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Authentic Leadership and Employee Engagement the Mediating Role of Trust: A Framework for Future Research and Practice

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Abstract:

The efficacy of Authentic Leadership (AL) and its impact on Employee Engagement (EE) has received, and continue to receive significant attention in the literature, although AL is still at its infancy. Trust a manifestation of one's action play a role towards employee engagement. A good research uses a theory, theoretical framework or construct. However, despite a growing interest in the area of AL, EE and Trust not much exist in the area of theoretical framework. This paper provides a theoretical framework which can be used for future research to understand the relationship between AL and EE and the mediating role of trust between this relationship.

Keywords: Authentic leadership, employee engagement, trust

1. Introduction

The importance of understanding leadership in the context of its relationship with subordinates' behaviour and organisational outcomes has been prominent in leadership research. Leader relationship with followers has been found to be important for various outcomes within organisations. For instance, it has been said that leadership enhances employee desires to remain in the organisation (Ali, 2009; Ng'ethe, Namusonge, & Iravo, 2012), performance (Judge, Piccolo, & Ilies, 2004; Obiwuru, Okwu, Akpa, & Nwankwere, 2011), level of commitment (Dhammika, Ahmad, & Sam 2013), satisfaction (Voon, et al., 2011), and engagement (Nohria, Groysberg, & Lee, 2008).

Different schools of thought on leadership have evolved over time. A review of the leadership literature reveals evolving series of 'schools of thought' from 'Great Man' (1840's) and 'Traits' theories (1930's-1940's) to 'Behavioural' theories (1940's-1950's) to 'Transformational' leadership (1970's) (Bolden, et al. 2003) and in recent past, authentic leadership introduced by Bill George, a management expert. The concept of authentic leadership is relatively new and there is less research on it than other forms of leadership (Robbins & Judge, 2014). Unfortunately, whilst the literature on authentic leadership keeps increasing, its meaning and construct is in pieces. This problem has been made worse by the differences in perspectives and complicated by the inadequate empirical research on it (Gardner et al., 2011). This raises some very important questions that need to be answered. What constitutes authentic leadership? What behaviours constitute acts of authentic leadership? Does authentic leadership affect employee engagement, and is this relationship mediated by other factors like trust?

Leaders often underestimate the challenge of ensuring employees engagement but it is becoming increasingly important, given that disengaged employees represent a high cost to organizations (Avery, et al., 2007) and employee engagement having a predictive influence on employee performance (Kahn, 1990; Schaufeli & Salanora, 2007), commitment (Albdour & Altarawneh, 2014) and turnover intention (Takawira, et al., 2014). It is estimated that employees who are not engaged conservatively cost the United States economy between US\$250 and US\$ 300 billion in a year in lost productivity (Rath & Clifton, 2004). At the global level, results of studies confirm that unengaged employees cost the Australian economy \$4.5 billion each year (Gopal, 2003) and that of the Asian market more than \$2.5 billion each year (Ratanjee, 2004). Thus, there is evidence that lack of employee engagement is financially harmful for organisations throughout the world.

This paper attempts at answering the questions posed earlier on by explaining what AL and EE are and developing a conceptual framework, which can be used for future research to understand the relationship between AL and EE as well as the mediating role played by trust.

The study adopted the literature review research method as it is described as a relevant research approach aimed at summarising the current extant body of literature related to a phenomenon (Chermack & Passmore, 2005). The study used multiple databases like Emerald, Science Direct, EBSCOhost, Sage publication, Taylor & Francis, Wiley-Online library among others to extract as many

relevant articles as possible. The keywords in the title - Leadership style, Employee Engagement, Trust- were keyed into the various databases to search for relevant information.

Both empirical and conceptual papers were considered. It should be noted that in most cases articles considered were from peer reviewed journals that were published in English language. The researcher did not restrict the period within which these articles were selected and therefore articles referred to in this paper range over a wide period of time even though it must be emphasised that as much as possible current (i.e. within the past seven years) published articles were focused on. After the initial search a staged review was adopted to identify and choose appropriate ones. Torraco (2005) explained stage review as a way to review literature where there is an initial review of abstracts which is then followed by an in-depth review of the related and relevant articles.

