Organizational Commitment As A Mediator In The Relationship Between Authentic Leadership And Job Burnout

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was not only to investigate the relationship among authentic leadership, organizational commitment and job burnout but also to investigate the mediating effect of organizational commitment in the relationship between authentic leadership and job burnout. Data were collected from 511 medical representatives of national pharmaceuticals companies working in Pakistan through organizational commitment questionnaire (Meyer & Allen, 1991), authentic leadership questionnaire (Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008) and job burnout questionnaire (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1997). SPSS and Amos were used for data operation. Correlation and structure equation modeling were used to test the hypotheses and research model. The results of correlation show that authentic leadership has a significant negative relationship with job burnout and positive relationship with organizational commitment. Further, it is noted that organizational commitment also has a significant negative relationship with job burnout. Structure equation modeling confirms that organizational commitment mediated the relationship between authentic leadership and job burnout.

Keywords: Authentic Leadership; Job Burnout; Organizational Commitment; Pharmaceuticals Companies; Pakistan.

Introduction

Ample studies have been conducted on authentic leadership (AL), which has primarily focused on the positive outcomes and the negative relations are ignored. Studies like Read and Laschinger (2013) and H. K. S. Laschinger, Wong, and Grau (2013) recommend that authentic leaders establish positive working conditions that decrease the probability of burnout. Therefore, it is convenient to investigate the relationship among AL and adverse working experiences and their unfavorable effects to discover its protective effects. The objective of this research is to examine the relationship between AL and job burnout (JB). It also aims to assess

the mediating role of organizational commitment (OC) in the relationship between AL and JB.

This study is of great importance. It addresses Employee Well-being, Advances Leadership Understanding, gives Evidence-Based Insights to the problem, contributing to Positive Organizational Culture, Tailored Interventions, Human-Centric Leadership, Workforce Retention and Productivity, Theoretical Enrichment, Practical Implications for Management and Bridging the current Research Gap.

OC is to the emotional and psychological bond between employees and organization. It shows the degree to which individuals are ready to exert effort to achieve organization's goals and values. OC is a central factor in employee's retention, engagement and job satisfaction. There are three primary elements of OC Normative, Affective and Continuance Commitment. Affective commitment denotes an employee's emotive bond and identity with the organization. Employees with high level of affective commitment believe a strong sense of loyalty and they sincerely care about organization's success and are more likely to stay with the organization voluntarily. The belief that the benefits of continuing with organization, counterbalance the potential switch over cost i.e. losing seniority or facing financial losses is labeled as Continuance Commitment. It is powered by perceived opportunity costs coupled with switching the job (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Normative Commitment is a feeling of obligation to the employer organization. Individuals with high normative commitment feel indebted to the organization and stay with the organization even when they

have superior opportunities due to his moral obligation (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Authentic leaders are the leaders having confidence, hope, optimistic approach, resilience, transparency, morality, future-oriented, and giving opportunity to the followers to be leaders (Luthans & Avolio, 2003). They are transformational, positive, moral leaders, optimistic in self and followers performance through key behaviors i.e. relational transparency, balanced processing, moral/ethical behaviour and self-awareness (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Walumbwa et al., 2008; Wong & Cummings, 2009).

It is a psychological syndrome characterized by persistent emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment (Schaufeli, Desart, & De Witte, 2020). It is result of persisted stress and strain in work environments, leading to feelings of being devastated, emotionally exhausted, and disconnected from their tasks. Emotional exhaustion refers to the reduced physical and emotional physical resources due to continuing job demands (Bakker, Demerouti, & Sanz-Vergel, 2014). Employees suffering from emotional exhaustion feel depleted, tired, and incapable of managing the emotional demands of their work which leads to shrunk motivation and enthusiasm to engage in their work. Depersonalization or cynicism, involves emergence of negative and indifferent attitude toward one's work, colleagues, and recipients of the work (Schaufeli et al., 2020). Employees demonstrating depersonalization may become indifferent or insensitive, handling others like objects rather than individuals with feelings. Reduced personal

accomplishment indicates a decrease in individual's self-evaluation of their ability and effectiveness at work (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011). This element of burnout leads to feelings ineffective, low self-esteem and diminished sense of individual achievement.

