

Authentic leadership, work engagement and organizational citizenship behaviors in petroleum company

AL, WE and
OCB in
petroleum
company

811

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to explore the relationship between authentic leadership (AL), work engagement (WE), and organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) among United Arab Emirates (UAE) nationals working in the petroleum sector. This study further intends to examine the mediating effect of psychological empowerment (PE) on above mentioned relationship.

Design/methodology/approach – Quantitative method involving self-reported questionnaire was used in this study. Data were collected from 189 UAE national employees from one of the major petroleum companies in the UAE. An extensive online questionnaire consisting of 70 questions was designed in Version 2.05+ of LimeSurvey, an open source-based survey tool. Structural equation modeling using Lisrel was deployed to examine the relationship between AL, PE, WE, and OCB.

Findings – The results revealed that AL significantly increases WE and OCB. Results also indicated that PE increases the strength of relationship between AL with WE and OCB while acting as a mediator.

Practical implications – The research results suggested that leaders and discussion makers in the petroleum sector in UAE should encourage their managers to adopt a more AL style. Given that AL is strongly related to WE, PE, and OCB, AL training programs is consequently important in building employees that would be more empowered and engaged.

Originality/value – This study contributes to organizational behavior and industrial psychology literature. The study is unique in respect to the research model that was developed and validated. It's one of the first attempts to empirically investigate the direct relationship among AL, PE, WE, and OCB in Middle-East context. This study was conducted in UAE, where AL concept has been rarely investigated and finding from this study may help in filling up the gap in knowledge.

Keywords Work engagement, Leadership, UAE, Organizational citizenship behaviour, Authentic leadership, Psychological empowerment, Middle-East

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Arab leadership styles differ from that of the Western due to the cultural and religious differences (Yaseen, 2010). Extended family, clan, tribe, village, and religion play a major role in leadership styles in the Arab world (Aгнаia, 1997). It has been argued that little is known about Arab leaders and entrepreneurs (Namaki, 2008). According to Randeree and Ninan (2011) who studied how leaders influence teamwork in the United



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Arab Emirates (UAE), Arab leaders exert transactional leadership in teams where they are more concerned on day-to-day tasks rather than long term objectives. The transactional nature of leadership in Arab teams means team members believe that the leader has the right to reward them on good performances but also punish them for poor performance (Yaseen, 2010). Moreover, Arab leaders tend to manage by exception (passive) where leaders wait for problems to become severe to interfere and solve them (Jabnoun and Rasasi, 2005; Yaseen, 2010). It is argued by Robertson *et al.* (2001) that the work value of managers in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Oman is found to be strongly dependent on their ability to interact with others in their workplace and promote collaborative working. Diamond (2010) affirms that the sharing of similar cultures, language, and religion in the Arabian world motivates leadership to be influential rather than aristocratic. Empirical research done in UAE showed that instructional leaderships, such as principals of schools, need very strong interpersonal skills; they should be good listeners as well as effective communicators. The results of the study showed a positive association between work climate and effective communication between leaders (principals) and employees (teachers) (Halawah, 2005).

Although conceptualizations of authentic leadership (AL) can be found many years ago in the literature, the AL theory is newly emerging and developing in multiple areas of leadership research, positive organizational behavior, and ethics (Avolio and Gardner, 2005; Northouse, 2013; Walumbwa *et al.*, 2008). The demand for authentic and more accountable leaders may be due to the failure of the banking industry, corporate scandals (e.g. Enron and WorldCom) (Northouse, 2013), ethical meltdowns due to terrorism, and the epidemic of serious diseases (Avolio and Gardner, 2005). Scholars argue that after all the corporate ethics scandals and the failure of leaders to meet people's expectations, AL has emerged as a potential solution for future leaders who can be trusted by people (Avolio *et al.*, 2004; Gardner *et al.*, 2005; May *et al.*, 2003). AL recognizes the self-awareness, moral perspective, balance processing, and transparency of the leader that reflect positively on the overall outcome for the employee, such as commitment, engagement, job satisfaction, performance, and general productivity (Gardner *et al.*, 2005; Luthans and Avolio, 2003). According to Avolio *et al.* (2004) AL identifies the main elements in leaders that enhance the followers' work and performance outcomes.

Previous researchers have found that AL may affect employees' work outcomes, such as organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), commitment, and engagement (Walumbwa *et al.*, 2008, 2010). When employees are more engaged at their workplace, they exhibit a higher level of OCB, which enhances the organization's overall efficiency, effectiveness, and performance (Anitha, 2014; Kahn, 1990; Organ, 1988). In addition to their formal work requirements, engaged employees exhibit additional efforts in activities that extend beyond their normal duties (Rana and Chhabra, 2011). Work engagement (WE) and OCB are also linked to employees' psychological empowerment (PE) (Conger and Kanungo, 1988; Ugwu *et al.*, 2014). Employees who perceived themselves as more empowered at work are more productive and effective compared to their less-empowered colleagues (Jaiswal and Dhar, 2016; Meyerson and Kline, 2008).

1.1 Research motivation

The UAE retains around 10 percent of the world's total oil reserves. Oil is expected to continue to provide income for both economic and social growth for several coming decades (Vine and Abed, 2001). The nature of oil and gas operations and explorations make it very challenging to work in this sector. The petroleum sector is facing a dearth of talented workers and recruiting talented employees are becoming more difficult

compared with past (Enzer, 2014; Preng and Nielsen, 2007). Furthermore, the dramatic drop in oil prices since the middle of 2014 is having a significant impact on the employment and layoff rates. Leaders and decision makers in the oil and gas industry have a great challenge in adopting new workforce strategies that will enhance employees' morale and engagement to mitigate the consequences of the high layoff rate (Howell, 2015). Therefore, the relationship between AL, PE, WE, and OCB has attracted substantial interest from both practitioners and academics. This study aims to enhance the understanding of the effect of PE on this relationship in Middle-East contexts in general and in the UAE in particular. The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between AL and employee engagement and OCB, and to extend the knowledge by exploring the mediating role of PE.

