

The Influence of Authentic Leadership And Psychological Capital on Work Engagement: The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction

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Abstract

This study examines the effects of Authentic Leadership and psychological capital on Work Engagement, with job satisfaction serving as a mediating variable among healthcare workers at Indramayu Regional General Hospital, Indonesia. The study addresses inconsistent findings in previous research regarding the relationship between these variables, particularly in healthcare settings. A quantitative study employing a cross-sectional survey design was conducted. Data were collected through an online questionnaire from 100 healthcare workers selected using purposive sampling from a population of 478 employees. The data were analysed using partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) with Smart PLS 4. The findings reveal that Authentic Leadership has no Significant effect on either Job Satisfaction or Work Engagement, and Job Satisfaction does not mediate the relationship between Authentic Leadership and Work Engagement. In contrast, Psychological Capital has positive and Significant effect on both Job Satisfaction and Work Engagement. In addition, Job Satisfaction positively influences Work Engagement. These findings indicate that Psychological Capital is a stronger predictor of Work Engagement than Authentic Leadership among healthcare workers. The study extends the Job Demands Resources (JD-R) theory by highlighting Psychological Capital as an important personal resource that enhances Work Engagement through Job Satisfaction. Practically, hospital management should prioritise strategies that strengthen employees Psychological Capital and improve Job Satisfaction to foster higher Work Engagement better healthcare service quality.

INTRODUCTION

Human resources play a crucial role in the determining the quality and sustainability of healthcare services because healthcare organizations rely heavily on employees to deliver consistent, timely, and high quality patient care. Beyond technical competence, employees motivation, commitment, and willingness to perform their responsibilities effectively are essential for achieving organizational success (Mahmoud et al., 2025). Consequently, work engagement has become an important issue in healthcare management. Work engagement is defined by (Schaufeli et al., 2006) as a vigour, dedication, and absorption, which stand for employees' fervour, emotional commitment, and total attention while working. Increased perseverance, initiative, and job success are linked to high work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). Low work engagement may lower staff productivity and compromise healthcare quality.

The capacity of medical personnel to offer timely, accurate, and responsive treatment is crucial to the quality of care given, making work engagement a growing concern in the healthcare industry. Organizations and physical demands to the workplace (Gregorio et al., 2023). Improving employee productivity and sustaining organizational continuity are both boosted by work engagement and job satisfaction, according to previous research (Bina et al., 2025). Twenty medical staff members (66.7%) had very high level of work engagement, nine (30.0%) had high level of

engagement, and one (3.3%) had mediate level, according to an initial pre-survey conducted 30 medical staff members at Indramayu Regional General Hospital using Work Engagement scale (UWES) questionnaire. The majority of employees seem to be enthusiastically pursuing their jobs, based on these results. Some employees, meanwhile, are still not giving it their all. Consequently it is important to find out what keeps medical professionals engaged in their job and what they can do to make it even better if we want to keep hospital service standards high.

Previous studies have identified both organizational and individual factors that influence employees work engagement (Başaran & KIRAL, 2022; Niswaty et al., 2021; Towsen et al., 2020). Among organizational factors, authentic leadership has received considerable attention because authentic leaders promote transparency, integrity, ethical behavior, and trust, which encourage employees to become more engaged in their work (Abdullah et al., 2023). Additionally, psychological capital which includes optimism, hope, resilience, and self-efficacy has long been acknowledged as a crucial personal resource that helps workers deal with obstacle at work and sustain engagement (Masindi & Khashane, 2025; Meiliyandrie et al., 2020; Rosa et al., 2025). Additionally, job satisfaction has been found to be a significant psychological mechanism that influences workers' work engagement through organisational and personal resources (Wong et al., 2020). Additionally, prior research has shown that organisational elements such as work atmosphere, work motivation, and work discipline have a major impact on workers job satisfaction (Iswara Putri et al., 2021).

