

How and When Compulsory Citizenship Behavior Leads to Employee Silence: A Moderated Mediation Model Based on Moral Disengagement and Supervisor–Subordinate *Guanxi* Views

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Abstract Prior research on citizenship behavior (CB) has mainly focused on its voluntary side—organizational citizenship behavior. Unfortunately, although compulsory behavior is a global organizational phenomenon, the involuntary side of CB—compulsory citizenship behavior (CCB), defined as employees’ involuntary engagement in extra-role work activities that are beneficial to the organization (Vigoda-Gadot in *J Theory Soc Behav* 36(1): 77–93, 2006)—has long been neglected and very little is known about its potential negative consequences. Particularly, research on CCB–counterproductive work behavior (CWB) association is still in its nascent stage. Therefore, drawing on moral disengagement (MD) theory and social exchange theory, we firstly attempt to systematically investigate how and when CCB leads to CWB. Specifically, we see

employee silence as a critical form of passive CWB and propose a moderated mediation model. In the model, CCB predicts silence through MD—a set of cognitive mechanisms that deactivate moral self-regulatory processes (Bandura in *Social foundations of thought and action: a social cognitive theory*, Prentice Hall, Englewood 1986), with the Chinese culture-specific concept of supervisor–subordinate *guanxi* (*s–s guanxi*), which captures the supervisor–subordinate non-work-related personal ties, acting as the contextual condition. Two-wave data collected from a sample of 293 employees in 17 manufacturing firms in China supported our hypotheses. The results revealed that the more employees experienced compulsory feelings caused by CCB, the more they morally disengaged and, in turn, resorted to avoidant or passive responses (i.e., silence) as a coping strategy. Further, *s–s guanxi* serves as a reverse moderator in that high *s–s guanxi* mitigates the destructive impact of CCB, makes employees less inclined to morally disengage, and thereby largely prevents them from practicing workplace silence behavior. Implications for theory and intervention strategies for practice are discussed. We also propose several promising avenues for future research.

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Introduction

Current literature on citizenship behavior (CB) has pointed primarily to the benefits of voluntary CB—organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), that is, “individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized

by the formal reward system, and that in aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization” (Organ 1988, p. 4). Undoubtedly, CB is needed in today’s organization of work more than before because increased competitive market pressures have forced modern organizations to depend more on flexibility and informality and maximize effectiveness and efficiency by all available means. Consequently, organizations aim to find ways to initiate more CBs. However, trying to enforce employees to show more CBs can come with a price and turn out negatively. Therefore, recent research has questioned the prevailing belief that CB is inherently voluntary and beneficial, and called for a more balanced view of CB by focusing on the exploitative tendency of supervisors and managements to impose the so-called voluntary activities via compulsory mechanisms. Vigoda-Gadot (2006) suggested that there may be “a unique segment of CB or extra-role behavior, one that is less voluntary but still expresses extra effort at work” (p. 81). This non-voluntary version of CB has been described by him as “compulsory citizenship behavior (CCB).” It is noteworthy that CCB is driven by outside forces and thus a CB is not a CCB if an employee forces himself/herself into it.

CCB is quite prevalent and has become a serious issue or even formed a vicious circle in the Chinese workplace. The ever-increasing employment pressure is a fundamental force that leaves Chinese employees no choice but to show more CBs. However, the destructive impacts of CCB have not received adequate attention. Especially, little is known about how CCB influences counterproductive work behavior (CWB)—“behavior that is intended to have a detrimental effect on organizations and their members” (Fox et al. 2001, p. 292). Thus, we choose the dark and destructive side of CCB as our research theme. We show this with a Chinese sample and use employee silence as a potential negative consequence of CCB.

Employee silence refers to employees’ intentional withholding of ideas, information, opinions, or concerns about potential organizational problems or with relevance to improvements in work and work organizations (Pinder and Harlos 2001; Tangirala and Ramanujam 2008; Van Dyne et al. 2003). Silence, although it is a right (i.e., the freedom to withhold ones’ expressions) and often the best option for employees (Donaghey et al. 2011), can cause harm to the organization and supervisors. It is conceptually similar to Connelly et al.’s (2012) knowledge hiding—“an intentional attempt by an individual to withhold or conceal knowledge that has been requested by another person” (p. 65), which impairs knowledge sharing/knowledge transfer and thereby undermines organizational creativity and productivity. Recently, scholars have highlighted the examination of employees’ motives for remaining silent. Particularly, Brinsfield (2013) has conceptualized deviant

silence, and Knoll and van Dick (2013) have conceptualized opportunistic silence. Drawing upon these two emergent concepts and Connelly et al.’s (2012) concept of knowledge hiding, we tend to focus explicitly on the intentionality and the selfish and retaliatory motives of silence and thus identify it as a distinctive form of CWB. We link CCB to silence also because there is a cultural specific in Chinese culture—when facing stressors, subordinates would rather avoid aggravating or ultimately terminating supervisor–subordinate relationships by using avoidant or passive coping strategies instead of acting out their anger on their supervisors or organizations.

Logically, our second objective is to examine the potential processes responsible for the CCB–silence relationship. Recent research has suggested that scholars should attend more carefully to the crucial role of socio-cognitive processes for better understanding of CWB (e.g., Detert et al. 2008; Fida et al. 2015). In particular, several researches have shown that moral disengagement (MD), which refers to a set of cognitive justifications that enable an individual to eliminate self-deterrents to unethical behaviors while avoiding self-sanctions and the accompanying guilt (Bandura 1990; Bandura et al. 1996), is a critical cognitive process as a mediator of work stressors and negative coping strategies (e.g., Claybourn 2011; Fida et al. 2015; Hystad et al. 2014). MD arises because the victims of work stress will experience negative psychological state and therefore become highly motivated to vent their grievances and change this state by morally disengaging and subsequently engaging in retaliation behavior. As stated above, CCB is a special type of work stressor. In addition, silence has been seen as a particularly important passive CWB (i.e., a passive coping strategy) (Bolton et al. 2012). Thus, our research aims to extend the work stressor–CWB research by proposing MD as a motivated cognitive process (i.e., a mediational pathway) linking CCB to silence.

Nevertheless, MD is not an automatic process. There might be differences in the type of person who engages in MD after being forced to show CBs. According to Eisenberger et al. (1990), employees’ attitudes and intentions are significantly influenced by social context such as the extent to which they feel supported in the workplace. Furthermore, the contingency view of CCB suggests that CCB cannot be fully understood when examined in isolation from the particular social and cultural context (Peng and Zhao 2012). Therefore, our third objective is to examine how CCB interacts with specific contextual factors in influencing MD.

