

EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRIGUNA AND AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP

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Abstract: Indian philosophy provides tri dimensional personality framework called triguna. Studies in the area of triguna, in Indian context has examined impact of triguna on karma yoga and transformational leadership. But there is paucity of research analysing impact of individual differences embedded in the given culture context on authentic leadership which presents as a research gap to be examined. Thus, the present study examined Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic guna as antecedent of authentic leadership.

Keywords: Authentic Leadership, Sattva, Rajas, Tamas.

Introduction: The zeitgeist of early 2000 is characterised by the lack of trust due to corporate scandals and unethical practices demanding genuine, transparent and trustworthy leadership. It has also become essential for organisational leaders to understand how their actions are perceived by employees and how they influence followers and organisational outcome. (Avolio et.al, 2005). Hence, organisational stakeholders appears to be much less tolerant of inconsistencies between leaders' espoused principles, values, and conduct and are expecting those leaders to operate at higher levels of integrity. In the midst of above challenges emerged authentic leadership concept simultaneously in the corporate arena (George, 2003) and academic domain (Luthans & Avolio, 2003). Authentic leadership characterised by a leader's transparency, genuineness, openness, self-awareness and clarity in behaviour (Wang et al., 2014) has emerged as a positive approach to organisational leadership that can help meet today's challenges (May, Chan & Avolio, 2003).

Human personality has been defined using many models and theories. In India, some interesting parallel attempts have been used to capture personality attributes (Chakroborty, 1987, Das, 1991, Kaur & Sinha, 1992, Sharma & Bhal, 2004). Indian philosophy provides tri dimensional personality framework called triguna. Studies in the area of triguna, in Indian context has examined impact of triguna on karma yoga and transformational leadership. But there is paucity of research analysing impact of individual differences embedded in the given culture on authentic leadership which presents as a research gap to be examined. Question arises how does personality trait based on triguna framework (Rajasic, Sattvic And Tamasic) impact authentic leadership? Thus, the present study will examine triguna as antecedent of authentic leadership.

Literature Review: Luthans and Avolio (2003) defined authentic leadership "as a process that draws from both positive psychological capacities and a highly developed organizational context, which results in both greater self-awareness and self-regulated positive behaviors on the part of leaders and associates, fostering positive self-development. Marshall (2004) presented the argument forwarded by George that as 90% of business failures are due to poor management strategies. Leader must give employees opportunities and tools to ensure that employees can succeed. It is possible to achieve this type of employee-commitment in any business. By being authentic a leader can achieve it. The five dimensions of authentic leadership stated are understanding you purpose, practising solid values, leading with your heart, establishing connected relationships, self-discipline in getting results.

**Sattvam rajastama iti Gunaah prakritisambhavaah
nibadhnanti mahaabaaho dehe dehinamavyayam // 14.5 //**

Manifestation of gunas has been well described in Bhagvad Geeta chapter 14, where it says that the interplay among these three Gunas makes one Guna prominent by defeating another one. This philosophy states that the entire physical universe is comprised of three basic constituents- Sattva, Rajas and Tamas (Chakraborty, 1987).

Sattva is free from evil, immaculate, flawless, and is expressed in qualities like purity, wisdom, goodness, fineness, bliss, and a love for knowledge. Rajas is characterized by egoism, activity, restlessness, assumption of undertakings, craving, passion, lust, greed, and the need for power.

Hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Sattva guna will be positively related to authentic leadership

Tamas is exhibited in sloth, delusion, ignorance, heedlessness, inertia, procrastination, confusion, and perversion in thought and action (Chakraborty, 1987). Das (1991) illustrated the psychological implications of trigunas after which several psychologists attempted to explain its relevance (Rao, 1962; Kaur & Sinha, 1992).

Hypothesis 2: Rajas guna will be negatively related to authentic leadership

Hypothesis 3: Tamasic guna will be negatively related to authentic leadership

Conceptual Framework

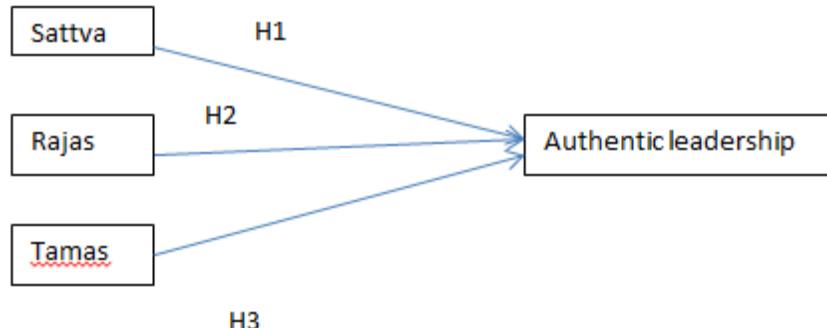


Figure 1: Proposed Conceptual Framework

Sample for the given study consisted of 104 Indian professionals working with different organisation. 130 questionnaires were administered and 104 questionnaires were received. Sample comprised of 58% males and 42% females (Mean age of the participant was 38 and SD = 1.1).

Table 1: Variable Descriptive, Cronbach's Alphas and Inter-Correlations

| Variable | Mean | S.D | α | correlations | | |
|----------------------|------|-----|----------|--------------|-------|-------|
| | | | | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Tamas | 3.36 | .62 | .74 | -.29* | -.23* | -.34* |
| Rajas | 3.59 | .73 | .77 | - | .60* | .199* |
| Sattva | 3.57 | .74 | .69 | -.23* | - | .358* |
| Authentic leadership | 4.03 | .32 | .72 | .199* | .358* | - |

N=104, * p=.05

Analysis

| Independent Variable | Dependent Variable | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|------|-------|-------|------|
| | R ² | F | β | t | Sig. |
| Tamas | .01 | 4.5 | -.044 | -.463 | .644 |
| Rajas | .11 | 6.8 | -.097 | -.886 | .378 |
| Sattva | .12 | 6. 9 | .380 | 3.473 | .001 |

It can be inferred from above table, Sattvic guna accounts for 12% variability in authentic leadership. The values of un-standardised β coefficient indicated that only sattvic guna ($\beta = .38$, $p \leq .01$) significantly predict authentic leadership. Thus, hypothesis H1 is accepted. It can be observed from above table, un-standardised β coefficient of Rajasic guna is not significant. Thus, hypothesis 2 is not accepted. Also, it can be inferred from above table, un-standardised β coefficient of Tamasic guna is not significant. Thus, hypothesis 3 is also not accepted.

Limitations of The Study: As the study uses correlational research design with cross sectional data, it cannot offer in-sights into the causal linkages as all the variables are measured at the same time. Also, as the measures for all the variables are collected from same source at a time, the study is susceptible to common method bias.

Conclusion: It was expected that based on tri-dimensional personality framework, sattvic guna will be positively related to authentic leadership and Rajasic and Tamasic guna will be negatively related to authentic leadership. The sample in the study experienced high level of authentic leadership ($M=4.1$, $SD=.32$). It provides good ground for testing. The result showed only sattvic guna significantly positively predict authentic leadership.

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