$; $b = .48$, $SE = .07$, $p < .01$) as compared to when it was lower ($-1 SD$; $b = .25$, $SE = .07$, $p < .01$) (diff: $b = .23$, $SE = .09$, $p < .01$). These results supported Hypothesis 3.

Furthermore, we found that the positive indirect effect of advantageous voice endorsement on silence via concern about being envied was stronger when superficial harmony was higher ($estimate = .06$, $SE = .03$, 95% CI [.010, .112]) as compared to when it was lower ($estimate = .03$, $SE = .02$, 95% CI [.004, .063]). The difference in these indirect effects was significant ($estimate = .03$, $SE = .02$, 95% CI [.002, .066]), supporting Hypothesis 4.

In addition, consistent with our expectation that deep harmony would not moderate the relationship between advantageous voice endorsement and concern about being envied, the results showed that the interaction effect of advantageous voice endorsement and deep harmony on concern about being envied was non-significant ($b = -.05$, $SE = .05$, $p = .31$).

Last, we found that neither self MVE ($b = -.01$, $SE = .08$, $p = .91$) nor coworker MVE ($b = -.13$, $SE = .10$, $p = .21$) was significantly related to concern about being envied, replicating the results of Study 3a that the effects of advantageous voice endorsement and voice endorsement itself differed.

Table 7 Results of path analysis (Study 3b)

	Concern about being envied		Silence	
	Est	SE	Est	SE
<i>Study variables</i>				
Advantageous voice endorsement	0.36**	0.05	0.13*	.06
Superficial harmony	0.33**	0.09	0.20*	.08
Advantageous voice endorsement $\times$ Superficial harmony	0.12**	0.05	0.01	.05
Concern about being envied			0.12*	.05
<i>Alternative moderator</i>				
Deep harmony	−0.08	.10	−0.07	.08
Advantageous voice endorsement $\times$ Deep harmony	−0.05	.05	−0.07	.04
<i>Control variables</i>				
Self MVE	−0.01	0.08	−0.39**	.09
Coworker MVE	−0.13	0.10	0.08	.09
Gender	0.08	0.14	0.15	.13
Age	0.01	0.01	−0.01	.01
Education 1	−0.17	0.18	0.26	.17
Education 2	−0.16	0.16	0.36*	.16
Education 3	−0.21	0.19	0.60**	.18
Organization tenure	0.00	0.01	−.01	.01
R^2	0.22		0.17	

$N = 321$. MVE = managerial voice endorsement. Est. = the unstandardized estimate; SE = standard error. Gender was coded as 0 = male, 1 = female. Education 1 was coded as 1 = master's degree or above, 0 = otherwise; Education 2 was coded as 1 = bachelor's degree, 0 = otherwise; Education 3 was coded as 1 = high school, 0 = otherwise

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed)

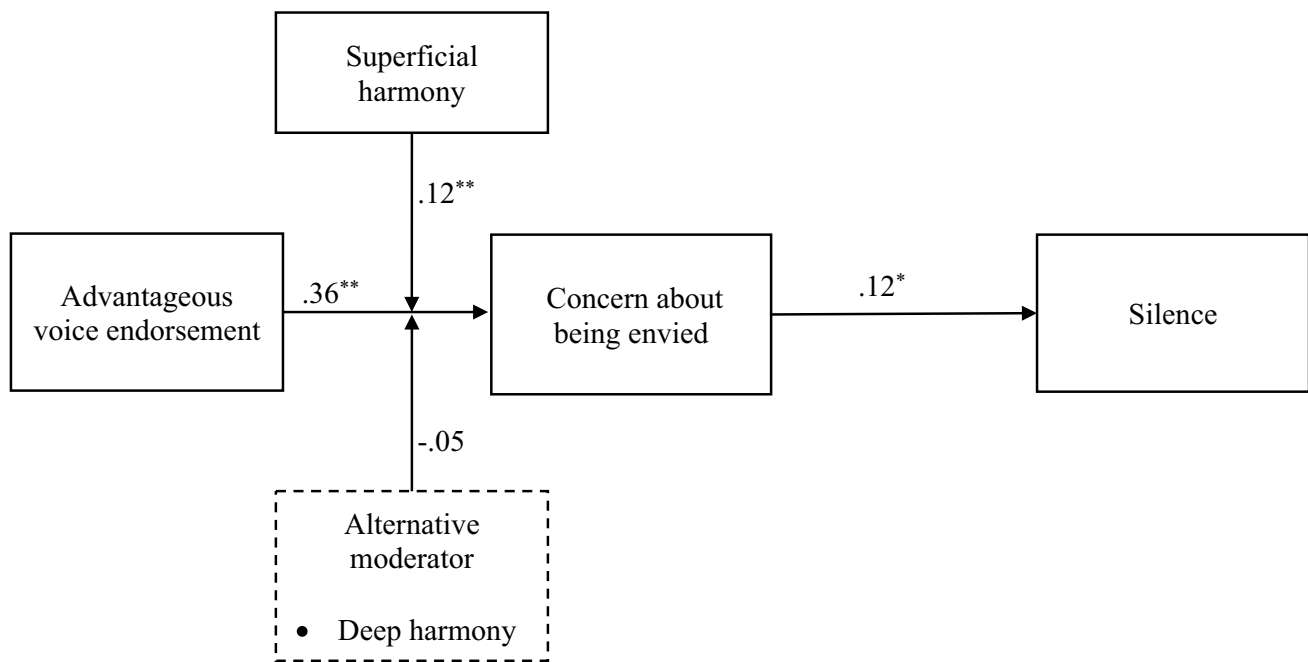


Fig. 5 Results of path analysis (Study 3b). $N=321$. All paths presented in this figure were estimated with control variables. The results of the unstandardized estimate are presented. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed)

