Authentic leadership: Organisational outcomes and leader and follower development

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Abstract

Authentic leadership is an emerging concept in the field of leadership which draws on positive psychology and focuses on leaders' values and beliefs. It places development at the forefront of the theory and strives to develop sustainable, socially responsible organizations where the paramount concern is the wellbeing of the employees, the organization and their communities. The aim of the present research was to examine the relationship between authentic leadership and the outcomes of job satisfaction, team performance and follower authentic leadership. Participants in the study were 40 employees of two mid-sized New Zealand companies. The respondents rated their own levels of authentic leadership (follower) and their leader's levels of authentic leadership using the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ). Other measures surveyed respondents levels of job satisfaction, their perception of team performance and the development opportunities provided by their leader. The results showed leaders' authentic leadership was related to followers' authentic leadership and to development opportunities. There was no significant relationship between leaders' authentic leadership and the outcomes of follower job satisfaction and team performance. However job satisfaction and leaders' authentic leadership together increased levels of team performance; followers' authentic leadership and leaders' authentic leadership interacted to show increased levels of job satisfaction; and leaders' authentic leadership and development opportunities interacted to increase levels of followers' authentic leadership. The study makes an important contribution to the research on authentic leadership by making the link between leaders' authentic leadership and followers' authentic leadership; a major premise of the theory. This research has drawn attention to the complexities of the leader-follower process and the process of authentic leadership development. The research establishes that development opportunities are not the mechanism through which followers become authentic leaders. Further research to explore the outcomes that authentic leadership is associated with and the mechanisms that are involved in authentic leadership development is recommended.

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Approval for the research has been obtained from the Massey University Human Ethics Committee Northern for the research described in the thesis.

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