SUBJECTIVITIES IN DEFINING AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP: A CROSS CULTURAL STUDY OF TWO NGOs IN GHANA AND NEW ZEALAND

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ABSTRACT

This study involves the documentation of leaders' and followers' constructs of authentic leadership in a private organisation in Ghana and New Zealand, which were subsequently compared using the Q method. Three factors or types of authentic leadership were identified and named for each of the two settings, yielding six different perceptions of authentic leadership. While the findings indicated that authentic leadership is idiosyncratic, further analysis showed that some attributes of authentic leadership were common to the organisations. Overall, the results suggest that in defining authenticity in leadership, leader and follower perceptions as well as organisational-specific characteristics cannot be overlooked.

Keywords: Authentic leadership, leaders and followers perception, Q method, Ghana, New Zealand CSF, Information Systems, IS Department, quality service

INTRODUCTION

Authentic leadership (AL) has been suggested by researchers and practitioners to be the kind of leadership relevant for positive and desirable organisational outcomes in turbulent and challenging times, as in our world today (Avolio & Gardner 2005). Authentic leaders are said to be true to themselves and are transparent in all situations regardless of the cost to them as individuals, and they have the welfare of followers and the organisation at heart (Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans & May 2004; Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May & Walumbwa 2005; Kernis 2003a; Luthans & Avolio 2003). The leading proponents of AL theory explain

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that leaders and followers come into an organisation with different expectations and in-built value systems which drive them to act in certain ways. On entry into an organisation, followers make judgements based on these already built perceptions about how a leader (in this case an authentic leader) should or must behave. Similarly, leaders have perceptions about how they should behave and what to expect from their followers.

One common theme emerging from the AL literature is that authentic leadership is not a trait theory but a behavioural attribute that arises from leader-follower interactions. When the espoused values and actions of leaders, with the concomitant benefits to the followers and the organisation occur, in a way that they are judged acceptable by the followers, then they confer authenticity on leaders. By playing such a key role in the creation of authenticity in leaders, followers' understandings and meanings about authenticity become very important issues that need to be understood (Owusu-Bempah, Addison & Fairweather 2011). However, followers' understandings and meanings are subjective as they depend on their own perceptions and expectations built up over time.

It has come to light that followers explain situations, issues and concepts based on the implicit theories they have about those issues, concepts and situations, which they have tested over a period of time and have built their own reality about and upon which they draw inferences when explaining events encountered (Awamleh & Gardner 1999; Cronshaw & Lord 1987; Lord & Maher 1991; Meindl, Ehrlich & Dukerich 1985; Phillip & Lord 1981). It could be implied, therefore, from the above discussion that to understand individuals' subjective meanings and interpretations given to specific situations or phenomena is to understand them from their points of view (Owusu-Bempah et al., 2011). This is, because, people give different interpretations and evaluations to given situations encountered.

Similarly, different expectations and interpretations will influence the assessment of acceptable leadership and organisational practices in different situational or cultural contexts. It is against this background that this study is arguing that if authentic leadership is not a trait but an attribute conferred on leaders based on the congruence between: followers' assessment of leaders' espoused values and behaviours, assessment of leader-follower expectations and finally, assessment of the leaders' actions and the direct benefits it produces to the organisation and the followers. There is a greater likelihood to have different meanings given to AL in different situational and/or cultural contexts due to differences in followers' subjective understanding and interpretation of situations. However, there could also be some preferred AL attributes that may be commonly preferred as portrayed by the existing AL theory. The main aim of this study was to use Q method to identify meanings and understandings of attributes of AL perceived by leaders and followers, and ascertain whether or not some of these preferred AL attributes are influenced by context.

METHODOLOGY

The Q-method is a measurement technique introduced by Stephenson (1953) as a way of measuring subjectivity. Brown (1996) explained that the Q method measures life as lived from the standpoint of the person living it without any external imposition. Therefore, using Q method according to Previte, Pini and Haslam-McKenzie (2007) will bring to light people's own perspectives, meanings and opinions on the subject under study.

The Q method consists of five key steps: Collecting relevant ideas, beliefs and opinions concerning the research object (concourse); selecting and formulation of a set of meaningful statements; selecting respondents and giving them the statements to sort out in their own way; and analysis and interpretation of data (Brown, 1980).

The concourse in this study was constructed through interviewing 70 diverse people from the 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 selected organisations, 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 organisations 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.

An initial total of 60 distinct opinion statements were collated. 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. A total of 33 statements finally formed the Q sets for New Zealand and 35 for Ghana (Appendix) due to specific culturally preferred extra two statements; these were randomly numbered and put on cards for the Q sorting process by the participants.

A variety of staff was selected, for example, in New Zealand, staff from administration, operational staff, and managers, were approached and asked to participate. A staff person who willingly agrees to participate in the study was asked to nominate another staff of his/her choice. This snowballing continued until 30 participants were selected. The sample size of thirty participants provided sufficient number to allow for many factors (e.g., four factors with five significant loadings). The instruction for sorting was that the respondents were 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. 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 comments were tape recorded and transcribed or by taking notes during the Q sort. Each Q sort lasted between 30 minutes to an hour. An example of a completely filled out Q sort is shown in Table 1 below.

