

An Empirical Study of the Effect of Leadership Exclusion on Employee Initiative Behavior

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Abstract

In recent years, leadership rejection has become an important topic of widespread academic concern as a factor that constrains individual career development and affects the competitive advantage of organizations. Although studies have been conducted on the implementation effect of leadership rejection, the role mechanism of leadership rejection has been less studied. In this study, we examine the impact of leadership rejection on employees' proactive behaviors and analyze the mediating effects of organizational identification, psychological empowerment, and the moderating effects of power distance. The path analysis of the two-stage survey data of 295 employees indicates that leadership rejection reduces employees' proactive behaviors by lowering subordinates' identification with the organization on the one hand and by lowering employees' psychological empowerment on the other. For employees with high power distance, leadership rejection has a weaker negative impact on employee proactive behavior by enhancing organizational identification; for employees with low power distance, leadership rejection has a stronger negative impact on employee work engagement by reducing psychological empowerment.

Key words: supervision ostracism, personal initiative, psychological empowerment, organizational identification, power distance

J.E.L. classification: D23, J53, M54

1. Introduction

As a result of technological change and intense competition, organizational managers are constantly faced with contradictions and conflicts in their management practices. In such a context, managers must be able to balance contradictions and tensions in the management process using more refined management capabilities. Leading rejection has become a significant factor in the contemporary workplace as a representative behavior of work deviation, restricting individual career development, preventing members of a team from working together synergistically, and adversely affecting the organization's competitiveness (Zhao & Chen, 2019). Studies have shown that it tends to induce counterproductive behavior in employees, which is both organizational and interpersonal in nature (Hitlan & Noel, 2009). Since a leader holds a position of authority, rejection by him or her tends to have a greater effect on his or her subordinates than rejection by other sources (e.g., coworker rejection) (Chen & Tu, 2017). People in lower positions are usually more sensitive to the thoughts of those in higher positions (Lee & Tiedens, 2001). Therefore, leadership rejection felt by subordinates is the neglect, exclusion and rejection of leaders perceived by individuals in the workplace (Ferris et al., 2008).

A review of the literature reveals that the research on the impact of leadership rejection on employees primarily covers the following aspects: first when it comes to work attitudes, leadership rejection is often associated with decreased job satisfaction among employees, increased emotional exhaustion, and a greater tendency to leave the company (Ferris, 2008; Jahanzeb, 2018); second, in terms of workplace behaviors, there is a significant positive relationship between leadership

rejection and employees' silence, bias and negative behaviors such as knowledge hoarding have a considerable positive relationship (Jahanzeb, 2021; Li, 2021). In addition, leadership rejection may also directly trigger employees' unethical and anti-productive behaviors (Akhtar, 2020); thirdly, the relationship between leadership rejection and employees' performance has also been shown to be negative (Feng, 2019). However, most of the previous studies focused on the effects of leadership rejection on employees' negative attitudes and behaviors, relatively ignoring its impact on employees' proactive behaviors. While some individual studies have examined this issue, they have not examined the mechanism that explains the relationship between leadership rejection and employee proactive behavior. Thus, it is of great theoretical and practical significance to investigate the impact of leadership rejection on employees' proactive behavior and the mechanism of its effect at a deeper level.

According to the discussion above, what are the negative consequences of leadership exclusion? What is the effect of this on people? The study also examined the influence of individual perceptions of power on leadership rejection behaviors via employees' power distance. The employees with a high-power distance tendency often submit to authority. In response to a leader's authorization and ordering behavior, they are more likely to recognize the leader's respect and care, which enhances the employee's organizational identity. On the contrary, employees with a low power distance tendency dare to challenge authority and work autonomously. They will take the initiative to assume more job responsibilities and thus feel higher psychological empowerment.

