

# The Role of Authentic Leadership in Work Life Balance and Employee Performance with Mediated Employee Engagement

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## Abstract

Leadership approaches in public sector organizations face distinct challenges in promoting work–life balance and performance while maintaining employee engagement. Authentic leadership has emerged as a promising framework for addressing these challenges; however, limited research has examined its effectiveness within Indonesian government institutions. This study examines the influence of authentic leadership on work–life balance and employee performance, with employee engagement as a mediating variable at the Department of Communication and Information Technology (Diskominfo) in Banjarbaru city, Indonesia. Using a quantitative approach with a causal design, this study surveyed 64 employees through a saturation sampling method. The data were analyzed via structural equation modeling-partial least squares (SEM–PLS) to evaluate both direct and indirect relationships among the variables. Authentic leadership positively influenced work–life balance ( $\beta=0.618$ ,  $t=5,934$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) and employee performance ( $\beta=0.683$ ,  $t=9,439$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Employee engagement mediated the relationships between authentic leadership and work-life balance ( $\beta=0.656$ ,  $t=6,112$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) and between authentic leadership and employee performance ( $\beta=0.632$ ,  $t=4,682$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). The indirect effects of employee engagement (0.454 for work–life balance; 0.471 for performance) were stronger than the direct effects (0.147 for work–life balance; 0.229 for performance), confirming the partial mediating role of employee engagement. Authentic leadership significantly enhances work–life balance and employee performance in public sector organizations, primarily by strengthening employee engagement. Government institutions should prioritize the development of authentic leadership capabilities and the implementation of policies that support employee engagement to optimize both organizational performance and employee well-being.

*Keywords:* Authentic leadership; work–life balance; employee performance; employee engagement; public sector; Indonesia.

Received: 4 June 2025

Revised: 13 August 2025

Accepted: 21 August 2025

## 1. Introduction

Human resources are an essential determinant of organizational success in a competitive environment. Organizations in both the private and government sectors face demands to provide optimal services to their stakeholders. Talented and competent individuals become strategic assets, placing HR as the primary element that drives organizational growth toward excellence (Vermeulen & Scheepers, 2020). Effective human resource management (HRM) improves institutional efficiency and effectiveness. Leadership is a fundamental factor in organizational dynamics. Thoha (2006) defines leadership style as a norm of behavior that a person uses to influence the behavior of others. Variations in leader character make leadership style an influential factor in organizational dynamics. The absence of effective leadership can cause institutional failure (Singarimbun & Suharti, 2024). In the management discipline, leadership style is considered a fundamental aspect, especially with respect to employee performance (Duarte et al., 2021).

The authentic leadership model refers to leaders who prioritize integrity, transparency, and sincerity. Walumbwa et al. (2008) identified the indicators of authentic leadership as integrity, commitment to self-development, and genuine relationships with subordinates. However, its implementation often faces challenges, such as performance pressure,

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inadequate organizational support, and differences in perceptions between leaders and employees. Ayu et al. (2022) shows that leaders who regularly interact with employees better understand their needs, such as the job direction and obstacles faced. Empirical data indicate a positive correlation between employee happiness and increased productivity (Alshurideh et al., 2023).

Work–life balance describes an individual's capacity to fulfill professional obligations while maintaining a quality personal life (Rahul Paul & Khalid Perwez, 2023). From a contemporary HR management perspective, WLB has evolved into a strategic aspect in an era of intensified professional demand. Empirical evidence shows that employees with an optimal work–life balance tend to develop substantial work engagement, resulting in positive contributions to institutional sustainability (Poulose & Susdarsan, 2014). The implementation of WLB policies facilitates the development of a productive and sustainable workforce, minimizing the risk of burnout, which can erode long-term productivity.

Employee engagement conceptualizes the level of motivation, commitment, and satisfaction of employees in the work environment, which has implications for improving performance in the workplace. Wang & Hsieh (2013) suggested that employee engagement is based on organizational culture, communication patterns, managerial approaches, leadership models, and trust-and-reward factors. Koon & Ho (2021) asserted that internalized employee involvement at every level of the organizational hierarchy results in an optimal dedication to work routines. Hana et al. (2021) indicate that work engagement is actualized when employees perceive the fulfillment of institutional obligations and job satisfaction. Purwaningsih & Rahmawati (2024) confirmed the significant influence of work–life balance on performance effectiveness, with employee engagement acting as a mediator.

At the Banjarbaru City Communication and Informatics Office (Diskominfo), several problems related to policy implementation and services lack active participation from employees. Although leadership has demonstrated transparency and openness in decision-making, employees face a high workload, including overtime, which impacts their personal life. The demand for completing household tasks further exacerbates this imbalance. Policies tend to be rigid and limited, leaving employees with no room to channel their creativity or expertise. The performance evaluation data show that ASN Diskominfo Banjarbaru in 2023-2024 received a "good" predicate, indicating the need for further evaluation of factors that affect performance effectiveness.

