

The Double-edged Sword Effect of Abusive Supervision on Subordinates' Knowledge Hiding Behavior: The Role of Moral Disengagement and Emotional Exhaustion

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Abstract

Existing researches on the relationship between abusive supervision and deviant behaviors mainly focus on emotional transmission pathways, that is, based on the resource preservation theory and emotional center model, it explores the mediating effects of emotional exhaustion and negative emotions. However, the organizational behavior literature points out that emotion and cognition are the two core elements that jointly drive employee behavior. Therefore, this research intends to build a cognitive transformation path and emotional transmission path from abusive supervision to knowledge hiding behavior based on the emotional center model and social cognitive process model, in order to understand abusive supervision and knowledge more comprehensively Hidden relationships between behaviors. This article uses questionnaire survey methods to conduct empirical research, and expects the following conclusions: abusive supervision has a positive effect on moral refusal, abusive supervision has a positive effect on emotional exhaustion, and moral refusal has a positive effect on subordinates' knowledge hiding behavior. Exhaustion has a positive effect on subordinates' knowledge hiding behavior. Leader-Member Guanxi significantly regulates the relationship between abusive supervision and moral rejection, and leader-Member Guanxi significantly regulates the relationship between abusive supervision and emotional exhaustion.

Keywords

Abusive supervision; Subordinate knowledge hiding behavior; Moral disengagement; Emotional exhaustion; Leader-Member Guanxi.

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the problem of abusive supervision has attracted great attention from the theoretical and practical circles at home and abroad. abusive supervision refers to the persistent hostile behavior of the boss perceived by the subordinates, including verbal (such as ridicule, abusive, etc.) and non-verbal (such as coldness, ostracism, etc.) hostile behavior, but does not include physical contact with aggressive behavior [1]. The increasingly fierce competition in the global market makes organizational managers face increasing work pressure. Subsequently, the phenomenon of abusive supervision is increasingly appearing in modern organizational life. In particular, in a Chinese society known for its high collectivism, high traditionality, and great power distance, the superiors are more likely to adopt a "do their own way" attitude in managing their subordinates, and less take into account the feelings and needs of subordinates. Because of the fear of being "wearing small shoes" by the boss, they generally dare not speak up about the abusive supervision of the boss. This may cause the abusive supervision phenomenon in Chinese organizations to become more and more serious, and even form a vicious circle.

Existing research shows that destructive leadership behaviors such as abusive supervision can cause huge hidden costs to organizations. Specifically, as a major source of workplace stress, abusive supervision can easily trigger negative emotions from subordinates, leading to increased deviant behaviors against the boss and (or) organization, which in turn reduces organizational cohesion and production efficiency [12]. Therefore, it is of extremely important theoretical value and practical guiding significance to explore which nature or type of deviant behavior will be triggered by abusive supervision in a cultural context with Chinese characteristics. Recent studies have found that victims of abusive supervision will adopt strategies of withdrawal and feedback avoidance behavior [7]. In addition, recent research also pointed out that knowledge hiding behavior (an individual in an organization deliberately refuses to provide or eliminate the knowledge required by other individuals) [2] is a kind of behavior adopted by employees when facing unfair treatment by their superiors or colleagues. Important hidden and evasive coping strategies [13]. Therefore, this research intends to take knowledge hiding as a kind of employee deviant behavior response under the pressure of boss abuse, and analyze the specific impact mechanism of abusive supervision on knowledge hiding behavior.

Existing researches on the relationship between abusive supervision and deviant behaviors mainly focus on emotional transmission pathways, that is, based on resource preservation theory and emotional center model, they explore emotional exhaustion (individuals treat emotions as a resource. When this resource is consumed, the individual will produce some mediating effects including internal and external negative reactions and thoughts [5] and negative emotions. The organizational behavior literature points out that emotion and cognition are the two core elements that jointly drive employee behavior [14]. Therefore, the academic community should pay more attention to the social cognitive process model and the emotional center model in order to understand the relationship between abusive supervision and deviant behavior more comprehensively. In particular, recent studies have found that moral disengagement (a series of cognitive justification mechanisms that encourage individuals to eliminate self-inhibition of engaging in unethical behavior while avoiding self-blame and guilt) [4] is a link between work pressure and employees' negative coping strategies. The key cognitive process. Based on this, this study intends to introduce two intermediary variables, moral refusal and emotional exhaustion, to construct a cognitive transformation path and an emotional transmission path from abusive supervision to a moral and psychological level of knowledge hiding behavior.

