A Review of the Outcome Variables in the Empirical Study of Authentic Leadership in China

Xueqiang Chen

School of Economics and Management, Yanbian University, Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture, China

cxq-999@163.com

Abstract: authentic leadership is a leadership behavior model using positive psychological ability and establishing a positive ethical environment, and includes four dimensions self-awareness, internalized morality, balance processing and relationship transparency. As the definition of authentic leadership becomes more and more clear and reliable measuring tools are developed, the research on the result variables of authentic leadership in China Abstracts many scholars. This paper reviews the development of definition of authentic leadership and the empirical researches of result variables of it in China, concludes the differences and similarities of these studies and predicts the development of authentic leadership researches in the future.

1. Introduction

In recent years, the rate of material wealth accumulation has been accelerating, but at the same time, some corporate management scandals have frequently exploded, such as product quality defects, accounting fraud and so on, which have hurt the public's confidence in enterprises and products. And the moral and ethical requirements on managers have gradually become a consensus in the theoretical and practical circles. Authentic leadership theory gets more and more attention.

2. The Definition of Authentic Leadership

Western scholars mainly define authentic leadership from two angles, the process and the composition structure. Burns was the first to use the term authentic leadership, emphasizing the moral agent role that leaders exhibit in the process of leading their subordinates, under the influence of a value-based approach. Luthans and Avolio similarly view authentic leadership as a process in which leaders and subordinates adopt positive behaviors of self-awareness and self-regulation to achieve positive self-development under the effect of positive psychological abilities and highly developed organizational situations.[1]

With the deepening of the research, scholars began to pay attention to the formation of authentic leadership. Ilies believed that authentic leadership included four dimensions: self-awareness, unbiased processing, ethical behaviour/action, and authentic relational orientation.[2]Studies had shown that it was impossible for individuals being completely objective when processing information related to themselves. Therefore, Gardner used balance processing instead of unbiased information processing. Balanced processing was an information processor that can consider and understand others. He described several conspicuous features linked to the self-regulation process of authenticity, including internalization norms, information balance processing, relationship transparency, and authentic behavior.[3] Walumbwa defined authentic leadership as "a leadership behavior model that leverages and promotes positive psychological ability and a positive ethical environment, which helps leaders and their followers to form a higher level of self-awareness, internalize morality, and achieve balanced information processing and relationship transparency in their work ".[4]This definition is widely accepted and serves as the theoretical basis for Walumbwa's development of authentic leadership level measurement tools. So far, the definition of authentic

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leadership has been basically clear, and scholars have carried out various studies on this basis, such as the measurement of authentic leadership and the antecedent variables, which constantly enrich the theoretical framework of authentic leadership.

3. The Result Variable of Authentic Leadership

In China, the result variable of authentic leadership has attracted a lot of scholars. With the source of literature limited to periodicals and a topic field of " authentic leadership", there is a total of 337 results, but only a part is Chinese(185), which has 42 from core journals and 6 from CSSCI in CNKI.net. Regardless of research in the administrative field, there are 11 on the authentic leadership results variables, which mainly focus on nursing management(6), primary and secondary education management(3),and business management(2).

The author summarizes the survey subjects, statistical methods, outcome variables, and findings of the collected literature, as shown in the table1. Researches in nursing management found that authentic leadership had positive effective on nurses' work commitment, retention willingness, goal achievement, innovation behavior and advice behavior. Researches in education management found that authentic leadership was positively correlated with teachers' work commitment and knowledge sharing behavior, and negatively related to job burnout. The research in enterprise management found that authentic leadership behavior of small and medium-sized enterprises positively affected the enterprise performance and corporate reputation, and was closely related to the related performance.

