AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP IN HIGHER LEARNING INSTITUTION: A CASE STUDY OF INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA (IIUM).

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This study investigated the pattern of authentic leadership. The purpose of this study is to test if self-awareness, balanced processing of information, internalized moral perspective, and relational transparency are predictors of authentic leadership among administrative heads at International Islamic University IIUM. An authentic leader reflects the extent to which there is congruence between leader's actions, intention, moral compasses, self-reflexivity, self-concept, self-development, altruistic actions, authenticity, psychological well-being, and internal regulation. This research is a case study, focusing on data collected from administrative staff at IIUM. The results of the regression indicated that the four predictors (self-awareness, balanced processing of information, internalized moral perspective, and relational transparency) explained authentic leadership. The tested model provides empirical evidence about the pattern of authentic leadership in higher education, thus confirming the presence of authentic leadership in organizations.

Higher institutions have been geared to achieve world standards of excellence. This has put a lot of demands on leadership style. Leadership in an academic learning environment is not just a focus on the organization's needs but is inclusive of the mission of the nation (Voon, Lo, Ngui, & Peter 2009). The International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) is among the twenty (20) public universities in Malaysia, established in 1982 after the 1977 first World Conference on Islamic education, with the mission of integrating values and professional ethics in its curriculum. Surprisingly, in almost three decades of existence, leadership notion that exists in IIUM remains a neglected perspective. That is, to date there are no studies undertaken to explore any form of leadership notion that exists within the university. On a broader plane, existing literature on leadership in Malaysian Higher Education indicates that leadership studies in universities are just evolving. Previous studies on leadership in Malaysia higher education shows that only 23.6 % of the collected data are from public universities,

while 68.6% are of private universities (data adapted from Voon et al., 2009; Lo, Ramayah, & Run, 2009). The Malaysian National Philosophy on Education (NPE) aims at developing student potentials in a holistic and integrated manner, with the production of individuals with value- oriented mind and disposition (Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) 2006). This is rooted to the first conference on Islamic education. IIUM internalized this in adopting her philosophy, which is internalization, Islamization, integration, and comprehensive excellence to provide a link between religion and western education. The congruence of the NPE and IIUM philosophical stance—which is the integration of values and professional ethics—necessitate the institution leadership evaluation. As a basic assumption, ideal leadership styles, behavior, and practice in Islam is expected to be in line with the Islamic system of leadership. However, the leadership system is feared to be infiltrated with other leadership systems because IIUM, unlike other public institutions in Malaysia, was established and incorporated as a company. Additionally, the global village phenomenon might have significant influence on its leader's behaviour especially with its international make-up of both the students and staff from more than 96 countries across the globe. It is also feared that one may find matching problems of ethical and moral decline of leadership due to this heterogeneity, despite IIUM predication on Islamic virtues. The infiltrations into the institutions could be related, as argued by Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, and Walumbwa (2005a), that:

> With today's pressures to promote style over substance, dress for success, embrace flavor-of-the month fads and fashions, and compromise one's values to satisfy …… thirst for quarterly profits, the challenge of knowing, showing, and remaining true to one's real self at work has never been greater. (p. 344)

According to Gardner, Avolio, and Walumbwa (2005b), leader's authenticity involves acting in accordance with thoughts. In addition to congruence with thoughts, leader's authenticity is a function of the moral self and transparent strength. In IIUM context, authenticity may be presumably theoretical, taking into account the philosophy, social, political, and cultural environment (heterogeneity) of which IIUM is situated; it might be logically possible to arrive at different conclusions. Most authentic leadership theories argue for standards of leader's behaviour and call for greater congruence between what leaders profess and what they do (Gardner et al., 2005b; Cooper, Scandura, & Schriesheim, 2005). This is a phenomenon most required by institutions of higher learning due to their roles in nation building and human capacity development. Most prior studies on authentic leadership (AL) focused on specific contexts and sectors such as the top executives and CEOs of corporate organizations (George, Sim, Mclean, & Mayer, 2007); auditors' behaviour (Morris, 2010) corporate organization (Roux, 2010; Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008) and military leadership (Beyer, 2010). Despite these widespread acknowledgments of the importance of authentic leadership, as an emerging theory in education, yet there is little empirical evidence. Against this backdrop, the purpose of this study is to test if self-awareness, balanced processing of information, internalized moral perspective, and relational transparency are predictors of authentic leadership among administrative heads in IIUM.

