Sustainability Development in Education: An Empirical Evidence and Discussion about Authentic Leadership, Religiosity and Commitment

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Abstract. The study presented to enhance understanding leadership development in an educational setting for sustainable development. Authentic leadership has core physiognomies having transparency, balanced-processing, accountability, and person's morality & ethics works in a self-centred way. These characteristics can be adopted through strategic planning for sustainable development in educational settings to improve commitment among employees. The current study highlighted the significance of Authentic Leadership over-commitment in university employees of Pakistan. The results revealed authentic leadership is the predictor of organizational commitment in university employees in Pakistan and the religiosity moderates authentic leadership and organizational commitment.

INTRODUCTION

It is important for sustainable development to promote people with positive insight into organizational behaviour (Nasih, *et al.*, 2019). Practising authentic leadership climate refers to positive organizational development. Employees who possess self-awareness, ethics, and a higher level of morality, transparency and balanced processing of information can consider as part of this leadership type (Walumbwa *et al.*, 2008) Leaders who adopt this style have self-awareness as well as awareness about others. The self-awareness practise give chance to know strengths and weaknesses by themselves therefore, such characterises allow them exhibits high moral standards to take decisions not only for themselves but also mindful for others thorough keeping facts and communicating openly in spirit of a true relationship with in organization (Gardner, *et al.*, 2011; Kernis, 2003). Researchers find that authentic leaders' transparency and self-awareness influence and attract their follower. Leaders' positive behaviour towards self-awareness instil employee's positive behaviour as the core value of the organization (Howell and Shamir, 2005). Authentic leadership, affective commitment, and job resourcefulness tested (Semedo, Coelho, and Ribeiro, 2016) and invited for more researches because authentic leadership is styles of transformational leadership and positively related to commitment and increase positive behaviour (Bakari, 2018; Bello & Steyn, 2019; Adell Carrassco et al., 2019). Pakistani society religiously implicates 97% of its population as Muslims, and people try to adopt Islamic practices; the study in important policymaking and decision-making considering influence of religion over beliefs and practices of individuals towards social behaviour, (Aman, et al., 2019) Consumption level patterns have a different impact on individual beliefs in different religious affiliations. In Islam, the adherence level of Muslims required beliefs and commitment (Mohd et al., 2019) in normal life. Practising religion in Islamic society is not only limited to personal life only. Islamic principles provide moral and ethical guidance for applying the same commitment and honesty in all sprees of life including organizational life. The current study aims to add knowledge in the existing literature about authentic leadership role as a predictor of enhancing commitment in the educational sector of Pakistan. The contribution of this paper is to provide a new trend toward education and leadership settings in organisational development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies about administrative leadership revealed a significant literature development (Van Wart, 2013). Learning through change comes in everyone's life happen with the time and by the experience. These

learnings become advantage for sustainable leadership and tool for empowerment to aid in leadership learning process, change and practice (Diamond, 2012). The authentic leadership as a construct is a positive influence of a person which comes through a process of positive psychology for organizational developments. It could result in increased self-awareness and positive self-regulated behaviour of employees as leaders, which help to foster positive influence among colleagues (Luthans and Avolio, 2003). Authentic leadership constructs carried important value-based personal leadership which is evident in literature review and confirmed that it also positively affected to the organizational outcome (Walumbwa, et al., 2008; Bird, et al., 2012; Leroy, Palanski and Simons, 2012). Development of leadership program for effective development and empowerment of teachers in educational systems required considerable investments (Hairon and Dimmock, 2012; Starratt, 2007). These investments can make through effective training programs. Authentic leadership defined as the practice of ethics and moral leadership in schools (Begley and Stefkovich, 2007). Leaders positive behaviour towards self-awareness instils employee's positive behaviour, which becomes the core value of the organization (Howell and Shamir, 2005). Balanced processing, transparency, moral & ethics, and self-awareness are four key components are preliminary efforts for implementing of authentic leadership through moral practise (Walumbwa, et al., 2008; Gardner, et al., 2005; Bird et al., 2009). Authentic leadership brings long-term results and meaning through leadership when they overcome difficult and conflicting situations for sustainability. It is a symbol of professional effectiveness, which is also sound ethical and have a conscious reflection in educational administrating practice. Authentic leadership style works as a device in the study of academic literature which enables distributed leadership into different components according to a different situation (Van Wart, 2011). Lack of self-awareness leads to lack of confidence, so knowledge acquisition provides a chance to deal with this difficulty in educational management (Amin and Khan, 2009), thus employees who bestow ethical leadership behaviours should have training to provide a positive influence, (Van Wart, 2011; Politis, 2013) and authentic leaders enriched for training investments. The growth of awareness and knowledge aimed at better decision making required in the field of academic research (Orrill and Cohen, 2016), while research about the authenticity of a person has application in education found traits as honesty and sincerity of a person required in educationists as a role model (Weimer, 2011). Strong self-efficacy also helps teachers to practice this profession and develop bond so valuable resource exhibits better performance in return (Hassan and Hatmaker, 2014). For leadership development in educational institutes, we required teachers who are ethical, trustworthy, and transparent in practice (Kiersch and Peters 2017; Duignan, 2004). Individuals when they demonstrate self-awareness in organizations work fluently, people understand them and follow without misunderstanding (Gardner, Avolio, and Walumbwa, 2005). Honesty, self-reflection and self-regulation is the capacity required for sustainability. A strong vision of culture needs to create among a workgroup, and transparency provides higher ethical grounds for individuals who practice ethical standards. This practice enables them to engage and inspire employees in the workplace. But, for understanding transparency, one must understand the attribution process first (Wegner, Coulton, and Wenzlaff, 1985). Transparency brings higher tolerance and personal ethics in a person. It is not only a leadership trait but all individuals within the organization can adopt easily. Studies about positive influence of leaders in organisational remained consistent in literature (Ambrose, Arnaud and Schminke, 2008; Sims and Kroeck, 1994; Sims and Keon, 1997); authentic leadership is a form of transformational leadership which practiced widely in school leaders (Yu, Leithwood, and Jantzi, 2002). In educational settings, teachers hold formal leadership positions. Many researchers argued considerable change in teacher's commitment come thorough transformational leadership influence (Liu and Hallinger, 2018). Transformational leaders tend to set direction by building a shared vision, and consensus about priorities about performance and achieving objectives. They also inclined towards the development of others by providing support to individuals and offer intellectual stimulations (Utama and Mirhard, 2016), which is more likely a redesigning model to build a collaborative culture. Implementation of this perception leads the transformation towards a specific plan achieving personal reflection through improved self-knowledge, which is the step towards authentic leadership (Begley, 2006). Several important changes can lead and support structure to aid in leadership evolving works, providing learning opportunities, creating a clear and open path to engage them in teaching leadership (Knapp, 2017). The construction of literature developed from the hypothesis that authentic leadership is basically a strong phenomenon. The following hypothesis are developed:

H_0: There is an association between authentic leadership qualities and organisation commitment.

H_A: There is no association between authentic leadership and organisational commitment

H_0: Religiosity moderates authentic leadership and organizational commitment positively

H_A: Religiosity moderates authentic leadership and organizational commitment negatively.

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METHODS AND DESIGN OF RESEARCH

The current section discussed the data collection, data analysis, and procedural methods of the study. Use of the whole population in research would be unmatched (Etikan, Sulaiman and Rukayya, 2016) but we determine a sample size for correct estimate which is required to complete research investigation The targeted population known in current study are the employee of universities, probability sampling adopted due to time constraints and non-availability of a complete list of the population (Singh and Masuku, 2014). The study opted the quantitative research method. A total number of 380 closed-ended questionnaires floated among the employees of local Universities in Pakistan. Avolio et al., (2004) proposed a framework positing several positive results of authentic leadership over employees' attitude, behaviours and commitment of the follower. The data-set of this study is also published in Mendeley for the ease of readers. Hence, to determine the variables, sustainable development commitment is required, which is linked to leader's integrity (Avolio and Gardner, 2005). Another variable to understand commitment which reflects followers' intrinsic work motivation (Meyer, Becker and Vandenberghe, 2004) we pursue work-related goals study because it drives employee motivation for positive workplace environment (Gagné and Deci, 2005). Countries like Pakistan have religion as an important part of social reality and its implications are vital in shaping societies, organizational setting, and leadership behaviours (Gümüsay, 2018). Furthermore, a conceptual framework is developed for brief explanation of the proposed study:
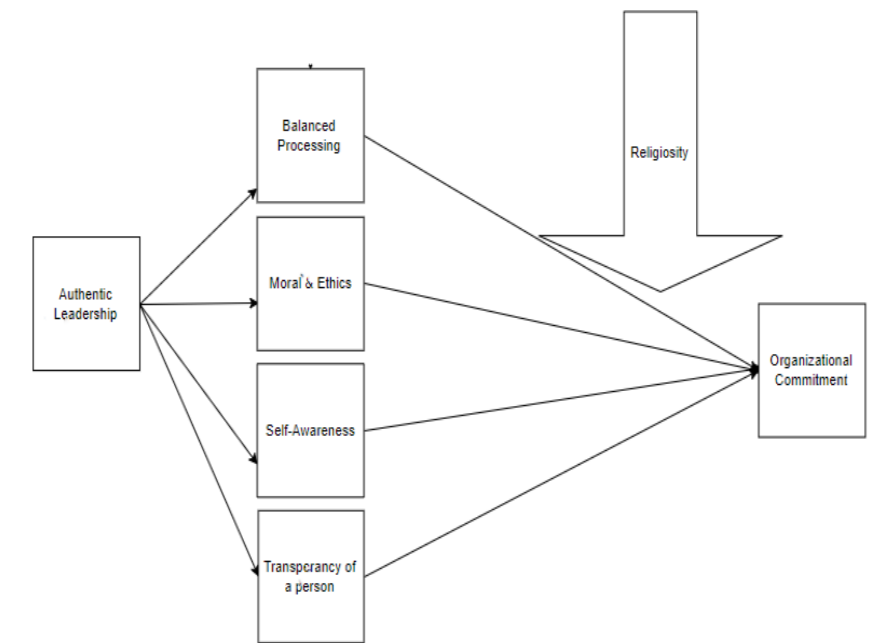

