

The impact of supervisor bottom-line mentality on employees' knowledge hiding: The mediating role of performance avoidance orientation and the moderating role of self-efficacy

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Abstract: In the era of the digital economy, the competitive advantage of internet enterprises is gradually shifting to knowledge-based intangible assets. However, leaders' behaviors and cognitive patterns, especially the prevalence of supervisor bottom-line mentality, have severely hindered internal knowledge flow. This study aims to explore the impact of supervisor bottom-line mentality on employees' knowledge hiding. By conducting a quantitative study that takes performance avoidance orientation as the mediating variable and self-efficacy as the moderating variable, empirical data were collected from the internet industry via a questionnaire survey. A total of 733 questionnaires were retrieved, with 503 valid samples and an effective response rate of 68.6%. Data analysis results show that supervisor bottom-line mentality strengthens performance avoidance orientation; performance avoidance orientation exacerbates knowledge hiding; performance avoidance orientation plays a partial mediating role between supervisor bottom-line mentality and knowledge hiding; self-efficacy significantly reduces the impact of supervisor bottom-line mentality on performance avoidance orientation. This finding provides theoretical support for managers to recognize the potential consequences and negative impacts of bottom-line mentality and to construct an open and collaborative organizational culture.

Keywords: Knowledge hiding, Performance avoidance orientation, Self-efficacy, Supervisor bottom-line mentality.

1. Introduction

The development of digitalization and technological progress has transformed the traditional competitive model, and knowledge has become the key to gaining a competitive advantage [1]. Knowledge is manifested not only through technological innovation but also in management processes, market insights, and business models. By implementing effective knowledge management to acquire, share, and apply knowledge, enterprises can enhance their overall efficiency and competitiveness [2]. However, the Internet industry faces numerous challenges in knowledge management. The high returns brought by the rapid growth of the Internet industry over the past decade have attracted a large number of practitioners. Along with this growth comes a data-driven decision-making evaluation system centered on quantitative performance, where short-term quantifiable performance indicators are often prioritized in salary and promotion decisions [3, 4]. Although this approach enhances decision-making objectivity and transparency, it often fails to capture employees' long-term contributions, particularly in knowledge sharing and innovative activities [3, 5]. An overemphasis on digital evaluation models can easily lead enterprises to blindly pursue data-based performance [6], which provides fertile ground for the growth of Supervisor Bottom-Line Mentality, a mindset that focuses solely on bottom-line results while ignoring processes and long-term goals. Leaders often overemphasize ultimate goals such as financial targets and overlook factors including employees' mindsets, needs, and long-term development [7], leading to employee distrust and a lack of sense of

belonging. To meet performance indicators, employees have to focus their main energy on work that yields visible results in the short term, while reducing their attention to innovative exploration and knowledge transfer that require long-term accumulation. To avoid taking on additional risks and responsibilities, they choose to engage in knowledge hiding [8]. This directly undermines the efficiency of organizational knowledge management and, consequently, the firm's competitiveness.

The theoretical foundation of this study is mainly based on Social Cognitive Theory. As organizational managers, leaders' behaviors and decisions directly influence employees' perceptions of organizational norms [7]. Supervisor Bottom-Line Mentality emphasizes short-term performance goals and neglects the importance of knowledge sharing and long-term development. In such an organizational environment, employees are more likely to hide their knowledge, thereby affecting the organization's knowledge flow and application capabilities [9]. Employees' goal orientation serves as one of the key mediating factors in this process. Under leadership pressure, employees are more likely to exhibit Performance Avoidance Orientation, which in turn affects their willingness to transfer knowledge in the workplace [10]. When leaders emphasize short-term performance while neglecting learning and growth, employees may hide their knowledge to protect their own interests or avoid the risks associated with innovation [8].

Self-efficacy, defined as an individual's confidence in their ability to complete specific tasks or achieve specific goals, is widely recognized as an important psychological factor affecting work behaviors and motivation [11, 12]. Employees with high Self-Efficacy believe they can cope with work challenges and remain confident in demonstrating their abilities even when leaders emphasize performance goals. In contrast, employees with low Self-Efficacy are more susceptible to the negative impact of leaders' Bottom-Line Mentality, exhibiting more performance avoidance behaviors, which in turn exacerbate knowledge hiding and reduce innovative behaviors [13, 14].

