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Investigate the Comprehensive Impact Mechanism of Leadership Empowerment on Employee Suggestions and its Management Strategies

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Abstract

In the current economic and social environment, businesses are facing increased uncertainty in both internal and external factors. In order to maintain a competitive advantage, companies must focus on organizational reform and innovation. How to inspire employees to actively contribute ideas and suggestions for the development of the company is a challenge faced by every business leader. Management researchers widely believe that suggestion behavior can bring a series of positive impacts to organizations. Currently, there have been studies on individual-level suggestion behavior, but there is relatively little research on how leadership empowerment behaviors influence employee suggestion behavior, and there is a lack of research on the internal transmission mechanism between the two. Based on literature research and relevant research suggestions, this study determines the research topic of "the influence of leadership empowerment behaviors on employee suggestion behavior". The main research examines how leadership empowerment behaviors influence employee suggestion behavior and the underlying mechanisms. Through empirical research on the variables of leadership empowerment behaviors, differential atmosphere, insider identity cognition, and employee suggestion, the following conclusions are drawn: leadership empowerment behaviors have a positive impact on employee suggestion behavior and its two dimensions (promotive and inhibitive suggestion); leadership empowerment behaviors have a positive impact on employees' insider identity cognition; insider identity cognition has a positive predictive effect on employee suggestion behavior and its two dimensions; insider identity cognition plays a mediating role between leadership empowerment behaviors and suggestion behavior; differential atmosphere negatively moderates the relationship between leadership empowerment behaviors and employee suggestion behavior. Based on the research findings, some management practice suggestions are proposed, providing theoretical basis and supporting evidence for business leaders to promote employee suggestion behavior through empowerment.

Keywords: Leadership empowering behavior, Employee suggestions, Insider cognition, Differential atmosphere

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Introduction

The traditional "superior-subordinate relationship" is no longer adequate for the survival and development of enterprises in the volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) business environment. The relationship between leaders and employees in modern enterprises exhibits more complexity, diversity and dynamism (Luo, 2015; Pan et al. 2023). Leaders need to depend on employees for insight, innovation, strategic thinking and challenging the status quo to cope with the fast-changing market demand (Bennis, 2000; Latour & Rast, 2004). Meanwhile, the new generation of employees, mainly born in the 1980s and 1990s, aspire to participate in organizational decision-making and fulfill their own value (Chen & Tang, 2014; Xie & Chen, 2014). Additionally, the decentralization of enterprise structure has transformed the traditional bureaucratic member relationship into a more horizontal one. Power and resources are no longer monopolized by leaders, which enables employees to exert influence on them. In this context, employees' behavior of making suggestions to leaders becomes increasingly prevalent and vital for enterprise development. However, there has been little research on how subordinates' suggestions influence superior leaders. Existing studies mainly examine two aspects: "leaders' adoption of suggestions" and "leaders' evaluation of suggesters" (Burris, 2012). The specific internal influence mechanism and related research warrant further investigation and elaboration.

Drawing on social identity theory, this paper examines the relationship between leader empowerment and employee suggestions behavior. Social identity theory suggests that employees categorize themselves and others into in-groups and out-groups based on various criteria (e.g., organizational membership), and establish their position and identity in social relations. This offers a valuable lens for understanding the impact of leader empowerment on employee suggestions behavior. Enhancing employees' insider identity cognition is a critical issue that requires the attention and resolution of enterprise leaders, as it has significant implications for enterprises and society.

This paper adopts social identity theory to examine the influence of leader empowerment on employee suggestions behavior via insider identity cognition, as well as the moderating effect of power distance climate, from the perspective of individual employees. It contends that employee behavior is shaped not only by cognitive factors such as their beliefs and emotions, but also by external environmental factors. Hence, stimulating employees' participation and enthusiasm, and encouraging them to voice their ideas proactively, are crucial for the organization's survival and advancement. This paper aims to enhance and refine the theory and localization research of local leader empowerment, and offer some implications and insights for enterprise leaders to facilitate employee suggestions (Wang & Li, 2023). In particular, enterprise leaders should improve employees' insider identity cognition and reduce differential treatment of employees by modeling their own behavior, thereby fostering employee suggestions more effectively.

Literature Review

Related research on leader empowerment behavior

The concept of leader empowerment

Empowerment can be categorized into three aspects: psychological, organizational and leadership. Konczak et al. (2000) first introduced the concept of empowering leadership behaviors, which they defined as "a leader assigns authority and responsibility to subordinates and ensures that the employees are able to use the delegated authority effectively". Arnold et al. (2000) defined empowering leadership behaviors as a process in

which leaders achieve empowerment by providing conditions that enhance employees' self-efficacy and control and by eliminating conditions that lead to feelings of powerlessness. Arnold (2000) defined leadership empowerment behavior as a process in which leaders achieve empowerment by providing conditions that enhance employees' sense of self-efficacy and control and eliminating conditions that lead to a sense of powerlessness. Arnold et al.'s concept of leadership empowerment behavior has been recognized and cited by many scholars. Wang Hui and Wu Zhaoyan et al. (2008) pointed out that leadership empowerment behaviors have large differences between Chinese and Western cultures, as well as different impact effects. They argued that in the Chinese context, leadership empowerment is a management behavior that can stimulate employees' self-motivation and intrinsic motivation, thus benefiting both the employees and the organization. According to Li Wei and Mei Jixia (2018), leadership empowerment behaviors are the behaviors of leaders who support and encourage their subordinates to engage in self-management, thus increasing employees' cognition of empowerment. According to Li Zhengwei et al. leadership empowerment behaviors include giving employees some power, involving them in decision-making, giving them trust, and making them aware of the significance of their work (Li, Cao, & Wang, 2019). Wang Yao et al. argue that leadership empowerment is an important source of information and power for employees in the organization, and that employees can earn leaders' trust in them through suggestions behaviors, which in turn leads to more leadership empowerment. Peng, Nie, and Chen (2023) argue that leadership empowerment can increase employees' self-confidence in their abilities and status within the organization, and that this self-confidence leads to a more positive commitment to their work, leadership empowerment may also lead to the problem of role ambiguity, i.e., employees lack a clear understanding of their job responsibilities and expectations, and employees may look for resources on the Internet or divert their attention to compensate for the uncertainty and lack of clarity at work.

Dimensions and measurement of leader empowerment

Wang et al. (2008) devised the first Chinese scale of leader empowerment behavior, comprising six dimensions: personal development support, process control, power delegation, participation in decision-making, outcome and goal control, and work guidance. Each dimension consists of four items, measured by a Likert 5-point scale.

The influencing factors of leader empowerment

There are three main influences on leader empowerment, i.e., the leader's personal psychological characteristics, the hierarchical relationship, and the organizational environment.

Leaders' empowerment behavior is influenced by their personal psychological characteristics, such as power distance, work load and uncertainty avoidance. Power distance is the extent to which individuals tolerate and accept unequal power distribution (Hofstede et al., 2010). It determines leaders' relationship and management style with employees. Leaders with low power distance are likely to form equal, harmonious and friendly informal relationships with employees, facilitate employee involvement in decision-making, and promote information sharing (Sharma & Kirkman, 2015). Conversely, leaders with high power distance retain more power and delegate less to employees (Liu & Liao, 2013). Drawing on the resource conservation theory, Yi, Wang and colleagues (2021) investigated how subordinate performance affects leader empowerment behavior. They found an inverted U-shaped relationship between the two variables. Moreover, they discovered that high-

quality leader-subordinate relationships enhanced leader trust and reduced status threat, leading to more empowerment for high-performing subordinates. They also suggested that employees with better relationships with their bosses received more rewards and support, and thus more empowerment (Deng et al., 2016). Dussia (2023) states that servant leadership builds a trusting and cooperative superior-subordinate relationship that promotes employee engagement, satisfaction, and development. This style of leadership can motivate and motivate subordinates to contribute to the success of the organization.

