

AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT IN SELECTED INSTITUTIONS IN BRONG AHAFO REGION

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Received: 11 May 2018

Accepted: 19 May 2018

Published: 31 May 2018

ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the antecedents of authentic leadership and organizational commitment in four selected higher education institutions in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana. The main aim was to examine how social and emotional intelligence link to authentic leadership, and how organizational commitment acts as an outcome of authentic leadership. The study was descriptive. The study first found about how employees perceived their leaders within the institutions. Also, the study revealed a significant positive relationship between social intelligence and authentic leadership as well as emotional intelligence and authentic leadership. Finally, it was discovered that significant positive relationship existed between authentic leader and organizational commitment. The study recommended that leaders within institutions in particular and other organizations must focus on quintessence like openness, confrontation, trust, authenticity, proactive, autonomy, and collaboration to strengthen authentic leadership behavior.

KEYWORDS: *Authentic Leadership, Social Intelligence, Emotional Intelligence, and Organizational Commitment*

INTRODUCTION

Over the decade, fewer faculties are interested in executive leadership roles such as presidential and provost positions (Fraser, 2014). Consequently, higher education is experiencing a shortage of leaders due to the diverse orientations of faculty and administrators to their institutional work (DeFavero, 2003 cited in Fraser, 2014). For this reason, Olalere (2015) attested that crisis of leadership appears as the most related problem confronting the African continent today. It is therefore not surprising that Stephen Adjei, a respected voice in leadership, on 2014 stated that "leadership is the cause; everything else is the effect." To him, leadership is a major reason for organizations to perform better or fail.

Hence, higher education in particular as well as Africa in general needs a leader that has the social ability to recognize internal feelings and perspective, detect and decipher emotions of others in social situations, and ability to inspire, influence, and interact with others. Leaders' with emotional intelligence to have a strong influence on followers' or subordinates mood which in return will influence their performance level in a variety of ways (Kelleter *et al.*, 2006).

These include boosting low confidence levels, helping subordinates cope with stress and frustrations, and motivating them to implement the leader's vision. This depicts that leaders with social and emotional intelligence can be revealed as authentic and effective leaders that can change the behavior of followers to enhance development in Ghana.

General intelligence continues to exhibit a strong connection to various indices of leadership and leader effectiveness, and this association has been observed under a variety of research settings (Zaccaro *et al.*, 2004). Social and emotional intelligence and authentic leadership are two emerging constructs in the field of leadership (Torbehbare *et al.*, 2014). Previous research studies indicate that social and emotional intelligence and authentic leadership have been found to have similar positive effects on leaders, organizations, and industries (Fred, 2014; Torbehbare *et al.*, 2014, Berardi, 2015). Although there is substantial research on social and emotional intelligence and authentic leadership as different constructs, research investigating their relationships is lacking in the area of leadership within Ghanaian context. While investigating how social and emotional intelligence act as an antecedent of authentic leadership, this leadership style may also affect commitment by its transparency and the moral stance of an authentic leader (Avolio & Gardner, 2005).

Research must improve insight to guide the choice of approaches that African leaders may adopt to achieve sustainable improvements in their behaviors to affect subordinates attitude to be committed to their work extraordinarily. In addition, since the leader-follower relationship is one of the main elements of authentic leadership (Gardner *et al.*, 2005), which is thus a multilevel dyadic construct (Krasikova and LeBreton, 2012), it is essential to collect information about a manager's authenticity both from the leaders as well as from their followers. It is crucial to distinguish between self-perception of the managers' characteristics and the perceptions of the leaders' characteristics of their followers (Cooper *et al.*, 2005). Hence, this study seeks to fill the gap by exploring into employees perceive of leaders' behavior as authentic and how social and emotional intelligence act as an antecedent of authentic leadership and organizational commitment as an outcome of authentic leadership in the Ghanaian context focusing on four tertiary institutions in Brong Ahafo Region.