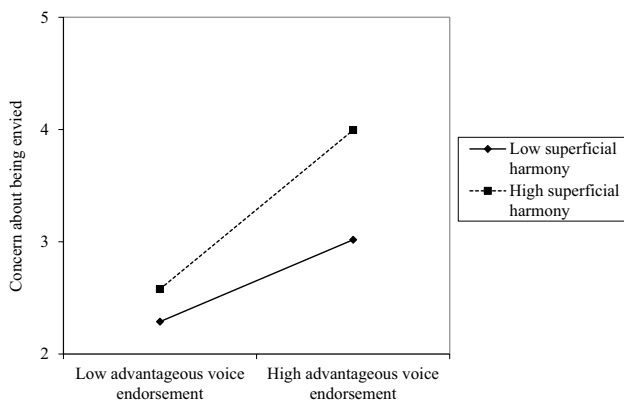


Fig. 6 The moderation effect of superficial harmony on the relationship between advantageous voice endorsement and concern about being envied (Study 3b)

Supplementary analyses. We conducted two supplementary analyses. First, similar to Study 2 (main analysis), we employed the polynomial regression analysis to retest our hypotheses. The results are presented in Table S2 in Appendix B. We found that advantageous voice endorsement was positively related to concern about being envied ($estimate = .82$, $SE = .19$, $p < .01$), and concern about being envied was positively related to silence ($b = .16$, $SE = .05$, $p < .01$). The indirect effect of advantageous voice endorsement on silence via concern about being envied was positive and significant ($estimate = .13$, $SE = .05$, 95% CI [.046, .237]). Advantageous voice endorsement produced a positive effect

on concern about being envied when superficial harmony was higher (+1 SD ; $b = 1.42$, $SE = .30$, $p < .01$) and this effect became non-significant when it was lower (−1 SD ; $b = .21$, $SE = .18$, $p = .25$) (diff: $b = 1.21$, $SE = .34$, $p < .01$). Furthermore, the indirect effect of advantageous voice endorsement on silence via concern about being envied was positive when superficial harmony was higher ($estimate = .23$, $SE = .08$, 95% CI [.080, .408]) and this indirect effect became non-significant when it was lower ($estimate = .03$, $SE = .03$, 95% CI [−.024, .102]). The difference in these indirect effects was significant ($estimate = .19$, $SE = .08$, 95% CI [.059, .371]). Accordingly, the results using polynomial regression analysis were consistent with the results of our main analyses.

Second, similar to Study 2 (supplementary analyses), we employed the difference score approach to measure advantageous voice endorsement and retested our hypotheses. The results are shown in Table S3 in Appendix B. We found that advantageous voice endorsement was positively related to concern about being envied ($b = .35$, $SE = .08$, $p < .01$), and concern about being envied was positively related to silence ($b = .17$, $SE = .05$, $p < .01$). The indirect relationship between advantageous voice endorsement and silence via concern about being envied was positive and significant ($estimate = .06$, $SE = .02$, 95% CI [.023, .106]). The interaction effect of advantageous voice endorsement and superficial harmony on concern about being envied was also significant ($b = .23$, $SE = .07$, $p < .01$). Specifically, advantageous voice endorsement produced a positive relationship with concern about being envied when superficial harmony was higher

(+ 1 *SD*; $b = .56$, $SE = .13$, $p < .01$) and this relationship became non-significant when it was lower (−1 *SD*; $b = .13$, $SE = .08$, $p = .10$) (diff: $b = .44$, $SE = .14$, $p < .01$). Furthermore, the indirect relationship between advantageous voice endorsement and silence via concern about being envied was positive when superficial harmony was higher ($estimate = .09$, $SE = .03$, 95% CI [.036, .174]) and this indirect relationship became non-significant when it was lower ($estimate = .02$, $SE = .01$, 95% CI [−.004, .052]). The difference in these indirect relationships was significant ($estimate = .07$, $SE = .03$, 95% CI [.020, .149]). To summarize, the results using the difference score approach to assess advantageous voice endorsement were also fully consistent with the results of our main analyses.

Discussion of Studies 3a and 3b

Studies 3a and 3b provided consistent support for the overall moderated mediation model. Using the direct operationalization to measure advantageous voice endorsement in Study 3a (Study 3b) enabled us to investigate the impact of advantageous voice endorsement on concern about being envied and silence while simultaneously controlling for the effect of self MVE (both self MVE and coworker MVE). Notably, in Study 3b, we demonstrated that the results using the direct approach were consistent with those using the indirect approaches (i.e., polynomial regression analysis and difference score), further supporting the robustness of our findings.

Moreover, in Study 3a, we ruled out four alternative mechanisms that could underlie the relationship between advantageous voice endorsement and silence. For example, our results showed that advantageous voice endorsement was not significantly related to fear ($b = .06$, $SE = .05$, $p = .22$), but was significantly related to concern about being envied ($b = .45$, $SE = .05$, $p < .01$). These results suggest that the relational dynamics triggered by advantageous voice endorsement are better captured by concern about being envied—a construct inherently rooted in social comparison that specifically reflects anticipated envy from coworkers. Fear, in contrast, is a more general avoidance-oriented emotion that is not uniquely tied to social comparison processes. Thus, concern about being envied is better suited to capture the interpersonal dynamics at play following advantageous voice endorsement. Study 3a also ruled out the potential effect of LMX, a theoretically relevant construct capturing leaders' relationships with employees, demonstrating that it did not confound the proposed relationships.

In addition, the results of Studies 3a and 3b supported the distinctiveness between advantageous voice endorsement and managerial voice endorsement itself. We found that advantageous voice endorsement and self MVE had different impacts on concern about being envied, psychological

safety, voice self-efficacy, fear, and pride. Finally, Study 3b ruled out the effect of an alternative moderator, deep harmony, demonstrating that not all forms of individual beliefs on interpersonal harmony are able to influence the relationship between advantageous voice endorsement and concern about being envied.

General Discussion

Building on the STTUC model, we theorized and tested how and when advantageous voice endorsement increases employees' subsequent silence. Across one preregistered experiment and three multi-wave field studies, we found consistent support for our hypotheses. Specifically, we found that advantageous voice endorsement has a positive indirect effect on silence via concern about being envied. This indirect effect intensifies for employees with higher levels of superficial harmony. The implications of these findings are discussed below.

