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圖利、失禮與不仁：職場小人的不道德行為

The abused, the misused and the underused:

Workplace xiaoren and their unethical behavior



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## 中文摘要

小人此一概念最早出現於先秦時代，原本泛指相對於統治者的一般民眾。經過先秦儒者的借用與轉化，以小人作為相對於君子的道德他者。自漢代獨尊儒術的政策推行後，儒家的用語也充分融入於漢語的日常使用中，小人一詞也因此成為漢語社會中重要的道德相關詞彙，然而我們對於當代社會中小人一詞的運用了解甚少，特別是在職場工作中的小人行徑。

透過質性研究方法，我的論文試圖更深入了解與職場小人有關的道德標準，特別是職場小人的不道德行為表現類型。研究結果提出六種不同的小人行為(巧取豪奪、虛有其表、含沙射影、結黨營私、獨善其身、推諉卸責)，我更進一步提出以上小人行為違反的儒家道德標準：圖利、失禮與不仁。本研究的結果協助我們了解小人在當代職場的不道德行為表現。

關鍵字：小人、倫理、職場、儒家文化

## Abstract

The expression of *xiaoren* (小人) can be traced back to the pre-Qin period. The original meaning refers to the common people, as a contrasting idea to the rulers. The Confucians borrowed this expression and gave it an ethical connotation, also as a contrast to the ethical idea of *junzi* (君子). The Han Dynasty's policy of exclusively reverenced Confucianism allowed the expression of *xiaoren* to be fully integrated into the everyday Han-language. The expression of *xiaoren*, thus, serves as a foundational vocabulary of Confucian ethics. However, our understanding of this expression and the ethical connotation has not been systematically examined nowadays, which is particularly true in the workplaces.

In a qualitative research examining the moral standards associating with workplace *xiaoren*, I identify a total of six behaviors of *xiaoren* (taking advantages from others, creating a false impression, aspersing others, coalition, disregarding others and shirking responsibility). These types of *xiaoren* behaviors can further classified into three unethical categories, namely abused, misused and underused. This study extends our understanding of the ethical standards and their behavioral manifestations. in the contemporary workplaces.

Keywords: *Xiaoren*, Ethics, Workplace behavior, Confucianism

## Table of Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Literature Review .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Methods.....</b>	<b>8</b>
3.1	Samples and sampling.....	8
3.2	Data collection and interview procedure.....	11
3.3	Data analysis.....	13
<b>4</b>	<b>Results .....</b>	<b>16</b>
4.1	Taking advantages from others.....	16
4.2	Creating a false impression .....	20
4.3	Aspersing others .....	24
4.4	Coalition .....	33
4.5	Disregarding others.....	36
4.6	Shirking responsibility .....	46
<b>5</b>	<b>Discussion and Future Research Recommendations .....</b>	<b>57</b>
5.1	Discussion.....	57
5.2	Research limitations and future recommendations.....	60
	<b>References.....</b>	<b>62</b>

## List of Table

1	Information of Interviewees .....	10
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## List of Figures

1	Data Structure Diagram .....	14
2	Data Structure Diagram (Countined).....	15



## 1 Introduction

The word “*xiaoren*” (小人) is has been used in Chinese language for more than three thousand years. It originally served as a symmetry concept with “*junzi*” (君子), representing the ruler and the ruled people in ancient classics of the early Qin Dynasty (Pan, 1997). This concept was redefined by Confucius because of the needs of educating the people (Yu, 1987). By adding moral connotation to it, *junzi* and *xiaoren* became two opposite sides of moral scales. While Confucianism plays an important role in the Orient culture, the concepts of *junzi* and *xiaoren* were also deeply embedded in the thinking concept of the Orientals.

The concept of *junzi* and *xiaoren* also follows the line of traditional culture and penetrated into aspects of the daily life of the people through socialization (Redfield, 1956). The meaning of this concept has gradually been given new meanings with time and how this term is used by people in differing period of time. Therefore, became the concept that can be discussed separately from *junzi* and even being endowed another relative concept, “*guiren*” (貴人).

Although the concept of *xiaoren* has been widely used in the daily life of orient people, the scope of research on this topic was still limited. Although the concept of *xiaoren* has been widely used in the daily life of orient people, the scope of research on this topic was still limited. Most of the past research were the discussion of the difference and the connotation between *junzi* and *xiaoren* (Liang, 2008, Pines 2017; Wang & Zheng, 2008). Also, for *junzi* and *xiaoren* are unique concepts from Confucianism, there are no corresponding words in Western culture that can fully explain their

connotations. There are also studies on the translation methods for *junzi* and *xiaoren*. By analyzing different translation methods to suggest the method of minimizing the bias of translation<sup>1</sup> (Feng, 2011; Pang, 2015).

Many studies are mostly aimed at the discussion of *junzi*. In contrast, relatively few discussions of studies included *xiaoren* in specific contexts, especially in the context of leadership in the workplace (Liu, 2002). Since The concept of *xiaoren* has changed after it has penetrated into the daily life of people, as well as previous studies have relatively less focused on the discussion of organizational background. This research aims to find out the behavior and characteristics of *xiaoren* in the organizational environment nowadays.

Such an issue is important for at least two reasons. First, this study extends Liu's research (2002). He proposed that the Chinese people follow a duality thinking framework when evaluating leaders in terms of *junzi* and *xiaoren*. However, he used the *junzi-xiaoren* as merely a conceptual and implied framework, while this study seeks to explicitly conduct an empirical study on the contemporary meaning of *xiaoren* in the workplaces. Second, *xiaoren* refers to the people who behave unethically, thus, *xiaoren* will have a negative impact in the workplace under the context of the organization. Therefore, studying how to identify *xiaoren* will help the organizations to promote ethical ways of working.

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<sup>1</sup> This research adopts the suggestion of this study, adopting transliteration for the translation *junzi* and *xiaoren*.

## 2 Literature Review

The origin of *xiaoren* (小人) can be traced back to the Eastern Zhou Dynasty (700-221 B.C.). It is a concept symmetrical to the *junzi* (君子), which means governor and people (Pan, 1997). This concept has been recorded a lot in ancient classics<sup>2</sup> and this symmetrical relationship has gradually evolved from the relationship between the governors and people to the differences of social classes. However, in the late Eastern Zhou Dynasty, the culture system<sup>3</sup> was destroyed due to the ruler of fiefs conquests each other<sup>4</sup>, causing this symmetrical relationship was also affected (Pan, 1997).

During the Warring States Period, like many philosophers of the same period, Confucius traveled around various fiefs, preaching his philosophy, advocating rulers of all fiefs to implement the governance of “*Ren*” (仁). He redefined the meaning of *junzi* by adding a moral connotation to it (Yu, 1987). Thus, the concept of *junzi* becomes a central part to his lecture in enlightening his audience. Since then, *junzi* not only represented the governors but also people who act morally. The corresponding concept of *xiaoren* became a negative image of moral actors at the same time.

The Warring States Period ended by the *Qin* unifying all the fiefs, then overthrown by the emperor *Gaozu* of *Han*, who established *Han* Dynasty. Under the rule of the *Han* Dynasty, the emperor exclusively revered Confucianism and deposed other philosophies to consolidate his sovereign. Thus, Confucianism became a mainstream

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<sup>2</sup> “Esteemed Documents”, also known as *Shangshu* (尚書) and “The Classic of Poetry”, also known as *Shijing* (詩經)

<sup>3</sup> *Fengjian* (封建) system was a political governance system applied in ancient China.

<sup>4</sup> Warring states period was an era of the rulers of the fiefs ignored the existence of the Emperor (*Tianzi*) and showed their ambitions by conquering each other.

philosophy and had a profound influence on Chinese culture (Li, 2006).

Confucius's statements were recorded and compiled by his disciples into a classic, the Analects. The Analects seemed to be a right place to seek the characteristics of *xiaoren*. There is a total of 24 places where *xiaoren* is mentioned, 18 of which are for comparison with *junzi* while *junzi* itself were mentioned 107 times. Such a disparity is originated from the educational purpose of Confucius. When Confucius was preaching his ideas, his purpose was to educate others to be a *junzi*. The statements about *xiaoren* were to create a contradictory image with *junzi* (Ma, 2013) as contrast rhetoric. Such rhetoric in mandarin makes the core idea more salient (Yao, 1970). This kind of rhetoric was used as early as "The Classic of Poetry" (Shih, 2018).

Although *xiaoren* in the Analects serve a rhetorical purpose and seems to be inseparable from the discussion of *junzi*, we can still infer the characteristics of *xiaoren* from Confucius's statements of *junzi*. According to Confucius, the three characteristics of *xiaoren* are pursuing interests, misunderstanding of interpersonal relationships and not fulfilling the innate responsibility. Each will be explained below.

Firstly, Confucius would like to educate people to have righteousness in their minds, thus, he portrayed *junzi* as an image that values righteousness, whereas *xiaoren* values pursuing interests.<sup>5</sup> This also makes the later generations of Neo-Confucian scholars

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<sup>5</sup> "The mind of the superior man (*junzi*) is conversant with righteousness; the mind of the mean man (*xiaoren*) is conversant with gain." (Chapter XVI); "The superior man (*junzi*) thinks of the sanctions of law; the small man (*xiaoren*) thinks of favors which he may receive." (Chapter XI); The translation of this statement and the following statements come from Legge, J. (1971). *Confucian analects*.

consider the pursuit of profit as an unethical behavior, if someone takes profit as the goal, he/she will be regarded as low-class (Lehman, 2006; Yung, 2008).

Secondly, Confucius also advocated people to follow the regulations of rituals. In the Zhou Dynasty, there were many rituals with strict regulations to observe when dealing with other people, such as recruitment, funeral, marriage, etc. Although these rituals with regulations originally used as a tool to maintain social order (Xu, 1963), Confucius added the concept of morality to it whereas advocating people to treat the morality as a norm to follow when getting along with others (Hwang, 2002). Therefore, *junzi* represents the people who only consider how to act morally and decently when dealing with people. On the contrary, *xiaoren* does not care about the norms that should be followed when establishing relationships with others, for the relationships between *xiaoren* are based on the goal of seeking interests<sup>6</sup>.

Thirdly, Confucius believes moral cultivation is the innate responsibility (天命) of people<sup>7</sup>. The moral cultivation of Confucianism refers to the promotion of benevolence to society starting from the family while observing the norms of interpersonal relations (Hwang, 2002). Although moral cultivation is a difficult task, even *junzi* have defects in performing it, but *xiaoren* doesn't care about it at all<sup>8</sup>. This difference is more

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<sup>6</sup> “The superior man (*junzi*) is affable, but not adulatory; the mean man (*xiaoren*) is adulatory, but not affable.”; “The superior man (*junzi*) is catholic and not partisan. The mean man (*xiaoren*) is partisan and not catholic.”