The literature on work stressor–CWB relationship suggests that research should not overlook the moderating role of individual and cultural differences (e.g., Liu et al. 2010). Farh et al. (1997) argued that “differences in

perceptions arising from people's cultural values may have a profound impact on how CB is viewed and operates in relation to other constructs" (p. 422). In addition, MD is understood to be co-determined by cultural norms or values (Petitta et al. 2015), and thereby research should include further determinants of MD more related to social and cultural aspects (Fida et al. 2015). Accordingly, there is an urgent need for scholars to adopt a culture-specific approach in investigating the contingent relationship between CCB and MD. Cultural influences are particularly relevant for our research as we have a sample from the Eastern unique cultural context that is known for these particular influences. Neglecting these influences may affect the proposed processes. Hence, we propose that culture-specific factors may lead to CCB being more or less acceptable and could thus regulate the CCB–MD association.

Actually, scholars have urged paying attention to traditional Chinese cultural values when conducting indigenous workplace research, because they can affect employees' thought patterns and behavior (e.g., Li et al. 2012; Liu et al. 2013; Mao et al. 2012). In particular, they are key factors in differentiating individual appraisals of and reactions to work stressors (Xie et al. 2008) and thus provide a basis for interpreting when and why an employee's revenge cognition is more or less likely to occur under work stress (Liu et al. 2010). *Guanxi*, which describes the informal, particularistic personal interactions that mainly include the social experience sharing and the reciprocal exchange of favors and trust (Bian 1997; Chen and Chen 2004), is considered one of the most significant traditional Chinese cultural values dominating Chinese people's ethics and behavior (Hwang 1987). Ho and Redfern (2010) have indicated that *guanxi*, which has long been ingrained in Confucian ideology, can exert a far-reaching influence on Chinese people's moral cognition and tendency. The literature on CCB also suggests that traditional Chinese cultural values such as *guanxi* provide important boundary conditions for the impact of CCB in China (Peng and Zhao 2012). Further, supervisor–subordinate *guanxi* (s–s *guanxi*), which refers to the subordinate-immediate supervisor non-work-related personal relationship that is formed and developed through informal and implicit social interactions after office hours (Chen and Tjosvold 2006; Law et al. 2000), is the most critical workplace *guanxi* in China (Chen et al. 2009).

Therefore, we use s–s *guanxi*, which is grounded in social exchange theory (Blau 1964), as a moderator and examine whether it weakens the effects of CCB. Specifically, we investigate how CCB and s–s *guanxi* may interactively influence subordinates' MD and subsequent silence by developing a moderated mediation model (see Fig. 1) and postulating that s–s *guanxi* acts as a buffer in

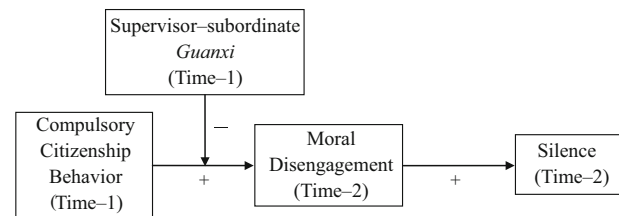


Fig. 1 Hypothesized moderated mediation model of processes linking CCB and silence

alleviating the main effect of CCB on MD and the indirect effect of CCB on silence via MD.

This research contributes to the current literature in two ways. First, it enriches our existing knowledge of the full picture of CCB's deleterious impacts by focusing on subordinates' passive responses. Our research proposes that remaining quiet in the daily work situation can be a critical passive approach adopted by subordinates to cope with CCB. Hence, it has shed a new light on this research stream by linking CCB to passive CWB. Second, it offers two new perspectives (i.e., moral and *guanxi* views) to study the citizenship pressure–CWB relation and broadens our existing knowledge on the occurrence and intervention mechanisms of silence. In particular, we are unaware of any study that explicitly explores the role of s–s *guanxi* as a moderator in the work stressor–MD or CWB relation. Thus, examining the culture-specific contextual variable of *guanxi* is an important extension as it considers the context which is often neglected in OB research.

Theoretical Background and Hypotheses Development

Compulsory Citizenship Behavior and Employee Silence

In recent years, the “forced” phenomenon (e.g., be forced to work extra hours beyond the formal workload or help the supervisor beyond the formal job obligations) has appeared very frequently in China's newspapers. It implies that CCB is a salient pressure in Chinese organizations. Particularly, in those private companies which are competing on low cost and speed, many job descriptions do not include boundaries that clearly identify extra-role behaviors such as CB, and employees frequently face strong social or managerial pressures to do things that are beyond their professional duties. A review of the limited literature on CCB suggests that CCB is extremely harmful to employees' health and well-being and has incurred huge hidden costs to the organization. It may engender employees' physiological fatigue, emotional exhaustion, and cognitive

strain, which ultimately undermine their work life quality and work–family balance, or even lead to *karoshi* (death caused by overwork). For example, the Chinese employees usually call themselves as “overtime dogs” and feel like “my body is hollowed out.” It is well known that in 2010, 13 young workers of Foxconn committed suicide by jumping off buildings largely because of CCBs. Although the CEO of Foxconn has sternly denied that Foxconn is a sweat shop, this event has already caused a serious damage to its reputation.

Undoubtedly, employees who are continually exposed to CCBs and thus feel pressured and distressed are likely to retaliate, because work stressors generally make action regulation difficult. Additionally, work stressors have been successfully and widely linked with CWBs. Hence, recently, increasing attention has been directed at the possible causal connection between enforced CB and CWB. Zhao et al. (2014) concluded that when employees are forced to perform more CBs, they may experience a strong sense of job dissatisfaction and reduced organizational identification. Consequently, their reactions are expected to be negative and then increased CWBs would follow. Klotz and Bolino (2013) suggested that “good soldiers” who engage in CBs may subsequently feel internal moral disequilibrium and therefore behave like “bad apples” and engage in CWBs. They found that citizenship pressure is an important explanation for this phenomenon (Bolino and Klotz 2015). Drawing on these researches and Bolino et al. (2010), Spector and Fox (2010), and Yam et al. (2017) who also indicated that citizenship under pressure could be a direct cause of employees’ CWBs, we expect that CCB can lead to CWB. The question is, however, what forms of CWB are shown.

Among various coping strategies, executing withdrawal for perceived pressure is relatively safe and noncontroversial. As a result, work stressors are thought to be positively related to employees’ defensive cognitions and withdrawal behaviors (e.g., Ashforth and Lee 1990; Chen and Spector 1992; Rodell and Judge 2009). Further, withholding of information and views has been seen as a form of defensive workplace behavior (Ashforth and Lee 1990). From this perspective, employees are likely to adopt a defensive posture and engage in silence behaviors as a means to cope with prior unpleasant experiences (i.e., CCBs).

