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The Impact of Team Identification on Outgroup Knowledge Sharing Behaviors in Administrative Teams of Chinese Universities: The Mediating Role of Ingroup Bias

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ABSTRACT

The prevalence of significant workloads and burnout has necessitated the promotion of collaboration by Chinese university administrative staff members, which can be achieved by enhancing the level of knowledge sharing. Previous studies have demonstrated a notable impact of social identity on the extent of knowledge sharing within teams. Nevertheless, the impact of excessive team identification on intergroup knowledge sharing has not been extensively studied. This paper addresses the aforementioned gap in the literature by examining the impact of team identity on ingroup bias and outgroup knowledge-sharing behaviors. To this end, a survey was conducted with 82 administrative staff members of Chinese universities, employing the PLS-SEM analysis. The findings revealed a positive effect of team identification on ingroup bias ($\beta = .44, p < .001$) and a negative effect of ingroup bias on outgroup knowledge sharing behaviors ($\beta = -.39, p < .01$). Moreover, the effect of team identification on ingroup bias was fully mediated by ingroup bias (indirect effect = $-.39, p < .05$). The present study provides empirical evidence that corroborates the existence of ingroup bias in the context of Chinese university administration. Furthermore, it demonstrates the deleterious impact of this bias on intergroup relations and behaviors. This evidence suggests that a balance should be considered in shaping employee identification with sub-teams. The evidence presented here suggests that a balance should be considered in shaping employee identification with sub-teams. Furthermore, multigroup analysis revealed a significant divergence between regular staff and contractual staff in the relationship between team identification and ingroup bias (Difference = $.87, p < .01$). It indicates a discrepancy in the effect of social identity between the two groups, which may negatively influence the ingroup collaboration.

Introduction

The aspiration to become a world-class institution and the impact of globalization have prompted a shift in the management philosophy of contemporary universities (Jung & Shin, 2015). In the Western context, universities are expected to be proactively involved in social service provision (Ramirez & Tiplic, 2014). The proportion of administrative staff is consistently increasing to align with the high level of external connectedness (Baltaru & Soysal, 2018). Consequently, the role of administrative staff has evolved from a mere administrative function to a pivotal role in organizational effectiveness (Jung & Shin, 2015). Nevertheless, the ratio of administrative personnel in Chinese universities is diminishing in conjunction with the exponential growth of student enrollment (Chinese Ministry of Education, 2023). In light of these circumstances, there was a pressing need to foster effective collaboration and team effectiveness among administrative staff in Chinese universities (Gao et al., 2022).

Previous research has highlighted the significance of knowledge sharing in several ways to the teamwork process (Cummings, 2004; Garcia Martinez, 2015; Gong et al., 2013; Haas & Hansen, 2007; Huang et al., 2014; Kim & Park, 2020; Krackhardt & Stern, 1988; Lin & Huang, 2019; Powell et al., 2004; Rao et al., 2018; Usman et al., 2019; Zeb et al., 2019). Firstly, knowledge sharing fosters independence among team members, thereby facilitating effective collaboration within the team (Powell et al., 2004). This was demonstrated to be of critical importance in promoting team effectiveness (Lin & Huang, 2019). Similarly, knowledge sharing behaviors encourage members to engage in team work by promoting a closer collegiality (Krackhardt & Stern, 1988), stimulating a better team performance (Cummings, 2004; Gong et al., 2013; Huang et al., 2014). Second, individuals who engage in knowledge sharing behaviors at the workplace are more likely to receive appreciation from their colleagues (Krackhardt & Stern, 1988), which increases their self-efficacy (Krackhardt & Stern, 1988), which increases their self-efficacy (Martinez, 2015). This, in turn, facilitates innovative behaviors, saves time, and improves work quality (Haas & Hansen, 2007; Zeb et al., 2019). Moreover, knowledge sharing facilitates the team learning process (Rao et al., 2018; Usman et al., 2019). This beneficial process, which occurs over time, progressively enhances the team's problem-solving abilities (Kim & Park, 2020).

