

The Influence Of Authentic Leadership On Employee Performance Through Employee Involvement At PT Karas Industri Nusa Tenggara Timur

Original Article

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the influence of authentic leadership on employee performance with employee involvement as a mediating variable at PT Karas Industri, East Nusa Tenggara. Authentic leadership, characterized by transparency, high morality, and healthy relationships between leaders and subordinates, is expected to have a significant impact on improving employee performance. The research method used was quantitative with a survey approach, involving a number of employees of PT Karas Industri as respondents. Data were collected through questionnaires measured using the Likert scale and analyzed with regression analysis techniques to test the relationship between independent variables (authentic leadership) and dependent variables (employee performance), as well as employee engagement as a mediating variable. The results show that authentic leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee performance, and employee engagement mediates this influence substantially. These findings indicate that authentic leaders can improve employee engagement and performance, so it is important for companies to develop this leadership style in order to achieve optimal organizational performance.

Keywords: Authentic leadership, Employee Performance, and Employee Engagement.

1. Introduction

The authentic leadership of the era of globalization, as a phenomenon that has dominated the stage of businesses and organizations around the world, has brought profound changes in the way companies operate and compete. In this era, companies are faced with complex challenges involving global market dynamics, technological developments, and changing consumer patterns. In the face of these challenges, effective leadership is key to maintaining competitiveness and ensuring business continuity. One of the leadership paradigms that is increasingly discussed and recognized globally is authentic leadership (Kaya & Karatepe, 2020; Novitasari et al., 2020). Authentic leadership creates a foundation for understanding and responding to changes in a fast-paced and complex business environment. The integrity, honesty, and personal involvement of the leader with his team members are the main points in this concept. The implementation of authentic leadership can encounter a number of challenges that can hinder its effectiveness. Resistance from internal parties, such as employees or organizational structures that are already accustomed to conventional leadership styles, can be a major obstacle. A lack of understanding of the concept of authentic leadership, both by leaders and by team members, can also be a significant hindrance (Duarte et al., 2021; S&P 2020; Purwanto et al., 2021). Other factors, such as a rigid organizational culture or incompatibility with the local work environment, can also limit the success of



implementation. The implementation of authentic leadership, employee engagement, and performance improvement is a holistic step that not only strengthens internal collaboration but also improves the quality of services provided to the community. This overall strategy will form a strong foundation for the growth and sustainability of the organization at the local level.

Authentic leadership has a very important role in improving employee performance at PT Karas Industri Nusa Tenggara Timur. First of all, authentic leadership places integrity and honesty as the main principles, creating a foundation of trust among leaders and employees (Goestjahjanti et al., 2020; Novitasari et al., 2020; Purwanto et al., 2021). Authentic leaders who are actively involved in problem-solving and shared decision-making can improve operational efficiency and stimulate team collaboration (Daraba et al., 2021; Hadian Nasab & Afshari, 2019; S&P 2020; Novitasari et al., 2020). Authentic leadership helps create a clear vision and provides strong direction, moving employees towards the achievement of organizational goals. Authentic leaders who are able to value differences and build strong relationships with each team member can create a positive atmosphere that contributes to employee well-being.

In addition to the urgency of this research arises from the urgent need to improve the performance of PT Karas Industri Nusa Tenggara Timur, with the main goal of providing optimal clean water services to the community. As a provider of vital services that directly affect the welfare of the community, regional drinking water companies in Magetan Regency have a great responsibility in meeting the basic needs of the population for clean water. Authentic leadership is considered an effective instrument to achieve this goal, as the concept not only encourages honesty and integrity of leaders, but also stimulates employee engagement. With strong involvement, it is hoped that employees will be more dedicated to improving operational efficiency and service to the community. In the context of PT Karas Industri Nusa Tenggara Timur, where public services are very important, authentic leadership is the foundation to achieve operational excellence and provide maximum benefits to the community. This research is expected to provide significant practical implications for the management of PT Karas Industri Nusa Tenggara Timur in Magetan Regency as well as related parties in an effort to improve leadership effectiveness and employee performance. The findings of this study can provide direct guidance to design authentic leadership strategies that are more in line with the dynamics of public sector organizations at the local level. In addition, the results of this study are expected to make a theoretical contribution to the development of the concept of authentic leadership in the local context, especially in the public service sector.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Human Resource Management

