

Violation and activation of gender expectations: Do Chinese managerial women face a narrow band of acceptable career *guanxi* strategies?

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Abstract We proposed a conceptual model arguing that stereotype violation and stereotype activation combine to create a narrow band of acceptable career strategies for women in management. Utilizing a sample of 324 Chinese managers (162 pairs of women and men matched on education, years of work experience, and employing organization), we examined the effects of gender on three career development outcomes: number of subordinates supervised, life satisfaction, and career satisfaction. Results indicated that being female had a significant negative main effect on all three outcomes. Ten significant interactions supported the theoretical effects of both stereotype violation and activation on women's managerial career development, consistent with our conceptual model. The findings suggest that Chinese women in management face a narrow band of acceptable career strategies, especially in the area of creating social capital. The results highlight the importance of testing both stereotype violation and stereotype activation effects and of creating social capital through appropriate networking.

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This study provides an interpretation and analysis of gender effects on managerial career success in China. With China's steady economic development, an increasing number of women are rising to senior management positions. For example, five women from mainland China appeared on Fortune's 2013 International Power 50 list (Fortune, 2013). Yet regardless of these exceptional cases, Chinese women's position in management has not been much improved. The latest available statistics indicate that women hold only 16.8 % of management positions in China compared to 34.2 % in the UK and 42.7 % in the US (International Labour Organization, 2015). The percentage of women in the top posts in firms listed on the Shanghai and Shenzhen Stock Exchange between 1997 and 2010 remained steady between 3.7 and 4 % despite a significant increase in the number of listed companies (Zhang, 2014). By comparison, 14.6 % of senior officers in US *Fortune 500* firms and 18.1 % of senior officers in *Financial Post 500* Canadian firms are women (Catalyst, 2014). This plateau in women's representation persists despite the fact that more women in China are seeking higher education in business (Granrose, 2007), and an estimated 64 % of Chinese citizens taking the Graduate Management Admissions Test are female (Thorne, 2012). Thus, assumptions by earlier scholars (Hildebrandt & Liu, 1988a, b) that eliminating barriers to education would enhance women's managerial career success are becoming less relevant and new explanations for the gender gap in management are needed. This paper aims to fill this research gap as well as to integrate extant theoretical models to enhance general understanding of gender bias in managerial careers.

Little is known about the factors that influence Chinese women's managerial careers or how useful Western career theories are for understanding their career success (Cooke & Xiao, 2014; Woodhams, Xian, & Lupton, 2015). Interview studies are beginning to reveal how Chinese women in management perceive their career progress (Peus, Braun, & Knipfer, 2015; Woodhams et al., 2015; Xiao & Cooke, 2012). However, the few quantitative studies of gender effects on managerial career development in China continue to be limited by sampling issues whereby the women and men being compared are not equivalent (Bu & Roy, 2005, 2008; Granrose, 2007; Tu, Forret, & Sullivan, 2006). This study leverages a rare sample of women and men in management who are matched on education, work experience, and employing organization. This methodological strategy strengthens the internal validity of the study because it rules out these factors as potential alternative explanations for any gender effects observed.

Theorists argue that barriers to women's career advancement result from the misfit between the management role and the requirements of feminine gender roles and stereotypes, arguing that women who fulfill managerial role requirements violate expectations associated with femininity and vice versa (Ely, Ibarra, & Kolb, 2011; Heilman, 2001). Western scholars have demonstrated that failure to fulfill expectations of femininity by engaging in masculine-typed behavior is detrimental to women's workplace outcomes (Berdahl, 2007; Joshi, 2014). These findings support the concept of prescriptive stereotyping (Heilman, 2001; Pichler, Simpson, & Stroh, 2008) and suggest that violating gender prescriptions damages women's managerial career

success. But some evidence suggests that engaging in feminine-typed behavior also has the potential to derail women's careers (Lyness & Judiesch, 2001). Such findings support stereotype activation theory (Aquino, Stewart, & Reed, 2005; Huntsinger, Sinclair, Dunn, & Clore, 2010) and imply that fulfilling images of femininity harms managerial women's careers. Together, theories of violation and activation of gender expectations suggest that in order to succeed, women in management must restrict themselves to a narrow band of acceptable behaviors that are neither too masculine nor too feminine (Morrison, White, & Van Velsor, 1987).

The aim of this paper is to situate the Western conceptualization of the narrow band of acceptable behaviors for women in management into the Chinese context and to determine whether it is useful for explaining career success for Chinese managerial women. Consistent with the state of the field (Baruch & Bozionelos, 2010; Bozionelos, 2015; Bozionelos & Wang, 2006; Russo, Guo, & Baruch, 2014; Wolff & Moser, 2009), we define career success broadly to include both extrinsic dimensions, or "objectively verifiable accomplishments" (Bozionelos & Wang, 2006: 1532) and intrinsic outcomes, which are workers' personal evaluations of their career accomplishments based on their internal values and personal standards (Baruch & Bozionelos, 2010). Our definition of career success is also consistent with contemporary theories of the agentic career (Shen, Demel, Unite, Briscoe, Hall, Chudzikowski, & Zikic, 2015) which argues that individuals must take more personal initiative to gain career success than was true in the past. Specifically, due to market changes around the world, including in China (Cooke & Xiao, 2014), organizations have truncated internal lifetime career pathways such that individuals must maintain personal marketability and awareness of labor markets in order to develop their career. Without the security and clear success indicators associated with lifetime employment in a single firm, individuals must develop a personal sense of their career achievements based upon their own personal standards of success (Shen et al., 2015).

Furthermore, as more workers live in dual-earner or single-parent families, professionals and managers increasingly value effectiveness at combining paid work with family for satisfaction in both spheres of life (Bagger & Li, 2014). Women in particular may draw a sense of achievement from multiple life domains, and the valuing of work-life balance reflects the importance of building a career that supports a satisfying life (Baruch & Bozionelos, 2010). The increasing importance of balance for professionals and managers is highlighted in the kaleidoscope career model (Sullivan, Forret, Carraher, & Mainiero, 2009; Sullivan & Mainiero, 2007). The kaleidoscope career model is based on five different studies of over 3000 US professionals. This body of research has shown that contemporary professionals value challenge, balance, and authenticity in their careers, and that individuals emphasize different patterns among these three values as their work and family demands, constraints, and opportunities change over time. While most professionals consider challenge (i.e., growth, development, and advancement) to be of utmost importance, balance with other life activities is also critically important for many professionals and is likely to increase in importance at some point in the life course for most, if not all of them.

In the remainder of this paper, we will first review relevant literature about the impact of gender roles and stereotypes on Chinese managerial women. Second, we will propose a theoretical framework for identifying both activation

and violation of gender expectations that underpin typical acceptable behavior for managerial women. Third, we detail our methodology used for this study and discuss findings in light of our theory-driven hypotheses. Fourth, we will discuss major findings followed by the conclusion highlighting the contributions and implications of this study.

Impact of gender roles and stereotypes on Chinese managerial women

While China's female labor force participation rate of 72 % is high by global standards, the small body of extant research consistently identifies gender roles and stereotypes as ongoing barriers to Chinese women's managerial career development (e.g., Cooke, 2001, 2003; Frank, 2001; Hildebrandt & Liu, 1988b; Peus et al., 2015; Sincoff, Owen, & Coleman, 2009). Stereotypes of women and men arise from categorization on the basis of gender (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), which is a profound human tendency found in all cultures, industries and societies (Kelan, 2008; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). The ubiquity of gender categorization may be a result of the importance of recognizing gender to the perpetuation of the species (Hoss, Ramsey, Griffin, & Langlois, 2005). Linked to gender categorization are specialized feminine and masculine roles, which differ between societies but which universally segregate the activities of women and men (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). This section situates extant theorizing on the impact of gender roles and stereotypes on women's managerial careers within the Chinese context (see Table 1).

Table 1 Impact of gendered expectations for Chinese managerial women

Theoretical mechanisms	Cultural sources	Contemporary impact
Activation of descriptive stereotypes • Cognitive distortions in attention, interpretation, and recall • Ambiguity of information and criteria • Lack of fit to masculine managerial context	Taoist concept of <i>yin</i> • Sweet, shy, timid • Lowly, servile • Lacking in initiative • Unintelligent	Women perceived as lacking attributes necessary for managerial effectiveness
Violation of prescriptive stereotypes • Assumed to be insufficiently communal • Communal behaviors are unappreciated	Maoist "Iron Woman"	Successful women are disliked and excluded
Gender roles • Women are subordinated to men • Women have primary responsibility for home and family	Confucius' three obedience duties of women: • To father before marriage • To husband after marriage • To son after husband's death <i>Guanxi</i> role obligations to family members	Strong barriers to women in management, particularly in positions leading men Strong pressures on women to sacrifice career to fulfill family obligations

Gender stereotypes and managerial careers

Gender stereotypes are bundles of traits shaping expectations for the behavior of women and men (Prentice & Carranza, 2002). Descriptive stereotypes are traits believed to be characteristic of women or men, while prescriptive stereotypes are evaluative judgments regarding the behaviors considered to be appropriate for each gender (Pichler et al., 2008). Chinese stereotypes based on the influential Taoist concept of *yin* prescribe that women should be sweet, shy, timid, and yielding (Yan, Wang, & Zhang, 2012), and describe women as lowly, servile, lacking in initiative, and less intelligent than men (Woodhams et al., 2015).

