Self-awareness: comparative research on viewpoints of “Avolio and Gardner” and “Allamah Tabatabaie”

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Abstract
Recent research on leadership has proven that self-awareness is an important factor influencing leadership. Having used an empirical research methodology, Avolio and Gardner espoused a comprehensive definition of self-awareness; they like other positivists, in general, assume empirical science to be the only valid scientific method for the study of self-awareness. Despite positivists’ beliefs and assumptions (ontology and epistemology) that science is a value-free enterprise, Avolio and Gardner consider morals and ethics as foundational resources for achieving self-awareness, thereby injecting values into studies of self-awareness. In our opinion, although Avolio and Gardner endeavored to explain self-awareness comprehensively, using strictly empirical approaches, they nevertheless could not come up with a comprehensive explanation. This article aims to study, analyze and critique Avolio and Gardner’s perspectives, and the epistemology and methodology that have lead to their conclusions. By referring to the ontology, epistemology and methodology of Allamah Tabatabaie, this article critiques Avolio and Gardner’s epistemological and methodological approaches. According to Allamah Tabatabaie reaching self-awareness requires a type of knowledge beyond empirical scientific approaches currently popular in the west. Allamah Tabatabaie believes self-awareness requires both knowledge-through-presence1 and acquired knowledge. These two forms of knowledge must be guided, directed and supported through the four foundational beliefs of the Abrahamic faiths presented within this paper. The four foundational beliefs are necessary for initiating and continuing knowledge creation and gain, so as to prevent these activities from being misled by human caprice and entering into a realm of imagination and wishful thinking2.

Keywords: Self-awareness; Leadership; Acquired knowledge; Knowledge-through-presence.

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1 For more information about presence, refer to pages 11-13
2 For more information about foundational beliefs, refer to pages 8-10.
3. Self-knowledge as used by Allamah Tabatabaie is not equal with Self-awareness, however, in this article, we have used self-awareness throughout.
1. Introduction

Research on leadership has proven that moral characteristics and behavior of leaders is the most important factor influencing leadership success (Lyman, 2003; Avolio and Gardner, 2005; Sosik, 2005; Reave, 2005; Brown and Trevino, 2006). Based on the importance of moral characteristics and leaders’ behavior on leadership success leadership theories such as charismatic, transformational, spiritual and authentic leadership were put forth. Having taken an empirical approach, Avolio and Gardner founders of Authentic Leadership Theory, found that self-awareness based on moral principles is the essential factor influencing personal character and behavior of leaders (Avolio and Gardner, 2005).

This article aims to answer the following questions based on Avolio and Gardner’s work:
- How can self-awareness be realized?
- Why the empirical approach is sufficient, for reaching self-awareness?

To answer these questions, it is necessary to explain and critique the ontology and methodology followed by Avolio and Gardner in acquiring knowledge and self-knowledge.

As an Islamic philosopher, Allamah Tabatabaie suggests that self-awareness is a critical factor in the development and felicity of mankind1 (Allamah Tabatabaie, 1381/2002; Allamah Tabatabaie, 1369/1990). Allamah Tabatabaie states that a person who has acquired self-knowledge has the essential quality needed for leadership2 (Allamah Tabatabaie, 1381/2002, p: 59 to 75, 113 to 143; Allamah Tabatabaie, winter 1382/2003; Allamah Tabatabaie, 1360/1381, p: 162 to 167).

According to Allamah Tabatabaie, empirical science is not sufficient for reaching self-knowledge; this type of knowledge requires a plane of awareness higher than the empirical plane. Therefore, the following questions must be addressed:
1. How does empirical approach to knowledge reach maturation?
2. Why is the empirical approach not sufficient in reaching self-awareness?
3. How does knowledge-through-presence compare with empirically driven science?
4. How can moral principles be realized?
5. How do moral principles relate to self-awareness?
6. How can the knowledge-through-presence of the self be realized?

