

Sustainability Development in Education: Empirical Evidence and Discussion about Authentic Leadership, Religiosity and Commitment

Ansar Abbas^a, Muhammad Saud^b, Indrianawati Usman^c and Dian Ekowati^{d*}, ^{a,c,d}Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Airlangga, Indonesia, ^bFaculty of Social and Political Science, Universitas Airlangga, Indonesia, Email: ^{d*}d.ekowati@feb.unair.ac.id

This study is presented to enhance the understanding of leadership development in an educational setting for sustainable development. Authentic leadership has core physiognomies having transparency, balanced-processing, accountability, and person's morality and ethics works in a self-centred way. These characteristics can be adopted through strategic planning for sustainable development in educational settings to improve commitment among employees. The current study highlighted the significance of Authentic Leadership over-commitment in university employees of Pakistan. The results revealed that authentic leadership is the predictor of organisational commitment in university employees in Pakistan and the religiosity moderates authentic leadership and organisational commitment.

Key words: *Authentic leadership, Commitment, Religiosity, Sustainable development.*

Introduction

Sustainable development needs to promote people with positive insight into organisational behaviour (Nasih *et al.*, 2019). Practising authentic leadership climate refers to positive organisational development. Employees who possess self-awareness, ethics, and a higher level of morality, transparency and balanced processing of information can consider as part of this leadership type (Walumbwa *et al.*, 2008). Leaders who adopt this style have self-awareness as well as awareness about others. The self-awareness practice gives chances to

understand the strengths and weaknesses by themselves. Therefore, such characteristics allow them to exhibit high moral standards to make decisions not only for themselves but also mindful for others through keeping facts and communication openly in the spirit of a true relationship within organisations (Gardner, *et al.*, 2011; Kernis, 2003). Researchers find that authentic leaders' transparency and self-awareness influence and attract their followers. Leaders' positive behaviour towards self-awareness instils employee's positive behaviour as the core value of the organisation (Howell and Shamir, 2005). Authentic leadership, affective commitment, and job resourcefulness are tested (Semedo, Coelho, and Ribeiro, 2016) and invited for more research because authentic leadership is a style of transformational leadership and positively related to commitment and increase positive behaviour (Bakari, 2018). Pakistani society religiously implicates 97% of its population as Muslims, and people try to adopt Islamic practices. The study in important policymaking and decision-making considers the influence of religion over beliefs and practices of individuals towards social behaviour (Aman, *et al.*, 2019). Consumption level patterns have a different impact on individual beliefs in different religious affiliations. In Islam, the adherence level of Muslims required beliefs and commitment (Mohd *et al.*, 2019) in normal life. Practising religion in Islamic society is not only limited to personal life only. Islamic principles provide moral and ethical guidance for applying the same commitment and honesty in all spheres of life, including organisational life. The current study aims to add knowledge in the existing literature about authentic leadership role as a predictor of enhancing commitment in the educational sector of Pakistan. The contribution of this paper is to provide a new trend toward education and leadership settings in organisational development.

Literature Review

Studies about administrative leadership revealed a significant literature development (Van Wart, 2013). Learning through change comes in everyone's life happen with the time and by the experience. These learnings become an advantage for sustainable leadership and tool for empowerment to aid in the leadership learning process, change and practice (Diamond, 2012). The authentic leadership as a construct is a positive influence of a person which comes through a process of positive psychology for organisational developments. It could result in increased self-awareness and positive self-regulated behaviour of employees as leaders, which help to foster positive influence among colleagues (Luthans Avolio, 2003). Authentic leadership constructs carried important value-based personal leadership which is evident in literature review and confirmed that it also positively affected to the organisational outcome (Walumbwa *et al.*, 2008; Bird *et al.*, 2012; Leroy, Palanski, & Simons, 2012). Development of leadership program for effective development and empowerment of teachers in educational systems required considerable investments (Hairon & Dimmock, 2012; Starratt, 2007). These investments can be made through effective training programs. Authentic leadership is defined as the practice of ethics and moral leadership in schools



