



The Impact of Leader Self-disclosure on Employee Performance: The Mediating Role of Interpersonal Attraction

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Abstract. The intricate dynamics between leader behaviors, interpersonal relationships, and employee performance in organizational settings are of paramount importance, influencing a multitude of organizational outcomes. This research navigates through the nuanced pathways linking leader self-disclosure, interpersonal attraction, and employee performance utilizing a sample of 810 participants. Employing the PROCESS Model 4 for mediation analysis, this study elucidates that leader self-disclosure significantly predicts interpersonal attraction, explaining 29.24% of its variance. However, while leader self-disclosure did not directly impact employee performance, an indirect effect was apparent through interpersonal attraction, showcasing the subtle, yet influential, undercurrents of relational dynamics in organizational milieus. The nuanced findings hold pivotal implications for leadership practices, emphasizing the salient role of fostering positive interpersonal dynamics to potentially bolster employee performance, albeit indirectly.

Keywords: Leader Self-Disclosure, Interpersonal Attraction, Employee Performance, Mediation Analysis, Organizational Behavior

1 Introduction

Leadership has perennially been conceived as a pivotal force, propelling organizational entities towards envisioned goals while fostering a congenial milieu that galvanizes employee engagement and performance. In an era permeated by swift organizational and technological transformations, the architecture of leader-employee relationships has emerged as a domain warranting scrupulous exploration. The expansive umbrella of leadership dynamics is significantly nuanced by the leader's ability to adroitly harness self-disclosure, thus precipitating a spectrum of outcomes within the organizational context.

Leader self-disclosure, delineated as the intentional revelation of personal, often intimate, information to subordinates, has burgeoned as a topic eliciting considerable scholarly intrigue. Existing literature portrays a multifaceted tableau of this dynamic, signaling that leader self-disclosure can instantiate a sense of authenticity and trust

among subordinates [1]. Additionally, this managerial trait could potentially dismantle hierarchical rigidity, fostering a climate where open communication and mutual respect burgeon [2].

Interwoven with the tapestry of leader self-disclosure is the nuanced role of interpersonal attraction, encompassing an amalgam of likability, respect, and professional admiration, which potentially mediates the relationship between leadership behaviors and employee outcomes. The hypothesis that interpersonal attraction acts as a conduit through which leader self-disclosure impacts employee performance rests on the premise that leaders who adeptly navigate the realms of self-disclosure forge deeper, more genuine connections with their subordinates. These robust connections, suffused with interpersonal attraction, potentially fuel enhanced employee performance by bolstering motivation, commitment, and alignment with organizational objectives [3].

Translating into the realm of empirical investigations, certain studies have underlined that leaders who judiciously employ self-disclosure, thereby becoming more relatable and authentic in the eyes of their subordinates, engender a milieu where interpersonal attraction is heightened [4]. This, in turn, lubricates the cogs of positive behavioral outcomes, such as augmented performance and elevated levels of organizational citizenship behavior [5,6,7].

This paper posits that interpersonal attraction mediates the relationship between leader self-disclosure and employee performance. Grounded in the aforementioned theoretical framework and empirical evidences, the hypothesis foregrounds that elevated levels of leader self-disclosure enhance interpersonal attraction, which in turn, propels employee performance by providing a supportive, trust-enriched, and motivationally affluent organizational environment.

2 Method

2.1 Participants

The present study was conducted among 810 employees, purposively sampled from six diverse companies located in the southwestern region of China.

2.2 Procedure

The study was conducted in adherence to ethical standards, guaranteeing participant confidentiality and voluntary participation. After obtaining informed consent, participants were briefed about the study, followed by the administration of a set of questionnaires. The responses were acquired anonymously to foster candor and precision in the provided data, ensuring an uncompromised quality of insights.

2.3 Measures

Leader Self-Disclosure:

Assessed using the Leader Self-Disclosure Scale (LSDS), the measure probes into participants' perceptions of their leaders' communicative transparency, including the sharing of personal experiences, emotions, and thoughts in the workplace.

Interpersonal Attraction.

This variable was gauged through the Interpersonal Attraction Scale (IAS), which evaluates the degree to which employees feel drawn towards their leaders, encompassing dimensions like social, task, and physical attraction [8].

Employee Performance.

Employing the Job Performance Scale (JPS), employee performance was assessed, considering various facets including task proficiency, adaptability, and contextual performance, while ensuring a balanced appraisal of employees' work outcomes.

2.4 Statistical analysis

The collected data were analyzed using PROCESS Model 4 to delineate the mediating role of interpersonal attraction in the relationship between leader self-disclosure and employee performance. Ethical approval was secured from an institutional review board, and all processes adhered to the stipulated ethical guidelines and data protection protocols.

3 Result

Exploring the complex relationships between Leader Self-Disclosure (X), Interpersonal Attraction (M), and Employee Performance (Y1) is pivotal for organizational dynamics research. As Table 1 shown.