Following this introduction is an explanation of what leadership is, description of authenticity, authentic leaders and authentic leadership. This is followed by models of AL and a discussion on employee engagement. The relationship between leadership style, employee engagement and trust is in the next section with the last the conceptual framework and the conclusion.

2. Leadership Explained

The topic of leadership has fascinated people for centuries and thus many definitions abound (Buelens, et al., 2006). According to Dwivedi (2001), among organisational theorists, who stress the leadership concept, there is no consensus of opinion regarding its definition. This may be because of the different perspectives from which it can be defined with concepts like traits, behaviours, influence, interaction patterns, role relationships and occupation of an administrative position (Yukl, 2010).

Robbins and Judge (2009) define leadership as the ability to influence a group toward the achievement of a vision or set goals. The source of this influence, according to them, may be formal, based on the possession of managerial rank in the organisation or informal. It is in a similar vein that Howell and Costley (2006) define leadership as a process used by an individual to influence members within a group toward the achievement of its goals and members within the group view the influence as legitimate. Similarly, Cole (2002) describes leadership as a dynamic process that works in a group whereby one individual over a particular period of time, and in a particular organisational context, influences that other group members to commit themselves freely to the achievements of group tasks or goals.

The foregoing indicates that leadership is about influence on people and there is a cause and effect relationship between leaders and their subordinates. Thus, in this paper leadership is described as an orderly process where one (usually a superior) influences others (usually subordinate) towards the successful achievement of desired goals.

2.1. Authenticity, Authentic leaders, and Authentic Leadership Style

Authenticity, according to Hughes et al. (2012), is something every leader must strive to achieve as the essence of authenticity is to know, accept and remain true to one's self (Avolio, et al., 2004). The leader's authenticity is key as the leader tries to impact organisational dynamics like creativity, relationships, and innovation and also endeavour to build a trusting work environment (Fairholm & Fairholm, 2009). Authenticity in this paper is explained as the quality of being authentic, that is, being genuine, reliable, true to yourself and others, trustworthy, dependable, making value-based choices and coherence between what you feel and what you say and do.

Authenticity, as a primary criterion for the authentic leader, is said to be achieved through enhanced levels of self awareness and self-regulation (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Gardner, et al., 2005; Sparrowe, 2005). Goffee and Jones (2005) assert that authenticity is not an innate quality where a person is either authentic or not but rather argued that authenticity is a quality that others must attribute to the person. They contend that "authenticity is largely defined by what other people see in you, and as such, to a large extent can be controlled by you and that if authenticity were purely an innate quality, there would be little you could do to manage it" (p.88).

Kernis and Goldman (2006) have divided authenticity into four components: awareness, unbiased processing, behaviour, and relational orientation. Awareness refers to having, and being motivated to increase knowledge of and trust in one's motives, feelings, desires, and self-relevant cognitions. 'Unbiased processing or self relevant information component involves objectivity with respect to one's positive and negative self-aspects without denying, distorting, exaggerating, or ignoring, private knowledge, internal experiences, and externally based self-evaluative information. In short, unbiased processing reflects the relative absence of interpretive distortions in the processing of self-relevant information. The Behaviour part refers to acting in line with one's values, preferences and needs and not to conform to social demands merely to please others or to attain rewards or avoid punishments. In essence, this component reflects the behavioural output of the awareness and unbiased processing components. Relational orientation means genuineness, truthfulness and openness in relationships.

From above, one can describe authenticity as the degree to which one is clear of one's own ideas, beliefs, convictions, motives, and self-knowledge and the semblance of these aspects with decisions made, actions and behaviours. Authentic leaders exhibit these characteristics. From this perspective, authentic leaders could be described as people who are aware of themselves, own their mistakes, acknowledge their faults, and always put the interests of their organizations ahead of self-interests.

There have been various attempts to conceptualize authentic leadership and thus there exist multiple definitions written from differing viewpoints with varied emphasis. Authentic leadership is grounded in the principle found in the adage from one of William Shakespeare's quotes, "to thine own self be true". In-depth research on the theory of authentic leadership began in the early 2000s (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Theoretically, Walumbwa et al. (2008) define authentic leadership as:

- ...a pattern of leader behaviour that draws upon and promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate, to foster greater self-awareness, and internalized moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency on the part of leaders working with followers, fostering positive self-development. (94)

Avolio et al. (2004) on the other hand defines the authentic leader as:

- ...someone who acts in accordance with deep personal values and convictions to build credibility and win the respect and trust of followers by encouraging diverse viewpoints and building networks of collaborative relationships with followers and thereby lead in a manner that followers recognise as authentic (806).

