Exploring the Perspective of a School Leader on Authentic Leadership Theory in Practice: A Case Study at a Private School in Dubai, UAE

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Abstract

Authentic leadership is essential in today's society due to the economic, technological and environmental challenges confronted by the school leaders in the twenty-first century. This study explores the authentic leadership theory in practice from the perspective of a successful leader at a private school in Dubai and to find out how authentic leadership theory is practiced or could be practiced by school leaders in the context of the UAE. The authentic leadership theory informs the theoretical framework for this research. The research design adopts a qualitative exploratory case study and uses the lens of constructivism as a research paradigm. Semi-structured interview was used to collect data; this involved in-depth interview with one school leader who was purposefully selected. The findings show that the practice of the school leader reflects the characteristics of authentic leadership evidenced by self-awareness, internalized moral perspective and balanced reasoning. However, evidence also shows absence of relational transparency in the leader's practice as it could be difficult in some situations. These findings could be useful for practitioners to add value to professional development programs for training how the authentic leadership theory can be translated into practice.

Keywords: Authentic Leadership, School Leader, Dubai Schools, UAE.

1. Introduction

At present, economic, technological and environmental forces are the major challenges influencing educational organizations (Bennis 2013). School leaders in the twenty-first century are concerned "about an economy where knowledge is a core commodity and the rapid production of knowledge and innovation is critical to organizational survival" (Benn and Martin 2010, p. 299). Meeting these challenges has necessitated having global skills among educational leaders to feature the unprecedented interconnectedness worldwide (Prentice 2013). In this regard, leadership is enduring a paradigmatic shift of power and respect (Bennis 2013). Noticeably, school leadership is a well-researched area that has produced abundant studies and keeps on to enthrall experts and researchers all over the world. These studies have been found to be dominated by a leader-centric perspective (Bennis 2014; Kaigh et al. 2014). However, these traditional leadership theories come short in preparing the twenty-first school leaders to effectively operate educational organizations in the era of globalization (O'Brien and Peterson 2009). Alvesson and Spicer (2012) suggest that the leader has turn on "one of the dominant heroes of our time" (p.1). Thereby, there is a need for novel thinking in terms of leadership.

One of the more recent leadership theories that has come out is the Authentic Leadership Theory and the body of research is steadily increasing (Avolio and Gardner 2005; Avolio et al. 2009; Northouse 2015). This theory has been originated in the US where the fosterage of developing authenticity in followers and building around psychological capitals including efficacy, hope, trust, optimism, resilience and followership are among

the centric postulation to this theory (Avolio et al. 2009; Goffee and Jones 2005). For instance, Walumbwa et al. (2011) propose that "authentic leadership is founded on the notion of trust and transparency, which is a vital element that enables people who work together to know they can rely on each other implicitly" (p.113). Though there is concourse between other leadership theories, in specific, transformational and ethical leadership theory, there is also specific rigour to the main conceptions of the authentic leadership theory with particular emphasis on self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing and relational transparency (Ardichvili and Manderscheid 2008; Northhouse 2015). Contrary to transformational and charismatic leaders, charisma may or may not be a core in authentic leadership (Avolio and Gardner 2005).

Put differently, given that the twenty-first century leader is required to have the capabilities for resourcefulness, change management, collaboration and relations, it is plausible to propose the authentic leadership theory constructs from sides that could turn into a leadership theory that prepares leaders for sustainable leadership. Though the authentic leadership theory is being a promising evolution for twenty-first century leaders, school leaders are confronted to be authentic (Walker and Shuangye 2007). Literature has documented a considerable number of research studies on authentic leadership. Most studies shed light on the importance of authenticity in leadership (Gardner et al. 2011). Other studies have focused on the practical side of authentic leadership through the examination of the school leaders' abilities to deliberately carry out authentic behavior (Gardner et al. 2011). Others have examined the authentic leadership theory from cultural perspectives such as in China, Switzerland and Spain to

validate the authentic leadership questionnaire (Zhang et al. 2012; Azanza et al. 2013; Endrissat et al. 2008). Yet, other studies recognize authenticity as a trait demonstrated by successful school leaders with an emphasis on the criticalness of being authentic as a leader which necessitated further exploration (Prentice 2013). Noticeably, there is little or no studies that provide practical guidelines or training to school leaders on how to best utilize authenticity relying on various situations and group of followers. Collectively, this has reflected the rationale behind conducting an empirical research study for this particular topic.

