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## How Authentic Leadership Promotes Organizational Citizenship Behavior: Mediating Role of Job-Related Motivation through the Lens of Self-Determination Theory

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**Abstract:** This study explores the influence of authentic leadership on organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), with job-related motivation serving as a mediator, structured within the framework of self-determination theory (SDT). Conducted in the palm oil manufacturing industry in Central Kalimantan, Indonesia, the study surveyed 312 employees, of whom 145 provided fully completed and valid responses, yielding a response rate of 46.5%. The data were assessed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with SmartPLS version 3.3.0. The results indicate that authentic leadership positively and significantly affects both job-related motivation and OCB. Furthermore, job-related motivation plays a significant role in enhancing OCB and mediates the relationship between authentic leadership and OCB. These findings emphasize the critical role of authentic leadership in fostering employees' intrinsic motivation by meeting their psychological needs for autonomy, relatedness, and competence. This intrinsic motivation, in turn, encourages employees to engage in extra-role behaviors that lead to organizational success, even without external rewards or recognition.

**Keywords:** Authentic leadership, Job-related motivation, Organizational citizenship behavior.

### 1. Introduction

Indonesia is the world's pioneering exporter and producer of palm oil, contributing over 55% of the global supply (Saputra & Sulistiyandari, 2024). This industry not only fuels the national economy—through its substantial contributions to GDP, foreign exchange earnings, and rural development—but also provides employment to millions across plantation and processing sectors. Despite its economic significance, research on leadership and employee motivation within the palm oil sector remains limited. Most existing studies have focused on white-collar (Adigüzel & Kuloglu, 2019), urban (Iqbal *et al.*, 2020), and developed-country (Monzani *et al.*, 2021) settings, overlooking rural, industrial, and emerging economy contexts. This gap is particularly relevant given the increasing scholarly interest in leadership styles that foster positive employee behaviors in complex and evolving organizational environments. In this regard, authentic leadership has emerged as a critical model, highlighting ethical conduct, transparency, and self-awareness (Hollis, 2018). As organizations navigate growing uncertainty and workplace challenges, the demand for leaders who can build trust and enhance intrinsic motivation is becoming more urgent. Characterized by relational transparency, self-awareness, balanced processing, and an internalized moral perspective, authentic leadership is now recognized not only as a moral ideal but also as a strategic resource for improving employee performance and fostering desirable organizational behaviors (Moore, 2017; Ogunyemi & Ogunyemi, 2020).

A key outcome associated with authentic leadership is organizational citizenship behavior (OCB)—discretionary actions that exceed formal job duties and enhance organizational effectiveness (Kyei-Poku & Yang, 2020). OCB encompasses dimensions such as altruism, civic virtue, courtesy, sportsmanship, conscientiousness, and all of which lead to better service quality (Demirel & Karademir, 2024) and greater open innovation (Naqshbandi *et al.*, 2024). Research findings on the relationship between authentic leadership and OCB have been mixed. While



findings from Jun *et al.* (2025) and Ribeiro *et al.* (2022) report a positive effect, others, including Emur *et al.* (2023), Yogatama & Nugrohoseno (2021), and Tsemach & Barth (2023), find no significant association. Similarly, Quraishi & Aziz (2018) observed that specific components of authentic leadership, such as relational transparency and balanced processing, do not significantly influence OCB.

Despite increasing attention in the intersection of leadership and motivation, the underlying psychological mechanisms connecting authentic leadership to OCB endure insufficiently explored. Most previous studies focus on direct relationships (Hendijani Fard *et al.*, 2020; Quraishi & Aziz, 2018; Ribeiro *et al.*, 2018), overlooking the potential mediating processes. To address this gap, the present study proposes a mediation model in which job-related motivation serves as the explanatory mechanism linking authentic leadership to OCB. One compelling analytical framework for understanding this pathway is Self-Determination Theory (SDT). According to SDT (Wax *et al.*, 2022), individuals are strongly inspired when their psychological needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness are met. Authentic leaders—through their supportive, genuine, and empowering behaviors—can fulfill these needs, thereby enhancing job-related motivation. In turn, this heightened motivation encourages employees encompass in OCB (Battistelli *et al.*, 2013), ultimately contributing to sustainable organizational performance.

