

THE IMPACT OF ALTRUISTIC LEADERSHIP ON TURN OVER INTENTION: THE MODERATING EFFECT OF CARING ETHICAL CLIMATE

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effect of altruistic leadership on turnover intention, with organizational cynicism serving as a mediating variable and caring ethical climate functioning as a moderating variable among employees in higher education institutions. A quantitative research design was adopted, and data were collected through a structured online questionnaire. The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The findings indicate that altruistic leadership plays a significant role in influencing employees' turnover intention and reducing organizational cynicism. The study further reveals that organizational cynicism serves as an important mechanism through which altruistic leadership affects employees' intention to leave their organizations. Additionally, a caring ethical climate was found to weaken the relationship between altruistic leadership and turnover intention, demonstrating its protective role in fostering employee retention. Overall, the findings suggest that promoting altruistic leadership, minimizing organizational cynicism, and cultivating a caring ethical climate can enhance employee commitment and reduce turnover intention in higher education institutions. The study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on leadership and employee retention by providing empirical evidence on the direct, mediating, and moderating relationships among the study variables. The findings also offer practical insights for institutional administrators and policymakers seeking to strengthen workforce stability through effective leadership and ethical organizational practices.

KEYWORDS: - Altruistic leadership; Organizational cynicism; Caring ethical climate; Turnover intention; Higher education institutions.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Employee turnover intention has become one of the most critical challenges confronting organizations worldwide because of its detrimental effects on organizational performance, workforce stability, and long-term sustainability. Within higher education institutions, retaining experienced academic and non-academic staff is essential for maintaining teaching quality, research productivity, and effective administrative service delivery (Ramalho Luz et al., 2018). However, universities, particularly in developing countries, increasingly face employee retention

challenges resulting from changing workforce expectations, increased labour mobility, economic uncertainty, and competition for highly skilled professionals (Hom et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2018). These challenges are particularly relevant to the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), whose open and distance learning model depends on a committed workforce capable of delivering quality education across geographically dispersed study centers. Turnover intention, defined as an employee's conscious willingness to leave an organization, is widely recognized as the strongest predictor of actual employee turnover (Mobley, 1977; Tett & Meyer, 1993). High turnover intention increases recruitment and training costs, disrupts institutional knowledge, lowers employee morale, and ultimately undermines organizational effectiveness (Park & Min, 2020). Consequently, identifying organizational factors that reduce employees' turnover intention has become an important research priority for scholars and university administrators.

Among the organizational factors associated with employee retention, leadership has consistently emerged as one of the most influential. Recent leadership literature suggests that leaders who demonstrate genuine concern for employees' welfare, compassion, empathy, integrity, and selfless behaviour cultivate positive work environments that enhance trust, organizational commitment, and employee loyalty (Eva et al., 2019; Sendjaya et al., 2019). Empirical evidence further indicates that positive leadership behaviours significantly reduce employees' intentions to leave by fostering supportive leader employee relationships and strengthening employees' emotional attachment to their organizations (Hoch et al., 2018; Inam et al., 2021). Despite these findings, research examining the direct influence of altruistic leadership on turnover intention remains limited, as previous studies have focused predominantly on transformational, ethical, authentic, and servant leadership styles. Furthermore, existing evidence has largely been generated from private-sector organizations and developed economies, leaving limited empirical understanding of altruistic leadership within public higher education institutions in developing countries such as Nigeria.

Although altruistic leadership is expected to reduce employees' turnover intention, this relationship is unlikely to operate solely through a direct effect. Previous studies suggest that leadership behaviours shape employees' psychological attitudes, which subsequently influence behavioural outcomes. One such psychological mechanism is organizational cynicism, which reflects employees' negative beliefs, emotional reactions, and distrust toward their organizations arising from perceived inconsistencies between organizational values and managerial actions (Dean et al., 1998). Employees exhibiting higher levels of organizational cynicism are more likely to become dissatisfied, emotionally detached, and willing to leave their organizations (Chiaburu et al., 2013; Iqbal et al., 2022). Empirical evidence indicates that organizational cynicism significantly mediates the relationship between leadership behaviours and turnover intention by explaining how positive leadership reduces employees' intentions to leave through

lowering cynical attitudes (Kim & Kim, 2024; Li et al., 2023). In addition, leadership effectiveness may depend on the ethical environment in which it is practiced. A caring ethical climate, characterized by organizational concern for employees' welfare and collective well-being, has been found to strengthen the beneficial effects of leadership on employee attitudes and retention by reinforcing trust, fairness, and organizational support (Newman et al., 2020; Babalola et al., 2022).

Despite increasing scholarly attention to leadership and employee retention, limited empirical research has simultaneously examined the direct effect of altruistic leadership on turnover intention, the mediating role of organizational cynicism, and the moderating role of caring ethical climate within a unified framework, particularly in the context of Nigerian higher education institutions. Existing studies have generally investigated these variables independently, providing limited understanding of the psychological mechanisms and organizational conditions through which altruistic leadership influences employees' turnover intention (Iqbal et al., 2022; Newman et al., 2020). Addressing this gap, the present study investigates the effect of altruistic leadership on turnover intention among employees of the National Open University of Nigeria, examines the mediating role of organizational cynicism, and determines whether caring ethical climate moderates this relationship. By integrating leadership behaviour, employees' psychological responses, and organizational ethical context into a single model, this study contributes to the employee retention literature and provides practical insights for university administrators seeking to enhance workforce stability and organizational effectiveness.

2.0 UNDERPINNING THEORY

Social Exchange Theory (SET), developed by Homans (1958) and extended by Blau (1964), provides the theoretical foundation for this study by explaining that relationships between employees and organizations are based on reciprocal exchanges of benefits and obligations. The theory suggests that when leaders demonstrate altruistic behaviors, such as genuine concern, support, empathy, and selflessness, employees perceive high levels of organizational care and are motivated to reciprocate with positive attitudes and behaviors, including reduced turnover intention. Conversely, unfavorable workplace experiences may foster organizational cynicism, characterized by distrust and negative perceptions of the organization, which increases employees' intentions to leave. Furthermore, a caring ethical climate strengthens these positive exchange relationships by reinforcing trust, fairness, and mutual concern, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of altruistic leadership in reducing turnover intention. Thus, Social Exchange Theory provides a comprehensive explanation for the direct relationship between altruistic leadership and turnover intention, the mediating role of organizational cynicism, and the moderating influence of caring ethical climate (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Homans, 1958).

