

Leadership for future construction industry: Agenda for authentic leadership

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Abstract

Research in the construction industry is beginning to pay more attention to project leadership. Current perception of construction project leaders is largely built around power, authority, and task-orientation. This is due to the traditional focus of the construction industry on technical and managerial features of construction projects. However, greater challenges of modern times and increasingly different business environment necessitate a renewed vision for leadership research and call for a change in traditional perception and mindset about leadership in the construction industry. Globalization and fast changing nature of construction have necessitated a need for project managers to have and apply different leadership behaviors, competencies and styles. To highlight the need for a new breed of construction project leaders, this paper discusses the recent construct of “authentic leadership” in the context of construction projects. Authentic project leaders possess positive values, lead from the heart, set highest levels of ethics and morality, and go beyond their personal interests for well-being of their followers. They capitalize on the environment of trust and are able to motivate people and accomplish challenging tasks. Authentic leadership possesses high potential for development as well as veritable performance of construction project leaders. Proposal made in this paper highlights benefits of authentic leadership development in construction professionals and discusses the relevant practical and research implications. An agenda for research on authentic leadership in the construction industry is also discussed in detail.

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1. Introduction

With increased emphasis on project management systems, construction firms are now seeking professionals with better management and leadership skills rather than technical skills [1]. However, educational institutions and construction firms continue to produce managers who lack leadership skills. This is due to traditional academic curricula which do not cover the development of individuals as leaders, the conventional transactional mentality and task-orientation of industry professionals. Moreover, the industry has focused on management, to the exclusion of

leadership. That is probably the reason that construction project managers are not perceived as leaders and are mostly termed as managers [2]. Their day-to-day work involves management of activities and achievement of the short-term goals of the project such as conforming to budget, schedule, and quality. They are focused on the end goals and not the means to achieve the results. This mindset of construction project management makes the managers more production-oriented rather than relationship-oriented. They mostly end up managing their teams and day-to-day work rather than leading their people to achieve long-term objectives.

Such conventional systems produce professionals who frequently do not see widely or deeply enough in the designs they produce, and ignore issues such as environmental and cultural degradation caused by engineering

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works. Previous works on the subject mention several reasons for this situation, for example: technically focused curricula in engineering education, limitations of the standards of performance, the requirements in standards and codes, and budget and time limits [1]. To address what may be called “leadership crisis” [3,4], authors of this paper argue that there is a need for leadership development in the project managers in the construction industry.

The construction industry is in a new period of a challenging socio-economic, cultural, political, and business environment. Many recent corporate scandals, instances of management malfeasance [5] in the business world have also left unfavorable impressions about leaders, leadership, and leadership authenticity. This situation urgently calls for fresh perspective of implicit leadership drives, suitable leadership behaviors for construction projects, practical and authentic performance standards, effective leadership interventions that can help to accelerate leadership development, influence of leadership on project outcomes, influence of leadership on followers and organizational outcomes in the long-term. Moreover, there is a need to promote a positive culture in the construction industry and to develop leaders who possess positive values and practice high levels of moral and ethical standards. These leaders should be capable of changing the conventional paradigm of management in the industry and set exemplary standards for others to follow. To achieve this goal, the authors argue that the construction industry needs to concentrate on developing a new breed of future project leaders through authentic leadership development.

Authentic project leaders are not only good managers of projects but they are also leaders of people and visionaries of future. George [6] asserts that authentic leaders have a unique leadership style that is consistent with their personality and character. They understand their purpose, practice solid values, lead with heart, establish connected relationships, and demonstrate high level of self-discipline [5]. Having these attributes, authentic project leaders are able to motivate people, win the support of their followers, and obtain project objectives as well as veritable performance for their parent organizations.

1.1. Objectives of paper

To emphasize the need for authentic project leaders and authentic project leadership, this paper focuses on the following objectives:

- To rationalize the need for authentic project leadership development (APLD) for construction project leaders and develop a theoretical framework.
- To discuss the research and practical implications of the proposed theoretical framework.
- To offer suggestions for measures which can be taken with regard to authentic leadership development in the construction industry.

2. Leadership research in the construction industry

Research has shown that the project manager is one of the most important success factors of projects. Site managers have an impact on the overall quality and cost of the project and the quality of the individual site manager may affect the project cost by as much as 10% [7]. Leadership is one of the most important subjects in management studies [8]. However, many authors have not been able to articulate the idea of leadership despite the large volume of research and literature on the area [9,10]. Particularly in the construction industry, not much work has been done on leadership [11]. Dulaimi and Langford [12] argue that most studies on leadership in the construction industry concentrate on investigating the motivational factors and the personal characteristics of project managers. Few studies focus on leadership development in construction project managers. However, due to the changing environment of the construction industry and increasing realization of people-side of project management, researchers have shown more interest during last few years. Toor and Ofori [13], in their recent review of empirical work on leadership in construction, have shown that the number of publications in this area have consistently grown during the last decade. Out of total 44 publications, Toor and Ofori [13] show that more than 50% have been published during the last decade. This shows a mounting interest of the research community in leadership in the construction industry.

