Value-Based Leadership Redefined: Driving Engagement and Teacher Performance Through Ethical Climate in Private Islamic Senior High School

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ABSTRACT: Authentic leadership (AL) plays a crucial role in enhancing teacher engagement and performance by fostering a conducive ethical climate (EC). However, further examination is needed in the context of Madrasah Aliyah. This leadership role is not limited to structural positions, as AL can be demonstrated by senior teachers and staff with leadership qualities. This study aims to explain the mediating role of EC in the relationship between AL, teacher engagement, and performance. An explanatory survey was conducted online (39%) and offline (61%) with 282 randomly selected, permanently employed private Madrasah Aliyah teachers in West Java. Data were collected via Google Forms and printed questionnaires during teacher meetings and analyzed using covariance-based Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Findings indicate that EC mediates the relationship between AL, teacher engagement, and performance. Additionally, work engagement (WE) mediates the influence of AL on performance and partially mediates the effect of EC on performance. By integrating the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model with Value-Based Leadership, this study clarifies the link between AL, EC, and teacher engagement. AL serves as an organizational resource strengthened by EC. To sustain teacher engagement and performance, multi-level training programs should expand AL practices among principals and senior teachers. MAS fosters EC through transparency, fairness, and value-based leadership.

Keywords: authentic leadership, engagement, ethical climate, performance, teacher, private islamic senior high school, value based leadership

ABSTRAK: Kepemimpinan autentik (AL) berperan penting dalam meningkatkan keterlibatan dan kinerja guru dengan menciptakan iklim etis (EC) yang kondusif. Namun, penelitian lebih lanjut diperlukan dalam konteks Madrasah Aliyah. Peran kepemimpinan ini tidak terbatas pada posisi struktural, karena AL dapat ditunjukkan oleh guru senior dan staf yang memiliki kualitas kepemimpinan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan peran mediasi EC dalam hubungan antara AL, keterlibatan guru, dan kinerja. Survei eksplanatori dilakukan secara daring (39%) dan luring (61%) dengan melibatkan 282 guru tetap Madrasah Aliyah Swasta di Jawa Barat yang dipilih secara acak. Data dikumpulkan melalui Google Forms dan kuesioner cetak selama pertemuan guru, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) berbasis kovarians. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa EC memediasi hubungan antara AL, keterlibatan guru, dan kinerja. Selain itu, keterlibatan kerja (WE) memediasi pengaruh AL terhadap kinerja serta sebagian memediasi pengaruh EC terhadap kinerja. Dengan mengintegrasikan Model Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) dengan Kepemimpinan Berbasis Nilai, penelitian ini memperjelas keterkaitan antara AL, EC, dan keterlibatan guru. AL berfungsi sebagai sumber daya organisasi yang diperkuat oleh EC. Untuk mempertahankan keterlibatan dan kinerja guru, program pelatihan multi-level harus memperluas praktik AL di kalangan kepala sekolah dan guru senior. MAS membangun EC melalui transparansi, keadilan, dan kepemimpinan berbasis nilai.

INTRODUCTION

The study of positive leadership in positive organizational behavior concepts has been widely explored in previous studies (Luthans et al., 2021; Luthans & Youssef, 2007; Uusiautti, 2013). This leadership involves the application of positive practices that support individuals and organizations in achieving goals, succeeding at work, enhancing vitality, and achieving high effectiveness (Azila-Gbettor et al., 2024) and support performance (Alzoraiki et al., 2018; Luthans et al., 2010). They also emphasize strengthening positive aspects in the workplace, aiming to create environments where teachers can grow emotionally and professionally through strength-based and well-being approaches (Goetz et al., 2024).

Positive leadership provides an inspiring vision, builds trust-based relationships, and creates a supportive work environment. Positive leadership influences both individuals and organizations, including authentic leadership (Abbas et al., 2022; Adams et al., 2020; Alazmi & Al-Mahdy, 2022; Azila-Gbettor et al., 2024). Conversely, ineffective leadership negatively impacts work engagement and outcomes (Alluhaybi et al., 2023).

