

Desirable Traits of a Conscious Leader: An Empirical Survey

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ABSTRACT

The paper is aimed at studying the desirable qualities of conscious leaders by leveraging the responses of business leaders in India. The respondents are drawn from various sectors of the Indian economy. The study is empirical in nature and uses principal component factor analysis and content analysis to understand the qualities demonstrated by conscious leadership.

Keywords: Conscious Leadership, Emotional Intelligence, Transformational leadership, Ethics, Corporate Social Responsibility

1. INTRODUCTION

Leaders, in the current age face numerous challenges. While they are responsible for delivering on societal expectations, by and large, they face a keen scrutiny from shareholders and other stakeholders (Fry and Matherly, 2006), deal with compliance on regulations

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(Burch and Danley, 1980), confront economic uncertainty, and, need to cope with civil society pressure for a more sustainable functioning (Brown, 2011). In a globally connected and digital world, news about corporate failure travels fast. Financial repercussions aside, impact on employees in terms of layoffs, and, natural disasters (French and Holden, 2012) can lead to grave consequences. In many economies, there seems to be ‘a crisis of confidence in those who are charged with leading wisely’ (Kellerman, 2012). It is with this background that theorists, educationists and practitioners debate upon qualities which are needed in future generations of business leaders.

Research into various aspects of organizational consciousness by theorists like Pruzan (2001), has helped apply those competencies to organizations, which are usually attributed to individuals e.g. ‘reflection’, ‘evaluation’, ‘learning’ and making measured ‘choices’. Taking decisions on the basis of one’s conscience which, in turn, guides moral values is another area which has been applied to studies on organizations. Meaningful examples are in the fields of business ethics, whereby, notions of organizational (shared) values, code of ethics and corporate social responsibility find due attention.

Researchers are beginning to investigate the specific ways in which consciousness impacts the functioning of human beings. It is expected that decisions taken by conscious leaders would be for the benefit of both the natural and corporate environment. Anderson and Anderson (2001), comment on qualities ascribed to a conscious change leader and this includes ‘being authentic, one’s natural self, being fully present and being skilled in self mastery, understanding the true dimensions of a problem faster, making better decisions, being able to develop one’s intuition and being able to sense right action and right timing’.

The researchers were inspired from the *term* ‘Conscious Leadership,’ ideated by John Renesch in 1997. According to Renesch (2003), conscious leaders ‘inspire and bring out the best in those around them, foster transformation, and manage beyond conventional profits’. Moreover, he enunciated that this leadership, is directed by an ‘inner moral compass’, and does not arise from ‘policy, procedures, techniques and systems’. The question of what influences the ‘inner moral compass’ is a separate one and is not the subject of research in this paper. This paper tries to refine the key constituents of conscious leadership.

It aims to specifically study the key attributes of conscious leadership by leveraging the views of profit and non – profit sectors in India.

To the best of our knowledge, no other study has been carried out which encapsulates the Indian view on Conscious Leadership.

The paper has been organized in the following manner. The present section introduces the focus area followed by literature review related to studies on consciousness and themes interfacing with management. The next section captures the research methodology. Further, the findings from the quantitative and qualitative studies are highlighted. In the last section, the findings are discussed and conclusions provided along with areas of future research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH GAPS

In the present section, we begin by summarizing research in the area of consciousness studies. Secondly, the key themes interfacing consciousness and management literature are examined from the lens of business and leadership studies. The research gaps are identified henceforth.

2.1 Consciousness

The term consciousness has many different connotations. Zeman (2001, p. 1265) referred to consciousness emerging initially, in the form of the three senses: “knowledge shared with another, knowledge shared with oneself and, simply knowledge”.

An inquiry into the types of consciousness, has thrown up multiple typologies. Four types of consciousness have been defined by Dr. A.K. Mukhopadhyay, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi. These include the brain – stem consciousness which enables movements in the human body. The limbic – system which is responsible for human emotions leads to the second type of consciousness and directs endeavors for the pursuit of pleasure. The third and higher level of consciousness originates in the cerebral cortex leading to creative imagination. The fourth type is referred to as supra-cortical consciousness where man unites with the cosmic consciousness through meditation and other ‘mystical experiences’ (Swami Jitatmananda, 2013, p.180 in Sriramamurti, Prashant and Mohan, 2013).

Studies into various types of consciousness have evolved over a period of time. Though the studies are innumerable in number, it is not possible to list every single one in this paper and only a few themes, relevant to this research have been included.

