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AN EXPLORATION OF AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP FROM OPPOSITIONAL PERSPECTIVES: FAITH VERSUS NON-FAITH BASED

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An Exploration of Authentic Leadership from Oppositional Perspectives: Faith versus Non-Faith Based

Synopsis:

The study explores leadership from two very different perspectives, that of faith-based versus non-faith based. It sheds light on the way authentic leadership is perceived both generally and specifically and was able to draw some generalizable conclusions on the observations collected, that authentic leadership does not reflect faith or religion; rather, it stems from a humanistic psychological/philosophical approach, which is applicable to each and every human being.

Running Head: AN EXPLORATION OF AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP

An Exploration of Authentic Leadership from Oppositional Perspectives:
Faith versus Non-Faith Based

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Abstract

This paper explores a new line of research which examines how authentic leadership is perceived by two oppositional groups, faith and non-faith. A review of the scholarly literature on authentic leadership was necessary to gain a better understanding of what traits, characteristics and attributes constitute authentic leadership. The methodologies included a literature review which consists of secondary research materials and an online survey which was designed based on the multi-dimensional models of the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire/Authentic Leadership Inventory (ALQ/ALI) and the Multi-Factor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). The concepts of the ALQ/ALI self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing and internalized moral perspective complemented by the MLQ's idealized influence (attributed), idealized influence (behaviour), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration was measured.

Confirmatory analysis supports the multi-dimensional model based on the ALQ/ALI as it revealed valid and credible measurements. The relationship between faith-based and non-faith-based groups showed a non-significant statistical difference; however, a statistically significant difference was revealed between the non-religious and the in-between group where $p < 0.05$. Research specific to this area of study is relatively new. Future research should expand on the development of additional dimensions of both quantitative and qualitative research methods in order to obtain more specific results. Implications for further research are addressed.

Keywords: leadership, authentic leadership, spirituality, religion

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An Exploration of Authentic Leadership from Oppositional Perspectives:
Faith versus Non-Faith Based

Authentic leadership is not a new phenomenon; rather, it has become more evident with globalization, advanced technologies and societal challenges (Northouse, 2012a). It is important to study authentic leadership as it is necessary to find ways to deal with the pervasive ethical and moral issues that appear to be immobilizing advancements in the 21st century. Research in authentic leadership is critical because in recent times, massive financial failures and upheavals in society have contributed to the apprehension and insecurities of people, leaving them desperate for genuine leadership and for leaders who are honest and good (Northouse, 2012b). The desire to find solutions to existing and future problems and the need to establish and deal with the root causes of the problems which lie in the hands of leaders is sufficient reason for ongoing research in the field.

In our globalized, complex and chaotic world with diverse value systems, where technology and communication let barriers and borders fade away, and there is ongoing differences in the structural and socio-cultural arenas; there is a rapid emergence of examples of political and financial corruption, greed and scandal. These problems contribute to the cause for deep-rooted concerns of increased employee distrust in organizations with many unanswered questions related to and dealing with important issues including: corporate misconduct, employee coercion, governmental fraud and failing economic situations. It is essential and timely for leaders and followers to have an understanding of the roots, characteristics and dynamics of what really causes these problems. Since leaders lie at the heart of the problems, it is necessary for them to understand how they can help to resolve the ongoing problems. Inauthentic leadership is the cause of many complex issues such as environmental, organizational, global, and political factors. These are critical aspects which are

associated with the leader's ability to lead which ultimately affects the success or failure of the organization.

The purpose of this exploratory study is multi-fold. In addition to being interested and passionate about issues surrounding authentic leadership in organizational settings, researching this topic offers an in-depth understanding about the concepts which constitute authentic leadership. This is grounded on evidence-based materials, the results of the online survey to examine individualized diverse perspectives; leadership theories, leadership styles and organizational practices and processes.

The study is divided into four sections. First, the literature review provides an overview, background and a critical evaluation of a body of research and ideas in the field of authentic leadership and how religion and spirituality is related to authentic leadership. Second, the methodology section is introduced, third the results and last, the discussion.

Literature Review

An exploration into this interdisciplinary area of study requires in-depth examination relative to blending theoretical and practical leadership approaches in order to improve on the knowledge and understand what specifically constitutes authenticity in leadership. Although the relationship and interrelationship between these approaches have been explored through research findings and established validated leadership related to organizations, research on authentic leadership is still in the formative phase of development. The research reveals that there are a multitude of facets linked to this area of study. Unfortunately, most of the available research is focused on specific areas and is repetitious which leaves many other areas of studies pertaining to authentic leadership untouched.

For the purposes of this study, an investigation into authentic leadership from oppositional perspectives, that of religious versus non-religious was examined to see if there is a significant difference in the way authentic leadership is perceived. The results will help to determine if there are some basic humanistic physiological and philosophical universal values that constitute authentic leadership.

Definitions/Problems:

Researchers have yet to agree on a particular definition of what specifically constitutes authentic leadership. Although they have been able to agree on some key concepts of authentic leadership that appear to be universal, the importance attached to these factors may vary, and there are factors that separate authentic leadership from other types of leadership. Defining authentic leadership remains a very challenging task, particularly with the varying perceptions, understanding, and interpretations of what characteristics, traits, abilities, attributes, and behaviours should be reflected within the scope of authentic leadership.

Some researchers have posited models for authentic leadership based on observation and empirical data, producing new terms and redefining old concepts to construct a concrete situation. Other researchers are less inclined to agree with their ideas and argue that leadership still seems to remain more of a concept in the mind or wishful thinking (Derungs, 2011a). Confusion can easily arise when universal terms and definitions are agreed upon, yet behaviours indicate otherwise. Therefore, assessing one's authenticity simply based on specific terms without a more in-depth evaluation can lead to misevaluation of what it means to be an authentic leader.

Historically, authenticity can be traced back to ancient Greek philosophy and is reflected by the Greek aphorism "know thyself" which was inscribed in the Temple of Apollo at Delphi (Parke &

Wormell, 1956), and which is linked to the word *authento* “to have full power” (Trilling, 1972). Knowing thyself implies that one is true to him/herself. How this translates into leadership actions and outcomes can differ considerably in the real world as not all leaders who claim to know themselves will do the right things for the right reasons. The multi-component conceptualization of authenticity in turn has provided the theoretical foundation for several theories.

Yukl (2010a) supported by Ilies, Morgeson and Nahrgang (2005a) define authentic leadership as a root concept that underlies the positive aspects of charismatic, transformational, spiritual and ethical leadership theories. One of the initial intents in defining authentic leadership as a construct was to make it multi-dimensional and multi-level (Luthans & Avolio, 2003a). Some items related to these concepts overlap with other existing theoretical approaches as leadership scholars conceptualized this “root” construct as underlying all positive approaches to leadership, with some notable distinctions between perceived authentic leadership and other leadership styles.

This conceptualization allows for an inclusion of other leadership approaches which include: ethical, transformational, charismatic, servant, heroic, character-based and transactional leadership styles. The need to carefully define, measure and rigorously investigate the theories is critical, particularly as researchers tend to define authentic leadership according to their individual perspective and the phenomenon of what interests them the most. It is important to know what comprises authenticity in leadership and the impact that authentic leaders have on followers from both practical and theoretical approaches.

Leaders strongly influence their followers in an organizational context to enhance organizational performance. Gardner, John and Schermerhorn (2004) argue that authentic leaders act in accordance with their true selves, expressing themselves in ways that are consistent with inner thoughts; owning one’s personal experience, thoughts, emotions, needs, and beliefs. Determining the

authenticity of a leader is dependent on the openness of the organizational climate which is manifested in the degree to which members resist personal change when enacting their leadership and professional roles (Halpin & Croft, 1966). Derungs (2011b) is less inclined to agree with these ideas and argues that leadership still seems to remain more of a concept in the mind or wishful thinking. Despite the fact many researchers are able to identify with some of the similarities and differences in their understanding and terminologies, to date, no conclusive definitions have been developed.

