Mediating Role of Organizational Commitment in the Correlation between Authentic Leadership and Work Engagement

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Abstract: This quantitative study is one of the series of studies conducted on private universities teachers in KP, Pakistan to explore various positive attitudes including commitment, empowerment and "Work Engagement" as a resultant of "Authentic Leadership" in the universities. This part of the study specifically looks into the mediating effect of the "Organizational Commitment" if "Authentic Leadership" effects the "Work Engagement" of the teachers. A random sample of (N=279) private universities teachers was selected to investigate the relationships among the study variables using correlation analysis and mediation analysis.The findings of Correlation analysis revealed a significant relationship of "Authentic Leadership" with "Work Engagement" and organizational commitment. Similarly"Organizational Commitment" showed a significant relationship with "Work Engagement". Confirmatory factor analysis revealed a significant positive impact of "Authentic Leadership" on "Work Engagement" and organizational commitment. "Organizational Commitment" also revealed a significant positive impact on "Work Engagement". Furthermore, "Organizational Commitment" was found to play an indirect role between "Authentic Leadership" and "Work Engagement". "Organizational Commitment" partially mediated the relationship of "Authentic Leadership" and "Work Engagement". The study strongly recommends a healthy and "Authentic Leadership" process to engage and commit people with their work for a competitive learning environment.

Keywords: Authentic Leadership; Organizational Commitment; "Work Engagement";

Introduction

Competition is one of the reasons for organizations to formulate organizational strategies. The leadership authenticity can ensure improved "Work Engagement" and commitment of the employees at workplace. Leaders should focus on developing a high level of commitment within their followers in order to retain employees"Work Engagement" (Du Plessis, & Boshoff, 2018).The role of leadership–engagement relationship indicates that individuals can draw positive attitudes to improve "Work Engagement" (Yousaf & Hadi, 2020). In the Pakistani context, the educational sector badly need

tremendous contributions from its key players i.e the teachers. The employees' "Work Engagement"with having a high degree of commitment is the prerequisite of the quality and competitive education specifically in the developing countries like Pakistan. However, there is no studies that have tested the mediating role of "Organizational Commitment" between "Authentic Leadership" and "Work Engagement". This study is conducted to examine the mediating effect of "Organizational Commitment" between "Authentic Leadership" and "Work Engagement" of the private sector universities of KP, Pakistan. The findings will help policy makers and authorities to achieve the milestones in education sector.

Literature Review

"Authentic Leadership"

Authenticity is individual's credibility to be accurate, fair and genuine (Avolio & Gardner, 2005 and Harter, 2002). To be authentic is a positive perception that cultivates self-awareness, an adopted moral outlook, composed processing of information, and interactive transparency (Walumbwa et. al., 2008). "Authentic Leadership" depends both on individual's psychological capabilities as well as on organizational context, imitates in the form of greater self-awareness and regulation to foster positive Luthans and Avolio (2003). "Authentic Leadership" comprises of vital dimensions containing rational transparency, balanced processing, self-awareness and internalized moral perspective. Rational transparency refers to the behaviors of leaders that are indispensable for enhancing a strong relationship with subordinates through information, feelings and thoughts sharing. Self-awareness refers to the understanding of leaders about their own weaknesses, strengths and their impact on others. Balanced processing refers to the analysis of information once obtained from subordinates and before making any important decision. An internalized moral perspective refers to the behaviors of leaders that is in line with internal moral standards.

"Work Engagement"

"Work Engagement" is a "work-related psychological state of mind, positive in nature and an indicator of employee well-being" (Schaufeli et al., 2002). It is composed of three dimensions i.e vigor, dedication and absorption. Vigor refers to the amount of energy and efforts which employees are willing to use while doing their work. It is the vigor that enables employees to face the challenges at work and achieve their objectives. Dedication refers to the amount of significance which employees give their work. "Authentic Leadership" plays a significant role in changing the behavior of employees towards "Work Engagement" because "Authentic Leadership" positively affects "Work Engagement"(Álvarez et al., 2019; Banford et al., 2012; Hsieh & Wang, 2015; Joo et al., 2016; Wong et al., 2010; Wang & Hsieh 2013; Oh et al., 2018).

