

## Supervisor Incivility, Psychology Safety and Employee Turnover Intention: Does Supervisor-Subordinate Guanxi Matter?

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### Abstract

*Research to date has largely been unclear about the relationship between supervisor incivility and employee turnover intention. Based on social cognition theory, we examine the extent to which psychology safety mediates the relationship between supervisor incivility and employee turnover intention, and the extent to which supervisor-subordinate guanxi moderates these relationships. Collecting 218 employees' data, we find that supervisor incivility is associated with psychology safety, which in turn relates to employee turnover intention. Moreover, we find that supervisor-subordinate guanxi moderates the relationship between supervisor incivility and employee turnover intention. Implications for theory and practice are discussed.*

**Keywords:** Supervisor incivility; Psychology safety; Turnover intention; Supervisor-Subordinate guanxi

### 1. Introduction

China's economy is stepping toward a "new normal", and experiencing a series of reform, such as the ownership structure, labor market and the manufacturing industry (Shen,2017).To some extent, it is intensified the competition of enterprises and causes employees experienced more pressure in the workplace. There are full of employee tragedies in the organization. Such as Huawei's "suicide gate" event, which refers to employees frequently suicide in huawei at 2008;the employee' suicide events of Foxconn in China. Research showed that employees suicide's reason not only referring enormous pressure, but also including the abuse and incivility form supervisor(Liu,2013).Workplace incivility was first proposed by Andersson and Pearson (1999), defined as low intensity deviant acts with ambiguous intent to harm. Supervisor incivility means the perpetrator is the supervisor. Supervisor incivility is a typical dark side behavior of leadership and is destructive both organizations and employees (Porath and Pearson, 2013). On the one hand, Liu et al(2012) pointed that workplace incivility can damage the occupational health, mental health and physical health of employees .On the other hand, Meier et al(2015) argued that workplace incivility will break the principle of respect for employees, and arouse the negative emotions, such as anger or disgusting. Ultimately, once the resource of employee's self-regulation exhausted, workplace incivility will further engender in spiral upgrade and vicious circle.

From to above, research to date has largely been unclear about whether a single perpetrator such as supervisor incivility is sufficient to instigate the well-documented negative consequences of workplace incivility(Andersson et al.,1999).Especially, there are little studies explore the psychological mechanism about supervisor incivility and employee' s attitude and behavior. Psychological safety is defined as feeling able to show and employ one's self without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status, or career (Kahn,1990).Individuals feel "safe" when they perceive that they will not suffer for expressing their true selves at work. In a safe environment, individuals understand the boundaries surrounding acceptable behaviors. However, unsafe conditions exist when situations are ambiguous, unpredictable and threatening (Mayet al., 2004). Empirical studies showed that psychological safety has a positive relationship with job engagement, innovation and performance (Xu,2017).Thus, in order to further explores the relationship between supervisor incivility and employee's attitude and behavior, we bring in psychological safety as a mediation mechanism. Supervisor-subordinate guanxi is a indigenous Chinese construct, which is defined as a dyadic, particular and sentimental tie that has potential of facilitating favor exchanges between the parties connected by the tie(Bian,2006).Supervisor-subordinate guanxi is similar to leader-membership exchange, in that both highlight the importance of quality relationships between supervisors and subordinates (Lawet al., 2000).

However, supervisor-subordinate guanxi is rooted in traditional Chinese society, which has been regulated by Confucian ideology, including the five cardinal relationships (called wu-lun)(Liu et al., 2013). Thus, it is necessary from the perspective of supervisor-subordinate guanxi to explore the influencing mechanism of supervisor incivility on employee's attitudes and behaviors. Turnover intention refers to a conscious and deliberate willfulness to leave the organization, which has a significant impact on job performance, organization commitment and performance (Tett et al., 1993). However, research to date mainly focus on the relationship between destructive leadership such as abusive supervision, and employees turnover intention, but little explore it from the perspective of supervisor incivility.

In short, under the background of social and economic transformation, we examine the extent to which psychological safety mediates the relationship between supervisor incivility and employees turnover intention, and the extent to which supervisor-subordinate guanxi moderates these relationships, this study theoretically enriches the literature research on destructive leadership organizational behavior and practically provides a suggestion to decrease employees turnover intention.

