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Exploring Authentic Leadership through Leadership Journey of Gandhi

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Abstract

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Keywords

authentic leadership, self-awareness, self-evaluation, self-concept

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Exploring Authentic Leadership through Leadership Journey of Gandhi

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Leadership research will benefit from bringing in the subjective realities of becoming a leader by considering the leadership journey. Generating an understanding of how leaders turn episodes in time into meaningful subjective narratives helps shed light on the meaning-making process. We seek in this inquiry to understand self-awareness with a narrative meaning-making process. In this study, we adopt a narrative research approach for analyzing the autobiography of Mahatma Gandhi, who is widely acknowledged as an authentic leader. The study explores individual experiences of becoming a leader and factors leading to the manifestation of authentic leadership behaviour as well as followers' outcomes. The study will also contribute towards the understanding of triggering events experienced by the leader at different points in life which have led to self-awareness.

Keywords: authentic leadership, self-awareness, self-evaluation, self-concept

“I had long since taught myself to follow the inner voice. I am delighted in submitting to it. To act against it would be difficult and painful to me...” (Gandhi, 2008)

Exploring Authentic Leadership and Self-Awareness Trigger

Across the last decade, increasing questions are raised about the integrity and authenticity of the leaders (Day, 2000; Gardner et al., 2011; Leroy, Palanski, & Simon, 2013; Northouse, 2019;). Integrity has been considered as an important axiomatic characteristic of effective leadership (Palanski & Yammarino, 2009). Luthans and Avolio (2003) defined the construct of authentic leadership as “a process that draws from both positive psychological capacities and a highly developed organisational context, which results in both greater self-awareness and self-regulated positive behaviours on the part of leaders and associates, fostering positive self-development” (p. 243). Previous studies indicate authentic leadership has been examined extensively with various outcomes, such as relative identification and positive emotions (Malik & Khan, 2020), job satisfaction (Giallonardo et al., 2010; Jensen & Luthans, 2006; Walumbwa et al., 2008), work happiness (Jensen & Luthans, 2006), personal identification (Wong et al., 2010), trust (Wang & Hsieh, 2013), job performance (Giallonardo et al., 2010; Walumbwa et al., 2008), organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB; Malik & Dhar, 2017), well-being (Rahimnia & Sharifirad, 2015). However, at the outset, authentic leadership studies indicate that majorly factors exploring followers' outcomes are focused more. Researchers like Gardner et al. (2011) and Luthans and Avolio (2003) emphasises the need for studies to explore factors leading to the demonstration of authentic leadership behaviour. Hence, we suggest exploring predictors of authentic leadership behaviour.

As per Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, and Walumbwa, (2005), one of the critical factors contributing to the development of authentic leadership is “the self-awareness or personal insight of the leader” (p. 5). Luthans and Avolio (2003) as well as Adams (2020) have also conveyed that the self-awareness of a leader leads to being true to self. Extending further trigger events are considered as the key catalysts, which serve for the heightened levels of the leaders’ self-awareness (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2008; Gardner et al., 2005). In this context, Wicklund (1979) and Atwater and Yammarino (1992) elaborated self-awareness as one’s own ability to self-observe and evaluate one’s behaviour to the set norms. Further, personal history and various trigger events can have an impact on the leader (Gardner et al., 2005). Trigger events have been described as “events that constitute dramatic and sometimes subtle changes in the individual’s circumstances that facilitate personal growth and development” (Gardner et al., 2005, p. 5). However, studies exploring the role of triggers and authentic leadership has received scant attention from the researchers.

Additionally, extant literature shows limited efforts to explore authentic leadership from the interpretive approach (Shamir & Eilam, 2005). In this context, Sparrowe (2005) argued that the self-regulatory process as described and analysed using the positivist approach creates limited understanding since it does not account for the dynamic nature of the self. Some of the notable studies are by Shrivastava (2018) and Shannon, Buford, Winston, and Wood, (2020) where the studies have explored trigger events and authentic leadership development through critical incident technique. Likewise, Loci (2016) described various factors that can contribute to further fostering the unique vision of authentic leaders. Hence, in the present study, we propose a narrative research approach to explore factors leading to the manifestation of authentic leadership and followers’ outcome and triggers experienced by the leader. Findings from the study can further help to conceptually build an authentic leadership framework. Likewise, Shamir and Eilam (2005) also describe using the narrative approach, authentic leadership development phenomena can be further expanded by exploring the “self-relevant meanings” the leader attaches to his or her life.

