The impact of empowering leader behavior on employees’ voice behavior: the role of person–environment fit and the golden mean

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Abstract

Purpose - The purpose of this research is to explore the internal mechanism of leadership empowerment behavior on employees’ suggestive behavior.

Design/methodology/approach - Based on the perspective of person–environment fit, taking the fit of employees to work, team and organization as the intermediary variable, and employees’ golden mean level as the moderating variable, the article establishes a theoretical model. And based on the 243 valid data obtained from the questionnaire survey, the model was empirically tested by using SPSS® and AMOS®.

Findings - The analysis shows that the person–environment fit dimensions play an intermediary role in the empowering leader behavior and the employee’s voice behavior, which means that the empowering leader behavior changes the employee’s voice behavior by changing the employee’s person–environment fit perception of the work environment.

Research limitations/implications - This research introduces a new perspective—personal–environment fit, and explains the mechanism of empowering leader behavior on employees’ voice behavior through it. It also uses the golden mean as a moderating variable and attaches importance to contextualized research in China, and provide new ideas for the management and practice of enterprises.

Originality/value - In theory, the person–environment fit perspective provides managers with new theoretical ideas on how to motivate employees. In practice, this research also inspires managers to attach importance to the fit between employees and the environment, rather than just focus on the needs of employees themselves.

Keywords | Empowering leader behavior; Employees’ voice behavior; Person–environment fit; The golden mean

Paper type | Research paper

1. Introduction

Employees’ voice behavior has a positive effect on the survival and development of enterprises and employees themselves. On the one hand, under the new era, companies must have a high degree of flexibility, adaptability and innovation, it is an important choice to encourage employees to make positive suggestions and give full play to their subjective initiative (Zhou and Sheng, 2019); On the other hand, employees’ positive opinions and behaviors can effectively improve their organizational identity and sense of participation, and stimulate their internal motivation (Ng and Feldman, 2012).

However, the Chinese workplace is under the background of high power distance and the golden mean culture, and the suggesting is often regarded as challenging the authority of the manager and destroying the harmony of the team, and most employees believe that this behavior will not only not be taken seriously by the manager, but will even be punished and affect their career development badly. Even if there are some good countermeasures and suggestions, most employees will still choose to give up their suggestions, which often makes the manager become “the last one to know the bad news”. In fact, companies and managers are aware of the importance of employees’ voice behavior, and they are trying to encourage and actively guide employees’ voice behavior in terms of system development and optimization of organizational structure, but the effect is not obvious. Therefore, it is important to study how to promote employees’ voice behavior.

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② SPSS is an abbreviation of Statistical Product and Service Splolutions;

③ AMOS is an abbreviation of Analysis of Moment Structures.
The manager plays a key role in many factors that affect employees’ behavior and attitude. In an organization, the manager is the core of the team, holds important resources, and has a direct relationship with the employees. As the direct target of suggestions, the manager’s behavior and leadership style have a significant impact on the employees’ suggestions (Detert and Burris, 2007). Among the many leadership behaviors, the empowering behavior has a special contemporary significance and rich connotation. First of all, the traditional dominant leadership has no longer adapted to the new environment of organizational management, and the employees’ acceptance of this leadership style is decreasing. On the contrary, the employees show a more positive attitude towards participating in management and are more pursuing the realization of their own value (Wang et al., 2019).

Secondly, with the tremendous changes in the internal and external environment of the enterprise, faced with the ever-expanding scope of work and increased work content, constrained by limited ability and energy, it is increasingly difficult for managers to deal with all the problems they face. “Leveraging force” and “grouping for action” have become the new view of management, and empowerment has become the new idea of managers. By empowering employees, giving them enough support and guidance, promoting their participation in decision-making, and empowering them (Arnold et al., 2000), the company can make full use of their talents, give full play to their initiative, make up for the lack of awareness of managers, and improve the accuracy of their decisions (Liang, 2014).