Theoretical Implications

We make several important contributions. First, we advance the literature on silence by extending the prevailing assumption that leaders' support for voice encourages employees to speak up rather than remain silent (Bowen & Blackmon, 2003; Knoll et al., 2016; Milliken & Morrison, 2003). Drawing on the STTUC model, we demonstrate that when employees perceive a relative advantage in receiving managerial support for voiced opinions over coworkers, it can counterintuitively stimulate silence. This unveils a previously overlooked, unintended consequence of high leader support for employee voice when evaluated comparatively. Specifically, perceiving advantageous voice endorsement triggers a relational concern about being envied by coworkers, which motivates employees to withhold further input. Notably, this mediating effect remains robust even after accounting for potential alternative cognitive (voice self-efficacy and psychological safety, Study 2 and Study 3a) and affective (pride and fear, Study 3a) pathways. Our findings suggest that the positive effect of leaders' support for voice on voice behavior, as demonstrated by previous research, does not warrant the conclusion that such support reduces silence. Instead, we highlight that leader support for voice does not operate in a vacuum but is interpreted through employees' social comparison, which generates potential relational costs that can catalyze silence. This paper thus adds to the literature on silence by demonstrating that the effect of leaders' support for voice on silence is more complex than currently assumed, due to the influence of social comparison processes. Our findings highlight the need for a more nuanced understanding: While managerial support for

voice may encourage employees to speak up, its comparative evaluation can trigger employees' decision to be silent.

Relatedly, our findings also contribute to the broader business ethics literature. We unveil that managerial practices, which intend to recognize and leverage employee contributions and hence promote ethical management of employees, can inadvertently undermine organizations' ethical effectiveness (Knoll & Van Dick, 2013; Whiteside & Barclay, 2013). Ethics-related matters represent one of the most frequent domains where employees choose between speaking up and remaining silent (Chen & Treviño, 2022; Huang et al., 2025; Wang et al., 2024a, 2024b). Therefore, identifying predictors of silence is important for addressing and preventing unethical behaviors in organizations. In particular, prior studies have highlighted the vital role of leaders in reducing employee silence. For example, leaders who model normatively appropriate behaviors can curb silence by alleviating employees' concerns about receiving negative treatment from managers (Bormann & Rowold, 2016; Brown et al., 2005). Our findings extend this line of research by revealing how relational comparison processes can transform managerial voice endorsement—an act typically intended to signal support and recognition of employees' input—into a source of relational tension that triggers employee silence. In this way, our findings call for further scholarly attention to investigating how leaders' well-intentioned efforts to recognize employee input may unintentionally produce a social comparison process and hence paradoxically suppress employees' willingness to speak up on issues, including sensitive, ethics-related ones, leading to unexpected ethical risks for organizations.

Second, we expand the literature on managerial voice endorsement by emphasizing the unique impacts of advantageous voice endorsement. While managers' endorsement of followers' ideas naturally varies across different individuals, much of the prior research has overlooked the comparative aspect of such endorsement. Our findings provide evidence that advantageous voice endorsement explains unique variances in various outcomes above and beyond the absolute levels of managerial voice endorsement. For example, we found that advantageous voice endorsement increased silence through prompting concern about being envied by coworkers. By contrast, managerial voice endorsement itself was not significantly related to this relational concern—a pattern consistent with Huai et al.'s (2024) findings. Our paper thus extends Huai and colleagues' (2024) work by providing an explanation for why they did not find a significant link between managerial voice endorsement and being envied: The social comparison processes of voice endorsement should be explicitly considered when examining the interpersonal consequences of managerial voice endorsement.

We also show that advantageous voice endorsement diverges from voice endorsement in its impact on outcomes

traditionally associated with leader support for voice. For instance, Study 3a results suggest that although managerial voice endorsement is positively related to psychological safety, a finding consistent with existing studies (Brykman & Maerz, 2023), advantageous voice endorsement is *negatively* related to psychological safety, reflecting the tension between feeling individually supported and relationally threatened. Recently, scholarship has called for a deeper exploration of the consequences of receiving managerial voice endorsement (Kim et al., 2023; Morrison, 2023). However, prior studies have typically examined either employees' own or their coworkers' received managerial voice endorsement in isolation (Huai et al., 2024; Ni et al., 2024a, 2024b; Poulton et al., 2024). By emphasizing the importance and necessity of considering both in tandem—particularly through the lens of advantageous voice endorsement—we provide new insights into how employees navigate leaders' voice endorsement in relation to coworkers. Thus, this paper enriches our understanding of the interpersonal dynamics that unfold in the post-voice-endorsement phase (Kim et al., 2023).

Third, we advance the STTUC model by clarifying its boundary conditions, thereby broadening its implications. Prior studies have investigated individual characteristics such as gender and personality traits of the outperformers as boundary conditions of the STTUC model (Tai et al., 2024; Zuiker et al., 2024). We shift the focus to the outperformers' values and beliefs, particularly regarding interpersonal harmony (Zell & Exline, 2010). While Exline and Lobel (1999) theorized that outperformers who highly value harmony maintenance may experience heightened STTUC-related concerns, they did not specify constructs to capture this individual difference, nor was this contention empirically tested. By examining superficial harmony—an inclination to avoid interpersonal conflict to safeguard self-interest (Leung et al., 2011)—as a moderator influencing the effect of advantageous voice endorsement on concern about being envied, we provide some of the first empirical evidence for this theorized boundary condition. Notably, we distinguish superficial harmony from deep harmony (Study 3b) and extend the STTUC model by demonstrating that not all harmony beliefs equally moderate STTUC effects.

Last, we add to the growing body of research differentiating silence from voice. In support of recent meta-analytical findings suggesting that silence is not merely the lack of voice (Hao et al., 2022; Sherf et al., 2021), our results indicate that silence and voice have distinct motivational underpinnings. While approach-oriented factors like voice self-efficacy (Study 2 and Study 3a) and pride (Study 3a) were strong predictors of voice but did not have significant relationships with silence, avoidance-oriented factors such as concern about being envied (Study 2 and Study 3a) and fear (Study 3a) were powerful drivers of silence but were unrelated to voice. By following the methodological

recommendations to measure both voice and silence (Sherf et al., 2021), we provide additional evidence supporting their unique nomological networks.