In the present study, through a narrative research approach, first, we explore factors leading to the manifestation of authentic leadership behaviour. Second, we explore authentic leadership followers’ outcomes. Third, we explore, self-awareness triggers experienced by the authentic leader. We considered the autobiography of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi who is widely recognized as a national leader for his honest and well-determined effort towards nation-building. A summary of his development from childhood to adulthood is considered, which provides the biographical background for exploring the authentic leadership development process. A leader’s journey is rich with life experiences (Shamir & Eilam, 2005). Hence, it is essential to understand what meaning he attaches to various phases in his lifecycle (Ilies et al., 2005; McAdams, 2008). Generating an understanding of how leaders turn various phases and struggle in their life into meaningful subjective narratives will help shed light on the meaning-making process (Bal, 1985; Calinog, 2012; Ilies et al., 2005; Sparrowe, 2005) As per Shamir and Eilam (2005) leaders acquire these characteristics by constructing, developing, and revising their life stories.

Inspiration for Understanding and Exploring Authentic Leadership

As a part of my coursework, for the research fellowship program at the National Institute of Industrial Engineering (NITIE), India. I had the opportunity to attend a session about current leadership theories. During the session, though various emerging leadership constructs were discussed; specifically, authentic leadership and ethical leadership were further explored. At length, we discussed how leaders achieve self-awareness? Can we categorize leaders as authentic or inauthentic or is it a continuum? How personality variables are related

to authentic leadership. What are the personal triggers experienced by the leaders? Are they positive or negative triggers? Preceding questions further inspired the need to further explore authentic leadership. However, I felt, a lot can be learned about the type of triggers experienced by the leader as well as factors leading to authentic leadership by going through the life story or autobiography of highly acknowledged leaders like Mr. Gandhi.

Additionally, very many anecdotes narrated by Gandhi in his autobiography are available for exploration by researchers. Gandhi in his own unique style titled his autobiographical anecdotes as “Experiments” carried out by him. Do note that experiments are consciously and purposefully done whereas experiences are those life events that just happen, and, in due course, people recall and reflect. The narration of the most life anecdotes by Gandhi reveals a sense that he was self-aware as the anecdotes have occurred in his life. Gandhi could stand the test of time and remain authentic and inspiring because he was a person of self-awareness. The objective of the co-authors in this study is to explore and expound the self-awareness as the source of leadership authenticity of Gandhi.

Literature Review

Authentic Leadership

We explored previous studies in the authentic leadership area to understand, what are the factors leading to authentic leadership behavior, also triggering events examined by researchers and followers’ outcomes. A review of previous studies indicates various authentic leadership models are proposed by researchers (e.g., Adams, 2020; Gardner et al., 2005; Ilies et al., 2005, Klenke, 2007; Luthans & Avolio, 2003; Michie & Gooty, 2005; Shamir & Eilam-Shamir, 2018). Based on the positive organizational scholarship, Luthans and Avolio (2003) proposed the developmental model for authentic leadership. According to their model, authentic leadership development is a dynamic lifespan process and various trigger events during different stages of life, help in shaping this development over time. These experiences in life lead to the development of positive psychological capacities (confidence, hope, optimism, and resiliency). Under the influence of positive organizational context, the trigger events and life challenges result in positive self-development which provides self-awareness and self-regulation behaviours (Church, 1997; Silvia & Duval, 2001). The positive self-development eventually results in the development of authentic leadership in individuals. Authentic leaders are described as confident, hopeful, optimistic, resilient, transparent, moral/ethical, and future-oriented (May, Chan, Hodges, & Avolio, 2003; Gardner et al. 2011). Luthans and Avolio (2003) further suggest that “to create authentic leadership requires the development of the individual as well as the context in which he or she is embedded over time.” Authentic leaders are portrayed as being highly self-aware, having clearly defined goals. Also, authentic leaders strongly articulate values; what they say is consistent with what they believe (Shamir & Eilam, 2005), with ongoing drive and motivation towards organisational goals and can harness followership. Cameron, Dutton, and Quinn (2003) view authenticity as owning one’s own experiences; be they thoughts, emotions, needs, wants preferences, and acting by one’s true self, expressing what you think and feel and behaving accordingly. The model proposed by Klenke (2007) had three interrelated identity systems (self-identity, leader-identity, and spiritual-identity) which led to further multiple sub-identities cognitive, affective, and conative elements. Hence, based on the preceding discussion, we derive that authentic leadership is achieved through self-awareness, self-acceptance, authentic actions, and relationships while remaining cognizant of one’s vulnerabilities (Luthans & Avolio, 2003; Marshall & Heffes, 2004).