The managers’ empowering leader behavior undoubtedly has an important impact on the employee’s voice behavior (Song and Liu, 2014), but the relevant research is not abundant (Deng et al., 2018), and its specific impact mechanism still needs further exploration. Previous studies by scholars are mostly based on the perspective of employee perception, while the person-environment fit theory based on the interactive perspective believes that the behavior of an individual is not only determined by the individual or the environment, but also the result of the interaction between the individual and the environment. The higher the degree of fit between individual characteristics and the environment, the more they can show the desired behavioral results of the organization, and the more opportunities there is to obtain resources to meet the needs of the environment (Arthur et al., 2006). This theory provides a novel perspective for exploring the internal mechanism between the empowering leader behavior and the employees’ voice behavior. Related research also proves that the person-environment fit can predict individual behavior well. Therefore, the article intends to select person-environment fit as the intermediary variable of the influence of empowering leader behavior on employees’ voice behavior.

In addition, the personality traits of employees also have a greater impact on their voice behavior (Duan and Zhang, 2012). Employees with different traits will respond differently to the same external stimuli. Under the influence of Chinese culture, the behaviors and standards of employees are deeply influenced by the culture of the golden mean. The golden mean, as a way of thinking with Chinese characteristics, can well explain the differentiated behaviors of Chinese employees in the same environment (Qin and Liu, 2014). Therefore, under the unique Chinese cultural background, it is of certain significance to study whether the doctrine of the golden mean will affect the relationship between empowering leader behavior and employees’ voice. Based on the above analysis, the article uses personal-environment fit as an intermediary variable, and the golden mean as a moderating variable for empowering leader behavior and personal-environment fit, explores the influence of empowering leader behavior on employees’ voice behavior, and expands relevant research in the Chinese context.

2. Literature review and hypotheses

2.1 Empowering leader behavior and employees’ voice behavior

Employees’ voice behavior refers to the employees’ spontaneous and proactive expression of work-related views and suggestions from the perspective of wishing the organization to be good. It is an employees’ active out-of-role behavior that is not controlled by the formal organization. A large number of studies have confirmed that the leadership style and behaviors of the manager have a greater impact on the employees’ voice behavior (Xiong et al., 2017; Deng et al., 2018; Qi et al., 2019). Management behavior and leadership style that are authoritative, disciplined, and obedience will reduce employees’
voice behavior, while inclusive and open management behavior and leadership style will promote employees’ voice behavior (Wang, 2018). Empowering leader behavior refers to the process by which managers improve employees’ sense of self-efficacy and stimulate their work enthusiasm and autonomy through various behaviors, such as power appointment, work guidance, and sharing of information. As a management behavior that is in line with the times and the organizational environment, some studies have demonstrated the positive relationship between its contribution to employees’ voice behavior (Detert and Burris, 2007; Tian, 2014). The mechanism of its influence on employees’ voice behavior is as follows:

On the one hand, the behavior of managers can directly influence the behavior of employees (Deng et al., 2018). As individuals in an organization, employees’ behavior is influenced by the organizational environment. Managers’ attitudes and behaviors, as important influences on the organizational environment, also have an impact on employees’ voice behaviors. As the main controller and dominator of resources in the organization, the manager can determine the development and retention of employees in the organization. Therefore, managers’ behaviors and attitudes are of greater concern to employees and determine their behaviors and attitudes. When managers create an open and inclusive organizational environment for employees through empowering behaviors, empower employees with sufficient energy, resource, and eliminate obstacles and concerns that employees may encounter in order to encourage employees to speak up, employees, as individuals in the environment, will actively adjust their own behaviors and engage in positive voice acts when they find that managers show the need to speak up.

On the other hand, according to social exchange theory, the interactive behavior between organization and employee is a reciprocal resource exchange process. The organizations need the contribution of employees to survive and develop, therefore, the organization will give employees appropriate stimulation and rewards based on their own needs to motivate them to work actively and create value for it. And in order to meet their own needs, employees will actively contribute their own strength, so as to obtain sufficient resources from the organization. When employees believe that their own behavior is favored by the organization and they can get more benefits from the organization, they will show positive voice behavior. Therefore, the article makes the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1. Empowering leader behavior have a positive effect on employees’ voice behavior.

