

# Research on the Construction of Partnership in the Corporate Workplace

Ruirui Chen

Tianjin University of Finance and Economics, Tianjin 300100, China.

1048189606@qq.com.

**Abstract.** Workplace partnerships refer to the establishment of new partnerships at the corporate workplace level that focus on win-win cooperation. The establishment of partnership in the workplace of Chinese enterprises takes into account the realization of the interests of the management, trade unions and employees. The article conceptualizes the meaning of partnership from the perspective of social exchange theory, and on this basis, puts forward how to implement effective cooperation measures in the workplace of enterprises, through the exchange relationship between enterprises, trade unions and employees, so that within the organization members form a mutually beneficial relationship.

**Keywords:** workplace level; partnership relationship; win-win.

## 1. Introduction

The partnership originated in the late 1980s. Under the background of the intensification of international competitiveness brought about by global economic integration and the weakening of trade union power, Western developed countries have gained market competitive advantages and satisfied their employees interest demands, proposed new labor relations model --- partnership model. The aim is to maximize the interests of the company's management, employees and trade unions and achieve their mutually beneficial and win-win goals.

At present, Chinese enterprises are also facing increasing market competition pressure and are in the initial stage of trade union organization. The increasing demand for competition and the issue of labor rights and interests are constantly appearing in the development of enterprises, making it necessary to establish a partnership model in China. Workplace partnership is a new partnership that integrate the individual interests of the members into common interests at the workplace level and achieve a mutually beneficial through the implementation of relevant organizational management measures.

## 2. The Practice of Partnership in the Perspective of Social Exchange Theory

In the conceptual partnership, social exchange theory is the most influential theoretical basis. From the perspective of social exchange theory, partnerships are conceptualized as a form of social interaction and the process of exchanging physical and non-material goods between employees and their corporate management through direct or indirect arrangements. Blau (2008) pointed out that the interaction among people is based on mutual benefit, and social exchange is a mutually beneficial behavior. The principle of reciprocity in social exchange theory explains how such a sustainable partnership can be formed among actors.

Based on the theory of social exchange, we can understand partnership as a new type of collaborative relationship between the management and employees to promote mutual benefit. This kind of collaborative relationship emphasizes that all members of the organization cooperate with each other in the common interest.

## 3. The Practical Effect of the Partnership

The heated debate about “who gets what from partnership” has always existed in the study of partnership practice, and the above three views are also evident in the existing literature. While mutually beneficial advocates believe that both employees and employers can benefit from work

partnerships (Kochan&Osterman,1994), the negative view is that employees experience negative outcomes (Danford,2005;2014). Scholars with a restrictive and mutually beneficial view believe that although workers are prone to potential gains, the benefits are usually more beneficial to employers, (Guest&Peccei,2001) and this voluntary partnership is difficult to maintain and easily broken. But in fact, the three views in the literature are not mutually exclusive, and the benefits of partnership can be consistent with the above points, depending on the specific cooperation method adopted. (Geary& Trif, 2011).

Cooke (1990) and Kochan & Osterman (1994) believe that the establishment of partnerships at the workplace level to implement a broad participation mechanism for employees, the introduction of flexible forms of work organization, and the way in which employees/union and management form a cooperative problem-solving approach can achieve the common interests of members within the organization. Guest and Peccei (2001) also suggested that the most beneficial mutual benefit results come from direct employee participation in work decisions, flexible work design, focus on quality, employment security and financial engagement.

#### **4. The Establishment of Partnership in the Workplace**

This paper believes that the establishment of workplace partnerships in Chinese enterprises requires the cooperation of enterprises, trade unions and employees from the following aspects.

##### **4.1 Practice of Partnership between Business Management and Employee.**

The management of the company should establish a mutual trust relationship with the employees, and carry out cooperation mechanisms from various aspects of the enterprise workplace to achieve the common goal of mutual development and mutual benefit.

First, the establishment of work rotation system, design team, quality management circle and other special modes enable employees to participate in different tasks and to increase their voice and autonomy. Second, establish internal corporate forums, add management communication meetings, etc. to improve the transparency of information within the organization and increase the level of communication between the upper and lower levels.

##### **4.2 Practice of Partnership between Business Management and Trade Unions.**

The goal of the management of the company is to improve the performance of the company and gain a greater competitive advantage in the market. The goal of the union is to safeguard the rights of employees and consolidate their position to achieve an equal dialogue with the management of the company. Both need to be based on employee trust. Therefore, the management and trade unions of the enterprise should establish a cooperation mechanism based on the maintenance of employee rights and interests, and through the coordination mechanism of collective bargaining and collective bargaining, effectively cooperate on the occupational safety and health and fair employment of employees in the workplace.

##### **4.3 The Practice of Partnership between Unions and Employees.**

A trade union is a legal organization that is independent of corporate management and that protects employees' rights. The cooperation between employees and trade unions is the election of employees to the leaders and representatives of the trade unions, and also the maintenance of the rights and interests of the employees by the trade unions. The effective cooperation between employees and trade unions can effectively protect employees' rights and interests.

#### **5. Conclusions and Recommendations**

The establishment of workplace partnerships is the basis for companies to achieve high performance, low management costs, harmonious internal labor relations and achieve stable long-term development. The cooperation mechanism of enterprise workplaces requires the cooperation of

the government, enterprises and trade unions to maintain the effective implementation of cooperative partnerships.

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