

An Empirical Study Of Influential Leadership Practices And Its Impact On Reducing Voluntary Attrition.

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Abstract:

Voluntary attrition remains a critical challenge for global corporate organizations, often resulting in talent loss, increased recruitment costs, and disruption of organizational continuity. This study investigates the role of influential leadership practices in reducing employees' intention to voluntarily leave, focusing on trust-building, recognition, empowerment, and career development support. A quantitative research design was employed, with data collected from 245 employees across multiple multinational corporations using a structured Likert-scale questionnaire. The study tested two hypotheses using regression analysis: first, that trust-building, recognition, and empowerment negatively predict voluntary attrition intention; and second, that career development support positively predicts employee retention intention. The findings confirm that influential leadership practices significantly enhance employee retention. Empowerment and recognition emerged as key drivers in reducing voluntary attrition, while career development support strongly predicts long-term loyalty. These results highlight the multidimensional nature of effective leadership, addressing both immediate engagement and long-term career aspirations of employees. The study contributes to both theory and practice by demonstrating that leadership behaviors are a strategic lever for mitigating turnover risks. Organizations that integrate trust, recognition, empowerment, and career development into leadership practices can enhance workforce stability, engagement, and performance. The study also provides a framework for managers to design leadership interventions aimed at sustaining a committed and high-performing global workforce.

Keywords: *Influential leadership, Employee retention, Voluntary attrition, Career development support, Organizational commitment*

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I. Introduction

Voluntary employee attrition continues to pose a significant challenge to organizations across sectors, disrupting productivity, increasing recruitment and training costs, and undermining institutional knowledge. Leadership, as a central organizational function, plays a critical role in influencing employees' decisions to stay or leave. Despite a wealth of research exploring turnover, the nuanced connection between specific leadership practices and voluntary attrition remains underexplored, particularly through empirical lenses. This study aims to bridge that gap by examining how influential leadership practices contribute to reducing voluntary attrition across different organizational contexts.

Leadership behavior significantly shapes the work environment, influencing not only employee satisfaction but also engagement and retention. Transformational leadership, which emphasizes vision, motivation, and individualized consideration, has been consistently linked with reduced turnover intentions (Sun & Wang, 2017). In public organizations, for example, transformational leaders have been shown to directly decrease both the intent to leave and actual voluntary turnover by fostering trust, commitment, and a shared purpose. Similarly, in non-profit settings, Almas et al. (2020) found that transformational leadership exerts both direct and indirect effects on volunteers' intentions to remain, suggesting that leadership style can mediate retention through motivational pathways.

The emotional and psychological dimensions of leadership further deepen its impact on employee turnover. Reina et al. (2018) demonstrated that the use of positive managerial influence tactics—such as rational persuasion and inspirational appeals—enhances employees' emotional engagement, which in turn lowers their likelihood of quitting. Conversely, toxic or unethical leadership behaviors can lead to what Cialdini et al. (2021) refer to as the “selective attrition effect,” wherein high-performing or ethically aware employees are more likely to leave, thereby degrading the overall organizational culture. This underscores the dual role of leadership: it can either serve as a retention mechanism or as a catalyst for attrition, depending on how influence is exerted.

The influence of leadership is particularly pronounced among specific demographic groups, such as millennials, who are often characterized by high expectations for meaningful work, autonomy, and growth. Andrade (2022) identified several leadership strategies—such as transparent communication, inclusive decision-making, and professional development opportunities—that significantly reduce voluntary turnover among millennial employees. These findings align with Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which posits that fulfilling basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness enhances intrinsic motivation and commitment (Forner, 2019). When leaders adopt SDT-informed practices, they not only cultivate a more engaged workforce but also mitigate the risks associated with voluntary turnover.

