
AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP and WORK ENGAGEMENT of SCHOOL HEADS as MEDIATORS of SELF-EFFICACY

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ABSTRACT: This study determines the mediating effect of self-efficacy on the relationship between authentic leadership and work engagement of school heads in public schools of the Island Garden City of Samal. The quantitative research design was utilized with 300 public elementary and secondary school teachers in the Island Garden City of Samal. Through non-experimental, quantitative, and mediation analysis, data were gathered through a survey and were analyzed using the Mean, Pearson Product Moment Correlation, Multiple Regression Analysis, and Path analysis. The study's findings revealed a very high result regarding the level of Authentic Leadership, Self-efficacy, and Work Engagement among school heads as perceived by the teachers. Also, the result showed a significant relationship between authentic leadership, work engagement of school heads, and self-efficacy. However, on the singular capacity of these variables, only partial mediation was observed on the mediating effect of Self-Efficacy in the relationship between Authentic Leadership and Work Engagement.

KEYWORDS: authentic leadership, work engagement, school heads, mediators, self-efficacy, educational management, Philippines

I. INTRODUCTION.

Teachers' Work engagement faces global problems in school (Saks, A. M., & Gruman, J. A. (2021). Work engagement among teachers can also be referred to as collaborative work among them. However, there are instances when teachers face problems like insecurities, incapability, and cultural differences between and among teachers and school heads. Such problems lead to an unhealthy working environment as outputs are compromised due to these conflicts. In addition, work engagement can become a problematic issue among teachers for several reasons, often stemming from various challenges within the education system and the broader societal context (Obrad & Circa, 2021). Further, this was caught and became one of the agenda items in DepEd memorandum no. 50 s. 2020 or the DepEd professional development priorities for teachers and school heads, specifically domain 4 (Developing Self to others).

Research on teachers' work engagement is vital for several reasons, as it provides insights into the factors affecting their professional well-being and the overall quality of education. Conducting studies about work engagement and other variables affecting teachers' performance may help understand what teachers are going through, like exhaustion, excessive workloads, performance management, and others. (Munna & Kalam, 2021; Van Waeyenberg, Peccei & Decramer, 2022). Furthermore, Work engagement is vital as it gives the school the more significant factor to be more productive, leading to achieving the institutional goals (Gapor & Doctor, 2020).

The link of the independent variable of this study with work engagement and self-efficacy among school heads is evident in the study of Saad, Sudin, & Shamsuddin (2018), as their results reveal that leadership influences followers' attributes of work engagement. As indicated in their study, the direct relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement was partially mediated by employees' perceptions of meaning in work. Moreover, industry reports show that unengaged employees have increased globally. It is suggested that human resource managers must design training programs that could improve transformational leadership behaviors in the workplace. Viewing the importance of the studies on teachers' work engagement has something to do with leadership. Authentic leadership of school heads was the first variable to be regarded as relevant. It plays a significant role in teachers' work engagement, as Kulophas's study (2018) emphasized.

The literature reviewed in the articles above has yet to extensively explore the role of self-efficacy as a mediator in the connection between leadership and engagement. Consequently, conducting a study in this area is crucial to address this research gap. Investigating the mediating effect of self-efficacy could provide valuable insights into comprehending work engagement, specifically within the educational context of teachers.

II. METHOD

This study utilized non-experimental, quantitative descriptive-correlational, and mediation analysis. Descriptive research describes the attitudes and behaviors observed during the investigation. In contrast, correlational research identifies statistical relationships between two variables (Mohajan,2020). Descriptive research provides current status information, examines participant characteristics, behaviors, and experiences, and uses correlational design to identify association strength and nature between variables.

This study fits a mediation analysis as it sought to identify and explain the mechanism or process that underlies an observed relationship between Authentic Leaders and the Work engagement of School Heads via the inclusion of a third hypothetical variable, known as a mediator variable, which is Self Efficacy (Iqbal, Ahmad, Nasim & Khan(2020).