## 2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Developments

### 2.1. Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

SDT, developed by Deci & Ryan (2000), is a well-established framework for understanding human motivation. It differentiates between types of motivation based on the level of autonomy and self-regulation involved. SDT asserts that individuals are naturally inclined to grow, learn, and integrate new experiences when their basic psychological needs are satisfied—namely, competence (feeling effective and capable), autonomy (the sense of volition and control over one's actions), and relatedness (feeling connected to and valued by others).

In organizational settings, SDT offers a robust framework for understanding how leadership shapes employee behavior. Leaders who provide constructive feedback, support autonomy, and foster meaningful interpersonal relationships can fulfill employees' basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Shih *et al.*, 2022). When these needs are satisfied, employees are more likely to experience intrinsic motivation, which in turn enhances their engagement, proactivity, and voluntary behaviors that contribute to organizational effectiveness (Zhang *et al.*, 2018). Recent research by Karbasi & Alavi (2024) further demonstrates that when employees perceive their leader as authentic, it fulfills these psychological needs and strengthens autonomous moral motivation, thereby promoting ethical conduct in the workplace.

### 2.2. Authentic Leadership and Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB)

Authentic leadership is characterized by a conduct pattern that leverages positive psychological capacities and fosters an ethical climate to promote internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, self-awareness, and relational transparency (Walumbwa *et al.*, 2008). In contrast to transactional or transformational leadership, authentic leadership emphasizes genuineness and alignment with core values, which nurtures trust and psychological safety among employees. When leaders are perceived as authentic, employees are more likely to respond with discretionary behaviors such as OCB (Jun *et al.*, 2023).

OCB encompasses voluntary behaviors that support organizational effectiveness without being formally rewarded. Authentic leaders cultivate environments of respect, ethical guidance, and open communication—conditions that encourage employees to go beyond prescribed roles (Farid *et al.*, 2020). Empirical studies have consistently demonstrated a positive association between authentic leadership and OCB across various organizational settings (Jun *et al.*, 2025; Ribeiro *et al.*, 2022). Thus,

*H1: Authentic leadership is positively related to OCB.*

### 2.3. Authentic Leadership and Job-Related Motivation

Job-related motivation refers to the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that drive individuals to perform their work effectively (Udin *et al.*, 2024). Authentic leadership plays a motivational role by satisfying employees' core



psychological needs, as outlined in SDT—namely, competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Authentic leaders support these needs by fostering autonomy, reinforcing employees' sense of competence, and building meaningful relationships. These conditions promote intrinsic motivation and facilitate the internalization of extrinsic goals, resulting in stronger job-related motivation (Durrach *et al.*, 2024).

Empirical evidence indicates that authentic leadership enhances employee engagement, work meaningfulness, and personal development—all of which are motivational outcomes associated with improved job attitudes and behaviors (Levesque-Côté *et al.*, 2021; Silva *et al.*, 2023). Therefore, authentic leadership is likely to contribute positively to job-related motivation by encouraging a psychologically empowering work environment.

*H2: Authentic leadership is positively related to job-related motivation.*

## 2.4. Job-Related Motivation and OCB

SDT implies that individuals are more inclined to engage in proactive and voluntary behaviors when their motivation is fully internalized or intrinsic. Intrinsically motivated employees not only perform their core tasks effectively but also exhibit discretionary behaviors such as assisting colleagues and contributing to broader organizational goals (Shin *et al.*, 2019). When job-related motivation is high, employees tend to take initiative, be more committed, and go beyond role expectations in ways that align with the dimensions of OCB (Battistelli *et al.*, 2013). Empirical studies support that motivated employees are more likely to engage in OCB because their actions are driven by a strong internal sense of responsibility and purpose (Shin *et al.*, 2019; Van den Broeck *et al.*, 2021). Therefore,

*H3: Job-related motivation is positively related to OCB.*

## 2.5. Mediating Role of Job-Related Motivation

This study advocates that job-related motivation mediates the relationship between authentic leadership and OCB. Authentic leaders foster intrinsic motivation by cultivating autonomy-supportive environments, which in turn encourage employees to engage in OCB (Jun *et al.*, 2023). According to SDT, the impact of authentic leadership on extra behavior is indirect, operating through the satisfaction of psychological needs and the enhancement of motivation (O'Donoghue & van der Werff, 2022). Previous research has emphasized the mediating role of motivation in the relationship between authentic leadership and various work outcomes (Farid *et al.*, 2020; Jun *et al.*, 2023; Kyambade *et al.*, 2024). Thus,

