

Impact of Inclusive Leadership on Employees' Adaptive Performance

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Abstract: In the actual work environment, employee's performance behaviors are affected by various factors, and adaptive performance as a team member's performance on adaptability is getting more and more attention from enterprises. Inclusive leadership, as a type of leadership that can embrace different cultural values, is having a good promotion effect on the adaptive performance of employees. It is believed that inclusive leadership yields good adaptive behaviors from employees through the role of learning orientation, and thus greatly improves the operational efficiency and performance of enterprises. This study proposes the discussion of two variables: inclusive leadership and employee's adaptive performance.

In this study, questionnaire surveys were conducted among supervisors and employees, and data were aggregated and analyzed by the software SPSS to make descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis. The results show that inclusive leadership has a positive effect on the improvement of employee's adaptive performance. With these results, some useful suggestions are put forward in order to improve the management level of enterprises.

1. Introduction

The continuous deepening and adjustment of social structure has made the organizational environment of enterprises increasingly complicated. It can be said that the primary characteristics of modern organizations have shown diversity and dynamics. In order to actively respond to organizational changes in the new environment, the concept and connotation of adaptive performance have emerged. Studies found that adaptive performance has added the requirement of adaptability to task performance and related performance, and besides these two dimensions, has included new structural contents from various aspects, such as innovation, social relations, convergence of ideas, differentiation, environmental responses, work stress, learning atmosphere, and so on.

The diversity of employees in enterprises is becoming increasingly apparent. Superficial characteristics in the past such as ethnicity, gender, age, and place of origin are no longer sufficient to comprehensively or systematically display the diversity characteristics. On this premise, inclusive leadership, as one of the new leadership styles in such a diverse environment, is increasingly getting attention from various industries. Inclusive leadership meets the requirements of a new leadership style for employees in this specific era, and can better integrate people and affairs into leadership style, so it can also play a new role in the current management context.

This article intends to explore the impact of inclusive leadership on employee's adaptive performance within the aforementioned context.

2. Literature Review

According to the existing literature research, the current research on "inclusive leadership" is still in its early stages. Nembhard and Edmondson (2006) first put forward the concept of "leader inclusiveness". Hantula (2012) proposed that the "inclusive leadership" relationship emphasizes that leaders and employees work together to achieve benefit sharing and win-win results, and its essence is the process of leaders and employees' working together. Based on the above factors, this study

defines inclusive leadership as a leadership model with the humanistic cares that value the individual differences of employees, carefully consider employee's views, recognize employee's contributions, create an atmosphere with equal opportunities, fair participation, and reasonable sharing, with the aim to achieve organizational goals.

Many scholars have put forward different perspectives on the types and influencing factors of adaptive performance. Allworth and Hesketh (1999) considered it as "Capacity to Cope with Change", and later extended it to the behaviors related with the ability to learn new knowledge, the confidence in completing new tasks, and the flexibility to respond to changes. London and Mone (1999) defined it as the employee's behavior of anticipating changes in job requirements, and learning relevant knowledge in advance in order to respond flexibly, and therefore consciously maintaining the habit of Continuous Learning for better job performance. This article combines personal and team perspectives to re-understand the adaptive performance of employees. It is considered that employee's adaptive performance refers to the behavior of quickly responding to unexpected situations and effectively responding to unexpected job changes by learning new knowledge and mastering new skills.

We can see that the improvement of employee's self-efficacy will undoubtedly be affected by the subtle influence of leadership behaviors, and adopting an inclusive leadership model will help improve performance. When an employee's degree of recognition of leadership performance behaviors is high, it will help develop adaptive performance, and thereby enhance the competitiveness of the enterprises and the creativity of its employees. From this, we can figure out a close relationship between inclusive leadership and adaptive performance, and put forward the hypothesis: inclusive leadership has a positive impact on adaptive performance.

3. Research Process

The areas covered by the distributed questionnaires in this study are relatively extensive, including Northeast China, North China, East China, South China and other regions. Each group of questionnaires uses a pairing of leaders and employees, with a vast majority of four employees corresponding to one leader. In order to minimize the homologous deviation of the questionnaire data, the content of the questionnaire was explained before the survey was conducted. A total of 195 groups of questionnaire and surveys were distributed. Finally, 171 groups of valid questionnaires were obtained, and the effective sample recollection rate was 87.69%.

3.1 Measurement

All the survey items carried out in this paper adopt the maturity scale of published literature at home and abroad, and certain modifications are made based on the actual situation, and data are finally collected and processed.

