

# The Impact of Leadership Styles on Turnover Intention: Perceived Supervisor Support as A Mediator in The Jordanian Public Universities

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**Abstract:** - The present study aims to investigate the effect of authentic, inclusive, strategic, and laissez-faire styles of leadership on turnover intention among academic staff in public universities in Jordan, through the mechanism of Perceived Supervisor Support (PSS). A total of 367 responses were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics in SPSS and structural equation modeling in AMOS.

Results indicated that authentic, strategic, and inclusive styles of leadership negatively predicted turnover intention. However, findings did not reveal a direct effect of laissez-faire style on turnover intention, whereas this style was found to be strongly related to PSS. Moreover, findings revealed that PSS was the best predictor of intention to stay ( $\beta = -0.416$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). It fully mediated the effect of laissez-faire style and partially mediated the effect of the remaining styles. The model explained about 72% of the variance in turnover intention ( $R^2 = 0.721$ ). Moreover, it highlighted that supportive management practices are a critical factor in retaining academic talent in Jordan.

**Key-Words:** - Authentic Leadership, Inclusive Leadership, Strategic Leadership, Laissez-Faire Leadership, Turnover Intention, Perceived Supervisor Support, Social Exchange Theory, Structural Equation Modeling, Higher Education, Jordan

Received: June 5, 2026. Revised: July 4, 2026. Accepted: July 28, 2026. Published: September 16, 2026.

## 1 Introduction

Staff retention is a key objective for universities, since the loss of academic staff can undermine the quality of teaching and research and impose significant recruitment and induction costs in terms of time, money, and lost expertise. Turnover affects not only the skills base and knowledge held by staff but also the organizational knowledge that underpins much of the teaching, learning, and research activity within universities [1]. While the occasional departure of academic staff may be manageable, endemic turnover can lead to a persistent decline in staff morale and negatively impact the learning environment for students. For this reason, motivating a stable and committed workforce is an important objective for university administrators [2]. In Jordan, however, academics are literally and metaphorically through the door, in the grip of a national brain drain with over 35% of Jordanian academics reported to have migrated to work in other countries, and the figure steadily rising [3]. This loss to higher

education is a serious one with consequences including a lowering of institutional quality and a negative impact on national education strategies [4]. Once experienced academic staff have left an institution, the consequences for the remaining faculty are likely to be immediate and negative. An increased workload can demoralize staff while students sense a decline in the quality of the teaching and mentoring they receive [5]. Such problems are rarely singular and can be exacerbated by a host of other factors, including poor working conditions, limited career progression opportunities, and ineffective supervision.

Staff turnover among academic staff is a serious organizational problem faced by many private universities in Jordan and affects their continuity and the academic performance of their students. This trend is influenced by several organizational and psychological factors, most notably leadership style, career development opportunities, work-related stress, and the fulfillment of psychological contracts.

Therefore, adopting effective leadership and providing clear career paths is crucial to reducing employee turnover and promoting the stability of higher education institutions [6].

The current study aims to examine the relationship between different leadership styles, namely authentic, inclusive, strategic, and laissez-faire styles, and turnover intentions (TI) of academic staff members in Jordanian universities. The mediating variable used in this study is Perceived Supervisor Support (PSS), which refers to the degree to which employees perceive their supervisors to value their contributions and care about their well-being. Although the broad link between leadership and employee retention is well-established, this study provides much-needed empirical evidence on how these specific supervisory dynamics operate within Jordan's academic sector. Critically, a significant gap exists in the literature regarding the mediating function of PSS. There is a lack of empirical examination into how PSS channels the influence of various leadership styles on turnover intention, specifically within the unique cultural and organizational context of Jordanian public universities. By exploring these pathways, this study seeks to identify the specific mechanisms through which leadership behaviors and supervisory care interact to either mitigate or exacerbate the alarming level of academic brain drain currently facing Jordan's public higher education sector.

## 2 Literature Review and Hypothesis

This section grounds the study in established theory and prior empirical research. The purpose of this study is to develop a conceptual framework of the relationship between four different leadership styles and employees' intention to turn over from work, by employing Social Exchange Theory. Specifically, the framework posits that employees' intention to turn over from work is fully mediated by Perceived Supervisor Support (PSS).