The first set of literature reviewed related to brain consciousness. Certain themes which have been studied in the realm of management studies include the implication for managers arising from the functional differences between the left and right sides of the brain (Hines, 1987); the neuroscience of leadership (Rock and Schwartz, 2006; Waldman, Balthazard and Peterson, 2011); inferences for business ethics (Salvador and Folger, 2009); organizational neuroscience (Becker and Cropanzano, 2010); the role of intuition in management research (Akinci and Sadler-Smith, 2012) and application of neurosciences in consumer behavior and marketing (Touhami *et al.*, 2011).

The second set of literature review is available in the domain of mind consciousness. It was Harung, Heato and Alexander (1995), who proposed that consciousness, caused changes in behaviours related with leadership. Schyuler (2010) investigated the relationship between leadership integrity and mind training and also undertook studies in *Lojong*, a concept in Tibetan Buddhism used as a method for training the mind to develop leaders.

The third important facet of consciousness is spiritual consciousness. Mayer (2000, p.48) defined spiritual consciousness as ‘attending to the unity of the world and transcending one’s existence, consciously entering into heightened awareness states, attending to the sacred in everyday matters, structuring consciousness so that problems in living are always seen in the context of life’s ultimate concerns and desire to act’. Reave (2005), has reviewed over 150 studies which find a clear relationship between spiritual values and practices, and, effective leadership. This aspect is especially important for management studies where business leaders take decisions which impact the lives of all their stakeholders.

The relevance of spiritual consciousness has been emphasized by Prof. Prem Saran Satsangi, Chairman, Advisory Committee on Education, Dayalbagh Educational Institute. According to Satsangi (2013), “the order of the empirical world itself has an order, an underlying order of second degree, which rests on the intuitive consciousness that guides and prompts development of systems, with apparently purposive and telic behavior”. He also states that “the fundamental axiom of macrocosmic / microcosmic spiritual consciousness is that the origin of the macrocosm is an infinite spiritual energy source or reservoir known as the Supreme Creator or Being or Super Positive source or reservoir known as the Supreme Creator or Being or Super Positive Pole accompanied by the omni – quantum spiritual force – field of consciousness ranging from the Super Positive Pole of full spirituality to the Nether or Negative Pole of depleted spirituality; and each constituent fundamental element of this

omni – quantum spiritual force field, known as the spirit force of consciousness (monopole), is the one which possesses prime energy and that all other forces (mental or physical) of creation or nature have been evolved by the association of this spirit force with media (mental or physical) of different kinds” (Satsangi, 2013. p.37 in edited book by Sriramamurty, Prashant and Mohan, 2013)

Hence, what may be interpreted here is the phenomenon of the spirit controlling the mind, which in turn controls the physical body, hence binding all three aspects of brain, mind and spiritual consciousness. This refers, hence to the relevance of all three in the development of human beings, especially business leaders.

2.2 Studies on Themes Interfacing Management Studies and Consciousness

One of the key aspects of management studies is leadership. Leaders have been defined as entities who guide others, due to possession of either superior traits (Barnard, 2003), or, people skills (Ward *et al.*, 2007), along with the ability to ‘articulate visions and create the environment in which to accomplish things’ (Russell and Stone, 2002). A key aspect of leadership has been pointed out by Hersey and Blanchard (1972) as the capability to respond to different situations.

In the sphere of educational institutions, Jones (2012) in her thesis on qualitative study of post secondary educational leadership practices observed that the 8 respondents were not familiar with conscious leadership practice as a term. However, the key leadership practices of the respondents, related to, developing relationships with people on a personal level and connecting with them. Moreover, faced with uncertainty, leaders developed a shared consensus on how to approach the problem. They learnt to become reflective and use collaboration and co-operation to meet organizational goals. Jones also observed that since they were critical thinkers they did not conform to any one leadership style. While interesting, the thesis is devoted to a study of educational leaders and it may not be completely relevant in the context of corporate functioning.

The relevance of consciousness in the sphere of corporate functioning has been examined by many researchers. Some of the following studies were presented in the Science of Consciousness Conference, organized by the University of Arizona, USA over a period of years and have been collected from the book of abstracts.

Malhotra and Malhotra (2013), stated the relevance of generating a new mindset, called new management consciousnesses by Joiner, 1994. This consciousness, according to them is causal and impacts individual and organization functioning.

