



Systematic Literature Review: Authentic Leadership Practices of School Principals

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ABSTRACT

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This research examines the role of authentic leadership in fostering trust and collaboration among teachers in Indonesian school environments. By employing the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method, this research analyses various studies on the application of authentic leadership in the educational context. The research results indicate that school principals who prioritise transparency, integrity, and openness can increase teacher trust and foster a more harmonious work environment. In addition, authentic leadership encourages collaboration between teachers by providing freedom to innovate and share learning strategies. This approach also helps school principals face the challenges of cultural diversity and limited resources through innovative solutions, such as the use of technology and involvement of the school community. Thus, authentic leadership has been proven to contribute to increasing motivation, discipline and the quality of education in Indonesian schools. The implications of this research indicate that implementing authentic leadership can be an effective strategy for increasing teacher trust, collaboration, and motivation in Indonesian schools. Therefore, principals need to develop authentic leadership skills to create a harmonious work environment and encourage quality educational innovation.

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INTRODUCTION

Leadership in education plays a crucial role in determining the effectiveness of school management, particularly in improving teacher performance and the overall quality of education. In the context of schools, the leadership approach adopted by principals directly influences the work environment, teacher motivation, and the quality of learning (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Feng-I, 2016; Walumbwa et al., 2007). Recent studies have highlighted the importance of authentic leadership, which emphasises the leader's integrity, transparency, and alignment with core values, to foster trust, collaboration, and

improved school outcomes (Kasa et al., 2020). In the Indonesian context, where educational institutions face challenges such as limited resources, diverse cultural backgrounds, and the need for quality improvement, the application of authentic leadership offers a promising solution. The importance of investigating how this leadership style can positively impact the school environment and ultimately contribute to better teacher performance and learning outcomes cannot be overstated.

The Indonesian education system faces several challenges that impede its progress. The quality of education remains inconsistent, with many schools struggling to improve student outcomes due to inadequate leadership, resource constraints, and cultural diversity among staff members. Additionally, there is a lack of trust and collaboration between school principals and teachers, leading to a less supportive work environment. As the demand for a high-quality education rises, it becomes imperative to explore leadership styles that can bridge these gaps. Authentic leadership, characterised by self-awareness, relational transparency, and a moral perspective, offers a potential solution to foster trust, collaboration, and innovation in schools. However, the application of authentic leadership in the Indonesian educational context remains underexplored, creating a need for further research to understand its impact on teacher performance and overall educational quality.

Previous research has demonstrated that authentic leadership can have a significant impact on the educational environment, particularly in fostering trust, enhancing teacher performance, and cultivating a collaborative work culture. Studies indicate that school principals who demonstrate openness, transparency, and ethical decision-making are more likely to gain the trust of their teachers, leading to improved school performance (Fatimatus Zahroh et al., 2023; Setyawan & Widjayanti, 2020). However, much of the existing literature focuses on Western educational settings, with limited attention given to how these concepts apply in the Indonesian context. This research gap highlights the need for studies that examine how authentic leadership can be effectively applied in Indonesian schools, taking into account the unique cultural, social, and resource-based challenges these schools face.

While several studies have established the importance of authentic leadership in education, a consensus remains lacking on the specific ways it can be effectively implemented in schools with diverse cultural contexts and limited resources. For instance, Riswandi et al. (2021) and Timor (2018) emphasise that the successful application of authentic leadership necessitates a profound understanding of the local school environment and its challenges. However, few studies have comprehensively addressed the specific barriers faced by school leaders in Indonesia when implementing authentic leadership. This research

aims to fill this gap by focusing on the practical application of authentic leadership in the Indonesian school context, providing valuable insights into how principals can adapt their leadership styles to address these challenges effectively.

