The Role of Transformational Leadership in Empowering Employees' Psychological Empowerment: The Mediating Role of Work Values

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Abstract: *With the development of the economy, competition among enterprises is becoming increasingly fierce. In management work, leadership style plays an important role in employees' psychological perception. This article explores the important impact of transformational leadership on the psychological empowerment of enterprise employees based on resource conservation theory and leadership theory. And through the method of questionnaire survey, the interrelationship between transformational leadership and its psychological empowerment with subordinates, as well as the mediating mechanism between the two, were tested. The results indicate that transformational leadership significantly positively affects the psychological empowerment activities of its subordinates; In the mutual relationship between transformational leadership ability and psychological empowerment of enterprise employees, work values and psychological capital play a mediating role, respectively.*

Keywords: *Transformational Leadership; Psychological Empowerment; Work values; Psychological Capital*

1. Introduction

Enterprises need to constantly adapt to the development and changing trends of the market, and improve their adaptability to the market in order to survive better. Even under unfavorable conditions, high-level psychological empowerment can provide employees with the necessary internal motivation to generate positive emotions, such as stronger emotional commitment and higher work enthusiasm, as well as other proactive behaviors[1]. The survey found that the effectiveness of authorization in most enterprises is not ideal, and employees' self-efficacy, sense of work significance, and work autonomy are weak. Therefore, enterprises should enhance employees' psychological empowerment perception, meet their pursuit of self-worth, and avoid employees from developing lower job satisfaction, negative passivity, and shirking responsibility.

In the constantly changing and complex environment, companies are also increasingly valuing the psychological state of their employees[2]. In organizations, the leadership style of leaders has a significant impact on the psychological state of employees. The transformational leadership theory is a representative leadership theory. Numerous surveys have shown that leadership during the transition period has a positive impact on individual employees and the company, such as job performance, civic behavior, and corporate performance[3]. The positive impact of transformational leadership on the psychology of subordinates has been generally recognized, but the exploration of its internal mechanisms and related factors still needs to be continuously enriched and deepened. Employees' own work values can affect their psychological state and behavior, and the level of psychological capital perception can also affect their perception of psychological empowerment.

In summary, this study starts from the theories of resource conservation and leadership, and explores how to improve employee psychological empowerment from the perspective of transformational leadership, exploring the motivating effect and mechanism of transformational leadership on employee psychological empowerment. From the perspective of individual initiative motivation, reveal the internal psychological motivation of employees' psychological empowerment.

2. Theoretical basis and research hypotheses

2.1. Transformational leadership and psychological empowerment

According to the theory of resource conservation, transformational leadership is a type of relational resource that originates from the organization. Personal resources and relational resources interact with each other, enabling employees to identify with the organization and have a sense of belonging. The influencing factors of transformational leadership include: firstly, by communicating with subordinates, closely integrating their career expectations and organizational work goals, improving the matching degree between personal values and work requirements, enabling employees to have a sense of identification and autonomy in initiating and maintaining work behavior, and enhancing employees' work vitality and dedication level. The second is to support and motivate employees, so that those who have a clear understanding of their work realize that as long as they work hard, they can achieve their future, and improve their work ability and confidence. Thirdly, transformational leadership satisfies employees' relationship needs by providing personalized care, thereby enhancing their sense of belonging to the enterprise. The fourth is to encourage subordinates to adopt new ways to solve problems through knowledge rewards and self affirmation, thereby improving their work methods and processes, and enabling employees to have high spiritual satisfaction.

Psychological experts believe that in addition to basic factors such as comprehensive ability, willpower, physical conditions, and social environment that can affect an individual's psychological and emotional activities, there are also important and easily overlooked psychological factors, namely, the way leaders do things, habits, and styles that have a significant impact on the psychological activity experience of subordinates[4]. Therefore, in the theory of leadership behavior, it is necessary to incorporate the behavior, emotional behavior, and social psychological factors of subordinates into the research framework[5].