"Organizational Commitment" (OC)

"Organizational Commitment" is the employee's state of commitment to the work as well as an identification with the organization's values and goals (Al-Jabari, & Ghazzawi, 2019). Sheldon, (1971) revealed OC as an attitude toward the organization to link own identity with the organization. It also refers to "a structural phenomenon which occurs as a result of individual organizational transactions and alterations in side bets or investments over time (Hrebiniak, Alutto, 1972)". Affective commitment as one of the dimensions of OC refers to the strong emotional attachment of employees to their

organization because they like to be part of the organization. The other dimension of OC is Continuous commitment refers to the attachment of employees to the organization due to the benefits to be lost in case of termination or retirement. The third dimension of OC is Normative commitment refers to the attachment of employees to their organization due to the sense of obligation (Meyer & Allen. 1991). "Authentic Leadership" positively affects the commitment of employees to their organization (Bento & Ribeiro, 2013; Leroy, Palanski, & Simons, 2012; Valsania et al., 2012).

Relationship between Authentic Leadership, "Work Engagement" and "Organizational Commitment"

Plethora of empirical research studies indicates a positive relationship between "Authentic Leadership" and "Work Engagement" (Álvarez et al., 2019; Banford et al., 2012; Hsieh and Wang, 2015; Joo et al., 2016; Wong et al., 2010; Wang and Hsieh 2013; Oh et al., 2018). Similarly there is a lot of empirical researches on the relationship of "Authentic Leadership" and "Organizational Commitment" (Bento & Ribeiro, 2013; Leroy, Palanski, & Simons, 2012; Valsania et al., 2012). A significant positive relationship is also found between "Organizational Commitment" and "Work Engagement" (Hayati, Charkhabi, Naami . 2014; Manning, 2016 and Shu, 2015). However, there is no studies that have tested the mediating role of "Organizational Commitment" between "Authentic Leadership" and "Work Engagement". This study is done to examine the mediating effect of "Organizational Commitment" between "Authentic Leadership" and "Work Engagement".

 Keeping in view the above literature the following hypotheses are developed:

H_1: "Authentic Leadership" and "Work Engagement" of the private university teachers in KP, Pakistan are positively related.

H_2: "Authentic Leadership" and "Organizational Commitment" of the private university teachers in KP, Pakistan are positively related.

H_3: "Organizational Commitment" and "Work Engagement"of the private university teachers in KP, Pakistan are positively related.

H_4: "Organizational Commitment" of the private university teachers in KP, Pakistan mediates the relationship between "Authentic Leadership" and "Work Engagement".

Research Methodology

This quantitative study is one of the series of studies conducted on private universities teachers in KP, Pakistan to explore various positive attitudes including commitment, empowerment and "Work Engagement" as a resultant of "Authentic Leadership" in the universities. This part of the study specifically looks into the mediating effect of the "Organizational Commitment" if "Authentic Leadership" effects the "Work Engagement" of the teachers. A sample size of N=279 was selected using a random sampling technique.

Data collection procedure

Data were collected from the teachers of private sector universities of KP, Pakistan. Two hundred and ninety (290) faculty members participated in this study. They were apprised of the objective of this research before they were distributed questionnaires. Eleven (11) questionnaires were disposed of

because they contained incomplete information. Two hundred and seventy nine questionnaires which were 100 percent complete were used for analysis purpose.

Measurement

1. Measurement of "Authentic Leadership"

To measure authentic leadership, "Authentic Leadership" inventory (ALI) adapted from (Neider and Schrieshei, 2011) was used. This inventory has four dimensions and each dimension has four items. Sixteen items were used to measure authentic leadership. The most common 5 point likert scale being "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" was used to measure all dimensions of authentic leadership.

2. Measurement of "Work Engagement"

To measure "Work Engagement", "Work Engagement" Scale adapted from Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) was used. This scale has three dimensions and each dimension three items. Nine items were used to measure "Work Engagement". The most common 6 point likert scale being "never" to "always" was used to measure all dimensions of "Work Engagement".

