

THE RELATIONSHIP STUDY BETWEEN A MANAGER'S STYLE AND THE WORKING ATTITUDE OF HIS SUBORDINATES

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ABSTRACT

In the field of organizational behavior research, research on leadership topics has always occupied an important position. The factors that affect leadership effectiveness (also known as leadership effectiveness) and how to improve leadership effectiveness have not only been highly sought after by researchers, but these two issues are also enduring topics in management practice. Among the many antecedent variables that affect leadership effectiveness, the leader's leadership style has also been attracting the attention of researchers. Compared to focusing on the "talent" of leaders, the theory of authentic leadership focuses more on the "virtue" of leaders, which coincides with the traditional Chinese culture's concept of "putting virtue first". As an emerging leadership theory originating from the Western cultural background, the exploration of authentic leadership in China began in 2009, and the research is still in its early stages. There are relatively few theoretical and empirical research results related to authentic leadership, and there is not much exploration of its effectiveness and mechanism of action.

Keywords: Authentic leadership, following behavior, leadership identification, leadership identity, Leadership identification, leadership effectiveness

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The power distance in Chinese corporate organizations is generally high, and employees largely assume that there is a hierarchical difference between leaders, which provides the possibility for the existence of abusive leadership. Leadership is the social influence process which leaders achieve group goals by acquiring and mobilizing the power of employees, and influence is the most essential characteristic of leadership. It can be seen that the role of a leader largely depends on whether the leader accepts their leadership or influence, and it is particularly necessary and important to pay attention to the follower behavior of employees towards the leader. Unlike the industrial society, with the gradual substitution of knowledge and information economy for the industrial economy, enterprise organizations have undergone tremendous changes. For example, the emergence of a large number of knowledge-based employees has gradually rendered command and control leadership styles ineffective. Employees even have more information than their leaders, and they no longer passively and mechanically accept the command and leadership of their superiors. Their weight in the success or failure of the organization continues to rise. However, in practical management practice, the role of leadership is magnified, and the role of ordinary employees is largely overlooked. The

excessive exaggeration of leadership's role overlooks the objective fact that "water can carry boats, but it can also capsize them." Every success and achievement achieved by an enterprise organization is similar to building a tall building. The construction of a tall building not only requires leaders to carefully design the entire structure, but also requires the advice of every employee, building bricks and tiles one by one, The work details of every "little person" also determine the success or failure of enterprise development. The traditional view that leadership determines the success or failure of an organization has been questioned.

1.2 Research Questions

- (1) The relationship between authentic leadership and abusive leadership styles and employee following behavior.
- (2) The impact effect and specific mechanism of leadership effectiveness.
- (3) The role of employee following behavior in enhancing leadership effectiveness.

1.3 Research Objectives

- (1) To verify the specific effects of authentic leadership and abusive leadership on employee following behavior and leadership effectiveness in the context of Chinese culture.
- (2) The mediating role of leadership identity in the relationship between authentic leadership and abusive leadership styles and employee following behavior is explored, with the aim of discovering the specific mediating mechanisms through which authentic leadership and abusive leadership styles influence employee following behavior.
- (3) Provide valuable practical suggestions for leaders to effectively manage employee following behavior and enhance leadership effectiveness in the context of Chinese culture.

1.4 Research Hypothesis

H1: Authentic leadership has a significant positive impact on employee following behavior.

H2: Abusive leadership has a significant negative impact on employee following behavior.

H3: Authentic leadership has a significant positive impact on leadership identification.

H4: Abusive leadership has a significant negative impact on leadership identity.

H5: Leadership identification has a significant positive impact on employee following behavior.

H6: Leadership identification plays a mediating role between authentic leadership and employee following behavior.

H7: Leadership identification plays a mediating role between abusive leadership and employee following behavior.

H8: Authentic leadership has a significant positive impact on leadership effectiveness.

H9: Abusive leadership has a significant negative impact on leadership effectiveness.

H10: Follow behavior plays a mediating role in the relationship between authentic leadership and leadership effectiveness.

H11: Follow behavior plays a mediating role in the relationship between abusive leadership and leadership effectiveness.