## **2. Literature Review and Hypotheses**

### **2.1 The effect of supervisor incivility on employee turnover intention**

Turnover intention refers to a conscious and deliberate willfulness to leave the organization, which is constituted by three items: desire to quit, seriously thinking about quitting, and the intention to quit (Mobley et al., 1978; Tett, et al., 1993). On the one hand, as proposed by Cortina et al (2001), in facing uncivil behaviors, victims of incivility could experience significant distress and decide to leave the organization; On the other hand, Harvey (2007) argued that employee turnover is related with the supervisor's negative behaviors. There was a study also pointed that destructive leadership can injury employee job satisfaction and increase turnover intention (Tepper et al., 2009). At the same time, research to date showed that abusive supervision has positive relationship with turnover intention (Tepper, 2000; Sun, 2013;

Zhang, 2016). Abusive supervision refers to subordinates perceptions of the extent to which their supervisors engage in the sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors, excluding physical contact (Tepper, 2000). Compared with it, supervisor incivility is less damaging but more prevalent. Therefore, we speculate that supervisor incivility has positive relationship with employee turnover intention.

According to social cognition theory, individuals respond to environmental stress through evaluating external stimulus (Bandura, 1986). Therefore, Faced with supervisor incivility, such as public criticism, slander, sarcasm, questioning and so on, employee could evaluate it as a threat and experience tremendous distress, thus increasing employee's turnover intention. Therefore, we posit that:

Hypothesis 1: supervisor incivility has positive relationship with employee turnover intention.

### **2.2 The mediating effect of psychology safety on the link between supervisor incivility and employee turnover intention**

Psychological safety is defined as feeling able to show and employ one's self without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status, or career (Kahn, 1990). May et al (2004) argued that supervisory and co-worker behaviors who are supportive and trustworthy in nature are likely to produce feelings of safety at work. Research also showed that leadership style is an important antecedent to psychological safety (Duan, 2012). That is, supervisor's behaviors have stronger relationship with psychological safety. Empirical studies have found that abusive supervision has negative relationship with psychological safety (Wu et al., 2012). Caza et al (2008) also pointed out that incivility breaks the norm of mutual respect and, hence, evokes feelings of injustice in the target. Furthermore, uncivil behavior signals that one is not valued and accepted by the other, which threatens one's social standing and self-esteem (Tyler and Lind, 1992), thus, decreasing employee's psychology safety in the workplace.

According to the theory of cognition, the response of employees to supervisor's behaviors often depends on a cognition appraisal process, which including two stages: primary appraisal and secondary appraisal (Yan, 2014). In the stage of primary appraisal, employees only take care of the external events whether it is beneficial for itself or not; In the stage of secondary appraisal, employees will further take sense-making for the external event.

Therefore, when perceived supervisor incivility, employees would take it as a potential stress and make a cognition appraisal. After the evaluation of two stages, employees couldn't identify with the supervisor incivility, and further threatening the self-perception and psychology safety of employees. Empirical studies have found that psychology safety has positive relationship with employee's retention, but has negative relationship with employee's silence and turnover intention(He,2010;Chenet al., 2014).That is, psychology safety is a significant antecedent for employee's intention turnover. Therefore, faced with supervisor incivility, employees make a cognition appraisal and take it as potential pressure, thereby threatening self-esteem, ultimately reducing psychology safety and further increasing employee's turnover intention. Based on the theoretical and empirical evidence, we predict:

Hypothesis 2: Psychology safety plays a mediation effect between supervisor incivility and employee turnover intention.