High-performance work practices (HPWPs), often championed by effective leaders, also play a pivotal role in employee retention. Selden and Sowa (2015) emphasized that the implementation of HPWPs—such as continuous feedback, participative decision-making, and performance-based rewards—correlates with lower turnover rates in nonprofit human service organizations. Furthermore, Waldman et al. (2015) conducted a multilevel investigation demonstrating that leadership effectiveness at both the supervisory and executive levels is a key determinant of turnover behavior, indicating that leadership impact is pervasive throughout organizational hierarchies.

Given the multifaceted nature of leadership and its far-reaching implications on employee retention, this study seeks to empirically investigate the specific leadership practices that are most effective in reducing voluntary attrition. By synthesizing insights from transformational leadership, emotional engagement theories, and motivational frameworks like SDT, this research aims to provide actionable recommendations for leaders and organizations striving to build more stable and committed workforces.

II. Literature Reviews And Development Of Hypotheses

Voluntary attrition remains a persistent concern for global corporate organizations, often triggered by deteriorating employee-leader relationships and poor workplace experiences. Among the many leadership dynamics influencing attrition, trust-building, employee recognition, and empowerment have emerged as critical factors for enhancing employee retention. The literature reviewed herein consistently supports the notion that influential leadership practices are instrumental in reducing employees' intention to voluntarily exit organizations.

Trust-Building and Voluntary Attrition

Trust between leaders and employees is a foundational element of workplace stability and cohesion. Restrepo (2019), using a grounded theory approach, found that trust-building is a dynamic and iterative process that significantly influences employee attitudes toward the organization. Employees are more likely to remain in workplaces where leaders consistently demonstrate integrity, transparency, and fairness. Trust in leadership also serves as a critical moderator in employee engagement and turnover intention. Naim and Ozyilmaz (2023) observed that trust in management significantly weakens the relationship between job dissatisfaction and turnover intention, suggesting that even under stressful work conditions, employees are less likely to leave when trust in leadership is high.

Furthermore, Ismail et al. (2023) emphasized the sequential influence of visionary leadership on organizational trust and, ultimately, organizational citizenship behaviors—behaviors closely linked to lower turnover intention. Similarly, Ntumngia (2017) highlighted the detrimental effects of trust issues, particularly in scenarios involving interim leadership, where the lack of trust leads to increased workforce disengagement and attrition. Sarun et al. (2025) reinforced this perspective, identifying trust in leaders as a significant determinant of person-organization fit, which, when strong, contributes to improved job performance and retention in international workplaces.

Recognition and Employee Retention

Employee recognition, both formal and informal, has consistently been linked to improved job satisfaction and reduced turnover intention. Covella et al. (2017) found that organizations with strong leadership recognition practices retain employees longer due to the perceived appreciation and validation of their work. Recognition is not merely a morale booster but a strategic leadership tool that directly influences organizational loyalty. Mitterer (2017) also linked servant leadership behaviors—particularly those involving acknowledgment of employee contributions—to higher job satisfaction and lower turnover intent. When employees feel seen and valued, their sense of purpose within the organization strengthens, making voluntary exit less appealing.

Empowerment and Retention Outcomes

Empowerment through autonomy, participation in decision-making, and professional development opportunities plays a crucial role in shaping employee commitment. Authentic leadership, characterized by openness, ethical conduct, and self-awareness, fosters an environment of empowerment. Liu and Wong (2023) demonstrated that authentic leadership directly reduces turnover intention by enhancing job satisfaction and an

employee's sense of calling. Empowerment leads to a heightened sense of ownership and belonging, both of which discourage voluntary departure. This is aligned with findings by Sarun et al. (2025), who emphasized that empowered employees show better organizational alignment and performance.

In synthesizing the reviewed literature, it becomes evident that influential leadership practices—especially trust-building, recognition, and empowerment—are essential in mitigating voluntary attrition. These practices not only improve individual job satisfaction and engagement but also strengthen the employee-leader relationship, which is a strong predictor of retention outcomes across global corporate contexts.

