

Authentic Leadership for Democracy in Schools

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Introduction

The main underlying value of authentic leadership is self awareness along with honesty, truthfulness, loyalty, transparency and integrity. These values define the main characteristics of authentic leadership, which this paper argues are the important values of democratic education also. Leadership is an art of inspiring or influencing followers in order to achieve organization's goals. In any organization, there is always a need for strong leadership (Daft, 1999). It is well established in literature that the success of an educational institution depends on the effectiveness of leadership (Huber, 2004). In the late 20th century, various researches have appeared regarding leadership styles like transactional and transformational, charismatic, visionary and inspirational (Shamir et al., 1993).

Authentic leadership is relatively a new concept. Extant literature puts forward the notion of authentic leadership as important trajectory of leadership in organizations. George (2004) argues that "leadership begins and ends with authenticity". It is well established in literature that good leadership is essential for effective and better performing schools (Pashiardis, 2000). This paper argues that in the context of education authentic leadership is more important as it has the same set of values as democratic education.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the study are:

1. To investigate the pattern of authentic leadership in schools in a developing country like Pakistan.
2. To propose a model for effective school leadership in to promote democratic practice in schools

Pakistan is a developing country. Its education system has come under much criticism (Quraishi, 2004, Siddiqui, 2007). Recently in the new educational policy (2009) school leadership has been acknowledged to improve schools. Leading public and private institutions such as University of Education, University of Management & Technology and IED Agha Khan have leadership programs to develop effective leadership in schools. However, there is no credible in-service leadership program other than these universities and institutes. Furthermore, there is a dire need to have mechanisms to monitor leadership at school level. Furthermore, Therefore, the instrument authentic leadership development is seen as a mechanism and/or a way to continuously monitor authenticity of leadership in schools. Although there has not been research to see; how much authentic leadership can affect the overall performance of a school? There is

research which shows democratic leadership does influence overall school improvement and achievement (Quraishi & Rahman, 2009). This study attempts to first understand the applicability of the concept to schools and then its workability as an assessment and guiding tool for continuous professional development of school leadership and school improvement with regards to creating democratic schools in the country.

Research Questions

The main research question of the study is:

What are characteristics of authentic leadership and how well its framework can assist in establishing democratic schools? Secondly, is there any evidence that suggests that ALQ can help as a tool for continuous professional development and school improvement? The following sub-research questions were developed for data analysis:

1. Is there a difference between teachers' perceptions regarding their leader's transparency and leader's self perception about his/her level of transparency?
2. Is there a difference between teachers' perceptions regarding their leader's moral/ethical and leader's self perception about his/her level of moral/ethical?
3. Is there a difference between teachers' perceptions regarding their leader's balanced processing and leader's self perception about his/her level of balanced processing?
4. Is there a difference between teachers' perceptions regarding their leader's self-awareness and leader's self perception about his/her level of self-awareness?
5. How ratings by teachers and self ratings of principals on self awareness, Balanced processing, moral and ethical and transparency can assist democratic practice in schools?

Literature Review

Defining Authentic Leadership

The concept of authenticity is generally recognized to have its roots in ancient Greek philosophy which means to be true to oneself (Gardner et al., 2005). Shamir & Eilam (2005) argue that it is difficult to define authentic leadership in one single definition because various authors have used the term in different ways. George (2004) states:

Authentic leaders genuinely desire to serve others through their leadership. They are more interested in empowering the people they lead to make a difference than they are in power, money, or prestige for themselves. They are as guided by qualities of the heart, by passion and compassion, as they are by qualities of the mind. (p.1)

Shamir & Eilam (2005) defined authentic leaders as under:

- Authentic leaders do not fake their leadership
- Authentic leaders do not lead for the sake of status or personal rewards
- Authentic leaders are original; they do not imitate other people
- Authentic leaders' actions are consistent with their beliefs and values

Authentic leadership was first discussed by Bill George in 2003. At that time, several great businesses were 'collapsing due to corruption and the avarice of their leaders' (The Essence of Real Leadership, 2007). Therefore, he realized the need of authenticity in leadership. In 2003, Bill George's book, "Authentic Leadership: Rediscovering the Secrets to Creating Lasting Values" challenged a new generation to lead authentically (George et al., 2007, p.130).