From another perspective, traditional Chinese culture emphasizes values such as harmony, respect the social norms (customs) and authority, fatalism, and a sense of powerlessness (Yang et al. 1991) and discourage immediate revenge. Since ancient times, some proverbs such as “silence is golden” and “speak and act cautiously” encourage Chinese people to endure humiliation, suppress

personal discontent, and avoid confrontation in order to preserve the overall situation. Consequently, blaming the supervisor or the organization goes against the traditional values of hierarchical Chinese societies. In the Chinese cultural context, which comprises high collectivism, high traditionality, and high power distance, subordinates usually ostensibly capitulate to pressures caused by the “forced” phenomenon and rarely seek explicit revenge against their supervisors or organizations. In consideration of the risks of challenging supervisors’ authority or the status quo and being treated as saboteurs or complainers, they generally hold a negative attitude toward exercising their voice or engaging in active and explicit CWBs. Therefore, it is not difficult to speculate that those passive and implicit CWBs such as silence are more likely to be adopted by Chinese employees as natural, logical, and safe responses to CCBs. Specifically, they may tend to isolate themselves from stressful work situations and remain silent by turning a blind eye to crucial organizational problems, and intentionally withholding information and suggestions when confronted with CCBs. Thus, we expect:

Hypothesis 1 CCB is positively related to employee silence.

Moral Disengagement Theory

MD theory was developed by Bandura (1990) as an extension of social cognitive theory. Social cognitive theory posits that most people will exercise control over their own thoughts and engage in moral behaviors when the moral self-regulatory function is activated and operational (Bandura 1986). However, Bandura et al. (1996) argued that moral self-regulatory processes that normally inhibit immoral acts or revenge can also be selectively deactivated, and he labeled this cognitive maneuver “MD,” which occurs through three broad or eight specific inter-related mechanisms: (1) cognitively reconstructing unethical behaviors (moral justification, euphemistic labeling, and advantageous comparison); (2) obscuring or distorting consequences (displacement of responsibility, diffusion of responsibility, and distorting consequences); and (3) devaluing the target (dehumanization and attribution of blame). MD theory has been gradually introduced into OB research in the most recent decade. It provides scholars with a lens for investigating the generating processes of a wide range of unethical work behaviors like CWB (e.g., Barsky 2011; Claybourn 2011). Therefore, we adopt MD theory as an overarching theoretical perspective and principally focus on MD’s potential mediating role in the CCB–silence relation.

The Mediating Role of Moral Disengagement

CWB does not occur automatically. As underlined in the literature, emotion and cognition are the two main drivers of people's actions (e.g., Lee and Allen 2002). To this end, past research has highlighted the path from work stressors to CWBs through emotional processes (Rodell and Judge 2009). Surprisingly, very little research has been done on the potential mediating effect of cognitive processes. To fill this void, some scholars have started to view social cognitive processes as necessary mediators for converting work stressors into CWBs. For example, Liu et al.'s (2010) research revealed that work stressors can lead to revenge cognitions and subsequent supervisor-directed CWB. This stream of work also suggests that a major thread underlying the work stressor–CWB relation may be the neglecting of individuals' moral cognitive process. Further, among a series of moral cognitive processes, MD has received considerable research attention. For example, Fida et al. (2015) confirmed that MD mediates the relation between negative emotions in response to work stressors and both individual-directed and organization-directed CWBs. Similarly, Hystad et al. (2014) introduced diffusion and displacement of responsibility (two mechanisms of MD) as partially mediating mechanisms in the work stressors and CWBs relations. Taken together, scholars have found that subordinates who reported having been subjected to more work stress also tended to report relatively high MD and perceive adopting CWBs as an ideal coping strategy.

Hence, we tend to believe that, for most subordinates, CCB will generate negative emotions and cause retaliation tendencies. Specifically, we argue that when subordinates are forced to engage in CBs, they will feel psychologically distressed for having gone above and beyond the call of duty. Further, these feelings of distress will act as moral justifications or excuses that morally free them to commit subsequent CWBs. Besides, perceived victimization by work stressors can deplete an individual's self-regulatory resources and lead to a heightened sense of MD (Lee et al. 2016). Thus, it appears that the perceived victimization by CCB might lead to subordinates feeling dissatisfied with their supervisors or organizations, which in turn leads to decreased levels of moral self-regulation and increased levels of moral violations (i.e., harming the supervisor or the organization more readily) and ultimately triggers a MD process. In light of the preceding arguments, we believe that silence is a likely consequence of CCB and speculate that a key to understanding the translation of CCB into silence lies in MD theory. In other words, we predict that, when faced with CCB, MD will make Chinese subordinates' personal moral rules momentarily obscured and pave the way for silence as a plausible behavioral strategy to cope with it. Therefore, we posit that:

Hypothesis 2 MD mediates the positive relationship between CCB and employee silence.

The Moderating Role of Supervisor–Subordinate *Guanxi*

Although subordinates are likely to take revenge on the source of work stress, it is noted that not all of them respond to CCB to MD to the same extent. As discussed previously, s–s *guanxi* should be taken into consideration in predicting employees' MD. Specifically, Chinese supervisors generally classify their subordinates into “insiders” and “outsiders” based on *guanxi* quality and provide the former with more emotional supports and work-related resources (Law et al. 2000; Wei et al. 2010). This helps the “insiders” to meet extra-role work requirements more easily and hence relieves their cognitive strain and evokes their positive feelings of affection, warmth, and companionship (Wong et al. 2010). In this situation, CCB yields much less loss of psychological-related resources. Further, s–s *guanxi* reflects a continued social exchange process (Han et al. 2012). The “insiders” are highly motivated to reciprocate with their moral obligations, loyalty, obedience, and devotion to their supervisors or the organization by demonstrating more CBs in unspecified time (Farh et al. 1998; Lin and Ho 2010). From this perspective, the “insiders” may have a positive cognitive evaluation of CCB by appraising it as challenging work assignments and thereby take problem-focused coping strategies. In addition, high s–s *guanxi* subordinates tend to leave their supervisors good impression by acting as an active fighter rather than a passive stress-bearer, because they rely on their supervisors for their future development and career. Therefore, they will think twice before engaging in CWBs. Taken together, good s–s *guanxi* subordinates are not endowed with intense motivation or willingness to disengage from their moral standards under CCB.

Conversely, low s–s *guanxi* subordinates are more likely to have a negative cognitive evaluation of CCB by considering it to be their supervisors' or the organization's negative or unfair treatment (i.e., a hindrance stressor). Therefore, they will be more sensitive to and less tolerant of CCB and thereby take emotion-focused coping strategies. Furthermore, the “outsiders” generally receive many fewer resources and supports from their supervisors than the “insiders.” Thus, they may be more concerned with the immediacy of returns on their time, energy, and efforts devoted to CBs. They may appraise CCB as more threatening to their valued resources and go through a much harder time when encountering CCB. This impels them to hold stronger negative reciprocity beliefs and find more explanations to rationalize and justify CWBs.

Subsequently, they may lower their threshold for MD. At last, low *s-s guanxi* subordinates generally do not expect that their supervisors will recognize their contributions. Consequently, they may feel “nothing to lose” and thereby more fully express their immoral thoughts. Consistent with these arguments, Fida et al. (2015) suggested that low-quality social ties and lack of social support may “reduce empathy and therefore facilitate the activation of cognitive processes aimed at reducing guilt or shame that would deter resorting to harmful actions toward the organization and its stakeholders” (p. 140).

