The Role of Teacher Followership Mediation For Authentic Leadership Toward Teacher Work Engagement

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Abstract: The Role of Teacher Followership Mediation for Authentic Leadership toward Teacher Work Engagement. Objectives: This research aimed to investigate how authentic leadership affects teacher followership and teacher work engagement mediated by teacher followership. **Methods**: A quantitative survey was employed. The population was civil servant teachers of senior high and vocational schools from 15 districts of Lampung Province, with a sample of 378 teachers randomly selected and completed the questionnaires distributed through google form The gathered data were analyzed using SEM Amos Version 23. **Findings:** Authentic leadership influenced teacher followership, teacher followership influenced teacher work engagement, and teacher followership mediated the influence of authentic leadership on teacher work engagement. **Conclusion:** Authentic leadership positively and significantly inluences teacher work engagement mediated by teacher followership.

Keywords: authentic leadership, teacher followership, teacher work engagement, role of mediation

Abstrak: Peran Mediasi Kepengikutan Guru untuk Kepemimpinan Autentik terhadap Kerja Guru. Tujuan: Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk meneliti bagaimana pengaruh kepemimpinan autentik terhadap kepengikutan guru dan terhadap keterlibatan kerja guru yang dimediasi kepengikutan guru. Metode: Survei kuantitatif digunakan. Populasinya adalah guru ASN SMA dan SMK dari 15 kabupaten di Provinsi Lampung, dengan 378 guru sebagai sampel yang dipilih secara acak dan melengkapi kuesioner yang dikirimkan melalui google form. Data yang terkumpul dianalisis menggunakan SEM Amos Versi 23. Temuan: Kepemimpinan autentik mempengaruhi kepengikutan guru, kepengikutan guru mempengaruhi keterlibatan kerja guru, dan kepengikutan guru memediasi pengaruh kepemimpinan autentik terhadap keterlibatan kerja guru. Kesimpulan: Kepemimpinan autentik berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap keterikatan kerja guru yang dimediasi oleh kepengikutan guru.

Kata kunci: kepemimpinan autentik, kepengikutan guru, keterlibatan kerja guru, peran mediasi.

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◼ INTRODUCTION

Work engagement was a concern of organizational leaders and managers worldwide (Welch, 2011). They recognize it as one of the essential elements that affect the effectiveness of an organization's work (Zahed-Babelan et al., 2019). That's why the number of studies on work engagement has increased rapidly (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018).

Two main drivers of work engagement have been identified, namely: the employee's relationship with his immediate supervisor and the employee's trust in the ability of his superior (Carnegie, 2012). Trust is described as a willingness to act based on the actions, words, and decisions of others (Roncesvalles & Sevilla, 2015). With trust, employees can feel safe and free to propose unusual ideas, as well as freely express opposing views (Avolio et al., 2004). Therefore, leaders and employees must develop a relationship of mutual trust. Employee trust in their leaders can be cultivated by authentic leaders (Roncesvalles & Sevilla, 2015).

An authentic leader has the unique ability to understand problems from various perspectives and can direct his followers correctly with fairness and honesty (Northouse, 2021). At the same time, authentic leaders are bound by strong internal moral values, ethical behavior, and accountability (Lussier & Achua, 2015). Authentic leaders are distinguished by broad appeal and a genuine desire to serve others (George, 2003). By combining these moral and ethical perspectives, authentic leadership moves beyond transformational leadership (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; George, 2003; Woolley et al., 2011). Therefore, authentic leadership is considered to be a more personalized leadership style compared to other leadership styles such as charismatic leadership (Ribeiro et al., 2018).

Leaders must be aware of the internal and external influences and processes of an organization so that subordinates will be able to identify the goals and challenges of the organization (Clapp-Smith et al., 2009). When employees perceive their leaders as having the necessary skills and abilities to facilitate growth and productivity, it leads to increased assurance among subordinates about a better and more profitable future (Hassan & Ahmed, 2011). This can lead to increased work engagement as employees so that employees gain a sense of trust and a feeling of security with the abilities and competencies of their leaders (Hassan & Ahmed, 2011).

The lack of research and emphasis on followership compared to research on the topic is lame leadership considering that the two are interrelated (Herdian et al., 2022). The emergence of the information age has highlighted the need for a more flexible leader-follower relationship. These changes have made the study of followership even more necessary as organizations seek new ways to select, train, and lead followers for maximum work productivity (Cross et al., 2004).

