



Research Article

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Authentic Leadership on Employee Coping and Its Impact on Psychological Vulnerable: Survey on Public Organization in Bandung, Indonesia

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Abstract

The study tested the preceding research model to develop theories regarding aspects of authentic leadership and employee coping in public organizations. Researchers conducted a survey on public organizations with 198 respondents whose task is providing services to the community. Researchers used the convenience sampling technique to take samples of respondents who work in public organizations in Bandung, Indonesia. To test the proposed research model, researchers used a non-parametric approach to predict the model of research. The result of this study indicates there is a connection between authentic leadership and psychological vulnerability mediated by proactive coping in uncertain situations, especially during COVID-19. The study result contributes to filling the research gaps, which shows the effectiveness of authentic leadership in encouraging proactive behavior of employees in dealing with stress and reducing the impact of psychological vulnerability on employees of public organizations. The research implication recommends that leaders of public organizations encourage the employees' proactive behavior by providing direct support. Thus, the employees can be more effective in dealing with uncertain situations to decrease the impact of psychological vulnerability.

Keywords: Authentic Leadership, Proactive Coping, Psychological Vulnerable, Public Organization

1. Introduction

Any organization, either public or non-public organizations, concerned with its internal resources in achieving organizational goals. (Brunetto & Beattie, 2020) COVID-19 experienced by public organizations, in this case, the government agency that directly provides services to the community as employees in sub-districts, needs some moral support to overcome the problems. (Agostino, Arnaboldi & Lema, 2021) The impact of COVID-19 endured by the community is related to mental health (Schuster et al., 2020), social (Mazzucato & Kattel, 2020), and psychological feelings (Júnior et al., 2020). People who experience the impact of COVID-19 feel psychologically vulnerable. This condition has some effects on their mental psychology. (Schomaker, Kappler & Bauer, 2020) In these kinds of circumstances, it is necessary to take comprehensive actions to address the unidentified social and psychological health challenges. (Marazziti, Pozza, Di Giuseppe & Conversano, 2020)

Some pivotal directions from the central government are indispensable to overcome the community's social and psychological health challenges, especially for government agency employees whose duty is straightforwardly to give services to the community at the sub-district level. (Megatsari et al., 2020) The instructions given by the government refer to the Covid-19 Task Force, which delivers directions to permanently prevent the spread of COVID-19 by implementing health protocols and providing strategic policy recommendations based on the actual conditions faced by Indonesia by suggesting policies for the Implementation of Enforcement of Restrictions on Community Activities (PPKM). (Tanra & Tusholehah, 2022)

The implementation of PPKM will have some implications for the health, social and psychological state due to exposure to the virus, restriction on community social activities, and limitation on work activities by using the work from home (WFH) policy. (Prasiska, Muhlis & Megatsari, 2022) The impact of PPKM has resulted in mental and psychological vulnerabilities by employees directly tasked with providing services to the community. (Douglas et al., 2020)

The vulnerability of mental and psychological health experienced by employees leads to declining quality of life. (López-Cabarcos, López-Carballeira & Ferro-Soto, 2020) In order to maintain a good standard of living, it is necessary to have support from the leaders by affording moral encouragement to overcome the effects of COVID-19 that emerge as mental health problems and psychological vulnerability. (Zhao, Ahmed & Faraz, 2020) Research conducted by Ersen & Bilgiç (2018) showed that employees must be able to manage conditions or crises that occur in uncertain situations. Kuznetsova et al., (2021) proved that the individual's ability to manage this kind of situation is an employee's active behavior in dealing with uncertain situations such as the effect of COVID-19. According to Šlebarska & Soucek (2020), coping behavior is one approach to overcoming this situation of insecurity. As stated by Chew et al., (2020) coping behavior reduces the effect on individual mental health and psychological vulnerability. On the other hand, leaders of the organization can stimulate employee coping behavior. This statement is supported by Tripathi & Bharadwaja (2020). Eisenbeck, Pérez-Escobar & Carreno (2021) suggested to overcome the problem of psychological vulnerability, the organization must have a leader's support. During COVID-19, numerous moral supports from the leaders are needed due to unprecedented conditions. (Farnese et al., 2018; Bailey & Breslin, 2021; Mostafa, Farley & Zaharie, 2021)