The paper is constructed in five main sections. It begins by presenting an overview of the literature review of the main variables. This is followed by description of the research method and procedure used to investigate the effects of AL on PE, WE, and OCB. It then discusses findings of the study. Finally, the paper concludes by attempting to bring together the findings of this study and its practical implications and tried to develop guideline for future research.

2. Literature review

2.1 AL

AL emerged as an important concept in the literature on ethical leadership and positive organization behavior. The concept was initially investigated by Luthans and Avolio (2003) and was theoretically derived from the positive organization behavior by Avolio *et al.* (2004). Luthans and Avolio (2003) defined AL as a process that draws from both positive psychological capacities and a well-structured organizational context, which results in leaders' greater self-awareness and reflect positively on followers' behaviors. AL is a form of leader behavior that occurs when individuals act in accordance with their values, beliefs, morals, ethics, and self-awareness, and use those abilities to formalize the relationship with their followers (Avolio and Gardner, 2005; Walumbwa *et al.*, 2008).

According to Walumbwa *et al.*'s (2008) AL comprises four main factors: first, self-awareness, which refers to understanding of one's strengths, weaknesses, principles, and their effect on followers; second, relational transparency, which refers to transparency in sharing information, opinions, and positive emotions with followers; third, balanced processing, which refers to making a decision objectively after proper investigation; and fourth, an internalized moral perspective, which refers to a self-regulation system operated by internal moral values and principles that develop the leader's decision-making skills and behaviors. Followers consider leaders authentic according to how much they embody these four elements.

Authentic leaders can adjust themselves to cope with their followers' perceptions in order to achieve their common goals, improve commitment, enhance general performance and assure trust (Bratton *et al.*, 2011; Gardner *et al.*, 2005; Luthans and Avolio, 2003; Moshavi *et al.*, 2003). Furthermore, AL plays a key role in enhancing employees' work environment, job satisfaction, WE, and general performance (Avolio and Gardner, 2005; Gardner *et al.*, 2005; Luthans and Avolio, 2003).

Recent research has proposed that AL may affect employees' work outcomes such as commitment, satisfaction, engagement, and OCB (Walumbwa *et al.*, 2008, 2010; Wang and Hsieh, 2013). Moreover, Hassan and Ahmed (2011) found a positive relationship between AL and WE among banking sector employees in Malaysia. They used structural equation modeling (SEM) to express how the variables in the

model (AL, interpersonal trust, and WE) are related to each other. In another study, Giallonardo *et al.* (2010) examined the relationships between new graduate nurses' perceptions of preceptor AL, WE, and job satisfaction, and they have also found that AL is positively related to WE.

2.2 PE

Thomas and Velthouse (1990) defined empowerment as intrinsic motivations with four individual cognitions as the basis for employee empowerment: senses of impact, competence, meaningfulness, and choice. Accordingly, empowerment is achieved when individuals in the organization perceive themselves as being empowered.

The approach of Thomas and Velthouse (1990) was empirically supported by Spreitzer (1995). He defined PE as a psychological state that comprises four main dimensions: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact (Meyerson and Kline, 2008; Spreitzer, 1995). Meaning is defined as congruence between job requirements at the workplace and the employee's beliefs, values, and behaviors. Competence is defined as the employees' belief in their capability and skills to successfully achieve certain work tasks. Self-determination is defined as employees' sense of autonomy and control over their decisions at work. Finally, impact is defined as employees' perception that their achievements can affect work outcomes.

A review of the literature on empowerment indicates a range of different definitions of and approaches to empowerment, specifically structural and psychological approaches (Huq, 2015; Mathieu *et al.*, 2006; Potterfield, 1999; Spreitzer, 1995). Structural empowerment is part of the job characteristics and job design, focussing on shifting the responsibilities from leaders to subordinates (Wallace *et al.*, 2011). Structural empowerment is about distributing, assigning, and sharing power, responsibilities, and consequences for the sake of organizational growth (Jha, 2014; Karsten, 1994; Siachou and Gkorezis, 2014), and direct objective measures of structural empowerment are harder to obtain. On the other hand, PE focusses primarily on employees' personal feelings and direct measures of that is more easily attainable through the respondents' self-administered questionnaires. PE has been shown to be linked to a wide range of positive organizational behaviors and outcomes, such as job satisfaction, job commitment, performance, and customer satisfaction (Huq, 2015; Jaiswal and Dhar, 2016; Mathieu *et al.*, 2006). Employees who feel more empowered at their work are more satisfied, productive, and effective compared to those with less PE (Meyerson and Kline, 2008; Taştan, 2014).

2.3 The relationship between AL and PE

Previous studies have indicated that there is a positive relationship between AL and PE. For example, Zhu *et al.* (2004) proposed a positive relationship between AL and PE. Authentic leaders treat their employees with respect, look after their needs, protect their dignity, and assure their autonomy. Accordingly, employees who perceive that their leaders are defending their basic human rights will have a greater feeling of empowerment (Zhu *et al.*, 2004).

Zhu (2008) studied the mediating role of PE on the relationship between ethical leadership and moral identity among 335 organizational employees from 13 various industries, and found that PE was positively related to AL. Shapira-Lishchinsky and Tsemach (2014) explored the mediating role of PE on AL, OCB, and a variety of withdrawal behaviors among teachers. They found that AL is positively related to

PE. As such, it is expected that followers will be more likely to have greater feelings of empowerment because their basic human needs of meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact are protected by their authentic leaders. Thus:

H1. AL is positively related to employees' PE attitudes.

