

## Identifying and Analyzing Factors Influencing Authentic Leadership

Yadegar Mohammadi Armandi<sup>1</sup>, Alireza Shirvan<sup>2\*</sup>, Iraj Soltani<sup>3</sup>

1. PhD of Public Management, Islamic Azad University, Dehaghan Branch, Dehaghan, Iran.
2. Associate professor, Department of Management, Islamic Azad University, Dehaghan Branch, Dehaghan, Iran.
3. Assistant professor, Department of Management, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan Branch, Isfahan, Iran.

### Article history:

Received date: 10 April 2019

Review date: 25 June 2019

Accepted date: 18 July 2019

### Keywords:

authentic leadership, self-awareness, balanced processing, transparency of relationship, inner conscience

### Abstract

**Purpose:** The present study aimed to recognize and analyze effective factors on authentic leadership in Iranian National Tax Admission Organization.

**Methodology:** The paper was of a qualitative type in terms of nature which was administered through Delphi method. Statistical population included experts, and professional managers in tax affairs who were eight people experienced in authentic leadership. They were selected through targeted sampling method. In data collection, a questionnaire was used in 3 phases. Firstly, having collected their points of view, we combined the similar views recognizing the basic components. Secondly, after discovering concepts and factors, a structured questionnaire was designed and used afterwards. At last, in the third phase, ranking the views was implemented, a statistical summary was prepared then, and finally effective factors on authentic leadership in tax admission organization were identified. In data analysis, the results of the first phase of preparing Delphi questionnaire were analyzed and the key items and concepts were extracted.

**Findings:** Findings obtained from Delphi indicated that 16 factors affected leadership in tax affairs. In other words, according to the highest loading value, the research model was well fitted having factor load (.98) showing as the most important determining factor in authentic leadership.

**Conclusion:** The foundation of authentic leadership presented some conditions in which individuals behaved according to values, beliefs, and the sublime nature of man.

**Please cite this article as:** Mohammadi Armandi Y, Shirvan A, Soltani I. (2019). Identifying and Analyzing Factors Influencing Authentic Leadership, *Iranian journal of educational Sociology*, 2(4): 179- 187.

## 1. Introduction

Authentic leadership is founded on authenticity that indicates the conditions in which people behave looking at their values, beliefs, and sublime nature who insist on preserving a behavior in line with their values and beliefs. In fact the authentic leadership theories try to educate leaders so that they show their followers their true self, without pretending the opposite. Actually, they show an internal fact in their behavior avoiding duplicity (Molaei Aliabad & Rajab Pour Savaari, 2019). Authentic leadership is a new theory that was proposed for its inspiration and was able to apply psychological capacity of subordinates and create innovative capabilities. Authentic leadership is a unique style in leadership that has a special meaning in organization. This concept includes moral values and behaviors expecting staff as a new structure. As so many different theories have been suggested on leadership so far (Behraves, Hoj, & Rotrovir, 2018), theory of authentic leadership is the last one proposed operationally which helps to have a better performance and create empathy in staff (Adil & Kamal, 2019).

The main difference between this theory and other theories in leadership is that the authentic leadership is more general than others, for it focuses on a basic element. By this factor we mean a basis it shapes in positive leadership. The theory of authentic leadership concentrates on self - control and self- awareness of leader and his followers, positive psychological capital, and organizational positive mediating role. Theory of authentic leadership is considered as the most comprehensive one in leadership (Cottrill et al, 2014).

An authentic leader is deeply aware of his thinking and behavior, and being aware of his and others' values, moral views, knowledge, strengths and weaknesses as well. Moreover, he knows the context he works in well; being self-confident, hopeful, optimist, flexible, and highly moral. The theory focuses on the psychological dimensions of leader and his followers, and the context in which they work. It has been basically introduced on two psychological dimensions of leader's self-awareness and self-regulation, introduced as the process of individual development of leader (Shokooh & Nikpour, 2018). According to the researchers, self-awareness is the base of authentic leadership which consists of values, recognition about identity, emotions, goals and motivations. Moreover, self-regulation is a process through which authentic leaders fix their values with their goals and performance, and present employees their standards and goals (Darabeigi et al, 2019). Erkutlu & Chafra (2017) protected the theory of authentic leadership. In the theory, a real leader creates some reliable relations with his employees; they are quite satisfied with the leader's behavior and performance and consider organization as an excellent workplace. In addition, it is emphasized on the quality of relationship among employees and with leader in authentic leadership.