The previous research signifies that the presence of a leader's moral support reduces psychological vulnerability. In addition, the research indicates that proactive coping behavior contributes to diminishing psychological vulnerability. Furthermore, encouragement from the leader increases proactive coping behavior. However, no research directly combines authentic leadership with proactive coping and its implications for psychological vulnerability during COVID-19. To fill the gap in preceding research, the researchers formulated the problem of the influence of authentic leadership on proactive coping and its implications for the psychological vulnerability of employees. Hopefully, this study contributes to developing theories, especially regarding leadership and stress management in organizations.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Authentic Leadership

The role of the leader within an organization is an essential aspect in motivating people to achieve organizational goals. (Shakeel, Kruyen & Van Thiel, 2019) Leaders can also demonstrate their ability to direct the work climate within the organization into a prevailing norm to accomplish organizational goals. (Qing, Asif, Hussain & Jameel, 2020) The existence of trust in the organization and cooperation between individuals are also essential factors to acquire positive outcomes. (Phong, Hui & Son, 2018) The work climate emphasizes the importance of various effective solutions to create an atmosphere that supports individual creativity to overcome diverse current and future work barriers. (Al Harbi, Alarifi & Mosbah, 2019) Feedback between leaders and organizational members encourages synergies that lead to high self-confidence. (Anwar, Abid & Waqas, 2019) The effectiveness of leaders who can solve problems within the organization by sharing knowledge and information is one aspect of solving problems in the organization; thus, the organization can compete and survive in uncertain situations. (Mutonyi, Slåtten & Lien, 2020) To deal with unexpected situations, an organization needs leaders who can manage problems that arise during crises and overcome the problems effectively. (Ahern & Loh, 2020)

Gardner et al., (2021) stated the behavior of leaders who take the opportunity of positive self-advantages, good ethics, and transparent disclosure of information to subordinates facilitate the proper organizational direction. Walumbwa et al., (2008) developed authentic leadership into several aspects such as self-awareness, transparency, ethics or morals, and a balanced process. According to Avolio & Walumbwa (2014), leaders with self-awareness are leaders who understand their purpose in life and transformed it effectively as guidance to their subordinates. Furthermore, there is transparency between the leader and subordinates objectively so that there is openness between them. (Hirst et al., 2016). Leader morality is behavior based on the norms that are implemented in the workplace. (Iszatt-White & Kempster, 2019) Furthermore, Alilyyani, Wong & Cummings (2018) also stated that leaders could also make decisions based on objective data by considering the opinions of their subordinates.

Andersen (2018) stated the leader's behavior that referred to the standards and norms he believes indicates he has solid ethics. A leader who has strong ethical standards is able to increase the attention of subordinates; make it easier to provide effective direction and instructions. (Gardner et al., 2011). Research by Malila, Lunkka & Suhonen (2017) identified that adequate direction drives the individuals within the organization to produce good competitiveness. Likewise, Covelli & Mason (2017) proved that efficacious instruction encourages individuals to be more active in carrying out their duties within an organization. Leaders who can direct their subordinates is also can encourage them to be proactive; then they have adequate competence and great competitiveness. (Alvesson & Einola, 2019) Liu et al., (2017) showed that directions offer various solutions for employees to face recent and future challenges. Gill et al., (2018) showed the effectiveness of leaders provides the impetus for individuals to accept the leader's vision. Moreover, the leader directs the development of the employees by demonstrating his ability to implement a profitable work climate to create new ethics within the organization.

