

Research on the Influence Mechanism of “Leader Underestimation” Internal Identity Asymmetry on Employees Job Involvement

—Based on the Dual Role Interaction Perspective

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Abstract—Mainly Based on the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model and Resource Conservation of Resource (COR) Theory, this research breaks through the limitation of a single top-down leadership perspective and focuses on the dual role interaction between leaders and employees in the organization. From the subjective internal perspective of employees, a moderated mediating model is constructed to delve into the actual influence process of Leader-member Internal Identity Asymmetry (Leader Underestimation) on employees' psychological motivation and behavior driven in the context of Chinese corporate culture. The empirical results show that (1) "Leader Underestimated" Internal Identity Asymmetry has negative influence on employees' Job Involvement; (2) Psychological Authorization completely mediates the influence of "Leader Underestimation" Internal Identity Asymmetry on employees' Job Involvement. (3) Leader-Member Exchange has a negative regulating effect on the relationship between "Leader Underestimation" Internal Identity Asymmetry and Psychological Authorization. This research result is helpful to supplement the relevant theories of the emerging field about Internal Identity Asymmetry, fill the gap of empirical research and provide a reference for enterprise leaders to accurately identify and solve the Internal Identity Asymmetry of employees and eliminate the bad mentality and behavior.

Keywords—“Leader Underestimation” Internal Identity Asymmetry; Psychological Empowerment; Leader-Member Exchange; Job Involvement

I. INTRODUCTION

In the context of China's "above is respected" corporate culture, leaders have absolute authority, which determines the allocation of resources and the deployment of power, and employees attach great importance to their evaluation. Under the high power distance, employees lack communication and contact with leaders, which lead to the fallibility and lag of

identity cognition, and the perception bias that is not recognized by leaders. Aleksandra (2016) pointed out that individuals tend to have a positive perception of them and tend to generate self-identity, thus overestimating their own value [1]. Moreover, perceived leader evaluation is likely to be lower than self-expected, leading to the Leader Underestimation” Internal Identity Asymmetry.

According to the psychological cognition of the leader is more willing to allocate the resources and power in the work to subordinates who attach importance to him, employees who feel "underestimated" will have a sense of loss of work resources and lack of authorization, which will lead to tension and depression, suppress inner work motivation, and further affect employees' Job Involvement. Based on the above analysis, this research intends to build a moderated mediating model to delve into the "Leader Underestimation" Internal Identity Asymmetry real influence process on employees' psychological motivation and behavior driven, rich relevant theories, and provides a reference for enterprises to identify and effectively solve the internal hidden harm of employees' Internal Identity Asymmetry.

II. THEORETICAL BASIS

A. Internal Identity Asymmetry

The word Identity was first proposed by Freud when discussed "the id impulse". In the modern context, it is generally accepted by researchers as a process of discovering and identifying one's own identity through reflective understanding. Meister & Jehn (2014) drew on and coordinated the research on Identity, self-verification and impression management, formally proposed the Internal Identity Asymmetry, and conceptualized it as the inconsistency between self-identity and perceived others' Identity, thus

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causing individuals to doubt their true Identity of self-cognition. External Identity Asymmetry, on the other hand, is a practical difference between the two [2].

Previous studies on internal identity tend to be consistent, that is, individuals are fundamentally eager to solve internal contradictions [35]. As an emerging field, Internal Identity Asymmetry lacks the support of empirical methods, and few scholars focus on the specific analysis of different job roles (leaders and employees) in the organization. Based on the perspective of adjustment and focus, Internal Identity Asymmetry can be divided into two categories according to leader-member internal identity level: Leadership Underestimation and Leadership Overestimation [4]. And further subdivided into four modes, as shown in Fig. 1.