Table 1 Summary of Literature on the Study on the Variables of Integrity Leadership Results[5]- [15]

Research areas	Research literature	Subjects of investigation	Statistical methods	Outcome variables	Conclusion
Nursing management	Zhangjie et al .2015	208 nurses in a Grade 3A hospital in Beijing	Description statistics, correlation analysis, hierarchical regression analysis	Work input	Positive impact
	Zhangjie et al .2016	605 nurses from 4 level 3 hospitals and 1 level 2 hospital in Beijing	Describe statistics, correlation analysis	Work input	Positive impact
	Zhengyue, et al .2017	Clinical Nurses in 3 Grade 3A Hospitals in Harbin	Description statistics, correlation analysis, hierarchical regression analysis	willingness to remain	Negative effects
	Huangqiong et al .2019	386 Nurses in 4 General Hospitals in Wuhan	Description statistics, correlation analysis, hierarchical regression analysis	Target achievement	Positive impact
	Lumeng et al .2019	909 registered nurses in 7 Grade 3A General Hospitals in Shandong Province	Description statistics, correlation analysis, structural equation analysis	Innovative behaviour	Positive impact
	Shiqing Liu et al .2019	327 nurses in 3 third Class A hospitals	Description statistics, correlation analysis, structural equation analysis, Bootstrap method	Prophecy	Positive impact
Education management	Zhihua Liu et al .2010	Teachers in 5 schools in Zhejiang province	Describe statistics, exploratory factor analysis, typical correlation analysis, confirmatory factor analysis	Work input	Positive impact
	Dongdong Gao et al .2014	Primary and secondary school teachers in three cities in Henan Province	Describe statistics, correlation analysis, hierarchical regression analysis	Knowledge sharing	Positive impact

	Jinping Mao et al .2016	Some primary and secondary school teachers in Tianjin, Baoding, Changsha, Zhuzhou and Wuxi	descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, exploratory factor analysis	Job burnout	Negative effects
Enterprise management	Weifeng et al .2019,	CEOs and executives from 150 companies in Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai	Description statistics, hierarchical regression analysis, Bootstrap method	Corporate performance, corporate reputation	Positive impact
	Shunkun Yu et al .2014	Grass-roots managers and general staff of 7 enterprises in Zhejiang, Jiangsu and Jiangxi provinces	Stepwise regression analysis	Associated performance	Positive impact

4. Summary and Comparison of Literature

These studies mainly have 2 different points.

1) The subjects of studies. The survey subjects in the three categories ,as shown in Table 1, were all internal personnel in various fields. The survey teams in nursing management were the hospital nurses, the field of education management was the teacher, and the field of enterprise management was the management staff and the general staff.

2) Authenticity level measurement tools. The questionnaire used to measure the authentic leadership level in the field of nursing management and enterprise management was developed by Walumbwa (ALQ). In the field of education management, Mao's research was still based on a scale developed by Walumbwa but revised by Qiuju Huang. Zhihua Liu and Dongdong Gao mainly referred to Hengxiao Xie's questionnaire.

There also are two similarities.

1) Statistical methods. Although there were differences in the specific operation, but the overall used the method of describing statistics, correlation analysis and regression analysis, selecting the scale to measure the level of authenticity and other variables data, using statistical software to analyze and test, and exploring the relationship between them.

2) The outcome variables. The outcome variables obtained from the study did not belong to a particular field. For example, work engagement was discussed in many areas. However, the results were from surveys by specific groups, and whether it can be extended to other areas needed to be tested in practice.

5. Conclusions

The authentic behavior displayed by the leader will affect the cognition and attitude of the subordinates, and then affect the performance. However, cognition, attitude and performance are broad concepts. The domestic empirical research takes the authentic leadership as the independent variable, and the dependent variable is selected from the problem or the important behaviors needed to be solved urgently in practice. They impel these broad concepts to the concrete through the research.

It is expected that the authentic leadership theory will make progress in two aspects in China in the future. First, the number of research on the improvement of the performance mechanism of the authentic leadership in the field of enterprise management is not much, and more research is needed. Secondly, although Jensen and other scholars have made the study of the antecedent variables of authentic leadership, but this aspect of research is few. How to develop and train leaders to form authentic leadership behavior needs more exploration.

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