

The Impact of Human Capital of Village Cadres on Work Performance: Taking Renju Town as an Example

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ABSTRACT

Renju Town, in Pingyuan County of Guangdong Province, was used as an example in this paper to illustrate relations between human capital, which were owned by village cadres, and their work performance, given the circumstances of new rural construction by using ordinary least squares for regression analysis. Thereafter, obtained results have shown that the knowledge level of village cadres was in strong positive correlation with economic development of the village, the ability and attitude of work with the honesty and purity of village people, knowledge level and ability of work with beauty of the village, as well as the knowledge level, ability and attitude of work with the standardized management of the village.

KEYWORDS

Village cadre; Human capital; Work performance

1 Introduction

The 2022 Central Government No. 1 Document declared by the State Department of Chinese Central Government clearly states, "Promote the coordinated development of urban and rural areas and improve the level of new rural construction." Village cadres in China's hundreds of thousands of administrative villages have become the direct bearers, organisers and leaders of this strategic task. Therefore, the quality, ability and performance of village cadres directly reflect the concrete results of the new rural construction. In practice, however, the low personal quality and competence of village cadres, their low motivation to work, their lack of awareness of service and their irregular behaviour are more prominent problems, which directly restrict the progress and quality of the central government's construction of the new socialist countryside. It can be seen that the human capital of village cadres is a key and significant factor affecting the effectiveness of their work. In this paper, a number of village cadres and villagers from 15 administrative villages in Renju Town, Pingyuan County, Meizhou, Guangdong Province were randomly selected for interviews and questionnaires to study the impact of village cadres' human capital on their work performance. Through the study, the negative human capital elements affecting the performance of village cadres are adjusted and improved in time, so as to improve the accumulation of human capital of village cadres, regulate the management of the village cadre team and enhance the effectiveness of the construction of the new socialist countryside.

2 Definition of the concept and study of the relevant literature

2.1 The meaning of human capital

Schulz put forward the theory of human capital systematically for the first time, emphasising that human capital is the most important of all resources, a long-term investment or capital that is the product of investment, a productive capacity that brings economic income, embodied in the individual or group of workers, the sum of intelligence, knowledge, skills and health conditions expressed by the labour process, which is value-added, long-term investment, It is value-added, long-term investment, changeable and motivating. In summary, this paper defines human capital of village cadres as the sum of intelligence, knowledge, abilities, attitudes and skills of village cadres, which are formed through acquired investment in education or work practice, and it is a kind of productive capacity that can bring economic benefits to village cadres.

2.2 Human capital and performance

Regarding the impact of human capital on performance, Ke Jianglin et al found through empirical research that human capital has a significant impact on task performance and peripheral performance, but the influence of human capital is weaker than that of psychological capital and social capital. Tian Xizhou et al found that employees' human capital, social capital and psychological capital were all positively related to employees' performance. In a study specifically examining the impact of human capital of village cadres on work performance, Gao Mengtao et al used micro panel data from China to analyse the impact of intellectualisation and rejuvenation of village cadres on farm household income and poverty incidence, and found that intellectualisation of village cadres had a significant contribution to average farm household income growth and rejuvenation had a significant effect on reducing poverty rates. Wang Xuanyu et al found through an empirical study that both the work ability and work attitude of village cadres had significant effects on positive work behaviour, concluding that the human capital accumulation status of village cadres in a general sense could play an important role in the effectiveness of the construction of a new socialist countryside. Yang Wei et al conducted an in-depth study on the relationship between human capital and work performance of village cadres, selecting the five dimensions of production development, wealthy living, civilized countryside, village cleanliness and democratic management as work performance variables, and selecting knowledge, ability, work attitude and value orientation as human capital elements of village cadres. They found that the human capital of village cadres was positively correlated with affluence, civilized countryside, village cleanliness and democratic management, and that the level of human capital of village cadres had a significant impact on their work performance, while their research also pointed out that the work performance of village cadres was also influenced by the factors of superiors and villagers. In addition to this, some scholars have also demonstrated through empirical studies that the behaviour or quality of village cadres has a significant positive impact on access to social services, improving rural cadre relations, strengthening grassroots democracy, increasing farmers' income and developing the rural economy. All of the above scholars have found through their research that the human capital of village cadres has a certain correlation with work performance, but the exact extent to which these human capital elements affect their work performance has so far been little discussed, and this paper attempts to supplement and improve this piece of research.