In summary, *s-s guanxi* differences underpin variances in what might be considered morally acceptable and questionable behaviors by subordinates. It is reasonable to speculate that *s-s guanxi* functions as a boundary condition in that high *s-s guanxi* generates happier subordinates and thus makes CCB less salient and the associated MD less likely. By contrast, CCB in a low-level *s-s guanxi* can be more threatening to subordinates’ moral self-regulatory mechanisms, which culminates in heightened MD. Therefore, we put forward:

Hypothesis 3 *S-s guanxi* moderates the positive relationship between CCB and MD. Such relationship is weaker when *s-s guanxi* is high rather than low.

So far, we have demonstrated that MD mediates the CCB–silence relationship and hypothesized that *s-s guanxi* moderates the first stage of this mediated model. We therefore propose further the moderated mediation model of the moral self-regulatory process linking CCB and silence. Specifically, high CCB combined with high *s-s guanxi* may make the CCB—silence association less salient because a typically supportive relationship will constrain the cues for activating subordinates’ MD. By contrast, high CCB coupled with low *s-s guanxi* may lead to a more pronounced indirect effect of CCB on silence because of increased levels of MD.

Hypothesis 4 *S-s guanxi* moderates the strength of the indirect effect of CCB on silence via MD, such that the mediated relationship is weaker when *s-s guanxi* is high rather than low.

Methods

Sample and Procedure

With the assistance of the management committees of three industrial parks in Guangxi province in southern China, we randomly selected 17 manufacturing firms to conduct a two-phase survey. Data were collected with the assistance of HR managers, who prepared a list of randomly selected

employees. In order to reduce social desirability bias, we provided the purpose and details of the survey, the voluntary nature of participation, an assurance of anonymity and confidentiality, and the contact information of the first author to the participants. Respondents were required to complete the questionnaires alone during working hours and return them to the first author in sealed envelopes (Richman et al. 1999). Translation and back-translation procedure (Brislin 1980) was adopted to verify the questionnaire in Chinese.

In March 2015 (Time-1), we distributed questionnaires to a total of 455 employees. Respondents assessed their perceptions of CCB and *s-s guanxi* by using their current immediate supervisors as referees. Of the 455 questionnaires we distributed, 426 questionnaires were returned. After excluding 42 invalid samples, we received 384 valid samples, representing a response rate of 84.40%. In May 2015 (Time-2), we conducted the survey following the same procedures. Respondents rated MD and silence. A coding provided by HR managers was used to match the responses received from Time-1 and Time-2. Finally, 293 completed and usable questionnaires were received, representing an overall response rate of 64.40%. Within the sample, 42.30% were male, 57% aged from 26 to 35, the mean working time was 6.64 years (SD = 6.05 years), and 46.40% received a university degree or higher.

Measures

Compulsory Citizenship Behavior (CCB)

This was measured with Vigoda-Gadot’s (2007) five-item scale. Sample items include “The management in this organization puts pressure on employees to engage in extra-role work activities beyond their formal job tasks” and “I feel that I am forced to assist my supervisor against my will and beyond my formal job obligation.” Response options ranged from 1 = never to 5 = always. The α reliability was 0.77.

Moral Disengagement (MD)

We used an eight-item scale developed and validated by Moore et al. (2012) to measure MD. The eight items represent the aforementioned eight specific interrelated mechanisms through which MD occurs. Sample items include “It is okay to spread rumors to defend those you care about (*moral justification*)” and “Some people have to be treated roughly because they lack feelings that can be hurt (*dehumanization*).” Response options ranged from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Given that Moore et al. (2012) supported MD as an aggregate construct, we summed the eight items of the MD scale to form

a composite score for the MD construct. The α reliability was 0.81.

Silence

This was measured by a five-item scale adapted from Tangirala and Ramanujam (2008), with items similar to the measure used by Van Dyne et al. (2003). Sample items are “I chose to remain silent when I had concerns about my work” and “Although I had ideas for improving work in my workgroup, I did not speak up.” Response options ranged from 1 = never to 5 = very frequently. The α reliability was 0.87.

Supervisor–Subordinate Guanxi (*s–s guanxi*)

We measured *s–s guanxi* using five items from Law et al.’s (2000) six-item scale. Sample items include “During holidays or after office hours, I would call my supervisor or visit him/her” and “My supervisor invites me to his/her home for lunch or dinner.” We deleted the item “I always actively share with my supervisor about my thoughts, problems, needs and feelings,” because this item seems to be pretty close to the opposite of silence. Response options ranged from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The α reliability was 0.86.

Control Variables

Previous silence research (e.g., Li et al. 2012; Tangirala and Ramanujam 2008; Xu et al. 2015) has mainly used respondents’ gender, age, education, working time, rank (job position) and organizational tenure as control variables, because they have been found to be related to employees’ psychological reactions and workplace behaviors. Particularly, in Li et al.’s (2012) research on silence in the Chinese cultural context, gender, age, education, and rank have been considered to be control variables. Further, because all of the respondents in our research are front-line employees, rank was excluded. Thus, in keeping with previous research, we controlled participants’ gender, age, education, and working time. Gender was coded 0 = male, 1 = female. Age was coded 1 = 25 or below, 2 = 26–35, 3 = 36–45, 4 = 46 or above. Education was coded 1 = high school or under, 2 = vocational school, 3 = university, 4 = graduate school. Working time was measured by number of years.

Data Analytic Strategy

To test the mediating role of MD, we adopted two analytical approaches. First, we performed a series of hierarchical regression analyses according to Baron and Kenny’s

(1986) procedures which suggested three conditions to establish a mediating effect ($X \rightarrow M \rightarrow Y$; i.e., Hypothesis 2): (1) CCB (X) must affect silence (Y), (2) CCB (X) must affect MD (M), and (3) MD (M) must exert influence on silence (Y) while controlling for CCB (X), whereas the impact of CCB (X) on silence (Y) is significantly reduced. Second, following Preacher and Hayes’s (2004) suggestion, we used a Sobel test and a bootstrap approach to evaluate the statistical significance of the indirect effect of CCB (X) on silence (Y) through MD (M). The Sobel test directly addresses the theme (i.e., the significance of the total effect of X on Y) reduced upon the addition of a mediator to the model, whereas the bootstrap procedure increases the power of analyses in non-experimental designs (Preacher and Hayes 2004). These analyses were performed using the PROCESS macro in SPSS version 19.0.

We employed moderated regression analysis to test the moderating effect of *s–s guanxi* on the CCB–MD relation (Hypothesis 3). Prior to the analyses, all continuous measures were mean-centered to avoid potential multicollinearity. We examined Hypothesis 3 through four steps: First, we entered the control variables; second, we entered the independent variable (CCB); third, we entered the moderator (*s–s guanxi*); last, we entered the interaction term ($CCB \times s-s\ guanxi$). When the beta coefficient of the interaction term is significant, the moderating effect is supported.

