

GENERATIONAL COLLABORATION STRATEGIES AND ORGANIZATIONAL SUCCESS: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHINESE FAMILY BUSINESSES

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Abstract: *This research focuses on exploring the impact of cross-generational dynamics on strategic decision-making, implementation, and organizational performance within the context of family-owned businesses, particularly in the Chinese landscape. With the acceleration of social change and the resulting reduced generational gaps, there's a critical need to understand and manage the diverse needs, expectations, and leadership styles across generations within these enterprises. The study aims to investigate how cross-generational communication, leadership styles, human resource policies, and knowledge transfer influence strategic decision-making and organizational performance. Data is collected through questionnaires administered in family-owned businesses, focusing on the interplay between different generations and their impact on organizational success.*

Keywords: *Cross-generational dynamics; Family-owned businesses; Intergenerational communication; Organizational performance; Strategic decision-making*

Introduction

Concerns that arise from leading a team that spans many generations are referred to as "intergenerational issues" or the "generation gap." Previously, a "generation" referred to a period of 20 or 10 years; however, with the acceleration of social change, this period has shrunk to as little as 5 or 3 years. It is important for younger relatives to learn about and participate in the decision-making processes in the family. For instance, grandparents and great-grandparents might include their grandchildren and great-grandchildren in family events like council meetings so that the latter can learn from and watch the former's knowledge, experience, ideas, and decision-making. Growing families have new challenges in communicating and making decisions together.

Second-generation members of "Chinese-style" families, however, are frequently unprepared for such responsibilities. It's possible that family patriarchs and matriarchs are hesitant to include them in family difficulties because they want to maintain power, are worried about their money, or fear losing their assets. Therefore, the next generation is unprepared to assume leadership roles due to a lack of knowledge and experience. Many Chinese enterprises are structured as limited liability corporations, with one spouse acting as the company's founder and both acting as shareholders. It's possible, though, that they won't properly apply the "three meetings and one layer" approach, which might lead to unfilled positions and duties inside the family business.

The cultural, social, and political climates in which people come of age vary greatly over the course of history. The fast societal developments taking place right now have highlighted the unique traits of the generation born after 1995, making them a sizable part of the labour market. The presence of such individuals presents a challenge to established methods of management, notwithstanding the benefits they offer to the company (Loang & Ahmad, 2023). Therefore, it is crucial for managers to have an appreciation for workers born after 1995 if they are to effectively engage, interpret, and encourage this generation.

Since China's reform and opening up policies, family-owned businesses have played an increasingly important part in the country's development. Many of these firms' founding members are now entering their senior years, making it critical to address the problem of intergenerational succession. The outcome of this case is crucial to the future success of private businesses in China. According to studies conducted by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, approximately 62% of private firms in China have been in operation for over 50 years. Over three million private businesses will soon have to overcome the difficulty of intergenerational communication, which will hinder their chances of achieving successful and long-term growth.

Since the reform and opening up of China, Chinese family enterprises have flourished and made great contributions in promoting economic growth and solving employment problems, and have become an important force in supporting China's economic development (Azman, Zabri, Masron & Malim, 2020). In recent years, as the curtain call of the first generation of entrepreneurs is approaching, the issue of inheritance has become an urgent and real problem for Chinese family enterprises. Family business is a complex system composed of family, enterprise and ownership, by the "family" and "enterprise" into one, the inheritance of the family business, but also the owner and the heir of the two generations of wealth, resources, capabilities, ideas, spirit of inheritance. A large amount of tacit knowledge in the enterprise is the main source of the core competitiveness of the enterprise due to the characteristic of being

difficult to imitate (Loang, Ahmad & Naveenan, 2023). For family enterprises, these elements that can bring unique advantages to the enterprise are often possessed by the first generation of entrepreneurs. (Goins,2021) Therefore, the intergenerational transfer of entrepreneurial tacit knowledge is the key to the success of inheritance. Since tacit knowledge is quite implicit and complex, in many cases, intergenerational transfer is accomplished through subtle ways, and intergenerational interaction is inseparable from the transfer of entrepreneurs' tacit knowledge. The intergenerational interaction is inseparable from the transfer of entrepreneurial tacit knowledge, and the interaction between entrepreneurs and their successors is commonly occurring and easily observable in the form of intergenerational conflicts between the two parties (LiLi & Loang, 2023).

