

Exploring Authentic Leadership Theory in Practice: A Case Study about a School's Leaders in a Private School in Sharjah, UAE

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Abstract

Due to the economic, technical, and environmental problems that school leaders face in the twenty-first century, authentic leadership is crucial in today's society. This research investigates authentic leadership theory in practice through the eyes of successful leaders at a private school in Sharjah, with the goal of determining how authentic leadership theory is or might be applied by school leaders in the UAE. The theoretical basis for this research is informed by the genuine leadership theory. The research methodology is a qualitative exploratory case study using constructivism as the research paradigm. To collect data, semi-structured interviews were conducted, which included in-depth discussion with one school leader who was carefully chosen and a focus group interview with the middle leaders of the school to solidify the findings. The results indicate that the school leadership practice shows authentic leadership traits such as self-awareness, internalized moral viewpoint, and balanced thinking. However, data suggests that the leader's behavior lacks relational transparency, which might be challenging in particular settings. These findings might help practitioners add value to professional development programs through demonstrating use authentic leadership theory in the workplace.

Keywords: Authentic Leadership, genuine leadership, School Leader, School middle leaders.

Introduction

Nowadays, technological, political, economic, and societal dynamics are the dominant challenges drastically conditioning educational institutions (Bennis 2013). Organization leaders in the modern time are perturbed "about an economy where knowledge is a core commodity, and the rapid production of knowledge and innovation is critical to organizational survival" (Benn & Martin 2010). Prentice (2013) suggested that meeting the century's challenges has obligated leaders to have global skills to promote remarkable worldwide interconnectedness. Accordingly, the concept of leadership is abiding by an enormous paradigmatic alternation of perspective and power (Bennis 2013). School leadership became one of the fashionable and well-researched fields that composed comprehensive prominent studies and endured to fascinate experts and researchers worldwide. From a leader-centric perspective, these researches are dominant and referable (Bennis; Kaigh et al., 2014). Thus, the classical theories of leadership were limited in qualifying twenty-first-century school leaders to adequately manage educational institutions in the neo-modern era of globalization (O'Brien & Peterson 2009). Hence, Alvesson & Spicer (2012) argued that leaders must be "one of the dominant heroes of our time." Moreover, Bill (2003) added that "we need leaders who lead with purpose, values, and integrity; leaders who build enduring organizations, motivate their employees to provide superior customer service, and create long-term value for shareholders." Therefore, leaders need to adapt to novel thinking and theories in the leadership domain.

Though there is enough research on the principal elements and perspectives of authentic leadership, there is still an apparent hiatus in the literature regarding the usages of authentic leaders in the UAE. Theoretically, the elements are understood but still not effectively practiced. Therefore, the theory is approached with doubt and queries as it is crucial to consider all aspects for validity purposes. The authentic theory has been tackled and studied theoretically but was not examined in the UAE context from the perspective of leaders. For that, this study aims at exploring the authentic theory and its effective implementation from the viewpoint of a successful school principal and the middle management in the context of a school in Sharjah, UAE.

One of the recent and prominent theories in leadership is Authentic Leadership Theory, though the wheel of development is still steering regularly (Avolio & Gardner 2005; Avolio et al. 2009; Northouse 2015). This theory has been first introduced in the USA, where the concept of authenticity has been first developed. Its significance lies in expanding and shaping a strength-based organization by emphasizing the importance of positioning and providing individuals with the opportunity to work in their comfort and strength zone for productivity purposes. Moreover, to enhance their growth and development through increased self-awareness about their positive qualification and areas that need enhancement (Buckingham & Coffman, 1999). Through this, authentic leaders assist the advancement of authenticity in their partisans. In return, the partisans' authenticity adds to their work progress, well-being, and sustainability.

While earlier research has enhanced our understanding of the factors influencing innovation in education institutions, some notable gaps in the literature must be addressed before making any firm conclusions. To begin with, most earlier research studies confine effective leadership styles to TL, ignoring new ways to leadership (Al-Husseini & Elbeltagi, 2016). Authentic leadership (AL) has recently gotten a lot of attention from leadership experts, who argue that it is extremely advantageous to companies and leads to desirable results (Luthans 2020).

