

# The Relationship Between Authentic Leadership And Organizational Gossip In Organizations

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## **Abstract:**

The purpose of this research is to examine whether there is a relationship between authentic leadership and organizational gossip behavior. For this purpose, 262 data were collected using a random sampling method from employees of a manufacturing company operating in both national and international markets in Konya. The survey used as a data collection method included demographic questions to get to know the participants, an authentic leadership scale, and an organizational gossip scale. The research hypotheses were tested with Pearson analysis. As a result of the analysis, a negative significant relationship was found between employees' authentic leadership perception and organizational gossip behavior.

**Background:** In this study, the effect of authentic leadership on employees' organizational gossip levels was examined. The study was conducted on employees in a manufacturing company operating in both national and international arenas. With these results, it is hoped that this study will guide future researchers in determining similar situations in different sectors.

**Materials and methods:** The research data was collected through a survey method. The survey was conducted physically, face to face. A total of 262 survey forms were filled out for the study. A total of 257 survey formulas were evaluated. However, incomplete, inconsistent and incorrectly filled survey forms were excluded from the scope of the study. The survey consists of three sections: demographic questions, authentic leadership and organizational gossip. SPSS 22.0 and AMOS 26 package programs were used in the research.

**Result:** Findings regarding the demographic characteristics of the research participants are presented. 82.8% of the participants are male employees. The majority of the participants, 51.3%, have 5-10 years of seniority. It was observed that the participants' education level was mostly primary school (35.7%) and secondary school/high school (40.5%). According to research results; when the significance of the dimensions of the scales is examined, it is observed that there is a significant positive relationship between the sub-scales of the authentic leadership scale. Similarly, it is observed that there is a significant relationship between the subscales of the Organizational Gossip Scale. A negative and significant relationship of  $-0.789$  ( $r=-0.789$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) was found between authentic leadership and organizational gossip.

**Conclusion:** In the study, whether there is a significant and positive relationship between the nature of the relationships between authentic leadership and organizational gossip behavior was tested with Pearson correlation analysis. Analysis results showed that there was a significant negative relationship between authentic leadership and organizational gossip behavior ( $r=-0.789$ ;  $p<0.01$ ). On the other hand, a negative significant relationship was found between the sub-dimensions (self-awareness, balanced information processing, relational transparency, internalized moral perspective) of authentic leadership and organizational gossip behavior and its sub-dimensions (having information, developing relations, organizational harm). According to these results, the H1 hypothesis has been accepted and there is a negative relationship between the variables, that is, a structure where one increases and the other decreases.

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## I. Introduction

Crises, turmoil, wars and business options that increasingly affect the entire world have created a need for new management models. In particular, a changing business environment accompanied by ever-changing expectations has also affected leaders. This changing business environment may create situations that are contrary to people's own beliefs, thoughts, and in other words, their own truths. Therefore, authentic leadership style is needed more than ever under these circumstances (Luthans et. al., 2006; Norman et.al., 2005). According to TDK, authenticity is defined as something that has preserved its characteristics and has not changed its qualities since ancient times (TDK, 2025). The concept of authenticity is a positive concept. Authenticity is defined with the words realistic, reliable, loyal, and genuine. Authenticity is acting in accordance with one's true self. In other words, it is behaving in accordance with one's beliefs, thoughts and feelings. Authenticity is being in harmony with one's true self. (Harter, 2002; Luthans and Avolio, 2003).

Authentic leadership was first conceptualized by Avolio et al. (Avolio et al., 2004). Authentic leadership was developed as part of transformational leadership (Bass and Steidlmeier, 1999). Authentic leaders foster positive development and foster a high level of self-awareness (Luthans and Avolio, 2003) and moral perspective in their followers. Authentic leadership is a leadership style that fosters personal growth in followers (Walumbwa et al., 2008). Authentic leaders are self-confident (Gardner and Schermerhorn, 2004), optimistic, ethical, future-oriented, hopeful, and leaders who develop their followers (Avolio and Gardner, 2005; Luthans and Avolio, 2003; Avolio et al., 2004). The most distinctive characteristics of authentic leaders are to create hope in their followers, build self-confidence in them, and make them more optimistic and resilient (Gardner and Schermerhorn, 2004). Optimists tend to experience positive emotions more than pessimists. Therefore, Optimistic leaders are more successful in getting positive outputs from the group and making them more productive (Seligman, 2007).

The most important feature that distinguishes authentic leadership from other leadership models is to develop followers, provide them with the necessary motivation, and increase their competence (Luthans et al., 2007). Authentic leaders serve as positive role models for their followers. By establishing positive identification between the leader and the follower, authentic leaders pave the way for followers to socially identify with other groups (Avolio et al., 2004).