Based on the background above, the following objectives, conceptual module as well as the hypothesis of the present study were framed: as the main objectives of this study are:

- To identify staff perceptions about authentic leadership.
- To identify the relationship between social intelligence and authentic leadership.
- To identify the relationship between emotional intelligence and authentic leadership.
- To evaluate the effect of authentic leadership on organizational commitment.

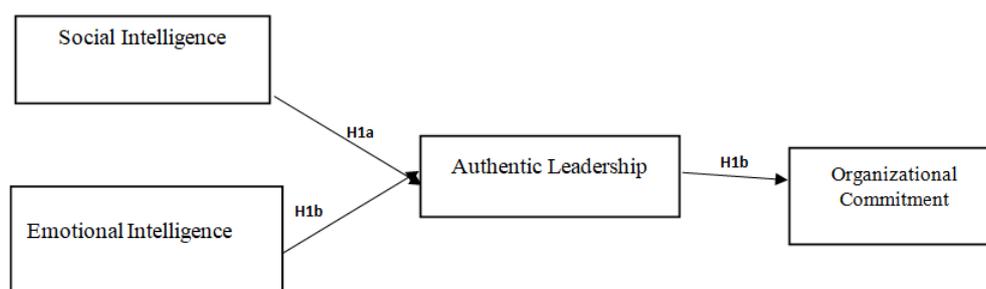


Figure 1: Conceptual Module

Towards the previously mentioned objectives, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H 1a: there is a statistically significant relationship between social intelligence and authentic leadership.

H 1b: there is a statistically significant relationship between emotional intelligence and authentic leadership.

H1c: there is a statistically significant relationship between authentic leadership and organizational commitment.

This framework sets up together different components (social and emotional intelligence) that offer ascent to the advancement of authentic leadership in people and organizational commitment as an outcome of authentic leadership.

METHODOLOGY

The study was purely descriptive. The sample of the study consisted of four institutions, namely; Valley View University, Catholic University College, Sunyani Technical University and the University of Energy and Natural Resource. Out of the 841 management (faculty) and staff (faculty and staff) from the four institutions, two hundred and ninety-five (295) provided data for the study.

Purposive and convenience sampling were used. Purposive sampling was adopted for the selection of management (faculty), and convenience sampling method was employed for the selection of staff (faculty and staff).

A different set of questionnaire was administered to management (faculty) and staff (faculty and staff). The management questionnaire consisted of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) adapted for measuring the contribution of social and emotional intelligence to authentic leadership styles which act as an independent variable in this study. According to Bass and Avolio (2000), the MLQ has been utilized in several research studies and has well-established reliability and validity as a leadership instrument in both industrial and service settings. The MLQ includes questions measuring (a) self-awareness, (b) social awareness, (c) self-management, (d) relational management and (e) responsive decision-making. In combination, these factors constitute emotional intelligence. The MLQ also includes questions measuring (a) skills to behave appropriately, (b) accurate interpretation of social situations and (c) knowledge of social situations; which are the characteristics of social intelligence.

Staff questionnaire consisted of the 20-item scale of organizational commitment questionnaire (OCQ) based on three main dimensions, including affective, continuance and normative commitment (Robbins, Judge, Odendaal & Roodt, 2010; Tella, Ayeni & Popoola, 2007; Meyer & Parfyonova, 2010; Robbins & Coulter, 2005). All the questionnaires were based on seven Likert scales.

RESULTS

This chapter presents the results and discussions of findings towards addressing the research objectives. The Pearson correlation between demographic, independent and dependent variables, mean score analysis and Regression tests were used to analyze the data.

The Correlations between Demographic, Independent and Dependent Variables

Pearson correlation analysis was employed in this study to determine the relationship between the demographic variables, independent variable and the dependent variables since this is a requirement for performing regression analysis. Table 1 gives a vivid statistic on the correlation between the variables.