Some of the researchers have used a qualitative approach to understand how leaders develop a “meaning system” to act in a way that gives them personal meaning (Albert & Vadla, 2009; Kegan, 1982; Lefort, 1988; Shamir et al., 2016; Sparrowe, 2005). For example, Kegan (1982) proposed life stories can provide leaders with a meaningful system from which they can act authentically, that interprets reality, and act in a way that gives their interpretations and actions a personal meaning. Contributing further Shamir and Eilam (2005) adopted a narrative approach to conceptually build authentic leadership phenomena. A different perspective is offered by Sparrowe (2005) about authentic leadership based on hermeneutic philosophy built on the framework of the narrative self. Sparrowe (2005) argued that authenticity is not achieved by self-awareness of one’s inner values but instead emerges from the narrative process in which others play a constitutive role in the self. Key features stated to attribute authentic leadership as per Shamir and Eilam (2005) are high self-concept clarity, self-resolution, and self-concordant goals (Campbell et al., 1996). Further, Swann, Stein-Seroussi, and Giesler (1992) stated that authentic leaders do not seek the most admiring followers, but rather followers who increase the leaders’ authenticity by confirming his or her self-concept. This implies the focus of authentic leadership development shifts from skills to the development of their self-concepts through to their construction of life-stories (Shamir & Eilam, 2005). Thus, a study on authentic leadership development has to focus on and analyse how these characteristics are developed. In this direction, we found a study by Albert and Vadla (2009) helping students to develop an authentic leadership voice by constructing narratives based on three questions – Who I am? Who are we and future stories? Another study conducted by Calinog (2012) explored how awareness of a leader’s life story impact follower’ perception of their authenticity and further how authentic leadership impacts follower job satisfaction. The study revealed a strong correlation between awareness of a leaders’ life story and their perceived authenticity. Stories of challenges emerged to be the most revealing “leader’s true self” (Luthans & Avolio, 2003). Research work by Turner and Mavin (2014) provides fascinating insight based on a qualitative study conducted to explore the socially constructed lived experiences of senior leaders. The study revealed by undergoing the process, leaders felt emotionally liberated and further enabling them (Turner & Mavin, 2014).

Although some of the qualitative studies have focused attention on authentic leadership development, most studies examining factors leading to the exhibition of authentic leadership behaviour are limited. Predictors of authentic leadership examined by some of the previous studies indicate individual dispositions variables, for example, values and emotions (Michie & Gooty, 2005), psychological capital (Petersen & Youssef-Morgan, 2018), self-knowledge and self-consistency (Peus et al., 2012). This is an important research gap that the present study will try to address. Additionally, studies exploring personal and interpersonal triggers experienced by the authentic leaders in their lifetime are least explored. Moreover, most of the authentic leadership studies are empirical (Gardner et al., 2011), hence the present study by adopting narrative research, and considering Mahatma Gandhi who is globally recognized as an authentic leader will additionally contribute towards authentic leadership literature. Moreover, studies exploring personality dimensions and authentic leadership are limited in the Asian context. Hence, we further contribute by exploring the three-dimensional personality framework based on Samkhya philosophy, called Triguna embedded in the Indian culture as proximate to understand authentic leadership behaviour. Drawing from qualitative research, the narrative study indicates how Triguna's personality framework composed of (sattva guna, rajas guna, and tamas guna) is related as a predictor of authentic leadership. This is an important line of pursuit which the present study will further explore and contribute towards developing and elaborating the nomological network of authentic leadership.

Method

We wanted to explore what leads to the manifestation of authentic leadership behaviour. What are the outcomes at the followers' level and further seek an understanding of triggering events experienced by the leader at different points in life which have led to self-awareness? Hence, we considered the narrative research approach. Narrative research is described as an umbrella for several approaches that focus attention on individuals' written, spoken, or visual representation to tell their story (Clandinin, 2010). Chase (2005) indicates that despite narrative research originated from literature, anthropology, sociology, history, and education but different fields of study have adopted their approaches. Narratives across the disciplines have many views of what a telling must consist of to be labeled as narrative, emphasizing rhythm and pacing, time and place, human agency, compelling actions, and plot (Bal, 1985; Chatman, 1980; Polkinghorne, 1988).

We have followed four steps to achieve our objectives. In the first step, we prepared a primary list of leaders with the help of a panel based on the four dimensions of authentic leadership as prescribed by Luthans and Avolio (2003) and Walumbwa et al. (2008). In the second step, we again asked a separate panel to select leaders from the primary list. In the third step, we gathered data from autobiography, articles, and letters. In step four, we coded that data using software and analysed the text. As we wanted to explore and understand the predictors and outcomes of authentic leadership and reveal and understand the meaning-making of triggering events. Hence, we did not restore the findings of our study. Instead, we have presented, the findings as themes so that in future studies themes can be further considered to construct a conceptual authentic leadership development framework.

