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The double-edged sword: The role of goal congruence in employee emotional and behavioral reactions to supervisor bottom-line mentality[☆]

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ABSTRACT

In today's complex and challenging business market, organizational supervisors place greater emphasis than before on maximizing profits. However, a singular focus on achieving bottom-line outcomes has been shown to have both positive and negative effects on employees, highlighting a complexity that demands further investigation. While existing literature has acknowledged the double-edged nature of supervisor bottom-line mentality, they have predominantly relied on cognitive processes. Building upon reinforcement sensitivity theory, this research shifts the focus to emotional mechanisms, investigating how the emotions of anger and harmonious passion mediate the dual impacts of supervisor bottom-line mentality on follower feedback-related behaviors and whether these relationships are contingent upon follower goal congruence with supervisor bottom-line mentality. We tested the proposed conceptual model by conducting two experimental studies and a multi-wave field study. Our findings enhance the scholarly understanding of when and how supervisor bottom-line mentality can evoke distinct emotions in employees, offering fresh insights into its double-edged effects.

1. Introduction

Supervisor bottom-line mentality, referring to “one-dimensional thinking that revolves around securing bottom-line outcomes to the neglect of competing priorities” (Greenbaum et al., 2012, p. 344), is a prominent phenomenon in today's organizations. The ongoing economic recession and increasing geopolitical risks have greatly impaired organizations' operating conditions, especially in the tourism and hospitality industry. Indeed, many organizations are facing financial strain and have well-founded concerns about their survival. In 2024, fierce competition among hospitality organizations led to 5%–25% profit reductions for both domestic and international hotel brands in China (Sohu, 2024). Given this competitive landscape, it is no surprise that supervisors tend to focus more on securing organizational profits than on achieving other priorities (i.e., employee well-being; Greenbaum et al., 2023). Supervisor bottom-line mentality is quite common in hospitality organizations' practices, yet it remains a new construct in the current hospitality literature. For instance, hotel managers have been known to assign sales key performance indicators to employees and force them to post product advertisements on their personal social media

accounts (Lvjie., 2022). The impact of such a requirement is complex: it has been shown to produce both positive and negative effects on employee outcomes. On the one hand, such direct sales not only blur employees' work–life boundaries but also put psychological pressure on the employees to perform (The Paper, 2022). On the other hand, it has been shown to effectively enhance organizational performance (Lvjie., 2022).

In addition to the industrial practice, general organizational behavior studies have also linked supervisor bottom-line mentality with adverse outcomes such as employee social undermining (Greenbaum et al., 2012), insomnia (Babalola et al., 2022), and reduced performance (Quade et al., 2020). Yet supervisor bottom-line mentality has also been found to prompt pro-organizational outcomes, including enhanced employee work performance (Babalola et al., 2021) and increased employee helping behaviors (Chen et al., 2022). These seemingly contradictory findings based on both industry practices and empirical research indicate the complex nature of supervisor bottom-line mentality and suggest the potential contingency factors in determining the outcomes of supervisor bottom-line mentality.

Most investigations of supervisor bottom-line mentality have

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explicated its different effects through the mechanisms of job-related cognition (i.e., felt obligation, Babalola et al., 2021; emotional exhaustion, Brown et al., 2022; stress appraisals, Zhang et al., 2022). However, the impact of bottom-line mentality on subordinates' emotions has yet to be uncovered (for an exception, anxiety, see Mitchell et al., 2024). Investigating employees' emotional experiences is particularly vital in the hospitality industry. First, emotion plays a crucial role in determining how individuals behave in reaction to external stimuli (Harley et al., 2019). Second, hospitality frontline employees interact daily with leaders, colleagues, and customers, and these interactions generate different types of discrete emotions (Hwang et al., 2021). For these reasons, the current research adopts the lens of employee emotional experiences to explicate the complex relationship between supervisor bottom-line mentality and employee behaviors. More specifically, drawing upon reinforcement sensitivity theory (RST; Gray and McNaughton, 2000), we propose that supervisor bottom-line mentality results in both positive and negative emotional experiences among employees depending on their level of goal congruence with bottom-line mentality, which in turn influences employee feedback-related behaviors at work.

RST explains how individuals respond to perceived rewards or punishments emotionally (Gray, 1970). Based on this framework, we postulate that supervisor bottom-line mentality elicits different employee feedback-related behaviors at work by activating employees' behavioral activation system (BAS) and/or behavioral inhibition system (BIS) (Gray and McNaughton, 2000). On the one hand, employees who are high in goal congruence with supervisor bottom-line mentality tend to perceive bottom-line mentality as a positive stimulus and anticipate potential rewards if they achieve the target bottom lines. Accordingly, the employees' BAS is activated, and they tend to feel harmoniously passionate about their work and engage in feedback-seeking behaviors that assist them in achieving their goals (Pickering and Corr, 2008). On the other hand, employees who are low in goal congruence with supervisor bottom-line mentality tend to experience bottom-line mentality as a negative stimulus at work. This activates employees' BIS, leading them to feel angry about their work and engage in self-protective feedback-avoiding behaviors. This feedback avoidance serves as a nonverbal way for employees to communicate their dissatisfaction with supervisor bottom-line mentality (Corr, 2008).

This project contributes to existing literature on supervisor bottom-line mentality in several important ways. First, previous research has typically characterized supervisor bottom-line mentality as a singular type of information (e.g., work stress or anticipated punishment) and has treated employees as passive recipients of this information. Hence, most studies adopted social information processing theory, social exchange theory, transactional model of stress and coping, or social cognitive theory to delineate the negative influences of supervisor bottom-line mentality (e.g., social undermining behavior, Riisla et al., 2021; emotional exhaustion, Quade et al., 2020). Recent systematic review on supervisor bottom-line mentality pointed out that these above-mentioned theories "have been overly used by researchers to explain the processes by which bottom-line mentality develops and influences outcomes" (Moazzam and Malik, 2025, p. 11). Therefore, they call upon the alternative theoretical perspectives in the investigation of supervisor bottom-line mentality. Responding to this call, therefore, we draw on RST to propose that the levels of goal congruence could shape employees' interpretations of supervisor bottom-line mentality, activate their BAS and/or BIS process and thereby lead to distinct behavioral responses. Specifically, we propose that supervisor bottom-line mentality communicates various information encompassing potential punishments if goals are not met, clarified goal attainment strategies with focused attention, and rewards when goals are achieved (Greenbaum et al., 2023), and employees should be viewed as active recipients who could proactively interpret bottom-line mentality-related information in accordance with their own motivational orientations. To the best of our knowledge, this research is the first to integrate RST into the bottom-line

mentality framework, offering an innovative and nuanced perspective for understanding the outcomes of supervisor bottom-line mentality.

Second, existing literature on supervisor bottom-line mentality has explored various boundary conditions that could alter its double-edged effects, including employee trait and organizational characteristics (e.g., mindfulness, Farasat and Azam, 2022; moral identity, Mesdaghinia et al., 2019; organizational competitive psychological climate, Li and Cheng, 2022). These studies have primarily addressed the question of which factors shape the strength of bottom-line mentality's positive or negative effects. However, the question about under which conditions does supervisor bottom-line mentality produce positive or negative outcomes have yet to be answered. To address this knowledge gap, drawing on the RST, the present research proposes that goal congruence between employees and supervisors with respect to bottom-line mentality serves as a critical boundary condition that leads to employees' positive or negative responses to supervisor bottom-line mentality. Rather than simply moderating the magnitude of bottom-line mentality's effects, goal congruence fundamentally shapes employees' core interpretations of supervisor bottom-line mentality, prompting them to view it either as a signal of reward (i.e., elicited harmonious passion via the activated BAS process) or as a signal of threat (i.e., elicited anger via the activated BIS process), which in turn, trigger two distinct feedback-related behavioral outcomes. By illuminating goal congruence as a critical boundary condition, we provide a unified and integrative theoretical framework and reconcile previously inconsistent findings in supervisor bottom-line mentality literature.

Last, we capture the double-edged effects of supervisor bottom-line mentality through employee emotions of anger and harmonious passion contingent on goal congruence. Previous studies mainly explained how supervisor bottom-line mentality leads to distinct employee performance through cognitive processes (e.g., increased felt obligation, Babalola et al., 2021; decreased leader-member exchange, Kamran et al., 2022). However, recent scholarship suggests that supervisor bottom-line mentality also represents an activated psychological state capable of generating employees' transient emotional and behavioral responses (Keeler and Webster, 2018). Given this, we adopted RST to propose that supervisor bottom-line mentality could increase employee harmonious passion under conditions of high goal congruence (i.e., BAS process), while also elicit employee anger under low goal congruence (i.e., BIS process), thereby resulting in subsequent feedback-seeking and feedback-avoiding behavior, respectively. By illuminating the mediating roles of discrete emotions, this research advances theoretical understanding of the mechanisms underlying the double-edged effects of supervisor bottom-line mentality. This emotion-based dual-pathway mechanism enriches current theoretical perspectives by offering a more nuanced account of how supervisor bottom-line mentality influences employee behaviors through instant emotional responses. Fig. 1 depicts the conceptual model.

