

Authentic Leadership on Employee Performance through Positive Psychological Capital and Work-life Integration of Employees in Leading ICT Companies in Thailand

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Abstract: - This quantitative study investigates the causal effects of authentic leadership on employee performance, with positive psychological capital and work-life integration serving as mediators, in leading information and communication technology (ICT) companies in Thailand. Data were collected through structured questionnaires from 407 employees across three large ICT companies. Descriptive statistics were used to examine sample characteristics, and structural equation modeling (SEM) was applied to validate the measurement model and test the hypothesized structural paths. The empirical findings show that authentic leadership has both direct and indirect effects on employee performance, with positive psychological capital and work-life integration acting as significant mediators. These results highlight the strategic value of authentic leadership in fostering stronger psychological resources and enabling employees to harmonize professional and personal demands more effectively. The study makes theoretical contributions by extending leadership research to the ICT sector in an emerging economy and offers practical implications for organizational leaders aiming to enhance performance, strengthen employee well-being, and build a resilient, sustainable workforce.

Key-Words: - Authentic Leadership, Positive Psychological Capital, Human Resource Management, Work-Life Integration, ICT Industry, Leadership Development, Employee Performance.

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1 Introduction

Future technologies play a significant role worldwide in solving problems and satisfying user needs, which leads to significantly higher economic value. This can be seen from the market growth in both the hardware and software industries. In [1], the forecast of global IT spending for 2022 was given as 4,385,270 million US dollars, which will increase to 4,491,471 million US dollars or 2.4 % by 2023. Meanwhile, Thailand spent 896,958 million baht on I.T. in 2022, increasing to 934,886 million baht or 4.2% by 2023. In addition, competition between large IT company groups remains fierce. This has accelerated the demand for utilization and the need to apply various technologies to be competitive in different business sectors [2].

The growth and advancement of technology with efficiency, precision, and comprehensiveness have resulted in convenience in human life and work efficiency [3]. However, the connectivity of different

technologies still requires a signaling network from the service provider in the region for users to access these technologies, making the ICT industry play a crucial role in the paradigm shift taking place [4]. In addition, technology and information are essential infrastructures for the country to drive the digital economy [5]. Therefore, Thailand needs to fully lead the industry into the 4.0 era for the country to get out of the middle-income trap and become a high-income country [6].

The current situation in the Thai ICT industry has changed its organizational structure through the merger of the country's three best-known companies: National Telecom Public Company Limited, True Corporation, and AIS. In addition, there is fierce competition for market share [7]. This situation has a direct impact on domestic users as the number of operators has decreased. However, if we look at the internal situation of the company, we can see that the employees in the ICT sector of each company have restructured their organization after the merger and

reduced the number of employees on a large scale to make the company smaller but more efficient. This is done by investing in the development of human capital and modern technology for internal work, such as remote work, online meetings, and receiving and sending work via digital platforms. As these organizations have worked through the government's work-from-home policy during the COVID-19 pandemic, they have embraced the remote work model. However, the impact on employees is that they sometimes have to work beyond the working hours set by the organization and may have to work additional hours on weekends, causing their working hours to interfere with their personal lives, ultimately leading to a loss of work-life balance.

In the past, work-life balance played an important role in employee satisfaction and performance. Stress and fatigue accumulated from work affect the time available for personal life and family. However, personal life also influences work quality, so the quality of work can decrease as a result [8]. Previous research, including interviews with executives and employees in the ICT industry, found that authentic leadership promotes and encourages an environment conducive to work-life integration. This integration is important for building employee resilience, improving productivity, and increasing engagement. It also enables employees to thrive in rapidly changing environments and catalyzes innovation [9]. Meanwhile, the growth of technology and startup companies has led to the introduction of measures to attract employees by utilizing technology for remote work or by creating work environments that differ from traditional workplaces. As a result, there is a growing interest in exploring new ways of living and working for employees, known as Work-Life Integration. Many scholars explain that the Internet helps integrate life and work, connecting the two and enabling people to work anywhere and anytime, [10], [11].