Consequently, there has been a significant focus on scholarly research aimed at understanding the antecedent factors that facilitate knowledge sharing in organizational contexts. (Wang & Noe, 2010). Social identity theory (Tajfel et al., 1971) posits that the activation of social identity is sufficient to lead to a process of depersonalization of team members. This process may result in individuals perceiving the norms and expectations of the team's prototypical qualifications and acting in accordance with them (Stets & Burke, 2000). In other words, group phenomena, such as team cohesion, cooperation, and altruism, collective action are introduced by the identification process (Turner et al., 1987). Since the cooperation and altruism have been found to be greatly influential with knowledge sharing (Obrenovic et al., 2020), previous studies therefore investigate and proved the positive relationship between identification and knowledge sharing (Carmeli et al., 2011; Zhu, 2016).

Nevertheless, while identity fosters positive behaviors within a certain social group (Haslam et al., 2022), such as knowledge sharing (Carmeli et al., 2011; Zhu, 2016), it also affects issues of intergroup relations. The salience of the identification is contingent upon self-categorization and social comparison (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1987). The essence of self-categorization is the perception of the uniqueness of the ingroup, which serves to

distinguish the ingroup from the outgroup (Brewer, 1999). Consequently, excessive identification engenders ingroup bias, which preferentially treats ingroup and derogates the outgroup (Hewstone et al., 2002). Previous research has demonstrated that team identification also indirectly facilitates knowledge sharing among ingroups through ingroup bias (Zhu, 2016).

However, despite the extensive theoretical support, there is no direct empirical evidence that team identification derogates outgroup knowledge sharing behaviors. This paper aims to address the gap by investigating the effects of team identification on ingroup bias and outgroup knowledge sharing behaviors. In doing so, it seeks to enrich the application of social identity and self-categorization theories in the field of knowledge sharing. Furthermore, it aims to provide a reference for the managerial problems in the aforementioned context.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Self-categorization theory and Ingroup Bias

Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) suggests posits that social identity is a self-conception as a group member (Abrams & Hogg, 1990) and thus influences the cognition and behaviors of individuals who identify with the group (Haslam et al., 2022). social group, regardless of its size or composition, provides its members with a shared identity that defines and assesses their beliefs and behaviors (Hogg, 2016). Nevertheless, social identity theory does not address the question of what makes social identity salient and how social identity is coordinated and shared within groups (Haslam et al., 2022). Consequently, self-categorization theory, which was developed in the 1980s, contributes to the explanation of the aforementioned questions (Turner et al., 1987). It introduced a model of 'self-categorical system', by which the 'self' is conceptualized as an object and can be categorized, classified in ways comparing to other social categories or classifications (Turner & Reynolds, 2012). The categorization process entails the classification of individuals who are analogous to the "self" as members of an "ingroup," while those who diverge from the "self" are designated as members of an "outgroup." (Stets & Burke, 2000). The perception of the distinctiveness between ingroup and outgroup enables the saliences of identification with ingroup membership and further informs behaviors. However, this perception gives rise to a tendency to favorably treat ingroups and its members over outgroups and its members. This phenomenon has been theorized as ingroup bias (Hewstone et al., 2002).

Knowledge sharing in social identity perspective

Social identity is a key concept in understanding how individuals interact with identified groups (Zhu, 2016). Firstly, individuals become part of a group with a social identity, whereby they are psychologically linked with the fate of the group and treat the success of the team as personal achievements (Abrams & Hogg, 1990). Secondly, social identity encourages individuals to engage in personally harmful activities, such as knowledge sharing, in order to benefit the identified group (Carmeli et al., 2011). Consequently, although employees who possess specific knowledge are able to occupy a distinctive position within the group (Yang & Wu, 2008), a strong sense of identification may prompt them to relinquish the possession of the knowledge, thereby enabling the entire group to benefit collectively (Haslam et al., 2022). This suggests

that a stronger perception of identification is associated with a higher level of knowledge sharing with the identified group (Zhu, 2016).

