Authentic Leadership and Societal Transformation: A Review of Literature

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to provide a review of the literature on authentic leadership and societal transformation. The paper presents authentic leadership as the key player in the transformation of society. Society has suffered due to many financial and moral scandals, corruption, nepotism, leadership that has no place for followers, and lack of transparency. The paper proposes a new theoretical model to show how the newly discovered constructs interconnect and relate to one another. The methodology employed in this article is the review of extant conceptual, theoretical, and empirical literature to build a case for a theoretical model that links up authentic leadership and societal transformation to cause a change in society. The study identifies five main constructs that positively relate to one another and can provide the required leadership for societal transformation. The five constructs include authentic leadership, trigger events, developmental readiness, core positive psychological resources, and societal transformation. The findings showed that authentic leadership has positive effects on societal transformation. The mediation role of the core positive psychological resources variable is discussed. In addition, the moderating role of developmental readiness is discussed. This study will be important in providing knowledge in regard to the effect of authentic leadership on societal transformation. Finally, the recommendation for future empirical studies is given.

It is not enough to have leaders in positions of power; authentic leaders who combine the elements of honest, accountability, transparency, and self-awareness of oneself are the answer to our societies' cries for reliable leadership. Studies show that since the introduction of authentic leadership in leadership theories, the study has gone through different levels of understanding (Avolio & Hannah, 2008; Northouse, 2016). In the study of leadership theories, particularly transformational leadership theory, authentic leadership theory brought a positive

change in society (George et al., 2008; Rodriguez et al., 2017). However, society has experienced uncertain moments, which have seen corporate financial and moral scandals, failure and collapse in the banking industry, and renowned business empires running bankrupt both at local, national, and international levels (Abid & Ahmed, 2014; Cole et al., 2021). Abid and Ahmed (2014) note that corporate frauds are widespread, costly, and multifaceted, and adversaries affect all stakeholders.

Nations, groups, and communities have suffered a downfall due to unethical practices (Fortune, 2020; Luke, 2021). Scandals of various types and levels have been witnessed. Shockingly and interestingly, scandals flourished during the Covid-19 pandemic. For example, BBC cited Kenya as having at least 15 top government officials and business people implicated in the misuse of millions of dollars meant for buying Covid-19 medical supplies (Igunza, 2020). Leadership coupled with corruption and irregularities has denied low-income people finances intended to help deal with the Covid-19 economic impact (Warah, 2021). Kenya was not the only African country in this shaming saga.

This problem affected many other African countries, including Malawi, South Africa, and so on (Warah, 2021). This lacks transparency, authenticity, and accountability (Warah, 2021). As a result, institutions have suffered a loss; qualified individuals have been denied jobs; and people have been inhibited with fear and a blurred vision of their future with respect to their investments due to high levels of corruption in society (Northouse, 2016). What is the solution to this big problem? Clearly, there is a need for a more reliable, stable, dependable, and trustworthy form of leadership that can foster hope and survival in society.

Leadership that has a bearing on society is necessitated by a strong, genuine desire in society – a desire for a better society where leaders are inspirational, transparent, committed, and accountable (Cole et al., 2021). A society where the youth, who are the fiber of the society, have the opportunity and privilege not just to watch leadership by the old folks but also to be participants in societal transformation. This brings authentic leadership into focus as an instrument for societal transformation. Authentic leadership is real, open, and honest, thrives in setting up workable regulations and policies, sets up forms, and pays attention to acceptable working ethics (Cole at al., 2021). The authentic leadership is appropriate in providing what society lacks – genuine, passionate, relational, and self-disciplined leadership. In authentic leadership, the leader can be genuine with himself and his beliefs, give rise to trust, and initiate and advance fruitful connections with others for the good of society (George et al., 2008; Luthans & Avolio, 2003). This paper's point of concern is how a society becomes the recipient of transformation through authentic leadership.

Although it is new and still under development, authentic leadership has its roots going back in history to the times of the ancient Greek philosophy, which examined the development of cardinal virtues such as prudence, temperance, justice, and fortitude in a leader (Northouse, 2016; Pratt, 2018). The term authentic leadership was not in use then.

So far, there is no universal definition of authentic leadership. Northouse (2016) advances three perspectives of definition: intrapersonal, interpersonal, and developmental perspectives. From a developmental perspective, scholars have come up with four distinct but related components of authentic leadership which serve as key pillars: self-awareness, internalized moral perspectives, balanced processing, and relational transparency (Avolio et al., 2009; Northouse, 2016; Pratt, 2018). Great contributions have been given by people such as Bill

George, Luthan and Bruce (Pratt, 2018). Studies show that authentic leadership has great potential to cause change (Amundsen et al., 2018) and critical practice (Conradi, 2015). Despite the extant literature on a number of constructs that are linked with the phenomenon, it is observed that further work is needed to establish how authentic leadership can have a life-changing impact on society.

Studies reveal other important components or constructs of authentic leadership: trigger events, developmental readiness, and core positive psychological resources. In this study, four variables come out clearly with different interactions: authentic leadership, which is the independent variable, societal transformation is the dependent variable, core positive psychological resources is the mediating variable; and developmental readiness is the moderating variable.