2.2 Proactive Coping

Coping refers to individual behavior in the cognitive domain when dealing with uncertain situations (Folkman & Moscovitz, 2004). It can be said that reflective coping is a process of individual response in enduring the causes of stress. (Craig & Austin, 2016) Similarly, individual coping behaviors in overcoming threats to unpredictable situations where individuals actively respond to actual actions to overcome threats that lead to anxiety (Straud et al., 2015). The behavior refers to the individual's actions in reacting to upcoming threats by preparing some ways to contend with the possibilities.

(Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997) Proactive coping behavior is the ability possessed by individuals based on values or self-confidence to overtake threats and opportunities synchronously. (Greenglass, 2002) Self-confidence refers to self-efficacy and a high locus of control (Li & Miller, 2017) which is the basis for handling threats and managing opportunities that may arise in connection with access to the used resources. (Carlander & Johansson, 2020)

The study of coping behavior is an attitude that transforms something with a cognitive approach. The behavior leads to the management of threats internally and externally by considering the effectiveness and efficiency of using its resources (Folkman & Moscovitz, 2004). The study of coping behavior is also closely related to the reciprocal relationship between individuals and their surrounding environment. (Mari et al., 2021) Study results show that stress management on individual welfare is also intently connected to their capability to grapple with future threats. (Frydenberg, 2014; Bui et al., 2021)

Greenglass (2002) developed coping behavior based on several factors that shape individual coping behavior. However, many researchers only use proactive coping and preventive coping. Researchers consider this aspect is the dominant one that shapes coping behavior in which individuals make efforts to face threats with a strong urge to overcome them. (Labrague, 2021) Thus, it is necessary to know the obstacles experienced by individuals to develop coping behaviors in order to handle and manage stress successfully. (Chew et al., 2020) Another reason proposed by researchers in the prevention aspect is individuals need to be prepared to bear the indefinite events in the future. (Yevdokimova & Okhrimenko, 2021) According to Mari et al., (2021), this form of behavior demonstrates an individual minimizes the potential risk due to the uncertain situation related to the level of anxiety. It can be said that coping behavior is an individual strategy with the ability and resistance to psychological pressure due to the emergence of unforeseen situations by utilizing the available resources effectively in dealing with threats in a positive manner. (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997)

Coping behavior also heightens individual optimism in overcoming threats into opportunities. (Chang, Chien & Shen, 2021) Individuals can overcome threats with intense self-confidence and preparation. (Wolor, Nurkhin & Citriadin, 2021) Farnese et al., (2018) indicated coping behavior requires support from the leader to work effectively. A leader who can provide a favorable atmosphere and role models for employees in managing stress from uncertain situations can support them to control threats or stress in the workplace. (Bailey & Breslin (2021) Leaders who have a capable level of self-awareness can motivate employees' proactive coping behavior; this encouragement reflects in the leader's ability to present clear direction to the given situation (Mostafa, Farley & Zaharie, 2021) The existence of openness between leaders and employees facilitates collaboration that leads to the desired results. In addition, when this condition is supported by the leader's ethics, it enables the leader to be a role model in managing obstacles related to stress in the workplace (Yamak & Eyupoglu, 2021). Therefore, it can be predicted that the effectiveness of authentic leadership enhances the employees' proactive coping skills to administer a situation of insecurity.

H₁: The more effective the authentic leadership, the better the proactive coping behavior of employees.

2.3 Psychological Vulnerable

Kontoangelos, Economou & Papageorgiou (2020) stated that psychological vulnerability can be indicated by avoiding experiences of negative and positive events that predict the distressing situation that might be felt by individuals. Shoss (2017) mentioned that psychological vulnerability is the avoidance of experience as a barrier or hindrance to getting pleasure and meaning in life and is predicted to lead to more valuable individual behavior.

