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Master Thesis

**The Relationship between Authentic Leadership
Competencies and Employee's Innovative Behavior**

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We have written this Master Thesis independently. Any ideas or data taken from other authors or other sources have been fully referenced.

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Abstract

The role of leadership is very vital when talking about innovation. In light of this, this research investigated how authentic leadership competencies-influence or relate with employee innovative behavior. The study employed quantitative research method and survey research design. The sample consisted of 130 respondents who were sampled using convenient sampling technique from south Asian Countries of Pakistan and Sri-Lanka. The results indicate that self-awareness and self-regulation dimensions have positive influence on employee innovative work behaviour while internalized moral perspective, balance processing, and relational transparency dimensions have negative influence on employee innovative work behaviour. Managerial implications, research limitations and recommendations for future research discussed below.

Introduction

Leadership is a broad concept and as a result different authors have offered different definitions to explain the meaning of leadership(Bolden, 2004). Leadership(Kruse, 2013) is defined as the process of social influence, which maximizes the efforts of others, towards the achievement of a goal. In view of broad nature of leadership different authors have proposed different leadership theories to explain different means used by leaders to influence their followers. Some of these leadership theories are transactional leadership, transformational leadership, autocratic leadership, democratic leadership, charismatic leadership, and benevolent leadership which are holding different outcomes in different types of industries(Nanjundeswaraswamy & Swamy, 2014). The emergence of authentic leadership has gained attention due to its ethical approach to leadership underpinned with characteristics such as firmness, fairness, selflessness and ethically uprightness behaviour between leaders and followers(Akuffo & Kivipöld, 2019). These characteristics are also supported by Shamir and Eilam (2008), who explained that authentic leaders have four unique attributes: (a) leadership as a central component of the self-concept; (b) high level of self-resolution or self-concept clarity; (c) goals are self-concordance; (d) self-expressive behavior which tend to illustrate the authenticity of the leader(Walumbwa et al., 2008).

The purpose of this study is to explore how leader's authentic leadership attributes influence employee innovative behaviors. Investigators have identified many different determinants of employee innovative behaviour such as knowledge sharing, human resource (HR) management practices, innovative climate, absorptive capacity, leadership, and perceived innovation job requirements. Out of all these determinants of employee innovative behaviour, leadership has been identified as the significant factor which influence creativity and innovation in an organization(Qi et al., 2019). Thus, leaders deliberate actions or influence employed in the daily management of

employees tend to stimulate idea generation and application which in turn cause employees to be more innovative (de Jong & den Hartog, 2007). Employees are the bedrock of every organization because their innovative mindset helps organizations to churn out more innovative product or process which in turn help the organization to be competitive or survive the turbulent business environment. That is employees innovative behavior is another significant factor which illustrate inner creativity of employees; it is a method that used to develop creative product or process to generate new ideas to solve problems and improve performance(M. Li & Hsu, 2016).

Interestingly, relationship between different leadership styles and employees' innovative behaviours have been established. For instance, (Carmeli et al., (2006); Dedahanov et al., (2019); Mehmood et al., (2020); Qi et al., (2019); Shunglong & Weiming, (2012); Wang et al., (2015)) all found that self-leadership skills, paternalistic leadership, Entrepreneur leadership, inclusive leadership, transformational leadership, and leadership-member exchange perspective are positively related to employee innovative behaviour.

However, there is only one study which has been done on multilevel investigation on the relationship between authentic leadership behaviour and employees innovative behavior(Laguna et al., 2019). They examined how business owner's authentic leadership behaviour and their employees innovative behavior is mediated by employee's personal initiatives and their work engagement. They found that leadership training, improving quality of the relationship between leaders and subordinates, and strengthening employees personal initiative and work engagement tend to boost the employee's innovative behaviour (Laguna et al., 2019). Despite that limited studies have been conducted on the relationship between authentic leadership and employee innovative behaviour. It is significant to study this because there are scant studies which demonstrate relationship between authentic leadership competencies such as relational

transparency, self-awareness, balance processing, internalized moral perspective, and self-regulation and employee innovative work behaviour. Studying authentic leadership competencies and employee innovative would help to identify which authentic leadership attributes could influence employee's innovative behaviour within the organization. Therefore, the purpose of this research to explore how authentic leadership competencies relate to employee innovative behaviour

Objective of the study:

- To explore how authentic leadership competences such as self-awareness, self-regulation, internalized moral perspective, relational transparency, and balance processing relate with employee innovative behaviour.

1. Literature Review

1.1 Authentic Leadership

The history of authenticity can be traced back to ancient Greek philosophy "Be thou Authentic" (Avolio & Gardner, 2005) to the modern twentieth century (with its ideas of self-reliance, honesty, and harmony), and ask the latest questions on whether authenticity can exist in modern times. The idea of authentic leadership has been around for quite a while, although it was known by various names until Bill George's book 'Authentic Leadership' spread the word about the name in 2003. The term has become a business word, regularly utilized widely and not saw enough to bode well from that point forward. Authentic leadership is explained by Gardner et al (2005, p.7) as somewhat a generic term and "can incorporate transformational, charismatic, servant, spiritual or other forms of positive leadership."

Similarly, Novicevic et al. (2006, p.1404) described it as "a process that draws from both positive psychological capabilities and a highly developed organizational context, which results in both greater self-awareness and self-regulated positive behaviors on the part of both leaders and associates, fostering positive self-development." There is a broad range of literature that suggests that an authentic approach to leadership is highly effective for advancing human enterprise and for maintaining positive performance for an organization (Walumbwa et al., 2008).

The concept of authentic leadership has since then developed to include five different dimensions. These five dimensions of an authentic leader, proposed by Puni and Hilton (2020) and Akuffo and Kivipõld (2021) are explained as follows:

1.1.1 Self-awareness

Self-awareness is a quality where a leader continually tries to understand their unique talents, sense of purpose, core values, beliefs, and desires (Gardner et al., 2005). This means that the leader is aware of their strengths and weakness, and examples of self-awareness include opinions or understanding about one's intelligence, social skills, academic ability, and athletic abilities.

