

How does Supervisor Incivility Impair Employees' Knowledge Sharing: Evidence from Chinese Firms¹

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Abstract

The research to date has largely been unclear about the relationship between supervisor incivility and employees' knowledge sharing. From the perspective of social exchange theory, we examine how a supervisor's incivility impact on employees' knowledge sharing through mediation factor of organizational identification. Meanwhile, the moderation role of promotion focus and prevention focus were investigated. Through 295 valid questionnaires collected from Hunan Province China, we find that those employees who experiencing incivility from their supervisors are more likely to have low organizational identification and as a consequence show reluctance to share knowledge with team members. Moreover, we find that promotion focus and prevention focus moderate the relationship between supervisor incivility and employee knowledge sharing in collectivist cultures. Implications for theory and practice are also discussed.

Keywords: Supervisor incivility; Organizational identification; Employee knowledge sharing; Promotion focus; Prevention focus

1. Introduction

Knowledge is the most important element and a primary resource for knowledge creation, heterogeneity and competitive advantage (Grant, 1996). Knowledge sharing plays an important role in organization through which employees acquire and provide information about products and technology, experience and knowledge, thus building up sustainable competitive advantage (Connelly & Kelloway, 2003). Previous studies shed light on the role of knowledge sharing in organizational innovation and performance. Many scholars have shown that employee knowledge sharing has a positive impact on organizations and employees creativity (Cao, 2014; Dong et al. 2017). In addition, Li (2003) showed that employee knowledge sharing positively affects job performance, and others have shown that knowledge sharing helps to improve organizational innovation performance (Liu, 2012; Kessel, 2012). Therefore, it is of both theoretical and empirical importance to explore knowledge sharing in the new situation of innovation-oriented society and the era of knowledge-based economies. Current research on impact factors of knowledge sharing mainly focused on personal traits, organizational culture and organizational knowledge (Zhang, 2016), and less about the relationship between leadership and knowledge sharing. Previous studies have shown that the nature of collectivist cultures affects leadership (Casimir and Waldman, 2007), knowledge sharing (Ma et al., 2014).

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Specially, in the context of Chinese culture which is collective and hierarchical, leaders and subordinates have a "the one who has higher position is superior to others" relationship and the subordinates expect and accept that power is distributed unequally and decision is made by leaders predominantly (Hofstede, 2001). Leaders are also largely control various forms of subordinates' resources and allocation, deep impact on subordinates' work and life, and thus influence on subordinates work attitudes and behavior (Cai, 2009). Research in Chinese context mainly focuses on the effect of positive leadership on employee knowledge sharing, such as transformational leadership, self-sacrificial leadership and ethical leadership (Li, 2014; Li, 2014; Yang, 2015), while little attention has been paid to the negative effect of destructive leadership on employee knowledge sharing. When facing different types of stimuli, individuals are inclined to respond to the negative stimuli more strongly than positive ones (Baumeister et al., 2001). Supervisor incivility, as a typical negative leadership, is defined as low intensity deviant acts with ambiguous intent to harm (Andersson et al., 1999). Supervisor incivility means the perpetrator is the supervisor, who refers to direct leader of subordinate. The current research is not clear about whether a single perpetrator such as supervisor incivility is sufficient to instigate the well-documented negative consequences of workplace incivility (Andersson et al., 1999). Moreover, it has been suggested that supervisor is in a position of power and influence within the social group, thus, supervisor incivility may be more detrimental than general incivility from peers or subordinates (Herscovis et al., 2017). Therefore, it is necessary to examine negative consequences of supervisor incivility separately. Therefore, our research explores the impact of supervisor incivility on employee knowledge sharing in China.

This paper mainly discusses the impact of supervisor incivility on employee knowledge sharing from the perspective of social exchange theory, focusing on the mediating role of organizational identification and the moderating role of regulatory focus. Homans (1958) argued that all of human social activities originated from the exchange, and the exchange relationships was the basic principle of human's interaction. This concept has gradually become an influential theory of "employee-organization" relationship. Being a special form of social identification, organizational identification refers to individual's self which is defined on the basis of organizational member identification and becomes a perception that is subject to the organization (Wu, 2010). Supervisor is "a face" of the organization, as the organizational agents, and has an important impact on employee organizational identification. When employees suffer from supervisor incivility, such as public criticism, mockery, etc., they may feel humiliated and rejected by the organization, thereby reducing organizational identification and negatively affecting employee knowledge sharing or motivation. However, there is lack of research on whether organizational identification has a mediating effect between supervisor incivility and employee knowledge sharing. At the same time, individuals responses to supervisor incivility differently, some traits may have moderating effects. This raise up concern such as regulatory focus is a stable trait, whether it will influence employee knowledge sharing? Regulatory theory is proposed by Higgins on the basis of self-discrepancies theory, which aims to present two different states of approaching positive goals and avoiding negative goals (Higgins, 1998). According to two different states and manifestations, it can be divided into two different regulatory focus (promotion focus and prevention focus). Promotion focus is a state that focuses on the existence of positive results and the ideals and goals that lead people to grow up and make progress (e.g., hope, desire and ambition); Prevention focus is a state that concerns the existence of negative results (Higgins, 1998), which is more concerned with security needs and "achievable" objectives (e.g., responsibilities, obligations and responsibilities). Employees with high promotion focus are often concerned with positive events that are conducive to their own development, weakening the negative impact of supervisor incivility on organizational identification, thereby reducing the negative impact on employee knowledge sharing; However, employees with high prevention focus tend to focus on whether the external environment threatens their security needs, especially negative events such as supervisor incivility. When having suffered from supervisor incivility, employees will be filled with negative emotions, and it can reduce their own organizational identification, thus, having negative impacts on knowledge sharing. Therefore, we believe that promotion focus and prevention focus will moderate the negative relationship between supervisor incivility and employee knowledge sharing.

