

Transformational Leadership, Perceived Justice, and Turnover Intention among University Lecturers: A Conceptual Framework in the German Higher Education Context

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Abstract

This study explores the relationship between transformational leadership, perceived justice and turnover intention among university lecturers in Germany. Increasing concerns regarding faculty retention, organizational stability, and academic performance in higher education institutions have highlighted the importance of leadership effectiveness and workplace fairness in shaping lecturers' intention to remain within their organizations. Although transformational leadership has been widely associated with positive organizational outcomes and reduced turnover intention, limited research has examined these relationships within the German higher education context, particularly in applied science universities.

Drawing upon transformational leadership theory and organizational justice perspectives, the paper develops a conceptual framework that investigates the role of perceived justice and transformational leadership in shaping turnover intention among university lecturers in applied science university (Fachhochschulen). The study further examines the dimensions of organizational justice, including distributive, procedural, interpersonal, and informational justice, and their relevance in academic institutions.

The proposed framework contributes to the higher education and organizational behavior literature in three ways. First, it integrates transformational leadership, perceived justice, and turnover intention within a unified conceptual model. Second, it applies validated organizational behavior constructs to the academic context of German universities. Third, it addresses the limited literature concerning leadership and lecturer retention in German higher education institutions. The study offers theoretical implications for future empirical and quantitative research and practical insights for university administrators seeking to enhance lecturer retention and organizational effectiveness.

Keywords: *Transformational leadership, Turnover intention, Perceived justice, University lecturers, Lecturer retention, Higher education management, Germany*

1- Introduction

In this study, the researcher conducted a comprehensive review of previous studies related to the relationship between transformational leadership and turnover intention and perceived justice among applied science university lecturers in Germany. To state the problem of turnover among professors in

higher education, considering these factors is essential for leaders to find the solutions in institutions, as faculty turnover in higher education systems causes significant challenges, and affects institutional stability, academic quality, and overall organizational effectiveness. Educators play a strategic role in improving science development, research quality, graduate quality, academic reputation, and academic program quality (Sarmiento et al., 2024).

Specifically, German universities of applied sciences known as *Hochschulen für Angewandte Wissenschaften (HAW)* or *Fachhochschulen (FH)*, emphasize highly qualified staff for teaching and research, and maintain close links with industry (Research in Germany, n.d.-a). Moreover, have a practical professional experience outside higher education is a prerequisite for professorship at applied science universities in Germany, declined by Federal Ministry of Education and Research BMBF (Research in Germany, n.d.-b).

In recent years, given the growing attention of transformational leadership implications, researchers found that TL negatively predicts turnover intention by creating a supportive and motivating workplace for employees (Xiong, Wu & Sui, 2023). Perceived organizational justice also is discussed in many studies, which indicates the importance of this factor that can influence the relationship between transformational leadership and turnover intention in organizations (Budomo, 2023; Hussain & Shahzad, 2022). Budomo (2023), confirmed that perceived organizational justice mediating the relationship between organizational commitment and turnover intention, a fair organizational climate to their decision to leave the organization. Studies evaluated other factors related to the turnover intention reduction, indicating the mediating role of a fair and justice organizational climate on the workplace bullying (Linkai et al., 2022; Yaqub et al., 2022).

By effective transformational leadership and attention to organizational justice in this dynamic in organization, leaders can reduce turnover intention, applicable in many realms such as remote work, innovative workplace (Silva et al., 2024; Yaqub et al., 2022). Based on the reviewed evidence related to the topic, university administrators' benefit of focus on promoting both transformational leadership and organizational justice to reduce the intention to leave among their faculty members (Xiong, Wu & Sui, 2023; Budomo, 2023; Yaqub et al., 2022; Hussain & Shahzad, 2022).

Despite growing evidence that transformational leadership and perceived organizational justice are associated with lower turnover intention, limited research has integrated these constructs within the context of German universities of applied sciences. This conceptual paper therefore develops a framework examining the relationships between transformational leadership and perceived organizational justice on turnover intention. The framework is intended to guide future empirical research and support evidence-based lecturer-retention practices in German higher education.

2- Literature Review

German Higher Education Context

Academic leadership, particularly in Germany, represent a multifaceted and ever-evolving field which is significantly influenced by cultural norms, inherent structural limitations, and recent trends that indicate a shift towards managerial reforms that reflect border administrative practices. The paradigm of traditional German academic leadership has been mostly characterized by an emphasis on the cultivation of consensus-

building and fostering open dialogue, which aligns with the broader societal values (Tulowitzki & Grigoleit, 2023). However, the emergence the concept known as "new managerialism" has introduced a more corporate, hierarchical approach, transferring power from individual professors to central management units (Moll & Kretzschmar, 2017).

Although many changes have been implemented, it is important to acknowledge the need for leadership development among professors in academia. Structured formal training programs are needed for many leaders who occupy leadership positions such as heads of departments and feel unprepared for the responsibilities associated with their roles (Haage et al., 2021a). In Germany many programs are progressively incorporating leadership training, emphasizing not only the acquisition of theoretical knowledge but also emphasize the importance of personal development and the cultivation of intercultural competencies, all aimed at effectively preparing individuals for diverse leadership roles (Sapohov et al., 2023).