2. Literature review

2.1. RST

RST contends that individual differences in emotional and behavioral reactions arise from variations in the sensitivity of distinct biological behavior systems within the brain (McNaughton and Corr, 2008). According to RST (Gray and McNaughton, 2000), there are three systems that can be activated by different external stimuli: (1) BAS that responds to perceived "appetitive stimuli" and generates positive emotional experiences (p. 163); (2) BIS that responds to perceived goal conflict between the person and their environment, prompting aversive emotions; and (3) the "fight-flight-freeze system (FFFS)" that is responsible for negative stimuli and gives rise to fearful emotions. Within the RST framework, we postulate that supervisor bottom-line mentality elicits different employee feedback-related behaviors at work by activating employees' BAS and/or BIS depending on

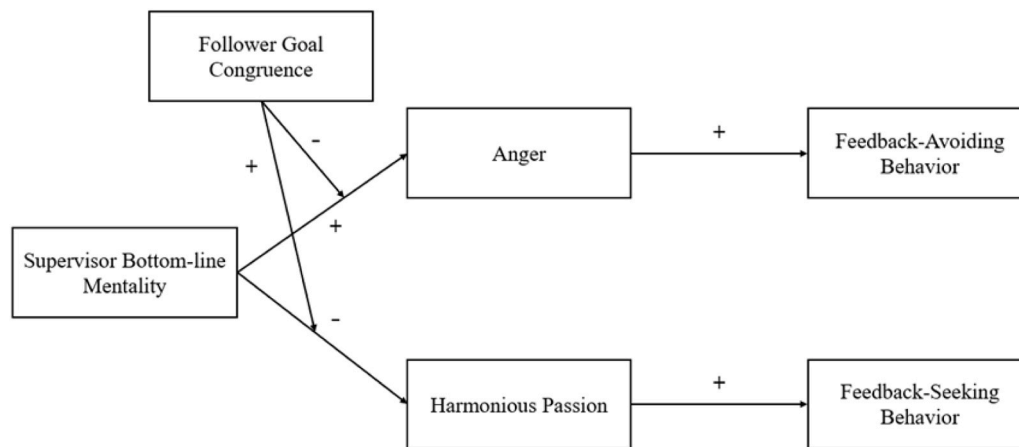


Fig. 1. Conceptual model.

employees' perception of supervisor bottom-line mentality (i.e., goal congruence). When employees perceive a supervisor's bottom-line mentality as conflicting with their own career goals, they see bottom-line mentality as a means of threatening or controlling information, thus activating BIS (Rickerby et al., 2024). Conversely, when employees experience high goal congruence with their supervisors, supervisor bottom-line mentality functions as a goal-facilitating cue. In such contexts, the BAS is activated, giving rise to high-arousal positive emotions such as harmonious passion and enhancing proactive behaviors like feedback-seeking (Karimpour-Vazifekhorani et al., 2020).

2.2. Subordinates' goal congruence

Goal congruence refers to the extent to which an employee's goals align with those of their supervisor (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). This alignment represents the compatibility between employees and their supervisors in terms of work objectives and value orientations, particularly in terms of performance goals. For instance, a hotel manager may delegate authority to subordinates to handle daily tasks and actively involve them in management decision-making processes, with the goal of fostering their leadership skills. These strategies may be compatible for employees who want to pursue personal career advancement. When employees perceive high goal congruence with their supervisors, they tend to regard their supervisors as supportive, experience greater satisfaction with management strategies, and perform discretionary behaviors at work (Vancouver and Schmitt, 1991). Prior studies have demonstrated that goal congruence enhances employee organizational commitment (Byza et al., 2019), job satisfaction (Audenaert et al., 2018), and psychological well-being (Edwards and Cable, 2009). Furthermore, the existing literature has revealed that goal congruence improves employee understanding and acceptance of leadership decisions by promoting shared understanding (Kristof-Brown and Billberry, 2012).

While goal congruence has been studied in relation to employee-supervisor relationships (e.g., Kristof-Brown et al., 2001), there is scarce research focusing on the impact of goal congruence on employees' emotional responses to work stressor (i.e., supervisor bottom-line mentality). RST suggests that goal congruence plays a crucial role in shaping employees' perceptions of bottom-line mentality: whether their supervisors' bottom-line mentality is a rewarding or punitive stimulus. Building on this understanding, this research specifically examines how goal congruence alters the relationship between supervisor bottom-line mentality and employee emotional responses (anger vs. harmonious passion) and employees' subsequent behaviors.

2.3. Anger or Harmonious Passion? The moderating effects of goal congruence on emotional responses to supervisor bottom-line mentality

Prior research on supervisor bottom-line mentality has focused mostly on cognitive-related outcomes such as employee self-interest cognitions (Babalola et al., 2021), moral disengagement (Farasat and Azam, 2022), and leader-member exchange (Quade et al., 2020). Scant research has been done on emotion-related outcomes of supervisor bottom-line mentality. Drawing on RST, we propose that goal congruence alters employees' emotional reactions to bottom-line mentality, either eliciting their harmonious passion or eliminating their anger depending on the level of congruence. Gibson and Callister (2010) define anger as "an emotion that involves an appraisal of responsibility for wrongdoing by another person or entity and often includes the goal of correcting the perceived wrong" (p. 68). Anger is widely conceptualized as an emotion elicited by others' perceived wrongdoings that involve impediments to goal-directed behaviors (Gibson and Callister, 2010). We posit that supervisor bottom-line mentality triggers employee anger for two main reasons. First, strong bottom-line mentality tends to exert excessive pressure on employees to achieve business objectives (Greenbaum et al., 2012). This intense performance pressure may be perceived as threatening and stressful by employees, leading them to view supervisor bottom-line mentality as a form of wrongdoing and experience anger toward their supervisors. Particularly for employees who value a healthy work environment, supervisor bottom-line mentality creates significant goal incongruence, thereby intensifying their anger (Stickney and Geddes, 2014). Second, prior research suggests that supervisors with strong bottom-line mentality mindsets focus exclusively on goals that improve organizational performance (Quade et al., 2020), leading them to discourage behaviors that do not align with performance-driven goals. Employees typically have diverse personal goals, such as work-life balance, family commitments, and personal development, which are not necessarily congruent with these performance-oriented goals (Brunstein et al., 1999). The perceived discrepancy between personal goals and supervisor expectations intensifies BIS activation. This heightened sensitivity to goal conflict leads to increased arousal and vigilance and reinforces anger. Thus, employees whose goals are incongruent with those of their high-bottom-line mentality supervisors are more likely to experience BIS activation and feel anger, as they tend to perceive their supervisors' actions as wrongdoings that impede their pursuit of their personal goal (Stickney and Geddes, 2014).

While some employees experience negative emotions in the face of supervisor bottom-line mentality, others perceive supervisor bottom-line mentality more favorably due to high goal congruence and the positive emotions it elicits in them (i.e., harmonious passion). Although existing research has focused on the negative effects of bottom-line

mentality, some studies have suggested that bottom-line mentality exerts a salutary influence. For instance, studies have revealed that supervisor bottom-line mentality effectively delivers messages emphasizing the importance of outcomes (Greenbaum et al., 2012), leads to more input from employees by directing their attention to clear objectives (Babalola et al., 2021), and promote pro-organizational behaviors among employees (Zhang et al., 2020). We argue that when an employee experiences high goal congruence with their supervisor, they tend to experience harmonious passion. Passion refers to “a strong inclination toward an activity that people like, that they find important and identify with, and in which they invest significant time and energy” (Pollack et al., 2020, p. 313). Vallerand and colleagues (2014) further classified passion into two types: one is obsessive passion which “results from a controlled internalization of the activity into one’s identity”; and another is harmonious passion referring to “an autonomous internalization of the activity into the person’s identity” (p. 757). For example, harmonious passion arises when employees derive authentic joy and fulfillment from serving guests and view service excellence as an expression of their own values and identity. In the context of supervisor bottom-line mentality, an employee’s perception that their supervisor emphasizes the business bottom line constitutes an important reference point that the employee compares against their own goals, thereby shaping the employee’s appraisal of their supervisor’s bottom-line mentality mindset. The alignment of values between supervisors and employees fosters goal congruence in the workplace, thereby transferring the goal of supervisors with high bottom-line mentality into their own performance goals. Therefore, under conditions of high goal congruence, employees tend to interpret supervisor bottom-line mentality as an appetitive stimulus that aligns with personal inclination to activate the BAS and as an instrument with which to attain their goals (Chen et al., 2022). Therefore, harmonious passion may arise as the subordinate increases their valuation of and preference for work based on this perceived goal congruence, while anger may decrease the employee’s willingness to seek assistance in the workplace. Therefore, we propose:

Hypothesis 1a. : The relationship between supervisor bottom-line mentality and employee anger is moderated by goal congruence such that the relationship is more positive when the level of goal congruence is lower than when it is higher.

Hypothesis 1b. : The relationship between supervisor bottom-line mentality and employee harmonious passion is moderated by goal congruence such that the relationship is more positive when the level of goal congruence is higher than when it is lower.

