

# Dynamics of Authentic Leadership: A Comparative Analysis Across Constituent Dimensions

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*This study investigated the distinction between authentic and non-authentic leaders by examining their character strengths and virtues within the framework of authentic leadership. Using a multi-level analysis approach, followers (teachers) rated their leaders (administrators) on six key variables: bravery, honesty, fairness, self-regulation, judgment, and leadership. Administrators also rated themselves using the Value in Action (VIA) survey. The study employed multilevel regression to analyze the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable of authentic leadership, which was measured through the Authentic Leadership Inventory (ALI). The findings revealed significant differences between authentic and non-authentic leaders, particularly in honesty, perseverance, bravery (courage), perspective and judgment (wisdom and knowledge), fairness (justice), and humility, prudence, and self-regulation (temperance).*

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## Introduction

Authentic leadership has garnered significant attention among scholars due to its emphasis on ethical behavior and genuine leadership practices (Bartlett et al., 2021; Imran et al., 2023; Joo & Jo, 2017). Characteristics like self-awareness, following one's convictions, moral growth and their importance in being an authentic leader were highlighted (Gardner et al., 2021). Leaders were recognized for their commitment to moral and ethical conduct in their communities and organizations (Nilsson, 2016). Those who relied on impres-

sion management to win trust were contrasted with this leadership style. It was seen as a tactic to rebuild trust in leadership through sincere and comforting behaviors (Kang, 2015; Joo & Jo, 2017).

Scholars analyzed the attributes and traits of authentic leaders. They focused on qualities like bravery, honesty, and commitment to fundamental values (Avolio, Wernsing, & Gardner, 2018; Gardner et al., 2021). Despite the abundance of evidence, there were still disagreements about the specific characteristics of these qualities and whether they are necessary for true leadership (George, 2010; Walumbwa et al., 2008). Alavi and Gill (2017) argued that moral development played a crucial role in authentic leadership, while Sparrowe (2005) disagreed, stating that moral and ethical behavior were not as important.

Much literature has identified these traits in the past, but little empirical research has examined how they appear in authentic leaders. Most research has focused on theoretical concepts and self-reported traits, leaving little known about authentic leadership in organizational contexts (Walumbwa et al., 2008). The gap in the literature highlighted the need for more studies examining how authentic leaders demonstrated and were perceived in real-world leadership situations. These studies should also focus on identifying the traits of authentic leaders.

This study examined the relationship between authentic leadership and the traits and qualities of authentic leaders compared to non-authentic ones (Byrne,

Crossan, & Seijts, 2018; Chawla, 2021). This study used empirical data to show how leaders in real-world situations exhibited these traits, unlike previous research that focused on theoretical concepts (Knights, Grant, & Young, 2020). The study compared authentic and non-authentic leaders' traits and strengths. It hypothesized that authentic leaders would possess qualities such as honesty, perseverance, bravery, perspective, judgment, fairness, humility, prudence, and self-regulation. The study referenced the works of Deng, Gulseren, Isola, Grocutt, and Turner, (2023) and Peterson and Seligman (2004).

The current study clarified authentic leadership behavior, filling a critical gap in the literature. This research provided new insights. These insights can guide the theoretical understanding and practical implementation of authentic leadership in organizational contexts. The research connected behavioral traits with authentic leadership. The following section gave the theoretical framework and literature review. The section that followed discussed the research methodology. The study's findings are in the next section.

## **Theoretical Framework**

Authentic leadership requires self-awareness and a clear understanding of principles and beliefs, according to Avolio et al. (2018), Cooper, Scandura, and Schriesheim, (2005), and George (2010). Self-awareness required understanding thoughts, feelings, needs, preferences, and beliefs (Kotsori, 2018; Nakamura, et

al., 2023). Genuine leaders need this awareness to act in accordance with their values. It made their leadership reflect their values (Howard, 2024; Sosik, Chun, Ete, & Scherer, 2019; Tabak, 2023).