To evaluate the moderated mediation model (Hypothesis 4), we used an SPSS macro proposed by Preacher et al. (2007). We estimated conditional indirect effects of CCB on silence via MD at high (one standard deviation above the mean level of) and low (one standard deviation below the mean level of) *s–s guanxi*. We examined the bias-corrected confidence interval (CI) obtained from bootstrapping approaches to estimate the significance of conditional indirect effects.

Results

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Because the data were collected from the same source, we conducted a series of CFAs with maximum likelihood estimation using AMOS 17.0 to examine the convergent and discriminant validity of our study constructs (Bagozzi et al. 1991). We assessed the overall model fit using Chi-square (χ^2), CFI, IFI, TLI, and RMSEA. A reasonable model fit is verified when $1 < \chi^2/df < 3$, CFI, IFI, and TLI are all above 0.90, and RMSEA is below 0.08 (Bentler and Bonett 1980). We first examined the baseline model that included all four constructs (i.e., CCB, *s–s guanxi*, MD,

and silence). As shown in Table 1, the baseline four-factor model with 23 items yielded an acceptable fit to the data with χ^2 of 517.97 ($df = 224$, $p < 0.01$), CFI of 0.94, IFI of 0.94, TLI of 0.92, and RMSEA of 0.06. In addition, inspection of factor loadings and factor covariances showed that all factor loadings were significant, demonstrating convergent validity.

The discriminant validity of the four constructs was tested by contrasting the baseline model against four alternative models. In particular, we mainly relied on the χ^2 difference ($\Delta\chi^2$) test (Bagozzi et al. 1991; Bentler and Bonett 1980). Previous research (e.g., Liu et al. 2010; Xu et al. 2015) has generally combined constructs that were measured at the same point in time or those which correlate the highest into one factor. Hence, we combined Time-1 CCB and s-s *guanxi* into one factor to create a three-factor model (model 1) and combined Time-2 MD and silence (correlation analysis also showed their association was the highest among the four constructs) into one factor to create a second three-factor model (model 2). Then, we simultaneously combined Time-1 CCB and s-s *guanxi* into one factor and Time-2 MD and silence into another factor to create a two-factor model (model 3). At last, we combined all items into one factor to create a one-factor model (model 4). The CFA results indicated that the alternative models yielded poor fits to the data (i.e., CFI/IFI/TLI < 0.90, RMSEA > 0.08, see Table 1 for details). In addition, the baseline four-factor model also produced a significant improvement in χ^2 over model 1, $\Delta\chi^2(3) = 457.03$, $p < 0.01$; model 2, $\Delta\chi^2(3) = 330.31$, $p < 0.01$; model 3, $\Delta\chi^2(5) = 787.26$, $p < 0.01$; and model 4, $\Delta\chi^2(6) = 1013.74$, $p < 0.01$, suggesting a superior fit to the data than any other alternative measurement models. Thus, the discriminant validity of the constructs was confirmed, suggesting that our respondents could distinguish the focal constructs clearly.

Descriptive Statistics

We reported descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, and correlations) for all study variables in Table 2. As predicted, Time-1 CCB was positively related to Time-2 MD ($r = 0.22$, $p < 0.01$) and silence ($r = 0.18$, $p < 0.01$), and Time-2 MD and silence were also positively related ($r = 0.36$, $p < 0.01$). In addition, consistent with our expectation, Time-1 s-s *guanxi* was negatively associated with Time-2 MD ($r = -0.22$, $p < 0.01$), and Time-2 silence as well ($r = -0.35$, $p < 0.01$).

Hypotheses Tests

Hypothesis 1 proposed that CCB is positively related to silence, and Hypothesis 2 proposed that MD mediates the relationship between CCB and silence. Table 3 presents the results for Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2. First, Model 1 shows that CCB is positively associated with silence ($\beta = 0.15$, $p < 0.01$), thus providing support for Hypothesis 1. Second, Model 4 shows the positive relationship between CCB and MD ($\beta = 0.22$, $p < 0.01$). Third, in Model 2, we regressed silence on MD with the effect of CCB controlled. The regression result shows that MD remained positively related to silence ($\beta = 0.33$, $p < 0.01$), whereas the positive effect of CCB on silence was not significant ($\beta = 0.08$, *ns*). According to Baron and Kenny's (1986) suggestion, all three conditions of our mediation hypothesis were met, indicating a full mediation effect. Thus, we have initial evidence supporting Hypothesis 2.

Based on these regression estimates, the PROCESS macro computed the mediator's bias-corrected CI. As shown in Table 4, results of the Sobel test (Effect size = 0.06, SE = 0.02, $Z = 3.25$, with the 95% CI as 0.04 and 0.11) and the bootstrapping test (Point estimate = 0.06, SE = 0.02, with the 95% bias-corrected CI as 0.03 and 0.11) supported that CI did not contain zero,

Table 1 Results of confirmatory factor analysis of the measurement models ($N = 293$)

Measurement models	$\chi^2(df)$	$\Delta\chi^2(\Delta df)$	CFI	IFI	TLI	RMSEA
Four-factor	517.97 (224)**		0.94	0.94	0.92	0.06
Three-factor (combined CCB and s-s <i>guanxi</i> into one factor)	975.00 (227)**	457.03 (3)**	0.78	0.79	0.75	0.12
Three-factor (combined MD and silence into one factor)	848.28 (227)**	330.31 (3)**	0.84	0.84	0.81	0.11
Two-factor (combined CCB and s-s <i>guanxi</i> into one factor, and combined MD and silence into one factor)	1305.23 (229)**	787.26 (5)**	0.74	0.75	0.80	0.14
One factor (combined all items into one factor)	1531.71 (230)**	1013.74 (6)**	0.65	0.65	0.69	0.15

CFI comparative fit index, IFI incremental fit index, TLI Tucker-Lewis index, RMSEA root mean square error of approximation. CCB and s-s *guanxi* were measured at Time-1; MD and silence were measured at Time-2. All alternative models were compared with the four-factor model

** $p < 0.01$

Table 2 Means, standard deviation, and correlations of variables (*N* = 293)

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Gender	0.58	0.50	–							
2. Age	1.91	0.73	–0.26**	–						
3. Education	2.37	0.86	0.14*	–0.08	–					
4. Working time	6.64	6.05	–0.23**	0.66**	–0.23**	–				
5. CCB	3.37	0.92	–0.03	0.06	0.15**	–0.07	–			
6. MD	2.20	0.84	–0.08	0.09	0.02	–0.03	0.22**	–		
7. Silence	2.18	0.79	–0.02	–0.05	0.13*	–0.07	0.18**	0.36**	–	
8. S–s <i>guanxi</i>	3.44	0.78	0.01	0.06	–0.16**	0.08	–0.05	–0.22**	–0.35**	–

M mean, *SD* standard deviation

** *p* < 0.01; * *p* < 0.05 (two-tail test)

Table 3 Regression summary for the mediating role of MD and the moderating role of s–s *guanxi* (*N* = 293)