Authentic leaders realize their knowledge, strengths, and weaknesses, and the domain in which they work, and having self-confidence, optimism, farsighted, flexibility, they cause others to grow leadership capacities. Orientation to imitation and applying others' countries technologies, and ideas without creating new ideas and presenting models fitted with our country's conditions will just result in dependency in scientific, cultural, and economic domains. On the other hand, creativity depends on individual and social factors. This study is going to introduce authentic leadership based on four dimensions of self-awareness, balanced processing, transparency in relationships, and ethical aspects as an appropriate behavioral model which can improve staff motivation and creativity in organization (Faghirnezhad & Fataahi, 2019). Nowadays, leadership is increasingly becoming more difficult than ever along with challenges such as competitions and stressors all over the world. These challenges necessitate recovering self-confidence, hope, and optimism in individuals, being necessary for leaders to help people to find and improve them. Therefore, it is necessary to have some leaders familiar with goals, values, and integrities. Iranian National Tax Admission Organization like every other organization faces many different challenges in such a challenging century. On the other hand, old - fashioned methods of leadership cannot solve the problems concerned with leadership any more. Whereas Tax Admission Organization should act in such an environment that it could adapt itself to the changes around, it needs an authentic leadership. Therefore, it

is of high importance to work on leadership. So, the present study aimed to recognize and analyze effective factors on authentic leadership in Iranian National Tax Admission Organization.

Zardoshtian and Hosseini (2018) conducted a research under the title of the role of the authentic leadership style on spirituality in staff of Sports and Youth Office in Kermanshah Province. The results showed that the present world is the world of organizations. If we create spirituality in workplace, the staff is motivated and engaged more with organization's goals and missions. Therefore, the research aimed to study the role of the authentic leadership style on spirituality in staff of Sports and Youth Office in Kermanshah Province.

Moradi et al (2018) implemented a research under the title of structural relationships of authentic leadership style with job enthusiasm and positive organizational behavior of teachers. The findings showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between authentic leadership, job enthusiasm and positive organizational behavior of teachers. Discussion and conclusion: authentic leadership can directly affect teachers' enthusiasm as well as teachers' positive organizational behavior. It is also possible to increase the positive variables (job enthusiasm and positive organizational behavior) in this organization via increasing this type of leadership in education office. Karimi et al. (2018) implemented a research investigating the effect of authentic leadership on mental health through mediating roles of areas of work life and occupational coping self-efficacy. The results indicated that authentic leadership had a significant direct effect on areas of, areas of work life had a significant direct effect on occupational coping self-efficacy and mental health and occupational coping self-efficacy had a significant and direct effect on mental health. Derakhshan et al (2016) conducted the research by the title of the relationship between authentic leadership and organizational transparency (Case study: General Administration of Roads and Urban Development of Kerman Province), showing that authentic leadership affects significantly in the relation between social performance and organizational culture. In addition, organizational culture had a significant effect on social performance. Finally, mediating role of organizational culture was affirmed according to the effect of significance of relations. Mira & Odeh (2019) in the research of investigating the role of authentic leadership on employee relationships and performance showed that although theoretical conceptualization of authentic leadership has developed well, but its empirical aspect is still in the beginning of development. Adil and Kamal (2019) in the research: investigating authentic leadership and psychological capital in teachers showed that the current framework should authenticate to other Middle East countries, especially public sections. In addition, the current study has approved a cross-sectional approach, while the next studies should implement longitudinal approach to validate the present results. Furthermore, the future studies can accomplish a reliable leadership as a control on present research.