Table 1: Correlation between Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. GN	1.00									
2. AG	.006	1.00								
3. EDUC	.227**	.194**	1.00							
4. MST	.013	-.001	-.153	1.00						
5. WEX	-.023	.027	-.049	-.010	1.00					
6. COE	.025	-.010	.134	.016	.005	1.00				
7. OC	-.089	-.101	.021	-.005	-.057	-.178*	1.00			
8. SOI	.048	-.013	.004	.058	-.043	-.023	.216*	1.00		
9. EMI	.084	.044	.082	.022	-.149	.082	.085	.311**	1.00	
10. AUL	.062	-.081	.101	-.054	-.199**	-.022	.327**	.339**	.362**	1.00

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

From Table 1, all the dependent variables (social and emotional) related positively with authentic leadership with social intelligence (SOI) showing higher values ($r = .366$, $p < .01$), followed by emotional intelligence (EMI) ($r = .339$, $p < .01$). This shows that as respondents' emotional (EMI) and social intelligence (SOI) increases, there is an increase in authentic leadership. However, none of the demographic variables, including gender (GN), age (AG), education (EDUC), marital status (MST), working experience (WEX) and category of employees (COE) relate positively with the dependent variable.

Staff Perceptions about Authentic Leadership

This objective was to find out the respondents' perceptions about authentic leadership. The questionnaires were answered based on a seven-point rating scale ranging from strongly disagree (indicated by 1) to strongly agree (indicated by 7). A mean score analysis was adopted to analyze this part of the questionnaire. Table 2 summarizes respondents' perception of authentic leadership.

Table 2: Staff Perception about Authentic Leadership

	Statement	Mean Score
My Leader	Says exactly what he or she means	5.67
	Accept mistakes when they are made	5.43
	Displays emotions exactly in line with feelings	5.76
	Demonstrates beliefs that are consistent with action	5.48
	Makes difficult decisions based on his or her core values and high standards of ethical conduct.	5.12
	Solicits opinions that challenge his or her deeply held positions	4.79
	Listens carefully to different points of views before coming to conclusions	5.07
	Seeks feedback to improve interaction with others.	5.39
	Knows when it is time to re-evaluate his or her positions on important issues	4.87
	Shows he or she understands how specific actions affect others.	5.30

Source: Field Survey, 2017

It is quite clear from Table 2 that the most prominent perception of staff about authentic leadership which was agreed by the majority was leaders' display emotions exactly in line with feelings which registered a mean score of 5.76 followed by leaders say exactly what they mean which also registered a mean score of 5.67. The third most prominent perception of staff about authentic leadership which was agreed on was leaders' demonstrate beliefs that are consistent with the action (Mean score=5.48). Staff perception of the statement "My leader accepts mistakes when they are made"

was followed with a mean score of 5.43 which depicted that they somehow agreed. The statement 'My leader seeks feedback to improve interaction with others' was the fifth most prominent perception of staff about authentic leadership which was somehow agreed with a mean score of 5.39 while leaders show they understand how specific actions affect others was followed (Mean score=5.30). The seventh most prominent perception of staff identified by the study of authentic leadership was that leaders make difficult decisions based on their core values and high standards of ethical conduct (Mean score of 5.12). The eighth most prominent perception of staff about authentic leadership was that leaders listen carefully to different points of views before coming to conclusions with a mean score of 5.07. Leaders know when it is time to re-evaluate their positions on important issues was the ninth most prominent perception of staff about authentic leadership (Mean score = 4.87). The least perception of staff about authentic leadership with the mean score of 4.79 was that leaders solicit views that challenge their deeply held positions. The mean score with 4.87 and 4.79 also felt within the range of somehow agreed.

