

The outline of research progress of authentic leadership's influence on subordinate's work satisfaction

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Abstract: The work attitude of employees is one of the primary concern of human resources management researchers, competition among enterprises is mainly about human capital, hence, research on authentic leadership and subordinate's work satisfaction is very important. There are many researches about this field. This article has summarized domestic and foreign research progress of authentic leadership and subordinate's work satisfaction.

Key words: authentic leadership; work satisfaction; research progress

1. Theory research on authentic leadership

Since the summit forum meeting of authentic leadership in Nebraska in 2004, there are more and more researches on authentic leadership, which produced some self theories of authentic leadership. There are mainly three dimensions about authentic leadership around the world as following:

- (1) Research on concept and essence of authentic leadership;
- (2) Research on structure and dimensions of authentic leadership;
- (3) Research on how it works and behavior development of authentic leadership, including prior valuable, intervening valuable, moderating valuable and outcome valuable.

1.1 Definition of authentic leadership

With retrospection on documents about authentic leadership recent years, the author found that all definitions about authentic leadership focus on several basic dimensions.

Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May and Walumbwa (2005) integrated their different definitions about authentic leadership into the development model of authentic leaders and their subordinate. The core of the model is self-examination and self-regulation leadership factors. They found several important features connected with real self-regulation process, including self-adjustment, balance information processing, relationship transparency and authentic behaviors. The different concept of Ilies, et al (2005) is that the model is more influenced by authentic leadership definition of Kernis's (2003). Besides, Avolio and Gardner (2005), Luthans and Avolio (2003) and May, et al (2003) maintain the opinion that authentic leadership includes active morality perspective.

Although the above definitions have different perspectives and contents, it is not hard for us to find a common point from them: Authentic leadership stresses on the unity of leaders' inside and outside characters, that is, their behavior theory and declaration theory are consistent. Authentic leaders should build up their subordinate's trust by such active behaviors, further enhance subordinate's attitude and behaviors change. In this article, the author takes Walumbwa's definition.

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1.2 Structure of authentic leadership

Scholars such as Kernis, Ilies and Gardner have researched about structure of authentic leadership. Of them, the concept of Ilies (2005) is different, which based on authentic theory of Kernis (2003), established a four-dimension model of authentic leadership consisting of self-awareness, unbiased processing, authentic behaviors and direction of authentic relationship. While Gardner (2005) group try to integrate the structures of authentic leadership, their model emphasizes on self-awareness and self-adjustment. As a component of authentic leadership, self-awareness refers to individual's characteristics, values, motivation, emotion and awareness and trust on cognition, while self-adjustment includes elements such as inner adjustment, balance information processing, relationship transparency and authentic behaviors.

The above theory built up the structure of authentic leadership, but because of lack of evidence research support, it wasn't able to get consistent support from scholars (HAN, 2008). Walumbwa (2008) group further integrated the researches of Gardner (2005) and Ilies (2005), and proposed relevant authentic leadership structure model based on certain assumption, and then conducted evidence research. They divided authentic leadership into four dimensions, including: self-awareness, relationship transparency, balance information processing and inner morality perspective. Of them, self-awareness refers to people's understanding about the origin and meaning of the world and the influence of the understanding on their self-awareness as time goes on. Meanwhile, it refers to their self advantages and disadvantages, their understanding about multi-level essence, including expecting to know more about themselves and feel their influence on others through disclosing themselves to others. Relationship transparency refers to show their true feelings before others without any false or secrete, and increase mutual trust through behaviors such as sharing information openly and expressing their true thoughts and feelings. Balance information processing refers to that leaders can analyze objectively all relevant statistics before they make any decision. About inner morality perspective, inner and integrated self-adjustment, such self-adjustment is not guided by a group, organization or society, but by inner moral standards and values. Thus, the decisions and behaviors made by leaders are consistent with their inner values.

Compared with the induction and deduction methods of Ilies and Gardner, we can see that the structure of authentic leadership of Walumbwa obtained in evidence that manner has better honor, higher efficiency and more scientific.

2. Theory of work satisfaction

2.1 Definition of work satisfaction

The formal research on work satisfaction is originated from the book *Work satisfaction* by Hoppock (1935), who initially proposed the concept of work satisfaction with the thoughts that work satisfaction is workers satisfactory feeling about environment both at mental and physical aspects, we can also think it as workers' subjective response to their work situations, since then, work satisfaction became the subject discussed by many scholars.

When researching work satisfaction, scholars take different theory frames because of their different subjects, so there are different kinds of definitions about work satisfaction, which are usually summarized as the following three kinds of definitions:

(1) Overall satisfaction definition

The definition explained work satisfaction in common features, which lies in the general attitude of workers

to their work environment. The feature of the definition is that work satisfaction is thought as a single concept without connecting with work satisfaction aspects, reasons and process of its form. Vroom (1976) thinks that work satisfaction is a general term expressing feeling and emotive response of roles of job itself in an organization.