Teixeira et al., (2022) proved both individuals and groups in a social environment need to get support due to psychological vulnerabilities caused by uncertain and unprecedented situations. Monroe, Anderson & Harkness (2019) showed the support that will be implemented requires mental,

social, and economic handling to overcome or reduce their negative behavior due to the crisis. For this reason, the role of health care support and treatment is beneficial in controlling the impact of the crisis. (Brown, 2017) The concept of psychological vulnerability was carried out in academic research that supports policymaking for providing health care services and social activities (Brown, Ecclestone, & Emmel, 2017).

Definition of vulnerability varies widely, such as vulnerability refers to the environmental impact of natural or economic disasters (Hossain et al., 2020), vulnerability relates to public health (Makwana, 2019), or vulnerability advert to the universal human condition (Herring, 2016). However, according to Satici (2019), there is a similarity that unexpected situations will have some influence on psychological vulnerability in individuals or groups and humanity at large. Therefore, some studies on psychological vulnerability can be examined in the context of policy (Harpviken, 2020), social care (Teixeira et al., 2022), individuals or groups related to victims, and dependence and fear (Kirby, Day & Sagar, 2019).

Research conducted by Altan-Atalay & Zeytun (2020) explores the relationship between coping behaviors, anxiety, and experiential avoidance. The study revealed a significant relationship between coping behavior and emotional anxiety and had implications for psychological vulnerability. In addition, Gorka, LaBar & Hariri (2016) found an eloquent reduction in the predictive relationship between coping with stress and uncontrollable anxiety.

Ersen & Bilgiç, (2018) showed that the ability of employees to manage unpredictable or uncontrollable situations is an essential aspect of anticipatory coping behavior. Furthermore, the research of Šlebarska & Soucek (2020) revealed the higher the ability of employees to deal with unruly situations, the better they would cope with both mental and psychological impacts. Larague (2021) indicated that employees' proactive coping ability decreases psychological vulnerability due to the health crisis. In addition, the role of leadership in providing moral encouragement positively has some impact on reducing employee psychological vulnerabilities. (Hu et al., 2018)) It can be assumed that the more effective authentic leadership will be, the lower the effect of employee psychological vulnerability.

H2: The better the employee's proactive coping, the lesser psychologically vulnerable employees.

H3: The more effective the authentic leadership, the lower the psychologically vulnerable employees.

3. Methods

The researchers used a nonparametric approach to answer the proposed problem formulation. This study aimed to predict whether there was a relationship between the influence of authentic leadership on proactive coping and its implications for the psychological vulnerability of employees. To predict the research model, the researchers used samples from bachelor's and master's degree students at Pasundan School of Economics, Bandung, Indonesia, who work as employees in government agencies, especially in sub-districts in Bandung. At first, the researchers listed bachelor's and master's degree students who work as employees in local government agencies at the sub-district level in Bandung. It was found there were 52 bachelor's and master's degree students who work at local government agencies at the sub-district level in Bandung. Therefore, the researchers asked them to distribute the questionnaires to their colleagues. The total respondents who filled out structured questionnaires through google form were 198 district employees in Bandung. The questionnaires were confidential as the respondents' identities would not be disseminated. It was for research purposes only.

The test of the research model referred to the determining variable, the Authentic Leadership variable, which is developed by Walumbwa et al., (2008) and validated by Roof (2014). The numbers of instruments were 16 statement items. However, only 13 items were used to test the model because 3 statement items were invalid. The valid instruments were outstanding abilities, feedback, self-

acceptance, openness, admitting mistakes, personal values, no emphasis, the position of existence, asking for opinions, listening to opinions, not sacrificing other people's opinions, and joint decisions.

Researchers used an instrument developed by Greenglass (2002) and validated by Roesch et al., (2009) to measure the Proactive Coping Inventory variable. There were 35 items, but only 26 were used to test the model because 9 items were invalid. There were three dimensions. First was proactive coping and the valid instruments were, more challenging goals, fancy challenges, achieving dreams, succeeding with various shortcomings, understanding support, looking for solutions, positive experiences, being able to finish, and taking the lead. The dimensions of preventive coping with valid instruments were willingness for difficult situations, readiness for threats, changing situations, work skills, protecting families, anticipating dangers, best results, and managing finances. Moreover, the reflective dimensions with valid instruments were complex problems, scenarios of various outcomes, realistic alternatives, careful behavior, visualization of results, making decisions carefully, visualization of solving problems, various alternative solutions, and potential outcomes.

