

Research on the Influence of Superior Satisfaction on Subordinate Tacit Understanding

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Abstract

In today's increasingly competitive society, organizational members need to find some innovative ways to promote cooperation and increase organizational competitiveness. Subordinate tacit understanding occupies an important position in eastern culture and also plays an important role in the cooperation between superiors and subordinates in enterprises. However, there is a lack of research on the antecedent variables of subordinates' tacit understanding. From the perspective of employees, this paper investigates the positive impact of superior satisfaction on subordinates' tacit understanding, and further explores the influencing mechanism -- the mediating role of leader-member exchange and the moderating role of face consciousness.

Keywords: subordinate tacit understanding, superior satisfaction, face consciousness, leader-member exchange theory

1. Introduction

Tacit understanding belongs to the high scene culture left over from Chinese history. When individuals communicate and interact in high-context environments, verbal expressions such as pronunciation, intonation and transmission speed, non-verbal expressions such as gestures and facial expressions, and other situational cues during communication are all crucial to the accuracy of complete information transmission and interpretation (Hall, 1976; Kim, Pan, & Park, 1998; Zheng et al., 2017). Tacit understanding is a great tool to help us make sense of the information we receive and extract clues from it in such a high-context environment. Therefore, it is very important to explore the role, influencing factors and mechanism of subordinate tacit understanding in eastern culture.

2. Theoretical Background and Hypothesis

2.1 Superior Satisfaction and Subordinate Tacit Understanding

There are few independent studies on the satisfaction of superiors in academic circles, and most people define it as a dimension that affects job satisfaction and is used to evaluate employees' overall job satisfaction. Later, with the further study, some scholars conducted some independent studies on superior satisfaction and produced some definitions. Scarpello et al. defined superior satisfaction as the satisfaction degree of employees to their immediate boss rather than other managers (Scarpello, & Vandenberg, 1987). Mao Na et al. defined superior satisfaction as subordinates' attitude towards their superiors, that is, whether subordinates are satisfied with their superiors (Mao, Na, Song, Heyi & Zhu, Fangfang, 2008). Yukl (2010) defined superior satisfaction as subordinates' attitudes and perceptions towards their superiors.

To sum up, superior satisfaction refers to subordinates' attitude towards their superiors, that is, subordinates' inner feelings and comprehensive evaluation of their superiors' working ability, working style and personality charm in the process of working in the organization. Higher satisfaction of superiors means that subordinates have a better overall impression and evaluation of their superiors, which plays an important role in promoting organizational management and team cooperation (Elkuori, 1983).

Social information processing theory proposes that individuals, as adaptive individuals, will change their attitudes, behaviors and beliefs to adapt to their social environment. An important source of information for individuals is their current social environment. The social environment provides cues to the individual that the individual uses to construct and interpret events, and it also provides information about what one's attitudes and views should look like (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). According to the definition of information sources, work experience, interpersonal

interaction at work, and views on work roles all belong to social information in the context of work teams (Zalesny & Ford, 1990). When an employee has a high degree of satisfaction with his supervisor, this information source will be processed and react in his brain. First of all, only when subordinates have a good impression, evaluation and basically the same values with their superiors, can they be willing to have a deeper understanding and contact with their superiors. Employees are more willing to communicate with their superiors. Secondly, when employees are more satisfied with their superiors, they will be more willing to work with their superiors, and there may be more opportunities for them to work together. Thirdly, employees will be more willing to cooperate with their superiors' actions, so as to better understand their superiors' needs and ideas. In the process of continuous cooperation and communication with superiors, employees may become more and more aware of their superiors' thoughts. Without too much communication, they can understand the needs of superiors and complete tasks, that is, the higher the tacit understanding between subordinates and superiors. Therefore, this paper proposes the following hypothesis:

H1: Superiors' satisfaction has a significant and positive effect on subordinates' tacit understanding

2.2 *The Mediating Effect of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX)*