1.1.2 Self-regulation

Self-regulation is defined as the ability to control and influence their emotional response towards a situation (Murphy, 2002). It is also defined by Beddoes-Jones and Swailes (2015, p.4) as “capability possessed by people to demonstrate an understanding of how an individual drives and interprets the world around him and how that interpretation influences how one sees themselves over time”. Thus, effective self-regulation during a demanding task performance depends on the leader's ability of efficient allocation and utilization of limited capacity emotional resources, which diminishes the negative impact of adverse emotions during work performance.

1.1.3 Balanced processing

The third dimension of an authentic leader is labeled as balanced processing. Balanced processing is defined as the objective evaluation of information and an exploration of opinions before forming a judgment, thus retaining the ability to be unbiased and fair in one's decision-making process (Northouse, 2021).

1.1.4 Internalized Moral Perspective

The fourth dimension is called internalized moral perspective and refers to the ability of the leader to “ set standards and then assessing and resolving inconsistencies between the standards and the

results” (Avolio & Gardner, 2005, p.325). This is the stage where leaders use their internal moral sense to evaluate the situation and when making these judgments, they do not let outside opinions influence their opinion.

1.1.5 Relational transparency

This refers to the leaders' ability to present themselves honestly and to be frank about their opinions (Luthans et al., 2006). This is an important characteristic for leaders to possess since they will not be able to gain a following if they are dishonest and insincere when interacting with their subordinates. According to Kernis (2003) and Walumbwa et al. (2008), relational transparency is achieved when leaders are objective and fair when making decisions and their final decisions are devoid of any personal gain.

According to Luthans & Avolio (2003), authenticity best illustrates the kind of leadership needed in modern times. The environment changes dramatically when the rules governing how we operate no longer work and when leading leaders will be seen through their intentions, having unbreakable connections to their values, actions, and behavior. An authentic leader is sure, idealistic, hopeful, challenging, endless, polite, understanding the future, and allowing subordinates the chance to become leaders. Currently, the concept of authentic leadership is used to explain many different types of important explanatory leadership models, including those of ethical, transformational, and charismatic leadership (Luthans & Avolio, 2003). For instance, authentic leadership provides a broader understanding of why some leaders possess more charisma than others; and according to Luthans and Avolio (2003), it is because the influence of an authentic leader is more exemplary and hence is perceived to be more charismatic by his/her followers.

Similarly, Avolio and Gardner (2005) explain that leadership has consistently been exceptionally troublesome in testing times, yet the remarkable pressing factors confronting associations around the world today require a reestablished center around what comprises genuine leadership. The authors propose that through the five dimensions of authentic leadership (self-awareness, self-regulation, balanced processing, relational transparency, and internalized moral perspective), leaders can influence the development of authenticity in their followers and can, in turn, lead towards sustained positive organizational performance(ibd). Thus, in this theoretical paper, the authors outline the processes which explain the development of authentic leadership and propose further research on the implications of leadership and performance(ibid).

In another seminal article for authentic leadership, Walumbwa et al. (2008) identify the theoretical dimensions of authentic leadership, and then use these dimensions to predict certain organizational outcomes, and also empirically prove the effects of authentic leadership on follower job satisfaction and performance. The authors first provide their definition of authentic leadership and explain this concept as a pattern of leader behavior consisting of positive psychological abilities and a positive ethical demeanor which also possesses the five dimensions of authentic leadership(ibid). Afterward, this concept was used to construct and validate a measurement item for authentic leadership; subsequently, this item scale is used to empirically measure the relationship of authentic leadership with individual job satisfaction and job performance, with organizational climate as the control variable, among a sample of 505 employees within organizations in Kenya, Africa(ibid). The results of the study found that authentic leadership is positively related to a variety of positive follower outcomes, including higher job satisfaction and improved performance.

1.2 Employee Innovative Behavior

Employee innovative behavior is defined as the “intentional, generation, promotion, and realization of new ideas within a work role, a workgroup, or a group organization” (Janssen, 2003, p.3) and is a closely related concept with employee creativity. Employee innovative behavior has been widely studied in terms of improvement in organizational performance (Hughes et al., 2018), and has been noted for its effect on improved employee behavioral outcomes such as increased job satisfaction and reduced employee turnover intentions (Dorenbosch et al., 2005). Many researchers maintain that employee innovative behavior (EIB) is essential for the functioning of organizations (Bednall et al., 2018) and also contributes significantly towards organizational development (Åmo & Kolvereid, 2005).

In most management and academic literature, EIB has been differentiated from employee creativity due to two important reasons: first, that EIB involves all stages of the innovation process while creativity involves only the idea generation stage, and second, that EIB is concerned with relative novelty while creativity is concerned with absolute novelty (De Spiegelaere et al., 2014). Thus, employees who take the initiative of implementing successful work habits from other departments are staging important innovative behavior, while not at all engaging in workplace creativity, and EIB is also explicitly intended to provide some kind of benefit (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2010). In this context, EIB has been widely noted for its effects on improved job satisfaction, reduced job insecurity, and increased work engagement (Orth & Volmer, 2017). On the other side, the antecedents of EIB have also received wide attention; currently, the factors affecting EIB can be classified across three analysis levels: individual, group, and organizational (Hammad, 2020). Some of the factors which are found to have a significant impact on EIB include organizational commitment, psychological empowerment and self-efficacy, job autonomy,

employee empowerment and motivation, and organizational intellectual capital (Anderson et al., 2004; Woods et al., 2018).

The theoretical work on EIB distinguished four dimensions of this concept, although it is largely measured as a single-dimensional concept (Reuvers et al., 2008). These four dimensions include idea exploration, idea generation, idea championing, and idea implementation; idea exploration refers to the discovery for an opportunity to begin something new, idea generation refers to the process where individuals combine and organize information to create new concepts, idea championing concerns the process where the ideas created need to be promoted and need to acquire legitimacy, and lastly, idea implementation is concerned with the practical implementation of the entire process which yields the effort and results of the improved ideas (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2010). Alongside this theoretical foundation, EIB has mostly been studied in the context of trait theory, where it is identified that most individuals have different capacities for innovation, and the most consistent personality trait predictors of EIB have been openness and conscientiousness (Woods et al., 2018). Similarly, innovation studies have mostly identified leader behavior in terms of performance outcomes, and the certain traits of leadership styles, such as transformational, transactional, and authentic, have been noted to have a significant impact on innovative behaviors (Hansen & Pihl-Thingvad, 2019).