Authentic leaders create trust by operating from a place of high self-awareness and showing true moral character, which can create employee attachment and thus counteract the intent to leave [7]. Likewise, an inclusive leadership style fosters a climate of psychological safety, valuable ideas, and fair treatment that brings a sense of belonging to employees, thereby engendering innovation and decreasing the intent to leave [8], [9]. A strategic leadership style seeks to align employees toward the organization's future success by articulating the connection between employee efforts and the achievement of long-term goals. Employees who feel

included in the organizational decision-making process and have a sense of purpose tend to become loyal to the organization and are less likely to leave [10], [11]. An opposite and perhaps equally extreme leadership style is that of the laissez-faire leader, who seeks to maximize employee autonomy and give employees as much freedom as possible [12]. While this approach can lead to high levels of self-motivation among employees who are highly autonomous, it can also cause employee role ambiguity and produce employees who feel lost or adrift at work, desiring to leave their organizations [4].

Perceived supervisor support refers to an employee's belief that their direct supervisor values their contributions and genuinely cares about their well-being [13]. PSS is a critical component of the employee experience, as it signals that help is available, efforts are appreciated, and personal needs are considered. High levels of PSS are strongly correlated with increased job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and reduced turnover intention.

Turnover intention (TI) is considered the strongest predictor of actual turnover in the workplace and serves as a key indicator of employee and organizational well-being [14]. To understand the mechanics behind these departures, this study is anchored in Social Exchange Theory (SET) [15]. SET is influenced by reciprocity in the workplace, in which supervisors' treatment of employees influences employees' willingness to invest some of their human capital in the organization [16]. Authenticity, inclusiveness, and a strategic approach to leadership, for example, prompt respectful, fair, and supportive behavior towards employees from supervisors. Employees then respond with behavior that is favorably inclined towards the supervisor, because they recognize and are motivated by the employees' 'supervisor-favorable behavior'. The leadership styles of authentic, inclusive, and strategic supervisors foster high levels of Perceived Supervisor Support (PSS), which in turn results in employees expressing affirmative statements concerning supervisors' support. This perceived support strengthens the psychological bond between the employee and the institution, prompting them to reciprocate with loyalty and ultimately lowering their TI. As illustrated in Figure 1, our conceptual framework maps these dynamics, proposing that leadership styles impact turnover both directly and indirectly through the mediating mechanism of PSS.

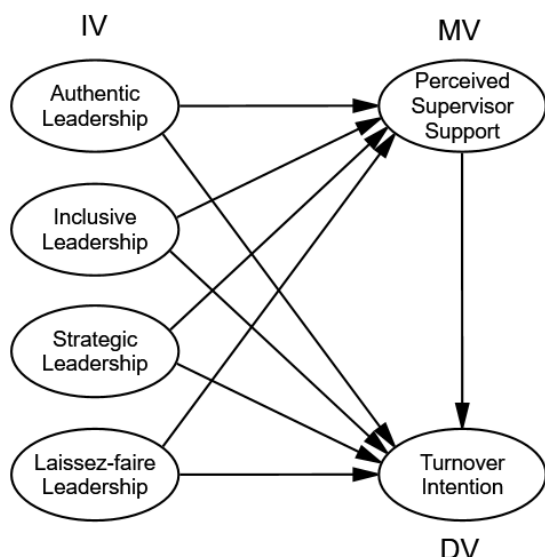


Fig. 1: Conceptual Framework  
Source: created by the authors

Constructive leadership behavior affects employee turnover. Research has found that authentic leaders, transparent leaders, and ethical leaders foster high trust in the workplace and create work environments that foster job satisfaction and a decrease in turnover intent [11], [17]. Inclusive leaders create organizations where employees feel a strong sense of belonging, which fosters organizational commitment [9]. In addition, strategic leaders serve to give meaning to employees' work by uniting the organization behind a shared vision [18]. In contrast to these findings, laissez-faire leaders tend to create work environments where employees do not receive the support they need, thus experiencing a heightened drive for turnover [19]. Building on these established dynamics, this study's hypotheses are structured to test these specific directional relationships. Constructive leadership styles are expected to have a "positive impact" (a direct correlation) on Perceived Supervisor Support (PSS), and a "negative impact" (an inverse relationship) on Turnover Intention, meaning that stronger leadership directly drives a measurable reduction in the desire to leave.

H1a: Authentic leadership has a negative impact on turnover intentions among academic staff in the Jordanian public universities.

H1b: Inclusive leadership has a negative impact on turnover intentions among academic staff in the Jordanian public universities.

H1c: Strategic leadership has a negative impact on turnover intentions among academic staff in the Jordanian public universities.

H1d: Laissez-faire leadership has a positive impact on turnover intentions among academic staff in the Jordanian public universities.

