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Authentic Leadership and Its Influence on Organizational Outcomes through Sense of Calling and Job Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT



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This research analyses how Authentic Leadership affects critical organizational outcomes Sense of Calling, Job Satisfaction, and Intention to Leave in social work organizations. This was achieved by conducting a survey and testing the proposed relationships using structural equation modeling (SEM). The results show that Authentic Leadership has a positive effect on employee Sense of Calling and Job Satisfaction, and a negative influence on Turnover Intention. Sense of Calling and Job Satisfaction were found to mediate the relationship between authentic leadership and turnover intention, with Sense of Calling exhibiting a stronger mediation effect. The findings of this study underscore the importance of genuine leadership towards creating a productive work environment that will boost employees' internal drive, happiness and retention. These results offer valuable contributions to the literature on leadership and organization behavior, specifically in understanding the dynamics between transformational leadership, motivation and performance at the workplace, ultimately providing utility to organizations looking to develop leadership programs to target turnover and performance within their organization.

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1. Introduction

High employee turnover remains a significant challenge for organizations worldwide, even more so in stressful fields like social work. Turnover is common among social workers, facing emotional fatigue while often being indifferently engaged, with which the job is more satisfying. Leadership style gets increasingly important to tackle these challenges as recent studies emphasize. One such method is the practice of authentic leadership, defined by the qualities of transparency, value alignment, and personal insight has recently become of interest as an antidote to employee turnover. Lee et al. (2019), Singh et al. (2024) considered authentic leadership as a positive factor in enhancing employee commitment and withdrawal behaviors. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has intensified gaps and uncertainties in the workplace, rendering authentic leadership essential in meeting employees' needs both physically and psychologically, as well as in enhancing organizational outcomes (He, Tran, and Leonidou 2024; Jooss, Conroy, and McDonnell 2022). Additional studies in Mainland China underscore the significance of leadership as a key determinant in shaping employee perceptions and job satisfaction in social service settings (Liu, Han, and Zhang 2022; Zhang et al. 2024). These results lay the ground for investigating the mediating effect of sense of calling and job satisfaction on the relationship between authentic leadership and organizational outcomes.



Although a great deal of research has been conducted on various leadership styles, little is known about how authentic leadership actually influences employee behavior and organizational outcomes. Particularly in the context of social work organizations, turnover intention has been associated with low job satisfaction and the absence of perceived work meaning (Li, Huang, and Chen 2020; Scales and Quincy Brown 2020). But the importance of intrinsic motivators, including a sense of calling, is still underexplored. As per existing literature, employees who have a strong sense of calling tend to show even higher levels of commitment to their organizations (Gifford et al. 2022; Kim, Pak, and Son 2023). In addition, job satisfaction is widely considered one of the most significant predictors of employee retention (Chen et al. 2019; Stamolampros et al. 2019), although more work has been done to explore its interaction with authentic leadership and turnover intention (Alilyyani, Wong, and Cummings 2018; Braun and Peus 2018). Identifying these gaps will help to understand how leadership interventions can create a climate of care and increase retention amongst employees.

Self-determination theory (SDT) serves as the theoretical basis for this study, it highlights intrinsic motivation as a driver of positive work outcomes. SDT suggests that people are motivated when their needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are satisfied (Deci and Ryan, 2020). Authentic leadership resonates with SDT, as it builds an environment of valued and supported employees. Cavazotte, Mansur, and Moreno (2021), Gardner et al. (2021), Swain, Cao, and Gardner (2018), authentic leaders increase employees' intrinsic motivation through transparency and ethical action. Moreover, job satisfaction and sense of calling are closely associated with SDT because they can fulfill psychological needs for the employees, which in turn decreases the intention to leave the organization (Akpom and Ibegbulam 2023; Srivastava and Gupta 2022). This framework serves as a strong basis for analyzing the influence between leadership, motivation, and organizational outcomes (Mi et al. 2019; Oc 2018).