The purpose of choosing and tackling such a study is linked to the belief of the researcher that authentic leadership can bring change and advancement to different organizations, including schools which is the focus of the research. Furthermore, this theory helps individuals have a greater understanding of how to be self-aware, optimistic, confident, and hopeful, advocate for transparent relationships in terms of decision making, and most importantly, boost the level of trust among followers through well-established ethical considerations. Furthermore, most leadership theories have been analyzed using a quantitative approach. With that, a fundamental understanding of the leaders' perspectives and behaviors is missed in the process (House 1995); with a qualitative approach, an in-depth insight is advantageous to augment the literature about leadership holistically and authentic leadership precisely. Noteworthy, this research has underpinned a qualitative case

study method to examine the noticed gap in the literature. The study explores authentic leadership from the perspective of successful leaders, the principal, and the middle management, in practice in Sharjah, UAE.

This research aims at answering the following core question:

- To what extent do school leaders practice authentic leadership in a Private School in the context of Sharjah, UAE?

Literature Review

This study focuses on the concept of authenticity which is defined as "being true in substance, as being genuine or as being real" (Oxford English Dictionary). The word authenticity goes back to Greek philosophy to mean (To thine own self be true). From a psychological and philosophical perspective, Rogers and Maslow (1971) have linked the term authenticity to humanistic psychology to stress self-actualized persons, in other words, individuals who are in harmony with their selves and reflect accurately on their lives. Maslow (1971) suggested that fully established people are less burdened with expectations set by others or societies, making them form sound choices in life. Moreover, Maslow (1971) added that self-actualized individuals have a high rate of ethical convictions. Although authenticity is evident in its definition, sometimes it is confused with sincerity. On the one hand, Erickson (1995) defined sincerity as "a congruence between avowal and

actual feeling," it reflects the individuals' outward feelings and thoughts that are in accord with the reality endured by oneself. Sincerity is weighted on how the self is accurately represented to the other rather than how the self is true to itself (Erickson 1995). On the other hand, Harter (2002) defined authenticity as "owning one's personal experiences, be it thoughts, emotions, needs, wants, preferences, beliefs, or processes captured by the injunction to know oneself ."Authenticity reflects how one acts by the true self; it is about conveying one inner thoughts, beliefs, and feelings by one true self. Heidegger (1962) added that individuals shouldn't be judged whether they are entirely authentic or inauthentic but can be considered obtaining levels of authenticity if it is partially evident.

Burns (1978) defined leadership as "one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth" since multiple perspectives and different disciplines should be considered when describing it. Though many educators and scholars have attempted to define leadership over the century, it is still a wide field to be discovered. No clear consensus upon definition has been drawn until now. In this prospect, Northouse (2015) agreed that the number of purposes equals the number of schoolers attempting to describe, and that is because of the continuous development in the leadership theories.

In today's volatile work climate, ethical and performance challenges have prompted a new ethical approach to leadership (Elrehail 2020). Both practitioners and academics have emphasized the importance of Authentic Leadership (AL) in this regard. Walumbwa et al.

(2008) define AL as "a pattern of leader conduct that relies on and develops both positive psychological capacities and a good ethical environment, to generate more self-awareness, an internalized moral viewpoint, balanced information processing, and relational transparency on the part of leaders engaging with followers, supporting positive self-development." Avolio and Elrehaul (2020) proposed that real leaders' conduct can improve followers' performance results, even in volatile work contexts.

Initiatives, capabilities, and actions determine the success of the school and the leader in it (Spillane 2006); usually, school principals are the ones affiliated with school management. Additionally, with time the accountability of school leaders to improve the learners' achievement became challenging and overwhelming, especially after considering schools for scrutiny and testing. Therefore, school leaders are obliged to regard their management skills and approaches for developing their schools under the umbrella of twenty-first-century skills (Prentice 2013). Chappellear & Price (2012) argued that school leaders affect the teachers' performance inside the classes, which reflects directly on the learners' performance and their achievements; this advocates the importance of the role played by school principals and its middle leaders. Noticeably, following the same logic, George (2003) stated that "we need leaders who lead with purpose, values, and integrity; leaders who build enduring organizations, motivate their employees to provide superior customer service and create long-term value for shareholders."