(Begley & Stefkovich, 2007). Leaders' positive behaviour towards self-awareness instils employee's positive behaviour, which becomes the core value of the organisation (Howell & Shamir, 2005). Balanced processing, transparency, moral and ethics, and self-awareness are four key components that are preliminary efforts for implementing of authentic leadership through moral practice (Walumbwa et al., 2008; Gardner et al., 2005; Bird et al., 2009). Authentic leadership brings long-term results and meaning through leadership when they overcome difficult and conflicting situations for sustainability. It is a symbol of professional effectiveness, which is also sound ethical and have a conscious reflection in educational administrating practice. Authentic leadership style works as a device in the study of academic literature which enables distributed leadership into different components according to different situations (Van Wart, 2011). Lack of self-awareness leads to lack of confidence, so knowledge acquisition provides a chance to deal with this difficulty in educational management (Amin & Khan, 2009). Thus employees who bestow ethical leadership behaviours should have the training to provide a positive influence (Van Wart, 2011; Politis, 2013).

The growth of awareness and knowledge aims at better decision making required in the field of academic research (Orrill & Cohen, 2016), while research about the authenticity of a person has application in education found traits as honesty and sincerity of a person required in educationists as a role model (Weimer, 2011). Strong self-efficacy also helps teachers practise this profession and develop bond so valuable resource exhibits better performance in return (Hassan and Hatmaker, 2014). For leadership development in educational institutes, we require teachers to be ethical, trustworthy, and transparent in practice (Kiersch and Peters 2017; Duignan, 2004). When individuals who demonstrate self-awareness in organisations work fluently, people understand them and follow without misunderstanding (Gardner, Avolio, and Walumbwa, 2005). Honesty, self-reflection and self-regulation is the capacity required for sustainability. A strong vision of culture needs to create among a workgroup, and transparency provides higher ethical grounds for individuals who practice ethical standards. This practice enables them to engage and inspire employees in the workplace. However, for understanding transparency, one must understand the attribution process first (Wegner, Coulton, and Wenzlaff, 1985). Transparency brings higher tolerance and personal ethics in a person. It is not only a leadership trait, but all individuals within the organisation can adopt easily. Studies about the positive influence of leaders in organisations remained consistent in the literature (Ambrose, Arnaud and Schminke, 2008; Sims and Kroeck, 1994; Sims and Keon, 1997); authentic leadership is a form of transformational leadership which practised widely in school leaders (Yu, Leithwood, & Jantzi, 2002). In educational settings, teachers hold formal leadership positions. Many researchers argued considerable changes in teacher's commitment come through transformational leadership influence (Liu & Hallinger, 2018). Transformational leaders tend to set direction by building a shared vision, and consensus about priorities over performance and achieving objectives. They are also inclined towards

the development of others by providing support to individuals and offer intellectual stimulations (Utama and Mirhard, 2016), which is more likely a redesigning model to build a collaborative culture. Implementation of this perception leads the transformation towards a specific plan achieving personal reflection through improved self-knowledge, which is the step towards authentic leadership (Begley, 2006). Several important changes can lead and support structure to aid in leadership evolving works, providing learning opportunities, creating a clear and open path to engage them in teaching leadership (Knapp, 2017). The construction of literature developed from the hypothesis that authentic leadership is basically a strong phenomenon. The following hypothesis is developed:

H₀: There is an association between authentic leadership qualities and organisation commitment.

H_A: There is no association between authentic leadership and organisational commitment