Most research on authentic leadership, work–life balance, and employee performance focuses on the private sector (Shafi et al., 2022), whereas research on government agencies, especially in Indonesia, remains limited. This condition is significant because the challenges in the public sector are different, such as rigid bureaucracies and limited resources. Given that government agencies face mounting demands to deliver superior public services, this study examines how authentic leadership influences work–life balance and employee performance while clarifying the mediating role of employee engagement in this dynamic. The findings from this study are anticipated to offer scientific contributions by providing references and empirical evidence of the strategic importance of authentic leadership in enhancing work–life balance and employee performance. Additionally, these insights will serve as a foundation for organizations to make informed strategic decisions when crafting effective human resource management strategies.

## **2. Literature Review, Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses**

### *2.1 The effect of authentic leadership on work–life balance*

Authentic leadership is characterized by consistent actions that foster positive psychological capacities and an ethical climate. This leadership approach enhances self-awareness, develops an internal moral perspective, ensures balanced information processing, and promotes relational transparency (Cao & Dong, 2024; Cortés-Denia et al., 2023; Emur et al., 2023; Nelson et al., 2014; Walumbwa et al., 2008). By establishing trust and emotional support between leaders and team members, authentic leadership positively influences employee well-being and motivation to maintain work–life balance (Fabriza & Susanty, 2024; Maximo et al., 2019; Park et al., 2025; Pratama & Farisi, 2024; Srivastava & Mohaley, 2022). Research by Koon et al. (2023) established a positive correlation between authentic leadership and employees' capacity to maintain work–life balance. This leadership approach creates a supportive work environment that enables employees to effectively manage their professional and personal responsibilities. Vanesa et al. (2022) identified authentic leadership's substantial contribution to work–life balance improvement, noting reduced stress levels and increased life satisfaction among employees under authentic leadership. Tak et al. (2019) demonstrated the influence of authentic leadership on work–life balance, with employee engagement functioning as a mediating variable.

On the basis of these findings, the following hypothesis was formulated: *H1: Authentic leadership has a positive and significant effect on work–life balance in employees of the Banjarbaru City Communication and Information Office.*

## *2.2 The effect of authentic leadership on employee performance*

Employee performance is characterized by the quality and quantity of work individuals accomplish while executing their assigned responsibilities (Prabu, 2005; Pratama & Suryosukmono, 2024). Authentic leadership influences employee performance by emphasizing honesty, transparency, and attention to employee needs. Walumbwa et al. (2008) established that authentic leaders enhance employee trust and engagement, which positively affects performance outcomes. This leadership approach, defined by genuine behavior, establishes a supportive work environment that enhances employee motivation and productivity. Research by Nasab & Afshari (2019) confirmed that authentic leadership positively impacts employee performance, resulting in improved productivity and work quality. Bakotić (2016) identified a strong correlation between authentic leadership and enhanced employee performance through strengthened intrinsic motivation and organizational commitment. Turnip & Desiana (2023) demonstrated the significant role of authentic leadership in improving employee performance, with job satisfaction functioning as a mediating variable. On the basis of these studies, a hypothesis was formulated: *H2: Authentic leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee performance at the Banjarbaru City Communication and Information Office.*

## *2.3 The effect of authentic leadership on employee engagement*

Authentic leadership provides employees with critical resources that enhance their organizational engagement (Gardner et al., 2005; Walumbwa et al., 2008; Wang & Hsieh, 2013). This leadership approach emphasizes four positive psychological states that favorably influence employees' mental conditions, attitudes, and performance outcomes. Employee engagement increases when individuals have adequate personal resources to address job demands. This concept refers to employees' positive psychological state with respect to their work and organizations. Dartey-Baah et al. (2025) identified several factors influencing employee engagement, including organizational culture, communication patterns, management approaches, leadership styles, trust, and reward systems. Schaufeli et al. (2019) conceptualized employee engagement in three dimensions: passion, dedication, and absorption. Research by Baquero (2023) confirmed the positive effect of authentic leadership on increasing employee participation in organizational activities. Silva et al. (2023) established authentic leadership as a significant predictor of employee engagement, with organizational trust functioning as a mediating variable. Koon & Ho (2021) demonstrated that authentic leadership enhances employee engagement by improving psychological well-being and developing organizational belonging. On the basis of these studies, the following hypotheses were formulated: *H3: Authentic leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee engagement at the Banjarbaru City Communication and Information Office.*

## *2.4 The mediating role of employee engagement in the relationship between authentic leadership and work–life balance*

Gardner et al. (2005) determined that leaders who display authentic characteristics create work environments characterized by transparency, honesty, and support, which enhances employee engagement. This engagement, comprising emotional connection and work dedication, plays an essential role in balancing the professional and personal responsibilities of nurses. When led by authentic leaders, employees experience greater appreciation, motivating them to establish an optimal work–life balance. Research by Rehman & Zeb (2023) established a positive correlation between healthy work–life balance and employee performance. Purwaningsih & Rahmawati (2024) confirmed that work–life balance significantly affects employee performance, with job satisfaction functioning as a mediating variable. On the basis of these findings, a hypothesis is formulated: *H4: Employee engagement mediates the relationship between authentic leadership and work–life balance in employees of the Banjarbaru city communication and information office.*