2.2 The intermediary role of person-environment fit

According to the person-environment fit theory, in organizations, employees’ behavior is the result of the joint action of individual and organizational environment, i.e., $B = F (P-E)$. Therefore, in the organization, it is possible to influence employees’ voice behaviors by changing the organizational environment. The manager is the most important influencing factor in the organizational environment. Specifically, the manager, as the direct target of the suggestion, is the closest to the employees in terms of working distance and interpersonal relationship, and the organizational environment perceived by the employees is greatly influenced by the manager’s words and actions. Therefore, the article argues that the external environmental variable of empowering behavior of managers and individual employees form a positive interaction that leads to a good perception of personal-environmental fit and thus influences employees’ voice behavior. In this paper, the person-environment fit is further divided into person-organization fit, person-team fit and person-job fit, and the research will further derive as follows.

2.2.1 The intermediary role of person-organization fit (P-O fit)

Empowering leader behavior has a facilitating effect on person-organization fit. Person-organization fit refers to the interaction and fit of employees’ values and organization values, according to the attractive-selection-attrition (ASA) model, individuals and organizations are attracted to each other for traits such as values, select each other in the socialization process, and finally the organization leaves behind individuals with similar values and pursuits (Schneider, 1987). And in this process, the manager’s behavior can play a positive role in facilitating the process. The values of the organization can be accurately and quickly transmitted to the employees through the manager’s behavior. As the main manager of the organization, the manager’s words and actions are more visible to the employees, and with the more work communication and closer interpersonal distance between them, it is also easier for
the manager to transmit the organizational values to the employees. The manager can help the employees to better understand the organizational values and integrate into the organization by sharing information, explaining company decisions, and how to integrate into the company, etc.

Person-organization fit also has a positive effect on employee voice. The core meaning of person-organization fit is the similarity between employee values and organizational values, it’s the degree of fit between individuals and organizations. The higher the fit degree, the more employees will have a sense of identity. Good person-organization fit can effectively improve employees’ organizational commitment (Li and Tu, 2012), thereby improving employees’ organizational citizenship behavior, and also improving employees’ sense of organizational support and psychological security, so as to effectively improving employees’ voice behavior (Zhan et al., 2017).

In summary, empowering leader behavior can effectively improve employees’ perception and adaptation to organizational values, which leads to good perception of personal-organizational fit, and effectively improves employees’ work motivation such as identity and self-efficacy, thus increasing employees’ voice behaviors. Therefore, the article makes the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2a. Personal-organizational fit plays a intermediary role in empowering leader behavior and employees’ voice behavior.

2.2.2 The intermediary role of person-team fit (P-T fit)
Empowering leader behavior has a facilitating effect on person-team fit. Person-team fit is essentially the degree of fit between people in a team. Empowering leader behavior can effectively regulate employees’ perceptions of fit with others in the team. First, managers can promote team interaction through positive guidance and communication, form a good team atmosphere and facilitating positive communication among team members, and it is conducive for team members to understand each other and work collaboratively for common team goals. Furthermore, the understanding support and equal treatment shown by the manager will create a stronger sense of teamwork among employees, thus enabling a good perception of person-team fit. Finally, An excellent team needs employees with different unique skills and personality traits to form complementary advantages, make common progress and better complete the tasks of the organization. High-quality leader-employee exchange relationships also promote employees’ recognition of their own attributes. Thus, empowering leader behavior can effectively promote employee personal-team fit.

Person-team fit also has a facilitating effect on employees’ voice behavior. On the one hand, based on self-validation theory, in order to gain a sense of control and prediction of the outside world, individuals will constantly seek or trigger feedback consistent with their self-concept (Gu, 2004). So if the team members share similar values and pursuits, members will communicate more easily with each other and therefore will show a more positive willingness to engage in positive behaviors such as suggesting ideas. On the other hand, the complementarity among team members can enable employees to play their unique value and provide a new perspective and ability for the organization. The identification and trust among colleagues can also meet the social needs and respect needs of employees, it also means that employees can perform better in specific tasks, which will also effectively improve employees’ self-efficacy (Shang and Gan, 2009) and be more willing to contribute to the team, thus showing more positive voice behavior.

In summary, empowering leader behavior can effectively improve consistency fit and complementary fit among team members, and improve the rapport among members in the team, which leads to employees’ perception of good person-team fit. Therefore, the article makes the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2b. Person-team fit plays a intermediary role in empowering leader behavior and employees’ voice behavior.