Values of Authenticity in Management

After several decades of focus on leadership from various perspectives, the spotlight is now changing (Luthans & Avolio, 2003), and this leads to the empirical study on leadership in contemporary society, to take entirely different dimensions from trait-based theories, behavior theory, contingency theory, to self-regulation (Avolio & Chan, 2008). The ultimate goal of scholars in this era appears to be in line with a strong desire to train and develop leaders that are proactive, foster positive environments, and conduct business in an ethical, socially-responsible manner (Cooper et al., 2005). In other to achieve these goals, authentic leadership study had become increasingly important social phenomenon, a focal point, and a huge task for scholars and researchers in all knowledge domains. As expressed by Schwann and Spady (1998), authentic leaders define and establish the moral philosophical bedrock for organisation to operate and in turn define the absolute core of the organisation existence. Moreover, they are more value-driven, ethical, credible, people-centered and compassionate (Smith, Bhindi, Hansen, Riley, & Rall, 2008). In many ways, this new spotlight is to be welcomed.

Authenticity as a concept gained global consideration recently due to the challenges faced by conflicting stream of social pressure, thus resulting in the self=entrapped in moral dilemmas (Novicevicet al., 2006). Generally, authenticity is defined in leadership literatures as absence of self-deception, recognition of any short-comings, striving for the fulfillments of individual potentials, having self-awareness of purpose, taking full responsibilities for one's error, and being one's true self (Shamir & Eilam, 2005; Sparrowe, 2005; Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Ilies, Morgeson, & Nahrgang 2005). Within this context, authenticity is an inner attitude that reflects the inner core—a true self, within an individual domain; from which an individual moral self-concept can be observed and influence positive behaviours as leaders and the actions as leadership. This notion is also supported by Chan, Hannah, and Gardner (2005), from a social cognitive lens. They suggested that authenticity has two features: (1) the presence and awareness of a core self within the self-system; and (2) presentation of self to align with core self. From a psychological lens, Kernis (2003) asserted that authenticity can be characterized as reflecting the unobstructed operation of one's true, or core, self. Avolio and Gardner (2005), from a moral perspective, asserted that leaders are described authentic if they undergo rigorous self-reflection to understand their moral compasses, and engage in practices appropriate to inner self-perception.

Thus, the new leadership paradigm requires leaders with a stable philosophical and psychological self, for the continuity of the organization as a social system. Arguably, researchers and/or practitioners are of the opinion that, with the development and study of authentic leaders, leaders' preferential interests are overtly taken by self-awareness, self-regulations, positive modeling, ethical reasoning, relational transparency, and balanced processing. They lead through a solid understanding of their moral, ethical and inner self, with greater self-awareness and self-regulation of positive behaviors in themselves and those that they lead (Luthans & Avolio, 2003). In addition, authentic leadership is considered (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Begley, 2003; Walumbwa et al., 2008; George, 2003) to be particularly important in achieving organizational objectives, and in evoking effectiveness among subordinates. Also, authentic leaders might be the employees' saving grace from the shackles of leaders who have their personal interest at heart before considering others. By professing positive images, the preferential interests of leaders are blindsided, submerged, and buried by the needs of groups, organization, community, and culture. If not (Begley, 2003), they join the congregation of failed leaders. While all this may seem to be positive

attributes of authentic leaders, understandably there is a deliberating question against authentic leadership study and development that poses challenges: how do individuals shun preferential interest for the collective interest of the organization? Secondly, how do leaders reconcile their preferential interests with those of the organization? Consequentially, there might be a mismatch between individual personality and organization roles when leaders compromise their values, integrity, identity, images, and morality by acting against their moral consciousness.

Values of Authenticity in Educational Setting

The study on authentic leadership stems from management however, several researchers of educational management have appealed for the study of authentic leadership to be in educational setting. They have offered arguments that, due to the prevailing milieu of cynicism on falling leadership standards, there is a growing concern on how educational organizations are managed. Inevitably, education cannot divorce itself from the shared fabric of societal decadence (Begley, 2003; Duignan, 2004; Smith et al., 2008). In addition, for learners to understand the moral purpose of learning, it is essential to have and develop authentic leaders in the institutional bedrock of communities (Begley & Stefkovich, 2007). The above argument is based on the notion that authentic leaders align a school improvement agenda within a value-based moral purpose. This argument seems particularly persuasive given the breadth and depth of the challenge to foster education on a moral purpose, which is overtly taken over by a market-sensitive educational system.

