Adaptation of the Authentic Followership Scale into Indonesian: A Validity Study

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Abstract

Authentic followership has been demonstrated to enhance leadership effectiveness and organizational performance. It comprises four dimensions: self-awareness, balanced processing, relational transparency, and an internalized moral perspective. According to previous research, the only measurement instrument sufficiently comprehensive to capture the construct of authentic followership is the Authentic Followership Scale developed by Leroy et al. Consequently, this study aims to adapt the Authentic Followership Scale into the Indonesian language and assess its validity. To evaluate the content and construct validity of this instrument, the study involved 531 participants (M age = 42.31, SD = 9.76; 58% female, 42% male). The results of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) confirmed that the four-factor measurement model (16 items) aligned well with the empirical data. This finding indicates that the Indonesian adaptation of the Authentic Followership Scale possesses both internal and construct validity as a measurement tool. However, this study is limited by its sample, which comprised only members of public organizations in East Java. Future research should expand the sample to include members of public organizations across various regions within the province. The originality of this study lies in its status as the first adaptation of the Authentic Followership Scale into the Indonesian language.

Keywords: Authentic followership, adaptation, validity study, public organization

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Introduction

Authentic followership is an emerging concept of growing scholarly interest due to its potential benefits. Research indicates that authentic followership can enhance leadership effectiveness and overall organizational performance (de Zilwa, 2016). It serves a crucial function in controlling and supervising leadership roles, ensuring that decision-making processes within organizations adhere to ethical and prudent standards. Consequently, organizations that foster authentic followership are better positioned to mitigate harmful practices.

Authentic followership comprises a four-dimensional structure encompassing self-awareness, balanced processing, relational transparency, and an internalized moral perspective (Leroy et al., 2015). Based on these dimensions, Leroy et al. (2015) developed a 16-item Authentic Followership Scale, drawing upon the framework established by Walumbwa et al. (2007). Their work aligns with the premise that authentic followership is a logical extension of authentic leadership development (Gardner et al., 2005). Given these theoretical foundations, this study adopts the Authentic Followership Scale by Leroy et al. rather than alternative scales developed by Tak et al. (2019) and Kosasih et al. (2020). The latter scales, consisting of 4-item and 8-item Likert measures, respectively, do not integrate the four-dimensional structure of authentic followership. The Authentic Followership Scale by Leroy et al. utilizes a five-point Likert scale,

ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree), and has been shown to demonstrate strong internal reliability and validity. De Zilwa (2016) further emphasizes that authentic followership enhances leadership oversight and contributes to improved organizational performance, reinforcing the importance of studying this construct.

Leroy et al. (2015) developed the Authentic Followership Scale by adapting the self-report Authenticity Inventory of Kernis and Goldman (2006) and aligning it with the authentic leadership model proposed by Walumbwa et al. (2007). Walumbwa et al. identify four key dimensions of authentic followership. The first, self-awareness, refers to an individual's evolving perception of themselves, shaped by their interactions with the external environment. This dimension enables followers to recognize their strengths and weaknesses, as well as the impact of their actions. The second dimension, balanced processing, pertains to the ability of followers to gather and evaluate information comprehensively before making decisions. This process includes seeking diverse perspectives, even those that challenge their own viewpoints, to ensure well-informed decision-making.

The third dimension, relational transparency, reflects an individual's capacity to openly express thoughts and emotions in a socially acceptable manner, fostering trust and self-disclosure within professional relationships. Lastly, the internalized moral perspective represents an individual's ability to self-regulate based on personal norms and values. This dimension allows followers to resist external pressures from groups, organizations, or societal influences when such pressures conflict with their ethical principles (Gardner et al., 2005; Walumbwa et al., 2007).

Gardner et al. (2005) posit that self-awareness is shaped by individuals' experiences, which influence their values, norms, goals, emotions, and identity. Additionally, self-awareness is facilitated by intersubjectivity, defined as a state of mutual connection and understanding between two or more individuals (Kernis, 2003). Moreover, balanced processing is significantly influenced by the extent to which individuals comprehend themselves. When individuals possess a deep understanding of themselves, they are more likely to critically evaluate situations before making decisions (Zheng et al., 2024). The third dimension, relational transparency, necessitates integrity and the ability to articulate thoughts and information with clarity (Lynch et al., 2022). Finally, the internalized moral perspective is shaped by the internalization of moral identity through past experiences (Alavi, 2024).

