

EMPLOYEE VOICE, AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP, INNOVATIVE WORK BEHAVIOR AND PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT: A MULTILEVEL MODERATED MEDIATION

Noerchoidah^{*)1}, Siti Istikhoroh^{*)}, Dhyah Harjanti^{**)}, Devi Rahnjen Wijayadne^{***)},
Tony Susilo Wibowo^{*)}

^{*)} Fakultas Ekonomi dan Bisnis, Universitas PGRI Adi Buana Surabaya
Jl. Dukuh Menanggal XII, Surabaya, Indonesia

^{**)} School of Business and Management, Universitas Kristen Petra
Jl. Siwalankerto 121-131, Surabaya, Indonesia

^{***)} International Business Management, Universitas Ciputra Surabaya
CitraLand CBD Boulevard, Made, Kec. Sambikerep, Surabaya, 60219, Indonesia

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Abstract:

Background: The dynamics of the tourism industry require companies to continue to innovate. As the company spearhead, employees need to be encouraged to continue to demonstrate innovative work behavior.

Purpose: This research explores the impact of authentic leadership and innovative work behavior, emphasizing the mediating role of employee voice and the moderating effect of psychological empowerment within the tourism industry in East Java.

Design/methodology/approach: The type of research used is quantitative research with an explanatory approach, namely explaining the causal relationship between variables based on data collected through questionnaires. The study involved 217 respondents selected through a purposive sampling technique. The gathered data were analyzed using PLS-SEM.

Findings/Result: The results showed that authentic leadership positively and significantly encourages employee voice, positively influencing innovative work behavior. In addition, employee voice can mediate authentic leadership and innovative work behavior. Psychological empowerment strengthens the influence of authentic leadership on innovative work behavior.

Conclusion: Tourism industry management should promote openness and innovation among employees by positioning authentic leaders to foster an inclusive culture of innovation.

Originality/value (State of the art): These findings offer valuable insights for tourism industry managers in East Java to enhance authentic leadership in fostering innovation.

Keywords: authentic leadership, employee voice, innovative work behavior, psychological empowerment, tourism industry

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¹ Corresponding author:

Email: noerchoidah@unipasby.ac.id

INTRODUCTION

The rapidly evolving business landscape, particularly in the realm of technology, compels organizations to continually adapt to the global competitive environment. Innovation is a critical factor that contributes to the success and competitiveness of organizations (Škerlavaj et al. 2019). This aligns with the view of Noerchoidah et al. (2024), which asserts that innovative behavior among employees is the foundation of organizational change and innovation.

Employee innovative work behavior is a complex process that encompasses the development, refinement, and implementation of new ideas, processes, or procedures in the workplace (Zainal & Matore, 2019). Creativity and innovation are closely related concepts. Creativity focuses on generating new ideas, while innovation involves both creating and actualizing those ideas (Noerchoidah et al. 2023). This recognition serves as the foundation for developing and advocating new ideas, as well as seeking support for the implementation of novel methods or techniques (De Jong & Hartog, 2010).

Organizations thrive when employees are actively involved in sharing ideas, expressing their opinions, and contributing to problem-solving (Noerchoidah & Harjanti, 2019). To foster creativity and innovation, organizations should encourage employees to voice their ideas and opinions to improve operational efficiency and overall organizational performance (Liao & Shaw, 2020).

Employee voice is a proactive and constructive behavior that should be fostered, as it emphasizes self-improvement rather than simply expressing criticism (Nazir et al. 2020). According to Wilkinson et al. (2020), employee voice includes all forms of communication that employees use to express opinions, share information, and propose ideas or suggestions relevant to their work. Leaders are responsible for motivating employees to speak their minds by providing rewards and corrective actions. As a result, leadership significantly influences employee voice (Lin et al. 2019).

Authentic leadership is another factor influencing innovative work behavior, which are often characterized by strong personal principles, ethics, and

clear self-confidence (Liao & Shaw, 2020). Authentic leadership is defined by behaviors emphasizing positive psychological and behavioral capacities, fostering self-awareness, internalized moral perspectives, and rational information processing. It also promotes transparency in interactions between leaders and subordinates (Nasab & Afshari, 2019).

Psychological empowerment, as a motivational concept, is influenced by employees' perceptions of their skills, independence in managing and executing tasks, capacity to impact their work environment, and the significance of their work. This concept is reflected in four key dimensions: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact (Grošelj et al. 2020). In an organizational context, psychological empowerment enhances employee performance, particularly in adapting to workplace changes (Nwanzu & Babalola, 2024). On a personal level, psychological empowerment helps employees improve their decision-making abilities and enhances their self-image.