Both descriptive and prescriptive stereotypes present barriers to career success for Chinese women in management. Western theorists have argued that descriptive stereotypes that men are more agentic (competitive, independent, and decisive) while women are more communal (helpful, sympathetic, and concerned about others) lead decision-makers to assume that women will be less effective than men in management roles (Heilman, 2001). The association of masculinity with agency and femininity with communalism is remarkably consistent across cultures, individuals, and social contexts, including the work context (Heilman, 2012). Consistent with this perspective, research has documented negative descriptive stereotypes about Chinese managerial women indicating them as being unmotivated, unfair, narrow-minded, and lacking in leadership charisma (Cooke, 2001, 2003). Bowen, Wu, Hwang, and Scherer (2007) found that younger and older men hold similarly negative views toward women in management, indicating lack of change between age cohorts. Prescriptive stereotypes that “women should be nurturing and service-oriented (communal), but not tough and achievement-oriented (agentic)” (Heilman, 2001: 667), result in disapproval of women who demonstrate competence in managerial positions (Heilman, 2001, 2012). Consistent with this dynamic, Chinese managerial women face prescriptive stereotypes that they should not be “ambitious” (Woodhams et al., 2015). Those who focus on career rather than family risk being considered “iron women” lacking in femininity, a remnant of Maoist ideology that women should be militants who put revolution and production ahead of the needs of their families (Leung, 2003).

Theory identifies two distinct mechanisms through which gender stereotypes affect women’s managerial careers, specifically, activation of descriptive stereotypes and violation of prescriptive stereotypes. Gender stereotype activation consists of the triggering of information processing distortions that bias perceptions in ways that confirm stereotypical expectations (Huntsinger et al., 2010). Stereotype activation causes decision-makers to attend to and recall stereotype-confirming information as well as to interpret information in ways that confirm stereotypes (Heilman, 2012). Activation of descriptive stereotypes results in evaluations that women are less fitting for masculine-typed positions such as management jobs (Perry, 1997).

Gender stereotype violation occurs when individuals fail to meet the prescriptions associated with their gender category (Heilman, 2012). Managerial women who violate prescriptive expectations of feminine communalism experience sanctioning in the form of dislike (Fiske, Xu, & Cuddy, 1999; Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs, & Tamkins, 2004), ostracism (Watson & Hoffman, 2004), and even harassment (Berdahl, 2007).

Gender roles and managerial careers

Gender-role theory argues that the gender segregation of paid and unpaid work (Ferre, 1990) developed as Western societies industrialized to create the role of the employee who works at a firm away from home (Hareven, 1982; Jacques, 1996). An ideal vision developed for families that could afford to do so which prescribed that women be assigned the unpaid role of homemaker and child-rearer while men were assigned the role of income provider for the family (Corrigan & Konrad, 2007). This Western vision of gender roles is the basis of the highly influential social role theory (Eagly, 1987), which provides the foundation of much scholarship on women's managerial careers (Ouyang, Lam, & Wang, 2015).

In the Chinese historical and cultural context, the gender roles ascribed to women have long been subordinate to those of men (Louie, 2002). Central to age-old Confucian teachings is the hierarchical social system based on *wulun* (五伦) or five relationships between emperor and subjects, father and son, husband and wife, older brothers and younger brothers, and friends and friends, within which men are the center of the society and women are positioned as inferior (e.g., Bowen et al., 2007; Granrose, 2007). Confucius further specifies women's subordinate role to men in the three obedience duties of women, confining a woman's duties to her father before marriage, to her husband after marriage, and to her son after her husband's death (Lin, 1938).

For Chinese women in management, the mindset that women should be subordinate to men creates norms precluding women from management positions. The norm of female subordination continues to be expressed in explicit discrimination. For instance, an estimated 40 % of Chinese job advertisements stipulate the gender of the applicants required, and management advertisements overwhelmingly indicate a preference for men (Woodhams, Lupton, & Xian, 2009).

Chinese managerial women also face strong pressures to fulfill traditional gender role obligations in the family. Emic investigation of the notion of *guanxi* or long-term relationships involving mutual commitment, trust, and loyalty indicates the dominant element of role obligations, first and foremost to family members (Mao, Peng, & Wong, 2012). The obligation to put the needs of the family members ahead of one's own interests to the point of self-sacrifice creates enormous pressures on women to fulfill gendered family roles (Ng & Chakrabarty, 2005). Gender norms in urban Chinese families continue to stipulate men as obligated to provide income to the family but free from equal responsibility for housework and child care while women are obligated to be the primary caregivers but free from equal responsibility for breadwinning (Zuo & Bian, 2001). Even career-oriented professional and managerial women are expected to show a high level of family involvement (Peus et al., 2015; Woodhams et al., 2015). In particular, pressures on mothers to involve themselves in child care have increased with the advent of the one-child policy, which increases the importance of investments in one's only child (Xiao & Cooke, 2012). The expectation of high levels of family involvement constitute one of the major barriers to managerial career advancement for Chinese women (Peus et al., 2015).

Conceptual model and hypotheses

The conceptual model depicted in Fig. 1 identifies both activation and violation of gender expectations as important processes creating a narrow band of acceptable behavior for managerial women. When managerial women’s behavior is appropriate to the masculine-typed managerial role, their actions violate expectations associated with the feminine gender role (Eagly, 1987) and stereotype (Heilman, 2012). Misfit between the managerial role and the female gender category makes gender salient for observers making judgments of women in management (Perry, 1997). Gender salience highlights ways that engaging in masculine-typed managerial behavior violates expectations for feminine communalism or *yin*, specifically, that Chinese women should be shy, service-oriented, nurturing, and focused on home and family. Career advancement and success for Chinese women in management also violate the traditional subordination of women to men as well as the strong *guanxi* role obligations of women to sacrifice their careers for their families (Zuo & Bian, 2001). Violating the prescriptions of femininity leads to dislike and approbation as an unfeminine “iron woman” (Woodhams et al., 2015), and damages women’s career outcomes (Heilman, 2012).

When managerial women’s behavior is appropriate to the feminine gender role, such as when they have young children or engage in networking activities with women, lack of fit occurs with the masculine-typed managerial role (Powell, Butterfield, & Parent, 2002). Such behavior activates the feminine stereotype by highlighting women’s lack of fit to the managerial role (Huntsinger et al., 2010), resulting in a negative evaluation of the woman as incompetent and/or uncommitted (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2004; Fiske et al., 1999). Activation of the descriptive feminine stereotype distorts attention, recall, and interpretation of information to highlight *yin* characteristics of Chinese women in

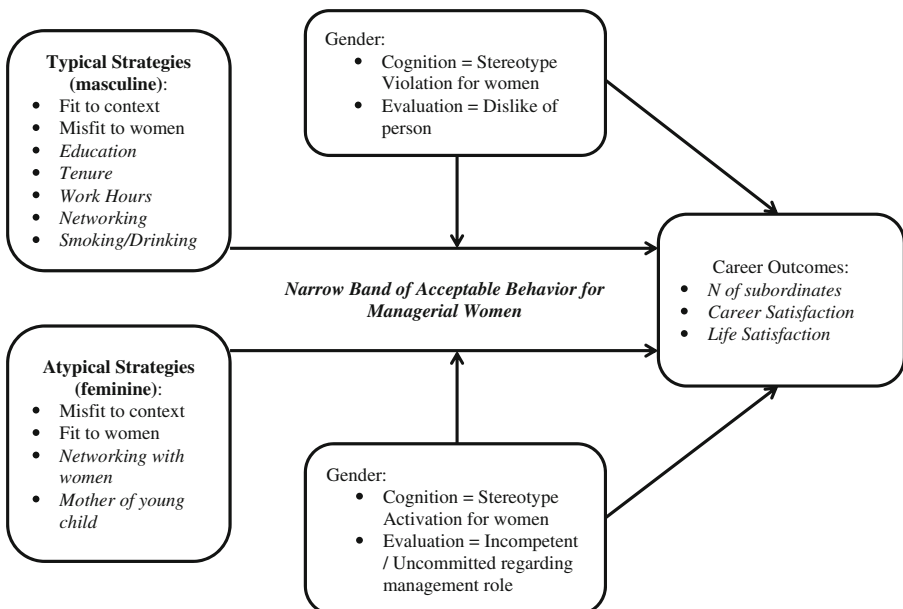


Fig. 1 Research model for impact of behavior on Chinese managerial careers

management, reinforcing the perception that they lack the attributes needed for effectiveness.