	Silence		MD			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Control variables						
Gender	–0.04	–0.01	–0.09	–0.08	–0.07	–0.05
Age	0.05	0.05	0.02	0.01	0.02	0.02
Education	0.10	0.10	0.02	–0.01	–0.04	–0.06
Working time	–0.08	–0.07	–0.06	–0.05	–0.04	–0.04
Independent variable						
CCB	0.15**	0.08		0.22**	0.21**	0.22**
Mediator variable						
MD		0.33**				
Moderate variable						
S–s <i>guanxi</i>					–0.22**	–0.21**
Interaction term						
CCB × S–s <i>guanxi</i>						–0.15**
<i>R</i> ²	0.05	0.15	0.01	0.06	0.10	0.12
<i>F</i>	2.81*	8.50**	0.69	3.34**	5.34**	5.62**
Δ <i>R</i> ²		0.10		0.05	0.04	0.02
Δ <i>F</i>		35.25**		13.81**	14.56**	6.70**

** *p* < 0.01; * *p* < 0.05 (two-tail test). Unstandardized regression coefficients were reported

Table 4 Results for the indirect effect of CCB on silence through MD (*N* = 293)

Sobel for the indirect effect						Bootstrap for the indirect effect				
Effect size	SE	LL 95% CI	UL 95% CI	Z	<i>p</i>	Point estimate	SE	LL 95% CI	UL 95% CI	<i>p</i>
0.06	0.02	0.04	0.11	3.25	0.00	0.06	0.02	0.03	0.11	0.00

Bias-corrected CI is reported

Bootstrap sample size = 5000

LL lower limit, UL upper limit, CI confidence interval

indicating that the indirect effect of CCB on silence via MD was statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was fully supported.

Hypothesis 3 focused on the moderating effect of *s-s guanxi* on CCB–MD association. We ran one regression to test this hypothesis, involving the product term of the independent and moderating variables ($CCB \times s-s\ guanxi$) on the mediator (MD). As shown by Model 6 in Table 3, the interaction term ($CCB \times s-s\ guanxi$) was significantly related to MD ($\beta = -0.15$, $p < 0.01$) and explained an additional 2.0% of the variance in MD, suggesting that Stage 1 of the moderation of $CCB \times s-s\ guanxi$ is negative and significant. We then plotted the interaction effects at different levels (i.e., one standard deviation above or below the mean level) of *s-s guanxi* using the recommendation of Aiken and West (1991). Figure 2 shows that the interaction patterns are as expected in that the CCB–MD association is relatively weaker for high rather than low *s-s guanxi*. These findings lend support to Hypothesis 3.

We further bootstrapped the CI to assess whether *s-s guanxi* also moderates the indirect effect of CCB on silence via MD. As shown in Table 5, the conditional indirect effect of CCB on silence through MD was stronger and significant at low *s-s guanxi* (Effect size = 0.08, $p < 0.01$, 95% bias-corrected CI from 0.04 to 0.13) but was weaker and not significant at high *s-s guanxi* (effect size = 0.02, *ns*, 95% bias-corrected CI from -0.01 to 0.06). Thus, we have enough evidence to support Hypothesis 4.

Discussion

In this research, we explored how and when CCB leads to employee silence by using two-phase data collected in China. The results revealed that (1) CCB was positively

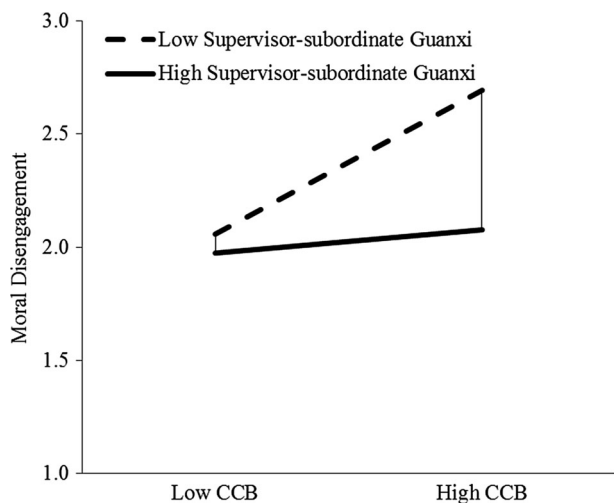


Fig. 2 Interaction of CCB and *s-s guanxi* on MD

associated with silence, (2) the positive relationship between CCB and silence was fully mediated by MD, (3) the presence of high *s-s guanxi* attenuated the detrimental impacts of perceived CCB on subordinate MD, and (4) the indirect effect of CCB on silence through MD was weaker among high *s-s guanxi* subordinates. In addition, our analysis also showed that *s-s guanxi* does not moderate the link between MD and silence ($\Delta F = 0.00$, *ns*; $\beta = -0.01$, *ns*; $\Delta R^2 = 0.00$). These results imply that it is more difficult to break the link between employees' MD and their subsequent silence behaviors than to break the CCB–MD link. Once an employee's morally disengaged thinking is formed, it is likely that he/she will unavoidably engage in passive stress-coping behavior. Therefore, organizations should focus mainly on the first stage of the CCB–MD–silence linkage and the direct influences of *s-s guanxi* on subordinates' moral cognitions.

Theoretical Implications

Our findings have several implications for theory. First, the findings contribute to the emerging but limited literature on the negative consequences of CCB. The growing research on CCB has mainly explored its antecedents (e.g., Zhao et al. 2013) and related it to subordinates' reduced OCB (e.g., Zhao et al. 2014). However, the linkage from CCB to CWB has not yet been established. By linking CCB to silence, we have answered the call of Vigoda-Gadot (2006, 2007) for more empirical research to shed new light on the CCB field. Our findings are in line with Xu et al.'s (2015) research, which suggested that, in order to maintain a good relationship with the supervisor, most Chinese subordinates tend to adopt avoidant or passive coping strategies rather than well-established aggressive reactions to workplace stress. Meanwhile, we first explicitly divide broad CB into two subcategories—OCB and CCB, and reveals that CCB plays a key role in cultivating silence. Thus, our findings also extend the current body of silence literature by exploring its new precursors.

Second, the current research contributes to the existing body of research regarding employee motives in enacting silence behavior. Whereas previous research on employee silence has "mainly focused on silence in response to perceived risks associated with speaking up" (Brinsfield 2013, p. 692), the current research found that motives to withhold information other than risk avoidance also are common. More specifically, the current research shows that employees intentionally withhold work-related opinions, knowledge, and concerns due to their retaliatory motive (i.e., harming the organization or supervisors) when confronted with CCB. It implies that deviant silence (Brinsfield 2013) and opportunistic silence (Knoll and van Dick 2013) or knowledge hiding (Connelly et al. 2012) do exist

Table 5 Results for conditional indirect effect of CCB on silence via MD across levels of *s-s guanxi* ($N = 293$)

Moderator	Level	Mean	Effect size	Boot SE	Boot z	Boot p	LL 95% CI	UL 95% CI
<i>S-s guanxi</i>	Low (-1 SD)	2.66	0.08	0.02	3.27	0.00	0.04	0.13
	High ($+1$ SD)	4.22	0.02	0.02	1.16	0.25	-0.01	0.06

Bias-corrected CI is reported

Bootstrap sample size = 5000

Low = 1 SD below the mean; High = 1 SD above the mean

in the Chinese workplace. Therefore, by confirming and emphasizing deviant motives and opportunistic motives as key motives for remaining silent, the current research is in response to the call by Knoll and van Dick (2013) to identify “how employee motives contribute to the occurrence and maintenance of silence in organizations” from a bottom-up perspective that “has not yet been given much research attention” (p. 349).