Entrepreneurial consciousness was modeled by Rajwanshi, Sri – Narain, Narain, Srivastava and Swami (2013) using causal loop diagram methodology and included aspects related to planning, organization, control, leadership, ethical, ecological and research and development consciousness among others.

In a discussion on the methods involved in developing intuitive abilities amongst managers, Das and Srivastava (2013) have pointed to the relevance of meditation. Amongst the benefits, they observed that intuitive ability helped managers take quick, accurate and confident decisions in scenarios of risk and uncertainty. Performance implications were observed by Srivastava *et al.* (2013) in the area of new product design amongst long term practitioners of meditation and those who practiced it instantaneously.

The studies show various aspects and nuances of consciousness in the area of business, but fall short of addressing the qualities that are of importance in conscious leaders. Most of the studies on consciousness have studied the phenomenon in isolation or with a key focus area. Hence, an attempt is made through the present study to address this gap by taking into account the views of practitioners regarding the desirable attributes of conscious leadership, especially in the Indian setting. It is hoped that most of the aspects of consciousness would be addressed in this study.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present section first discusses the data sources, tool and sample selection, after which the method of analysis is elaborated upon.

3.1 Data Sources, Tool and Sample selection

To understand the key qualities of conscious leaders a questionnaire was developed, referencing traits from several studies on leadership. This is potentially one of the first questionnaires deployed amongst business leaders, which directly references traits which may be considered necessary amongst conscious leaders. It is due to the lack of availability of a standard questionnaire referencing attributes of conscious leaders that the questionnaire used in the present study was self developed by the researchers' basis review of literature. It was not expected that all traits used in the questionnaire would qualify as important from the

perspective of conscious leadership. Hence, a five point likert scale question was used to get respondent views on agreement or disagreement with the traits in question. To address the missing components of conscious leadership, the respondents were also asked to provide their opinion through an open ended section of the questionnaire. The responses to this section constitute the qualitative analysis in section 4.5. The table 1 highlights the authors who have referenced qualities of leaders and which have been used by the authors for the purpose of the study.

The respondent base constituted several leaders from the business arena. A sampling frame of top 500 firms basis turnover was procured from the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) in Gurgaon, India and others sources like details of business leaders from industry associations like PHD Chambers of Commerce and FICCI, as well as social media platforms like LinkedIn were leveraged to circulate the questionnaire tool.

The questionnaire was administered via Survey Monkey, an online tool for hosting and conducting surveys. A confidentiality clause was incorporated to ensure respondent and organization privacy.

TABLE 1

LEADERSHIP QUALITIES AND AUTHORS

Qualities	Readings
Self awareness	Plato, Levy (2012), Jones (2012), Gosling (2003), Bass and Steidlmeier, 1999
Conscious of effects on others	Ketola (2009)
Ability to influence the organization	Avolio, B. J., Zhu, W., Koh, W., and Bhatia, P. (2004)
Sound understanding of global issues	Cooper (2002)
Emotional Intelligence	Goleman (1995), Anderson and Anderson (2001), Brown (2011)
Holistic view of the organization	Carter*
Systems orientation	Carter*, Anderson and Anderson (2001)
Intellect	Pienaar (2009)
Reflective	Pruzan (2001)
Vision	Renesch (2003)
Desire to learn	Pruzan (2001), Renesch (2003)
Ability to share power	Carter*, Raelin (2003) cited in Gosling (2003)
Ability to create an environment for team to succeed in	Anderson and Anderson (2001)
Ability to understand what the stakeholders expect from the organization	Renesch (2003)
Integrity	Confucius, Bass and Steidlmeier, 1999, Welch (2001)

Footnote: * Center for Conscious Leadership

3.2 Method of Analysis

Descriptive analysis, reliability test, principal component factor analysis, Anova and content analysis have been used in the present study.

For quantitative analysis, before conducting factor analysis, Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's test were performed to understand whether Factor analysis may be carried out for the data collected. If a KMO measure greater than 0.5 is achieved (Lee, 2006), then this supports the use of factor analysis for the data in question. Bartlett's test of sphericity indicates that the factor analysis is significant if the $p < 0.05$. This was also conducted.

As per standard procedure, correlation analysis among the variables was first carried out and two correlated variables out of 17 initial variables were removed from the analysis. The retained factors were evaluated for reliability and cronbach alpha was executed in SPSS.

Principal component analysis, which is a ‘method for finding the initial factor solution’ (Manly, 1994) was conducted, since the number of measures was large and it was difficult to visually seek out correlations among them. This helped identify the number of individual constructs required to account for the pattern of correlations observed (Fabrigar and Wegener, 2011). Factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 were taken into account. Varimax, which is often used as a choice of rotation method, was used whilst running the factor analysis.

