

Full Length Research Paper

SUSTAINABILITY & AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP: STUMBLING BLOCKS AND ENABLERS

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Abstract

The literature within the field of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainability is broad and can be classified in a variety of approaches. What remains constant in these various models is that leadership and specifically authentic leadership, is key to going beyond compliance oriented sustainability to achieve genuine implicit, sustainability.

This study thus seeks to explore the construct of authentic leadership from the perspective of practicing managers. To achieve this, a group of 210 MBA students were asked to write on authentic leadership from their own experiences. This body of leadership assignments was analyzed through the use of open and axial coding, grounded theory and content analysis. Through this process, a series of family codes emerged which can be grouped into factors which either enable or hinder authentic leadership. Self-knowledge emerged as the main enabler, and the influence of others is the main hindrance, to authenticity.

Keywords: Authenticity, leadership, self-awareness, sustainability, corporate social responsibility, trust

Introduction

The aim of this research is to determine what the enablers and the stumbling blocks are to achieving authenticity for a group of MBA and EMBA students. Students were asked to write about authenticity and to provide a literary definition, as well as their experiences of personal stumbling blocks and enablers of authenticity. These experiences are analyzed in this paper.

The concept of authenticity is key to that of good leadership: "Authentic leadership links assumptions, beliefs about, and actions related to, authentic self, relationships, learning, governance and organization, through significant human values, to leadership and management practices that are ethically and morally uplifting" (Duignan & Bhindi, 1997:208). Authentic leadership is also specifically seen as a key driver for corporate social responsibility and sustainability (Waldman et al, 2006b; Waldman, Siegel & Javidan, 2006a; O'Neil & Ucbasaran, 2010). Wicki and van der Kaaij (2007) go further still and identify authenticity and the distinction between rule-based CSR and principle-based CSR.

Hence, this research is important in order to understand what enables or prevents people, especially those in, or aspiring to be in management and leadership positions, to live and lead authentically and sustainably.

Literature Review

As with any emergent subject area, the literature around corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainability is extensive, albeit not very clearly defined. Furthermore, as the literature crosses traditional academic boundaries, the challenge is even greater. Preston (1975) first suggested the need to classify the field, and a variety of authors have taken up the challenge. An extensive review by Garriga and Mele (2004) divided the literature into four groups: (1) CSR as a means to profit; (2) CSR as part of a corporation's social power, relatedly (3) CSR as part of a social contract, and lastly, (4) CSR as embedded in morality and ethics. Waldman and Siegel (2008) reduce the debate to a binary argument between CSR as a framework which is only relevant insofar as it creates rules that inform the core corporate goal of profit maximization, and the opposing view of responsibility based on moral values. Secchi (2007) steers a middle ground and models social responsibility along three lines. The first, the utilitarian school, is in line with previous models. The second, the managerial perspective, looks at problems from the internal perspective of the

organization while the third, the relational school looks at the firm and the wider environment.

Wood (1991), Thomas and Simerly (1995) and Agle et al (1999) recognize that, while creating frameworks can be informative, much more thought should be given to concrete examples of how managers use CSR values in their decision-making because managers decide on what gets done in organizations. Waldman et al (2006b), for example, subscribe to a neo-charismatic leadership paradigm and suggest that two key aspects of leaders are critical to social responsibility and sustainability: visionary leadership which encompasses a sense of mission, an inspirational vision and determination; and secondly, the concepts of integrity and authenticity, encompassing stability and continuity. Similarly, Angus-Leppan et al (2010) suggest that while autocratic leadership leads to explicit, compliance-based CSR, authentic leadership styles promote implicit, transformational sustainability. Angus-Leppan et al (2010), and Wicki and van der Kaaij (2007), typify the link made in the literature between an authentic leadership based on values and a sustainable leadership outlook.

Having provided a very brief overview of the challenges involved in classifying the CSR literature and illustrated how leadership, and specifically authentic leadership is a critical component, a review of the field of authenticity follows.

