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Work engagement and organizational commitment on millennial employees in terms of authentic leadership perception

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ABSTRACT

Work engagement and organizational commitment are research concepts that still need to be studied in Indonesia. Millennial employees are the generation that is dominating almost all organizations in Indonesia. The study aimed to examine how the role of authentic leadership is on work engagement and organizational commitment for millennial employees. Data were collected from 171 millennial employees in private and start-up companies through online and offline surveys. The quantitative method by survey method was applied in this study. Three scales were used to collect data, including the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale of work engagement (17 items), Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (15 items), and Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (24 items). The data analysis used multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA). Results showed authentic leadership has a positive role in work engagement and organizational commitment, so the research hypothesis is accepted. This study further clarifies the contribution of authentic leadership in generating high work engagement and organizational commitment of the millennial generation. By applying authentic leadership, the leader may enhance millennial employees' work engagement and organizational commitment.

Introduction

The psychological attachment of employees with their works is crucial in the economic service of this 21st century. Concerning contemporary employment work, to compete effectively, organizations have to recruit employees with superior talents and capable of inspiring and empowering the employees to apply their maximum capacities to their work. Organizations in this contemporary era require employees who connect psychologically to their work, have the will, and fully invest themselves into their roles, proactive and committed to high-performance quality standards. In other words, organizations need employees attached to their work (Bakker & Leiter, 2010).

Work engagement is a self-condition that is positive, vigorous, and full of meanings. Work engagement is a work condition related to the mind indicated by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002). When employees are engaged with their work, they feel motivated to fight for more challenging goals while reaching success. Engaged employees will discover that their work is more pleasurable; they transform the pleasure into more effective actions (Bakker & Leiter, 2010). Engaged employees are not those who get addicted to their work. Engaged employees will enjoy other things outside the work and not workaholics. Employees will go to work not because of a strong and uncontainable inner impulse, but because the work is a pleasuring thing (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008).

Problems related to engagement were also found in the millennial generation, which is currently the largest number of employees by age in almost all organizations in Indonesia. According to the National Social-Economic Survey in 2017, the number of millennials or the generation born between 1981-2000 was the generation with the largest, 88 million people (33.75%) of the Indonesian population. Generation Z (29.23%) came second, followed by generation X (25.74%) and baby boomers (11.27%), with the fewest number of populations. Millennial employees tend to switch jobs because they feel that their employers and jobs are incompatible with their expectations; as a result, they do not give a high commitment to the organization they work at (Özçelik, 2015).

According to (Schaufeli et al., 2002), if employees feel engaged in their job, this condition will be indicated by high vigor, dedication to their work, and absorption. Vigor is characterized by a high energy level and being mentally resilient during the work, having more effort, and being diligent in conducting the work even when faced with difficulties (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003). The closeness between work engagement and organizational commitment (May et al., 2004). If employees are not fully engaged, this will also be an issue related to employee commitment and motivation loss. Further, employees with low commitment make it difficult for a company to compete globally. Organizational commitment will make employees have a strong will in maintaining their membership within the organization.

There are many factors behind the occurrence of work engagement and organizational commitment as the output of individual processes in the organization, such as individual (e.g., personality, self-efficacy, general abilities) and situational factors (e.g., leadership style, organizational culture, work environment) (Robbins & Judge, 2018). Job resources and personal resources are the antecedents of work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). Job resources refer to physical, social, or organizational aspects of a job that contribute to accomplishing the job's goal, reducing the workload, and encouraging individual growth, learning, and development. Thus, researchers elaborate on the role of situational factors related to leadership style in influencing the output of organizational behavior in work engagement and organizational commitment.

A leader can be viewed from various behaviors such as the one who has collaborative actions of guidance and instruction, and ability to be inspiring to achieve the goal, an art to carry people towards a new direction, as well as an ability to achieve goals with the help of others (Graybill, 2014). Millennial employees dislike a supervisor with poor communication, rude, lazy, and micro managerial-type. They want more collaboration, a values-based culture, bigger autonomy, and even more authority. In addition, millennial employees also desire a leader that can be trusted and super effective in leading them (Faller & Gogek, 2019).