Next, ANOVA was executed to understand how significantly the variable in question impacted each measure of the construct. This helped confirm the reliability of the factors on various respondent segments.

For qualitative analysis, content analysis was used to create themes for the open ended responses to the question of qualities of conscious leaders. These themes were further categorized into qualities demonstrated in the organizational space, social space and personal space of leaders. Further, the content was aligned as per categories to develop eight main themes.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As previously noted, a questionnaire was used to gather respondent views about the key attributes of conscious leaders. The respondent demographic profile is listed below.

4.1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

The demographic profile of the respondents is highlighted in Table 2 below.

In terms of age profile, 31.13% of the respondents (33) were in the 22 to 34 years age group, 41.51% (44) were in the 35 to 44 years age group, and 27.36% of the respondents (30) were above 45 years of age. With respect to diversity, 31.77% of the respondents (34) were females, with 68.22% (73) being males. In terms of work experience, 29.9% of the respondents (32) had less than 10 years of work experience, and the remaining 70.09% (75) had greater than 10 years of work experience.

TABLE 2

DEMOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

Number of Respondents	Categories	Respondents (Number)
Age Group	22 to 34	33
	35 to 44	44
	45 to 54	21
	55 to 64	8
	Not Known	1
Gender	Female	34
	Male	73
Work Experience	0 to 5 years	11
	6 to 10 years	21
	11 to 15	24
	16 to 20	23
	21 and more years	28
Management Level	Senior Management (Vice President and Higher)	57
	Others	50

4.2 Organizational Profile of the Respondents

The 107 respondents belonged to 79 organizations². However the organizations spanned automotive, academia, IT enabled services, computer software, banking, chemicals and fibres industries, consulting, diversified and infrastructure sector, FMCG sector, insurance and financial services sector, non – profit sector, pharmaceuticals and electronics.

4.3 Quantitative Analysis: Results from Factor Analysis

As a first step, the correlation coefficient among various factors was calculated in SPSS and two factors, viz. ‘Experience’ was observed as being correlated with ‘Reflective’ ($r = 0.557$) and ‘Experience’ was also observed to be correlated with ‘appreciation of diversity’ (0.516). ‘Appreciation of diversity’ was in turn detected as being correlated with ‘reflective’ (0.528). It was, hence, decided to remove two variables from the overall list of

² For ethical reasons stated during the data collection period, it has been decided to keep the organization names confidential.

factors. These were ‘appreciation of diversity’ and ‘experience’. However, ‘Reflective’ was retained.

To test the reliability of the 15 item question, cronbach alpha was carried out in SPSS, and it was observed as being reliable at 0.80.

As a precursor to factor analysis, KMO and Bartlett’s test were performed. Since, KMO measure of sampling adequacy was observed as being greater than 0.5 at 0.673, the test condition was adequately met. Bartlett’s test indicating the significance of the factor analysis was also observed to be significant ($p = 0.00$). The results of the KMO and Bartlett’s test are indicated in Table 3.

TABLE 3
KMO AND BARTLETT TEST RESULTS

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.673
Approx. Chi-Square	369.990
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity df	105
Sig.	.000

Since both test conditions were met in this case, factor analysis was carried out in SPSS.

The descriptive statistics and rotated component matrix key variables are depicted in Table 4.

It is observed from the descriptive statistics that all factors except one, have a mean rating of greater than 4. The standard deviation is least for self awareness which leads one to understand that most of the people felt that awareness of the self is an important attribute for conscious leaders to possess.

TABLE 4
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS AND ROTATED COMPONENT MATRIX FROM
FACTOR ANALYSIS

Descriptive Statistics			Rotated Component Matrix			
Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	1	2	3	4
Self Awareness	4.63	0.506				0.777
Conscious of effects on others	4.37	.628				
Ability to influence the organization	4.39	.616		0.738		
Sound understanding of global issues	4.13	.655		0.751		
Emotional Intelligence	4.40	.601				0.737
Holistic view of the organization	4.37	.674				
Systems orientation	3.90	.873				
Intellect	4.26	.659			0.798	
Reflective	4.00	.758				
Vision	4.57	.697				
Desire to learn	4.45	.623				
Ability to share power	4.17	.822	0.742			
Ability to create an environment for team to succeed	4.61	.647	0.833			
Ability to understand and deliver what the stakeholders expect from the organization	4.53	.625				
Integrity	4.77	.612				

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.^a

^a a Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

The factor analysis highlighted the presence of 4 key factors which are enumerated below.