In the masculine context of managerial careers, masculine behaviors result in stereotype violation and feminine behaviors result in stereotype activation for managerial women but not managerial men. Specifically, masculine-typed managerial behaviors (Schein, 2001) such as pursuing a traditionally masculine degree such as the MBA, being decisive, taking initiative, leading (Ely et al., 2011; Koenig, Eagly, Mitchell, & Ristikari, 2011), engaging in networking activities with men, or moving one's family to pursue an opportunity benefit men's careers more than women's because women are penalized for violating expectations of femininity. Feminine-typed behaviors such as nurturing a young child, networking with women, or helping others on the job are less beneficial to women's careers due to the detrimental effects of activating the expectations associated with femininity (Allen, 2006; Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2004). As a result, gender moderates the impact of many behaviors and strategies on managerial career outcomes, creating a narrow band of acceptable behavior for managerial women. Chinese women in management must be sufficiently career-oriented, assertive and decisive to succeed in management while not acting so much like men that they become labeled ambitious or unfeminine. Chinese women in management must also engage with their family roles sufficiently to fulfill their family obligations under *guanxi*, but not in ways that are highly visible or interfere with their managerial work such that they become labeled as uncommitted or incompetent.

Human capital and career success

An important factor for career success in management is human capital, or the amount and quality of investments in knowledge, skills, and capabilities that allow individuals to create value by engaging in productive work (Becker, 1993). Hildebrandt and Liu (Hildebrandt & Liu, 1988a, 1988b; Hildebrandt, 1993) found that female managers in China had little job mobility and were less educated than men, and they recommended strengthening women's human capital through business courses as preparation for managerial responsibilities. Korabik (1993) also noted a gender gap in human capital among Chinese managers. But research has shown in both China and the West that simply providing more education to women or improving other aspects of their human capital will not overcome discriminatory barriers embedded in the social and historical context. For example, Cooke (2003) found that among college graduates recruited by governmental organizations, women generally progress considerably more slowly than men from the entry point. Cooke (2005) also found that Chinese women are relatively rare in management positions and are disproportionately found in lower level positions in government administration, academic institutions and private businesses. In government recruiting, she documented that men were hired over women who had out-performed them on civil service examinations. Similarly, in a study of 139 Chinese managers, 45 of whom were women, Tu et al. (2006) found that female gender was a major negative predictor of total compensation for Chinese managers.

While the Chinese Communist Party has been committed to gender equality since the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC), much inequality remains,

especially at the lower provincial level (Cooke, 2005). Researchers have identified a number of limitations of China's approach to gender equality. As Yang (1999) pointed out, women's equal rights were granted by the state, not through struggle based on women's consciousness about their subordinate status. Due to a lack of sustained feminist discourse (Leung, 2003), it is taken for granted that equal rights means sameness, with men and masculinity as the norm, which reinforces the superiority of men (Li, 2003). Furthermore, gender inequality remains codified in Chinese law. For instance, since 1951, China has followed a retirement policy requiring women to retire at the age of 55 and men at 60, which means women have shorter careers, although certain enterprises quietly overlook that requirement. As a result of these many factors, there exists a duality between the espoused equality and practical inequality (Benschop & Doorewaard, 1998).

Given the conceptual argument that women are likely to be seen as a poor match to the masculine-typed requirements for managerial positions, such as being a leader (especially leading men), presenting the agentic qualities associated with masculinity (*yang*), and putting career ahead of family, we anticipate that being female will show a negative main effect on managerial career outcomes regardless of individual human capital endowments. This result is predicted due to the negative effects of violating norms that women should be subordinate to men and of activating stereotypes that women lack the attributes necessary for managerial effectiveness due to their *yin* qualities and their family obligations. This prediction is depicted in Fig. 1 as the main effect of gender on the outcome variables.

Hypothesis 1 Being female will be negatively associated with objective career success, subjective career success, and life satisfaction.

Beyond examining the main effect of gender on career outcomes, another way to assess whether discrimination is taking place is to examine the impact of gender on the relationship between human capital, effort and career outcomes. Groups showing comparatively weak relationships between their human capital assets and rewards are considered to experience discrimination (Bertrand & Hallock, 2001; Oaxaca & Ransom, 1994). We examine these data to determine whether gender moderates the association between common measures of human capital and effort (i.e., education, years at the company, years in the position, weekly hours of work) and career outcomes for Chinese managers.

Conceptually, building human capital for management is a masculine activity because men and not women are expected to be agentic and pursue leadership positions (Heilman, 2012). As a result of violating gender expectations, managerial women will accrue fewer rewards for their human capital assets. Specifically, women who engage in success-oriented career behaviors are likely to be disliked because they are viewed as insufficiently communal and unfeminine (Woodhams et al., 2015). Career-building efforts are likely to be less valued in Chinese managerial women due to the ongoing influence of traditional prescriptions that women should be subordinate to men and should focus their efforts on home and family. Because they are violating expectations for femininity in China, managerial women are expected to receive smaller rewards for equal human capital investments.

Hypothesis 2 The relationship between human capital and objective career success, subjective career success, and life satisfaction will be more strongly positive for men than for women.

Human capital theory also argues that women's greater responsibilities for child-rearing limit their career advancement (Becker, 1985). This argument suggests that female gender role responsibilities at home require women to hoard energy at work in order to have sufficient energy for their greater homemaking and childcare duties. As such, women are less productive than equivalent men on the job and receive fewer career rewards as a result. This argument may be less relevant to Chinese women's managerial careers due to the cultural context in which early retirement makes grandmothers available for childcare, supporting women's labor force participation (Maurer-Fazio, Connelly, Chen, & Tang, 2011).

Nonetheless, professional and managerial women in China continue to face strong norms that they be present and active in family care (Cooke & Xiao, 2014; Ng & Chakrabarty, 2005; Peus et al., 2015). The presence of young children in the family activates negative stereotypes about women's lower commitment to paid work. This dynamic is likely to be relevant in China, due to the ongoing influence of Confucian ideas regarding gender roles in the home. When their children are young, managerial women risk being stigmatized as uncommitted relative to their male counterparts (Lyness & Judiesch, 2001), with the result that the value they add to the organization is questioned (Cuddy et al., 2004). By comparison, having young children activates a positive stereotype for managerial men, who are viewed as even more committed to paid work in their role of father as income provider (Jacobs & Gerson, 2001; Moen & Yu, 2000). As such, stereotype activation results in young children having a more negative impact on managerial career outcomes for women than for men.

Hypothesis 3 Young children at home will be more strongly negatively associated with objective career success, subjective career success, and life satisfaction for women than for men.

Social capital and career success

Beyond individual human capital endowments, Western career theory highlights the importance of social capital for success in management (Baruch & Bozionelos, 2010). Social capital consists of the set of resources available to managers through their set of informal social connections with others, including superiors, peers, and subordinates as well as associates outside of the employing organization (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). Network connections are crucial sources of information about organizational strategies, future plans, and career opportunities that influence managerial career success (Uzzi & Dunlap, 2005). Building and maintaining relationships with a large and varied set of contacts (Burt, 2005) helps to maximize access to information, influence, and career sponsorship due to the establishment of trust (Adler & Kwon, 2002). Trust is required for social exchange in business networks due to the informal nature of expectations for reciprocity, as well as confidentiality concerns and the uncertainty associated with judgments of competence and integrity (Leana & Van Buren, 1999).

Similar to the Western concept of social capital, the Chinese cultural tradition of *guanxi* underscores the importance of relationship networks to managerial career success (Huang & Aaltio, 2014). *Guanxi* is defined as interpersonal connections (Xin & Pearce, 1996) involving a special relationship that two persons have with each other (Zhu, 2009, 2015; Zhu & Zhang, 2007). In China, family ties and other shared identities such as being from the same hometown, the same educational institution, the same work organization or having the same teacher or supervisor are key sources of *guanxi* (Mao et al., 2012). *Guanxi* provides the foundation for business transactions and exchange of resources due to strong obligations to support the interests of relationship partners. A common goal of networking in China is to develop *guanxi* through informal interaction whereby individuals identify common social identities and third party connections to move from the status of stranger to relationship partner (Mao et al., 2012). Informal interaction is also valuable for establishing “anticipatory” *guanxi* by expressing intentions to collaborate in the future (Huang & Aaltio, 2014).

Chinese managerial women are likely to have greater difficulty than their male counterparts in building valuable *guanxi* ties. Although shared work, education, or geographical identities are likely to link network contacts similarly for women and men, obligations to support women’s managerial career progress may be diminished to avoid violating gender role expectations of male hierarchical superiority. Due to women’s weaker *guanxi* ties than their male counterparts, supporting women’s careers might also be perceived as risky, which may even further reinforce the activation of negative descriptive stereotypes of women in management held by many Chinese businessmen (Bowen et al., 2007; Cooke, 2001, 2003; Liu et al., 2001; Sincoff et al., 2009).

Chinese managerial women are also likely to be at a disadvantage in building anticipatory *guanxi* by creating agreements for future business collaborations. Potential contacts are likely to perceive men to be more valuable exchange partners than women and might hesitate to provide resources to women who are viewed as less valuable connections. Indeed, studies in China show that the most influential network connections are men, for both male and female managers (Bu & Roy, 2005; Huang & Aaltio, 2014). In order to overcome biased perceptions of personal characteristics resulting from stereotype activation as well as dislike from assumed violations of expectations for feminine communalism, women may have to engage in more frequent interactions with a potential contact before the gender barrier to future business collaboration is broken. Also, the need to devote time to family in order to fulfill strong gender-role norms limits women’s ability to build and maintain network relationships (Woodhams et al., 2015).