The lack of focus on leadership is not limited only to research in the construction industry. Practicing construction professionals are also hardly seen as leaders [14]. A recent poll of the American Council of Engineering Companies (cited in [2]) revealed that very few people view consulting engineers as community leaders while a large percentage of respondents perceived them as technical consultants. Several reasons have been suggested to explain why the construction industry has not undertaken any significant research on leadership and its practical use in the industry. Langford et al. [15] opine that the low volume of leadership studies in the construction industry is due to the lack of understanding of knowledge of the industry on the part of social scientists and a lack of understanding of the social sciences by those in the industry.

3. Unique challenges of a unique industry

The uniqueness of the construction industry is probably the most often mentioned feature in books and journals. This uniqueness also makes construction project management a distinct discipline as it poses considerable challenges in various contexts. Toor and Ofori [16] present the taxonomy of construction industry challenges which comprises industry specific challenges, general business challenges, and operating environment challenges (socio-cultural, economic, technological, legal and regulatory, and ethical). Industry specific challenges include poor social image of the construction industry, fluctuating construction activity,

greater private-sector participation in infrastructure projects, globalization of the construction industry leading to increased foreign participation in domestic industries, growing size of projects, the need to integrate an increasingly large number of construction processes, multi-project environments, widening application of franchising in the industry, increasing vertical integration in the packaging of projects, and increasing trend of strategic alliances such as mergers, acquisitions, and partnering relationships. Other researchers note challenges such as the gap between research and practice and the need to attain the highest client value as well as its creation, capturing, and distribution. The construction industry faces major leadership challenges such as those relating to the workforce including lack of quality people owing to difficulty in attracting talent, ageing workforce, dealing with issues such as change or transition, teamwork and communication, and training and education. One major challenge of traditional construction paradigm is the emergent human resource strategies despite the fact that industry is badly suffering from scarce human resources.

Toor and Ofori [16] note that the socio-cultural challenges facing the industry include spreading wave of terrorism and political upheavals and cross cultural issues. Economic challenges include funding difficulties, uncertain economic conditions, threats of high inflation, and rapidly fluctuating stock values and exchange rates. Technological challenges include increased use of information and communication technology (ICT) such as in e-procurement, technological gap between the industries in developed and developing countries and matters of technology transfer, and growing need for innovation to gain competitive edge. Legal and regulatory challenges include different legal systems, litigation procedures, and arbitration methods within and across countries. Ethical challenges comprise corruption in both developing and industrialized countries and fraudulent and unethical professional practices [16].

These challenges, together with rapid changes in the business culture have led to a widespread adoption of flattened organizational structures and empowerment strategies. To improve the operational flexibility of organizations, several new structures have emerged such as networks, collaborations, federalist structures, the sham-rock structure, and virtual organizations. Pries et al. [17] note that the mainstream paradigm of construction industry leaders is conventional in nature and remains technology- and project-oriented. He argues that industry leaders must take appropriate initiatives to change the old paradigms and make the construction industry more flexible to adapt to the modern business environment. There lies a task ahead and construction leaders need to develop necessary capabilities to accomplish the future challenges.

Fig. 1 summarizes the above discussion and shows the traditional construction project manager who is surrounded by a set of forces from all sides. There are passive and active forces, contemporary leadership challenges, and

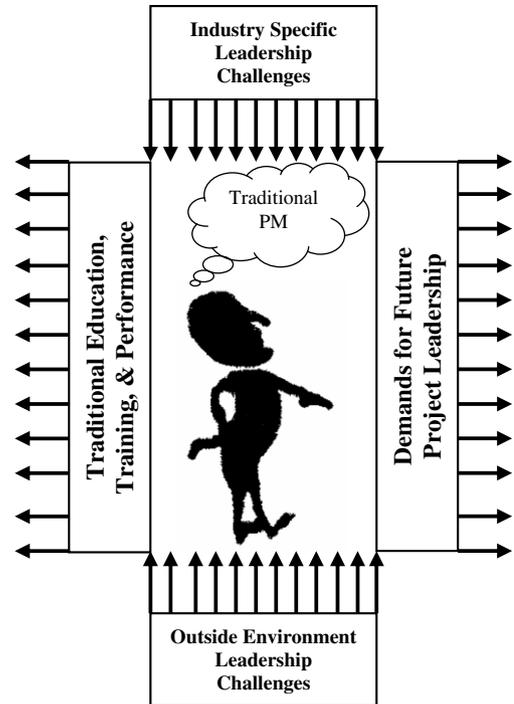


Fig. 1. Forces around traditional project manager.

