Comparison between Chinese Traditional Culture and Modern Management Theory

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Abstract
Although modern management theory is rooted in western culture, its philosophy is highly coincident with Chinese traditional culture, revealing the operating principle and the source of everything. The ancient wisdom in modern management theory has played an important role in the modern enterprise management. To this end, this paper compares traditional culture and modern management theory based on the relationship between traditional culture and modern management, as well as the management thoughts and characteristics of traditional culture.

Keywords
Chinese Traditional Culture; Modern Management; Comparison Theory.

1. Introduction
The modern management theory is emerged and developed based on specific historical conditions and environment, so it can present the social culture and background at that time, and has a guiding role in management practice. Sorting out and comparing modern management thoughts and Chinese traditional culture is not only an important means of reform of modern management theory, but also an important task of studying modern management theory.

2. Relationship between Traditional Culture and Modern Management
Modern management theory is closely related to traditional culture, and its strategic thinking and the theory of division and combination reflect the connotation of management thoughts rooted in traditional culture.

2.1. Strategic Thought and Ancient Strategic Design
For the enterprise management, the strategy shall be formulated, and the internal and external environment of the enterprise shall be analyzed, and then the strategic decisions of the enterprise shall be made by using the military management theory of the hundred schools of thought in the pre-Qin period. Finally, the enterprises shall be managed based on the governing thoughts and methods of the hundred schools of thought in the pre-Qin period. The goal of Taoism’s governing thought is "inner cultivation and exterior action"; while the Confucianism advocates "self cultivation and great harmony" to achieve the unity of personal goals and organizational management goals. In other words, personal management can realize the transformation from self-discipline to self-consciousness, thus achieving organizational management goals[1]. However, in the modern enterprise management, the personnel are the key, so modern enterprises pay more attention to shaping individuals, coordinating the relationship between individuals, so as to form the collective strength of individuals, groups and society, thus achieving goals, and implementing the enterprise management strategy.
2.2. **Theory of Division and Combination of Modern Organizations**

Setting the management goals is to manage the organization, with the view to design the communication network so that the organization members can grasp and clarify the purpose and reasons for the organizational decisions. The modern enterprises mainly apply the theory of division and combination in the management, aiming to clarify the division of labor within the enterprise and eliminate the misconception of employees about their job duties. Effective management is a high degree of unity of goals and tasks, which can achieve clear rights and responsibilities and reasonable span in enterprise management. As early as in the Warring States Period, Xuncius discussed the organizational issue. In his opinion, being gregarious is the human nature, while the division is the inevitable result of social groups, so there will be fierce competition between groups if the hierarchical division is eliminated. The modern management theory reinterprets it based on the traditional theory of division and combination, re-divides the management goals and policies, and integrates the existing human and material resources of the enterprise to conduct the enterprise grouping.

2.3. **Restriction in Five Elements and Constraint**

Restricting and standardizing the behavior of enterprise managers and employees is a necessary condition to ensure the operation of the organization, so the purpose of enterprise management is to motivate and restrict employees. Mutual supervision and checks & balances can realize the restriction and checks & balances of power, and the formation of the relationship between supervision and restraint in the organizational structure can realize the supervision and restraint of the enterprise’s production and management behaviors. The enterprise management based on the Theory of Yin-Yang and Five Elements can achieve the dynamic balance of the internal and external environment. According to the Theory of Yin-Yang and Five Elements, Tai Chi manifests Liangyi, namely yin-yang. They produce four phenomena, namely: lesser yin, and greater yin, lesser yang, and greater yang. Only when the two sides are evenly matched can effective balance be achieved. Therefore, supervising and controlling the enterprises is to achieve the harmonious development of the organizational structure and promote the harmonious coexistence of internal relations by balancing the internal forces of enterprises. Once an enterprise takes a certain measure, its checks and balances can also play a role, realizing the supervision and control of member activities.

3. **Management Thoughts and Characteristics of Chinese Traditional Culture**

The long history of Chinese civilization has bred unique ideological connotation and cultural features, which has become the cultural treasure of the Chinese nation.

