AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP, EMPOWERMENT, AND POSITIVE OUTCOMES: HEARING THE VOICES OF THE EVENTS INDUSTRY

MAJD MEGHEIRKOUNI ⓘ

School of Business, Law & Social Sciences, Abertay University, Dundee, UK

The purpose of this study is to investigate the direct and indirect relationships between authentic leadership and job satisfaction, and those between authentic leadership and organizational commitment, using empowerment as a mediator in the events industry. Quantitative data were obtained from 304 participants from sport, cultural, and personal events in the Middle East. Three hundred and four surveys were completed. The results show that empowerment mediates the relationships between authentic leadership and job satisfaction, as well as between authentic leadership and organizational commitment in the events industry. Theoretical and practical implications of the findings are discussed, together with limitations and ideas for future research.

Key words: Authentic leadership; Empowerment; Satisfaction; Commitment; Events

Introduction

The challenges for event managers and leaders are exacerbated by their increasing reliance on paid and unpaid staff, if the events are to be economically and operationally viable (Chalip, 2000; Costa et al., 2006; Van der Wagen & White, 2018). In addition, many events would not exist without the support of volunteers, employees, and their leaders organizing and managing the events (Mykletun & Himanen, 2016). The major problem facing organizing committees and subcommittees before and during events is how event leaders influence followers while maintaining their satisfaction and

commitment (Megheirkouni, 2017). It is known that leadership in events requires the setting of strategies, empowering others, creating visions, communicating goals, and inspiring everyone to work together towards those goals. Although event leaders must execute many of these functions, they may not be observable to followers (Mumford et al., 2017). In this context, Getz and Page (2016) argued that shared leadership, where no one dominates and all decisions are taken democratically, is an effective approach in events, but difficult to implement. They suggested that leadership behaviors can continue well into the life span of the event and its organization and success (see also Megheirkouni,

Address correspondence to Majd Megheirkouni, Lecturer in Event Management, The Accounting, Business & Management Division, School of Business, Law & Social Sciences, Abertay University, Bell St., Dundee DD1 1HG, UK. E-mail: m.megheirkouni@abertay.ac.uk

2018a, 2018b, 2019; Smith et al., 1997). One of these leadership behaviors is authentic leadership.

The concept of authentic leadership has emerged in both the research and practice literature as an area of interest that complements work on ethical and transformational leadership (Avolio, Gardner et al., 2004; Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, et al. 2005; Gardner, Avolio, Walumbwa, 2005; George, 2003; Ilies et al., 2005). The theoretical research on authentic leadership has described those leaders as having subordinates who feel more psychologically empowered to take on greater ownership for their work (George, 2003; Ilies et al., 2005). Although there is an increasing number of studies on authentic leadership (Avolio et al., 2018; Leroy et al., 2015; Sendjaya et al., 2016; Sidani & Rowe, 2018), it is still in the formative stages of development, and there are a number of questions that need to be addressed about authentic leadership, such as its implementation in a non-Western context (Northouse, 2018)—for example, the Middle East (Karacay et al., 2017).

A comprehensive review of the literature suggests that the authentic leadership approach has not been explored or investigated yet in relevant fields such as event management, sport management, or/and sport business (Megheirkouni, 2018c; Takos et al., 2018). More importantly, no study has examined how event leaders influence their people, while maintaining their satisfaction and commitment, despite some of the relevant studies including samples of different types of events in the Middle East (Megheirkouni, 2018a, 2018b). The need for investigating authentic leadership in the Middle East lies in its vital role in uncertain economic, demographic, political, social, and legal environments of the Arab Middle East countries, especially over the last decade (Akhras, 2016).

In all of this, a key question remains: How do authentic leaders exert their influence in an event-related context? That is, how does authentic leadership affect positive outcomes, such as satisfaction and commitment in the events industry? The purpose of the current study is to advance research on authentic leadership in the field of event management in the following ways. First, I argue that the impact of authentic leadership on subordinates' satisfaction and commitment is mediated by empowerment. Second, data were collected from the events industry in the Middle East, rather than in the West where most studies on authentic leadership have been conducted to date (Megheirkouni, 2018a).

Theory and Hypothesis Development

Introduction to Event Management

Event management is the applied field of study gaining global recognition at national and international levels by academicians, professional, politicians, and business people. The growing interest in the field of event management reflects a fundamental need within all countries for effective management and leadership of events in the nonprofit, for-profit, and state sectors (Getz & Page, 2016; Megheirkouni, 2018b). The EMBOK model of event management knowledge domains developed by Silvers et al. (2006) suggested that scholars and researchers can explore or investigates ideas and aspects of event management in five different areas: administration, design, marketing, operations, and risk. Each of these has become an independent domain of research. Although there are as many typologies or classifications of events as there are textbooks, all scholars agree that the major classifications of events include: 1) business (e.g., meetings and conferences, exhibitions, and incentives), 2) sport (e.g., competitive sports events and noncompetitive sports events), and 3) culture (e.g., arts, entertainment, television and the internet, community—historical and anniversary celebrations, social action—cause-related events, protests, life cycle/milestones, and religious) (Van der Wagen, 2007). Others provide a more accurate classification of events includes: leisure events (leisure, sport, and recreation), cultural events (ceremonial, sacred, heritage, art, and folklore), organizational events (commercial, political, charitable, and sales), and personal events (weddings, birthdays, and anniversaries) (Shone & Parry, 2004). Accordingly, this study focuses on leadership in three different events: sport, cultural, and personal events.

Authentic Leadership and Empowerment

Authentic leadership was identified earlier in transformational leadership research but never

fully articulated. Researchers, in attempts to more fully investigate authentic leadership, set out to identify the outcomes of authentic leadership and conceptualize it and those efforts continue today (Northouse, 2018). Authentic leadership is a complex process. This might be the reason why there is no single accepted definition of authentic leadership. In this regard, Chan (2005) pointed out that there are many definitions of authentic leadership, each written from a different viewpoint and with a different focus. Specifically, leadership research shows that there are three ways of defining authentic leadership: (1) authentic leadership is defined from an intrapersonal perspective, which focuses on leader's life experiences (Shamir & Eilam, 2005); (2) authentic leadership is defined as an interpersonal process, which focuses on the relational behavior created by both leaders and their subordinates and is perceived as a reciprocal process (Eagly, 2005); and (3) authentic leadership is defined from a developmental perspective, which suggests authentic leadership develops in leaders or/and subordinates over time (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Walumbwa et al., 2008). According to Northouse (2018), all these ways are understood within authentic leadership behaviors.