Most existing literature focuses on the relationship between leadership behavior and employee performance, but the impact of Supervisor Bottom-Line Mentality on Knowledge Hiding behavior has not been fully explored [8, 9]. Centering on key factors in contemporary enterprise development, this study supplements research on the relationship between Supervisor Bottom-Line Mentality, Knowledge Hiding, and innovative behavior in the Internet industry by examining the mediating role of Performance Avoidance Orientation between Supervisor Bottom-Line Mentality, Knowledge Hiding, and innovative behavior. It also explores the boundary effect of individual Self-Efficacy in this process, aiming to provide theoretical support for Internet enterprises in knowledge management. Additionally, this study expands existing theoretical research on goal orientation and leadership mentality, further enriching academic discussions in related fields. The specific research objectives are as follows: (1) To explore the impact of Supervisor Bottom-Line Mentality on Knowledge Hiding. (2) To examine the mediating role of Performance Avoidance Orientation between Supervisor Bottom-Line Mentality and Knowledge Hiding. (3) To investigate the moderating effect of Self-Efficacy on the relationship between Supervisor Bottom-Line Mentality and Performance Avoidance Orientation.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Social Cognitive Theory

2.1.1. Social Cognitive Theory

Social Cognitive Theory posits that individual behavior is influenced by the interaction of environment, cognition, and beliefs [13-16]. Under the influence of external factors such as Supervisor Bottom-Line Mentality, employees often focus on achieving short-term performance goals to gain recognition. Meanwhile, they avoid the risk of failing to complete tasks, which strengthens their Performance Avoidance Orientation. This competitive attitude may make employees feel pressured when faced with Knowledge Hiding, for fear of exposing their own shortcomings, and thus lead them to conceal knowledge [17, 18]. As a core concept in Social Cognitive Theory, Self-Efficacy plays a crucial moderating role. Employees with higher Self-Efficacy demonstrate greater initiative and adaptability when confronting challenges, which can mitigate the negative impact of Supervisor Bottom-Line

Mentality [19, 20]. Drawing on Social Cognitive Theory, this study constructs a mechanism illustrating how Supervisor Bottom-Line Mentality affects employees' Knowledge Hiding from the perspective of goal orientation, and further clarifies the impact of individual differences through the moderating role of Self-Efficacy.

2.2. Supervisor Bottom-Line Mentality and Knowledge Hiding

Supervisor Bottom-Line Mentality refers to a leadership mindset that focuses on bottom-line performance goals and regards them as the sole priority [21, 22]. Knowledge hiding is defined as the behavior where knowledge holders intentionally retain, conceal, or fail to provide complete knowledge when responding to work-related knowledge requests from other individuals [23].

Social Cognitive Theory suggests that stimuli and responses from the external environment are key factors influencing employees' attitudes and behaviors [13, 16]. By observing supervisors' words and actions, as well as the reward and punishment mechanisms within the organization, employees gradually develop an understanding of appropriate behaviors [12]. Supervisors with a supervisor bottom-line mentality often prioritize performance goals while neglecting knowledge exchange, and they do not reward employees for knowledge sharing [9]. In turn, employees perceive that supervisors care more about bottom-line outcomes than factors such as personal growth and knowledge exchange [7, 22, 24]. Consequently, employees tend to direct their attention to the goals that supervisors aim to achieve rather than knowledge sharing, thereby promoting knowledge hiding [25, 26]. Meanwhile, supervisors who focus on bottom-line goals can create an organizational climate that encourages self-interest and internal competition [9, 27]. Employees may feel that sharing knowledge not only yields no returns but may even weaken their competitive advantage. This single-oriented cultural environment drives employees to prioritize personal interests [8], and knowledge hiding becomes a self-protection strategy for employees to maximize their personal benefits [7, 28]. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H₁: Supervisor Bottom-Line Mentality has a positive impact on Knowledge Hiding.