AL, WE and
OCB in
petroleum
company

2.4 WE

Over the last two decades, there has been a considerable amount of interest in WE among researchers and practitioners around the globe (Albrecht, 2010; Saks, 2011). It is emerging as one of the key factors for enhancing employees' performance and organizational growth (Harter, 2002; Saks, 2006). Engaged employees show fewer negative organizational behaviors (e.g. absenteeism, intention to leave) at work. On the other hand, they are physically and emotionally connected to their work, strongly motivated and eagerly willing to improve their work-related skills and knowledge (Bakker, 2011; Schaufeli, 2012). Engagement is variously conceptualized as psychological and physical presence at the workplace (Kahn, 1990), the opposite of burnout (Maslach and Leiter, 1997; Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002), or as a result of organizational support (Saks, 2006).

Kahn (1990) is considered the pioneer in the field of engagement research (Stairs and Galpin, 2010). He defined engagement as "the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances" (Kahn, 1990, p. 694). Kahn's concept added great value to the engagement literature; however, it was criticized for being too conceptual and providing little information about the influence of cognition and emotions on engagement or disengagement.

Maslach and Leiter (1997), on the other hand, defined engagement as the opposite of burnout. They believed that burnout consists of three main factors: mental exhaustion, cynicism, and restricted professional efficiency. Accordingly, burned-out employees can be described as energy exhausted, uninvolved, and inefficient. In contrast, engaged employees are involved, efficient, and fully energized at work. Thus, engaged employees are characterized by higher energy instead of exhaustion, significant involvement instead of cynicism, and self-efficacy instead of inefficiency. In conclusion, job engagement is the positive side of the employee's contribution at work, while burnout is its negative side.

Maslach and Leiter (1997) used the same instrument to measure both burnout and engagement, which complicated the research on the relationship between the two constructs empirically (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002). Consequently, they came up with a new definition of and scale for engagement. Schaufeli *et al.* (2002, p. 74) defined WE as "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption." As per Schaufeli and Bakker (2004, p. 295) vigor is characterized by "high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one's work, and persistence even in the face of difficulties," while dedication is characterized by "a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge" (p. 295). Finally, absorption is characterized by "being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in one's work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work" (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004, p. 295). Accordingly, highly engaged employees will have high energy at work and will be enthused at their jobs, with inspiration and pride. Moreover, they will be happily immersed in their duties, and due to this engagement, working hours will pass quickly without realization from the employees.

Schaufeli *et al.* (2002) concept of engagement is the most commonly used in the academic literature (Bakker *et al.*, 2008; Christian *et al.*, 2011). Distinct from previous research (i.e. Kahn, 1990; Maslach and Leiter, 1997), the concept treats engagement as an independent construct and provides a reliable scale to measure engagement (Utrecht WE scale). In addition, the definition covers both cognitive and emotional aspects of WE. Finally, the construct allows researchers to investigate vigor, dedication, and absorption independently, which can enhance the findings from each dimension of engagement. Accordingly, Schaufeli *et al.* (2002) definition of engagement will be used in this study.

WE is a crucial aspect for organizations because it has many positive outcomes. It has a significant effect on both employees and organizations (Saks, 2006). Engaged employees are more attached physically and emotionally to their organization, which leads to better job performance and more positive work outcomes (Kumar and Pansari, 2015; Menguc *et al.*, 2013; Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004).

In his study, Kahn (1990) identified the following as four major consequences of engagement: job satisfaction, organizational commitment, OCB, and lower intention to quit. Saks (2006) found that job and organizational engagement are positively related to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and OCB. On the other hand, the study showed a negative relationship between engagement and intention to quit.

Harter *et al.* (2002) used meta-analysis techniques on 7,939 business units in 36 companies to examine the relationship between employee satisfaction-engagement and the business-unit outcomes. They found that WE is positively linked with customer satisfaction, productivity, customer loyalty, and profitability, while it is negatively related to turnover. Recently, Ibrahim and Al Falasi (2014) conducted a study on the relationship between employee loyalty and WE among employees at three government managerial levels in the UAE. They found that WE is positively related to employee loyalty. Engaged employees tend to perform better and achieve their goals at work proactively, and they feel they are able to provide an extra-role contribution to their organization.

2.5 OCB

OCB has emerged among researchers and HR practitioners as an essential topic in the field of organizational behavior and organizational psychology (Organ and Ryan, 1995). OCB encompasses employees' informal and voluntary behaviors toward their organization and their colleagues, which leads to the organization's growth (Organ, 1988; Soieb *et al.*, 2013). Further, OCB concentrates on employee contributions that go beyond normal expectations; in other words, it is the employees' extra-role behavior at work that contributes to organizational success (Posdakoff and Mackenzie, 1994).

OCB was introduced by Organ (1988), and has been defined as "individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization" (p. 4). Furthermore, he proposed five main elements that contribute directly to OCB: altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy, and civic virtue. Altruism refers to behavior directed toward assisting a specific employee within the organization to accomplish a task or solve a problem. Conscientiousness denotes a pattern of behavior that goes further than minimal required levels of punctuality, time, resource utilization, and attendance. Sportsmanship signifies behavior in which fewer insignificant complaints are raised by the employee and more time is spent on direct organizational activities. Courtesy means behavior that reduces work-related problems in advance by enhancing the communication and coordination channels between colleagues. Finally,

civic virtue refers to behavior involving participation in and contributions to the organization's life-related issues. Various studies have operationalized these five dimensions of OCB and used them as a basis for OCB measurement.

