



Inclusive Leadership and Workplace Deviant Behavior: The Role of Organizational Ethics climate and Moral Disengagement

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ABSTRACT

In order to investigate the potential relationship between inclusive leadership and workplace deviant behavior of employees, and the boundary conditions of the influence of inclusive leadership on workplace deviant behavior of employees, managers and their direct subordinates were investigated. The results show that inclusive leadership is positively correlated with moral disengagement and workplace deviant behavior. The organizational ethical climate is lower, the stronger the positive effect of inclusive leadership on moral disengagement and workplace deviant behavior.

Keywords: *Inclusive Leadership; Moral Disengagement; Organizational ethical climate, Workplace Deviant Behavior*

1. INTRODUCTION

The most important core part of inclusive management is inclusive leadership in an organization, so inclusive leadership has been widely concerned by scholars [5]. At present, scholars at home and abroad have conducted a lot of exploration and research on the concept of inclusive leadership and have also achieved certain research results. However, relevant studies on inclusive leadership still need to be further expanded and deepened, and further research is needed [10]. For example, in terms of its consequences, employees are more willing to show more voice behavior under the leadership and management of inclusive leadership, because inclusive leadership supports employees to generate new and novel ideas by showing openness, availability and accessibility. More willing to listen to employees [2]. Therefore, compared with other leadership styles, inclusive leadership style may be more conducive to negative behaviors of employees.

Workplace deviation behavior is the behavior intentionally implemented by employees that has obvious harm to the interests of the organization and other members [7]. The annual financial cost of workplace deviation behavior to global enterprises has reached 4.2 billion US dollars. To examine the potential link between inclusive leadership and employee deviant workplace

behavior, we explored the role of employee moral disengagement in facilitating this relationship. When the behavior of the employees to do with its own internal moral standards being back, by way of moral excuse to employees lost its own moral self adjusting function, and thus reduce their produced by guilt and remorse moral sentiment, so, when higher employee moral evade a tendency to make more likely to unethical behavior.

Moreover, we consider employee compliance with social information processing theory as a boundary condition on the probability of engaging in unethical behavior. Therefore, we believe that organizational ethical climate is a key moderating factor. The ethical climate of the organization provides an understanding of what behavior is valuable and acceptable, and this helps individuals decide on appropriate behavior [3] [4]. Therefore, when the organizational ethical climate is low, employees are more likely to engage in workplace deviant behaviors, while when the organizational ethical climate is high, employees are less likely to engage in workplace deviant behaviors. Therefore, we expect that when the ethical climate of the organization is low, employees are more likely to engage in workplace deviant behaviors when faced with inclusive leadership. Figure 1 illustrates the overall theoretical framework.

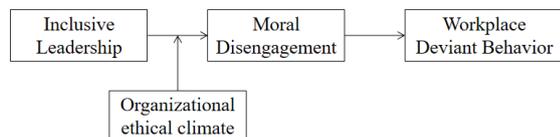


Figure 1: Theoretical model

2. THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

2.1 *Inclusive Leadership and Employee Ethical Disengagement*

Under the influence of leadership behavior information, employees will constantly adjust their attitudes, behaviors and beliefs, so employees' behaviors will be greatly influenced by leadership behavior information. Previous empirical studies have found that leadership behavior affects the likelihood of employees engaging in moral disengagement [6]. Employees are more likely to engage in moral disengagement when they perceive that their leaders are tolerant of their employees' mistakes.

Therefore, when employees perceive that their leaders are tolerant of their employees' mistakes, they will be more likely to engage in moral disengagement, because employees know that their leaders will understand and tolerate their mistakes even if they make mistakes. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1 Inclusive leadership is positively related to employee moral disengagement.

2.2 *Inclusive leadership and employee deviant behavior in the workplace*

As suggested by the theory of social information processing, a person's social environment provides a variety of information that influences their attitude and behavior. People process surrounding social information to better understand their work environment, and in turn, this information processing process shapes their subsequent attitude and behavior. Therefore, it is important to study the downstream effects of leadership on employee behavior. Workplace deviant behaviors of employees are intentional behaviors aimed at harming the legitimate rights and well-being of the organization or other members. Existing research shows that the generation of workplace deviant behavior is likely to be related to the leadership behavior of the boss. For example, when employees are subjected to abusive management behaviors by supervisors and have negative psychological experiences, they will exhibit negative feedback behaviors (such as workplace deviation behaviors). Boekhorst (2015) proposed that inclusive leadership can help the team build an inclusive atmosphere, and employees are more likely to engage in

negative behaviors, largely because of the inclusive signal conveyed by leaders.