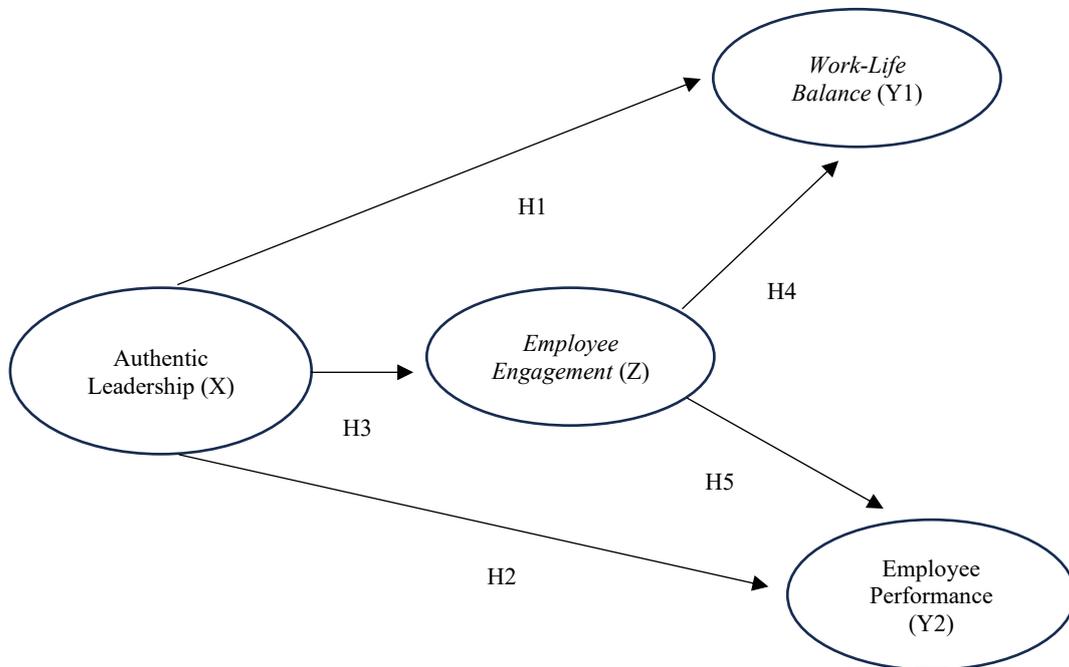
## *2.5 The Mediating Role of Employee Engagement in the Relationship between Authentic Leadership and Employee Performance*

Leaders who demonstrate authentic characteristics, such as integrity, transparency, and empathy, foster positive workplace environments. Employees who develop emotional engagement and organizational commitment typically exhibit enhanced productivity and performance. Schoofs et al. (2024) established that authentic leadership influences

employee performance both directly and indirectly through employee engagement as a mediating mechanism. Their analysis confirmed that the increased implementation of authentic leadership approaches strengthened employee engagement, which subsequently enhanced employee performance. Employee engagement effectively serves as a connecting mechanism between authentic leadership and employee performance. On the basis of these findings, the following hypotheses were formulated: *H5: Employee engagement mediates the relationship between authentic leadership and employee performance at the Banjarbaru City Communication and Information Office.*

### 2.6 Conceptual framework

This study developed a conceptual framework describing the relationships among authentic leadership, work-life balance, employee performance, and employee engagement. The conceptual model was built on the basis of a literature review and previous empirical research, evaluating the role of authentic leadership as an independent variable, work-life balance and employee performance as dependent variables, and employee engagement as a mediating variable. Research conceptual framework and SEM-PLS model presented in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Research conceptual framework and SEM-PLS model.

## 3. Research Method and Materials

### 3.1 Research design and setting

This study utilized a quantitative approach with a causal design to analyze the relationships between authentic leadership (independent variable) and work-life balance and employee performance (dependent variables), with employee engagement functioning as a mediator. This methodology aligns with the positivist philosophy, which examines populations through systematic data collection via research instruments and subsequent quantitative statistical analysis (Darwin et al., 2021). The investigation was conducted at the Banjarbaru City Communication and Information Office, a government institution responsible for communication and information services that face significant demands for digital transformation

### 3.2 Population, sample and sampling technique

The research population included all employees of the Banjarbaru City Communication and Informatics Office, consisting of 64 people with details of 33 civil servants (PNS) and 31 contract workers. The study used a saturated sampling technique, in which all members of the population were used as respondents (Adnyana, 2021). The selection of this technique is based on the consideration of a relatively small population size, thus involving the entire population to improve the quality of research and produce generalizations with minimal error, strengthening the validity and reliability of the findings.

### 3.3 Inclusion and exclusion criteria

The inclusion criteria were as follows: (1) active employees at the Banjarbaru City Communication and Informatics Agency, both civil servants and contract workers; and (2) had worked for at least one year to ensure that the respondents had sufficient experience related to leadership and the work environment in the agency. The exclusion criteria were as follows: (1) employees who were on leave or study assignment when the study was conducted and (2) employees who were not willing to participate in the study after receiving an explanation.

### 3.4 Research procedure

The research was conducted through several stages: (1) preliminary interviews to gain an understanding of the context and dynamics at the research site; (2) development of research instruments in the form of questionnaires on the basis of a literature review and field conditions; (3) distribution of questionnaires to respondents with a distribution of two types of questionnaires, where leaders received questionnaires related to authentic leadership variables (X) and employee performance (Y2), whereas employees received questionnaires related to work–life balance (Y1) and employee engagement (Z); (4) collection of documentary data from official agency sources; (5) data analysis via the SEM–PLS method; and (6) interpretation of the results and conclusions.