Research Problem Statement

Despite the fact that authentic leadership is new in the field of leadership theories and that since its entrance into the field, a lot of papers, articles, and books have been published, there is still no agreement upon a universal definition of what authentic leadership means (Liu et al., 2015; Northouse, 2016). Studies show that what has been written about authentic leadership is limited in the findings and discussions focused on the initial process by which authentic leaders form authentic leadership (Avolio & Hannah, 2008; Gardner et al., 2011). This means that more discoveries continue to emerge because the field is new. There is a need to bridge the gap between authentic leadership and societal relationships (Iqbal et al., 2020). Also, exploration work needs to be done later to uncover how authentic leadership is related to organizational outcomes (Northouse, 2016). Authentic leadership and societal transformation are areas that are going to help discover societal transformation.

This study will provide scholars with knowledge on how authentic leadership can bring about the required societal transformation through different agents. Also, my interest as a researcher is to set out a clear understanding of leadership that has a lasting impact on the lives of people and to add more knowledge in relation to societal transformation.

Objectives

The paper addresses five objectives as follows: to review the extant conceptual literature on authentic leadership; to review the extant theoretical literature on authentic leadership; to review the extant literature on authentic leadership; to identify gaps from the reviewed literature on authentic leadership with a view of adding new knowledge in the field under study; and to propose a theoretical model for modeling the emerging phenomena from the deployment of authentic leadership.

The Rationale for the Study

This study is critical in understanding the transformation of society through authentic leadership. The study is intended to increase knowledge in understanding the effect of authentic leadership on societal transformation. The study will also dig into the literature to discover key constructs of authentic leadership apart from those already well-known, such as self-awareness, internalized moral perspectives, balanced processing, and relational transparency.

The study will help Kenya's Public Sector – Governance and Administration in the county and national governments of Kenya. The uniqueness of this sector cannot be ignored or pushed aside as a nonissue. It is mandated to run county governments and initiate and complete developments at county levels. The county government is set out as an agent of the state and serves the entire country through elected officials, administering and enforcing law. This does not seem to work out well in most counties. Issues of corruption, favoritism, joblessness, harassment of employees and unlawful termination of jobs, mismanagement of public resources, the collapse of public institutions like hospitals, and poor human relations are the order of the day in most counties (Duri, 2021). Clearly, authentic leadership is needed to correct this mess and foster leadership that guarantees transformation in society (Northouse, 2016). This study will help show how authentic leadership can bring real societal transformation.

Method

This conceptual paper has been drawn from literature relevant to the study. It has considered how this concept of authentic leadership began and the various evolution phases it has undergone. Authentic leadership is a new leadership theory still in the phase of development. This concept paper has majored in key concepts of the study whereby each key concept is explained by another concept.

The original dimensions of this study include authentic leadership, self-awareness, internalized moral perspectives, balanced processing, and relational transparency. Through studies, other constructs have come up, which include: trigger events, developmental readiness, core positive psychological resources, and societal transformation.

Based on the above, previous researches were consulted for each construct. Articles selected for this study had the following features: author, the title of the search, focus, variables, design, population, data collection, data analysis, techniques for analysis, findings, conclusion, limitations, and recommendations for future study. Any article lacking in these features was laid aside or rejected. This has led to proposing a theoretical framework to show the interconnections of various constructs studied. Various propositions are also drawn, pointing out various variables and showing the relationships thereof.

Literature Review
Conceptualization of Key Constructs

One of the current issues facing all sectors of life is the speed at which the world is changing both positively and negatively due to digitalization, emerging of new techniques, the advancement of technologies, globalization, and the world economic crisis. Coupled with that, fraud cases are increasing in the business environment, financial and moral scandals, failures in governance and administration, and environmental changes (Ahmed, 2021). According to scholars, contemporary times need authentic leadership, which has been credited as the most effective in coping with the challenges of the times, for it has the ability to bring life back to normality by bringing confidence, hope, optimism, and resilience (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Pellerin et al., 2022). The main issue of authentic leadership is arranging leadership, people's character, and values harmoniously to create consistency (Johnson, 2019). This paper presents five key constructs: authentic leadership, trigger events, developmental readiness, core positive psychological resources, and societal transformation.

Authentic Leadership

Authentic leadership is as old as Greek philosophy, which goes back to the times of Socrates, who taught the need to know oneself and stay true to that self (Johnson, 2019; Luenendonk, 2020). The emphasis then was on basic behavior standards that included the ability to govern and discipline oneself through reason, self-control or moderation, fair treatment to all, and courageously enduring challenges of life (Luenendonk, 2020; Pratt, 2018). Philosopher Plato, an outstanding and influential leadership thinker of the time, shared a similar mind (Takala, 1998). And later, Aristotle, Plato's student, held the same belief and practice where he urged that being true to oneself was ideal and needed to be mediated by such factors as politics (Jones & Grint, 2013). In the current understanding of authentic leadership, the sense of pursuing correct, accurate, and measurable universal authenticity is added to the original idea (Walumbwa et al., 2008). To enrich the understanding of authentic leadership, Northouse (2016) discusses four dimensions that are added to it: self-awareness, an internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, and relational transparency. Such leadership is needed to inspire, encourage, strengthen, and influence with the effect of causing success in an organization (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017; Pratt, 2018).

