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A life-story approach to authentic leadership development among South African black leaders

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on the life history qualitative study done on seven black South African leaders. The focus was with regards to using life-stories to develop authentic leadership. Authentic leadership has been seen as a way to get leaders to be ethical and address from of the moral voids that exits. The study was triggered the ever growing challenges of corruption and unethical conduct across South African organisations.

All seven leaders shared their journeys to leadership which were then presented in narrative form. The results showed consistent high levels of authenticity among all leaders and verified the assertion that life-stories present a strong approach to authentic leadership development. It was discovered that the leaders were able to negotiate various challenges in the leadership based on their lived experiences, while maintaining their authenticity.

These findings provide a solid foundation for more leaders to use their life-stories to create meanings of their authentic identities. The study also provides strong input for future studies in authentic leadership within the various racial and ethnic groupings in South Africa.

KEYWORDS

Authentic leadership; Life-stories; Black leadership; Leadership development.

DECLARATION

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.

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Kutlwano Chaba

07 November 2012

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF STUDY

The concept of authentic leadership has received revived attention in the last five to ten years. This was partly sparked by the number of corporate scandals that were being uncovered. Leadership scholars identified authentic leadership as a possible solution to curbing unethical and corrupt conduct within organisation. Scandals that have appeared do not only include the Enron saga, but also the behaviour by financial institutions leading to the 2007 financial crisis.

Corporate scandals and corrupt leadership have not only been uncovered in the western world. South Africa, too, has its own challenges. News headlines continue to uncover a number corruption stories within the government leadership. Such stories span through the various levels of government and threaten to make corruption endemic. In the private sector there have been many cases, launched by the competition commission, on companies colluding to fix prices. These unethical practices have been committed against government, where companies have been accused of splitting tender work. Other cases have been about companies fixing prices of basic foods that affect the poorest of communities. These include bread and milk prices ("Competition commission to," 2009)

Government and other regulatory institutions can implement policies and laws to control how companies and individuals should conduct themselves. They can also have monitoring bodies to ensure such actions are adhered to. However, leaders in all organisations still need to behave and think in a way that is ethical and honest. This is something that cannot be regulated as it sits within an individual's core.

We have seen, in this country, a commissioner of police get arrested for taking bribes and having inappropriate relationships with criminal organisations. Ministers have been found guilty of using public funds to pay for private escapades or using public facilities for their

own benefit. All this continues to happen in a country that still has the worst inequalities in the world. In a sense we have leaders that do not serve the very people that have elected them.

The private sector with the many competition commission rulings also indirectly steals from the country and from the inhabitants thereof. A sense of responsibility to the county seems absent with each of these acts. More recently we have read accusations of Gold Fields giving a few elite individuals large sums of equity and cash, while leaving employees with minute locked-in shares. Many of these recipients, of the large equities, were prominent leaders from both the public and private sector.

Asking about leadership quality then becomes increasingly important. This is because these decisions are taken by leaders and not followers. Now, since authentic leadership is being proposed as an answer to this challenge, it is worth investigating if South African leaders can develop this leadership philosophy. The challenge is not only confined with older community leaders. Both seasoned and young leaders are affected by this current conduct of leadership. The more experienced leaders have the potential to set the precedent that can be followed by the next generation.

The area of authentic leadership, and how it can be applied in the South African context, is of interest to the author. An even more specific realm of leadership that the author wants to focus on is that of black leadership. South African organisations are increasingly having more black people in leadership positions. Figures in the Quarterly Labour Force Survey by Statistics South Africa (2012) confirm this growth. These black leaders are coached and guided by older and experienced colleagues, most of whom are managing the very same corporations being watched and monitored by the competition commission. To avoid these black leaders from falling into the bandwagon of collusive and unethical behaviour, they need to find their own, self-defined, leadership paradigm. Authentic leadership presents itself as an option and should be explored.

In the public sector the leadership demographic is already predominantly black and, as discussed, are already facing challenges and criticism. For these leaders, authentic leadership can present an opportunity for turning around the moral and ethical fibre of the public sector. Digging deep into the field of authentic leadership and whether it can be developed and applied by black leaders is what inspired this project.

1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Having mentioned the area of authentic leadership, the objectives of this paper is to first unpack the theory that unpins authentic leadership. This is will assist in getting the foundation of the philosophy and ensuring the researcher understands what other researchers have done. Secondly, this will be transposed into the South African context where the theory and framework will be explored with focus on authentic leadership development.

Avolio and Mhatre (2011) called on other researchers to look into authentic leadership in different contexts and cultures. They identified that there is a need "…to theorize *(sic)* and assess the impact of gender, ethnicity and race on authentic leadership" (p.364). This study heeds that call and aims to take a look into authentic leadership development within black South African leaders. By focusing on authentic leadership the study would assist in developing a leadership philosophy that can assist in addressing some of these problems the country is facing.

The objective also moves away from just looking at cultural differences (Booysen, 2001) or essentialist explanations of what African or black South African leadership is or should be. The Globe project (House, Javidan, Hange & Dorfman, 2002) had looked at implicit leadership theory using cultural dimensions but not looking specifically in the area of authentic leadership. Others, in South African like Booysen (2001) also looked at different leadership dimensions contrasting black and white leaders.

Ultimately the objective of this research is to look at whether black South African leaders can develop authentic leadership in the similar fashion that the current literature, and other studies conducted (Bennis & Thomas, 2002; George & Sims, 2007), suggest.

Chapter 2 will reflect on the current literature, use it to present an integrated framework that would be applicable for this study. The aim is not to produce a new theory but to test the existing thinking of authentic leadership development.

1.3 ASSUMPTIONS AND DEFINITIONS

Leaders refer to individuals who occupy senior roles in their organisations, and have roles that include leading a group of people, and are responsible for achieving the goals of their organisations. This definition is inspired by the definition that says a leader is a "…person who leads or commands a group, organisation…" (Soanes & Stevenson, 2011, p.804)

It is assumed that, in the future, the corporate community will be made up of more black leaders than we have currently. Therefore, a compelling case to only look at black leaders can be established. For the purpose of this study, black people will refer to what the South African government classifies as African and will exclude leaders in the Indian and Coloured groups.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Work in the area of authentic leadership within the South African context has not been apparent. There is, however, sufficient literature available on the theory of authentic leadership, in the global context. This chapter uncovers the area of authentic leadership by reviewing the prominent thinking around this leadership philosophy. The focus is to reveal a framework that can be used to investigate authentic leadership development in the South African context.

The first section will look at the general leadership research agenda and also some views on leadership in Africa. The second part will look at the levels of leadership and highlight the level which this study will be focusing on. Thereafter, authentic leadership will be defined, including pointing out the components thereof. Following that will be the dimensions of authentic leaders as introduced by George (2003). The rest of the chapter will then look at the development of authentic leaders and then move to life-stories and narratives as approaches to authentic leadership development.

In closing, the chapter will then focus on the emerging critiques of authentic leadership literature. An integrated framework of the literature discussed will then presented and used as a frame of reference for the study.

2.1 STATE OF AFRICA-FOCUSED LEADERSHIP RESEARCH

Leadership research within the African context has been given increased attention recently (Muchiri, 2011; Walumbwa, Avolio, & Aryee, 2011). Much of what has been done has been about looking at the same existing leadership theories and attempting to see if they would fit in African culture (Javidan, Dorfman, Howell, & Hanges, 2010). Nkomo (2011) raised alarms at the essentialist approach to research of leadership in Africa and warned against stereotypical colonial view of African leadership – and recommended a concept of cultural relativism.

The departure point, of looking at leadership research within Africa would therefore be about accepting that leaders in Africa can be different even when they are of the same race and ethnicity. Nkomo (2011) has also raised that concern and as call to escape from the essentialism trap that exists in some of the African leadership research.

Therefore the literature reviewed below, will focus on the authentic leadership as has been developed by various authors. Although the objective was to look at black leaders in South Africa, the literature was not looked at with an assumption of homogeneity among any black leaders. The literature focus did not incorporate African themes such as Ubuntu as Muchiri (2011) suggested. Rather it focused on escaping from the very essentialism trap that Nkomo (2011) warned about. This stance echoes Mumford's (2011) position when he stated that "…the day of the global theory for leader success is over. Rather, over the last ten years the field has begun to develop as a distinct scientific discipline characterized by progressive research and well defined boundary conditions…" (p. 6). He was essentially welcoming the investigation of leadership theories in different boundaries but cautioning against making presumption on the nature of the boundaries.

2.2 THE EVOLUTION OF AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP

Authors looking at the areas of authenticity, identity and the "real-self", have been in existence for some time now (Novicevic, Harvey, Ronald, & Brown-Radford, 2006). Even Brumbaugh (1971) cited authors such as Seeman as well as Rokeach before his time, while Avolio and Gardner (2005) cited authors such as Maslow as well as Rogers.

However, it wasn't until 2003, after Kernis (2003) published work on what constituted authenticity as well as optimal self-esteem, that it received increased attention from leadership scholars (Avolio & Mhatre, 2005; George, 2003; George & Sims, 2007; Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009). Part of its ascendance was that result of the need for a leadership philosophy that promoted consistent, genuine and ethical behaviour (Avolio et al., 2009) in light of numerous corporate scandals throughout the western world.

These earlier studies of authenticity have informed and inspired similar work, and definitions, in the leadership research domain. The next two sections cover these definitions and components developed to concretise those descriptions of authentic leadership.

2.3 DEFINING AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP AND LEADERS

This section looks at the various, but corresponding, definitions of authentic leadership. Others have borrowed from the earlier descriptions of previous psychological research work. These represent the dominant and accepted definitions of authentic leadership.

The leadership philosophy developed its roots and foundation from the area of positive psychology (Luthans & Avolio as cited in Avolio & Gardner, 2005) and the subsequent work has built from that. As such, Luthans & Avolio defined authenticity as a "process that draws from both positive psychological capacities and a highly developed organizational (*sic*) context, which results in … self-awareness and self-regulated positive behaviours…" (as cited in Avolio and Mhatre, 2011, p. 445)

Avolio and Garner (2005) used a definition by Harter and stated that authenticity is about "…owning one's personal experiences, be they thoughts, emotions, needs, wants, preferences, or beliefs, processes captured by the injunction to 'know oneself'…" (p. 320). In addition to the definitions, Avolio (2010), continued to define the authentic leader as an individual who is "… very self-aware, has a clear moral centres, is transparent, and is fair or balanced decision maker" (p.744).

There is a consistent theme within the various definitions and these speak to the awareness of self and the reflection and manifestation of the self through actions without compromising on morals. All of these are encompassed in a leader being true to himself.

Shamir and Eilam (2005) distinguished between authentic leadership and the authentic leader. Their definition stated that “authentic leaders do no fake their leadership. They do not pretend to be leaders just because they are in a leadership position…” (p. 396). They further stated that authentic leaders do not focus on the status that is associated with their leadership positions. An issue of originality is also brought into their definition as they assert that authentic leaders are not replicas but rather originals.

2.4 COMPONENTS OF AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP

A collection literature has published what now are the accepted components of authentic leadership (Diddams & Chang 2012; Avolio, 2010; Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Avolio & Mhatre, 2011). This section describes these four components and how they contribute to authenticity. These components are described as:

- Self-awareness
- Balanced processing
- Internal moral perspective
- Relational transparency

2.4.1 SELF-AWARENESS

Self-awareness is summarised as a leader’s comprehension of not only his abilities and limits, but his strengths, weaknesses, or his feelings (Avolio & Mhatre, 2011). Therefore, this knowledge of self is the starting point for a leader to be authentic and bridges the gap between how a leader sees himself and the actions he takes.

This first component was developed from the work done by Kernis (2003). In his publication, Kernis (2003) described four elements of self-awareness, namely, “…one’s motives, feelings, desires and other self-relevant cognitions” (p.13). What he did not highlight was the relationship between these four elements. Avolio and Mhatre (2011) reflected up this link and brought to the

fore the need of consistency between these four elements. In so doing they solidified the meaning of self-awareness to include the consistency between one's motives, feelings, desires and self-relevant cognitions. It is not to say that these cannot change through time, but that they remain constant over a longer time.

The role of self-awareness, in authentic leadership, is in assisting the leader to define and continuously develop his identity – from his conception. Carver (2012) highlighted this selectivity of self-identity as just a conduit for individuals to create meaning in how they view themselves. He continued to explain self-awareness as "a matter of selective processing and encoding of certain aspects….that the person has brought in from the environment" (p. 54).

Others have used alternative terms for self-identity. For example – Oyserman, Elmore, and Smith (2012), Shamir and Eilam (2005), as well as Shamir, Dayan-Horesh, and Adler, (2005) adopted self-concept as the label for describing self-identity. When an authentic leader has a strong self-concept, and is in tune with his convictions, he can be in a better position to be objective in his thinking. This speaks to the second component of authentic leadership, which is balanced processing.

2.4.2 BALANCED PROCESSING

Balanced processing, speaks of this presence of objective decision making (Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008). Walumbwa et al. (2008) further injected the point that this objective processing must be demonstrated to others. That is, the leader must be able to show his objectivity and that he is able to "…analyse all relevant data before coming to decision" (p. 95).

This concept of balanced processing is another expansion from what Kernis (2003) called unbiased processing. It was Avolio and Gardner (2005) who termed it balanced processing to be more encompassing of the human element where the existence of biased behaviour is

always a possibility. The authentic leader in his balanced processing will also come to decisions that may not always be in line with his belief, for he based those decisions on the facts available and not only based on purposefully selected data.

2.4.3 INTERNALISED MORAL PERSPECTIVE

An internalised moral perspective is about a leader that is "…guided by internal moral standards, which are used to self-regulate…" (Avolio et al., 2009, p. 424) his conduct. Such a leader would also exude exemplary behaviour and become a role model to those around him (Avolio & Mhatre, 2011). This component touches on the area of values as well (George, 2003).

2.4.4 RELATIONAL TRANSPARENCY

Relational transparency is described as the manner in which a leader presents his real or authentic self to the world (Peus, Wesche, Streicher, Braun, & Frey, 2012). Peus et al. (2012) emphasised the fact that this authentic self is not a distorted or fake portrayal but rather a true reflection of the leader's self-concept. Diddams and Chang (2012) expanded on this description by asserting that it also involves "…openly sharing information and feelings as appropriate for situations…" (p. 599). It is about a leader building a high level of transparency with those around him (Avolio & Mhatre, 2011).

The first two components of authentic leadership are internal to the leader, while the latter two speak to how the leader projects himself to the outside. In other words, the self-concept, and the objective processing of data – is projected through moral behaviour and relational openness.

This section discussed the components of authentic leadership. In the next section, the attributes that make up the authentic leader will be discussed.

2.5 DIMENSIONS OF AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP

In addition to the components of authentic leadership discussed above, George (2003) presented five characteristics that authentic leaders exude. He summarised authentic leaders as those having the following attributes:

- Understanding their purpose
- Practising solid values
- Leading with heart
- Relationships
- Self-discipline

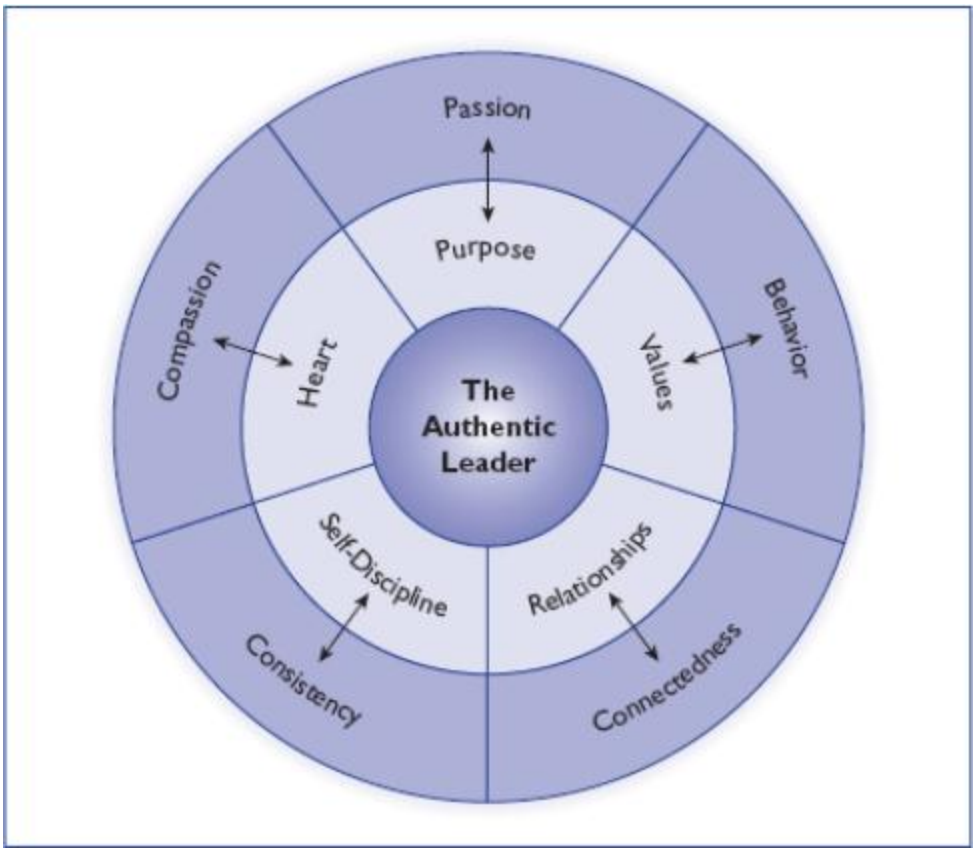
Figure 1 presents diagrammatic illustration of George's five dimensions of authentic leadership. In addition, it contains some of the developmental qualities that indicate the existence or the potential existence of these dimensions. Purpose can be seen through passion, values through behaviour, heart through compassion, relationships through connectedness, while self-discipline can be seen through consistency. These signs are very important in serving as codes that validate the five themes. That is, these are the areas to look at when investigating whether a leader is authentic or developing authenticity.