Consistent with the theoretical foundation that authentic leadership (AL) improves employee performance, many researchers have since then empirically explored various dimensions of work-related outcomes in relation to AL.

1.3 Relationship between AL competencies and Employee Innovative behavior

One of these outcomes is employee innovative behavior, where according to the social support theory, it is predicted that AL would improve innovative behavior from employees because people would now be able to recognize that their leaders are supportive and authentic (Hinojosa et al., 2014). To test this assumption, Novitasari et al. (2020) empirically study the relationship between AL and employee innovation, mediated by emotions, among a sample of 500 employees working among five manufacturing enterprises located in China. The authors define employee innovation as the action which is directed towards the introduction and application of new techniques, ideas, processes, or procedures (Janssen, 2005), and predict that the development of fresh and novel ideas depends intrinsically upon the support from their leaders before practically applying these to the organization. The study finds that there is a significant and positive relationship between AL and employee innovative behavior, and employee emotions are also a significant mediator between the two. Thus, the study concludes that highly authentic leaders would encourage more innovation within the organization and are more likely to encourage the development of positive emotions (such as courage and enthusiasm) among their employees.

In another theoretical study, Li and Zheng (2014) stipulate that employee innovation behaviors depend on the effective stimulation provided by AL and the external environment. This is because leadership improves employee innovative behavior through uninterrupted encouragement or by encouraging employees to innovate which also motivates them to perform better. This initiative from AL also invokes a positive emotional response among employees, since now, they would be rewarded and admired for presenting new and innovative ideas to the management. In another empirical study, Yuan and Woodman (2010) find the antecedents of employee innovative behavior; using the efficiency-oriented and social-political theoretical perspectives, the authors

propose that organizational support, supervisor support and leadership qualities, job requirements, reputations, and dissatisfaction with the status quo are all positively related to employee innovative behavior. The authors test this assumption on a sample of 425 employees working within four US companies and find that each independent variable has a significant impact on employee innovative behaviors. The implications of this study for AL and innovative behavior is that when employees perceive that leaders are supportive of their innovative behavior, and tolerate their differences, then they feel psychologically safe and are thus more likely to innovate.

Researchers have also explored the relationship of AL with various other desirable employee outcomes, such as employee citizenship behaviors. Valsania et al. (2012) empirically estimate the relationship between AL and employee citizenship behavior among a sample of 227 employees working among organizations in Madrid, Spain. The authors posit that high levels of self-awareness, balanced processing, moral behaviors among leader's interactions with employees will increase employee identification with their leaders, resulting in increased trust and optimism among employees which will, in turn, improve employee satisfaction and commitment to their leader, and hypothesize that this increased satisfaction and commitment will enhance employee citizenship behaviors. The study finds positive and significant results in support of this hypothesis, which illustrates that leaders' role is key towards eliciting positive employee behaviors; in this manner, it is important for organizations to have authentic leaders who can harness their characteristics of relational transparency and internalized moral perspective to stimulate positive emotional outcomes among employees.

However, not all studies have reported a positive correlation between AL and innovative behaviors; some studies have also reported a negative relationship between some types of leadership and innovative behaviors. For instance, in a study conducted by Pieterse et al. (2010),

it is empirically measured if transformational and transactional leadership have a significant and positive impact on innovative behaviors when moderated by psychological capital. The study tests this assumption on a sample of 230 employees working in organizations in the Netherlands and finds that transactional leadership is negatively related to innovative work behaviors while transformational leadership is not related to innovative work behavior; this may be because workers with high psychological capital may view this form of leadership as controlling and demotivating, and when psychological capital is low, then this be less strongly related to innovative behavior. In another study, Hou (2017) finds similar results when testing the influence of destructive leadership on innovative work behaviors. The results were studied across a sample of 256 employees within China and confirmed that destructive leadership was effective predictors of employees' innovative behavior, confirming that leadership style has an important influence on employees' performance, work attitudes, and behavior, and on the individual level, destructive leadership has a negative influence on employees' innovative behavior materially increasing employees' innovation input risks and reducing their passion for innovation and group emotional attachment.

In an empirical study for investigating the effect of AL on innovative work behaviors when mediated by psychological capital, Purwanto et al. (2021) find that AL and psychological capital are significant and positive predictors of innovative work behaviors. The authors use Avolio et al. (2004) reasoning for AL to hypothesize that because AL is a combination of transformational and ethical leadership, so it is likely to promote innovative behavior among the leaders' subordinates, and this relationship is positively promoted by an employees' psychological capital. This hypothesis is tested among a sample of 213 employees working within manufacturing

organizations of Indonesia. These findings imply that the higher the levels of AL perceived by employees, the more likely is their innovative behavior.

Moreover, there is a positive connection between authentic leadership and innovative attitudes (Ribeiro et al., 2018), just as a positive connection between psychological capital and innovative behaviors (Černe et al., 2013). This means that there is an increase in the employee's perception of authentic employer leadership where ethical behavior is displayed (Hannah et al., 2011). This is because leaders have an important role in shaping the organization's (or the society's) moral quality; this aspect of leadership qualities has received a lot of attention in prior academic literature, and the relationship between ethical leadership, authentic leadership, and employee outcomes have been studied from the theoretical perspective of situational theory, path-goal theory, contingency theory, leader-member exchange, transformational leadership and servant leadership (Yasir & Mohamad, 2016). Thus, there is a strong theoretical foundation for predicting employee outcomes when comparing leadership attributes and components.