Another argument is that an authentic leader leads through self-concept; through this, they transform teaching and learning beyond the current stage and sustain the ethics and moral behaviour in the learning environment to what can be emulated by teachers and students (Duignan, 2007). This self-concept fosters a deeper self-knowledge, which assists leaders to challenge their existing worldviews, to determine how actions are translated perceived and inculcated (Shamir & Eilam, 2005). The aim of education is to bring productive teaching and learning to the school environment (Duignan, 2004; Sergiovanni, 1992), creating rounded students. In order to achieve this valid and valued outcome, there are increasing calls for leaders in education to become more dynamic, open, and trustworthy, and with improved performance, efficacy, and effectiveness. However, transforming schools from ordinary organizations to learning environments requires one to be in touch with basic moral values (Sergiovanni, 1992). Despite agreement among researchers about the importance of authentic leadership study in education as a basic supposition, such theory might not be proper for educational leadership advancement. Much prior research has examined the efficacy of other developed theories (transformational and transactional leadership) as it is applicable to leadership in educational context.

Accordingly, Robinson (2006) argued that such leadership theories were developed for management and other fields and might not properly capture the challenge faced by education leaders in the course of leading contemporary schools. Robinson (2006) supports her contention from current literatures on leadership, that substantial research on educational leadership literature are majorly of debates about the merits of various leadership theories, or of empirical research assessing the degree to which educational leaders exemplify the qualities of the selected theory. Adding to these, the efficacy of leadership theories and how they impact student outcome (Robinson, 2006; Mascall, Leithwood, Straus, & Sacks, 2008) remains a major challenge of leadership in the educational sector. Moreover, to make peace

with two competing imperatives which are managerial and moral (Sergiovanni, 2006) are vital for the functionality of any society. Furthermore, how can education leaders be ethical role models or moral emulators that encourage followers to discover and establish their own internal set of moral principles and ideals, (Lawrence & Sharma, 2002) when knowledge is commodified? Kazmi (2009) argued that, when knowledge is reduced to a commodity, our intellectual horizons are sharply diminished, weakening the ability to meet the new challenges constructively. A crucial point is that to lead effectively in higher education (HE) requires a richly blended nature of strategic intent, basic relationship skills, atmosphere of trust, and sense of purpose, plus understanding the historical, traditional, and social philosophy on education and how it impact education.

In Malaysian context, research on higher education leadership, unlike research in other fields (engineering and health, etc.), is mostly not associated with improvement of teaching and learning, student outcomes, and balancing the dual role of education as a vehicle for national development and self-development. A further problem with existing leadership research in Malaysia is the lack of research on the impact of culture on leadership situatedness, developing framework on leadership efficacy across higher education sector and importantly how the empirical study on the subject can be a product for national development and not a product for university library shelves. This separation has meant that theoretical and empirical work on leadership does not yet serve the goal of educational improvement, even though the Malaysian Higher Education Academy (AKEPT) is assumed to perform these roles.

Authentic Leadership Construct Defined

The conception of authentic leadership stems from convergence of theoretical stream (Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, & May, 2004; Luthans & Avolio, 2003), positive organizational behavior (Luthans, 2002a; 2002b), authenticity (Kernis, 2003), and self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In an attempt to conceptualize authentic leadership, various theoretical models have been developed (Kernis, 2003; Ilies et al., 2005, Gardner et al., 2005a; Walumbwa et al., 2008) and highlighted to reflect the various components and features such as authenticity, self-realization, and eudaemonic well-being. The empirical relevance of authentic leadership theory was also empirically evaluated by (Walumbwa et al., 2008). In Kernis study, self-awareness, unbiased processing, authentic behavior/action, and relational authenticity were considered as basic components towards authenticity as part of optimal self-esteem (Kernis, 2003). Drawing on these authenticity studies (Kernis, 2003; Goldman & Kernis, 2002), Ilies et al. (2005) adapted Kernis' theoretical components stated above to reflect leaders' and followers' eudaemonic well-being (self -realization), using the same components as Kernis' (2003) model. The study further relates authentic leadership components "to personal characteristics that have been linked to leadership or well-being in existing theoretical models—positive self-concept, personal integrity, and emotional intelligence" (Ilies et al. 2005, p. 377).

Gardner et al. (2005a) integrated the various theoretical models and definitions of authentic leadership to propose a self-based model for the development of authentic leaders and followers. This integrated model focused on the core self-awareness and self-regulation components of authentic leadership, which serve as the theoretical foundation for the recent extensions of authentic leadership metaphors. Equally, Gardner et al. (2005a) frame their authentic leadership components from Kernis' (2003) authenticity research, and Deci and Ryan's (2000) self-determination theory. However, they recast the term "unbiased

processing" to "balanced processing," to recognise studies from social psychology lens. Similarly, Avolio and Gardner's (2005) model recast Kernis' (2003) authenticity components, and proposed the following authentic leadership components: positive moral perspective, self-awareness, and self-regulations (balanced processing, relational transparency and internalised). The latter's model used the term balanced processing and not unbiased processing to recognize researches from cognitive psychology. Similarly, the term "relational transparency" was used since it seemed to be more descriptive than "relational authenticity"—it reflects an open and transparent manner at which authentic leaders and followers are theorized to share information with each other and close others.

