

A Study on the Mechanisms of Management Practices in Culturally Heterogeneous Scenarios on Local Hotel Employees' Professional Identity and Organizational Commitment

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Abstract. Multicultural teams and local international hotels often employ expatriate managers in global projects. Expatriate leaders emphasize direct feedback, while Chinese leaders emphasize hierarchical reporting. This difference leads to a conflict between management styles and cultural inertia. This study primarily adopts theoretical research methods and is supplemented with case studies to analyze and construct the mechanism of the influence of cross-cultural management on hotel employees' professional identity and organizational commitment by searching the relevant literature on cross-cultural management, professional identity, and organizational commitment, and then combining the Combined with the practice cases of well-known hotel groups in China, we found that cross-cultural management characterized by high cultural intelligence and strong inclusiveness has a significant positive impact on employees' occupational identity and organizational commitment, and occupational identity plays a partly intermediary role in the influence of cross-cultural management on the relationship between the two, which enriches the research on cross-cultural leadership and human resource management, and holds certain value to the practice of hotel management.

Keywords: Cultural intelligence, inclusive leadership, occupational identity, organizational commitment, international hotel, cross-cultural management

1. Introduction

The national census report shows a significant increase in the foreign population in China from 2010 to 2020, with the number of foreigners in 2020 about 2.5 times that of 2010. It brings about an increase in cultural heterogeneity and potential culture clashes, especially evident in leader-employee interactions. Meanwhile, the increasingly younger workforce often exhibits marked professional alienation, along with a lack of role acceptance and sense of responsibility [1]. Against this backdrop, cross-cultural management has garnered considerable attention, as companies tend to prefer leaders capable of adjusting policies to motivate employees by eliciting positive behaviors (e.g., professional recognition and organizational commitment). Furthermore, in the context of a

competitive market, the hospitality industry is one of the highly competitive markets with high cultural heterogeneity [1]. This requires leadership to bridge the gap between cultural diversity and repeatable business processes [2]. However, most existing studies focus on cross-cultural team conflict management and performance improvement, and less on the impact on employee psychology [3]. Therefore, this paper mainly focuses on the theoretical discussion, supplemented by cases. Based on a literature review of cross-cultural management, professional identity, and organizational commitment, and integrated with management practices of well-known hotel groups in China, it conducts an analytical argumentation. Attempts are made to answer the following research questions: how does cross-cultural management by foreign managers affect local employees' occupational identity and organizational commitment? Does occupational identity play a mediating role in the relationship between cross-cultural management's influence on organizational commitment? The results will suggest empirical lessons and implications for human resource management in internationalized hotels under multiculturalism.

2. Literature review

2.1. Cross-cultural management

Cross-cultural management is recognized as the ability to collaborate and lead effectively across cultures. In the specific area of leadership, existing research identifies cultural intelligence and inclusive leadership as key elements. Cultural intelligence is defined as "an individual's ability to identify, comprehend, or resolve cross-cultural differences, which differs from general intelligence and emotional intelligence, and represents a multidimensional and independent competency structure". It comprises four components: metacognition, cognition, motivation, and behavior. Cultural intelligence has a significant impact on individual behavior in cross-cultural contexts, with metacognition and cognition strongly predicting cultural judgment and decision-making, while motivation and behavior are correlated with culturally adaptive task performance [3].

Inclusive leadership is a relational leadership style characterized by leaders who listen to employees' needs and foster dialogue [4]. Such leaders are distinguished by open communication, valuing employee needs, and accommodating differences [5]. Inclusive leadership can significantly enhance employees' work engagement by cultivating psychological safety and building trust in leaders [6]. At the same time, it can strengthen employees' professional identity and organizational commitment, particularly in multicultural environments [7].

2.2. Professional identity

In addition to cross-cultural management competence, professional identity is an important factor influencing employees' behaviors and attitudes in cross-cultural organizations. Previous studies have shown that employees construct their professional identity based on expectations or by establishing a shared identity with other colleagues, which has also been described as a process of human development [8]. Professional identity is shaped by personal factors, organizational factors, and social support. These factors interact with one another and collectively influence the level of an individual's professional identity [9]. Therefore, cognitive recognition of and emotional attachment to occupational roles are key determinants of professional identity, and serve as significant predictors of employees' occupational behaviors and attitudes [10]. In the hotel industry, the higher the level of employees' cultural intelligence, the stronger their professional identity and the greater their willingness to remain in the organization [11].