Based on the behavioral characteristics of followership, Howell and Costley (2006) theorized how active followers can increase work engagement. First, they note that the role of the follower fulfills essential personal needs for the individual, as it provides friendships with others that are valued by serving them, and thus helps meet one's social needs and affirms a self-concept that is beneficial to many people (Howell & Costley, 2006).). Second, fulfilling the role of active follower fulfills an individual's need for self-esteem because it provides personal growth by helping them become more effective performers (Vondey, 2008).

Referring to the description presented, the authors identify the existing problem. There is still little research on work engagement in educational institutions, especially in Indonesia, and very little research linking authentic leadership style mediated by teacher followership to teacher work

engagement. Thus, the authors believe that the results of this research can provide practical guidance for leaders in educational institutions in Indonesia and make a significant contribution to understanding the work involvement of teachers in educational institutions in Indonesia and how authentic leadership styles and followership can influence this work involvement. This can help educational leaders develop more effective strategies for increasing teacher engagement and improving education quality. This study aims to answer the following research questions.

a. How does authentic leadership influence teacher followership and teacher work engagement?

b. What is the direct effect of authentic leadership on teacher work engagement through teacher followership?

■ LITERATURE REVIEW

Teacher Work Engagement

Work engagement is identified as a combination of satisfaction and commitment, and satisfaction refers more to emotional or attitudinal elements, while commitment involves more motivational and physical characteristics (Schmidt, 2004). Furthermore, Schmidt (2004) even added that work engagement moves beyond satisfaction which incorporates various perceptions of employees who collectively show high performance, commitment, and loyalty. In this case, work engagement can be used to describe the extent to which employees are involved, committed, enthusiastic, and excited about their work (Macey & Schneider, 2008).

Work engagement is critical for all organizations because it helps create a better work culture, reduces staff turnover, increases productivity, improves work and customer relations, and retains an impact on organizational profits (Schaufeli, 2018). The effects of work engagement are individuals have high morale (Schaufeli, 2018). individuals can develop their

potential at work (Bakker & Leiter, 2010), individuals can survive facing work difficulties (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2008), individuals invest time and effort in their work activities (Bakker & Leiter, 2010), and individuals can identify themselves psychologically in their work (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2008). Lockwood (2007) classifies the factors that affect work engagement into two aspects.

Internal factors: Several things can affect the level of employee engagement, including the employee's life background (biography), personality characteristics, employee trust in the company, feelings of pride in the company, and employee perceptions that the work done is crucial, has goals, and has meaning for himself (Lockwood, 2007).

External factors: Things that can affect the level of work engagement based on external factors, namely organizational culture, leadership style, senior manager's concern for the existence of employees, company reputation, compensation, opportunities to develop employee careers, opening opportunities for employees to give opinions, rights employees to make decisions, the quality of communication between members of the organization, a compact and mutually supportive work team, clarity of the type of work being done, the existence of resources needed by employees to support performance, and the delivery of organizational values and goals to employees (Lockwood, 2007).

Authentic Leadership

Authentic Leadership is a leader who is aware of his strengths and weaknesses, encourages the participation of others does not impose his point of view on others, and acts according to his values and beliefs (Walumbwa et al., 2008). This condition is caused by authentic leadership being able to foster self-confidence and self-ability in employees (Rego et al., 2016).

Walumbwa et al. (2008) identified authentic leadership as comprised of four dimensions, self-awareness, relational transparency, a balanced process, and an internalized moral perspective. These four dimensions can be explained as follows:

Self-awareness: Self-awareness is a process by which leaders know themselves, their strengths and weaknesses, and their influence on others. This component reflects values, identities, emotions, motivations, and goals as well as knowing and being aware of one's feelings (Kernis, 2003). Leaders who have self-awareness will know the values of their subordinates, know the importance of struggle and respect each other. Self-awareness is also needed to develop authentic leadership components, gain insight into oneself through exposure to subordinates, and be aware of the leader's impact on followers (Walumbwa et al., 2008).

Relational transparency: Relational transparency is the leader's understanding of the thoughts and feelings of the leader toward his employees. Maintain the relationship between leaders and employees based on sincerity and honesty. Relational transparency occurs when leaders share their feelings, motivations, and desires with others rightly (Kernis, 2003).