Leader empowerment behavior is positively influenced by organizational empowerment atmosphere, which facilitates information sharing and team responsibility among organizational members (Han et al., 2019).

Related studies on insider identity cognition

The concept of insider identity cognition

Stamper and Masterson (2002) introduced the concept of insider identity cognition in their empirical study, defined as the employee's cognition of their personal space and acceptance within the organization. They claimed that insider identity cognition indicated the extent to which the organization included oneself, or the psychological sense of belonging among organizational members.

The dimensions and measurement of insider identity cognition

Stamper and Masterson (2002) developed and tested a single-dimensional measure of insider identity cognition, which was widely used by subsequent researchers. The measure consisted of six items, such as: "I believe I am a member of this organization", "I feel like an outsider in this organization" and so forth. They administered the measure to over 300 hotel employees in the US and found that it had high reliability, with a value of 0.88.

The influencing factors of insider identity cognition

Insider identity cognition refers to the employee's cognition of their belongingness to the organization. It is mainly determined by individual factors, but also influenced by external factors, such as leadership style and the attitudes of other organizational members. Most studies examine the antecedents and outcomes of insider identity cognition.

1. Antecedents of insider identity cognition. Insider identity cognition is determined by employee personal factors (e.g., creativity and proactive personality), leadership factors (e.g., leader-member exchange and leadership style) and organizational factors (e.g., organizational justice and organizational support).
2. Outcomes of insider identity cognition. Insider identity cognition influences individual work attitudes, behaviors and performance, according to previous studies.

Related studies on employee suggestions

Definition of the concept of employee suggestions

Employee suggestions has been approached from two main perspectives. Hirschman (1970) defined employee suggestions as the expression of views and suggestions on organizational problems, and viewed it as a constructive behavior to enhance organizational conditions. The other perspective, which has gained wide recognition among scholars, considers employee suggestions as an extra-role or organizational citizenship behavior of employees, aimed at

expressing dissatisfaction and improving the organizational status quo. Thus, suggestions is a proactive behavior.

The dimensions and measurement of employee suggestions

1. The dimension of offering suggestions.

Employee suggestions have been evolved from a single to a multiple dimensional concept. Liang and Farh (2008) differentiated inhibitive voice and promotive employee suggestions according to their function and impact. Inhibitive voice consists of future-oriented suggestions for improving organizational efficiency, while promotive employee suggestions comprises past and future-oriented opinions for exposing organizational conflicts and negative emotions. Maynes and Podsakoff further classified promotive voice into supportive and constructive voice, and inhibitive voice into defensive and destructive employee suggestions.

2. The measurement methods of offering suggestions.

VanDyne and Lepine (1998) developed a six-item scale to measure employee suggestions, which they defined as the extent to which employees make suggestions and express opinions about work-related issues. The items, such as "This employee makes suggestions for improving how the team functions" and "This employee speaks up and encourages others to get involved in issues that affect the team", were rated on a Likert seven-point scale. The scale has been widely used and validated in previous studies, and has demonstrated high reliability and validity.

Factors influencing employee suggestions

1. Antecedent variables for employee suggestions. Employee suggestion behavior is influenced by a range of individual, leader, and organizational factors. Individual factors comprise personality traits, attitudes, emotions, psychological safety, and self-efficacy. Leader factors encompass leadership style, leader-member exchange, and leader suggestion adoption. Organizational factors entail organizational justice, organizational politics, team suggestion climate, workplace ostracism, and organizational support. These factors determine whether employees decide to make suggestions and how frequently and effectively they do so.
2. Outcome variables for employee suggestions. Suggestion is a dynamic process that engages the suggester, the suggestee, and other stakeholders. When suggesters voice their ideas through formal or informal channels, they may receive recognition or acceptance from their superiors, which can boost their self-efficacy and work motivation, and foster their positive contributions to others, teams, and organizations, as well as their subsequent suggestion behavior. Conversely, if their suggestions are overlooked or rejected by their superiors, it may impair their attitudes and work behavior. Depending on their suggestion intention, they may either refrain from making further suggestions or seek alternative venues to voice their ideas. Thus, the recognition or rejection of their suggestions by their superiors or leaders can have significant implications for individuals, teams, and organizations.

Research on differential atmosphere

The concept of differential atmosphere

The concept of differential atmosphere is developed based on the "differential pattern" proposed by Fei Xiaotong (1998). He believes that interpersonal relationships and hierarchical order are important in Chinese culture. People prioritize themselves and the degree of proximity to the outer circle varies, with relationships gradually weakening from the inside to the outside. Zhu Yu and Xie Binbin (2018) define the cognition of differential atmosphere as the feeling of intimacy between leaders and subordinates in their empirical study on subordinate pairing. Ma Wei and Su Hang (2020) define the cognition of differential atmosphere as individuals' cognition of the quality of interpersonal relationships within an organization, which primarily involves aspects such as fairness in resource allocation, power hierarchy order, and differential treatment. Qu et al. (2023) argue that leadership humility can be effective in promoting hard work among employees by establishing a safe and relaxed work environment, providing effective internal resources, and promoting positive interpersonal interactions. This has important implications for development within an organization.

The measurement of the differential atmosphere

The differential atmosphere can affect employees' psychology, attitudes, and behaviors. The scale developed by Liu Zhenyu (2003) is currently the primary tool for studying the differential atmosphere at the individual, organizational, or team level. It includes three dimensions: trusted roles, biased treatment, and mutual dependence, with a total of 11 items. For example, "Frequent interaction and communication between leaders and individual subordinates" and "Leaders having particular trust in certain subordinates" are included in the scale.

The outcome variable of the differential atmosphere

Employees may experience emotional exhaustion when they perceive that their external resources are insufficient to cope with the demands of their job. At this point, they may rely more on internal resources to regulate their emotions, thus creating an imbalance in resource allocation. Differential atmosphere can exacerbate this imbalance because it creates a sense that resources are being supplied unfairly. This can affect employees' self-efficacy and organizational behaviors such as performance, silence, proactive change, and tacit knowledge sharing. Previous research has shown that differential atmosphere has a significant impact on these outcomes. For example, Ma, Wang, and Yang (2012) found that employees who perceived fairness in performance appraisals improved task performance when the differential atmosphere was low. Wang and Zhang (2017) also examined the relationship between differential atmosphere and fairness in performance appraisals. Using a linear hierarchical model, they analyzed data from 302 employees in 18 companies in Tianjin and found that differential atmosphere reduced perceived fairness in performance evaluation, including procedural fairness, distributive fairness, and interactional fairness. Zhu et al. (2018) argued that higher differential atmosphere increased the risk and uncertainty of employees' suggestions, leading to employee silencing from an affective perspective. They reported a positive correlation between differential atmosphere and employee silencing behavior. Liu (2021) studied employees in 13 manufacturing companies in China considering generational differences. He found an inverted U-shaped relationship between perceptions of differential atmosphere and proactive change behavior among non-

new generation employees. Pan et al. (2023) argued that differential atmosphere negatively affects work. When employees perceive a higher degree of differential atmosphere, their job satisfaction decreases. Differential atmosphere can make employees feel unfairly treated by leaders and co-workers, generate negative emotional responses, and even trigger negative organizational behaviors. The negative effects of differential atmosphere on work can be mitigated by promoting organizational trust. Shi et al. (2023) argued that employees with positive leader-member relationships tend to enjoy more support, resources, and opportunities, which positively affects their work attitudes and behaviors. Good coworker relationships provide social support, camaraderie, and opportunities for collaboration, which help to establish a positive work climate, reduce employee anxiety about work, and increase job satisfaction and engagement.

