

The Impact of Authentic Leadership on Job Satisfaction of the civil engineers in Thailand

Nopphong Kerdngern, Sutthathip Kamthornphiphatthanakul, Narinthorn Somthong

Department of Logistics and Supply Chain Management, Ramkhamhaeng University, Bangkok, Thailand.

Department of Logistics and Supply Chain Management, Ramkhamhaeng University, Bangkok, Thailand.

Department of Accounting Management, Ramkhamhaeng University, Bangkok, Thailand.

Corresponding Author: Nopphong Kerdngern

ABSTRACT

This empirical research is to examine the relationship between project manager's authentic leadership style and job satisfaction of the civil engineers in Thailand. Attaining job satisfaction is crucial to retain productive and efficient employees. Therefore, one of the ways that may be effective help project managers in increasing the satisfaction among their followers is employing the right leadership style. Four authentic leadership characteristics which are self-awareness (**SA**), balanced processing of information (**BPI**), internalized moral perspective (**IMP**) and relational transparency (**RT**) are discussed. Base on literature review, most previous studies confirmed that these characteristics are significantly related to job satisfaction. An empirical study was conducted by 400 civil engineers in Thailand. The quantitative study applies a survey type of research design. The survey method using a structured questionnaire was utilized to obtain primary data from the participants. The collected data is then analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis. The findings show that **SA** and **RT** are found to have significant relationship with job satisfaction. Characteristics of **RT** are found to be contributed most in job satisfaction.

Keywords: authentic leadership, job satisfaction, project manager, civil engineers

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I. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays companies operate in a very competitive global environment, punctuated by the financial crisis. Given the rapid and substantial changes occurring in the economic environment, organizations have to adapt to the market and work to become and remain competitive. The effect of globalization, demographic changes, shifts in social structures, and technological advancements enables people to work together which needs the new blood leaders to bridge social identity boundaries among groups of people with very different backgrounds, perspectives, values, and cultures. According to Yulk[1], successful organizations require the leadership skills. Among the essential leadership skills is the ability to visualize the future changes that impact the business operations and then conceive the countermeasure strategies. Substantial research indicates that a leader and his style being perceived as trustworthy leads to positive job satisfaction[2].

The construction industry has greatly contributed to the development of countries[3]. There are a lot of infrastructure and construction projects face many challenges arise through a need to maintain the skills and competitive workforce. The cost of the turnover to organizations can be

high. Given the knowledge-intensive nature of the construction industry and its relatively high labor costs in overall costs, turnover is an important issue for the construction industry. Project managers are key players in projects and construction industry, their interpersonal skills and leadership in addition to the project management technical competencies will ensure smooth running of projects towards achieving its designated goals and success. The role of project manager involves management of activities and achievement of the short-term goals of the project such as conforming to budget, schedule, and quality that make more production-oriented rather than relationship-oriented. Managing projects in the 21st century will require a new breed of construction project leaders that different approach and therefore different attributes, knowledge and skills of project managers[4]. To remediate, one possible solution is for the project managers to establish an understanding of the contributing factors of the high employee turnover and boosting the employee job satisfaction, particularly that of civil engineers who are highly skilled, confident, creative and independent but at the same time less disciplined and occasionally insubordinate[5].

Thus the aim of this paper is to address the identified need for the leadership style to suit project

environments of the third wave and the future. Hence this paper will discuss the attributes of authentic leadership (AL) to identify whether this leadership style required for successful employee satisfaction. And then draw on results of literature review research to explore the broad concept of leadership style illustrate the importance placed upon fitting values with authentic leadership style, and the increased job satisfaction (JS) for civil engineers.

II. THEORETICAL REVIEW

Leadership

Style of Leadership is the first issue which is focused when a leader's performance is assessed by others. It is also one of the most popular topics among the researchers in the leadership area. Leadership has been interest for many hundreds of years that are numerous and vary considerable definitions. Thus, this research defines leadership as the ability to inspire confidence and support among the people who are needed to achieve organizational goals[6]. Most definitions of leadership reflect the assumption that involves a process whereby intentional influence is exerted over other people to guide, structure, and facilitate activities and relationships in an organization. The most common theories of leadership are the trait theory, the behavioral theory, the contingency or situational theory, and the transformational theory[7]. Several studies have shown significant relationships among the leadership behavior and job satisfaction[8-12]. However, there is no one best style of leadership. Leaders must attempt to construct validity of vigor, energetic collective job condition and become more concerned regarding satisfaction of employees.

