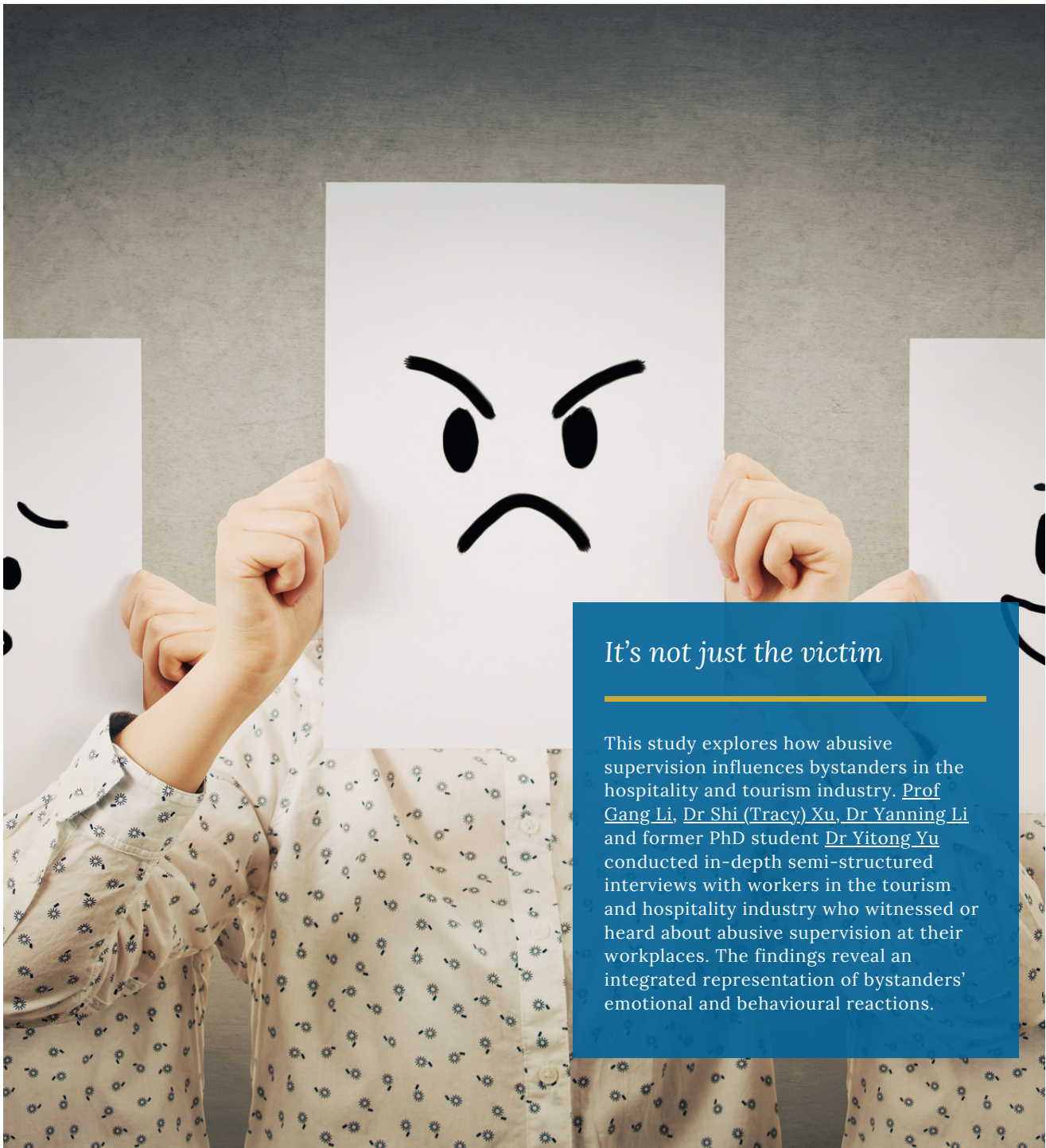


Academic Weekly Digest

School of Hospitality & Tourism Management



It's not just the victim

This study explores how abusive supervision influences bystanders in the hospitality and tourism industry. [Prof Gang Li](#), [Dr Shi \(Tracy\) Xu](#), [Dr Yanning Li](#) and former PhD student [Dr Yitong Yu](#) conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews with workers in the tourism and hospitality industry who witnessed or heard about abusive supervision at their workplaces. The findings reveal an integrated representation of bystanders' emotional and behavioural reactions.

Bystanders' emotional and behavioural reactions towards abusive supervision

Dr Yanning Li, Dr Shi (Tracy) Xu & Prof Gang Li

Bystanders are potential “secondary victims,” and therefore their emotions and reactions deserve equal attention and comprehensive understanding. This study is one of the first to investigate the influence of abusive supervision from a bystander’s perspective. Prof. Gang Li, Drs Shi (Tracy) Xu, Yanning Li and colleague conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews which revealed an integrated representation of bystanders’ emotional and behavioural reactions, ranging from negative emotions to unconcerned and exclusionary feelings, from supportive behaviours to avoidance, gossip, and learning behaviours. Furthermore, this study found important factors which were also influencing these emotional and behavioural reactions such as trust, power distance, social-cultural context, the tourism and hospitality context, victims’ spillover, and bystanders’ attribution. The findings of this study provide useful insights for practitioners in the hospitality and tourism industry.



“
Silence is a
source of
great
strength—Lao
Tzu
”

From this study, practitioners should note that abusive supervision negatively affects not only victims but also bystanders. Thus, organisations should consider creating regular activities and opportunities to encourage all employees to speak up about any negative experiences and emotions, and offering counselling support to a wider group of the workforce when abusive behaviour is reported. A policy or system that not only encourages employees’ voice behaviour but also protects them from exposure to secondary abuse could also be useful.

Further Reading:

Yu, Y., Li, Y., Xu, S. T., & Li, G. (2022). It's not just the victim: Bystanders' emotional and behavioural reactions towards abusive supervision. *Tourism Management*

Link: bit.ly/3wyDLrr