Research questions

- How do cross-generational communication and collaboration strategies affect strategic decision-making and implementation?
- What strategies can organizations adopt to effectively manage and leverage multigenerational diversity in strategic decision-making?
- How do the leadership styles of cross-generational leaders affect organizational culture and its alignment with strategic goals?
- How do generational differences in HR policies and practices affect the development and implementation of strategic plans?
- How do cross-generational knowledge transfer and learning opportunities affect strategic management approaches?

Research objectives

- Identify and analyze how cross-generational communication and collaboration strategies affect strategic decision-making and implementation.
- Research and analyze the effective management and use of multigenerational diversity in strategic decision-making.
- Analyze how the leadership styles of intergenerational leaders affect organizational culture and its alignment with strategic goals.
- Analyze how generational differences in human resource policies and practices affect strategic plan development and implementation.
- Analyze how cross-generational knowledge transfer and learning opportunities impact strategic management approaches.

Significance of the research

With the influx of new generation groups into the labor market, multi-generational coexistence has become the norm in business. For managers, understanding the cohesive and integrative work environment of different generational groups and building unity among a wide range of age groups play a very important role in creating shared values in hotels (Loang, 2023). Self-efficacy, as a motivational factor at the core of an individual's self-system, influences an individual's subjective judgment, which in turn influences their behavior. In the workplace, individuals with high self-efficacy help them to make rapid self-acceptance and have the confidence to deal with difficult issues at work, which in turn increases their commitment to their work. With the diversification of generations in the workplace, there are differences in values and work attitudes among employees of different generations, and frequent work conflicts will weaken employees' sense of organizational identity, which is likely to affect their commitment to their work. This paper explores the

relationship between work values, self-efficacy and work engagement through a survey of hotel employees and analyzes the differences in the impact of work values and self-efficacy on work engagement among different generations, with a view to providing targeted suggestions for managers on how to manage multigenerational employees.

Literature Review

Major historical events and their effects on the features and social identity of today's youngsters are the subject of this research. There is an emphasis on the "social generation" notion within the broader field of intergenerational sociology (Sreih, Lussier & Sonfield, 2019). These societal generations are distinguished by certain traits and are crucial in defining the course of history. Young people nowadays are categorised as a "social generation" because of the impact of factors including increased access to higher education, population movement, and the advent of the Internet on their way of life. They are different from prior generations in terms of demography, attitudes, and behaviours, and they are also leaders in these revolutionary processes.

Intergenerational sociology relies on the analytic framework provided by life cycle theory. According to this theory, a person's life is structured around a set of predetermined responsibilities and milestones that are determined by society. Understanding how social change affects individuals and their life paths is made easier with this theory's recognition that age categorises them within social structures and age cohorts. Different generations have been studied from this angle by academics, including the "Reform and Opening-up Generation," the "New Generation of Migrant Workers," and the "One-Child Generation." Thus, the research use the "social generation" concept and the life course theory as its primary framework to investigate the modern young generation's distinctive features and its engagement with larger historical events.

Social Emotional Wealth Theory

From the emotional point of view, the study of China's domestic part of the family business can be found to exist part of the phenomenon that may not be purely for the sake of economic interests of some moves, for this phenomenon part of the scholars to introduce altruism to explain. From the definition of altruism, altruism is to give up one's own economic interests for the economic interests of others. From a certain point of view, altruism has its own unique good part, this kind of altruism if integrated into the kinship can significantly enhance the family cohesion, strengthen the cooperation and communication between family members, mutual benefit and win-win.(Fowler,2019).