The innovation of individual workers is an essential source of competition for firms, contributing to society's development. To examine this relationship, Laguna et al. (2019) investigated how the authentic leadership behavior of business owners is related to the behavior of their employees. Their conceptual model stipulates that the relationship between the true leadership of business owners (as seen by their employees) and their new employees' behavior is governed by personal action and their workplace participation. This examination's discoveries recommend that new representative conduct can be upgraded through initiative preparing, improving the nature of connections among leaders and subordinates, and reinforcing individual activity and cooperation in the work environment. This would again help us draw out conclusions mainly related to the role of the authentic leader. The discoveries here also affirmed that the legit initiative of entrepreneurs,

as witnessed by employees, is identified with their workers' new conduct. They examined two different ways to intervene in this relationship. The outcomes showed that true initiative style predicts individual activity and worker association, and these two changing components foresee representative conduct. They likewise tracked down a social impact: being a representative from Spain (contrasted with Dutch and Polish workers) lessens the degree of new conduct reflected in the association's everyday tasks. Their discoveries can be utilized to educate leaders about the hierarchical results regarding their leadership style. This presents an avenue of research to be explored within leadership styles; every individual has different leadership styles. Therefore, we can find out the role of an authentic leader in influencing employees' innovative behavior.

In another study, Müceldili et al. (2013) analyze how AL impacts creativity and innovativeness, the authors use four components of AL (self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, relational transparency, and balanced processing) to analyze the impact on innovation and creativity. The study hypothesizes that AL fosters innovation when mediated by employee creativity. This hypothesis is tested across a sample consisting of 142 employees working among different industries in Turkey, and the results found that although there is a significant relationship between AL and innovation, the same relationship is not significant when mediated by creativity. The results of this study help to explain that the different characteristics of AL provide employees the power to explain their own ideas and decision, which in turn, may lead to an increase in their creative capacity.

The advancement of a hierarchical culture that centers on adaptability, with the aid of AL, can contribute fundamentally to employee job satisfaction. This authoritative culture can be a good place for the actual initiative, affecting working conditions. This assumption is tested by Azanza et al. (2013) who test the impact of AL and organizational culture on employee job satisfaction.

The results of this study show that authentic leadership part of the way matches the positive connection between authoritative societies towards adaptability and job satisfaction. This means that an authentic leader fosters the effects of flexibility-oriented culture on employees due to the shared values of the organization and the leader. This study has implications for organizational culture and authentic leadership development: hiring or training authentic leaders would enhance employees' job satisfaction in a flexibility-oriented organization. The results of this study can be used to explain how AL is linked with positive employee outcomes such as job satisfaction and innovative behavior. Similarly, Min and Ko (2016) examine the relationship between authentic leadership, trust in a leader, innovative behaviors, and organizational citizenship behaviors. The study was conducted among airline crews in Korea and the sample was gathered between August 15 and August 30 in 2015. Two hundred thirty questionnaires were distributed, and 210 (91.3%) were returned, of which 15 (6.5%) were removed due to inadequate answers. 195 (84.8%) were used as valid samples. Analysis of the research model used SPSS 21.0 and AMOS 22.0 to analyze the data's frequency and performed a theoretical analysis of the structural modeling model. The study found that there is a significant impact of AL on trust in the supervisor, and trust in the supervisor had a significant impact on innovative behavior, and finally, trust in supervisor and AL has a significant impact on organizational citizenship behaviors. This implies that when employees have high recognition of trust in supervisors, they tend to willingly help other workers who have a lot of workloads and participate voluntarily in the events that enhance the company's image. Thus, AL and trust in supervisors lead to positive organizational outcomes.

In another study, Rahimnia and Sharifirad (2015) explore the relationship between AL and employee well-being, mediated by attachment insecurity. The study used three dimensions of employee well-being within this study: job satisfaction perceived work stress, and stress

symptoms). Authentic leadership has been shown to reduce attachment insecurity, and attachment insecurity is a factor that reduces job satisfaction and increases depressive symptoms and signs of depression. Besides, their results have shown that authentic leadership contributes to direct and indirect job satisfaction. However, the leader's authenticity only indirectly, with the insecurity of the attachment, has affected the visible stress and depressive symptoms. The hypothesis of the study was tested across a sample of 212 nurses in Iran and found that AL is significantly linked with job satisfaction and stress symptoms, but not with perceived work stress. The theoretical implications of these results provide sufficient foundation for the relationship between AL and innovative work behaviors: Leaders' transparency and commitment to morality increase trust among followers. Gradually, trust breeds security in interactions which in return minimizes stress and boosts job satisfaction and innovative work behaviors. Job satisfaction has been recognized as an important antecedent of innovative behaviors; for instance, Chung and Kim (2017) study the effects of social network services on workplace ostracism, job satisfaction, and innovative behaviors among a sample of 237 employees within Korean organizations, and the results found that job satisfaction was positively related to innovative behaviors; this is because workers who are more satisfied with their jobs are likely to indulge in more prosocial behaviors, such as searching and implementing a new method of work to improve one's condition as well as to enhance overall organizational performance.

Likewise, Niu et al. (2018) examine authentic leadership's effect on employee behavior (e.g., voice and innovation behavior) through the mediating role of relational and organizational identification, while also using the moderating role of leader-member exchange. The results of the study (studied across a sample of 289 employees in China) found that AL was significantly related to organizational identification, which in turn, significantly increased employee innovative

behaviors. The mediating effects of relational and organizational identification were also significant while the moderating effects of leader-member exchange were significant between AL and relational identification. At the same time, it also expands on the theoretical framework, which discusses the direct effect of authentic leadership on the identification of a fan base. Second, this study answers the call for scholars to address what variables can contribute to that early identification (i.e., related identification). As the authors have suggested, future studies to identify relationships can explore short-term contradictions such as revolutionary leadership. By establishing this close connection with the employees, the leader would be able to get the best out of them as well that, in the end, would prove to be the best for the company, much more detail and research is required in this area. The results of the study highlight the importance of the social identity approach towards explaining the relationship between AL and innovative work behaviors; this means that authentic leaders should communicate with their employees as often as possible to present their authentic characteristics and should devote more attention to employees' self-concept and help them define themselves; this, in turn, would give employees more opportunity to explore and be more innovative.