As mentioned by Haage et al. (2021b) and Moll & Kretzschmar (2017), the lack of emphasis on leadership competence has significant consequences and effective leadership is vital for fostering academic excellence, creativity, and innovation, and staff well-being. Also, Moll & Kretzschmar (2017) introduced the servant leadership model, which promotes human-centered and low-power-distance approach, has been proposed as a potentially suitable framework in academia by encouraging a supportive and collaborative environment. Niemiec (2019), mentioned the role of students that shaping and transforming academic leadership, recognized for their positive influence on dynamics of leadership. The leadership styles of school principals, such as transformational, instructional, and integrated leadership, have been shown to impact student academic achievement, highlighting the importance of context-specific leadership approaches (Chen et al., 2022). The concept of practical wisdom is being explored as a valuable framework for understanding university leadership, emphasizing the need to balance intellectual rigor with ethical considerations (Kleimann, 2016). Academic leadership in Germany is characterized by a delicate balance of traditional values, managerial reforms, and emerging challenges. This underscores the need for comprehensive leadership development programs and a more inclusive and supportive academic culture.

Leadership Styles

Leadership styles represent different ways in which leaders interact with their followers, make decisions, and influence group dynamics. Leadership style can influence organizational effectiveness, innovation, and employee outcomes (Sarmiento et al., 2024). Over the years, numerous theories and models have emerged to describe and classify leadership styles and this literature review explores key leadership styles, their characteristics and implications for organizational performance and follower outcomes.

Lewin et al., (1939) distinguished among autocratic (authoritarian), democratic, and laissez-faire leadership style. Later developments in leadership theory introduced transformational leadership which seeks to create positive and motivating environments for followers, characterized by inspiration, empowerment, and fostering innovation (Bass & Riggio, 2006). According to the study by Lewin et al., (1939), authoritarian leadership is characterized by control, top-down approach, leading to conformity, an environment of fear, conformity, and obedience. Democratic leadership emphasizes participation in the decision-making process in organizations, and laissez-faire leadership describe the lowest interference and hands-off approach with limited direction for employee.

Table 1, defines the six leadership styles developed by Goleman (2000), commanding style introduced by high level of control, immediate compliance and directive approach, which has a negative impact on climate in organization. The visionary style refers to the ability to motivate and inspire personnel, building a long-term vision, and clarifying the clear direction, that has the strongest positive effect on environment and aligns with transformational style.

The affiliative style in this concept refers to empowering emotional connection, enhancing harmony and team cohesion, to create a supportive workplace and positive climate. Democratic style includes the team leadership communication and collaborative decision-making process, that values all the members making the positive place to work. At the same time, it should be considerate that in democratic leading the slower making the decision and the potential for conflict. The pacesetter style, which has a negative impact on work environment, sets the high standards and expectations, and is defined as performance-oriented approach which may place considerable pressure on employees and cause them to feel overwhelmed. Lastly, the coaching style focuses on fostering developmental growth, personal enhancement, and long-term skill development, which facilitates individual growth but requires employee engagement and cooperation.

Table 1: The six leadership styles by Goleman, "Leadership that Gets Results", Harvard Business Review, 2000, p. 82-83.

	Commanding	Visionary	Affiliative	Democratic	Pacesetter	Coaching
The leader's modus operandi	Demands immediate compliance	Mobilizes people toward a vision	Creates harmony and builds emotional bonds	Forges consensus through participation	Sets high standards for performance	Develops people for the future
The style in a phrase	"Do what I tell you"	"Come with me"	"People come first"	"What do you think?"	"Do as I do, now"	"Try this"
Underlying emotional intelligence competencies	Drive to achieve, initiative, self-control	Self-confidence, empathy, change catalyst	Empathy, building relationships, communication	Collaboration, team leadership, communication	Consistently, drive to achieve, initiative	Developing others, empathy, self-awareness
When the style works best	In a crisis, to kick start a turnaround, or with problem employees	When changes require a new vision, or when a clear direction is needed	To heal rifts in a team or to motivate people during stressful circumstances	To build buy-in or consensus, or to get input from valuable employees	To get quick results from a highly motivated and competent team	To help an employee improve performance or develop long-term strengths
Overall impact on climate	Negative	Most strongly positive	Positive	Positive	Negative	Positive

Table 2 shows the summary of leadership styles, and among these approaches transformational leadership is particularly relevant to academic institution because its emphasis on vision, motivation, employee development, and intellectual stimulation.