Summary

The literature review revealed that academics have different views on the definitions, dimensions, and scales of leadership empowerment behavior, differential atmosphere, insider identity cognition, and employee suggestion. Leadership empowerment behavior stems from empowerment development, and most studies have examined its positive impact on employee suggestion behavior and innovation behavior. However, fewer studies have been conducted at the organizational and team levels, and the internal mechanisms of influence need to be further investigated and expanded. Research on differential atmosphere is categorized into individual and team levels, but the team level is understudied. Influences on employee suggestions include personal, leadership, and organizational factors, with the former placing more emphasis on positive and negative leadership styles than the leadership empowerment perspective. The latter focuses more on the effects of employee suggestions. Since leader recognition and acceptance can motivate and strengthen employee suggestions, exploring leadership empowerment and employee suggestions can enrich the existing literature.

Research Methodology

This paper reviews the literature on leadership empowerment behavior, insider identity cognition, employee suggestions, and differential atmosphere, summarizes their concepts, dimensions, and content. And suitable theories explaining the relationship between these four variables are identified, providing theoretical support for the hypotheses of this paper. Based on the established scales of related variables at home and abroad, this paper prepared a questionnaire for corporate employees, and using software such as SPSS, we conducted correlation analysis, descriptive analysis and hierarchical regression analysis on the data obtained from the questionnaire to test the validity of the hypotheses and models, and drew conclusions.

Model construction

This paper examines the relationship between leader empowerment behaviors, insider identity cognition, employee suggestions, and differential atmosphere, including the following items.

1. Analyze and discuss the impact of leader empowerment on employee suggestions that encompass both dimensions.
2. To test whether insider identity cognition mediates between leadership empowerment behaviors and employee suggestions and their two dimensions.
3. To test whether differential atmosphere plays a moderating role between leadership empowerment behaviors and employee suggestions and their two dimensions.

The conceptual model for this article is shown in the figure 01.

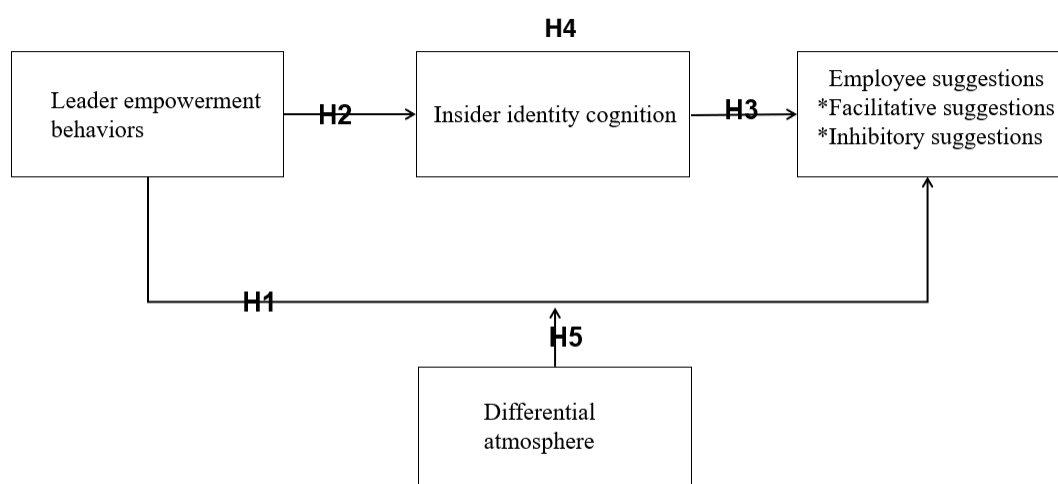


Figure 01: Conceptual Model

The Relationship Between Leader Empowerment and Employee Suggestion

Leaders give employees a certain amount of power, both to stimulate the internal motivation of employees, but also to give employees confidence, more conducive to the development of enterprises and organizations. For facilitative suggestions, first of all, as the direct supervisor of the employee, the leader and the employee in the daily work of the exchange of frequent contact, the leader's attitude, character traits and behavior are directly affecting the employee. As the recipient of the advice, the leader can give more support and trust to the employees, thus creating a positive and favorable atmosphere in the organization. When employees feel this positive atmosphere and encouragement, they will be more active in expressing their views and making suggestions, and at the same time, they will give more feedback to the leaders. On the other hand, based on the principle of mutual benefit, employees will decide whether or not to take the advice behavior according to the organizational context (Deng et al., 2018). In order to develop continuously, the organization needs employees' efforts and contributions, so it will give appropriate recognition, incentives and rewards according to its own needs in order to motivate employees to work actively and create more value for the organization. In turn, employees will be more productive and create more value for the organization in order to receive additional rewards and compensation, which will lead to more resources. Employees engage in facilitative suggestions behaviors when they believe that the organization recognizes their behavior and get more benefits from the organization. Whereas, for inhibitory suggestions, individuals need courage and remove various concerns before making the behavior. By empowering employees to increase their confidence in making suggestions, leaders reduce the concerns and risks associated with suggestions and help individuals point out problems and deficiencies (Fu et al., 2023). Research has also shown that leaders' empowerment behaviors affect employees' sense of

suggestion efficacy, which leads to suggestion behaviors. Based on this, this paper makes the following recommendations

H1 : Leadership empowerment behavior positively influences employee suggestions.

H1a : Leadership empowerment behavior positive influence facilitative suggestions.

H1b : Leadership empowerment behavior positively affects inhibitory suggestions.

Leadership empowerment behavior and insider identity cognition

The dimensions of leadership empowerment behavior, such as personal development support and job coaching, indicate that the leader will provide guidance and assistance to the employee's daily work as well as problems that cannot be solved at work, which will make the employee feel that the leader values him/her, and that the organization is investing in, and nurturing, them, which will further enhance the employee's status as a member of the organization's inner circle (Stamper & Masterson, 2002). Chen and Aryee (2007) argued that high-quality leader-minister exchange leads to higher insider identity cognition. According to the cognitive consistency theory, the leadership's empowerment behavior signals recognition and identification with the subordinate's identity and status, leading employees to believe that they are part of the organization and play an important role, ultimately enhancing their cognition of their organizational identity. Additionally, leadership behavior does not directly influence employee behavior but rather affects employee behavior through its impact on their psychology and cognition (Deng, 2023). Based on this, this article proposes the following:

H2 : Leadership empowerment behaviors positively affect insider identity cognition.

Insider Identity cognition and Employee Suggestion

The concept of insider identity is mainly based on the theory of leader-member exchange. In the process of superior-subordinate exchanges, leaders form differentiated exchange relationships with different subordinates, resulting in the formation of insider and outsider groups. Employees who consciously categorize themselves as insiders usually have characteristics that are similar to and shared with the organization, which enhance their sense of belonging, acceptance, and identity, thus motivating them to cooperate with the organization, actively contribute to the organization, and exhibit suggested behaviors.

Morrison (2014) argues that safety and effectiveness are key factors in employee advising. First, in terms of security, maintaining largely congruent values between leaders and subordinates promotes understanding and mutual support in the relationship, further enhances the ability to predict each other's behavior, increases employees' sense of psychological security, and reduces concerns about psychological risks, thereby encouraging employees to voice their opinions. Second, in terms of effectiveness, individuals with a higher sense of insider status are more likely to have access to resources that are beneficial to them, and are therefore more willing to invest those resources in ways that increase their value (Li et al, 2017). Employees who make contributions are more likely to achieve high performance and be highly recognized and appreciated by their leaders, given that their suggestions and countermeasures are likely to enhance organizational effectiveness, improve the current organizational situation, and align with leaders' expectations (Weiss & Morrison, 2019). This cognition motivates employees to actively contribute and see it as a means to gain access to more channels and resources. Internal employees enjoy more opportunities, benefits, training and recognition than their external counterparts. As a result, internal employees have a stronger sense of belonging and responsibility, and they are more

motivated and willing to take on tasks beyond their own duties to help the organization progress and achieve its goals. On the contrary, employees with a weak sense of insider are limited in their room for progress and access to resources because they are not recognized and supported by the organization and other members. In order to avoid further depletion of resources, they prefer to remain silent or make no suggestions. Based on the above, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Insider identity cognition positively influences employee suggestions.