2.2.3 The intermediary role of person-job fit (P-J fit)
Empowering leader behavior has a facilitating effect on person-job fit. The essence of person-job fit is the degree of fit between employees and their jobs, specifically including demand-ability fit (D-A fit) and need-supply fit (N-S fit), empowering leader behavior can effectively improve the fit of these two aspects in employees’ work. On the one hand, by paying attention to the career development of employees,
providing them with opportunities for exercise and training, and actively guiding and managing them in the workplace, managers can effectively improve the quality of employees’ abilities and make them better fit with job requirements. On the other hand, manager can make employees participate in decision-making and provide support and resources for employees’ work by empowering, which can effectively meet the work needs of employees, give full play to their work autonomy and improve their work control. Thus empowering leader behavior can effectively improve employees’ perception of personal-job fit.

The person-job fit also has a facilitating effect on the voice behavior. On the one hand, a high degree person-job fit means that employees have skilled job skills, enough resource and information to complete their tasks (Lu et al., 2014), and the sense of accomplishment of completing job tasks can effectively improve employees’ self-efficacy and perception of job meaning (Tims et al., 2016), which leads to a high motivation and increases extra-role behavior of employees. On the other hand, in order to continue mastering the skills and resources they possess and satisfy the need for the realization of their values, employees will show higher levels of job engagement and job recognition, and also show higher extra-role behaviors. Thus, person-job fit can effectively increase employees’ voice behaviors.

In summary, empowering leader behavior can effectively improve person-job fit and increase the person-job fit in an organization, thus affecting employee output. Therefore, the article makes the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2c. Person-job fit plays a intermediary role in empowering leader behavior and employees’ voice behavior.

2.3 The moderating effect of the golden mean

As a traditional Chinese way of thinking, the golden mean emphasizes thinking from multiple angles to achieve a state of moderate and positive coordination, that is, to find the most appropriate “middle” position between various extremes, so as to achieve the best position under the contingency environment. This thinking paradigm is deeply embedded in the Chinese way of thinking and has an important influence on Chinese people’s cognition and actions. The golden mean of employees also has an important influence on the empowering behavior of managers on the voice behavior of employees.

Research proves that the golden mean can well explain the different behaviors of employees in the same situation (He, 2009). Employees’ behaviors will be influenced by the interaction of organizational environment and employees’ own traits. Employees with different values and ways of thinking have inconsistent understanding and perceptions of the external world, and therefore their behaviors will be different. So, employees’ personal way of thinking—the golden mean—has a significant effect on the mechanism of action of empowering leader behavior on employees’ personal-environmental fit, employees with different levels of the golden mean process the manager’s empowering behavior with different information editing, and therefore will understand and perceive the manager’s behavior differently, which affects the employee’s perception of personal-environmental fit and further affects the employee’s voice behavior.

Therefore, the article makes the following hypotheses.

Hypothesis 3a. The golden mean moderates the relationship between empowering leader behavior and personal-organizational fit.

Hypothesis 3b. The golden mean the relationship between empowering leader behavior and personal-team fit.

Hypothesis 3c. The golden mean moderates the relationship between empowering leader behavior and personal-job fit.

3. Methods

3.1 Measures

This study uses the scale developed by Wang, Hui et al. (2008) to measure empowering leader behavior, the scale has 24 items in 6 dimensions.
The measurement part of the congruence (values) fit dimension of the scale developed by Cable and Dene (2002) is used for the measurement of the personal-organizational fit, with a total of three items. The scale developed by Kristof Brown et al (2014) is used to measure personal-team fit, with 6 items in 2 dimensions. The measurement scale for person-job fit adopts the scale designed by Saks, Ashforth’s (1997), with a total of 4 items. The 2-dimension scale developed by Liang et al (2012) is used to measure employee voice behavior, with a total of 10 items. The scale developed by Wu and Lin (2005) is used to measure the golden mean, with 13 items in 3 dimensions. All these scales are either developed according to our country’s situation or have been verified by Chinese scholars, so they have good applicability.

3.2 Questionnaire distribution and the analysis of reliability and validity

Before the formal distribution of the questionnaire, the research conducted a pre-survey in advance, and the results showed that the questionnaire has good reliability and validity. Formal questionnaires were handed out one-to-one. The respondents were on-the-job employees with working experience. A total of 301 questionnaires were collected and 243 valid questionnaires were obtained after eliminating invalid ones, with an effective rate of 80.7%. The questionnaire survey covers a wide range, and employees work in many places across the country.