Authentic leadership pays unwavering attention to the ethical dimensions of the relationship between leader and followers and describes those behaviors that result in a trusting relationship (Towler, 2019). Authenticity is leading not only with your mind but also with your heart (Johnson, 2019). This means authentic leadership should have a distinctive taste of passion and clear guidance in matters of the behavior coupled with acceptable practices to provide awareness that enables authentic leaders not only to know but also to act upon their true values, beliefs, integrity, and strengths (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Avolio et al., 2009; Stewart, 2015; Walumbwa, et al., 2008). Authentic leadership goes beyond exercising power and authority to merge actions, words, and thoughts carefully. One does not become an authentic leader in an instant; rather, it is a process that incorporates the development of one's emotional intelligence (Miao et al., 2018). The aspect of being self-aware and being genuine and open to one's followers makes authentic leadership both powerful and unique (Ahmed, 2021).

Northouse (2016) identified three perspectives of authentic leadership: intrapersonal, interpersonal, and developmental. Intrapersonal perspective draws its attention to the inside of a leader – what goes on within the leader – and strongly emphasizes leaders' life experiences and the meanings the leader attaches to those experiences, leader's self-knowledge, self-regulation, self-concept, leading from personal inner convictions, and maintaining originality (Onyalla, 2018). The next is the interpersonal perspective. This is a process whose attention is on authentic leaders and their followers. Success is achieved through the effort of leaders and followers because both affect one another. The working together of these two is critical to the success of any organization or society. This can only be realized in meaningful interaction between the two (Northouse, 2016; Onyalla, 2018). The third perspective is developmental, focusing on a firm explanation that authentic leadership is not a fixed in-born character reachable by few; it can be nurtured in a leader (Miao et al., 2018; Technofunc, 2020). It is a lifetime process that could be triggered by some major life events like severe illness, a new career, or a change of status (Northouse, 2016). This gradual growth is grounded in a leader's psychological qualities and strong ethics (Walumbwa et al., 2008).

From the developmental perspective, Walumbwa et al. (2008) explored four dimensions of authentic leadership: self-awareness, internalized moral perspectives, balanced processing, and relational transparency. Self-awareness involves personal insights, strengths, and weaknesses, making impacts on others, and reflecting on one's values, identity, emotions, motives, and goals (Guenter et al., 2017; Walumbwa et al., 2008). Several scholars have written about self-awareness and its role in authentic leadership. Sutton (2016) points out that there is no point in life at which self-awareness is not needed. Dishon et al. (2017) indicate that self-awareness has a causal impact on the self-concept. This is to say that one discovers self by giving attention to oneself (Wilson, 2019). It is further to say that lack of self-awareness will create a poor image or wrong idea of oneself. There are two aspects of self-awareness: personal self-awareness and collective self-awareness. These two aspects enable one to relate well with others both at the individual and collective levels (Steffens et al., 2021). An authentic leader with a self-awareness dimension has a great advantage in controlling issues, for he understands his strengths and weaknesses and will not let outer factors limit authentic leadership (Soderlund et al., 2021).

Internalized moral perspectives are components that entails a self-regulation process and internal morals, which, when combined with values, results in behavior such that a leader's actions are consistent with their inner beliefs (Horner, 2016; Northouse, 2016). This component enables a leader to control any outside pressure that may wish to control them. A leader should be able to create his own life and achieve what they have worked for, irrespective of gender (Horner, 2016). Assaf (2021) observes that internalized moral perspective includes integrity, honor, courage, and transparency. Ethical values guide moral values. Various studies confirm this dimension to be key in forming authentic leadership behavior. According to Ozkan and Ceylon (2012), this perspective enables and builds open and frank communication between employers and employees. Internalized moral perspective can apply to whatever geographical location one is located (Petan & Bocarnea, 2016). In addition, Guenter at al. (2017) point out that this construct enables shared authentic leadership. Kasa et al. (2020) also found that this dimension works well with teachers. Where it is present, the influence on teacher commitment is big. An organization's high performance and survival is pegged on this perspective (Idris et al., 2021; Kasa et al., 2020). There is no way one can lead well without self-control or management of emotions, desires, and behaviors and expect to reach a positive outcome (Chappelear, 2017).

Balanced processing entails self-regulatory behavior whereby one is open to his own point of view without disregarding others' ways of regarding something (Northouse, 2016). A Balanced processing behavior enables a leader to avoid favoritism to certain followers, remain unbiased, and consider others' opinions before taking action (Horner, 2016). A leader with this balanced processing will impact the lives of many. It has been confirmed to be useful in industries (Shumon et al., 2012); excelling simultaneously in efficiency and innovation – ambidexterity (Chemkah & Zanaoui, 2018); care quality in nursing profession (Puni & Hilton, 2020), wellness in physical, mental, emotional, spiritual life (Rhoads et al., 2020), and work-life (Fan et al., 2021).

The fourth component of authentic leadership is relational transparency which speaks of openness and honesty in communication and being real in relationships with others (Northouse, 2016). No putting on face masks to cover your true identity; you show others your strengths and weaknesses and let your experiences be a lesson to them (Horner, 2016; Northouse, 2016).

According to Hughes (2005), the true self does not only manifest itself in a friendly environment but also in an opposing environment. A leader's relational transparency and behavioral integrity are required for followers to trust their leaders (Gatling et al., 2017). Where leaders exhibit authenticity and relational transparency, the followers are willing and ready to emulate their leaders (Marinakou & Nikolic, 2016). Many managers of organizations and companies see it as a problem embracing relational transparency due to its demand to lay oneself bare before one's followers (Kempster et al., 2019). Relational transparency has been found to be able to limit or reduce the effects of unnecessary tasks and job satisfaction.