Based on the above analysis, transformational leadership can enhance the psychological needs of employees, enabling individuals who are self defined in future work to demonstrate a high level of psychological empowerment and actively integrate into their work[6]. Therefore, the following assumptions are proposed:

H1: Transformational leadership behavior positively affects employees' psychological empowerment.

2.2. The mediating role of work values

Work values are a subjective value judgment of an individual and an important reflection of their values in work behavior. In work activities, they mainly include the psychological traits that an individual values the most and the inner needs they hope to be satisfied by others. Work values also affect an individual's professional behavior in the professional environment and among work groups. At present, empirical studies have shown that work values can also have an impact on job outcome variables such as individual job satisfaction and occupational organizational environmental commitment. In the relationship where the organizational atmosphere directly affects employee engagement, work values play a partial mediating role[7]. Through concepts and behaviors, transformational leadership can influence employees' work values, motivate them to continuously pursue development and improvement under the style of transformational leadership behavior, stimulate internal motivation, and change work attitudes.

Psychological empowerment is a psychological model of organizational active empowerment, which refers to the subjective psychological state of an individual that is spontaneously sustained, internally stable, and actively learning after being authorized. It can be specifically divided into four dimensions: organizational self-efficacy, knowledge of the intrinsic meaning and value of work, autonomous learning decision-making process, and the influence of authorization on the organization[8]. Many scholars at home and abroad believe that individual factors can have a significant impact on sense of commission, such as demographic variables, personality traits, etc[9]. And there are differences in work values among different individuals.

This article finds that adjusting employees' work needs and characteristics can improve their psychological control. Therefore, the hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Transformational leadership positively affects employees' work values.

H3: Transformational leadership influences employees' psychological empowerment through work

values.

2.3. The mediating role of psychological capital

According to leadership theory[10], transformational leadership behavior with relatively strong emotional and spiritual motivational effects can enhance the psychological capital of enterprise employees to achieve success. Leaders can enhance their unique personality charm and gradually gain recognition, respect, understanding, and trust from surrounding employees. Employees who are attracted by the charisma of their leaders often imitate them and gain positive emotions from them, thereby influencing and improving their work enthusiasm. Transformational leaders establish a vision that enables employees to clarify the direction of their efforts, understand the value and significance of their work, have confidence in their future, and maintain a positive spirit of cooperation[11]. Transformational leaders provide personalized care and guidance to employees, allowing them to feel valued by their superiors, inspiring and enhancing their understanding and self-awareness, transforming work difficulties into development opportunities, and cultivating their optimism and resilience. Many qualities of leadership can greatly enhance and motivate subordinates, ultimately obtaining the spiritual capital for success[12]. Transformational leadership can positively influence and enhance the psychological capital and other abilities of subordinates[13-14], and can further enhance the self-efficacy of leaders and employees in practice, enabling them and their subordinates to carry out work more independently, flexibly, and efficiently, gradually achieving organizational goals. We can further predict the positive correlation between transformational leadership behavior and employees' own psychological capital.

Psychological capital is a positive psychological resource that can counteract stress and burnout in the workplace and avoid negative outcomes from work family conflicts. Individuals with high levels of psychological capital can experience a stronger sense of happiness, greater flexibility and adaptability, and can use diverse abilities to meet the dynamic needs of work. When employees have a high level of psychological capital in the work environment, they will have a high sense of control and autonomy, as shown in Figure 1.

Based on previous research and the above discussion, this study proposes the following assumptions:

H4: Transformational leadership positively affects employees' psychological capital.