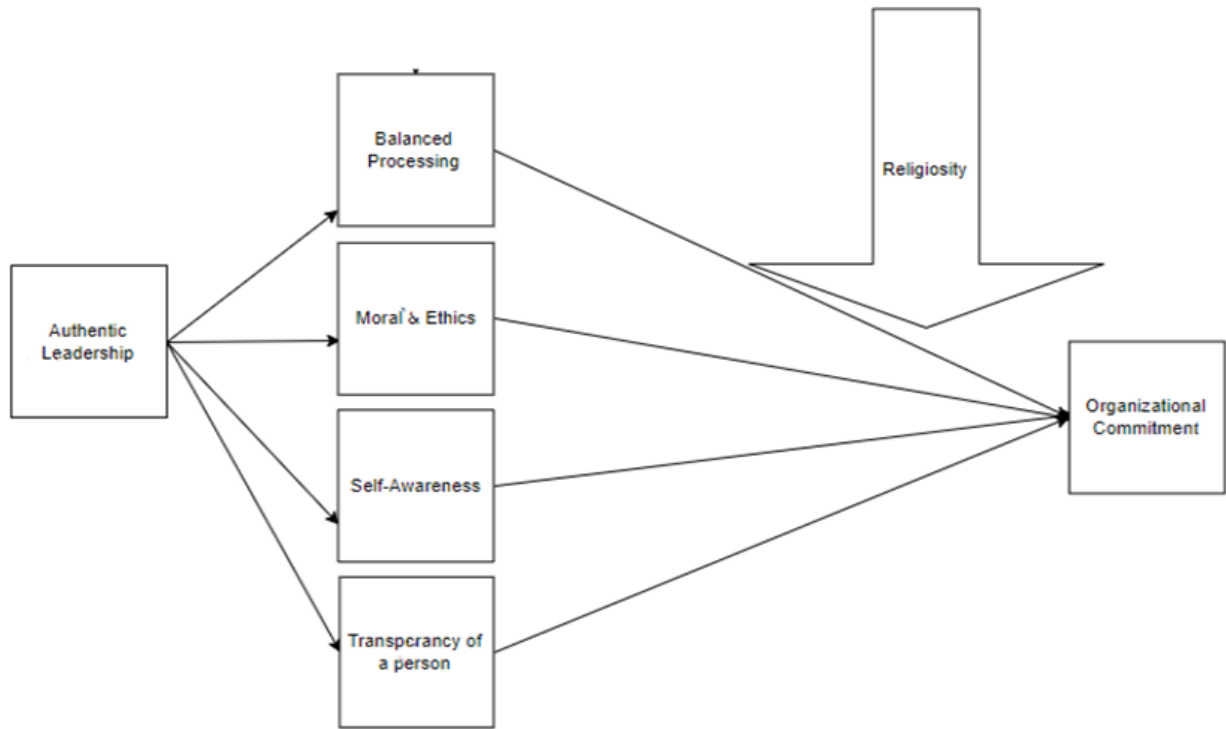
H₀: Religiosity moderates authentic leadership and organisational commitment positively

H_A: Religiosity moderates authentic leadership and organisational commitment negatively.

Methods and Design of Research

The current section discusses the data collection, data analysis, and procedural methods of the study. Use of the whole population in research would be unmatched (Etikan, Sulaiman & Rukayya, 2016). However, we determine the sample size for a correct estimate which is required to complete a research investigation. The targeted population known in the current study are the employee of universities, probability sampling adopted due to time constraints and non-availability of a complete list of the population (Singh and Masuku, 2014). The study opted for the quantitative research method. A total number of 380 closed-ended questionnaires was floated among the employees of local Universities in Pakistan. Avolio et al., (2004) proposed a framework positing several positive results of authentic leadership over employees' attitude, behaviours and commitment of the followers. The data-set of this study is also published in Mendeley for the ease of readers. Hence, to determine the variables, sustainable development commitment is required, which is linked to the leader's integrity (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). To understand commitment which reflects followers' intrinsic work motivation (Meyer, Becker & Vandenberghe, 2004), we pursue work-related goals study because it drives employee motivation for positive workplace environment (Gagné & Deci, 2005). Countries like Pakistan have religion as an important part of social reality, and its implications are vital in shaping societies, organisational setting, and leadership behaviours (Gümüşay, 2018). Furthermore, a conceptual framework is developed for a brief explanation of the proposed study:

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework



Results and discussions

Table 1: Demographic results of the respondents

| | Mean | ST | % |
|----------------|----------------|------------|-------------|
| Age | 40.3096 | 9.06957 | |
| Experience | 9.205882 | 3.93978 | |
| | Description | N | |
| Marital Status | Single | 118 | 39.34 |
| | Married | 182 | 60.66 |
| Education | Bachelors | 20 | 6.7 |
| | Masters | 98 | 32.66 |
| | MS/MPhil | 182 | 60.64 |
| Sector | Public Sector | 113 | 37.67 |
| | Private Sector | 187 | 62.33 |
| Gender | Male | 201 | 70 |
| | Female | 99 | 30 |
| | Total | 300 | 100% |

Table 1 describes the overall demographic statistics. Out of a total of 300 respondents, the majority (70%) are male and less than half (30%) are female in this research. As per the

previous studies, male are participated in discussions and can participate in the organisational structure. The table further discusses the marital status of the respondents. The majority (60.6%) of the respondents are married. It is also found that Education is a preliminary indicator for authentic leadership qualities. A majority of the respondents have Masters of M.Phil. (postgraduate) which accounts for 60.64%, and 62% of respondents are from private sector universities. Mean of age is 40, with an average of 9.2 years' experience. The results show that the majority of the respondents come from private sector universities.

Table 2: Regression Model

| R | R ² | B | t | Sig. |
|--|----------------|-------|--------|-------|
| .206 ^a | 0.42 | 3.167 | 14.403 | 0.000 |
| | | 0.206 | 3.77 | 0.000 |
| a. Predictors: (Constant), Authentic Leadership | | | | |
| a. Dependent Variable: organizational commitment | | | | |

Table 2 describes the regression model of the variables authentic leadership and organisational commitment, with $r=.206$ and $p=.000$ indicating a statistically significant relationship between organisational commitment and authentic leadership.

Table 3: ANOVA of Proposed Model

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|--|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|------|
| Regression | 18.992 | 1 | 18.992 | 14.237 | .000 |
| Residual | 428.213 | 298 | 1.334 | | |
| Total | 447.205 | 298 | | | |
| a. Dependent Variable: organisational commitment | | | | | |
| b. Predictors: (Constant), Authentic Leadership | | | | | |

Table 3 shows overall model fitness of the dependent variable organisational commitment and the independent variable authentic leadership which is significant. It is found that the coefficient is highly significant (.000). Thus, the dependent variable (organisational commitment) and the independent variable (authentic leadership) are correlated with each other.

Table 4: Table for Regression for Moderation

| R | R ² | Std. Error | B | T | Sig. |
|--|----------------|------------|-------|------|-------|
| .332 ^a | 0.011 | 1.1145 | 0.272 | 4.95 | 0.000 |
| a. Predictors: (Constant), AL x Religiosity | | | | | |
| b. Dependent Variable: Organizational commitment | | | | | |

Table 4 indicates the moderation effects of religiosity over authentic leadership, which is positively significant. Value of $r=.332$ is higher compared with the previous model in Table 2 ($r = .206$), and the significant level remains the same with $p=0.000$. Table 4 shows that there is a highly significant relationship between religiosity and organisational commitment. It is obvious from the above results that religiosity is the need for organisational development and organisational commitment.

Table 5: Different Dimensions of Authentic Leadership

| Without Moderation | | | | | With Moderation | | | | |
|---|----------------|--------|--------|--------------|---------------------|----------------|--------|--------|--------------|
| R | R ² | Beta | t | Sig | R | R ² | Beta | t | Sig |
| .313 ^a | 0.098 | | 12.644 | 0.000 | .395 ^a | 0.156 | | 7.847 | 0.000 |
| Transparency | | -0.136 | -0.487 | 0.626 | Transparency | | -0.251 | -0.925 | 0.355 |
| Moral Ethics | | 0.067 | 0.773 | 0.440 | Moral Ethics | | -0.014 | -0.158 | 0.874 |
| Balanced Processing | | 0.573 | 3.333 | 0.001 | Balanced Processing | | 0.493 | 2.943 | 0.003 |
| Self-awareness | | -0.270 | -0.684 | 0.495 | Self-awareness | | -0.086 | -0.225 | 0.822 |
| | | | | | Religiosity | | 0.256 | 4.662 | 0.000 |
| a. Dependent Variable: organizational commitment | | | | | | | | | |
| b. Predictors: (Constant), Authentic Leadership (Sub Scale) and Religiosity | | | | | | | | | |

