

THE ROLE OF AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP IN ENHANCING
ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT: EVIDENCE FROM EGYPT

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Abstract:

The purpose of this paper is to explore the effect of toxic leadership on organizational commitment from the point of view of employees in cement sector companies in Egypt. The study used a survey questionnaire. Respondents were 310, The descriptive analytical approach was applied. The study used regression analysis to determine the relationship between the independent variable on the dependent variables. The results of the regression analysis proved that authentic leadership dimensions (Self-awareness, Balanced Processing, Internalized Moral Perspective, and Relational Transparency) have a positive and significant effect on organizational commitment dimensions from the point of view of employees in cement sector companies.

Keywords: *Authentic leadership, Organizational commitment, Affective commitment, Normative commitment, Continuance commitment.*

1 - INTRODUCTION:

Some results from previous studies have found essential variables such as: Engagement (Bruce *et al.*, 2010), Commitment (Bandura and Cavusano (2018), Psychological capital (Burhanuddin *et al.*, 2019), and leadership (Avolio *et al.*, 2009). These variables have a positive impact on employees, whether in terms of raising their morale or improving performance.

Leadership can be considered as a pivotal component that influences organizational commitment. Thus organizations with effective leaders can have committed employees (Jackson *et al.*, 2013). This appeared in many leadership theories (charismatic, transformational) that included employee commitment as a possible outcome (Edith *et al.*, 2015). On the other hand, the theory of organizational commitment included leadership as a pivotal and essential factor towards strengthening employee commitment (Meyer *et al.*, 2002).

Although previous leadership research has largely focused on the competencies of leaders, more recently practitioners and researchers have given more attention to the ethical aspect of leadership. Here, authentic leadership has become of interest to researchers which concentrates on self-awareness self-regulation, self-concordance, and modeling these characteristics to subordinates (Lemoine *et al.*, 2019).

Administrative studies have focused on the factors that determine organizational commitment, and among those factors is the leadership style. Hence the organizations' interest in leadership and leader behaviors that create an organizational climate full of hope and optimism, so it is likely that authentic leadership will have a positive impact on the level of employee commitment (Walumbwa, *et al.*, 2008).

Despite the abundance of studies that dealt with authentic leadership in the non-Arab business environment, which confirmed the importance of practicing authentic leadership in the business organization because of its positive impact on employees attitudes as it leads to an increase in desired behaviors. As Arun *et al.*, (2022) pointed out, authentic leadership has been linked to a wide range of employee attitudes, behaviors, and outcomes, which improves the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization (Lee and Lee, 2018; Iqbal *et al.*, 2018). Efforts to address this gap are below what is required on the part of Arab researchers. A number of studies have also addressed the nature of the direct impact of authentic leadership on employees' commitment to organizations in the non-Arab business environment (Nasab and Afshari, 2019; Sharon, 2021; Ferrer, 2017). However, studies in the Arab business environment, ignored the study of the effect of authentic leadership on enhancing organizational commitment. The current research contributes to filling that gap.

2- literature review and hypothesis development:

In this section, the researcher defines basic concepts addressed in this study and presents literature relevant to the study variables.

2.1 Authentic Leadership

The roots of the term (Authenticity) go back to the ancient Greek philosophy, which it reflects a Greek aphorism "know thyself". Authenticity refers to the individual's possession of personal experiences and acting in accordance with the values and beliefs he believes in. Its concept was developed in the late 1970s, and its theoretical expansion as a radical construct in positive leadership theory over the past three decades, in order to emphasize the need for leaders' moral character, their concern for others, and the compatibility of their words and their compatibility with their actions (Arici, 2018; Ribeiro *et al.*, 2018)

Authentic leaders seek to fulfill the needs of both the organization and the subordinates. They determine the right direction for their subordinates and give value and importance to their roles. This comes from the followers' view of their leaders as the ideal and the role model to be followed (Gardner *et al.*, 2005).