Several researchers have previously examined innovative work behavior related to innovation climate (Etikariena & Kalimashada, 2021), psychological contract (Selvaraj & Joseph, 2020), leadership style (Soomro et al. 2021), knowledge sharing (Noerchoidah et al. 2020). However, there is still limited research on innovative behavior associated with employee voice, namely innovation-related behavior (Selvaraj & Joseph, 2020; Rasheed et al. 2021; Botha & Steyn, 2022).

This study fill the gap with several differences. Etikariena & Kalimashada (2021) focus on flexibility and innovation in the organizational climate that affects innovative work behavior which is done partially. Selvaraj & Joseph (2020) examined employee voice on innovation (in a deliberative context). Soomro et al. (2021) focus on Paternalistic Leadership → Employee Voice → Creativity. Fair and ethical moral leadership creates a safe space for employees to voice creative ideas. Furthermore, Noerchoidah et al. (2020) Focus: Organizational Justice → Knowledge Sharing → IWB. Fair and collaborative organizational practices foster a culture of knowledge sharing and innovation.

Some of these previous studies complement each other in the determinants of innovative work behavior. Therefore, this study comprehensively examines

the determinants of innovative behavior for several reasons. First, this study extends previous research by introducing a new perspective on how authentic leadership drives innovative work behavior. Second, this research framework of this study has never been done in previous studies, using employee voice as a mediator and psychological empowerment as a moderator in generating innovative behavior in the tourism industry. The moderating role of psychological empowerment is very important to increase intrinsic motivation and strengthen innovative behavior. Third, this study has a different setting, namely employees in the tourism industry in East Java.

The theoretical basis used in this study is through social exchange theory (SET) to focus on interpersonal relationships based on cost-benefit considerations and evaluation of available alternatives (Blau, 2017). This theory refers to the social exchange between organizations and employees. This exchange occurs when organizations and employees can benefit each other based on the trust built between the two (Ayu & Dewi, 2021). In the SET perspective, the relationship between authentic leadership -employee voice, and innovative work behavior with psychological empowerment moderation can be explained: When leaders show honesty and trust, employees respond with extra contributions through voice behavior. Employees who actively voice ideas tend to be more involved in exploring, experimenting, and implementing ideas as the core of innovative work behavior. Directly, authentic leaders can encourage innovative work behavior by creating a work culture that supports employee freedom of expression, personal responsibility, and self-confidence. However, this effect can be stronger or weaker depending on the level of psychological empowerment. Psychological empowerment as a moderator strengthens or weakens the relationship between: Authentic leadership and IWB.

This study was carried out in the tourism sector because it presents unique process complexities and challenges in fostering employees' innovative work behavior compared to other industries. This study explores a conceptual framework linking authentic leadership and employee voice in driving innovative work behavior. Specifically, it investigates the mediating role of employee voice in the relationship between authentic leadership and innovative work behavior and the moderating influence of psychological empowerment on this connection.

METHODS

This explanatory study explores the impact of authentic leadership, employee voice, innovative work behavior, and psychological empowerment on the tourism industry in East Java. It employed a quantitative approach, utilizing both online and offline questionnaires for data collection.

The study's population comprises all 4,550,200 employees working in East Java's tourism sector. The sample size was determined based on the guidelines of Hair et al. (2019), which suggest multiplying the number of indicators by a factor of 5 to 10. Given 25 indicators, the minimum required sample size is 125 respondents. However, to ensure greater accuracy, this study includes 217 respondents.

This study uses primary data collected using a questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of a number of statements regarding the variables under study with the following measurements. This study utilizes a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly agree" (5) to "strongly disagree" (1). The authentic leadership measuring instrument adopted by Xu et al. (2017) has as many as seven items. A sample item is: "My leader listens to all inputs from the team before making decisions." Employee voice has been measured through five items from Liao & Shaw (2020). Sample items include, "I provide constructive suggestions to improve performance". Furthermore, the measurement of innovative work behavior adopted from (De Jong & Hartog, 2010) is seven items. Sample items included, "I try to find new work methods related to work." Furthermore, psychological empowerment was adopted from (Liang et al. 2012) has as many as eight items. Sample items included, "I have the freedom to carry out work".