For authentic leadership to be moral and ethical, character traits and virtues were essential (Nakamura et al., 2023; Walumbwa et al., 2008). Wisdom, knowledge, courage, justice, and temperance were often stressed in leadership literature (Deng et al., 2023; Howard, 2024; Kotsori, 2018). Byrne et al. (2018) found that these qualities matched genuine leaders' character traits.

True leaders displayed these virtues more prominently than other Values in Action (VIA) virtues, demonstrating their link to authentic leadership. The VIA framework gave leaders a structured approach to decision-making with predetermined scenarios and a few recommended behaviors (Cavazotte, Mansur, & Moreno, 2021). The framework identified the traits and moral qualities leaders believed they had and consistently demonstrated (Arar & Oplatka, 2022).

The study aimed to identify the qualities and character traits that distinguished authentic leaders from those who lacked authentic leadership (Lumpkin, 2023). The research enhanced our understanding of how specific virtues and character traits support authentic leadership. It also made the connection between the theoretical framework and study objectives clearer.

## Authentic Leadership

Authentic leadership theory emphasizes a leader's authenticity, integrity, honesty, and bravery (Alvesson & Einola, 2019; Lek, Vendrig, & Schaafsma, 2020). Authenticity used to mean acting in accordance with one's beliefs (George, 2010). Genuine leaders did not become genuine by copying lists of qualities that other people thought were important in leaders (Knights et al., 2020). Crawford et al., (2020) found that genuine leaders demonstrated leadership by embodying their values, significance, and purpose. During challenging times, authentic leaders stuck to their beliefs and ideals (Qu et al., 2019).

**Authentic leaders focused on self-awareness and self-discovery, which occurred independently without considering external factors.**

Authentic leaders focused on self-awareness and self-discovery, which occurred independently without considering external factors (Howard, 2024; Martino, 2019; Sparrowe, 2005). Authentic leaders understood who they really were by creating a life narrative that included incidents, deeds, and inspirations from their past experiences (Gardner et al., 2021). The genuine self formed through interactions with others and changed due to life's experiences (Sparrowe, 2005). The moral compass of transformational leaders was influenced by authenticity. This had an impact on their motivations when making decisions

about the organization (Sendjaya et al., 2016).

Sparrowe (2005) examined how a leader's sincere actions mirrored their fundamental beliefs and goals in a study on authentic followership (Kelly & Hashemi, 2022; Nabi & Akter, 2023). The development of followers' authenticity and true identities was influenced by their imitation of this behavior (Sparrowe, 2005). Similar to this, Walumbwa et al. (2008) and Fusco, O'Riordan, and Palmer, (2016) identified critical leader attributes for genuine leadership. The following theory was put forth in light of the discussion above:

**Hypothesis I:** Honesty (authenticity; integrity) will have a positive association with authentic leadership.

Using willpower to overcome challenges, whether they originated internally or externally, was the essence of courage (Brockorny & Youssef-Morgan, 2019). Positive traits like bravery, tenacity, honesty, and a proactive mindset were linked to the concept (Stichter & Saunders, 2019). A true leader was not always one who exhibited courage (Bartlett et al., 2021; Sendjaya et al., 2016). Having the guts to take action is one sign of authentic leadership, according to Gardner et al. (2021). It was crucial to remember that there were other signs as well. The authors suggested looking into the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis II:** Bravery (not shrinking from fear; speaking up for what is right) will have a positive association with authentic leadership.

### **Values in Action (VIA) System of Classification**

Ng et al. (2017) included the virtues in the VIA classification of character strengths. Wisdom and knowledge were discussed (Ogunyemi & Ogunyemi, 2020). Gathering and applying information involved the cognitive skills of wisdom and knowledge. Wisdom and knowledge were linked to specific character strengths. These strengths included creativity, curiosity, sound judgment, love of learning, and perspective. The authors suggested investigating the following hypothesis as a result.

