

Interpreting Authentic Leadership: A Cross Cultural Comparison of A New Zealand University and Ghanaian University

Justice Owusu-Bempah*

Faculty of Commerce, Lincoln University, New Zealand

Abstract

National culture theory proponents have argued that due to differences in national cultures, expectations and preferences differ and this affect prioritizations in value systems. However, the authentic leadership (AL) theory presents an authentic leader as honest, transparent and behaves with integrity regardless of culture. By presenting AL this way, the proponents of the AL theory are discounting the effects of contexts/culture in the subjective interpretations and prioritizations of individuals in explaining constructs and concepts. This study, therefore, explored and compared the preferred authentic leadership attributes from leaders' and followers' perspectives using respondents from a Ghanaian university and a New Zealand university. The Q method was used to gather information from 60 respondents, 30 in each university. The findings show that the subjects, though in different cultural contexts, have some common shared preferences for certain authentic leadership attributes. However, there were some attributes that were country specific. This suggests that though certain authentic leadership attributes are universal whereas some are context specific and therefore in defining authenticity in leadership context specific preferences cannot be overlooked. The findings of study apart from being useful in the design of training programs to training practicing and upcoming leaders in universities, has also contributed a cross cultural dimension of authentic leadership attributes to the authentic leadership theory.

Keywords

National culture, Authentic Leadership, New Zealand, Ghana

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Introduction

New challenges facing the world today has made the suitability and the applicability of the known leadership theories been questioned (Avolio and Gardner, 2005). There is therefore the need to come up with a model of leadership that would be suitable to meet the challenges of

today's organizations and still be relevant for the future as well. Researchers and practitioners (Bass and Steidlmeier, 1999; May *et al.*, 2003; Harris, 2004; Avolio and Gardner, 2005; Gardner *et al.*, 2005; Spillane, 2005; Walumbwa *et al.*, 2008) asked for the redirection of research efforts towards the understanding of

leadership practice, which they believe is revealed in leader-follower interactions rather than concentrating on the leader as an individual. Understanding leader-follower dynamics is vital because it is within this that we can know the expectations, anticipations and reactions of leaders and followers, which are very important ingredients of organizational development. Researchers (Harris, 2004; Avolio and Gardner, 2005; Spillane, 2005), highlight the opportunities to be derived from understanding leader-follower interactions. They suggest that inherent in the leader-follower dynamism lies collaborative and collective learning and knowledge generation which, is a strong foundation for building innovation and trust in organizations. Also the issues of integrity become evident. Gardner et al., (2005) echo that in times of rapid changes like our world today, people (employees) need direction and meaning in their work and they are in constant search for those who could help them genuinely and transparently with integrity coupled with high moral standards. Employees, in addition need people who have stable philosophies of themselves as well as the organization and have the ability to help the employees to also develop their own philosophical bases (Novicevic et al., 2006). Leaders with such characteristics and abilities are said to be authentic (Avolio and Gardner, 2005; Eagly, 2005; Gardner et al., 2005; Shamir and Eilam, 2005; Novicevic et al., 2006; Endrissat et al., 2007). Authentic leaders are needed in today's organizations (Luthans and Avolio, 2003; Avolio et al., 2004) to develop authentic followers (2003b; Avolio et al., 2004; Gardner et al., 2005; Illies et al., 2005) for positive organizational behaviours (Luthans et al., 2004; Luthans and Youssef, 2004, 2007; Luthans et al., 2007b) which culminates in

positive organizational outcomes such as citizenship and job satisfaction and more. Proponents of the authentic leadership (AL) construct (Kernis, 2003a, Kernis, 2003b; Avolio et al., 2004; Luthans et al., 2004; Gardner et al., 2005; Illies et al., 2005; Luthans and Youssef, 2007; Luthans et al., 2007b) have presented AL as having more practical advantages than the existing leadership models and that it is more follower centric in contrast to most of the known leadership models that appear more leader centric. That means for leaders to achieve authentic leadership status depends on them having met certain follower expectations of what is authentic. This makes the AL construct subjective, because to evaluate it requires understanding from followers' point of view. Another issue of concern is that the current AL theory, which is mainly based on research done in the Western world, suggests that all the desirable authentic leader attributes revealed by such research are universally applicable. But studies (Hofstede, 1980; Dorfman et al., 1997; Peterson and Hunt, 1997; Den-Hartog et al., 1999; Hofstede, 2001; House, 2004; Northouse, 2004) have proven that no two cultures are the same and it is likely that follower expectations and perceptions are heavily dependent on their background cultures. The implication here is that cultural context will influence the prioritization of preferred authentic leader attributes. Therefore a question exists as to whether leaders and followers in different contexts see authentic leadership differently or not.

To address the concerns raised above and to make the AL construct meaningful in its applicability in different contexts require investigating leader and follower subjectivity regarding the meanings given to the AL construct in different cultural settings and compare these meanings.

Such comparison can identify those AL attributes that might be universal. This study has been designed to compare and contrast the meanings given to the AL construct in two different cultures.

Methods

The main focus of the Q method is not to find out how prevalent a particular viewpoint is in a given sample but rather to bring an understanding of the contours and subjectivities existing in the views (Stephenson, 1994). These contours according to Cross (2005) come to light because Q method explores varieties of accounts from finite diversities as constructed by people on the given subject. Though it has been argued that the Q method is a quantitative means of measuring subjectivity (McKeown and Thomas, 1988) because of its heavy reliance on factor analysis, it is also a qualitative technique as it emphasizes „operant subjectivity“ (Brown, 1980). The qualitative nature of the Q method is seen when researchers listen to and record subjects“ own accounts, (Previte *et al.*, 2007), while asking engaging questions (Fairweather, 2001), for further clarification. It is through this fundamental process that the meanings individuals have constructed in their minds on given topics come to light. This process, according to Robbins and Krueger (2000), provides researchers with the opportunity to examine response patterns across individual participants, rather than variables, in order to systematically identify groups of people with common structures in their perspectives. The uniqueness of the Q method as a qualitative technique according to Goldman (1999) lies in the fact that it is structured and “scientific”.