A purposive sampling technique was applied based on specific criteria: employees must have a minimum of one year of experience in the tourism industry and undergo a questionnaire assessment to evaluate their job suitability. The gathered data were organized and analyzed using PLS-SEM. The analysis technique uses PLS-SEM by testing the outer model and inner model. Outer Model Testing (Measurement Model), the outer model aims to evaluate the validity and reliability of indicators that measure each construct (latent variable). Outer model testing includes: Indicator reliability: Viewed from the loading factor value, with an ideal

value > 0.7. Construct reliability: Measured using Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha, with a minimum value of 0.7. Convergent validity: Viewed from the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value, ideally > 0.5.

Inner Model Testing (Structural Model), aims to assess the relationship between constructs. The steps include: R-Square (R^2) evaluation: This shows how much the independent variable explains the dependent variable. Test the significance of the relationship between constructs: Conducted through bootstrapping, to obtain the t-statistic and p-value to test the hypothesis.

Organizations are faced with various pressures and challenges in maintaining sustainable excellence. To overcome this, authentic leaders are needed, who are self-aware, consistent with their values, and able to communicate honestly that reflects their thoughts and emotions (Grošelj et al. 2020). Authentic leadership can also encourage employees to express their opinions (Liang, 2017). The open attitude of authentic leaders can strengthen mutual trust between leaders and subordinates. This trust encourages subordinates' openness and motivates them to be more active in voicing their opinions. Based on this, the hypothesis formulated is as follows:

H1: Authentic leadership positively and significantly affects employee voice.

Voice behavior plays a vital role in organizational development (Jiang et al. 2022). Employees who engage in voice behavior are more willing to share their thoughts, ideas, and perspectives with their superiors while actively participating in issues related to work and organizational well-being (Jiang et al. 2022). Employee voice behavior demonstrates dedication to the success of the organization, increasing the likelihood that contributions will be recognized and rewarded. In addition, employee voice can increase appreciation, recognition, and respect, which strengthens the status of the organization (Weiss & Morrison, 2019). Based on this reasoning, the following hypothesis is proposed: H2: Employee voice positively and significantly influences innovative work behavior.

Laguna et al. (2019) emphasized that authentic leadership encourages innovative work behavior among subordinates. When employees perceive their leaders as authentic, they tend to experience positive emotions at work, such as enthusiasm and self-confidence. These

emotions, in turn, encourage employees to propose innovative solutions that improve organizational productivity. Based on the discussion above, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Authentic leadership positively and significantly influences innovative work behavior.

One strategy for organizations to develop competitive advantage is to utilize employee ideas and concepts to improve processes, products, and services. Voice behavior is an approach that allows the exploration and exchange of ideas between employees and the organization (Liu et al. 2023). Employees who are actively involved in voice behavior and provide input to the organization contribute to increased individual creativity and improve overall performance in the workplace (Afsar et al. 2019). One of the main factors that drive voice behavior is authentic leadership. Authentic leaders are considered able to inspire and motivate employees to express and propose new ideas that are beneficial to the organization with confidence. These ideas can then be developed into innovative work behavior in the workplace. Based on this explanation, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Authentic leadership and innovative work behavior are mediated by employee voice.

Employees must have psychological empowerment as an intrinsic motivation that has a positive impact on their work (Kustanto et al. 2020). Psychological empowerment is the delegation of authority and a means for individuals to demonstrate their abilities in carrying out their tasks (Grošelj et al. 2020). Leaders must be aware of the importance of psychological empowerment in fostering employee innovative work behavior. When employees experience high psychological empowerment, they tend to take the initiative in implementing their ideas. Authentic leadership is key in empowering employees by fostering high-quality relationships based on social exchange theory. As a moderating variable, psychological empowerment can strengthen the impact of authentic leadership on innovative work behavior (Grošelj et al. 2020). Based on this explanation, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5: Authentic leadership and innovative work behavior are moderated by psychological empowerment.

Figure 1 shows that this Framework examines the influence of authentic leadership on innovative work behavior with employee voice as a mediator and

psychological empowerment as a moderating variable. Based on the Social Exchange Theory (SET) approach. The results of the study indicate that authentic leadership influences innovative work behavior, both directly and indirectly through employee voice, which acts as a mediator. In addition, psychological empowerment moderates the relationship between authentic leadership and innovative work behavior, where the influence of authentic leadership on innovative work behavior is stronger when employees feel they have meaning, competence, and control over their work. This finding emphasizes the importance of the combination of authentic leadership, employee voice, and psychological empowerment in encouraging innovative work behavior.