The effect of team identification on ingroup bias and outgroup knowledge sharing

The salience of team identification is contingent upon the process of self-categorization (Hogg, 2016). This process enables the individual to perceive the distinctiveness that distinguishes the other social group from the group with which they identify, thereby introducing the sense of "us" and "them" (Turner et al., 1987). Theoretical propositions indicate that robust identification may precipitate an ingroup bias predicament, which is a proclivity to treat or assess one's own group in a more favorable manner than a non-membership group. (Hewstone et al., 2002; Zhu, 2016). Accordingly, the study postulates that the degree of team identification is a contributing factor to the level of ingroup bias. On the other hand, when individuals define themselves as being part of a given social identity, they psychologically prioritize the fate and standing of the identified group (Haslam et al., 2022). This phenomenon results in individuals being willing to act against their own personal interests in order to advance the cause of a prominent ingroup. This phenomenon can manifest in various ways, including altruism, organizational citizenship and self-sacrifice (Haslam et al., 2022; Haslam & Platow, 2001; Mael & Ashforth, 1992). Hence, previous studies have indicated that identity can facilitate knowledge sharing within an ingroup (Carmeli et al., 2011; Zhu, 2016). Nevertheless, the intention of altruism or self-sacrifice was contextualized within the framework of ingroup identification. The present study postulates that team identification will not result in positive knowledge sharing with the outgroup and may even have a negative effect. This is due to the salience of ingroup identification, which is attributed to the comparison between the ingroup and outgroup.

Hypothesis 1: Team identification positively influences ingroup bias.

Hypothesis 2: Team identification negatively influences outgroup knowledge sharing behaviors.

The effect of ingroup bias on outgroup knowledge sharing

Theory suggests that strong identification may lead to an ingroup bias problem (Hewstone et al., 2002): a cognitive tendency that individuals view the own groups (ingroup) and its members more favorably than the groups (outgroup) that do not identify with. Such a bias frequently manifests as ingroup favoritism and outgroup derogation, encompassing behavioral discrimination, attitudinal prejudice, and perceived stereotyping. (Hewstone et al., 2002). Previous studies have indicated that the effects of ingroup bias have been observed in both artificially induced teams and natural teams (Balliet et al., 2014). For example, individuals tend to be averse to inequality in the allocation of resources or money. This aversion is particularly pronounced when it comes to allocations between the self and the outgroup, as opposed to ingroup allocations (Chen & Li, 2009; Currarini & Mengel, 2016). In organizational settings, individuals with salient team identification exhibit diminished levels of cooperation and coordination with outgroup members relative to their performance with ingroup members (Xu et al., 2020). With regard to knowledge sharing behaviors, it seems reasonable to posit that

ingroup bias may result in a negative outcome. In light of the aforementioned evidence, two hypotheses are proposed:

Hypothesis 3: Ingroup bias negatively influences outgroup knowledge sharing behaviors.

Hypothesis 4: Ingroup bias mediates the negative effect between team identification and outgroup knowledge sharing behaviors.

The effect of demographic variables

Previous research on knowledge sharing has typically considered gender and age as control variables to account for demographic differences (Su et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021; Yin et al., 2020; Zhu, 2016). The present study also incorporates age and gender into the model, following the precedent set by previous studies in this field. Furthermore, the type of employment will be subject to control. This discrepancy in remuneration, social security benefits, and career progression between regular employees (referred to as "institutional employees") and contractual employees (referred to as "non-institutional") persists despite the growing convergence in the nature of their work and demographic characteristics, such as education and work ability, which are distinctive to the Chinese university context (Xu & Wu, 2022).