Leader-member exchange theory was developed in 1972 by Graen and Dansereau et al.. One of its main premises is that leaders develop differential relationships with their immediate subordinates within the work team (Liden, Erdogan, Wayne, & Sparrowe, 2010). That is, superiors will divide their subordinates into different types, and then establish different quality exchange relations with different types of subordinates: low quality exchange relations and high quality exchange relations, and adopt different management styles for them. Subordinates who form a low-quality exchange relationship with their superiors are "out-group members" of their superiors, whose interpersonal communication is mainly limited to fulfilling contractual obligations. And subordinates who form high-quality exchange relations with their superiors are "in-group members" of their superiors who will form a social exchange mode with their superiors that goes beyond contractual obligations (Liden & Graen, 1980). These "insiders" have more opportunities to collaborate and communicate with their leaders who are more likely to provide them with guidance (Scandura, & Schriesheim, 1994) and provide support in work and life (Sparrowe & Liden, 2005), providing them with more authorization (Chen, Kirkman, Kanfer, Allen, & Rosen, 2007).

Research shows that employees who are willing to take on more responsibilities and responsibilities are more likely to form high-quality leader-member exchange relationships with their leaders (Liden, Graen, 1980). Subordinates' ingratiating behavior towards leaders has a positive promoting effect on leader-member exchange relationship (Wayne, Liden, & Sparrowe, 1994). Subordinates' personality also has a significant influence on the quality of leader-member exchange relationship. For example, extroverted subordinates are more likely to form high-quality leader-member exchange relationship with superiors (Phifiphis A, Bedeian A, 1994). Subordinate's effort also has a significant positive effect on leader-member exchange relationship (Maslyn J., & Uhl-Bien, M, 2001).

Implicit cooperation theory describes that when team members communicate less, individuals will automatically evaluate and select different behaviors, and adjust their behaviors according to the prediction and perception of the external environment (Rico, R., Sanchez-Manzanares, M., Gil, F., et al., 2008). A prerequisite for the tacit understanding of subordinates is to continuously cooperate or communicate with the leaders, constantly get feedback from the superior, and then verify the correctness of their own understanding and correct their views on the superior. If a subordinate's satisfaction towards his superior is high, he will have a positive relationship with the superior, willing to contact more with the superior. The two sides may be in the process of constant exchange and cooperation and establish a contract relationship which has detached from the employment contract, namely the psychological contract. The supervisor will provide more opportunities for subordinates. Subordinates will respond to the superior with higher efficiency and higher quality. In the long run, both sides will establish a "tacit understanding". Therefore, subordinates' satisfaction with their superiors may influence the leader-member exchange (LMX) and thus subordinate tacit understanding. To sum up, this paper proposes the following hypotheses:

H2: Superior satisfaction has a significant positive impact on leader-member exchange (LMX)

H3: Leader-member exchange (LMX) positively affects subordinate tacit understanding

Integrating the above assumptions, we further propose the following hypothesis:

H4: Leader-member exchange (LMX) plays a mediating role between superior satisfaction and subordinate tacit understanding

2.3 *The Adjusting Role of Face Consciousness*

Face has been playing an important role since ancient times. Huang Guangguo (2010) believes that face involves a

person's social status or reputation. Brown et al. defined face as the public self-image that a person wants others to recognize (Brown, Levinson, 1978). Zhao Zhuojia (2015) believes that face is a person's inner self-assertion, which is usually manifested in the public self-image. Whether it is a person's social value or self-image, face plays an important role in people's hearts. When people experience embarrassment and shame, they may have the idea to save or improve face, which is the consciousness of face. Bao et al. define face consciousness as people's desire to improve and maintain face in social activities and avoid losing face in front of others (Bao, Y, Zhou, KZ, & Su, C. 2003); From the perspective of sociality, Zhang et al. defined face consciousness as people's psychological needs to gain more face and avoid losing social face in the process of social interaction with others (Zhang, Xin-an, Cao, Qing, & Grigoriou, Nicholas, 2011). Hu Xiaoi and Wang Jianming (2014) believe that face awareness is people's perception of face. To sum up, this paper defines face consciousness as a psychological consciousness, which mainly includes two kinds of consciousness: protecting face and fighting for face.