Meanwhile, to measure the Psychological Vulnerability variable, the researchers used an instrument developed by Sinclair & Wallston (1999) and validated by Satici & Uysal (2017) with 6 statement items. However, this study only used 4 items because 2 items were invalid. The valid statement items were feeling like a failure, low self-esteem, needing recognition, and feeling used by others. Therefore, 43 statement items were used to test the proposed research model. Data from the respondents were recapitulated and can be seen in table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Respondents Data

Data demographic	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	109	55,1
Female	89	44,9
Age		
Less 30 years	144	72,7
31 - 40 years	33	16,7
41 - 50 years	11	5,6
More 50 years	10	5,1
Education		
High School and Diploma	127	64,1
Bachelor	68	34,3
Master	3	1,6
Tenure		
Less 3 years	97	49,0
3 - 10 years	84	42,4
More 10 years	17	8,6

After recapitulating the questionnaire, it was found that mostly the respondents were women (55.1%). This result was not much different from the fact in most of the officers serving the community at the sub-district level in Bandung are women. Respondents' age less than 30 years were the highest and the second highest was 31- 40 years old. This condition reflects that most of the respondents were productive workers who provide services to the community. High school graduates were the highest percentage and the next position were diploma graduates (64.1%). The highest percentage of tenure period was less than three years (49.0%), while the second highest percentage were respondents with a tenure period between 3 - 10 years (42.4%). The tenure period showed that the respondents who participated in the study were employees who already knew their job well.

After the data was collected, the next step was to test the validity and reliability of the research construct. Furthermore, the researchers examined the predictions of the research model by using partial least squares.

4. Data Analysis

Researchers performed the data analysis by validating the research construct. It was the initial stage before conducting the full data analysis model. This stage was a first-order test to obtain valid and reliable data. After testing the first order, the researchers conducted a second-order test to find out the conclusions of the data with the suitability of the proposed hypothesis. The results of data analysis for the first order and second order testing can be seen in table 2 and table 3.

Table 2: Results Of Construct Analysis Research

Construct	Loading	Cr. Alpha	Comp. Reliability	A. Var. Ext.
Saw2	0,711	0,750	0,811	0,590
Saw3	0,746			
Saw4	0,842			
Tran1	0,782	0,759	0,773	0,532
Tran2	0,721			
Tran4	0,683			
Etic1	0,833	0,791	0,792	0,585
Etic2	0,522			
Etic3	0,699			
Balance1	0,810	0,875	0,915	0,731
Balance2	0,913			
Balance3	0,770			
Balance4	0,916			
Pro3	0,581	0,801	0,852	0,520
Pro4	0,703			
Pro5	0,661			
Pro6	0,725			
Pro7	0,589			
Pro8	0,719			
Pro11	0,574			
Pro12	0,612			
Pro13	0,581	0,850	0,885	0,596
Prev3	0,550			
Prev4	0,700			
Prev5	0,639			
Prev6	0,657			
Prev7	0,756			
Prev8	0,796			
Prev9	0,853			
Prev10	0,633			
Ref1	0,564			
Ref3	0,714			
Ref4	0,738			
Ref5	0,707			
Ref6	0,564			
Ref7	0,650			
Ref8	0,512			
Ref9	0,661			
Ref11	0,664			
PV1	0,667	0,736	0,785	0,579
PV3	0,741			
PV4	0,641			
PV5	0,713			
Second Order				
Authentic Leaderships		0,777	0,806	0,524
Proactive Coping Inventory		0,853	0,911	0,772
Psychological Vulnerable		0,736	0,785	0,519

The validity test for statement items referred to the loading value > 0.5, and the research instrument reliability test referred to the Cron value. Alpha > 0.7, Comp value. Reliability > 0.7 and the value of A. Var. Ext. > 0.5. (Kock, 2015) The data analysis showed that research instruments were valid and reliable as shown in table 2. After testing the validity and reliability, the researchers then tested the second-order model to obtain the coefficient value and significance criteria with an error rate of 5%.

