

Factors Influencing Employees' Intrapreneurial Behavior

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Effectively promoting employees' intrapreneurial behavior has become the focus of enterprises. This study takes the middle and grassroots employees in enterprises as subjects and explores the configuration effect of multiple influencing factors on employees' intrapreneurial behavior. Based on employee expectation theory and individual-environment matching theory, this study collates six influencing factors: entrepreneurial self-efficacy, entrepreneurial competence, task school level, perceived value, management support, and reward mechanism. A total of 163 samples were obtained, and the qualitative comparative analysis method based on fuzzy set was used to analyze the influence mechanism and result path of employees' intrapreneurial behavior from the perspective of the interaction between individual factors and organizational factors. Six influencing paths of employees' high intrapreneurial behavior were found, which can be divided into ability-driven and value-driven factors, revealing that the six factors can produce equivalent results in different configurations. Furthermore, five influencing paths of employees' non-high intrapreneurial behavior were divided into three types: ability obstacle type, perception obstacle type, and value obstacle type. These have an asymmetric causal relationship with employees' high intrapreneurial behavior. This study provides management support for effectively stimulating employees' intrapreneurial behavior.

employees' intrapreneurial behavior

intrapreneurship

employees' individual factors

organizational factors

fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis

1. Introduction

In the context of emphasizing the input and output of innovation, innovation capability naturally becomes a crucial guarantee for businesses to maintain competitiveness and achieve positive performance growth. Simultaneously, employees, as carriers of innovation activities within a company, play a key role in utilizing the company's business resources for innovative activities. With the increasing flattening of organizational structures and the knowledge-based nature of labor in society, the management philosophy used to emphasize hierarchy and authority has gradually shifted toward emphasizing equality and cooperation. The focus has shifted from a supervision-oriented "economic person" to an achievement-oriented "entrepreneur". They are willing to take risks, are enthusiastic about facing challenges and overcoming difficulties, and passionate about value creation. Many companies encourage employees with entrepreneurial intentions to undertake new businesses and projects within the organization. In this approach, employees are primarily responsible for the entire business process, and share profits and achievements with the company during the business settlement. This approach is known as the internal

entrepreneurship mode. It not only satisfies employees' entrepreneurial desires, but also stimulates the vitality of internal personnel and enhances the company's innovation capabilities.

Google encourages its employees to document their innovative ideas. The company provides funding and technical support, allowing employees to dedicate 20% of their working time to implementing ideas [1]. This approach not only meets the individual needs of employees, but also enhances the company's internal innovation capacity. Huawei offers supportive policies and preferential treatment for entrepreneurial employees. They provide equipment and promise to reassign employees to other positions within the company if their entrepreneurial endeavors fail within six months. This not only addresses employees' concerns about their future but also enables them to focus on intrapreneurial activities [2]. As a result, it facilitates the creation of new businesses and ventures for the company. Research has confirmed that internal entrepreneurship has a positive impact on employees' work engagement through the mediating variable of psychological capital. Management can encourage employees' intrapreneurial behavior, which can lead to wholehearted dedication to work [3]. Moreover, high consistency between user-driven innovation and employee intrapreneurship as sources of higher innovation performance has been confirmed [4]. Thus, at the organizational level, employees' entrepreneurial behavior has gradually become an important way for companies to enhance their innovation capabilities and maintain core competitiveness.

Intrapreneurial behavior is a process in which employees, based on new employment opportunities, utilize the platform provided by their parent company to create new ventures and drive overall strategic updates within the company [5]. However, employees' intrapreneurial behavior does not always occur as expected by managers, as not all employees respond to a company's call to engage in internal entrepreneurship. Employees who lack the corresponding traits or environmental stimuli may not exhibit entrepreneurial behavior [6].