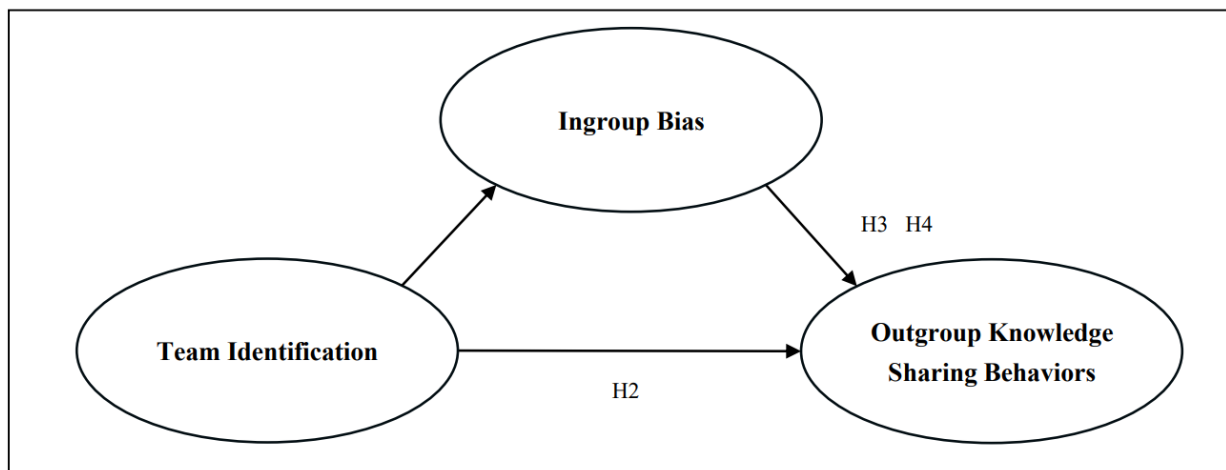


Figure 1
Proposed Conceptual Framework

Research Methodology

Participants and sampling procedures

A quantitative method utilizing partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was employed to test the proposed hypotheses within the context of Chinese public university administration. The minimum sample size required for PLS-SEM analysis should be at least as large as the largest number of construct indicators or the dependent variables of the largest number of independent variables impacting it (Hair et al., 2011). In the present study, the largest number of indicators was 6 for ingroup bias. 2 linkages were identified that impact the dependent variable of knowledge sharing behaviors. Therefore, the minimum sample size should be greater than 60. The data was gathered through the use of China's most extensive online questionnaire survey management platform, Wenjuanxing (<http://www.wjx.cn>). The platform facilitates response and delivery through China's largest social software, WeChat, thereby enabling rapid and efficient data collection (Yang et al., 2021). A total of 82 valid samples were collected from 12 Chinese public universities, distributed across the country in the West, East, Central, and Northeast regions, respectively. The samples were collected using purposive sampling.

Instrument

The study employed the self-report surveys to collect the data. A 7-Likert scale was utilized across different constructs (from 1=strongly disagree to 7 strongly agree). To ensure the competency of the survey instruments fitted well in Chinese context, a back-translation technique was applied (Brislin, 1980).

Outgroup Knowledge sharing behaviors

In this study, outgroup knowledge sharing behaviors were quantified using a knowledge sharing behaviors instrument developed by Lin (2007) and Yi (2009), which comprises five items. In order to align the knowledge sharing behaviors with the outgroup context, the item administrations were made to switch 'My group/team/colleague' into 'My group/team/colleague from other teams.' An example of items is 'When I have learned something new, I tell colleagues of other departments about it.'

Team Identification

Team identification was administrated and measured using Ellemers et al. (1997) and Bock et al. (2005), which including four items. An example item is, 'I see myself as a member of my department'.

Ingroup Bias

Ingroup bias was measured indirectly by following the previous ingroup bias research (Dunne, 2018; Zhu, 2016). The participants were requested to value their own department and other departments, respectively, with specific traits (hardworking, efficient, and competent).