However, since work-life integration may not separate complex roles, they must rely on self-leadership. Leadership is an essential factor that helps organizations to operate and manage effectively. It also enables organizations to adapt to survive and grow sustainably, [12]. A study by [13], states that strengthening work-life integration through authentic leadership leads to life fulfillment. It also supports straightforward action and pays attention to the roles and responsibilities for which they are responsible. However, authentic leadership and positive PsyCap are deeply connected and cannot be separated, [14]. It also often affects attitudes, behaviors and work performance, [15]. Many previous research studies have looked at work-life balance [16]. However, few modern studies mention the forms and effects of

work-life integration [17], especially in relation to leadership and positive psychological capital. Therefore, there is a significant research gap in practice and academia.

Moreover, studying these dynamics within the Thai ICT industry plays an important role in expanding international knowledge, particularly by demonstrating the role of authentic leadership in enhancing performance through work-life integration and the development of positive psychological capital. This is especially relevant as Thailand rapidly advances its digital economy. Additionally, the distinctiveness of Thai culture, such as its hierarchical organizational structure and the importance of social relations, offers new perspectives that can broaden the existing conceptual framework in foreign literature. This makes related theories and models more comprehensively applicable across a variety of contexts.

Therefore, this study examines the causal effects of authentic leadership on employee performance through positive psychological capital and work-life integration among employees in a leading ICT company in Thailand. The findings can serve as a guide for shaping human resource management strategies to enhance employee performance and promote organizational strength and sustainability in a highly competitive environment.

2 Literature Review

Authentic leadership refers to a model of leadership behavior that attracts and promotes positive psychological and ethical competencies to enable leaders to achieve positive self-development [18]. The authentic leadership model encourages followers to engage in self-awareness, self-acceptance, authentic actions and relationships, which are divided into four components: Self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, and relational transparency. Social identity theory can explain the relationship between authentic leadership and work attitudes and outcomes [19] because authentic leadership makes people feel responsible for their work and shows proactive behaviors and adaptations to their roles [20]. In addition, authentic leadership is also a behavioral model that promotes positive psychological competencies and a positive ethical climate, which are used in self-awareness and lead to self-development and higher performance [21].

While positive psychological capital is a psychological state of individual development, it is closely related to authentic leadership as it enhances hope and psychology [22]. It consists of self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience [23], and authentic leadership is positively related to the proactive

behavior of subordinates, with psychological capital being a complete mediator. It is also essential for a good quality of life, especially for positive thinking about the future. It is the ability to predict what might happen, with appropriate principles, leading to a broader perspective on life [24].

Ultimately, work-life integration affects employee performance by reducing conflicts between employees' lives and work, thus promoting social exchanges that explain economic needs [25], as well as self-esteem and meaningful relationships with other people [26]. The traditional understanding of work-life balance is outdated and complex. Although the term work-life integration has a similar meaning, it differs because technology connects work or creates a modern workplace [27]. According to the concept of [26], the components of work-life integration consist of work, home (family), community (social), and self (personal life). It is a combination of different elements. It is used to evaluate the importance of each role to create a diagram that understands the form of work-life integration that leads to improved efficiency in all dimensions of life. It also impacts work efficiency in the areas of task fulfillment, contextual, and adaptive performance. It also has a direct and indirect impact on the costs of the organization [28]. Based on the literature review, the conceptual framework and research hypotheses are summarized in Figure 1.

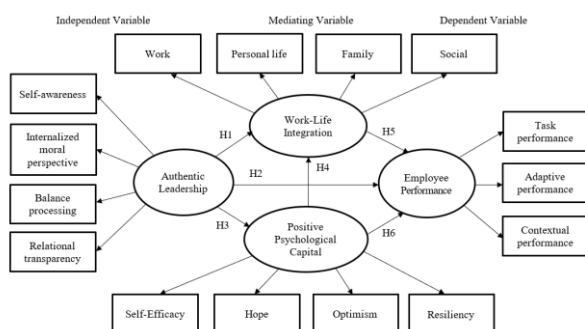


Fig. 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: created by the authors

Research hypothesis

H1: Authentic leadership has a positive influence on the work-life integration of employees in the information and communications technology industry.

H2: Authentic leadership has a positive influence on employee performance in the information and communications technology industry.

H3: Authentic leadership has a positive influence on the positive psychological capital of employees in the information and communications technology industry.

H4: Positive psychological capital has a positive influence on the work-life integration of employees in the information and communications technology industry.

H5: Work-life integration has a positive influence on employee performance in the information and communications technology industry.

H6: Positive psychological capital has a positive influence on employee performance in the information and communications technology industry.

