

A Review of Research on the Influence of Organizational Culture on Employee Innovation Behavior

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Abstract. Organizational culture has always been a mainstream issue of research in the field of organizations, and its connotation has been gradually enriched, perfected and presented a trend of diversification. Innovation is perceived as a critical factor in helping enterprises to retain competitive advantages, while employee innovation behaviour is thought to be the basis for enterprises to innovate. Using the definitions proposed by Chinese and foreign scholars in the past decade for reference and from the perspective of social cognitive theory, this paper, in the form of an argumentative essay, mainly to elaborate the connotation of organizational culture as well as the concept of employee innovation behavior, and it studies on the impact mechanism of organizational culture on employees and defines the research concepts on the impact of employee innovation behavior. And therefore the paper introduces the state of related research in China and abroad by outlining and summarizing the existing research, and points out that an organization creating atmosphere of encouragement for innovation can stimulate the employee's sense of self-efficacy and further make the individuals sense of self-reliance, sense of efficacy, which in turn leads to a sense of innovation among individual employees. This paper theoretically shows that organizational culture plays a rather positive part in guiding individual employee to display innovative behaviors, and by summarizing and reviewing the existing studies, it points out the future development prospect of this field, which will provide reference and help for the subsequent researchers to carry out their studies.

1 Introduction

Organizational culture is usually compared as the soul supporting an enterprise and also the inexhaustible impetus promoting its development. In the 1980s, the concept of organizational culture was imported from the West into China. After entering the 21st century, the construction of enterprise culture has gradually become

the conscious behaviour of organizations to improve their management level and enhance their core competitiveness. Enterprises have their own particularity, which requires good organizational culture work. Behind a strong organizational culture is a complete set of management system. There are strict control processes for key links, which are controlled and approved by means of modern technology. In this new situation, organizational culture

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and employee innovation behaviour, especially in the Chinese academic community, are getting increasing attention year by year [1]. Related Chinese literature accounts for 83% of the total literature volume, and 85% of the contributions in both Chinese and English have been published in the past ten years. Therefore, organizational culture and employee innovation behavior have gradually become the important roles of Chinese enterprise management culture.

After the reform and opening up, more and more organizations and enterprises in China began to focus on strengthening the construction of organizational culture so as to improve their organizational management as well as to enhance their overall quality. This trend of developing their unique culture in organizations along with a deeper awareness of organizational culture's influence on employee innovative behavior is not accidental, but has an inherent inevitability in social and economic development. Just as the viewpoint put forward by scholar Yang Jingzhao, between organizational culture and employee innovation behavior exists a positive correlation, in which employee's self-efficacy of creativity takes effect as an intermediary [2]. As organizational culture itself has a good functions including guide and constraints, it is helpful to mobilize the enthusiasm of employees to implement management, enhance their awareness of innovation and create more economic benefits for the enterprises.

This paper focuses on how organizational culture affects personnel innovative behavior, which is its study object. It also combs and summarizes the literature in this field in five parts. The first part is the overview of the research: it explains the overall situation of the selected topic (including research quantity, research scale, research quality, research growth trend, whether there is an interdisciplinary vision, etc.); The second part studies organizational culture and its connotation: it lists the representative scholars and their definitions of the organizational culture connotation; The third part describes a credible influencing mechanism of organizational culture on staff: it enumerates most representative scholars and their related research (the specific process of influencing, the mediating elements, etc.); The fourth part is about the research of organizational culture's influence on employees: it

concludes representative scholars and their research on the results of organizational culture's influence on employees; The fifth part is the research review and prediction on future research progress. The research goal of this paper is to provide some reference for enterprise management and the theory of human resource management discipline as well as the practice of enterprise organizational culture development.

2 Literature overview

This study gets some inspirations from existing literature review. Schein believes that initially organizational culture was often studied within the field of organizational management and racial culture, and as study continues, organizational culture is classified as a separate research field which later formed a number of dynamic concepts and theories accordingly in the academic circles. In China, scholars such as Chen Chunhua and Zeng Wu started from exploring the source relationship between organizational culture and other related disciplines, and delineated a detailed and clear organizational lineage on the basis of literature research.