Table 2: Summary of Leadership Styles, created by the author

Leadership Styles	Characteristics	References
Transformational	Charisma, vision, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation	Bass & Riggio (2006)
Transactional	The exchange of rewards and punishments in return for compliance	Bass & Riggio (2006)
Charismatic	Possess a magnetic and captivating personality that inspires devotion and loyalty	Conger & Kanungo (1998)
Servant	Qualities like empathy, humility, and a focus on empowering others	Liden et al. (2008)

Laissez-Faire	Adopt a hands-off approach, providing minimal guidance and involvement in decision-making	Bass & Riggio (2006)
Autocratic	Top-down decision-making, control without input from subordinates	Lewin et al, (1939)
Democratic	Participative decision-making, involving team members in the process	Lewin et al, (1939)
Situational Leadership	Adaptation of style based on the situation and maturity level of followers	Hersey & Blanchard (1969)
Strategic Leadership	Focus on long-term vision, innovation, and change management	Rowe et al. (1994)
Coaching Leadership	Developmental growth, personal improvement, and skill-building	Kombarakaran et al. (2008)
Bureaucratic Leadership	Reliance on established rules, policies, and procedures	Weber (1947)

Transformational Leadership in Academia

Primary definition of transformational leadership by Bass (1985) and based on transformational leadership theory (Bass & Avolio, 1994), introduced a transformational leader as one who motivates followers to do more than they originally expected to do. The main characteristics of transformational leadership defined by Bass & Riggio (2006), involves vision, charisma, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation, which help leaders inspire and motivate their followers to move beyond their self-interest and expectations. Transformational leadership is characterized by key elements namely intellectual stimulation, inspirational communication, and compelling vision, which empowers team members to contribute to the advancement of the organization (Manafi et al., 2025). Transformational leadership can stimulate and direct followers to achieve improved individual performance because followers become competent to carry out tasks (Sarmiento et al., 2024). Adeoye et al. (2025) examined transformational leadership in education settings and reported that it is essential for navigating the complexities of modern education to empower innovation and global awareness.

A study involving lecturers in Jakarta, Indonesia, found that transformational leadership indirectly enhances lecturer performance through job competency, emphasizing the critical role of lecturer competency in this dynamic (Nelly et al., 2024). The study conducted at the faculty of Tarbiyah State Islamic Institute of Madura indicated that transformational leadership significantly influences organizational change, both directly and indirectly through lecturer commitment, with organizational culture serving as a moderating factor (Kusuma et al., 2023).

According to Manafi and Subramaniam (2015a) transformational leadership plays a significant role in fostering organizational innovation by motivating employees to think creatively, challenge conventional approaches, and actively contribute to organizational goals. Transformational leaders create a compelling vision, intellectually stimulate employees to develop innovative solutions, and provide personal recognition that encourages initiative and continuous improvement. These leadership behaviors cultivate an organizational environment where employees are more willing to share knowledge, collaborate, and engage in innovative activities. Based on their empirical study of large electronics companies in Iran, the authors found that the transformational leadership dimensions of vision, intellectual stimulation, and personal recognition had significant positive effects on innovation, while knowledge sharing partially mediated the relationship between transformational leadership and innovation. These findings suggest that transformational leadership enhances innovation not only through direct influence on employees' creativity and motivation but also by fostering knowledge-sharing behaviors that facilitate the generation and implementation of new ideas.

According to Pongpearchan (2016), transformational leadership is important for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of university teaching staff. Many studies have found that transformational leadership increases positive factors such as job satisfaction, value-based vision of the future, trust, organizational commitment, and the performance of both leader and followers (Judge & Bono, 2001; Krishnan, 2005; Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Bormann & Rowold, 2016). Trmal et al. (2017) suggest that transformational leadership can help improve employees' capabilities and involvement in organizational activities. Bass (1985) and Siajaya (2014) stated that transformational leadership is able to make team members care about each other and inspire each other to achieve high level of performance.

Asgari et al. (2008) state that transformational leaders motivate followers by getting them to internalize and prioritize a larger collective cause over individual interests. Individuals who are intrinsically motivated to fulfill a collective vision without expecting immediate personal and tangible gains may be inclined to contribute toward achieving the shared workplace goal in ways that their roles do not prescribe. These individuals make these contributions because their sense of self-worth and/or self-concepts are enhanced in making these contributions. Sarmento et al. (2024) state that transformational leadership reflects the attitude of a participatory leader who is not only able to motivate and move the organization vertically and horizontally, but also realizes an organizational capacity to always be more agile in every situation. Organizations always face threats both internally and externally so they really need a transformational type of leader. Table 3 highlights how Carless et al. (2000) model aligns with and simplifies Bass & Avolio (1995) transformational leadership framework:

Table 3: Conceptual alignment between the transformational leadership dimensions of Carless et al. (2000) and Bass & Avolio (1995), developed by the author

Carless et al.'s Dimensions of Framework	Bass & Avolio's Framework
Communicating a clear and positive vision of the future	Inspirational Motivation
Supporting and encouraging staff development	Individualized Consideration
Providing recognition and encouragement	Individualized Consideration
Fostering trust, involvement, and cooperation	Individualized Consideration
Encouraging innovative thinking and questioning assumptions	Intellectual Stimulation
Leading by example and practicing stated values	Idealized Influence
Instilling pride, respect, and confidence through charismatic behavior	Idealized Influence

Turnover Intention among University Lecturers

Primary study by Mobley (1977) and Bluedorn (1982), defined turnover intention as willingness and desire of employee to leave the organization, which is a psychological state and essential predictor of actual turnover behavior. According to the study by Park & Kim (2009), intentions to leave work thus capture the final stage in the decision-making process of an employee who has become dissatisfied with the job and seeking other alternative employments. Considering the factors that reducing the employee intention to leave could make great benefit and changes in the overall effectiveness of the organization. The concept of turnover intention is vital in the turnover process since employee resignation rarely accuses instantaneously.