The study was conducted on the public school teachers of IGACOS, specifically from the three districts: Babak, Samal, and Kaputian. This investigation was conducted in Davao Region, specifically in the Island Garden City of Samal in Davao del Norte. Davao Region, also known as Region XI, is south of Mindanao. As shown in Figure 6, the Davao Region is surrounded by the CARAGA region in the north, the Philippine Sea in the south-eastern border, and the Bukidnon and the SOCCSKSARGEN Region in the west. Davao City (or Dakbayan sa Dabaw in Cebuano, Lungsod ng Dabaw in Filipino, Ciudad de Dávao in Chavacano) is a fully developed city in Mindanao and dubbed as the third most populated city in southern Mindanao having a population of 1,632,991, as recorded in the 2015 Philippine census (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2016). The city serves as the regional center and a center of Mindanao's trade, commerce, and industry.

Samal, or the Island Garden City of Samal (IGACOS), with a population of 104,123, belongs to the fourth type of city based on income. The city is also located in Davao del Norte. Comprising Samal and Talikud Islands, the city is known to be the largest resort city in the country, with very nice beach resorts.

A total of 300 teachers from the three districts of IGACOS in Southern Philippines served as the respondents of this study. Using Raosoft, the sample is 300 based on the total number of 1093 teachers. As mentioned in the study of Ahmed and Malik (2019), having 300 respondents in a mediation study is ideal. It is most practical when the total population is manageable, such as a well-defined subgroup of a larger population (Crossman, 2013). This sampling strategy was suitable for the research because it allowed the researcher to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the target population. For the inclusion criteria, only teachers with three years of experience and above were willing to answer the questionnaires, and teachers with permanent status from any of the public schools in any of the IGACOS districts participated in the study. Hence, substitute teachers, volunteer teachers, and staff are omitted. Suppose they find the study against their will, views, and opinions. In that case, they can decline without facing any consequences or penalties. After stating the purpose and benefits of the study to the respondents, the respondents' rights in line with the study were carefully considered.

Three sets of survey questionnaires were used to obtain data from the respondents adapted from previous studies. The questionnaires were subjected to content validity and reliability analysis to ensure measurement accuracy. External validators with expertise in social research and statistics validated the survey instruments. Recommendations from the validators were integrated into the final instrument. The overall mean validation of experts is 4.3 , which is described as very good. Before the actual survey, the researcher conducted a preliminary survey of 30 respondents for reliability testing. The preliminary data gathered was subjected to an internal consistency type of validity test using Cronbach's alpha with 89.8 and interpreted as sound.

The first part is an authentic leadership questionnaire, which was adapted from the study of Bandura and Kavussanu (2018). This self-assessment questionnaire is designed to measure your authentic leadership by assessing four components of the process: self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, and relational transparency. By comparing your scores, you can determine your stronger and weaker components in each category. You can interpret your authentic leadership scores using the following guidelines: high = 16–20 and low = 15 and below. Scores in the upper range indicate more vital authentic leadership, whereas scores in the lower range indicate weaker authentic leadership. The questionnaire is a 5-point Likert Scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The rating scale below was used for all the variables measured.

The work engagement questionnaire was adapted from the Utrecht Manual of Schaufeli and Bakker (2004). This tool measures Vigor as having high levels of energy and resilience, the willingness to invest effort, not being easily fatigued, and persistence in the face of difficulties. Dedication is assessed by five items that refer to deriving a sense of significance from one's work, feeling enthusiastic and proud about one's job, and feeling inspired and challenged by it. Six items measure absorption: being totally and happily immersed in one's work and having difficulties detaching oneself from it so that time passes quickly and one forgets everything else that is around. The questionnaire is a 5-point Likert Scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

The questionnaire on self-efficacy is adapted from the General Self-Efficacy (GSE) Scale of Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995). The total score is calculated by finding the sum of all items. For the GSE, the total score ranges between 10 and 40, with a higher score indicating more self-efficacy. The rating scale below shall be used.

