Anxious or Differentiation? The Impacting of the New Generation of Migrant Workers’ Growing Demand Strength on Their Organizational Identification and Intra-Job Embedded

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Abstract

After getting rid of the survival of rationality among the first generation of migrant workers, 160 million population of new generation of migrant workers in China are treating migrant to work in cities as seeking better lifestyle changes and more development needs. They have more work high expectations and are more focused on self-realization of career. However, in the face of institutional barriers and social exclusion, what were the hidden influence factors that impacted their organizational identity and embedded for their behaviors as helpless and differentiation? From the perspective of growth need strength, this article has selected the relevant measurement scales to verify their positive and interference effect of the new generation of migrant workers embedded within organizational identification. The results show that growth need strength influences positively on their organizational identification and intra-job embeddedness. The effecting relation is also interfered partially by their growth need strength. Conclusions can enhance the organizational identification and job intra-embeddedness, and improve their performance of the new generation of migrant workers.

Keywords

New Generation of Migrant Workers, Growth Need Strength, Organizational Identification, Intra-Job Embedded, Impacting

New generation of migrant workers refers to the rural migrant workers in cities born after 1980. Among the existing 0.24 billion of migrant workers, about 50% were born after 1980 and more than 40 million were born after 1990. They went to school after born and then got employment in cities after graduation or drop out. Compared with traditional farmers, they are not so familiar with agriculture, village life, land and farmers. Meanwhile, they want to enter and integrate with urban society. Generally, they are evaluated three high and one low by the society: high education background, high career expectancy, high material and spiritual enjoyment, but low work tolerance. It is reported that among the new generation of migrant workers, 11.6% have an education background in technical secondary school or higher, 9.9% higher than the migrant workers (>30 years old); 44.4% have received various trainings, 9% higher than the migrant workers (>30 years old)\(^1\).

The new generation of migrant workers is greatly different with the previous generation. Instead of blue-collar workers, they prefer to be respectable white-collar workers in comfortable working environment. However, their high expectancy conflicts with the lack of essential professional skills and existing low-end industrial structure in China, and catches in the contradiction between market and individuals. More differently, they are not as frugal as their parents and have no family responsibility, but good consumers who try best to pursue personal freedom and enjoyment. These characteristics result in the intense conflict between their marginalized identity, personal ability as well as lifestyle and life goal as well as market structure. Most of these new generation of migrant workers once were leftover children and only developed lower cognition and control ability during teenage. The great wealth gap and urban-rural gap bring them heavy psychological stress. In the unfair society with frequent infringement of rural workers’ right by enterprises, their high pursuit of material and spiritual enjoyment is easy to induce crimes or unstable factors. Therefore, it is urgent to study and manage such new generation of migrant workers.

The sociologist Daniel Lerner defined the “transition people”\(^2\) as those on the tradition-modern continuum, who lived in the development stage between traditional society and modern society and possessing dual material concepts as well as values [1]. They present the mixture of some traditional and modern psychological and cultural qualities as well as personality characteristics. The new generation of migrant workers was known as such transition people. They were struggling between the traditional and modern values, such as advanced and backward, positive and negative, care and indifference, hope and confusion, progressive and hesitation, identification and lost. They were seeking their positions between urban and rural areas with ambitions and ideas. However, they were lost in frequent isolation and frustrations. Therefore, they were widely accepted as a “hesitating” group. They had an embarrassing identity of neither “farmer” nor “urban residents”. They were hesitating between urban and rural lifestyles, traditional and modern values, etc. Rural areas were not their home and cities can’t accept them completely. Therefore, they became the marginal people in cities and were regarded as homeless people.

Scholars stated that, rural residents migrated for employment in 1980s, but for income growth in 1990s (Du Ying, Bai Nansheng, 1997) [2]. Then, what the migrant workers, especially the new generation of migrant workers, desired in the new century? Viewed from the motivation of seeking employment in cities, they regard it as an opportunity for lifestyle change and better development instead of survival. As this new generation of migrant workers left their hometown and entered into cities, their extending individualities can be developed more freely. However, facing with institutional barriers and social exclusion, such extending individualities were distorted without reasonable regulations and restrains. As a result, they behave in different ways. To integrate into the urban lifestyle, some of them worked hard and were accepted finally by the society, and became real members of their cities. However, others became feel cynical and self-abandoned, which influenced the existing social order to certain extent.

