

The Influence of Paternalistic Leadership and Ethical Leadership on High School Teachers' Knowledge Sharing Behavior-An Empirical Study Based on Comparative Advantage Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Using the Paired Questionnaire Survey of leader and subordinate, this study explored the influence of paternalistic leadership and ethical leadership, as well as the mediating role of emotional commitment on senior high school teachers' emotional commitment and knowledge sharing behavior. The results show that paternalistic leadership is positively correlated with teachers' emotional commitment ($r = 0.482, P < 0.01$) and knowledge sharing behavior ($r = 0.394, P < 0.01$). Ethical leadership was positively correlated with teachers' emotional commitment ($r = 0.437, P < 0.01$) and knowledge sharing behavior ($r = 0.528, P < 0.01$). The test on mediating effect of affective commitment on paternalistic leadership, ethical leadership and knowledge sharing behavior shows that affective commitment played a complete mediating role between paternalistic leadership and knowledge sharing behavior ($C' = -0.034, P > 0.05$), and a partial mediating role between ethical leadership and knowledge sharing behavior ($C' = 0.412, P < 0.01$). Overall, the influence effect value of paternalistic leadership is 0.074 and the influence effect value of ethical leadership is 0.477, showing that the ethical leadership plays a more positive role.

Keywords: *paternalistic leadership, ethical leadership, emotional commitment, knowledge sharing behavior.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The importance of leadership type to organizational effectiveness goes without saying. From the early transactional leadership, to the late transformational leadership, charismatic leadership and authentic leadership, and then to the service-oriented leadership and spiritual leadership, it not only reflects the trend of the gradual evolution of leadership theory with the development of the times, but also reflects the attention of academic and practical circles to leadership effectiveness. Among the numerous leadership types, which one is more suitable for Chinese culture and which one is more effective? The research on this issue can not only enrich the previous research results on leadership theory, but also have certain guiding significance for management practice.

Leadership style is an important external environment variable affecting individual behavior [1]. Previous research has focused on transformational

leadership and transactional leadership based on Western cultural background, while parent leadership based on Chinese culture is relatively less concerned by academic circles [2]. Zheng Beilong believes that paternalistic leadership is a kind of leadership style with strict discipline and authority, father like kindness and moral integrity in the atmosphere of human governance [3]. Paternalistic leadership emphasizes that leaders' authority cannot be violated. Employees are required to obey unconditionally, and leaders are required to have high personal quality and quality and personalized care for subordinates. The research confirms that paternalistic leadership is prevalent in Chinese organizations [4]. The related research also discusses the effect of parental leadership. For example, the research of Deng Zhihua shows that paternalistic leadership has a significant positive impact on job satisfaction and organizational citizenship behavior, and has a significant negative impact on job deviation behavior [5]. The research of Yangxia and others shows that

paternalistic leadership has a significant role in promoting knowledge transfer performance ^[6]. Based on previous research, it can be predicted that knowledge sharing behavior, as a special form of organizational citizenship behavior and emotional commitment as a working attitude, will be positively affected by paternalistic leadership.

In recent years, the problem of organizational development dilemma caused by the lack of integrity and moral decay has become increasingly prominent, which has also aroused people's strong motivation to delve into ethical leadership ^[7]. Ethical leadership refers to the leadership style in which leaders show ethical behavior in interpersonal interaction and personal activities, and stimulate similar behavior of subordinates through two-way communication with subordinates, strengthening mechanism and decision-making ^[8]. Under the traditional Chinese culture, leaders seem to attach great importance to their own personal morality and self-cultivation. An old saying of "having both morality and ability and putting morality first" has become an important principle in leader selection for most organizations. In daily management activities, leaders tend to convince others with morality. Relevant studies have shown that ethical leadership has a significant positive impact on employees' positive behavior performance. For example, studies have shown that ethical leadership has a significant positive correlation with job performance and organizational citizenship behavior ^[9-10]. Su Xiaofeng confirmed that the emotional commitment played a mediating role in the process of ethical leadership influencing employees' knowledge sharing behavior ^[11]. Therefore, it can be predicted that ethical leadership may have a positive impact on high school teachers' knowledge sharing behavior.