Knowledge sharing is an important way to improve the organizational creativity and sustainable competitive advantages. Under the background of knowledge-based economies and innovative society, this paper explores the mechanism of supervisor incivility on employee knowledge sharing and the moderating effect of regulatory focus, which theoretically enriches the research on destructive leadership, and provides a strong reference to enhance employee knowledge sharing for managerial practice.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses

2.1 The effect of supervisor incivility on employee knowledge sharing

Employee knowledge sharing is actually an interactive process of interpersonal communication, and is actually the exchange of resources between the two sides of the transaction (Zhang, 2016). Based on social exchange theory, the relationship between leaders and subordinates develops and forms a reciprocal feedback cycle (Kacmar, 2011). Konovsky and others believe that the subordinate's responds not only include more time and effort to work within the role or task, but also willing to do things beyond their own work requirements and role, such as knowledge sharing (Konovsky, 1994). When faced with supervisor incivility, such as neglect, criticism, unfair evaluation, etc., employees may find it difficult to obtain resources and benefits from the leader, and are reluctant to respond positively to the organization. Thus leader's behavior will have a negative impact on employee knowledge sharing. Supervisor incivility as a typical negative leadership, we believe that it will affect employee emotions and working atmosphere to stimulate employee knowledge sharing. First, when employees are often subjected to supervisor incivility, such as disregard, ridicule, etc. (Tepper, 2007), they will produce negative emotions such as frustration, anxiety and exhaustion, thus inhibiting the intrinsic motivation of individual knowledge sharing, which is foster to the generation of knowledge sharing. Aryee et al. (2007) argued that the perpetrator will think their efforts and contributions are negated by the organization or leadership, furthermore that they will have negative attitudes and behavior to deal with tasks and even impede the development of the organization and do not want to share knowledge. Second, supervisor incivility is more likely to lead to the negative working atmosphere in the organization and is not conducive to cooperation and interpersonal interaction which can't provide a positive atmosphere for knowledge sharing and thus inhibiting the generation of knowledge sharing. Therefore, based on the above analysis, we proposed the hypothesis below:

Hypothesis 1: Supervisor incivility has negative relationship with employee knowledge sharing.

2.2 The mediating effect of organizational identification on the link between supervisor incivility and employee knowledge sharing

Supervisor incivility is a kind of interpersonal deviant act, such as unfair treatment, indifference, ridicule, etc., which has a greater impact on the exchange relationship between leader and employees. Supervisor, as an organizational agent, may affect the staff's attitude and behavior to the organization. Supervisor incivility, as a negative leadership, may make employees feel that they are not trusted or not be valued, and even question their own value in the organization, and think they can't be recognized. At the same time, individuals want to keep control of the surrounding environment to reduce the environmental changes. Supervisor incivility could damage the staff's control to the interpersonal interaction and result in a low-quality relationship between supervisor and subordinate, and they may think their own behavior can't get a higher level or organization of positive response. Thus, when employees encounter supervisor incivility, their group consciousness will be weakened, and do not think that they are an integral part in the organization, therefore reducing organizational identification.

When employee organizational identification is weakened, it is less likely to devote more energy to maintaining high-quality interpersonal relationships and generating a high level of trust in the organization. Siemsen et al. (2009) found that the closer the interpersonal relationship is, the greater the degree of interaction and communication is, and the greater the willingness to share knowledge is, thus, the more likely it is to share knowledge. Kankanhalli (2005) also emphasized that trust in organizational culture can diminish the cost of knowledge sharing that supervisor incivility brings. Therefore, organizational identification is negatively affected by supervisor incivility, which can affect their interpersonal quality and trust in the organization, thus, inhibiting employee knowledge sharing. In addition, when organizational identification is weakened, employee wouldn't regard organizational achievement as closely related to own well-being, and do not believe that organizational development is essential to their own interests and is less likely to play their own initiative and efforts to promote groups progress. And they don't devote themselves establish positive relationship with members in the organization, which has a negative impact on employee knowledge sharing. Therefore, we believe that supervisor incivility will weaken employee organizational identification, thereby weakening employee knowledge sharing. Based on the above analysis, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: Organizational identification partially mediates the relationship between supervisor incivility and employee knowledge sharing.

