

Promoting Authentic Behaviour in Organisations: An Attributional Perspective

The logo for 'greenfields' is displayed in white lowercase letters on a dark green rectangular background.

by Harvey, P., Martinko, M.J., and Gardner, W.L.. *Journal of Leadership and Organisational Studies*, 2006, Vol. 12, No. 3

Authenticity is described as a developmental process that promotes self-awareness and accurate perceptions, and enables self-regulation that aligns behaviours with internal values, beliefs, emotions and thoughts.

The model (see figure 1) suggests that Authentic behaviour is more likely in cultures with are :

- Transparent
- Supportive
- Low on Ambiguity

It also suggests that people who have the following traits are more likely to demonstrate Authentic leadership behaviours (thinking competency models yet?)

- Psychological Closeness - essentially the ability to have an emotional component to their working relationships with their “followers”, specifically being able to empathise with their people. The logic being that it is less likely that such people will claim inappropriate credit for success or blame others for failure.
- Positive Psychological Capital is suggested to be positively linked with Authentic Behaviour – specifically those who are high on the following traits
 - Self-efficacy
 - Hope
 - Optimism
 - Resilience
- Finally they consider some attributional biases, both of which it is suggested get in the way of the objectivity required for authentic behaviour :
 - The Self-Serving Bias is negatively correlated with authenticity – i.e. the tendency of individuals to take credit for successful outcomes whilst blaming external factors for failures
 - The Actor-Observer Bias - if any of this bias is present it can lead to conflict with followers. Actors tend to attribute both positive and negative outcomes to situational factors; Observers attribute outcomes to their own personal traits

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