Table 5 describes (sub-scale) separate relationships between authentic leadership dimensions and the dependant variable organisational commitment. R and R² shows a significant change ($r= .206$ to $r= .313$) without moderation (table 2) and ($r=.332$ to $r=.395$) with moderation (table 3) which indicates that religiosity moderates these relationships positively and significantly. Hence, the study found that there is a regression needed to work on leadership qualities. The practical implication of the study reveals that this study will have both theoretical as well as practical implications. It will be beneficial for organisations to play a practical role in the development of leadership qualities.

Conclusion

Results of the current study show the role of authentic leadership over employee commitment as reported previously (Begley and Stefkovich, 2007) and coincide that religion remains the focus of life in morality and ethics of a person, (Forrest-Bank & Dupper, 2016; Galanou & Farrag, 2015). Authentic leadership emphasis has a close link with Islamic leadership which plays a vital role in the development and transformation of a person (George, 2003; Cottrill, Lopez & Hoffman, 2014). Positive leadership behaviour commitment in a diverse culture is required for sustainable development in developing organisations (Avolio & Walumbwa, 2006; Brown & Treviño, 2006; Reicher, Haslam & Hopkins 2005).

REFERENCES

- Aman, J. Abbas, J. Nurunnabi, M. and Bano, S. (2019). The relationship of religiosity and marital satisfaction: The role of religious commitment and practices on marital satisfaction among Pakistani respondents. *Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, Vol. 9, No. 3, pp. 30.
- Ambrose, M. L. Arnaud, A. and Schminke, M. (2008). Individual moral development and ethical climate: The influence of person–organisation fit on job attitudes. *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 77, No. 3, pp. 323-333.
- Amin, H. U. and Khan, A. R. (2009). Acquiring knowledge for evaluation of teachers performance in higher education using a questionnaire *ArXiv abs/0906.4663*.
- Avolio, B. J. and Walumbwa, F. O. (2006). Authentic leadership: Moving HR leaders to a higher level. *Research In Personnel And Human Resources Management* (Emerald Group Publishing Limited) chapter 6, pp. 273-304.
- Avolio, B. J. Gardner, W. L. Walumbwa, F. O. Luthans, F. and May, D. R. (2004). Unlocking the mask: A look at the process by which authentic leaders impact follower attitudes and behaviours. *The Leadership Quarterly*, Vol. 15, No. 6, pp. 801-23.
- Avolio, B. J. and Gardner, W. L. (2005). Authentic leadership development: Getting to the root of positive forms of leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly*, Vol. 16, No. 3, pp. 315-38.
- Bakari, H. Hunjra, A. I. Jaros, S. and Khoso, I. (2018). Moderating role of cynicism about organisational change between authentic leadership and commitment to change in Pakistani public sector hospitals. *Leadership in Health Services*.
- Begley, P. T. and Stefkovich, J. (2007). Integrating values and ethics into post secondary teaching for leadership development: Principles, concepts, and strategies. *Journal of Educational Administration*, Vol. 45, No. 4, pp. 398-412.
- Begley, P. T. (2006). Self-knowledge, capacity and sensitivity: Prerequisites to authentic leadership by school principals. *Journal of Educational Administration*, Vol. 44, No. 6, pp. 570-89.
- Bird, J. J. Wang, C. Watson, J. and Murray, L. (2012). Teacher and principal perceptions of authentic leadership: Implications for trust, engagement, and intention to return. *Journal of School Leadership*, Vol. 22, No. 3, pp. 425-61.



