

**FINAL PROJECT: IMPACT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF AUTHENTIC
LEADERSHIP IN ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE**

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Introduction

Examining the influence of leadership style on organizational culture and employee outcomes is essential for understanding how to create a positive environment and the impact of leadership on employee engagement. A leadership style that is gaining increased interest in practical and academic domains is authentic leadership, a leadership style grounded in positive psychology and an awareness of self and moral values, and recent studies suggest this leadership style may positively affect work outcomes (Hsieh & Wang, 2015). Human Resource Development (HRD) practitioners face the challenge of helping organizations and their leadership foster a positive work culture while improving employee outcomes, mainly through employee engagement. Due to limited research on authentic leadership and its impact on organizational culture, practitioners lack support in applying this leadership style to employee outcomes; therefore, we propose an initiative to bridge the gap between defining authentic leadership, what influences a positive organizational culture, and how authentic leadership can enhance employee engagement. Our initiative aims to provide tangible interventions that human resource practitioners can deploy to achieve positive employee outcomes while developing authentic leaders.

Research Question

How does authentic leadership influence the development of a positive organizational culture? How do authentic leaders influence employee outcomes?

Literature Review

To address our research questions, we begin by studying the relevance of authentic leadership to employee outcomes and training and development, which positively impacts employee engagement. (Appendix 1) The literature review was conducted in 2024 using Google Scholar and the Clemson University Library database. The search utilized the following terms: authentic leadership, employee engagement, employee outcomes, organizational culture, authentic leadership training, authentic leadership questionnaire, and authentic leadership inventory. Google Scholar is a reliable and credible source for literature review searches and interdisciplinary scholarly literature, particularly peer-reviewed journals. Clemson University Libraries use published sources and trusted websites to collect scholarly literature.

Authentic leadership and employee outcomes

Authentic leadership

Authentic leadership is often conceptualized as a fluid framework structured around four components: self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing, and internalized moral perspective (Gill et al., 2018). This definition connects to another article that examines the effect of authentic leadership, which states that leaders who lead authentically are aware of and willing to admit their strengths and weaknesses (Wirawan et al., 2020).

Authentic leadership fosters trust-based relationships between leaders and followers. These high-quality relationships enhance employees' dedication and engagement at work significantly (Silva et al., 2023). Positive experiences at work positively impact family life and vice versa, creating a balanced relationship that further enhances work engagement (Silva et al., 2023). This research suggests that authentic leadership can positively affect employees and organizations.

Effects of authentic leadership on work engagement

Authentic leaders build trust and make work more meaningful for employees. High-quality behavior and performance are a result of fully engaged employees (Hsieh & Wang, 2015). Employees' sense of meaningfulness from their work contributes to increased engagement. A study investigating the impact of authentic leadership and psychological capital on employees reveals a positive influence on work engagement. Engaged employees show enjoyment and involvement in their work (Wirawan et al., 2020).

Effects on organizational culture

Recent research has proposed that authentic leadership positively affects follower attitudes, job commitment, job satisfaction, trust, creativity, performance, and organizational citizenship behavior (Hsieh & Wang, 2015). By focusing on authentic leadership, organizations can improve employee satisfaction, reduce turnover intentions, and create a more supportive and engaging work environment, ultimately leading to better organizational outcomes (Kim et al., 2022). Authentic leadership significantly influences employee behavior and the quality of employee-organization relationships (EOR). This positive relationship is crucial in enhancing employees' engagement and willingness to voice concerns constructively. Authentic leadership encourages employees to express their opinions and collaborate on solutions, which improves organizational communication and the workplace environment (Kim et al., 2022).

Organizational culture between employees and leaders depends on many factors. Creating a collaborative work environment between employees and leaders through an authentic leadership style can contribute to dynamic relationships and foster trustworthy organizational cultures (Gill et al., 2018). Authentic leadership also empowers followers and aids in forming a shared vision and identity in an organization (Gill et al., 2018). The organization can positively

impact its local context through a unified vision and strong reputation. Creating this environment begins with training and development tailored to the tenets of authentic leadership.

Training and development

Program Development

Researchers agree that with access to the necessary skills and appropriate techniques, most individuals can potentially develop into authentic leaders (Baron & Parent, 2015). A mixed individual training and group coaching method can provide a comprehensive approach to developing authentic organizational leadership. Creating training programs focusing on authentic leadership through workshops, seminars, coaching, and mentorship proves valuable for implementing effective interventions. These programs will enhance leaders' self-awareness, ethical decision-making, and transparent communication skills.