Although the effectiveness of paternalistic leadership and ethical leadership has been confirmed in relevant studies, previous studies tend to focus on a specific type of leadership instead of systematically comparing the two types of leadership under the same framework. It is difficult to verify whether there are differences in the mechanism of the two types of leadership, and which type of leadership is more effective. Based on this, this study adopts the strategy of comparative advantage analysis, brings paternalistic leadership and ethical leadership into the same research framework to study the influence effect and mechanism of the two types of leadership on high school teachers' knowledge sharing behavior and compare their respective influence effect. Compared with the previous research, this study is more comprehensive and its conclusions are more practical.

2. OBJECT AND METHOD

2.1. Research objects

By using the convenient sampling method, we distributed 200 teacher questionnaires and 200 leadership questionnaires randomly to four senior high schools in Xinyang, Pingdingshan and Kaifeng, Henan Province. The variables involved in the teacher questionnaire were paternalistic leadership, ethical leadership and emotional commitment. The variables involved in the leadership questionnaire were teachers' knowledge sharing behavior. A total of 188 valid teachers' questionnaires and 177 valid leaders' questionnaires were collected. After matching the teachers' questionnaire with the leaders' questionnaire, 172 valid matching questionnaires were obtained, among which 74 were male and 98 were female. There were 46 people under 30 years old, 27 people between 31 and 35 years old, 55 people between 36 and 40 years old, 14 people between 41 and 45 years old, and 30 people over 45 years old. In terms of educational background, there are 37 college students and below, 120 undergraduate students and 15 graduate students. There are 42 junior professional titles, 125 intermediate professional titles and 5 senior professional titles. The survey did not involve the demographic variables of leadership.

2.2. Research tools

2.2.1. Parent Leadership Questionnaire.

Taiwan scholars, Zheng Bolong et al., prepare the questionnaire of paternalistic leadership including three dimensions composed of 15 topics ^[3], namely benevolent leadership, moral leadership and authoritative leadership. The questionnaire is also a common research tool in the research of paternalistic leadership. Many studies show that the questionnaire has high reliability and effectiveness. The internal consistency reliability coefficient of the scale is 0.716.

2.2.2. Ethical Leadership Questionnaire.

Huang Jie's revised Ethical Leadership Questionnaire ^[12] originally compiled by Resick et al., is used, and it composes of 15 items and four dimensions. After the preliminary interview, questionnaire translation, exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis, the final questionnaire includes 13 items, belonging to three dimensions of collective motivation, integrity and altruism. In this study, the internal consistency reliability coefficient of the scale is 0.920.

2.2.3. Affective Commitment Questionnaire.

This paper adopts the emotional commitment subscale [13] of the Chinese Employees' Organizational Commitment Questionnaire developed by Ling Wenfu and others in combination with the characteristics of Chinese culture and the background of the times. It contains five items and has a one-dimensional structure. In the formal test, we modify the original questionnaire in the sentence expression to ensure the expression of items is more in line with the identity characteristics of teachers. In this study, the internal consistency reliability coefficient of the scale is 0.796.

2.2.4. Knowledge Sharing Behavior Questionnaire.

This paper adopts the knowledge sharing behavior questionnaire [14] revised by Taiwan scholar Ruan Gahan, including five items and a single dimension. The research shows that the questionnaire has high reliability and validity. In this study, as a tool for leaders to evaluate subordinates, the subject is changed from "I" to "he " in the formal questionnaire. In this study, the internal consistency reliability coefficient of the scale is 0.810.

The above questionnaires are scored by 5-point Likert scale, and 1-5 stands for the range from completely inconsistent to completely consistent.

2.3. Research procedures

This study uses paired survey to collect data. The specific procedures are as follows: on the premise of following the principles of voluntariness and

psychological research ethics, firstly, ordinary teachers are randomly selected from the grass-roots teaching and research groups as the research objects, and teachers' questionnaires are issued; Secondly, the leader of the teaching and research group of the investigated teachers is selected as the research object to complete the leadership questionnaire. The evaluation content of the leadership questionnaire is the teachers' knowledge sharing behavior in the investigation in step 1. The leadership evaluation questionnaire includes not only the evaluation of one single subordinate, but also the evaluation of many subordinates. Finally, after the completion of the questionnaire, the teacher's evaluation questionnaire and the leader's evaluation document are bound together to facilitate data input. We take back the valid questionnaires and keep them in a centralized way. SPSS21.0 and Mplus7 were used for data post-processing and statistical analysis.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Structural validity test of research tools

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to test the structural validity of the research tools. The results are shown in Table 1. Except that the GFI value of paternalistic leadership is slightly lower than the critical value, other fitting indexes are better than the recommended critical value. Therefore, the measurement tools used in this study have ideal structural validity.