2.3. Supervisor Bottom-Line Mentality and Performance Avoidance Orientation

Performance Avoidance Orientation refers to an individual's goal or motivational tendency to avoid challenges in the workplace, to prevent poor performance, or to expose insufficient abilities [29-32]. It is a state influenced by specific contexts, characterized by variability and situational dependence [33]. During the socialization process, employees are affected by environmental factors shaped by supervisors and internalize the cognitions and values derived from these factors into their own belief systems [34]. Supervisors with a Supervisor Bottom-Line Mentality provide a strong, prominent, and clear direction for their employees [35], prompting the organization to carry out work tasks around goals such as performance and financial results [21, 22]. This shapes employees' cognitive framework regarding organizational achievements: higher performance pressure and the perception that failing to meet performance goals equals failure [10, 36]. Additionally, supervisors with a Supervisor Bottom-Line Mentality directly link important matters such as salary and promotion to performance. Therefore, to avoid negative evaluations or loss of benefits due to poor performance, employees are more inclined to adopt conservative strategies and avoid participating in tasks that may lead to negative outcomes [37]. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H₂: Supervisor Bottom-Line Mentality has a positive impact on Performance Avoidance Orientation.

2.4. Performance Avoidance Orientation and Knowledge Hiding

The core motivation of individuals with Performance Avoid Orientation is to avoid failure and prevent others from viewing them as incompetent [32]. Under Performance Avoid Orientation, employees may exhibit a high degree of caution or even avoidance toward knowledge sharing. They fear being criticized or punished for taking time away from work for knowledge exchange, or worry that errors or incompleteness in the shared knowledge will trigger others' doubts about their professional

competence, exposing their unfamiliarity or insufficient abilities in certain fields and ultimately leading to negative evaluations [17]. This fear of failure and mistakes drives employees to engage in knowledge hiding, to avoid damaging their image in others' minds due to errors or deficiencies in knowledge sharing [18, 38]. Furthermore, individuals with a strong performance avoidance orientation usually perceive their personal abilities as relatively fixed and difficult to improve through work and communication, making them more likely to adopt more prudent and conservative behaviors [17, 39]. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H₁: Performance Avoid Orientation has a positive impact on Knowledge Hiding.

2.5. The Mediating Role of Performance Avoidance Orientation Between Supervisor Bottom-Line Mentality and Knowledge Hiding

Supervisor Bottom-Line Mentality focuses the organization's evaluation system on performance goals, bringing greater performance pressure to employees and shaping an achievement cognition where performance completion serves as the evaluation criterion [17, 32]. The work environment dominated by supervisors with a Supervisor's Bottom-Line Mentality directly leads employees to fear negative evaluations or punishment from superiors, due to concerns that knowledge sharing may take up work time or lead to mistakes during sharing [9, 10]. In response, employees adopt conservative behavioral strategies to avoid exposing their insufficient abilities as much as possible. The resulting Performance Avoidance Orientation further promotes employees' behavioral strategies of risk avoidance and personal image protection, which in turn leads to Knowledge Hiding [8, 18].

H₂: Performance Avoid Orientation plays a mediating role between Supervisor Bottom-Line Mentality and Knowledge Hiding.

2.6. The Moderating Role of Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy refers to an individual's confidence and belief in their ability to use existing skills and resources to successfully cope with specific tasks or situations. It reflects an individual's assessment and expectation of their own abilities when facing challenges or pressure [11]. When Self-Efficacy is low, individuals often lack confidence in their own abilities [40] and are more likely to feel pressure from Supervisor Bottom-Line Mentality and exhibit a tendency to avoid challenges [10]. When employees have low Self-Efficacy, the positive impact of Supervisor Bottom-Line Mentality on Performance Avoidance Orientation is stronger, and employees are more likely to avoid challenges due to fear of failure. In contrast, employees with high Self-Efficacy are more confident in coping with task challenges [14] and do not experience excessive anxiety due to Supervisor Bottom-Line Mentality. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H₃: Self-efficacy negatively moderates the impact of supervisor bottom-line mentality on performance avoidance orientation.