In order to find 'How can people become and remain authentic leaders?' George and his colleagues interviewed 125 leaders whose age ranged between 23 to 93 year olds. They were selected on the basis of their reputations for authenticity and effectiveness. George (2007) stated that there is no single universal definition and/or traits, skills or styles of leadership. By and large, in many studies which they conducted leadership emerged out of the life stories of people, where they were testing themselves through real life situations and reframing their experiences. Therefore, after all interviews, George and his colleagues contend that having leadership traits, behaviors or top position is not necessary for a leader to be an effective leader. Instead, a leader needs to discover his/her potential for leadership (George et al., 2007).

This paper argues that in educational organizations where the role of a principal is crucial as an educational leader, steady and confident presence of a principal can impact consistent performance of both teachers and students. More so, for teachers as they have to implement the vision of the principal, in other words they have to be authentic followers to ensure that students get the best out of their experience of leadership in schools. Furthermore, in education prior movements to improve practice such as democratic education are seen here as having an important connection with Authentic Leadership (AL) model. Research on educational leadership indicates the importance of team building and creating effective followership. The concept of educational leadership is based on this notion of effective leadership:

"A leader cannot define herself as an authentic leader. Only the people who experience the leader can ascribe authenticity to the leader. Authenticity is only perceived by others. It is the perception that the leader is real, sincere and defined by honesty and integrity" (Goggee and Jones, 2005 as cited in Kerfoot, 2006, p. 595).

Authentic leaders are role models for their followers because followers perceive their behavior authentic and transparent. Thus authentic leaders can develop authentic followers. In the leader-follower relationships, an emphasis is on transparency because transparent relationships triggers trust in followers (Gardner et al., 2005). Transparency is argued to be an important value within democratic framework of management in organizations (Davies, 1995, Quraishi, 2004)

Howell & Shamir (2005) argue that as leadership has always been a relationship between leader and followers (cited in Shamir & Eilam, 2005). Therefore, authentic leadership includes authentic followership as well. Authentic followership involves, firstly followers' trust in the leader that is sharing of his/her beliefs, values and convictions. This means that instead of

coercion and/or expectation of personal reward followers share leader's the vision and/or analysis of the situation. Secondly, followers' own judgment about their leaders and their actions. This means, by and large, leaders' actions and behaviors are consistent with that of followers' own 'beliefs, values and convictions' (Shamir & Eilam, 2005, p.140). There have been very few studies in educational leadership that have used authentic leadership framework to see how it permeates educational practice, especially in schools. In Pakistan there are no studies conducted so far to understand authentic leadership in school context.

Authentic Leadership and Democratic Education

There are four attributes identified in authentic leadership framework 1) self awareness, 2) transparency, 3) Moral/Ethical and 4) balanced processing (Avolio et al., 2007).

Self-Awareness

Self-awareness is a "process where one continually comes to understand his/her unique talents, strengths, sense of purpose, core values, beliefs and desires. It can include having a basic and fundamental awareness of one's knowledge, experience and capabilities" (Day, 2000 as cited in Avolio & Gardner, 2005, p.324).

Avolio et al., (2007) stated that self-awareness can be defined an extent to which a leader is aware of his/her strengths, limitations, how others see him/her and how the leader impacts others.

Therefore, self-awareness refers to the self knowledge of one's strengths and weaknesses (Gardner, et al., 2005). Within the democratic education framework – democratic leadership is also about honesty and integrity , we tend to argue that having self knowledge in terms how one's actions are perceived by others can help improve upon one actions and the leader can better communicate collective agenda and be more effective in building a team by addresses one's own gaps and weaknesses.

Transparency

Transparency refers consistency between a leader's talk and actions (Gardner, et al., 2005). Avolio et al., (2007) noted that transparency referred to the extent to which a leader reinforces a level of openness with followers that provides them with an opportunity to be forthcoming with their ideas, challenges and opinions.