3. "Organizational Commitment" Questionnaire

To measure organizational commitment, "Organizational Commitment" scale adapted from Meyer and Allen (1991) was used. This scale has three dimensions and each dimension has 6 items. Eighteen items were used to measure organizational commitment. The most common 5 point likert scale being "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" was used to measure all dimensions of organizational commitment.

Table 1

Details of the instruments used in the Study

Variables and Instrument	No. of Items	Source
"Authentic Leadership" Inventory (ALI)	16	Neider & Schrieshei, (2011)
"Work Engagement" Scale	09	Schaufeli & Bakker (2004)
"Organizational Commitment" scale OCS	18	Meyer & Allen (1991)

For the analysis of collected data, a mix of statistical methods was employed including Pearson Correlation analysis and mediation analysis

Results and Discussions

Correlation

The correlation between Authentic Leadership, "Organizational Commitment" and Psychological Empowerment is calculated from the collected data.

Table 2

Correlation among authentic leadership, "Organizational Commitment" and "Work Engagement"

(Sample N= 279)

		Authentic Leadership	Organizational Commitment	""Work Engagement""
"Authentic Leadership"	"r"	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
"Organizational Commitment"	"r"	0.382**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		
""Work Engagement""	"r"	0. 673**	0.443**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	

Correlation is Significant at 0.01level, (2-tailed)

Table 2 reveals the relationship among authentic leadership, "Organizational Commitment" and "Work Engagement" of teachers working private universties of KP, Pakistan. As shown in Table 2, the Pearson correlation value (r=0.382, p=0.000) between "Authentic Leadership" and "Organizational Commitment" explains a positively significant relationship. This explains the significance of having "Authentic Leadership" to increase the teachers' commitment in the private universities of KP, Pakistan similar as studies by Ausar, Kang, & Kim, 2016. The correlation value (r=0.673, p= 0.000) between "Authentic Leadership" and "Work Engagement" shows significantly positive and strong relationship. This implies that "Authentic Leadership" can ensure the "Work Engagement" of the teachers as revealed by Gigol, (2020).Similarly the correlation value (r=0.443, p=0.000) between "Organizational Commitment" and "Work Engagement"explains the significantly positive relationship. The findings expose positively significant relationship with each other similar to the studies of Liu, (2019).The change in one will bring positive change in other and vice versa.

Therefore the following hypotheses were accepted:

H1: "Authentic Leadership" and "Work Engagement" of the private university teachers in KP, Pakistan are positively related.
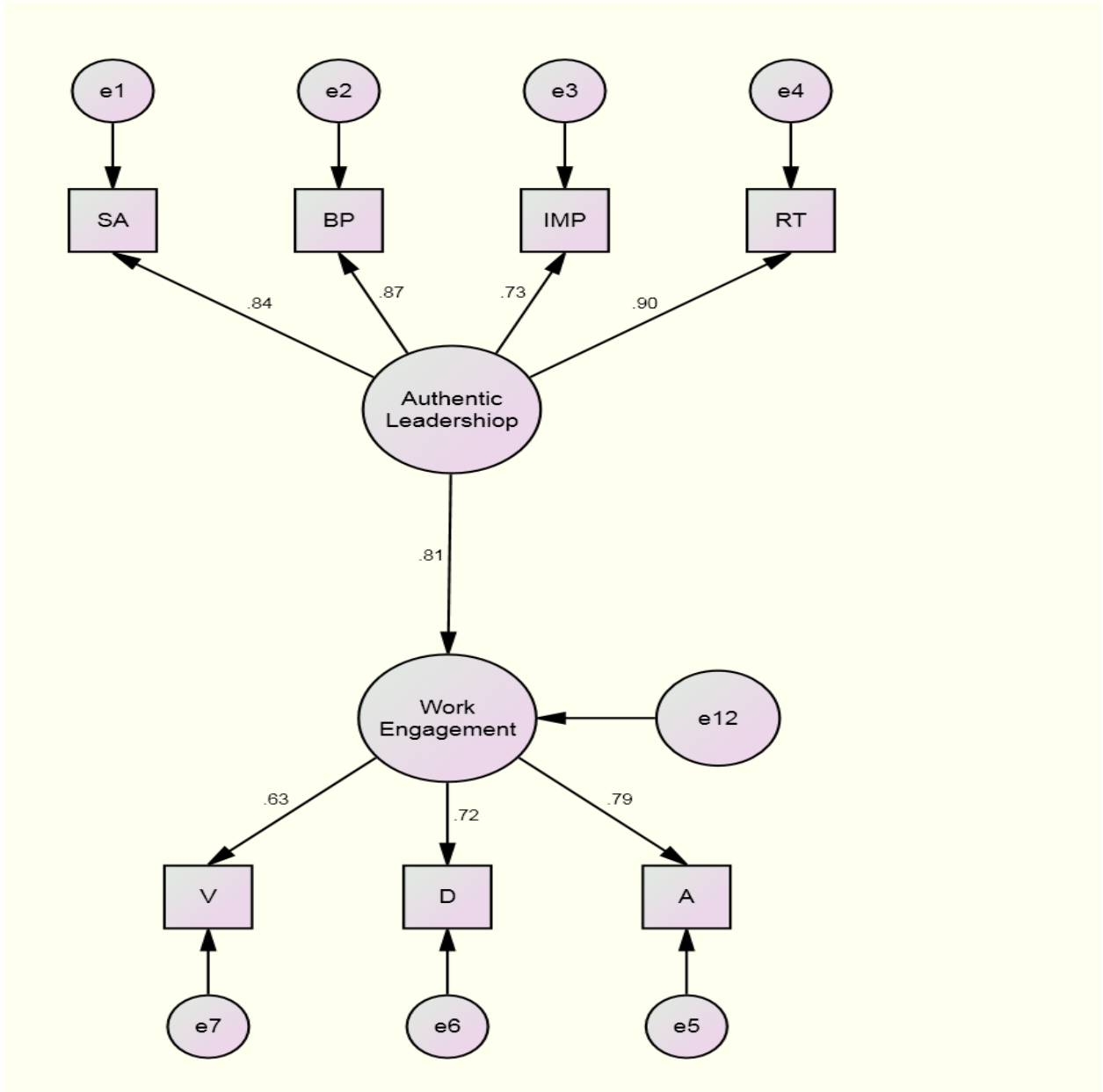
H2: "Authentic Leadership" and "Organizational Commitment" of the private university teachers in KP, Pakistan are positively related.

H3: "Organizational Commitment" and "Work Engagement"of the private university teachers in KP, Pakistan are positively related.

Mediation Analysis

  1. *Direct Path from "Authentic Leadership" to "Work Engagement"*

A direct path from "Authentic Leadership" to "Work Engagement" was tested to know whether the independent variable i.e., "Authentic Leadership" significantly affect the dependent variable i.e., "Work Engagement" so as to meet the procedure adopted by Baron and Kenny (1986) for testing the mediating role. The first condition proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986) was satisfied because "Authentic Leadership" significantly affected "Work Engagement" with Chi-square = 20.852; DF = 13; GFI = .980; CFI = .993; RMSEA = .047. So Hypothesis 1: "Authentic Leadership" and "Work Engagement" are

positively related is accepted. All values of indices are within the acceptable range. Other results are given the table below.

Table 3

Model	NPAR	CMIN	DF	P	CMIN/DF
Default model	15	20.852	13	.076	1.604
Saturated model	28	.000	0		
Independence model	7	1130.716	21	.000	53.844

Model	RMR	GFI	AGFI	PGFI
Default model	.010	.980	.956	.455
Saturated model	.000	1.000		
Independence model	.242	.345	.126	.259