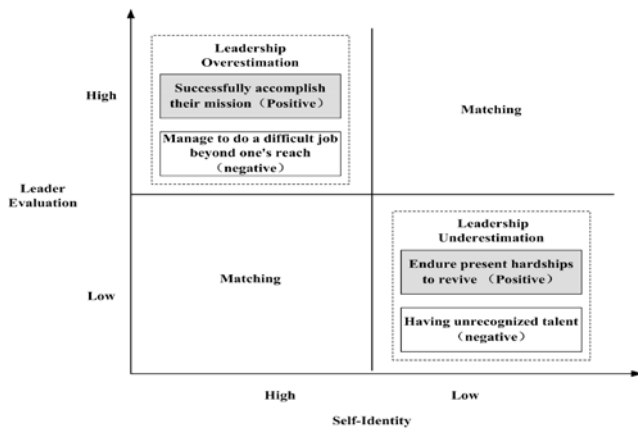


Fig. 1. Leadership - Member Internal Identity Asymmetry Model

B. Psychological Empowerment

Conger & Kanungo (1988) defined Psychological Empowerment as a dynamic process where employees receive internal incentives to improve their self-efficacy.

C. Leader-Member Exchange (LMX)

Graen & Dansereau et al. (1972) first proposed the Leader-Member Exchange Theory, and divided subordinate employees into "In-group members" and "Out-group members" according to the degree of affinity with leaders. The "In-group members" has a high-quality exchange relationship with the leader, which will gain more trust and attention than the "Out-group members".

D. Job Involvement

Kahn (1990) defined Job Involvement as the degree of willingness of employees to actively shape work roles and

shoulder work responsibilities. Employees with high Job Involvement will invest more time and energy in their work and give full play to their initiative and creativity to create positive work roles.

III. THEORETICAL MODEL AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

Based on the JD-R Model, work resource is an important positive factor in work [5], while the Leader Underestimation will cause the tension and insecurity of resource loss of employees and reduce the sense of obtaining their work rights [9]. Psychological Empowerment is the inner emotional activity which reflects the sense of right to work. Employees who lack Psychological Empowerment may question their leaders' affirmation and perceive that they lose control of their work, so as to vent their dissatisfaction through negative work [6] and show differentiated work input to cope with different levels of authorization perception [7].

Based on the ROC theory, when employees realize that the expected work resources cannot be obtained, they will feel nervous and depressed, and then tend to avoid the existing work and reduce work inputs to protect the existing resources [8]. The quality of LMX largely determines employees' interpretation and judgment of leadership identity. As leadership and employee with a high level of interaction relations, the employee, as a "In-group member", will interpret this identification as positive motivation, stimulate internal motivation, and then actively participate in the work to change the "Leader Underestimation" Internal Identity Asymmetry. In other words, it forms the facilitating focusing adjustment for employees, and then presents the positive model of "Endure present hardships to revive" [4].

To sum up, this study constructed a moderated mediating model and proposed the research hypothesis. The research model is shown in Fig. 2, and the research hypothesis is shown in Table I.

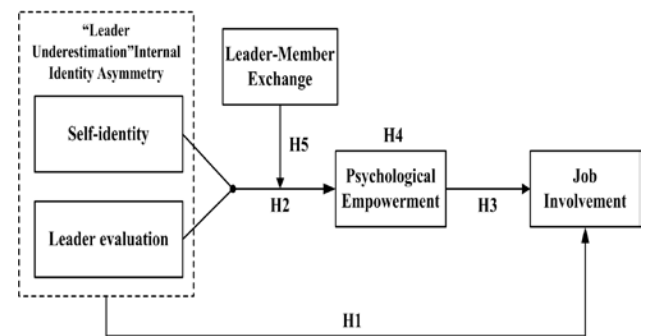


Fig. 2. Research Model Framework

TABLE I. SUMMARY OF RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

Hypothesis number	Hypothesis content
H1	"Leader Underestimation" Internal Identity Asymmetry has a negative effect on employee's Job Involvement.
H2	There is a negative correlation between "Leader Underestimation" Internal Identity Asymmetry and Psychological Authorization.
H3	There is a positive correlation between Psychological Authorization and employees' Job Involvement.
H4	Psychological Authorization mediates the influence of "Leader Underestimation" Internal Identity Asymmetry on employees' Job Involvement.
H5	LMX has a negative regulating effect on the relationship between Leader Underestimation and Psychological Authorization.