In summary, this study proposes a research model as shown in Figure 1.

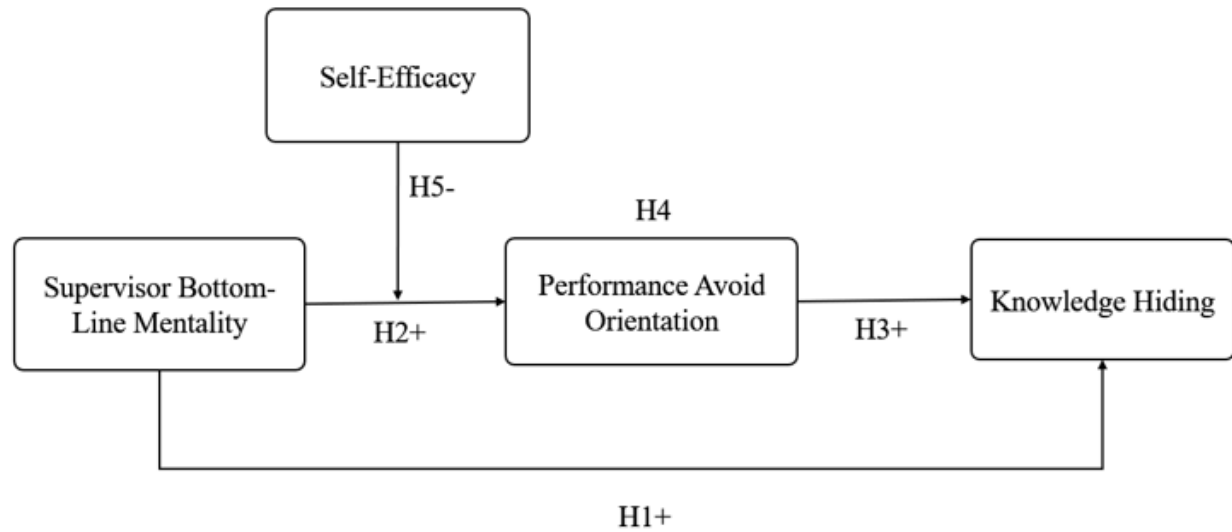


Figure 1.
Research Model.

3. Research Methods and Design

3.1. Research Tools

Supervisor Bottom-Line Mentality is measured using the bottom-line mentality scale developed by Greenbaum et al. [21]. This scale is widely adopted worldwide and exhibits good reliability and validity across all levels [6, 9, 41]. Knowledge Hiding is assessed with the three-dimensional Knowledge Hiding Scale developed by Connelly et al. [23], which includes evasive hiding, playing dumb, and rationalized hiding. Performance Avoid Orientation is measured using the scale developed by VandeWalle [31]. Self-efficacy is assessed with Chen et al. [42]'s 8-item scale. All scales demonstrated good reliability in small-sample analysis (Cronbach's $\alpha > 0.8$, KMO > 0.8 , Factor Loading > 0.6).

3.2. Research Object and Data Collection Method

The research population of this study consists of in-service employees in the Internet industry. In the Internet industry, characterized by rapid iteration and intensive collaborative innovation, these employees usually participate extensively in knowledge exchange within and outside the organization [10, 43].

This study adopted purposive sampling to collect data through electronic questionnaires. The research questionnaire comprises 51 items, and the number of questionnaires to be distributed was determined by the test estimation method (5–10 times the number of items) [44, 45]. Considering the potential for invalid questionnaires, this study plans to distribute 730 questionnaires. Each independent IP address is restricted to submitting the questionnaire only once, and lie detection questions and screening questions are incorporated to ensure the validity of the survey results.

4 Results

4.1. Reliability and Validity Analysis

Cronbach's α , Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) were used as evaluation indicators for scale reliability and validity. Meanwhile, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted to test the construct validity of the scales [46]. Table 1 presents the analysis results, where all coefficients meet the standard thresholds, indicating good reliability of the scales.