emerging leadership demands of the projects. The passive forces comprise traditional education and training, passive organizational and industry culture, and traditional performance expectations. These forces compel the project manager to remain conventional, conform to situational demands, and accept the existing circumstances. Contemporary leadership challenges include those which are specific to the industry, and those which are in its environment. These challenges have been discussed above. To face the future business challenges, the project managers need to develop as leaders who are not only good at human and social capital but they also have positive psychological capacities which Luthans et al. [18] refer to as confidence, optimism, hope, self-efficacy, and resilience. They need to develop as authentic project leaders to be able to achieve veritable performance by creating a positive environment in their organizations.

4. Leadership style in construction projects

Leadership style is a joint outcome of the leader's self-related cognitive information, personality traits, the underlying motives, and his understanding of operating situational variables [16]. The outcome of some research on leadership in the past has resulted in the identification of a number of leadership styles such as democratic and authoritarian [19], task- and relationship-oriented [20], autocratic, consultative, and joint decision making [21], servant leadership [22], authority-compliance, impoverished management, country club management, team management, middle of the road management [23], directing,

coaching, supporting and delegating [24], transactional, transformational, and laissez faire [25], charismatic leadership [26], self-leadership [27], spiritual leadership [28], and authentic leadership [29].

Researchers in the construction industry have also explored leadership styles suitable for construction professionals. The least preferred coworker (LPC) measure of Fiedler's [20] contingency model of leadership has been mostly widely used. In one of the earliest studies, Monaghan [30] observed that project managers who were high in task and low in people consideration produced an acceptable level of commercial performance. Another study described project managers as "socially independent" [14] although the calculated LPC scores suggested the task-oriented behavior of the subjects. Seymour and Abd-Elhaleem [31] noted that the effectiveness of project managers is fairly synonymous with task-oriented leadership. Rowlinson et al. [32] examined variations of leadership styles employed by the same construction managers in different circumstances. They found the managers tended to use a supportive style in feasibility study and pre-contract stages of works and a directive style as construction progressed. Dulaimi and Langford [12] also considered the project managers in their study as socially independent. They noted that project managers' personal orientation and the situational variables were independent of one another.

In another study of construction site managers, Fraser [33] found that those who scored high on the effectiveness scale favored team-style leadership, those following a production style of leadership scored the lowest of all, and those using a compromise leadership style had middle-range effectiveness scores. Contrary to earlier studies, in another study of project managers in Thailand, Ogunlana et al. [34] found that the relationship-oriented leadership style was considered to be more important than the task-oriented style for project managers. Fellows [35], in a study of the quantity surveyors in Hong Kong, observed that they were mostly relationship-orientated and tended to adopt a supportive style of leadership. The expressed preference for relationship orientation was stronger amongst contractors than consultants. In their survey of leadership styles of construction professionals in Turkey, Giritli and Oraz [9] observed that (i) female and male managers were similar in terms of their transactional leadership behavior but their transformational practices were significantly different, suggesting the task-oriented style of both sexes in a gender-congruent context; and (ii) managers in higher positions were stronger in pacesetting style than those in lower management positions, indicating that senior managers led by example, yet exerted tight control over the performance of their subordinates.

In a rather international study of leadership in the construction industry, Chan and Chan [36] found that all transformational factors—which are charisma, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration—and contingent reward of

transactional factors—which are contingent reward, management-by-exception, active and passive—were highly correlated with the rated outcomes (such as leader effectiveness, extra effort by employees, and employees' satisfaction with the leaders). Their study also revealed that well-perceived leadership styles of the building professionals were inspirational motivation, idealized attributes, intellectual stimulation, idealized behaviors, contingent reward, and individualized consideration. They recommend that building professionals should adopt and promote the use of transformational leadership in their interactions with employees in order to realize greater employee performance and satisfaction [36]. In a survey on leadership for mega project, Toor and Ogunlana [8] observed that the attributes of transformational leaders were rated high as compared to those of transactional leaders. They also observed that the use of authority and punishment was rated among the lowest of leadership behaviors.