Balanced processing: Balanced processing allows leaders to avoid bias. This component is seen as authentic because leaders are open to perspectives and are also objective in considering the viewpoints of others (Walumbwa et al., 2008).

Internalized moral perspective: Internalized moral viewpoint refers to self-regulation resulting in ethical and transparent behavior. This component is seen as authentic because the leader's actions are consistent with the morals and beliefs they have (Walumbwa et al., 2008).

Teacher Followership

Followership is an interactive role played by individuals that complements leadership roles and is equal in importance in achieving group and organizational performance (Kelley, 1992). Furthermore, followership is defined as a process in which a person fills the role of a follower, supports the views of a leader, and consciously and deliberately works towards a common goal shared with the leader or organization (Baker & Gerlowski, 2007). Meanwhile, Crossman and Crossman (2011) argued that followership is a relational role in which followers can influence leaders and contribute to group and organizational goals.

Kelley (1992) identified two dimensions of followership, namely: independent critical thinking (ICT) and active engagement (AE). These two dimensions can be explained as follows.

ICT is the ability of individuals to measure the importance of their role in the organization and the collaboration they do to achieve the expected results (Kelley, 1992). Kelley (1992) further explains that the ICT dimension is a dimension that clarifies how a follower is not a "sheep" who is only able to follow directions from his shepherd without having the ability to think critically and cannot create required innovative breakthroughs. Behavioral characteristics that reflect ICT are the ability to provide constructive criticism and action innovatively and creatively (Blanchard et al., 2009). Independent critical-thinking followers are aware of individual behavior in the act of organizational goals or vision. They can weigh the impact of decisions from the idea set by the leader and offer constructive criticism, full of creativity and innovation. Conversely, an independent uncritical thinker does not consider various possibilities that go beyond what he says, does not contribute to the organization, and takes ideas from leaders

for granted without rethinking (Blanchard et al., 2009).

AE is defined as an individual's ability to engage in organizational processes (Kelley, 1992). Furthermore, Kelley (1992) explained that the dimension of active engagement (AE) is a dimension that includes the behavior of followers where they voluntarily participate and carry out activities and programs that have attitudes and programs that have positive values for the organization. Individuals who are passive and do not show involvement and wait to be told what to do are followers who do not have this dimension. Individuals who own this dimension will show attitudes and behaviors that are always in line with the goodness of the organization even though these followers do not get rewards directly from the organization.

■ METHODS

Participants

The population and sample are civil servant teachers who work at state senior high schools and state vocational high schools from 15 districts/cities in Lampung Province using a simple random sampling technique. There were 378 teachers involved and completed the questionnaires sent by Google form.

Research Design and Procedures

The research was conducted in Lampung and covered 15 regencies/cities. The design used a quantitative survey to explain phenomena and test theories consisting of variables that are measured by numbers and analyzed statistically to determine whether the theory explains or predicts the phenomena of interest (Creswell, 2021; Gay et al., 2009; Yilmaz, 2013). Hypothesis testing using the SEM was preceded by outlier testing, normality testing, Bollen-Stine Bootstrap testing, and Goodness of Fit (GoF) testing.

Instruments

The authors adopted the standardized questionnaires and they are open sources. The study utilized the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ; 16 items) by Walumbwa et al. (2008) to measure authentic leadership. Servant leadership was assessed using the Servant Leadership Questionnaire (SLQ; 28 items) developed by Liden et al. (2008). Work engagement was measured using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES; 17 items) by Schaufeli et al. (2006). For teacher followership, a custom instrument, the Teacher Followership Scale (TFS; 16 items), was developed by adapting Kelley's Followership Questionnaire (KFQ; 20 items) by Kelley (1992). Language experts aided in translation, and a Forum Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted to ensure readability. Each alternative answer gets a weighted score between 1 to 4. With 1 = Strongly disagree (SD), 2 = Disagree (D), 3 = Agree (A), and 4 = Strongly Agree (SA).