2.5.1 PURPOSE

With purpose, George (2003) referred the importance of a leader having a guiding concept. In his view, the lack of purposed would have leaders simply relying on their egos and other self-absorbing demeanours or "…narcissistic impulses" (George, 2003, p. 19). This comment about purpose and its place in authentic leadership echoes earlier work by Seeman (as cited in Brumbaugh, 1971), who argued that inauthenticity can be used to label a "… leader who lets his occupancy of high status influence his decision making in an unrealistic way…" (pp. 108-109).

Put in another way, authenticity would then speak to a leader who does not let his profile or ranking clout his true convictions.

Figure 1. Dimension of authentic leadership (George, 2003)



This is in line with what Shamir and Eilam (2005) explained as being central to how an authentic leader is. As alluded to in the definitions section in the definitions section. They brought the attribute of the leader's role being a key component of their self-component. That speaks to purpose being an integral part of the leader's identity.

George (2003) explained that for a leader to find his purpose he needs to fully understand himself (i.e. self-concept and self-awareness), his passions and his motivations. It can be

concluded that a leader who does not know what drives him, or what he wants to achieve, will falter in trying to develop his authenticity.

The concept of person-role merger presented by Shamir and Eilam (2005), which Pratt, Rockman, and Kaufmann (2006) termed work-identity integrity, speaks to this strong sense of purpose. From this view, at the highest level of authenticity, a leader's personal purpose and that of his role or position are highly congruent. As an example given by Shamir and Eilam (2005) where Nelson Mandela would have described himself as a freedom fighter and not a leader of a political movement. As such, a strong sense of purpose, or person-role merger, would have a leader so immersed in his purpose that he describes himself in terms of his role or his role in terms of his purpose.

2.5.2 VALUES

George (2003) emphasised values as another dimension of authentic leaders. He suggested that values are "shaped by personal beliefs, developed through study, introspection and consultations with others – and a lifetime experience….through study and dialogue" (pp. 20-21). An example he made, on the presence of values, is that of a quote he took from one of the leaders he interacted with, which stated "the leader's first job is to define reality. The last is to say thank you. In between the leaders must become a servant and a debtor" (p. 21)

It is through behaviour that values are manifested or in other words values drive behaviour. The consistency between stated values and actual behaviour will validate authenticity or the level thereof. From this end, trust will then be established (George, 2003).

2.5.3 HEART

In illustrating the definition of leading by heart, George (2003) spoke about a leaders that are "…open and willing to share themselves fully…. and are genuinely interested in us" (p. 22). As a

result of this employees will feel their contributions matter and go far beyond their transactional value.

Leading with heart is manifested by the presence of caring and having compassion for others. Becoming a role model for caring and empathy would key in validating a leader's authenticity.

2.5.4 RELATIONSHIPS

Building strong relationships with employees, colleagues, customers and other stakeholders, is seen as another key dimension. This is beyond formal structures, and is about "…building enduring relationships with *everyone* [emphasis added]" (p. 23). It is a dimension that seeks to satisfy the need for people to have direct access to their leaders.

Authentic leaders that have relationships with everyone, argued George (2003), are able to earn trust and commitment from their people. "Authentic leaders establish trusting relationships throughout the organisation as well as in their personal lives" (George, 2003, p. 24). This does not simply mean being nice to employees but rather is about having the best interest of the people and the organisation at heart. George (2003) makes reference to the former General Electric CEO, Jack Welch, and his approach on getting results. He was known as being hard on his people, but that very approach was seen as him being interested in the success of those employees and concerned about their careers.

The level of connectedness with others is what displays the existence of strong relationships. That is to say, the authentic leader will have durable and stable relations if he is connected to as many interface points as possible. It is not only when a leader shares his stories with others, that he establishes connectedness, but also about how he allows others to share their stories with him (George, 2003).

2.5.5 SELF-DISCIPLINE

George (2003) defined as "being to convert values into consistent actions" (p.24). It is this consistency that validates the followership a leader has. The loyalty and respect an authentic leader gets is seen as the product of self-discipline. George continued to assert that for a leader it is not enough to have values but these values "needs (*sic*) to be channelled through purpose and discipline" (p.25).

The key identifier of a leader that has self-discipline is consistency. In other words, a leader that is not consistent in his purpose and values cannot be seen to have authentic self-discipline. Kernis (2003) had already emphasised consistency and it is a term that continues to emerge through the various dimensions and components of authentic leadership.

2.6 DEVELOPING AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP

An important aspect of looking into any leadership philosophy is to look at how leaders can develop it. Cooper, Scandura, and Schriesheim (2005) also observed this point and made an assertion specific to authentic leadership. They conceded that authenticity does not come naturally for everyone but did contend that others "…may have the potential to become authentic but may need help in realizing (*sic*) their potential" (p.483).

Although a lot of leadership philosophies have been presented without their corresponding development aspects being presented (Avolio & Gardner, 2005), there have been some work done to look at authentic leadership development (Avolio, 2010; George, 2012; George & Sims, 2007; Shamir & Eilam, 2005).

The paradigm used in authentic leadership has been based on a positive organisation context which is about building on one's strong traits and does not subscribe to the deficit-reduction concept (Avolio, 2010; Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Novicevic et al., 2006). In justifying this stance

Gardner et al. (2005) explained it eloquently in their broad definition of authentic leadership, with respect to development thereof, by stating:

"…a pattern of leader behaviour that draws upon and promotes both *positive psychological capabilities* [emphasis added] and positive ethical climate, to foster greater self-awareness, an internal moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency on the part of leaders working with followers, fostering positive self-development" (p. 94)

Five developmental qualities that can assist a leader in becoming authentic were discussed in section 2.5 and also presented in figure 1.

2.6.1 DEVELOPING AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP THROUGH LIFE-STORIES AND SELF NARRATIVE

After George (2003) defined the five dimensions of authentic leadership, he continued to spend time with leaders considered to be authentic. He then conducted his interviews with leaders by probing them to narrate their life-stories (George & Sims, 2007). The crux of his study was to interrogate the leaders' life-stories in explaining how they developed their authenticity. George (2012) repeated the definition of authentic leadership as has been discussed earlier in this chapter, and for the development thereof he stressed the leader's "…understanding….unique life-story and the crucibles….experienced" (p. 313). The above-mentioned authors were not alone in identifying the power of life-stories in authentic leadership development.

This importance of life-stories had also been raised by Shamir and Eilam (2005). They had looked at life-stories, not only in the context of authentic leadership development, but also in the field of authentic followership development. Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, and Walumbwa (2005) reemphasised this point as they argued that life-stories, within the context of authentic leadership development, should be seen as the foundation for being self-aware and developing an identity. It is about "…how individuals interpret accumulated life experiences….with their on-going interpretation of trigger events…" (Gardner et al., 2005, p. 348).

The life-stories do not, in themselves, develop authenticity within a leader. Rather it is how a leader views, tells, and understands his story that he can discover and develop his authentic self. Furthermore, leaders would select stories that they find relevant and key in developing their authentic leadership (Shamir et al., 2005). This story-telling is also referred to as the narrative-self (Sparrowe, 2005). Life-stories, are in essence "…narratives that help individuals think about who they are, where they come from, and where they are headed – constitute the single most powerful weapon in the leader's arsenal" Gardner (as cited in Albert & Vadla, 2009, p. 75).

Within a leader's life-story there are key events that impact the individual so profoundly that they trigger a change in that person's life. The next subsection discusses the importance of crucibles and trigger events within a leader's life-story with the domain of authentic leadership development.

2.6.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF CRUCIBLES AND TRIGGER EVENTS

Much of the literature on authentic leadership and its development, speak on how crucibles and other life events can allow a person to be a successful leader (Bennis & Thomas, 2002; George, 2003, 2012; George & Sims, 2007; Shamir & Eilam, 2005).

Crucibles do not always occur in everyone's life and other leaders may develop their authenticity from favourable and positive conditions. Bennis and Thomas (2002) echoed this presence of positive impacts by stating that leaders "…can involve a positive… experience…" (p. 10). Therefore crucibles can also be in the form of challenging situations that could catapult a leader to improved self-awareness and a greater sense of purpose or values. When a leader is faced with crucibles that place pressure on his values he is able to either reinforce his values.

In certain cases, leaders may not experience any challenges or crucibles but may encounter something that sparks up a life-changing decision. Luthans and Avolio (as cited in Cooper et al., 2005) make an example of an individual reading a book that changes the way that individual sees the world. Cooper et al. (2005) further observed that sometimes these trigger events may

rise as a collection of a number of events that build up until they are great enough to change the life of a leader. Here they reflect on authentic leadership as being both "…evolutionary as well as revolutionary" (p. 485).

Although Ibarra, Snook, and Ramo (2010) have raised concerns regarding the sparse literature, on ways that can be used to use crucibles or trigger events to develop authenticity, they do concede that a persuasive argument has been made regarding the importance of these life events. Ibarra et al (2010) went on to suggest psychological techniques that can be explored in learning from trigger events. The three steps they defined were separation, transition, and incorporation.

Separation would be when, as a result of a key event, a leader stops or moves away from doing certain things. Transition was explained as process where the leader begins to prepare the internalisation of new lessons, be it in behaviour, values, and other self-relevant archetypes. The last step would be incorporation and involves internalising the new archetypes and thus developing as a leader and redefining the self-concept.

2.7 BARRIERS TO AUTHENTICITY AND HUMAN WEAKNESSES

The more prominent work in authentic leadership has been focusing on the positive side of philosophy and has highlighted some of the benefits thereof. However, there are some challenges that come with having leaders to try to be authentic. These challenges are unintended consequences of the four components discussed above. More recently there have been some critiques directed to the existing authentic leadership literature (Algera & Lips-Wiersma, 2012; Diddams & Chang, 2012).

As Shamir and Eilam (2005) have pointed out, there is more to authentic leadership. The issue of looking at the authentic leader and followers has invited further questions in terms of other facets that can influence authenticity, the authentic leader and authentic leadership

development. An area that had not been discussed enough in this field has been that of context and organisational setting. Rather, much of the discussion has been on the behaviour of the leader and the description of the leadership philosophy. This section looks at some of the critique that has recently emerged.

Much of the work critique presented below is rooted in the philosophy of existentialism. This branch of philosophy is characterised by the notion that people would assume that their lives are well lived for as long as they are conforming to societal norms or expectations of their society (Algera & Lips-Wiersma, 2012).

Algera and Lips-Wiersma (2012) have identified this weakness in authentic leadership work and introduced factors that should be kept in mind when attempting to bolster authenticity. In terms of context, they have identified three contextual elements that could contend with a leader's authenticity. These are summarised as power relations within the organisation, purpose of the organisation as well as time limitations. As a result, Algera and Lips-Wiersma (2012) identified the following three tensions emerging:

- Tension between authenticity and power within organisations;
- Tension between authenticity and the instrumental purpose of organisations;
- Tension between authenticity and time as a scarce resource.

Every organisation has got some form of rules, procedures and codes of conduct. Some of these can regulate or restrict individuals from behaving in certain ways. Algera and Lips-Wiersma (2012) expand on this by saying organisations need some form of co-ordination and direction. At the same time they also state that "authenticity requires the ability to freely discover and express that what is meaningful and ethical" (p.128). In the end what they argue is that the power of the individual is limited within organisations as their freedom is guaranteed to the point where they remain accountable and deliver on their work. Therefore, if leaders pursue authentic behaviour that is in contrast with the norms and regulations then tensions will develop. Consequently the level of authenticity by the leader may be diminished or the leader will simply

contravene certain organisational practices that had probably agreed to on joining the company. This is how the authors present the tension between authenticity and power in organisations.

On the tensions between authenticity and purpose provide Algera and Lips-Wiersma (2012) an example they make is that of a company that is in distress and facing no option but to retrench workers. From a moral perspective, retrenching people and leaving them with no means of making a living, can be seen as wrong.

On the issue of tension between authenticity and time limitation the authors that for one to be self-aware, as part of becoming authentic, time is required for reflection. The reality however, is that organisation are driven by deadlines and other time-based demands that may require more attention from the leader than reflecting.

Diddams and Chang (2012) have found weakness in the literature by pointing out some indirect drawbacks of leaders being authentic. By definition, authentic leaders are defined in a strength-based view forgetting that leaders are human and are not without faults or weaknesses. To be specific, the definition that Diddams and Chang (2012) have quoted was that of authentic leaders being individuals who "…act upon their true values, beliefs, integrity, and strengths" (p.593). The argument the authors present is that there is always a risk of leaders, that being seen as authentic, "…managing the impressions others have of them…" (p.594). It can be said that these authors are merely calling for a move forward from just looking at authentic leadership from its roots of positive psychology.

An example used by Diddams and Chang (2012) was that of leaders who are seen to be successful and authentic become lost in their success. Such leaders would then begin to develop hubristic tendencies and ignore their weaknesses. They emphasise this point, citing Tangney, by stating "if leaders attribute performance outcomes to an overarching positive self-assessment of being authentic, they may be more prone to develop self-pride rather pride in their accomplishments" (p.595).

Kernis (2003) had also stated that authentic leaders must "…accept themselves, imperfections…" (p.3) among other things. What Diddams and Chang (2012) have expanded upon is the area of these imperfections that Kernis (2003) alluded to. Their argument is rooted in the idea that not research has been done on addressing the issue of human imperfections within the sphere of authentic leadership.

What Diddams and Chang (2012) are actually bringing to light are the issues that leaders may become self-absorbed but also could also pretend to be authentic by managing how others perceive them. This could also be in slight contrast to what Ladkin and Taylor (2009) advocated. They brought in the concepts of acting authentically and acting towards authenticity. Although they cite that this is "…not acting as in faking it…" their metaphors are drawn from theory written for performers who act on stage. Ultimately their stand on how leaders can be authentic is about leaders managing how others perceive them and evoking emotions in others that in turn make them see the leader as authentic. This issue of charisma is seen by Diddams and Chang (2012) as not real authenticity as it underscores only the positive side of the leader and not imperfections or weaknesses.

In their paper, Diddams and Chang (2012), highlight some weaknesses with each of the four components of leadership (i.e. self-awareness, balanced processing, internalised moral perspective, and relational transparency). Diddams and Chang (2012) argue that self-awareness is not finite or fixed but rather is a continuous journey in the acknowledgement that "…one's self-knowledge will always be incomplete". To address this weakness they introduce the concept of increased feedback seeking by authentic leadership. This would counter the self-delusion that some leader would have about their authenticity.

In terms of balanced processing, they propose an introduction of humility where they argue that a humble leader will have less fear of being judged or even labelled. This would allow the leader to be more open to criticism and not only focus on positive feedback. It can be said that the authors were warning against selective openness on the side of leaders.

What the authors did not reflect upon was that Avolio and Gardner (2005) were already aware of this limitation. Avolio and Gardner (2005) had addressed the description used by Kernis (2003) that authenticity includes unbiased processing. Instead they proposed the concept of balanced processing, which has been discussed earlier in this section. They borrowed this thinking from psychology and their rationale was that "…humans are inherently flawed and biased information processors" (p. 317).

Avolio and Mahtre (2011) described authentic decision-making as including the ability to judge "…moral dilemmas from multiple angles…" (p.15) but Diddams and Chang (2012) raise an objective with this moral component of authentic leadership. What they argue is that a leader can be authentic even when his actions, through his organisation, seem to exhibit what is morally incorrect. Diddams and Chang's (2012) contention to morals can be linked to Algera and Lips-Wiersma's (2012) tension of authenticity versus an organisation's purpose. The example on retrenchments also speaks to this assertion. To moderate this Diddams and Chang's (2012) suggest moral modesty in order to allow a leader to still lead the organisation to achieve its purpose.

An additional, possible, facilitative quality between a leader's authenticity and organisational purpose could be what Shamir and Eilam (2005) labelled the person-role merger. This is where the authentic leader identifies with the purpose of the organisation and is immersed within it. That would lead to a greater congruence between the values and ideals of the leader and that of the organisation.

On the final component and relational transparency, Diddams and Chang (2012) highlight the need for the leader to also disclose failures and other negative aspects of their leadership. In this way they argue that leaders will achieve a greater level of authenticity simply because authentic leadership is about a leader being true not only to themselves but also to their followers.

The work that presented components and dimensions of authentic leadership did not divulge, or provide enough depth, on the issues raised by the above critiques. In as much as studies and interviews have been done with various leaders, there is no sufficient evidence of investigations done to reveal how the leaders cope with power, time pressures and organisational purpose. Also the area of selective openness and disclosing weaknesses did not make the list of questions used by George and Sims (2007) in their interviews with American leaders.