Table 1 Confirmatory factor analysis of research tools

	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	RMSEA	CFI	IFI	NNFI	GFI
Paternalistic leadership	200.3	87	2.30	0.087	0.96	0.96	0.95	0.86
Ethical leadership	73.9	51	1.45	0.051	0.99	0.99	0.99	0.93
Emotional commitment	12.5	5	2.5	0.094	0.98	0.98	0.95	0.98
Knowledge sharing behavior	7.7	5	1.54	0.056	0.99	0.99	0.98	0.98

3.2. Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis of variables

Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis of the research variables are carried out here to understand the distribution and correlation of the data as a whole, and provide a premise for the subsequent verification of research hypotheses. As shown in Table 2, there is a significant positive correlation between the four

variables of paternalistic leadership, ethical leadership, emotional commitment and knowledge sharing behavior. Among them, paternalistic leadership has a significant positive correlation with emotional commitment ($r = 0.482, P < 0.01$) and knowledge sharing behavior ($r = 0.394, P < 0.01$); The relationship between ethical leadership and affective commitment ($r = 0.437, P < 0.01$) and knowledge sharing behavior ($r = 0.528, P < 0.01$) was also significant, which provided a

basis for the subsequent test of the mediating role of affective commitment among paternalistic leadership, ethical leadership and knowledge sharing behavior.

Table 2 Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis of variables

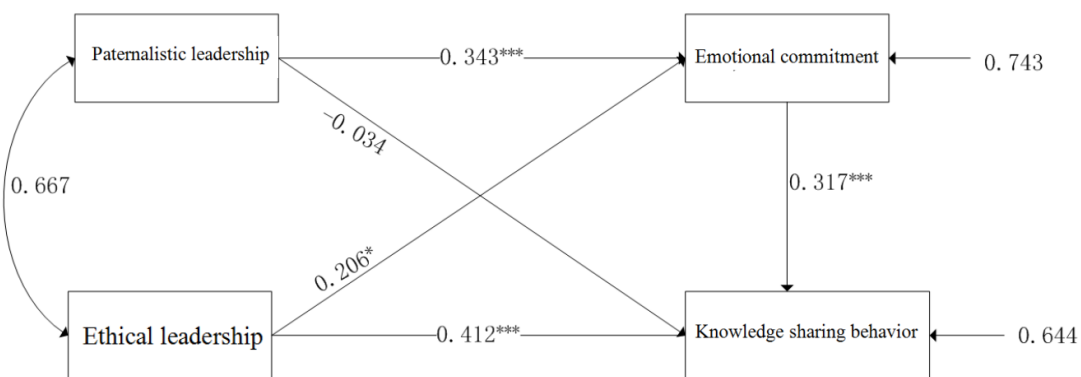
Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4
Paternalistic leadership	3.51	0.45	1			
Ethical leadership	4.13	0.57	0.667**	1		
Emotional commitment	3.45	0.75	0.482**	0.437**	1	
Knowledge sharing behavior	3.92	0.69	0.394**	0.528**	0.481**	1

Note: ** means $P < 0.01$

3.3. The influence mechanism of paternalistic leadership and ethical leadership on Teachers' emotional commitment and knowledge sharing behavior

The paper uses path analysis to test the influence mechanism of parental leadership and ethical leadership on teachers' emotional commitment and knowledge sharing behavior. The results are shown in Figure 1. In order to more accurately reveal the influence of the unique components of paternalistic leadership and ethical leadership on teachers' emotional commitment and knowledge sharing behavior, the study controls the co-change relationship between the two types of leadership. The results show that paternalistic leadership has a significant positive impact on affective commitment ($\beta = 0.343, P < 0.001$) and its influence on knowledge sharing behavior is not significant ($\beta = -0.034, p > 0.05$). Ethical leadership has a significant positive impact on emotional commitment ($\beta = 0.206, P$