Developing programs encompassing personal resources and organizational support can also encourage leaders to exhibit more positive attitudes and behaviors toward their followers (Wirawan, 2020). Conventional wisdom suggests that attitudes are shaped from the top down. Therefore, fostering mutually beneficial relationships is achievable by designing supportive training programs and ensuring access to personal and professional resources during leadership development.

Psychometric Instrument

The Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) is a self-assessment tool used to measure the four components of authentic leadership. The ALQ consists of 16 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale. It was developed based on theoretical literature and expert input, applied through a combination of deductive and inductive approaches, and multiple studies support its validity and

reliability (Roof, 2013). The ALQ measures critical work-related attitudes and behaviors (Fusco et al., 2016). The ALQ has been used as an assessment tool and also in research.

Group Coaching

Empirical research suggests that group coaching is successful among various applications, and a study that assessed the effectiveness of authentic leadership group coaching found this to be an effective form of authentic leadership development (Fusco et al., 2016).

Group settings offer the chance to address fundamental leadership skills universally and create an atmosphere conducive to groupthink and collaborative discussions.

Intervention Selection Proposal

Our goal is to offer practical and established interventions that human resource professionals can utilize to develop and enhance authentic leadership within the workplace. We suggest employing a blend of strategies delivered through both in-person sessions and hybrid formats that combine one-on-one interactions with group settings. We have chosen this approach because little research exists on developing authentic leaders and their impact on employee engagement, and these interventions exist at the foundation of human resource development. Strategies are already well-established and proven successful, and the combination and individualized aspect offered will provide a comprehensive framework that benefits the organizational culture.

Our interventions include leadership training programs in workshops and seminars held in group settings and led by leaders who identify as authentic leaders. Coaching sessions led by human resource management in the existing organization, trained on authentic leadership, and having experience in the field demonstrate that management leads by example and has the knowledge and skills to develop their leaders. Finally, we recommend mentorship programs that

consist of human resource management trained and practiced in authentic leadership who meet 1:1 with supervisors and develop them individually.

Leadership training programs

Incorporating personal experiences from real-life case studies can provide valuable insights into the practical simulation application of authentic leadership principles. These real-world examples help frame the structure of experimental designs, allowing organizations to test and refine their leadership interventions effectively and with feedback. (Silva et al., 2023).

Group coaching and group training can also provide space for the intentions behind human resource practices to align with employees' perceptions of them (Gill et al., 2018). Group environments tend to create accountability and credibility among organizations, and when employees better understand implementations, they are more motivated to engage.

Accountability and credibility build trust, which has been named the most influential factor affecting efficiency and quality between organizational members (Hsieh & Wang, 2015).

Organizations must also be more consistent between intended, actual and perceived human resource management practices and employee and supervisor perceptions of authentic leadership (Gill et al., 2018). Implementing comprehensive training programs at the group level synthesizes the two perspectives and can build trust and engagement, creating a positive organizational culture.

We believe workshops and seminars held in person and led by authentic leadership subject matter experts are the most effective way to provide universal authentic leadership training in a group setting. We recommend that senior management ally with human resource management, explore local leaders who fill this specification, and ask them to speak at the organization.

Coaching sessions

We recommend coaching sessions led by the organization's human resource managers, who are trained and experienced in authentic leadership. Allowing existing management to facilitate the coaching sessions merges outside professional development with the individualized approach we discuss below. This scenario also allows human resource and line managers to create a cohesive team and collaborative work environment. Coaching can be formal or informal and adaptable to the organization's culture. Human resource management will have the opportunity to make this selection at their discretion.

We found a need for more research on psychometrics and their use to coach leaders in developing leadership skills. The Authentic Leadership Questionnaire can be a tool for screening during the hiring process and training to identify further skills needed to create authentic leadership. We propose administering the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire post-training to test its efficacy. These results should be discussed during the coaching sessions in workgroups or as a whole group. Results of the individual questionnaires will be kept confidential from the group, but coaching on the four tenets as a group will provide everyone with a well-rounded picture of what authentic leadership looks like and how they may encourage others to adhere to the four tenets.

