

Research on the Influence of Psychological Privilege in Work Situation

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Abstract: Privilege refers to a psychological feel right to preferential treatment, being exempt stable social responsibility and universal subjective belief or perception, in different areas can be expressed as a sense of academic privilege, the consumer a sense of privilege, the privilege workplace flu. Psychological privilege enables individuals to become narcissistic, induced interpersonal conflict, selfishness and aggression and so on. The main factors affecting the psychological privilege of individual factors contextual factors have life experience, rearing, attachment type, socioeconomic status, and other environmental organizations and self-compassion, subjective construct, egalitarian values, and so on. Future studies should further explore the psychological privileges concept and structure, expand its research methods, longitudinal studies and strengthen indigenous research and to further explore the psychological factors that may affect the privileges of the privileged and psychological ways to avoid negative consequences (or reduced). As an important element of people's social life, a psychological sense of privilege determines the individual's attitude and implementation efficiency towards social rules, corporate requirements, and work. As a result, people with high levels of psychological privilege are more resistant to being bound by rules and more difficult to manage. Individuals with low levels of psychological privilege are more likely to follow orders. At the same time, from the perspective of identity theory resources and self-regulation and another theoretical perspective of workplace, psychological privilege research is summarized and reviewed.

Keywords: Psychological Privilege, Enterprise Management, Work Situation

1. Introduction

In recent years, the concept of psychological privilege has been widely concerned by academic circles. This concept is related to everyone's intense feelings about their social status and the social rights they should enjoy. Especially in enterprise management, if the psychological sense of privilege of employees is too high, it will bring a series of behaviors including resisting the orders of superiors, believing that they should enjoy better treatment than other colleagues, and disobeying corporate rules and even laws. Therefore, only by correctly recognizing what kind of influence psychological privilege will have in management and what kind of consequence orientation, can we carry out

better-targeted management.

In order to help researchers have a deeper understanding of psychological privileges formed by employees in the workplace and the behavioral changes brought about by them, this paper analyzes and discusses psychological privileges within a specific theoretical framework, to tease out the formation process and action mechanism of psychological privileges from different theoretical perspectives. Analyzing workplace psychological privilege from a conjectural perspective can enable scholars to better understand the phenomenon of psychological privilege in the workplace and develop more novel and interesting theoretical stories around psychological privilege. In order to provide a useful reference for subsequent researchers to grasp the

applicability of the theory and determine the future research direction, logic, and shortcomings of psychological privilege research from different theoretical perspectives are sorted out.

At the same time, foreign managers and researchers found that people's psychological privilege levels increased year by year [1]. College students and young employees compared to the previous psychological privilege level of contemporary college students and young employees significantly increased [1, 2]. This means that contemporary adolescents are more likely to have some negative qualities, is more likely to make social adaptation of bad behavior. This phenomenon has attracted the attention of foreign researchers in the field of psychology, ethics, law, etc., while the domestic introduction to psychological concepts of privilege is relatively small [3], empirical research related has just carried out [4], few theoretical construction and review of the literature on the psychological privilege system.

For example, some government officials feel that they deserve better in all aspects than the ordinary people of treatment [5] no additional contribution of some employees think they have a right to a bonus [6]. This is based on their shared conviction that psychological privilege (psychological entitlement, PE). Psychology is a privilege to feel right to preferential treatment, being exempt stable social responsibility and universal subjective belief or perception, it affects a series of psychological and behavior of people [7]. Existing studies, high levels of psychological and privilege often associated with negative results. For example, high psychological privilege levels were more likely to perceive unfair [8], are more likely to live [9], work and pay [10] dissatisfaction, more prone to turnover intention. In addition, psychological privilege will reduce the individual's sense of social responsibility [11], of the partner's loyalty and empathy [12]. Also so that individuals are more likely to make selfish behavior and aggressive behavior [13], to make a selection competition in social dilemmas [14], are more likely to induce interpersonal conflict [15].

2. The Generation of Psychological Privilege

2.1. The Concept of Psychological Privilege

The sense of psychological privilege is an essential psychological factor, and everyone has a level of psychological feeling. This concept represents the degree to which people should enjoy social status and individual rights in their social environment. To some extent, this value is not an absolute value but a ratio value, that is, if a person thinks that he or she should enjoy more privileges than he or she should enjoy, he or she will have a higher level of psychological privilege. The more privileges he or she exceeds, the higher the level of psychological privilege the individual has.