<sup>7</sup> “Without recognizing the *innate responsibility*, it is impossible to be a superior man (*junzi*).” The original translation of *innate responsibility* was “ordinances of Heaven”. Considering the differences in beliefs between Eastern and Western cultures, “ordinances of Heaven” was rewritten as “innate responsibility”, which is closer to Confucius’ original meaning.

<sup>8</sup> “Superior men (*junzi*), and yet not always virtuous, there have been, alas! But there never has been a mean man (*xiaoren*), and, at the same time, virtuous.”

obvious in times of poverty<sup>9</sup>.

In the Analects, the philosophies of Confucius were systematically elaborated and recorded which is in line with modern scholars' definition of “macro-tradition”. After the cultural essence of the macro-tradition penetrates into the lives of ordinary people through socialization, family education, celebration ceremonies or custom norms, etc., it will form a concept and value corresponding or derivative from the macro-tradition, that is, “micro-tradition” (Redfield, 1956). After the concept of *xiaoren* penetrated to the folks' level, it became a vocabulary used by folks. The vocabulary usually acquires additional meaning when being used and, therefore, gradually changes its original meaning (Feng, 2011). The change can be seen that “*guiren*” ( 貴人 ) as another corresponding concept appeared at the discussion of *xiaoren*. Unlike *junzi*, *guiren* does not refer to people with high moral standards, but refers to people who have positively influential in the course of life (Tsai, 2000). This shows that in addition to referring people who have no moral integrity, *xiaoren* also acquired the meaning of the person who has negative influence in our course of life.

Since *xiaoren* is also representing the person who has negative influence in our course of life, many coping strategies emerged against it. Such as wearing a tail ring, placing crystal decorations, or applying a ritual of “Beating the Petty Person” (Liu, 2009), etc. Although these coping strategies seem to lack scientific proof, they can be seemed as lay theories that came from old sayings (Dach-Gruschow, Au & Liao ,2011; Stich &

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<sup>9</sup> “The superior man (*junzi*) may indeed have to endure want, but the mean man (*xiaoren*), when he is in want, gives way to unbridled license.”

Nichols, 1992). This way of applying coping strategies of supernatural forces greatly deviates from Confucianism, which believes in its existence but not discuss it (Hwang, 2002).

It can be seen from the above that the definition of *xiaoren* appears to have certain differences from ancient times to the present. Through cultural socialization, the concept of *xiaoren* has penetrated into our daily life. We often call those who have a negative influential in our life, while everyone has different definitions and coping strategies. Therefore, this study aims to find the answer of “What is the definition and characteristics of *xiaoren* nowadays?”



### 3 Methods

#### 3.1 Samples and Sampling

In the absence of a unified definition of *xiaoren* in the current era, this study aims to get the characteristics and behaviors of *xiaoren* via interviews with the victims. This research engages in induction to summarize the experience of *xiaoren* in the workplace and find out the definition of *xiaoren* in this era.

As the aim is about *xiaoren* in the workplace, I used purposive sampling to increase the effectiveness of the sample, along with identifying people with work experience to suit the study (Patton, 2002). With the criteria for choosing an interviewee, heterogeneous sampling is an excellent form. I can achieve a greater understanding by taking subjects from different aspects related to the workplace. For instance, industries, ranks, work tenure, gender and age (Etikan, 2016). The concept of *xiaoren* originates from Confucianism. Therefore, Taiwan is an ideal place to find our interviewee since Confucianism has considerable influence in Taiwanese culture.

In oriental society, group harmony is a very crucial value (Bedford & Hwang, 2003). This value might affect interviewees to avoid identifying *xiaoren* or criticizing their behaviors within interviews, lest to make themselves appear to be people who disrupt group harmony. Thus, in this study, I approached interviewees through my personal network. Because in oriental society, interviewing acquaintances can better obtain information that people do not want to disclose when facing unfamiliar interviewers (Tsang, 1998; see also Hwang, 1987).

The sample size is based on the concept of saturation which the collection stops when no new information is observed from the interview. (Guest et al., 2006) A total of 22 people was interviewed in this study. Interviewees are from different industries (e.g., Catering, education, service, insurance, electronics, logistics, retail, computer information industries and public institutions), work tenure (from less than a year to 36 years with an average of 12 years and 2 months), ranks (12 out of 22 are supervisor, while 10 out of 22 are for non-supervisor), gender (50% for men and women) and ages (from 23 to 56 with an average of 34.4 years old).



No.	Age	Gender	Industry	Tenure	Supervisor
#1	24	Male	Service	3	N
#2	23	Male	Education	2	N
#3	26	Male	Catering	1 Year, 6 Month	Y
#4	56	Female	Education	36	Y
#5	23	Female	Education	10 Month	N
#6	25	Male	Insurance	5	Y
#7	28	Male	Insurance	3 Year, 6 Month	N
#8	25	Female	Service	1	N
#9	23	Male	Electronics	4	N
#10	24	Female	Service	1 Year, 9 Month	N
#11	24	Male	Education	1	N
#12	42	Female	Retail	26	Y
#13	40	Female	Electronics	16	Y
#14	49	Male	Logistics	27	Y
#15	44	Female	Electronics	24	Y
#16	44	Female	Electronics	24	Y
#17	52	Male	Information	26	Y
#18	41	Female	Information	20	Y
#19	35	Male	Public Institution	16	Y
#20	37	Male	Public Institution	11	N
#21	33	Female	Public Institution	6	Y
#22	39	Female	Public Institution	13	N

Table 1: Information of Interviewees

### 3.2 Data Collection and Interview Procedure

The interviews for collecting data were conducted on a one-on-one basis, that is, one interviewer and one interviewee. All interviews were completed during the non-working hours of the interviewee, including weekday evenings and weekends. Most of the interviews were conducted in the classrooms of National Taiwan Normal University, while the rest were in restaurants, coffee shops, interviewees' home, or an independent meeting room at the interviewee's workplace. The average interview time was half an hour and was recorded with the consent of the interviewee to facilitate subsequent production of verbatim scripts. Regarding the experience of *xiaoren*, each interviewee provides one to five cases, with an average of two.

The critical incident technique is chosen as my data collecting method since this study is focusing on *xiaoren* and their behaviors in the workplace, which is a "certain important facts concerning behavior" under a "defined situation" (Flanagan, 1954). Thus, I conducted semi-structured interviews in this research to guide the direction of the interviews based on established questions. Semi-structured interviews can also allow interviewees to present more realistic feelings (Hu, 1996).

The interviews started after informing the interviewee's rights and asking for the consent of recording. All interviews began with the same question: "In the present or past working experience, have you or your friends ever encountered *xiaoren* in the workplace?". If the interviewee responded positively, I then asked the follow-up question: "Can you share what had happened in detail?" to obtain the comprehensive

event of the experience of encountering *xiaoren*, including the time, persons involved and the course of the incident. After the interviewee finished describing the event, I would summarize the event to ensure that we have the same perception to the event. These procedures allowed me to have an unbiased full comprehension of the interviewee's *xiaoren* experience.

After grasping all the relevant details of the interviewee's *xiaoren* experience, I guided the interviewee to conduct a more in-depth discussion of how *xiaoren* influenced them (Flanagan, 1954) by asking: "In the event just mentioned, what is the key that makes you recognized this was a *xiaoren* experience?". Then I asked the interviewee: "Why do you think that *xiaoren* would act like this?", "What makes *xiaoren* could act like this?" to make the interviewee analyze the behaviors of *xiaoren*. The purpose was to allow interviewees to have a more profound portrayal of *xiaoren* in the event.

I would ask the questions like: "How did you feel when encountering these behaviors at the time?", "What was your response to these behaviors? Why?" and "What did you do with regard to the emotions caused by such behavior?" to clarify the impact of the event on the victim and the response to effected work matters and emotions. After having a complete understanding of the event, I would ask: "Do you have any other events you can share?" to get as many events as possible.

Before the end of the interview, I would ask the interviewee to provide a general definition of the characteristics and behaviors of *xiaoren*. The whole process ended

after inquiring the information about the interviewee, such as age, gender, whether he/she is a supervisor and the total working experience.

### 3.3 Data Analysis

A total of 42 events of *xiaoren* were provided by 22 interviewees, all events were comprehensively reviewed to find common places. After several rounds of review, six common elements of *xiaoren* event were found, namely (1) the *xiaoren*'s action, (2) the advantage taken by *xiaoren* in this action, (3) *xiaoren*'s motivation, (4) the victim's loss, (5) the innocence of the victim and (6) the reason that unable the victim to fight back. These common aspects can be seen as the six pillars of events of *xiaoren*, for the lack of any aspect will make the feature of *xiaoren* in the event become insignificant.

Some studies have pointed out that under the influence of Confucianism, the standard of evaluating others for Chinese people is not just at the behavioral level, but rather an implicit level of motivation (Liu, 2003). Therefore, I chose to process the aspect of *xiaoren*'s motivation and behavior further. The aspects of *xiaoren*'s motivation and behavior were extracted and separately compiled onto a card. Subsequently, all the cards representing all the events were screened and categorized based on similarity. After screening, 6 types of *xiaoren* were categorized, namely (1) taking advantages from others, (2) creating a false impression, (3) aspersing others, (4) coalition, (5) disregarding others and (6) shirking responsibility. These six types can be further classified in to three categories, namely abused, misused and underused.

