

# The Process of Crossing Cognitive Legitimacy Threshold in Community of Practice

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## Abstracts

In the academic world, the research on the legality threshold is mainly carried out for new ventures, etc., and there are certain researches on the legality of different levels and stages. From the causal logic, we can see that crossing the legitimacy threshold is the result of goal-oriented rational choice behavior; from the effect logic, we can see that crossing the legitimacy threshold is the effect achieved by improvisational behavior predicated on means. This article will take the practice community as the object to introduce the study of legitimacy and crossover, study how the practice community can accumulate and cross over legitimacy, and explore the process of crossing the legitimacy threshold of the practice community. Take the question of what is the process mechanism of the legitimacy threshold of the practice community?

**Keywords:** Community of Practice; Legitimacy Threshold; Effectuation Logic; Causation Logic

## Introduction

Due to the global outbreak of the covid-19, China has launched strict prevention and control measures for the prevention and control of the epidemic. During the period of epidemic prevention and control, the Chinese nation's pharmaceutical industry played a vital role and provided strong guarantee and support for the people across the country to prevent covid-19 at different stages.

"The legality of the threshold crossing" the emergence of this new research directions, only in the current academic theoretical level on the "legitimacy of the threshold crossing" do some research, but not study the legality of the threshold crossing is subject to Community of Practice, so there are many issues can be explored, such as "community of practice is how to cross the threshold of legitimacy?"; "community of practice across the legality of the threshold for the need to have what kind of premise and condition?"

The related research on legitimacy threshold is an emerging direction. At present, the academic circles are discussing the knowledge of "legitimacy threshold crossing" at the theoretical level, and there are still many issues that can be studied in depth. This research takes the practice community as the object to study the legitimacy threshold crossing, and combines the practice community with the logic of effect and the logic of cause and effect, the study of legitimacy threshold crossing from a new perspective can provide abstract and theoretical guidance for the study of legitimacy threshold crossing of different objects.

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## 1. Theoretical basis

### 1.1 Community of practice

Community of Practice, as a complete concept, was originally proposed by Lave and Wenger in "Situational Cognition: Legal Marginal Participation", expressing a "knowledge-based social structure". Community of practice has many equivalent concepts, such as community of practice, community of practice, community of practice, etc. This study uses the term "community of practice". Wenger made a clear definition of a community of practice (community of practice) in "Community of Practice: A Guide to Knowledge Management for Learning Organizations", it can also be said that "a practice society is a group of people who have common concerns, the same problems, or the same enthusiasm for the same topic, and they deepen their knowledge and professional skills in this field by influencing each other on the basis of continuous development". "These people don't necessarily work together every day, but because they have discovered the value of interaction, they come together. They share experiences, exchange ideas, and provide suggestions to each other to help each other solve problems, discuss their respective situations, pursuits and needs; think about common issues, explore various ideas, and respond to each other and feedback. "

### 1.2 Legitimacy threshold

Although some researchers (Scott & Bruce, 1987 : 45-52) have hinted at the term legitimacy threshold, Zimmerman and Zeitz (2002 : 414-431) were the first to explicitly use and implement this term. They did not take the risk of predicting when and where reaching the threshold of legitimacy would happen, but they stated that "an organization must reach the basic level of legitimacy. This is a dichotomy-it either reaches the threshold or does not meet the threshold." Legitimacy is defined here as "a social judgment of acceptance, suitability, and desirability, which is another resource that enables an organization to obtain survival and growth." Organizational legitimacy refers to the general perception and evaluation of the appropriateness of organizational behavior by stakeholders, which can be further divided into three dimensions: cognitive legitimacy, normative legitimacy, and regulatory legitimacy. Due to the existence of "new entrant disadvantage", the growth process of entrepreneurial enterprises is usually accompanied by the process of legalization, that is, the process of obtaining the acceptance, recognition and support of stakeholders.