< 0.05) as well as knowledge sharing behavior ($\beta = 0.412, p < 0.001$). The test on the mediating effect of affective commitment on paternalistic leadership, ethical leadership and teachers' knowledge sharing behavior showed that affective commitment completely mediated the influence of paternalistic leadership on knowledge sharing behavior ($C' = -0.034, P > 0.05$), and partially mediated the influence of ethical leadership on knowledge sharing behavior ($c' = 0.412, P < 0.001$). By comparing the indirect effect, it is found that the indirect effect of paternalistic leadership on knowledge sharing behavior goes as $ab = 0.343 \times 0.317 = 0.109$, the total effect is $ab + C' = 0.343 \times 0.317 + (-0.034) = 0.075$. The indirect effect of ethical leadership on knowledge sharing behavior is $ab = 0.206 \times 0.317 = 0.065$, the total effect is $ab + C' = 0.206 \times 0.317 + 0.412 = 0.477$, indicating that paternalistic leadership has a greater impact on knowledge sharing behavior through emotional commitment, and the total effect is smaller. Ethical leadership has a smaller impact on knowledge sharing behavior through emotional commitment, but the total effect is larger.



Note: * means $P < 0.05$, *** means $P < 0.001$.

Figure 1 Influence of parental leadership and ethical leadership on teachers' emotional commitment and knowledge sharing behavior

4. DISCUSSION

4.1. The relationship between paternalistic leadership, ethical leadership and high school teachers' emotional commitment and knowledge sharing behavior

The analysis results show that paternalistic leadership, ethical leadership and high school teachers' emotional commitment and knowledge sharing behavior are significantly positively correlated, meaning that there is a co changing relationship between them, and the higher the teachers' perceived paternalistic leadership and ethical leadership, the higher their emotional commitment and knowledge sharing behavior to the organization. It shows that both paternalistic leadership and ethical leadership are effective leadership types, playing a certain role in improving teachers' emotional commitment and knowledge sharing behavior. The research by Chou et al. shows that the influence of paternalistic leadership on subordinate organizational citizenship behavior mainly comes from benevolent behavior and moral behavior^[15], human relationship and face are the important components in traditional Chinese culture, and the rule of human relationship is based on norms of reward. Generally speaking, when the giver gives kindness to the recipient, the recipient will repay the giver's kindness at an appropriate time^[16]. The benevolent leader is subordinate centered and cares about the happiness and welfare of subordinates. Based on the principle of reciprocity, subordinates also tend to show deeper emotional identification with the organization and more behaviors conducive to the development of the organization. The ancient view of kind king, loyal subjects, kind father and filial children also emphasizes that the superior is kind to the subordinate, and the subordinate should show more appropriate behaviors in return. From the perspective of moral leadership, virtue is particularly important in the context of Chinese culture. An honest leader is more likely to be recognized and trusted by his subordinates. At the same time, he can also win the recognition and admiration of his subordinates. The recognition of a leader often makes his subordinates transfer this feeling to the feelings of the organization. Based on the role of benevolent leadership and moral leadership, paternalistic leadership as a whole has a significant positive impact on Teachers' emotional commitment and knowledge sharing behavior. The remarkable feature of ethical leadership is that leaders' behavior must first conform to ethical standards, and leaders can treat subordinates equally. When making major decisions, leaders fully respect and consider the needs of subordinates and give necessary support, which could make subordinates feel the concerns from the organization objectively, and ethical leaders are honest and considered trustworthy by subordinates. In addition,

ethical leaders attach importance to ethical norms and moral standards, and influence their subordinates' ethical behaviors through two-way communication, reinforcement and decision-making, which are highly consistent with social values and expectations and also conform to their moral standards. In such an atmosphere, individual values are recognized by organizations, and meanwhile, we can also realize the fairness of organization to people. These are the important reasons for influencing the subordinates' emotional commitment and knowledge sharing behavior^[17].

