Research on the Influence of Family Supportive Supervisor Behavior on Employee’s Knowledge Sharing Behavior

——A Cross-level Moderation Model

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Abstract. Based on the theory of social exchange, this paper constructs a theoretical model of the influence of family-supported supervisor behavior on employees’ knowledge sharing behavior. The results of 200 valid questionnaires show that: (1) Family supportive supervisor behavior can effectively promote employees’ knowledge sharing behavior; (2) Organizational identity partly plays the mediating role between family supportive supervisor behavior and employees’ knowledge sharing behavior; (3) Duty orientation mitigates the association between family supportive supervisor behavior and employees' knowledge sharing behavior. Finally, this article discussed effective ways to promote employees' knowledge-sharing behavior: by improving the supervisor's ability to implement family-supporting supervisor behavior, creating a harmonious organizational atmosphere and improving employees' organizational identity, and strengthening employees' duty orientation. All of these can play a positive role in promoting knowledge sharing behaviors of employees.

Keywords: Family supportive supervisor behavior; employees' knowledge sharing behavior; organizational identity; duty orientation.

1. Introduction

Knowledge is regarded as an essential resource and asset for organizations. Knowledge sharing (KS) refers to the behavior of transferring explicit knowledge and tacit knowledge between individuals and between individuals and organizations[1]. After entering the era of knowledge economy, knowledge management has become one of the most important success factors of organizations. Employees’ knowledge sharing behavior (EKS) plays an increasingly important role in the long-term development of organizations. When employees create and share personal knowledge with colleagues or teams, knowledge is formed and sustained[2]. On the contrary, if knowledge sharing cannot be realized within the organization, it will be limited to the personal level instead of operating within the organization, and difficult to realize knowledge mining and innovation[3]. At the same time, employees' knowledge sharing behavior is bound to be affected by employees' psychological factors. In contrast to the interests of the organization, employees tend to retain their advanced knowledge rather than actively share it for their own interests, such as maintaining their privileged position in the organization or occupational safety[4]. At present, many scholars have discussed the non economic factors that affect EKS, but most of the research focuses on the fields directly related to knowledge management, lacking empirical research on indirect factors[5]. In China, which pays attention to ethical norms and social relations, the impact of family supportive supervisor behavior on employees may be more obvious.

Family support supervisor is considered to be a supervisor who can understand and support employees to balance family and work[6]. Hammer et al. defined the family supportive supervisor behavior(FSSB) as the behavior that the supervisor showed to support employees' performance of family duties, and refined its four dimensions, namely emotional support, instrumental support, role model behavior and innovative work-family management[7][8]. As an important supplement to the organization of family support, FSSB research provides a new perspective for the acquisition of employees' sense of support. Many Chinese scholars have also conducted studies on the localization of FSSB in China. For example, Wu Xia[9]and others has confirmed that FSSB has a positive impact
on Chinese employees' work engagement. However, in recent years, few studies have discussed the impact of FSSB on employees' out of role behavior\cite{10}. Employees' out of role behaviors refer to employees' voluntary behaviors beyond the requirements of formal work, which is not employees' obligations, and their implementation will not be rewarded or punished by the organization\cite{11}. According to this definition, EKSB belongs to the behavior outside the role. Based on the reality of Chinese culture and the theory of social exchange, this paper believes that China's traditional family concept makes employees pay more attention to the balance between work and family, so they are more aware of FSSB, and make deeper feedback, sharing their valuable knowledge for the organization.

Organizational identities (OID) play an important role in the relationship between family supportive supervisor behavior and employee knowledge sharing behavior. Organizational identity refers to the cognitive or emotional connection between self-identity and identity in organizational relationships among organizational members\cite{24}. It is the perception of personal belonging. As the direct supervisor of employees, the behavior of supervisors often represents the wishes of the organization. This study believes that in the face of the supervisor's family support behavior, employees will connect it with the organization's support for themselves, enhance their sense of belonging, and then take knowledge sharing behavior to repay it.