Such leaders according to them, have achieved high levels of authenticity, thus they know who they are, what they believe in and value and also act upon those values and beliefs when interacting with others. In so doing they are true to others and more importantly true to themselves. In the view of Shamir and Eilam (2005) authentic leadership does not depend on only the existence of the characteristics of authentic leaders but also on followers who authenticate the leader and follow him/her authentically.

Authentic leaders possess certain characteristics, which from Shamir and Eilam (2005) perspective, can be put into four categories. First, authentic leaders do not fake their leadership. Thus they are true to themselves (rather than conforming to the expectations of others) and not pretend to be leaders just because they are in a leadership position. Second, authentic leaders do not take on a leadership role or engage in leadership activities for status, honour or other personal rewards. They have a cause they want to promote and based on their values they engage in leadership in order to promote this cause or mission. Third, authentic leaders are originals, not copies; that is, they have certain values which they have internalised and hold these values to be true not because these values are socially or politically appropriate, but because they have experienced them to be true and thus lead from their own personal point of view. Finally, the actions of authentic leaders are based on their personal values and convictions; there is consistency between what they say and what they believe.

Considering the varied views of authentic leadership, the idea can be explained as an approach to leadership where the leader's action is based on his/her core values, knows him/her self, genuine, fair minded and do the right thing at the right time without following the crowd but rather inspire them to follow him towards the successful achievement of their vision and goals.

There is growing evidence that an authentic approach to leading is desirable and effective for achieving positive outcomes in organizations. There are various benefits of authenticity, as shown by growing evidence from social, cognitive, and positive psychology as well as organizational studies (Walumbwa et al., 2008). Authentic leaders exhibit a consistency between their values, beliefs, and actions (Walumbwa, et al., 2008) because they have a high self awareness of these values, beliefs, emotions, self-identity, and abilities (Yulk, 2010), they tend to be more transparent, more open, self-disclose more, and evoke higher levels of follower trust which has important implications for employee engagement and performance. Again, adopting authentic leadership results in leaders leading with purpose and values, and being very self aware.

3. Models of Authentic Leadership

Different scholars have developed different models of authentic leadership. For instance, Beddoes-Jones and Swailes (2015) developed what they described as the three-pillar model. This model is reflected in a relational model, which include self-awareness, ethics and self-regulation and these depends on trust. On the other hand, Walumbwa et al. (2008) have developed a four-model version which include self awareness, balanced processing, internalised moral perspective and relational transparency.

This paper is interested in the four-pillar model developed by Walumbwa, et al. (2008). This is because the model entails the characteristics developed by Beddoes-Jones and Swailes (2015) in addition to other characteristics. Walumbwa et al. (2008) initially viewed authentic leadership as being made up of five distinct but related components, which are self awareness, relational transparency, internalised regulation, balanced processing of information and positive moral perspective. They, however, combined the internal regulation processes and positive moral perspective into internalised moral perspective later resulting in the four components.

3.1. Self-awareness

Self-awareness (SA), according to Walumbwa et al (2008), refers to the demonstration of an understanding of how one derives and makes meaning of the world and how that meaning making process impacts the way one views himself or herself over time (p.95). In this sense, it is seen as one's awareness of, and trust in, one's own personal characteristics, values, motives, feelings, and cognitions (Ilies et al., 2005), as well as a clear understanding of who one is—i.e., one's personality and how others perceive it. Thus, it is about being conscious of what one is good at while acknowledging what the person is yet to learn and therefore not an end in itself but a process where the individual understands him/herself. From Valsania (2012) perspective it is about being aware of one's values, identity, emotions, objectives and goals as well as the effect their actions have on their employees. Some of these values include honesty, altruism, kindness, fairness, accountability and optimism (Yukl, 2010).