### 1.3 Causal logic and effect logic

|                  | Causal logic                                     | Effect logic   |
|------------------|--|--|
| Prerequisites    | Set goal   | Established means  |
| Advantage        | Can learn from previous knowledge and experience | Use of contingency to adapt to environmental changes         |
| Disadvantage     | Higher personal requirements for decision makers | Difficult to control various uncertain factors in the future |
| Underlying logic | In order to achieve a certain                    | What kind of results can I create                            |

|                                |   |   |
|--------------------------------|---|---|
|                                | goal, what means should I gather  | with the existing methods   |
| Decision criteria              | Carry out income analysis, emphasizing the pursuit of maximum income with the best choice | Carry out cost analysis, emphasizing on making a satisfactory choice within the lower limit of the tolerable loss |
| Attitude towards risk          | Avoid risks as much as possible   | Prevent risks in advance  |
| Attitudes towards stakeholders | Emphasis on competition   | Emphasize the establishment of alliances and cooperation  |
| Attitude towards the future    | The future is predictable, control the predictable part                                   | No need to predict the future, pay attention to the controllable aspects of the future                            |
| Get results                    | Expand existing market share through competition  | Create new markets through alliances or cooperation with other stakeholders                                       |

Through comparison, it can be found that the applicable conditions of causal logic and effect logic are different. Causal logic decision-making is suitable for mature large enterprises. Mature enterprises have abundant resources, complete internal operating mechanisms, mature crisis handling capabilities and methods, and stable internal and external environments that make risk probabilities easier to predict, and easier to determine and implement targets. The effect logic decision is suitable for early start-up enterprises. Most early start-up companies lack resources, face various uncertain situations such as goals, markets, and risks, and cannot make rational decisions like causal logic, therefore, it is more emphasized that the personal characteristics and social relations of the decision-makers participate in the decision-making and create various possible results. Although the decision-making methods of causal logic and effect logic are quite different, it does not mean that the two are opposed to each other. In actual decision-making, it is possible that decision makers will use these two decision-making methods at the same time, but only one of the decision-making methods dominates in a specific period of time.

## Research Objectives

This article will take the practice community as the object to introduce the study of legitimacy and crossover, study how the practice community can accumulate and cross over legitimacy, and explore the process of crossing the legitimacy threshold of the practice community

## Research Methods

This research comprehensively uses relevant knowledge and theories of management and knowledge management, and uses a combination of theoretical analysis and qualitative research. On the basis of theoretical research, research questions are put forward, and then analyzed and researched through qualitative research methods.

What kind of research strategy to use depends on the purpose of the research and the research question. The choice of research method is to better solve the research problem. The main question of this research is, how does the community of practice cross the legitimacy threshold? What is the process of crossing the legality threshold?

Considering that the nature of the research question of this study is the discussion of internal mechanism, and mainly adopts the research method of qualitative research, this article focuses on the construction of the theoretical construction of the legitimacy threshold spanning process of the construction of a community of practice, which is a theoretical discussion, at the same time, it involves the problem of insufficient research on the legitimacy threshold, and qualitative research can better conduct exploratory research on new research fields or fields with insufficient existing research than quantitative research. Therefore, this article chooses qualitative research as the main research method.

This research uses a literature analysis method to sort out and analyze the literature on legitimacy thresholds, causal logic and effect logic, and use semi-structured interview methods to conduct open interviews to record the cases selected in this research, and use the grounded analysis method to code and interpret the interview content and literature.

### 3.1 Case Introduction

This research takes the necessary conditions of the practice community as the case study object to find the research case. Through my first phase of research, I found an organization with the nature of a community of practice. Through interviews with the members of the organization, I determined the organizational nature, as well as the development history and process of the Guizhou Medical Association of Minorities, and finally chooses the Guizhou Medical Association of Minorities as the case study.