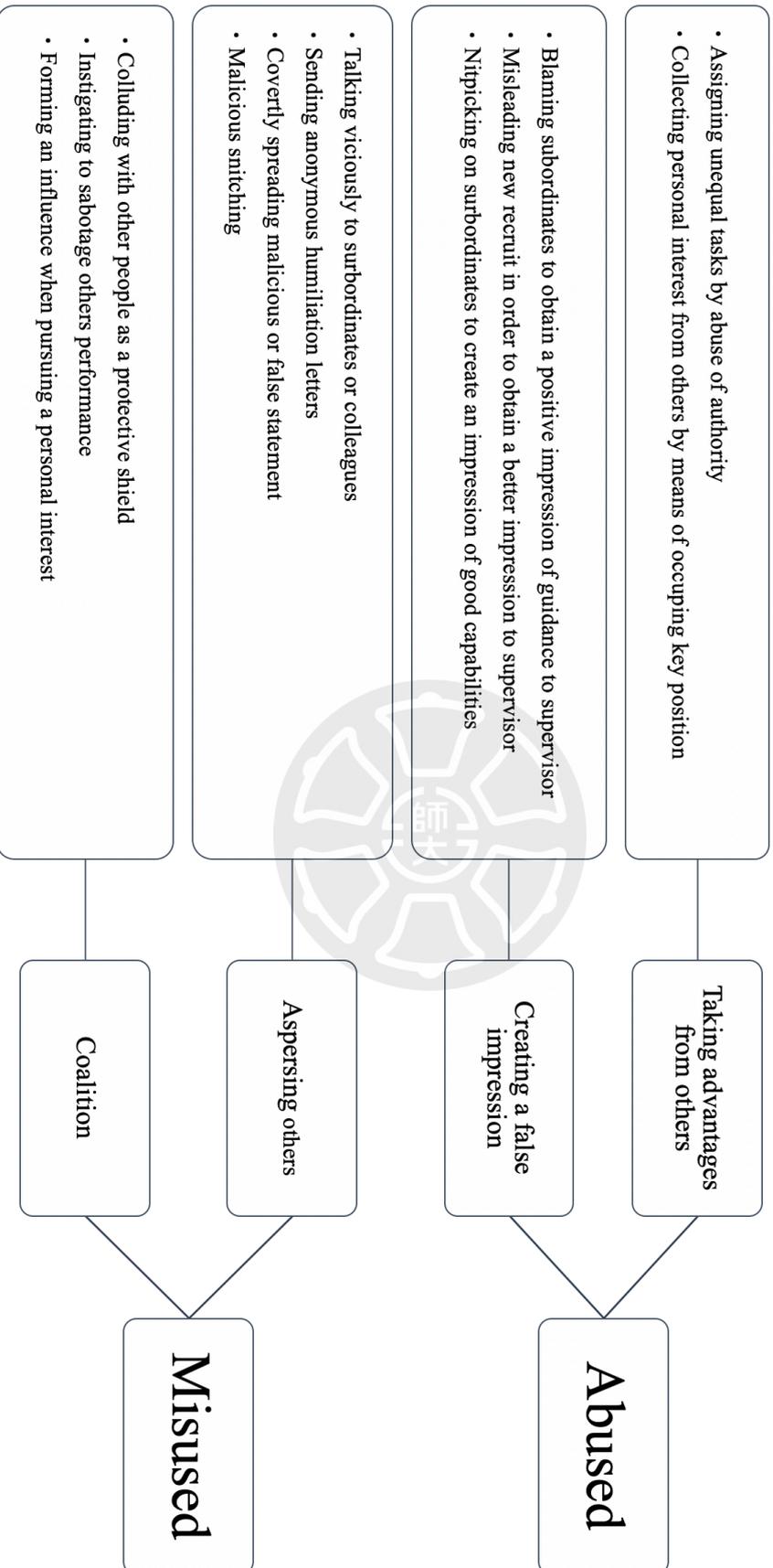


Figure 1: Data Structure Diagram

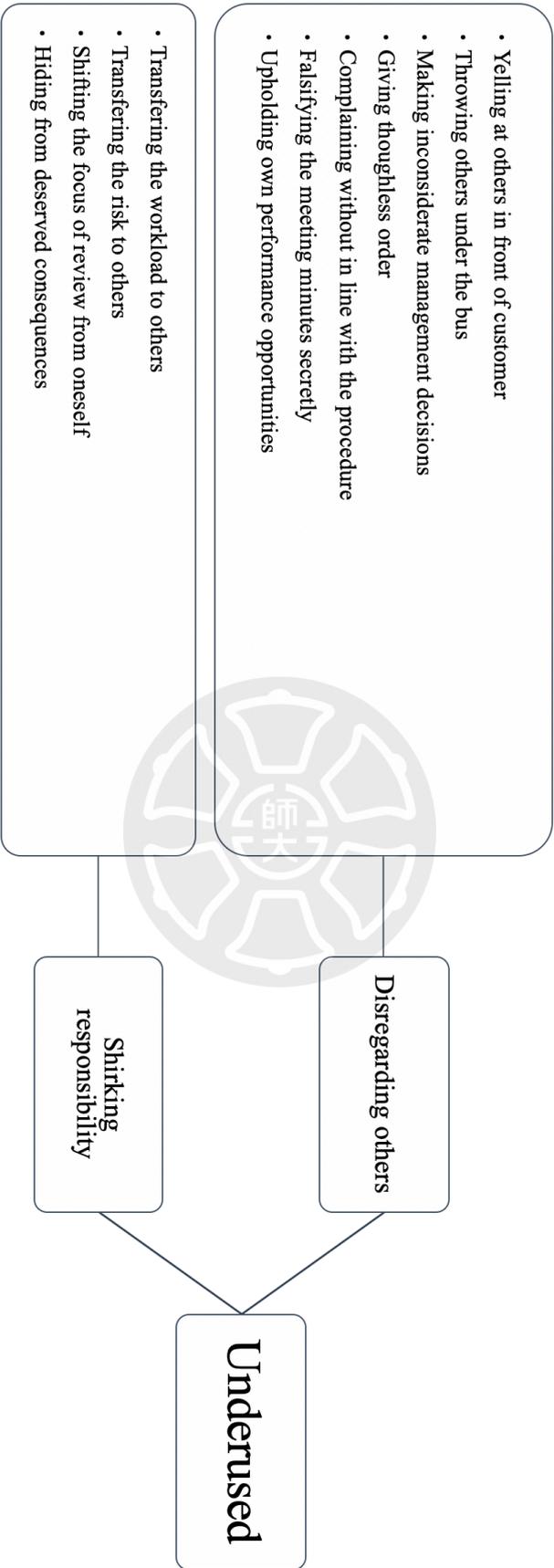


Figure 2: Data Structure Diagram (Continued)

## 4 Results

Corresponding to research question, I identify six types of *xiaoren* in the workplace from the interviews, namely (1) taking advantages from others, (2) creating a false impression, (3) aspersing others, (4) coalition, (5) disregarding others and (6) shirking responsibility.

The above 6 types can be further categorized into 3 characteristics that people will be recognized as *xiaoren* in the workplace, namely abused, misused and underused, which are considered morally wrong under the context of orient culture.

It is worth noting that the identification of *xiaoren* is based on their behaviors, rather than the negative consequences that *xiaoren* brings to the victim (of *xiaoren*). This is partly due to fact that the presence of *xiaoren* does not necessarily lead to negative consequences, though it does create some emotional disturbance such as feeling annoying.

### 4.1 Taking advantages from others

Some people are considered as *xiaoren* because they abused the authority granted by the organization to take advantage of others. For instance, organization often sets up key managerial positions or assigns critical tasks to an employee to fulfill the larger organizational purpose. This employee would not be considered as doing the wrong thing if he or she does the job right. However, he or she would be considered as *xiaoren* if he or she abuses the authority given to the critical tasks assigned to him or her.

Our interviewee (#2) who provided his experience when he works as a part-time in a cram school. He stated that some of the senior employees took advantage for himself by the power of distributing the task. He said that full-time employees have the power to assign certain tasks, such as handing out flyers. When that senior full-time employee distributed the task of handing out flyers, he always kept the best spot for himself and assigned the harder spot to part-time employees:

*“The bad spots had really bad transportation. Or let's say that the quantity was huge. And the veteran staff would distribute you to a bad spot.... This should be considered as an experience of encountering a xiaoren.”* (Translated)

“比較不好的點，可能是交通不方便啊！或是說那個（發放傳單）量可能就是很多那樣。...就是會就是已經老鳥的人，他就派一個比較就是不這麼好的點給你。...這應該算是比較比較符合犯小人。”<sup>10</sup>

This makes him feel very unfair, because this kind of abusive use of power make those full-time employees with relatively high salaries always occupy the easiest task, while those part-time employees like him who can only have the further and inconvenient spot to distribute flyers, receiving relatively low salaries.

The abusive use of power will bring negative effects to the company. In addition to creates an unfair situation among employees, the abusive behaviors often make

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<sup>10</sup> In order to avoid the content of the translated interviews from causing controversy on understanding, the original verbatim version is provided.

employees opt to adopt a more “pragmatic” solution and thus co-engage in this corruptive behavior. Facing someone who abused power for his or her interest often makes others to consider this abnormal use of power as the way it is. Thus, people are often forced to become morally disengaged by complying with this wrong-but-working practice.

One of the interviewees (#17) mentioned his experience of *xiaoren* in many companies. He pointed out that many companies, large and small, have positions of assistants. Their ranks are not high and responsible for trivial routine tasks between company internal affairs like travel reimbursement or apply for petty cash fund. Although they have no power to make major decisions of the company, they can affect the smoothness of operations:

*“Those assistants would take advantage of her position and try to mooch. Let’s say if you want things to go smoothly, and you need the petty cash or loan in order to finish your work. You just need her to do you a little favor. There, she would take advantage of her position and mooch from you.”* (Translated)

*“那種小助理他某個程度都會用他職務上的方便，去卡一些小油，如果說你要運作的很順遂，例如說你要借貨、申請零用金或是做一些例行性事務，這時候缺她小小的動作又不可，那他就會運用他的職務去卡。”*

If the employees of the company do not receive the full support of these assistants, they will encounter many inconveniences when performing company business, on the

contrary, those employees who have assistants in their favor will have a very smooth business process. For instance, if the employees want to apply for the meeting room they need, they may need to wait a few days longer than the employees who have the full support of assistants. For the times that meeting room is in short supply, they might not even be able to get one. Therefore, when there are such assistants who create this "normal" order in the company, in order to get their favor, it will be necessary for employees to spend extra time and effort to try their best to please them. The situation will be even worse when this "normal" order becomes a competition, which will cannibalize more company resources. Our interviewee (#17) gave a practical example of this:

*“At this time, there are lots of people trying to please the assistants. For instance, the free Hello Kitty toy from McDonald’s was a big hit. That assistant liked it as well, and the engineers would skip work to get in line for her. To please her.”* (Translated)

*“這種時候就會有很多人會去巴結助理。例如說那時候麥當勞會送的 hello kitty 造成熱潮，大家都想搜集整套整套這樣子，然後那個助理很喜歡，工程師還會翹班去幫她排隊買來送她、巴結她這樣子。”*

In addition to this kind of affiliation relationship due to the task interdependence, there is a chance for such *xiaoren* to appear in a team that is without an affiliation relationship. An interviewee (#7) engaged in insurance sales said that his company allows multiple people to handle a case at the same time, which allows them to take care of the same customer together. But some people will secretly harvest the fruits of

their joint operations at the last moment, which is the time when the customer signing the contract, they will meet the customer without letting others know, sometimes even lying to customers that another salesperson could not be here for some reason:

*“Because we are allowed to handle a case with others. We can share our sales volume. Some people are really selfish. Our work is based on contracts. Who has their name on the contract, who got the case and the sales. But then, he (xiaoren) would visit the client alone privately and keep all the sales to himself. I’ve heard what’s even worse was that, when the clients asked why others did not show up, that salesperson lied and said, ‘Oh, he’s not feeling well.’ or ‘He’s busy with other stuff.’” (Translated)*

“因為我們的業務工作是可以，多個經手人，業績可以做分享。那有些人可能比較自私，他就會可能就會自己獨立去，把那個業績全部都收起來，這樣子。我們我們的業務工作是會寫契約的，那契約上面寫誰，業績就歸誰，那有可能他跟客戶就是自己私下約，但是沒有跟其他的經手人講的話，他可能就自己把業績吞掉。我有聽過是比較恐怖的是，客戶可能會問說，欸，為什麼其他人沒來，那他可能說，可能有事情，或是身體就是不舒服。”

Because the company only evaluate the performance by name on the contract, this makes it impossible for other salespeople in the joint operation to appeal.