### **2.3 The moderating effect of supervisor-subordinate guanxi**

Supervisor-subordinate guanxi refers to a dyadic, particular and sentimental tie that has potential of facilitating favor exchanges between the parties connected by the tie(Bian, 2006).Wei et al(2010) pointed out that supervisor-subordinate guanxi is still seen as corresponding to the ruler-subject guanxi of old, and it is the most critical interpersonal relationship in various Chinese organizational settings. In fact, based on guanxi, supervisor intend to classify their subordinate into different groups and make distribution decision in China(cheng et al.,2002).Therefore, subordinate will make full use of supervisor-subordinate guanxi, and adjust their behaviors to meet supervisor's expectation. To a certain extent, supervisor-subordinate guanxi can take place of formal organizational relationship, and promotes organization performance (Luo, et al.,2012).Supervisor-subordinate guanxi is similar with leader-membership exchange, both of all emphasize the importance of relationship quality. However, there are essential differences between supervisor-subordinate guanxi and leader-membership exchange, such as conception and relationship model. In the aspects of conception, on the one hand, based on the "renqing" and unfair exchange, supervisor-subordinate guanxi emphasizes the private interaction between supervisor and subordinate in the workplace, and it have impacts employee's behaviors. On the other hand, leader-membership relationship mainly focus on the formal exchange, which is based on the performance and fair exchange. In the aspects of relationship model, based on specific relationships or affection ties, supervisor-subordinate guanxi is a kind of "identity relationship", the relationship of two sides must undertake responsibility and obligation. However, in order to promote individual performance, employees should always keep loyalty and obedience for supervisor. Based on efforts and performances, leader-membership exchange is a contract relationship, which is characterized by" equality-matching", the relationship of two sides will engender in fair exchange. In contrast, once employees have high performance, and they can get the necessary supports from supervisor (Liu,2016).

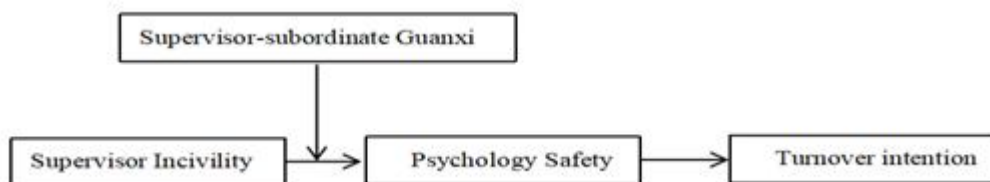
Because of the profound and lasting impact of Confucianism that underscores relationship orientation, power distance, group and harmony(Zhang,etal.,2006).Therefore, compared with leader-membership exchange, supervisor-subordinate guanxi has more profound significance. On the one hand, many scholarly works believed that supervisor-subordinate guanxi has positive impact on various desirable organization outcomes. For example, Chou(2014)pointed out that supervisor-subordinate guanxi has positive relationship with employee's loyalty and organization citizenship behavior, ultimately impacting on performance. Yu(2015)argued that, in facing with abusive supervision, employees with high supervisor-subordinate guanxi tend to restriction and obedience for supervisor, and try a variety of ways to eliminate the negative experience from abusive supervision; however, employees with low supervisor-subordinate guanxi are to enhance the communication with supervisor, and increasing employee's voice behaviors. On the other hand, negative consequence of supervisor-subordinate guanxi have also been documented(Zhang,2014).For example, when employees perceived that supervisor usually make management decisions based on supervisor-subordinate guanxi, their sense of justice in the organization will be decreased(Chen et al.,2011). In shorts, when faced with supervisor incivility, employees would show two different behaviors. On the one hand, some employees would build a positive relationship with supervisor. That is, through the self-expression by subordinate, supervisor would deepen the understanding to subordinate, and giving more affective supports and instrumental supports, eventually promoting the employee's psychology safety; However, on the other hand, another believed that supervisor incivility is a threat of self-esteem and self-identity, and reducing the interaction with their supervisor.

That is, employees deliberately divided themselves into “outsides “in the organization, and decreasing the sense of belonging and psychology safety of employees. Therefore, we make assumption: Hypothesis 3: Supervisor-subordinate guanxi will moderate the relationship between supervisor incivility and psychology safety. such that the negative relationship will be stronger when the employee with low supervisor-subordinate guanxi compared to the employee with high supervisor-subordinate guanxi.

Hypothesis 1 and hypothesis 2 illustrate the mediator effect of psychology safety between supervisor incivility and employee turnover intention, hypothesis 3 illustrate supervisor-subordinate guanxi has a moderator role between supervisor incivility and psychology safety, following the logic of the above assumptions as well as the related research of moderating and mediating effect. This study proposes a mediated moderator model, the mediating effect of psychology safety is moderated by supervisor-subordinate guanxi. According to social cognition theory, the behavior and attitude response of individual depend on the individual's cognition evaluation to the input information (Alison, 2012),thus, employees who are suffering from supervisor incivility are more likely to reduce the psychology safety, and increasing turnover intention. Meanwhile, supervisor-subordinate guanxi as a relationship quality, which plays a moderator role between supervisor incivility and employee turnover intention. In particular, high supervisor-subordinate guanxi weakened the negative relationship between supervisor incivility and turnover intention, however, the employee of low supervisor-subordinate guanxi strengthen the negative relationship. Therefore, we posit that:

Hypothesis 4: Supervisor-subordinate guanxi of employee will moderate the strength of the mediated relationship between supervisor incivility and employee turnover intention via psychology safety, such that the mediated relationship will be stronger when employee has low supervisor-subordinate guanxi control compared to employee with high supervisor-subordinate guanxi . Based on the above analysis, this research establishes conceptual model in follow figure 1.

**Figure1 Conceptual model**



### 3. Research Design

#### 3.1 Sample and data-collection procedure

The sample of this study mainly comes from six private company's employees in Hunan and Guangdong, China. In 2016, we received a total of 350 employees responses from electronic questionnaires, selecting 333 data, and the validity of questionnaire rate was 84.98%. In the final sample, 163 respondents (57.6%) were woman. Participants range from 20 to 50 ( $M=30.98$ ). With regarded to education, 195 respondents were college (68.90%), 13 respondents were master (4.59%), and only 2 respondents were doctor (0.71%). Of the respondents, 197 (69.61%) were general employees, 63 (22.26%) were supervisors, and 23 (8.13%) were senior managers.

#### 3.2 Measures

All constructs were measured with acceptable internal consistency, as seen in the table 1 and table 2, which also include scale descriptive statistics and correlations among variables.

- (1) Supervisor Incivility. Supervisor incivility was measured by Liu et al (2011) modifying the original scale developed by Cortina et al (2001), which consisted of twelve-items that gauge the frequency with which the respondents experienced workplace incivility in dealing with supervisor during the past time (1=stronger disagree; 5=stronger agree). Sample items include "Put you down or was condescending to you" and "Made demeaning or derogatory remarks about you." and so on. The scale's reliability was 0.906.
- (2) Psychology Safety. Psychology safety was measured by Zhang et al. (2015) modifying the original scale developed by Edmondson (1999), which consisted of six-items. Sample items include "It is safety to express what i think." "It is easily to express what i think." and so on. The scale's reliability was 0.821.

- (3) Turnover Intention. A four-item scale developed by Mobley et al (1978) was used to measure employee turnover intention. Sample item were: "I plan to have long career development in this organization", " I didn't want to leave the current organization." and so on. The scale's reliability was 0.952.
- (4) Supervisor-subordinate guanxi. We used Supervisor-subordinate guanxi scale by Yang(1999) to assess Supervisor-subordinate guanxi, which contains thirteen-items. Sample items include "we like brothers, which the relationship between me and my supervisor", " I and my boss are in tune, "and so on. The scale's reliability was 0.802.
- (5) control variables. We controlled for respondents' demographic variables, including age, gender, education, and tenure, occupation in the organization. As previous research suggested that these variables affect employees' behavior (Thau et al., 2009).To ensure the accuracy and scientificity of the results, the basic information variables are controlled.

#### 4. Results

This study uses SPSS21.0 and AMOS17.0 to analysis the data. The steps are as follows: first, doing the descriptive statistical analysis of the data; second, testing the common method bias variation, and analyzing the data problems; third, using the procedures and steps of the mediating moderator effect which were proposed by Wen Zhonglin (2006), and analyzing the mediation effect of psychology safety and the moderating effect of supervisor-subordinate guanxi; finally, through the SPSS PROCESS macro program, the confidence interval of BOOTSTRAP method was adopted, and the mediation effect was further tested.

##### 4.1 Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis

From the correlation analysis of table 1, supervisor incivility and employee turnover intention showed strong positive correlation ( $\gamma=0.471$ ,  $P<0.001$ ), and supervisor incivility and psychology safety have a strong negative correlation ( $\gamma=-0.281$ ,  $P<0.01$ ).psychology safety and employee turnover intention have significant negative correlation ( $\gamma=-0.316$ ,  $P<0.01$ ), therefore, these analysis results verified hypothesis 1. But the correlation analysis of table 1 has not yet considered the impact of the control variables, in order to ensure the scientificity and accuracy of the analysis. Next, we need to test the common method bias, reliability and validity.

