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LAMPIRAN

LAMPIRAN 1 KUESIONER DATA RESPONDEN

Pengaruh Kepemimpinan Autentik terhadap Keterikatan Karyawan dengan Lingkungan Kerja Karyawan sebagai Variabel Mediasi pada Karyawan di PT Randayan Hartadika Abadi Yth. Bapak/Ibu/Saudara/I Selamat Pagi/Siang/Sore/Malam. Perkenalkan saya Kelvania Mashabilla Cinta Hartoko, mahasiswa Program Studi Manajemen, Fakultas Bisnis dan Ekonomika, Universitas Atma Jaya Yogyakarta. Saat ini saya sedang menjalankan penelitian tugas akhir sebagai bagian dari penyusunan skripsi. Penelitian ini berjudul "Pengaruh Kepemimpinan Autentik terhadap Keterikatan Karyawan dengan Lingkungan Kerja Karyawan sebagai Variabel Mediasi pada Karyawan PT Randayan Hartadika Abadi." Kuesioner ini disusun sebagai bagian dari pengumpulan data penelitian. Partisipasi Bapak/Ibu/Saudara/i dalam mengisi kuesioner ini sangat penting untuk mendukung kelancaran penelitian saya. Jawaban yang diberikan akan dijaga kerahasiaannya dan hanya digunakan untuk kepentingan akademik. Jika terdapat pertanyaan terkait kuesioner ini, Anda dapat menghubungi: WhatsApp: 082132835586 Atas perhatian dan kesediaan Bapak/Ibu/Saudara/i dalam berpartisipasi pada penelitian ini, saya ucapkan terima kasih. Salam hangat, Kelvania Mashabilla Cinta Hartoko Login ke Google untuk menyimpan progres. Pelajari lebih lanjut Berikutnya Kosongkan formulir	Pertanyaan Filter Apakah Anda merupakan karyawan tetap yang telah bekerja di perusahaan ini selama lebih dari 1 tahun? * ☐ Ya ☐ Tidak Pertanyaan Filter Apakah Anda memiliki atasan langsung yang dapat dinilai perilaku kepemimpinannya? * ☐ Ya ☐ Tidak	Demografi Responden Jenis Kelamin * ☐ Laki-laki ☐ Perempuan Usia * ☐ 20-30 tahun ☐ 31-40 tahun ☐ 41-50 tahun ☐ >50 tahun Lama Bekerja * ☐ 1-2 tahun ☐ 3-5 tahun ☐ >5 tahun
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LAMPIRAN 2 PERTANYAAN TERKAIT KEPEMIMPINAN AUTENTIK

Kepemimpinan Autentik	
Pada bagian ini, Anda akan diminta untuk menjawab beberapa pernyataan terkait kepemimpinan autentik (authentic leadership), yaitu persepsi Anda terhadap perilaku atasan langsung yang menunjukkan kejujuran, keterbukaan, kesadaran diri, integritas, serta kemampuan mengambil keputusan secara adil dan transparan. Silakan berikan penilaian berdasarkan pengalaman Anda dengan menggunakan skala berikut: 1 = Sangat Tidak Setuju 2 = Tidak Setuju 3 = Netral 4 = Setuju 5 = Sangat Setuju Harap jawab dengan jujur sesuai dengan kondisi yang Anda alami. Terima kasih atas partisipasi Anda!	Atasan saya menyadari dengan jelas dampak yang ia berikan kepada karyawan. * 1 2 3 4 5 Sangat Tidak Setuju ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Sangat Setuju
	Atasan saya menyampaikan maksudnya dengan jelas. * 1 2 3 4 5 Sangat Tidak Setuju ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Sangat Setuju
Atasan saya mampu menggambarkan secara akurat bagaimana orang lain memandang kemampuannya. * 1 2 3 4 5 Sangat Tidak Setuju ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Sangat Setuju	Atasan saya secara terbuka berbagi informasi dengan karyawan. * 1 2 3 4 5 Sangat Tidak Setuju ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Sangat Setuju
Atasan saya menunjukkan bahwa ia memahami kekuatan dan kelemahannya sendiri. * 1 2 3 4 5 Sangat Tidak Setuju ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Sangat Setuju	Atasan saya mengungkapkan ide dan pikirannya dengan jelas kepada orang lain. * 1 2 3 4 5 Sangat Tidak Setuju ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Sangat Setuju

Atasan saya menunjukkan konsistensi antara keyakinan dan tindakannya. * 1 2 3 4 5 Sangat Tidak Setuju ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Sangat Setuju	Atasan saya mau meminta ide-ide yang berbeda dengan keyakinannya sendiri. * 1 2 3 4 5 Sangat Tidak Setuju ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Sangat Setuju
Atasan saya menggunakan keyakinan dasarnya dalam mengambil keputusan. * 1 2 3 4 5 Sangat Tidak Setuju ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Sangat Setuju	Atasan saya mendengarkan perspektif alternatif dengan seksama sebelum mengambil kesimpulan. * 1 2 3 4 5 Sangat Tidak Setuju ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Sangat Setuju
Atasan saya menolak tekanan untuk melakukan hal-hal yang bertentangan dengan keyakinannya. * 1 2 3 4 5 Sangat Tidak Setuju ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Sangat Setuju	Atasan saya menganalisis data yang relevan secara objektif sebelum membuat keputusan. * 1 2 3 4 5 Sangat Tidak Setuju ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Sangat Setuju
Atasan saya dalam bertindak selalu berpedoman pada standar moral internal. * 1 2 3 4 5 Sangat Tidak Setuju ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Sangat Setuju	Atasan saya mendorong orang lain untuk menyampaikan sudut pandang yang berbeda. * 1 2 3 4 5 Sangat Tidak Setuju ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Sangat Setuju

LAMPIRAN 3 PERTANYAAN TERKAIT LINGKUNGAN KERJA KARYAWAN

Lingkungan Kerja Karyawan

Pada bagian ini, Anda akan diminta untuk menjawab beberapa pernyataan terkait **lingkungan kerja karyawan** (*employee work environment*), yaitu persepsi Anda mengenai kondisi tempat kerja, baik secara fisik maupun nonfisik, yang mendukung kenyamanan, keamanan, hubungan sosial, serta kelancaran Anda dalam bekerja.

Silakan berikan penilaian berdasarkan pengalaman Anda dengan menggunakan skala berikut:

1 = Sangat Tidak Setuju
2 = Tidak Setuju
3 = Netral
4 = Setuju
5 = Sangat Setuju

Harap jawab dengan jujur sesuai dengan kondisi yang Anda alami. Terima kasih atas partisipasi Anda!