This pervasive interest in OCB comes from its advantage that enhances the organization's performance, effectiveness, employee satisfaction, retention, and loyalty. Furthermore, it has been argued that OCB reduces undesirable employees' behaviors and attitudes such as turnover intention, actual turnover, and absenteeism (Chahal and Mehta, 2010; Podsakoff *et al.*, 2009; Podsakoff and MacKenzie, 1997; Shahin *et al.*, 2014; Walz and Niehoff, 2000).

2.6 The relationship between PE and WE

Based on Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) definition of WE, PE could be considered as antecedent of WE (Ugwu *et al.*, 2014). Previous studies support the positive relationship between PE and WE. For example, a study on the influence of professional nursing practices' environments and PE on nurses' WE revealed that PE is positively related to WE (Wang and Liu, 2015). Another study of 715 employees from seven commercial banks and four pharmaceutical companies in Southeastern Nigeria showed that PE is a predictor of WE (Ugwu *et al.*, 2014). Based on the above literature, the second hypothesis is as follows:

H2. PE is positively related to employees' WE among UAE nationals in the petroleum sector.

2.7 The relationship between PE and OCB

The literature shows that there is a significant positive relationship between PE and OCB (Chiang and Hsieh, 2012; Conger and Kanungo, 1988; Karavardar, 2014). PE is internal motivation that encourages and promotes OCB among employees (Conger and Kanungo, 1988; Morrison, 1996). Employees who are psychologically empowered and experience citizenship, participate effectively in the organization (Spreitzer, 1995; Walz and Niehoff, 2000). Psychologically empowered employees have a good emotional state about the tasks that they conduct; this feeling may increase individual motivation and inspire active OCB (Yen *et al.*, 2004 as cited in Chiang and Hsieh, 2012). Moreover, because PE is positively related to positive job behaviors, it is suggested that it could also be related to OCB. Accordingly, third hypothesis is as follows:

H3. PE will positively influence employees' OCB.

2.8 PE as a mediator between AL, WE, and OCB

In addition to the studies that showed a positive relationship between AL and PE (Zhu *et al.*, 2004), a PE and WE (Wang and Liu, 2015), and PE and OCB (Conger and Kanungo, 1988), it is expected that PE will increase when perception of AL among employees increases. This will impact both OCB and employees' engagement positively. It is important to note that although separate independent studies have been done to show that there are significant relationships between the variables mentioned, there has been no research that tests the goodness of fit of all these variables in a single study using SEM. Therefore, fourth hypothesis that is to be tested is as follows:

H4. PEs among UAE nationals in the petroleum sector will positively influence the relationship between the perception of AL and WE and OCB.

2.8.1 Research model. As shown in Figure 1, this model assumes that AL increases WE and OCB. Moreover, AL and the PE latent construct indicate that AL significantly and positively influence PE. Furthermore, the model assumes that PE significantly and positively influence WE and OCB. Therefore, PE is working as a mediating variable that strengthen the relationship between AL and the WE and OCB.

3. Research methodology

3.1 Participants and procedure

The current research approach of the study has adopted a quantitative empirical analysis to assess the relationship among the four variables, namely, AL, PE, WE, and OCB. Generally, this approach is used when researchers need to test existing hypothesis or to examine the relationship between constructs within a theory (Creswell, 2009). Furthermore, quantitative research methods attempt to examine theories deductively, it generalize and replicate findings, and then it conducts objective and unbiased studies (Harwell, 2011). Consequently, quantitative approach was suitable for this study because it was aimed to test AL theory that includes a relationship between leaders' characteristics and employee's behavior and attitude such as WE and OCB.

The approval for the study was taken from the organization's management, and the survey was published online with LimeSurvey®. All the participants were UAE nationals and full-time employed and were holding managerial position in one of the major petroleum organizations in the UAE. A total of 376 electronic copies of the questionnaire were distributed using stratified random sampling, and 189 were completed, which is a response rate of 50.3 percent. Because the official business language in UAE's petroleum sector is English, the electronic surveys were written in English. The responses' confidentiality was ensured, and participants were requested to complete the questionnaire at their convenience. Participation to this survey was voluntary.

3.2 Measuring instruments

The instrument consisted of five parts. The first part was demographic variables. Rest four parts were measurement scale on AL, WE, OCB, and PE. Measurement scales used for this study are discussed in below.

3.2.1 Authentic leadership questionnaire (ALQ). The ALQ is a 16-item survey instrument that measures AL (Walumbwa *et al.*, 2008). Furthermore, it has adequate internal consistency, with Cronbach's α s for each subscale and overall scale higher than 0.70 in a cross-cultural validation study (Walumbwa *et al.*, 2008). The scale takes AL as a second-order factor with four first-order factors: self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing, and internalized moral perspective. It uses a five-point scale (0=not at all, 4=frequently, if not always) where respondents rate leaders on statements such as, "Admits mistakes when they are made."

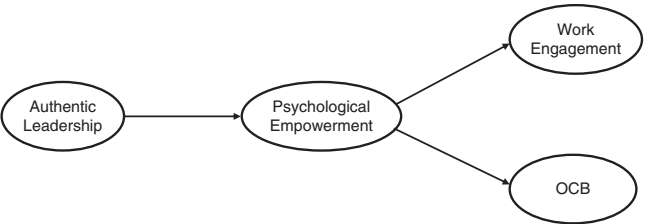


Figure 1.
The proposed model
for this research

3.2.2 Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES). The most popular scale to measure WE is the UWES, which was developed by Schaufeli *et al.* (2002). The UWES scale is used to measure vigor, dedication, and absorption (Bakker *et al.*, 2008; Schaufeli *et al.*, 2006). A nine-item short version of the scale had sufficient internal reliability and construct validity. The median α for the overall scale was 0.92 across ten countries in a cross-national study. It uses a seven-point scale (0=never, 6=always) where employees respond to statements such as, "At my work, I feel bursting with energy."

