

The Role of Authentic Leadership in Job Enrichment and Employee Turnover

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between authentic leadership, job enrichment, and employee turnover among university staff, conducted through a descriptive-correlational research method. The statistical population consisted of all 659 employees of the Islamic Azad University, Zahedan Branch. Using the Krejcie and Morgan (1971) sample size table, a sample of 247 individuals was determined, and simple random sampling was employed. Data were collected using the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire by Walumbwa et al. (2008), the Job Enrichment Questionnaire by Dehghan et al. (2010), and the Employee Turnover Questionnaire by Ghasemkhani (2013). The results indicated a significant relationship between authentic leadership and its dimensions (self-awareness, relational transparency, internalized moral perspective, and balanced processing) with job enrichment and employee turnover. Furthermore, the regression results showed that 78% of the variance in job enrichment and 48% of the variance in employee turnover could be predicted by the authentic leadership variable.

Introduction

Today, one of the fundamental problems in organizations is the lack of trust between managers and employees. This lack of trust leads to the depletion of organizational resources and the failure to achieve organizational goals. To build trust, organizations need managers who can transform into effective leaders (Eyni Nargeseh, 2024). It is evident that when discussing human resources, factors such as thought, creativity, knowledge, and up-to-date information are also considered. The key point is that employees should be able to demonstrate their talents in positions that are most compatible with their abilities. Unfortunately, this compatibility does not always occur, and there are many instances where talents are wasted due to individuals being placed in jobs unrelated to their background, interests, or education, leading to significant job dissatisfaction (Rezaei, Hemati & Porashraf, 2023).

One of the strategies in the field of human resource management for fostering skilled, motivated, and creative employees is job rotation. Job rotation is a process through which employees within an organization perform tasks at various related levels through job transitions. Through this process, individuals become familiar with a wider range of jobs, experience greater variety in their work, become valuable organizational members, and have their work motivation enhanced. Job rotation is also referred



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to as on-the-job training, meaning that an employee in a unit or department can acquire various job skills over a specific period. It is also considered a practical method for job enrichment and development ([Shokri, 2018](#)).

Job rotation encompasses various types, including promotion (upward), demotion (downward), transfer and change of workplace (horizontal), suspension, retirement, dismissal, and resignation (outside the organization), as well as intra-organizational rotation (where an individual changes their job within the organization), inter-organizational rotation (where an employee changes their organization), intra-professional rotation (where individuals move within their profession), and inter-professional rotation (where individuals change both their job and profession during rotation) ([Van den Berg, 2023](#)).

Management scholars have identified the components of job rotation as work quality, innovation, and satisfaction. They also believe that job rotation helps employees enhance their abilities and broaden their perspectives. Proper appointment is one of the measures that can play a fundamental role in the optimal utilization of human resources. However, appointments are never permanent; rather, based on the competencies, experiences, and knowledge an individual acquires during their service, they should be promoted to higher positions or rotated to roles with different responsibilities. Vertical rotation (promotion and demotion), horizontal rotation (transfer), and other forms of rotation, if carried out correctly and systematically, not only enhance the effectiveness of human resources but also prevent organizational stagnation and monotony, leading to employee satisfaction and, consequently, increased efficiency and effectiveness of the institution ([Nasir Nateri, Metani, Mehrara, 2023](#)).

