

# Research on the Influence of Overqualification on Employee Innovation Performance: The Role of Knowledge Sharing and Humble Leadership

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**Abstract.** With the rapid development of China's higher education, the competition for talents has become increasingly fierce, resulting in a large-scale overqualified in the labor market. As a research hotspot emerging in the field of underemployment, the sense of overqualification is still controversial in the academic circles about its positive effect. Based on the theory of self-efficacy perception, this study aims to view overqualification from a positive perspective, build a theoretical model of the relationship between overqualification and employee innovation performance, and reveal the mediating effect of employees' knowledge-sharing behavior and the moderation of humble leadership style's mechanism. Through statistical analysis of the collected data of 301 valid employees, the empirical results show that: the sense of overqualification positively affects the innovation performance of employees; knowledge sharing behavior plays a complete mediating role between the sense of overqualification and innovation performance of employees; the level of humility leadership not only positively regulates the relationship between employees' sense of overqualification and knowledge sharing behaviors, but also further moderates the indirect effect of employees' sense of overqualification affecting their innovation performance through knowledge sharing behaviors. The conclusions of the study help enterprise managers to correctly view the phenomenon of overqualification of employees, and provide suggestions on how managers should guide employees with overqualification to make more positive behaviors, so as to create more value for enterprises.

**Key words:** Overqualification; Employee Innovation Performance; Knowledge Sharing; Humble Leadership.

## 1. Introduction

The state and society are increasingly investing in and paying attention to education. The national education expenditure has shown a growth trend for 10 consecutive years, and the society's pursuit of education has reached a new peak. Relevant data show that the number of postgraduate entrance examinations in 2022 has reached as high as 4.57 million. However, when the growth rate of the demand in the labor market is far less than the rate of the supply of talents, it will eventually lead to the phenomenon that currently highly educated workers have to engage in some jobs with lower job requirements or incompatibility with their professional abilities. About 30.37% of the employees to be employed in the "front-line production and operation positions" of the seven cigarette factories under the jurisdiction of China Tobacco Henan have a master's degree. This kind of underemployment problem is called overqualification by researchers, that is, employees' qualifications such as education, experience and skills exceed job requirements [1]. According to a research report, 84% of Chinese employees believe that they are overqualified in the organization, and an average of 47% in the world feel the same way. Therefore, exploring the influence of the general employment phenomenon of overqualification on employees' behavior and how to stimulate the potential of employees with overqualification have become the subject of current academic research.

Looking back at the previous studies of scholars, early scholars focused on the negative effects of overqualification, mainly in the two areas of individual cognitive status and working status. For example, SIMON [2] believes that the sense of overqualification will reduce employees' sense of work achievement and work autonomy; LIU [3] proposes that overqualification makes employees think that their ability and value are not playing a role, thus questioning themselves and prompting

generation of negative emotions. FELDMAN [4], LOBENE [5] pointed out that overqualification will have a negative impact on employee job satisfaction and work engagement; Liu Jinju [6] and others also found that overqualification will increase employees' negative behaviors such as job withdrawal. Although existing research has fully demonstrated the negative impact of overqualification, managers still need to continue to hire employees with overqualification. Therefore, in recent years, scholars have paid more attention to the positive effects of overqualification. Combined with the current torrent of innovation, there have been Some researchers have conducted preliminary exploration on the influence of overqualification on employees' innovation performance, such as Liang Hao [7], Li Hui [8], LIU [9], revealing the positive relationship between the sense of overqualification and employees' innovative behavior.

At present, the relevant research on the positive effect of overqualification is mostly based on the perspective of employees' cognition and personality characteristics, such as role-width efficacy [1], self-efficacy [10], employee goal-orientation [11] as mediators. However, there are few studies on the intermediary mechanism from the perspective of behavior, which can be seen that the exploration of the active organizational behavior mechanism between overqualification and innovation still has a lot of space for expansion. Considering that employees with overqualification will take the initiative to share knowledge and improve their innovation performance in order to be recognized by their superiors and colleagues, this study uses this as a mediating variable to try to expand the positive effect of overqualification.

Combined with the dual interaction scene between employees and leaders in the workplace, how the leaders should adjust overqualified employees to create more value is an urgent problem for organizations to solve. The boundary conditions of the existing sense of overqualification mainly focus on the variables from the perspective of employees, such as psychological empowerment [12], individual status differences [13], and individual personality characteristics [14], ignoring the role of leadership. Considering that humble leaders can recognize and appreciate employees, their objective view of themselves, and their humility to learn from others has played a good role in modeling employees and motivated them to take positive behaviors. Therefore, this study attempts to explore the boundary role of humble leadership.

The purpose of this study is to explore the mechanism between overqualification and employee innovation performance. Based on the theory of self-efficacy perception and with knowledge sharing behavior as an intermediary, a theoretical model between overqualification and employee innovation performance is constructed. It also explores the moderating role of humble leadership, and finally puts forward suggestions on how organizations should manage employees with overqualification to promote performance innovation and create value for enterprises, in order to provide valuable references for enterprise talent management and development.