Walumbwa et al. (2008) are of the view that knowing oneself means more than being aware of one's values, identity, emotions, objectives, and goals, as well as the effect their actions have on their employees but also refers to a demonstration of understanding of how one develops and makes meaning of the world and how that process of making meaning influences the way one views oneself. Thus a leader who is knowledgeable about him/herself understands his/her personal strengths, weaknesses, and motives, and also aware of how others view his/her leadership (Walumbwa et al., 2010). As a result, he or she is able to behave well with his/her subordinates which may result in employees being engaged as suggested by Xu and Thomas (2011). Thus, self-awareness results in

leaders being knowledgeable about their personal beliefs, values, goals, as well as being aware of how others recognize them. Thus awareness influences the way they relate with followers and therefore impacts on employee engagement.

3.2. *Balanced Processing*

Balanced processing (BP), according to Walumbwa et al. (2008), refers to leaders who show that they objectively analyze all relevant data before coming to a decision (p. 95). Thus BP involves the objective analysis of relevant information available before making choices (Gardner, et al., 2005). This implies that the leader will not distort, embellish, or ignore the available information but objectively analyze it before deciding on the action to take. Doing so will encourage others to question or challenge one's values before making a decision. Walumbwa et al. (2010) add that leaders whose followers perceive them to exhibit BP seek views from others that challenge their existing positions, indicating that the leader accepts vulnerability. Thus, the leaders' vulnerability is due to the essential relationship between subordinates' trust and superiors' ability to lead (Klenke, 2007).

Being vulnerable in this paper means being open, even if it is to criticism or attack. It should be noted that vulnerability is not seen as a weakness by authentic leaders but rather as a necessary element for innovation, creativity and change (Wright, 2015). Consequently, a vulnerable leader is more probable to get superiority and reliable information, which they can rely on to make decisions which will guide them in their relationship with followers. Literature confirms that employees whose opinions are sort in making decisions turned to be engaged. Thus authentic leader behaviour reflected in balanced processing will affect EE.

3.3. *Internalised Moral Perspective*

Another factor or variable of the model is internalised moral (IM). Walumbwa et al. (2008) citing Ryan and Deci (2003) explain IM as an internalized and integrated form of self-regulation. A self-regulated leader, according to Beddoes-Jones and Swailes (2015), displays self-discipline, keeps his ego in check, does not suffer from mood swings, remains approachable even when facing significant challenges and consistently acts as a role model for others.

Accordingly, through self-regulation based on an internalised moral value not one imposed by group members, organisation or society, such leaders' behaviour is expressed in ethical decisions making and ethical behaviour (Walumbwa et al., 2008). In ethical decision making and behaviours, leaders use their internal moral standards and values to guide how they act or behave rather than allow outside pressure to dictate and control their behaviour, even though the managers' values should be in accordance with the values generally accepted in their environment like the society, organisation, or the like (Pengere & Černea, 2014). Such behaviour is highly likely to impact on employee engagement.

4. **Employee Engagement**

In recent times, it has been acknowledged that Employee Engagement (EE) is a powerful tool to predict and enhance individual and organisational performance (Markos & Sridevi, 2010). Consequently, there has been various attempts to define and study EE. In spite of this, there is no consensus on the meaning of EE (Saks & Gruman, 2014). Schaufeli, et al. (2002) define the concept as "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption" (74). In a nutshell, rather than a momentary and specific state, engagement refers to a more persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state that is not focused on any particular object, event, individual or behaviour (Schaufeli, et al., 2002).

Even though the definition and meaning of engagement in the practitioner literature often overlaps with other constructs the academic literature it is clear (Saks, 2006). He defined it as a distinct and unique construct that consists of cognitive, emotional and behavioural components that are associated with individual performance.

Employee engagement from Albrecht's (2010) view refers to a positive work-related psychological state characterised by a genuine willingness to contribute to organisational success. Employees are ready to put in extra effort to ensure the successful achievement of the organisation's goal. Bakker and Demerouti, (2008); Braine and Roodt (2011), Xanthopoulou, et al., (2009); Schaufeli, et al., (2002); Sibiya, et al. (2014) also describe engagement as a positive work related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption- the three main behaviours of an engaged employee.

Absorption, a critical aspect of engagement, conveys a sense of intensity of concentration (Rothbard, 2001). It involves being deeply engrossed in one's work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work (Schaufeli, et al., 2002). It is what prompts employees to identify with the organisation, recommend the organisation to others as a good place to work and also "go the extra mile" in looking for creative solutions that help the organisation succeed (Richman, 2006). Vigour on the other hand is being characterised by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one's work, and persistence even in the face of difficulties (Schaufeli, et al, 2002; Bakker & Demerouti, 2008).