Adding to the uniqueness of the Q method according to Previte *et al.*, (2007) is seen in the analysis of data. The Q method employs quantitative factor analysis to group qualitatively gathered responses. In so doing, Stenner and Rogers (2004), report that the Q method possesses quantitative and qualitative features which make it more robust and systematic. Sell and Brown (1984) echo the qualitative/quantitative nature of Q method and add that this allows it to provide a helpful bridge between the natural and the social sciences and could therefore be an insightful and useful tool which can be used to provide a dialogue between these divergent research traditions. The Q method consists of five processes, beginning with collecting relevant ideas, beliefs and opinions concerning the research object, selecting and formulation of a set of meaningful statements, selecting respondents and giving them the statements to sort out in their own way and lastly collection and analysis of data. The first step is the collection of relevant ideas, beliefs, attitudes and opinions on the topic under study, a process known as concourse building. There can be several ways of building a concourse. It could be done either by interviewing people who have knowledge about the subject matter, or content analysis of documents or previous research, drawing quotations from relevant literature, photos etc. the concourse in this study was constructed through interviewing 70 diverse people from the universities and two NGOs in New Zealand and Ghana. Respondents were asked to ‘describe a good leader they know or have known and tell us why he/she considers such a person/people good leader(s)’. As the individuals shared their views on the above question, they were asked to clarify some of the issues they

raised, e.g., truthful, kind, generous etc the issues that emerged differ from one individual to another and so are the follow-up questions. In the two universities, individuals that were willing to provide answers for the concourse building were used. After they are satisfied and believed to have exhausted answering the questions posed, they nominated another person. This snowballing process went on in all the selected organizations until such a time that the responses being given by later respondents were similar to those previously given by earlier respondents indicating that no new insights were being found. At this point the initial interviews stopped.

The second step involves the selecting and formulation of a set of meaningful statements out of the number of already gathered statements. These final statements so selected are referred to as the Q sample. These statements are then randomly numbered and put on separate cards and given to respondents for the study. All responses received from the initial interviews were collated and condensed into 60 distinct opinion statements. These statements were then mapped onto Kernis' (2003b) model of authentic leadership. The mapping was done by comparing and, matching, the meaning of the statements selected from the concourse with the characteristics of each of the four attributes of AL in the Kernis' model. Four dimensions each under leader and follower meant that eight domains were needed. The use of five rows and two columns gave a matrix of 10 cells. A minimum of five statements was chosen from each column. However, more statements were chosen from the 'other' column as those ideas expressed by the subjects were not included in the published research on authentic leadership. A total of

33 statements finally formed the Q sets for New Zealand. For Ghana, two additional statements stood out as unique to Ghana and were added to make a total of 35. All statements were randomly numbered and put on cards for the Q sorting process.

The third step requires the respondents to express their views on the topic under study by arranging the cards into piles of most agreed, neutral and most disagreed in a prestructured normal distribution. When completed, the resultant structure is called a Q sort. The respondents were asked to order the Q sets (statements) into three piles; the ones with which they most agreed, the one they most disagreed with and those about which they were neutral. After they were satisfied with their groups they were then asked to select the four most agreed with statements out their agreed pile. They were then asked to select one statement out of the four that they strongly agreed with; was a condition of the instruction. The number of the selected statement was inserted into the first pile in the Q sort distribution for the strongly agreed part. The remaining agreed statements were used to fill other sections of the agreed part of the matrix until that part was completely filled. This same procedure was followed on the loading of the 'disagreed' side of the matrix. The statements with which the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed (neutral) with were used to load the neutral portion of the matrix. Then the respondents were asked to review the completed matrix to make any changes to the arrangement if so desired. The matrix was deemed complete when a respondent was convinced that there was no need to make any further change to the arrangements in the matrix. As the respondents sorted the statements, they were invited to comment on the statements, and then invited to comment on why they ranked the statements on

the matrix sheet in the way they did. All their comments were recorded either by way of taking notes during the Q sort or tape recorded and transcribed. Each Q sort lasted between 30 minutes to an hour

The fourth step is analyses and interpretation of the Q sort data. The process begins by entering completely filled out Q sort matrix into the PQ software, a free online software package used for analysing Q data (Schmolck, 2002). The software produces a correlation matrix of all Q sorts. That is, each person's responses are statistically correlated with each other. The correlation coefficient produced is based on the rank ordering of statements in a continuum so that any pair of respondents with similar order will have a high correlation. The magnitude of the correlation coefficients generated by the software indicates the degree of similarity among the various perspectives (ten-Klooster *et al.*, 2008). The data for this study were analysed with Principal Component Analysis on a 30 x 30 matrix with varimax rotation. This approach was followed because recent Q sort studies use the varimax rotation. However, both Stephenson (1953) and Brown (1980) prefer using centroid plus hand rotation instead which in their view could produce better insights than the varimax rotation. And as stated earlier, each person's responses were statistically correlated with each other by the software to produce correlation coefficients that are based on the rank ordering of statements in a continuum so that any pair of people with similar order will have high correlation. An important decision in a Q study is determining the number of factors which should be selected for interpretation. The usual criterion in Q method is that an interpretable factor must ordinarily have at least two Q sorts that load significantly upon it alone the

unrotated factor matrix (Brown, 1980). Upon observing the number of significant loadings on the unrotated factor matrix, a three factor solution was deemed suitable for the final analysis. The last step is the interpretation of the factors obtained from the PQ software.

Meta Analysis

A further analysis in the form of Pearson's rank correlation was conducted on the results from the organizations in the two nations. This was to ascertain the existence of correspondence between the factors in the organizations in the two countries. A meta-analysis was then performed to find out the exact similarities existing between the factors in the two nations.

Results

The following narrative descriptions are based on the distinguishing statements for each factor that emerged from the statistical analysis i.e. those statements whose positioning by factor one was significantly different to one or more of the other factors (at $p < 0.05$ or 95% significance level). The main ideological perspectives captured by the factors in the two organizations are presented below.