2.3 The moderating effect of regulatory focus

Regulatory focus is a characteristic which is different from knowledge ability and big-five personality. It refers to the motive state of individual's tendency to move forward positive target and avoid negative target, which corresponds to promotion focus and prevention focus (Higgins, 1998). These two different regulatory focus may have different effects on employee knowledge sharing. First, employee with promotion focus focuses on the ideal goal, growth and development (Higgins, 1998), and concerns the relevant information of success and positive results, and tries a variety of ways to achieve the goal (Das & Kumar, 2011); employees with prevention focus tend to focus on whether the external environment threatens their own security needs and avoid the potential risks of negative events. Therefore, compared to employee with low promotion focus, employee with high promotion focus has more concerns about achievements and dreams but little concerns about negative information, and is more optimistic when facing risk and pressure (Friedman & Forster, 2001). While employees are willing to continue to believe in organization, so supervisor incivility has less impact on them. At the same time, supervisor incivility leads to employee exhaustion and psychological stress, thereby weakening employee role self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986). Individual's ability to control emotion is beneficial to coping with situations (Chi & Liang, 2013). When faced with supervisor incivility, employees with high promotion focus can respond to it with a more optimistic and positive attitude, and be good at regulating their emotions, and relieving the psychological pressure and emotional exhaustion caused by their rude acts (Tepper, 2000; Whitman et al., 2014), and thus weakening the negative effect of supervisor incivility on organizational identification. In contrast, after having suffered from supervisor incivility, employees with high prevention focus may focus on the risks caused by negative events and be more sensitive to the negative information. While employees have more serious psychological stress and emotional exhaustion, they are likely to have a sense of distrust to organization which strengthens the negative role of supervisor incivility on organizational identification. Second, there are different strategies to achieve goals between promotion focus and prevention focus (Higgins et al., 2001). Individuals with promotion focus are concerned with hope and desire and pursuing "ideal self". Individuals with prevention focus stick to "ought self", and are more concerned with their duties, obligations and responsibilities. That is, they are more concerned about what they should do, and fulfill their responsibilities and expectation (Das & Kumar, 2010). As a result, when facing supervisor incivility, ones with high promotion focus tend to take a promotion goal to achieve to solve the problem. In the process of solving the problem, they are more optimistic and courageous. However, employees with high prevention focus may take defensive goals to achieve strategy and they tend to respond negatively rather than take a variety of solutions to respond to supervisor incivility. As it is difficult for them to have a good interpersonal interaction with the supervisor and organization, and even question their own value in the organization, it thus having negative impacts on organizational identification. Based on the above analysis, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3a: Promotion focus moderates the negative relationship between supervisor incivility and organizational identification: The relationship is weaker when employees are with higher level of promotion focus.

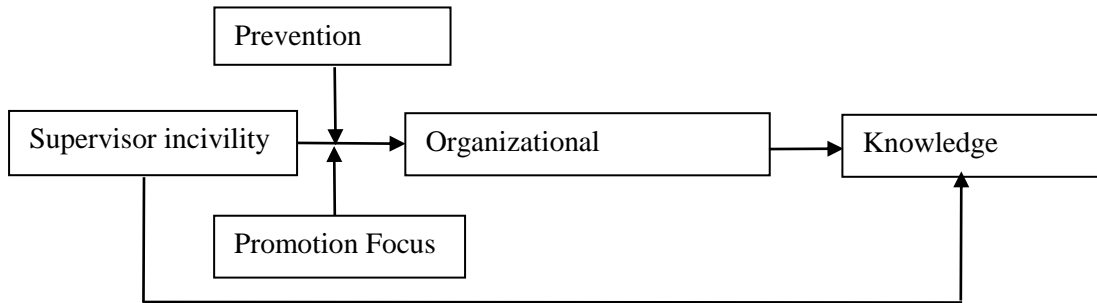
Hypothesis 3b: Prevention focus moderates the relationship between supervisor incivility and organizational identification: The relationship is stronger when employees are with higher level of prevention focus.

Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2 illustrate the mediating role of organizational identification in the relationship between supervisor incivility and employee knowledge sharing. Hypothesis 3a and Hypothesis 3b illustrate the moderating role of promotion focus and prevention focus in the relationship between supervisor incivility and employee knowledge sharing. In this study, we propose a mediated moderator model, that is, promotion focus and prevention focus moderate the mediating role of organizational identification. According to social exchange theory, the exchange relationships was the basic principle of human's interaction, thus, those employees who experiencing incivility from their supervisors are more likely to have low organizational identification and as a consequence show reluctance to share knowledge with team members. However, regulatory focus as a stable personal trait, moderates the relationship between supervisor incivility and organizational identification. In particular, promotion focus moderates the negative relationship between supervisor incivility and organizational identification: the relationship is weaker when employees are with higher level of promotion focus, however, prevention focus moderates the relationship between supervisor incivility and organizational identification: the relationship is stronger when employees are with higher level of prevention focus. Therefore, we posit that:

Hypothesis 4a: promotion focus moderates the indirect negative effect of supervisor incivility on employee knowledge sharing via organizational identification: The indirect negative effect is weaker when employees are with higher level of promotion focus.

Hypothesis 4b: prevention focus moderates the indirect negative effect of supervisor incivility on employee knowledge sharing via organizational identification: The indirect negative effect is stronger when employees are with higher level of prevention focus.

Figure 1 Conceptual Model



3. Research Design

3.1 Sample and data-collection procedure

The sample of this study mainly comes from nine companies’ employees of Hunan province. We received a total of 349 employees’ responses from field surveys and electronic questionnaires, after deleting missing data there were 295 valid questionnaires, and the validity of questionnaire rate was 84.5%. The demographic information of the valid questionnaire was shown in table 1:

Table 1 Basic Statistics of Effective Questionnaire Sample

item	category	quantity	percentage	name	category	quantity	percentage	
Gender	male	152	51.53%	Occupation	production staff	45	15.25%	
	female	143	48.47%		salesperson	70	23.73%	
Education	college and below college	98	33.22%		customer service	52	17.63%	
	undergraduate	172	58.30%		financial officer	55	18.64%	
	master or above	25	8.48%		other	73	24.75%	
Age	Under 30 years old	200	67.80%					
	30-40 years old	50	16.95%					
	Above 41 years old	45	15.25%					

3.2 Measures

In order to ensure the consistency and reliability of measurement tool, this study uses a mature present scale, with the situation and the reality to have an appropriate revision. All scales were scored using Likert 5 points, allowing respondents to score their own and others' behavior (1= "strongly disagree"; 5= "strongly agree"). All of the scales in this study are described as follows:

- (1) Supervisor Incivility. We measured incivility using the workplace incivility scale (Cortina, 2001; Liu Change, 2011), and made appropriate revisions based on groups being tested. This scale includes 12 items, and sample items include "Put you down or was condescending to you" and "Made demeaning or derogatory remarks about you." and so on. The scale's reliability was .947.
- (2) Organizational Identification. We measured it using the Organizational Identification scale (Smidts, 2001), and made appropriate revisions based on groups being tested. This scale includes 5 items, and sample items include "I fully recognize this company ". The scale's reliability was .917.

- (3)Regulatory Focus. We measured it using the regulatory focusscale (Shin,2014), and made appropriate revisions based on groups being tested. This sale includes 3 items to measure promotion focus, and sample items include "I focus on completing the task which can improve my ability ". This sale includes 3 items to measure prevention focus, and sample items include "I will try to avoid loss at working ". The scales' reliability were .876 and .879.
- (4) Knowledge Sharing. We measured it using the knowledge sharing scale (Lu, 2006), and made appropriate revisions based on groups being tested. This sale includes 5 items, and sample items include "I make helping others as a starting point, and have enthusiasm and willingness to share knowledge". The scale's reliability was .847.
- (5)Control Variables. We controlled for respondents' demographic variables, including age, gender, education and position in the organization. As previous research suggested that these variables affect employees' behavior (Thau et al., 2009).To ensure the accuracy of the results, the basic information variables are controlled.

4. Results

This study uses SPSS21.0 and AMOS17.0 to process the data. The steps are as follows: firstly, doing the descriptive statistical analysis of the data; Secondly, testing the common method bias variation, and analyzing the data problems; Thirdly, using the procedures and steps of the mediating moderator effect which was proposed by Wen, and analyzing the mediation effect of organizational identification and the moderating effect of regulatory focus; Finally, through the SPSS PROCESS macro program, the confidence interval of BOOTSTRAP method was adopted, and the mediation effect was further tested.

4.1 Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis

From the correlation analysis of table 2, supervisor incivility and employee knowledge sharing showed strong negative correlation ($R=-.285$, $P<.001$), and supervisor incivility and organizational identification have a strong negative correlation ($R=-.147$, $P<.01$). Organizational identification and employee knowledge sharing have a significant positive correlation ($R=.371$, $P<0.001$). Therefore, these analysis results verified hypothesis 1. But the correlation analysis of table 2 has not yet considered the impact of the control variables, in order to ensure the accuracy of the analysis. Next, we need to test the common method bias, reliability and validity.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

variable	mean	Standard Deviations	1	2	3
1. supervisor incivility	2.42	.51			
2. organizational identification	2.11	.62	-.147**		
3.promotion focus	3.43	.50	-.072*	-.062*	
4. prevention focus	2.05	.23	.036*	-.047*	.016
5.knowledge sharing	3.41	.37	-.285***	.371**	.141

Note.*** $p<0.001$; ** $p<0.01$; * $p<0.05$; the same below.