"Face" is rooted in Chinese culture, reflecting the individual's concern for the gain and loss of face and the desire to maintain a good image. According to the theory of social information processing, the formation of employees' perception and behavior is not only affected by the characteristics of the information itself, the sender of the information and other related factors, but also affected by the relevant factors of the employees themselves. First of all, subordinates with a high sense of face have a stronger desire to express themselves and want to improve their image in the mind of their superiors. They will interact with their superiors more actively and try to figure out their superiors' wishes in order to obtain more information to help them fulfill their superiors' expectations. Second, when subordinates with a high sense of face interact with the superior, they are more likely to notice the signal or expectations from the superior, so as to adjust their behavior to be consistent with the expectations of the superior. This process can increase the interaction between subordinates and superiors, enhance understanding of superiors, and increase the tacit understanding. Hence, this paper puts forward the following hypothesis:

H5: Face consciousness positively moderates the relationship between leader-member exchange (LMX) and subordinate tacit understanding: the stronger the face consciousness, the stronger the relationship between leader-member exchange (LMX) and subordinate tacit understanding.

Integrating the previous assumptions, we further propose the following hypothesis:

H6: Face consciousness positively moderates the indirect effect between superior satisfaction and subordinate tacit agreement: the stronger the face consciousness, the stronger the indirect effect of leader-member exchange (LMX).

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Model

Based on literature review and research review, this paper specifically analyzes the internal relationships among superior satisfaction, leader-member exchange (LMX), subordinate tacit understanding and face awareness, and the specific model is shown in Figure 1.

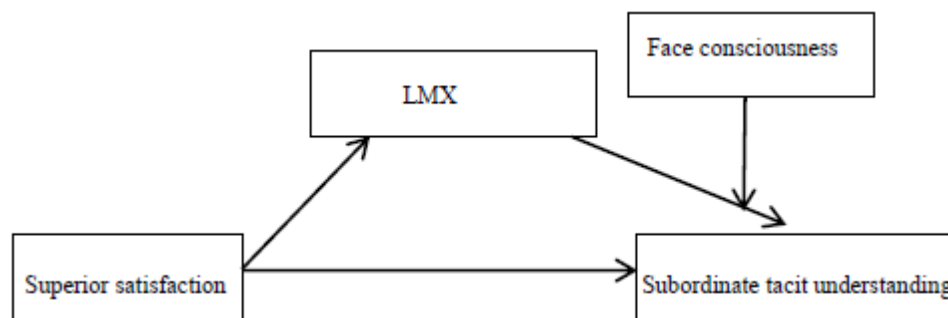


Figure 1. Research Theory Model

Based on this model, this paper discusses the influential mechanism of subordinates' satisfaction with their superiors on subordinates' tacit understanding, and puts forward the above six hypotheses. The hypotheses are analyzed in detail in the following.

3.2 Study Subjects and Procedures

Data for the study came from 22 companies in a variety of industries, including finance, construction, services, manufacturing and transportation. A total of 300 questionnaires were sent out and 252 were effectively received, with an effective recovery rate of 84%. During the survey, we asked subordinates to fill in the questionnaire carefully, sealed the completed questionnaire with an envelope, and then handed it to researchers for data processing.

The questionnaire included demographic variables such as gender, age, educational background, nature of work, industry of the company, working time in the company, and working time with the current superior. Among the valid samples collected, 59% were male and 40% were female, showing a gender balance between men and women. The mean age of the valid sample was 31 years, with the oldest age being 52 years and the youngest 23 years. In terms of educational background, the valid samples of high school and below account for 2.49%, those of junior college account for 25.87%, those of bachelor's degree account for 64.68%, and those of master's degree account for 6.96%. Most of the respondents have a bachelor's degree. In terms of the nature of work, among the effective samples, production accounted for 2.53%, sales accounted for 15.15%, technology accounted for 35.86%, management accounted for 21.72%, and other work accounted for 24.74%. The respondents are mainly technical and managerial personnel. In terms of the industry to which the company belongs, among the effective samples, manufacturing industry accounted for 44.28%, construction industry accounted for 1.00%, service industry accounted for 15.42%, financial industry accounted for 2.49%, transportation accounted for 8.46%, telecommunications accounted for 0.50%, wholesale and retail accounted for 10.94%, and other industries accounted for 16.91%. Most of the respondents worked in the manufacturing industry. In terms of working time in the company, the average length of the valid samples was 45 months (about 4 years), with the longest working time being 264 months (22 years) and the shortest working time being 1 month. In terms of working time with the current supervisor, the average time of valid samples was 33 months (about 3 years), among which the longest time with the current supervisor was 135 months (about 11 years), and the shortest time with the current supervisor was 1 month. The specific distribution of effective samples is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. The basic attribution of research samples