Based on Figure 1 of the research framework, the hypothesis in this study is formulated as follows:

H1: Authentic leadership positively and significantly affects employee voice

H2: Employee voice positively and significantly influences innovative work behavior

H3: Authentic leadership positively and significantly influences innovative work behavior.

H4: Authentic leadership and innovative work behavior are mediated by employee voice

H5: Authentic leadership and innovative work behavior are moderated by psychological empowerment

RESULTS

Characteristics of Respondents

This section presents an overview of the demographic and professional characteristics of the respondents involved in the study. The characteristics analyzed include gender, age, and length of employment. Based on Table 1. The gender distribution is quite balanced, with a slight dominance of male respondents. This shows that the research results reflect relatively equal views between genders so that there is no gender bias in the context of perceptions of authentic leadership style and innovative behavior. The majority of respondents were aged 18-30 years old, belonging to the millennial generation who tend to be more vocal, dynamic, and open to change. This is relevant to the concept of employee voice and innovative work behavior because this generation is usually more active in voicing ideas and trying new things if they feel safe in psychological empowerment. Most respondents have between 6 and 10 years of work experience. This shows that respondents have the capacity to assess authentic leadership styles and their effects on work behavior. This group is also at a career stage that tends to be productive and has a tendency to innovate if supported by empowerment.

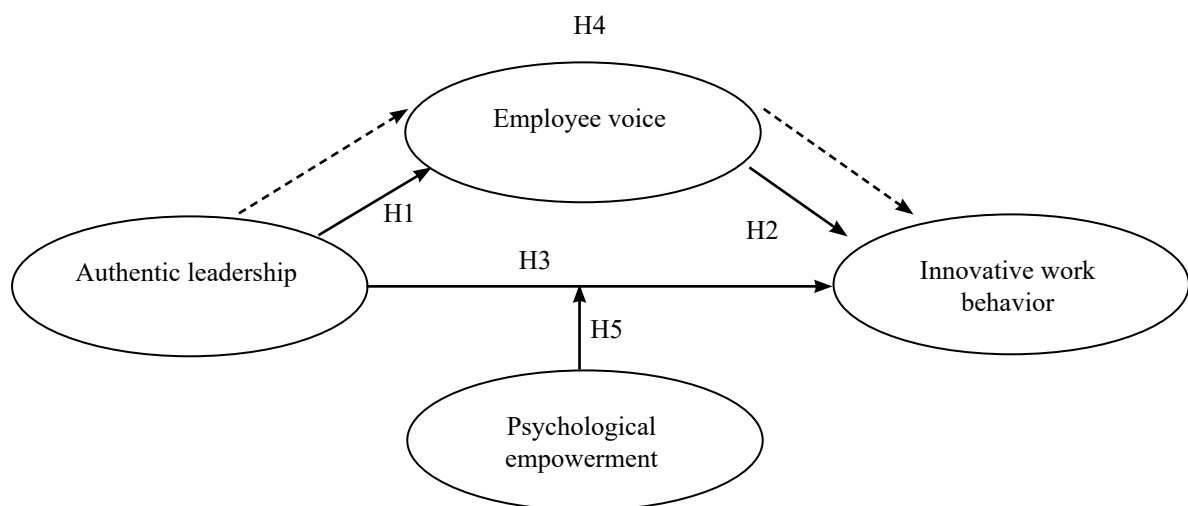


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the research

Outer Model

The outer model test aims to evaluate the relationship between each indicator and its corresponding latent variable. This test is conducted through validity and reliability assessments. Validity measurement is determined by convergent validity, which is assessed using the loading factor (expected to be > 0.7) and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value (which should exceed 0.5) (Wijaya, 2019). According to the data analysis results, each variable's loading factor value is found in Figure 2. All loading factor values of the authentic leadership, employee voice, innovative work behavior, and psychological empowerment variables have met the loading factor > 0.7 requirements so that they are declared valid.

Table 2 presents the loading factor, AVE, Cronbach's Alpha, and Composite Reliability (CR) values. Based on the table, the AVE values for all variables exceed 0.5, indicating that they meet the validity criteria.

Reliability is assessed through Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR). The results show that authentic leadership, employee voice, innovative work behavior, and psychological empowerment all have Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.6 and CR values exceeding 0.7. Therefore, all variables in this study are considered reliable.