2. Literature review and hypothesis development

2.1 The mediating role of organizational identity on the relationship between leadership exclusion and employee initiative behavior

Organizational identity is a special form of social identity, indicating the degree of psychological recognition of the organization by employees. Organizational identity is defined as a strong sense of belonging and responsibility based on the identity of an insider in the organization (Mael & Ashforth, 1992). The impact of workplace rejection on organizational identity focuses on two aspects: on the one hand, workplace rejection will weaken the four basic needs of employees (Zhao & Sun, 2017). First, workplace rejection can break the social connections between employees and others, separating employees from the organization and undermining their sense of belonging (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Second, workplace rejection usually conveys the message that "the employee's ability is not recognized", resulting in the excluded employees not receiving the respect they deserve, which damages their self-esteem. Thirdly, workplace rejection often conveys a message that "the employee's abilities aren't recognized", therefore causing the excluded employee to lack the respect they deserve, thereby affecting his or her self-esteem. Workplace rejection undermines the employee's need for control by decreasing the employee's sense of control over their environment (Friedland et al., 1992). Last but not least, the phenomenon of "social death" in an organization robs excluded employees of the meaning of their existence in the organization (Solomon et al., 1991), leading to a decrease in their need for self-actualization. It can be seen, however, that workplace exclusion may weaken employees' interpersonal communication, which is important for organizational identity, and from this perspective, it can be concluded that workplace exclusion can undermine employees' organizational identity.

As a common phenomenon of unjust treatment in an organization, leadership rejection is a typical example. It refers to subordinate perceptions of negative behaviors originating directly or indirectly from superiors, whether intentional or unintentional (Hitlan & Noel, 2009). Studies have pointed out that employee identification with the organization leads to increased employee creativity and active implementation of innovative behaviors (Galvin et al., 2015). The first advantage of employees who have a high organizational identification is that they are able to think about problems from the organization's perspective and are willing to express their innovative ideas and act in the organization's interest. Second, employees' sense of belonging to the organization will motivate them to propose behaviors that are beneficial to the continuous development and growth of the organization. Thirdly, employees with a high sense of organizational identity will integrate their development and growth with the organization's growth, take the organization's

goals as their direction of action to guide them, constantly stimulate their creativity, and achieve the organization's objectives by reinforcing their innovative behaviors (Liu et al., 2011). According to the self-validation theory proposed in the 1980s, it is shown (Swann, 1997) that if an employee feels rejected in an organization, they will think that the organization does not accept them. It is difficult to form a sense of identity as an insider in an organization. As a result, the employee will seek validation from their surroundings in order to validate their negative self-concept, resulting in a low sense of organizational identity. Considering the importance of leaders to organizational performance and employee behavior, research has shown that leadership rejection negatively impacts employee organizational citizenship behavior (Chung & Yang, 2017). Overall, this paper proposes the following hypothesis:

H1: Organizational identity mediates the relationship between leadership rejection and employee proactive behavior; leadership rejection reduces employee organizational identity, which in turn reduces employee proactive behavior.

2.2 The mediating role of psychological empowerment on the relationship between leadership rejection and employee initiative behavior

Psychological empowerment is rooted in the concept of empowerment, which is the distribution of power among individuals and the enhancement of their capabilities (Barner, 1994). The concept is a psychological state arising from employees' perceptions of their organization's environment and managers' behaviors, and is directly influenced by leaders' actions (Conger, 1988; Spreitzer, 1995). Psychological empowerment is manifested through four dimensions of cognition: job meaning, self-efficacy, self-determination, and job impact (Spreitzer et al., 1995). Self-efficacy refers to perceptions of one's ability to complete work tasks (Gist, 1987); job meaning relates to perceptions of the value of work according to personal criteria (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990); organizational influence refers to perceptions of the degree to which an individual influences the goals, strategies, and outputs of an organization (Ashforth, 1989). Job autonomy refers to an individual's perceived degree of control over work decisions and ways. Spreiter argues that psychological empowerment benefits organizations in terms of product quality, service efficiency, management effectiveness, and innovation. The higher the degree of psychological empowerment, the more the organization's performance will be substantially improved, and the two show a strong positive correlation.