One form of positive leadership is Authentic Leadership (AL). Authentic leadership is a new alternative that helps organizations overcome challenges in times of change (Jang, 2021). It includes self-awareness, balanced processing, genuine conduct, and trusting relationships (Tate et al., 2023; Walumbwa et al., 2008). Authentic leadership in schools inspires and promotes positive psychological capabilities, focusing on moral and ethical behavior while maintaining transparency and honesty with staff (Ismail et al., 2019).However, the concept of authentic leadership (AL) can present biases. The diversity of leadership concepts risks confusing both academics and professionals with limited exposure to the topic (Crawford et al., 2020; Macambira et al., 2022).The use of AL as a value foundation in organizational practice remains limited (Gill et al., 2018).

Authentic leaders internalize moral values through social interactions for organizational effectiveness (Lei et al., 2021). AL serves as a positive moral and organizational belief model (Jaworski et al., 2022; Tak et al., 2019). AL demonstrate values, principles, morality, and ethics, critically incorporating moral reasoning into their leadership behavior (Akdemir, 2017; Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Gardner, 2005; Glowacki-Dudka & Treff, 2016). AL promotes positive psychological capacity and ethical climate (Alazmi & Al-Mahdy, 2022; Iqbal et al., 2020). Authentic leaders act according to their values and beliefs in the organization (Anwar & Zakaria, 2019). Yet, there are contradictions that may create ambiguity regarding the role of AL. Some studies state that AL influences ethical climate (Alzghoul et al., 2018; Cansor et al., 2021; Qureshi & Hassan, 2019), while others suggest that ethical climate affects AL (Milon & Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2021). Arimatika et al., (2023) reveal the role of ethical climate as a moderating variable between AL and performance. Ethical climate (EC) is defined as a shared perception of ethically appropriate behavior and how ethical issues are managed

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in organizations (Coremans et al., 2024; Gan et al., 2020; Sinkler, 2021; Victor & Cullen, 1988). The three primary dimensions of EC are caring ethical climate, law and code ethical climate, and instrumental ethical climate, referring to prevailing perceptions of ethical content in organizational practices and procedures.

This contradiction concerns the position of ethical climate (EC) as a variable influenced by Authentic Leadership (AL), while other findings suggest that EC itself influences AL. Additionally, some studies identify EC as a moderator of AL, further complicating its conceptual role. These differences highlight a conceptual gap in understanding how EC functions within the framework of authentic leadership. In the context of Madrasah Aliyah Swasta (MAS), further research is required to clarify the relationship pathways between AL, work engagement (WE), and performance within Islamic education. Additionally, it is essential to examine the mediating roles of EC and WE to develop a more comprehensive understanding of their influence in this setting.

In schools, EC principles include respect for autonomy, nonmaleficence, beneficence, justice, and fidelity (Schulte, 1990). EC plays a vital role in organizations, including schools (Enwereuzor et al., 2020; Jiang & Liu, 2024), including Islamic education institutions (Pradesa et al., 2023). EC also encourages engagement (Aleksić & Mihelič, 2022).

AL is also a resource supporting both work and personal domains (Adil & Kamal, 2020; Hsu et al., 2024; Wang & Xie, 2020; Wirawan et al., 2020). AL as Resources can support engagement and performance (Bakker et al., 2004; Baquero, 2023; Uluturk et al., 2024). Leaders with authentic characteristics such as moral behavior, self-awareness, balanced processing, and transparency encourage engagement and higher performance achievement (Aboramadan et al., 2021). However, contradicting findings by Wirawan et al., (2020) indicate that AL does not directly affect work engagement (WE) unless through a mediating variable, suggesting a need for further investigation.

Work engagement is a positive state of mind where individuals can express themselves physically, cognitively, and affectively in their work (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; W. Schaufeli et al., 2017). It is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Murangi et al., 2022; W. Schaufeli et al., 2017). WE is closely related to performance (Bakker & Bal, 2010; Bhat et al., 2024; Nandini et al., 2022), including teacher performance in their duties. Performance includes technical dimensions (e.g., classroom management and teaching strategies) and interpersonal aspects (e.g., interaction with students) (Mișu et al., 2022). Performance in Islamic educational institutions presents unique challenges (Pradesa et al., 2023).