- Factor 1: Ability to create an environment for the team to succeed in, and Ability to share power
- Factor 2: Sound understanding of global issues, and Ability to influence the organization

- Factor 3: Intellect
- Factor 4: Self Awareness, and Emotional Intelligence

The next section highlights the universal applicability of the factors which have been derived from the analysis.

4.4 Universal Applicability of Factors

To test whether the factors were universally applicable across years of work experience ANOVA was conducted and observations noted whether for any of the variables the p – value ≤ 0 . The strata under work experience were as follows:

Work Experience: 0 to 5 years, 6 to 10 years, 11 to 15 years, 16 to 20 years, 21 and more years.

Results on strata of ‘work experience’ show that for all factors, except ‘ability to influence the organization’ ($p = 0.045$), the p-value was greater than 0.05, indicating no significant difference across strata responses with respect to the factors.

4.5 Qualitative Analysis: Analysis of Verbatim Comments of Respondents

The qualitative analysis of verbatim comments was analysed using content analysis and statements were arranged according to themes in three different spaces. The first one referred to statements which related to qualities demonstrated by conscious leaders in the organizational space, the second referred to qualities demonstrated in the social space and the third one referred to qualities demonstrated in the personal space. The related themes were then arranged together between various spaces. These are illustrated in Table 5 below.

TABLE 5

FINDINGS FROM THE QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS ABOUT QUALITIES OF CONSCIOUS LEADERS DEMONSTRATED IN VARIOUS SPACES

Organizational Space	Social Space	Personal Space
Theme 1		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Aware ▪ Understands the environment ▪ Has Vision, Strategizes and brings opportunities to the organization, Able to plan and predict the future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Influential 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mental Maturity
Theme 2		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develops Leaders ▪ Motivates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Empowers others ▪ Good Interpersonal relations ▪ Develops Trust ▪ Has Empathy ▪ Knows and Guides 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No Ego ▪ Self Aware ▪ Emotional Maturity ▪ Self regulates emotions ▪ Sensitive
Theme 3		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Competent ▪ Efficient ▪ Decisions as per need ▪ High speed of decision making ▪ Objective 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Values Time ▪ Disciplined ▪ Analytical
Theme 4		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ethical Conduct 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Honest
Theme 5		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Presence of Mind 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mindful
Theme 6		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transformational ▪ Innovates and brings about Impact 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Flexible
Theme 7		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transparent 		
Theme 8		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Universal Brotherhood ▪ Compassion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Religious ▪ Beyond Self ▪ Values

The eight themes which have been aligned from the verbatim comments of the respondents may be explained thus.

Firstly, conscious leaders are aware; they understand the macro environment facing the organizations and think and plan proactively about organizational responses to these

factors and situations. In the social space they are influential and at a personal level they have mental maturity to deal with the changes in the environment.

Secondly, they develop leaders and motivate their teams. They have excellent inter – personal relations, and nurture trust within the teams. They exhibit empathy towards their fellow colleagues. At a personal level, they are self aware, and have learnt to control their ego as well as emotions.

Thirdly, conscious leaders take decisions as per need, are competent and efficient. At a personal level, they value time, are disciplined and analytical.

Fourthly, conscious leaders demonstrate ethical conduct and live honestly in their personal space.

Fifthly, they have the presence of mind to respond to different situations and they are mindful, and practice being in the present at all times.

Sixthly, conscious leaders are transformational and try to bring about impact through decisions.

Seventhly, after awareness and being self aware, most of the respondents have alluded to the fact that conscious leaders are transparent and credible.

The last quality demonstrated is that of universal brotherhood towards others, and being compassionate towards all beings. Conscious leaders are religious, and look beyond their own self towards others.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This section discusses the joint findings of both quantitative and qualitative analysis and concludes the paper with areas of further research.

The quantitative and qualitative analysis highlights three primary factors which are of significance in both the analysis.

The first key attribute is associated with leadership ability to *foster an environment which would help teams succeed and also be able to share power*. In today's complex times, knowledge no longer resides in one person alone. Employees learn to co-exist in a shared

power environment, with due respect for the knowledge each one has imbibed, continuously learning from each other and evolving to find further meaning in work.