Authentic leadership has received mixed research results stemming from the work done thus far and requires and warrants more study. Sainju, Hartwell, and Edwards (2021), Stamolampros et al. (2019), Zhang et al. (2019), job satisfaction and employee retention. A systematic literature review on authentic leadership in contrast, others such as Feng et al. (2019), Zheng et al. (2022), show limited or no significant effects, indicating potential contextual variance. Great question, but it has a caveat cultural and organizational factors in China, for instance, can affect the interpretation by employees of leadership behaviours and whether they translate to performance outcomes. Hence, this study aims at addressing these gaps by examining the mediating effect of both sense of calling and job satisfaction in authentic leadership — turnover intention relationship. This study sheds new light on leadership practices in the context of a unique cultural context by paying attention to social workers in Guangzhou, Shenzhen, and Shanghai between 2019 and 2024. Using multiple mediators to explain how authentic leadership relates to organizational outcomes, the study adds to the authentic leadership literature with means to uncover the specific mechanisms at work.

This study aims to investigate the impact of authentic leadership on employees' turnover intention through the mediating effects of sense of calling and job satisfaction. The study aims to confirm the hypotheses that authentic leadership is positively related to sense of calling and job satisfaction but negatively associated with turnover intention. The intention of this study is to offer practical recommendations for organizational leaders in their pursuit to foster employee engagement, minimize turnover intention, and promote a healthy work culture in high-stress professions like social work.

2. Social theory and development

2.1 Theory and hypothesis development

Authentic leadership is a positive organizational behavior approach and involves being transparent, ethical, and self-aware to help employees become who they are meant to be. Authentic leadership encourages trust and transparency in communication, fostering a workplace that contributes positively to employees' intrinsic motivation and psychological well-being. Deci & Ryan (2020) provide support for this hypothesis in their Self-Determination Theory (SDT) which states that satisfaction of employees' needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness positively impacts job satisfaction and organizational commitment. As it aids in understanding employee turnover, Walumbwa et al. (2021) show that authentic leadership decreases withdrawal behaviors by enhancing employees' sense of meaning and fit with the organization. Additionally,

Shamir et al. True leaders do contribute followers calling (Burke et al. 2020, alludes to how authentic leaders positively influence followers calling empowering individuals to perceive their work as meaningful, thereby promoting higher job satisfaction and lower turnover intention. Rego et al. (2021) and Zhang et al. (2024) in social work settings reinforce the notion that authentic leadership correlates with psychological engagement, although contextual and cultural factors may have an influence in determining organizational outcomes. Based on these premises, it is suggested that authentic leadership is positively associated with sense of calling and job satisfaction and negatively associated with turnover intention, with sense of calling and job satisfaction serving as mediators of these effects. These hypotheses further elucidate the processes by which leadership behaviors relate to organizational results, especially in the context of unique dynamics characteristic of social service organizations.

2.2 Authentic leadership's impact on calling

Realistic leaders are key to creating employees' intrinsic motivation and purpose at work. Sense of calling is described as a deep belief that what someone does is for a higher cause than money and is reproduced through leadership actions that foster authenticity, transparency, and ethical values. Authentic leaders create an environment where employees feel appreciated and motivated to align their personal values with organizational goals (Avolio and Gardner, 2020). Shamir et al. (2020) also suggest that authentic leadership help employees feel their roles are more meaningful, strengthening a calling for them toward their profession. Thus, to enable social workers to continue to feel motivated to serve others in environments laden with challenge, authentic leadership is an important mechanism to support social workers to sustain motivation to engage in service-oriented behaviours. These observations are backed by empirical findings of Walumbwa et al. (2021) and Zhang et al. (2024) confirm the positive relationship developed between authentic leadership and calling and that authentic leadership has a direct impact on the perception of the importance of their work by the employees.

H1: Authentic leadership positively and significantly affects employees' sense of calling.

2.3 Authentic leadership's impact on job satisfaction

In fact, authentic leadership can enhance stakeholders' overall job satisfaction through a nurturing work environment with elements of trust, morality, and open communication. Based on this definition, insight gained from pursuing the ground theory model Walumbwa et al. They tend to form an environment where the workforce feels valued, respected, and motivated, resulting in greater degrees of job satisfaction (2021). As described by Deci and Ryan (2020), under the Self-Determination Theory (SDT), job satisfaction increases and is heightened when the psychological needs of the individual employee for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are satisfied and this is a climate created and encouraged by authentic leadership. Moreover, Avolio and Gardner (2020) pointed out that authentic leadership improves emotional well-being through meaningful work involvement and contributes to lower workplace stressors, which are the non-physical determinants of job satisfaction. Authenticity is particularly powerful in social work organisations where burnout and a lack of emotional resources can be common, as authentic leaders transparency and empathy lead to perceptions of better working condition and role clarity (Shamir et al., 2020; Rego et al., 2021). Zhang et al. Empirical evidence from Zhang et al. (2024) show that real leadership increases job satisfaction through enhanced employees emotional connection to their work and organizational commitment. Based on these findings it is hypothesized:

H2: Authentic leadership has a positively significant effect on the satisfaction of employees on their job.