In terms of gender, males account for 45.3% and females account for 54.7%. In terms of age, the majority of employees are 30 years old or younger, accounting for 81.5%, while only 18.5% are over 30 years old. In terms of educational background, the majority of employees have bachelor’s degree, accounting for 54.7%, followed by those with bachelor’s degree or below, accounting for 30.5%, and those with master’s degree or above account for 14.8%. In terms of enterprise nature, private enterprises account for the majority (51.9%), followed by government agencies/public institutions (17.3%), the third largest is state-owned enterprises or central enterprises, accounting for 14.8%, and the foreign/joint ventures and enterprises of other nature account for 7.4% and 8.6% of the sample respectively. Through the above analysis, it can be seen that the sample has a wide range of distribution, and the sample distribution, such as enterprise nature and educational background, is in line with the current market situation and is representative to a certain extent. That article research mainly uses descriptive statistical analysis, reliability and validity test and confirmatory factor analysis to test the data before analysis. The results show that the data basically conforms to the normal distribution, and the Cronbach’s Alpha > 0.7, KMO > 0.6(p < 0.05) of all variables. According to confirmatory factor analysis, the overall fit of the six-factor model is good. The test results indicate that the data can be further analyzed.

4. Correlation Analysis

We use SPSS to correlation analysis in this research and the results are shown in Table 1 below. The data show that empowering leader behavior, personal-organizational fit, personal-team fit, personal-job fit, the golden mean and employees’ voice behavior are significantly and positively correlated (β > 0 and p > 0.01), and the relationships between the variables are strong, and all the assumptions are preliminarily true.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Empowering leader behavior</th>
<th>P-O fit</th>
<th>P-T fit</th>
<th>P-J fit</th>
<th>The golden mean</th>
<th>Voice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Empowering leader behavior</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.594**</td>
<td>.602**</td>
<td>.405**</td>
<td>.370**</td>
<td>.586**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P-O fit</td>
<td>.594**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.616**</td>
<td>.565**</td>
<td>.247**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P-T fit</td>
<td>.602**</td>
<td>.616**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P-J fit</td>
<td>.405**</td>
<td>.627**</td>
<td>.565**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The golden mean</td>
<td>.370**</td>
<td>.374**</td>
<td>.379**</td>
<td>.247**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice</td>
<td>.586**</td>
<td>.630**</td>
<td>.481**</td>
<td>.567**</td>
<td>.398**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<0.05, **p<0.01
5. Main analysis

5.1 Analysis of the main effect of Empowering leader behavior

The research use SPSS to conduct regression analysis on the dimensions of empowering leader behavior with personal-environmental fit and employees’ voice behavior, and the results of the analysis are shown in Table 2 below. The model M1 ~ M4 take leadership empowerment behavior as independent variable, employee voice behavior, individual organization fit, individual team fit and individual work fit as dependent variables. According to the test results of model M1, the demographic variables are not significant in the model, indicating that the demographic variables are not statistically significant. Further, the adjusted R² = 0.341, indicating that the model can explain the variance of dependent variables well D-W value=1.868, indicating that the model has no autocorrelation phenomenon, and the F value of p<0.01, indicating that the test meets the Inspection standard, and the model has a good goodness of fit. The independent variable β = 0.692 (p<0.01), indicating that the empowering leader behavior can well explain the employees’ voice behavior, hypothesis 1 holds. The same reasoning model M2 to M4 shows that empowering leader behavior also explains the dimensions of personal-environmental fit well. Notably, gender plays an important role in model M3 with β=0.303 (p <0.01), and similarly, the firm nature also performs better in M2 and M4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables Model</th>
<th>Control variable</th>
<th>Independent variable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voice M1</td>
<td>Gender 0.116</td>
<td>0.175*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Age 0.112</td>
<td>0.058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Education 0.196</td>
<td>0.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The nature of enterprises 0.902**</td>
<td>0.902**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Empowering leader behavior</td>
<td>0.341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P-O fit M2</td>
<td>-0.156</td>
<td>0.444**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.144</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The nature of enterprises 0.902**</td>
<td>0.902**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Empowering leader behavior</td>
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<tr>
<td>P-T fit M3</td>
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<td>0.17</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-0.018</td>
<td>0.045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The nature of enterprises 0.902**</td>
<td>0.902**</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Empowering leader behavior</td>
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<tr>
<td>P-J fit M4</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.127</td>
<td>0.152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The nature of enterprises 0.902**</td>
<td>0.902**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Empowering leader behavior</td>
<td>0.351</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**p<0.05, **p<0.01

