

# **IMPACT OF LEADERSHIP STYLES ON ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AND TALENT RETENTION IN THE PERMANENT STAFF OF THE PORTUGUESE ARMY**

Diogo Filipe Miguel da Guarda, Military Academy, [diogoguarda@hotmail.com](mailto:diogoguarda@hotmail.com)

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study examines the impact of different leadership styles on organizational commitment and the intention to leave among the permanent staff of the Portuguese Army. The findings indicate that transformational and authentic leadership styles significantly enhance organizational commitment and reduce the intention to leave, while the laissez-faire leadership style has the opposite effect. The study utilized a quantitative approach, collecting data from 228 respondents from officers and sergeants, and applied linear regression analysis to determine the impact of leadership styles on the variables of interest.

**Keywords:** Leadership, Authentic Leadership, Transformational Leadership, Organizational Commitment, Intention to Leave, Military Leadership.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The recent pandemic has profoundly affected the labor market, introducing terms like "Great Resignation" and "Quiet Quitting" to describe employee disengagement and dissatisfaction. Leadership plays a crucial role in influencing how employees perceive and interact with their organizations. This study aims to explore how different

leadership styles impact organizational commitment and the intention to leave among the permanent staff of the Portuguese Army.

The Portuguese Army, like other military institutions, faces significant challenges concerning talent retention within its permanent staff. Turnover intention and organizational commitment are critical issues affecting the institution's stability and operational effectiveness, particularly given that many years of training are required to equip these highly specialized personnel.

Leadership is a complex process involving influencing followers to achieve common goals (Northouse, 2021). According to General Belchior Vieira (2002), leadership is the process of influencing human behavior, beyond what could be achieved solely through invested authority, to accomplish purposes, goals, and objectives defined and prescribed by the designated organizational leader. Research has demonstrated that different leadership styles can have varying impacts on job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and employees' turnover intention (Bass, 1985; Avolio & Gardner, 2005).

Through a questionnaire administered to 228 permanent army personnel, this study aims to examine how the various perceived leadership styles (Authentic, Transactional, Transformational, and Passive or Laissez-faire) influence organizational commitment and turnover intention. The goal is to assist in identifying future pathways and provide clearer insights to leaders regarding the impact of different leadership styles on talent retention within the Army's permanent staff.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 TRANSFORMATIONAL, TRANSACTIONAL, AND PASSIVE OR LAISSEZ-FAIRE LEADERSHIP**

Transformational leadership is characterized by the ability to inspire and motivate followers to achieve outcomes beyond their expectations, thus fostering a sense of mission and purpose (Bass, 1985). This leadership style encompasses four primary components: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Avolio & Bass, 2002). Within the military context, transformational leaders play a crucial role in building cohesion and esprit de corps. The component of inspirational motivation pertains to the leader's ability to communicate an appealing vision of the future, thereby encouraging followers to commit themselves to collective objectives (Bass & Riggio, 2006). For the Portuguese Army, this may translate into greater mission commitment and improved retention of talent among career personnel.

Transactional leadership is based upon exchanges or transactions between the leader and followers, wherein rewards are contingent upon performance and task completion (Burns, 1978). The two primary dimensions of transactional leadership include contingent reward and active management-by-exception.

The laissez-faire style is characterized by an absence of active leadership. Laissez-faire leaders typically avoid decision-making, abdicate responsibilities, and rarely take proactive measures (Bass, 1990). It can also be associated with passive management-by-exception, where the leader intervenes only after errors or failures occur (Bass, 1985). This leadership style generally correlates with negative outcomes, including decreased morale and follower dissatisfaction (Skogstad et al., 2007).

## **2.2 AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP**

The roots of authentic leadership lie in theories of positive psychology as well as transformational and ethical leadership. Positive psychology, a field developed by Seligman, emphasizes the positive aspects of human experience—such as resilience and well-being—suggesting that authentic leaders cultivate healthier and more motivating work environments (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Authentic leadership involves self-awareness, relational transparency, and ethical decision-making (Walumbwa et al., 2008). Research indicates that authentic leadership fosters trust and strengthens organizational commitment.

## **2.3 ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT**

Defined as the psychological attachment and loyalty an employee feels towards their organization, encompassing affective, normative, and calculative dimensions (Meyer & Allen, 1991). É este compromisso que permite às organizações obter vantagens por forma a alcançar uma vantagem competitiva sustentável (Jena and Pradhan 2018).

Organizational commitment comprises three dimensions: (1) affective commitment, which reflects an individual's emotional attachment to, and identification with, the values and goals of the organization; (2) normative commitment, which is grounded in the principle of reciprocity—employees with high normative commitment feel a stronger sense of obligation and duty to remain with the organization; and (3) continuance commitment, which refers to an employee's desire or need to stay in the organization, based on a cost–benefit analysis of their personal investment versus the potential costs of leaving (Kaarsemaker, 2008; Nasab & Afshari, 2019).