## 2. Research Hypothesis

### (1) Overqualification and Employee Innovation Performance

The term overqualification originated from the concept of over-education proposed by FREEMAN [15], which mainly refers to the fact that with the rapid popularization and development of education, people's education level, experience or knowledge and skills have far exceeded the skills actually required by their jobs' require. Previous studies by ERDOGAN [16], MAYNARD [17] and others mainly focus on subjective overqualification, that is, employees feel that their knowledge and skills exceed the objective requirements of the job, which is judged by the employees themselves.

Innovation performance is one of the important dimensions in work performance, which can be divided into three levels: organization, team and individual. In the research of SCOTT [18], the three levels of innovation performance path models are studied, and the innovation behavior is influenced by various factors, among which the influence of individuals makes employees respond to relevant innovation expectations by adjusting their behaviors to achieve positive self-evaluation. It can be seen that employee innovation performance has a more direct impact on the organization. In addition,

employee innovation performance is the unification of innovation process and result, including both the employee's willingness to innovate and the process in which employees put it into practice and finally achieve the innovation effect.

A review of the past literature shows that there are still differences in the impact of overqualification on performance innovation, and most studies focus on the negative effects of overqualification. However, in recent years, scholars have paid more attention to discussing the positive effects of overqualification. SAUL FINE [19] proposed that overqualification are positively correlated with overall performance standards; Zhao Hui [20] also verified that employees' overqualification positively affect innovative behaviors based on social cognition theory. This study suggests that a sense of overqualification may promote employee innovation performance. Based on the theory of self-efficacy, it can be seen that employees with a sense of overqualification tend to think that they can do more challenging work with their own ability level, and the resulting gap between psychological perception and reality will make them feel unbalanced. This may generate the motivation to explore innovative behaviors such as more novel and efficient ways to complete work or solve problems [21]. So by creating challenging work behavior increases task difficulty to reduce the psychological gap of innovation motivation, can enable the overqualified employees obtain recognition from others. At the same time, self-actualization needs are satisfied and psychological balance is achieved [22]. AMABILE pointed out that individual knowledge workers with relevant knowledge and skills in a certain field can provide organizations with visible and practical innovation results by providing relevant solutions to work problems [23]. Part of the reason for the sense of overqualification is that employees think that their abilities exceed the actual needs of the position, so that such employees can complete their work more efficiently [24], and at the same time have a higher level of knowledge than the actual job requirements, which providing "raw material" for its subsequent innovation performance. So it can be considered that the innovation performance of high-knowledge employees with a sense of overqualification is highly implementable. To sum up, employees with a sense of overqualification have both the motivation and ability to innovate performance, so this paper puts forward the following assumptions:

Hypothesis 1: Sense of overqualification positively affects employee innovation performance

(2) The Mediating Role of Knowledge Sharing

Knowledge sharing refers to the behavior that employees voluntarily and selectively share their knowledge and skills to other organizations or individuals through certain channels. From past research, MELODY JUN ZHANG [10] and Zhang Xuemeng [25] have shown through research that overqualification can positively affect employees' proactive behavior; and Chen Hong'an [26] used role breadth self-efficacy as a mediating variable to verify the positive relationship between overqualification and positive organizational citizenship behavior. Therefore, this study indicates that the sense of overqualification may promote knowledge sharing among employees.

KRISTOF BROWN [17] believes that one of the reasons why employees feel overqualified is that employees have a relatively high level of knowledge and skills, but they cannot be identified and entrusted with important responsibilities by leaders in time. Based on Maslow's demand theory, employees at this situation may take the initiative to perform positive behaviors outside their roles in order to pursue self-worth to demonstrate their ability to work, in order to be recognized by their superiors. Considering that employees in the same job will unconsciously make horizontal comparisons, employees with a sense of overqualification will have a positive evaluation of their abilities compared with other employees in the same position. In order to achieve the social expectations of others or themselves for their own ability and behavior, and to obtain affirmative emotional satisfaction, it may generate upward motivation for positive performance such as knowledge sharing [28]. Based on the theory of self-efficacy perception, by sharing the knowledge and skills mastered by oneself with employees in the organization, the self-efficacy perception of employees with a sense of overqualification can be enhanced. The resulting psychological gap will also be further reduced. To sum up, employees with a sense of overqualification may enable leaders and other members of the organization to fully realize their own abilities through positive behaviors

such as knowledge sharing, realize self-worth and reduce their psychological imbalance. Therefore, this paper proposes the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 2: A sense of overqualification positively affects knowledge sharing

TAYLOR pointed out that knowledge sharing can promote the generation of new knowledge [29] for individual employees, employees who are willing to share their personal knowledge and experience with others are usually able to perform outstandingly in innovation [30]. On the one hand, the knowledge sharing behavior of employees helps to form an innovative organizational atmosphere in the organization [31], which can drive the innovation of other members in the organization, improve work efficiency in the process of communication with colleagues, and inspire new thinking. On the other hand, according to the principle of reciprocity and mutual benefit, when employees impart their knowledge and skills to others, they can also gain experience and skills of other members to broaden their thought, and it is easy to generate novel and valuable knowledge in the process of integrating their own knowledge with others, and improve the implementable innovation performance [32]. In addition, according to the theory of self-efficacy perception, it can be known that employees' knowledge sharing can further improve their self-efficacy perception [33], then the higher self-efficacy perception enables employees to think that they can successfully complete a wide range of tasks and make a wider range of positive activities [34]. At this time, employees are more willing to innovate, more willing to put innovative ideas into practice, and promote the generation of innovative performance. Therefore, this paper proposes the following assumptions:

Hypothesis 3: Knowledge sharing positively affects employee innovation performance

The employees with a sense of overqualification in the organization can perform other activities in addition to efficiently completing their own work because of their knowledge and ability reserves higher than their positions, providing basic support for their subsequent proactive behaviors. And based on the theory of self-efficacy perception, overqualified employees with high self-efficacy have strong confidence and ability to believe that their experience and skills are beneficial to the organization. And at the same time in order to realize self value, reduce the psychological gap, gain appreciation from their superiors and the recognition of other members to satisfy their affirmative emotions, it will take the initiative to share the positive behavior of knowledge. Also employees take the initiative to share knowledge, can create an innovative atmosphere in the organization, and such an innovative atmosphere will further promote the innovation performance of employees [35]. Secondly, knowledge sharing makes the relationship between employees closer, helps to improve work efficiency, and establishes a mutually beneficial relationship between them, so that employees with a sense of overqualification can also acquire new experience skills and enhance their innovation efficiency during knowledge sharing [36]. In addition, knowledge sharing further improves the self-efficacy perception of employees with overqualification, and stimulates employees' willingness to innovate, thereby promoting employees to put novel and feasible ideas into practice to form innovative performance [37]. Based on the above analysis, this paper proposes the following assumptions:

Hypothesis 4: Knowledge sharing mediates the relationship between employee overqualification and employee innovation performance

(3) Moderating Role of Humble Leadership Style

OWENS puts forward the definition of humble leadership based on previous scholars' research. Humble leadership is a "bottom-up" leadership style that leaders develop with employees by the following three-dimensional behavior, which is recognizing and admiring the strengths of others, admitting their own shortcomings, and being willing to learn from others humbly [38]. GAMERON proposes that humility is an organizational virtue that promotes altruistic behavior in organizations. Yuan Ling pointed out that humble leadership can inhibit employees' knowledge hiding and promote knowledge sharing. Therefore, this study suggests that humble leadership style may positively moderate the relationship between the sense of overqualification and knowledge sharing.

High humility leaders can make knowledge workers feel more respect and a relatively relaxed spiritual environment [39]. When employees with overqualification are respected and treated fairly

by their leaders, they can strengthen their trust and satisfaction with leaders [40], and at the same time, greater psychological freedom can also improve employees' work engagement [27]. As a common altruistic behavior, knowledge sharing will be influenced by the high-quality exchange relationship between leaders and members, also the active attitude of employees with overqualification. Secondly, leaders with high humility can appreciate the contributions and advantages of employees, pay attention to the psychological freedom of employees, and give employees enough autonomy to complete their work [41], so that employees with overqualification have more opportunities to participate in important decisions of the organization and show themselves. Improve employees' sense of organizational participation and perception of their own influence [42]. In addition, high humility leadership can also reduce employees' work pressure, encourage employees to explore novel work methods independently, and enhance employees' work autonomy [43]. Higher work autonomy and psychological freedom will stimulate the work enthusiasm of overqualified employees [44], and at the same time, based on the perception of their own influence, their willingness to share knowledge will increase, which will promote the generation of employees' knowledge sharing behavior. Finally, high humility leaders are willing to admit their own shortcomings, tolerate mistakes, reduce employees' anxiety and fear of failure, and help employees share knowledge [45]. According to the role model proposed by LIAN, employees will regard leaders as people who can imitate and learn [46]. Humble leaders have clear self-awareness, their objective evaluation of others and low self-centeredness, which can make overqualified employees view themselves more objectively [47]. At this time, employees are more aware of the advantages of others, and while actively seeking help from others, they will also actively contribute knowledge to achieve knowledge complementation.

On the contrary, due to the low-quality leader-member exchange relationship between low-humility leaders and employees, employees with overqualification will think that they are not valued by leaders and feel that their knowledge and experience are ineffective for the organization, resulting in a reduced desire for knowledge sharing [22]. Secondly, low humility leaders also make employees do not have enough work autonomy to control the way and results of their work, resulting in the formation of their negative psychological state. At the same time, the greater work pressure makes the overqualified employees spend more time in their think meaningless work activities, then hinder the generation of knowledge sharing behaviors in the work process. Finally, the high self-centeredness of low-humility leaders will also bring negative behavioral models to employees, and employees will compete with each other, reducing the generation of knowledge-sharing behaviors in the organization.

Taken together, this study suggests that humble leadership may have an impact on the relationship between the sense of overqualification and knowledge sharing, and proposes the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 5: Humble leadership moderates the relationship between overqualification and knowledge sharing. That is, when the level of humility leadership is high, the positive relationship between the sense of overqualification and knowledge sharing is stronger; on the contrary, when the level of humility leadership is low, the positive relationship between the sense of overqualification and knowledge sharing is weaker.

Based on the previous analysis, it can be seen that knowledge sharing has a mediating role between the sense of overqualification and employee innovation performance, and the humble leadership style has a moderating effect on the relationship between sense of overqualification and knowledge sharing. Therefore, this paper further proposes that humble leadership can not only moderate the relationship between overqualification and knowledge sharing, but also moderate the mediating role of knowledge sharing between overqualification and employee innovation performance.