Basic information		Statistical result
Gender	Male	59.4%
	Female	40.6%
Age	Mean	31.2
Educational background	High school and below	2.5%
	Junior college	25.9%
	Undergraduate	64.7%
	Master	6.9%
	Doctor	0.0%
Work nature	Production	2.5%
	Sales	15.2%
	Technical	35.9%
	Management	21.7%
	Others	24.8%
Industry of company	Manufacturing	44.2%
	Architecture	1.0%
	Service	15.4%
	Finance	2.5%
	Transportation	8.5%
	Telecommunication	0.5%

	Mining	0.0%
	Agriculture, forestry and fisheries	0.0%
	Wholesale and retail	10.9%
	Others	16.7%
Work time in the company	Mean	45.4 months
Work time together with the current superior	Mean	33.5 months

3.3 Study Instrument

In order to avoid the problem of homologous variance, the questionnaire design of this study adopts the form of code instead of name, and the anonymous method is used to ensure the respondents do not need to worry about the disclosure of personal information, which can reduce the tendency of personal bias to a certain extent.

The questionnaire of this research mainly adopts excellent domestic and foreign scholars' maturity scale to carry on the design. This study adopts the Linker 7 points measurement way (1 represents strongly disagree, 7 represents extremely agree, and so on). To guarantee the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, the measurement scales of all variables go through normalized translation and back translation process.

The job satisfaction measurement scale developed by Cammann et al. (1983) was used to measure the satisfaction of superiors, which was translated and adapted. The scale consists of 3 questions and is self-evaluated by subordinates. The measured reliability of the scale in this study is 0.965.

Leader-member exchange relationship was measured using the LMX scale developed by Liden et al. (1998), which used seven items in the scale that met the larger requirements. This scale contains 7 questions and is self-rated by subordinates. The measured reliability of this scale in this study is 0.912.

Subordinate tacit understanding was measured by the subordinate tacit understanding scale developed by Zheng et al. (2017). The scale consists of 8 questions and is self-evaluated by subordinates. The measured reliability of the scale in this study is 0.916.

Face consciousness was measured by the gain and loss scale of face consciousness developed by Zhang et al. (2011). The scale contains 11 questions and is self-rated by subordinates. The measured reliability of the scale in this study is 0.886.

In this study, some demographic variables were used as control variables, including gender, age, educational background, industry of the company, working time in the company and working time with the current superior. Previous studies have shown that these basic demographic variables may influence employees' work behaviors to a certain extent. Therefore, this paper chooses these demographic variables as control variables in the process of data analysis.

4. Data Analysis and Result

4.1 Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Before hypothesis testing was conducted, descriptive statistics and correlation analysis were conducted on the four core variables (superior satisfaction, leader-member exchange, face consciousness and subordinate tacit understanding) and the control variables involved in the study.

According to the results, there was a significant positive correlation between superior satisfaction and leader-member exchange, and the correlation coefficient was 0.07 ($P < 0.01$). There was a significant positive correlation between superior satisfaction and subordinate tacit understanding, and the correlation coefficient was 0.47 ($P < 0.01$). There was a significant positive correlation between face consciousness and subordinate tacit understanding, and the correlation coefficient was 0.67 ($P < 0.01$). Correlation test provides preliminary support for the hypotheses of this study.

