Authentic Leadership and the Impact on Psychological Safety and Relationship Quality

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Disclosures

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES
At the conclusion of the presentation participants will be able to:

- Discuss the relational constructs of leadership, relationship quality and psychological safety in the creation of a healthy work environment in the acute care setting.

- Appraise the effect of Authentic Leadership skills on work environment within the acute care setting.

- Reflect upon their own relational strengths and weakness within the workplace to identify areas requiring additional attention to improve overall health of the workplace.

Variables of relating

- Leadership style

- Nurse to nurse relationship quality

- Interactional civility

- Psychological safety

A relational event or a technical exchange?

- A study of 10,000 nurses – mortality rate 60% higher if poorly rated work environment (Aiken, Clarke, Sloane, Lake & Cheney, 2008)

- Meta-analysis identified interpersonal relationships as essential for healthy work environment (Kramer, Schmalenberg & Maguire, 2010)

- Manager support & nurse-MD communication essential for healthy work environment BUT communication was positive only in the context of a quality relationship (Kramer & Schmalenberg, 2008)

The importance of relationships in healthcare

- Relationship on collaboration (Gittell, et al 2000), disruptive behavior (Rosenstein & O'Daniel, 2005), lateral violence & bullying (Vessey, DeMarco & DiFazio, 2010).

- Quality relationships among providers linked to safe patient care

- The IOM (2011) is calling for interdisciplinary education and improved collaboration in the acute care setting

High Quality Relationships (HQR)

- Dutton and Heaphy (2003) identified 3 capabilities of HQRs
  - Emotional carrying capacity, the tensility of the tie & degree of connectivity

- High-quality relationship (HQR) defined as a connection "marked by vitality, mutuality & positive regard" (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003)

Authentic Leadership (AL)

- Positive relationally based model (Avolio, et al., 2004)
- Contains core elements of other positive models (TL & Ethical)
- The AL shapes the environment through the possession & modeling of 4 elements:
  - self-awareness
  - balanced information processing
  - relational transparency
  - internalized moral perspective

Authentic Leadership Research

- AL significantly r/t job satisfaction with the relationship mediated through empowerment (Wong & Laschinger, 2013)

- Relationship between AL & perceptions of quality care by nurses, mediated by trust in manager (Wong, Laschinger & Cummings, 2010)

- Both AL and structural empowerment were significantly related to a new nursing graduate's perception of interprofessional collaboration (Laschinger & Smith, 2013)

Psychological Safety (PS)

- The tacit knowledge or belief that it's interpersonally safe to be vulnerable among colleagues (Edmondson, 1999; Kahn, 1990).

- Fosters honesty, willingness to present divergent ideas, safe to admit errors, openness in asking for help and other risk-taking behaviors needed for effective coordination of complex care

- Without it- greater risk for error and poor outcomes (Edmondson, 2004; 2012)

Specific Aims

- To explore the congruence between nurse director's self-evaluation of authentic leadership style and staff nurses' evaluation of leadership style.

- To determine the impact of leadership style on team psychological safety.

- To identify if leadership style's impact on psychological safety is mediated by high quality relationships.

The Study Design

- A non-experimental predictive survey design

- Convenience sampling

- Staff nurses and nurse directors from general medical-surgical and critical care units

- To improve response rate, a $10.00 gift card incentive was offered upon completion of this confidential survey

Instrumentation

- Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) - a 16-item measure with four subscales which correspond to the four components identified in the model
  - Reliability previous studies: .70 - .90; current .98
- High-Quality Relationship measure - a 20-item measure
  - Reliability previous studies .72-.85; current .93
- Psychological Safety – a 7-item instrument
  - Reliability previous studies 0.78 to 0.82; current .74
- Workplace Incivility Scale (WIS) – a 6 –item inst.
  - Reliability in previous studies ranges .86 to .88 and current study .90

Procedure

- Informational session for the nurse directors

- Email notice 4 days prior to release of survey link

- Second email provided a link to the confidential survey

- Two week later a reminder sent for those who did not respond

- $10.00 gift card incentive was offered upon completion of the confidential survey

The Sample

- Staff nurses and Nurse Directors from general medical and surgical units within an acute care hospital setting

- A response rate of usable surveys were 55% for the nurse directors (n = 17) and a 21% response rate for staff nurses (n = 455)

- A modest effect size of 0.2 for the relationship ALQ and psych. Safety

- G-Power software (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007) for correlational analysis, a recommended power of 0.80, alpha level of .05, and a two-tailed test, we estimated a needed sample size of 321 or greater