Table 3: Results Of Model Analysis Research

Path	Coefficient	St. Deviation	P Values	Note
AL -> Prev	0,417	0,054	0,000	Significant
AL -> Pro	0,382	0,054	0,000	Significant
AL -> Ref	0,403	0,052	0,000	Significant
Prev -> PV	-0,052	0,111	0,637	No Significant
Pro -> PV	-0,306	0,109	0,005	Significant
Ref -> PV	-0,096	0,106	0,368	No Significant
AL -> Saw	0,715	0,045	0,000	Significant
AL -> Trans	0,784	0,034	0,000	Significant
AL -> Etic	0,612	0,078	0,000	Significant
AL -> Balance	0,792	0,028	0,000	Significant
PCI -> Pro	0,872	0,023	0,000	Significant
PCI -> Prev	0,898	0,014	0,000	Significant
PCI -> Ref	0,879	0,019	0,000	Significant
Authentic Leaderships -> Proactive Coping Inventory	0,443	0,055	0,000	Significant
Proactive Coping Inventory -> Psychological Vulnerable	-0,276	0,069	0,000	Significant
Authentic Leaderships -> Psychological Vulnerable	-0,293	0,068	0,000	Significant

The results of data calculations showed that all the hypotheses proposed were significant, in which Authentic Leaderships -> Proactive Coping Inventory with a coefficient value 0.443 and p-values 0.000. The Proactive Coping Inventory -> Psychological Vulnerable with a coefficient of value -0.276 and p-values 0.000. In addition, the Authentic Leaderships -> Psychological Vulnerable with a coefficient -0.293 and p-values 0.000. The result is shown in Figure 1.

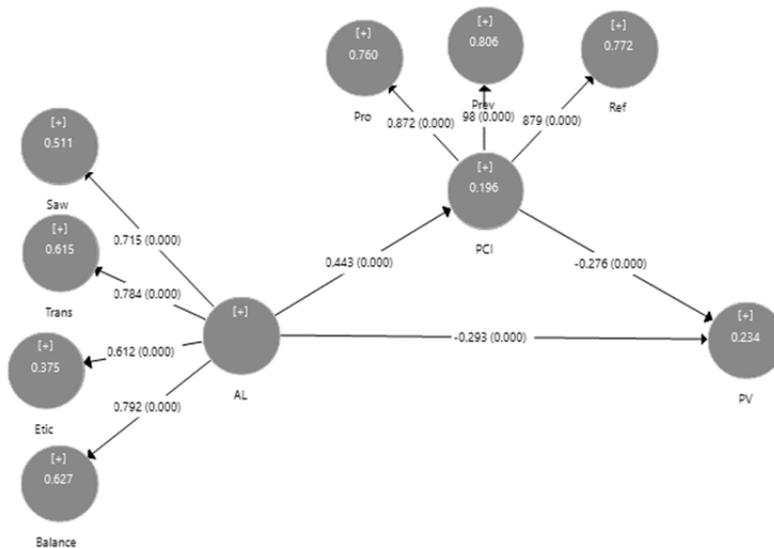


Figure 1: The result of calculating the research model

In addition, the researchers also explored the relationship between Authentic Leadership and the Proactive Coping Inventory dimension and its implications for Psychological Vulnerability. The results showed Authentic Leadership on the Proactive Coping Inventory dimension was significant with the respective coefficient values 0.417 [p-value = 0.000], 0.382 [p-value = 0.000], and 0.403 [p-value = 0.000]. Different results proved the effectiveness of the Proactive Coping Inventory dimension on Psychological Vulnerable, in which only the proactive dimension was significant with a coefficient value of -0.306 and p-value of 0.005. The Preventive Dimension of Psychological Vulnerable was not significant, with a coefficient value of -0.306 and a p-value of 0.637. Moreover, the Reflective dimension of Psychological Vulnerable was insignificant, with a coefficient value of -0.096 and a p-value of 0.368, as seen in Figure 2.