IV. EMPIRICAL RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA PROCESSING

A. Sample description, questionnaire issuance and collection

The subjects of this study were employees of different industries and enterprises in China, and a total of 518 valid questionnaires were obtained. After continuing the conditional screening, 215 samples belonging to the research category ("Leader Underestimation" Internal Identity Asymmetry) were

extracted, accounting for 41.5% of the effective samples. *B. Variable measurement*

This study used the scale developed by Shu-yan Gong et al (2014) for the measurement of Self-identity and Leader evaluation, with 6 items each. Indirect measurement at the individual level is used to measure the matching degree and type of internal identity of leader-member in the team. Absolute value difference method ($|X-Y|$) of variance analysis

indicator is used to calculate [4]. Firstly, the measured data were standardized, and then the absolute value of the difference between Self-identity (R1) and perceived Leader evaluation (R2) was used as the measurement index to measure the

matching degree of the inner identity of leader-member. The matching conditions of internal identity are summarized in Table II.

TABLE II. INNER IDENTITY MATCHING CONDITION ARRANGEMENT

Condition	Characteristic	Matching Degree
$ R_1 - R_2 < 1/2 \sigma$ and closer to 0	The smaller the gap between Self-identity and Leader evaluation	Leader - member internal identification match
$R_1 - R_2 > 1/2 \sigma$	The higher the degree of "Leader Underestimation" Internal Identity Asymmetry	Leader - member internal identity asymmetry
$R_2 - R_1 > 1/2 \sigma$	The higher the degree of "Leader Overestimation" Internal Identity	

In this study, the Psychological Authorization Scale developed by Spreitzer (1995) was selected, including 4 dimensions, namely, Meaning, Self-determination, Self-efficacy and Impact, with a total of 12 items; The LMX-MDM Scale developed by Liden & Maslyn (1998) was selected with a total of 16 items including four dimensions of Affect, Loyalty, Contribution and Professional Respect; Utrecht Job Involvement Scale developed by Schaufeli (2002) was selected, including 3 dimensions of Vigor, Dedication and Absorption, with a total of 17 items.

V. EMPIRICAL RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

A. Reliability and validity analysis of scale

SPSS 23.0 was used for reliability analysis of the effective data. CITC of the items in each scale were all larger than the allowable value of 0.5, and Cronbach's scales were all larger than 0.6. Therefore, the items of each original scale are kept,

the reliability of each scale is excellent, and the internal consistency is good; Factors were extracted by the principal component analysis method and rotated by the maximum variance method. The KMO of each scale was 0.739, 0.762, 0.875, 0.895 and 0.940, all larger than the KMO minimum fitness value of 0.6, and the P corresponding to Bartlett spherical test of each scale was less than 0.001, reaching a significant level, which was suitable for factor analysis and effective for factor analysis.

To further verify the structural validity, five variables in this study were analyzed by AMOS 24.0. The CMIN/DF of all variables were all below 5, RMSEA were all 0.1, IFI, TLI and CFI were all greater than 0.7, all indicators met acceptable fitting standards, and the model adaptability was good.

B. Regression analysis and hypothesis testing

TABLE III. STRATIFIED MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF "LU" INTERNAL IDENTITY ASYMMETRY ON PSYCHOLOGICAL AUTHORIZATION/JOB INVOLVEMENT (N=215)