Since this new generation of migrant workers entered into cities immediately after graduation from schools, they are not as hard-working as their parents and never think to go back to hometowns as their parents did. Furthermore, with the social change, they can’t go back to hometowns because they neither can get desired jobs and living environment there, nor can receive spiritual identification there. This indicates that the most important characteristic of this new generation of migrant workers is identity crisis, including organizational identity and self identity. They migrate to cities for employment, but are accepted as marginal population in cities and have poor professional dedication. Therefore, to establish a good relationship between the new generation of migrant

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workers and organizations as well as the society, facilitate their organizational identity, achieve good intra-job embeddedness and improve their working performance, it is significant for enterprises and the society to improve the demand satisfaction of new generation of migrant workers.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Hypotheses

2.1. Growth Needs Strength

According to the Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, human motivations can be divided into seven levels from high to low: 1) physiological needs; 2) security needs; 3) love and dependence needs; 4) dignity needs; 5) self-actualization needs; 6) cognition needs; 7) aesthetic needs (Abraham H. Maslow, Robert Frager, 1987) [3]. People will turn to the high-level needs after the low-level needs satisfied. Generally speaking, these seven needs can be divided into two classes: basic needs and growth needs. Basic needs include 1)-4) and the needs intensity will be lowered after these needs are satisfied. Growth needs include 1)-6) and the needs intensity will be increased after these needs are satisfied. Basic needs are the foundation of growth needs, while growth needs are the guide of basic needs. The growth needs won’t be developed before all (or some) basic needs were satisfied. This derives the concept of growth need strength (GNS) of individuals (Hackman & Oldham, 1980) [4]. Progress-pursuit individuals with strong learning desire shall have high expectancy to work performance, thus presenting more positive working attitude and behaviors. Individuals with high GNS can be aware of the rich core features of work and achieve more positive returns than those with low GNS.

Since the new generation of migrant workers generally has satisfied their basic survival needs, they are pressed for the benefits from social security and public services. However, they are excluded by the current social security during the economic transition period. They can only receive some governmental care, voluntary services form non-governmental organizations and private assistance. They desire urban acceptance, rural resident identity, social integration, treatment as a citizen, respect and recognition. Before these needs are satisfied, they will remain confused and hesitating. Furthermore, their dream of urban life will arouse their affections to the companies and devote themselves to the companies. During this period, they adapt to the working environment and lifestyle, develop a sense of belonging and pursue goal achievement.