Social identity theory refers to that in order to maintain the cognition of self-concept or improve the ability of

self-cognition in social life; people begin to try to influence the identity they project on others. Social identity is generally divided into positional identity and mixed identity. The so-called positional identity refers to the identity of positional significance that is completed by the specific interaction between individuals and other specific individuals. Mixed identity is a set of universal identity which includes the most extensive social behavior and social interaction between people and different individuals. Conceptually, each individual has many different vocational identities, but there is only one fixed identity. For example, an employee has a social identity, corporate identity, organizational identity, and so on. There are also significant individual differences in people's collective interaction, which mainly depends on the differences in their social motivation and social ability. Some people are skilled in advising, giving speeches, and dealing with social affairs. Nevertheless, other individuals are not very good at these kinds of things, who are extremely sensitive to all kinds of interactions and so on.

The generation of psychological privilege comes from the collective influence of many factors, which are considered as a social psychological factor and have nothing to do with heredity and gene. It is mainly influenced by the education, social atmosphere, individual experience, understanding, and other factors that people have received since childhood. For individuals, psychological privilege comes from the impact of social comparison and social expectation, which has many similarities with the psychological contract. These two dimensions can be divided horizontally into the "internal-external" dimension.

Social identity theory explains precisely how the generation mechanism of discrete psychological privilege is formed and how the after-effect contingency mechanism formed after that is formed. Specifically, role identity theory can help explain the mechanism of psychological privilege. However, it should be noted that the influence of role identification on psychological privilege should theoretically result in different results and changes of persons under the influence of personality trait differences, organizational situation differences, and other identification differences. In addition, the research of other scholars in the past is generally showed that organizational identification can adjust the effect on the employees in the psychological sense of privilege, but high psychological privilege level of employees is often accompanied by response to the organization at a high level of expectation, think you should get more than others, or more generous perks; as a result, we can speculate that organizational identification and psychological sense of privilege also exists the relationship.

In the study of the existing theory, social identity theory can more accurately explain how individual in society to realize the structure of the self-concept and psychological sense of privilege, is mainly explained the individual to "who am I" and "how-to" questions, and psychological privilege is the individual in the social environment of self-concept cognitive weak performance directly. From existing studies, we can find that the research and explanation based on social

identity theory explain that the formation mechanism and influence the mechanism of employees' psychological privilege level are derived from the joint effect of social identity and social expectation.

2.2. Psychological Privilege Discrimination

In previous studies, whether psychological privilege is a personality trait or a psychological state has been widely examined by scholars. Most researchers believe that psychological privilege is a stable personality trait [16], will not be affected by situational factors. However, some studies have found that psychological privilege is a psychological state that can be activated by specific situational experiences [17, 19]. Some scholars believe that psychological privilege has both character traits and psychological states (Naumann et al., 2002; Fisk, 2010; Yam, Klotz, He, & Reynolds, 2017). When psychological privilege is treated as an individual trait, it plays a more antecedent role in research [20] or moderating variables (e.g., Priesemuth & Taylor, 2016; Wheeler, Halbesleben, & Whitman, 2013). However, when psychological privilege is seen as a psychological state, scholars more discuss its formation mechanism [21]. In view of the research on psychological privileges defined there are some fuzziness and uncertainty (Bai Baoyu etc., 2017), and the future research should further explore the connotation of the concept of psychological privilege field, and try to define the privileges and state of psychological qualities mental privileges and distinguish, discusses different attributes of psychological privilege what are the similarities and differences on the structure and mechanism of action.

Besides, whether the psychological privilege is consistent across fields has aroused the discussion of scholars. [22] argued that psychological privilege has cross-field consistency and influences in all fields. However, some scholars think that psychological privilege is a domain-specific concept, and the level of individual psychological privilege varies in different fields [23]. Future research may explore whether individuals with psychological privileges in other fields may have psychological privileges in the workplace.

3. Psychological Privilege Is Under Theoretical Research

In recent years, psychological privilege in the workplace has attracted extensive attention from scholars at home and abroad. Based on the review of psychological privilege literature at home and abroad, this paper summarizes the generation mechanism, action mechanism, and representative studies of psychological privilege in the workplace from diverse theoretical perspectives. From the perspective of identity theory, previous studies mainly discussed the anthesis of psychological privilege and the regulating effect of organizational identity. From the perspective of cognitive motivation theory, most researchers focus on the effects of psychological privilege. From the perspective of equity theory,

scholars concentrate on the impact of psychological privilege on employees' perception of equity. From the perspective of resources and self-regulation, the research focuses on the regulation effect of psychological privilege. While there are relatively few studies on psychological privilege in the workplace from other theoretical perspectives, this paper mainly reviews the mechanism and effect of psychological privilege in the workplace from the opinions of moral permission theory, feedback intervention theory and emotional event theory.