The current leadership styles are rapidly growing following globalization and the demand of organizations to be more integrative in facing issues. The social environment in Western and Eastern cultures considers that the important social values to be conceived by leaders are integrity and authenticity (George et al., 2007). To discover the context of optimism expected from organizations, organizations should focus the study on the role of the leader. Organizations attempt to examine and implement new leadership contexts, one of which is authentic leadership, which positively impacts individual commitment (Walumbwa et al., 2008). Researchers are concerned about leaders with authentic leadership, doing what is right and fair for followers, creating a special type of relationship with high mutual trust, transparency, and guidance toward worthy shared objectives, and emphasizing follower welfare and development (Yukl, 2013).

Authentic leaders will be transparent in showing their feelings and emotions towards employees. In addition, the leader will also try to control all emotions that might reduce inappropriate behaviors (negative behaviors) within the organization (Rukh et al., 2018). An authentic leader that acts accordingly to the embraced values by the leader himself tends to be loved by millennial employees because he can be the role model for them (Gursoy et al.,

2008). An authentic leader can understand himself and tries to understand his group. Leaders understand the importance of consistency to establish trust, momentum, and performance. When a leader's behavior is inconsistent, work partners might get agitated and often get constrained in a particular position; it can be ensured that millennial employees won't be sitting still to see such a situation.

Authentic leadership may increase positive behaviors in organizations because it has been proven as positively affecting work and employee engagement (Álvarez et al., 2019; Bamford et al., 2013; Oh et al., 2018) and organizational commitment (Alinezhad et al., 2015; Emuwa, 2013; Guerrero et al., 2015). When leaders understand the concept of engagement, they may utilize it to produce positive organizational outcomes, such as higher employee retention and greater customer satisfaction. An authentic leader will create a higher trustworthy condition and acquire positive emotions from the subordinates, improving the decision-making and the organization's wellbeing. Therefore, all employees' positive emotional conditions and high engagement levels will eventually be established (Avolio et al., 2004).

Based on the explanation above, this current study aimed to examine the role of authentic leadership on work engagement and organizational commitment among millennial employees. The supervisor's authentic leadership is expected to contribute positively to millennial employees' work engagement and organizational commitment. This study is expected to provide empirical evidence and recommendation for the company that the role of the leader in an organization is crucial. A leader's positive role will contribute positively to employees' engagement and commitment. The increased engagement and commitment will eventually provide benefits for the organization itself.

Method

Participants

The participant criteria of this study are millennial employees born from 1981 to 2000 (20-39 years old), males or females who work in private or start-up companies, have a minimum of a six-month working period.

Table 1

Demographics of Participants

Cat	egory	Frequency	%	Cate	egory	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	79	46.2	Type of	Private	129	75.4
	Female	92	53.8	company	Start-up	31	18.2
Age	23 - 27	89	52.0		Other	11	6.4
(years	28 - 33	36	21.2	Employee's	Permanent	95	57.8
old)	34 - 39	21	12.2	status	Contract	64	37.4
	Other	25	14.6		Outsourcing	8	4.8
Last	High	29	16.9	Working	6 - 12	43	25.1
education	School			Period			
	Diploma	16	9.5	(months)	>12	112	65.4
	Bachelor	117	68.4		Other	16	9.5
	Master	9	5.2				

As shown in Table 1, the participants in this study were 171 millennial employees aged between 20-39 years who work at private or start-up companies, with a minimum of a sixmonth working period. The majority are female with more than a year of working period and in the age range of 23-27 years old.

Instruments

This study used three psychological scales in data collection: work engagement, organizational commitment, and authentic leadership. The authors translated work engagement and organizational commitment scales into Bahasa Indonesia. In comparison, the authentic leadership scale was translated by a previous researcher (Septania, 2015), followed by a review through a professional judgment.

Work engagement was measured through the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003) by measuring three dimensions (vigor, dedication, absorption) with good reliability ($\alpha = .92$). This scale used the Likert method with seven answer choices ranging from 0 (never) to 6 (always). After a field trial, 16 items can be used, with the discriminating index of items ranging from .291 to .721 with reliability $\alpha = .868$.