Tang Chaoying and others proposed that humble leadership can promote the formation of a team atmosphere of mutual trust [48]. In addition, high humility leadership is also conducive to creating an atmosphere of error management in the organization, so that employees are no longer afraid of negative evaluations, and employees with overqualification are encouraged to actively share own knowledge experience and promote knowledge sharing [49]. A good fault-tolerant and trusting

organizational atmosphere enables employees with overqualification to frankly deal with their own shortcomings in the process of knowledge sharing and negative evaluations from colleagues [50] and promote positive knowledge sharing behaviors. The collision of knowledge within the organization further stimulates the innovation willingness of employees with overqualification, and promotes the generation and development of employees' innovation performance. On the contrary, low-humility leaders have low tolerance for employees' mistakes, which causes employees to be cautious in doing things in the organization because they are afraid of exposing their own shortcomings and deficiencies, which inhibits their willingness to share knowledge and develop innovative thinking.

In addition, OWENS also pointed out that high-humility leaders make overqualified employees have greater psychological freedom and stronger self-efficacy [27]. When employees have the opportunity to participate in the organization's major activities and the organization encourages employees to continuously explore and learn in a supportive environment, their competency needs will be met [51]. From the principle of reciprocity, it can be seen that the satisfaction of the ability needs makes it more acceptable to the leader, and in order to repay the leader's "receiving help and encouragement", the overqualified employees will show a positive attitude and altruistic behavior, so that its excess resources can be better utilized [5]. Also its high sense of self-efficacy and the perception of its own influence brought about by the satisfaction of ability needs make employees with overqualification believe that their innovation is valuable to the organization, then improve their intrinsic motivation for innovation, and promote employees to be more active in innovative behavior [52]. At the same time, knowledge sharing is an important channel to promote employees' innovative performance. However, in the process of knowledge sharing, the exchange of individual ideas and knowledge of employees not only brings sparks of innovation, but also may bring some unacceptable views due to their unique views, which makes employees feel embarrassing [39]. However, by imitating the behavior of high-humility leaders, the overqualified employees can more objectively recognize their own shortcomings, making the innovative behaviors brought about by the knowledge sharing process more feasible, and further improving the innovation performance of employees. Therefore, high humility leaders will make employees with overqualification have a stronger positive impact on employee innovation performance through knowledge sharing.

On the contrary, when the organizational leadership behavior is low-humility type, lack of leadership support and recognition, the ability needs of overqualified employees are not met, it is easier to think that the organization does not trust them, and their influence on the organization is low, which means less willing to engage in positive altruistic behavior. Moreover, working in a low-fault-tolerant organizational atmosphere of low-humble leadership management, when employees share their experiences and opinions and are negatively evaluated, they are more inclined to suppress the presentation of experience and ideas, rather than actively recognize their own shortcomings. This not only inhibits the generation of knowledge sharing, further hinders the development of innovation performance, but also makes some innovative behaviors unfeasible due to the lack of objective evaluation, further suppressing employees' willingness to innovate and then reducing employee innovation performance. Therefore, low-humility leadership will weaken the positive impact of knowledge sharing on employees' innovation performance.

Based on the above discussion, this paper proposes the following assumptions:

Hypothesis 6: Humble leadership moderates the indirect effect of knowledge sharing on the sense of overqualification and employee innovation performance. That is, when the level of humble leadership is high, the mediating effect of knowledge sharing on the sense of overqualification and employee innovation performance is stronger; on the contrary, when the level of humble leadership is low, the mediating effect of knowledge sharing on the sense of overqualification and employee innovation performance is weaker.

In summary, the theoretical model of this paper is shown in Figure 1:

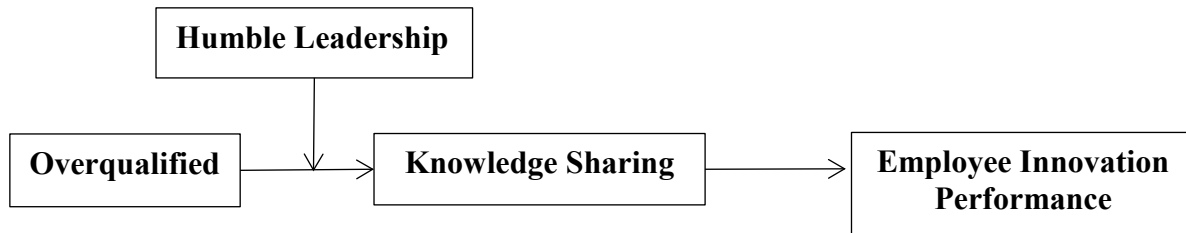


Figure 1. Theoretical Model of this Study

### 3. Research Design

#### (1) Research Samples and Data Collection

This study surveyed the knowledge employees of enterprises in 6 regions of Hebei, Shanxi, Beijing, Shanghai, Hubei, and Henan as the survey objects, and the questionnaires were distributed and returned by means of online research. A total of 360 questionnaires were distributed and 311 were recovered. After excluding invalid data, 301 valid questionnaires were finally obtained in this study, with an effective recovery rate of 83.61%. Among them, males account for 50.65%, and females account for 49.35%; The age distribution of the surveyed employees is mainly concentrated in 26-35 years old, accounting for 55.48%, followed by 36-45 years old employees, accounting for 31.94%; In terms of education, 70.32% of employees have a bachelor's degree, and 12.9 % have a master's degree or above; In terms of positions, 27.42% of ordinary employees, 45.81% of grass-roots management or junior technical personnel, middle-level management or intermediate technical personnel accounted for 23.87%, senior management or senior technical staff accounted for 2.9 %; In terms of working years, most of the employees have 3-5 years and 6-10 years of work experience, accounting for 33.87% and 33.23% respectively; State-owned enterprises accounted for 26.45% of employees, foreign-funded enterprises accounted for 18.71%, private enterprises accounted for 39.35%, public institutions accounted for 14.52%, and other types of enterprises accounted for a minority.