### 3.5 Research instruments and operational variables

The research instrument was a closed questionnaire consisting of 39 statements to measure four main variables: authentic leadership, work–life balance, employee performance, and employee engagement. The measurement uses a 5-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree). Variable operationalization is described as follows: a) Authentic leadership (X), measured via four dimensions according to Walumbwa et al. (2008): (1) self-awareness; (2) internalization of moral perspective; (3) balanced processing; (4) relational transparency; b) work–life balance (Y1), measured via three dimensions according to Brough et al. (2020): (1) work-related; (2) family-related; (3) other-related not related to work or family; and (3) employee performance (Y2), measured via five dimensions according to Prabu (2005): (1) work quality; (2) work quantity; (3) responsibility; (4) cooperation; (5) initiative; and d) employee engagement (Z), measured via three dimensions according to Schaufeli et al. (2019): (1) passion; (2) dedication; and (3) cooperation; and (5) initiative.

### 3.6 Data collection and extraction

Data were collected through three methods: (1) questionnaires given to all respondents; (2) interviews with key employees in different divisions to assess the level of work–life balance, performance, and engagement; and (3) documentation in the form of ASN employee performance reports, agency strategic plans, organizational structure, and organizational performance reports. Data from the questionnaire were extracted via a Likert scale, with categorization of mean scores based on the interval: 4.20-5.00 (very good), 3.40-4.19 (good), 2.60-3.39 (fairly good), 1.80-2.59 (not good), and 1.00-1.79 (very not good).

### 3.7 Statistical analysis

Data analysis was performed via the structural equation modeling approach with partial least squares (SEM-PLS) version 3. SEM-PLS was chosen because of its ability to produce valid and reliable models and provide flexibility for nonnormal data with smaller samples (Sarstedt et al., 2022). The analysis includes two components: (1) the outer model

to evaluate construct validity and reliability and (2) the inner model to test causal relationships among latent variables. Convergent validity was tested via the loading factor (criterion >0.7) and average variance extracted (AVE, criterion >0.5). Discriminant validity is evaluated through cross loading, where the cross-loading value of the indicator against its construct must be greater than the cross-loading value against other constructs. Reliability was tested via Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability, both with criteria >0.7 for good reliability. The structural model was evaluated via (1) R-square (0.75 strong; 0.50 medium; 0.25 weak); (2) F-square (0.35 large; 0.15 medium; 0.02 weak); (3) Q-square (>0 indicates good predictive relevance); and (4) goodness of fit (0.36 large; 0.25 medium; 0.10 small) (Sarstedt et al., 2022).

#### 4. Results and Discussion

##### 4.1 Respondent characteristics

This study involved 64 employees from the Banjarbaru City Communication and Information Office as presented in Table 1. In terms of gender, 57.81% of the respondents were male, and 42.19% were female. This composition reflects the priority of recruiting male workers to support operational activities, including news coverage in the field and the technical handling of networks that require fast and accurate responses. In terms of age distribution, the 20–30 years group dominated with 37.5% of the total respondents, followed by the 31–40 years group (31.25%), the 41–50 years group (23.44%), and the above 51 years group (7.81%). The dominance of employees aged 20-30 years indicates that the majority of employees are at a productive age with sufficient cognitive maturity for effective decision-making. In terms of length of service, 46.88% of the respondents had 1-5 years of experience, 42.19% had more than 5 years, and 10.94% had less than 1 year. The majority of the respondents had sufficient work experience to understand the responsibilities and tasks assigned.

**Table 1.** Characteristics of the respondents

Characteristics	Respondents (n=64)	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	37	57.81%
Female	27	42.19%
<b>Age</b>		
20-30 Years	24	37.5%
31-40 Years	20	31.25%
41-50 Years	15	23.44%
51> Years	5	7.81%
<b>Jobs</b>		
<1 Years	7	10.94%
1-5 Years	30	46.88%
>5 Years	27	42.19%

##### 4.2 Tables descriptive analysis of the research variables

The results of the descriptive analysis show that the authentic leadership variable obtained an average score of 4.15 (good category). The distribution of the responses revealed that 35% of the respondents strongly agreed, 46% agreed, 18.5% disagreed, and no respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. This finding indicates that Banjarbaru Diskominfo leadership has implemented a leadership style that prioritizes transparency, integrity, and consistency in leadership behavior. The dimensions of internalizing moral perspectives and balanced processes received the highest assessment, with an average of 4.28 (very good), indicating that leaders are able to control and understand the right leadership attitude. The work–life balance variable received an average score of 4.39 (very good) (Table 2). The majority of respondents strongly agreed (50.67%) and agreed (38%) that they were able to balance their work and personal lives, with only 11.33% choosing to disagree. The family-related dimension received the highest rating, with an average of 4.50, indicating that employees have sufficient time for family after completing work. These results indicate that the agency has paid adequate attention to employees' obligations and rights by not burdening them with working hours that exceed standard operating hours.

