



Research Paper

Investigating the effect of authentic leadership on employee job satisfaction with emphasis on the mediating role of job involvement

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Abstract

The present study was conducted with the aim of investigating the effect of authentic leadership on the job satisfaction of employees, emphasizing the mediating role of job involvement. The method of this study was descriptive-survey type. The statistical population of the research was 311 employees and managers of the central organization of Islamic Azad University (275 employees and 36 managers), of which 158 people were selected based on Cochran's formula and by simple random sampling as the sample size of employees. The census method was used to collect the managers' information due to the limited statistical population. To collect the data, the standard questionnaires of Ladahl and Kenger (1965) on job involvement with a reliability coefficient of (0.85), and Minnesota job satisfaction with a reliability coefficient of (0.88), and the authentic leadership of Walumba et al. (2008) with a reliability coefficient (0.90) was used; whose validity was confirmed by academic experts and their reliability was also confirmed through Cronbach's alpha coefficient test. In order to analyze the data, structural equation technique was used through Statistical software LISREL and Spss version 22. Quantitative findings from the test of research hypotheses showed that authentic leadership has a positive and significant effect on both job involvement and job satisfaction of employees. Job involvement has a positive and significant effect on employee job satisfaction. Job involvement has played a mediating role in the impact of authentic leadership on job satisfaction. The results of the research also showed that the components of transparency in relationships, balanced processing, internal aspects, and self-awareness had the most influence on job engagement and job satisfaction, respectively.

Keywords:

authentic leadership,
job satisfaction,
job involvement,
central organization of
Islamic Azad
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Extended Abstract

Introduction

Today, the importance of job satisfaction is a well-known and self-evident matter, and it is also a matter of concern in human resources management. Paying attention to this factor shows the importance that managements attach to human resources as one of the valuable capitals (Kiani & Nazari, 2022). It should be stated that employee satisfaction is the most important concern of leadership in organizations, and the requirement for successful leadership is that the manager pays primary attention to employee satisfaction programs, which include leadership methods and programs designed to change the role of employees. Changing the role of employees is important, because in today's era, the purpose of the university is not merely transfer of the cultural heritage and human experiences to the new generation; and to creation of favorable changes in the attitudes, cognitions and ultimately the behavior of people has a special position in it (Zavvar et al., 2021). The employees of the organization are one of the key and important elements of the higher education system, which must have the necessary competencies and qualifications to be able to undertake this important job (Rajabzadeh et al., 2015). Employees must have the necessary knowledge and skills, and be able to perform and apply them, and it is necessary for teachers to be motivated and work with motivation to achieve high job performance and have the necessary satisfaction. Creating satisfaction in employees causes their individual success to affect the overall effectiveness of the university, which employee satisfaction and then increasing the efficiency of the university depends on the role of managers within the organization, meanwhile, the key feature of a first-rate university is the presence of outstanding managers (Mousavi et al., 2020). Therefore, creating job satisfaction in employees is a very important matter that should be created in different ways. One of these methods is the institutionalization of managerial skills of managers. The way of managers' performance in applying the three-type management skill will attract the attention of the employees toward this matter, and the optimum of these skills will lead to the formation of job satisfaction in employees. On the other hand, the reasons for carrying out the research in order to eliminate the existing gaps can be examined from several aspects: the concept of employee job satisfaction in the literature of human relations and organizational behavior is so important that researchers from different angles have examined the predictors of this key structure in the realization of the organization. Job satisfaction is the feeling that a person has towards his profession (Abdullah, 2019). Another fundamental factor in improving the job performance of employees is the level of their job involvement. Job involvement is an important variable attitude in maximizing organizational effectiveness. Job involvement mainly includes job satisfaction, ability, dedication and attachment. Power indicates a high level of energy, psychological flexibility while working, the desire to spend effort in one's work and different in facing problems (Ziaei et al, 2015). High job involvement indicates the experience of the feeling of meaningfulness, enthusiasm, honor, being immersed in work and having a pleasant feeling towards work. In this situation, over time, a person becomes attached to his job (Braganza et al, 2021). People with low job involvement are usually at a higher level in terms of job burnout, psychopathy and extroversion. Job involvement is related with job resources including social support from colleagues and supervisors, performance feedback, leadership, job control, task variety, learning and growth opportunities, and training facilities. In addition, employees with high job involvement attach more importance to the job (Taştan & Türker, 2018). Therefore, conducting studies that examine the factors affecting the level of employee satisfaction is of great importance and necessity, and since the review of the research background shows that so far, a study that examines the effect of managers' managerial skills on employees' satisfaction with the role of managers has not been available to the researcher;



