



The Relationship between Authentic Leadership with Organizational Identification and Work Engagement

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
Article type: Research Article	One of the important issues in the rganizationis the organizational identification and work engagement that can be influenced by various variables, including leadership style. One of the leadership styles that have been used today by organizations is the authentic leadership style. Therefore, the present study aimed to investigate the relationship between authentic leadership and organizational identitification and work engagement of teachers.The research is descriptive-correlational.The statistical population of this study was all the elementary schols teachers of Chabahar city in the academic year of 2017-2018, with 795 teachers' volume. 259 teachers were selected as the sample, using stratified random sampling method and teachers were studied through three questionnaires including authentic leadership, organizational identitification and work engagement of teachers.The data was analyzed using correlation coefficient and multiple regression with SPSS21 software. The findings showed that there is a positive and meaningful relationship between authentic leadership (and all its components: self-awareness, relational transparency, internalized moral perspective and balanced processing) with organizational identification and teacher's work engagement. Also, based on the results of regression, the style of authentic leadership has been able to predict 60.7% of organizational identitification changes and 5.3% of work engagement changes. Hence, School principals can improve organizational identification and employee' work engagement by better use of authentic leadership style.
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Introduction

The emergence of the authentic leadership was strongly influenced by Kernis's efforts that expressed the authentic concept as a fundamental factor for self-esteem ([Diddams & Chang, 2012](#)). Following the efforts of Kernis, the theoretical works on the conceptualization of authentic leadership began gradually by Avolio and [Gardner and Gardner et al in 2005](#). Also in 2008, Walumbwa et al. were among the first that worked on preparation and developing an authentic leadership measuring tool. Authentic leadership is characterized as a model of leadership behavior that extends both positive psychological capabilities and a positive moral environment ([Roof, 2013](#)). [Avolio and Gardner \(2005\)](#) described the authentic leadership as follows: these leaders know who they are, they recognize and value their beliefs, and, based on those values and beliefs Take steps and at the same time, are very clear with others. According to [Ilies et al. \(2005\)](#) authentic leaders are deeply aware of their values and beliefs, self-assured, honest, reliable, and trustworthy and they focus on empowering followers, they expand their thinking, and building an organization with positive people.

The foundation of authentic leadership is based on the authenticity concept, which expressing the conditions that persons behavior in accordance with their fine human values and beliefs and insist on behaving in accordance with their values and beliefs under various conditions and pressures. The components of authentic leadership are self-awareness, relational transparency, internalized moral perspective and balanced processing. Self-awareness is defined as trust in personality, values, motives, feelings and personal perceptions. Internalized moral perspective represents a controlling process by which the leaders adapt their values to their goals and activities. Balanced processing is a level in which the leader analyzes his/her information before making a decision and calls for followers views that challenge their position. In relational transparency, the leader shows his/her information to others, shares the information with others, and expresses his/her thoughts and feelings ([Walumbwa et al., 2008](#)).

Authentic leaders penetrate in the persons' abilities by motivation and motivating for better function, and as a result, persons appear at their highest level of effort and performance ([Gardner & Schermerhorn, 2004](#)). Authentic leaders increase the actual and sustainable performance of employees. The Authentic leadership also promotes the positive interpersonal relationships between leaders and employees and among employees, which these relationships can be a source of positive emotions. Positive emotions affect the promotion of relationships and social connections among employees ([Rego et al., 2014](#)). Authentic leaders experience much positive emotional states and for this reason through the emotional excitement penetration of them, they also experience a much positive emotional state compared to other leadership styles ([Rego et al., 2012](#)). The authentic leadership plays an important role in strengthening the positive approaches of followers, including commitment, engagement in work and passion for work, improving individual and organizational performance, positive organizational behavior, security sense and job satisfaction (Al Sahi AL Zaabi et al., 2016).