Correlation of major study variables for staff nurses

	ALQ	HQR	WIS	PS
ALQ	1			
HQR	.338**	1		
WIS	-.339**	-.551**	1	
PS	-.028	-.077	.036	1

Covariance matrix for major study variables

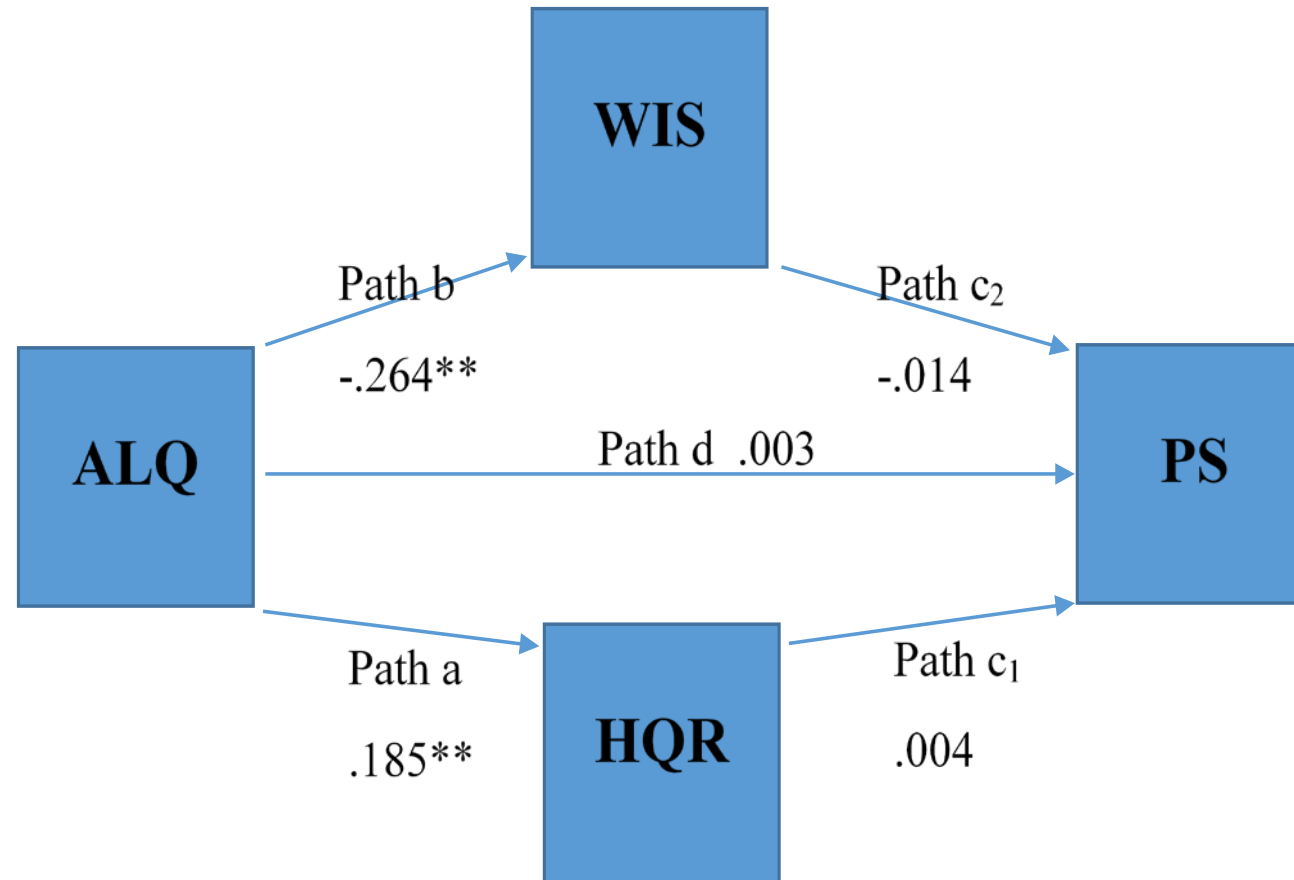|	ALQ	HQR	WIS	PS
ALQ	1.200			
HQR	.220	.352		
WIS	-.311	-.274	.700	
PS	-.058	-.085	.055	3.459
Means	2.536	3.540	2.014	2.536
SD	1.096	.593	.837	1.860
Skewness (SE)	-.550 (.114)**	-.393 (.114)**	1.221 (.114)**	-5.777 (.114)**
Kurtosis (SE)	-.640 (.228)	.685 (.228)**	1.687 (.228)**	33.360 (.228)**