(2) Expectation discrepancy definition

The definition explains degree of work satisfaction as the difference between actual values obtained by individuals and expected values which individuals should obtain in a particular work environment, which is defined as need deficiency by XU (1981). For example, Porter and Lawlar (1974) thinks the degree of individual work satisfaction is determined by difference between the actual payment they obtained and their expected payment which they should obtain in a particular work environment, the difference is less, the degree of satisfaction is better, and vice versa. CAI (1993) thinks the difference between expectation discrepancy definition and fair theory is that, fair theory thinks individual's work satisfaction degree lies on the proportion of his, what so called fair and unfair is determined by the devotion and payment comparison between the individual and others; while expectation discrepancy definition puts attachment on individual's expectation, that is individuals' subjective decision, without comparison with others.

(3) Frame of reference definition

The definition explains work satisfaction as the outcome that individuals explain work features based on certain reference frame. XU (1981) calls it as facet definition or job facet satisfaction, emphasis on workers' emotional response to their work. CAI (1993) points out that, scholars with this kind of definition think, objective features in organization or work situations are not most important factors influencing people's attitude and behaviors, and people's subjective awareness and explanation to the objective features are most important factors, while the awareness and explanations are influenced by individuals' self reference frame.

Based on the above research on work satisfaction definitions, this article believes that the proper definition on work satisfaction should refer to the psychological status expressed in work itself and its relevant aspects during their work time in an organization, including work environment, work status, work style, work stress and personnel relationship, etc.

2.2 Factors influencing on work satisfaction

The different research backgrounds and aims of researchers make different perspectives. Therefore, different researchers have their different opinions as to factors influencing work satisfaction. Table 1 is the discussion on factors influencing work satisfaction of relevant scholars.

Because of plenty of factors influencing on work satisfaction, there isn't any complete model up to now which can include all possible relevant factors. During the past decades, lots of foreign research results point out various factors and their influences on work satisfaction.

2.3 Facet and survey of work satisfaction

Work satisfaction is divided into single facet and multi-facet ones. What as so called single facet means work satisfaction as an overall level without division of various facets. Survey questions are general, for example: Do you like your job? Adler (1985) group judge people's work satisfaction according to people's yes/no degree about their questions. Such as: "I feel happy in my work". "I seldom feel unsatisfactory at my job". As a kind of attitude, the core feature of work satisfaction is its evaluation function. Any attitude contains favorable or unfavorable evaluations about its referring matters; such evaluation consists of cognition (objective judgments) and emotion (feelings about evaluated things). Hence, work satisfaction can be divided into emotional satisfaction and cognition satisfaction.

Table 1 Relevant factors influencing work satisfaction

| Origins | Influencing factors |
|---|---|
| Vroom (1962) | Organization itself, promotion, job description, direct supervisor, payment, work environment, work partners |
| Fournet, Distefano, Prver (1966) | Individual features factors: age, education, intelligence, sex, occupational level; Work features factors: organization and management, supervision from leaders, social environment, communication, work safety, work monotonicity, wage |
| Herzberg (1968) | achievement, acknowledge, job itself, responsibility, promotion, growing possibility, policy and management, leaders, relationship with leaders, working conditions, salary, colleague relationship, subordinate relationship, private life, status, job security |
| Smith, Hulin & Kendall (1969) | Job itself, wage, promotion, supervisor, work partners |
| Aldrefer (1972) | Life level: wage, benefits, safety, relationship level, colleagues, supervisor; customer growing level: growing |
| Locke (1973) | Job itself, work payment, work environment, actor itself, other people inside or outside the company |
| Hall & Mansneld (1975) | Self-esteem, self-fulfillment, independence, safety, subordination |
| Maanen & Katz (1976) | Job characteristics, workers mutual relationship, organization policies, unity satisfaction |
| Klinger (1983) | Stable employment, promotion opportunity, satisfactory payment |
| Cron & Slocum (1986) | work, supervision, payment, promotion, work colleagues |
| Robbins (1991) | Intelligence, challenging work, fair bonus, support of work conditions, support of colleagues, jobs suitable for individual's characters |
| Emmert & Taher (1992) | Flexible working hours, social satisfaction, supervision features and behaviors |
| Victor & Samantha (1996) | The monetary or non-monetary demand, job characteristics, work environment, individual characteristics |
| Joseph & Desphande (1997) | Ethic climate |
| Spector (1997) | Job characteristics, organization stress, role factors, conflicting, wage, work stress between work and family |
| Yoav (1998) | Intelligence and education degree |
| Bovycki,Thorn & LeMaster (1998) | Organizational commitment |
| Robie, Ann, Schmleder, Parra & Smith (1998) | Job levels |
| Taylor (1998) | Work itself, relationship with supervisors, relationship with colleagues, payment, rewards |
| Relner & Zao (1999) | Demographics, work environment |

Data source: LIU. (2005). *Research on relationship among work stress, work satisfaction and organization commitment*.