The authentic leaders are those who are self-identified and aware of their behavior and beliefs. They have moral value insights and know the knowledge and capabilities of others. The authentic leaders are sure, hopeful, optimistic and flexible and have a very moral character, and the authentic leader is defined as someone who is trustworthy ([Gardner et al., 2011](#)). These leaders are secretive, hopeful, optimistic, flexible, transparent, ethical and future-oriented, and have a good understanding of cultural sensitivities and are very motivated and self-conscious. They have a high level of honesty, deep commitment to goals, courage to move forward, enthusiasm and leadership skills ([Toor & Ofori, 2009](#)). In general, organizations that have authentic leadership, experience positive psychological capacities as well as a better positive ethical atmosphere in the relationship between leaders and followers ([Hinojosa et al., 2014](#)). Authentic leaders can provide the ground for organizational excellence by helping followers for finding the meaning in their work, creating optimism and commitment among followers, and encouraging transparent relations to build trust, and improve the positive environment ([Wong & Cummings, 2009](#)).

Organizational identification is based on the Social identity theory that states persons grouping themselves and others in different social categories such as organizational membership, gender, race, age group, or religious affiliation, and persons consider their membership in special groups based on the Social roles and roles relationships ([Fombelle et al., 2012](#)). Organizational identification refers to a cognitive link between organizational identity and employee identity ([Glavas & Godwin, 2013](#)) and states that the person's

affiliation and interesting to their organizations will cause them to define themselves according to the characteristics of an organization. In other words, they will see their identity in the heart of their organizations. [Gkorezis, Mylonas & Petridou \(2011\)](#) have interpreted organizational identification as belonging of persons to an organization, if they consider themselves the organization that they are working in. In other words, the person will sense identity through the organization and the organization provides the person's identity ([Ceri-Booms, 2012](#)). Organizational identification is an attempt to answer the question that we as the organization "who" are ([Puusa, 2006](#)). [Riketta \(2005\)](#) states that all definitions of organizational identification refer to an individual feeling of being a part of an organization, accepting organizational values, or pride in his membership.

The identification process provides a relation between identities at different levels, and a well-defined, quite distinct, and comprehensive and accepted organizational identification, can provide a grave point for members of the organization to determine their own identities in an uncertain employment pattern ([Puusa, 2006](#)). Organizational Identification is not a permanent, stable and static framework, but is a pattern of beliefs, values and feelings that shape in a special interaction between individuals and their environment in the context of organizational culture. Therefore, factors such as gender, nationality and race in this view will have multiplicity of organizational identification that can have a positive or negative effect on organizational performance ([Cornelissen et al., 2007](#)). Organizational Identity is an important cognitive variable that affects not only the sense of membership in the organization, but also determines the individual behavior in an organizational environment ([Melita et al., 2011](#)).

Organizational identification consists of three components: (A) Membership: is included the sense of belonging and the strong sense of affiliation and emotional traction. Membership indicates that a person has a strong relation with his/her organization, who is proud to be present at that organization and to introduce himself with that organization. (B) Loyalty: means the individual's support and defense of the organization and organizational goals. (C) Similarity: means the employee feels that he/she has shared goals and interests with other members of the organization, which promote the spirit and the sense of commitment ([Ngo et al. 2012](#)). Through identification, employees attract important features of the organization as their own features. For this reason, activities that threaten organizational identity are threats to employees themselves ([Kalemci & Irfan, 2009](#)).

The term work engagement has not been entrenched into organizational behavior for a long time. Work engagement is defined as an individual's approach toward the job and how much that job can eliminate individual needs, and also defined as an employee's psychological perception of his role at work. Work engagement is a positive mental state and relevant to the job that is defined with the power, devotion yourself to work and work absorption ([Schaufeliet al., 2002](#)). Power means being prepared to work, providing high levels of energy in working and a willingness to remain firmly in the face of the difficulty or failing in the work. Devotion yourself to work refers to determination a person's strong identity with work. Absorption is meant to be quite focused and engaging in work, so that time passes fast for a person and it is difficult to get out of work ([Bakker et al., 2011](#)). [Christian et al. \(2011\)](#) also defined work engagement as a mental state that is relatively stable and signifying the simultaneous investment of individual energies on the experiences or work functions. In fact, work engagement is the individual psychological replication with the kind of work he/she is doing and work engagement is an important source of job satisfaction and a major need in the work environment ([Moynihan and Pandey, 2007](#)).