Furthermore, both women and men garner larger career benefits from network connections to men rather than network connections to women (McDonald, 2011). Unfortunately, in China, close working relationships between women and men can generate suspicions of inappropriate intimacy (Woodhams et al., 2015). Hence for many reasons, networking behavior is likely to be more strongly positive associated with career success for Chinese men than for Chinese women.

Hypothesis 4 Networking behavior is more strongly positively associated with objective career success, subjective career success, and life satisfaction for men than for women.

While networking behavior should be beneficial for both women's and men's management careers, men are more likely than women to have numerous career-enhancing relationships with men (Bu & Roy, 2005; McDonald, 2011). Social category similarity leads women to build relationships with other women in the workplace, however, these links are less likely to generate the kinds of information, resources, and sponsorships that enhance career opportunities because men predominate in influential networks in Chinese business contexts (Cooke, 2005; Ng & Chow, 2009). Recent research has shown that Chinese women's network connections with other women are sources of social support rather than career enhancement (Huang & Aaltio, 2014). For this reason, building relationships with men is more likely to generate career benefits than building relationships with women (Ibarra, 1992).

Extensive networking with women is particularly likely to be damaging to women's careers because interacting with other women is a feminine-typed behavior, indicating a tendency toward self-segregation or avoidance of the dominant majority by members of the numerical minority group (Mollica, Gray, & Treviño, 2003). Women who devote most of their networking time and effort toward building connections with other women may be viewed as engaging in frivolous socializing rather than serious business networking. Women who interact with many other women are likely to miss opportunities to develop relationships with men who are more able to link them to sources of information, resources, and sponsorship essential to career success (Seibert, Kraimer, & Liden, 2001). Instead, interacting with other women may activate stereotypes of women as less serious business partners, damaging their career opportunities and rewards.

Hypothesis 5 Networking behaviors with women will be more strongly negatively associated with objective career success, subjective career success, and life satisfaction for women than for men.

An additional factor for building social networks in the Chinese business context is after-hours socializing involving drinking alcoholic beverages and smoking (Cooke & Xiao, 2014). These social activities are similar to imperatives to engage in sports activities and consume alcohol in Western managerial settings (Forret & Dougherty, 2004; Harris & Ogbonna, 2006). Kipnis (1997: 53) found that "the drinking responsibility (almost always male) of officials whose job it was to foster *guanxi* (connections) between work units was considerable" and attending banquets was a positive *guanxi* constructing act. Smoking is also linked to building connections in China (Pan, 2004), where smokers are likely to be male, married, Communist Party members, permanent employees, white-collar rather than blue-collar (Sun & Shun, 1995) workers in state-owned enterprises (usually larger in size than privately-owned businesses), and high in social status (Zhang, Wang, Zhao, & Vartianinen, 2000).

Smoking and drinking are gendered behaviors. In China, men are considerably more likely than women to smoke (75 % compared to 5 %) although the percentage of women smokers appears to be on the rise (Pan, 2004). In an earlier study, Hildebrandt and Liu (1988b) estimated that only about 2 % of women in management were smokers. In terms of drinking, as early as the late 1980s, Hildebrandt and Liu (1988b) found that only 24 % of female managers reported drinking alcoholic beverages, compared to 68 % of their male counterparts. Kipnis (1997) found clear gender

segregation in drinking practices, where men drink *baijiu* (a strong clear liquor) while women drink *hongjiu* (a sweet red fruit wine). Drinking white liquor is more significant since it plays a ritualistic role in cadre selection (for senior posts in local government), which generally excludes women.

Recent research has indicated that clients in particular regularly request female professionals to violate Chinese cultural tradition by drinking spirits in much larger quantities than they wish to drink (Cooke & Xiao, 2014). This behavior is interpreted as an abuse of power and harassment, particularly of younger professional women. As such, socializing for business that involves smoking and drinking represents a context in which women's status as outsiders is evident. Because these activities violate gender expectations, women who participate risk being made targets of fun rather than respected colleagues. Hence, due to their gendered nature, smoking and drinking are likely to be less strongly associated with positive career outcomes for women than for men.

Hypothesis 6 Smoking and drinking will be less strongly positively associated with objective career success, subjective career success, and life satisfaction for women than for men.

Methods

Data for this study were based on a Chinese questionnaire administered to managers who attended a short managerial executive education course in the People's Republic of China in 2013. The participants were middle and senior managers from the capital city of Beijing. The questionnaire was based on established survey items with minor adaptations. We drafted the questionnaire items in English; translated that document into Chinese; and back translated it into English. Fluent Mandarin scholars further reviewed and pretested the final Chinese printing to avoid potential misunderstandings.

The survey was administered by mail in hardcopy format in Chinese as all respondents were native Chinese speakers. The survey packet contained two surveys marked with the same unique identification number and an A or a B (e.g., 212A and 212B). Respondents were asked to complete survey A themselves and return their response in a self-addressed and stamped envelope. Respondents were also asked to identify another manager of the other sex who worked in the same organization to form a matching pair (of same age, work experience, and educational level), and to give that person survey B along with a self-addressed and stamped envelope to allow separate mailing directly to us. Of the 1584 surveys (792 individuals were given a matched pair of surveys A and B) that were distributed, 402 (201 matched pairs of respondents) were returned for a 25.4 % response rate. A total of 162 matched pairs of respondents (324 individuals) provided usable responses for analysis. Means, standard deviations, and correlations for major study variables are shown in Table 2.

Measures

As already hinted earlier, in order to examine the full breadth of career success factors, this study includes both objective and subjective measures of career success. Because survey

Table 2 Means, standard deviations, and correlations

	Mean	Std. Dev.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1 Number of subordinates	6.86	9.17	1																
2 Life satisfaction	2.98	.72	.14***	1															
3 Education	4.24	.70	-.04	-.02	1														
4 Company years	5.28	4.92	.25***	-.01	.07	1													
5 Position years	3.34	2.97	.24***	-.02	.07	.64***	1												
6 Hours worked	1.74	.91	.06	.07	.07	-.08	-.02	1											
7 Smoker	.15	.36	-.0003	.13**	-.12**	.07	.09	.08	1										
8 Drinker	.69	.46	-.05	-.05	.03	-.02	-.04	.02	.21***	1									
9 Born rural area	.36	.48	.02	.01	-.08	.01	-.06	.004	.14**	.11**	1								
10 Female	.50	.50	-.09	-.12**	.00	.004	-.02	-.03	-.32***	-.29***	-.20***	1							
11 Marriage	.65	.48	.05	.03	.19***	.19***	.16***	.005	.004	-.05	.11**	-.01	1						
12 Manufacturing	.38	.48	.12**	-.02	.02	.08	.09	-.07	.004	.02	-.01	.00	.06	1					
13 Firm size	4.20	2.20	-.07	-.03	.26***	-.03	-.08	.09	-.02	-.01	-.02	.00	.15***	.12**	1				
14 Career satisfaction	15.33	3.81	.22***	.63***	.10*	.10*	.09*	.10*	.13**	.05	-.07	-.15***	.12**	.02	-.04	1			
15 Networking: M&F	2.66	1.42	-.01	.10*	.09*	-.16***	-.09	.13**	.02	.02	-.02	-.01	.05	.00	.15***	.08	1		
16 Networking: M	1.38	.78	.06	.16***	.09	-.11*	-.05	.17***	.19***	.17***	.10*	-.36***	.12**	.02	.14**	.16***	.85***	1	
17 Networking: F	1.29	.86	-.07	.03	.07	-.17***	-.10*	.06	-.14**	-.11**	-.12**	.30***	-.02	-.02	.12**	-.02	.88***	.50***	1
18 Young child	.40	.49	.12**	.02	.16***	.25***	.24***	-.01	-.01	.01	.06	.03	.57***	-.07	-.05	.09	-.03	.01	-.06

N = 324. **p* < .10, ***p* < .05, ****p* < .01

questions about earnings are highly intrusive in a Chinese setting, the objective measure of career success in this study was the number of employees each manager supervised. Supervising a larger number of workers is an indicator of a higher level of authority (Reskin & Ross, 1992), particularly in Chinese managerial culture where number of subordinates is an indicator of status or “face” (Chow & Ng, 2004). Measures of subjective career success in this study were a commonly-used measure of career satisfaction (Greenhaus, Parasuraman, & Wormley, 1990) as well as a measure of general life satisfaction (Hildebrandt & Liu, 1988b). Chinese workers, and Chinese women in particular, consider a good life and work-life balance to be essential indicators of career success (Woodhams et al., 2015; Zhou, Sun, Guan, Li, & Pan, 2013).