Qualitative research mostly considers purposive sampling (Creswell, 2003) where the inquirer selects individuals and sites for study because they have a story to tell about their lived experience. Following the previous studies (examining authentic leadership and in line with the research objectives of the present study, leaders were chosen as the unit of analysis in the narrative research for example (Betov & Szillat, 2016; Colton, 2020; Shamir et al., 2016). Sample for the present study comprised of recognized leaders across various fields like business, politics, sports, culture (see Annexure A). We selected the sample for the study in line with previous studies, exploring authentic leadership in a different context (for example, Betov & Szillat, 2016; Colton, 2020). We found across the studies, the sample size of leaders considered varies from one to ten (e.g., Colton, 2020; Shamir et al., 2016) respectively.

Step 1 Preparation of the Primary List

Our first step was to prepare the primary list of leaders with the help of the team demonstrating authentic leadership behaviour. To prepare the list, we first briefed the team about the four components of authentic leadership as defined by Walumbwa et al. (2008) that are (a) transparency, (b) self-awareness, (c) internalised moral values, and (d) the balanced process of information. We further discussed each dimension in detail based on the work of Luthans and Avolio (2003). We emphasised the need to include leaders from as far as possible from diverse fields in the primary list to the team. Post one week, we had a discussion and various names emerged from fields such as science and technology, academics, cinema and arts, government agencies. Post team discussion and based on consensus, we included only those leaders who illustrated authentic leadership dimensions. Some of the names that were considered in the primary list were distinguished personalities like Mother Teresa, Mahatma Gandhi, Homi Bhabha, Anna Hazare, Shreedharan, and Satya Nadella. Post 10th leader, repetition of leader across fields had started, hence sample identification had reached

saturation. Thus, we considered in the first step a sample of eleven leaders from the diverse field in our primary list. We have attached the primary list in the annexure (See Annexure A).

Step 2 Selection of Leaders from the Primary List

In the second step, we constituted a separate panel. We briefed the panel members about authentic leadership with the help of George (2010) as well as Luthans and Avolio (2003). definition and description of authentic leadership development. The panel was comprised of three experts from the OB/HR field having doctoral degrees and industry professionals occupying leadership positions. Then we asked the panel members to rank any three leaders from the primary list, as 1, 2, 3 where 1 is a most authentic leader, 2 is a second-most authentic leader and 3 is the third most authentic leader, whom they think as demonstrating authentic leadership characteristics. Analysis of rank score indicated Mr. Mahatma Gandhi was considered as the most authentic leader from across the list. The present research paper illustrates findings based on the detailed life journey of a single leader, Mahatma Gandhi from the given sample. Mahatma Gandhi was an Indian freedom fighter. He was born on October 2nd, 1869, and played an active role during the Indian Independence movement against British rule (Bilgrami, 2003). He was able to employ non-violent civil disobedience and led India to freedom successfully (Bilgrami, 2003). He is widely recognized for the capability to set superordinate goals and confidently and genuinely strive towards its attainment.

Step 3 Data Gathering

The next step was to explore the experiences of the leader by gathering information from different sources. For the given study, we considered the autobiography of Gandhi *My Experiments with Truth: An Autobiography* (Gandhi, 2008); it has 490 pages to develop the field texts. In narrative research, autobiographical and biographical data is considered a very important source of data as it captures the experiences of the narrator (Chatman, 1980; Clandinin, & Connelly, 2000; Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002). As narrative research is driven with a sense of the whole; thus, the researcher has to glean the overall narratives to arrive at themes to understand the phenomena (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

QDA Miner lite which is computer-assisted qualitative analysis software was used to code the text. Further, data was supplemented with letters and articles (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Letters written by Mr. Gandhi to Mr. Hitler as well as to Mr. Nehru are presented in the annexure (see Annexure B). In the letter written by Mr. Gandhi to Mr. Hitler, Gandhiji emphasises the importance of peace and requests Hitler to shun the war for the sake of humanity. Also, emphasises, how he has also adopted the path of non-violence for his objective. Gandhian philosophy gives the utmost importance to truth and non-violence. Gandhi's self-awareness was such that he always tried to follow truth rather than untruth, non-violence rather than violence in his life.

Step 4 Analysis

For data analysis, in the first step, we read the text and asked questions (some of the questions) as given below to code the text.

- a) What are the actions demonstrated by the leaders?
- b) What are the events experienced by the leader?
- c) How leaders react to various events?
- d) What are the personality qualities demonstrated by the leaders?