Resource Management Theory Human Resource Management (HR) is closely related to the concepts of authentic leadership, employee engagement, and employee performance. The concept of authentic leadership, which emphasizes the integrity, honesty, and personal involvement of the leader with his team, is in accordance with the HR management approach that emphasizes the development and empowerment of human resources. HR Management Theory provides an in-depth understanding of the importance of human resource management as a strategic asset in achieving organizational goals (Lee et al., 2020; Supriyadi et al., 2020). HR management principles that suggest a more personalized approach to understanding and meeting employee needs to achieve optimal levels of engagement (Awan et al., 2020; Goestjahjanti et al., 2020). At the employee performance level, HR Management theory emphasizes on performance management and employee assessment. Authentic leadership can positively impact performance by providing honest feedback, providing

support in skill development, and creating a motivating work environment. By motivating employees through authentic values, authentic leadership can spark increased productivity and positive contributions to organizational goals. The integration of these concepts provides a solid theoretical foundation for understanding, managing, and improving the capacity of human resources in achieving organizational goals effectively and sustainably.

2.2. Authentic Leadership

Authentic leadership is the focus of an in-depth theoretical study in the field of management and leadership. (Lai et al., 2020; Luthfiana, et al., 2023). developed a conceptual model that includes key aspects of authentic leadership, including self-awareness, transparency, honesty, and morality. (Bass and Riggio, 2020) in the book "Transformational Leadership," explain how authentic leadership falls within the spectrum of transformational leadership and the key elements of authentic leadership, and how this concept involves leaders who demonstrate integrity, engagement, and honesty. Authentic leaders strive to understand themselves, value personal values, and lead with integrity (Awan et al., 2020; Goestjahjanti et al., 2020; Lai et al., 2020; Rasool et al., 2021). These references cover the conceptual dimension, self-identity, employee engagement, relationship to transformational leadership, and the practical applications of authentic leadership, providing a rich and diverse foundation for understanding the concept of authentic leadership in the management and leadership literature.

2.3. Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is an important dimension in human resource management that significantly impacts the productivity and performance of the organization. Employee engagement theory includes a variety of perspectives to understand the factors that motivate employees to actively participate in their work. According to the expectancy theory, (Vroom, 1964) states that employee engagement depends on their belief that the effort they put in will result in the performance that is desired and appreciated by the organization. (Herzberg's, 1959) motivational theory highlights the importance of motivational factors and hygiene factors in creating sustainable engagement, where motivational factors, such as achievement and recognition have a positive impact on engagement. Social psychology theories, especially social identity theories by (Tajfel and Turner, 1979), illustrate that employee engagement is also influenced by group identities in the workplace. A sense of identity and pride in the work group can increase employee engagement. In addition, the expectation theory of work engagement theory by (Kahn, 1990) suggests that engagement involves employees as a whole, both physically, cognitively, and emotionally, in carrying out their duties. The theory of work involvement is also closely related to the concept of job satisfaction. According to the theory of cognitive dissonance by (Festinger, 1957), employees tend to seek consistency between their behaviors and beliefs. Therefore, a high level of job satisfaction can be an important factor that supports employee engagement.