Supportive leadership behaviors can enhance individual psychological empowerment in organizations. Several studies have shown that leadership support is positively related to psychological empowerment (Harris et al., 2009). Leadership rejection can be defined as the behavior of a leader that undermines organizational goals and reduces organizational performance, as well as subordinate motivation and job satisfaction (Einarsen et al., 2007). Jahanzeb, a Pakistani scholar, pointed out that leadership rejection can stimulate employees' defensive and silencing behaviors through a survey of 300 service personnel in Pakistan (Jahanzeb, 2018). Accordingly, Hypothesis 2 is proposed in this paper:

H2: Psychological empowerment mediates the relationship between leadership rejection and employee proactive behavior; leadership rejection reduces psychological empowerment, which in turn reduces employee proactive behavior.

2.3 The moderating role of entitlement distance

Resource Conservation Theory suggests that employees' values influence individuals' perceptions of resource acquisition and resource depletion (Hobfoll, 1989). Power distance is the degree to which an individual accepts the unequal distribution of power in an organization. When employees have a high-power distance, they are more likely to show absolute loyalty and obedience to their managers (Farh et al., 2007). Therefore, employees with high power distance need more psychological resources such as satisfaction and self-worth, as well as more recognition and support from their supervisors under the pressure of leadership rejection, which in turn leads to

loyalty to leadership. It has been demonstrated that employees who have low power distance always communicate with their leaders with the attitude of equal participation, and leadership rejection leads to a stronger "reverse psychology" in subordinates with low power and a failure to stimulate their gratitude and emotional attachment to their leaders as a result. Accordingly, this study suggests that low power distance will exacerbate the negative consequences of leadership rejection for organizational identity.

The power distance is the degree to which people in different social classes are willing to accept an unequal distribution of power (Vidyardhi & Anand, 2014). Typically, organizations with a high-power distance have a strong concept of power and a weak concept of cooperation. In particular, a strong power conception means that an organization emphasizes the fact that power is the underlying principle of the organization and that those who have power enjoy special privileges. Liao et al. suggest that bureaucracy and officialism have led to hierarchical disparity and privilege being viewed as a badge of honor, and power and wealth are regarded as signs of success (Liao et al., 2010). Due to situational differences, employees often make different behavioral choices when faced with unfair treatment, such as complying, compromising, or quitting (Wang & Zhang, 2013). It is also necessary to explore other strategies or methods that may be employed by individuals in order to cope with the external threat of ostracism (Wu et al., 2016). When leadership rejection occurs in an environment of high-power distance, individuals are more likely to exhibit submissive and compromising behavior. It is possible to reduce negative experiences by pretending to cater to their needs. Thus, organizational identification may indirectly mediate the relationship between leadership rejection and employee proactive behavior. Based on this, Hypothesis 3 was proposed in this study:

H3: Power distance positively moderates the relationship between leadership rejection and organizational identification. That is, the higher the employee's power distance, the stronger the negative relationship between leadership rejection and organizational identification.

Furthermore, this study indicates that power distance negatively moderates the relationship between leader rejection and psychological empowerment. Particularly, employees with low power distance are more likely to challenge authority and interact with leaders on an equal basis with them (Wee et al., 2017). As a consequence, the influence resulting from leadership rejection is more likely to be recognized and obeyed by employees at this time; therefore, employees are more likely to follow the example and follow the flexibility of behavior as a result of leadership rejection, and they are more likely to be influenced and assimilated by leadership rejection. Due to this, under the influence of leadership rejection, employees with low power distance are more likely to assume responsibility, not only for completing routine tasks but also for participating in more proactive organizational affairs, and as a result, will have a greater degree of power distance. Employees with high power distance respect leadership authority. Those who receive the assistance and support of the leader will be more appreciative and agree with the actions taken by the leader. Leadership rejection, however, demonstrates that leadership behavior conveys a greater level of negativity to employees and increases their workload for them. Meanwhile, subordinates will convert leadership rejection into more fake pandering in order to reduce the level of leadership rejection, thereby weakening their psychological empowerment. Therefore, this paper proposes Hypothesis 4:

H4: Power distance negatively moderates the relationship between leadership rejection and psychological empowerment. That is, the lower the power distance of employees, the stronger the negative relationship between leadership rejection and psychological empowerment.

