

THE INFLUENCE OF COACHING LEADERSHIP AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL ON INNOVATIVE BEHAVIORS

Hui Liu¹ Eksiri Niyomsilp²

Abstract

The purpose of this research was to study the influence of coaching leadership and psychological capital on employee's innovative behavior. This research was qualitative research method, the data were collected through in-depth interview of 15 informants from 4 high-tech enterprises in China. This study concluded that there was a significant influence of coaching leadership and psychological capital on employee's innovative behavior.

Keywords: Coaching Leadership; Psychological Capital; Innovative Behavior; Employees' Stimulation

Introduction

In the present era of knowledge economy, innovation is the key for enterprises to improve their competitiveness in a competitive society and ensure their competitive advantage for a long time (Scott & Bruce, 1994). The generation of an idea is the starting point of innovation (Janssen, 2000), and new ideas come from every individual in the organization. Although enterprises are the main market players of innovation, the root of innovation lies in employees (Liu Yun, Shi Jintao, 2010). Promoting the innovation behavior of employees is the top priority to improve the performance of the enterprise and promote the rapid development of the enterprise (Su Yi, et al., 2018). Employee innovation behavior is a complex activity process, which is affected by many conditions and factors. According to social cognitive theory, employees' behavior will be affected by environmental factors and individual factors. Studies have shown that coaching leadership is an important antecedent for employee attitudes, in-role performance and extra-role performance (Huang, J. T., & Hsieh, H. H. 2015). Coaching leadership as a new leadership behavior, its effect on employee's innovative behavior not

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¹ PhD program, School of Management, Shinawatra University. e-mail: liuhui6692@163.com

² School of Management, Shinawatra University. e-mail: eksiri.n@siu.ac.th

clear enough. The current research on coaching leadership behavior is mainly carried out in the context of European and American cultures. There are not many researches in other cultural backgrounds, especially in China (Kim et al., 2013). Psychological capital, as an important concept of positive psychology theory, has the driving effect that improving employees' positive work attitude and behavior as been widely validation (Story, et al., 2013). Therefore, based on the Social Cognitive Theory and the Positive Psychological Capital Theory, this study investigates the influence of individual factor psychological capital and environmental factor coaching leadership on employee innovation behavior.

Research Questions

To sum up, based on the Social Cognitive Theory and the Positive Psychological Capital Theory, this research will explore the following questions:

1. What is the influence of coaching leadership on employee innovative behavior?
2. What is the influence of psychological capital on employee innovative behavior?

Research Objectives

1. To study the influence of coaching leadership on employee innovative behavior.
2. To study the influence of psychological capital on employee innovative behavior.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework was developed from the literature review to study the influence of coaching leadership and psychological capital on employee innovative behavior.

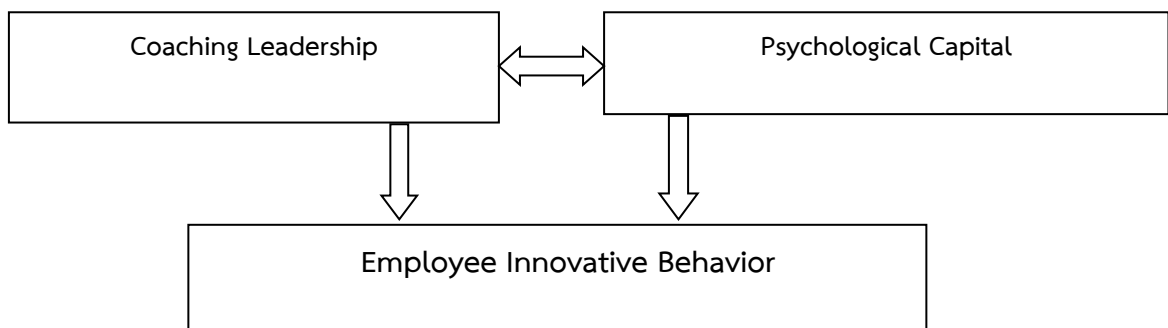


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework from Original Research

Literature Reviews

Innovative behavior refers to the behavior that individuals can form innovative and creative ideas or solutions in the process of work and try to put them into practice (Scott & Bruce 1994). Coaching leadership emphasizes that leaders help employees discover their inner needs and set work goals by encouraging, mentoring, empowering, etc, provide resources and support to employees during the interaction, pay attention to employee's mental model improvement and potential stimulation, finally realize mutual promotion and common development between leaders and employees(Wang Yanfei et al., 2016). Previous studies have shown that inclusive leadership (Carmeli, 2010), Shared leadership (Hoch, 2013),transformational leadership (Eisenbei & Boerner, 2013),and servant leadership(Cai, W., Lysova, E. I.2018)can effectively predict innovative behavior. Because the key of innovation lies in the improvement and breakthrough of employees' mental model (Yang Guoan, 2010), and the coaching leadership just emphasizes to encourage and guide employees to solve problems independently rather than directly transfer solutions to employees (Pousa & Mathieu, 2015), which helps to improve employees' mental model and stimulate their innovation potential.