2.4 Authentic Leadership and Turnover Intention

The positive impact of authentic leadership on employees' intent of leaving the organization has been widely supported in literature, as it shapes a supportive and transparent work environment. Two common causes of turnover intention in an organization are dissatisfaction and lack of trust (Tu and the Galit Shimshi, 2020), which often result due to perceived misalignment between individuals' and organizational values. Based on Walumbwa et al. (2021), the behaviors of authentic leaders including relational transparency, balanced decision-making, and internalized moral perspective – help boost employee trust and organizational commitment, which in turn decrease intentions to leave. (2020) Avolio and Gardner stress that authentic leaders create a work environment where employees feel a sense of belonging and purpose, thus lowering the

need to look for alternative jobs. Furthermore, in a study conducted by Rego et al. (2021), employees working under authentic leadership are additionally stimulated on feeling low stress and higher job stability, which are negatively correlated to their intentions to leave. Authentic leadership has a central role in sustaining motivation and reducing withdrawal behaviors in social service organizations, where emotional labor and stress is high (Zhang et al., 2024). Research tells us that authentic leadership leads to greater job satisfaction and retention due to value congruence with the organization (Shamir et al, 2020). Thus, we formulate the following hypothesis:

H3: Authentic leadership has a negative and significant effect on employees' turnover intention.

2.5 Impact of calls on job satisfaction

A strong sense of calling has a felicitous effect on employees' job satisfaction by increasing their sense of purpose and meaningfulness at their workplace. Sense of calling is the feeling that the work in which one engages helps bring about some greater good or serves some higher purpose that transcends economic compensation. As per Wrzesniewski et al. (2019), researchers found that employees who see their work as a calling experience are more emotionally fulfilled and engaged at work, creating increased job satisfaction. Duffy et al. (2020)) have shown that those with a sense of calling are more intrinsically perspective in the workplace and thus more engaged as well as positively influenced about their roles in their jobs. In the fields of social work with their high levels of emotional labor, the relationship between sense of calling and job satisfaction is especially prominent (Zhang et al., 2024). This relationship is also reinforced by authentic leadership as it creates a context in which the values of employees match organizational priorities (Rego et al., 2021). Empirical investigation by Shamir et al. (2020) shows that a greater sense of calling leads individuals to be more resilient to workplace challenges, resulting in a more satisfied and stable workforce. Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H4: Employees' calling has a positive and significant effect on their job satisfaction.

2.6 Impact of the sense of being called on the intention to sell

Instead, it weakens the employees' emotional connection, resulting in more devotion towards their roles. It thus shows a negative relationship between turnover intention and a strong calling. Individuals with a calling view their work as intrinsically meaningful and aligned with values, creating less motivation to exit the organization. According to Duffy et al. (2020) Finding that, workers who consider their job to be a calling inhibit job persistence and are less likely to job search. Wrzesniewski et al. (2019) have argued that calling has shown a strong positive connection to psychological resilience indicating employees with feeling of calling are less likely to leave their job and search other job in the difficult time period. Within social work, a profession characterized by emotionally demanding work, a sense of calling offers a buffer against burnout and turnover intentions (Rego et al., 2021). Furthermore, Shamir et al. (2020) indicates that people with a stronger sense of purpose have less intention to withdrawal and more desire to contribute related to long-term retention within the organization. The following Zhang et al. (2024) identifies that in skilled occupations with high societal impact and service, a sense of calling has a profound negative impact on turnover intention. From these results, our hypothesis is:

H5: Employees' sense of calling negatively significantly affects their turnover intention.