therefore, the present research is a new work in this field and its results will solve the existing research gap in this field. According to the stated content and the statement that improving the quality of education and performance of the university depends on the knowledge and perception of managers and employees about their role, and the way managers work can affect various factors regarding employees, including their satisfaction as a member of the country's educational organization, therefore, according to the theoretical and research bases mentioned, this research tries to answer the question whether authentic leadership has a significant effect on the job satisfaction of employees by emphasizing the mediating role of university employees' job conflict?

Theoretical framework

Job conflict

Job involvement refers to positive psychological conditions in a person that prompts him to be actively involved in his role and his organization. Harter et al (2003) defined employee involvement as a combination of emotional and cognitive variables in the work environment; including satisfaction, happiness, prosperity and positive thinking (Tabatabai Adnan et al, 2021).

Authentic leadership

Authentic leadership is a social process that organizes all human, financial and technological resources by using human, conceptual, specialized and artistic, scientific and experimental skills; and realizes the goals and policies of the organization through the material and spiritual needs of the employees (Fadaei, 2017). According to Falath (1989), the term authentic leadership refers to the activities that managers perform or assign to others to increase employee learning. Authentic leadership places a high priority on improving the quality of performance, and tries hard to realize this vision (Mousavi Jahromi et al, 2018). The basic task of authentic leadership is to improve the learning situation. If someone in the position of authentic leadership cannot be effective in improving quality, his existence in this position cannot be defended and justified. In fact, the purpose of several decades of research on leadership, which has been associated with the creation of many theories, models and scales, is to increase our understanding of how leadership can lead to the best organizational results (Jafari & Rezaiee, 2018).

Job satisfaction

If the satisfaction of the employees increases, the quality of education, the efficiency of the higher education system, the saving of educational costs and the optimal use of time and educational facilities, and etc. will increase, and in general, the efficiency and effectiveness of the educational system will increase (Adli & Motallebi Varkani, 2018).

In a research, Zovar et al. (2022) investigated the mediating role of managers' creativity in the relationship between participatory management and their social responsibility with teachers' job satisfaction, and showed that collaborative management and managers' creativity have a direct and significant effect on teachers' job satisfaction, but social responsibility of managers do not have a direct and significant effect on teachers' job satisfaction, and the role of creativity as a mediating variable was confirmed (Zavvar et al, 2021).

In a research, Mousavi and Shirzadi (2019) investigated the impact of school administrators' social capital on teachers' job satisfaction, and showed that the structural dimension has the greatest impact on teachers' job satisfaction (Mosavi & Shirzadi, 2019).

Abdullah (2019) in the study of teachers' satisfaction with the perceived leadership of principals showed that there is a relatively strong correlation between the principal's perceived

leadership style and the overall satisfaction of teachers, and the satisfaction of female primary school teachers was higher compared to that of the male teachers (Abdullah, 2019)..

Methodology

The research method is descriptive-correlative in nature, and practical in terms of purpose. The statistical population of the research was made up of managers and employees of the central organization of Islamic Azad University as many as 311 people (36 managers and 275 employees). The size of the research sample for employees was determined 160 people based on Cochran's formula. A simple random sampling method was used in order to give an equal chance to all of the statistical sample members of the teachers. The census method was used to collect the managers' information due to the limited statistical population. Based on this, the sample size of the managers was 36 people. Out of the total number of distributed questionnaires, 158 questionnaires were received from employees and 35 questionnaires from managers. The return rate of questionnaires related to employees was 99% and for managers was 97%. Library and field methods were used to collect data.