In collecting the data, the following key steps and procedures were undertaken. First, the researcher presented his concept to his adviser. A series of revisions were done before the survey instruments were initially drafted. Second, the survey instruments were validated through experts' opinions from notable research enthusiasts from different Universities. Third, after the validation of

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the survey instruments was completed, the researcher decided to test them. Fourth, the accomplished survey instruments were submitted to the statistician at the University of Mindanao for reliability testing. Fifth, after completing the validation and reliability testing for the survey instruments, the researcher submitted his manuscript to the UM Ethics Review Committee for review (UMERC). After approval from UMERC, written permission and endorsement were obtained from the Department. The sixth and its succeeding steps contributed to the majority of the scope of work regarding the data collection process. In the sixth step, a letter was attached to the endorsements and submitted to the office of the school division superintendent. Then, an approved letter from the school division superintendent's office was submitted to the different school heads. Upon the individual permission was granted, a schedule was made for the face-to-face distribution and retrieval of the survey forms. The researcher personally distributed and administered the sets of questionnaires to the respondents. It took two to three weeks to distribute, collect, and gather the questionnaire from the respondents due to the COVID protocol that existed during that time. After retrieval, the data were screened, encoded, tabulated, and analyzed.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Authentic Leadership of School Heads

Presented in Table 1 is the level of Authentic Leadership of School Heads as perceived by teachers, resulting in an overall mean of 4.41 with a corresponding Standard Deviation of 0.47, which is interpreted as very high. This means that the authentic leadership skills of school heads are very high.

Among the indicators, it can be gleaned that the Relational Transparency gained the lowest mean of 4.34 compared to the other indicators. Nonetheless, all indicators gained the exact verbal description, which was very high. This means that Self Awareness, Internalized Moral Perspective, Balanced Processing, and Relational Transparency are all manifested by the School heads and that they have embodied these as a school leader.

The authentic leadership skill of school heads, as perceived by teachers, is very high. This means that school leaders as perceived by teachers, are seen as genuine or "real." The very high level of authentic leadership among school heads manifests that they are authentic leaders who act according to their values and convictions, which gives them credibility with their followers. This quality wins the respect and trust of followers. They act and believe in a way that is congruent with their conduct. Real leaders are transparent in the workplace, which gives their followers valuable job experience. Genuine leaders welcome feedback from their followers and share information when making judgments (Northouse, 2021 & Walumbwa et al., 2008).

Further, this study's result corroborates with the results of Lawson (2020) that the influential mentors perceived as authentic leaders by teacher-mentees acted within four dimensions: self-awareness, balanced processing, relational transparency and internalized moral perspective. These four dimensions are also the indicators of the Authentic leadership scale of the present study. The results revealed a very high level. Hence, the school leaders are influential as perceived by the respondent teachers and that they work well with their school heads.

Table 1. Level of Authentic Leadership of School Heads

Indicator	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
Self-awareness	0.50	4.40	Very High
Internalized Moral Perspective	0.52	4.45	Very High
Balanced Processing	0.53	4.44	Very High
Relational Transparency	0.63	4.34	Very High
Total	0.47	4.41	Very High

B. Work Engagement of School Heads

Presented in Table 2 is the level of Work Engagement of School Heads as perceived by teachers, which gained an overall mean of 4.48 with a corresponding standard deviation of 0.52, which is interpreted as very high. This means that the School Heads manifest a very high work engagement as school leaders.

Though all of the indicators have resulted in a very high description, it can be noted that Absorption as an indicator, got the lowest mean, which is only 4.29, compared to the other indicators, which resulted in 4.55 and 4.61. Hence, the respondents perceive Absorption as their lowest work engagement.

As perceived by teachers, school heads' high level of work engagement shows that teachers are driven by the opportunity for development and interaction with colleagues. At the same time, older employees appreciate seeing their competencies acknowledged by their school heads. The present study result is an added literature on the growing notion that it is important to highlight that a high degree of job engagement presents an opportunity to develop procedures and give each age group the proper combination of motivators. We examined how work engagement and job-related affect might mediate the connection between proactive behavior and inventive personality (Guglielmi, Bruni, Simbula, Fraccaroli, & Depolo (2016). Additionally, this study

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supports the notion of Gamero-Burón and Lassibille (2018) that work engagement is both a "motivational state manifested in a genuine readiness to spend focused effort toward accomplishing corporate goals" and "employee engagement".