Practical Implications

Our findings have significant practical implications. First, given the established role of silence in shaping organizational ethics, managers are motivated to reduce employee silence (Reeves & Bristow, 2024; Wang et al., 2024a, 2024b; Weiss & Zacher, 2025). Our findings remind managers to recognize that simply endorsing employees' voiced ideas or suggestions is insufficient for curbing silence. Employees often compare the level of managerial voice endorsement they receive with that of their colleagues, and endorsing one individual's voiced ideas more than others may inadvertently encourage this individual's withholding of further input. The substantive importance of this effect is underscored in our results, which show that the standardized regression coefficients (presented in Tables S4, S5, and S6 in Appendix B) for the relationship between advantageous voice endorsement and concern about being envied were .68 in Study 2, .48 in Study 3a, and .38 in Study 3b, respectively. Across studies, a one-standard-deviation increase in advantageous voice endorsement was associated with approximately a .51 standard deviation increase in concern about being envied, representing a relatively large effect size (Fey et al., 2023). In addition, the standardized regression coefficients for the relationship between concern about being envied and silence were .51 in Study 2, .14 in Study 3a, and .14 in Study 3b. Averaging across studies, a one-standard-deviation increase in concern about being envied was associated with approximately a .26 standard deviation increase in silence, representing a relatively moderate effect size (Fey et al., 2023). The standardized indirect effects of advantageous voice endorsement on silence through concern about being envied were .35 (Study 2), .07 (Study 3a), and .05 (Study 3b), indicating that on average, a one-standard-deviation increase in advantageous voice endorsement was associated with approximately a .16 standard deviation increase in silence through concern about being envied.

To address the risk that advantageous voice endorsement can increase employee silence, managers are encouraged to strive for relative balance in endorsing ideas of comparable quality across employees. This approach is feasible over time, as valuable contributions may arise from different employees at different stages. Furthermore, when certain employees consistently present higher-quality ideas and receive greater endorsement, managers are advised to proactively address these employees' potential concerns about being envied by peers. For example, managers can establish shared team objectives and foster a culture of cooperation (Byron et al., 2023), which promotes mutual support and

trust (Courtright et al., 2015). In such environments, employees receiving more voice endorsement than their coworkers become inspiring role models rather than perceived threats.

In addition, our findings serve as a cautionary reminder for managers to consider individual characteristics, such as superficial harmony, when trying to prevent employee silence. Employees with higher superficial harmony are more predisposed to feel concerned about being envied by peers and, consequently, engage in more silence behaviors when they perceive advantageous voice endorsement. Managers can identify followers who are high in superficial harmony by encouraging discussions about interpersonal risk management. Defensive coping style or avoidance-oriented actions signal higher levels of superficial harmony (Zhang & Wei, 2017). To support these employees, managers can implement training programs focused on building mutually beneficial interpersonal relationships (Chen et al., 2015). For example, managers can encourage approach-oriented actions such as open communication and rapport-building to help them interact with coworkers more effectively (Leung et al., 2011; Wang et al., 2014), alleviating their concerns about interpersonal risks and negative peer anticipation.

Limitations and Future Directions

This paper has several limitations. First, the reliance on self-reported data may raise concerns about common method bias. Nonetheless, self-reporting was deemed conceptually more suitable than other-reporting for assessing our study variables. Advantageous voice endorsement reflects employees' perceptions, concern about being envied pertains to employees' internal psychological states, and superficial harmony involves a dispositional value or belief—all of which are less observable to external raters. Silence, as a deliberate withholding of input, is also difficult for third parties to evaluate due to its covert nature (Knoll et al., 2016; Morrison et al., 2015). Empirically, we temporally separated the measures of the study variables in the three field studies to mitigate the common method bias. Future studies may use behavioral measures, such as coding participants' decisions to withhold input despite having relevant information to share in lab experiments, to assess silence.

Second, different operationalizations of advantageous voice endorsement across studies may raise concerns about convergence. In Study 2, we employed an indirect approach using polynomial regression analysis (Edwards & Parry, 1993) to analyze the incongruence between employees' managerial voice endorsement (MVE) and their perceived coworkers' MVE. We also calculated the difference score between self MVE and coworker MVE as an alternative, indirect measure of advantageous voice endorsement in the supplementary analysis (see Han & Pollock, 2021, for a similar approach). In Studies 3a and 3b, we used a direct

approach to measure advantageous voice endorsement by adapting an established MVE measure (see Vidyarathi et al., 2010, for a similar approach). Findings using different approaches were highly consistent. Notably, Study 3b tested our hypotheses using both the direct and the indirect approaches, still yielding convergent results. Overall, these results support the robustness of our findings.

Finally, we focused on superficial harmony as a moderator, leaving other contextual or relational factors unexplored. Scholars have suggested that contextual characteristics that reflect the nature of the relationship between outperformers and those outperformed may also serve as boundary conditions of the STTUC model (Exline & Lobel, 1999, 2001; Zuiker et al., 2024). For example, employees with closer peer ties may be less likely to perceive themselves as threatening targets in the eyes of peers due to greater mutual trust (Dirks & de Jong, 2022; McAllister, 1995). Therefore, future research could examine additional moderating factors that influence the indirect effect of advantageous voice endorsement on silence via concern about being envied, such as relationship closeness (Dibble et al., 2012). Doing so can enhance our understanding of the circumstances under which employees resort to silence to mitigate the perceived relational costs associated with advantageous voice endorsement.

Conclusion

In this paper, we demonstrated that advantageous voice endorsement increases employee silence via concern about being envied. Furthermore, this indirect effect is stronger for employees with higher rather than lower levels of superficial harmony. Our findings emphasize the importance of social comparison processes in understanding managerial voice endorsement and indicate the existing assumption that leader support for voice encourages voice and curbs silence is incomplete. Instead, we reveal that when evaluated comparatively, leader support for voice can unintentionally foster silence by generating relational concerns.