1.5 Research Scope

Using a combination of theoretical construction and empirical analysis, this study follows the logical line of "leadership style - interaction between employees and leaders (employee following behavior) - leadership effectiveness", and conducts in-depth analysis and exploration of the mechanisms by which real leadership and abusive leadership affect employee following

behavior and leadership effectiveness. Population Range: 827 employees from Beijing, China. Time Range: June 18, 2023- August 27, 2023

1.6 Limitations of the Study

China has a long history, a vast territory, a huge population, and a highly diverse culture. Due to limitations in the research ability of this article, only 827 employees in Beijing were studied during the research process. The characteristics represented by this research group themselves cannot effectively cover all the characteristics of Chinese society. Therefore, this study has a certain degree of one-sidedness. The research results of this article are only an explanation of the relationship between Chinese social leadership style and employee behavior.

1.7 Significance of Research

First, authentic leadership and employee following behavior are emerging research topics in the field of organizational behavior. The exploration of these topics has just begun in China and is in the early stage of research, and research results are still lacking. The research results obtained in this study are a beneficial supplement to the further development of authentic leadership theory and following behavior. Secondly, this study verified the crucial role of employee following behavior in enhancing leadership effectiveness and discovered another important way to enhance leadership effectiveness, which is to indirectly enhance leadership effectiveness by stimulating employee following behavior. The dissemination of this research result helps to remind the public and corporate management to re-examine the important value of employee following behavior. Thirdly, remind leaders in enterprises to constantly reflect on the appropriateness of their management methods, pay attention to strengthening their own moral cultivation, and influence and shape employees by enhancing their personal charm and charisma rather than resorting to humiliation and intimidation. In addition, it should be noted that the effectiveness of leadership style is closely related to the cultural values of individual employees (power distance orientation), and it is meaningless to discuss the appropriateness of leadership management methods by avoiding differences in power distance orientation among employees.

1.8 Definition of Terms

Leadership Style: Among the many factors that influence employee behavior, the style of leaders has always been regarded as an important aspect by both the theoretical and practical communities. **Follow Behavior:** Follow behavior refers to the relatively stable behavioral tendencies and patterns exhibited by employees (also known as followers) in the process of interacting with leaders in an organization. **Leader Identification:** The social identity theory holds that identity is an important process for individuals to form their self-concept, which often requires obtaining information from their relationship positioning with other individuals. The identification of employees with leaders is a state in which individuals define themselves based on their leadership and employee relationship identity, or a perception of belonging to the leader. **Leadership Effectiveness:** Regarding the definition of leadership, different scholars have different opinions. Similarly, the definition of leadership effectiveness varies from person to person, and the specific indicators used to measure leadership effectiveness are also different. The most commonly used indicators for measuring leadership effectiveness include objective and subjective indicators, such as profit, sales growth, market share, return on investment, and productivity; Subjective indicators include ratings of leadership effectiveness obtained from superiors, peers, and subordinates, such as satisfaction and turnover rate.

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview of Theoretical Foundations

Social Identity Theory: The theory of social identity originated in the 1970s, which holds that an individual's identification with a group is the basis for group behavior. Through social classification, an individual identifies with the group they belong to. Social identity theory is a grand social science theory in the fields of sociology and psychology. We can explain why individuals need social identity from both motivational and functional perspectives. **social Exchange Theory:** "To show gratitude and repay kindness" is an important component of the moral conscience of Chinese people, and it is also a code of conduct that people follow in their daily lives. In essence, most interactions between people depend on the model of "giving return" equivalence. It is not difficult to find that this behavior model can restrict the behavior of people everywhere.