Lemoine et al (2019) in the study by the title of investigating the effect of authentic leadership on staff morale showed that authentic leadership is not necessarily transformational. For instance, it doesn't intend to change followers to leaders. An authentic leader usually expresses himself to others by action not words, and through his principles, values, and moralities, while a charismatic leader tries to affect and convince others via eloquent poetic gift. Hoch, et al (2016) in the research: investigating ethical and authentic leadership at work place showed the positive relation between staff training and performance. The effective role of valid training and leadership depends on staff high performance. In other words, leadership is very important in staff training.

## 2. Methodology

The research is a qualitative one in which Delphi technique was applied. Delphi is a systematic method to elicit intellectual judgments from a group of specialists on a specific subject or question. In this way, the goal that this technique follows is to reach a group of experts' reliable consensus. Consensus is a participants' agreement on a specific level and subject. Delphi consists of stages, which 4 phases are there in classic Delphi. Researchers shorten these phases to 2 or 3 to reach their purposes in research. However,

decision-making is practical and empirical to a great extent which depends on the availability and the type of start question (Zarafshani et al, 2013).

One of the most important things in analyzing Delphi is to create an experts panel to present their views on a research subject. 8 members of the study included experts, tax specialist managers who were experienced in authentic leadership area. These people were chosen through targeted sampling. To collect data, questionnaire was implemented, distributed in 3 phases. At the first phase, the research purpose was explained. Then, the respondents were asked to express their intellectual points of view in the effective components on authentic leadership in Tax Affaires Organization in open-ended question form. To do so, the specialists were asked to freely put their views forth about the subjects presented. After collecting the answers in the first phase, they were analyzed, the similar views were found and the basic grounds were realized. After identifying concepts and factors, a structured questionnaire was prepared to be used as the second tool in the second phase of Delphi.

At the second phase, the questionnaire prepared was handed in the same specialists to announce whether they agree or disagree using Likert; meanwhile the participants were free to correct and even omit incongruous concepts and factors. The second phase of Delphi resulted in the convergence in specialists' opinions. At the third phase, the results obtained were handed in the respondents once more to identify the factors and review it to change it if necessary. In fact, they were asked to determine the importance of each item using 5-scale Likert. Ranking the views was conducted at this phase, a statistical summary was prepared, and finally the factors effective on authentic leadership in Tax Affaires Organization were identified.

In sum, there are different methods and strategies to create validity and trust in study through qualitative research (Merriam, 2002). In order to investigate the validity and reliability of the present study, "trilateral viewing and "pundits review" were implemented. The research team's trilateral viewing included more than an observer, interviewer, and an analyzer in study. In other words, the aim of applying several researchers is to decrease the bias in collecting, reporting, coding, and analyzing data as well as increasing research credibility. In order to analyze data, content analysis method was carried out. Content analysis is a research tool used to determine the presence of certain words, themes, or concepts within some given qualitative data (i.e., text). It aims to determine answers to questions where the text implies something, and not necessarily explicit. Content analysis is a research that can analyze human communications, how people plan their lives, what people know about something, how people react to something and how to create a conceptual map. Content analysis consists of coding raw data based on classified design. In fact, the results of the first phase of the Delphi questionnaire were analyzed via content analysis method. It was done in the way that the answers to open-ended questions obtained in the first phase were conceptualized and the main sentences and concepts were taken out. Then the items and factors were packed in a questionnaire frame and prepared in Likert form. Then they were handed in the specialists to express their opinions to correct or omit items or factors.

### 3. Findings

The codes obtained from the texts (library) were handed in the specialists and the factors tested in the first phase in terms of reliability and validity is as following:

**Table1.** Delphi phase 1

Components (round 1)	Kendall Test	Significance	Eliminating components	Final components
self-awareness	0.526	0.000	-	self-awareness
balanced processing	0.234	0.000	-	balanced processing
inner conscience	0.364	0.000	-	inner conscience
transparency of relationship	0.713	0.000	-	transparency of relationship
strategic view	0.658	0.000	-	strategic view

sublimation seeking	0.173	0.000	-	sublimation seeking
commitment to ethical values	0.354	0.000	-	commitment to ethical values
value creator	0.621	0.000	-	value creator
creating cultural integration	0.257	0.000	-	creating cultural integration
trust-maker	0.367	0.000	-	trust-maker
inspiring	0.497	0.000	-	inspiring
empowerment	0.225	0.000	-	empowerment
new codes				pioneering
				spiritual management
				displacement

