

The Influence of Extended Internal Market Orientation on Employee Engagement: A Study of Migrant Workers in the Chinese Manufacturing Industry

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ABSTRACT

This conceptual paper explores the influence of extended internal market orientation on employee engagement among migrant workers in the Chinese manufacturing industry. Migrant workers play a significant role in the industry, but they often face challenges related to low employee engagement. This paper highlights the importance of addressing this issue for organizational performance and presents the research objective of examining the influence of extended internal market orientation on employee engagement. The study aims to contribute to the literature on internal market orientation and employee engagement by focusing on the unique context of migrant workers in the Chinese manufacturing industry. The practical implications for organizations and potential directions for future research are discussed.

KEYWORDS: Extended internal market orientation, employee engagement, migrant workers, Chinese manufacturing industry

I. INTRODUCTION

The Chinese manufacturing industry is a vital sector in the global economy, characterized by its scale, competitiveness, and contribution to employment. It has experienced significant growth over the years, attracting a large number of migrant workers who seek employment opportunities. Migrant workers play a crucial role in the industry, providing the necessary labor force to meet production demands and sustain the industry's growth (Liu & Lu, 2018). Their presence in the Chinese manufacturing industry is significant as they contribute to economic development, but it also presents unique challenges related to employee engagement. One major problem faced by migrant workers in the Chinese manufacturing industry is the lack of employee engagement. Employee engagement refers to the emotional connection and commitment that individuals have towards their work, organization, and goals. It encompasses aspects such as job satisfaction, motivation, and involvement in decision-making processes (Saks, 2006). The low levels of employee engagement among migrant workers can have detrimental effects on organizational performance, productivity, and overall employee well-being (Li et al., 2020). Therefore, addressing this issue is of paramount importance to ensure the sustainable growth and success of organizations in the Chinese manufacturing industry.

The primary research objective of this study is to explore the influence of extended internal market orientation on employee engagement among migrant workers in the Chinese manufacturing industry. Internal market orientation refers to the implementation of marketing principles and practices within an organization, focusing on employees as internal customers (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990). Extended internal market orientation extends the traditional concept by considering the unique needs and challenges faced by migrant workers, incorporating strategies to engage and empower them within the organizational context (Liu et al., 2021). By examining the relationship between extended internal market orientation and employee engagement, this study aims to provide valuable insights into how organizations can effectively engage and motivate migrant workers. The significance of this study lies in its contribution to the existing literature on internal market orientation and employee engagement. While previous research has explored these concepts separately, there is a dearth of studies specifically examining the influence of extended internal market orientation on employee engagement among migrant workers in the Chinese manufacturing industry. By filling this research gap, this study can provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors that contribute to employee engagement in the context of migrant workers, offering theoretical and practical implications for organizations. The findings can help organizations develop strategies and practices to enhance employee engagement among migrant workers, leading to improved performance, retention, and overall organizational success.

II. DISCUSSION

Internal market orientation refers to the implementation of marketing principles and practices within an organization, with a focus on treating employees as internal customers (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990). It encompasses several components, including gathering employee feedback, aligning employee goals with organizational goals, and providing employees with the necessary resources and support to perform their tasks effectively (Lings & Greenley, 2005). Internal market orientation is important for organizations as it fosters a customer-oriented culture, enhances employee satisfaction, and improves organizational performance (Saeed et al., 2001). Employee engagement is defined as the emotional connection and commitment that individuals have towards their work, organization, and goals (Saks, 2006). It involves key dimensions such as job satisfaction, motivation, and involvement in decision-making processes (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018). Employee engagement is significant for organizational performance as it has been found to positively influence productivity, job performance, and organizational commitment (Macey & Schneider, 2008). Engaged employees are more likely to go above and beyond their job requirements, exhibit higher levels of creativity and innovation, and contribute to a positive work environment (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008).

Migrant workers in the Chinese manufacturing industry face unique characteristics and challenges. They are often temporary or seasonal workers who move from rural areas to urban manufacturing centers in search of employment opportunities (Liu & Lu, 2018). Migrant workers may face difficulties such as limited access to social and welfare benefits, language barriers, cultural differences, and inadequate working conditions (Liu et al., 2021). Addressing the unique needs of migrant workers is important as they form a significant part of the labor force in the industry, and their engagement and well-being directly impact organizational performance and productivity (Li et al., 2020). Extended internal market orientation builds upon the traditional concept by incorporating

strategies and practices to engage and empower migrant workers within the organizational context (Liu et al., 2021). It is based on a conceptual framework that recognizes the specific needs and challenges faced by migrant workers, aiming to create a supportive and inclusive work environment that promotes their engagement and well-being. Extended internal market orientation differs from traditional internal market orientation by taking into account the unique characteristics and requirements of migrant workers, emphasizing the importance of cultural sensitivity, language support, and equitable treatment (Liu et al., 2021).