Background of Respondents

The New Zealand subjects had different background characteristics in terms of age, highest educational level attained, years of experience and the self-declared leader-follower classification. Thirteen of the subjects were males while 17 were females. Their ages ranged between 28 and 63 years and they had worked in this organization between six to 36+ years. Varying educational backgrounds were also identified. Whereas some had high school certificates, others held college certificates. Four had a tertiary diploma and 11 had bachelors degrees. Some

held postgraduate diploma certificate and masters degree while eight had a PhD qualification. The remaining three were PhD candidates at the time of the interview. Five out of the 30 respondents classified themselves mainly as followers, 14 as leaders and followers and 11 mainly leaders. The above descriptions identify the respondents as being very diverse. Like New Zealand, thirty respondents were used in the University chosen in Ghana. Like the New Zealand subjects, the Ghana subjects also have varied background in terms of age range, formal educational level reached, years of experience and the self-declared leader-follower classification. Regarding the gender, this sample was more skewed in favour of males as they form the majority (25) while their female counterparts formed the minority (5). This does not reflect the employment situation but more males were willing to participate in the study than their female counterparts. Their ages ranged between 22 and 50 years and have worked between one to 33 years with an average of 16 years of experience. Varying formal educational levels were identified amongst the subjects. Some had college certificates, while some were undergraduates at the time of the interview. Three had a tertiary diploma and six a bachelors degrees. The majority (13) had a masters degree while four had a PhD qualification. In terms of the self-classified leader and follower category, five of the subjects classified themselves mainly as followers, 17 as leaders and followers and eight said mainly as leaders. Such a diverse sample was sought purposely in order to capture diverse opinions from within the organization, a very important condition of Q methodology.

University In New Zealand

Below is the description of the three authentic leadership perceptions

identified based on the analysis of the Q sample statements and their normalized scores supplemented with comments from respondents in the New Zealand University.

Factor one: The Participative Democrat

The name, Participative Democrat is given to this factor, as a result of the beliefs of the subjects loaded on it. They believe in equality but they want to be part of, or contribute to ensuring that equality prevails. In decision making for example, the Participative Democrat believes in democracy, that is, every individual should be given the opportunity to air their views. To the Participative Democrat, authentic leadership mean having a democratic environment where everybody is treated equally and where each person's views and opinions are considered in decision making. A more detailed interpretation of the beliefs of the Participative Democrat is given below.

Interpretation. The adherents of this factor are worried and concerned about having and maintaining democratic environments, where everybody's views, opinions and ideas are appreciated. This explains why they strongly agree with statement 21 (*I look for a leader I can easily approach and discuss issues with, +5*). The Participative Democrat prefers an approachable leader with an aim of getting an opportunity to be listened to (Statement 19: *I want my leaders to be good listeners, +3*). Not only do they want to be listened to but they actually want their ideas to be taken on board and be appreciated for their achievements as well (statement 10: *I want leaders who are open to my ideas and appreciate what I can do, +4*). When such opportunity is created for the Participative Democrat,

they see their leader as being flexible (statement 29: *I prefer leaders who are flexible and can find several ways for us to achieve our goals, +3*) for finding several ways to achieve goals. They see their contributions as part of the several ways to achieve goals. However, as they see themselves not as leaders yet, so they appreciate that their ideas may not be right or their ideas may be different and therefore if a leader takes them on board they see such leaders as flexible and accommodating. Because they like having their ideas considered, they also seek to be taught and inspired (statement 33: *I want leaders who will teach and inspire me to do more than I normally would, +4*). This reflects their acknowledgement of the limited leadership experiences they possess. However, they prefer positive thinking leaders who do not bow to hard situations (statement 30: *I want positive thinking leaders even in hard times when things seem to be going wrong, +3*).

On the disagreed side, the Participative Democrat maintained that they would not discuss their personal issues (statement 27: *I look for leaders I can discuss my personal issues with, -3*) with their leader regardless of their preference for good listening leaders. They think that the ideas they want to share or discuss are not for their selfish interest but may be for the general good of the organization or for everybody in the organization. This is emphasized by their strong disagreement with statement 32 (*I want my leaders to act in ways that pleases me, -3*). It is expected that because they want leaders to be open to their ideas, they would also prefer leaders acting in ways that would please them, but that this is not what the Participative Democrat wants. Arrogance is something that the Participative Democrat cannot stand regardless of how such individual could be of help (statement

5: *I don't mind if my leaders are arrogant as long as they help me to achieve my aim I will follow, -3*), because arrogance runs against their view of participation. Likewise, they really want to know the intentions and motivations behind every action a leader might take before they follow (statement 16: *Regardless of the intentions and motivations behind their actions I will follow as long as they are my leaders, -4*). Integrity (statement 14: *I don't mind if a leader does not act according to what they say, -4*) is a valued attribute by the Participative Democrat as they would expect people to act according to what they say and therefore disagrees with any statement that puts such value in the negative. The Participative Democrat appears to like to work with people where each one's ideas are valued and taken on board and therefore they do not like being bossed about (statement 28: *I like bossy type of leader, -5*) to emphasize their preference of being treated equally.

Factor two: Leadership by Confidence

The subjects ascribing to the Leadership by Confidence factor feel that leadership could best be seen when there is confidence especially in a firm and fair environment where there is no discrimination against anybody. They also believe that it is the leaders' responsibility to help followers develop self-confidence. Authentic leadership for adherents of this factor centres on showing confidence in a firm but fair environment while developing others to learn how to believe in themselves.