#### 4.2 Creating a false impression

Impression management is a common thing in an organization, people will deliberately design an impression to influence how they perceived by others (Bolino & Turnley,

2003) to get certain benefit (Gardner & Martinko, 1998). But when someone creates an impression to benefit themselves by means of harming others, he or she will be regarded as *xiaoren*. An interviewee (#8) provided a case about her first few days in a company as an admin staff. She was assigned to a senior employee as a guide. In order to show the appearance of actively leading the newcomer to get the praise of the higher-level manager, her guide did nothing but sternly blamed her for any errors with the operation process:

*“I was there probably only for two to three days, so I didn’t know anything. After I finished the document, I went to my supervisor. He was so mad and kept pointing out where I did wrong, and how come I was doing it that way. I think he was the xiaoren to me. If he was pretending to keep an eye on me, the boss would think that he was behaving and complement him, thinking he’s so good at training newbies.”* (Translated)

“我剛到職兩天還三天而已，所以有很多東西我都不會。所以我是 key 完之後，我就拿我那份文件去給那個主管看，然後那個主管就是一直很生氣的跟我說，我哪裡說不對做不對，為什麼妳不會這樣...我覺得他就是我的小人...如果他有去盯我的話，大 boss 就會覺得他有在做事，然後就會讚許他這樣，就覺得他很會帶新人這樣。”

Another interviewee provided a similar case about a voluntary soldier he met in his compulsory military service, who had stayed longer thus was a senior to him. They were assigned together as a task team and this senior soldier was responsible to guide him to get familiar with the tasks. But soon he discovered that this voluntary soldier

would giving him incomplete instructions while guiding him, waited for his mistake and seized the chance to report that mistake to their supervisor. By this kind of snitching behavior, that soldier trying to create an impression that she is more capable than our interviewee (#3):

*“There was a volunteer soldier in the task formation, she performed the task with me.... In the beginning, she said that she will instruct me if there is something I didn't understand. But soon I discovered that she would only give me incomplete instructions intentionally, and then she would go to my supervisor to snitch my mistake.”*

(Translated)

*“業務分配是有一個志願役的士兵，跟我一起分配。...然後她會去跟我主管說，我哪裡沒做、沒做好或什麼樣子... 她一開始就是說，我哪裡不懂，她就會跟我講，可是她會留一手...可能她怕她跟我講太多，我會超過她那種感覺，然後會去打一些小報告...我如果漏做的話，她會跟上面打小報告，上面就會可能就會唸我。”*

The above cases are both sacrificing the new recruits to create a good impression of themselves. Organizations assign new employees to senior employees to guide them and make them familiar with the work content faster. If they train their novices in a proper way that meets the organizational expectation to be appreciated by their supervisors, they will not be considered as *xiaoren*. On the contrary, if they abuse the authority given to them by the organization to achieve the same goal by hurting others, they will be regarded as *xiaoren*.

Regarding the case of using the authority assigned by the organization to create one's own impression, another interviewee (#18) complained that her supervisor's behaviors made the entire department feel very annoyed. She said that her supervisor likes nitpick on every project, sometimes when the project is too perfect for him to carp, he will lose his temper for no reason. Even in the interdepartmental meetings, he will still be carping and directly say to his subordinates that the idea is not good enough. Such behavior causes great distress to colleagues. Through this behavior, her supervisor wants to make everybody in the organization to think he has the capability:

*“It was a collaboration between two departments. The other department didn't want the boss to get involved. However, the boss would try every way to pick on you. Yet, your project still has to proceed. The boss would know eventually. Or perhaps, your project wasn't going on quite smoothly, and the boss would say something sarcastic during the cross-department meeting. ‘You're saying it wrong. You should have present it in what ways!’ He would give you instruction in front of other people because he want others to think that he's actually productive.”* (Translated)

“可能是一個跨部門合作，然後，別的部門都希望老闆不要 involve 進來，但是呢，老闆就會無所不用其極的去戳你，就是說，因為你的案子還是會走嘛。然後，到最後他還是會知道。...然後就說，你們可能這個案子做得不好，或者是說在跨部門的會議當中，直接嗆你。就是說，你這個說法是錯的，你應該要怎麼怎麼講，就在大家的面前就指導你...他想要讓別人覺得，他其實是有所表現的。或者是，他其實是有想法的，有作為的。”

This kind of case is also abuse of the authority granted by the organization to establish a good impression of himself. If the supervisor performs his duties properly and picks out the imperfect places sincerely in order to perfect each project, he will not be regarded as *xiaoren*. However, his behavior of carping has brought more redundant burdens to his subordinates. Even when the subordinates did their jobs is too perfect for him to carp, they still have to endure with his bad temper, thus, this supervisor was identified by our interviewee as *xiaoren*.

#### 4.3      Aspersing others

Most of the interviewees mentioned aspersing others as a common behavior of *xiaoren* during the interview, including speaking viciously to others and covertly spreading malicious or false statement. Speaking viciously to others refers to a harsh and hurtful statement in direct one-on-on conversations, which will do damage to the victim at the moment of speech. Covertly spreading malicious or false statements refers to a malicious or forged statement that presents to others than the victim, causing the victim to be unable to make an argument against the statement but also be annoyed about whether the others will believe the statement or not.

In the case of speaking viciously to others, our interviewee (#8) provided an experience she encountered a shop manager with a bitter tongue while doing a part-time job. She was a salesperson for a clothing store which has a very strict demand for the looks of the staff. Once she brought a small snack to work and suffered sour words from the store manager:

*“When we have our lunch or dinner at the office, we can’t eat too much. We can only eat food like Subway. Sometimes I’ll sneak some snacks in, but if the supervisor found out, she’ll be really sarcastic. She’ll say, ‘You still going to eat that? Didn’t you gain 2 kilograms already? Customers wouldn’t want to buy clothes from you like this.’ I think for me, this can be considered as xiaoren as well. She could have been milder, yet she always chose to use offensive language to us.” (Translated)*

*“我們在公司吃午餐或晚餐的時候，我們都不能吃太多，或說我們只能吃 subway 那種的...我可能會偷帶小點心來吃，然後被那個主管看到的時候，她就會酸說，妳還要再吃喔，妳體重不是已經增加兩公斤了嘛，這樣這樣顧客不會想跟妳買衣服這樣，我也覺得對我來說，也算是犯小人。...可以婉轉一點，但她都是很強力的用比較不好聽的話語對我們”*

Our interviewee pointed out the hurtful words against her as the key to identifying the manager as a *xiaoren*. Although she understood that the store manager is for the sake of sales in the store, it would be much better if the manager could express it more euphemistically.

In addition to pursuing the organizational goals, there is also a case in which *xiaoren* humiliates others to satisfy his vanity. One interviewee (#1) mentioned that he became the subject of verbal attacks because of his college degree. *Xiaoren* in this case has a relatively low level of education and preparing for the police college, He humiliated our interviewee (#1) by asking questions that involving expertise but he already knows

the answer to but pretends he didn't. In other words, that *xiaoren* waits for the opportunity to attack the knowledge blind spot of our interviewee (#1).

*“He'll take some test items from their cram school and pretend to ask me questions. Some of them I couldn't answer because it's been a while since last time I used it. Then, he'll say stuff like, 'Well, that's all a college student knows?' sarcastically. He just grabbed some questions occasionally to bother you and said, 'That's it, pretty easy, isn't?' He actually knew the answer already. So that when I didn't know the answers, he could throw some sarcasm to me.”* (Translated)

“他就會拿一些，可能他們那種補習班的題目，然後假裝就假裝要問問題，然後來問我。有的是因為我根本就是太久沒有用就不會。他就說『啊讀大學生就這樣而已。』就是會故意有事沒事就找一些問題來問你，然後說『這不是這樣而已嘛』他其實自己也會。然後我不會的時候，他就可以酸我這樣子。”

Although our interviewee said that this incident did not have any real impact on him. After all, he only stayed for two to three months, but there are still some emotional fluctuations at the moment.

There is another special case which is not humiliated by verbal but text, a letter. Although it is carried out in a letter, it is still a direct one-on-one humiliation to the victim. Our interviewee (#4) mentioned a terrifying *xiaoren* experience that she started to receive several anonymous humiliation letters after blocking the promotion chance of a greedy person:

*“He (xiaoren) wanted to be the director badly. But I just wouldn’t let him be. So he started to sue me. He wrote poison pen letters. He’s really good at composing poison pen letters. He sent it everywhere. Just because I did not approve of him becoming a director. Why would I give someone the opportunity if he’s not suitable? And he wrote poison pen letters all the time and sued people.”* (Translated)

“他(小人)就是很想當主任，我就是不給他當主任，於是他就開始告我，到處告我。然後他都是寫黑函，他是非常會寫黑函的人，他就到處寫黑函...就因為我沒有給他當，啊我給一個沒有主任資格的人當，然後他就這樣告我，然後一天到晚就在學校裡面寫黑函告人家。”

Although the sender can infer by the content, there were still no legal actions can be taken without direct evidence. In addition, all the people she asked for an interview for this position received related intimidation, which also resulted in no suitable candidate for this position.