Positive leadership behaviors are expected to enhance an employee's perception of supervisor support. Authentic leaders foster trust [20], inclusive leaders demonstrate fairness and respect [21], and strategic leaders provide guidance and investment in their staff [22], all of which contribute to higher PSS. A laissez-faire approach, however, may be perceived as having a negative impact, thereby reducing PSS [23].

H2a: Authentic leadership has a positive impact on perceived supervisor support among academic staff in the Jordanian public universities.

H2b: Inclusive leadership has a positive impact on perceived supervisor support among academic staff in the Jordanian public universities.

H2c: Strategic leadership has a positive impact on perceived supervisor support among academic staff in the Jordanian public universities.

H2d: Laissez-faire leadership has a negative impact on perceived supervisor support among academic staff in the Jordanian public universities.

Consistent with Social Exchange Theory, PSS remains a robust predictor of turnover. Employees who feel genuinely supported naturally reciprocate by developing stronger organizational loyalty and a reduced intent to leave [24].

H3: Perceived supervisor support has a negative impact on turnover intentions among academic staff in the Jordanian public universities.

Finally, PSS is hypothesized to be the mechanism through which leadership styles influence turnover intention. Positive leadership enhances PSS, which in turn reduces turnover intention [25].

H4a: Perceived supervisor support mediates the relationship between authentic leadership and turnover intention among academic staff in the Jordanian public universities.

H4b: Perceived supervisor support mediates the relationship between inclusive leadership and turnover intention among academic staff in the Jordanian public universities.

H4c: Perceived supervisor support mediates the relationship between strategic leadership and turnover intention among academic staff in the Jordanian public universities.

H4d: Perceived supervisor support mediates the relationship between laissez-faire leadership and turnover intention among academic staff in the Jordanian public universities.

Based on the hypothesized model, the specific equations for the endogenous variables are as follows:

(1) Equation for Perceived Supervisor Support ( $\eta_1$ ):

$$\eta_1 = \gamma_{11}\xi_1 + \gamma_{12}\xi_2 + \gamma_{13}\xi_3 + \gamma_{14}\xi_4 + \zeta_1$$

(2) Equation for Turnover Intention ( $\eta_2$ ):

$$\eta_2 = \beta_{21}\eta_1 + \gamma_{21}\xi_1 + \gamma_{22}\xi_2 + \gamma_{23}\xi_3 + \gamma_{24}\xi_4 + \zeta_2$$

Where:

1.  $\gamma_{ij}$  (Gamma) is the path coefficient from exogenous to endogenous variables.
2.  $\beta_{21}$  (Beta) is the path coefficient from PSS to Turnover Intention.
3.  $\zeta$  (Zeta) represents the structural disturbance or residual error for each equation.

(3) The complete structural relationships are represented in the following matrix form:

$$\begin{bmatrix} \eta_1 \\ \eta_2 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 0 \\ \beta_{21} & 0 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \eta_1 \\ \eta_2 \end{bmatrix} + \begin{bmatrix} \gamma_{11} & \gamma_{12} & \gamma_{13} & \gamma_{14} \\ \gamma_{21} & \gamma_{22} & \gamma_{23} & \gamma_{24} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \xi_1 \\ \xi_2 \\ \xi_3 \\ \xi_4 \end{bmatrix} + \begin{bmatrix} \zeta_1 \\ \zeta_2 \end{bmatrix}$$

The formula above represents the complete mathematical mapping of the study's hypotheses, explicitly defined for both direct and mediated pathways.

### 3 Methodology

The current study is based on a number of hypotheses that need to be tested; hence, a quantitative, cross-sectional design was adopted. The study population consists of 7,879 faculty members and academic staff working in the public universities in Jordan. The sample selected for the study was random but stratified by the type of work each academic performs. A total of 367 academic staff, from professors to lecturers and administrative coordinators, were selected for the study from the 10 public universities. In order to increase accessibility to the population and to ensure anonymity, a structured online questionnaire using Google Forms was developed. The measurement instruments were adapted from established, validated scales from prior research. The details of these instruments are presented in Table 1.

All study variables, the four leadership styles, perceived supervisor support, and turnover intention, were measured using a standard 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) (Appendix A). The scales were found to be clear after getting them validated from a pilot study with 35 participants of academic rank from various departments of the undergraduate college of education. A two-stage analytical procedure was then

applied. Initially, all the analyses were performed using SPSS. After getting the desirable results from initial analyses, structural equation modeling was applied using AMOS (Version 29) [26]. Initially, all the analyses were performed using SPSS. All the study variables were first portrayed in the form of a percentage frequency distribution to portray the study sample, and then initial data diagnostics like multivariate outliers (Mahalanobis distance), normality test (skewness, Kurtosis & Mardia's coefficient), and multicollinearity (Variance Inflation Factor –VIF) were conducted to validate the analytical framework.