Summary of Simple Linear Regression for the Relationship between Social Intelligence and Authentic Leadership

To analyze the influence and predictive capacity of social intelligence components on the authentic leadership which was the second objective of the study, the variable called social intelligence was computed by averaging all the responses on the social intelligence constructs. The same was done for authentic leadership. Then simple regression was employed. A summary of social intelligence as independent and authentic leadership as the dependent is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Summary of Regression

Model Summary					
Model	R	Adjusted R-Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R-Square	Sig.
1	.339 ^a	.106	.883	.115	.001

Predictors: (Constant), Authentic Leadership

Dependent Variable: Social Intelligence

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 3 gives a summary of simple linear regression to ascertain the relationship between social intelligence and authentic leadership. The adjusted R-square value displayed in the Table 3 shows that 10.6% of the variation in the dependent variable (authentic leadership) is explained by the independent variable (social intelligence). Thus, the adjusted R-square value accounted for .106 which means that a 1% change in social intelligence will result in a 10.6% increase in authentic leader. This declared a significant value of .001 meaning the independent variable has a tendency of predicting the dependent variable. This gives the indication that as an individual's response level of social intelligence increases, his or her authentic leadership qualities can be predicted to increase and vice versa. The finding of the study showed a significant positive relationship between social intelligence and authentic leadership (adjusted r-square=.106, sig. value=.001). Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is a statistically significant relationship between social intelligence and authentic leadership could therefore be accepted.

Summary of Simple Linear Regression for the Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Authentic Leadership

Also, to find the relationship between authentic and emotional intelligence to ascertain objective three, all the emotional intelligence sub-constructs were averaged to form one variable (called emotional intelligence) and regressed it

with the average of the authentic leadership sub-constructs (called authentic leadership). Table 4 illustrates further details.

Table 4: Simple Linear Regression for the Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Authentic Leadership

Model Summary					
Model	R	Adjusted R-Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R-Square	Sig.
1	.362 ^a	.122	.734	.131	.000

Predictors: (Constant), Emotional Intelligence

Dependent Variable: Authentic Leadership

Source: Field Survey, 2017

As presented in Table 4, the results show that the model was significant and accounted for 12.2% of the variance in authentic leadership. Thus, the adjusted R-square value displayed in Table 4 shows that 12.2% of the variation in the dependent variable (authentic leadership) is explained by the independent variable (emotional intelligence). Thus, the adjusted R-square value accounted for .122 which means that a 1% change in emotional intelligence will result in a 12% increase in authentic leadership. However, the significant value of .000 was significant in the sense that the independent variable has a tendency of predicting the dependent variable. This means that as the response level of emotional intelligence increases, authentic leadership qualities can be predicted to increase. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is a statistically significant relationship between emotional intelligence and authentic leadership could therefore be accepted.

Summary of Simple Linear Regression for the Relationship between Authentic Leadership and Organizational Commitment

To evaluate the effect of authentic components on organizational commitment, the variable called authentic was computed by averaging all the responses on the authentic leadership constructs. The same was done for organizational commitment statement. Then simple regression was employed. A summary of the authenticity as the independent variable and organizational commitment as a dependent is shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Simple Linear Regression for the Relationship between Authentic Leadership and Organizational Commitment

Model Summary					
Model	R	Adjusted R-Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R-Square	Sig.
1	.327 ^a	.102	.894	.107	.000

Predictors: (Constant), AUL **Dependent Variable:** OC.

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The result of the analysis shows that the model accounted for 10.2% (Adjusted-R2 = .102, sig value=.000) of the variance in organizational commitment and this was significant. The results indicated a significant and positive relationship implying that a change in a leader's authentic characteristic behavior by 1% would be translated into 10.2% improvement in organizational commitment. Higher levels of authentic leadership exhibition were associated with higher levels of organizational commitment.

Also, the significant value (or p-value) is .000 which is below the .005 level; hence, it could be concluded that the overall model is statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is a statistically significant

relationship between authentic leadership and organizational commitment could therefore, be accepted.

DISCUSSIONS

The research was conducted to access some objectives. This part discusses the results of the study in relation to the study objectives.

Perception of Staff about Authentic Leadership Style

Gardner *et al.* (2005) posited that followers' perceptions of their leader are not solely based on the leader's observable behavior, but also those values, beliefs, and goals attributed to the leader by those followers. Also, Goffee and Jones (2005) and Harvey *et al.* (2006) insist that authenticity must be attributed to an individual by others. In this view, leaders cannot assess themselves as authentic, but can only be described as such by people around them. With this, the study sought to find out the perceptions of staff within the various tertiary institutions about authentic leadership style.