Although prior studies have demonstrated that authentic followership contributes to performance, job satisfaction, and other positive organizational outcomes (Kosasih et al., 2020; Leroy et al., 2015; Schoofs et al., 2024; Tak et al., 2019), these studies remain limited in terms of measurement instruments and research contexts. Many studies on authentic followership rely on scales that do not fully capture its theoretical dimensions. For instance, Tak et al. (2019) employed a four-item scale, while Kosasih et al. (2020) used an eight-item scale. Such approaches risk oversimplifying the complexity of authentic followership and diminishing the validity of its measurement. Additionally, Schoofs et al. (2024) assessed authentic followership using a scale adapted from the Authentic Leadership Inventory (ALI), which may introduce measurement bias.

The concept of authentic followership is rooted in the broader notion of authenticity, as proposed by Kernis (2003). Kernis defines authenticity as the expression of one's true self in daily life, a construct that has been empirically validated (Kernis & Goldman, 2006). The application of authenticity to leadership (Avolio & Gardner, 2005) and followership (Gardner et al., 2005) led to the development of the concepts of authentic leadership and authentic followership,

respectively. Gardner et al. expanded on the elements of authentic followership by drawing from Kernis' theory of authenticity. The construct was further examined by Avolio and Reichard (2008) in their article, *The Rise of Authentic Followership.* Subsequently, Leroy et al. (2015) developed a scale to measure authentic followership, basing it on the Authenticity Inventory by Kernis and Goldman (2006) and incorporating the four-dimensional structure proposed by Walumbwa et al. (2007). Notably, Leroy et al. (2015) remain the only scholars to have developed an authentic followership scale using this four-dimensional framework.

The absence of a valid and reliable Indonesian instrument hinders further research on authentic followership within the local context. Consequently, Indonesian leaders and organizations may lack appropriate tools to assess the quality of their authentic followers. Given the pivotal role of authentic followership in organizational success, it is imperative to develop a valid and culturally appropriate measurement instrument to enhance understanding and promote effective followership. This study is the first to systematically adapt the four-dimensional Authentic Followership Scale into Indonesian, thereby providing a robust foundation for future research. In contrast to prior studies that employed abbreviated scales with limited validity, this research ensures comprehensive representation of the four authentic followership dimensions by adhering to the ITC (2017) standards for scale adaptation.

Most research on authentic followership has been conducted in Western contexts (Leroy et al., 2015; Schoofs et al., 2024), utilizing instruments developed in English and rarely tested across diverse cultural settings. In Indonesia, investigations into authentic followership remain limited, and no instrument has been systematically adapted to capture the four-dimensional framework proposed by Leroy et al. (2015). This gap poses a significant challenge for academics and practitioners seeking a culturally valid measure of authentic followership. Accordingly, this study aims to address this deficiency by adapting and validating the Authentic Followership Scale for use in Indonesia, thereby contributing to the advancement of followership theory and practice in the region.

Method

Participants

A total of 531 participants (Mage = 42.31, SD = 9.76) participated in the measurement instrument adaptation study. Of these, 310 (58%) were female and 221 (42%) were male. In terms of educational background, 1 participant (0.188%) held a doctoral degree, 47 participants (8.851%) held a master's degree, 201 participants (37.853%) held a bachelor's degree, 166 participants (31.262%) held an associate degree, and 116 participants (21.846%) had completed high school. Participants were randomly selected using a simple random sampling method from the population of members of public organizations in East Java, Indonesia. Public organizations in East Java were chosen because their organizational culture emphasizes integrity, professionalism, and ethical conduct more so than those in other regions of Indonesia (Rachman & Sari, 2019).

Adaptation procedure

Several procedures were used to adapt this measuring instrument to Indonesian.

Precondition stage.

At this stage, the authors sought formal permission from the original developers of the authentic followership scale, specifically requesting consent from Leroy et al. (2015) to adapt the scale into Indonesian.