Within south Asian countries, innovation environment and innovative behavior is perceived differently than it is in the West. From a theoretical perspective, the relationship between innovative work behaviors and its outcomes, such as increased commitment and job satisfaction has been greatly upheld in the Western cultural and organizational context (Nazir et al., 2019). In South Asian countries like Pakistan, India, and Sri Lanka, where a collectivist culture prevails, employees expect organizations to treat them like family, and that an innovative environment is rarely encouraged in the workplace nor are employees encouraged to resolve problems using their creativity (Abbas and Wu, 2021). Similar studies conducted in the Pakistani context have found

that there is high uncertainty avoidance in the country, and this high evidence of corruption, nepotism, and centralization is found in the societal and work environment of many South Asian countries (Islam, 2004). Such characteristics and environmental behavior then results in reduced employee autonomy, employee creativity, and hinder the relationships between employees and their supervisors. However, a similar study conducted in Pakistan which investigated the role of authentic leadership found that authentic leadership plays a great role towards assisting employees towards engaging in their work, building a healthy and encouraging work environment and also helps towards building positive relationships between employees and their supervisors (Rashid et al., 2019).

Studies which explore the relationship between authentic leadership and employee innovative work behaviors find that in Asian countries, employees feel empowered and creative when their leader is an embodiment of trust, which then determines the fundamental leader-follower relationship; this proposition was tested among a sample of medical staff in public sector hospitals in Pakistan and the results confirmed that AL is positively related to creativity and commitment among subordinates (Bakari et al., 2019). And within South Asian countries, people tend to value their individual relationship more than their organizational relationship. In this manner, commitment to the leader becomes a major factor in inspiring creativity and innovation behavior, and such inspiration is nurtured by a justifiable leader-follower relationship (Imam et al., 2020). Therefore, in Asian countries, leader-directed commitment is a useful mechanism for fostering creativity and innovative among employees (Leroy et al., 2015). And when this is the case, then according to social exchange theory, employees would reciprocate with new ideas, because their commitment and psychological capital levels would now be higher. To explore this theoretical opinion, Malik, et al., (2016) study the impact of authentic leadership on employee creativity

within nursing staff in India. The sample for this study was collected from 426 nurses across hospital in India; the results of this study found that authentic leadership played an important role towards motivating nurses to think and act creatively. The results of this study also indicate that when authentic leaders motivate their followers by enhancing their positive psychological state, then it further encourages employees to try to set autonomous goals and improve their work by being creative. When faced with challenging situations, employees try to be creative and this gives them a feeling of achievement and satisfaction. Authentic leaders allow them a certain degree of autonomy in decision making and encourage them to think positively. Employees who have the freedom to establish their own goals and enrich their jobs thus are more likely to be creative, leading to an innovative culture in the organization. In a similar study, Khilji et al., (2015) explore the cross-cultural manifestations of authentic leadership and the resulting organizational outcomes from a sample collected from Pakistan, Nepal, India, and Sri Lanka. The authors explain that South Asian leaders offer interesting and new perspective to the leadership and management literature (ibid); this is because recent growth in the South Asian economy have led to the development of a diverse range of organizations in these countries, which has challenged leadership roles and has forced them to innovate. Secondly, the growth of population and literacy levels in these countries has led towards exponential development in technological and leadership talent, making it important to incorporate these perspectives into management literature. The study finds that the dimensions of leadership explored in these countries are interdependent and mutually reinforcing, and are stimulated though authenticity (ibid). The authors further suggest that a strong positive self-concept can engender follower development particularly through trust and relational aspects, which in turn through collective positive action and positive psychological capital, can result in developing authentic leaders and cultures (ibid). Leader and follower authenticity is thus most

essential to facilitating authentic leadership in these environments. This is because leaders and followers have an inherent understanding of the expected relationship among them, an understanding which is created unique self-interest, personal values, and identification; the resulting compatibility among leaders and followers will then lead towards easier establishment of an authentic climate, which in turn, enhances both employee and organizational performance (Akuffo and Kivipõld, 2021). It can be deduced from this discussion that the presence of AL in countries where a creative culture is not encouraged and society and work environments are centered on a collectivists attitude, then the presence of AL would increase employee morale and would enhance employee psychological capital leading towards an environment of trust between leaders and followers, which in turn, would make it easier for employees to be creative and adopt innovative work behaviors.

Authentic leadership competencies rely on two key components such as internal competencies, and external competencies. The internal competencies define the leader's awareness of their strengths and weakness, regulating emotions, and making judgments according to a person's moral and ethical background. These internal competencies measured with self-awareness internalized moral perspective and self-regulation (Akuffo & Kivipõld, 2019). The external competencies define the leader's relationship with the employees. Here the leaders have the ability to be objective and fair towards employees without harming them (Akuffo & Kivipõld, 2019). This study, therefore, adopted the classification of the authors above in the analysis and the formulation of the research questions.

RQ1. How do authentic leadership internal competencies such as self-regulation, internalized moral perspective, and self-awareness relate to employee innovative work behavior?

RQ2. How do authentic leadership external competencies such as relational transparency and balance processing relate to employee innovative work behavior?

2. Methods

2.1 Population and Sample

The population for this study, consist of employees from innovatively inclined firms operating in south Asian countries. The countries selected are Sri Lanka, and Pakistan. Innovative firms were selected because a part of this study is based on analyzing employees' innovative behaviour, then these firms would be most eligible to gather authentic data. Also, Pakistan and Sri Lanka have been selected for many reasons such as similar cultural aspects, close rankings on global innovative indexing, both countries in lower-middle-income economy sector, similar GDP growth, and etc. which holds equivalent aspects in both countries. All the selected firms are technology-driven innovative organizations in different sectors. The study employed survey as its research design. Cost effectiveness, extensive, flexibility, and dependability which are the reasons for selecting this research design. The study also used convenience sampling technique to sample respondents. The expected sample size of the survey is up to 130 responses. These 130 responses had been gathered in 14 days period of time. These responses rate is 53.06% where 55 responses requested from Sri Lanka and 190 responses requested from Pakistan. All the questions are close ended and participants answered all the questions in-order to submit all the responses. The questionnaire was administered on online platform and distributed and handled through online social media platforms while responding to participant's questions. In here the management level helped on getting permission and distributing surveys within the organizations on gather data anonymously.