The Chinese sources of this paper are CNKI database and Duxiu Resource Library, and the English sources are Sciencedirect database and EBSCO full-text database. The literature search method of this paper is the subject retrieval method, and the number of mainstream Chinese literature retrieved is 155 while the number of mainstream English literature is 32. After calculation, 85% of the number of Chinese and English papers were published within the last 10 years (i.e., after 2012), and nearly 1/5 of them were published through core journals. This indicates that more and more scholars, both in China and in the West, have focused their research attention on analyzing the topic of organizational culture and employee innovative behaviors in the past decade, which has led to an overall upward trend in the number of researches and attention in this field.

3 Definitions of related concepts

3.1 Connotations of organizational culture

Domestic scholars believe that organizational culture constitutes a spiritual imputes, sustaining the development of enterprises and is one of the important means to

implement corporate strategy. Organizational culture can determine the development of enterprises to a large extent [3]. Chen Bingfu pointed out that organizational culture includes the basic values of an enterprise or organization, the views of internal and external environment and other contents. It is a philosophy, values and code of conduct that are followed by all members of the organization and can guide the work [4]. Foreign scholars define organizational culture as the basic beliefs and value standards that are spontaneously formed in the survival of an organization and followed by most of its members [5]. Schein, on the other hand, argues that organizational culture should be a widely recognized system of fundamental beliefs that teach organizational members how to manage the challenges from inside integration and outside adaptation. The successful resolution of these challenges is of great importance to the organization. Therefore, this culture will be passed to newly joined partners as a guide to properly perceive and consider relevant issues [6].

From the definition of organizational culture by Chinese and foreign scholars, organizational culture is strongly associated with enterprises' development. And the establishment of organizational culture helps employees to get familiar with the organization, regulate their behaviors in accordance with the organization's values, as well as timely response in line with the organization's orientation to ensure that the organization's efficiency is achieved [7].

3.2 Definition of "Employee Innovative Behavior"

Foreign scholars believe that innovative behavior is a kind of behavior that generates, promotes and applies innovative thought in an organization to achieve better individual and organizational performance, which enables the personnel to adjust to changes in client needs quickly and accurately with their innovative mindset [8]. Huang Zhikai and Lu Xiaojun et al. combine the actual situation and test the idea of Kleysen and Street that innovative behavior can be divided into five links covering seeking chances, forming proposals, field investigation, practical operation and concrete application. And they make a definition about the employee innovation behavior: the process where employees produce innovative proposals or methods to settle matters at work and their behavior to

make them come true [9]. In the organization, unique behaviors that have long or short term effects on the group can be considered to be the innovation of personnel. Namely, employee innovation indicates the generation of something that is new and have potential value, covering new management processes, manufacturing methods, products and services, , etc., whose presence contributes to the continuance, evolution and progress of an organization within a fiercely competitive environment [10]. Chinese scholars Yang Jingzhao et al. pointed out that the personnel's motive to innovate includes internal and external motives. Internal motives include employees' personal traits and their ability to participate in innovation, while external motives include an open team environment, leadership support and so on. Under the joint effect of internal and external motives, employees' willingness to innovate and creativity will be enhanced [11].

Scholars share the view that innovative behavior is more than just an innovative idea, but should also include its specific practice of innovative ideas. Therefore, this paper defines employee innovation behaviors to be a course where personnel generate novel thoughts during work, plan and implement efforts for realizing the ideas, and such behavior can bring certain influence to the organization.

4 Influence mechanism of organizational culture on employee innovation behavior

Organizations cultivate innovative employees by activating different levels of intrinsic motivation, prosocial motivation, and innovation self-efficacy in employees, as shown in figure 1 [12]. Intrinsic motivation works as an intermediary between organizational culture and employee innovation behavior. When organizational culture is more conducive to innovation, employees' intrinsic motivation will be enhanced, which in turn will inspire them to display more innovative behaviors. This is because the presence of organizational culture provides a supportive and motivating environment that stimulates employees' intrinsic curiosity, autonomy, and sense of achievement, which enhances their intrinsic motivation to innovate. Employees feel that the organization values and encourages innovation, as well as their own ability to contribute positively to innovation, which further