This research introduces a fresh perspective by investigating the application of authentic leadership in Indonesian schools. It builds on existing studies by considering the specific cultural, social, and resource-based challenges faced by school principals in Indonesia. By focusing on the role of authentic leadership in fostering trust, collaboration, and teacher performance, this study provides new insights into how leadership can drive positive changes in the educational system. The findings from this research are expected to offer practical recommendations for school leaders in Indonesia, guiding them in implementing authentic leadership practices that align with local needs and challenges. Thus, the study's contribution lies in its potential to influence education policy and leadership practices, providing a model for enhancing school performance in the face of diverse and evolving challenges.

Addressing the gap in authentic leadership research, particularly in the Indonesian educational context, is crucial for advancing leadership practices in schools. With the increasing complexity of challenges faced by school leaders, including resource limitations, diverse cultural backgrounds, and the demand for improved educational outcomes, exploring innovative leadership models is crucial. Authentic leadership has the potential to foster a more inclusive, transparent, and supportive work environment, ultimately contributing to better teacher performance and student success. This research not only adds to the academic body of knowledge on leadership in education but also provides actionable insights that can be applied to real-world school settings, thus making a significant impact on the quality of education in Indonesia.

A Systematic Literature Review (SLR) is necessary in the context of research on the authentic leadership practices of school principals in Indonesia, as it can help identify, evaluate, and synthesise relevant findings regarding the application of authentic leadership in education. By conducting SLR, we can understand how authentic leadership improves teacher performance, learning quality, and relationships between school principals and staff, especially when facing complex challenges such as limited resources and cultural differences in Indonesian schools. In addition, SLR also enables the exploration of how authentic leadership theories, grounded in values, character, and ethics, can be adapted in educational contexts, enrich existing literature, and provide direction for further research with practical applications. This is crucial for developing effective education policies and can enhance the overall quality of education in Indonesia. And the research questions are;

1. How does the application of authentic leadership by school principals in Indonesia affect the relationship between principals and teachers?
2. What factors influence the effectiveness of authentic leadership in improving teacher performance and learning quality in Indonesian schools?
3. How can authentic leadership help principals overcome cultural challenges and resource limitations in schools?
4. What is the role of authentic leadership in building trust and collaboration between teachers in Indonesian school environments?

RESEARCH METHOD

This research method uses the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) approach to ensure transparency and repeatability in the search and selection of relevant literature. The inclusion criteria used in this research include articles that discuss authentic leadership in school principals, published within the last five years, and that have undergone a peer-review process. Meanwhile, exclusion criteria include articles that are not relevant to the topic of authentic leadership, have not been published in the last five years, or are not peer-reviewed.

The primary data source used in this research is Google Scholar. The search strategy was carried out using a combination of keywords such as "Authentic Leadership in School Principals", "Authentic leadership of school principals", and "Authentic Leadership in Education". Search filters were applied to ensure that only articles published within the last five years and that had undergone a peer-review process were included in this study.

The article selection process is carried out through several stages. First, an initial screening is carried out by reviewing the title and abstract of the article to ensure relevance to the research topic. After that, articles that pass the initial stage will be evaluated in depth to assess the suitability of the methodology and content to the research objectives. Next, inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied to eliminate articles that did not meet the requirements. In this process, reference management is carried out using Mendeley software to store, manage and detect duplication in the list of articles used.

Literature analysis and synthesis were conducted by grouping selected articles based on themes, methodology, and main findings. The analytical techniques employed include qualitative analysis to assess the quality and consistency of research results, as well as mixed-methodology to combine various perspectives and obtain more comprehensive conclusions. Next, a synthesis of the results was conducted by identifying consistent findings across various studies, comparing results between studies to highlight similarities and

differences, and analysing emerging trends in research related to the authentic leadership of school principals. With this approach, research is expected to provide a comprehensive and evidence-based picture of the authentic leadership of school principals.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Articles reviewed