Table 2. Level of Work Engagement of School Heads

Indicator	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
Vigor	0.54	4.55	Very High
Dedication	0.52	4.61	Very High
Absorption	0.69	4.29	Very High
Total	0.52	4.48	Very High

C. Self-Efficacy among School Heads

Presented in Table 3 is the level of self-efficacy of School Heads as perceived by teachers. It gained an overall mean of 4.64 with a standard deviation of 0.38, which is interpreted as very high. Specifically, the result shows that the school heads can solve most problems by investing necessary effort. Also, the school heads can usually handle whatever comes their way. These items got the highest mean of 4.68 and are interpreted as very high.

The very high level of Self-efficacy among school heads as perceived by teachers is an exhibition of how productive and progressive the school heads are in dealing with their teachers. Evidently, with how high the respondent teachers rated their school heads, supports with the study result of Skaalvik & Skaalvik (2014) and Dato and Mateo (2020), which shows that both teacher self-efficacy and teacher autonomy are associated with adaptive motivational and emotional outcomes. Hence, the high level of self-efficacy among school heads is an index of good management when dealing with teachers and other school concerns as a leader. Moreover, it suggests that the school heads can solve most problems by investing the necessary effort. Also, the school heads can usually handle whatever comes their way.

Table 3. Level of Self-efficacy of School Heads

Item	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
Having always manage to solve difficult problems.	0.51	4.67	Very High
find the means and ways to get what he/she wants if someone opposes him/her.	0.58	4.55	Very High
Finding it is easy to stick to his/her aims and accomplish his/her goals.	0.50	4.67	Very High
Being confident that he/she could deal efficiently.	0.52	4.63	Very High
Being resourceful, he/she knows how to handle unforeseen situations.	0.52	4.63	Very High
Solving most of the problems if he/she invests necessary effort.	0.48	4.68	Very High
Having remain calm when facing difficulties	0.52	4.56	Very High
Being always find several solutions when confronted with a problem	0.50	4.65	Very High
Having usually think of a solution if he/she is in trouble	0.51	4.67	Very High
can usually handle whatever comes the way.	0.49	4.68	Very High
Total	0.38	4.64	Very High

D. Correlation between Authentic Leadership and Work Engagement

As to the significant relationship between Authentic Leadership and Work Engagement, Table 4.1 shows that the overall computed R-value on Authentic Leadership and Work Engagement among school heads is 0.543, which fell within the threshold of moderate positive correlation. Specifically, it can be gleaned from the table that the indicators: Self-awareness, Internalized Moral Perspective, Balance Processing, and Relational Transparency registered an R-value of 0.489, 0.470, 0.492, and 0.436, which denote that these observed indicators have slight positive correlations with Work Engagement. The result indicates that Authentic Leadership has a significant direct relationship with Work Engagement, thus the null hypothesis is rejected.

Authentic leadership has been found to have a significant positive relationship with work engagement among employees. Research conducted by Kernis, Goldman, Davis, and Heppner (2018) supports the notion that authentic leadership behaviors, such as being genuine, transparent, and building trusting relationships, are associated with higher levels of work engagement. When employees perceive their leaders as authentic, they are more likely to feel a sense of purpose, passion, and connection to their work, leading to higher engagement and commitment to their organizational goals (Kernis et al., 2018). Authentic leaders inspire and

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motivate their followers by setting a positive example, fostering a climate of trust and psychological safety, and empowering employees to contribute their best efforts to the organization. These leadership behaviors create a supportive work environment that promotes engagement and enhances individual and organizational outcomes.

The result of the study aligns with the George's model of authentic leadership (2003) as it indicate that the school heads are leaders who demonstrate the qualities or characteristics that enable their followers to respond positively and be productive in their workstations.