3 Variable selection and model construction

3.1 Selection of human capital variables

Human capital is the capital formed by the expenditure people spend on human health care, education and training. Through the above literature, scholars have found that the human capital of village cadres mainly contains two aspects, one is formed innately, such as gender, age, physical condition of the body, etc., and the other is acquired, including the knowledge, skills, experience, etc., acquired by individuals from the learning and working process, and also includes their own way of thinking and values, etc. As each individual has different life experiences, this also leads to differences in the human capital status of each individual, so that in the workplace, different individuals have different work performance. Therefore, in this paper, the knowledge, ability, attitude and skills of village cadres are selected as human capital elements to study the influence of these factors on their work performance.

3.2 Selection of performance variables

Performance is the achievement of an individual in terms of quantity, quality and efficiency. In the context of rural revitalization, the performance of village cadres can be assessed subjectively in terms of economic development, simple countryside, beautiful villages and standardized management by referring to the twenty-word policy of rural revitalization strategy: "prosperous industry, ecological livability, civilized countryside, effective governance and prosperous living", and its relationship model is shown in Fig.1.

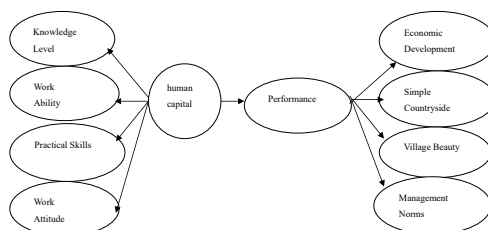


Fig.1 Model of relationship between village cadres' human capital and work performance

4 Statistical analysis of data

4.1 Sample source and descriptive statistical analysis

The sample data for this survey was obtained from interviews and research conducted in 15 administrative villages in Renju Township, Pingyuan County, Meizhou, Guangdong Province, between September 2021 and February 2022. Shexi Village, Muxi Village and Liuji Village were selected as representatives of the relatively economically backward ones. Village cadres were surveyed mainly by members of the leadership team of the village committee, while villagers were randomly selected to represent all age groups as survey respondents. During the survey, a total of 300 questionnaires were distributed and 285 were returned, with a recovery rate of 95%, of which 270 were valid, with an efficiency rate of 90%.

The questionnaires for village cadres and villagers were set up in a 1:2 ratio for matching. The questionnaire completed by the village cadres mainly investigated their human capital status, firstly to obtain specific information on the age, gender, education and position of the village cadres, and then to investigate the human capital status of the village cadres in terms of their knowledge level,

work ability, practical skills and work attitude. The villagers' part of the questionnaire is to investigate the performance of the village cadres, allowing them to evaluate the work of the village cadres, mainly in terms of the economic development of the village, the simplicity of the countryside, the beauty of the village and the standard of management. The questionnaire was based on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly oppose" to "strongly agree", with a score of "1" to "5 ". A total of 90 valid questionnaires were collected from village officials, and the characteristics of the respondents are shown in Table 1.

Tab.1 Interviewed village cadres descriptive statistics of personal information

Personal characteristics variables		Number of people(persons)	Percentage/%
Gender	Male	60	0.67
	Female	30	0.33
Age	31-40	20	0.22
	41-50	57	0.63
	51-60	13	0.15
Political affiliation	Party members	84	0.93
	Non-Party member	6	0.04
	Village clerk	30	0.33
	Village Chief	17	0.19
Position	Village committee members	14	0.15
	Women chiefs	29	0.33
	Primary	4	0.04
	Lower secondary	10	0.11
Education	High school	23	0.26
	Secondary and tertiary	47	0.52
	Bachelor's degree and above	10	0.07

A statistical analysis of the personal characteristics of the respondents revealed that most of the village cadres in this survey sample were over 40 years old, accounting for 78% of the total sample, and none of the village cadres were under 30 years old. In terms of education level, only two village cadres had a bachelor's degree or above, while the others had college degrees or below. This reflects to a certain extent that the current village cadres in Renju Township may generally have the problems of prominent ageing and low levels of knowledge and education.