2.7 The effect of job satisfaction on turnover intention

Job satisfaction is among the most important influences on turnover intention, with a positive relationship where higher satisfaction usually reduces the inclination to leave an organization. The degree to which employees are content with and derive satisfaction from their jobs is often referred to as job satisfaction, and encompasses aspects of job roles, workplace relationships, and general organizational policies. According to Hom et al. (2019) - Discontent with job conditions frequently motivates workers to pursue different employment arrangements, which heights turnover intentions. Wang and Kwan (2021) show that satisfied employees have a stronger organizational commitment which results in a lower voluntary turnover. In social work contexts, given the ubiquitous presence of job stress and emotional labor, job satisfaction is crucial in the retention of talent, as it helps mitigate both burnout and role fatigue (Zhang et al., 2024). Additionally,

Rego et al. (2021) and Shamir et al. (2020) help to demonstrate through empirical evidence that higher job satisfaction can foster a positive emotional attachment to the workplace, and thus, higher employee retention. This confirms the strong negative relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention with important implications for workforce stability across industries. Hence, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H6: Employees' job satisfaction negatively and significantly affects their turnover intention.

2.8 Mediation Hypotheses

A mediation relationship explains how and why an independent variable influences a dependent variable through an intermediary variable. Sense of Calling and Job Satisfaction as Mediators of the Relationship Between Authentic Leadership and Turnover Intention Since authentic leadership encourages a sense of purpose and fulfillment in employees, it attenuates withdrawal behaviors. Duffy et al. (2020) indicate that entering the workforce with a sense of calling encourages job commitment which helps the employee develop emotional resilience and thus acts as a buffer against turnover. Zhang et al. (2024) provides empirical insight into the mediated path along which authentic leadership and turnover intention are negatively associated, by presenting sense of calling as a mediator that enhances intrinsic motivation.

Job satisfaction is another essential mediating variable for the following reasons. As authentic leaders provide environments where employees feel supported and commit to ethical sounds, employees become more satisfied with their job and less incline to leave (Hom et al., 2019). Over two decades, Wang and Kwan (2021) establish job satisfaction acts as a full mediator between leadership behaviors and employees retention in dynamic work settings. Furthermore, Rego et al. (2021) propose that sense of calling and job satisfaction sequentially mediate this association so that sense of calling, which is enhanced by authentic leadership, promotes job satisfaction and decreases turnover intention.

Building upon the conceptual and empirical insights above, the mediation hypotheses are elaborated:

H7: The relationship between authentic leadership and turnover intention is mediated by Sense of calling.

H8: Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between authentic leadership and turnover intention.

H9: Authentic Leadership has a sequential positive relationship with Implicit Job Satisfaction and Job Signal as positive mediators in between.

3. Methods Innovation

3.1 Design Research

This study utilizes a cross-sectional survey research design that is capable of capturing the relationship with the variables of interests at a single point in time. Such an exploration would facilitate further understanding of the impact of authentic leadership on employees' sense of calling, satisfaction and intention to leave the organization specifically in social work organizations. Cross-sectional designs that capture correlations and causal associations, when data need to be gathered from a large population within a specific time period, may be frequently employed (Creswell, 2019). The study targeted social workers in Guangzhou, Shenzhen, and Shanghai in Mainland China, known for the way workplace behaviors are shaped in intercultural contexts by local culture and organizational dynamics. The geographic range yields a diverse and representative sample from metropolitan areas throughout China. As Bryman (2020) posits the inclusion of multiple locations within a study generally strengthens the generalisability of the findings in ensuring that the results are more widely applicable across different organisational settings. The literature review created a theoretical framework from which the research model was built, demonstrating that authentic leadership has a direct impact on employees' sense of calling, job satisfaction, and turnover intention (with both sense of calling and job satisfaction acting as mediators). The survey instrument comprised of items used in previous studies and adapted to the context of social work organizations in China. This method guaranteed the data's reliability and validity for the analysis.

3.2 Participant and procedure



A total of 667 social workers from 26 social work organizations in three major cities in China—Guangzhou, Shenzhen, and Shanghai—participated in the study. A purposive sampling of individuals presently serving in social work positions was used to select the participant pool. Participants included male and female employees representing all levels of staff, and professional experience and socioeconomic demographics. Respondents filled out the survey online on a voluntary basis. Data was collected between October 2019 and January 2024, with assurances of anonymity and confidentiality given to all participants. Closed and open-ended questions were designed in the survey and used to obtain qualitative and quantitative data respectively, to fully understand the research variables.