Above research studies show that there is no agreement on what leadership style best suits the construction professionals and project managers. This is arguably understandable because no leadership style can be considered to be the best in all circumstances and at all times [20,21], and context is a vital factor for the success and effectiveness of any particular leadership style [35]. Moreover, most of the identified leadership styles are self-centered, task-centered, relationship-centered, or change-centered. These styles do not tell if the effort behind the leadership is genuine, reliable, truthful, and earnest. Leaders can pretend, and put such styles on show for certain purposes. They can even pretend to be charismatic and transformational while being different in reality [37]. George et al. [4] also claim there can no absolute trait-profile of leaders for if there was one "cookie-cutter leadership style, individuals would be forever trying to imitate it. They would make themselves into personae, not people, and others would see through them immediately."

Another important question is whether general leadership characteristics (such as task- and/or relationship-orientation, clarity of vision, intellectual stimulation, active or passive management, and so on) suffice in making up the character of an effective construction project leader. Furthermore, most of the leadership styles which are offered in the leadership literature do not consider questions such as: how the leader develops a particular style, why the leader chooses to adopt a certain style; why some styles work within some teams but fail within others under similar conditions; whether there is an ideal set of qualities to constitute a best leadership style; how a leader switches from one style to another; whether it is possible to retain credibility by switching styles frequently; and how a leader can have several styles at the same time if he is working on different projects with different teams under different set of circumstances. To address these questions, it is necessary to recognize the "root construct" of leadership which can provide a broader base for understanding leaders, leadership and leadership development. George [5] and Luthans and

Avolio [29] presented the construct of “authentic leadership” as a solution to contemporary leadership challenges and future leadership demands. While advocating the need for a new form of leadership, George [5] argues that every individual is unique with a distinctive set of personal values, life history, professional and personal experiences, and future motivations. Leaders can learn from others’ experiences [6] but they can not perfectly imitate them without looking foolish and exposed in front people [4]. Based on this, project managers need to have a unique and authentic leadership style that is coherent with their personality and is consistent with their personal values and motivations. In the next section, the notion of authentic leadership and its potential application in the construction industry is discussed.

5. New leadership for the construction industry

Although several forms of leadership are suggested in the literature, many mainstream leadership researchers now believe that “authentic leaders” are the solution to the leadership crisis in the modern business world. Attributes of authentic leaders encompass positive energy, high sense of integrity, moral character and self-discipline, clear purpose, concern for others, confidence, hope, optimism, resilience, and personal values [5,29,38,39].

Some recent publications also propose that the construction industry needs to develop individuals who are not only good managers but who also have genuine and authentic passion to lead the projects [3,16]. Such leaders are not self-centered and project stereotypes; rather, they are motivated by the well-being of their subordinates, other colleagues, their organization, and society at large. They have the highest sense of ethics, morality, and personal values. They build an environment of mutual trust, optimism, altruism, transparency, and openness within teams. This is not to claim that authentic leaders are supernatural human beings and have no shortcomings. As other human beings,

authentic leaders also make mistakes but they take full responsibility for it and accept their weaknesses [5]. This unbiased processing of one’s positive and negative aspects, attributes, and qualities help the authentic leaders to “accurately interpret task feedback, better estimate their own skills, and seek out challenging situations with learning potential” [40]. Therefore, authentic leaders learn and move forward without getting constrained by their past failures. Kernis and Goldman [41,42] also warn about costs of authentic functioning that may be consequential at times. Acting authentically and in accordance with one’s true self may not be beneficial always and opening oneself to others may cause disappointment or even betrayal [43,41]. However, benefits of authentic functioning are far more than its costs and carry long-term advantages in terms of healthy psychological functioning [32,41,44] and eudaemonic well-being of the leader as well as the followers [40]. Fig. 2 illustrates the case for authentic leadership development in traditional construction project managers and presents the characteristics of authentic project leaders suggested by mainstream leadership scholars.

Authentic leadership development is fundamentally the development of authenticity which, according to Kernis et al. [42,43,41], comprises four components namely awareness, unbiased processing, behavior, and relational orientation. According to Kernis et al. [42,41], awareness refers to having trust in one’s motives, feelings, desires, and self-relevant cognitions. Unbiased processing means not denying, distorting, exaggerating, nor ignoring private knowledge, internal experiences, and externally based self-evaluative information. Behavior refers to acting in accord with one’s values, preferences, and needs. Finally, relational orientation means valuing and achieving openness and truthfulness in one’s close relationships. Authenticity of leadership, as many argue, depends on positive mediation of leadership antecedents, highly developed organizational context, and a positive external environment [29,45,46]. Such an organizational context will support the type of