**Hypothesis III:** Judgment (critical thinking, thinking things through, and open-mindedness) will have a positive association with authentic leadership.

Humanity has frequently been associated with qualities such as love, kindness, and social intelligence Byrne et al. (2018). Kadyrova (2020) mentioned emotional and personal intelligence as some of the attributes. Justice was viewed as a valuable social quality that helped foster a thriving community. These traits were linked to citizenship, social responsibility, loyalty, equity, and leadership (Gardner et al., 2021). Transcendence included strengths that served the greater good (Onyalla, 2018). The strengths were discussed by Afshari (2023), Deng et al. (2023), and Joo and Jo (2017). Moreover, hope, gratitude, and appreciation of excellence and beauty were also stressed by the researchers (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Thus, we hypothesize the following.

**Hypothesis IV:** Self-regulation (self-control; disciplined; managing impulses and emotions) will have a positive association with authentic leadership.

Peterson and Seligman (2004) emphasized that authentic leaders needed more virtues and character strengths. Fairness and judgment were essential to balanced decision-making and morality (Rodriguez et al., 2017). Researchers examined authentic leadership theory. They focused on leaders' moral and ethical qualities and supporting theories (Ruch, 2014). Therefore, the following hypothesis is presented for further examination.

**Hypothesis V:** Fairness (avoiding personal emotions when making judgments about others) will be linked to genuine leadership in a positive way.

Walumbwa et al. (2008) conducted a global investigation. They provided empirical data that could assess authentic leadership using the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ). Avolio and Gardner (2005) proposed a model of authentic leadership that consisted of four factors. The ALQ could be used to evaluate this model. Walumbwa et al. (2008) also examined the impact of authentic leadership on the performance and job satisfaction of individual followers. The literature review emphasized five important interrelated components. Gardner et al. (2021) identified several elements. These elements included self-awareness, relational transparency, internalized regulation (authentic behavior), balanced information processing, and a morally optimistic outlook.

Authenticity and impression management were distinguished (Lamertz, 2022). Authentic leader consistently acted in alignment with their authentic self, regardless of external influences or expectations (Ebrahimi, Kouchaki, & Patrick, 2020). People who weren't genuine relied on outside sources for information (Peck & Hogue, 2018). Authenticity went beyond just self-regulation. Authentic leaders monitored themselves to present themselves to others (Chawla et al., 2021). An individual with high self-monitoring focuses on cultivating the appropriate social image (Afshari, 2023; Winton, Whittington, & Meskelis, 2022). The goal consistently represented a certain level of the ideal group archetype (Shamir & Eilam, 2005). Researchers found that it matched the external data and social context (Ebrahimi et al. 2020). Morality and authenticity became entwined and mutually reinforced because it was impossible to be truly antisocial or immoral. Shamir and Eilam (2005) stated that being self-aware and committed to one's beliefs is essential for being an authentic leader. Genuineness inspired and earned followers' trust (Winton, Whittington, & Meskelis, 2022). Helping others was prioritized over self-interest and approval (Walumbwa et al., 2008).

Several studies have examined authentic leadership and validated the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) (Panczyk et al., 2019; Wong, Spence, & Cummings, 2010). To assess authentic leadership today, Neider and Schriesheim (2011) developed the Authentic Leadership Inventory (ALI). Neider and Schriesheim (2011) emphasized the im-

portance of using thorough analytical methods to assess the content validity of leadership research.

### **Research Methodology**

Academic and research leaders' virtues and traits were linked to their authentic leadership in this study. These traits were expected of authentic leaders. Leadership authenticity was measured by the degree of agreement between leaders' and followers' evaluations. Participants in this study were invited from a variety of academic and research organizations in the United States, including both public and private institutions.