2.1.1 Definition of Authentic leadership

Gardner and Carlson (2015) defined authentic leaders as those who lead their subordinates and present themselves as they are, rather than their unreal and false selves. Authentic leadership is defined as a leader's behavior pattern based on the leader's tremendous positive psychological capabilities in order to develop self-awareness, internal moral outlook, balanced information processing, and transparent communication in dealing with subordinates (Walumbwa *et al.*, 2008). George (2003) described Authentic leaders as being aware of their falls and working hard to overcome them.

Pavlovic (2015) defined authentic leadership as "It is a behavioral pattern that depends on a moral climate, and positive psychological abilities based on the leader's self-understanding, and its discovery to enhance his self-awareness, which increases the level of consensual communication between him and his employees." Wood (2007) defined it as "That leadership style that works to direct the values, goals, and behaviors of individuals towards achieving the goals of the organization in a state of transparency, integrity, and altruism."

2.1.2 Dimensions of authentic leadership:

Walumbwa *et al.*, (2008) identified four dimensions of authentic leadership as follows:

Self - Awareness

Self-awareness represents the degree of awareness and knowledge of the individual for himself and everything related to his identity, emotions, motives and goals, as well as the world around him, and the individual's awareness of his strengths, weaknesses and restrictions imposed on him.

Internalized Moral Perspective

Internalized Moral Perspective expresses the extent of the leader's commitment to ethical values and standards when making decisions or determining various work procedures.

Balanced Processing

Balanced Processing expresses the degree to which the leader is keen to collect and analyze all data related to a particular situation without bias so that he can objectively address this situation in a balanced manner.

Relational Transparency

Relational Transparency expresses the transparency of relationships as the leader's disclosure and disclosure of his values and beliefs to subordinates and the transparent exchange of information with everyone without discrimination, which leads to an increase in the degree of mutual trust between leaders and their subordinates.

2.2 Organizational commitment:

The results of many studies have shown the importance of organizational commitment in improving job attitudes such as job satisfaction and behaviors such as employees' extra-role behaviors, innovation in solving problems, reducing employee withdrawal behavior, labor turnover, and organizational outcomes such as performance (Park and Rainey, 2007).

The success of organizations depends in essence on the employees they possess on a high level of commitment to them, and that the commitment of the employee is not just because he is an official member of it, but rather represents attitude towards the organization and his willingness to do everything that is in the interest of the organization. (Robbins and Judge, 2007).

2.2.1 Definition of Organizational commitment:

Allen and Meyer (1990) explained that organizational commitment is related to the level of individuals' loyalty and their psychological connection to the organization and the least likely to leave it.

Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) indicated that organizational commitment in general can be defined as that linking force or psychological state that compels an individual to associate with the organization.

Porter *et al.*, (1974) define organizational commitment as the identification and engagement of an employee with the organization. This commitment is characterized by three main factors: (a) Strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values; (b) Willingness to make significant effort on behalf of the organization; and (c) strong desire to remain in the organization, regardless of the temptations of other alternatives.

2.2.2 Dimensions of Organizational commitment:

Organizational commitment has been divided into three dimensions: Continuous commitment, Affective commitment, and Normative commitment. Organizational commitment should be studied as a multi-dimensional concept rather than a one-dimensional one. (Allen and Meyer, 1990)

• *Continuance commitment:*

Allen and Meyer (1990) defined Continuous commitment as the need of the individual to remain in the organization because of his awareness of the losses he may incur if he leaves it, i.e. the individual remains in the organization because he is aware of the benefits associated with staying and the costs associated with leaving.

• *Affective commitment*

Allen and Meyer (1990) defined it as an individual's emotional attachment with his organization, where the individual feels the compatibility of his values and the values of the organization together, believes in its goals and has the willingness to do everything in his power for it, and that there is a kind of emotional relationship with the organization, so he feels as if he is part of it.

• *Normative commitment*

Allen and Smith (1993) defined it as a kind of commitment resulting from loyalty to the employer and the need to return the favor for what the organization has provided to him. The individual remains in the organization because he feels that he must do so, so he feels a kind of moral obligation and responsibility towards the organization.