Further, this is associated with another important concept of diversity. Harrison (2005, p. 206) wrote that leaders can “help unlock their DNA of success by providing a work culture that is flexible, adaptable and respectful of diverse skills and personalities. It will also be collaborative, itself entrepreneurial and conducive to innovation from anyone”. This aids the organization integrate various skills in the form of corporate DNA which it may require at different points of time.

An ability to share power is opposite to the autocratic leadership style and requires leaders to practice humility without absolving themselves of the accountability for results. They help others in the team perform to the best of their abilities, and reach higher pinnacles of achievement, reaching win–win outcomes for people and organizations. Bolden, Gosling, Marturano and Dennison (2003) discussed the concept of ‘servant leadership’ as a ‘practical philosophy which supports those who choose to serve first and then lead as a way of expanding service to individuals and institutions’. According to the Center for Servant Leadership website, (April 2003), as cited in Bolden, Gosling and Dennison (2003), this leadership encourages ‘collaboration, trust, foresight, listening and the ethical use of power and empowerment’. The result is significant since it was observed to be an important leadership quality by other researchers like Raelin (2003).

The second important factor highlights the importance of what we call “social” (Researcher’s term) consciousness. This incorporates the ability to have a sound understanding of global issues, and being able to influence the organization with integrity. This result finds an echo in the work of Cooper (2002). With most multi-national companies having footprints in various countries, leaders need to understand the macro – environmental factors associated with their businesses. They also need to develop foresight of how these factors would impact their business.

Psychological empowerment of employees helps leaders influence for better outcomes (Avolio *et al.*, 2004). Organization structure, culture and climate are also important variables that have been observed by other researchers as helping the organizations achieve goals (Koberg *et al.*, 1999; Spreitzer, 1996; Spreitzer *et al.*, 1999, as cited in Avolio *et al.*, 2004).

Influencing ability is also associated with the leader's ability to communicate his vision and thoughts. What is meant here is not only the ability for personal communication but also an intuitive ability to design effective communication channels which transmit messages to the correct recipients at the right time, for intended consequences to transpire. This is an infallible part of intellectual integrity – how it is used to influence an organization – board, shareholders and employees to take appropriate decisions for the benefit not only of the organization but the wider community. This result is similar to the observations of Avolio *et al.* (2004).

The third key factor is being self aware, which is a key part of emotional intelligence. Many researchers like Levy (2012), Jones (2012), Gosline (2003) and, Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) have also highlighted its importance.

Developing self awareness helps leaders understand themselves, appreciate their fellow colleagues and their motivations. This helps channelize energies in the right direction for organizational success. It is deeply associated with self regulation and controlling one's thoughts, emotions and feelings to lead to proactive actions which further helps build their credibility in the organization.

Such awareness helps in fine tuning on the job performance of every kind – managing feeling, keeping oneself motivated and developing good work – related social skills, including those essential for leadership and team work. This gauge is related to our inner core values, and, it guides our conscious or unconscious motivations in the work sphere.

The quantitative analysis highlighted the importance of intellect in conscious leadership.

Intellectual ability helps conscious leaders direct efforts towards understanding and delivering on organizational commitments and key focus areas.

The qualitative analysis, on the other hand, also indicated the importance of ethical conduct, refined decision making ability, displaying presence of mind and being transformational in the organizational space. It also referred to them believing in universal brotherhood in the social space and displaying qualities of compassion and selflessness in the personal space. It was also pointed out that they may be religious.

These constitute attributes, mindsets and values which the respondents observed as being important and were not included in the questionnaire (except Integrity). A merger of the attributes used in the questionnaire and the new attributes from qualitative analysis could hence form the universe of characteristics of conscious leaders. This is the significance of the present research. It extends the understanding of leader attributes, especially when looked at from the lens of consciousness.

Whilst the study has provided insights into the key qualities of conscious leaders, it has certain limitations. Due to time constraints it was not possible to extend the time span beyond 107 respondent answers which form the basis of the study. More sections of society can also be included namely government sector to provide a larger base of representative society.

Further research in this area may be conducted by enhancing the questionnaire with the findings from the qualitative analysis to provide a more comprehensive view on conscious leadership.

It would be interesting to study various aspects of consciousness – related to the brain, mind and spirituality and their linkages with conscious leadership. Some of the areas of future research which may be potentially studied are the methods deployed by conscious leaders in removing the ego and self in the organizational domain, the role of religion in developing consciousness among business leaders, and, mindful work and consciousness. It is hoped these areas would be of interest to researchers in the field of management.

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