Though researchers in authentic leadership reveal to concur on the main sides of this theory, there is a gap in the literature on the practices of authentic school leaders particularly in the context of UAE. Bearing in mind that it is crucial to look at the leadership theory with a sizable amount of doubt and query what some of the implicit postulates may be and assure the study's validity, this study has been intended to explore how authentic leadership theory is perceived to be practiced from the perspective of a successful school leader in the UAE context. Noteworthy, the current leadership theories have mostly scrutinized from a quantitative approach that misses comprehending the real behaviour of leaders (House 1995) whereas qualitative studies would be advantageous for the increasing body of literature on leadership in general and authentic leadership in particular. Thereby, this study has adopted a qualitative exploratory case study approach to fill the gaps identified in literature. Consequently, this study aims to gain insights on authentic leadership theory in practice from the perspective of a successful leader at one private school in the UAE. The research question is: How could the authentic leadership

theory be practiced by a school leader in the UAE context? The study pivots on connecting the theoretical concepts of the authentic leadership theory with action area in one successful school in the UAE.

Theoretical and practical contributions have been identified in this study. Firstly, the qualitative research approach brings an unusual method to the masterful contributions of quantitative studies on leadership. The dominant quantitative research studies on leadership have to be complemented with more comprehensive data and in-depth descriptions of the topic via designing qualitative research study. Secondly, the authentic leadership theory has not been explored from a leaders' perspective in the UAE context though contributions are emerging and encompass authentic leadership in China, Switzerland and Spain (Zhang et al. 2012; Azanza et al. 2013; Endrissat et al. 2008). Thereby, this has added and participated to the present literature. Thirdly, this exploration would contribute in assisting practitioners in the application of authentic leadership in the schools.

2. Literature Review:

2.1. Conceptual Underpinning:

This study has been underpinned in the concept of "Authenticity". In the wide concept of its sense, the term 'Authenticity' is "being true in substance, as being genuine or as being real" (Oxford English Dictionary). From philosophical and psychological stand points, authenticity is often blurred with sincerity (Avolio and Gardner 2005). Indeed, sincerity embraces other whereas authenticity embraces self. Philosophically, recognizing and involving larger contexts of human lives, supplying a meaning of personal relations with

74

a wider sense, whether political, social, or religious have involved true authenticity (Fiske and Taylor 1991). Authenticity has been viewed as both individualistic and collectivistic indicating that moral values and beliefs are components of authenticity. Within the context of authentic leadership, authenticity is stated as acting correctly in agreement to the true self by possessing one's ideas, emotions, beliefs, functions and personal expertise (Harter 2002).

2.2. Leadership in Schools:

Leadership is "one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth" (Burns 1978, p.2). Multiple perspectives including various disciplines, cultures, religions, worldviews or alternate platforms can be used to observe leadership (Prentice 2013). Though scholars and practitioners have tried to define leadership for more than a century, there is no assent for one definition (Northouse 2015). Rather, there are as many definition of leadership as the number of people who attempted to define it due to the continuous emerging of leadership theories.

The abilities, initiatives and actions of the school principals have determined the success of the school (Spillane 2006). School principals are usually associated with school leadership. School leaders have been placed under extreme pressure due to their accountability in improving the achievement of students. Noteworthy, the concept of school improvement has been embodied through inspection and testing. Thereby, school leaders have to reconsider their leadership approach for improving their schools in the twenty-first century (Prentice 2013). Both the tone of the school building and the direction of the school are usually set and impacted by the school principal. The effect of

school leaders concerning student achievement comes after their impact on teaching quality (Leithwood et al. 2004). As it is evident in literature, the behaviours and actions of the school leaders, in particular, have impacted student achievement. This justifies the worth of accountability for the school leaders (Chappelear and Price 2012).

2.3. An Overview of Leadership Theories:

Leadership theory can be described and understood via suing and tracking its history. Theories are generally classified by which feature is thought to define the leader the most (Leithwood 2012). The most widespread one's are: Great Man Theory, Trait Theory, and Behavioral theories, Contingency Theories, Transactional Theories and Transformational Theories. Earlier, before late 1940s, great man theorists and the trait theorists have an ideology that the leaders' capabilities and competencies are inherent and innate. Individuals become leaders based on their own intellect, impression and communication competencies (Bolden et al. 2006; Leithwood 2012). Between 1940s and 1960s, behavioral theorists have a belief that leaders' behaviors has been directly associated with the efficiency of leadership. Contingency theorists have claimed that the efficiency of leadership has depended on the situation and a squeamish style of leadership which are convenient at a given circumstance (Bolden et al. 2006; Leithwood 2012). Then, the appearance and charisma of leaders have been considered in the recent theories about leadership including transactional, transformational and transcendental leadership theories (Leithwood 2012). The recent theories of leadership have testified movements from single, individual, principal leadership to a collaborative, distributive and democratic leadership.