Table 1.
Reliability Analysis Results.

Variable	Items	Factor loading	Cronbach's α	CR	AVE
Supervisor Bottom-Line Mentality	SBLM1	0.76	0.846	0.846	0.578
	SBLM2	0.77			
	SBLM3	0.72			
	SBLM4	0.79			
Knowledge Hiding	KH1	0.69	0.876	0.940	0.570
	KH2	0.70			
	KH3	0.63			
	KH4	0.69			
	KH5	0.77			
	KH6	0.81			
	KH7	0.78			
	KH8	0.81			
	KH9	0.80			
	KH10	0.79			
	KH11	0.81			
	KH12	0.75			
Performance Avoidance Orientation	PAO1	0.78	0.877	0.877	0.587
	PAO2	0.79			
	PAO3	0.75			
	PAO4	0.74			
	PAO5	0.77			
Self-Efficacy	SE1	0.79	0.923	0.923	0.601
	SE2	0.75			
	SE3	0.78			
	SE4	0.79			
	SE5	0.81			
	SE6	0.76			
	SE7	0.75			
	SE8	0.77			
CFA Model Fit Indices	CMIN/df=1.36, RMSEA=0.03, RMR=0.05, SRMR=0.032, GFI=0.90, NFI=0.91, CFI=0.97				

4.2. Descriptive Statistics

Data for this study were collected from employees in the Internet industry through an online questionnaire via a professional sampling service agency. A total of 733 questionnaires were retrieved between August 1 and 25, 2025. After excluding 109 invalid questionnaires with excessively short completion times, 7 questionnaires that failed screening questions, 78 questionnaires with incorrect answers to lie detection questions, and 36 questionnaires with overly regular response patterns, 503 valid samples were retained, with an effective recovery rate of 68.6%.

Among the valid samples: In terms of gender, females accounted for 53.3% (268 respondents), slightly higher than males at 46.7% (235 respondents). The dominant age group was 28–37 years old, accounting for 41.6% (209 respondents), followed by 18–27 years old (22.5%, 113 respondents) and 38–47 years old (26.2%, 132 respondents). Regarding work experience, employees with 1–3 years of experience made up 29.8% (150 respondents), while those with 4–6 years and 7–9 years of experience accounted for similar proportions: 27.0% (136 respondents) and 26.6% (134 respondents), respectively. In terms of educational background, bachelor's degree holders were the majority at 56.1% (282 respondents), and those with a college degree or below accounted for 27.8% (140 respondents). Regular employees accounted for 53.3% (268 respondents), and non-regular/dispatch employees made up 37.8% (190 respondents). The largest company size category was 201–500 employees, accounting for 45.7% (230 respondents). Regarding the duration of cooperation with their current supervisor, 38.2% (192 people) have worked with their current supervisor for 7 months to 2 years, while 28.8% (145 people) have worked with them for 6 months or less.

4.3. Correlation and Discrimination Validity Analysis

Table 2 presents the Pearson correlation analysis results. All indicators are significant at the 0.001 level, indicating that pairwise correlations exist among Supervisor Bottom-Line Mentality (SBLM), Knowledge Hiding (KH), Performance Avoidance Orientation (PAO), and Self-Efficacy (SE). These results confirm the suitability of conducting regression analysis.

The square roots of the AVE for each variable are all greater than the absolute values of the correlation coefficients between the corresponding variable and other variables, indicating good discriminant validity for each scale.

Table 2.
Correlation and Discrimination Validity Analysis.

	1	2	3	4
SBLM	0.760			
KH	0.508***	0.755		
PAO	0.294***	0.423***	0.766	
SE	-0.419***	-0.368***	-0.253***	0.775

Note: *** indicates significance at the 0.001 level, ** indicates significance at the 0.010 level, and * indicates significance at the 0.050 level. The diagonal is the square root of the AVE for the variables.

4.4. Hypothesis Testing

This study employed multiple regression analysis to verify the relationships among Supervisor Bottom-Line Mentality (SBLM), Performance Avoidance Orientation (PAO), and Knowledge Hiding (KH), with results presented in Table 3.