*H4: Job-related motivation mediates the relationship between authentic leadership and OCB.*

## 3. Research Methods

### 3.1. Sample and Procedure

This study was conducted within the palm oil manufacturing industry in Central Kalimantan, Indonesia. The target population comprised 1,425 employees across various operational and administrative divisions of the company. A structured questionnaire was distributed via a Google Forms link to 312 employees, selected using purposive sampling. The sample focused on full-time employees who worked under direct supervision and had at least six months of tenure. Of the 312 employees invited, 145 completed the questionnaire fully and accurately, resulting in a valid response rate of 46.5%. To assess the representativeness of the sample, available demographic data—including age, education level, job tenure, and gender—were analyzed. The sample comprised 52% male and 48% female respondents, with the majority (62%) aged between 26 and 40 years. Additionally, 71% had attained at least a secondary education, and 64% had tenure exceeding three years. These demographic characteristics closely align with the overall workforce profile of the company, thereby enhancing the generalizability of the study findings within the organizational context.

### 3.2. Instruments and Measures

All constructs in this study were measured using established and validated scales, with responses recorded on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ('strongly disagree') to 5 ('strongly agree'). To guarantee linguistic and



conceptual equivalence in the Indonesian context, all instruments were adapted using the back-translation method (Brislin, 1980).

Authentic leadership is evaluated using a four-item abbreviated version of the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ), adapted from Walumbwa *et al.* (2011) and Datta (2015), focusing on leadership behaviors related to managing change. This reduction was implemented to address response fatigue in the survey instrument while maintaining strong psychometric properties (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.836, Composite Reliability (CR) = 0.891, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) = 0.673).

Job-related motivation is assessed using eight selected items from the Multidimensional Work Motivation Scale (MWMS), developed by Gagné *et al.* (2015) and further applied by Adiguzel & Sonmez Cakir (2022), with a focus on autonomous motivation. The items capture both intrinsic motivation and identified regulation.

OCB is assessed using five items adapted from Cardona *et al.* (2004) and Qiu *et al.* (2019), capturing four key dimensions: altruism, conscientiousness, courtesy, and civic virtue. The model demonstrates acceptable reliability and convergent validity, with Cronbach's Alpha = 0.879, CR = 0.912, and AVE = 0.675.

### 3.3. Data Analysis Technique

The data were examined employing Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with SmartPLS version 3.3.0. This method is well-suited for modeling complex relationships and testing mediation effects in social science research, particularly when dealing with non-normal data.

## 4. Results and Discussion

Table 1 outlines the results of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) for three key psychological constructs: Authentic Leadership, Job-Related Motivation, and OCB. Each construct was analyzed with multiple items, with model quality evaluated through factor loadings, reliability coefficients (Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability), convergent validity (Average Variance Extracted or AVE), and multicollinearity (Variance Inflation Factor or VIF).

The authentic leadership construct is evaluated through four items (AL1–AL4), with factor loadings ranging from 0.722 to 0.855—surpassing the recommended minimum of 0.70, indicating strong item representation of the construct. The Cronbach's Alpha (CA) is 0.836, and the CR is 0.891, both reflecting good internal consistency (Campo-Arias & Oviedo, 2008). The AVE is 0.673, exceeding the 0.50 threshold, thus demonstrating solid convergent validity. VIF values range from 1.396 to 2.182, well below the critical value of 5, indicating no multicollinearity issues (Kalnins & Praitis Hill, 2025).

The job-related motivation construct is assessed using eight indicators (JRM1–JRM8). Factor loadings range from 0.794 to 0.925, indicating strong relationships between the indicators and the underlying construct. The construct demonstrates excellent internal consistency, with a CA of 0.952 and CR of 0.960. The AVE is 0.749, suggesting that approximately 75% of the variance in the indicators is explained by the construct. Multicollinearity diagnostics show that all VIF values fall within acceptable limits. Although two indicators (e.g., JRM4 and JRM5) exhibit VIF values slightly above 4.5, they remain below the commonly accepted threshold of 5.0 (Kalnins & Praitis Hill, 2025), indicating no critical multicollinearity at the indicator level.

The OCB construct comprises five items (OCB1–OCB5), with factor loadings between 0.765 and 0.873—all above the minimum standard. The CA is 0.879, and the CR is 0.912, indicating strong reliability. An AVE of 0.675 supports the construct's convergent validity. VIF values range from 1.735 to 3.157, suggesting no significant multicollinearity.