It is worth noting that there are contentious arguments among researchers either to include or exclude a moral component from the construct of authentic leadership. Although, Luthans and Avolio (2003) conceptualized that authentic leadership and its development includes an inherent ethical/moral component, Gardner et al. (2005b), and Avolio and Gardner (2005) asserted that the construct of authentic leadership needs a positive moral/ethical component. It is contended that authentic leaders are moral agents that have high moral standards and capacities to judge moral dilemmas. They are, however, of the view that positive moral perspective is crucial to the emerging work on authentic leadership development. Other researchers (e.g. Cooper et al., 2005; Shamir & Eilam, 2005; Sparrowe, 2005) argued against the construct having a moral component, stressing that it dilutes the construct. Furthermore, Cooper et al. (2005) suggest that studies on authentic leadership are better predicated on consensus regarding theoretical frameworks and investigation methods.

While emphasis was also placed on the notion that knowledge cannot be advanced in a cumulative manner without reaching consensus, Cooper's study further established the view that lack of consensus in prior research (e.g. Leader Member Exchange) leads to the replication of efforts to create the measure of a single phenomenon. And thus, the research resulting from these various measures were not directly comparable. The authors concur further that authentic leadership scholars need to give careful consideration to four critical issues: defining and measuring the construct, determining the discriminant validity of the construct, identifying relevant construct outcomes (i.e., testing the construct's nomological network), and ascertaining whether authentic leadership can be taught. In an attempt to conceptualize what constitutes authentic leadership constructs, Cooper et al. (2005) outlined research issues that formed the origin of Walumbwa et al.'s (2008) authentic leadership construct definition, measurement, and validity that is "to lay the necessary conceptual and empirical groundwork for advancing authentic leadership theory and development" (Walumbwa et al., 2008, p. 99).

Furthermore, Walumbwa et al.'s (2008) authentic leadership construct conceptualization is predicted on research by Avolio and Gardner (2005), Gardner et al. (2005a), and Ilies et al. (2005) for three reasons: (1) it is firmly rooted in the extant social psychological theory and research; (2) it explicitly recognizes and articulates the central role of internalized moral perspective to authentic leadership and its development; and (3) it focuses explicitly on the development of authentic leaders and authentic followers. They developed the following definition of authentic leadership through the modification of Luthans and Avolio's (2003) definition to advance a refined definition that reflects the underlying dimensions of the Gardner, et al. (2005a) and Ilies et al. (2005) constructs:

> …as a pattern of leader behavior that draws upon and promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate, to foster greater self awareness, and internalized moral perspective, balanced processing of

information, and relational transparency on the part of leaders working with followers, fostering self-development. (Walumbwa et al., 2008, p. 94)

Walumbwa et al. (2008) viewed authentic leadership as being composed of five distinct and substantive components, which are: self-awareness, relational transparency, internalized regulation (i.e., authentic behavior), balanced processing of information, and positive moral perspective. The internalized regulation processes and authentic behavior were further combined into a single concept (internalized moral perspective), because the two concepts were conceptually equivalent (both involve exhibiting behaviors) from a self-determination theory perspective. As explained by Walumbwa et al. (2008), in an attempt to operationalize the authentic leadership construct, there are conceptual overlaps between the internalized regulation and positive moral perspective dimensions. Additionally, these dimensions were collapsed into a single dimension—Internalized Moral Perspective, which involves a leader's inner drive to achieve behavioral integrity. The four constructs of authentic leadership, as identified by Walumbwa's research, formed the basis of this research. It might be safely stated at this end that the study on authentic leadership may continue to be a subject of discourse among researchers. Towards this end, an attempt should be made by educational leadership studies to align these grey areas. Before aligning the grey areas, there is a need to gather knowledge about the construct.