Mentorship programs

Individual development provides an opportunity for the self-awareness dimension of authentic leadership. Leaders who develop their followers promote positive work engagement (Wirawan et al., 2020). Mentorship and consistent feedback can contribute to an individual's confidence, and a leader who shows confidence, high moral standards and commitment will have a powerful effect on their followers (Hsieh & Wang, 2015).

Conclusion of literature review

An evolving research topic, authentic leadership has the potential to significantly impact an organization's employee outcomes, primarily through employee engagement. HRD practitioners must prepare intervention strategies to develop an authentic leader while producing favorable employee outcomes effectively. As we compare and evaluate the literature in our resources, we see that Baron and Parent (2014) focus on developing authentic leadership within structured training, while Kim, Velez, and West (2022) examine the influence of authentic leadership on employee behaviors. They found that authentic leaders create an environment where employees feel safe to express their opinions constructively. Silva, Duarte, and Oliveira (2023) take a broader perspective in exploring how authentic leadership enhances overall organizational outcomes, such as employee engagement, commitment, and job satisfaction. Their perspective is a holistic view of authentic leadership's impact on organizational culture and employee loyalty. Together, all of these research studies identify the significance of authentic leadership. More research in this field of study is sure to develop over time, and we hope the interventions we suggest will lead to further exploration of strengthening organizational culture through the development of authentic leaders.

Applied Leadership Intervention

Examining the influence of leadership style on organizational culture and employee outcomes is essential for fostering positive leadership and improving employee engagement. Authentic leadership, a leadership style grounded in positive psychology and an awareness of self and moral values, is gaining increased interest in practical and academic domains, and recent studies suggest this leadership style may positively affect work outcomes (Hsieh & Wang, 2015).

However, due to a lack of research, HRD practitioners must implement effective mechanisms to foster such a culture while producing positive employee outcomes. In response to this need, our course "Pathways to Authentic Leadership" is designed to formulate, create, and expand upon authentic leadership skills among emerging and established leaders. We aim to bridge the gap between defining authentic leadership and how authentic leadership can enhance employee engagement. Our target audience primarily focuses on practicing leaders, but organizations, work groups, and individuals can all benefit from the course's practical application.

Leaders who lead authentically are aware of and willing to admit their strengths and weaknesses (Wirawan et al., 2020). Considering this, our program identifies leaders' strengths and weaknesses through an authentic leadership lens and transforms them into strategies to inspire followers and increase employee engagement, producing positive organizational results. However, leaders can also benefit from authentic leadership by boosting their employees' motivation (AlMazrouei, 2023). Through monthly workshops and seminars, leaders will learn how to create an environment of teamwork and collaboration. Creating a collaborative work environment between leaders and employees through an authentic leadership style can contribute to a dynamic relationship and create a more credible organizational culture (Gill et al., 2018). By focusing on authentic leadership, organizations can improve employee satisfaction, reduce turnover intentions, and create a more supportive and engaging work environment, ultimately leading to better organizational outcomes (Kim et al., 2022). Therefore, we are confident that translating authentic leadership into employees will positively impact organizational culture and engagement.

Authentic leadership comprises four components: self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing, and internalized moral perspective (Gill et al., 2018). We

structure our program around clear and actionable objectives so participants can employ these leadership strategies and skills and transpose them to their respective organizations. This course emphasizes the development of self-awareness and relational transparency through utilizing various instructional materials, assessments, and learning activities. The curriculum also prepares leaders to improve decision-making processes through balanced processing and mixed methods of learning activities. It also ensures that their actions align with an internalized moral perspective through the discipleship of becoming an authentic leader.

A study that tested the relationship between authentic leadership and positive organizational culture found that authentic leadership development training among management can cultivate authentic leadership in the work environment (Jiang & Luo, 2018). Our curriculum supports the theory and model Jiang and Luo tested. Our article also supports the structural equation modeling in another study with Jiang, which indicated that authentic leadership and transparent communication significantly influence employee engagement. (Jiang & Shen, 2020).