To assess discriminant validity, this study applied both the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) and the Fornell-Larcker criterion, as recommended in PLS-SEM analysis. The Fornell-Larcker criterion establishes discriminant validity by comparing the square root of each construct's Average Variance Extracted (AVE) with its correlations to other constructs. As shown in Table 2, the square roots of the AVEs for Authentic Leadership (0.820), Job-Related Motivation (0.865), and OCB (0.822) all exceed their respective inter-construct correlations. This indicates that each



construct shares more variance with its own indicators than with other constructs, supporting their discriminant validity.

**Table 1.** Confirmatory factor model

Constructs and scale items	Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite reliability	AVE	VIF
<i>Authentic leadership</i>		0.836	0.891	0.673	
AL1	0.722				1.396
AL2	0.845				2.101
AL3	0.852				2.182
AL4	0.855				2.123
<i>Job-related motivation</i>		0.952	0.960	0.749	
JRM1	0.847				3.331
JRM2	0.886				4.089
JRM3	0.794				2.495
JRM4	0.895				4.543
JRM5	0.925				4.771
JRM6	0.862				3.323
JRM7	0.875				4.041
JRM8	0.831				2.885
<i>OCB</i>		0.879	0.912	0.675	
OCB1	0.765				1.735
OCB2	0.849				2.886
OCB3	0.873				3.157
OCB4	0.843				2.361
OCB5	0.773				1.870

**Table 2.** Discriminant validity

	Authentic Leadership	Job-Related Motivation	OCB
<i>Fornell-Larcker criterion</i>			
Authentic leadership	0.820		
Job-related motivation	0.626	0.865	
OCB	0.678	0.772	0.822
<i>Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)</i>			
Job-related motivation	0.698		
OCB	0.793	0.837	

The HTMT ratio was also examined as a more stringent test. All HTMT values fell below the conservative threshold of 0.85: 0.698 for Authentic Leadership and Job-Related Motivation, 0.793 for Authentic Leadership and OCB, and 0.837 for Job-Related Motivation and OCB. These results provide further evidence that the constructs are empirically distinct.

Table 3 and Figure 1 present the path coefficients obtained from the SEM analysis, which tests the hypothesized relationships among authentic leadership, job-related motivation, and OCB. Each path is assessed using three key indicators: the path coefficient (original sample), t-statistic, and p-value, which collectively determine the level of support for each hypothesis.

The results indicate that authentic leadership has a significant positive direct effect on employees' OCB, with a path coefficient ( $\beta$ ) = 0.321, t-statistic = 3.136, and p-value = 0.002. Since the p-value is below 0.05 and the t-statistic exceeds the critical value of 1.96, the relationship is statistically significant, thereby supporting H1. Practically, this suggests that when leaders demonstrate authenticity—characterized by self-awareness,



transparency, ethical behavior, and balanced decision-making—employees are more inclined to exhibit discretionary behaviors beyond their formal roles, such as helping colleagues, showing organizational loyalty, and volunteering for extra responsibilities.

The results reveal the strongest direct relationship in the model between authentic leadership and job-related motivation, with a path coefficient ( $\beta$ ) = 0.626, a t-statistic well above the critical threshold, and a p-value < 0.001, providing strong statistical support for H2. This large effect size indicates that authentic leadership significantly enhances employees’ motivation at work. Leaders who demonstrate openness, fairness, and moral integrity foster an environment that encourages employees to internalize organizational values and pursue high performance through intrinsic motivation. This finding is consistent with SDT, which posits that authentic leadership satisfies core psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—thereby strengthening employee motivation.

