

The Impact of Authentic Leadership on Employee Commitment and Talent Development (From IT SME Employees' Perspective in Amman, Jordan)

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Abstract: - This research aims to identify the Impact of Authentic Leadership on Employee Commitment and Talent Development (From IT SME employees' Perspective in Amman, Jordan). To achieve the aim of the research, the researcher used the descriptive analytical approach. The study population consisted of (360) employees' in IT SMEs in Amman, Jordan, A random sample content of (186) employees was chosen, questionnaires were distributed using Google Forms, and the percentage of correct questionnaires was (94.5%), The research found that there is an impact of Authentic Leadership on Employee Commitment, and there is an impact of Authentic Leadership on Talent Development, this study recommends enhancing employee commitment strategies, strengthen talent development and when hiring, consider assessing candidates not only for technical skills but also for their alignment with authentic leadership qualities.

Key-Words: - Authentic Leadership, Employee Commitment, Talent Development, IT SMEs. Organizational Behavior, JORDAN.

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1 Introduction

In today's competitive business environment, marked by fierce competition, organizations face challenges in increasing the proportion of employees who fully commit themselves to their organizations. According to [1], employee commitment is understood as an employee's psychological connection to the organization. The greater the commitment level, the stronger the employee's attachment to the organization. The commitment of an employee stands as one of the most valuable assets for any organization, [2]. In recent decades, organizations also have grappled with retaining top talent amid market competition and scarcity, prompting leaders to enhance human resource strategies. In the last twenty years, talent management and talent development have become highly popular, recognizing key human resources as strategic partners in successful business strategies, [3]. Effective talent management ensures that employees' skills and capabilities are continuously developed, which not only aids in retaining top talent but also drives organizational success. Nowadays, the most extensively researched leadership style in literature is

authentic leadership. This approach revolves around leaders motivating their teams to exceed expectations by exemplifying a positive role model, fostering interactive and appealing visions of the future, inspiring individualistic and creative thinking, and demonstrating both caring and determination in their actions, [4]. Authentic leadership represents an emphasis on the ethical development of leaders and the advancement of legitimacy, [5]. This research aims to explore the impact of authentic leadership on employee commitment and talent development from the perspective of IT SME employees in Amman, Jordan. Understanding how authentic leadership influences these critical factors can provide valuable insights for organizations striving to enhance their human resource strategies and foster a committed, talented workforce.

2 Research Problem and Questions

The research problem arises from the importance of authentic leadership within contemporary administrative literature. Authentic leadership holds a significant position among emerging leadership

styles, with a heightened emphasis on the critical matter of employee commitment, particularly in the modern business environment. Additionally, the pivotal role of talent development is highlighted for its contribution to elevating organizational commitment. From a practical perspective, the researcher chooses SMEs within the IT sector in Amman, Jordan. This choice is informed by the necessity for IT companies to remain attuned to the latest shifts in the business environment. Moreover, it underscores the importance of determining the appropriate leadership style that management should adopt to raise the level of employee commitment and develop talent within the company. By reviewing the research problem, the main question can be formulated as: **Is there an impact of authentic leadership on employee commitment and talent development from the perspective of IT SME employees in Amman, Jordan?**

Sub-Questions:

1. What is the level of Authentic Leadership in IT SMES in Amman, Jordan?
2. What is the level of Employee Commitment in IT SMES in Amman, Jordan?
3. What is the level of Talent Development in IT SMES in Amman, Jordan?
4. Is there an impact of Authentic Leadership on Employee Commitment in IT SMES in Amman, Jordan?
5. Is there an impact of Authentic Leadership on Talent Development in IT SMES in Amman, Jordan?

3 Research Importance

Within today's business environment, the study titled "The Impact of Authentic Leadership on Employee Commitment and Talent Development (From IT SMEs Employees' Perspective in Amman, Jordan)" holds significant value as it explores intricate dimensions within its variables. Authentic leadership, employee commitment, and talent development stand as focal points resonating profoundly in the dynamic realm of Information Technology Small and Medium

Enterprises (IT SMEs). The theoretical importance arises from the research's focus on an underrepresented area. This study provides a unique examination of how authentic leadership shapes employee commitment and talent development in the context of IT SMEs, uncovering unexplored dynamics. Unlike conventional studies, it delves into the nuanced interconnections between authentic leadership, employee commitment, and talent development, unveiling their collective impact on organizational performance. This not only enhances theoretical understanding but also introduces fresh insights into these crucial interdependencies. From a practical standpoint, the research assumes significance in light of the pivotal role played by IT SMEs. Their contributions to innovation and economic growth underscore their importance. Insight into how authentic leadership moderates the relationship between employee commitment and talent development becomes essential for operational efficiency, promoting employee engagement, and making strategic decisions tailored to the unique landscape of IT SMEs in Amman, Jordan.