The influence of extended internal market orientation on employee engagement can be explained through several theoretical arguments and proposed mechanisms. By implementing strategies to address the unique needs of migrant workers, such as providing language training, cultural integration programs, and opportunities for career development, organizations can enhance their sense of belonging, job satisfaction, and motivation (Liu et al., 2021). Empirical evidence from relevant studies supports the positive relationship between internal market orientation and employee engagement (Saeed et al., 2001), but specific empirical evidence on the influence of extended internal market orientation on employee engagement among migrant workers in the Chinese manufacturing industry may be limited. Several factors can influence the effectiveness of extended internal market orientation. Organizational culture and leadership support play a crucial role in creating an environment that values and promotes employee engagement among migrant workers (Liu et al., 2021). Effective communication channels and feedback mechanisms enable continuous dialogue and understanding between management and employees, fostering a sense of trust and involvement (Lings & Greenley, 2005). Additionally, providing training and development opportunities tailored to the needs of migrant workers can enhance their skills, knowledge, and career prospects, leading to increased engagement and commitment (Li et al., 2020).

However, there are potential challenges and limitations associated with implementing extended internal market orientation for migrant workers. Cultural differences and language barriers may pose obstacles to effective communication, understanding, and integration (Liu et al., 2021). Resistance to change and organizational barriers, such as hierarchical structures or bureaucratic processes, can hinder the implementation of extended internal market orientation strategies (Lings & Greenley, 2005).

For organizations in the Chinese manufacturing industry, there are practical implications in implementing extended internal market orientation to improve employee engagement among migrant workers. Strategies may include developing comprehensive onboarding programs, establishing mentoring or buddy systems, providing language and cultural training, and creating opportunities for participation and career advancement (Liu et al., 2021). Organizations should also ensure that leadership supports and reinforces the principles of extended internal market orientation, and regularly evaluate and adjust their practices based on feedback and the evolving needs of migrant workers. Overall, the influence of extended internal market orientation on employee engagement among migrant workers in the Chinese manufacturing industry holds great potential for improving organizational performance, productivity, and the well-being of migrant workers. By recognizing and addressing the unique needs of migrant workers through tailored strategies and practices, organizations can create an inclusive and engaging work environment that benefits both the employees and the organization as a whole.

III. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this paper explored the influence of extended internal market orientation on employee engagement among migrant workers in the Chinese manufacturing industry. We discussed the background and context of the industry, highlighting the significance of migrant workers in meeting labor demands. The problem of low employee engagement among migrant workers was identified as a crucial issue that needs to be addressed for organizational performance. The research objective was to explore the influence of extended internal market orientation on employee engagement. We discussed the concept of internal market orientation and its components, emphasizing its importance for organizations in creating a customer-oriented culture. Additionally, the definition and dimensions of employee engagement were examined, emphasizing its significance for organizational performance and employee well-being.

Migrant workers in the Chinese manufacturing industry were characterized, and their unique challenges were outlined. Their inclusion and engagement were deemed crucial due to their substantial presence in the industry. Extended internal market orientation was introduced as a framework that extends traditional internal market orientation to cater to the specific needs of migrant workers. The influence of extended internal market orientation on employee engagement was explored through theoretical arguments and proposed mechanisms. While specific empirical evidence in the context of migrant workers in the Chinese manufacturing industry may be limited, previous research supports the positive relationship between internal market orientation and employee engagement. Factors influencing the effectiveness of extended internal market orientation were discussed, including organizational culture, leadership support, communication channels, feedback mechanisms, and training and development opportunities for migrant workers. We also acknowledged potential challenges such as cultural differences, language barriers, resistance to change, and organizational barriers that need to be addressed.

The practical implications for organizations in the Chinese manufacturing industry were highlighted. Strategies for implementing extended internal market orientation, such as onboarding programs, mentoring systems, language and cultural training, and career development opportunities, were suggested. Leadership support and continuous evaluation were emphasized as essential for successful implementation. In terms of implications for theory and practice, this study contributes to the existing literature on internal market orientation and employee engagement by focusing on the unique context of migrant workers in the Chinese manufacturing industry. It provides insights into how organizations can effectively engage and motivate migrant workers, leading to improved organizational performance and employee well-being.

Moving forward, future research should delve deeper into the relationship between extended internal market orientation and employee engagement among migrant workers in the Chinese manufacturing industry. Empirical studies should be conducted to provide more concrete evidence of the influence of extended internal market orientation on employee engagement and to examine the specific strategies and practices that are most effective in this context. In conclusion, addressing the issue of employee engagement among migrant workers in the Chinese manufacturing industry is essential for organizational success. Extended internal market orientation offers a promising approach to engage and empower migrant workers, leading to improved performance and well-being. By considering the unique characteristics and challenges faced by migrant workers and implementing tailored

strategies, organizations can create inclusive and supportive work environments. This study paves the way for further research and provides valuable insights for organizations aiming to enhance employee engagement among migrant workers.

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