4.2. The mediating role of affective commitment in paternalistic leadership, ethical leadership and high school teachers' knowledge sharing behavior

When we test the mediating role of emotional commitment, it is found that emotional commitment plays an intermediary role in parent leadership, ethical leadership and knowledge sharing behavior of senior high school teachers. Among them, it plays a complete intermediary role between parent leadership and knowledge sharing behavior, and plays a part of intermediary role between ethical guidance and knowledge sharing behavior. That is, the influence of parental leadership and ethical leadership on knowledge sharing behavior of senior high school teachers is realized through emotional commitment serving as the bridge. On the one hand, the conclusion reveals the internal hidden box operation of the role of leadership type. On the other hand, it also reveals the difference between the two kinds of leadership ways through comparative perspective. Emotional commitment refers to the degree of recognition and involvement of an individual in an organization^[18], which is usually considered as the core component of organizational commitment. Emotional commitment often represents the motivation of an individual to contribute to the organization and the degree of work involvement. High level emotional factors have unique advantages in transforming into work performance^[19], and during working, work, they also tend to show behaviors that are beneficial to the organization, such as knowledge sharing behavior. Previous studies have also confirmed the positive relationship between emotional commitment and knowledge sharing behavior^[20]. Based on the above analysis of the relationship among paternalistic leadership, ethical leadership and emotional commitment, it can be seen that emotional commitment serves as a bridge and transmits the influence of paternalistic leadership and ethical leadership on knowledge sharing behavior. As for the specific mediating effect, affective commitment plays a complete mediating role between paternalistic leadership and knowledge sharing behavior with an effect value of 0.109, and plays a partial mediating role between ethical leadership and knowledge sharing

behavior with an effect value of 0.065. It means that the influence of paternalistic leadership on teachers' knowledge sharing behavior mainly affects the realization of teachers' emotional commitment to the organization, that is, paternalistic leadership first improves teachers' emotional input and recognition of the organization, and then promotes teachers to have more knowledge sharing behavior under the strong emotional control. Ethical leadership can not only improve teachers' emotional commitment to affect knowledge sharing behavior, but also directly affect teachers' knowledge sharing behavior. Compared with the total effect, the effect value of paternalistic leadership on knowledge sharing behavior is 0.075, and the effect value of ethical leadership on knowledge sharing behavior is 0.477, that is to say, the positive effect of ethical leadership on high school teachers' knowledge sharing behavior is more prominent. The reason may be that paternalistic leadership contains authoritarian elements, requiring subordinates to obey the leader's authority absolutely and not to put forward any different opinions. These characteristics are incompatible with the new generation of teachers' pursuit of equality and individual independence, which weakens the effect of paternalistic leadership on knowledge sharing behavior.

4.3. Management inspiration

Through the comparative **advantage** research on the influence effect and mechanism of paternalistic leadership and ethical leadership on teachers' emotional commitment and knowledge sharing behavior, this study can provide the following reference and enlightenment for school management. Firstly, both paternalistic leadership and ethical leadership are effective leadership styles, which can have a positive impact on high school teachers' knowledge sharing behavior. Leaders are supposed to improve their self-cultivation and intentionally cultivate these two types of leadership according to their own reality. Secondly, there are some differences in the influence effect and mechanism of the two leadership styles. Ethical leadership has a stronger influence on high school teachers' knowledge sharing behavior, while emotional commitment plays a more important role in the process of paternalistic leadership influencing knowledge sharing behavior. It inspires that, conditions permitted, managers should cultivate leaders with ethical leadership types as far as possible, and put ethical standards in a prominent position in subordinate management. For paternalistic leadership style, to give full play the leadership effectiveness, leaders should pay more attention to subordinates' emotions and take a variety of measures to improve subordinates' emotional commitment to the organization.

5. CONCLUSION

Adopting the method of empirical research, this research sent out 200 paired questionnaires among high school teachers and leaders, finally, the data from the study was analyzed. The results showed that, both paternalistic leadership and ethical leadership are significant positive correlative with knowledge sharing behavior of high school teachers, and they are all effective leadership types to promote the knowledge sharing behavior of high school teachers. The study also found that, both paternalistic and ethical leadership could influence the knowledge sharing behavior through the affective commitment, the difference was that affective commitment passed the influence of paternalistic leadership on knowledge sharing behavior completely, but passed the influence of ethical leadership on knowledge sharing behavior partly, in terms of the mediating effect size, ethical leadership was a more effective leadership type than paternalistic leadership

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