The degree of ingroup bias was determined by the difference between the scores assigned to the ingroup and outgroup. One example item is, 'I feel that my department/other departments is/are efficient'.

Demographic variables

The study incorporated 3 demographic variables:

Age: the actual age was collected from respondents.

Gender: male and female were coded as 0 and 1 respectively as the binary variable.

Type of employment: Formal staff and temporary staff were coded as 0 and 1 respectively as the binary variable.

Marker variables

The study included a marker variable that was not theoretically related to the structural model for testing common method bias. The marker variable, *Perceived Product Uncertainty* (Lu & Chen, 2021), was operationalized with three items. One example item is, "Broadcaster's product recommendations cannot reduce my concerns about whether the products fit for me or not." Additionally, a reverse-scored item, "I feel that the products the broadcaster recommended would fit my preference," was included to assess the validity of the responses.

Results

Due to the limited sample size, PLS-SEM was employed to analyze the data using SmartPLS 4.0.9.5. (Ringle et al., 2022).

Sample Characteristics

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the 82 valid respondents. Specifically, 36 (43.9%) were male and 46 (56.1%) were female. Of the respondents, 53 (64.6%) were employed in a regular type, while 29 (35.4%) were employed on a contractual basis. Additionally, 43 (52.4%) of the respondents were younger than the average age, while 39 (47.6%) were older.

Table 1

Sample Demographic

Characteristics	Descriptive statistics		
	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	36	43.90%
	Female	46	56.10%
Age*	< 37.5	43	52.44%
	>37.5	39	47.56%
Type of Employment	Temporary	29	35.37%
	Formal	53	64.63%

Note. The average age among 82 samples were 37.5

Analysis of the Measurement Model

A number of criteria were employed to test the reliability and validity of the measurement model, including factor loading, cross-loading, Cronbach's alpha (CA), composite reliability (CR) average variance extracted (AVE) and discriminant validity were used to test the reliability and validity of the measurement model using PLS-SEM algorithms (Table 2 and Table 3). The indicators exhibited loading values ranging from .75 to .90, which were higher than the threshold of .708 (Hair et al., 2022). The findings indicated that the loading of each indicator was greater for its stipulated construct than for any of the other constructs, suggesting that there were no cross-loading issues. The CA and CR values were all above the threshold of .7, as recommended by Hair et al. (2022). Furthermore, the convergent validity of the model was evaluated by the average variance extracted (AVE), with all values exceeding the accepted threshold of 0.50 (Hair et al., 2022).

Table 2

Construct Reliability, Validity and Factor Loadings

Construct	Factor Loading	CA	CR	AVE
TI	.80 - .90	.87	.91	.70
IGB	.90 - .96	.93	.95	.86
OKSB	.75 - .93	.96	.93	.72

Note. TI=Team Identification, IGB=Ingroup Bias, OKSB=Outgroup Knowledge Sharing Behaviors.

Two methods were employed to assess discriminant validity: the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio (see Table 3). The results indicate that the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) exceeds the correlation coefficient between constructs, thereby satisfying the Fornell-Larcker criterion for discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2022). The HTMT ratios were found to be below the threshold of 0.85, as recommended by Hair et al. (2022) and Henseler et al. (2014), indicating that the measurement model exhibits satisfactory discriminant validity.

Multicollinearity and Common Method Bias Assessment (CMB)

The presence of multicollinearity was evaluated by calculating the variance inflation factor (VIF). The results indicate that the VIF values of the inner model are below 3 (ranging from 1.00 to 1.24), suggesting that multicollinearity was not a concern in the present study (Hair et al., 2022). Harman's single-factor test was conducted to assess the potential for common method bias in the current model (Zhu, 2016). The results indicated that only 38.37% of the variance was explained by the single-factor solution, suggesting that CMB did not represent a significant concern as it was below the threshold of 50% (Sun, 2022). Moreover, the study employed a marker technique introduced by Lindell & Whitney (2001) to test the CMB. The study suggests that any correlation between latent variables and the marker variable should be less than a threshold of .3 in order to ignore the CMB issues. The results demonstrated that the correlation coefficients between the marker variable and the latent variables were all below the threshold of 0.3, indicating that the present study satisfied the CMB issues.