Data Analysis

The authors employed Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) Amos to analyze the data gathered to get the goodness of fit and coefficient exogenous to endogenous. Hu and Bentler (1999) introduced cutoff criteria for fit indexes in Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). In their analysis of 100 studies utilizing SEM, they found that an RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation) below 0.05 indicates excellent fit, between 0.05 and 0.08 suggests good fit, and between 0.08 and 0.10 indicates marginal fit. An RMSEA above 0.10 suggests a poor fit. Widely accepted in SEM research, these criteria are relative and may vary based on factors like sample size, model complexity, and data nature. Caution and consideration of relevant factors are advised when applying these criteria (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Hair et al., 2014; Kline, 2015).

Goodness of Fit (GoF) is a comparison of the specified model and the covariance matrix between indicators or the observed variables. If the resulting GoF is good, then the model can be accepted, and vice versa if the resulting GoF is bad. Then the model must be rejected or the model modified (Latan & Ramli, 2013).

In this study, to discover which structure is the most fit or feasible, you can look at the Goodness of Fit (GoF) value in the calculation results. Based on the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the help of the Analysis of Moment Structure (Amos), the researcher presents the results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) calculations based on the Chi-Squares statistical test, Root Mean Squares Error of Approximate (RMSEA), Tucker Lewis Index (TLI)), Normed Fit Index (NFI), and Parsimonious Normal Fit Index (PNFI). Recapitulation of the GoF criteria in this study, the researchers presented as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Goodness of fit index

No	The goodness of Fit Indices	Parameter		Result	Information
		Excellent	Marginal Fit		
1.	CMIN/DF	≤ 5.00	1.890	Excellent	≤ 5.00
2.	RMSEA	≤ 0.08	0.074	Good Fit	≤ 0.08
3.	GFI	≥ 0.90	0.776	Marginal Fit	≥ 0.90
4.	AGFI	≥ 0.90	0.772	Marginal Fit	≥ 0.90
5.	CFI	≥ 0.90	0.944	Excellent	≥ 0.90
6.	TLI	≥ 0.90	0.933	Excellent	≥ 0.90
7.	IFI	≥ 0.90	0.947	Excellent	≥ 0.90

Table 1 shows the full model being an acceptable fit model. Of the seven criteria, five standards include good fit, namely, RMSEA, CMIN/DF, TLI, CFI, and IFI. While GFI and AGFI are included in the Marginal Fit category. The overall Goodness of Fit Index can be assessed based on five criteria. Researchers who use SEM are not required to fulfill all the standards for the Goodness of Fit Index (Ghozali, 2008; Hair et al., 2014; Purwanto et al., 2020). Researchers are advised to fulfill four to five criteria of the Goodness of Fit Index. Fulfillment of four to five Goodness of Fit Indices is considered sufficient to assess the feasibility of a model with the respective records of Absolut Fit Indices, Incremental Fit Indices, and Parsimony Fit Indices represented (Hair et al., 2011).

■ **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**
Direct Effect Testing

Based on calculations using Amos Version 23, the estimated value and p-value of the direct influence between the variables in this study are obtained as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Standardized direct effects

Parameter			Estimate	Lower	Upper	P
TF	<---	AL	.434	.395	.472	.003
TWE	<---	TF	.746	.692	.810	.002
TWE	<---	AL	.122	.113	.386	.320

The results in Table 2 show that the authentic leadership (AL) variable has a direct positive effect on the teacher followership (TF) variable with an estimated value of 0.434 with a p-value of 0.003 <0.05. Furthermore. the p-value of the direct effect of the authentic leadership (AL) variable on the work engagement (TWE) variable is 0.002 <0.05.

The teacher followership (TF) variable has a direct positive effect on the teacher work engagement (TWE) variable with an estimated value of 0.746. Furthermore. the p-value of the direct effect of the teacher followership (TF) variable on the teacher work engagement (TWE) variable is 0.002 <0.05. These results indicate that the teacher followership (TF) variable has a significantly positive effect on the teacher work engagement (TWE) variable.

The results in Table 8 show that the authentic leadership (AL) variable has a direct positive effect on the teacher work engagement (TWE) variable with an estimated value of 0.122. Furthermore. the p-value of the direct influence of the authentic leadership (AL) variable on the teacher work engagement (TWE) variable is 0.257 > 0.05. These results indicate that the authentic leadership (AL) variable has a positive but not significant effect on the teacher work engagement (TWE) variable.

