THE IMPACT OF SENSE OF OVERQUALIFICATION ON INNOVATION PERFORMANCE: A STUDY ON THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF EMOTIONAL LABOR IN XUCHANG D GROUP

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Abstract: This study investigates the relationship between the sense of overqualification, emotional labor, and innovation performance among employees of Xuchang D Group, a prominent company in the commercial trade sector. The research aims to understand how the sense of overqualification influences innovation performance and the mediating role of emotional labor in this relationship. Using a survey methodology with 485 valid responses, the study employs confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM) to analyze the data.

The demographic statistics reveal a young workforce with a balanced gender distribution and a high percentage of educated employees. Descriptive statistics indicate a positive attitude towards innovation, reflecting a supportive culture for innovation within the company. CFA results demonstrate the high construct validity of the scales used, providing a reliable basis for further analysis.

Inferential statistical analysis shows that education significantly affects exploitative and exploratory innovation, while age significantly impacts innovation performance. SEM results reveal the mediating role of emotional labor in the relationship between the sense of overqualification and innovation performance. Although the direct effect of the sense of overqualification on innovation performance is not significant, its indirect effect through emotional labor is.

The study concludes that organizations should foster a culture of innovation and provide resources to encourage employees' innovative activities. It also suggests that recognizing the impact of individual characteristics on innovation activities is crucial for talent attraction and development. The findings offer practical implications for human resource management and organizational development, emphasizing the importance of aligning employee qualifications with job requirements and leveraging emotional intelligence to enhance innovation performance.

Keywords: Overqualification Sensation, Emotional Labor, D Group of Xuchang City, Innovative Performance

Introduction

The service industry faces increasingly fierce market competition in the current global economic context. To gain advantages in the market, service enterprises pay special attention to enhancing customer service experience. The emotional states displayed by frontline employees during interactions with customers have a decisive impact on customer experience. Therefore, enterprises encourage employees to demonstrate positive emotions in service delivery to enhance customer positive emotional responses, service experience, and satisfaction. Emotional labor is crucial in service delivery, as employees adjust their feelings according to the organization's emotional expression rules. Emotional labor is divided into two strategies: deep acting and surface acting, among which deep acting is more conducive to enhancing employee emotional displays and customer satisfaction.

With the improvement of education levels, many highly educated and skilled employees enter the workforce with higher expectations for personal career development and job satisfaction. However, global economic fluctuations and intensified competition in the job market have made some employees feel that their qualifications exceed the job requirements, resulting in an "overqualification sensation." This feeling may lead to decreased job satisfaction, weakened motivation, and reduced work performance. Nevertheless, there is still a lack of systematic and in-depth research in the academic community on how overqualification sensation affects individual innovative performance.

Emotional labor, an essential job requirement in the service industry, directly affects customer service experience and enterprise market performance. Research has shown that emotional labor significantly influences individual job performance and innovative behavior. However, there is scarce research on the relationship between overqualification sensation and emotional labor and the mediating role of emotional labor in the impact of overqualification sensation on innovative performance.

This study uses the research object of D Trading Group in the Xuchang area. As an influential enterprise in the trading field, the group has a large workforce with varying abilities. In such a context, studying how overqualification sensation affects employees' innovative performance and exploring the mediating role of emotional labor in this process is of great practical significance. The study aims to provide organizational management strategies, practical guidance, and self-management advice for individuals to enhance innovative performance and job satisfaction. This is crucial for enterprises to maintain advantages in fierce market competition and achieve sustainable development.

Furthermore, society's evaluation criteria for enterprise innovation capabilities are constantly rising, with customers not only focusing on product quality but also valuing emotional experiences during the service process and the satisfaction of personalized needs. Therefore, enterprises must attach importance to the role of emotional labor in improving service quality by cultivating employees' emotional intelligence and providing emotional support to enhance employees' service awareness and innovation capabilities. This study will deeply understand the relationship between emotional labor,

overqualification sensation, and innovative performance for D Trading Group in Xuchang City and the broader business community. Through empirical research, this thesis will provide a theoretical basis and practical guidance for enterprise management of the new generation of employees, helping optimize human resource management, enhance employee job satisfaction, and improve enterprise innovative performance, ultimately promoting the sustainable and healthy development of the socio-economy.