2.2. Organizational Identity

The employment relationship between employees and their organizations has been described as an exchange relationship in Enterprise (Rousseau, 1995) [5]. The relationship between individuals and organizations is one seemingly preeminent relationship that all employees have at work (Masterson, Lewis, Goldman, et al., 2000) [6]. The organizational metaphors regulated the behavior pattern of members, which serves as a vivid framework and foundations of organizational identity (Ashforth, Mael, 1989) [7]. Organizational identification as a unique form of social identity, is defined as “... perceived oneness between self and organization”, which discloses the internal motivations of individuals to be an organizational member (Yimo Shen, et al., 2013; Ashforth, Harrison, Corley, 2008) [8] [9]. With the expansion of the size of the organization, complexity and without boundary, organizational identity has become the key element of main means for organizational cohesion and success (Reade, 2001; Smidts et al., 2001) [10] [11]. Ashforth & Mael demonstrated that “as a unique form of social identity, organizational identity refers to individuals’ self-definition as members of an organization or sense of belonging to a group” (Ashforth, Meal, 1996) [12]. Xu Weiling and Zhen Boxun, two Taiwan scholars, demonstrated that organizational identity is a process and consequences of individuals’ self-definition. They think individuals connect self-concept and organizational identity together through the pursuit of sense of belonging, thus achieving the classification effect (Xu Weiling, Zhen Boxun, 2002) [13]. Chinese scholar Wei Jun defined the organizational identity as a type of social identity is individual integration with organizations. It is the consequences of individuals’ cognition and internalization of organizational value (cognition) and manifested by individuals’ emotions like sense of belonging, sense of pride and loyalty (emotion) (Wei Jun, 2007) [14]. As increasing profound researches on organizational identity were reported, people focus on the formation of organizational identity. For example, Gioia (2000) [15] proposed that the establishment of organizational identity is a symbolic and inventive process. However, no profound research on how employees perceive organizational identity under different cultural backgrounds has been reported yet. Furthermore, organizations have certain uniqueness in China, which may cause a special organizational identity in China (Li Yan, Wei Feng, 2011) [16].
Organizational identity is a process that individuals recognize and internalize the value of organizations and finally integrate with the organization. The new generation of migrant workers is less interested in farming and countryside culture, but keen on urban culture, thus making most of them prefer workers in cities to farming in countryside. They are more inclined to “migrant workers” than the “peasant workers”. Although such organizational identity is a psychological process of individuals, it is not accidental and independent, but developed from the interaction with other organizational members and countrymen during the pursuit of growth needs. Such interaction may be either direct or indirect.

With satisfied basic needs that their parents demanded for, the new generation of migrant workers pays more attentions on the growth needs. These growth needs are reflected by organizational identity and intra-job embeddedness. This paper supposed that the growth needs of the new generation of migrant workers have positive effect on their organizational identity and intra-job embeddedness. On this basis, the first research hypothesis and corresponding sub-hypotheses were proposed:

H1: GNS brings positive effect on the organizational identity of the new generation of migrant workers.
H1a: GNS brings positive effect on the membership of the new generation of migrant workers.
H1b: GNS brings positive effect on the loyalty of the new generation of migrant workers.
H1c: GNS brings positive effect on the similarity of the new generation of migrant workers.

2.3. Intra-Job Embeddedness

Researches on intra-job embeddedness were based on the job embeddedness. Intra-job embeddedness means that “employees are embedded into a network with various weak or strong connections. These connections influence decisions and behavioral choice of employees.” (Mitchell, et al., 2001) [17]. Job embeddedness is composed of three work dimensions: 1) organizational ties: correlation between employees and other members or activities within the organization; 2) organizational matching: matching degree between employees’ job and their life space; 3) organizational sacrifice: strength of connections, or known as the cost and sacrifice for employees’ resignations from the organization.

Intra-job embeddedness summarizes organizational factors for the new generation of migrant workers to maintain their existing jobs. These factors will make them attached or embedded into their jobs and still remained in the organization for individual growth when facing with dissatisfying treatment or optional job opportunities. Therefore, this paper supposed that GNS of the new generation of migrant workers brings direct positive effect on their intra-job embeddedness. On this basis, the second hypothesis and corresponding sub-hypotheses were proposed:

H2: GNS brings direct positive effect on the intra-job embeddedness of the new generation of migrant workers.
H2a: GNS brings positive effect on the organizational ties of the new generation of migrant workers.
H2b: GNS brings positive effect on the organizational matching of the new generation of migrant workers.
H2c: GNS brings positive effect on the organizational sacrifice of the new generation of migrant workers.

2.4. Direct Effect of Organizational Identity of the New Generation of Migrant Workers on Intra-Job Embeddedness

Granovetter (1985) [18] demonstrated that social network where people are living in is the core of social structure and the embedded network mechanism is trust. Members of society make different and structural allocation of scarce resources according to the ties. For the new generation of migrant workers, employment ties actually reflect the relationship between individuals and their environment, organizations, groups, countrymen as well as friends. Stronger ties make employees more possibly to be fettered by jobs and their organizations, indicating higher possibilities of intra-job embeddedness. Furthermore, the employment motivation of the new generation of migrant workers is greatly related with their families, work team and countrymen. Employment matching represents the adaptation and integration of peasant workers to the organizations and environment. Higher perceived employment matching of the new generation of migrant workers leads to the higher integration of their career, life and personalities with the organization and environment, thus bringing larger intra-job embeddedness correspondingly. Employment sacrifice represents the break of all original ties caused by the resignation, thus losing or sacrificing all original interests. For example, he will not only lose good colleagues and countrymen, but also has to adapt to a new environment. More importantly, he will lose many subjective emotions achieved...
through years’ efforts, such as the harmony relationship with original environment and colleagues, admission, respect and security. Higher resignation sacrifice indicates the higher possibility of intra-job embeddedness of the new generation of migrant workers.