2.1 Altruistic leadership and Turnover intention

Turnover intention is widely recognized as the strongest predictor of actual employee turnover and poses significant challenges to organizational effectiveness through increased recruitment costs, loss of experienced personnel, and reduced productivity (Hur& Abner, 2024; Hur& Abner, 2023; Liu & Wong, 2023). Consequently, researchers have examined altruistic leadership as a mechanism for reducing employees' intentions to leave. Empirical evidence consistently indicates that altruistic leadership is significantly and negatively associated with turnover intention because leaders who demonstrate selflessness, empathy, fairness, and genuine concern for employees' well-being foster supportive work environments that enhance employees' attachment to the organization (Dinler&Akbolat, 2024; Denizli&Kınış, 2025; Tian, 2025). Empirical studies consistently found that altruistic leadership significantly reduces turnover intentions among healthcare staff (Dinler&Akbolat, 2024). Similarly, Denizli and Kınış (2025) observed that higher perceived leadership altruism directly curtails intentions to leave while boosting individual performance. Even though positive leadership may sometimes work indirectly through intermediate factors such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, or stress alleviation (Hur& Abner, 2023; Liu & Wong, 2023), the core empirical evidence demonstrates a clear, direct protective effect against employee exit. Consequently, this study posits:

H1: Altruistic leadership has a significant positive relationship with employees' turnover intention.

2.2 Organizational cynicism and turnover intentions

Organizational cynicism refers to employees' negative attitudes toward their organization, characterized by beliefs that the organization lacks integrity, accompanied by feelings of distrust, disappointment, and frustration (Dean et al., 1998). When employees perceive a discrepancy between organizational promises and actual practices, they are more likely to develop cynical attitudes that weaken their emotional attachment and commitment to the organization. Drawing on Social Exchange Theory, employees who perceive unfair treatment, broken promises, or inadequate organizational support often reciprocate with negative attitudes and withdrawal behaviors, including intentions to leave the organization (Cropanzano& Mitchell, 2005). Consequently, organizational cynicism reduces employees' willingness to contribute to organizational goals and increases their desire to seek alternative employment opportunities.

Empirical studies consistently demonstrate that organizational cynicism is a significant predictor of turnover intention. Chiaburu et al. (2013), through a meta-analysis, found that cynical employees are more likely to exhibit withdrawal behaviors and intentions to quit. Similarly, Kim

et al. (2019) reported that organizational cynicism increases turnover intention by diminishing employees' trust and commitment, while Khan et al. (2021) found that cynical attitudes significantly contribute to employees' intentions to leave their organizations. More recent studies by Akram et al. (2023) and Li et al. (2024) further confirmed that organizational cynicism promotes turnover intention by weakening employees' psychological attachment and increasing dissatisfaction with organizational practices. Based on these theoretical and empirical findings, it is proposed that:

H2: Organizational cynicism has a significant positive relationship with turnover intention.

2.3 Altruistic Leadership and Organizational Cynicism

Existing empirical evidence consistently suggests that altruistic leadership is negatively associated with organizational cynicism. Leaders who demonstrate compassion, integrity, selflessness, and genuine concern for employees' well-being create a supportive work environment that fosters trust, fairness, and transparency, thereby reducing employees' negative perceptions of organizational intentions (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Eva et al., 2019). These leadership behaviours strengthen employees' confidence in the organization, enhance positive leader–employee relationships, and minimize feelings of distrust and disappointment that often give rise to cynical attitudes (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Hoch et al., 2018). Consequently, employees are less likely to develop cynical beliefs and negative attitudes toward their organization, resulting in lower levels of organizational cynicism (Bedi et al., 2016).

Several empirical studies have confirmed that positive leadership styles, including altruistic, ethical, authentic, and servant leadership, significantly reduce organizational cynicism by promoting organizational trust, fairness, and supportive workplace relationships (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Brown & Treviño, 2006; Bedi et al., 2016; Eva et al., 2019; Hoch et al., 2018). More specifically, Wnuk (2026) found that altruistic leadership was a significant negative predictor of organizational cynicism, indicating that employees who perceive higher levels of altruistic leadership exhibit lower levels of cynical attitudes toward their organization. These findings suggest that organizations can minimize employees' cynical attitudes by cultivating leaders who consistently demonstrate empathy, integrity, fairness, and genuine concern for employee welfare.

Based on the foregoing empirical evidence, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H3: Altruistic leadership has a significant positive relationship with organizational cynicism.

2.4 Caring Ethical Climate Moderate the relationship between Altruistic Leadership and Turnover Intention

A growing body of empirical research suggests that the effectiveness of leadership behaviors depends on the organizational context in which they are exercised. In particular, a caring ethical climate has been identified as an important boundary condition that strengthens the positive effects of leadership on employee attitudes and behaviors. Studies have shown that a caring ethical climate significantly moderates the relationship between positive leadership styles and turnover intention by reinforcing perceptions of fairness, trust, and organizational support, thereby reducing employees' intentions to leave the organization (Shafique et al., 2023; Babalola et al., 2022; Newman et al., 2020). Conversely, when the caring ethical climate is weak, the beneficial influence of leadership on employee retention tends to diminish. These findings indicate that a caring ethical climate significantly conditions the extent to which leadership behaviors influence turnover intention.

Consistent with these findings, this study proposes that a caring ethical climate moderates the relationship between altruistic leadership and turnover intention. Specifically, the negative effect of altruistic leadership on turnover intention is expected to be stronger when employees perceive a high caring ethical climate than when such a climate is weak. Thus, a caring ethical climate enhances the effectiveness of altruistic leadership in reducing employees' intentions to leave the organization.