Secondly, the human capital status of village cadres, mainly collecting information on the knowledge level, working ability, working attitude and practical skills of village cadres, as shown in Table 2. Statistics reveal that in terms of knowledge level, most respondents have studied agriculture-related knowledge and usually pay attention to news developments. It is worth noting that half of the village cadres interviewed said that they had attended continuing education training after being elected as village cadres. This shows that village cadres, in addition to doing their daily work, also pay close attention to improving their human capital by going to the local radio and television university to receive higher level education and training. In terms of working ability, this includes service ability, organisational ability and sociability. From the statistical results, we can see that the village cadres interviewed still rate their work ability relatively high. In terms of serving the public, communicating with them and uniting with their leadership colleagues, village cadres are able to co-ordinate well with all parties. In terms of practical skills, nearly half of the village cadres have mastered agricultural production techniques, and they belong to the category of village cadres who work and farm at the same time, and are farmers themselves, participating in agricultural production activities together with villagers. In terms of computer use, nearly half of the village cadres interviewed said that they were not skilled in using computers, and that they still carried out all their work mainly by handwriting. In terms of work attitude, most of the village cadres have a

good attitude towards their work, are patient in providing services to the public, and are also pragmatic in their work.

Tab.2 Descriptive statistics of human capital status of interviewed village cadres

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Item	Does not match at all	Somewhat does not match	Unable to determine	Basically matches	Completely matches
I know about agriculture knowledge	0	22.22	44.44	25.9	7.4
I always watch the news and care about current affairs	0	14.8	48.1	29.6	57.4
I have attended continuing education training since becoming a village cadres	11.1	25.9	11.1	40.7	11.1
My heart is for the people and I put them first	0	7.4	51.9	25.9	14.8
I can be an exemplary leader in the village	0	18.5	48.1	29.6	3.7
I am good at leading villagers to develop their production	0	22.22	51.9	22.22	3.7
I am good at dealing with conflicts between neighbours	0	22.22	48.1	22.22	7.4
I can reach out to the people and communicate with them	0	11.1	40.7	37	11.1
I have acquired some agricultural production techniques	0	29.6	33.3	25.9	11.1
I am good at managing village affairs	0	14.81	55.6	22.2	7.4
I am proficient in the use of a computer	7.4	29.4	33.3	25.9	3.7
I can work patiently	0	18.5	44.4	25.9	11.1
I work for results	0	7.4	55.6	25.9	11.1

The questionnaire completed by the villagers evaluated the performance of the village cadres, including various aspects such as economic development, simplicity of the countryside, beauty of the village and standard management, as shown in Table 3.

Tab.3 Descriptive Statistics of Villagers 'Performance Evaluation of Village Cadres' Work Performance

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Performance of the current village cadres	Strongly oppose	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Making the village economy grow quickly	1.9	35.2	48.1	14.8	0
Diversify the village's economy	0	29.6	61.1	7.4	1.9
Increased the collective income of the village	0	20.4	57.4	22.2	0
Improved the standard of living of villagers	0	20.4	51.9	25.9	1.9
Helped villagers improve their housing conditions	0	27.8	51.9	20.4	0
Helped villagers reduce their burden of living	0	14.8	64.8	20.4	0
Improved villagers' ability to increase production and income	0	22.2	46.3	33.96	0
The villagers have a good relationship with each other	0	20.4	44.4	31.5	3.7
Making villagers more united	0	9.3	53.7	33.3	3.7
Making more villagers enthusiastic about charity	0	11.1	48.1	35.2	5.6
Improving access to the village	0	13.0	51.9	27.8	7.4
Making the village look much better	0	29.6	42.6	25.9	1.9
Improving access to medical care for villagers	5.6	24.1	51.9	16.7	1.9
Increasing villagers' motivation to participate in politics	0	14.8	63.0	18.5	3.7
Making public village affairs in time to accept supervision	0	14.8	44.4	35.2	5.6
Villagers are able to give their opinions on the work of village officials	0	11.1	50.0	35.2	3.7