Saya tidak banyak mendengar keluhan dari rekan kerja tentang gaji mereka. *

1 2 3 4 5

Sangat Tidak Setuju ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Sangat Setuju

Tempat kerja saya peduli terhadap karyawan dan keluarga mereka. *

1 2 3 4 5

Sangat Tidak Setuju ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Sangat Setuju

Tempat kerja saya aman dan bersih. *

1 2 3 4 5

Sangat Tidak Setuju ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Sangat Setuju

Tempat kerja saya menyenangkan. *

1 2 3 4 5

Sangat Tidak Setuju ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Sangat Setuju

Semua orang di tempat kerja tampaknya membicarakan kebugaran, kesehatan, dan pola makan yang baik. *

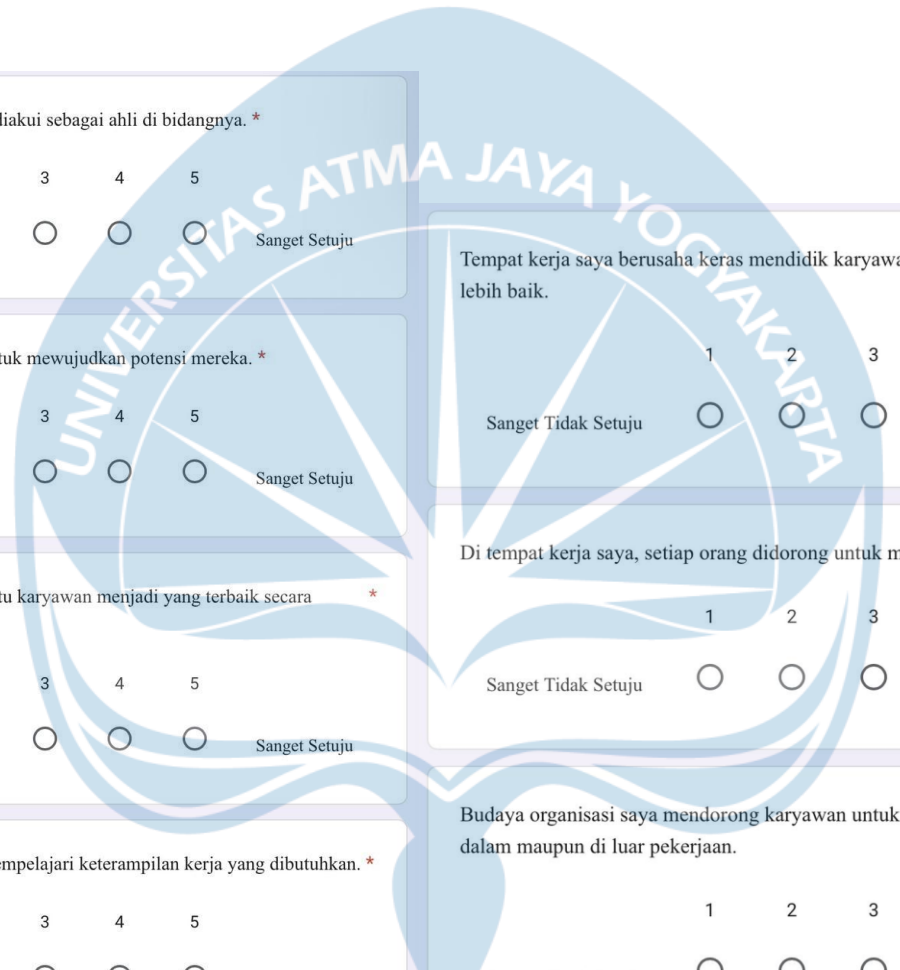
1 2 3 4 5

Sangat Tidak Setuju ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Sangat Setuju

Hampir semua orang di tempat kerja saya mendapat penghargaan berdasarkan kinerja. *

1 2 3 4 5

Sangat Tidak Setuju ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Sangat Setuju



Hampir semua orang di tempat kerja saya diakui sebagai ahli di bidangnya. *						
	1	2	3	4	5	
Sangat Tidak Setuju	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Sangat Setuju
Tempat kerja saya membantu karyawan untuk mewujudkan potensi mereka. *						
	1	2	3	4	5	
Sangat Tidak Setuju	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Sangat Setuju
Tempat kerja saya berusaha keras membantu karyawan menjadi yang terbaik secara profesional. *						
	1	2	3	4	5	
Sangat Tidak Setuju	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Sangat Setuju
Tempat kerja saya membantu karyawan mempelajari keterampilan kerja yang dibutuhkan. *						
	1	2	3	4	5	
Sangat Tidak Setuju	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Sangat Setuju
Tempat kerja saya berusaha keras mendidik karyawan agar menjadi profesional yang lebih baik. *						
	1	2	3	4	5	
Sangat Tidak Setuju	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Sangat Setuju
Di tempat kerja saya, setiap orang didorong untuk mengekspresikan kreativitasnya. *						
	1	2	3	4	5	
Sangat Tidak Setuju	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Sangat Setuju
Budaya organisasi saya mendorong karyawan untuk mengekspresikan kreativitas baik di dalam maupun di luar pekerjaan. *						
	1	2	3	4	5	
Sangat Tidak Setuju	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Sangat Setuju

LAMPIRAN 4 PERTANYAAN TERKAIT KETERIKATAN KARYAWAN

Keterikatan Karyawan

Pada bagian ini, Anda akan diminta untuk menjawab beberapa pernyataan terkait **keterikatan karyawan (*employee engagement*)**, yaitu sejauh mana Anda merasa bersemangat, antusias, bangga, dan terlibat secara penuh dalam pekerjaan yang Anda jalani.

Silakan berikan penilaian berdasarkan pengalaman Anda dengan menggunakan skala berikut:

1 = Sangat Tidak Setuju
2 = Tidak Setuju
3 = Netral
4 = Setuju
5 = Sangat Setuju

Harap jawab dengan jujur sesuai dengan kondisi yang Anda alami. Terima kasih atas partisipasi Anda!

Saya antusias dengan pekerjaan saya. *

1 2 3 4 5

Sangat Tidak Setuju ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Sangat Setuju

Pekerjaan saya menginspirasi saya. *

1 2 3 4 5

Sangat Tidak Setuju ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Sangat Setuju

Di tempat kerja, saya merasa penuh dengan energi. *

1 2 3 4 5

Sangat Tidak Setuju ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Sangat Setuju

Saya bangga dengan pekerjaan yang saya lakukan. *

1 2 3 4 5

Sangat Tidak Setuju ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Sangat Setuju

Pada pekerjaan saya, saya merasa kuat dan bertenaga. *

1 2 3 4 5

Sangat Tidak Setuju ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Sangat Setuju

Saya merasa senang ketika bekerja secara intens. *

1 2 3 4 5

Sangat Tidak Setuju ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Sangat Setuju

Ketika bangun di pagi hari, saya merasa bersemangat dalam bekerja. *

1 2 3 4 5

Sangat Tidak Setuju ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Sangat Setuju

Saya merasa menyatu dalam pekerjaan saya. *

1 2 3 4 5

Sangat Tidak Setuju ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Sangat Setuju

Saya terbawa suasana ketika saya bekerja. *

1 2 3 4 5

Sangat Tidak Setuju ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Sangat Setuju

LAMPIRAN 5 HASIL *OUTER LOADING*

UJI 1

Outer Loadings			
	KA	KK	LKK
KA1	0.592		
KA10	0.766		
KA11	0.815		
KA12	0.795		
KA13	0.797		
KA14	0.819		
KA2	0.830		
KA3	0.854		
KA4	0.848		
KA5	0.788		
KA6	0.781		
KA7	0.818		
KA8	0.787		
KA9	0.798		
KK1			0.845
KK2			0.848
KK3			0.822
KK4			0.847
KK5			0.851
KK6			0.833
KK7			0.874
KK8			0.826
KK9			0.832
LKK1			0.820
LKK10			0.856
LKK11			0.835
LKK12			0.799
LKK13			0.841
LKK2			0.629
LKK3			0.857
LKK4			0.846
LKK5			0.842
LKK6			0.826
LKK7			0.865
LKK8			0.820
LKK9			0.848

UJI 2

Outer Loadings			
	KA	KK	LKK
KA10	0,770		
KA11	0,819		
KA12	0,800		
KA13	0,795		
KA14	0,816		
KA2	0,828		
KA3	0,858		
KA4	0,847		
KA5	0,790		
KA6	0,785		
KA7	0,818		
KA8	0,785		
KA9	0,801		
KK1		0,845	
KK2		0,848	
KK3		0,822	
KK4		0,846	
KK5		0,851	
KK6		0,833	
KK7		0,874	
KK8		0,826	
KK9		0,832	
LKK1			0,825
LKK10			0,858
LKK11			0,838
LKK12			0,800
LKK13			0,841
LKK3			0,864
LKK4			0,849
LKK5			0,843
LKK6			0,827
LKK7			0,868
LKK8			0,818
LKK9			0,844