2.2 Authentic leadership and Organizational Commitment

Regarding the relationship between authentic leadership and organizational commitment, underpinned by positive social exchanges and emotional contagion, the outcome is often identification of the subordinate with the leader.

Authentic leaders improve the level of organizational commitment through self-awareness and transparency with followers.

Authentic leaders often tend to encourage their subordinates to identify with the core values of their organization (Bandura, and Kavussanu, 2018). Authentic leaders demonstrate a thorough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their subordinates. They have the ability to gain insight into themselves through exposure to their subordinates and through awareness of their influence on others. Clarity in their expressions, a high level of understanding, a willingness to be self-aware, help to correct the personal inclinations of their subordinates and contribute to positive work results. The characteristics of authentic leaders are likely to increase the commitment of subordinates to their leaders and thus to their organization (Bandura and Kavussanu, 2018)

The study by Bandura and Cavusano (2018) on a sample of athletes in the sports industry demonstrated that authentic leadership is positively associated with outcomes including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, organizational confidence, etc.

In another study Roncesvalles and Gaerlan (2021) study which conducted on a sample of 150 responding university teachers in the Philippines tested the hypotheses using AMOS SPSS and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) software. The results of this research revealed that the authentic leadership and organizational commitment of teachers significantly influence the behavior of organizational citizenship. The results also showed that authentic leadership significantly influences organizational commitment.

On the indirect impact of authentic leadership on organizational commitment; The study of Gatling *et al.*, (2016) which was conducted on a sample of 236 students who work as hospitality employees in the United States of America. The results of the structural equation modeling provide support for the positive impact of authentic leadership on organizational commitment in the hospitality industry, and indicate that authentic leadership has an indirect impact on employee turnover intentions through organizational commitment. Hence, the researcher suggests that the positive relationship that appears through the authenticity of leaders can positively affect the mentality behind the three elements of commitment and thus improve organizational commitment in general.

Based on the previous literature review, the researcher was able to develop the following main hypothesis on which the study is based:

Authentic leadership dimensions (Self-awareness, Balanced Processing, Internalized Moral Perspective, and Relational Transparency) has a positive and significant effect on organizational commitment from the point of view of employees in cement sector companies.

This main hypothesis is divided into the following three hypotheses:

- H1: Authentic leadership (Self-awareness, Balanced Processing, Internalized Moral Perspective, and Relational Transparency) has a positive and significant effect on Affective commitment from the point of view of employees in cement sector companies.
- H2: Authentic leadership (Self-awareness, Balanced Processing, Internalized Moral Perspective, and Relational Transparency) has a positive and significant effect on Normative commitment from the point of view of employees in cement sector companies.
- H3: Authentic leadership (Self-awareness, Balanced Processing, Internalized Moral Perspective, and Relational Transparency) has a positive and significant effect on Continuance commitment from the point of view of employees in cement sector companies.

3 - Materials & Method

3.1 Population and Sampling

The research population was all the 1,106 employees of all cement sector companies that are located within the Cairo governorate. Statistical tables were used to arrive at a sample size of 285 based on a margin of error of 5% (Bazara'a, 1989)

Since the objective of the study was to estimate a certain phenomenon in the study population from the reality of the sample data, we relied on a randomly drawn probability sample (Bazraa, 1989). The questionnaire was distributed to the sample population with a response rate of 84% (240 completed questionnaires).

3.2 Measurement and Instrumentation:

3.2.1 Authentic leadership

The scale of Authentic leadership is adapted from the work of (Walumbwa, *et al.*,2008)., consisted of 16 items representing the four dimensions of the construct (self-awareness, relational transparency, internalized moral perspective, and balanced processing)

3.2.2 Organizational commitment

With regard to the organizational commitment scale, the researcher used the short form of the Mayer and Allen (1993) which is applied in Aube *et al.*, (2007), The scale consists of 18 items distributed over three sub-scales to measure the three dimensions of organizational commitment (Normative commitment, Continuous commitment, and Affective commitment). All variables are interval scales as well as using a 5-point Likert scale with a description of (1) strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) undecided (4) agree (5) strongly agree.