Impact of AL on JB

Employees experience lesser emotional exhaustion and depersonalization or burnout if they consider their leader as authentic, trustworthy, and empathetic which are key components of burnout. Authentic leaders who encourage open communication, nurture positive relationships, and demonstrate genuine care for their employees to create conducive work environments that reduced JB (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Burnout is a work-related hazard and AL strengthen employees' trust in their capability to cope with the job's demands by shielding them from burnout and weak mental health (H. K. S. Laschinger, 2012; H. S. Laschinger & Fida, 2013). AL has a negative correlation with burnout among nurses. H. K. S. Laschinger (2012) and Read and Laschinger (2013) found that nurses' opinions of their leaders AL behaviors affected burnout. These researches further propose that authentic leaders can establish encouraging working environment that decrease the possibility of burnout. Emotional exhaustion, the core component of burnout, is negatively influenced by AL. According to Giallonardo, Wong, and Iwasiw (2010) and Wong, Spence Laschinger, and Cummings (2010), AL is related to greater employee engagement and according to Christian, Garza, and

Slaughter (2011) and Schaufeli and Bakker (2004), AL is negatively associated to burnout. Possibly, AL may prevent burnout by high level of employee engagement. Implementation of AL style at different levels in academic and medical organizations helps in mitigating the increased burnout emergency in healthcare organizations (McPherson et al., 2022).

OC is projecting employees' behavior (Meyer and Allen's, 1991). According to Harter, Schmidt, and Hayes (2002), Meyer, Allen, and Gellatly (1990), Walumbwa et al. (2008), and (Rego, Sousa, Marques, & e Cunha, 2012), AL is correlated to improved OC particularly the affective commitment. According to Rukh, Shahrukh, and Iqbal (2018), AL has impact on OC through mediator. AL modifies the working environment by founding an authentic environment which leads to OC (Grandey, Foo, Groth, & Goodwin, 2012). Authentic leaders always have a tendency to inspire the admirers to pinpoint the principal values of their mutual organization resulting in OC (Bandura & Kavussanu, 2018). Clarity, understanding and self-awareness of leaders helps to rectify personal inclinations of subordinates and adds to encouraging endings which potentially increase commitment (Bandura & Kavussanu, 2018). In addition, affective commitment influences burnout (Maruyama, Suzuki, & Takayama, 2016). Sajid (2014) conducted a research on comparison of OC and JB between teachers which shows that JB inversely influences OC. (Yasmin & Marzuki, 2015) observed the link between variables like OC and JB amongst nurses in Punjab Province of

Pakistan and evaluated the direct impact of OC on JB. Results of the study showed normative commitment have a meaningful effect and affective and continuous commitment doesn't have any considerable impact on employees' burnout. Unlike affective commitment, continuance commitment denotes a person attachment with the employer organization due to high costs of switching the job (Meyer et al., 1990; Meyer, Allen, & Smith, 1993). Whereas officer's burnout may be decreased by excessive affective commitment and high degree of continuance commitment may possibly make the burnout process easy. Continuance commitment leads to a impression of attachment to employer organization, although an employee may not want working for his organization.

Preventative and Primitive psychological ownership/ OC mediate the inverse relationship of AL and burnout (Adil & Kamal, 2018). Researchers have proposed that affective commitment can mediate the relationship between AL and JB. AL can significantly impact the degree of affective commitment. The aforementioned literature suggests the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1:   AL affects JB negatively.

Hypothesis 2:   AL affects OC positively.

Hypothesis 3:   OC affects JB negatively.

Hypothesis 4:   OC mediates the relationship between AL and JB.

Sample and Procedure for Data Collection

The study included a total of 511 medical representatives employed by National Pharmaceutical Firms operating in Pakistan. The study observed a gender distribution in which 89% of the participants were identified as male, while the remaining 11% were identified as female. The age of the participants was between the ranges of 20 to 35, with an average age of 27. The participants' level of experience varied from a minimum of one year to a maximum of six years. The participants had an average experience of four years. Data was collected from the participants using a questionnaire as the primary instrument for data collection. The research used a convenience sampling strategy for the selection of participants. A total of 700 questionnaires were sent to the participants. The questionnaires were distributed with the help of students and friends. A total of 511 questionnaires were collected from the participants and were subsequently included for the purpose of data analysis.