Compared with speaking viciously to others, covertly spreading malicious or false statement are more troublesome to defend against, because victims can only find out that they are under attack after the incident has already happened. An interviewee (#13) provided her *xiaoren* experience about this, she said that she had a business trip to the factory to solve a product that had a production problem. Since the product was scheduled to produce at night, she asked the accompanying engineers to go to the factory to find the problem with her during that time, those engineers don’t want to

spend their non-working hours at the factory but had to follow the order from her. After the business trip, one day her colleague told her that something bad had happened one day:

*“When your colleagues disagreed with your management or your requests, they might post it on Facebook about how awful you were. To let out some emotions. Those criticisms, or insults online, were mostly name-calling. They weren’t focusing on the incident, but on me. So to me, this is the xiaoren.”* (Translated)

*“同事在對你的管理方式或者是你的要求，他覺得他不認同的時候，他們可能會在 Facebook 上面，就會講說，妳有多糟糕、多糟糕，就是有些情緒上面的發洩。...他們在 Facebook 上的批評，是比較多是針對我個人的人身攻擊。那比較不是針對事情，所以對我來說，這是犯小人。”*

After this incident, she said that on business trips afterward, the engineers show no willingness if they know that she will also be with them. In addition to this incident, the interviewee (#13) also provided an experience of which *xiaoren* of this behavior is from the outside of the organization:

*“There are always competitors for a salesperson, for example, there are substitutes for the thing you sell. So when the customers have to choose from you or another company, you are in a competition. Some salespeople might spread some rumors within the industry or some gossip about the other salesperson. They’ll change the image for the customers, and make the customer doubting about whether to choose*

*another company. Or perhaps they'll say to the customers, 'Let me tell you something, their product has a really big issue at the manufacturing company. They even caused a halt in production at the factory. Their products are poor in quality and dysfunctional. Right, so you should really reconsider using their products.' Then, he got me out of this client because they've already left a bad image of you and your company."*

(Translated)

“業務一定會有競爭對手，比如說你賣你賣的東西一定會有替代品，所以當他可以選擇你或另外一家B的時候，你們就是一個競爭關係...有的業務操作方式，他可能會講一些業界的八卦，或是這個人的八卦給妳聽，讓妳去改變對這個人的印象，那你也許會想說是不是在選擇另外一家會比較好。或是說：『我跟你說，他們家的產品在那個廣達發生很大的問題，然後那顆產品根本就造成停線啊！然後功能不良、品質很不OK，對，所以你要不要再考慮，你還是要用他們家的產品嗎？』... 也許，他從此就讓我消失在這間客戶裡。因為這個客人對妳印象不好嘛！對妳的公司的印象也不好。”

Fortunately, in the face of such a *xiaoren* competitor, she said that she still had a solution. Although there was no way to sign the contract for the first time, she said that when a competitor's product had a problem, the customer would know that they can seek her help, but this kind of secret defamation of other's products is still considered a *xiaoren* behavior by her.

In some cases, the situation will become more troublesome when *xiaoren* maliciously snitches on victim or even presents false statements to victims' supervisors, for once

the supervisor is affected to believe those statements, the impact on the victim will be broader, including future job distribution, promotion opportunities and even performance appraisal, which brings more stress to the victim compared to the above cases even if the supervisor is not convinced. Our interviewee (#1) provided such a case when he served as a course assistant. Although he fulfilled every duty as a course assistant, he was still complained anonymously by a student, which made him be questioned by the secretary in charge of this course:

*“It was when I was the teaching assistant at the statistics course. I even talk to the secretary about this. Actually, I replied on time on social media and E-mail. I did remind everyone of everything related to the course. But still the secretary asked to talk to me and questioned if there’s anything happening. It turned out that there was a senior student who made a complaint. Actually, the secretary didn’t say it clearly or tell me the details. She just asked me to try to smile more and keep a healthy relationship with the senior students.”* (Translated)

“統計助教的時候，然後我，那時候我還有跟秘書討論過，就是其實我 line 什麼都有照時回，然後 E-mail 也都有回，然後上課該提醒也都有提醒。結果還被那個就是秘書找去說，有沒有發生什麼事，結果是有一個學姊，就是客訴。...就是那個時候其實秘書也沒有跟我很具體的講，可是她後來只是叫我說，就是要多笑，然後跟學長姊，就是就是要保持一個好一點的關係這樣子。”

The specific content of the complaint is unknown, however, he believes that he has fulfilled his duties and has not had any disputes with any students, but he does not

know why he was complained, which make him feel like he had been stab in the back thus identified this as a *xiaoren* behavior.

Another case was provided by an interviewee (#3) who work as a waiter in the restaurant. In this case *xiaoren* is the chef of the restaurant while our interviewee was working as a waiter. After rejecting an unreasonable request, the chef would complain about him to his supervisor or deliberately say some targeted and vicious words in front of him:

*“If I don’t do as he wished, he’ll pull a face or complain about me to our supervisor. And sometimes, he’s not talking directly to me, but he’ll be sarcastic in front of my face.”* (Translated)

“我如果不這麼做的話他就會擺臉色給我，或是跟我們主管 *complain* 我這樣子。然後有時候是，他可能不是正面跟我講，可能就是在我面前，然後酸我一下這樣子。”

Fortunately, he had the opportunity to clarify the misunderstanding to the supervisor and prove his innocence in both cases, but he still classifies these as the experiences of the *xiaoren* behavior that he has endured.

He was not the only one who had suffered from both direct and indirect insult, one interviewee (#20) also raised a similar case, which her colleague was scolded by their supervisor for certain incidents, the colleague had a grudge against her for her never

get scolded and began to talk viciously to her or snitch on the team to a higher supervisor.

*“She always said to others that our supervisor picked on her but not me. So, she thinks that the supervisor takes sides on me because she knew our relationship. (Family related with supervisor.) Actually, I did not tell others in the office but then she would tell everyone about this relationship or being sarcastic about it. Also, she would go to the higher supervisor and complain about things in the office. But she would say to us it's the supervisor who looks for her. We all knew it wasn't true. We all knew it's her that would tell the supervisor about her objective thoughts.” (Translated)*

“她都會跟別人講說，我主管都只罵她，不罵我。...所以，她就一直會覺得說，就是我主管會偏袒我。...因為她知道我們兩個之間的關係(與主管的親戚關係)。所以，她就一直會覺得說，就是我主管會偏袒我。然後，她就是有去跟辦公室的人講。因為其實這個事情，我沒有給辦公室的人知道。然後，她就會到處去講這件事，又或者是說，就是講話都會比較酸。不然就是她可能會去找上面的，就是高層的長官，就是去抱怨辦公室的事情。...就是打小報告。但是，她會跟我們講說：『喔，是那個長官找我進去的。』然後，其實我們都知道是，就是她時不時的就會去找長官去講她認為、主觀的事情。”

What made her feel defenseless in this case was that she did have a relative relationship with their supervisor, but the reason she was never blamed because she did not make a mistake, rather than being favored by their superior, therefore, she identified these things done by her colleague as a *xiaoren* behavior.

#### 4.4 Coalition

*Xiaoren* will deliberately manage interpersonal relationships in the workplace for certain illegitimate needs. Such as to form a kind of influence when pursuing their own interest, or colluding with other people as a protective shield to avoid unwanted consequences when doing something unethically. For instance, when striving for a promotion, instead of working harder to achieve organizational goals for better performance, *xiaoren* will choose to coal with other people to give themselves more advantages, sometimes even form an influence to hold others back to increase their odds. Sometimes *xiaoren* coals just to bully others so that the victim is isolated and unable to fight back. Our interviewee (#4) shared a frustrating case that she could not fight back when she was treated like this before, during her time as a special education teacher, she was jealous by her colleague because she was admitted to the graduate school at public expense, she obtained two half-day of government-approved official leaves for her to attend classes. After then, she was subjected to harsh words from her colleague, that colleague even colluded with other teachers to exclude our interviewee:

*“He will be talking about it all the time. And teachers from other classes would join him and say something ironically about me. They said stuff like, ‘Well, some people are just SO good at studying, and some people..., etc.’”* (Translated)

“他就會一直在那邊講，然後還會聯合其他班的老師，就一起講風涼話，就是挖苦，就會講一些有的沒有的啊，然後就是講說：『對啊，有些人就是會讀書啊，有些人就是會怎樣啊。』”

Although the sarcasm speech made our victims feel very angry, their coalition also prevented our interviewee from fighting back. Our interviewee (#17) gave another example, he stated that *xiaoren* in his case, use advantage as a recruiter, managed to have new employees as their accomplices, thereby become a force that is able to affect the work smoothness of him:

*“He (xiaoren) was in charge of an installation case of the Coast Guard Administration. He got to know a soldier there. The soldier got familiar with the system and was recruited to their company. But the soldier was working with me instead of the xiaoren. And he would try to incite the newcomers to slack off on work so that I would be in trouble with customer complaints or personnel dispatch”* (Translated)

*“那時候他去裝一個海巡署的一個裝機案，然後到那個阿兵哥兩年，熟悉這個系統，所以他就退伍，他就找來...可是來以後就是在我們這一邊，那他就會故意去運作他們，刻意的在工作上擺爛、杯葛讓我這邊可能人力調度或者是客戶客訴的處理，時常會出問題。”*

What makes our interviewees feel frustrated is that he and that *xiaoren* have been friends since they first joined the company. Sometimes they even met to play bowling together before going to work. But since their ranks were higher and under the pressure of promotion, our interviewee suffered from his *xiaoren* behavior and finally realized that he was a *xiaoren*.

In addition to coal with colleague to sabotage the performance of others, there are also *xiaoren* who coals with other in order to become an opinion leader, so that they can increase their influence on the organization. An interviewee (#12) provided a case where her company used the dual store manager system so that a *xiaoren* behavior reveals. She was the manager of a store at the time. She said that the other manager would invite the staff to have dinner after work in order to win them over and form an influence. When the time they discuss the affairs of the store, that store manager will use this influence to forcefully oppose her proposal for no reason:

*“There was another manager, he would use his power and think that some of the staff should obey him. Then, he would use some techniques, such as differentiation, to achieve this goal. For example, I would go home right after work, while he hung out with other staff. Gradually, there would be a group of people on his side. In that way, when he has some policies to promote, or when he has to compete with other proposals, he would tell his group of people negative gossips of the opposing side.”* (Translated)

“另外一個店長，他會去框他的勢力，他就會覺得，應該要有一些員工都聽他的。然後，他就會可能用一些分化，或者是用一些其他的方式。就像可能我下班，就是直接回家，然後他就會跟員工去唱歌、去吃飯，那慢慢就會有一群人會跟著他。那…那在有的時候，他要推動一些政策的時候，不論是為反對而反對，或者是那就是他的主張的時候，就會有一些這樣子的競爭。那他可能就會跟員工說，啊他都怎麼樣，誰都怎麼樣，或者是跟主管說(別人的不是)。”

Another interviewee (#9) provided an outsider’s perspective as he had an internship

experience as a student. He said that during his internship in the sales department of that company, the employees of the entire sales department coaled with each other to form a little group to spread the false rumors of other colleagues who are outside their group in order to hold them back while striving for promotion opportunities:

*“I think everyone seemed friendly to each other on the surface, but I found that in fact, every action was for their own benefit. He wanted to be promoted and he wanted to emphasize his position in the company. He would go looking for newcomers or colleagues who have a lower position in the company to obey him. Those who speak ill of him seem to gather and he would realize that the atmosphere was not right, and it seemed that he'd lose advantage.”* (Translated)

“我覺得公司內部算大家表面上蠻友好，但私底下，我發現他們的一舉一動，其實都是為了在圖謀自己的利益...他想要有個更好的職位，再來就是他想要去凸顯自己在公司說話的份量。他會去吸引一些比較可能比較年輕的，或是在公司裡面比較沒有比較沒有地位的一些同事，然後去聽從他的話。...講他壞話的人，有一個就是組黨成群結隊的傾向。所以他當事人會發現說，就是風向好像已經不是倒向這邊，而是倒向就他的競爭者那邊。”

This ethos made him identify that every employee in that sales department was *xiaoren*, he was just an intern, so he was fortunate to not suffer any impact.