Authentic leadership

Philosophy, psychology and social psychology, are the three main disciplines which have helped in understanding the concept of authentic leadership literature[13-15]. The philosophical concept of authenticity dates back to the ancient Greek times when it was defined as, being yourself[13]. However, social psychologists the construct was defined, as a process that draws from both positive psychological capacities and a highly developed organizational context, which results in both greater self-awareness and self-regulated positive behaviors on the part of leaders and associates, fostering positive self-development[16].

However, for the first time defined the construct as a four factor model including; self-awareness, unbiased processing, internalized moral perspective and authentic relational orientation[17]. Meanwhile Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing and Peterson[18] validated these factors by testing in

USA (individualistic country) and China (collectivist country) to develop a theory based measure. According to Avolio and Gardner[19], authentic leadership is described as the root component of effective leadership required to build trust and ethical work environments. Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May and Walumbwa describe four components of authentic leadership: self-awareness, which refers to understanding not only their own strengths and limitations, but how they affect others; balanced processing information, which involves analyzing all relevant information objectively before coming to a decision; internalized moral perspective, which refers to self-regulation guided by internal moral standards and values; and Relational transparency: which refers to openly sharing information through honest communication with others while trying to minimize displays of inappropriate emotions[20].

Job Satisfaction

Employees' job satisfaction is an important facet of human resource management. Job Satisfaction (JS) can be defined as the degree of conformity of a person regarding his or her work environment; or more formally as, the positive or pleasant emotional state, resulting from the subjective perception of the person regarding his or her work experiences[21]. The importance of job satisfaction appears when the numerous negative effects of job dissatisfaction such as lack of loyalty, the increasing number of accidents, and absenteeism are taken into assessment[22]. The commonly used theories in the study of employee's job Satisfaction are Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, Alderfer's Existence, Relatedness, Growth Needs (ERG) theory, and Herzberg's two-factor theory[1]. More recently, debate has arisen as to whether job satisfaction is a global concept or is composed of facets of satisfaction with various aspects of an individual's job determinants of job satisfaction are whether an employee finds their job interesting, has good relationships with their managers and colleagues, has a high income, is allowed to work independently, and has clearly defined career advancement opportunities[23].

The job satisfaction will lead employees toward positive behavior and vice versa, job dissatisfaction will cause negative behaviors among employees. The evaluation of job satisfaction in organizational units, identifies different levels of satisfaction and consequently, those units in which improvements should be made can be recognized. As discussed earlier, the effect of leadership, especially authentic leadership significant relationship between leadership and job satisfaction. For example, Giallonardo, Wong and Iwasiw[24] has been found job satisfaction was explained by

authentic leadership. Some empirical studies have also found positive correlation between authentic leadership and job satisfaction[25-27]. Thus, this study examined the relationship between project manager's authentic leadership style and job satisfaction of the civil engineers in Thailand. The hypothesized relationships in this study are presented in figure 1. that shown resulting in the following hypotheses:

H1: There is significant relationship between authentic leadership and job satisfaction of Civil Engineers in Thailand.

Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework for this study that shows the relationship between dependent variable job satisfaction and four authentic leadership style domains as independent variables that show in Figure 1.

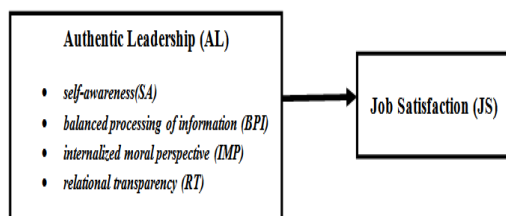


Fig. 1: Conceptual Framework

III. RESEARCH SAMPLE AND METHODOLOGY

This empirical research is to examine the relationship between authentic leadership style and job satisfaction by means of a descriptive and analytical methodology. The quantitative study applies a survey type of research design that using a structured questionnaire was utilized to obtain primary data from the participants. The sample consisted of 400 civil engineers from Thai construction companies by Yamane[28] using a questionnaire that was using the cluster and purposive random sampling techniques. The research questionnaire contains three sections. The first section is the demographics of the respondents. The second section deals with the construction project manager's authentic leadership styles based on the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) developed by Rader[27] and the third section concerns the participating civil engineer's job satisfaction based on the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) short form developed by Weiss, Dawis, England and Lofquist[29]. The

questionnaire questions in Sections 2 and 3 are of the four-point Likert scale questions[30].