**Table 1 Descriptive Statistics and Correlations**

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.gender	1.53	0.50							
2.age	2.18	0.68	-0.199						
3.education	1.76	0.53	0.103	-0.008					
4.occupation	1.39	0.64	-0.176	0.290*	-				
5.Supervisor incivility	2.30	0.51	-0.200	0.030	0.079	0.093			
6.Psychology safety	2.81	0.63	-0.084	0.073	-	0.204*	-0.281*		
7.supervisor-subordinate guanxi	3.09	0.49	0.129	-0.052	0.073	-0.001	-0.204*	0.149*	
8.turnover intention	2.23	0.56	0.062	-0.108	-	0.073	0.471*	-0.316*	-0.201

Note.\*\*\*  $p<0.001$  ; \*\*  $p<0.01$  ; \*  $p<0.05$  ; the same below.

## 4.2 Common method bias

The data of this research stem from survey question, with the method of self-evaluation to controversy question. Number of installations given by the same subject, although the survey process was careful anonymity and confidentiality, there may be community problem bias. Therefore, to ensure the scientific of study results, this study used test the way of harman single factor to analyze data, according to Zhou Hao and Long Lirong (2004)research conclusions, use of exploratory factor analysis, this study was performing unscaled principal component analysis for all variables. According to the number of factor precipitation or common factor interpretation to determine the size of the common method of deviation, In this study, seven common factors (eigenvalue>1) were extracted from the tested results, and explained variation of the first factor is 17.57%, less than 50% (recommended explained variation), indicating that bias problem of the common method is not serious.

## 4.3 Reliability and validity analysis

The study use SPSS21.0 statistical analysis software to analyze the reliability and validity of scales. The results are shown in table 2. Cronbach's alpha coefficients of all scales were above 0.80, indicating that the reliability of the scale is quite high. The KMO values of each scale were all greater than 0.60, and the results of Bartlett spherical test were significant, and each scale cumulative variances were greater than 50%, indicating good validity.

**Table 2 Reliability and Validity Analysis**

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	KMO	Cumulative Variance	Interpretation
supervisor incivility	0.923	0.915	84.21%	
psychology safety	0.821	0.650	73.62%	
supervisor-subordinate guanxi	0.802	0.899	65.41%	
turnover intention	0.952	0.857	87.38%	

In this study, AMOS21.0 software was used to carry out confirmatory factor analysis for the four latent variables of supervisor incivility (SI), psychology safety (PS), turnover intention (TI) and supervisor-subordinate guanxi (SSG).The results showed that the four-factor model assumed in this study has reached the acceptance criteria ( $X^2 / df = 2.62$ , RMSEA <0.08, IFI, TLI, CFI are greater than 0.9).In addition, this study will assume that the model is compared with the 4 alternative model, and the four-factor hypothesis model is significantly better than the other alternative models. This also proves that the four main variables of this research are indeed different constructs, and the questionnaire has better construct validity.

**Table 3 Confirmatory Factor Analyses**

Model	Factor	$X^2/df$	RMSEA	IFI	TLI	CFI
1	four-factor model(SI,PS,TI,SSG)	2.62	0.049	0.905	0.931	0.917
2	three-factor model1(SI,PS,TI+SSG)	2.95	0.077	0.791	0.824	0.763
3	three-factor model2(SI,TI,PS+SSG)	3.08	0.105	0.722	0.771	0.742
4	two-factor model(SI,TI+PS+SSG)	3.67	0.136	0.642	0.735	0.695
5	one-factor model(SI,TI+PS+SSG)	4.42	0.174	0.601	0.592	0.618

## 4.4 Hypothesis testing

Main effect test. Using the hierarchical regression analysis method to verify the hypothesis, as shown in Table 4, the gender, age, education and position as a control variable into the regression model. Then, the stepwise entry method is used to put the supervisor incivility into the regression model.