As with the broad bodies of literature concerning corporate social responsibility or leadership, the challenge is to delineate and sort the material. The authenticity literature has its conceptual roots in philosophy, humanistic psychology and positive psychology. In the specific area of authentic leadership, Luthans and Avolio and their colleagues now at the Gallup Leadership Institute of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln are critical. Luthans and Avolio (2003) argue that an authentic leadership development strategy is urgently needed for leaders to cope with the ethical issues thrown up to achieve sustainability in leadership. They draw on a wide ranging body of research including the area of positive psychology (Seligman, 2002; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Snyder & Lopez, 2002); transformational leadership (Bass, 1985, 1998) and ethical and moral perspective-taking (Schulman, 2002). A key special issue of *The Leadership Quarterly* in 2005 further expands the domain to include work on authentic follower development (Ilies, Morgeson & Nahrgang, 2005). More importantly, a range of articles provide impetus for this present study. Shamir and Eilam (2005) advance a life stories approach while Sparrowe (2005) applies hermeneutic philosophy to the narrative process. Michie and Gooty (2005) explore the effects of values and emotions while Cooper et al (2005) importantly call on scholars to ensure that theory does not become

unrelated from reality.

At an aggregate level, one faces a challenge of classification. The field can be subdivided in many ways. Avolio and Gardner (2005) compare authentic leadership with other leadership theories without really moving things forward. More successfully, they draw out positive psychological capital, positive moral perspective, leader self-awareness, leader self-regulation, leadership behaviour, follower self-awareness, and follower development as key themes emerging from the literature. In concluding their paper, they suggest that the authenticity literature is key to meaningful, sustainable performance.

THE PRESENT STUDY

In the present study, 210 assignments on leadership and authenticity from MBA students were analyzed. The overall pool of assignments drew on two sets of work. The first group came from the full-time MBA students of the University of Cape Town's Graduate School of Business from a class on Communication, Leadership and Learning. The second set came from EMBA students from Erasmus University's Rotterdam School of Management in a class on Leadership.

In the first part of the study, students were asked to provide their own definitions of what authentic leadership meant to them. In this manner, this study has sought to follow up on the suggestion made by Cooper et al (2005) to ensure that the literature remains related to practice. An additional goal of this task was to compare the classification of definitions from a practitioner perspective with those of an academic perspective.

In the second part of the study, the assignments were analysed through the use of open and axial coding, as well as grounded theory and content analysis. The emergent sub-codes were grouped into twelve broader family codes. Some of these family codes had a positive influence and added to authenticity while others detracted from an ability to conduct one's self authentically.

Definitions of Authenticity

Within the assignments, participants were asked to draw on published, academic definitions of authenticity and to choose the definition which best reflected their own personal perspectives. The 210 submissions were manually grouped into five themes and categories. The categories which emerged were: Authenticity and Trust, Authenticity and Self-Awareness, Authenticity and Relationships, Authenticity and the Perception of Others, and Authenticity and Balance. These form the basis for an overall understanding of Authenticity and Leadership.

Authenticity and Self-Awareness

Mader (2007:74) states this concept of authenticity in a

basic form, and believes that authenticity is "[i]n a nutshell, transparent self-awareness". He states that this is a continuous evaluation of how values are informed by experiences (Mader, 2007). Knowing oneself also includes knowing and acknowledging weaknesses. Marshall and Heffes (2004:10) state: "[a]uthentic leadership...is about: being your own person; having your own unique style; stewardship; being aware of your weaknesses; and developing as a leader".

However, being self-aware and acknowledging weaknesses is not a complete description of authenticity for some authors. Schor, Kane and Lindsay (1995:55) describe authenticity as "being with, understanding and acting from one's feelings and inner truth in the moment and in an ongoing process of self-discovery". The idea of acting from one's "inner truth in the moment" is linked closely to Donahoe's definition, who sees authenticity as "maintaining a sense of self no matter where you are" (quoted in George, Sims, McLean & Mayer, 2007:137). Although theoretically plausible, this argument is somewhat weak in terms of applicability in reality, and this concept of always acting on one's feelings, is one that many find difficult to put into practice. This is where the need for balance is addressed.

Authenticity and Balance

There are many factors of authenticity that require balance. One of these is the balance between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. In order to discover one's authentic leadership, according to George et al (2007:135), "the key is to find a balance between your desires for external validation and the intrinsic motivations that provide fulfillment in your work". Many leaders measure their terms of success against external validations instead of intrinsic motivations (George et al, 2007), despite the fact that intrinsic motivations "are more fulfilling than extrinsic motivations" (George et al, 2007:136).