It is worth noting that not all individuals will have the same degree of moral excuse or report the same degree of deviant behavior due to abusive supervision. Therefore, another important task of this research is to actively explore which specific situational factors can lead to higher/lower levels of moral rejection (emotional exhaustion) and subsequent deviant behaviors. Finally, since relationship is one of the core concepts of traditional Chinese culture, the emphasis on relationship is one of the most significant characteristics of Chinese society. Therefore, leader-Member Guanxi is introduced as the moderating variable of the research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Abusive Supervision

Tepper (2000) is the first to define abusive supervision as the continuous verbal or nonverbal hostile behavior of supervisors perceived by subordinates, but does not include physical contact violations [1]. Abusive supervision includes the following four characteristics: One is the subjective evaluation of subordinates. The evaluations of employees in different situations may be inconsistent, and different employees' perceptions of this may also differ; the second is continuous behavior. Temporary or occasional hostile behavior by superiors is not abusive

supervision; third, hostile behavior; fourth, non-physical contact. The manifestations of abusive supervision include ignoring subordinates, mocking subordinates, insulting subordinates in public, calling subordinates insultingly, betraying their promises, threatening subordinates by dismissal, etc.

2.2. Knowledge Hiding Behavior

The concept of knowledge hiding first appeared in database research, mainly considering two levels of hiding problems: one is the hiding and protection of sensitive data; the other is the hiding and protection of sensitive knowledge contained in the data. Scholar Connelly et al. (2012) introduced knowledge hiding as an individual-level construct into the workplace research for the first time, and defined it as "a deliberate attempt by an individual to retain or conceal knowledge when facing the knowledge request of others. Behavior", and used empirical sampling to prove that there is indeed knowledge hiding behavior in the organization [2]. The knowledge referred to in the conceptual definition of knowledge hiding behavior in the workplace by scholar Connelly et al. (2012) includes information, opinions, and relevant experience or professional expertise in completing tasks with organization members.

At present, the academic circles generally agree with the three-dimensional structure of knowledge hiding behavior proposed by Connelly et al. (2012): evasive hiding, playing dumb, and rationalized hiding. Dodge concealment refers to the fact that the concealer provides inaccurate information or promises to help, but actually delays as much as possible. It does not really want to provide the requested knowledge, which is deceptive. Pretending to be stupid means that the concealer pretends that he does not understand the requester's question, or pretends that he does not understand the relevant content of the requester's knowledge, which is also deceptive. Reasonable concealment refers to the fact that the concealer informs him that he cannot provide a legitimate reason for the knowledge being asked, for example, the knowledge being asked is confidential and cannot be disclosed.

2.3. Moral Disengagement

Moral evasiveness refers to the specific cognitive tendencies that individuals produce in their behaviors. These cognitive tendencies include redefining their behavior to make it less harmful, minimizing one's own responsibility in the consequences of behavior and reducing injury. The painful identification of the goal, and at the same time, these cognitive tendencies are not the endogenous and stable characteristics of the individual, but the result of the interaction between the individual and the environment, that is, moral rejection is plastic [4].

2.4. Emotional Exhaustion

In 1981, the scholar Maslach (1981) proposed the definition of emotional exhaustion. He believed that emotional exhaustion is when individuals regard emotions as a resource. When this resource is consumed, individuals will have some negative reactions and thoughts, including internal and external. The specific manifestations of emotional exhaustion are: the individual's energy exhaustion and exhaustion, energy being scattered, negative emotions including frustration and indifference. Two scholars, Maslach and Jackson, also showed in 1991 that emotional exhaustion is manifested in individuals as their own sense of tension and sense of loss of control. The employees in the organization are specifically manifested as loss of mental resources, fatigue, loss of interest in things, irritable mood, etc. [5].

2.5. Leader-Member Guanxi

Superior-Subordinate Guanxi (SSG) is a Chinese concept, and current scholars have conducted in-depth research on this concept. Scholar Chen et al. (2000) believe that the concept of leader-Member Guanxi is that in an organization, leaders and subordinates can establish a relationship through informal exchanges and contacts in work situations and non-work

situations, which will promote the relationship between the two Benefit exchange and follow-up development [6]. Although the definition of the relationship between superiors and superiors is not completely unified, the academic circles believe that this relationship is a mutually beneficial exchange relationship between leaders and members.