Authentic Leadership

The researchers used the AL Questionnaire (ALQ) created by Walumbwa et al. (2008) to assess the comprehensive construct of AL, as well as its facets namely "Self-Awareness (SA), Rational Transparency (RT), Balanced Processing (BP), and Internalized Moral Perspective (IMP)". Self-awareness has four distinct components. Examples of SA are "I can list my three greatest weaknesses" and "I can list my three greatest strengths". Internalized moral perspective comprises four (N=4) items. Examples of IMP are "My actions reflect my core values" and "Other people know where I stand on controversial issues". Balanced processing composed of four (N=4) items. Examples of BP are "I seek others' opinions before making up my

own mind" and "I do not emphasize my own point of view at the expense of others". Examples of RT are "I openly share my feelings with others" and "I rarely present a "false" front to others". The Likert scale used in this research to assess AL consists of five points, with 1 representing "strongly disagree" and 5 indicating "strongly agree." The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the "Self-Awareness, Rational Transparency, Balanced Processing, and Internalized Moral Perspective" in the current research was determined to be 0.89, .78, .85 and .82 respectively.

Organizational Commitment

The researchers used a modified version of the OC questionnaire originally developed by Meyer and Allen (1991) to assess both the individual dimension of OC and the overall OC. This survey assesses the ideas of "Affective Commitment, Continuous Commitment, and Normative Commitment". Each dimension of the OC construct consists of six components. Instances of emotional commitment may be seen in statements such as "I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this organization." and "I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own". Instances of ongoing commitment may be seen in statements such as "It would be very hard for me to leave my job at this organization right now even if I wanted to" and "I believe I have too few options to consider leaving this

organization". Illustrative instances of normative commitment may be seen in statements such as "Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave" and "I would feel guilty if I left this organization now". In order to get replies on the questionnaire, a Likert scale consisting of five points ranging from "1: strongly disagree" to "5: strongly agree" was used. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the "Affective Commitment, Continuous Commitment, and Normative Commitment" in the current research was determined to be 0.83, .89 and .78 respectively.

Maslach Burnout Inventory

The Maslach Burnout Inventory, established by Maslach et al. (1997), was used to assess the burnout levels of the participants. This questionnaire assesses three characteristics of burnout, namely "Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment". The inventory consists of a total of 22 items and is influenced by three elements. Out of the total items assessed, 9 items correspond to emotional exhaustion, 5 items correspond to depersonalization, and 8 items correspond to personal accomplishment. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the "Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment" in the current research was determined to be 0.81, .84 and .88 respectively.

Table 1: Correlation among AL, JB and OC

	AL	OC	JB
AL	1	.585**	-.628**
OC	.585**	1	-.653**
JB	-.628**	-.673**	1

"**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)."

Table 1 shows the correlation among the AL, OC and JB. The results show that AL has a significant negative relationship with JB (r= -.628, p=0.000)

and positive relationship with OC (r= .585**, p=0.000). Further, it is noted that OC also has a significant negative relationship with JB (r= -

.673[**], p=0.000). So we accept the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: AL affects JB negatively.

Hypothesis 2: AL affects OC positively.

Hypothesis 3: OC affects JB negatively.

Table 2: Values of CFI, GFI, RMR, RMSEA, Chi-Square

Indices	CFI	GFI	RMR	RMSEA	Chi-square
Values	.989	.952	.031	.065	68.867

Table 2 shows the values of comparative fit index, Chi-Square, root mean square error of approximation, goodness of fit index, and root mean square residual. All values of the above indices are within acceptable range. So the three factor model (AL, OC and JB) is accepted.