What specific attributes and skills do leaders need in order to lead their companies, organizations, or communities successfully through sensitive situations? Should leaders be appointed based on their religious beliefs and value systems? How is authentic leadership perceived by leaders and followers? These are important questions that require further exploration in order to build on the existing knowledge and arrive at a more definitive understanding of authentic leadership and its impact on organizational transformation and success.

Towards the definition of authenticity: A critical dilemma is for researchers to operationally define key behaviours and the dimensions of authentic leadership (Cooper, Scandura & Schriesheim, 2005a). Until differences in the definition of authentic leadership are resolved and differences between authentic leadership and other theories of leadership are resolved, it would be difficult to determine what should be included in the research.

Yukl (2006b) reinforces the importance of considering rational and emotional processes and how they interact and to identify the need for these issues to be resolved by empirical research. The conceptualization of leadership should not exclude either type of process. The construct of authentic followership can be achieved by followers who follow leaders for authentic reasons and have an authentic relationship with their leader(s) (Shamir & Eilam, 2005). Confusion can arise when

defining authenticity with sincerity which does not involve any explicit consideration of others; rather, it exists wholly on the laws of its own being (Erickson, 1995a). He describes it as an either/or condition (i.e., people are never entirely authentic or inauthentic; instead, they can more accurately be described as achieving levels of authenticity).

What is authenticity? One's authenticity is therefore judged by the extent to which the self is represented accurately and honestly to others rather than on the extent to which one is true to the self. To know oneself one must be able align authenticity with thoughts, emotions, needs, wants, preferences, beliefs and processes captured by the injunction to know oneself (Harter, 2002). This further implies that one acts in accordance with the true self, expressing oneself in ways that are consistent with inner thoughts and feelings. Similarly, Avolio and Gardner (2005) suggest that authenticity is fundamentally a self-referential concept that is about "being true to one's self." Kernis and Goldman (2006) add that its documentation of a range of mental and behavioural processes explain how people discover and construct a core sense of self, and how the core self is maintained across situations. Over time it is dependent on self-understanding, openness to objectively recognizing their ontological realities (e.g., evaluating their desirable and undesirable self-aspects), actions and orientation towards interpersonal relationships.

In leading according to this model, an authentic leader will be motivated by a genuine desire to serve others, understanding his/her purpose, knowing him/herself and leading from core values. Self operates as a social force in its own right that is actively involved in the social construction of reality rather than a mere reflection of that real self. Hence, the self both shapes and is shaped by social exchanges with others. Erickson (1995b) cautions that while authenticity is the ideal, leadership should not be conceived as an either/or condition, as people are never completely authentic or inauthentic.

Authentic leaders are dedicated to developing themselves because they know that becoming a leader takes a lifetime of personal growth. This idea fits well with Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing and Peterson's (2008a) definition that authentic leadership is a pattern of leader behaviours that draw upon and promote both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate to foster greater self-awareness, an internalized moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency on the part of leaders working with followers, fostering positive self-development.

Other researchers agree that there is a central premise of authentic leadership which identifies the concepts of self-awareness, self-regulation and positive modeling as being essential in the development of authenticity in followers. Perceivers tend to weigh negative acts more heavily than positive acts and that even if a leader consistently acts with integrity, yet commits one act of immorality, they may be deemed to be an inauthentic leader (Snyder & Stukas, 1999). George and Sims (2007a) warn that leaders should not pretend to be someone they are not while Freeman and Auster (2011a) claim that authentic leadership is more complex as it depends on leader-follower relationships which have a more relational character. Bill George's authentic leadership approach is comprised of having a genuine desire to serve others, understanding one's purpose, knowing oneself and leading from core values (George & Sims, 2007c).

Some leadership scholars conceptualize authentic leadership as an extension of a specific leadership theory. For example, Bass and Steidlmeir (1999b) present authentic leadership as an extension of transformational leadership: leaders are authentically transformed when they increase awareness of what is right, good, important and beautiful, when they help to alleviate follower's needs for achievement and self-actualization and moral authority, and when they challenge followers to move beyond their self-interests for the good of their group, organization, or society.

Authentic leaders demonstrate confidence and hope to followers particularly when seeking approval ratings and votes. This was evident in the 2003 competitive presidential debate between Barack Obama and John McCain (The New York Times, 2012, May 12). It would be unwise to simply assume that a leader who projects him/herself as having the traits, characteristics and qualities linked to effective leadership is truly an authentic leader. We can summarize that the personal beliefs, experience, interactive abilities, methodological qualities, level of understanding, knowledge and spirituality are all contributing factors that constitute a person's authentic qualities, regardless of their religious or non-religious beliefs. How a person perceives him/herself can be quite different from how another individual or group will perceive him/her, as oftentimes people will psychologically project their own value system onto others and deduce conclusions which do not necessarily reflect the individual's reality.

Whitehead (2009) sums up an authentic leader as one who 1) is self-aware, humble, always seeking improvement, aware of those being led and looks out for the welfare of others; 2) fosters high degrees of trust by building an ethical and moral framework; and 3) is committed to organizational success within the construct of social values. These are some basic universal values that can be deemed essential to the existence of human beings, including in a leadership role and from a religious perspective. A review of existing literature on authentic leadership and religion suggest there is an overlap of values in both systems.

Outcome: Inauthentic leadership is thought to be a major contributing factor of the economic crisis with corruption and greed at senior levels in corporations globally. Popular leadership researchers such as Medtronic CEO Bill George (2003b; George & Sims, 2007d) and leadership consultant Kevin Cashman (1998, 2008) called for a new type of genuine and values-based leadership. A follower's authenticity contributes to his/her well-being and the attainment of sustainable and

unquestionable performance (Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May & Walumba, 2005a). Through authentic words and deeds, self-awareness, positive psychological capital, moral and authentic behaviours, positive moral perspectives and positive modeling, leaders can significantly motivate their followers to be moral and authentic in their decision-making intent (Gardner et al., 2005b; Ilies, Morgeson & Nahrgang, 2005b).

Leaders are no longer able to control and manipulate situations due to market demands, advanced technologies, emerging competition and unstable environmental factors. These challenges force leaders to adjust strategies and management styles as too often they succumb to the temptation of the simple and quick repair as the 'efficient' solution (Wright & Quick, 2011). This situation applies to leaders globally as the majority of companies around the world are looking increasingly alike in their economic survival strategies (Derungs, 2011c). What is evolving is the need to appoint leaders who can demonstrate accountability and transparency and who can effectively lead based on personal core values of integrity, credibility, trusting relationships (Kouzes & Posner, 1991) and commitment to ethical and moral values (Nair, 1994). The convergence that these challenges have in combination has elicited calls for more positive forms of leadership in institutions to restore confidence at all levels of leadership (Brown, Trevino, & Harrison, 2005; George, 2003c). Individuals with conflicting value systems will be opposed to change and modernity. This makes leadership a difficult task as leaders need the right people around them to be successful. People are the organization's most important asset. Authentic leaders strongly influence an individual's ability through motivation and stimulation towards better performance as individuals perform at the peak of their strength and efforts (Rokeach, 1973). Leaders must be available to meet and interact with their followers and follow through with words and actions.

What, then, does it mean to be an authentic leader? The list is quite exhaustive. Social scientists propose varying complex theories and explanations. Leadership effectiveness is linked to authentic leadership and has been described as containing an ethical component (Callahan 2004: Kalshoven, Den Hartog & De Hoogh, 2011a). This idea is supported by an increasing number of social commentators and scholars who have suggested that one important reason for the widely heralded crisis in leadership is the apparent decline in the ethics of leaders. Recent critics point to the moral problems and ethical roots of the crisis such as uncontrolled greed which has resulted in a loss of confidence in leadership (Greenhalgh, 2008: Heuvel & Schollosser, 2008: Steenland & Dreier, 2008). Researchers have begun to examine what traits, abilities, behaviours, sources of power, or aspects of a situation determine how well a leader is able to influence followers to effectively accomplish task objectives.