Authentic leadership includes four types of behaviors: self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, and relational transparency (Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, et al., 2005). Self-awareness refers to the extent leaders understand their own strengths, weaknesses, and motives, as well as recognizing how leaders view their leadership. Self-awareness includes reflecting on leaders' values, identity, emotions, motives, and goals. Additionally, it includes being aware of and trusting one's own feelings and beliefs. Internalized moral perspective refers to a self-regulatory process whereby individuals use their internal moral standards and values to guide their behavior rather than allow outside pressures to control them. Balanced processing, a self-regulatory behavior, refers to the ability to analyze information objectively and explore other people's opinions before making a decision. Relational transparency means to be open and honest in presenting one's true self to others. This might include showing both positive and negative aspects of oneself to others (Gardner, Avolio, & Walumbwa, 2005; Northouse, 2018; Walumbwa et al., 2008).

Empowerment is one of the mechanisms through which authentic leadership influences followers (George, 2003). It is conceptualized as a psychological state resulting from an enabling process that comprises four dimensions: self-determination, impact, meaning, and competence (Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). Authentic leaders recognize the importance of understanding the impact of trust, hope, and positive emotions, and of understanding the attitudes and behaviors of subordinates (Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, et al., 2004). Subordinates are perceived as an essential element for authentic leadership. Gardner, Avolio, Luthan, et al. (2005) point out the relationship between an authentic leader and subordinates is characterized by: a) guidance toward worthy objectives; b) transparency, openness, and trust; and c) an emphasis on subordinate development. In view of the available research and above logic, a relationship between authentic leadership and empowerment may exist (Laschinger et al., 2007; Wong & Laschinger, 2013; Zhu et al., 2004).

Empowerment and Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is defined as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state [which is] a function of the perceived relationship between what one wants from a job and what one perceives it is offering" (Locke, 1976, p. 1300). Though Conger and Kanungo (1988) and Thomas and Velthouse (1990) did not explicitly include job satisfaction in their models of empowerment, Thomas and Tymon (1994) argued that empowerment can be evident at higher levels of job satisfaction. They reported that assessments of empowerment generate intrinsic rewards and thus should be positively related to job satisfaction. Similarly, previous research has supported a positive relationship between empowerment and job satisfaction (Laschinger et al., 2007, 2011). However, empirical research on the relationship between empowerment and job satisfaction varies and most empirical research has revealed partial correlations of one or more of the components of empowerment with job satisfaction (e.g., Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Spreitzer et al., 1997; Thomas & Tymon, 1994; Wang & Lee, 2009).

Empowerment and Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is defined as:

> the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization. Conceptually, it can be categorized by at least three factors: a) a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values, b) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization, and c) a definite desire to maintain organizational membership. (Mowday et al., 2013, p. 43)

The link between empowerment and organizational commitment appears to exist. It is argued that there are several reasons that empowerment affects organizational commitment. These reasons are: (a) a meaningful job provides a suitable fit between the requirements and purposes of one's organizational work roles and one's personal value system; (b) a sense of competence gives workers the belief that they are able to perform their work roles with skill and success, stimulating them to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization; (c) self-determination gives workers control over their work and a voice in work-related decision processes, leading to enhanced involvement in the organization; and (d) having impact facilitates workers' possibilities to participate in shaping the organizational system in which they are embedded (Kirkman & Rosen, 1999). Empirical research revealed the greater the level of empowerment experienced by the employees, the greater their organizational commitment will be (Bhatnagar, 2005; Menon, 2001).

The Mediating Role of Empowerment

Thus far the research reviewed has been on the links between authentic leadership and job satisfaction, and between authentic leadership and commitment. The key proposition in this study is that empowerment mediates the relationship between authentic leadership and between job satisfaction and commitment. A requirement for this proposition is that authentic leadership is related to job satisfaction and commitment. And an extensive range of studies supports this proposition (e.g., Azanza et al., 2013; Giallonardo et al., 2010; Leroy et al., 2012; Peus et al., 2012; Walumbwa et al., 2008).

The model presented in the next section assumes that authentic leadership precedes empowerment and thus has a causal effect on empowerment. Many authors have viewed authentic leadership as being instrumental in orientation and goal-directed behavior and includes some sort of focus on achieving a particular aim or goal. Peterson et al. (2010), for instance, investigated the role of subordinate emotions in the relationship between authentic leadership and individual job performance. Their results revealed a positive relationship between the frequency of authentic leadership exhibited by leaders and subordinates' job performance. Previous research has supported a positive relationship between authentic leadership and job satisfaction (Giallonardo et al., 2010; Walumbwa et al., 2008). Considerable empirical evidence shows that empowerment is positively related to outcomes, such as subordinates' commitment, performance, satisfaction, and work engagement (Chen et al., 2007; Seibert et al., 2004).

The final part of the argument for a mediation effect is that leaders with authentic leadership create outcomes such as job satisfaction and commitment because their authentic leadership empowers their subordinates. For example, members in an Olympic Games organizing committee, who have most of the required technical, cognitive, and strategic skills for an organizing committee' member, have the capability to manage in other subcommittees, but each member is assigned to a particular role during organizing sport mega-events such as the Olympic Games. An empowerment of the committee member is needed in order to gain a high level of satisfaction and commitment, which is related to the extent to which authentic leaders can facilitate that. In sum, the effect of empowerment on job satisfaction as well as on commitment becomes magnified when leaders display authentic behaviors to develop a collective sense of high-performance goals at the individual and collective level.