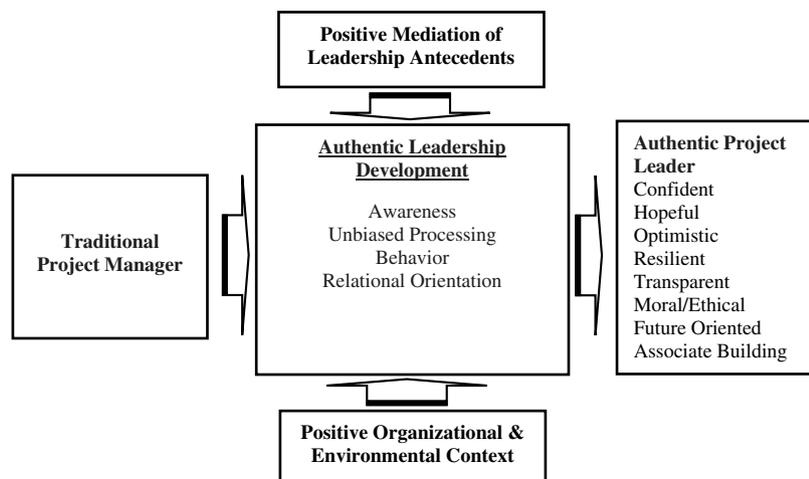


Fig. 2. Authentic leadership development in construction industry.

self-awareness and self-regulation behaviors required of leaders to develop higher levels of authentic leadership potential [29]. To the present authors, positive self-development of the project leader is also influenced by the external environment which may include other organizations, project stakeholders, socio-cultural and economic factors, and the political situation.

In Fig. 2, positive mediation of leadership antecedents refers to trigger events which activate the leadership schema in individuals. Toor [3] describes these antecedents as being biological, physiological, psychological, socio-cultural, spiritual, economic, educational, occupational, and contextual. Researchers have supported the fact that individuals have a considerable degree of choice in the way they manage these events. Appropriate “event management”, however, can help in leadership emergence and endorsement as individuals do get opportunities where they can either choose to lead or opt to follow. The combined mediation of these leadership antecedents under positive organizational and environmental contexts is central to the development of authentic leadership characteristics.

6. Attributes and impact of authentic project leaders

Fig. 2 suggests that authentic leaders are confident, hopeful, optimistic, resilient, transparent, moral/ethical, and future-oriented [46,47] and having all these characteristics they turn their associates into leaders themselves [29]. They have good comprehension of cultural sensitivities, and are highly motivated and self-aware. They understand the demands of the project from the client’s as well as user’s perspective and give their best to make the project a success for all stakeholders. They possess high levels of integrity, deep sense of purpose, courage to move forward, passion, and skill of leadership [5]. Authentic project leaders fulfill the criteria that “the profession of engineering calls for men with honor, integrity, technical ability, business capacity, and pleasing personalities” [48]. They attend to the development of their followers, and act as their role models to turn them into future leaders [38]. They engage in monitoring follower performance and correct the followers’ mistakes by teaching and coaching them.

Authentic project leaders do not only have high human and social capital [45], they also possess high psychological capital [18]. Gardner and Schermerhorn [49] suggest that authentic leaders are committed to building the highest level of organizational capacity through individual performance, which becomes an example for others to follow. They are able to create organizations which Ket de Vries [50] calls authentic organizations. Authentic organizations are worthy of trust and reliance and compelling connective quality for their employees in their vision, mission, culture, and structure.

Authentic leaders are influential in enhancing others’ ability to perform better by providing support and creating conditions that stimulate the individuals “to work hard, even extraordinarily hard, to perform at one’s very best”

[49]. Authentic leaders challenge their followers by setting high performance standards through their own examples. By demonstrating commitment, devotion and dedication, they become the role models of veritable performance. George and Sims [39] believe that authentic leaders are able to motivate people based on mutual trust and connected relationships. They also assert that authentic leaders or “true north leaders” develop by knowing their authentic self, defining their values and leadership principles, understanding their motivations, building their support team, and staying grounded by integrating all aspects of their life.