Model 1 examines the regression of control variables on the dependent variable, Knowledge Hiding. Meanwhile, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values for all models range from 1.006 to 4.334, which are below the threshold of 5, indicating no severe multicollinearity issues in the models.

Regarding the relationships between SBLM, PAO, and KH, Models 2, 3, and 4 all demonstrate significant positive impacts ($\beta = 0.506$, $p < 0.001$; $\beta = 0.298$, $p < 0.001$; $\beta = 0.427$, $p < 0.001$), thus supporting Hypotheses H₁, H₂, and H₃. Model 5 introduces the mediating variable (PAO) based on Model 2, resulting in improved model fit: $R^2 = 0.349$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.337$, and $F = 19.380$ ($p < 0.001$). The standardized regression coefficient of SBLM on KH decreases ($\beta = 0.416$, $p < 0.001$), while PAO exerts a significant positive effect on KH ($\beta = 0.303$, $p < 0.001$). These results confirm Hypothesis H₄: Performance Avoidance Orientation plays a mediating role between Supervisor Bottom-Line Mentality and Knowledge Hiding.

Table 3.
Regression Analysis.

	M1 (KH)	M2 (KH)	M3 (PAO)	M4 (KH)	M5 (KH)
Gender	-0.053 (-0.760) (1.014)	-0.020 (-0.526) (1.014)	-0.005 (-0.109) (1.014)	-0.029 (-0.705) (1.014)	-0.019 (-0.519) (1.014)
Age	-0.142 (-0.168) (4.324)	-0.117 (-1.459) (4.334)	0.028 (0.319) (4.334)	-0.167* (-1.988) (4.324)	-0.126 (-1.660) (4.335)
Work Experience	0.075 (1.278) (3.530)	0.061 (0.841) (3.539)	-0.112 (-1.395) (3.539)	0.143 (1.887) (3.538)	0.095 (1.384) (3.553)
Education	0.009 (0.173) (1.009)	-0.015 (-0.381) (1.011)	-0.041 (-0.961) (1.011)	0.020 (0.485) (1.01)	-0.002 (-0.063) (1.013)
Employment Status	-0.025 (-0.476) (1.024)	-0.035 (-0.885) (1.025)	0.014 (0.319) (1.025)	-0.031 (-0.750) (1.025)	-0.039 (-1.052) (1.025)
Company Size	0.053 (1.355) (1.008)	0.056 (1.443) (1.008)	0.049 (1.134) (1.008)	0.039 (0.954) (1.01)	0.041 (1.125) (1.010)
Duration with Current Supervisor	0.034 (0.546) (2.078)	0.031 (0.562) (2.078)	0.131* (2.135) (2.078)	-0.022 (-0.374) (2.096)	-0.009 (-0.162) (2.097)
SBLM		0.506*** (13.089) (1.006)	0.298*** (6.968) (1.006)		0.416*** (10.881) (1.105)
PAO				0.427*** (10.500) (1.014)	0.303*** (7.891) (1.114)
R^2	0.013	0.267	0.102	0.102	0.349
Adj R^2	-0.001	0.255	0.088	0.088	0.337
F	0.906	22.480***	7.035***	7.035***	19.380***

Note: *** denotes significance at the 0.001 level, ** at the 0.010 level, and * at the 0.050 level. M stands for Model (e.g., M1 = Model 1); SBLM = Supervisor Bottom-Line Mentality; KH = Knowledge Hiding; PAO = Performance Avoidance Orientation; SE = Self-Efficacy. Data in each cell are presented as β (t) (VIF).

The analysis using the bootstrap method with a 95% confidence interval (CI) also verified this result. The indirect effect value of the mediating path was 0.069 (standard error = 0.017), and the 95% CI was [0.039, 0.104], which does not include 0. The effect contribution rate was 17.3%, indicating that the mediating role of Performance Avoidance Orientation is significant. Hypothesis H₄ is further supported.

Table 4.
Path Analysis of Mediating Effect (Bootstrap).