Research Hypotheses and Hypothesized Path Model

The current study, on the basis of prior studies, presents a path analytic model, depicted in Figure 1, in which authentic leadership affects empowerment, and in which empowerment is subsequently
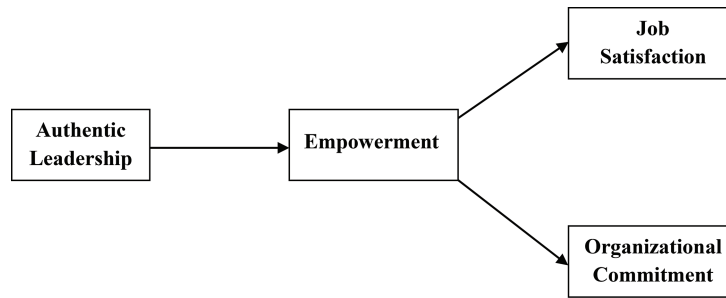
Figure 1. Hypothesized research model.

linked to job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Accordingly, the hypotheses of this study are:

H1. Authentic leadership is positively related to job satisfaction and organizational commitment.
H2. Authentic leadership is positively related to empowerment.
H3. Empowerment mediates the relationship between authentic leadership and job satisfaction; and between authentic leadership and organizational commitment.

Methodology

Participants and Procedures

The present study focuses on three event types: sports, cultural exhibitions, and festivals in the Arab Middle East. Specifically, these events were chosen after consultancies with several experts working in Syria, Lebanon, and the United Arab Emirates, as well as using previous experience in these countries and selected events. The study focused on cultural events in Syria in 2018. Data were collected from Syrian cultural exhibitions in association with Syrian museums, the Damascus International Book Fair, the International Exhibition for the Reconstruction of Syria, as well as the Damascus International Fair. For personal events, data were collected from four companies operating in Lebanon specializing in weddings, birthdays, and anniversaries in 2018. For sport events, data were collected from the United Arab Emirates in 2018 with a specific focus on an annual horse racing event hosted in the Meydan racing complex, Emirates Airlines Dubai Rugby Sevens, and the Dubai Duty-Free Tennis Championships.

Questionnaires were distributed to 600 people and a total of 304 usable surveys (50.6% response rate) were completed and returned from sport, cultural, and personal events. Of the 304 participants who completed and returned the questionnaire, 81% were male and 19% were female. Sixty-nine percent of the participants working for sport, cultural, and personal events were natives of the respective country. Sixty-two percent of participants were between 31 and 40 years of age. Of the respondents, 8% had high school degrees or less, 62% had undergraduate degrees, 24% had postgraduate degrees, and 6% had other degrees.

Data were collected from Syria, Lebanon, and the United Arab Emirates. An introductory letter from the author was emailed to chief executives, HR managers, and public relations managers managing the events. It included specific information about the purpose of the study, data collection, the events adopted in the study, and the potential participants for the study. Reminder notices were emailed 7 days later. Questionnaires were emailed to participants via the internal electronic mail system of each organization/firm and included an introductory letter from the author. Participants completed the questionnaire on the job and reminder notices were emailed 2 weeks later. It was emphasized that the organization/firm would receive only aggregated results.

Instruments

Authentic leadership was measured using the 16-item Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ). This questionnaire was validated by Walumbwa et al. (2008), who confirmed four theoretically related

substantive factors: balanced processing (3 items), internalized moral perspective (4 items), relational transparency (5 items), and self-awareness (4 items). Managers at the operational level from the three different events were asked to assess their leadership (self-assessment). The scale for their answers ranged from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*frequently, if not always*). Sample items are: "I can list my three greatest weaknesses," "My actions reflect my core values," "I seek others' opinions before making up my own mind," and "I openly share my feelings with others."

Empowerment was measured using a 12-item scale developed by Spreitzer (1995). This scale includes four dimensions: competence (3 items), impact (3 items), meaningfulness (3 items), and self-determination (3 items). This questionnaire was given to employees to measure the level of empowerment granted to them by their managers. The scale for their answers ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). A sample item is, "I have significant autonomy in determining how I do my job."

For Job satisfaction, satisfaction on the job was measured using a 5-item scale developed by Bacharach et al. (1991). It, acting as a general job satisfaction scale, "emphasizes the match between expectations and perceived reality for broad aspects of the job taken as a whole" (Bacharach et al., 1991, p. 45). This questionnaire was given to employees to measure their satisfaction. The response range is from 1 (*very dissatisfied*) to 4 (*very satisfied*).

For Job commitment, the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) is a widely used instrument to measure employees' commitment using 15 items developed by Mowday et al. (2013). Sample items are: "I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organization," "I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization," "This organization really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance," "I really care about the fate of this organization." The response range is from 1 (*strongly disagree*), 4 (*neither disagree nor agree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

In addition to the substantive measures described above, measures of control variables included age, gender, and nationality, which were obtained from both employees and their managers at the operational level. This author controlled for event type

because organizational (e.g., events) culture and strategy can influence levels of empowerment (Bailey, 2009; Spreitzer, 1996), and thereby influence job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Given that the data were based on perceptions of both managers and employees, the author wanted to mitigate same source contamination as much as possible. Therefore, data were collected randomly within each event type.

Data Analysis

All the items in the current study defined the latent variables well, given that their respective coefficients were above 0.40, ranging from 0.47 to 0.90 (Pituch & Stevens, 2015). All constructs also demonstrated sufficient discriminant validity. The author used the population discrepancy function to derive the effect size in the current study (MacCallum et al., 2006). For the measurement model, it was 0.42 ($N = 304$, $df = 175$, noncentrality parameter = 173.60).

Results

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, and zero-order correlations for all variables and shows that most variables in the study's model were significantly and positively correlated. As shown in Table 1, authentic leadership was positively and significantly related to empowerment ($r = 0.98$, $p < 0.001$), job satisfaction ($r = 0.28$, $p < 0.001$), and commitment ($r = 0.96$, $p < 0.001$). Additional significant correlations were also obtained.

Hypothesis 1 predicts that authentic leadership would be positively related to job satisfaction and commitment. The results revealed that authentic leadership predicted job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.223$, $p < 0.001$), and commitment ($\beta = 0.322$, $p < 0.001$) after controlling for gender, age, and event type. Hypothesis 1 is therefore supported by the data.