2.8 FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY

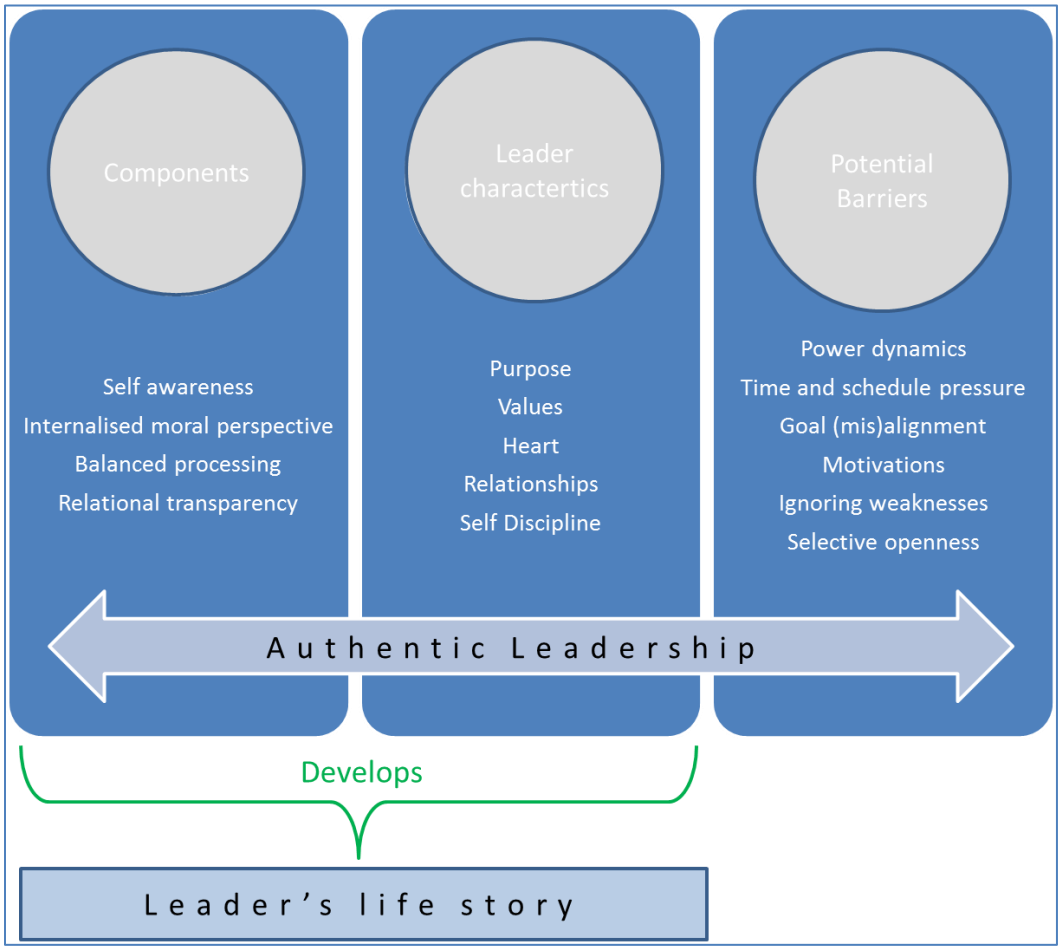
The area of authentic leadership and the development thereof has, as per this chapter, been looked at by a number of authors. Looking at development of authenticity there has been an increasing call to look at identity (Carver, 2012; Kernis, 2003; Oyserman et al., 2012) life-stories (Shamir & Eilam, 2005; George & Sims, 2007) as possible approaches to consider. Within the realm of life-stories other terms, such as self-narration (Sparrowe, 2005) have been used.

This chapter has also reflected on some of the recent critique placed on the limitations of authentic leadership (Algera & Lips-Wiersma, 2012; Diddams and Chang, 2012). These authors based their arguments using an existential lens and asserting that authenticity is still about the individual being true to himself but also taking into account the context in which the individual leads. Tensions of authenticity against power within an organisation, time as a scarce resource and organisational purpose, were raised as important factors that could limit a leader from being authentic. Furthermore, the issues of selective openness and limited disclosure of weaknesses also formed part of the critiques.

In the work done there have remained calls to looking at authentic leadership in other races (Avolio & Mhatre, 2011) among other factors. The Globe study (House *et.al,* 2002) had done comprehensive work in looking at leadership in different national cultures but not specifically in the area of authentic leadership.

Figure 2 summarises the theory covered above and forms an integrated framework for the study. It incorporates the components of authentic leadership, the characteristics associated with authentic leaders (George, 2003) as well as the potential barriers and pitfalls that could hinder authentic behaviour. These barriers are derived from the recent critiques in the area of authentic leadership (Algera & Lips-Wiersma, 2012; Diddams & Chang, 2012).

Figure 2. Integrated framework for authentic leadership



In addition, the life-story approach to developing authentic leadership has been incorporated as key to this study. The strength of the framework is in that it synthesises works that have been fragmented up to now. It also brings balance between the accepted approach of authentic leadership as well as the critiques that have emerged.

There is no explicit mention of identity, or related ontologies, on this framework. This is so for two reasons. Firstly, identity will be based on how each leader sees himself, i.e. their self-concept (Carver, 2012; Oyserman et al., 2012; Shamir & Eilam, 2005). The self-concept approach to identity is what a leader will develop from his or her life-story. Secondly, this particular study focuses only on black South African leaders and therefore covering the racial aspect of identity. After all, in South Africa "…identities are often reduced to 'racial identity' aspects which seems (*sic*) to be a historical culture-specific influence…" (Mayer & Louw, 2010, p. 583) of the country.

Shamir et al. (2005) also added by stating that "life stories express the story-teller's identity, which is a product of the relationship between life experiences and the organized stories of these experiences" (p. 17). Therefore, the section referring to the leader's life-story will encompass the identity portion and might reveal other aspect of identity, other than race, as defined by the individual.

All these elements, in the framework, represent themes associated with authentic leaders and leadership. The research proposition, therefore, speaks to the very themes that make the framework. Chapter 3 will divulge into the research proposition.

3. RESEARCH PROPOSITION

The aim of the research project was to explore the possibility that black South African leaders can develop authentic leadership by revisiting their life journeys. As reflected earlier in the document, George and Sims (2007) had conducted a study with American leaders on developing authentic leadership. Similar to the study George and Sims (2007), this research aimed to support that black South African leaders can achieve the same. With that said, and incorporating the framework established in chapter 2, the following proposition was presented and became focus of the study:

Research Proposition 1:

Black South African leaders can develop authentic leadership through their life-stories.

The work conducted by George and Sims (2007) and that by Bennis and Thomas (2002) in terms of life-stories and life crucibles, respectively, has yielded positive results in how these can help leaders develop their authentic leadership. Although, as discussed in chapter 2, none of the investigations looked at some of the limitations raised in the recent critiques – they still provide sufficient basis for looking at leader life-stories and authenticity. This does not mean the critique was ignored.

To bring expand and strengthen the work, it is also worth investigating whether authentic leaders address the limitations raised in the critique or whether these barriers do create tensions against their authenticity. The authentic leader, in view of optimal self-esteem (Kernis, 2003), would be aware of his or her short comings and be open about them. He would also be able negotiate with barriers that may pose challenges to his authenticity. To this reason, a second proposition is presented. The study aimed to support this second proposition which is listed below:

Research Proposition 2:

Black South African leaders, in their authentic leadership, are aware of the barriers to authenticity, and behave in a manner that moderates those barriers.

In attempting to support the two propositions data will need to be collected. The next chapter explains the methodology followed in conducting the investigation.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains the methodology that was used in satisfying the research objectives and research propositions of this project. These are described in chapters 1 and 3, respectively. The life history methodology, which was adopted for this study, is also explained. It is a method that has been used in other leadership studies (Nkomo & Kriek 2011; Bennis & Thomas, 2002) and in the area of authentic leadership research (George & Sims, 2007). On the area of general qualitative research publications by Conger (1998), Marshall and Rossman (2006), as well as Saunders and Lewis (2012), were used.

4.1 RATIONALE FOR QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Marshall and Rossman (2006) describe research as "…a process of trying to gain better understanding of the complexities of human experience…" (p. 23), and depending on the focus area either qualitative or qualitative approaches can be taken.

Qualitative research is seen as suitable for the early stage research where a phenomenon is still not fully understood and exploration is required. Conger (1998) echoes this by alluding to the point that "this paradigm where qualitative methodology is best suited to the early phases of an investigation has dominated our thinking" (p.108). He further highlights the limitation of this thinking in his declaration saying that it "…needs to be seriously challenged" (p.108). The core of this argument is that qualitative research has greater value to add in any stage of leadership research, even if the area has been explored previously.

This point then supported this study's aim to further extract deeper understanding of authentic leadership within the black leaders in the South African context. The nature of this study is to discover, through a life history approach, the development of authentic leadership by black

leaders. Each of the leaders has a unique story. Essentially, the methodology will produce multiple leader life histories, as it uncovers the authenticity development of each leader.

To gather insight from their early life-stories through to their professional experience in their leadership roles, qualitative methods provide opportunities to have an appropriate depth of understanding. It was also important to let the research subjects reveal all this insight in their own words and interpretations. This also allowed the researcher to discover details that would otherwise reside in the implicit and/or tacit domain of the subject's knowledge. Quantitative methods will be ineffective in this regard.

The power of the life history methodology is in that it allows the subject to articulate his lived experiences from his own understanding or subjective processing (Marshall & Rossman, 2006) in order for the researcher to uncover the person's lived meanings (Nkomo & Kriek, 2011). It is a feature no different to how, as discussed in chapter 2, a leader creates his self-concept. What the method allowed was to help uncover the different developments in the leader's lives, through their different stages. Marshall and Rossman (2006) continue to add that life histories are "…used when in-depth interviews are more focused on the respondents' evolution or development over time" (p.116).

Marshall and Rossman (2006) identified the following as being the strengths of the life history approach:

- The reader can enter into the experiences of the person's life
- It provides a fertile source of testable hypothesis (and propositions)
- It depicts actions and perspectives across social groups

Had the main focus been about revealing leadership styles and dominant leadership practices, within the realm of authentic leadership, then quantitative tools such as the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) would have been utilised. The ALQ was used by Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, and Peterson (2008), not just as a tool for leaders to evaluate themselves or their followers to evaluate them, but also for authentic leadership research. In

turn the results, using averages, would indicate what components of authentic leadership the leader is more dominant in.

However, the ALQ does not reveal much into how the leader has developed over a period of time. Furthermore, the ALQ instrument does not reveal how a leader would think about his or her actions in different situations. Avolio and Bass (as cited in Conger, 1998) reflect on this drawback in quantitative leadership research. They argue that quantitative approaches to leadership research have an "…inability to draw effective links across multiple levels to explain leadership events and outcomes". (p.109). A quantitative approach would therefore not allow the researcher to reveal the richness that is embodied in exploratory research.

On the whole, a quantitative study would not have catered for some of the criteria, of doing life histories that Jones (as cited in Marshall & Rossman, 2006) expressed. These were:

- Viewing the individual as a member of a culture and interpreting the account of his development in the world
- Capturing the role that others play in the individuals knowledge base
- Focusing on the experience of the individual in order to capture the "...processual development of the person" (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 117)

4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

The crux of this paper was about accounting the journey of leaders' development. As alluded in the previous section, to support or disprove the research propositions a life history methodology was adopted. The life history methodology, as part of narrative approach, "emphasizes (*sic*) personal stories…. and people constantly remaking themselves as an active, ongoing social project" (Dhunpath, 2000, p. 545). In order to actualise the process in-depth interviews were conducted to supply the rich qualitative data.

The interviews used questions adapted from those employed by George and Sims (2007) as well as Bennis and Thomas (2002). An area of looking for crucibles in the leaders' history was incorporated from some of the questions used by Bennis and Thomas (2002). All questions spoke to the life-stories of the leaders, and aimed to uncover their leadership development and find existence of authenticity, i.e. finding the themes highlighted in the framework as per figure 2.

What George and Sims (2007) did not include in their set of questions was the area that speaks to how transparent or open the leaders were about their weaknesses and how the leaders negotiated with contextual pressures. These are the issues that rose from the recent criticism on authentic leadership as discussed in chapter 2. To ensure that these areas were directly addressed, the author added questions to close that gap, as incorporated in the literature framework.

The researcher personally conducted all the interviews due to his familiarity with the theoretical framework developed for this study. Table 1 depicts the general strategies followed when conducting this qualitative research and the first line, highlighted in blue, reflects the nature of this study and what the researcher embarked on.

Table 1. Qualitative genre and overall strategy (Marshall and Rossman, 2006)

Genre	**Main strategy**	**The focus and enquiry**
Individual lived experience	In-depth interviews	Individuals
Society and culture	Case study	Groups or organisations
Language and communication	Micro-analysis and text analysis	Speech events and interactions

An anomaly occurred with one of the interviewees who, after receiving the interview schedule, requested to respond to the questions in written format. On receipt of the completed document, the researcher decided to incorporate this response due to the amount of information the respondent provided. Each and every question was answered in great detail. The data received

fulfilled the requirements of that the project, in terms of gathering the leader's life-story from his or her point of view.

A key assumption that was made was that the leader provided that same information that he or she would offered in the interview. What also led the author to accept this was that each of the stories were analysed in isolation and thus this data was not going to contaminate other leaders' stories. Whether the insight was oral or written – the main aim was for the leader to tell their story, in their own words. This is supported by Shamir et al. (2005) when they argue that the life history methodology does "…not focus on lives but the texts that describe lives" (p. 16). That is indeed where the power lies.

4.3 DATA SOURCES AND COLLECTION

For the purpose of gathering the life-stories of the leaders, only two sources of data were used. To have an understanding of the professional profile of the leaders, their résumés were used. This provided basic insight into the leaders' academic qualifications, work experience, achievements and age.

The second source, as mentioned earlier, was the actual interviews with the leaders. No other sources were used as the main strategy of life-stories is to allow the leader to narrate their experiences based on their own constructed meaning.

4.4 UNIT OF ANALYSIS

The unit of analysis used was black leaders in South Africa, who are in senior positions in their organisations, and are responsible in contributing to the achievement of the goals of those entities. Furthermore, they were individuals who were responsible for managing people, and mobilising other resources in that aim of achieving the organisational goals.

4.5 TARGET POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The population for this study was made up of black professionals in leadership positions. These based in various kinds of organisations, including private companies, and government departments. Leadership positions and racial grouping were the only criterion used to determine the target population. Other factors such as success (or failures), size of organisations, and number of employees, were not employed in determining the population and sample. The key driver for this decision was because the area of authentic leadership is focused on behavioural aspects related to, among others, ethics and consistency in the individual's conduct without necessarily looking at organisational outcomes. Area such as company performance can be influenced by other facets of the organisation such as marketing, economics and finance, which did not form part of this study.

To achieve a meaningful research exercise, the interviewees chosen had to be leaders that were able to articulate not only their convictions, but also their life-stories. The sample size was made up of seven leaders. This decision, to more than one story, was to ensure that the investigation revealed a variety of stories, due to the uniqueness of people's lives. Also, as Marshall and Rossman (2006) asserted, it is a difficult exercise to determine the universe of possible samples and relevant variables. However, they proposed a compromise where a researcher can "…include a sample with reasonable variations in the phenomenon, setting or people (Dobbert, as cited in Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 63)

One of the interviewees, as explained in the previous section, responded in written format. In terms of selection, purposeful sampling was deployed. What made this sampling appropriate in this study was that it will allowed the researcher to interview leaders that will be able to comfortably articulate their opinions and life experiences to the researcher. Some of the interviewees were already known to the researcher, and they in turn recommended other interviewees. Table 2 represents the sampling approach followed in selecting the interviewees. Those highlighted in blue represent the sampling strategy adopted in this study.

Table 2. Typology of sampling strategy (Marshall and Rossman, 2006)

Type of sampling	**Purpose**
Snowball or chain	People who know people who can contribute
Criterion	People who meet certain criterion useful for quality assurance
Convenience	Those that are reachable and available and willing only

As per Table 2, all interviewees had met the criteria and were reached either through snowballing or convenience sampling. The group of interviews was made up of five males and two females. Of the males, the youngest was 30 with the eldest being 33. The eldest female was 39 with the youngest being 33. An average age of 33 years was observed for the total group. Ultimately, the total sample was made of relatively young leaders with none of the candidate being over the age of 40 years. Appendix A provides a list of the individuals interviewed.

The initial correspondence with the interviewees was through the use of telephone and email. Some respondents confirmed via email while most finalised the interview date via telephone. On initial confirmation of the interview dates, meeting requests were then sent to the interviewees through emails. Some candidate selected to use their private email accounts and not that of their organisations. The meeting request was accompanied by the interview schedule, which had the list of questions that the researcher was going to use

To ensure that the interviews were conducted properly and they revealed as much depth as was possible, some data about the interviewees were requested. A resume of each candidate was requested and provided to the researcher. This was useful in providing background information about the interviewees.