The (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008) Job Demands Resources (JD-R) theory explains this study's relationships. Personal and professional resources boost workplace engagement, according to JD-R. Because they offer assistance, direction, openness, and moral leadership that improve workers performance, authentic leaders are considered a job resource in this study. Hope, optimism, resilience, and self efficacy make psychological capital, a personal resource that helps workers deal obstacles at work. As a result it is anticipated that psychological capital and authentic leadership will serve as crucial organisational and individual resources that improve workers job satisfaction and eventually boost work engagement.

Research gaps remain regarding the relationships among authentic leadership, psychological capital, job satisfaction, and work engagement. The direct impact of authentic leadership on work engagement has been the subject of conflicting findings in earlier research. Job satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between psychological capital and work engagement and fully mediates the relationship between authentic leadership and work engagement (Wirawan et al., 2020), indicating that more research is needed to understand the underlying mechanisms connecting these variables. Furthermore, there is little information about healthcare workers who deal with particular occupational and psychological demands because the majority of earlier research was done in non-healthcare settings. Thus, more research is required in healthcare settings.

To address these gaps, this study examines how psychological capital and authentic leadership affect job satisfaction and work engagement among healthcare personnel at Indramayu Regional General Hospital, Indonesia. By offering empirical data on the relative contributions of organisational and individual resources to job engagement in healthcare organisations, the results are anticipated to broaden the applicability of job Demands Resources (JD-R) theory. Furthermore, this study provides hospital management with useful recommendations for developing evidence based tactics to boost psychological capital, enhance job satisfaction, and encourage greater levels of work engagement among healthcare professionals.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS

a. Social Exchange Theory

All ties between humans and organizations rest on the principle of reciprocity, as stated in Blau's (1964) Social Exchange Theory (SET). When workers feel appreciated and respected by management, they are more inclined to give their all for the organization. Employees report higher levels of job satisfaction and work engagement when they are well-supported by their leaders and have access to the tools they need to do their jobs well. The definition of authentic leadership in this research is leaders that assist their organizations while acting with honesty, openness, and integrity. Psychological capital, on the other hand, is a person's positive mental resources that they may draw on to deal with the stresses of their employment. When workers feel encouraged by their managers, they are more likely to be content with their positions and committed to their work (Cook et al., 2013).

b. Job Demands-Resources Theory

According to Bakker and Demerouti (2008), the JD-R Theory was put out. Workplace engagement is impacted by both individual and organizational resources, which are discussed in this article. Employees are able to achieve their work goals, cope with work stress, and grow professionally and personally thanks to job resources, which include physical, social, psychological, and organizational components. Meanwhile, personal resources are positive psychological characteristics possessed by individuals that help them cope with various work challenges (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). In this study, authentic leadership is categorized as a job resource because authentic leaders are able to provide support, guidance, and a positive work environment for their subordinates. Psychological capital, on the other hand, is a kind of personal resource that includes things like self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience; these things keep people invested in their job. Both of these resources are believed to enhance job satisfaction and promote increased work engagement.

Authentic Leadership and Work Engagement

Integrity, honesty, self-awareness, openness in interactions, internalized moral compass, and balance in processing are traits of authentic leadership (Walumbwa et al., 2008). According to social Exchange Theory, when leaders support and treat workers fairly, they are more likely to exhibit positive work behaviors, such as higher levels of engagement. According to the JD-R Theory, authentic leadership is a tool that boosts motivation and engagement at work. Employees are more involved in their work when their leaders are genuine (Abdullah et al., 2023). Similarly, it has been demonstrated that employees are more committed to their work when they perceive their leaders to be sincere (Giri & Indrawati, 2025). These findings support of (Mahmoud et al., 2025), who discovered that authentic leadership significantly raises employee engagement.