3. Research methodology

3.1 Research sample

In this study, a questionnaire was used to collect data on the Powercx platform. The study sample consisted of workers in the service, financial and IT industries. To avoid homogeneity, this study adopted two-time points for questionnaire distribution, and the interval between each data collection is 2 weeks. In order to ensure that the respondents fill out the questionnaire truthfully and objectively, this survey informs the respondents before the questionnaire starts that this questionnaire is anonymous participation, that the collected data and information are used for academic research, and that the submitted questionnaires are approved by the quality audit and the subjects can be rewarded with a certain amount of money. The first time point collected variables on subordinates' power distance, perceived leader rejection, and demographic characteristics of subordinates. These variables included age, gender, education, and time spent with the leader. 400 valid questionnaires were eventually returned in the first phase. The 400 respondents who completed the first questionnaire were contacted two weeks later with a second questionnaire. 328 questionnaires were ultimately retrieved, including variables such as psychological empowerment, organizational identification, and proactive behaviors, and 328 questionnaires were finally retrieved, with 295 valid questionnaires ultimately retained after 33 invalid questionnaires had been eliminated. Among them, the sample of subjects consisted of 187 females (63.34%) and 108 males (36.61%). The average age was 27.56 years old, and the average working experience was 3.87 years. In addition, when analyzing the attrition rate of the subjects, the t-test results show that there is no significant difference between the attrition subjects and the retention subjects in terms of gender ($t = 0.23, p > 0.05$), age ($t = 0.26, p > 0.05$), educational background ($t = 0.87, p > 0.05$), and the time spent with the leaders ($t = 0.53, p > 0.05$), which indicates that the attrition sample does not cause serious sample bias. There was no significant bias in the sample.

3.2 Measurement of variables

All the variables in this study are from the Maturity Scale. The scoring is based on the Likert 5-point scale, with "1" to "5" indicating a low to high level of agreement or agreement.

For the measurement of leadership rejection, a three-dimensional scale of workplace rejection was developed according to Hitlan and Noel, which are leadership rejection, coworker rejection, and verbal rejection, and the measurement items of the scale totalled 15, and leadership rejection was measured by 5 items (Hitlan & Noel, 2009). With the deepening and localization of research, leadership rejection measurement in China usually adopts the five-level scale developed by Jiang et al. With a total of 10 items, including representative items like "my supervisor ignores my existence", higher ratings indicate the more seriously the employee feels rejected by their supervisor (Jiang, Lu & Zhang 2011). The Cronbach's alpha of the scale was 0.88.

For the measurement of power distance, the scale developed by Dorfman and Howell was used, with 6 questions, such as "Superiors do not need to consult their subordinates when making decisions" (Dorfman & Howell, 1988). The coefficient value of Cronbach's α is 0.93.

For the psychological empowerment measure, the scale developed by Spreitzer (Spreitzer, 1995), which was translated and revised by Chinese scholars such as Li Chaoping, was used, with a total of 12 questions. The scale consists of four dimensions, measuring self-efficacy, work meaning, organizational influence, and work autonomy, with sample questions such as "The work I do is very meaningful to me" (LI, Tian, Shi, 2006). In this study, the coefficient value of Cronbach's α for the Psychological Empowerment Scale was 0.88.

For the organizational identity measure, the 6-item Organizational Identity Scale developed by Ashforth and Mael was used, such as "When someone blames my company, I feel like blaming myself" (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). The coefficient value of Cronbach's alpha for this scale in this study was 0.85.

For employee initiative behavior measurement, a seven-item scale developed by Frese et al. was used. The scale consists of three dimensions measuring proactive behavior at the individual, team, and organizational levels, with sample questions such as "I will take the initiative to do my job in a

better way" (Frese, 1997). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient value for the Proactive Behavior Scale in this study was 0.89.