The results of the analysis show that employee performance obtained an average score of 4.32 (very good) (Table 2). The distribution of the responses revealed that 44.4% of the respondents strongly agreed, 42.8% agreed, 12.8% disagreed, and no respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. The responsibility dimension received the highest rating, with an average of 4.42, indicating that employees can complete tasks appropriately and plan and manage time well. This positive response indicates that employees can meet expectations and perform their duties effectively. The average employee engagement score was 4.26 (very good) (Table 2). The distribution of the responses revealed that 42% of the respondents strongly agreed, 42% agreed, 16% disagreed, and no respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. The dedication dimension received the highest rating, with an average of 4.32, indicating that employees feel inspired by their work and have high enthusiasm for it. Description of respondents' answers variable as presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Description of respondents' answers variable (X)

Variable - Indicator	Average	Criteria
<b>Authentic Leadership (X)</b>		
Self-Awareness	4.06	Good
Internalization of moral perspectives	4.28	Very good
Balanced process	4.28	Very good
Relational transparency	3.98	Good
Overall Average	4.15	Good
<b>Work-Life Balance (Y1)</b>		
Related to work	4.36	Very good
Family-related	4.50	Very good
Other unrelated	4.32	Very good
Overall Average	4.39	Very good
<b>Employee Performance (Y2)</b>		
Quality of Work	4.30	Very good
Work Quantity	4.34	Very good
Responsibility	4.42	Very good
Cooperation	4.22	Very good
Initiative	4.30	Very good
Overall Average	4.32	Very good
<b>Employee Engagement (Z)</b>		
Spirit	4.22	Very good
Dedication	4.32	Very good
Absorption	4.24	Very good
Overall Average	4.26	Very good

#### 4.3 Evaluation of the measurement model

The convergent validity test results show that all 39 question items have outer loading values above 0.7, with an average value of 0.8. The items with the highest values are Y1.1 and Y1.2 (0.898), whereas the items with the lowest values are X9, X10, X11, and X12 (0.705). The average variance extracted (AVE) value for all the variables also exceeded 0.5: authentic leadership (0.559), work–life balance (0.676), employee performance (0.742), and employee engagement (0.743). These results confirm that the research indicators can explain more than 50% of the variance in their latent constructs. Convergent validity analysis as presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Convergent validity analysis

Variables	AVE value ( $\geq 0.5$ )	Description
Authentic Leadership (X)	0.559	Valid
Work-Life Balance (Y1)	0.676	Valid
Employee Performance (Y2)	0.742	Valid
Employee Engagement (Z)	0.743	Valid

The analysis of discriminant validity through cross loading shows that each indicator has a higher loading value on the measured construct than on the other constructs. This finding indicates that each construct in the research model has

good discriminant validity, confirming that the constructs measure different concepts. Discriminant validity measurement with cross loading as presented in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Discriminant validity measurement with cross loading

Indicator	KO (X)	WLB (Y1)	KP (Y2)	EE(Z)
X1	<b>0.673</b>	0.554	0.734	0.666
X2	<b>0.673</b>	0.554	0.734	0.666
X3	<b>0.673</b>	0.554	0.734	0.666
X4	<b>0.673</b>	0.554	0.734	0.666
X5	<b>0.879</b>	0.456	0.504	0.535
X6	<b>0.879</b>	0.456	0.504	0.535
X7	<b>0.879</b>	0.456	0.504	0.535
X8	<b>0.879</b>	0.456	0.504	0.535
X9	<b>0.705</b>	0.433	0.308	0.385
X10	<b>0.705</b>	0.433	0.308	0.385
X11	<b>0.705</b>	0.433	0.308	0.385
X12	<b>0.705</b>	0.433	0.308	0.385
X13	<b>0.717</b>	0.314	0.302	0.443
X14	<b>0.717</b>	0.314	0.302	0.443
X15	<b>0.717</b>	0.314	0.302	0.443
X16	<b>0.717</b>	0.314	0.302	0.443
Y1.1	0.593	<b>0.898</b>	0.633	0.677
Y1.2	0.593	<b>0.898</b>	0.633	0.677
Y1.3	0.542	<b>0.813</b>	0.694	0.615
Y1.4	0.542	<b>0.813</b>	0.694	0.615
Y1.5	0.461	<b>0.871</b>	0.623	0.674
Y1.6	0.461	<b>0.871</b>	0.623	0.674
Y2.1	0.526	0.720	<b>0.826</b>	0.642
Y2.2	0.526	0.720	<b>0.826</b>	0.642
Y2.3	0.487	0.595	<b>0.826</b>	0.719
Y2.4	0.487	0.595	<b>0.826</b>	0.719
Y2.5	0.558	0.704	<b>0.810</b>	0.650
Y2.6	0.558	0.704	<b>0.810</b>	0.650
Y2.7	0.555	0.529	<b>0.844</b>	0.646
Y2.8	0.555	0.529	<b>0.844</b>	0.646
Y2.9	0.683	0.551	<b>0.805</b>	0.613
Y2.10	0.683	0.551	<b>0.805</b>	0.613
Z1	0.636	0.602	0.710	<b>0.871</b>
Z2	0.636	0.602	0.710	<b>0.871</b>
Z3	0.636	0.602	0.710	<b>0.871</b>
Z4	0.623	0.725	0.658	<b>0.864</b>
Z5	0.623	0.725	0.658	<b>0.864</b>
Z6	0.623	0.725	0.658	<b>0.864</b>
Z7	0.599	0.602	0.692	<b>0.850</b>
Z8	0.599	0.602	0.692	<b>0.850</b>
Z9	0.599	0.602	0.692	<b>0.850</b>