4 Research Objectives

This research aims to examine The Impact of Authentic Leadership on Employee Commitment and Talent Development (From IT SME employees' Perspective in Amman, Jordan).

Sub-Objectives

1. Explaining the concept of authentic leadership, employee commitment, and talent development.
2. Determining the impact of authentic leadership on employee commitment and talent development in IT SMEs in Amman, Jordan.
3. Providing recommendations to managers in IT SMEs in Amman, Jordan, for enhancing authentic leadership practices and the role of employee commitment and talent development to augment organizational performance.
4. Providing recommendations for future research studies in the realm of authentic leadership, employee commitment, and talent development within the context of IT SMEs in Amman, Jordan.

5 Research Model

The Figure 1 explains the research model:

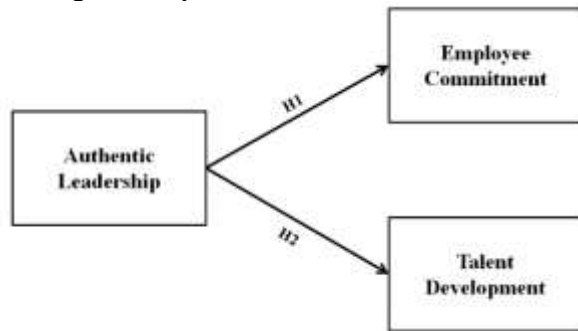


Fig. 1: The research model was designed by the researcher

6 Research Hypotheses

H1: There is an impact of Authentic Leadership on Employee Commitment in IT SMES in Amman, Jordan.

H2: There is an impact of Authentic Leadership on Talent Development in IT SMES in Amman, Jordan.

7 Literature Review

The contemporary discourse on authentic leadership is characterized by its integration of various leadership styles, including servant, transformational, charismatic, and spiritual leadership. [6], underscore the essential characteristics of authentic leaders, such as self-confidence, optimism, hopefulness, flexibility, and a strong sense of ethics or morality. These traits contribute to the development of authentic leaders' behavior, fostering honest relationships that, in turn, create an ethical work environment. Authentic leadership is further described as having a proactive orientation toward enhancing organizational strengths and cultivating engaging, caring, and inclusive climates within the workplace. The study by [7], emphasizes the positive outcomes associated with authentic leadership, noting that when followers perceive their leader's behavior as appropriate, it correlates with heightened levels of commitment, satisfaction, adherence to organizational practices, and overall achievement. The establishment of trust among followers is identified as a pivotal aspect of authentic leadership, with [8], highlighting the role of supportive behavior and transparent relationships in building this trust. [9], contribute to the literature by delineating four essential components of authentic

leadership behavior: self-awareness, balanced processing, an internalized moral viewpoint, and relational transparency. These components collectively underscore the emphasis on positive psychological capability and moral principles to inspire follower self-development. [10], adds nuance to the definition of authentic leadership by emphasizing its foundation in solid ideals and principles derived from a leader's self-awareness, impacting organizational members through open connections. [11], further characterize authentic leadership as a systematic behavior with the dual objectives of building positive psychological capital in followers and fostering a positive organizational culture characterized by values, positive work beliefs, transparency, and responsibility. An effective way to ensure that team members fully embrace managerial self-determination and experience authentic leadership commitments is by emphasizing the persuasive aspects [12]. Collectively, these studies contribute to a comprehensive understanding of authentic leadership, highlighting its diverse components and positive implications for organizational dynamics. [13], delineates commitment into emotional attachment, recognition of benefits (continuance commitment), and feelings of obligation (normative commitment). This multi-faceted conceptualization sets the stage for understanding the nuanced nature of employee commitment and its implications for organizational outcomes. [14], highlighted the importance of employee commitment as a predictive factor for both job satisfaction and performance. The assertion that employees with a strong commitment are vital for achieving optimal individual performance underscores the instrumental role commitment plays in the organizational context. [15], frame employee commitment as a dynamic process, characterizing it as a sequence of activities directed toward the achievement of specific goals. This perspective emphasizes the active and evolving nature of commitment within the employee-organizational relationship. [16], provide a comprehensive definition of employee commitment, highlighting its emotional dimensions, as well as the identification of organizational goals, values, and traditions. Committed employees, according to this definition, exhibit a psychological attachment to the organization, actively committed to providing quality service, and are less likely to consider leaving. [17], extend the understanding of employee commitment