4. Results of the study

4.1 Common method bias test

In order to avoid the homology problem, this paper adopts Harman's one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) method to test the model. The variance explained by the first common component is 35.75%, which does not exceed the specific threshold value of 40%, indicating that the model does not have serious common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

4.2 Validation factor analysis

The results of the model fit index are shown in Table 1. The specific value of each fitting index becomes worse with the reduction of the number of factors, which shows that the fit index of the five-factor model is the most effective. This indicates that there is a high degree of discriminant validity among the five variables of leadership rejection, organizational identification, psychological empowerment, rights distance and employee initiative.

Table no. 1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Model	Variables	c2	df	$\Delta c2/(\Delta df)$	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
Five-factor model	SO, PE, OI, PI, PD	204.23	138		0.95	0.96	0.07
Four-factor model	SO, PE+OI, PI, PD	251.56	141	62.82	0.91	0.93	0.08
Three-factor model	SO+PD+PI, PE, OI	283.93	149	129.33	0.88	0.86	0.09
Three-factor model	SO+OI+PI,PD,PI	331.82	157	183.25	0.81	0.83	0.11
Three-factor model	SO+PE+PI,OI,PI	493.78	189	243.18	0.77	0.79	0.13
Two-factor model	SO+OI+PE,PD+PI	572.21	164	351.44	0.65	0.73	0.15
One-factor model	SO+PE+OI+PI+PD	823.45	198	542.83	0.61	0.65	0.16

Source: own processing

SO=Supervisor Ostracism, PD=Power Distance, PE=Psychological Empowerment, OI=Organizational Identification, PI=Personal Initiative.

+ indicates that two constructs were combined into one.

**p<0.01

4.3 Descriptive statistical analysis

As shown in Table 2, Supervisor Ostracism was significantly negatively correlated with Organizational Identification ($r = -0.73$, $p < 0.01$), Supervisor Ostracism was significantly negatively correlated with Psychological Empowerment ($r = -0.54$, $p < 0.01$) showed a significant negative correlation, Organizational Identification showed a significant positive correlation with Personal Initiative ($r = 0.61$, $p < 0.01$), and Psychological Empowerment showed a significant negative correlation with Personal Initiative ($r = -0.50$, $p < 0.01$) were significantly negatively correlated, and the hypotheses of this paper were preliminarily verified.

Table no. 2 Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis

	Mean	s.d.	1	2	3	4	5
Supervisor Ostracism	12.82	3.98	1				
Organizational Identification	4.72	0.59	-0.73**	1			
Psychological Empowerment	3.52	0.83	-0.54**	0.24	1		
Personal Initiative	3.67	0.62	0.05	0.61**	-0.50**	1	
Power Distance	2.73	0.59	-0.73**	0.24**	0.12	-0.45**	1

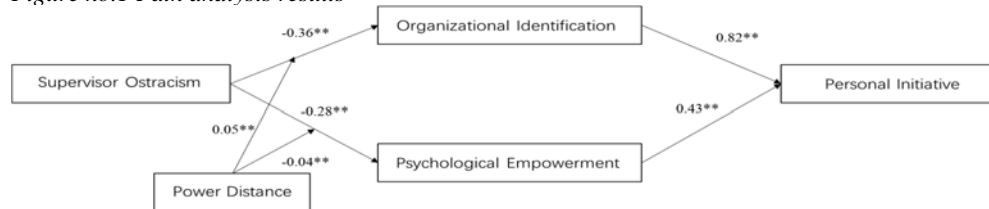
Source: own processing

295 samples. * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.05$

4.4 Hypothesis testing

The results of the path analysis are shown in Figure 1, and the path coefficients are the standardized solutions of the model.