5.2 The Analysis of intermediary role of person-environment fit

Hierarchical regression analysis is used to test the intermediary role of person-environment fit between the empowering leader behavior and employees’ voice behavior, and the results are shown in the table 3 below. Models M5 to M7 represent the results after adding person-organization fit, person-team fit, and person-job fit to model M1. From the analysis results, we can know that the β value all decrease and p<0.01 after adding the intermediary variables to model M1, indicating that person-organization fit plays a partially intermediary role in the relationship between empowering leader behavior and employees’ voice behavior, and hypotheses 2a, 2b and 2c are all true. It is worth mentioning that although control variables show significance in a few dimensions, they do not show significance in these dimensions in the regression analysis. Therefore, it can be concluded that demographic variables do not play a significant role in all models.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Dependent variable: employees’ voice behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control variable</td>
<td>M1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>0.116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-0.196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The nature of enterprises</td>
<td>0.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent variable</td>
<td>Empowering leader behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediary variable</td>
<td>P-O fit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. The main effect analysis of the empowering leader behavior and employees’ voice behavior

Table 3. The intermediary role of person-environment fit’s dimensions
5.3 The Analysis of moderating role of the golden mean

The research uses SPSS to analyze the mean thinking, and the analysis results are shown in Table 4 below. It can be seen from Table 4 that the fitness of each model has passed the test and the effect is good. The interaction term of empowering leader behavior and the golden mean has a significant positive effect on person-environment fit ($\beta = .0524, p<.01$), indicating that the golden mean can significantly moderate the relationship between empowering leader behavior and person-environment fit, and hypothesis 3a holds. Similarly, hypotheses 3b and 3c both hold.

6. Discussion and conclusion

This research mainly discusses “the function mechanism of empowering leader behavior on employees’ voice behavior”. Employees’ voice behavior is a positive employees’ spontaneous behavior, and its mechanism is different from the formal job responsibilities, and the traditional dominant-command management approach is not very effective on it. From the perspective of the interaction between employees and the environment, the research believes that when the empowering leader behavior acts on employees, it does not change the employees themselves to produce spontaneous and positive voice behavior, but changes the fit degree of employees to themselves and the environment, so as to stimulate their subjective initiative and make them produce positive voice behavior. According to the research results, the article mainly draws the following conclusions:

First, hypothesis 1 is established, indicating that the empowering leader behavior can significantly and positively predict the employees’ voice behavior. In this article, the empowering leader behavior has six dimensions, namely personal development support, participation in decision-making, power appointment, result goal control, process control, and work guidance. These dimensions can well promote employees’ voice behavior. Managers provide guidance, encouragement, resources and
information to their subordinates, pay attention to the development of employees in the organization, and create opportunities for them to make progress, which can give employees a sense of identity and belonging, relieve their work pressure, stimulate employees’ work enthusiasm, make employees more willing to contribute to the organization and promote their positive suggestions. Empowering leader behavior can also bring out the strengths of employees working independently and their intelligence by empowering them to participate in organizational decision-making and other behaviors through the empowerment of resources and power. In addition, it can also enhance employees’ work autonomy and sense of control, improve their self-efficacy, and stimulate positive extra-role behaviors. Finally, proper process and results management can in turn provide positive, correct and timely guidance to employees so that they and their behavior are better aligned with the requirements of the environment, thus also producing positive results.

Second, hypotheses 2a, 2b, and 2c hold. The article divides the person-environment fit into three dimensions: person-organization fit, person-team fit and person-job fit, which represent employees’ fit between themselves and organizational values, team members, and jobs. The research shows that all three dimensions play a intermediary role in the relationship between empowering leader behavior and employees’ voice behavior, indicating that empowering leader behavior can change employees’ voice behavior by influencing their fit degree with the organizational environment, and the model and viewpoints of this article are validated.