Development of measuring instruments.

At this stage, the adaptation process involves multiple steps designed to ensure that the instrument is linguistically, psychologically, and culturally appropriate for the target population. Initially, experts with relevant expertise are selected to account for language, psychology, and cultural differences. This careful selection ensures that the adaptation process is sensitive to the nuances of the target population. Following expert selection, appropriate translation designs and procedures are implemented to maximize the suitability of the measuring instrument. This step is crucial for maintaining the integrity of the original content while making it accessible and meaningful in the new context.

Subsequently, efforts are made to provide evidence that the instructions and items of the measuring instrument convey the same meaning in the target language. Alongside this, it is equally important to verify that the item format, rating scale, scoring categories, administration procedures, and other related aspects are appropriate for the target audience. Once these elements have been addressed, initial data is collected on the adapted instrument to facilitate item analysis and assess its reliability and validity, thereby allowing for any necessary revisions.

The translation process itself is divided into two main phases: forward translation (from English to Indonesian) and backward translation (from Indonesian to English). In each phase, two translators are engaged—one with a psychology background and one without, serving as a naive translator. Upon completion of these translation phases, a synthesis process is conducted by a translator who is a member of a public organization (reflective of the target population), possesses a psychology background, and has international experience. Finally, an expert review is performed by a committee of three specialists in psychological measurement instruments (International Test Commission, 2017). Figure 1 illustrates the comprehensive steps involved in adapting the measurement instrument.

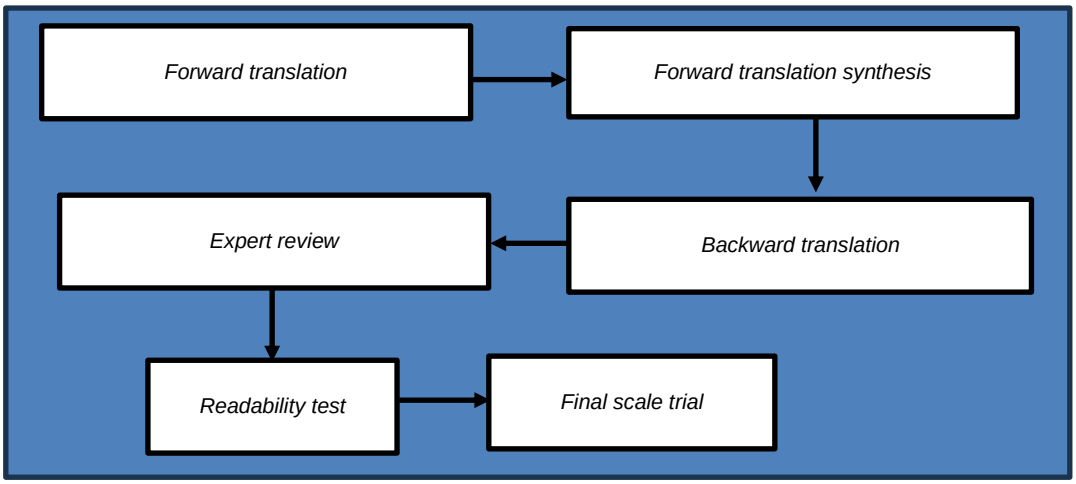

Figure 1. Measuring Instrument Adaptation Process

Forward translation.

The development of the measurement tool begins with translating the original instrument from English to Indonesian. This initial translation is undertaken by two qualified Indonesian translators who possess sufficient English language skills, evidenced by a minimum TOEFL score of 550 or

an IELTS score of 6.5. One translator has a background in psychology, while the other comes from a non-psychology field, ensuring a balanced perspective. Each translator is provided with a consent form, a detailed guide for completing the measurement tool, and comprehensive information regarding the study's purpose, context, and the conceptual as well as operational definitions of the variables.

Backward translation.