Instead, it typically comprises a series of cognitive-emotional stages that individuals go through before they finally decide to quite their job and actual resignation (Holtom et al., 2008).

Job satisfaction as one of the most important dimensions of turnover intention, primary defined as the extent to which employees' needs and expectations are satisfied to their works, as a result of their assessment of both the intrinsic and extrinsic dimensions of their job, including salary, working conditions, policy, responsibility, and career advancement (Herzberg, 1966). Individuals who are dissatisfied with their job are more inclined to leave their positions, because satisfaction which indicates how people are in fulfilling their desires and need through their job, fosters elevated levels of motivation and morale, and eventually enhancing organizational performance (Harter et al., 2002). Okolocha et al. (2021) supported that responsibility and career advancement have a significant effect on job performance and job satisfaction among university lecturers. Agubosim et al. (2023) mentioned factors such as work conditions, motivational factors, peer relationships, job security, and the opportunity for personal development can influence job satisfaction within the organization.

Many studies discussed the impact of organizational commitment that directly or indirectly on turnover intention, which considered as an individual factor in organization. First discussed by Meyer & Allen (1991), including affective, normative, and continuance commitment, organizational commitment is a robust factor the decrease the level of intention to leave for staffs (Meyer et al., 2002). Linking to the concept of transformational leadership, which improves the organizational commitment, Bass and Riggio (2006) admitted that these factors have a significant impact on turnover intention in organizations. Initial investigations on the nature of work (work itself), which defined as the level of challenges, diversity, autonomy, and value that employees perceive in the work, have an impact on overall job satisfaction (Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Herzberg, 1966).

Salary refers to monetary compensation employees receive for their work (Milkovich & Newman, 1999). Reward and equitable compensation can lead individuals to overall job satisfaction, and can impact an employee's value, motivation and commitment to the organization (Judge & Bono, 2001). Considering the factor as managerial support, also known as supervision, means the guidance, feedback, and assistance provided by managers and it is crucial for job satisfaction (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Wayne et al., 1997). Therefore, the quality of leadership can significantly influence turnover intention, specifically transformational leadership defined as inspiring and motivating leadership style, reduces the rate of turnover intention (Eisenbeiss et al., 2008; Tepper, 2000).

Getting promoted and opportunities for career advancement, named promotion in organizations, also influencing the job satisfaction and increases the organizational commitment (Ng & Feldman, 2008; Cable & DeRue, 2002). Moreover, co-worker support as defined by Podsakoff et al. (1997), is related to teamwork and refers to collaboration, the level of assistance and fellowship experienced among colleagues. Rhoades & Eisenberger (2002), admitted that positive relationships with coworkers contribute to job satisfaction by fostering a supportive place, less stress, and higher overall quality of work life. Considering the work-life balance factor defined as balance between work and personal life, as one of the contemporary concerns is crucial because lack of this characteristic it may lead to higher turnover intention (Kalliath & Brough, 2008).

Finally, workload as one of the most important organizational factors, which refers to the amount of work assigned to an employee within a given period, significantly influence turnover intention for academic

staffs. Primary investigation by Karasek (1979), discussed excessive workload as the main reason of stress, burnout, and job dissatisfaction, and eventually are key drivers of turnover intention. Later, Bakker & Demerouti (2007); Demerouti et al. (2001), admitted that high level of workload can frustrate employee's psychological needs by exhaustion and diminished sense of accomplishment, increases the likelihood of leaving the organization.

Turnover is directly linked to employees' behaviors as may cause lower productivity, loss of loyalty, stress, and conflict in the workplace. Therefore, by ensuring employee job satisfaction both individuals and organizations can benefit. To achieve job satisfaction, it is required addressing intrinsic and extrinsic factors that stakeholders must prioritize to find the best performance and institutional goals (Agubosim et al., 2023). Turnover intention, as researched in educational sector, is influenced by many characteristics namely work-family conflict, workplace well-being, and workload among lecturers. The finding confirmed that positive workplace and workload negatively and significantly affect turnover intention, while work-family conflict has a positive and insignificant relationship with this factor among lecturers in higher education region IX (Mariana et al., 2024). To determine the dimensions of turnover intention, considering job demand, job resources, and burnout are the most important factors that have an impact on intention to leave among lecturers in private higher institutions in Sabah (Maseri et al., 2022). Lecturers who found support from their principals were less likely to quit their job, and positive climate in workplace can significantly reduce turnover intention in private universities in Nigeria (Kanu et al., 2022).