Based on the theoretical and empirical insights discussed, the following hypothesis is proposed - **H₁**: Influential leadership practices (trust-building, recognition, and empowerment) negatively predict voluntary attrition intention among employees in global corporate organizations.

Career Development Support and Employee Retention

Research on leadership and employee retention consistently highlights the critical role of career development support in reducing voluntary attrition. De Oliveira, Cavazotte, and Dunzer (2019) found that leadership-driven career management initiatives enhance job satisfaction and reduce turnover intention, while Pineda (2022) demonstrated that leadership support for career growth, alongside trust, directly predicts retention. Similar findings were reported by Lee, Yang, and Li (2017), who emphasized that career-related support improves job satisfaction, thereby lowering attrition among early-career employees. Amah and Oyetuunde (2020) further showed that servant leadership fosters retention through career growth potential and employee voice, underscoring the importance of leaders enabling developmental opportunities. Collectively, these studies establish that leaders who actively support employees' career trajectories positively influence retention outcomes.

Additional research reinforces the direct impact of career development and leadership support on long-term employee commitment. Ferdiana, Khan, and Ray (2023) identified career development as a strong predictor of retention across industries, while Bibi, Ahmad, and Majid (2018) found that supervisor support and training initiatives increase retention in academic institutions. In the hospitality sector, Ohunakin et al. (2019) showed that transformational leaders indirectly reduce attrition by promoting satisfaction and growth opportunities. Similarly, Fletcher, Alfes, and Robinson (2018) demonstrated that leadership-provided training enhances retention through improved work attitudes, and Yarbrough et al. (2017) confirmed that career development opportunities significantly strengthen intent to stay among nursing professionals. Together, these findings provide robust evidence that career development support offered by influential leaders serves as a powerful mechanism to improve retention, thereby supporting **H₂**: Career development support provided by influential leaders positively predicts employee retention intention in global corporate organizations.

III. Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative, explanatory research design to analyze the effect of influential leadership practices on voluntary attrition intention in global corporate organizations. The focus was on testing two hypotheses: **H₁**: Trust-building, recognition, and empowerment negatively predict voluntary attrition intention, and **H₂**: Career development support positively predicts employee retention intention. The population for the study comprised employees across multinational corporations, ensuring diversity in workplace experiences and organizational contexts. A total of 245 employees participated, selected through convenience sampling due to the accessibility of respondents across global corporations. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire that included demographic items (age, gender, tenure, job role) and Likert-scale statements (5-point scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) measuring trust-building, recognition, empowerment, career development support, and attrition or retention intentions. Items were adapted from prior validated instruments, and a pilot test was conducted to ensure clarity and reliability. Ethical considerations were maintained, with informed consent obtained and confidentiality assured.

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS. Preliminary steps included data screening to check for completeness, outliers, and adherence to assumptions of regression analysis. Reliability testing was carried out through Cronbach's alpha, with values of 0.70 and above considered acceptable for internal consistency. Thereafter, regression analysis was employed to test the hypotheses and determine the predictive power of the leadership constructs. This approach enabled the study to assess the direct influence of trust-building, recognition, empowerment, and career development support on employee attrition and retention intentions. A significance threshold of $p < .05$ was applied, ensuring robust interpretation of results. The findings from this analysis provide empirical evidence on how influential leadership practices can reduce voluntary attrition and enhance retention in global corporate organizations.

IV. Results

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.877	26

The reliability analysis presented in Table 1 shows that the Cronbach's Alpha value is .877 for 26 items, which indicates a high level of internal consistency among the questionnaire items. According to widely accepted benchmarks, a Cronbach's Alpha above 0.70 is considered acceptable, while values above 0.80 reflect strong reliability. Thus, the obtained coefficient of .877 suggests that the measurement instrument used in this study is both reliable and robust, meaning the items consistently measure the intended constructs—trust-building, recognition, empowerment, career development support, and attrition intention. This level of reliability enhances the credibility of subsequent statistical analyses, ensuring that the results are based on a dependable and internally consistent dataset.