Supplementary Information The online version contains supplementary material available at <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-026-06412-7>.

Funding Open access funding provided by Hong Kong University of Science and Technology.

Declarations

Conflict of interest We acknowledge that there are no potential conflicts of interest.

Ethical approval We acknowledge that all studies reported in this paper were approved by the Human and Artefacts Research Ethics Committee of a public university in Hong Kong.

Informed consent Informed consent was obtained from all participants involved in the research.

Open Access This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons licence, and indicate if changes were made. The images or other third party material in this article are included in the article's Creative Commons licence, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the article's Creative Commons licence and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

References

- Aiken, L. S., & West, S. G. (1991). *Multiple regression: Testing and interpreting interactions*. Sage.
- Bamberger, P., & Belogolovsky, E. (2017). The dark side of transparency: How and when pay administration practices affect employee helping. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 102(4), 658–671. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000184>
- Barranti, M., Carlson, E. N., & Côté, S. (2017). How to test questions about similarity in personality and social psychology research: Description and empirical demonstration of response surface analysis. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 8(4), 465–475. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550617698204>
- Birnbaum, H. J., McClanahan, K. J., & Unzueta, M. (2025). Silence on injustices speaks Vols.: When and how silence impacts perceptions of managers. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 110(3), 336–357. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0001240>
- Bormann, K. C., & Rowold, J. (2016). Ethical leadership's potential and boundaries in organizational change: A moderated mediation model of employee silence. *German Journal of Human Resource Management*, 30(3–4), 225–245. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2397002216649855>
- Bowen, F., & Blackmon, K. (2003). Spirals of silence: The dynamic effects of diversity on organizational voice. *Journal of Management Studies*, 40(6), 1393–1417. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-6486.00385>
- Brislin, R. W. (1980). Translation and content analysis of oral and written materials. In H. C. Triandis & W. Lonner (Eds.), *Methodology. Handbook of cross-cultural psychology* (pp. 389–444). Allyn and Bacon.
- Brooks, S., Richmond, J., & Blenkinsopp, J. (2023). Applying a lens of temporality to better understand voice about unethical behaviour. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 188(4), 681–692. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-023-05505-x>
- Brown, M. E., Treviño, L. K., & Harrison, D. A. (2005). Ethical leadership: A social learning perspective for construct development and testing. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 97(2), 117–134. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2005.03.002>
- Brykman, K. M., & Maerz, A. D. (2023). How leaders inspire voice: The role of voice climate and team implicit voice theories. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 38(2), 327–345. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-022-09827-x>
- Burris, E. R. (2012). The risks and rewards of speaking up: Managerial responses to employee voice. *Academy of Management Journal*, 55(4), 851–875. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2010.0562>