3.2.3 OCB scale. The OCB scale was developed by Podsakoff *et al.* (1990). The instrument was used to assess the five dimensions of organizational citizenship: altruism, conscientiousness, courtesy, sportsmanship, and civic virtue. It consists of a 24-item seven-point Likert scale that ranges from 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree. For each dimension, five items were allocated, except for civic virtue, which had four items. The internal reliability coefficient α for altruism, courtesy, sportsmanship, conscientiousness, and civic virtue in this study were 0.918, 0.895, 0.858, 0.890, and 0.883, respectively. Podsakoff *et al.* (1990) reported that Cronbach's α reliability coefficient value for all constructs was 0.7 or more. Examples of the items include, "I help others who have heavy workloads," and "I keep abreast (updated) of changes in the organization."

3.2.4 PE scale. PE scale was used to measure PE in this study (Spreitzer, 1995). The dimensions of PE (meaning, competence, self-determination, impact) were assessed using a 12-item scale. The measure used a seven-point scale ranging from 1=no, strongly disagree to 7=yes, strongly agree. Employees responded to statements such as, "The work I do is very important to me," and "I have a great deal of control over what happens in my department" (Spreitzer, 1995) found in his study that Cronbach's α reliability coefficient for the overall empowerment construct was 0.72 for the industrial sample of 393 managers and 0.62 for the insurance sample of 128 lower-level employees.

The control variables of gender, age, education level, and job tenure were used at the individual level to control the relationships among variables. The Cronbach's α for all factors were above 0.8.

4. Findings and analysis

A total of 189 UAE national employees from a major organization in the petroleum sector in the UAE have participated in this study. Out of 189 employees who participated, 72 percent ($n=136$) were male and 28 percent ($n=53$) were female. In total, 25 percent ($n=47$) of the respondents were 18-29 years of age, 55 percent ($n=105$) were 30-39 years of age, 19 percent ($n=36$) were 40-49 years of age, and only a single respondent was above 50 years of age. Therefore, the majority of the sample's respondents were 30-39 years of age. The majority of respondents had 11-15 years of work experience. The participants' educational qualifications were as follows: 22 percent ($n=41$) had their high school certificate, 31 percent ($n=60$) had diploma certificates, 11 percent ($n=21$) had postgraduate degrees, 35 percent ($n=66$) had their bachelor's degrees, and only one respondent had a doctorate degree. Therefore, the majority (35 percent) of the sample's respondents had at least a bachelor's level of education.

SEM technique was used in this study for the primary data analysis. Furthermore, overall model fit was tested with fit indices including comparative fit index (CFI), the incremental fit index (IFI), and the root mean square residual (RMSR) (Bentler, 1990; Bollen, 1989; Pedhazur and Schmelkin, 1991). The CFI is the index of choice for model fit where the sample size is relatively small (Bentler, 1990). The IFI was also used to take into consideration the issue of small sample size (Bollen, 1989). CFI and IFI values greater

than 0.9 are generally accepted as indicating a good model fit (Bollen, 1989). The value of the RMSR is interpreted in relation to the sizes of the observed of variances and co-variances, with obtained RMSR values indicating the average discrepancy between the sample observed and hypothesized correlation matrices (Hu and Bentler, 1998). A RMSR value of 0.05 or less indicates a good fit (Byrne, 1994) with values between 0.05 and 0.08 indicating an acceptable fit (Hu and Bentler, 1998). The standardized measure of RMSR will be used for easiness of comparison across scales.

4.1 *The measurement equations: AL*

The AL latent construct was measured with transparency, moral/ethics, balance processing, and self-awareness measurement scales. The one-factor congeneric model AL is a good fit for the data, as indicated by the goodness of fit statistics. For the incremental fit indices, CFI is 0.99 and IFI is 0.99, which indicate a good fit of the model to the data. The RMR of 0.048 also suggests a good model fit.

Table I demonstrates that all scale items load significantly (*t*-values above 2.00) on the latent variable. Self-awareness has the highest λ (0.79), with the largest associated *t*-value (15.90). It also explains 82 percent of the variance in the AL measurement model. Balance processing's structural scale has a very similar influence on AL's measurement model, with a λ of 0.79 and associated *t*-value of 15.10, and explains 77 percent of the variance in the AL measurement model. Moral/ethics has a λ of 0.74 with an associated *t*-value of 15.89, and explains 82 percent of the variance in the AL measurement model. Transparency has a λ of 0.72 with an associated *t*-value of 14.71, and explains 75 percent of the variance in the AL measurement model. Overall, the most important source of AL is self-awareness.

4.2 *The measurement equations: WE*

The WE latent construct was measured with the vigor, dedication, and absorption measurement scales. The one-factor congeneric model WE is a good fit to the data, as indicated by the goodness of fit statistics. For the incremental fit indices, CFI is 0.99 and IFI is 0.99, which indicate a good fit of the model to the data. The RMR of 0.048 suggests a good model fit.

Table II demonstrates that all scale items load significantly (*t*-values above 2.00) on the latent variable. Dedication has the highest λ (1.28), with the largest associated *t*-value (16.76). It also explains 88 percent of the variance in the WE measurement model. Vigor's structural scale has a very similar influence on the WE measurement model, with a λ of 1.27 and an associated *t*-value of 15.92. It explains 83 percent of the variance in the WE measurement model. Absorption has a λ of 1.10 with an associated *t*-value of 14.03, and explains 71 percent of the variance in the WE measurement model. Overall, the most important source of WE is dedication.