One of the most difficult balancing acts in trying to achieve authenticity is that of balancing values and actions. The better the balance between being true to one's core and the actions one takes, the more authentic one is. "Authenticity refers to the degree of congruence between internal values and external expressions." (Harter, 2002, quoted in Roberts, 2005:699).

Authenticity and the Perception of Others

Goffee and Jones (2005:88) state that "authenticity is a quality that others must attribute to you". This definition seems to vary a great deal from the definitions of authenticity that require developing self-awareness, self-discovery and oneself (Mader, 2007; Schor, et al, 1995; Marshall & Heffes, 2004). Endrissat, Müller and Kaudela-Baum (2007:208) concur with Goffee and Jones (2005) in that they see authenticity not as "a personal innate

quality, but as a characteristic attributed to leaders by others". However, they deviate slightly from Goffee and Jones' (2005) interpretation of the factors needed to create authenticity. Where Goffee and Jones (2005) state that a leader's words and deeds need to be consistently aligned to establish authenticity, Endrissat et al (2007:217) argue that this is "not necessarily a reliable indicator of a person being true to herself" and that it is a "necessary, but not a sufficient condition for authenticity". They argue that leaders might be able to act a part that is not of their conviction (Endrissat et al, 2007).

According to Goffee and Jones (2005), there are two parts to managing this perception: leaders have to ensure their actions match their words, and they need to "present different faces to different audiences" (Goffee & Jones, 2005:89). Therefore, it is still important to remain authentic; however, one should choose wisely which aspect of one's personality should be shown to a specific group. When doing this, authentic leaders also need to know how much they need to "conform to social and organizational norms...to create just enough distance from the norms so followers will perceive the leaders as special and attractive" (Goffee & Jones, 2005:93). In order to do this, the leader's ability to read her or his audience, and therefore her or his ability to build relationships, is very important in this aspect, as will be detailed below.

Authenticity and Relationships

One of the reasons it is important to show different aspects of one's personality to different audiences, is the fact that people can sense inauthenticity. Roberts qualifies this by stating that authenticity can "enhance the quality of the individual's relationships, while inauthenticity can detract from relationship quality" (Roberts, 2005:701). Conversely, Duignan and Bhindi (1997:201) find that the relationship between authenticity and relationships is reversed: "[a]uthenticity is not only a quality of the leader, but it is also a product of relationships and interrelationships".

Trust is an integral part of relationships, as well as a part of authenticity. Luke (1998, quoted in Fairholm & Fairholm, 2000:103) captures this connection as follows: "[t]rust, essential in interpersonal relationships, is based not only on the confidence and predictability of the actions of others, but also on the moral integrity and goodwill of another". This concept of trust in the context of authenticity is elaborated on below.

Authenticity and Trust

One of the essential ingredients in relationships is trust. James (2001, quoted in Darwish, 2006:34) describes trust as follows: "If trust is violated, the other party will limit their future exposure. If trust is confirmed, greater loyalty and commitment are like to occur". Effective leaders need to confirm, or earn, the trust of others in order to

become authentic: "[a]uthentic leaders earn the allegiance of others not by coercion or manipulation but by building *trusting* relationships" (Duignan & Bhindi, 1997:206).

Lewicki et al (1998, quoted in Dietz & Den Hartog, 2006:564) describe it in the following way: "the formation of a trust belief about another party, and the decision to trust them or not, requires sophisticated processing of huge amounts of often-contradictory information". Precisely because of these amounts of information, people need to process in order to trust leaders, the more transparent and authentic the leaders are, the easier it is to make this decision.

THE TEXTUAL STUDY: METHODOLOGY

According to Grabet (1998, quoted in Delattre, Ocler, Moulette & Rymeyko, 2009:36) it is "standard behaviour to link exploration with a qualitative approach". The research is based on a qualitative grounded theory methodology, with the ultimate aim of creating situated-experience theory on authenticity and is therefore exploratory in nature.

Schutz, (1967, quoted in Shaw, 1999:61) notes that the "qualitative paradigm recommends that researchers observe human behaviour and action as it occurs in 'mundane' everyday life". The experiences of everyday stumbling blocks and enablers of authenticity of 210 people, as detailed in the Leadership assignments were analyzed and coded within this research. The words in these assignments record some of their feelings, behaviours or actions.