The second stage of analysis involved applying Covariance-Based Structural Equation Modeling (CB-SEM) techniques within the AMOS computer software program. The use of CB-SEM instead of Partial Least Squares (PLS-SEM) was deemed appropriate for this study since theory was more pressing than practical application, and the Social Exchange Theory-based model was being tested. Analysis consisted of two steps of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using Maximum Likelihood (ML) estimation. Initially, a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was performed to assess the reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity of the measurement model constructs. Subsequently, analysis of the structural model attempted to establish direct paths and indirect mediations hypothesized by the study.

To ensure the statistical rigor of these mediation tests against any potential deviations from multivariate normality, the analysis incorporated a non-parametric bootstrapping technique utilizing 5,000 resamples and 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals.

### 4 Results

The survey was conducted online, and as all the questions had 'required' fields, no missing values were encountered. The demographic characteristics of the 367 academic staff from the three public universities in Jordan are presented in Table 2. The majority of respondents were men (70.3%), senior, and well-educated. The majority of respondents (40.1%) were aged between 50 and 59 years. In terms of their personal characteristics, the majority of respondents were married (80.4%), had more than 15 years of experience in their job (47.1%), and had doctoral degrees (80.9%). Nearly half of respondents (49.3%) reported monthly incomes that range from JD 500 to JD 1000.

The measurement model was then evaluated with a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). Only four

items had to be excluded from the analysis because their standardized factor loadings were below 0.50 (AL\_3, IL\_4, IL\_6, SL\_4). The error analysis revealed that all standardized residual covariances were within the range of  $\pm 2.58$  (maximum: -2.045 for IL\_5 <-> PSS\_2). Hence, the measurement model showed a very good overall fit without any additional respecifications. The biggest modification index for error covariances was for the error of item AL\_1 and item SL\_31 (MI = 12.523), but this was not heeded in order to keep the model parsimonious and to avoid overfitting. Table 3 shows that all constructs were assessed to have very good reliability and validity. The internal consistency was excellent, indicated by high Composite Reliability (CR) values above 0.70. The convergent validity is also given since all AVE values are well above 0.50.

Further evidence regarding the discriminant validity was obtained by applying the Fornell-Larcker criterion (Table 4). Here, the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each of the six studied constructs is greater than the respective inter-construct correlations. Thus, there is clear empirical support for the discrimination of the studied latent constructs.

The final structural model shown in Figure 2 had an excellent fit to the data (CMIN/DF = 1.182; CFI = 0.991; TLI = 0.991; RMSEA = 0.022). The model estimates reached the minimum solution in 6 iterations. The Chi-square statistic for the model was 567.226 on 480 degrees of freedom ( $p = 0.004$ ). There were no boundary problems (i.e., no negative variances or Heywood cases), thereby allowing for the efficient testing of the hypotheses.

The model explained 74% of the variance in PSS and 72% of the variance in Turnover Intention. A comparison of the fit statistics clearly suggests that the partial mediation model provides a much better fit to the data (CFI = 0.991, RMSEA = 0.022) than the fully mediated alternative model (CFI = 0.988, RMSEA = 0.027). Additionally, constraining the direct paths to test for full mediation showed a marked decline in model fit, indicating that PSS alone is not sufficient to explain employee retention and that the three leadership styles—Authentic, Inclusive, and Strategic—each have a direct relationship with employees' intentions to stay with the organization. This supports a partial, as opposed to full, mediation model.