In this phase the components concerned the previous one were handed in the experts. The results are as following:

**Table2.** . Investigating the components concerned Delphi second phase

Components (second phase)	Kendall Test	Significance	Eliminating components	Final components
self-awareness	0.578	0.000	-	self-awareness
balanced processing	0.563	0.000	-	balanced processing
inner conscience	0.363	0.000	-	inner conscience
transparency of relationship	0.371	0.000	-	transparency of relationship
strategic view	0.565	0.000	-	strategic view
sublimation seeking	0.177	0.000	-	sublimation seeking
pioneering	0.259	0.000	-	commitment to ethical values
value creator	0.238	0.000	-	value creator
commitment to professional ethics	0.313	0.000	-	creating cultural integration
trust-maker	0.216	0.000	-	trust-maker
inspiring	0.251	0.000	-	inspiring
empowerment	0.463	0.000	-	empowerment
displacement	0.279	0.000	-	pioneering
creating cultural integration	0.438	0.000	-	spiritual management
spiritual management	0.353	0.000	-	displacement

Investigating second phase: In this phase the components concerned the previous one were handed in the experts. The results are as following: surveying qualitative reliability means evaluating the point that whether information obtained through qualitative data are clear or not. The question in term of reliability is like this: Does the researcher thinks, knows, or understands. Finally, a questionnaire including these characteristics was prepared.

**Table3.** Investigating final questionnaire

components of phase 2	validity	reliability	Number of questions	source
self- awareness	form and content	Kendall coefficient	10	library
balanced processing	form and content	Kendall coefficient	10	library
inner conscience	form and content	Kendall coefficient	10	library
transparency of relationship	form and content	Kendall coefficient	10	library
strategic view	form and content	Kendall coefficient	10	interview with Delphi technique
sublimation seeking	form and content	Kendall coefficient	10	interview with Delphi technique
commitment to ethical	form and	Kendall	10	interview with Delphi

values	content	coefficient		technique
value creation	form and content	Kendall coefficient	10	interview with Delphi technique
creating cultural integration	form and content	Kendall coefficient	10	interview with Delphi technique
trust-maker	form and content	Kendall coefficient	10	interview with Delphi technique
inspiring	form and content	Kendall coefficient	10	interview with Delphi technique
empowerment	form and content	Kendall coefficient	10	interview with Delphi technique
pioneering	form and content	Kendall coefficient	10	interview with Delphi technique
spiritual management	form and content	Kendall coefficient	10	interview with Delphi technique
displacement	form and content	Kendall coefficient	10	interview with Delphi technique
developmental management	form and content	Kendall coefficient	11	interview with Delphi technique