Harter (2002) stated that a transparent leader acts according to the true self, expressing oneself in ways that are consistent with inner thoughts and feelings (p.382 as cited in Michie & Gooty, 2005, p. 442).Furthermore "authentic leaders lead by example as they demonstrate transparent decision making, confident, optimistic, hope and resilience and consistency between their words and deeds" (Avolio & Gardner 2005, p. 326). Transparency in democratic education context is about participative decision making – clear and agreed rules based on ethics and justice. The

transparency as translated in the Authentic Leadership can be argued a prerequisite for transparency with democratic education framework. The more authentic the leader in terms of transparency, the more authentic the democracy in the school.

Moral/Ethical

Avolio et al., (2007) argue that moral/ethical can be defined the extent to which a leader sets a high standard for moral and ethical conduct.

Followers' trust in leader is largely based on the leader's actions. Therefore, these actions must be aligned with espoused values to convince followers of the leader's integrity (Gardner et al., 2005).

Shamir & Eilam (2005) described:

Authentic leaders are leaders whose actions are based on their values and convictions. What they say is consistent with what they believe and their actions are consistent with both their talk and their beliefs. Because they act in accordance to their values and beliefs rather than to please an audience, gain popularity or advance some personal or narrow political interest, authentic leaders can be characterized as having a high level of integrity (p. 397).

Furthermore Howell & Avolio (1992) suggested:

Authentic leaders have moral standards or values that emphasize the collective interests of their groups or organizations within a greater society. In contrast, inauthentic or exploitative leaders have values that promote self-interest at the expense of their constituencies (cited in Michie and Gooty, 2005, p. 442).

Common interest and good, fairness and justice, diversity are some of key values in democratic education (Quraishi, 2006) and therefore Authentic Leadership may also be seen as an important component of democratic education as well as democratic leadership.

Balanced Processing

Avolio et al., (2007) noted that balanced processing referred to the extent to which a leader solicits sufficient opinions and viewpoints prior to making important decisions.

May et al., (2003) stated

Authentic leaders' decisions are not based on what action is most self-serving or most popular, but are instead guided by a systematic evaluation of the alternatives available of what is fair or just and would do the least harm to one party over another. Authentic leaders do not attempt to hide their reasoning from their stakeholders. They make it transparent to them because they trust

their reasoning has yielded the best course of action that meets the requirements of the problem and the ethical standards committed to in their role as a leader. (p. 254).

In literature related to democratic education, the term balanced processing is not used anywhere however, the value of participative decision making is considered to be essential component (1994) which , we argue, is what balanced processing is all about.

Method

This research focused on the perceptions of teachers regarding their principal's authenticity and their principal's self perceptions about the level of authenticity using the standard scale of authentic leadership.

Sample

The sample for this study was randomly selected from among all private secondary schools which were famous for their reputation and effectiveness. A total of 300 questionnaires were sent out to private secondary school teachers of Lahore. Only 204 questionnaires were returned. Total sample comprised of 195 private secondary school teachers and 9 principals.

The research requirement was to pair participated teachers with their principals. Therefore, separate questionnaires were used for teachers and their principals. Although responses were personally unidentified, respondents provided their principal's names and schools to match principals and teachers. Table I illustrates the distribution of teachers with their principals

Table 1 Distribution of teachers with principals

	Teachers	Principals
School 1	22	1
School 2	19	1
School 3	23	1
School 4	22	1
School 5	23	1
School 6	25	1
School 7	26	1
School 8	20	1
School 9	15	1
Total	195	9

Instrument

Authentic leadership questionnaire (Avolio et al., 2007) was adopted to measure the authenticity of private secondary school principals. The questionnaire has sixteen items and further divided into four subscales to measure the leader's self awareness, transparency, moral/ethical values and balanced processing.