The data analysis method in qualitative research has been discussed by various researchers (Creswell, 2003; Madison, 2005). We coded the text based on the preceding questions, through various iterations such as (e.g., determination, calm, rejection, duty, commitment, evaluation). Further, codes were grouped to form categories. We grouped the codes across categories (e.g., caring, and supporting, quality of interaction, sattva, rajas, tamas, personal triggers, positive self-appraisal, emotional stability). We further grouped the categories to form the themes (e.g., Sattva, rajas, tamas, personal triggers, leader-member exchange, authentic followership, the well-being of employees, engaging the followers, and self-evaluation). We further discuss various themes that have emerged from the study.

Authentic Leadership –Discussion across Various Themes

In this section, we deliberate upon findings based on the narrative research study. First, we review and discuss factors leading to the manifestation of authentic leadership behaviour and followers' outcomes. Second, we explore triggering events experienced by the leader.

Personality Framework (Triguna)

The first factor, we discuss is the personality framework based on the Triguna framework drawn from Samkhya philosophy (Radhakrishnan, 1948, Chapter 5). Narrative research focused on understanding personality characteristics beyond the western context using the Triguna framework. Triguna framework explores personality-based on three gunas (sattva guna, rajas guna, tamas guna). In the Indian context, Triguna has been utilized as proximate to understand the personality of human beings across various studies (e.g., Puta & Sedlmeier, 2014; Rani, 2007; Thomas, 2013). As per Chakraborty (1987), human beings will tend to exhibit any one of the following gunas in their behaviour: Illumination (Sattva), Passion (Rajas), and Dullness (Tamas). Each guna has been further elaborated.

(a) Sattva (Illumination). When one is enriched with the sattva guna (Illumination) as per (Radhakrishnan, 1948, Chapter 14, Verse 11) “purity, wisdom, bliss, serenity, love of knowledge, fineness, goodness will be reflected in one's behaviour” (Chakraborty, 1987; Das, 1991). Codes (for example, knowledge, truthful, calm, goodness, wisdom) were grouped under the category Sattva. Results indicated the dominance of Sattva guna in the leader representing characteristics of wisdom, purity, goodness, and serenity.

Drawing from Narrative research, Gandhiji states when he was struggling, to seek the cases, he was asked to pay bribe: “You will have to pay commission to the tout, I was told to accept Mamibai case. I emphatically denied...” (Gandhi, 2008, p. 90). Gandhiji constructs an identity where he does not embody an individual who will be ingenuine and unauthentic.

(b) Rajas (Passion). The present study found very few instances of rajasic disposition. As per Chakraborty (1987), Das (1991), and Radhakrishnan (1948), when the passion guna dominates, the person will exhibit egoism, restlessness, passion, and greed in their behaviour. Gandhiji narrates instances of moral lapses for seeking enjoyment: “From the strictly ethical point of view, all these occasions must be regarded as moral lapses, for the cardinal desire was there. I thank God for having saved me” (Gandhi, 2008, p. 23).

(c) Tamas (Dullness). The narrative study indicated very few instances of inactions, laziness, and perversion of thoughts. When a person is overwhelmed with the tamas guna, the

person will experience and show signs of laziness, confusion, inertia, heedlessness, and perversion in thoughts and actions (Chakraborty, 1987; Kaur, & Sinha, 1992). Gandhiji's narrative indicates perversion in thought, he states, he was guilty of stealing coppers: "I stole the coppers when I was twelve or thirteen, possibly less. The other theft was committed when I was fifteen. In this case, I stole a bit of gold out of my meat-eating brother's armlet" (Gandhi, 2008, p. 23).

Further, Gandhiji states, he repented for being a lustful, strict though faithful husband: "I have therefore always regarded myself as a lustful, though a faithful husband. It took me longer to get free from the shackles of lust, and I had to pass through many ordeals before I could overcome it" (Gandhi, 2008, p. 30). Altogether, it can be stated from the above discussion, an authentic leader will be high on *sattva guna* and low on *rajas* and *tamas guna*.

Self-Evaluation (Core Self-Evaluation)

Core self-evaluation refers to fundamental appraisals that people make of their self-worth, competence, and capabilities (Judge et al., 2002). We grouped codes such as (self-esteem, self-evaluation, self-efficacy, confidence, optimism) under two categories (Positive self-appraisal and stability). Both categories have been further combined under the self-evaluation theme. Drawing from narrative research, when Gandhiji was not permitted by the village head to travel abroad and outcasted for action. Gandhiji narrates:

I do not think it is at all against our religion to go to England. I intend going there for further studies. And I have already solemnly promised to my mother to keep away from three things you fear most... This made the Sheth very angry. He swore at me. I sat unmoved. So, the Sheth ordered- This boy shall be treated as an outcast from today. The order had no effect on me. (Gandhi, 2008, p. 39)

In this context, (Hu et al., 2012) state, individuals with high on core self-evaluation holds a higher degree of self-esteem compared to individuals with low core self-evaluation inclined to have negative self-regard. Findings reveal the leader demonstrated high on self-evaluation.