Model	NFI Delta1	RFI rho1	IFI Delta2	TLI rho2	CFI
Default model	.982	.970	.993	.989	.993
Saturated model	1.000		1.000		1.000
Independence model	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Model	RMSEA	LO 90	HI 90	PCLOSE
Default model	.047	.000	.082	.517
Independence model	.436	.415	.458	.000
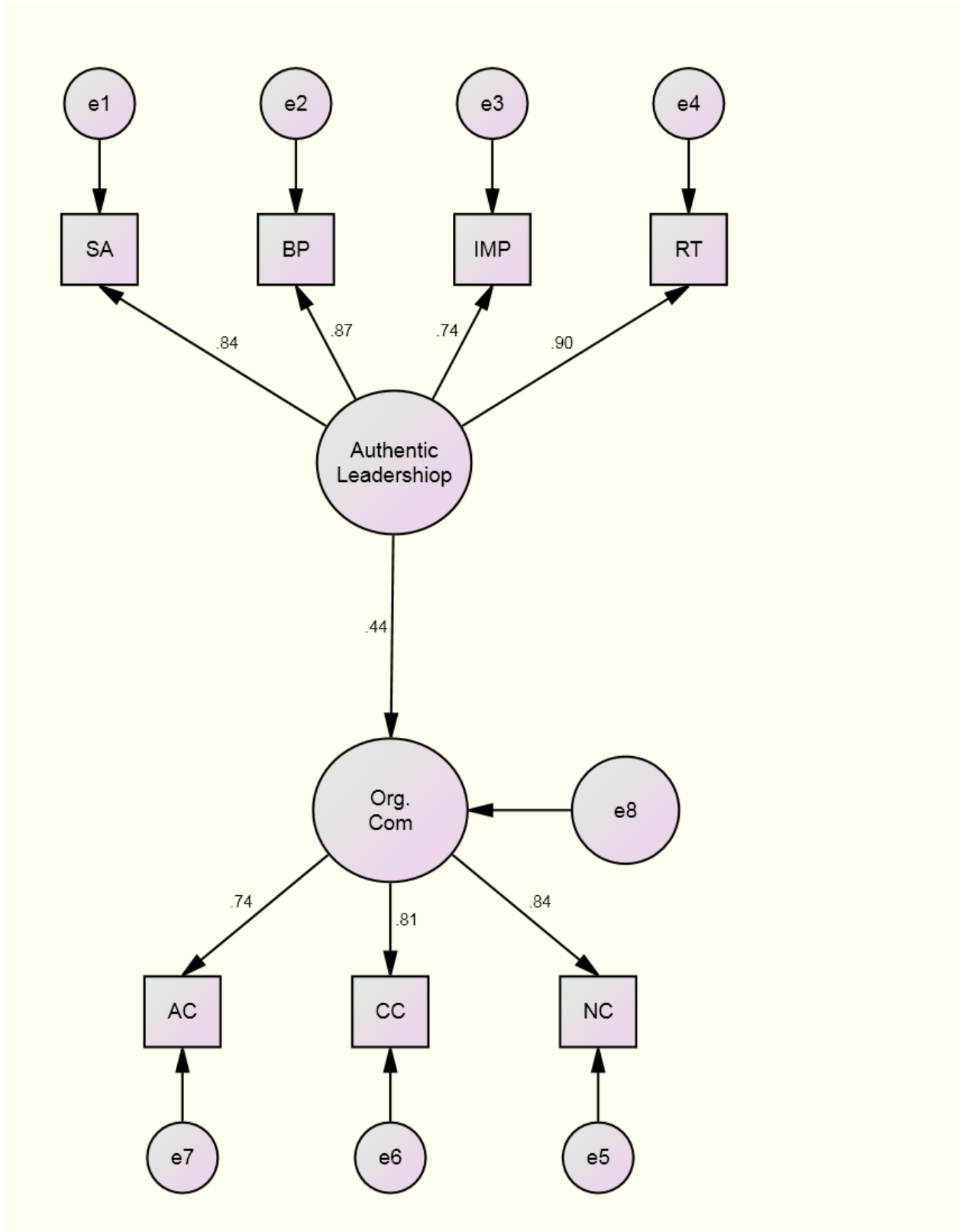
2. Direct Path from "Authentic Leadership" to Organizational Commitment

A direct path from "Authentic Leadership" to "Organizational Commitment" was tested to know whether the independent variable i.e., "Authentic Leadership" significantly affect the mediator i.e., "Organizational Commitment" so as to meet the procedure adopted by Baron and Kenny (1986) for testing the mediating role. The 2nd condition proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986) was satisfied because "Authentic Leadership" significantly affected "Organizational Commitment" with Chi-square = 15.479; DF = 13; GFI = .984; CFI = .998; RMSEA = .026. All values of indices are within the acceptable range. Other results are given the table below.