## **2.4 TURNOVER INTENTION**

Turnover intention refers to employees' willingness to leave the organization and is often influenced by the quality of leadership (Maertz & Griffeth, 2004). It is one of the strongest predictors of actual turnover, representing the most robust cognitive precursor to an employee's departure from the organization. As such, it serves as a reliable substitute for actual turnover rates in research contexts (Oliveira, 2009). According to Varshney (2014), turnover intention is a subjective perception held by an individual within an organization to leave their job in pursuit of alternative opportunities.

Authentic leadership—characterized by transparency, ethical conduct, and self-awareness—has a significant inverse correlation with employees' turnover intention. Authentic leaders are perceived as trustworthy and genuine, fostering a work environment where employees feel valued and supported. Such an environment mitigates uncertainty and stress, two factors frequently associated with the intention to leave (Walumbwa et al., 2008).

## **3. METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 HYPOTHESES**

To develop the hypotheses for this study, a conceptual model was constructed (Annex I – Table 01), guided by the central research question: “What is the influence of leadership styles on the retention of career personnel in the Army?”

From this central question, two derivative research questions (RQs) were formulated:

- RQ1 – How are the leadership styles of career Army personnel characterized?
- RQ2 – What is the relationship between leadership styles and the retention of career Army personnel?

To address RQ1, Hypothesis 1 was developed. To address RQ2, Hypotheses 2 and 3 were formulated. The hypotheses are outlined below:

- Hypothesis 1 (H1): Leadership style negatively influences turnover intention.
- Hypothesis 2 (H2): Leadership style positively influences organizational commitment.
- Hypothesis 3 (H3): The relationship between leadership style and turnover intention is mediated by organizational commitment.

The hypotheses above are represented in the accompanying diagram.

**Figure 1**

*Hypotheses diagram*



**Note.** Source: Author's work.

### **3.2 METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES**

The present study aims to examine the relationship among the following variables: authentic leadership, laissez-faire leadership, transactional and transformational leadership, along with organizational commitment and turnover intention. To analyze all variables, a quantitative, descriptive research design was adopted. The chosen procedure involved administering an online questionnaire, conducted at a single point in time, using the Google Forms platform.

The questionnaire was structured into four sections, and completion of all items was required for a response to be considered valid. The first section collected sociodemographic data, including personal information (gender and age group) and professional background (rank category, branch or service affiliation, current rank, and years of service by category). Sections two through four addressed the key study measures, asking participants to evaluate the leadership style of their immediate superior and their perception of the organization. Prior to completing the questionnaire, participants were informed about the study's objectives, confidentiality protocols, and anonymity guarantees.

A pre-test was conducted with 10 participants to validate response time, questionnaire clarity, potential errors, and data collection method. These participants were selected based on convenience. Following the pre-test, the questionnaire was submitted for approval to the Chief of Staff of the Portuguese Army, allowing it to be distributed via email to all Army officers and non-commissioned officers. As a result, a question regarding permanent cadre membership was added; participants who responded negatively were automatically redirected to the end of the questionnaire.

Participants were also encouraged to share the questionnaire with others, applying a snowball sampling strategy (Reis et al., 1997). The data collection period extended from April 17, 2023, to June 10, 2024.

### **3.3 KEY MESURES**

This subsection presents the key measures used in the study. These were assessed using five-point Likert scales, ranging from 1 = "Never" to 5 = "Always," and seven-point Likert scales, ranging from 1 = "Strongly Disagree" to 7 = "Strongly Agree." Authorization to use each of the instruments was obtained from one of the original authors of each scale via email or through the Mind Garden website. The reliability

and internal consistency of the instruments were evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, with values above 0.7 considered acceptable (Rust & Cooil, 1994).

**Authentic Leadership.** The Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ), translated into Portuguese, was used in this study. The 16 items of the ALQ cover four dimensions identified by Walumbwa et al. (2008), distributed as follows: 5 items for Transparency (e.g., "My supervisor says exactly what they mean"); 4 items for Moral and Ethical Perspective (e.g., "My supervisor makes decisions based on their core values"); 3 items for Balanced Processing (e.g., "My supervisor carefully listens to different points of view before drawing conclusions"); and 4 items for Self-awareness (e.g., "My supervisor is aware of when they need to re-evaluate their positions on important issues"). The Cronbach's alpha for the overall authentic leadership scale was .97. The values for each dimension were: .90 for Transparency, .91 for Moral and Ethical Perspective, .89 for Balanced Processing, and .93 for Self-awareness.