It is important to understand how authentic leaders encourage and support ways of thinking and doing things that are ethical and people-centred in all types of organizations, regardless of their religious or spiritual beliefs. For example, the relationship between spiritual leadership and spiritual well-being was examined in a military-based environment which resulted in a positive and significant relationship between spiritual leadership and several unit-level outcomes, including organizational commitment and four measures of performance (Fry, Hannah, Noel & Walumba, 2011a).

Organizations are a reflection of their top leaders though there is a paradox in taking leaders from just being a good leader to a great leader. A great leader will encourage argument and debates from team members; however, the leader expects that there will be unification in his/her final decision (Collins, 1958a). Leaders, no matter what field, must respond to challenges and be able to

develop strategies to reach their followers (Boal & Hooijberg, 2001). They must also be willing to adjust and adapt to situations.

Authentic leadership involves making tough decisions for which there are no obvious answers (Rickards & Clark, 2006). To help alleviate leadership challenges, authentic leaders may be those leaders who are motivated towards the good of the people and the organization. This concept can be linked to a person's spirituality. Anderson (2000) states that a person's spirit is the vital principle or animating force traditionally believed to be the intangible life affirming energy in oneself and all human beings. Ignoring this spirit at work may mean ignoring a fundamental feature of what it means to be human (Duchon & Plowman, 2005a). The need to develop new business models based on spiritual leadership that accentuate employee well-being, sustainability and social responsibility without sacrificing performance is necessary to deal with modern organizational challenges (Fry & Slocum, 2008).

Values. As we review the available literature on authentic leadership, there are a number of terms which are subject to interpretation based on personal belief systems, values, tradition and culture. For example, Freeman and Auster (2011b) bring to our attention the varying interpretations of the word "value," which from a social scientific perspective equals "preferences." Agle and Caldwell (1999) argue that values be understood at four interdependent levels: individual, organizational/institutional, societal and global. What the religious texts say and what is inferred, believed and shared depends on culture, traditions, freedom of expression, economics and value systems shaped through one's personal and spiritual thought processes, beliefs and experiences.

Individual values. How do personal values and/or beliefs influence how a person thinks, acts, and perceives things? Earlier leadership definitions emphasized leadership as a rational, cognitive process; however, recent research emphasized the emotional aspects of influence and attributes this

factor as being much more than reason (Yukl, 2006c). For example, in the painting of Pope Velasquez, it is important to note that the artist Bacon was not motivated by expressions of religiosity, but rather was inspired by aesthetic and emotional reasons which inspired him to demonstrate a sense of godlessness in his artwork of the Pope (Arya, 2011). Bacon was guided by personal values and beliefs. In trying to establish what some of the factors are that might contribute to personal and spiritual beliefs, practices and experiences, Derung (2011d) claims that the definition of personal beliefs is the awareness of one's own integrity, potential, and limits, the cognition of the impact of cultural paradigm on cognitive, affective and behavioural patterns in interaction and relationship building.

Examples of authentic leaders: Pope Francis is attempting to unite people globally by building a relationship based on charity, faith, hope, love, humility, solidarity and mutual trust, qualities which are rooted in the foundation of the institution for over 2,000 years. What lies beneath this worldly leader is his strong desire to affect change which is reflected in his personality and humility, in thoughts, words, actions and presence. Collins (1958c) reassures us that authentic leaders are self-effacing, quiet, reserved, and even shy; they are a paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will. Abraham Lincoln's personality of being modest, shy and awkward was no hindrance to his ability to lead effectively during his presidency of the United States from 1861-1865 (Great American History, 2013). His dedication and commitment was evident through his humility and his will, and his ability to never let his ego get in the way of his primary ambition for the larger cause of the nation sufficed to attain the status of a Level 5 leader.

Organizational/Institutional Values. Key authentic attributes are deemed essential for leaders in diverse organizational structures. A review of the value system of Pope Francis is a key example. Pope Francis is intensely scrutinized and is under tremendous pressure to live up to the expectations

of the organization and the people. We look at two prominent religious world leaders, Pope Francis (March 2013-Present) and Pope Benedict XVI (April 2005-February 2013). Both leaders worked towards similar goals, yet they adopted different leadership styles and approaches.

In Pope Francis's case, he was appointed based on his demonstrated ability to lead, his personality, simplicity, humility, and compassion (Bauman, 2013) which is reflective of a deep love and concern for human life, social justice issues and inclusivity. From an organizational perspective, there may be other issues that will spoil his attempt to find successful resolutions such as a mismatch between hires and responsibilities, non-cooperation from his team, a shift in his leadership style and a change of focus.

Pope Benedict XVI, a great scholar and pope of pastoral sensitivity, recognized that no means can adequately redress the heinous wrongs within human history, such as the Holocaust, natural calamities, war and terrorism. He preached that no humans could bring forth total justice, reassuring people that justice will be served. "No one and nothing can answer for centuries of suffering." (Pope Benedict XVI, 2006). Pope Benedict XVI encouraged all people to be conscientious individually and collectively as a society. He too, was subject to criticisms from followers and other leaders. Clearly, both leaders expressed similar concerns regarding the progression of the institution but adopted different leadership styles. Rock (2013) invites us to examine the psychological, spiritual and existential discernment that is necessary to the development of authenticity in leadership. Although these are very important facets which could effectively contribute to the research on authentic leadership, issues of timeliness limit the scope and nature of this study.

Global Values. It is difficult to define a set of universal values that apply to organizations globally. Although some concepts may be understood, leadership challenges can include trans-cultural issues and multi-cultural diversity. Leaders must be prepared to develop their moral, ethical and behavioral

leadership skills and be able to adapt in order to facilitate the needs of their followers while staying aligned with corporate culture.

Spirituality. Some researchers argue that everyone is spiritual, as everyone has spirit which is the force of life. Although some people choose to combine spirituality, understandings and practices with a religious denomination, many do not. Spirituality can be lived negatively or positively. It is not uncommon for people to bring religion into the workplace, which in essence, tends to connect a person with the ‘territory’ of being that person. Fry et. al., (2011b) concur and elaborate on spirituality as being concerned with qualities of the human spirit, including positive psychological concepts, such as love and compassion, patience, tolerance, forgiveness, contentment, personal responsibility, and a sense of harmony with one’s environment (Synder & Lopez, 2011a). It can be argued that these basic fundamental qualities are critical to every human being, in all aspects of life, regardless of a person’s religious or non-religious beliefs.

Karakas (2010a) informs us that there is very little empirical research that has specifically focused on diversity of values, attitudes, and motives of different people in organizations. Furthermore, he presented definitions that have been introduced by various researchers, notably that spirituality is an individual level-phenomenon, focusing on the inner life, idiosyncratic experiences, and feelings of the individual. Spirituality therefore may be best understood as the pursuit of a vision of service to others through humility, as having the capacity to regard oneself as an individual equal, but not greater in value to other individuals, through charity and veracity. In order to capture the real essence of what lies behind spirituality, it is necessary to do an in-depth examination by dwelling into the inner perspectives of individuals to understand the complexity and diversity of this phenomenon. This requires on-going research. Although authentic leadership has been represented as an ongoing theme in religion (e.g. Matt 23:11) theistical attempts to link leadership to a religious

tradition have met resistance in modern pluralistic society, where it is assumed that there will be a separation between religion and public life (Spohn, 1997; Hodge, 2001a). Fry (2003a) reminds us that spirituality is necessary for religion, but religion is not necessary for spirituality. Consequently, workplace spirituality can be inclusive or exclusive of religious theory and practice.

Religion versus Spirituality. Religion and spirituality, although intertwined, can be categorized into two very separate and distinct categories. Broadly, religion is often described as a public and institutional process based on sacred texts, rituals and practices, whereas spirituality is seen as an unsystematic, individually interpreted, private experience (Hodge, 2001b). Although religion involves being concerned with a system of theological beliefs, ritual prayers, rites and ceremonies and related formalized practices and ideas, spirituality is concerned with the qualities of the human spirit (Fry et. al, 2011c).

