

# Effect of Authentic Leadership on Academic Atmosphere and Organizational Culture in Indonesian Islamic Higher Education

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This purpose of this study is to examine the effect of authentic leadership on academic atmosphere and organizational culture in Indonesian Islamic higher education. To address this objective, primary data was collected with the help of a survey questionnaire delivered to individuals who are related to Islamic higher education in different public and private sector universities. A final sample of 350 responses was found to be valid for the descriptive and regression analysis. Findings of the study indicate the fact that there is a significant and positive influence of authentic leadership factors in terms of self-awareness, transparency and balance processing with academic atmosphere and organizational culture in Islamic higher education of Indonesia. However, the effect of ethical and moral conduct (EMC) is found to be negative for authentic leadership and organizational culture as measured through mean value, managerial and aim factors. In addition these findings may be considered as a significant addition to the literature of authentic leadership, academic atmosphere, specifically in Indonesian Islamic higher education. Study findings can provide a good evidence and are highly recommended to various parties such as students, researchers and those dealing with Islamic higher education policy making. However the present work has observed various limitations. First, the study is conducted in Indonesia and therefore, has limited regional implications. Second, sample size considers only the employees who are currently engaged with Islamic higher education and related departments. Third, only the primary measures of authentic leadership and academic atmosphere with organizational culture are observed for empirical findings. Future research may overcome these limitations in terms of expanding the regional context, targeting the students in Islamic higher education and finding some other measures of stated variables of the study.

**Key words:** *Authentic leadership, higher education, organizational culture, Indonesia.*

## Introduction

In the field of business management, the role of leadership is observed as a direct determinant in explaining the vision and mission (Avolio, Zhu, Koh, & Bhatia, 2004; Bass, Avolio, Jung, & Berson, 2003; Kirby, Paradise, & King, 1992). In a global economy, every business organization (either domestic or international) is working to get maximum benefit from its resources (tangible or intangible) as expressed by (Kamran, Khan, & Sharif, 2016). With the passage of time, the demand for honest, trustworthy, competent and capable leaders has increased (Abraham, 2004; Northouse, 2017; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2017). In this regard, the idea of leadership and leaders seems to be an important indicator for business success. The reason is that leadership captures various sub dimensions as required for the efficient and smooth working in the market by q business (Bigio, 2015; Jung & Kuester, 2015; Kamran, Chaudhry, et al., 2016; Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008).

In the literature context, various theories are presented by scholars to define the concept of leadership under a range of situational settings; trait theory (Pervin, 1994), behavioral theory (Cyert & March, 1963), contingency theory (Donaldson, 2001), transformational theory (Bass & Avolio, 1993) and authentic leadership theory (Walumbwa et al., 2008). The literature also describes the concept of leadership under the title of authenticity which captures such factors as awareness, unbiased processing, behavior and finally relational orientation. It is also argued that organizations become more authentic when they are aware of uncertainties, accept their mistakes and adopt corrective measures under the guidance of leaders who are effective, inspiring and more influential in the business field. In this regard, authentic leaders work for their personal development while being more ambitious, putting forward the core values and norms, are self-disciplined and motivated to achieve the business objectives with strategic decision making.

The approach of leaders to rule, work and integrate the business units with the efforts from the employees in an appropriate direction is also part of the researcher focus. In this regard, an emerging field under the title of authentic leadership is widely examined in both the theoretical and empirical literature (George, 2003; May, Chan, Hodges, & Avolio, 2003; Walumbwa et al., 2008). The idea of authentic leadership is integrated with modern theories of leadership and was initially recognized as the component of transformative leadership (Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, & May, 2004; Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, & Walumbwa, 2005; Waite, McKinney, Smith-Glasgow, & Meloy, 2014).

In addition the notion of organizational culture is broadly inspected in the literature both in developed and emerging economies. It is believed that institutes develop their own culture, considering their identity and other characteristics. For example, school culture is defined

under the shadow of values, beliefs, shared culture and other symbols which are formed by the traditions, norms, rituals and to some extent, events as well (Çelik, 2000; Şişman, 2007). Meanwhile organizational culture is defined in terms of the behavior of the employees (Marcoulides & Heck, 1993). It has been (Hofstede, 2001; Pollay, 1983) suggested that the fact that culture establishes itself in terms of values and behavior is an acknowledgment that organizational culture is a set of shared assumptions and understanding about the function of the organization (Chadwick & Raver, 2015; Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016; Schein, 1996; Shirey, 2009). For the success of business projects, organizational culture is accepted among the key role players.