From the participants 63.8% of them are males, and 36.2% of them are females. Of these, 33.1% of the participants are in the age between 18 and 25. The majority of the participants who are in between the age of 26 and 35 holds 66.2% of the sample size while only 0.8% of participants are in the age between 35 and 45. In terms of education level, 48.5% of the participants holds bachelor's degree while 40.8% and 6.9% of them are holding master's degree and doctoral degree.

Only 2.3% and 1.5% of participants holds high school diploma and associate's degree. Overall, 53.1% of the participants are from technology sector while healthcare, finance, customer service holds 13.8%, 10.0%, 7.7% respectively. The least participants are from manufacturing, logistic, and retail sectors which are holding 6.2%, 6.2%, and 3.1% respectively.

2.2 Measures

2.2.1 Authentic leadership competencies

The authentic leadership questionnaire combine different questions from (Walumbwa et al., 2008), (Neider & Schriesheim, 2011), and (Beddoes-Jones & Swailes, 2015). The questionnaire included 27 questions. The questions were scored as: 0 = not at all, 1 = once in a while, 2 = sometimes, 3 = fairly, often, and 4 = frequently, if not always. This questionnaire has been divided into five sections: Relational transparency (6 questions); Self-awareness (6 questions); Balance processing (4 questions); Internalized moral perspective (6 questions); Self-regulation (5 questions). Akuffo and Kivipold (2020), who have been used the same dimensions of questions in their research on "Influence of leaders' authentic competences on nepotism-favouritism and cronyism" for the measurements.

In the relational transparency dimension, the cronbach's alpha value is 0.82, and this dimension holds questions like "Encourage everyone to speak their mind". In Self-Awareness dimension, the cronbach's alpha value is 0.833 which has questions like "My leader is clearly aware of the impact he / she has on others". Balance processing section has 0.799 of cronbach's alpha value where this dimension holds questions like "My leader asks for ideas that challenge his/her core beliefs". Internalize moral perspective dimension has 0.871 of cronbach's alpha value where this dimension has questions like "Ask you to take positions that support your core values". Finally, in self-

regulation dimension has 0.698 cronbach's alpha value where there are questions like "Doesn't suffer from mood swings".

2.2.2 Employee innovative work behaviour

The employees innovative work behaviour questionnaire was designed by(Samma et al., 2020). This questionnaire included 7 questions which were scored as: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree. These set of questions have 0.60 of cronbach's alpha values where there are questions like "I always search out new technologies, processes, techniques, and / or product ideas?".

3. Results

The study explored how authentic leadership competencies influence employee innovative work behaviour. The table 1 below represent the mean, standard deviation, and correlation matrix of the first section of the analysis. Age, gender, education and industry had no significant relationship with neither authentic leadership competencies nor employee innovative work behaviour.

Table 1: Descriptive statics and correlation among study variables

	Mean	SD	Age	Gender	Education	Industry	RT	SA	BP	IMP	SR	EIWB
Age	26.76	2.80	1									
Gender			-0.16	1								
Education			0.26**	0.01	1							
Industry			-0.10	-0.10	-0.27**	1						
RT	2.47	0.83	-0.01	-0.06	-0.01	-0.07	1					
SA	2.28	0.84	-0.04	-0.13	-0.06	-0.12	0.67**	1				
BP	2.38	0.89	0.00	-0.09	0.03	-0.11	0.65**	0.77**	1			
IMP	2.35	0.91	0.08	-0.08	-0.05	-0.12	0.70**	0.76**	0.67**	1		
SR	2.41	0.76	0.06	-0.17	0.10	-0.07	0.53**	0.64**	0.73**	0.69**	1	
EIWB	3.26	0.55	0.00	-0.06	0.05	0.01	0.01	0.13	0.08	0.02	0.14	1

Notes: *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.00, +p ≤ 0.1, SD –standard deviation, RT- relational transparency, SA – self-awareness, BP – balance processing, IMP- internalize moral perspective, SR-self regulation, EIWB – employee innovative work behaviour.

In exploring the research questions, the analysis explored the relationship between authentic leadership competencies such relational transparency, self-awareness, balance processing,

internalize moral perspective, and self-regulation relate to employee innovative work behaviour. The table 2 below present the multiple regression results for the relationship between AL competencies and employee innovative behaviour.

Table 2: The relationship between authentic leadership competencies, and employee innovative work behaviour

Variables	Employee innovative work behaviour
	Model (β)
Constant	3.04
self-awareness	0.18 ⁺
internalize moral perspective	-0.14
self-regulation	0.17 ⁺
relational transparency	-0.06
balance processing	-0.06
R ²	0.06
F	1.44

Notes: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.00$, + $p \leq 0.1$.

RQ1. How do authentic leadership internal competencies such as self-awareness, self-regulation, internalize moral perspective relate to employee innovative work behaviour?

The findings from table 2 explains that there is a significant positive relationship self-awareness and employee innovative work behaviour ($\beta = 0.18$, $p < 0.1$), though the level of significance is quite low. Self-awareness signifies the inner-focused evaluation of individual who makes comparison with goals of better self-knowledge and improvement(Ashley & Reiter-Palmon, 2012). Although the leaders who hold self-awareness key dimensions such as sensitivity of inner feelings, recognition of one's positive and negative attitude, introspective behaviour, tendency to picture oneself, awareness of one's physical appearance and presentation, and concern over appraisal of others which tend to have significant effect on employee innovative work behaviour(Fenigstein et al., 1975).

Similarly, the results from table 2 indicates that there is a significant positive relationship between self-regulation and employee innovative work behaviour ($\beta = 0.17$, $p < 0.1$), the relationship was not strong. However, the positive influence indicates that self-regulation of leaders who encompass any efforts by themselves to alter any of its own inner states or responses which can be described in terms of people regulating their thoughts, emotions, impulses or appetites, and task performance have some significant impact on employee innovative work behaviour(Vohs & Baumeister, 2004). Final results on authentic leadership internal competences from the table 2, reveals that internalized moral perspective has a negative relationship with employee innovative work behaviour ($\beta = -0.14$, $p = 0.16$), contrary to the expectation of the author. However, the relationship was not statically significant.

RQ2. How do authentic leadership external competencies such as relational transparency, and balance processing relate to employee innovative work behaviour?