Although numerous studies have examined the relationship between Authentic Leadership (AL), Ethical Climate (EC), Work Engagement (WE), and performance across various organizations, such as the corporate sector (Brunetto et al, 2024; Kyambade et al , 2024) and Higher education (Elrehail, et al, 2018; Srivastava et al, 2024) research specifically investigating this relationship within the context of Islamic education remains limited.This study contributes by exploring how AL and EC shape teacher engagement and performance within

Madrasah Aliyah Swasta (MAS) in West Java, which is characterized by value-based leadership and an organizational culture rooted in Islamic principles.Thus, this research not only validates existing models but also expands the understanding of how AL and EC function within faith-based educational institutions. MAS in West Java faces challenges such as the stigma of being a last-choice school and being perceived as lower in quality compared to public schools and Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN). However, MAS possesses significant potential in terms of resources, particularly in leadership, which can be leveraged to enhance educational quality and competitiveness.

The contribution of this study is to explain how leader-level resources and organizational-level resources ensure the balance between motivational processes and health impairment processes in the context of Islamic educational institutions, aligning with Bakker, (2017); Bakker et al., (2023); Bakker & de Vries, (2021). By positioning authentic leadership (AL) as a core element, this research connects leadership styles with increased work engagement and adaptive performance. The proposed model clarifies the mechanisms through which EC and WE mediate the relationship between authentic leadership and performance.

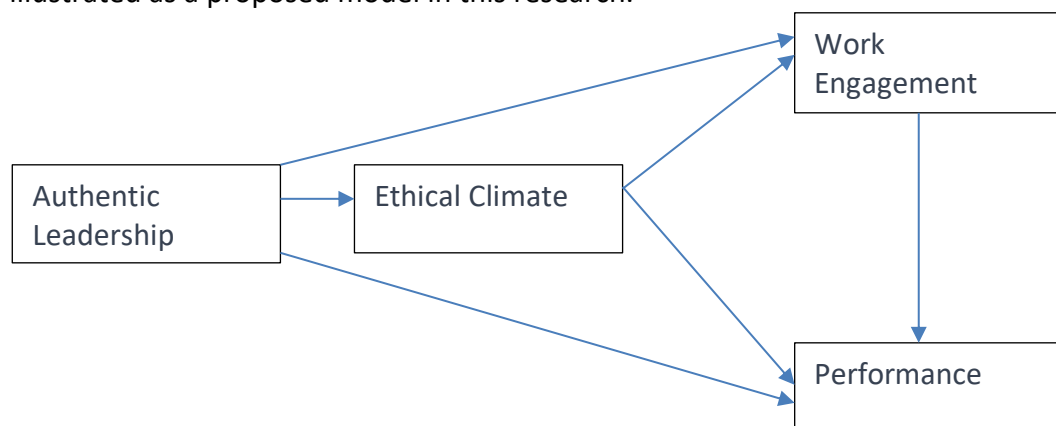The interaction between AL, EC, WE, and adaptive performance is illustrated as a proposed model in this research.

Figure 1. Proposed Model

The research aims to explain the influence of AL on work engagement and performance through ethical climate in private Madrasah Aliyah in West Java. The leadership structure of Madrasah Aliyah Swasta (MAS) in West Java differs from that of public schools, where leadership is not solely exercised by the principal but also by senior teachers and other informal figures. Additionally, the organizational culture in MAS is heavily influenced by Islamic values, which emphasize honesty, transparency, and moral accountability.As a result, Authentic Leadership (AL) becomes highly relevant in this context, as it focuses on value-based and morality-driven leadership. Moreover, Ethical Climate (EC) plays a crucial role in shaping teacher engagement and performance, as it reinforces ethical norms that foster a healthy and productive work environment. The proposed model in this study takes these unique factors into account and aims to examine how AL and EC contribute to teacher engagement and performance within an Islamic educational setting.

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RESEARCH METHOD

This study was conducted in private Madrasah Aliyah (MAS) in Bekasi Regency and City using a hypothetic-deductive logic approach (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Bekasi represents a diverse educational landscape, with MAS located in both urban and rural areas, as well as institutions with varying accreditation levels (A, B, and C). This diversity allows for a more comprehensive examination of how Authentic Leadership (AL), Ethical Climate (EC), and Work Engagement (WE) influence teacher performance across different school environments.