#### (2) Variable Measurement

To ensure the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, the variables of this study were made using scales published in international authoritative journals, and the English scales were translated into Chinese using standard back-translation procedures. The measurement questionnaires of the study were distributed and collected in an anonymous form. All scales were measured using the LIKERT 7-level scoring method, in which 1 represents complete dissatisfaction, 2 represents dissatisfaction, 3 represents relatively dissatisfaction, 4 represents average, and 5 represents relatively in line, 6 means in line with the situation, 7 represents in full agreement, respectively indicating the degree of agreement of the respondents with the described situation.

**Overqualification Scale.** This study uses the overqualification Scale developed by MAYNARD [53] and others in 2006 to measure employees' subjective perception of overqualification. The scale has been widely used in academia and has good reliability. At the same time, relevant research by domestic scholars has also verified the applicability of the scale to Chinese employees (Zhao Hui [55]; Chen Yingyuan [54]). In this study, the Cronbach's alpha of this scale was 0.879.

**Knowledge Commons Scale.** This research adopts the knowledge sharing self-efficacy scale of LU & KOCH [56] (2006), which consists of 8 items in total. This scale is widely used and empirical studied by domestic scholars, and has good applicability and validity (Lu Lin [32]). In this study, the Cronbach's alpha of this scale was 0.839.

**Employee Innovation Performance Scale.** This paper adopts the employee innovation performance scale of JANSSEN, which is widely used to measure innovation performance at the individual level. It divides employee innovation performance into three dimensions: innovation willingness, innovation action and innovation application effect, which has been widely used by scholars at home and abroad, with good reliability and applicability. JANSSEN [57] believes that personal innovation begins with generating novel and useful ideas in various fields, and the next stage of the task is to

promote one's own creative ideas to others in the organization, and to improve the ideas after receiving feedback and support from others, and finally through continuous Improve and successfully apply the idea. At the same time, its design thinking is in line with the overview of employee innovation performance in this paper. Therefore, employee innovation performance can be measured by a scale of 9 items in total from the above 3 dimensions. In this study, the Cronbach's alpha of this scale was 0.843.

**Humble Leadership Scale.** In 2012, OWENS and HEKMAN put forward the dimension division method and related scale design of humble leadership [58], which specifically divides humble leadership into being honest about their own shortcomings and mistakes, appreciating the strengths and contributions of others, and upholding learning and progress these three dimensions. The relevant assumptions about humble leadership in this paper also follow the dimension division of OWENS. At the same time, the development scale has also been widely used in the Chinese context and has shown good reliability and validity indicators (Tang Hanying [43]; Wang Rui [50]). Therefore, humble leadership in this study was measured by this scale. In this study, the Cronbach's alpha of this scale was 0.813.

## 4. Research Results

### (1) Common Method Bias

In order to test the problem of common method bias generated by the questionnaire data, this study used the "Harman single factor test" method of SPSS26.0 to conduct the homologous variance test. The variable items and basic information items involved in the questionnaire are collected together for factor analysis. If only one factor is extracted or the first factor can explain most of the variation, it means that there is a homologous variance problem, otherwise, there is no this question. According to the above method, the results of this research questionnaire show that the first principal component accounts for 29.265% without rotating the factor, which is significantly less than the critical standard of 40%, indicating that the homologous method has no serious deviation and is within the acceptable range.

### (2) Confirmatory Factor Analysis

In order to test the discriminant validity of the research variables, this study uses Mplus7.4 software to carry out confirmatory factor analysis on four variables of overqualification, knowledge sharing, employee innovation performance and humble leadership. The results show (see Table 1), four factors The model fits better than other models ( $\chi^2/df = 1.210$ , RMSEA=1.210, CFI=0.995, TLI=0.993, SRMR=0.033), indicating that these four measurement variables have good discriminant validity, belonging to the four different concept, which can allowing subsequent studies.

**Table 1.** Confirmatory Factor Analysis Comparison

Model	Included factors	$\chi^2/df$	RMSEA	CFI	TLI	SRMR
four-factor model	OQ; KS; EIP; HL	1.210	0.026	0.995	0.993	0.033
three-factor model	OQ+KS; EIP; HL	13.210	0.201	0.699	0.611	0.250
two-factor model	OQ+KS+EIP; HL	13.930	0.274	0.665	0.608	0.327
one-factor model	OQ+KS+EIP+HL	14.530	0.281	0.644	0.587	0.329

Note: OQ means sense of overqualification; KS means knowledge sharing; EIP means employee innovation performance; HL means humble leadership; + means two factors combined into one factor

### (3) Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis

This study uses SPSS26.0 to carry out descriptive statistics and correlation analysis on the sample, and finds that the mean values of overqualification, knowledge sharing, employee innovation performance and humble leadership are 4.42, 5.57, 5.33 and 2.68 respectively, and the standard deviations are 1.08, 0.84, 0.76 and 0.71. From the results of the variable correlation coefficients in the table, it can be seen that the sense of overqualification is positively correlated with knowledge sharing ( $r=0.162$ ,  $p<0.001$ ); knowledge sharing is positively correlated with employee innovation

performance ( $r=0.763$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Correlation analysis between variables provided some support for subsequent hypothesis testing.