Hypothesized Model Paths

- **Model**

Mediation Analysis

WIS

Path b

-.264**

Path c_2

-.014

ALQ

Path d .003

PS

Path a

.185**

HQR

Path c_1

.004
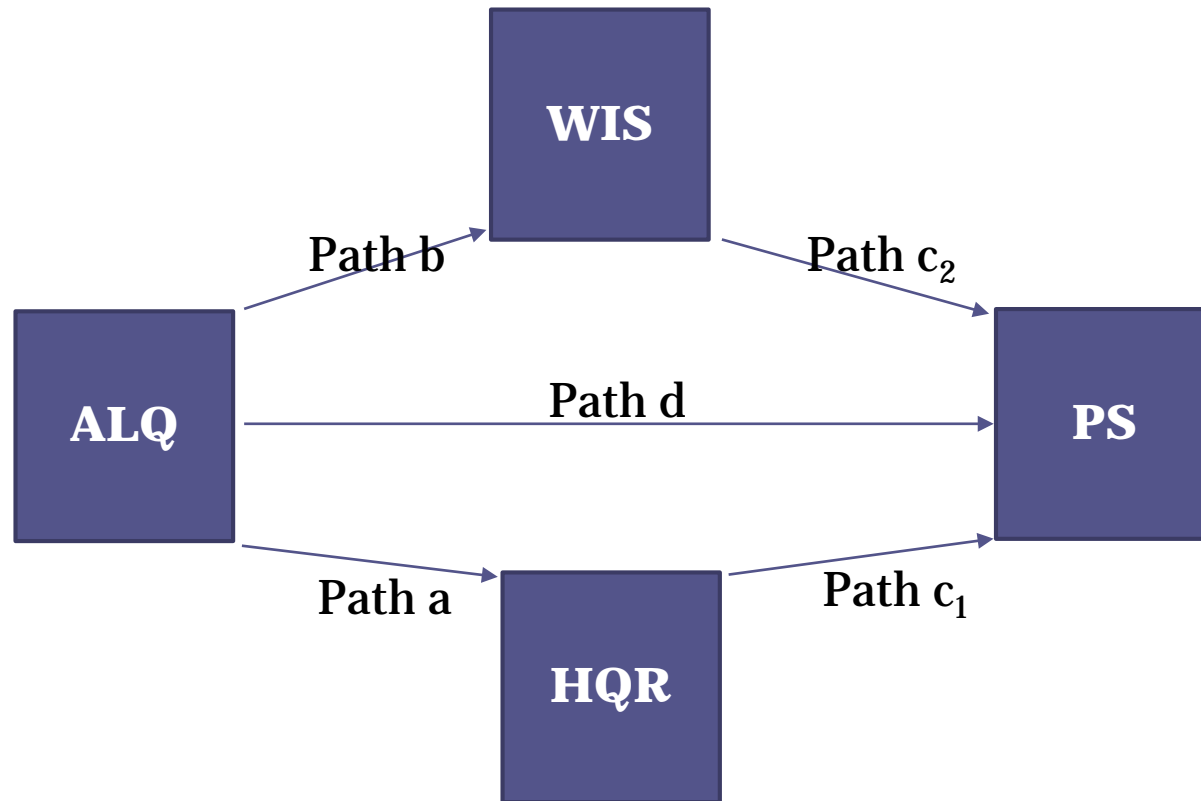
Discussion and Limitations

- Higher levels of authentic leadership was correlated with higher levels of relationship quality and lower levels of incivility.

- This supports the notion that leadership style does impact the relational tone of a unit, thereby influencing the peer-to-peer relationships within the team.

- The lack of direct or indirect relationship of leadership to psychological safety may indicate either different or additional factors involved in the mediation.

Discussion and Limitations

- A narrow leadership style instrument was used but a broader measure, such as Multi-factor scale might have better captured the relationship with psychological safety

- Complex nature of organizational research may require a more complex model

Discussion and Limitations

- Timing of survey release

- Inability to conduct a team based measure

- Use of convenience sampling

- Unionized facility

Future Studies

- Broaden literature scope to identify additional mediating variables

- Multi-site study with probability sampling and perhaps within unit analysis of the variables identified

- A comparison of union and non-union facilities to determine whether there are unique factors related to power, trust and psychological safety

- Analysis of ALQ subscales to determine with greater specificity which characteristics have a stronger impact on identified variables

Contribution

- Supports the notion that front line management can set the relational tone of a patient care unit

- Supports current literature regarding relationally based leadership skills contributing to healthy peer-to-peer relationship building

- With ongoing concerns regarding negative workplace behavior such as incivility, these outcomes can guide future interventions for the same

- Contributes to learning objectives in leadership education

Questions