Data were collected using a closed-ended questionnaire with responses ranging from 1 to 5. The research population consisted of 236 private Madrasah Aliyah teachers across West Java, selected through proportional random sampling per region (urban-Rural) Then, based on accreditation levels (A, B, C), to meet proportionality criteria both by region and accreditation classification.

The measurement of the Authentic Leadership (AL) variable was developed based on Avolio & Gardner, (2005) with four core dimensions: self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing, and internalized moral perspective. Glowacki-Dudka & Treff, (2016) serve as an additional reference in adapting the AL instrument to the educational context, ensuring its relevance within the environment of Madrasah Aliyah Swasta (MAS). The instrument consisted of 12 statements developed. The instrument is accepted . The validity (> 0.30) and reliability (>.70) . Ethical Climate (EC) was measured based on Gan et al., (2020); Sinkler, (2021); Victor & Cullen, (1988), with six dimensions: caring, service and ethics, law and code, school rules, instrumental, and independence, totaling 24 statements.

Work engagement (WE) measurement followed Rastegr & Zarei, (2023), using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) by Schaufeli & Bakker, (2003) with three dimensions: vigour, dedication, and absorption. Teacher performance was measured based on Mişu et al., (2022), consisting of six dimensions: individual task competence, individual task adaptability, individual task proactivity, organizational member competence, organizational member adaptability, and organizational member proactivity.

The questionnaire was distributed in two phases to minimize bias. In the first week, the researcher distributed questionnaires for AL and EC variables, while in the second week, questionnaires for WE and performance were distributed, In accordance with Podsakoff et al. (2003).. Before distribution, the researcher clarified that the questionnaire was unrelated to job performance, and respondents were free to withdraw if they felt uncomfortable. It was also explained that respondents could access the study results and that their data would be used solely for research purposes, ensuring anonymity.

Once data were collected, the first step involved checking for completeness and consistency of responses within the agreed timeframe. Data analysis was performed using covariance-based Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) following Hair et al., (2019).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

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Defining Individual Constructs

The questionnaire used has been tested for both validity and reliability. The instrument was developed based on references with proven validity. It is considered appropriate and suitable for use in the main study. The results of the individual Goodness-of-Fit (GOF) tests indicate that the variable constructs align with the field data. Each construct demonstrated GOF values supporting its acceptance as a variable construct for testing the research model.

The Results of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

The results of testing each indicator related to its latent variable showed varying levels of correlation.
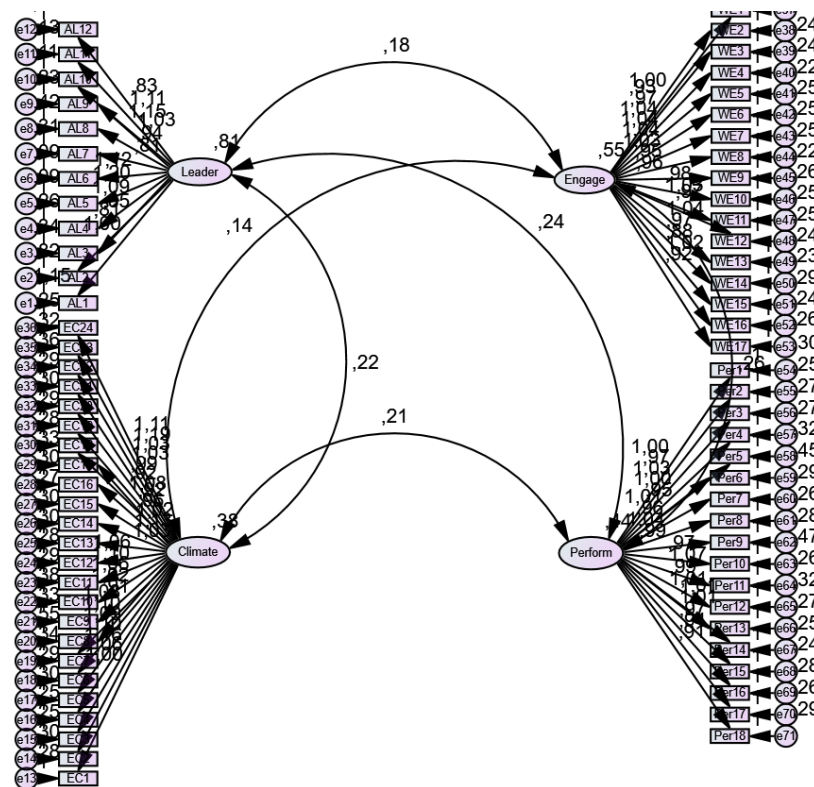

