



Research on Authorized Leadership, Psychological Empowerment and Employee Innovation Performance

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Abstract

Innovation is an important means to improve productivity and technological progress and gain competitive advantage, and staff innovation is the main source of enterprise innovation. Based on the theory of intrinsic motivation, this paper tries to test the mediator role of psychological empowerment between authorized leadership and individual innovation in organizations. This article selects knowledge workers employees as the survey object and takes the knowledge workers employees in Chongqing as the main survey object. Through exploratory factor analysis, reliability analysis, descriptive analysis, correlation analysis, and regression analysis, 346 valid questionnaires were collected by literature review and questionnaire survey. It was concluded that both authorized leadership style and psychological empowerment significantly positively affect employee innovation performance, and authorized leadership style positively affects employee psychological empowerment. At the same time, psychological empowerment plays a mediator role between authorized leadership and innovation performance. Managers need to fully recognize the characteristics, needs, and values of knowledge workers, carry out authorized leadership according to their needs, truly stimulate the important role of psychological empowerment of knowledge workers in individual and organizational innovation of employees, and create a supportive atmosphere for their work and innovation activities.

Keywords: Authorized Leadership, Psychological Empowerment, Innovation Performance

1. Introduction

With the development of China's economy, the needs of the public and society have gradually improved, and the comprehensive requirements for the quality of products and services have been continuously improved. How to innovate the products and services of enterprises and meet the needs of the public and society has become more and more important. By continuous innovation, organizations can better provide services, improve public satisfaction, and win public welcome and recognition (Tang, Li, & Li, 2012). At the same time, more and more knowledge workers join different organizations and become the main participants in organizational innovation (Xu, Zhong, & Gao, 2016). These knowledge workers play a key role in organizational development, management improvement, and service innovation (Liao & Dong, 2015). New public administration changes from efficiency to service quality and customer satisfaction, from management evaluation to recognition of organizational mission and work. The government and public organizations should actively use internal management, find new management concepts and tools, and strengthen the management of government and organizations. Therefore, the new public administration theory pays more and more attention to the use of power to improve the innovative behavior of knowledge workers, while the new public administration practitioners pay more attention to how to give full play to the role of innovation. Organizations and the public sector also face competition in serving the public. The improvement and competition are the competition of innovative talents (Chen, 2017), especially to fully stimulate the innovation behavior of knowledge workers, and to improve the innovation performance has become an important subject of innovation and development in the organization and public sector.

Drucker (1999) thought that people with higher education have more professional knowledge, and such groups in the job are more concerned by business owners. Because of their higher education level, knowledge workers have a wider horizon, more knowledge, and more management methods to plan their lives and jobs. They are eager to use what they have learned. To improve their pursuit of quality of life (Ji & Zhu, 2012). Therefore, knowledge workers have great differences from non-knowledge workers in their views on work and things, and these differences have long since made great differences between the two



types of employees in their work and management methods. Therefore, strict management may kill and suppress the innovation performance of knowledge workers.

2. Literature review and hypothesis

From the four dimensions of authorized leadership (Emphasizing the importance of work, by promoting participation in decision-making, expressing high-performance trust, weakening bureaucratic constraints), each dimension will have a positive impact on promoting the innovation performance of knowledge workers. First of all, according to social cognitive theory, we have a full understanding of knowledge workers and their work content. By emphasizing the significance of knowledge workers to their work, they can help them better understand and identify with knowledge workers. In the economy and society, knowledge becomes the core factor of production in society, and the transfer, application, and innovation of knowledge become the motive source of productive forces. Innovation activities are not only for organizational development but also for social progress. Therefore, by emphasizing the significance of the work, empowering leaders can motivate knowledge workers to recognize their work in increasing organizational performance through knowledge transfer and innovation (Chen, 2013); Second, leaders give subordinates decision-making power, encouraging subordinates to participate in decision-making, can meet the needs of knowledge workers for respect and self-realization (Chen, Yang, & Li, 2017). They also feel that their opinions are respected and valued by their superiors. To enhance the sense of responsibility of knowledge workers; Again, leaders often express confidence in high performance to knowledge workers, This has the following effects: On the one hand, leaders lead by example, keep up the fighting spirit, can inspire knowledge, knowing staff morale, carry forward the organizational atmosphere of positive struggle (Wang & He, 2013); On the other hand, can remind knowledge workers to pay attention to their work goals, without deviating from current priorities, improve self-confidence in dealing with setbacks; Finally, leaders take the initiative to break the hierarchy, weakening bureaucratic constraints can bring more autonomy to subordinate work, giving subordinates more power and responsibility, creating a more flexible and open environment, giving knowledge workers time and space to think and explore and discover innovative issues, this helps stimulate innovation among knowledge workers (Muo, 2009). The results show that active participation in decision-making and perception of job autonomy can effectively enhance the innovation enthusiasm of knowledge workers (Sun & Lv, 2016). Based on the above discussion, authorized leaders can truly realize the significance and value of innovation by making knowledge workers realize their innovative knowledge stock and structure, and provide channels and authorizations for knowledge workers to participate in decision-making. Based on the confidence that continuous transmission of knowledge workers will produce high performance, authorized leadership style should stimulate knowledge workers' innovative performance. Therefore, the first assumption is as follows:

H1: Authorized leadership style positively affects the innovation performance of knowledge workers.

Authorized leadership is not to command or guide others through power or authority, but to develop the ability of subordinates to influence themselves through their behavior, so that subordinates have the ability of self-control, self-regulation, self-management, self-leadership.

Authorized leadership can affect the psychological empowerment of employees. It is mainly in the following four aspects: 1) Authorized leaders tend to express confidence in their subordinates' high innovation performance and competence, 2) Delegated leadership helps subordinates understand the effectiveness of their work across the organization to increase their "sense of work," 3) Delegated leadership lets subordinates decide how to work (Sims & Manz, 1996). Provide independent space for employees, and 4) Authorized leadership trains subordinates to participate in decision-making (Manz & Sims, 1987). Making subordinates feel that their behavior has an impact on their work thereby increases the subordinate's "sense of work's meaning." Studies have shown that Authorized leadership promotes psychological empowerment (Chen, Sharma, Edinger, Shapiro, & Farh, 2011). If Zhang, Kwan, Everett, and Jian (2012) research found, there is a positive correlation between authorized leadership and subordinate psychological empowerment; Zhang and Bartol (2010) empirical study of a Chinese IT company also shows that Authorized leadership has a



positive impact on the psychological empowerment of subordinates. Based on the above analysis, the following assumptions are proposed:

H2: Authorized leadership positively affects psychological empowerment.

Psychological empowerment has an important influence on the work attitude and behavior of individuals (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). Individuals with authorized experience will be more active at work. Sun, Zhang, Qi, and Chen (2012) found that there was a positive correlation between individual psychological empowerment and innovation behavior and organizational innovation performance. Based on the theory of intrinsic motivation, scholars have also suggested that Individual innovation performance is not only influenced by leadership style, organizational support. The impact of organizational environmental factors such as team networks is also influenced by individual internal motivation. Psychological empowerment is a positive motivation. The higher the individual's psychological empowerment, the more motivated they are, To promote a more active orientation in their work (Wei, Yuan, & Yang, 2009). It plays an important role in individual innovation. Compared with individuals with low psychological empowerment, individuals with high psychological empowerment experience are more aware of the importance of their work. Being more proactive at work, more confident in your ability to innovate, stronger understanding of resource use and organization. Thus, more effectively stimulate personal innovation. Besides, another dimension of psychological empowerment--autonomy can also stimulate individual creativity at work.

H3: Psychological empowerment positively affects employee innovation performance.

Through leadership to give employees more rights to work, through motivation and personalized care to improve their self-confidence and self-esteem, actively encourage subordinates to challenge the existing old thinking, give full play to imagination and creativity, give subordinates more work autonomy, so that they can have more autonomy, play a role and influence in the work, thereby enhancing the psychological empowerment of subordinates.

Scholars begin to pay attention to the mediator role of employee psychological empowerment between authorized leadership and leadership effectiveness but pay more attention to employee job satisfaction, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior. Well-being and other aspects (Li, Tian, & Shi, 2006), the research on subordinates' innovation performance are still lacking. Eisenbei and Boerner's (2013) research on employees found that innovation self-efficacy plays an important role in the relationship between transformational leadership and subordinates' innovative behavior. Liu and Zou (2013) directly verified the mediator role of psychological empowerment between transformational leadership and employee innovation behavior. Transformational leadership and authorized leadership belong to two different leadership styles. Based on this, there is no detailed literature to study whether psychological empowerment plays a mediator role between authorized leadership and innovation performance. On this basis, the hypothesis is proposed in this study.

H4: Psychological empowerment plays a mediator role between authorized leadership and employee innovation performance.

Based on intrinsic motivation theory, some studies suggest that authorized leadership can affect the intrinsic motivation of team members and thus their innovative behavior (Shin & Zhou, 2003). As the concrete manifestation of individual intrinsic motivation, psychological empowerment is an important mediator variable to reveal the mechanism of authorized leadership (Li et al., 2006). Therefore, this study attempts to examine the mediator role of psychological empowerment between authorized leadership and individual innovation in organizations. Accordingly, the following research framework is proposed as shown in Figure 1.