H3a: Insider identity cognition positive influence facilitative suggestions.

H3b: Insider identity cognition has a positive effect on inhibitory suggestions.

Leader Empowerment Behavior, Insider Identity Cognition and Employee Suggestions

The internal and external environmental factors of an enterprise can have an indirect effect on the cognition of individuals and, in turn, have a significant impact on their behavior. According to social identity theory, employees will classify themselves and other employees as internal or external groups according to some kind of classification (e.g., organizational membership, etc.), and accurately position themselves in social relationships. Employees with a high degree of insider cognition are able to accurately position themselves and are more likely to categorize themselves as an "internal group", thus more actively displaying organizational citizenship behaviors and making suggestions, and contributing more to the good functioning of the organization. When leaders are actively involved in their employees' decision-making processes, give positive and supportive evaluations, and establish a reliable relationship of trust, it greatly increases employees' self-confidence and creates a strong sense of being an insider (Li & Peng, 2023). This further motivates employees to translate this feeling into more actions to give back to their superiors or the organization, to be willing to provide the organization with their intelligence, energy, and time, and to proactively propose suggestions related to the organization and the business (Song & Liu, 2014). Thus, insider identity cognitions play a mediating role between empowered leadership and employee suggestions. From the above, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H4: Insider identity cognition plays a mediating role in leadership empowerment behaviors and employee suggestions.

H4a: Insider identity cognition mediates leadership empowerment behaviors and facilitative suggestions.

H4b: Insider identity cognition mediates leadership empowerment behaviors and inhibitory suggestions.

Differential Atmosphere, Leadership Empowerment Behaviors and Employee Suggestions

The concept of differential atmosphere is derived from "differential pattern", which mainly refers to the cognition of closeness and distance in interpersonal relationships centered on the individual. It includes the relationship between individuals and their coworkers, especially the relationship between subordinates and leaders (Zhu & Xie, 2018).

While differential leadership or differentiation in the treatment and management of leaders may positively affect a small number of employees to some extent, the negative effects tend to outweigh the positive effects on the employees of the organization as a whole. On the one hand, the resources that subordinates have in the organization depend on the degree of closeness with their superiors (Wang & Zhang, 2017). Individuals with a high sense of differential atmosphere are more likely to develop a sense of distance and unfairness and

perceive themselves as more distant from their leaders than core members. As a result, more negative and negative emotions are generated, which reduces commitment and identification with the organization, and consequently, the occurrence of suggestions. On the other hand, the act of suggestion itself is accompanied by greater uncertainty and risk and is seen as a challenge to the status quo of the organization's operations. This is coupled with a lower level of mutual trust with the leader and a lack of concern and encouragement from the leader. As a result, individuals who perceive a differential atmosphere will protect themselves by avoiding uncertainty and risk, by speaking less to the leader or the organization, or even by engaging in silent behavior.

In contrast, employees with lower perceptions of differential atmosphere were less sensitive to the relationship between leaders and themselves, and had closer relationships with leaders and managers. As a result, the resulting feelings of distance and alienation are less intense. These employees are more likely to develop trusting relationships with their leaders and receive more encouragement and support. They are willing to be proactive and offer valuable suggestions to maintain or enhance relational distance from their supervisors, and tend to engage in behaviors and make helpful suggestions that are beneficial to the organization. This leads to the following hypothesis:

H5: The relationship between the role of leadership empowerment behavior on employee suggestions is affected by the moderating effect of differential atmosphere.

H5a: The relationship between the role of leadership empowerment behavior on facilitative suggestions is affected by differential atmosphere. The positive influence of leadership empowerment behaviors on facilitative suggestions is diminished when differential atmosphere perceptions are high.

H5b: The relationship between the role of leadership empowerment behavior on inhibitory suggestions is affected by differential atmosphere. The positive effect of leadership empowerment behaviors on inhibitory suggestions is diminished when differential atmosphere perceptions are high.

The summarized results of the above assumptions are shown in Table 01:

Table 01: Summary of hypotheses

Hypothesis	Specific content
Hypothesis 1	Leadership empowerment behaviors positively influence employee suggestions.
Hypothesis 2	Leadership empowerment behaviors positively affect insider identity cognition.
Hypothesis 3	Insider identity cognition positively predicts employee suggestions.
Hypothesis 4	Insider identity cognition plays a mediating role in leadership empowerment behaviors and employee suggestions.
Hypothesis 5	The relationship between the role of leadership empowerment behaviors on employee suggestions is affected by the moderating effect of differential atmosphere.

Collection and distribution of questionnaires

Description of the questionnaire design

Based on the existing literature and the theoretical model constructed in this paper, we developed a measurement questionnaire and followed the principles of clear survey purpose, logical rigor, and clear presentation. The questionnaire was mainly distributed through online methods. It consists of two parts: the first part is the basic information of the research subjects, including age, etc., with five questions; the second part is the theme questionnaire, including the Leader Empowerment Behavior Scale, Insider Identity cognition Scale, Employee Suggestions Scale, and the Differential Atmosphere Scale. In order to obtain valid and high-quality data, we took the following measures in the design of the questionnaire: firstly, we informed the respondents that the survey was filled out anonymously and that personal information and privacy would not be disclosed, so as to reduce the worries and concerns of the respondents and to improve the validity of the questionnaire. Second, when designing the questionnaire, we mixed three reverse test questions and forward test questions to reduce the possibility of random filling by the respondents. Finally, relevant prompts were designed before each part of the questionnaire to distinguish different variables. The scales used in this study were developed by scholars from home and abroad and have good reliability and validity. The questionnaire utilized a 5-point Likert scale, where "1=completely disagree, 2=don't quite agree, 3=fairly agree, 4=comparatively agree, and 5=completely agree".

Specific scale design

i: Leadership Empowerment Behavior Scale. In this paper, a Leadership Empowerment Behavior Scale was developed, which includes the following questions: 1. "My supervisor often provides me with training and learning opportunities" 2. "My supervisor criticizes me for not completing my work goals on time" 3. "My supervisor helps me in a timely manner when I encounter difficulties in my work" A total of 24 items were used.

ii: Insider Identity cognition Scale. In this paper, we developed an insider identity cognition scale, which is a single dimension and includes the following items: 1. "I feel that I am an insider in my organization" 2. "I feel that I am an outsider in my organization" There are a total of 6 items, including 3 forward measuring items and 3 reverse measuring items. The scale is widely used by scholars in China and has a reliability of 0.8 or more.

iii: Employee suggestions scale. The scale developed in this paper consists of two dimensions, facilitative and inhibitory suggestions, with a total of 10 items. The items are as follows: 1. "I will actively propose new projects that will be beneficial to the development of the organization" 2. "I will express suggestions and ideas about improving the organization's operations" etc.

iv: Differential Atmosphere Scale. The scale developed in this paper contains three dimensions of crony roles, biased treatment and interdependence. There are a total of 11 items, such as "The leader interacts and communicates more frequently with individual subordinates" and "The leader has subordinates in the organization in whom he or she has special trust." The Cronbach's α coefficient for this scale was above 0.9.

v: Control Variables. The control variables in this study include age, level of education, gender, years of experience, and nature of the workplace. These variables will have an impact on employee suggestions in different degrees. In this case, gender is coded as "1" for men and "2" for women, and other control variables are expressed in terms of actual years of experience in order to explore their impact on suggestions behavior.