As shown in Table 4, the supervisor incivility was significantly positively correlated with employee turnover intention ( $\beta=0.517, P < 0.001, M2$ ). Thus, Hypothesis 1 is supported. The mediating role of psychology safety. According to the judgment method of Baron and Kenny, the mediating effect must meet the following conditions: ①The independent variable is associated with the dependent variable and the mediator; ②The mediator has a significant effect on the dependent variable; ③When the independent variable and the mediator are simultaneously substituted into the regression equation to explain the dependent variable, the effect of the mediating variable is significant and the effect of the independent variable disappears (the fully mediating effect) or weakens (partial mediating effect). From the table 4, there was a negative correlation between the supervisor incivility and psychological safety ( $\beta=-0.327, P < 0.01, M6$ ), and had a positive correlation with employee turnover intention ( $\beta=0.517, P < 0.001, M2$ ), meanwhile, psychological safety had a negative relationship with employee turnover intention ( $\beta=-0.217, P < 0.01, M3$ ). Finally, based on the model 2, supervisor incivility and psychological safety are simultaneously entered in model 4, and the results show, the coefficient of psychological safety is significant ( $\beta=-0.206, P < 0.01, M4$ ), but the effect of supervisor incivility on employee turnover intention has disappeared ( $\beta=-0.322, P < 0.001, M4$ ). The results reveal that psychological safety has an mediating role between supervisor incivility and employee turnover intention. Hypothesis 2 is supported.

**Table 4 Mediated Regression Results**

Type of the Variable		Turnover Intention				Psychology Safety	
		M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6
control variable	gender	-0.011	0.069**	0.044	0.101	0.081*	0.063*
	age	0.042	0.135	0.039	0.084	0.027	0.045
	education	0.102* *	0.028	0.065	0.016	-0.112*	0.027
independent mediation	occupation	-0.053	-0.019	-0.012	-0.018	0.052	0.047
	SI		0.517***		0.322***		-0.327**
	PS			-0.271**	-0.206**		
	F	5.918	46.606	34.459	16.481	8.171	13.717
	R <sup>2</sup>	0.107	0.162***	0.159***	0.181***	0.100	0.198***
	$\Delta R^2$	0.089	0.055	0.052	0.022	0.101	0.089

The moderating role of supervisor-subordinate guanxi. First, we test the moderating role of supervisor-subordinate guanxi between supervisor incivility and employee turnover intention, the variable data is normalized, Using regression analysis method to test. As shown in the model 2 of table 5, supervisor incivility has a significant negative correlation to psychological safety ( $\beta=-0.327, P < 0.01$ ), after entering the interactions term between supervisor incivility and supervisor-subordinate guanxi in model 4, and the interaction coefficient is significant ( $\beta=0.184, P < 0.01; \Delta R^2=0.062, P < 0.001$ ), Which indicates that the supervisor-subordinate guanxi plays a moderating role between supervisor incivility and psychological safety. Hypothesis 3 is supported.

**Table 5 Moderated Regression Results**

Type of the Variable		Psychology Safety			
		M1	M2	M3	M4
control variable	gender	0.081*	0.063*	0.108	0.088
	age	0.027	0.045	0.061	0.071
	education	-0.112*	0.027	0.130	0.102
	position	0.052	0.047	0.080	0.057
independent moderator	SI		-0.327**		-0.289**
	SSG			0.146*	0.115*
Interaction item	SI×SSG				0.184**
	F	8.171	13.737	11.271	13.148
	R <sup>2</sup>	0.109	0.198***	0.137***	0.209***
	$\Delta R^2$	0.101	0.089	0.028	0.062

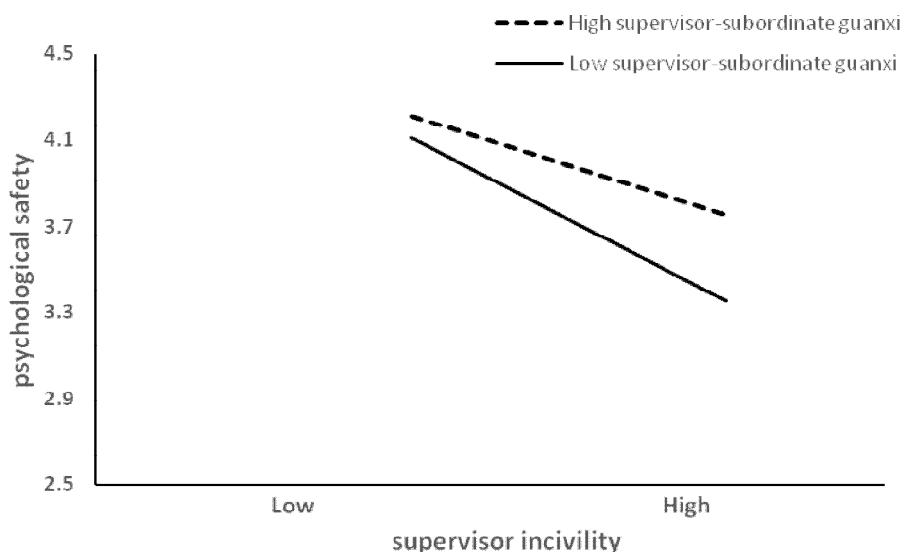
In this study, we used SPSS PROCESS macros to replicate 5000 with sample data, and reported indirect effects. Using the bootstrap method to get the supervisor-subordinate guanxi mean addition and subtraction of a standard deviation under the conditional indirect effect.

