Research Status of Authentic Leadership Theory in the Field of Nursing Management

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Abstract: This paper reviews the philosophical basis of authentic leadership theory and the key characteristics of authentic leadership under the background of medical reform, summarizes the concepts, dimensions and measurement tools of authentic leadership, reviews the application status of real leadership theory in the field of nursing management, and puts forward a prospect, aiming to provide new ideas and theoretical references for nursing managers to optimize leadership behavior.

Keywords: Authentic Leadership; Nursing Management; Leadership Behavior

Introduction

With the deepening of medical reform, the continuous expansion of the scope of nursing work, the increasing level of nursing knowledge and technology, and the diversification of nursing staff's thinking, nursing management is facing great challenges today. The words and actions of nursing managers affect the work attitude, behavior, and quality of care of nursing staff [1]. According to Avolio and Gardner, authentic leadership is a relatively new style of relational leadership designed to help people find meaning in their work and encourage trust, optimistic and transparent relationships, and inclusive, healthy work environments that influence employee performance and organizational outcomes[2]. As a new leadership theory, real leadership has become a research hotspot in management and psychology, but it is relatively lacking in the field of nursing.

1. Authentic leadership theory

1.1 The conceptual and philosophical foundations of authentic leadership

Truth, defined as "the quality of truth," the concept of the real type originated from the ancient Greek philosopher Socrates, who taught the importance of knowing oneself and being true to oneself, requiring self-awareness and the ability to act according to one's true self. Hatchell [3] points out that authenticity in nursing means living in the moment, being authentic to oneself and having the characteristics of display, in how individuals support others and what is right for them.

Authentic leadership is an emerging leadership style rooted in humanism, which centers on the personal experience of individuals. Humanism places more emphasis on qualities such as self-actualization and self-worth. Another major feature of humanism is the help of others with personal development and the realization of what humanists call self-actualization. The theory of "authentic leadership" is a complex theory that applies the principles of authenticity and humanism to leadership theory and believes that being true to oneself produces more positive outcomes. Authentic leadership theory can be used in conjunction with any other leadership style and have a significant positive impact on the workplace [4].

1.2 Structure and characteristics of authentic leadership

The four key elements of authentic leadership are:balanced approach,transparency in relationships, internalizing ethical perspectivesand self-awareness, and building a healthier work environment. Authentic leadership theory identifies 5 key characteristics of authentic leadership: the ability to reason ethically,lead attentively, maintain relationships, be disciplined,and have aclear purpose. Without the development of these important characteristics, authenticity cannot exist. For a true leader, self-discipline is essential and must be able to overcome pressures thatcan influence judgment or lead to inconsistent behavior, and failure to be consistent can ultimately lead to distrust and disrespect. Thebehavior of authentic leaders is rooted in theirpositive moral and ethical values [1]. Detached leadership styles won't succeed in the 21st century, and today's employees demand more personal relationships with leaders before they can dedicate themselves to their work.

2. Measurement tools for true leadership

For authentic leaders, a variety of measurement tools, such as personality tests, exist to help leaders become more self-aware and create a personal leadership style. There is also a one-on-one interview format, most commonly a scale measurement. Representative ones include the evidence-based Authentic Leadership Questionnaire developed by Avolio et al.[5], the Authentic Leadership Inventory (ALI) of Neider and Schriesheim[6], and the Authentic Leadership Self-Assessment Questionnaire based on a sample of people. ALSAQ-P)[7], A shortened version of an 8-item scale [8], on the whole, the scales developed by domestic scholars are mostly based on the theoretical research of previous foreign experts, and there is no substantial change in the nature of measurement.

3. Research on authentic leadership theory in the field of nursing management

3.1 Study of antecedent variables

What antecedents are relevant to authentic leadership? Ninety-one retrospective studies found that: few studies explored the relationship between antecedents and true leadership, and a large number of cross-sectional studies limited the interpretation of causality; Through research, some scholars have proposed that personal life experience, life events have a role in real leadership, and confirmed that the external environment is also one of the influencing factors. Early literature suggests that humble personality has a positive effect on authentic leadership behavior, and overall there is a lack of large, long-term cohort studies demonstrating factors influencing authentic leadership [9].