Faculty members are valuable resources in academia, which need to be retained in universities. As a result, factors that influencing turnover intention, namely affective commitment, normative commitment, organizational fit and sacrifices in organizations can significantly affect faculty members' decision to stay or leave their position in the university of Namibia (Pieters et al., 2022). In a study, the finding showed that there is a negative relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention among the lecturers, which confirms that when lecturers are highly satisfy are less likely to leave their positions in Tanzanian public universities. Moreover, they found significant difference in job satisfaction by age and work experience, and for gender diversity found male lecturers have higher intention to leave the position in compare with female lecturers in universities. They suggested that for universities that aim to have innovative, motivated, and productive faculty members, job satisfaction is one of the considerable attentions in academia (Amani & Komba, 2016).

Job satisfaction is one of the main causes for turnover intention among employees, and there is the negative direct relationship between these factors within organizations (Sharma & Syal, 2022). Turnover intention influenced by many characteristics directly and indirectly among lecturers, as is discussed job satisfaction through work engagement has an effect of turnover intention among lecturers. The authors also examined the impact of work-life balance and organizational commitment factors which is related to lecturers' job in Indonesia (Harini et al., 2020). In a study, the effect of cognitive style on job satisfaction and turnover intention in higher education institutions of Pakistan was examined, and they found that understanding the job satisfaction dimensions could provide the development of more policy practices and reducing turnover intention among university lecturers (Mughal & Busari, 2015).

In Malaysia, social support and substantial work are important factors that predict turnover intention, and those are vital for less rate of turnover intention in academic environment (Ramli et al., 2014). For educational environment in China, work stress directly predicts burnout and intention to leave among undergraduate university teachers, and self-efficacy negatively moderate the direct effect of work stress on

job burnout. This means that when the self-efficacy of teachers in universities are high, the direct effect of work stress on job burnout and turnover intention decrease for them (Pei et al., 2024). By study on turnover intention among early career academicians, career adaptability, motivation, ostracism and work engagement are the critical determinant in reducing turnover intention in higher education institutions (Rafie et al., 2023; Rafie et al., 2024). Attention to enhancing the level of empathy, workplace environment and collaboration, and competent problem-solving can help leaders to reduce turnover intention in organizations (Flores, 2023).

The employees' intention to leave reduces when organizational engagement among employees rises, and job satisfaction and job stress are the most effective characteristics affect the turnover intention among academic faculty in universities (Malik, 2023). Wage inequality factor, including pay disparity and discriminatory promotion, is another predictor of turnover intention, as this correlates positively with employee absenteeism and job search activities (John-Eke et al., 2023). Factors such as the work environment, motivation, and workload are additional factors, each having a significant positive effect on turnover intention (Rahman & Wasiman, 2023).

Organizational Perceived Justice

Organizational justice or justice perception defines workers' individual perception of justice and fair in organizational process and outcome (Colquitt et al., 2001). Employees of an organization having high justice climate may experience more favorable outcomes such as enhanced job satisfaction and reduced intention to quit the company (Sora et al, 2010). According to the study by Manafi and Subramaniam (2015b), universities are recommended to improve the level of justice in many aspects, and found significant impact of equity theory in using intellectual capital. They confirmed justice has dimensions such as distributive, procedural, interactional and informational factors, and educational institutions need to improve all of these four dimensions among lecturers.

Besides, Mengstie (2020) research focuses specifically on the importance of organizational justice in shaping human resource management policy and practice, indicating that healthcare professionals' perception of organizational justice has a significant predictor for turnover intention. The concept of organizational justice is a pivotal concern in academia, since it has an impact on decision to promotion, resource allocation, and workload distribution. By fostering an environment where fairness is perceived and practiced, institutions can enhance job satisfaction, reduce turnover, and promote a positive organizational culture among lecturers.

Distributive justice concentrates on the perceived fairness of outcomes, and in universities distributive justice is achieved when promotions and salary increases are done based on definite criteria like research output and teaching evaluations so that there are equitable rewards for the faculty members (Bhatti, 2024; Ahmad & Jameel, 2021). Procedural justice refers to the fairness of the procedures that are used in decision making about results' allocation (Sjahrudin & Sudiro, 2013; Blakely et al., 2005). In academia, lecturers experience procedural justice when they are involved in decision-making, such as curriculum development or departmental policies, and when these processes are consistent and free from bias (Bhatti, 2024; De Vries et al., 2024). Procedural justice characteristic has significant influence on job satisfaction, motivation, and performance of academic staff, and open decision-making and communication by administrators foster impressions of fairness and equity (Khan et al., 2022). Procedural justice's impact extends beyond the individual level of satisfaction to affect greater organizational outcomes such as employee absenteeism,

turnover, and engagement, and it also intersects with other dimensions of justice, such as distributive and informational justice, to enhance the overall sense of fairness within the firm (Harris, 2015).

Perhaps the most important advance in organizational justice literature is consideration of the importance of interpersonal behaviors in the organization, which is called interactional justice (Fang & Lim, 2002). Interactional justice focuses on the quality of interpersonal treatment individuals receive, particularly from supervisors, which involves trust, respectful, dignified, and informative communication, which has direct effects on job satisfaction, motivation, and commitment of lecturers (Dai & Xie, 2016). High levels of interactional justice increase the positive organizational behavior and organizational citizenship, when staff voluntarily beyond than their official job roles (Ramkissoon, 2016). Research shows that interactional justice also helps to counteract negative work experiences, such as emotional abuse, by instilling in the workplace a respectful and supportive work climate (Lonsdale, 2013).