Principal-agent theory

Principal-agent theory holds that the separation of the two rights of enterprise ownership and management will lead to agency conflicts between the principal and the agent. Especially at the level of re-trust, limited by the fundamental interests of the principal's orientation as well as the problem of information opacity, in order to effectively prevent the existence of the principal's own mind may lead to indirectly harm the interests of the principal, the principal has to exist to increase the cost in preventing this possibility. (Sharma, 2023) The characteristics of the two powers of the family business can effectively reduce the agency cost, on the one hand, the family members have blood relations, the fundamental interests of the same, so it can significantly reduce the generation of such costs, from another point of view is that the members of the members can effectively communicate with each other, comparatively speaking, it can effectively solve part of the information asymmetry. Relevant

research shows that, based on the principal-agent theory, for the consideration of the interests of the enterprise as well as the family, intergenerational inheritance is one of the relatively better choices. At the same time, the earlier the intergenerational inheritance occurs, the earlier the preparation for the future of the enterprise, which can effectively reduce the possibility of "cronyism".

Literature Review on Dependent Variable

Organizational performance is the quantity, efficiency, quality and profitability of a particular organization in a certain period of time. In business management activities, the evaluation of organizational performance is essentially a process in which the managers of an enterprise use a certain indicator system to make a general evaluation of the business conditions and operational effects of the enterprise. According to Stanley E. Seashore and others, most organizations do not have a single goal, and there may even be conflicting goals, and this complexity directly determines the difficulty of measuring organizational performance.

Literature Review on Independent Variables

Cross generational communication and collaboration strategies

In most organizations in China (including the global), there are five generations of employees, including those from the 50s and 60s, as well as those from the 70s, 80s and 90s. Especially with the entry of the "Post-90s" into the workplace, the clash of cultures and values between generations has become one of the core issues of corporate human resources.

"Post-90s" is a generation that grows up in the Internet environment, and it is a generation that comes of age in the era of China's qualitative change, and this group enters the workplace with brand-new value orientation and distinctive personality of the times. This puts higher demands on human resource management in terms of inclusiveness of personality, meticulousness of employee care, and ability to balance different values, etc. The year of 2012 has been called by many as the "first year of intergenerational management" for human resources in China, because in this year, the "Post-90s" started to formally become a group of people. In 2012, many people called China's human resources "the first year of intergenerational management", because in this year, the "Post-90s" began to formally enter the Chinese workplace as a group.

The "grayscale state" puts forward higher requirements for enterprise operation and managers, and at the same time, it also provides possibilities and opportunities for enterprise management innovation. In the black-and-white period, everyone's division of labor is very clear and certain; while in the era of gray-scale mesh structure, more emphasis is placed on the spontaneous response of employees to the market demand, and automatically take responsibility (Loang & Ahmad, 2023). Employees no longer work passively, but actively. This requires the whole organization to be more open and flexible, and employees to have more autonomous value creation ability (Schrodt, 2020).

The so-called revert to culture and people means that in this new era, enterprises should rethink the mission, vision and core values of the enterprise, the products and services of the enterprise should return to the customer value, the human resource management model should reflect humanistic care, and at the same time, through the upgrade of human resources based on the improvement of the quality and ability of the employees and the support of the enterprise's strategy, to create a new leadership based on values.

Return to scientific management and effectiveness. The word "efficiency" seems to be contradictory to happiness and care, but an enterprise, as a competitive body, talks about happiness or employee care, and ultimately to create high performance. If an enterprise does not have efficiency, it is impossible to provide employees with good space for future development and high realistic returns. Therefore, at any time, all the management concepts of the enterprise should be returned to the basic aspects of the manager, that is, how to activate the value creation of talent.

The development of Chinese enterprises has experienced a rough and savage management era. How to move from the era of roughness to the era of refined effectiveness, and how to move from an era of barbaric management to an era of civilized management is a brand-new task faced by Chinese human resource managers. In addition to upgrading human resources fundamentally, another more effective means is to improve the effectiveness of human resources.