Path	Indirect Effect	Standard Error	LLCI	ULCI	Effect Contribution Rate
SBLM -> PAO -> KH	0.069	0.017	0.039	0.104	17.3%

The moderating effect of Self-Efficacy was tested using the bootstrap method. As shown in Table 5, the regression coefficient of the interaction term (SBLM \times SE) was significantly negative ($B = -0.164$, $SE = 0.042$, $p = 0.000$), with a 95% CI of [-0.243, -0.078] that does not include 0. Further simple slope analysis was conducted by dividing Self-Efficacy into low and high levels (see Table 6 and Figure 2). When Self-Efficacy was at a low level, the 95% CI was [0.291, 0.559] (excluding 0), indicating that Supervisor Bottom-Line Mentality had a significant positive impact on Performance Avoidance Orientation. However, when employees' Self-Efficacy was high, the positive impact was no longer significant, with a 95% CI of [-0.031, 0.220] (including 0), supporting Hypothesis H₅.

Table 5.

Analysis of the Moderating Effect of Self-Efficacy.

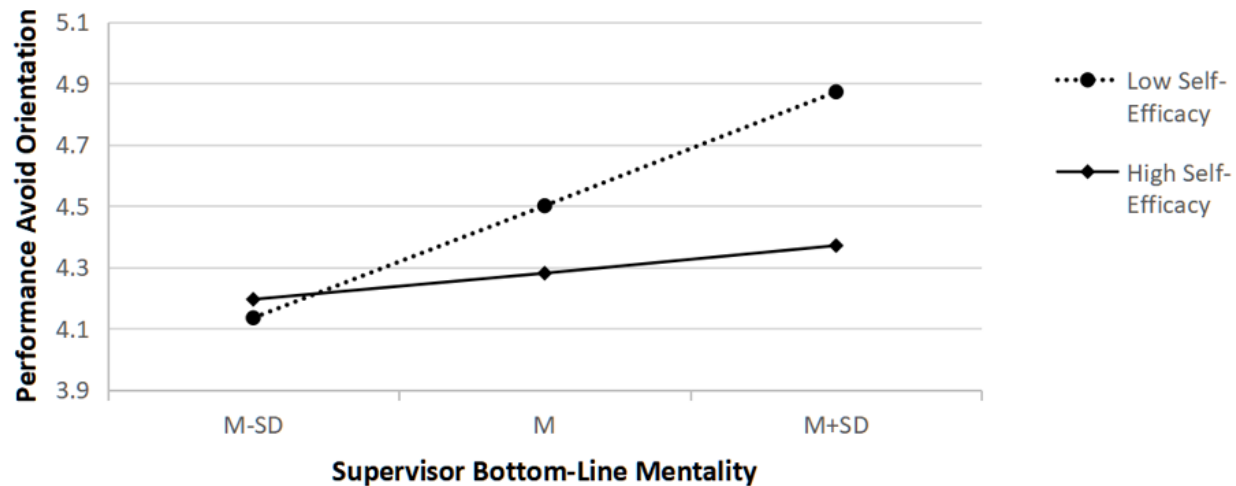
Variable	<i>F</i>	<i>B</i>	Standard Error	<i>p</i>	LLCI	ULCI	ΔR^2
SBLM x SE	25.387***	-0.164	0.042	0.000	-0.243	-0.078	0.026

Note: The dependent variable is Performance Avoidance Orientation. *** denotes significance at the .001 level.

Table 6.

Analysis of the Moderating Effect of Self-Efficacy at Different Levels.

Moderator Variable	Effect	Standard Error	LLCI	ULCI
Low Self-Efficacy (2.851)	0.425	0.068	0.291	0.559
High Self-Efficacy (4.909)	0.095	0.064	-0.031	0.220

**Figure 2.**

The Moderating Effect of Self-Efficacy at Different Levels.

5. Discussion

5.1. Conclusions

The empirical results of this study verify the significant relationships among supervisor bottom-line mentality, employees' performance avoidance orientation, self-efficacy, and knowledge hiding.