2.4. Feedback-seeking or feedback-avoiding? The behavioral responses to supervisor bottom-line mentality

In the face of supervisor bottom-line mentality, employees may develop certain emotional responses and engage in subsequent behaviors aimed at social survival and thriving in the given situation (e.g., Lindebaum and Jordan, 2012). Specifically, angry employees often feel that they need to resolve an anger-triggering situation via a “return of injuries” (Gouldner, 1960, p. 172). Although anger can result in well-defined retaliation, it can also be expressed less obviously and intensely (Leary et al., 2006). We argue that employees who experience anger as a result of perceived goal conflict may engage in a safer and less obvious form of retaliation that entails actively avoiding feedback (Yu and Duffy, 2021). Feedback avoidance is a highly discretionary behavior in which an employee purposefully does not seek feedback (Gibson and Callister, 2010). A typical example of feedback-avoiding behavior is a hotel employee from the sales department intentionally avoiding interactions with their supervisor by any means (e.g., not responding to phone calls, pretending to be sick), thereby decreasing the possibility of discussing performance with the supervisor. When individuals feel anger toward someone, they lack their appreciation toward the perceived

transgressors, which may lead to psychological and physical avoidance behaviors toward the perceived wrongdoers (Gibson and Callister, 2010). According to RST, when the BIS is activated due to perceived misalignment between an employee’s personal goals and supervisor bottom-line mentality, the anger evoked by this incongruence may reduce the employee’s motivation to seek feedback, which itself serves as a potential source of additional stress or frustration. Such employees are also reluctant to be passive recipients of feedback, instead resorting to various avoidance tendencies (e.g., refraining from verbal interaction or making eye contact) to withdraw from perceived threats (Moss et al., 2009). Therefore, lower goal congruence exacerbates employees’ anger, which in turn strengthens feedback-avoiding behavior as a maladaptive response to anger triggered by BIS (Ratcliff et al., 2012).

In contrast, harmonious passion is a high-arousal positive emotional experience at work, thus strengthening subordinates’ self-motivating initiative and in turn promoting extra-role performance (Qadeer et al., 2016). When a supervisor’s managerial emphasis on bottom-line mentality and an employee’s performance goal orientation is aligned, the BAS is activated as a rewarding stimulus. In this case, employees are likely to experience harmonious passion and expand their range of proactive behaviors with the hope of contributing more to their organization and thereby achieving better work outcomes. Besides, passionate employees display more initiative and discretionarily engage in behaviors that go beyond their job requirements and are intended to elicit work recognition from others (Pradhan et al., 2017). Feedback-seeking, defined in this context as employees’ proactive attempts to obtain information about their work performance through direct inquiry or monitoring of their environment (Ashford and Cummings, 1983), represents one such proactive behavior. One example is that when a front-line employee receives compliments from the guests, he or she may proactively ask the supervisor’s suggestions on their performance. The harmonious passion generated through BAS activation in high-goal-congruence contexts serves as a driving force for feedback-seeking behavior (Pickering and Corr, 2008). Employees are motivated to obtain information that will facilitate goal attainment, viewing feedback as a valuable resource. Therefore, employees who are aligned with their supervisors’ goals and perceive supervisor bottom-line mentality as a sign of rewarding opportunities may engage in feedback-seeking behavior at work to achieve the desired bottom-line outcomes and ensure their performance aligns with their supervisors’ expectations. Taken together, we propose:

Hypothesis 2a. : Supervisor bottom-line mentality is related to higher levels of subordinate feedback-avoiding behavior via employee anger when goal congruence is lower than when it is higher.

Hypothesis 2b. : Supervisor bottom-line mentality is related to higher levels of subordinate feedback-seeking behavior via employee harmonious passion when goal congruence is higher than when it is lower.

3. Overview of studies

We adopted a mixed-method design, including three empirical studies to examine the proposed conceptual model. By collecting data from the United States, Study 1 utilized a scenario-based quasi-experimental design, where supervisor bottom-line mentality was manipulated to establish preliminary causal inferences regarding the focal relationships. Building on this foundation, Study 2 adopted a quasi-experimental design with U.S. participants using the critical incident technique to enable a re-validation of the proposed causal relationships in this model. Finally, Study 3 involved a multi-wave field study conducted in China with three primary aims: (1) to replicate the empirical findings observed in Studies 1 and 2; (2) to capture employees’ behavioral outcomes as they unfold in real-world organizational contexts; and (3) to increase the external validity of the research model by incorporating participants from different cultural backgrounds.

4. Study 1

4.1. Participants

We employed Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) to recruit a diverse and high-quality sample of employees from the U.S. hospitality and tourism sector. To ensure data robustness, pre-screening questions and attention checks were incorporated. Only the participants who were currently working within the hospitality and tourism industries were eligible to participate in this study, including lodging (i.e., hotel), food and beverage, entertainment, and recreation. Furthermore, given that the study design necessitates employees having actual interactions with their supervisors at the workplace to better comprehend our research, only those with a tenure exceeding five months and having a direct supervisor at work were included. Ultimately, data were collected from 111 employees, surpassing the G*Power estimate of 55 participants to achieve the effect size of 0.15. Respondents were provided with an incentive of \$1.3 for participating in this survey. Most of the participants were male (61.3%), with an average age of 33.03 years old ($SD = 6.14$). Most respondents had worked in their current organizations for three to five years (40.5%) and held a bachelor's degree (73.9%).

4.2. Design and procedure

A scenario-based quasi-experimental design was employed in this study to examine the influence of supervisor bottom-line mentality on employees' emotions and behavioral intentions, contingent on their goal congruence. Participants were first required to review and respond to an informed consent form and pre-screening questions. Eligible individuals were randomly assigned to one of two scenarios (high vs. low supervisor bottom-line mentality). The scenario-based design was utilized to manipulate bottom-line mentality (high vs. low) using the validated scenarios developed by Ren et al. (2024). We maintained the essence of the scenario (i.e., sales team context) with minor adjustment in the hospitality work setting to ensure its validity as well as enhance the sense of immersive. Detailed content of the vignettes is shown in Appendix A (see supplementary file). After reading their assigned scenario, participants completed the manipulation check and realism check. They were then asked to evaluate their goal congruence with the supervisor described in the scenario. We assessed participants' goal congruence by using six-item scale developed by Supeli and Creed (2014). Sample item is "My personal goals are compatible with my supervisor's goals". Following this, respondents completed the remaining survey that assessed their emotional reactions and feedback-related behavioral intentions. The question wording and survey layout were identical across various conditions.

4.3. Measures

Anger. Anger was measured with four items adapted from Ford et al. (2018). Participants were asked their felt anger. A sample item is "To what extent has your supervisor made you feel mad".

Harmonious passion. We used six items adapted from Marsh et al. (2013) to assess employees' feelings of harmonious passion. A sample item is "This work allows me to live a variety of experiences".

Feedback Seeking Behavior. We adapted five items from Moss et al. (2003) to measure employees' intentions to conduct feedback seeking behavior. A sample item is "I would display my excellent work for my coworkers and hope they might relay some positive remarks to my supervisor (Bob)".

Feedback Avoiding Behavior. To assess employees' intentions to implement feedback avoiding behavior, we used six items developed by Moss et al. (2003). A sample item is "I would hide from my supervisor (Bob) if I had performed poorly or had failed to complete an assignment on time".

Control Variables. We included multiple control variables to

strengthen the robustness of results. We assessed PANAs by using 10-item developed by Thompson (2007), including "Upset" and "Attentive". Besides, core self-evaluation was examined, using 12 items from Judge et al. (2003). Sample item includes "I am capable of coping with most of my problems". Resilience was also included in the survey as a control variable with six items developed by Smith et al. (2008). Sample item is "I tend to bounce back quickly after hard times". Moreover, we examined power distance by adopting five-item from Yoo et al. (2011). One item is "People in higher positions should not ask the opinions of people in lower positions too frequently". We controlled these variables since they were found to influence individual emotional experiences and feedback behaviors (e.g., Gong et al., 2019; Shockley et al., 2012).

4.4. Study 1 Results

4.4.1. Realism and manipulation check

We included two questions in the survey to test the scenario realism, which were "It was easy imagining myself in the scenario situation (working at ABC Hotel)" and "The scenario situation (working at ABC Hotel) was realistic". By doing the descriptive analysis, results demonstrated a good realism of the developed scenario (Question one: $M = 5.58$, $SD = 1.39$; Question two: $M = 5.75$, $SD = 1.39$). For the manipulation check, we asked respondents to answer a four-item scale of supervisor bottom-line mentality that was developed by Greenbaum et al. (2012). One sample item is "My supervisor only cares about the business". The results of the independent sample *t*-test showed that we successfully manipulated supervisor bottom-line mentality. The participants assigned to the high-bottom-line mentality condition ($N = 58$, $M = 5.44$, $SD = 1.37$) rated a significantly higher level of supervisor bottom-line mentality than those in the low-bottom-line mentality condition ($N = 53$, $M = 4.47$, $SD = 2.08$; $t(109) = -2.87$, $p = .003$).

4.4.2. Measurement model

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to test the construct validity. Table I (see supplementary file) shows that all factor loadings were above 0.4. Besides, all AVE values were greater than 0.50, and all CR values were greater than 0.80, indicating a good convergent validity. In addition, the results of alternative model comparisons indicated that the five-factor model represents the best model fit ($\chi^2(312) = 537.23$, $p < .001$; CFI = .91, TLI = .90, RMSEA = .08, SRMR = .06; see Table II in supplementary file). Besides, since data on anger, harmonious passion, and feedback-related behaviors were collected from a single source at the same time, common method bias could be an issue. Therefore, we performed Harman's single-factor test to control the potential common method bias issue. Results of the test revealed that the first factor accounted for 41.82% of the variance in the data, which is less than 50%, indicating that the common method variance was unlikely to be a serious problem in this study (Podsakoff et al., 2012).