3.1. **Guan Zi Thought**

Guan Zi, an important ideologist in the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period, advocated the theory of "Ordaining Conscience for Heaven and Earth". A leader should take heaven and earth as a model, play a leading role, ignore personal desire, restrict power through law, and restrict behavior through morality. In addition, Guan Zi also mentioned the management thought of combining hardness and softness. He held that self-interest is human nature, and people are born with egoism. However, Guan Zi believed that there can be a reconciliation between egoism and altruism, and self-interest itself has inherent goodwill. Only by achieving a high degree of unity between egoism and altruism can a harmonious relationship be reached. In addition, he also argued that only the people's wealth can realize the national wealth, and the people's wealth are the necessary conditions for realizing the national wealth. Therefore, the taxes can be raised as long as the people are rich, thus achieving national prosperity. On the contrary, the national prosperity can drive the people's wealth, and the
people can have fear of the country, so as to obey the government order of the country[2]. When the people are rich, they will live and work in peace and contentment, and obey the governance of the country. Otherwise, they are likely to break the law. Therefore, in the process of governance, the country should uphold the people-oriented idea, win the popular support, understand the wishes and needs of the people, and meet the needs of the people as much as possible. Moreover, Guan Zi also believed that the governance of the country should keep pace with the times, pay attention to the combination of reality and comply with the trend of the times, and should not stick to convention, not follow the beaten track, not be restricted by the real society, nor indulge in the achievements of reality. He held that honesty is the foundation of people’s wealth and national development. Only the honest people can get the benefits they deserve and live in the environment of honesty and prosperity. In the selection of talents, it is necessary to select personnel with both ability and political integrity, recruit and utilize talents, reduce the situation according to seniority, and not stifle real talents due to limitations on age and merit.

3.2. Confucianism’s Management Thought

Confucianism is the mainstream of our thoughts, and its most representative is Confucius and Mencius. Confucianism has always adhered to the idea of "benevolence", especially on issues related to life and society. Confucius believed that only "benevolence" is the foundation of conducting oneself, while "propriety" is the restriction of human behavior. Mencius inherited Confucius’ thought and put forward the people-oriented theory, which took the human as the key factor of ruling a country, and emphasized the support and trust of the ruled to the ruler, because water can both float and capsize a vessel. Confucianism adhered to the management from self to family and country, that is, self-improvement and self-discipline and stabilizing others, advocating the golden mean. Furthermore, Confucius also explained and defined the key to the management, and held that on the basis of following rules and ensuring efficiency, it is necessary to adhere to the principle of combining punishment with leniency, and recruit and utilize talents, so as to achieve the management vision of harmonious coexistence.

4. Comparison between Chinese Traditional Culture and Modern Management Theory

Modern management theory is rooted in Chinese traditional culture and has been innovated on the basis of inheritance to adapt to the development of modern enterprises and achieve the goals of managers and enterprises. Moreover, modern management theory has also absorbed the essence of Chinese traditional culture.

4.1. Ancient Chinese Decision-making Strategy

Among the hundred schools of thought in the pre-Qin period, the essence lies in the military management theory, which reveals the methods and principles for enterprises to make strategic decisions. The hundred schools of thought in the pre-Qin period have different opinions, which involve all aspects of enterprise management. For instance, Taoism reveals the idea of personal management, while Confucianism advocates the realization of great harmony. What's more, Confucianism also advocated a high degree of unity between personal management goals and organizational management goals. Confucianists carried out in-depth analysis of the relationship between individuals, groups and society, stating that it is the premise and basis for achieving corporate goals, and that it can be truly sublimated by cycle[2]. In Sun Tzu's Art of War, the "five things in war" are discussed in detail, and the corresponding factors of "Foundation, Heaven, Earth, General, Rule" are put forward. "Foundation" mainly refers to the objective and comprehensive political environment; "Heaven" mainly refers to the opportunities for development, while "Earth" refers to the favorable geographical position,
namely, the internal relationship and environment of the enterprise; "General" corresponds to the quality of managers in modern enterprises. Enterprise managers should be honest, kind and brave; "Rule" mainly refers to the clear management standards and guidelines[3]. The "five things in war" have guiding significance for enterprises to formulate business strategies, so that enterprises can occupy a place in the fierce market competition. If the "five things in war" correspond to the external environment of enterprise development, the "seven aspects of estimation in war" correspond to the internal environment of the enterprise, through which enterprises can identify their own development disadvantages, compare with their competitors, and take them as the elements of formulating their development strategies.