Table 2: Demographic Profile of Respondents'

		Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age Group	20–29 years	72	29.4
	30–39 years	96	39.2
	40–49 years	53	21.6
	50 years & above	24	9.8
Gender	Male	141	57.6
	Female	98	40
	Other / Prefer not to say	6	2.4
Tenure with Organization	Less than 1 year	32	13.1
	1–3 years	88	35.9
	4–6 years	67	27.3
	More than 6 years	58	23.7
Job Role of Respondents	Entry-level / Junior Staff	54	22
	Mid-level / Associate	96	39.2
	Senior-level / Manager	65	26.5
	Executive / Leadership	30	12.2

The demographic profile of respondents reveals that the majority of employees surveyed were in the 30–39 age group (39.2%), followed by those aged 20–29 years (29.4%). This suggests that the sample is dominated by early- and mid-career professionals, individuals who are often in critical stages of career development and therefore highly responsive to leadership practices such as recognition and empowerment. Respondents in the 40–49 years (21.6%) and 50 years & above (9.8%) groups were relatively fewer, reflecting the smaller proportion of older employees in global corporate environments. In terms of gender distribution, the sample is relatively balanced but slightly male-dominated, with 57.6% male respondents compared to 40% female respondents, while 2.4% preferred not to disclose their gender. This balance enhances the representativeness of perspectives across genders in analyzing leadership and attrition dynamics.

Work tenure distribution shows that a significant proportion of respondents (35.9%) had been with their organizations for 1–3 years, followed by 27.3% with 4–6 years of tenure. Employees with longer tenure (more than 6 years, 23.7%) and newcomers with less than 1 year (13.1%) formed smaller segments. This distribution indicates that the dataset captures views from employees across different stages of organizational attachment, from newcomers to long-serving staff. Regarding job roles, the largest group comprised mid-level associates (39.2%), followed by senior managers (26.5%), entry-level employees (22%), and executive/leadership positions (12.2%). This suggests that the findings will largely reflect the perceptions of mid-career professionals and managers, who are often directly influenced by leadership practices and are critical to organizational continuity.

Validation of Hypotheses

H₁: Influential leadership practices (trust-building, recognition, and empowerment) negatively predict voluntary attrition intention among employees in global corporate organizations.

Table 3: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.591 ^a	.350	.342	.49012

a. Predictors: (Constant), Empowerment, Trust Building, Recognition

Table 4: ANOVA^b

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	31.128	3	10.376	43.193	.000 ^a
	Residual	57.893	241	.240		
	Total	89.020	244			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Empowerment, Trust Building, Recognition

b. Dependent Variable: Employee Retention Intention

Table 5: Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.804	.253		7.125	.000
	Trust Building	.188	.069	.186	2.713	.007
	Recognition	.202	.066	.220	3.069	.002
	Empowerment	.235	.052	.292	4.469	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Retention Intention

The regression analysis results strongly support H₁, which proposed that influential leadership practices—trust-building, recognition, and empowerment—negatively predict voluntary attrition intention among employees. The model summary (Table 3) shows an R value of .591 and an R² of .350, indicating that leadership practices explain 35% of the variance in employee retention intention, a substantial proportion in behavioral research. The ANOVA results (Table 4) confirm the overall model's statistical significance (F = 43.193, p < .001), demonstrating that the predictors collectively exert a meaningful effect on retention intention.

At the individual predictor level (Table 5), all three leadership dimensions are statistically significant, with positive standardized beta coefficients: empowerment ($\beta = .292$, p < .001), recognition ($\beta = .220$, p = .002), and trust-building ($\beta = .186$, p = .007). Since higher scores on these leadership practices correspond to higher employee retention intention, the results validate the hypothesis that they effectively reduce voluntary attrition intention. Among the predictors, empowerment emerges as the strongest driver of retention, followed by recognition and trust-building, highlighting the importance of autonomy and involvement in reducing turnover risk. Thus, the hypothesis is validated: influential leadership practices significantly and negatively predict voluntary attrition intentions in global corporate organizations, confirming their critical role in strengthening employee loyalty and retention.