Leader-Member Exchange

Drawing from the narrative research, Gandhi states to his friend: "Rather than allow binoculars to be a bone of contention, why don't you throw this. Each day we had to learn something new in this way for both of us was trying to tread a path of truth" (Gandhi, 1980, p. 334). The further instance below states how followers identified with the leader during independence and wanted to go to jail.

Researchers' like Ryan and Deci (2000) and Leroy, Anseel, Gardner, and Sels (2015) posited that positive modeling by leaders would foster internalised regulation processes among followers, which have in turn been to contribute to elevated levels of follower's well-being, engagement, and performance. In the narration below, Gandhiji shows, how he changed the perception of goal and goal-related behaviour while treading the path of truth.

Drawing from the role of relational process, LMX is expected to mediate the relationship between authentic leadership and follower's outcome. Authentic leadership may be able to influence the development and maintenance of exchange relationships with followers. Apart from the positive relationship, followers are obligated to reciprocate with good performance as a return for the treatment they derive from the exchange relationship with the

leader (Wang et al., 2014). In the authentic leadership model Gardner et al. (2005) state, authentic leaders promote the development of followers by helping them achieve their sense of self and practice their authentic behaviour. The role models are often seen as those who motivate us to set more ambitious goals or make the right decisions (Morgenroth et al., 2015).

Further followers reply to Gandhiji that “We will undoubtedly go to Jail, provided you lead us. You may trust us to respond as soon as you summon” (Gandhi, 2008, p. 368). Preceding instances indicate how trust and respect in interaction with the leader enhance leader-member exchange.

Development of Authentic Followership

Further narrative by his follower, Sardar Patel, about working for Gandhi stated during the early days of independent struggle:

I was not concerned with his principles or with himsa and ahimsa. All that mattered to me was that he was sincere; that he had dedicated his whole life and all he had, to the cause he served, that he was possessed with a desire to free his country from bondage, and that he knew his job thoroughly. I wanted nothing more. (Gandhian Institutions: Bombay Sarvodaya Mandal & Gandhi Research Foundation, 2021)

Sardar Patel says was not concerned with the principles of Gandhi, but the fact that Gandhiji was completely dedicated to his cause was more than enough. Narrative research based on instances presented indicates, how leader, led by their moral values, transparency in action, guiding and letting their subordinates to participate in decision making leads to authentic followership development.

The Well-Being of the People

Research by Rahimnia and Sharifirad (2015) analysed different facets of employee well-being – positive affective well-being (job satisfaction) and negative affective well-being (job stress, stress symptoms). We found in the study by Rahimnia and Sharifirad (2015) a positive correlation between authentic leadership and positive affective well-being. Further research emphasizes that authentic leadership facilitates the process of follower’s accurate self-identification thus contributing directly to the follower’s well-being. Secondly, the study illustrated the correlation between authentic leadership, and job stress (Sultana et al., 2018) is significant and negatively related.

Drawing from the narrative research Gandhiji states, “I thus made an intimate study of the hard condition of Indian settlers, and my mind became more and more occupied with how this state of things to be improved” (Gandhi, 2008, p. 126).

The authentic leader is theorized to develop a follower’s authenticity by serving as a developmental trigger, using relational transparency, and helping strengthen the regulatory process (Gardner et al., 2005). Followers’ exposure to an authentic leader may serve as a trigger event that results in a tangible shift in how followers view themselves (Gardner et al., 2005; Luthans & Avolio, 2003).

Engagement with Group

Followers’ identification with leaders will influence followers through the internalisation of values to become more authentic and engaged in work. Also, Gandhi felt it

is important to engage and guide the followers. During such Satyagraha camp, Gandhi used to emphasize and advised his followers against violence. Still, when violent attacks were reported, Gandhi suspended his movement to convey a message to his followers: “It has not yet been understood my suspension of satyagraha after Ahmedabad and Viramnagar tragedies, then after the Bombay rowdism, and lastly, after the Chauri Chaura outrage” (Gandhi, 2008, p. 139).