2.3. Organizational commitment

Organizational commitment refers to an individual's psychological attachment and emotional involvement in his or her organization, a degree of identification with the organization's goals, values, or sense of mission, and the degree to which an individual is loyal to the organization and is willing to contribute to the future development of the organization. Organizational commitment consists of three types: affective, sustained, and normative; for the hospitality industry, organizational commitment influences employees' work attitudes and behaviors, among other outcomes.

3. The mechanism of the two key dimensions of cross-cultural management on professional identity

3.1. The mechanism of high cultural intelligence management behavior on hotel employees' professional identity

The impact of managerial behavior on employees' professional identity is a crucial aspect of cross-cultural management. Employees' professional identity refers to their understanding of and sense of belonging to their professional roles, as well as their recognition of the organization's values and goals [9]. Cultural intelligence is an individual's ability to recognize, comprehend, and effectively address cultural differences in cross-cultural situations. The metacognitive and cognitive dimensions enable managers to understand and predict the impact of cultural differences on organizational behavior, whereas the motivational and behavioral dimensions determine how managers respond to the cultural needs of organizational members in cross-cultural contexts [12].

In practice, leadership behaviors characterized by high cultural intelligence are known for their responsiveness to cultural differences. For instance, Chinese employees often avoid explicitly saying “no” at work; if a leader with high cultural intelligence perceives this cultural trait, they are more likely to use a “commanding” rather than a “suggesting” tone when assigning tasks. When a leader with high cultural intelligence recognizes this cultural difference and assigns tasks in a “commanding” rather than a “suggesting” manner, such an adjustment in direct behavioral style directly influences employees' identification with their profession, as well as their sense of psychological belonging and value alignment within the organization.

In addition, cultural dimensions theory provides a framework for analyzing cultural differences, including dimensions such as power distance, individualism versus collectivism, and uncertainty avoidance. For managerial behavior, managers in high power distance cultures are more authoritative and employees tend to comply; in low power distance cultures, equality and participatory management are preferred. For professional identity, employees in individualistic cultures pay more attention to personal achievement. Moreover, employees in collectivistic cultures pay more attention to teamwork and a sense of belonging to the organization. Managers with high cultural intelligence can understand these cultural differences and adopt appropriate strategies, for example, encouraging participation and team identification while respecting employees' cultural backgrounds to enhance employees' professional identity and organizational commitment [13].

3.1.1. Identify cultural differences and establish a foundation for identification

Managers with high cultural intelligence first identify cultural differences through metacognition and cognition, e.g., employees' communication styles, decision-making modes, and reactions to

authority. For example, when receiving instructions from superiors, employees in Chinese hotels will first express their agreement, then propose or modify implementation plans. Managers with high cultural intelligence understand and manage the deep-seated cultural logic generated by this behavioral pattern and make adjustments in their management behavior. This cognition triggers employees to respect the managers' intrinsic psychological basis for their own culture and work habits.

3.1.2. Behavioral adjustment to strengthen professional competence identity

After identifying cultural differences, managers with high cultural intelligence respond to employees' needs by adjusting their management behaviors. Specific behaviors include changing the style of communication, participation in decision-making, the way of feedback, and revising decisions. Employees believe that their occupational importance and occupational professionalism are recognized due to changes in management behaviors, and thus their occupational identity is enhanced.

3.1.3. Case: marriott's "global leadership localization program"

A typical case of cultural intelligence management of professional identity — Marriott Hotel's "Global Leadership Localization Program". After the program was implemented in a store in China, the employee value score increased.

Specific measures included:

Cultural Training: Expatriate managers undergo systematic cultural training to gain an in-depth understanding of the cultural backgrounds and work practices of local employees.

Communication Adjustment: Expatriate managers adjust their communication styles to align more closely with the local culture.

Feedback mechanism: An effective feedback mechanism was established to gather employees' needs and suggestions.

It can be seen that after the expatriate leaders received cultural intelligence training and behavioral adjustment, the employees felt that their professional ability and professional value were affirmed, and their professional identity was enhanced. This case verifies the conclusion of the theoretical study that "high cultural intelligence enables managers to effectively mediate cross-cultural differences and establish mutual respect and trust, thus affecting the psychological structure of employees".

3.2. The mechanism of inclusive leadership behavior on hotel employees' career identity

In addition to employees' own career development experiences, the formation of professional identity is also directly related to managerial leadership behavior [5]. Inclusive leadership enhances employees' professional identity by providing psychological security and a sense of value-based belonging, enabling them to feel valued and develop a sense of organizational attachment. For hotel employees, who frequently interact with customers and face high work pressure, inclusive leadership can alleviate career-related anxiety and strengthen employees' professional role identity and career stability.