Table 1. Respondent Profiles

Characteristics	Number	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	115	53
Female	102	47
Age (Years)		
18 – 30	157	72.4
> 30	60	27.6
Working period (Years)		
1-5	76	35
6-10	102	47
>10	39	18

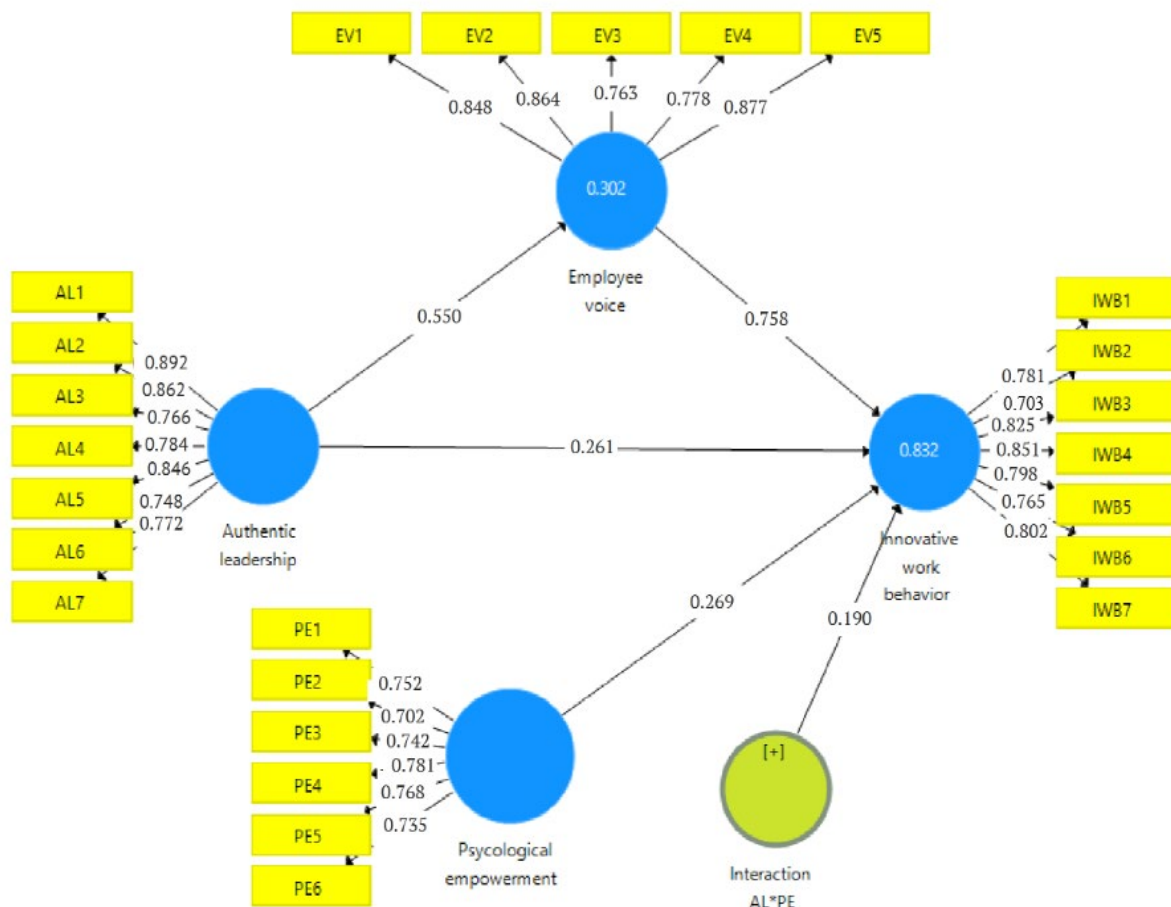


Figure 2. Loading factor

Table 2. Validity and reliability results

Variables	Indicator	Loading Factor	Cronbach Alpha	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Composite Reliability (CR)
Authentic Leadership	AL1	0.892	0.915	0.778	0.964
	AL2	0.862			
	AL3	0.766			
	AL4	0.784			
	AL5	0.846			
	AL6	0.748			
Employee Voice	EV1	0.848	0.865	0.698	0.912
	EV2	0.864			
	EV3	0.763			
	EV4	0.778			
	EV5	0.877			
Innovative work behavior	IWB1	0.781	0.857	0.774	0.904
	IWB2	0.703			
	IWB3	0.825			
	IWB4	0.851			
	IWB5	0.798			
	IWB6	0.762			
	IWB7	0.802			
Psychological empowerment	PE1	0.752	0.902	0.785	0.915
	PE2	0.702			
	PE3	0.742			
	PE4	0.781			
	PE5	0.768			
	PE6	0.735			