Table I.
Parameter estimates,
t-values, R^2 , error of
variance, and
incremental fit
statistics for
authentic leadership

Authentic leadership	λ -X	<i>t</i> -value	R^2	Error
1. Transparency	0.72	14.71	0.75	0.17
2. Moral/ethics	0.74	15.89	0.82	0.12
3. Balance processing	0.79	15.10	0.77	0.18
4. Self-awareness	0.79	15.90	0.82	0.14
Notes: Fit statistics: CFI=0.99; IFI=0.99; RMR=0.048				

4.3 The measurement equations: OCB

The OCB latent construct was measured with the altruism, sportsmanship, conscientiousness, courtesy, and civic virtue measurement scales. The one-factor congeneric model OCB is a good fit to the data, as indicated by the goodness of fit statistics. For the incremental fit indices, CFI is 0.99 and IFI is 0.99, which indicate a good fit of the model to the data. The RMR of 0.048 suggests a good model fit.

Table III demonstrates that all the scale items load significantly (t -values above 2.00) on the latent variable. Courtesy has the highest λ (0.96) with the largest associated t -value (15.45). It also explains 80 percent of the variance in the OCB measurement model. The civic virtue structural scale has a very similar influence on the OCB measurement model, with a λ of 0.96 and an associated t -value of 13.36, and it explains 67 percent of the variance in the OCB measurement model. Conscientiousness has a λ of 0.80 with an associated t -value of 13.58, and explains 68 percent of the variance in the OCB measurement model. Altruism has a λ of 0.73 with an associated t -value of 13.56, and explains 68 percent of the variance in the OCB measurement model. The least influential structural scale is sportsmanship with a λ of 0.50 and an associated t -value of 4.95, and it explains only 13 percent of the variance, with a large possible error in the OCB measurement model. Overall, the most important sources of OCB are courtesy and civic virtue.

4.4 The measurement equations: PE

The PE latent construct was measured with the meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact measurement scales. The one-factor congeneric model PE is a good fit to the data, as indicated by the goodness of fit statistics. For the incremental fit indices, CFI is 0.99 and IFI is 0.99, which indicate good fit of the model to the data. The RMR of 0.048 suggests a good model fit.

Table IV demonstrates that all the scale items load significantly (t -values above 2.00) on the latent variable. Meaning has the highest λ (0.96) with the largest associated t -value of 13.74. It also explains 69 percent of the variance in the PE measurement model. Self-determination's structural scale has a very similar influence on the PE measurement

Table II.

Parameter estimates, t -values, R^2 , error of variance, and incremental fit statistics for work engagement

Work engagement	λ - X	t -value	R^2	Error
1. Vigor	1.27	15.92	0.83	0.14
2. Dedication	1.28	16.76	0.88	0.23
3. Absorption	1.10	14.03	0.71	0.50

Notes: Fit statistics: CFI = 0.99; IFI = 0.99; RMR = 0.048

Table III.

Parameter estimates, t -values, R^2 , error of variance, and incremental fit statistics for OCB

OCB	λ - X	t -value	R^2	Error
1. Altruism	0.73	13.56	0.68	0.25
2. Sportsmanship	0.50	4.95	0.13	1.67
3. Conscientiousness	0.80	13.58	0.68	0.30
4. Courtesy	0.96	15.45	0.80	0.23
5. Civic virtue	0.96	13.36	0.67	0.46

Notes: Fit statistics: CFI = 0.99; IFI = 0.99; RMR = 0.048

model, with a λ of 0.91 and an associated t -value of 15.17, and it explains 79 percent of the variance in the PE measurement model. Impact has a λ of 0.87 with an associated t -value of 12.51, and explains 61 percent of the variance in the PE measurement model. Competence has a λ of 0.84 with an associated t -value of 14.04, and explains 71 percent of the variance in the PE measurement model. Overall, the most important source of PE is meaning.

4.5 Assessment of the structural model: PE as a mediator (model estimation and hypotheses testing)

Four one-factor (congeneric) measurement models have been used to test the nature of the relationship between AL, WE, and OCB among UAE nationals in the petroleum sector. The general design of the present research includes both the estimation of latent constructs and the estimation of multiple dependence relationships. The use of SEM in the present study is justified by the confirmatory rather than exploratory nature of the research questions asked and the suitability of addressing questions concerning the robustness of theoretically driven a priori models through cross-validation (Kirk and Brown, 2003).

For this model, absolute fit indices determine how well the a priori model fits the data. Degrees of freedom=98, $\chi^2=165.74$ and $p < 0.00$, GFI=0.90, AGFI=0.86 demonstrate that the model is an acceptable fit to the data. Moreover, incremental fit statistics (NFI=0.97, CFI=0.99, IFI=0.99, and RMR=0.048) also indicate that the model is a good fit to the data. Prior literature has confirmed that each of those factors positively contribute toward the conceptual model. The following section presents details on the nature of the relationships found in this study.

First, it was assumed that AL will positively influence employees' PE attitudes (*H1*). The graphical model shows a tighter fit between AL and the PE latent construct. As shown in Table V, the direct path coefficient between AL and the PE latent construct indicates that AL significantly and positively ($\beta=0.33$, t -value=4.73) influenced PE. More specifically, AL helps to achieve better PE. This finding is consistent with *H1* of the present study.

Second, it was assumed that PE would positively lead to employees' WE (*H2*). The graphical model shows a tight fit between PE and the WE latent construct. As shown in Table V, the direct path coefficient between PE and the WE latent construct indicates that PE significantly and positively ($\beta=0.63$, t -value=12.39) influenced WE. More specifically, PE helps to achieve better WE. This finding is consistent with *H2* of the present study.