Schaufeli, et al. (2002) and Bakker and Demerouti (2008) explain dedication as being characterised by a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride and challenge. It is "being strongly involved in one's work and experiencing a sense of significance, enthusiasm and challenge" (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008, p 210). It should be noted that these explanations or definitions of vigour, absorption and dedication according to Bakker and Leiter (2010) are focused on the experiences of work activity of the employee and not the prediction nor the outcomes of the experience. Employee engagement can thus be described as a positive attachment -physical, emotional and mental - that an employee has for his organisation which influences him/her to put in extra effort towards the achievement of the organisation's goals.

Definitions of engagement in existence often sound like other constructs such as organisational commitment, job satisfaction and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) (Robinson, et al., 2004) though they are different. The next section describes the differences between them. Job satisfaction as is explained as a positive feeling about one's job resulting from an evaluation of its

characteristics (Robbins & Judge, 2009). Engagement is seen as going beyond job satisfaction and refers to an employee's personal state of involvement, contribution and ownership (Robinson, et al., 2004). Satisfaction is "one-way" relation (what can you do for me), and Engagement is a "two-way" relationship (what can we do together, in partnership).

Employee commitment refers to the level of employee satisfaction as well as identification with the organization, while employee engagement focuses on not just identification with the organisation but an emotional attachment to the organization and are always trying to give their maximum contribution towards its success.

Since engaged employees have powerful effect on business outcomes (Richman, 2006) leaders should ensure all efforts are put in place to achieve this. Studies have established a positive relationship between employee engagement and organizational performance outcomes that include employee retention, productivity, profitability, customer loyalty and safety (Popli & Rizvi, 2015). Engaged employees are committed, dedicated, and invest in their work roles cognitively, psychologically, and behaviourally (Rana, et al., 2014) and this improves on organisation's performance. They are people who work with passion, have a deep connection to their company, come up with innovation and move the organization forward (Attridge, 2009). Engaged employees, according to Schaufeli et al, (2002), have a sense of energetic and effective connection with their work activities and see themselves as able to deal absolutely with the demands of their job. Such employees' presence in an organisation will impact on performance.

Indeed, findings from a research by Bakker and Demerouti (2008) indicate that engaged employees are more creative, more productive, experience high level of energy, have strong identification toward their work and more willing to go the extra mile. High levels of engagement promote retention of talents, advance customer loyalty and improve performance of organisation as well as shareholder value (Lockwood, 2007) customer satisfaction, retention and loyalty (Bates, 2004).

5. Authentic Leadership, Employee Engagement and Trust

This section presents information on the effect of leadership styles on employee engagement and how this relationship is mediated by trust. Leadership is a major factor, which contributes immensely to the general wellbeing of organisations and nations (Odumeru&Ifeanyi, 2013). Effective leadership behaviour according to Buelens, et al, (2006), is based on both the willingness of the manager to help subordinates and the need of subordinates for help. Successful leaders have one thing in common; that is, they influence those around them in order to reap maximum benefit from the organization's resources, including its most vital and expensive resource-its people.

A significant portion of literature on leadership and employee engagement reveals positive link between leadership style and employee engagement. For instance, results from a study by Sarti (2014) in Italy found that the styles adopted by leaders impacted on individual performance of employees. Also, Bakker and Schaufeli (2008) assert that employees who have positive interactions with their managers have increased levels of engagement. This may be the reason why Mugo, et al. (2014) suggest that all managers and supervisors should be concerned about strengthening employee engagement.

A number of authors have suggested that authentic leadership may positively affect employee attitudes and behaviours, such as job satisfaction, work engagement, organisational citizenship behaviour, and performance (Avolio, et al., 2004; Gardner, et al., 2005; Ilies, et al. 2005). This is because authentic relations with followers lead to trust (Gardner, et al., 2005; Clapp-Smith, et al., 2009) and research confirms that increase in trust directly or indirectly result in positive workplace behaviours and attitudes like organisational commitment and employee work engagement (Dirk & Ferrin, 2002). Thus, trust becomes a mediating factor between AL and EE.