Each interview took approximately 60 minutes, with a few taking up to 75 minutes. These interviews were either held in the interviewees' offices or at an agreed venue. One of the interviews was conducted over the telephone as the interviewee was based in Cape Town while the researcher was in Johannesburg. All interviews were digitally recorded.

4.6 DATA ANALYSIS

Because of the uniqueness of each story, the analysis was done separately for each story. The life history method does not make for easy generalisation (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Their narratives were analysed to better understand their journeys. The recorded interviews were transcribed and then analysed to identify codes that would validate the existence of themes listed in the framework.

The propositions presented in chapter 3 are driven by themes listed under the framework presented in the literature framework. Each of the questions asked in the interviews was important in either revealing codes or in validating certain codes that in turn would confirm the existence of the authenticity theme. Because of the uniqueness of stories, different themes were discovered from different codes. An example is that of other leaders experiencing crucibles and others having a cumulated number of small trigger events that changed their lives. All the stories were analysed independently.

These stories are presented in narrative form in the next chapter – and were each analysed to find examples and behaviour that would support the various themes listed in the framework (as per figure 2). Narratives are described as "…accounts of events in the world which are organized in a time-related sequence" (Watson, 2009, p. 429).

For example, where a leader described a hardship and later demonstrated an ability to handle hardship in their leader - the area of crucibles would then be confirmed as a key driver in developing self-awareness. Or where high levels of passion were uttered then it can be concluded that a clear sense of purpose exists. Also, the leaders' ability to continuously reflect upon his life events and learn and grow from them was seen as the use of life-stories in developing leadership (authentic or otherwise).

The presentation of the stories could have been presented in terms of common themes throughout the stories, but that would have not revealed the impact of the life-story in influencing a leader's approach to his work. For example, it could have been found that a leader had

compassion which would render them leader with heart. However, the way they developed that compassion might not always be infused by the similar values or backgrounds. The power of the narrative was then in creating a cohesive story that in a person's journey. Each leader's approach would therefore be looked at in relation to their life-story.

In the end the level of authenticity for each leader will be pronounced with the framework used as a guide. The first proposition was supported when it could be established that the leader's life experiences, as gathered from the story he told, helped him develop his authenticity. In other words, two conditions had to be met. Firstly, the leader's level of authenticity needed to be high – where he demonstrated that he had the components of authentic leadership and the dimensions of an authentic leader. Secondly, there had to be a link between his authentic leadership approach and his life-story. If the two could not be reasoned to be connected then it meant the life-story had not been instrumental in the leader's authentic leadership development.

In supporting the second proposition, the leader's explanation of how they handle the barriers to authenticity. The analysis in this area was to discover if the leaders were aware of those tensions and barriers and if they maintained some level of authenticity in handling those situations. To accept the second proposition, the awareness would need to be discovered and that the leader tried to maintain his authenticity.

4.7 LIMITATIONS

The limitation to the study is that the leaders may have not, for unknown reasons, fully shared their stories or remembered other key events in their lives. Also, because a life-story is a construct of person's own interpretation it is possible that some information was not provided or shared, deliberately or otherwise.

An additional limitation is the age spread of the interviewees. Since none of them were over the age of 40 years, the research results are therefore confined to one or two generations and exclude those in preceding generations. This suggests the sample is not fully representative of the population of black leaders in South Africa.

As mentioned in chapter 2, the area of identity is encompassed in the leader's life-story portion of the framework and it was limited to the self-concept level. Other identity variables that could speak to national and cultural identity (House *et.al,* 2002; Javidan *et.al, 2010*) were not necessarily revealed. Other studies may, in future, isolate this investigation by digging deeper to the area of identity.

The area of gender was not isolated as important variable in this study. However, as Avolio and Mhatre (2011) pointed, it is worth looking at. This research did not dig deeper into the influence of gender differences within authentic leadership. It is a limitation that the author has noted.

Despite the noted limitations, the scope of the study remained rich enough to make meaningful discoveries in support or dismissing the research proposition presented. The following chapter presents the results from the data collected.

5 RESEARCH RESULTS

This chapter presents the findings from the data collected in the interviews. Appendix A lists the designations, the organisations and age of the interviewees. The names of the interviewees have been changed and can be provided on request. Also the questions used for the interview can be viewed in Appendix B. In this section, the results will be presented in narrative as based on the stories told by the leaders.

The subsequent sections of this chapter will present the results taken from the interviews. Each of the sections will be dedicated to each of the interviews conducted. That is to say, each life-story will be presented separately. Because the names of the interviews are not provided each of the interviewees will be labelled as “Leader” plus a number, for example the first leader will be labelled Leader-1. Similarly each of the subsections below will be labelled accordingly.

As discussed in previous sections, the aim of the study was to attempt to support a proposition. For that purpose, the framework (as per figure 2) presented in chapter 2, with the number of themes associated with authentic leadership, will be used in the analysis (Chapter 6).

The average age of the interviewees was 33. The youngest of the leaders was 30 while the eldest was ten years older. Two of the seven interviewees were female. All seven leaders had more than one academic qualification. These qualifications were mainly in commerce, with two of the leaders having completed science degrees.

One of the leaders was based outside the Gauteng province. The industries they worked in included the public sector (i.e. government), manufacturing, management consulting, market research, and financial services. Both government based leaders were in the areas of environmental affairs, one being in the sustainability space and the other in water affairs. None of the leaders had worked for less two companies.

5.1 LIFE-STORY OF LEADER-1

Leader-1 is a 30 year old male and managing director of a market research company. He is based in Johannesburg, South Africa and looks after all African offices of this company.

Leader-1 was born in Lesotho to a banker father and a mother who was from a daughter of chief. Because of the work his father did, the family had to move to Ivory Coast. Leader-1 was four years old at the time. There he moved with his brothers and his father while the mother joined a year later due to visa complication.

His grandfather was a school headmaster and had about 24 grandchildren. One thing Leader-1 remembered was how close all of them were. They were also taught to look after each other.

On the first day to kindergarten, his father, a strict traditionalist dropped him off at the school gate without even walking him inside the school: “Imagine the first day at school, foreign country”. It would be the beginning of a multi-cultural experience for Leader-1. He grew up in a community of expatriates and had friends from Lebanon, France and Canada. Leader-1 also learned to speak French.

A male nanny later joined the family, as in West Africa women were not allowed to seek household work jobs as these were reserved for men. Leader-1 developed a relationship with the nanny, while his father was busy with his professional duties. Leader-1 reflects on a day while in primary school, he returned home with his report card where he had one ‘A’ and his father would ask: “What happened to the other marks?”

He saw his father as being very strict: “I would say strict and especially now being a parent and looking back, we were not allowed to drink coke until I was 10, were not allowed to chew bubble gum, strictly in bed by half past 7.” Despite this, Leader-1 does not recall any point where he rebelled.

When he started in high school, Leader-1 lost his grandfather: “which was the first time I experienced death in the family”. At the funeral Leader-1 made a vow to his grandfather: “I still remember at his funeral promising to make him proud and I remember the following year my marks moved from being an average C student to an average A by the end of that year, so that was one defining moment”.

Later in his senior school years, the family returned to South Africa and Leader-1 was sent to a private boarding school in Grahamstown. Upon completion he then moved to Johannesburg to study accounting at Wits university. It was also a time he became more aware of racial tensions in the country: “I would say the real shock came when it came to varsity, where we saw people who used to be in matric all of a sudden sticking together because of colour hardly speaking to you so it was the first time we noticed that”.

Leader-1 would drop out of university after the first year: “I decided I didn’t want to become an accountant it was too boring a job and I wanted to do entrepreneurship”. His father stopped talking to him, but Leader-1 continued with his entrepreneurial plan and started an entertainment company with a friend where they organised events. Two events later the company failed and they had lost all the R150 000 they had raised.

Later in that year, his mother was diagnosed with breast cancer: “I was the one who was driving her for chemo and therapy sessions and things like that. We got quite close and her going through that was also life changing and she managed to come through”.

The business failure got him to apply for a job he has seen on a daily newspaper. He did get offered the job. It was a UK-based company that was doing business in South Africa within the music research industry. At the same time he registered to study with UNISA, and his still not in talking terms with his father: “Had to keep the parents happy. Actually it was quite a dramatic time; we went through a year with my dad not talking to each other. I moved out of home, went to stay with my brother. My grannies and uncles were called in to mediate”. The relationship was eventually mended.

The UK company lost a contract with the music association in South Africa and it had to close, and the MD of the company recommended Leader-1 to another international marketing research company which was about to open offices in South Africa. This new job offered him

the opportunity to travel regularly to Germany for training. A few years later, his MD would be fired unfairly and in solidarity Leader-1 tendered his resignation and looked to complete his studies.

At the same time he got offered a job at Pick 'n Pay through an American consulting firm that was doing work for the retailer. It was the year that would see him get engaged to his girlfriend and prepare to get married. Things did not, however, get better in the home front as his father was hospitalised and had part of his lunch cut out: "I still remember a week before the wedding wondering if we should cancel it coz he was still in ICU".

It wasn't long when he received a call from the previous company he resigned from and offered a role to set up a new department that would look at expanding the company's African footprint. Leader-1 obliged.

Leader-1 reflected on the challenges faced while looking for clients in the African continent: "A lot of people saw South Africa like the new colonialist, took us a lot of time to get started but again it was always relationship based. We managed to do that, a year later after that". With this success, he was approached by the company's global CEO if he would be interested in heading up the entire African division. Leader-1 agreed and work began in training and developing him to assume the role.

During this journey his mother suffered a double-stroke and got paralysed from her left side of the body. It also affected her speech. Leader-1 thought back about when his wife gave birth to his son and his mother could not play with the child due to the stroke.

Leader-1 completed two courses from business schools and went on to study for an MBA. He was made managing director of the company while in his first year of his MBA. Leader-1 was 29 at the time and reflected on his first months as MD: "Importantly for me the role was to not change things for the sake of changing and also tried to think before I was MD how I would have wanted the situation to be approached what could have been ideal… also not to expect authority because of the position". He continued to explain that he was a consultative leader and brought people in to be involved in decision making.

From a growth point of view Leader-1 learnt that leadership is harder than it looks from the

outside. He had also learnt to overcome his fear of making mistakes. Flexibility was another growth for him as he said: “now when you need to make a decision you make it and live with the consequences coz sometimes you still have to make the authoritarian and move on, you cannot always consult everybody”.

He conceded that the journey has not been without challenges and failures. An example he made was of hiring certain people, based on certain expectations, only to be let down when “the person does not turn out” to be what they said: “I’ve learnt that CV is one thing; you need to trust your gut when it comes to experience, the interviews you sit in”. Leader-1 continued to add: “Somehow challenges always come and in a way my whole life has been about getting over challenges, different cycles, and different turns. Right now we’ve had our second biggest client decide to drop the channel so that’s a challenge by itself”.

In explaining his leadership approach Leader-1 described is as follows: “I would say the style is probably more consultative and one that is team based. I believe in working in team, no man is an island and nobody can do it all on their own and you are only as good as the synergy you can get between yourselves regardless of how good the individuals are. So a lot of it will be relationship based”.

On seeking feedback, Leader-1 preferred information interactions when it came to his subordinates. His feedback preference when it comes to clients was more formal. He also acted upon some of the feedback he received. In addition, Leader-1 proclaimed to take notice of what others think of him. “So now you have to become a role model and before I used to wear jeans and a golf shirt you know, things like that”, he said.

As inherent in his industry, there are occasional crises that emerge. “I would say pressure is the name of the game, there’s no single day that there is no pressure…. Crisis, the key is to be confident, deal with it confidently. I think in crisis people project their own insecurities and concerns and it reflects with you. The more you feel uncertain [the more] they worry”, he reflected. He relies more on his values in times of crisis: “Definitely in a crisis you have to believe and know what you believe in, be it values, be it you products, be it your processes”. The value that he highlighted was that of dealing with people the way you would want to be dealt with. He believed other values get entrenched easily when this main value is in place: “If that comes right all the other smaller values will be in line. Respect but not in an authoritarian

point of view. Never think too highly of yourself; never look down on people coz you never know where your next meal is going to come from. Values have always been a strong part of my upbringing, my mom served in the church; I was a counsellor in the church."

When defining success, Leader-1 traced back to an assignment that was given to him in primary school. The teacher had asked them to imagine themselves as 30 year olds and writing a letter to an old friend and tell them how they have progressed with their life. In that letter, Leader-1 wrote that he will be married, working for an international company, and will be a millionaire. That was his definition of success then, and he has achieved the first two and believes he is close enough to achieving the third. He further continued to add the presence of happiness in defining his success.

This also led Leader-1 to speak about the legacy he would like to leave: "As a leader the best legacy you can leave is being a champion for your people. It means having an open door policy where people can come to you about anything in their lives. People come to me not because they want extra money but because they just need to speak to somebody. In this position I see my role as 50% looking after employees and 50% looking for new business".

As much as the demands of the business are about profits for his European shareholders, he did emphasise that the just meeting the required financial results was enough for him and that people were his main priority. Another legacy that Leader-1 expressed was that of helping South Africa address its unemployment challenges.

Leader-1 one spoke about his personal story as extraordinary: "On a personal level I would say there is nothing that is impossible. You cannot get a more extraordinary story than someone who started with no degree to where I am today and what I say to people is to always believe and be prepared to back yourself and to put in the hard work."

He understood his purpose as simply living his own story and positively affecting the lives as many people as he can. On reflecting about his work, Leader-1 summarised is as follows: "I have enjoyed what I do to the point where you don't see it as work".

5.2 LIFE-STORY OF LEADER-2

Leader-1 is a 31 year old male and finance head of a financial services and investment products company. He is based in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Leader-2 is a Zulu male born in Soweto and moved to Kwazulu-Natal with his mother. Born to a teenage mother, he had an absent father but a loving set of grandparents. He recalled calling her mother "Sisi" and her grandparents "Mama" and "Baba". To this present day his relationship with his mother is that of a friend than of a parent.

While living around his grandparents he remembered how his grandmother was able to keep the family together and united. All of his uncles looked after him and played the father role to him. However, Leader-2 still wonders today if there were some lessons that he could have learnt from his real father.

His memories of his school days were not too vivid but he was able to mention different names of teachers that had an impact on him. He recollected having to join the choir, that a Mr Bambo led, and singing baritone. In addition he was in the debating team. Another observation he made was that he used to envy individuals that had close relationships with the teachers.

Outside school he was the one who was the envy of other children as he reflects on the terms that were used to describe him, such as "Cheese boy" (a term used to label someone who is more fortunate that the average child in the township). These were days when he was still in KZN before his return to Johannesburg.

The return took place when was doing his standard 9 (or grade 11). Leader-2 did not reveal much about his school experiences besides the two extra mural activities he took part in. Much of his detailed memories were in his Technikon days.

He had planned to study law but was inspired by his step-father to pursue studies in marketing: "He fascinated me about the whole marketing thing and that every company you look at, in fact anything you look at has a bit of marketing behind it", he said. Leader-2 enrolled for a

marketing diploma with what was then called Wits Tech.

Leader-2 commuted by train to attend his classes and remembers how other students would drive to work in their own cars. He found it hard at first, as he was comparing himself with others, to find a group he could relate to. But in the classroom he felt comfortable to converse and discuss well in English. Then Leader-2 found mentorship in one of the marketing lecturers: "I had a Mrs McClarence who was the marketing lecturer at the time from year one right up to the third year. So she guided me and I got the necessary assistance". Other than that, his days as the tertiary institution were just about spending time in the library and studying.

When the time to go on his compulsory internship, a relative connected him with a certain Colin Jackson who was head of marketing at a bank. Colin offered to help him get exposure into the marketing world and eventually Leader-2 would spend a few years with the bank: "I would say Colin Jackson would definitely be one of the few people that gave me the break that I needed at that time and gave me the guidance".

In his days at this bank Leader-2 first moved into youth and student banking, where they won an award for the coolest bank for the category in which he was portfolio manager. Later he would be moved to the Mpumalanga province as regional marketing manager. He was to look at the unbanked market. In that role he recalled how he had to break the rules and perform experiential marketing and they won another award in their efforts to build a market in the province. He reflected on the team's performance: "I am saying 'we' because I don't believe in the whole 'I', so it paid off and we got those".

His stint in Mpumalanga was the beginning of his interest in the bottom end of the market within the banking and financial services arena. "That way I got real meaning of what it means to be a company trying to sell communities with unfortunate backgrounds. I used to look at some of the CSI, I used to do the sponsorships within the region and I used to do the travelling in all the small towns there and being hit cold by poverty. People would complain about a brick and mortar school that is missing two bricks and having to see school that are built of asbestos, knowing that in 20 years' time those kids will have lung issues. Those sorts of things that hit me", he added.

As his career progressed, so did his focus into the lower end of the market and he began to

see his work as no more than just being in the offices and doing presentations. He was immersed in the communities he was marketing to. As he put it: “Although I might be here for a presentation wearing a suit, I am willing to put up a banner. I have never been one to be crazy about titles; and the jobs that I have held have been out there in community so you cannot have a big head when you are dealing with the community”. He also understood that he could not be big headed as the communities he served were no different to the background he had while growing up.