In addition, in Chinese traditional Confucian culture, the sense of individual duty for the collective, as an excellent quality, has always been respected by scholars and educators of all generations. "Every man is responsible for the rise and fall of the world", "humble position does not dare to forget to worry about the country" and other famous aphorisms related to duty orientation emerge in endlessly. The Chinese who grows up in this cultural environment are naturally more loyal to the organization and its members, and are willing to sacrifice their personal interests for the interests of the organization. Duty orientation (DO) reflects the will of individuals, including loyal service and loyal support to other members of the team, accomplishing the tasks and missions of the team through struggle and sacrifice, and abiding by the norms and guidelines of the team\cite{12}. At present, there is still a lack of research on duty orientation in China. Therefore, this paper introduces organizational identity and employees' duty orientation in the model construction, which is helpful to clarify the relationship between FSSB and EKSB.

2. Theoretical Basis and Research Assumptions

2.1 Family Supportive Supervisor Behavior and Employee Knowledge Sharing Behavior

China's traditional farming civilization for thousands of years has taken the family as the unit. Therefore, since ancient times, Chinese people have generally attached importance to family construction. Modern society has undergone profound changes due to the development of productive forces. The traditional work form of "men in charge of the outside and women in charge of the inside" has changed. Balancing the relationship between work and family has become a difficult problem for employees\cite{13}. In this context, the support from the organization is more important. FSSB is the latest product from the perspective of social support theory. It is the concrete development of supervisor support\cite{14}, reflecting the supervisor's care for his subordinates. Past studies have proved that FSSB has positive relationships with the resolution of conflicts between family and work, the improvement of job satisfaction and the decline of turnover intention\cite{15}, and also has a significant impact on employee innovation behavior\cite{16}. According to previous literature, organizational trust\cite{17} and perceived support\cite{18} can significantly increase employees' knowledge sharing behavior, while workplace exclusion and dominance based status competition will reduce employees' willingness to share knowledge\cite{19}.

Social exchange theory attempts to explain the individual behavior involved in the process of resource exchange. It points out that members of the organizational exchange resources out of the desire to obtain something out of contact, and the principle of individual behavior is to maximize benefits and minimize costs\cite{20}. According to the social exchange theory, when employees get
enough benefits, they are more willing to share their own knowledge. Besides, according to the framework of Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory[21], family supportive supervisor behavior acts on employees, which is conducive to the realization of employees' needs for love, belonging and respect. According to the above two theories, when the supervisor shows family-supportive behavior, employees can perceive the respect, support and care of the supervisor and the organization represented by the supervisor for their family duties, obtain emotional and work support, and learn to balance work and family roles, so as to reduce the impact of family problems on work to a certain extent and complete performance tasks better. At this time, employees will have a sense of responsibility to reward the organization based on the principle of reciprocity[22], enhance employees' willingness to create and share knowledge, increase the possibility of the team or organization to successfully achieve its goals through knowledge sharing behavior, and reward the support of supervisors and organizations. Under the cultural background of valuing family and reward in China, this influence may be more obvious. To sum up, the following research hypotheses are proposed:

H1: family supportive supervisor behavior has a significant positive impact on employee knowledge sharing behavior.

2.2 Mediating Role of Organizational Identity

Organizational identification describes the degree to which members of an organization group define themselves. The more employees identify with the organization, the more they apply the attributes and characteristics of the group to themselves, and the stronger their sense of belonging to the organization[23]. The more employees identify with the organization, the more likely they are to look at issues from the perspective of the organization and take action in a way that promotes the interests of the organization. Their turnover intention will also be significantly reduced, and the stability of employees will be increased[24].