3.1. Psychological Senses of Privilege from the Perspective of Resource Preservation and Self-regulation

Resource conservation theory is that people will actively maintain, protect, and construct thought more precious resources, when the individual resources losses or threats and complement are not available, can produce pressure this theory is mainly from the perspectives of individual resource flows to analyzing the forming process of the pressure, not only can adequately explain the behavior of the individual motivation, and is an excellent way to explain individual in limited resources situation decision. Based on the resource conservation theory, Prosecute and [10] believe that employees with psychological privilege are susceptible to the violation of the psychological contract, and are more likely to perceive the threat to resources and fall into intense emotional depression. The discrepancy between expectation and reality makes them bear more pressure, which requires more resources to self-regulate. Thus reducing organizational citizenship behavior. Besides, [24] also explored the relationship between perceived responsibility, psychological privilege, and job satisfaction based on the resource conservation theory. The study found that in situations with low levels of accountability, psychologically privileged workers spend many resources on cognitive filtering and maintaining a positive self-image, and the loss of resources will make them feel more stressed, thus reducing job satisfaction. However, the effect of psychological privilege on job satisfaction was not significant when the level of accountability was high.

Workers with psychological privilege have weak self-concept and need constant self-affirmation. This means that when the difference between real experience and imagination intensifies, it requires more effort to self-regulate, which will further increase the consumption of expressive resources. However, it should be pointed out that individuals' different perceptions of the importance of resources will also affect their attitudes and behavioral responses after resource loss. Research on psychological privilege based on the opinion of resources and self-regulation is rare and ignores the differences of individual characteristics. Previous studies have discussed that self-monitoring can weaken the growing relationship between external control sources and psychological privilege. Based on this, the moderating effect of emotional intelligence, self-control, traditionalism, and neutral thinking on the powerful effect of psychological privilege

can be discussed in the future. Also, the discussion of psychological privilege from the perspective of resources and self-regulation requires more attention to the recovery process of psychological resources. When workers with psychological privilege lose perceived resources, they may take actions to restrain or compensate for the loss of resources, such as seeking emotional support and psychological detachment.

3.2. Organizational Fairness and Psychological Privilege

Fairness Perception is the subjective feeling of individuals, which are easily affected by individual values, knowledge, experience, and personality traits. Studies have shown that employees with higher levels of psychological privilege tend to have inflated self-perception and self-serving attribution, believing that they should get more rewards (Harvey & Harris, 2010), but there is a big gap between what they think and what they get [20]. Therefore, workers with psychological privilege are less likely to feel organizational fairness. [21] confirmed this view through empirical research. Some scholars believe that psychological privilege is largely caused by the lack or bits of inner fairness, and unfair treatment can stimulate the psychological privilege of employees. However, there is the absence of evidence to support the relationship between organizational fairness and psychological privilege in existing studies. It is worth further discussion in the future whether organizational fairness practices implemented by organizations will alleviate the psychological privilege of workers.

3.3. Equity Sensitivity Theory and Psychological Privilege

According to the equity theory, individuals tend to evaluate their social exchange situation with others as a reference, and the comparison of input and output will affect their perception of equity. Based on this, some scholars have explored the generation mechanism and influence the effect of psychological privilege from the perspective of equity theory. Housman, Hatfield and Miles (1987) point out that the people of fairness preference are stable and are different from person to person, and then put forward the theory of fair and sensitivity. There are three types of Equity sensitivity: Benevolent, Entitled and Equity Sensitive. Different fairness preference of attitude and behavior of the individual is different, the influence of employee preference type privilege to get more in return, they asked for in return is more significant than your input, and input-output ratio is higher than reference object, the privileges and psychological privileges that staff is very sensitive to unfair, high psychological privilege will be disappointed at human resources management service employees and discontent, whether organization providing human resources service fairness. Domestic scholars Wang Chongqing and Peng Jisheng (2016) discussed the influence of psychological privilege on abuse management perception and the moderating effect of intergenerational differences based on equity sensitivity theory and found that employees with psychological privilege are more sensitive to abuse

management, especially in the new generation.