3.3 Reliability

The Cronbach alpha reliability was used to estimate the internal reliability of the scales. The results are presented in table 1.

Table 1. Cronbach reliability coefficients

scales	No. of items	Alpha coefficients
Authentic leadership	16	.774
self-awareness	4	.789
Relational transparency	4	.843
internalized moral perspective	4	.820
balanced processing	4	.863
Organizational commitment	18	.794
Normative commitment	6	.847
Continuous commitment	6	.882
Affective commitment	6	.816

3.4 Analysis Technique:

The researcher relied on a number of statistical methods in analyzing the data provided by the research sample using the computer through the Statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS):

- Descriptive statistics are represented by the arithmetic mean and standard deviation to describe the variables contained in the research
- Pearson's correlation coefficient to determine the magnitude and direction of the relationship between the dependent variables and the independent variable used in this research.
- Regression analysis to determine the relationship between the independent variable on the dependent variables

4 - Results

4.1 Demographic

With regard to gender; The majority of the respondents were males at 79% ,with regard to education; The majority were those with a bachelor's degree with 86%, high school at 11%, and with 3% with post graduate. Finally, with regard to experience and tenure, the predominant percentage was from (10) years to less than (15) years at 67%,followed by from (15) years and more at 20%, then from (5) years to less than (10) years at 10%, Finally, less than (5) years at a rate of 3%.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for search variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Authentic leadership	3.91	.794
Organizational commitment	3.90	.702

Table2.shows employees' perceptions towards authentic leadership styles portrayed by their supervisors which the employees considered to be very high. as evidenced by a mean value of 3.91; a result that implies the respondents felt that their leaders often applied this leadership style. There was also a high level of Organizational commitment among the employees of the company under study; mean value of 3.90.

4.2 The Correlation between the Research Variables

Table 3 shows the correlation between authentic leadership in its dimensions - self-awareness, Relational transparency, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing - as independent variables and Organizational commitment in its three dimensions - Normative commitment, Continuous commitment, and Affective commitment- as dependent variables.

Table 3. The results of correlation analysis between the research variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Toxic leadership									
self-awareness	.783**								
Relational transparency	.721**	.456**							
internalized moral perspective	.795**	.476*	.490**						
balanced processing	.781**	.567**	.520**	.408**					
Organizational commitment									
Normative commitment	.628**	.552**	.590**	.494**	.505**				
Continuous commitment	.619**	.503**	.467**	.562**	.611**	.693**			
Affective commitment	.689**	.487*	.620**	.597**	.534**	.674**	.629**		
	.635**	.528**	.642**	.486**	.476**	.734**	.569**	.519**	

Note. * $\rho < 0.05$; ** $\rho < 0.01$.

Table 3 illustrates positive and significant relationships between Authentic leadership and Organizational commitment and its three dimensions - Normative commitment, Continuous commitment, and Affective commitment- with (R) values equal: .628 .619, .689, .635, respectively a statistical significance of <0.01 level for all the 3 relationships. Table 3 illustrates also positive and significant relationships between the 4 dimensions of Authentic leadership - self-awareness, Relational transparency, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing - and Normative commitment with (R) values equal: .503 .467, .562, .611, respectively a statistical significance of <0.01 level for all the 4 relationships. And Continuous commitment with (R) values equal: .487 .620, .597, .534, respectively a statistical significance of <0.01 level for all the 4 relationships. And Affective commitment with (R) values equal: .528 .642, .486, .476, respectively a statistical significance of <0.01 level for all the 4 relationships.

4.3 Regression analysis results:

Table4 shows the magnitude and level of significance of the standard regression coefficients (β) for the independent variables, which regression analysis found to have a significant effect on organizational commitment or any of its three dimensions (Normative commitment, Continuous commitment, and Affective commitment).