The meaning of academic atmosphere as generally used in educational circles covers its scope in educational institutes (Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumbley, 2019), general or academic learning (Fisher et al., 2015), academic and scholarly research (Kennelly, Stam, & Schick, 2018), reading and conducting oneself academically (Harri-Augstein, Smith, & Thomas, 2017) and integration of various learning objectives. Some authors state that academic atmosphere considers the full development of body and mind in a learning process (Green, 2017) while others have the viewpoint that academic atmosphere is a stable kind of scholarly spirit developed while developing long term educational practices (Godfrey, 2016). In this regard, the present study has focused on authentic leadership style and its impact on factors like academic atmosphere and organizational culture in the region of Indonesia. The overall structure of the paper is as follows; the present section covers the introduction and some literature background, section two covers the variables and their measurement, section three indicates the research design, section four provides the discussion over findings and the last section concludes the study.

### **Variables of the Study and Their Measurement**

For the measurement of authentic leadership, this study has considered factors like self-awareness (SA), transparency (TR), ethical and moral conduct (EMC) and balanced processing (BP) as identified from the research work (Fallatah, Laschinger, & Read, 2017; Joo, Lim, & Kim, 2016; Sendjaya, Pekerti, Härtel, Hirst, & Butarbutar, 2016). For the further measurement of SA, four items, for TR five items, for EMC five items and for BP five items are further considered. Similarly to measure the factor of academic atmosphere (AA) five items and for organizational commitment (OC) seven items are under observation. All these items are measured on a five point likert scale. The factor of SA is defined as the awareness of the leader while giving the meaning to the world and how this process affects their individual perception. Additionally, the factor of transparency refers to the clear and direct relationship established by the leaders in their institute or business firms (Schnackenberg & Tomlinson, 2016). Balanced processing indicates the decision making by the leader in an objective way while evaluating the relevant information in a situation.

Furthermore ethical and moral conduct (EMC) reflects the collaboration and cooperation from various departments as conduct performed by the leader and whether the words and action match each other. Meanwhile two further measures of organizational culture in terms of managerial and aim are also considered for better understanding. The factor of managerial reflects the leadership and leadership style under the condition of a well-structured system while making any decisions and both formal and informal communication within the organization. It also reflects the relationship between the superior and subordinates while keeping their powers and responsibilities in mind. Moreover, the factor of aim describes the future situation as desired by the workers in the organization.

### **Data collection and Research Design**

This study has adopted primary data research technique while developing a structural questionnaire based on the stated items of the variables of the study. For the development of the questionnaire a five points likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree has been considered with relative respective coding (1-5). After the development of the questionnaire, 400 copies were distributed with the help of 10 team members in different universities of Indonesia (both public and private sector). An expected time duration of three weeks was finalized to collect the distributed copies from the targeted respondents. For this purpose, various employees who are directly or indirectly involve with the Islamic education and have some understanding about the authentic leadership, organizational culture and academic atmosphere were targeted.

A sample of 383 questionnaires were collected and evaluated for the data analysis. It was found that overall 350 questionnaires were good for the descriptive and regression analysis with no missing responses. For the analysis purpose, this study has considered the descriptive statistics like mean score of the responses, deviation from the mean, percentiles, range of the data set, kurtosis and finally the skewness. For the causal relationship between the variables, this research has applied multiple regression method, while taking the mean score of various factors of authentic leadership like self-awareness, transparency, ethical and moral conduct and finally the balanced processing. In addition, regression findings in terms of model fit and overall explained variation by all the factors of authentic leadership in organizational culture and academic atmosphere are also provided.

### **Results and Discussion**

Table 1 below provides the descriptive results of the study covering the total observations, mean score, standard deviation, range of the data, percentiles, skewness and finally the kurtosis. The key reason to present the descriptive findings is to provide the evidence about the trends in the dataset. For this purpose, individual items for each of the variables under the title of self-

awareness (SA) are measured through four items, transparency (TR) measured through six items, Ethical and Moral Conduct (EMC) measured through five items and Balanced Processing (BP) as measured through five items. Maximum value of mean score is attributed to BP3, followed by EMC5 and BP1 respectively. Whereas, minimum value of average trends in the dataset is linked to TR2 which is 2.70. The range of the data indicates the minimum score of 1 while maximum value of 5 on the likert scale of five points. The same trend is observed for the percentile score in terms of P1 and P99 respectively. Both the trends in the values of skewness and kurtosis have provided a good indication for the normality of the data set.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics**