Based on the above analysis, this paper concluded that the organizational identity and intra-job embeddedness of the new generation of migrant workers bring direct positive effect. On this basis, the third hypothesis was proposed:

H3: Organizational identity and intra-job embeddedness of the new generation of migrant workers bring direct positive effect.

2.5. Mediating Effect of GNS of the New Generation of Migrant Workers on Their Organizational Identity and Intra-Job Embeddedness

Although the organizational identity of the new generation of migrant workers affects the intra-job embeddedness directly, most of them join in organizations through special ties instead of official social arrangement, thus making them difficult to be integrated and accepted by the organizations. Furthermore, intra-job embeddedness emphasizes on that the voluntary resignation of the new generation of migrant workers significantly depends on the organization network, strengths of ties they involved in and costs to abandon these ties. This is because their GNS serving as an emotional factor is an important inherent characteristic of individuals, which is related with their attitudes toward social competition, environmental challenge, integration with organizations and needs realization. Therefore, GNS is a coordinating agent during the intra-job embeddedness of individuals. Peasant workers with higher growth needs also have higher organizational identity and intra-job embeddedness, while those with lower growth needs have lower organizational identity and intra-job embeddedness. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis was proposed:

H4: GNS has mediating effect on the organizational identity and intra-job embeddedness of the new generation of migrant workers.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Framework

Based on the primary literature review, the research framework model was established (Figure 1). This paper focused on discussing the effect of GNS of the new generation of migrant workers on their organizational identity and intra-job embeddedness (H1 and H2), effect of organizational identity on intra-job embeddedness (H3) and interference effect of GNS (intervening variable) of the new generation of migrant workers on these effects (H4).

3.2. Measurement Variables and Scales

1) Growth need strength (GNS)
The GNS scale of the new generation of migrant workers is mainly cited from the job diagnostic survey (JDS) of Hackman & Oldham (1980) [4]. The practical scale includes 11 items, such as “I hope to gain high respect and fair treatment from my superior”, “I’d like to do exciting and challenging work”, etc. These items were graded by the Likert Five-point Scale: 1 represents disagree strongly and 5 represents agree strongly. Higher grade represents high GNS.

2) Organizational identity
This research scale was measured by the modified scale of organizational identity proposed by Miller et al. (2000) [19]. It includes 10 items, such as “I’m proud of being a member of the company”, “I will my friends my company is an excellent company”, etc. These items were also graded by the Likert Five-point Scale.

3) Intra-job embeddedness
The job embeddedness scale developed by Mitchell et al. (2011) includes 40 items. It can similarly be illustrated by a web in which individuals can become immersed. The level of embeddedness is determined by the density of connections (e.g., social, material), which can aggregate in a variety of combinations. Lee et al. (2004) [20] modified it in view of sample needs and divided the job embeddedness into intra-job embeddedness and extra-job embeddedness. They adjusted the original 40 items into 34 items. Such as “My values are compatible with my organization values”, “I would sacrifice a lot if I left my organization” … Items were also graded by the Likert five-point scale. The paper mainly applied these items of intra-job embeddedness.

4) Control variables
To achieve stable research results, this paper introduced some individual and organizational variables into the analysis model, such as gender, age, working years, educational background, annual wage and company properties. This paper focused on the new generation of migrant workers, a class variable, aiming to control the differences caused by basic sample differences, such as gender, educational background, working years, company background, etc. Age took the practical age, which is mainly for controlling the impact of age growth on the environmental adaptation and organizational identity. The educational background, a class variable, is divided into primary school or lower, middle school, high school and technical secondary school as well as junior college. Different educational background can affects the organizational identity of respondents. Company properties, a class variable too, focus on the impact of employment system and corresponding farewells of different types of enterprises on the organizational identity.