Psychological Capital and Work Engagement

Positive traits like hope, optimism, self-efficacy, and resilience make up person's psychological capital (Towsen et al., 2020). One of the personal resources that may help people deal with the challenges of their jobs and become more invested in what they do is psychological capital, which is part of the JD-R theory. People who score high on the psychological Capital scale are more likely to be optimistic, self-assured, and able to keep going when things go tough on the job. According to studies conducted by (Varonicha Ambarwati et al., 2023), psychological capital has a substantial and favorable effect on employee engagement in the workplace.

H2: Psychological Capital has a positive effect on Work Engagement.

Authentic Leadership and Job Satisfaction

Authentic leadership fosters honesty, transparency, and trust between managers and employees, creating a positive work environment. According to Social Exchange Theory, workers are happier at work if they think their leaders are fair and supportive. Authentic leadership improves leader worker relationships and job satisfaction (Wong et al., 2020).

H3: Authentic Leadership has a positive effect on Job Satisfaction.

Psychological Capital and Job Satisfaction

Higher psychological capital people are more positive and better at handling work challenges. Psychological capital improves workers mental health and job satisfaction, according to the JD-R Theory. (Anugrah, 2025) discovered that workers job satisfaction is positively impacted by psychological capital.

H4: Psychological Capital has a positive effects on job satisfaction.

Job Satisfaction and Work Engagement

A good emotional state brought on by workers assessments of their work is referred to as job satisfaction (Wirawan et al., 2020). According to the Social Exchange Theory, workers who are happy in their positions are more likely to show higher involvement at work in return. According to (Kappen et al., 2025), workers' work engagement is positively impacted by job satisfaction.

H5: Job satisfaction has a positive effects on Work Engagement .

The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction

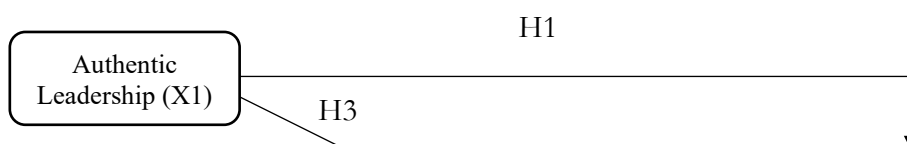
Authentic leadership and psychological capital may boost job satisfaction and work engagement. Social Exchange Theory suggests that workers with strong psychological resources and authentic leaders are happier at work, which boosts engagement. Previous research by (Wirawan et al., 2020) found that job satisfaction fully mediates the relationship between authentic leadership and work engagement, while partially mediating the relationship between psychological capital and work engagement.

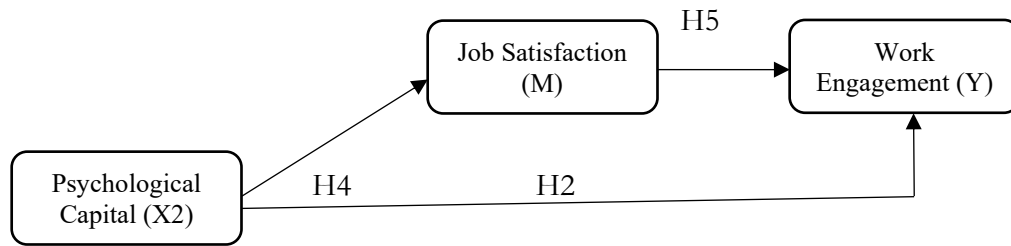
H6: Job satisfaction mediates the effect of authentic leadership on work engagement.

H7: Job satisfaction mediates the effect of Psychological Capital on Work Engagement .

According to Social Exchange Theory and Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Theory, authentic leadership and psychological capital are expected to enhance job satisfaction and work engagement among healthcare workers. Figure 1 presents the research hypotheses and conceptual framework.