Figure 1. *Conceptual Framework*

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1. *Demographic results of the respondents.*

	Mean	ST	
Age	40.3096	9.06957	**%**
Experience	9.205882	3.93978	
	Description	N	
Marital Status	Single	118	39.34
	Married	182	60.66
Education	Bachelors	20	6.7
	Masters	98	32.66
	MS/MPhil	182	60.64
Sector	Public Sector	113	37.67
	Private Sector	187	62.33
Gender	Male	201	70

	Female	99	30
	Total	**300**	**100%**

Table 1 describes the overall demographic statistics, according to out of total 300 respondents majority (70%) are male and less than half (30%) are female in this research. As per the previous studies male are participated in discussions and can participate in organisational structure. The table further discussed the marital status of the respondents, this majority (60.6%) of the respondents are married. It is also found that Education is a preliminary indicator for the authentic leadership qualities, thus majority of the respondents are having Masters of M.Phil. (post graduate) level of education 60.64% out of which 62% from private sector university respondents. Mean of age is 40 with an average of 9.2 years' experience. The conclusion of this table, the majority of the respondents are participated from private sector universities.

Table 2. *Regression Model*

R	R²	B	t	Sig.
.206ᵃ	0.42	3.167	14.403	0.000
		0.206	3.77	0.000
a. Predictors: (Constant), Authentic Leadership				
a. Dependent Variable: organizational commitment				

Table 2 describes regression model of the variables authentic leadership and organizational commitment having r=.206 with p=.000 indicating significant level of relationship among dependant organizational commitment and independent authentic leadership.

Table 3. *ANOVA of Proposed Model*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	18.992	1	18.992	14.237	.000
Residual	428.213	298	1.334		
Total	447.205	298			
a. Dependent Variable: organizational commitment					
b. Predictors: (Constant), Authentic Leadership					

Table 3 shows overall model fitness of the dependent variable organizational commitment and independent variable authentic leadership which is significant. It is found that the level of significant among organizational commitment and authentic leadership is highly significant (.000). Thus, the dependent variable (organisational commitment) and independent variable (authentic leadership) are correlate with each other.

Table 4. *Table for Regression for Moderation*

R	R²	Std. Error	B	T	Sig.
.332ᵃ	0.011	1.1145	0.272	4.95	0.000
a. Predictors: (Constant), AL x Religiosity					
b. Dependent Variable: Organizational commitment					

Table 4 indicates moderation effects of religiosity over authentic leadership, which is positive significant moderation. Value of r=.332 increased from previous value .206 in table 2 and significant level remain same with p=0.000. The table 4 found that there is high significant relationship between the religiosity and organisational commitment. It is obvious from the above results, that religiosity is the need for the organisational development and organisational commitment.

Table 5. *Different Dimensions of Authentic Leadership*

Without Moderation					With Moderation				
R	R²	Beta	t	Sig	R	R²	Beta	t	Sig
.313ᵃ	0.098		12.644	**0.000**	.395ᵃ	0.156		7.847	**0.000**
Transparency	-0.136	-0.487	0.626		Transparency		-0.251	-0.925	0.355

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Moral Ethics	0.067	0.773	0.440	Moral Ethics		-0.014	-0.158	0.874
Balanced Processing	0.573	3.333	0.001	Balanced Processing		0.493	2.943	0.003
Self-awareness	-0.270	-0.684	0.495	Self-awareness		-0.086	-0.225	0.822
				Religiosity		0.256	4.662	**0.000**

a. Dependent Variable: organizational commitment
b. Predictors: (Constant), Authentic Leadership (Sub Scale) and Religiosity

Table 5 describes authentic leadership dimensions (sub-scale) separate relationship with dependant variable organizational commitment. Value of R and R^2 shows significant change (r= .206 to r= .313) without moderation table 2 and (r=332 to r=.395) with moderation table 3 which indicates that religiosity is moderating authentic leadership relationship positively and significantly. Hence, the study found that there is a regress need to work on the leadership qualities. The practical implication of the study reveal that this study will have both theoretical as well as practical implications. It will beneficial for the organisations to play a practical role in the development of leadership qualities.

CONCLUSION

Results of current study show the role of authentic leadership over employee commitment as reported previously (Begley and Stefkovich, 2007) and coincides that religion remains the focus of life in morality and ethics of a person, (Forrest-Bank and Dupper, 2016; Galanou and Farrag, 2015). Authentic leadership emphasis has a close link with Islamic leadership which plays vital role in development and transformation of a person (George, 2003; Cottrill, Lopez and Hoffman, 2014). Positive leadership behaviour commitment in diverse culture which is required for sustainable development in developing organizations (Avolio and Walumbwa, 2006; Brown and Treviño, 2006; Reicher, Haslam and Hopkins 2005).

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