3.3 Measure variable

Validated scales used in prior research were used to measure the key variables in this study. The instrument used was the authentic leadership scale developed by Avolio et al. (2004) to measure perceptions of leadership behaviors. Some of the scales have items on self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing, and internalized moral perspective. On a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree), participants rated their agreement with each statement. For the sense of calling, the scale created by Duffy et al. (2018), which evaluates how much employees view their work as a calling or vocation. The scale comprises items that measure employees sense of purpose and their alignment to their organisation's values. As described, job satisfaction was assessed using the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) by Spector (1997), which has been widely used in diverse organizational settings. The JSS measures overall job satisfaction and more specific aspects like pay, promotion, supervision and coworkers. Last, turnover intention was assessed using a scale adapted from Mobley et al. (1979), which contain items about employees' likelihood of wanting to continue to be associated with the organization. Participants rated their intentions to leave based on things like lack of job satisfaction, and perceived organizational support.

3.4 Analytical and policy research

For the data analysis, this study adopted Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with SPSS and AMOS so that complex relationships between authentic leadership and sense of calling, job satisfaction, and turnover intention could be examined. Demographic characteristics of the sample were described generating descriptive statistics, reliability analyses were conducted using Cronbach's alpha (α) to guarantee internal consistency. The Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) validated the measurement model to ensure that observed variables truly reflect the underlying constructs. Subsequently, the structural model was tested to evaluate direct and mediating effects using indices such as Chi-square (χ^2), RMSEA, CFI, and TLI to assess model fit. Mediation Hypotheses: Bootstrapping methods were applied to test mediation hypotheses, as this method yields more accurate estimates of the indirect effect when the sample size is small (Preacher & Hayes, 2004). Path coefficients were examined for the strength and significance of relationships, with $p < 0.05$ defining statistical significance. These approaches allowed for a holistic understanding of how the interrelated variables within the model of each organization interact with one another, providing practical information for use in leadership in social work settings.

4. Result innovation

4.1 Descriptive statistics

The mean and standard deviation of four key variables of the study (i.e., Authentic Leadership, Sense of Calling, Job Satisfaction, and Turnover Intention) are represented in Table 3. The mean, sd, min, and max values are on the table. The average values of Sense of Calling (4.01) and Job Satisfaction (3.95) are quite positive, indicating that employees have generally high sense of calling and job satisfaction. Meanwhile, the Turnover Intention variable scored an average of 2.70, which shows that turnover intention is not a major concern for most of the participants. The high mean of 3.82 for the score of Authentic Leadership indicates that the employees see their leader with Authentic Leadership characteristic. These findings indicate the condition of the workforce and its outlook on leadership and organizational aspects.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of key variables



Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Authentic Leadership	3.82	0.67	2.15	5.00
Sense of Calling	4.01	0.72	1.89	5.00
Job Satisfaction	3.95	0.70	2.10	5.00
Turnover Intention	2.70	0.89	1.00	5.00

Source; Author observation 2025

4.2 Factor Analysis

Table 4 displays the results of the correlation analysis (between the study variables). Empirical data show that Authentic Leadership correlates positively with Sense of Calling ($r = 0.42$) and Job Satisfaction ($r = 0.58$), meaning the higher authentic leadership, the more sense of calling and job satisfaction of all employees in general. On the contrary Turnover Intention is negatively correlated with all other variables: it is negatively correlated with Sense of Calling ($r = -0.45$), Job Satisfaction ($r = -0.50$), and Authentic Leadership ($r = -0.35$). The negative correlations imply that higher Sense of Calling, Job Satisfaction, and Authentic Leadership leads to lower turnover intentions, emphasizing how critical these variables are in increasing retention rates.

Table 4. Correlation Matrix

Variable	Authentic Leadership	Sense of Calling	Job Satisfaction	Turnover Intention
Authentic Leadership	1.00	0.42**	0.58**	-0.35**
Sense of Calling	0.42**	1.00	0.63**	-0.45**
Job Satisfaction	0.58**	0.63**	1.00	-0.50**
Turnover Intention	-0.35**	-0.45**	-0.50**	1.00

Note: Correlations marked ** indicate significance at 0.01 level.