Career success

As an objective measure of career success, respondents were asked to report the number of people they supervised. As a subjective measure of career success, career satisfaction was assessed using the 5-item measure developed by Greenhaus et al., (1990), with response options on a 5-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree to some extent, 3 = uncertain or neutral, 4 = agree to some extent, 5 = strongly agree). Principal components analysis indicated that all five items loaded on a single factor, with factor loadings ranging from .79 to .87 ($\alpha = .90$).

Life satisfaction

A measure of life satisfaction was derived from three survey items developed by Hildebrandt and Liu (1988b): “In general, how satisfied are you with your life?,” “how satisfied are you with your family?,” and “how satisfied are you with your friends?.” The five response options were coded as 1 = strongly unsatisfied, 2 = unsatisfied to some extent, 3 = uncertain or neutral, 4 = satisfied to some extent, 5 = strongly satisfied. Principal components analysis indicated that all five items loaded on a single factor, with factor loadings ranging from .67 to .94 ($\alpha = .77$).

Education

Education was an ordinal variable coded at five levels (1 = Less than a high school; 2 = High school; 3 = Some college, no degree; 4 = Undergraduate degree; 5 = Postgraduate degree).

Tenure

Respondents reported how many years they had worked at their current enterprise (tenure with the company) and how many years they had held their present position (tenure in the position).

Work hours

Respondents reported weekly hours of work with response options: 1 = 40 h per week, 2 = 50 h, 3 = 60 h, 4 = 70 h, and 5 = more than 70 h per week.

Smoking and drinking

An indicator variable for smoking was created based upon three response options coded as follows: smoker (1); ex-smoker (0); and never smoked (0). An indicator of drinking was created based on three response options: drinker (1); ex-drinker (0); and never a drinker (0).

Networking behaviors

We created a measure of networking behavior to fit the Chinese business context, which affects both the types of networking activities and the response option frequencies. The measure was composed of six stem questions: “On average, how many times per week do you socialize with male (female) colleagues working in your same firm,” “On average, how many times per week do you socialize with male (female) colleagues working in other firms,” and “On average, how many times per week do you socialize with male (female) managers at higher levels than yourself, other than your manager” (response options 0 to 5 times a week or more). For each stem question, we assessed five types of networking behaviors, specifically: (1) “In the office,” (2) “On the phone/online chat,” (3) “During lunch,” (4) “Evening socializing,” and (5) “At home” for a total of 30 networking questions ($\alpha = .90$), 15 assessing networking with men ($\alpha = .85$), and 15 assessing networking with women ($\alpha = .88$).

Demographics

Respondents reported demographics on the survey form. Gender was coded to indicate female respondents (1 = female, 0 = male), and indicator variables were created to identify respondents who were married (1 = yes, 0 = no), respondents who had a child age 6 or younger in the home (1 = yes, 0 = no), and respondents who worked in manufacturing industries (1 = yes, 0 = no). We included firm size in the model as a control variable, assessed with a survey item requesting number of employees working in the entire enterprise. Response options ranged from less than 100 to greater than 10,000. The mid-point of each category was used in the analysis (1 = 50, 2 = 300, 3 = 750, 4 = 1500, 5 = 2600, 6 = 5350, 7 = 7750, 8 = 9000, 9 = 12,000). An indicator variable was created to identify respondents with rural backgrounds (1 = rural, 0 = urban).

Results

Hypotheses were tested using OLS regression. The main effects of control and predictor variables were entered in Step 1, and the hypothesized two-way interactions with gender were entered in Step 2. Points to plot and simple slopes were calculated by using the PROCESS macro for SPSS (Hayes, 2013). We tested each interaction individually because they were highly correlated with each other, due to sharing the component of gender.

The results of *t*-tests (Table 3) indicated that the matching strategy was effective for building a sample of managerial women and men who worked for the same organization and were similar in education, years with the company, years in the position, and hours worked weekly. Men and women also were equally likely to be married and

Table 3 Gender comparisons: paired samples t-tests

Pair	Variables	Mean	Std. dev.	<i>t</i> -value, sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	Number of subordinates (Male)	7.69	11.61	1.64, .10*
	Number of subordinates (Female)	6.04	5.72	
Pair 2	Life satisfaction (Male)	2.81	.95	1.72, .08*
	Life satisfaction (Female)	2.64	.85	
Pair 3	Career satisfaction (Male)	15.91	3.89	2.87, .01***
	Career satisfaction (Female)	14.76	3.65	
Pair 4	Company years (Male)	5.26	4.59	-.08, .93
	Company years (Female)	5.29	5.23	
Pair 5	Position years (Male)	3.39	3.00	-.36, .72
	Position years (Female)	3.28	2.93	
Pair 6	Hours worked (Male)	1.76	.87	.49, .62
	Hours worked (Female)	1.71	.95	
Pair 7	Smoker (Male)	.27	.44	5.94, .00***
	Smoker (Female)	.04	.19	
Pair 8	Drinker (Male)	.82	.38	5.21, .00***
	Drinker (Female)	.56	.49	
Pair 9	Born rural area (Male)	.45	.49	3.72, .00***
	Born rural area (Female)	.26	.44	
Pair 10	Marriage (Male)	.65	.48	.27, .79
	Marriage (Female)	.64	.48	
Pair 11	Networking: M&F (Male)	2.68	1.53	.21, .83
	Networking: M&F (Female)	2.64	1.31	
Pair 12	Networking: M (Male)	1.65	.78	7.10, .00***
	Networking: M (Female)	1.10	.68	
Pair 13	Networking: F (Male)	1.02	.86	-5.76, .00***
	Networking: F (Female)	1.54	.79	
Pair 14	Young child (Male)	.38	.49	-.56, .57
	Young child (Female)	.41	.49	

N = 324 (162 matched pairs)

p* < .10, *p* < .05, ****p* < .01

showed equivalent levels of total networking behaviors when networking with men and women was combined. Despite these similarities, men showed better outcomes on all three measures of career success, including number of subordinates ($t = 1.64$, marginally significant at $p < .10$), life satisfaction ($t = 1.72$, marginally significant at $p < .10$), and career satisfaction ($t = 2.87$, $p < .01$). Men were more likely to be smokers ($t = 5.94$, $p < .001$) and drinkers ($t = 5.21$, $p < .001$) than women. Men were also more likely to report a rural origin ($t = 3.72$, $p < .001$). Consistent with commonly reported homophily effects (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001), men reported a higher level of networking behaviors with men ($t = 7.10$, $p < .001$), while women reported a higher level of networking behaviors with women ($t = -5.76$, $p < .001$).

H1 predicted that being female would be negatively associated with number of subordinates, career satisfaction and life satisfaction. This hypothesis was tested by examining the regression coefficient on being female while controlling for human and social capital variable but before the interactions were entered. As shown in Table 4, findings indicated that when only human capital variables were controlled, being female was significantly negatively associated with life satisfaction (Model 1: $\beta = -.12, t = -2.05, p < .05$), career satisfaction (Model 8: $\beta = -.15, t = -2.68, p < .01$) and number of subordinates (Model 15: $\beta = -.09, t = -1.68, p < .10$), as expected. When social capital variables were also controlled, gender continued to be significantly negatively associated with all three career outcomes (life satisfaction, Model 2: $\beta = -.12, t = -1.89, p < .10$; career satisfaction, Model 9: $\beta = -.14, t = -2.31, p < .05$; number of subordinates (Model 16: $\beta = -.13, t = -2.22, p < .05$). When the networking measure was disaggregated to indicate networking with women and men separately, gender no longer showed a significant association with career success measures (life satisfaction, Model 3: $\beta = -.06, t = -.77, ns$; career satisfaction, Model 10: $\beta = -.07, t = -.10, ns$; number of subordinates, Model 17: $\beta = -.07, t = -.98, ns$). As such, H1 received partial support.

H2 predicted that the relationship between human capital (education, years at the company, years in the position, and weekly hours of work) and career outcomes for managers (life satisfaction, career satisfaction and number of subordinates) would be stronger for men than for women. This hypothesis was tested by examining the direction and significance of the interaction between gender and human capital variables on the three outcome variables (Table 4; findings for the interactions between gender and years in position and weekly hours of work were all non-significant and are not shown in the Tables to save space). Out of 12 tests, three significant associations emerged. Education interacted negatively and significantly with being female in predicting both life satisfaction (Model 4: $\beta = -.81, t = -2.32, p < .05$) and career satisfaction (Model 11: $\beta = -.64, t = -1.88, p < .10$). Years with the company interacted significantly and negatively with being female in predicting number of subordinates (Model 18: $\beta = -.17, t = -1.71, p < .10$).

The significant interactions were plotted to examine whether their forms were consistent with H2's prediction that human capital factors would be less strongly positively associated with career success for women than for men. All three significant interactions were consistent with this prediction. Therefore, H2 received partial support. The interaction between gender and education on life satisfaction is illustrated in the top-left panel of Fig. 2. Consistent with H2, the simple slopes indicate that education is negatively related to life satisfaction for women ($\beta = -.16, t = -1.91, p < .10$), while being unrelated for men ($\beta = .07, t = .86, ns$).