Trust is important in any relationship, and leader-member relationship is no exception (Hassan & Ahmed, 2011). Trust is a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behaviour of another (Rousseau et al., 1998). Trust according to Donney et al. (1998, p. 604) is 'willingness to rely on another party and to take action in circumstances where such actions makes one vulnerable to the other party'. Leadership trust is very necessary and a viable component of organisational success (Dirk & Ferrin, 2002; Morgan & Zeffane, 2003). Dirk and Ferrin (2003) describes leadership trust as a leader-member relationship based on mutual respect, cooperation, commitment, reliability and equity. Leaders are considered trustworthy based on their conduct, integrity, use of control, ability to communicate and how they express interest for members (Whitener, et al., 1998). When trust is broken, it turns to have a negative effect on the performance of the people involved (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). Whitener, et al, (1998) suggest that leaders should put up five categories of behaviours to build trust with their employees. These are: Behavioural consistency, Behavioural integrity, Sharing and delegating control, Communication and Demonstration of concern. Building trust with employees is key because EE increases if there is a sound sense of trust in their immediate supervisor (Hassan & Ahmed, 2011). Hence, if there exist trust between the leader and subordinates and other followers it will contribute positively towards their engagement.

The authentic leaders lead by example and demonstrate transparent decision making (Avolio& Gardner, 2005), arouse and motivate followers to higher level of performance by building a workforce characterised by high level of hope, optimism, resiliency and self-efficacy (Avolio, et al, 2004). Such behaviour of the authentic leaders moves employees to trust him and to be more engaged. Followers of authentic leaders with time internalise values and beliefs revealed to them and this change their self-perceptions in the actual state, and therefore what they may become (Avolio& Gardner, 2005) and behave. This point holds because according to Hughes, et al. (2012) authentic leaders have strong ethical convictions that guide their behaviour not so much to avoid doing "wrong" things but to always try to do the "right" things including treating others with respect and dignity, a prerequisite of trust.

The results of studies conducted by Avolio and Gardner (2005), Gardner et al. (2005) and Toor and Ofori (2008) confirm a positive effect that authentic leadership has on employee engagement. However, results of a study conducted by Seco and Lopes (2013) show an insignificant negative effect between authentic leadership and employee engagement. This difference in the results may be the mediating factor-trust was not considered in the research.

Bamford, et al. (2013) in a study to examine the relationship among nurses' perceptions of nurse managers' authentic leadership, nurses' overall person-job match in six areas of work life and their work engagement among others found that authentic leadership, overall person-job match and years of experience explained 33.1% of the variance in work engagement and concluded that nurses who work for authentic leaders have higher engagement. Similarly, Penge and Černea (2014) carried out a study with the purpose to develop and test empirically a multilevel model of cross-level interactions between authentic leadership at team level and job analysis of data gathered from 23 team supervisors and 289 team members, it was identified that authentic leadership had a positive and statistically significant relationship with employees' work engagement. In addition, it was found that perceived supervisor support was positively related to team members' work engagement. They explained that this result of the influence of authentic leadership on employees' engagement showed that in line with the social exchange theory propounded by Blau (1964) and the norm of reciprocity by Gouldner (1960), the followers of supervisors who perceive their supervisors as authentic are willing to put in extra effort into their work to reciprocate the highly valued relationships with their leaders.

Furthermore, results from a study by Walumbwa, et al. (2010) to examine the direct and indirect effect of authentic leader behaviour on organisational citizen behaviour and work engagement showed that authentic leadership behaviour was positively related to supervisor-rated OCB and work engagement. This result perhaps implies that the more employees perceive their leaders as authentic, the more they identify with them, feel psychologically empowered trust them and be more engaged. It is thus imperative that leaders build credibility, win respect and trust, be aware of themselves, and hold high ethical standards to increase employee engagement.

