

AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP: A VALUE-LADEN LEADER

A new type of leadership that is genuine and values based laden known as authentic leadership has emerged (Zhang, Bowers, & Mao, 2020). This form of leadership acknowledges and accommodates the legitimate needs of cultures, communities, organizations, groups and even individuals in an integrative way, rather than only being centred around organizational perspectives (Begley, 2001). George and Sims (2007, pp. 131–132) described authentic leaders as: ‘develop self-awareness from their experiences; act on that awareness by practicing their values, sometimes at substantial risk; balance their motivations with both internal and external drives; keep a strong support team around themselves; and, live integrated, grounded lives’.

Early critiques to emerging authentic leadership theories described it as lacking some of the key elements of an effective leader. Particularly, it lacks focus on the leader but rather focused on the process and leadership practices a leader enacts to influence their followers (Zhang, Bowers, & Mao, 2020). Crawford et al. (2020, p. 22) later defined authentic leaders as individuals who ‘influence and motivate followers to achieve goals through their sincerity and positive moral perspective, enabled through heightened awareness and balanced processing’. Other researchers concluded authentic leaders are individuals who exhibit behaviours in four ways: self-awareness; relational transparency; balanced processing; and internalized moral perspective (Shapira-Lishchinsky & Levy-Gazenfrantz, 2016; Shapira-Lishchinsky & Tsemach, 2014).

Kulophas et al. (2015) placed the concept of authentic leadership in an educational context. They viewed authentic school leaders as one ‘who aspires to understand oneself and their teachers and behave in accordance to one’s core values to steer the school towards its goals’. Authentic educational leaders focus on their self-knowledge, is sensitive to the orientations of others that leads to a synergy of leadership action (Srivastava & Dhar, 2019). Authentic leaders have the inner ability to practice what they preach and lead their followers by setting examples (Srivastava & Shree, 2019). Furthermore, authentic leaders are motivated to encourage their followers to become leaders in the future (Wang et al., 2014).

However, developing authenticity in a school principal is not an easy task (Srivastava & Dhar, 2016). This is due to the school’s limited context that depends on spontaneous situations to occurs in schools. Thus, developing authentic leadership in a school principal requires specific guidelines (Srivastava & Shree, 2019). Branson (2007) stressed authentic leaders should believe in reflective practicing via analyzing and implementing their own values. This clearly indicates that authentic school leaders must adhere to their values before taking any decision (Srivastava & Dhar, 2019). Principals should analyse the situation and implement what they believe is good for all as their decisions affect every section of the education community.

A growing body of evidences has identified principals’ authentic leadership as being related to a series of school desirable outcomes such as teachers’ attitude towards their profession and behaviour, more specifically, organizational citizenship and withdrawal behaviour (Shapira-Lishchinsky & Tsemach, 2014), teacher trust (Fox et al., 2015), emotional intelligence (Shapira-Lishchinsky & Levy-Gazenfrantz, 2016), psychological capital (Feng, 2016), academic optimism (Kulophas et al., 2018), teachers’ intentions to return (Bird et al., 2012) and work engagement (Kulophas et al., 2018; Wang & Bird, 2011). However, the body of knowledge is still relatively

limited. Thus, researching more about how principals enact authentic leadership in schools to drive their school towards its goals is critical.

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