Third, it was assumed that PE would positively lead to employees' OCB (*H3*). The graphical model shows a tight fit between PE and the OCB latent construct. As shown in Table V, the direct path coefficient between PE and the OCB latent construct indicates that PE significantly and positively ($\beta=0.63$, t -value=12.39) influenced employees' OCB. More specifically, PE helps to achieve better employee OCB. This finding is consistent with *H3* of the present study.

Table IV.
Parameter estimates, t -values, R^2 , error of variance, and incremental fit statistics for psychological empowerment

Psychological empowerment	λ -X	t -value	R^2	Error
1. Meaning	0.96	13.74	0.69	0.41
2. Competence	0.84	14.04	0.71	0.29
3. Self-determination	0.91	15.17	0.79	0.22
4. Impact	0.87	12.51	0.61	0.84

Notes: Fit statistics: CFI = 0.99; IFI = 0.99; RMR = 0.048

Finally, it was assumed that PE among UAE nationals in the petroleum sector would mediate the relationship between AL and WE and OCB (*H4*). The direct path coefficient between PE ($\beta=0.63$, $t\text{-value}=12.39$) and employees' WE is higher than the direct path coefficient between AL and the WE latent construct ($\beta=0.48$, $t\text{-value}=7.79$). Similarly, the direct path coefficient between PE ($\beta=0.82$, $t\text{-value}=25.88$) and employees' OCB is higher than the direct path coefficient between AL and the OCB latent construct ($\beta=0.40$, $t\text{-value}=5.93$). Therefore, this finding is consistent with *H4* of the present study.

4.5.1 Summary of the conceptual model. The standardized path coefficients from this model supported all of the proposed hypotheses. Figure 2 illustrates the final conceptual model of the research, where AL style comprises four main factors: self-awareness, balance processing, transparency, and internalized moral perspective. Moreover, PE consists of four main dimensions: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. WE is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. Finally, OCB consists of five main elements: altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy, and civic virtue.

As shown in Figure 2, the direct path coefficient between AL and the PE latent construct indicates that AL significantly and positively influenced PE. Furthermore, the direct path coefficients between PE and the WE and OCB latent constructs indicates that PE significantly and positively influenced WE and OCB.

5. Discussion

The present study adds to the AL literature by verifying empirical support of the relations between AL, WE, OCB, and the mediating effect of PE in the UAE petroleum sector. Four hypotheses were developed and examined successfully. SEM was used to test the hypothesis as presented in Figure 2 and Table V. AL construct was measured by four main sub constructs: transparency, moral/ethics, balance processing, and self-awareness. Self-awareness and balance processing dimensions are the most influential elements of AL. In previous studies, self-awareness is suggested to be fundamental to AL (Gardner *et al.*, 2005; Kernis, 2003). The PE latent construct was measured with the meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. Meaning and self-determination have been shown in this study to be the most important elements in PE. Moreover, WE construct was measured with vigor, dedication, and absorption. The findings have shown that "dedication and vigor" are the most essential factors of WE. Dedication and vigor have been found to be opposite of exhaustion and cynicism which are considered the main core dimension of burnout (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004). When employees are becoming more energetic and

Pathways between latent constructs	Λ (β)	λ error	t -value
Authentic leadership $\rightarrow$ Psychological empowerment	0.33	0.07	4.73
Authentic leadership $\rightarrow$ Work engagement	0.48	0.06	7.79
Authentic leadership $\rightarrow$ OCB	0.40	0.07	5.93
Psychological empowerment $\rightarrow$ Work engagement	0.63	0.05	12.39
Psychological empowerment $\rightarrow$ OCB	0.82	0.03	25.88
Work engagement $\rightarrow$ OCB	0.60	0.05	11.40

Notes: Goodness of fit statistics: degrees of freedom = 98; $\chi^2 = 165.74$ ($p = 0.00$); (RMSEA) = 0.061; 90 percent confidence interval for RMSEA = (0.044; 0.076); p -value for test of close fit (RMSEA < 0.05) = 0.13; normed fit index (NFI) = 0.97; comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.99; incremental fit index (IFI) = 0.99; critical N (CN) = 154.71; root mean square residual (RMR) = 0.048; goodness of fit index (GFI) = 0.90; adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI) = 0.86

Table V.
Parameter estimates
 λ , λ error, and
 t -values for
pathways defined in
the structural model