#### 4.5 Disregarding others

Many interviewees complained that *xiaoren* in their experience only thinks about

themselves while working and does not consider other people or even the whole organization. For instance, they do whatever they want for their own good and don't care about the consequences of their actions on others, sometimes the impact of such consequences on others or the organization can be mild or severe, from causing discomfort to the people involved, to serious enough to endanger the results of the organization's long-term efforts.

Our interviewee (#10) who used to work as a waitress in a restaurant, talked about how embarrassing she felt when encountering a *xiaoren* who has a bad temper and yelled at her regardless of the customers in front of them:

*"That girl (that xiaoren) called my name directly at the front desk and yelled at me "Don't you hear my call?", at that time there are so many guests at the front desk and it happened in front of them making me so embarrassed, but I can't say anything in response and the guests on-site are also felt embarrassed."* (Translated)

*“那個女生（小人）就直接在門口叫我的名字然後罵我說是都沒聽到（無線電呼叫）嗎？那時候很多客人，而且是當著這麼多客人的面。我也很尷尬，我也不能說什麼，客人也很尷尬。”*

Such embarrassment stems from the orient culture, the service industry staff tend to show a deference attitude in front of customers (Johns, Chan, & Yeung, 2008). Therefore, the conflict in front of the guests will be considered inappropriate, thus, the inconsiderate behavior of bringing the inappropriate conflict in front of the guest will

be regarded as behavior of *xiaoren*.

In addition to bringing embarrassment to the colleague, the inconsiderate behavior of *xiaoren* sometimes even threatens reputation and relationship of the victim with the organization. One interviewee (#21) mentioned how disappointed he was when he found out that he has been betrayed by a colleague, who had received his advice privately not to attend the procurement meetings with procedural problems but have blurted him out with a thoughtless disclosure for self-protection when the supervisor questioned about the absence:

*"I called him and said that there was a problem with this tender and told him not to attend the meeting...Because we already acquiesced in a specific manufacturer for those goods. "Your attendance is only to endorse our tender.", I said. Then I reminded him, "Please pretend I didn't make this call." ...Two days later, I went to our department to discuss other unrelated matters with a senior supervisor. He asked me in sudden, "Did you tell the other department there was something wrong with our tender? Why didn't he come to review the tender that day and said you told him not to?" I was shocked, sweating on the soles of my feet and all over."* (Translated)

“我打電話給他說，這個標案有問題，叫他不要出席...因為那些東西，我們已經有特定的廠商了，『你過去只是幫我們背書而已。』，然後，我就還提醒說：『當我沒有打這通電話。』...隔了兩天，我去我們單位上，找我們單位一個高層的長官講別的事情。他突然就跟我講說：『欸，你是不是有跟別的單位講說，我們的案子有什麼問題？為什麼他那天沒來審標？說是你跟他講的。』我整個傻住，

腳底冒汗，整個冒冷汗。”

This thoughtless disclosure caused him to be questioned by the supervisor after the meeting. Fortunately, he found a way to get out of it, but this incident did cause him trouble and the risk of his loyalty being doubted.

Another interviewee (#4) provided a very similar case of her subordinate, the person considered to be a *xiaoren* in this case is the ex-supervisor of that subordinate, who was awarded a problem after taking over the headmaster position. Instead of trying to understand the reason and find a solution to this problem, which is a smooth and more considerable way to solve it, he chose a method that only considered himself. He directly reported to the authority right away to make sure he will not have to take the responsibility when the time of routine inspections, leaving his subordinate face the investigation alone:

*“I have a director who has a trauma of being reported by his principal when he was in the previous school. Because our work hour is until 4:30, so we can't have any lecture from 4 to 4:30, including lecture for student club...He was reported to the authority by his principal, the newly appointed principal. After that, the inspector came to investigate everything, making him feel like standing over the abyss afterward...I think he should understand the situation more as a newcomer. Of course (this matter) is wrong, but he should try to understand that he did it on purpose or because there is no other way... He (the principal) just protects himself, he doesn't*

want to wait until things happen and get him involved.” (Translated)

“我現在有個主任，他有個陰影就是，他在前一所學校的時候，他被他的校長舉發。因為我們是上班上到4點半。所以4點到4點半這個時間你是不可以教課的，你如果教社團的話（也不行）。...他被他們校長，就新的校長就檢舉，檢舉了以後就查，而且調查局也來查，什麼都來查，像他現在就是我覺得就是戒慎恐懼這樣。...我覺得你新來你應該去了解啊，（這件事）當然是不對，但是，你應該去了解說，他們是故意要這樣貪？還是說真的沒有辦法...他（那位校長）就是自保啊，他不要等到事情發生的時候燒到他啊。”

The subordinate took over as the instructor of the school after-school club during working hours because of the short-staffed situation of their school. Although it is against the regulations, there are more and better ways to deal with it. The new headmaster's choice of this inconsiderate approach only to protect himself is the key to being considered as a *xiaoren* in this case.

From the above cases we can know that, not only colleagues who just thinking about self-protection without considering others will be labeled as *xiaoren*, but supervisors who act the same will also be considered as the same, not to mention the supervisors who give thoughtless orders and does not care about why or how should their subordinate do it will also be regarded as *xiaoren*. One of the interviewees (#19) said that once he was asked by his supervisor to rectify one of his subordinate's computer screen saver picture. Although there was nothing inappropriate with it and it was a very normal picture, he was still asked to deal with this matter and even being scolded

for not doing it:

*“Let me give one more case about my direct supervisor once treated me. I also felt a little bit offended by a xiaoren at that time. The supervisor once asked me to take care of the computer screen savers of my subordinates.... I thought it might be nudity or improper pictures that the screen saver of A is. Then I went to see A’s screen saver... I think her screen saver is fine and normal, so I went to talk to the supervisor, “I think her screen saver is fine. I don’t know why you told me that her screen saver needs to be changed. What exactly is it going to be?” Then I got scolded by the supervisor, “I don't care. That screen saver has to be changed. Moreover, as a manager, how can you even fail to manage with this?” (Translated)*

“我這邊再舉一個我的直屬長官曾經對我的一件事情，我那時候也覺得有一點犯小人的感覺。那個長官有一次就跟我講說，叫我管好下面的人的電腦螢幕保護程式。...我想說，是不是A(受訪者的下屬)的螢幕保護程式放了很多裸露的，或是比較不適合的。然後我還特地跑去看A的螢幕保護程式...我那時候看，我覺得螢幕保護程式沒問題。而且，我覺得很正常。那我又跑去跟那個長官講說：『我覺得，她的螢幕保護程式沒問題。我不曉得，你跟我講說，她的螢幕保護程式要換，到底是要換什麼？』然後，接著，那個長官就把我罵了一頓。說：『我不管，那個螢幕保護程式就是要換。而且，你身為主管，連這個都沒有管好。』”

Despite being given such a thoughtless order, our interviewee (#19) refused to execute the order in order to protect the rights and interests of his subordinates, but he still suffered an unnecessary reprimand from his superiors. Such behavior will make

employees baffled and bring a lot of redundant pressure to them, in more serious cases, even make employees choose to leave the organization. Another interviewee (#8) provided such a case of a friend, in which the victim chooses to leave the organization after he was forced to interrupt his vacation and take the earliest flight back to work for a non-emergency situation:

*“He went on a vacation to the outer islands for three days, which was approved by the supervisor (the xiaoren). But on the second day of his vacation, the supervisor called to recall him for a pistol test. The supervisor strongly asked him to come back immediately, even though his vacation was approved by the supervisor and had already flown out to the outer islands. He bought the earliest plane to flew back the next day.”* (Translated)

“他去外島玩三天，然後可是那個主管(小人)已經准他的假。可是在他出去玩  
的第二天，主管又打電話回來說，有一個，他們要去手槍測驗。然後要請他回去  
測驗，可是那個主管已經准他的假，但是他又硬叫他回去，但是他已經飛出去  
了，後來他確實就是買了最早的飛機又飛回來。”

His supervisor doesn't care despite the vacation he applied for was completely in compliance with the procedure and was already approved, which made him very upset and applied for transfer right after returning to duty in order to stay away from this thoughtless supervisor.

*“He applied for a transfer, which was when he just came back.”* (Translated)

“他申請調職了，就是他剛回來的當下。”

*Xiaoren* who doesn't think about others not only causes trouble for employees who have work related to him / her but also sometimes causes disturbance for the organization. One interviewee (#12) provided an experience about an employee who sent a letter, pointed out many supervisors who he believed to have inappropriate behaviors within the organization. Instead of appealing according to the normal channel, he sent it to all employees of the company. Regardless of their rank or relevance, without any evidence provided:

*“Once a partner wrote a letter the day before leaving and sent it to about 700 employees of the whole company.... The contents of the letter attacked many supervisors. I was one of them. He wrote something like, "Why does this supervisor come to the store behaved like this? "...I think the company might have a different way of handling it if he (xiaoren) just sent it to the general manager. But he sent it to the whole company... Suppose that he wrote ten accusations about the injustice he encountered. Perhaps only two accusations are authentic, while others are false. However, if the company only makes a statement about these two points, the employees may not know the others are actually false accusations. However, it doesn't actually have a better way to deal with it, the mentioned supervisors in the letter is already suffering.” (Translated)*

“就有一個夥伴，在離職的前一天，寫了一封信，寄給全公司七百多個人。... 那當然他信裡面的內容，就攻擊了很多主管，那我是其中一個。然後，他就會寫了

一些他認為為什麼這個主管來店裡面這樣？或者是指使別人，或是什麼之類的...我覺得，如果他今天只是寄給總經理，那可能他有不同的處理方式。可是，因為他是寄給全公司...假設他寫了十點，公司對他不平的地方，或許只有兩點是事實，有七點不是。但是，如果你只處理這兩點，員工不一定知道那七點，其他的部分，其實是對的。但是，它其實沒有更好的處理方式，就是權衡之下，都已經是傷害了。”

Although our interviewee (#12) believes that he (the xiaoren) has the right to raise what he thinks is inappropriate in the organization and this right is also protected by the organization's regulations. The company's post-event handling method also successfully quelled employees' doubts and dissatisfaction, such less considerate behavior is tantamount to encouraging employees in disguised form to recklessly report anything without providing evidence and not by the normal grievance way before leaving the job, which don't care about the chaos they might cause to the company.