4.4.3. Hypothesis testing

Descriptive analysis was performed, and the basic statistics and correlations among variables were shown in Table III (see supplementary file). To test the hypotheses, we conducted path analyses using MPlus 8.3. As shown in Table 1 below, supervisor bottom-line mentality was positively related to employee anger but was not significant ($b = 0.11$, $p = .86$). However, the interaction between supervisor bottom-line mentality and goal congruence was negatively and significantly related to employee anger ($b = -0.75$, $p = .045$). Fig. 2 showed the relationship between supervisor bottom-line mentality and anger at $\pm 1SD$ of goal congruence, such that employees would experience a lower level of anger derived from supervisor bottom-line mentality when the goal congruence was higher than the goal congruence was lower, supporting Hypothesis 1a. Besides, results showed that supervisor bottom-line mentality was negatively related to employees' harmonious passion ($b = -1.22$, $p = .001$). The interaction between goal congruence and supervisor bottom-line mentality significantly and positively influenced

Table 1
Results for path analyses in Study 1.

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables			
	Anger <i>b</i> (S.E.) [95 % CI]	Harmonious Passion <i>b</i> (S.E.) [95 % CI]	Feedback Avoiding Behavior <i>b</i> (S.E.) [95 % CI]	Feedback Seeking Behavior <i>b</i> (S.E.) [95 % CI]
Age	0.03 (.02) [-0.016, 0.073]	-0.04 (.02) [-0.071, 0.001]	-0.02 (.01) [-0.045, 0.004]	-0.00 (.01) [-0.025, 0.022]
Gender	-0.18 (.32) [-0.798, 0.437]	-0.32 (.22) [-0.747, 0.102]	0.06 (.19) [-0.311, 0.426]	0.08 (.15) [-0.205, 0.372]
Marital Status	1.06 (.68) [-0.274, 2.390]	0.44 (.72) [-0.965, 1.844]	-0.01 (.59) [-1.163, 1.136]	0.18 (.28) [-0.366, 0.723]
Educational Level	-0.51 (.33) [-1.151, 0.129]	-0.09 (.24) [-0.566, 0.387]	-0.04 (.22) [-0.480, 0.395]	0.10 (.18) [-0.263, 0.456]
Organizational Tenure	-0.03 (.13) [-0.286, 0.217]	-0.05 (.09) [-0.222, 0.124]	0.21 (.12) [-0.013, 0.440]	0.00 (.11) [-0.209, 0.209]
Core Self-evaluation	0.09 (.29) [-0.471, 0.654]	0.22 (.17) [-0.110, 0.558]	0.34* (.16) [0.029, 0.643]	0.02 (.09) [-0.161, 0.194]
Resilience	0.13 (.26) [-0.380, 0.648]	0.26 (.16) [-0.060, 0.574]	-0.20 (.19) [-0.576, 0.177]	0.08 (.16) [-0.227, 0.389]
Power Distance	0.81*** (.16) [0.502, 1.119]	0.05 (.09) [-0.124, 0.228]	0.14 (.17) [-0.196, 0.483]	0.14 (.09) [-0.048, 0.318]
Negative Affects	-0.01 (.11) [-0.230, 0.208]	-	0.04 (.06) [-0.084, 0.164]	-
Positive Affects	-	0.40*** (.12) [0.171, 0.621]	-	0.18 (.10) [-0.013, 0.371]
Supervisor bottom-line mentality	0.11 (.60) [-1.069, 1.280]	-1.22*** (.36) [-1.922, -0.523]	-0.16 (.39) [-0.934, 0.608]	0.72** (.26) [0.209, 1.226]
Goal Congruence	0.53 (.33) [-0.124, 1.177]	-0.08 (.20) [-0.475, 0.321]	0.00 (.22) [-0.429, 0.437]	-0.02 (.12) [-0.250, 0.206]
Supervisor bottom-line mentality x Goal Congruence	-0.75* (.37) [-1.476, -0.018]	1.03*** (.22) [0.591, 1.464]	0.14 (.28) [-0.409, 0.696]	-0.19 (.23) [-0.638, 0.253]
Anger	-	-	0.51*** (.13) [0.244, 0.769]	-
Harmonious Passion	-	-	-	0.67*** (.11) [0.458, 0.889]
R ²	0.30***	0.46***	0.51***	0.66***

Note. *N* = 111; bottom-line mentality = Bottom-Line Mentality. *b* = unstandardized path coefficient. CI = confidence interval. S.E. = standard error. **p* < .05; ***p* < .01; ****p* < .001 (two-tailed).

employees' harmonious passion (*b* = 1.03, *p* < .001). As shown in Fig. 3, employees were likely to experience a higher level of harmonious passion after experiencing supervisor bottom-line mentality when goal congruence was higher than lower, thus supporting Hypothesis 1b.

Next, we included employees' feedback-related behaviors in the moderated mediation model to test the indirect effects of supervisor bottom-line mentality. Results supported Hypothesis 2a and suggested that the indirect relationship between supervisor bottom-line mentality

and employees' feedback avoiding behaviors via employee anger was stronger when goal congruence was low (difference = -1.39, *p* = .05). Specifically, employees were likely to perform less feedback avoiding behaviors after experiencing supervisor bottom-line mentality when goal congruence was higher (*b* = -0.64, 95 % CI [-1.745, 0.465]) than lower (*b* = 0.75, 95 % CI [0.053, 1.441]). In a similar vein, goal congruence also significantly moderated the indirect relationship between supervisor bottom-line mentality and employees' feedback seeking behaviors via employee harmonious passion (difference = 2.54, *p* < .001). Specifically, employees tended to conduct more feedback seeking behaviors due to the experience of harmonious passion derived from supervisor bottom-line mentality when goal congruence was higher (*b* = 0.45, 95 % CI [-0.394, 1.285]) than lower (*b* = -2.09, 95 % CI [-3.027, -1.156]), therefore supporting Hypothesis 2b.

4.5. Study 1 discussion

The results of Study 1 supported our proposed hypotheses. By conducting the scenario-based quasi-experiment, we revealed the significant moderating role of employees' goal congruence in the causal relationship between supervisor bottom-line mentality and employees' feedback behaviors via the elicited experiences of anger and/or harmonious passion. Specifically, when employees are congruent with supervisor bottom-line mentality, they tend to experience harmonious passion derived from supervisor bottom-line mentality, leading to increased feedback seeking behaviors. On the contrary, employees are likely to feel anger following supervisor bottom-line mentality and perform feedback avoiding behaviors when their goal congruence is low. To enhance the internal validity of the proposed causal relationships, we conducted the second study with a different experimental design.

5. Study 2

5.1. Participants, design, and procedure

Data collection was conducted through Prolific, targeting U.S. full-time hospitality employees with a minimum of five months of organizational tenure working with a direct supervisor. Participants received an incentive of \$3.22 upon completing our survey. Participants were informed that the study explored supervisor bottom-line mentality and employee experiences. To help participants fully understand and recall their experiences, the survey introduced the construct of bottom-line mentality by providing a conceptual definition and illustrative examples adapted from prior literature. Participants were then asked to report whether their direct supervisors had adopted high bottom-line mentality or low bottom-line mentality toward them in the past three months. Individuals who had not experienced supervisor bottom-line mentality within a recent three-month period were instructed to withdraw from this study. Using critical incident technique, participants were required to recall and describe a specific and concrete incident where they experienced their supervisor displaying either high or low bottom-line mentality over the previous three months. They were also asked to comment on whether their personal career goals at the time were aligned or misaligned with their supervisor's goals. Clear prompts guided them to provide sufficient details, enabling independent coders to infer the supervisor's level of bottom-line mentality and their responses (see Appendix B in supplementary file). Following the written narrative, participants measured their described experiences of supervisor bottom-line mentality by adopting a four-item scale from Greenbaum et al. (2012). Then, participants were required to report their personal career goals congruence with their supervisor at the time when they experienced the supervisor bottom-line mentality. Furthermore, they were asked about their feelings of anger and harmonious passion following the experiences of the supervisor bottom-line mentality, as well as their subsequent feedback-related behaviors. All measurements used in Study 2 were the same as those used in Study 1. Finally,

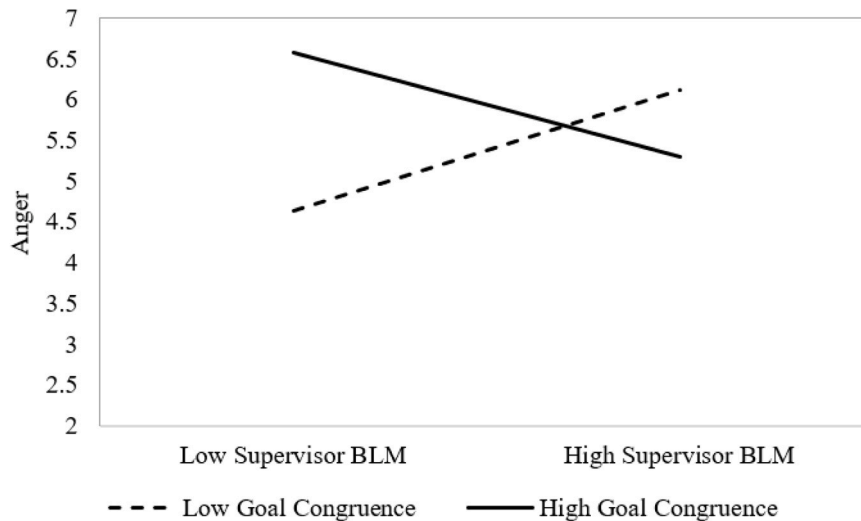


Fig. 2. Moderating role of goal congruence in supervisor bottom-line mentality-anger relationship.