3.1.1 Adaptive performance

The source of the adaptive performance scale is from Han & Williams (2008 GOM), which has 14 items. We adopt Likert's five-point evaluation criteria, and set 5 division scales from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The supervisor fills in the questionnaire to evaluate the entire team's performance in terms of adaptability. The content is described as "Finding the central role of problem and its critical path of solving when dealing with emergencies", "Quickly finding the right person to deal with the matter when a non-daily event occurs", "When the team's solution to a problem is not suitable, keep communicating with each other and report the error to the team leader or key person", "When a limited number of members need to take over the overflowed workload, quickly adjust its work role system to solve this problem", "Explore and test the fitness of different work rhythms and coordinated sequences" and so on. The reliability value of Cronbach's alpha in this study is 0.877, and it is greater than 0.7, which shows that this scale has relatively high reliability.

3.1.2 Inclusive Leadership

The inclusive leadership adopts a scale developed by Carmeli, Reiter-Palmon & Ziv (2010). This study uses five division scales from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree". There are 9 items on

the scale, which are filled out by 4 employees, according to their recognition degree of the content of supervisor's leadership style and leadership performance behavior. The survey questions are set as follows: "My supervisor is willing to listen to other people's new views", "My supervisor is happy to discuss with us the goals at work and new ways to achieve them", "Always get help and guidance at work from my supervisor", "We can always discuss with our supervisor on emerging issues" and so on. The reliability value of Cronbach's alpha in this study is 0.880, and it is greater than 0.7, which shows that this scale has relatively high reliability.

3.1.3 Personal Information

Personal information includes the age, gender, education level, job attributes, years of service, years of working with the team, years of working with the team leader, years of working with the team you lead, and the number of team members, etc. Among them, there are 8 items for the personal attribute data of either the employee or the supervisor.

4. Research Results

4.1 Descriptive Statistical Analysis

A. Attribute of Age. The majority of employees and supervisors' ages is between 25-44 years old, among which 60.49% of employees are between 25-34 years old, indicating the prime of their career. 41.34% and 40.58% of the supervisors are between 25-34 years old and 35-44 years old, taking up the majority of these samples. This attribute of age suitably conforms to normal distribution.

B. Attribute of Gender. Among the respondents, distributions of gender in employees and supervisors are basically the same, with male employees at 52.13% and female employees at 47.87%, while male supervisors take up 64.74% and female supervisors at 35.26%. This shows that males still have an advantage in leadership positions.

C. Education level. As samples selected are mainly distributed in Pearl River Delta of Guangdong Province and Macao Special Administrative Region, which are relatively developed areas, personnel quality is relatively high. Education level of over half of the employees and supervisors reaches college or above, while supervisors' education level is slightly higher than employees'.

D. Attribute of Job. We classify job attributes into full time and part time. And seen from the sample statistics, a vast majority of samples are full-time, reaching over 90%.

E. Years of Service. In the sample statistics, the percentage of respondents' serving for between 3-10 years is the highest, with the employees' at 46.05% and the supervisors' at 49.54%; Employees with over 10 years of service take up 9.57%, while that of supervisors reaches 30.7%, indicating the advantage supervisors have in years of service.

F. Years of working with the team, with the team leader, with the team you lead. In these three statistical variables, the percentages of employees and supervisors both reach their greatest within the range of 3-10 years, at between 41.95%-68.84%.

G. Number of Team Members. According to the statistics, for either employees or supervisors, teams with 5-10 members make up the largest proportion at about 50%; Teams with less than 5 or more than 15 members are minorities.

4.2 Correlation Analysis

This study aims to explore the impact of inclusive leadership on employee's adaptive performance. Prior to this, we first determine whether there is a correlation between the variables. Here, we test the correlation between the variables by using Pearson's performance correlation analysis to test whether the correlation coefficient between the variables is significant. After research, the correlation coefficient between inclusive leadership and employee's adaptive performance is 0.19**, indicating that there is a significant positive correlation between inclusive leadership and employee's adaptive performance.

4.3 Regression Analysis

From the analysis results, we can see that the standardized regression coefficient of inclusive leadership on employee's adaptive performance is: $\beta = .17$ ($p < .01$), and the R^2 change is 0.04. It can be seen that there is a positive linear relationship between inclusive leadership and employee's adaptive performance. Inclusive leadership has a 17% explanatory power in predicting employee's adaptive performance, and it also has statistical significance. Therefore, the regression analysis results of the samples support the hypothesis of this study: inclusive leadership is positively correlated with adaptive performance.

5. Conclusions

As seen from the sample analysis results, inclusive leadership and employee adaptive performance show a positive correlation. From the explanations of many scholars at home and abroad on relevant theories of these two subjects, we can get theoretical support in related aspects. Adopting an inclusive leadership model helps improve performance. When an employee's degree of recognition of leadership performance is high, it helps to improve the adaptive performance, thereby promoting enterprises' competitiveness and enhancing employees' creativity. This study believes that enterprises should promote a good inclusive leadership model in order to maximize the effectiveness of adaptive performance.

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