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Figure 1: Example of a completely filled out Q sort

The fourth step is the analyses and interpretation of the Q sort data. The process begins by entering completely filled out Q sort matrices 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 were statistically correlated with the others. The correlation coefficient produced is based on the rank ordering of statements in a continuum so that any pair of respondents with similar orders 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, Visser & De-Jong 2008). A Principal Component Analysis on a 30 x 30 matrix with a varimax rotation was used in analyzing the data. This approach was followed because recent Q sort studies used the varimax rotation. However, both Stephenson (1953) and Brown (1980) preferred using a centroid plus hand rotation instead which in their view could produce better insights than the varimax rotation.

RESULTS

Background

Table 1 below shows that the majority (22) of the subjects in New Zealand were females with the males being eight in number. This gender imbalance reflected the fact that more females were employed in the NGO than their male counterparts at the time of the study.

The ages of the respondents were varied, eight were in their twenties, ten were in their 30s, seven in their 40s and five were more than 52 years of age. Regarding years of work experience, two had worked between two to five years, five between six and ten years, eight had worked between 11 and 15 years, two between 16 and 20 years, six between 26 and 30 years and five more than 36 years with an average of 40 years of work experience. Thirteen had high school certificate as their highest formal education qualification, some had university diplomas, eleven had bachelor's degrees and some had masters' degrees with one being a PhD candidate.

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Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the participants of the study

	New Zealand N = 30	Ghana N = 30
Age range	22 - 52	23 - 62
Sex		
Male	8	17
female	22	13
Years of work (range)		
	2 – 38	1 – 42
Education		
High School	13	0
College certificate	1	5
Tertiary diploma	2	12
Bachelors	11	7
Postgraduate cert	0	2
Masters	2	4
PhD (can)	1	0
Leader/follower classification		
Leaders	7	11
Followers	15	4
Leader & follower	8	15

Fifteen classified themselves mainly as followers, eight as leaders and followers and seven mainly as leaders. Like their New Zealand counterparts, the subjects in Ghana had varied ages, attained different levels of formal education certificates, and worked for a different number of years. Seventeen of them were males whereas 13 were females. Their ages ranged between 23 and 62 years with an average age of 32 years. The subjects have worked between one to 42 years with an average of nine years of experience. Varying levels of formal educational attainments were identified. Some had college certificates, while others were undergraduate and postgraduate students at the time of the interview. Ten had a tertiary diploma and two a higher diploma. Seven had bachelor's degrees and four masters' degree. Eleven subjects classified themselves mainly as leaders, 15 as leader and follower, while four classified themselves mainly as followers.

A detailed description of the three authentic leadership perceptions identified in each NGO for the countries, and their normalised scores for the first six positive statements is presented below.

New Zealand Factor One: the Dedicated Learner

This perspective is called the Dedicated Learner because they see themselves as committed learners. They have a quest for new knowledge and experience in their chosen field. They are, therefore, ready to learn and be inspired by leaders so that they can do more than they normally would by themselves. The meaning of authentic leadership to adherents of this perspective focuses on leaders being more or less like coaches or teachers who constantly provide new ideas, knowledge, strategies and experiences to help followers achieve their goals.

Interpretation. The respondents in this group appear essentially as learners. They are driven by a deep inherent desire to learn from people (in this case their leader) who they

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consider has more knowledge or experience than them in their chosen endeavour. With this orientation, it is not surprising that they strongly prefer leaders who will teach and inspire them to do more than they normally would, (Statement 33; *I want leaders who will teach and inspire me to do more than I normally would. +5*). Because of the desire to learn, they want their teachers (leaders) to be as transparent as possible without having any hidden motives (Statement 22: *I prefer leaders who speak transparently without any hidden motive, +4*). They think that by being transparent, leaders would probably give them everything they needed to know on the given subject without any reservation. However, they would want to question or give their opinions on some of the ideas of their leaders, they, therefore, prefer leaders who will solicit views even if it challenges their own deeply help opinions (Statement 17: *I prefer leaders who solicit views even if it challenges their deeply held opinions, +4*).

As the Dedicated Learner tries to build their confidence through learning, they want positive-thinking leaders even in hard times (Statement 30: *I want positive leaders' even hard times when things seem to be going, +3*) probably because they may learn such an attitude that will keep them going when they also find themselves in hard times. Further, they seem to prefer leaders who are committed (Statement 31: *commitment of leaders, to the work and to those working with them, is something I desire in my leader, +3*) because they think that when leaders are committed they may give them their best in everything. Further, the Dedicated Learner prefers leaders who are flexible and can find several ways to help them achieve set goals (Statement 29: *I prefer leaders who are flexible and can find several ways for us to achieve our goals, +3*). This is because leaders' flexibility provides the opportunity for getting different sides of an issue from leaders. Perhaps they prefer flexibility because they see this as making it easier for them to learn, i.e., by allowing their own views to be proven correct