The course identifies our primary interventions, which focus on creating leadership training programs rooted in the tenets of authentic leadership by incorporating workshops, seminars, coaching, and real-life scenarios. The integration of regular feedback systems facilitates ongoing collaboration and motivation, ensuring leaders learn, apply, and refine their skills in real time. Implementing these interventions is critical in creating a supportive and dynamic environment where authentic leadership can thrive. Through authentic leadership, encouraging employees to collaborate on solutions improves organizational communication and the workplace environment (Kim et al., 2022). High-quality relationships between leaders and followers enhance employees' dedication and engagement at work significantly (Silva et al., 2023). Our interventions will translate to improved leadership skills, higher employee

engagement, enhanced team performance, and overall organizational success. Our course also provides the opportunity to address universal foundations of leadership skills and provide an environment conducive to groupthink and collaborative discussions, supporting existing empirical research that suggests group coaching is successful in authentic leadership development.

We have outlined our curriculum below.



Course Title: Pathways to Authentic Leadership

Course Description: A transformative training program to develop and enhance authentic leadership skills in emerging and established leaders. This program comprehensively explores

authentic leadership principles through monthly workshops and seminars. Through teamwork and collaboration, leaders will enhance their motivation to inspire others.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of “Pathways of Authentic Leadership,” you will be able to:

- Understand authentic leadership and identify its core principles.
- Apply authentic leadership practices to enhance leadership effectiveness.
- Develop increased self-awareness and relational transparency.
- Improve decision-making processes through balanced processing.
- Align leadership actions with an internalized moral perspective.
- Design and develop a personal action plan for continuous leadership development.

Module 1	Introduction to Authentic Leadership
Objective(s)	● Define authentic leadership. ● Explain how authentic leadership differs from other leadership styles ● Recognize the impact of authentic leadership on employee engagement, trust, and motivation. ● Apply the core principles of authentic leadership to hypothetical scenarios.
Instructional Materials	● PowerPoint ● YouTube - (TEDTalks)(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lmyZMtPVodo) ● Handouts ● Mindtools.com - https://www.mindtools.com/a9h7syi/authentic-leadership

Learning Activities	Concept Mapping - Participants create a concept map that defines authentic leadership and its core principles. Panel Discussion - Facilitate a panel discussion where participants discuss various leadership styles, focusing on how authentic leadership stands out. Provide prompts and questions to guide the discussion. Scenario Group Work - Divide participants into small groups and give each group a hypothetical leadership challenge. Groups develop a plan to address the challenge using the core principles of authentic leadership and then present their plans to the larger group.
Assessment	● <u>Evaluation Quiz</u> - To evaluate participants' retention and understanding of authentic leadership's definition and core principles. ● <u>Simulation Game</u> - Effectiveness of decisions, alignment with authentic leadership principles, and outcomes achieved in the simulation.
Tools	● Google Docs ● Zoom ● Simulation Software (ex: Simtics, Capsim) ● Canvas LMS.

Module 2	Self-Awareness and Relational Transparency
Objective(s)	● Increase understanding of personal values, strengths, and areas for improvement through self-assessment exercises. ● Build trust and transparency within teams by practicing open communication and authenticity. ● Apply self-awareness and relational transparency principles to real-world leadership scenarios.
Instructional Materials	● Scholarly Articles ● Handout ● YouTube (TEDtalks)

Learning Activities	Self-Reflection Journals - Participants keep a journal reflecting on their values, strengths, and areas for improvement. Personality and Leadership Style Assessments - Participants complete assessments such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) or StrengthsFinder.
Assessment	<u>Case Study Reports (in groups)</u> - Thoroughness of analysis, understanding of principles, and application to real-world scenarios. <u>Peer Feedback Case Studies</u> - Peer feedback on trust-building activities and role-playing scenarios. Midpoint Qualitative Check-In - adjust objectives to meet participants' needs and learning styles.
Tools	● Google Docs ● Zoom ● Canvas LMS

Module 3	Balanced Processing and Moral Perspective
Objective(s)	● Identify and apply balanced decision-making techniques in leadership scenarios. ● Demonstrate ethical leadership practices in various organizational contexts. ● Analyze case studies and participate in role-playing to enhance moral perspective in leadership
Instructional Materials	● PowerPoint ● Scholarly Articles ● Case Study videos - YouTube ● Handouts

Learning Activities	Decision-Making Workshops - Interactive workshops where participants learn and practice authentic leadership principles in decision-making workshops. Utilize ethical decision-making models to align decisions with participants' internal moral perspectives. Ethical Dilemma Discussions - Group discussions on ethical dilemmas leaders face, exploring different approaches and solutions.
Assessment	<u>Decision-Making Workshop Reflections</u> - Depth of reflection on decision-making techniques learned and applied. <u>Simulation Performance</u> - Effectiveness and balance in decision-making during simulations.
Tools	• SWOT Analysis Templates • Pros and Cons Lists • Ethical Decision-Making Models • Zoom • Google Docs • Canvas LMS