Variables	Obs	Mean	Std.Dev	Min	Max	p1	p99	Skew.	Kurt.
SA1	350	2.909	1.347	1	5	1	5	.096	1.895
SA2	350	3.383	1.191	1	5	1	5	-.302	2.116
SA3	350	3.037	1.292	1	5	1	5	-.077	1.855
SA4	350	3.411	1.188	1	5	1	5	-.528	2.556
TR1	350	3.486	1.122	1	5	1	5	-.379	2.397
TR2	350	2.700	1.397	1	5	1	5	.254	1.797
TR3	350	3.352	1.294	1	5	1	5	-.04	1.966
TR4	350	3.161	1.279	1	5	1	5	-.227	1.943
TR5	350	3.294	1.217	1	5	1	5	-.242	2.091
TR6	350	3.097	1.233	1	5	1	5	-.121	2.081
EMC1	350	3.243	1.214	1	5	1	5	-.338	2.197
EMC2	350	3.322	1.314	1	5	1	5	-.354	1.956
EMC3	350	3.009	1.357	1	5	1	5	-.022	1.896
EMC4	350	2.934	1.412	1	5	1	5	.086	1.697
EMC5	350	3.874	1.074	1	5	1	5	-.958	3.435
BP1	350	3.877	1.076	1	5	1	5	-.889	3.176
BP2	350	3.714	1.199	1	5	1	5	-.627	2.417
BP3	350	3.909	1.045	1	5	1	5	-.768	2.953
BP4	350	3.734	1.066	1	5	1	5	-.651	2.852
BP5	350	3.651	1.182	1	5	1	5	-.51	2.334
AA1	350	3.686	1.08	1	5	1	5	-.621	2.754
AA2	350	3.806	1.103	1	5	1	5	-.803	3.005
AA3	350	3.723	1.092	1	5	1	5	-.612	2.671
AA4	350	3.743	1.053	1	5	1	5	-.697	2.917
AA5	350	3.147	1.012	1	5	1	5	-.586	2.889
OC1	350	3.666	1.013	1	5	1	5	-.522	2.743
OC2	350	3.771	1.012	1	5	1	5	-.709	3.196
OC3	350	3.722	.864	1	5	1	5	-.63	3.619

OC4	350	3.757	1.138	1	5	1	5	-.67	2.609
OC5	350	3.769	1.057	1	5	1	5	-.737	3.064
OC6	350	3.514	1.206	1	5	1	5	-.466	2.261
OC7	350	3.217	1.213	1	5	1	5	-.161	2.106

After the descriptive findings of the study, Table 2 below provides the outcomes for the correlation matrix of the study covering the level of association between the mean score of SA, TR, EMC and BP under full sample of the study. It shows the correlation between SA and TR is .315 is significant at 1 percent. It means that there is a significant and positive level of association between SA and TR, showing their low relationship. For SA and EMC, correlation coefficient is .280, significant at 1 percent. This association is also low and positively significant. For the relationship between SA and BP, correlation coefficient is .262, showing a positively weak but insignificant relationship between them. For the correlation between TR and EMC, value of correlation coefficient is 27.8, significant at 1 percent. For the association between TR and BP, correlation coefficient is 34.5, significant at 1 percent. Finally, the factors of EMC and BP have showed the coefficient of 22.2 percent, significant at 1 percent. As per these findings, it is found that all variables have their positive and low but significant association with each other, except for SA and BP.

**Table 2:** Pairwise correlations

Variables	SA	TR	EMC	BP
(1) SA	1.000			
(2) TR	0.315***	1.000		
	0.000			
(3) EMC	0.280***	0.278***	1.000	
	0.000	0.000		
(4) BP	0.262	0.344***	0.220***	1.000
	0.125	0.000	0.000	

Table 3 below provides the regression findings for the impact of related factors of authentic leadership on the value of academic atmosphere. It is observed the effect of SA on AA mean score is .008 with the standard error of 0.35, indicating the fact that there is a positive but insignificant influence of SA on AA mean score under full sample of the study. For TR, the coefficient of 0.152 indicates the fact that authentic leadership in the form of TR has its positive influence on the academic atmosphere in the region of Indonesia. This coefficient is significant at 1 percent as t-value is 3.61. The effect of EMC on academic atmosphere is Islamic higher education of Indonesia is -0.023 with the standard error of 0.038 respectively. This means that there is a negative but insignificant influence of EMC on the value of academic atmosphere. Additionally the effect of BP as a reasonable measure of authentic

leadership is also considered for its causal relationship with the academic atmosphere. The coefficient of .579 indicates that with the increasing level of authentic leadership capability in terms of BP, there is a positive and highly significant influence on the value of overall academic atmosphere in Indonesian Islamic higher education.