Under the culture of high power distance in China, the values, psychology and behavior of leaders have a great impact on the psychology and behavior of subordinates[25]. The social identity theory of leadership points out that leaders are members of a group, and the interaction between leaders and subordinate members based on their group identity is the mechanism of leadership[26]. The theory holds that leaders represent the embodiment of group identity. In a sense, leaders are the expression of group will. Given their status in the organization, their practice may also have an important impact on how followers identify with the group[23]. The management's care, support and understanding of employees directly reflects the organization's respect, support and understanding of employees[10]. When employees realize that the organization intends to take action to improve their well-being, they will have a sense of gratitude and belonging to the organization[27]. To sum up, the following assumptions are made:

H2: family supportive supervisor behavior has a positive impact on organizational identity.

Organizational identity has a direct impact on employee behavior. Existing research shows that the stronger employees' identification with the organization, the more motivated they are to adopt ways to promote their success[27]. The social exchange theory also emphasizes that the value of social exchange depends on the subjective feelings of employees about the resources and values obtained. The principle of reciprocity and the obligation of return stimulates employees to return to the organization[27]. In the era of knowledge economy, knowledge is the most important and the unique source of lasting competitive advantage of organizations[28]. In addition to tangible or intuitive ways such as achieving performance, knowledge sharing is also an important way for employees to return to the organization. For employees, knowledge sharing means the dispersion of their own advantages, but based on organizational recognition and reward, employees may be willing to bear part of the loss in exchange for the better development of the organization[29]. To sum up, the following assumptions are made:

H3: employees' organizational identity has a positive impact on employees' knowledge sharing behavior.
Family supportive supervisor behavior emphasizes that supervisors should care about employees' work family balance, which has a positive effect of improving employees' organizational identity and can positively affect employees' knowledge sharing behavior. Based on the theory of social exchange, when a supervisor takes family support actions in terms of emotional care, tool help, role demonstration, and innovative management to support employees in fulfilling family responsibilities and achieving a balance between work and family for the work-family problems of his/her subordinates, employees will identify with his/her organization because of the representativeness of the supervisor in the organization, so as to take more actions to share knowledge, return the care of the organization represented by the supervisor behavior, in order to achieve the organizational goals and obtain their own long-term development in the organization. To sum up, this paper speculates that organizational identity can explain the impact mechanism of FSSB on EKSB, and puts forward the following assumptions:

H4: organizational identity plays a mediating role between family supportive supervisor behavior and employee knowledge sharing behavior.

2.3 Regulatory Role of Duty Orientation

The duty orientation of employees is the content of the scope of ethics, which means that employees are loyal to support members of the organization based on their responsibilities, and are willing to make efforts and sacrifices to complete the tasks and missions of the team. Most of the time, employees' behavior is not just motivated by interests; Concepts related to responsibilities, such as loyalty, honor and norms, are all based on moral commitment. Individuals believe that they have certain obligations and responsibilities to the organization.[30] China's idea of duty is deeply rooted in the thick soil of China's traditional culture.[31]. Compared with western countries, China prefers collectivism to individualism in value choice. In collectivist culture, group interests and collective interests take precedence over individual interests,[4], and individuals are more likely to make sacrifices and concessions for collective development. This paper argues that when employees have a strong duty orientation to the organization, employees will be more active in knowledge sharing, but at the same time, the impact of FSSB on employees' knowledge sharing behavior may be weakened. When employees think they are members of the organization, they are willing to adjust themselves to promote the development of the organization. Their intrinsic motivation is to act in accordance with the organizational goals and norms, so the demand for leadership is very low.[32]. The study found that when employees' demand for managers is low, their response to managers' behavior will be reduced. On the contrary, we can think that when employees lack duty orientation, they will pay more attention to their own interests, and the impact of supervisor behavior on their knowledge sharing behavior will increase. To sum up, the following assumptions are made:

H5: duty orientation plays a moderating role between family supportive supervisor behavior and employee knowledge sharing behavior. When employees' duty orientation is high, the impact of family supportive supervisor behavior on knowledge sharing behavior is relatively reduced; When employees' duty orientation is low, the influence will be opposite.

