

Present situation and trend of managerial psychology in China[☆]

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Received: 2004-09-13 Accepted: 2004-12-13 (09/XX)

Abstract

OBJECTIVE: To analyze the development of managerial psychology so as to solve culture, managerial system and peculiar problems at the transitional phase.

DATA SOURCES: By using CNKI and PSYCINFO database, we searched literature on organization and managerial psychology in the past 20 years. We also collected the authors' research papers related to this area in the recent years.

DATA SELECTION: We selected 24 research articles on organizational reforms, leadership behavior, motivation mechanism and organizational culture.

DATA EXTRACTION: Seventeen out of the 24 articles were excluded because they overlapped with each other in content to some extent. Therefore, this article reviewed the other 7.

DATA SYNTHESIS: On the basis of comprehensive analysis of development of managerial psychology at home and abroad, this article predicts the newly emerging hot issues and trend of research on managerial psychology, and further puts forward the short-term and long-term development goals of managerial psychology research.

CONCLUSION: Paying attention to research on organization-level changes, accentuating on the systematic exploitation of human resources, continuously expanding research field and giving more concern for the national goals are the development trend of managerial psychology.

Shi K, Long JH, Lu J, Wang S. Present situation and trend of managerial psychology in China. *Zhongguo Linchuang Kangfu* 2005; 9(8): 244-6 (China) [www.zgckf.com]

INTRODUCTION

At present, China is at the transitional phase from planned economy to market-oriented economy, and it is one of the countries with the most rapid economic growth after entry into the WTO in 2001. From the global perspective, competition between countries is becoming fiercer as the new economy era comes. On the other hand, China has her own unique culture, managerial system and problems in the particular stage. How can these problems be solved? Managerial psychology may help resolve these problems by focusing on human behavior and the influential factors at the individual, community and organizational levels. Therefore, this article introduces the development of managerial psychology in China and other countries.

GENERAL SITUATION OF DEVELOPMENT

Definition of managerial psychology

Managerial psychology, also called organizational psychology within the psychology boundary and organizational behavior in industrial and business circles, is an important newly emerging branch of psychology. At the very beginning of the 20th century, scientific management movement proposed by F. Taylor and industrial psychology by H. Muensterberg were the pioneers of managerial psychology, but

the real force of promoting its formation was Hothawn's experiment led by Elton Mayo in 1927. It was not until the 1960s that managerial psychology became a real independent discipline and was widely applied. Managerial psychology focuses on human behavior and the influential factors at individual, community and organizational levels. It emphasizes the human role in the management environment. Moreover, it studies the theoretical issues of leadership behavior, management decision, organizational change and development, team construction, communication, stimulating and cross-cultural management. On the other hand, it studies the theories and methods concerning post analysis, personnel selection, job training, performance assessment and salary distribution from the perspective of individual divergence^[1].

It is generally considered that research of managerial psychology in the 21st century will face three main tasks: the readjustment of social and economic structure, scientific and technological innovation and globalization brought about by rapid development of multinational corporations. Under the new social and economic situation, human factors are gradually becoming prominent; therefore, how to tap human resources has become an issue which deserves priority in international competition. The joint statement of "preparing for the 21st century" made by the presidents of American National Academies of Science, Engineer and Medicine in 1997, considered the exploitation and development of human resources and research on behavior science of science and technology decision-making as the most important issue. In addition, the development of management science itself urgently requires scientists provide new knowledge about how to adapt ourselves to scientific and technological progress and social changes, which evidently requires conducting research on psychological issues in management system from a new perspective.

China is a large developing socialist country. The prosperity of managerial psychology is closely related to the nation's economic progress and success of reform. The financial crisis in Southeast Asia proves that developing countries no longer enjoy the advantages in narrowing the gap by introducing advanced technology from developed countries. International competition involves three factors: "favorable climatic, geographical and human conditions". Having no superiority in the first two factors, developing countries have to make best use of the third factor. Learning from the successful experiment of "hydrogen bomb and atomic bomb and the man-made satellite", we can establish our own position in international competition of science, technology and economy in the new century in order to shorten the distance with developed countries. Because managerial psychology is directly associated with scientific progress and economic development, the results of theoretical research play an extremely important role in social and economic development. For instance, our country is making major decision in adjusting the structure of state-owned enterprises, transforming housing system and distribution of salary. Research on these decisions involves the participation and guidance of management psychologists. In this case, as a part of basic psychological research, managerial psychology plays an important role that cannot be replaced in the development of management science.

RESEARCH ON HOTPOINTS

Entering the 1990s, organizational transformation has been the primary issue of psychological research in the competition of globalized

economy. The research mainly explores the analyzing framework, ideal organizational model and intervention theory of organizational transformation and the role of the agents.