H4: Caring ethical climate significantly moderates the relationship between altruistic leadership and turnover intention, such that the negative relationship is stronger under a high caring ethical climate.

2.5 Organizational cynicism Mediate the relationship between Altruistic Leadership and Turnover Intention

Organizational cynicism has been widely recognized as an important mechanism through which leadership behaviors influence employees' work outcomes. Previous empirical studies suggest that positive leadership behaviors reduce employees' cynical attitudes toward the organization, which subsequently decreases their intention to leave (Nazir et al., 2022; Li et al., 2023; Kim & Kim, 2024). The mediating role of organizational cynicism has been found to be statistically significant in explaining the relationship between leadership and turnover intention, indicating that leadership influences employees' turnover decisions not only directly but also indirectly through its effect on employees' cynical perceptions of the organization. These findings imply that reducing organizational cynicism is a critical pathway through which effective leadership can enhance employee retention. Consistent with these empirical findings, this study proposes that organizational cynicism mediates the relationship between altruistic leadership and turnover intention. Employees who perceive higher levels of altruistic leadership are expected to exhibit lower organizational cynicism, which in turn reduces their turnover intention. Therefore,

organizational cynicism is expected to transmit the influence of altruistic leadership on employees' intention to leave the organization.

H5: Organizational cynicism significantly mediates the relationship between altruistic leadership and turnover intention.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative cross-sectional survey design to examine the relationships among altruistic leadership, organizational cynicism, caring ethical climate, and turnover intention among lecturers in the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed with Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to test the proposed hypotheses (Hair et al., 2022; Saunders et al., 2019).

3.2 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The study population comprised 3,090 lecturers across the 78 study centres of the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) (NOUN, 2022). Following Krejcie and Morgan (1970), a minimum sample size of 342 was determined and doubled to 684 to improve the response rate for the online survey (Hair et al., 2010). A convenience sampling technique was employed, and data were collected through online questionnaires distributed via institutional email and professional WhatsApp platforms (Etikan et al., 2016; Rahman, 2023).

3.3 Variable Measurement

All constructs were measured using previously validated scales on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Altruistic leadership was measured with four items adapted from the altruism dimension of the Servant Leadership Questionnaire developed by Barbuto and Wheeler (2006). Organizational cynicism was assessed using nine items adapted from the Organizational Cynicism Scale developed by Brandes et al. (1999) and Eaton and Struthers (2002). Caring ethical climate was measured with four items drawn from the Ethical Work Climate Questionnaire (EWCQ) developed by Victor and Cullen (1988). Turnover intention was measured using the three-item scale developed by Yücel (2012). The scales were adopted following their application in Wnuk (2026) and were selected because of their established reliability and validity in organizational research.

3.4 Evaluation of the PLS-SEM results

This study utilized a two-step modeling technique in analyzing the data collected from the respondents. Firstly, is the assessment of outer model and second is the assessment of a structural model following the procedures from Hair et al. (2014), and Henseler et al. (2009).

3.5 Assessment of the measurement model

The measurement model shows the associations between the latent variables and the measures of each original construct. To evaluate the PLS path models, this study followed the recommendations put forth by Hair et al. (2014). The recommendation entails evaluation of construct validity, convergent validity and discriminant validity as described in the following sections.

3.6 Construct Reliability and Validity

The assessment of the measurement model is a critical step in Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) because it determines whether the measurement items reliably and validly represent their respective latent constructs before evaluating the structural relationships among the constructs. According to Hair et al. (2022), the evaluation of reflective measurement models consists of four major criteria: indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Indicator reliability is assessed using outer loadings, while internal consistency reliability is evaluated using Cronbach's alpha (α) and Composite Reliability (CR). Convergent validity is established through the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Satisfying these measurement criteria ensures that the latent constructs are measured accurately and consistently, thereby increasing confidence in the subsequent structural model results (Hair et al., 2022; Henseler et al., 2015).

The first stage of the measurement model assessment involves examining the **outer loadings** of the measurement items. Outer loadings indicate the strength of the relationship between an observed indicator and its underlying latent construct. Higher outer loading values imply that the indicator contributes substantially to explaining the construct it is intended to measure. Hair et al. (2022) recommend that outer loadings should preferably be 0.708 or higher, although indicators with loadings between 0.40 and 0.70 may be retained if their removal does not improve the Composite Reliability or Average Variance Extracted of the construct. As presented in Table 2, all retained indicators exhibited acceptable outer loading values, with the majority exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70. This finding demonstrates satisfactory indicator reliability, indicating that each observed variable adequately represents its corresponding latent construct.

The second criterion examined is Cronbach's alpha (α), which measures the internal consistency reliability of the indicators used to measure a latent construct. Cronbach's alpha evaluates the extent to which all indicators consistently measure the same underlying concept by estimating

the average correlation among the items. The Cronbach's alpha can be calculated using a given formula as:

$$\alpha = \frac{K}{K-1} \left(1 - \frac{\sum S_i^2}{S_t^2} \right)$$

Where k is the number of items, S_i^2 is the variance of the ith item and S_t^2 is the variance of the total score formed by summing all the items. If the items are not simply added to make the score, but first multiplied by weighting coefficients, we multiply the item by its coefficient before calculating the variance S_i^2 . Clearly, we must have at least two items that is $k > 1$, or α will be undefined. The formula shows that Cronbach's alpha compares the total variance of all measurement items with the variance of the combined construct score. A higher alpha coefficient indicates greater internal consistency among the indicators. Hair et al. (2022) recommend a minimum value of 0.70, while values between 0.80 and 0.90 indicate good reliability, and values above 0.90 suggest excellent internal consistency. However, extremely high values (greater than 0.95) may indicate redundancy among measurement items (Hair et al., 2022). As reported in Table 2, all constructs recorded Cronbach's alpha values above the recommended threshold of 0.70, confirming that the measurement items consistently measure their intended constructs.