First five items were considered as transparency subscale, item nos. 6, 7, 8 and 9 were considered as moral/ethical subscale, next 3 items were included in balanced processing and item nos. 13, 14, 15 and 16 were considered as self awareness subscale.

ALQ was based on 5 point response scale (0 = not at all, 1 = once in a while, 2 = sometimes, 3 = fairly often and 4 = frequently, if not always).

Data Analysis Procedure

All computations were done by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS-16). Reliability of the ALQ Questionnaire was .886. Reliability of Transparency was .729, Ethical/Moral was .629, Balanced Processing was .659 and Self Awareness was .775.

Mean, standard Deviation and t-test were used to know the comparison between principals' self rating and their teachers' rating regarding the principal's authenticity level of transparency, ethical/moral, balanced processing and self awareness.

Results

Mean, standard deviation and t-test were employed to analyze the comparison between principals' self rating and their teachers' rating regarding the principal's authenticity on transparency, ethical/moral, balanced processing and self awareness. All computations were done by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS-16).

The results of schools are given below.

Table 1 Comparison of Mean Scores of Principal and Teachers

Transparency	N	Mean	SD	t-value	P-value	
School 1	Teachers	22	1.77	.65	11.76***	***P < .001
	Principal	1	3.40	-		
School 2	Teachers	19	2.41	.61	4.24**	**P < .01
	Principal	1	1.80	-		
School 3	Teachers	23	2.75	.45	2.68*	*P < .05
	Principal	1	3.00	-		
School 4	Teachers	22	2.91	.58	0.88	
	Principal	1	2.80	-		
School 5	Teachers	23	3.22	.37	0.25	
	Principal	1	3.20	-		
School 6	Teachers	25	2.45	.32	11.71***	***P < .001
	Principal	1	3.20	-		
School 7	Teachers	26	3.00	.51	3.99**	**P < .01
	Principal	1	3.40	-		
School 8	Teachers	20	2.48	.23	6.22***	***P < .001
	Principal	1	2.80	-		
School 9	Teachers	15	2.16	.77	4.22**	**P < .01
	Principal	1	3.00	-		

Gaps in Transparency

Mean scores of school 1, school 2, school 3, school 6, school 7, school 8 and school 9 shows that majority of the teachers perceived their principal non-transparent. Only school 4 and school 5's teachers perceived their principal transparent. These results show high level of inconsistency between leader's words and deeds. It also demonstrates that leaders do not admit their mistakes in front of their followers that indicate authoritarian style. Moreover results also indicates that majority of principals do not encourage their teachers to speak freely indicating patterns of authoritarian and also gaps within authentic leadership framework.

Table 2

Moral/Ethical	N	Mean	SD	t-value	P-value
Teachers	22	2.36	.46	6.52***	***P < .001

School 1	Principal	1	3.00	-		
School 2	Teachers	19	2.29	.73	2.71*	*P < .05
	Principal	1	2.75	-		
School 3	Teachers	23	2.82	.51	5.16***	***P < .001
	Principal	1	2.25	-		
School 4	Teachers	22	3.05	.59	1.60	
	Principal	1	3.25	-		
School 5	Teachers	23	3.04	.35	6.30***	***P < .001
	Principal	1	3.50	-		
School 6	Teachers	25	3.03	.31	0.48	
	Principal	1	3.00	-		
School 7	Teachers	26	3.20	.45	0.56	
	Principal	1	3.25	-		
School 8	Teachers	20	2.75	.17	6.57***	***P < .001
	Principal	1	2.50	-		
School 9	Teachers	15	2.75	.43	6.75***	***P < .001
	Principal	1	3.50	-		

Gaps in Moral/Ethical

Statistical results of school 1, school 2, school 3, school 5, school 8 and school 9 shows that principals' beliefs are not consistent with their actions. This also indicates that principals' decisions are not purely ethical. Only teachers of school 4, school 6 and school 7 rated their principal ethically strong. The mean scores of teacher from school 3 are higher (2.82) as compare to principal's mean scores (2.25). In the same manner the mean scores of teacher from school 8 are higher (2.75) as compare to principal's mean scores (2.50). These results show the principal's genuine self perceptions or low self esteem.