Reave (2005a) adds that religion is ‘predominantly associated with formal/organizational structures while spirituality is more associated with closeness to God and feelings of interconnectedness with the world and living things and that beliefs have had some impact in the workplace.’ Some researchers argue that everyone is spiritual, as everyone has spirit which is the force of life. Although some people choose to combine spirituality, understandings and practices with a religious denomination, many do not. Spirituality can be lived negatively or positively. It is not uncommon for people to bring religion into the workplace, which in essence, tends to connect person with the ‘territory’ of being that person.

Over the last decades scholars reported a dramatic and steady increase of interest in spirituality at work issues among management researchers (Karakas, 2010b; Cavanagh, 1999; Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003a; Tischler, 1999). Practitioners in North America point out that while the increase in popularity and interest in spirituality at work is well documented in the organizational

literature (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Duchon & Plowman, 2005b; Fry, 2003b; Markow & Klenke, 2005), all agree that there have been a lot of controversies around the multiple meanings and construct of “spirituality at work” (Dent, Higgins & Wharff, 2005; Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003b; Hicks, 2002) and that the weakness in the construct is a lack of clear definition and conceptualization (Gibbons, 2000). Fry et. al., (2011d) concur with this concept and add that spirituality as being concerned with qualities of the human spirit, including positive psychological concepts, such as love and compassion, patience, tolerance, forgiveness, contentment, personal responsibility, and a sense of harmony with one’s environment (Synder & Lopez, 2011b).

Religion and Subjective Well-Being (SWB). Researchers find that religious people, on average, report higher subjective well-being and have fewer psychological pathologies (Blackney & Sanders, 2003). It is possible therefore that religious people will tend to always look for the ‘good’ in people and will be less judgmental about their leader(s) and others. However, psychological/philosophical pathologies are not limited to followers or leaders in non-religious or in specific organizations and can be extremely costly to the organization.

Although the individual character of the leader, level of religiosity and spirituality can be critical to the development and success of the leader and the organization, for example, from a Christian perspective, Clark (2009) brings to light the root causes of the economic crisis as social injustice and motive by greed and avarice. He does not directly link the causes to authentic leadership, but attributes the lack of several principles of Catholic social thought as contributing to the economic crisis. These include: 1) dignity of human person, 2) principle of participation, 3) principle of the common good, 4) the universal destination of goods, 5) preferential option for the poor, 6) the principle of subsidiarity and 7) the principle of solidarity. While these factors can serve

to oppress followers and/or strengthen their belief and faith in religion, once the effects of these principles are reversed, it is likely that the role of religion will be reduced.

Workplace Spirituality. It is evidenced through a review of over 150 studies that there is a clear consistency between spiritual values and practices emphasized in spiritual teachings where the values and practices of leaders are able to motivate followers, create a positive ethical climate, inspire trust, promote positive work relationships and achieve organizational goals (Reave, 2005b). Despite the fears of proselytizing or being told what to believe, workplace spirituality (wellness) programs have been introduced in organizations to help employees explore their inner spirituality, which is believed to help employees find meaning and purpose (Bhindi & Duignan, 1997). These programs lead to beneficial personal outcomes such as increased joy, peace, serenity, job satisfaction and commitment, as well as deliver improved productivity, reduced absenteeism and turnover, and promote higher levels of organizational performance (Duchon & Plowman, 2005c; Elm, 2003; Fry, 2005; Garcia-Zamor, 2003; Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003c; Reder, 1982).

Psychological concepts such as love, compassion, patience, tolerance, forgiveness, contentment, personal responsibility, and a sense of harmony with one's environment lie at the foundation of these concepts (Snyder & Lopez, 2002c). What necessitates this outcome is "a framework of organizational values evidenced in a culture that promotes employees' experience of transcendence through the work process, facilitating their sense of being connected to others in a way that provides feelings of completeness and joy (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003d). While arriving at a definition that encompasses issues of performance, turnover, productivity and other relevant effectiveness criteria is quite a challenging task, this is a critical factor and beneficial to leaders and organizations (Sass, 2000). This holistic approach must be understood within the context of interwoven diverse cultural and personal values.

Although religion and spirituality are two different concepts, some researchers identify spirituality as a necessity to workplace leadership developing constructs such as emotional intelligence, ethics, values; and leadership models such as charismatic, stewardship, transformational and servant (Cacioppe, 2000; Tischler, Biberman & McKeage, 2002).

Hypothesis

We will focus on the results of the quantitative research analysis (meta-analysis) study conducted by Witrer, Stock, Okun, & Earing (1985) who set out to measure the relationship between religion and subjective well-being. Based on the results, one can argue that a person who considers him/herself to be religious or is perceived as being religious by others has a higher subjective well-being and may be inclined to think more positively, have higher levels of morality, integrity and happiness, therefore will always look for the positive qualities in themselves and in their respective leader(s). There are several additional dimensions which could be explored to gather more favourable and diverse results. These include, intrinsic and extrinsic items, e.g. religious activity, moods, emotions, behaviours, stress, leadership presence, image, appearance, innateness and personality. As well, in addressing these issues, existing assumptions can be tested and the potential to validate new theories is also possible.

Research suggests that religion helps people to cope with difficult circumstances, and that religious people tend to have higher subjective well-being and less psychological/philosophical pathologies. Therefore, it can be argued when people from the oppositional groups are faced with the same or similar challenges, from a leader/follower perspective, religious people will be more able to deal with the challenges positively as compared to non-religious people. It is assumed then that because religious people have higher subjective well-being, they will look for the 'good' in people,

demonstrate qualities of consideration and forgiveness and therefore would be less judgmental about their leader(s).

Prior to the experiment, the researcher determined that the independent variable of ‘authentic leadership’ would be measured against the dependent variable ‘affinity to religion.’ The group would be divided into two separate and distinct groups, religious and non-religious. However, at a later stage it was determined that instead of categorizing into two groups, a third group be introduced which would capture the responses which fell between the minimum and maximum scores of both the religious group and the non-religious group. This group was named the ‘*in between*’ group. The introduction of this new category broadened the direction of the study and ultimately affected the anticipated outcome.

Ho: People with higher religiosity will rate their leaders as more effective than people with low religiosity.

Ha: People with higher religiosity will not rate their leaders as more effective than people with low religiosity.

Ho: People who fall into the ‘*in-between*’ group will rate their leader(s) as being less effective than people who belong to a religious group.

Ha: People who fall into the ‘*in-between*’ group will not rate their leader(s) as being less effective than people who belong to a religious group.

Ho: People who fall into the ‘*in-between*’ group will rate their leader(s) as being more effective than people who belong to non-religious group or non-religious groups.

Ha: People who fall into the ‘*in-between*’ group will not rate their leader(s) as being more effective than people who belong to non-religious group or non-religious groups.

Methods

Overview

The nature of this study was exploratory. In order to obtain diverse results, initially, participants were recruited from faith-based and non-faith-based organizations and were invited to participate in the study. Drawing on the available literature research on authentic leadership, the

ALQ/ALI and the Multi-Factor Questionnaire (MLQ), a questionnaire was developed to explore how the four concepts that encompass the multi-dimensional model on authentic leadership (16 questions) and the five concepts linked to multi-factor leadership (5 questions) could effectively measure what authentic leadership meant to survey participants.

Participants

Participants for the study were obtained through convenience sampling. Fourteen organizations were contacted by email. Faith-based organizations/institutions included the Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, Canadian Apostolic Ministries, Salvation Army, a synagogue, a Hindu temple, the faculty of Theology at a Christian University, a Buddhist temple and a mosque. Non-faith-based organizations included the Society of Free Thinkers, Canadian Secular Alliance, Center for Inquiry, National Center for Science Education, the Humanist Society.

The recruitment letter was designed with pertinent information relating to the study. It identified the researcher, the advisory team, the nature of the study and the purpose of the study. As well, it elaborated on the anticipated length of time to complete the survey, the number of questions, the type of questions and the information related to the incentive draw prizes. To be able to reach as many specific participants for the study, initially, leaders of religious and non-religious organizations were contacted and asked if they would consider recruiting participants from their respective organizations to take part in the research.