Figure 2. Measurement Theory Model (CFA) Unstandarized Regression Weight

The CFA model in this figure indicates that overall construct validity (convergent, discriminant, and nomological validity) is well established. The indicators are sufficiently strong to support the constructs, the relationships between constructs align with theory, and there is no excessive overlap between constructs. The results of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) show that the observed data fit the hypothesized model of relationships. The relationship between observed variables and latent variables aligns with expectations based on theory.

The results of the CFA test on this model show that construct validity, consisting of convergent validity, discriminant validity, and nomological validity, has been well satisfied. Convergent validity is evident from the loading factor

values of each indicator, with most values above 0.50, and many close to or exceeding 0.80. This indicates that these indicators are able to significantly measure the intended construct. Discriminant validity is also met, as the correlations between constructs such as Leader, Engage, Climate, and Perform are moderate and not excessively high (e.g., the correlation between Leader and Engage is 0.18, and between Climate and Perform is 0.21). This suggests that each construct is distinct from the others, in line with the principles of discriminant validity. The results of the nomological validity test are also evident from the relationships between constructs, which are consistent with the theory or hypotheses proposed. Positive relationships, such as between Leader and Engage (0.18), Leader and Perform (0.22), and Climate and Perform (0.21), show that the direction and significance of the relationships between constructs are in accordance with the theoretical model. The results of the tests can be seen in Table 1 as follows.

Table 1. Average Variance Extracted, Composite Reliability, Discriminant Validity

Latent Variable	($\bar{x}$)	Indicator Code	Discriminan Validity			
			1	2	3	4
Authentic Leadership	3.78	Al1-Al12	1.000			
Ethical Climate	3.91	EC1-EC24	0.15	1.000		
Work Engagement	3.83	WE1-WE17	0.08	0.09	1.000	
Performance	3.51	Per1-Per18	0.16	0.28	0.28	1.000
Average Variance extracted			0.710	0.573	0.683	0.597
Composite reliability			0.549	0.951	0.937	0.953

The loading factor values in this study are acceptable (> 0.5). The AVE values above 0.50 indicate good convergent validity. The CR values above 0.70 demonstrate good consistency. The diagonal values represent the correlation of each construct with itself (1.000). The off-diagonal values, such as 0.15, 0.08, etc., indicate the level of correlation between constructs. All constructs meet the requirements for discriminant validity, convergent validity, and composite reliability.

Designing a Study to Produce Empirical Results (Sample size, model estimation, which is MLE, missing data; identification issues)

The Maximum Likelihood Estimation (MLE) model is used with a sample size greater than 200, in accordance with the requirements of this method. The data is normally distributed with a p-value of 0.321 (p > 0.05), indicating normal distribution. Before conducting the analysis using Covariance-Based SEM (CB-SEM), a normality test was performed using skewness and kurtosis analysis. The results indicated that the data distribution met the normality assumption, with skewnes 1.24 or < 2 and kurtosis 2.129 or < 7, confirming that the dataset was suitable for further SEM analysis. There is no missing data, and no identification issues that hinder the testing process using SEM Covariance-Based. No outliers were found, allowing for the analysis to be conducted without data-related obstacles.