Self–Awareness (SA). The notion is that self-awareness is a central element in authentic leadership study, with an interest on identifying how self-awareness can be perceived in leader's behaviours. According to Klenke (2005), self-awareness is the degree to which an individual is aware of various aspects of self-identities, and congruent with the ways they are perceived by others. Self–awareness then is a measure of the ability to be truly conscious of self-components and to observe it without prejudice. The majority of literature on self-awareness suggests that it involves awareness of, and trust in, individual personal characteristics, values, motives, feelings, and cognitions. Self-awareness also includes knowledge of inherent contradictory self-aspects and the role of these contradictions, in influencing thoughts, feelings, actions, and behaviors (Ilies et al., 2005). However, Sparrowe (2005) argued that authenticity is more than self-awareness of one's inner values or purpose, but instead it is emergent from the narrative process in which others play a constituent role in the self. Gardner et al. (2005b) pointed out that:

> …Thus, one can say it is not sufficient to simply be self-aware of what constitutes the moral and ethical ''right thing to do,'' it requires that the leader and follower are able to focus their choices, actions and behaviors via self regulation to take what they know to turn it into moral and ethical behavior. (p. 390)

The researchers believed that authentic leaders experience a heightened level of self–awareness, which is a core component of authentic leadership. Thus, self-awareness is necessary for effective leadership, class room practitioners, and administrators. They requires being aware of their moral and ethical strengths and weaknesses. As such, if self-awareness is lacking, it is difficult for educational leaders to take a moral stand and/or adopt new behaviors, if needs warrant doing so. If higher education leaders are (Burns, 1978) to respond as moral agents, self-awareness is essential for behavioral change (Osterman & Kottkamp, 1993), which requires that self-awareness is predicted by positive self-concept (Ilies et al.,

2003). Shamir and Eilam (2005) advocate that, to become authentic, leaders need to develop a high level of self-concept, which is centered on a stable sense of self-knowledge and strongly-held values and convictions.

Relational Transparency (RT). The basis for relational transparency is found in Kernis' (2003) research, which was referred to as relational authenticity. Relational authenticity involves endorsing the importance for others to see the real you, either good or bad. Authentic leaders are transparent in expressing their true emotions and feelings (Gardner et al. 2005a). Concurrently, they regulate such emotions to reduce displays of inappropriate emotions. By responding transparently to moral dilemmas, authentic leaders become ethical role models (Gardner & Schermerhorn, 2004). Nevertheless, Hughes (2005) argued that relational transparency results from the leader's self-disclosure which comprises of four aspects: goals/motives, identity, values and emotions (GIVE). The leader is transparent to the follower when making ethical decisions and, to be transparent, one must first be self-aware of one's weaknesses and strengths.

The disclosures of information between leaders and followers also reflect on the level of transparency that exists from the leaders to followers (Gardner et al., 2005a). Authentic relations entail selective processes of self-disclosure and the development of common understanding and trust. Based on the available information from the literature, it is believed that relational transparency entails responding to who you are. That is the fusion of internal and external true self without portraying a different entity within and outside the organization. Portraying the true self assists in building relationships, trust, and care. Furthermore, Duignan and Bhindi (1997) argue, the quality of relationship influences everything else that happens in the organization, inclusive of the quality of the organization. If a leader could identify, understand, and implement the components of Hughes's self-disclosure (goals/motives, identity, values and emotions), then the authentic self of learners and followers is unleashed. These might create a shift in the learner's orientation to learning rather than the perceived orientation to learn for glamorous employment (Hashim & Hassan, 2008). Thus, the priority of learning is to discover the real self within the passage of time spent while schooling.

Internalized Moral Perspective (IMP). At the very heart of the leadership relationship is an essential moral consideration. Recent leadership literature recognizes the growing meditation on values and taking value-positions (Begley, 2003). The degree of commitment of the organization's leader to ethical conduct and values are very important and thus influence the followers and the organization in a positive way. Walumbwa et al. (2008) are of the notion that self-regulation is "guided by internal moral standards and values versus group, organizational, and societal pressures, and it results in expressed decision making and behavior that is consistent with these internalized values" (p. 96). Leaders exhibit ethical behaviors when they are doing what is morally right, just, and good. When they do so, they help to elevate followers' awareness and moral self-actualization. Thus, followers' moral self-development is proactively shaped by the leader's moral behaviour (Zhu, 2008). This will lead followers to inculcate and possibly demonstrate high moral values, beliefs, emotions, motives, and goals through the modeling of leader's positive behavior. Hannah, Lester, and Vogelgesang (2005) defined the moral component of authentic leadership "as the exercise of altruistic, virtuous leadership by a highly developed leader who acts in concert with his or her self-concept to achieve agency over the moral aspects of his or her leadership domain" (p. 44). Thus, in education, a leader is a role model who sets high standards for

moral and ethical conduct, and for moral emulation, a reflective practice by having a strong moral compass, values and goals. This leads to behaviors and decisions that promote ethical policies, procedures, and processes within the learning environment.