Table 4.1. Significance on the Relationship between Authentic Leadership and Work Engagement

Authentic Leadership	Work Engagement			Overall
	Vigor	Dedication	Absorption	
Self-awareness	.415**	.441**	.437**	.489**
	.000	.000	.000	.000
Internalized Moral Perspective	.401**	.484**	.373**	.470**
	.000	.000	.000	.000
Balance Processing	.421**	.490**	.402**	.492**
	.000	.000	.000	.000
Relational Transparency	.366**	.380**	.404**	.436**
	.000	.000	.000	.000
Overall	.461**	.516**	.467**	.543**
	.000	.000	.000	.000

E. Correlation between Authentic Leadership and Self-efficacy

Presented in Table 4.2 is the significant difference between Authentic Leadership and Self-Efficacy. The overall result shows that the computed R-value is 0.615, which indicates a significant relationship between authentic leadership and Self-efficacy. Specifically, the indicators of Authentic Leadership show a direct relationship with Self-Efficacy as the R-values are 0.532, .565, 0.546 and 0.490. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected.

The relationship between authentic leadership and self-efficacy has gained significant attention in recent research. Authentic leadership, characterized by leaders who are genuine, transparent, and true to themselves, has been found to influence the self-efficacy beliefs of employees positively. According to a study by Hannah, Avolio, and Walumbwa (2018), authentic leaders serve as role models and provide support, encouragement, and empowerment to their followers, which enhances their self-efficacy. When leaders exhibit authentic behaviors, employees are more likely to perceive themselves as capable of accomplishing tasks and overcoming challenges. This, in turn, leads to increased levels of self-efficacy, which is an important predictor of individual performance, motivation, and job satisfaction (Hannah et al., 2018) The relationship between authentic leadership and self-efficacy is significant as it highlights the positive impact of authentic leadership on the belief in one's abilities, which can have substantial implications for individual and organizational outcomes.

Another study shows a significant relationship between authentic leadership and Self-efficacy. Specifically, the indicators of Authentic Leadership show a direct relationship with Self-Efficacy. This means that the high sense of self-awareness and internalized moral perspective of school heads have contributed to the teachers' self-efficacy. Moreover, the school heads' perceived high sense of balance processing and relational transparency have provoked positive behavior among the teachers, which has motivated them, too. This result is an added literature to the growing notion similar to the study results of Rego et al. (2012) and Malik et al. (2016), which emphasize that authentic leadership positively affects employees.

Table 4.2. Significance on the Relationship between Authentic Leadership and Self-efficacy

Authentic Leadership	Self-Efficacy
Self-awareness	.532**
	.000
Internalized Moral Perspective	.565**
	.000
Balance Processing	.546**
	.000
Relational Transparency	.490**
	.000
Overall	.615**
	.000

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F. Correlation between Self-efficacy and Work Engagement

Table 4.3 shows the computed R-value of 0.557, which denotes a strong positive relationship between self-efficacy and work engagement.

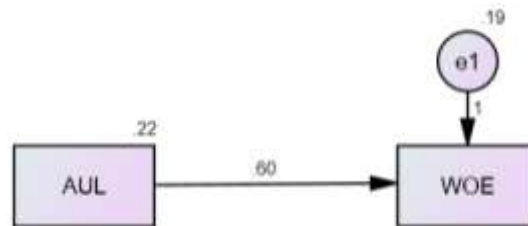
The relationship between self-efficacy and work engagement has been widely recognized as significant in recent research. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to successfully perform specific tasks or activities. On the other hand, work engagement is a positive, fulfilling, and energized state of mind characterized by dedication, vigor, and absorption in one's work. Numerous studies have shown that self-efficacy is crucial in predicting work engagement. For instance, according to a study conducted by Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, and Schaufeli (2018), employees with higher levels of self-efficacy are more likely to experience greater work engagement. These individuals strongly believe in their ability to perform their job tasks successfully, enhancing their motivation, commitment, and enthusiasm. The significant relationship between self-efficacy and work engagement highlights the importance of fostering self-beliefs in employees to promote their engagement and overall well-being.