Figure1. Research Model Framework





METHODS

Indramayu Regional General Hospital staff were surveyed to determine whether job satisfaction mediates the relationship between actual leadership, psychological capital, and work engagement. In this study, a quantitative research methodology was used. 478 healthcare professionals, including nurses and paramedics, made up the research population. The Slovin algorithm with a 10% margin of error found 83 responders as the minimal sample size. Purposive sampling was utilised to improve responses, and 100 people received questionnaires. Due to their completeness and compliance with the study's requirements, all 100 completed surveys were included in the analysis. The survey was administered via Google Forms. A five-point Likert scale was used to score each trait, with 1 meaning "strongly disagree" and 5 meaning "strongly agree." Real leadership, psychological capital, job satisfaction, and work engagement were studied. Self-awareness, relational transparency, internalised morality, and balanced processing defined authentic leaders. Psychological capital included resilience, optimism, hope, and self-efficacy. Supervisors, working conditions, job itself, and professional advancement opportunities were utilised to measure job satisfaction. Vigour, dedication, and absorption measured work engagement. Data was analysed using SmartPLS 4 PLS-SEM. To evaluate the validity and reliability of the measurement model, we looked at the outer model. The inner model's direct and indirect impacts, including the mediating function of work satisfaction, were investigated using model fit, R-square values, and hypothesis testing.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

An overview of the profiles of the healthcare workers included in the sample for this study can be found in the respondent characteristics. The purpose of presenting these characteristics is to provide an overview of the sample's demographics by breaking them down by age, gender, education level, and length of service.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

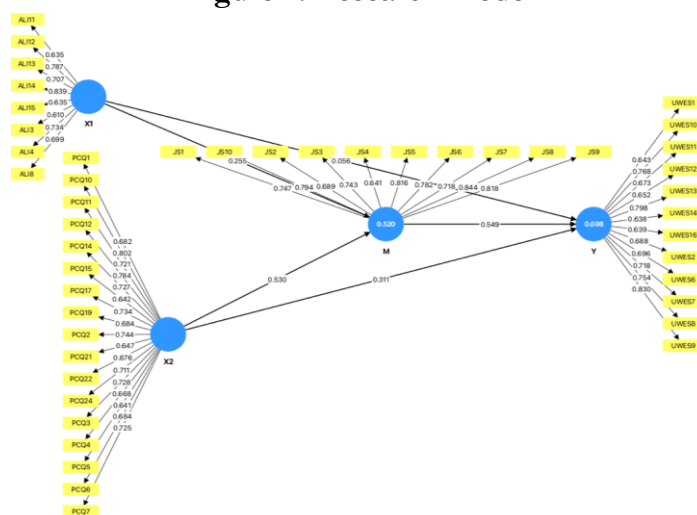
Characteristics	Category	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	37	37,0
	Female	63	63,0

Age	20 – 25	14	14,0
	26 – 30	20	20,0
	31 – 35	25	25,0
	> 36	41	41,0
Education Level	Diploma (D3)	32	32,0
	Bachelor's Degree (S1)	56	56,0
	Professional Nursing Degree (Ners)	5	5,0
	Master's Degree (S2)	7	7,0
Length of Employment	< 1 year	7	7,0
	1 – 3 year	19	19,0
	4 – 6 year	20	20,0
	> 6 year	54	54,0

Source: Processed data from SmartPLS. 4

The demographic information of the participants is shown in Table 1. Men made up 37(37.0%) of the total responders, while women accounted for 63(63.0%) of the total. With 41 responders (41.0%), the oldest age group was those over 36 years old. The next highest percentage was among those between 31 and 35 years old (25.0%), followed by those between 26 and 30 years old (20.0%), and finally, those between 20 and 25 years old (14.0%). Most respondents had a bachelor's degree (S1), accounting for 56 people or 56.0% of the total. Diploma holders made up 32.0%, master's degree holders 7.0%, and professional nurses (Ners) 5.0%. More over half of the respondents (54.0%) had worked for more than six years, while 20% had worked for 4-6 years, 19.0% for 1-3 years, and 7.0% for less than one year. The respondents had sufficient job experience and good educational backgrounds, according to these factors, so they could provide accurate information on the study's variables.