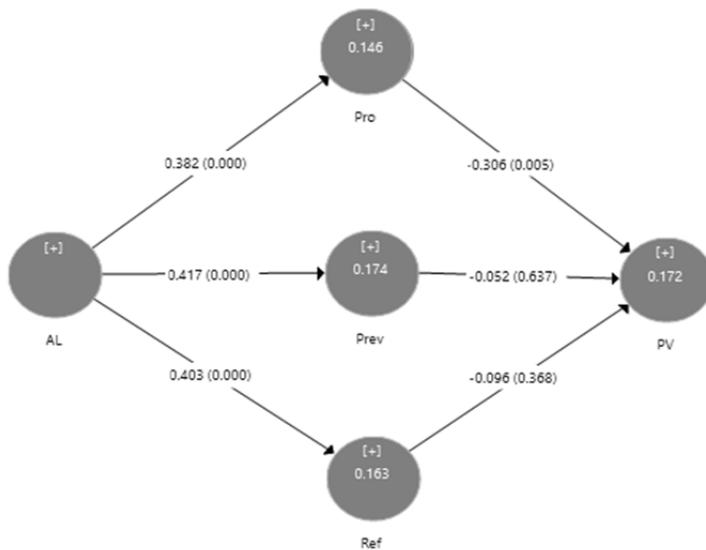


Figure 2: The result of exploring the dimension relationship of the Proactive Coping Inventory

5. Discussion

The results imply the first hypothesis which stated the more effective authentic leadership, the better the employee's proactive coping is significant. The results indicate that authentic leadership boosts the employees' proactive coping behavior in dealing with stress due to unknown threats. This research is in accordance with Wang & Xie (2020), which showed the effectiveness of authentic leadership improved employee behavior in managing emotions related to threats that occur in the workplace. Referring to the results of the exploration of the proactive coping dimension, seen in table 3, the effectiveness of authentic leadership increased proactive coping behavior by actively encouraging employees to deal with the stress they had during the Covid-19 pandemic. The effectiveness of authentic leadership also improves employee preventive coping behavior, where the role model and directions given by the leader encourages the employees to anticipate possible threats. This study is in concordance with Stander, De Beer & Stander (2015) research, which pointed out that authentic leadership increased employees' confidence and a sense of optimism in the workplace. Leaders provide information disclosure that reflects them to encourage employees' reflective coping behavior. Leaders' openness and ethics provide input for the employees in making scenarios for various possibilities that will occur in the future in connection with uncertain threats. This study aligns with Li et al., (2021) who prove information disclosure was essential for overcoming

indefinite situations. The results of this study indicate the leader offers information objectively to allow employees to be able to consider their behavior cautiously. The balanced information from the leaders inspires employees to be creative in overpowering difficulties in the workplace. (Imam et al., 2020)

The data analysis points out that the second hypothesis, which stated that better employee proactive coping will decrease the psychologically vulnerable employees, is significant. Based on the results of data analysis, it was discovered that the higher the proactive coping behavior of employees, the lower the level of psychological vulnerability during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study supports Altan-Atalay & Zeytun (2020), who proved individual proactive behavior is closely related to stress and anxiety levels. Mentioning the results of exploring the effect of the proactive coping dimension, shows that only the proactive dimension affects the level of employee psychological vulnerability. In contrast, the reflective and preventive dimensions do not affect the employee's psychological vulnerability. The study results are in line with research conducted by Almasy et al., (2014) and Li & Miller (2017), which showed proactive coping strategies were related to individual levels of anxiety and vulnerability and proactive coping showed a more significant relationship than the other dimensions. For this reason, it is indispensable to have a solution for the employees to improve their preventive and reflective behavior provided by the organization.