Trigger Events

Trigger events are another main or lead construct of authentic leadership. Trigger events are defined as occurrences, negative or positive, that cause other events to occur (Dollarhide, 2021). They include such events as job loss, retirement, other dramatic loses, life stories, experiences, and life-threatening diseases that the leader had survived (Turner & Mavin, 2007). Trigger events, planned or unplanned, are necessary ingredients in enriching both the development of authentic leadership and the authenticity of leaders (Covelli & Mason, 2017; Turner & Marvin, 2007).   Further, in the development of authentic leadership, trigger events together with leadership crucibles have a critical role to play (Shannon et al., 2020). The dimensions of trigger events include experiences, life stories, and positive and negative events.

The experiences human beings go through or acquire through different life phases add value to the development of authentic leadership. The experience could be good or bad; it becomes a learning moment with great benefits (Geug et al., 2015; Lipovetzky et al., 2007). In addition, Doherty and Revell (2020) found out that a nurse's individual history, personal values, ethics, and the organization's structure interact and influence authentic leaders' development. Also, Shannon et al. (2020) confirmed that leadership development could not be possible without trigger events and crucibles of leadership. This idea is confirmed by Biaett and Richards (2020).

In addition to experience, life stories are part of trigger events. Human life is full of stories from the beginning to the end. Some of these stories are good, while others are bad and threatening. The key point is the meanings attached to these stories by individuals (Shamir & Eilam, 2005) and the control leaders have over environments (Albert & Vadla, 2009). Etherington (2009) found that storytelling enables one to break away from isolation, stigma, and alienation that characterize those who may have suffered traumatic life experiences.   Life storytelling has the power to turn negative experiences to positive use. Telling and retelling your life's story has a therapeutic effect on one's life and impacts followers (Marlow, 2012). This is to say that life stories and retelling those stories bring some healing responses. Stories of challenge are more influential in revealing leaders' true selves (Drumm, 2013).

Life is not made up of one type of activity. Life events that have the potential to trigger authentic leadership may include marriage, divorce, stressful life events, and illness or injury. The events that happen in one's life might be a reason for a certain behavior, good or bad (Gorman & Peters, 1990). It is always prudent to find out the underlying reasons behind people's behaviors. Even past events, which sometimes happen early in one's life, can affect one's later life (Young-Wolf et al., 2012). Studies confirm that significant life events, especially those that are stressful in nature, change the future learned responses by giving rise to nonspecific and persistent changes in the functioning of the human nervous system (Shors,

2005). Interestingly, even the shape of memories to come is altered by past or present stressful life events. Cohen et al. (2019) confirmed that physical illness could be caused by an accumulation of life events that are not in keeping with the self-concept (Masters et al., 2015; Renzaho et al., 2014).

Developmental Readiness

Developmental readiness is the third main or lead construct of authentic leadership under this study. It has to do with having a high level of capacity, sensitivity, and motivational mindset for the development of the environment where one is. APA dictionary (2022) defines developmental readiness as a "person's state of psychological and intellectual preparedness for a given task, subject, or grade level." Such leaders are able to embrace trigger events as learning opportunities to develop as a leader and develop one's followers. Leaders with developmental readiness do not waste time defending and clinging to outdated perceptions and actions; they are always ready and willing to move to higher operating levels to achieve greater goals (Griffith et al., 2009). A leader cannot be said to be authentic if he lacks developmental readiness, which leads to motivation and development (Hannah & Avolio, 2010). Studies have found that individual differences exist in timing and tempo, whether in biological growth or in other areas of life (Marceau et al., 2011). Developmental readiness is closely linked to triggering events (Knudsen, 2018; Van & Jacobs, 2017). Where people are ready to develop in their leadership, there is always perceived improvement (Avolio & Hannah, 2008). Authentic leadership developmental readiness is closely and positively connected with organizational change (Manzano, 2020). Developmental readiness incorporates learning goal orientation, self-concept clarity, and metacognitive ability (Avolio & Hannah, 2008). A consideration of each of these is important.

Learning goal orientation speaks of individuals' desire to develop themselves through acquiring new skills, mastering situations, and improving competence (Wang et al., 2021). Hannah and Avolio (2010) found out that LGO is necessary for leadership development to take place. Culture plays a role in leadership development (Azanza et al., 2013; Mango, 2019; Steele, 2015). In addition, the dimensions of leader developmental readiness have a significant antecedent of initial levels of leader identity, leader self-efficacy, and leader emergency (Azanza et al., 2013). Culbertson and Jackson (2016) confirm that leaders with stronger learning goal orientation will be more developmentally ready than leaders with a strong PGO. The same position is held by Mango et al. (2019).

Self-concept clarity is another dimension of leader developmental readiness. The following studies were conducted on self-concept clarity with corresponding results. Studies by Danarree and Bobrowski (2017) confirm that measures of self-concept combine with self-esteem for a stronger relationship. Lan et al. (2020) show that self-concept is significantly and positively associated with career calling, resilience, and work readiness. Self-concept clarity has been confirmed to work well with authentic group-couching (Fusco et al., 2016). Studies also confirm that individuals are different in levels of self-concept clarity; depending on one's level, perceptions of work, meaningfulness, and transformation work motivation takes place (Oh & Roh, 2019).