Figure 2. Research Model



Picture 2. shares the findings from the study's model estimate utilizing the PLS-SEM technique. The findings of the study demonstrate that every single connection between the variables is positively correlated. Authentic leadership has a far less impact on engagement and job satisfaction than psychological capital. Workplace satisfaction also affects involvement. The R-squared value shows that the model explains 52.0% of job satisfaction and 69.8% of work engagement. This means that we may go on to testing hypotheses with confidence in the research

model because of its respectable prediction power.

Table 2 . Validity and Reliability Tests for Variables

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Authentic Leadership	0.918	0.932	0.580
Psychological Capital	0.857	0.889	0.504
Job Satisfaction	0.937	0.941	0.500
Work Engagement	0.910	0.917	0.505

Source: Processed data from SmartPLS. 4

Evaluations included Cronbach's Alpha, CR, and AVE. All structures demonstrated good internal consistency, with Composite Reliability values from 0.889 to 0.941 and Cronbach's Alpha values from 0.857 to 0.937, as shown in Table 2. These findings indicate that measurement items accurately reflect linked constructs. Average Variance Extracted was used to verify convergent validity. AVE values of 0.580 for authentic leadership, 0.504 for psychological capital, 0.500 for job satisfaction, and 0.505 for work engagement are displayed in Table 2. These findings show that each construct has excellent convergent validity and sufficiently explains the variation of its indicators. Overall, the results support the constructs' eligibility for additional structural model research by confirming their validity and reliability.

Table 3. R-Square Value

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Job Satisfaction	0.520	0.510
Work Engagement	0.698	0.688

Source: Processed data from SmartPLS. 4

Table 3. shows that the R-squared value for job satisfaction is 0.520. This suggests that Authentic Leadership and Psychological Capital represent 52.0% of the variation in work satisfaction, with 48.0% attributable to variables beyond the study's purview. The R-squared score for Work Engagement, on the other hand, is 0.698. We find that authentic leadership, psychological capital, and job satisfaction account for 69.8% of the variation in engagement at work, whereas other factors account for the remaining 30.2%. Consequently, endogenous factors are sufficiently taken into consideration in this study's model, especially the work engagement variable with its comparatively high coefficient of determination.

Table 4. Fit Model

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.080	0.086
d_ULS	7.134	6.696
d_G	4.462	4.629
Chi-square	1813.415	1813.1813.415
NFI	0.562	0.562

Source: Processed data SmartPLS. 4

Table 4 shows model fit evaluation findings. Estimated model SRMR of 0.086 suggested a good fit. The Normed Fit Index (NFI) result of 0.562 suggests that the proposed model accurately represents the research variables' relationships. Overall, the model suited well enough for hypothesis testing and structural model analysis.

Table 5. Path Coefficient

Hipotesis	Hubungan	β	T	P	Hasil
H1	ALI $\rightarrow$ UWES	0.056	0.760	0.447	rejected
H2	PCQ $\rightarrow$ UWES	0.311	2.813	0.005	accepted

H3	ALI → JS	0.255	1.769	0.077	rejected
H4	PCQ → JS	0.530	4.072	0.000	accepted
H5	JS → UWES	0.549	6.410	0.000	accepted
H6	ALI → JS → UWES	0.140	1.642	0.101	rejected
H7	PCQ → JS → UWES	0.291	4.172	0.000	accepted