- Buunk, B. P., & Gibbons, F. X. (2007). Social comparison: The end of a theory and the emergence of a field. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 102(1), 3–21. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2006.09.007>
- Byron, K., Keem, S., Darden, T., Shalley, C. E., & Zhou, J. (2023). Building blocks of idea generation and implementation in teams: A meta-analysis of team design and team creativity and innovation. *Personnel Psychology*, 76(1), 249–278. <https://doi.org/10.1111/peps.12501>
- Carlson, D. S., Quade, M. J., Maggie Wan, M., Kacmar, K. M., & Yin, K. (2023). Keeping up with the Joneses: Social comparison of integrating work and family lives. *Human Relations*, 76(8), 1285–1313. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00187267221094686>
- Chen, A., & Treviño, L. K. (2022). Promotive and prohibitive ethical voice: Coworker emotions and support for the voice. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 107(11), 1973–1994. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0001003>
- Chen, T., Leung, K., Li, F., & Ou, Z. (2015). Interpersonal harmony and creativity in China. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 36(5), 648–672. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2001>
- Cooper, C. D., Kong, D. T., & Crossley, C. D. (2018). Leader humor as an interpersonal resource: Integrating three theoretical perspectives. *Academy of Management Journal*, 61(2), 769–796. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2014.0358>
- Courtright, S. H., Thurgood, G. R., Stewart, G. L., & Pierotti, A. J. (2015). Structural interdependence in teams: An integrative framework and meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 100(6), 1825–1846. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000027>
- De Maria, W. (2006). Brother secret, sister silence: Sibling conspiracies against managerial integrity. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 65(3), 219–234. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-005-4710-3>
- 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. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2011.61967925>
- Dibble, J. L., Levine, T. R., & Park, H. S. (2012). The unidimensional relationship closeness scale (URCS): Reliability and validity evidence for a new measure of relationship closeness. *Psychological Assessment*, 24(3), 565–572. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0026265>
- Dirks, K. T., & de Jong, B. (2022). Trust within the workplace: A review of two waves of research and a glimpse of the third. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 9, 247–276. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-012420-083025>
- Duffy, M. K., Lee, K., & Adair, E. A. (2021). Workplace envy. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 8, 19–44. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-012420-055746>
- Duffy, M. K., Scott, K. L., Shaw, J. D., Tepper, B. J., & Aquino, K. (2012). A social context model of envy and social undermining. *Academy of Management Journal*, 55(3), 643–666. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2009.0804>
- Edwards, J. R., & Parry, M. E. (1993). On the use of polynomial regression equations as an alternative to difference scores in organizational research. *Academy of Management Journal*, 36(6), 1577–1613. <https://doi.org/10.5465/256822>
- Exline, J. J., & Lobel, M. (1999). The perils of outperformance: Sensitivity about being the target of a threatening upward comparison. *Psychological Bulletin*, 125(3), 307–337. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.125.3.307>
- Exline, J. J., & Lobel, M. (2001). Private gain, social strain: Do relationship factors shape responses to outperformance? *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 31(5), 593–607. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.79>
- Exline, J. J., Zell, A. L., & Lobel, M. (2013). Sidestepping awkward encounters: Avoidance as a response to outperformance-related discomfort. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 43(4), 706–720. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1559-1816.2013.01047.x>
- Fatimah, S., Lee, H. W., Ferris, D. L., & Young, H. R. (2024). A regulatory focus theory perspective on the dynamics between action and power. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 109(9), 1397–1407. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0001198>
- Festinger, L. (1954). A theory of social comparison processes. *Human Relations*, 7(2), 117–140. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001872675400700202>
- Fey, C. F., Hu, T., & Delios, A. (2023). The measurement and communication of effect sizes in management research. *Management and Organization Review*, 19(1), 176–197. <https://doi.org/10.1017/mor.2022.2>
- Gu, X., Liu, C., Ma, J., & Du, C. (2024). Supervisor ostracism and employees' emotional labor: The moderating effect of interpersonal harmony. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 39(2), 455–470. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-023-09891-x>
- Hall, R. J., Snell, A. F., & Foust, M. S. (1999). Item parceling strategies in SEM: Investigating the subtle effects of unmodeled secondary constructs. *Organizational Research Methods*, 2(3), 233–256. <https://doi.org/10.1177/109442819923002>
- Han, J. H., & Pollock, T. G. (2021). The two towers (or somewhere in between): The behavioral consequences of positional inconsistency across status hierarchies. *Academy of Management Journal*, 64(1), 86–113. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2018.1091>
- Hao, L., Zhu, H., He, Y., Duan, J., Zhao, T., & Meng, H. (2022). When is silence golden? A meta-analysis on antecedents and outcomes of employee silence. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 37(5), 1039–1063. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-021-09788-7>
- Henagan, S. C., & Bedeian, A. G. (2009). The perils of success in the workplace: Comparison target responses to coworkers' upward comparison threat. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 39(10), 2438–2468. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1559-1816.2009.00533.x>
- Hendy, J., & Tucker, D. A. (2021). Public sector organizational failure: A study of collective denial in the UK National Health Service. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 172(4), 691–706. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-020-04517-1>
- Howard, E., Luksyte, A., Amarnani, R. K., & Spitzmueller, C. (2022). Perceived overqualification and experiences of incivility: Can task i-deals help or hurt? *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 27(1), 89–103. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ocp0000304>
- Huai, M., Wen, X., Liu, Z., Wang, X., Li, W.-D., & Wang, M. (2024). Does voice endorsement by supervisors enhance or constrain voicer's personal initiative? Countervailing effects via feeling pride and feeling envious. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 109(9), 1408–1430. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0001191>
- Huang, L., Carnevale, J. B., Mackey, J., Paterson, T. A., Li, X., & Yang, D. (2025). Fulfilling moral duty or prioritizing moral image? The moral self-regulatory consequences of ethical voice. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 110(1), 49–66. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0001217>
- Isaakyan, S., Sherf, E. N., Tangirala, S., & Guenter, H. (2021). Keeping it between us: Managerial endorsement of public versus private voice. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 106(7), 1049–1066. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000816>
- Janssen, O., & Gao, L. (2015). Supervisory responsiveness and employee self-perceived status and voice behavior. *Journal of Management*, 41(7), 1854–1872. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206312471386>
- Khan, A. K., Quratlain, S., & Bell, C. M. (2014). Episodic envy and counterproductive work behaviors: Is more justice always good? *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 35(1), 128–144. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.1864>
- Kiewitz, C., Restubog, S. L. D., Shoss, M. K., Garcia, P. R. J. M., & Tang, R. L. (2016). Suffering in silence: Investigating the role of fear in the relationship between abusive supervision and