Organizational commitment was measured through the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) (Porter et al., 1974), in which the aspects of organizational commitment were re-categorized into two new aspects (value commitment and commitment to stay) (Angle & Perry, 1981) with reliability $\alpha = .90$. The answer choices used the Likert method with five answer choices ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). After the field trial, only 12 items can be used with the discriminating index ranging from .236 to .729, with reliability $\alpha = .804$.

Authentic leadership was measured by the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) (Walumbwa et al., 2008), which was based on four aspects (self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing, internalized moral perspective). A previous study found the authentic leadership scale has a good reliability with $\alpha = .913$ (Septania, 2015). There were 24 items available and had been professional judgment by several experts who analyzed word usage and the congruity between aspects and indicators of behavior. This scale used the Likert method with five answer choices ranging from 1 (very incompatible) to 5 (very compatible). After the field trial, 24 items can be used with the discriminating index ranging from .336 to .870, and reliability $\alpha = .957$.

Data Analysis

Multivariate Analysis of Covariance (MANCOVA) was carried out in this study. MANCOVA applies regression procedure in the variance method analysis that involves covariates as the metric variable in which the effect on two or more dependent variables will be observed (Hair Jr et al., 2019). The MANCOVA analysis was chosen to be applied in this study to discover the role of the independent variable that acts as the covariate (authentic leadership) on two dependent variables (work engagement and organizational commitment).

Results

Table 2 shows the multivariate test results using MANCOVA analysis is fulfilled in which p=.000 (p < .05) of significance value of covariate independent variable is obtained on Pillai's Trace, Wilks' Lambda, Hotelling's Trace, and Roy's Largest Root tests. This result shows that authentic leadership can contribute significantly to work engagement and organizational commitment (F = 18.601; p < .05).

According to the results of MANCOVA analysis, Table 3 shows that the parameter estimate test β (regression coefficient) of authentic leadership on work engagement is .222 with a significance value (p=.000). This result shows a positive contribution of authentic leadership on work engagement (B=.222; p<.05). So does the second dependent variable in which parameters β (regression coefficient) of authentic leadership on organizational commitment acquires .208 with significance value (p=.000). Similar to the previous explanation, this result shows a positive contribution of authentic leadership on organizational commitment (B=.208; p<.05).

Table 2
The Results of Hypothesis Test

	Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.331	41.638b	2.000	168.000	.000	.331
	Wilks' Lambda	.669	41.638b	2.000	168.000	.000	.331
	Hotelling's Trace	.496	41.638b	2.000	168.000	.000	.331
	Roy's Largest Root	.496	41.638b	2.000	168.000	.000	.331
Authentic	Pillai's Trace	.181	18.601b	2.000	168.000	.000	.331
Leadership	Wilks' Lambda	.819	18.601b	2.000	168.000	.000	.331
	Hotelling's Trace	.221	18.601b	2.000	168.000	.000	.331
	Roy's Largest Root	.221	18.601b	2.000	168.000	.000	.331

Table 3
The Results of Parameter Estimates Test

•						95% Confidence	e Interval
Dependent Variab	ole Parameter	В	Std. Error	t	Sig.		Upper
						Lower Bound	Bound
Work Engagemen	t Intercept	44.556	5.240	8.503	.000	34.211	54.901
	Authentic	.222	.060	3.719	.000	.104	.340
	Leadership	.222	.000	3.717	.000	.104	.540
Organizational	Intercept	23.494	2.978	7.889	.000	17.615	29.372
Commitment	Authentic	.208	.034	6.117	.000	.141	.275
	Leadership						

The analysis results using the MANCOVA technique show that the research hypothesis is accepted. There is a positive contribution of the supervisor's authentic leadership on millennial employees' work engagement and organizational commitment. An additional analysis was also conducted to discover the mean difference of work engagement, organizational commitment, and authentic leadership levels of the participants based on the participants' demographic data: employee status, working period, and gender.