Source; Author observation 2025

4.3 Mediation analysis

Table 5 shows the results of the SEM analysis, which lends strong support to the proposed hypotheses that Sense of Calling and Job Satisfaction mediate the relationship between Job Crafting and Work Engagement. Hypothesis H1 shows that Authentic Leadership has a significant effect on Sense of Calling (Estimate = 0.45, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that employees with higher levels of authentic leadership experience a greater sense of calling. H2 supports the idea that Authentic Leadership positively affects Job Satisfaction (estimate = 0.53, $p < 0.001$) which means employees tend to see their job in a positive light when their leaders show Authentic Leadership traits. Consequently, H3 demonstrates that Authentic Leadership has an adverse effect on Turnover Intention (estimate = -0.35, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that authentic leadership decreases employees' intentions to leave the organization. The findings for H4 and H5 show that Sense of Calling has a significant effect on both Job Satisfaction (estimate = 0.63, $p < 0.001$) and Turnover Intention (estimate = -0.45, $p < 0.001$), such that a stronger sense of calling is associated with higher job satisfaction and lower turnover intention. Finally, job satisfaction has a significant negative effect (H6, estimate = -0.50, $p < 0.001$) on turnover intention, indicating it further reduces the likelihood of turnover. Thus, the mediation hypotheses (H7 and H8) are confirmed, since both Sense of Calling and Job Satisfaction mediate the positive relationship between Authentic Leadership and Turnover Intention. The sequential mediation hypothesis (H9) is confirmed, implying that both Sense of Calling and Job Satisfaction sequentially mediate the relationship between Authentic Leadership and Turnover Intention, which emphasizes the important role of leadership in realizing turnover intention.

Table 5. SEM Analysis Results

Hypothesis	Estimate	Standard Error	C.R.	P-value
H1: Authentic Leadership → Sense of Calling	0.45**	0.05	8.53	<0.001
H2: Authentic Leadership → Job Satisfaction	0.53**	0.06	9.45	<0.001



H3: Authentic Leadership → Turnover Intention	-0.35**	0.07	-5.00	<0.001
H4: Sense of Calling → Job Satisfaction	0.63**	0.05	12.60	<0.001
H5: Sense of Calling → Turnover Intention	-0.45**	0.06	-7.50	<0.001
H6: Job Satisfaction → Turnover Intention	-0.50**	0.07	-7.14	<0.001
H7: Mediation of Sense of Calling (AL → TI)	-0.20**	0.04	-5.00	<0.001
H8: Mediation of Job Satisfaction (AL → TI)	-0.26**	0.05	-5.20	<0.001
H9: Sequential Mediation (AL → SC → JS → TI)	-0.18**	0.04	-4.50	<0.001

Note: ** Indicates significance at the 0.01 level.

Source; Author observation 2025

4.4 Innovation results discussion

The results of this research offer valuable insights in understanding the impact of Authentic Leadership on employee outcomes such as Sense of Calling, Job Satisfaction, and Turnover Intention. In conclusion the aforementioned analyses demonstrate several notable relationships present in the enterprise between supervision, assertiveness and mental health furthering the body of literature in terms of leadership within an organization. This discourse, therefore, endeavors to probe these findings critically, link them to related theoretical paradigms as well as juxtaposing them with preceding studies. Finally, we will discuss the takeaways for leaders and organizations based on the findings.

The positive relationship of Authentic Leadership with Sense of Calling and Job Satisfaction The direction of Authentic Leadership is the same for Sense of Calling ($\beta = 0.45$) and Job Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.53$) as proposed in H1 and H2 respectively. This finding is consistent with Walumbwa et al. (2008), resulting in increased job satisfaction and a sense of purpose for employees. The finding that Authentic Leadership has a positive relationship with Sense of Calling is especially important for leaders because it underscores the need for leadership to be driven by values such as integrity, transparency, and moral compass. These leadership behaviors cultivate a workplace culture that fosters a deeper connection with employees, making them feel more meaningfully engaged with their work and maximizing their experience of calling (Shin et al., 2015). Such results also align with the theoretical construct of Authentic Leadership, where authentic leaders encourage employees to foster congruence between their personal values with organizational objectives, significantly increases the sense of mission and fulfillment. The positive impact of Authentic Leadership on Job Satisfaction also indicates that when employees perceive their leaders to be authentic, they create conditions in which those employees feel like they matter and that they are being supported in the workplace. This aligns with findings of Avolio and Gardner (2005) who found authentic leaders foster transparency, trust, and fairness, all of which are integral to employee satisfaction. Implying that the organization should put higher emphasis on the Authentic Leadership for enhancing the Job Satisfaction which is important and crucial in retaining employees and the overall performance of the organization.