Metacognitive ability carries the connotation of one's ability to use prior knowledge to strategize for a learning task approach (Fleming & Dolan, 2012). It entails taking all necessary

steps to resolve a problem, thinking critically about an issue, assessing results, and making changes in one's approach as may be needed (Weil et al., 2013). It can be divided into three categories: person variables, task variables, and strategy variables (LINCS Information, n.d.). Followers are moved highly and influenced well by leaders perceived to have moral authority and mental ability (Zhu et al., 2016). A study by Black et al. (2016) confirms that metacognitive ability can be taught and people can be trained to get the required techniques. One needs to be aware of his metacognitive ability, for this leads to self-directed learning readiness (Jin & Ji, 2020; Ors &Titrek, 2018). Metacognitive ability is a good predictor of leadership development (Mango et al., 2019).

Core Positive Psychological Resources

Core Positive psychological resources are also called positive psychological capital (PsyCap) and include confidence, hope, optimism, and resilience whose focus is on positivity about oneself and what one can do to accomplish aims through others (Bayramoglu & Sahin, 2015; Anglin et al., 2018). It has to be more aware of self-awareness of one's current confidence, optimism, and resilience levels. Apart from such a leader being more aware of self-awareness, he also engages in adaptive self-reflection. A leader who lacks awareness of their self-confidence or optimism will not be able to develop, which will have bad effects on their followers (Tanui et al., 2018). Clapp-Smith et al. (2009) found that relationships and performance strengthen where an organization or society operates guided by authenticity and truth. From this understanding, leadership is called upon to embrace the idea of 'to thine own self be true.' The study by Wang et al. (2014) confirms that a relationship between leaders and followers is necessary. It means that job performance improved when followers perceived high LMX in their leaders (Akhtar et al., 2019; Schmidt et al., 2013). Studies show a positive moderating effect of PsyCap (Fladerer & Braun, 2020; Owens, 2017; Towsen et al., 2020). Owens (2017) found that there was a strong connection between the code of works and ethics moral values. Four constructs under core positive psychological resources/capacities require attention (Bayramoglu & Sahin, 2015; Rabenu & Yaniv, 2017).

Confidence is critical in leadership performance (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). There are different phases of life, positive and negative, friendly and threatening. Confidence is an important ingredient in coping with these various phases of life (Stajkovi, 2006). Confidence leads to a successful performance and empowers a leader (Zhang et al., 2018). A study by Benson (2018) focused on determining if youths' leader self-confidence, once developed in a leadership training program, persisted over time and was confirmed.

Optimism speaks of hopefulness and confidence about the future or the success of something (Barnes & Watts, 2011). Where people hold bright beliefs about the future, there is a tendency to hang on even in difficult (Cover et al., 2014). In other words, people can bear up with difficulties and diversities in the present when they have a positive future expectations. A study by Segerstrom (2005) shows that optimism has therapeutic effects against psychological stressors. Optimism is needed in academic circles (Boileau et al., 2021). It is connected with academic satisfaction.

Hope is another construct under core positive psychological resources. Wandeler et al. (2011) and Kotze and Kleynhans (2013) found that hope and health work together. Again hope, together with optimism and resilience, are good predictors of burnout (Virga et al., 2020). It is

also found that hope combined with authentic leadership predicts employees' hope and creativity (Anwar et al., 2020; Regio et al., 2014). Creativity in the workplace or academic world thrives well where there is hope.

Resilience is the fourth construct under core positive psychological resources. It is a personal trait and a process (Pan & Chan, 2007). This was proposed by Graber et al., 2015). A study by Akbaba and Altindag (2016) point out that organizational climate is needed for good performance of the organization. Authentic leadership affects productivity in any area of work (Zehir & Narcikara, 2016). It is also confirmed by Baykal (2018) that resilience behavior affects the overall organization and makes it a resilient atmosphere. When authentic leaders empower their followers and organizations, the outcome is to be more resilient and adaptive in times of turmoil.

Societal Transformation

The last lead or main construct of authentic leadership is societal transformation. World Atlas (2018) defines societal transformation as "the process of change in institutionalized relationships, norms, values, and hierarchies over time." Societal transformation is important because it embraces innovative solutions necessary for universal values of peace, human dignity, gender equality, social inclusion, environmental changes, and non-violence activities (UNESCO, 2022). The inevitability of social change cannot be denied or ignored (Feola, 2015). Yavuz (2019) points out authentic leadership as one of the major factors that will bring positive societal change. Societies are made up of individuals, groups, and communities. Transformation in society is possible through leadership that is relational, change-directed learning, and transformative (Iqbal et al., 2020; Watt, 2009). It is also found that both transformational and authentic leadership can be taught people to attain the required change (Yavuz, 2019). Authentic leadership is positively correlated with communal employees' relationships (Yavuz, 2019). As shown in the following paragraphs, societal transformation is possible through individuals, groups, and communities.

Individuals are a critical basic part or component of society (Aslaksen, 2018). Society cannot be positively transformed if the individuals who make up the society's fabric are unwilling to embrace transformation (Lei et al., 2021). How individuals perceive change can positively or negatively affect transformation or development (Feola, 2015; Trommsdorff, 2000), and change requires other concepts like resilience and transition. It should be noted that change is gradual (Fozdar, 2018). Also emotional connectivity between employees and organizational leaders can foster change by turning individuals into committed and created persons (Lei at al., 2021).