Figure no.1 Path analysis results



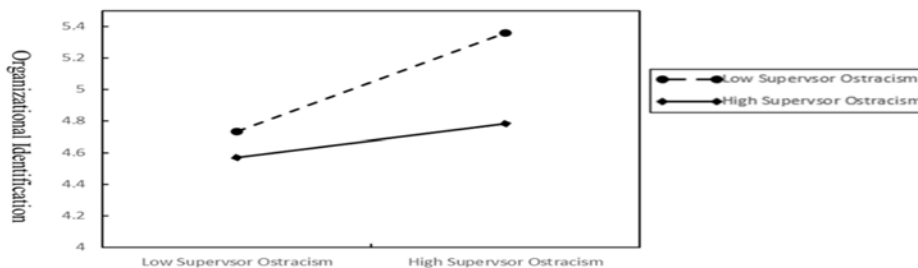
Source: own processing

H1 test results. Leadership rejection negatively affects leadership organizational identification ($\beta = -0.36, p < 0.001$), and organizational identification positively affects employee proactive behavior ($\beta = 0.82, p < 0.001$). The indirect effect value of leadership rejection affecting employee proactive behavior through organizational identification was -0.010 with a 95% confidence interval of $[0.07, 0.15]$ excluding 0. Hypothesis 1 was tested.

H2 test results. Leadership rejection negatively affects psychological empowerment ($\beta = -0.28, p < 0.05$), and psychological empowerment positively affects employees' proactive behavior ($\beta = 0.43, p < 0.001$). The indirect effect value of leadership rejection negatively affecting work engagement through psychological empowerment was -0.05 , 95% confidence interval $[-0.09, -0.01]$ excluding 0. Hypothesis 2 was tested.

H3 test results. This study found that employees' power distance moderated the relationship between leadership rejection and organizational identification ($\beta = 0.05, p < 0.001$). The results of simple slope analysis showed (Figure 2) that the positive effect of leadership rejection on organizational identification was stronger when employee power distance was higher ($\beta = 0.08, t = 4.53, p < 0.001$); and the positive effect of leadership rejection on organizational identification was weaker when employee power distance was lower ($\beta = 0.03, t = 2.17, p < 0.05$), which supported Hypothesis 3.

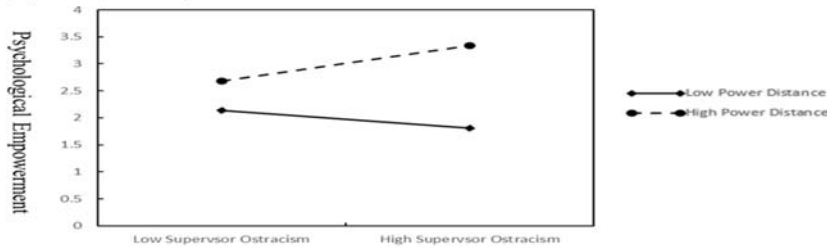
Figure no. 2 The moderating effect of power distance on the relationship between supervisor ostracism and organizational identification



Source: own processing

H4 test results. This study found that employees' power distance significantly moderated the relationship between leadership rejection and psychological empowerment ($\beta = -0.04, p < 0.001$). The results of simple slope analysis showed (Figure 3) that the negative effect of leadership rejection on employees' psychological empowerment was stronger for higher power distances of employees ($\beta = -0.08, t = -4.25, p < 0.01$), and the positive effect of leadership rejection on employees' psychological empowerment was stronger for lower power distances of employees ($\beta = 0.06, t = 5.12, p < 0.001$). The hypothesis 4 has been validated.

Figure no. 3 The moderating effect of power distance on the relationship between supervisor ostracism and psychological empowerment



Source: own processing

5. Conclusions

Based on self-expression theory, this study examined the relationship between leadership rejection and employee proactive behavior, explored the mediating role of organizational identification, psychological empowerment, and delved into the moderating role of power distance.

5.1 Theoretical significance

(1) This study enriches the research content of leadership rejection, divorces the concept of leadership rejection from the previous field of destructive leadership and workplace rejection, and differs from previous studies that generally focus on the hindering effect of leadership rejection on employees' work behavior and neglect the impact on the recipient of rejection-employees' behavioral choices, verifying the effect of leadership. Depending on the employee's behavioral strategy choice, the impact of rejection will change employee behavior, providing new ideas for future research as well as expanding the research on leadership rejection outcome variables and proactive behavior antecedent variables.