Although the fairness theory can explain the mechanism and effect of psychological privilege, there are still some deficiencies in the relevant researches. First of all, there are limited empirical studies on the relationship between psychological privilege and organizational justice. Future studies can further explore the interaction between organizational justice and psychological privilege and the differences in the impact of different forms of justice (procedural justice, distributive justice, interpersonal justice) on psychological privilege. Secondly, as a subjective feeling, the perception of fairness will be different in different organizations. In order to explore psychological privilege from the perspective of equity theory, cultural differences, institutional environment, and mechanical characteristics should be taken into consideration. Finally, the relationship between employees' sense of fairness and psychological privilege may be affected by many situational factors, such as collectivism atmosphere, organizational fairness atmosphere, self-sacrificing leadership, and performance tracking strategies, which may weaken or inhibit the generation of employees' psychological privilege.

3.4. Psychological Privileges from the Perspective of Moral Licensing Theory

The moral licensing theory can be used to explain the inconsistent behavior of workers. To some extent, psychological privilege is like a kind of moral credence, which is based on negative cognition of past behaviors. When people think of the morally plausible behavior they have done before, they feel that they have the right to violate morality and engage in immoral behavior with ease used psychological privilege to measure the role of moral permission vicariously, believing that employees who often engage in organizational citizenship behaviors can generate psychological privilege and therefore feel justified to engage in some deviating behaviors in the workplace. From the perspective of moral licensing theory, the formation mechanism and behavioral response of workers from "good soldiers" to "bad apples" can be well explained, but relevant researches are rare. Employees' active behaviors may be influenced by the active personality, pro-social motivation and external environment, not necessarily to pursue proper credit or moral credentials. Therefore, it is necessary to further understand under what circumstances employees' functional behaviors will form psychological privileges and what factors can effectively regulate such effects. In addition, there are certain cultural differences in moral behavior, and it is difficult to judge whether workers' behavior is moral under different cultural backgrounds. Therefore, the influence of ethical behavior on the psychological privilege of employees should also consider cultural factors.

3.5. Psychological Privilege from the Perspective of Feedback Intervention Theory

According to the feedback intervention theory, the

effectiveness of feedback depends on whether the receiver of feedback focuses his attention on task-level or ego level. When feedback recipients perceive the task level feedback, their primary concern will be the improvement of task performance to achieve the goal or expectation. However, when feedback recipients receive self-level feedback, defense mechanisms will be generated, leading to reduced efforts and decreased performance. Built on the feedback intervention theory, Holderness, Olsen, and Thornock found that the effectiveness of performance feedback depends on the level of psychological privilege of the feedback source and recipient. In particular, when negative performance feedback is provided, the influence of feedback source on performance is controlled by the level of psychological privilege of the feedback recipient. Psychologically privileged employees show a strong sense of superiority to peers and view peers negative feedback as threatening and offensive and tend to view peer feedback as self-level feedback. However, they may view the feedback from their superiors as a potential affirmation of themselves, as task-level feedback and respond positively to feedback from their superiors. Therefore, Future research may explore what kinds of leadership and peer feedback mitigate the negative effects of psychological privilege.

4. Conclusion

To sum up, the level of individual psychological privilege discussed based on the cognitive motivation theory explains many situations of unusual behaviors. Meanwhile, based on the above argumentation and narration, we propose the following hypotheses for the specific performance of psychological privilege:

First of all, more selfish, often unreasonable, difficult to understand and accept the efforts of others, and even to others' help with hostility and slander.

The second, I often believe that I have been treated unfairly at work and that I have been subjected to inhuman and unequal management, thus showing a negative attitude or even directly showing my resistance.

The last, they often believe that they can get away with punishment even if they do not follow instructions or do not face the process that needs to be punished at all, but ask for higher preferential treatment than others when facing the coming punishment.

The three hypotheses above respectively correspond to the characteristics that individuals with a high level of psychological privilege may generally appear in their behaviors and psychological processes. Similarly, there are mainly two shared environments where psychological privilege may cause harm: one is in public places, and the other is in enterprises. In recent years, there have been numerous cases of harm caused by psychologically privileged people in public places, including the events of high-speed railway gate boarding and bus steering wheel grabbing, which have caused widespread social concern. In enterprises, psychologically privileged people are often critical personal

reasons for team conflicts, failure of tasks, difficulties in docking and blocked cooperation. In the past, this was often considered as subjective morality, quality, conduct or emotional intelligence.