Interpretation. The adherents to this factor appear to be egalitarian as they think people should be treated equally. This belief in equal treatment accounts for their strong agreement to statement 12 (*I prefer leaders who are firm but fair to everyone*

without any bias, +5). They think that with fairness on the part of leaders, it is easier for them to chart a path for themselves and others (statement 4: *I prefer leaders who set clear goals for themselves and others, and help them to achieve their goals, +4*). They think it is easier for fair leaders to get people to come along with them than when they are unfair. However, in the mind of the subjects loaded on this factor, for leaders to be able to get people to see their direction and get them to follow, demands the leaders show confidence in themselves and about who they are and this can help followers to also develop such self-confidence (statement 1: *I like leaders who are confident about who they are and can help me to be same, +4*). Not only that, they believe that leaders should also have the ability to exhibit same confidence in the role they play in the organization as well (statement 6: *I want leaders who are confident in representing the organization and their role in it, +3*). They think by portraying themselves like this show that the leaders know what they are doing by occupying the leadership position. The proponents of the Leadership by Confidence factor believes that leader flexibility (statement 29: *I prefer leaders who are flexible and can find several ways in achieving our goals, +3*) and integrity (statement 13: *I want leaders who act according to what they say, +3*) are two other attributes leaders need in addition to confidence if they want to achieve the goals they set for themselves and others.

On the disagreement side, the Leadership by Confidence factor disagrees strongly with statement 14 (*I don't mind if a leader does not act according to what they say, -3*) which puts integrity in the negative. This could be because they hold people by their words or they themselves go by their word, therefore acting differently from what one says is expected not to

be appreciated by them. Again, because the people loaded on the Leadership by Confidence factor appears to be more independent, they believe that they are able to handle their own personal issues without having to discuss it with their leaders (statement 27: *I look for leaders I can discuss my personal issues with, -4*) and that they do not need leaders to act in ways that will please them (statement 32: *I want my leaders to act in ways that pleases me, -5*). They see being pleased by leaders as being given undue advantage over others which is contrary to their belief in fair treatment for everybody. Further, the Leadership by Confidence factor is not interested in knowing every intention or motivation behind leaders' actions (statement 15: *I want to know the intentions behind every action my leader takes, -3*) and do not find it a weakness when a leader boldly tell them how they feel (statement 26: *I find it a weakness if a leader tells me how he/she feels, -3*) but they do not like bossy leaders (statement 28: *I like a bossy leader, -4*).

Factor three: The Good Shepherd.

The adherents of the Good Shepherd factor derived their name from their belief that, there are beautiful talents buried deep inside everybody, but it will take committed leaders to dig them out. To achieve this, the Good Shepherd believes that leaders must set clear goals for themselves and their followers. The meaning of authentic leadership to them centre on leaders playing the key role of helping followers to do more than they normally would and encouraging them by demonstrating sincerity, objectivity and commitment.

Interpretation. The main focal point of the subjects loaded onto this factor is the belief that each individual can shine if

given the needed training. In the mind of the Good Shepherd, it is the responsibility of leaders to train followers to be their best. But this they believe should be carefully planned and implemented by setting clear goals for both parties involve. This could explain why they strongly agree with statement 4 (*I prefer leaders who can set clear goals for themselves and others and help them reach them, +5*). They believe that for leaders to be able to help followers in supportive way demands commitment (statement 31: *Commitment of leaders, to the work and to those working with them, is something I desire in my leader, +4*), objectivity (statement 8), flexibility (statement 29: *I prefer leaders who are flexible and can find several ways for us to achieve our goals, +3*) and integrity (statement 13: *I want leaders who act according to what they say, +3*). With these attributes exhibited, the Good Shepherd probably believes that it will be easier for leaders to teach and inspire their followers to do more than they normally would do by themselves (statement 33: *I want leaders who will teach and inspire me to do more than I would normally would, +3*). It is not surprising that the Good Shepherd disagrees strongly with statements 14 (*I don't mind if my leader is sometimes not objective, especially on sensitive issues, as I believe that is part of leadership, -4*) and 9 (*I don't mind if my leader does not act according to what they say as I believe that is part of leadership, -4*) because these two statements put integrity and objectivity in the negative sense which contradicts their belief that these two virtues cannot be avoided in leadership. To further deepen their belief that leaders have a responsibility of teaching and inspiring followers the subjects of the Good Shepherd factor does not have any problem with leaders who give out too much information (statement

25: *I have a problem with leaders who give out too much information to followers, -3*) or when leaders tell them how they feel (statement 26: *I find it a weakness if a leader tells me how he/she feels, -3*) because they feel it is through the transfer of information from leaders to followers that followers learn and get inspired. They would also not follow leaders regardless of their intentions and motivations (statement 16: *Regardless of the intentions and motivations behind their actions I will follow as long as they are my leaders, -5*), because they believe that some of the intentions and motivations may not be honourable. Neither do they like to be bossed about (statement 28: *I like a bossy type of leader, -3*).

University In Ghana

Like the New Zealand University, the three authentic leadership perceptions were identified based on the analysis of the Q sample statements and their normalized scores supplemented. These are described below.

Factor one: The Consultative Democrat

The Consultative Democrat derives their name from the belief that there is unity in equality especially when all key players in decision making are consulted, while clear pathways are set to achieve solutions. Authentic leadership for this perspective therefore, centres on leaders' openness to accommodate individual differences and opinions in a firm and fair environment.

Interpretation. The Consultative Democrat believes in systematically laying down plans and developing strategic ways to follow through to the end. For them this is the only basis for getting so many things done without missing the mark. They therefore strongly agree with statement 4