(2) This study reveals the negative effect of leadership rejection on employees and explores its effect on employees' proactive behavior using organizational identification as a mediating variable. According to the study, the higher organizational recognition the employee receives, the higher their work initiative is. This study explores the effect of leadership rejection on organizational recognition by examining that the negative factors exhibited by leadership rejection increase the burden of employees' emotional and behavioral control, reduce employees' identification with the organization, and therefore reduce employees' proactive behaviors. The findings expand and enrich the understanding of the mechanism of action between leadership rejection and employee proactive behavior.

(3) By constructing a theoretical model of "leadership behavior-employee proactive behavior", the study finds that organizational identity and psychological empowerment mediate the relationship between leadership rejection and employee proactive behavior, thus more effectively revealing the inner mechanism of leadership rejection's influence on employee proactive behavior, enriching the study of the mediating variables between the two, and providing a valuable theoretical framework for deeply understanding and grasping the nature of individual behavior. The study provides a valuable theoretical framework for understanding and grasping the nature of individual behavioral influence.

(4) Considering the differences in individual abilities of different employees, this paper broadens the boundary exploration of the relationship between leadership rejection, organizational identification and psychological empowerment through the moderating variable of power distance. To a certain extent, it answers the key question of "how to influence employees psychologically when encountering leadership rejection". This study's exploration of the boundary conditions between leadership rejection, organizational identity, and psychological empowerment makes conclusions more robust and explicatory. It provides an important basis for scientifically predicting the consequences of leadership rejection.

5.2 Practical implications

The conclusion of this paper shows that in the Chinese workplace culture situation that emphasizes superiority and inferiority, hierarchical order, leadership rejection may lead to more negative behavioral tendencies of employees, and discourage employees from taking the initiative to work, which indicates that leadership rejection is not a reasonable means of motivation, and the conclusion of the study has certain guiding significance for management practice:

Improve the system of employee rights and interests related to the institutional protection system. The organization should take measures to solve the problem of leadership rejection when necessary. It is intended to prevent abuse of the leader's "power of life and death" in order to ensure the legitimate rights and interests of employees and the orderly development of the organization as a whole. For example, strictly implement supervision and punishment measures for leadership rejection, and at the same time establish a complete complaint and supervision mechanism so as to strengthen the sense of organizational support of employees, weaken the role of leaders as "organizational agents", and avoid the emergence of leadership rejection at the system level.

(2) Focus on creating a harmonious and open cultural atmosphere. The daily management of the enterprise should focus on caring for the learning, life and work status of the employees, provide emotional, rights and interests, information and resource support for the employees, and promote communication and collaboration within the organization, so as to avoid the decline of the degree of organizational identity of the employees, and, at the same time, encourage employees to take initiative as a way to promote the long-term development of the organization.

(3) Adopt different measures to cope with different employee types. For employees with low power distance, managers should weaken the leader's rejection of subordinates so as to obtain the subordinate's organizational identity and also to improve the staff's ability to work with higher enthusiasm. In order to reduce the uncertainty of the organization caused by leadership rejection, leaders should communicate with employees more frequently, provide timely feedback on tasks, and alleviate the uncertainty of the organization caused by low power distance.

5.3 Research limitations and prospects

Although this study contributes to the field of leadership exclusion, it still has some shortcomings. First, although this study used a two-time point questionnaire design to obtain data on the relevant variables at different time points, all the data relied on self-reporting, which could not completely exclude the effect of common variance bias, and future research could use methods such as multi-temporal and multi-subjective measurements to obtain data on the variables and improve the accuracy of the findings. Second, this study only examined the effect of leadership rejection on employees' work engagement. Future research could consider the study of leadership rejection on other employee behaviors or leaders' own well-being. Finally, this study only examined the moderating effect of power distance. However, there may be other moderating variables, such as employees' integration complexity, cognitive flexibility, etc., to dig deeper into the boundary conditions affecting leadership rejection.

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