How Can Individualistic/Collectivistic Orientation Affects Chaxu Leadership's Availability

Ping WANG 1,a and Lin WANG 1,b,*

1 ZheJiang Sci-Tech University, Hangzhou, Zhejiang, China 310018

a wp190923@163.com, b wlin3123@126.com

*Corresponding author

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Abstract. Purposes: There are significant differences between Chinese social structure and western countries’, so it is necessary to study Chinese localized leadership style and explore whether it’s effective. Procedures: by summarizing current studies, we introduce the definition, origin of Chaxu leadership and why it is effective in Chinese background, then, individualistic orientation and collectivistic orientation have been presented. Conclusions: we came up of some assumptions and hypotheses for further research, discussing about how will individualistic/collectivistic orientation affects Chaxu leadership’s availability.

Introduction

ChaxuGeju, proposed by Fei Xiaotong, has a strong explanatory on Chinese society and relationships, so while learning to understand the psychological and behavior of Chinese leaderships in organizations, it is very helpful and significant to take ChaxuGeju into account (Yan Yunxiang, 2006). Chaxu leadership is a kind of leadership from ChaxuGeju, means leaders are not equal treatment of all employees but in favor of some individual employees. Chaxu leadership has been validated widespread in Chinese organization (Zheng Boxun etc, 2006; Jiang Dingyu etc, 2010; Wang Lei, 2013). Though it seems like an unfair style which can cause negative feelings, some scholars as Ma Jun (2012) hold the views that since Chinese people have a rational flexible characteristics—if individual can not change the reality, they will adjust themselves to minimize the loss, in other words, employees have a high obedience and tolerance to their superiors. Related studies have confirmed it, Chaxu leadership can significantly affect the performance of subordinates (Jiang Dingyu et al, 2010; Wang Lei, 2013).

Considering subordinates are the recipients of leadership, and job performance is the most direct way to know whether the leadership is effective, so subordinates’ job performance is used to examine the Chaxu leadership. Also, the traits of subordinates are so important that must be considered. Chinese are recognized as Collectivistic, but some scholars suggested that each person has different characteristics, one country one characteristic is unacceptable, individualism and collectivism are co-exist in Chinese society. Individualistic/collectivistic orientation, have a close relation with individual’s psychological perception and action tendencies, so do they will affects the availability of Chaxu leadership.

Chaxu Leadership

What’s Chaxu Leadership?

Chaxu leadership is born of a series of theoretical, such as ChaxuGeju (Fei Xiaotong, 1948), the relationship between Guanxi(Huang Guangguo, 1988; Yang Guoshu, 1993), Trust Pattern (Chen Jiexuan, Gao chengshu, 1991) and “pro-loyalty, loyalty, talent” Pattern (Zheng Boxun, 1995) and other extension. Above theories describe the evolution and transition of Chaxu relation, which has three major changes in content: First, the orientation of relationship has been expanded. The factors
influencing Chaxu relationship orientation are from genetic and other congenital factors to acquired factors like ability and loyalty, in other words, whether relationship is close also impacted by individual characteristics. Second, because the relationship is impacted by acquired factors like ability and loyalty, when the personal ability changes, their relationship will changes together, the “Outsiders” rose to “Insiders” gradually is a very normal phenomenon. Third, the object of study is from social phenomenon down to leadership behaviour within the organization. Organization is refined interpersonal unit, zeroed in leadership behaviour within the organization will greater research value.

However, these changes have laid a theoretical foundation for Chaxu leadership. Professor Jiang and Zhang (2010) summarizing all these theories and define the Chaxu leadership as Chinese leaders’ attitudes to subordinate various from the closeness of relationship. That’s to say, Chinese leaders give more favour to good related subordinates, including rewards, care or even opportunities for promotion. According to the definition of Jiang (2010), Chaxu leadership is divided into solicitude and communication, promotion and rewards, tolerance of mistakes three dimensions.

Along this definition, some scholars carried out researches about its function. Recent researches can be divided into two types, one is individual-level, the other is team-level. The impact of Chaxu leadership on individual-level is mainly in psychological perception and behaviour, such as justice perceptions, job satisfaction, knowledge sharing, unethical behaviour, counterproductive work behaviour and so on, in Chinese background, Chaxu leadership promote them positively. When it turns to team-level, recent studies focus on team performance, team identity and team knowledge sharing, most results show positively too.

Why it is effective in China?

Though directly studies between Chaxu leadership and subordinates’ job performance are rare, available studies are focus on Taiwan. The results show that Chaxu leadership has a positive role in promoting performance, but the specific conclusions are slightly different (Jiang Dingyu ect, 2010; Wang Lei, 2013).

Study from Jiang Dingyu and Zhang wanzhen (2010) shows that Chaxu leadership is still significant positive influent job performance while the effect of paternalistic leadership is taken control. Moreover, the impact is not confined to the favors one, the employees who are not be cared also appear to higher performance. Wang Lei (2013) starts his research from the perspective of trust, studies show favoritism behavior can not only promote performance but also assist to improve mutually helping behavior. For this, he explains that it is a convention that new employees into organization are often treated as an “outsider”, so they won’t consider its unfair, instead, they using the way of tolerance and patience to get continuous performance to be “insider”. Therefore, this paper deduces Chaxu leadership is helpful to improve subordinates’ job performance in Chinese situation.

In summary, Chaxu leadership is considered to be an unique style of Chinese leadership, though it seems to cause an unfair atmosphere in organization, but in the role of Chinese relations oriented cultural, it does work. The in favour employees get more resources and opportunities, the other subordinates also will show better attitude, better work performance because of the Chinese “Ren” and “Shi” culture, so it do positively work on subordinates’ job performance, we proposed:

H1: Chaxu leadership is conducive to improving subordinates’ job performance.