2. Literature review

Positivist Social Science is in wide use, in fact most people assume the positivist approach is science (paraphrased from Neuman, 2000, p: 67). Logical positivism is a philosophy of science based on the view that in social as well as material sciences, data derived from necessary experience, logical and math treatments of such data, are together the exclusive source of all authentic knowledge (paraphrased from Neuman, 2000; Easterby-Smith and et al, 2002; Donaldson, 1996; Nabavi, 1384/2005).

The influence of positivism on Avolio and Gardner’s ontology and methodology is stated explicitly (Avolio and Gardner, 2005; Cooper and et al, 2005; Shamir and

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1. Self-knowledge as used by Allamah Tabatabaie is not equal to self-awareness, however, in this article, we have used self-awareness throughout.
2. In his books, Allamah Tabatabaie states that People with high self-awareness approach the position of velayat. He states that velayat is an absolute necessity for leading society.
Eilam, 2005). According to positivism, scientific approach has a few underlying assumptions: First, modern positivists hold that social and physical reality are real. It exists "out there" and awaits our discovery. Moreover, reality is not random; it is organized and ordered. Therefore, the scientific approach enables humans to discover the order and the laws of the universe\(^1\). These assumptions point out that objective and physical reality exists outside of the human mind and are waiting to be discovered. It is also assumed that the mind is able to discover and explain reality in the objective world through empirical approaches. Another assumption is that basic patterns of (social and physical) reality are stable and knowledge of them is cumulative. The regularity in social and physical reality does not change over time, and laws discovered today will hold in the future (Neuman, 2000, 67; Easterby-Smith and et al, 2002; Donaldson, 1996). In the positivist approach to knowledge, the social and the natural sciences must use the same methods (paraphrased from Neuman, 2000).

**Avolio and Gardner’s viewpoint about material and immaterial realities.** According to positivism to which Avolio and Gardner prescribe, empirical facts only, are considered as factual and scientific information. We can observe them by using sense organs (taste, sight, smell, hearing, and touch) or special instruments that extend the senses (e.g. telescopes, microscopes, and geiger counters) (Neuman, 2000, p: 69; Easterby-Smith and et al, 2002; Donaldson, 1996). Therefore, information that cannot be discovered through sense organs and empirical methods are not considered scientific knowledge.

**Moral insight: necessary factor for reaching self-awareness.** According to Avolio and Gardner, moral insights are the basis for self-awareness; ethical commitments prevent any deviation in the process of authentic self-awareness (Avolio and Gardner, 2005; Cooper and et al, 2005; Shamir and Eilam, 2005). Avolio and Gardner take moral insights to be the inherent capital of the human make-up (Avolio and Gardner, 2005); therefore, in this paper we infer that Avolio and Gardner suggest that the mind has moral insights of its own which are not gained through any positivistic, scientific approach (i.e. Empirical approach).

According to Avolio and Gardner, moral insight is the foundation for gaining authentic self-awareness; however, the positivist school of thought holds that moral insight is not a necessary factor for gaining true self-awareness or any other scientific knowledge. Positivists’ position on the nature of science is that science is a value-free enterprise that is objective. By objectivity, they emphasize two factors: observers’ agreements on what is seen, and science that is not based on values, opinions, attitudes, or beliefs (i.e. moral insight)\(^2\).

In Avolio and Gardner’s viewpoint, self-awareness is obtained both through the empirical approach and through the moral insights which are an inherent capital of the human make-up.

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1. Neuman's explanations are paraphrased in this article. There are also other references for this explanation such as Easterby-Smith and et al, 2002; Donaldson, 1996, ...

2. The explanation by Neuman (2000, p: 69), is paraphrased. Other references are Easterby-Smith and et al, 2002; Donaldson, 1996.
3. Problem description

Like other Islamic philosophers, Allamah Tabatabaie believes that realities have two dimensions; the material and the immaterial. Moreover, he believes that material and immaterial dimensions of reality have causal effects on one another (Allamah Tabatabaie, 1332/1953, chapters 2 and 4, p: 366 to 382; Javadi Amoli, 1379/2000, p: 50, 57 to 60, 75 to 85 and ...). In fact, he demonstrated these two logical postulates through the use of deductive reasoning (Allamah Tabatabaie, 1332/1953). He goes further by stating that knowledge is created by the interaction between these two planes of being (Allamah Tabatabaie, 1332/1953, chapters 4 and 7, p: 366 to 382).