2.4. Employee Performance

The theoretical study of employee performance includes an in-depth understanding of the various factors that affect the productivity and contribution of individuals in an organization. Herzberg's Motivation Theory (Semedo et al., 2019; Dipomatodjo, T. S. P., 2025). emphasizes the importance of motivational factors, such as achievement, responsibility, and recognition, in improving employee morale and performance. Vroom's Expectancy Theory highlights the relationship between an individual's expectation of an outcome and the effort required to achieve it, forming a basis for understanding how an individual's beliefs can shape performance levels. Organizational Justice Theory creates an understanding of how

employees' perceptions of fairness, resource distribution, and organizational decisions can affect their motivation and performance. Hersey-Blanchard's Situational Leadership Theory (Rasool et al., 2021) provides perspective on the importance of adjusting leadership styles to employee readiness and abilities. (McGregor's X and Y Theory, 2021) explores managers' views on the nature of employees, which can shape managerial mindsets and interactions with teams. The integration of these theories provides rich insights for developing a holistic management strategy, enabling organizations to design policies and practices that support employee performance improvement. Employee performance indicators are parameters or metrics used to measure the level of contribution and achievement of an employee in his or her work. These indicators help organizations to evaluate the extent to which employees are achieving their individual goals and contributing to the overall goals of the company. Some commonly used employee performance indicators involve aspects of productivity, work quality, and commitment to tasks (Lai et al., 2020; Rasool et al., 2021; Sahni, 2021; Semedo et al., 2019).

2.5. Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis

This frame of mind describes the influence between authentic leadership on employee performance through employee engagement. This model shows that authentic leadership can have an effect on employee performance optimally through employee engagement.

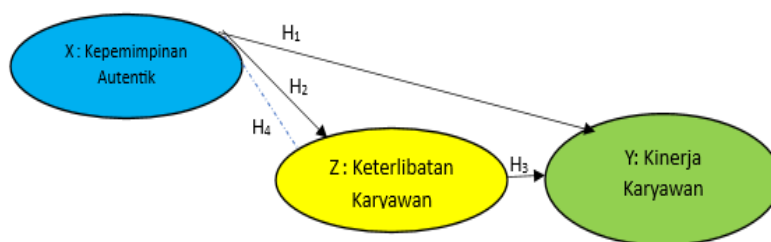


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Research Hypothesis

The hypothesis of this research is described as follows:

H1: Authentic Leadership can Affect Employee Performance at PT Karas Industri Nusa Tenggara Timur

H2: Authentic Leadership can influence Employee Engagement at PT Karas Industri Nusa Tenggara Timur

H3: Employee Involvement can Affect Employee Performance at PT Karas Industri Nusa Tenggara Timur

H4: Authentic Leadership through Employee Involvement affects Employee Performance at PT Karas Industri Nusa Tenggara Timur.

3. Methods

This study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory descriptive design to explain the relationship between variables through testing the hypotheses that have been formulated. The research variables consisted of Authentic Leadership (X) as an independent variable, Employee Engagement (Z) as an intervening variable, and Employee Performance (Y) as a bound variable. The research population includes all employees of PT Karas Industri Nusa Tenggara Timur as many as 200 people. The sample was determined using the probability sampling method with a simple random sampling technique, so that 132 respondents were obtained based on calculations with the Sample Size Calculator (margin of error 5%). The

types of data used are primary data and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through a Google Form-based questionnaire with a Likert scale of 1–5, while secondary data was sourced from the company's literature and supporting documents. The research instrument includes measurable indicators for each variable according to the theory used.

The data analysis technique was carried out using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on Partial Least Squares (PLS) with the help of SmartPLS 3.0. The analysis includes two stages, namely the evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) to test the validity and reliability of the instrument through convergent validity, discriminant validity, composite reliability, AVE, and Cronbach's Alpha, and the evaluation of the structural model (inner model) to test the relationship between variables using R^2 , Q^2 , and Goodness of Fit (GoF) values. Hypothesis testing was carried out through a bootstrapping procedure with a significance level of 5% (t-statistic ≥ 1.96 and p-value < 0.05) to determine the acceptance or rejection of the hypothesis. In addition, descriptive analysis was used to describe the characteristics of respondents and the distribution of answers for each variable using the 1.00–5.00 score interval category.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Overview of Research Objects