Predictor variable	Psychological Authorization								Job Involvement							
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5		Model 6		Model 7		Model 8	
	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β
(Constant)	2.979		5.257		0.224		-3.441		2.405		4.132		0.413		0.701	
Gender	0.108	0.055	0.217	0.111	0.014	0.007	0.006	-0.004	0.060	0.033	0.143	0.078	-0.012	-0.007	0.001	0.001
Age	-0.042	-0.076	-0.060	-0.109	-0.017	-0.032	0.001	0.001	0.032	0.063	0.019	0.036	0.060	0.117	0.058	0.112
Educational status	-0.154	-0.147	-0.104	-0.099	0.030	0.028	0.019	0.024	-0.066	-0.067	-0.028	-0.028	0.037	0.038	0.040	0.041
Position	0.236**	0.205**	-0.009	-0.008	-0.082	-0.071	-0.071	-0.048	0.308***	0.286***	0.122	0.114	0.150**	0.140**	0.128*	0.119*
LU			-1.821***	-0.450***	-0.520***	-0.129***	2.265	0.560			-1.380***	-0.365***			-0.192	-0.051
LMX					1.073***	0.858***	1.998***	1.597***								
LU x LMX							-0.704*	-0.781*								
Psychological Authorization													0.669***	0.715***	0.653***	0.697***
R ²	0.058		0.201		0.797		0.841		0.103		0.197		0.584		0.586	
Adj.R ²	0.040		0.182		0.791		0.839		0.086		0.178		0.574		0.574	
F	3.220*		10.532***		135.954***		118.541***		6.019***		10.257***		58.688***		48.984***	
ΔR^2	0.058		0.143		0.596		0.044		0.103		0.094		0.481		0.389	
F of ΔR^2	3.220*		37.539***		609.702***		3.653		6.019***		24.515***		241.764***		195.011***	

Note: the dependent variable is Psychological Authorization; B is the unstandardized regression coefficient, β is the standardized regression coefficient (Beta). *P < 0.05; **P < 0.01; ***P < 0.001

1) Principal effect analysis

From model 5, 6 in table III, it can be seen that "Leader Underestimation" Internal Identity Asymmetry ($\beta = -0.365$, $P < 0.001$) has a significant negative impact on employees' Job Involvement, and hypothesis H1 is verified.

2) The mediating effect Analysis of Psychological Authorization

In this study, the meditational effect of Psychological Authorization was tested by the four-step method proposed by Barron & Kenny (1986). As can be seen from model 1, 2 in table III, there is a significant negative correlation between "Leader Underestimation" Internal Identity Asymmetry ($\beta = -0.450$, $P < 0.001$) and Psychological Authorization, and H2 is verified; According to model 5, 7, Psychological Authorization ($\beta = 0.715$, $P < 0.001$) is significantly positively

correlated with employees' Job Involvement, and hypothesis H3 is verified; From model 5, 6, 8, after the Psychological Authorization independent variable is further introduced in model 8, the standardized regression coefficient β of "Leader Underestimation" Internal Identity Asymmetry on employees' Job Involvement decreased from -0.365 ($P < 0.001$) to -0.051 ($P = 0.379$) and became insignificant. Therefore, Psychological Authorization completely mediates the influence of "Leader Underestimation" Internal Identity Asymmetry on employees' Job Involvement, and H4 is verified.

3) The regulating effects Analysis of LMX

As can be seen from model 2, 3, 4 in table III, after addition of interaction term (LU x LMX), the coefficient R² was determined to be 0.841, increasing by 4.4%, and the regression coefficient of interaction term was significant ($\beta = -0.781$, $P < 0.001$).

0.05, CI=[-1.430,-0.022]). The 95% confidence interval did not include 0.

The adjustment effect test method of Aiken & West (1991) was adopted to further verify the regulatory effects. With the mean plus or minus one standard deviation as a standard, could be divided into high group LMX and low group LMX, from the model 2, 4 in table IV, from a high level LMX to a low level LMX, the "Leader Underestimation" Internal Identity Asymmetry standardized regression coefficient β has been

changed from -0.436 ($P < 0.001$) to -0.896 ($P < 0.001$), the negative influence of "Leader Underestimation" Internal Identity Asymmetry on Psychological Authorization is enhanced. Similarly, it can be seen from Fig. 3 that the slope of the interaction line under high level LMX is smoother. Therefore, LMX negatively regulates the effect of "Leader Underestimation" Internal Identity Asymmetry on Psychological Authorization. Hypothesis H5 is verified.