Contrary to Avolio and Gardner, Allamah Tabatabaie believes in immaterial (dimensions of) reality and the fact that its causal laws lead to a type of knowledge beyond the empirical approach. Furthermore, he demonstrates that the human mind is not able to discover realities on its own and is in need of some means (and conditions) in order to be effective. These means are referred to in the “acquired knowledge” section of this article.

In a similar view to Avolio and Gardner, Allamah Tabatabaie argues that the order of reality does not change over time, and laws discovered today will hold in the future while adding that knowledge is above material limitations including time and space (Allamah Tabatabaie, 1332/1957, chapter 4; Javadi Amoli, 1379/2000, p: 175 to 193).

Allamah Tabatabaie states that reality is “being”¹, and characteristics do not have an independent being of their own -as conceived by our minds- rather they are embedded in being itself².

Allamah Tabatabaie’s acceptance of being as the only reality makes epistemology and methodology of Allamah Tabatabaie different from some other Islamic philosophers. In Allamah Tabatabaie’s viewpoint, reality in its entirety is independent of mind and of an objective nature, and it exists in the world outside of the mind. This perspective has similarities to the positivist perspective of reality. This is one reason that led us to compare Allamah Tabatabaie’s viewpoint with that of Avolio and Gardner.

In addition, in the Islamic philosophical tradition and especially Allamah Tabatabaie’s viewpoint, another important assumption is the need to put knowledge into practice (Allamah Tabatabaie, 1332/1957, p: 233 to 238, Allamah Tabatabaie, 1360/1981, p: 208 and 209). In fact, mankind needs a knowledge that is practical and useful (Allamah Tabatabaie, 1360/1381, p: 208 and 209)³.

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¹ We used the word “being” as opposed to existence in order to make distinction between the concept of “being” from a spiritual stand point as opposed to “existence” used in the material existentialism of the likes of SARTÉ.

² From a theoretical and practical standpoint, the history of discussions on “reality” dates back to centuries ago. Islamic philosophers have concurred that reality has two aspects of “being” and “essence”. Being holds fundamental reality and essence plays a subordinated dependent role to that being.

³ Aristotle argues that knowledge is not for practice, however, it itself is the aim and the ultimate (history of philosophy, vol. 1 Capeleston, 1375/1996).
Allamah Tabatabaie’s viewpoint of reality, which considers reality to be a two-tiered phenomena (immaterial and material) leads to two types of knowledge: 1) knowledge-through-presence and acquired knowledge (refer to ft. 14, p: 14); each with its own instruments of knowledge and methodology (for the first time, the 17th century Islamic philosopher Mulla Sadra, explicitly divided knowledge into these two types).

4. Methodology

Acquired knowledge is the understanding of realities and causal relations of this worldly life through the usual and customary methods of learning (everything that is learned through the traditional learning mechanisms i.e. parents, schools, universities etc.). Empirical science is the most prevalent method used for gaining knowledge and is considered by the positivist school of thought to be the only form of valid knowledge (Allamah Tabatabaie, 1332/ 1957, chapter 2).

In acquired knowledge, the mind is the main instrument for perceiving realities and their causal relations. The mind receives concepts and pictures of realities in the material world through senses directly and/or indirectly (Allamah Tabatabaie, 1332/1957, p: 173, 371 and 188; Javadi Amoli, 1379/2000, p: 52, 74, 75, 111 and 112, Hasan zadeh Amoli, 1362/ 1983, p: 337). Furthermore the mind classifies the received material from the outside world and gains further understanding (paraphrased from Allamah Tabatabaie, “Principles of Philosophy and the Method of Realism” 1332/ 1957, chapter: 3 and P: 200 and 206).

It is important to note that the mind should form concepts and images through thinking and reasoning (Allamah Tabatabaie, 1332/1957, p: 234 to 237), without being swayed by imagination, personal tendencies and caprice; in order to reach an unadulterated sense of understanding (Allamah Tabatabaie, 1332/ 1957, p: 234 to 236; Javadi Amoli, 1379/2000, p: 47).