H5: Transformational leaders influence employees' psychological empowerment through psychological capital.
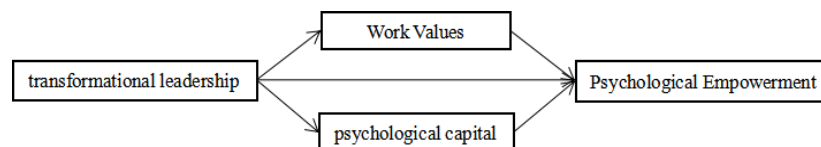

Figure 1: Relationship Model Diagram

3. Research Design

3.1. Research sample

The main data source for this questionnaire is manufacturing enterprises in the northern region. In online research work, online survey questionnaires are distributed, collected, and archived through online survey stars. A total of 300 questionnaires were filled out, with a total of 216 valid questionnaires and a questionnaire recovery rate of 72.00%. Among them, the proportion of males is 69.62%, and the proportion of females is 30.38%. College education accounts for only 7.55%, undergraduate education accounts for over 85%, and graduate education accounts for 6.6%. In terms of age, employees aged 25 and below account for 18.87% of the total number of employees, employees aged 26 and above -35 account for 63.21% of the total number, employees aged 36 and above -45 account for 16.98% of the total number, and employees aged 45 and above account for 0.94% of the total number. In terms of job nature, management and skills service positions account for 31.13%, research and development and design positions account for 18.87%, production technology positions account for 26.42%, frontline service personnel account for 15.09%, and other positions only account for 8.49%. In terms of the hierarchical structure of job abilities, the backbone employees of frontline enterprises account for approximately 0.75%, technical personnel account for 32.08%, grassroots management personnel account for 33.02%, and middle to high-level enterprise management personnel account for 14.15%.

After verification, Cronbach's α 0.81, greater than 0.80.

3.2. Variable measurement

This study conducted a questionnaire survey using the Transformational Leadership Scale, Work Values Scale, Psychological Capital Scale, and Psychological Authorization Scale. This research scale adopts the Likert 5 rating system, with 1-5 representing a range from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree".

Transformational leadership. In the context of China, Li Chaoping developed the theory of transformational leadership, pointed out the four dimensions of transformational leadership, and developed a transformational leadership questionnaire. Considering the unique economic and cultural environment in China, this scale is used to examine the relationship between transformational leadership in each dimension and organizational commitment.

Work values. This study selected a portion of the scale compiled by Zhang Jianren. The scale includes "fairness and justice in the reward and punishment promotion mechanism of the workplace", "work can provide me with good compensation", and so on. Cronbach's of this scale α Is 0.792.

Psychological capital. The survey was mainly conducted using Luthans' psychological capital questionnaire, with a total of 7 questions. Including 'Even if I encounter setbacks in my work, I can quickly recover my own state' and so on. Cronbach's of this scale α Is 0.799.

Psychological empowerment. A part of the psychological empowerment survey questionnaire compiled by SPreitzer and revised by Li Chaoping, Li Xiaoxuan, and Shi Kan in China includes "I have a lot of independence and autonomy in how to complete work". Cronbach's of this scale αIs 0.715.

Control variable selection. According to previous research, employees with different characteristics and in different economic stages often have different levels of psychological perception. Therefore, this study effectively controlled for five related variables: gender, education level, age, job level, and job category, in order to reduce the impact of the selection of these control variables on the results of this study.

4. Data analysis and results

4.1. Deviation Analysis of the Same Source Method for Variables

Use SPSS 22.0 for Harman single factor analysis. Firstly, construct factors that include all variable items. Secondly, conduct exploratory factor analysis and find that the maximum unrotated factor accounts for 30.41% of the variance, which is less than half of the 68.42% variance explained by all factors. Therefore, a single factor did not explain most of the variation, and the issue of bias in homologous methods was not serious, which would not affect the reliability of the research conclusions.

This article uses AMOS24.0 software to conduct empirical analysis on a total of 216 sets of sample data to test the discriminant validity of the four variables directly involved in the model. observation χ^2/df, RMSEA value, CFI value, etc., Table 1 shows that among the confirmatory models of the four variables mentioned above, the 4-factor basic model has the most ideal fitting results(χ^2/df=1.129, RMSEA=0.035, CFI=0.971). It can be concluded that the 4-factor model can better reflect the factor structure of the measurement variables, that is, the discriminant validity between transformational leadership, work values, psychological capital, and psychological empowerment has been verified.