Table 4

Model	NPAR	CMIN	DF	P	CMIN/DF
Default model	15	15.479	13	.278	1.191
Saturated model	28	.000	0		
Independence model	7	1119.627	21	.000	53.316

Model	RMR	GFI	AGFI	PGFI
Default model	.014	.984	.966	.457
Saturated model	.000	1.000		
Independence model	.235	.401	.202	.301

Model	NFI Delta1	RFI rho1	IFI Delta2	TLI rho2	CFI
Default model	.986	.978	.998	.996	.998
Saturated model	1.000		1.000		1.000
Independence model	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Model	RMSEA	LO 90	HI 90	PCLOSE
Default model	.026	.000	.068	.790
Independence model	.434	.412	.456	.000
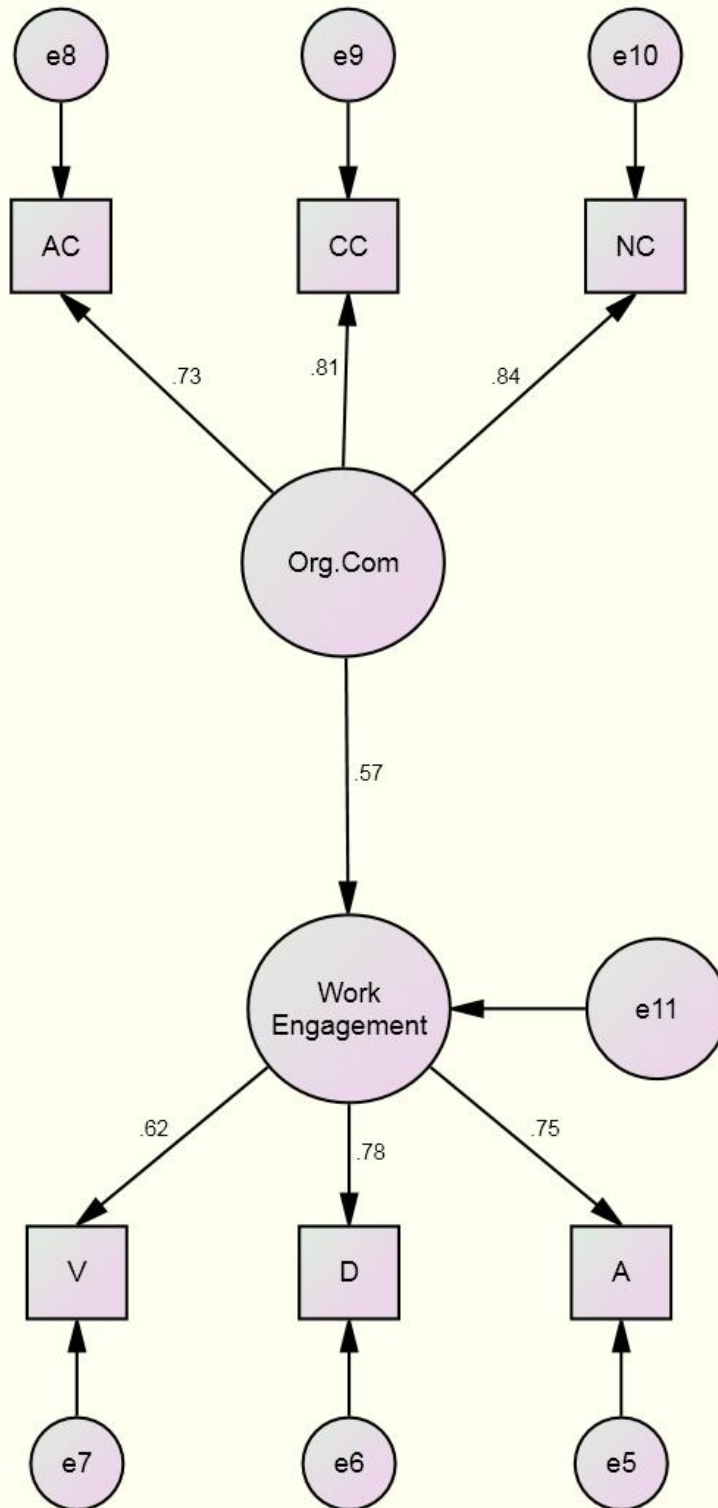
3. Direct Path from "Organizational Commitment" to "Work Engagement"