Employee needs and expectations

Experts point to the gulf between technological productivity growth (Moore's Law) and human productivity growth. They conclude that humans must learn to change faster. They assert that in order for businesses to remain competitive, we must adopt better human capital strategies that push humans to be as productive as the computer chips we produce. While Deloitte's experts clearly note that employees demand a better work experience, their push for humans to do more work seems inconsistent with higher employee engagement scores. They describe the factors that create a better work experience for employees, but the solutions they offer are almost always technology-based fixes. While human capital strategies are critical to successful organizations, we must move away from the notion that human productivity growth should follow the same path as technology.

Leadership style

Leadership style refers to the behavioral patterns of a leader. Leaders use different behavioral patterns to achieve their goals when influencing others. Business leadership style is the customized leadership way to show all kinds of characteristics. The customary leadership style is gradually formed in the long-term personal experience, leadership practice, and in the leadership practice consciously or unconsciously stable role, has a strong personalized color. Both authoritarian and laissez-faire are not conducive to the creation of a sense of fairness among employees, the improvement of corporate incentives and the formation of a good organizational climate (Shi, Graves & Barbera, 2019). Llewellyn initially agreed that a democratic style of leadership seems to result in good quality and quantity of work, as well as higher job satisfaction among group members, and that a democratic style of leadership may be the most effective style of leadership. However, researchers have since found that democratic leadership style produces less productive work than authoritarian in some cases, which is related to the values and personalities of the team members. Therefore, a single leadership style is not the best way to manage a company, and should be changed accordingly with the working condition of the employees. Different leadership styles should be adopted for different people, and for the same people, the leadership style should be changed according to the change of situation.

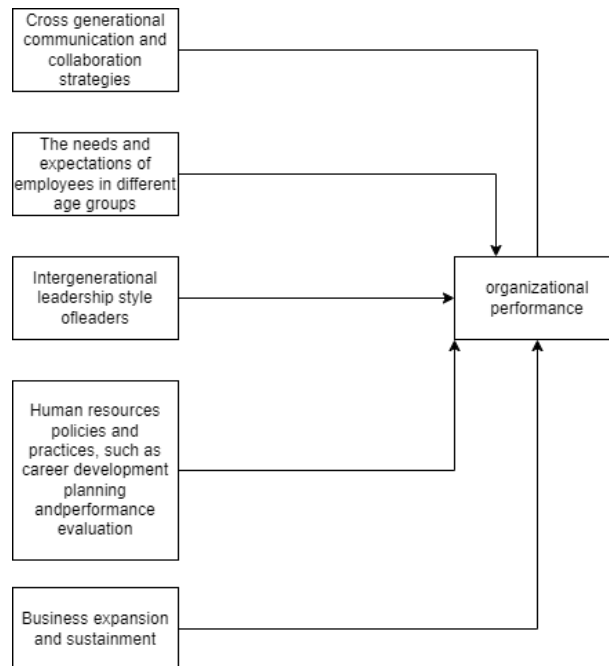
Human resources policies and practices

Employee's personal ability is embedded in the employees themselves, without responsive stimulation policies or methods, employees will not spontaneously create favorable value for the enterprise. Recognizing this, enterprise human resource managers must implement scientific and effective strategic human resource policies to stimulate the inner potential of employees (Nurfadilah & Samidi, 2021). And also to continuously develop the ability of employees, so as to give full play to the staff's initiative to contribute to the development of the enterprise. To realize this goal, we should start from the following aspects. First of all, scientific selection of talents. The work of the enterprise ultimately depends on human capital to implement. Then whether from outside the enterprise to recruit some with rich knowledge and advanced skills, or directly from the enterprise internal training and promotion of excellent staff, is the key step of the enterprise employment (Sevriana, Febrian, Anwar & Ahmad Faisal, 2022). Secondly, a reasonable job arrangement is also particularly important. Employee's post arrangement should make its ability and professional are in line with the requirements of the job, so as to let the employees in their positions to play its talent (Loang & Ahmad, 2022). To avoid the phenomenon of low efficiency and high turnover rate due to unreasonable job arrangement. Through the perfect selection policy, enterprises can maximize economic benefits.