Prior to the data collection, the questionnaire questions were reviewed by a panel of five qualified experts and have satisfied the content validity requirements with the questions' index of item-objective congruence (IOC) in the range of 0.6-1.0. According to Rovinelli and Hambleton[31], the IOC greater than 0.5 is regarded as statistically significant. The questionnaire questions were then trialed with a group of 30 civil engineers to determine the internal consistency reliability. Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the questionnaire were 0.76-0.8. According to Hee[32], the alpha coefficient greater than or equal to (\geq) 0.6 is regarded as statistically significant. The collected data is then analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis.

IV. RESULTS

In this sample were 318 males and 82 female between the ages of 25 and 35 years. The levels of education included bachelor's degree (83%) and master's degree (17%). The length of work experience encompassed less than 1 year (9%), 1-5 years (33%), 5-10 years (23%), and more than 10 years (35%). The levels of income included below THB 20,000 (27%), THB 20,000-29,999 (25%), THB 30,000-40,000 (26%), and above THB 40,000 (22%), where 1 USD is equal to THB 33. The company size included fewer than 20 employees (19%), 20-50 employees (27%), 51-100 employees (19%), and more than 100 employees (35%). The length of operation included less than 1 year (4%), 1-5 years (18%), 6-10 years (13%), and longer than 10 years (65%).

The results of Pearson Correlation Analysis between authentic leadership and job satisfaction that shown the four authentic leadership characteristics have significant positive effect on job satisfaction as shown in Table 1. Moreover the results of the multiple regression analysis shown in Table 2 displays the standardized beta coefficients between the predictor variable authentic leadership characteristics and the dependent variable overall job satisfaction indicate that, there is significant in self-awareness ($p = 0.042$) and relational transparency ($p = 0.000$) with job satisfaction. The Beta coefficients show positive values which were statistically significant at the different levels. The highest Beta coefficient value found is relational transparency (Beta = 0.379).

Table 1: Pearson Correlation Analysis between authentic leadership and job satisfaction

Authentic Leadership	Pearson Correlation Analysis	Sig. (2-tailed)
self-awareness(SA)	.494**	.000
balanced processing of information (BPI)	.509**	.000
internalized moral perspective (IMP)	.536**	.000
relational transparency (RT)	.590**	.000

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

Table 2: Multiple Regression Analysis between authentic leadership and job satisfaction

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Standard Error	Beta	t	
(Constant)	.943			7.498	.000
SA	.125	.061	.128	2.040	.042
BPI	.082	.064	.084	1.275	.203
IMP	.066	.059	.083	1.135	.257
RT	.342	.065	.379	5.263	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction (Overall)

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between project manager's authentic leadership style and job satisfaction of the civil engineers in Thailand. The findings confirm that authentic leadership have significant positive effect on employee's job satisfaction[24,26,27,33]. Empirical support was gained for Avolio and Gardner's contention that authentic leadership impacts the work attitudes and behaviors of employees[19]. This is because the correlation coefficient is moderate signifying that there are all authentic leadership style factors of that can significantly increase job satisfaction. The finding implies that, if the construction company maintain practices that ensure civil engineers are satisfied with their project manager will increase the employee's job satisfaction. Moreover, this findings support previous researches (Amunkete and Sebastiaan[34]; Yon, Kim, Ko and Park[35]) which reported that leaders who implement authentic leadership characteristic, such as relational transparency (RT) and self-awareness (SA) contribute more towards employee's job satisfaction that self-awareness (SA) contribute the most towards job satisfaction.

Specifically, finding of the study suggest the need for construction companies to as a matter of urgency ensure that their organizational policies are favorable to employees and align them strategically with the overall objective of the organizations. This will ensure that employee have sense of accomplishment with the job to enable them become satisfied and exert effort to benchmark with the global construction practices. Moreover, in situations where construction strategically implement their policies they are transmitting a positive signal to employees' that their presence in the organization matters to them. In essence, the need to development sound policies in leadership style that stimulate employee job satisfaction in the construction industry. Hence the study recommends that construction company in Thailand accord more

priority to the development of favorable policies in their relationship between leader and employees in order to fully harness the potentials endowed in each of their employees.

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