Research Objective (s)

This study aims to achieve the following seven specific objectives:

Objective 1: Investigate the overall perception of overqualification sensation among employees of D Trading Group in Xuchang City.

Objective 2: Examine the overall perception of emotional labor among employees of D Trading Group in Xuchang City.

Objective 3: Explore the overall perception of innovative performance among employees of D Trading Group in Xuchang City.

Objective 4: Investigate the impact of different individual characteristic variables on the overqualification sensation among employees of D Trading Group in Xuchang City.

Objective 5: Examine the impact of different individual characteristic variables on emotional labor among employees of D Trading Group in Xuchang City.

Objective 6: Study the impact of different individual characteristic variables on innovative performance among employees of D Trading Group in Xuchang City.

Objective 7: Investigate the relationship between overqualification sensation, emotional labor, and innovative performance among employees of D Trading Group in Xuchang City.

Through these objectives, the study aims to provide targeted management suggestions for the managers of D Trading Group in Xuchang City to promote the company's sustainable innovation and development.

Literature Review

Overview of Overqualification Sensation

Overqualification sensation refers to individuals feeling that their abilities and qualifications exceed job requirements, a phenomenon prevalent globally and studied across multiple disciplines. Erdogan et al. (2009) suggested that the sensation of overqualification might lead to the wastage of human capital within organizations. Khan et al. (1991) categorized overqualification sensation into objective and subjective forms, while Zhang et al. (2016) further explored the impact of subjective overqualification sensation on employee attitudes and behaviors.

Concept and Structure of Emotional Labor

Emotional labor originated with the rise of the service economy, requiring employees to manage and regulate their emotional expressions at work. Hochschild (1979) initially proposed the concept of emotional labor, emphasizing consistency between emotional expression and organizational demands. The structure of emotional labor includes dimensions like surface acting, deep acting, and genuine emotional expression. Grandey (2000) proposes a causal model suggesting emotional labor affects job performance and withdrawal behaviors through different strategies.

Review of Employee Innovative Performance

Employee innovative performance is a crucial indicator of measuring organizational innovation effectiveness, covering the entire process from generating creative ideas to realizing innovative outcomes. Measurement methods vary, including scales for individual innovative behavior and performance measurement. Amabile (1993) highlighted the importance of employees' creative thinking and ability to translate ideas into products or solutions. Studies by Scott and Bruce (1994) and Janssen (2000) emphasized the importance of the innovation process.

Theoretical Foundations

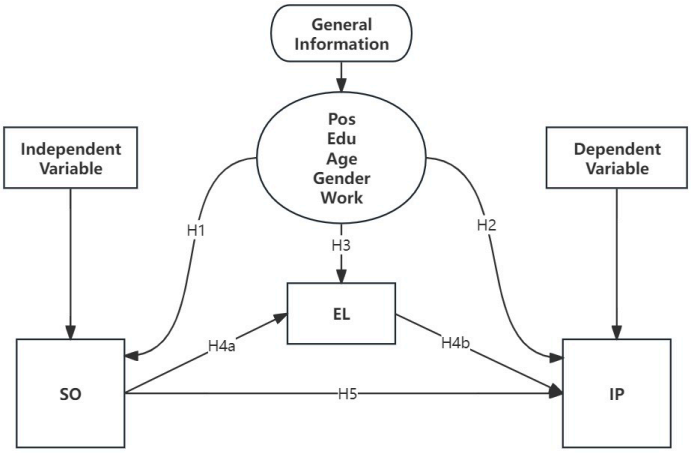
The study is grounded in the conservation of resources theory, self-determination theory, control theory, affective events theory, and job demands-resources model. Hobfoll's (1989) conservation of resources theory emphasizes the impact of resource loss on employee psychological states. Deci and Ryan's (2000) self-determination theory focuses on individual intrinsic motivation. Control theory provides a perspective on the feedback loop of emotional labor. At the same time, the job demands-resources model explains how job resources and demands dynamically adjust to influence employee innovative performance.