They were advised that the research was exploratory and the intention was to obtain responses from two very different and oppositional groups. Recruitment letters informed the recruiter that the survey questions were based on the ALQ/ALI and MLQ and were intended to examine key behaviours associated with the theoretical construct of authentic leadership. The letter specified the format of the study and indicated that participants would have to meet the requirements of being 18

years of age or older and had read and understood the purpose of the study prior to participation. The survey was intended to attract English-speaking participants. The anticipated time to complete the survey was estimated to be between 8 to 10 minutes. There was no time limit. Participants were encouraged to work according to his/her own pace. The questionnaire allowed for the participant to review the previous questions but prior to proceeding to the next question or reviewing the previous question they would have to answer the current question. Participants also had the option to pause the survey and return at a later time to complete it. The survey was conducted on Lime Survey. For the analysis of the response, the results were uploaded to SPSS.

The study awarded two incentive prizes of \$250. At the end of the online study, participants had a 1 in 71/72 chance of winning one of the incentive prizes.

Measures

To facilitate this study, an online questionnaire was designed to explore authentic leadership incorporating the elements of authentic leadership from the ALQ/ALI and MLQ questionnaires. The study examined concepts related to authentic leadership, identified similarities and differences in existing constructs and terminologies, and through quantitative research moved on to explore authentic leadership from two distinct perspectives.

Religious Grouping. The dependent variable of affinity to religion was categorized into three separate groups: religious, non-religious and in-between. This variable was generated from the survey responses to questions 41 to 44. These questions measured the respondent affinity to religion. The questions were presented in the yes/no format where a yes response was value 1 and a no response was assigned a value of 2. In order to facilitate analysis the values were flipped. For example, a yes response had a value of 2 and a no response has value of 1. The responses to all four questions were

summed. The minimum total score was 4 and maximum total score was 8. The respondents with a total score of 4 were grouped into the non-religious group. The respondents with a total score of 8 were grouped into the religious group and all others were grouped into the in-between group. The results show 62 (40.5 percent) indicated that they were non-religious, 44 people (28.8 percent) fell in the category 'in between' (which signifies that they were neither religious or non-religious and could be identified as belonging to an atheist, agnostic or secular group), and the remaining 47 (30.7 percent) indicated that they were religious.

The scale of measure was the Likert Scale. The quantitative research focused on the multi-dimensional model of the ALQ/ALI which was complemented by the MLQ. The ALQ is a theory-driven leadership survey instrument designed to measure the components that have been conceptualized as comprising authentic leadership. It is comprised of five scales (Northouse, 2012c). Authentic leadership was measured using the ALQ/ALI which comprised of 16 authentic items and the method used was the content validity assessment procedure. Results indicate some concerns with the ALI but support the content validity, reliability, factor structure, convergent and discriminant validity, concurrent validity and freedom from impression management response bias of the Authentic Leadership Inventory (Neider & Schriesheim, 2011). Careful consideration was paid to the reliability and validity of these measures by ensuring that they met high levels to make sure that the survey accurately assessed the variables.

Authentic Leadership Questionnaire/Inventory. The Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) and the Authentic Leadership Inventory (ALI) (Walumba, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing and Peterson (2008) was complemented by the Multi-Factor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) with more in-depth questions. Five questions were extracted from the original questionnaire. The 5X MLQ is also a well-

established instrument of transformational leadership and has been extensively researched and validated (Antonakis, Avolio & Sivasubramanian, 2003).

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire is a well-established instrument in the measure of transformational leadership as well as being extensively researched and validated. Avolio and Bass (2005) MLQ manual show strong evidence for validity. This questionnaire was intended to evaluate three different leadership styles: transformational, transactional, and passive-avoidant.

Originally, both questionnaires were designed to provide an opportunity for self-assessment and for others to rate the subject. This strengthened the assessment as it helped to develop insight into the differences between the self-rated results, the results based on external assessments, and the potential to move forward with a leadership development plan. However, for purposes of this study respondents were not given an option to self-rate, rather, they were asked to rate their leader based on personal, spiritual beliefs, practices and experiences about their respective leader(s) and on the development of meaningful relationships, shared beliefs and values of members, and ultimately the success of the organization.

All of the items were administered in English using the Likert Scale and were scored with the integers 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) measuring the level of agreement or disagreement. This scale of measurement is considered a balanced measure as there were equal numbers of positive and negative positions between the five measurements. The options provided using the Likert scale are considered to be a bipolar scaling method where an even-point scale was used in the middle, offering the respondent to respond with the option of a 'neither agree nor disagree.' For a brief description of ALQ/ALI is followed by the MLQ components.

Religiosity. Religiosity was measured using a four item scale intended to measure the influence of religious beliefs in a person's life. The questions were designed by the researcher. They are as follows:

- Do you have a religious affiliation? (Yes) (No)
- My life is influenced by religious beliefs. (Yes) (No)
- Religion offers me the most comfort when sorrows or misfortunes strike. (Yes) (No)
- Religious beliefs influence my social activities. (Yes) (No)

The questions were necessary to 1) gathering more solid results pertinent to the research study, 2) contributing to the potential for modification of the theory, and 3) a greater chance of asserting that authentic leadership influences positive outcomes. Cooper et. al., (2005b) advocate on behalf of conducting qualitative research as this method would aid in the development of conceptual frameworks that relate authentic leadership to its key antecedent, moderating, and mediating the dependent variable (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955). Combining the literature review and the online survey helped to explore the meaning of authentic leadership in greater detail and provided a more coherent and complete picture, gaining a better understanding of how people think and feel while appreciating what lies at the core of an authentic leader.

Prior to the analysis and interpretation, negatively keyed items were flipped. Questions which pertained to religion originally scored as Yes (1), No (2) were reversed, this reversal did not change the total sum. Deleting four questions during the Cronbach Alpha analysis resulted in a change to the total sum of the ALQ's and MLQ's. Initially, two categories were established to determine religious affiliation. Scores which fell between four and five were categorized as non-religious, scores which fell between six and eight were considered to be religious. After a preview of the results which showed that 45 participants (28.8 percent) were neither religious nor religious, a new category was

included. In order to perform a more complete analysis the results were re-coded and labeled '*in between*.' The new scoring rated 4 as 'non-religious,' 5 to 7 fell into the '*in between*' category and a score of 8 scored 'religious.' The '*in between*' group could reflect atheist, agnostic, or secular participants. One hundred and fifty-four participants (154) were recruited from both religion and non-religious groups.

Identifying Variables

The method employed was the quantitative content validity assessment procedure developed by Schriesheim et al., (1979) and further refined by Hinkin and Tracey (1999). Measures of central tendency (mean, median and mode) were used to summarize scores. After the questionnaire was completed, each item was analyzed separately. The next step was assigning labels to each item, categorizing them into specific groups, and, later, the items were summed together to create a score for each group of items. Thirty-five (35) of the forty (40) questions belonged to the ALQ/ALI, and were categorized into groups and assigned labels. The remaining five (5) questions were extracted from the MLQ.

Results

Data cleaning

Data collection involved the collection of data from multiple sources over a period of time. To avoid distortion of the data set, exploratory data analysis and cleaning through manual and computational procedures were employed to identify and correct errors in the data set. Data was screened for missing values, out-of-range values, outliers, and violations of assumptions of normality. Variables were negatively skewed.

Descriptive Statistics. For this study, 9 indices were constructed and used in the analysis. Four indices represented the four ALQ/ALI concepts. The other five indices belong to the MLQ concepts. Data of

overall sample size was summarized looking for the mean, mode and standard deviation. Other tests included distribution of normality to check for normal distribution of data; regression tests were run to determine the predictability of the dependent variable (affinity to religion) to the independent variable (authentic leadership); correlation was performed to determine the strength and direction of the association between the dependent variable and the independent variable. Cronbach's Alpha was run to determine potential inflation or deflation of the value of the alpha and the ANOVA was used to look for significant differences amongst the three dependent groups.