H7: The mechanisms through which authentic leadership influences employee performance in the information and communications technology industry through positive psychological capital and work-life integration.

3 Research Methodology

This quantitative study used a survey method. It was certified in accordance with the International Ethical Guidelines for Research Involving Human Subjects by the Human Research Ethics Committee, Rajamangala University of Technology Thanyaburi, Research Project Code Exp 88/66. Therefore, the names of the companies studied were withheld to protect the rights of the subjects in this study.

The population and sample were employees of three leading companies in the ICT industry in Thailand, with a total population of 54,584. The sample size was determined according to the criteria of [29], using a structural equation model that must be 20 times the size of each observed variable in the model. The number of observed variables in this study was 15, which corresponds to 300 samples. The sampling method used in this study was stratified random sampling according to the proportion of employees in each company, along with convenience sampling, in which the questionnaires were sent by mail to the managers or supervisors of each company to select the sample group internally. Data collection by mail requires the reservation of the sample group. In order to avoid a 50% error in data collection in the individual companies [30], a total of 450 samples were drawn. After data collection, it was found that only 407 questionnaires, or 90.44% of the response rate, were usable, which was considered appropriate and analyzed further.

The research instruments were questionnaires developed based on literature reviews from various sources, as well as questionnaires from previous research that had been tested for both content validity and reliability. They were divided into five parts: (1) questionnaire on general information about the respondents; (2) Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) by [18], 16 questions; (3) Positive Psychological Capital Questionnaire by [31], called

PCQ-12, 12 questions; (4) Work-life Integration Questionnaire by [11], 20 questions; and (5) Employee Performance Questionnaire by [28], 23 questions. The questionnaires in parts 2-5 used a 7-point rating scale. All questionnaires were translated, and their content validity was checked by determining the item-objective congruence index (IOC) of 5 experts with IOC values between 0.60 and 1.00, corresponding to .60 and above. The reliability of the questionnaire was tested using Cronbach's alpha values, which showed that the questions had values between .756 and .964, i.e., higher than .7. It was therefore assumed that the content of the questionnaire was valid and reliable [32].

Data analysis included descriptive statistics, i.e., preliminary analysis of the sample data, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, and inferential statistical analysis using structural equation modelling (SEM). The criteria for checking the consistency of the structural equation model according to the theory with the empirical data are as follows: χ^2 , p-value, χ^2/df , GFI, AGIF, CFI, TLI, and RMSEA, [29].

4 Results

The general data analysis of the respondents revealed that most of the 407 respondents were female, 248 (60.93%), 161 (39.56%) were between 31 and 40 years old, 327 (80.34%) had a bachelor's degree, 242 (59.46%) were single, 206 (50.61%) had an average monthly income of 20,001-40,000 baht, and 125 (30.71%) had been working for more than ten years.

Analysis of respondents' opinions revealed that the majority of respondents agreed with all the variables examined. Specifically:

1. Authentic Leadership: respondents gave the highest mean score for Balance Processing ($\bar{X} = 5.52$, $SD = 0.66$), followed by Relational Transparency ($\bar{X} = 5.48$, $SD = 0.70$), Internalized Moral Perspective ($\bar{X} = 5.46$, $SD = 0.69$), and Self-Awareness ($\bar{X} = 5.44$, $SD = 0.69$).

2. Positive Psychological Capital: The highest rating was observed for Optimism ($\bar{X} = 5.58$, $SD = 0.73$), followed by Self-efficacy ($\bar{X} = 5.55$, $SD = 0.73$), Hope ($\bar{X} = 5.55$, $SD = 0.73$), and Resiliency ($\bar{X} = 5.53$, $SD = 0.71$).

3. Work-Life Integration: Respondents gave the highest mean score for the Social dimension ($\bar{X} = 5.53$, $SD = 0.76$), followed by Work ($\bar{X} = 5.47$, $SD = 0.74$), Personal Life ($\bar{X} = 5.44$, $SD = 0.80$), and Family ($\bar{X} = 5.39$, $SD = 0.72$).

4. Employee Performance: The highest ratings were given for Task Performance ($\bar{X} = 5.64$, $SD = 0.63$), followed by Contextual Performance ($\bar{X} = 5.61$, $SD = 0.65$) and Adaptive Performance ($\bar{X} = 5.59$, $SD = 0.66$).

