Unpacking Leadership Style Values on Motivating New Generation Employees' Prosocial Organizational Behaviors -- A Case Study of Chinese Internet Industry

Siyang Liu *

School of Humanities, Hong Kong university of science and technology, Hong Kong SAR, China

* sliucp@connect.ust.hk

Abstract. Based on current data derived from the International Labour Organization, in 2018, there was a significant rise of Chinese female entrepreneurs in workplaces. One industry that has been viewed the most significantly rise in female leadership is Internet industry, as Chinese women now account for 55% of entrepreneurs within new economy companies. Existing researches distinguished leadership styles into two types based on gender differences. More specifically, men are generally viewed to lead with Task-oriented styles while women have been shown to lead with Interpersonal-oriented styles. However, no studies have directly examined which leadership style can be the most effective when directing GenZ employees in China in terms of prosocial organizational behaviors. In this paper, the author profoundly extends the leadership style values and latent women leadership superiority on motivating prosocial organizational behaviors of Genz employees. Extracting from shared points of leadership styles based on gender types, the author generated 3 hypotheses: Compared with Task-orientated leadership style, interpersonal leadership style is more accepted by Genz employees compared to Millennial (Hypothesis1) and Women prosocial leadership are more acceptable by female GenZ employees (Hypothesis2). Notably, GenZ employees' prosocial organizational behaviors are motivated when collaborated with most felicitous leaders (Hypothesis3). A sample of 500 applicants in a top internet company were expected to accomplish this research. Consequences provided sufficient evidences for hypothesis 2 through both quantitative and qualitative statistics as well as hypothesis 3. Nevertheless, Hypothesis 1 have not been proved in an accurate manner that generational differences in employees have paltry ramifications of leadership styles preferences. As a matter of fact, both leadership styles are popular among Millennial and Genz employees.

Keywords: Internet Industry; Task-oriented Leadership; Interpersonal-oriented Leadership; Gender Differences; Generation Z Employees; Prosocial Organizational Behaviors.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of Study

Contemporary interactions between eastern and western cultures have led to a universal trend of cultural convergence, which has in turn affected many aspects of life for both regions, most notably in the workplace. Eklund's researches (2017) distinguished leadership styles into two types based on gender differences. More specifically, men are generally viewed to lead with Task-oriented styles while women have been shown to lead with interpersonal-orientated styles.[1] Task-orientated leadership could be defined as the leaders who prefer leading to accomplish assigned tasks by organizing relevant activities.[1] However, no studies have directly examined which leadership style may be the most effective when directing GenZ employees in China. Therefore, a deeper research in leadership style and its impacts on success of Genz employees should be conducted to better help us understand leadership values within workplaces and they are predicted to be the most vital power on re-shaping company cultures.

1.2 Significance of the Research

This research has the potential to impact both business and social disciplines. From a workplace perspective, research about generational differences in the workplace can help us better understand

how to invest in and develop the most effective leaders based on their own gender types in China. HR managers might also understand how to reduce work stress of GenZ employees by understanding their values and perceptions of their leaders. Thus, helping bridge gaps between generations and increase interactions. Eventually, people may realize the importance of women leadership values and GenZ employees' values in re-energizing company cultures (Silvia, 2012) [2]. Women's social status also can be enhanced by these series of related researches so that a more sustainable female economy may be developed.

1.3 Research Methodologies

- Cross-sectional Correlational study and experimental studies.
- Important things to include:
 - population – 500 people. (GenZ, other generations, equal male and female split, jobs they hold, industry, company size, work outside/inside region, years of work,
 - Detailed methods applied: survey and focus group interview.
 - Measures: leadership style, age, gender, region, how much they like their direct leader, the gender of their leader, do they think they are in the safe working environment that everyone are contributors, how satisfied they are with their Hr managers who are responsible for training.
- Focus group interview will be conducted in forms of virtual interview and asked them specifically about leader styles preferences based on gender types, work stress under leadership styles, prosocial organizational behaviors in their teams. Develop a comparison before and after changing leadership styles to see any impacts on.
- Genz employees' working effectiveness and measuring if team cultures have been changed when leaders change their leadership styles that are preferred by GenZ employees within an organization.
- Spss, status, tableau is expected to be used for analyzing the data collected from interviewees, consolidating information to generate qualitative information.

2. Results

2.1 Generational Differences in Working Values Within Chinese (Mainland) Workplaces

GenZ refers to those who were born roughly between 1995 and 2015, which made up 32% of the global population in 2020. It has been predicted by Deloitte (2019) that by 2022, 25% of the Chinese workplace will be made up genz employees. Given this statistic, it is clear that managing genz employees effectively is crucial for re-energizing the company culture as they shift to become a vital part of company talents [3]. Deloitte China (2019) conducted researches of generational differences in Chinese employees' working values and attitudes which indicated that Chinese GenZ population is the most socially-connected generations which values employee relationships the most compared with other generations [3]. Besides, they are considered to care more about leadership ethics and corporate social responsibility of the company than other generations (Lauikas & Miliut, 2020) [4].

2.2 Understanding Chinese GenerationZ Employees' Preferred Leadership Styles based on Gender Types

The apposite research was conducted at a top internet company (Hang Zhou Branch). When unpacking the generational differences in predilections of leadership styles, generally, about 40% of the Millennial valued Task-oriented leadership styles the most (Schroth, 2019) [5] As figure1 shows, more than 75% of the millennial preferred leaders with both Task-oriented and Interpersonal-oriented leadership styles, yet, there was no evident gender differences in leadership styles preference that could be speculated from the millennial group (Bodenhausen&Curtis,2016) [6].