Another important element of society is a group (Gastil, 2009; Mondal, n.d.). This is another level of operation in any given society of people. Alvord et al. (2004) emphasize that organizational arrangements are needed to bring change. Culture plays a role in any social change (Garcia-Guin et al., 2015; Khondker & Schueerkens, 2014). Change is effected through formulating policies, guiding behavior, and promoting ethics, transparency and justice (Garcia-Guin et al., 2015). Change is inevitable when a team works together and then operates through shared leadership (Guenter et al., 2017). There is a need to teach all levels of people so they can develop a positive outlook on it (Wibeck et al., 2019). Individuals and groups are not the

only agents of society. Society is also made up of a community. It is important to consider the construct.

The third level of societal agency of change is a community (Campbell, 2014). A study by De la Rey and Kottler (1999) confirms that in the community, gender equality matters; South Africa has demonstrated gender equality in a big way. Ard et al. (2016) point out that there is a positive link between authentic behavior and the positivity of followers (Lamm et al., 2017). Community leaders must be an encouragement to many in the community. Power should not belong to one person or a few individuals. The community operates well through power sharing (Lamm et al., 2017). Consistency of leaders is important among community members, and developing a sense of locality enables change (Nettleingham, 2017). A community can reach far with the sustainability necessary to keep society going. This sustainability contributes greatly to improving the quality of life, protecting the ecosystem and the natural resources so that future generations are empowered (BluGlacier, 2022).

Theoretical Review

The conceptual review of this paper has revealed the nature and interactions of lead constructs of authentic leadership, including authentic leadership, trigger events, developmental readiness, core positive psychological resources, and societal transformation. Clearly, this calls for a review of theories that can explain the nature and interactions of the constructs. This paper examined the theories of this study which included Maslow's self-actualization theory, the situational leadership theory, the level 5 Leader's hierarchy theory, and TechnoFunc-Management theories/the Human Relations Theory. These theories link to various constructs of this paper.

Maslow's Self-Actualization Theory

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory is a chief theory in this study. American Abraham Maslow proposed it in his (1943) paper "A theory of Human Motivation" in the Journal of Psychological Review. The theory shows various human needs within a pyramid form. These needs are physiological, safety, love and belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization (Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, 1821; Maslow's Safety Needs, 2021; McLeod, 2020).

The self-actualization argument is based on the fact that individuals fulfill their potential through motivation (Vinney, 2018). It came into existence out of humanistic psychology, which held that higher needs drive human beings and, above all, needs to make self-actual (Vinney, 2018). Self-actualization can be defined as the ability to become the best version of oneself (D'Souza, 2018). With esteem needs, it points out that there is a need in human beings where each person needs to believe in himself, accept himself, get social acceptance, and be valued (Esteem, 2021).

Self-actualization theory connects well with authentic leadership (Johnson, 2019). An authentic leader must work to meet followers' needs and provide people-focused leadership to help followers achieve self-actualization (Miniotaite, 2012). On the other hand, the follower must trust the leader so that the leader can achieve the intended goal (Mason, 2021). This theory links up very well with the authentic leadership construct. It also links up with the societal transformation construct because society comprises individuals, groups, and communities with different needs that require attention. A society will undergo a transformation when people

exercise their talents while being mindful of their limitations; this is self-actualization (Good Therapy, 2019). It is the work of authentic leaders to help individuals, groups, and communities to develop. Personal development brings people to self-actualization, enabling them to live their life's purpose and fulfill their own unique destiny (Johnson, 2019).

The Situational Leadership Theory

This was established by Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard in the year 1969 (Gamelearn Team, 2015). According to Gamelearn Team (2015), the theory established two basic levels of leadership behavior, namely: management, whereby leaders demonstrate managerial behavior by defining what, when, and how to perform tasks; and support, whereby leaders show supportive behavior in the development of teams through the participation of all members which has the effect of providing cohesiveness and motivation of people. Through these two leadership behaviors, four leadership levels can be seen: the leader tells; the leader sells, which has the idea of offering constant supervision and constant feedback; the leader advises by way of facilitating and encouraging teammates; and the leader delegates tasks to mature individuals (Cherry, 2020; Team Asana, 2021). From this theory, one must learn that leaders must not be static; leaders must learn to adapt to the circumstances (Gamelarn Team, 2015).

A situational leader must demonstrate direction, flexibility, participation, delegation, regular coaching, and honesty (Kenton & Drury, 2020). Application of this theory has the benefit of allowing leaders to apply any leadership style that works in a given situation, adapting style to meet the needs of followers, and giving consideration to various levels of maturity of followers. Its weaknesses include confusion due to constant changes in the approach of things, focusing only on short-term goals, and it depends on the leader's ability to judge employees' maturity level. This theory links up with developmental readiness. The situational leadership theory is critical in training and developing leaders because of its flexibility and adaptability (STU Online, 2014). This theory also links up well with the trigger events construct. The situational leadership theory calls for the application of leadership according the prevailing situation that might be triggered by various events (Alsaqqa, 2020).

TechnoFunc-Management Theories/Human Relations Theory

This theory, also called transactional theory, focuses on the role of supervision, organization, and group performance (Gordon, 2022). These management theories are general rules that guide managers in managing an organization. They advocate leadership based on a system of reward and punishment (Gordon, 2022; Sarachek, 1968). The first management theory began in 1909 through Frederick Winslow Taylor. Such theories include classical management, human relations theory/behavioral management theory, and modern management theories. Four individuals are associated with four general management theories: Frederick Taylor – theory of scientific management, Henri Fayol – Administrative management theory; Max Weber – Bureaucratic theory of management; and Elton Mayo – Human relations theory/Behavioral theory of management (Ward, 2021).