On the disagreed side, the Dedicated Learner strongly disagrees with blindly following their leaders (Statement 16: *Regardless of their intentions and motivations behind their actions I will follow as long as they are my leaders, -5*), and they want to know the intentions and motivations behind their actions before they follow. They want to know whether the leaders' intentions will create an opportunity for them to learn something or not before they chose to follow. As it must be apparent, they prefer leaders who are transparent and, therefore, for them to disagree with Statement 9 (*I don't mind if my leader is sometimes not objective, especially on sensitive issues, as I think this is part of leadership, -3*), which puts leader objectivity in the negative, is a confirmation of this preference. Similarly, to disagree with Statement 23 (*I do not want leaders to be too blunt, some moderation is preferable, -4*) also confirms their preference for bluntness because they want to learn. By being blunt to the Dedicated Learner, they believe will help them to know how they are faring or where they went wrong and this might help them to either continue what they are doing or change and improve.

Further, to confirm their desire for information and their preference for bluntness and objectivity, it is not surprising that they do not find it a weakness when a leader tells them how he/she feels (Statement 26: *I find it a weakness if a leader tells me how he/she feels, -3*) since they think knowing such feelings helps them to learn. Similarly, they do not want their leaders to act in ways that please them (Statement 32: *I do not want my leaders to act in ways that pleases me, -3*) as they think that by pleasing them they might compromise learning from leaders. However, regardless of their desire to learn, they do not want to be bossed on by

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leaders (Statement 28: *I like a bossy leader, -4*). This statement probably reflects arbitrary bossiness, not leadership that results in learning.

New Zealand Factor Two: Leadership by Endorsement

The Leadership by Endorsement factor derived its name because the subjects loaded on this factor lack self confidence to initiate and sustain progress on their own unless they received endorsement in the form of encouragement and support from leaders before they feel comfortable to either proceed in what they are doing or start something new. Authentic leadership for proponents of this factor centres on an encouraging and supportive work environment where people are constantly encouraged and supported.

Interpretation. This perspective has very positive attitudes toward certain desired leader characteristics because they believe that in such company, they would learn and develop confidence to act on their own. In their mind, they need somebody's approval or support for whatever they want to do, to be sure that they are doing the right thing or are on the right path. This accounts for their strong agreement with Statement 3 (*encourage and support is the most important things I desire in my leaders, +5*; Table 4.11). As a result of their lack of confidence to act on their own unless somebody supports them, they want leaders who are confident in representing the organisation and their role in it (Statement 6: *I want leaders who are confident in representing the organisation and their role in it, +3*), so they can learn confidence in performing their roles. The Leadership by Endorsement factor has a positive image for leaders who tell the truth about everything (Statement 20: *I prefer leaders who tell the truth about everything including admitting when they don't know something, +3*) they believe that with this attitude from leaders they would be getting the affirmation they need to be motivated to press on.

Positive thinking leaders (Statement 30: *I want positive thinking leaders' even when things seem to be going wrong, +4*) appealing to the proponents of the Leadership by Endorsement factor believe that when things are going wrong, getting a positive endorsement from other leaders would be encouragement enough to keep them going until the desired results are obtained. Firm but fair leaders (Statement 12: *I prefer leaders who are firm but fair to everybody without any bias whatsoever, +4*) are also strongly preferred by the subjects of the Leadership by Endorsement factor because they believe if leaders are fair, they would get a fair assessment of their output, which they need to know to assess their own performance and may be build some confidence to move on. In addition, they prefer leaders who would open up to their ideas and appreciate what they can do (Statement 10: *I want leaders who are open to my ideas and appreciate what I can do, +3*). This would also help them to know that they have something to offer and that, as mentioned earlier they are endorsed, which they probably needed to build their confidence.

Of the statements that were rejected by the subjects this factor, bossiness (Statement 28: *I like a bossy type of leader, -5*) was strongly rejected. This is not surprising because in their mind they need encouragement and support to be able to act and do well. Therefore, they feel if they were bossed about, this desire may not be achieved. It is also not surprising that they rejected Statement 14 (*I don't mind if a leader does not act according to what they say as I believe that is part of leadership, -4*) because this contradicts their preference for telling the truth all the time without hidden motives. This, again, explains why they objected to the fact

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they find it a weakness if leaders tell them how they feel (Statement 26: *I find it a weakness if a leader tells me how he/she feels, -3*). They believe that if leaders are blunt they express their opinions and feelings without hiding anything. To them this is good and not a weakness. Further, they do not want to know the intentions and motivations behind every action their leaders take (Statement 15: *I want to know the real intentions motivations behind every action my leader takes, -3*) but they would not follow their 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, -4*). This seems a contradiction but as much as they would not want to know every intention and motivation they would not follow those who would not lead them achieve their own goals of getting endorsement to build confidence. In their minds they do not think it is good for leaders to solicit views that would challenge their deeply held ideas (Statement 17: *I prefer leaders who solicit views even if these views challenge their deeply held idea, -3*) they think such a situation might offend the leader in a way and, therefore, they might not get the needed encouragement and support from them.