motivates them to participate in innovative activities and demonstrate innovative behaviors more actively. In addition, prosocial motivation also plays an intermediary role between organizational culture and employees' innovative behaviors. When organizational culture is more conducive to innovation, employees' prosocial motivation will be enhanced, which in turn will drive them to display more innovative behaviors. Prosocial motivation involves employees' motivation to care for, support, and cooperate with others, as well as their pursuit of good relationships with others. An innovative organizational climate whose presence is perceived by employees, usually tends to encourage teamwork, knowledge sharing, and innovative cooperation, which is closely related to prosocial motivation. In such a climate, employees will realize that through innovative behaviors, they can bring positive impacts to the team and the organization, and also promote good cooperative relationships with their colleagues. As a result, more innovative behaviors are shown by the employees. Regarding innovation self-efficacy, many scholars have found that organizational culture also influences employee innovation behaviors through the intermediation of innovation self-efficacy [13]. Foreign scholars also hold the same view about the function of innovation self-efficacy while organizational culture and employee innovative behaviors interact with each other. Organizational culture motivates employees to give full play to their strengths by creating a supportive, resource-rich, and information-sharing work environment and atmosphere, and thus positively affecting employees' creativity, self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation, and prompting them to show innovative behavior [14]. From the above points of view, it can be seen that organizations can create a cultural atmosphere that encourages innovation to trigger personnel's innovation self-efficacy, thus promoting the employees to show more innovative behaviors.



Figure 1. The mediating model of the impact of organizational culture on employee innovative behaviors

Organizational culture can also affect employee innovative behaviors by influencing employees' values. Employee thinking and behavior is an important factor affecting employee innovation behavior, and innovative values of collective culture can influence its daily innovation consciousness of the enterprise employees, thus affecting the innovation behavior of employees [15]. Scholars Li Hai, Zhang De also point out that through the influence of organizational members values, work attitudes, work atmosphere, organizational culture affect employees' work efforts and their way of improving work, and ultimately enhance the employees' efficiency and improve the overall performance of the organization [16]. In summary, organizational culture influences employees' innovative consciousness and behavior by shaping their values, thoughts and behaviors and in the end promotes employee innovation and improves organizational performance.

Different types of organizational culture also make a huge difference to employee innovative behavior. In the market-oriented culture, companies place more emphasis on customer orientation, and in order to maintain the corporate image, employees are expected to exhibit more organizational citizenship behaviors than innovation. Employees may inhibit their innovative behaviors for fear of failure. Mclean believes that in an organizational culture that produces an overly competitive internal environment, the cooperation will be reduced, and employees will be deterred from innovating for fear of failure, bringing a negative impact on group creative behaviors [17]. In organizational culture, high convergence culture influence employee innovation behavior by promoting internal integration and external adaptation. Organizational culture has great effect and value in shaping group integration and solidarity. These factors also become mediators in influencing employee innovation behavior [18]. In a high convergence culture that focus on internal integration and external adaptation, employees are more motivated to display innovative behaviors and have stronger confidence in their creativity. This is because this culture pattern stresses interpersonal harmony as well as stability and seeks to balance the interests of all parties. And this culture focuses internally on employee orientation, emphasizing employee dedication and encouraging democratic participation,

while externally it focuses on social responsibility and the courage to innovate. This type of culture provides support to employees and encourages them to be creative, thus enhancing employee innovation behavior. In conclusion, different organizational culture types have their unique and specific effects on employee innovation behavior.

5 Research of organizational culture's influence on employee innovation behavior

Organizational culture is not only the concentrated embodiment of the enterprise value system and value concepts, but also involves a series of behavioral norms, working methods and management system. Organizational culture runs through every aspect of the daily operation of the enterprise and affects the innovative behavior of employees greatly. Therefore, the study of the relationship between the two helps to better understand the operation of the organization and the characteristics of employee innovation behavior, thus helping enterprises to better achieve success.