Balanced Processing of Information (BP). Balanced processing of information can be comprehended by taking into consideration how motivational biases impact the processes by which people with low or fragile high self-esteem opt for and understand information (Kernis, 2003). Begley's (2003) point of argument is that there is need for frameworks and ways of thinking that will encompass the full range of human motivations and valuation processes as it relates to leadership practices and serves as a guide to action, particularly as a support to ethical resolution of dilemmas. Ethics and moral and valuation models are important for institutional leadership to serve as rubrics, benchmarks, social standards of practice, and templates for moral action. To serve as templates for moral action, balanced processing refers to the impartial collection of relevant self-related information, either positive or negative in nature. That is, the leader does not distort, exaggerate, or ignore externally based evaluations of the self nor internal experiences and private knowledge that might inform self-development (Gardner et al., 2005a). Balanced processing of information involves being aware of and attuned to one's weaknesses and strengths, and care is taken to deflect from the weakness angle when needs call for it. They also solicit views that challenge their deeply-held positions (Gardner et al., 2005a). Taken together, balanced processing refers to leaders who show that they objectively scrutinize all pertinent information before making any conclusion.

Research Design and Methodologies

The research was conducted at the main campus of the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). Data about authentic leadership were collected from administrative staff of IIUM, voluntarily with no reimbursement for their participation. They were asked to rate the authentic leadership of their respective administrative heads. In all the administrative staff, workforces are one thousand eight hundred and nine (1809). The male staff comprises of eight hundred and sixteen (816) and the female staff consisted of nine hundred and ninety three (993).One goal of this study was to provide quantitative evidence about the emerging theory of leadership from an educational perspective. Based on the adopted rater version, the 16 questions from the authentic leadership questionnaire (ALQ) clustered into four categories or constructs, which are: RT, relational transparency (5 items); IM, internalized moral perspective (4 items); BP, balanced processing of information (3 items); and SA, self-awareness (4 items). The respondents rate leaders as authentic using a 0-4-point Likert-type scale choice, ranging from 0 (not at all) to 4 (frequently, if not always). Work by Walumbwa et al. particularly addressed validity questions among samples in the United States, the People's Republic of China, and Kenya by investigating hypothesized relationships of authentic leadership for construct support and concluded that a second-order four-factor model best fit the data to account for the dependence between each of the factors and that the convergent validity among the four factors suggested a higher-order factor of authentic leadership.

Currently there are 20 public universities in Malaysia and the sample is selected from administrative staff of IIUM only. Therefore, one must be cautious in generalizing these results to all administrative staff working in the Malaysian universities or higher institutions of learning. Secondly, quota sampling technique was used for data collection. The limitation

is due to the difficulty of manageability, financial, and time constraints. For authentic leaders in higher education to purport what they truly means, it is not a gain saying there is a long rough road ahead, which is also challenging. Drawing upon literature and based on the present research context, the researchers hypothesized that:

H_1:   Self-awareness, balanced processing of information, internalized moral perspective, and relational transparency are predictors of AL.

Sample
The study populations were full-time administrative staff members of selected departments at IIUM, representing almost 18% of the total population of administrative staff. Based on quota sampling procedure, the total of 320 academic, management and professional administrative staff members from ten departments were selected to participate in the study. The respondents were comprised of assistant directors, administrative executives, administrative assistant, middle managers and administrative and technical support staff. A total of 235 questionnaires were returned, representing a 73.4% return rate. Different strategies were used to increase response rates in order to obtain the achieved sample targets. By most social science standards, this achieved sample is relatively large.

Analysis procedures. The analyses were conducted using descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis (MRA). The data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science for Windows Version 16.0 (SPSS).

FINDINGS
Description of variables

Descriptive statistics of the demographic characterization are reported in Table 1. 235 responses were obtained from the original response distribution of 320 respondents. However, 21 responses were discarded due to incomplete information. There are altogether 40.2% males and 59.8% females. Table 1, shows the respondents' age distribution: 27.1% were between 25–30 years old, 25.7% were between 41–45 years old, 19.1% were between 36 – 40 years old, 13.6% were between 46 – 50 years old, 13.1% were between 31–35 years old, 0.9% were older than 51 years old. This study did show that the majority of respondents are within the 25-30 years old range. In terms of respondents' working experience, 29.4% have served less than 5 years' experience; followed by 29% respondents have been working between 11–15 years, 19.6% work at the institution between 6–10 years, 15% respondents have been working between 16–20 years, and the remaining 7% respondents have been working in the institution for more than 21 years. This indicates that highest working experience categorization fell between 1–5 years. The respondents' academic qualifications were as follows: degree, 51.4%; diploma, 29.9%; SPM, 17.3%; and masters, 1.4%. In sum, descriptive findings reveal that the study sample had a greater proportion of female respondents aged 30 years or below, with a larger proportion of respondents that are degree holders, and that the majority has served less than 5 years.