Inner Model

The internal model test assesses the validity of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables, including the R-Square (R^2) value shown in Table 3. R^2 value of 0.302, indicating that authentic leadership explains 30.2% of the variation in employee voice through its interaction effect in this study. In comparison, it is influenced by other factors by 69.8%. This can be explained by authentic leadership building a safe and supportive work environment where employees feel valued and heard. However, due to the nature of employee voice, which may be influenced by other factors such as organizational culture and psychological safety, its influence is less significant than that of innovative work behavior. Furthermore, the amount of authentic leadership and employee voice on innovative work behavior explained in this study is 0.832 or 83.2%; the rest is influenced by other factors by 16.8%. This condition shows that authentic

leadership often encourages and inspires employees to think creatively and innovatively. They provide space for employees to experiment and support new ideas. The openness and transparency of authentic leadership also build trust, an important foundation for innovation.

Hypothesis Testing

After the outer and inner model stages are carried out, hypothesis testing uses SmartPLS software. The following SmartPLS output of direct effects, indirect effects, and moderation is presented in Table 4. The t-statistic is higher than the critical t-value (1.96) and that the P-value (0.000) is below 0.05. The original sample value suggests a positive relationship between the variables. As a result, hypotheses H1, H2, H3, H4, and H5 are confirmed. Table 4 shows the results of hypothesis testing using the Partial Least Squares method where there are direct effect, mediation (indirect effect), and moderation (interaction effect) paths.

Table 3. R Square (R^2)

Variable	R^2
Employee Voice	0.302
Innovative Work Behavior	0.832

Table 4. Hypothesis testing results

Hypothesis	Path	Original Sample	T Statistic	P Value
H1	Authentic leadership → employee voice	0.550	2.676	0.000
H2	Employee voice → innovative work behavior	0.758	3.231	0.004
H3	Authentic leadership → innovative work behavior	0.261	2.416	0.000
H4	Authentic leadership → Employee voice → innovative work behavior	0.378	2.672	0.000
H5	Authentic leadership and innovative work behavior are moderated by psychological empowerment	0.190	3.605	0.000

The mediation test found that:

H1: Authentic leadership → Employee voice (significant).

H2: Employee voice → Innovative work behavior (significant).

H3: Authentic leadership → Innovative work behavior (direct, significant).

H4: Authentic leadership → Employee voice → Innovative work behavior (indirect path, significant).

This can be explained, because all paths are significant ($p < 0.05$), then the mediation of employee voice on the relationship between authentic leadership and innovative work behavior is partial mediation.

Moderation testing found

H5: Interaction between Authentic leadership and psychological empowerment on innovative work behavior, with Original Sample value: 0.190, T Statistic: 3.605, and P Value: 0.000 (significant).

These results show, there is a significant interaction effect ($p < 0.05$), then psychological empowerment moderates the relationship between authentic leadership and innovative work behavior positively and significantly.

Authentic Leadership on Employee Voice

The results of the hypothesis test show a coefficient value = 0.550, $p < 0.05$, meaning that authentic leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee voice

in the East Java tourism industry. In this condition, when employees perceive authentic leadership at a high level, employee voice is also high. The tourism industry in this context focuses on authentic leadership that seeks to provide quality service to guests through service innovation. Authentic leadership as a leader who is transparent and honest and has high morals and is willing to listen to employee voice. Employees who are given the opportunity to speak will be more proactive in conveying ideas and providing suggestions for improvement in the organization to provide quality service to guests.

This finding supports the social exchange theory (Blau, 2017) which states that the interaction of reciprocal relationships that authentic leadership can provide employee comfort and trust. In return, employees will actively contribute in conveying their voices to express their opinions. The results of this study strengthen the influence of employee voice as a form of reciprocity for fair and open treatment from leaders.

This is in accordance with the perspective of Alvesson & Einola (2019) that authentic leadership increases employee confidence in the workplace. Authentic leadership will allow employees to have an opinion about support services. Hsiung (2012) study of 404 employees in a Taiwanese real estate company revealed that authentic leadership significantly influenced employee voice behavior. Strengthened by research (Liao & Shaw, 2020) of 183 employees in Taiwan provides evidence that authentic leadership is positively related to employee voice.