**Participants:** Thirty school administrators from public, private, and charter elementary, middle, and secondary schools in the Northeastern US participated in the study. The word "administrator" was used to describe people in important executive or managerial positions who were in charge of departments or whole schools. Because these administrators played such important roles in strategic planning, decision-making, and institutional guidance, it was assumed that they were leaders. Participants included teachers, teaching assistants, guidance counselors, school psychologists, librarians, and other instructional specialists from the schools run by these administrators. The participants were selected because they frequently interacted with the administrators, which allowed them to assess the administrators' genuine leadership based on firsthand experience. Participation was voluntary, so partici-

pants could choose to opt out at any time. If they did, their information would be deleted from the analysis.

**Design:** Three measures were used in this study. The first tool, the Virtues in Action Inventory of Strengths, assessed character and virtues. A 120-item online survey was used (Stichter & Saunders, 2019). The second test was the 14-item Authentic Leadership Inventory. Leaders' authenticity was rated by followers (Panczyk et al., 2019). Third, followers assessed their leaders' virtues and character strengths using an adapted Character Strengths Rating Form (CSRF) (Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

**Measures:** Teachers, teaching assistants, guidance counselors, school psychologists, librarians, and instructional specialists completed the Authentic Leadership Inventory (Walumbwa et al., 2008). It evaluated administrators' credibility. The ALI used a 14-item Likert scale. These items stressed self-awareness, relationship transparency, morality, and objectivity. The ALI reliably identified true leaders (Arar & Oplatka, 2022).

The final assessment tool used was a modified version of the original Character Strengths Rating Form (Ruch et al., 2014). It consisted of 25 items. Followers were able to rate the virtues and character strengths of their administrators rather than just their own ratings. At faculty meetings, the study was quickly presented to academic and research leaders. Participants completed two questionnaires: the ALI and the modified CSRF. They also filled out a demographic form.

Both had to be submitted within ten days after the presentation. Leaders' participation was encouraged by coding the questionnaires to correspond with the academic administrator of each follower. This ensured anonymous responses. After the survey, we sent each administrator an overview of their primary character strengths. The researchers were able to access the raw data and individual area scores for the participants' identified character strengths, without disclosing the identities of the administrators. The administrators completed the 120-item Virtues in Action survey using an access code. The raw data for this survey was provided by the VIA Institute.

**Analysis:** Data analysis was conducted using STATA 14 software (Seheult, 2016) to evaluate the effects of variables at different levels. In 2000, Klein and Kozlowski conducted a study. This method was necessary because follower data needed to be considered at both the individual and group levels. This was because individual responses varied depending on the administrator they reported to. The analysis considered how followers' professional relationships and shared experiences could impact their ratings, potentially compromising the objectivity of their viewpoints (Chen & Zhang, 2023). Klein and Kozlowski (2000) justified the multi-level approach, stating that relationships observed at one level of analysis could vary in strength or direction at another level.

The administrator combined all of the followers' responses on the ALI and the modified CSRF, and the ICC1 and ICC2

indices were computed to support this combination. With ICC1 values above the standard cutoff of 0.05 and ICC2 values above 0.70, these indices verified that the aggregation was statistically appropriate and guaranteed that the data appropriately represented the leadership behaviors of the administrators. The investigation assessed various attributes of the administrators, including courage, integrity, equity, self-control, discernment, and leadership. This assessment used two types of measurement. Leaders completed the VIA survey, while followers rated administrators using ALI and modified CSRF. VIA and modified CSRF responses were level two variables. All administrators used the ALI scale as a dependent variable.

## Results

As was the case with Kinnunen, Feldt, and Mauno, (2016), normality tests were performed. Genuine leadership was negative and unusual (Braun & Nieberle, 2017). Kinnunen, Feldt, and Mauno, (2016) recommended the square root transformation after mirroring the variable.