Table 1: Confirmatory factor analysis results.

	χ^2/df	NFI	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR
Four factor model: TL; WV; PC; PE	1.129	0.902	0.971	0.963	0.035	0.043
Three factor model: TL+WV; PC; PE	5.037	0.859	0.847	0.841	0.104	0.096
Two factor model: TL; WV+PC+PE	8.569	0.712	0.751	0.709	0.153	0.127
One factor model:	11.611	0.617	0.632	0.573	0.179	0.118

Note: TL represents transformational leadership, WV represents work values, PC represents psychological capital, PE represents psychological empowerment, and "+" represents integration.

4.2. Correlation analysis

The weighted mean, standard deviation, and correlation coefficients between various research variables are shown in Table 2. Data shows that transformational leadership is significantly positively correlated with employees' work values (r=0.69, p<0.01), psychological capital (r=0.59, p<0.01), and psychological empowerment (r=0.68, p<0.01). Work values (r=0.68, p<0.01) and psychological capital (r=0.67, p<0.01) are also significantly positively correlated with psychological empowerment, respectively. The above correlation conclusion preliminarily indicates that the relationship between variables is as assumed, providing a basis for subsequent hypothesis verification.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis results.

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Gender	1.61	0.49								
Age	2	0.64	-0.03							
educational background	1.98	0.37	0.12	0.04						
post	2.42	0.97	-0.02	0.36**	0.05					
Job Position	2.5	1.3	-0.03	-0.02	-0.02	-0.39**				
transformational leadership	3.67	0.7	0.22*	-0.11	0.08	0.21*	-0.27**			
Work Values	3.56	0.68	0.05	-0.12	-0.07	0.20*	-0.27**	0.69**		
Psychological capital	3.39	0.72	0.02	0.00	0.02	0.26**	-0.22*	0.59**	0.52**	
Psychological empowerment	3.67	0.68	0.13	-0.01	-0.04	0.25**	-0.25*	0.68**	0.68**	0.67**

Note: M represents the average; SD represents the standard deviation* Represents p<0.05,** represents p<0.01.

4.3. Hypothesis test

Main effect test. Control for demographic variables such as gender, age, and education, and use the SPSS 22.0 model to test the relationship between variables. Perform the following hierarchical regression. Detect transformational leadership and its positive impact on subordinates' psychological empowerment behavior (see Table 3). The results indicate that there is a significant positive correlation between transformational leadership and subordinate psychological empowerment behavior (M6:β= 0.661, p<0.001), therefore H1 is supported.

Table 3: Hierarchical regression analysis results.

variable	Work Values		psychological capital		Psychological authorization			
	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8
Age	0.053	-0.086	0.013	-0.106	0.134	-0.001	0.033	0.042
educational background	-0.191	-0.066	-0.09	0.017	-0.087	0.034	0.06	0.028
post	-0.078	-0.109	0.011	-0.016	-0.068	-0.098	-0.055	-0.092
post	0.193	0.05	0.243	0.12	0.226	0.087	0.068	0.039
transformational leadership	-0.198	-0.074	-0.124	-0.018	-0.16	-0.04	-0.011	-0.032
Age		0.681***		0.583***		0.661***	0.394***	0.427***
educational background							0.392***	
post								0.400***
R2	0.122	0.511	0.09	0.376	0.117	0.484	0.559	0.584
ΔR		0.389		0.285		0.367	0.075	0.1
F	2.747	17.083	1.959	9.821	2.628	15.312	17.555	19.448

Note: * represents p<0.05, ** represents p<0.01, and *** represents p<0.001.