As shown in Table 6, when the supervisor-subordinate guanxi was low (the mean minus a standard deviation), the indirect effect of the supervisor incivility affecting the employee's turnover intention through psychological safety was -0.10 (Confidence interval [-0.087, 0.011]), including 0. So the supervisor-subordinate guanxi is low, the indirect effect is not significant; in the supervisor-subordinate guanxi for the high value (mean plus a standard deviation), the supervisor incivility through psychological safety affect employee turnover intention, The indirect effect of the tendency is -0.16 (confidence interval [-0.161, -0.028]), excluding 0. So the supervisor-subordinate guanxi has a significant effect on the indirect effect. Therefore, the supervisor-subordinate guanxi moderating supervisor incivility through psychological safety indirectly affect of employee turnover intention, Hypothesis 4 is supported.

**Table 6 Analysis of Mediated moderator model**

Moderator Supervisor-Subordinate Guanxi	SI(X)→PS(M)→TI(Y)			
	Turnover Intention			
	Indirect Effect	SE	LLCI	ULCI
high SSG	-0.16*	0.04	-0.161	-0.028
low SSG	-0.10	0.05	-0.087	0.011

To vividly show and explain the moderating role of supervisor-subordinate guanxi in the entire model, the study draws on widely used figure of the moderating role. According to the methods and procedures proposed by Aiken et al (1991), we draw figure of moderating role that supervisor-subordinate guanxi between supervisor incivility and employee turnover intention. We can see the degree to which from this figure, high supervisor-subordinate guanxi (M+1SD) and low supervisor-subordinate guanxi (M-1SD) have influence on psychological safety. As shown on Figure 2, supervisor-subordinate guanxi has not been able to change the negative relationship between supervisor incivility and psychological safety, but supervisor-subordinate guanxi has been able to moderate the relationship between them. Compared to employee with low supervisor-subordinate guanxi, ones with high supervisor-subordinate guanxi can weaken the relationship between supervisor incivility and psychological safety. Employees with higher supervisor-subordinate guanxi are more likely to weaken the destructive relationship between supervisor incivility and psychological safety, and the assumption 3 is supported.



**Figure 2: Supervisor-subordinate guanxi has an moderator role between supervisor incivility on turnover intention**



## 5. Discussion

This paper mainly focuses on the impact of supervisor incivility on employee turnover intention, especially on the mediating role of psychological safety and the moderator role of supervisor-subordinate guanxi. It finds that:(1)supervisor incivility significantly has a negative effect on psychological safety, while positive effect on employee turnover intention;(2)psychological safety significantly has negative effect on employee turnover intention, and mediates the relationship between supervisor incivility and employee turnover intention;(3)supervisor-subordinate guanxi moderates the relationship between supervisor incivility and psychological safety, and employees with the higher supervisor-subordinate guanxi, the weaker impact of supervisor incivility on the employee's psychological safety. Further analysis, supervisor-subordinate guanxi also moderates the mediating effect of psychological safety between supervisor incivility and employee turnover intention.

### 5.1 Theoretical implications

Our research mainly contributes to literature in two aspects. First, based on the psychological perception to explore supervisor incivility, To a certain extent, which explains the mechanism of supervisor incivility to the employee's turnover intention. Most scholars focus on the direct effect of supervisor incivility on outcome variables, but there are less studies on supervisor incivility's psychological mechanism. Liu (2012) suggested that, faced with workplace incivility, such as public criticism, defamation, ridicule and so on, employees would experience the sense of insecurity and identity threat. However, it doesn't explain the mechanism about workplace incivility and psychology safety based on empirical. Therefore, from the perspective of psychological safety, this study used empirical research to explore the influence mechanism between supervisor incivility and employees turnover intention.