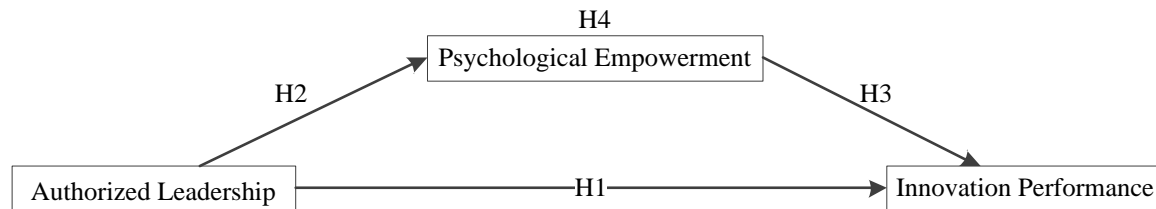


Figure 1 Research framework

3. Objectives

This article selects knowledge workers employees as the survey object and takes the knowledge workers employees in Chongqing as the main survey object. Through exploratory factor analysis, reliability analysis, descriptive analysis, correlation analysis, and regression analysis. This paper presents the following two research objectives:

- 1) The status of authorized leadership, psychological empowerment, and innovation performance in this survey.
- 2) The mediator role of psychological empowerment between authorized leadership and employee innovation performance.

4. Materials and methods

4.1 This study adopts the following two methods: 1) Literature research method: Literature research is an important method to use existing literature for in-depth research. It finally achieves the purpose of research through data collation, material synthesis, and content analysis. This paper takes knowledge workers as the research object. The main research content is the mechanism that authorized leaders influence the innovation performance of knowledge workers, including psychological empowerment mediators. Therefore, based on literature processing on the influencing factors of knowledge worker innovation performance, authorized leadership style, and its influence on knowledge worker innovation, this paper analyzes the existing research deficiencies, finds out the problems and research contents, and provides the research basis. 2) Questionnaire survey: According to the scheduled plan, directly investigate the respondents, around the topic through questionnaires and other forms of collection of relevant research materials. This study involves many different research variables, such as authorized leadership, psychological empowerment, employee innovation behavior, etc. The authoritative scale in authoritative journals is selected through literature research, and the questionnaire design is revised and improved to meet the requirements according to the actual situation of this study. After collecting the questionnaire, input the data and provide the data for the follow-up study.

4.2 Authorized leadership was measured using Ahearne, Mathieu, and Rapp (2005)'s developed scale. It includes four dimensions: Improving the meaning of work, increasing participation in decision-making, expressing self-confidence in high performance, and weakening the constraints of stratification, three questions per dimension, there are 12 questions. Evaluation using Likert 5 rating scale, KMO is 0.77, Cronbach's α is 0.81. A psychological empowerment scale using a Spreitzer (1995) scale, the scale consists of 9 items, it includes three dimensions: Work meaning, autonomy, and work influence. Evaluation using Likert 5 rating scale, KMO is 0.76, Cronbach's α is 0.79. Based on George and Zhou (2001) innovation performance scale, the original scale consists of 13 questions, to ensure the quality of the questionnaire, to avoid the bias caused by excessive questionnaires, compressed the questionnaire, delete topics of similar significance, final retention of 9 questions, evaluation using Likert 5 rating scale, KMO is 0.83. Cronbach's α is 0.85. So the scale used this time has reliability and validity.

4.3 For the samples recovered from this survey, in terms of gender, the gender ratio is small, in which 51.7% are women and 48.3% are men. In terms of marriage, 59.8% are unmarried whereas 40.2% are



married. Concerning Education, 50.0% are specialists, 32.4% of subjects in high school and below, and bachelor's degree and master's degree and above account for 16.2% and 1.4%, respectively. The number of years of employment is mainly 1-3 years and less than 1 year at 53.8% and 32.4%, respectively, while the lowest number is people working 4-5 years or 13.9% of the sample size. The demographic structure of the survey is in line with reality. The results of this survey are representative.

5. Results and discussion

In this paper, the Likert 5-point scale was used, in which the minimum value is 1, the maximum value is 5, and the intermediate value is 3. The average value of authorized leadership is 3.57, the average value of psychological empowerment is 3.53, and the average value of innovation performance is 3.53. The correlation analysis is shown in Table 1, and the correlation preliminarily verifies the hypothesis.