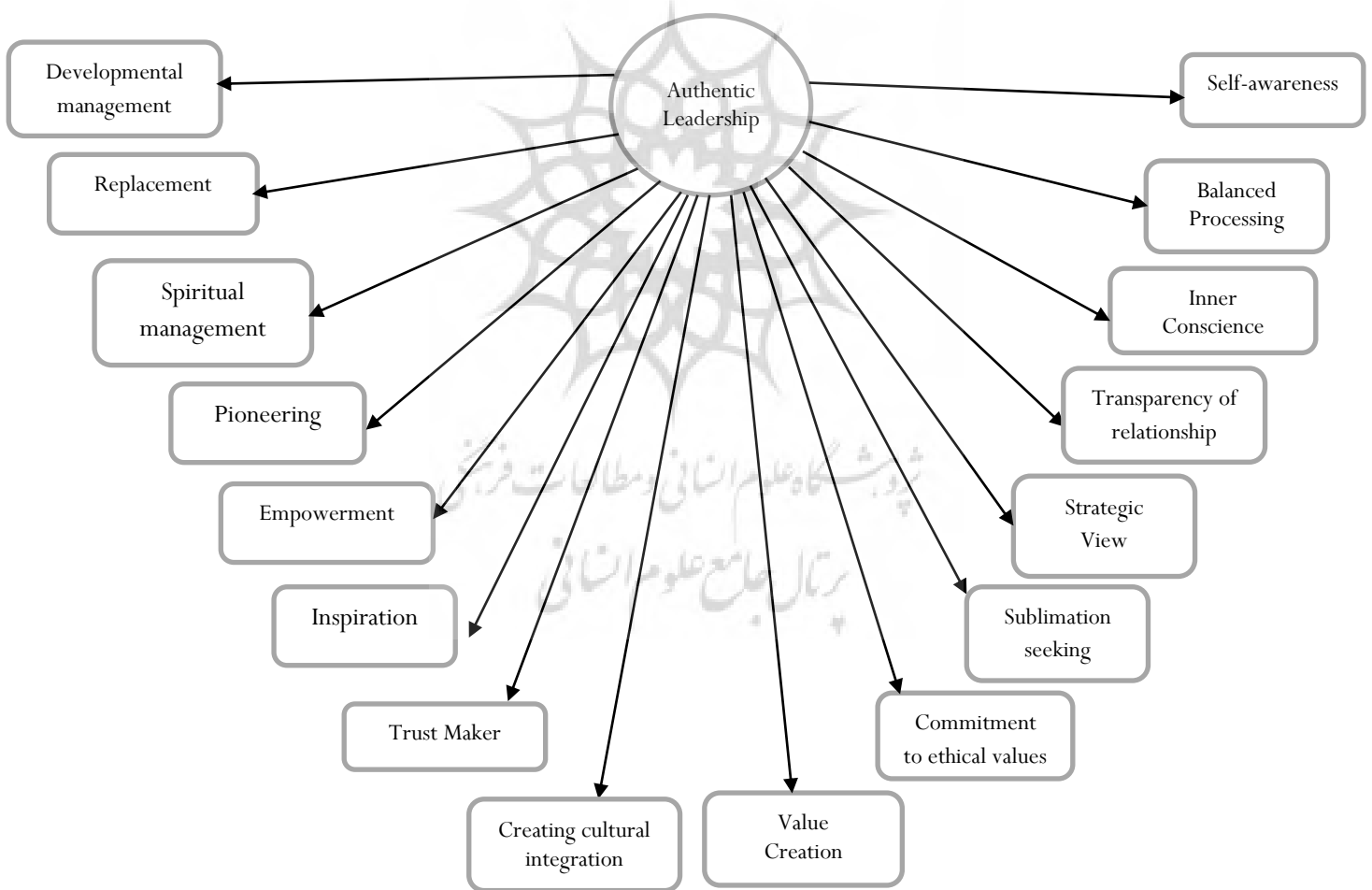


Figure1. Effective factors on authentic leadership in Tax Affaires Organization

#### 4. Discussion

Findings indicate that 16 factors are effective on authentic leadership in Tax Affairs Organization. According to quantitative calculations, the most remarkable characteristics of authentic leadership are the following: self-awareness, balanced processing, inner conscience, and transparency of relationship, strategic view, transcendentalism, and commitment to ethical values, value creator, creating cultural integration, trust maker, inspiring, empowerment, pioneering, spiritual management, and displacement. Based on results, theory of authentic leadership focuses on self-confidence and self-awareness of leaders and their followers.

Theory of authentic leadership is considered as the most comprehensive theory in leadership. Nowadays, leadership is increasingly becoming more difficult than ever along with challenges such as competitions and stressors all over the world. These challenges necessitate recovering self-confidence, hope, and optimism in individuals, being necessary for leaders to help people to find and improve them. Therefore, it is necessary to have some leaders familiar with goals, values, and integrities. Authentic leadership is founded on authenticity that indicates the conditions in which people behave looking at their values, beliefs, and sublime nature who insist on preserving a behavior in line with their values and beliefs. In fact the authentic leadership theories try to educate leaders so that they show their followers their true self, without pretending the opposite. Actually, they show an internal fact in their behavior avoiding duplicity.