The model framework constructed in this paper is as follows:

![Diagram](image)

Fig. 1 theoretical model of influence mechanism of FSSB on KS
3. Research Methods

3.1 Samples

This study uses the method of online questionnaire survey to collect questionnaires from employees working in Shandong, Hebei and other provinces in March 2021, involving eight industries such as insurance, manufacturing and service. Declare the confidentiality principle to the subjects during the investigation and inform them that the research results are only used for academic research. A total of 217 samples were collected, and 189 valid questionnaires were obtained after eliminating invalid questionnaires. The effective rate of the questionnaire was 87.10%. Descriptive statistical analysis of the sample showed that there were 76 males, accounting for 40.2%, and 113 females, accounting for 59.8%. ; the average age of employees is 42; The average working life is 18 years; married employees accounted for 91%, and unmarried employees accounted for 9%; employees with children accounted for 89%.

3.2 Variable Measurement

Mature Chinese and English scales were selected for the survey, and all were scored with likert-5 point scale. 1-5 respectively indicated totally disagree, disagree, general, agree, and totally agree.

The family supportive supervisor behavior was evaluated by using the four item scale developed by hammer, the coefficient \( \alpha = 0.864 \).

Organizational identity was assessed using the 6-item scale developed by Mael et al, the coefficient \( \alpha = 0.855 \).

Employees' knowledge sharing behavior Lin Lu, k.leung, etc. Used the 8-item scale to evaluate the project, the coefficient \( \alpha = 0.866 \).

Employee duty orientation adopts 8 items of member and mission dimensions in the 12 item scale developed by Hannah et al, the coefficient \( \alpha = 0.965 \).

Gender, age, marital status, with children or not, and working years are selected as control variables to reduce the interference of demographic information on the theoretical model.

4. Data Analysis

4.1 Variable Principal Component Analysis

All items in the questionnaire were analyzed by principal component analysis without rotation using Harman single factor test. The results showed that the first principal component explained 38.168% of the main component variation, indicating that there was no serious common method deviation in this study.

4.2 Descriptive statistics and Correlation analysis

The mean, standard deviation and correlation coefficient among the variables involved in this study is shown in Table 1. Organizational identity is positively correlated with EKSB \((r=0.687, p<0.01)\). Employees’ duty orientation is positively correlated with EKSB \((r=0.727, p<0.01)\), FSSB \((r=0.598, p<0.01)\), and organizational identity \((r=0.722, p<0.01)\).

Table 1 descriptive statistics

<table>
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<tr>
<th>First level variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
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<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. gender</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. age</td>
<td>41.93</td>
<td>7.83</td>
<td>0.045</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. marital status</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.069</td>
<td>0.604*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. with or without</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.050</td>
<td>0.631*</td>
<td>0.830*</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
### 4.3 Hypothesis Testing

Hierarchical regression was used to test the hypothesis, and the data fitted the model well. See Table 2 for the specific results. M2 test H2, the results showed that FSSB had a significant positive impact on employees’ organizational identity (r=0.442, p<0.001), H2 was established. M4 tests H1. The results show that FSSB has a significant positive impact on employees’ knowledge sharing behavior (r=0.440, p<0.001), and H1 is true. M5 tests H3, and the results show that there is a significant positive correlation between organizational identity and employees’ knowledge sharing behavior (r=0.657, p<0.001). H3 is established. M6 tested the mediating role of organizational identity. The results showed that after the family support supervisor behavior and organizational identity entered the model at the same time, r family support supervisor behavior - employee knowledge sharing behavior decreased from 0.430 to 0.213, r organizational identity - employee knowledge sharing behavior was 0.514, indicating that the indirect effect was less than the direct effect, that is, organizational identity played a partial mediating role, and H4 was established. M8 tested the moderating effect of duty orientation, and the results showed that the coefficient of interaction was significant (r=-0.066, p<0.05), that is, employee duty orientation negatively regulated the positive impact of family supportive supervisor behavior on EKSB, and H5 was established.