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Background

2.1. Employees' Intrapreneurship

The concept of intrapreneurship originally referred to a process in which relatively independent small teams within large organizations or companies engaged in entrepreneurial activities. Fischer defines intrapreneurship as the actions taken by established companies to enhance profitability, achieve strategic renewal, and drive innovation [6]. Moreover, intrapreneurship is defined as activities undertaken by an organization to strengthen innovation, assume risks, and proactively respond to environmental forces [7]. Others define it from the perspective of individual employees, stating that it involves employees within an organization deviating from routine to pursue new opportunities, engage in new activities, or take bottom-up, work-related proactive actions [8]. Additionally, it is described as the proactive work-related activities of capable employees who can transform ideas into business success using a bottom-up approach [9]. Currently, a widely accepted comprehensive concept of intrapreneurship emphasizes the differentiation between its organizational and individual aspects [5]. By integrating both personal and organizational aspects, the following definition is proposed: Intrapreneurship refers to the process in which employees identify and exploit opportunities through innovation, proactiveness, and risk-taking, enabling the organization to create new products, processes, and services, and initiate self-renewal or entrepreneurship to

enhance the organization's competitiveness and performance [5]. Other scholars argue that intrapreneurship, regardless of the size of the company, has a significant impact on various aspects of organizational development. They believe that intrapreneurship is essentially an activity-driven concept that leads the organization toward new directions in terms of its products and services, technology, structure, or operations [10][11][12]. Employees are identified as initiators and primary contributors to the innovation process, and innovative employee behavior is driven by intrapreneurship (bottom-up) [13][14].

The current consensus in academia is that intrapreneurship exists at two levels: organizational and individual. Organizational-level intrapreneurship is considered to be more aligned with entrepreneurial activities at the company level, with initiators being predominantly top-level managers who emphasize the creation of new ventures. Therefore, organizational-level intrapreneurship bears a strong resemblance to corporate entrepreneurship. By contrast, individual-level employee intrapreneurship primarily focuses on non-managerial or lower-level managerial employees [15]. Employees often passively perform job tasks and instructions. In individual-level intrapreneurship, employees take responsibility for innovation, and proactively and spontaneously pursue internal entrepreneurial projects. This is referred to as bottom-up intrapreneurship.

2.2. Factors Influencing Employees' Intrapreneurial Behavior

Employee intrapreneurship focuses on the individual rather than the organizational level. It emphasizes the proactive assumption of innovation responsibilities by non-managerial or lower-level managerial employees within the existing organizational framework, engaging in bottom-up entrepreneurial activities. Employees are constantly situated within the organization, and, according to the person-environment fit theory, their behavior is influenced not only by individual factors but also by their organizational environment. A combination of these factors determines the subsequent employee behavior. Therefore, the factors that influence employee intrapreneurship include both individual and organizational factors. Individual factors primarily serve as intrinsic motivations for employee intrapreneurship, while organizational factors act as external influences.

2.2.1. Employees' Individual Factors

Individual traits, abilities, and cognition are important factors that influence employee intrapreneurship. Individual traits and human capital influence intrapreneurial employee behavior [16]. A comprehensive capability indicator known as entrepreneurial competence is a key factor in determining employee intrapreneurship behavior [17]. Scholars have elucidated the content of entrepreneurial competence, which includes opportunity perception, risk taking, and resource allocation abilities. Based on these criteria, entrepreneurial competence can be divided into self-perception and practical ability. Employees with high self-efficacy perceptions often exhibit intrapreneurial behaviors. By contrast, in terms of practical ability, opportunity recognition ability significantly enhances the likelihood of employees engaging in intrapreneurial behavior [18]. Regarding cognitive factors at the employee level, employees' organizational identification, which refers to their sense of belonging to an organization, is positively correlated with the occurrence of intrapreneurial employee behavior [19]. Additionally, employees' organizational identification partially mediates the relationship between leadership and intrapreneurial behavior [19]. Employee job

satisfaction plays a significant role in the process of intrapreneurial behavior. High job satisfaction has a positive impact on intrapreneurial behavior within an organization [20][21]. Scholars have introduced the concept of self-efficacy at the employee cognitive level [22][23]. Self-efficacy refers to employees' cognitive beliefs about their ability to accomplish a specific task successfully. They found a relationship between self-efficacy and employees' intrapreneurial spirit, indicating that higher self-efficacy is associated with a higher likelihood of intrapreneurial behavior [22][23]. Obtaining management support is crucial for employees willing to engage in intrapreneurial activities. Management support includes managerial behaviors that foster employees' intrapreneurial spirit, such as encouraging employees and providing them with appropriate assistance [24].