Authentic leaders create trust, encourages a positive and moral environment, optimism, and clear relationship through helping them to find meaning in their work. Whereas the leaders are considered as behavior pattern, we expect followers to model leaders' positive behavior perception. Cottrell et al (2014) showed the effect of a positive leader on military students which affects in short and long term periods. The short term effects include increasing self-esteem, morale, reducing absenteeism, improving performance, meeting goals, increasing trust between leaders and followers, and long term effects consist of followers' trying to imitate positive leaders. Other studies indicate that the leaders with positive characteristics, goals, values, and considerable capabilities in personality affect positive effects on followers' performance, behavior, and emotions. Moreover, there is a positive relationship between authentic leadership, psychological capital and creativity, leadership effectiveness and positive psychological capabilities, organization performance, commitment, satisfaction, citizenship behavior, and satisfaction from supervisors. Truthfulness, trust and transparency of authentic leaders cause a mutual encouragement between employees and culture in organizations so that illumination, sharing, and continuous development of psychological capital change into normality in organization. Thus, authentic leadership can develop individual and organization capacities and help create a positive and inspiring environment. Authentic leader is deeply aware of his behavior, way of thinking, values, ethical perspectives, knowledge and his strengths and others'; the context he works; he is self-confident, optimist, flexible, and possesses considerable ethical characteristics. This theory concentrates on psychological dimensions of leaders, followers and the context he works. The theory basically stands on two psychological dimensions, leader's self-awareness and self-regulation, which was introduced as process of individual development of leader.

According to the researchers' view in this area, self-awareness is the basis of authentic leadership, which consists of 1.Values, 2.Identifying identity, 3.Emotions, 4.goals/motives. In addition, self-regulation is a process in which the authentic leaders adjust their genuine values with their goals and performances, and present their employees their standards and goals to guide them. The significant issues and concerns organizational leaders are facing during the early part of the twenty-first century such as global crises, rapidly changing economic landscapes, and the sheer speed of global change are creating ethical dilemmas, complexity and unpredictability for twenty-first century international leaders.

Whether domestically or internationally, organizations are grappling with capriciously shifting external hurdles (customer demands, unpredictable markets, expansion into new economies, constantly changing

strategic alliances, sustainable growth and viability) and internal issues (skills shortages, talent retention, flexible work forcing, organizational structural adaptations). Thus, maintaining national, social and organizational resilience, security and viability in turbulent and uncertain international conditions should be top priorities for international leaders.

Also relevant is the notion that political leaders must put partisan politics aside and collaborate with social, community and business leaders to encourage human development and capacity building for resilience in the face of corruption, environmental degradation, and global threats, especially as there is no single, globally enforcing, political or economic body holding leaders accountable for their actions.

However, endeavors to discover an appropriate leadership approach relevant for all international leaders have typically been blurred by a perplexing array of fragmentary and opposing viewpoints, cultural biases in interpretation, and an “eclectic variety of leadership perspectives that define the essence of leadership”. Additionally, these approaches are often based on a predominantly Western, Anglo-Saxon social constructivist viewpoint, which is focused on leadership as imparted by an individual rather than leadership models as “process”. Attention to these “best practice” skills should enable business leaders to apply more sophisticated leadership capabilities. It is these capabilities that should proactively underpin corporate strategy with an influential socially responsible business model focusing on long-term outcomes, a wide-range of stakeholders (not just shareholders), and the obliteration of corruption and bribery. It is to be hoped that such a course of action will go some way to prevent the reoccurrence of global disasters that seem to appear with increasing frequency and heightened levels of ongoing threat.

Considering the relationship and forecasting of innovation capabilities based on the original leadership style, it is suggested that managers and education leaders, provide the ground for creating innovation capabilities in subordinate by applying this leadership style and its appropriate executive approaches. According to the findings, some applied suggestions are following: job profile is one of the most central features in organizations which affect other variables in organizations leaving constructive or destructive effects. So it is necessary to motivate the workers through creating some job profile for them so that they would have a good feeling in organization environment. In organizations, most workers are interested in being respected for identity aspect rather than other parts of job profile. So it should be planned in organization so that it can give identity to the work accomplished by workers to pave the way to devote them to work. Human source is considered as a main variable which can develop an organization, because the motiveless workers can't work not only effectively but also influence others to be ineffective. Therefore, giving motivating and respecting to workers increase their motivation.

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