Regarding the transformational leadership theory, it has been originated in the early 1980s as a part of novel paradigm. It is one of the greatly utilized approaches that have invaded an essential position in the research in the past 30 years and concentrates on the charismatic and effective elements of leadership. It has been defined as operation during which a mutual engagement of both leaders and followers towards elevated standards of excellence and stimuli usually occurs (Burn 1978). Put differently, transformational leadership theory has been perceived as a persistent operation where followers and leaders unavoidably tied up together contrary to the discrete interchange within a transactional leadership approach (Northouse 2015). Noticeably, achieving goals, giving promotions, bonuses or other transactional exchanges between leaders and followers for performance frame the transactional leadership (Northouse 2015).

On the other side, the leadership theories and approaches grown in the twenty-first century concentrate on leadership as an operation where leaders have abilities to impact a group for attaining goals rather than pivoting on notion definition (Northouse 2015). The emergent leadership processes in this century encompass servant leadership, spiritual leadership and authentic leadership. For instance, the service for the enrichment of the individuals' lives for building better organizations and creating a caring world is the pivot of the servant leadership approach (Greenleaf 1991). This approach is contradictory with a leader-first approach that is pivoted on power, ego and possession. As like the behavioral leadership theory, servant leadership has concentrated on leadership from the point of view of the leader and his behavior (Northouse 2015).

Regarding the authentic leadership, a positive development via greater self-awareness and

self-regulated positive behaviors are the central focus of this approach (Luthans and Avolio 2003). This theory is considered more tentatively than other established leadership theories (Northouse 2015). Thereby, as more research is carried on, more assumptions and principles for the authentic leadership will emerge. The practice of the authentic leadership theory has been showed to improve the engagement of teachers in the schools (Alazmi and Al-Mahdy 2020). Moreover, the principal's authentic leadership has direct and indirect effects on teachers' voice behaviour where the interpersonal trust positively moderated the relationship between psychological empowerment and teachers' voice behaviour (Zhang et al. 2020).

2.4. Theoretical Underpinning: Authentic Leadership Theory:

As a research grounding, leadership is a broad subject, grown with several definitions and a plethora of theories. The glamour with leadership extends through centuries where many leadership theories can be traced back to the old Greeks. Currently, leadership is enduring a paradigmatic shift of power and respect due to the globalization impact. To achieve the study's purpose, this topic has been theoretically underpinned within the work of Luthans and Avolio's (2003) work on authentic leadership theory. Avolio et al. (2004) propose authentic leadership as a core conception that can integrate other leadership theories such as transformational and ethical leadership. For instance, Northouse (2015) suggests that the authentic leadership theory has been built up from transformational, charismatic and servant leadership. Noticeably, an essential component of the authentic leadership theory is the ethical dimension which puts this leadership theory away from the long-established leadership theories, as many of these do not have an ethical component. However, most leaders display behaviour which is neither ethical nor

78

unethical (Trevino et al. 2003). In addition to that, the deep levels of leader's awareness of their own and other's moral values and perspectives, knowledge and strengths, and the context in which they work, have distinguished the authentic leadership theory from the other theories such as the transformational leadership (Avolio et al. 2004). Besides that, behavioral styles are not differentiated in the authentic leadership theory.

Based on Luthans and Avolio's (2003) work, four key constructs have been introduced in the authentic leadership theory. The first key construct is the self-awareness which stands to the recognition of the leader's strengths and weaknesses, knowing how the leader gets to be motivated himself and comprehending his own nature in dealing and interacting with others are all related to the self-awareness. The second key construct is the relational transparency which displays the one's authentic self contrary to fake self where the leader transparently shares information and expression of beliefs and emotions. The third key construct is the balanced processing where leaders examine the data before taking a decision without any bias with less misrepresentation, negation and overstatement along being open to views that face the leader's deeply help convictions. The fourth key construct is the internalized moral perspective where leaders show self-regulation directed by his internal moral standards and values facing group, institutions and societal pressures. Indeed, each one of these four constructs and behaviours concentrates on one aspect of authenticity. Accordingly, values, character and moral capacity along with possessing and modeling confidence, hope, optimism and resilience anchor the authentic leadership theory.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Approach:

Reviewing the literature on leadership studies has showed dominance for quantitative studies on leadership and there were deficiency in the qualitative empirical research on the practices of authentic leadership in educational organizations in the UAE context (Leithwood 2012). Accordingly, an approach to understand deeper meanings as well as an approach which "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" are highly demanded for leadership studies as suggested by Alvesson and Spicer (2011, p.11). Thus, a qualitative approach has been found to be appropriate. As Creswell proposes (2007), "we consider qualitative research because we need a complex detailed understanding of the issue" (p. 40). Contrary to a quantitative research which concentrates on outcomes and assessments, a qualitative research does not aim to prove a theory or test a hypothesis. Instead, a qualitative study underlines the views of practitioners in context and presents the opportunity to investigate topics in depth in their natural settings (Creswell 2013; Merriam 2009).

3.2 Research Paradigm:

Constructivism has framed the lens of the researcher where the authentic leadership theory has been viewed as an intentional act impacted by the real world of the school. The process is impacted by the way of interpreting and constructing understandings of reality by both leaders and followers. Individuals' thinking frames derived from their knowledge and experience has formulated the meaning of their reality (Crotty 1998). This

80

study is exploring the authentic leadership theory as perceived by one school leader at a school in the UAE. Thereby, constructivist method considers the effect of interactions among leadership team members in the production of knowledge (Crotty 1998).

3.3 Research Design:

An exploratory case study design has been considered in this study where the authentic leadership theory is the unit for analysis. Generally, a case study enables researchers to perform an exploration that is both holistic and real world and to gather comprehensive, systematic and in-depth information about the case of interest (Yin 2009). For Merriam (2009), a case study is "an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system" (p.40). Three major types of case studies are commonly fostered in social science research: explanatory, descriptive and exploratory. Noticeably, exploratory case studies are convenient when looking to answer "how" and "why" questions regarding a particular phenomenon (Yin 2009). Consequently, it has been adopted in this study to seek for insights on the authentic leadership theory in practice.

3.4 Study Setting and Sampling:

Criterion purposeful sampling strategy has been used to choose a school leader to be the participant in this study (Shakir 2002). The selection criteria were: (a) having more than ten years experience as a leader, (b) having a minimum two years of experience in UAE schools and (c) currently working in a school that has a minimum good ratings in the last two years of the KHDA inspection. The researcher has used his connections to find the intended school leader. The selected school principal is 52 years old holding a Master of

Education from a western country. He has two years of experience of being Head of curriculum, five years of experience as being a Deputy Principal prior to his appointment as a principal since 2008. Within the years of his leadership, the school has got very good rating by KHDA inspection.

3.5 Data Collection:

One of the primary methods of data collection in qualitative research is interviews where the researcher acts as the primary instrument (Creswell 2014; Merriam 2009). One face-to-face, in-depth, semi-structured interview has been conducted with the selected school leader. This method was found to be appropriate as it enables contribution to existing or new theory and provides opportunities for an interviewee to display his/ her own views the topic versus pre-identified answers to questions (Creswell 2014). Besides, the flexibility in the structure of questions along with its interactive nature have emphasized on the appropriateness of using interview as a data collection method in this study. The interview has been carried for approximately 55 minutes at a place convenient for the interviewee. The interview has been digitally recorded. An interview protocol has been followed, however the semi-structured nature of the interview has provided a space for asking follow-up and probe questions to dig deeper into specific situations (Merriam 2009; Seidman 2013). The interview questions were open-ended and generated from the literature on authentic leadership following Merriam's criteria for asking questions (Merriam 2009). The validity and reliability have been checked via bracketing, debriefing, member checking and interview piloting for ensuring trustworthiness which is highly significant in research studies (Merriam 2009).

3.6 Data Analysis:

Data analysis is "the process of making sense out of the data... [which] involves consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read – it is the process of making meaning" (Merriam 2009, p. 178) where it is completed simultaneously with the data collection. The data has been analyzed by firstly checking particular statements or data linked to the authentic leadership trying to identify emerging themes and patterns that are responsive to the research question (Merriam 2009). Then, data is interpreted using the constructivist lens to identify the main points then expend the analysis by querying and contextualizing the findings in the literature.