Table 1 (Appendix) shows that the observed variables in each latent variable had factor weights between .62 and .91, values for the explained variance between .38 and .83, values for the composite reliability (C.R.) between .87 and .92, which is greater than .7, and values for the average variance extracted (AVE) between .63 and .80, which is greater than .5.

Table 2 (Appendix) shows that the correlation values of some latent variables, when tested using the criteria of [33], have square roots of AVE that are lower than the correlation values between latent variables. Therefore, the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio of Correlations (HTMT) criterion is used to consider the discriminant validity. Each pair of latent variables has discriminant validity because the correlation value of the latent variables is below .90, [34].

Table 3 (Appendix) shows that after fitting the model according to the recommendations of the Model Fit Index (MI), the model matched the empirical data. Although the p-value was statistically significant, a study by [26] suggested that other index values should be considered if the model had a good fit and the χ^2 value was high due to many variables, other index values should also be considered.

Table 4 (Appendix) shows that Authentic Leadership, Positive Psychological Capital and Work-Life Integration had a statistically significant positive impact on employee performance at the .000-.019 level with a predictive power of 76%. In comparison, Authentic Leadership had a statistically significant positive impact on Positive Psychological Capital at the .000 level with a predictive power of 72%. Authentic Leadership and Positive Psychological Capital had a statistically significant positive impact on Work-Life Integration at the .000 level with a predictive power of 71% (as shown in Figure (Appendix)).

Table 5 (Appendix) shows that Authentic Leadership, Positive Psychological Capital and Work-Life Integration have a direct influence on employee performance. In addition, they have an indirect influence through Positive Psychological Capital and Work-Life Integration of .51, resulting in a higher overall influence value of .81. Therefore, Positive Psychological Capital and Work-Life Integration are partial mediating variables between Authentic Leadership and Employee performance.

5 Conclusion and Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that authentic leadership plays a pivotal role in enhancing employee performance both directly and indirectly through positive psychological capital and work-life integration, with statistically significant effects. This

result is consistent with [35], who found that leaders demonstrating transparency and moral integrity can build trust and significantly improve work effectiveness. A study by [36] also showed that authentic leadership influences positive work behaviors through psychological resources such as hope, resilience, and optimism. Additionally, the study of [37] emphasized that psychological capital supports safe and effective work behaviors under authentic leadership. According to [38], further explained that psychological capital directly influences adaptive performance in highly dynamic environments, which corresponds with the causal mechanism identified in this study: psychological capital functions as a mediator enhancing employee performance in the Thai ICT industry facing continuous digital competition.

Beyond the mechanism of psychological capital, the results also highlight the important role of work-life integration (WLI), a construct that has received increasing global scholarly attention in the post-COVID-19 era. Study of [39] describes WLI as a modern conceptual framework that surpasses the limitations of traditional work-life balance by proposing that integrating personal and work roles creates a more flexible equilibrium aligned with contemporary digital work patterns. Similarly to [40], reinforce the conceptual distinction between work-life balance and work-life integration, noting that WLI reduces role conflict and enhances job satisfaction more effectively in highly flexible occupations such as those in the ICT sector.

Furthermore, the results of this research reveal that WLI contributes to improved job performance. This finding strongly aligns with the study of [41], who confirmed that WLI enhances happiness at work and reduces stress-related consequences. Study by [42], also reported that work-life integration increases job satisfaction and productivity among bank employees, a pattern that can be meaningfully compared to knowledge-based work in the ICT industry. In addition, [43], noted that work-life integration is linked to personal relationships and the well-being of senior leaders, suggesting that the influence of WLI extends to leadership and management levels rather than being limited to operational employees. This interpretation corresponds with the findings of [44], who discovered that an organization's capacity to foster a positive environment transforms employees' psychological resources into higher performance through organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), consistent with the model identified in this study. According to [45], also highlights that the widespread adoption of remote and hybrid work arrangements in the ICT era

facilitates work-life integration and consequently enhances performance within digital enterprises.

A comparative analysis with international contexts demonstrates that although the mechanisms of leadership and psychological capital are broadly universal, the Thai context – characterized by collectivist cultural values that emphasize interpersonal relationships and hierarchical organizational structures – amplifies the prominence of both WLI and psychological capital relative to countries such as the United States or those in Europe. These findings therefore make an important contribution to addressing theoretical gaps in global research, which has given limited attention to WLI in Southeast Asia, particularly regarding the roles of authentic leadership and psychological mechanisms in the digital industries of developing economies.