3.3. Data Collection and Sample Analysis

1) Data collection
According to the research plan of National Science Fundation Project in China, the research group carried out a field survey in 31 industries, such as processing and manufacturing industry, service industry, construction industry, etc. in 10 cities in Jiangsu, Shandong, Zhejiang, Anhui, Henan provinces and Shanghai city. The respondents were new generation of migrant workers who were born after 1980 with an educational background of junior college or lower and rural registration. The questionnaire was sent and collected through three approaches: visit, E-mail and authorized sending. The per-survey was mainly conducted through the first two approaches due to their convenience in getting feed-backs in time. Therefore, the questionnaire can be modified and adjusted correspondingly. To obtain trusts and cooperation from organizations, the official questionnaires were mainly sent and collected through researchers’ visit and authorizing people closely related with enterprises.

2) Sample distribution
The involved data were collected in two years. To obtaining more representative samples, it applied the probability sampling method which combines stratified sampling and systematic sampling together. A total of 1550 questionnaires were sent in 31 industries, including 1150 in elementary operators and 400 in managers. Totally 1059 questionnaires were collected and 683 were effective, accounting for 64.49% of total questionnaires. The specific sample distribution was shown in Table 1.

3.4. Research Process
To evaluate the measurement scales, 100 new generation of migrant workers were selected from 3 different types of enterprises for per-survey. The fuzzy items and easy-to-be-misunderstood items were corrected according to the per-survey results. During the official survey, researchers or people closely related with the participated enterprises contacted with the human resource management department of enterprises and then took the
questionnaires to enterprises for investigation. In considering of respondents’ characteristics, organizers explained the key words in the scales in advance. To ensure reality and scientific of survey results, each questionnaire provides an instruction that “This questionnaire is answered in anonymity. Any information you provided here is only for academic research and will be kept in high confidentiality. Please feel at ease to answer.” This paper made a statistics and path analysis on the effective questionnaires only by using SPSS19.0 and Lisrel 8.8.

4. Result Analysis

4.1. Reliability and Validity Test

Without repeated measurements, the data reliability was tested by the indicator reflecting internal consistency. In this paper, the Crobach reliability coefficients of organizational identity, job embeddedness and GNS scales were 0.927, 0.898 and 0.897 respectively, and the reliability coefficient of the whole scale valued 0.952. All of them are larger than 0.80. A theoretical model was established firstly and then the structural validity of scales was evaluated through the model fitting of confirmatory factor analysis. The GFI of organizational identity, intra-job embeddedness and GNS were 0.95, 0.97 and 0.97 respectively after corrected through the confirmatory analysis of their structural equation models. Their CFI all valued 0.99.

4.2. Individual Difference Analysis of the New Generation of Migrant Workers

Except for the slightly significant gap in variance and standard deviation of organizational identity, the descriptive statistics scale of samples represented no evident selection preference of respondents in GNS, intra-job embeddedness and organizational identity. Since most respondents in this paper were chosen from labor-intensive enterprises, no significant gap in company properties and working environment was observed. As a result, the data analysis demonstrated no obvious difference of individual variables of the new generation of migrant workers in organizational identity, GNS and intra-job embeddedness.

4.3. Main Effect Analysis

To verify the theoretical derivation, this paper applied Lisrel 8.8 and LSM model for correction and fitting. Based on the output maximum likelihood estimation, the relevant parameters of model were evaluated and standard path coefficients were screened. The corrected model was shown in Figure 2.

The associated fitting coefficients were listed in Table 2. Based on P < 0.01, the correlation coefficient between
GNS and organizational identity was 0.685; the correlation coefficient between GNS and intra-job embeddedness was 0.746; and the correlation coefficient between organizational identity and intra-job embeddedness was 0.654. Generally speaking, RMSEA was 0.079, which is below 0.08; GFI was 0.91 and CFI 0.94, both larger than 0.9; $\chi^2/df$ was 2.38, indicating the good fitting degree of the whole model.