**Significant correlations ( $p < .05$ ) were found between honesty, bravery, fairness, judgement, leadership, and honesty.**

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**Table 1 Demographic Leader Information (N = 32)**

Characteristic	n	%
Gender		
Male	19	59.4
Female	13	40.6
Degree		
Masters	3	9.4
Masters +	27	84.4
Doctoral	2	6.2
Years Teaching		
0	1	3.2
2-4.9	4	12.5
5-9.9	10	31.2
10-14.9	8	25.0
Over 15	9	28.1
Years Administration		
Less than 1	3	9.4
1-1.9	3	9.4
2-4.9	2	6.2
5-9.9	8	25.0
10-14.9	7	21.9
Over 15	9	28.1

**Table 2 Demographic, Academic & Research Information (N=419)**

Characteristic	N	%
Gender		
Male	116	27.7
Female	303	72.3
Degree		
High School	6	1.4
Associates Degree	4	1.0
Bachelors	119	28.4
Masters	176	42.0
Masters +	107	25.5
Doctoral	7	1.7
Years Teaching		
0.1-1.9	20	4.8
2-4.9	41	9.8
5-9.9	92	22.0
10-14.9	87	20.8
Over 15	179	42.7

Action Survey. Significant correlations were found ( $p < .05$ ) between various variables in the data analysis. These included honesty and bravery, honesty and fair-

ness, judgement and fairness, judgement and leadership, and judgement and honesty (Butterworth, 2020).

**Table 3 Summary Information for Academics Measures: Character Strengths Ratings and Authentic Leadership (N=419)**

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.Bravery	20.39	2.24	1.00						
2.Fairness	21.87	1.68	0.04	1.00					
3.Honesty	22.57	1.57	0.41***	0.37*	1.00				
4.Judgment	21.92	2.31	0.42***	0.58***	0.37***	1.00			
5.Leadership	21.08	1.87	0.20***	0.36***	0.49***	0.11	1.00		
6.Self Regulation	17.80	2.34	-0.09	-0.07	0.12*	-0.01	-0.04	1.00	
7.Authentic Leadership	56.13	9.96	0.03	0.06	0.02	0.00	0.02	-0.01	1.00

\*p < .05, \*\*p < .01, \*\*\*p < .001

**Table 4 Summary Information for Leaders' Measures Virtues in Action Survey (N = 32)**

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.Bravery	20.03	2.43	1.00					
2.Fairness	21.75	1.80	-0.04	1.00				
3.Honesty	22.53	1.70	0.37*	0.47**	1.00			
4.Judgment	21.75	2.18	0.24	0.57***	0.27	1.00		
5.Leadership	21.09	2.05	0.17	0.41*	0.54*	0.16	1.00	
6.Self Regulation	17.59	2.79	0.02	-0.00	0.20	0.04	-0.08	1.000

\*p < .05, \*\*p < .01, \*\*\*p < .001

The scale's alpha reliability was calculated (Seheut, 2016). The coefficient alpha for the ALI was 0.94. The leader's data was analyzed. The authors calculated the alpha reliability of the VIA. The data for the leader's or administrator's

self-assessments were compiled by the authors in Table 5. The results demonstrated reliable levels and aligned with those reported for the Virtues in Action 120-item survey by the Virtues in Action Institute.

**Table 5 Alpha Reliabilities for Administrator Responses on Virtues in Action Survey**

Bravery	0.77
Honesty	0.74
Fairness	0.76
Judgment	0.79
Leadership	0.72
Self-Regulation	0.73

The random effects parameter estimates for the Authentic Leadership Inventory were displayed by the authors in Table 6 (Butterworth, 2020). The intra-class correlations showed how much of the vari-

ance was due to differences between clusters, specifically academic teams in this case. In Table 6, it was found that approximately 27% of the ALI variance resulted from variations among academic teams.

**Table 6 Random Effects Parameter Estimates for the Authentic Leadership Inventory**

Source	Estimate	Standard error	95% Confidence Interval	
ALI leader differences	.5118	.1652	.2718	.9637
Residual	1.401	.1009	1.2165	1.6132

Intra-class correlation = .27,  $p < .001$

The authors compiled the findings regarding the second-level equation for teachers' ratings on the Authentic Leadership Inventory and leaders' self-ratings on the VIA in Table 7.