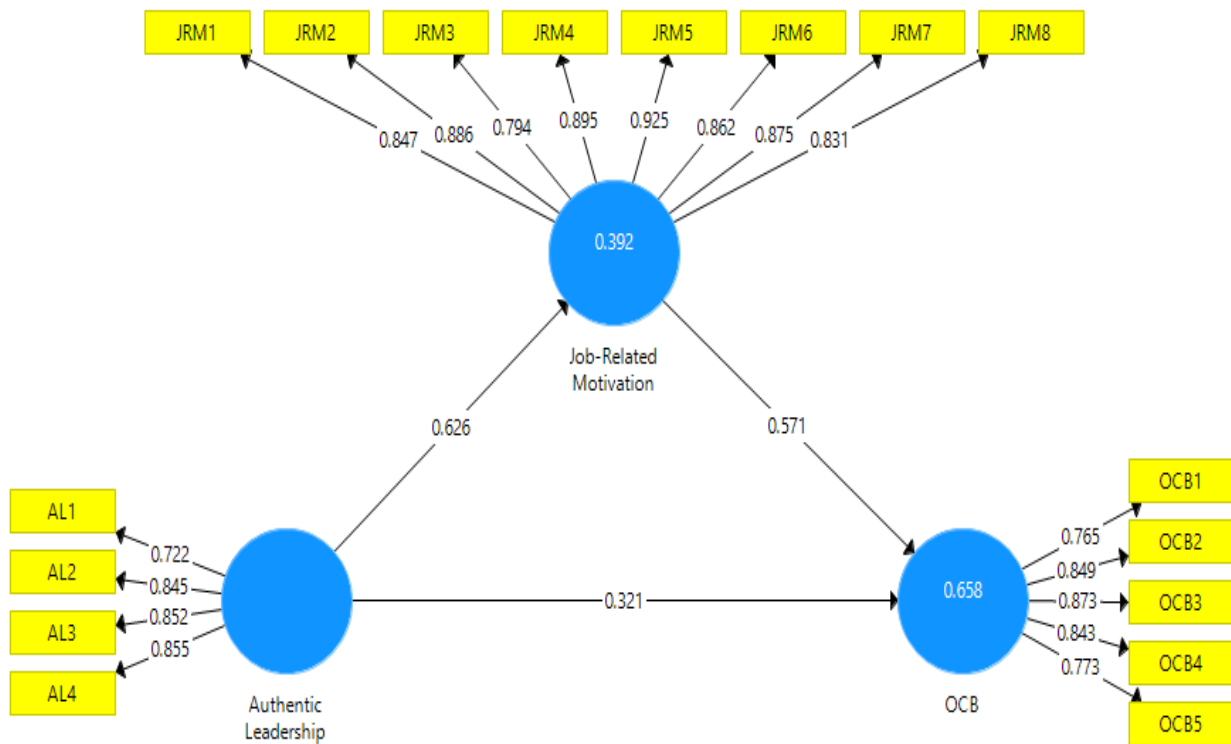


Figure 1. Structural model

Table 3. Path Coefficients

Hypotheses	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values	Result
<i>Direct effects</i>				
H1: Authentic leadership → OCB	0.321	3.136	0.002	Supported
H2: Authentic leadership → Job-related motivation	0.626	5.911	0.000	Supported
H3: Job-related motivation → OCB	0.571	6.205	0.000	Supported
<i>Specific indirect effect</i>				
H4: Authentic leadership → Job-related motivation → OCB	0.358	3.663	0.000	Supported

The results indicate that job-related motivation has a significant positive effect on OCB, with a path coefficient ( $\beta$ ) = 0.571, demonstrating both statistical and practical significance. This finding supports H3 and highlights motivation as a critical driver of extra-role behaviors. Motivated employees are more likely to go beyond formal job responsibilities, engaging in actions that support colleagues and contribute to organizational effectiveness—even when such efforts are not explicitly rewarded. Motivation thus channels employees’ energy and commitment toward behaviors that foster a cooperative and productive work environment.

The hypothesis investigates the mediating role of job-related motivation in the relationship between authentic leadership and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). The indirect effect was statistically significant ( $\beta = 0.358$ ,  $t = 3.663$ ,  $p\text{-value} < 0.001$ ), indicating that authentic leadership enhances OCB not only directly but also indirectly by increasing employees' intrinsic motivation

This finding supports H4 and underscores job-related motivation as a key mechanism linking authentic leadership to extra-role behaviors. To enhance robustness and transparency, this study reports the 95% bias-corrected confidence interval derived from 5,000 bootstrap samples: [LLCI = 0.198, ULCI = 0.508]. As the interval does not include zero, the mediating effect of job-related motivation is further confirmed, consistent with current SEM reporting guidelines (Hair *et al.*, 2017).

#### 4.1. Impact of Authentic Leadership on OCB and Job-Related Motivation

Authentic leadership is defined by transparency, self-awareness, ethical conduct, and a strong alignment with core values. This leadership style fosters a climate of trust and openness, which is crucial for cultivating positive employee attitudes and behaviors. When employees perceive their leaders as authentic, they experience greater psychological safety and a sense of being valued—factors that increase their commitment and willingness to go beyond formal job responsibilities (Farid *et al.*, 2020; Jun *et al.*, 2025).