According to the different objects of action, workplace deviant behaviors can be divided into two categories: first, organizational deviant behaviors, in which the violated employees take revenge on the organization; The second is interpersonal deviant behavior, in which the violated employee retaliates directly against the supervisor or vicariously against the surrounding colleagues [7]. However, in Chinese organizations with high power distance, it is often dangerous to carry out deviant behaviors against the organization, which may lead to pressure and retaliation from the organization and superior leaders. Deviant behavior directed at immediate supervisors and colleagues around them is safer. Based on the above arguments, we propose the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 2 Employee moral disengagement plays a mediating role between inclusive leadership and workplace deviant behaviors.

2.3 *Inclusive leadership and employee deviant behavior in the workplace*

The ethical climate of an organization refers to "the general perception of typical organizational practices and procedures with ethical content" [9]. Individuals are more inclined to follow ethical guidelines and act in an ethical way. In contrast, in a low ethical environment, moral practice is less valued. As a result, the likelihood of an employee engaging in unethical behavior such as deviant workplace behavior increases because his/her behavior is consistent with the organization's ethical signals [1] [8]. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3 Organizational ethical climate moderates the relationship between inclusive leadership and employee moral disengagement.

3. METHOD

3.1 *Participants and Procedure*

Data was collected from companies located in various provinces in China. We distributed questionnaires to 306 employees, and finally obtained 294 valid questionnaires, with an effective recovery rate of 87.6%. Among the subordinates, 38.8% are male, 83.4% are aged 35 and below, 79.2% have a bachelor's degree or above, and 78.4% have worked for less than 5 years.

3.2 *Measures*

To ensure the reliability and validity of the research, the measurement tools used in this paper are the authoritative mature scales widely used in the existing literature. Except for the control variables (gender, age,

education, and working years), the specific measurements were all scored using the Likert 5-point scale, with 1 indicating "very unsatisfactory" and 5 indicating "very consistent", increasing sequentially.

A 9-item scale developed by Carmeli et al. (2010) was used to measure Inclusive leadership ($\alpha = 0.930$). A 8-item scale developed by Moore et al. was used to measure moral disengagement ($\alpha = 0.895$). A 12-item scale developed by Bennett et al. (2000) was used to measure workplace deviant behaviors ($\alpha = 0.819$). A 4-item scale developed by Victor et al. (1987) was used to measure organizational ethical climate ($\alpha = 0.893$).

Gender, age, education, and working years were controlled in this study.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

This study used Amos26.0 for confirmatory factor analysis. The analysis results are shown in Table 1. Compared with other alternative models, the four-factor model has the best fitting effect on the data, where $\chi^2/df=2.29$, RSEAR=0.06, CFI=0.94, TLI=0.94, IFI=0.95, indicating that the four variables in this study have good discriminant validity.

Table 1: Results of confirmatory Factor Analysis

Model	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	RSEAR	CFI	TLI	IFI
One-factor model: A+B+C+D	1679.23	293	7.21	0.14	0.69	0.66	0.69
Two-factor model: A+B, C+D	916.17	277	3.52	0.09	0.92	0.91	0.91
Three-factor model: A, B, C, D	610.12	261	2.29	0.06	0.94	0.94	0.95

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics of the variables and the correlation coefficient, mean and standard deviation of each variable are shown in Table 2. Among them, Inclusive leadership was significantly positively

correlated with moral disengagement ($r = 0.761, p < 0.01$) and workplace deviant behaviors ($r = 0.309, p < 0.01$), and moral disengagement was significantly positively correlated with workplace deviant behaviors ($r = 0.728, p < 0.01$). The obtained results provide preliminary data support for hypothesis testing.

Table 2: Means, standard deviations, and correlations

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.Gender	1.527	0.500	1							
2.Age	2.423	1.034	0.106**	1						
3. Tenure	3.114	1.039	0.056	0.442**	1					
4. Education	2.920	0.734	-0.031	-0.087	0.503*	1				
5.Inclusive leadership	3.897	0.771	-0.071	0.008	0.173*	-0.025	1			
6.moral disengagement	3.767	0.954	-0.021	0.019	0.211**	0.009	0.761**	1		
7.workplace deviant behaviors	3.768	0.861	-0.062	0.168*	0.172	-0.003	0.309**	0.728**	1	
8.ethical climate	3.761	0.955	0.048	0.033	0.034	0.082	0.607**	0.887*	0.083	1
<i>N</i> = 294; ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$; Cronbach's α reliabilities are in parentheses on the diagonal										