3.7 *Ethical Consideration and Role of the Researcher:*

The participant has signed an informed consent that summarizes the purpose of the study and ensures the confidential, anonymous and the voluntary participation. The participant has been treated in a respected way and he has given the opportunity for confirming the content of his interview transcript. All data has been stored in pass-word secured files. Regarding the researcher, he has many years experience in education and was the primary instrument for data collection through an interview. As a middle leader, the researcher was interested in the identification of expressions and practices of authentic leadership for a successful leader in the UAE context. Throughout data collection and data analysis, he was highly aware about his bias to monitor his subjectivity.

4. Results and Discussion:

4.1. Results:

The school leader who was the case in this study actively engaged in the in-depth interview. The interview centred on the various constructs related to authentic leadership; a wide range of views and opinions emerged from the data.

Firstly, regarding the self-awareness construct of the authentic leadership, the school leader said "*I am aware of the importance of being aware about my strengths and weaknesses as this helped me to control my emotions, behaviour, thoughts and attitude and this facilitated my professional relationship with the staff members*". Consequently, the school leader has linked the success of his school to this construct. He said that he did not hesitate to list his strengths and weaknesses, and he could sometimes seek for feedback as a way of understanding who he really is as an individual. Furthermore, he has reflected his acceptance for his feelings about himself. Secondly, the internalized moral perspective construct of the authentic leadership has been highly practiced by the school leader where he has stated that his actions reflect his core values and he did not permit group pressure to control him. Instead, his morals drive him as a leader thereby providing an insight for other people to know his stand view on controversial issues. The school leader said, "*I am always eager to build honest relationships with the staff members, always trying to be positive and promote openness*". Thirdly, the school leader has always intended to have balanced reasoning. Sometimes, he has asked educational experts from either the national Ministry of education or international accreditation organizations before making decisions that might have strong impact on the students'

84

achievement. Moreover, he has reported that he could listen to the ideas of those who disagree with him if he had enough time to do that. Noticeably, the leader has mentioned that he sometimes asks for brainstorming meeting with the senior and middle managers in the school for the purpose of putting ideas on the table before making decisions. However, sometimes he had to emphasize on his point of view for the benefit of the school. All together might reflect and show the practice of balanced reasoning. Lastly, the school leader has stated that trust, accountability, integrity and open-mindedness are essential to display relational transparency which is the fourth construct of the authentic leadership theory. The school leader stated, "*I am not being able to attain relational transparency in some situations. I am always trying to be transparent, but I am not able to explain my decisions where some information must be kept confidential and some decisions could not be justified*". He said that he neither preferred to openly share his feelings with others nor admitting his mistakes. He did not like to let other know who he truly is as a person. Rather, he has preferred to maintain professional relations with no need to express anything personal with his followers. However, it is difficult to differentiate authenticity between personal and professional. Noteworthy, the school leader has reflected a high wish for their authentic approach to be reciprocal.

4.2 Discussion:

The previous research on what constitutes authentic leadership has showed that this theory has four main constructs self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing and an internalized moral perspective (Avolio et al. 2009). The results of this study has endorsed that line of thinking and agreed to some extent with what reported in

the literature. Analyzing the interview transcript has given insights on the expressions and practices of authentic leadership from the perspective of a successful leader. This has added to the most recent literature studies on authentic leadership (Alazmi and Al-Mahdy 2020; Zhang et al. 2020).

Literature has reported that positive psychological capital and a positive organizational context have been involved in the authentic leadership theory similar to servant leadership which is an ethical type of leadership theory (Luthans and Avolio 2003). Contrary to transformational and charismatic leaders, charisma may or may not be a core in authentic leaders (Avolio and Gardner 2005). Indeed, the functioning and the success of the organizations would not be achieved by leaders on their own (George and Sims 2007). This study's findings have found that practising authenticity as intended in the authentic leadership theory, impacts the behaviour of both leaders and followers regarding self-regulation and self-awareness as well as the optimistic self-development. This has been found to be consistent with a study for Garden et al. (2005) who further elaborate that the followers will promote the same positive features regarding optimism and self regulations in others. In addition to that, the findings have reported that the conditions and environments for optimism, confidence, resilience and aspirations, which are among the core capabilities of the authentic leader, must be created by the leader himself. This is consistent with a study for Walumbwa et al. (2008) who ascertain that the promotion for a 'positive ethical climate' and 'positive psychological capacities' are among the behaviours of authentic leaders. Regarding self-awareness, it frames how the individual comprehend the world and how this comprehension could impact his self-perception. Self-awareness has been highlighted in the literature related to effective

86

school leadership. The study's findings have reported that the school leader is practicing self-awareness in the school where he works through acknowledging his strengths and weaknesses, knowing how he gets to be motivated himself and comprehending his own nature in dealing and interacting with. In addition to what reported in this study, Ozkan and Ceylan (2012) have found that self-awareness also encompasses a comprehension of how followers evaluate the leadership approach of the leader.