The perceptions of employees about how leaders behave within the various tertiary institutions in order of magnitude include; leaders display emotions exactly in line with feelings, leaders say exactly what they mean, leaders demonstrate beliefs that are consistent with action, leaders accept mistakes when they are made, leaders seek feedback to improve interaction with others, leaders show they understand how specific actions affect others was followed, leaders make difficult decisions based on their core values and high standards of ethical conduct, leaders listen carefully to different points of views before coming to conclusions, leaders know when it is time to re-evaluate their positions on important issues, and leaders solicit views that challenge their deeply held positions. These components are in agreement with Walumbwa *et al.*, (2008) and Neider and Schriesheim (2011), who displayed these characters of authentic leadership in their study.

The study also disagreed with many researchers that assumed that authentic leadership does not involve others' perception of a manager, but only an individual's actions in accordance with an individual's true nature (George, 2007; George *et al.*, 2007; Shamir and Eilam, 2005). According to them, individuals have access to in-depth information about themselves that no one else has. With regard to the introspected nature of authentic leadership elements (Avolio and Gardner, 2005), in particular, the self-awareness dimension, it makes sense to evaluate authentic leadership through self-reported ratings, as well. Such an approach allows for a deeper understanding of an individual's internal personal traits.

Relationship between Social Intelligence and Authentic Leader

The results revealed that social intelligence significantly and positively predicted authentic leadership (Adjusted r -square=.106, sig. value=.001). The first hypothesis which states that there is a statistically significant relationship between social intelligence and authentic leadership was accepted. The study confirmed that respondents who exhibit high social intelligence showed more authentic leadership qualities.

This gives a clear picture that leaders with high social intelligence are more able to recognize when different relations behaviors are salient. For example, to know when to be more supportive, cooperative, encouraging, and helpful. This finding is to some extent in congruence with Humphrey *et al.*, (2008). According to him, a social, intelligent leader may be capable of expressing authentic leadership and support towards frustrated employees. As authentic leadership emphasizes on the fostering of a healthy relationship between a leader and employees, as well as focusing on

comprehending of those whom they serve, the role of social intelligence in authentic leadership is attested.

The psychologist Edward Thorndike, the first to explore the concept of social intelligence in 1920 sees social intelligence as the ability to think, understand, manage and act appropriately in human social relationships. Karl Albrecht (2009) elaborates five major dimensions of social intelligence as situational radar, presence/ bearing, authenticity, clarity, and empathy. Nonetheless, the consistent aspects of social intelligence among all researchers in this field include knowledge of the social situations, accurate interpretation of the social situation and the skills to behave appropriately in that social situation.

From the researcher's perspective, this means that individuals with social intelligence have an outstanding personality of attracting others to themselves. They depend on a lifelong experience and demonstrate a genuine interest in their fellow workmates. Hence, these views are in agreement with this study since for one to work effectively as an authentic leader; there is the need for a better understanding of the environment and how this environment can be manipulated to suit the organizational purpose.

Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Authentic Leadership

Hypothesis 2 which also stated that emotional intelligence would significantly and positively predict authentic leadership was also affirmed in the study. Consistent with previous findings, this study also found a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and authentic leadership among the study sample (Adjusted-R² = 0.122, sig. value=0.000). It is exciting to note that researchers such as Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans and May, (2004); Gardner *et al.*, (2009); Walter *et al.*, (2011), and Vlăsceanu, (2012) enumerated the role that emotional intelligence plays in the authentic leadership process, as well as the ability of the leader to manage emotions which form the characteristics of self-management in relationship with employees. The elements they highlighted seem to be similar to the findings of this study which revealed that as the respondents' level of emotional intelligence increases, authentic leadership qualities could be predicted to increase. This finding did not come as a shock as several researchers have emphasized the relational nature of emotional intelligence, and it's relevant to authentic leadership.