Therefore, GNS causes positive effect on organizational identity, with a correlation loading coefficient of 0.83 under $P < 0.01$. GNS causes positive effect on intra-job embeddedness, with a correlation loading coefficient of 0.88 under $P < 0.01$. Organizational identity causes positive effect on intra-job embeddedness, with a correlation loading coefficient of 0.77 under $P < 0.01$.

### 4.4. Mediating Effect Analysis

As Baron & Kenny (1986) [21] suggested, the following conditions shall be satisfied firstly in order to test the mediating effects of GNS on organizational identity and intra-job embeddedness: 1) significant correlation between GNS and organizational identity as well as intra-job embeddedness; 2) significant correlation between organizational identity and intra-job embeddedness. This can be divided into three conditions [22]: a) If organizational identity and intra-job embeddedness were mutually independent under the interference effect of GNS, the GNS serves as a coordinating agent between them; b) If the organizational identity and intra-job embeddedness presented a weakening significant correlation when GNS involved in their correlation analysis, GNS causes partial mediating effect on their correlation; c) If the organizational identity and intra-job embeddedness were still independent from each other when GNS involved in their correlation analysis, GNS has no mediating effect on their correlation. The results of mediating effect analysis were shown in Table 3.

The above correlation analysis has confirmed the positive effect of GNS on organizational identity and intra-job embeddedness as well as the significant correlation between organizational identity and intra-job embeddedness. As a result, this paper shall not only test the interference effectiveness of GNS on correlation analysis between organizational identity and intra-job embeddedness, but also observe whether the correlation between organizational identity and intra-job embeddedness is disappeared as well as such correlation change.
As can be seen in the Table 3, among three different mediator models, the partial mediator model is the optimal one with highest fitting degree and smallest $df$. Therefore, the partial mediator model was applied in this paper and GNS was used as an effective mediating variable between organizational identity and intra-job embeddedness. Furthermore, the correlation coefficient between organizational identity and intra-job embeddedness without involving the interference of GNS was 0.77, which, however, decreased by 34% to 0.51% after GNS was involved as a mediating variable. This indicated that GNS of the new generation of migrant workers affects the correlation between organizational identity and intra-job embeddedness to some extent.

5. Conclusions

To sum up, the verification results of above mentioned research hypotheses were shown in Table 4.

Without tough life experiences as their parents have, the new generation of migrant workers often evaluates the environment according to their standard. Facing with such cruel social reality, some will feel isolated by the new environment, thus developing stronger sense of deprivation correspondingly. They expect more fair treatment during their environmental evaluation. If these demands were not satisfied, they would become hesitate and differentiate, or even take more rebellion behaviors. In this paper, the impact of GNS of the new generation of migrant workers on their organizational identity and intra-job embeddedness is studied, aiming to provide references for practical management of the new generation of migrant workers. The empirical research results demonstrate that the new generation of migrant workers has moderate level of organizational identity and intra-job embeddedness. Additionally, their GNS is significantly correlated with their organizational identity and intra-job embeddedness. In the unfair society with frequent infringement of rural workers’ right by enterprises, the new generation of migrant workers with high pursuit of material and spiritual enjoyment is easy to suffer psychological change, thus influencing their behaviors and inducing unstable factors. Under this circumstance, managers are suggested to pay attention to the fairness of management system, choose effective communication ways flexible, provide support, care and respect to the new generation of migrant workers, increase their organizational identity, stimulate their working enthusiasm and thereby improve their job performances.

In conclusion, employers are suggested to fulfill reasonable recruitment, adopt customized and people-oriented human resource management, establish fair, harmonious and comfortable working environment and cultural atmosphere, stimulate the GNS of the new generation of migrant workers, improve their organizational identity and intra-job embeddedness.
identity and intra-job embeddedness, facilitate them to make more contributions to the organizations’ development, and develop a virtuous circle.

References