Secondly, with respect to the internalized moral perspective, the study's finding has been aligned with the results for Walumbwa et al. (2008) where the behaviour of the leader relying on his inner moral principles and values against the behaviours relying on external pressure from peers, society and other demands have formulated the internalized moral perspective which ends in expressed decision-making and behaviour that is aligned with these internalized values. Contrary, one critical perspective of the authentic leadership theory has been suggested by Alvesson and Spicer (2011). They have criticized the highly individualistic moral side of the authentic leadership that lies on a postulation that a leader is innately a good individual with noble intentions. However, the potential dilemma between being authentic but not necessarily with good intentions as ironic have been referred by Chan et al. (2005) who consider that authentic leaders are as true to their role as leaders as to themselves as individuals.

Thirdly, the school leader has showed positive intention to have balanced reasoning where all the significant data before taking a decision in an objective way with less misrepresentation, negation and overstatement will be considered similar to Walumbwa et al. study (2011). Besides, being open to views that face the leader's deeply held

87

convictions has been considered important for balance processing (Gardner et al. 2005). Lastly, the school leader did not show any positivity towards practicing relational transparency. He did not like the connection and engagement abilities through honest and transparent storytelling among the authentic leadership strategies and practices. In contrast, Chan et al (2005) showed that revealing one's true self to others are essential for the relational transparency where the leader transparently shares information and expression of beliefs and emotions. Accordingly, being an authentic leader means to endorse through their transparency trust among others contrary to fake self leaders. One research study reported that an authentic leader has been perceived as vulnerable and transparent as he permits and hold people and institutions via communion a convincing vision. Leaders have to tighten their direction relying on the situation and followers. Walker and Shuangye (2007) have referred that authentic interactions with others through self-reflection and adjustment could be developed by authentic leaders. Consequently, students' lives and learning within the given educational context could be improved.

5. **Conclusion:**

School leaders are presently confronting raising tension and defiance in their daily life careers. Authentic leadership is particularly significant in today's society to due to economical, technological and environmental challenges of the twenty-first century. Elements of transformational and ethical leadership have been combined in the authentic leadership theory with particular emphasis on self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing and relational transparency. Ethics and morality in actions and interactions has been the pivot of authentic leadership. The authentic

leadership theory as informed in the theoretical underpinnings of this study has been found applied by the school leader who participated in this study. He has showed both high self-awareness by identifying his strengths and weaknesses and high internalized moral perspective where morals drive him as a leader. Besides, the school leader has always intended and tried to have balanced reasoning while he is making decisions. On the other side, the school leader has stated that trust, accountability, integrity and open-mindedness are essential to display relational transparency which is the fourth construct of the authentic leadership theory. However, this could not be attained in many situations.

It has been assumed that the participant was honest and has the expertise to give accurate answers with rational explanations. This assumption has been considered as one of the limitations as the participant's perception, feelings and thoughts are the only source of data for this study. Only one participant has interviewed to explore the case under study which is the authentic leadership theory. Thereby, the generalizability of the results is another limitation. The collected data has relied on the personal view of the participant without using any objective data from quantitative method or statistical data to underpin this qualitative data. The findings could be useful for practitioners to add value to professional development programs for training how theory can be translated into practice. The implications of the study extend to both the research and practice of leadership. For example, professional development programs could be developed in train the school leaders for equipping them or improving their authentic practices. In the absence of sufficient empirical research on authentic leadership, a lot of future studies could be done for further explorations and descriptions of this theory to be practiced by

leaders. More qualitative body of literature is highly needed to complement the quantitative literature on authentic leadership theory. Since the data has been collected from one instrument only and from one participant only, additional research should be conducted with a larger sample and using more than one instrument to collect data. This could ensure the validity and generalizability. Thereby, this study could be extended by interviewing more than one school leader to ensure the validity. Or a mixed method study design could be conducted to triangulate the data and thereby ensure the validity of the study. Another study could be conducted on the difference between describing and being an authentic leader.

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