2.2 Leadership Style

The Connotation and Measurement of Authentic Leadership. The connotation of authentic leadership The concept of Authentic Leadership is a positive leadership approach proposed by Luthans and Avolio in 2003. Authentic leadership is seen as the "root" concept of positive leadership. At this point, the field of organizational behavior research has begun to explore various aspects of authentic leadership, including conceptual description, connotation definition, structural measurement, theoretical research, and empirical research. **Measurement of Authentic Leadership:** Ilies, Morgeson, and Nahrgang proposed in an article published in the Leadership Quarterly in 2005 that authentic leadership includes four core dimensions: self-awareness, unbiased information processing, authentic behavior, and authentic relationship orientation. From the perspective of the relationship with oneself, these four dimensions can be further divided into two categories: self-awareness and loyalty to oneself. The dimension of self-awareness belongs to the category of leaders recognizing themselves, while the category of leaders being loyal to themselves includes the other three dimensions, namely unbiased processing, authentic behavior, and authentic relationship orientation. **The Influence Mechanism of Authentic Leadership**

On the basis of summarizing previous research, this study categorizes the core mechanisms of authentic leadership into the following four types. (1) Positive Organizational Behavior Perspective. (2) Social learning perspective. (3) Social identity perspective. (4) Social exchange perspective.

2.3 Leadership Style: Abusive Leadership

2.3.1 Definition of Abusive Leadership

The concept of abusive leadership was first proposed by American scholar Tepper (2000), who defined it as "the hostile language and nonverbal behavior that employees perceive as a leader's ongoing behavior, excluding physical contact based aggression.". The specific manifestations of leadership abusive behavior include: criticizing and mocking employees in public, using rude and rude language to speak to employees, breaking promises made to employees, ignoring employee interests, and humiliating and insulting employees.

2.3.2 Measurement of Abusive Leadership

Tepper (2000) was the first to develop a measurement scale for abusive leadership, which was

widely adopted in subsequent domestic and international research and reported good measurement indicators. This measurement scale contains a single dimension and consists of 15 measurement items. The measurement method is to have employees subjectively evaluate the abusive behavior of their leaders.

2.3.3 Influence Mechanism of Abusive Leadership

What are the pathways and mechanisms through which abusive leadership functions? This article focuses on the impact of abusive leadership, and based on the logic of relevant empirical research and the specific research variables used, summarizes the core mechanisms of abusive leadership into the following three types.

2.4 Follow Behavior

The emergence of the concepts of leadership and leader inevitably corresponds to the concepts of being led (follower) and being led (follower), which appear together. There is a plethora of literature exploring the concepts of leadership and leader in the field of organizational behavior, but there is still limited definition of followers and followers.

2.5 Leadership Effectiveness

Leadership is often defined as managing employee behavior and achieving goals through the use of power and influence. Leadership effectiveness (also known as leadership effectiveness) is an important indicator for measuring the effectiveness of leadership management, and is a relatively broad concept.

2.6 Leadership Identification

Identity is the degree to which people recognize one thing as distinct from another. Explaining the relationship between individuals and society is the core of identity theory. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, people have the need to interact with others, gain a sense of belonging, friendship, and love, and identification is an effective way to obtain these social needs.

2.7 Relationship between Variables

2.7.1 Realistic Leadership and Employee Following Behavior

According to Carsten et al. (2010), following behavior refers to a series of behaviors exhibited by employees when interacting with leaders. Employee following behavior does not include the employee's own work activities or interactive behavior with other colleagues, that is, following behavior focuses on a series of behaviors that the employee points towards the leader, including respectful learning behavior, implementation behavior, and intention comprehension behavior.

2.7.2 Abusive Leadership and Employee Following Behavior

This study assumes that abusive leadership has a significant negative effect on employee following behavior, for the following reasons:

(1) Firstly, in terms of effectiveness, abusive leadership refers to the perception of employees towards the leader's persistent verbal and nonverbal hostile behavior but does not include physical contact. (2) Secondly, abusive behavior by leaders can lead to employee anxiety, self-doubt, and a sense of unfairness. (3) Finally, from a theoretical perspective, according to social exchange theory, hostile behavior in verbal or nonverbal forms by leaders goes against employees' positive expectations of the leader, resulting in employees only maintaining an economic and low-quality exchange relationship with the leader.

2.7.3 Authentic Leadership and Leadership Identification

From the perspective of social exchange, the relationship between employees and leaders is defined as an exchange relationship, where both parties follow mutually beneficial behavioral norms; From the perspective of social identity, the relationship between employees and leaders is seen as a social and psychological connection and emotional relationship. The relationship between authentic leadership and leadership identity has not been empirically tested. This study suggests that authentic leadership positively affects employee identification with leadership for the following reasons.