Fig. 2 is the moderating effect diagram to more intuitively reveal the mechanism of duty orientation on the relationship between FSSB and EKSB. It can be seen from Figure 2 that the more FSSB managers show in the process of interaction with subordinates, the more likely it is to cause employees to show knowledge sharing behavior. As the level of duty orientation varies from person to person, it will also have an impact on the level of EKSB. Specifically, employees with higher level of duty orientation can adjust their behavior from the achievement of collective interests and team goals. Facing the family support supervisor behavior will increase the knowledge sharing behavior of employees, but it is lower than those with low duty orientation.

**Table 2: Regression analysis results of hypothesis test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>category</th>
<th>organizational</th>
<th>Employee knowledge sharing behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. working years</td>
<td>18.00</td>
<td>6.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. organizational identity</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. employee knowledge sharing behavior</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. duty orientation</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. family supportive supervisor behavior</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: n=200, *** is significantly correlated at the level of 0.001 (bilateral); ** is significantly correlated at the level of 0.01 (bilateral); * is significantly correlated at the level of 0.05(bilateral); the same as table 3.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>identification</th>
<th>M1</th>
<th>M2</th>
<th>M3</th>
<th>M4</th>
<th>M5</th>
<th>M6</th>
<th>M7</th>
<th>M8</th>
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<td>0.045</td>
<td>-0.24</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-0.120</td>
<td>-0.192</td>
<td>-0.143</td>
<td>-0.091</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>-0.010</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.362</td>
<td>0.332</td>
<td>0.072</td>
<td>0.113</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>With or without children</td>
<td>-0.324</td>
<td>-0.128</td>
<td>-0.24</td>
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<td>-0.045</td>
<td>-0.208</td>
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<td>-0.068</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working years</td>
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<td>0.024</td>
<td>0.028</td>
<td>0.022</td>
<td>0.008</td>
<td>0.010</td>
<td>0.024</td>
<td>0.022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>independent variable</td>
<td>Family supportive supervisor behavior</td>
<td>0.442**</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.440**</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.213*</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>organizational identification</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.657**</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.514*</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>duty orientation</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.620**</td>
<td>0.550***</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>duty orientation × Family supportive supervisor behavior</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>-0.066*</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adjusted R2</td>
<td>-0.006</td>
<td>0.290</td>
<td>0.020</td>
<td>0.333</td>
<td>0.481</td>
<td>0.531</td>
<td>0.530</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.759</td>
<td>13.773*</td>
<td>1.772</td>
<td>16.659*</td>
<td>30.007*</td>
<td>31.347*</td>
<td>36.390*</td>
<td>32.215***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2 the moderating effect of duty orientation on the relationship between FSSB and KS
5. Discussion

5.1 Research Conclusion

Based on the theory of social exchange, this paper constructs a theoretical model of family supportive supervisor behavior and employees’ knowledge sharing behavior, and discusses the mediating role of organizational identity and the moderating role of duty orientation in the relationship between the two. The specific conclusions are as follows:

First, family supportive supervisor behavior can affect the knowledge sharing behavior of employees in the organization. From the survey and analysis results, there is a positive correlation between the two, that is, the more abundant or frequent the family support behavior the supervisor shows, the more likely the employee is to show knowledge sharing behavior. Chinese people generally value the family. This study is based on China's national conditions, starting from the behavior of managers, taking the FSSB as the antecedent variable, and based on the social exchange theory, analyzes the impact of FSSB on employees' knowledge sharing behavior, and introduces duty orientation as the moderator variable according to the cultural characteristics of China's emphasis on duty. It theoretically demonstrates the impact mechanism of FSSB on employee knowledge sharing behavior. On this basis, through empirical research, it further refined the past exploration of the relationship between employee support and knowledge sharing behavior from the perspective of management, it has significant theoretical and practical value for the improvement and enrichment of relevant theories and the development of enterprise management practice.