In terms of economic development, villagers generally did not rate the work of village cadres highly, and one-fifth of them were against the economic work of village cadres, reflecting that the current rural economy lacks vitality and there is still a long way to go in terms of poverty alleviation. In terms of the simplicity of the countryside, more than half of the villagers were positive about the work of village cadres. This has a lot to do with the fact that village cadres often reach out to the

people, communicate with them and actively resolve conflicts in the neighbourhood. In terms of the beauty of the village, this is a tangible work achievement that the public can see. Everyone agrees that the village cadres have improved the traffic conditions in the village and the village looks much better than before. In terms of management norms, villagers are not very motivated to participate in village management and supervision of village affairs still relies mainly on a small group of villagers who are concerned about village affairs. Therefore, the village cadres need to make more efforts to improve the democratic aspects of management.

4.2 Analysis of the correlation between human capital and work performance of village cadres

The sample data were statistically processed using SPSS 22.0 with a test level of 0.05. Pearson correlation analysis was used to test the degree of association between the dimensions of human capital and work performance. Before conducting the analysis, the values of the variables were calculated using a weighted average, and the mean, standard deviation and correlation coefficient were calculated as shown in Table 4.

Tab.4 Average, standard deviation and correlation coefficient of human capital and work performance

Project	Knowl- edge level	Work Ability	Practi- cal Skills	Work Attitude	Economic Develop- ment	Simple Country- side	Vil- lage Beaut y	Manage- ment Norms	Aver- age	SD
Knowledge level	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3.210	0.593
Work Ability	0.272	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	3.274	0.377
Practical Skills	0.390*	0.271	1	—	—	—	—	—	3.099	0.553
Work Attitude	0.599**	0.322	0.300	1	—	—	—	—	3.352	0.633
Economic Development	0.578**	0.478*	0.325	0.509**	1	—	—	—	2.971	0.302
Simple Countryside	0.268	0.442*	0.196	0.622**	0.651**	1	—	—	3.284	0.323
Village Beauty	0.512**	0.591**	0.315	0.250	0.549**	0.201	1	—	3.049	0.351
Management Norms	0.495**	0.505**	0.215	0.290	0.587**	0.298	0.382*	1	3.247	0.398

**P<0.01, *P<0.05

Statistics found that among the human capital dimensions, the highest mean value was work attitude and the lowest was practical skills, which indicated that village cadres were more satisfied with work attitude but practical skills needed to be improved. Among the dimensions of work performance, the highest mean value is simple country style and the lowest is economic development, which indicates that villagers are more satisfied with village cadres' country style construction, but the level of economic development needs to be improved. The correlation analysis found that there was a significant positive relationship between economic development and three dimensions of human capital (knowledge level, work ability and work attitude). There is a significant

positive correlation between simple country style and work ability and work attitude; there is a significant positive correlation between village beauty and knowledge level and work ability; and there is a significant positive correlation between management standard and knowledge level and work ability. It can be seen that there is a significant positive relationship between work performance and three dimensions of human capital (knowledge level, work ability and work attitude).

The reason for this result is that a village cadre's knowledge of agricultural policies, news and current affairs, and knowledge of agricultural and forestry economics will entirely affect his understanding of the spirit of instructions from higher levels, his grasp of policies and regulations, and the formulation of development ideas for his village. Therefore, the higher the knowledge level of a village cadre, the higher his work performance will be. A village cadre's willingness to spend time and energy on study and further education is very helpful for him to lead the villagers to do a good job in the construction and development of the village. In order to do a good job, village cadres have to actively seek financial and policy support from their superiors on the one hand, and on the other hand, they have to reach out to the masses, actively communicate with them and put their tasks into practice, which is a great test for their communication and service abilities. Only when the village cadres have improved their abilities in all aspects can they coordinate well with all parties, steadily promote various tasks and improve their performance. The attitude of a village cadre will be reflected in the whole process of his work. Only by taking the work arranged by his superiors seriously, responding positively to the demands of villagers and providing services patiently, can he do his job well. The more positive the attitude of a village cadre, the more positive he will be, and the higher his performance will be. The practical skills of village cadres have only a low linear correlation with their work performance, and the influence is weaker than knowledge level, work ability and work attitude. Most of the village cadres interviewed were from a farmer's background and had more or less mastered some agricultural production skills. In the process of participating in agricultural production, they can exchange information with villagers on the use of farming machinery and the selection of crop varieties, helping them to improve their skills in increasing production and income.