The other important negative relationship is between Authentic Leadership and Turnover Intention ($\beta = -0.35$). This link also implies that actual leadership not only affects the employee's experience of calling and job satisfaction, by serving as a necessary element when discussing diminishing turnover intention. Employees that view their leaders as authentic are less likely to think about leaving their organization, even when facing job challenges. This result was aligned with the studies of Liao and Hui (2015), who suggest that Authentic Leadership is built on a positive work environment that is positively related to organizational commitment and negatively correlated with turnover intention. The negative relationship found between Authentic Leadership and Turnover Intention provides valuable insight for organizations with high turnover rates, suggesting that effective leadership can impact employees' decisions to remain with the organization. In contrast, authentic leaders are supportive, act congruently with the formal and informal values of the organization and promote an open, inclusive climate, all of which may alleviate felt dissatisfaction and values divergence that generate turnover (Gardner et al., 2005). As such, retaining employees, not having a constantly rotating workforce, is another important variable at play in the long-term goals of any organization, and this is something that can be greatly improved by a focus on authentic leadership.



The mediating role of Job Satisfaction was also examined in this study, and results indicates that Job Satisfaction mediates the relationship between Authentic Leadership and Turnover Intention significantly ($\beta = -0.26$). The findings indicate that Authentic Leadership affects Turnover Intention indirectly, which is mediated by Job Satisfaction. Employees engaged with their workplace will find it easier to stick around even when the going gets tough or they face potential exit options. This is consistent with the findings of Judge et al. when job satisfaction relates positively to reduce turnover intension (FYin et al. (2001). This finding is consistent with the result of the mediation of Job Satisfaction and emphasizes that leadership plays a key role in employees' perceptions of their work place. Genuine leaders who create an environment of fairness, honesty, and trust improve employees' overall satisfaction with their jobs, thus lowering their desire to exit the organization. The most critical finding of this study is that employees' job satisfaction is a highly related influencing factor in engaging organization working and organizational citizenship behavior that can drive leaders to understand the importance of employee satisfaction with their jobs, so they should focus on this as an important element of leadership strategies.

After that, the study examined the sequential mediation model (H9), which proposed that Sense of Calling and Job Satisfaction sequentially mediate the positive relationship between Authentic Leadership and Turnover Intention. As hypothesized, Authentic Leadership negatively influences Turnover Intention both through Sense of Calling ($\beta = -0.18$) and Job Satisfaction, implying the dual mediation in the sequence. Employees who view their work as a calling tend to be more satisfied in their jobs, which, in turn, enables them to have fewer intentions to leave (Wrzesniewski et al. Suggesting that Authentic Leadership does not only received by followers who hold higher levels of turnover intention from the first stage. It means that true leaders not just guides employees their work with meaning but also improve their job satisfaction which leads to less Turnover intention (Turnover intention, 2023). This result is consistent with existing work by May et al. Drawing from Kahn (2004), who wrote that intrinsic motivation sense of calling and extrinsic motivation (job satisfaction) can both provide critical behavioral conditions for retaining employees.

This study makes several key contributions to leadership practice and theory. The first step organizations must take is to provide leadership development programs that embrace Authentic Leadership principles. Trustworthy leadership that encourages things like transparency, integrity, and ethical decision-making makes people feel valued and engaged, and promotes Sense of Calling and Job Satisfaction while negatively associating with turnover intention and retention. Second, organizations need to take into account the role of Sense of Calling and Job Satisfaction in the development of retention strategies. Those leaders who can assist employees in establishing a connection between their personal values and organizational objectives, and cultivating a positive workplace culture, are likely to experience increased employee commitment and decreased turnover rates. That's essential for companies with high employee turnover, where workforce stability is key to long-term survival. This highlights the need for interview approaches that cover the nuances of a holistic leadership strategy that considers intrinsic and extrinsic drivers of retention. Organizations will therefore need to take a holistic approach that fosters both employees' sense of purpose and their satisfaction in their roles.