(*I prefer leaders who set clear goals for themselves and others, +5*). However, they believe that the best way to get to the ultimate goal is to find alternative ideas from others which demands opening up to them and/or consulting them for their views on the situation at stake while working together (statement 2: *I prefer leaders who are open to other people's ideas and will consult people before making a decision, +4*). The Consultative Democrat believes that if leaders open up to follower views and opinions, there could be situations where the leader authority might be taken for granted, therefore leaders need to be authoritative by being firm but treat everybody fairly without any bias (statement 12: *I prefer leaders who are firm but fair to everybody without any bias whatsoever, +4*). Further, in their mind, even though it pays to be open to others but to get more insight and ideas from others demand being transparent in all things (statement 15) and flexible (statement 29: *I prefer leaders who are flexible and can find several ways for us to achieve our goals, +3*) so that when one receives other people's insight and ideas one can easily adapt and incorporate into the original strategies to help improve or enhance the approach of getting to the set target. In addition they want leaders to be inspirational teachers (statement 33: *I prefer leaders who teach and inspire me to do more than I normally would, +3*) so that followers can do more than they normally would by themselves. On the disagreed side, the Consultative Democrat would not do anything nor just follow leaders because they are their leaders (statement 16: *Regardless of the intention and motivation behind their actions I will follow as long as they are my leaders*) or regardless of how ethical their decisions may seem (statement 18: *I*

would do anything for leaders who make difficult decisions that are based on high standard of ethical conduct) may be they would want to see where the leader is taking them and how they are going to get there. Fairness and firmness are virtues the Consultative Democrat believes in and therefore they do not think that there should be times leaders should not be objective regardless of how sensitive the issue might be (statement 9: *I don't mind if my leader is sometimes not objective as I think that is part of leadership*). Again, their strong emphasis on the contributions of other people in achieving set targets, they do not believe that leaders should treat people anyhow regardless of how result oriented that leader might be and therefore their strong disagreement with statement 22 (*I admire results oriented leaders regardless of how he/she treat me*). As a result of their focus on goals and how to achieve them, they do not think it is wise for leaders to act in ways that pleases an individual (statement 32: *I want my leaders to act in ways that pleases me*) nor boss over them (statement 28: *I like a bossy type of leader*) but probably just find ways and means to get to the ultimate goals.

Factor two: Leadership by Optimism

The Leadership by Optimism perspective derives their name from the belief that, there are more good things in life and, therefore, life must be met with a positive attitude. Positive attitude, they believe, must be the foundation to everyday life. Authentic leadership for adherents of this factor centres on maintaining a positive attitude with a strong sense of faith in God and helping others.

Interpretation. The subjects espousing this perspective believe that everything is possible with a positive attitude regardless

of prevailing conditions. In their mind, thinking positive has the likely ability to give the individual an inner motivation to move on in life no matter the obstacles that might come along the way. This positive outlook explains their strong agreement with statement 30 (*I want positive thinking leaders even in hard times when things seem to be going wrong*). In addition they also prefer leaders that are God fearing (statement 26: *I prefer a God fearing leader*) possibly they believe such leaders would do the right things. In the mind of the Leadership by Optimism factor, a positive attitude to life with the fear of God can help leaders achieve the goals they set for themselves and others (statement 4: *I prefer leaders who set clear goals for themselves and others and can help them to achieve the goals*). They believe that in order for leaders to get followers to know the direction to follow, it is better for leaders to create the opportunity so that the followers could express themselves by talking while the leaders listen (statement 19: *I want my leaders to be good listeners*) and also by being inspirational teachers to followers, followers can then do more than they normally would by themselves (statement 33: *I want leaders who will teach and inspire me to do more than I normally would*). In the mind of the Leadership by Optimism factor, goal achievement is very important, and therefore they have no problem accommodating arrogant leaders if they believe such leaders have the required knowledge to help them achieve their goals (statement 5: *I don't mind if my leaders are arrogant as long as they are knowledgeable and can help me achieve my goals*). One thing the Leadership by Optimism factor believes is part of leadership regardless of the situation is leader objectivity they therefore strongly object to statement 9 (*I don't mind if my*

leaders are sometimes not objective as I believe that is part of leadership, -3) as this contradicts their beliefs. Again, as mentioned earlier the Leadership by Optimism factor places strong emphasis on having clear goals and knowing how to achieve the goals and this explains their rejection of statement 16

(*Regardless of the intentions and motivations I will follow as long as they are my leaders, -3*). They believe some intentions and motivations may not be honourable or may be for selfish interest and desires. Further, they think it is not necessary for their leaders to act in ways that pleases them alone (statement 32: *I want my leaders to act in ways that pleases me, -3*) but do what is good for everybody and the organization. They also value people with integrity and therefore saying one thing and acting differently (statement 14: *I don't mind if my leaders does not act according to what they say as I believe that is part of leadership, -4*) is seen this perspective as a mark of people without integrity. As mentioned earlier that this perspective believes leaders must listen to followers and also followers listening to leaders. It is therefore not surprising that they do not find it a weakness if a leader tells them how he/she feels (statement 35: *I find it a weakness if a leader tells me how he/she feels, -4*). Regardless of their high levels of tolerance and accommodation for arrogance, they do not like to be bossed about (statement 28: *I prefer a bossy type of leader, -5*).

Factor three: The Sincere Leader

The Sincere Leader factor appears more independent and focused, and takes pride in sincerity. They trust their own skills, ideals, talents and knowledge to the level that they believe what they have is sufficient to see them through any

situation they meet at work. The meaning of authentic leadership to adherents of this perspective, centre around having the independence and freedom to work by using one's own initiatives, ideas and skills in a sincere, truthful and open environment.

Interpretation. As should be apparent, the Sincere Leader like the Consultative Democrat prefers setting clear goals for themselves and others (statement 4: *I prefer leaders who can set clear goals for themselves and others, and then help them to reach them, +5*) but for quite different reasons. In the mind of the Sincere Leader, leaders can attain success in terms of achieving desired goals only when they tell the truth about everything (statement 20: *I prefer leaders who tell truth about everything including admitting when they don't know something, +4*) and act according to their word (statement 13: *I want leaders who act according to what they say, +3*) at all times and in all situations. These two conditions according to the Sincere Leader perhaps involve some level of commitment if results are to be achieved. This therefore forms the basis of their strong agreement with statement 31 (*commitment of leaders to the work and to the people working with them is something I desire in my leader, +4*). In the mind of the Sincere Leader, working with people demands respecting their views and differences regardless of whether one agrees with them or not. They therefore strongly agree with fact that leaders "must show respect to people and what they stand for (statement 11: *I prefer leaders who will respect me for who I am and what I stand for, regardless of whether they agree or not, +3*). The Sincere Leader thinks that there are several ways to goal achievement but the key is flexibility in terms of seeking and adopting other