- defensive silence. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 101(5), 731–742. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000074>
- Kim, Y. J., Lam, C. F., Oh, J., & Sohn, W. (2023). Employee constructive voice: An integrative review and a dyadic approach. *Journal of Management*, 49(1), 430–473. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01492063221108654>
- Kish-Gephart, J. J., Detert, J. R., Treviño, L. K., & Edmondson, A. C. (2009). Silenced by fear: The nature, sources, and consequences of fear at work. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 29, 163–193. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.riob.2009.07.002>
- Knoll, M., & Van Dick, R. (2013). Do I hear the whistle...? A first attempt to measure four forms of employee silence and their correlates. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 113(2), 349–362. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-012-1308-4>
- Knoll, M., Wegge, J., Unterrainer, C., Silva, S., & Jønsson, T. (2016). Is our knowledge of voice and silence in organizations growing? Building bridges and (re) discovering opportunities. *German Journal of Human Resource Management*, 30(3–4), 161–194. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2397002216649857>
- Koopman, J., Lin, S. H., Lennard, A. C., Matta, F. K., & Johnson, R. E. (2020). My coworkers are treated more fairly than me! A self-regulatory perspective on justice social comparisons. *Academy of Management Journal*, 63(3), 857–880. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2016.0586>
- Lee, K., Duffy, M. K., Scott, K. L., & Schippers, M. C. (2018). The experience of being envied at work: How being envied shapes employee feelings and motivation. *Personnel Psychology*, 71(2), 181–200. <https://doi.org/10.1111/peps.12251>
- Leung, K., Brew, F. P., Zhang, Z. X., & Zhang, Y. (2011). Harmony and conflict: A cross-cultural investigation in China and Australia. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 42(5), 795–816. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022110363474>
- Leung, K., Deng, H., Wang, J., & Zhou, F. (2015). Beyond risk-taking: Effects of psychological safety on cooperative goal interdependence and prosocial behavior. *Group & Organization Management*, 40(1), 88–115. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1059601114564012>
- Li, H., Zhang, S., Mo, S., & Newman, A. (2024). Relative leader-member exchange and unethical pro-leader behavior: The role of envy and distributive justice climate. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 192(1), 99–111. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-023-05492-z>
- Liang, J., Farh, C. I., & Farh, J. L. (2012). Psychological antecedents of promotive and prohibitive voice: A two-wave examination. *Academy of Management Journal*, 55(1), 71–92. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2010.0176>
- Liao, Z., Wu, L., Zhang, H. J., Song, Z., & Wang, Y. (2023). Exchange through emoting: An emotional model of leader-member resource exchanges. *Personnel Psychology*, 76(1), 311–346. <https://doi.org/10.1111/peps.12506>
- Liu, X., Wu, L. Z., Ye, Y., Liu, L., & Cheng, X. M. (2024). Green-eyed coworkers in service organizations: The impact of being envied by coworkers on employee service outcomes. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, 41(4), 2251–2275. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10490-023-09911-7>
- Lucas, K., & Fyke, J. P. (2014). Euphemisms and ethics: A language-centered analysis of Penn State's sexual abuse scandal. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 122(4), 551–569. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-013-1777-0>
- Madrid, H. P., Patterson, M. G., & Leiva, P. I. (2015). Negative core affect and employee silence: How differences in activation, cognitive rumination, and problem-solving demands matter. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 100(6), 1887–1898. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0039380>
- Martinescu, E., Janssen, O., & Nijstad, B. A. (2019). Gossip as a resource: How and why power relationships shape gossip behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 153, 89–102. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2019.05.006>
- McAllister, D. J. (1995). Affect- and cognition-based trust as foundations for interpersonal cooperation in organizations. *Academy of Management Journal*, 38(1), 24–59. <https://doi.org/10.5465/256727>
- Milliken, F. J., & Morrison, E. W. (2003). Shades of silence: Emerging themes and future directions for research on silence in organizations. *Journal of Management Studies*, 40(6), 1563–1568. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-6486.00391>
- 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. <https://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. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-031413-091328>
- Morrison, E. W. (2023). Employee voice and silence: Taking stock a decade later. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 10, 79–107. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-120920-054654>
- Morrison, E. W., See, K. E., & Pan, C. (2015). An approach-inhibition model of employee silence: The joint effects of personal sense of power and target openness. *Personnel Psychology*, 68(3), 547–580. <https://doi.org/10.1111/peps.12087>
- Muthén, L. K., & Muthén, B. O. (1998–2017). Mplus user's guide (8th ed.). Muthén & Muthén
- Ni, D., Wu, W., Wu, S. (E.), Zhang, Y., Chen, C., & Zhang, R. (2024a). Adopting underdogs' ideas triggers fairness? When and how underachievers' voice endorsement promotes team voice. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 45(8), 1287–1305. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2814>
- Ni, D., Yang, M., & Chen, W. (2024b). A dual-path model of observers' responses to peer voice endorsement: The role of instrumental attribution. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 45(1), 39–56. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2754>
- Parke, M. R., Tangirala, S., Sanaria, A., & Ekkirala, S. (2022). How strategic silence enables employee voice to be valued and rewarded. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 173, Article 104187. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2022.104187>
- Parker, S. K., Wang, Y., & Liao, J. (2019). When is proactivity wise? A review of factors that influence the individual outcomes of proactive behavior. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 6, 221–248. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-012218-015302>
- Parrott, W. G., & Smith, R. H. (1993). Distinguishing the experiences of envy and jealousy. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 64(6), 906–920. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.64.6.906>
- Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., & Podsakoff, N. P. (2012). Sources of method bias in social science research and recommendations on how to control it. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 63(1), 539–569. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-120710-100452>
- Poulton, E. C., Lin, S. - H. (J.), Fatimah, S., Ho, C. M., Ferris, D. L., & Johnson, R. E. (2024). My manager endorsed my coworkers' voice: Understanding observers' positive and negative reactions to managerial endorsement of coworker voice. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 109(8), 1250–1270. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0001180>
- Puranik, H., Koopman, J., Vough, H. C., & Gamache, D. L. (2019). They want what I've got (I think): The causes and consequences of attributing coworker behavior to envy. *Academy of Management Review*, 44(2), 424–449. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2016.0191>
- Reeves, L. J., & Bristow, A. (2024). Political organisational silence and the ethics of care: EU migrant restaurant workers in Brexit