Moreover, now we are trying to tease that out for a separate study. At present, there are many debates on whether psychological privilege is a state or a character in the academic circle. However, no matter which kind of psychological process it belongs to, it is always the main factor that makes people prone to various problems and should be further studied and explained. In the follow-up research, we will conduct experimental research on several hypotheses to explore the relationship and factors behind them.

5. Discussion

Psychological privilege in the workplace is a common social phenomenon, which has attracted significant attention from scholars and practitioners at home and abroad. Based on multiple theoretical perspectives, this paper sets out the relevant literature on psychological privilege and summarizes the legal network of workplace psychological privilege research, hoping to provide a useful reference for the localization research on psychological privilege. In general, researchers have made a lot of valuable achievements in the concept, measurement, influencing factors and influencing results of psychological privilege, but there is still much room to improve the discussion of psychological privilege under the unique cultural background of China. For domestic scholars, future research can start from the following aspects to continuously expand and enrich the research results of psychological privilege.

Firstly, the existing theoretical perspective has some limitations in explaining the influencing factors, action mechanism and boundary conditions of psychological privilege in the workplace. Future research can think to introduce a new theoretical perspective to discuss psychological privilege in the workplace. For example, future research could use trait activation theory to explain the mechanism of trait psychological privilege. According to trait activation theory, personality traits are potential states, and whether traits can be manifested as specific behaviors depend on whether traits can be activated by situational factors. A large number of studies have found that job characteristics, leadership factors, and organizational atmosphere can activate staffs' trait expression as situational factors. Jordan et al. believe that it is helpful to think about psychological privileges under the framework of trait activation. Psychological privileges can be activated by specific situational factors, and then affect the attitude and behavior of workers. Future research can explore whether task importance, differentiated leadership style, and organizational hierarchy atmosphere active employees' trait psychological privileges within the framework of trait activation theory, thus leading to a series of deviant behaviors in the workplace. In addition, Future research can also analyze the role of psychological privilege in interpersonal communication in the workplace

with the help of social exchange theory. In the workplace, social interaction between people is a rational process of resource exchange, based on the principle of reciprocity. Only when the material and spiritual exchange between people reaches a reciprocal balance can human relations be harmonious and lasting. Naumann *et al.* believe that Employees' perception of privilege is based on the asymmetric evaluation of reciprocity. Therefore, workers with psychological privilege may not perceive the fair exchange among people, which will lead to a series of negative attitudes and behaviors. Future research can explore the influence of the quality of the exchange relationship between employees, leaders, and colleagues on the relationship between psychological privilege and employee deviation behavior based on social exchange theory. In addition, some scholars have proposed that self-evaluation theory, emotional, cognitive evaluation theory, and motivational reasoning theory can also provide a different perspective for the study of psychological privilege. In the future, multiple theoretical perspectives can be integrated to study the original topic of psychological privilege.

Finally, existing studies focus more on the influencing factors and effects of individual psychological privilege. However, in organizations based on teamwork, individual psychological privilege is likely to spread in teams (Harvey & Dasborough, 2015). Compared with distinctive psychological privileges, team psychological privileges may cause more significant harm to the organization, for example, destroy the organizational culture and teamwork, and even cause the collective resignation of the team. However, at present, research on team psychological privilege is still in its infancy. Future research can focus on the generation mechanism of team psychological privilege, for example, whether the psychological privilege of leaders, organizational differential atmosphere, and work characteristics will lead to teaming psychological privilege. Depending on the perspective of social learning theory, key employees will become the objects that organization members rely on and imitate. Therefore, the team leader with psychological privilege may induce the team psychological privilege to some extent. Previous studies have shown that in organizations that implement differential management, staff in the circle will get more resource support and higher status, which will strengthen their inflated self-cognition and improve the level of psychological privilege. The sense of separation caused by unfair treatment of workers outside the circle will also improve their psychological privilege level. Therefore, in organizations with an energetic atmosphere of organizational differential order, it may be easy to form team psychological privilege. In addition, the potential impact of some work characteristics on team psychological privilege is also worth discussing. For instance, in a team with high work autonomy, members may overestimate the contribution of their team and the importance of undertaking tasks, which may also give rise to team psychological privilege to some extent. Therefore, it is not only of theoretical significance to explore the formation mechanism of team psychological

privilege. However, it also provides scientific guidance for organizational practitioners to restrain the diffusion of psychological privilege.

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