A direct path from "Organizational Commitment" to "Work Engagement" was tested to know whether the mediator i.e., "Organizational Commitment" significantly affects the dependent variable i.e., "Work Engagement" so as to meet the procedure adopted by Baron and Kenny (1986) for testing the mediating role. The 3rd condition proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986) was satisfied because mediator significantly affected "Work Engagement" with Chi-square = 9.491; DF = 8; GFI = .989; CFI = .998; RMSEA = .026. All values of indices are within the acceptable range. Other results are given the table below.

Table 4

Model	NPAR	CMIN	DF	P	CMIN/DF
Default model	13	9.491	8	.303	1.186
Saturated model	21	.000	0		
Independence model	6	620.312	15	.000	41.354

Model	RMR	GFI	AGFI	PGFI
Default model	.013	.989	.970	.377
Saturated model	.000	1.000		
Independence model	.176	.504	.305	.360

Model	NFI Delta1	RFI rho1	IFI Delta2	TLI rho2	CFI
Default model	.985	.971	.998	.995	.998
Saturated model	1.000		1.000		1.000
Independence model	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Model	RMSEA	LO 90	HI 90	PCLOSE
Default model	.026	.000	.078	.720
Independence model	.381	.356	.407	.000
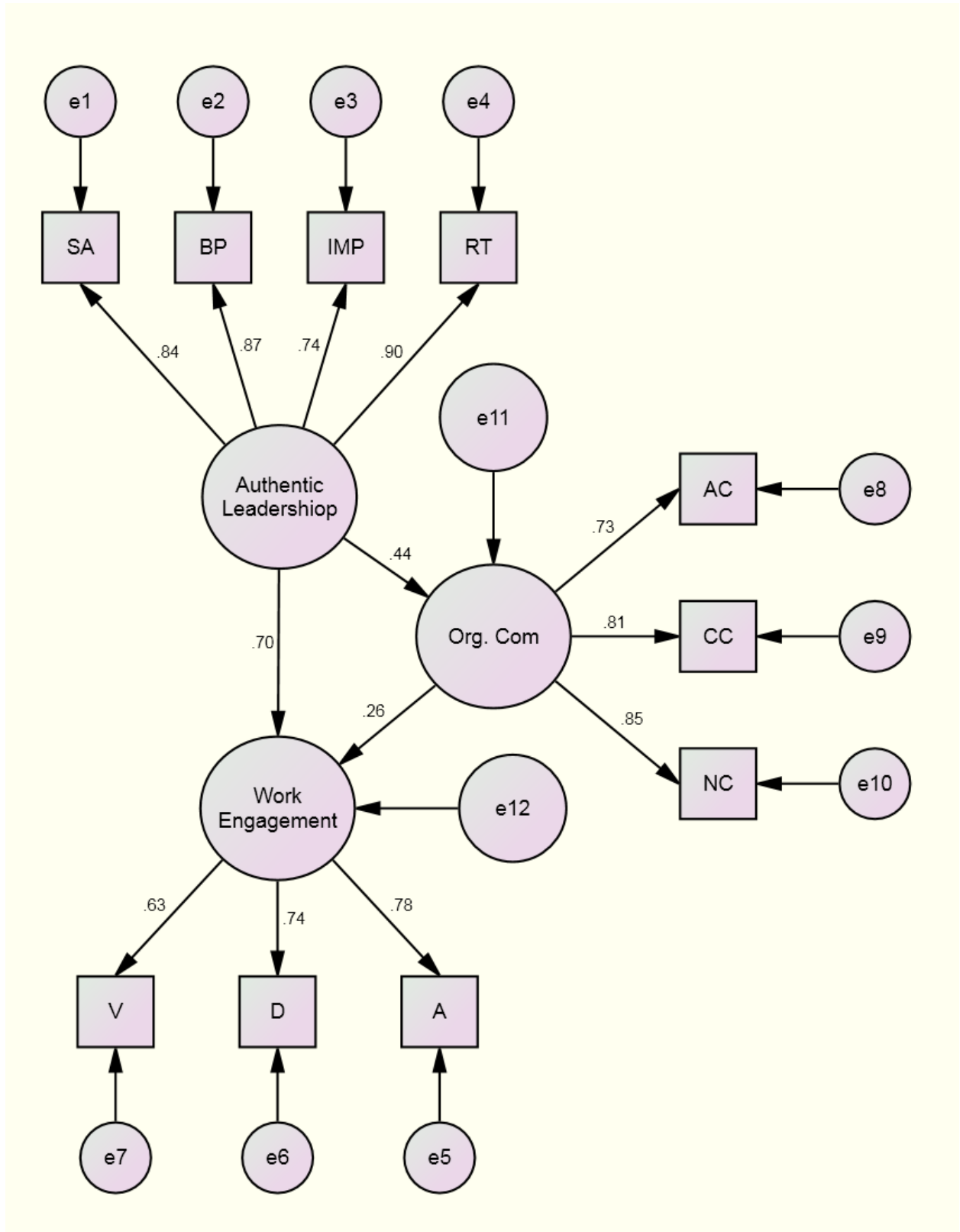
4. Indirect Path from "Authentic Leadership" to "Work Engagement" through Organizational Commitment