In dealing with colleagues he claimed the first people he gets to know are the security personnel and the cleaning staff. Despite comments that he was trying to validate his standing he continued knowing why he related to those individuals. His understanding of this marketing also got him to launch, not only innovative products such the WiniKaya competition and shack insurance, but also other impactful initiatives like financial literacy programmes.

A firm believer in leaving things better than he found them – Leader-2 always documented things he had done and reflected upon them, in order to ensure the next person assuming the role would flourish.

In balancing his convictions against power relations and organisational purposes Leader-2 expressed his strategy as involving sponsors to back him up in getting buy-in from other stakeholders. Such sponsors would be senior executives within the organisation. Furthermore, he would ensure he performs product testing and research to demonstrate value to his stakeholders.

Describing his motivations to lead, Leader-2 mentioned people as the main driver. “I am driven by people, by the potential that lies within people, the potential that lies within the environments that get up and go type of thing”, he said. Leader-2 takes this further by saying “It all comes back to knowing what poverty is and knowing what communities have to deal with and the need to drive specific change. Even if it is for one community and I can ensure the RDP houses next to cosmos are proper and running. You have communities in Mpumalanga that were hit by floods. Be in the thick of it, be there”. He explains his level of awareness of his surroundings being from the role he was given since his early career.

Leader-2 does not ask much for feedback from others, but did acknowledge that his work and

people-focus had not gone unnoticed. “As far as feedback is concerned I realized the other day in a meeting where a partner that I have been dealing with for the last five years said ‘I know Leader-2 is a peoples person, he likes to help people’ and it struck me in the time we have spent together, in the conversations we have had, this is what this person had learnt of me”. While speaking about feedback-seeking, Leader-2 added the element of being honest and true to one’s self and explained in the following words: “Don’t be fake, it will catch with you”.

On looking at his weakness he thought his way of taking time to make decisions as challenge at times but also strength. This is same philosophy he applies when he is in a crisis: “My flow for instance, is when an issue gets tough I need time out to reflect on it. I am very upfront about those things, I am also upfront about the fact that I believe in cultivating relationships and if you as my MD has a point that I am not in agreement with I will call a time out”. He also prefers discussing difference with his superiors when they are both treating each other as equals.

Leader-2’s definition of success is about feeling at ease. If he pauses for five seconds and feels okay then he feels successful. “I savour those 5 seconds and that’s when I realize I am happy to be alive and not having to pick anything from the external to give me those 5 seconds”, he said. Before, he would render his attainment of a degree, of him getting a house, as success. That had changed. He then moved on to discuss the issue of legacy and success interchangeably. “The day I leave this earth and my daughters, the community, and people that I have interacted with feel I have had an impact in their life positively, that would be success” he uttered.

Leader-2 has also began mentoring young graduates on how they can grow their careers but also on how to manage their finances. While doing this he had noticed a change in his leadership style, although not a change in his core values, in dealing with other leaders. He explained this by saying: “I have gone to realise the decision you make has ripple effects and I think initially growing up you need to be a lot more diplomatic to get certain results....I have become a lot better at that in realising that in a new organization give credit to the work that has been done by previous leaders or people before yourself, before you lay another set of building blocks”.

Leader-2 is married with two children.

5.3 LIFE-STORY OF LEADER-3

Leader-3 is a 32 year old male and an associate partner at a leading management consulting, audit and advisory firm. He is based in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Leader-3 was born to very humble beginnings in Soweto. His parents would later to move to Tembisa, north-east of Johannesburg. His mother was a casual domestic worker while his father was a street vendor. Leader-3 had two other siblings, a younger sister and an older brother.

He remembered the days, during school holidays, where he used to go with his father to the market to buy fruit and soft drinks and assisted him in selling them at the train station: “That was quite useful for me the whole experience of getting to see a different world in particular the experience with my father in going to the train station. It was eye opening because you see a variety of people but at an early age you start developing that sense of responsibility because you are entrusted with mending the stock, buying the stock on your own, using the train on your own”, he said.

Also he had memories of having to go with his mother to the suburbs where he saw a different life to what he was used to. It was also his mother who taught him a lot of values, including discipline: “she was trying to teach us is as sense of responsibility and accountability for decisions and actions that we take. Respect. Compassion. Those are some of the key characteristics of value systems. Most certainly they continue to empower me and drive me but also enable me to relate with my surrounding environment in an authentic manner”, he added.

Leader-3 remembered his first days at school, in a class where there so many students that they all needed name tags for the teacher to remember them. He did not even have shoes to wear to school at the time but did not see it as a problem as most of the children at the school had similar backgrounds and that is the life they knew. It was not a bad state according to them.

It was when he went to high school, at the dawn of the democratic South Africa that he

succumbed to the influences of popular American culture that waved throughout the townships. Most of his peers were into designer labels that he also wanted. Students would wear their school uniform as required but they would wear Italian shoes and tailor-fit shirts. Leader-3 reflected on the pressure that this brought to students that were less-fortunate like him: “would have been very challenging dynamic if one was not grounded enough because again I was still coming from a position of the underprivileged but together with a few friends we managed to stand our ground and not let the fact that we were not as privileged as other kids to basically distract us and demoralise us.”

Due to the lack of funds, Leader-3 enrolled at the Soweto-campus of the black institution called Vista University. He had wanted to attend Wits University but that R1500 needed for registration was too much his family to handle. Vista’s registration was less than half that amount and he registered for a computer science degree.

He almost dropped out of school in his second year, when his mother passed away: “it was a very huge test for me because she was a huge pillar of strength for us and inspiration somebody who taught us good values that were later to become very important attributes in all of us as her children”. His brother convinced him to continue with school, which Leader-3 sees as one of the greatest advice he received from anyone.

The level of student activism at the school was very high. He recalls how united the students were in terms of addressing issues of academic and financial exclusion. It is there at this institution that he discovered student politics and became involved in the student movement through SASCO, an ANC affiliated student body. Within months of joining this movement he became regional chairperson of the greater Johannesburg region. The role automatically made him part of the provincial executive committee of the organisation.

In the student movement Leader-3 was seen as a solid leader: “it gave me an accelerated political development path because my colleagues identified potential and gave me an opportunity to lead which I seized so that was for me the turning point of my political activism”. By affiliation, Leader-3 would become involved with the ANC Youth League.

Leader-3 earned the respect of many in the ANC Youth League although he was not a formal

member. Despite being lured into mainstream politics and having toyed with the idea of studying law, Leader-3 joined the BMW graduate programme in 2002 where he would be responsible for logistics and production systems. The decision not to study law was purely based on financial reasons. He needed a job to assist his family. He also admitted to the irony of being in a leftist political movement and ending up working for the very capitalist the movement sometimes was against.

After spending two years at the company he worked for one of the large global management consulting firms. Here he spent eight years and accelerated into senior management roles. However, he does not remember ever planning to be a leader: “I do not know if I ever planned to be a leader. It was probably a by-product of my determination to see through some changes in whatever space and terrain I found myself in. But obviously in both political activism and the corporate world there is a direct correlation between holding a position of leadership and providing leadership”, he added.

On his general journey to leadership he gave a detailed example from his days with SASCO and the ANC Youth League:

“A good example for me has been the ANC Youth League, I have been with them for many years and did not hold a position in the upper structures but my peers and colleagues were recognising me as one of the leaders because of the energy that I exuded, the passion, the will, the zeal and the commitment to the cause and importantly the eagerness to express myself, my views and thoughts; those are some of the things that make one to be a leader”.

He has seen the emergence of courage as one of his growth areas of his leadership. Leader-3 sees himself more comfortable to tackle sensitive and difficult issues. Another growth area he had noticed was his listening of the views of others.

Leader-3 has also had his challenges and failures throughout the years. He terms them technical defeats and credits his strong character and challenging upbringing as being the source that allowed him to bounce back from those challenges. “So my philosophy in life is that we have gone through a lot of hardship based on the position of being underprivileged that I was born into. To have emerged out of it I should be able to emerge out of anything”, he added.

He has been open about his weakness throughout the number of consulting projects he was involved in. A lot of his teams were made up of people he deems were more intelligent than him and had more technical knowledge that he could ever have. It was through his openness about his shortcomings that he was able to supplement his limitations by inviting those talented individuals and being honest to them. Also he ensured that he created trust within those teams.

Leader-3's found asking for feedback very important and kept inviting it:

"I have found it very useful and I try to proactively use it or seek feedback because someone once told me that even if somebody unfairly or harshly says negative things about you what is important is critically reflect on it and take a first view that there is some level of truth about it. Even if it could be exaggerated and said in bad faith, just pretend that it is true and decides what you are going to do about it and I have found that very useful and powerful".

On his change of leadership approach, Leader-3 believed his value system has not changed and so is his leadership style. He sees a consistent approach to leadership and thinks he has held that since his activist days.

In terms of balancing between his own convictions and the organisation purpose and power relations, Leader-3 expressed the following: You have to adapt, unless that environment is fundamentally in conflict with your belief system and your values. It's really a matter of adapting and stretching yourself to ensure that the attainment of the ultimate goal is not at risk".

On the issue of legacy and success, he would like to leave a legacy where he can be seen as a person who succeeded without selling his soul or without doing things that are in conflict with what they believe in.

His success definition is that about the extent to which he can live his ideal life based on the aspiration that he had. He did not attach any monetary value or material wealth to his success definition.

5.4 LIFE-STORY OF LEADER-4

Leader-4 is a 33 year old male and chief operations officer of a manufacturing firm. He is based in Cape Town, South Africa. He is responsible for all operations of the firm including Pretoria and Durban, and his portfolio covers manufacturing, plant operations, supply chain, and sales marketing.

Leader-4 was born in rural Limpopo and raised in Mamelodi in a large family of 7 children. His parents were educated individuals with his father being a teacher while his mother was a nurse. He was the second youngest child in his family. He describes his childhood as based in three worlds. There was Mamelodi, a township that had difference cultures in it. Then there was rural Limpopo where his parents had a house and visited during holidays. The third was his schooling environment. Leader-4 attended a multi-racial school (Model-C).

His parents had been serious about education and this saw his father fight to get Leader-4 admitted to a white school, at a time when apartheid was still in its peak. Leader-4 described his parents are academics, though they had humble backgrounds. His father was of the first radio announcers in the old Radio Bantu, and spent time at the SABC while pursuing further studies. On completion his father became a teacher and later a professor who also wrote and published many books in both English and Sepedi. His mother moved from nursing and also studied further to become a teacher and later earn a master's degree in linguistics.

A lot of values were taught to him by both his parents and Leader-4 has vivid details of those lessons. He recalled how he had to oblige when any elder asked him to do something or send him somewhere, even if that elder was not his parent. Another value he remembered was that of humility.

His recollection of his days in Mamelodi included the sense of community that existed. Over and above that Leader-4 also admits that not all was perfect as there was a lot of political activity and also guns and knives were everywhere.

His parents' decision to take him to a white school was a deliberate one: "he challenged the

school and how he did that, got us out of the system and put us into those schools they said we cannot be in". This was about his father ensuring his children received the education they deserved in spite of what the apartheid system was trying to do.

Leader-4 remembers being labelled by people in the township for attending a white school, and also being labelled at school by the white kids. But makes the point that among all the labelling, he was taught about who he was: "You are taught things to say you do not define yourself according to whomever or whatever people say about you and where you are from. I grew up with a strong sense of who I am and I did not need anybody or a system to tell me this is what you will amount to. My parents said you don't need to settle for anything less and I think that basically set the tone in terms of how I would always view things in life and always trying to push myself to the next level."

While at school he remembers losing one of his older brothers who died at the age of 13. Leader-4 was eight at the time and explained that he felt as if he had lost a friend.

His memories of rural Limpopo revealed a contrast to what he experienced in Mamelodi: "Going to the rural setting which was also very communal but at the same time there was not this fixation on material things there was not that hustle and bustle. People still had values and they believed in the human spirit, Ubuntu. But people do not necessarily understand the underlying that comes with it. You found a lot of that when you went into the villages, for instance, growing thinking of poverty. There was nothing like that there. If we did not have any tomatoes my mom would know where to get some tomatoes or go borrow some sugar. It was not frowned upon, I still remember sitting around in the evenings and there would be a passer-by and that passer-by would be offered food and drink at that time. In the making of who I am it has basically influenced me one way or another".

Leader-4 recalled the days in the township when his mother would return from work with an extra loaf of bread. When confronting his mother about that the extra loaf, she would answer by telling him that the loaf would be meant for a certain family that needed it. His mother showed him that the caring and sense of community, which existed in rural Limpopo, also had a place in the townships. He continued to unpack the concept of Ubuntu by also bringing the element of one acknowledging his fellow man: "I carried throughout life teachings around Ubuntu. You finding that walking, for instance, there is no way that you can walk past the next

individual, whereas in the more western environment that I grew in you would find that it was ok for a person to just walk past you. By you not greeting the person you say I do not recognize you as a person".

Over and above being inspired by his parents, Leader-4 found inspiration from the apartheid struggle heroes in terms of their selflessness. He had witnessed some of the consumer boycotts that took place in the late 1980s and had memories of those.

As a pupil he was an ordinary performer but recalled an incident in standard 7 (grade 9) that had a profound impact on him. He and his friend were beginning to take a direction that was not advisable to young teenagers, and that led to his friend being shot in the stomach. The friend did not die but Leader-4 began thinking about his priorities as he could have chosen to avenge the attack on his friend or simply turn the tide and lead a different life. Leader-4 chose to focus on education.

He eventually completed high school and developed a love for economics in university. Although he found that love for economics, his first year performance was dismal and was faced with the possibility of dropping out. He, however, decided to continue and performed well in the rest of his years and the university offered him a chance to pursue his honours studies and becoming a junior economics lecturer. Thereafter he would join a management development programme with one of the big South African banks. The programme was about giving black graduates an opportunity to establish their careers. He did not stay long there as he expressed his concern on how it was structured. That is when he received an opportunity to join a team tasked with setting up a South African office of the internal NGO called Endeavor. The organisation is about finding high-impact entrepreneurs and assisting them in taking their businesses to the next level. This allowed him to scout and meet a lot of entrepreneurs.

After spending years at Endeavor, Leader-4 would explore business opportunities himself. This did not go well and he struggled to find funding from many institutions. His quest for going into business yielded fruit when he discovered a textile company that was in need for turnaround and also needed a black partner. His reflection on this deal was as follows: "At that time there were no black companies doing what we do and we came through. But there was a lot of talk wondering if this is a BEE deal and whether will be here today and gone tomorrow. And over

the four years we have been able to convince people otherwise and to say we are capable of running and growing a business. And at the same time we did not need to get a BEE transaction, 'we have got the management expertise', 'we have got the skills and we have been trained".

As he joined the company he faced the reality of having to retrench staff to allow the business to survive. However, Leader-4 would not have himself put people out jobs and worked to find ways to get the business back to shape. In the present day the business is profitable and has an additional factory in Cape Town and has created more employment. Leader-4 reflected on this achievement by saying: "People that get into business will say they have these aspirations driven by money but from my side as an individual it goes back to wanting to make a difference. What we are doing today we are not only touching the lives of one person but five or more so in terms of the multiplier effect".

Another aspect that he reflects upon is an observation that he made about some black people not believing they can work for other black people. He reflect on a saying "Sehlare sa motho yo moso ke lekgowa", loosely translated to "a black man's remedy is a white man", a statement that was ingrained to some through the apartheid system. Leader-4 believed to have demystified that notion.

At being open about his weakness, he did admit that it was difficult to open up but eventually was able to. His main identified weakness was about putting tremendous pressure on himself. However, he conceded that most of his employees see him as being soft since has an approach that gives the employees benefit of the doubt: "Another weakness is I tend to give someone a long rope to hang themselves", he says.

Upon reflection on his mentioned weakness, Leader-4 has noticed a change in his leadership approach. Although he had remained results-driven he had noticed a change in his communication style. He has moved away from giving people the "rope" and now over communicates to ensure people understand what they need to do. He moved on to start spending time on the factory floor and even having lunch with his people and conversing in their home languages. He believes this had yielded positive results has recalled what one of his employees said to him: "boss I appreciate the fact that we can come together and actually talk and let you know what is on our minds, we may be able to come to you", he recollected.

Leader-4 drew parallels with the days when he worked with Americans at Endeavor and saw that there was more focus on the numbers and less on the people. He now sees his approach as different and placed equal importance on the people. His employees are able to come to him with personal problems, such as needing advice on banking or saving.

When asking about his approach on balancing his own convictions and the purpose of the company and the time pressures of the business Leader-4 preferred not to see the issues as mutual-exclusive. He does not let his people focus compromise on the fundamentals of the business. Instead he would demonstrated to the employees the importance of not wasting material and also show them the financial impacts thereof, by so doing making them take ownership of their business operations. Now, the employees are the one championing those efficiencies.

His approach under pressure and crisis is that of being a micro-manager and being in the thick of things. But also admits to being a hopeless optimist. He reflects a lot before taking action and will do whatever it takes to address and solve the crisis. Leader-4 also invites customers to see the factory floor in a way to make them understand his operations and also seek feedback as a way of fostering collaboration.

On success and legacy Leader-4 provided a number of examples, including some of his achievement. He would like to leave a legacy that would be validated by his children. In his view, he wants his children to be proud of him and say that their father build a great company based on values, integrity and honesty. He continued to add that a legacy for the broader society was equally important to him: “I want to leave a legacy where the broader community… people are able to reflect and say that that man had a profound impact on his people”.