The Guizhou Medical Association of Minorities has a history of nearly 40 years from the birth of the idea to the establishment of the society. According to the contents of the history of the society, the society was divided into three periods before and after its establishment: 1981-1984 was the social investigation period, 1984-1987 was the preparatory period for the society, and after 1987, the society was established and operated to this day. Each period has a milestone event: (1) Before 1984, under the background that the country wanted to promote the development of ethnic medicine with characteristics in each region, the Guizhou region completed a poll on the relevant ethnic medicine industry, mainly local Miao medicine., Found that the folks have a large demand for ethnic medicine. (2) After the completion of the poll, the Guizhou Provincial Institute of Traditional Chinese Medicine led the Guizhou Provincial Ethnic and Religious Affairs Commission to invest 200,000 yuan to conduct research and in-

depth investigations on Miao Medicine in Guizhou Province. (3) In 1987, the preparatory work for the society was completed. With the mutual cooperation and joint efforts of relevant practitioners in the ethnic medicine industry, the Guizhou Medical Association of Minorities was established, with Zhao Song as the first president of the society. (4) After the establishment of the society, it clarified the role of the society in the promotion of ethnic medicine culture in Guizhou Province, provided a foundation for the academic research and theoretical construction of ethnic medicine in Guizhou, and played a role in regulating behavior in ethnic medicine related industries, the medical system made up for the shortage of social medical resources in short supply at that time, and regularly held large-scale free clinics in cities, counties, and villages.

### 3.2 Effect logic process result

Before the establishment of the society, the effective process of the Guizhou Medical Association of Minorities produced the following effects: ①The ethnic medicine related personnel gathered quickly to form a practical community organization form. ②In the process of exploring the way out of ethnic medicine, it has been recognized and supported by relevant industry personnel and government organizations. In fact, the Guizhou Medical Association of Minorities is accumulating "cognitive legitimacy". From interviews and data analysis, it is learned that the social awareness of ethnic medical practitioners during this stage of activities has continued to increase, and the increase in the number of organizations and social evaluations is the characteristic of accumulating "cognitive legitimacy". ③With the increase in the number of organizations and the support of relevant industry personnel and government organizations, the establishment of the National Medical Association will be further accelerated.

### 3.3 Causal logic process result

After the establishment of the Guizhou Medical Association of Minorities, it purposefully established the society's awareness of the ethnic medicine industry and the process of obtaining legitimacy, accumulated a wide range of positive reviews and social reputation, and realized the maintenance of "cognitive legitimacy".

The realization of this goal is manifested in: ①Guizhou Medical Association of Minorities has the qualifications to train ethnic doctors, and the trainees can grant their ethnic doctors a unique legal practice certificate after passing the training and assessment. This function of the Guizhou Medical Association of Minorities provides a legal opportunity for various ethnic doctors in the society. ②Through the more systematic publicity and promotion of the society, the popularity of ethnic medicine has been increased. Doctors who have been trained and qualified to practice medicine participate in free clinic activities in various places, opening up the publicity channel of ethnic medicine in various places. ③The Guizhou Medical Association of Minorities provides an exchange platform for ethnic medicine related personnel, shares ethnic medicine knowledge in various regions, makes important contributions to the academic field of ethnic medicine, and helps the construction of ethnic medicine disciplines to provide practical data and theoretical support.

## Research Results

When a community of practice organization needs to survive and develop, "informal organization" to shift from development to "formal organization", the organization needs to build social awareness, based on their own what capacity, resources and means, try to carry out activities within their power to build community awareness, the accumulation of positive comments. When evaluating these cognitive and accumulated to a certain extent, to be set up conditions for the formal organization, this community of practice to complete the crossing of a threshold of legality.

Community of Practice mentioned in this study spanned the legality of the threshold value is "cognitive legitimacy threshold" cognitive legitimacy from the people for the common perception of symbolic systems and a shared sense of the system, in other words when an organization is recognized by society, there is a wide range of positive comments, there is a population basis, etc., then the organization will have the cognitive legitimacy, therefore, attempt to establish the organization's public image can enhance cognitive behavioral legitimacy of the organization.