Data analysis indicates that Supervisor Bottom-Line Mentality has a significant positive impact on Knowledge Hiding. When leaders prioritize bottom-line goals such as financial performance and quantitative indicators as the sole core pursuits, while neglecting non-economic values such as knowledge sharing and team collaboration, employees' sense of belonging and trust in the organization decrease. This lack of psychological motivation for active knowledge sharing ultimately results in the development of a defensive strategy of hiding knowledge to protect personal interests. This finding aligns with the research conclusions of Chen et al. [9], Tan et al. [7], and Zhang et al. [8], which reveal the inhibitory effect of Supervisor Bottom-Line Mentality on organizational knowledge flow.

Supervisor Bottom-Line Mentality exerts a positive impact on Performance Avoidance Orientation. This indicates that when managers over-focus on performance indicators, employees' growth motivation is inhibited, and they are more likely to adopt a goal tendency of avoiding failure to meet organizational requirements. This finding aligns with Lin et al. [10], research at the team level, suggesting that Bottom-Line Mentality induces employees' short-term and defensive orientations at both the individual and team levels.

Performance Avoidance Orientation significantly enhances the tendency of Knowledge Hiding, indicating that in a competitive and defensive atmosphere, employees are more likely to choose to conceal knowledge out of self-protection or risk avoidance. This result echoes the knowledge hiding

motivation model proposed by Connelly et al. [23] and is consistent with the research of Lei [17] and Su [18], further confirming the important role of Performance Avoidance Orientation in explaining knowledge management behaviors.

In addition, the study verifies the mediating role of Performance Avoidance Orientation between Supervisor Bottom-Line Mentality and Knowledge Hiding. Supervisor Bottom-Line Mentality can indirectly affect employees' knowledge-sharing behaviors by enhancing their Performance Avoidance Orientation. This result expands the application boundary of Supervisor Bottom-Line Mentality in the field of knowledge management, reveals how Supervisor Bottom-Line Mentality inhibits knowledge flow through Performance Avoidance Orientation, and enriches the research on the consequences of Supervisor Bottom-Line Mentality in workplace contexts.

Self-efficacy plays a moderating role in the relationship between Supervisor Bottom-Line Mentality and Performance Avoidance Orientation. Employees with low Self-Efficacy are often more susceptible to the influence of leaders' result-oriented thinking, thereby showing a stronger avoidance tendency. In contrast, employees with high Self-Efficacy can offset this adverse effect to a certain extent, avoiding falling into a negative Performance Avoidance Orientation due to excessive worry about failure. This finding reveals the differences in the impact of Supervisor Bottom-Line Mentality among employees with different psychological characteristics in the Internet industry, enriches the boundary condition dimension of Supervisor Bottom-Line Mentality, and provides a theoretical basis for organizations to alleviate the negative effects of leaders by improving employees' psychological resilience.

5.2. Practical and Theoretical Contributions

This study verifies the indirect mechanism of Supervisor Bottom-Line Mentality on Knowledge Hiding and reveals the boundary effect of individual psychological resources. At the theoretical level, the research expands the framework on the relationships among leadership mentality, Performance Avoidance Orientation, and Knowledge Hiding. At the practical level, this study suggests that managers should avoid a one-sided performance-oriented management approach, while focusing on improving employees' Self-Efficacy and creating a safe technical and knowledge environment to reduce Knowledge Hiding and promote internal knowledge flow and sharing.

5.3. Research Limitations and Future Recommendations

However, this study still has some limitations. First, the research sample only focuses on the Internet industry. Although it meets the needs of knowledge-intensive scenarios, the single industry may limit the generalizability of the conclusions. Second, data collection adopts a cross-sectional questionnaire survey, which can only reveal the correlation among variables but cannot accurately verify the long-term relationships between them. Finally, the study does not deeply explore the potential impacts of different organizational contexts and leadership types on the relationships among core variables, nor does it further expand the research depth of boundary conditions. Future research should improve the research design by integrating multi-industry samples, longitudinal data, and multi-context analysis.

Transparency:

The authors confirm that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained. This study followed all ethical practices during writing.

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