Descriptive statistical analysis of the sample

In this paper, formal employees from enterprises and organizations in Shandong, Anhui and Jiangsu were mainly collected as the research sample. A total of 318 questionnaires were distributed in the form of questionnaires, and 300 valid questionnaires that could be used for analysis were obtained after incomplete and obviously mismatched responses were eliminated.

In this survey, there were 111 male respondents and 189 female respondents, accounting for 37% and 63% of the valid questionnaires respectively. In terms of age, there are 53 employees aged 25 and below, 156 employees aged 26-35, 70 employees aged 36-45, and 21 employees aged 46 and above, accounting for 17.7%, 52%, 23.3%, and 7% of the total respectively. In terms of education, there are 26 employees with high school education or below, 51 with college education, 139 with bachelor's degree, and 84 with master's degree or above. In terms of years of work experience, there are 83 employees with less than 1 year of work experience, 109 employees with 1-5 years of work experience, 50 employees with 6-10 years of work experience, 29 employees with 11-15 years of work experience, and 29 employees with more than 15 years of work experience, accounting for 27.7%, 36.3%, 16.7%, 9.7%, and 9.7%, respectively. Regarding the nature of work units, the largest number of employees were from institutions, with 83; the smallest number of employees were from joint ventures, with only 24; there were 59 from state-owned enterprises, 34 from wholly foreign-owned enterprises, 49 from private enterprises, and 51 from other types. From these data, it can be seen that the majority of the sample comes from the employees of the institutions. It is shown in the table 02:

Table 02: Descriptive statistics for demographic variables.

Demographic variables	Category	Number of people	Percentage
Gender	Male	111	37%
	Female	189	63%
Age	25 years old and below	53	17.7%
	26-35 years old	156	52%
	36-45 years old	70	23.3%
	46 years old and above	21	7%
Education attainment	High school and below	26	8.7%
	College degree	51	17%
	Undergraduate degree	139	46.3%
	Master's degree and above	84	28%
Years of work experience	1 year or less	83	27.7%
	1-5 years	109	36.3%
	6-10 years	50	16.7%
	11-15 years	29	9.7%
	15 years or more	29	9.7%
Nature of work unit	State-owned enterprise	59	19.7%
	Joint venture empresa	24	8%
	Wholly foreign-owned enterprise	34	11.3%
	Private enterprise	49	16.3%
	Public institution	83	27.7%
	Others	51	17%

Common method bias test

Although measures were taken to minimize the presence of common method bias in the design of the questionnaire, the questionnaires were all filled out by individual employees, so the results may still be affected by homogeneity bias. Therefore, this study further used the Harman one-way test by combining all measurement questions for the five variables and taking an unrotated factor analysis. The results yielded that there were six eligible (i.e., eigenvalues greater than 1) factors and the cumulative variance explained by the first factor was 33.24% (less than 40%). Therefore, the questionnaire used in this study does not have a significant common method bias problem.

Correlation analysis

In this paper, the relationship between the variables was analyzed using Pearson correlation test using SPSS 26.0 software. The results of the test are shown in the table below. The mean value of leadership empowerment behavior is 3.46 with a standard deviation of 0.82; the mean value of insider identity cognition is 3.34 with a standard deviation of 0.96; the mean value of facilitative suggestions is 3.27, and the mean value of inhibitory suggestions is 3.09, and the standard deviation of both is 0.91; the mean value of differential atmosphere is 2.68 with a standard deviation of 0.92. As can be seen in Table 03, there is a significant correlation between the two. Leadership empowerment behavior is significantly and positively correlated with insider identity cognition ($r=0.48$, P value <0.01). Facilitative suggestions and inhibitory suggestions were significantly positively correlated with leadership empowerment behavior, with correlation coefficients of 0.59 and 0.37, respectively, and p -values of <0.01 . Facilitative suggestions and inhibitory suggestions were also significantly positively correlated with insider identity cognition, with correlation coefficients of 0.51 and 0.39, respectively, and p -values of <0.01 . However, insider identity cognition was significantly negatively correlated with differential atmosphere ($r=0.13$, p -value <0.01), and insider identity cognition was significantly negatively correlated with leadership empowerment behavior, with correlation coefficients of 0.59 and 0.39, respectively. -0.13 , both p -values <0.05). Facilitative suggestions ($r= -0.32$, both p -values <0.01) and inhibitory suggestions ($r= -0.16$, both p -values <0.01) were significantly negatively correlated with differential atmosphere. The results of the above correlation analysis preliminarily verified the hypotheses proposed in this study.

Table 03:Correlation analysis

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1.Gender	1.63	0.48	1									
2.Age	2.20	0.81	-0.14*	1								
3.education attainment	2.94	0.89	0.16**	-0.47*	1							
4.Years of work experience	2.37	1.25	-0.12*	0.68*	-0.17*	1						
5.Nature of work unit	3.75	1.76	0.17**	-0.06	0.06	0.05	1					
6.Leadership empowerment	3.46	0.82	0.13*	-0.17*	0.21*	-0.01	0.1	1				
7.Internal self-identity cognition	3.34	0.96	0.04	-0.22*	0.35*	-0.03	0.0	0.48*	1			
8.Promotive suggestions	3.27	0.91	0.02	-0.09	0.30*	0.12*	0.13*	0.59*	0.51*	1		
9.Inhibitory suggestions	3.09	0.91	0.03	-0.05	0.23*	0.11*	0.07	0.37*	0.39*	0.47**	1	
10.Perceived inequity climate	2.68	0.92	0.07	-0.07	-0.17*	-0.12*	0.09	-0.01	-0.13*	-0.32**	-0.16**	1

Note: * indicates $p < 0.05$, ** indicates $p < 0.01$.

Regression analysis

This paper uses SPSS 26.0 to conduct regression analysis on leadership empowerment behavior, differential atmosphere, insider identity cognition and employee suggestions based on the development of regression models.

Leadership empowerment behavior and employee suggestions

Regression analysis of leadership empowerment behavior on employee suggestions:

Model 1 was regressed by putting in just the control variables such as gender, which can be seen from the regression results in Table 04, which show that the control variables contributed 14.7% to the employee suggestions. The F-test for Model 1 ($F=10.125$), with a p-value of less than 0.001, indicates that the control variables have significant overall explanatory power for the constructs as a whole. The independent variable leadership empowerment behavior was added to model 2 for regression, and the results showed that empowerment leadership behavior would show a significant positive correlation to the construct as a whole ($\beta=0.512$, $p=0.000$), hypothesis H1 was verified, and a total of 38.9%

of the variance in the dependent variable employee suggestions could be explained by both the control variable and the independent variable.

Table 04 Regression analysis of leadership empowerment behavior on employee suggestions

variable	Employee Suggestions			
	model 1		model 2	
control variable	standard coefficient	significance	standard coefficient	significance
Gender	-0.014	0.797	-0.059	0.215
Age	-0.119	0.166	-0.007	0.920
education attainment	0.295***	0.000	0.237***	0.000
Years of work experience	0.262**	0.001	0.177**	0.007
Nature of work unit	0.082	0.136	0.055	0.244
Independent variable leadership empowerment behavior			0.512***	0.000
F	10.125***		31.109***	
R ²	0.147		0.389	
Adj-R ²	0.132		0.377	

Regression analysis of leadership empowerment behavior on two dimensions of employee suggestions:

Table 05 shows the results of the regression analysis between the two sub-dimensions under leadership empowerment behavior on employee suggestions. Model 1 was regressed on the control variables only, and the results showed that the control variables explained 13.8% of the variance in the dependent variable facilitative suggestions; the F-test for Model 1 (F=9.423), with a p-value of less than 0.001, indicated that the control variables had a significant overall explanatory power for facilitative suggestions. Model 2 adds the independent variable leadership empowerment to the control variables such as gender for regression, and the results show that leadership empowerment will present a significant positive effect on facilitative suggestions ($\beta=0.55, p=0.000$), and H1a is verified, and the above variables explain a total of 41.8% of the variance in the dependent variable facilitative suggestions; the F-value of model 2 is 35.029, and the p-value is less than 0.001, indicating that leadership empowerment behavior has overall explanatory power for facilitative suggestions.