PT Karas Industri, located in East Nusa Tenggara (NTT), is a manufacturing company that focuses on processing local natural resources such as coconut, coffee, and seafood into value-added products such as virgin coconut oil, organic coffee, and processed fish. The company implements a business strategy based on innovation, production efficiency, and environmental sustainability by applying modern technology and environmentally friendly waste treatment systems. In addition to being profit-oriented, PT Karas Industri also has a positive social impact through the empowerment of local communities. The company provides training to local workers and establishes strategic partnerships with local farmers and fishermen, thereby increasing the income and market access of the community. From an economic perspective, PT Karas Industri contributes to regional economic growth by creating jobs and attracting investment based on local resources. The study involved 114 employee respondents aged between 23–56 years, who were selected through the distribution of an online questionnaire during April–May.

4.2. Distribution of Respondents' Answers

This study involved 114 employees of PT Karas Industri Nusa Tenggara Timur as respondents. Based on the results of processing data on respondent characteristics, the majority were male as much as 68.4%, while female as much as 31.6%. In terms of age, most respondents were in the age group of 52 years, which indicates that the majority of employees have had a long time of work experience. Based on education level, most respondents have a high school education background, indicating that the company's workforce generally comes from the secondary education level. The results of the descriptive analysis on the Authentic Leadership variable showed a mean of 3.31, which was included in the good category. This means that employees judge that the company's leaders have shown honest, open, high self-awareness, and consistency with the organization's vision and goals. In other words, authentic leadership at PT Karas Industri is considered quite effective in creating trust and example in the work environment. Furthermore, in the Employee Engagement variable, an average score of 3.37 was obtained, also in the good category. These findings indicate that employees have a high level of engagement and participation in work. They show a sense of responsibility,

loyalty, and a passion to contribute to the achievement of organizational goals. This good engagement reflects the healthy working relationship conditions between superiors and subordinates, as well as an organizational climate that supports collaboration and self-development.

Meanwhile, the Employee Performance variable showed the highest average score of 3.65, which means it is in the good category. This shows that employees have a high level of productivity, discipline, and work commitment. They are considered to be able to complete tasks well and contribute to improving the overall performance of the organization. Overall, the results showed that the three main variables – Authentic Leadership, Employee Engagement, and Employee Performance – were in the good category, with an increasing trend of positive influence. Authentic leadership has been proven to build emotional engagement and employee commitment, which in turn has a positive impact on improving individual and organizational performance. These findings are in line with previous research conducted by (Kaya and Karatepe 2020; Novitasari et al., 2020) which stated that an authentic leadership style is able to improve employee engagement and work performance through psychological mechanisms such as trust, integrity, and authenticity in interacting. Thus, it can be concluded that the application of authentic leadership at PT Karas Industri Nusa Tenggara Timur plays an important role in creating a productive, harmonious, and employee-oriented work environment.

4.3. Data Analysis

a) Outer Model Test Convergent Validity Test

Convergent validity is tested through the loading factor value with valid criteria if > 0.70 (Chin, 1998 in Ghazali, 2011).

Table 1. Validity Test Results (Loading Factor)

Construct	Items	λ	α	CR	AVE
Authentic Leadership (X1)	X1	0,975	0,985	0,988	0,915
	X2	0,983			
	X3	0,710			
	X4	0,993			
	X5	0,987			
	X6	0,992			
	X7	0,981			
	X8	0,996			
Employee Engagement (Z)	Z1	0,971	0,991	0,992	0,941
	Z2	0,986			
	Z3	0,952			
	Z4	0,980			
	Z5	0,984			
	Z6	0,973			
	Z7	0,946			
	Z8	0,964			
Employee Performance (Y)	Y1	0,984	0,966	0,975	0,886
	Y2	0,991			
	Y3	0,740			
	Y4	0,987			
	Y5	0,980			

Source: data processed, 2025

The entire loading factor value > 0.7, so all indicators are declared valid. Furthermore, the Discriminant Validity test shows that the cross loading value shows that each indicator has a higher correlation to its construct compared to other constructs. Thus, all variables meet the criteria of discriminant validity (Hussein, 2019). The Reliability Test shows that all variables show a Composite Reliability value of > 0.70, which means that this research instrument is reliable and consistent in measuring the construct in question.

b) Test inner model (structural model)

The internal evaluation of the model aims to see the relationship between latent variables with the R² and Q² indicators.