This paper takes on the human relations theory/behavioral theory of management. This is a theory advocated by Elton Mayo and Mary Parker Follet in the 1920s (Gordon, 2022; Ward, 2021). Its focus was on human factors, particularly the motivation of individuals, group motivation, and leadership. The theory held that to reach organizational effectiveness and high

productivity, human needs of satisfaction and social interactions with other workers, were critical (Cooley, 2016; Thornton & Hill, 2022). Positive human attitudes and psychological effects result in greater organizational achievement (Hossni, 2020).

Studies confirm authentic leadership to be a type of management style in which, contrary to the classical management theories criticized for ignoring human needs, people act in a genuine, genuine and sincere way that is true to who they are as individuals (Avey et al., 2011). This theory sees authentic leadership as a web of many other constructs: core values, honest relationships, genuine openness, ethics and integrity, self-awareness, building trust, vision, and mission (O'Hara, 2022). This theory links up with the construct of core positive psychological resources.

## The Case for a Theoretical Model

Both the conceptual and theoretical reviews have raised various perspectives supporting a new theoretical model linking the various constructs. First, the perspective is the expansion of constructs. Second, since Maslow's Self-actualization Theory links up authentic leadership and societal transformation constructs, a new theoretical model will help show this linkage. Situational Leadership theory links up with two constructs: developmental readiness and trigger events. The fourth perspective, TechnoFunc-Management theory/Human Relations Theory and core positive psychological resources construct, point out that human beings must be treated as human beings (not as machines) before positive change can be achieved. Fifth, how societal transformation takes place through authentic leadership, which is mediated and moderated by these constructs, needs to be illustrated and explained.

The Proposed Theoretical Model

The proposed theoretical model is presented in Figure 1 and explained below.

Figure 1

The Proposed Theoretical Model
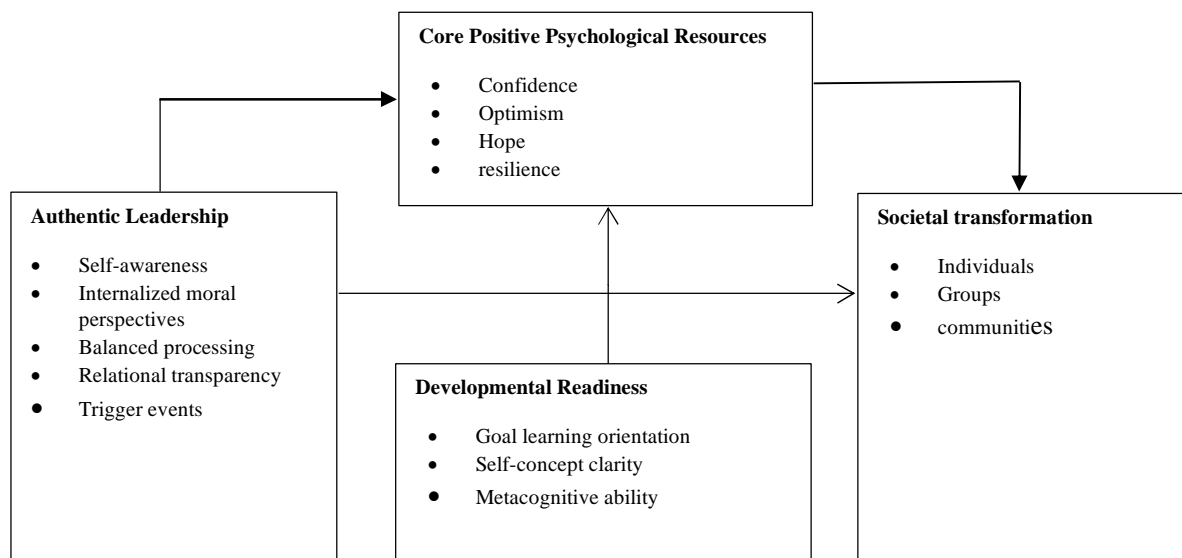
Authentic Leadership and Societal Transformation

Authentic leadership is the independent variable in this case because it can only be manipulated by the researcher, not by other variables. In this study, authentic leadership brings transformation to society. The dependent variable is societal transformation. This is because this variable is measurable. It responds to a change in the independent variable. This is the responding variable.

1st Proposition: Authentic leadership has positive effects on societal transformation.

A study by Lei et al. (2021) about the impact of authentic leadership on individual and team creativity found that authentic leadership is necessary for individual creativity. Also Kelly et al. (2022) made a study entitled "Social impact: The role of authentic leadership, Compassion and Grit in social entrepreneurship." The study shows that authentic leadership is a more effective driver of multiple outcomes in social entrepreneurship. A study by Wang et al. (2014) confirms that a relationship between leaders and followers is necessary.

Core Positive Psychological Resources as Mediating Variable

In this study, core positive psychological resources serve as mediating or intervening variables. This is the case because it links the independent and the dependent variables. This brings out two propositions:

2nd Proposition: Core positive psychological resources affect authentic leadership.

