

The Model of Leader-Subordinate Relational Identity

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The issue of 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 viewpoints of self-concept or interaction between categories, this study took perspective of social cognitive schema with special focus on the cognition structure and category content of the vertical leader-subordinate relationship. Firstly, this study reviewed theories and studies related to leader-subordinate relationship in organization. Secondly, based on the review of past studies taking perspective of self-concept that used degree of relational bonds to define self-relational identity, this study adopted viewpoint of social cognitive schema to define “relational dyadic role” to fill up the gap; meanwhile, considering the characteristics of vertical relationship in modern organizations after culture shock from Western to Chinese traditional culture, this study further clarified the dimensions and contents of cognitive structure of vertical leader-subordinate relationship. That is, by using the two dimensions of “equal/unequal” and “close/distant,” the contents of the leader-subordinate relational identity (LSRI) could be classified into four categories: communal affection relationship (equal and close), instrumental exchange relationship (equal but distant), care-repay relationship (unequal but close), and authority-obedience relationship (unequal and distant). Lastly, this study constructed a model of leader-subordinate relational identity, and the importance, future research directions, research limits, and practical contributions of this study were also discussed.

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