Employee Voice on Innovative Work Behavior

This study proves that employee voice positively and significantly influences the innovative work behavior of employees in the East Java tourism industry. This finding provides an overview of the importance of employee voice where employees can share ideas in encouraging creativity so that the tourism sector can compete. The condition of the tourism sector is very dynamic in meeting consumer demands and rapid technological developments, innovation is needed to remain competitive. Therefore, employee voice and innovative work behavior are needed in providing opportunities for employees to express opinions and suggestions. The ideas conveyed by employees are the foundation for producing innovative behavior (Noerchoidah et al. 2020). The results of the study provide evidence of a coefficient of 0.758 on the positive and significant influence of employee voice on innovative work behavior. This shows that the more employees are given the opportunity for employee voice, the more they can increase their innovative behavior in the workplace. The results of this study are in line with the needs of the tourism industry, especially in East Java as one part of creative tourism, such as: Malang, Surabaya, Batu, and Banyuwangi.

Employees in the tourism sector interact very often with consumers so that they often obtain practical information that can be used as input for making improvements.

The results of this study support the social exchange theory (Blau, 2017) that when organizations give employees the freedom to express their opinions, employees will respond by demonstrating innovative work behavior.

The empirical findings of this study are supported by research by Chen et al. (2020) which proves a positive and significant relationship between employee voice and creativity. Research by Botha & Steyn (2022) conducted on 620 respondents from 11 private organizations from various sectors in South Africa shows that employee voice is positively correlated with innovative work behavior.

Authentic Leadership on Innovative Work Behavior

The research findings show that authentic leadership and innovative work behavior have a positive and meaningful

impact. In essence, the better the quality of authentic leadership, the greater the tendency of employees to participate in innovative work behavior in the tourism industry. This finding shows that leaders who are open, consistent and appreciate employee contributions will be able to encourage employees to think creatively in producing innovation. Employees with innovative work behavior will produce new methods or ways of working that help in carrying out their work in the form of new services. Innovation is an important thing that drives growth and performance in the tourism industry (Achmad et al. 2023). Employees play an important role in spurring innovation in the tourism industry, so they become the foundation of the innovation process. The demand for innovation in tourism is increasing due to changes in consumer preferences and expectations. Therefore, authentic leadership is very important to foster a work environment that fosters creativity, empowers employees, and stimulates innovative work behavior in the sector.

This finding can be explained theoretically through the Social Exchange Theory (SET), which states that the relationship between superiors and subordinates is formed on the basis of mutually beneficial social exchange. When leaders demonstrate authenticity, honesty, and consistency in action as shown in the characteristics of authentic leadership towards employees will assess the interaction as a form of positive and meaningful support. In this context, employees feel psychologically valued, so they are encouraged to reciprocate the relationship with positive behavior that benefits the organization, one of which is innovative work behavior. In other words, the stronger the employee's perception of authentic leadership, the higher their intrinsic motivation to contribute through innovation as a form of reciprocation. The results of this study provide support for SET as shown in the path coefficient value between authentic leadership and innovative work behavior is positive and significant. This means that there is a reciprocal relationship.

The findings of this study are in line with Laguna et al. (2019), which states that higher levels of authentic leadership increase the likelihood of employees engaging in highly innovative work behavior. This is further supported by Pangayom & Pangayom & Kusmaningtyas (2023), who highlighted the significant impact of authentic leadership on the innovative work behavior of PT JDDM employees in Surabaya.

Authentic Leadership and Innovative Work Behavior are Mediated By Employee Voice

This study reveals that employee voice mediates authentic leadership and innovative work behavior as evidenced by a coefficient value of 0.378, t-statistic 2.672, and p-value 0.000, which means statistically significant. However, the direct path between authentic leadership and innovative work behavior is also significant as evidenced by the coefficient value = 0.261, $t = 2.416$, and p-value = 0.000). This shows that the mediation that occurs is partial mediation because the direct effect still exists even though the mediating variable (employee voice) has been entered into the model.

The results of this study quantitatively show that the indirect effect (through employee voice) is stronger than the direct effect between authentic leadership and innovative work behavior. This indicates that employee voice plays an important role as a means of expressing innovative ideas and transforming them into creative solutions in services, products, and work processes.

Authentic leadership is a leader who plays a role in creating a psychologically safe work environment by giving employees the freedom to express ideas and input as an important channel in generating innovation. Innovation can be in the form of products or services to face the very dynamic tourism sector.

The results of this study support the Social Exchange Theory (SET) which helps explain the existence of a working relationship based on social exchange. When authentic leadership acts as an honest and transparent leader, employees will respond with a willingness to actively use employee voice to generate innovative ideas and implement them in innovative work behavior. This can result in innovation in the workplace that is supported by authentic leadership for the sustainability of the tourism industry.