Research Design and Data Collection Methods

The research design that was used is cross-sectional. Although this is traditionally understood to be associated with research methods such as surveys (Bryman & Bell, 2007), it also uses methods like content analysis, and can be defined as "the collection of data on more than one case ... and at a single point in time in order to collect a body of quantitative or quantifiable data in connection with two or more variables ... which are then examined to detect patterns of association" (Bryman & Bell, 2007:55).

The 210 assignments qualify as the data collected, and Bryman and Bell (2007:71) state that the typical form of a cross-sectional design can "be based upon qualitative content analysis of a set of documents relating to a single event".

The various assignments were written specifically on the 12 seeds of the April² Framework (April & April, 2007), one seed of which was authenticity, which although not an event, is a single topic.

Sampling

The researchers held a database of Communication, Leadership and Learning assignments from the University of Cape Town's Graduate School of Business, as well as Leadership assignments of EMBA students from the Rotterdam School of Management. A sample size of 210 of the most recent assignments across both schools was chosen. According to Bryman and Bell (2007:182), a non-probability sample is "a sample that has not been selected using a random selection method". In this case, due to time constraints, and in order to complete an analysis of authenticity using the most current data available, a non-probability sample has been chosen

Data Analysis Methods

Grounded theory was used to analyze the assignments, and is "a

methodology that has been used to generate theory where little is already known" (Goulding, 1998:51). It is particularly appropriate for this, as it is a methodology "developed for, and particularly suited to, the study of behaviour" (Goulding, 1998:56).

The coding for this research was done using ATLAS.ti software, which was further analyzed using content analysis. Open coding can be defined as "the analytic process through which concepts are identified and their properties and dimensions discovered in the data" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998:101, quoted in Burden & Roodt, 2007:15). After completion of the open coding, a conditional relationship guide was used to perform axial coding for each of the sub-codes identified during the open coding process. According to Scott (2004:125), the Conditional Relationship Guide "contextualizes the central phenomenon and related the structure with the process by answering the investigative questions 'What, When, Where, Why, How, and with what Consequence'". Content analysis was used to further analyze the assignments, and is the method used if "there is not enough former knowledge about the phenomenon or if this knowledge is fragmented" (Lauri & Kyngäs, 2005, quoted in Elo & Kyngäs, 2008:109). This is the case in terms of stumbling blocks and enablers to authenticity for MBA and EMBA students.

FINDINGS

Through the process of open coding, 125 sub-codes of stumbling blocks and enablers to authenticity emerged. Of these sub-codes, "conforming to the expectations of others" was mentioned fifty seven times, which was the sub-code mentioned the most, with "meditation and reflection" being mentioned thirty three times, and "self-awareness" being mentioned twenty seven times. There were 646 instances of enablers and stumbling blocks mentioned in the assignments.

These 125 sub-codes were grouped into twelve family codes: Self-Knowledge, Personality Traits and Behaviours, Relationships, Fear, Values and Morals, Influence of Others, Coping Mechanisms, Meditation, Reflection and Spirituality, Balance, Diversity, Institutions, Organizations and the Workplace, and Money and Material Goods.

The Family Codes are listed below, and the sub-codes that appeared most are elaborated on below and include some excerpts of the assignments written by the students.

Self-Knowledge

The sub-codes contained in the family code of "Self-Knowledge" are cited mainly as enablers.

Self-Awareness

Self-awareness appeared twenty seven times and was one of the most frequently mentioned sub-codes. This is illustrated with the following comment: "[d]uring tense moments ... I find that I refer to myself (internally) asking the question, 'am I being me? ... I find that by doing this, it provides me with the knowledge of the fact that I am aware of my actions'".

Knowing Oneself

This sub-code was mentioned seventeen times and occurred when people had experienced a change in their lives. One respondent joined Narcotics Anonymous: "The turnaround came when I sat down with a sponsor, and started putting my life story to paper... the lessons learnt from both were that the journey of discovery is not a one-time event, but rather a continuous life-long exercise".

Being True to Yourself

This sub-code appeared fifteen times, often in difficult times in the individual's lives. One example is as follows: "At some point in my life I was faced with a dilemma to take or save someone's life. I did not pull an AK47 trigger because it was against what I believed in... I was being true to myself".