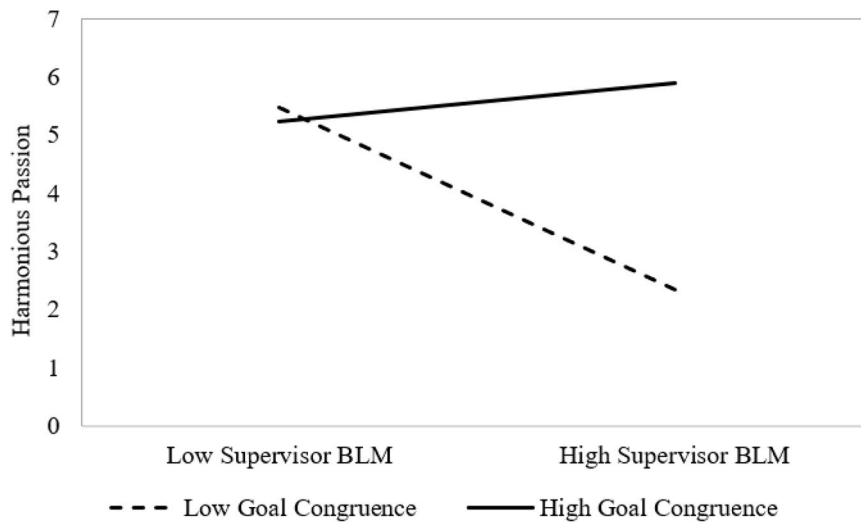


Fig. 3. Moderating role of goal congruence in supervisor bottom-line mentality-harmonious passion relationship.

participants’ demographic information was gathered, such as age, gender, education, and tenure, which were controlled for data analysis. To ensure an unbiased and reliable grouping of manipulation conditions, two researchers who were blind to participants’ assigned conditions independently reviewed and coded each narrative as indicative of either high (1) or low (0) supervisor bottom-line mentality. The initial coding agreement between the two raters was Cohen’s $\kappa = .93$, indicating excellent interrater reliability. Any discrepancies were discussed and resolved through discussion until consensus was reached. Ultimately, 108 valid responses were retained for analysis. The demographic profile of the final sample showed that 51.9 % of participants were male, the majority (29.6 %) were between 28 and 37 years old, and 68.5 % hold a bachelor’s degree or above.

5.2. Study 2 results

5.2.1. Manipulation check

To assess the effectiveness of the experimental manipulation, participants were asked to complete a four-item measure of supervisor bottom-line mentality ($\alpha = .97$). An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to confirm that individuals in the high-bottom-line mentality condition reported significantly higher levels of supervisor bottom-line

mentality ($M = 6.31, SD = 0.83$) compared to those in the low-bottom-line mentality condition ($M = 1.94, SD = 1.05$), $t(106) = -23.63, p < .001$.

5.2.2. Measurement model

To validate the measurement model, we conducted CFA. The hypothesized five-factor model demonstrated satisfactory fit to the data [$\chi^2(307) = 508.49, p < .001$; CFI = 0.95; TLI = 0.94; RMSEA = 0.08; SRMR = 0.07]. Furthermore, Table IV (see supplementary file) demonstrates the AVE scores and CR scores for all constructs in Study 2 were satisfactory, thereby confirming the discriminant and convergent validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

5.2.3. Hypothesis testing

Following the CFA, we proceeded with path analyses to examine the hypothesized relationships. Descriptive statistics and intercorrelations among variables are reported in Table V (see supplementary file), and Table 2 (see below) shows the results of path analysis. Supervisor bottom-line mentality had a significant positive impact on employee anger ($b = 3.65, p < .001$). The interaction effect of supervisor bottom-line mentality and goal congruence was negatively related to anger ($b = -0.40, p < .05$), such that employees experienced a lower level of anger

Table 2
Results for path analyses in Study 2.

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables			
	Anger <i>b</i> (S.E.) [95 % CI]	Harmonious passion <i>b</i> (S.E.) [95 % CI]	Feedback Avoiding Behavior <i>b</i> (S.E.) [95 % CI]	Feedback Seeking Behavior <i>b</i> (S.E.) [95 % CI]
Age	-0.00 (.01) [-0.022, 0.013]	0.01 (.01) [-0.005, 0.033]	-0.01 (.01) [-0.032, 0.011]	-0.01 (.01) [-0.028, 0.011]
Gender	0.35 (.20) [-0.025, 0.756]	-0.19 (.24) [-0.670, 0.265]	0.12 (.25) [-0.357, 0.597]	-0.19 (.23) [-0.626, 0.272]
Educational Level	0.24* (.10) [0.053, 0.433]	0.17 (.13) [-0.086, 0.442]	0.15 (.13) [-0.092, 0.405]	0.09 (.12) [-0.138, 0.316]
Organizational Tenure	0.06* (.03) [0.003, 0.112]	0.00 (.04) [-0.073, 0.068]	-0.03 (.03) [-0.098, 0.029]	-0.03 (.03) [-0.092, 0.037]
Supervisor bottom- line mentality	3.65*** (.31) [3.014, 4.245]	-2.33*** (.36) [-2.988, -1.587]	-0.46 (.67) [-1.643, 0.987]	-0.35 (.37) [-1.104, 0.346]
Goal Congruence	0.20 (.13) [-0.046, 0.456]	-0.52*** (.15) [-0.825, -0.243]	0.32* (.15) [0.002, 0.609]	0.19 (.20) [-0.193, 0.588]
Supervisor bottom- line mentality x Goal Congruence	-0.40* (.17) [-0.744, -0.077]	0.95*** (.20) [0.530, 1.333]	-0.17 (.25) [-0.668, 0.305]	0.23 (.23) [-0.229, 0.673]
Anger	-	-	0.42** (.15) [0.111, 0.692]	-
Harmonious Passion	-	-	-	0.46*** (.09) [0.270, 0.640]
R ²	0.75***	0.53***	0.37***	0.41***

Note. *N* = 108; bottom-line mentality = Bottom-Line Mentality. *b* = unstandardized path coefficient. CI = confidence interval. SE = standard error. **p* < .05; ***p* < .01; ****p* < .001 (two-tailed).

following supervisor bottom-line mentality when goal congruence was higher than the goal congruence was lower (see Figure I in supplementary file), supporting Hypothesis 1a. Moreover, supervisor bottom-line mentality was negatively related to employees' harmonious passion (*b* = -2.33, *p* < .001). The interaction effect of goal congruence and supervisor bottom-line mentality positively influenced employees' harmonious passion (*b* = 0.95, *p* < .001). Besides, employees experienced a higher level of harmonious passion in response to supervisor bottom-line mentality when goal congruence was higher than lower, thereby supporting Hypothesis 1b (see Figure II in supplementary file).

Next, we examined the moderated mediation effect to test the indirect effects of supervisor bottom-line mentality on employees' feedback-related behaviors. Results indicated that the indirect effect of supervisor bottom-line mentality on employees' feedback avoiding behaviors via anger was stronger when goal congruence was low (difference = 0.55, 95 % CI [0.09, 1.32]), thus supporting Hypothesis 2a. Specifically, employees conducted less feedback avoiding behaviors when facing supervisor bottom-line mentality when goal congruence was higher (*b* = 1.25, 95 % CI [0.36, 2.36]) than lower (*b* = 1.80, 95 % CI [0.50, 3.12]). Similarly, goal congruence also significantly moderated the indirect relationship between supervisor bottom-line mentality and feedback seeking behaviors via harmonious passion (difference = -1.45, 95 % CI [-2.43, -0.71]). Specifically, employees are likely to conduct more feedback seeking behaviors following harmonious passion derived from supervisor bottom-line mentality when goal congruence was higher (*b* =

-0.36, 95 % CI [-0.88, 0.07]) than lower (*b* = -1.80, 95 % CI [-2.75, -1.02]), therefore supporting Hypothesis 2b.

5.2.4. Qualitative analysis

One trained rater independently evaluated participants' narratives on four constructs, including supervisor bottom-line mentality, follower goal congruence, BAS activation, BIS activation. The coding scheme was derived from prior literature on bottom-line mentality and reinforcement sensitivity theory, which are shown in Appendix B in the supplementary file, along with typical examples of coded responses. Coding was performed on a 5-point Likert scale. To further enhance reliability, a second independent coder reviewed a randomly selected subset of the narratives. Inter-rater reliability was assessed using a two-way random-effects model with absolute agreement [ICC(2,1)]. The results indicated excellent agreement across all coded variables: supervisor bottom-line mentality (ICC = .86, 95 % CI [.69,.94]), goal congruence (ICC = .90, 95 % CI [.70,.96]), behavioral activation system (ICC = .88, 95 % CI [.72,.95]), and behavioral inhibition system (ICC = .96, 95 % CI [.89,.98]), exceeding thresholds for robust inter-rater consistency (Koo and Li, 2016). Discrepancies were resolved through discussion to reach consensus ratings. These results confirm that the coders shared a consistent understanding of the rating criteria and that the quantitative coding of narratives was reliable.