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Assessing the Measurement Model Validity

The test results for overall fit indicate that each GOF criterion is met, as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Goodness of Fit Test Index

Type of Measurement	Measurement	Stage 1	Stage 2	Conclusion
Absolute fit measures	p-value-	0.00	0.00	Moderate
	CMIN/df	2.06	1.24	Fit
	RMSEA	0.06	0.29	Fit
	GFI	0.72	0.79	Moderate Fit
Incremental fit measure	NFI	0.77	0.87	Moderate Fit
	TLI	0.87	0.97	Fit
	RFI	0.77	0.86	Moderate Fit
	CFI	0.87	0.97	Fit
	AGFI	0.70	0.77	Moderate Fit
Parsimonius fit measure	PNFI	0.75	0.84	Fit
	PGFI	0.68	0.74	Moderate

The results of the first-stage test show that each criterion was not yet represented. After improvements according to Hair et al., (2019), the model showed significant improvement in almost all fit indices. In the final stage, the model demonstrated good fit based on CMIN df, RMSEA, TLI, CFI, and PNFI, which indicate good fit. Some other criteria were at a moderate level, such as GFI, RFI, AGFI, and PGFI, suggesting that there is still room for refinement regarding model simplicity. The results of the correlation test can be seen in Table 3 below:

Table 3. Construct Correlation Matrix (Standardized)

Path			Estimate		S.E.	C.R.	P
			Unstandardized	Standard			
Climate	<---	Leader	0.27	0.39	0.0	5,94	***
Engage	<---	Leader	0.15	0.18	0.053	2,82	***
Engage	<---	Climate	0.28	0.23	0.08	3,61	***
Perform	<---	Leader	0.12	0.16	0.04	2,94	***
Perform	<---	Climate	0.38	0.35	0.06	5,99	***
Perform	<---	Engage	0.34	0.38	0.05	6,91	***

The results of the relationship test show that there are significant relationships between variables, with varying degrees of influence strength. Next are the results of the mediation variable test, as shown in Table 4 below:

Table 4. Mediation Test (Standardized)

Path					Estimate	Sobel test / Z-Score	Conclusion
Engage	<--	Climate	<--	Leader	0.09	2.84	Partial and significant
Perform	<--	Climate	<--	Leader	0.14	4.67	Partial and significant
Perform	<--	Engage	<--	Leader	0.10	3.13	Partial and significant

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Perform	<--	Engage	<--	Climate	0.089	2.79	Partial and significant

The results of the test show that each mediator variable can partially and significantly mediate the influence of the exogenous variable on the endogenous variable.

Hypothesis Test Result

In accordance with the results of the correlation and mediation tests, it can be concluded that the proposed hypotheses are accepted.

Table 5. Hypothesis Test Result

	Hypothesis	Estimate	C.R/ Z-Score	Conclusion
H1	Authentic leadership has a positive effect on the ethical climate	0.39	5.94	Supported
H2	Ethical climate has a positive effect on work engagement	0.23	3.61	Supported
H3	Work engagement has a positive effect on performance	0.38	3.91	Supported
H4	Ethical climate mediates the effect of authentic leadership on work engagement	0.09	2.84	Supported
H5	Ethical climate mediates the effect of authentic leadership on performance	0.10	3.13	Supported
H6	Work engagement mediates the effect of authentic leadership on performance	0.14	4.67	Supported
H7	Work engagement mediates the effect of ethical climate on performance	0.89	2.79	Supported

All proposed hypotheses are accepted. Authentic leadership (Authentic Leadership) and ethical climate (Ethical Climate) are important resources that contribute to employee behaviors, such as work engagement (Work Engagement) and performance (Performance). Authentic leadership, ethical climate, and work engagement together create a balance between health impairment processes and motivational processes to achieve the performance of teachers in MAS.

Discussion

Authentic Leadership (AL) as an Organizational Resource

Leadership as an organizational resource. The study results show that Authentic Leadership (AL) influences performance both directly and through Work Engagement (WE) and Ethical Climate (EC). The interaction between AL and EC ensures the sustainability of resources for teachers to engage and achieve high performance. AL creates an ethical environment that supports engagement and performance, and is based on values. The moral values inherent in AL significantly contribute to the development of teachers' psychological capacities and create adequate performance. AL is not just a leadership management tool, but also a

strategic element in building competitive advantages for Madrasah Aliyah Swasta (MAS).