Research on Relationships Between Major Variables

Existing research suggests that the relationship between overqualification sensation and innovative performance is complex, with emotional labor potentially mediating this relationship. Grandey's (2000) emotional labor causal model provides a theoretical basis for understanding the relationship between emotional labor and innovative performance. Individual traits such as gender, age, education level, tenure, and position may moderate this relationship.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework illustrates the interactions between overqualification sensation, emotional labor, and innovative performance, considering the potential moderating effects of individual trait variables. This framework provides theoretical guidance for exploring and verifying the complex relationships between these variables and offers valuable insights for enterprise management.



Picture 1: Conceptual Framework

Methodology

Research Overview

This study aims to analyze the relationship between overqualification sensation, emotional labor, and innovative performance among employees of D Group in Xuchang City and to explore the mediating role of emotional labor between overqualification sensation and creative performance. The research employs a questionnaire survey method, collecting data through the online platform "Questionnaire Star," resulting in 485 valid responses with an effective rate of 96.42%. In terms of scale design, validated scales for overqualification sensation, emotional labor, and innovative performance are utilized to ensure the high content validity of the questionnaire.

Composition and Measurement of Main Variable Scales

The study's measurement of overqualification sensation, emotional labor, and innovative performance is crucial. By quantifying key constructs, researchers can better understand the relationships between these constructs. The study employs the Scale of Sense of Over-qualification (SPOQ) developed by Maynard et al. (2006) to measure employees' overqualification sensation, consisting of 9 items. The emotional labor scale is based on Gandey's (2003) questionnaire, modified to fit the Chinese cultural context, comprising 11 items. The innovative performance scale draws from the research of Chinese scholar Han Yi (2007), including eight items.

Research Hypotheses

The study proposes several hypotheses to explore the differences in overqualification sensation, emotional labor, and innovative performance based on individual characteristics (such as age, gender, tenure, education level, and position) and the mediating role of emotional labor between overqualification sensation and innovative performance. These hypotheses are grounded in previous research theories like Grandey's (2000) emotional labor causal model.

Sampling and Population

The study discusses the differences between probability and non-probability sampling and their advantages and disadvantages. It employs cluster sampling, a probability sampling method, to ensure randomness and reliability. The population consists of employees of D Group in Xuchang City, totaling 7,500, according to information from the company's official website. The sample size determination follows Taro Yamane's (1967) sample size table, with a 95% confidence level and 5% sampling error. After distributing 503 questionnaires and excluding invalid responses, 484 valid responses are obtained.

Data Collection

Questionnaires are distributed and collected through the online platform "Questionnaire Star," covering personal basic information, overqualification sensation, emotional labor, and innovative performance.

Data Analysis Methods and Their Significance

Data analysis methods include frequency analysis, independent sample t-tests, one-way ANOVA, one-sample t-tests, two-tailed tests, factor analysis, and linear regression analysis. These methods aim to comprehensively assess the relationships between individual characteristic variables and overqualification sensation, emotional labor, and innovative performance, validating the correctness of research hypotheses.

Reliability and Validity Analysis of Scales

Reliability and validity analysis of scales is fundamental to ensuring the reliability and validity of data and research results. Cronbach's α coefficient is used for reliability analysis, showing high internal consistency for overqualification sensation, emotional labor, and innovative performance scales ($\alpha > 0.89$). Validity analysis, conducted through the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test and Bartlett's spherical test, indicates good validity of the scales.

This detailed summary highlights the rigorous methodological approach adopted in exploring the relationships between overqualification sensation, emotional labor, and innovative performance among employees. It ensures the reliability and validity of the research tools through reliability and validity analysis. The study results will provide valuable insights for enterprise human resource management and organizational development.