good suggestions that might come from other people, hence their agreement with statement 29 (*I prefer leaders who are flexible and can find several ways in achieving our goals, +3*). The very nature of the Sincere Leader is the confidence they have in themselves and their belief in their own skills, knowledge and ideas. This explains why they believe they do not need to be taught or inspired before they would do more than they normally would (statement 33: *I want leaders who will teach and inspire me to do more than I normally would*). They think they are already motivated and always do more and therefore there is no need for them to be taught and inspired before they give their best. The Sincere Leader does not want to be bossed on (statement 28: *I like a bossy type of leader*) nor be treated anyhow (statement 22: *I admire result oriented leaders regardless of how they treat me*) regardless of how results oriented such person may be. Because the Sincere Leader believes in truth in all things and all situations, they do not prefer the exercise of moderations when being dealt with (statement 23: *I do not want leaders to be too blunt; some moderation is preferable*) but wants things blunt as they are. Further, because they believe they know who they are already so they think there is no need to have lessons from anyone to identify who they are anymore. This could therefore be the basis for their strong disagreement with statement 1 (*I like leaders who are confident about who they are and can help me be same*). The Sincere Leader does not tolerate arrogance especially if people believe they are knowledgeable and could help them achieve their aims. Such a picture is painted as they disagree with statement 5 (*I don't mind if my leaders are arrogant as long as they are knowledgeable and can help me achieve my goal*).

Table 1: Comparison of Existing Factors Across Universities

Ghana University	New Zealand University
<p><i>Consultative Democrat</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authentic leadership for this perspective therefore, centres on leaders' openness to accommodate individual differences and opinions in a firm and fair environment 	<p><i>Participative Democrat</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authentic leadership mean having a democratic environment where everybody is treated equally and where each person's views and opinions are considered in decision making
<p><i>Leadership by Optimism</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authentic leadership for adherents of this factor centres on maintaining a positive attitude with a strong sense of faith in God and helping others 	<p><i>Leadership by Confidence</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authentic leadership for adherents of this factor centres on showing confidence in a firm but fair environment while developing others to learn how to believe in themselves
<p><i>Sincere Leader</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authentic leadership to adherents of this perspective,- centre around having the independence and freedom to work by using one's own initiatives, ideas and skills in a sincere, truthful and open environment University 	<p><i>Good Shepherd</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authentic leadership to them centre on leaders playing the key role of helping followers to do more than they normally would and encouraging them by demonstrating sincerity, objectivity and commitment

Comparison of Existing Factors Across Universities

The six positive statements for all three factors in the Universities in the two nations were compared. On the phase value, there are several similarities existing between the factors in both universities across the two nations. However, a further test statistic was done using the normalized values of the factors to show the strength of the existing relationships.

Pearson Rank Correlation for the Factors in the Two Universities

A Pearson sample/factor correlation was carried out for the factors in the two Universities and the results are presented in Table 2 below. The 33 statements and their normalized values of each factor were used for this purpose. For instance,

factor one in Ghana university against factor one in the New Zealand university. One factor is taken as X and the other Y. The difference (D) between X and Y was computed and squared. The sum totals of the squared of both X and Y was also computed and using the formula $r = 1 - \frac{\sum D^2}{\sum total (X^2 plus y^2)}$, the answer derived from the computation (r) shows the Pearson rank relationship between the paired factors. This was followed until all factors had been paired. Table 2 shows a substantial correspondence between the two Universities in the two nations. Factor 1 in Ghana University correlates with all three factors in New Zealand University, while factor 2 in Ghana also correlates with factor 2 and 3 in New Zealand and factor 3 in Ghana correlating with New Zealand factor 1 and 3.

Table 2: Pearson's sample/factor correlation for the factors

		<u>New Zealand Sample</u>		
		1	2	3
<u>Ghanaian Sample</u>	1	0.30*	0.21*	0.49*
	2	0.02	0.20*	0.33*
	3	0.25*	0.11	0.33*

*Significant $p < .01$

The correlation coefficients as outlined in Table 2 confirm the correlation between the factors in the Universities in both countries. Correlation coefficients as presented in Table 1 suggests that New Zealand University factor 3 correspond well with all three Ghana factors whereas Ghana factor 1 is also seen as correlating with New Zealand factor 1. At this stage however, though it is confirmed that there exist some correlations between the Ghana and New Zealand University factors, the exact form which this correlation takes cannot be easily identified using the Pearson's correlation coefficients.

Meta Analysis

A meta-analysis in the form of second-order factor analysis was therefore performed.

Second-Order Factor Analysis

The meta-analysis in the form of a second-order factor analysis was carried out by taking all the factors as single units and

reloading them into the PQ software. In all, 33 statements were re-loaded and the factor arrays of each factor in each for the universities, generated initially (and used for the interpretation of factors) were re-entered as individual sorts. Using the formula $1/\sqrt{n} \times 2.58$ to check for possible factors that can be generated from the unrotated factor matrix resulted in a one-

Table 3: Factor matrix comparing Ghana and New Zealand

		A	B
<u>Ghanaian Uni.</u>	1	0.87*	0.15
	2	0.21*	0.23
	3	0.20	0.10
<u>New Zealand Uni.</u>	1	0.32	0.22
	2	0.12	0.94*
	3	0.27	0.25

Significant $p < .01$

Table 3 shows that two underlying patterns emerged from the analysis as two of the Ghana factors loaded significantly on factor A and only one factor i.e., factor 2, in New Zealand loaded significantly on factor B. However, the overall correspondence between the two set of factors in the two Universities, is by any standard, quite substantial. It is worth noting that after the second-order factor analysis, the statements that enjoyed consensus for all the University factors in the two nations, include; statement 4 (*leader goal orientedness*), statement 33 (*inspirational teaching leaders*), statement 8 (*leader objectivity*), statement 12 (*leader fairness*) and statement 29 (*leader flexibility*), *positive thinking leaders* (statement 29), *leader commitment* (statement 31), *encouragement and support from leaders* (statement 3) and *leader integrity* (statement 13) and *leader confidence in who they are and can help others know who they are also* (statement 1).

factor solution (Table 2 below), as only one of the values for the second-order factor analysis for unrotated factor matrix was found to be equal to or above 0.45.