Hypothesis 2 predicted that authentic leadership would be positively related to empowerment. The results revealed that authentic leadership is positively related to empowerment ($\beta = 0.429$, $p < 0.001$), once again controlling for gender, age, and event type. Hypothesis 2 is therefore supported.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that the relationship between authentic leadership and job satisfaction

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, and Zero-Order Correlations

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Age	1.29	0.45	1						
2. Gender	1.80	0.40	−0.79	1					
3. Event type	1.71	0.76	0.01	−0.08	1				
4. Authentic leadership	3.50	0.65	−0.04	0.03	0.01	1			
5. Empowerment	3.52	0.68	−0.03	0.03	0.00	0.98***	1		
6. Job satisfaction	3.16	0.52	−0.10	0.01	−0.07	0.28***	0.25***	1	
7. Commitment	3.54	0.73	−0.04	0.05	−0.00	0.96***	0.96***	0.23***	1

***$p < 0.001$.

and commitment would be mediated by empowerment. According to Baron and Kenny (1986), the following conditions must be met in order to conclude that mediation has taken place: a) the independent variable must be related to the mediator as well as to the dependent variable; b) the mediator must significantly predict the dependent variable; and c) when controlling for the effects of the mediator, the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable must either reliably reduce (the reduction can be tested with the Sobel test, 1982; see Baron & Kenny, 1986) or become nonsignificant when the mediator is controlled. Thus, testing the indirect effect of authentic leadership on satisfaction and commitment requires a significant relationship between authentic leadership and empowerment. As in Hypotheses 1 and 2, the author further controlled for gender, age, and events type. In step 1, authentic leadership needs to be related to job satisfaction and organizational commitment. These requirements were supported by the results

for Hypothesis 1 above. Step 2 requires that authentic leadership is related to empowerment. This requirement was also supported by the results of Hypothesis 2 above. In step 3, the author tested the relationship between the mediator and the dependent variable. The results revealed that empowerment predicted job satisfaction while controlling for authentic leadership ($\beta = 0.402$, $p < 0.001$, $\Delta R^2 = 0.021$, $\Delta F = 7.077$, $p < 0.05$), and empowerment would predict commitment whilst controlling for authentic leadership was found ($\beta = 0.194$, $p < 0.001$, $\Delta R^2 = 0.013$, $\Delta F = 15.411$, $p < 0.001$). The last step is to test for mediation and this occurs if the significant relationship between authentic leadership and commitment and job satisfaction, respectively, either reliably reduces or becomes nonsignificant when controlling for the mediator. As shown in Table 2, the results revealed that when controlling for empowerment, the condition for mediation was met between authentic leadership and commitment ($\beta = 0.322$, $p < 0.001$), which was

Table 2

Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Control Variables, Authentic Leadership, Empowerment on Satisfaction and Commitment

	Empowerment	Commitment		Job Satisfaction	
		Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2
Age	–	−0.00	0.01	−0.02	−0.06
Gender	–	0.05	0.02	−0.02	−0.05
Event type	–	0.00	−0.00	−0.05	−0.06
Authentic leadership	0.429***	0.322***	0.147*	0.223**	0.098*
Empowerment	–	–	0.194***	–	0.402***
R^2	–	–	0.020	–	0.033
ΔR^2	–	–	0.013***	–	0.021
ΔF	–	–	15.411	–	7.077

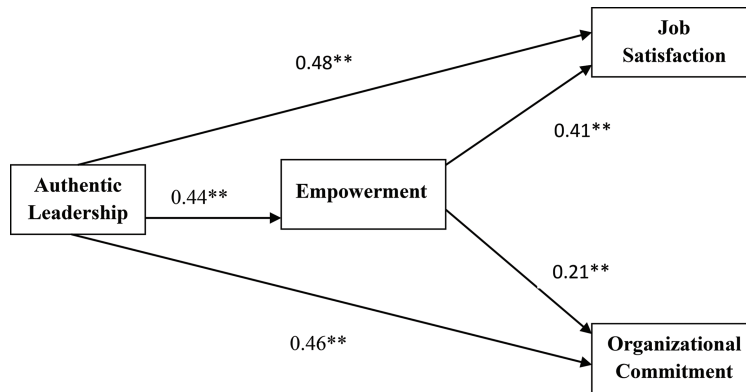*$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, ***$p < 0.001$.

Figure 2. Hypothesized path model with standardized coefficients.

lower, but remained significant ($\beta = 0.147$, $p < 0.05$; and Sobel test, $t = 3.933$, $p < 0.001$); and between authentic leadership and job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.223$, $p < 0.001$), which was lower, but remained significant ($\beta = 0.098$, $p < 0.05$; and Sobel test, $t = 2.664$, $p < 0.05$). Thus, Hypothesis 3 was supported.

An additional requirement for mediation is the significance of the indirect effects. To test the mediation effects, I first included a path linking authentic leadership to empowerment and paths from empowerment to job satisfaction and organizational commitment, as well as direct and mediated paths linking authentic leadership to job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The path model is presented in Figure 2. The fit of this fully mediating model is good, $\chi^2(31) = 42.36$, CFI $= 0.96$, RMSEA $= 0.092$, SRMR $= 0.05$. The model was compared with other alternative models and

the results of these models are presented in Table 3. I tested whether model 1 differs from the alternative models. The results for $\Delta\chi^2$ were significant in each instance. Models 2 through 5 were tested and the fit statistics of these models were good, except model 5 where some paths were nonsignificant in that model. Therefore, it can be concluded that all models are notable, except model 5, and Hypothesis 3 was fully supported.