Table 3

Balanced Processing	N	Mean	SD	t-value	P-value	
School 1	Teachers	22	2.15	.60	9.22***	***P < .001
	Principal	1	3.33			
School 2	Teachers	19	2.47	.92	2.46*	*P < .05
	Principal	1	3.00	-		
School 3	Teachers	23	3.04	.59	5.56***	***P < .001
	Principal	1	2.33	-		
School 4	Teachers	22	3.11	.47	2.19*	*P < .05
	Principal	1	3.33	-		
School 5	Teachers	23	3.49	.17	4.51**	**P < .01
	Principal	1	3.33	-		
School 6	Teachers	25	2.67	.39	8.46***	***P < .001
	Principal	1	3.33	-		
School 7	Teachers	26	2.93	.44	4.63***	***P < .001
	Principal	1	3.33	-		
School 8	Teachers	20	2.73	.44	0.60	
	Principal	1	2.67	-		
School 9	Teachers	15	2.07	.86	7.20***	***P < .001
	Principal	1	3.67	-		

Gaps in Balanced Processing

Regarding balanced processing, results of school 1, school 2, school 3, school 4, school 5, school 6, school 7 and school 9 indicates that principals do not include their all teachers in decision making process. Only in school 8, the principal was perceived as shared decision maker by their teachers. The mean scores of teacher from school 3 are higher (3.04) as compare to principal's mean scores (2.33). In the same manner the mean scores of teacher from school 5 are higher (3.49) as compare to principal's mean scores (3.33). These results show the principal's genuine self rating or low self esteem.

Table 4

Self Awareness	N	Mean	SD	t-value	P-value	
School 1	Teachers	22	1.73	.47	15.16***	***P < .001
	Principal	1	3.25	-		
School 2	Teachers	19	2.66	.63	2.79*	*P < .05
	Principal	1	2.25	-		
School 3	Teachers	23	2.93	.31	2.81*	*P < .05
	Principal	1	2.75	-		
School 4	Teachers	22	3.18	.60	4.33**	**P < .01
	Principal	1	3.75	-		
School 5	Teachers	23	3.38	.24	7.39***	***P < .001
	Principal	1	3.75	-		
School 6	Teachers	25	2.66	.39	4.35**	**P < .01
	Principal	1	3.00	-		
School 7	Teachers	26	2.60	.28	2.73*	*P < .05
	Principal	1	2.75	-		
School 8	Teachers	20	2.20	.21	4.25**	**P < .01
	Principal	1	2.00	-		
School 9	Teachers	15	2.20	.48	0.40	
	Principal	1	2.25	-		

Gaps in Self -Awareness

It was seen that principals in school 1, school 2, school 3, school 4, school 5, school 6, school 7 and school 8 are not aware of their strengths and weakness because they do not seek feedback from others about themselves. Only teachers of school 9 rated their principal as a self aware person. The mean scores of teacher from school 2 are higher (2.66) as compared to principal's mean scores (2.25). In the same manner the mean scores of teacher from school 3 are higher (2.93) as compared with principal's mean scores (2.75). The mean scores of teacher from school 8 are higher (2.20) as compared with principal's mean scores (2.00). These results show the principal's genuine self rating or low self esteem. Here where the results are showing gaps in Self -Awareness with regards to their relationship and/or the impact of their leadership style, it is also indicating gaps in communication and distance from the followers/teachers. Such a gap indicates tensions in democratic process thereby democracy in schools. If the school leader is not communicating and not seeking feedback for the followers s/he they may be following authoritarian mode of leadership – governance for followers to rate them low on the` scale.

Implications for Practice in School Leadership and democracy in Schools

This study has given an insight into the applicability of authentic leadership to education practice. The instrument developed by Avolio et al. (2007) can serve as a mechanism and/or a tool to monitor authenticity of leadership at school level and thereby provide areas for improvement and development within leadership practice in schools. This would ensure that leader in schools get a realistic picture about their schools and improve their followership in order to get maximum output from their school, which we argue would benefit all stakeholders.