LAMPIRAN 6 HASIL UJI RELIABILITAS

Construct Reliability and Validity

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
KEPEMIMPINAN AUTENTIİK	0,956	0,956	0,961	0,655
KETERIKATAN KARYAWAN	0,949	0,950	0,956	0,709
LINGKUNGAN KERJA KARYAWAN	0,962	0,962	0,966	0,705

LAMPIRAN 7 HASIL UJI VALIDITAS DISKRIMINAN

Fornell-Larcker Criterion

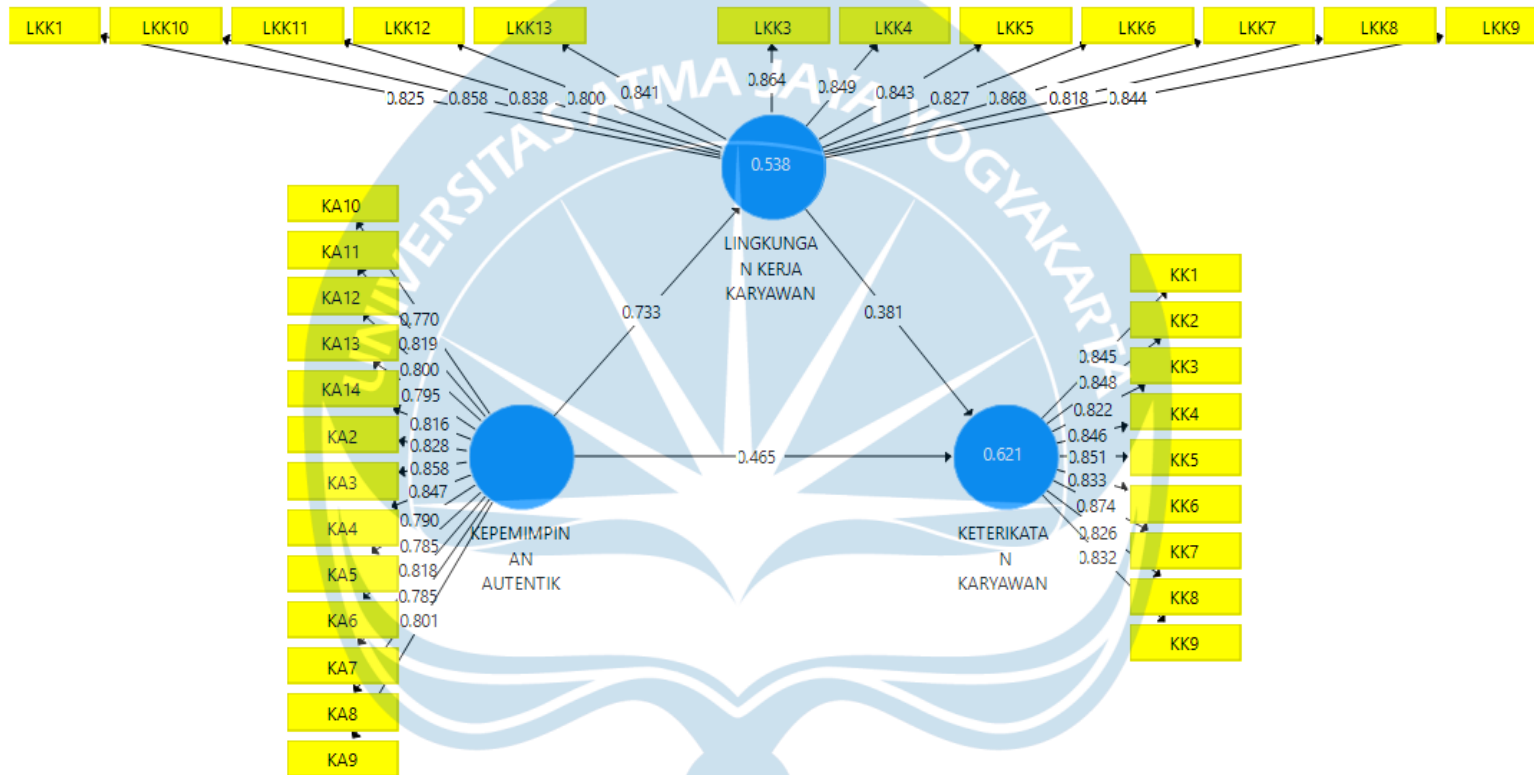
	KEPEMIMPINAN AUTENTIK	KETERIKATAN KARYAWAN	LINGKUNGAN KERJA KARYAWAN
KEPEMIMPINAN AUTENTIK	0,809		
KETERIKATAN KARYAWAN	0,744	0,842	
LINGKUNGAN KERJA KARYAWAN	0,733	0,722	0,840

LAMPIRAN 8 HASIL UJI KOEFISIEN DETERMINASI

R Square

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
KETERIKATAN KARYAWAN	0,621	0,613
LINGKUNGAN KERJA KARYAWAN	0,538	0,533

LAMPIRAN 9 MODEL PENELITIAN



LAMPIRAN 10 HASIL UJI HIPOTESIS

Final Results

Path Coefficients

Mean, STDEV, T-Values, P-Values

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
KEPEMIMPINAN AUTENTIK -> KETERIKATAN KARYAWAN	0,461	0,470	0,097	4,748	0,000
KEPEMIMPINAN AUTENTIK -> LINGKUNGAN KERJA KARYAWAN	0,738	0,739	0,064	11,627	0,000
LINGKUNGAN KERJA KARYAWAN -> KETERIKATAN KARYAWAN	0,386	0,381	0,108	3,556	0,000

Mean, STDEV, T-Values, P-Values

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
KEPEMIMPINAN AUTENTIK -> LINGKUNGAN KERJA KARYAWAN -> KETERIKATAN KARYAWAN	0,285	0,279	0,079	3,624	0,000

LAMPIRAN 11 JURNAL ACUAN PENELITIAN

Authentic leadership and employee engagement: the mediating role of employee work environment

Kwasi Dartey-Baah, Latifa Issahaku and Bridget Akwete-Siw

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Abstract
Purpose – The purpose of this study is to investigate the interrelations between authentic leadership style and employee engagement and the mediating influence of employee work environment in the local government service in Ghana.
Design/methodology/approach – Using a quantitative research design, this study conducted a cross-sectional survey using a stratified and simple random sampling technique, gathering data from 245 respondents from local government service employees in Ghana.
Findings – This study's findings supported the positive and significant role of authentic leadership style in fostering employee engagement and shaping the work environment. In addition, the research established that the employee work environment played a partial mediating role in the relationship between authentic leadership and employee engagement.
Practical implications – The implications of this study underscore the importance of authentic leadership within government units, offering a compelling argument against the prevalent bureaucratic form of leadership commonly observed in such settings. As a result, it is recommended that concerted efforts be directed toward cultivating a positive work environment conducive to fostering employee engagement. This entails a deliberate focus on the leadership styles exhibited within the various settings. Moreover, there is a crucial need for the training and encouragement of supervisors to embody authentic leadership practices.
Originality/value – By promoting authentic leadership practices, this research advocates for a shift toward leadership approaches that prioritize transparency, integrity and employee empowerment, ultimately fostering a more conducive work environment and enhancing employee engagement within the local government service in Ghana.
Keywords Authentic leadership, Employee engagement, Work environment
Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Organizations are facing unprecedented challenges in today's dynamic business environment, marked by globalization, technological advancements, intensified competition and the recent disruptions caused by events like the COVID-19 pandemic. To navigate these turbulent times, there is an increasing focus on fostering skills and innovative behaviors among their workforce to enhance staff commitment toward their overarching goals, thereby ensuring productivity and profitability (Oh *et al.*, 2017). Scholars in organizational research highlight the significance of employee engagement as a critical tool for addressing organizational challenges and ensuring survival, especially during economic downturns (Amabile and Kramer, 2011). Highly engaged employees are seen as pivotal assets in driving innovation, productivity and performance while minimizing costs through their enthusiasm and dedication to their work (Sibanda and Ncube, 2014). However, within organizations, the pursuit of power and positions often fosters a competitive and harsh