Model 3 was also regressed on the control variables only and the results showed that the control variables explained 8.3% of the variance in the dependent variable inhibitory suggestions. Model 4 was regressed on control variables such as gender and later added the independent variable leadership empowerment, which can be seen from the results that leadership empowerment would present a significant positive effect on inhibitory suggestions ($\beta=0.329, p=0.000$), H1b was verified, and the control and independent variables contributed 18.3% of the variance of the dependent variable, inhibitory

suggestions; the F-value for model 4 was 10.91, with a p-value of less than 0.001, indicating the overall explanatory power of leadership empowerment behavior on inhibitory suggestions.

Table 05 Regression analysis of leadership empowerment behavior on two dimensions of employee suggestions

Variable	Facilitative suggestions				Inhibitory suggestions			
	model 1		model 2		model 3		model 4	
Control variable	standard coefficient	significance	standard coefficient	significance	standard coefficient	significance	standard coefficient	significance
Gender	-0.027	0.631	-0.075	0.107	0.002	0.968	-0.026	0.632
Age	-0.121	0.163	-0.001	0.994	-0.084	0.346	-0.012	0.886
Education attainment	0.283**	0.000	0.221**	0.000	0.223*	0.001	0.186*	0.003
Years of work experience	0.243*	0.002	0.151*	0.019	0.207*	0.01	0.152*	0.046
Nature of work unit	0.099	0.076	0.069	0.132	0.043	0.455	0.025	0.645
Independent variable leadership empowerment behavior			0.55**	0.000			0.329**	0.000
F	9.423***		35.029***		5.308***		10.91***	
R ²	0.138		0.418		0.083		0.183	
Adj-R ²	0.123		0.406		0.067		0.166	

Note: * represents $p < 0.05$, ** represents $p < 0.01$, and *** represents $p < 0.001$.

Regression analysis of leadership empowerment behavior on insider identity cognition:

Regression analysis was conducted with leadership empowerment behavior as the independent variable and insider identity cognition as the dependent variable, and the regression results are shown in Table 06. Model 1 was regressed by simply putting in control variables such as gender, and the control variables explained a total of 13.6% of the variance in the dependent variable, insider identity cognition. Model 2 also puts the independent variable leadership empowerment into the regression on model 1, and the regression results show that leadership empowerment behavior obviously has a positive relationship with insider identity cognition ($\beta = 0.427$, $p = 0.000$), and Hypothesis 2 has been verified, and the

control variables and the independent variables can explain 30.5% of the variation of the dependent variable insider identity cognition.

Table 06:Regression analysis of leadership empowerment behavior on insider identity cognition

Variable	Insider identity cognition			
	model 1		model 2	
Control variable	Standard coefficient	Significance	Standard coefficient	Significance
Gender	-0.014	0.809	-0.051	0.317
Age	-0.166	0.055	-0.073	0.352
education attainment	0.297***	0.000	0.248***	0.000
Years of work experience	0.132	0.090	0.06	0.390
Nature of work unit	0.011	0.836	-0.012	0.816
Independent variable leadership empowerment behavior			0.427***	0.000
F	9.288***		21.394***	
R ²	0.136		0.305	
Adj-R ²	0.122		0.29	

Note: * represents $p < 0.05$, ** represents $p < 0.01$, and *** represents $p < 0.001$.

Insider Identity Cognition and Employee Suggestions

Regression analysis of insider identity cognition on employee suggestions:

Table 07 shows the results of the regression relationship between insider identity cognition and employee suggestions. Model 2 includes the independent variable insider identity cognition in addition to the control variables, and it can be seen from the results that there is a significant positive relation between insider identity cognition and employee suggestions ($\beta = 0.461$, $p = 0.000$), hypothesis H3 is verified, and a total of 33% of the variation in the dependent variable employee suggestions can be explained by both the control variables and the independent variables; the F-value of model 2 is 24.105, with a p-value less than 0.001, which shows that insider identity cognition has significant overall explanatory power for employee suggestions.

Table 07:Regression of insider identity cognition on employee suggestions

Variable	Employee suggestions			
	model 1		model 2	
Control variable	Standard coefficient	Significance	Standard coefficient	Significance
Gender	-0.014	0.797	-0.008	0.87
Age	-0.119	0.166	-0.043	0.579
education attainment	0.295***	0.000	0.158***	0.007
Years of work experience	0.262**	0.001	0.202**	0.004
Nature of work unit	0.082	0.136	0.077	0.116
Independent variable leadership empowerment behavior			0.461***	0.000
F	10.125***		24.105***	
R ²	0.147		0.33	
Adj-R ²	0.132		0.317	

Regression analysis of insider identity cognition on two dimensions of employee suggestions:

Table 08 shows the regression results of insider identity cognition on the two dimensions of employee suggestions respectively, model 2 and model 4 put the independent variable insider identity cognition on the basis of model 1 and model 3, and it can be seen from the results that insider identity cognition has a positive relationship with facilitative suggestions ($\beta=0.444$, $p=0.000<0.01$) and inhibitory suggestions ($\beta=0.347$, $p=0.000<0.01$). $0.000<0.01$) have a positive relationship, therefore, the established hypotheses H3a and H3b can be verified, and the above variables can explain a total of 30.9% and 18.7% of the variance of the dependent variable employee suggestions; the F-value of the holistic regression test of Model 2 and Model 4 is 21.791 and 11.206, with p-values less than 0.001, which shows that insider identity cognition has a significant overall effect on the employee suggestions of the two sub-dimensions has significant overall explanatory power.

Table 08:Regression of insider identity cognition on the two dimensions of employee suggestions

Variable	Facilitative suggestions				Inhibitory suggestions			
	model 1		model 2		model 3		model 4	
Control variable	standard coefficient	significance	standard coefficient	significance	standard coefficient	significance	standard coefficient	significance
Gender	-0.027	0.631	-0.021	0.678	0.002	0.968	0.007	0.898
Age	-0.121	0.163	-0.047	0.548	-0.084	0.346	-0.026	0.756
Education attainment	0.283**	0.000	0.151*	0.011	0.223*	0.001	0.121	0.062
Years of work experience	0.243*	0.002	0.185*	0.009	0.207*	0.01	0.161*	0.034
Nature of work unit	0.099	0.076	0.094	0.061	0.043	0.455	0.039	0.473
Independent variable leadership empowerment behavior			0.444**	0.000			0.347**	0.000
F	9.423***		21.791***		5.308***		11.206***	
R ²	0.138		0.309		0.083		0.187	
Adj-R ²	0.123		0.294		0.067		0.17	

Mediation effect test

In testing the mediating role of insider identity cognition between leadership empowerment behavior and employee suggestions, a hierarchical regression of the variables was conducted using SPSS 26.0 software. The regression results are shown in Table 09. Model 1 in Table 09 obtained a significant positive correlation between insider identity cognition and leadership empowerment behavior ($\beta=0.427$, $p<0.001$).