Through the wisdom they obtain from their experiences, they are able to reflect on a situation, evaluating and making choices. They are guided by a set of transcendent values which mediate their decisions about what is right and fair for all stakeholders [29,47]. Michie and Gooty [51] believe that authentic leaders are concerned with the interests of all stakeholders as they live with self-transcendent values such as benevolence (honesty, responsibility, and loyalty) and universalism (equality, social justice, and broadmindedness). These characteristics show some of the features of transformational, charismatic, servant, spiritual, and ethical leaderships. Thus, the proponents of authentic leadership call it a “root construct” and believe that it underlies all forms of positive leadership although it is distinct from other leadership styles in many respects [38,5]. Hence, authentic leaders can be transactional, transformational, directive, or participative, and still be defined as authentic. Authentic leadership goes beyond transformational and charismatic leadership as leaders can be highly authentic but not charismatic at all [29]. However, under crucial circumstances, authentic leaders take a stand that changes the course of history for others, be they organizations, departments or just other individuals [47]. They genuinely desire to serve others and empower their people through their leadership [22]. This notion of authentic leadership is partially similar to what Rock [52] refers to as “quiet leadership”. According to Rock [52], “quiet leaders” are masters in bringing out the best performance in others by noticing certain qualities in people’s thinking, by helping them improve their thinking, and by helping them making their own connections. They help the people explore their real potential by giving them power to think, by encouraging them make their own decisions, and by letting them enjoy the thrill of finding solutions to their problems themselves. They validate, confirm, encourage, support, and believe in people’s potential and ensure to let people realize their best potential for the betterment of the organization [52].

Blanchard and Johnson [53] also present a picture of authentic leadership under the cover of “one minute manager” who practices the ideology of “one minute goal setting, one minute praising, and one minute reprimand”. The one minute manager also lets people do their work, appreciates them in the right when they perform better, and provides them feedback whenever necessary. In order to get people perform better, the one minute manager asks

brief but important questions, speaks the simple truth, laughs, works, enjoys, and encourages his followers to do the same as he does. These characteristics of the authentic leaders—or for the namesake, quiet leaders or one minute managers—clearly illustrate their competitive advantage. Any organization would aspire to have such leaders to gain competitive edge over their rivals in the market. Having authentic project leaders, organizations can be sure of a bright future and veritable performance at large.

7. Implications of authentic project leadership

The APLD model emphasizes the need for a change in the philosophy of construction project leadership that is largely “engineer-paradigm” in contemporary practice. It underpins that there should be greater attention to a more humanistic and genuine approach of project leadership and leadership development at all levels of construction organizations. The appreciation of leadership authenticity will help to develop effective leadership for future projects, and result in an organizational culture which promotes positive organizational behavior, positive organizational scholarship, self-transcendent values, mutual respect and understanding, and highest standards of ethics and morality.

Another advantage of authentic project leadership is its sustainability in comparison with other forms of positive leadership. Since authentic leadership is a “root construct” [38,29] and is achieved through a sense of self-awareness and self-regulation, there is a high likelihood that it will be sustained and nourished in individuals and organizations. Authentic leadership construct also emphasizes the development of followers as authentic followers and eventually authentic leaders in the organization. Studies have shown that when followers are treated fairly, they are more committed and likely to display positive attitudes [46]. This positive attitude of leaders and trust of followers in leadership results in positive outcomes for organizations such as the development of positive organizational behavior and organizational scholarship [54].

Studies have also shown positive correlations between authenticity and employee outcomes. For example, Kernis and Goldman [43] discuss a number of factors that are potentially positively linked to authenticity. These include satisfaction, performance, well-being, self-esteem, depression, negative affectivity, psychological well-being, optimal self-esteem, and social motivation. They also note that authenticity has great influence on performance, interpersonal relationships, effectiveness, and behaviors of individuals [42,41]. This implies that authenticity has a potential of strong correlations with overall leadership effectiveness and performance. Hence, if a project leader is authentic, it is likely that overall performance on the project will be superior. Such a project leader would not have personal bias or self-centeredness. Moreover, an authentic project leader develops healthy interpersonal relationships which are expected to result in reduced disputes and conflicts

and improved social well-being of the followers. George and Sims [39] also claim that authentic leaders have better ability to inspire their followers to follow their vision. Since their followers trust them, authentic leaders are able to motivate them and create a better working environment through their openness in relationships, concern for their followers, and passion for service of humanity.

8. Future directions

Authentic leadership construct is a nascent development and needs further work in terms of its theoretical base and empirical validity. Avolio and Gardner [38] believe that continued theory building and systematic testing of the existing propositions on authentic leadership will enhance the understanding, prediction, and application of the positive impact of authentic leadership development. For this purpose, proponents of authentic leadership have proposed several directions in which further research should focus. For example, Cooper et al. [55] emphasize that there is further need for defining, measuring, and rigorously researching this construct. Theory and study of authentic leadership is still emerging and that researchers need to incorporate a number of alternative research designs for further studies on the area [45,56]. Since authentic leadership is a multifaceted construct [29,40,46,56], it calls for multi-level research designs. Researchers also argue that considering only one level of analysis can cause researchers to miss or improperly identify the effects of this emerging leadership phenomenon [57].