This is in line with the opinion of Jin et al. (2022) who stated that when leaders are considered authentic, employees show greater initiative and involvement in their work.

Authentic Leadership and Innovative Work Behavior are Moderated By Psychological Empowerment

The findings of this study illustrate that psychological empowerment is very important in moderating the relationship between authentic leadership and employee innovative work behavior in the East Java tourism industry. The test results confirm that psychological empowerment can moderate the impact of authentic leadership on employee innovative work behavior. Psychologically empowered employees are more likely to try new ideas, driven by the belief that authentic leadership will provide support. Consequently, psychological empowerment enhances the relationship between authentic leadership and employee innovative work behavior, which encourages creative contributions in the tourism industry. The dynamics of the tourism industry require continuous adjustments to consumer demands. Leaders' opportunities for employees to voice their opinions can have a direct impact, provide positive feedback, and create innovations that are in line with market demand. The study of authentic leadership shows that psychological empowerment is a key factor in moderating the relationship between authentic leadership and employee innovative work behavior in the East Java tourism industry. The test results validate that psychological empowerment strengthens the influence of authentic leadership on employee readiness to engage in innovation. When employees feel psychologically empowered, they are more likely to explore new ideas, confident that authentic leadership will offer the necessary support. This empowerment strengthens the relationship between authentic leadership and innovation, allowing tourism industry employees to contribute more creatively in the way they serve customers by introducing new ways to improve guest check-in experiences or offering creative additional services to increase customer satisfaction. This is in line with the opinion of Nwanzu & Babalola (2024) that psychological empowerment can moderate proactive work behavior and the relationship between core self-evaluation and proactive work behavior. The findings of this study are in line with (Grošelj et al. 2020) that psychological empowerment can moderate proactive work behavior and the relationship between core self-evaluation and proactive work behavior. The findings of this study are in line with those (Kustanto et al. 2020) which show that psychological empowerment plays a moderating role in the relationship between transformational leadership and innovative work behavior.

Managerial Implication

The results show that authentic leadership has a significant effect on employee voice and innovative work behavior, both directly and indirectly through mediation. Therefore, managers in the tourism sector need to develop a transparent, honest, and consistent leadership style between personal values and actions in order to increase employee active participation and creativity. Employee voice provides evidence that it can contribute to being a mediator of authentic leadership and innovative behavior. The follow-up is that managers must be able to facilitate a comfortable work environment for employees to convey ideas, suggestions or criticisms without fear of punishment. The results found that psychological empowerment is able to moderate authentic leadership on innovative work behavior. The tourism sector needs to create a work environment that can improve competence in order to have an impact on innovation.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

This study reveals that authentic leadership plays an important role in encouraging innovative work behavior of employees in the tourism industry in East Java, both directly and through employee voice mediation. This finding strengthens the application of Social Exchange Theory (SET), by showing that relationships based on trust and authenticity from leaders can increase employee participation and trigger innovation. In addition, psychological empowerment is proven to moderate the relationship between authentic leadership and innovative work behavior, confirming the importance of psychological empowerment in maximizing the influence of leadership on innovative behavior.

The main theoretical contribution of this study is the integration of mediation and moderation roles in one conceptual model, which is still rarely studied in the context of the tourism industry in developing countries. Empirically, this study offers a new understanding of how authentic leadership, employee voice, and psychological empowerment interact in encouraging innovation, especially in the service sector that is highly dependent on human resources.

Recommendations

Building Transparent and Relational Authentic Leadership. This can be done with open and consistent communication between words and actions. In addition, it can be done by involving employees in decision making that impacts their work. Providing employee voice support by providing a forum for employees to communicate and giving rewards to creative employees. Psychological empowerment needs to be improved through training and self-development so that employee competence is better. In addition, it is necessary to provide trust to employees in completing their work.

The study was limited to employees in the tourism industry in East Java, so the results of the study cannot be used to be generalized to other industry in Indonesia. Data collection was carried out cross-sectionally, so that the relationship between variables only describes conditions at a certain time. This limits the ability to observe the dynamics of changes in employee behavior longitudinally. All data were obtained through perception-based questionnaires, which can cause social bias or subjectivity of respondents in assessing their own leadership, employee voice, and innovative behavior. Although the number of respondents as many as 217 is sufficient for PLS-SEM analysis, non-probability sampling techniques (eg purposive sampling) can limit the representativeness of the tourism sector employee population as a whole.

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