New Zealand Factor Three: Leadership by Respect

The name given to this factor is due to their concern about respect given (by leaders) to them for who they are, and what, they stand for. With them every leader action taken, i.e., telling the truth, acting according to their word, and setting clear goals for followers, are all done out of respect and nothing more. Authentic leadership centres on leaders' respect for their followers regardless of who they are or what they do.

   Interpretation. For the adherents of this factor, being respected for who they are and what they stand for (Statement 11: *I prefer leaders who will respect me for who I am and what I stand for, +5*. Table 4.13) is of utmost importance. The Leadership by Respect adherents believe that when people respect you, they will be non judgemental of you or your actions, and, therefore, they have a positive image about leaders who are non judgemental about them (Statement 7: *I would like a leader who is non judgemental about me and others, +3*). They believe it is out of respect that leaders treat others fairly and without any bias (Statement 12: I *prefer leaders who are firm but fair to everyone without any bias whatsoever, +3*). Truth (Statement 20: *I prefer leaders who tell the truth about everything including admitting that they don't know something*) and integrity (Statement 13: *I want leaders who act according to what they say, +4*) are deeply cherished as they believe that it is out of respect that leaders will be truthful to their followers while acting according to what they say to them. The Leadership by Respect factor also prefers leaders who set goals for themselves and others (Statement 4: *I prefer leaders who set clear goals for themselves and others and help them to achieve it, +3*). They believe that leaders will go the extent to set goals for followers and offer help to get the goals achieved out of the respect they have for their followers.

The perspective captured by the Leadership by Respect factor conflicts with statements that put integrity (Statement 14: *I don't mind if a leader does not act according to what they say as I believe that is part of leadership, -3*) and objectivity (Statement 9: *I don't mind if my leader is sometimes not objective as I believe that is part of leadership, -3*) in the negative as this contradicts their preference for truth, fairness and non bias on the part of leaders. It is not surprising that the participants do not believe that not being objective or honest is part of leadership. In their mind, they do not follow leaders just because they are leaders but they

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want to know their intentions and motivations, therefore, they disagree with Statement 16 (*Regardless of the intentions or motivations behind their actions I will follow as long as they are my leaders, -4*). Also, they believe that personal issues should not in any way be discussed with leaders (Statement 27: *I look for leaders I can discuss my personal issues with, -3*) neither should a leader in anyway be a people pleaser (Statement 32: *I want leaders who will act in ways that pleases me, -5*).

Ghana Factor One: The Independent Enthusiast

The Independent Enthusiast perspective derived the name from their pre-occupation of a passion to do things independently by laying out the roadmaps to achieving a set goal while helping others do same. Authentic leadership for proponents of the Independent Enthusiast is, therefore, in the leaders' role performance, i.e., setting goals for themselves and others, creating independence and equal opportunities for followers to act while they (leaders) direct and empower followers towards goal achievement.

Interpretation. The Independent Enthusiast believes leaders should set clear and specific goals for themselves and their followers and help followers achieve the goals they set for them (Statement 4: *I prefer leaders who can set clear goals for themselves and others and help them to reach them, +5*). In the mind of the Independent Enthusiast achieving goals, demands positive thinking by leaders regardless of the prevailing conditions therefore they are in strong agreement with Statement 30 (*I want positive thinking leaders even in hard times when things seem to be going wrong, +4*). They believe that if leaders are God-fearing (Statement 26: *I prefer a God-fearing leader, +4*) they can be inspirational teachers (Statement 33: *I want leaders who would teach and inspire me to do more than I normally would, +3*), good listeners (Statement 19: *I want my leaders to be good listeners, +3*) and transparent (Statement 15: *I want leaders who speak transparently about everything without any hidden motives, +3*). The Independent Enthusiast, therefore, prefers goal oriented leaders who would do whatever it takes to achieve the goals set. But first, such leaders must be God-fearing, secondly, they must be inspirational teachers, good listeners and transparent in all their dealings with a positive attitude towards situations.

Regardless of the preferences and interest in leaders who achieve goals, the Independent Enthusiast does not favour arrogance (Statement 5: *I don't mind if my leaders are arrogant as long as they are knowledgeable and can help me achieve my goals, -3*) or bossiness (Statement 28: *I like bossy type of leaders, -5*) in leaders. However, they believe that objectivity (Statement 9: *I don't mind if my leaders are sometimes not objective especially about sensitive issues as I think that is part of leadership, -3*) and integrity (Statement 14: *I don't mind if my leader does not act according to what they say as I believe that is part of leadership, -3*) are essential parts of leadership no matter what the situation, therefore their strong disagreement with those statements which framed these topics negatively. As a result of their belief in creating an open and fair environment for everybody by leaders, the Independent Enthusiast would not appreciate the leader acting in ways that pleases people (Statement 32: *I want my leaders to act in ways that pleases me, -4*) as this is against the Independent Enthusiast's ideological stance.

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Ghana Factor Two: The Social Democrat

The Social Democrat perspective derived their name from the belief that decision making must be made collectively while every employee must have equal access and benefit of organisational structures and resources. Authentic leadership for adherents of this factor therefore, is centred on fairness and a firm environment where everybody had equal access to resources and equal opportunities.