Conclusion

The purpose of this quantitative research was a) to explore the ALQ authentic Leadership Questionnaire which seeks perceptions of teachers regarding their leader's authenticity and their leader's self perceptions about the level of authenticity and b) see the applicability of ALQ to indicate areas of improvement in leadership style to sustain and/or develop democracy in schools. Transparency, moral/ethical, balanced processing and self awareness the four components of authentic leadership were found to be relevant to democratic practice with reference to school leadership. Transparency meaning high level of consistency between leader's words and deeds was seen as essential component of school leadership to instill democratic practice in schools. Moral/ethical aspect demonstrated that principals' beliefs are consistent with their actions, which is equate with truthfulness and honesty important values of democracy, hence showing a clear link with democratic practice in the context of a school. Balanced processing referring to the extent to which principals include their all teachers in decision making process, this was linked with participative and inclusive decision making within democratic practice in education, therefore linking the AL with democracy in schools. Self awareness indicating towards a leader's knowledge about his/her strengths and weaknesses was also seen as necessary part of democracy to revisit one's actions in order to align them with the overall development and needs of the organization, hence essential to sustain democratic process

in schools. Major findings indicate that introduction of Authentic Leadership (AL) and its training is immediately needed in democratic school context. Through Authentic Leadership, leaders can develop authentic followership, thus democratic practice schools. Furthermore, ALQ was found to be a useful tool to identify areas for continuous improvement as well as leadership development- training. The current findings show that the instrument provides a complete picture where leaders are somewhat not familiar exactly how others perceived them. This ignorance was generating distrust, absenteeism; turn over, dissatisfaction, lack of commitment from the followers, in these cases teachers, as during collection of data some teachers expressed such feelings and views about the principals, especially in schools where gaps were found in the Authentic Leadership. . Authentic Leadership framework and ALQ Authentic Leadership Questionnaire are found to be useful in the context of democratic education and democracy in schools.

Future Research

More research, especially qualitative research, is needed to substantiates the link between Authentic Leadership and Democratic Education. Furthermore research to study the correlation of leader's authenticity and school's performance would be useful for educational practice. More culturally focused studies would generate better understanding of democratic education and Authentic Leadership. Future research focused on authentic followership would provide a new dimension in the concept of Authentic Leadership. Research is needed around authentic leadership focusing on gender in order to find out significant difference in male and female leaders. Other important focuses for future research could be to measure authenticity of leaders in elementary and higher education.

Note:

1. The Islamic Republic of Pakistan is a country located in South Asia, Greater Middle East and converges with Central Asia and the Middle East. It has a 1,046kilometer (650mile) coastline along the Arabian Sea and Gulf of Oman in the south, and is bordered by Afghanistan and Iran in the west, India in the east and China in the far northeast. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pakistan>)
1. Lahore is the capital of the Pakistani province of Punjab and is the second largest city in Pakistan after Karachi. It is popularly known as the Heart of Pakistan, due to its historical importance in the creation of Pakistan, and also being a cultural, political and educational centre of the country. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lahore>)
1. In Pakistan, Secondary education is divided into three cycles: three years' middle school, two years' secondary and two years' higher secondary. On completion of the second cycle, pupils take the Secondary School Certificate or Matriculation Examination. Pupils may then study for a further two years, specializing in Science or Arts. At the end of this period, pupils take the examinations for the Intermediate Certificate or Higher Secondary School Certificate. Vocational secondary schools offer courses leading to the Secondary School Certificate in technical subjects. (http://pakistanweb.com/html/education_system.htm)

1. The secondary level is very important due to the final stage of general education, which prepares students for higher studies. Therefore, it requires teacher's maximum effort and the fulfillment of responsibilities towards students and the community at large.
1. Private schools, or independent schools, are schools not administered by local, state, or national government, which retain the right to select their student body and are funded in whole or in part by charging their students tuition rather than with public funds.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Private_school)

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