The backward translation process involves translating the synthesized forward translation back into the original language (English). This process engages two translators—one with a background in psychology and another with a non-psychology background—both of whom have lived abroad and possess adequate English language skills. Prior to beginning the translation, each translator receives a consent form, a comprehensive guide for completing the instrument, and detailed information regarding the study's purpose, context, and the conceptual and operational definitions of the variables. The outputs from the backward translation are subsequently submitted to a backward translator reviewer, who synthesizes the review results provided by both translators. This reviewer, a member of a public organization reflective of the target population and with international experience and proficient English language skills, ensures that the synthesized translation closely aligns with the original version.

Expert review.

The expert review was conducted to compare the original version of the measuring instrument with the forward translation, the backward translation, and the resulting synthesis. Three expert reviewers were tasked with comparing the original scale to the back-translated synthesis. Drawing on Sperber's (2004) methodology, the reviewers assessed two key aspects using a rating scale from 1 to 7: the language comparison (or comparability) and the similarity of meaning. The language comparison evaluated the extent to which each item maintained similar language elements—such as phrases, terms, words, and sentence structures—between the original and the back-translated versions. In contrast, the similarity of meaning determined how closely the items in the original scale matched the meanings in the back translation. Items with identical meanings received a score of 1, while those with very different meanings were scored as 7. This process served as the validation of the translation.

Following this, the expert reviewers rated each item for its relevance, clarity, simplicity, and ambiguity on a separate scale ranging from 1 to 4, as outlined by Yaghmaie (2003). In this context, relevance refers to how well an item aligns with the construct being measured; clarity denotes how easily the item can be understood; simplicity indicates the straightforwardness of the item; and ambiguity reflects the degree to which the item avoids multiple interpretations. A score of 1 indicated that an item was considered irrelevant, unclear, not simple, or ambiguous, while a score of 4 signified that an item was very relevant, very clear, very simple, or unambiguous.

Readability test.

This stage involved administering a scale readability test to a group of 10 research participants. These participants, drawn from various public organizations, were asked to evaluate several aspects of the measurement instrument. Firstly, they assessed whether the instrument's instructions contained any inaccuracies or complexities. Secondly, they evaluated the items for the presence of complicated wording, challenging technical terms, or ambiguity (Willis & Lessler, 1999). Participants were also encouraged to provide additional comments regarding the items or the instrument overall.

Based on the feedback obtained from the readability test, a cognitive interview was subsequently conducted, following the methodology proposed by Beatty and Willis (2007). In this process, draft survey questions were presented to respondents while additional verbal information was collected regarding their answers. This approach was used to assess the quality of the responses and to determine whether the questions were effective in eliciting the information needed for the study.

Final scale trial.

Following the readability test, the next stage involved a final trial of the research measurement instrument. Prior to this, the study had undergone an ethical review and received approval from the Ethics Commission of Universitas Surabaya. The instrument was then administered to qualified subjects, specifically members of public organizations in East Java, Indonesia, to evaluate its effectiveness in a practical setting.

Questionnaire

The instrument adapted and validated in this study is the Authentic Followership Scale developed by Leroy et al. (2015).

Data Analysis

To validate the adaptation of the Authentic Followership Scale, the data were analyzed using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) via Jeffreys's Amazing Statistics Program (JASP) software version 0.18.3.0.

Result

Content validity

Content validity is assessed by examining both the translation validity and the Content Validity Index (CVI), including the Scale-level Content Validity Index (S-CVI) values. Translation validity is determined by assigning validation scores to the translation outcomes based on the degree of comparability and similarity between the original and translated items. Following evaluations by three expert reviewers, the mean score for each item is calculated. According to Sperber (2004), if an item receives a mean score greater than 3 (on a scale where 7 indicates agreement and 1 indicates the highest level of agreement), a formal review of the translation is required.

Table 1

Mean Score Comparability and Similarity Calculation Results

Scale	*Comparability Mean Score*		*Similarity Mean Score*		Problematic items
	Score	Range	Score	Range	
Authentic Followership Scale	1.79	1 – 2.67	1.5	1 – 2.3	-

The ideal item is one that maintains similar meaning and language form between the original and translated versions. Based on the calculation of the mean comparability and similarity values (see Table 1), no items necessitated a formal review of the translation.