People who are very involved in their work are known and excited with their work. They like to work harder and more profitably than others, and it's more possible for them to achieve the results that customers and organizations want ([Schaufeli et al., 2002](#)). Personnel with a work engagement are more capable in their work, are better in communicating with their work activities, and respond better to their job demands; they have more hope for their work and suffer less physical or psychological fatigue ([Hassan & Ahmed, 2011](#)). Work engagement has a positive relationship with internal motivation, general service motivation, job satisfaction, organizational productivity, organizational commitment, decrease in absenteeism, increasing organizational self-efficacy behaviors, increasing self-esteem and also has a negative relationship with job exhaustion, non-commitment to work, job stress and nervous pressure ([Lambert et al., 2012](#)).

Education Organization is one of the organizations whose success depends on the use of sustained and committed personnel. Teachers are the most effective and influential educational personnel that implement

supportive programs to maintain and create sufficient motivation for them. The persistence and motivation of teachers are the influencing important factors on the quality of education and students' learning. Teachers' supportive programs will have different consequences that most important of them are continuously motivation service and tendency to further work towards the goals of education. Not paying attention to teachers' motivations and tendencies leads to their non-motivational survival, which is combined with words such as falling, emigrating, moving and displacing that a lack of willingness to remain in the education job (Ingersoll, 2001). Therefore, paying attention to their needs and the type of supply of their needs by school manager can lead to job satisfaction and as a result, their organizational commitment. School principals like teachers to have a high degree of work engagement and organizational identity. Hence, managers seek to identify ways to increase the work engagement and organizational identity of teachers, that authentic leadership, can be effective in this regard. Therefore, the present research question is what is the relationship between the managers' authentic leadership with organizational identification and the work engagement of primary school teachers in Chabahar?

Method

Sample and Sampling Method

The statistical population of this study consisted of all elementary school teachers in Chabahar City during the 2017–2018 academic year, comprising 795 teachers (245 men and 550 women). Using Cochran's formula, a sample of 259 teachers (80 men and 179 women) was determined. A stratified random sampling procedure was employed, in which the population was first divided into two strata based on gender (male and female teachers). Participants were then randomly selected from each stratum in proportion to its representation in the population, thereby ensuring that the gender composition of the sample closely reflected that of the overall population

Tools Used

Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (Walumbwa et al., 2008): This 16-item instrument measures authentic leadership across four components: self-awareness (4 items), relational transparency (4 items), internalized moral perspective (4 items), and balanced processing (4 items). Items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree). Total scores range from 16 to 80, with higher scores indicating greater and more effective use of authentic leadership by school principals.

Work Engagement Questionnaire (Kanungo, 1982): This 10-item instrument assesses teachers' work engagement. Items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree). Total scores range from 10 to 50, with higher scores reflecting greater work engagement.

Organizational Identification Questionnaire (Cheney, 1983): This 18-item instrument measures organizational identification across three components: membership (6 items), loyalty (8 items), and similarity (4 items). Items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree). Total scores range from 18 to 90, with higher scores indicating stronger organizational identification.

Content validity was established for all three questionnaires; the instruments were reviewed and approved by faculty members of the Department of Educational Administration at the University of Sistan and Baluchestan, who confirmed that the items adequately measured the intended constructs. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, yielding coefficients of .787 for the authentic leadership questionnaire, .812 for the work engagement questionnaire, and .740 for the organizational identification questionnaire, indicating acceptable internal consistency for all three instruments.