working environment, stifling innovation and damaging employee relationships (Banihani and Syed, 2017; Okoro *et al.*, 2018). To counter these negative effects, authentic leadership and a supportive organizational environment are deemed essential to foster cooperation, collaboration and motivation among employees and management (Banihani and Syed, 2017).

The role of leadership as a key antecedent to both employee and organizational outcomes is well-established and consistently supported in the existing literature. Leadership styles have been shown to influence employees' voluntary work behaviors by creating a conducive atmosphere for task performance and fostering an engaged workforce (Boerner *et al.*, 2007). Leadership is a crucial factor in mobilizing an engaged workforce, as effective leaders shape not only the attitudes and behaviors of employees but also the overall work environment. A positive work environment can be collaborative, healthy and effective, while a negative one can be toxic (Tims *et al.*, 2011; Al-Abrow *et al.*, 2019). The growing body of literature suggests a significant relationship between authentic leadership, the work environment and employee engagement. Researchers like Geostjahjanti *et al.* (2020) argued that authentic leaders exhibit behaviors that foster a positive and trustworthy work environment, which in turn strengthens employee commitment. The work environment is shaped by organizational elements such as management and leadership, quality control mechanisms and available support resources, all of which can either constrain or enable positive employee outcomes (Lako, 2002, as cited in Lee *et al.*, 2019). Authentic leadership has been proposed as a critical ingredient in activating positive and effective leadership behaviors, instilling confidence in employees, fostering trust among all stakeholders (Avolio *et al.*, 2004) and providing support for employees' relationship with their work (Laschinger and Fida, 2014). By stimulating employee drive, commitment and enthusiasm toward achieving organizational objectives, authentic leaders influence the engagement of employees. Authentic leaders are known for their genuine concern for the development of their employees' mental and emotional capacities through the values of trust, hope, optimism, resilience and confidence. According to Shirey (2006), leaders are the key elements that bind a healthy and effective work environment together. They have the ability to create a workplace that encourages employees to express their "preferred self" in their work, which is a concept often associated with employee engagement.

Ghana's corporate landscape has witnessed a surge in corporate scandals, resource mismanagement and a decline in trust and confidence in leaders, particularly in the financial sector (Boateng, 2020). The decisions taken by leaders have been identified as significant contributors to the institutional challenges faced by both public and private institutions (Bank of Ghana, 2017). In response to these challenges, there is a growing interest in promoting positive and ethical forms of leadership, such as authentic leadership, to address organizational issues, enhance employee outputs and improve overall organizational outcomes (Towsen *et al.*, 2020). Hence, this research aims to investigate the mediating role of the employee work environment on the relationship between authentic leadership and employee engagement among metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies in Ghana.

The findings of this study highlight the relevance of authentic leadership in the public sector and its impact on both organizational and employee outcomes. More importantly, we anticipate that the theoretical importance of this knowledge will translate into practical improvements, as evidenced by enhanced work environments and greater employee engagement. To that end, we provide practical guidelines for developing authentic leadership. For this study, authentic leadership is defined according to its original conceptualization by Luthans and Avolio (2003), as cited in Winton *et al.* (2022). It is a leadership style marked by transparency in intentions and a seamless alignment between espoused values, actions and behaviors (p. 243). A positive work environment, the focus of this study, is characterized by mutual respect, fairness and trust between management and

employees, an organizational culture that fosters communication and collaboration and a commitment to ensuring the physical and emotional safety of individuals (Heath *et al.*, 2004). Employee work engagement, meanwhile, is defined as a positive state in which employees experience vigor (energy to complete tasks); dedication (full involvement in tasks); and absorption (immersion in tasks and genuine enjoyment) (Wirawan *et al.*, 2020).

2. Literature review

2.1 The concept of leadership

Leadership, a well-researched concept in human resource management, has been subject to various interpretations by scholars over the centuries. Dartey-Baah (2016) attributed the divergent views on leadership to the complex nature of societal values and aspirations. While some define leadership as central to group processes, others perceive it as a manifestation of distinct characteristics or qualities inherent in individuals, enabling them to influence others toward achieving set objectives (Bass, 1990; Northouse, 2013). Anwar (2017) defined leadership as the ability to guide, empower and motivate others toward productivity and organizational advancement. Naseri (2017) described leadership as an interconnected endeavor, involving building trust, improving workplaces and encouraging heightened productivity and performance among employees. Northouse (2013) underscored the centrality of leadership as a process involving influence within groups, with a shared goal, highlighting influence as a recurring theme. In essence, leadership entails the role of a leader in inspiring others to undertake desired actions within an organization to achieve set objectives.

2.2 The case for authentic leadership theory

As Handy (1994) asserted, leadership, much like a paradox, does not need to be “solved” but should be embraced, accepting that multiple valid ideas and solutions exist within it. Mango (2018) noted that theories generally model specific aspects of the empirical world, meaning that no single perspective on leadership can be regarded as the absolute truth. This has led to the proliferation of leadership literature, which includes a wide range of theories, from early concepts like the Great Man theory and trait theory to contemporary models such as transformational leadership (Burns, 1978), transactional leadership (Bass, 1990) and transformational leadership (Dartey-Baah, 2015). Within this context, authentic leadership has emerged as a relatively recent development in leadership theory. It is defined by how closely a leader’s actions align with their innermost beliefs and ideals (Luthans and Avolio, 2003).

It embodies a constructive leadership style characterized by self-awareness, vulnerability and integrity (Avolio and Gardner, 2005). Authentic leaders are perceived as trustworthy, moral, self-aware and capable of fostering their subordinates’ growth and development (Luthans and Avolio, 2003). These leaders inspire their followers to prioritize their colleagues’ well-being and act consistently with ethical principles, ultimately benefiting both individuals and the organization (Crosby and Bryson, 2005). Four fundamental components define authentic leadership: self-awareness, balanced processing, relational transparency and internalized moral perspective (Kernis and Goldman, 2005; Walumbwa *et al.*, 2006).

Self-awareness: This component entails having awareness of one’s motives, feelings and self-relevant cognitions, allowing leaders to interact with others candidly (Kernis, 2003). Leaders with a high level of self-awareness are more capable of leading and developing their employees (Jang, 2021).

Balanced processing: It refers to a leader’s objective evaluation of information without biases, enabling them to make informed decisions (Midom *et al.*, 2021). Thus, authentic leaders often process information without any biases and are objective when it comes to

decision-making. This trait makes them objectively think through both positive and negative aspects of a problem before making important decisions (Kernis, 2003).