**Perceived Leadership Style.** To assess other perceived leadership styles, the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire – MLQ-5x4 (Avolio, Bass, & Jung, 1996) was used, based on the Portuguese military-context adaptation (Guiomar, 2010) validated for military use (Azevedo, 2021). This scale comprises 45 items divided into four dimensions: Transformational Leadership (20 items across five subscales with four items each), Transactional Leadership (8 items across two subscales with four items each), Passive Leadership (8 items across two subscales with four items each), and Leadership Outcomes (9 items across three subscales with three items each). The overall Cronbach's alpha for the MLQ-5x4 was .97. For each dimension: .97 for Transformational Leadership, .85 for Transactional Leadership, .75 for Passive Leadership (item 28 was removed), and .96 for Leadership Outcomes.

**Organizational Commitment.** Organizational commitment was measured using the Portuguese military-context adaptation by Fachada (2015) of the scale developed by



Allen and Meyer (1990), as translated by Nascimento et al. (2008). The instrument includes 18 items assessing three dimensions: Affective Commitment (e.g., “I find that my personal values and those of this organization are quite similar”), Normative Commitment (e.g., “I am willing to go above and beyond to help this organization succeed”), and Continuance Commitment (e.g., “For me, this is the best possible place to work”). The Cronbach’s alpha for the overall scale was .75. For each dimension: .78 for Affective Commitment (item 3 was removed), .78 for Normative Commitment, and .72 for Continuance Commitment.

**Turnover Intention.** Turnover intention was assessed using the unidimensional Turnover Cognition scale (Bozeman & Perrewé, 2001), validated for the Portuguese military context by Braga (2018). This scale includes five items (e.g., “I am likely to look for another job in the near future”). The Cronbach’s alpha for this scale was .90.

### **3.4 PARTICIPANTS**

From the initial sample of 242 observations, 14 were excluded. Due to institutional limitations, the questionnaire could only be formally distributed to officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) of the Army's permanent cadre (QP). The second question of the survey asked whether the respondent belonged to the QP; 14 individuals answered negatively. In this context, QP personnel are defined as military members with permanent contracts and continuous career progression until retirement age. The final sample therefore consisted of 228 observations.

Regarding sociodemographic variables, the distribution of the sample reveals that 206 participants (90.4%) were male. In terms of age, approximately 92.1% were between 30 and 59 years old, with the median age falling within the 45–49 age range. The sample was evenly split between officers and NCOs, with 114 individuals (50%) in each category. As for branch or service affiliation, the largest proportion came from

the Infantry (66 participants, 28.9%), followed by Artillery (34 participants, 14.9%) and Cavalry (30 participants, 13.2%). Other branches each represented less than 10% of the sample, with Pharmacy, Veterinary Medicine, and Medicine each comprising only 2 participants (0.9%).

In terms of rank, 49 participants (21.5%) were Sergeant Majors (Sargentos Ajudantes). Regarding years of service, the most represented group was those with 25 to 29 years of service, also with 49 participants (21.5%).

**Table 1**

*Demographic distribution of participants*

Variable	Category	Frequency (%)
Gender	Male	90.4%
	Female	9.6%
Rank	Officers	50%
	Sergeants	50%

### **3.5 DATA ANALYSIS**

The data collected were analyzed using IBM® SPSS® Statistics software. The statistical procedures included Reliability Analysis through the computation of Cronbach's alpha, sample characterization based on sociodemographic variables, as well as Descriptive Analysis, Correlation Analysis, Regression Analysis, and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

## **4. RESULTS**

### **4.1 CORRELATION ANALYSIS**

To assess the hypotheses regarding the influence of leadership styles on turnover intention and organizational commitment, the analysis began with a correlation analysis. The objective of this analysis was to identify the strength and direction of the relationships between the variables of interest—specifically, leadership styles (transformational, transactional, laissez-faire, and authentic), turnover intention, and organizational commitment (OC), including its subscales: continuance commitment, affective commitment, and normative commitment.