**Table 2.** Means, Variance, and Correlations of the Variables

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Gender	1.49	0.501									
2. Age	2.34	0.676	-0.164**								
3. Education	1.96	0.537	-0.007	0.08							
4. Current position	2.01	0.787	-0.076	0.443**	0.285**						
5. Working years	2.67	0.987	-0.164**	0.685**	0.078	0.563**					
6. Unit type	2.23	1.031	0.104	0.038	0.033	0.152**	0.150**				
7. Overqualification	4.4207	1.08147	-0.019	-0.032	-0.009	0.171**	-0.131*	0.014			
8. Knowledge Sharing	5.2653	0.83719	-0.055	0.147*	0.145*	0.117*	0.128*	0.021	0.162**		
9. Humble Leadership	2.6813	0.71432	0.121*	0.181**	0.231**	-0.122*	-0.113	0.072	-0.07	0.720**	
10. Employee Innovation Performance	5.3254	0.76364	-0.101	0.199**	0.275**	0.140*	0.135*	0.041	0.11	0.763**	0.761**

#### (4) Hypothesis testing

1, The main effect test of the sense of overqualification on employee innovation performance. Hierarchical regression analysis was used to test the main effect of overqualification on employee innovation performance. Controlling demographic variables such as gender, age, education, current position, years of service and unit type. The regression analysis results of Model 6 in Table 3 show that the sense of overqualification has a significant positive impact on employee innovation performance ( $\beta = 0.121$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, it is assumed that H1 is supported.

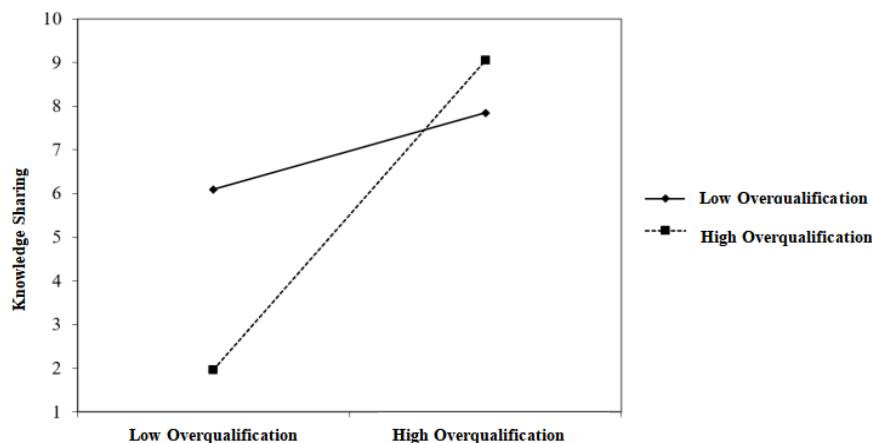
2, The mediation effect test of knowledge sharing. Firstly, hierarchical regression analysis is used to test the influence of overqualification on employee innovation performance. Model 6 has tested the positive impact of overqualification on employee innovation performance. Secondly, to examine the effect of overqualification on knowledge sharing, Model 2 in Table 3 shows that overqualification has a significant positive impact on knowledge sharing ( $\beta = 0.18$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Finally, to test the mediating effect of knowledge sharing on the sense of overqualification and employee innovation performance, Model 7 shows that knowledge sharing has a significant positive impact on employee innovation performance ( $\beta = 0.728$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ); after introducing the mediating variable of knowledge sharing, the positive effect of overqualification on employee innovation performance is no longer significant ( $\beta = -0.01$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ), while the positive effect of knowledge sharing on employee innovation performance is still significant ( $\beta = 0.73$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), it can be seen that, knowledge sharing plays a complete mediating role between the sense of overqualification and employee innovation performance, so H2 is initially supported. In addition, the results of Bootstrapping analysis using the Process plug-in show that the 95% confidence interval is [0.021, 0.167], the interval does not contain 0, means the indirect effect is significant, and the indirect effect value is 0.087, which further verifies H2.

3, The moderating effect test of humble leadership. Hierarchical regression was used to test the moderating effect. After controlling for demographic variables, the regression analysis results of Model 4 were obtained. The regression coefficient of the interaction term between overqualification and humble leadership was significant ( $\beta = 0.143$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that humble leadership positively moderated the relationship between the sense of overqualification and knowledge sharing, so H5 was supported. According to the regression results, draw a moderating effect diagram of the influence of humility leaders on the influence of overqualification on knowledge sharing, as shown in Figure 2. As can be seen from Figure 2, in the case of high humility leadership, the influence of employees with high sense of overqualification on knowledge sharing behavior is stronger than that of low humility leaders, and the slope of the straight line of high humility leaders is significantly greater than that of low humility leaders. The above slope situation further shows that humble

leadership positively moderates the effect of overqualification on employees' knowledge sharing behavior.