Interpretation. The subjects loaded on this factor are concerned about each member of the community receiving fair treatment without being discriminated against. This attitude forms the basis for their strong agreement with Statement 12 (*I prefer leaders who are firm but fair to everybody without any bias whatsoever, +5*). Agreeing strongly with Statement 12 shows how the Social Democrat cherishes individual contributions to the overall success of the organisation if each person is given the chance by leaders. In the mind of the Social Democrat, leaders can give each community member a chance only if everybody is given a fair hearing (Statement 19: *I want my leaders to be good listeners, +3*) while their ideas are taken on board. If leaders do this, then the Social Democrat sees them as being open and consultative (Statement 2: *I prefer leaders who are open to others and would consult people before making decisions, +4*). In mind of the Social Democrat, if leaders tell the truth about everything (Statement 20: *I prefer leaders who tell the truth about everything, including admitting they don't know something, +4*) and are God-fearing (Statement 26: *I prefer a God-fearing leader*), they can set clear goals for themselves and others (Statement 4: *I prefer leaders who set clear goals for themselves and others and help them reach them, +3*).

On the disagree side, Statement 14 (*not acting according to one's word, -3*) strongly contradicts the Social Democrat's strong emphasis on honesty and, therefore, it is not surprising that they strongly object to statements that negatively frame this virtue. Also, they again indicate their appreciation of each individual's contribution because they feel that it is the combined effect of everybody's potential, ability and capability, that brings success to organisations and, therefore, everybody must receive respect (Statement 22: *I admire results oriented leaders regardless of how they treat me, -3*).

It is their belief that leaders must set clear goals for themselves and others as this shows where they are going and how to get there. Therefore, disagreeing with Statement 16 (*Regardless of the intentions and motivations behind their actions I will follow as long as they are my leaders, -3*) confirms their belief of first wanting to know where they are going through the set goals. They also indicated that they would not do anything for leaders regardless of whether or not their decisions were based on ethics (Statement18: *I would do anything for leaders who make difficult decisions that are based on high standards of ethical conduct, -4*). This also affirms their desire to first know where they are going and how to get there; all other things are secondary. Further, it is also expected that their strong emphasis on equality would definitely make them disagree with being bossed about (Statement 28: *I prefer a bossy type of leader, -5*) as they see this as preventing equality. Further, their strong trust in people's capabilities and abilities could explain why they believe a person should be able to handle their own affairs without having to discuss it with leaders, therefore, their strong disagreement with Statement 27 (*I look for leaders I can discuss my personal issues with, -3*).

Ghana Factor Three: The Independent Novice

The Independent Novice believes they need training in order to meet the normal requirements of being regarded as mature and equal participant in their chosen field. But, they want to be active participants in the training process. Authentic leadership for the adherents of this factor would be seen when leaders teach and inspire followers while allowing followers to contribute to the training, that is, by being giving.

Interpretation. The Independent Novice is a learner with a main focus of needing as much knowledge, ideas and/or information as possible from others (in this case a leader). However, they however do not want just any knowledge, but a well organised and structured knowledge with specific emphasis on helping them achieve specific targets. Having this mindset formed the basis of their strong agreement with Statement 33 (*I want leaders who will teach and inspire me to do more than I normally would, +5*) and Statement 4 (*I prefer leaders who can set clear goals for themselves and others, and help us to reach the goals, +4*). Their strong agreement with Statement 17 (*I prefer leaders who solicit views even if they challenge their deeply held ideas, +4*) also portrays them not as passive recipients of the training they desire but as active participants in the exchanges that go on during the training period. In the mind of the Independent Novice, leaders must be able to solicit followers' views even if such views contradict with the ideas leaders held during their interactions (Statement 17). This agreement also confirms their active participation when being taught and inspired.

In their mind, leaders who teach and inspire followers show commitment. Therefore, it is expected that they will agree strongly with Statement 31 (*Commitment of leaders to the work and to those working with them is something I desire in my leader, +4*). Further, because of their quest for applicable knowledge, the Independent Novice is deeply concerned about how they fare when being assessed of their performance so they prefer leaders who are firm but fair to everybody without any bias (Statement 12: *I prefer leaders who are firm but fair to everybody without any bias whatsoever, +3*), thinking that such leaders can give this kind of assessment.

More revealing about the Independent Novice is the standards they have for their coaches (leaders). They want a trainer who is bold and confident with an independent mind whereby they can make a point and stand solidly for it, i.e., being sure of what is being communicated without wavering or having second thoughts; this directly corresponds with their strong agreement with Statement 6 (*Assertiveness, charisma and strong mindedness are attributes I always desired in my leaders, +3*).