6 Implications for the Study

This study has implications for executives and HR managers in companies in the ICT industry in Thailand when it comes to improving employee performance through work-life integration programs. The study shows that organizations need to play an essential role in supporting and promoting authentic leadership and positive psychological capital for employees in work-life integration so that they can manage their tasks and responsibilities effectively. Therefore, company leaders' work-life integration policies need to be clear and promote self-development that lends itself to flexible working in conjunction with technology and an open workplace environment by using authentic leadership training programs that help instill the four critical characteristics of self-direction and honesty at work. Managers and supervisors should participate in the workshops as supporters and inspirers for employees. In addition, there should be projects or activities that use positive psychological capital to get employees to believe in their abilities, have a good attitude, and be flexible when it comes to overcoming obstacles in life and at work. Supervisors have a duty to listen and give advice to find ways to solve or mitigate the problems. If the organization implements the above activities, the measures and strategies to promote employees' work-life integration will be more effective, reduce work stress, and create greater satisfaction in the company.

In terms of academic value, this model demonstrates the integration of authentic leadership theory with work-life integration to improve employee performance, which is a long-standing research gap. To keep pace with the changing situation, every organization is adopting various technologies to work

more conveniently and efficiently. On this basis, this study makes an important contribution to theory development by empirically examining the role of positive psychological capital and work-life integration as partial mediating variables, thus expanding the scope of explanations for the influence of authentic leadership on employee performance. The results clearly show that authentic leadership predicts positive psychological capital and that this psychological capital improves employees' ability to integrate work and personal life, which ultimately leads to better performance. The results of this research represent new theoretical insights showing that leadership behaviors based on authenticity and trust not only influence performance but also operate through psychological mechanisms and work-life integration, which are key factors in maintaining sustainable performance.

7 Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should focus on longitudinal studies to assess the different impacts over time and the transition of technologies. It should also be extended to different industries or regions to examine the influences that depend on the culture and values of each context. In addition, the diffusion of telework technology continues to evolve, leading to new careers and freelance work for people with specialized skills, making it difficult to bring these employees back into the regular workforce. Therefore, future research should also examine the impact on small and medium-sized enterprises with low capital and high demand for employees to find ways or opportunities for establishing policies and strategies for recruiting employees to work effectively in the future.

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- Morakot Junkrapor: Project administration, Conceptualization, Methodology, Data curation, Data Analysis, Validation, Investigation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.
- Krisada Chienwattanasook: Conceptualization, Supervision, Validation, Investigation, Writing – review & editing.

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APPENDIX

Table 1. Composite Reliability (C.R.) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of each variable

Factors	$\bar{X}$	SD	Factor Loading	R ²	CR	AVE
Authentic Leadership					.91	.72
- Self-awareness	5.44	0.69	.86	.74		
- Internalized moral perspective	5.46	0.69	.87	.76		
- Balance processing	5.52	0.66	.83	.69		
- Relational transparency	5.48	0.70	.84	.71		
Positive psychology capital					.92	.75
- Self-efficacy	5.55	0.73	.83	.69		
- Hope	5.55	0.73	.89	.79		
- Optimism	5.58	0.73	.87	.76		
- Resiliency	5.53	0.71	.87	.76		
Work-life integration					.87	.63
- Work	5.47	0.74	.84	.71		
- Personal life	5.44	0.80	.87	.76		
- Family	5.39	0.72	.81	.66		
- Social	5.53	0.76	.62	.38		
Employee performance					.92	.80
- Task performance	5.64	0.63	.87	.76		
- Adaptive performance	5.59	0.66	.91	.83		
- Contextual performance	5.61	0.65	.90	.81		

Source: created by the authors

Table 2. Discriminant validity analysis

Factors	Authentic Leadership	Positive psychology capital	Work-life integration	Employee performance
- Authentic Leadership	.85			
- Positive psychology capital	.84	.87		
- Work-life integration	.78	.83	.79	
- Employee performance	.81	.85	.80	.89