Since Cronbach's alpha assumes that all indicators contribute equally to the construct, researchers in PLS-SEM recommend Composite Reliability (CR) as a more robust measure of internal consistency reliability because it incorporates the actual standardized outer loadings of the indicators (Hair et al., 2022; Henseler et al., 2009). Composite Reliability is computed using the following equation:

$$CR = \frac{(\sum_i \lambda_{ij})^2}{(\sum_i \lambda_{ij})^2 + \sum_i var(\epsilon_{ij})}$$

Where

λ_i = loadings indicator I of a latent variable

ϵ_i = Measurement error of indicator I

J = flow index across all reflective measurement model

The formula demonstrates that Composite Reliability estimates the proportion of variance in the construct that is attributable to the true score relative to measurement error. Unlike Cronbach's alpha, CR assigns greater weight to indicators with stronger loadings; making it a more appropriate reliability measure in PLS-SEM. Hair et al. (2022) recommend that Composite Reliability values should range between 0.70 and 0.95. Values below 0.70 indicate insufficient internal consistency, whereas values exceeding 0.95 may suggest redundancy among indicators.

The results presented in Table 2 show that all constructs achieved Composite Reliability values above 0.70, demonstrating satisfactory internal consistency reliability and confirming that the indicators jointly provide reliable measures of their respective latent constructs. On the other hand, the construct validity is measured by assessing the average variance extracted (AVE) of each latent construct as recommended by Fornell & Larcker (1981). The AVE value is calculated as the mean of the squared loadings for all indicators associated with a construct as follows:

$$AVE_{\epsilon_j} = \frac{\sum_{k=1}^{K_j} \lambda_{jk}^2}{\sum_{k=1}^{K_j} \lambda_{jk}^2 + \theta_{jk}}$$

Where

AVE_{ϵ_j} = Average Variance Extracted

λ_{jk}^2 = Sum of standardized loadings square

θ_{jk} = Error variance of the k^{th} indicator ($k = 1, \dots, K_j$)

The formula indicates that AVE is obtained by averaging the squared standardized loadings of all indicators associated with a construct. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), an AVE value of 0.50 or greater indicates adequate convergent validity because the construct explains at least 50% of the variance in its indicators, while the remaining variance is attributed to measurement error. Hair et al. (2022) reaffirm that AVE values above 0.50 provide sufficient evidence that the indicators converge in measuring the same underlying construct. As shown in Table 2, all constructs recorded AVE values above the recommended threshold of 0.50, confirming that the measurement items adequately converge in representing their respective constructs.

Overall, the results reported in Table 2 provide strong evidence that the measurement model satisfies the recommended criteria for reliability and convergent validity. Specifically, the outer loadings demonstrate satisfactory indicator reliability, the Cronbach's alpha values confirm acceptable internal consistency among the measurement items, the Composite Reliability values indicate robust construct reliability, and the Average Variance Extracted values establish adequate convergent validity. These findings are consistent with the recommendations of Fornell and Larcker (1981), Henseler et al. (2009), Hair et al. (2019), and Hair et al. (2022), thereby confirming that the measurement model is reliable and valid for subsequent structural model assessment.

Table 2 Convergent validity

Latent Constructs and Items	Standard Loadings	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability (ρ_c)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Turnover Intention		0.950	0.960	0.799

TI01	0.907			
TI02	0.901			
TI03	0.896			
TI04	0.916			
TI05	0.887			
TI06	0.855			
Altruistic Leadership		0.928	0.944	0.738
AL01	0.762			
AL02	0.813			
AL03	0.877			
AL04	0.888			
AL05	0.911			
AL06	0.892			
Organizational Cynicism		0.920	0.933	0.636
OC01	0.758			
OC03	0.785			
OC04	0.783			
OC05	0.873			
OC06	0.814			
OC07	0.825			
OC08	0.804			
OC09	0.732			
Caring Ethical Climate		0.951	0.962	0.835
CEC04	0.916			
CEC05	0.929			
CEC06	0.918			
CEC07	0.909			
CEC08	0.897			

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell–Larcker criterion (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2022). According to this criterion, discriminant validity is established when the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct exceeds its correlations with other constructs. As shown in Table 3, the square root of the AVE was greater than the corresponding inter-construct correlations, confirming satisfactory discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). These results indicate that the measurement model achieved adequate indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity, demonstrating its suitability for structural model assessment (Hair et al., 2022).

Table 3 : Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	Altruistic Leadership	Caring Ethical Climate	Organizational Cynicism	Turnover Intention
Altruistic Leadership	0.859			
Caring Ethical Climate	0.738	0.914		
Organizational Cynicism	0.822	0.721	0.798	
Turnover Intention	0.735	0.591	0.755	0.894

Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

Similarly, the discriminant validity was assessed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations, as shown in Table 3. The HTMT ratio represents the average of correlations between different traits measured by different methods (heterotrait-heteromethod) in relation to the average of correlations for the same trait measured by different methods (monotrait-heteromethod). Monotrait-heteromethod correlations are derived from indicators that assess the same constructs, while heterotrait-heteromethod correlations are obtained from indicators that evaluate different constructs. The formula for calculating HTMT is provided as follows:

$$HTMT_{IJ} =$$

$$\frac{1}{K_i K_j} \sum_{g=1}^{K_i} \sum_{h=1}^{K_i} r_{ig,hj} \div \left(\frac{2}{K_i(K_i-1)} \cdot \sum_{g=1}^{K_i-1} \sum_{h=g+1}^{K_i} r_{ig,ih} \cdot \frac{2}{K_j(K_j-1)} \cdot \sum_{g=1}^{K_j-1} \sum_{h=g+1}^{K_j} r_{jg,jh} \right)^{1/2}$$

Thus, HTMT values fell within the confidence intervals for both the lower and upper bounds, confirming the presence of discriminant validity.