Table 4
The Contribution of Demographic Factors in the Correlation of AL on WE

Demographic	Category	R	r square	Sig.	Effect size
Employee's status	Permanent employee	.121	.014	.244	Insignificant
Employee's status	Contract employee	.516**	.266	.000	Large effect
Working period	6 - 12	.508**	.258	.001	Large effect
(month)	>12	.240*	.057	.011	Small effect
Gender	Male	.216	.046	.055	Insignificant
Gender	Female	.334**	.111	.001	Medium effect

^{*}The significance of the correlation is at the level of .05;

Table 5
The Contribution of Demographic Factors in the Correlation of AL on OC

Demographic	Category	r	r square	Sig.	Effect size
Employee's status	Permanent employee	.318**	.101	.002	Medium effect
	Contract employee	.600**	.360	.000	Large effect
Working period	6-12 months	.629**	.395	.000	Large effect
	>12 months	.396**	.156	.000	Medium effect
Gender	Male	.380**	.144	.001	Medium effect
	Female	.473**	.223	.000	Medium effect

^{**}the significance of the correlation is at the level of .01

^{**}The significance of the correlation is at the level of .01

The data presented in Table 4 and Table 5 among participants with contract employee status show strong correlations (r = .600; r = .516), and about 36.0% of the variation of organizational commitment and 26.6% of work engagement are described through the supervisor's authentic leadership. On the contrary, among participants in the permanent employee's status, a medium effect (r = .318) and about 10.1% of the variation of organizational commitment are described through the supervisor's authentic leadership.

Among participants in the 6-12 months working period group, a strong correlation (r = .629) and about 39.5% of the variation of organizational commitment are described through the supervisor's authentic leadership. While among participants with more than 12 months working period, a medium correlation (r = .396) and about 15.6% of the variation of organizational commitment are described through the supervisor's authentic leadership. On the contrary, among participants with more than 12 months working period, the supervisor's authentic leadership has a weak correlation (r = .240) and .57% of the work engagement variance.

The demographic on male gender indicates a moderate correlation (r = .380), and about 14.4% of the variation of organizational commitment is described through the supervisor's authentic leadership. Unlike the female gender, which indicates moderate correlations and about 22.3% of the variation of organizational commitment variable and 11.1% of work engagement variable are described through the supervisor's authentic leadership.

Discussion

This study aimed to examine the role of authentic leadership on work engagement and organizational commitment of millennial employees. According to the results of the conducted study, it has been acquired that a supervisor's authentic leadership positively affects work engagement and organizational commitment. This result shows that both work engagement and organizational commitment can be predicted with the supervisor's leadership of millennials. With this matter, it can be concluded that the research hypothesis proposed in this study is accepted: authentic leadership positively affects work engagement and organizational commitment.

The analysis results in this study showed that authentic leadership positively affects work engagement with 4.9% of effective contribution and 4.3% of effective contribution on organizational commitment. This finding is consistent with the previous study, which explained that individuals who feel that their leaders have or are willing to show their attention and consideration would give feedback in the form of behaviors that the employees genuinely expect. The trust towards the leader has to be associated with a higher level of work satisfaction and organizational commitment; in addition, the intention to quit the current job becomes lower (Rich, 1997).

When employees do not trust their leaders, they consider quitting their job. This condition is caused by the concern regarding the leader's decision they do not want to put themselves in a risky position (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). Employees' trust in their leaders affects two variables for effective leadership: commitment towards their decision or for the goals determined by the leader and the confidence in the accuracy of information provided by the leader. The trust toward the leader in an organization may involve the reciprocal relationship manifested in the commodity at the organizational level, such as organizational commitment (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002).

According to this study finding, authentic leadership also positively affects work engagement. Previous studies expressed that the trust of subordinates toward their leader will positively predict the work engagement of employees (Bamford et al., 2013; Hassan & Ahmed, 2011). In addition, an employee who trusts their supervisor and co-workers will be happier to stay in authentic organizational culture. This condition also allows employees to conduct their work and assignment fully engaged. Authentic leadership is also seen as the

factor contributing to trust to ensure that work engagement is fulfilled. If appropriately applied, the leadership concept can function as the intermediary or resource for individuals who work in a specific sector. This condition also helps achieve outcomes in the workplace, including work engagement. The idea regarding authentic leadership needs to be applied to achieve positive results and organizational goals (Wong et al., 2013).