The interaction between gender and education on career satisfaction is depicted in the top-left panel of Fig. 3. Consistent with H2, the simple slope is more strongly positive for men than for women, however both simple slopes were non-significant, indicating that education is unrelated to career satisfaction for women ($\beta = .03, t = .33, ns$) and men ($\beta = .13, t = 1.51, ns$).

The interaction between gender and number of years with the company on number of subordinates is illustrated in the top panel of Fig. 4. This finding supported the hypothesis that women would gain less career advancement than men would for each unit of human capital, in this case, tenure with the firm. Consistent with H2, the simple

Table 4 Results of regression analyses predicting career outcomes

Variable	Outcome: Life satisfaction						Outcome: Career satisfaction						Outcome: Number of subordinates							
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12	Model 13	Model 14	Model 15	Model 16	Model 17	Model 18	Model 19	
Female	-.12** (-2.05)	-.12** (-1.89)	-.02 (.26)	-.06 (-.77)	.74** (2.11)	.04 (.46)	.13 (1.20)	.08 (.65)	-.15*** (-2.68)	-.14** (-2.31)	-.07 (-1.0)	.551 (1.60)	.019 (.22)	.09 (.83)	.05 (.44)	-.09* (-1.68)	-.13** (-2.22)	-.07 (-.98)	.02 (.27)	.01 (.09)
Marriage																				
Manufacturing																				
Size																				
Degree																				
Company years																				
Position years																				
Hours worked																				
Young child																				
Smoker																				
Drinker																				
Born rural area																				

Table 4 (continued)

Variable	Outcome: Life satisfaction						Outcome: Career satisfaction						Outcome: Number of subordinates							
	Model	Model	Model	Model	Model	Model	Model	Model	Model	Model	Model	Model	Model	Model	Model	Model	Model	Model		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
Networking:	.11*						.192***	.08						.16**	.04					
M&F	(1.83)						(2.599)	(1.38)						(2.25)	(.67)					
Networking: M	.16*	.17*	.16*	.14*	.13	.13		.16*	.16*	.16*	.14*	.14	.14	.13	.12	.11				
	(1.86)	(1.95)	(1.68)	(1.57)	(1.57)	(1.57)		(1.88)	(1.95)	(1.70)	(1.70)	(1.62)	(1.62)	(1.54)	(1.52)	(1.38)				
Networking: F	-.03	-.04	-.02	.11	.11	.11		-.06	-.07	-.05	-.05	.06	.06	-.08	-.08	-.07				
	(-.38)	(-.52)	(-.24)	(1.08)	(1.08)	(1.08)		(-.75)	(-.86)	(-.62)	(-.62)	(.60)	(.60)	(-.97)	(-.97)	(-.86)				
Female				-.81**																
× Education				(-2.32)																
Female					-.22**															
× Young child					(-2.43)															
Female						-.30**														
× Network F						(-2.31)														
Female																				
× Network M&F																				
Female																				
× Company years																				
Adjusted R ²	.01	.01	.01	.03	.03	.03	.02	.04	.06	.06	.07	.07	.07	.07	.06	.08	.08	.09	.09	.10
F	.78	1.32	1.35	1.64*	1.67*	1.63*	1.49	2.49***	2.45***	2.44***	2.52***	2.68***	2.57***	2.54***	4.27***	3.25***	3.17***	3.17***	3.17***	3.26***

N = 324. Standardized beta coefficients are reported
t statistics in parentheses
 p* < .10, *p* < .05, ****p* < .01

slopes indicate that number of years with the company is unrelated to number of subordinates for women ($\beta = .09, t = .93, ns$) but positively related to number of subordinates for men ($\beta = .26, t = 2.39, p < .05$).

H3 predicted that networking behavior would be less strongly positively associated with number of subordinates, career satisfaction and life satisfaction for women than for men. This hypothesis was tested by examining the direction and significance of the interaction between gender and networking with all colleagues, male and female combined. Out of three significance tests, two significant findings emerged. The interaction between gender and networking with all colleagues in predicting life satisfaction (Table 4, Model 7: $\beta = -.24, t = -1.85, p < .10$) is illustrated in the upper right panel of Fig. 2. Consistent with H3, the simple slopes indicate that networking behavior is unrelated to life satisfaction for women ($\beta = -.02, t = -.25, ns$), while showing a positive relationship for men ($\beta = .18, t = 2.29, p < .05$). The interaction between gender and networking with all colleagues in predicting career satisfaction (Table 4, Model 14: $\beta = -.23, t = -1.85, p < .05$) is illustrated in the upper right panel of Fig. 3. Consistent with H3, the simple slopes indicate that networking behavior is unrelated to career satisfaction for women ($\beta = -.01, t = -.12, ns$), but positively related to career satisfaction for men ($\beta = .14, t = 1.74, p < .10$). These results partially support H3.

H4 predicted that networking with women would be less strongly positively associated with number of subordinates, career satisfaction and life satisfaction for women than for men. This hypothesis was tested by examining the direction and significance of the interaction between gender and networking with female colleagues. From three significance tests, two significant findings emerged. The significant interaction between

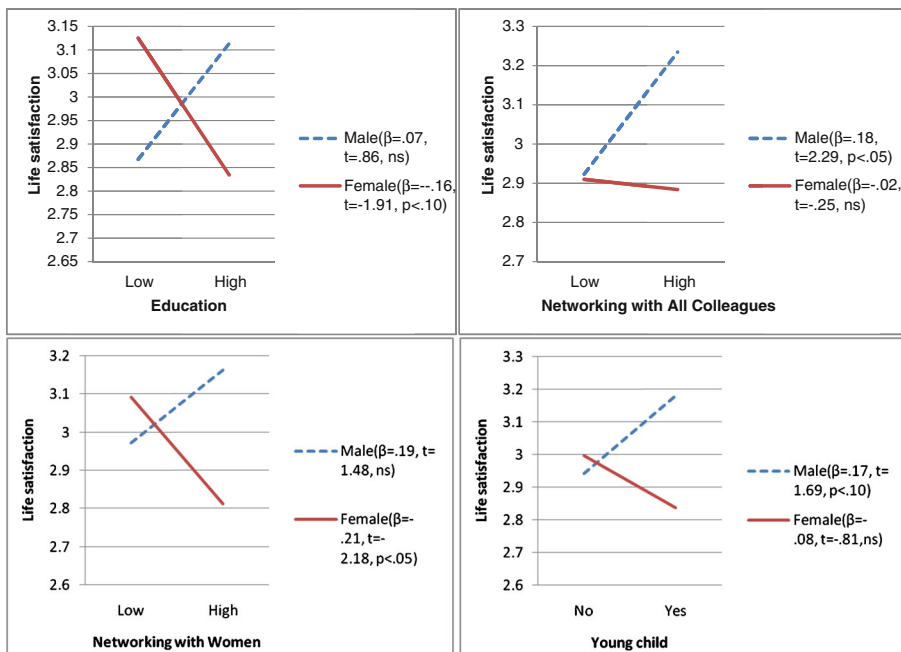


Fig. 2 Gender interactions affecting life satisfaction

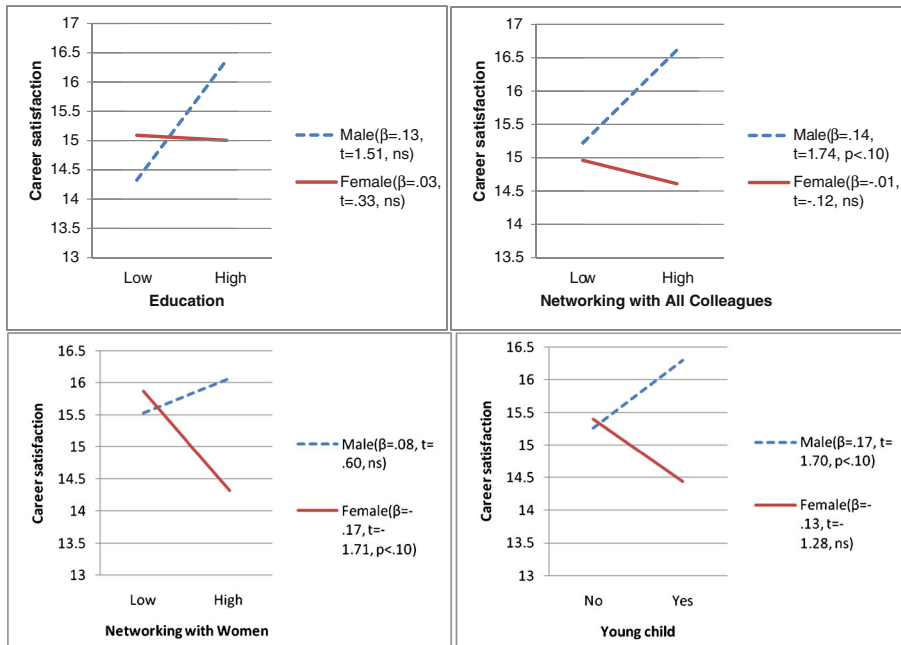


Fig. 3 Gender interactions affecting career satisfaction

gender and networking with women in predicting life satisfaction (Table 4, Model 6: $\beta = -.30$, $t = -2.31$, $p < .05$) is illustrated in the lower left panel of Fig. 2. Consistent with H4, the simple slopes indicate that networking with women is negatively related to life satisfaction for women ($\beta = -.21$, $t = -2.18$, $p < .05$), and but unrelated for men ($\beta = .19$, $t = 1.48$, ns). The significant interaction between gender and networking with women in predicting career satisfaction (Table 4, Model 13: $\beta = -.26$, $t = -2.01$, $p < .05$) is depicted in the lower left panel of Fig. 3. Consistent with H5, the simple slopes indicate that networking with women is negatively associated with career satisfaction for women ($\beta = -.17$, $t = -1.71$, $p < .10$), but unrelated for men ($\beta = .08$, $t = .60$, ns). Thus, these results provide partial support to H4.