Third, hypotheses 3a, 3b, and H3c are valid, indicating that the golden mean plays a significant positive moderating role in all dimensions of empowering leader behavior and person-environment fit. The golden mean advocates a harmonious, moderate, and coordinated view and handling of problems, as a positive attitude, employees with a high level of the golden mean are obviously better at getting along in harmony with the environment, just as the old saying goes, “A gentleman is like water, which takes the shape of the container into which it flows. He is comfortable in any situation”.

7. Enlightenment and Deficiency

7.1 The enlightenment

7.1.1 Improve leadership skills in empowering behaviors

Theoretical research and practice have proved that the empowerment behaviors of superior supervisors have a significant role in promoting employees’ work enthusiasm and self-efficacy, which can effectively improve employees’ sense of organizational values, enhance the similarity and complementarity of values and work skills between employees and others, promote the harmony of team atmosphere, and improve the fit degree between employees and work. The perspective of fit also provides managers with new ideas, that is, pay attention to the fit perception of employees and organizational environment, and analyze problems from the perspective of interaction between employees and environment, so as to accurately find the management methods suitable for employees, and achieve twice the result with half the effort.

7.1.2 Considering the fit degree between employees’ personal characteristics and enterprise characteristics in the recruitment process

It is found that the unique personality of employees has a significant impact on the fit degree between employees and organizations. The uniqueness of employees is the special attribute of employees, which is difficult to be changed by the organizational environment, therefore, before recruitment, enterprises should be clear about their own needs, fully understand the job requirements and organizational characteristics, and then find new employees whose personality characteristics meet the needs of the organization, speed up the socialization process of new employees, reduce unnecessary friction and recruitment costs. For example, enterprises in the rising period should recruit new employees with enterprising spirit, while in mature enterprises, the company pays more attention to the overall harmony and stability of the organization, so it should recruit employees with higher level of the golden mean.
7.1.3 Making full use of employees’ intelligence, not just their job skills

Employees’ voice play an important role in the survival and development of today’s organizations. Encouraging employees to participate in management, giving full play to their initiative, and motivating them to take the initiative to make suggestions for the organization can effectively make up for the limitations of managers’ own energy and improve the sensitivity of the company to the market. The behaviors such as active suggestions also have a positive effect on employees, which can effectively meet the needs of employees to achieve their self-worth, improve their sense of work control and organizational identity, promote employees’ follow-up voice, and form a virtuous circle. Therefore, the organization should actively guide employees to make positive suggestions in the aspects of system and management, pay attention to the value of employees, give full play to the unique advantages of employees to improve the voice behavior of employees, and let them make contributions to the organization.

7.2 The deficiency

Limited by data and other reasons, this paper has the following research deficiencies:

The first is there is no further discussion on the types of empowering leader behavior and employees’ voice behavior. Due to the lack of research conditions, the dimensions of the each concept are complex, therefore, although the mature scale is used to measure them, due to the length of the research and the complexity of the model, there is no further dimension discussion and detailed analysis in this paper, the follow-up research should be further discussed.

The second is the analysis of demographic variables is not detailed enough. Although the article has carried out hierarchical regression analysis on demographic variables, due to the lack of samples it is only significant in a few dimensions. Therefore, the research does not conduct in-depth analysis and Research on demographic variables.

Combined with the shortcomings of existing research and this research, we think that the following aspects should be paid attention to in the follow-up research:

The first is to enrich the division of person-environment fit in research. This paper takes person-environment fit as the intermediary to explore the mechanism of empowering leader behavior on employees’ voice behavior, but there are still limitations in the division method and understanding of person-environment fit. Person-environment fit is a complex and rich concept with rich dimensions, it is not enough to divide only three dimensions, and it may also lead to the imperfect conclusion of the article. The follow-up research can pay more attention to the dimension division of person-environment fit.

The second is to consider cross level research. The understanding and measurement of each variable are analyzed only from the perspective of individuals, but only from the perspective of individual to understand empowering leader behavior and person-environment fit has certain limitations, therefore, the influence of cross level on variables should be considered in the follow-up study.

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