Module 4	Practical Implementation
Objective(s)	• Create detailed action plans for implementing authentic leadership principles in personal and professional contexts. • Establish measurable personal and team goals aligned with authentic leadership values. • Implement strategies for continuous improvement in leadership practices.
Instructional Materials	• PowerPoint • Scholarly Articles

	• Case Study videos - YouTube • Handouts
Learning Activities	Goal Setting Exercises - Participants engage in exercises to set SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) goals for themselves and their teams. Continuous Improvement Workshops - Workshops on constant improvement strategies such as PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) and Kaizen.
Assessment	<u>Peer Review Feedback from Action Plan Submission</u> - Quality and constructiveness of feedback provided to peers. <u>Case Study Analysis Reports</u> - Thoroughness of analysis, understanding of continuous improvement principles, and application to personal contexts.
Tools	• Microsoft Planner • SMART Goal Templates • Google Docs • Canvas LMS

Program learning outcomes are critical in ensuring that the "Pathways to Authentic Leadership" program achieves its educational objectives and delivers measurable results. Articulated learning outcomes enhance the program's transparency and allow participants to understand the expected competencies and benchmarks for success. Providing the knowledge and skills to analyze and apply the course objectives, we offer a structured framework to guide instructional design and assessment. These outcomes align the program's activities, materials, and assessments with its goals, ensuring that every aspect of the training intentionally cultivates authentic leadership skills.

Program learning outcomes also facilitate continuous improvement and accountability, crucial in assessing the program's effectiveness. Incorporating real-life case studies will provide valuable insights into the practical simulation application of authentic leadership principles. These real-world examples help frame the structure of future experimental designs (Silva et al., 2023). They work to enable instructors and administrators to measure whether the participants are acquiring the intended skills and knowledge and then applying them to their leadership styles within their organization. This data-driven approach allows ongoing refinement of the program content and delivery methods and ensures that the training remains relevant and current. The program can adapt to emerging trends and feedback by systematically assessing and reviewing these outcomes, supporting higher participant satisfaction, improved leadership capabilities, and better organizational outcomes. We have created a timely evaluation process for our program that includes multiple surveys, assessments, feedback systems, and progress reports.

Evaluation Plan for "Pathways to Authentic Leadership" Program

1. Pre- and Post-Program Surveys

- **Purpose:** To measure changes in participants' knowledge, attitudes, and self-perceived skills related to authentic leadership before and after the program.
- **Method:** Administer surveys at the beginning and end of the program via Survey Monkey

2. Employee Satisfaction and Engagement Surveys

- **Purpose:** To assess the program's impact on participants' teams and organizational culture.

- **Method:** Conduct surveys among employees who report to program participants before and after the program.

3. Assessment of Learning Activities

- **Concept Mapping:**
- **Panel Discussions and Scenario Group Work:**
- **Self-Reflection Journals**
- **Case Study Reports**
- **Decision-Making Workshop Reflection**
- **Goal Setting Exercises**
- **Simulation Games and Performance**

4. Feedback Systems

- **Purpose:** To gather qualitative data on the program's effectiveness and areas for improvement.
- **Method:** Collect feedback through regular surveys, focus groups, and one-on-one interviews.

5. Quarterly and Annual Reports

- **Purpose:** To provide a comprehensive overview of the program's progress and impact over time.
- **Method:** Compile data from all evaluation methods into quarterly and annual reports. Action Plans for improvement will be updated accordingly.

Conclusion

Researchers agree that the majority of individuals have the potential to become authentic leaders when the skills for development are known and the appropriate techniques are available (Baron & Parent, 2015). Existing research studies justify the need for further analysis and synthesis of authentic leadership interventions to strengthen organizational culture by developing authentic leaders. Our course provides the needed intervention strategies to build an authentic leader, which will produce favorable employee outcomes. Our course will contribute to the

academic literature on authentic leadership and organizational culture and compose a foundation for future exploration of authentic leadership and organizational outcomes.

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Appendices

Literature Review Concept Map