Authentic Leadership (AL) is a form of positive leadership that emphasizes self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced information processing, and moral behavior that aligns with organizational values. Research shows that this leadership has a direct impact on the improvement of both individual and organizational performance (Abbas et al., 2022; Avolio & Gardner, 2005). In the education sector, especially in the context of MAS, authentic leaders can encourage teachers to be more adaptive and innovative in meeting learning needs and facing uncertainty, as outlined by Mişu et al., (2022).

The Mediating Role of Ethical Climate (EC) and Work Engagement (WE)

Ethical climate, as a collective perception of organizational ethics, plays an important role in supporting the relationship between AL and performance. AL, by promoting moral values and organizational ethics, creates an environment conducive to ethical behavior (Alzghoul et al., 2018; Victor & Cullen, 1988). In the educational context, especially in religious institutions like MAS, an ethical climate helps enhance trust, fairness, and the psychological well-being of teachers (Pradesa et al., 2023). EC fosters trust, fairness, and psychological well-being within the workplace, which in turn enhances engagement and performance (Pradesa et al., 2023). In the context of Madrasah Aliyah Swasta (MAS), EC is shaped not only by formal ethical guidelines but also by Islamic moral values, such as honesty (ṣidq), justice (ʿadl), and accountability (amānah). These values influence leadership practices, creating an ethical environment that reinforces teachers' engagement and performance.

In non Islamic schools, ethical climate (EC) is often associated with legal regulations and professional codes of ethics embedded within organizational policies (Victor & Cullen, 1988). However, in Madrasah Aliyah Swasta (MAS), EC is not solely based on formal regulations but is also deeply rooted in religious values and Islamic morality. This comparison highlights that Authentic Leadership (AL) in the MAS context is more closely linked to EC than in secular schools, as moral and ethical norms serve as the core foundation of authentic leadership within religiously affiliated institutions.

Value based Leadership and JD-R Model Integration

In the JD-R context, the high self-awareness of authentic leaders becomes an organizational resource that strengthens competitive advantage through moral behavior, relational transparency, and value-based decision-making. AL also creates positive psychological capacity, encouraging the practice of value-based morals and generating consistent positive behavior that strengthens individual self-development.While Bakker et al., (2023); Bakker & de Vries, (2021) highlight leadership as an organizational resource, the resource itself is dynamic. In MAS, leadership is structurally chosen based on the interests of the foundation. MAS is an extension of the foundation's vision regarding education. Therefore, to optimize leadership functions, the concept of authentic leadership should not be

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limited to structural positions. AL leadership is broader across various levels and not limited to formal structures. Leadership that fosters ethical climate, work engagement, and performance can be found at various levels and among individuals. Its strength lies in the authentic values of leadership.

The study aligns with the JD-R Perspective, viewing leadership as an organizational resource. It supports the works of Akdemir, (2017); Glowacki-Dudka & Treff, (2016), who explain authentic leadership based on moral values. These moral values become a resource for teachers. Authentic Leadership (AL) serves as an organizational resource because its value-based leadership helps create a positive work climate that promotes employee well-being and engagement. The research supports that authentic leaders utilize values of originality to guide organizations, such as MAS, to face modern challenges while maintaining their identity.

AL provides job resources such as vision, ideological values, and structural adaptation that strengthen intrinsic motivation, improve the work demands-support balance, and enhance competitive advantage. This is in line with the concept of AL, which demonstrates how authentic leadership encourages and maintains a unique identity while adapting innovative strategies based on organizational needs. AL is key in maintaining employee engagement by creating a supportive, adaptive, and value-oriented work environment, as emphasized by Jaworski et al., (2022); Lei et al., (2021); Tak et al., (2019), where AL serves as a positive moral role model and organizational belief.