Second, organizational identity plays a partial mediating role between family supportive supervisor behavior and employee knowledge sharing behavior. When the supervisor takes family support behavior, the employee will attribute the behavior to the organization's support for the performance of his/her family responsibilities, enhance the organization's identity, consider more for the organization, and be willing to bear the possible adverse effects of knowledge sharing for the development of the organization, so as to increase the knowledge sharing behavior. The discovery of this intermediary variable more clearly indicates the path of the impact of FSSB on EKSB, and enriches the research on the mechanism of family supportive supervisor behavior.

Third, duty orientation can adjust the influencing mechanism of FSSB on employees' knowledge sharing behavior. The empirical results show that after the introduction of duty oriented variables, the impact of FSSB on employees' knowledge sharing behavior decreases to a certain extent. Employees with high duty orientation naturally focus on the collective interests and are more willing to make sacrifices for the development of the organization. At this time, knowledge sharing behavior is not entirely out of the consideration of interest exchange, and the impact of supervisor behavior will be weakened. From another point of view, duty orientation, as the self-consciousness of employees, is conducive to employees' firm value judgment and can promote the development of enterprises.

5.2 Management Suggestions

All the survey data of this study are collected from Chinese local employees, which can represent the opinions and opinions of Chinese employees to a certain extent, and have certain reference value for Chinese management practice.

First, we should enhance the ability of supervisors to implement family support behavior and stimulate employees’ knowledge sharing behavior. At the moment when knowledge is king, organizations should try to stimulate employees' willingness to create and share knowledge, reduce their burden of knowledge sharing, provide appropriate facilities and support when necessary, and encourage their knowledge sharing behavior, so as to promote the operation of knowledge in the organization. The ability of supervisor is the basis of behavior implementation. As a close manager of employees, on the basis of maintaining the normal operation of the Department, the supervisor should get the relevant knowledge of family supportive behavior, improve the innovation
managing ability, set an example for employees, meet the needs of employees for love, belonging and respect in company, enhancing their knowledge sharing behavior.

Second, we should attach importance to the construction of corporate culture and a good atmosphere to enhance employees' sense of belonging and identity to the enterprise. Organizational identity has an important impact on whether employees are willing to share knowledge. One of the model paths constructed in this paper is family supportive supervisor behavior, which promotes employees' knowledge sharing behavior by strengthening employees' organizational identity. To enhance employees' organizational identity, in addition to increasing the family supportive supervisor behavior described in this article, we can also strengthen the construction of corporate culture, enhance employees' understanding of corporate culture, and strengthen the guiding role of culture for employees. In addition, a good culture is also conducive to creating a harmonious working atmosphere, promoting exchanges between employees and between employees and supervisors, helping supervisors to collect information on the coordination between work and family, and facilitating supervisors to implement family support more targeted and effectively.

Third, enterprises should take appropriate incentives to reward employees who actively engage in knowledge sharing and other activities with duty-oriented characteristics and supervisors who implement family supportive behaviors. As a personal choice, duty orientation is difficult to be cultivated in a short time, but according to the reinforcement theory, when employees take such behavior, appropriate rewards will have a positive reinforcement effect on them, which will consolidate and enhance their behavior, increase the possibility of repetition, and help them shape such behavior. In the long run, employees' enthusiasm for knowledge sharing can be improved. At the same time, rewarding supervisors who implement family supportive behavior can also enhance their willingness to implement such behavior.

5.3 Research Limitations and Prospects

There are also some limitations and shortcomings of this study: first, this survey adopts the method of employee self-assessment, and is cross-sectional data. Future research can extend the time line of data collection, conduct tracking and comparative research, and improve the accuracy and rigor of the research; second, a complete knowledge sharing process includes sharing intention, sharing behavior and sharing results, while there is no further research on whether the intention and results of knowledge sharing can affect the model. Future research can start from the other two parts of knowledge sharing to further improve the relevant research.

References