Research Gaps

Academics have recently focused on intergenerational transmission because of its uniqueness and importance. After reviewing relevant scholarly works on intergenerational transfer effects domestically and internationally, significant transfer phenomena have been found in educational attainment, traditional values, child anxiety, attachment styles, and filial piety. Intergenerational impacts can often seen through "capital," efficient communication, Intergenerational impacts often occur through "capital," "communication," and "cultural immersion." Based on this result, the researchers anticipate intergenerational impact studies. This study examines generational job engagement determinants using a hotel employee survey. The empirical findings show: (1) work values and self-efficacy improve work engagement; (2) those born after 1995 and 1990 had higher work values. The empirical study found that: (1) work values and self-efficacy positively affect work engagement; (2) hotel employees from the "post-95" and "post-90" generations significantly affect work engagement; and (3) self-efficacy's impact on work engagement varies across generations and has distinct dimensions. Hotel management should promote a harmonious workplace for their staff. They should also integrate flexibility strategies to improve employee work experiences. This method increases employee work engagement..

Conceptual Framework



Hypotheses

- H1 : Cross generational communication and collaboration strategies has significant impact on Organizational Performance
- H2 : The needs and expectations of employees in different age groups has significant impact on Organizational Performance
- H3 : Intergenerational leadership style of leaders impact on Organizational Performance.
- H4 : Human resources policies and practices, such as career development planning and performance evaluation significant impact on Organizational Performance.
- H5 : Business expansion and sustainment has significant impact on Organizational Performance

Methodology

In this study, we systematically examine the research on how providing feedback on performance might improve an organization's ability to adapt to changing circumstances. The authors seek to resolve the contradiction in empirical data by investigating the theoretical mechanisms and variables impacting this connection. Different theoretical viewpoints, varying definitions of responsive behaviours, measurement limits associated with expectancies, and the effect of internal and external circumstances on the perception and interpretation of feedback are all cited as contributing factors. The authors suggest a thorough paradigm that takes them into account, providing important direction for future studies. This study presents a well-organized review of the area, touching on theoretical viewpoints, different organisational responses, measuring methods, and relevant aspects in the performance feedback and responsiveness connection.

Research Design

In the increasingly competitive market environment, enterprises must pay attention to their core competitiveness in order to ensure their survival and realize the goal of further development. The core competitiveness of enterprises and their corporate culture has a close

link between the in-depth exploration of the relationship between corporate culture and organizational performance, to provide information for the enterprise's decision-making reference, and become the goal of the current academic research and practical exploration in the field of common struggle. In view of this, this paper analyzes the relationship between corporate culture and organizational performance, and in the research process, the research results of previous scholars are summarized and analyzed, and the results of related research as the basis for the research structure and assumptions. In the hypothesis stage, the following hypothesis is proposed: corporate culture is significantly related to organizational performance. In terms of the research structure, corporate culture is taken as the independent variable and organizational performance as the dependent variable, and the hypothesis is valid if it can be verified that differences in corporate culture can cause differences in organizational performance.

After comprehensively analyzing the relevant literature and the scales used in the sampling survey, this paper designed its own questionnaire. Subsequently, some enterprises were selected as the research object, and the convenience sampling method was adopted to investigate the relevant enterprises. In order to ensure the recovery rate of this questionnaire survey and the accuracy of the sample questionnaire, this questionnaire survey is mainly selected as the main object of investigation, such as the director in charge of personnel business and other business executives, in order to questionnaire after obtaining their consent, and questionnaires sent out one week after the study of this study issued a total of 300 questionnaires.

In the sample of the survey, women accounted for a larger proportion, 60.9%, and men 39.1%; the higher proportion of generation distribution is "post-90s", 46.5%, followed by "post-00s", 22.3%, "post-80s" and "pre-80s" accounted for 18.9% and 12.3% respectively; 46% of employees have a bachelor's degree; the working experience of less than 3 years is less than 3 years, 12.3%. "Post-80s" and "pre-80s" accounted for 18.9% and 12.3% respectively; 46% of the employees had a bachelor's degree in education; and the proportion of employees with less than 3 years of working experience was 55.7%.