The findings from this qualitative analysis are summarized in four major themes and are integrated with the quantitative results to provide a richer understanding of the model. The comprehensive findings are provided in Appendix C in the supplementary file. First, employees reported that they perceived supervisor bottom-line mentality not only through supervisors' explicit performance demands but also through implicit cues, including performance orientation and task intensification, neglect of employee welfare, and conditional and transactional support. Second, supervisor bottom-line mentality functions as a double-edged managerial mindset, determined by employees' personal orientations. Achievement-oriented employees perceived bottom-line mentality as motivating, whereas employees with stronger balance or relational orientations perceived it as exploitative, dehumanizing, and emotionally draining. Third, the perception of supervisor bottom-line mentality was contingent on follower goal congruence with their supervisors. When employees' personal career goals aligned with their supervisors' bottom-line mentality, they interpreted this mindset as legitimate and goal-coherent reinforcement that fostered engagement and resilience. In contrast, when their goals diverged, supervisor bottom-line mentality was perceived as coercive, unethical, or threatening. Finally, consistent with RST, employees' emotional and behavioral responses to supervisor bottom-line mentality followed two distinct pathways, namely BAS and BIS. When bottom-line mentality was perceived as rewarding, BAS was activated, which in turn elicited enthusiasm and harmonious passion. By contrast, when bottom-line mentality was experienced as threatening or misaligned, it triggered BIS and led to employees' anxiety, anger, and avoidance-oriented behaviors.

5.3. Study 2 discussion

By employing the critical incident technique within a quasi-experimental design, the integration of qualitative and quantitative findings in this study provides a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the proposed model. Participants recalled actual incidents, facilitating examining whether the results in Study 1 would persist when grounded in real-life experience. The results supported our hypotheses and echoed Study 1, revealing that the positive link between supervisor bottom-line mentality and employee anger was intensified under conditions of low goal congruence. Moreover, the negative influence of supervisor bottom-line mentality on employee harmonious passion was attenuated when goal congruence was higher. The converging evidence drawn from both manipulated scenarios and authentic incidents

reinforced the internal validity and generalizability of our theoretical framework. More importantly, the qualitative analysis enriched these results by illustrating the nuanced ways in which supervisor bottom-line mentality is enacted and experienced. The mixed-method findings provide a richer, more meaningful understanding of how supervisor bottom-line mentality shapes employee experiences and outcomes, with dual-path model grounded in RST. Building on these findings, Study 3 transitioned to a multi-wave field investigation in China, aimed to replicate the causal relationships within a different cultural context and to observe behavioral outcomes in real organizational settings over time rather than behavioral intentions.

6. Study 3

6.1. Sample, procedure, and measures

We invited 430 full-time employees working in a large Chinese domestic hotel brand to voluntarily participate in this research at three times. At Time 1, we asked participants to rate their supervisor bottom-line mentality and goal congruence. All employees provided complete responses. Of these participants, 390 participants provided valid responses in the second survey four weeks later, in which they rated their feelings of anger and harmonious passion at work. At Time 3, we asked participants to report their feedback avoiding and feedback seeking behaviors. Finally, we received 335 valid responses, with a response rate of 78 %. Participants responded to the same scales for all measures as Studies 1 and 2. Among the final eligible 335 participants, 54.3 % were female. Most of them were between 28 and 37 years old (42.1 %) and completed high school education (43.6 %). Besides, most of the participants have been working in the current hotel for at least one year (80.9 %).

6.2. Study 3 results

6.2.1. Measurement model

CFA was performed (see Table VI in supplementary file) and all indicators were satisfactory ($\chi^2 = 1128.69$, $df = 418$, CFI = 0.95, TLI = 0.95, RMSEA = 0.07, SRMR = 0.05), indicating a good model fit. The AVE scores and CR scores for all constructs were satisfactory, thereby confirming the discriminant and convergent validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). During data collection, risk attitude as an individual difference was included to mask the research purpose. To examine participants' risk attitude, a four-item scale developed by Neves and Eisenberger (2014) was adopted. Sample item includes "I am willing to accept tasks having a high likelihood of problems". Since risk attitude is theoretically irrelevant with the testing variables in the proposed model, we used it as the marker variable to test the common method variance (Williams et al., 2010). We compared the chi-square and degree of freedom values of unconstrained ($\chi^2 = 1558.592$, $df = 539$) and fully constrained ($\chi^2 = 1561.279$, $df = 540$) model by performing CFA with MPlus. The results indicated a statistically insignificant difference ($\Delta\chi^2 = 2.687$, $\Delta df = 1$, $p = .101$), suggesting that common method bias was not a concern in Study 3 (Williams et al., 2010).

6.2.2. Hypothesis testing

We followed the same procedure of data analysis as Studies 1 and 2. First, we conducted a descripted analysis for the variables (see Table VII in supplementary file). Then, path analysis with bootstrap 5000 was performed to test the proposed hypotheses (see below, Table 3). Specifically, supervisor bottom-line mentality could incur employee anger ($b = 0.33$, $p < .001$). Goal congruence negatively and significantly moderated the relationship between supervisor bottom-line mentality and employees' anger ($b = -0.11$, $p = .026$). Employees would experience a lower level of anger derived from supervisor bottom-line mentality when the goal congruence was higher than the goal congruence was lower, thus supporting Hypothesis 1a (see Figure III in

Table 3
Results for path analyses in Study 3.

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables			
	Anger <i>b</i> (S.E.) [95 % CI]	Harmonious passion <i>b</i> (S.E.) [95 % CI]	Feedback Avoiding Behavior <i>b</i> (S.E.) [95 % CI]	Feedback Seeking Behavior <i>b</i> (S.E.) [95 % CI]
Age	-0.07 (.12) [-0.302, 0.153]	-0.08 (.08) [-0.241, 0.087]	0.09 (.12) [-0.144, 0.338]	-0.10 (.12) [-0.329, 0.123]
Gender	-0.05 (.14) [-0.326, 0.209]	-0.12 (.10) [-0.321, 0.083]	0.08 (.15) [-0.204, 0.375]	-0.32* (.15) [-0.605, -0.012]
Marital Status	0.27 (.16) [-0.045, 0.586]	-0.30* (.14) [-0.579, -0.020]	0.25 (.19) [-0.128, 0.600]	-0.35* (.18) [-0.688, 0.007]
Educational Level	-0.04 (.13) [-0.305, 0.200]	-0.07 (.09) [-0.250, 0.112]	-0.05 (.12) [-0.283, 0.198]	0.26* (.11) [0.049, 0.489]
Organizational Tenure	0.07 (.07) [-0.069, 0.221]	-0.06 (.06) [-0.170, 0.047]	-0.09 (.07) [-0.240, 0.044]	0.10 (.07) [-0.036, 0.226]
Supervisor bottom- line mentality	0.33*** (.06) [0.219, 0.442]	-0.12** (.05) [-0.209, -0.032]	-0.02 (.06) [-0.144, 0.095]	-0.00 (.05) [-0.109, 0.102]
Goal Congruence	-0.31*** (.07) [-0.451, -0.159]	0.44*** (.06) [0.326, 0.549]	-0.14 (.07) [-0.275, 0.008]	0.15* (.07) [0.006, 0.301]
Supervisor bottom- line mentality x Goal Congruence	-0.11* (.05) [-0.201, -0.016]	0.10** (.04) [0.032, 0.169]	-0.03 (.04) [-0.115, 0.058]	0.01 (.05) [-0.084, 0.108]
Anger	-	-	0.34*** (.07) [0.201, 0.467]	-
Harmonious Passion	-	-	-	0.26*** (.07) [0.129, 0.400]
R ²	0.19***	0.25***	0.14**	0.13**

Note. $N = 335$; bottom-line mentality = Bottom-Line Mentality. b = unstandardized path coefficient. CI = confidence interval. SE = standard error. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed).

supplementary file). Besides, results supported Hypothesis 1b, showing that supervisor bottom-line mentality significantly influence employees' harmonious passion ($b = -0.12$, $p = .009$) and the interaction effect of supervisor bottom-line mentality and goal congruence significantly and positively influenced employees' harmonious passion ($b = 0.10$, $p = .004$). Therefore, employees were likely to experience a higher level of harmonious passion after experiencing supervisor bottom-line mentality when goal congruence was higher than lower (see Figure IV in supplementary file).