- Bird, J. J. Wang, C. Watson, J. R. and Murray, L. (2009). Relationships among principal authentic leadership and teacher trust and engagement levels. *Journal of School Leadership, Vol. 19, No. 2*, pp. 153-71.
- Brown, M. E. and Treviño, L. K. (2006). Ethical leadership: A review and future directions. *The Leadership Quarterly, Vol. 17, No. 6*, pp. 595-616.
- Cottrill, K, Lopez, P. D. and Hoffman, C. C. (2014). How authentic leadership and inclusion benefit organisations. *Equality Diversity Inclusion: An International Journal, Vol. 33, No. 3*, pp. 275-92.
- Diamond, H. (2012). Empowering Sustainability Leaders: Developing an authentic leadership identity. *Leadership for Sustainability Education Comprehensive Papers 4*.
- Duignan, P. (2004). Authentic leadership for authentic learning. *ACEL Scholar Traveling Scholar 1-6*
- Etikan, I. M. Sulaiman, A. A. and Rukayya, S. (2016). Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical Applied Statistics, Vol. 5, No. 1*, pp. 1-4.
- Forrest-Bank, S. S. and Dupper, D. R. (2016). A qualitative study of coping with religious minority status in public schools. *Children Youth Services Review, Vol. 61*, pp. 261-70.
- Gagné, M. and Deci, E. L. (2005). Self-determination theory and work motivation. *Journal of Organisational behavior, Vol. 26, No. 4*, pp. 331-62.
- Galanou, A. and Farrag, D. A. (2015). Towards the distinctive Islamic mode of leadership in business. *Journal of Management Development, Vol. 34, No. 8*, pp. 882-900.
- Gardner, W. L. Cogliser, C. C. Davis, K. M. and Dickens, M. P. (2011). Authentic leadership: A review of the literature and research agenda. *The leadership quarterly, Vol. 22, No. 6*, pp. 1120-45.
- Gardner, W. L. Avolio, B. J. Luthans, F. May, D. R. and Walumbwa, F. (2005). Can you see the real me?" A self-based model of authentic leader and follower development. *The Leadership Quarterly, Vol. 16, No. 3*, pp. 343-372.
- Gardner, W. L. Avolio, B. J. Walumbwa, F. O. (2005). Authentic leadership development: Emergent trends and future directions. *Authentic Leadership Theory Practice: Origins, Effects Development, pp. 387-406*.



- George, B. (2003). *Authentic leadership: Rediscovering the secrets to creating lasting value*. John Wiley and Sons.
- Gümüşay, A. A. (2018). Embracing religions in moral theories of leadership. *Academy of Management Perspectives*.
- Hairon, S. and Dimmock, C. (2012). Singapore schools and professional learning communities: Teacher professional development and school leadership in an Asian hierarchical system. *Educational Review, Vol. 64*, No. 4, pp. 405-24.
- Hassan, S. and Hatmaker, D. M. (2014). Leadership and performance of public employees: Effects of the quality and characteristics of manager-employee relationships. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory, Vol. 25*, No. 4, pp. 1127-55.
- Howell, J. M. and Shamir, B. (2005). The role of followers in the charismatic leadership process: Relationships and their consequences. *Academy of Management Review, Vol. 30*, No. 1, pp. 96-112.
- Kernis, M. H. (2003). Toward a conceptualisation of optimal self-esteem. *Psychological Inquiry, Vol. 14*, No. 1, pp. 1-26.
- Kiersch, C. and Peters, J. (2017). Leadership from the inside Out: Student leadership development within authentic leadership and servant leadership frameworks. *Journal of Leadership Education, Vol. 16*, No. 1.
- Knapp, M. C. (2017). An autoethnography of a (reluctant) teacher leader. *The Journal of Mathematical Behavior, Vol. 46*, pp. 251-266.
- Leroy, H. Palanski, M. E. and Simons, T. (2012). Authentic leadership and behavioural integrity as drivers of follower commitment and performance. *Journal of Business Ethics, Vol. 107*, No. 3, pp. 255-64.
- Liu, S. and Hallinger, P. (2018). Principal instructional leadership, teacher self-efficacy, and teacher professional learning in China: Testing a mediated-effects model. *Educational Administration Quarterly, Vol. 54*, No. 4, pp. 501-28.
- Luthans, F. and Avolio, B. J. (2003). Authentic leadership development. *Positive organisational scholarship, Vol. 241*, No. 258.
- Meyer, J. P. Becker, T. E. and Vandenberghe, C. (2004). Employee commitment and motivation: a conceptual analysis and integrative model. *Journal of Applied Psychology, Vol. 89*, No. 6, pp. 991.