Remarks: KO, authentic leadership; WLB, *work life balance*; KP, employee performance; EE, employee engagement

The reliability test results revealed that all variables had a Cronbach's alpha value above 0.7: authentic leadership (0.724), work–life balance (0.826), employee performance (0.880), and employee engagement (0.827). The composite reliability value also exceeded 0.7 for all the variables: authentic leadership (0.834), work–life balance (0.896), employee performance (0.913), and employee engagement (0.897). These results confirm that the research instruments have adequate internal consistency for measuring the constructs under study. Reliability measurement of each variable as presented in Table 5.

**Table 5.** Reliability measurement of each variable

Variables	Cronbach's alpha value ( $\geq 0.7$ )	Composite reliability value ( $\geq 0.7$ )	Remarks
Authentic leadership (X)	0.724	0.834	Valid
Worklife-balance (Y1)	0.826	0.896	Valid
Employee performance (Y2)	0.880	0.913	Valid
Employee engagement (Z)	0.827	0.897	Valid

4.4 Structural model evaluation

The results of the R-Square ( $R^2$ ) analysis as presented in Table 6, show values of 0.590 for work–life balance, 0.659 for employee performance, and 0.517 for employee engagement, all in the medium category. This value indicates that authentic leadership and employee engagement together explain 59% of the variability in work–life balance, authentic leadership explains 51.7% of the variability in employee engagement, and authentic leadership, employee engagement, and work–life balance together explain 65.9% of the variability in employee performance.

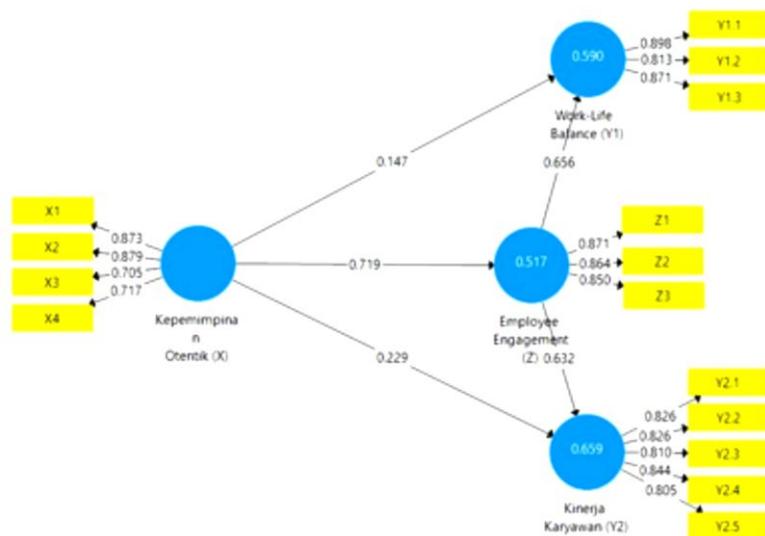
**Table 6.** R-Square measurement

Dependent Variable	R Square	Category
WorkLife Balance (Y1)	0.590	Medium
Employee Performance (Y2)	0.659	Medium
Employee Engagement (Z)	0.517	Medium

The F-square test results as presented in Table 7 show that authentic leadership has a small influence on work–life balance (0.025) and employee performance (0.074) but has a large influence on employee engagement (1.069). In the indirect relationship, authentic leadership through employee engagement has a strong influence on work–life balance (0.566) and on employee performance (0.506).

**Table 7.** F-Square measurement

Variables	Effect size	Effect category
Authentic Leadership (X)→ WLB (Y1)	0.025	Small
Authentic Leadership (X)→ Employee Performance (Y2)	0.074	Small
Authentic Leadership (X)→ Employee Engagement (Z)	1.069	Great
Authentic Leadership (X)→ Employee Engagement (Z)→ WLB (Y1)	0.566	Great
Authentic Leadership (X)→ Employee Engagement (Z)→ Employee Performance (Y1)	0.506	Great



**Figure 2.** Goodness-of-fit measurement (in Indonesia)

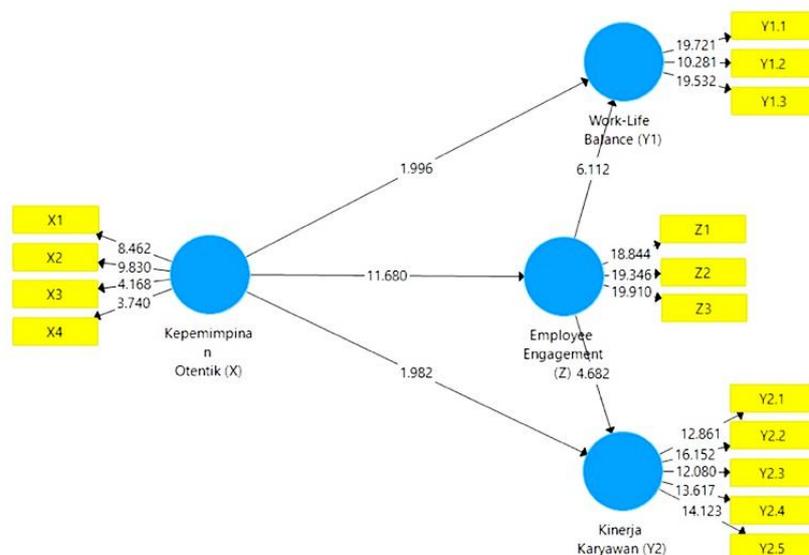
The Q-square analysis yielded a value of 0.933, indicating a very high level of predictive relevance. This value indicates that the research model can explain approximately 93.3% of the variation in the observed data. The goodness-of-fit (GoF) value of 0.775 also indicates an excellent level of model fit, far exceeding the "large" classification threshold (0.36). Goodness-of-fit measurement as presented in Figure 2.