4.2 Discriminating Validity and Common Variance Test

This study consists of four constructs: superior satisfaction, leader-member exchange, subordinate tacit understanding and face consciousness. In order to better distinguish these four constructs and test discriminative

validity, AMOS was used to conduct confirmatory factor analysis on the four constructs prior to hypothesis testing.

Firstly, the four-factor model is analyzed. In this model, superior satisfaction, leader-member exchange, subordinate tacit understanding and face consciousness are independent factors. On this basis, five models are constructed to compare the fitting index between the four-factor model and other models.

4.3 Hypothesis Testing

Through the above correlation analysis, this paper has preliminarily found that there is a significant positive correlation between superior satisfaction and subordinate tacit understanding. In order to study the relationship between superior satisfaction and subordinate tacit understanding more rigorously, this study adopted the SPSS mixed model for a regression analysis. According to the regression analysis results of model 1, there is a significant positive correlation between superior satisfaction and subordinate tacit agreement ($\beta=0.39$, $P < 0.001$), that is, superior satisfaction has a positive impact on subordinate tacit understanding. Thus, hypothesis 1 is valid. When superior satisfaction is high, subordinate tacit understanding is more likely to occur. When the level of superior satisfaction is low, the possibility of subordinate tacit consciousness also decreases.

According to the regression results of Model 7 in the mixed model, superior satisfaction has a significant positive correlation with leader-member exchange ($\beta=0.60$, $P<0.001$), that is, superior satisfaction has a positive impact on leader-member exchange. Hence, hypothesis 2 is true. Leader-member exchange is more likely to be formed when superior satisfaction is high. When the satisfaction of superiors is low, the possibility of leader-member exchange relationship is also reduced.

According to the regression results of model 2 in the mixed model, leader-member exchange has a significant positive correlation with subordinate tacit understanding ($\beta=0.54$, $P<0.001$), that is, leader-member exchange has a significant positive impact on subordinate tacit consciousness, and hypothesis 3 is valid. When the level of leader-member exchange is high, subordinate tacit understanding is more likely to occur. When leader-member exchange level is low, the possibility of subordinate model is also reduced.

According to the regression results of model 3 in the mixed model, leader-member exchange significantly positively predicted subordinates' tacit understanding ($\beta=0.55$, $P<0.001$), but the prediction effect of superior satisfaction on subordinates' tacit understanding was no longer significant at this time. Therefore, leader-member exchange mediated the relationship between superior satisfaction and subordinate tacit understanding, that is, hypothesis 4 was established.

4.4 The Mediating Effect of Face Consciousness

According to the regression results of model 5 in the mixed model, the interaction terms of leader-member exchange and face consciousness had a significant positive effect on subordinate tacit understanding ($\beta=0.13$, $P < 0.001$), indicating that face consciousness positively moderated the relationship between leader-member exchange (LMX) and subordinate tacit understanding. Hypothesis 5 was valid. In other words, the stronger the face consciousness, the stronger the relationship between leader-member exchange and subordinate tacit understanding.

In order to observe the moderating effect of face consciousness on leader-member exchange and subordinate tacit understanding more directly, the moderating effect graph is made in this paper. According to the moderating effect diagram, leader-member exchange significantly promoted the formation of subordinate tacit understanding when the level of face consciousness was high ($\beta=0.92$, $P = 0.000 < 0.001$). However, when the level of face consciousness was low, leader-member exchange had no significant positive effect on subordinates' tacit understanding ($\beta=0.27$, $P = 0.03 > 0.05$).

Finally, Model 14 in the Process compiled by Hayes (2012) was adopted in this study to test the moderated mediating effect of face consciousness. According to the results in Table 2, the mediating effects of leader-member exchange are different at the three levels of face consciousness. When the level of face awareness was low (face=-1.00), the mediating effect of leader-member exchange was low ($\beta=0.32$), and when the level of face awareness was high (Face =1.00), the mediating effect of leader-member exchange was high ($\beta=0.51$). Thus, face consciousness positively moderates the indirect effect between superior satisfaction and subordinate tacit understanding. Hypothesis 6 is true. That is, the higher the level of face consciousness is, the stronger the indirect effect of leader-member exchange is.