**Table 3.** Results of the Hierarchical Regression Analysis

Type of Variable	Knowledge Sharing				Employee Innovation Performance			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
Controlled variable								
Sex	-0.031	-0.024	0.037	0.044	-0.067	-0.062	-0.044	-0.045
Age	0.103	0.079	-0.033	-0.013	0.176*	0.161*	0.102*	0.103
Education	0.13*	0.123*	-0.034	-0.035	0.265*	0.26*	0.17*	0.17*
Current position	0.011	0.042	0.031	0.038	-0.008	0.013	-0.016	-0.018
Working years	0.035	0.06	0.069	0.057	-0.005	0.012	-0.031	-0.032
Unit type	0.009	-0.002	0.055	0.039	-0.047	-0.054	-0.054	-0.053
Independent variable								
Overqualification		0.18*	0.124*	0.186*		0.121*		-0.01
Mediating variable								
Knowledge sharing							0.728*	0.73*
Moderating variable								
Humble leadership			-0.722*	-0.714*				
Moderating effect								
Overqualification*Humble leadership				0.143*				
R <sup>2</sup>	0.022	0.05	0.529	0.544	0.097	0.108	0.613	0.612
F	2.128*	3.274*	43.159*	40.826*	6.351*	6.183*	68.927*	60.131*



**Figure 2.** the Moderating Effect of Humble Leadership on Employees' Sense of Overqualification and Knowledge Sharing

4, Moderated mediation test. In this study, We using Bootstrapping to sample the sample 10,000 times and build a first-stage moderated mediation model. When the mean value of the humble leadership level is higher than one standard deviation, the indirect effect of the sense of overqualification on its innovation performance through the knowledge sharing behavior of employees is significant (0.102, 95% confidence interval [0.035,0.223] , excluding 0) ; and when the mean value of humble leadership is lower than one standard deviation, the indirect effect of overqualification on its innovation performance through employee knowledge sharing behavior is not significant (0.012, 95% confidence interval is [-0.011,0.067] , including 0). In addition, the difference between high and low humility leadership levels is still significant (0.090, 95% confidence interval [0.034,0.189] , excluding 0) , indicating that humble leadership positively regulates the intermediary role of knowledge sharing in the relationship between employee overqualification and innovation performance. This shows that the higher the level of humble leadership, the stronger the mediating effect of knowledge sharing on the relationship between employees' sense of overqualification and their innovation performance; conversely, the lower the level of humble leadership, the weaker the intermediary role of knowledge sharing in the relationship between the sense of overqualification and their innovation performance. Hence, H6 is supported.

**Table 4.** the Results of the Analysis of the Mediating Effect of Humility Leadership in Moderating Knowledge Sharing

	influence level	effect	standard error	95 % confidence interval	
				lower limit	upper limit
humble leadership	high level	0.102	0.046	0.035	0.223
	low level	0.012	0.019	-0.011	0.067
	difference	0.090	0.037	0.034	0.189

## 5. Conclusions and Discussion

### (1) Research Conclusions

This paper analyzes the relationship between the sense of overqualification, knowledge sharing, employee innovation performance and humble leadership through the theoretical review of literature, and builds a relevant theoretical model. And through empirical data analysis to test the proposed research hypothesis, which has strong theoretical and practical significance. The following research conclusions were drawn:

First, A sense of overqualification has a positive impact on employee innovation performance. According to the theory of self-efficacy perception, employees with a sense of overqualification think that their knowledge and skills experience are higher than the job requirements of their positions, which will lead to the psychological gap between their efficiency perception and reality due to their ability to engage in more challenging work. On the one hand, in order to adjust this psychological imbalance, employees with overqualification will take the initiative to increase the difficulty of work, and explore innovative ways to complete work tasks more efficiently, so as to gain recognition from others to meet the needs of self-realization; on the other hand, The rich knowledge, experience and skills of overqualified employees, as well as the extra time and energy due to they can complete their work faster, also provide basic support for the improvement of their innovation performance.

Second, knowledge sharing has a complete mediating effect between perception of overqualification and employee innovation performance. Employees with a sense of overqualification often gain the appreciation and attention of leaders through proactive behaviors such as knowledge sharing, as well as meeting others' expectations of their own ability and behavior, and satisfying their affirmative emotions. Further, knowledge sharing among employees with overqualification will create an innovative atmosphere for the organization and bring closer colleagues relationships, so that the collision of knowledge and experience will spark innovation and improve employee innovation performance. This intermediary mechanism, which positively affects the innovation performance of employees through knowledge sharing behavior, is an important path to improve the innovation performance of employees with overqualification.

Third, humble leadership plays a positive moderating role between employees' sense of overqualification and knowledge sharing behavior. At the same time, the higher the level of humility leadership, the stronger the mediating effect of knowledge sharing on employees' sense of overqualification and their innovation performance. That is, working in an organization with high humility leaders, under the influence of respect, admiration, humility, and high tolerance for faults from high humility leaders, overqualified employees are more likely to improve their innovation performance through active knowledge sharing behaviors. Conversely, low-humility leaders tend to reduce knowledge-sharing behaviors among employees with a sense of overqualification, which in turn negatively affects their innovation performance.