Mediation effect test. Firstly, the mediating effect of work values and psychological capital was tested using the mediating test method proposed by Baron and Kenny. The relationship between independent variables and mediating variables was tested, and the results showed that transformational leadership had a significant positive effect on employees' work values (M2:β= 0.681, p<0.001), transformational

leadership has a significant positive effect on psychological capital (M4:β= 0.583, p<0.001), H2 and H4 were supported. Secondly, when both transformational leadership and work values are added to the regression model (see Table 3M7), work values have a significant positive effect on psychological empowerment(β= 0.392, p<0.001), but it was found that the impact of transformational leadership on employee psychological empowerment weakened(β= 0.394, p<0.001), indicating that work values play a partial mediating role between transformational leadership and employee psychological empowerment, with H3 receiving partial support. Similarly, when both transformational leadership and psychological capital are added to the regression model (see Table 3M8), psychological capital is significantly positively correlated with psychological empowerment(β=0.400, p<0.001), which means that the impact of transformational leadership on employee psychological empowerment is weakened(β= 0.427, p<0.001), indicating that psychological capital plays a partial mediating role between transformational leadership and psychological empowerment, with H5 receiving partial support.

In addition, through the Bootstrap method (5000 random samples), it was found that transformational leadership has a significant indirect effect on employees' psychological empowerment through their work values(β= 0.332, p<0.001), and 95% CI=[0.06, 0.17], CI does not include zero; The indirect effect of transformational leadership on employee psychological empowerment through psychological capital is significant(β= 0.383, p<0.001), and 95% CI=[0.05, 0.19], CI does not include zero. H3 and H5 get in.

5. Theoretical and practical significance

The research in this article has the following practical significance: firstly, when selecting and cultivating managers, enterprises should choose more leadership methods of change, cultivate employees' work spirituality through establishing a vision and respecting differences, and enable employees to grow and stimulate their abilities. Secondly, managers can establish connections with employees, enhance their understanding of work significance, generate positive interactions between their psychological needs and work significance, enrich positive emotional experiences, strengthen identification, and ultimately achieve the unity of employees' self and organization. Finally, due to the increasingly flat and informationized organizational structure of enterprises, it is necessary to gradually form a "people-oriented" management model, stimulate and mobilize people's initiative and creativity, and achieve common development between employees and the enterprise.

The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of transformational leadership on employee psychological empowerment, which has practical significance in improving the level of employee psychological empowerment. However, due to limitations in personal energy and resources, there are shortcomings in this study, mainly reflected in.

Firstly, the sample size is limited. Due to the influence of subjective and objective factors, this article only focuses on some manufacturing enterprises in the northern region as the research object, and cannot conduct a more comprehensive analysis. In future research, it is necessary to enrich industry types, expand urban scope, and make the sample more representative.

Secondly, work values and psychological capital play a partial mediating role between transformational leadership and employee psychological empowerment, indicating that transformational leadership may also influence employees' level of psychological empowerment through other factors.

Thirdly, in measuring employees' level of psychological empowerment, a survey form of mutual evaluation between leaders and employees should be adopted. Considering the complexity of implementing this form, this study only arranged for employees to fill out survey questionnaires, which may lead to deviation in the measurement results due to subjective factors of employees. In future research, mutual evaluation between employees and leaders can be conducted to reduce bias.

6. Conclusions

This study explores how transformational leadership affects employee psychological empowerment from the perspectives of work cognition and personal emotions, as well as the dual mediating effects of work values and psychological capital. Through empirical testing and analysis of 216 sample data, the following conclusions are drawn.

Firstly, transformational leadership behavior can significantly improve employees' level of psychological empowerment, which may mean that transformational leadership's satisfaction with subordinates' psychological needs and personal growth can effectively promote employees to generate a

higher level of psychological empowerment.

Secondly, the experimental results indicate that employees' work values and psychological capital play a partial mediating role in the process of transformational leadership influencing employees' psychological empowerment, respectively. Transformational leadership behavior mainly affects employees' psychological empowerment through two transmission pathways: work values and psychological capital. This actually indicates that employees' psychological and emotional factors play an important transmission role in the transmission process of managers' leadership behavior, providing a new perspective for the study of enterprise leadership behavior and employee psychological empowerment.

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