Procedure

Following determination of the target population and calculation of the required sample size using Cochran's formula, a list of elementary schools in Chabahar City was compiled, and teachers were selected through stratified random sampling based on gender. With the cooperation of school principals, the authentic leadership, work engagement, and organizational identification questionnaires were administered to the selected teachers in person. Prior to data collection, participants were informed of the purpose of the study and assured that their responses would be used solely for research purposes and treated confidentially. After the completed questionnaires were collected, the data were entered into SPSS version 21 for analysis. Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were computed, and Pearson correlation coefficients were used to examine the relationships among the study variables. Multiple regression analysis was then conducted to determine the extent to which authentic leadership and its components predicted teachers' organizational identification and work engagement.

Result

In order to investigate the relationship between authentic leadership with the organizational identification and work engagement of teachers, in the first stage, Pearson correlation coefficient was used that findings are showed in Table 1.

Table 1- correlation coefficients of c authentic leadership with organizational identification of teachers

variable	membership		loyalty		similarity		Organizational identification		work engagement	
	r	p	r	p	r	p	r	p	r	p
self-awareness	0.611	0.001	0.706	0.001	0.657	0.001	0.743	0.001	0.142	0.023
relational transparency	0.573	0.001	0.661	0.001	0.669	0.001	0.71	0.001	0.188	0.002
internalized moral perspective	0.575	0.001	0.658	0.001	0.643	0.001	0.703	0.001	0.152	0.015
balanced processing	0.527	0.001	0.626	0.001	0.637	0.001	0.668	0.001	0.222	0.001
authentic leadership	0.625	0.001	0.725	0.001	0.712	0.001	0.772	0.001	0.192	0.002

According to the findings of Table 1, there is a meaningful positive relationship between the authentic leadership (and all its components: self-awareness, relational transparency, internalized moral perspective, and balanced processing) with the organizational identification and work engagement ($p < 0.05$), which means with better use of authentic leadership style, the teachers show better organizational identification and work engagement.

In the second stage and after finding out the relationship between authentic leadership and its components with the organizational identification and work engagement of teachers, in order to predict this relationship, the simultaneously multiple regression test was used that the results are showed in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2- Summary of regression analysis to predict organizational identification based on authentic leadership components

variable	non-standard coefficients		standard coefficients	T	p
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
self-awareness	1.36	0.248	0.39	5.43	0.001
relational transparency	0.764	0.288	0.206	2.65	0.008
Internalized moral perspective	0.547	0.281	0.151	1.94	0.053
balanced processing	0.346	0.253	0.097	1.36	0.172
p=0.001 f=21.071 R ² =0.249 r=0.499					

According to Table 2, the coefficient of explanation (R^2) is equal to 0.249 which mean that the authentic leadership account for 24.9% of the organizational identification. Also, among the components of authentic leadership, the relational transparency with the value of β (0.206) and self-awareness with the value of β (0.39) have a positive effect on the organizational identification.

Table 3- Summary of regression analysis to predict work engagement based on authentic leadership components

variable	non-standard coefficients		standard coefficients	T	p
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
self-awareness	-1.113	0.207	-0.061	-0.546	0.586
relational transparency	0.192	0.241	0.096	0.797	0.426
internalized moral perspective	-0.127	0.235	-0.065	-0.541	0.589
balanced processing	0.462	0.212	0.241	2.18	0.030
p=0.001 f=3.55 R ² =0.053 r=0.230					

According to Table 3, the coefficient of explanation (R^2) is equal to 0.053 which mean that the authentic leadership account for 5.3% of the work engagement. Also, among the components of authentic leadership, the balanced processing with the value of β (0.241) has a positive effect on the work engagement.

Discussion & Conclusion

Organizational identification and work engagement are among the central concerns of contemporary schools, and both can be shaped by a range of variables, including the leadership style adopted by school administrators. Authentic leadership, one of the leadership approaches increasingly emphasized in organizations today, was examined in the present study in relation to teachers' organizational identification and work engagement. The findings are discussed below in light of the existing literature, followed by the study's limitations and practical implications.