Relational transparency: This requires leaders to exhibit genuine behaviors and value honesty, fostering an organizational culture that encourages openness and trust (Oh *et al.*, 2017). These leaders are honest, show genuine behaviors and consistently exhibit such values with their followers. (Oh *et al.*, 2017). They believe in building an organizational structure that allows employees to share information and their feelings in a genuine manner, without any fear (Yadav and Dixit, 2017).

Internalized moral perspective: This entails authentic leaders upholding ethical principles and behaving in accordance with their values, emphasizing people-oriented attributes (Jang, 2021). These types of leaders hold people-oriented attributes in high esteem and value relationships.

2.3 Employee engagement

Employee engagement denotes the extent to which employees feel a sense of belonging and connection to their organization’s objectives (Bedarkar and Pandita, 2014). It encompasses employees’ emotional attachment to the organization, influencing their willingness to go above and beyond to achieve organizational goals (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004). Engaged employees demonstrate interest in their work, take pride in their contributions and consistently strive to exceed expectations (Saleem *et al.*, 2020). Facilitating employee engagement requires organizations to delineate roles clearly, provide opportunities for training and development and cultivate an inclusive atmosphere (Saleem *et al.*, 2020). Engaged employees are more likely to demonstrate commitment to organizational values and excel in their roles, contributing to business success (Kamanja, 2020). Research has demonstrated that the amount of employee involvement may be used to forecast money flow, results of employee performance and the attainment of organizational success, making the idea of employee engagement of tremendous importance to any organization (Mohd *et al.*, 2016).

2.4 Employee work environment

The workplace environment can be characterized by both its physical and behavioral components (Zhenjing *et al.*, 2022; Kumar and Sia, 2012) operationalize it to include factors such as peer cohesion, supervisor support, autonomy, task orientation, work pressure, clarity, control and physical comfort. The work environment plays a crucial role in influencing employee engagement, retention, commitment, motivation and productivity, with a safe and supportive environment being key to attracting and retaining talent (Saleem *et al.*, 2020). While physical elements such as ergonomic workspace design, lighting (both natural and artificial) and room temperature have been shown to impact work efficiency and productivity, behavioral factors – such as the quality of interpersonal relationships, social support and job demands-resources – also significantly affect employee outcomes (Dulloh *et al.*, 2024). According to Ramli (2019), the work environment directly influences employee performance, as factors like the level of work errors, innovation and collaboration with colleagues are shaped by the immediate surroundings in which employees operate. An organization characterized by openness, justice and opportunities for creativity fosters greater employee engagement (Anitha, 2014). Organizations that prioritize employee well-being, provide opportunities for skill development and encourage open communication create a supportive work environment conducive to employee engagement (Mohd *et al.*, 2016). Employees who engage in the positive exchange of behaviors feel motivated and committed to their job when they are provided with a healthy work environment. On the contrary, employees face occupational stress, feel toxicity in coworker relationship and

engage in absenteeism and work destruction, which ultimately results in low work engagement (Saleem *et al.*, 2020).

2.5 Theoretical framework

The Social Exchange Theory (SET) underpins this study, positing that social behavior results from an exchange process where individuals weigh the benefits and risks of their interactions (Homans, 1961; Emerson, 1962). Authentic leaders establish an exchange relationship with their employees by offering support, motivation and an enabling atmosphere (Lorinkova and Perry, 2017). In turn, employees reciprocate by demonstrating positive behaviors and commitment to their employer (Jiang and Men, 2017).

The SET forms the foundational framework for this study. It suggests that social behavior arises from an exchange process in which individuals, generally viewed as rational, engage in a cost-benefit analysis of their relationships. One of its principal assertions follows that people evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of their interactions and associations with others. Notably, scholars such as Homans (1961), Emerson (1962), Blau (1964) and Nunkoo (2016) advocate for SET, suggesting that individuals are inclined to terminate relationships if perceived risks outweigh rewards (cited in Soieb *et al.*, 2013). Building on Homans' assumptions, Nunkoo (2016) argued that all participants in an exchange process rely on each other for various advantages, both material and immaterial and engage in the exchange process after considering its advantages and disadvantages. Hence, individuals enter into exchange relationships when they believe the benefits outweigh the drawbacks.

Authentic leaders, as posited by Laschinger *et al.* (2010), actively work to mitigate workplace disputes and burnout. These leaders assist employees in navigating challenging work situations and cultivate an environment where openness and accountability are encouraged. Moreover, supervisors who facilitate the free flow of information and promote decisions aligned with ethical principles can significantly enhance employees' motivation and engagement (DeConinck, 2010). In addition, leaders who demonstrate authenticity establish an exchange connection with their teams by providing support, motivation, an enabling atmosphere and expressions of gratitude. Through these actions, leaders elevate morale and, consequently, inspire positive behaviors from their teams toward both themselves and the organization as a whole (Lorinkova and Perry, 2017). Similarly, organizations foster mutually beneficial relationships when employees perceive care, receive constructive feedback and are encouraged to contribute ideas and grow professionally. Such employees, feeling valued and supported, are more likely to invest their energy into their work and demonstrate unparalleled commitment to their employer (Jiang and Men, 2017).

2.6 Empirical review

2.6.1 Authentic leadership and employee engagement. Leaders play a pivotal role in supporting their teams, fostering enthusiasm and dedication among employees (Niswaty *et al.*, 2021). Employees often gauge their behavior at work based on interactions with their leaders, thereby granting leaders a significant influence in shaping the workplace culture (Macey and Schneider, 2008). Niswaty *et al.* (2021) investigated the relationship between authentic leadership and staff morale within Indonesia's major public services. It emerged from the study that there is a strong correlation between authentic leadership and employees' commitment to their roles. Their findings underscored that genuine leadership fosters greater engagement from staff in their work. Townsen *et al.* (2020) investigated the dynamics of authentic leadership, psychological empowerment, job clarity and employee engagement within the South African mining industry. Analyzing a sample of 236 coal-mining workers, they established a significant positive correlation between authentic leadership and employee engagement. Furthermore, their research highlighted that

psychological empowerment mediated the relationship between authentic leadership on employee engagement. In a similar vein, Novitasari *et al.* (2021) explored the impact of authentic leadership style and psychological capital on the creative work behavior of employees within an Indonesian manufacturing firm. The study revealed a correlation between the variables. Consequently, authentic leadership and psychological capital emerge as important factors in predicting and shaping employees' proactive and creative behaviors in the workplace, thereby influencing overall engagement levels. It is thus hypothesized that:

H1: Authentic leadership will positively and significantly influence employee engagement.

2.6.2 Authentic leadership and employee work environment. A review of the literature on authentic leadership demonstrates that its basic components; self-awareness, transparency and balanced processing have a favorable effect on the workplace (Liu *et al.*, 2017). There is an increased emphasis on open communication, especially among employees whose voices may not have been heard without the authentic leadership style being present (Walumbwa *et al.*, 2008). As a result, authentic leadership has a direct, beneficial effect on the office climate (Lee *et al.*, 2018). Sagbas and Surucu (2021) investigated the impact of authentic leadership on occupational stress among 311 staff members working in luxury hotels in Alanya, Turkey. It was identified from the research that a more authentic leadership style was inversely related to increased levels of stress in the workplace. Yadav and Dixit (2017) studied the relationship between authentic leadership and the happiness of IT workers in India. The study's authors set out to look into the connection between authentic leadership and workers' work-related quality of life, which they described as factors including job and career satisfaction, overall well-being, job control, job stress, the home-work interface and working circumstances. A total of 45 team managers and 121 team members were sampled for this study. According to the findings, authentic leadership significantly improved employees' lives across all six areas of job satisfaction. Therefore, authentic leadership promotes a healthy workplace.