Table 2. The mediating effect at different levels of face consciousness

	Face consciousness	Efficacy value	Boot mean value	Lower limit of Boot CI	Upper limit of Boot CI
The mediating role of Leader-member exchange	-1.00	0.32	0.07	0.20	0.47
	0.00	0.42	0.07	0.28	0.57
	1.00	0.51	0.10	0.33	0.73

After reviewing a large number of literature reviews, deducing hypotheses and models, conducting scientific research on questionnaires and rigorous data analysis, this study gets the following findings. Firstly, there is a significant positive relationship between superior satisfaction and subordinate tacit understanding. Secondly, leader-member exchange plays a mediating role between superior satisfaction and subordinate tacit understanding, and superior satisfaction positively affects leader-member exchange, while leader-member exchange positively and significantly affects subordinate tacit understanding. Thirdly, face consciousness plays a positive regulating role in the relationship between leader - member exchange and subordinate tacit understanding. The higher the face consciousness, the stronger the relationship between leader-member exchange and subordinate tacit understanding. And the face consciousness positively moderates the indirect effect between superior satisfaction and subordinate tacit understanding. That is, the stronger the face consciousness, the stronger the indirect effect of leader-member exchange (LMX). Finally, all the six hypotheses proposed in this study have been verified.

5. Conclusions and Prospect

5.1 Result Analysis and Theoretical Significance

First of all, as a new concept in the field of organization management in recent years, there are still few studies on subordinate tacit understanding. Zheng et al. (2017) proposed the concept of "subordinate tacit understanding" based on the concept and study of "tacit understanding" and developed a scale to measure subordinate tacit understanding. Later, they carried out a series of studies on the influence and consequences of subordinate tacit understanding. Zheng et al. (2017) proposed that subordinates' feedback behavior had a positive role in promoting subordinate tacit understanding, and studied the possible outcome variables of subordinate tacit understanding. Wang Lan et al. (2018) further studied the antecedent variables of subordinate tacit understanding and proposed the influential relationship between perceived status of superiors and subordinate tacit understanding. In 2018, Zheng Xingshan et al. also proposed that subordinate tacit understanding had certain effects on the voice behavior and superior comprehensive evaluation. From a new perspective, this paper studies the influence of subordinates' satisfaction with their superiors on subordinates' tacit understanding, which enriches studies on antecedent variables of subordinate tacit understanding. This study finds that when subordinates have a high degree of satisfaction with their superiors, the communication between superiors and subordinates is relatively increased, which has a positive effect on LMX and subordinate tacit understanding.

Secondly, this study further finds the influential mechanism between subordinates' satisfaction with their superiors and subordinates' tacit understanding: Leader - member exchange (LMX) plays a completely intermediary role in the relationship between subordinates' satisfaction with subordinates and the subordinate tacit understanding. When there is a leader-member exchange relationship between superior and subordinate, the influence of superior satisfaction on subordinate tacit understanding is reduced, which indicates that the influence of superior satisfaction on subordinate tacit understanding is mainly generated by leader-member exchange (LMX) relationship. Face consciousness plays a moderating role. When subordinates' face consciousness is strong, leader-member exchange relationship has a stronger influence on subordinates' tacit understanding.

5.2 Practical Significance

This study explored the relationship between superior satisfaction and subordinate tacit understanding, and explored the influential mechanism of superior satisfaction on subordinate tacit understanding through leader-member exchange (LMX) and face consciousness. The research results of this paper show that by improving the relationship between subordinates and superiors, that is, improving subordinates' satisfaction with their superiors, employees can gradually achieve consistency with their superiors in behaviors, views and attitudes, thus promoting subordinates' tacit understanding. In addition, because subordinates have a higher degree of satisfaction with their superiors, they can have more sense of closeness and followership to their superiors, thus leading to a high-quality relationship between superiors and subordinates, which will also promote subordinates' tacit understanding. At the same time,

employees' strong face consciousness will have a stronger relationship between leader-member exchange relationship and subordinates' tacit understanding.