by emphasizing the connection and support employees exhibit within the organizations they serve. This dimension adds a contextual layer to the conceptualization of commitment, considering the broader organizational environment. Employee commitment enhances an employee's performance and productivity, thereby amplifying opportunities for increased rewards, recognition, and promotions. Through commitment, employees engage in the exchange of ideas within their peer groups. This dedication prompts employees to invest their energy and time in their work, surpassing other priorities. The higher the commitment and stability an employee exhibits, the greater the level of self-efficacy experienced, reflecting positively on their psychological, health, and personal aspects [2]. The literature also explores the correlation between employee commitment and turnover, with [18], noting a negative relationship. Less committed employees are characterized by minimal engagement, demonstrating only the necessary behaviors for employment. In contrast, those displaying commitment, often linked with job satisfaction, are more likely to go above and beyond their obligations, showcasing loyalty and contributing to superior performance. According to [19], Talent development serves as a comprehensive framework, transforming individuals from mere factors of production into a contributing force that sustains progress. Through training, a company demonstrates its commitment to and investment in employees, signaling their importance to the organization's survival and prosperity. This creates incentives for employees to remain with the organization and motivates all staff to perform at high levels. Developing and enhancing the talent base strategy involves training individuals with varied tasks, and assessing their abilities and potentials within the talent base. Subsequently, identifying deficiencies in the talent matrix elements and developing a training program to address these shortcomings, contributes to improve training outcomes [20]. [21], contribute to the understanding of talent development by framing it as a set of actions specifically designed to enhance the skills of individuals within the workplace. This emphasis on skill augmentation positions talent development as a proactive approach to building a capable and adaptable workforce. The positive impact of talent development on organizational performance is underscored by [22]. This association between talent development initiatives and enhanced organizational

outcomes highlights the strategic importance of investing in the growth and proficiency of employees. Talent development is further positioned as a critical tool for gaining a competitive advantage through career development, performance enhancement, and succession planning for talented employees. [23], suggest that organizations can enhance employee career development, engagement, and retention by implementing practices such as mentoring, training, and coaching. [24], emphasize the role of the talent development process ineffective retention. The literature suggests that providing employees with opportunities for training and development, coupled with avenues for professional growth, plays a pivotal role in retaining skilled and motivated individuals. [25], shed light on the employee perspective, indicating that considerations such as chances for training and development, as well as opportunities for professional growth, significantly influence individuals when selecting a preferred job. Organizations that actively demonstrate a commitment to talent development are perceived positively, influencing the decision-making process of potential employees.

8 Research Methodology

A descriptive-analytical approach was used in this research, focusing on the impact of authentic leadership on employee commitment and talent development (from IT SME employees' perspective in Amman, Jordan). To achieve the research aim, the researcher utilized a convenience sample. Primary data were gathered using a questionnaire comprising 35 items, and the research is structured on a five-point Likert scale. Subsequently, the collected data underwent analysis through SPSS software.

9 Research Population and Sample

The study population consisted of (360) employees in IT SMEs in Amman, Jordan. The random sampling method was used, and the sample size was (186). After checking the sample, (12) questionnaires were excluded, which constitutes (6.4%) of the total. The number of questionnaires that were valid for analysis was (174), constituting (93.5%) of the sample. The questionnaire was distributed using Google Forms.

10 Data Analysis

10.1 Descriptive Statistics

In order to shed light on the features of numerous variables, such as Authentic Leadership, Employee Commitment, and Talent Development, descriptive statistics provide a mathematical explanation of their mean values. The levels of respondents' answers based on their importance were determined using the formula outlined by [26], Table 1 (Appendix) shows the ranges of computed levels.

Table 2 (Appendix) above presents the descriptive statistics for a total of 6 columns. The first column contains the names of the variables, the second column displays the sample size of the research. The third column shows the mean value observed in the responses for each variable, while the fourth column presents the standard deviation value recorded for that variable. The fifth column indicates the level of the variables, respectively. The mean value for the independent variable "Authentic Leadership" is calculated to be 3.78, with a standard deviation of 0.972. For the variable "Employee Commitment," the mean value is 3.68, and the standard deviation is 1.23. Lastly, for the variable "Talent Development," the mean value is 3.81, and the standard deviation is 0.697.