Table 3*Discriminant Validity*

	TI	IGB	OKSB
TI	.84		
IGB	.44 (.49)	.93	
OKSB	-.06 (.10)	-.34 (.34)	.85

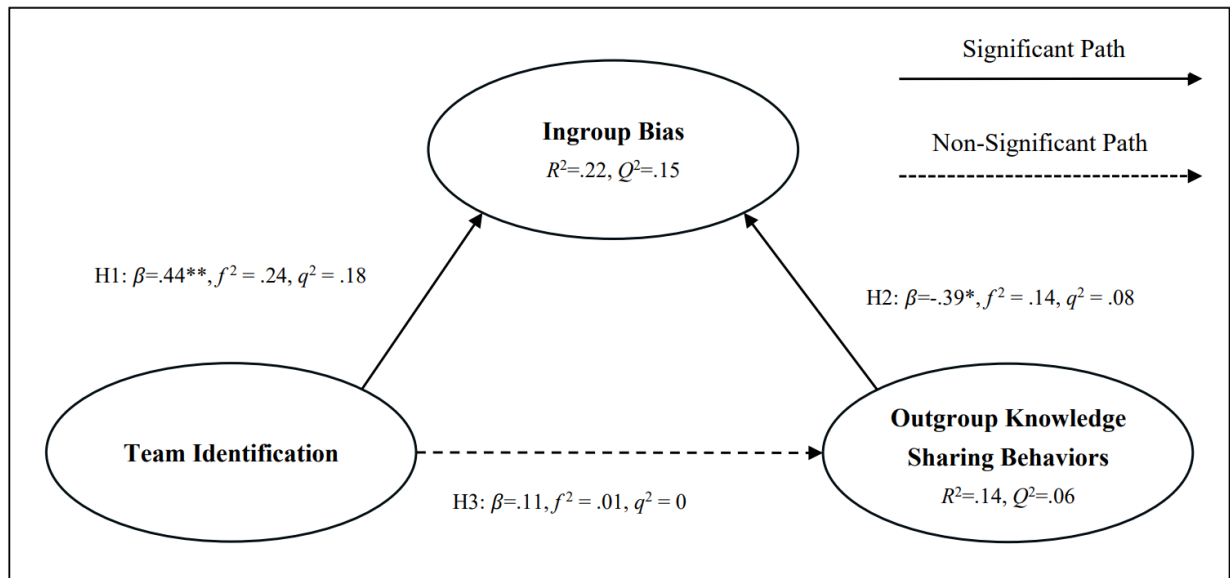
Note. Square root of AVE is shown in diagonal; HTMT is demonstrated in bracket.

Structural Model Analysis

The proposed hypotheses were tested using PLS-SEM. The standard root mean square residual (SRMR) was employed to assess the model fit, with a minimum value of .08 required to indicate a satisfactory fit. The results indicate that the value of SRMR for the present model is .07, which suggests that the structural model is well-fitted (Hair et al., 2022). Figure 2 presents the results of the structural model analysis.

Coefficient of Determination R^2 was measured to evaluate the predictive accuracy of the structural model. Results show that the structural model has a weak predictive accuracy to explain IGB ($R^2 = .22$) and OKSB ($R^2 = .14$). The present study also measured f^2 to assess the exogenous construct's contribution to R^2 value of an endogenous variable. The results show that TI ($f^2 = .24$) has a strongly medium effect on IGB and IGB ($f^2 = .14$) has a nearly medium effect on OKSB (Hair et al., 2022). Stone-Geisser's Q^2 value was measured with omission distance $D = 10$ in terms of the predictive relevancy of the structural model (Hair et al., 2022). The results show that the Q^2 of endogenous variables IGB ($Q^2 = .15$) and OKSB ($Q^2 = .06$) are above 0, supporting the structural model's predictive relevance regarding IGB and OKSB (Hair et al., 2022). The effect size of q^2 was computed to evaluate the exogenous construct's contribution to Q^2 value of an endogenous variable. The results indicate a medium q^2 effect size between TI and IGB ($q^2 = .18$) and a weak size between IGB and OKSB ($q^2 = .08$) and TI has no ($q^2 = 0$) contribution to Q^2 value of OKSB (Hair et al., 2022).