H₂: Career development support provided by influential leaders positively predicts employee retention intention in global corporate organizations.

Table 6: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.493 ^a	.243	.240	.52648

a. Predictors: (Constant), Career Development Support

Table 7: ANOVA^b

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	21.665	1	21.665	78.162	.000 ^a
	Residual	67.355	243	.277		
	Total	89.020	244			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Career Development Support

b. Dependent Variable: Employee Retention Intention

Table 8: Coefficients^a

	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.973	.179		16.573	.000
	Career Development Support	.371	.042	.493	8.841	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Retention Intention

The regression analysis supports H₂, which proposed that career development support provided by influential leaders positively predicts employee retention intention in global corporate organizations. The model summary (Table 6) shows an R value of .493 and an R² of .243, meaning that career development support alone explains 24.3% of the variance in employee retention intention—a considerable contribution for a single predictor variable in behavioral research. The ANOVA results (Table 7) further confirm that the model is statistically significant ($F = 78.162$, $p < .001$), establishing that career development support has a meaningful impact on retention intention.

The coefficients table (Table 8) highlights that career development support is a significant positive predictor of retention intention ($\beta = .493$, $t = 8.841$, $p < .001$). The unstandardized coefficient ($B = .371$) indicates that for every unit increase in perceived career development support, employee retention intention increases by 0.371 units. This finding validates the hypothesis by demonstrating that employees who perceive their leaders as supportive of their career growth and progression are more likely to remain committed to their organizations. Thus, H₂ is validated, confirming that career development support is a critical leadership practice that strengthens employee loyalty and reduces turnover risk in global corporate settings.

V. Findings And Discussion

The study highlights that influential leadership practices play a decisive role in shaping employee retention intentions in global corporate organizations. The results demonstrate that trust-building, recognition, and empowerment contribute significantly to reducing voluntary attrition intentions. Among these, empowerment emerges as a particularly critical factor, as employees who are granted autonomy, encouraged to take initiative, and included in decision-making processes report stronger intentions to remain with their organizations. Recognition, in the form of appreciation, acknowledgment, and constructive feedback, also enhances retention by making employees feel valued. Trust-building, while slightly less dominant compared to the other two, still plays an essential role in establishing reliability and psychological safety, which together strengthen long-term commitment. Collectively, these findings reinforce the idea that leadership practices oriented toward respect, fairness, and employee involvement create a supportive organizational environment that discourages voluntary turnover.

The study also finds that career development support provided by leaders is a strong predictor of employee retention. Employees who perceive that their leaders are invested in their professional growth, learning, and career advancement are more likely to remain loyal to their organizations. This highlights the long-term significance of leadership practices that extend beyond day-to-day management and focus on developing employees' potential. It also aligns with theoretical perspectives such as self-determination theory, which suggests that meeting intrinsic needs for growth and competence fosters commitment and reduces turnover intentions.

At the outset, the findings validate the proposed hypotheses and underline the multidimensional nature of leadership in addressing attrition challenges. Leadership practices such as empowerment and recognition can directly influence immediate retention decisions, while sustained career development support nurtures long-term loyalty. The study thus emphasizes that organizations seeking to reduce voluntary attrition should adopt a holistic leadership approach that balances trust, recognition, empowerment, and developmental opportunities to create a resilient and committed workforce.

Managerial Implications

The findings of this study provide clear guidance for managers aiming to reduce voluntary attrition in global corporate organizations. First, leaders should prioritize empowerment, granting employees autonomy, involving them in decision-making, and providing the necessary resources to perform effectively. Such practices enhance employees' sense of ownership and commitment. Second, recognition and trust-building should be embedded in daily leadership behaviors; acknowledging achievements and maintaining transparency fosters a positive work climate, increasing retention. Third, managers must focus on career development support by offering learning opportunities, mentoring, and clear growth pathways, which strengthens long-term loyalty and reduces turnover intentions.