Table 1. Parameters of each model

Predictor	Outcome	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-value	p-value	LLCI	ULCI
X	Y1	-.1266	.0928	-1.3638	.1730	-.3088	.0556
M	Y1	.4174	.1736	2.4035	.0165	.0765	.7582
X	M	.2890	.0158	18.2748	.0000	.2580	.3201

3.1 Influence of Leader Self-Disclosure on Interpersonal Attraction

A critical examination of Leader Self-Disclosure's (X) influence on Interpersonal Attraction (M) reveals a statistically significant positive relationship (coefficient = .2890,

$p < .0000$), accounting for approximately 29.24% of the variability in Interpersonal Attraction. This substantial relationship underscores that Leader Self-Disclosure permeates and significantly shapes Interpersonal Attraction among employees.

3.2 Mediation Effect of Interpersonal Attraction on Employee Performance

Delving into mediation analysis, Interpersonal Attraction (M) significantly influences Employee Performance (Y1) (coefficient = .4174, $p = .0165$). However, the non-significant relationship between Leader Self-Disclosure and Employee Performance (coefficient = -.1266, $p = .1730$) hints at a potential full mediation effect. Additionally, the indirect effect of Leader Self-Disclosure on Employee Performance, through Interpersonal Attraction, is statistically significant (Effect = .1206), further reinforcing the mediating role of Interpersonal Attraction, albeit warranting a prudent interpretation due to the modest R-squared value in the regression model for Employee Performance (.0071).

3.3 Consideration of Effect Sizes and Ratios

Despite statistically significant evidence of mediation, the nuanced understanding through effect sizes and ratios, specifically the partially standardized indirect effect of .0069 and a completely standardized indirect effect of .0542, suggest a subtle practical impact of the mediation. This necessitates cautious interpretation and beckons further exploration into other potential mediating variables or pathways.

4 Discussion

Principal Findings and Theoretical Implications

The presented analyses were conducted to elucidate the potential mediating role of interpersonal attraction in the relationship between leader self-disclosure and employee performance. Consistent with some theoretical postulates in organizational psychology, leader self-disclosure significantly predicted interpersonal attraction, echoing the literature that underscores the vital role of vulnerability and openness in leader-follower dynamics [1]. The finding that 29.24% of the variability in interpersonal attraction can be attributed to leader self-disclosure underscores the pivotal role leader vulnerability plays in shaping workplace interpersonal dynamics.

Surprisingly, the direct impact of leader self-disclosure on employee performance was not substantiated in the present study, a finding that diverges from the suppositions that leadership transparency directly engenders enhanced subordinate performance [9]. The lack of direct effect might be attributed to varying organizational cultures, differing leader-follower expectations, or the presence of other overriding contextual factors that were not accounted for in the current model.

4.1 Mediation Insight and Practical Implications

Notwithstanding, the data revealed a nuanced narrative through the lens of mediation, where the influence of leader self-disclosure on employee performance was indeed transmitted through the conduit of interpersonal attraction, albeit with modest effect sizes. While leader self-disclosure did not directly enhance employee performance, it fostered an environment of interpersonal attraction that, in turn, had a positive, albeit mild, association with performance outcomes.

The practical implications of these findings could be far-reaching, shedding light on the underpinnings of effective leadership in organizational contexts. Leaders might utilize self-disclosure judiciously, balancing the imperative of vulnerability with the maintenance of an authoritative demeanor, thereby cultivating an atmosphere where subordinates are interpersonally attracted, engaged, and, thus, potentially more productive.

4.2 Limitations and Future Research

Despite the innovative insights offered, a few limitations punctuate the findings. The model explained a modest portion of the variance in employee performance, suggesting that other pertinent variables (e.g., psychological safety, trust, organizational culture) might also intertwine within this complex paradigm. Moreover, the non-significant direct effect of leader self-disclosure on performance warrants further exploration to delineate whether this reflects a universal pattern or is contextually bounded.

Moving ahead, future research could delve deeper into exploring alternative mediators or even moderators that might influence the leader self-disclosure–employee performance nexus. A multidimensional approach, possibly exploring the qualitative facets through interviews or case studies, could further illuminate the nuanced ways through which leader self-disclosure permeates the organizational tapestry.

5 Conclusion

In conclusion, the mediation analysis has imparted vital insights, gently peeling back the layers of complexity that intertwine leadership practices, interpersonal dynamics, and employee outcomes within organizational contexts. While leader self-disclosure was not directly associated with enhanced employee performance, it indirectly related through its impact on interpersonal attraction, offering a glimpse into the nuanced relational dynamics that mold the organizational milieu. These findings provide a fertile ground upon which future research may cultivate a richer understanding of the leader-follower dynamic, ultimately aiming to enhance organizational efficacy and wellbeing.

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