Discussion

It is apparent that most of the identified attributes that this study found were consistent with the authentic leadership literature but with some significant departures. To the subjects of this study, for a leader to be authentic meant that a leader sets clear goals for him/herself and the followers, is an individual who is open and appreciative, firm but fair to everybody without any bias whatsoever and transparent in all dealings with others and can always come up with different ways and approaches to achieve the set goals while inspirationally teaching their followers. This summation of the attributes of AL summarizes the interpretation of the meaning of authentic leadership as perceived by leaders and followers in the universities in Ghana and New Zealand. The implicit meaning (theory) held by followers about leadership plays a vital role in the assessment of leaders in the work place. For example, researchers (Phillip and Lord, 1981, Meindl et al., 1985, Cronshaw and Lord, 1987, Lord and Maher, 1991, Awamleh and Gardner, 1999) have suggested that followers match leaders with implicit models of what was good or authentic in leadership. This must be given closer attention as the subjects made leader assessments based on this subjective meaning regarding what they considered as authenticity in leaders. The importance of followers' expectations for perceived leader effectiveness cannot be overemphasized.

Studies (Peters and Austin, 1985, Kouzes and Posner, 1987, Locke and Lathan, 1990, Brown and Peterson, 1993, Parham,

1994, DeGroot et al., 2000) have shown a direct relationship between followers' perception of leaders' effectiveness and followers' positive outcomes such as organizational citizenship behaviour, job satisfaction and commitment. Following on from the above, it must be noted that subjects in Ghana and New Zealand would rate their leaders at their respective work places based on their particular understanding of the meaning of authenticity in leaders. Therefore, this meaning attributed to authenticity must be given due consideration by organizations as this can go a long way to increase the desired organizational outcomes. The argument here is that, the identified authentic leader attributes in this study are positive expectations the subjects in this study would like their leaders to exhibit in the leader-follower exchanges at their work place. The implication here is that if the subjects found these attributes in their leader at the work place, they would feel comfortable building a good and positive personal relationship with their leader. Such relationships would basically be founded on trust. Some of the preferred identified authentic leadership attributes in this study, e.g., openness and fairness have been identified in the literature as being antecedents to building trust (Gabarro, 1978, Hart et al., 1986, McAllister, 1995).

By ranking leader fairness and openness as part of the commonly-preferred attributes of authenticity in leaders, the subjects in this study indicated that they would like to work with leaders with whom they can build trust and enjoy high positive organizational outcomes with, as argued in the trust literature. When there was trust in an organization, employees worked freely without having to watch their backs, so to speak, and they knew they were likely to give and receive evidenced-based accounts about every situation

from their colleagues and leaders. Such organizational environments have been argued to promote innovation (Poole and Ven, 2004) and desirable organizational outcomes such as commitment, citizenship and high employee performance (Mayer et al., 1995).

The subjects again prefer leader encouragement and support and leader confidence in who they are so that they can help followers to also know who they are. The AL literature does not explicitly identify that authentic leaders are encouraging or supportive of followers per se. However, explaining follower encouragement, the AL literature mentions that when authentic leaders encourage their followers to imitate their leaders' authentic behaviours such as self-disclosure, transparency and openness (Clapp-Smith et al., 2009). The university subjects claimed that there were several challenges associated with work and when leaders encouraged and showed support to followers it meant they understood the situation and were ready to lend a hand to help followers through. That meant for the university subjects, leader encouragement must extend beyond pointing followers to being imitators of leaders (as suggested by the AL literature), to leaders empathizing with followers and lending a hand where necessary to help them (followers) through challenges that arose on the job. The implication here was that leader encouragement must not be implied as an attribute but must be a core attribute and also must be extended to include support. These new findings must be validated in a different university context. Leader confidence or efficacy is identified in the AL model as a positive psychological capacity possessed by authentic leaders and being beneficial for goal achievement (Bandura, 1997, Stajkovic and Luthans, 1998, Luthans et al., 2006). "Leader

confidence has been described as a positive belief or convictions about an individual's abilities to mobilize the motivation, resources or courses of action needed to successfully execute a specific task within a given context" (Stajkovic and Luthans (1998, p 66).

There were some nationally preferred authentic leader attributes that were specific to each university in each nation. The New Zealand subjects expressed how they wanted authentic leaders to display knowledge. They believed that this knowledge must manifest in fulfilling their (leaders') roles in the organization and the leader should have the ability to impart such knowledge to followers. The authentic leadership literature is silent about this aspect of AL. Authentic leaders have been argued to have the welfare of their followers in mind and to strive to encourage followers to be like them (Harter, 2002, Luthans and Avolio, 2003, Kernis, 2003b, Avolio and Gardner, 2005, Gardner et al., 2005). This part of the AL construct is more or less pointing followers to imitate the ideals and standards of the authentic leader. But the New Zealand subjects want something that goes beyond just being encouraged to imitate the leader, to the leader making a conscious and deliberate effort to directly impart knowledge as well. Further, a leader's confidence in representing the organization and their role in it are also mentioned by the New Zealand subjects as another preferred attribute they feel defines authenticity in leaders. Leader confidence in their role and in representing the organization has been identified as self-efficacy, a positive psychological capacity that enabled leaders to mobilize the motivation and resources to execute a course of action successfully within a given context (Stajkovic and Luthans, 1998, Luthans and Youssef, 2007,

Luthans et al., 2007b). This meant for the New Zealand subjects, authenticity in leaders also included the notion of a leader who is self-motivated and can mobilize resources to achieve success in addition to passionately representing his/her organization in any given situation. Finally, the New Zealand subjects believe that authentic leaders are non-judgmental about people. That is, in the minds of the subjects, authentic leaders are accepting without discrimination. Although the AL literature mentions fairness as one of the characteristics of authentic leaders, being non-judgmental and accepting of all people regardless of race, gender, religion or ethnic background has not been mentioned.