Authors	Research Objectives	Findings
Rio Zeni Mandraguṇa, Andri Supriadi	To study the impact of authentic principal leadership on teacher motivation and its influence on teacher work discipline in private schools.	Authentic leadership has a significant positive influence on teacher motivation and work discipline.
Mohammad Zainuddin, Mat Zaid, Mat Rahimi Yusof, Mohd Isha Awang	To validate a measurement model for authentic leadership in teachers.	The authentic leadership model for teachers was validated and proven robust in measuring leadership effectiveness.
Esisarn, Sandra Gamba Indah Siregar, Nurhizrah Gistituati, Anisah	To examine the role of authentic leadership in improving employee work discipline.	Authentic leadership significantly improves employee discipline in organizations.
Hilman Fauluthy, Ririn Handayani, Fahmi Oemar	To explore the role of authentic leadership in employee job satisfaction, with intrinsic motivation as a mediator.	Intrinsic motivation mediates the relationship between authentic leadership and employee job satisfaction.
Surwiti	To investigate the impact of authentic leadership on teacher performance.	Authentic leadership has a positive influence on teacher performance in schools.
Lisa Handayani, Esther Naomi Samosir, Sutono, Dewi Riana, Septi Indrawani Turan, Yudo Dwiyono	To explore the role of educational leadership in integrating technology with local wisdom in elementary schools in Indonesia.	Leadership plays a crucial role in addressing challenges in integrating technology with local wisdom in schools.
T. Rusli Ahmad	To explore the role of authentic leadership in organizational commitment and its impact on happiness at work.	Authentic leadership mediates the relationship between organizational commitment and employee happiness at work.
Frans Andrianto, Ika Zenita Ratnaningsih	To examine the relationship between authentic leadership and work commitment in hospital staff.	A positive relationship exists between authentic leadership and work

			commitment among hospital staff.
Lisa Handayani, Esther Naomi Samosir, Sutono, Dewi Riana, Septi Indrawani, Turan, Yudo Dwiyono	To explore the role of educational leadership in integrating technology with local wisdom in elementary schools in Indonesia.		Educational leadership is crucial in integrating technology with local wisdom in schools, particularly in addressing differences in technology access between urban and rural areas.
Andrey Afandi, Bagus Wicaksono, Pratista Arya Satwika	To study the role of authentic leadership and job-individual fit in turnover intentions among Generation Z employees.		Authentic leadership and job-person fit are significant factors influencing turnover intentions among Generation Z employees.

How does the application of authentic leadership by school principals in Indonesia affect the relationship between principals and teachers?

Based on the results of the literature review and relevant research findings, the application of authentic leadership by school principals has a significant impact on the relationship between school principals and teachers in Indonesia. Research by Rio Zeni Mandraguṇa and Andri Supriadi shows that authentic leadership has a positive effect on teacher motivation and work discipline. This means that school principals who implement authentic leadership can build stronger relationships with teachers through openness, integrity, and honest communication. Teachers who feel supported by authentic leadership tend to be more motivated and demonstrate higher levels of work discipline. Additionally, Surwiti's study revealed that authentic leadership has a positive impact on teacher performance, with teachers working under such leadership being more focused, productive, and committed to their tasks.

Furthermore, research by Hilman Fauluthy, Ririn Handayani, and Fahmi Oemar highlights that intrinsic motivation acts as a mediator in the relationship between authentic leadership and employee job satisfaction. In the school context, this suggests that when principals practice authentic leadership, teachers feel more valued and develop a stronger internal drive to perform well. This sense of recognition and value plays a crucial role in increasing teacher motivation and improving their overall performance. Research by Mohammad Zainuddin, Mat Zaid, Mat Rahimi Yusof, and Mohd Isha Awang supports the idea that the authentic leadership model is effective in assessing leadership effectiveness in educational environments, confirming that it fosters strong working relationships between school principals and teachers.

In addition, findings from Esisarn, Sandra Gamba, Indah Siregar, Nurhizrah Gistituati, and Anisah show that authentic leadership has a significant impact on employee work discipline. This suggests that school principals who apply authentic leadership can instil stronger disciplinary values in teachers. Teachers working under such leadership models are more likely to exhibit high levels of self-discipline and commitment to their responsibilities. The supportive and transparent work environment created by authentic principals also encourages teachers to maintain high standards of professional conduct.