On the other hand, one of the key factors in effective job design is job enrichment. This is a practice that enhances individual jobs to make responsibilities more rewarding and inspiring for those performing them. With job enrichment, the range of tasks an individual performs is expanded, creating more stimulating and engaging work that adds variety and challenge to an employee's daily life. This increases the depth of work and allows individuals to have greater control over their tasks. Job enrichment addresses these factors by enhancing core job dimensions and fostering a sense of achievement and success in individuals ([Fathi et al., 2020](#)). In fact, job enrichment is a managerial tool for transforming employees' jobs to be more challenging and less repetitive. The goal of job enrichment is to increase employees' satisfaction in their current roles. The result of job enrichment for the organization is improved employee performance and, consequently, a reduced turnover rate. Job enrichment seeks to improve performance and employee satisfaction by expanding the scope of an individual's activities and providing greater opportunities for success and personal growth in their job ([Iranzadeh, Bagherzadeh khajeh, Baghernejad, 2021](#)). Job enrichment represents continuous growth and comprehensive development of an individual's various dimensions. In other words, job enrichment involves the holistic development of an individual, encompassing their work life, social life, personal life, and cultural and spiritual aspects. Humans are the core of productivity, and all organizations, regardless of their mission, should dedicate the majority of their resources, time, and programs to nurturing individuals in various dimensions. This ensures that organizational individuals are equipped to foster and apply personal, group, and organizational productivity ([Novitasari et al., 2020](#)). One of the factors influencing job rotation and job enrichment is leadership and management, with authentic leadership considered the independent variable in the present study.

Organizational behavior researchers have long been interested in examining how employees' perceptions of their leaders influence their work-related thoughts and behaviors ([Adams, 2020](#)). Organizations need leaders who manage purposefully, possess strong ethical principles, can establish long-term relationships, and encourage members to provide exceptional support to clients. Authentic leaders exhibit authenticity and promote dignity, respect, reputation, and trust among employees ([Gathing, 2014](#)). They must focus on constructive psychological potential and positive ethical actions, foster harmonious leadership-subordinate partnerships, and cultivate an environment for personal growth in the workplace ([Ershadi & Salari, 2023](#)). Specifically, the conceptualization of leadership effectiveness has been addressed as a high-level framework, described as a pattern of leadership activity that both benefits from and reinforces positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical environment. Authentic leadership is ultimately conveyed through self-awareness, healthy management, internalized moral perspective, and rational honesty. Self-

awareness refers to understanding one's strengths and weaknesses as well as the psychological impact on others. Relational openness or receptivity refers to leadership styles that generally reveal the leader's true self, genuine emotions, and feelings, fostering mutual trust ([Farokhi & Amiri, 2023](#)).

Authentic leadership theories strive to develop leaders who display their true selves to their followers and act in accordance with their inner truth, free from hypocrisy or pretense ([Chen et al., 2022](#)). According to [Peterson et al. \(2012\)](#), authentic leadership is a four-dimensional concept consisting of self-awareness, balanced processing, relational transparency, and internalized moral perspective. Given that educational organizations are inherently developmental, leadership plays a significant role in the success of performance, job enrichment, and employee turnover within these organizations. The review of prior research supports the issues raised. [Farokhi and Amiri \(2023\)](#) found that authentic leadership significantly impacts employees' organizational trust. Additionally, [Bird \(2009\)](#) showed a significant relationship between the authentic leadership of school principals and teachers' intentions to change jobs. A study by [Key \(2024\)](#) titled "Enhancing Educational Outcomes through Servant Leadership and Authentic Leadership: Addressing Low Teacher Morale and High Turnover Rates" found that servant leadership and authentic leadership reduced turnover rates. Furthermore, [Huang and Yin \(2024\)](#) investigated the relationships between authentic leadership, emotional exhaustion, engagement, and teachers' turnover intentions, revealing that the total indirect effects between benevolence and work engagement were significant and positive, but not significant for turnover intentions. For authoritarianism, the opposite was true for total indirect effects. These findings highlight the varying impacts of different emotional labor strategies and the distinct roles of authentic leadership dimensions. [Liu and Wong \(2023\)](#) stated that there is a significant positive relationship between authentic leadership, job rotation, and job satisfaction among employees in the cities of Guangzhou, Shanghai, and Shenzhen in China. Finally, a study by [Van den Berg \(2023\)](#) indicated a direct impact of authentic leadership on organizational identity, work commitment, and job rotation. Therefore, based on the above discussion and the research background, the main research question is whether there is a significant relationship between authentic leadership, job enrichment, and employee turnover at the Islamic Azad University, Zahedan Branch.