ALQ/ALI Measures

Table 1. Minimum (M1), Maximum (M2), Mean (M), Standard Deviation (SE), Sum (S) of total scores for concepts related to ALQ/ALI Measures.

ALQ/ALI Measures	M1	M2	M	SE	S
1: Self-Awareness	27.00	45.00	37.38	3.66	5757
2: Relational Transparency	27.00	45.00	36.14	4.01	5567
3: Balanced Processing	18.00	35.00	29.09	3.78	4480
4: Internalized Moral Processing	16.00	30.00	25.12	2.79	3870

The higher standard deviation scores indicate that the data points are spread over a large range of values as three of the four components of the ALQ consisted of nine items, the fourth component consisted of eight items. The remaining five questions were extracted from the MLQ. These were individual questions which represented the five categories of the MLQ, each question was assigned a specific label.

MLQ Measures

Table 2. Minimum (M1), Maximum (M2), Mean (M), Standard Deviation (SE), Sum (Sum) of total scores for concepts related to MLQ Measures.

MLQ Measures	M1	M2	Mean	SE	S
1: Internalized Influence (A)	2.00	5.00	4.155	.76807	642
2: Internalized Influence (B)	2.00	5.00	4.444	.67267	684

3: Internalized Motivation	2.00	5.00	4.201	.83533	647
4: Intellectual Stimulation	2.00	5.00	3.876	.76122	597
5: Individualized Consideration	2.00	5.00	4.233	.71210	620

Each component of the MLQ consisted of a single question, this explains the low standard deviation scores for the MLQ items as the data points tend to be very close to the expected value (mean).

Total Scores for ALQ/ALI & MLQ Measures

Table 3. Minimum (M1), Maximum (M2), Mean (M), Standard Deviation (SE) of total scores for concepts related to MLQ Measures.

Measures	M1	M2	M	SE
ALQ/ALI & MLQ	108	177	148.66	13.52

Total Scores Religious Grouping

Table 4. Number (N), Minimum (M1), Maximum (M2), Mean (M), Standard Deviation (SE) of total scores for concepts related to MLQ Measures.

Religious Measures	N	M1	M2	M	SE
1: Non-religious:	62	132	177	151.92	11.12
2: In-between:	45	108	172	143.64	15.47
3: Religious:	47	109	177	149.17	13.27

Distribution of Normality. The Shapiro-Wilks normality test revealed the data was normally distributed ($p = .184$).

Table 5.

Tests of Normality						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig
Total_Score	.046	154	.200*	.988	154	.184

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

*. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Regression: The R² value is .011. It indicates how much of the dependent variable, “affinity to religion,” can be explained by the independent variable “authentic leadership.”

Correlation. The Pearson’s correlation was performed to determine the strength and direction of t and p values from regression, the association between affinity to religion and authentic leadership. The data showed no violation of normality, linearity, or homoscedasity. The Pearson’s correlation coefficient was -.103. The $p = 0.205$.

Cronbach’s Alpha. In order to understand whether the questions were internally consistent, a Cronbach’s alpha was done on the four variables ALQ1, ALQ2, ALQ3 and ALQ4 to measure internal consistency and reliability. For ALQ1 (Self-Awareness), the results revealed the co-efficiency of the reliability at .668 which indicated consistency; all of the questions were in good standing and this was an acceptable measure for the component of self-awareness. The results for the ALQ2 (Relational Transparency) showed the co-efficiency of the reliability of .641. This is also an acceptable measure and the results obtained suggested a slightly higher score could be attained if #30 (integrity) was deleted, since this would reflect a small improvement in Cronbach’s alpha (.679-.641 = .013) the researcher decided to keep the original score.

For ALQ3 which measured the variable of relational transparency, the Cronbach Alpha results suggest that the co-efficiency of the reliability was .560 which was poor or borderline acceptable. The results indicated a more efficient co-reliability could be attained by deleting #25 (persuasion) and #39 (courage). Deleting these items increased the score to .790 and brought it within an acceptable value (low stakes testing) of alpha. Initially, these two items could have been re-phrased, re-assigned labels or deleted all together. The lowest score of .316 which was extremely unacceptable was realized in the ALQ4 (Internalized Moral Processing). This could suggest that the interrelatedness of the items was

inefficient or that the participants did not respond to the set of items consistently. Deleting items #23 and #27 increased the alpha to .558 bringing it to a more acceptable range.

No previous testing for internal reliability/consistency was conducted prior to the study and no effort was made to inflate or deflate the values. The variances were true score variance.

ANOVA: A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine if any significant differences exist among the means authentic leadership score of the three religious affinity groups of religious, non-religious and in-between. The results supported the hypotheses that overall there is a significant difference in the perception of authentic leadership based on a person's affinity to religion. The conclusion was evidenced by the responses received from the ALQ/ALI and MLQ questionnaires, both valid and credible measures of testing which support the idea that there are some universal values/characteristics such as morality and ethics, self-awareness, integrity, accountability, confidence and reliability (to name a few) which contribute to the authenticity of a leader.

We see from the results of this exploratory study that there are non-significant differences in the perceptions of authentic leadership between religious and non-religious groups. The experiment produced diverse results. We now have two outcomes which are different to the outcome that was anticipated from the original hypothesis; therefore, we can reject the hypotheses that suggest there is a significant difference between religious and non-religious groups which produced significance $p = .275$. Since the p value is greater than the .05 level, this tells us that there is no statistically significant difference between the mean score for the two groups analyzed, the religious and non-religious groups. In other words, the mean scores were similar enough among the two groups.

There was a statistically significant difference between groups as determined by the one-way ANOVA, $F(2, 151) = 5.20, p = .007$. A Tukey post-hoc test revealed that the total score of authentic leadership is statistically lower for the in-between group than for the non-religious group. There was

no statistically significant difference between the religious and non-religious groups. As well, there was no statistically significant difference between the religious and in-between groups.

The null hypotheses states that the experiment produced null results between the religious and non-religious groups h_0 , that is, both the experimental group and the control group performed the same. To arrive at this hypotheses, it should be noted that this was a true score, and no data was manipulated despite the fact that the sample size for the non-religious group was approximately 25 percent higher (15 samples) than the scores for the religious group.

It was difficult to randomly select an equal number of responses for each category and test and analyze the data as this would have biased the results. We ran a two-sided test at a .95 confidence level. The mean for each of the groups was non-religious = 151.19, in-between = 143.64 and religious = 149.17. To determine the difference between the religious and non-religious scores, the Levene's test of equality was run, however, the results did not show a significant difference between the religious and non-religious groups ($p = .275$). The mean difference in scores was two points out of 154 which was not at all that significant at the .05 level. We cannot therefore conclude that the perception of the non-religious group is statistically significant; in fact, we can conclude with certainty that the difference observed between the two groups is statistically non-significant. The survey did not require demographic data about the respondents (e.g. gender). Therefore, the data does not include relationship information and comparisons are limited.

Discussion

Overview of the Results

Assessing leadership authenticity is a difficult task as both the characteristics of the leader and the context in which the leader leads must be taken into consideration. Factors include: inadequate and/or ineffectual training, personal biases, cultural differences, leader inconsistency, the

ability of leader to be adaptive, directness of the leader, motivation of the leader, organizational and structural change, level of follower involvement, interpersonal skills, position power/distance, gender, individualism, situations, authority system, cohesiveness of group, comparators (comparing leaders), the factors one decides to focus on (e.g., issues of pay, promotion, supervision, satisfaction) and stereotyping.

The purpose of the study was to investigate the perceptions of religious and non-religious people and their relationship to authentic leadership. Items to be rated were statements based on qualities, traits and characteristics of what essentially contributed to authentic leadership. The ratings would be based on how the respondent perceived the leader's authenticity based on his/her personal and spiritual beliefs, practices and experiences as well as on the development of meaningful relationships, shared beliefs, values of members, and ultimately the success of the organization.