Discussion

This study was motivated by a desire to understand the mediating role of empowerment on the relationship between authentic leadership and job satisfaction, and on the relationship between authentic leadership and organizational commitment. Although not proposed as a mediator in previous

Table 3

Comparison of Structural Equation Models

Model and Structure	χ^2	df	$\Delta\chi^2$	RMSEA	CFI	SRMR
1. Authentic leadership → empowerment → job satisfaction + organizational commitment and authentic leadership → job satisfaction and + organizational commitment	42.34	31	0.41	0.092	0.96	0.05
2. Authentic leadership → empowerment → job satisfaction + organizational commitment and authentic leadership → job satisfaction	42.34	31	0.41	0.092	0.96	0.05
3. Authentic leadership → empowerment → job satisfaction + organizational commitment and authentic leadership → organizational commitment	42.34	31	0.41	0.092	0.96	0.05
4. Authentic leadership → empowerment → job satisfaction + organizational commitment	42.26	32		0.087	0.95	0.05
5. Empowerment → authentic leadership → job satisfaction + organizational commitment and empowerment → job satisfaction and + organizational commitment	64.48	32		0.144	0.92	0.17

authentic leadership models, the current study demonstrated that authentic leadership was significantly related to job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The current study investigates the mediating role of empowerment between authentic leaders and outcomes: satisfaction and commitment in the field of event management research. The mediating role of empowerment adds to the theory on authentic leadership because the findings explain why leaders who adopt authentic behaviors increase subordinates' positive perceptions of the workplace empowerment, which in turn enhances their job satisfaction and organizational commitment in the events industry. The results of the current study provide empirical evidence for the proposition by establishing empowerment as a mediator between authentic leadership and subordinates' outcomes: job satisfaction and commitment.

Empirical research by Megheirkouni (2018a) revealed that the type of leadership differs across sport, cultural, and personal events in the Middle East. Though the majority of research in this area is focused on Western contexts, authentic leadership is also spreading to Middle Eastern cultures due to scandals and corruption which have greatly influenced the events industries worldwide (e.g., Brooks et al., 2013; Gorse & Chadwick, 2010; Kihl, 2017; Transparency International, 2016). Interestingly, the construct of authentic leadership is relatively new to the events industry in the Middle East. The findings of the current study are consistent with authentic leadership and other variables of organizational aspects that have been developed and tested primarily in non-event settings (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, et al., 2005; Walumbwa et al., 2008).

Findings of the present study support that authentic leadership behaviors as demonstrated by events managers and leaders do empower followers. This finding aligns with previous research that recognizes that the unique attributes of authentic leadership as a style of event leaders that encourage empowerment (Wong & Cummings, 2009), and, I would argue, in the broader event context as well. By demonstrating authentic leadership behaviors, including self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, and relational transparency (Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, et al., 2005), managers and leaders of the events industry support

empowerment in their people. Importantly, empowerment has been posited as another mechanism through which authentic leadership influences followers (George, 2003; Ilies et al., 2005). However, I do not claim in the current study that low levels of empowerment in some circumstances will not also be seen with authentic leaders, particularly when a job description is well defined and restricted, such as the case of organizing committees and subcommittees of the Olympic Games.

One possible explanation is that empowered people in the events industry will see themselves as more capable of influencing their job and organization in a meaningful way. There is also considerable empirical evidence showing empowerment is positively related to positive outcomes such as commitment (Avolio, Zhu, et al., 2004) and job satisfaction (Banks et al., 2016; Ugboro & Obeng, 2000; Wong & Laschinger, 2013). The current study contributes to the literature by demonstrating the external validity of these variables in a non-Western setting (the Arab Middle East) and in the events industry (sports, cultural, and personal events). In the current study, the correlation between empowerment and both satisfaction and commitment is notably high (i.e., 0.722, $p < 0.001$; 0.402, $p < 0.001$) even when controlled for same source bias. These results are all the more interesting when one considers that the Middle East is often described as having a bureaucratic and autocratic culture influenced by patriarchal and loyal culture (e.g., Megheirkouni, 2016; Weir, 2010) which may lead leaders to maintain the status quo rather than undertake authentic leadership behaviors. Combining the above results, it can be stated that arguably the most interesting findings are the mediating role of empowerment in the events industry in the Middle East.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

The theoretical model and empirical findings of the present study provide several interesting insights. The present study is one of the few studies that have investigated the impact of authentic leadership on outcomes such as job satisfaction and commitment mediated by empowerment in the field of event management. Specifically, the first theoretical contribution of this study lies in drawing on leadership and event management literature help

explain how leaders' perceived authenticity can influence their subordinates' behaviors. The findings of the current study support previous suggestions (Ilies et al., 2005; Wong & Laschinger, 2013) that the concept of empowerment is an essential motivational mechanism through which authentic leaders may affect subordinates' work-related outcomes (job satisfaction and organizational commitment in this study). Although subordinate work engagement has been suggested as a key process variable because of its motivational and behavioral consequences (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), it remains sparsely researched in the literature as a second mediator alongside empowerment. The findings of the current study, along with those of previous research on other leadership styles, such as transformational leadership (Walumbwa et al., 2008), suggest that empowerment and subordinates' work engagement may be a critical intervening variable linking leaders and their subordinates' outcomes and this is the second theoretical contribution of this study. More importantly, the pattern of results reported here proposes that the more event leaders are perceived as authentic, the more subordinates feel empowered, satisfied, and committed to their work. Taken together, the findings of the present study point to the need for future research to explore the integration of empowerment, work engagement, other organizational aspects, and different leadership perspectives in the events sector to understand how they relate to subordinate outcomes, particularly as the environment of events is rapidly becoming a dynamic competitive market and complex in most of its types (Megheirkouni, 2018b).

Understanding how authentic leadership relates to job satisfaction and organizational commitment also has practical implications, particularly in the areas of leadership styles development and improving performance in the events industry. Leaders need more than traditional management behaviors; they need to use empowerment, as a means to influence subordinates. The findings of the present study support the idea that the events industry should select leaders across all organizational levels who support subordinates' empowerment because it is precisely those individuals who have the potential to become authentic leaders. Further, job recruitment agencies on behalf of the events industry need

to make a practice of testing for authentic leadership style. However, given that the culture of the Middle East is described by Western scholars as a "dangerous other" (Maalouf, 2000; Megheirkouni, 2016; Weir, 2005), it forces leaders in the events industry to slow down any process changing the status quo. In other words, fundamentally changing the leadership styles in the Middle East is likely to be a long and arduous process if national culture is not taken into account.

Second, as mentioned earlier, it would be beneficial for authentic leadership to be highlighted and supported as an important form of leadership for the events industry to enhance job satisfaction and encourage commitment. This could include providing training to future events leaders (e.g., events leadership development programs) through introducing authentic leadership to trainees and promoting and developing authentic skills that are need in the field of event management. It is argued that a more authentic leadership-oriented development strategy becomes relevant and urgently needed for desirable outcomes such as confidence, hope, optimism, and resilience (see, e.g., Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, et al., 2004; George, 2003; Luthans & Avolio, 2003; Seligman, 2002).