Source: Processed Data SmartPLS. 4

Table 5 indicates that Authentic Leadership does not substantially affect Work Engagement ($\beta = 0.056$, $t = 0.760$, $p = 0.447$), disproving “H1. Psychological capital positively and significantly affected work engagement ($\beta = 0.311$, $t = 2.813$, $p = 0.005$), supporting H2. Job satisfaction was not substantially affected by authentic leadership ($\beta = 0.255$, $t = 1.769$, $p = 0.077$), disconfirming H3. Positive and significant influence of psychological capital on job satisfaction supported H4 ($\beta = 0.530$, $t = 4.072$, $p < 0.001$). Job satisfaction positively and significantly increased work engagement ($\beta = 0.549$, $t = 6.410$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H5. H6 was not supported since Job Satisfaction did not significantly impact the relationship between Authentic Leadership and Work Engagement ($\beta = 0.140$, $t = 1.642$, $p = 0.101$). Job Satisfaction strongly mediated the relationship between Psychological Capital and Work Engagement, supporting H7 ($\beta = 0.291$, $t = 4.172$, $p < 0.001$).” These findings imply that in order to increase healthcare workers' job happiness and engagement, psychological capital is more crucial than genuine leadership. The link between psychological capital and work engagement is mostly mediated by job satisfaction.

DISCUSSION

The Effect of Authentic Leadership on Work Engagement

Healthcare workers' work engagement was not significantly impacted by authentic leadership ($\beta = 0.056$, $t = 0.760$, $p = 0.447$). This result implies that employees' passion, commitment, and immersion in their job cannot be strengthened only by their impressions of authentic leadership. Although authentic leaders are expected to build trust, encourage transparency, and promote ethical behaviour, these qualities may not directly translate into higher levels of work engagement in a healthcare setting. One possible explanation is that healthcare professionals operate in a demanding environment characterised by heavy workloads, emotional pressure, and continuous patient care responsibilities. Under such conditions, employees may rely more on their own psychological resources and coping abilities than on leadership behaviours to remain engaged. Consequently, work engagement appears to be influenced more by employees' internal strengths than by the leadership style of their supervisors.

This outcome contradicts research by (Başaran & KIRAL, 2022; Niswaty et al., 2021; Towsen et al., 2020), which found that work engagement is favourably impacted by authentic leadership. The discrepancy may be explained by differences in organisational culture, leadership practices, and workplace characteristics across healthcare institutions. Therefore, improving work engagement requires not only effective leadership but also supportive working conditions and initiatives that strengthen employees' personal resources.

The Effect of Psychological Capital on Work Engagement

Psychological capital positively affects workplace engagement ($\beta = 0.311$, $t = 2.813$, $p = 0.005$), indicating that healthcare workers with higher self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience are more enthusiastic, dedicated, and actively involved. These traits enable healthcare workers overcome obstacles, adapt to difficult conditions, and stay positive. This supports previous research (Meiliyandrie et al., 2020; Niswaty et al., 2021; Rosa et al., 2025; Tamar & Wirawan, 2020; Varonicha Ambarwati et al., 2023) that found psychological capital to strongly influence

work engagement. Training, mentorship, counselling, and well-being activities can boost psychological capital, which improves employee engagement, resilience, and organisational performance.

The Effect of Authentic Leadership on Job Satisfaction

The results of the study show that job satisfaction is not substantially impacted by authentic leadership ($\beta = 0.255$; $p = 0.077$). These findings imply that the degree of job satisfaction among healthcare workers is not much impacted by their judgements of authentic leadership. This result suggests that when assessing their job satisfaction, workers could give more weight to other elements including workload, pay, prospects for professional growth, and the workplace. The Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) paradigm views authentic leadership as a job resource that may help people do their jobs. However, unlike (Wong et al., 2020), who reported that authentic leadership positively influences job satisfaction among healthcare workers, this study found that authentic leadership alone could not significantly improve job satisfaction. Therefore, enhancing job satisfaction among healthcare professionals necessitates not just strong leadership but also sufficient organisational support and comfortable working environments.