2.7.4 Abusive Leadership and Leadership Identification

From the characteristics of abusive leadership, it can be seen that abusive leadership cannot meet the emotional needs of employees (such as a sense of belonging and self-worth) and cannot stimulate their identification. When employees feel the abusive treatment of their leaders, it can lead to tension and disharmony in the relationship between leaders and employees, which reduces employee identification with the leader.

2.7.5 Leader Identification and Employee Following Behavior

Employees who have a strong sense of identification with their leaders are particularly interested and eager to maintain, deepen, and expand this relationship with their leaders. This sense of identification and the resulting mutually beneficial relationship motivate employees to always remember the image they represent as leaders during the work process, and then constantly follow the leader. Generally speaking, the emotional dependence of employees on their leaders is positively correlated with their behavioral performance. This article believes that employee identification with their leaders can stimulate employee following behavior, mainly due to the following reasons.

2.7.6 The mediating Effect of Leadership Identification

On the one hand, theoretically speaking, employee identification with a leader refers to the degree to which employees perceive the overlap of their identity with that of the leader. The identification of employees with their leaders is a binary level of personal identification, and high personal identification means that individuals use their leaders as self-reference points or self-definition.

2.7.7 Realistic Leadership and Leadership Effectiveness

This study suggests that authentic leadership has a significant positive impact on leadership effectiveness.

2.7.8 Abusive Leadership and Leadership Effectiveness

Based on existing empirical research results, Harris et al. (2007) found that leader abusive behavior is negatively correlated with employee self-evaluation of job performance and leader rated job performance. Tepper (2007) found that when employees are subjected to abusive treatment by their leaders, they will vent their negative emotions by reducing organizational commitment, task performance, and organizational citizenship behavior.

2.7.9 The mediating Effect of Employee Following Behavior between Leadership Style and Leadership Effectiveness

This study selects employee task performance and emotional commitment as the three measurement indicators of leadership effectiveness, all of which are evaluated by employees. The positive following behavior of employees towards leaders can help improve work performance and emotional commitment.

2.7.10 Conceptual Framework

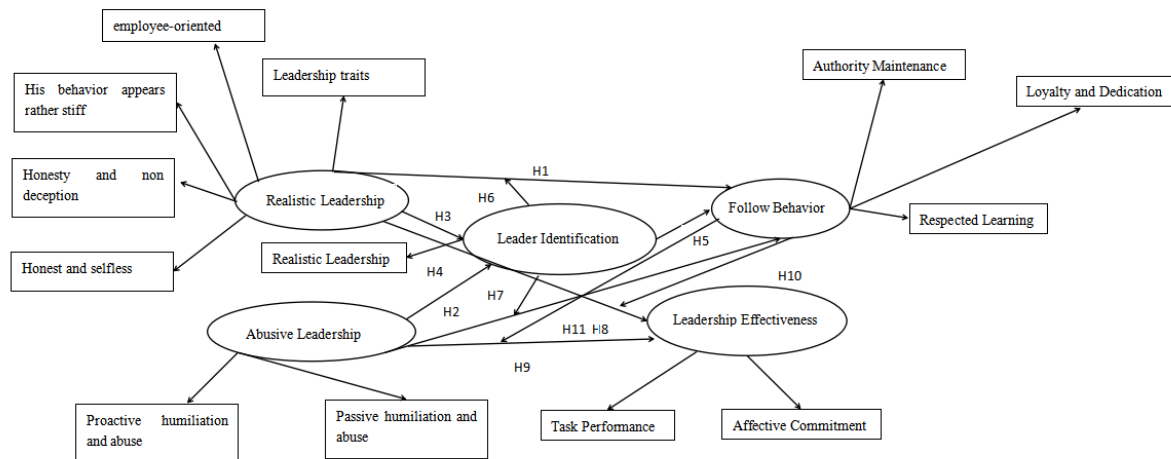


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Population and Sample

The basic rule based on statistical sample size calculation is $N > k + 1$, which means that the minimum sample size is greater than the number of survey questionnaires, which meets the relevant requirements. Based on the research companies selected by the researchers themselves, 827 respondents were found to meet the research criteria for this study. Therefore, this paper takes 827 employees in Chinese Mainland as specific research objects to carry out analysis and research. Analysis Software: During the research process, this article used SPSS 26.0 software to analyze and process the data obtained from the survey questionnaire in detail, and thus completed the empirical research.