2.2.2. Organizational Factors

Organizational flexibility can provide employees with a smoother and more diverse information flow [25]. High flexibility increases the likelihood of entrepreneurial behavior among employees. Organizational flexibility is positively correlated with employees' job satisfaction and self-efficacy [25]. Allowing employees to design their own work leads to more entrepreneurial activities, thereby positively influencing their intrapreneurial behavior [26]. Simultaneously, employees' job autonomy enhances their self-efficacy [25]. Organizational rewards and reinforcements constitute the fourth dimension. Rewards can effectively increase employees' willingness to participate in innovative projects [27].

Scholars have researched internal entrepreneurship from various perspectives including individual abilities, employee cognition, organizational structure, management styles, and social influence. Currently, most scholars focus on one aspect to draw corresponding conclusions, overlooking the fact that the emergence of employee behavior is not solely determined by individual factors, but is closely related to the organizational environment. Multiple factors influence the decisive factors in subsequent employee behavior. Therefore, conclusions derived from linear studies of one-dimensional factors lack comprehensive consideration, and further in-depth research is required in this area.

2.3. The Theory of Person-Environment Fit

Person-environment fit theory suggests that the degree of alignment between individuals and their environments greatly influences employees' job attitudes and subsequent behaviors. This theory explores the outcomes and impacts that arise during a match or mismatch between an individual's values, expectations, goals, and the environment. Scholars consider the results of person-environment fit to be predictive indicators of employees' job attitudes and subsequent behaviors [28][29]. In the context of intrapreneurial behavior, employees' judgment of engaging in such behavior is not solely influenced by individual factors, but also by changes in their surrounding environment. When employees perceive that they are unable to achieve their goals or that environmental obstacles are too significant for them to benefit from internal entrepreneurship, they are likely to refrain from engaging in such behaviors. Conversely, during favorable conditions, employees are more likely to proactively seek internal entrepreneurial opportunities and engage in such activities. Therefore, when exploring the factors that influence employees' intrapreneurial behavior, it is crucial to consider both the individual characteristics of employees and

their organizational environment. Only by considering both aspects can people gain a more comprehensive understanding of intrapreneurial behavior, and the theory of person-environment fit can effectively support the factors influencing employees' intrapreneurial behavior.

2.4. The Theory of Employee Expectations

Regarding employee expectations, expectancy theory was initially proposed by American psychologist Vroom [30]. The author suggests that individuals have different needs, and the existence of these needs continuously stimulates their intrinsic motivation to fulfill various needs by achieving their goals. When individuals assess if something meets their internal expectations, they consider the probability of accomplishing the event, and the value derived from its completion. The basic expectation model is expressed as motivation (M) = expectancy (E) × valence (V). According to expectancy theory, when an individual's expectations and valence regarding a task are high, they experience greater motivation, actively striving to engage in the expected behavior to fulfill their expectations. Conversely, when an individual's expectations or valence regarding a task are low, the motivational effect diminishes, and they may approach the task with relative passivity, or even experience negative emotions [31] [32]. As a form of employee behavior, internal entrepreneurship is the result of a comprehensive evaluation of individual conditions and the organizational environment. This behavior can be explained and predicted by an individual's expectations and valence. When employees are in favorable situations, they experience strong motivating forces that lead to innovative behavior. Conversely, internal entrepreneurship is inhibited in unfavorable environments. Therefore, the expectancy theory effectively helps us understand the “pathway” of employees' internal entrepreneurship behavior and to explore the antecedents that influence its occurrence.

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