The first finding of the study indicated a positive and significant relationship between authentic leadership—along with all of its components (self-awareness, relational transparency, internalized moral perspective, and balanced processing)—and organizational identification ($p < .001$), with authentic leadership accounting for 24.9% of the variance in teachers' organizational identification. This finding is consistent with prior research. [Lotfi Jalalabadi et al. \(2015\)](#) similarly found that all dimensions of authentic leadership were significantly related to organizational identification, with relational transparency emerging as the strongest predictor, followed in order by internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, and self-awareness. Likewise, [Ceri-Booms \(2012\)](#) reported that authentic leadership exerts a positive effect on employees' organizational identification. These findings suggest that authentic leadership can strengthen employees' willingness to identify with their organization and, in turn, generate positive organizational

outcomes: organizationally identified employees tend to prioritize the collective interests of the organization over purely personal goals, work with greater enthusiasm, and display higher levels of organizational citizenship behavior, job satisfaction, and work engagement (Çeri-Booms, 2012). Organizational identification is further associated with a stronger sense of loyalty, a heightened interest in organizational membership, a clearer understanding of one's duties within the organization, and a greater appreciation of shared goals and values among members (Celik & Findik, 2012); it also facilitates knowledge sharing within the organization (Carmeli et al., 2011).

The second finding of the study showed a positive and significant relationship between authentic leadership—along with all of its components—and work engagement ($p < .001$), with authentic leadership accounting for 39.8% of the variance in teachers' work engagement. This result corroborates the findings of Yousefy et al. (2016), who also reported a positive and significant relationship between authentic leadership and work engagement; in their study, balanced processing, internalized moral perspective, and relational transparency emerged as the strongest predictors of work engagement, respectively, whereas the leader's self-awareness did not have a significant effect. In the context of the Malaysian banking sector, Hasan and Ahmad (2011) similarly found that authentic leadership enhances interpersonal trust and, through it, contributes to employees' work engagement. Rucker et al. (2011), examining the relationships among authentic leadership, optimism, and self-cognition, likewise reported a positive and significant association between authentic leadership and work engagement. In a related inquiry into the leadership factors that foster employee work engagement, Toor and Ofori (2009) compared several leadership styles and identified authentic leadership as the most effective in promoting work engagement, recommending its adoption accordingly. Mirmohammadi et al. (2013), drawing on the perspectives of experts and university faculty members, further demonstrated that interpersonal trust fully mediates the relationship between authentic leadership and work engagement, indicating that authentic leadership influences employees' work engagement primarily through the trust it engenders.

A limitation of the present study is its reliance on a correlational design; consequently, the observed relationships cannot be interpreted as causal, and it remains possible that they are influenced by other, unmeasured variables. Future research employing longitudinal or experimental designs would help clarify the causal mechanisms underlying these relationships.

Taken together, the findings of this study—demonstrating a positive and significant relationship between the components of authentic leadership and both organizational identification and work engagement among teachers—carry several practical implications for school leadership and management. School administrations are encouraged to prioritize the selection of leaders who embody the characteristics of authentic leadership and to invest in training and development programs designed to cultivate this leadership style, given its potential to enhance staff members' positive emotional states, strengthen the transparency of workplace relationships, build psychological capital, and reduce organizational ambiguity. To foster self-awareness, principals may benefit from seeking an accurate understanding of how others perceive them, remaining open to feedback as a means of improving their interactions with others, and reflecting on how their own behavior affects those around them. The transparency of relationships can be enhanced by clearly and precisely communicating one's expectations and intentions, giving genuine weight to the opinions of others rather than suppressing them, striving to understand and consciously convey one's own feelings, communicating truthfully, and openly acknowledging one's own mistakes. The internalization of moral values can be promoted by grounding decisions in core ethical principles, ensuring consistency between what is said and what is done, encouraging others to make decisions based on ethical considerations, and acting in accordance with recognized ethical standards. Finally, balanced processing can be strengthened by avoiding bias in the acquisition of information, ensuring access to comprehensive and timely information, remaining open to challenging viewpoints and critical feedback, and listening carefully to perspectives that differ from one's own.

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