Applying authentic leadership to leaders in different organizations is what is discussed earlier about authenticity, its definition, and significance. Howell & Avolio (1992) defined authentic leadership as "a process that draws from both positive psychological capacities and a highly developed organizational context, which results in both greater self-awareness and self-regulated positive behaviors on the part of leaders and associates." Additionally, an authentic leader is transparent, optimistic, ethical, and future-oriented and provides opportunities to develop their associates. Needless to mention that this kind of leader is true to themselves and contributes to building and transporting leadership skills to their associates to become leaders themselves. Ideally, authentic leaders should be implemented from the top to the lowest and minor workers in the organization/school. This diffusion becomes real only when leaders' objective actions are synchronized with the constructs of authentic leadership and are reflected to be executed by every institution member. When it is deeply rooted in the organization's culture, the institution becomes a strength-based organization.

Elements of authentic leadership theory were first introduced in sociology and education (Hannah & Chan 2004). At first, the sociologist Seeman's (1960) emphasis is on inauthenticity since he perceived it as a necessity, as leaders have to comply with the arising demands in their roles as leaders. Though there is a measurable developed scale for that, many scholars like Brumbaugh (1971) questioned its validity and reliability. They were discarded to be a suitable method of measurement for leaders. Consequently, Henderson &

Hoy (1983) renovated and revised the scale used by Seeman (1960) and added that an inauthentic leader is a leader who has to comply with the stereotypes imposed on them by their roles as leaders. In a more current context, this approach to perceiving authentic leadership has altered into embedding elements of positive psychology (Luthans & Avolio 2003). Accordingly, more disagreements arise about authentic leadership and the elements constructing it.

The primary goal of genuine leadership is to validate an individual's way of being and make it 'authentic.' As a result, the focus should be placed mostly on appointing possibilities for consciousness in accordance with the concept of 'authentic existence.' This even includes methods of encouraging 'genuine life,' which are related to our interactions as well as how we perceive them ([Bahzar](#) 2019). As a result, knowing oneself and being oneself is adequate and complete at the heart of the genuine leadership construct. Adding extra attributes and talents as desired to this concept may conflict with the idea of authenticity, which asks for us to comply with our inner-self rather than external standards (Wiewiora 2018).

Avolio, Luthans, and Walumbwa (2004, p. 4) defined authentic leaders as "those who are deeply aware of how they think and behave and are perceived by others as aware of their own and others' values/moral perspectives, knowledge, and strengths ."However, Luthans and Avolio (2003, p. 243) described authentic leadership as "a process that draws from both

positive psychological capacities and a highly developed organizational context, which results in greater self-awareness and self-regulated positive behaviors on the part of leaders and associates, fostering positive self-development." Many scholars at later times attempted to define and develop authentic leadership, but it was pretty hard to provide a complete, logical definition. In this prospect, Cooper et al. (2005) suggested that the "initial conceptualization is multi-dimensional. It contains elements from diverse domains—traits, states, behaviors, contexts, and attributions. Moreover, the observers or perspectives involved vary from the leader to followers to possibly additional observers". The concern is that authentic leadership operates best at individual and organizational levels. Moreover, there will be considerable challenges in enacting such a complex theory, especially if the definitions are that broad and vague, and complete understanding about it is a requirement for a better implementation. Shamir & Eilam (2005) expressed their concerns about the definitions and the main elements governing authentic leadership, in their turn, suggested that four characteristics of authentic leadership are introduced:

1. Authentic leaders are not fake; they are true to themselves.
2. They follow their convictions and not be affected by status or personal profit.
3. These leaders are authentic, meaning original, not fake.
4. The performance of authentic leaders is built on their inner values and positive morals.

Accordingly, Shamir & Eilam (2005) introduced authentic followership to shed more light on authentic leadership, suggesting that they are "followers who follow leaders for authentic reasons and have an authentic relationship with the leader." Its importance is that it "mirrors the developmental processes of authentic leadership" and is emphasized by "heightened levels of followers' self-awareness and self-regulation leading to positive follower development and outcomes". The aim of going to authentic followership is because they are supposed to reflect transparency in their dealings, balanced information process, genuine attitudes and behaviors, and ethical dimension which are aligned with what authentic leadership is about. In this respect, these mutual, parallel conventions make the theory of authentic leadership. Moreover, Luthans & Avolio's (2003) suggested four elements at the core of authentic leadership theory. The first pillar is self-awareness, which represents the leaders' consciousness about their strengths and areas of development, taking into account the knowledge of self-motivation and interest and understanding of their nature in interacting with others. The second key element is relational transparency. Leaders are translucent in their decisions and share them openly with others; it is a record for original self-explanatory rather than displaying a false self. The Third milestone is balanced processing, in which the leader is aware of the data they have and draws decisions based on that without any bias, subjectivity, or misrepresentations. The last pillar deals with the internal moral perspective where leaders are following their positive attitudes, ethical standards, and positive values while dealing with individuals, groups, and organizations. In

addition to other matters like optimism, confidence, positive character, values, and resilience are at the core of authentic leadership theory.