Table1: Descriptive Statistics (N=320)

		Number of administrative staff	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	86	40.2
	Female	128	59.8
	25–30 years	58	27.1
	31–35 years	28	13.1
Age	36–40 years	42	19.6
	41–45 years	55	25.7
	46–50 years	29	13.6
	51+ years	2	.9
	1–5 years	63	29.4
	6–10 years	42	19.6
Numbers of years employed	11–15 years	62	29.0
	16–20 years	32	15.0
	21+ years	15	7.0
	SPM	37	17.3
	Diploma	64	29.9
Academic qualifications	Degree	110	51.4
	Masters	3	1.4

For this particular study, the estimated internal consistency alphas (Cronbach's alpha) for each of the measures were as shown in table 2: relational transparency (RT), 0.84; internalized moral perspective (IM), 0.78; balanced processing (BP), 0.74; and self-awareness (SA) 0.84. This study indicates that staff rates the authentic leadership of administrative heads as moderately high on all the dimensions of AL, as indicated in table 2. The mean (M) for relational transparency dimension is 2.89 with standard deviation (SD) 0.80; internalised moral perspective has M = 2.87, SD = 0.78; balanced processing of information M = 2.78, SD = 0.85; and self-awareness M = 2.8, SD = 0.83.

Table 2: Scale reliability and descriptive statistics of authentic leadership dimension

Construct	Alpha	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Relational Transparency	.84	.60	4.00	2.89	.80
Internalized Moral	.78	.75	4.00	2.87	.78
Balanced processing of information	.74	1.3	4.00	2.79	.85
Self–Awareness	.84	.88	4.00	2.82	.83

Table 3 reports the means and standard deviations of staff's responses to authentic leadership variables. The mean ratings for authentic leadership ranged from 2.762 to 2.9766, standard deviations ranged from 0.87883 to 1.08467. All the items were found to have a mean score greater than 2.7 on a 0 - 4-point scale. With the mean score greater than the average anchor point, it is an indication that the authenticity of administrative heads is perceived to be fairly high. The least-rated item is BP10 (from balanced processing of

information constructs) and the most rated items are RT 1 & RT 3 (from relational transparency constructs).

Table 3: Rating of authentic leadership items

Codes	Item numbers	Mean	Std. Deviation
BP10	16	2.7103	1.06157
RT 5	15	2.7523	0.94911
SA14	14	2.762	1.0809
SA15	13	2.7804	0.99924
SA16	12	2.7944	1.04579
BP 11	11	2.8037	1.06095
RT 2	11	2.8037	1.04759
IMP 9	9	2.8411	1.08467
IMP 6	8	2.8551	0.87883
BP 12	8	2.8551	1.03122
IMP 8	6	2.8785	1.03652
IMP 7	5	2.9112	1.02850
SA13	4	2.9252	0.90591
RT4	3	2.9439	1.04663
RT1	1	2.9766	1.05902
RT 3	1	2.9766	1.01834

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to test if self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing of information, and internalized moral perspective are predictor variables of authentic leadership, using the following equation:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + + \beta_2 X_2 + + \beta_3 X_3 + + \beta_4 X_4 + + e$$

Where Y = Authentic Leadership, X_1 = Relational Transparency, X_2 = Internalized Moral Perspective, X_3 = Balanced Processing of Information, X_4 = Self-Awareness and e = unobservable influence of any omitted variables.

Table 4 presents information about the model summary. Using the enter method, it was found that a statistically significant model emerged R^2 = 0.793 F (3, 210) = 11155.269, $p < 0.001$). Adjusted R square (0.793) indicates that 79.3% of the variance is substantially explained by the four construct/predictor variables of AL. The four predictor variables accounted for 79.6% of the variance of authentic leadership. According to the standardized beta coefficients (β), it was found that the four predictor variables predicted Authentic Leadership in the following pattern: self-awareness ($\beta = 0.424$, $p = 0.001$), internalised moral perspective ($\beta = 0.353$ $p = 0.001$), relational transparency ($\beta = 0.236$, $p = 0.001$), and balanced processing of information ($\beta = 0.127$, $p = 0.001$). Multicollinearity was assessed using multiple regression collinearity diagnostics. Thus, multicollinearity occurs if a tolerance value is less than .10 and variance inflation factors (VIF) values are above 10 (Pallant, 2005). The VIF for the predictor variables are as follows: self–awareness = 2.96, internalised moral perspective = 2.41, relational transparency = 2.91, and balanced processing of information = 3.60, while the tolerance values are: self-awareness = 0.338, internalised moral perspective = 0.414, relational transparency = 0.456, and balanced processing of information = 0.277. Significant variables are shown below:

Table 4: Regression Results

Construct	B	SEB	β
Self-Awareness	5.855	.091	.424
Internalized Moral	4.508	.079	.353
Relational Transparency	3.756	.187	.263
Balance Processing of Information	1.824	.167	.127

Note. $R^2 = .763$ ($p < .001$).
**$p < .001$.