Table 4 Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	Altruistic Leadership	Caring Ethical Climate	Organizational Cynicism	Turnover Intention
Altruistic Leadership				
Caring Ethical Climate	0.784			
Organizational Cynicism	0.859	0.740		
Turnover Intention	0.780	0.616	0.774	

Structural Model Evaluation

After establishing the reliability and validity of the measurement model, the structural model was evaluated using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM 3.0) approach. The structural model assessment focused on examining the hypothesized relationships

among the latent constructs through the PLS algorithm and the bootstrapping procedure. According to Hair et al. (2022), structural model evaluation in PLS-SEM primarily involves assessing the coefficient of determination (R^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), and the significance of the structural path coefficients. These indicators provide evidence of the model's predictive capability and the strength of the proposed relationships.

Firstly, the coefficient of determination (R^2) was used to assess the explanatory power of the structural model by measuring the proportion of variance in each endogenous construct explained by its predictor variables. According to Hair et al. (2022), higher R^2 values indicate greater explanatory power, while Chin (1998) classified R^2 values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 as substantial, moderate, and weak, respectively. The results indicate that Organizational Cynicism recorded an R^2 value of 0.676, implying that 67.6% of its variance is explained by Altruistic Leadership, while the remaining 32.4% is due to other factors outside the model. Similarly, Turnover Intention recorded an R^2 value of 0.610, indicating that 61.0% of its variance is jointly explained by Altruistic Leadership, Organizational Cynicism, and Caring Ethical Climate, with 39.0% explained by other variables. Based on the guidelines of Chin (1998) and Hair et al. (2022), both R^2 values demonstrate moderate explanatory power, indicating that the proposed structural model adequately explains the endogenous constructs.

The second stage of the structural model assessment involved examining the significance and strength of the hypothesized relationships through the estimation of standardized path coefficients. Following the recommendations of Hair et al. (2022), the significance of the structural paths was assessed using the bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples, which provides robust estimates of standard errors, t-values, confidence intervals, and p-values. The standardized path coefficients indicate both the direction and magnitude of the relationships among the latent constructs, while the bootstrapping results determine whether the proposed hypotheses are statistically supported. The results of the structural model analysis, including the path coefficients and hypothesis testing outcomes, are presented in figure 2 and **Table 4**.

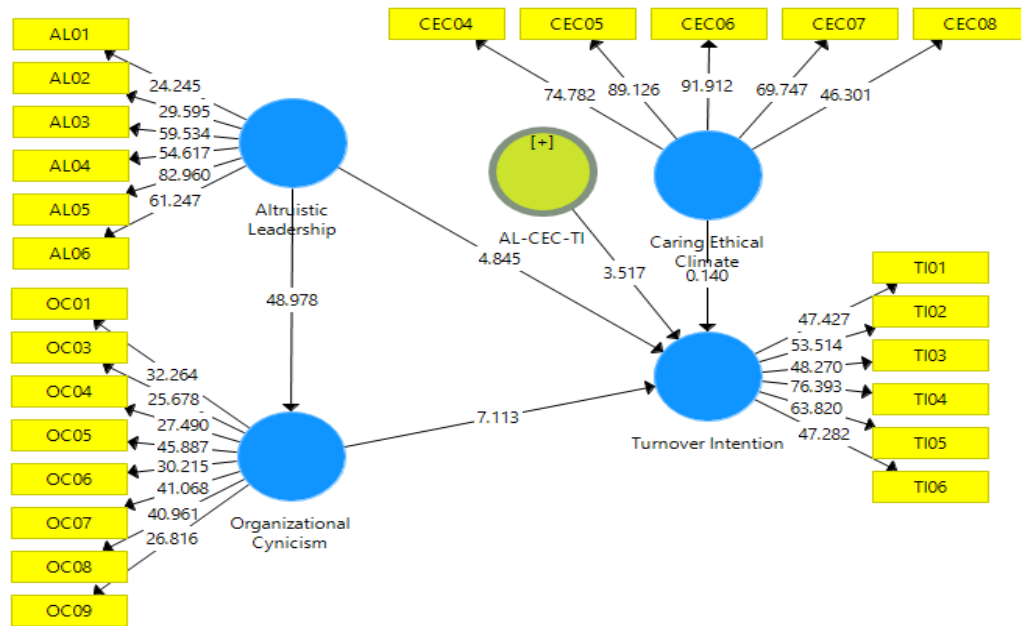


Figure 2 Structural Model

Table 4 presents the results of the structural model assessment, including the direct, mediating, and moderating relationships among altruistic leadership (AL), organizational cynicism (OC), caring ethical climate (CEC), and turnover intention (TI).

The structural model results indicate that all five hypotheses were **supported**, as each relationship was statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). Specifically, **H1** revealed that altruistic leadership has a significant positive effect on turnover intention ($\beta = 0.363$, $t = 4.845$), supporting the hypothesis. **H2** also showed a significant positive relationship between organizational cynicism and turnover intention ($\beta = 0.458$, $t = 7.113$), indicating that organizational cynicism is a strong predictor of employees' turnover intention. Furthermore, **H3** was supported, with altruistic leadership demonstrating a strong and significant positive effect on organizational cynicism ($\beta = 0.823$, $t = 48.978$), suggesting that changes in altruistic leadership are strongly associated with changes in organizational cynicism.

Regarding the moderating relationship, H4 was supported, as the interaction effect between Altruistic Leadership and Caring Ethical Climate on Turnover Intention was statistically significant and negative ($\beta = -0.054$, $t = 3.517$, $p < .001$). The negative interaction coefficient indicates that Caring Ethical Climate has a weak moderating relationship between Altruistic Leadership and Turnover Intention. This suggests that as the level of caring ethical climate increases, the influence of altruistic leadership on turnover intention becomes weaker. Furthermore, H5 was supported, as Organizational Cynicism significantly mediated the relationship between Altruistic Leadership and Turnover Intention ($\beta = 0.377$, $t = 7.134$, $p <$

.001). Overall, the findings confirm that altruistic leadership, organizational cynicism, and caring ethical climate are significant determinants of turnover intention, with organizational cynicism exerting the strongest direct effect on turnover intention among the hypothesized relationships.