Source: created by the authors

Table 3. Comparison of the analysis before and after the adjustment of MI

Index	Before Adjustment	After Adjustment	Result
χ^2	300.384	139.852	-
χ^2/df	3.576	1.970	Consistent
p-value	.000	.000	Inconsistent
GFI	.912	.958	Consistent
AGFI	.875	.929	Consistent
NFI	.946	.975	Consistent
CFI	.960	.987	Consistent
TLI	.950	.981	Consistent
RMSEA	.080	.049	Consistent

Source: created by the authors

Table 4. Coefficients obtained from structural equation models

Causal variables	Dependent variables	b	S.E.	β	C.R.	p-value
Authentic Leadership	Work-life integration	.301	.078	.28	3.848	.000***
	Employee performance	.313	.072	.30	4.336	.000***
	Positive psychology capital	.868	.049	.85	17.768	.000***
Positive psychology capital	Work-life integration	.616	.077	.59	7.950	.000***
	Employee performance	.478	.080	.47	5.958	.000***
Work-life integration	Employee performance	.146	.062	.15	2.347	.019*

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

Source: created by the authors

Table 5. Direct influence, indirect influence, and overall influence of structural equation modelling

Causal variables	Effects	Dependent variables		
		Positive psychology capital	Work-life integration	Employee performance
Authentic Leadership	DE	.85	.28	.30
	IE	-	.50	.51
	TE	.85	.78	.81
Positive psychology capital	DE	-	.59	.47
	IE	-	-	.09
	TE	-	.59	.56
Work-life integration	DE	-	-	.15
	IE	-	-	-
	TE	-	-	.15

DE = Direct Effect, IE = Indirect Effect, TE = Total Effect

Source: created by the authors

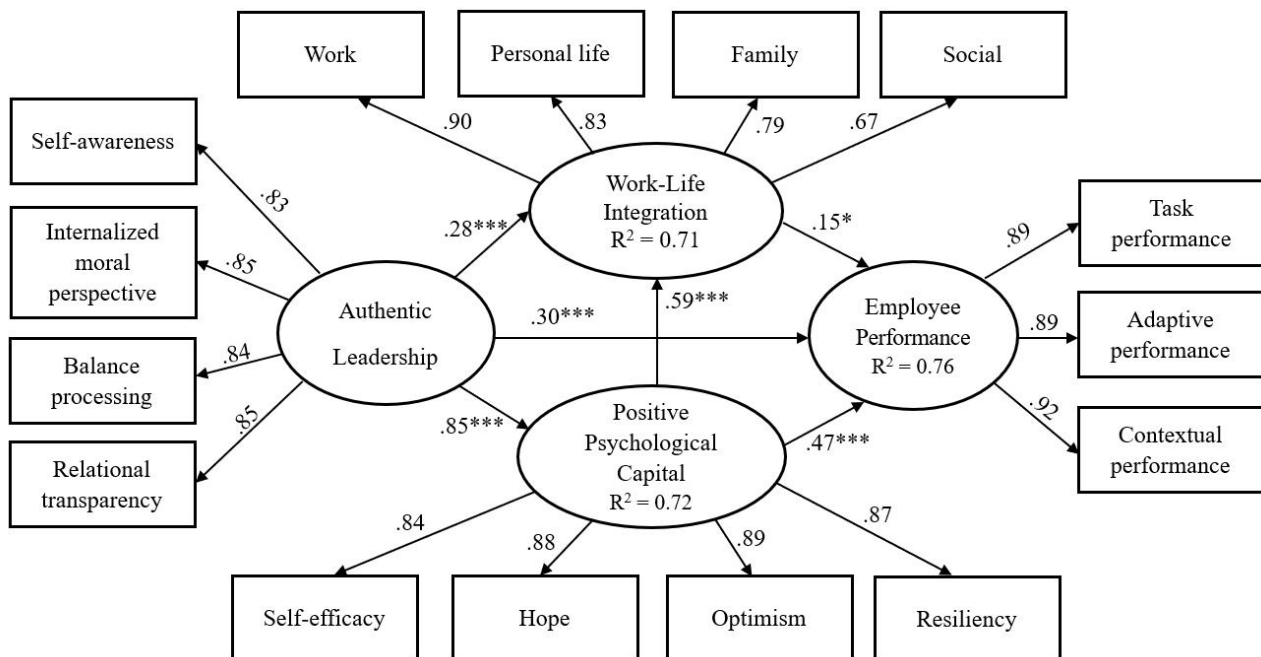


Fig. 2: Structural equation model testing results

Source: created by the authors