His sees, his contribution to a book called Zumanomics as proxy to some of his success. He is also presenting a paper in China for a research he conducted for Department of Science and Technology. However, he prouds himself on being a father and family man and that is his main success.

5.5 LIFE-STORY OF LEADER-5

Leader-5 is a 35 year old female and chief director in the area of sustainability. She is based in Pretoria, South Africa. Her portfolio informs the national agenda for sustainability and the strategic direction of the provincial department as well.

Leader-5 was born in the old Bophuthatswana homeland and had lived between Hammanskraal and Ga-Rankuwa. She spent her early life in the former town and lived with her aunt, brother, sister and cousins. At the time, a certain woman would occasionally come to visit and bring gifts and spend time with her. Only when this woman told her she has to move to Ga-Rankuwa did she get told that she was talking to her mother: “I didn’t get to understand who my mother was until I was 8 because I was raised mainly with my sister and brother by my auntie and my mother was working in Cape Town, she would probably come twice a year”.
The move was triggered by her mother’s decision to leave her job that was based in Cape Town.

Returning from Cape Town mean Leader-5’s mother had to look for the job. From having a decent job working in Cape Town, her mother took on a domestic job. This put financial pressure on the family but Leader-5 remembered how her brother came to the rescue: “luckily my older brother had finished school and had gone to work and took care of us”. Her father, whom she had never met, was absent.

As a child, Leader-5 was always the favoured: “and I would always be the clean one, the clever one and those things get engraved into one and one is able to see you tend to live what you are told”. On starting at a new school Leader-5reflected up how she and her sister were always mocked by kids for the way they dressed and for being from Hammanskraal: “as a result my early schooling year I had a low self-esteem”. Ga-Rankuwa was a more urban area than where she had lived before.

As a result, she began trying to buy friendship from other kids at school by doing their homework. Eventually she found a friend, who happens to be her best friend up to the present day.

The friend would become very pivotal in her upbringing. Her mother began drinking and was distant. Leader-5 started spending her afternoons at her friend's house and developed a relationship with the friend's mother: "I also admired her mother, there would be instances where I went to her house and she would want to play but I would sit with her mother". This woman would become her mother in many ways and Leader-5 felt like part of that family. The woman would assist her with homework and also buy her clothes. During school holidays Leader-5 would also sleep at her friend's house.

In her early high school days, Leader-5 began befriending male friends and less of females. This made her to be seen as one of the naughty crowds. On one parents day, a teach shouted at her mother explaining how Leader-5 was not a good child: "In front of all the other parents in the class she shouted at my mother about what a bad parent she is and that she is raising this girl who likes boys and always hangs around boys and doesn't do schoolwork."

From that episode, Leader-5 worked harder and her grades improved and she started doing very well. She also started doing athletics, after being rejected in the choir for not being able to sing, and being kicked out of the netball team for not being "cool enough". She excelled in athletics and made it to regional competitions: "I did that from high school level to your regional competition and that helped in terms of earning some status because at that time your achievement in the classroom didn't earn you much popularity". She eventually completed her high school education.

Her mother demanded that she study nursing and arranged for her to start studying at a nursing college. Leader-5 refused and threated to take her own life if she was not going to be allowed to study something health. As a compromise she chose a course titled Environmental Health. Her first day at the Technikon Northern Transvaal, Leader-5 was already involved in the student movement: "My first day at TNT was spent at the dean's office submitting a memorandum from students complaining about the exclusion and that the course was not allowing people to carry subjects".

While being part of the student political movement, she also joined the Young Women Network which she ended up heading as chairperson. At the same time she was student representative for the environmental health course. She did well academically and earned a bursary with the

school. Things did not go well, however, with all her relationships and she would be dumped every time.

On completion, she started working in 1997 in the Environmental Health Department in the Limpopo province. That year would see a series of unfortunate events occur. First her brother was going through a divorce and she was forced to assist him financially as his brother was taking strain. Within a few months her friend's mother, who was like a mother to her, passed away from an AIDS related illness: "It was such a huge disappointment for me coz she died of AIDS and you know when you had looked at someone whom you thought was pure". This took place in the month of July and in October her brother was involved in a motor accident that took his life. Her brother is the one that was looking after her when she was still in school and had played a significant role in her life: "Which meant I was without a father, I must also mention to you in my conscious life I have probably only seen my dad twice".

In the same year Leader-5 fell pregnant with her son, whom she later named Kgomotso which means comfort. Her career was taking shape as she was developing a greater interest in the area of environmental affairs.

By 2004, now an adult, she was able to meet her father and told him how she felt about him: "I just told him what a useless human being he'd been and doing that I was trying to compensate the fact that he'd done this and more so to my brother who's then passed on". She would not get to reconcile with her father and a year later he passed on. Leader-5 reflects on her life and how she developed bitterness towards men: "I've got that thing of saying no man will ever get to me".

This bitterness would manifest itself in how she related to her male subordinates. "I am soft when it comes to ladies; which has worked to my detriment because my softness also means I try to be overfriendly, am very artificial when it comes to them. With males am like harsh and to the point". However, this earned her the respect from the males more than it did with the females.

She commented on how her leadership style changed throughout the years: "Initially I had an approach that has always been cordial, 'let's get together and be friends'. I had tried to really…because of over the years through my marriage life, I amended who I am, I changed

and shifted from relating to males which is what I do, naturally get along with guys as women required a lot of my energy. I changed that because I was trying to deal with the insecurities in my marriage and moved more towards trying to deal with females but because it was not authentic and it came back to bite me in the most horrible way".

The very female subordinates she tried to help became her worst critics and saw her success as betrayal to them. It was then when she started being more direct with women and become more balanced in how she related to employees of all genders.

When asked about her motivations to lead and her job she spoke of being able to set directions and be hands on. She made a distinction between giving direction and giving instruction saying that her approach is about "let us talk and agree". She continued: "I would like to be seen as someone who is open, who is flexible enough to accept changes and hear people out".

But Leader-5 does not like people who do not bring their ideas and thoughts into work assignment. She wants people to interrogate thoughts and ideas: "ok it means you do not have the organisations' best interest at heart."

At first, when she started her career, everything was about just getting a job and having a salary. As time went on, though, this changed. While she was on the brink of a divorce, she began seeing a career a way to do "community work". She moved on to lecturing at Wits Technikon, and later was awarded the Nelson Mandela Scholarship to study in the United Kingdom. Her studies were still in the area of environmental affairs and sustainability and reinvigorated her interest in the field: "That's when I started making conscious decisions on the work am doing not based on money and going up but based on where I would want to go."

Her explanation of her purpose is about her achieving what she wants technically and not in managing people. By technically she speaks of the environmental work she does: "I want to be one of the voices in sustainability and be able to integrate the different elements that render the country sustainable… I am a woman on a mission in terms of sustainable behaviour in the country from a social, economically perspective and resource based perspective… So I feel that my duty is to grow those interconnections".

Leader-5 spoke at length about the area of sustainability and her vision thereof. In explaining the legacy she wants to leave she continued to speak within the field: “The legacy I would like to leave I think is just the feeling of a niche within the country economic architecture around green development”. She could not see a distinction between her life and her work: “my work is my life and my life is my work”.

Her definition of success is about being content, having peace of mind, and being happy. She reflects on this definition as being triggered by her divorce.

5.6 LIFE-STORY OF LEADER-6

Leader-6 is a 39 year old female and director looking into the area of water security and sanitation in the national government. She is based in Pretoria, South Africa. Her portfolio informs the strategies of the national and different provincial teams.

Leaders-6 was born in Soweto in the early 1970s at a time when there was high political unrest. The family stayed in Soweto until she was three and half years old. The move could have been triggered by event that she had witnessed six months prior. Leader-6 had seen the student uprising, and although she was only three she makes reference of "…this vision… of …standing at the gate… in Meadowlands Zone 6 and the chanting while police were passing by". Because of her father's engineering skills within the radio broadcasting industry, they relocated to the then Pietersburg (now Polokwane) and eventually made their permanent move to Thohoyandou in the Venda homeland. Leader-6 reflected on how the demands for her father's engineers experience taught her that "if one is good at something, you can go far and be recognised for that".

Not only was her father working but also her mother who was a nurse, received a bursary from the Venda government to pursue an honours degree in nursing. On her return she became one of the first tutors at Venda's only nursing college. The influence of Leader-6's parents led her to believe that "one has to be a trendsetter, a leader, a conqueror, no matter the circumstance".

Her father, who later developed a gambling and drinking problem, was very strict while her mother was a disciplinarian. The two instilled a number of values that she still carries with her: "we were taught to say 'thank you' or acknowledging the support provided, no matter how small it is (*sic*). Caring for others, as well as self-care has also allowed me to extend a helping hand to those in need…. Commitment to what we are doing …stick to the promises made… For me it is human nature to be compassionate". Listening, respect, forgiveness and honesty were other values that were taught to her.

The early years of her high school period brought her a major challenge. She fell pregnant and gave birth to a baby girl at the age of 15. Not only did she think she disappointed her parents,

but also her community. Despite the setback, her mother supported and looked after her. Her father only forgave her when the baby was born. Leader-6 was able to return to school and completed her matric and continued to graduate. Her assessment of this ordeal is quoted below:

> "I graduated with my first degree and my dad gave me a car as a gift. It was a huge thing back then 1994, especially for a girl child to be given a car of her own. That proved to me that I have regained my parents trust, especially my father."

Her father's alcoholism and gambling became worse to a point where he took money from the mother's account. Leader-6 recalls asking her mother why she stayed throughout the abusive marriage, and the mother replied by saying it was for the sake of the family. The mother secretly opened savings accounts to ensure the family could eat and meet other obligations. "She sacrificed her happiness for me and kept me motivated to focus on my studies", uttered Leader-6.

Life would not be smooth sailing for Leader-6 as she three years unemployed and looking for job. Fortune hit when she was given a three month contract as Mvula where her hard work was rewarded with a one year extension. Then she moved to Justine cosmetics – a job that would see her given 20 subordinates within a period of six months. She continued to say: "this also shaped me to be able to lead people and share with them the vision of the company". Later Leader-6 would receive employment in the provincial public sector.

It is in the public sector that her star began to shine brighter. She received promotions every 18 months. She summarised the driving force for her to leader as the satisfaction she gets when a job is well executed: "The efforts that the team put…bring in a howl lot of meaning to being a leader and provide a sense that the team trusts you and willing to go the extra mile". Standing by her team did not only start in her professional role. As a class prefect she recalls having to protect some of her class mates from getting into trouble with the teachers.

Leader-6 acknowledges the challenges she experienced in her life when she said: "I became a leader because of the experiences I had in my life…through experience and wisdom you become a better leader". Her journey allowed her to appreciate her subordinates as well as credit them for moulding her to be the leader she is today.

She split her success in different pillars and stages in her life. For example, she describes her first success as passing her matric after being a teenage mother. Other successes she mentions speak to completing her degree, getting a job and being able to look after her young sister as well as her child. Professionally she defined success as being able to deliver (beyond expectations) on difficult projects. As a mother, Leader-6 saw success as having a child that listens and respects.

What she treasures in her role is that is also able to mentor young people who come to her to learn from her as a role model. She terms that “the ultimate success”. Other virtues that she observes is having respect for others and “choosing what to say no matter how difficult the situation”. She continued to say: “there are certain things at work that occur that I must tolerate and now allow them to affect my judgement”. Having said she admits that in her role she ensures that she takes blame when she is in the wrong even if it is in the presence of her subordinates. Leader-6 said she does apologise to her team if she has been in the wrong.

She described herself as a consultative leader and she claimed she takes “time to listen to what is being said no matter how junior the official might be. Leader-6 further reflects on this by stating that she is “aware that ignoring some of these matters can destroy a leader but one does the best to ensure there is an open and transparent door policy”. Most of the feedback she receives from her team is formal and conducted in scheduled forums and not much informal sessions.

In times of crisis Leader-6 preferred to both do some introspection, and consul others. However, she also delegates to ensure the person responsible still becomes part of the solution. She does concede that the time pressures in her role do affect the time she would like to spend with her daughter.

On the area of growth she does feel she became more assertive in handling subordinates that are older than her. Like most of black people, she was taught to respect her elders. An area she is concerned about is that she can be over self-critical and that sometimes she gets defensive when she receives negative feedback about herself.

She believes her purpose as a leader is to inspire and create vision for others to remain

enthused in their work. When it comes to legacy, Leader-6 becomes more expressive as she would like to be remembered as having the following qualities: “respect for others, strict but accommodative, supportive and empathetic, loving, friendly generous, caring and innovative”

5.7 LIFE-STORY OF LEADER-7

Leader-7 is a 31 year old male and head of projects in a diversified company that finance head of a financial services and investment products company. He is based in Rustenburg, South Africa. His portfolio includes managing the company's community development projects.

Leader-7 grew up in the then homeland of Gazankulu with his parents. Both parents were teachers and he was the youngest child for the first eight years of his life. His eldest sister was in boarding school and he enjoyed most of the attention from his parents. Being the only child in the house he was forced to do most of the chores. The one thing that Leader-7 remembered well was that he did not in a modest family: "So most of my primary life, based on the memories that I have, I was very privileged", he said.

Besides having strict parents, he does not recall any deliberate lessons given to him in terms of values. But, from observation he knew that his parents worked hard for the life they were living. His father established a soccer team and soon left the teaching profession to join the Gazankulu Department of Sport. That move would see his father always away from home and only returning on weekends. "That fostered a stronger relationship with my mother but whenever he was available we would always have time to wash cars, doing the garden on a Saturday", he recalls. Leader-7 would then later join his father's soccer team as a player.

His memory of the Tzaneen and broader Gazankulu area was that everyone had a job: "Growing up in Tzaneen I always tell people it was surprising when another person was not working because people would say he or she was lazy. Jobs were abundant there was no way you wouldn't work. It was unheard of".

Leader-7 saw himself as an ordinary boy in primary school. He did, however, perform well at school that he earned a scholarship to attend a prestigious school called the Dr Pearl Academy. The school had the best infrastructure and attracted students who had a high aptitude for mathematics and science. Leader-1 reflected on the point that the school allowed him to interact with pupils of different backgrounds and languages since some of the children were from "mainland" South Africa.

Joining the school, which was a boarding school, also meant he had to leave home and follow on his sister's path: "for me it was the first point of independence but at home that was not unique because my sister had followed the same programme as well, she had gone through the same school. So it became a family tradition that you have to do well to go into Dr Pearl Academy".

At this school Leader-7 would become part of the group that was known for being mischievous but also that was seen as cool by the other children. He continued to say: "formed strong bonds with certain guys there, but we were naughty as hell. I remember every second quarter they would call our parents either we escaped at night went and drank came back. We were seven in our group, and actually we were the outcast because boarding schools what you would find, was that the Student Christian Movement, was very powerful".

Leader-7 would become a very good soccer player and made the first team at a young age. He would continue to be selected to the provincial soccer team. Within two weeks in the team, and as the youngest member, he was chosen as captain to lead the squad. His talent was noticed in 1996 when he made it to the first national under-20 soccer side of 42 players. He would not, however, make it to the final team of 24. Those players that did make the final list included names like Bennie McCarthy and Nassir Morris, players that are now legends in South African football.

Back at the Dr Pearl Academy, Leader-7 was elected as SRC chairperson for sports. Beside that role, he and his friends would always be part of all social events that took place: "The attitude that I had was that we are invincible and we can do anything", he recalled. In matric, to the surprise of many, Leader-7 and all his friends passed very well. He was 16 at the time, when most matric students were 18 or older.

From being one of the cool boys in his high school, Leader-7 was brought to earth when he went to the Midrand Graduate Institute. The tertiary institution was a private establishment that attracted students from affluent background: "Things changed there, I was young used to be the crowd puller and then you come to varsity you are on your own and there is guys with more style than you basically you have to deal with reality. You are just nothing but a small fish in the sea". Yet, he managed to find friends that were in the same level as him.

He would register with UNISA, through the institute for logistics and economics. In hindsight he conceded that he needed a role model:

"The disadvantage of completing at that age is the lack of role models, because between 16 and 20 that is a transitional period, that is where you need a role model that is where you need to be grounded. That is where you can make a lot of mistakes and yes I made a lot of mistakes in terms of hanging with the wrong crowd, finding myself in the wrong side of the law and so forth but in terms of academically I didn't suffer".
Leader-7 would be arrested twice while in university, and each time his father would come to the rescue to ensure he did not sleep in jail.

After doing well in his first year, and getting a bursary from the school, he managed to earn himself some additional cash but also respect from his father. The following year the father would give him all the money for the year for books, tuition, accommodation, and leisure. The relationship he had with his father improved, but he never saw him as a role model. Leader-7 commented by saying: "I cannot count my dad as my role model because then whatever I said I thought this man just does not want me to enjoy – but other than that it was the disadvantage of living, settling away from your family".

With that said, Leader-7 did observe some lessons from his father: "For me the key lesson was the guy was very fair, that's one big thing I decided if there is one thing you can ever do is to stand your feet, confront issues, you do not have to be violent". He continues to respect his father with the same approach he had as a youngster.