In my opinion: the process of crossing the cognitive legitimacy threshold of the practice community is a process of accumulating cognitive legitimacy in the logical process of effect, and then passing through the occurrence of a key event when the accumulation reaches a certain threshold, make this community of practice complete the crossing of the threshold of cognitive legitimacy, from the logical process of effect to the logical process of causality. For example, before the establishment of the Guizhou Medical Association of Minorities in this study, only a group of people from the ethnic medicine industry organized spontaneously to carry out activities. In this process, it actively builds society's awareness of ethnic medicine, acquires and accumulates "cognitive legitimacy", with the increase in the number of people participating in the activities of the organization, "cognitive legitimacy" has also been accumulated in the ethnic medicine industry. With the expansion of the scale of the organization, the support and assistance of relevant government organizations have been aroused, and the accumulation of "cognitive legitimacy" has also increased. And through legal registration, the Guizhou Provincial Ethnic Medicine Association was established, which transformed from a community of practice organization to a formal organization, from "purposeless" activities to a state of organizing activities based on "objectives". Completed the cognitive legitimacy threshold crossing of the practical community from the logical process of effect to the logical process of causal.

## Discussion

The research on the "legitimacy threshold crossing" of the practice community describes the process in which the practice community accumulates cognitive legitimacy in the process of effect, and then crosses the "cognitive legitimacy threshold" when it enters the causal process. The current discussion on legitimacy threshold crossing mainly focuses on the theoretical level. This research develops the theory with a case discussion: ① This study found a close relationship between the accumulation of cognitive legitimacy of the practice community and the logical process of effect. In the "purposeless" activities of the effect logic process, the organizations of the practice community continue to explore and carry out activities based on their own means. With the positive evaluation and social recognition brought by their activities and explorations, it is the necessary factor for the practice community

organization to cross the "threshold of legitimacy" and enter the causal process. The ethnic medical practitioners in this study are based on their own capabilities and methods at this stage, actively construct the cognition of ethnic medicine in the society, so as to gradually accumulate "cognitive legitimacy" and gradually develop, therefore, it is found through this study that the acquisition and accumulation of "cognitive legitimacy" in the effect process stage is an important condition for the survival and development of the practice community. ② It is found that when the practice community organization develops to a certain scale and the cognitive legitimacy accumulates to a certain degree, the organization will achieve the leap of the "legitimacy threshold" through the occurrence of a certain key event. The ethnic medical practitioners in this study passed the event of "establishing the Guizhou Medical Association of Minorities", from the effect logic process into the causal logic process, from means-based "purposeless" organizational activities to a stage of organizational activities based on "goals". At the same time, this community of practice has also achieved a leap in the "threshold of legitimacy of knowledge", which is reflected in the "illegal" state of the relevant practitioners before the establishment of the Guizhou Medical Association of Minorities. After the establishment of the Association, the establishment of the ethnic medicine has opened the way for ethnic medicine to "legitimate". , And can get more resources and support.

## Recommendation

In this study, the effect as from the perspective of cause and effect logic and the logic of combining the legality of the practice of community across the threshold of the first attempt to study the process, there are still some limitations: ① The study found general or replicability. This is a common limitation of single case studies. This study selected only one Chinese Medicine Societies organizations, research findings obtained based on this may not apply to other types of organized communities of practice. In this case selection and case study analysis process as far as possible to follow the standard case study in order to reduce the impact of this limitation of the study. ② This research only studies the process and mechanism of the effect logic stage of the practice community from the causal logic stage, and does not answer the legality acquisition and the next development of the practice community after the stage of the causal logic. There are other aspects of the legality of the threshold value exists in the study of legitimacy among the community of practice for the legality of the threshold crossing process also crossed the threshold from which the level of legitimacy, as well as what is the leap-over mechanism, further research and exploration are needed. ③ The research level is limited to the organization level of the society. This study did not examine the dynamic nature of the industry, such as the national level, the legality of the practice of a single community organization may also be affected by factors of national level policy, industry-level collective behavior. Future research could explore cross-layer dynamic process, and further combines the two dimensions of time and space, the legality of the threshold inspection practices across the community process.

## References

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