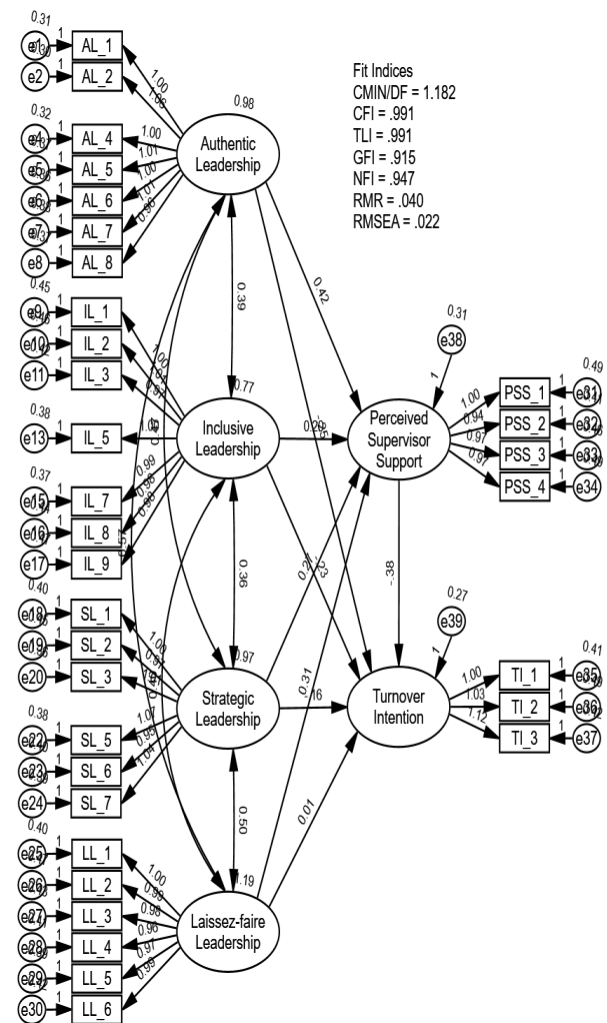


Fig. 2: Final SEM for turnover intention  
Source: created by the authors

Moreover, Table 5 reveals that distinct leadership behaviors have direct effects on faculty retention. The results strongly supported hypotheses H1a, H1b, and H1c, indicating that authentic ( $\beta = -0.249$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), inclusive ( $\beta = -0.201$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), and strategic leadership ( $\beta = -0.155$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ) all reduced turnover intention. This means that when supervisors are transparent, inclusive, and communicative about the vision and strategic plan for the unit, academic staff are far less likely to consider resigning from their positions. Conversely, hypothesis H1d was not supported, indicating that there was a non-significant direct effect of laissez-faire leadership on turnover intention ( $\beta = 0.014$ ,  $p = 0.797$ ). It appears that a purely hands-off leadership behavior has no effect on faculty turnover intention.

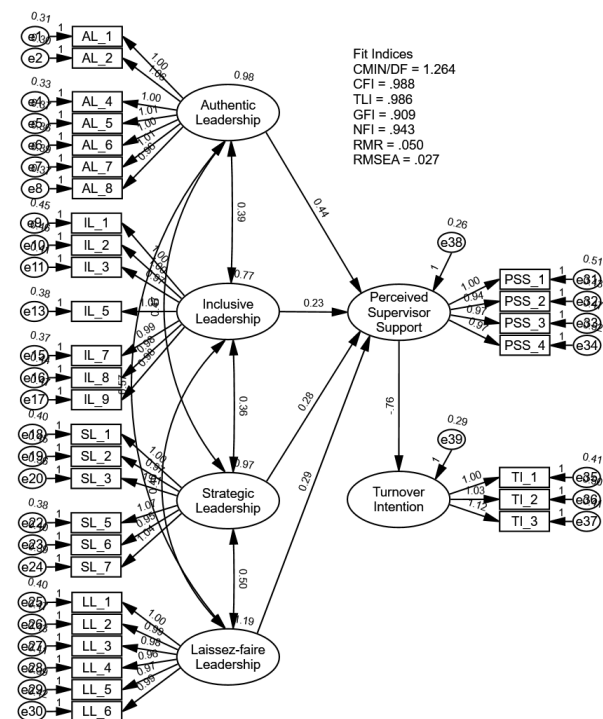


Fig. 3: Full mediation model comparison  
Source: created by the authors

Statistical evidence is also found for hypotheses H2a through H2d regarding the internal work environment. All four leadership styles measured in the study were found to have a positive impact on Perceived Supervisor Support (PSS). Specifically, authentic leadership ( $\beta = 0.380$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), laissez-faire leadership ( $\beta = 0.310$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), strategic leadership ( $\beta = 0.246$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), and inclusive leadership ( $\beta = 0.158$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) all contributed to academic staff perceiving that their contributions were valued. Thus, what a supervisor does on a day-to-day basis has a profound effect on how academic staff feel valued.

While Western-centric research may portray the Laissez-faire management style in a negative light as lacking proactivity or negligence, the findings are indicative of positive outcomes in the context of the Jordanian public universities. These results differ from what is typically reported in Western-centric research and can be attributed to the cultural differences in the Jordanian public sector. In this setting, a leader who grants employees autonomy may be seen as a facilitator of independence. This finding is particularly relevant in specialized professional settings, such as higher education. The findings suggest that in these environments, a laissez-faire style of supervision is associated with employees' perception of supervisor support in line with the Social Exchange expectations.