3.2.1. Value recognition

The occupational identity of employees in the hotel industry has a close connection with the employees' sense of identification with their work in the industry, and the attention and affirmation of inclusive leadership can improve the employees' sense of self-efficacy, which makes the employees think that the value of their occupational roles is irreplaceable, and then improves their own occupational identity.

3.2.2. Sense of role belonging

Inclusive leadership encourages employee participation in decision-making, which not only boosts motivation but also strengthens employees' sense of professional belonging. For example, team meetings allow employees to participate in the hotel's business management decisions, discuss how to arrange shifts, and how to deal with customer complaints. For the existence of problems, allowing employees to propose corrective comments. When employees find that their own opinions are adopted, it produces a certain impact, and the sense of belonging to the profession and the organization will be strong. Including both cognitive and emotional employee professional identity.

3.3. Case: hilton hotel "employee voice program"

Hilton's "Listen to Employee Voices" program serves as a practical example of inclusive leadership behavior aimed at promoting employees' professional identity. Managers are required to listen to employees' feedback, ask questions regarding workflows, customer experience, and internal communication, and report the employees' perspectives to hotel management during quarterly review meetings. Hilton's internal survey indicated that, following the implementation of the program, approximately 95% of employees reported satisfaction with their current jobs. This indicates a significant improvement in participating employees' professional identity, as well as a notable reduction in hotel employee turnover [14].

4. Mechanisms by which professional identity further influences organizational commitment

Occupational identity enhances employee-organization emotions. High occupational identity of employees to the role of "hotel services" and self-worth associated with it. When employees perceive their own value embodied in the occupation and that this reflects their abilities and aspirations, they develop emotional commitment to the organization that enables them to realize this value. Occupational identity improves employee identification with organizational goals and self [15]. Employees with high occupational identity identify with organizational service values and form normative commitment. In hospitality companies, service norms, customer service philosophy, and organizational culture are the guidelines for daily behavior. Professional identity connects employees' professions to organizational values, prompting employees to consciously regulate their behaviors, remain loyal to the organization, and abide by its rules and regulations.

Employees with a high degree of professional identity see "hotel service provider" as an important way to achieve self-worth, because the organization provides a platform for the realization of value, training, and promotion opportunities. Employees will feel the recognition of personal ability and value realization, thus generating loyalty to the organization's identity. Hotel front-line departments, such as the front office and guest rooms, and the food and beverage department staff provide quality service to harvest customer evaluation and professional identity and to obtain self-identity and organizational identity [16].

If the employee's professional value is reflected in the organization, it will create an emotional attachment to the organization, and emotional attachment can motivate employees to work hard rather than slacking off or leaving the job when the employee is under high pressure and in complex customer service situations, forming a strong emotional attachment to the organization [17]. However, local employees have a more stable occupational identity and relatively higher affective and continuance commitment due to their familiarity with the local culture, whereas expatriate employees may fluctuate in their occupational identity and willingness to stay due to the pressure of cultural adaptation [18].

Professional identity leads employees to agree with the organization's service philosophy and easily accept its normative requirements. For example, employees with a strong sense of professional identity will consciously comply with the standard service process, etiquette norms of service, norms of customer communication, and other requirements, internalize the professional obligations of the organization, and make normative commitments. This is particularly beneficial for cross-cultural hotels, ensuring that employees in cross-cultural contexts provide the same level of service.

5. The amplification of the above effects by the specificity of the hotel industry

The hotel is a typical service-oriented industry; therefore, the formation process of cross-cultural management and professional identity amplifies the impact of cross-cultural management and professional identity on organizational commitment [19,20]. This amplification is primarily reflected in two aspects: "high interactivity" and "service non-standardization"

5.1. Mechanisms of high interactivity to amplify influence

Another key feature of hotel service is the frequent interaction between employees and leaders. Unlike the manufacturing industry and back-office positions, the daily interaction between employees and leaders is far beyond the manufacturing industry, especially in the front office, catering, and guest room positions. The details of the cross-culture directly affect the psychology of the employees, including how to criticize the leadership, how to praise, and how to communicate with the employees to determine their own professional role and their own value of the judgment.

Thus, in a cross-cultural context, if expatriate leaders overlook local cultural differences or lack inclusive communication methods, employees' sense of professional identity will decline. This decline in the sense of professional identity will be further caused by the lack of emotional attachment and normative commitment to reduce the organizational loyalty and retention of employees, and for the hotel industry it is also more direct because of the need to face the implementation of high-intensity services every day. In the face of the customer, the psychological feeling of the change will be the first time, the first time, the first time, the first time, the first time, the first time, the first time, and the first time. Changes in psychological feelings will be reflected in the first time in the behavior, such as changes in attitude, intention to leave, the rise, and so on.