4.5 Hypothesis testing

On the basis of the results of the SEM–PLS analysis, all hypotheses in this study were accepted (Table 8 and Figure 3), with details on Hypothesis 1 stating that authentic leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee work–life balance ( $\beta = 0.618$ ,  $t = 5,934$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). These results indicate that improving the quality of authentic leadership is related to improving employees’ work–life balance. Hypothesis 2 states that authentic leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee performance ( $\beta = 0.683$ ,  $t = 9,439$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This finding indicates that the effective implementation of authentic leadership improves employee performance. The third hypothesis shows that authentic leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee engagement ( $\beta = 0.719$ ,  $t = 11,680$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). These results indicate that strong authentic leadership plays a role in developing employee engagement in organizations. In addition, Hypothesis 4 shows that employee engagement mediates the relationship between authentic leadership and work-life balance ( $\beta = 0.656$ ,  $t = 6,112$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This finding confirms that employee engagement strengthens the effect of authentic leadership on employees' work–life balance. Finally, employee engagement mediated the relationship between authentic leadership and employee performance ( $\beta = 0.632$ ,  $t = 4,682$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This result confirms the importance of employee engagement in transmitting the effect of authentic leadership on performance improvement in the hospitality industry.

**Table 8.** Hypothesis confirmation with total effects

Variables	original sample	t statistics	p values	description
Authentic Leadership (X)→ WLB (Y1)	0.618	5,934	<0.001	H <sub>1</sub> Accepted
Authentic Leadership (X)→ Employee Performance (Y2)	0.683	9,439	<0.001	H <sub>2</sub> Accepted
Authentic Leadership (X)→ Employee engagement (Z)	0.719	11,680	<0.001	H <sub>3</sub> Accepted
Authentic Leadership (X)→ Employee engagement (Z)→ WLB (Y1)	0.656	6,112	<0.001	H <sub>4</sub> Accepted
Authentic Leadership (X)→ Employee engagement (Z)→ Employee performance (Y2)	0.632	4,682	<0.001	H <sub>5</sub> Accepted



**Figure 3.** Results of hypothesis confirmation with the bootstrapping method. (in Indonesia)

#### 4.6 Discussion

This study explores how authentic leadership influences work–life balance and employee performance, with a focus on employee engagement as a mediating factor at the Banjarbaru City Communication and Information Office. The hypothesis testing results indicate that all five hypotheses are supported, indicating that authentic leadership positively impacts work–life balance and employee performance both directly and indirectly through employee engagement. The data analysis confirmed the beneficial impact of authentic leadership on work–life balance, with a coefficient value of 0.618 ( $t=5,934$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). This finding is consistent with the findings of Koon et al. (2023), who reported that authentic leadership creates a supportive work climate that helps employees balance the demands of work and personal life. This congruence strengthens the evidence that leaders who promote transparency and integrity are successful in building a work environment that facilitates employees' work–life balance.

The characteristics of authentic leadership found in Banjarbaru Diskominfo include integrity in decision-making and attention to holistic employee welfare, which is supported by the average value of the authentic leadership variable of 4.15 (good). The dimensions of internalizing moral perspectives and balanced processes received the highest ratings, indicating that leaders implement moral values and provide fair treatment to their employees. Gardner et al. (2005) explain that authentic leaders support work–life balance by promoting openness and flexibility, allowing employees to manage their time and resources optimally. This is reflected in Banjarbaru Diskominfo, where leaders provide support to employees to achieve balance through policies that consider the individual needs of employees. The work–life balance score of 4.39 (excellent category), with the family-related dimension receiving the highest assessment, shows that employees have sufficient time for their families after completing their work.

The analysis shows that authentic leadership has a positive effect on employee performance, with a coefficient of 0.683 ( $t=9,439$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). This finding is consistent with that of Hadian Nasab & Afshari (2019), who recognized the beneficial effects of genuine leadership on employee performance and noted that employees led by authentic leaders demonstrated increased productivity and improved work quality. The results of this study reinforce those of Oh et al. (2018), who identified a significant link between genuine leadership and enhanced employee performance by increasing intrinsic motivation and commitment to the organization. In Banjarbaru Diskominfo, leaders who apply authentic principles are able to increase employee motivation and commitment, which is reflected in the average employee performance score of 4.32 (very good). Walumbwa et al. (2008) stated that authentic leaders are able to increase employee trust and engagement, positively impacting performance. The authentic leadership model creates a supportive work environment that facilitates employee motivation and productivity. This is in accordance with the conditions at Diskominfo Banjarbaru, where the responsibility dimension in the employee performance variable received the highest assessment (4.42), indicating that employees can complete tasks appropriately and plan and manage their time well.