Table 5 Path coefficients

Hypothesis	Relationship	Mean	Standard Deviation	T-Value	P-Value	Decision
H1	AL→TI	0.363	0.075	4.845	0.000	Supported
H2	OC→TI	0.458	0.065	7.113	0.000	Supported
H3	AL→OC	0.823	0.017	48.978	0.000	Supported
H4	AL→CEC→TI	-0.054	0.014	3.517	0.000	Supported
H5	AL→OC→TI	0.377	0.053	7.134	0.000	Supported

The Moderating Effect

The interaction plot supports the moderation results by showing that Altruistic Leadership significantly moderates the relationship between Caring Ethical Climate and Turnover Intention. Although all three interaction lines have positive slopes, the line representing a high caring ethical climate (+1 SD) is flatter than those for the mean and low levels, indicating that a stronger caring ethical climate weakens the effect of altruistic leadership on turnover intention. This finding is consistent with the significant negative interaction effect ($\beta = -0.054$, $t = 3.517$, $p < .001$), suggesting that a caring ethical climate serves as a buffering mechanism, thereby reducing employees' turnover intention. Therefore, the moderation hypothesis is supported (Hair et al., 2017).

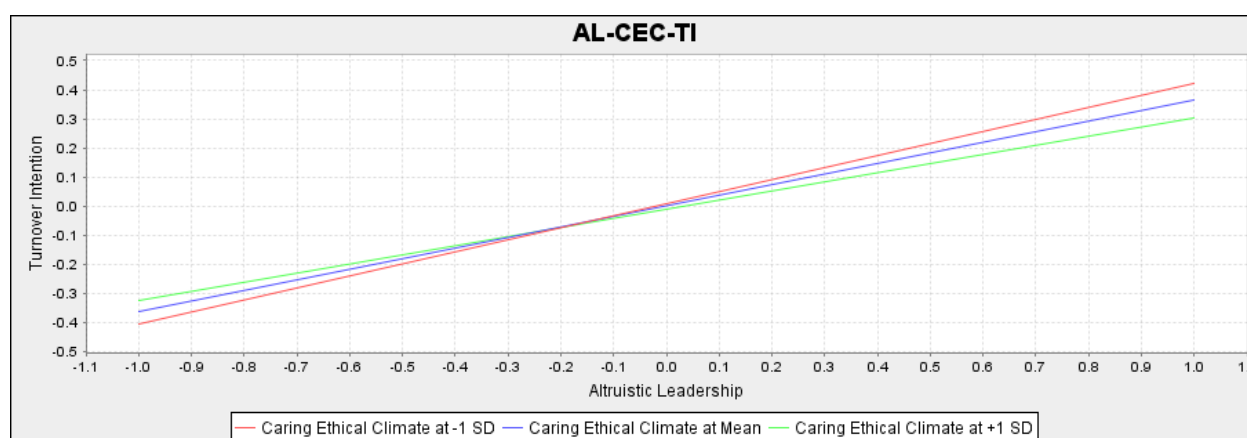


Figure 2 Simple Slope Analysis

Evaluation of Effect Size (f^2)

The Effect size (f^2) is used in evaluating the relative impact of one construct (variables) in terms of its predictive relevance. The effect size for each path model can be determined by calculating Cohen's f^2 . The f^2 is estimated by recording the changes in coefficient of determination R^2 when a specific construct (variable) is deleted from the model. The f^2 is calculated using two PLS path models. The first PLS path model should be the full model as defined by the hypotheses of the study, yielding the R^2 of the full model called $R^2_{Included}$. The second path model should be identical with the first path model but with an eliminated construct generating a new R^2 from the reduced model called $R^2_{Excluded}$ as expressed in the following formula (Chin, 1998). Based on the value of f^2 , the effect size of the omitted variable for a particular endogenous construct (dependent variable) can be determined. If the independent variable strongly contributes to explaining the dependent variable, the difference between $R^2_{Included}$ and $R^2_{Excluded}$ will be leading to a high F^2 value.

$$\text{Effect Size } (f^2) = \frac{R^2_{Included} - R^2_{Excluded}}{1 - R^2_{Included}}$$

Cohen (1988) further describes f^2 as weak, moderate and has strong effects, respectively. This is expressed as follows:

$0.02 \leq f^2 < 0.15$ = Weak effect

$0.15 \leq f^2 < 0.35$ = Moderate effect

$f^2 \geq 0.35$ = Strong effect

This study, therefore, shows the f^2 of the latent variables of the structural model as indicated in Table 4.6. The result shows the f^2 of Altruistic Leadership and Organizational Cynicism as 0.072 and 0.390, respectively.

Table 6: Effect Sizes of Using Cohen's (1988)

	R-Squared (R2)	Included	Excluded	F2	Effect Size
1	Altruistic Leadership	0.610	0.582	0.072	Weak Effect
2	Organizational Cynicism	0.676	0.549	0.390	Strong Effect

Evaluation of Predictive Relevance

The coefficient of determination (R^2) is widely used to assess the predictive power of structural models in PLS-SEM (Hair et al., 2012; Henseler et al., 2011; Sarstedt et al., 2013); however, it provides limited information regarding out-of-sample prediction (Sarstedt et al., 2014). Consequently, Stone-Geisser's Q^2 is employed as a measure of predictive relevance, indicating the extent to which the model and its parameter estimates can accurately reconstruct the observed

data (Geisser, 1974, 1975; Stone, 1974; Fornell & Cha, 1994). Q^2 is commonly regarded as an alternative to goodness-of-fit in PLS-SEM and is estimated using the blindfolding procedure, where portions of the data are systematically omitted and predicted using the remaining observations (Chin, 1998, 2010; Duarte & Raposo, 2010; Esposito Vinzi et al., 2010). The predictive relevance of the model is evaluated through cross-validated communality and cross-validated redundancy, with a Q^2 value greater than zero ($Q^2 > 0$) indicating that the structural model has predictive relevance, whereas Q^2 values below zero ($Q^2 < 0$) suggest a lack of predictive capability (Tenenhaus et al., 2005; Esposito Vinzi et al., 2010) as follows:

$$\text{Stone – Geisser test criterion } Q_j^2 = 1 - \frac{\sum_k E_{jk}}{\sum_k O_{jk}}$$