On the disagree side, the Independent Novice desires to acquire as much knowledge as possible but neither from arrogant leaders (Statement 5: *I don't mind if my leaders are arrogant as long as they are knowledgeable and can help me achieve my goals, -3*) nor by those who say one thing and do another (Statement 14:*I don't mind if a leader does not act according to what they say as I believe that is part of leadership, -3*), they also do not want to be taught by leaders who are not objective (Statement 9: *I don't mind if my leader is not objective especially about sensitive issues as I think that is part of leadership, -3*). Again, they would not follow somebody just for followings sake (Statement 16: *Regardless of the intentions and motivations behind their actions I will follow as long as they are my leaders, -4*) unless they know that they are going to get the desired training for their benefit; they

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would, therefore, like to know this before following. Also, because they want to take advantage of every opportunity to learn, they do not think it is a weakness if a leader tells them how they feel (Statement 35: *I find it a weakness if a leader tells me how he/she feels, -4*). Regardless of their determination to learn and mature, it is interesting to note that the Independent Novice does not want leaders who will please them (Statement 32: *I want leaders to act in ways that pleases me, -5*), but would prefer those who will be straight up with them.

Comparison of the Factors Across the Two Nations

Comparison was made between the six positive statements for all three factors in the two organisations. This was done by lining the statements side by side and comparing them. This comparison revealed that some factors had common preferences for specific AL attributes. Such factors that had made similar or same choices were put together. A Meta analysis in the form of a second-order factor analysis was then performed to know the extent of correlation between the factors by re-loading the six factors into the PQ software as individual units. The result is presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Factor matrix comparing the Ghanaian and the New Zealand NGOs
(Second-order factor analysis)

		A	B
	1	0.56	0.73*
Ghana Sample	2	0.89*	0.20
	3	0.26	0.93*
	1	0.84*	0.39
New Zealand	2	0.73*	0.40
Sample	3	0.67*	0.37
Significant p< .01			

Table 2 shows that all the New Zealand NGO factors and Factor 2 in Ghana loaded significantly on factor A with Factors 1 and 3 in Ghana loading significantly on factor B. It must be noted that the overall correspondence between the two set of factors in the two NGOs, is by any standard, quite substantial. It is worth noting that after this second-order factor analysis, Statement 4 (*leader goal orientedness*), Statement 10 (*leader openness*), Statement 19 (*good listening leader*), Statement 12 (*leader fairness*) and Statement 21 (*leader approachability*), Statement 29 (*leader flexibility*), Statement 30 (*positive thinking leaders*) and Statement 31 (*leader commitment*) emerged as binding these NGO factors together. However, certain preferred AL attributes; Statement 5 (*knowledgeable even if arrogant*), Statement 6 (*confidence in representing organisations and role in it*) and Statement 7 (*non judgemental about followers and others*) emerged to be specific to the New Zealand factors whereas Statement 26 (*God fearing*) and Statement 8 (*objectivity and justice*) were specifically preferred by the Ghanaian factors.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The second-order factor analysis showed that there were certain preferred AL attributes shared among the organisations in both countries. This part of the findings affirms the emic

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(Den-Hartog, House, Hanges & Ruiz-Quintanilla 1999; Dorfman, Howell, Hibino, Lee, Tate & Bautista 1997; Peterson & Hunt 1997) part of AL. This means that regardless of the differences between the Ghanaian and the New Zealand contexts, the subjects commonly preferred goal orientedness, openness, good listening, fairness, approachability and flexibility as defining authentic leadership.

Regarding leader approachability as an attribute of authenticity in leaders, the subjects suggested that when leaders are approachable, it is easier to get as much information as practicable to enhance their job. This they believed can allow for quick feedbacks and productivity. It seems that the nature of the job in these organisations may account for why the subjects believed that leader approachability is an attribute of AL. Because they mentioned that the nature of the processes, procedures and protocols their job demands are too many to keep abreast with and requires constant consultation with the leader and, therefore, if leaders are not approachable, it will be difficult for followers to give off their best. Leader approachability is not discussed directly in the AL literature. It is implied in that part of leader openness associated with authentic leaders where followers can easily approach leaders and discuss issues with them.

Good listening was the next commonly preferred AL attribute by the subjects in the two countries. When leaders' listen to followers attentively and actively show interest in whatever the followers present to them, according to the subjects they (leaders) will get to know the followers' concerns, fears and frustrations and can develop strategies to help them out. Followers will also get to know more about the leaders concerns. That is, the subjects of the study wants leaders to empathise by following and trying to understand the message being delivered by actively responding to questions, signalling interest in the conversation to encourage them, not unnecessarily interrupting or distorting the speaker, keeping eye contact and re-stating or summarising key points to show understanding (Bacon 1992; Chamot & Kupper 1989; O'Malley). One of the advantages that go with being a good listener according to Bacon (1992) and O'Malley et al., (1989) is the encouragement of dialogue and expression of appreciation on the part of the speaker and this encourages trust to develop between the parties involved.

Further, the subjects believed that if leaders are good listeners, apart from leaders being in a position to help solve a challenge that can grow big and affect followers' performance on the job, they are able to build some confidence in their followers by directly being part of the solution to whatever challenge is. They (subjects) also believed that sometimes, there may not necessarily be a problem but followers just want to have somebody to hear them out to make them feel good and the sense of having their leader being ever ready to listen probably not to contribute anything or not having the ability to help but to listen could deepen trust between leaders and followers. They mentioned that this leader-availability demonstrates that the leaders have followers' interests at heart.