Figure: Relationship between AL and JB through OC
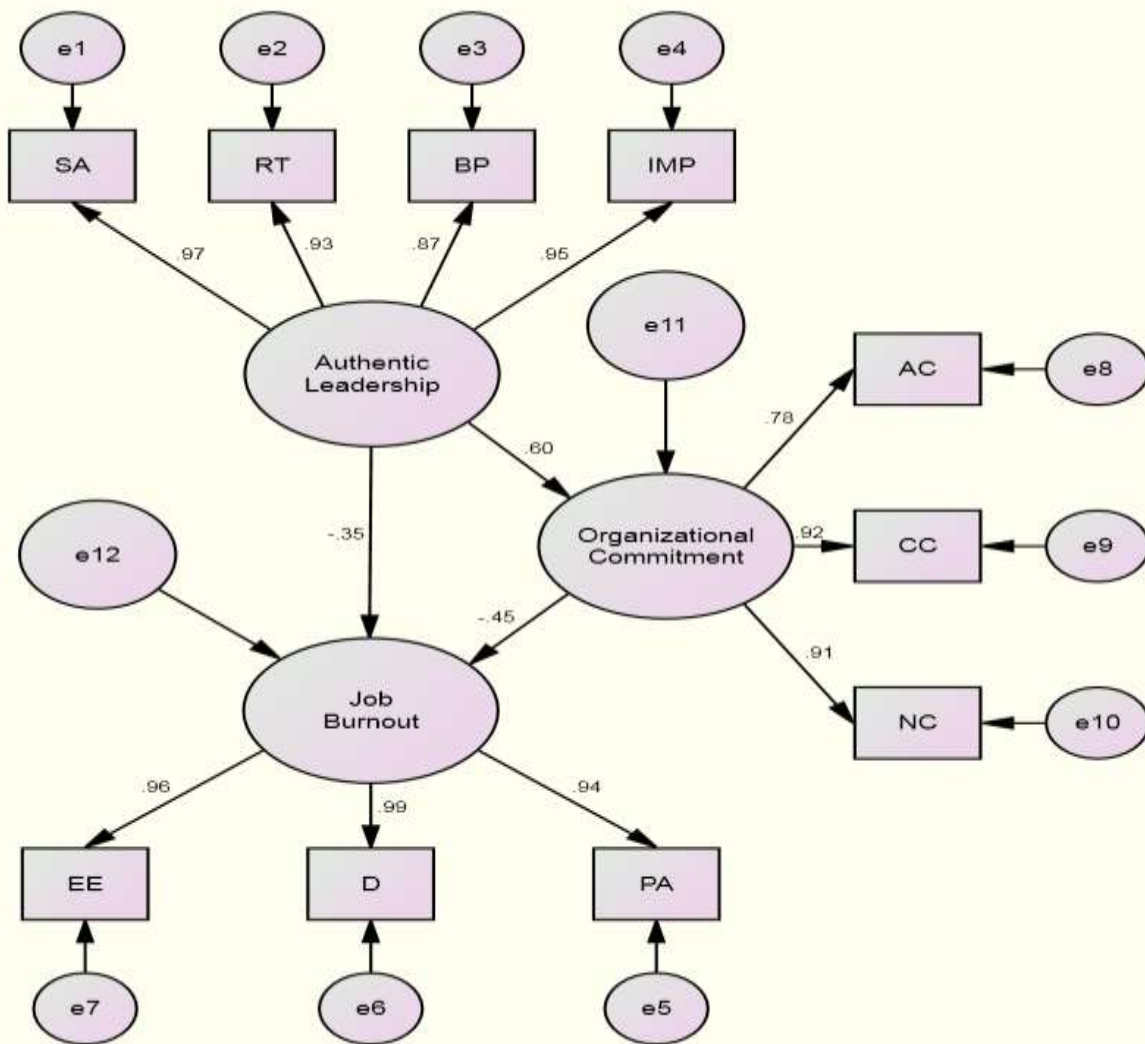
The above model shows that AL has a significant negative relationship with JB and positive relationship with OC. OC has also been found to have a negative relationship with JB. The values of regression weights are within acceptable range. The beta value between AL and JB declined to -.35 from -.47 after adding OC as a mediator. so we accept all the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1:   AL affects JB negatively.

Hypothesis 2:   AL affects OC positively.

Hypothesis 3:   OC affects JB negatively.

Hypothesis 4:   OC mediates the relationship between AL and JB.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was not only to investigate the relationship among AL, OC and JB but also to investigate the mediating effect of OC in the relationship between AL and JB. Data were collected from 511 medical representatives of national pharmaceuticals companies working in Pakistan through OC questionnaire (Meyer & Allen, 1991), AL questionnaire (Walumbwa et

al., 2008) and JB questionnaire (Maslach et al., 1997). SPSS and Amos were used for data operation. Correlation and structure equation modeling were used to test the hypotheses and research model. The results or correlation show that AL has a significant negative relationship with JB and positive relationship with OC. Further, it is noted that OC also has a significant negative relationship with JB. Structure equation modeling confirms that OC mediated the relationship between AL and JB.

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