Limitations

Despite the insight gained from this study, it is not without some limitations that warrant acknowledgment. Specifically, the low number of responses from the three contexts in the Middle East used to examine the hypothesized relationships is likely to limit the generalizability of the findings. Another limitation is the cross-sectional nature of the study. It is possible that at least certain aspects of authentic leadership behaviors and empowerment, and their impact on job satisfaction and organizational commitment, emerge with some kind of time lag. Replication of the findings in studies using different methods—for instance, field experiments—as well as longitudinal designs would be highly valuable. This study was also unable to actually observe events in all types: cultural, sport, and personal events interacting with subordinates. Observational data are recommended to supplement survey measures. It is argued that qualitative research is needed

to enhance our understanding of complex forms of leading in different contexts as the limitations of quantitative methods in dealing with organizational complexities become increasingly apparent (Bass & Stogdill, 1990).

Future research should also add to the variables of the current study other leadership constructs to assess whether authentic leadership plays a positive role in subordinates' organizational commitment and job satisfaction outcomes. Another important next step for future research is to determine the extent to which the findings of the current study extend to other event types outside of the Middle East, although, of course, this author cannot be sure that the findings of the current study extend to the events industry in most of its types—cultural, sport, and personal events—in most parts of the world.

Conclusion

Overall, findings supported a positive relationship between authentic leadership and increased job satisfaction (Giallonardo et al., 2010; Walumbwa et al., 2008; Wong & Laschinger, 2013) and organizational commitment (Leroy et al., 2012). The new contribution to the authentic leadership literature in the current study confirmed that empowerment mediated the relationship between authentic leadership and outcomes: job satisfaction and organizational commitment in the events industry. These results suggest that event leaders who emphasize authentic leadership behaviors effectively increase subordinates' positive perceptions of workplace empowerment in the events industry, which in turn enhances their job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

ORCID

Majd Megheirkouni ⓘ https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5809-8520

References

Akhras, C. (2016). Authentic leadership in drastic times. *Proceedings of the 4th International Conference on Management, Leadership, and Governance, ICMLG 2016*, Saint-Petersburg State University of Economics, Saint-Petersburg, Russia, April 14–15.

Avolio, B. J., & Gardner, W. L. (2005). Authentic leadership development: Getting to the root of positive forms of leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly, 16*(3), 315–338. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2005.03.001

Avolio, B. J., Gardner, W. L., Walumbwa, F. O., Luthans, F., & May, D. R. (2004). Unlocking the mask: A look at the process by which authentic leaders impact follower attitudes and behaviors. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *15*(6), 801–823. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2004.09.003

Avolio, B. J., Zhu, W., Koh, W., & Bhatia, P. (2004). Transformational leadership and organizational commitment: Mediating role of psychological empowerment and moderating role of structural distance. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 25*(8), 951–968. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.283

Avolio, B. J., Wernsing, T., & Gardner, W. L. (2018). Revisiting the development and validation of the authentic leadership questionnaire: Analytical clarifications. *Journal of Management*, *44*(2), 399–411. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206317739960

Azanza, G., Moriano, J. A., & Molero, F. (2013). Authentic leadership and organizational culture as drivers of employees' job satisfaction. *Revista de Psicología del Trabajo y de las Organizaciones, 29*(2), 45–50. https://doi.org/10.5093/tr2013a7

Bacharach, S. B., Bamberger, P., & Conley, S. (1991). Work-home conflict among nurses and engineers: Mediating the impact of role stress on burnout and satisfaction at work. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *12*(1), 39–53. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.4030120104

Bailey, T. L. (2009). *Organizational culture, macro and micro empowerment dimensions, and job satisfaction: An application of concurrent mixed and multi-level methods in the federal sector.* Universal-Publishers.

Banks, G. C., McCauley, K. D., Gardner, W. L., & Guler, C. E. (2016). A meta-analytic review of authentic and transformational leadership: A test for redundancy. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *27*(4), 634–652. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2016.02.006

Baron, R. M., & Kenny, D. A. (1986). The moderator-mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: Conceptual, strategic, and statistical considerations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *51*(6), 1173–82. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.51.6.1173

Bass, B. M., & Stogdill, R. M. (1990). *Bass & Stogdill's handbook of leadership: Theory, research, and managerial applications*. The Free Press.

Bhatnagar, J. (2005). The power of psychological empowerment as an antecedent to organizational commitment in Indian managers. *Human Resource Development International*, *8*(4), 419–433. https://doi.org/10.1080/13678860500356101

Brooks, G., Aleem, A., & Button, M. (2013). *Fraud, corruption and sport*. Palgrave. https://www.palgrave.com/gp/book/9780230299788

Chalip, L. (2000). Sydney 2000: Volunteers and the organization of the Olympic Games: economic and formative aspects. In M. Moragas, A. B. de, Moreno, & N. Puig (Eds.), *Volunteers, global society and the*

Olympic movement (pp. 205–214). International Olympic Committee.

Chan, A. (2005). Authentic leadership measurement and development: Challenges and suggestions. In W. L. Gardner, B. J. Avolio, & F. O. Walumbwa, (Eds.), *Authentic leadership theory and practice: Origins, effects, and development* (pp. 227–251). Elsevier Science.

Chen, G., Kirkman, B. L., Kanfer, R., Allen, D., & Rosen, B. (2007). A multilevel study of leadership, empowerment, and performance in teams. *The Journal of Applied Psychology*, *92*(2), 331–346. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.92.2.331

Conger, J. A., & Kanungo, R. N. (1988). The empowerment process: Integrating theory and practice. *Academy of Management Review, 13*(3), 471–482. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1988.4306983

Costa, C. A., Chalip, L., Green, B. C., & Simes, C. (2006). Reconsidering the role of training in event volunteers' satisfaction. *Sport Management Review*, *9*(2), 165–182. https://doi.org/10.1016/S1441-3523(06)70024-9

Eagly, A. H. (2005). Achieving relational authenticity in leadership: Does gender matter? *Leadership Quarterly*, *16*(3), 459–474. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2005.03.007

Gardner, W. L., Avolio, B. J., Luthans, F., May, D. R., & Walumbwa, F. (2005). Can you see the real me? A self-based model of authentic leader and follower development. *The Leadership Quarterly, 16*(3), 343–372. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2005.03.003

Gardner, W. L., Avolio, B. J., & Walumbwa, F. O. (2005). Authentic leadership development: Emergent trends and future directions. In W. L. Gardner, B. J. Avolio, & F. O. Walumbwa (Eds.), *Authentic leadership theory and practice: Origins, effects, and development* (pp. 387–406). Elsevier Science.