Authentic Leadership in the Context of Islamic Education

Authentic Leadership (AL) forms the foundation for MAS development due to its characteristics of self-awareness, moral values, broad insight, and adaptive strength. In the context of MAS, AL's foundational elements are strengthened by the religious values practiced by leaders in their interactions with subordinates. The study emphasizes the role of AL in shaping and developing the ethical climate. This study shows that AL influences performance not only directly but also through the mediation of EC and WE. AL allows leaders to critically evaluate MAS's position and analyze both structural and non-structural constraints to build a competitive advantage. This study addresses ambiguities in the concept of AL. In this study, AL is proven to be multidimensional, reflecting the richness of an authentic leader's social role. AL is also shown to influence performance both directly and indirectly. The results of this study differ from previous studies that revealed contradictions, potentially causing ambiguity regarding the function of AL. Unlike secular schools, which place greater emphasis on managerial competency-based leadership, Madrasah Aliyah Swasta (MAS) focuses more on value-based leadership rooted in religious principles, which significantly influences organizational culture and work climate (Pradesa et al., 2023). Thus, in the MAS context, Authentic Leadership (AL) is not only associated with leadership effectiveness but also plays a crucial role in preserving Islamic moral values within the educational environment.

At last, The findings of this study can be explained through three key theoretical perspectives.First, the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model suggests

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that Authentic Leadership (AL) functions as an organizational resource that enhances teacher engagement and performance by reducing work-related stress (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). Second, the value based Leadership perspective emphasizes that AL is rooted in ethical values, which strengthen the Ethical Climate (EC), thereby fostering a more positive work environment (Gill et al., 2018). The integration of these perspectives confirms that AL not only contributes to teacher engagement but also establishes an ethical foundation that reinforces long-term organizational excellence.

CONCLUSION

Authentic Leadership (AL) plays a crucial role in the management and development of organizational resources in Madrasah Aliyah Swasta (MAS). AL functions not only as a managerial tool but also as a strategic element that drives competitive advantage. Authentic leadership creates a value-based environment that enhances work engagement (WE) and teacher performance through strengthening the Ethical Climate (EC). Authentic leadership plays a significant role in improving performance, both directly and through the mediation of ethical climate and work engagement.

Theoretical Implication

This study extends the JD-R theory. Authentic Leadership (AL) in the context of Islamic education, particularly in Madrasah Aliyah Swasta (MAS), is not only a management tool but also a strategic element that builds teacher performance through the strengthening of Ethical Climate (EC) and Work Engagement (WE). This contributes to the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory by emphasizing the importance of AL and moral values as organizational resources to support performance. The study explains the complex relationship between AL, EC, and WE, which previously caused ambiguity in the literature. The research shows that EC significantly mediates the relationship between AL and WE, as well as between AL and teacher performance. This provides a new theoretical foundation regarding how moral values and organizational ethics can serve as a bridge in building work engagement and performance. This study adds a new dimension to the JD-R theory, particularly at the micro-level, by emphasizing that a balance between motivational processes and stress reduction can be achieved through the interaction of AL, EC, and WE. These findings are relevant for understanding work dynamics in unique educational contexts like MAS.

Practical Implication

These findings have significant implications for educational institutions, particularly in the context of Madrasah Aliyah. Authentic leadership has great potential to improve teacher performance through the creation of an ethical work climate and high engagement. However, the main challenge is ensuring that the concept of AL is consistently applied in practice, considering the risks of bias and ambiguity in its implementation (Gill et al., 2018; Macambira et al., 2022). An important implication for leadership development in MAS is that schools should design leadership recruitment systems and cultivate leadership at various levels,

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even within non-formal structures. The leadership developed should be one that is self-aware and creates value-based moral behavior consistently. MAS should consistently expand leadership practices based on moral and religious values to support the formation of EC and enhance WE and teacher performance. Leadership practices help teachers develop their psychological capacities through the application of moral values, which positively impacts their work engagement and performance.

Future Research Direction

The consistency of application and exploration of the mechanisms of these relationships require further attention, especially in the context of Islamic education such as MAS. Future research is expected to provide deeper insights into optimizing the potential of authentic leadership in supporting organizational and individual performance. Additional empirical studies are needed to explore how the mechanisms between AL, EC, WE, and performance operate in different contexts for generalization and exploring AL's long-term impact on teacher retention and student outcomes and comparisons across different groups (e.g., rural vs. urban MAS.Future research can adopt a mixed-methods approach and This approach will help develop a more contextually appropriate conceptual framework that aligns with the local context and educational organizational needs.

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