From the perspective of SDT, which highlights the importance of intrinsic motivation, authentic leadership supports employees' needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Emmerich & Rigotti, 2021). Transparent decision-making and ethical behavior enhance employees' sense of competence and autonomy, while authentic leaders' genuine interpersonal relationships fulfill the need for relatedness. Together, these conditions foster intrinsic motivation, encouraging employees to engage in OCB—voluntary actions that support organizational effectiveness, even in the absence of external incentives motivation (O'Donoghue & van der Werff, 2022).

#### 4.2. Impact of Job-Related Motivation on OCB

Job-related motivation, particularly intrinsic motivation as described in SDT, serves as a key factor in promoting OCB (Van den Broeck *et al.*, 2021). Employees driven by internal factors—such as meaningful work, personal growth, and value alignment—are more inclined to contribute beyond their official duties. Their sense of pride and connection to the organization drives them to support its goals without requiring tangible rewards or recognition.

#### 4.3. The Mediating Role of Job-Related Motivation

A key finding of this study is the mediating role of job-related motivation in the relationship between authentic leadership and OCB. Authentic leadership strengthens motivation by fulfilling core psychological needs, which, in turn, leads to greater engagement in OCB (Joo & Jo, 2017; Sedlářík *et al.*, 2024). When employees perceive that their work is meaningful and aligns with their values—and when they are empowered to act autonomously—they are more likely to exhibit discretionary behaviors that benefit the organization.

### 5. Conclusion

This study reinforces the pivotal role of authentic leadership in enhancing OCB, with job-related motivation emerging as a crucial mediating factor. Drawing on SDT, the findings demonstrate that authentic leaders nurture employees' intrinsic motivation by fulfilling their psychological needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness. This intrinsic motivation, in turn, drives employees to engage voluntarily in extra-role behaviors that support organizational success.

The study provides both practical and theoretical contributions. Theoretically, it deepens the understanding of leadership's influence on employee behavior by highlighting the motivational processes that link authentic leadership to OCB. Practically, it the importance of cultivating authentic leadership to inspire a motivated workforce that willingly engages in value-adding behaviors beyond formal job responsibilities. To build a culture of engagement



and organizational citizenship, organizations should invest in leadership development initiatives that emphasize authenticity, ethical behavior, and relational transparency. Such efforts contribute to a supportive work environment where employees are intrinsically motivated to contribute, ultimately enhancing both individual growth and organizational productivity. Rather than relying solely on general ethics training or personality assessments, leadership programs should focus on developing core interpersonal capabilities. This includes fostering autonomy-supportive communication—where leaders offer meaningful choices, explain the rationale behind decisions, and validate employee perspectives—while also encouraging shared decision-making to promote psychological safety.

Despite its valuable contributions, this study acknowledges several limitations. The cross-sectional design employed in this study constrains the ability to draw definitive causal inferences between authentic leadership, job-related motivation, and OCB. While the mediation model is theoretically grounded in SDT, the absence of temporal sequencing limits confidence in the directionality of the observed relationships. Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data introduces the risk of common method bias and perceptual distortion, potentially inflating correlations among constructs. These limitations highlight the need for future research utilizing longitudinal or experimental designs, along with multi-source data collection, to validate and deepen the understanding of the mechanisms linking authentic leadership style and employee behavior.

For future research, scholars are encouraged to examine potential moderating factors, such as psychological safety, or trust in leadership, to better understand the conditions that enhance or weaken the effect of authentic leadership on motivation and OCB. Expanding the model to include additional outcomes, such as work engagement, creativity, or psychological well-being, may also provide a more holistic understanding of authentic leadership's impact. Furthermore, integrating alternative motivational frameworks—such as expectancy theory or goal-setting theory—could offer deeper insights into the underlying mechanisms that drive employee behavior.

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### Authors' Contributions

Ika Nurul Qamari: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Writing-Review and Editing. Udin Udin: Writing-Original Draft Preparation, Methodology, Validation, Formal Analysis. Ziyah Zulfajarisa: Conceptualization, Validation, Writing-Review and Editing. Rr. Sri Handari Wahyuningsih: Validation, Funding Acquisition, Project Administration. All the authors read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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### Does this article screen for similarity?

Yes

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