The AL literature suggests that authentic leaders have the welfare and well being of their followers at heart. By implication, being concerned about followers' welfare and well being could include having the time and patience to listen and empathising and helping out where necessary but the AL literature does not mention categorically that authentic leaders are good listeners as the subjects of this study have indicated.

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Leader commitment to the work and to the people working with them is not explicitly mentioned as being part of the authentic leader construct in the AL literature. However, that part of the AL construct concerned with seeking the welfare of followers and encouraging them to imitate their (leaders') good virtues could be interpreted as commitment to the followers. The subjects believed that when leaders are committed to the work and the followers, they (leaders) would not deliberately do things to hurt followers. According to the subjects, leaders in return receive follower commitment, which is necessary for organisational development. By this finding, the claim that authentic leaders have the welfare and well being of followers at heart is validated.

Contextually Preferred AL Factors for the New Zealand Subjects

The findings further showed that certain attributes were specific to the subjects in New Zealand (Table 3). The New Zealand subjects preferred leaders who they perceived as knowledgeable and can help them achieve their goals regardless of the fact that such leaders were seen as arrogant. This finding was interesting because one of the universally agreed on attributes that was not part of authentic leaders was arrogance. However, when it came to leader knowledge, the New Zealand subjects did not appear to be bothered about arrogance. This suggested that leader knowledge was a big issue in New Zealand especially as the economy is knowledge based.

Table 3: Preferred authentic leadership attributes specific to New Zealand subjects

- Knowledgeable even if arrogant
- Confidence in representing organisations and role in it
- Non judgemental about followers and others

The New Zealand subjects expressed how they wanted authentic leaders to display knowledge. They believed that this knowledge must manifest in fulfilling their (leaders') role in the organisation and that the leader must demonstrate the ability to impart such knowledge to followers. The AL literature was silent about this aspect of AL. Authentic leaders as mentioned earlier have been argued to strive to encourage followers to be like them (Avolio & Gardner 2005; Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May & Walumbwa 2005; Harter 2002; Kernis 2003b; Luthans & Avolio 2003). This part of the AL construct was more or less pointing followers to imitate the ideals and standards of the authentic leader. But the New Zealand subjects wanted 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.

Furthermore, a leader's confidence in representing the organisation and their role in it were also mentioned by the New Zealand subjects as another preferred attribute they felt defined authenticity in leaders. Leader confidence in their role and in representing the organisation 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 (Luthans et al., 2007b; Luthans & Youssef 2007; Stajkovic & Luthans 1998). This meant for the New Zealand subjects, authenticity in leaders also included the notion of a leader who was self-motivated and can mobilize resources to achieve success in addition to passionately representing his/her organisation in any given situation. Finally, the New Zealand subjects believed that authentic leaders were non judgemental about people. That is,

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in the minds of the subjects, authentic leaders were accepting without any discrimination. Although the AL literature mentioned fairness as one of the characteristics of authentic leaders, being non judgemental and accepting of all people regardless of race, gender, religion or ethnic background has not been mentioned.

Contextual Factors for the Ghanaian Subjects

Like the New Zealand subjects, the second-order factor analysis showed that the Ghanaian subjects also had two specific preferred AL attributes (Table 4).

Table 4: Preferred authentic leadership attributes specific to Ghana subjects

- God fearing
- Objectivity and justice

The Ghanaian subjects believed that being God-fearing forms a core part of authenticity in leaders. This was 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 was a high power distance country that was classified as highly religious (Hofstede 1980). It may be that the ability to fear 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 was perceived to exhibit these benevolent characteristic associated with God. This was consistent with the human oriented leadership findings of Wanasika, Howell, Littrell and Dorfman (2010) in sub-Saharan Africa (which Ghana forms part) that leaders perceived as being supportive and considerate exhibiting compassion and benevolence for followers are regarded as great leaders in that region.

Objectivity and justice was another preferred authentic leader attribute specific to the Ghanaian subjects. The subjects felt that for a leader to be authentic, he/she must be free from his/her own biases in making decisions and must be fair and just in every situation. This has been identified in the AL literature as an attribute of authentic leaders.

This study offered several significant implications for AL theory and future research. First, the study extended AL theory relative to the meaning giving to AL and extended some attributes that the AL literature has indicated were characteristics of authentic leaders. Luthans and Avolio (2003) indicated that the attribute of hope that authentic leaders have, was a positive psychological capital, which enabled them to persevere towards the achievement of goals and when necessary redirect pathways to goals. This implied that authentic leaders set goals and persevered to achieve them but this study explicitly extended AL theory and research by adding that authentic leaders were goal oriented and set clear goals for themselves and their followers and also helped followers directly to achieve the set goals. Similarly, two other attributes of inspirational teaching and good listening which were not originally mentioned as being characteristics of authentic leaders, have been found in this study to be an important part of the AL construct. Other extensions have been made; for example, proponents of AL theory (Avolio & Gardner 2005; Gardner et al., 2005; Harter 2002; Kernis 2003b; Luthans & Avolio 2003), have argued that authentic leaders were fair in

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all their dealings with followers and in their decision making. However, this study found that subjects not only believed that fairness was a characteristic of authentic leaders but also firmness. Further, authentic leaders were 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 extended the encouragement part of the AL theory to include direct leader support for follower activities.