4.2 Common method bias

The data of this research stem from survey question, with the method of self-evaluation to controversy question. Number of installations given by the same subject, although the survey process was careful anonymity and confidentiality, there may be community problem bias. Therefore, to ensure the scientific of study results, this study used test the way of Harman single factor to analyze data, according to Zhou and Long research conclusions, use of exploratory factor analysis, this study was performing unscaled principal component analysis for all variables. According to the number of factor precipitation or common factor interpretation to determine the size of the common method of deviation, In this study, four common factors (eigenvalue>1) were extracted from the tested results, and explained variation of the first factor is 29.94%,less than 50% (recommended explained variation), indicating that bias problem of the common method is not serious.

4.3 Reliability and validity analysis

The study use spss21.0 statistical analysis software to analyze the reliability and validity of scales. Cronbach's alpha coefficients of all scales were above 0.80, indicating that the reliability of the scale is quite high. The KMO values of each scale were all greater than 0.80, and the results of Bartlett spherical test were significant, and each scale cumulative variance were greater than 50%, indicating good validity.

To provide further evidence supporting our developed measures, we then performed a series of confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) using Mplus7.0. In table 3, an excellent fit was found for 5-factors model ($X^2/df=2.01$, less than 4; RMSEA=.068, less than.08; CFI, IFI and TLI are more than.9).

Table 3 Confirmatory Factor Analyses

Model	Factor	X^2/df	RMSEA	IFI	TLI	CFI
1	standard model(SI,OI,KS,PD,DO)	2.01	0.068	0.941	0.907	0.924
2	four-factor model(SI,OI,KS,PD+DO)	3.16	0.084	0.807	0.795	0.811
5	three-factor model(SI,OI,KS+PD+DO)	4.54	0.137	0.773	0.684	0.738
8	two-factor model (SI,OI+KS+PD+DO)	5.18	0.163	0.611	0.592	0.631
9	one-factor(SI+OI+KS+PD+DO)	6.03	0.174	0.537	0.464	0.542

Note: SI stand for supervisor incivility ; OI stand for organizational identification ; KS stand for knowledge sharing PD stand for promotion focus ; DO stand for prevention focus.

4.4 Hypothesis testing

Main effect test. We use the hierarchical regression analysis method to verify the hypothesis, as shown in table 4, and put the gender, age, education and position as a control variable into the regression model. Then, we use the stepwise entry method to put supervisor incivility into the model. In table 4, supervisor incivility was significantly negatively correlated with employee knowledge sharing ($\beta = -.319$, $P < 0.001$, M2). Thus, hypothesis 1 is supported.

The mediating role of organizational identification. According to the judgment method of Baron and Kenny, the mediating effect must meet the following conditions: ①The independent variable is associated with the dependent variable and the mediator; ②The mediator has a significant effect on the dependent variable; ③When the independent variable and the mediator are simultaneously substituted into the regression equation to explain the dependent variable, the effect of the mediating variable is significant and the effect of the independent variable disappears (the fully mediating effect) or weakens (partial mediating effect). In table 4, model 4 shows that supervisor incivility has negative correlation to organizational identification ($\beta = -.201$, $P < .01$, M6), and has negative effects on employee knowledge sharing ($\beta = -.319$, $P < .001$, M2). Moreover, organizational identification has positive correlation to employee knowledge sharing ($\beta = .430$, $P < .001$, M3). Finally, based on the model 2, model 4 adds mediator (organizational identification) to itself. And the results show, the coefficient of organizational identification is significant ($\beta = .181$, $P < 0.01$, M4), but the effect of supervisor incivility on employee knowledge sharing has been weakened ($\beta = -.255$, $P < .001$, M4). Thus, organizational identification has a partial mediating role between supervisor incivility and employee knowledge sharing. Hypothesis 2 is supported.