Table 1 Correlation analysis

	M	SD	1	2	3
1 Authorized Leadership	3.57	0.63	-		
2 Innovation Performance	3.53	0.90	.49**	-	
3 Psychological Empowerment	3.54	0.68	.63**	.46**	-

As shown in Table 2, in model 1, authorized leadership is an independent variable, Psychological empowerment is a dependent variable, and model 1 is statistically significant ($F = 108.93, p < .05$). Authorized leadership positively influences psychological empowerment ($\beta = .63, p < .05$), assuming that H2 is supported. In model 2, psychological empowerment is an independent variable, innovation performance is a dependent variable, and model 2 is statistically significant ($F = 92.06, p < .05$). Psychological empowerment positively affects innovation performance ($\beta = .459, p < .05$), assuming that H3 is supported. In model 3, authorized leadership is an independent variable, innovation performance is a dependent variable, and model 3 is statistically significant ($F = 88.93, p < .05$). Authorized leadership positively impacts innovation performance ($\text{Beta} = .49, p < .05$), assuming that H1 is supported. Model 4 adds psychological empowerment to model 3, and model 4 is statistically significant ($F = 65.85, p < .05$), by comparing the coefficient of innovation performance between model 3 and model 4. In model 4 of psychological empowerment of mediator variables, the coefficient of authority leadership to innovation performance was reduced from 0.49 to 0.33, which shows that psychological empowerment has a mediator effect between authorized leadership and innovation performance; both assume that H4 is supported.

Table 2 Multiple linear regression

	DV: Psychological Empowerment	DV: Innovation Performance		
	M1	M2	M3	M4
Authorized Leadership	.63***		.49***	.33***
Psychological Empowerment		.46***		.25***
F	180.93***	92.06***	88.93***	65.85***
R ²	.40	.21	.24	.28
Adj R ²	.40	.21	.24	.27

6. Conclusions

6.1 Conclusions

This paper verifies that the authorized leadership style positively affects the innovation performance of knowledge workers through regression analysis. In line with Cheng's (2013) conclusion that authorized leaders can inspire knowledge workers to highly recognize their work of increasing organizational performance through knowledge transfer and innovation. At the same time, it is also in line with Chen et al. (2017) that the decision-making power of rich subordinates can meet the needs of knowledge workers' respect



and self-realization, and employees feel that their opinions are respected and valued by their superiors. Thirdly, leaders often express confidence in high performance to knowledge workers.

This paper verifies the positive influence of authorized leadership style on psychological empowerment by regression analysis. As with Chen et al. (2011), Zhang et al. (2012), Zhang and Bartol (2010) findings, both empowered leaders have a positive impact on subordinates' psychological empowerment; Empowered leaders tend to express confidence in their subordinates' high innovation performance and competence. Authorized leaders then help subordinates understand the effectiveness of their work across the organization to increase their sense of work.

This paper verifies that psychological empowerment positively affects employee innovation performance through regression analysis. Similar to the research results of Thomas and Velthouse (1990), Sun et al. (2012), Wei et al. (2009), and other scholars, not only psychological empowerment has an important impact on individual work attitude and behavior, but also on individuals with authorized experience will be more active in their work; psychological empowerment is a positive motivation. The higher the individual's psychological empowerment experience, the more can stimulate their internal work motivation, promote their work more positive positioning, and play an important role in individual innovation. Compared with individuals with low psychological empowerment experience, individuals with high psychological empowerment experience are more able to realize the importance of their work, be more proactive in their work, and have more confidence in their innovative ability. A stronger understanding of resource use and organization, thus more effectively stimulating individual innovation. Another dimension of psychological empowerment — autonomy can also stimulate individual creativity at work.

Through regression analysis, this paper verifies that psychological empowerment plays a mediator role between authorized leadership and employee innovation performance. Through authorized leadership to give employees more rights to work, through motivation and personalized care to improve their self-confidence and self-esteem, actively encourage subordinates to challenge the existing old thinking, give full play to imagination and creativity, give subordinates more work autonomy, so that they can have more autonomy, play a role and influence in the work, thereby enhancing the psychological empowerment of subordinates.

6.2 Recommendations for future research

Given the defects and shortcomings of this study, this paper puts forward the corresponding research prospects for future research to further enrich and enrich the research on authorized leadership, psychological empowerment, and employee innovation performance:

1) This paper does not define a specific enterprise, and the innovation performance of different occupations and different levels of employees may also be different. Subsequent follow-up research can put this topic in a specific enterprise environment or limit a specific group to study and discuss, to get more targeted suggestions.

2) In this study, the authorized leadership is not considered to be divided into dimensions. To study the impact of various aspects of authorized leadership on the innovation performance of employees in more detail, Subsequent empirical studies can analyze the role of authorized leadership in each dimension.

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