Research on leadership behavior

In recent years, various theories of leadership, such as route-objective theory, leader-participation model and life cycle theory, have emerged under the influence of adaptability theory. The most representative one at present is the theory of cognitive resources utilization theory put forward by Fielder, who emphasizes that the key to successful leadership depends largely on the conditions of making full use of the cognitive resources rather than intelligence and ability of any individual leader^[1]. The factor of management decision plays a key role in organizational transformation because readjustment is usually carried out under certain risks. At present, individual studies on this subject pay more attention to the cognitive strategy and judgment decision in decision-making process; on the other hand, organizational study mainly analyzes the decision-decision model, structure of power and system of participation, giving special attention to the development and practice of decision-making skills.

Study on stimulation

There were various schools of theories like contents, process and intensification. Even the justice theory of S. Adams is still valued for its practical use in the design of payment. Besides, another related study is the research on work promises. It mainly deals with work value, vocational development, responsibility, organizational identification and social attitude. It also explores the impacts of organization promise on retirement, sense of satisfaction, sense of security and interpersonal relationship as well as its formation law^[2].

Research on organizational culture

Researchers define organizational culture as the basic hypothetic form that develops within a specific community and applied inside and outside in a certain environment. It has become a practical method to educate staff of cognition, thought and perception. The research centers on its features, structure and operational mechanism. At the community level, it mainly studies the cohesion and construction of the community, target setting, relationship, regulation, role and conflicts within community and community decision^[1]. Worth mentioning is cross-cultural research on management, a new direction in this field to be adapted to the development of multinational corporations. The most influential one studies the impact of individualism and collectivism on organizational management, and discloses the differences between eastern and the western cultures: Chinese people prefer to distribute bonus equally. It emphasizes that management pattern should be suitable for the national state and culture.

TREND OF DEVELOPMENT

Organizational transformation and development is the primary issue in managerial psychology research

Until the 1980s, managerial psychology research focused on individual theory and brought out many theories including theories of stimulation, community behavior and leadership behavior. After the 1980s, with the trend of economic globalization and readjustment of economic construction, new momentum has been gained in research of enterprise reorganization, strategy management, management of multinational companies and joint-ventures. Cultural factor becomes the focal point of these comparative studies^[3]. Much more importance has been attached to macroeconomic behavior research, and economic confidence and expectation have been treated as good indices to predict a country's economic prosperity. The growing complexity of research on management environment has turned the attention to the whole organization; otherwise, the management targets cannot be achieved in the process of structural readjustment, leaders' decision-making and adjustment of employees, nor in cultural construc-

tion of multinational corporations and stimulation policy making.

Focus on the systematic development of human resources

Technological innovation has become the key in the development of international market and competition in the new century. In this system, human resources with great competency are needed in technological innovation and international market development. Therefore, we should pay more attention to the quality needed for management's decision-making, technological innovation and employees to adjust themselves. Another key issue is the best use and exploitation of human resources. Technological progress and management complexity raise new requirements for employees' competency, which makes management of human resources another key research issue and turns local research into research of the whole system. At present, more in-depth research is being conducted on competency assessment, individual adaptability and intervention in human resources management^[4].

Constant expansion of research field

Managerial psychology goes beyond the tradition and taps new research fields. Different from other sub-branches of psychology, it not only takes into consideration market economic interests of many commercial consulting agencies, investment and national security and interests in international competition, but also conducts research on behavior science in planned managerial decision making. In other words, it is more interested in the national objectives. In a word, the new focus lies in the comparative study on multinational corporations and joint ventures, behavior research on scientific investigation and unemployment guidance, all of which have brought social and economic benefits. Managerial psychologists regard the organization as an open social-technological system. Their research, having gone beyond the tradition, covers management training and development, performance assessment, management policies, organizational atmosphere and culture, and cross-cultural comparison.

ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION OF MANAGERIAL PSYCHOLOGY

From the year 1978 on, scholars of psychology in China have begun to introduce systematic theories and methods from foreign countries and finished the fundamental disciplinary construction in succession. They have conducted systematic research on working motivation, leadership behavior, administration decision, value, employee training, personnel selection and organizational innovation. Cross-cultural comparative-cooperative studies with foreign industries and organization psychologists have narrowed the gap with developed countries and enriched the knowledge system of international managerial psychology as well. At present, administration psychologists of our country are taking a leading part in International Applied Psychology League. They are directing or participating in some important editing work of management psychology journals. They have also established their own academic status in the field of international managerial psychology and have made great progress. Regarding the application of managerial psychology, a series of influential research projects on reform of state-owned enterprises, leader selection, administrative decision-making, human resources management, stimulation mechanism, and astronaut simulated training have been completed and produced great social and economic benefits, according to the needs of national scientific and technological progress and social and economic transformation.