Another case is also provided by an interviewee (#4) in which a director of the school disagrees with the resolutions of the meeting, instead of presenting his ideas in the meeting and resort to discussion, he accessed the cloud system to tamper the meeting minutes afterwards and does not care about the matters decided by everyone:

*“In fact, that incident is not a big deal, but I think his actions just make everyone feel very angry. If you have any opinion you should propose it at the meeting, we can*

*discuss it, then make it a record (the normal circumstances). But for him (xiaoren) the rule is not like this, he chose to change the meeting minutes on the cloud system after the meeting ended.” (Translated)*

“那其實那件事也不是什麼很大的事情，可是，我覺得他的動作，就是讓大家覺得很生氣，因為你有什麼意見你應該是在會議上講，那我們就討論，我們就可以做成紀錄，不是，他(小人)是會議結束之後，他上雲端去更改會議記錄。”

The record of the cloud system showed all the access and the content which had been tampered. Fortunately, the event which was tampered with is not significant and attendees clearly remember the original resolution of that meeting. However, his disrespect for the meeting results and such egocentric behavior affected everyone's mood at work and his arrogant attitude of not responding to questions about the tampering is even more frustrating.

In addition to this incident, the interviewee (#4) also provided another case about the egocentric behavior of this director. Compared with the above situation, although this case did not cause substantial harm in the end, it did bring greater risks to the organization. The case is about a competition in which they have to form up a team but present their result session by session, the director was unwilling to cooperate with the team and deliberately sabotage the presentation during his own session:

*“Once we were going to participate in a competition, a very important competition with a time-based presentation. We must present the slides within 10 minutes. Our time*

*distribution was, I am the beginning, and then they will present one after another and finally give it back to me for the conclusion. When it was his turn, he clearly saw the remaining time was not enough for us. Logically speaking, he should finish his part as soon as possible, because his slides are relatively not important than the conclusion. But he dawdling presented his slides so that the most remarkable part could not be presented.” (Translated)*

“有一次我們要去參加一個比賽，很重要的比賽，然後那個比賽他就有限時的，就是，你必須要在 10 分鐘裡面就每一個人有自己報告的（時段），好，那我，我們的分配是，我是開頭，然後，他們一棒接一棒...最後講完他還要交給我，可是呢，輪到他（小人）的時候，他明明看到他剩下的時間就已經不夠了，照道理講，他應該是要趕快把它跑完，因為他那幾張不是太重要的，他應該把最後最重要的在交給我，結果他就慢慢的講，讓我們那個最後那個最精彩的部分就沒有辦法呈現出來。”

In the end, they still got awards and bonuses, so that his actions did not cause substantial harm. Although the lack of presentation session time was not caused by that director, the egocentric behavior of caring for his own performance opportunities rather than the complete presentation of the whole team, which made him considered by our interviewee as a *xiaoren*.

#### 4.6 Shirking responsibility

Shirking responsibility is the most common behavior of *xiaoren* mentioned by the interviewees during the interview. All *xiaoren* in this category failed to fulfill their

responsibilities, neither the things they should do, nor the consequences they should suffer. The former often uses the ambiguous areas in the organizational division of labor or takes advantage of the accommodating personality of others to transfer the work that is supposed to be theirs to others, while the latter uses some tricks to shift the focus of everyone after things go wrong or choose to hide when the time they should come forward. Such employees will cause uneven workload or bring many unnecessary burdens to other employees.

Our interviewee (#3) provided a case in which *xiaoren* is the chef who took advantage of accommodating personality to shirked his own duty. In the case, the interviewee (#3) said that the waiters in their restaurants sometimes finish their tasks earlier and willing to help out the chef team to wash the dishes as a favor so that everyone can get off work earlier. After a while, the chef team take this favor for granted and even leave the unclean dishes for them to wash on purpose:

*“Because we are responsible for the service of the restaurant, sometimes we are actually a bit idle, so we can help the chefs to wash the dishes... I have confirmed with my supervisor that the dishes are actually the responsibility of the chefs. Although it is their responsibility, we will do them a favor if we can, for everyone can get off work earlier. But it turns out that they took our favor for granted, they left the dishes for us after cooking, so they can get off their work on time. Gradually, the dishes became our responsibility that they think we should work overtime to wash their dishes.”*

(Translated)

“因為我們就是外場，其實有時候其實比較閒，就可以會幫內場洗碗...因為那其實是內場的工作，因為我有詢問過我的主管說，他覺得那是內場工作，只是我們工作許可範圍之內，我們會去幫忙，只是說大家可以早點收工或是怎麼樣。可是變成說，到最後是他們裡面內場出完菜之後，盤子都不洗，就丟著就走，就準時下班，變成外場要把東西洗完，久而久之就變成是說，我們沒洗的話我們應該加班。”

After several times expressing their refusal to help the chef to wash the dishes, the atmosphere between them became increasingly tense. In the end, he had to ask their supervisor to reiterate that washing dishes is their job.

Apart from the chef in this case, He mentioned another case about a voluntary soldier assigned with him as a task team during his enlistment. He said that during his enlistment, he is more favored by the supervisor for better capability. Therefore, their supervisor not only had more tasks assigned to him, but also only asked for his opinion when a situation arose. This plight made the voluntary soldier feel very disappointed. She thought that as a voluntary soldier, she did not receive more respect than a compulsory soldier by the supervisor, thus she began to show an extremely negative attitude on tasks:

*“My efficiency is better than that female soldier. After I became more familiar with the sergeant, he would teach me some new methods for our tasks or assign me more important tasks. This makes the female soldier very upset and said, “I am a volunteer*

*soldier and I have more tenures than him, but you assigned me nothing. You assigned every task to him. Then she started murmurs in everything. In the end, she didn't complete any tasks, making all the tasks became my workload.”*” (Translated)

“我跟上面跟這個中士，就是比較熟了之後，然後我做事效率，其實也比那個女兵好。然後他就會把很多事情教我很多新的做法，或是把很多重要的東西，都派給我做。可是女兵就會開始不爽，就說：『我志願役，然後我又來的比較久，然後你事情都不給我做，都給他做這樣子。』然後就會開始講一些有的沒的。然後到後來是，她事情都不做，然後都變成我在做。”

Our interviewee (#3) was very annoyed by the situation. He said the military ethos dictates that those who are able works more. When something goes wrong, the supervisor will only question our interviewee (#3). Therefore, he said that waiting for discharge is the only solution.

An interviewee (#11) provided his previous experience of working in a small-scale cram school. He mentioned that there was a full-time employee who did not want to do chores so gave them to him because he is just a part-time employee that won't stay for too long:

*“He actually busy with many jobs to do, but he will shift many of his own chores to me... He might think that although I am a class assistant (who is not responsible for his chores), I am just a part-timer and won't stay long, it will be fine for him that he just leaves some of his chores to me.”* (Translated)

“那他其實有很多事情要做嘛，他就會把他自己身上很多的雜事丟給我做...他們可能覺得說，雖然你是班導師，但是你就是個打工仔，你就是個過客，那我可能就把我的一些工作丟給你做也沒有關係這樣子。”

The interviewee (#11) pointed out that because of his personality, he would not reject others request if he was not busy, but sometimes when he himself is busy, this will be really annoying. On the other hand, due to the small scale of the cram school, the division of duties is loose and unclear. He even doesn't know whom to report if he wants to report this situation.

Another interviewee (#16) mentioned how the *xiaoren* in her experience used her sense of responsibility to gradually transferred his project to her. In this case, our interviewee works in the general affairs department and the *xiaoren* is responsible for the newly built storage project. At the beginning of the plan, he pulled our interviewees into the planning meeting for discussion, but judging from the position of general affairs, she did not need to attend the initial planning meeting, she only needs to provide necessary assistance during project execution. However, our interviewee participated in the initial planning meeting because she thought it was good to know more details. However, during the execution of the project, the *xiaoren* often put his subordinates' proposals in pending by keep asking for a better solution but never takes any actions. With the deadline of the project was getting closer, his subordinates came to our interviewee for help for she is familiar with the project too. Out of her unwillingness to see problems with the company's warehousing system, she took over the project

with only one month left:

*“If I left it alone, I think it’s going to mess up or let’s say his subordinates will end up really badly....so I volunteered to take over the project...First, he (that xiaoren) knows very well that he is shifting (his job). That is, he was shifting this job intentionally. Second, he was shifting not because of his lack of capability, in short, he just didn't want to do it. Then third, his attitude, he even showed a little bit triumphant attitude about it.”* (Translated)

“如果我不管的話，我覺得這件事就就是真的會出錯，或者說，下面的人就是真的會很慘...所以我就自己跳下去請命做這件事情...第一個，他（小人）很清楚知道他在推（推卸他的工作），就是他是有意識的在推這個工作，然後第二個是他也不是因為他能力不足，簡單來說他就是不想做嘛！就在那邊擺爛，然後，第三個是，就是他最後的態度嘛！就是甚至是有有一點得意洋洋。”

To her annoyance, after she took over the project, the *xiaoren* bluntly said that this just allows him could use this time to take a break and travel abroad. Unfortunately, after the project was successfully finished, the senior supervisor did not take any action on the matter, because the *xiaoren* had a very good personal relationship with the senior supervisor, which made our interviewee feel very disappointed and reduced work commitment afterward.

When two companies are merged, there will be many rules and regulations that need to be integrated because of inconsistency, one interviewee (#14) mentioned this also

allows *xiaoren* to shift the focus when it comes to discussing their responsibility. In this case, the sales unit received a customer who needed the operation unit to provide services during non-working hours on weekends. Providing this kind of service will increase the cost of their department for working overtime. For the sake of company performance, our interviewee asked if the sales unit could find other customers with the same needs at the same time for them so that the operation unit could maximize the use of assets even if working overtime. As a response, he raised an issue about the company had just undergone the merger. The service period of the two companies is different, which is yet to be integrated. By propagating this issue, that senior executive blurs the initial requirements of the operation unit successfully:

*“They took advantage of this opportunity to propagating this kind of issue. He blurred the focus of the issue I formerly raised... I think this is actually a trick of xiaoren... They took advantage of this opportunity to propagating this kind of issue. He blurred the focus of the issue I formerly raised. Basically, this issue should be solved by him or make some explanation about it as an alternative. It is like that he passes the ball back to you, making the scoring has become your problem again.”* (Translated)

*“他們就是趁這個機會，就開始炒作這些問題。他就模糊了，我原本提的那些問題的焦點...那我覺得這個其實，就是一種小人的招數...本來這個問題就是應該是他要解決的，或者他該做一些說明，他(小人)會拿另外的議題來，模糊了焦點，就變成現在這個球丟給你了，你要去解決這個問題。”*

Since the issue was propagated successfully, everyone is beginning to research and

discuss how to integrate the different service hours, which blurred the initial requirements of the operation unit away, leaving the increased cost of the operation department to themselves.