Subsequently, content validity was assessed through the calculation of the Content Validity Index (CVI) and the Scale-level Content Validity Index (S-CVI). This process was implemented to evaluate both individual items and the overall scale. In this study, the CVI was computed for four adapted measuring instruments. The CVI can be determined for each scale item (I-CVI) and for

the overall scale (S-CVI) (Polit et al., 2007). To calculate the I-CVI, each item was rated by at least three expert reviewers, who evaluated the items based on relevance, clarity, simplicity, and ambiguity using a four-point scale. On this scale, a score of 1 indicates that the item is irrelevant, unclear, not simple, or doubtful, while a score of 4 denotes that the item is very relevant, very clear, very simple, or unambiguous (Yaghmaie, 2003).

The ratings provided by the expert reviewers were subsequently dichotomized; scores of 1 or 2 were recoded as 0, and scores of 3 or 4 were recoded as 1. The I-CVI for each item was then calculated by summing these dichotomized ratings and dividing by the number of expert reviewers, whereas the S-CVI was determined by averaging the I-CVI scores across all items. An item is considered acceptable if its I-CVI is ≥ 0.78, and the overall scale is deemed acceptable if the S-CVI is ≥ 0.90. The calculations for the authentic followership scale revealed an I-CVI score of 1 for the relevance, clarity, and ambiguity aspects, and the S-CVI values were 1 for relevance, 1 for clarity, 0.96 for simplicity, and 1 for ambiguity. These results indicate that the content validity of the authentic followership scale is satisfactory, as both the I-CVI and S-CVI values meet or exceed the recommended thresholds (Polit et al., 2007).

Additionally, the content validity of the measuring instrument was further evaluated using the Content Validity Ratio (CVR), which assesses the necessity of each item based on expert judgment (Madadizadeh & Bahariniya, 2023). According to Frey (2018), a CVR value of at least 0.78 is required for an item to be considered valid. The CVR calculation for the items assessing relevance, clarity, and ambiguity on the authentic followership scale yielded a score of 1 for each item, further corroborating the instrument's content validity.

Construct validity

This study assessed construct validity using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) performed with Jeffreys's Amazing Statistics Program (JASP) software. CFA evaluates how well observed variables represent their underlying latent constructs (Hair et al., 2010). A key consideration in CFA is the factor loading, which quantifies the correlation between observed indicators and latent variables. A factor loading of zero indicates that an indicator does not represent the latent factor at all (Wang & Wang, 2020). According to Hair et al. (2010), for a sample size of 350 or more, the minimum acceptable factor loading is 0.3. In this study, the measurement instrument was trialed on 531 participants.

Several fit indices were considered to evaluate model suitability, including the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), and Normed Fit Index (NFI) (Llosa et al., 2023).

The CFA was conducted to establish the construct validity of the authentic followership scale, drawing on previous studies that support the use of a four-factor model (Kernis & Goldman, 2006; Leroy et al., 2015). This four-factor model comprises four interrelated latent factors—dimensions that, although not directly observable, are measured through multiple indicators. Moreover, the model yields four composite scores corresponding to each latent dimension (Hair et al., 2010; Leroy et al., 2015). Consistent with prior research, the CFA in this study was also based on a four-factor model.

Table 2
Fit Indices of Authentic Followership Scale

Index	Score	Interpretation
CFI	0.926	Fit
TLI	0.910	Fit
RMSEA	0.078	Fit
SRMR	0.062	Fit
GFI	0.990	Fit
NFI	0.906	Fit

Table 3
Factor Loading of Authentic Followership Scale Indicators

Dimension	Indicators	Factor Loading
Self-awareness	AF1	0.790
	AF2	0.509
	AF3	0.814
	AF4	0.810
Balanced processing	AF5	0.692
	AF6	0.765
	AF7	0.701
	AF8	0.652
Relational transparency	AF9	0.852
	AF10	0.849
	AF11	0.734
	AF12	0.858
Internalized moral perspective	AF13	0.755
	AF14	0.757
	AF15	0.767
	AF16	0.692

Based on the fit indices presented in Table 2, the model demonstrates an adequate fit, with values of CFI = 0.926, TLI = 0.91, RMSEA = 0.078, SRMR = 0.062, GFI = 0.99, and NFI = 0.906. Furthermore, the convergent validity of the authentic followership scale is supported by the factor loadings, Construct Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values, as recommended by Hair et al. (2010). Table 3 indicates that the factor loadings for all indicators of the authentic followership scale are robust, ranging from 0.509 to 0.858. In addition to these loadings, it is essential to consider the AVE and CR values for each dimension of the instrument. The following outlines the CR and AVE values for each dimension of the authentic followership scale.