Results

Population Traits Statistics

Regarding gender distribution, females account for 55% of the research sample, while males represent 45%, indicating a slight majority of females. Age distribution shows that the majority of respondents are concentrated in the age groups of 25-34 years (27%) and 35-44 years (23%), with a considerable proportion of young employees aged 18-24 years (25%). Regarding education, over 40%

of employees hold a bachelor's degree, while master's and doctoral degrees account for 34% and 21%, respectively, reflecting a high level of education among the organization's employees. Position distribution indicates that most employees are at the ordinary staff level (56%), with fewer in middle and senior management positions. The statistics on work experience show that over one-third of employees have over ten years of work experience (37%), suggesting the company has a significant number of senior employees.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics reveal the mean scores and distribution characteristics of each variable. The average score for gender is 1.545, close to 1.5, indicating a relatively balanced gender distribution on a 5-point scale. The average scores for age and work experience are 2.585 and 3.318, respectively, suggesting respondents tend to fall into older and more experienced categories. The average score for education is 3.719, indicating employees generally report their education level higher than job requirements. The standard deviation for all variables is close to or below 1, indicating a relatively concentrated data distribution. Skewness and kurtosis values close to 0 confirm the symmetry of data distribution and similarity to a normal distribution.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

The results of CFA show that all item loadings are significant, indicating good structural validity of the scales. For example, item loadings for overqualification sensation range from 0.706 to 0.772, emotional labor from 0.639 to 0.761, and innovative performance from 0.669 to 0.761.

Correlation Coefficients

Correlation coefficients reveal the relationships between different variables. The correlation coefficient between emotional labor and innovative performance is 0.800, indicating a strong positive correlation. The correlation between gender and emotional labor and innovative performance is insignificant (p=0.01100 and p=0.00766, respectively), suggesting that gender has little influence on these variables.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Mean	SD.D	SKE	Kurtosis
Gender	1.545	0.498	-0.182	-1.971
Age	2.585	1.283	0.378	-0.935
Edu	3.719	0.849	0.040	-0.547
Pos	1.566	0.706	0.839	-0.582
Work	3.318	1.602	-0.320	-1.487

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Table 2: Correlation Coefficients

	Gender	Age	Edu	Pos	Work	SO	EL	IP
Gender	1.000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Age	-0.043	1.000	-	-	-	-	-	-
Edu	-0.038	0.187	1.000	-	-	-	-	-
Pos	-0.032	0.022	0.052	1.000	-	-	-	-
Work	-0.049	0.781	0.096	0.062	1.000	-	-	-
SO	0.016	0.034	0.064	0.073	-0.065	1.000	-	-
EL	0.118	0.012	0.024	0.042	-0.004	0.800	1.000	-
IP	0.124	-0.012	0.072	0.081	0.007	0.700	0.855	1.000

Impact of Gender on Variables

In terms of gender differences, an independent sample T-test was used to evaluate since gender is a binary categorical variable (male/female).

Sense of Over-qualification: The T-test results show that gender does not significantly impact Sense of Over-qualification (p=0.725), indicating no significant difference between males and females in feeling over-qualified.

Emotional Labor: The T-test finds a significant impact of gender on emotional labor (p=0.01100), suggesting an essential difference between males and females, with females scoring significantly higher.

Innovation Performance: Gender also significantly affects innovation performance (p=0.00766), indicating a significant difference in innovation performance between males and females.

Impact of Age, Education, Position, and Work Experience on Variables

These variables were assessed using one-way ANOVA since they involve multiple categories.

ANOVA Results for Sense of Over-qualification: Age, education, position, and work experience do not significantly affect Sense of Over-qualification.

ANOVA Results for Emotional Labor: Age, education, position, and work experience do not significantly affect emotional labor.

ANOVA Results for Innovation Performance: Education significantly impacts innovation

performance, while other variables do not substantially affect innovation performance.

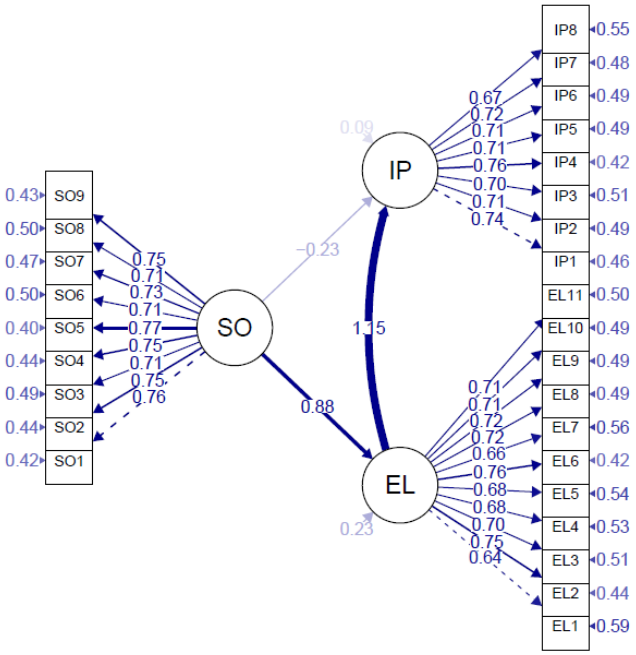
Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