Regarding the case where the focus is subtly shifted so that *xiaoren* does not need to take the responsibility, another interviewee (#15) provided such experience. *Xiaoren* is good at shifting the responsibility to our interviewees by finger-pointing our interviewee as the one to be blamed. This unfortunately increased the workload of our interviewee as people often come to her for clarification.

*“People will always come to you for some questions, often really tricky or difficult. Something very hard to handle. Or they came to challenge you. And he would say somebody said to come to you because you finished that thing.”* (Translated)

*“工作有交集的話，就表示，你會常常聽到，別人來找你，問一些問題，然後那個問題可能是很棘手的，或者是很麻煩，難處理的，或是來 challenge 你的，然後他就會說是某某某叫我來問你，因為他說那個是你弄的。”*

This behavior prevents the victim from confronting the *xiaoren* at the time, making the victim can only deal with the problems first.

In addition to cases of shifting responsibility to other people mentioned above, there is another case mentioned by our interviewee (#5). The case involves negligence during their work, causing an amercement for the whole team but the troublemaker.

To our interviewee's disappointment, the troublemaker did not come forward to take responsibility. This behavior is also classified as behaviors of *xiaoren*. She said that when she worked as a part-time job in a cram school, she belonged to the math class team. Once, because someone asked for leave, a member of the English class team came to support, but this support staff is carelessness, causing a problem in the promotion part of enrollment. This negligence caused the math class team to receive a forfeit, but that English class members have not received punishment in any way:

*“Actually, he should know that we had to call the admission team during intermission. But he forgot on that day...Probably we did poorly on the performance evaluation...He wasn't punished, but instead all of us that were involved got punished”* (Translated)

*“他其實應該要知道說，我們其實中場休息都要打電話給招生團隊的，可是他那天忘記了...績效可能就會不好這樣子...他沒有受到處罰，反而是我們被波及到的人受到處罰。”*

This kind of forfeit makes them feel very unfair because the people who really made mistakes are not punished, but innocent people like them are affected. That English class team member didn't show any sign of apology afterward, not to mention standing forward.

There is another case about the behavior of *xiaoren* when the victim was working part-time in a cram school. Another interviewee (#2) provided a case about being instructed by a senior full-time employee, but the irresponsible method he had been taught cause

him scolded by the supervisor. Our interviewee (#2) said that the cram school he works has a list of all the things he needs to do. However, due to time constraints, it is impossible to complete everything on the list. Therefore, he was taught by a senior full-time employee to do only a few specific things will be enough. When his supervisor really needed the documents in the list one day, it was beyond the scope of what he was taught "enough", causing him being scolded by his supervisor:

*“Perhaps that he had a list writing, you have to do this and that. But it is impossible for you to have time to finish such many things. When supervisor asked you, you just finish and you’re fine” (Translated)*

“他可能會有個 list，就是說欸你要做這些事情...但你不可能有時間去做那麼多事情。...老鳥跟你說，你就是做好某些事情就好了。那如果今天，你沒有做的事情，其中一件突然間蹦出來了。然後你不能說，『這都是他跟我說不用做，或是其他人都沒有做。』...你就只能被罵。...你明明知道他是知道的，或他是有意義的，可是你也不能怎麼樣。”

When he was scolded, that senior full-time employee did not stand forward to speak for him. He also couldn't tell his supervisor that he didn't make this document because of the guidance of that senior employee, because that guidance is not formal and can only be considered as informal advice.

Another interviewee (#20) provided her personal experience. After she was invited to join a collective buying group and was persuaded to buy a healthy food product, her

name was falsely used to be the group owner by the employee who brought her into this group:

*“She said that she would be the initiator to invite others to purchase it together.... I said that if she successfully initiates, I will follow.... but then, I discovered that the girl actually used my name to recruit everyone.... We will not openly invite others to a collective buying group, we prefer doing it in private. But she even invited departments which are not familiar with us.”* (Translated)

“她就說：『不然她來揪團。』，就是問大家要不要買？...我就說好，那如果妳有開團的話我再跟，...後來是那女生就是開團，但是，是用我的名字去開團。...照理說，公務體系裡面，我們不會就是大張旗鼓地說要揪團。但是，她就是把那個團購單，就是，很遠的科室也都發放了。”

Because the interviewee works in public institutions, forming a collective buying group during working hours will cause a bad impression of society, so they have an unwritten rule that this kind of behavior must be low-key. What makes her unacceptable is that she was only following the purchase, not the initiator. This is undoubtedly the initiator fraudulently using her name in order to transfer the risk to her.

## 5 Discussion and Future Research Recommendations

### 5.1 Discussion

This study aims to find the meaning and characteristics of *xiaoren* nowadays. After interviews, I have acquired six types of *xiaoren*, which are (1) taking advantages from others, (2) creating a false impression, (3) aspersing others, (4) coalition, (5) disregarding others and (6) shirking responsibility. These six types of *xiaoren* can be further categorized into three characteristics, namely abused, misused and underused. By comparing these three types of characteristics with the ancient Confucian definition, we can find out whether the meaning of *xiaoren* has changed over time and the difference between them (if any).

Firstly, in the aspect of abused, containing two types of *xiaoren*, namely taking advantages from others and creating a false impression. These characteristics do not have much different from the ancient definition. Confucius portrayed *junzi* as an image that values righteousness, whereas *xiaoren* values pursuing interests. In terms of purpose, whether it is taking advantage from others or creating a false impression, it is all for seeking interests. This is in line with Confucius' description of *xiaoren*. On the other hand, in terms of action, no matter the one who abuses the power granted by the organization, or the one who concealing certain facts and only conveyed partial information. Both of the actions are not righteousness and violates the way of *junzi* by Confucius. Thus, we can say that the definition of *xiaoren* in this aspect are not much different from the Confucius' definition.

Secondly, in the aspect of misused, containing two types of *xiaoren*, namely aspersing others and coalition. These characteristics have slightly difference from the ancient definition. According to Confucius, *junzi* represents the people who only consider how to act morally and decently when dealing with people while *xiaoren* does not care about the norms but interests. In terms of coalition, the establishment of relationships between *xiaoren* and others did not consider whether they conform to the correct norms but only for the pursuit of certain goals. Not only this is in line with Confucius' description of the difference between *junzi* and *xiaoren*, but in the description of *Chuang Tzu* ( 莊子 ) about the interpersonal relationship of *junzi* and *xiaoren*. *Chuang Tzu* believes that compared with the close friendship between *xiaoren* based on interests, the friendship between *junzi* is rather dull.<sup>11</sup> It indicates that a *xiaoren* will establish relationship with others because of interest, thus, the interaction between *xiaoren* is lavish. While *junzi* will not establish relationships in pursuit of profit. In addition to this, apart from pursuing goals, another purpose of coalition derived as *xiaoren* coalited to avoid unwanted consequences. In the context of the workplace, employees are required to contribute, those whose performance does not meet expectations will be expelled from the organization. In order to survive in such a competitive environment, *xiaoren* in the workplace has derived another need for coalition which is to establish a protective shield.

In terms of aspersing others, there is a difference between the definition of ancient

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<sup>11</sup> "The intercourse of superior men (*Junzi*) is tasteless as water, while that of mean men (*Xiaoren*) is sweet as new wine." The translation of this statement and the following statements come from Legge, J. (1971). *The Writings of Chaung Tzu*.

times and nowadays, since the connotation of norms of establishing relationships with other valued by Confucianism had been given new meanings as later generations adopted it (Feng, 2011). The original purpose of the ritual norms of Confucianism is to pursue social harmony. For instance, the norms of funerals are to let the livings express their grief in compliance with the norms, so as to maintain social harmony (Yeh, 2014). In later generations, the purpose of pursuing harmony is retained and derived into harmony between people when dealing with others. This leads to the principle of interpersonal relationships, the establishment of relationships between people must base on the principle of harmony. Thus, when individuals feel offended and feel that the counterpart is intentional, they will identify him/her as *xiaoren*. Not to mention aspersing others privately is an act of disrupting organizational harmony. To sum up, as time goes by, people have given new connotations to the norms of getting along with each other. The new and old connotations were mixed together, setting a new standard of identifying *xiaoren* nowadays.

Thirdly, in the aspect of underused, containing the last two types of *xiaoren*, namely disregarding others and shirking responsibility. Along with ancient definition, a new standard derived for identifying under the context of the workplace. Confucianism advocates a spirit of benevolence. In addition to being kind to those close to oneself, it is also true to others. Both Confucius and Mencius advocated promoting the spirit of benevolence from the family to the society in compliance with the norms of interpersonal relations (Hwang, 2002). From the interview, we know that people who don't care about others in their actions are regarded as *xiaoren*, which is not much

different from the ancient Confucian definition. This can be regarded as people have something to be done but not done, he/she will be regarded as *xiaoren*. In the context of the workplace, this concept has derived to people who don't do what they should do and don't take the responsibility as they should take will be regarded as *xiaoren*.

To conclude the comparison mentioned above, the identification of *xiaoren* nowadays is only slightly different from the ancient Confucianism definition. For some ancient definitions that have acquired new meaning through the changes of the times, thus having a collateral influence on the identification of *xiaoren* nowadays. Today's environment is more complex than in ancient times, as well as people's behavior in the workplace is also more complex than before. Therefore, more different *xiaoren* behaviors are derived, but still not far from Confucian standards in terms of identification principles.

## 5.2 Research Limitations and Future Recommendations

The limitation of this study shows in scopes of geography since this study only focuses on people who work in Taiwan, while the scope of influence by Confucianism also includes China, Korea, Japan and Vietnam (Huang, 2015). Thus, future research is suggested to shift the focus to other target groups within the cultural sphere where Confucianism has considerable influence.

Secondly, the data collection of this study is based on interviews, while there is various source to obtain the experience of encountering *xiaoren* in the workplace, such as

internet forums, Facebook groups, etc. Thus, future research is suggested to adopt a different method for data collection to acquire the data which is not included in this study.

This study defines that *xiaoren* is the person who bring negative effects to others. According to the interview, we can know that the identification of the *xiaoren* is after the behavior occurs, indicating the low predictability of the *xiaoren*'s behavior. In addition, the scope of work between the *xiaoren* and the victim has a certain degree of interdependence, which affects the victim's controllability of *xiaoren* event. In psychological research, predictability and controllability affect people's perception of stressors (Nolen-Hoeksema, Fredrickson, Loftus, & Wagenaar, 2009). Therefore, future studies are suggested to aim at the individual's coping strategies when encountering *xiaoren* as a stressor.

Moreover, future studies can also pull the scope to the level of the organization to study the negative effects of *xiaoren* on the organization. This topic can even extend to the development of strategies for reducing the negative impact of *xiaoren* on the organization.

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