Finally, H3 is strongly supported, as the dimension of Perceived Supervisor Support was the strongest predictor in the study, having a significant negative impact on intentions to turn over ( $\beta = -0.416$ ,  $p < .001$ ). While all the leadership styles examined in the study were found to be significant predictors, this finding takes on special significance with respect to the academic brain drain that is affecting the health profession in Jordan. It appears that the single most important factor is the feeling of being supported on a daily basis by one's immediate supervisor.

Results from the mediation analysis in Table 6 revealed that Perceived Supervisor Support (PSS) is the mechanism through which leadership behaviors are associated with faculty retention. For authentic, inclusive, and strategic leadership, results supported the partial mediation hypotheses (H4a, H4b, and 4c). These constructive leadership behaviors negatively suppress turnover intent directly (predicting intention to leave), but they also positively enhance retention through a second pathway by creating a highly supportive work environment, with authentic leadership exhibiting the greatest total effect on turnover intent through both direct ( $\beta = -0.249$ ) and indirect ( $\beta = -0.158$ ) paths, followed by the effects of inclusive and strategic leadership.

Meanwhile, PSS fully mediated the relationship between leadership for innovation and turnover intention (supported H4d), while the direct effect of leadership for innovation on employee retention was not significant ( $\beta = 0.014$ ,  $p = 0.797$ ). Only when academic staff perceived that a no-hassle, laissez-faire leadership style was also supportive and trusting did such a style contribute to retention ( $\beta = -0.129$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

## 5 Discussion

Findings from the current study revealed that authentic, inclusive and strategic leadership styles reduce academic staff members' intentions to leave from their academic posts. These leadership styles reduce turnover intentions through a direct effect as well as an indirect effect via perceived supervisor support, wherein employees experience and confirm supportive supervisory behaviors that anchor them to their organization. This pattern is consistent with previous research [11], [27] in that it identifies how genuine, fair and visionary leadership 'makes a difference' by creating a work environment that 'makes employees feel safe' and valued. As the study also indicates, in the context of the Jordanian universities, where academic staff members are unusually specialized in supportive supervisory

behaviors, serve as a respectful recognition of this professionalism and foster long-term commitment to their organizations [28].

The finding for laissez-faire leadership was particularly interesting in that there was no significant relationship with turnover intentions. Although this does not suggest that a hands-off leadership approach is appropriate in all settings, it does indicate that insofar as PSS is concerned, such an approach is not detrimental. The indirect path from laissez-faire leadership to turnover intentions, however, was positive and sizable. Furthermore, from the perspective of the academic environment, a highly delegative approach can serve as a powerful marker of the level of trust that supervisors have in employees to self-manage. That granted autonomy can translate into a strong sense of supervisory support, which in turn can "keep it in house" when other factors might drive employees to leave for other organizations. The findings, therefore, suggest that what appear to be inconsistent and even negative findings regarding the positive effects of deconstructing leadership in the mainstream literature may be explained by the finding that, for the academic environment, a hands-off leadership approach need not predict high turnover intentions so long as employees perceive that supervisors are supportive. In turn, such a hands-off approach can promote PSS and, therefore, enhance employee intent to remain with the organization.

Perceived Supervisor Support (PSS) was the strongest predictor of turnover intention in this study, and high levels of PSS were associated with lower intentions to leave. Social Exchange Theory explains that employees will go to great lengths to reciprocate the investment of time and resources by an organization for which they work. PSS is the tangible evidence of such an investment. For employees to remain committed to an institution, they must feel that their supervisor supports them. Furthermore, because PSS is the only leadership style condition that fully mediated the relationship between one of the leadership styles (laissez-faire) and turnover intention, and partially mediated the relationships between the other three leadership styles and turnover intention, PSS is the key mechanism by which supervisory styles affect faculty retention.

These findings, in line with current research, provide University administrators with a clear understanding of the mechanisms that drive academic staff retention. This theoretical understanding of the specific leadership dynamics at play in their institutions provides a solid foundation for the practical implications and methodological limitations discussed in the following sections.

## 6 Implications and Limitations

### 6.1 Implications for Practice and Policy

This study identifies practical solutions for university administrators and policymakers in Jordan's higher education sector by specifying the types of training programs leaders need to manage effectively in an authentic, inclusive, and strategic manner. In order to achieve faculty commitment, deans, department heads, and academic supervisors in universities need to undergo structural leadership training programs, focusing on ethical decision-making, active listening, creating psychological safety at the workplace, and long-term strategic planning.