Discussion and Results

The main hypothesis analyzes the mediating role of job involvement in the influence of authentic leadership on job satisfaction. The results showed that the strength of the direct relationship between authentic leadership on job satisfaction was calculated to be equal to (0.48), which shows that the correlation is favorable. The strength of indirect authentic leadership on job satisfaction, with regard to the mediating role of job involvement is equal to (0.51). The results related to the first sub-hypothesis showed that the strength of the influence of authentic leadership on job involvement was calculated equal to (0.67), which shows that the correlation is favorable. The significance statistic of the test was also obtained (7.65), which was more than the critical value of t at the 5% error level, i.e. (1.96), and it shows that the observed correlation is significant. The results related to the second sub-hypothesis showed that the strength of the impact of job involvement on job satisfaction was calculated equal to (0.76), which shows that the correlation is favorable. The significance statistic of the test was also obtained (8.74), which was more than the critical value of t at the 5% error level, i.e. (1.96), and it shows that the observed correlation is significant. The results related to the third hypothesis showed that the strength of the influence of authentic leadership on job satisfaction was calculated equal to (0.48), which shows that the correlation is favorable. The significance statistic of the test was also obtained (5.46), which was more than the critical value of t at the 5% error level, i.e. (1.96), and it shows that the observed correlation is significant.

Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to investigate the effect of authentic leadership on the job satisfaction of employees, emphasizing the mediating role of job involvement among employees of the central organization of Islamic Azad University.

The main hypothesis analyzes the mediating role of job involvement in the influence of authentic leadership on job satisfaction. The results showed that the strength of the direct relationship between authentic leadership on job satisfaction was calculated to be equal to (0.48), which shows that the correlation is favorable. The strength of indirect authentic leadership on job satisfaction, with regard to the mediating role of job involvement is equal to (0.51). Due to the fact that the power of the indirect path is greater than the direct path, therefore the existence of the variable of job involvement increases the power of influence and the mediating role of this variable is confirmed. In this regard, it can be said that an



authentic leader with the variables such as self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing and internalized moral framework can give employees the confidence that he possesses a calculated behavior (Corriveau, 2020). Self-awareness and relational transparency convey that the authentic leader tries to acquire a correct recognition about himself, his moods, and his thoughts on one hand; and he is aware of the thoughts and moods of the employees and the environment on the other. As a result, he probably creates the confidence that he has as much correct information as possible. Balanced processing can ensure this confidence that the authentic leader will not have an unbalanced view as much as possible and will not make an unreasonable decision (Amiri, 2017). It is expected that the employees of the organization will have higher motivation and ability and their job success will improve. These results are in line with the results of the research findings of Nik Del Makki (2019).

The results related to the first sub-hypothesis showed that the strength of the influence of authentic leadership on job involvement was calculated as equal to (0.67), which shows that the correlation is favorable. The results of the second sub-hypothesis showed that the strength of the effect of job involvement on job satisfaction has been calculated to be (0.76), which shows that the correlation is favorable. Also, the results related to the third hypothesis showed that the power of authentic leadership on job satisfaction has been calculated equal to (0.48), which shows that the correlation is favorable. It can be said that authentic leadership has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction. In this regard, it can be said that authentic leaders are people who have achieved self-knowledge and are aware of their thoughts and behavior. They are very hopeful, flexible and have a very moral personality (Bahmani, 2017). These results are in line with these research findings: Rajabzadeh et al, (2015), Call & Ployhart (2021), Rajabzadeh et al, (2015), and Wang et al, (2018). In this regard, the following suggestions can be made:

Organizations that are interested in raising the indicators of authentic leadership in their managers can teach the concepts of authentic leadership and the importance of paying attention to them by holding workshops. For more impact and expansion, it is suggested that this training starts from the higher levels of the organization. One of the effective mechanisms of authentic leadership is the creation of a common identity between the leader and the team members. The leader should pay attention that the more he can align the values and beliefs of his team members with the values and beliefs of himself and the organization, the more common identity and as a result more common emotional trust is created. This view in managers will be created that the reason for the existence of organizations in the first stage is the employees and in fact they are the ones who determine what organizational performance will be in front of the organization. Employees are the first step of managers in fulfilling organizational obligations.