Interactional justice principles for teachers are based on respect, dignity, and peace communication. These are necessary for a supportive and fair learning environment. They not just enhance organizational commitment and job satisfaction but also reduce deviant behaviors like emotional abuse, which creates a positive organizational culture (Dai & Xie, 2016; Ramkissoon, 2016; Novitasari et al., 2020; Güven & Güven, 2020; Fauzi, 2022; Castillo & Fernandez Alarcon, 2017). Informational justice defines as the adequacy, clarity, and fairness of the information provided to faculty members, and in the university setting this translates to proper communication from the university administration regarding policy changes, performance feedback, and expectations (Bhatti, 2024; Wiseman & Stillwell, 2022). Fair informational justice generates trust and collaboration among teachers, to improve their professional working conditions and overall job satisfaction. Hazzi & Hammami (2019), introduced a technological element to organizational justice, and argued that technology has the capability of enhancing the information dissemination and transparency, and thus informational justice in organizations. Table 4, illustrates the summary of literatures related to dimensions of organizational justice in academia:

Table 4: Summary of Literatures of Organizational Justice, created by the author

Dimensions	Authors	Scope/Sample	Summary of findings
Distributive Justice	Jesus & Rowe (2014)	University lecturers	Found that perceptions of distributive justice influence commitment, trust, and performance among lecturers
	Güven & Güven (2020); Gabriel & Nwaeke (2014)	Higher education sector	Identified that fair distribution of tasks and rewards enhances job satisfaction and motivation while reducing turnover.
	Hernández Gracia et al. (2015)	Senior faculty members	Found that older lecturers with seniority perceive workload distribution as more favorable due to their status.
Procedural Justice	Bhatti (2024); Harris (2015)	Higher education institutions	Highlighted that procedural justice is interconnected with distributive and informational justice, influencing fairness perceptions among lecturers.
	Castillo & Fernandez Alarcon (2017)	Educational settings	Emphasized that the relationship between procedural and interactional justice impacts students' satisfaction and academic experience overall.
	Güven & Güven (2020)	Female lecturers in academia	Found that procedural justice affects job performance, motivation, and personal happiness, with female lecturers particularly concerned about interpersonal equality and gender discrimination.
	Shahzad (2018)	Performance management in universities	Stressed the importance of procedural justice in performance evaluations, leading to workplace satisfaction and improved performance.
	Ahmad & Jameel (2021); Tran (2016)	Higher education institutions	Identified fairness, transparency, respect, and effective communication as key procedural justice principles that contribute to a positive and equitable academic environment.

Interpersonal Justice (Interactional Justice)	Güven & Güven (2020); Fauzi (2022)	Gender differences in academic settings	Reported that female lecturers often perceive lower levels of interactional justice due to gender biases, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions to promote equality.
	Bhatti (2024); Monteiro da Silva et al. (2021)	Higher education institutions	Highlighted that when department heads communicate politely and considerately, lecturers feel respected and valued, fostering a positive work environment.
	Novitasari et al. (2020)	Job satisfaction and motivation of lecturers	Demonstrated that interactional justice directly impacts job satisfaction, motivation, and organizational commitment.
	Dai & Xie (2016); Ramkissoon (2016); Lonsdale (2013); Novitasari et al. (2020); Güven & Güven (2020); Fauzi (2022); Castillo & Fernandez Alarcon (2017); Emami et al. (2013)	Academic work environments	Concluded that respect, dignity, and effective communication are fundamental principles of interactional justice, enhancing job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and reducing negative behaviors like emotional abuse.
Informational Justice	Ibragimova et al. (2012)	Educational institutions	Emphasized that clear, consistent, and equitable dissemination of information shapes perceptions of fairness within organizations.
	Bhatti (2024)	Higher education institutions	Stressed that informational justice, along with procedural, interpersonal, and distributive justice, plays a key role in overall organizational justice, influencing employee satisfaction and efficiency.
	Güven & Güven (2020)	Female lecturers in academia	Highlighted the importance of informational justice in promoting interpersonal equality and reducing negative impacts on job satisfaction and motivation, particularly in gender-biased environments.
	Fauzi (2022)	Academic settings	Found that perceptions of informational justice vary by demographic factors, such as gender, indicating the need for tailored communication strategies.
	Selekler-Goksen et al. (2016)	Turkish public universities	Demonstrated that informational justice enhances leader-member exchanges and complements procedural justice in fostering positive relationships.
	Odor, Martins-Emesom & Ugbechie (2019)	Teaching staff in higher education	Identified a positive correlation between informational justice and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), where fair communication fosters voluntary and constructive behaviors.
	Yang & Cho (2017)	Higher education in Taiwan	Found that informational justice is correlated with background variables such as gender and institutional type, affecting lecturers' perceptions of fairness.
	Alkhadher & Gadelrab (2016)	Higher education in Kuwait	Validated the four-factor model of organizational justice, showing that informational justice significantly impacts organizational commitment and collective esteem.