Next, we included employees' feedback-related behaviors in the moderated mediation model to test the indirect effects of supervisor bottom-line mentality. Results supported Hypothesis 2a and suggested that goal congruence negatively moderated the indirect relationship between supervisor bottom-line mentality and employees' feedback avoiding behaviors via employee anger (difference = -0.09 , $p = .046$). Employees were likely to perform less feedback avoiding behaviors after experiencing supervisor bottom-line mentality when goal congruence was higher ($b = 0.07$, 95 % CI [0.027, 0.126]) than lower ($b = 0.15$, 95 % CI [0.083, 0.253]). Furthermore, goal congruence also significantly moderated the indirect relationship between supervisor bottom-

line mentality and employees' feedback seeking behaviors via employee harmonious passion (difference = 0.07, $p = .028$). Specifically, employees were inclined to conduct more feedback seeking behaviors due to the experience of harmonious passion derived from supervisor bottom-line mentality when goal congruence was higher ($b = 0.001$, 95 % CI [-0.020, 0.024]) than lower ($b = -0.07$, 95 % CI [-0.138, -0.023]), therefore supporting Hypothesis 2b.

6.2.3. Measurement invariance

Since we collected data from different countries (i.e., The United States and China) across studies, measurement invariance was also examined to strengthen the validity and robustness of our results. Specifically, following the guidance of previous research (Vandenberg and Lance, 2000), we consolidated the datasets from the U.S. and China, performing CFA with *MPlus* to compare the CFI and RMSEA among models of configural invariance, metric invariance, and scalar invariance. The results revealed that differences in CFI and RMSEA among different models were less than 0.01 (see below, Table 4), indicating the measurement invariance across datasets from different countries (Vandenberg and Lance, 2000).

6.3. Study 3 discussion

The results of Study 3 successfully replicated the findings of Studies 1 and 2. By conducting two quasi-experiments and a multi-wave field study, this research provided sound evidence for the proposed research model. Specifically, we revealed that subordinates' goal congruence significantly moderates the relationship between supervisor bottom-line mentality and employees' different types of feedback behaviors via distinctive emotional responses. Employees tend to experience anger derived from supervisor bottom-line mentality when their goal congruence with supervisors is low, which results in increased feedback avoiding behaviors. When employees' goals are congruent with their supervisors, supervisor bottom-line mentality could elicit employees' harmonious passion and encourage their following feedback seeking behaviors.

7. Conclusion

7.1. Theoretical Implications

Our research extends the literature on supervisor bottom-line mentality in several important ways. First, this research integrates RST into bottom-line mentality research, offering an innovative and nuanced perspective for understanding the outcomes of supervisor bottom-line mentality. Most existing studies adopted social information-processing theory, social learning theory, or social cognitive theory to posit that employees learned appropriate work behaviors from supervisor bottom-line mentality (e.g., prioritizing bottom-line outcomes), thereby increasing group bottom-line mentality (Greenbaum et al., 2021), employee work performance (Zhang et al., 2022), and employee unethical pro-organizational behavior (Farasat et al., 2021). Other scholars took the lens of work stress, using transactional model of stress and coping, conservation of resources theory, and social exchange theory to explicate how supervisor bottom-line mentality enhanced work

performance (Zhang et al., 2022) and reduced leader-member relationships (Kamran et al., 2022). To sum up, existing literature has typically characterized supervisor bottom-line mentality as a singular type of information (e.g., work stress or anticipated punishment) and has treated employees as passive recipients of this information. However, we propose that supervisor bottom-line mentality communicates various information encompassing potential punishments if goals are not met, clarified goal attainment strategies with focused attention, and rewards when goals are achieved (Greenbaum et al., 2023). We further posit that employees should be viewed as active recipients who could proactively interpret bottom-line mentality-related information in accordance with their own motivational orientations. Therefore, we draw on RST to propose that the levels of goal congruence could shape employees' interpretations of supervisor bottom-line mentality, activate their BAS and/or BIS process and thereby lead to distinct behavioral responses. To the best of our knowledge, this research is the first to integrate RST into the bottom-line mentality framework, responding to recent calls for alternative theoretical perspectives in the investigation of supervisor bottom-line mentality (Moazzam and Malik, 2025) as well as providing a nuanced understanding of its double-edged effects.

Second, prior research on supervisor bottom-line mentality has explored various boundary conditions that could alter its double-edged effects, including employee trait and organizational characteristics. For instance, findings revealed that employees' ambition (Babalola et al., 2021) and trait competitiveness (Babalola et al., 2022) may enhance the positive influence of supervisor bottom-line mentality on employee performance. Likewise, employees' mindfulness, moral identity, and self-efficacy have been found to temper the negative effects of supervisor bottom-line mentality (e.g., employees' unethical pro-organizational behavior, Farasat and Azam, 2022; turnover intentions, Mesdaghinia et al., 2019; social undermining, Eissa et al., 2019). Beyond individual differences, prior studies also investigated how organizational characteristics (i.e., organizational competitive psychological climate, Li and Cheng, 2022) strengthened the relationship between supervisor bottom-line mentality and employee knowledge hiding. Collectively, these studies have primarily addressed the question of which factors shape the strength of bottom-line mentality's positive or negative effects. However, a more fundamental question remains: under which conditions does supervisor bottom-line mentality produce positive or negative outcomes? Accordingly, drawing on the RST, the present research proposes that goal congruence between employees and supervisors with respect to bottom-line mentality serves as a critical boundary condition that leads to employees' positive or negative responses to supervisor bottom-line mentality. Rather than simply moderating the magnitude of bottom-line mentality's effects, goal congruence fundamentally shapes employees' core interpretations of supervisor bottom-line mentality, prompting them to view it either as a signal of reward (i.e., elicited harmonious passion via the activated BAS process) or as a signal of threat (i.e., elicited anger via the activated BIS process), which in turn, trigger two distinct feedback-related behavioral outcomes. By illuminating goal congruence as a critical boundary condition, this research helps shift the scholarly attention from investigating conditions that alter the magnitude of bottom-line mentality's effects to those that shape their direction (i.e., positive or negative). By doing so, we provide a unified and integrative theoretical framework and reconcile previously inconsistent findings in supervisor bottom-line mentality literature.

Third, departing from previous research that focused on employee cognitive processes, the current research examines employee discrete emotions (i.e., harmonious passion and anger) as primary mechanisms in the double-edged effects of supervisor bottom-line mentality. Researchers have examined the double-edged effects of supervisor bottom-line mentality through employees' social exchange processes, suggesting that supervisor bottom-line mentality can enhance employee performance by increasing their felt obligation toward bottom-line mentality (Babalola et al., 2021), but may also diminish performance by impairing

Table 4
Measurement invariance across the U.S. and China datasets.

	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR	ΔCFI	ΔTLI	ΔRMSEA
Configural Invariance	.933	.929	.078	.062			
Metric Invariance	.931	.928	.079	.118	.002	.001	.001
Scalar Invariance	.931	.928	.079	.118	.000	.000	.000

employees perceived leader-member exchange (Kamran et al., 2022). Moreover, existing literature posited that supervisor bottom-line mentality could elicit subordinates' state of bottom-line mentality, thereby increasing their proactive work engagement (Brown et al., 2022). In contrast, empirical evidence indicates that supervisor bottom-line mentality is associated with increased emotional exhaustion among employees, which in turn promotes avoidance-oriented behaviors such as turnover (Mesdaghinia et al., 2019). Taken together, these studies have primarily conceptualized supervisor bottom-line mentality as a relatively stable behavioral style, focusing on its double-edged effects through employees' cognitive processes. However, recent scholarship suggests that supervisor bottom-line mentality also represents an activated psychological state capable of generating employees' transient emotional responses (Keeler and Webster, 2018) and calls for further research into the "state-like nature of bottom-line mentality" (Greenbaum et al., 2023, p. 2138). Responding to this call, we adopted RST to propose that supervisor bottom-line mentality could increase employee harmonious passion under conditions of high goal congruence (i.e., BAS process), while also elicit employee anger under low goal congruence (i.e., BIS process), thereby resulting in subsequent feedback-seeking and feedback-avoiding behavior, respectively. By illuminating the mediating roles of discrete emotions, this research advances theoretical understanding of the mechanisms underlying the double-edged effects of supervisor bottom-line mentality. This emotion-based dual-pathway mechanism enriches current theoretical perspectives by offering a more nuanced account of how supervisor bottom-line mentality influences employee behaviors through instant emotional responses.

7.2. Practical implications

The tourism and hospitality industry faces multiple challenges, including an economic downturn, intensified competition among organizations (Guix et al., 2024), and pervasive travel restrictions and lockdown measures (Ruiz-Ballesteros and González-Portillo, 2024). Because organizational survival relies on enhancing employee work efficiency under resource constraints, supervisors often adopt a bottom-line-oriented approach by establishing performance indicators designed to maintain productivity. However, prior research suggests that supervisor bottom-line mentality can be a double-edged sword—on one hand enhancing employees' harmonious passion and feedback-seeking behavior, while on the other triggering anger and avoidance. Building on this paradox, our study demonstrates that the impact of supervisor bottom-line mentality is contingent on goal congruence, a critical moderator that shapes how employees interpret managerial expectations. When personal and organizational goals align, employees are more likely to respond constructively to supervisors' bottom-line mentality. Accordingly, we outline a set of practical implications that primarily highlight how supervisors and employees can navigate the paradoxical effects of supervisor bottom-line mentality, offering an integrated framework that aligns managerial behaviors, employee responses, and the conditions under which bottom-line mentality is most constructive.