Self-Awareness Triggering Events

In this section, we discuss various triggering events experienced by the leader. Triggering events are described as an event or occurrence that has led to self-awareness and self-regulation (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Gandhiji recalls various instances that led to self-awareness. Self-awareness occurs as further stated by Silvia and Duval (2001) due to cognizant of their existence and what constitutes that exist within the context within which it operates by an individual. Gardner et al. (2005) identifies four elements of self-awareness – values, cognitions regarding identity, emotions, and motives/goals. One of the critical factors contributing to the development of authentic leadership is the self-awareness or personal insight of the leader (Luthans & Gardner, 2005). Additionally, Gardner et al. (2005) state “an authentic leader through self-reflection gain clarity and concordance concerning their core values, identity, emotions, motives, and goals” (p. 6). Gandhi followed the practice of introspection. Various instances leading to self-awareness and self-regulation across Gandhiji’s life are narrated.

During his childhood phase, Gandhi described how while reflecting on the play based on truthfulness triggered his self-awareness: “Play Harishchandra captured my heart. I kept thinking about it all the time, and I must have acted Harishchandra to myself times without number. Why should not all be truthful like Harish Chandra?” (Gandhi, 2008, p. 7).

There are various instances in the journey of the leader, indicating triggering events occurred at different intervals leading to enhanced self-awareness.

Likewise, Gandhiji further narrates that in the school during the inspection:

It was beyond me to see that he wanted me to copy the spelling from my neighbour's slate, for I had thought that was the teacher was there to supervise us against copying. I never could learn the art of copying. (Gandhi, 2008, p. 6)

Further, in another incident where Gandhiji stated he learned a valuable life lesson was in school when his teacher convicted him of lying: “I was convicted of lying! This deeply pained me. How was I to prove my innocence? There was no way. I cried in deep anguish. I saw that man of truth must be the man of care” (Gandhi, 2008, p. 15). Further, during his growing up phase, Gandhiji narrates the instance of lying to his mother and how it made him feel:

Mother would naturally ask me to come and take my food and want to know the reason why I did not wish to eat. I would say to her, “I have no appetite today; there is something wrong with my digestion.” I knew I was lying and lying to my mother. I also knew that, if my mother and father came to know of my having become a meat-eater, they would be deeply shocked. This knowledge was making me feel uneasy. (Gandhi, 2008, p. 22)

During his childhood, Gandhiji states he never realized the importance of handwriting, however, he repented for his neglect. Gandhiji states “I was ashamed of myself and repented

of my neglect. I saw that bad handwriting should be regarded as a sign of imperfect education...” (Gandhi, 2008, p. 15). Likewise, Gandhiji narrates an instance where he confessed to his father various mistakes committed by him:

I handed him the note and sat opposite the plank. He read it through, and tears trickled down his cheeks, wetting the paper. For a moment he closed his eyes in thought and then tore up the note. I also cried. I could see my father's agony. Those tears of love cleansed my heart and washed my sin away. (Gandhi, 2008, p. 26)

Day (2000) and George et al. (2007) introduced self-awareness as an emerging process and not as a destination thus one continually comes to understand his or her unique talents, strength, sense of purpose, core values, beliefs, and desire. Gandhiji used to reprimand himself for not strictly following his path of truth and non-violence.

From the above discussion, we found, how Gandhi makes the meaning of various trigger events, he experienced in life as well as how he was able to realize their strength, a sense of purpose, emotions, and goals. We found personal triggers affects the leader across their life span. The findings of the study also corroborate with the authentic leadership model proposed by Luthans and Avolio (2003) which states authentic leadership development is a dynamic lifespan process and various trigger events during different stages of life help shaping this development over time. These experiences in life lead to the development of positive psychological capacities (confidence, hope, optimism, and resiliency (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Under the influence of positive organizational context, the trigger events, and life challenges result in positive self-development which provides self-awareness and self-regulation behaviors (Luthans & Avolio, 2003). As leaders strive for self-excellence, self-awareness can play an important role and help the leaders to unlock their potential (Caldwell & Hayes, 2016). The positive self-development eventually will result in the development of authentic leadership in individuals.

This narrative research analysed the journey of Mahatma Gandhi to comprehend the concept of authentic leadership better. The key objective of the research was to understand triggers leading to self-awareness and study predictors of authentic leadership based on the common themes that emerge from the study and followers' outcomes. Answering the call for research to identify antecedents of authentic leadership, the study has helped draw various significant antecedents like core self-evaluation and Triguna.