Furthermore, Laschinger and Fida (2014) investigated how authentic leadership influenced workplace bullying, burnout and voluntary turnover. The study involving 342 recently graduated nurses with less than two years of experience working in Ontario's acute care hospitals revealed that workplaces with authentic leaders had fewer bullying incidents. The reasoning being that authentic leaders are more likely to set high standards of behavior in the workplace and less likely to accept bullying behavior. Furthermore, authentic leaders were found to be honest and consistent in their interactions with followers. It is therefore hypothesized that:

H2: Authentic leadership will positively influence employees' work environment.

2.6.3 Work environment and employee engagement. Employee engagement may be affected by the quality of the work environment, which has been shown to increase in productive and positive work environments and decrease in unproductive and negative environments. Staff members are more likely to give high-quality service if they are provided with a conducive work environment that allows them to make the most of their knowledge, abilities and resources (Leshabari *et al.*, 2008; Nasidi *et al.*, 2019). In a study by Bushir (2014) at the Institute of Finance Management in the Dar es Salaam Region, employee performance was shown to be affected by factors related to the organization's working environment, including issues related to the availability of job aids, the usage of performance feedback, the prevalence of noise at work and the supervisor's interpersonal interaction with subordinates. Kamanja *et al.* (2019) looked at how the workplace atmosphere in Kenya's central government ministries affected employee engagement. Employee engagement was found to be significantly affected by both the physical and social aspects of the workplace. Employee enthusiasm was shown to increase in tandem with improvements in the emotional climate of the workplace; however, allowing workers

more freedom in their schedules did not boost morale. Mohd *et al.* (2016) investigated the impact of the office setting on the dedication of workers at a Kuala Lumpur-based telco. It was found that the work environment is the single most important element in determining whether or not workers are actively involved in the success of their organization, and that this atmosphere must be both favorable and liberating for people to give their all. It is therefore hypothesized that:

H3 Employee work environment will influence employee engagement.

2.6.4 Work environment as a mediator between authentic leadership and employee engagement. Enhanced workplace productivity can be attributed to the positive impact of a safe and healthy work environment on employees' attitudes and performance (Daniel, 2019). However, when employees are treated poorly or are unhappy in their work environment, productivity tends to suffer. In addition, leadership significantly influences organizational culture. Sugiyanta *et al.* (2021) explored the mediating role of the workplace in the relationship between leadership and employee performance. In their study involving 50 workers from the College of Economics in Jakarta, Indonesia, they found that effective leadership positively affected the work atmosphere. Good leadership contributed to a pleasant workplace, whereas poor leadership resulted in a less-than-ideal environment.

To achieve high levels of employee performance, businesses should prioritize cultivating a workplace atmosphere conducive to effective leadership styles. Authentic leadership, in particular, can flourish in such an environment. Labrague *et al.* (2021) investigated the importance of nurses' work environment and leadership self-efficacy. Their findings, based on data from 1,534 nurses across 24 acute care hospitals in the Sultanate of Oman, revealed a correlation between nurses' intrinsic motivation and leaders' genuineness in their leadership styles. Nurse managers who exhibited authentic leadership saw increased enthusiasm among their staff nurses, encouraging them to take on leadership roles within the organization. From the literature review, the following hypothesis was stated:

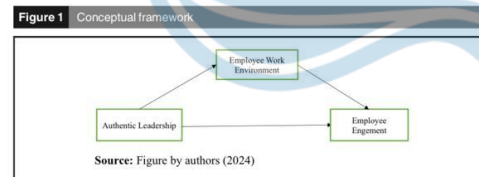
H4 Employee work environment will mediate the relationship between authentic leadership and employee engagement.

The conceptual framework is shown in Figure 1.

3. Research methodology

3.1 Population, sample and eligibility criteria

The population for the study were employees of local government service in the Eastern Region of Ghana. The selection of the local government service for the study was based on the nature of leadership structures that exist in the service. An introductory letter was sent to the selected assemblies to gain institutional consent for the study, the next line of action was to inform respondents of the study's purpose and scope. Individuals who were willing to



participate were stratified into categories of top management, middle management and junior staff with more than one year working experience in the local government service.

A total of 300 standardized questionnaires were distributed, with a three-week period allocated for completion and return. Of the distributed questionnaires, 245 were returned and deemed suitable for data analysis, yielding a response rate of 82%. Authentic leadership was measured with 14-item developed by Neider and Schriesheim (2011) and rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly Disagree (1); Disagree (2); Neither agree nor disagree (3); Agree (4); Strongly Agree (5). Some of the items on the ALI include *My leader solicits feedback for improving his/her dealings with others, my leader clearly states what he/she means*. Employee engagement was measured with a nine-item on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Never) to 7 (Always); some of the items on the scale include *at work, I feel bursting with energy*. The abridged version (UWES-9) of Utrecht work engagement scale developed by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) was used. Employee work environment was measured with questionnaire items adopted from Razaka *et al.* (2016), the 13 items were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Sample of the items on the scale include *My place of work is safe and sanitary*.

To ensure that ethical considerations were met, approval was obtained from the relevant district and municipal assemblies in the Eastern Region before data collection. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the research, the importance of the study and the proper way to complete the questionnaires. Participation was entirely voluntary and respondents were assured that their information would remain confidential and anonymous.

4. Data analysis

Analysis of data was carried out with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 and the IBM AMOS version 21.0 for further analyses. Field data was coded and sorted in the SPSS. A preliminary analysis was carried out to ensure data collected was good and fit for further analysis, particularly with structural equation model which requires data to be normally distributed and have no missing values. As posited by George and Mallery (2010), the empirically determined range for Skewness and Kurtosis is between -2 and $+2$. The results indicate that the absolute values are all within the range of -2 and $+2$ (see Table 1).

4.1 Reliability and validity analysis

Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability index were used to analyze the level of reliability. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to assess the composite reliability. Each variable in the study was shown to have satisfactory dependability having a Cronbach's alpha value above the 0.70 threshold recommended by Nunnally (1978). Using the average variance extracted (AVE), the investigator was able to evaluate the convergent validity (AVE). Fornell and Larcker (1981) stated that an AVE of 0.50 or above is required to prove validity; all constructs were found to be at or above the AVE cut-off level.

Table 1 Skewness and kurtosis of the study variables

Variable	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. deviation	Skew	Kurtosis
Authentic leadership	1.30	5.00	3.696	0.667	-0.986	1.179
Employee engagement	1.00	7.00	5.291	1.201	-0.679	0.351
Employee work environment	1.00	5.00	3.115	0.786	-0.015	-0.273

Source: Transformed from field data (2024)

Discriminant validity was confirmed using the Fornell and Larcker procedure. According to the rule of thumb, for latent variables to be considered adequately discriminant, the off-diagonal values in the corresponding rows and columns should be smaller than the diagonal values. Tables 2 and 3 depicts the reliability and validity assessment for the study variables.

4.2 Demographic profile of respondents

Based on the gender distribution of the respondents, it can be inferred that, in the context of this study, more males are employed in the local government service than females. The majority of respondents (131 or 53.5%) fell within the 31–40 age bracket, whereas only one respondent was above the public retirement age of 60. The age distribution suggests that the local government service is largely comprised of a youthful workforce, with most respondents having fewer than four years of work experience. Over half of the respondents are permanently employed in the sector, with a significant proportion holding middle management positions (see Table 4).