3. MODEL CONSTRUCTION

The research on abusive supervision and knowledge hiding behavior has always been a focus of organizational behavior. Therefore, exploring the extent to which abusive supervision can trigger knowledge hiding behavior in a cultural context with Chinese characteristics has extremely important theoretical value and practical guiding significance [11]. This article proposes a relationship model that takes moral refusal and emotional exhaustion as a common intermediary variable, leader-Member Guanxi as a moderating variable, abusive supervision as antecedent variable, and knowledge hiding behavior as an outcome variable, and explores the common intermediary effect of emotional exhaustion and moral excuse. The relationship between abusive supervision and knowledge hiding behavior.

4. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES

4.1. The Impact of Abusive Supervision on Knowledge Hiding Behavior

Abusive supervision is often regarded by employees as a form of interpersonal abuse. From the perspective of negative reciprocity in social exchange theory, when a subordinate feels uncomfortable due to improper treatment by the boss, he/she will take retaliatory measures to respond to the abuser's behavior in order to make himself psychologically Feel more comfortable. The resistance theory believes that the frustrated individual will participate in the behavior of restoring a sense of personal control. In response to abusive leaders from superiors, individuals may choose to participate or not to participate in certain free behaviors. Then, one of the ways for abused employees to restore autonomy and freedom is to consciously suppress behaviors that can express organizational values, such as knowledge sharing. Based on this, this research proposes the following hypothesis 1:

Hypothesis 1. Abusive supervision positively affects knowledge hiding behavior

4.2. Mediating Role of Moral Disengagement

Studies have shown that the perception of victimization caused by work pressure will consume the individual's moral self-regulation resources, thereby enhancing the individual's awareness of moral rejection [16]. In other words, the greater the work pressure faced by the subordinates, the more likely they are to show a high level of moral excuse and regard engaging in deviant behavior as an ideal coping strategy. Accordingly, when subordinates are abused by their bosses, as victims, they will feel psychologically unpleasant, and this sense of unpleasantness will become an excuse for them to defend themselves morally, thereby prompting them to be morally unhappy. Allow yourself to implement subsequent knowledge hiding behaviors. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 is proposed.

Hypothesis 2. moral disengagement has an intermediary effect on the relationship between abusive supervision and knowledge hiding behavior.

4.3. Mediating Role of Emotional Exhaustion

Emotional exhaustion is an important symptom of job burnout. In this state, employees are unlikely to participate in off-role behaviors that are beneficial to the organization or its members, such as knowledge sharing. In addition, abuse of leadership is a kind of psychological pressure, and its appearance is a behavioral sign. Lee and Ashforth (1996) believe that when individuals perceive that they do not have enough resources to control the stressors they are

facing, emotional exhaustion will be triggered. Therefore, long-term exposure to abusive leadership situations will deplete the psychological and physical resources of the abused subordinates, and emotional exhaustion will prompt the abused employees to take conservative measures to conserve resources, while also reducing spontaneous role behaviors, such as knowledge hiding. Based on this, this research proposes the following hypothesis 3:

Hypothesis 3. Emotional exhaustion mediates the relationship between abusive supervision and knowledge hiding behavior.

4.4. Regulating Role of Leader-Member Guanxi

The combination of high-level abusive supervision and high-level leader-Member Guanxi may make the "abusive supervision-knowledge hiding behavior" relationship weaker, because the supportive relationship between subordinates will activate the subordinate's moral rejection mechanism (emotional exhaustion mechanism) Form certain restrictions. On the contrary, the combination of high abusive supervision and low leader-Member Guanxi may cause abusive supervision to have a more significant indirect effect on knowledge hiding behavior, because in this context, the level of moral disengagement (emotional exhaustion) of employees may be greatly affected. Promote. Accordingly, this study proposes Hypothesis 4 and Hypothesis 5.

Hypothesis 4. The relationship between superior and superior regulates the relationship between abusive supervision and moral rejection.

For lower-level employees, the mediating effect of moral disengagement is stronger. For high-level employees, the mediating effect of moral disengagement is weaker.

Hypothesis 5. Leader-Member Guanxi regulates the relationship between abusive supervision and emotional exhaustion.

For low-level employees, the mediating effect of emotional exhaustion is stronger. For high-level employees, the mediating effect of emotional exhaustion is weaker.