Authentic leadership improves the subordinates' engagement, motivation, commitment, and work satisfaction required to enhance their performance. A leader may embody this improvement by creating a personal relationship between himself with the subordinates and a social relationship with the organization (Avolio et al., 2004). No previous research collectively studied authentic leadership on work engagement and organizational commitment. The study regarding affective commitment, ethical leadership, and work engagement found that affective commitment is related to employees' work engagement in two contexts. First, when employees have a strong commitment, they will trust their responsibility and engagement in every activity within the organization and achieve organization goals with their hard work. The role of ethical leadership causes employees to be more engaged toward their jobs through a strong affective organizational commitment (Asif et al., 2019). In addition, a similar study regarding the effect of leadership style on employee engagement and mediated by organizational commitment found that the regression result showed significant correlations between leadership style and employee engagement, between organizational commitment and employee engagement, and between leadership style and organizational commitment. Partial mediation was found between the three variables (Lama & Pokhrel, 2019).

The current study directly examined the role of authentic leadership on work engagement and organizational commitment, resulting in authentic leadership becoming the predictor or positively affecting work engagement and organizational commitment. Authentic leadership predicts work engagement slightly higher than that of organizational commitment. However, the scores acquired based on the analysis results were not much different, and the correlation direction shown was positive.

Another finding of this study showed that besides accurately predicting work engagement and organizational commitment, one of the uniqueness of authentic leadership is the analysis based on employee status, working period, and gender. One of the interesting findings is that there were score differences between authentic leadership on work engagement based on the gender of participants. The findings based on gender showed that among female millennial employees, authentic leadership correlated with work engagement, but not among male millennial employees. However, the correlation between authentic leadership and organizational commitment among female and male millennial employees is moderate, meaning there was no difference based on gender. The gender of participants, either male or female, did not significantly impact organizational commitment.

Another finding is based on the working period of participants, both on work engagement and organizational commitment. The researcher determined the criteria in which the research participants must have been working for a minimum of six months. It has been found that employees who have worked for 6-12 months acquired high scores, so did those who work more than 12 months. Along with the increasing work experience, employees' condition becomes more stable. The participants with longer working periods have 21.03% higher average work experience compared to the subjects with short working periods, which only amounted to 16.71% (Bakker & Demerouti, 2009).

About the condition of millennial employees, the purpose of a leader is not to create robots for the millennial employees. However, to develop and catalyze a unique strength of each member for the embodiment of the organization's greater good, an authentic leader will acknowledge and utilize group value. An authentic leader feels grateful when he leads a group that performs at a high level and uses every opportunity to communicate changes or developments to his subordinates. An authentic leader might demand to do his group's best

and become a role model by performing the best he can. Until eventually, the success team is the happy team. An authentic leader will achieve success with full passion encourage employees to be committed and engaged.

The findings in this study contribute to giving broader inputs and explanations regarding the condition of millennial employees at work. Aside from that, other studies may obtain the overview to conduct a study with other predictor factors to reveal work engagement and millennial organizational commitment, which, as we know that the character of millennial employees is their intention to switch companies. Besides the contribution given through this study, this study still has some limitations. The adaptation and translation process of the research instruments needs to be addressed because some participants have difficulty understanding the meaning of the statements on several items of the scales. In addition, selecting some translators with a psychology background and proficient foreign language skills should be considered for the translation process of the instruments to enhance the validity of the instruments in data collection.

Conclusion

Authentic leadership positively contributes to work engagement and organizational commitment on millennial employees. The higher the leader's authentic leadership, the higher the work engagement of millennial employees will be. Whereas the leader's higher authentic leadership, the higher organizational commitment on millennial employees will be. Based on employee status, working period, and gender, authentic leadership correlates with millennial employees' work engagement, except for male participants and participants with permanent employee status. In comparison, authentic leadership correlates with millennial employees' organizational commitment in all categories based on employee status, working period, and gender.

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