6. The Conceptual Framework

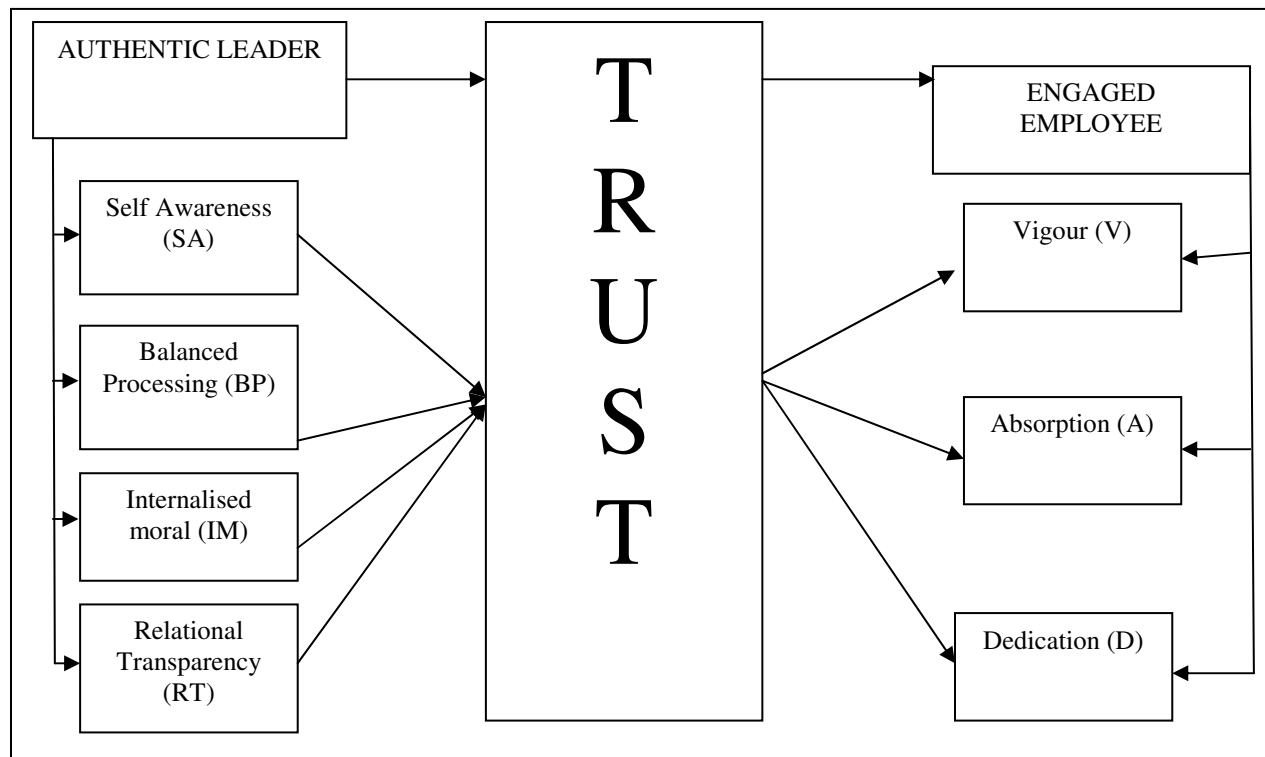


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework showing the relationship between components of Authentic leader, Trust and Employee engagement
Source: Authors, 2015

The components Authentic Leaders (AL) according to Walumbwa, et al. (2008) are Self awareness (SA), Balanced processing (BP), Internalised model (IM), and Relational transparency (RT). Thus $SA + BP + IM + RT = AL$.

The components of Employee Engagement (EE) according to Schaufeli et al. (2002) are Vigour (V), Absorption (A) and Dedication (D). Thus $V + A + D = EE$.

This conceptual framework in Figure 1 is showing that AL affects EE and this relationship is mediated by trust.

7. Conclusion

AL and EE have been defined in different ways by different authors in the literature. Each of these constructs has varied components. It is quite clear that several researches have been carried out with focus on identifying the relationship between authentic leadership and employee engagement. However, it appears the relationship between the components of the constructs, that is AL (Self awareness, Balanced processes, Internalised moral and Relational transparency) and EE (Vigour, Absorption, and Dedication) have not been directly explored. This relationship from literature is mediated by trust in leaders. A conceptual framework depicting the relationship between AL and EE with trust as a mediating factor is proposed to serve as a basis in conducting empirical studies in the future. It is hoped that empirical studies would be conducted using the conceptual framework in Figure 1 focusing on the specific components of

authentic leadership and that of employee engagement with trust being a mediating factor to identify which of these strongly impacts on the other.

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