Also, Goleman and Boyatzis (2008) depicted four main groups of emotional behaviours which include self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management. Emmerling and Boyatzis (2012) felt that this intelligence can best be understood as a competency. They further described it as a person's ability to think ahead, comprehend and use their emotions leading to greater achievements. By properly managing one's emotions, the study comes to the conclusion that authentic leaders can change their subordinates reasoning and behaviors in a way that will lead to organizational improvements.

Effect of Authentic Leadership on Organizational Commitment

The study further revealed that there is a positive relationship between authentic leadership and organizational commitment (Adjusted-R² = 0.102, sig. value=0.000). This implied that an increase in a leader's authentic characteristic behavior would be translated into an improvement in organizational commitment. Thus, employees who are led by authentic leaders are more likely to be committed to their organization. This means that when individuals within organizations establish that their leader is sensitive to their grievances, trustworthy and thus very supportive, they respond by showing more commitment. Previous researchers like Alinezhad, Abbasian, and Behrangi (2015), Rego *et al.*, (2015),

and Walumbwa *et al.*, (2008), which showed that authentic leadership has a direct and significant effect on organizational commitment gives evidence to this study.

As authentic leadership can positively affect the behaviors and attitudes of employees, Ilies *et al.*, (2005) and Rego *et al.*, (2012) also postulated that it could impact on developing commitment, organizational citizenship behaviors and performance. This causes followers to feel more committed to achieving the goals and objectives that have been set, given their degree of perceived authenticity (Kernis, 2003; Kernis & Goldman, 2005). Followers will get to know, appreciate, and admire their leader's oneself, wants, needs, and desires, as well as their role–position as a leader and thus as a representative spokesperson for the overall organization (social identification).

CONCLUSIONS

This study has delved into social and emotional intelligence: the role of authentic leadership on organizational commitment. Based on the results of the study, the objective one sought to find out the perception of staff about authentic leadership among them were leaders display emotions exactly in line with feelings, leaders say exactly what they mean, leaders demonstrate beliefs that are consistent with action, leaders accept mistakes when they are made, leaders seek feedback to improve interaction with others and others. This depicts that a leader's true, authentic self-operates from a combination of his or her inner personal realm in relation to the external world which can be attributed by others (Wong & Laschinger, 2013; Goffee & Jones, 2005; Harvey *et al.*, 2006).

Objective two also revealed that social intelligence significantly and positively predicted authentic leadership (Adjusted r-square=.106, sig. value=.001). This implies that as social intelligence increase, so as authentic leadership increase and vice versa.

Consistent with previous findings, the study also found a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and authentic leadership among the study sample (Adjusted-R2 = 0.122, sig. value=0.000). This declared that as a respondents' level of emotional intelligence increases, authentic leadership qualities could be predicted to increase.

Lastly, the study further revealed that there is a positive relationship between authentic leadership and organizational commitment (Adjusted-R2 = 0.102, sig. value=0.000). This implied that an increase in a leader's authentic characteristic behavior would be translated into an improvement in organizational commitment. It could therefore be concluded that the findings of the study have a relevant contribution to higher education institutions, which is an enhancement of social and emotional intelligence will enhance authentic leadership behavior.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

- The study recommends that leaders should pay much attention to how employees perceive their authenticity to build upon what constitutes a genuine leader.
- Leaders within the institutions must focus on quintessence like openness, confrontation, trust, authenticity, proactive, autonomy, and collaboration to strengthen authentic leadership behavior. This can be inculcated into followers, which can be a copious benefit to the society and nation as a whole.
- Higher education leaders should accentuate more on self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and

relationship management. Also, leaders should focus on their ability to think ahead, comprehend and use their emotions to get things done leading to magnificent achievements.

- Finally, higher educational institutions should focus much on authentic leadership to sharpening faculty and staff roles in becoming more committed to their task.

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