First, our findings indicate that supervisor bottom-line mentality can elicit employee anger and feedback-avoidant behaviors. Based on this evidence, we recommend that hospitality supervisors take proactive steps to mitigate the negative consequences of bottom-line mentality. Rather than maintaining a consistently high bottom-line mentality, supervisors can dynamically regulate the intensity of bottom-line cues in response to team conditions and contextual demands. For example, when resources are sufficient, supervisors may temporarily soften their bottom-line emphasis and instead highlight developmental and supportive behaviors. Conversely, when supervisors receive strong bottom-line mentality directives from top management, they can attend to communication strategies that clarify the collective rather than self-serving nature of these expectations. Articulating that bottom-line

goals serve organizational rather than personal interests reduces employees' perceptions of supervisor self-interest, thereby alleviating anger and feedback avoidance. Moreover, demonstrating genuine care for employees' workload, emotional well-being, and developmental needs further buffers the threat associated with high-bottom-line mentality cues and fosters a more constructive exchange climate (Colquitt et al., 2013).

Second, beyond mitigating negative effects, supervisors should take an active role in strengthening employee goal congruence. As our findings show, goal incongruence intensifies anger and avoidance, underscoring the importance of clarifying how bottom-line expectations relate to broader team or organizational priorities. Such clarification reduces misinterpretation of managerial intent and facilitates shared understanding of performance goals, thereby minimizing resistance and enhancing receptivity to feedback (Gnepp et al., 2020). In addition to regular goal-alignment discussions, guided job crafting represents an innovative intervention. Through job crafting, supervisors can help employees reshape task boundaries, align personal strengths with organizational goals, and co-construct meaningful work purposes (Berg et al., 2013). This collaborative process fosters psychological ownership and shared purpose, transforming externally imposed performance targets into self-endorsed goals that support sustained motivation and proactive behavior.

Third, when bottom-line mentality is already salient, supervisors can implement targeted strategies to promote feedback-seeking and reduce avoidance behaviors. Specifically, supervisors should adopt transparent communication by clearly explaining the rationale behind performance expectations and feedback processes, thereby lowering uncertainty and prompting employees to initiate learning-oriented feedback (Kim and Uysal, 2025). Supervisors should also engage in brief but frequent feedback conversations that emphasize learning and improvement rather than judgment. These ongoing micro-interactions normalize feedback exchange, helping employees reinterpret feedback as a developmental resource rather than a threat, thereby reducing avoidance and encouraging proactive feedback-seeking (Katz et al., 2023). Furthermore, training supervisors in fair-process communication and emotion-recognition skills can reinforce these practices and help create a psychologically safe climate. When employees perceive the feedback process as fair, respectful, and developmental, they are more likely to engage openly and sustain feedback-seeking behaviors even under performance pressure (Madera et al., 2013).

In conclusion, we developed an Implications Box (see below, Fig. 4) that summarizes the conditional recommendations derived from our empirical results. The box presents specific strategies that supervisor could adopt with various levels of employee goal congruence and supervisor bottom-line mentality. For instance, when there is low goal congruence with high supervisor bottom-line mentality, supervisors are advised to engage in emotion-regulation training and flexible goal-realignment dialogues to reduce perceived bottom-line mentality threat and reestablish a shared sense of purpose. In contrast, supervisors may enhance feedback quality and promote a feedback-seeking culture to sustain motivation and proactive engagement for employees with high goal congruence with respect to high bottom-line mentality. Collectively, the Implications Box serves as a hands-on reference guide for hospitality managers dealing with diverse employee responses to bottom-line mentality.

Finally, our results indicate the importance of congruence between personal goal-setting tendencies and organizational performance bottom-line policies for employee career development. We aim to help employees realize that they are not passive recipients of organizational policies but rather active responders capable of adjusting their goal-setting tendencies to align with their supervisors' bottom-line mentality performance goals (Montani et al., 2014). Therefore, our research serves as a reminder that employees should closely monitor person-organization fit, appraising not only the organization's emphasis on bottom-line mentality but also whether their career goals match

Conditions (Outcomes)	Recommended Interventions	Advantages
<p>High BLM × Low GC with supervisor (Employee anger, feedback-avoiding behavior)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement fair-process communication (Kim & Uysal, 2025) • Facilitate flexible goal realignment dialogues (Johnson, 2014) • Encourage job crafting to sustain meaning and engagement (El-Gazar et al., 2023) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce perceived BLM threat • Promote open communication • Realign goals and expectations
<p>High BLM × High GC with supervisor (Employee harmonious passion, feedback-seeking behavior)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance feedback quality (Whitaker & Levy, 2012) • Promote feedback-seeking culture (Evans et al., 2021) • Adopt servant or spiritual leadership to reinforce shared purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen motivation, learning orientation, and proactive behaviors
<p>Low BLM × Low GC with supervisor (Employee anger)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct person-organization fit appraisal • Implement job crafting for personal goal alignment (Johnson, 2014) • Provide career development dialogue (Montani et al., 2014) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rebuild shared purpose • Restore engagement
<p>Low BLM × High GC with supervisor (Employee harmonious passion)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain transparent communication (Kim & Uysal, 2025) • Feedback clarification sessions (Katz et al., 2023) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustain clarity, challenge, and motivation.

Fig. 4. Recommendations based on the findings of this research.

organizational demands (Hoffman and Woehr, 2006). Meanwhile, we acknowledge it is difficult for employees to find a job with perfect person-organization/job fits. Instead of simply suggesting employees quit when there is goal misalignment with supervisors, we suggest employees engage in several strategies. First, employees may engage in job crafting to reinterpret organizational goals and align them with personal values and aspirations (Zhu et al., 2025). For example, employees may reassess the broader business environment and understand their supervisor’s bottom-line mentality as an effort to ensure organizational survival. Such reframing may help employees view organizational goals as compatible with their own career sustainability. Second, employees may practice mindfulness-based self-regulation (e.g., journaling, meditation) to manage emotional responses to misalignment and maintain adaptive engagement (Wang and Yan, 2018). Moreover, seeking feedback and support from coworkers can provide emotional stability and constructive guidance. Over time, these strategies may enhance resilience and reduce premature turnover, particularly in high-pressure environments (Liao et al., 2025). By continuously assessing and adjusting their work goals, employees can ensure that their career development paths are congruent with organizational goals, thereby enhancing their proactive behaviors and sense of professional accomplishment.

7.3. Limitations and future research

We acknowledge several limitations of the current research that merit addressing in future studies. First, we collected data exclusively from employees. To eliminate potential common method bias, future research could test our proposed model using multi-source data. For instance, supervisors could be invited to rate their subordinates’ feedback-related behaviors. Second, in line with existing literature (i.e., Greenbaum et al., 2012), this research focused on between-person experiences of supervisor bottom-line mentality. Several recent studies have pointed out the possibility of fluctuations in employees’ perceptions of their supervisors’ bottom-line mentality stemming from situational workplace changes and within-person changes (e.g., Babalola et al., 2021). Therefore, future research might consider the within-person variability of followers’ perceptions of their supervisors’ bottom-line mentality and adopt the experience sampling method to test

the impacts of supervisor bottom-line mentality on employee responses. Doing so would provide greater insight into employees’ fluctuating emotional and behavioral responses to supervisor bottom-line mentality on a daily basis.

Moreover, we found that the influence of supervisor bottom-line mentality on employees’ distinctive emotional reactions hinges on employees’ experiences of goal congruence with their supervisors. While our research offers a nuanced perspective by integrating interpersonal goal congruence into the theoretical framework to explicate the double-edged effects of supervisor bottom-line mentality, we acknowledge that contextual boundaries (e.g., organizational climate, cultural differences) may influence perceptions of goal congruence and, in turn, determine the dominance of positive versus negative pathways in response to supervisor bottom-line mentality. For example, previous research indicates that a strong learning climate can foster employees’ personal commitment to learning (Li and Tsai, 2020). In such contexts, even employees with initially low goal congruence with supervisor bottom-line mentality may become more open-minded and proactive when interacting with bottom-line mentality supervisors, thereby mitigating the negative emotional and behavioral consequences of supervisor bottom-line mentality. Additionally, researchers posited that power distance belief could influence employees’ goal commitment (Sue-Chan and Ong, 2002). In this regard, in a cultural background with high power distance, employees are more likely to exhibit goal congruence with their supervisors, thus leading to more positive effects of supervisor bottom-line mentality (i.e., harmonious passion and feedback-seeking behaviors). Given this, we suggest that future research should further examine organizational or cultural contingencies (e.g., performance and learning climate, power distance) that may shape the operation of our goal congruence-based dual-path emotional model of supervisor bottom-line mentality.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Jingwen Yan: Writing – original draft, Visualization, Methodology, Formal analysis, Conceptualization, Writing – review & editing. **Mengxuan Li:** Writing – original draft, Visualization, Formal analysis, Writing – review & editing. **Xingyu Wang:** Writing – original draft,

Supervision, Project administration, Methodology, Investigation, Funding acquisition, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Liu Han:** Writing – original draft, Formal analysis, Conceptualization, Writing – review & editing.

Compliance with ethical standards

Research involving human participants

Declaration of Competing Interest

No potential conflict of interest is reported by the author(s).

Appendix A. Supporting information

Supplementary data associated with this article can be found in the online version at [doi:10.1016/j.ijhm.2026.104626](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2026.104626).

Data availability

The data that has been used is confidential.

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