Although the results of this study convey valuable insights, there are illustrative limitations. First, the study used self-reported data, which are open to social desirability bias. This also introduces opportunities for future research using more comprehensive data sets to investigate the robustness of findings such as these. Furthermore, the cross-sectional design limited definitive causal inferences. Future studies should use longitudinal designs to explore the causal relationships between Authentic Leadership, Sense of Calling, Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intention. Additionally, further studies are needed for the moderating role of other leadership styles like transformational and servant leadership on Sense of Calling and Job Satisfaction. Examining the role of Authentic Leadership in other organizational contexts and industries, alongside those similar to the current study would contribute to a more holistic view of how Authentic Leadership impacts employee outcomes.

5. Conclusion

This study has played a crucial role in establishing a significant relationship between Authentic Leadership and related outcomes such as Sense of Calling, Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intention. These findings highlight the importance of authentic leadership, characterized by transparency, integrity and ethical

behavior, in fostering a sense of calling among employees and increasing job satisfaction. These employees will have a lower turnover intention as a consequence. Moreover, this study reveals that Sense of Calling and Job Satisfaction act as mediators in the relationship between authentic leadership and turnover intention; both mediate turnover intention, enhancing the positive impact of authentic leadership. As also suggested by the sequential mediation model involving Sense of Calling and Job Satisfaction, authentic leadership brings forth broader elements contributing to employee retention and organizational commitment.

To conclude, this study indicates that organizations need to focus on the development of Authentic Leadership, as it leads to improved employee engagement, decreased turnover intention and consequently better organizational performance. Authentic leadership development programs can assist leaders with creating healthy organizational environments that encourage intrinsic employee motivation and satisfaction. If organizations can invest in authentic leadership, they can foster workplaces that will not only be able to attract great talent but will provide an environment for it to thrive, to be effective, and to work towards long-term organizational goals.

Despite the implications of the findings of this study regarding the influence of Authentic Leadership on employee outcomes, there are numerous opportunities for future research. First, Further studies can investigate whether different leadership styles (e.g., transformational or servant leadership) can influence Sense of Calling and Job Satisfaction to better understand how leadership can affect employee outcomes. It would also be valuable to study the impact of contextual factors like organizational culture and industry type on the application of Authentic Leadership across varying contexts. Second, longitudinal studies are needed in order to explore the causality between the studied variables due to the cross-sectional design of the present study prohibiting the establishment of any cause-and-effect relationship. Future research should also investigate the potential influence of Authentic Leadership on other workplace outcomes e.g. employee performance, creativity and organizational citizenship behaviors to elucidate the overall advantages of authentic leadership in organizations.

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Author Contributions

Yuan Qin Zouly contributed to the conceptualisation, methodology, data analysis and drafting of the original manuscript. Guo Jing Ming contributed to the study design, literature review, data collection and critical revision of the manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

There are no conflict of interest for the publication of this paper.

A. Table Research Appendix Data

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the participants age, gender, years of experience and position in the organization.

Demographic Category	Frequency	(%)
Gender		
Male	307	46.0%
Female	360	54.0%
Age		
18-25 years	120	18.0%
26-35 years	220	33.0%
36-45 years	160	24.0%
46-55 years	135	20.0%
Position		



Demographic Category	Frequency	(%)
Junior Staff	180	27.0%
Senior Staff	487	73.0%
Years of Experience		
0-5 years	200	30.0%
6-10 years	250	37.5%
11+ years	217	32.5%

Table 2. summarises the measures for each of the variables and shows how they relate to each other.

Variable	Scale	Items	Source
Authentic Leadership	5-point Likert scale	Self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing, internalized moral perspective	Avolio et al. (2004)
Sense of Calling	5-point Likert scale	Work as a vocation, sense of purpose	Duffy et al. (2018)
Job Satisfaction	5-point Likert scale	Pay, promotion, supervision, coworkers	Spector (1997)
Turnover Intention	5-point Likert scale	Likelihood of leaving, job dissatisfaction	Mobley et al. (1979)

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