MSQ (Minnesota satisfaction questionnaire) and most of work satisfaction questionnaire, including JDI (job descriptive index), JDS (job diagnostic survey) which are usually used during research, takes cognition work satisfaction survey. There is certain difference between cognition survey method and emotion one, which perhaps will influence on work satisfaction or relationship between relevant work satisfaction and other organizational variables.

Taking single overall facet or considering them separately decided by actual requirements of research. There isn't any consistent acknowledgement in community of scholars about how to divide facets specifically. The facets are usually divided into intrinsic job satisfaction and extrinsic job satisfaction. Intrinsic job satisfaction is people's feeling to work of themselves. Extrinsic job satisfaction is people's feeling to various outside work situations. Herzberg (1959) disclosed structures of intrinsic job satisfaction and extrinsic job satisfaction.

At present, domestic research on work satisfaction measurement usually use multi-facet measurement (ZHONG, 1986). But, there isn't specific and perfect answer to the best facet of work satisfaction. Smith (1969) proposed five facets as work itself, promotion, payment, supervisors and work partners. Vroom (1962) thinks

there are seven facets, including organization itself promotion, job description, direct supervision, payment, work environment and work partners. Arnold and Feldman (1986) thinks present research work generally including five to eight facets, of them, the most common facets include work itself, supervisors, payment, promotion, work environment and work team.

3. Research on relationship between authentic leadership and work satisfaction

Authentic leadership refers to a process in which leaders play their roles by integrating their active psychological ability into highly developed organizational situations. Such individuals are more transparent, open and intimate for others around them, they would like to share their feelings and thoughts with others. Relationship transparency is better than authentic relationship direction, because transparent relationship can more efficiently describe features that leaders and pursuers share information and intimacy, expressing transparency and openness better (HAN & YANG, 2009).

At present, more researches focus on the relationship between authentic leadership and performance. Authentic leadership can not only enhance pursuers trust to their leaders, but also find their capability and talents by helping their pursuers, so that arrange them at proper positions providing rich opportunity for work and colleague relationship development, promote engagement of pursuers which can increase well-being in work place efficiently, while well-being and invention are helpful for promoting pursuers' real and sustainable performance (Gardner & Walumbwa, 2005). Authentic leaders relies more on their own qualities, exemplary role and contributions to influence pursuers' values, morality and belief, not on encouraging charismatic, vivid statements or other impression management (Fry, 2003).

Research from mechanical of actions and behaviors development of authentic leaders, the focuses are mainly on discussion about authentic leadership influence factors, the relationship with subordinate, which results from authentic leaders' development, and real development of subordinate. Factors influencing authentic leadership are mainly individuals' life experience and trigger events: Outcome variables are mainly subordinate's benefits, responsibility, work satisfaction, sustainable high performance, self efficiency, etc; relationship with subordinate mainly includes relationship transparency, trust, social exchange, etc, while intervening mechanic refers to organizational environment (including organizational atmosphere and culture, etc.) (Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May & Walumbwa, 2005; Avolio, Gardner & Walumbwa, et al., 2004; Eagly, 2005; George & Sims, 2007; Tate, 2008).

As for the influencing progress of leaders behaviors, cognition and emotion of subordinate are very important intervening factors (CHEN, 2006; CHEN & Aryee, 2007). Different from less research on authentic leadership prior variables and mechanism of action, since the concept of authentic leadership was proposed, there are more research on authentic leadership outcome variables, especially research on influences on pursuers' attitude and behaviors. However, existing researches mainly build up relationship between authentic leaders and subordinate's attitude and behaviors based on theory, while less evidence research (HAN & YANG, 2009). Hoping that trust to leaders and active emotions keeps prominent and direct proportion relationship with subordinate's work satisfaction and organization commitment.

4. Summary

Prior theory and models provide necessary theory and evidence support to our research on authentic

leadership. But, there is still certain limitation as following: First, different scholars have different understanding about concept and structure of authentic leadership. On the one hand, it is the beginning period of the research; On the other hand, domestic research on contents and structure of authentic leadership hasn't been developed, the most urgent and important thing for us is to learn from foreign research achievements and relate it with our circumstances. Second, at present, the academic field lacks of efficient survey tools for authentic leadership, so it is necessary to develop the tools. Furthermore, the present authentic leadership models are still at theory thinking stage and lack of evidence research support.

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