Table 4 Mediated Regression Results

type of the variable		knowledge		employee knowledge sharing			
		sharing		M3	M4	M5	M6
		M1	M2				
control variable	gender	.081	.103	.066	.057	-.116	-.075
	age	.064*	.091*	.107*	.103	.077*	.137*
	education	-.055	.071	-.124	.068*	.070	.057*
	position	.119*	.094*	.097*	-.046	.088*	-.073
independent	SI		-.319***		-.255**		-.201**
mediation	OI			.430**	.181**		-.0216**
				*	*		
F		7.351	9.864	10.181	11.351	6.817	12.355
R ²		.013*	.109***	.117***	.140***	.081	.132***
ΔR ²		.068	.096	.104	.032	.051	.051

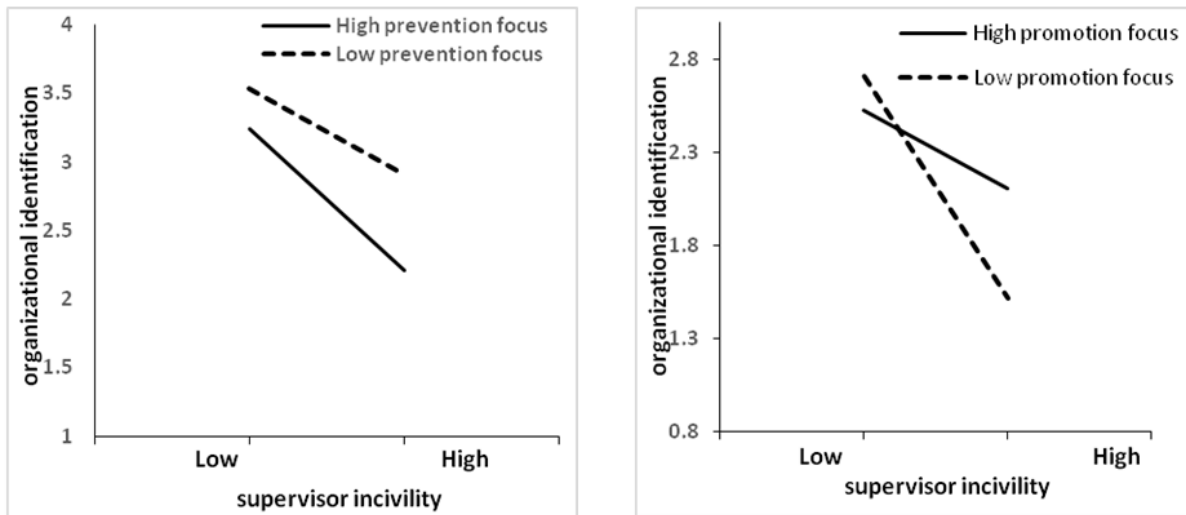
The moderating role of regulatory focus. First, we use regression analysis method to test the moderating role of employee’s regulatory focus between supervisor incivility and employee knowledge sharing, and add promotion focus and prevention focus to regression model to examine the moderating effect of them between supervisor incivility and employee knowledge sharing. In order to reduce the influence of multiple collinearity on the conclusion, the variables involved in the moderating effect were standardized and then interacted. As shown in table 5, supervisor incivility has a significant positive correlation to organizational identification ($\beta = -.201$, $P < 0.01$), after entering the interactions term between supervisor incivility and promotion focus, and the interaction coefficient is significant ($\beta = .119$, $P < 0.01$, $M5$; $\Delta R^2 = .109$, $P < 0.001$), and after entering the interactions term between supervisor incivility and prevention focus, and the interaction coefficient is significant ($\beta = -.168$, $P < 0.01$, $M6$; $\Delta R^2 = .114$, $P < 0.001$). Hypothesis 3a and 3b are supported.

Table 5 Moderated Regression Results

type of the variable		organizational identification					
		M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6
control variable	gender	-.116	-.075	-.079	.082*	.069	.081
	age	.077*	.137*	.108*	.201*	.125*	.116*
	education	.070*	.057*	.094*	.067*	.067*	.067*
	position	-.088*	-.073	-0.046	-.101	-.094	-.073
independent	SI		-.201**			-.408***	-.349***
moderator	PD			0.204		.162*	
	DO				-.129*		-.102*
Interaction item	SI×PD					.119**	
	SI×DO						-.168**
F		6.817	12.355	9.160	7.682	10.572	11.404
R ²		.081	.132***	.135***	.147*	.189***	.193***
ΔR ²		.051	.051	.054	.066	.108	.114

To vividly show and explain the moderating role of employee’s regulatory focus (promotion focus and prevention focus) in the entire model, the study draws on widely-used figure of the moderating role. According to the methods and procedures proposed by Aiken et al. (1991), we draw figure of moderating role between supervisor incivility and employee knowledge sharing. As shown on Figure 2 and 3, Hypothesis 3a and 3b.

Figure 2 Prevention focus moderates the relationship between supervisor incivility on organizational identification & Figure 3 Promotion focus moderates the relationship between supervisor incivility on organizational identification are supported.



The integrative moderated mediation testing. First, we test a negative relationship between interaction of supervisor incivility and promotion focus and employee knowledge sharing, and a positive relationship between interaction of supervisor incivility and prevention focus and employee knowledge sharing, which are prerequisites for subsequent analysis. Then, we used the PROCESS program (Edwards, 2007) in SPSS to sample the data with 5000 replicates, and estimate the confidence interval of mediated moderating effect. According to the subgroup analysis proposed by Preacher and the INDEX of the mediated moderating effect proposed by Hays, we determine whether the results support mediated moderating effects. Using Bootstrap to analyze data, the results shown in table 6.