Relationship Between TL, PJ, TI

Transformational leadership has been shown to negatively correlate with employee turnover intention in many studies, especially among lecturers in universities. Transformational leaders are able to reduce employees' intention to leave their position by providing an individualized support, intellectual stimulation, inspiring vision, and a supportive work environment among lecturers (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Caillier, 2016; Cheng et al., 2016). In higher education, Bukhari & Kamal (2019) found that transformational leadership and supportive environment can reduce the intention to leave among faculty members in universities. Similarly, Sultana & Jabeen (2018) reported a significant negative relationship between transformational leadership and turnover intention, and highlighted employee engagement as an important mechanism in this relationship among faculty members. These findings suggest that transformational leadership may

contribute to employee retention by strengthening positive workplace attitudes, including job satisfaction, engagement, and organizational commitment.

To find the factors than influencing the relationship between transformational leadership and turnover intention, it is partially mediated by mission of the organization, which can enhance motivational value within the organization (Caillier, 2016). According to the studies by Saeed & Jun (2022); Gyensare et al., (2016), transformational leadership has a negative correlation with turnover intention, which means that as transformational leadership increases, the intention of employees to leave the organization decreases significantly. This relationship is further explained by the mediating role of affective commitment, where employees' emotional attachment and involvement with the organization lessen their intention to quit in organizations.

As mentioned by Asgari et al. (2008), in order to maintain transformational and transactional behaviors with subordinates strengthens leader-member exchange relationships, so that enhancing organizational commitment and reducing turnover intention. The interaction between shared and transformational leadership styles can significantly enhance team learning and performance in educational settings. Shared transformational leadership, where team members motivate and inspire each other mentally, has been proved to be superior to traditional vertical leadership in facilitating educational change in institutions (Koeslag-Kreunen et al., 2021). In public sector educational settings, vertical and shared transformational leadership can motivate teams and improve school performance, which the combination allows for a more distributed form of leadership that reaps the strengths of individual leaders as well as the team's collective efforts.

Perceived fairness in the distribution of resources, in assigning workloads, and in making decisions is positively correlated with job satisfaction and firm commitment (Colquitt et al., 2001). For wider implications, however, since perceived justice is a critical determinant of turnover intention, other constructs such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment, which mediate this relationship, have to be considered. For instance, job satisfaction fully mediates between organizational justice and turnover intention, while organizational commitment partially mediates it (Suifan et al., 2017; Al-Kilani, 2017). Perceived organizational support and employee-organization relationship quality are also critical in constructing turnover intentions (Kang & Sung, 2019; Tanoto & Sugiharto, 2018).

Organizations have a responsibility to focus on instituting justice systems and mechanisms for enhancing perception of justice. This includes transparency in decision-making, fairly allocating resources, and thoughtful interpersonal communications (Silvernail et al., 2021; Mengstie, 2020). Furthermore, healthy leader-member exchanges can mitigate the effects of perceived justice, which can foster a healthy work culture in which lecturers can report freely and remain active (Assefa et al., 2024).

3- Proposed Framework

In the academic landscape, the challenge of retaining qualified university lecturers is a matter of paramount importance, prompting an in-depth exploration into the factors that shape their decisions to stay or leave. Based on the reviewed literature, this paper proposes a conceptual framework to intricate dynamics between three key variables, including turnover intention, transformational leadership, and perceived justice.

To achieve the goals of study, turnover intention is chosen as the dependent variable, reflects the proactive decisions of university faculty members to either maintain or abandon their current positions, addressing a critical facet of employee retention within the academic sector. To state the importance of this variable, it directly addresses the challenge of employee retention in the academic environment. Introducing transformational leadership factor as the independent variable holds a central attention to this study, as this style characterized by motivating and inspiring faculty members. This study investigates the potential significant relationship between transformational leadership on the intention to leave or remain in the position among lecturers. Perceived justice is serving as the second independent variable, adding another layer of complexity to this investigation. By review and explore definition of variables and find characteristics effecting academic staffs' decision to stay or leave the organization, the researcher conducted the framework to provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between these variables.

This paper detected the most significant dimensions which has an effect on the relationship between variables of the study. In figure 1, transformational leadership adapted from Carless, Wearing, and Mann (2000), encompassing seven distinct dimensions namely vision, development, supportive leadership, empowerment, innovative thinking, leading by example and charisma. Conversely, turnover intention adapted from the study by Roodt (2004), comprising five characteristics as thought of leaving, job satisfaction, work frustration, value misalignment, job-related daydreaming. Finally, after investigating on factors affecting perceived justice variable, the researcher adapted a short version survey based on Colquitt's (2001) research introducing four dimensions in four factors including distributive, procedural, interpersonal and informational justice.