Research by T. Rusli Ahmad suggests that authentic leadership moderates the relationship between organisational commitment and job satisfaction. This means that authentic principals can increase teacher loyalty to the institution, creating a work environment where teachers feel a deep sense of belonging and satisfaction. By fostering strong emotional ties to the school, authentic leadership contributes to the overall happiness and well-being of the teaching staff, which is vital for improving the school's long-term success and stability.

Overall, authentic leadership in schools not only enhances teacher work motivation and discipline but also creates a positive and supportive atmosphere that fosters collaboration and commitment. Research consistently shows that when school principals apply authentic leadership, teachers feel more engaged, valued, and motivated to contribute to the school's success. This leadership style, therefore, has a profound impact on teacher performance and the overall quality of education in Indonesian schools.

What factors influence the effectiveness of authentic leadership in improving teacher performance and learning quality in Indonesian schools?

The effectiveness of authentic leadership in improving teacher performance and the quality of learning in Indonesian schools is influenced by various interrelated factors. The first factor is the individual characteristics of the principal, where principals with high integrity, openness, and the ability to self-reflect are more able to implement authentic leadership effectively. Research by Mohammad Zainuddin et al. shows that school principals who have honesty in decision-making and good communication skills can build strong relationships with teachers, thereby improving their performance in the learning process. Setyawan and Widjayanti emphasize that authentic leadership contains positive psychological aspects such as self-confidence, optimism, and hope which can motivate teachers to contribute better to the learning process (Setyawan & Widjayanti, 2020). In addition, research by Suhartini shows that authentic leadership can be closely related to organizational commitment, which is an important factor in improving teacher performance (Suhartini, 2020).

In addition, teacher motivation and involvement are also key factors in the effectiveness of authentic leadership. A study conducted by Hilman Fauluthy et al. revealed that school principals who give teachers freedom in carrying out their duties can increase teachers' intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction. School principals who support learning innovation, involve teachers in decision-making, and provide recognition for their achievements, can increase teachers' sense of ownership and responsibility towards the institution, which ultimately has a positive impact on the quality of learning in schools. This is in line with the findings of Solihin et al., who emphasize that school principals' support for learning innovation and teacher participation in decision-making contribute to increasing teachers' sense of ownership and responsibility towards the institution, which in turn has a positive impact on the quality of learning in schools (Solihin et al., 2021).

Another factor that plays a role is the school's organizational culture, which creates a work environment that is conducive to the application of authentic leadership. The study conducted by Esisarn et al. shows that schools with an organizational culture that emphasizes openness, cooperation, and work discipline enable principals to implement authentic leadership more effectively. Transparency in school policies and support for teacher welfare are also important elements in creating a harmonious relationship between school principals and teachers, thereby improving the quality of teaching.

Research shows that an organizational culture that emphasizes openness, cooperation, and work discipline can increase the effectiveness of school principal leadership. For example, Kurniati suggests that a strong organizational culture demonstrated through open communication patterns, contributes to school quality management (Kurniati, 2023). In addition, Putra and Yunita emphasized that the principal's leadership and organizational culture have a significant influence on teacher performance, which in turn has an impact on the quality of education (Putra & Yunita, 2018). This suggests that when principals can operate within a supportive organizational culture, they are better able to implement authentic leadership that focuses on developing positive relationships with teachers.

Furthermore, the education system and policy support also have a role in determining the effectiveness of authentic leadership. Research by Lisa Handayani et al. emphasized that educational policies that are flexible and responsive to school needs can strengthen the leadership role of school principals in improving teacher performance. School autonomy in managing resources, leadership training for school principals, and financial support from the government or educational foundations are factors that can strengthen the implementation of authentic leadership in Indonesian schools.