From table 2, it was observed that relational transparency had negative relationship with employee innovative work behaviour ($\beta = -0.06$, $p = 0.50$), and the relationship was not significant.

The final results from the results in table 2 indicates that balance processing was negative related to employee innovative behaviour ($\beta = -0.06$, $p = 0.56$). Again, the relationship was not significant.

From the model, AL competencies contributed 6 percent of the variance in employee innovative behaviour. This indicates that possessing authentic leadership attributes may not be the only major factor that can stimulate employee innovative behaviour, but other factors such as organization's ability to encourage employee to take risk as well as the self-efficacy of the employee to take risk or explore.

4. Discussion

This study contributes to the literature by exploring the relationship between authentic leadership competencies and employee innovative work behaviour in innovatively inclined companies in Sri Lanka and Pakistan. Authentic leadership has been evaluated with respect to internal competencies such as self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, self-regulation and external competencies such as relational transparency, balance processing against employee innovative work behaviour

The results indicate that self-awareness and self-regulation dimensions which are internal competencies under authentic leadership had a significant relationship with employee innovative work behaviour, even though the level of significance was quite low. However, internal moral perspective which is the other dimension of internal competencies under authentic leadership did not have a significant influence on employee innovative work behaviour.

There results obtained are partially supported by Laguna et al (2019). The author conducted a multilevel investigation in three European countries and they founded that authentic leadership has positive influence on employee innovative behaviour(Laguna et al., 2019). In similar vein, Ribeiro and colleges (2018) investigated the connection between authentic leadership and innovative attitudes and established that authentic leadership has positive influence on employee innovative behaviour(Ribeiro et al., 2018). The findings was also partially supported by Li and Zheng (2014), they investigated how authentic leadership and external environment have impacted on employee innovative behaviour and findings indicated positive relationship between authentic leadership and employee innovative behaviour(X. Li & Zheng, 2014). The leaders who are being aware about their strengths and weaknesses while understanding their true potentials gives an opportunity for employees to be more innovatively incline, and the leaders who can control and influence their emotions and responses while being more self-regulate to the situation cause to have similar effect

on employees to be more innovative. The leaders who have internalized moral perspective while setting standards and assessing consistencies between those standards tend to have negative effect on employees to be more innovative with the limitations.

The external competencies which are balance processing and relational transparency did not have significant influence on employee innovative work behaviour and the direction was negative. The negative results obtained was contrary to the expectation of the author because we expected that leaders transparent and objective behaviour would rather stimulate employee innovative behaviour. However, the results obtained did not support our expectations. Interestingly, similar leadership studies have also established a negative relationship between different leadership behaviour and innovative behaviour. For instance, Pieterse and colleges (2010) investigated the relationship between transformational and transactional leadership and innovative behaviour. They found a negative relationship between transactional leadership and innovative behaviour while transformation leadership has no relationship between innovative behaviour(Pieterse et al., 2010). The studies which are explored assessed authentic leadership without segregating its dimensions, and this could be the reason why our findings are dissimilar to the existing studies that looked at AL competencies together. However, we believe it is critical to explore the influence of each competencies to help leaders to understand which aspect of their behaviour have the potential to stimulate employee innovative behaviour. The dimensions which are balance processing and relational transparency explains being unbiased on decision-making and leader's present themselves honestly have a negative impact on employee innovative behaviour. These implies that leaders' exhibition of such behaviour alone is likely to stimulate employees innovative behaviour. There are similar studies which have been conducted in south Asian countries, and different result differently compare to the current study were obtained. Malik and his colleges (2016) had

conducted study in authentic leadership and its impact on creativity of nursing staff. There they have found that authentic leadership positively linked to the employees' creativity as well as they have pointed out sharing ideas and information with the help of information technology resulted on the improvement of the creativity of employees, and the findings helps for the healthcare managers to understand the aspects of knowledge creation and sharing among healthcare workers. A similar investigation conducted in south Asian countries such as India, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka on self, follower, organization, and the context – a cross cultural view of authentic leadership. They have found that cultural relevancy on multi-dimensional construct constituting self-concept, follower development, organizational outcomes and culture and contextual knowledge influenced the emergence of authentic leadership (Khilji et al., 2015).

From the findings we argued that factors implemented by an organization other than leaders behaviour might play a significant role in stimulating employee innovative work behaviour. For instance the innovative behaviour of employees can be enhanced through strengthening employee personal initiatives, work engagement as well as improving the quality of relationships between leaders and subordinates (Laguna et al., 2019). This view is supported by existing study acknowledge that knowledge sharing, sharing best practices, and sharing mistakes tend to increase the one's innovative behaviour within the organization (Mura et al., 2013). Finding from these two studies above suggest that there are many different approaches that can be employed by an organization to enhance employee innovative work behaviour. Though, we do not rule out the role of leadership behaviour, we argue that other factors such those mentioned above might also play significant role employee innovative work behaviour, especially from the countries where the data was gathered than just exhibiting authenticity.

4.1 Managerial Implication

The findings of this investigation on authentic leadership and employee innovative behaviour provide evidence for the companies which share similar backgrounds as the study area to understand what areas leaders must focus on to improve employees' innovative work behaviour. As an innovative organization managers and authorities should be more focused on Authentic leadership dimensions such as self-regulation, self-awareness and how to improve the qualities of these dimensions on leaders in the organizations to improve the creativity or the innovative behaviour of the employees. According to the results, it conveys that being only authentic leader doesn't completely relate to employee innovative work behaviour. So organizations in countries like Sri Lanka and Pakistan should more focus on other factors such as knowledge sharing, freedom of sharing ideas / thoughts, encourage reasonable risk taking as well as improve inter relationship between employees and leaders. These factors in addition to leaders' ability to interpret and understand their work environment as well as having the ability to regulate emotions and remaining resilient or not giving up in the face of setback (Beddoes-Jones and Swailes, 2015; Akuffo and Kivipõld, 2019) might influence employees' innovative work behaviour positively.

4.2 Limitations and directions for future research

In spite of the interesting findings above, the study has some limitations which need to be acknowledge and be addressed by futures studies. This research was conducted in south Asian countries such as Sri Lanka and Pakistan which have similar cultural, and ethical backgrounds, as a result these findings cannot be extrapolated to countries which are situated in Europe, North and South America, Africa, and some countries in Asia which do not share similar backgrounds.