We need to ask: is the mind capable of reaching knowledge in a comprehensive fashion? From Allamah Tabatabaie’s viewpoint, the answer is negative, the mind needs to utilize the senses, thinking and reasoning to arrive at true concepts and images. However, senses and thinking suffer from certain deficiencies: Sense organs deal with the material world and are limited to time and space. For this reason, knowledge based on sense organs is imperfect, unreliable and somewhat whimsical. On the other hand, in order for the mind to operate rationally it must not be swayed by imagination, personal tendencies, and caprice. Therefore, it must employ some other means to safeguard it against such shortcomings. The means mentioned should incorporate the following 8 characteristics:

1. Not being a part of sense organs;
2. Not having material limitations;
3. Not being of an inductive-reasoning-type of thinking;
4. It should eliminate, or at minimum, help reduce faulty perception and reasonings of the rational mind;
5. It should create motivation for turning knowledge into action;
6. It should not hamper the functioning of the rational mind and the sense organs;

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4. Knowledge is a total name for scientific knowledge gained through use of empirical approaches and/or other approaches and instruments. All approaches and instruments including empirical and other kinds are explained in the following sections.
7. It should be able to control and set right human caprice, immoralities and fabricated untrue makings of the imagination; and
8. It should lead man to a state of comprehensive understanding of reality and truth, and arrive at scientific and knowledge-based generalizations.

If we look at the 7th characteristic above (the control and setting right of caprice, immoralities and imagination), we will notice that ordinary tools of law, education, rewards and punishment, cannot act as internal motivations and value-instilling tools to control and set-right man’s shortcomings. All of these tools are incapable of internalizing the necessary beliefs and commitments within the individual to assure abidance to correct actions. Although it may look like education is capable of internalizing ethics and morality, nevertheless, we see ample examples of highly educated cultures which during critical junctures choose to act immorally, and we notice a prevalence of caprice-lead humanity.

Another solution is the acceptance of certain beliefs and ideas that may prevent immoral social behaviors from taking place. This fulfills all of the 8 characteristics put forth; thereby it meets the criteria of selection, as our means to help the mind operate rationally.

The four beliefs below help the mind perform rationally and not to be swayed by imagination and/or caprice:
1. The Belief that all acts and caprice of mankind will be assessed and questioned;
2. The Belief that there will be a time when all actions will be manifested and brought to account;
3. The Belief that there are true and absolute criteria which determine and explain boundaries of morality and ethical behavior; these criteria help prevent falling into moral and ethical relativism; and
4. The Belief that there is a superior, true and absolute being from whom true and absolute criteria for moral assessments of right and wrong flow.

This being cannot be temporal, since a temporal being like man is limited to time and space and cannot create moral criteria which are of a transcendental nature. Man can judge moral and ethical behaviors based on the criteria provided from the higher realm of transcendence, however, in the lack thereof, man will be lost in such judgments, and at best he will be mislead by the limits of his temporality and the forces of caprice enacting within his being.

These four beliefs lead mankind to avoid unethical immoral behaviors and sacredly impermissible desires. The individual who controls his or her caprice can understand realities better through unhampered thought and wisdom.

The four beliefs are more comprehensive in nature than the 8 characteristics. Because of the brevity of this paper, we have considered the four beliefs within the parameters of the 8 characteristics mentioned above.

The authors consider these beliefs common to the Abrahamic faiths. According to the Abrahamic faiths¹, God is the superior, true and absolute being that is creator of true, ethical and behavioral standards. God has sent numerous messengers to reveal these criteria to man and on the Day of Judgment, God will judge all people.

¹. We mean religions that are explained by messengers sent by God such as Judaism, Christianity and Islam.
The four beliefs are inherent to the teachings of Abrahamic faiths. We discussed how these beliefs will lead to a more rational mind-set. It can be stated that within the abrahamic faiths, teachings leading to higher levels of rationality are imbedded. In the realm of acquired knowledge, a mind so freed of personal inclinations and caprice is better able to acquire and utilize the sciences available in different fields of knowledge. The four beliefs inherent in the teachings of the Abrahamic faiths lead man to gain a comprehensive knowledge of the self.