There are benefits of using mixed methodologies. These include 1) gathering more solid results pertinent to the research study, 2) the potential for modification of the theory, and 3) a greater chance of asserting that authentic leadership influences positive outcomes. Combining the literature review and the online survey helped to explore the meaning of authentic leadership in greater detail and provided a more coherent and complete picture gaining a better understanding of how people think and feel while appreciating what lies at the core of an authentic leader.

In evaluating the results of the two distinct groups of religious and non-religious, the results revealed no difference in how leaders relate which suggest that most people tend to perceive leaders based on some basic universal values. These results suggest that leaders can build trust across religious differences because they are not judged based on their religiosity and/or followers did not rate leaders based on their personal beliefs of religion. Leaders and followers should take a humanitarian approach, regardless of their religious affiliation.

This study has some notable strengths in that it demonstrates that people are conscientious about the leadership of their organizations. One can deduce that there are some common beliefs, definitions and understanding which capture the essence of authentic leadership despite a person's religious or non-religious beliefs.

Limitations. Demographically, most of the samples are believed to be from Canada. It is quite possible that a few responses may have trickled in from outside Canada. Having a diversified sample size enhanced the potential of gaining valuable information related to the rater's perception and understanding of authentic leadership. The difference between the religious and non-religious groups could be related to the distribution of the survey, the willingness of members to participate, the interest in the field of research and whether or not participation was encouraged to participate.

The use of the Likert scale did not allow the researcher to obtain details from the respondents. The research question did not include personal data therefore the researcher could not further group the responses on specific factors, e.g. age. As well, the study did not ask respondents to rate specific leaders who were public figures, therefore a comparison could not be established amongst the leaders who were rated. However, the intent of the study was not to examine the authenticity of major public figures, rather to explore how the respondents viewed authentic leadership from their personal perspective based on personal and spiritual beliefs, experiences and practices.

While some researchers placed a strong emphasis on the creation of interventions to facilitate the development of authentic leadership, as mentioned earlier in the study, the initial challenges surrounding the identifying factors of what defining, measuring and researching the construct is critical prior to determining or evaluating interventions. As well, models related to this area of research have not been identified in the scholarly search that would provide a better fit for the data as compared with the model used.

In line with suggestions made by Hunt (1999) we agree that that all survey measures of leadership have inherent limitations. There are many interpretations to the limitations of this study. First, because this is the first study that specifically looks at authentic leadership from diverse religious perspectives, there was a lack of available literature for research and there are no other similar comparators.

There were a few articles which incorporated elements of spirituality. For example, Kriger and Seng (2005) focused on leadership with inner meaning based on the worldviews of five religions, and while there were certain elements that could be attributed to a study of authentic leadership, the nature of their investigation did not contribute to this study and their research results had to be eliminated from the research design. While the majority of research on authentic leadership suggests ways of improving leader effectiveness, little is done to measure the outcome and the research appears stationary. However, with more exploratory research, we can expect to have new insight and development in the field of authentic leadership.

Another really important point that was raised by Avolio and Yammarino (2002) is the limitations posed to levels of analysis. Their concern regards the failure to address multiple levels of analysis issues, as well, the analysis should be addressed explicitly rather than implicitly. For example, a model was created specifically for this study and the values were assigned to the questions based on the researcher's knowledge of the literature. It is possible that other researchers would assign different values or interpret the assigned values differently. Biases can be made if the results are not analyzed and interpreted correctly. Cooper et. al., (2005c) warn against the areas of conceptual ambiguity, for example, levels of analysis, and cautions scholars to avoid pitfalls in advancing prior leadership theories.

Although the targeted response rate was sufficient during the relatively short space of time that was allocated for the study, the data sample may not fully represent the population it was intended to as the survey was administered over the internet. However, the research was exploratory in nature and not typically generalizable to the population at large. This method precluded individuals who are not computer savvy or who do not have access to the internet, as well, the researcher had no control over who the participants were as there was no direct relationship between the participants and the researcher. And, while the majority of research on leadership suggests ways of improving leader authenticity, little is done to measure the outcome and the research appears stationary. Unfortunately, most of the research is repetitious and does not include the multitude of facets of authentic leadership that could be explored.

In general, society tends to lend credibility to those who are in strong leadership roles, however, people do not necessarily know the true motivations of the leaders and whether he or she is acting from personal conviction or strictly a desire to achieve and gain favourable status. This idea is not limited to specific organizations but rather to all organizations, communities and countries. George (2003d; George & Sims, 2007e) summarizes the characteristics of an authentic leader as having a more genuine desire to serve others, be in tune with their own purpose, understanding of themselves and others, and leading from core values. In a faith-based agency, it is almost assumed that these shared-based qualities are the norm and therefore the foundation for effective and trusting partnerships.

Personal beliefs may colour the perception of a leader(s). For example, religious leaders may value a silent approach or adopt a charismatic style which may not be perceived in the same light as a person who does not understand this approach or is not familiar with this style of leadership. If we propose to follow through with Luthans and Avolio (2003b) and their inclusivity approach to fit the

multidimensional model particularly given that all the traits and characteristics associated with authentic leadership are largely positive, several arguments could follow related to measuring authenticity.

In the first case, the dimensions to measure the construct are too broad and leave little room to examine how authentic leadership fits with the individual versus how they are perceived by a collective group. Would leaders act in a way that is not true to who they are in order to meet the standards and expectations of others and/or would leaders make the tough choice and do the right thing by doing what needs to be done? It would be difficult to ascertain the true authenticity of a leader if positive values and morals are not reflected in their leadership decisions. The leader is the only person who knows the factors that influence the who, what, why, when and how of their decision.

Faith-based organizations that are independently institutional may be able to take on more radical positions. Faith-based leaders or faith-based organizations could be perceived as being credible and authentic, with high ethical and moral standards, making them more easily accepted by faith-based followers.

In addition, questions were close-ended and did not provide an opportunity to speculate freely on their feelings and thoughts or reveal more information about themselves or their respective leader(s). Employing qualitative research would have complemented the quantitative research and could have resulted in valuable results. The survey was tested across a variety of settings with different levels of participation hoping to capture the maximum participation from leaders as followers, and followers as leaders. No literature was given on the concepts which the researcher intended to explore as the researcher did not want to encourage participants to provide responses that they might anticipate the study hoped to receive. In this multi-dimensional source study, the

researcher hoped to be able to source genuine responses which would provide a better understanding on authentic leadership, increase the credibility of this area of research, attract support from those who do not understand the leadership model, and as well, effectively contribute to the existing literature.

Distinguishing between authentic leadership behaviours and others theoretical approaches is complicated for followers as characters, traits, attributions, attitudes and behaviours shown by other approaches overlapped. The study did not provide an avenue to collect biographical information, employment data, relationship between leader and participant (previous or current), the reporting structure, chain of command, direct or indirect relationship, the dependency in the relationship, the pattern of interactions, size of organization, crisis in organization, organizational culture, organizational life cycle, societal trends in the organization, diversity in workplace, technological advances or issues of globalization. Further, there is potential for bias and error as the researcher is not privileged to details surrounding the history of either the participant or the leader(s) that the participant was referring to and under which circumstances.

The researcher recognized that the study would not prove any notable differences for the following reasons, 1) the experiment could have failed, 2) the researcher could become frustrated and decide to discontinue the research, 3) the results were not reliable or consistent and the researcher needed to re-test, 4) a pre-test was not conducted and 5) the research design was flawed. Any of these scenarios could have resulted in a null hypothesis h_0 . Many hypotheses have been previously proposed and tested providing us with extensive data on what constitutes authentic leadership, however, this is the first experiment specific to examining the relationship between religious and non-religious people and how authentic leadership is perceived based on their personal and spiritual beliefs, practices and experiences.

Although research in the field has maintained a forward trajectory, researchers have failed to reach any consensus regarding theoretical frameworks they should use in defining authentic leadership or the appropriate methods for investigating them. This limits the advancement of research in a cumulative manner (Cooper et al., 2005d). It is also important to recognize that the ALQ shares a number of measurement limitations that are inherent to measures of leadership in general (Avolio et al., 2003) such as not accounting for contextual influences on leadership. Researchers continue to examine the intricacies of authentic leadership and what constitutes this very complex topic but have been faced with an insurmountable number of challenges.