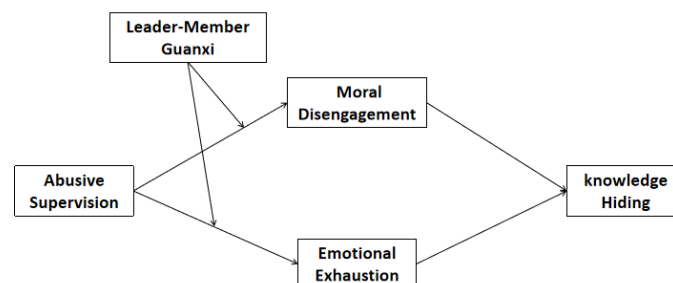


Fig 1. Study model

5. RESEARCH DESIGN

This article will use questionnaires to explore the relationship between "abusive supervision", "hidden knowledge of subordinates", "moral disengagement", "emotional exhaustion", and "leader-Member Guanxi". To reduce the impact of potential common method deviations, two time nodes are used to collect data. The variables investigated at time point 1 were abusive supervision and leader-Member Guanxi, and the variables investigated at time point 2 were moral excuse, emotional exhaustion and knowledge hiding behavior. Among them, the questionnaire will be divided into six parts: the degree of abusive supervision perceived by employees; the measurement of moral disengagement; the measurement of emotional exhaustion; the measurement of leader-Member Guanxi; the measurement of employee knowledge hiding behavior; the basic information of the respondent. The study will randomly select frontline employees from 15 manufacturing companies in Shanghai to conduct a questionnaire survey.

6. CONCLUSION

Abusive supervision has a positive effect on moral refusal, abusive supervision has a positive influence on emotional exhaustion, moral refusal has a positive effect on subordinates' knowledge hiding behavior, and emotional exhaustion has a positive effect on subordinates' knowledge hiding behavior, and the relationship between superiors and superiors is significant. Regulate the relationship between abusive supervision and moral rejection, and leader-Member Guanxi significantly regulates the relationship between abusive supervision and emotional exhaustion.

7. THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTION AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1. Theoretical Contribution

First, this study found that knowledge hiding behavior is an important strategy for Chinese employees to cope with boss abusive supervision; second, this study found that moral rejection and emotional exhaustion are the key to the impact of abusive supervision on knowledge hiding behavior. The intermediary link, to a certain extent, has revealed the "black box" of the transformation process from abusive supervision to employee deviant behavior; finally, this study found that the relationship between the superior and the subordinate is in the relationship between abusive supervision, moral refusal/emotional exhaustion and knowledge hiding behavior. As a moderator, employees with high-level leader-Member Guanxis are less likely to have moral excuses/emotional exhaustion and allow themselves to resort to tit-for-tat retaliation.

7.2. Practical Implications

First of all, employee knowledge hiding behavior is extremely threatening to the organization, because it will have a wide range of destructive effects on all organizational levels, such as the loss of key information and ideas. Therefore, companies should continue to strengthen the monitoring of employees' work and life quality, and often clearly remind managers of the negative effects of abusive supervision, and build and improve a punishment mechanism that helps prohibit bad leadership behaviors of their bosses. Secondly, business managers should be fully aware of the importance of timely grasping the moral and psychological activities of employees (emotional changes) and blocking or reducing their moral disengagement tendency (emotional exhaustion); finally, the company should strengthen the leadership of the boss and the interpersonal relationship of the subordinates. Skill training, solidly build a harmonious supportive, trust-based leader-Member Guanxi structure.

8. RESEARCH LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

As in any field study, our study has several limitations. First, the method of employee self-evaluation is used to measure the main variables, but this single source of data may lead to leniency effects, common method deviations, and social desirability deviations, so follow-up research should try to collect multiple sources or Paired sample data.

Second, collect data only from manufacturing companies in Shanghai, which limits the generalizability of the research conclusions. Follow-up research can collect data from a wider area and more industries to improve the external validity of the research conclusions.

Finally, this research only partially reveals the "black box" of the process of abusive supervision affecting knowledge hiding behavior, placing the emotional process mechanism and cognitive process mechanism in the same theoretical model, and discussing the effects of emotional exhaustion and moral refusal on abusive supervision. The common intermediary effect of the relationship with knowledge hiding behaviors can introduce more novel

intermediary variables and moderating variables in future research to deeply explore the impact of abusive supervision on knowledge hiding behaviors.

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