3.2 Mediation variable research

In the included study, there were 21 mediating factors between true leadership and 25 different outcome variables. It is roughly attributed to personal factors, organizational environmental factors. (1) Personal factors: Structural empowerment was the most commonly tested mediating factor, linking authentic leadership to 7 different outcomes, such as job satisfaction, job performance, burnout, social capital, staffing shortages, work-life disruptions, and professional practice environment. Burnout and emotional exhaustion are important mediators between authentic leadership and job satisfaction and intention to leave. Empowerment has a partial mediating role in the relationship between the true leadership of the head nurse and the job satisfaction of nurses, and has a perfect mediating role in the relationship between the true leadership of the head nurse and nursing performance [10]. (2) Organizational environmental factors: Organizational identity acts as a mediator between state-owned enterprises, true leadership, Christian religious beliefs, and immoral organizational behavior [11]. Organizational commitment [12] and perceived organizational support [13] play a part-mediating role in the influence of honest leadership of nurse managers on nurses' advocacy behavior. Perception of organizational support, innovation atmosphere,

and work atmosphere has shown multiple mediations between real leadership and nurse mindfulness, creativity, work performance, and other outcomes in multiple studies. Honest leadership of head nurses can influence nurses' work engagement and willingness to stay through the mediating role of nursing organizational culture.

3.3 Study of outcome variables

3.3.1 Healthcare Provider Results

Personal psychological state: Psychological capital includes optimism, identity includes personal and social/organizational identity, trust includes trust in leaders, organizations, or colleagues, and resilience, all of which reflect an individual's psychological state.

Work attitude and behavior: including job satisfaction, career satisfaction, intention to leave, work engagement, work adaptation level, and work restrictions. Authentic leadership in nurses' work environments is important in reducing the causes of faulty care, improving perception of a safe atmosphere, and job satisfaction.

Performance: including work performance, knowledge sharing, creativity, innovative behavior, advice behavior, scientific research ability, organizational citizenship behavior, and behavioral goal achievement. Authentic leadership styles have a positive impact on employees' environmental organizational citizenship behavior (OCBE). Authentic leaders engage employees and help them develop, and for the organization, they increase productivity, creativity, and financial returns [14]. Authentic leadership by head nurses is positively correlated with empowerment, job satisfaction, and nursing performance. Authentic leadership is the precursor to team initiative, which has an impact on productivity and team members' well-being, and promotes team flourishing and performance.

3.3.2 Patient outcomes

Authentic leadership and a healthy work environment help staff engage and improve patient outcomes. The four dimensions of authentic leadership, self-awareness, internalized ethical perspectives, balanced approach, and relationship transparency, are positively correlated with the quality of patient care, and authentic leadership can positively predict the quality of patient care [15]. There is a strong relationship between authentic leadership, employee engagement, and reduced burnout. Burnout is associated with absenteeism, which affects the quality of patient care [16]. Developing and supporting authentic care managers is important for patient outcomes, nurses and their organizations, and occupational and healthcare [17]. There is a moderate correlation between authentic leadership and a healthy work environment, which contributes to staff engagement and improved patient outcomes [18]. Sincere leadership can help mitigate the negative impact of ICU nurses on work quality under high work pressure.

4. Summary

As a new leadership style, the core content of authentic leadership is a positive and positive form of leadership. This theory advocates the discovery and development of positive psychological abilities of leaders and their subordinates. Some scholars pointed out that the core content of authentic leadership coincides with employees' demands for leaders. Therefore, from the perspective of the hospital, in the process of selecting and training nursing managers, the current nursing managers can be cultivated by combining the real leadership theory, the current situation of the hospital and the feelings and needs of nurses. When nurses perceive their leadership as authentic, open, honest, and willing to invite them to participate in decision-making, they respond positively to their work and trust their leadership.

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