Third, our research extends prior research on the work stressor–CWB association, which has mainly investigated the “hot” emotional processes based on the classical stressor–emotion model of CWB (Fox et al. 2001). Specifically, we extended the MD lens to a Chinese organizational setting and employed it as a cognitive mechanism between CCB and employee silence. Hence, this research offers further insight into the relationship between work stress and CWB by highlighting the social cognitive “cold” processes. Furthermore, by clearly demonstrating MD’s etiological role in the facilitation and reinforcement of silence, this research is in response to Bolino and colleagues’ (Bolino et al. 2010, 2012, 2015; Bolino and Klotz 2015) call for more research on using a self-regulation approach to understand CB and investigate precisely how the outcomes of CB might be affected by employee motives. Overall, to our knowledge, this research is the first to examine the dark and destructive side of CCB from a moral perspective and the first to add a powerful human moral motive as a bridge to link work stressors and silence.

Finally, another key contribution of this work relates to the examination of a general and important element of culture in Eastern society, namely *guanxi*, as a moderator of the influence of CCB. We found that high-level *s-s guanxi* subordinates are less likely to morally disengage and allow themselves to resort to retaliation, such as an unwillingness to communicate upward. This not only verifies Fida et al.’s (2015) prediction—cultural dimensions may “facilitate the internalization and adoption of social norms, restricting the use of MD mechanisms” (p. 141), but also echoes Vigoda-Gadot’s (2006) and Peng and Zhao’s (2012) research, which advocated that subordinates who hold higher levels of supervisor–subordinate relationships may suppress their indignation and express a

spirit of self-sacrificing to CCB, therefore inhibiting implementing a “tit-for-tat” attitude. Furthermore, there is a growing recognition that the nature and scope of silence in organizations can be shaped by cultural values. Specifically, Huang et al. (2005) suggested that there is a systematic link between national cultural value of power distance and the overall level of employee opinion withholding. Liang et al. (2013) emphasized the role of Chinese culture and introduced harmony beliefs as antecedents of silence. Knoll et al. (2016) have also discussed culture as a subtle factor for understanding silence. Therefore, our contingent consideration of *s-s guanxi* not only enriches the current research on the cultural antecedents of silence, but also promotes fresh thinking about the cultural boundary conditions on the work stressor–silence relationship. It represents a first step toward understanding the role of non-work ties in minimizing employees’ morally disengaged thinking and finally reducing the frequency of silence in the Chinese cultural context.

Practical Implications

Silence might be taken by employees as the easiest and least costly way to response to CCB. However, a series of organizational tragedies have revealed that silence can be more harmful, less predictable, and more threatening to organizations than other passive CWBs. For example, Enron’s bankruptcy was largely because of the loss of critical and timely information from front-line employees. Our findings suggest several paths for organizations to depress the incidence of silence. First, managers should take preventive measures and create a zero-tolerance culture regarding CCB. Specifically, they should have a good understanding of the double-edged sword effect of CB (Bolino et al. 2015) and eliminate or reduce CCBs by (1) explicitly identifying the boundary of in-role and extra-role behaviors; (2) promoting ethical work culture to replace those exploitative and workaholic work cultures such as the “24-7, 365 (day) work culture”; (3) setting reasonable performance goals and restricting working long hours, such as by scheduling frequent breaks; (4) closely monitoring employee depletion through periodical surveys about

workload and stress and providing timely psychological consultation and guidance; (5) advocating the use of self-help books with tips regarding CCB prevention; and (6) listening attentively to employees' inner voice and encouraging them to contribute their own ideas toward organizational problems such as CCB by setting up certain safe complaint channels.

Second, the underlying role of MD further draws managers' attention to the importance of mitigating employees' propensity to morally disengage and inhibiting the morally disengaged culture in the organization. We suggest that one option is to explicitly search for employees with low levels of MD tendencies by focusing on their histories and weighing scores on MD-related individual characteristics (e.g., morally relevant personality traits such as moral identity, empathy, and responsibility; moral reasoning abilities and orientations; and dispositional moral emotions) (Moore et al. 2012) via questionnaires and scenario simulations in the recruitment process. Another option is to provide ethical interventions and foster a healthy organizational culture. Specifically, organizations should (1) improve employees' understanding of specific MD mechanisms and potential ethical blind spots, and strengthen their moral sensitivity and moral self-regulatory capacities through ethics education and training; (2) "encourage the use of ethical language and discourage the acceptance of euphemisms that cloud judgments" (Moore et al. 2012, p. 41) and make the resulting harm to the organization more real to employees; (3) establish explicit cultural norms regarding ethical and unethical employee behaviors and provide clear reprimands and keep written records of wrongdoings when these norms are violated. A healthy organizational culture makes it easier for silence to be identified and more difficult for employees to apply such behavior to achieve their goals of retaliation. In addition, supervisor behavior sets the example for what is acceptable or unacceptable and thus matters in subordinate MD (Palmer 2013). Particularly, ethical leadership plays an important role in shaping employee moral cognition and behavior (Moore et al. 2014). Hence, organizations should ensure that supervisors engage in healthy managerial behaviors by reinforcing ethical leadership development.

Third, our findings indicated the critical role of high *s-s guanxi* on preempting employees from responding to CCB with undesirable work attitudes and behaviors. Therefore, Chinese supervisors need to construct supportive, trusting, and harmonious dyadic *guanxi* with their subordinates by increasing personal interactions outside working hours such as home visits, lunch or dinner gatherings, gift-giving, thoughts sharing, doing favors or other social functions. Meanwhile, training programs in *guanxi* skills also can be provided by organizations for employees to cultivate good *s-s guanxi*. Particularly, organizations should offer

workshops or courses on political skills, which refers to "the ability to effectively understand others at work, and to use such knowledge to influence others to act in ways that enhance one's personal and/or organizational objectives" (Ferris et al. 2005, p. 127), to employees so they can improve their networking abilities and interpersonal influence scores and therefore have the savvy and shrewdness to know where, when, and how to discuss dissatisfying aspects of their work (e.g., CCB) with their supervisors.

Limitations and Future Research

There are a number of limitations and several avenues for future research that need to be addressed. First, because all the variables were rated by subordinates, the single-source data may raise concerns about common method bias. Although our results of one-factor and discriminant tests indicated that common method bias does not exist, future research still needs to ascertain the causality in our model by collecting data from multiple sources over a longer period of time. Moreover, considering that the generalizability of our findings was restricted because the survey was only conducted in the manufacturing sector, an essential and fruitful next step is to enhance external validity of the findings by replicating our model in service organizations or employing multi-sector data.