As for research resources, the field of managerial psychology in China has had the training system that can cultivate personnel of different levels from undergraduates to post-doctors. Research funds mainly come from National Natural Science Funding Committee (NNSFC) and partly from some enterprises involved. At present, the development of managerial psychology in our country faces the following problems: Firstly, study lacks focus or systematic plans in accordance

with the latest international trend and demands of social and economic changes. Secondly, although NNSFC and National Science and Technology Department have urgent demands for the role that managerial psychology plays in the nation's social and economic development, some important fields concerning the long-term development of managerial psychology cannot get necessary support due to insufficient funds. For example, Administration Science Department mainly offers financial aids for human resources management countermeasures projects that can be applied directly. Up till now the important projects of the pioneering study on managerial psychology theory have received no financial aid. Thirdly, laboratory facilities need improvement urgently. Managerial psychology is a comprehensive discipline that studies human-group-machine system. With the development of new technologies and new demands for managerial psychology study, modern national open labs of managerial psychology should be set up right now in order to shorten the gap between China and foreign countries. At present, many administration decision experiments, situation-simulated assessment and training, big sample survey and data processing cannot work without the support of computer network in other countries. Open labs of managerial psychology that can meet the demands of the new century should be set up through initiating major national projects.

DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTION

Organizational innovation and development during social and economic transition

The new demands of social and economic transition brought about by globalization will be the main issue in organizational innovation and people's adaptation that all countries will face in the following century. As far as China is concerned, transition from planned economy to market-oriented economy will bring many managerial psychology problems because of adjustment and development of organizational construction in a long period of time, which include the analysis of organizational environment characteristics and trend analysis, enterprises reconstruction, development strategies, administrative decision making, and technological innovation administration.

Theoretical basis of human resources management and countermeasures

According to demands of high-tech development and international competition, we have to explore human resources management model under the new situation so as to establish a systematic mechanism of job analysis, selection, training, placement, stimulation, assessment and flow. The mechanism of forming professional entrepreneur team, stimulation mechanism, human adaptation psychology, vocational development and intervention countermeasures, super-complicated system administration control and other administration problems should be studied in particular so as to form a series of human resources management countermeasures from the perspectives of job analysis, competency characteristics analysis, training demands assessment, professional entrepreneur selection, intelligence simulated training, organizational learning, personal placement and assessment. Only in this way can a human resources management model suitable for our country be built.

Organizational culture and learning model

In order to solve the problems of organizational management during the pivotal phase and coordinate all kinds of relationship, we must know the acceptance and adaptation of people of different levels towards occupational standard, interpersonal relation, organizational principle and distribution principle under the new situation, to establish new organizational behavior and cultural structure and affecting factors^[5]. By strengthening studies on individual, group and organization behavior factors under new economic development environment, cultural characteristics, construction and operation mech-

anism of new-type organization will be discovered and the trend of people's changing values can be explored. By launching cross-cultural research on management, the similarities and differences between eastern and western cultures will be revealed and new stimulation system and salary system will be explored^[6]. Through the organizational learning model, an administrative model and corporate culture suitable for the national condition will be constructed.

Economic psychology and national financial security

The main task is to explore consumer behavior, social insurance, investment psychology, economic confidence and expectation and the psychological factors that affect the investment expansion in order to set up a social stability predicting and monitoring system. In addition, it is necessary to carry out research on enterprise image strategy and explore the management problems of market-oriented technological innovation so as to construct the model of enterprise image strategy in China based on comparative studies^[7].

In conclusion, this article explores managerial psychology research on organizational change, leadership behavior, motivation mechanism and organizational culture based on the analysis of requirements of economic globalization and the changing situation of corporations. Paying attention to research at organizational-level changes, accentuating on the systematic exploitation of human resources, continuously expanding research field and giving more concern for the national goals have been the development trend of managerial psychology. In addition, we put forward the short-, intermediate-and long-term goals of managerial psychology research.

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管理心理学的现状与发展趋势*

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时勤☆男, 1949年生, 湖北省枝江县人, 汉族, 1990年中国科学院心理研究所毕业, 博士, 研究员, 主要从事组织行为学、人力资源管理的研究。

摘要
目的: 分析国内外管理心理学发展概况, 以利于解决文化、管理制度和处于转型期的独特问题。

资料来源: 应用中国期刊网和外文检索近二十年来关于组织和管理心理学的文献, 以及作者近年来有关管理心理学研究所发表的正式论文。

资料选择: 选择有关组织变革、领导行为、激励机制和组织文化方面研究的相关文献 24 篇。

资料提炼: 在这 24 篇文献中, 内容呈不同程度重复的有 17 篇, 给予删除, 对符合要求的 7 篇文献整理形成综述。

资料综合: 在综合分析了国内外管理心理学发展概况的基础上, 预测了管理心理学的研究新热点和发展趋势, 并提出了管理心理学研究的近期目标和中长期发展目标的建议。

结论: 管理心理学的发展趋势是: 重视组织层面的变革研究, 强调对人力资源的系统开发, 研究领域不断拓展, 更加关注国家目标。

关键词: 心理学/发展趋势/组织变革/组织和管理/人员开发

中图分类号: R749 文献标识码: A 文章编号: 1671-5926(2005)08-0244-03
时勤, 龙建华, 卢嘉, 王爽. 管理心理学的现状与发展趋势[J]. 中国临床康复, 2005, 9(8): 244-6 [www.zglckf.com]

(Edited by Fan XH/Song LP/Xiao XL)