Implications. Based on the literature review and the quantitative research, it is evident that organizations and sectors are in need of capable leadership to strengthen them and pilot them through unforeseen circumstances. In this relatively new area of research, leadership researchers have compiled a series of characteristics, traits and behaviours which they believe contribute to the concept of authentic leadership, as well as, critiqued current assessments like the MLQ expressing concerns with the ambiguity with respect to the level of analysis and the lack of clarity as it relates to the individual, group or organizational referents (Schriesheim, Wu & Scandura, 2009).

From a development point of view, the opportunity for followers to provide leaders with overall feedback would be beneficial to the organization as well as to the leader noting that leadership is supposedly exhibited at all levels of the organization and at all organizational levels (Luthans & Avolio, 2003b). Going back to simple modes of observation and simpler models related to authentic leadership and authentic leadership development, Katz, Maccoby, Gurin, and Floor 1951; Stogdill & Coons (1957) believe that this will push leadership research and training in the wrong direction in the same way that earlier two-factor models of leadership did at Ohio State and Michigan State.

More research is needed to build on the theoretical construct of authentic leadership, however, to complement the current existing literature, it is critical that extensive quantitative research and the inclusion of qualitative research be conducted in order to enhance the theoretical study while paying attention to the practical aspects of what really constitutes authentic leadership and to arrive at a more concrete construct.

As well, other critical aspects include the avoidance of replicating previous efforts in the study of authentic leadership and to concurrently develop and validate measures for variables not previously measured (Cooper et. al., 2005e). He stresses the importance of thinking outside the parameters of traditional leadership training and suggest the importance of 1) ensuring the program, itself, is genuine and is based on an underlying theoretical model that is valid, which considers the aspects of industry, organization, size, organizational culture, organizational histories, work group cohesion, conflict, individual differences, demographics, personality, age, previous leadership interventions and degree of success or failure, 2) determining how the ‘trigger events’ can be replicated during training, observing behavioural change due to interaction of trigger events and personal insight, as well the ability to overcome adversity, 3) deciding whether ethical decision-making can be taught, and after addressing the previous three issues, and lastly, 4) determining who should participate in authentic leadership training is a critical factor as there is the likelihood individuals with Machiavellian tendencies would participate in authentic leadership development interventions simply to further their own personal power or self-interests.

Future Directions. Extensive future research is critical to the enhancement of the study on authentic leadership. Notable in this study are several contributory factors which could be included in the research on authentic leadership: authority, imagery, appearance, emotions, moods and behaviours, to name a few. To further explore authentic leadership from diverse perspectives, additional

questions can be posed to collect data related to demographics, the relationship between the respondent and the leader(s) and his/her position on the hierarchy pole. In addition, questions extrapolated from other leader assessments can be incorporated to obtain more diverse results.

There were no other similar assessments or models in place to test the results (e.g., qualitative research). Combining both qualitative and quantitative methods would have been more effective as both the 'what and why' of leadership would have been addressed more effectively.

Although future research is critical to the development of this area of study, leadership scholars Cooper et al. (2005f) cautioned other scholars to avoid the pitfalls of advancing past leadership theories by carefully defining, measuring and rigorously investigating the existing construct. They add that in addition to designing strategies for authentic leadership development, scholars in this area need to give careful consideration to three additional critical factors 1) determining the discriminant validity of the construct, 2) identifying relevant construct outcomes (i.e. testing the construct's nomological network), and 3) ascertaining whether authentic leadership can be taught.

As well, the conceptual development of workplace spirituality lacks a sound theoretical base as benevolently motivated people do not take a scientific approach resulting in a problem with definitions which ultimately is insufficient motivation to propel the field onward (Geh & Tan, 2009). While some researchers have difficulty determining why the area of study related to authentic leadership is progressing slowly, to date, Luthans, et al., 2005; Ilies et al. (2005c) and others provide a number of different possible reasons. Problems are compounded by a limited amount of empirical research, which makes it difficult to assess the validity of assertions regarding the positive effects of AL that are commonly advanced by its proponents (Gardner, Cogliser, Davis & Dickens (2010).

In addition to the lack of empirical research, researchers who are interested in developing the existing research have been cautioned and discouraged by previous researchers who provide recommendations regarding further research. It is not clear if the recommendations are intended to hinder the investigation into this relatively new area study as it has been suggested that some researchers would like to take ownership for the existing literature, as well, researchers are not willing to expand the research across the individual, dyadic, group and organizational level of analysis (Yammarino, Dionne, Chun, & Dansereau, 2005).

Conclusion. We see that determining authenticity of a leader is a complex task in a chaotic world, as discovered in this study. Change and transition appear to be the natural state of organizations, religious and non-religious, globally. Leaders in 21st century are challenged to perform in an increasingly complex, interdependent, faster moving and competitively dynamic globalized world (Derungs, 2011d). Leadership actions and decisions are not necessarily always well-intentioned. Outcomes can be either beneficial or detrimental.

People want to believe in and trust in their leaders in departments, organizations, countries and in their world leaders, particularly as mergers are becoming commonplace in the global industry and are desperate for financial and job security. Companies are struggling to meet financial deficits and/or restore profits in order to stay afloat in a globalized world. Governments are unable to provide sufficient funding to meet the needs of educational institutions, health-care services and safety and security to name a few. Even religious organizations are losing the faith and trust of their parishioners. In all arenas, the state of the organization is easily compromised without effective leadership decisions and actions. As we learn, despite a leader's intellectual brilliance or inspirational qualities, today's leaders are faced with many political, technical, financial and administrative challenges.

Based on the literature review and the quantitative research, it is evident that organizations and sectors are in need of capable leadership to strengthen them and pilot them through unforeseen circumstances. In this relatively new area of research, leadership researchers have compiled a series of characteristics, traits and behaviours which they believe contribute to the concept of authentic leadership, as well as, critiqued current assessments like the MLQ expressing concerns with the ambiguity with respect to the level of analysis and the lack of clarity as it relates to the individual, group or organizational referents (Schriesheim et. al. 2005).

The results provided insight on key characteristics, attributes and behaviours that contribute to the authenticity of leaders despite a person's religious beliefs. This opens up a new line of research and encourages further exploration into authentic leadership and its relationship to religiosity (note that religiosity/non-religiosity and faith/non-faith are used interchangeably in this study). The results could effectively contribute to ways in which leaders can restore confidence, hope and optimism in their followers and in other leaders as they search for meaning and connection in respective leadership roles.

Given the various leadership styles and leadership requirements related to specific jobs, a critical aspect to realizing positive leadership potential and successful organizational outcome is that leaders should be the right fit for the position and organization as leadership cannot be understood through a "one-size-fits-all" approach. Some researchers suggest that the effective alternative to ineffective leadership is to offer managerial training; however, if this fails, replacing the leader should be the ultimate decision. Ancona, Malone and Orlikowski (2007) argue that only when leaders see themselves as incomplete, as having both strengths and weaknesses, then they will be able to make up for their missing skills. Despite the inability of researchers to arrive at common terms, to develop inconsistencies of defining and labeling of variables that constitute authentic

leadership, determine factors by which authentic leadership is measured, discern a person's emotions, discover important competencies and identify levels of importance, we see that the results of the study is evidence that there are some basic moral, ethical and universal values that constitute authentic leadership.

This study sheds light on the way authentic leadership is perceived both generally and specifically. It is hoped that the results will help to explain some of the competencies that participants deem essential to the concept of authentic leadership. While this exploratory study was not designed to discriminate based on religious perceptions or to use 'faith' as a new synonym for positivity or equalize the already under-represented faith community, it was able to draw some generalizable conclusions on the observations collected, that authentic leadership does not reflect faith or religion; rather, it stems from a humanistic psychological/philosophical approach, which is applicable to every human being.

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