Table 4. Results of regression analysis of the effect of independent variables on organizational commitment

variables	Normative commitment			Continuous commitment			Affective commitment			Organizational commitment		
	β	(T) test	Sig.	β	(T) test	Sig.	β	(T) test	Sig.	β	(T) test	Sig.
Self-awareness	0.233	3.654	0.000**	0.209	4.276	0.000**	0.289	3.205	0.001**	0.268	4.963	0.001*
Balanced Processing	0.254	3.679	0.001**	0.286	3.393	0.001**	0.276	4.396	0.000**	0.220	3.456	0.000**
Internalized Moral Perspective	0.302	4.265	0.000**	0.307	3.107	0.000**	0.320	3.440	0.001**	0.328	3.095	0.000**
Relational Transparency	0.257	3.610	0.000**	0.328	3.257	0.000**	0.306	3.723	0.000**	0.257	3.389	0.000**
Adjusted R ²	0.354			0.310			0.297			0.371		
(F) Test	26.678			18.398			52.308			38.208		
Sig.	0.000**			0.000**			0.001**			0.000**		

Note. * $\rho < 0.05$; ** $\rho < 0.01$.

Testing the first hypothesis:

According to the results shown in Table 4, the four dimensions of authentic leadership (Self-awareness, Balanced Processing, Internalized Moral Perspective, Relational Transparency) have a significant effect on the Normative commitment dimension, where the value of the standard regression coefficient (β) was 0.233, 0.254, 0.302 and 0.257, respectively, at a level of significance of 0.01 for all. That is, the predictive regression equation for the relationship between the normative commitment as a dependent variable and those variables as independent variables takes the following form:

$$Y = 9.234 + 0.233 X1 + 0.254 X2 + 0.302 X3 + 0.257 X4$$

Where Y refers to the dependent variable (Normative Commitment), X1 to Self-awareness, X2 to Balanced Processing, X3 to Internalized Moral Perspective, and x4 to Relational Transparency, Where the value of the constant for the regression model = 9.234

The previous regression equation is significant at the level of 0.00 and the significance of the multiple regression equation indicates that the regression model represents the relationship between the four dimensions of authentic leadership (as independent variables) and Normative commitment (as a dependent variable), and it is also clear that Adj. R² of the regression model is 0.354, which indicates that these independent variables together explain about 35% of the variance in the normative commitment (as a dependent variable).

Testing the second hypothesis:

According to the results shown in Table 4, the four dimensions of authentic leadership (Self-awareness, Balanced Processing, Internalized Moral Perspective, Relational Transparency) have a significant effect on the Continuous commitment dimension, where the value of the standard regression coefficient (β) was 0.209, 0.286, 0.307 and 0.328, respectively, at a level of significance of 0.01 for all. That is, the predictive regression equation for the relationship

between continuous commitment as a dependent variable and those variables as independent variables takes the following form:

$$Y = 8.308 + 0.209 X1 + 0.286 X2 + 0.307 X3 + 0.328 X4$$

Where Y refers to the dependent variable (Continuous Commitment), X1 to Self-awareness, X2 to Balanced Processing, X3 to Internalized Moral Perspective, and x4 to Relational Transparency, Where the value of the constant for the regression model= 8.308

The previous regression equation is significant at the level of 0.00 and the significance of the multiple regression equation indicates that the regression model represents the relationship between the four dimensions of authentic leadership (as independent variables) and Continuous commitment (as a dependent variable), and it is also clear that Adj. R² of the regression model is 0.354, which indicates that these independent variables together explain about 31% of the variance in the Continuous commitment (as a dependent variable).