It is believed that authenticity and authentic leadership may fundamentally change leadership if applied in organizations and institutions due to its construct. Its significance is related to transparent relationships exercised by leaders and followers, in addition to a built sense of self-awareness, confidence, and optimism. Moreover, the theory is meaningful in terms of trust-building, accountability, and positive ethical environment that this kind of theory highlights, which adds to any institution's performance ratio.

Methodology

According to Creswell (2018) research approach is "a plan and the procedures for research that span the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation." Concerning this study, most of the studies about authentic leadership approach it from a quantitative perspective, indicating a deficiency in using qualitative empirical methods to analyze the applied principles of authentic leaders in the context of UAE (Leithwood 2012). Furthermore, another approach to studying the practices of authentic leadership "involves listening to people in organizations and finding out when and why they talk about leadership, what they mean by it, their beliefs, values, and feelings around leadership" (Alvesson & Spicer 2011). In this case, a qualitative method is preferred

as it provides a deeper understanding of the study at hand. Adding to that, Creswell (2018) suggested that "we consider qualitative research because we need a complex detailed understanding of the issue" (p.40). Opposite to the quantitative method which focuses on statistics and outcomes, the qualitative method emphasizes the viewpoints and opinions of educators in context. It administers the tendency to examine topics in-depth (Creswell 2018). Accordingly, this study will focus on using a qualitative approach to examining the implementation of authentic leadership theory in practice.

A research paradigm is a conceptual framework a researcher uses to conduct a study. This study underpins the constructivist approach. Noticeably, Crotty (1998) argued that the person's experience and knowledge define their reality. Subsequently, constructivist theory contemplates the influence of the interactions between authentic leaders to produce knowledge and learning.

Research design is a methodological instrument used by researchers to form an understanding of already existing data to develop a reasonable outcome (Creswell 2018). This study uses an intrinsic, exploratory case study and focus group where authentic leadership theory is examined. Eventually, a case study facilitates the researcher's task to explore both holistically and individually to gather understandable, methodical, and in-depth

knowledge about the concerned case (Yin 2009). Merriam (2009) defines a case study as "an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system" (p.40).

Sampling is a method used by a researcher to process knowledge that can be obtained from a small group or large group; it is beneficial since it is easier to collect the intended information without examining all of the population or each individual. The context of this research is UAE, a private school in Sharjah. The school adopts the American curriculum from Kg to grade 12 with a total population of 1200 students. Therefore, this site is chosen as it is suitable for the researcher since she is the head of the English department in the school. The participants in the current studies are the principal in the case study and the middle leadership, those instructors who educate as well as lead (**assistant principal, subject leaders**), and who can therefore bridge the gap between learning practices and school management. In this case, the heads of departments are the ones who are used in a group interview

Research instruments are determined based on the study's objectives and research questions, for the validity of outcomes, the researcher has employed two qualitative instruments; a case study and a group interview used to achieve the aim of the study. First, a case study "is characterized by process-tracing; it investigates properties of a single phenomenon, instance, or example" (Yin 1994). Gerring (2004) added that "its reliance is on covariation

demonstrated by a single unit and its attempt, at the same time, to illuminate features of a broader set of units." An exploratory case study is adopted in this research; the aim is mainly to deduct more background information and detailed analysis of the study (Yin 2009). Moreover, a group interview refers to an interview where more than one participant is involved in the questioning process. This kind of interview is less time-consuming and makes data analysis easier as all the candidates are present on one site (Kvale & Brinkmann 2015).

Before collecting data, the researcher has the school's principal approval to carry out the study; first, the research title, objectives, and research questions were shared with him, with the targeted participants needed. In the next step, the study population was met, and the study's purpose and rationale were informed thoroughly. Finally, the optional participation was explained, and the right to withdraw from the study at any time was clarified. Moreover, they have been informed about the confidentiality and the anonymity of their answers and identity.