George, W. (2003). *Authentic leadership: Rediscovering the secrets to creating lasting value.* Jossey-Bass.

Getz, D., & Page, S. (2016). *Event studies: Theory, research and policy for planned events*. Routledge.

Giallonardo, L. M., Wong, C. A., & Iwasiw, C. L. (2010). Authentic leadership of preceptors: Predictor of new graduate nurses' work engagement and job satisfaction. *Journal of Nursing Management, 18*(8), 993–1003. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2834.2010.01126.x

Gorse, S., & Chadwick, S. (2010, July/August). Conceptualizing corruption in sport: Implications for sponsorship programs. *The European Business Review*.

Hackman, J. R., & Oldham, G. R. (1980). *Work redesign.* Addison-Wesley.

Ilies, R., Morgeson, F. P., & Nahrgang, J. D. (2005). Authentic leadership and eudaemonic well-being: Understanding leader–follower outcomes. *The Leadership Quarterly, 16*(3), 373–394. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2005.03.002

Karacay, G., Ertenu, B., & Kabasakal, H. (2017). Follower gender and authentic leadership: Perspectives from the Middle East. In D. Cotter-Lockard (Ed.), *Authentic Leadership and rollowership* (pp. 33–58). Palgrave Mac-Millan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-65307-5_2

Kihl, L. (2017). *Corruption in sport: Causes, consequences, and reform*. Routledge.

Kirkman, B. L., & Rosen, B. (1999). Beyond self-management: Antecedents and consequences of team empowerment. *Academy of Management Journal, 42*(1), 58–74. https://www.jstor.org/stable/256874

Laschinger, H. K., Finegan, J., & Wilk, P. (2011). Situational and dispositional influences on nurses' workplace well-being. *Nursing Research*, *60*(2), 124–131. https://doi.org/10.1097/nnr.0b013e318209782e

Laschinger, H. K. S., Purdy, N., & Almost, J. (2007). The impact of leader-member exchange quality, empowerment and core self-evaluation on nurse manager's job satisfaction. *The Journal of Nursing Administration, 37*(5), 221–229. https://doi.org/10.1097/01.nna.0000269746.63007.08

Leroy, H., Anseel, F., Gardner, W. L., & Sels, L. (2015). Authentic leadership, authentic followership, basic need satisfaction, and work role performance: A cross-level study. *Journal of Management*, *41*(6), 1677–1697. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206312457822

Leroy, H., Palanski, M. E., & Simons, T. (2012). Authentic leadership and behavioral integrity as drivers of follower commitment and performance. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *107*(3), 255–264. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-011-1036-1

Locke, E. A. (1976). The nature and causes of job satisfaction. In M. D. Dunnette (Ed.), *Handbook of industrial and organizational psychology* (pp. 1297–1349). Rand McNally.

Luthans, F., & Avolio, B. J. (2003). Authentic leadership development. In K. S. Cameron, J. E. Dutton, & R. E. Quinn (Eds.). *Positive organizational scholarship* (pp. 241–258). Berrett-Koehler.

Maalouf, A. (2000). *In the name of identity: Violence and the need to belong* (B. Bray, Trans.). Arcade Publishing.

MacCallum, R., Browne, M., & Cai, L. (2006). Testing differences between nested covariance structure models: Power analysis and null hypotheses. *Psychological Methods, 11*(1), 19–35. https://doi.org/10.1037/1082-989x.11.1.19

Megheirkouni, M. (2016). Factors influencing leadership development in an uncertain environment. *Journal of Management Development*, *35*(10), 1232–1254. http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/JMD-07-2016-0128

Megheirkouni, M. (2017). Revisiting leader-member exchange theory: Insights into sport stadia management. *International Journal of Event and Festival Management*, *8*(3), 244–260. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEFM-03-2017-0022

Megheirkouni, M. (2018a). Insights on practicing of servant leadership in the events sector. *Sport, Business, Management: An International Journal*, *8*(1), 134–152. https://doi.org/10.1108/SBM-01-2017-0001

Megheirkouni, M. (2018b). Leadership and decision-making styles in large-scale sporting events. *Event Management*, *22*(5), 785–801. https://doi.org/10.3727/152599518x15299559876162

Megheirkouni, M. (2018c). Mixed methods in sport leadership research: A review of sport management practices.

Sports Management International Journal Choregia, 14(1), 1–20. https://doi.org/10.4127/ch.2018.0126

Megheirkouni, M. (2019). The types of authority and problems at Olympic events: Insights into Grint's model of decision-making positions. *Event Management, 23*(6), 801–816. https://doi.org/10.3727/152599519x15506259856408

Menon, S. (2001). Employee empowerment: An integrative psychological approach. *Applied Psychology*, *50*(1), 153–180. https://doi.org/10.1111/1464-0597.00052

Mowday, R. T., Porter, L. W., & Steers, R. M. (2013). *Employee–organization linkages. The psychology of commitment, absenteeism, and turnover* (1sted.)*.* Academic Press. https://www.elsevier.com/books/employee-organization-linkages/mowday/978-0-12-509370-5

Mumford, M., Hemlin, S., & Mulhearn, T. (2017). Leading for creativity: Functions, models, and domains. In M. Mumford & S. Hemlin (Eds.) *Handbook of research on leadership and creativity* (pp. 1–16). Edward Elgar. https://www.e-elgar.com/shop/usd/handbook-of-research-on-leadership-and-creativity-9781784715458.html

Mykletun, R. J., & Himanen, K. (2016). Volunteers at biking race events: Antecedents of commitment and intention to remain volunteering at future events. *Sport, Business and Management: An International Journal*, *6*(3), 246–273. https://doi.org/10.1108/sbm-12-2014-0051

Northouse, P. G. (2018). *Leadership: Theory and practice* (8th ed.). SAGE.