Research Hypotheses

1. There is a significant relationship between authentic leadership and job enrichment among employees of the Islamic Azad University, Zahedan Branch.
2. There is a significant relationship between authentic leadership and job rotation among employees of the Islamic Azad University, Zahedan Branch.
3. Authentic leadership can predict job enrichment among employees of the Islamic Azad University, Zahedan Branch.
4. Authentic leadership can predict job rotation among employees of the Islamic Azad University, Zahedan Branch.

Research Method

The present study is applied in terms of purpose and employs a survey-based correlational method.

Sample and Sampling Method

The statistical population of the study consists of all 695 employees of the Islamic Azad University, Zahedan Branch. Based on the Krejcie and Morgan table, a sample of 247 employees was selected using simple random sampling.

Tools Used

In this study, three questionnaires were used to collect data:

Authentic Leadership Questionnaire

To measure authentic leadership, the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire by Walumbwa et al. (2008) was used, consisting of 16 items and covering the dimensions of self-awareness, relational transparency, internalized moral perspective, and balanced processing.

Job Enrichment	0.879 _*	0.813 _*	0.813 _*	0.817 _*	0.839 _*	1										
Task Nature	0.812 _*	0.724 _*	0.742 _*	0.754 _*	0.814 _*	0.848 _*	1									
Task importance	0.844 _*	0.794 _*	0.755 _*	0.799 _*	0.805 _*	0.943 _*	0.750 _*	1								
Autonomy	0.806 _*	0.747 _*	0.759 _*	0.741 _*	0.762 _*	0.939 _*	0.709 _*	0.882 _*	1							
Result feedback	0.779 _*	0.700 _*	0.731 _*	0.738 _*	0.742 _*	0.928 _*	0.716 _*	0.846 _*	0.866 _*	1						
Skill Variety	0.801 _*	0.770 _*	0.749 _*	0.727 _*	0.741 _*	0.934 _*	0.734 _*	0.860 _*	0.853 _*	0.831 _*	1					
Job Rotation	0.683 _*	0.597 _*	0.653 _*	0.622 _*	0.678 _*	0.673 _*	0.591 _*	0.663 _*	0.599 _*	0.584 _*	0.655 _*	1				
Satisfaction	0.603 _*	0.554 _*	0.569 _*	0.525 _*	0.600 _*	0.672 _*	0.619 _*	0.631 _*	0.601 _*	0.610 _*	0.629 _*	0.666 _*	1			
Quality of Work	0.737 _*	0.637 _*	0.714 _*	0.692 _*	0.708 _*	0.707 _*	0.596 _*	0.689 _*	0.644 _*	0.628 _*	0.690 _*	0.818 _*	0.630 _*	1		
Job Transfer	0.296 _*	0.251 _*	0.277 _*	0.262 _*	0.313 _*	0.272 _*	0.247 _*	0.290 _*	0.229 _*	0.212 _*	0.275 _*	0.757 _*	0.177 _*	0.296 _*	1	

*P<0/05

The results of Table 2 show that the internal correlation of the variables was all significant. The findings from the research hypotheses are presented below.

Hypothesis 2: Authentic leadership can predict job enrichment of employees at the Islamic Azad University, Zahedan Branch.

To examine this hypothesis, multiple regression analysis was used. In this method, the authentic leadership variable is included as an independent variable in the regression equation, and if it does not have a significant role in the regression, it is removed.

Table 3- Results of Regression Coefficients.

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t Statistic	F Statistic	Df	Sum of Squares	Sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta				
Constant	2.03	0.27	—	3.47	3	152.17	0.01
Self-awareness	1.27	0.28	0.300	4.83	242	41.66	0.01
Relational Transparency	0.52	0.15	0.116	1.59	246	193.83	0.01
Internalized Moral Perspective	0.26	0.14	0.100	1.38			0.01
Balanced Processing	0.41	0.054	0.435	7.63			0.01

In Table 3, the analysis of variance shows that the significance level is zero, indicating that the regression is significant. In Table 5, which displays the coefficients and their significance, the significance values for the variables self-awareness, relational transparency, internalized morality, and text processing are less than 0.01. Therefore, it can be concluded that self-awareness, relational transparency, internalized morality, and text processing have the ability to predict job enrichment.