While other factors may also influence faculty retention, findings from the survey indicate that Perceived Supervisor Support (PSS) is the most important factor in influencing the decision of faculty to remain at their current institution. As a result, this factor must become a strategic priority for institutions seeking to support their academic workforce. Administrators must hold academic leaders accountable for creating supportive work environments for their faculty and programs. For example, PSS could become a performance management metric. Furthermore, formal mentorship programs and other structural supports that pair junior and more senior faculty could also send the message that an institution values the daily work of its faculty as well as their long-term professional development.

This is not to say that the findings on laissez-faire leadership offer unambiguous lessons for academic management. Ultimately, the evidence suggests that a very hands-off approach to management—and one in which the delegator offers very little involvement in the work of others—can promote greater employee empowerment when the policies and organizational structures are designed to preserve significant academic independence, while at the same time providing ready access to administrative and supervisory support, clear lines of communication, and adequate staffing and resources. University administrators thus must enable maximum academic self-governance even as they are vigilant concerning the corresponding need for greater institutional support.

### 6.2 Theoretical Contributions

This study contributes to the development of Social Exchange Theory by examining exchange mechanisms in a specific context of Jordanian public universities that have so far received little attention in leadership research. Using the SEM approach and

simultaneously studying four different leadership styles, the study proposes an integrated leadership model in which Perceived Supervisor Support (PSS) acts as the key mediator that predicts employee-rated supervisor exchanged quality. In addition, this study sheds new light on the poorly understood empirical relationship between laissez-faire leadership and employee outcomes, in the context of an academic environment. Crucially, autonomous leadership increases the likelihood of employee retention through perceived supportive trust.

### 6.3 Limitations

While the current study identifies significant relationships between leadership and employee retention, several methodological and contextual limitations exist that need to be addressed. First, the cross-sectional design of the current study does not allow for any definitive statements regarding causality. Future research could incorporate a longitudinal design to better capture the relationships between varying levels of leadership and perceptions of organizational support for employee retention over time. Additionally, because the current study relies on self-reported data, the potential for response bias and social desirability bias exists. Therefore, future models of supervisor behavior and employee retention could incorporate multiple data sources, such as 360-degree feedback, to more accurately capture specific supervisory behaviors.

However, the findings are limited to the specific Jordanian cultural context in which the research was conducted. Future research should adopt a comparative, cross-cultural methodology in order to determine whether the findings are specific to the Jordanian higher education system or reflect dynamics occurring in other regions/countries. In addition, the study has focused on the perceptions of the academic staff of one higher education institution. There are three operational levels within any higher education institution: academic staff, students, and senior administration. Thus, future studies could incorporate all three levels in order to develop a more comprehensive, multi-level perspective of effective leadership practice in higher education.

## 7 Conclusion

This study investigates the impact of supervisory behavior on the intent of academic staff from public universities of Jordan to leave their employment. The study results show that some supervisory behaviors (those associated with authentic, strategic, and

supportive supervision) are more important than others in helping to retain the academic staff. The findings also reveal that the mediating variable of employees' Perceived Supervisor Support (PSS) plays a pivotal role in reducing turnover intention at work. Moreover, the results contextualize the model of laissez-faire supervision in the higher education setting, revealing that delegative supervision diminishes intent to leave when employees perceive that autonomy granted to them is a supported expression of trust.

Consequently, employees' perception of being supported by their supervisor (PSS) turned out to be the predominant mechanism for attracting and retaining academic talent in the public universities of Jordan. The findings suggest, therefore, that despite the existence of effective models of supervision, what matters most to employees from the academic ranks is their daily experience of being valued by their immediate supervisor and perceived accordingly as being supported. It follows that for the public universities of Jordan to maintain a stable workforce of the highest quality, their immediate priority must be the structural development of the type of leaders who are capable of providing authentic, strategic, and supportive supervision.

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### **Contribution of Individual Authors to the Creation of a Scientific Article (Ghostwriting Policy)**

Anas Awamleh is the main author, and Dr. Abbod, Dr. Sidra, and Dr. Abdallah are co-authors who contribute to the consultation, methodology, final solution, and overview of research.

### **Sources of Funding for Research Presented in a Scientific Article or Scientific Article Itself**

No funding was received for conducting this study.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare that are relevant to the content of this article.