5.2. Service non-standard amplification of the impact of the mechanism

Another feature of the hotel service is that it is non-standardized, based on local customs and customer preferences. Unlike standardized product manufacturing (which has strict requirements for workers), hotel services demand cultural adaptability. For example, employees in the Chinese restaurant catering services usually use the traditional Chinese standard service procedures. If a

foreign leader insists on using "knife and fork to do Chinese banquets," the waiter will feel that their ability and value are underestimated and thus feel frustrated.

This kind of professional frustration reduces the employee's recognition of his/her profession, makes it difficult to link the role of "hotel service provider" with his/her self-worth, and reduces the employee's emotional and normative commitment to the company.

6. Recommendations

6.1. Focus of training for foreign managers

According to relevant research, if cross-cultural leaders do not have local cultural awareness, it is very easy to lead to subordinates' professional identity and organizational commitment to reduce [21]. Through systematic training, we should help employees to improve cultural adaptability: open the "Chinese workplace culture class." The training content includes power distance, deciphering communication, face culture, etc., so that foreign leaders understand the potential cultural motivations behind the subordinate's behavior. For instance, if a subordinate remains silent after being criticized, it is not a sign of disagreement but of respect for the leader and a desire to "save face." The training can help leaders not to make a fuss about their subordinates when they don't understand the situation and avoid subordinates losing their professional identity due to the inappropriate control of leaders. case simulation, role-playing: combined with the reality of the hotel, such as reception, catering services, etc., the simulations of the collision of Chinese and Western cultures so that expatriate leaders can learn from the case of the inclusive communication style, local cultural adaptability, etc. A cultural sensitivity test can also be conducted: a situational judgment and self-reflection questionnaire on typical Chinese and Western culture clash scenarios. Through quantitative scoring and qualitative feedback, we can ensure that the training effects are translated into actual management behaviors.

6.2. Inclusive leadership development

Inclusive leadership can respect employees, encourage innovation, enhance employees' professional identity, and strengthen emotional and normative commitment. Specifically, the establishment of a staff suggestions feedback channel: take online mailbox, monthly meeting culture, and other forms to encourage employees to raise service innovation and cultural adaptation suggestions, such as for the tableware on the table with the hotel room holiday elements, etc. The manager should fully respect and actively respond to the adoption of the staff as a managerial assessment standard. regular exchanges and affirmation: monthly meetings, recognition, and other ways to let employees feel the professional values Regular communication and affirmation: Monthly meetings, award ceremonies, and other activities should be used to help employees recognize their professional value and identify with their "hotel service provider" role, thereby enhancing emotional commitment and normative commitment; Establishment of a cultural management positive and negative case library: covering the success and failure of cross-cultural management of the hotel front desk, food and beverage service, and other positions, for leaders to understand the cultural motivation behind the behavior of employees and learn inclusive leadership strategies; Incorporation of the employee's evaluation of cultural inclusiveness into the promotion appraisal: the employee's evaluation of cultural inclusiveness into the promotion appraisal. Incorporate employees' evaluation of leaders' cultural inclusiveness into promotion assessment: through incorporation into promotion assessment, leaders are urged to continuously improve their cultural sensitivity and communication skills.

6.3. Organizational mechanism optimization

In addition to changing managers' behaviors, optimizing organizational systems can further enhance the impact of organizational commitment improvement. Specific measures include: Creating a cross-cultural coordination post: it is filled by employees with Chinese and Western cultural backgrounds who have lived and worked in the local workplace for a long time to assist expatriate operators in their understanding of their employees, e.g., the silence of their employees, which can help expatriate operators understand the psychology of their employees under the influence of power distance and face-saving, etc., to reduce the destruction of their professional identification; allow dual-track service standards: While maintaining international standards, Chinese cultural standards should be added, such as room design standards that can be added to the holiday elements, familiarization, and so on.

7. Conclusion

The study shows that high cultural intelligence and inclusive leadership significantly enhance local employees' work identity and organizational commitment in the hospitality industry. When managers respect local culture and acknowledge employees, it boosts their emotional and normative commitment, and their willingness to stay and be dedicated. This effect is amplified by the industry's high interactivity and non-standardized services. However, the study lacks quantitative empirical evidence. Future research should use surveys and experiments to quantify the impact of cross-cultural management behaviors on professional identity and organizational commitment. For example, exploring how a 10% increase in cultural intelligence affects professional identity. Additionally, differences in cross-cultural management behaviors among leaders from diverse cultural backgrounds (e.g., European-American, Asian) should be examined to provide deeper insights.

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