Coefficient of Determination (R²)

The R² value indicates how much the exogenous variable is able to explain the endogenous variable.

Table 2. Value of Coefficient of Determination (R²)

	R Square	Adjusted R Square
Employee Engagement	0,958	0,957
Employee Performance	0,885	0,883

The R-square value for the employee engagement variable (Z) obtained was 0.958 indicating that 95.8% could be influenced by authentic leadership variables while the remaining 4.2% were influenced by other variables outside the study.

Predictive Relevance (Q²)

The value of Q² = 0.995212, meaning that the amount of diversity of research data that can be explained by the structural model is 99%, while the remaining 1% is explained by factors other than the model.

c) Hypothesis Test

Based on the results of the evaluation of the outer model and inner model, all constructs are eligible for hypothesis testing using the bootstrapping method in SmartPLS 3.3.3 (Figure 2). The test was carried out on the direct and indirect influence between latent variables.

Live Testing

Direct influence tests were carried out on the H1, H2, and H3 hypotheses with the statistical criteria of > 1.97 and p-value < 0.05 showing a significant influence.

Table 3. Path Coefficients Test Results

	Relationship	β	T-value	P-Values	Decision
H1	Authentic Leadership -> Employee Engagement	0,979	109,757	0,000	Confirmed
H2	Leadership Authentic Employee Performance ->	-1,156	2,105	0,036	Confirmed
H3	Involvement Employee Employee Performance >	2,042	3,940	0,000	Confirmed

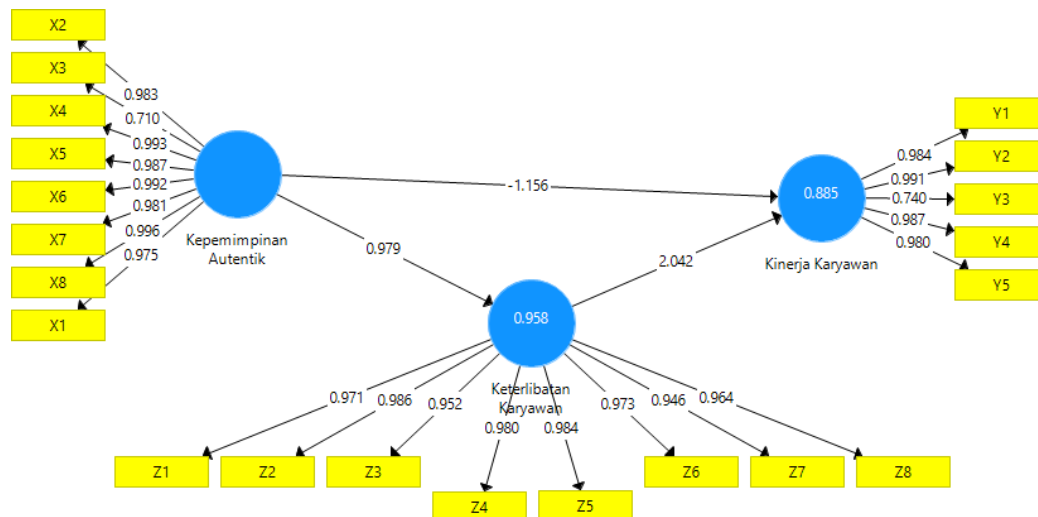


Figure 2. Model PLS

Interpretation of the results:

The first hypothesis of this study is that authentic leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee engagement. The results of data processing obtained a t-value value on the influence of authentic leadership on employee engagement in table 4.4 of 109.757 > 1.97, and a p-value value of 0.000 < 0.005.