On the one hand, the case study with the principal took 30 minutes; the questions are divided into three main parts; part one is at the personal level tackling the age, the number of years' experience as a leader, qualifications, and degrees of the participant. The second part tackles the core pillars of authentic leadership and its application in the school. Finally, the third part deals with the challenges of executing this kind of leadership post. On the other hand,

the group interview took 25 minutes; 5 participants are scheduled at one site where the researcher questioned them about the pillars of authentic leadership and how they are implemented from their point of view. Data has been collected accordingly.

It is crucial to pilot the research instruments to guarantee the effectiveness of the instruments to solidify the data collection (Majid et al. 2017). The aim of piloting research instruments is mainly to determine other issues related to the study objectives and research questions and to determine possible limitations to the study (Kvale 2007). Accordingly, the researcher piloted the case study and the group interview questions by sending the questions to two neutral experts in the field of leadership to go through questions, and adjust and refine them.

The study has some limitations; one of them is related to the confidentiality and privacy of the principal in the case study; for his position, he has to exercise some secrecy which might affect the effectiveness of the study at hand. In addition to that, the group interview might mask some of the absolute judgments as some might go with the decision and explanation of others without voicing their own; in this case, accuracy might be challenged. Moreover, the study relies on a qualitative approach to research; it is beneficial if the study is approached from a quantitative perspective, using statistical survey data to get the more generalized result and underpin the qualitative results. Furthermore, even another qualitative instrument like observation might help solidify the outcomes. Moreover, more participants

could be targeted, and some other schools as well to have a deeper insight into the study. Additionally, a bias might be introduced at the level of questions. Other investigations in this field can solidify the findings, like how authentic leadership affects the students' outcomes or even teachers' performance.

The participants in the study have signed a consent form before joining as participants. The researcher clearly explained the purpose and the rationale of the study stressing the confidentiality and voluntary protocol in displaying any hint about them. Therefore, the names are anonymous, the leading participant in the study is called a principal, the school in which the investigation takes place is called a school, and the group interview participants are called middle leaders.

For the success of any research, the researcher has to ensure trustworthiness and authenticity while undergoing the study (Creswell 2018). To ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of the study, the researcher has deployed professional colleagues to check the quality and efficiency of the questions in both the case study and the group interview.

In this study, participants are expected to have an understanding and a positive attitude towards implementing the four pillars of authentic leadership in the school. However, it is also predicted to have some contradicting understanding regarding the theory or the practical

enactment of these milestones. Even a gap might be traced back once comparing the data obtained from the principal and the middle leaders in the school. Therefore, the researcher believes that the reflection upon the expected gap might implicate understanding, effective and better enactment that leads to better school management and leadership.

Findings and Data analysis

The school principal in this study enthusiastically participated in the in-depth interview. The interview focused on the many structures associated with authentic leadership, and the data revealed a wide range of viewpoints and ideas.

To begin, the school leader spoke on the self-awareness premise of authentic leadership and said; “A basic pillar of authentic leadership (self-awareness) is important in the way that you try all the time to invest in your strengths and make them even stronger and to address weaknesses through a very structured and organized manner which is a school development plan. So, this awareness will enable you to understand what are the next steps on your improvement school improvement agenda”. He stated that he did not hesitate to identify his talents and faults and that he would occasionally seek comments in order to better grasp who he is as a person. Second, the school leader has exemplified the internalized moral standpoint component of authentic leadership by stating that his actions represent his basic values and that he does not allow conformity to rule him. Instead, his morals motivate him as a leader, allowing others to gain insight into his point of view on contentious matters.

According to the school's principal, "all staff members know what is expected from them. And what are the consequences in case they do not adhere. They see that our interventions or the intervention of the HR as a state are almost consistent and standardized in all circumstances of adherence or lack of adherence. So, we have policies, we have procedures, and these are being implemented in a very consistent and fair manner. And to me, this would enhance standards of work ethics, because even these modern standards and work at its ethics are guaranteed not by the person approaches or the staff, they are guaranteed by institutionalizing the rules and regulations, processes, procedures, relations, staff relations among each other staff relations with the students' relations among each other, rules, accountability, and responsibilities are at the core of the institution". Third, the school's principal has always aimed for balanced reasoning. Before making decisions that could have a significant impact on student's progress, he has sought advice from educational professionals from the national Ministry of Education or foreign accreditation organizations. Furthermore, he has stated that if he had the time, he would listen to the thoughts of individuals who disagree with him. Interestingly, the leader has stated that he occasionally requests brainstorming meetings with the school's senior and middle leaders in order to incorporate thoughts before making judgments.