H5 predicted that having a young child at home would be more strongly negatively associated with career outcomes for women than for men. Gender interacted significantly with presence of a young child to predict all three outcome variables (Table 4, life satisfaction, Model 5: $\beta = -.22$, $t = -2.43$, $p < .05$; career satisfaction, Model 12: $\beta = -.21$, $t = -2.37$, $p < .05$; number of subordinates, Model 19: $\beta = -.18$, $t = -2.04$, $p < .05$). Plots of these interactions are shown in Figs. 2 (bottom-right panel), 3 (bottom-right panel), and 4 (bottom panel). Consistent with H5, for all three dependent variables, the simple slopes in all three cases were positive and marginally significant to significant for men (β for life satisfaction = $.17$, $t = 1.69$, $p < .10$; β for career satisfaction = $.17$, $t = 1.70$, $p < .10$; β for number of subordinates = $.21$, $t = 2.21$, $p < .05$) and negative but non-significant for women (β for life satisfaction = $-.08$, $t = -.81$, ns; β for career satisfaction = $-.13$, $t = -1.28$, ns; β for number of subordinates = $-.11$, $t = -1.18$, ns). As such, H5 is supported.

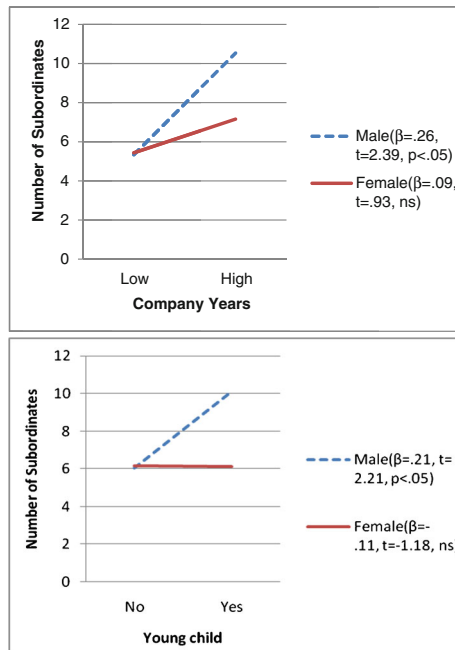


Fig. 4 Gender interactions affecting number of subordinates

H6 predicted that smoking and drinking would be less strongly positively associated with number of subordinates, career satisfaction and life satisfaction for women than for men. Gender did not interact significantly with smoking to predict the three outcome variables (life satisfaction, $\beta = .08$, $t = 1.32$, ns; career satisfaction, $\beta = .06$, $t = .92$, ns; number of subordinates, $\beta = .04$, $t = .62$, ns). Also, gender did not interact significantly with drinking to predict the three outcome variables too (life satisfaction, $\beta = .14$, $t = 1.22$, ns; career satisfaction, $\beta = .09$, $t = .76$, ns; number of subordinates, $\beta = .14$, $t = 1.26$, ns). Therefore, H6 is not supported.

Discussion

In a sample of 324 women and men in management who were matched on work organization, level of education, and years of work experience, female gender was a significant negative predictor of the three career outcome variables examined in this study, specifically, life satisfaction, career satisfaction, and number of subordinates. In addition, 10 significant interaction effects indicated that career strategies were either more beneficial or less detrimental to men's than to women's career outcomes. Consistent with stereotype violation effects (Berdahl, 2007; Joshi, 2014), the typical or masculine-typed strategies of gaining higher education, building tenure with the company, and networking with business colleagues had significant positive effects on career outcomes for men, while showing non-significant or negative relationships with women's career outcomes. Consistent with stereotype activation effects (Aquino et al.,

2005; Huntsinger et al., 2010), the feminine-typed activities of networking with women and having a young child had negative or non-significant effects on career outcomes for women, while showing non-significant or positive relationships with men's career outcomes. These findings allude to gender discrimination where women received lower returns to human and social capital than men do (Bertrand & Hallock, 2001; Oaxaca, 1975; Oaxaca & Ransom, 1994), consistent with previous research documenting gender discrimination in the market for Chinese managers (Cooke, 2001, 2003, 2005; Lam & Dreher, 2004; Tu et al., 2006; Woodhams et al., 2009)

Given results that support both stereotype violation and stereotype activation effects, together, these findings support the contemplated narrow band of acceptable behavior for managerial women in China (Fig. 1). Chinese women in management must be sufficiently career-oriented, assertive and decisive to avoid activating descriptive stereotypes of women's *yin* nature in order to succeed in management. However, they must not act so much like men that they violate prescriptive stereotypes and become labeled ambitious or unfeminine, "iron women" (Leung, 2003). Chinese women in management also experience substantial pressure to engage with their gender role in the family sufficiently to fulfill their family obligations (Ng & Chakrabarty, 2005; Peus et al., 2015). However, to avoid being labeled as uncommitted or incompetent managers, their family responsibilities must not be highly visible or interfere with their paid work role.

Our examination of the role of gendered networking behaviors yielded the novel finding that networking behaviors with women was negatively associated with women's but not with men's career outcomes. Some managerial women in China attempt to fit into the managerial role by building social capital and adopting behaviors consistent with the typical successful role occupant, which traditionally has been a man (Cooke, 2001, 2003, 2005; Hildebrandt & Liu, 1988b). Our findings suggest that women participated in building networks with colleagues and supervisors of both genders, but compared to their male counterparts, women in management interacted less frequently with men and more frequently with women, similar to prior findings (Bu & Roy, 2005; McDonald, 2011). Furthermore, although women expended effort to form networks with other women, these networks were actually disadvantageous to women's managerial careers, echoing concerns voiced by prior authors that ties between Chinese women managers are primarily social in nature (Huang & Aaltio, 2014). Perhaps networking with other women indicates a tendency toward self-segregation or avoidance of the male majority (Mollica et al., 2003), or perhaps networking with women leaves women with less time and energy to connect with more valuable male contacts who are more able to link them to sources of information, resources, and sponsorship essential to career success (Seibert, Kraimer, & Liden, 2001). It is also possible that businessmen limit network ties to women in management, due to stereotypes that they are incompetent (Bowen et al., 2007). The documented harassment of Chinese professional women in after-hours socializing contexts supports the agency of men in limiting women's cross-gender network ties (Cooke & Xiao, 2014).

Although smoking and drinking did not interact with gender in the relationship with career outcomes, the main effects of smoking and drinking have some overall implications at the societal level. For example, smoking is positively related to

career and life satisfaction, which supports the notion that smoking is still an important means of social interactions within the business context in China (Hildebrandt & Liu, 1988b; Liu, 2013). In addition, the negative correlation between drinking and life satisfaction, which is contrary to our hypothesis, did not come as a complete surprise. As the majority of our respondents were married, drinking (especially deep-night drinking) might have a negative impact on family life, hence resulting in life dissatisfaction. Career and life are closely intertwined in China, with a permeable line of demarcation between them (Shen et al., 2015; Zhou et al., 2013). So the negative relationship of drinking with life satisfaction may not suggest drinking is unimportant for career advancement. As Zhang (2014) noted, drinking is still an important form of business and organizational activity in China. More empirical research may be needed to further explore the impact of drinking and smoking as a networking activity in Chinese business.

Theoretical implications

The theoretical contribution of this paper is shown in Fig. 1, which combines the effects of stereotype violation and stereotype activation to explain the previously noted narrow band of acceptable behavior for managerial women (Morrison et al., 1987). Our conceptual model indicates stereotype violation and stereotype activation as processes that operate in parallel to create a narrow band of acceptable behavior for managerial women that is neither too masculine nor too feminine. In a highly gender-embedded society such as China, our findings indicate that both processes coexist, limiting women's options regarding methods for advancing their managerial careers.

Prior work has focused on the negative effects of stereotype violation on women's managerial and professional careers (Berdahl, 2007; Joshi, 2014), arguing that embodiment itself as a woman constitutes a barrier to career success. Such effects are consistent with the perspective that the managerial role is masculine and that enacting managerial success strategies is a means of expressing and validating one's masculinity (Collinson & Hearn, 1994; Hearn & Collinson, 2006). In this view, networking behaviors, for example, become an expression of masculinity as well as a means of garnering business contracts. There is little a woman can do to fit such a context because her embodiment precludes her from successfully demonstrating masculinity through managerial success. The stereotype violation pattern indicates a context in which women are not accepted as managers. As such, stereotype violation effects may be commonly experienced by women entering the management ranks as pioneers, that is, in a context where organizations and societies have had little experience with women in management.