Recognising Strengths and Weaknesses

This sub-code was mentioned seven times, as both stumbling block and enabler. The following excerpt illustrates this: "I am bad at acknowledging my own personal shortcomings which results in my bad self-clarity... [w]hen I fail at something I need to assess why I failed, rather than trying to cover up the fact that I failed".

Awareness

Awareness occurs mostly in situations where individuals are looking at their lives in relation to their surroundings, and was mentioned six times

Examining One's Life Story

This sub-code emerged six times. One student explained, "When I look back and examine the relationships of my parents I now realize that, although my father was the alcoholic, it was my mother that was the dominant, controlling personality. I also now see how I use the same techniques to try to dominate my wife"

Expressing Feelings

This was both a stumbling block and an enabler for the individuals, and was mentioned six times and occurs in various situations.

Lack of Self-Awareness

This sub-code was mentioned six times and is a stumbling block in all cases.

The following sub-codes appeared five times or less: Knowing Your Purpose, Strong Sense of Self, Repressing Parts of Oneself, Revealing Different Aspects of Oneself, Not Knowing Oneself, Focusing on Positive

Traits, Not Understanding One's Purpose, Self-Acceptance, Hiding Aspects of Oneself, Lack of Purpose, Difficulty with Examining One's Past Experience, Living Up to Self Imposed Expectations and Open-Mindedness.

Personality Traits and Behaviours

The various sub-codes in this family code are elaborated on below.

Confidence

"Confidence" appeared nine times in the open coding, in differing situations. This is illustrated with the following comment: "When something strikes me as important, I will act strongly and with enormous amounts of self confidence and passion".

Inability to be True to Self

This stumbling block emerged eight times, mostly when dealing with others or facing a difficult truth. One such example is illustrated with this comment: "One of the contributing factors that make[s] me unauthentic is that I am unable to accept my sexuality and never wanted anybody to know about [it]".

Inability to be Open about One's Feelings

This code emerged eight times as a stumbling block, mainly when dealing with family, friends or work colleagues.

Being Compassionate

"Being compassionate" was mentioned five times, mostly as an enabler for authenticity and mainly occurs for individuals who feel the need to give something back to the community.

Inability to Trust

This stumbling block was mentioned five times and occurred when individuals were betrayed in the past.

Inability to Listen Authentically

This code appeared five times as a stumbling block, mainly in the individual's personal lives.

Lack of Confidence, Having low Self-Esteem, Arrogance, Being Intolerant of Others, Being Passionate, Building up a Defense Mechanism, Denial, Strong Intuition, Caring What Others Think, Shyness, Lack of Passion, Lack of

Self Discipline, Inability to Self Regulate in a Stressful Environment, Inability to Ask For Assistance, Conscience and Guilt and Self-Discipline were all mentioned four times or less.

Relationships

This is one of the key family codes that contains stumbling blocks and enablers.

Openness in Relationships

This code appears mainly as an enabler and emerged twenty one times. One individual described this when he spoke about telling his fiancée something he was ashamed of: "I have become brave enough to tell her about the time when as a sixteen year old I slapped my then girlfriend who had cheated on me... revealing who I am will make my relationships more real because people will be interacting with the real me".

Family and Friends

Ten individuals mentioned "family and friends" as both enablers and stumbling blocks. One example is as follows: "I am the youngest of three children... since I was young I have felt as if I was standing in their shadow. I always tried to join in the discussions my parents and siblings used to have during supper... but the response would always be: 'he is still young, forgive him'".

Showing Trust

This sub-code emerged eight times as an enabler, both at home and at work.

Avoiding Conflict

"Avoiding conflict" was a stumbling block mentioned seven times, mainly in the context where people were faced with difficult situations. One of these is highlighted here: "In arguments, I often concede defeat even when I know I am right just to avoid conflict".

Role Models

Seven individuals mentioned role models as enablers for authenticity and one individual described what her role model meant to her: "Royal, a 62 year old grandmother, is by no means perfect, in fact, quite the opposite, but she is real... I use her as my benchmark for authenticity".

Upbringing

"Upbringing" was cited six times, and most of these instances were mentioned as enablers. Tolerance of Others, Building Strong Support Networks,

Death of a Loved One, Associate with Others who Respect Me, Vulnerability, Lack of Meaningful Relationships, Participation in Social Networks, Listening Intently, Appreciation of Others, Transparency, Lack of Role Models and Irreconcilable Desires were all mentioned five times or less.