Individualistic/Collectivistic Orientation

Individualistic/Collectivistic orientation is defined from micro level of individual departure rather than national culture, which means personal mindset. Triandis and Gelfand (1998) hold the views that people between individualistic and Collectivistic do be different in self-awareness, objectives, actions and relation-awareness. China has been known as collectivistic orientated country, but there are also difference between each person (Yu Mi, 2011). Individualism and collectivism are not the ends of the two orientation but the two contents of one orientation.

Besides, Triandis (1988) proposed to add a horizontal and vertical dimension according to how
people views himself in a group, if one has a higher scores in vertical means he is likely to be emphasis on hierarchy and easy to accept social status; if one have higher horizontal scores will attempt to emphasis on equality(Wang Yongli, Shi Kan,2003). Thus, individualistic/collectivistic orientation is divided into four dimensions, named Vertical Individualism(VI), Horizontal Individualism(HI), Vertical Collectivism(VC), and Horizontal Collectivism(HC), each has different meanings as label 1 shows.

Table 1. Dimension contrast.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Opinion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vertical</td>
<td>Emphasize individual independence;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualism</td>
<td>Keen to compare;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Competition is the law of nature;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aim at victory;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horizontal</td>
<td>Stress equal On the basis of independence;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualism</td>
<td>Not focus on comparison;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Doing their own thing;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can sacrifice themselves for the collective, but stresses the authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vertical</td>
<td>structure within organization;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collectivism</td>
<td>Accept the inequality of status;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Competition between members in organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interdependence among members;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horizontal</td>
<td>Emphasis on equality and personality;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collectivism</td>
<td>Team happiness is very important;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emphasize common goals;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Individualistic Orientation**

Triandis (1988) argues that individualism-oriented employees emphasize individual independence, tend to achieve self-worth through self-reliance, and emphasize interpersonal relationships as a loose social interpersonal relationship and structure. Therefore, subordinates don’t recognize the behaviour of getting resources through close relationship, superior leader tend to be in favour of same colleagues will break the fairness of competition. So, in the individualistic oriented of subordinates’ view, the positive relation between Chaxu leadership and job performance is weakened and may even be negative.

The difference between horizontal individualism and vertical individualism lies in whether it emphasizes competition, horizontal individualism advocates equality, while vertical individualism places great emphasis on competition and status, which leads to the difference of the adjustment effect between Chaxu leadership and job performance. Because vertical individualism tend to focus on competition with others, even if the found to lag behind in terms of resource, they won’t give up working hard for their own performance, so it will weaken the negative adjustment effect or make it less significant than horizontal individualism. In summary, this paper proposed:

H2: The individualistic orientation plays a negative role in moderating the relationship between Chaxu leadership and job performance, and horizontal individualistic orientation has higher negative adjustment effect than vertical individualistic orientation.

**Collectivistic Orientation**

Yang Ziwei believes that collectivistic orientation employee hope by emphasizing the absolute loyalty to the collective in exchange for their concern, so a collective organization is more close to individualism, Chinese collectivism is evolved from Chaxu Geju. That to say, individuals behave according to the cognition of situation. Under the influence of the political economy and culture, Chinese tend to compliance with authority, that’s why leader has a strong influence in organization. Therefore, the motivating of being in favour of leaders is obvious, collectivistic orientation employee are more likely to show characteristics of “pro-loyalty, loyalty and talent” to meet the expectation of leader, while the “talent” is reflected in job performance.
Whether a employee is horizontal collectivistic or vertical based on how individuals perceive themselves in a team, horizontal collectivistic underline equality while vertical collectivistic is more likely to accept inequality. This means that when one of the members of the team get more favour and rewords because of relationship with leaders, horizontal collectivistic orientation subordinates fells more upset. Since they were equal, each one should be in favour equally, they will better work, more communication with leaders to get trust and partiality, so the horizontal collectivistic orientation subordinates more be inspired, so we proposed:

H3: The collectivistic orientation plays a positive role in moderating the relationship between Chaxu leadership and job performance, and horizontal collectivistic orientation has higher positive adjustment effect than vertical collectivistic orientation.

Above all, the model shown in Figure 1 below:

![Theoretical Model](image)

Figure 1. Theoretical Model.

**Conclusion, Implications, and Directions for Future Research**

First, Chaxu leadership style is deeply rooted in Chinese traditional culture and social background, this study combines the traditional culture and modern enterprise management, making it more meaningful to turn the study on Chaxu leadership from theory to organizations. Presently studies on Chaxu leadership are mostly concentrated in Taiwan, mainland China about its research is not common, so its real precious and practicality to discuss the universality and effectiveness of Chaxu leadership by local Chinese business.

Second, we argue that Chaxu leadership is helpful and suitable in China, but also noted that different employees have different effects, with full attention to individual differences. Chinese are generally regarded as collectivist orientations, taken individualistic orientation and collectivistic orientation in study helps to better reflect the current characteristics of Chinese society as well as make the study more rigorous.

Third, the future scholar should emphasize more on Chaxu leadership as a research theme, especially its social structure and cultural background, that’s why Chaxu leadership is effective in China rather than all of the world. The definition and measurement of Chaxu leadership is still to be enriched in current study, applying the Chaxu leadership to be organization better needs to taken organizational feature, individual characteristics of subordinates as well as leaders into consideration.

**References**