TABLE IV. ADJUSTMENT OF LMX GROUP REGRESSION AT HIGH AND LOW LEVELS (N=215)

Predictor variable	Psychological Authorization							
	High Level LMX				Low Level LMX			
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β
(Constant)	3.122		5.047		2.431		4.889	
Gender	0.296	0.164*	0.385**	0.213**	-0.400***	-0.799***	-0.014	-0.028
Age	-0.133**	-0.263***	-0.140***	-0.278***	0.212***	1.121***	0.049**	0.259**
Educational status	-0.093	-0.101	-0.058	-0.063	-0.169**	-0.338**	0.230***	0.459***
Position	0.160	0.160	-0.044	-0.044	0.101	0.156	-0.330	-0.511
LU			-1.547***	-0.436***			-2.961***	-0.896***
R ²	0.093		0.235		0.584		0.586	
Adj.R ²	0.073		0.213		0.574		0.574	
F	4.501**		10.686***		58.688***		48.984***	
ΔR^2	0.093		0.142		0.481		0.389	
F of ΔR^2	4.501**		32.215***		241.764***		195.011***	

Note: the dependent variable is Psychological Authorization; B is the unstandardized regression coefficient, β is the standardized regression coefficient (Beta). * $P < 0.05$; ** $P < 0.01$; *** $P < 0.001$

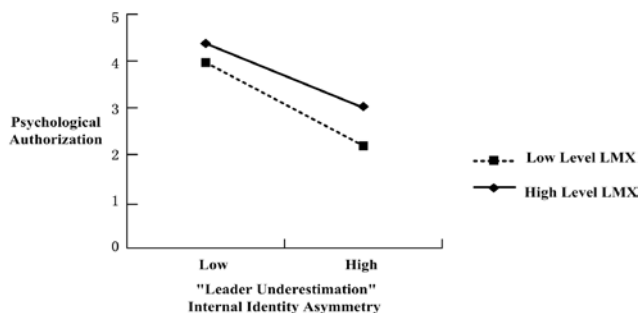


Fig. 3. The Regulating Interaction Diagram of "Leader Underestimation" Internal Identity Asymmetry to Psychological Authorization by LMX

VI. RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS AND PROSPECTS

A. Result discussion

Internal Identity Asymmetry individual perception dramatically affects the employee's work attitude and behavior, and when employees perceived Leader Evaluation below expectations, with inner self good evaluation experience of the employees will be led by self-doubt due to the perception of being underestimated by the leader, reduces internal psychological motivation. Driven by negative emotions of discontent, employees will vent their dissatisfaction to their superiors and seek inner balance by reducing Job Involvement.

The quality of LMX determines how employees interpret leadership decisions and thoughts. Different ways of understanding will lead to different attitudes of acceptance and subsequent behaviors. High-quality LMX tends to positive adjustment direction when employees digest the sense of imbalance of leader-member identity, internalize perceived leader's underestimation of identity. With an optimistic attitude, regard underestimation as a source of challenge and pressure, accept the status quo and put into work with a more positive status, and try to change the leader's underestimation of identity.

B. Management implications

Leaders in the organization should take incentive measures at the right time, empower properly, delegate power, and narrow the power distance between the upper and lower levels. To enrich the work content, adopt the method of optional working place and flexible working time, and give employees enough free working space and time. Encourage and give affirmation in due time, respect the decision of the employee, invite the suggestion of the employee, make him establish the feeling of influence of working role.

Strengthen communication, improve the grassroots feedback mechanism within the organization, timely feedback the work results and existing problems of employees to the superior leaders, so that they can pay attention to the psychological changes of employees in a timely manner. Through communication, the internal identity imbalance problem of employees can be found accurately, the negative emotions generated by employees can be properly cleared up, and the negative effects can be eliminated.

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