The results of Models 3 and 6 show that insider identity cognition can positively influence facilitative suggestions ($\beta=0.444$, $p<0.001$) and inhibitory suggestions ($\beta=0.347$, $p<0.001$). After adding the mediator variable (insider identity cognition), leadership empowerment had a significant positive effect on employee facilitative suggestions (Model 4, $\beta=0.448$, $p<0.001$) and the positive effect of leadership empowerment on facilitative suggestions decreased from 0.55 to 0.448; Model 5 indicated that leadership empowerment had a significant positive effect on inhibitory suggestions ($\beta=0.329$, $p<0.001$). The positive effect of leadership empowerment on inhibitory suggestions (Model 7, $\beta=0.224$, $p<0.001$)

declined after the addition of the mediating variable (insider identity cognition). From this, we can conclude that insider identity cognition will play a mediating role between leadership empowerment behavior and the two sub-dimensions of constructs, Hypothesis 2a and Hypothesis 2b are partially proven.

To further verify the significance of the mediating effect, this paper continues to verify the mediating role of insider identity cognition. The results of the analysis are shown in Table 10 and Table 11, the indirect effect value of leadership empowerment behavior affecting the occurrence of facilitative suggestions through insider identity cognition is 0.114, and the lower upper limit within the 95% confidence interval is [0.057,0.178], excluding 0; while the indirect effect value of leadership empowerment behavior affecting the occurrence of inhibitory suggestions through insider identity cognition is 0.116. The indirect effect of leadership empowerment behavior through insider identity cognition on the occurrence of inhibitory suggestions was 0.116, and the lower limit upper limit in the 95% confidence interval was [0.045,0.188], excluding 0. From this, we can determine that the mediating role of insider identity cognition in leadership empowerment behavior in relation to facilitative suggestions and inhibitory suggestions is further evidenced.

Table 09: A test of the mediating effect of insider identity cognition on leadership empowerment behavior and employee suggestions

	Insider identity cognition	Facilitative suggestions				Inhibitory suggestions	
Control variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
Gender	-0.051	-0.075	-0.021	-0.063	-0.026	0.007	-0.014
Age	-0.073	-0.001	-0.047	0.017	-0.012	-0.026	0.006
Education attainment	0.248***	0.221***	0.151*	0.161**	0.186**	0.121	0.125*
Years of work experience	0.06	0.151*	0.185**	0.137*	0.152*	0.161*	0.137
Nature of work unit	-0.012	0.069	0.094	0.072	0.025	0.039	0.028
Mediating variable leadership empowerment	0.427***	0.55***		0.448***	0.329***		0.224***
Insider identity cognition			0.444***	0.24***		0.347***	0.244***
F	21.394***	35.029***	21.791***	35.206***	10.91***	11.206***	12.05***
R ²	0.305	0.418	0.309	0.458	0.183	0.187	0.224
Adj-R ²	0.29	0.406	0.294	0.445	0.166	0.17	0.206

Table 10: Leadership empowerment behavior → insider identity cognition → facilitative suggestions

	Efficiency value	Boot Standard Error	BootCI lower limit	BootCI Upper Limit	Effect ratio
Indirect effect	0.114	0.031	0.057	0.178	18.61%
Direct effect	0.497	0.063	0.372	0.619	81.39%
Aggregate effect	0.611	0.057	0.496	0.719	

Table 11: Leadership empowerment behaviors → insider identity cognition → inhibitory suggestions

	Efficiency value	Boot Standard Error	BootCI lower limit	BootCI Upper Limit	Effect ratio
Indirect effect	0.116	0.036	0.045	0.188	31.73%
Direct effect	0.251	0.086	0.082	0.415	68.27%
Aggregate effect	0.367	0.073	0.223	0.508	

Moderating effects test

This paper used SPSS 26.0 to examine the moderating role of the moderator variable differential atmosphere between leadership empowerment behavior and employee suggestions and its two dimensions (facilitative suggestions and inhibitory suggestions). The data results are presented in the table 12.

Table 12: Testing the moderating effect of perceived inequity climate

	Promote			Inhibit		Provide suggestions			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
Gender	-0.027	-0.055	-0.04	0.002	-0.018	-0.012	-0.014	-0.042	-0.03
Age	-0.121	-0.035	-0.02	-0.084	-0.026	-0.02	-0.119	-0.036	-0.023
Academic background	0.283***	0.15***	0.138*	0.223**	0.157*	0.152*	0.295**	0.179*	0.17**
Years of work experience	0.243	0.13*	0.125*	0.207*	0.143	0.141	0.262*	0.159*	0.155*
Organization	0.099**	0.094*	0.085*	0.043	0.035	0.031	0.082	0.075	0.068
Leadership empowerment		0.55***	0.538**		0.329**	0.323***		0.512**	0.502**
Perceived inequity climate		-	-		-	-0.105		-	-
		0.277**	0.259**		0.113*			0.227**	0.212**
Leadership empowerment × Perceived inequity climate			-			-0.068			-
			0.158**						0.131*
F	9.423***	39.871***	38.218***	5.308***	10.071***	9.028***	10.125***	32.369***	30.164***
R2	0.138	0.489	0.512	0.083	0.194	0.199	0.147	0.437	0.453
adj-R2	0.123	0.476	0.499	0.067	0.175	0.177	0.132	0.423	0.438

In validating the moderating effect of leadership empowerment behavior and poorly ordered climate on employees' suggestions, this study first centered on leadership empowerment behavior and poorly ordered climate and constructed their interaction terms to reduce the effect of multicollinearity on the data results. As can be seen from Model 2 in Table 4, $F = 39.871$ ($p = 0.000 < 0.001$), which is significant at the 0.001 level with the inclusion of the two variables of Leadership Empowerment Empowering Behavior and Poorly Ordered Climate. From the R^2 value, it can be seen that the variance explained by the dependent variable facilitation increased from 13.8% to 48.9%. From Model 3, it can be seen that the interaction term between leadership empowering behaviors and poorly ordered climate has a significant negative effect on facilitative suggestions ($\beta = -0.158$, $p = 0.000 < 0.001$), which indicates that the higher the poorly ordered climate in the organization, the positive effect of leadership empowering behaviors on facilitative suggestions will be attenuated. Thus, Hypothesis 5a is validated. However, as can be seen from Model 6, the negative effect of the interaction term between leadership empowerment behaviors and poorly ordered climate on inhibitory suggestions ($\beta = -0.068$, $p < 0.05$) is not significant, and Hypothesis 5b is not verified. With the addition of the two variables of leadership empowerment behaviors and

poorly ordered climate, we can conclude that $F=32.369$ ($p=0.000<0.001$), which at the 0.001 level is significant. The R^2 value shows that the variance explained by the suggestions on the dependent variable increases from 14.7% to 43.7%. After adding the interaction term in model 9, the variance explained increases to 45.3%. The coefficient of the interaction term is -0.131 ($p < 0.01$) and significantly negative, indicating that the differential atmosphere plays a negative moderating role between leadership empowerment behaviors and suggestions, i.e., H5 is validated.

Results of the validation of the hypothesis

This study is based on the relevant theories and includes a total of 13 general hypotheses and sub-hypotheses. The results of testing the hypotheses are shown in the table 13.