Another important issue is: can the mind by itself arrive at all laws and axioms through acquired knowledge (empirical knowledge) only?

According to Allamah Tabatabaie, materialistic philosophy which takes all beings to be equal with material, does not accept metaphysical principles. In other words, it considers all principles of knowledge to be the result of experimentation (Tabatabaie, 1332/ 1953, p: 239 to 260). The mind has certain principles and axioms which are transcendental to empiricism (they are not open to experimentation and straight forward observation). All laws and axioms arrived at by the mind, whether arrived directly or indirectly through the senses must draw from laws existing within the mind itself, independent of the senses; and if we assume that all mental axioms are in need of experimentation, observation or other empirical approaches, arrival at mental axioms would be unlikely for the mind. As a result, the mind will be overtaken by absolute doubt (Tabatabaie, 1332/ 1953, p: 240). Put otherwise, refusal to accept primary-obvious mental axioms leads to absolute doubt and drawing in the vortex of sophism.

As stated previously observation and experimentation are limited to time and space, if primary-obvious mental axioms are denied and the whole creation of knowledge is taken to be in a strictly empirical fashion. The possibility of generalization of scientific laws and axioms becomes unlikely thereby we will always be faced with a very limited transitory case-based-only knowledge, which will be of no general expansive use. Not only the mind has its own axioms and general statements of knowledge, but it does not always move from the specific to the general, and in the cases that it does move from the specific to the general forming the general laws of natural sciences, it utilizes a chain of more general axioms and principles which the mind has inherited from the start in the general form and without the intermediary of any of the external agents such as observation and experimentation. It can be said that humans have within their minds primary-obvious mental axioms to draw upon for gaining further knowledge of themselves and their world.

Hume as a philosopher of the school of empiricism and skepticism (Atherton, 1999) states that “Causal relationships are arrived at by the mind due to constant association of conjoined events, and the mental act of association is the basis of our concept of causation”1. As he states the causal relationship are concepts within the mind, Allamah Tabatabaie’s view on this issue is that the principle of causality is inherent to the mind’s understanding through what he calls knowledge-through-presence. however, the difference between the two thinkers on this issue is: whereas, Hume takes causality to be a falsely arrived at principle by the mind based on association, Allamah Tabatabaie takes causality to be a real and true principle existent within the universe, that is inherent to the mind’s intrinsic understanding.

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Furthermore, Hume states that using the inductive method of reasoning cannot reach the principles of causality and/or generalization. Allamah states the same as far as the inductive method is concerned, however, Allamah goes further by stating that through inherent principles available to the mind, mind can link principles of causality within the world, and arrive at scientific and knowledge-based generalizations.

As noted before, Allamah Tabatabaie explains two fields of knowledge, the first deals with material dimensions of realities and their causal relations (acquired knowledge), and the second explains immaterial dimensions of realities and their causal relations. Hence, the eighth characteristic is a kind of knowledge that helps the mind arrive at scientific and knowledge-based generalizations. In Islamic philosophy, this knowledge is called knowledge-through-presence. Knowledge-through-presence has its own unique instrument(s) to discover realities and their causal relations.

5. Results and discussion

**Knowledge-Through-Presence**. As already mentioned, material world has limitations of time and space, and empirically derived knowledge is of a cumulative nature due to the limitations of acquired knowledge. Thereby, a piecemeal and fragmented knowledge is made available to us, as opposed to a holistic, comprehensive type of knowledge. Islamic worldview suggests that a subject of understanding can be presented as an integrated thorough existence, in a mode of understanding superior to the sensory material method. Hence, we are only able to discover realities truly and comprehensively when we utilize a kind of knowledge superior to material limitations, referred to as knowledge-through-presence.

Knowledge-through-presence has its own special means of reception; referred to in the spiritual and intellectual heritage of mankind by the use of such terms as revelation, intuition and spiritual illumination.