- Britain. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 194(4), 825–844. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-024-05772-2>
- Reh, S., Tröster, C., & Van Quaquebeke, N. (2018). Keeping (future) rivals down: Temporal social comparison predicts coworker social undermining via future status threat and envy. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 103(4), 399–415. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000281>
- Rosen, C. C., Dimotakis, N., Cole, M. S., Taylor, S. G., Simon, L. S., Smith, T. A., & Reina, C. S. (2020). When challenges hinder: An investigation of when and how challenge stressors impact employee outcomes. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 105(10), 1181–1206. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000483>
- Rubenstein, A. L., Xia, Y., Lan, Y., Morrison, H. M., & Newton, D. W. (2023). Strengthening supervisor bonds but impairing coworker relations? The divergent effects of voice endorsement. *Journal of Management*, 51(4), 1619–1644. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01492063231213657>
- Ryan, K. D., & Oestreich, D. K. (1991). *Driving fear out of the workplace: How to overcome the invisible barriers to quality, productivity, and innovation*. Jossey-Bass.
- Selig, J. P., & Preacher, K. J. (2008). Monte Carlo method for assessing mediation: An interactive tool for creating confidence intervals for indirect effects [Computer software]. Available from <http://quantpsy.org/>
- Sherf, E. N., Parke, M. R., & Isaakyan, S. (2021). Distinguishing voice and silence at work: Unique relationships with perceived impact, psychological safety, and burnout. *Academy of Management Journal*, 64(1), 114–148. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2018.1428>
- Sun, J., Li, W.-D., Li, Y., Liden, R. C., Li, S., & Zhang, X. (2021). Unintended consequences of being proactive? Linking proactive personality to coworker envy, helping, and undermining, and the moderating role of prosocial motivation. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 106(2), 250–267. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000494>
- Tai, K., Keem, S., Lee, K. Y., & Kim, E. (2024). Envy influences interpersonal dynamics and team performance: Roles of gender congruence and collective team identification. *Journal of Management*, 50(2), 556–587. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01492063221121597>
- Tai, K., Lin, K. J., Lam, C. K., & Liu, W. (2023). Biting the hand that feeds: A status-based model of when and why receiving help motivates social undermining. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 108(1), 27–52. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000580>
- Tai, K., Narayanan, J., & McAllister, D. J. (2012). Envy as pain: Rethinking the nature of envy and its implications for employees and organizations. *Academy of Management Review*, 37(1), 107–129. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2009.0484>
- Tang, Y., Lam, C. K., Ouyang, K., Huang, X., & Tse, H. H. (2022). Comparisons draw us close: The influence of leader-member exchange dyadic comparison on coworker exchange. *Personnel Psychology*, 75(1), 215–240. <https://doi.org/10.1111/peps.12465>
- Tangirala, S., & Ramanujam, R. (2008). Employee silence on critical work issues: The cross level effects of procedural justice climate. *Personnel Psychology*, 61(1), 37–68. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.2008.00105.x>
- Tangirala, S., Kamdar, D., Venkataramani, V., & Parke, M. R. (2013). Doing right versus getting ahead: The effects of duty and achievement orientations on employees' voice. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 98(6), 1040–1050. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0033855>
- Taylor, S. E., & Lobel, M. (1989). Social comparison activity under threat: Downward evaluation and upward contacts. *Psychological Review*, 96(4), 569–575. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.96.4.569>
- Trinkaus, J., & Giacalone, J. (2005). The silence of the stakeholders: Zero decibel level at Enron. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 58(1), 237–248. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-005-1418-3>
- 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. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-6486.00384>
- Vecchio, R. (2005). Explorations in employee envy: Feeling envious and feeling envied. *Cognition & Emotion*, 19(1), 69–81. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02699930441000148>
- Vidvarthi, P. R., Liden, R. C., Anand, S., Erdogan, B., & Ghosh, S. (2010). Where do I stand? Examining the effects of leader-member exchange social comparison on employee work behaviors. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 95(5), 849–861. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0020033>
- Wang, J., Leung, K., & Zhou, F. (2014). A dispositional approach to psychological climate: Relationships between interpersonal harmony motives and psychological climate for communication safety. *Human Relations*, 67(4), 489–515. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726713495423>
- Wang, Y.-D., & Hsieh, H.-H. (2013). Organizational ethical climate, perceived organizational support, and employee silence: A cross-level investigation. *Human Relations*, 66(6), 783–802. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726712460706>
- Wang, Y., Xie, Y., Liu, M., Guo, Y., & He, D. (2024a). Silent majority: How employees' perceptions of corporate hypocrisy are related to their silence. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 195(2), 315–334. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-024-05647-6>
- Wang, Z., Ren, S., Chadee, D., & Chen, Y. (2024b). Employee ethical silence under exploitative leadership: The roles of work meaningfulness and moral potency. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 190(1), 59–76. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-023-05405-0>
- Wei, X., Zhang, Z.-X., & Chen, X.-P. (2015). I will speak up if my voice is socially desirable: A moderated mediating process of promotive versus prohibitive voice. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 100(5), 1641–1652. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0039046>
- Weiss, M., & Zacher, H. (2025). Still waters run deep: How employee silence affects instigated workplace incivility over time. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 201, 587–604. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-024-05903-9>
- Whiteside, D. B., & Barclay, L. J. (2013). Echoes of silence: Employee silence as a mediator between overall justice and employee outcomes. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 116(2), 251–266. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-012-1467-3>
- Xu, A. J., Loi, R., & Lam, L. W. (2015). The bad boss takes it all: How abusive supervision and leader-member exchange interact to influence employee silence. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 26(5), 763–774. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2015.03.002>
- Xu, E., Huang, X., Ouyang, K., Liu, W., & Hu, S. (2020). Tactics of speaking up: The roles of issue importance, perceived managerial openness, and managers' positive mood. *Human Resource Management*, 59(3), 255–269. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.21992>
- Xu, X.-M., Cropanzano, R., McWha-Hermann, I., & Lu, C.-Q. (2024). Multiple salary comparisons, distributive justice, and employee withdrawal. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 109(10), 1533–1554. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0001184>
- Yan, T., Tangirala, S., Vadera, A. K., & Ekkirala, S. (2022). How employees learn to speak up from their leaders: Gender congruity effects in the development of voice self-efficacy. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 107(4), 650–667. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000892>
- Yoon, S., Koopman, J., Dimotakis, N., Simon, L. S., Liang, L. H., Ni, D., Zheng, X., Fu, S. (Q.), Lee, Y. E., Tang, P. M., Ng, C. T. S., Bush, J. T., Darden, T. R., Forrester, J. K., Tepper, B. J., & Brown, D. J. (2023). Consistent and low is the only way to go: A polynomial regression approach to the effect of abusive supervision inconsistency. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 108(10), 1619–1639. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0001096>

- Zell, A. L., & Exline, J. J. (2010). How does it feel to be outperformed by a “good winner”? Prize sharing and self-deprecating as appeasement strategies. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 32(1), 69–85. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01973530903540125>
- Zell, A. L., Exline, J. J., & Lobel, M. (2020). Navigating the perils of outperforming others. In J. Suls, R. L. Collins, & L. Wheeler (Eds.), *Social comparison, judgment, and behavior* (pp. 280–308). Oxford University Press.
- Zhang, L., Liang, J., & Liu, F. (2023). I spoke up, did you hear? The impact of voice (in)congruence on employee-initiated constructive changes. *Human Relations*, 76(10), 1567–1598. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00187267221110781>
- Zhang, Z. X., & Wei, X. (2017). Superficial harmony and conflict avoidance resulting from negative anticipation in the workplace. *Management and Organization Review*, 13(4), 795–820. <https://doi.org/10.1017/mor.2017.48>
- Zhao, H., Chen, Y., & Liu, W. (2023). Socially responsible human resource management and employee moral voice: Based on the self-determination theory. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 183(3), 929–946. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-022-05082-5>
- Zuiker, A. A. M., Born, M. P., & Van Strien, J. W. (2024). Outperforming in the workplace: Predicting employee sensitivity about being the target of a threatening upward comparison. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 46(5), 321–333. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01973533.2024.2373146>

Publisher's Note Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.