Psychological capital has been defined as an individual's positive psychological state of development characterized by: (1) having confidence (efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks; (2) making a positive attribution (optimism) about succeeding now and in the future; (3) persevering towards goals and, when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (hope) in order to succeed and (4) when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond (resilience) to attain success (Luthans et al., 2007). The employees with more psychological capital will have more innovative behavior (Han Yi, et al., 2011). Previous studies have shown that psychological capital can positively predict employees' positive perception, attitude and active behavior, such as job satisfaction, job efficacy, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior and team creativity (Newman A, 2014, Wu S.2015). At the same time, it has been found that employees' psychological strength is helpful to enhance individual creativity (Avey J B,2012) while individual psychological resources (such as psychological capital) are helpful to improve individual creativity, It is also one of the important factors affecting the promotion and practice of creative ideas(Hsu M L A,2015). And Jafri (2012) found that employees with a higher level of psychological capital are willing to show more innovative behaviors in the survey of employees in the Indian garment industry. Abbas and Raja (2015) also found a positive relationship between psychological capital and employee innovation behavior through the matching survey of 237 employees in the banking, textile and public telecommunications sectors in Pakistan.bv

Research Methodology

This study is designed as qualitative research. 4 high-tech enterprises with active innovation activities were selected in this study. There are 15 employees from these enterprises participate in the research. The researchers obtained the preliminary information through the in-depth interview with the participants of the target enterprise, and encoded and reorganized the data which are important in the information framework and can promote the research. Voice recorder were permitted to use. If there are some information not clear, it is convenient to timely check the deficiencies and make up the omissions in the process of subsequent data sorting.

Expected Finding and Discussion

This study examined the influence of coaching leadership and psychological capital on employee innovative behavior. The study was undertaken using a qualitative research design allowed the author to collect data by in-depth interview.

For research objective which aimed to find out the influence of coaching leadership on employee innovative behavior. The results found that coaching leadership has a great influence on employee innovative behavior. The informants in the four high-tech companies strongly agree that the leaders in their company encourage the employee to express different ideas, advocates exploration and innovation, be inclusive of failures in exploration and innovation, likes to try new ways to solve work problems, welcome new ideas. All of these characteristics of coaching leaders are benefit to create an innovative atmosphere in the workplace and to inspire the employee's innovative behavior.

For research objective which aimed to find out the influence of psychological capital on employee innovative behavior. The result indicates that there is a significant influence of psychological capital on employee innovative behavior. All the informants have the same opinion that the higher the psychological capital, the more individuals are willing to exhibit innovative behaviors. Employees with high self-efficacy believe that they are competent for innovative work, have a stronger belief in their own creativity, dare to take risks, are good at using creative methods to solve problems, and creatively complete challenging tasks. Employees with a higher level of hope are expected to set challenging goals, have more expectations for the future and look forward to new things. Employees with optimistic qualities have positive expectations for future results, thus facing pressure, challenges and difficulties at work with optimistic emotions. Resilience also motivates employees to stay motivated and continue to accomplish creative work.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The purpose of this study is to explore the influence of coaching leadership and psychological capital on employees' innovative behavior.

Coaching leadership can effectively stimulate employees' innovative behavior. The behavior of employees is malleable, and the coaching leaders breaks the traditional management mode of command and control, and is committed to develop employees' potential by means of inspiration, induction, authorization and feedback. On the one hand, it can promote the improvement of employees' knowledge and skills. The necessary knowledge and skills are the basis for employees to engage in innovation activities. On the other hand, the guidance of this heuristic model is more conducive to guide employees to break the thinking limit, enlighten employees' intellectual potential, and ultimately transform into employees' innovative behavior.

Psychological capital has a significant positive effect on employees' innovative behavior. The results of in-depth interviews show that employees with positive psychological quality tend to deal with innovative challenges with a positive, optimistic, open and confident attitude, and also show resilience and hope when innovation fails, and are willing to take the initiative to implement innovation behavior.

Additionally, based on the findings the recommendations for organizations are listed below:

1. Coach skill is regarded as an important management ability of leaders. Enterprises should take a variety of activities to build internal coach culture and increase the coach skill of managers. Leaders should give reasonable authorization according to the characteristics of their subordinates, and provide them with resource support when necessary. Leaders should know how to ask questions, guide their subordinates to explore their own solutions to problems, and improve their ability to analyze and solve problems, rather than directly providing them with solutions to problems.

2. This study found that psychological capital can have a direct effect on employees' innovative behavior, which shows that it is very important to cultivate and improve employees' psychological capital. Enterprises can integrate psychological capital intervention training into human resource management system, and make employees believe that they have the characteristics of completing challenging tasks, recovering from adversity and achieving goals through quality development training, model demonstration and superior guidance.

Research Contributions

The current research on coaching leadership behaviors is mainly conducted in the context of European and American cultures. There are not many studies on coaching leadership behaviors in other cultural backgrounds, especially in China (Kim et al., 2013). This study introduces coaching leadership behavior to the field of innovation, and explores the factors that drive innovation behavior from the perspective of coaching leadership. This study finds that coaching leadership behavior has a positive significant impact on employees' innovative behavior. Therefore, the conclusions of this paper are of great significance to promote the combination of coaching leadership theory and innovation theory, and to promote organizational innovation from the perspective of coaching leadership. The implementation provides new theoretical basis.

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