**Table 3:** Linear regression Findings for the Impact of Authentic leadership on Mean Academic atmosphere.

Academic atmosphere AA Mean value	Coef.	St.Err	t-value	p-value	Sig.
SA	0.008	0.035	0.23	0.815	
TR	0.152	0.042	3.61	0.000	***
EMC	-0.023	0.038	-0.60	0.551	
BP	0.579	0.044	13.26	0.000	***
_cons	0.959	0.219	4.37	0.000	***
Mean dependent var		3.686	SD dependent var		1.080
R-squared		0.414	Number of obs		350.000
F-test		60.887	Prob > F		0.000
Akaike crit. (AIC)		869.493	Bayesian crit. (BIC)		888.783
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1					

Table 4 below provides the regression findings for the impact of authentic leadership indicators on the value of mean organizational culture. It is observed that the effect of SA on CA mean score is 0.129 with the standard error of 0.035 indicating the fact that there is a positive and significant influence of SA on OC mean score under full sample of the study. For TR, the coefficient of 0.113 indicates the fact that authentic leadership in the form of TR has a positive influence on the organizational culture in the region of Indonesia. This coefficient is significant at 1 percent as t-value is 2.72. The effect of EMC on OC in Islamic higher education of Indonesia is -0.090 with the standard error of 0.038 respectively. This means that there is a negative and significant influence of EMC on the value of organizational culture. Additionally, the effect of BP as among the reasonable measures of authentic leadership is also considered for its causal relationship with the organizational culture. The coefficient of 0.465 indicates that with the increasing level of authentic leadership capability in terms of BP and has a positive and highly significant influence on the value of overall organizational culture in Indonesian Islamic higher education. The value of F-test is significant at 5 percent and that overall model under regression findings is presented in Table 4 as statistically a good fit.



**Table 4:** Linear regression Findings for the Impact of Authentic leadership on Mean Organizational Culture.

OC Mean Value	Coef.	St.Err	t-value	p-value	Sig.
SA	0.129	0.035	3.70	0.000	***
TR	0.113	0.042	2.72	0.007	***
EMC	-0.090	0.038	-2.36	0.019	**
BP	0.465	0.043	10.81	0.000	***
_cons	1.384	0.216	6.40	0.000	***
Mean dependent var	3.666	SD dependent var	1.013		
R-squared	0.352	Number of obs	350.000		
F-test	46.878	Prob > F	0.000		
Akaike crit. (AIC)	859.137	Bayesian crit. (BIC)	878.427		
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1					

Table 5 below provides the regression findings for the impact of authentic leadership indicators on the value of OC in terms of managerial capabilities. It is observed the effect of SA on OC (Managerial) is 0.103 with the standard error of 0.034 indicating that there is a positive and significant influence of SA on OC (managerial) under full sample of the study. For TR, the coefficient of 0.145 indicates the fact that authentic leadership in the form of TR has a positive influence on the organizational culture (managerial) in the region of Indonesia. This coefficient is significant at 1 percent as t-value is 3.57. The effect of EMC on OC (managerial) in Islamic higher education of Indonesia is -0.016 with the standard error of 0.037 respectively. This means that there is a negative and significant influence of EMC on the value of organizational culture in terms of managerial capabilities. Additionally, the effect of BP as a reasonable measures of authentic leadership is also considered for its causal relationship with the organizational culture. The coefficient of 0.465 indicates that with the increasing level of authentic leadership capability in terms of BP, there is a positive and highly significant influence on the value of overall organizational culture in Indonesian Islamic higher education. The value of F-test is significant at 5 percent and overall model under regression findings are presented in Table 5 below which are statistically good fit.