The SEM results indicate that emotional labor mediates between a Sense of Over-qualification and innovation performance, with emotional labor positively impacting innovation performance. In contrast, a Sense of Over-qualification negatively impacts it.

Model Fit Indices

The chi-square test result for the model is 0.000, indicating a good fit with the data. Other fit indices such as CFI, TLI, and RMSEA must also be considered in order to evaluate the model fit comprehensively.

These detailed analysis results provide an in-depth understanding of the relationship between employees' Sense of Over-qualification, emotional labor, and innovation performance, offering empirical evidence for organizational human resource management and innovation strategy formulation.



Picture 2: Path Diagram

Discussion

This study explores the relationship between employees' sense of over-qualification, emotional labor, and innovation performance. It examines the potential impact of demographic characteristics such as gender, age, education, position, and work experience on these variables. The study results provide a deeper understanding of organizational human resource allocation and employee behavior.

Firstly, gender significantly affects emotional labor and innovation performance but has no significant impact on the sense of over-qualification. This may indicate that although there are

differences between men and women in emotional labor and engagement in innovative activities, their perception of over-qualification is similar. This finding is consistent with previous research, which suggests that gender roles and expectations may influence the expression of emotional labor (Grandey, 2000) while also suggesting that organizations have made some progress in gender equality, at least in terms of employees' perception of over-qualification.

The influence of age, education, position, and work experience on the sense of over-qualification is not significant. It may reflect the consistency of employees' perception of the match between their qualifications and job requirements across different ages and experience levels. However, education significantly influences innovation performance, indicating that employees with higher educational levels may be more capable of participating in innovative activities and achieving results. This has important implications for human resource management, emphasizing the necessity of providing corresponding innovative opportunities and resources for employees with different educational backgrounds.

The strong positive correlation between emotional labor and innovation performance suggests that employees' ability to regulate emotions in the workplace may help them generate new ideas and achieve innovation. This is consistent with existing research, which suggests that emotional labor can promote employees' creativity and job engagement (Morris & Feldman, 1996).

Conclusions

Based on the analysis above, the following is a summary of the research conclusions of the paper:

1). Gender Differences: Gender significantly influences emotional labor and innovation performance but has no significant effect on the sense of over-qualification, indicating that gender still plays a role in certain work-related domains.

2). Demographic Characteristics: Apart from the impact of education on innovation performance, other demographic characteristics such as age, position, and work experience have no significant effect on the research variables, suggesting that employees' personal qualifications and work experiences are universal across different backgrounds.

3). Emotional Labor and Innovation Performance: The strong positive correlation between emotional labor and innovation performance emphasizes the importance of emotional intelligence in the innovation process, suggesting that organizations should pay attention to employees' emotional management abilities.

4). Sense of Over-qualification: Although there is a negative correlation between the sense of over-qualification and innovation performance, this relationship is not significant in this study, indicating that other factors, such as organizational support and job design, may have a more direct

impact on innovation performance.

5). Structural Equation Model (SEM): The SEM results reveal the mediating role of emotional labor between the sense of over-qualification and innovation performance, providing quantitative evidence for understanding these complex relationships.

6). Model Fit: Although the model's chi-square test results indicate a good fit with the data, considering the sensitivity of the chi-square test to sample size, future research should consider using other fit indices for validation.

This study provides insights for organizations to improve innovation performance by understanding and managing employees' sense of over-qualification and emotional labor. Organizations should consider providing employees with roles that match their qualifications and cultivating a supportive and resource-rich work environment to unleash employees' innovation potential.

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