Table 4
CR & AVE Authentic Followership Scale values

Dimension	CR	AVE
Self-awareness	0.826	0.55
Balanced processing	0.796	0.495
Relational transparency	0.8945	0,68
Internalized moral perspective	0.831	0.55

Based on Table 4, the Construct Reliability (CR) values for the four dimensions of the authentic followership scale range from 0.796 to 0.8945, thereby satisfying the criterion of ≥ 0.7. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for the four dimensions generally meet the minimum criterion of ≥ 0.5, with the exception of the balanced processing dimension, which is slightly below this threshold. This lower AVE for balanced processing suggests a reduced correlation among items measuring the same construct, indicating that they may be less representative of the intended construct (Al-Ebrahim et al., 2025; Baharum et al., 2023). Nevertheless, the balanced processing items remain acceptable due to their sufficient CR values (Hair et al., 2010). Collectively, the evidence from the factor loadings, CR, and AVE values supports the convergent validity of the authentic followership scale. Convergent validity reflects the extent to which items that serve as indicators of a particular construct exhibit high convergence or similarity (Hair et al., 2010).

Table 5
Comparison of AVE Values with the Squared Correlation between Authentic Followership Scale Constructs

	Self-awareness	Balanced processing	Relational transparency	Internalized moral perspective
Self-awareness	0.55			
Balanced processing	0.126736	0.495		
Relational transparency	0.023104	0.381924	0.68	
Internalized moral perspective	0.322624	0.181476	0.0576	0.55

The next step is to assess the discriminant validity of the authentic followership scale. According to the Fornell & Larcker criteria, a measuring instrument demonstrates discriminant validity when the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct exceeds the squared correlation between that construct and any other construct. Based on the analysis, all AVE values (0.55; 0.495; 0.68; 0.55) exceed the corresponding squared correlations with other constructs (see Table 5). These findings confirm that the authentic followership scale exhibits adequate discriminant validity, meaning that each construct is distinct from the others (Hair et al., 2010).

Comparison with previous study results

Furthermore, the analysis indicates that the chi-square value (416.102) divided by the degrees of freedom (98) yields 4.25, a ratio that remains within acceptable limits. Additionally, the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was found to be 0.692, which is considered acceptable according to Hair et al. (2010).

Table 6
Comparison of CFA Authentic Followership Scale Results

	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR	X2/df	Cronbach's alpha
Criteria values	≥ 0.90	≤ 0.10	≤ 0.10	≤ 5	≥ 0.6
Previous CFA results (Leroy et al., 2015)	0.99	0.04	0.03	1.23	0.85
CFA results of the measurement tool trial	0.926	0.078	0.062	4.25	0.692