For the outcome variables, the individual level focuses on three main areas, firstly, the consideration of family entrepreneurial performance, including family business growth (Kellermanns et al., 2018), performance, cross-generational performance improvement, entrepreneurial gain, and entrepreneurial interference.

Questionnaire design and revision. The study adopted mature scales at home and abroad, and the work engagement scale compiled by Schaufeli and other scholars was used for work engagement, which consisted of 15 items and was divided into five likert scale.

Surveys involve administering questionnaires to a sample of participants to collect quantitative data. In this case, you can develop a survey questionnaire that includes items related to the key factors, impacts, and challenges of strategic management in cross-generational management. The questionnaire can be distributed electronically or in-person, depending on the target population.

In this study, the relationship between the firm as the independent variable and the dependent variable, organizational performance, is analyzed through empirical research. The methods used in the research process are reliability analysis, descriptive statistics, one-way ANOVA,

Scheffé post hoc test, Pearson product-difference correlation analysis, and typical correlation analysis.

Conclusion

The contemporary landscape of family-owned businesses in China is undergoing significant transformation, influenced by rapid societal changes, generational shifts, and the imperative of successful intergenerational collaboration. This paper seeks to delve into the intricacies of these transformations, focusing on the impact of cross-generational dynamics on strategic decision-making, implementation, and organizational performance within the unique context of Chinese family enterprises. Understanding and effectively managing the diverse needs, expectations, and leadership styles across generations is paramount for sustaining the competitive edge and long-term viability of these businesses.

The phenomenon of intergenerational issues, often encapsulated within the notion of the "generation gap," has garnered increasing attention, particularly as the pace of social change accelerates. Traditionally, the notion of a "generation" spanned significant timeframes, but contemporary dynamics have compressed this period considerably. This compression presents novel challenges for family-owned businesses, necessitating younger generations' involvement in decision-making processes. In the Chinese context, where familial hierarchies often intersect with business structures, the transfer of knowledge, experience, and decision-making authority becomes crucial for continuity and success.

However, despite the importance of intergenerational collaboration, second-generation members in Chinese family businesses frequently encounter challenges in assuming leadership roles. This can stem from a variety of factors, including reluctance from elder family members to relinquish power or concerns about financial security and asset protection. Consequently, the lack of preparedness among successors poses a significant obstacle to effective succession planning and organizational sustainability. The failure to effectively navigate intergenerational dynamics risks leaving crucial positions unfilled and responsibilities unattended, potentially jeopardizing the future of the enterprise.

Moreover, the rapidly evolving cultural, social, and political landscapes have given rise to distinct generational cohorts, each with its unique characteristics and perspectives. Notably, the generation born after 1995 has emerged as a significant demographic in the labor market, bringing both challenges and opportunities for organizational management. Adapting established management practices to accommodate the needs and expectations of this cohort is essential for fostering engagement, understanding, and motivation within the workforce.

Against the backdrop of China's economic development, family-owned businesses have emerged as pivotal contributors, driving growth, employment, and innovation. However, as the founding generation approaches retirement age, the issue of intergenerational succession assumes heightened importance. The successful transfer of entrepreneurial tacit knowledge, encompassing wealth, resources, capabilities, and ethos, becomes central to ensuring continuity and competitiveness. Given the inherent complexity and implicit nature of tacit knowledge, its transfer often occurs through subtle intergenerational interactions, which may manifest as conflicts between entrepreneurs and successors.

In conclusion, the effective management of cross-generational dynamics is indispensable for the sustained success and longevity of Chinese family-owned businesses. Addressing the challenges posed by the generation gap, preparing successors for leadership roles, and

fostering intergenerational knowledge transfer are critical imperatives. By embracing the diversity of perspectives, experiences, and leadership styles across generations, these enterprises can leverage their inherent strengths to navigate evolving market dynamics and achieve enduring success in an ever-changing business landscape.

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