Where: Q_j^2 = Stone – Geisser test Criterion

E_{jk} = Squares of the predicting error

O_{jk} = Squares of the trivial prediction error

On the other hand, cross-validated redundancy (Q^2) is the second Stone-Geisser's prediction technique which is used for assessing the predictive relevance of the inner model. The inner model or structural model represents the relationships between the evaluated constructs or variables (Hair et al., 2014). The Cross-validated redundancy (Q^2) assesses the predictive relevance of the inner model using a sample re-use technique excludes a part of the data matrix, calculates the model parameters and predicts the omitted part using the estimates. The smaller the difference between the original and predicted values, the greater the Q^2 and thus the model's predictive accuracy (Hair et al., 2014). Henseler et al. (2009) have proposed that if the value of cross-validated redundancy is $Q^2 > 0$ for particular endogenous construct it indicates that the path models have predictive relevance. On the contrary, if it is $Q^2 < 0$, the construct in the inner model lacks predictive relevance. However, Rigdon (2014) and Sarstedt et al. (2014) did not say anything about the quality of the prediction. Cross-validated redundancy (Q^2) can be assessed using the following statistical formula:

$$Q_j^2 = 1 - \frac{\sum_G SSE_{jG}}{\sum_G SSO_{jG}}$$

Where: Q_j^2 = Cross-validated redundancy

$\sum_G SSE_{jG}$ = Sum of squares of prediction errors for Block J

$\sum_G SSO_{jG}$ = Sum of squares of original data observations for Block J

Table 4.25 presents the cross-validated redundancy of the research models

Table 6: *Constructs Cross-Validated Redundancy of the Research Models*

	SSO	SSE	Q ² (=1-SSE/SSO)
Altruistic Leadership	1746.000	1746.000	
Caring Ethical Climate	1455.000	1455.000	
Organizational Cynicism	2328.000	1399.246	0.399
Turnover Intention	1746.000	910.574	0.478

To evaluate the predictive relevance of the structural model in this study, a blindfolding procedure was executed to obtain the Stone-Geisser (Q^2) values for the endogenous constructs. According to Hair et al. (2014), a Q^2 value greater than zero indicates that the model possesses predictive relevance for a specific reflective dependent variable, with values above 0.25 and 0.50 representing medium and large predictive relevance, respectively. As expected, the exogenous constructs—Altruistic Leadership and Caring Ethical Climate—yielded values of 0.000, as they are not predicted by other variables in the framework. Crucially, the Q^2 values for the model's endogenous variables were both substantially above zero, with Organizational Cynicism ($Q^2 = 0.399$) showing a moderate-to-strong predictive effect and Turnover Intention ($Q^2 = 0.478$) approaching a large predictive effect. Taken together, these results provide robust evidence that the structural model exhibits a high degree of predictive relevance for the key target outcomes.

Assessment of Model Fit

The model fit was assessed using the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), Squared Euclidean Distance (d_ULS), Geodesic Distance (d_G), Chi-square (χ^2), and Normed Fit Index (NFI). According to Hair et al. (2022), the SRMR is the most widely reported global model fit index in PLS-SEM, with values below 0.08 indicating a good model fit. As shown in Table X, the SRMR values of 0.102 (Saturated Model) and 0.104 (Estimated Model) are slightly above the recommended threshold, indicating a marginally acceptable model fit supporting its suitability for subsequent structural model analysis.

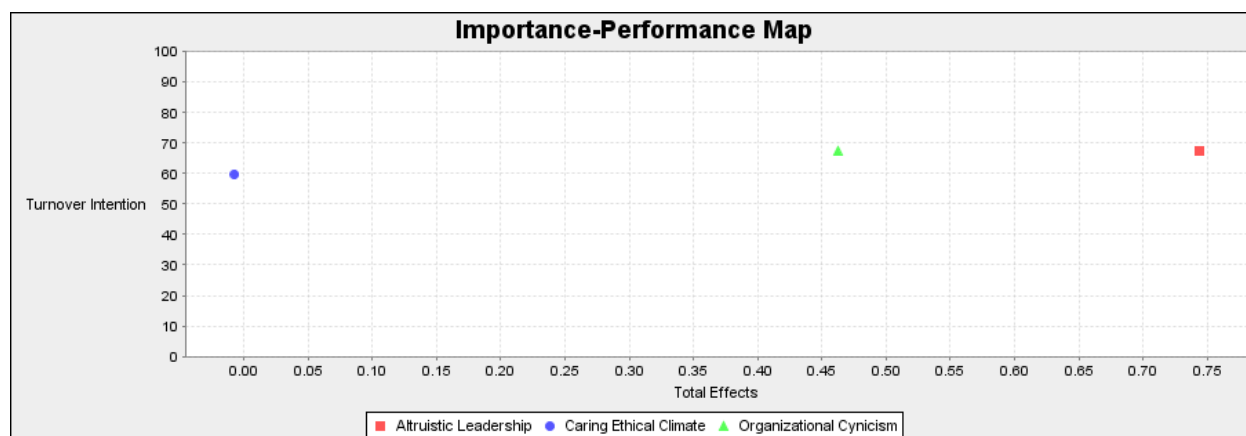
Table 7 Model Fit

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.102	0.104
d_ULS	3.352	3.525
d_G	1.357	1.384
Chi-Square	2050.992	2068.687
NFI	0.759	0.757

Assessment of Importance–Performance Matrix Analysis (IPMA)

Importance Performance Matrix Analysis (IPMA) is an advanced analytical technique in Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) that extends the interpretation of structural model results beyond the standard path coefficients. According to Hair et al. (2017), IPMA combines the importance (total effects) of each latent construct with its performance (average latent variable scores), thereby providing a more comprehensive basis for interpreting the results. This approach enables researchers and practitioners to identify constructs that exert a strong influence on the target variable while simultaneously evaluating their current performance levels. Consequently, IPMA serves as a valuable decision-support tool by highlighting priority areas for managerial intervention and resource allocation. For instance, constructs that exhibit high importance but relatively low performance indicate aspects requiring immediate improvement, as enhancing these areas is likely to produce the greatest impact on the desired outcome (Hair et al., 2017; Ringle&Sarstedt, 2016).