Indirect Influence Test Results (Mediation Effect)

Based on calculations using Amos Version 23. the estimated value and p-value of the indirect effect (mediation effect) between the variables in this study are obtained as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Standardized indirect effects

	AL
TF	.000
TWE	.324

One variable acting as a moderator is to compare the direct and indirect output tables. When the indirect value is greater than the direct effect. the intervening variable mediates. Because the indirect value is 0.324 (Table 3) > the direct value is 0.122 (Table 2). the teacher followership mediates.

The concept we describe here involves the use of mediation analysis to better understand the relationships between variables in a statistical model. In moderation analysis. you examine whether the strength or direction of the relationship between two variables changes depending on the level of a third variable. known as the moderator. It helps you understand under what conditions a relationship is stronger. weaker. or even reversed (Igartua & Hayes. 2021).

Mediation analysis is used to understand the underlying mechanisms through which one variable influences another variable. It typically involves three variables: the independent variable (IV). the mediator (M). and the dependent variable (DV). The mediator helps explain why or how the IV affects the DV.

This represents the relationship between authentic leadership (AL) and teacher work engagement (TWE) without considering any intervening variables (mediators). This represents the relationship between AL and TWE. considering the mediator. which in this case is teacher followership (TF).

Based on your statement. you have found that the indirect effect (0.324) is greater than the direct effect (0.122). When the indirect effect is greater than the direct effect. it suggests that the intervening variable (in this case. teacher followership. TF) is mediating the relationship between authentic leadership (AL) and teacher work engagement (TWE).

In other words. authentic leadership influences teacher followership. and teacher followership. in turn. influences teacher work

engagement. This suggests that teacher followership plays a significant role in explaining why and how authentic leadership affects teacher work engagement(Adil & Kamal. 2020). The mediation effect implies that the impact of authentic leadership on teacher work engagement is not just direct but is partially explained or mediated by the level of teacher followership. When teacher followership is higher. it amplifies the positive impact of authentic leadership on work engagement (Ciftci & Erkanli. 2020).

This finding is valuable because it provides a more nuanced understanding of the relationships within your model. It suggests that interventions or leadership strategies aimed at improving teacher followership might lead to a more substantial increase in teacher work engagement in the context of authentic leadership. Additionally. it highlights the importance of considering the role of teacher followership when studying the effects of leadership in educational settings.

The direct effect of authentic leadership on teacher work engagement through teacher followership can be understood as follows. Authentic leadership influences teacher followership directly. Authentic leaders exhibit qualities such as transparency. trustworthiness. and respect for their teachers. they inspire and motivate their teachers to follow their lead willingly.

Teacher followership. in turn. has a direct impact on teacher work engagement. When teachers feel a strong sense of followership toward their authentic leaders. they are more likely to be engaged in their work. They may feel a sense of duty. commitment. and motivation to fulfill their roles and responsibilities effectively (Pranitasari. 2020). Through the pathway of teacher followership. authentic leadership indirectly influences teacher work engagement. This indirect effect suggests that authentic leadership's impact on work engagement is mediated by its influence on teacher followership (Zahed-Babelan . 2019).

In summary. authentic leadership has a direct positive effect on teacher followership. and teacher followership has a direct positive effect on teacher work engagement. Therefore. the relationship between authentic leadership and teacher work engagement is partially mediated by teacher followership. The combined influence of these factors contributes to a more engaged and committed teaching workforce. which can have positive implications for student outcomes and the overall effectiveness of educational institutions.

■ **CONCLUSIONS**

In this mediation analysis exploring the relationship between authentic leadership, teacher followership, and teacher work engagement, the findings reveal a significant indirect effect of authentic leadership on teacher work engagement through teacher followership (0.324), surpassing the direct effect (0.122). This implies that teacher followership mediates the influence of authentic leadership on teacher work engagement, highlighting the meaningful and statistically significant mediation effect. Theoretical implications include advancements in education management, human resource management, and leadership literature. Additionally, the development of the Teacher Followership Scale (TFS) provides a valuable tool for researchers and practitioners in further investigations.

Practically, the study's outcomes offer guidance for future researchers, encouraging more in-depth investigations in the evolving landscape of education management. For teachers, the results serve as valuable insights for self-reflection, while school principals can benefit from using the findings to enhance their competence as both authentic and servant leaders. Education authorities are urged to utilize the study's outcomes as a foundation for crafting informed policies aimed at improving the leadership quality of school principals.

■ **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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