4.3 Regression analysis of human capital and work performance of village cadres

In this study, the five dimensions of village cadres' work performance, i. e. economic development, rural simplicity, village beauty and management norms, were used as the dependent variables, and each research dimension of human capital was used as the independent variable. A multiple linear regression model was adopted for analysis and the F-value was tested to explain the relationship between human capital and work performance of village cadres, and the regression results are shown in Table 5.

The regressions showed that the R² values of all five regression models were greater than 0.1, and the goodness of fit of the models was good, and the F-values all passed the significance test, indicating that the explanatory power of the independent variables on the dependent variable was strong. All variables of the human capital of village cadres were positively correlated with economic development performance, with knowledge level having a significant positive effect on driving village economic development. In terms of village simplicity, all variables of human capital of village cadres are positively correlated with village simplicity, among which, the working ability and working attitude of village cadres have a significant positive influence on driving village simplicity. In terms of village beauty, all variables of human capital of village cadres are positively correlated with village beauty, among which, the knowledge level and working ability of village cadres have a significant positive influence on village beauty. In terms of management norms, all variables of

human capital of village cadres are positively correlated with management norms, among which, the knowledge level, work ability and work attitude of village cadres have a significant positive influence on management norms. On the whole, the knowledge level and work ability of village cadres have a significant positive relationship with job performance, while the rest of the human capital variables have a positive relationship with job performance, but none of them are significant. Therefore, the government should pay attention to the training of village cadres and actively organise regular training for them, such as training in innovation and entrepreneurship, production technology, computer operation, etc. These practical trainings will help to improve the knowledge level and work ability of village cadres, so that they can better lead villagers in seeking development and thus improve their job performance.

Tab.5 Village cadres of human capital and work performance of the relationship between the various dimensions

Project	Economic Develop- ment	Simple Country- side	Village Beauty	Management Norms	Work Perfor- mance
(Constant)	1.199*	1.715**	0.861	1.107	1.215**
Knowledge Level	0.190**	0.108	0.287*	0.312*	0.175**
Work Ability	0.248	0.246*	0.482*	0.453*	0.330**
Practical Skills	0.024	0.001	0.033	0.036	0.010
Work Attitude	0.082	0.330**	0.123	0.070**	0.062
Adjustment R2	0.368	0.381	0.426	0.295	0.550
F-value	4.791**	5.005**	5.814**	3.721*	8.957**

**P<0.01, *P<0.05

5 Conclusion

This paper adds to the existing research that has found a correlation between the human capital of village cadres and job performance. The analysis found that village cadres all rated their human capital status as moderate or above, indicating that village cadres, as the main leaders and leaders of a village, pay more attention to their own personal development and that village cadres elected by villagers are competent in their work. In contrast, villagers do not rate the job performance of village cadres very highly, and more villagers are willing to rate village cadres from a neutral perspective. Of course there are also many villagers who affirm the work performance of village cadres in the light of the actual situation of their village. In dealing with matters related to villagers, the service ability, sociability and work attitude of village cadres all have an important impact on doing their job well. It can also be seen that the level of personal qualities of village cadres affects their work effectiveness, but the cooperation of villagers is even more indispensable for a good job, and the villager factor is also an important influencing factor for the high performance of village cadres. The relatively low ratings given by villagers to village cadres for leading the village's economic development, raising villagers' incomes and improving their livelihoods indicate that the problem of slow economic development and backward production levels in the rural areas of Renju Township is relatively prominent. Some villages are located deep in the mountains, with backward transportation, closed environment and less external communication. Although these objective conditions can limit further rural development, this may also lead to village cadres not thinking about change and not acting. Therefore, the joint efforts of many parties, including the government, village cadres and villagers, are still needed in stimulating rural development.

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