Table 4.3. Significance on the Relationship between Self-efficacy and Work Engagement

Self-efficacy	Work Engagement			Overall
	Vigor	Dedication	Absorption	
	.540**	.560**	.402**	.557**
	.000	.000	.000	.000

G. The mediating effect of Self-efficacy on the relationship between Authentic Leadership and Work Engagement.

Table 5. Mediation Analysis of the Three Variables



Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
WOE <--- AUL	.597	.053	11.194	***	

Legend:

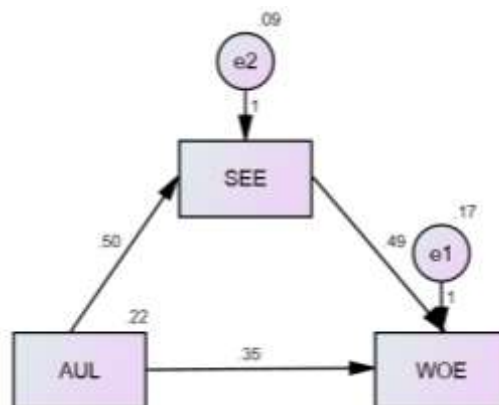
AUL=Authentic Leadership

WOE=Work Engagement

SEE=Self-efficacy

Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
SEE <--- AUL	.497	.037	13.475	***	
WOE <--- AUL	.354	.064	5.572	***	
WOE <--- SEE	.487	.079	6.193	***	



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Recent research has shed light on the mediating role of self-efficacy in the relationship between authentic leadership and work engagement. Authentic leadership is characterized by genuineness, transparency, and positive moral qualities, fostering trust and confidence among followers. On the other hand, work engagement is a state of vigor, dedication, and absorption in one's work. A study by Zhang, Liu, and Wu (2019) found that self-efficacy mediates the relationship between authentic leadership and work engagement. The study revealed that authentic leadership positively influences self-efficacy, enhancing work engagement. This suggests that leaders who exhibit authentic behaviors and demonstrate trustworthiness and ethical conduct can significantly impact employees' self-efficacy beliefs, leading to increased levels of work engagement. These findings highlight the importance of authentic leadership in promoting self-efficacy and subsequently fostering work engagement among employees.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

As perceived by the teachers, the study's findings reveal very high results regarding the level of Authentic Leadership, Self-efficacy, and Work Engagement among school heads. However, on the singular capacity of these variables, only partial mediation was observed on the mediating effect of Self-Efficacy in the relationship between Authentic Leadership and Work Engagement. In conclusion, Authentic leadership significantly affects work engagement. Further, Authentic Leadership also significantly influences Self-efficacy. This means the more passionate authentic leaders are, the more efficient subordinates can be. Lastly, The very high level of Self-efficacy and its significant relationship with work engagement also means that school heads who have the attributes of being efficient directly influence their subordinates to become more engaged at work.

Based on the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are drawn. First, even if leaders' authentic leadership skills are very high, the specific indicator, Relational Transparency, resulted in the lowest mean. Hence, it is suggested that this specific indicator be given more focus by school heads in their management course with their subordinates. School Heads may explore practicing transparency more often. This can be through financial report transparency and emotional transparency. For example, include sharing true thoughts about issues and feelings during faculty meetings, conducting school-based training, and planning. Second, even if the results say that there is a very high result as to the work engagement of school heads, the indicator absorption got the lowest mean. Hence, in this part, it is suggested that school heads must look into some activities that will make them happily engrossed in one's work in a way that makes time pass quickly and which makes it difficult to detach oneself from work. This can be done by conducting physical exercises like weekly Zumba sessions, Fun Run activities, etc. This way, teachers and school heads will have another outlet for stress and overthinking. Teachers, as collaborators, may also learn about work engagement from this study, and as future leaders, they will also learn how to deal with their stakeholders. With this, they can reflect on how they deal with their stakeholders and their school heads in general. Third, even if the results for self-efficacy are high, finding the means and ways to get what he/she wants if someone opposes him/her got the lowest mean. Hence, it is suggested that school heads enhance this by providing more research-based data and other documents that will support the proposition or decision every time they have meetings and conferences with their teachers and stakeholders. Finally, for future researchers, other factors relating to Self-Efficacy can also be explored to expand and saturate other factors that link to work engagement and efficacy.

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