Fear

Fear is a family code that encompasses mainly stumbling blocks, where individuals are afraid of certain consequences that prevent them from acting authentically.

Fear of Vulnerability

This sub-code was mentioned thirteen times as a stumbling block. One individual stated the following: "Being away from home makes me feel vulnerable, further being black in a white-dominated class worsens my already precarious position... The fear is that I look more vulnerable than I am".

Times of Distress

"Times of Distress" emerged five times, interestingly mostly as an enabler. During his time in the Armed Forces, one individual describes his experience: "I was pushed to the very limits of my mental and physical abilities... It is only when you ... have absolutely nothing left to give... that you truly see the Authentic You".

Fear of Rejection

This stumbling block occurred four times, mostly when dealing with other people.

Moving Away from a Comfort Zone

"Moving away from a comfort zone" was raised by four individuals who were forced, or chose to, leave their comfort zones: "When the sheriff repossess[ed] our home and all we owned, I was forced to face the reality that I was not defined by the possessions that I or my family owned, if this was the case I was nothing and I refused to accept that". This enabled him to become more authentic.

Fear of Being Judged, Fear of Repercussions, Not Afraid of Being Judged, Fear of Conflict, Fear of Hurting Others, Fear of Making Mistakes, Aversion to Risk, Overcoming Fear and Self-Deception were all mentioned once or twice each.

Values and Morals

In the majority of cases, sub-codes belonging to this

family code are enablers of authenticity.

Living Out Your True Values

This sub-code occurred in various situations and was highlighted fourteen times as an enabler. One example is that of an individual who worked for Accenture and decided to resign: "I made the difficult decision to leave the organization based on the fact that the organization's [working] principles were in constant conflict with my personal values".

Sound Values

Thirteen individuals mentioned sound values as an enabler. The context of this sub-code is varied, but includes family life, upbringing and religion.

Standing Up for What You Believe In

This code emerged six times as an enabler, mostly in all situations. One individual describes it as follows: "An enabler for me is not being afraid to voice my opinion or thoughts and [to] have courage to stand up to my beliefs." Being Comfortable With Your Decisions, Honesty, Knowing Where You Stand on Moral Issues, Telling the Truth, Making a Positive Difference in the Lives of Others, Doing what is Right and Fair, Stewardship, Avoiding Situations that Conflict with One's Morals, Integrity, Moral Guidance and Freedom were all mentioned five times or less.

Influence of Others

This family code relates on the whole to stumbling blocks to authenticity where individuals are influenced in different ways

Conforming to the Expectations of Others

This stumbling block was mentioned fifty seven times and is the one sub-code mentioned the most times in all the documents that were analyzed. This sub-code occurred in all types of situations.

Pleasing Others

"Pleasing others" was mentioned by thirteen individuals as a stumbling block. One of the individuals stated: "My desire to please everyone and always be the 'perfect person' is my flawed sense of role in that it disables me from really being myself". The consequence of this had led to her suffering from bulimia.

Contingent Self-Esteem

Nine individuals mention this sub-code as stumbling

blocks, and one illustrated this as follows: "Throughout my life I have been measured against my older sister, Mienkie ... This has made me feel misaligned with myself because I am continuously trying to achieve something which is not based on my own goals and aspirations".

Wanting to Fit In

This sub-code was mentioned seven times as a stumbling block. One individual pretended to be Namibian when he was South African.

Seeking Approval

Seven individuals named this as a stumbling block, both in their personal lives and at work.

Non-Conformance, 'Stealing' the Traits of Others, Being Influenced and Feedback from Others were mentioned six times or less.

Coping Mechanisms

This family code refers mainly to stumbling blocks that were identified as means for individuals to deal with their specific situations. The sub-codes are detailed below:

Putting up a Façade

This stumbling block was mentioned eight times in various circumstances. This individual described himself in the workplace: "In the end I could hardly identify the real me. In every work situation I built a façade". This resulted in the individual not letting people know who he was.

Not Telling the Truth, Escapism, The Ability to Adapt and Change and Mind is Stronger than Body were all mentioned four times or less.

Meditation, Reflection and Spirituality

This family code represents mainly enablers, and the sub-codes are listed below:

Meditation and Reflection

This sub-code was mentioned thirty three times and is the second most mentioned sub-code. It is an enabler in the majority of instances. One individual found this in nature: "I have found that my quiet time comes when I participate in road running or cycling, as well as finding that walks in the Table Mountain National Park...focuses my mind on being reflective".