The results demonstrated that authentic leadership significantly increased employee engagement, with a coefficient of 0.719 ( $t=11,680$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). This result aligns with that of Baquero (2023), who reported that authentic leadership positively influences employee involvement in organizational tasks, and with that of Silva et al. (2023), who identified authentic leadership as the primary predictor of employee engagement. The F-square value of 1,069 indicates that authentic leadership has a strong effect on employee engagement, underscoring its crucial role in fostering employee involvement in the organization. This conclusion is in agreement with that of Koon et al. (2023), who noted that authentic leadership enhances employee engagement by improving psychological well-being and fostering a sense of belonging within the organization. At Diskominfo Banjarbaru, leaders who apply the principles of transparency, honesty, and open communication succeeded in increasing employee engagement, as reflected in the average employee engagement score of 4.26 (very good). The dedication dimension received the highest rating, indicating that employees feel inspired by their work. This confirms the theory of Schaufeli et al. (2019), who conceptualized employee engagement as a positive working condition characterized by passion, dedication, and full involvement in work.

Analysis of the mediation pathways confirmed that employee engagement functions as a significant mediator in the relationship between authentic leadership and work-life balance (coefficient = 0.656,  $t = 6,112$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Similarly, employee engagement mediates the relationship between authentic leadership and employee performance (coefficient = 0.632,  $t = 4,682$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). These findings emphasize the critical role of employee engagement as a mechanism through which authentic leadership enhances both work–life balance and performance outcomes. Comparative analysis of direct versus indirect effects revealed that authentic leadership's direct influence on work–life balance (0.147) and employee performance (0.229) was substantially weaker than its indirect influence through employee engagement (0.454 and 0.471, respectively). This pattern indicates partial mediation, whereby employee engagement significantly

amplifies the impact of authentic leadership on both organizational outcomes. These findings align with those of Purwaningsih & Rahmawati (2024), who reported that employee engagement is crucial in balancing work and personal life demands, thereby increasing performance effectiveness. This conclusion is also consistent with the research of Els & Jacobs (2023), which confirms that authentic leadership not only directly affects employee performance but also has a mediating effect through employee engagement.

#### 4.7 Research implications

This study offers both theoretical and practical insights pertinent to Banjarbaru Diskominfo and other similar governmental bodies. On a theoretical level, the results bolster the authentic leadership framework proposed by Walumbwa et al. (2008), as they validate the role of its four dimensions in enhancing work–life balance and employee performance, facilitated by the mediation of employee engagement. On a practical level, Diskominfo Banjarbaru needs to develop a leadership program that emphasizes transparency and integrity, implement work–life balance support policies such as flexible working hours, create regular discussion forums to increase employee engagement, and implement a systematic continuous training system and KPIs to optimize performance. Recognizing employees' contributions through a fair reward system and involving them in setting performance targets will strengthen their sense of belonging and responsibility toward achieving organizational goals, thus promoting a productive and balanced work environment in the government sector.

#### 4.8 Limitations

This study has several methodological limitations that should be acknowledged when the findings are interpreted. The cross-sectional design prevents the establishment of causal relationships among variables, as data were collected at a single point in time, limiting our ability to observe how relationships evolve over time. The exclusive focus on Diskominfo Banjarbaru raises questions about the generalizability of the findings to other government institutions or private sector organizations with different structural characteristics and operational contexts. Reliance on self-reported data introduces potential common method bias, as respondents may have provided socially desirable responses rather than objective assessments. Additionally, the relatively small sample size ( $n=64$ ) may have affected the statistical power, potentially limiting the detection of smaller effect sizes. The study's assessment of authentic leadership was confined to the conceptualization by Walumbwa et al. (2008), potentially overlooking alternative dimensions or cultural adaptations relevant to the Indonesian public service context. Future research should consider longitudinal designs, more diverse samples across multiple organizations, multisource data collection methods, and alternative conceptualizations of key variables that incorporate cultural contextual factors.

### 5. Conclusion

This study provides empirical evidence that authentic leadership positively influences work–life balance and employee performance at Diskominfo Banjarbaru, with employee engagement serving as a significant mediating mechanism. The findings reveal that authentic leadership contributes 61.8% to work–life balance and 68.3% to employee performance, with stronger effects occurring through the mediating role of employee engagement than through direct influence. These results underscore the strategic importance of developing authentic leadership capabilities that emphasize transparency, moral perspective, balanced processing, and relational transparency to foster supportive work environments. This study extends the theoretical understanding of authentic leadership in public sector contexts and offers practical insights for government institutions seeking to increase employee well-being and organizational effectiveness. For Diskominfo Banjarbaru, specifically, implementing leadership development initiatives focused on authentic behaviors, establishing policies that support work–life integration, and creating mechanisms to strengthen employee engagement represent a comprehensive approach to improving institutional performance and employee satisfaction. This study contributes to the growing body of evidence demonstrating how leadership approaches centered on authenticity and employee well-being create sustainable advantages for public sector organizations.

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