Some prior work has shown that engaging in feminine behaviors can also damage women's managerial careers (Lyness & Judiesch, 2001), an effect that suggests stereotype activation effects (Huntsinger et al., 2010). Stereotype activation effects suggest that managerial women are viewed as acceptable and gender neutral unless and until they engage in a typically feminine action that triggers the feminine stereotype. In particular, becoming the mother of a small child is associated with questioning a woman's commitment to career success (Cuddy et al., 2004). By themselves, then, stereotype activation effects suggest some level of acceptance of managerial women as long as they do not engage in behaviors that indicate they are unfit for the managerial role. As such, research needs to examine both stereotype violation and stereotype

activation effects in order to document either the presence or absence of gender bias. Only if both stereotype violation and stereotype activation effects are ruled out can it be concluded that the image of managerial success is sufficiently gender neutral that traditional gender roles and stereotypes no longer constitute barriers to women's career advancement.

We have made a number of contributions to studying issues faced by Chinese women in management. The conceptual approach combining stereotype violation and stereotype activation is context-sensitive and flexible, dealing with the content of stereotypes in society at large. For example, the significant negative main effects of being female indicate that Chinese women in management experience gender-based discrimination that limits objective career outcomes along with career and life satisfaction. As such, the findings underscore the impact of negative stereotypes about female managers in China documented by previous authors (Bowen et al., 2007; Frank, 2001; Liu, Comer, & Dubinsky, 2001; Sincoff et al., 2009). The findings also broaden examinations of gender discrimination beyond the discriminatory compensation effects observed previously in studies of Chinese managers (Lam & Dreher, 2004; Tu et al., 2006). As such, research examining an array of career outcomes for Chinese managers cannot ignore gender discrimination as an influential predictor.

Women's lower levels of career and life satisfaction are particularly compelling due to the common finding that despite poorer objective career outcomes, women often report being equally or more satisfied than men are with their careers (Ng, Eby, Sorensen, & Feldman, 2005). The paradox of women being more satisfied with poorer career outcomes may be due to a variety of factors. First, women and men may have different career expectations whereby men set higher goals for themselves while women feel entitled to lower levels of success (Ngo, Foley, Ji, & Loi, 2014). Second, women and men may utilize different reference groups when judging their career satisfaction whereby women compare themselves to other women or worse jobs they have held while men compare themselves to other men (Ngo et al., 2014). Third, women may place greater value on different facets of career satisfaction than men do (Baruch & Bozionelos, 2010). Research on the kaleidoscope career model, for instance, shows that managerial and professional women place greater importance on balance than men do when judging their career success (Sullivan et al., 2009). Given that the bulk of career research and theory suggests that women should be more satisfied than their male counterparts, our findings of lower satisfaction ratings among Chinese managerial women when compared to men are even more troubling because they suggest substantial dampening effects on these women's ability to achieve satisfaction in their careers and lives.

The findings for the networking measures confirm prior theorizing that social networks are gendered in multiple ways (Bu & Roy, 2005; Forret & Dougherty, 2004; McDonald, 2011). First, the age-old separation gender roles in China results in gender segregation in informal social networks among Chinese managers where men interact more frequently with men, while women interact more frequently with women. Second, power dynamics mean that connections with men are more beneficial for generating career success (Ibarra, 1992). Combining the two processes of gendered social roles and related power differences results in particularly negative outcomes for women, due to limits on their access to male power-holders who can provide the resources needed for career success.

Future research may extend theory to further explore how cultural contexts can shape the impact of social categorization on organizational behavior. Specifically, when certain behaviors needed to build and maintain human capital and social capital connections are viewed as inappropriate for particular social groups, such as women, these behaviors are less likely to lead to career advancement. Social capital studies have demonstrated the importance of connecting with male power-holders for women's career enhancement (Belliveau, 2005; Ibarra, 1992). Prior research has demonstrated, however, that relationship-building across the genders can be misinterpreted as sexual in nature by both the target and observers of the behavior (Elsesser & Peplau, 2006), a dynamic that has been observed in China (Woodhams et al., 2015). Hence, women's attempts to build social capital by connecting with male colleagues may be ineffective and even backfire if they are viewed as inappropriately sexual or romantic in nature. By focusing on behavioral appropriateness for different social groups, social role theory provides a useful lens for developing moderators of the link between human capital, social capital and outcomes.

Practical implications for HRM

Chinese companies need to adopt multi-faceted long-term strategies if they wish to move more women into leadership positions in a male-dominated world of management (Graham & Hotchkiss, 2009; Jabbour, Gordon, de Oliveira, Martinez, & Battistelle, 2011; Yang & Konrad, 2011). Now that women's educational status equals or exceeds that of their male counterparts, HR planning in this area can focus on removing barriers and creating facilitators for women's career development. Emphasizing that managerial jobs require skills associated with feminine stereotypes, such as building teams and developing subordinates has been shown to diminish biased evaluations of women (Gaucher, Friesen, & Kay, 2011). European research has documented the success of efforts to use "gender fair" language in recruitment and selection for traditionally masculine jobs for reducing gender bias (Horvath & Sczesny, 2013, May 24). Organizational structures and processes can either enhance or attenuate societally-driven gender effects (Ely & Padavic, 2007), and leaders can reduce gender gaps in managerial career outcomes by implementing such gender fair practices.

Research has shown that creating a positive climate for diversity is an effective way of dealing with cognitive biases such as gender stereotyping (Kossek & Zonia, 1993; McKay, Avery, & Morris, 2009; North-Samardzic & Taksa, 2011; Pichler et al., 2008). Creating a positive diversity climate requires the support of senior organizational leaders who articulate a clear vision supporting gender diversity (Moore, Konrad, & Hunt, 2010) and hold line managers accountable for fulfilling that vision (Kalev, Dobbin, & Kelly, 2006). In addition, promoting the development of affinity groups such as women's networks has been linked to retention and career satisfaction (Friedman & Holtom, 2002; Friedman, Kane, & Cornfield, 1998). Succession planning and high potential programs that identify and develop highly talented managerial women both raise awareness of the presence of highly qualified women among decision-makers and prepare those women to succeed in a series of increasingly challenging leadership posts (Groves, 2007).

Limitations and future research

Although the use of a sample of Chinese managerial women and men who were matched on education, experience, and employing organization strengthened the internal validity of our research compared to prior work, this study also has its limitations. Information on managerial compensation would have been valuable for comparing men's and women's career success, however expert informants told us that asking people to report their wages would greatly reduce willingness to respond to our survey in the Chinese context. Hence, we are limited to examining number of subordinates as a measure of objective career outcomes. Also, all of our measures were taken from a single survey at a single point in time. As such, the associations we observed are cross-sectional in nature, limiting our ability to draw causal implications. The generalizability of our findings to the population of Chinese managers is unknown, as we cannot be certain of the representativeness of our sample.

Another limitation of this study is our inability to assess the theoretical mechanisms of stereotype violation or stereotype activation in the minds of the decision-makers. Future research could build this research program by gathering supervisors' evaluations of the extent to which their direct report fit images of managerial success, are liked or disliked, and are viewed as committed or uncommitted, competent or incompetent. Those data could be added as mediators in our conceptual model, and tests of mediated moderation would provide more evidence regarding the impact of stereotype violation and activation on women's managerial careers.

Future studies that assess family responsibilities as well as measures of work-life conflict and facilitation (Voydanoff, 2004) would be valuable for examining how work-life interface affects career development for women and men in China. In addition, our findings about smoking and drinking were based on managers in Beijing (but with no significant gender interactions) and gender interactions may be identified with other parts of China. For example, it is still the norm in China for men to network and achieve in their career path via smoking or drinking (Cooke & Xiao, 2014; Liu, 2013). Future studies may broaden the scope of data collection to include a number of other regions to further explore such an interesting networking phenomenon.

Conclusion

We found clear evidence of gender barriers to women's managerial career development in China. Women experience a direct disadvantage in number of subordinates compared to men with equivalent human capital, effort, and background. Compared to men, managerial women gain authority over fewer subordinates for each year of tenure with their firm, and the social behavior of networking is less strongly positively related to career satisfaction and life satisfaction for women than for men. Moreover, women experienced reduced career and life satisfaction through networking with other women, which further confirmed the inferior status of women in the Chinese business context. Having a young child was associated with enhanced career outcomes for men but not for women. Altogether, these findings support the existence of a narrow band of acceptable career strategies for

Chinese managerial women, as both typical masculine strategies and atypical feminine strategies garnered smaller career gains. These findings have significant theoretical and practical HRM implications for improving women's status through training, education and policy-making on a systematic basis and for further theoretical development to better explain gender-related issues in organizations.

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