Organizational culture cultivates and regulates employees to form innovative behaviors, and a free and innovative corporate culture has a positive influence on individual innovative behaviors. Scholars Yang Jingzhao, Yang Dongtao et al. have shown that various patterns of organizational culture work differently on employee innovation behaviors and creativity self-efficacy to a great extent [2]. They also indicate that employees' innovative behaviors and employees' creativity self-efficacy are the strongest in a high convergent culture that attaches importance to internal integration and external adaptation. By studying the staff of an American technology company, Scott et al. concluded that support for innovation of the group atmosphere affect employees' personal innovation behavior in a rather positive way [9]. Managers should create a positive and strong innovation atmosphere in the organization, encouraging or rewarding employees' innovative behaviors, providing them with a relaxing and enjoyable innovation work environment, and establishing a sound reward mechanism, so as to encourage employees to continue to innovate and love innovation. The organizational culture of an enterprise with a competitive atmosphere also has a great positive effect on stimulating employees' innovative thinking. It has been found that the

holistic creativity of staff in competitive environments is stronger than that of staff in less competitive environments [19]. Therefore, organizations should fully mobilize the competitive atmosphere within the company, and guide employees to spontaneously generate competition consciousness through the implementation of reward mechanisms, thus promoting employees' innovative behavior. Other scholars point out that the more a culture appreciates staff and their vocational prospective, the more innovative an organization will be, and the more it appreciates positive participation and transparency of making decisions, the more creative an organization will be [20]. An organizational culture that cares for and supports employees and respects their opinions can strengthen employees' sense of trust and belonging, thus enhancing the cohesion and innovation of corporate employees. And an organizational culture heartening staff to actively participate in the company's decision-making and innovation activities can improve the team spirit of the employees and bring new ideas and directions to the company, thus enhancing the vitality and creativity of the company. In one of his studies, Li Mingfei argues that the continuous optimization and innovation of corporate culture will bring the innovation of employees' beliefs and values, and this innovation of beliefs and values will continue to promote the corporate system revolution and corporate strategy innovation. And it will become the most important spiritual protection for the implementation of the corporate system and the corporate strategy, the fundamental theoretical basis of corporate innovation, and the source of the enterprise's vitality [21].

Organizational culture and employees' innovative behavior are deeply connected. Organizational culture defines the values and behavioral norms of the organization, which help employees better integrate into the organization, so that they can quickly start and complete their work tasks and improve the company's performance and efficiency. Secondly, the behavioral characteristics of employees can also be regulated and adjusted according to the operation of the organizational culture, contributing to their better integration into the company, and thus the common understanding and common development between enterprises and employees are promoted. Currently, scholars generally believe that

different types of organizational culture have different impacts on employees' creativity self-efficacy, and that a positive organizational culture is more likely to stimulate employees' innovative behaviors. Corporate support for employee innovation and a favorable competitive environment will contribute to enhance employee innovation behaviors. Moreover, the optimization and innovation of organizational culture are essential to promote the innovation of employees' values and the revolution of corporate strategy.

6 Conclusion

Based on academic cognition and social cognition, this paper summarizes and discusses the existing studies related to organizational culture as well as employee innovation behavior, after which constructs a theoretical correlation between optimization of organizational culture and employee innovation behavior. Organizational culture and employee innovative behavior are defined into separate concepts, and it is firstly found that the organizational culture is closely related to the development of the enterprise. Secondly, employee innovation behavior is defined as the innovative ideas generated by employees in the work environment and the behavior to put them into practice. Furthermore, by combining the two keywords into one and studying their mutual relationship, it is concluded that organizations can create an atmosphere that encourages innovation, thus stimulating employees' self-efficacy, which in turn leads to the creation of an innovative consciousness in individual employees. It is theoretically explained that there is an indispensable intermediary relationship between the two and that the organizational culture of free innovation can positively guide and support individual innovation behavior. It enriches and develops the aspects that directly combine organizational culture and employee innovation behavior to study the relationship between them.

The future research on the theory of this paper can be carried out from two aspects. On the one hand, researchers can focus on the influence of innovation incentive degree in the organizational culture on employee innovation effectiveness, by introducing data analysis, investigating the actual enterprise management cases and corporate financial reports and using empirical methods with data to

analyze and confirm the relationship between the organizational culture and the employee innovation behavior. On the other hand, researchers may also carry on more research about the impact of behavioral model dimensions in organizational culture on employee innovation behavior, in order to fully explore affecting elements, and further enrich the research on innovative behavior. These research methods can present a more intuitive interaction between dependent and independent variables through the expression of statistics and scales.

Authors Contribution

All the authors contributed equally and their names were listed in the following order. Minxin Luo is the first co-author, Yuhang Cai is the second co-author, and Mengge Zhang is the third co-author.

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