4.2. Application of the Thought of Harmony into Modern Organizational Management

In terms of the organizational management theory, the purpose of the modern management theory is to achieve the enterprise management goals, give full play to the organizational strength, clarify the organizational responsibilities, and develop an effective communication platform. Chinese traditional organizational management is mainly the interpretation of the theory of division and combination. "Division" refers to the classification of the organizational management goals, and integration of the human and material resources of enterprises to solve the contradictions within the organization by adjusting the professional division of labor, thus laying a solid foundation for the sound operation of the organization. On the basis of division, the organization should take unity and cooperation as the core of its management to improve its operation efficiency. In the Book of Changes, the organizational management goals are also clearly explained, which is intended to strengthen the effective communication between the managers and the members of the organization, and give full play to the talents of the organization. It can be said that the ancient Chinese thought of harmony is the basic method and principle of modern enterprise management, which contains simple values and pays more attention to the degree, thus making the organizational management reach an ideal state through the distribution system. Chinese traditional theory advocates that "Inequality rather than want is the cause of trouble", which to some extent reveals the problem of income distribution. In addition, the idea of equal distribution developed from the thought of harmony is highly compatible with the problems of modern economic and social development, reflecting the expectation of the ancients to pursue common prosperity.

4.3. Traditional Motivation and Leadership Theory

In modern management theory, the leadership means to guide the staff to make outstanding contributions to the enterprise development, aiming to leading people to achieve common aspirations and expectations by following the organizational goals. In this process, leaders should give some incentives, take actions and formulate action plans on the premise of understanding people's needs, so as to achieve effective management. Western scholars have made different interpretations of this theory, revealing human nature through different definitions of human beings and studying the evolvement rules of human beings, while this interpretation is highly consistent with the views of Chinese Taoism and Legalism, that is, better management effect can be achieved by shaping human nature.

Chinese traditional management thought reflects the relationship between the leader and the follower, and emphasizes that a ruler should love his subjects as well as his relatives and children, fully meet the needs of the subjects, and comply with the aspirations of the people, so as to enhance the cohesion of the people. When rewarding and punishing people, the rule should not consider people's status, age and other factors, but drive the backward by rewarding the advanced, so as to improve the performance, and temper justice with mercy[4]. In particular, leaders should influence their subordinates through their words and deeds and treat them kindly and generously so that the enterprise can achieve the best coordination. As an important
part of modern management theory, motivation is also an important means for enterprises to establish corporate culture, which can stimulate the initiative and creativity of employees, create a harmonious relationship for employees, and enhance the loyalty and centripetal force of employees, thus creating value for enterprises.

4.4. Governance by doing Nothing that Goes Against Nature and Management Control

Modern management theory pays more attention to the phased tasks and materialized results, as well as the effectiveness of management, while Chinese traditional theory focuses on the control of personnel to achieve the effect of combining hardness and softness. Taoism emphasizes that governance by doing nothing that goes against nature is the most effective means of management, and it is a way of organic governance. Guided by it, enterprises can make the best choice when facing important issues related to employees, so as to avoid a dilemma. In other words, enterprises should give the subordinates full freedom to urge them to take responsibility for their own behaviors, and improve their ideological quality and learning ability through the complex self-control system, so as to achieve the governance by doing nothing that goes against nature.

5. Conclusion

To sum up, the combination of Chinese traditional culture and modern management theory can present the characteristics of the times, and reveal the symbiotic relationship under the material civilization. In addition, it is the theoretical support to promote the success of enterprises, which fits the future development of enterprises, and can predict the future trend.

References