Gossip is as old as human history. The concept of gossip has been researched by different disciplines, especially history, sociology and psychology (Niedzviecki, 2010; Kniffin and Wilson, 2005). Gossiping is part of being human. Because the emotions such as competition, jealousy, hatred, etc. that exist in people create the need to talk about others (Danziger, 1988). For this reason, gossip occurs naturally in people's workplaces and social circles. And gossip is one of the conversations that develop relationships between people (Guerin and Miyazaki, 2006). However, despite these features, gossip is not welcomed by most people (Beersma and Van Kleef, 2011). Psychologists, in particular, do not view gossip positively and have stated that gossip is effective in revealing aggressive behavior among people (Baumeister et al., 2004).

by the environment (Leblebici et al., 2009). Gossip, defined as critical talk about third parties, was first mentioned in organizational life by Noon and Delbridge (1993) (Noon and Delbridge, 1993). There are both formal and informal communication networks in organizations (Thomas and Rozell, 2007).

Gossip is informal communication about a person or event (Merry, 1997). In other words, gossip is an informal communication between the gossipier and the listener about a person or event (Niedzviecki, 2010; Kniffin and Wilson, 2005). While gossip provides information transfer between people, it can also lead to reputation damage, rebellion or conflict (Manaf et al., 2013). In particular, the content of gossip changes as it moves away from the original source and can become malicious. Therefore, gossip should not be trusted. At the same time, necessary precautions should be taken to prevent gossip from replacing formal communication in the organization (Michelson and Mouly, 2004). Therefore, gossip is considered negative by many people (Waddington and Michelson, 2007).

However, although gossip does not contain reliable information, it provides rapid transfer of information and has a significant impact on the organization. However, although gossip does not contain reliable information, it can have significant effects on the organization and employees because it enables the rapid transfer of information. For this reason, although gossip has unreliable content, it is important for organizations because it reduces uncertainty (Michelson and Mouly, 2004). However, gossip also has a function in protecting organizational interests (Elias and Scotson, 1965; Gluckman, 1963). The organizational consequences of gossip include sharing information, expanding organizational networks, establishing relationships in the workplace, spreading organizational values, resistance to organizational change, misunderstanding and mistransmission, and distorting organizational problems (Waddington and Michelson, 2007).

Gossip has been defined by society as unethical, unobservable behavior. Some of the factors that cause gossip in organizations include negative attitudes and behaviors of employees, lack of information, and disruptions in official communication channels. (Stewart and Strathern, 2004). In authentic leadership, the leader offers a moral perspective to his followers. By establishing transparent relationships with his followers, the authentic leader supports their positive self-development. This creates a positive ethical climate in organizations. (Walumbwa et al., 2008). In this context, it is thought in this research that employees with authentic leaders will show less organizational gossip behavior in organizations. In this context, it is assumed that there is a negative relationship between authentic leadership and organizational gossip behavior. The hypothesis developed in this context are listed below.

H1: There is a negative relationship between authentic leadership and organizational gossip.

## **II. Material And Methods**

### **Purpose and Importance of the Research**

The aim of this research is to reveal whether authentic leadership has an impact on organizational gossip of employees. In this context, the effect of authentic leadership on employees' organizational gossip levels was

examined. Quantitative research method was used in the research. The research questions developed to achieve this aim are as follows:

- Does authentic leadership have an impact on organizational gossip in manufacturing?

### The Universe and Sample of the Research

The population of this research consists of manufacturing business employees in businesses operating in Konya. Simple random sampling method was used in the research, and manufacturing business employees in Konya and 262 employees who were willing to participate in the survey constituted the sample of the research. The sample size is sufficient for situations whose universe is known and is above the minimum sample size (Gürbüz and Şahin, 2018). Findings regarding the demographic characteristics of the research participants are presented. 82.8% of the participants are male employees. The majority of the participants, 51.3%, have 5-10 years of seniority. It was observed that the participants' education level was mostly primary school (35.7%) and secondary school/high school (40.5%).