However, for the sake of the school, he had to sometimes emphasize his point of view. All of this could reflect and demonstrate the value of a well-balanced rationale. Finally, the school leader emphasized relational transparency, which is the fourth element of the genuine

leadership theory, it requires trust, responsibility, honesty, and open-mindedness. According to the school's principal, "it is a very important pillar and this has to do in all areas of operation of the school, it has to do with the school attainment, school progress external examination results, communication with parents' communication with the staff communication with colleagues. We do believe that transparency is a must because it enhances trust among all stakeholder groups and in the first position, and in the second position, it enhances people's collaboration because they do not feel that they are under the pressure of concealing information or hiding information". He stated that he liked both openly sharing his sentiments with others and confessing his mistakes. He was apprehensive about revealing his true self to others. Rather, he has sought to establish professional relationships with his followers and avoid the urge to communicate anything emotional.

Furthermore, to verify the claims of the leader in the case study, a group interview was conducted with the middle leadership. First, in regard to self-awareness, a middle leader argued; "reflect in the way I approach my tasks in the department for example a task that I consider myself challenging and needs time, I will not expect others to finish it and submit it promptly and eventually I will not ask them to do so" . However, in terms of relational transparency, a participant suggested; "it is a must as many of the day to day tasks are either new or quickly developing so it is either the leader admits that a certain mission is challenging for them as well as for employees or the employees will lose trust in the leader, so yes relational transparency is important and applied to a large extent". Whereas for

balanced processing, a middle leader agreed that “Not to a very large extent, despite the fact that we try our best to make informed decisions but schools in general are regulated by larger bodies, SPEA for example, which might impose a decision on all schools, in this case the school has to accept and apply the decision regardless data collected”. Finally, linked to Internalized moral perspective, they have claimed that “ Working in a diversified work community makes it more important and difficult at the same time to reflect your own personal values in the work place, but as a matter of fact when working in such an environment, work colleagues reach to a kind of mutual understanding to the differences and similarities between different cultures and backgrounds , and we all try to hold on to the values that unify us rather than the ones that separate us”.

A previous study on what defines genuine leadership revealed four key constructs: self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing, and an internalized moral viewpoint (Avolio et al. 2009). The findings of this investigation supported that line of thought and agreed to some extent with what was stated in the literature. Analyzing the interview transcript provided insights into real leadership expressions and behaviors from the perspective of a successful leader. This has contributed to current research on authentic leadership (Alazmi and Al-Mahdy 2020; Zhang et al. 2020).

According to the literature, genuine leadership theory, which is an ethical sort of leadership theory, includes positive psychological capital and a good organizational framework (Luthans and Avolio 2003). Authentic leaders, unlike transformative and charismatic leaders,

may or may not be endowed with charisma (Avolio and Gardner 2005). Indeed, leaders cannot accomplish the functioning and development of companies on their own (George and Sims 2007). The outcomes of this study indicate that practicing authenticity, as intended by authentic leadership theory, influences the behavior of both leaders and followers in terms of self-regulation and self-awareness, as well as hopeful self-development. This was shown to be compatible with a Garden et al (2005) investigation. He goes on to say that the followers will inculcate the same traits of optimism and self-control in others. Furthermore, the research revealed that the settings and surroundings for optimism, confidence, resilience, and ambitions, which are essential attributes of the genuine leader, must be established by the leader himself. This is congruent with the findings of Walumbwa et al. (2008), who discovered that authentic leaders promote a "good ethical atmosphere" and "positive psychological capabilities." In terms of self-awareness, it defines how an individual perceives the world and how this view influences his self-perception. The importance of self-awareness ineffective school leadership has been underlined in the literature.