Spirituality and Religion

Ten individuals named this as a stumbling block or

enabler. One individual mentioned: "I had many material possessions but my life... still felt empty. When I became a Christian I understood my purpose was to follow God and serve Him and others".

Lack of Reflection, Reflection on the Past, Mindfulness and Lack of Inner Vision were all sub-codes mentioned six times or less.

Balance

This family code is represented by both stumbling blocks and enablers and is detailed below.

Congruence between Words and Deeds

This sub-code appears six times and is an enabler. One individual explained this as follows: "I sincerely believe that actions speak louder than words... I strive to maintain a consistency between what I say and do".

Balancing Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation

Four people highlighted this sub-code. One individual stated: "Growing up and living in Johannesburg, it's easy to get caught up in the materialism hype... as result of this, you tend to lose a grip of who you are".

Integrating One's Life, Balancing Work and Social Responsibilities, Incongruence between Words and Deeds and The Struggle of Maintaining One's Integrity were all mentioned three times or less.

Diversity

This family code is comprised of the following sub-codes listed below.

Embracing Diversity

Eleven individuals highlighted this sub-code as an enabler: "When it comes to respect for diversity, to live and work in South Africa is indeed a blessed opportunity... I've found that a culture of respect for diversity encourages me to be as authentic as I can be". The sub-codes of Cultural Diversity, Embracing being Different, Taking Risks were all mentioned three times or less.

Institutions, Organizations and the Workplace

This family code represents stumbling blocks and enablers and is detailed below:

Organizations with Conflicting Values to Yours

Eighteen individuals mentioned this as a stumbling block and one of these was in the navy, where his values did not match that of the organization's: "I reached a point

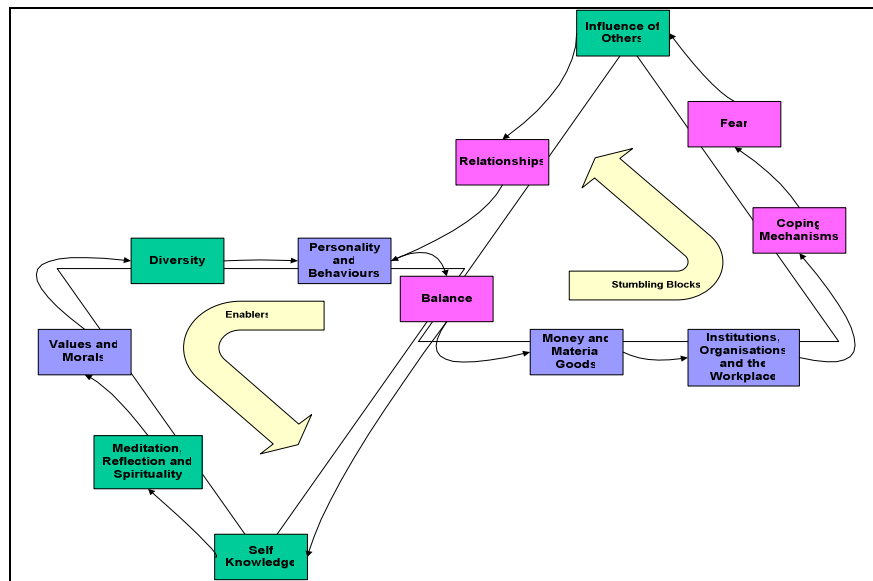


Figure 1: Researchers Model of Stumbling Blocks and Enablers of Authenticity

where further justification to stay in the navy would mean the almost complete deconstruction of what it meant to be me”.

Learning and Education

“Learning and education” was mentioned seventeen times, mostly as an enabler, although there were some instances of this sub-code being a stumbling block. Working in an Environment Conducive to Expressing Values was mentioned six times, and Working Too Much was mentioned once.

Money and Material Goods

The family code “money and material goods” consists of mainly stumbling blocks and is detailed below.

Material Wealth

This sub-code was mentioned three times as stumbling blocks: “The pursuit of material wealth and buying ‘things’ may stop me from pursuing another line of work that might be more fulfilling but does not pay as much as my current job.

Financial Freedom and Fear of Loss of Income were both mentioned once.

INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

The researchers took the twelve family codes and created an interrelationship diagram in order to answer the question ‘how are the different family codes of authenticity interlinked?’ This was achieved by taking

each family code, for example Fear, and deciding whether it influenced the following family code, for example Balance, or whether Balance influenced Fear. If Fear influenced Balance, an arrow was drawn pointing away from Fear and the arrow head would point towards Balance. The inverse would also be true. Once this exercise was completed with all twelve family codes, a count was done of the number of arrows pointing away from each family code, and towards each family code. The family codes with the majority of arrows pointing outwards were labeled as drivers, those with the majority of arrows pointing towards the code were outcomes, and those in the middle were links. This resulted in Fear, Coping Mechanisms, Relationships and Balance emerging as the outcomes. Values and Morals, Personality Traits and Behaviour, Money and Material Goods and Institutions, Organizations and the Workplace emerged as links. The drivers of authenticity are Meditation, Reflection and Spirituality, Influence of Others, Self-Knowledge and Diversity.

The family code Self-Knowledge, and more specifically the sub-code, “self-awareness” can be related back to the definitions of authenticity of Mader (2007), George et al (2007), as well as Marshall and Heffes (2004). The family code of Personality Traits and Behaviours can be linked to this, as traits such as “shyness” and “having low self-esteem“, which are sub-codes, are intricately linked with knowing oneself. It could be argued that the family code of Meditation, Reflection and Spirituality is also linked to the concept of self-awareness. Religion as an enabler generally occurred when people converted or when it was a key part of their upbringing. Although the family code Money and Material Goods and its sub-codes did not appear in the initial literature review, individuals did mention that these had an effect on their authenticity

and were stumbling blocks to achieving authenticity.

Many individuals commented on the fact that their places of work were a stumbling block to their authenticity. Influence of Others is a family code that contains a number of stumbling blocks that refer back to Relationships. This was highlighted by many individuals. The family code Balance ties into the concept of George et al (2007) of balancing intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

Values and Morals are an integral part of many definitions of authenticity, such as that of Hodgkinson (1991:130, quoted in Duignan & Bhindi, 1997:207), who defines authenticity "as being true to one's own set of values, whatever they may be". This family code of Values and Morals was cited as an enabler by many students.

The concept of the family code of Fear is not described in the literature review conducted at the start of this research process, which was described by many students as a stumbling block towards their authenticity. The family code of Coping Mechanisms also cannot be directly linked to the literature reviewed, however, sub-codes such as "not telling the truth" and "putting up a façade" are the polar opposite of what authors such as George et al (2007:129) advocate: "[p]eople trust you when you are genuine and authentic". Diversity as a family code consisted primarily of enablers, but does not tie directly into the literature reviewed prior to the analysis of the documents. However, for many students it was a key component of authenticity. In order to understand better how the drivers, links and outcomes obtained in the interrelationship diagram were interlinked, the researchers created a causal loop diagram, which was then refined into the model below.

CONCLUSION

The overall aim of this research was to analyze the stumbling blocks and enablers towards achieving authenticity for MBA and EMBA students, through analyzing a body of leadership assignments. After conducting a literature review on the topic of authenticity, these assignments were analyzed using grounded theory. During the process of open coding, 125 sub-codes were identified. The researchers then used axial coding, through the use of a conditional relationship guide, to further analyze these sub-codes. These sub-codes were grouped into twelve family codes.

Through using an interrelationship diagram, it was established what the key drivers, links and outcomes of authenticity were. When relating this to the initial literature review, it emerged that the family codes of Relationships and Balance were in fact two of the sub-headings in the literature review. In addition, "trust" and "self-awareness", which were two other sub-headings in the literature review, were identified as sub-codes in the analysis, thereby clearly reinforcing and enhancing the literature review conducted.

The count of the sub-codes within the family code of Self Knowledge is one hundred and twenty nine, whereas the count of the sub-codes within the family code Influence of Others is one hundred and ten. These are the two highest counts of sub-codes in this analysis, hence these family codes are the biggest influencers of authenticity. The majority of sub-codes contained in the family code Self Knowledge are enablers, and the majority of the sub-codes in the family code Influence of Others are stumbling blocks, hence Self Knowledge is the main enabler, and Influence of Others is the main stumbling block towards achieving authenticity for MBA and EMBA students.

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