An indirect path from "Authentic Leadership" to "Work Engagement" through "Organizational Commitment" was tested after the satisfaction of all three conditions of Baron and Kenny (1986). "Organizational Commitment" partially mediated the relationship between "Authentic Leadership" and "Work Engagement". The value of .81 reduced to .70 after including "Organizational Commitment" as mediator between "Authentic Leadership" and "Work Engagement" with Chi-square = 46.692; DF = 32; GFI = .968; CFI = .990; RMSEA = .041. All values of indices are within the acceptable range. Other results are given the table below.

Model	NPAR	CMIN	DF	P	CMIN/DF
Default model	23	46.692	32	.045	1.459
Saturated model	55	.000	0		
Independence model	10	1560.107	45	.000	34.669

Model	RMR	GFI	AGFI	PGFI
Default model	.015	.968	.946	.563
Saturated model	.000	1.000		
Independence model	.213	.336	.189	.275

Model	NFI Delta1	RFI rho1	IFI Delta2	TLI rho2	CFI
Default model	.970	.958	.990	.986	.990
Saturated model	1.000		1.000		1.000
Independence model	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Model	RMSEA	LO 90	HI 90	PCLOSE
Default model	.041	.006	.065	.715
Independence model	.348	.333	.363	.000

Conclusion and Recommendation

This quantitative study is one of the series of studies conducted on private universities teachers in KP, Pakistan to explore various positive attitudes including commitment, empowerment and "Work Engagement" as a subsequent of "Authentic Leadership" in the universities. This part of the study specifically looks into the mediating effect of the "Organizational Commitment" if "Authentic

Leadership" effects the "Work Engagement" of the teachers. Data were collected from teachers of private sector universities of KP, Pakistan. A total of 279 questionnaires were used for data analysis. Correlation analysis revealed a significant relationship of "Authentic Leadership" with "Work Engagement"(Gigol, 2020) and "Organizational Commitment" (Ausar, Kang, & Kim, 2016). Similarly "Organizational Commitment" showed a significant relationship with "Work Engagement". Confirmatory factor analysis revealed a significant positive impact of "Authentic Leadership" on "Work Engagement" and organizational commitment. "Organizational Commitment" also revealed a significant positive impact on "Work Engagement". Furthermore, "Organizational Commitment" was found to play an indirect role between "Authentic Leadership" and "Work Engagement". "Organizational Commitment" partially mediated the relationship of "Authentic Leadership" and "Work Engagement". The study strongly recommends a healthy and "Authentic Leadership" process to engage and commit people with their work for a competitive learning environment. The study may be replicated in public sector universities and even at school and colleges level.

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