The data on the left side of table 6 shows that the indirect effects of supervisor incivility on knowledge sharing through employee organizational identification are $-.029$ (Confidence Intervals $[-.081, -.002]$) and $-.043$ (Confidence Interval $[-.118, -.023]$), when employee promotion focus is high or prevention focus is high; when employee promotion focus is low or prevention focus is low, the indirect effects of supervisor incivility on employee knowledge sharing through organizational identification are $-.014$ (confidence interval $[-.103, -.014]$) and -0.021 (confidence interval $[-.130, -.010]$). The results show that the indirect effect of supervisor incivility on knowledge sharing through employee organization recognition is significant, whether promotion focus and prevention focus are high or low.

According to the judgment method proposed by Hays, when the moderator takes high or low values, the indirect effects are significant, and the INDEX must be used to justify the mediated moderating effect. According to the data on the right side of Table 6, the INDEX indicator of the indirect relationship between interaction of supervisor incivility and promotion focus and employee knowledge sharing is $-.026$ (confidence interval $[-.191, -.034]$), and INDEX indicator of the indirect relationship between interaction of supervisor incivility and prevention focus and employee knowledge sharing is $-.016$ (confidence interval $[-.116, .009]$). Since both confidence intervals do not include 0, therefore, promotion focus and prevention focus moderate indirect relationship between supervisor incivility and employee knowledge sharing. Hypothesis 4a and 4b are verified.

Table 6 Analysis of Mediated moderator model

moderator promotion focus	SI(X)→OI(M)→KS(Y)							
	indirect effect				mediated moderator effect			
	effec t	standard error	upper limit	lower limit	INDEX	standard error	uppe r limit	lower limit
high promotion focus	-.029	.045	-.081	-.002				
low promotion focus	-.014	.057	-.103	-.014	-.025	.026	-.191	-.034

moderator prevention focus	SI(X)→OI(M)→KS(Y)							
	indirect effect				mediated moderator effect			
	effec t	standard error	upper limit	lower limit	INDEX	standard error	uppe r limit	lower limit
high prevention focus	-.043	.010	-.118	-.023	-.016	.034	.116	.009.
low prevention focus	-.021	.008	-.130	-.010				

5. Discussion

This paper mainly focuses on the impact of supervisor incivility on employee knowledge sharing, especially on the mediating role of organizational identification and the moderating effect of regulatory focus. It finds that: (1) supervisor incivility significantly has a negative effect on employee knowledge sharing and on organizational identification; (2) organizational identification significantly has positive effect on employee knowledge sharing, and partially mediates the relationship between supervisor incivility and employee knowledge sharing;(3) promotion focus moderates the negative relationship between supervisor incivility and organizational identification: The relationship is weaker when employees with higher level of promotion focus; prevention focus moderates the relationship between supervisor incivility and organizational identification: The relationship is stronger when employees with higher level of prevention focus; (4) promotion focus moderates the indirect negative effect of supervisor incivility on employee knowledge sharing via organizational identification: The indirect negative effect is weaker when employees with higher level of promotion focus; prevention focus moderates the indirect negative effect of supervisor incivility on employee knowledge sharing via organizational identification: The indirect negative effect is stronger when employees with higher level of prevention focus.

5.1 Theoretical implications

Our research has theoretical contributions in four aspects. Firstly, this study separates supervisor incivility from workplace incivility, and analyzes its outcome. The current research is unclear about whether a single perpetrator such as supervisor incivility is sufficient to instigate the well-documented negative consequences of workplace incivility (Andersson et.al, 1999). Otherwise, it has been suggested that the reason why different impacts of deviant behaviors from peers or supervisor is that supervisor is in a position of power within the social group, thus, the impact of supervisor incivility on employee is stronger than peers' (Hershcovis et.al,2017;Brunelle,2013). Therefore, it is necessary to examine negative consequences of supervisor incivility separately.

Secondly, we examine the relationship between supervisor incivility and employee knowledge sharing. Most scholars focus on the positive effect of positive leadership on employee knowledge sharing, but there are few studies on effect of negative leadership on employee knowledge sharing. Extant research shows that the destructive leadership behavior at workplace is generally manifested as a low intensity deviant acts, especially in the collectivist culture as China where it emphasizes on "harmony", "zhongyong" and "face"(Cortinaet.al,2001), so it is of great theoretical significance to examine the relationship between supervisor incivility and employee knowledge sharing.

