

What Is the Matter of Identity to Leadership Behavior: Leader-Subordinate Relational Identity and Paternalistic Leadership

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Abstract : How relational identity of leader-subordinate relationship affects behavior of both parties is getting more and more attentions in recent years. Different from past studies on leader-subordinate relationship taking viewpoint of self-concept or interaction between categories, we took perspective of social cognitive schema with special focus on the cognition structure and category content of the vertical leader-subordinate relationship. This study firstly clarified the dimensions and contents of cognitive structure of vertical leader-subordinate relationship. By using two dimensions of "equal/unequal" and "close/distant", the contents of the leader-subordinate relational identity (LSRI) are classified into four categories: communal affection RI (equal and close), instrumental exchange RI (equal but distant), care-repay RI (unequal but close), and authority-obedience RI (unequal and distant). Furthermore, according to the four dimensions of leader-subordinate relational identity, we explored: (1) how a leader's LSRI leads to paternalistic leadership; and (2) how paternalistic leadership affects subordinate's LSRI. Using 59 work group as sample (59 leaders and 251 subordinates), the results of HLM and regression analysis showed: (1) leader's LSRI significantly affects leadership behavior: instrumental exchange RI is positively relates to authoritarian leadership behavior, but significantly has negative relationship with benevolent leadership; care-repay RI has significantly positive relationship with authoritative leadership; authority-obedience RI has significantly positive relationship with authoritarian leadership; (2) paternalistic leadership is significantly related to subordinates' LSRI: benevolent leadership is positively related to subordinate's communal affection and care-repay RI; authoritative leadership has significantly positive relationship with care-repay and authority-obedience RI; authoritarian leadership has significantly positive relationship with subordinate's instrumental exchange RI. Finally, the main findings, contributions and limits, future research directions, and implications were also discussed.

Keywords : relational identity, leader-subordinate relational identity (LSRI), relational schema, paternalistic leadership

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