Avolio and Gardner [38] suggest that future research can focus on exploring the relationship between authentic leadership and the levels of self-awareness of leaders and followers; the direct effect of the leader’s positive psychological capacities (such as hope, resiliency, and optimism) on followers and their mediating effects on sustained performance; and whether positive organizational contextual variables such as an inclusive and engaged culture or climate have a direct effect on followers and moderating effects on the authentic leadership-sustained performance.

Luthans and Avolio [29], in their initial theoretical framework of authentic leadership development, also stress the need to construct “taxonomies of trigger events” that promote positive leadership development. Such taxonomies may include influential role models and various significant others in one’s life, events and experiences, and various social institutions which influence the behavior of a person [3]. Understanding the moments that matter in life that accelerate authentic leadership development and recreating those moments may help to accelerate leadership development faster than life-long program.

Another important future dimension Avolio et al. [56] point out is the dynamics of emotions and trust. They suggest that researchers could also pursue the effect of authentic leadership on emotions and trust at the individual, dyad, group, and organizational levels and assess if the impact of authentic leadership might differ as a function

of level of analysis. In the same article, Avolio et al. [56] mention the importance of context in study of authentic leadership and its development. They encourage a more thorough understanding of whether different contextual factors, including those that can be shaped by the leader and those that are not within a leader's control, foster different identities and moderate the authentic leader's efforts.

Ilies et al. [40] have also developed a series of propositions for future research which represent testable hypotheses that can be pursued in empirical research. Prior to testing many of these hypotheses however, it will be necessary to develop a measure of authentic leadership that assesses each of the four components outlined earlier. Various authentic leadership scholars [40,55,56] also suggest that the future research should examine how authentic leadership relates to other leadership constructs such as transformational leadership, relational leadership approaches, and leader behaviors. This direction should not only consider developing a sound theoretical base but also, a sizable focus should also be given to empirical differentiation of authentic leadership construct from other forms of leadership.

Michie and Gooty [51] suggest that future research on authentic leadership could examine how the leader's capacity to experience positive other-directed emotions influences follower outcomes, such as perceptions of the leader's authenticity, identification with the leader, and follower self-concepts. Further, research is required to discover moderating variables that may influence the interactive effects of values and emotions on leader behavior. Like other researchers in the area, Michie and Gooty [51] also stress the need for research on contextual variables such as organizational culture, environmental uncertainty, gender, and socio-cultural setup of society.

Shamir and Eilam's [58] life-story approach suggests that leaders' life-stories should be approached as "depositories of meaning" and further analyzed to discover those meanings. They propose that the data for such analyses can come from various sources: written biographies and autobiographies of leaders, interviews in the media, interviews conducted for research purposes with leaders, their colleagues and followers, and observations of leaders' public appearances and other occasions in which leaders' share their life-stories with others. In this regard, Shamir and Eilam [58] suggest several directions of further research. They propose that leaders' life-stories can be compared to those of others such as artists, scientists, or just ordinary people, to examine the proposition that they contain specific leadership related contents. To test whether leaders' life-stories are selectively constructed by the leaders, such life-stories should be compared with the stories that others—family members, colleagues, and followers—tell about the same leaders' lives.

Another line of inquiry that Shamir and Eilam [58] suggest is to focus on the process of constructing life-stories by leaders. From the life-story perspective, leadership development is to a great extent the development of self-knowl-

edge and clarity through reflection, interpretation and revision of life-stories. Therefore, the construction of life-stories is what studies of authentic leader development should focus on. Further work to develop methods which can distinguish authentic stories from inauthentic stories and authentic leadership from inauthentic leadership. Finally, the followers' responses to leaders' life-stories, and the effects of these stories on followers should also be studied further.

9. Research agenda for the construction industry

Future studies should investigate the issues related to ethics and authenticity more widely and at various levels in the industry. Previous works on leadership have focused on executives, project managers, site managers, quantity surveyors, etc. However, studies have shown that foremen and supervisors also have a vital role in getting the job done on the construction site. Therefore, it is important to analyze authentic leadership at all levels of construction organizations. Such examinations at dyadic, group, and organizational levels also have the potential to enhance the understanding of authentic leadership in the construction industry.

Future studies should also take into account the personal demographics of project leaders—such as gender, age, ethnicity, nationality, education, work experience, and job level. Other dimensions on which project leadership research can focus are organizational culture, type of organization (such as developers, contractors, architects, and engineers), size of organization, and focus of organizational activity (such as building and civil engineering). Such multi-level and multi-dimensional analyses can help to identify and explain specific leadership needs and demands of organizations in different contexts and understand the behaviors that authentic leaders possess to be more effective and successful in different contexts. Moreover, such analyses can also assist to comprehend the concepts of "competence"—a work-related concept that defines the areas of work in which a person needs to be competent—and "competency"—a person-related concept that refers to the dimensions of behavior underlying competent performance—in relation to authentic leadership for effective and superior job performance in a given context (see [59]).