**Table 5:** Linear Regression Findings for the Impact of Authentic leadership on Organizational culture (Managerial Capabilities)

OC: Managerial	Coef.	St.Err	t-value	p-value	Sig.
SA	0.103	0.034	3.02	0.003	***
TR	0.145	0.041	3.57	0.000	***
EMC	-0.016	0.037	-0.43	0.666	
BP	0.476	0.042	11.27	0.000	***
_cons	1.172	0.212	5.53	0.000	***
Mean dependent var	3.771	SD dependent var	1.012		
R-squared	0.376	Number of obs	350.000		
F-test	52.032	Prob > F	0.000		
Akaike crit. (AIC)	845.671	Bayesian crit. (BIC)	864.961		
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1					

Table 6 below provides the regression findings for the impact of authentic leadership indicators on the value of OC in terms of Aim. As described earlier the factor of aim considers the organizational culture in which future situation of the business is desired by the workers. It is observed that the effect of SA on OC (Aim) is 0.096 with the standard error of 0.026, indicating there is a positive and significant influence of SA on OC(Aim) under full sample of the study. For TR, the coefficient of 0.096 indicates the fact that authentic leadership in the form of TR has positive influence on the organizational culture (Aim) in the region of Indonesia. This coefficient is significant at 1 percent as t-value is 3.14.

The effect of EMC on OC (Aim) in Islamic higher education of Indonesia is -0.066 with the standard error of 0.028 respectively. This means that there is a negative and significant influence of EMC on the value of organizational culture in terms of Aim. Additionally, the effect of BP as among the reasonable measures of authentic leadership is also considered for its causal relationship with the organizational culture. The coefficient of 0.509 indicates that with the increasing level of authentic leadership capability in terms of BP, it has a positive and highly significant influence on the value of overall organizational culture (Aim) in Islamic higher education of Indonesia. The value of F-test is significant at 5 percent and overall model under regression findings are presented in Table 6 below and are statistically good fit. In addition overall value of R<sup>2</sup> is 51.4 percent indicating a moderate level of variation in the value of organizational culture in terms of aim as explained by all the factors of authentic leadership in Indonesian Islamic higher education.

**Table 6:** Linear Regression Findings for the Impact of Authentic leadership on Organizational culture (Aim)

organizational culture: Aim	Coef.	St.Err	t-value	p-value	Sig.
SA	0.096	0.026	3.75	0.000	***
TR	0.096	0.031	3.14	0.002	***
EMC	-0.066	0.028	-2.35	0.019	**
BP	0.509	0.032	15.98	0.000	***
_cons	1.345	0.160	8.42	0.000	***
Mean dependent var	3.720		SD dependent var	0.864	
R-squared	0.514		Number of obs	350.000	
F-test	91.208		Prob > F	0.000	
Akaike crit. (AIC)	647.621		Bayesian crit. (BIC)	666.911	
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1					

### Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has considered the effect of authentic leadership in terms of self-awareness, transparency, ethical and moral conduct, and balanced processing to analyze their significant influence on the value of organizational culture and academic atmosphere in Indonesian Islamic higher education. For quality findings, regression analysis was conducted and results presented in an appropriate manner. It is observed that for the academic atmosphere significant factors are TR and BP with highly significant and positive influence. Whereas factors like SA, TR and BP have their significant and positive influence except for the EMC whose effect is found to be significantly negative on OC mean value in the present study. In addition for the organizational culture in terms of managerial, significant and positive influence is observed from the factors like SA, TR and BP. However, there is no significant influence of EMC on the value of OC in terms of managerial level.

Additionally OC as measured through aim factor has found that SA, TR, BP have significant and positive impact while EMC has shown negative and significant influence on the value of OC in terms of aim factor. These findings conclude that organizational culture is significantly affected by the factors of authentic leadership in both a positive and negative way but that most of the factors have positive influence. This fact further supports the argument that in Indonesian Islamic higher education there is constructive authentic leadership. On the other hand there is significant need to revisit the negative influence of EMC on OC in terms of aim, managerial, and overall mean value. More specifically, for academic atmosphere, again the effect of EMC is negative but insignificant.



These findings can be considered as a significant addition to the literature on authentic leadership and academic atmosphere specific to Indonesian Islamic higher education. These study findings provide good evidence and are highly recommended to various parties like students, researchers and those dealing with Islamic higher education policy making. However, the present study has various limitations. First, the study is conducted in Indonesia and therefore has limited regional implications. Second, sample size considered only the employees who are currently engaged with Islamic higher education and related departments. Third, only the primary measures of authentic leadership and academic atmosphere with organizational culture were observed for empirical findings. Future research may overcome these limitations in terms of expanding the regional context, targeting students in Islamic higher education and finding some secondary measures of stated variables of this study.

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