Rodriguez et al. (2017) used the Wald Chi-square test as the significance test for the regression analysis. The test results indicated that the model, which included the independent variables measured on VIA (bravery, fairness, honesty,

judgment, leadership, and self-regulation), did not show any statistical significance.

All significance tests for the slopes in the data were above the  $\alpha = .05$  threshold, which meant they were not statistically significant (Byrne et al., 2018). The administrator's self-assessment of specific virtues and characteristics did not correlate significantly with their evaluation of authentic leadership by academics.

**Table 7 Multi-level Model, Level Two Equation—Leader Self-Ratings**

sqrtauthentic	Slope	Std. Error	Z	p	[95% Conf. Interval]	
Bravery	0.0440	0.0705	-0.62	0.532	-0.1822	0.0941
Fairness	0.0936	0.1150	-0.81	0.416	-0.3189	0.1317
Honesty	0.0251	0.1168	0.17	0.830	-0.2038	0.2539
judgment	0.0171	0.0832	-0.21	0.837	-0.1801	0.1459
leadership	0.0072	0.0841	-0.09	0.932	-0.1721	0.1577
self-reg	0.1956	0.2727	-0.72	0.473	-0.7300	0.2388

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

Wald  $\chi^2 = 2.90$ ,  $df = 6$ ,  $p = .821$

Note: Slopes signs were changed to reflect the correct direction of association

In Table 8, the authors summarized the level one equation for followers' or teachers' ratings on the Authentic Leadership Inventory. The equation included ratings of the independent variables: bravery, fairness, honesty, judgment, leadership, and self-regulation (adapted CSRF). The Wald Chi-square test served as the significance test in the regression analysis (Winton et al., 2022). A correlation was discovered between certain in-

dependent variables related to CSRF and the dependent variable, authentic leadership, as measured by ALI. The correlation was found to be significant at a level of .05.

The data indicated that the slopes for bravery, honesty, judgment, and leadership, as assessed by followers, were statistically significant. The teachers assessed the independent variables using

**Table 8 Multi-level Model: Level One Equation—Leader Ratings by Academicians**

Predictor	Slope	Std. Error	Z	p	[95% Conf. Interval]	
bravery	0.1050	0.0314	-3.35	0.001**	-0.1665	-0.0435
fairness	0.2607	0.0465	-0.56	0.575	-0.1172	0.0651
honesty	0.1279	0.0415	-3.08	0.002**	-0.2092	-0.0466
judgment	0.1341	0.0390	-3.44	0.001**	-0.2106	-0.0577
leadership	0.1994	0.0440	-4.53	0.000***	-0.2858	-0.1131
self-reg	0.0305	0.0410	-0.74	0.457	-0.1108	0.0498

\*p < .05, \*\*p < .01, \*\*\*p < .001

Wald  $\chi^2 = 438.02$ , df = 6, p < .001

Note: Slopes were changed to indicate the direction of association

the adapted CSRF. The authors found a positive correlation with the dependent variable, authentic leaders. This correlation was observed in the aspects of bravery, honesty, judgment, and leadership. No significant relationship was found between self-regulation, fairness, and the dependent variable.

## Discussion

The objective of the research study was to measure the correlations between the traits that characterize authentic leadership and quantify them. Atwijuka and Caldwell (2017) suggested a link between specific traits and effective leaders. Bravery, honesty, self-control, fairness, leadership, and judgment were mentioned as traits or virtues (Ogunyemi & Ogunyemi, 2020). Meng, Cheng, and Guo (2016) found a strong correlation between leaders' authentic leadership ratings and followers' bravery, honesty, judgment, and leadership ratings. Research by Ogunyemi and Ogunyemi (2020) supported these findings. There was no correlation between self-control, justice, and genuine leadership (Shahzad, Raja, & Hashmi, 2021). Shahzad et al. (2021)

found no correlation between authentic leadership and leader virtues.