After graduating first class, Leader-7 made it to the ABI graduate programme, something he applied for by chance. On starting, he happened to have a conversation with a stranger that asked him about his studies and what he expects from the graduate programme. He expressed his ideas and the next day received call from the stranger to come and discuss possible assignments. This strange man was the director of supply chain and he decided to give Leader-7 an opportunity to do meaningful work and just the training type of work the other graduates were getting.

Leader-7 recalls his first assignment of being asked to get a stock count of all 340ml bottles empties in the entire country. After a day's crash course in excel, Leader-7 was in Durban

counting bottles. By the next morning, the exhausted Leader-7 was tired and the director wondered what was wrong. He told his boss that he was physically counting all the bottles and continued through the night. That was when he was told that he needed to let the workers do the count and that he needs to supervise and record the results. From then he would continue as told and completed that assignment to positive feedback.

His next assignment would be more challenging. He was given the opportunity to take a new role at the biggest depot of the ABI in Pretoria. The role was that of load planner, where he would schedule the delivery of soft-drinks to the various customers. Thinking he knew everything, Leader-7 scheduled trucks and loads incorrectly, resulting in a collapse of the distribution and warehouse plan for the day. Reflecting on the event, he said: “and for the first time I learnt to be humble because I got there with a degree and thinking I am the man”.

Besides becoming infamous for the mess, his boss gave him a choice to either go back to the standard graduate programme or fix the chaos he created. He chose the latter, and after spending the whole night with an experienced employee – he was able to plan loads and routes properly and was able to get all trucks out on time and with the right loads. The success would have him being offered a senior role in of the other depots.

Leader-7, eventually resigned from the company despite being offered more money. The offer he had received was more than what he earned and he was concerned about making money at that time and not waiting for years to climb up the corporate ladder. He continued although the supply chain director had expressed disappointment.

He would continue to receive big project and more responsibilities in the various companies he joined, but cannot explain why he thinks he always got chosen for leadership:

“I have been chosen than choosing myself. The captaincy, two weeks after joining the team I was given the role. Two days after joining the graduate programme, the manager just pulled me. When I was at Letsema, within a week I was given a massive project. So

everything, the script has already been written to lead and to succeed. But I am not sure if there is anything in particular, that personally I see. There should be something that people see that I don't see. Even at other times guys would say 'do you want to lead this?' I don't know what it is. I don't know exactly why".

On describing his leadership approach, Leader-7 sees himself as goal oriented and does concede that this is at times to the detriment of his subordinates. "I am not sure whether am doing enough to give people the opportunity that I was given", he said. However, having said that Leader-7 seems to say he finds happiness when other people are happy: "and if people are sad I always want to find out what's wrong and what is it that I need to help with". He thinks he may have taken this trait from his father as he sometimes wants to be a champion for the voiceless. Having said that, he has identified a weakness in reading people, and said: "I can't pick up when people are not happy. So sometimes I am more focused on the goal that I can't tell when the atmosphere is not right".

On balancing between the tensions of organisation power, purpose, time pressures and his convictions, Leader-7 went back to define himself as the goal-oriented leader. In terms of power, he reflected on to say that he has learned to choose his battles and remind himself where his salary comes from. When it comes to issues of time pressure and organisational purpose – Leader-7 speaks of being a selfish person. "I compromise my beliefs for the betterment of my family and myself which could be selfish", he said.

In times of crisis Leader-7 uses his goal-orientation to get his team around and brainstorm ideas and to follow up on their implementation: "So I would rather say let us deal with this matter and resolve it and move as a team rather than move forward". But he also consults as much as possible where he is not well equipped.

As far seeking feedback, Leader-7 seems to rely only on the formal feedback session that his organisation has. These are the standard 360 feedback tools that are in common use. But he did admit: "I know my challenges, am so comfortable to discuss with my team, I say guys be aware I have picked up one, two and three; I was not aware and please help me by guiding

me."

In terms of growth he admitted to having moderated his arrogance in terms of thinking he knows everything and has learnt to listen more to other's people's opinions and inputs. He has also come to grips with managing staff older than him as his culture had taught him not to question elders.

His definition of success used to be about money and cars but as he progressed in life he has found value in being happy and content. He believes he has not discovered what legacy he would like to leave but he thinks when he is older he would prioritise the improvement of the lives of the less fortunate. Having said that, he mentioned that it was important for him to make sure he gives his children all the opportunities they can have.

It is when he speaks about his purposes and motivations that he was clear and precise: "I have got ambition like any other guy. I want to be at the top – whatever the top is, however far I can reach. I do not want to be the second in command; I want to be in charge of something. If I can't get it through the corporate world then I will create it. I want to be the guy with the final decision somewhere. Whether in church, if it means taking leadership in church wherever but somewhere…. That is why when I am at work I take additional work to prove to myself that I am ready to move to the next level".

6 ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Based on the narratives presented in chapter 5, this chapter will unpack and discuss them using the framework, as per figure 2. These speak to the four components of authentic leadership (i.e. self-awareness, internalised moral perspective, balanced processing, and relational transparency), the five characteristics (i.e. Purpose, Values, Relationships, Self-discipline, Heart), as well the elements that make the barriers to authentic leadership.

The narrative were basically the life-stories each leader. Throughout this chapter, the stories will be looked at within an authentic leadership lens. Each is analysed in its own merits and coherence. However, parallels will be drawn with other stories but with no intention of highlight aggregation.

Appendix C list summarised the analysis and notes on each of the leaders. Each of the framework elements or themes are listed for each leader. The subsection below will discuss the rationale of the contents in Appendix C. Where a leader demonstrated a high level of self-awareness, for example, there are two ticks in his block. A single tick means there is a sufficient level of self-awareness.

6.1 COMPONENTS AND DIMENSIONS OF AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP

This section discusses the components authentic leadership. The discussion and analysis is aimed to partly address the first research proposition.

6.1.1 SELF AWARENESS

There was very strong sense of awareness among all, but one, leaders. Each of the six leaders shared stories and examples that revealed a high person-role merger (Shamir & Eilam, 2005). The various examples given by the leaders, about themselves, showed a deep understanding of

their traits and attributes. For example, Leader-6 knew she was not a shy person and always wanted to be in the front and volunteered in just about everything she could do. Even in her first job which was supposed to be a temporary thing, she ended up being given twenty subordinates. Therefore, her understanding of herself and the actions she took were congruent.

But also, the continuous definition of self was evident. Leader-5 was able to see her negative approach towards men, mainly as a result of her father not being around in her life. She was aware of her wrong actions of giving preferential treatment to her female subordinates and being hard on her male staff. Leader-5 was able to re-examine herself and turned the tide, thus demonstrating continuous self-assessment. This also showed the way the leaders create meaning and identity through their stories. Leader-5 had previously, in university, been chairperson of a women's movement and that could have also led her to being more lenient to her female staff.

Leader-4 had go lessons from his father about not allowing other people to define who he was, be it the apartheid government or people on the street. At an early age he knew he had to decide what kind of person he wanted to be and he was clear. Ultimately he would identify himself through the lessons of Ubuntu. The example he made about greeting every person he passed, as a sign of acknowledgement and respect, showed how he saw himself as a black South African. This definition of his identity is also evident in how he aimed to show that as a black person he was able to run and turnaround a company and had the skills do so.

6.1.2 INTERNALISED MORAL PERSPECTIVE

Determining the presence of a high moral compass was a difficult task. However, this was described by Avolio et al. (2009) as a set of guiding principles used as means of self-regulation. The value system described by the leaders was adopted as a gauge for a presence. All leaders, in their stories mentioned having respect for their parents and subordinates who were older than them.

6.1.3 BALANCED PROCESSING

Nearly all leaders were aware of their convictions but also admitted to knowing that they had situations where they had to make decisions that were not necessarily in tune with their gut feelings but still made them based on other information. This supports, the literature that balanced processing is about high levels of objective decision making (Walumbwa et al., 2008).

An example is when Leader-6 mentioned than in her work she has to be tolerant of certain things and had to be aware of the diversity that existed. This showed her appreciation for other views and influences within her environment. Leader-3 also made reference to being aware of his own subjectivities and balancing them with the objectivities of the environment, again demonstrating a strong urge to be objective and appreciate other influences.

6.1.4 RELATIONAL TRANSPARENCY

As Peus et al. (2012) noted, an authentic leader always presents his real self to the world. All but one of the leaders were demonstrated a sufficient level of transparency in a consistent manner. It was however the level of openly sharing views that was not apparent among all.

Leader-1 was quick to point out that he had to be a role model when he was giving the managing director position. He had to become what his employees expected to be. What he did not do, though, was change or move away from his values. Therefore, although he did not fully present his authentic self, in terms of appearance, he was able to remain true to his inner self.

Once Leader-2 knew his passion lied in developing the lower income end of the market, nothing stopped him from being a proponent of that purpose. Even in dealing with issues with his superiors, he never changed from who he was. He made an example of, when in conflict with

his directors, he would prefer engaging as equals and not focus on superiority. This indicated his approach of being true to himself and presenting his true self to others.

6.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF AUTHENTIC LEADERS

This section discusses the dimension of authentic leaders. The discussion and analysis is aimed to partly address the first research proposition.

6.2.1 PURPOSE

In line with their self-awareness, most of the leaders presented a clear purpose. High levels of passion were demonstrated by Leader-1, Leader-2, Leader-4 and Leader-5. All four leaders share their dislike for titles and positions and preferred.

For example, Leader-5 saw her and her work as being identical and could not split between the two. She called herself an environmentalist and not a chief director, which can be classified as work-identity integrity (Pratt et al., 2006). It is also a verification of Shamir and Eilam's (2005) assertion that "the role of the leader is a central component of their self-concept" (p 398). Further, she mentioned how she would never just accept a role because of monetary benefits but will do so only if it is in line with her passion.

Leader-2 expressed his passion for community development and linked. His story is that of being part of a bigger family where all his uncles played father figure role. He had wanted to see the communities that he served prosper as he saw parallels between those communities and his upbringing. His passion catapulted this purpose as he found innovative ways to offer financial products to the poor that not only met their real needs but also made money for his employer.

The role of crucibles in Leader-1's life cannot be overstated. The passing of grandfather led him to vow to perform well academically as way to his grandfather proud. He continued to excel in school, and although he initially dropped out of university, he continued to attain three qualifications. In his professional life he decided he wanted to be entrepreneurial and it is that entrepreneurial spirit that enabled him to expand his company into the rest of Africa.

6.2.2 VALUES

In line with their specified values all leaders, with the exception of Leader-7. What is was also fascination is that they learnt and observed their values from their parents. Leader-5 took most of her values from her adopted mother, who happened to be her best friend's mother.

George (2003) argued that values are tested and developed through crucibles r through a culmination of smaller trigger events. It is perhaps not surprising that Leader-7 could not articulate any sets of values that he lived by. He never experienced any crucibles nor did he have a culmination of events that shaped his approach to leadership or live in general. He confirmed the assertion by Bennis and Thomas (2002) that crucibles help in building a person's character.

The one thing that Leader-7 noted was that he did not have any role models – and this is something that the other leaders had. Each of the other leaders learnt their values from key people in their lives.

Leader-2, on the other hand, also did not experience any crucibles. However, there was a series of trigger events that enabled him to develop a passion for working with the lower end of market. The various roles he was given were always in areas that were economically challenged and he decided to provided products that would help the families and communities prosper. It is the same values he had learnt from this uncles and grandparents as promoted the spirit of looking after each other.

Among the value systems that Leader-4 mentioned, was the system of Ubuntu. The various examples of his mother's generosity in rural Limpopo were also seen in his decision not to retrench employees though the company was struggling to survive.

Leader-1 and Leader-6 probably had the most crucibles and were always met with challenges but managed to pull through. Leader-1 lost his grandfather, had seen his father hospitalised with lung issues, saw his mother experience diagnosed with cancer and also have a double-stroke. Yet, he is able to say his line of business is always about challenges and then turn around say he doesn't see his role a job any longer. His values are able to carry him in both personal and professional predicament. Leader-6 as well also defined herself as meant to triumph over challenges and even used that in her definition of success.

6.2.3 RELATIONSHIPS

All of the leaders seemed to find it easy to open up to others and also listen to the stories of others, something that is consistent with the literature. Others seemed to be more consistent than others. For example Leader-1 through to Leader-4, explained how they were always engaging with their employees on both work and personal issues. Furthermore, they all involved their stakeholders in the work they did. Leader-4, for example, also invited his customers to his factory so they could collaborate whenever challenges arose.

Their abilities to build strong relationships were mainly developed from their unique stories. Leader-2, for example had learnt to served different stakeholders, be it SASCO at his school campus, the ANC Youth League, or the SASCO provincial committee. It was therefore not surprised that he had flourished in having these relationships.

Leader-1 made direct mention to the importance of building relationships when he started looking for expansion opportunities in the Africa. And, as he explained, those enabled him to

crack the market. Growing up in a multi-cultured and expatriate community in the Ivory Coast was also part of his life-story that assisted him in managing such relationships.

6.2.4 HEART

Leader-2's story on helping communities, as well as creating a financial literacy programme demonstrated the care and compassion he had for his market. Developing a product that looked at shack insurance showed the level of caring he had.

Leader-4 also had demonstrated he compassion for the families of his employees. Part of the decision not to retrench employees was his understanding of what he described as the multiplier effect. He understood that one job loss meant more than just one hungry stomach. This was also congruent with the lessons he was taught by his mother.

All the other leaders had sufficient levels of compassion as they described their legacies in terms of making a difference to people lives. That people-focus and respecting others symbolised this. Leader-3, for example was part of the student movement that fought for the students that were excluded for financial reasons, something that he personally understood as he had come from a very poor family.

Although Leader-7 mentioned his willingness to be the voice of the people, he did concede that at times he would prioritise his cheque at the end of the month than fight for the rights of his people.

6.2.5 SELF-DISCIPLINE

Almost all leaders had a consistency in their leadership. The consistency was rooted in their stories, the lessons they learnt from those stories. Leader-7, did not display consistency in

values and purpose, and that was consistent with his story. Throughout his story there were many variations in behaviour.

Another leader that showed great discipline is Leader-1. In a letter he wrote to a friend, while in primary school, he said that one day he will work for an international company, and every company (including the one he was leading) was exactly that. The ability to make a commitment to himself at a young age, and continue actualising it 15 years later shows strong consistency.

6.3 BRINGING RESEARCH PROPOSITION-1 TO A CLOSE

Every single story that was discussed seemed to influence the level of authenticity in each leader. All the leaders that had a clear picture of who they were, and where they come from, were able to develop the various attributes of being authentic.

Leader-7's story did not have many crucibles and he did not provide any evidence of learning values in his younger days. Subsequently his inability to explain why he became a leader seems to assert that he seems to be a born leader than a made leader. For him to think he was chosen indicates highly his low self-awareness.

Leader-7's and Leader-4 were, in many cases, opposites. While Leader-4 demonstrated a high level of authenticity with his story supporting this development, Leader-7s could not give stories that supported his leadership approach and nor could he demonstrated many of the attributes of authentic leaders.

The proposition was strongly supported in two ways. All leaders, with the exception of Leader-7, were able to demonstrate sufficient or higher levels of authenticity as developed through their life-stories. Leader-7 supported the proposition in a converse form. He did not display a sufficient level of authenticity and none of his leadership approaches could be explained by the story he told.

An authentic leader, being true to himself, will project a consistent set of values, which are consistent with his self-concept, rooted in his values, driven by his purpose, not jeopardising the well-being of his people and the broader community. This definition is derived from the various literature discussed in chapter 2, as well as the demonstrated behaviours of the various leaders.

6.4 ON RESEARCH PROPOSITION 2: ON POTENTIAL BARRIERS

The following sections will discuss the various elements of the authentic leadership framework that speak to barriers and tension that can limit a leader's authenticity. These are discussed as explain by the different leaders.

6.4.1 POWER DYMANICS, TIME PRESSURES AND GOAL ALIGNMENT

There was clear understanding among the authentic leaders, on the demands of their organisations and jobs. The level of awareness of the cultural and organisation nuances was high and they negotiated with those tensions with their convictions intact.

Leader-3, for example, raised the issue of him having to adapt without necessarily over compromising on his belief system. Leader-2 also mentioned having to find a balance between his purpose and passion with the demands of his expectations to come up with financial products for the poor. He negotiated these power tensions by getting buy-in from executives who would then sponsor his trials that would in turn demonstrate the viability of his products. Leader-2 would continue introducing initiatives that would also educate the poor so that they would not get cheated by financial services companies – thus aligning his goals and that of the company without jeopardising either.

Although Algera and Lips-Wiersma (2012) raised these valid tensions and ones to be looked at, it seems the authentic leaders were able to adjust and adapt accordingly without losing sight of their values and purpose. The same results were found with the other leaders, such as Leader-1 and Leader-4 who ensured their people-focus was balanced with business focus. Leader-1 put 50% weight on people and the other on profits, while Leader-4 ensured that he involved the people in the programs he introduced in terms of reducing costs and by so doing he made them take ownership of their work and making them feel valued.

The exception was Leader-7 who did not have to clear values that would get compromised and such he would do what he had to do in order to protect his job and the livelihood of his family. But this was expected as his level of authenticity was found to be low.