Hypothesis 3: Authentic leadership can predict job enrichment of employees at the Islamic Azad University, Zahedan Branch.

To examine this hypothesis, multiple regression analysis was used. In this method, the authentic leadership variable is included as an independent variable in the regression equation, and if it does not have a significant role in the regression, it is removed.

Table 4- Results of Regression Coefficients.

Variable	Standardized Coefficients	Non-Standardized Coefficients	t Statistic	F Statistic	Df	Sum of Squares	Sig
	B	Standard Error	Beta				
Constant	2.03	0.27			3	152.17	0.01
Self-Awareness	1.27	0.28	0.300	220.99	242	41.66	0.01
Relational Transparency	0.52	0.15	0.116				0.01
Internalized Morality	0.26	0.14	0.100				0.01
Text Processing	0.41	0.054	0.435		246	193.83	0.01

In Table 4, the analysis of variance shows that the significance level is zero, indicating that the regression is significant. In Table 6, which displays the coefficients and their significance, the significance values for the variables self-awareness, relational transparency, internalized morality, and text processing are less than 0.01. Therefore, it can be concluded that self-awareness, relational transparency, internalized morality, and text processing have the ability to predict job enrichment.

Hypothesis 4: Authentic leadership can predict job turnover of employees at the Islamic Azad University, Zahedan Branch.

To examine this hypothesis, multiple regression analysis was used. In this method, the authentic leadership variable is included as an independent variable in the regression equation, and if it does not have a significant role in the regression, it is removed.

Table 5- Results of Regression Coefficients.

Variable	Standardized Coefficients	Non-Standardized Coefficients	t Statistic	f Statistic	df	Sum of Squares	Sig
	B	Standard Error	Beta				
Constant	1.86	0.09			4	44.52	0.01
Self-Awareness	0.02	0.06	0.144	58.69	242	45.95	0.01
Relational Transparency	0.19	0.07	0.302				0.11
Internalized Morality	0.03	0.07	0.153				0.01
Text Processing	0.29	0.05	0.445		246	90.47	0.01

In Table 5, the analysis of variance shows that the significance level is zero, indicating that the regression is significant. In Table 8, which displays the coefficients and their significance, the significance values for the variables self-awareness, relational transparency, internalized morality, and text processing are less than 0.01. Therefore, it can be concluded that self-awareness, relational transparency, internalized morality, and text processing have the ability to predict job turnover.

Discussion

This study was conducted to investigate the relationship between authentic leadership, job enrichment, and job turnover among employees of the Islamic Azad University, Zahedan Branch. The following sections discuss and elaborate on the findings obtained.

The findings from the analysis of the first hypothesis (the relationship between authentic leadership and job enrichment of employees at the Islamic Azad University, Zahedan Branch) showed a significant relationship between authentic leadership and job enrichment (0.879), as well as between the dimensions of authentic leadership (self-awareness, relational transparency, internalized morality, and text processing) and job enrichment, with correlation coefficients of (0.813, 0.803, 0.817, 0.839), respectively. These findings align with a study by [Ibrahim \(2024\)](#) titled "The Relationship between Authentic Leadership and Organizational Self-Esteem with Job Success among Mathematics Teachers in Public Schools of Maysan

Province, Iraq," and also with the findings of a study by [Fathi et al. \(2020\)](#) titled "Development and Validation of a Job Enrichment Model for Faculty Members: Findings of a Qualitative Study."