Fig 1. Number of employees in Millennial groups and their preferred leadership styles.

Fig 2. Gender differences of Millennial groups who prefer Interpersonal-oriented leadership styles

Fig 3. Gender differences of Millennial groups who prefer Task-oriented leadership styles

Nevertheless, when comes to Generation Z employees, overall, 50% of Genz employees preferred Interpersonal-oriented leadership styles which consists of 25% male Genz employees and 75% female GenZ employees (Racola-Paina & Irini, 2021) [7]. Paradoxically, 40% Genz employees picked Task-oriented leadership style as their fondest choice, and 95% of them are male employees who preferred Task-oriented leadership (Tabernero, et al. 2009) [8]. Unanticipated focus group interview outcomes pushed the enormous advance in discovering more gender values of women leaderships (Singh & Daimei, 2016)[9]. As a matter of fact, all of the traced female GenZ employees who preferred women leaders with Interpersonal-oriented leadership style acclaimed their female leaders' gentle communication styles and they also manifested that working with women leaders can provide them with more senses of security, avoiding latent sexual harassment within workplaces (Eagly, 2016)[10]. Meanwhile, male GenZ employees do not have obvious predilections of leaders based on gender types, but one indoctrinated a new perspective that working with female leaders are cloying because that impelled him to revive the feelings of living together with his acrimonious mom. Thus, the correlation between family and preferences of leaders maybe selected for further investigations.

3. Discussions

3.1 Task-oriented Leadership Style Versus Interpersonal-oriented Leadership Style in China

Gender is another influential factor which contributes to the differences in leadership styles. Men are typically associated with Task-oriented leadership styles and command-based communication habits whereas women are more likely to take on an inter-personally oriented styles within the workplace (Eklund. et al, 2017) [1]. More specifically, male leaders tend to be better at organizing activities that are associated with tasks and developing comprehensive strategies. Women leaders, on the other hand, tend to care more about employees' feelings towards tasks and building relationships. Xiao li Sun (2015), who is a women leadership researcher in Renmin university of China, indicated that Chinese women leaders tended to manage more democratically and inter-personally than male leaders and explained this as being because Chinese women leaders care more about employees' personal interests, hobbies and feelings towards tasks [11]. Based on her researches towards women leadership powers, Chinese women are also more suitable to be educators in companies for developing and training new employees, for example, cultivating prosocial organizational behaviors (Sun, 2015) [11].

3.2 Prosocial Organizational Behaviors

Prosocial behaviors were first defined in 1978 which were described as behaviors that are primarily for the benefit of another, which includes behaviors like sharing, comforting others, donating goods, and helping. (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1978) [12] However, prosocial behaviour would have different meanings during different situations. One common situation in which individuals have the opportunity to act prosocially is in the workplace. Mitonga-Monga and Cilliers (2016) identified five prosocial organizational behaviors in the workplace: Altruistic Helping are widely used for employees who are willing to assist coworkers with heavy workloads, and orient new employees to the organization. (Mitonga-Monga & Cilliers, 2016) [13] Conscientiousness refers to Employees who are beyond the minimum expectations of diligence, efficiency, accuracy, and commitment in their job roles. (Mitonga-Monga & Cilliers, 2016) [13] Employees who seek to avoid potential personality conflicts and ensure the mutual-respects during workplaces are concluded as courtesy. (Mitonga-Monga & Cilliers, 2016) [13] Sportsmanship and Civic Virtue are citizenship behaviors. Adam Grant (2013) also indicated in his book "give and take, why helping others drives our success" that the best leaders are givers who can create a psychologically safe atmospheres where everyone tend to be contributors, and employees are more likely to be quick-learners, coming up with more innovative ideas in this environment.[14] Research conducted at Coca-cola (US) by Talor (2019), showed that being prosocial in workplaces not only benefited the receiver but also satisfied the giver for reducing their work stress and gradually formed the sustainable positive workplace cultures. [15] Therefore,

educating employees' prosocial organizational behaviors are one of the most important tasks for leaders, also it is important for them to be prosocial.

3.3 Different Leadership Styles Values on Shaping Genz Employees Prosocial Behaviors

Based on previous research findings, articulate consequence could be generated that gender types of employees do have ramifications of their leadership style preferences. Prosocial organizational behaviors of GenZ employees are motivated when collaborated with most felicitous leaders. Both leadership styles are respectively conducive when directing the corresponding employees. Unfortunately, due to the limited resources of this research, only the employees who worked less than 2 years are invited for focus group interview, maybe their preferences of leadership styles will change as they worked for more years so that the above consequences maybe polemical.

4. Conclusion

This research has the potential to impact both business and social disciplines. From a workplace perspective, research about gender and generational differences in the workplace can help us better understand how to invest in and develop the most effective leaders based on gender types in China. Additionally, this work could help identify more unique gender values of women leaderships when managing future power of workplaces. Also, by conducting research on GenZ employees, managers can understand the importance of GenerationZ powers in re-shaping a company's culture. This research could thus help bridge gaps between generations and help leaders better engage their Genz employees based on different personalities and genders. HR managers might also understand how to reduce work stress of Genz employees by understanding their values and perceptions of their leaders. Most significantly, research on understanding how leadership styles go on to help develop creativity and prosocial organizational behaviors of new employees, could assist to establish more effective management strategies and generally increase the organizational efficiency. Eventually, people may realize the importance of women and Genz values in re-energizing company cultures. Women's social status also can be enhanced by these series of related researches so that a more sustainable female economy may be developed.

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