According to the study's findings, the school leader practices self-awareness in the classroom by admitting his own strengths and shortcomings, understanding how he gets motivated, and grasping his own nature in dealing and engaging with others. In addition to what is described in this study, Ozkan and Ceylan (2012) discovered that self-awareness includes understanding how followers perceive the leader's leadership strategy. The same thing was confirmed by the middle leaders in the school. Second, in terms of the internalized

moral perspective, the study's findings are consistent with the findings of Walumbwa et al. (2008), who found that the behavior of the leader relying on his inner moral principles and values vs the behavior depending on external pressure from peers, society, and other demands has formulated the internalized moral viewpoint, which leads in stated decision-making and behavior that is linked with these internalized values. Alvesson and Spicer, on the other hand, have proposed a critical viewpoint on genuine leadership theory (2011). They have questioned the very individualistic moral aspect of genuine leadership, which is based on the premise that a leader is intrinsically a decent person with noble aspirations. However, Chan et al. (2005) regard authentic leaders to be as true to their duty as leaders as they are to themselves as people.

Third, the school leader has demonstrated a favorable desire to use balanced thinking in which all significant evidence will be reviewed before making an objective judgment with less distortion, denial, and overstatement, similar to the Walumbwa et al. research (2011). Furthermore, being open to opposing viewpoints to the leader's sincerely held ideas has been regarded as vital for balancing processing (Gardner et al. 2005). Finally, the school head had no enthusiasm for adopting relational transparency. Among the genuine leadership tactics and practices, he disliked the ability to connect and engage via honest and truthful storytelling. In contrast, Chan et al. (2005) demonstrated that disclosing one's genuine self to others is necessary for relational transparency, in which the leader transparently provides information and expresses opinions and feelings. As a result, being an authentic leader

involves endorsing trust among people via openness, as opposed to self-serving leaders. According to one study, a genuine leader is viewed as sensitive and honest because he allows and holds individuals and institutions in communion with a compelling vision. Leaders must tighten their focus based on the scenario and their followers.

According to Walker and Shuangye (2007), genuine leaders may build authentic connections with others via self-reflection and correction. As a result, students' life and learning within the provided educational framework may be enhanced.

Conclusion

School administrators are currently dealing with increasing tension and resistance in their everyday lives. Due to the economic, technical, and environmental difficulties of the twenty-first century, authentic leadership is especially important in today's society. The genuine leadership theory combines elements of transformational and ethical leadership, with a specific emphasis on self-awareness, internalized moral viewpoint, balanced processing, and relational transparency. The core of true leadership has always been ethics and morals in acts and interactions. The genuine leadership theory, as guided by the theoretical underpinnings of this study, was found to be utilized by the school leader who participated in this study. He has demonstrated strong self-awareness by acknowledging his own talents and flaws, as well as a high internalized moral viewpoint, demonstrating that values drive

him as a leader. Furthermore, the school leader has always planned and attempted to use balanced thinking while making judgments. On the other hand, the school leader indicated that trust, accountability, honesty, and open-mindedness are required to demonstrate relational transparency, which is the fourth pillar of the genuine leadership theory. In many cases, however, this was not possible. It was expected that the participant was truthful and knowledgeable enough to provide correct answers with sensible explanations. Because the participants' perceptions, feelings, and ideas are the only source of data for this study, this assumption has been deemed one of the limitations. Only one person has been questioned to investigate the case under consideration, which is the authentic leadership hypothesis. As a result, another constraint is the results' generalizability. The acquired data was based solely on the participant's personal viewpoint, with no objective data from quantitative methods or statistical statistics to support this qualitative data. The findings might help practitioners emphasizes the importance of ongoing professional development by teaching them how to transfer theory into practice. The study has ramifications for both leadership research and practice. Professional development programs, for example, might be created to teach school leaders in order to better equip them or improve their authentic practices. In the absence of significant empirical study on genuine leadership, a large number of future studies might be conducted to better explore and describe this idea for leaders to implement. A larger amount of qualitative literature on genuine leadership theory is desperately needed to supplement the quantitative material. Because the data was acquired using only two instruments, more

research with a bigger sample size and more than one tool should be done. This may assure the validity and generalizability of the findings. As a result, to assure validity, this study might be expanded by interviewing more than one school administrator. Alternatively, a mixed-method research design might be used to triangulate the data and therefore verify the study's validity. Another research might be done to distinguish between describing and being a genuine leader.

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