10.2 Reliability

Before testing for the expected impacts, it was necessary to see whether the model had any concerns with regard to validity and reliability. Cronbach's alpha was used to calculate the construct reliability. Many academics have proposed evaluating construct reliability through measurement criterion thresholds. As mentioned, Cronbach's alpha must be more than 0.7, [27]. Construct reliability Table 3 (Appendix) displays the findings of Cronbach's alpha. An examination of the Table reveals that the Cronbach alpha values were satisfactory in meeting the requirements for measurement (all values were between 0.7 and 0.9). The Cronbach alpha value for Authentic Leadership is 0.926, Employee Commitment is 0.951, and Talent Development is 0.784.

10.3 Correlation Analysis

The degree of strength among variables is obtained by correlation analysis which is given in Table 4 (Appendix). This method also considers the direction

of a relationship between variables. Both positive and negative correlations between variables are revealed by the correlation analysis. The direction of the link is indicated by the sign of the correlation coefficient. It goes from minus one to plus one. In general, the lower the correlation between two variables, the lower the possibility of multi-co-linearity, and vice versa for higher correlations. The level of association between variables is displayed in the table. The strength and direction of a link can be explained with the help of a Pearson correlation test.

The correlation between the study's primary factors is shown in Table 4 (Appendix). A positive ($r=0.531^{**}$) correlation between Authentic Leadership and Employee Commitment was found. It means that both variables are going in the same direction. The positive $r=0.616^{**}$ correlation between Authentic Leadership and Talent Development suggests that when Authentic Leadership rises, so does Talent Development.

10.4 Regression

In this research, regression analysis was performed using SPSS. The study's independent variable is authentic leadership, and the two dependent variables are employee commitment and Talent Development.

10.4.1 Test of the First Hypothesis

H1: There is an impact of Authentic Leadership on Employee Commitment in IT SMES in Amman, Jordan.

Simple Linear Regression was used to test the first hypothesis

Table 5 (Appendix) shows that the calculated t-value (7.897) is higher than the t-table (1.861), indicating statistical significance. It means **that there is an impact of Authentic Leadership on Employee Commitment in IT SMES in Amman, Jordan**. So we accept the hypothesis, the table also shows that there is a positive correlation between **Authentic Leadership and Employee Commitment $R=0.821$** . Also, **Authentic Leadership contributes to Employee Commitment by (67.4%)**. As the **B value is (.656)**, it means that the increase of one unit in Authentic Leadership, Employee Commitment will increase by (.656).

10.4.2 Test of the Second Hypothesis

H2: There is an impact of Authentic Leadership on Talent Development in IT SMES in Amman, Jordan.

Simple Linear Regression was used to test the second hypothesis

Table 6 (Appendix) shows that the calculated t-value (6.453) is higher than the t-table (1.861), indicating statistical significance. It means **that there is an impact of Authentic Leadership on Talent Development in IT SMES in Amman, Jordan**. So we accept the hypothesis, the table also shows that there is a positive correlation between **Authentic Leadership and Talent Development $R=.732$** . Also, **Authentic Leadership contributes to Talent Development by (53.5%)**. As the B value is (.471), it means that the increase of one unit in Authentic Leadership, Talent Development will increase by (.656).

11 Conclusions

The first question revealed a high level of importance assigned to Authentic Leadership in IT SMEs, as evidenced by the mean score of 3.78. This mean score suggests that, on average, respondents view Authentic Leadership as important. Furthermore, the score is notably close to the upper limit of the scale, indicating a widespread acknowledgment of its importance. The accompanying standard deviation of 0.972 suggests that responses were relatively consistent and clustered around the mean. In other words, there is less variability in opinions, emphasizing the unanimous recognition of the significance of Authentic Leadership. This leadership style, characterized by genuineness, transparency, and integrity, builds trust and positive relationships within the organization. Moving on to the second question, Employee Commitment emerged as another vital aspect in IT SMEs in Amman, Jordan, with a mean score of 3.68. This score indicates that, on average, respondents perceive Employee Commitment as important, although moderately close to the upper limit of the scale. However, the standard deviation of 1.23 reveals a higher degree of variability in opinions compared to Authentic Leadership. Responses are more spread out from the mean, reflecting a diverse range of views among participants. Employee Commitment, associated with dedication, loyalty, and engagement, is acknowledged as important, but there is a greater diversity of perspectives among respondents. This information is crucial for organizations aiming to understand and address the varied views on employee