The Effect of Psychological Capital on Job Satisfaction

Psychological capital positively affects job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.530$, $t = 4.072$, $p < 0.001$). Health workers with higher self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience can better handle work-related obstacles, retain emotional stability, and adapt to difficult settings, making them happier at work. They are consequently more likely to like their jobs and be satisfied. (Anugrah, 2025) showed that psychological capital is a key influence on job satisfaction. Stronger psychological resources enable workers to better handle stress, stay motivated, and stay dedicated to their jobs, all of which contribute to happier work environments. These findings imply that strengthening psychological capital should become an integral part of organisational development initiatives. Healthcare institutions may enhance employees job satisfaction by implementing training programmes, mentoring, counselling services, and well-being initiatives that foster optimism, resilience, confidence, and hope in the workplace.

The Effect of Job Satisfaction on Work Engagement

Job Satisfaction was positively correlated work engagement ($\beta = 0.549$, $t = 6.410$, $p < 0.001$), indicating happier healthcare workers were more involved. Employees that are happier at work are more eager, committed, and dedicated, which helps them succeed. This result is in line with (Kappen et al., 2025), who found that job satisfaction is positively associated with work engagement and significantly predicts work engagement. A positive work environment, supportive supervision, fair rewards, and opportunities for career development can increase employees' satisfaction and encourage them to contribute more actively to organisational goals. Therefore, improving job satisfaction should remain a priority for hospital management, as it can strengthen employee engagement and support the delivery of high-quality healthcare services.

The Mediating Effect of Job Satisfaction on the Relationship Between Authentic Leadership and Work Engagement

The relationship between authentic leadership and work engagement was not significantly influenced by job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.140$, $t = 1.642$, $p = 0.101$), indicating that job satisfaction did not enhance work engagement. This research suggests that workload, working environment, and organisational support affect healthcare professionals' job happiness, not leadership. As a result, employees who perceive their leaders as authentic do not necessarily experience higher job

satisfaction or become more engaged in their work. Effective leadership, encouraging work conditions, and the development of psychological resources are all necessary to increase job engagement, according to this study's little direct influence of authentic leadership.

The Mediating Effect of Job Satisfaction on the Relationship Between Psychological Capital and Work Engagement

Job satisfaction significantly influenced the relationship between psychological capital and work engagement ($\beta = 0.291$, $t = 4.172$, $p < 0.001$). According to this study, healthcare workers that are resilient, hopeful, optimistic, and self-assured are happier and more engaged at work. Work engagement and job satisfaction are indirectly increased by psychological capital.

These results are consistent with other studies showing that employees with more psychological capital tend to have more positive opinions about their occupations, which boosts engagement and job satisfaction. These results suggest that improving employees' psychological capital might be a helpful tactic for increasing job satisfaction and work engagement. Healthcare organisations can support this by providing training, mentoring, counselling, and employee well-being programmes that help employees build resilience, optimism, confidence, and hope, ultimately contributing to better organisational performance and higher-quality healthcare services.

CONCLUSION

This study examined psychological capital and real leadership affect work engagement in Indramayu Regional General Hospital healthcare staff through job satisfaction. The results suggest that psychological capital increases job engagement more than real leadership. Psychological capital significantly improves workplace satisfaction and engagement, while authentic leadership does not. Job satisfaction, which boosts engagement, mediates the psychological capital-engagement relationship. True leadership and work engagement are not mediated by job contentment. These research support the idea that psychological capital resilience, optimism, hope, and self-efficacy is crucial to employee engagement. Hospitals should thus give top priority to tactics that increase staff members' psychological capital through mentorship, training, and psychological support initiatives. Simultaneously, increasing job satisfaction via the provision of professional development opportunities and a supportive work environment may further boost employee engagement and improve the quality of healthcare services.

By offering empirical evidence that personal resources are more important than organisational resources in promoting job engagement among healthcare professionals, The Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) paradigm is advanced in this work. Due to the study's focus on a particular regional public hospital, the findings might not be as broadly applicable. Future research should include more healthcare institutions, use a longitudinal design, and examine variables like perceived organisational support, commitment, burnout, and work-life balance to better understand work engagement.

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