### (2) Theoretical Contributions

This study has the following important theoretical contributions to the exploration of the impact mechanism of overqualification on employee innovation performance:

Firstly, this paper enriches the research on the positive impact mechanism of excess aptitude, focusing on the mediating role of knowledge sharing. In previous studies, there is no consistent conclusion about the impact of overqualification on employees in the organization, and most of them are based on the theory of person-job matching, focusing on the negative consequences of

overqualification [59ban], and its positive effects have not been adequately obtained theoretical discussion and empirical analysis. Considering the literature on the effect of overqualification on employees' innovation performance, the main focus is to explore the cognitive mechanism of employees, and less attention is paid to the mediating path of behavior. Based on the theory of self-efficacy perception, this study introduces the behavioral variable of knowledge sharing as a mediator, and empirically tests the mediating effect of knowledge sharing in the relationship between overqualification and employee innovation performance. To a certain extent, this paper makes a theoretical contribution to exploring the effectiveness of overqualification and the related research on it.

Secondly, this paper examines the moderating effect of humble leadership on the relationship between overqualification and knowledge sharing, enriching and expanding the boundary conditions of the mechanism of overqualification. In the existing literature, the boundary conditions for the sense of overqualification include psychological empowerment [12], individual status differences [13], individual personality characteristics [14] and other individual moderator variables, ignoring the dual interaction between employees and leaders in the workplace. By exploring the influence of humble leadership on employees in the organization, this study constructs a moderating mechanism between the sense of overqualification and knowledge sharing, and further verifies the role of humble leaders in regulating the intermediary effect of knowledge sharing between the sense of overqualification and employee innovation performance. The moderating effect of the mediating effect enriches the situational factors of the mechanism of overqualification, and deepens the analysis of the leadership style mechanism in the study of overqualification.

### (3) Practical Inspiration

First, managers should correctly view the phenomenon of overqualification of employees. Overqualification are regarded as one of the typical forms of mismatch between people and jobs, and their negative effects have been widely verified by scholars, which makes the field of management practice highly vigilant about overqualification. This phenomenon is reflected in the case of international students who had previously caused heated discussions on the Internet and were rejected by the company because of their high degree of education. However, with the development of the times, the competition for talents has become more and more fierce, and the phenomenon of overqualification has long existed in the work. What managers need to do is not to avoid blindly, but to change their attitudes towards overqualification and recognize its two-sidedness. And take certain measures to guide employees with overqualification to create greater value for the enterprise. For example, giving overqualified employees a certain amount of attention to increase their opportunities to participate in major decisions of the organization and to show themselves; take incentive measures for overqualified employees to encourage them to take the initiative to use their overqualification; let employees have a sense of work participation and improve their self-efficacy which will further promote the generation of its innovation performance and create value for the enterprise.

Second, in the daily operation of the enterprise, managers can improve the innovation performance of employees with overqualification by creating a suitable atmosphere for knowledge sharing. On the one hand, by enriching the internal activities of the enterprise, such as employee knowledge sharing reports etc to strengthen the communication and contact between members of the organization, to form a closer relationship of trust, while improving work efficiency, it will also be generated spark of innovation by the exchange of knowledge. On the other hand, a good knowledge sharing atmosphere can enhance the self-efficacy of overqualified employees, who think that they are useful to the organization, so as to take the initiative to carry out positive behaviors and improve their innovation performance.

Third, managers should pay attention to changes in leadership styles. As the new generation of employees gradually become the main force of the labor force, and the phenomenon of overqualification brought about by fierce competition increases, managers need to seek more suitable and effective leadership methods to exert the positive influence of employees with overqualification. Among them, it should pay more attention to understanding and practicing the humble leadership

style from the bottom up, and actively eliminate the barriers of hierarchy, so as to be able to recognize and appreciate employees, look at themselves objectively, and learn from employees humbly. Such a more equal leadership-membership relationship will have a certain impact on employees with overqualification, thereby stimulating employees' knowledge-sharing behavior, further promoting innovation performance, and allowing enterprises to maintain greater core advantages in competition.

#### (4) Limitations and Future Directions

Although this paper provides empirical support for the relevant research on the positive effect of overqualification, and has theoretical and practical contributions, the research still has some shortcomings:

First of all, there are subjective and objective distinctions between overqualification. The difference between the two lies in whether employees subjectively believe that they have overqualification, or whether their qualifications are actually higher than the job requirements. Although the current academic community mainly uses the subjective sense of overqualification as a measure, future research can consider adding the evaluation of others, that is, to use a combination of self-assessment and others' evaluation to explore whether the overqualification of subjective and objective will differ in the relationship between variables, and expand the research angle to improve the reliability of the conclusions.

Second, this paper uses cross-sectional data, which is difficult to reveal dynamic changes. In particular, innovation performance needs a certain period of time to achieve, and its lag and periodicity are not studied and controlled in this paper. Subsequent research can consider time-point measurement or longitudinal tracking to collect data, explore the changes and dynamic trends of innovation performance of individuals with overqualification, and improve relevant theories.

Finally, this paper only discusses the innovation performance of overqualified employees themselves, and does not study the cross-level impact of overqualified employees on others or team and organization. Whether overqualified employees have an impact on other employees in the organization, whether their positive impact can lead to higher team performance, and how team overqualification affects team performance, or how it affects team member performance across levels, these questions can be further discussed and explored through future empirical research.

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