4.3 Hypothesis Testing

In order to verify the main effect, this study adopts the hierarchical regression method, taking participative leadership as the independent variable and followership as the dependent variable for regression analysis. The results are shown in Table 3, Inclusive leadership has a significant positive impact on employee workplace deviant behaviors (M4, $\beta = 0.483$, $p < 0.001$), it can be seen that H2 is supported. In order to verify the mediating effect of vitality at work, this study adopts the hierarchical regression method, and the results are shown in Table 3: First, Inclusive leadership has a significant positive impact on moral disengagement (M2, $\beta = 0.760$, $p < 0.001$); Second, moral disengagement has a significant

positive effect on workplace deviant behaviors (M5, $\beta = 0.917$, $p < 0.001$), H1 is supported. It can be seen that moral disengagement partially mediates the effect of Inclusive leadership on workplace deviant behaviors. Second, this study uses the Process plugin to perform the Bootstrap test. The results show that the 95% confidence interval of the indirect effect of Inclusive leadership on workplace deviant behaviors is [0.0731, 0.1249], excluding 0, indicating that there is a mediating effect of participation between moral disengagement and workplace deviant behaviors, and H1 H2 are further verified. Third, ethical climate×Inclusive leadership has a significant positive effect on moral disengagement (M5, $\beta = -0.917$, $p < 0.01$), H3 is supported. Results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Results of hierarchical regression analyses

	moral disengagement		workplace deviant behaviors		
	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5
Gender	-0.053	-0.031	-0.034	-0.095	0.001
Age	0.030	-0.005	0.019	0.053	0.026
Tenure	0.035	0.095	-0.071*	-0.040	-0.028
Education	0.115	0.124	0.079	0.03	-0.049
Inclusive leadership		0.760***		0.483***	0.851***
moral disengagement					0.914***
ethical climate×Inclusive leadership		-0.105**			
R ²	0.007	0.379	0.682	0.816	0.581
ΔR ²	-0.006	0.369	0.677	0.813	0.575
F	0.550	38.780	136.490	9234.600	88.300
N = 213; *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001					

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Theoretical Implications

Firstly, based on the theory of social information Processing, this study deeply analyzed the internal characteristics of inclusive leadership and believed that it would increase employees' moral disengagement and workplace deviant behaviors, which not only expanded the research on the consequence variables of inclusive leadership. It further demonstrates the strong vitality of the concept of inclusive leadership. Future research may consider introducing multiple levels of outcome variables to further investigate the predictive role of inclusive leadership in different fields of subjects.

Second, our study proactively links positive supervisory behavior to negative employee behavior. On the other hand, we found that the target of retaliation for employees engaging in workplace deviant behaviors is

not limited to inclusive leadership, but also extends to other "innocent" entities around them (e.g., other colleagues, organizations), a conclusion consistent with previous findings [5].

5.2 Practical Implications

From the perspective of practice, the organization is concerned, should fully realize the importance of inclusive leadership, mining and cultivate an inclusive leader, efforts to build inclusive organization atmosphere, create a harmonious working environment for employees, so as to improve the employee's organizational identity and initiative behavior ; For employees, they should cultivate correct values, learn to correctly understand the relationship between leaders and subordinates, do not blindly obey the decisions of leaders, interact with leaders more, and strive to build a harmonious relationship between superiors and subordinates, so as to make greater contributions to the organization.

5.3 Limitations and Future Directions

At the same time, this paper also has some limitations. First, due to the nature of our survey design, our findings reflect correlation rather than causation. Future studies could use a stronger study design, such as obtaining more objective measures, including assessments by other raters, and adding additional time frames for data collection. Therefore, we cannot completely exclude the possibility that the employee's personal moral disengagement tendency is relatively high. For example, the employee's own moral disengagement tendency is high and the employee is more likely to engage in deviant workplace behavior even if the supervisor is not an inclusive leader. Future research could control for employees' own moral disengagement tendencies to get more robust results.

Although there are some limitations in this paper, the research findings of this paper also provide some good directions and research approaches for future research. At present, researches on inclusive leadership mostly focus on the influence of inclusive leadership on outcome variables at individual, team and organization levels and its mechanism, but have not systematically explored the influencing factors of inclusive leadership. In order to form a complete and systematic understanding of inclusive leadership and form effective guidance for the relevant practices of enterprises, it is necessary to conduct a thorough and detailed investigation on the antecedents of inclusive leadership. Future research should be multiple levels such as individual, group, organization and social rich of former inclusive leadership for question discussion, at least from the following four perspectives an antecedent research inclusive leadership: leadership - subordinate relationship, leader individual characteristics perspective, subordinates, individual characteristics, organization situation perspective.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This study focuses on the conditional process by which inclusive leadership influences employees' deviant behaviors in the workplace, and explores the mediating effect of moral disengagement and the moderating effect of organizational ethical climate. The results show that the inclusivity of inclusive leadership will increase the moral disengagement of employees, thus increasing the tendency of employees to engage in deviant workplace behaviors. Among them, the influence of inclusive leadership on employees' moral disengagement is moderated by the ethical atmosphere of the organization.

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