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Significance of Servant Leadership for creativity in change processes when using the Lean tool Value Stream Mapping (VSM)

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1. Background:

Researchers recognize innovation as an important source for organizational success. Creativity is widely believed to be an important pre-requisite for innovation. Creativity has been described as a property of thought processes that can be acquired and improved through instruction and practice. Theories of organizational creativity posit that the work environment can be a stimulus for employee creativity. Existing research suggests that creativity and innovation can be enhanced through good leadership. Health care organizations are often dominated by leadership styles that are thought to be unsupportive of creativity. Researchers argue that Servant Leadership (SL) may be particularly well suited for enhancing creativity.

This study is part of a Nordic Multicenter Study where we evaluate if an ergonomic module (Ergo) added to the participatory Lean tool VSM results in an enriched sample of proposals.

2. Aim:

To investigate the significance of SL for creativity in healthcare when using VSM/ErgoVSM, with aspects of the work environment as a moderator.

3. Material and method:

Two clinical wards comprising 126 employees and two first line managers at each ward (nursing and medicine) were investigated. SL, creativity and psychosocial factors were assessed by questionnaire.

4. Results:

Analysis of a mediated path model shows that SL is important for employees' creativity as it is positively related with employee creative self-efficacy. The relationship between SL and creative self-efficacy is stronger when role clarity is high.

5. Conclusion:

The results suggest that SL may modify the sample of proposals created when using VSM/ErgoVSM.

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