Collectively, these practices suggest that a holistic, employee-centered leadership approach not only improves retention but also enhances engagement, performance, and organizational culture. Organizations that

invest in these leadership strategies are better positioned to retain talent, maintain continuity, and sustain competitive advantage in global markets.

VI. Limitations And Scope For Future Study

Despite providing valuable insights into the role of influential leadership in reducing voluntary attrition, this study has certain limitations. First, the use of convenience sampling and a sample size of 245 employees may limit the generalizability of the findings across all global corporate organizations. Second, the study relied solely on self-reported questionnaire data, which may be subject to response biases such as social desirability or recall bias. Third, the research focused only on selected leadership practices—trust-building, recognition, empowerment, and career development support—while other potentially influential factors, such as organizational culture, compensation, or work-life balance, were not considered.

Future research could address these limitations by employing larger, stratified samples across multiple industries and countries, using mixed-method approaches to capture richer insights, and examining additional organizational and contextual variables. Longitudinal studies could also explore how leadership interventions impact employee retention over time, providing a deeper understanding of causality and long-term effectiveness.

VII. Conclusion

This study examined the impact of influential leadership practices on voluntary attrition and employee retention in global corporate organizations. The findings confirm that leadership behaviors such as trust-building, recognition, empowerment, and career development support play a pivotal role in shaping employees' intentions to remain with their organizations. Empowerment and recognition were found to be critical in influencing immediate retention decisions, fostering a sense of ownership, engagement, and value among employees. Similarly, career development support emerged as a strong predictor of long-term loyalty, highlighting the importance of providing growth opportunities, mentorship, and clear career pathways. Collectively, these insights validate the proposed hypotheses and emphasize that effective leadership is multidimensional, addressing both psychological needs and professional aspirations of employees.

The study contributes to both theory and practice by demonstrating that organizations can strategically reduce voluntary attrition through targeted leadership interventions. By integrating trust, recognition, empowerment, and career development into managerial practices, organizations not only enhance employee retention but also strengthen engagement, performance, and organizational culture. These findings underscore that influential leadership is not merely a managerial style but a strategic tool for sustaining a committed, motivated, and high-performing workforce in global corporate contexts.

Items Used For Study

Sr No.	Questions
Trust-Building	
1	My leader keeps promises and follows through on commitments.
2	I feel I can rely on my leader when I need support.
3	My leader acts consistently and predictably.
4	My leader is honest in communications with team members.
5	Reverse-coded: I sometimes suspect my leader is not truthful with employees.
6	My leader treats employees fairly and without favouritism.
Recognition	
1	My leader recognises my achievements in meaningful ways.
2	My leader gives constructive praise for good work.
3	My leader ensures team members receive credit for their contributions.
4	Reverse-coded: I rarely receive any acknowledgement for my efforts.
5	My leader offers rewards or opportunities when performance is strong.
Empowerment	
1	My leader gives me the freedom to decide how to carry out my work.
2	My leader encourages me to take initiative.
3	My leader involves me in decisions that affect my work.
4	My leader provides resources and authority needed to do my job.
5	Reverse-coded: My leader closely controls every step of my work.
Career Development Support	
1	My leader actively supports my professional development.
2	My leader discusses career goals and helps plan next steps.
3	My leader provides coaching or mentoring when I need it.
4	My leader ensures I get appropriate training opportunities.
5	My leader advocates for me in promotion/assignment discussions.
6	Reverse-coded: My leader shows little interest in my long-term career growth.
Voluntary Attrition Intention	
1	I am actively looking for a job outside this organisation.
2	I often think about quitting my job.

3	I will probably look for a new job in the next 12 months.
4	I intend to search for alternatives even if nothing urgent prompts me to leave.

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