The result of the Importance Performance Matrix Analysis (IPMA) indicate that **Organizational Cynicism** has the highest importance value (0.460), making it the most influential determinant of turnover intention and the highest priority for managerial intervention. **Altruistic Leadership** recorded the second-highest importance value (0.363) and the highest performance score (82.2%), suggesting that while employees perceive altruistic leadership practices to be well implemented, further improvements could still contribute to reducing turnover intention. In contrast, **Caring Ethical Climate** exhibited a negligible importance value (–0.009), indicating that it has little direct influence on turnover intention in the present study. Overall, the IPMA findings suggest that organizational efforts should primarily focus on reducing organizational cynicism while strengthening altruistic leadership practices, as these constructs offer the greatest potential for lowering employees' turnover intentions (Hair et al., 2017; Ringle&Sarstedt, 2016).



4.0 DISCUSSION

This study examined the impact of altruistic leadership on turnover intention, with organizational cynicism serving as a mediator and caring ethical climate as a moderator. The findings confirmed that altruistic leadership, organizational cynicism, and caring ethical climate significantly influence employees' turnover intention. Specifically, **H1** revealed that altruistic leadership significantly influences turnover intention, suggesting that leaders who demonstrate empathy, fairness, and genuine concern for employees' welfare can shape employees' intention to remain with the organization. This finding is consistent with previous studies indicating that supportive and employee-centred leadership enhances job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and employee retention (Eva et al., 2019; Karatepe et al., 2020). **H2** also established that organizational cynicism significantly predicts turnover intention and emerged as the strongest predictor among the direct relationships, implying that employees who develop distrust and negative attitudes toward their organization are more likely to leave, a finding that agrees with earlier studies linking organizational cynicism to withdrawal behaviours and turnover intention (Kim et al., 2023; Durrah et al., 2021). Furthermore, **H3** demonstrated that altruistic leadership has a strong and significant influence on organizational cynicism, indicating that leaders who exhibit compassion, integrity, and selflessness can reduce employees' cynical perceptions of the organization, consistent with previous findings on ethical and servant leadership (Eva et al., 2019; Xu et al., 2022). The finding reinforces the argument that organizations can minimize organizational cynicism by encouraging leadership practices that prioritize employee well-being, ethical conduct, and genuine concern for followers, ultimately creating a more positive and trusting organizational climate.

The findings further showed that **H4** was supported, as caring ethical climate significantly moderated the relationship between altruistic leadership and turnover intention. The negative interaction effect indicates that a caring ethical climate attenuates the strength of the relationship between altruistic leadership and turnover intention, suggesting that a supportive ethical work environment provides an additional mechanism for reducing employees' intentions to leave. This finding is in line with previous studies which reported that ethical work climates promote positive employee attitudes and reduce turnover intention by fostering trust, fairness, and organizational support (Newman et al., 2020; Babalola et al., 2022). In addition, **H5** confirmed that organizational cynicism significantly mediates the relationship between altruistic leadership and turnover intention, implying that altruistic leadership indirectly influences employees' turnover intention through its effect on organizational cynicism. This finding supports earlier evidence that organizational cynicism is an important psychological mechanism linking leadership behaviour with employee retention (Kim et al., 2023; Shah et al., 2022). Overall, the findings highlight the complementary roles of altruistic leadership, organizational cynicism, and

caring ethical climate in explaining turnover intention and suggest that organizations can improve employee retention by strengthening altruistic leadership practices, minimizing organizational cynicism, and fostering a caring ethical climate.

Implications of the Study

This study provides important theoretical and practical implications for leadership and organizational behaviour. The findings demonstrate that altruistic leadership, organizational cynicism, and caring ethical climate are significant determinants of employees' turnover intention, thereby extending the understanding of leadership's role in employee retention. Specifically, the study highlights organizational cynicism as a critical mechanism through which altruistic leadership influences turnover intention, while caring ethical climate strengthens this relationship by serving as a moderating factor. From a managerial perspective, organizations should invest in developing altruistic leadership behaviours characterized by empathy, fairness, and concern for employees' welfare. In addition, management should implement policies that reduce organizational cynicism through transparent communication, equitable treatment, and employee involvement in decision-making while fostering a caring ethical climate that promotes trust, ethical conduct, and mutual support. These initiatives are expected to enhance employee commitment, reduce turnover intention, and improve organizational effectiveness.

Limitations of the Study

Despite its contributions, this study has some limitations. First, the use of a cross-sectional research design limits the ability to establish causal relationships among altruistic leadership, organizational cynicism, caring ethical climate, and turnover intention. Second, the study relied on self-reported questionnaire data, which may be subject to common method bias and respondents' social desirability bias. Third, the findings are based on a specific organizational context, which may limit their generalizability to other industries, sectors, or cultural settings. Therefore, the results should be interpreted with caution when applying them to different organizational environments.

Suggestions for Further Studies

Future studies should employ a longitudinal research design to examine the causal relationships among altruistic leadership, organizational cynicism, caring ethical climate, and turnover intention over time, thereby providing stronger evidence of the direction and stability of these relationships. In addition, future researchers should replicate this study in different industries, organizational settings, and countries to determine whether the observed relationships remain consistent across diverse organizational and cultural contexts, thereby enhancing the generalizability and external validity of the findings.

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