Conclusion

We adopted a narrative research approach and analysed the journey of Mahatma Gandhi to comprehend the concept of authentic leadership better. A study utilizing narratives from the autobiographical material, articles, and letters have explored factors leading to authentic leadership as well as followers' outcomes. Further, we also explore and discuss, self-awareness triggers experienced by the leader at a different point in life. We found various significant factors like core self-evaluation, sattva guna which was found to enhance the manifestation of authentic leadership behaviour. Further, we also found the quality of exchanges between leaders and members enhances trust and positive outcomes amongst followers. We also found authentic leadership leads to followers' outcomes like authentic followership development, well-being, and engagement of employees.

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ANNEXURE A

(Narrative Research- Primary List of Leaders)

S.No	Name of the Leader	Brief Profile	Area	Availability of Biography	Rank
1.	Mahatma Gandhi	The preeminent leader of the Indian independence movement in British-ruled India. Employing nonviolent civil disobedience, he led India to independence and inspired movements for civil rights and freedom across the world.	Reformer & nation builder	Yes	
2.	Mr. Homi Baba	A nuclear physicist who laid the foundation for nuclear research in India.	Scientist	Yes	
3.	Mr. Abdul Kalam	He hailed as an Indian scientist who served the President's term from 2002 to 2007. He was also hailed as the "Missile Man of India" because of his tremendous effort in missile development.	Scientist	Yes	
4.	Mr. Satya Nadella	An Indian American business executive. He is the current chief executive officer (CEO) of Microsoft.	Business	Yes	
5.	Ms. Indra Nooyi	She is an Indian-born American business executive currently serving as the Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer of PepsiCo, one of the largest food and beverage businesses in the world.	Business	Yes	
6.	Mr. Shreedharan, DMRC	He is a retired Indian Engineering Service (IES) officer popularly known as the "Metro Man." He is credited for changing the face of public transport in India by his leadership for building the Konkan Railway and the Delhi Metro when he served as the managing director of Delhi Metro between 1995 and 2012.	Bureaucrats	Yes	
7.	Mr. Anna Hazare	He is one of India's well-acclaimed social activists. A former soldier in the Indian army, Anna is well known and respected for upgrading the ecology and economy of the village of Ralegan Siddhi which is located in the drought-prone Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra state.	Reformer & nation builder	Yes	
8.	Mr. Sam Pitroda	He is a telecom engineer, inventor, entrepreneur, and policymaker. Pitroda launched the Center for the Development of Telematics (C-DOT) and served as Advisor to the Prime Minister on Technology Missions related to water, literacy, immunization, oil seeds, telecom, and dairy. He is also the founding Chairman of India's Telecom Commission.	Bureaucrats	Yes	
9.	Mr. Satyajit Ray	He was an Indian Bengali filmmaker, widely regarded as one of the greatest filmmakers of the 20th century. Ray directed 36 films, including feature films, documentaries, and shorts. He was also a fiction writer, publisher, illustrator, calligrapher, music composer, graphic designer, and film critic.	Cinema & Arts	Yes	
10.	Mr. Ravi Mathai	He was a management education administrator, noted for establishing the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, and Institute of Rural Management, Anand. He was the first full-time Director of the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, and is said to have been the person most responsible for setting the culture of the Institute.	Institution Builder	Yes	

11	Field Marshal Manek Shaw	He was the Chief of the Army Staff of the Indian Army during the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971 and was subsequently the first Indian Army officer to be promoted to the rank of field marshal. His distinguished military career spanned four decades and five wars, beginning with service in the British Indian Army in World War II.	Army	Yes	
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ANNEXURE B

Sample Letter Written by Mr. Gandhi to Mr. Hitler

As at Wardha
C.P.
India.
23.7.'39.

Dear friend,

Friends have been urging me to write to you for the sake of humanity. But I have resisted their request, because of the feeling that any letter from me would be an impertinence. Something tells me that I must not calculate and that I must make my appeal for whatever it may be worth.

It is quite clear that you are today the one person in the world who can prevent a war which may reduce humanity to the savage state. Must you pay that price for an object however worthy it may appear to you to be ? Will you listen to the appeal of one who has seliberately shunned the method of war not without considerable success? Any way I anticipate your forgiveneas, if I have erred in writing to you.

Herr Hitler
Berlin
Germany.

I remain,
Your sincere friend

M.K. Gandhi.

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Note. Mr. Gandhi's letter requesting Mr. Hitler to shun the war for the sake of humanity.

ANNEXURE C

Some of the questions considered while coding the text is presented below

- a) What are the factors leading to manifestation of authentic leadership behaviour?
- b) What are the personality qualities demonstrated by the leaders?
- c) What are the actions demonstrated by the leaders?
- d) What are the events experienced by the leader?
- e) What are the reactions from the followers?
- f) How leaders react to various events?
- g) How leader influence and engage the followers?
- h) What are the followers' outcomes?

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