4.3 Measurement analysis (confirmatory factor analysis)

CFA was conducted to ensure that items that strongly correlated with their respective variables were retained. According to Hair *et al.* (2010), items that fail to load well on the constructs should be deleted to boost the fit indices of the constructs and to control the errors to the model fit. The initial measurement indicated that the fit indices did not meet their various thresholds. Therefore, the items with loadings below 0.50 were deleted from the various constructs to boost fit measures of the model and ensure they were within the acceptable thresholds as recommended by scholars. The final measurement model is shown in Figure 2.

4.4 Structural model results

In assessing the fitness of our research model, Chi-square [CMIN/df (χ^2/df)] (1.756), goodness-of-fit (GFI), comparative fit index (CFI), incremental fit index (IFI), Tucker–Lewis index (TLI) and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) were used to validate the structural model. The values as shown in Table 5 indicate that the research model has an acceptable good fit because the values of the fit index are within the excellent threshold as suggested by Bagozzi and Yi (2012).

Table 2 Reliability and convergent validity coefficients of the main constructs

Constructs	No. of items	Cronbach's alpha	CR	AVE
Employee work environment	13	0.898	0.732	0.536
Authentic leadership	14	0.856	0.651	0.523
Employee engagement	9	0.822	0.735	0.540

Source: Transformed from field data (2024)

Table 3 Fornell and Larcker procedure for discriminant validity

Variables	1	2	3
Employee work environment	0.732		
Authentic leadership	0.519	0.723	
Employee engagement	0.490	0.340	0.735

Source: Transformed from field data (2024)

Table 4 Demographic profile of respondents

Demographic characteristics	Categories	Frequency	%
Gender	Female	95	61.0
	Male	150	39.0
Age	21–30	75	30.6
	31–40	131	53.5
	41–50	31	12.8
	51–60	7	2.9
	60+	1	0.4
Education	WASSCE/SSSCE	1	0.4
	Diploma/HND	44	18.0
	Bachelors	134	54.7
	Masters	50	20.4
	Professional certificate	10	4.1
	Other	6	2.4
Workplace experience	1–3 years	105	42.9
	4–7 years	34	13.8
	8–10 years	49	20.0
	11–13 years	34	13.9
	14 years+	23	9.4
Employee type	Permanent	236	96.4
	Temporal/GF	3	1.2
Category of staff	Contract	6	2.4
	Senior management	82	33.5
	Middle management	99	40.4
	Junior staff	64	26.1

Source: Field survey (2024)

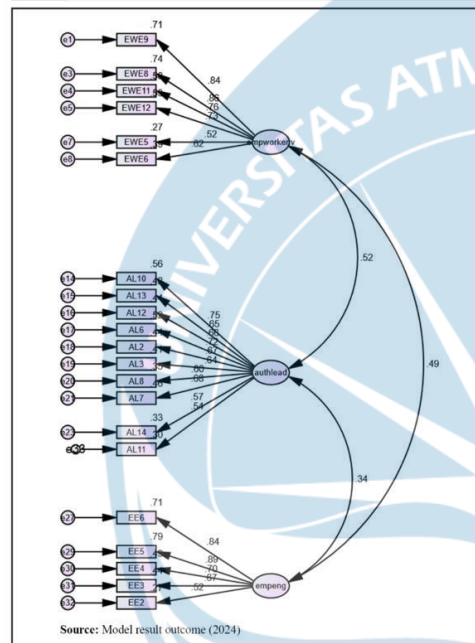
5. Hypotheses testing

The objective of this study was to examine how authentic leadership and employee work environment affect or impacts employee engagement and how this relationship is mediated by the employees' work environment. Table 6 reports the path relationship with the standardized coefficient values. The prediction that authentic leadership will positively influence employee engagement was supported (Authlead → Empeng: $\beta = 0.136$, t -statistic = 3.151, $p < 0.05$), indicating a significant support for $H1$. Authentic leadership was also found to positively and significantly influence employees' work environment (Authlead → Empwrkenv: $\beta = 0.477$, t -statistic = 10.470, $p < 0.01$), indicating support for $H2$. The third hypothesis examined employee work environment as an influencer of employee engagement, with statistical results of (Empwrkenv → Empeng: $\beta = 0.414$, t -statistic = 10.489, $p < 0.01$), $H3$ was accepted.

The study also sought to examine the mediation effect of employee work environment between authentic leadership and employee engagement. Results showed a substantial association between authentic leadership (independent variable) and employee work environment (mediator) ($\beta = 0.477$, $p < 0.01$), authentic leadership and employee engagement ($\beta = 0.136$, $p < 0.01$) and employees' work environment (the mediator) and employee engagement (the dependent variable) ($\beta = 0.414$, $p < 0.01$), which is in line with the three-step approach for mediation analysis proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986). $H4$ was therefore accepted.

6. Discussions

The first research objective of the study confirms that within the Ghanaian local government service, authentic leadership positively influences employee engagement. According to Townsen *et al.* (2020), this leadership style is a valuable asset to the workforce, as it promotes openness and strengthens the leader-subordinate relationship through

Figure 2 Final measurement model

trust-building, which is essential for fostering creativity and innovation (Walumbwa *et al.*, 2008). This finding aligns with the work of Laschinger *et al.* (2014), who found that authentic leadership creates an environment of trust, leading to increased employee engagement and enthusiasm. Similarly, Qiu *et al.* (2019) asserted that authentic leadership significantly boosts subordinates' involvement by enhancing their confidence in their leaders. Dabone (2024) argued that transforming the Ghanaian public sector into a more efficient and performance-driven entity will require leadership strategies that motivate and inspire employees, thereby enhancing their engagement levels. When employees trust their leaders, they are more likely to go above and beyond in their duties. In line with this, research by Niswaty *et al.* (2021) also found that authentic leadership is a significant

Table 5 Model fit measures and their interpretations of the measurement model

Measure	Estimate	Threshold	Interpretation
CMIN/df (χ^2/df)	1.848	<3.000	Excellent
p-value	0.157	>0.05	Good fit
GEI	0.993	≥ 0.95	Excellent
GFI	0.987	≥ 0.90	Excellent
NFI	0.973	≥ 0.90	Excellent
IFI	0.987	≥ 0.90	Excellent
RMSEA	0.059	<0.08	Excellent
RMR	0.013	<0.09	Excellent

Source: Transformed from field data (2024)

predictor of employee dedication. Several scholars have expanded on this idea, suggesting that leaders who demonstrate authentic leadership traits are better equipped to connect with their subordinates, increasing the likelihood of employees putting in the effort to achieve organizational goals. A leader's clear understanding of their role and the impact they have on others, combined with transparency that fosters trust and honesty, results in employees who are both capable and motivated to contribute extra effort.

The second objective of the study confirmed that authentic leadership has a positive and significant influence on the work environment. This finding is consistent with the work of researchers like Sagbas and Surucu (2021), who highlight that a positive work environment is one of the key benefits of authentic leadership. Authentic leaders achieve this by promoting transparency in processes, fostering an open climate for sharing ideas and information and reducing job-related stress, traits that are characteristic of authentic leadership (Walumbwa *et al.*, 2008). These leaders enhance employee morale and productivity (Yadav and Dixit, 2017). Similarly, in their study of the healthcare profession, Wong and Laschinger (2013) found that the more leaders demonstrate authenticity, the more employees perceive access to workplace resources, which in turn boosts employee satisfaction and performance.