Table 13: Summary of research hypothesis testing results

Hypothesis	Hypothesis content	Test results
H1	Leadership empowerment behavior positive prediction employee suggestions.	Supported
H1a	Leadership empowerment behavior positively predicts employees' facilitative suggestions.	Supported
H1b	Leadership empowerment behaviors positively predict employees' inhibitory suggestions.	Supported
H2	Leadership empowerment behavior will positively affect insider identity cognition.	Supported
H3	Insider identity cognition positively influences employee suggestions.	Supported
H3a	Positive effects of insider identity cognition facilitative suggestions.	Supported
H3b	Insider identity cognition positively affects inhibitory suggestions.	Supported
H4	Insider identity cognition plays a mediating role in leadership empowerment and employee suggestions	Supported
H4a	Insider identity cognition mediates leadership empowerment and facilitative suggestions	Supported
H4b	Insider identity cognition mediates leadership empowerment and inhibitory suggestions	Supported
H5	The relationship between the role of leadership empowerment behavior on employee suggestions is affected by the negative moderating effects of differential atmosphere	Supported
H5a	The relationship between the role of leadership empowerment behavior on employee facilitative suggestions is affected by the negative moderating effect of differential atmosphere	Supported
H5b	The relationship between the role of leadership empowerment behaviors on employee suggestions of inhibitory suggestions is affected by the negative moderating effect of differential atmosphere	Not supported

Results and Analysis

Good leadership and empowered employees are essential for the good operation and growth of an organization. A few scholars have demonstrated the positive impact of leadership empowerment behavior on employee suggestions. However, the current research on specific internal influence mechanisms is not sufficient and in-depth. Therefore, based on social identity theory and cognitive consistency theory, this study selects insider identity cognition and differential atmosphere as mediating and moderating variables, with a view to

conducting an in-depth and rich exploration of related research and drawing the following conclusions:

1. Leaders actively empower their employees and motivate them to provide more useful responses and suggestions to the organization. This study found that facilitative suggestions are significantly more useful than inhibitory suggestions. Leaders who appropriately empower their employees, recognize their subordinates' ability to do their jobs, and motivate their subordinates' behaviors help to build a good relationship of trust among employees. In return, employees become more engaged in their work, are willing to take on more tasks and out-of-role behaviors while completing their assigned tasks, and offer optimization solutions and suggestions for organizational development. Inhibitory suggestions, on the other hand, are suggestions for problems and vulnerabilities in the organization, which are riskier and more challenging. Employees need to consider more factors, and expressing inhibitory suggestions requires more courage and motivation, so the likelihood of employees or subordinates expressing inhibitory suggestions is relatively low.
2. Insider identity cognition plays a partial mediating role between leadership empowerment and employee suggestions. This study verified the positive effect of leadership empowerment on insider identity cognition, the positive effect of insider identity cognition on employee suggestions and its two dimensions, and the partially mediating role of insider identity cognition through correlation analysis. This suggests that leadership empowerment enhances subordinates' perceptions of themselves as members of the firm or organization, which in turn influences employees' behavior. Employees with stronger insider identity cognition tend to be more active in exhibiting organizational citizenship behaviors, i.e., suggesting suggestions and strategies that benefit the organization or solve organizational problems.
3. Differential atmosphere negatively moderates the mechanism by which leadership empowerment behavior directly affects employee suggestions, and leadership empowerment has a weaker effect on suggestions when employees perceive a stronger differential atmosphere. This suggests that employees who perceive a weaker climate of differentiation are more likely to feel support, acceptance, and encouragement from their organization and leaders than employees who perceive a stronger climate of differentiation. Their sense of distance and alienation from their leaders is not obvious, and they perceive their leaders and organizations as relatively fair and just. As a result, they are more willing to offer suggestions and strategies to the organization.

Management recommendations

1. Promote empowering behaviors of leaders and establish an authorization system. For an enterprise to develop sustainably and well, it needs good leaders and diligent employees. Specifically, enterprises can start from two aspects: firstly, pay attention to the establishment of authorization system, encourage leaders to delegate authority appropriately, support and motivate employees' self-management and independent decision-making, provide employees with opportunities to exercise and show themselves, and improve employees' motivation to work. The second is to train managers and leaders so that they can learn how to authorize, how to discover and tap the potential and enthusiasm of employees, and understand the characteristics and advantages of each employee, so as to improve the work autonomy and enthusiasm of employees. In addition, for leaders, they should fully trust their subordinates when

authorizing, timely tracking of the authorization process after selecting the authorization object, establishing an effective feedback and supervision system, and forming an effective authorization mechanism.

2. Enhance cooperation and communication to improve the perception of insiders. Individuals spend most of their time at work in addition to their families, so having pleasant interpersonal relationships and being an "insider" of the organization play an important role in an individual's work output and psychological state. In this regard, both enterprises and employees should take measures. First, enterprises should change their management style to improve employees' insider identity cognition by respecting them, exerting their subjective initiative, and valuing their work in a flexible and humane way. Secondly, employees should improve their insider identity cognition in the following aspects. First, employees should establish a sense of community with leaders and team members, recognize that corporate interests are higher than personal interests, and break personal boundaries. Secondly, employees should improve their communication skills, take the initiative to integrate into the organization in smooth and pleasant communication, and show their personal strengths, take the initiative to undertake tasks and contribute to the team and the organization. Again, at work, they should actively participate in training, train hard, improve their personal psychological quality and ability, find organizational problems or have good suggestions to timely feedback to the leadership, dare to objectively express their opinions and ideas, express their doubts about the work, and win more opportunities and development space for themselves in cordial cooperation and communication.
3. Create a good working atmosphere, reduce differential treatment in the organization, differential atmosphere is a common phenomenon in the workplace, workplace, it will affect the harmony between the leadership and subordinates, team members, affect the progress and development of the organization. A good working atmosphere is not only conducive to the establishment of a corporate culture of mutual trust and common struggle between leaders and members, members and members, but also helps to enhance the willingness and probability of employees to take the initiative to speak out. To this end, both enterprises and leaders should take measures. First, enterprises should combine hard constraints with an open organizational culture to constrain employees' self-behavior with an ethical organizational atmosphere. Second, leaders should reduce differential treatment of organizational members, take the actual ability of employees as the standard when allocating resources and promoting employees, treat every employee as fairly as possible, inhibit the creation of differential atmosphere, and establish an equal and smooth communication atmosphere. In addition, in daily activities, companies can organize a variety of fun competitions and activities to enhance the interaction and communication between various types of employees at the upper and lower levels, in a relaxed and happy atmosphere to enhance the team's tacit understanding, so that the team members are closely united, which is conducive to the formation of a good working atmosphere.

Research Limitation and Future Direction

This paper empirically tests the effect of leadership empowerment behavior on employee suggestions and the mediating and moderating role of insider identity cognition and differential atmosphere on leadership empowerment behavior and employee suggestions,

and draws the above conclusions, but there are still the following shortcomings in the process of the study.

Firstly, the data sources are mainly cross-sectional data collected at the same point in time and the questionnaires were filled by individual company employees. As a result, the conclusions drawn may be biased.

Secondly, most of the samples collected were from employees of companies in mainland China. The persuasiveness and generalizability of the findings need to be further improved.

Third, only insider identity cognition as well as differential atmosphere were selected as mediating and moderating variables in this study. The scope of the study needs to be further expanded.

Fourth, this paper only explores the relationship between employee suggestions and leadership empowerment as a dependent variable. Leadership empowerment impacts more factors in the management process and needs to be studied further.

To address the above research shortcomings, future research can be directed in the following four areas:

Firstly, in order to increase the credibility of the findings, future studies may consider using longitudinal data, collecting data multiple times, and employing top and bottom matching methods.

Secondly, in order to increase the persuasiveness and generalizability of the findings, the study could expand the sample size by collecting samples from different regions on a larger scale.

Third, in order to expand the scope of the study, other boundary conditions, such as psychological empowerment, psychological security, and difference management climate, can be selected to expand the scope of the study between the relevant mediating and moderating variables, especially the moderating variables, in the subsequent study.

Fourth, in order to examine the relationship between additional dependent variables and leadership empowerment, in the future, other dependent variables could be sought to broaden the study of leadership empowerment outcomes.

Conclusions

Based on combing and reading the previous literature, this paper mainly utilizes social identity theory and cognitive consistency theory. Empowerment leadership behavior, insider identity cognition, and employee suggestions behavior are taken as the main line of research. Differential atmosphere is taken as a moderating variable, and then the research hypotheses related to each of the above variables are proposed. Subsequently, the proposed hypotheses are verified through empirical analysis, and based on the experimental results, it is suggested that leaders actively empower their subordinates, prompting employees to propose more useful countermeasures and suggestions to the organization, thus ensuring the good operation and development of the enterprise.

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