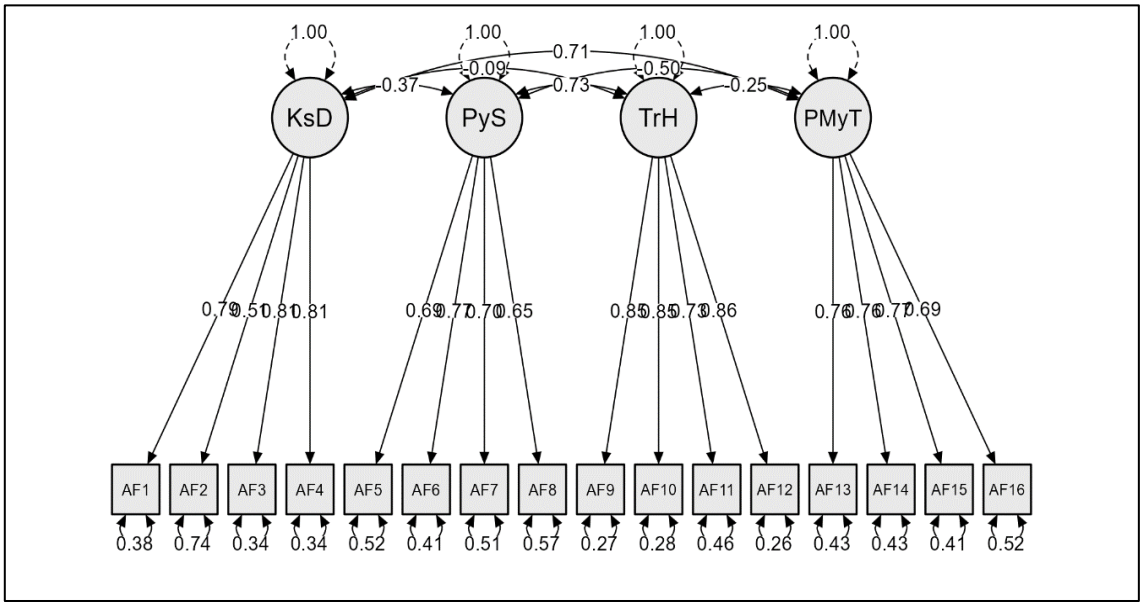

Figure 2. Four-Factor Authentic Followership Model

The next step involves comparing the CFA results obtained from previous studies with those from the current measurement tool trial, following the criteria established by Llosa et al. (2023) and Hair et al. (2010). Table 6 presents this comparison, and Figure 2 illustrates the resulting model image from the CFA analysis. Based on this comparison, it is evident that the authentic followership scale measurement model, structured on a four-factor approach, aligns with previous research findings. All CFA test results meet the specified criteria, indicating a good fit between the measurement model and the field data. Additionally, the analysis confirms that the authentic followership scale possesses both convergent and discriminant validity.

Given these results, the Indonesian version of the authentic followership scale is deemed suitable for research purposes. Its validation supports its use in quantitative studies on authentic followership in Indonesia and provides an additional perspective for leadership research, as leadership effectiveness can be evaluated through the lens of authentic followership (Nair et al., 2022; Utomo et al., 2025; Utomo & Rosyidah, 2024).

However, the study has certain limitations. First, the participants were exclusively members of public organizations in East Java, Indonesia, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research should involve a more diverse sample from various public organizations across Indonesia. Second, there is a potential for bias in scale validation due to the subjectivity of the reviewers. To mitigate this, future studies could increase the number of reviewers to reduce such bias. Moreover, as the scale was adapted using data from public sector participants, further validation using a sample from the private sector is recommended.

Despite these limitations, a notable strength of this study is the relatively large sample size used to test the measurement instrument's validity. According to Kline (2011), a minimum sample size of 100 participants per factor is advisable for CFA, and this study satisfies that recommendation.

Conclusion

Authentic followership is pivotal in supporting leadership success and enhancing organizational performance. The literature indicates that authentic followership comprises four dimensions: self-

awareness, balanced processing, relational transparency, and internalized moral perspective. Although various empirical studies have examined authentic followership, the measuring instruments used have been diverse. The only instrument that consistently aligns with the four-dimensional authentic followership theory is the scale developed by Leroy et al. (2015). Notably, no prior research in Indonesia has adapted a scale to measure authentic followership based on these four dimensions.

The findings of this study demonstrate that the Indonesian version of the authentic followership scale exhibits strong content and construct validity. Furthermore, the CFA results—when compared with previous studies and established minimum criteria—confirm that the adapted scale is representative and effective. Thus, the validated Indonesian authentic followership scale is a robust tool for future research on authentic followership and provides valuable insights into leadership dynamics in Indonesia.

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Ethical statement
The study followed the guidelines of the Declaration of Helsinki.

Informed Consent Statement
Informed consent was obtained from all persons involved in the study.

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Conflicts of Interest
On behalf of all authors, the corresponding author states that there is no conflict of interest.

Author Contribution
All authors have contributed equally to the study's conceptualization, interpreting data, reviewing, and editing the manuscript.

Data availability
Data can be provided upon request to the author.

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