In the digital era, the use of technology in learning is also a factor that influences the effectiveness of authentic leadership. School principals who encourage the use of technology in the learning process can help increase interaction between teachers and students, as well as expand access to a more varied learning resource. Research by Lisa Handayani et al. highlights the importance of integrating technology with local wisdom in improving the quality of education. Providing adequate technological infrastructure, training teachers in the use of technology, and utilizing the Learning Management System (LMS) are important aspects in supporting the effectiveness of authentic leadership in the world of education. Research shows that the integration of technology in education not only improves the quality of teaching but also strengthens teachers' professional competence (A & Bau, 2023; Vivi, 2023). E-learning, as a form of technology use, has proven effective in expanding learning accessibility and providing opportunities for teachers to develop new skills (Favourite & Kusuma, 2021; Vivi, 2023).

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the effectiveness of authentic leadership in improving teacher performance and learning quality in Indonesian schools depends on a combination of various factors, starting from the characteristics of the school principal, teacher motivation, school organizational culture, education policy, to the use of technology. School principals who have authentic leadership values and are supported by a positive school environment and adaptive education policies will be better able to create a more effective and high-quality learning system.

How can authentic leadership help principals overcome cultural challenges and resource limitations in schools?

Authentic leadership plays an important role in helping principals overcome cultural challenges and resource limitations in Indonesian schools. One of the main challenges faced is the diversity of organizational cultures which reflect differences in values, work ethics, and socio-economic backgrounds of students and teaching staff. A study by Esisarn, Sandra Gamba Indah Siregar, Nurhizrah Gistituati, and Anisah shows that school principals who apply authentic leadership can build a more adaptive and inclusive organizational culture. With transparency in decision-making and honest communication, school principals can create a more harmonious and productive work environment, which encourages collaboration between teachers and staff in overcoming existing cultural differences. Research by Solihin et al. shows that school principals who practice authentic leadership can build a harmonious and productive work environment, which in turn encourages collaboration between teachers and staff in dealing with existing cultural differences (Solihin et al.,

2021).

In addition to cultural challenges, many schools in Indonesia, especially in remote areas, face limited resources in terms of educational facilities, teaching staff, and operational budgets. The study by Lisa Handayani, Esther Naomi Samosir, Sutono, Dewi Riana, Septi Indrawani Turan, and Yudo Dwiyo highlights that school principals who implement authentic leadership tend to be more innovative in finding solutions to these limitations. For example, school principals can establish partnerships with local communities to obtain financial and material support or develop local wisdom-based programs to replace unavailable resources. With a creative and flexible approach, school principals can continue to provide a quality learning environment for students even with limited resources (Juharyanto et al., 2019).

Authentic leadership has also proven effective in increasing teacher motivation and loyalty, which is often a challenge in schools with limited facilities and financial incentives. The study by Hilman Fauluthy, Ririn Handayani, and Fahmi Oemar shows that principals who implement authentic leadership can build stronger relationships with teachers through emotional support, giving trust, and rewarding their dedication. Research by Anwar et al. shows that school principals who implement authentic leadership can build stronger relationships with teachers through emotional support, giving trust, and rewarding their dedication (Anwar et al., 2021). By creating a more positive work environment and providing space for teachers to innovate in teaching, school principals can increase teachers' intrinsic motivation, which ultimately has an impact on the quality of learning in schools. This is in line with findings showing that the principal's leadership has a positive effect on teacher work motivation (Nasrun, 2016; Rosmawaty, 2022).

Apart from that, the involvement of the school community is a crucial aspect in facing the challenges of limited resources. The study by T. Rusli Ahmad emphasized that school principals with authentic leadership are more likely to build close relationships with stakeholders, including parents, local governments, and non-profit organizations. Through open and transparent communication, school principals can obtain external support that can help improve the quality of education in their schools, such as financial assistance, scholarships, or the provision of educational facilities.

In the digital era, the use of technology is also the main solution to overcoming limited school resources. The study by Lisa Handayani et al. highlights that school principals who apply authentic leadership tend to be more proactive in encouraging the use of technology in the learning process. For example, schools that lack textbooks can use digital platforms as alternative learning sources, or schools that experience a shortage of teaching staff can utilize

online learning systems to expand student access to learning materials. With technology-based innovation, school principals can ensure that limited resources do not become a barrier to providing quality education.