Peterson, S. J., Walumbwa, F. O., Avolio, B. J., & Fredrickson, B. L. (2010). *The relationship between authentic leadership and job performance. The moderating role of follower emotions* [Unpublished manuscript].

Peus, C., Wesche, J. S., Streicher, B., Braun, S., & Frey, D. (2012). Authentic leadership: An empirical test of its antecedents, consequences, and mediating mechanisms. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *107*(3), 331–348. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-011-1042-3

Pituch, K. A., & Stevens, J. P. (2015). *Applied multivariate statistics for the social sciences: Analyses with SAS and IBM's SPSS*. Routledge. https://www.routledge.com/Applied-Multivariate-Statistics-for-the-Social-Sciences-Analyses-with-SAS/Pituch-Stevens/p/book/9780415836661

Schaufeli, W. B., & Bakker, A. B. (2004). Job demands, job resources, and their relationship with burnout and engagement: A multi-sample study. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *25*(3), 293–315. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.248

Seibert, S. E., Silver, S. R., & Randolph, W. A. (2004). Taking empowerment to the next level: A multiple-level model of empowerment, performance, and satisfaction. *Academy of Management Journal, 47*(3), 332–349. https://doi.org/10.5465/20159585

Seligman, M. E. P. (2002). *Authentic happiness: Using the new positive psychology to realize your potential for lasting fulfillment*. Free Press. https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2002-18216-000

Sendjaya, S., Pekerti, A., Härtel, C., Hirst, G., & Butarbutar, I. (2016). Are authentic leaders always moral? The role of Machiavellianism in the relationship between authentic leadership and morality. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *133*(1), 125–139. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-014-2351-0

Shamir, B., & Eilam, G. (2005). What's your story? A life-stories approach to authentic leadership development. *Leadership Quarterly, 16*(3), 395–417. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2005.03.005

Shone, A., & Parry, B. (2004). *Successful event management: A practical handbook* (2nd ed.). Cengage Learning EMEA.

Sidani, Y. M., & Rowe, W. G. (2018). A reconceptualization of authentic leadership: Leader legitimation via follower-centered assessment of the moral dimension. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *29*(6), 623–636. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2018.04.005

Silvers, J., Bowdin, G., O'Toole, W., & Nelson, K. (2006). Towards an international Event Management Body of Knowledge (EMBOK). *Event Management*, *9*(4), 185–198. https://doi.org/10.3727/152599506776771571

Smith, P. B., Wang, Z. M., & Leung, K. (1997). Leadership, decision-making and cultural context: Event management within Chinese joint ventures. *The Leadership Quarterly, 8(*4), 413–431. https://doi.org/10.1016/s1048-9843(97)90022-9

Spreitzer, G. M. (1995). Psychological empowerment in the workplace: Dimensions, measurement and validation. *Academy of Management Journal*, *38*(5), 1442–1465. https://doi.org/10.5465/256865

Spreitzer, G. M. (1996). Social structural characteristics of psychological empowerment. *Academy of Management Journal, 39*(2), 483–504. https://doi.org/10.5465/256789

Spreitzer, G. M., Kizilos, M. A., & Nason, S. W. (1997). A dimensional analysis of the relationship between psychological empowerment and effectiveness, satisfaction, and strain. *Journal of Management, 23*(5), 679–704. https://doi.org/10.1177/014920639702300504

Takos, N., Murray, D., & O'Boyle, I. (2018). Authentic leadership in nonprofit sport organization boards. *Journal of Sport Management*, *32*(2), 109–122. https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.2017-0282

Thomas, K., & Tymon, W. (1994). Does empowerment always work: Understanding the role of intrinsic motivation and personal interaction. *Journal of Management Systems, 6*(3), 39–54.

Thomas, K. W., & Velthouse, B. A. (1990). Cognitive elements of empowerment: An 'interpretive' model of intrinsic task motivation. *Academy of Management Review, 15*(4), 666–681. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1990.4310926

Transparency International. (2016). *Global corruption report: Sport*. Routledge.

Ugboro, I. O., & Obeng, K. (2000). Top management leadership, employee empowerment, job satisfaction, and customer satisfaction in TQM organizations: An empirical study. *Journal of Quality Management*, *5*(2), 247–272. https://doi.org/10.1016/s1084-8568(01)00023-2

Van der Wagen, L. (2007). *Human resource management for events: Managing the event workforce.* Routledge.

Van der Wagen, L., & White, L. (2018). *Event management: For tourism, cultural, business and sporting events*. Cengage AU.

Walumbwa, F. O., Avolio, B. J., Gardner, W. L., Wernsing, T. S., & Peterson, S. J. (2008). Authentic leadership: Development and validation of a theory-based measure. *Journal of Management, 34*(1), 89–126. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206307308913

Wang, G., & Lee, P. D. (2009). Psychological empowerment and job satisfaction: An analysis of interactive effects. *Group Organization Management*, *34*(3), 271–296. https://doi.org/10.1177/1059601108330089

Weir, D. (2005). *The Arab as the 'dangerous other'? Beyond orientalism, beyond post-colonialism*. Paper presented in the track on Post-Colonialism at the Critical Management Conference, Cambridge.

Weir, T. (2010). Developing leadership in global organizations. In K. Lundby & J. Jolton (Eds.), *Going global practical applications and recommendations for HR and OD professionals in the global workplace* (pp. 203–230). John Wiley.

Wong, C. A., & Cummings, G. G. (2009). The influence of authentic leadership behaviors on trust and work outcomes of healthcare staff. *Journal of Leadership Studies*, *3*(2), 6–23. https://doi.org/10.1002/jls.20104

Wong, C. A., & Laschinger, H. K. (2013). Authentic leadership, performance, and job satisfaction: The mediating role of empowerment. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 69*(4), 947–959. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2012.06089.x

Zhu, W., May, D. R., & Avolio, B. J. (2004). The impact of ethical leadership behavior on employee outcomes: The roles of psychological empowerment and authenticity. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies, 11*(1), 16–26. https://doi.org/10.1177/107179190401100104