Comparison of perception about ethics and authenticity across various cultures, countries, regions, socio-economic conditions, and several other factors can also provide additional insights about world-over culture of the construction industry. This would help to find joint solutions and a common platform of learning for different countries and regions. The influence of international firms on perceptions of authenticity and ethics could also be studied to find out whether while going international such firms try to develop a positive image. Once these diagnoses are made, it will be possible for decision makers to focus on the areas which need immediate attention. Also, the industry can then focus on formulating authentic leadership development

programs that are customized to meet the needs of construction professionals and designing the leadership interventions for authentic leadership development.

Future works can also examine the impact of authentic project leaders on their subordinates, and on the success of the projects they lead. Influence of organizational culture, team environment, size, duration, and complexity of the construction project, number of stakeholders involved, and various other factors can also be considered as mediating variables affecting the perception of leadership authenticity. While considering these research questions, due consideration has to be given to research designs. So far, leadership research in the construction industry has utilized the traditional approach of survey questionnaires and interviews. However, there is a need to employ multiple designs that may include life-stories, idiographic, historiometric, psychometric, and psychobiographical approaches [60]. Also, study of authentic leadership can greatly benefit from ethnographical design of studies where the researcher observes the daily activities on the authentic leaders for a certain time period. Noordegraaf and Stewart [61] propose this method has viable and useful for studying the managerial behavior. Recently, psychometric neuro-scientific methods have also generated much interest in the study of leadership behavior [52]. Studies in the field of authentic leadership can also benefit from these modern and technologically advanced approaches.

Further, in addition to cross-sectional studies, authentic leadership should also be studied through longitudinal studies. Particularly, in construction projects, project managers tend to employ different leadership styles during different stages of the project. This conclusion needs further exploration through longitudinal research designs. Such studies can also explore how project managers adapt themselves to new projects and what influences their leadership styles in a new environment. Multi-dimensional studies can examine the authentic leadership style of those project managers who operate in multi-project environment. Since such project managers operate in varying situations such as team compositions and project variables, it is pertinent to explore how they manage to perform under various situations and environments but still remain authentic in their leadership style.

It is important to explore the antecedents that stimulate the authentic leadership schema and result in leadership development. Research endeavors in this direction are likely to produce results that are useful for designing leadership interventions for developing authentic project leaders. Future research can also focus on designing and testing interventions to develop special skills required to lead in the construction industry.

The review in this paper shows that leadership studies mostly base their conclusions on perceptions of respondents without providing objective measurement of outcomes of leadership process. Hence, there is a need to evaluate the performance of authentic leaders by objective measurements such as general effectiveness and perfor-

mance, follower satisfaction, organizational and project performance, personal growth of leaders, influence on managerial and technological innovation, effectiveness in terms of cost, time, and quality, management and satisfaction of stakeholders, decision making and dispute resolution capabilities, and interface management. Objective measurement of leadership outcomes will help to estimate return on the investment in leadership development programs.

Work on many of the research directions mentioned above is underway by the current authors. Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies are being employed to explore the construct of “authentic leadership” at various levels of construction organizations. It is hoped that the outcomes of the agenda proposed here and the research currently underway will enhance our understanding of leadership in the construction industry and help developing the future project leaders.

10. Conclusions

The traditional behavior of construction project managers—that is primarily due to several factors which are inherent in the construction industry—must be transformed to meet challenges facing the construction industry. There is the need for a shift in the way project managers function and lead projects. They need to develop as authentic leaders to successfully operate in the increasingly complex working environment. Within a fast changing construction industry, there is mounting pressure on project managers to do more with fewer people and less resources. Under such circumstances, the people-side of project management, or what many would call leadership, is paramount to the successful delivery of desired results. This paper articulates the need for the authentic leadership development in construction managers and argues that authentic leadership must be embedded in the organizational culture so as to maximize the positive outcomes and achieve a veritable organizational performance. Organizations with authentic project leaders will have a sustainable competitive advantage over their competitors in the form of veritable performance and sustained growth. However, a major challenge here is to further the research on how to develop authentic leadership in individuals. To achieve this, the current authors call for an extensive research exercise, multi-level and multi-dimensional research designs, and country-wide collaborations to explore authentic leadership across the global construction industry.

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