Second, this study suggests that supervisor-subordinate guanxi moderate the indirect relationship between supervisor incivility and employee turnover intention. Chinese society always emphasize on "guanxi" and "renqing". That is, in China, social relations network usually expressed by "circle". Fei (1948) pointed out that the social relationship network is a shape of "corrugated circle" and expanding from inside to outside in China. Interpersonal relationship with the circle continues to expand, reflecting the obvious "qinshu" and distance. In other words, the relationship network in China has a unique local characteristics. Zhang et al(2014)pointed out that guanxi is an indigenous Chinese concept, which is driven by personal interests as well as needs to belong, can be built on either relationship by birth or social interaction. Therefore, in the organization, we take the relationship between supervisor and subordinate as supervisor-subordinate guanxi. supervisor-subordinate guanxi has an important influence on the employee's behavior. In contrast, employees would show different behaviors to cope with it (Zheng, 2005).Research to date little focused on the influence of supervisor-subordinate guanxi. Therefore, this study has carried on the localization research to the influence of supervisor incivility and employees turnover intention, regards the supervisor-subordinate guanxi as moderation, and constructing a mediated moderator model. The research hypotheses are finally confirmed. Meanwhile, it is of great significance to a comprehensive understanding of the individual attitudes and behaviors changes in workplace.

### 5.2 Management implications

The results of this study show that supervisor incivility has an obvious negative effect on employees' psychological safety and positive relationship with employee turnover intention. Therefore, enterprise should pay attention to the leadership behavior and improve the supervision system. The enterprise can assess the supervisor regularly and get the assessment data through anonymous survey and observation. It's suggested to conduct reward and punishment mechanism and put the leadership behavior into the performance appraisal system. Then, psychological safety mediates the relationship between supervisor incivility and employee turnover intention. So, on the one hand, managers should change leadership cognition and promote leadership ability, and reducing the probability of supervisor incivility occurred; on the other hand, managers want to weaken the negative impact of supervisor incivility on employees and reduce turnover intention, they should focus on the role of psychology safety, and create a positive, safe atmosphere in the workplace. Finally, we point out supervisor-subordinate guanxi moderates the relationship between supervisor incivility and turnover intention. Therefore, it is necessary to build high-quality supervisor-subordinate guanxi. High-quality supervisor-subordinate guanxi will make subordinate feeling more instrumental support and emotional support from supervisor, which can significantly improve the employee's psychological safety, decreasing turnover intention.

For the organization, it can hold regular meeting to strengthen communication between the supervisor and the subordinate, and to improve mutual trust and dependency. High-quality cooperative relationship can eliminate the bad behavior of supervisor, improve employee psychological safety and reduce turnover intention.

### 5.3 Limitations and directions for future research

As with all research, our study have a number of limitation. First, we only consider the positive role of supervisor-subordinate guanxi, while ignoring the negative impact for employee's behavior and the organization. therefore, future research should consider supervisor-subordinate guanxi's positive and negative aspects; Second, we only collect the cross-sectional data and ignore the impact of time effects on variables, which makes it difficult to test the dynamic impact of supervisor incivility on psychological safety and employee turnover intention. But our hypothesis model agrees with the research conclusion, namely the leadership behavior can be used as a predictor of individual turnover intention. The conclusion is consistent with the findings of negative side of leadership in organizations. The future researchers can use time series design, and through empirical sampling or field test method to collect horizontal and vertical data, which will make it more accurately to grasp the relationship among variables; Finally, it uses the single-source data measurement methods and the conclusions will be influenced easily by the deviation of common method. In this study, employee self-evaluation is used to obtain employee turnover intention data. However, employees are likely to consider their own face problems and have reservations in filling in questionnaire. Therefore, the other evaluation ways are more likely to restore the essence of employee turnover intention. In order to reduce measurement deviation, the suggestions of Podsakoff can be taken. Through protecting the privacy of interviewees, the concern to employees' evaluation will be lower. At the same time, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted on the data, and the results showed that there was a good distinction between the main variables. Therefore, future research can use multisource or other assessment methods to obtain data to avoid the impact of homologous error.

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