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## Identifying Effective Factors on Institutionalizing of Authentic Leadership

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study was to identify the factors affecting the institutionalization of authentic leadership in the Islamic Azad University of Tehran in 2019. This study was performed qualitatively and quantitatively (mixed). For this purpose, 12 experts in the field of management in higher education were purposefully selected and interviewed semi-structured, so that the necessary data were collected based on theoretical saturation. Then, three steps of open, axial and selective coding were performed using NVivo 10 software. Then, a 24-item researcher-made questionnaire was prepared based on a range of five Likert options, the face and content validity of which was confirmed by 10 expert professors and distributed among 203 selected samples. Its reliability was calculated to be 0.845 Cronbach's alpha. To analyze the research data, exploratory, confirmatory, and t-sample factor analysis tests were used using SPSS 24 software and LISREL. The findings of this study indicate that 8 factors play the most important role in institutionalizing authentic leadership in Islamic Azad University. These factors are: "social factors" with the highest score and in the first place, "political factors" in the second place, "economic factors" in the third place, "cultural factors" and "technological factors" both in the fourth place, "Organizational factors" were in the fifth place, "Individual factors" were in the sixth place and "International factors" were in the seventh place. Therefore, to institutionalize authentic leadership in the university, all the proposed factors must be considered in a coordinated manner.

### Introduction

Today, the issue of leadership has become an important challenge for today's organizations (Madanchian, et al., 2018). In recent decades, ethical issues and the adoption of an ethical approach in the field of organization and management have become very common. Following these conditions, the issue of leadership has been influenced in universities, as one of the influential educational

organizations in societies, by this approach and has led to the creation of a new style called "authentic leadership" (PiranNezhad et al., 2013).

The authentic leadership, which has recently entered the literature of leadership, was first introduced in the field of sociology and education in 1990, and due to its position as an emerging concept, it attracted a lot of attention from the Society for Leadership Studies. The development of the main framework of the work was undertaken by the Gallup Leadership Institute (Ladkin & Taylor, 2010, citing MirAli & Kaheh, 2014). The term authentic leadership represents a fundamental concept that increases and enhances other types of positive leadership. Authentic leaders can be portrayed as people who are well aware of their values and beliefs and have enough self-confidence to express themselves and their authentic behavior in a way that is consistent with their inner thoughts and feelings (Braun and Niberle, 2017; 782); Because authentic leadership emerges as a behavioral model from positive psychological capacities and a positive organizational ethical climate, it fosters self-awareness, intrinsic ethical aspects, balanced information processing, and transparency in working with followers (Walumbwa, et al, 2008 quoting Mir Ali and Kaheh, 2014). Also, authentic leadership is deeply aware of its way of thinking and is aware of its values, moral views, and the strengths of itself and others; And it recognizes the context in which it operates; it is confident, hopeful, optimistic, flexible, ethical, and forward-looking (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; quoted in Lotfi et al., 2014). Because the foundation of authentic leadership is based on the concept of authenticity, it is based on the fact that people behave in accordance with their high human values, beliefs, and nature, and under the influence of various conditions and pressures, insists on behaving in accordance with their values and beliefs. In fact, authentic leadership theories seek to train leaders to show their true selves to their followers and to behave in accordance with their inner truth away from any hypocrisy (PiranNezhad et al., 2010).

### **Research Methology**

This research is applied in terms of purpose, because in order to solve problems quickly, and adopt the necessary measures, so that in addition to awareness, existing obstacles and problems can be solved with careful and principled planning; because this study will be useful for universities and research centers. However, this research has been done in terms of data collection method with mixed approach (quantitative & quality) and consecutive exploration strategy. The qualitative part was conducted as a "semi-constructed interview" because the factors are identified. The quantitative part was descriptive-survey. The statistical population of the study included all managers of Islamic Azad University of Tehran Province with 385 people, 12 of whom were initially selected for targeted semi-structured interviews. The following basic questions were asked: A) In your opinion, what is authentic leadership? B) What are the

factors affecting authentic leadership in Islamic Azad University? C) What is the current situation of the authentic leadership at the Islamic Azad University of Tehran Province? D) How do you think the authentic leadership can be institutionalized in the Islamic Azad University? After conducting the interviews and using NVivo 10 software, open, central and selective coding was performed. Then, the 24-item researcher-made questionnaire was well prepared in the two situations (Existing and favorable) according to the identified components based on the 5-item Likert scale (very low with a score of 1, low with a score of 2, I have no opinion with a score of 3, high with a score of 4 and very high with a score of 5). The formal validity and content were approved by 10 professors in the field of higher education management. The reliability of the Cronbach's alpha of 0.845 was calculated and distributed among 203 participants who were calculated using Cochran's formula and selected as multi-stage clusters. Confirmatory factor analysis was performed. The t-test was also used to assess the current state of the authentic leadership and its institutionalization mechanisms at the university. In this study, researchers tried to answer the following questions:

- 1) What are the effective factors for the institutionalizing of authentic leadership in the Islamic Azad University?
- 2) What is the current situation of authentic leadership in the Islamic Azad University?
- 3) What are the mechanisms for institutionalizing authentic leadership in the Islamic Azad University?
- 4) What model can be provided for the institutionalizing of authentic leadership in the Islamic Azad University?

### **Discussion and Results**

Since this study was conducted with the aim of identifying the factors affecting authentic leadership in Tehran Azad University with a mixed approach, after studying the literature and research background and semi-structured interview with experts, the first research finding led to identifying eight components (Individual, cultural, social, political, economic, technological, organizational and international factors) as effective factors of authentic leadership, so they are:

The first component was identified as "individual factors", which ranked seventh. The second component was identified as "cultural factors" which, along with technological factors, were ranked fourth and fifth, respectively. The third component was identified as "social factors", which came in first. The fourth component was identified as "political factors", which came in second. The fifth component was identified as "economic factors", which came in third. The sixth component was identified as "technological factors" which, along with cultural factors, were ranked fourth and fifth, respectively. The seventh

component was identified as "organizational factors," ranking sixth. The eighth component was identified as "international factors", which came in last. Also, according to the identified eight effective factors, 16 strategies have been proposed (two solutions for each factor) that should be considered for the institutionalizing of authentic leadership in the university.

Another finding of this study showed that the current situation of authentic leadership (in each of its eight components in the Islamic Azad University is less than the average of society and is in unfavorable conditions. Since authentic leadership can lead to the effectiveness and optimal performance of the university, it is necessary based on the identified eight effective factors, institutionalizing mechanisms and the proposed model provide the ground for the institutionalization of authentic leadership in the Islamic Azad University of Tehran Province.

#### **conclusion**

Since authentic leadership can lead to the effectiveness and optimal performance of the university, it is necessary to provide the ground for institutionalizing authentic leadership in the Islamic Azad University of Tehran based on the eight effective factors identified, institutionalization mechanisms and the proposed model. Finally, the recommendations based on the research results are as follows:

- 1) Since this study was conducted only in the Azad University of Tehran, it is recommended that it be conducted in other provinces in the free, government, non-profit and Payame Noor universities and their results Compare.
- 2) Since social factors play the most important role in institutionalizing authentic leadership in the university, it is suggested that officials hold social conferences and workshops to raise the level of social commitment, social responsibility.
- 3) Since individual factors are another effective factor, it is recommended that the training of employees be provided through workshops on self-confidence, self-knowledge, and positive thinking.

**Keywords:** authentic leadership, organizational dimension, individual dimension, institutionalization

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