A study by Mckinsey (2021) was conducted on psychological safety and the critical role of leadership development. The study also shows that core positive psychological resources – confidence, hope, optimism, and resilience impact authentic leadership and enable the operation of authentic leadership (Northouse, 2016; Qkm5011, 2020). This position is supported in a study conducted by Margiadi and Wibowo (2020). The study showed that psycap (confidence, hope, optimism, and resilience) is an antecedent of authentic leadership. This means that these psychological resources have positive influence on authentic leadership theory and are useful in developing authentic leadership.

3rd Proposition: Core positive psychological resources mediate the relationship between authentic leadership and societal transformation.

Studies show that core positive psychological resources have mediated the relationship between perceived management and readiness for change (Kirrane et al., 2017). Psychological capital is an intervening variable in the relationship between perceived organizational support (POS) and work engagement (Nikhil & Arthi, 2018). From studies, it seems that leaders lacking awareness of their self-confidence or optimism have no chances of developing, which will negatively affect followers (Tanui et al., 2018). Further, it is revealed in studies that relationships and performance go high wherever an organization or society embraces authenticity and truth (Clapp-Smith et al. (2009). From this understanding, leadership is called upon to embrace the idea of 'to thine own self be true.

Developmental Readiness as Moderating Variable

In this study, developmental readiness moderates the relationship between the independent variable (authentic leadership) and the dependent variable (Societal transformation). Through moderating variables, the association between independent and dependent variables can be strengthened, diminished, or otherwise altered. This leads us to two more propositions:

4th Proposition: There is a relationship between developmental readiness and authentic leadership.

A lack of developmental readiness will negatively affect authentic leadership, and the presence of it will positively affect authentic leadership. This relationship is confirmed in the study by Avolio and Hannah (2008). Authentic leadership developmental readiness is closely and positively connected with organizational change (Bakari et al., 2017; Manzano, 2020).

5th Proposition: The relationship between the authentic leadership and societal transformation is affected by moderating variable.

It depends on whether the development readiness of both the individual and the community are present to enable one to become an authentic leader and cause a change in society (Avolio & Hannah, 2008). Those willing to be authentic leaders are also ready to develop and transform (Droffelaar & Jacobs, 2017). Social creativity and participation in social activities that have the potential to cause transformation to entail components of developmental readiness (Shubovich et al., 2019). Individual's and community's motivation toward progress and advancement in life is necessary for social transformation. Society is a living organism that must strive to survive, grow, and develop the individual's and community's conscious participation in both word and action (World Animal Net, 2017). The society or organization will likely experience major changes when developmental readiness is high (Armenakis et al., 1993; QICWD, 2018).

Discussions

The results reported in this paper suggest that authentic leadership is effective in bringing societal transformation. The study shows authentic leadership is the independent variable, while societal transformation is the dependent variable. Again, the study confirms the mediating effect of core positive psychological resources. The various empirical studies conducted confirm this fact. This calls for leaders to create a conducive environment for developing core positive psychological resources (Akhtar et al., 2019). A leader requires confidence, hope, optimism, and resilience. In this way, one becomes positive about oneself. This is elf awareness which one needs to be aware of (Tanui et al., 2018). Also, the results confirm the moderating effect of developmental readiness. Learning goal orientation, self-concept clarity, and metacognitive ability are strong elements that can make a leader positive about one-self (Avolio & Hannah, 2008). These facts are supported by this study and reveal that authentic leadership contributes to societal transformation through the agency of individuals, groups, and communities (Horner, 2016; Mango, 2019). It means that where individuals are ready for change, individuals, groups, and communities will be transformed.

The findings confirm a strong positive relationship between authentic leadership and the other constructs. The significant mediating role of core positive psychological resources cannot

be ignored. The model shows that authentic leadership enhances societal transformation at the individual, group, and community levels (Linner, & Wibeck, 2021).

Conclusions

This paper is an introduction to independent study. The paper aimed to provide a review of the literature on authentic leadership and societal transformation. Authentic leadership will save society from financial and moral scandals, corruption, nepotism, and toxic leadership that places no value on followers. The study was intended to highlight societal transformation through authentic leadership. To fulfill this goal, the author conducted a comprehensive conceptual, theoretical, and empirical literature review. The study came out with five lead constructs: authentic leadership, trigger events, developmental readiness, core psychological resources, and societal transformation.

The study links these theories to various constructs of this paper. Maslow's Self-Actualization Theory is linked to the main construct of this study – authentic leadership. This theory also links up well with the dependent construct of societal transformation. Leaders are needed who have high moral values and who meet the needs of their followers. The theory sees authentic leadership as leadership that thrives on core values, honest relationships, genuineness, openness, ethics, integrity, self-awareness, building trust, vision, and mission.

The situational leadership theory is important in this study; it links with two constructs: developmental readiness and trigger events. Developmental readiness takes into account goal learning orientation, self-concept clarity, and metacognitive ability. Various situations will trigger events (experiences, life stories, and events in life – both positive and negative) that will require a leadership style befitting that particular situation.

TechnoFunc-Management theories/Human Relations theory links well with core positive psychological resources. Applying confidence, hope, optimism, and resilience enable an individual to become the best version of oneself.

Recommendations for the Future Studies

I would therefore recommend an empirical study to dig more into coming up with more developmental readiness constructs and show their effect on an individual's readiness for development as it combines with authentic leadership and transformation of the society. Also, a study is needed to determine if moral reasoning can be part of core positive psychological resources and its effect on authentic leadership and societal transformation.

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