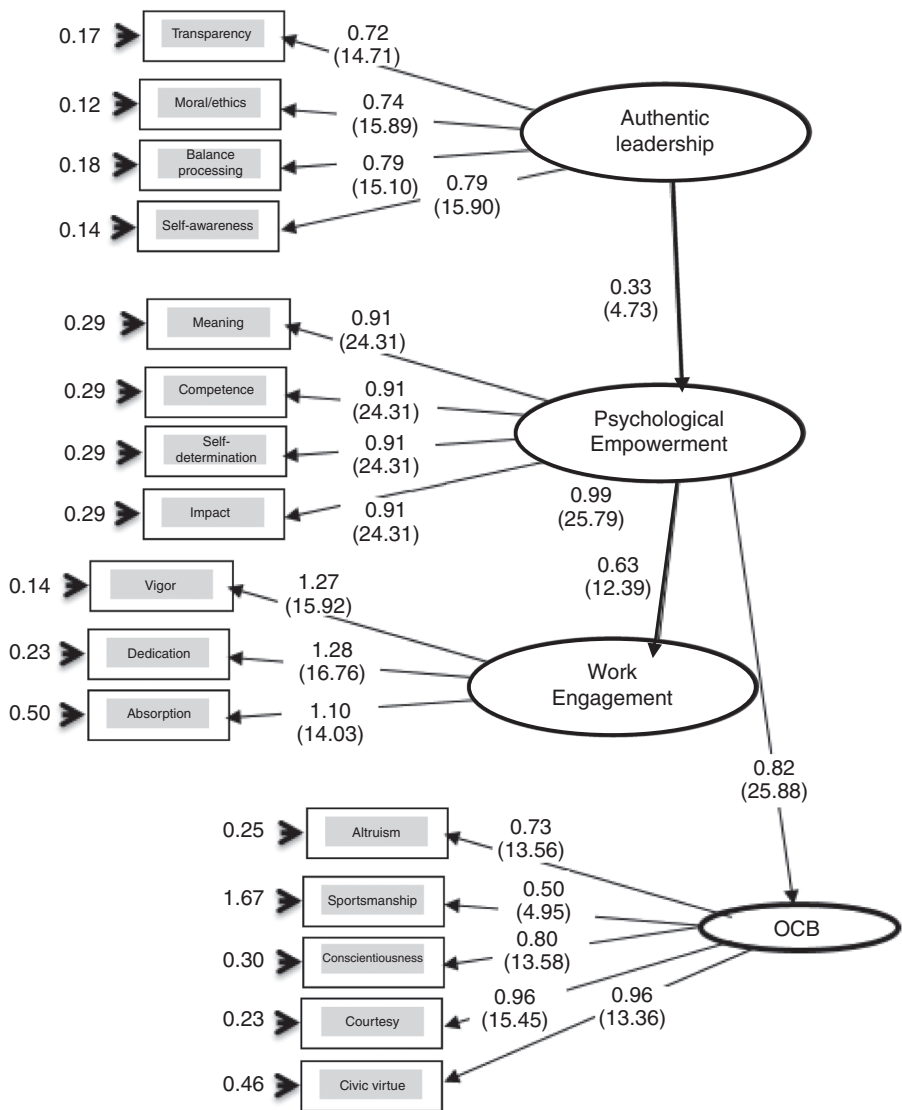


Figure 2.
Pathway coefficient
for the structured
model

dedicated in their work, this would positively reflect on the outcomes or benefits for both the employee as well as the organization. Finally, the OCB latent construct was measured with the altruism, sportsmanship, conscientiousness, courtesy, and civic virtue. The findings shows that “Courtesy and civic virtue” are the key factors in OCB. Consequently, employees are keen to prevent potential problems between each other and to positively contribute toward organizational growth.

From the theoretical perspective, the present study confirms the results of previous studies (Avolio *et al.*, 2004; Walumbwa *et al.*, 2008) which demonstrate the substantial effects of perceived AL on the follower’s attitudes and behaviors such as WE and OCB.

The findings shows that AL affects WE and OCB through PE. As predicted in the first hypothesis, AL was significantly positively related to PE. This is consistent with Shapira-Lishchinsky and Tsemach (2014), who found a mediating relationship for PE on AL and OCB, and withdrawal behaviors among teachers. Also, the results show that PE is significantly positively related to WE. This results are in line with previous researches. For example, Ugwu *et al.* (2014) found that PE was positively related to WE. Similarly, when the UAE nationals in this study perceived higher level of PE from their line managers, they reported increase in OCB level. This result is consistent with Karavardar's (2014) study, who found that PE was positively related to OCB. The findings also suggested a mediating role of PE in the relationship between AL and WE and OCB. This indicates that the nature of the relationship between leaders and the UAE national subordinates in the petroleum industry is crucial in sculpturing work-related behaviors and attitudes. Authentic leaders will enhance the PE level among their employees, which in turn inspires employee engagement and OCB.

6. Managerial implications

From the practical perspective, the results of this study show that it is important for the leaders to truly understand themselves in terms of their own strengths and weaknesses and how that impacts their followers – for leaders cannot truly understand their subordinates, if they do not understand their own selves. Regarding balanced processing, this shows that, it is very important for decision makers in the UAE petroleum industry to first conduct thorough investigations before making any decisions and to be totally objective when doing so. They have to listen carefully to different points of view before coming to conclusions. They may even have to solicit views that challenge his or her deeply held positions. Regarding transparency, they have to admit to mistakes that they made and encourage everyone, including themselves, to tell the truth. Results have shown that these will in turn will assist employees to feel empowered in their jobs. Authentic leaders should take the time to understand their subordinates' values and beliefs and ensure that the job requirements are congruent with them – this will enhance employees' perception of meaning from their jobs. In addition, authentic leaders should facilitate subordinates to not only become more competent in their jobs, but to also give them more autonomy at work. Further, to encourage engagement and OCB, HR practices should be developed to enhance PE among employees. Specifically, leaders need to develop professional AL training programs for managers in deferent levels. Furthermore, WE can be measured through distributing WE surveys regularly as a mechanism to monitor employee engagement level. Leaders need to motivate, guide and give their employees all the required support to be more productive and creative.

7. Conclusion and future research intent

Several contributions to the literature were achieved, mainly the role of AL as a predictor of WE and OCB in the petroleum sector in UAE. Leaders and decision makers in this sector should consider ethical issues to achieve desired outcomes and positive behaviors from their employees. Moreover, PE was found a significant mediator in the relationship between AL and WE and OCB. Thus, to encourage engagement and OCB, HR practices should be developed to enhance PE among employees. Specifically, leaders need to develop professional AL training programs for managers in different levels. Furthermore, WE can be measured through distributing WE surveys regularly as a

mechanism to monitor employee engagement level. Leaders need to motivate, guide and give their employees all the required support to be more productive and creative.

Yet, there are several limitations in this study. First, sample was homogeneous in that it covered employees from only one major petroleum firm in UAE, hence generalization of the results may be limited. Consequently, the finding should be reexamined in another sector in UAE or elsewhere in another country. Future studies on the same topic are encouraged to retest these findings through longitudinal study in order to comprehensively assess and understand the relationship between AL and WE and OCB.

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