The next limitation is the industries, thus, data from the study was gathered from industries such as technology, healthcare, finance, manufacturing, customer service, retail, and logistic. Therefore,

future researchers should collect data from different industries such as education, and tourist sectors to see if different or similar results can be obtained. The age of the respondents for this study were between the age bracket – 18 -25, 26 -35, and 36 -45. The authors argue that having quite older respondents could influence the results. Therefore, future studies could employ face to face distribution of questionnaires to widen the age group since most of the older people may not willing to submit their data or views online.

In addition, the study employed the survey research design in this study and since survey design sample's opinion and views of respondents. The study does not have the power to establish cause and effect relationship. Future studies could use longitudinal design to study leaders' behaviour and employee innovative work behaviors over a period of time to see if the same or similar results can be obtained.

4.3 Conclusion

Finally, the study indicates that some dimensions have low significance influence on towards employee innovative work behaviour while some dimensions do not have any significance influence on employee innovative work behaviour. Also different existing studies established both positive and negative relationship between different leadership behaviour and innovative behaviour. All in all, study conclude that only being authentic leader alone might not be enough to stimulate employee innovative behave innovatively.

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Resümee

Autentsete juhtimiskompetentside seos töötaja innovaatilise käitumisega

Käesoleva töö eesmärk on uurida seost autentse eestvedamise pädevuste vahel, nagu eneseteadlikkus, eneseregulatsioon, sisemine moraalne perspektiiv, suhte läbipaistvus ja töötaja inovatiivsete käitumise tasakaalu leidmine. Selles uuringus keskenduti kahele uurimisküsimusele.

Uurimisküsimus 1. Kuidas autentse eestvedamise sisemised pädevused nagu eneseteadlikkus, eneseregulatsioon ja sisemine moraalne perspektiiv seostub töötaja uuendusliku töö käitumisega?

Uurimisküsimus 2. Kuidas autentse eestvedamise välised pädevused nagu suhte läbipaistvus ja tasakaalustatud tegevus seostub töötaja uuendusliku töö käitumisega?

Andmed koguti Pakistanist ja Sri-Lankalt. Neis riikides on sarnased kultuurilised aspektid, üksteisega lähedane koht ülemaailmses innovatiivsuse indekseerimise tabelis, mõlemad riigid on madalama keskmise sissetulekuga majandussektorites sarnase SKP-ga jms. Valitud ettevõtted on erinevatest sektoritest tehnoloogia-alased firmad.

Uurimus kasutas mugavusvalimi tehnikaid.

See uurimus panustab kirjandusse uurides autentse eestvedamise pädevuste suhet töötaja uuenduslikku töökäitumisse uuendusmeelsetes ettevõtetes Sri Lankas ja Pakistanis. Autentset eestvedamist hinnati seoses seesmiste pädevustega nagu eneseteadlikkus, sisemine moraalne perspektiiv, eneseregulatsioon ning väliste pädevustega nagu suhte läbipaistvus ja tasakaalu leidmine töötaja uuendusliku töö käitumisele.

Tulemused näitavad, et eneseteadlikkus ja eneseregulatsiooni dimensioonidel, mis on sisemised pädevused, on autentse eestvedamise all vähene tähtsus töötaja uuendusliku töö käitumisele. Seevastu seesmine moraalne perspektiiv, mis on veel üks sisemine pädevus, ei oma mõju töötaja uuendusliku töö käitumisele.

On oluline ära märkida, et selles uuringus, mis viidi läbi Sri Lankal ja Pakistanis, on mõned piirangud. Nende piirangute lahendamine on tulevastele uurijatele kasulik. See uurimus keskendub peamiselt Lõuna-Aasia riikidele, nagu Sri Lanka ja Pakistan, millel on sarnane kultuuriline ja

eetiline taust, mistõttu neid järeldusi ei saa ekstrapoleerida riikidele, mis asuvad Euroopas, Põhja- ja Lõuna-Ameerikas, Aafrikas ja mõnede Aasia riikidele, kellel pole sarnast tausta.

Järgmine piirang on tööstusharud, kuna uuringu andmed koguti sellistest tööstusharudest nagu tehnoloogia, tervishoid, rahandus, tootmine, klienditeenindus, jaemüük ja logistika. Seetõttu peaksid järgnevad uurijad koguma andmeid erinevatest tööstusharudest nagu haridus ja turismisektor, et näha, kas on võimalik saada erinevaid või sarnaseid tulemusi. Uuringule vastanute vanused jäid vahemikesse 18-25, 26-35 ja 36-45. Autorid väidavad, et vanemate vastajate olemasolu võib tulemusi mõjutada. Seetõttu võiksid tulevased uuringud kasutada küsimustike jagamist näost näkku vanuserühma laiendamiseks, kuna suur osa vanemaid inimesi ei pruugi olla nõus oma andmeid või seisukohti veebis esitama.

Lisaks kasutati uurimustöös küsitluse uuringu kavandit ning kuna küsitluse ülesehitus valim tõi välja vastajate arvamused ja seisukohad, ei saa uuring põhjuse ja tagajärje seost kindlaks teha. Tulevased uuringud võiksid kasutada pikisuunalist disaini, et uurida juhtide käitumist ja töötajate innovaatilise töö käitumist teatud aja jooksul, et näha, kas on võimalik saada samu või sarnaseid tulemusi.

Viimaseks, uuring näitab, et mõnel dimensioonil on töötajate innovaatilise töö käitumise suhtes vähe tähtsust, samal ajal kui mõnel dimensioonil pole töötajate innovaatilise töö käitumise suhtes mingit tähtsust. Erinevad uuringud viitavad nii positiivsele kui ka negatiivsele juhtimise ja uuendusmeelse käitumise suhtele, selgitades samal ajal erinevaid asjaolusid ja nende tulemuste saavutamise põhjuseid. Kokkuvõttes selgub uuringust, et ainult autentne juht olemine ei mõjuta töötajaid otseselt innovatiivselt käitumast.

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