- Mohd, D. Nuradli, R. S. Yousafzai, S. and Abdul, H. H. (2019). Religiosity scale development. *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 227-248.
- Nasih, M. Harymawan, I. Paramitasari, Y. I. and Handayani, A. (2019). Carbon emissions, firm size, and corporate governance structure: Evidence from the mining and agricultural industries in Indonesia. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, Vol. 11, No. 9, pp. 2483.
- Orrill, H. and Cohen, A. S. (2016). Why defining the construct matters: An examination of teacher knowledge using different lenses on one assessment. *The Mathematics Enthusiast*, Vol. 13, No. 1, pp. 93-110.
- Politis, J. (2013). The relationship between team performance, authentic and servant leadership. *Proceedings of the European Conference on Management, Leadership and Governance*, pp. 237-244.
- Reicher, S. Haslam, S. A. and Hopkins, N. (2005). Social identity and the dynamics of leadership: Leaders and followers as collaborative agents in the transformation of social reality. *The Leadership Quarterly*, Vol. 16, No. 4, pp. 547-568.
- Semedo, A. S. D. Coelho, A. F. M. and Ribeiro, N. M. P. (2016). Effects of authentic leadership, affective commitment and job resourcefulness on employees' creativity and individual performance. *Leadership Organization Development Journal*, Vol. 37, No. 8, pp. 1038-55.
- Sims, R. L. and Kroeck, K. G. (1994). The influence of ethical fit on employee satisfaction, commitment and turnover. *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 13, No. 12, pp. 939-947.
- Sims, R. L. and Keon, T. L. (1997). Ethical work climate as a factor in the development of person-organisation fit. *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 16, No. 11, pp. 1095-1105.
- Singh, A. S. and Masuku, M. B. (2014). Sampling techniques and determination of sample size in applied statistics research: An overview. *International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management*, Vol. 2, No. 11, pp. 1-22.
- Starratt, R. J. (2007). Leading a community of learners: Learning to be moral by engaging the morality of learning. *Educational Management Administration Leadership*, Vol. 35, No. 2, pp. 165-183.
- Utama, A. A. G. S. and Mirhard, R. R. (2016). The influence of sustainability report disclosure as moderating variable towards the impact of intellectual capital on company's performance. *International Journal of Economics and Financial Issues* Vol. 6, No.3, pp. 1262-1269.



- Van, W. M. (2011). Changing dynamics of administrative leadership. *The State of Public Administration: Issue, Challenges and Opportunities* Menzel D C and White J D (New York: Routledge) chapter 6, pp 89-107.
- Van, W. M (2013). Administrative leadership theory: A reassessment after 10 years. *Public Administration, Vol. 91, No. 3*, pp. 521-543.
- Walumbwa, F. O. Avolio, B. J. Gardner, W. Wernsing, T. S. and Peterson, S. J. (2008). Authentic leadership: Development and validation of a theory-based measure. *Journal of Management Development, Vol. 34, No. 1*, pp. 89-126.
- Wegner, D. M, Coulton, G. F. and Wenzlaff, R. (1985). The transparency of denial: Briefing in the debriefing paradigm. *Journal of Personality Social Psychology, Vol. 49, No. 2*, pp. 338
- Weimer, M. (2011). What does your syllabus say about you and your course. *Faculty Focus* pp. 1-3.
- Yu, H. Leithwood, K. and Jantzi, D. (2002). The effects of transformational leadership on teachers' commitment to change in Hong Kong. *Journal of educational administration Vol. 40, No. 4*, pp. 368-89.