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## APPENDIX

Table 1. Measurement instruments and sources

| Variable Name                | No. of Items | Original Source                       |
|------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------|
| Authentic Leadership         | 8            | Walumbwa et al. (2008)                |
| Inclusive Leadership         | 9            | Yasin et al. (2023)                   |
| Strategic Leadership         | 7            | Jooste and Fourie (2009)              |
| Laissez-faire Leadership     | 6            | Adjei (2023)                          |
| Perceived Supervisor Support | 4            | Rhoades, Eisenberger, & Armeli (2001) |
| Turnover Intention           | 3            | Yasin et al. (2023)                   |

Source: created by the authors

Table 2. Profile of respondents

| Demographic        | Category              | Frequency (N) | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|-----------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Gender             | Male                  | 258           | 70.30%         |
|                    | Female                | 109           | 29.70%         |
| Age                | Below 30 years        | 36            | 9.80%          |
|                    | 30-39 years           | 55            | 15.00%         |
|                    | 40-49 years           | 92            | 25.10%         |
|                    | 50-59 years           | 147           | 40.10%         |
|                    | 60 years and above    | 37            | 10.10%         |
| Marital Status     | Married               | 295           | 80.40%         |
|                    | Single                | 72            | 19.60%         |
| Working Experience | Less than 5 years     | 37            | 10.10%         |
|                    | 5-10 years            | 76            | 20.70%         |
|                    | 11-15 years           | 81            | 22.10%         |
|                    | More than 15 years    | 173           | 47.10%         |
| Academic Level     | Master's Degree       | 70            | 19.10%         |
|                    | Doctoral Degree (PhD) | 297           | 80.90%         |
| Working Position   | Professor             | 82            | 22.30%         |
|                    | Associate Professor   | 115           | 31.30%         |
|                    | Assistant Professor   | 117           | 31.90%         |
|                    | Lecturer              | 53            | 14.40%         |
| Monthly Income     | Below JD 1000         | 181           | 49.30%         |
|                    | JD 1000 - 1999        | 122           | 33.20%         |
|                    | JD 2000 - 2999        | 33            | 9.00%          |
|                    | JD 3000 - 3999        | 15            | 4.10%          |
|                    | JD 4000 and above     | 16            | 4.40%          |

Source: created by the authors

Table 3. Reliability and convergent validity

| Construct                    | AVE   | CR    |
|------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Authentic Leadership         | 0.742 | 0.953 |
| Inclusive Leadership         | 0.641 | 0.926 |
| Strategic Leadership         | 0.711 | 0.937 |
| Laissez-faire Leadership     | 0.732 | 0.943 |
| Perceived Supervisor Support | 0.709 | 0.907 |
| Turnover Intention           | 0.710 | 0.880 |

Source: created by the authors

Table 4. Fornell-Larcker discriminant validity

| Construct | TI     | PSS   | LL    | SL    | IL    | AL    |
|-----------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| TI        | 0.843  |       |       |       |       |       |
| PSS       | -0.643 | 0.842 |       |       |       |       |
| LL        | -0.317 | 0.479 | 0.856 |       |       |       |
| SL        | -0.382 | 0.408 | 0.214 | 0.843 |       |       |
| IL        | -0.365 | 0.314 | 0.176 | 0.169 | 0.801 |       |
| AL        | -0.510 | 0.542 | 0.283 | 0.236 | 0.203 | 0.861 |

Note: Diagonal values are the square root of AVE.

Source: created by the authors

Table 5. Results of path coefficient

| Hypothesis | Path      | Beta ( $\beta$ ) | P-value | Finding       |
|------------|-----------|------------------|---------|---------------|
| H1a        | AL -> TI  | -0.249           | <0.001  | Supported     |
| H1b        | IL -> TI  | -0.201           | <0.001  | Supported     |
| H1c        | SL -> TI  | -0.155           | 0.002   | Supported     |
| H1d        | LL -> TI  | 0.014            | 0.797   | Not Supported |
| H2a        | AL -> PSS | 0.380            | <0.001  | Supported     |
| H2b        | IL -> PSS | 0.158            | <0.001  | Supported     |
| H2c        | SL -> PSS | 0.246            | <0.001  | Supported     |
| H2d        | LL -> PSS | 0.310            | <0.001  | Supported     |
| H3         | PSS -> TI | -0.416           | <0.001  | Supported     |

Source: created by the authors

Table 6. Results of mediation effect

| Hypothesis | Path            | Beta ( $\beta$ ) | P-value | Finding (Type)      |
|------------|-----------------|------------------|---------|---------------------|
| H4a        | AL -> PSS -> TI | -0.158           | <0.001  | Supported (Partial) |
| H4b        | IL -> PSS -> TI | -0.066           | <0.001  | Supported (Partial) |
| H4c        | SL -> PSS -> TI | -0.102           | <0.001  | Supported (Partial) |
| H4d        | LL -> PSS -> TI | -0.129           | <0.001  | Supported (Full)    |

Source: created by the authors