The findings from the analysis of the second hypothesis (the relationship between authentic leadership and job turnover of employees at the Islamic Azad University, Zahedan Branch) indicated a significant relationship between authentic leadership and job turnover (0.683), as well as between the components of authentic leadership (self-awareness, relational transparency, internalized morality, and text processing) and job turnover, with correlation coefficients of (0.597, 0.653, 0.622, 0.678), respectively. This means that as authentic leadership and each of its Dimensions increase, job turnover also increases to the same extent. These findings are consistent with a study by [Ershadi and Salari \(2023\)](#) titled "Investigating the Impact of Servant Leadership on Organizational Commitment with an Emphasis on the Mediating Role of Job Turnover among Employees of the Education Department in the Rudbar Region," as well as with the findings of a study by [Betancourt \(2024\)](#) titled "Evaluating the Relationship between Authentic Leadership of School Principals and Teachers' Turnover Intentions in Public High Schools in a Southern U.S. State."

The findings from the analysis of the third hypothesis (the predictive ability of authentic leadership for job enrichment) showed that 78% of the variance in job enrichment is explained by the authentic leadership variable (self-awareness, relational transparency, internalized morality, and text processing). These findings align with a study by [Iranzadeh et al. \(2021\)](#) titled "Investigating the Impact of Job Enrichment on Reducing Career Plateau among Employees of the National Bank of East Azerbaijan Province," as well as with the findings of a study by [Asadian et al. \(2023\)](#) titled "Strategies and Techniques of Job Enrichment for Primary School Teachers."

And finally, the findings from the analysis of the fourth hypothesis (the predictive power of job turnover through authentic leadership on the job turnover of employees at Islamic Azad University) showed that 48% of the changes in job turnover were determined by the variable of authentic leadership (self-awareness, relational transparency, internalized moral perspective, and balanced processing). The findings of this hypothesis are in line with the research conducted by [Huang et al. \(2024\)](#), titled *The Relationships Between Authentic Leadership, Emotional Exhaustion, Engagement, and Turnover Intention Among Teachers*. They are also consistent with the findings of the research conducted by [Liu et al. \(2023\)](#), titled *The Relationship Between Authentic Leadership, Job Turnover, and Job Satisfaction Among Employees in Guangzhou, Shanghai, and Shenzhen, China*. The results indicated that authentic leadership has a direct impact on job turnover and job satisfaction, demonstrating alignment. In explaining these findings, it can be stated that authentic leadership, as a leadership style emphasizing transparency, honesty, ethical behavior, and trust, can create an environment in which employees feel psychological safety, a sense of value, and belonging to the organization. These characteristics increase job satisfaction and reduce job burnout, both of which are key factors in reducing job turnover.

Conclusion

Authentic leaders, by promoting transparency and fostering healthy relationships, provide a suitable environment for employee growth and development. This helps employees become more motivated and committed to the organization and less inclined to leave their jobs. In academic environments, where employees must constantly face educational and research challenges, maintaining employee commitment and motivation is essential for organizational success. Authentic leadership can reduce employees' psychological stress by creating a supportive work environment and give them a stronger sense of belonging and importance. This sense of belonging is one of the most important factors in reducing job turnover.

Research Limitations

This research had limitations, such as the fact that the statistical population included only the staff of the Zahedan branch of Islamic Azad University, limiting the generalizability of the findings to other academic settings. Another limitation is the use of a questionnaire, which examines individuals' attitudes rather than objective reality, and this can be considered a limitation.

Suggestions

In line with the findings of this research, it is recommended to hold training courses to strengthen authentic leadership skills, such as self-awareness, transparency, ethical behavior, and trust among university managers and department heads. These courses can help enhance managers' capacities to create transparent and supportive environments; continuous assessment and feedback on leaders' performance in creating meaningful and enriched work environments for staff should be conducted. These assessments should include transparency in decision-making and personal and professional support for employees. Leaders should support employees in a way that makes them feel the organization cares about their well-being and mental health. This support can include offering appropriate opportunities for rest, psychological counseling, and reducing job pressures, as well as providing training courses and professional development programs for employees, enabling them to acquire new skills and advance in their careers. This leads to increased job satisfaction, reduced monotony in work, and ultimately, enhanced job enrichment.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors do not have any conflicts of interest.

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