Discussion and Implications

This study investigated patterns of authentic leadership, which prior evidence has suggested is consequential for students to understand the moral purpose of learning (Hodgkinson, 1991; Smith et al., 2008) through their leaders, teachers, and those who assist with teaching and learning. Authentic leadership constructs have been conceptualized to have four dimensions: self-awareness, relational transparency, internalized morals, and balanced processing of information (Walumbwa et al., 2008). This concept of the leader's authenticity patterns suggested that the more the leaders are authentic the more productive contributions they make to organizational outcomes (Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, & May, 2004; Gardner et al., 2005a). We hypothesized that: Self-awareness, balanced processing of information, internalized moral perspective, and relational transparency are predictor variables of AL in IIUM. The responses of the 214 administrative staff in IIUM provide evidence to test the study objective. Nevertheless, one must be cautious in generalizing these results to all administrative staff working in the Malaysian universities or higher institutions of learning, due to the limitation of the sample size.

With these limitations in mind, results provide support for our initial hypothesis. The tested model is positive, significant, and the values for the predictor variables are within limits, indicating absence of multicollinearity. That is, each of the predictor variables is different from one another. The standardized beta coefficient result indicates that self-awareness strongly predicts authentic leadership and contributes the utmost strength of the relationship to authentic leadership. This was followed by internalised moral perspective, relational transparency and balanced processing of information respectively. The self-awareness t-value and small p-value suggest that it has a large impact on authentic leadership. These findings are in parallel view with Walumbwa et al. (2008) and Gardner et al. (2005b), that self-awareness constitutes the core component of authentic leadership and its development. Self-awareness, however, may be an influence on the development of different patterns of authentic leadership, as an antecedent variable. When administrative heads hold high levels of such self-awareness, they may be much more likely to develop the authenticity of their colleagues in efforts to improve higher learning. Additionally, it also adds support to the notion that internalised moral perspective is a required component of authentic leadership. The present generation has witnessed one of the most devastated finance and mortgage industrial collapse as never before in the history of mankind since the Great Depression (Novicevic et al., 2006), due to leaders' lack of authenticity and ignoring ethical considerations when making decision (Begley, 2003; 2006).

For these reasons and more, the practical implication of authentic leadership as contended is significant to the educational sector and other vital sectors of society. Thus, the

practical implications of these results depend on the notion that, to restore the moral purpose of education, we need to have leaders that are authentic in their dealings and dispositions. Therefore, authentic leadership theory is a response to the managerial and corporate meltdowns (Luthans & Avolio, 2003; Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Cooper et al., 2005), which pushed a significant need for genuine leadership, characterized by self-concept, integrity, morality, self-regulation, transparent self, and an ability to better cope with fast-changing, turbulent organizational contexts.

This study demonstrates two important practical implications. First, the findings indicate that participants view their leaders as authentic leaders in IIUM. This supports authentic leadership theory and suggests that authentic leaders are present in a wide variety of organizations (Luthans & Avolio, 2003). Second, the findings show that authentic leaders exhibit high levels of self-awareness, as well as high levels of internalised moral perspective, relational transparency, and balanced processing of information. This might indicate that authentic leaders will potentially place organizational and followers' needs above their own needs and will pursue ethical practices that will ultimately benefit learning. In turbulent decision-making periods, leaders will allow their individual values to align with organizational and professional values. Lastly, this study might provide a starting point and benchmark for future research in the area of authentic leadership pattern. The study of authentic leadership in higher education is just evolving. As such, this study provides an initial theoretical framework and preliminary findings that can serve as impetus for future research. Normative approaches to authentic leadership will need to find an avenue in which leaders and staff work together to share leadership in a planned and aligned ways. By supporting each other in trustful, mutual, and positive ways, such an approach may lead to improving schools, and ultimately lead to student achievement.

In sum, today's higher education needs leaders who will exemplify and execute authentic behaviours that seeks to benefit higher learning over personal preferential self-interest. This study indicates that such leaders are present in IIUM. It is hoped that this finding has contributed to the corpus of knowledge on authentic leadership development, as it is applicable to educators, bearing in mind the arguments of Robinson (2006) and Mascall et al. (2008). Secondly, it might be useful for IIUM in its development strategy; and lastly, it might assist Malaysian Higher Education Academy (AKEPT) to develop a framework on leadership which will be a product for national development and not only a product for universities' library shelves.

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