Hypothesis The second hypothesis of this study Authentic leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. The results of data processing obtained a t-value value on the influence of authentic leadership on employee performance in table 4.4 of 2.105 > 1.97, and a p-value of 0.000 < 0.005.

Hypothesis The third hypothesis of this study Employee involvement has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. The results of data processing obtained a t-value value on the effect of employee involvement on employee performance in the table

4.4 is 3.940 > 1.97, and the p-value is 0.000 < 0.005.

Indirect Influence Testing

The indirect influence test (H4) was conducted to see the role of employee involvement as a mediating variable between authentic leadership (X) and employee performance (Y).

Table 5. Indirect Effects Test Results

Immediate effect		Indirect effect (after bootstrapping)			Decision
		β	T-Value	p-value	
H4	Employee Engagement - > Employee Performance	2,042	3,940	0,000	Mediator
	Authentic Leadership - > Employee Engagement - > Employee Performance	1,998	3,988	0,000	

The test results showed that the relationship of authentic leadership variables to employee performance through employee engagement showed an indirect path coefficient value of 1.998 with a calculated t-value of 3.988, which means it is less than 1.97 and a p-value of 0.000 or

less than 0.05. These results mean that employee engagement has a significant influence in mediating authentic leadership on employee performance.

4.4. The Influence of Authentic Leadership on Employee Engagement

The results of the study show that authentic leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee engagement at PT Karas Industri. Transparent, honest, and ethical leaders are able to build trust and a sense of security for employees, thereby increasing their motivation and participation in work. These findings are consistent with studies by Gardner et al., 2021; Avolio et al., 2022) that affirm that authentic leadership strengthens employees' emotional connection to the organization, increases a sense of belonging, and encourages higher work engagement.

4.5. The Influence of Authentic Leadership on Employee Performance

Authentic leadership has also been proven to have a positive and significant effect on employee performance at PT Karas Industri. Leaders with integrity and fairness create a supportive work environment, so employees feel valued and motivated to do better. These results are in line with research by (Avolio et al. (2021; Gardner et al., 2022) which shows that authentic leadership increases employee loyalty, responsibility, and productivity. Thus, the application of an authentic leadership style is an important factor in improving individual and organizational performance.

4.6. The Influence of Employee Involvement on Employee Performance

Research proves that employee involvement has a positive influence on performance at PT Karas Industri. Actively engaged employees demonstrate greater dedication, innovation, and commitment to achieving company goals. This supports the findings of (Sarti 2020; Saks, 2021; Nurhaliza et al., 2023). That engagement increases job satisfaction, loyalty, and effectiveness. By creating a supportive work environment and providing fair rewards, PT Karas Industri has succeeded in improving productivity and service quality through increased employee engagement.

4.7. The Influence of Authentic Leadership on Employee Performance through Employee Engagement

The results of the study show that authentic leadership has a positive and significant effect indirectly on employee performance through employee involvement as a mediating variable. Authentic leaders can foster trust, loyalty, and a sense of belonging in employees, which in turn increases engagement and impacts improved performance. These findings are in line with the research of (Luthans and Avolio, 2021; Rego et al., 2023) who affirm that engagement is an important mechanism that connects authentic leadership to performance. Thus, strengthening authentic leadership is an effective strategy to build high engagement and superior performance at PT Karas Industri.

5. Conclusion

Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that authentic leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee engagement and performance at PT Karas Industri, both directly and indirectly through employee involvement. Honest, transparent, and ethical leaders are able to build trust, increase motivation, and create a positive work environment, thus having an impact on improving individual and organizational performance. Although employee engagement also affects performance, structural and operational factors are still a challenge in optimizing these influences. The implications of these findings underscore the importance of implementing an authentic leadership style to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the company through increased employee commitment and loyalty. Therefore, PT Karas Industri is advised to strengthen authentic leadership practices through training, open communication, and recognition of employee contributions. Further research suggests extending the context to other sectors as well as considering additional variables such as organizational culture and work well-being to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the influence of authentic leadership on employee performance.

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