6.4.2 MOTIVATIONS

Leader-7's explained his motivations in terms of being at the top and not second in command. He was concerned with leading for the sake of leading. This created tension with some of the virtues he mentioned (i.e. being the voice of the people). That could also explain why he admitted to not giving others the opportunities he was given in his early career. He is still on his journey to attain his goal of getting to the top that he does not consider many of the people that his leading or even the organisations he is working for. This is consistent with some of the criticism that was covered in the literature by Diddams and Chang (2012) with regard to human tendencies to manage the impressions that others have of them. Leader-7's assertion that he is the voice of the people could not be substantiated with examples and therefore could have been what he wanted others to think of him in order to be seen as caring leader.

The other leaders, because of their clear purpose and self-awareness, were able to align their motivations with their roles without elevating any tensions. Leader-2's statement about being fake and how it could catch up with a person was a validation of his clear purpose and understating of what he stood for as a leader. He and the other leader mentioned people as their one of their motivations to lead. This highlights and confirms their awareness that they

were not leader in a vacuum but part of a community that they knew they could influence and that could in turn influence on them.

6.4.3 WEAKNESSES AND OPENNESS

Although some leaders expressed their discomfort – with disclosing some of their weaknesses – they did demonstrate a level of openness when receiving feedback. Leader-3 showed more maturity in his approach to receiving negative feedback. Most of the leaders preferred more informal feedback sessions with their team, while others hand a combinations of both. Leader-7 only made use of the formal 360 degrees feedback mechanism that was part of his organisation's human resource policies.

For the authentic leader to continue building his story and developing higher levels of authenticity, feedback from the environment is very important and the leaders seemed to be aware of that.

6.5 BRINGING RESEARCH PROPOSITION-2 TO A CLOSE

The second proposition was also supported. All of the leaders had great awareness of the six barriers that were listed in the framework. With the exception of Leader-7, they all understood that compromises are, at times, necessary but only to a point. What was important was that they all understood the difficulty that existed in terms of balancing between their convictions and the demands of their jobs.

Therefore, the authentic leader may vary in his level of authenticity, depending on organisational dynamics. However, as Leader-3 mentioned, he will not sell his soul to meet the organisational demands. Most of the leaders were also, at some point, given a break by a key person in their lives and then went to be chosen as leaders. In addition, the leaders could explain why they think those people saw leadership qualities in them. Only Leader-7 seemed to be motivated to lead for the sake of being in power. Leader-7, because of his lack of clarity seemed to play a

political game of managing impression – be it taking extra work to demonstrate he can go to the next level – or choosing assignment that a guarantee success.

7 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study aimed to validate the proposition that black South African leaders can develop their authentic leadership using their life-stories. The leaders relayed their life-stories for the author to look at their journeys into leadership. This methodology, though triggered by the work of Shamir and Eilam (2005), attempted to replicate a study by George and Sims (2007) where he had interviewed a number of leaders in the United States of America.

To bring balance, additional questions were added to incorporate some of the recent literature that has raised criticism to the early authentic leadership body of knowledge. This work was rooted in existentialist philosophy.

Interviews were conducted with black South African leaders. The average age of the interviewed leaders was 33. As part of the data collection the interviews were recorded and analysed in line with the methodology and literature framework created. This analysis was split in accordance with the various components of authentic leadership in the framework presented in chapter 2.

7.1 SUPPORTING THE FIRST PROPOSITION

This paper has achieved the objective of supporting the proposition that black South African leaders can develop authentic leadership through their life-stories. The paper was able to show the link between the stories of the various leaders and the development of their authenticity. The results were highly congruent with the previous findings by George and Sims (2007) in as far as

the five dimensions of authentic leaders. All seven leaders had a clear purpose, lived by their values, built solid relationships, led with heart, and demonstrated a high level of self-discipline.

This solidifies what the dimensions of authentic leadership represent and further justifies them. Not only does it confirm these dimensions but it is also concretise the components of authentic leadership.

The seven leaders, through their stories and leadership practices, all demonstrated self-awareness, an internal moral compass, balanced processing, as well as relational transparency. Their life-stories, some of which had crucibles, allowed them to learn more about themselves and develop authenticity. Along with the dimensions of authentic leaders, the findings supported the first proposition.

7.2 SUPPORTING THE SECOND PROPOSITION

Furthermore, the results were consistent with additional components added from the existential proponents with regards to looking at authentic leadership from both the positive and negative flanks. All leaders addressed the barriers presented by power struggles in the organisation and also they negotiated their time well enough to self-reflect and consult with others. On the issue of aligning with organisational purposes most of the leaders described themselves in terms of their roles and not just their statuses. That person-role merger allowed them to align with those organisation purposes and such that they could deal with possible tensions. In effect, their motivations were linked to their roles and the purposes of their organisations.

The leaders were also open about their weaknesses and worked towards addressing them instead of hiding them. Most invited their colleagues and followers to help them where they were lacking.

These discoveries and those above, support the second proposition. Indeed the black South African leaders, being authentic, are aware of the barriers to authenticity, and behave in manner that moderates those barriers.

7.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SOUTH AFRICAN LEADERSHIP

A great depth of insight into the area was collected. South African black leaders, although with different life-stories from their western counterparts, can likewise develop their authenticity from tapping into their lived experiences. This also indicates that black South African leaders are no different, in terms of authentic leadership development, from their American counterparts. The life-story difference is not the only issue noticed in this study, but age as well.

Although, many leaders in South Africa are over the average age of those studied in this project – there remains an opportunity for them to track back to their life-stories and early experiences in order to find their authentic selves. It is this authenticity that could alleviate some of the leadership challenges the country is experiencing.

Challenges faced by these leaders, such as corruption, collusion, and other unethical practices can be better addressed if the leaders focus on their authentic selves. In turn, the authentic leader can instil authentic thinking among his followers, because until recently "…the experience of dysfunctional and corrupt political and business leadership… influences the way people think about leadership…" (Bolden & Kirk, 2009, p. 81).

In chapter 6, it was highlighted that most of the seven leaders were always seen by others as leaders and, at one point or another, were nominated to fulfil certain roles. This was consistent throughout their lives and not only when they entered their workplace. It was an intriguing finding.

One of the leaders could not explain why he was asked or nominated to assume their earlier leadership roles. This suggests that those around them had recognised or noticed certain traits that were not visible to the leaders themselves. Considering he had not led before it can be suggested that he was nominated based on external traits.

These could be traits such as charisma, personality, demeanours, language and appearance (Williams, Pillai, Deptula, & Lowe, 2012). Such traits create an impression, something Diddams and Chang (2012) highlighted.

However, it is important for leaders to have a strong self-concept that is aligned with their purpose for that will enable them to explain how they mananged to get leadership position. Also, their leadership journey will be informed by a clearer purpose and values. If those are not in place, the leader will be at the mercy of his egoistic motivations of wanting to lead for the sake of leading. The risk of this low level of authenticity is that the leader can then be easily lured to behave unethically in order to get to the top.

7.4 REVISING THE AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK

Also what this analysis found was a close relationship between self-awareness and purpose. Another link was found between relational transparency and the dimension of enduring relationships or (connectedness) as well as leading with heart.

Furthermore, as seen in the results the potential barriers can be overcome by highly authentic leaders. As such, in an authentic leader's approach it can be recommended that these barriers can be seen as moderating factors in adapting to organisational dynamics. To development increased levels of authenticity, a leader would need to embrace his weakness and not ignore them. The authentic leader would also invite feedback instead of being selectively open.

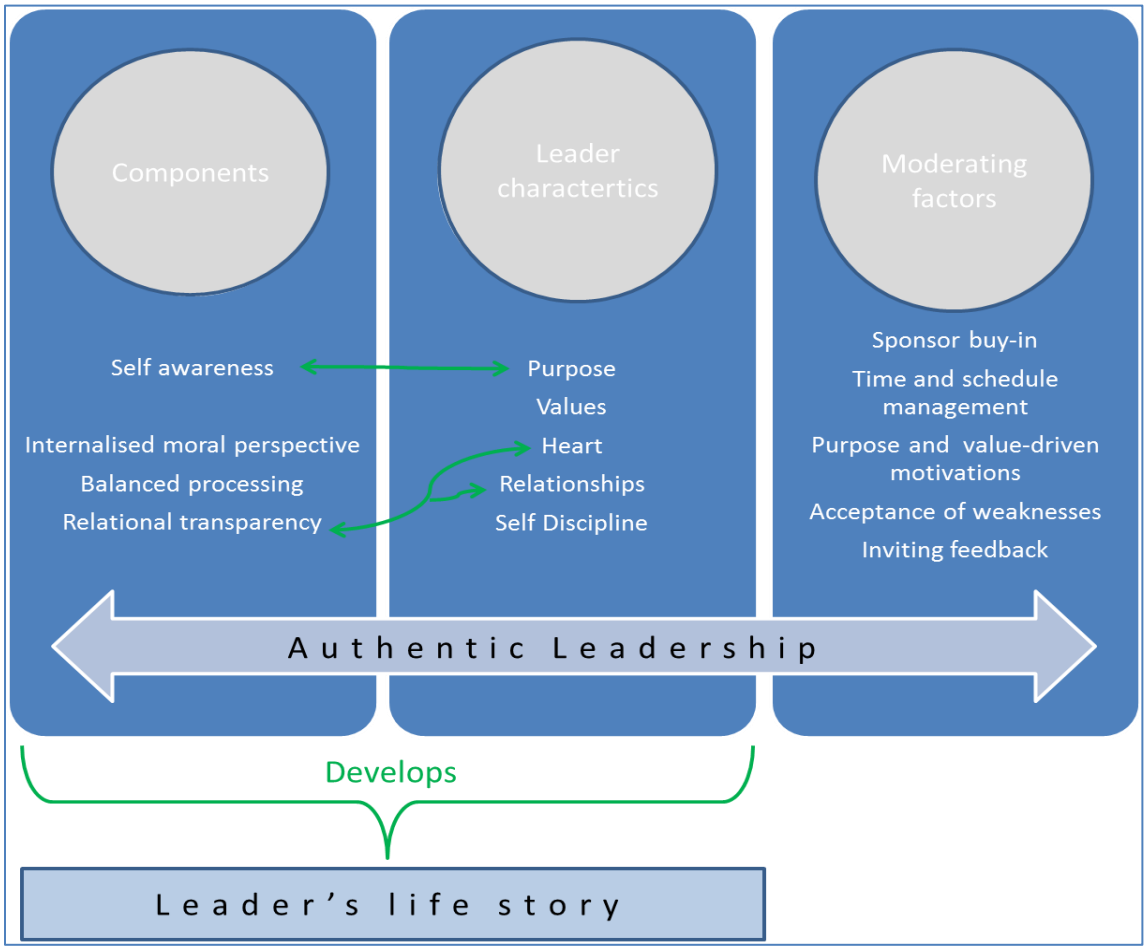
What other authentic leaders did, in negotiating with power dynamics in their organisations was to make the senior leadership part of the journey and making get their sponsorship and buy-in. It is thus recommended that the barrier of power relations be replaced by a moderating factor called organisational buy-in, in that way the buy-in will encompass all stakeholders and not just the executive. This will ensure the authentic leader does not exclude his followership.

The tension between time and authenticity seemed to prevail and this could be mainly due to the fact that time is finite and cannot be changed. In creating a moderating factor, it is recommended that this tension be replaced by the concept of time management. This would be at the volition of the authentic leader.

In the issue of aligning goals, as was found in the results, the authentic leaders did not have to realign their goals. Their approach was to ensure their purpose and belief systems were not compromised to the point where they lost their true selves. It is therefore recommended that instead of having the area of goal alignment as a barrier, or separately listing motivations, a new moderating factor looking at purpose and value driven motivations. This will concretise the leader's purpose in his leadership approach.

The above can be incorporated into a revised of the framework in figure 2. Figure 3 shows the revised recommended framework for authentic leadership development.

Figure 3. Revised integrated framework for authentic leadership development



7.5 ON RACIAL IDENTITY

It is worth noting, as was apparent in the previous chapter, that none of the interviewees discussed any direct issue of race and racial identities. The level of discussion was reduced to how they were raised with a certain cultural domain but nothing was directly about being black or working in "white" environment. This could raise an additional tension that may become a barrier to a leader being authentic.

This additional element, of racial tension, is more prevalent in the South African context. There remains, though subtle, some cultural conflicts within organisations (Mayer & Louw, 2011).

Although the issue of tension and power dynamics had been raised and discussed in chapter 2, a specific area of race and ethnicity was not highlighted. From this study it is not clear if the area of racial tension should be included under the area of power tensions or if it should become a fourth tension, after power dynamics, organisational purpose, and time pressure.

7.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Of course the study was an exploratory and qualitative one and therefore cannot be robustly generalised. Conger (1998) asserted that "as our understanding becomes increasingly well-defined, quantitative analysis can then refine and validate with 'empirical rigor' the hypotheses generate by qualitative investigations" (pp. 108). From the discussion above the following hypothesis were developed:

- H_1: Black South African leaders, irrespective of age or leadership level, can develop their authentic leadership by drawing on their life-stories.

- H_2: Black South African leaders can, through their authentic leadership, instil an authentic culture in the followers.

With regards to the area of impression management it is recommended that external traits, and their impact on authentic leadership development, be investigated. The set of research questions arises from this:

- Research question 1: Does setting a good impression, of self, support or hamper the development of authentic leadership?

- Research question 2: To what extent can these impressions influence authentic leadership?

Williams et al. (2012) conducted a study looking at authentic leadership and charismatic leadership in the context of handling crisis. Incorporating this particular issue of charisma within authentic leadership development is another intriguing question. The question is specified below:

- Research question 3: To what extent can charismatic leadership be merged with authentic leader?

To ignore the South African challenge of racial tensions, in conducting further investigations within authentic leadership, could be futile. In fact it is an issue that is applicable to any other country that has a history of racial division. Therefore it is suggested that future studies explore the following research question:

- Research question 4: To what extend can racial tensions affect leader authenticity?

In closing, to further strengthen leadership research in South Africa it will be valuable if scholars can go deeper in studying authentic leadership within the black race. Walumbwa et al. (2011) reflected on this tendency to view black people "...as one homogenous group…" although "… the population is divided along linguistic and ethnic lines…" (p. 428). There still lies deeper insight within the South African ethnic context and should be investigated.

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Table of Figures

Appendix A: Details of interviewees

Name	Gender	Position	Organisation	Age
Leader-1	Male	Managing Director	Market Research Company	30
Leader-2	Male	Head of Financial Services	Financial services and investment products company	31
Leader-3	Male	Associate Director	Management consulting, audit and advisory firm	32
Leader-4	Male	Executive Director	Manufacturing company	33
Leader-5	Female	Chief Director	Government Department	37
Leader-6	Female	Director	Government department	39
Leader-7	Male	Senior Manager Quality Assurance	Diversified resources company	32

Appendix B: Interview schedule

1. **Early influences (people and experiences)**
    a. Can you take us to your early childhood memories

    b. Can you share some of the key people that have had an impact in your early life and describe that impact?
        i. Share some stories from your upbringing.

    c. Can you share some of the key experiences that have had an impact in your early life and describe that impact?

    d. Who do you admire? Someone you would want to spend 10 hours in a plane with? (And why?)

2. **Discovering authenticity**
    a. Motivations:
        i. What motivates you to lead? Why do you think you became a leader?
        ii. How do you define success? And has that changed from ten years ago?
        iii. Can you share any early memories of being a leader?
        iv. What are the things that matter to you the most?

    b. What have been your strongest leadership growth experiences?

    c. Have you experienced major failures and/or crucibles, earlier in your life?
        i. What role(s) have these played in your life?
        ii. What lessons have you learnt from them?

3. **Approaches to leadership**
    a. What are your most important leadership practices?
        i. How often do you seek feedback?
        ii. How, if ever, has your leadership style changed throughout your life?
        iii. Are you aware of, and do you worry about, how you are perceived by others?

b. Maintaining authenticity under pressure
    i. When in crisis do you get advice or do you dig deep within yourself?
    ii. How do you balance your true self with: power dynamics, time pressures, and purpose/goals, within the organisation and followership?

c. What have been your greatest personal challenges as a leader?

d. How open are you about your weaknesses, with yourself, your followers, customers (shareholders, chairman, own leader)?
    i. To what extent do you share and/or reveal your weaknesses?

4. Leadership purpose and legacy

a. What do you think is your purpose as a leader and as person?
b. What legacy would you like to leave as a leader and as a person?

Appendix C: Summary of story and authenticity analysis

Interviewee	Self-awareness	Balanced Processing	Internal Moral Perspective	Relational Transparency	Purpose (passion)	Values (behaviour)	Heart (Compassion)	Enduring Relationships (Connectedness)	Self-Discipline (Consistency)	
Leader-1	√√	√√	√√	√	√√	√√	√	√√	√√	H
Leader-2	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√	√	√√	√√	√√	H
Leader-3	√	√√	√√	√√	√	√√	√	√√	√√	M
Leader-4	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√	H
Leader-5	√√	√√	√√	√	√√	√√	√	√	√	M
Leader-6	√√	√	√√	√	√	√√	√	√	√	M
Leader-7			√	√	√	√	√	√		L
Level of authenticity: H = high; M = Moderate (sufficient); L = Low										