### Data Collection Tool Used in the Research

Data collection was carried out using a data collection tool with a total of 43 questions, 3 of which were about demographic characteristics. 16 of these questions are five-point Likert-type expressions belonging to the "authentic leadership" and 24 of them are "organizational behavior" scales. Authentic leadership scale was developed by Walumbwa, et. al (2008) and adapted into Turkish by Tabak et. al, 2012. The Cronbach Alpha value of the scale is .93. There are four sub-dimensions related to authentic leadership in the scale. These are self-awareness, balanced information processing, relational transparency, and internalized moral perspective (Tabak et. al, 2012). The organizational gossip character is used by Han and Dağlı (2018). The Cronbach Alpha value of the scale is .829. There are three sub-dimensions related to organizational gossip in the scale. These are having information, developing relations, organizational harm (Han and Dağlı, 2018). Scales, 5-point Likert type. The scales were evaluated on a five-point Likert type (5 = Strongly agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Undecided, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly disagree). Before applying the scale used in the research, a pilot application was carried out. In this regard, surveys were administered to 33 employees in different businesses. Within the scope of the findings obtained through face-to-face interview method, it was seen that all the statements in the survey were understandable. Accordingly, no changes were made to the survey form.

### Data analysis

During the data analysis phase, firstly the surveys were examined. As a result of this review, 262 surveys were deemed suitable for inclusion in the analysis and all 257 surveys were included in the analysis. SPSS 22.0 program and AMOS 26 were used to analyze the data obtained from the surveys. In the study, central tendency measures were used to classify the demographic characteristics of the participants, and frequency and percentage distributions were examined in this context. Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between authentic leadership and organizational gossip.

### Number of Validity and Reliability Tests of the Scales

Data collection was carried out using a face-to-face survey technique between January 2 and February 23, 2025. The skewness and Kurtosis values of the scale items are between -1.5 and +1.5. Therefore, the data showed a normal distribution (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2014).

Scales	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Authentic Leadership	0.872	16
Organizational Gossip	$\alpha=.911$	24

According to Table 1, Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) coefficients show that the scales used in this study are reliable. Authentic leadership is  $\alpha=.872$ , organizational gossip is  $\alpha=.911$ , and the value for the entire scale is  $\alpha=.982$ . According to the factor analysis results, the factor analysis results for the Authentic Leadership Scale were found as [ $\chi^2$ (Chi-square)=17.9; df(degrees of freedom)=5;  $\chi^2/df= 3.58$ ;  $p<.001$ ; CFI (Comparative Fit Index)=.96; TLI(Tucker-Lewis Index)=.91 and RMSEA(Root Mean Square Error of Approximation)=.079]. The factor analysis results calculated for the organizational gossip scale were determined as follows: [ $\chi^2=163$ ; df=54;  $\chi^2/df= 3.01$ ;  $p<.001$ ; CFI=.97; TLI= .93 and RMSEA=.072]. The performance of the factor structures of the scales is verified according to the goodness of fit criteria (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2014).

III. Result

Pearson Correlation analysis was used to reveal the relationships between the subscales of the scales used in the study and among themselves. The correlation coefficients obtained as a result of the correlation analysis between the authentic leadership dimensions; self-awareness, balanced information processing, relational transparency, internalized moral perspective and the organizational gossip dimensions; having information, developing relations, organizational harm variables are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Correlation Analysis Results

VARIABLES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<i>Authentic Leadership</i>	1								
<i>Self-Awareness</i>	,611**	1							
<i>Balanced Information Processing</i>	,517**	,548**	1						
<i>Relational Transparency</i>	,632**	,597**	,843**	1					
<i>Internalized Moral Perspective</i>	,729**	,428**	,610**	,565**	1				
<i>Organizational Gossip</i>	-,789**	-,546**	-,482**	-,609**	-,619**	1			
<i>Having Information</i>	-,613**	-,687**	-,520**	-,685**	-,627**	-,457**	1		
<i>Developing Relations</i>	-,752**	-,530**	-,621**	-,415**	-,406**	-,589**	-,453**	1	
<i>Organizational Harm</i>	-,588**	-,452**	-,457**	-,402**	-,411**	-,647**	-,578**	-,517**	1