Second, this research has partially opened the black box of the processes linking CCB to silence. However, in order to paint a more complete picture of how CCB indirectly influences silence, future scholars are encouraged to conduct a systematic investigation by forming a mixture of individual physiological, emotional, cognitive, and moral variables. Particularly, we predict that the CCB-silence association is also fully mediated by emotional exhaustion (or citizenship fatigue). Specifically, CCB threatens and depletes subordinates' personal and social resources and thereby makes them feel emotionally overextended and exhausted (or fatigued). According to conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll 1989), people fundamentally strive for surpluses while avoid loss of their valuable resources. From this perspective, sustained CCB endows emotionally exhausted (or fatigued) subordinates with strong motivation to conserve their limited resources and protect them from potential further depletion by adopting silence. Therefore, future research can construct a dual-process model by integrating the "hot" emotional (i.e., emotional exhaustion or citizenship fatigue) and "cold" social cognitive (i.e., MD) mediating processes. We also predict that MD plays a partial mediating role in the process of transforming emotional exhaustion (or citizenship fatigue) into silence.

Third, our research focused on the moderating role of *s-s guanxi* rather than LMX (i.e., leader-member exchange which depicts a work-related exchange relationship),

because unlike Western employees who rely primarily on work ties to get things done (Farh et al. 1997), employees in *guanxi*-oriented Chinese society have a high dependency on non-work-related personal ties (Smith et al. 2012; Zhang et al. 2015b). Furthermore, prior research has highlighted the importance of informal *s-s guanxi*, rather than more formal LMX in CWB management in China (e.g., Zhang and Deng 2016). However, it is still unclear how *s-s guanxi* differs from LMX as moderators of the CCB–MD–silence relationship. Particularly, our results are found to differ from Lian et al.’s (2012) and Xu et al.’s (2015) research, which advocates that perceiving high LMX makes abused subordinates’ emotional resources drain more quickly and further exerts greater silence. Therefore, in view of “the related but distinct roles *s-s guanxi* and LMX play in the workplace” (Zhang et al. 2015a, p. 21), future research should examine more in depth the dynamic processes leading from CCB to silence by integrating them into a model. We expect that, in China, those subordinates high in LMX suffer more from the request to show CBs as they are more disappointed by the supervisor they trusted in. Silence would then be a consequence of their compulsory feelings. Moreover, we encourage further research to test our model in cross-cultural settings. We expect that, in Western contexts, high LMX also makes the adverse impact of CCB even worse, and there would be a stronger moderating effect of LMX and a weaker or nonsignificant moderating effect of *s-s guanxi* on the CCB–MD–silence linkage.

Fourth, this research did not consider the important role of leadership. Leadership matters, as it has a profound influence on CCB and subordinates’ reactions and behaviors in the workplace. Current literature shows that one of the predictors of CCB was abusive supervision (e.g., Zhao et al. 2013). Prior research on the precursors of silence has also largely focused on destructive leadership behaviors (e.g., Xu et al. 2015). Therefore, we suggest that future research should examine how leadership could influence the occurrence of CCB and moderate the effects of CCB on MD and silence. We expect that a particularly negative leader could demand a lot of CCBs. In particular, destructive and authoritarian leaders will deliberately blur boundaries of extra-role work behaviors to make them seem like a duty and responsibility. They often misuse or overuse their followers’ good will. This will unavoidably increase subordinates’ MD and ultimately increase their silence behaviors. In contrast, we expect that ethical leadership, benevolent leadership, and servant leadership will lead to less CCBs and make the associated MD and silence less likely.

Fifth, prior work suggested that different types and sources of CCB may exist in the workplace because subordinates may perceive various types of social and occupational stresses in terms of CCB (Vigoda-Gadot 2006;

Zhao 2014). Silence has also been conceptualized as a multi-dimensional construct regarding different content, different targets to withhold information from, or different motivations (Van Dyne et al. 2003). For example, Brinsfield (2013) has conceptualized six forms of (i.e., deviant, relational, defensive, diffident, ineffectual, and disengaged), and Knoll and van Dick (2013) have conceptualized four forms of (i.e., acquiescent, quiescent, prosocial, and opportunistic) silence. Therefore, future research should extend our model with different forms and sources of CCB and silence. In particular, we predict that abusive supervision and/or organizational politics climate-induced CCB mainly leads to deviant, defensive (or quiescent), and acquiescent (or ineffectual) silence, while CB assessment-induced CCB mainly leads to opportunistic silence. We also advise researchers to extend our model to a group climate to know whether group-level CCB will result in collective silence.

Last but not least, there are some other ways for future research to shed new light on the CCB and silence fields. For example, silence is not necessarily the antithesis of voice (Knoll et al. 2016). As suggested by Brinsfield (2014), “voice and silence may indeed be two sides of the same coin” (p. 115). Therefore, merely knowing that CCB can lead to silence this does not give us enough information upon the CCB–voice relationship. In fact, in the real world, one CB that a company or a manager may be particularly interested in forcing employees to do is voice. From this perspective, CCB may actually enhance voice. However, in our view, this kind of voice is in violation of employees’ willingness and thereby is not their genuine expressions of work-related views. Thus, future research should examine the potential positive relationship between CCB and voice and investigate the nature of such voice behaviors (e.g., promotive or prohibitive voice). Furthermore, Yam et al. (2017) have verified that CB-generated moral licensing (a concept highly akin to MD) can psychologically free employees to engage in CWBs inside and outside the organization. Hence, future research should pay more attention to CCB’s influence on employees’ unethical behaviors in non-work areas (e.g., violence or emotional abuse in family). It would also be theoretically and practically meaningful to link CCB to those more direct forms of CWB (e.g., aggression and sabotage) through MD. Especially, we expect a stronger relationship between CCB and active CWB in Western countries than in China because of cultural differences.

Conclusion

CB has a tremendous impact on organizational survival and success in today’s highly dynamic competitive environments. Consequently, continually encouraging or forcing

employees to perform more CBs has become an increasingly pervasive phenomenon in modern organizations. In particular, in China—a society that advocates selfless contribution, many start-ups take their cues from tech giants like Huawei and BAT (i.e., Baidu, Alibaba, and Tencent) to encourage or force their employees to “create their own values” through performing more CBs in the name of “voluntary overtime.” However, the misuse or overuse of employees’ good will can also be costly. Therefore, based on MD theory and social exchange theory, we proposed a moderated mediation model for examining how CCB, a dark-side CB, interacts with s–s *guanxi* to influence employees’ cognitive maneuvers that rationalize unethical behaviors and their subsequent silent response. The results suggest that, although silence has significant destructive effects on the organization, it can be restructured by MD and become an acceptable passive coping strategy for CCB, especially when s–s *guanxi* is low rather than high. All in all, our research has provided some new paths (i.e., moral cognitive process and Chinese *guanxi* perspectives) to view the work stressor–silence association.

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