Testing the third hypothesis:

According to the results shown in Table 4, the four dimensions of authentic leadership (Self-awareness, Balanced Processing, Internalized Moral Perspective, Relational Transparency) have a significant effect on the Affective commitment dimension, where the value of the standard regression coefficient (β) was 0.289, 0.276, 0.320 and 0.306, respectively, at a level of significance of 0.01 for all. That is, the predictive regression equation for the relationship between affective commitment as a dependent variable and those variables as independent variables takes the following form:

$$Y = 8.743 + 0.289 X1 + 0.276 X2 + 0.320 X3 + 0.306 X4$$

Where Y refers to the dependent variable (Affective Commitment), X1 to Self-awareness, X2 to Balanced Processing, X3 to Internalized Moral Perspective, and x4 to Relational Transparency, Where the value of the constant for the regression model = 8.743

The previous regression equation is significant at the level of 0.00 and the significance of the multiple regression equation indicates that the regression model represents the relationship between the four dimensions of authentic leadership (as independent variables) and affective commitment (as a dependent variable), and it is also clear that Adj. R² of the regression model is 0.297, which indicates that these independent variables together explain about 30% of the variance in the affective commitment (as a dependent variable).

5 - Discussion and conclusions:

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of authentic leadership on organizational commitment dimensions (Affective commitment, Normative commitment, Continuance commitment) from the point of view of employees in cement sector companies. The study noted a high level of perception of subordinates in the company under study of authentic leadership on the part of their supervisors. The findings of present study also show that authentic leadership has direct and significant effects on organizational commitment. These findings consistent with the results of Ferrer (2017) which concluded that the dimensions of authentic leadership (self-awareness, relational transparency and internal ethical perspective) have a positive and significant correlation with organizational commitment. It is also consistent with the findings of Bandura and Cavusano (2018), which demonstrated the impact of authentic leadership on a number of variables, including organizational commitment. It is also consistent with (Gatling *et al.*, 2016).

This result can be explained from the perspective of (Hlongwane and Olivier, 2017) that the commitment of the authentic leaders to the organization is demonstrated through transparency with subordinates. Thus, they act as role models for their subordinates. Employees develop a strong commitment to the organization through transparent relationships with an authentic leader.

6- Limitations

The research is limited to examine two variables: Authentic leadership as an independent variable, and organizational commitment as dependent variable.

The current study was categorized in its design into cross-sectional designs; Where data are collected for both dependent and independent variables simultaneously - at the same time - making it impossible to trace cause-and-effect relationships between the variables mentioned in the study, which can be done through studies conducted at spaced intervals called longitudinal designs."

The research was limited to cement sector companies in Cairo for considerations of effort and time for the researcher.

7- Recommendations:

Based on the results of the field study, the authors wish to make practical recommendations for officials at the Egyptian Pharmaceutical Trading Company and for future research.

7.1 Practical recommendations:

The officials of the cement sector companies in Egypt should:

- Preparing programs to qualify managers on authentic leadership practices, including:
 - Self-awareness occurs in those who have a positive self-concept.
 - Unbiased treatment of information. It should be an important criterion for selection and promotion. Individuals who process information in an unbiased manner are more active in searching for information and inference, oriented towards learning and being positive in situations.
 - Authentic behavior. Behavior consistent with the true self. There are two main personality characteristics that are likely to lead to authentic behavior that the leader is directed from the workers and has a high level of self-esteem.
 - Transparency of the relationship in the institution and honesty in relations with others. This component is important in the selection, promotion and training of leaders.
- Be accurate in choosing leaders and managers in cement sector companies in Egypt who possess the characteristics of authentic leadership and whose words match their actions.

7.2 Recommendations for future research

- The same variables of the study can be tested, but in service organizations such as hotels or hospitals, so that the scope of generalization of the results can be expanded.
- Testing the effect of authentic leadership on other variables other than those addressed in the study, such as: employee creativity, Counter-productive behaviors, organizational citizenship behaviors, organizational cynicism, and workplace bullying behaviors.
- Conduct a study that includes both the antecedents and the consequences of authentic leadership to obtain sufficient knowledge of this subject.

8- Conclusion

The researcher conducted this research to determine the effect of authentic leadership on organizational commitment from the point of view of employees in cement sector companies. The study applied regression analyzes stepwise methods to data collected from 240 employees in the company. The results showed that authentic leadership is a predictive variable of organizational commitment. The researcher recommends to include personality tests in the selection process for managers in an effort to select those who meet the characteristics of authentic leaders, and prepare programs to qualify managers of cement sector companies on authentic leadership practices.

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