commitment, tailoring strategies accordingly. The third question focused on the significance of Talent Development in IT SMEs in Amman, Jordan, with a mean score of 3.81. This mean score indicates that respondents, on average, perceive Talent Development as highly important, with the score being relatively close to the upper limit of the scale. The low standard deviation of 0.697 suggests a high level of agreement among participants, as responses are closely clustered around the mean. Talent Development, encompassing activities and strategies aimed at nurturing employee skills and capabilities, is recognized as crucial for organizational success. The consensus among respondents emphasizes the unanimous acknowledgment of the importance of talent development in fostering professional growth within the organization. For the first hypothesis, the calculated t-value (7.897) surpassed the t-table (1.861), indicating statistical significance. This outcome supports the conclusion that there is a substantial impact of Authentic Leadership on Employee Commitment in IT SMEs in Amman, Jordan. Additionally, the correlation table revealed a positive correlation between Authentic Leadership and Employee Commitment ($R=.821$). It was further observed that Authentic Leadership contributes significantly to Employee Commitment, accounting for 67.4%. The B value of (.656) signifies that a one-unit increase in Authentic Leadership corresponds to a (.656) increase in Employee Commitment. Likewise, the second hypothesis was confirmed as the calculated t-value (6.453) exceeded the t-table (1.861), signifying statistical significance. This finding indicates that Authentic Leadership has a notable impact on Talent Development in IT SMEs in Amman, Jordan. The correlation table exhibited a positive correlation between Authentic Leadership and Talent Development ($R=.732$). Moreover, Authentic Leadership contributes to Talent Development by 53.5%, as indicated by the associated percentage. The B value of (.471) suggests that a one-unit increase in Authentic Leadership results in a (.471) increase in Talent Development.

12 Recommendation

Based on the results, this research recommends the following:

1. Enhancing employee commitment strategies, conducting employee surveys, implementing feedback mechanisms, and creating customized

- engagement programs can help enhance commitment levels.
2. Strengthen talent development by implementing targeted training programs, mentorship opportunities, and career development plans to nurture employee skills and capabilities.
 3. SMEs should actively encourage leaders to embody authenticity, transparency, and integrity in their actions and decision-making processes.
 4. Diversify talent development approaches by diversifying their approaches to cater to different learning styles and preferences among employees. Incorporating online learning, mentorship programs, and skill-building workshops.
 5. When hiring, consider assessing candidates not only for technical skills but also for their alignment with authentic leadership qualities. This ensures that new hires contribute positively to the organization's culture and values.

12.1 Future Studies

This research recommends future studies to study the impact of new leadership styles and their impact on employee Commitment and Talent Development specifically in the IT sector and SMEs and start-up companies.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process:

During the preparation of this work the author used QuillBot PREMIUM/ Paraphrasing Tool in order to improve the text. After using this tool/service, the author reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the publication.

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APPENDIX

Table 1. Statistical Criterion for Interpreting Arithmetic Mean of the Study's Variables

Level	Means	Description
Low	1 - 2.33	Most of the respondents do not accept the statement
Medium	2.34 - 3.66	The respondents have different opinions
High	3.67 - 5	Most of the respondents accept the statement

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level
Authentic Leadership	174	3.78	.972	High
Employee Commitment	174	3.68	1.23	High
Talent Development	174	3.81	.697	High
Valid N (listwise)	174			

Table 3. Reliability Test

Variables	# of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Authentic Leadership	15	.926
Employee Commitment	10	.951
Talent Development	10	.784

Table 4. Correlation

	Authentic Leadership	Employee Commitment	Talent Development
Authentic Leadership	1		
Employee Commitment	.531**	1	
Talent Development	.616**	.570**	1

**: Correlation is significant at 0.01.

Table 5. Result of the first hypothesis

Independent Variable	R	R ²	R ² Adjust	B	Independent Variable	t- table	t-calculated	Sig
Authentic Leadership	.821	.674	.671	.656	Employee Commitment	1.861	7.897	.000

Table 6. Result of the first hypothesis

Independent Variable	R	R ²	R ² Adjust	B	Independent Variable	t- table	t-calculated	Sig
Authentic Leadership	.732	.535	.530	.471	Talent Development	1.861	6.453	.000

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