PLS-SEM bootstrapping (5000 times) was employed for hypotheses testing. The results indicate that there is a significant positive effect of TI on IGB ($\beta = .44, p < .001$) and a significant negative effect of IGB on OKSB ($\beta = -.39, p < .01$), which supports hypotheses 1 and 2. The paths between TI and OKSB ($\beta = .11, p = .49$) was found to be non-significant, indicating that hypothesis 3 is not supported. However, according to Hair et al. (2021), IGB was found to fully mediate the negative effect of TI on OKSB (Indirect effect = $-.17, p < .05$), thereby supporting hypothesis 4.

Figure 2*The Results of The Structural Model*

Note. * $p < .01$, ** $p < .001$

Additional Analysis

In addition, the current study employed a multigroup analysis to investigate the influence of demographic variables on the structural model (Table 4). The results of the bootstrap multigroup analysis (5000 times) indicate that gender and age have no effect on the model. This is evidenced by the fact that the path coefficient differences between male and female, younger group (age < 37.5) and older group were not significant. The type of employment significantly influences the effect of TI on IGB (Differences = .87, $p < .01$), indicating that team identification of regular employees has a stronger effect on the ingroup bias.

Table 4*The Results of Multigroup Analysis*

Demographics	H1	H2	H4
	TI → IGB	IGB → OKSB	TI → IGB → OK
Difference (Male-Female)	.03	-.13	-.07
Difference (Younger-Older)	-.22	-.07	.05
Difference (Formal- Temporary)	.87*	-.29	-.30

Note. * $p < .01$

Discussion

Discussion of main findings

The findings suggest that team identification positively link with ingroup bias, the attitudinal differences towards ingroup and outgroup, which is consistent with the previous research (Dimmock et al., 2005; Jackson, 2002; Zhu, 2016). The findings provide support for the assertion that the salience of a certain social identity is contingent upon self-categorization and comparisons (Hogg, 2016). Self-categorization enables individuals to perceive themselves and others as belonging to different groups, which can lead to a sense of belongingness on the one hand, but also to the promotion of ingroup bias (Dunne, 2018). The findings underscore the dual nature of social identity, while strong team identification can influence team members' positive in-group behaviors, such as enhanced team performance and reduced team conflict (Han & Harms, 2010; Solansky, 2011). However, the excessive awareness of "us" may still induce strong in-group bias, leading to a negative influence on intergroup behaviors (Eren, 2023).

This study also investigated the behavioral outcome under the influence of ingroup bias, with a particular focus on knowledge sharing behaviors with outgroup members. The findings indicate that outgroup knowledge sharing behaviors were significantly influenced by the effect of ingroup bias. This finding is partially consistent with previous research (Xu et al., 2020; Zhu, 2016). Zhu (2016) observed that ingroup bias is negatively correlated with employees' intentions to share knowledge with the organization. The current findings update it by investigating the actual knowledge sharing behaviors of individuals, as opposed to their intentions (Kuo & Young, 2008). The extensive findings substantiated the anticipated hypothesis that excessive identification with a specific team may precipitate detrimental behaviors towards an outgroup. This is because ingroup bias fully mediates the relationship between team identification and outgroup knowledge-sharing behaviors.