What is the role of authentic leadership in building trust and collaboration between teachers in Indonesian school environments?

Authentic leadership plays a crucial role in fostering trust and promoting collaboration among teachers in the Indonesian school environment. Principals who implement this leadership style emphasise transparency, integrity, and openness in communication, which in turn increases teachers' sense of trust in their leadership. This trust is strengthened by emotional support and efforts to empower teachers, which have a positive impact on increasing their motivation and job satisfaction. Research conducted by Rio Zeni Mandraguna and Andri Supriadi revealed that authentic leadership contributes to increasing teacher motivation and work discipline, thereby creating a more comfortable and productive work environment.

In addition to building trust, authentic leadership also encourages more effective collaboration between teachers. Authentic principals create a positive and supportive work environment, where teachers feel comfortable innovating teaching methods and sharing learning strategies with their colleagues. Studies conducted by Surwiti show that authentic leadership contributes to improving teacher performance, which encourages them to work together more effectively in improving the quality of learning. With the freedom to carry out their duties and support from the school principal, teachers become more committed to their roles at school.

In the context of schools in Indonesia, authentic leadership enables school principals to overcome various challenges, including cultural diversity and limited resources. Schools in Indonesia have diverse cultural backgrounds, and principals who apply authentic leadership can create an inclusive and harmonious environment for all teaching staff. Additionally, limited resources, which often pose obstacles in education, can be overcome through authentic and innovative leadership. This could involve establishing partnerships with local communities or utilising technology as an alternative solution to enhance learning.

The study by Lisa Handayani et al. demonstrates that authentic leadership in education is essential for integrating technology into learning, thereby enhancing collaboration and the overall quality of education. In this context, emotional support and teacher empowerment are key to increasing their motivation and work discipline, which are essential for achieving better educational outcomes (Sudharta, 2017). These leadership strategies ensure that

teachers are more invested in their roles, thereby fostering a more effective and collaborative learning environment.

Furthermore, authentic leadership encourages more effective collaboration between teachers by creating a supportive and empowering environment. Research indicates that authentic leadership enhances teacher performance by encouraging collaboration and improving the quality of learning (Wahyudi et al., 2021; Yustika & Syamsiyah, 2020). With the freedom to innovate and the support from the school principal, teachers feel more committed to their roles at school (Burhanuddin, 2019). This approach to leadership significantly improves teacher engagement, contributing to a more cohesive and collaborative school culture.

Overall, authentic leadership plays a crucial role in fostering a more harmonious school environment, building trust between principals and teachers, and promoting better collaboration. By implementing authentic values such as honesty, transparency, and empowerment, school principals can increase teacher motivation and work discipline, ultimately improving the quality of learning in schools (Lailiya & Fitriatin, 2025; Putri & Sentoso, 2022).

CONCLUSION

Authentic leadership plays a crucial role in building trust and fostering collaboration between teachers in Indonesian schools. By prioritising transparency, integrity, and openness in communication, school principals can establish harmonious relationships with teachers, enhancing their motivation and reinforcing work discipline. The trust built through authentic leadership not only strengthens teacher commitment to educational institutions but also increases loyalty and dedication to achieving the school's goals. This leadership style fosters a collaborative work culture, empowering teachers to innovate and share effective learning strategies with their colleagues, ultimately enhancing the quality of education within the school environment.

In the face of challenges such as cultural diversity and limited resources, school principals with authentic leadership can implement innovative solutions. These include establishing partnerships with local communities, leveraging technology in education, and optimising available resources to maximise outcomes. With an adaptive and development-focused approach, authentic leadership proves to be an effective strategy in improving teacher performance and enhancing the overall quality of education. By fostering a supportive and inclusive environment, this leadership model helps create a productive, collaborative, and sustainable school culture.

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