3.2 Overview of Research Methods

3.2.1 Quantitative Research

Because of drawing on mature measurement scales and methods, this study mainly adopts two methods: on-site questionnaire survey and online network questionnaire survey to obtain measurement information related to full-time employees in enterprises. The entire field research process is divided into two stages: the first stage involves small sample pretesting, with a total of 150 questionnaires distributed and 110 effectively collected. Referring to the common practice of questionnaire correction in existing research, this study adopts the "Corrected Item Total Correction (CITC)" indicator to purify the measurement items of the pre-test questionnaire, and uses the internal consistency coefficient (α) The coefficient is used to test the reliability of the measurement questionnaire, and the questionnaire is revised based on the results of small sample pre testing and relevant feedback information to obtain a formal survey questionnaire.

3.2.2 Qualitative Research

In the process of changing the research topic, this article conducted qualitative research using literature research method, conducted in-depth and systematic analysis and research on relevant literature, clarified the current research status and progress related to the research topic both domestically and internationally, as the basic support for constructing the research ideas and

specific content of this study.

3.2.3 Procedure for Conducting Research

Firstly, design a survey questionnaire. Based on the research purpose and combined with the research model, appropriate variable measurement tools were selected and determined. As the research variables selected in this study have been used by many authoritative studies in China, the reliability and validity of the measurement scales have been confirmed. Therefore, the measurement scales used in these authoritative studies will be directly adopted, and the description of the items will be adjusted according to the needs of this study.

3.3 Data Collection

This study used questionnaire survey method to obtain research data, and convenient sampling method was used. The distribution and collection of formal questionnaires were concentrated from June 2 to September 23, 2023, lasting nearly 3 months. In order to ensure the universality of the research, the sample mainly comes from more than ten large enterprises and institutions, including Datong Coal Mine Group Co., Ltd., in-service MBA students from Capital University of Economics and Trade, Wuyi College, Tangshan Agricultural and Commercial Bank, China Minsheng Bank, Tianjin Nuoxin Financial Group, and Capital Airport, including coal, communication, petroleum, finance, and education industries. The respondents mainly come from more than ten provinces and autonomous regions, including Beijing, Shanxi, Hebei, Fujian, Inner Mongolia, Shandong, Henan, Xinjiang, and Tianjin, with high coverage and representativeness. This study used a combination of online and paper-based questionnaires to collect sample data. For companies located in close proximity to Beijing, Hebei, and Tianjin, the author contacted the relevant responsible persons of the companies and distributed the questionnaire on site. Participants were asked to carefully fill out the questionnaire and collect it on the spot. Questions were answered on the spot. For other provinces that are relatively far away, a combination of mailing paper questionnaires to the contact persons of each unit and collecting questionnaires through the Questionnaire Star network was adopted. The contact persons were asked to send the paper questionnaire or the link to the online questionnaire to the respondents, and requested to collect it within one day.

A total of 600 paper questionnaires were distributed in this study, with 483 responses. The response rate for paper questionnaires was 80.50%. Questionnaire Star collected 344 questionnaires, with a total of 827 responses. Before entering the data, the author carefully checked the questionnaire: deleting questionnaires with serious missing personal background information; Delete the answer set and present a questionnaire with clear answering patterns; Delete a questionnaire with multiple consecutive blank questions. After inspection, 113 invalid questionnaires were deleted and 714 valid questionnaires were retained. The effective response rate of the questionnaire was 86.34%. After ANOVA analysis, it was found that there was no significant difference in controlling variables between the sample data obtained through paper-based questionnaires and online questionnaires, indicating that the data obtained through the two methods can be combined for subsequent empirical analysis.

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