\*\*\*p<0,01; \*\*p<0,05

According to Table 2, when the significance of the dimensions of the scales is examined, it is observed that there is a significant positive relationship between the sub-scales of the authentic leadership scale. Similarly, it is observed that there is a significant relationship between the subscales of the Organizational Gossip Scale. A negative and significant relationship of -,789 ( $r=-,789$ ;  $p<0,01$ ) was found between authentic leadership and organizational gossip. When the correlations between the subscales of the scales were examined, -,687 ( $r=-,687$ ;  $p<0,01$ ) relationship was found between the Self-Awareness, which is a sub-dimension of authentic leadership, and the Having Information, which is a sub-dimension of organizational gossip. When the correlations between the subscales of the scales were examined, -,530 ( $r=-,530$ ;  $p<0,01$ ) relationship was found between the Self-Awareness, which is a sub-dimension of authentic leadership, and the Developing Relations, which is a sub-dimension of organizational gossip. When the correlations between the subscales of the scales were examined, -,452 ( $r=-,452$ ;  $p<0,01$ ) relationship was found between the Self-Awareness, which is a sub-dimension of authentic leadership, and the Organizational Harm, which is a sub-dimension of organizational gossip. When the correlations between the subscales of the scales were examined, -,520 ( $r=-,520$ ;  $p<0,01$ ) relationship was found between the Balanced Information Processing, which is a sub-dimension of authentic leadership, and the Having Information, which is a sub-dimension of organizational gossip. When the correlations between the subscales of the scales were examined, -,621 ( $r=-,621$ ;  $p<0,01$ ) relationship was found between the Balanced Information Processing, which is a sub-dimension of authentic leadership, and the Developing Relations, which is a sub-dimension of organizational gossip. When the correlations between the subscales of the scales were examined, -,457 ( $r=-,457$ ;  $p<0,01$ ) relationship was found between the Balanced Information Processing, which is a sub-dimension of authentic leadership, and the Organizational Harm, which is a sub-dimension of organizational gossip. When the correlations between the subscales of the scales were examined, -,685 ( $r=-,685$ ;  $p<0,01$ ) relationship was found between the Relational Transparency, which is a sub-dimension of authentic leadership, and the Having Information, which is a sub-dimension of organizational gossip. When the correlations between the subscales of the scales were examined, -,415 ( $r=-,415$ ;  $p<0,01$ ) relationship was found between the Relational Transparency, which is a sub-dimension of authentic leadership, and the Developing Relations, which is a sub-dimension of organizational gossip. When the correlations between the subscales of the scales were examined, -,402 ( $r=-,402$ ;  $p<0,01$ ) relationship was found between the Relational Transparency, which is a sub-dimension of authentic leadership, and the Organizational Harm, which is a sub-dimension of organizational gossip. When the correlations between the subscales of the scales were examined, -,627 ( $r=-,627$ ;  $p<0,01$ ) relationship was found between the Internalized Moral Perspective, which is a sub-dimension of authentic leadership, and the Having Information, which is a sub-dimension of organizational gossip. When the correlations between the subscales of

the scales were examined,  $r = -.406$  ( $r = -.406$ ;  $p < 0,01$ ) relationship was found between the Internalized Moral Perspective, which is a sub-dimension of authentic leadership, and the Developing Relations, which is a sub-dimension of organizational gossip. When the correlations between the subscales of the scales were examined,  $r = -.411$  ( $r = -.411$ ;  $p < 0,01$ ) relationship was found between the Internalized Moral Perspective, which is a sub-dimension of authentic leadership, and the Organizational Harm, which is a sub-dimension of organizational gossip.

#### IV. Conclusion

This study was conducted to determine whether there is a relationship between authentic management and the organizational gossip. In the study, a quantitative research method was applied using a questionnaire form as a data collection tool. Data were analyzed using SPSS 22.0 and AMOS 26 package programs. In the study, whether there is a significant and positive relationship between the nature of the relationships between authentic leadership and organizational gossip behavior was tested with Pearson correlation analysis. Analysis results showed that there was a significant negative relationship between authentic leadership and organizational gossip behavior ( $r = -.789$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). On the other hand, a negative significant relationship was found between the sub-dimensions (self-awareness, balanced information processing, relational transparency, internalized moral perspective) of authentic leadership and organizational gossip behavior and its sub-dimensions (having information, developing relations, organizational harm).

According to these results, the H1 hypothesis has been accepted and there is a negative relationship between the variables, that is, a structure where one increases and the other decreases. Because authentic leaders create positive effects on their followers with their basic characteristics. The honesty, reliability, hope and optimism of authentic leaders lead to a decrease in negative and destructive behaviors in their organizations. Because authentic leadership can create a moderately positive organizational climate. Authentic leaders are able to recognize the issues, values and beliefs needed. Therefore, authentic leaders influence their followers not only through rules but also by living and personally representing morals and values. At the same time, authentic leaders create an environment for their employees where there is no uncertainty, where everyone is offered equal learning and development opportunities, and where everyone has access to information and resources. In other words, the authentic leader creates an organizational environment where uncertainty is minimal (Avolio and Gardner, 2005). This will also prevent rumors that followers will create among themselves and reduce gossip and rumors. Because gossip has a feature that also provides organizational communication. In organizations where effective communication exists, employees will have easy access to information and will not experience the problem of insufficient information, thus reducing the need for gossip and rumors.

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