As for the important area of knowledge of the self, which is comparable to the concept of the self awareness as used by Avolio and Gardner (although, knowledge of the self as referred to by Allamah Tabatabaie is very different from Avolio and Gardner’s concept of self awareness), knowledge-through-presence is taken to be direct existential illumination, without any intermediary intuition of the self (Allamah Tabatabaie, 1382/2003, p: 53 to 55). Self awareness according to Avolio and Gardner is a rather piecemeal, fragmented, limited, incomprehensive, experience-based method of self-understanding that although useful, it has its limitations (i.e. the use of questionnaires although somewhat useful yet, this

1. Allamah Tabatabaie explains immaterial dimensions of realities are superior to the material dimensions. For more information, refer to “Tabatabae, Muhammad Hussein, principles of philosophy and method of realism (1, 2 and 3 volume), Ofset Publication Co., Ltd., 1332/1953”.

2. Knowledge-through-presence includes the following elements; knowledge which is directly within the self or becomes directly available within the self without the use of any common intermediaries i.e. the usual instruments of learning such as teachers, books, media, experience. In comparison to acquired knowledge, knowledge-through-presence is received in a more whole and perfect manner. In this type of knowledge, the known’s (image/meaning/substance) is part and parcel of the human self, and the self is expanded and re-formed, re-shaped by this knowledge.

3. Intellect as referred to in the classical Latin usage as the instrument of receiving intellectuation or illumination from the higher and more sublime realms of existence.

4. For better understanding, we paraphrased the text.
experimental method has its own significant limitations). Allamah’s method of knowledge-through-presence of the self is a holistic, comprehensive, direct method of revealing all or many of the potentialities of the self that overcomes the limitations of the strictly experimental approach to self awareness (for example, the knowledge that a child has through presence and intuitively within herself about herself, her needs, wants and causes of happiness, as opposed to the knowledge that her parents, schools and particular cultures as a whole try to instill in her in a more artificial way from the outside; one is genuine, natural, direct existential knowledge and the other is more of a secondary, outside-of-the-self experience which may or may not have a positive value bases).

According to Allamah Tabatabaie, we have knowledge-through-presence of ourselves, our actions and our powers of understanding; and any form of acquired knowledge is accompanied by a form of knowledge-through-presence.

Allamah Tabatabaie suggests these two inferences through his own logical method of reasoning (Allamah Tabatabaie, 1332/1957). According to Allamah Tabatabaie, self-awareness as a fundamental way of knowledge can make use of both knowledge-through-presence and acquired knowledge.

However, according to Avolio and Gardner, man’s self-awareness is based on experimental knowledge arrived at through the senses and the observation of the world around us.

According to Avolio and Gardner, ethics, as an inherent capital of man, is the basis of authentic self-awareness. Whereas Allamah Tabatabaie takes the position that ethics is an endowed, given factor from the highest reality “God”, to man through the channel of knowledge-through-presence as a type of knowledge bestowed within the being of man.

**Moral principles.** immaterial/non-experimental knowledge; an absolute necessity for reaching self-awareness. Avolio and Gardner consider ethics as an inherent capital of man and the basis of authentic self-awareness. According to Avolio and Gardner, man’s self-awareness is based on two fountainheads: the non-experimental available as inherent capital of ethics within the being of man, and the experimental knowledge arrived at through the senses and the observation of the world around us.

As suggested by Avolio and Gardner, moral principles are a form of inherent capital within man. This statement of theirs creates two possibilities: first, that through generations of experimentation mankind has come up with certain moral principles that have proven efficacious and these principles have turned into the genetic makeup of man, and passed on from one generation to another. The second possibility is that from the first to the nth created man, each individual human being has possessed the moral principles shared by all of mankind. The argument for moral principles having been passed on through experimentation is weak since we can observe that while experiences may be different all over the world, at the same time, there seems to be a constancy of moral principles shared by all of mankind. If the basis of moral principles were formed on experience, it would be logical to think that with different experiences, people would arrive at different principles of

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morality. One does not witness such a phenomenon. Therefore, we can conclude that the origin of moral principles must be something other than experience. In this article we suggest that moral principles which are not experience-based or temporal, and are universally held by all human beings cannot be created by humans. Therefore, they are derived from the realm of the spiritual and from the ultimate being, who is the source of all types of knowledge-through-presence (a priori knowledge) and moral principles (for further clarification see pg. 6-13).