Thirdly, this study also explores the mediating effect of organizational identification between supervisor incivility and employee knowledge sharing. It suggests that organizational identification can partially mediate the relationship between supervisor incivility and employee knowledge sharing. Cortina et al (2001) argued that the destructive leadership had a negative effect on employees' production. However, there has been not yet detailed analysis of its related evolution mechanism, such as whether the organizational identification plays a role in the course of action or not. Based on social exchange theory, this study combines literature on supervisor incivility and literature on organizational identification to explore the internal relationship of these two variables, which is of great significance to a comprehensive understanding of the effect of organizational identification on employee knowledge sharing.

At last, this study suggests that regulatory focus moderates the indirect relationship between supervisor incivility and employee knowledge sharing. This study shows that when employees with high promotion focus suffer from supervisor incivility, who are concerned with their own development and pursue positive outcomes, they can maintain a high level of organizational identification, and tend to respond to supervisor incivility through a proactive approach. Thus, the negative impact on employee knowledge-sharing is weak. Meanwhile, employees with high prevention focus tend to be more sensitive to whether they will suffer losses, and they pay more attention to their own benefits and security, thereby weakening organizational identification, and thus it negatively affect employee knowledge sharing. Current research on outcomes of leadership mainly focus on the moderating effect of narcissism, self-efficacy and the sense of responsibility, rarely on regulatory focus, and seldom combine the negative leadership to explore employee knowledge sharing. Thus our paper enriches leadership literature.

5.2 Management implications

Our findings suggest that supervisor incivility have negative impacts on employee knowledge sharing and regulatory focus also plays a moderating role in this relationship. Based on the above conclusions, we provide the following recommendations for human resource management practitioners. Firstly, advocate positive interaction norms, and establish the zero tolerance mechanism of supervisor incivility. In order to reduce the negative impact on employee knowledge sharing and to avoid or reduce supervisor incivility, the most direct and effective way is to create a good working atmosphere and interaction norms. According to social exchange theory, if having suffered from supervisor incivility (such as defamation, ridicule, indifference, etc.), employees will believe their own efforts and contributions are not respected, which will reduce organizational identification and trust. When this incivility is not punished by the organization and the frequency and intensity of incivility is increasing, the staff may reduce knowledge sharing and other positive behavior to respond to supervisor incivility, which may bring serious consequences to the development of organization. As a result, the organization must take a zero tolerance attitude towards supervisor incivility to prevent its adverse effects on employees and organizations. Second, this study suggests that companies can use recruitment, training, feedback and other human resources management measures to actively guide regulatory focus of employee, so as to make use of the positive role of regulatory focus and to avoid its negative impacts. Firstly, organization should be strict in recruitment and promotion procedures, and shut the door upon the employees with high prevention focus. In the talent selection and promotion of assessment, employees' characteristics are more important than performance. Organization could adopt personality test such as various test through psychological, personality, behavior observation, etc. It is recommended to prevent employees with high prevention focus enter the enterprise or management. Secondly, organization should take the correct incentives and assessment mechanisms to encourage employees with prevention focus to share knowledge. First of all, organization should make employees' contributions get recognized and rewarded, a good incentive system can encourage employee knowledge sharing and reduce risk or worries of losing their knowledge and personal advantages. Furthermore, organization could also improve employees' social and political skills through relevant training and employee assistance program, and enhance their ability to communicate with their supervisors and to deal with problems. By doing so, employees could avoid being suffered from supervisor incivility and unwilling to share their knowledge in the organization.

5.3 Limitations and directions for future research

Our study has a number of limitations. Firstly, we only collect the cross-sectional data and ignore the impact of time effects on variables, which makes it difficult to test the dynamic impact of supervisor incivility on organizational identification and employee knowledge sharing. But our hypothesis model agrees with the research conclusion, namely the leadership behavior can be used as a predictor of employee knowledge sharing.

The conclusion is consistent with the findings of negative side of leadership in organizations (Cortina, 2001;Eckhardt,2004). The future researchers can use time series design, and through empirical sampling or field test method to collect horizontal and vertical data, which will make it more accurately to grasp the relationship among variables. Secondly, it uses the single-source data measurement methods and the conclusions will be influenced easily by the deviation of common method (Podsakoff, 2012). In this study, employee's self-evaluation is used to obtain employee knowledge sharing data. Our research is anonymous, even we have indicated to the survey respondent that their privacy is protected. However, employees might still likely to consider their own face problems and have reservations in filling in questionnaire in China. Therefore, the other evaluation ways are more likely to restore the essence of employee knowledge sharing. At the same time, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted on the data, and the results showed that there was a good distinction between the main variables. Therefore, future research can use multi-source or other assessment methods to obtain data to avoid the impact of homologous error. Third, the research level needs to be further expanded. This study focuses only on the impact of supervisor incivility on employee knowledge sharing from the individual level. Future research can combine multi-level or cross-level to explore the impacts of supervisor incivility on employee knowledge sharing at the team or organization level.

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