The third key finding of this study reveals that a conducive work environment positively influences employee engagement. Drawing on social exchange theory and the principle of reciprocity, it was observed that when leaders provide support and exhibit positive behaviors such as ensuring a safe and conducive work environment, employees feel a sense of obligation to reciprocate by demonstrating good behaviors and increased commitment to organizational goals. The study further identified that the state of the work

Table 6 Summary of hypothetical relationships

Model 1 (direct)	Estimate	SE	T-value	p-value	Findings bootstrap CI
H1: authlead $\rightarrow$ empeng	0.198	0.114	3.151	0.032	Supported
H2: authlead $\rightarrow$ empworkenv	0.477	0.066	10.470	***	Supported
H3: empworkenv $\rightarrow$ empeng	0.414	0.097	10.469	***	Supported
Model 2 (mediation)					
H4: authlead $\rightarrow$ empworkenv $\rightarrow$ empeng	0.198			***	Partial mediation ■ Supported

LLCI (0.148)–ULCI (0.275)

Notes: ***Significant at 0.01%; **significant at 1%; *significant at 5%; authlead = authentic leadership; empworkenv = employee work environment; empeng = employee engagement

Source: Transformed from field data (2024)

environment plays a significant role in shaping employee engagement. In other words, the more secure and pleasant the work environment, the more likely employees are to become engaged and go above and beyond for the organization. This finding aligns with several studies (Bushir, 2014; Vidhi Tyagi, 2016; Daniel, 2019; Kamanja *et al.*, 2019).

The final research objective sought to establish the work environment as a mediator between authentic leadership and employee engagement. The results showed that the work environment partially mediates the relationship between authentic leadership and employee engagement, meaning that authentic leadership both directly and indirectly influences employee engagement. For example, Otaghsara and Hamzehzadeh (2017) asserted that authentic leadership creates an environment that motivates and inspires followers, which, in turn, enhances productivity and morale. Similarly, Yeboah-Appiagyei *et al.* (2018) found that when employees feel their leaders care about them and respond to their concerns, they are more likely to feel loyal to the organization. Furthermore, scholars like Saleem *et al.* (2020), Labrague *et al.* (2021) and Sugiyanta *et al.* (2021) provide empirical evidence of the indirect link between authentic leadership and employee engagement. For instance, Laschinger *et al.* (2012) found that when CEOs engage in actions that truly matter to their employees, they are seen as representatives of the organization, fostering greater loyalty from staff. In the context of local government services, where top executives are often political heads representing the government of the day, employees may perceive their superiors as embodying the government itself.

While this study has established these findings, it is important for leaders seeking to adopt authentic leadership to recognize that culture is a critical contextual factor influencing the effectiveness of this leadership style in achieving desired organizational outcomes. The study's limitations include the exclusion of cultural variables; however, Shamir and Eitam (2005), as cited in Yung-Kai (2024), note that authentic leadership may not be universally valued across all cultural contexts. Not all leaders are expected to be self-expressive or transparent in their interactions with followers. In the case of Ghanaian society, elements such as collectivism, an emphasis on relationships and respect for elders and authority align with certain aspects of authentic leadership. However, challenges such as hierarchical structures, power distance and the reluctance to admit weaknesses or vulnerability can pose barriers to the effective implementation of authentic leadership. Consequently, further research is needed to deepen the understanding of how national and organizational cultures across different industries and nations influence the outcomes of authentic leadership.

7. Managerial implications

The evidence suggests that cultivating authentic leadership within an organization can be a valuable asset for the workforce, contributing to enhanced team dynamics and fostering desirable employee behaviors (Towsen *et al.*, 2020). The challenge for leaders and managers in the public sector lies in the job-related demands and the social and political norms within the workplace, which can make it difficult for them to be authentic (Gadner *et al.*, 2021). However, it is important to note, as Gadner *et al.* (2005, p. 345) argued, that "authenticity is not an either/or condition (i.e. people are neither completely authentic nor inauthentic). Instead, it is better understood as a spectrum, with individuals being more or less authentic or inauthentic." Implementing authentic leadership in the public sector begins with leaders aligning themselves with the core principles of authenticity. This involves embodying key traits associated with authentic leadership, such as self-awareness, balanced processing of information, relational transparency and an internalized moral perspective. These qualities enable leaders to build meaningful relationships with subordinates, fostering unparalleled commitment to organizational goals.

As Shirey (2006) suggested, the process of becoming an authentic leader is more of a journey than a destination. This journey begins with self-discovery, self-improvement,

reflection and renewal. In this process, individuals must develop professional competence and expertise in their respective fields, which helps them cultivate a leadership style that aligns with their personality and values.

Furthermore, managers should adopt practices that promote openness and encourage the free exchange of ideas and information, which is a hallmark characteristic of authentic leadership (Walumbwa *et al.*, 2008). Creating an environment where employees feel empowered to share their thoughts and opinions can significantly boost morale and productivity within the organization (cited in Yadav and Dixit, 2017). Practices such as engaging in executive coaching, seeking feedback, journaling, openly admitting mistakes, sharing decision-making processes and workplace challenges, consistently clarifying their core beliefs and values and aligning their actions with those values are key strategies through which leaders can cultivate authenticity in the workplace. In addition, the study aligns with research by Sagbas and Surucu (2021), which underscores the importance of authentic leadership in mitigating job-related stress, highlighting the need for leaders to prioritize employee well-being. Drawing from the social exchange theory and the principle of reciprocity, it becomes evident that when leaders demonstrate support and exhibit positive behaviors toward employees, such as ensuring a safe and supportive work environment, employees reciprocate with increased commitment and positive behaviors (Towsen *et al.*, 2020).

The concept of authentic leadership, though relatively new, has made significant strides in the field of organizational sciences. However, according to Gardner *et al.* (2021), a review of the existing literature reveals that it is at the second of three stages of development (concept assessment and augmentation) where concerns about the validation of empirical results arise. During this stage, researchers focus on examining mediators and moderators to enhance the understanding and operationalization of the concept. In line with this, the findings of the study provide evidence that authentic leadership is a positive leadership approach and identify the underlying mechanisms through which its influence can be experienced, thus contributing to the advancement of the concept.

8. Recommendation and future direction

It is a well-established fact that leaders are perceived as representatives of organizations (Dartey-Baah, 2018), thus organizations are admonished to pay attention to the kind of leadership styles exhibited in the workplace environment. Furthermore, future studies could use a qualitative or mixed-method approach to enhance the understanding of the interplay of the constructs under study as this study employed the quantitative approach. Again, the research was purposely carried out for selected assemblies in Ghana. The results may not be a generalized reflection of the views of all employees of the entire local government service of Ghana. Future research can therefore investigate the relationship between the constructs in other assemblies in other regions of Ghana. Furthermore, data gathered for this study was cross-sectional. Therefore, future researchers could use longitudinal data for such studies to ascertain the cause-and-effect relationship among the constructs under study. Future research should also explore additional mediators in the relationship between authentic leadership and work outcomes, such as positive psychological capital and psychological empowerment.

9. Conclusions

This study underscores the important role of authentic leadership in shaping workplace dynamics and fostering desirable employee behaviors. It is evident from the study that authentic leadership significantly influences employee engagement and the overall workplace environment. Key traits associated with authentic leadership, such as self-awareness, relational transparency and moral integrity, facilitate meaningful interactions

between leaders and subordinates, thereby fostering commitment toward organizational objectives. This study highlighted the positive impact of authentic leadership on employee engagement through the work environment. Moreover, the correlation between authentic leadership and reduced job-related stress emphasizes its role in promoting a conducive work atmosphere. The principle of reciprocity elucidates how supportive leadership behaviors engender a sense of obligation among employees to reciprocate positively, contributing to heightened engagement and commitment. Furthermore, the study underscores the critical importance of organizational leadership, particularly in the public sector for achieving organizational goals. Recognizing the intrinsic need of employees for meaning and value in their work, organizations are urged to prioritize leadership styles that promote supportive environments conducive to employee engagement and organizational success.

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