For further clarification, a priori knowledge is not dependent on historical, cultural, social, family, educational background, and upbringing of man. For instance, “Destruction of nature is abhorable” is a value of humanity not gained through historical, cultural, social, family, educational influences, and upbringing of man’s indoctrinations, rather, it is a self-evident value upheld by any rational normal human being.

Allamah Tabatabaie’s perspective conveys to us the idea that obvious fundamental axioms of knowledge, as well as, moral principles (Allamah Tabatabaie uses the term confirmational principles) are to a large degree available within the consciousness of man as a form of knowledge-through-presence; which in the western tradition is referred to as a priori form of knowledge.

According to Avolio and Gardner, moral principles are common beliefs among managers and employees. Their claim that moral principles are common to mankind and they are immaterial in nature, sits harmoniously with Allamah Tabatabaie’s views on the existential nature of knowledge in the universe; with moral principles being inherent in the universe as well as being present within the being of man. Also, Allamah Tabatabaie, like Avolio and Gardner, considers moral principles as an absolute necessity for reaching self-awareness.

Avolio and Gardner’s shortcoming on this issue is that, although they claim the universality for moral principles, and the fact that moral principles are inherent within man, nevertheless, they do not posit from where or how this body of moral principles becomes available to man.

According to Allamah Tabatabaie, moral principles are a priori-in-nature; therefore, they are a type of knowledge present in the being of man.

6. Conclusions and future works

Avolio and Gardner’s scientific approach and research methodologies are of empirical nature. Self-awareness as a central component of strictly Avolio and Gardner’s authentic leadership theory is arrived at in rough empirical approaches and using objective research instruments. In addition, Avolio and Gardner consider that moral and ethical principles are inherent and natural to man and those principles act as a necessary capital for man in his quest to reach self-awareness. Through a process of deductive reasoning, Allamah Tabatabaie explains that a

1. Confirmational principles that, common sense and man’s rationality take them to be true. In other words, they are confirmed as being true by mankind i.e. harmony is beautiful, destruction of nature is abhorable, taking of innocent life is an abominable act, or the sun is hot,…the qualities of knowledge-through-presence are all applicable to confirmational principles of innate understand (refer to footnote section of “knowledge-through-presence”, page: 11).

2. A proposition is knowable a priori if it is knowable independently of experience, while a proposition knowable a posteriori is knowable on the basis of experience. The distinction between a priori and posteriori knowable thus broadly corresponds to distinction between empirical and non-empirical knowledge (Jason S. Bacher at IEP).
self-awareness based only on empirical knowledge, is rather piecemeal, fragmented, incomprehensive and an experience-based method of self understanding which has considerable limitations. According to Allamah Tabatabaie, arriving at self-awareness acquired knowledge and knowledge-through-presence are both needed.

Allamah’s method of self knowledge-through-presence is holistic, comprehensive, a direct method of revealing all or many of the potentialities of the self, and it overcomes the limitations of the strictly experimental approach to self awareness. Also, considering Allamah Tabatabaie’s logical explanations, it is proved that four religious beliefs mentioned above, cause mankind to avoid unethical immoral behaviors and sacrdly impermissible desires. In the realm of acquired knowledge, a mind so freed of personal inclinations and caprice is better able to acquire and utilize the sciences available in different fields of knowledge.

Finally, having utilized Allamah Tabatabaie’s perspectives, authors have shown moral and ethical principles as supporting resources of knowledge are not inherent capitals of mind. They are given and discovered through a mechanism of knowledge through presence.
References:
26. Tabatabie, Muhammad Hussein, principles of philosophy and method of realism (1, 2 and 3 volume), Ofset Publication Co., Ltd., 1332/1953.