**Leaders' self-perceptions did not match their followers' views of leadership.**

The study found strong correlations between traits and strengths. The literature on authentic leadership and positive psychology (Atwijuka & Caldwell, 2017) defined human qualities differently. Researchers found a link between leaders' authenticity and trait ratings (Gill, Gardner, Claeys, & Vangronsvelt, 2018). These findings needed to be confirmed using different methods and study designs. Concerningly, leaders' self-perceptions did not match their followers' views of leadership.

Highly self-aware leaders were authentic. They tried to communicate openly. They believed in self-awareness and honest relationships with followers (Crawford et al., 2020). This study found that leaders violated basic principles. The gap between leaders' self-assessed character strengths and followers' authentic

leadership assessments showed this. In modern corporate and political environments, authentic leadership appeared attractive, but it turned out to be more theoretical than useful. This suggested that we should support the idea of training people to become real leaders. According to Shane and Venkataraman (2000), the leaders had to reassess, identify the behavioral indicators of the construct, and explain how they demonstrated it.

Latent variables were measured using well-researched tools. The identification of indicators was necessary to conduct quantitative research on social phenomena, such as authentic leadership and its associated characteristics and virtues, as these concepts could not be measured directly. Items representing bravery were observed and indicated through endorsements. The researchers used various indicators from the Virtues in Action Survey and the Authentic Leadership Inventory to identify the characteristics and virtues reported by the administrators and leaders. The Character Strengths Rating Form (CSRF) was adapted. The measurement indicated positive correlations between bravery, honesty, leadership, and judgment with the dependent variable, authentic leadership.

### **Conclusion**

This study investigated the relationship between virtues and authentic leadership behaviors within organizations, aiming to understand the complexities surrounding this concept. Strong positive correlations emerged between vir-

tues such as bravery, honesty, leadership, and judgment and authentic leadership behaviors. Conversely, self-regulation and fairness did not show significant correlations with authentic leadership. These findings suggested that expressing certain qualities in leadership positions might be more complex than previously anticipated. The study also revealed a disparity between how leaders perceived themselves and how their followers perceived their authenticity. This highlighted the importance of understanding behavioral cues and their influence on leadership success.

### **Future Research Directions**

To better understand authentic leadership, future research should be multifaceted. First, research into dimensions other than those examined in this study may reveal more about how they affect organizational outcomes. Second, examine what factors affect followers' and leaders' authenticity perceptions. This analysis considered contextual and individual differences. Third, organizational authenticity requires intervention and training program development and evaluation. These encouraged leaders' self-awareness and openness. Assessing and improving genuine leadership qualities requires exploring different methods and tools due to the ever-changing nature of leadership behaviors. Finally, working with experts would have helped translate research findings into practical leadership and organizational performance strategies. This collaboration sought to apply authentic leadership

principles to organizational frameworks. Leadership practice and development in different organizational contexts would benefit from this.

### Research Implications

The study found complex links between virtues and leadership practices. The study assessed latent variables using validated instruments and set a framework for future research. The discrepancies between followers' perceptions of authentic leadership and leaders' self-ratings need further study. This study will illuminate authentic leadership in real-world organizations. Future researchers should explore more aspects of genuine leadership and use different research methods to better understand this complex concept.

### Practice Implications

This study shows practitioners the importance of authentic leadership. Recognition of relational transparency and self-awareness can help. Leaders should actively seek follower feedback to compare perceptions, according to research. To promote workplace authenticity and trust, organisations should have developed focused training programs and interventions to improve leaders' self-awareness and interpersonal skills (Gupta, Ravindranath, & Kumar, 2018). Practitioners should have improved assessment tools like the Character Strengths Rating Form (CSRF) to assess and improve authentic leadership.

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