This study indicates proactive coping behavior decreases the psychological vulnerability of employees during the COVID-19 pandemic. An adequate level of employee proactive coping skills enables them to increase their low self-esteem to cope with the impact of COVID-19. The employees will be confident in handling problems that arise when completing tasks and duties. Great stress management is marked by employee coping behavior who likes challenges to solve problems in uncertain situations. Çutuk & Aydoğan (2019) showed a high level of emotional control has a noteworthy effect on psychological vulnerability. Employees accumulate their internal resources to turn threats into opportunities to increase the sense of meaning in life when facing uncertain conditions. This condition displays coping behavior is closely related to the domain of upright self-regulation. It is to deal with stress related to anxiety which tends to be rigid and inflexible. Hyun & Ku (2020) exhibited the results of reducing anxiety and increasing the meaning of life with satisfactory proactive behavior. Proactive coping ability is also closely linked to the individual's ability to avoid unwanted personal events related to his psychological vulnerability. (Bhattacharyya, Namdeo & Dwivedi, 2018)

Correspondingly, the third hypothesis, which stated the more effective authentic leadership, the lower the psychologically vulnerable employees, is significant. Indication of the effectiveness of authentic leadership decreases the psychological vulnerability of employees is the high moral standards. The leaders are the role models for their subordinates to be more positive in overcoming various problems in the workplace. Gaddy et. (2017) assumed employees with a high level of psychological vulnerability need to get a leader's concrete examples in handling indeterminate conditions. The effectiveness of authentic leadership is reflected in the existence of a work atmosphere that leads to a contributive work climate to overcome various obstacles within the organization. This statement is in compliance with ul Haque, Sher & Urbański (2020) that stated effective authentic leadership overpowers various stress problems in the workplace and influences employee work effectiveness. Sidani & Rowe's research (2018) confirmed consistent moral standards applied in organizations reflect an authentic leadership approach. Authentic leadership emphasizes honest relationships with subordinates to build the legitimacy of leaders and the appreciation of input from the subordinates; thus, they have an optimistic attitude to overcome various obstacles in the workplace. (Laguna et al., 2019) Working conditions that improve the work climate reduce the employees' psychological vulnerability which the employees will not have the feeling of inferiority in overcoming work problems during the COVID-19 period. Expectantly, the existence of authentic leadership prompts positive employee perceptions of vulnerability and psychological anxiety. Therefore, they can handle various obstacles in completing their tasks through crises and unexpected situations in the workplace.

6. Conclusion and Recommendation

The researchers propose a theory development model based on a literature review to fill the research gap in the study of authentic leadership, proactive coping, and psychological vulnerability. The study results indicate a close relationship between authentic leadership, proactive coping, and psychological vulnerability. Concrete results from this study indicate that the effectiveness of authentic leadership develops employee stress management abilities and lessens employee psychological vulnerabilities when facing uncertain situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Employees' psychological vulnerabilities, such as inferiority feelings can be dissolved by employees' proactive coping behavior. The employees are optimistic in dealing with unexpected obstacles. The impact of the threat from unclear situations can be decreased when the employees can manage stress properly. Moreover, they are also supported by a leader who can create a contented work climate and own high moral and ethical standards. A balanced disclosure of information between the leaders and subordinates and role model examples for subordinates is a fundamental aspect of controlling uncertain situations in the future.

This study still has several shortcomings in which the researchers only predict the theory of development model so that the results of this study cannot be generalized. Further research is needed to explore aspects of individual preventive and reflective coping behaviors and their relationship to psychological vulnerabilities to obtain a more comprehensive picture.

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