Like the New Zealand subjects, the second-order factor analysis showed that the Ghanaian subjects also had specific preferred AL attributes. Two attributes that are specifically preferred by the Ghanaian subjects alone regardless of their organization are God-fearing and objectivity and justice. The Ghanaian subjects believe that being God-fearing forms a core part of authenticity in leaders. This is because they feel that if a leader was God fearing he/she will possess all the desirable qualities such as being understanding, empathic, supportive, and encouraging to mention a few. Ghana is a high power distance country that was classified as highly religious (Hofstede, 1980). It may be that the fact of fearing a common God may help bridge this power gap – the distance between leaders and followers pales into insignificance when compared to the distance between them and their God. This may well contribute to the importance of this factor. Also, in Ghana, God was regarded as a caring and benevolent Supreme Being and, therefore, if a leader is presumed to be God-fearing then possibly he/she is perceived to

exhibit these benevolent characteristic associated with God. This is consistent with the human oriented leadership findings of Wanasika *et al.*, (2010) in sub Saharan Africa (of which Ghana forms part) that when leaders were perceived as being supportive and considerate, exhibiting compassion and benevolence for followers they were regarded as great leaders in sub Saharan Africa. Objectivity and justice is another preferred authentic leader attribute specific to the Ghanaian subjects.

Conclusion and Implications

This study offers several significant implications for AL theory and future research. First, the study extends AL theory relative to the meaning giving to AL and extends some attributes that the AL literature has indicated are characteristics of authentic leaders. Luthans and Avolio (2003) indicated that the attribute of hope that authentic leaders have, is a positive psychological capital, which enables them to persevere towards the achievement of goals and when necessary redirect pathways to goals. This implies that authentic leaders set goals and persevere to achieve them but this study explicitly extends AL theory and research by adding that authentic leaders are goal oriented and set clear goals for themselves and their followers and also help followers directly to achieve the set goals. Similarly, two other attributes of inspirational teaching and good listening which are not originally mentioned as being characteristics of authentic leaders, have been found in this study to be an important part of the AL construct. This also extends the characteristics of authentic leaders in the AL theory. Other extensions has been made; for example, proponents of AL theory (Harter, 2002; Luthans and Avolio, 2003; Kernis, 2003b;

Avolio and Gardner, 2005; Gardner *et al.*, 2005) have argued that authentic leaders are fair in all their dealings with followers and in their decision making. However, this study found that subjects not only believe that fairness is a characteristic of authentic leaders but firmness as well.

Further, authentic leaders are argued to display openness and transparency in decisions and actions. But this study has extended the openness to include appreciating follower efforts and contributions. A similar picture was also supported regarding encouragement of followers by authentic leaders as indicated in extant AL theory. This study extends the encouragement part of the AL theory to include direct leader support for follower activities. Further, the study extends the flexibility part of hope authentic leaders are said to possess. Flexibility was found not only in redirecting pathways, but also in listening to and taking on board follower contributions. The proponents of the national culture theory (Hofstede, 1980; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1997; House, 2004) have argued that due to differences in national cultures, expectations and preferences differ because of differences in prioritizations in value systems. This study suggest that this is always not true as different subjects in different cultural contexts and different organizational contexts have been shown to have some shared preferences for desirable attributes regarding authenticity in leadership raising support for the ethic-leadership (Bass, 1990; Dorfman *et al.*, 1997; Rao *et al.*, 1997; Casimir and Waldman, 2007) stance. Implicit in the majority of extant, AL theory is the notion that AL theory has been argued as being universally applicable in all contexts and cultures. This study supports the universality of some AL attributes as indicated in the AL theory but with

some extensions. Across cultures, the study found that leader goal orientedness, openness and appreciation, leader firmness and fairness, transparency, leader flexibility, and inspirational teaching, were preferred as constituting authentic leadership in this study.

In conclusion, authenticity in leaders has received, and is still receiving, considerable research attention today and given the constant and continual scandals being uncovered at national, organizational and multi-national levels, leader ethics and morality continue to be questioned. This has brought authentic leadership to the forefront of research in an attempt to validate the concepts of universal applicability. However, authenticity has been argued as being an 'honorary' title bestowed on leaders by followers through leader-follower exchanges. This, therefore, introduces follower expectations and perceptions, making the authentic leadership construct purely subjective in nature (but no less valid for that). Interest is growing in research circles into this subjectivity and this trend will likely continue in the future. Results reported in this study showed that with regards to the respondents used in the two countries, AL is achieved when leaders are able to set clear goals for themselves and their followers and provide guidelines and direct help for goals to be achieved. This, the respondents believed demands openness on the part of the leaders to receive follower ideas and also appreciating follower strengths in addition to being firm, and treating followers equally without any bias whatsoever. It also includes leaders being transparent, having the ability to encourage and support followers, showing confidence in who they are and helping others know who they are, exhibiting flexibility and being inspirational teachers. The results

also introduce contextual preferences for some desired attributes which extend the AL theory.

Nationally, the New Zealand respondents solely preferred leaders who are knowledgeable even if they are arrogant, non-judgmental and confident in representing their organizations while their Ghanaian counterparts rather preferred God-fearing and objectivity and justice as being part of AL. If practicing leaders and researchers understand what followers meant by authenticity in leaders, it will help them find ways and means to develop training specifically suitable for organizations, which, could help maximize the chances of winning or building trust of followers and subsequently attaining higher organizational success for the future.

If practicing leaders and researchers understand what followers meant by authenticity in leaders, it will help them find ways and means to develop training specifically suitable for organizations, which, could help maximize the chances of winning or building trust of followers

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Notes on Contributor

Justice Owusu-Bempah is a doctoral at Lincoln University, New Zealand. His thesis involves a nqualitative study on how leaders and followers bestow authentic leadership in Ghana and New Zealand

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