For managers, they should not unilaterally carry out their own actions. They should understand that not only leaders evaluate employees' satisfaction, but also employees constantly evaluate managers, and such evaluation will further affect subordinates' tacit understanding. Superiors should pay attention to their words and deeds and management modes, cultivate their relationship with employees, which can promote subordinates' tacit understanding, thus making the tasks achieved with higher quality and efficiency, having a positive impact on the organization, and achieving a win-win situation. At the same time, managers should pay attention to the individual characteristics of employees. Those employees with a strong sense of face are more likely to be motivated by the feedback and encouragement of leaders, which helps to promote the formation of tacit understanding among subordinates. This has very important practical significance for improving organizational performance, promoting organizational reform and promoting organizational innovation.

For employees, they need to know that their view of the superior and their attitudes affect the tacit understanding between the superior and the subordinate. In order to improve relations with the superiors and cultivation the tacit understanding between them, it is necessary to adjust their first view of the superior and attitude, without prejudice against their superior. Otherwise, they can try to communicate with the superior, so as to resolve the inner the problem and prejudice.

5.3 Innovations

The research focus of this paper is on the influence of subordinates' satisfaction with superiors on subordinates' tacit understanding in the context of localization. Compared with previous studies, there are the following innovations:

First of all, most of the previous studies focused on the impact of employee's job satisfaction on their job performance, dismissal clarity, dismissal rate and so on. Most of the researches on superior satisfaction were based on western cultural background, which could not adapt to the Chinese cultural background. There are few domestic studies focusing on subordinates' satisfaction with their superiors. This study uses a new concept in the eastern context to study the influence and mechanism of subordinate satisfaction on subordinate tacit understanding in the Chinese context.

At the same time, this study constructed a structural model of subordinates' satisfaction with their superiors, leader-member exchange (LMX), face consciousness and subordinates' tacit understanding in the Chinese context, and revealed the mechanism of their interaction with empirical research methods. This paper explores the antecedent variables of subordinate tacit understanding and supplements the influential mechanism of subordinate tacit understanding. In addition, previous studies are relatively weak on the relationship between superiors and subordinates, leader-member exchange (LMX) and subordinate tacit understanding. This study reveals the internal relationship between subordinates' satisfaction with their superiors, leader-member exchange (LMX), and subordinates' tacit understanding, opening up the influence of subordinates' tacit understanding in a Chinese context, and making up for the shortcomings of previous studies in the aspects of systematization and integrity.

5.4 Limitations and Future Research

This paper has verified the relationship among subordinates' satisfaction with their superiors, leader-member exchange (LMX), face consciousness and subordinates' tacit understanding through an empirical research and has better fulfilled the purpose of this study. However, there are still some shortcomings, which need to be further improved in the future research.

Firstly, both leader-member exchange relationship and subordinate tacit understanding are concepts which involve the two-way feelings of superiors and employees, but the measurement of these two concepts in this study adopts the method of self-evaluation by employees. However, there may be a deviation between employees' self-perception and the actual situation, and it cannot be ruled out that there is a situation where employees unilaterally believe that their relationship and tacit understanding are high. Therefore, unilateral employee self-evaluation cannot fully measure the real situation of leader-member exchange (LMX) and subordinate tacit understanding, so a bilateral evaluation method of superior and subordinate can be adopted for future research. Secondly, as a bilateral dyadic concept describing the relationship between superiors and subordinates, subordinate tacit understanding is not only affected by subordinate characteristics, but also by superior factors. However, this study only discusses the ante-cause of subordinate tacit understanding from the perspective of subordinates, that is, the influence of subordinates' satisfaction with their superiors on subordinate tacit understanding. The satisfaction of superiors with subordinates may also affect the formation of subordinates' tacit understanding. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct further

research on the satisfaction of superiors with subordinates. Thirdly, as a concept generated in the eastern culture, whether studies on subordinate tacit understanding can be extended to western cultures needs to be further studied. At the same time, the formation of tacit understanding, a very cultural behavior, may be affected by environment, corporate nature, corporate culture and other factors, which can be further studied in the future.

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