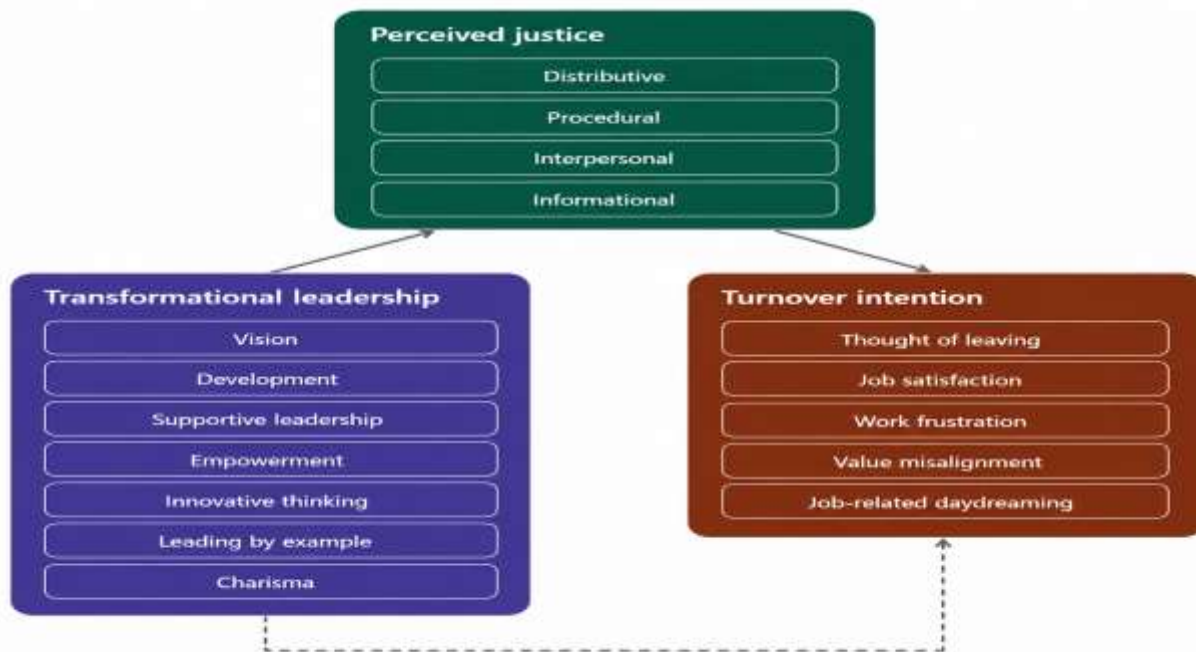


Figure 1: Proposed Framework

4- Conclusion and Future Research

This study reviewed and integrated the existing literature concerning transformational leadership, perceived justice, and turnover intention among university lecturers within the German higher education context. The paper highlighted the increasing importance of effective leadership and organizational fairness in addressing the growing concern of faculty turnover in academic institutions.

The review of literature suggests that transformational leadership is associated with higher motivation, organizational commitment, trust, and job satisfaction while reducing lecturers' intention to leave their institutions. Furthermore, the study emphasized that perceptions of fairness within universities, particularly distributive, procedural, interpersonal, and informational justice, are essential factors influencing employees' attitudes and behavioral intentions in academic environments. The integration of these variables contributes to a deeper understanding of lecturer retention and organizational effectiveness in higher education institutions.

This paper contributes to the literature in several important ways. First, it integrates transformational leadership, perceived justice, and turnover intention into a unified conceptual framework specifically designed for the higher education sector. Second, the study extends organizational behavior research into the German academic environment, which remains comparatively underexplored in existing leadership and turnover literature. Third, the paper emphasizes the application of validated theoretical constructs and organizational behavior dimensions within the context of university lecturers, supporting future empirical investigation in educational institutions. From a practical perspective, the proposed framework may assist university administrators and academic leaders in understanding the importance of transformational leadership behaviors and fair organizational practices in reducing turnover intention among lecturers. Promoting transparent communication, equitable procedures, supportive leadership, and respectful interpersonal relationships may strengthen lecturers' organizational commitment and enhance institutional stability and academic performance.

Despite its contributions, the present study is conceptual in nature and therefore limited by the absence of empirical testing. Future research should empirically examine the proposed framework using quantitative or mixed-method approaches among applied science university lecturers (Fachhochschulen) in Germany. Researchers may further investigate the potential moderating effects of each dimension of organizational justice separately to determine their relative influence on the relationship between transformational leadership and turnover intention. In addition, future studies could explore the role of demographic factors such as gender, age, academic rank, years of experience, and employment status in shaping lecturers' perceptions of leadership and organizational justice. Further comparative studies between public and private universities, as well as cross-cultural investigations involving other European higher education systems, may provide broader insights into leadership effectiveness and lecturer retention strategies in academia. Longitudinal research designs are also recommended to better understand how leadership practices and fairness perceptions influence turnover intention over time.

AI Assistance Declaration

Artificial intelligence tools (Grok by AI and ChatGPT by OpenAI) were used solely for language editing, rephrasing, and improving the English expression of the manuscript. No AI tool was used to generate

original ideas, research content, analysis, or conclusions. The author is fully responsible for the content of this article.

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