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APPENDIX

The final Q sets used for the Q sorts for the study (country differences highlighted)

New Zealand	Ghana
I like leaders who are confident about who they are and can help me to be the same	I like confident leaders who can make their point and stand by it regardless of what others think
I want leaders who are confident in representing the organisation and their role in it	I want leaders who are confident in representing the organisation and their role in it
I want leaders who can share their strengths and weakness with us and let us know how they feel	I prefer leaders who are open to other people's ideas and will consult people before making a decision
Encouragement and support in everything are things I expect from leaders	Encouragement and support in everything are things I expect from leaders
I prefer leaders who can set clear goals for themselves and others and guide them to reach the set goals	I prefer leaders who can set clear goals for themselves and others and guide them to reach the set goals
I don't mind if my leaders are arrogant as long as they are knowledgeable and can help me achieve my goals	I don't mind if my leaders are arrogant as long as they are knowledgeable and can help me achieve my goals
I want leaders who are confident in representing the organisation and their role in it	Assertiveness, charisma and strong mindedness are attributes I always desired in my leaders
I would like a leader who is non judgmental about me and others	I would like a leader who is non judgmental about me and others
Objectivity is one of the most important things I want to see in my leaders	Objectivity *and justice* are two of the most important things I want to see in my leaders
I don't mind if my leader is sometimes not objective, especially about sensitive issues as I think this is part of leadership	I don't mind if my leader is sometimes not objective, especially about sensitive issues as I think this is part of leadership
I don't mind if my leader does not act according to what they say as I believe that is part of leadership	I don't mind if my leader does not act according to what they say as I believe that is part of leadership
I want leaders who are open to my ideas and appreciate what I can do	I want leaders who are open to my ideas and appreciate what I can do
I prefer leaders who will respect me for who I am and what I stand for, regardless of whether they agree or not	I prefer leaders who will respect me for who I am and what I stand for, regardless of whether they agree or not
I prefer leaders who are firm but fair to everybody without any bias whatsoever	I prefer leaders who are firm but fair to everybody without any bias whatsoever
I want leaders who act according to what they say	I want leaders who act according to what they say
I don't mind if a leader does not act according to they say as I believe that is part of leadership	I don't mind if a leader does not act according to they say as I believe that is part of leadership
I prefer leaders who speak transparently without any hidden motives about anything regardless of how *I might feel*	I want leaders who speak transparently about everything without any hidden motives regardless of how *it feels*
Regardless of the intentions or motivations behind their actions I will follow as long as they are my leaders	Regardless of the intentions or motivations behind their actions I will follow as long as they are my leaders
I prefer leaders who solicit views even if they challenge their deeply held ideas	I prefer leaders who solicit views even if they challenge their deeply held ideas
I would do anything for leaders who make difficult decisions that are based on high standards of ethical conduct	I would do anything for leaders who make difficult decisions that are based on high standards of ethical conduct
I want my leaders to be good listeners	I want my leaders to be good listeners
I prefer leaders who tell the truth about everything, including admitting *when they don't know something*	I prefer leaders who tell the truth about everything, including admitting when *they have limited knowledge about something*
I look for a leader, who I can easily approach and discuss issues with	I look for a leader, who I can easily approach and discuss issues with
I want to know the real intentions or motivations behind every action my leader takes	I want to know the real intentions or motivations behind every action my leader takes

I do not want leaders who will be too blunt, some moderation is preferable	I do not want leaders who will be too blunt, some moderation is preferable
I keep my relationship with my leader at a purely professional level, nothing more	I keep my relationship with my leader at a purely professional level, nothing more
I have a problem with leaders who give out too much information to followers	I admire results oriented leaders regardless of how he/she treats me
I find it a weakness if a leader tell me how he/she feels	I find it a weakness if a leader tell me how he/she feels
I look for leaders I can discuss my personal issues	I look for leaders I can discuss my personal issues
I like a bossy type of leader	I like a bossy type of leader
I prefer leaders who are flexible and can find several ways for us to achieve our goal	I prefer leaders who are flexible and can find several ways *and resources* for us to achieve our goal
I want positive thinking leaders even in hard times when things seem to be going wrong	I want positive thinking leaders even in hard times when things seem to be going wrong
Commitment of leaders to the work and to those working with them is something I desire in my leader	Commitment of leaders to the work and to those working with them is something I desire in my leader
I want leaders who will teach and inspire me to do more than I normally would	I want my leader to act in ways that pleases me
	I prefer a God-fearing leader
	I want leaders who would be like a parent to me at the work place

Notes:
1. The italics are used to show the differences existing between the statements used in both countries
2. An additional two statements were added to the Ghana statements to compensate for the cultural differences and what was very important to the respondents during the concourse building