The results of multi-group analyses indicate that regular staff exhibit higher levels of insider group bias than temporary staff. This reflects differences in the perception of and adherence to team norms and expectations between the two groups, which subsequently affects their perception of team identification. This may have a detrimental impact on the capacity for ingroup collaboration, as those who fail to adhere to the group norms and expectations may be subjected to a more negative evaluation than outgroup members by the ingroup members, as previously indicated (Dunne, 2018). The observed discrepancy can be attributed to the differences in income level and career development, as well as the similarities in job and demographic characteristics between regular and temporary employees (Xu & Wu, 2022). As previously stated, the proportion of administrative staff at Chinese universities is undergoing a reduction (Chinese Ministry of Education, 2023). In light of these circumstances, it is becoming increasingly common for Chinese universities to employ contractual employees, or what is known as non-institutional staff in the Chinese context, in order to supplement their regular employee (institutional) workforce. Nevertheless, the daily responsibilities, workload, and entry qualifications of these workers are becoming increasingly similar to those of regular employees (Xu & Wu, 2022). However, their income level, career advancement, and even social status remain significantly lower than those of regular employees, which has resulted in the emergence of cognitive and behavioral marginalization issues (Xu & Wu, 2022).

Implications

The current study makes a significant contribution to the existing body of literature in several key areas.

This paper confirms the significant role of ingroup bias between team identification and outgroup knowledge sharing behaviors. It is demonstrated that increased team identification significantly raises ingroup bias and reduces outgroup knowledge sharing behaviors. The concept of knowledge sharing within organizations is often limited to the sharing of knowledge within a team or organization. This approach fails to consider the potential for knowledge sharing across teams (Zhu, 2016). This paper also makes a practical contribution to the field of organizational management. While the formation of a strong team identity can be beneficial in promoting collaboration and positive behaviors within a team (Khumalo et al., 2022; Krug et al., 2020), the formation of ingroup biases may create difficulties in intergroup collaboration, such as the sharing of knowledge between teams, which is obviously harmful to organizational knowledge sharing management.

Second, the study extends the application of self-categorization (Turner & Reynolds, 2012) and ingroup bias theory (Hewstone et al., 2002) to a common intergroup setting (the context of common work teams), whereas the previous research typically emphasized the ingroup bias problem in distinctiveness-sensitive contexts. For instance, previous studies (Dimmock et al., 2005; Distelhorst & Hou, 2014; Eren, 2023) have examined the phenomenon between genders, races and sports team fans. Furthermore, the study found no direct effect of team identification on outgroup knowledge sharing behaviors, providing empirical evidence to support the understanding of self-categorization. This finding specifically corroborates the assertion that self-categorization typically enables individuals to perceive the distinctiveness of the ingroup and to further differentiate the outgroup from the ingroup (Brewer, 1999).

Third, the present study highlights the distinctions between regular and contractual employees of Chinese public universities, and its moderating effect on the intergroup relations. As the population of contractual administrators continues to expand (Xu & Wu, 2022), it is imperative that higher administration in Chinese universities prioritize reducing the discrepancy between the two groups to enhance collaboration within the university community..

Limitations and Future Recommendations

Despite the valuable contributions made by this study, there are a few limitations that indicate the direction for future research. The present study employed a cross-sectional survey design, which may present challenges in addressing the issue of ingroup bias research. Because, the development of ingroup bias typically occurs over an extended period of time (Stevens et al., 2020). It is recommended that future studies employ longitudinal design. Secondly, one of the advantages of PLS-SEM, as highlighted by sociologists in recent times, is its capacity to handle small sample models (Hair et al., 2019). However, the relatively limited sample size still raises concerns about the generalizability of the findings. The concept of ingroup bias was initially defined by Hewstone et al. (2002) as the tendency to favor the ingroup and derogate the outgroup. However, the study in question solely examined the impact of ingroup bias on outgroup knowledge sharing. It is recommended that future studies examine the influences of ingroup bias on both the ingroup and outgroup together, in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the theories.

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