**Table 2**

*Pearson correlations, means, and standard deviations of key variables.*

	Average	Standard Deviation	Authentic Leadership	Transformational Leadership	Transactional Leadership	Laissez-faire Leadership	Leadership Results	Organizational Commitment	Turnover Intention	Age	Sex	Category	Weapons or Service	Rank	Years of Service
Authentic Leadership	3.09	0.91	1												
Transformational Leadership	3.16	0.87	,916**	1											
Transactional Leadership	3.07	0.72	,843**	,892**	1										
Laissez-faire Leadership	2.89	0.69	-,280**	-,278**	-,0107	1									
Leadership Results	3.17	0.99	,890**	,933**	,856**	-,271**	1								
Organizational Commitment	4.03	0.8	,470**	,433**	,418**	-,054	,455**	1							
Turnover Intention	2.75	1.19	-,451**	-,463**	-,368**	,271**	-,502**	-,473**	1						
Age	---	---	,184**	,204**	,176**	-,0099	,197**	0,114	-,208**	1					
Category	---	---	-,020	-,078	-,027	0,032	-,030	-,0105	0,010	0,130	-,059	1			
Weapons or Service	---	---	0,046	0,021	0,025	0,005	0,076	-,022	-,070	0,067	,210**	0,042	1		
Rank	---	---	0,088	,140*	0,080	-,076	0,095	,196*	-,096	,211**	-,020	-,869**	-,096	1	
Years of Service	---	---	,198**	,215**	,190**	-,0122	,215**	0,153	-,222**	,963**	-,150*	0,103	0,065	,237**	1

The correlation results indicate that transformational, transactional, and authentic leadership styles are significantly and negatively correlated with turnover intention. In other words, the greater the perception of these leadership styles, the lower the turnover intention among military personnel. Conversely, the laissez-faire leadership style showed a positive correlation with turnover intention, suggesting that the more prevalent this style is, the higher the intention to leave.

It is also observed that the Leadership Outcomes variable contributes to a 50% reduction in turnover intention, whereas the laissez-faire leadership variable contributes to an increase, in contrast to the other leadership styles, which have a positive impact in reducing turnover intention.

Regarding organizational commitment, transformational, transactional, and authentic leadership styles demonstrated significant positive correlations. On the other hand, laissez-faire leadership exhibited negative correlations with all subscales of organizational commitment, indicating a detrimental effect on military personnel's commitment to the organization.

Moreover, the Leadership Outcomes variable is associated with a 46% increase in organizational commitment, whereas the laissez-faire leadership variable contributes to a reduction, contrary to the other leadership styles, which positively influence commitment.

### **Table 3**

*Cronbach's alpha for leadership, turnover cognition and organizational commitment measures*

<b>Scale</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>
Authentic Leadership	0.97
Transformational Leadership	0.96
Transactional	0.85
Laissez-Faire Leadership	0.75
Organizational Commitment	0.85
Turnover Cognition	0.90

## 4.2 REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Subsequently, multiple regression analyses were conducted to test the direct impact of leadership styles on turnover intention and the subscales of organizational commitment, addressing Hypotheses H1 and H2.

**Table 4**

*Regression models predicting organizational commitment and turnover*

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	$\beta$ Coefficient	R <sup>2</sup> Coefficient	p-value
Authentic Leadership	Organizational Commitment	0.55	0.22	<0.001
	Turnover Intention	-0.34	0.20	<0.001
Transformational Leadership	Organizational Commitment	0.43	0.19	<0.001
	Turnover Intention	-0.46	0.21	<0.001
Transactional Leadership	Organizational Commitment	0.42	0.18	<0.001
	Turnover Intention	-0.37	0.14	<0.001
Laissez-Faire Leadership	Organizational Commitment	-0.30	0.003	0.51
	Turnover Intention	0.30	0.07	<0.001

The findings show that all leadership styles significantly influence turnover intention, thereby confirming the hypotheses. Authentic leadership emerged as the most significant and impactful style. Transformational and transactional leadership styles also contributed to a reduction in turnover intention, whereas laissez-faire leadership was associated with an increase in such intention.

## 4.3 ANOVA (ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE)

In the Age Groups and Intention to Leave we find that  $F(8, 495) = 9.02$ ,  $p < 0.001$ : This indicates that there are significant differences in the intention to leave among different age groups. In the Post-Hoc Tests: Tukey's HSD and Scheffé tests revealed that younger age groups (20-25 years) have a higher intention to leave compared to older age groups (>60 years). This suggests that younger employees are more likely to consider leaving the organization.

On the Seniority and Organizational Commitment, we have that  $F(7, 496) = 6.88, p < 0.001$ : Significant differences in organizational commitment were found across different levels of seniority. And the Post-Hoc Tests: Higher organizational commitment was observed among leadership positions compared to administrative roles. This implies that employees in leadership roles feel more committed to the organization.

About Activity within the Organization the value of  $F(9, 494) = 4.19, p < 0.001$ : Significant differences in organizational commitment were found across different activities within the organization. Post-Hoc Tests show that Employees in the telecommunications and/or informatics sector showed higher organizational commitment compared to those in the health and education sectors. This indicates that the nature of the work and the sector can influence the level of commitment employees feel towards the organization.

At Educational Level and Intention to Leave the  $F(8, 495) = 9.02, p < 0.001$ : Significant differences in the intention to leave were found across different educational levels. And Post-Hoc Tests: Employees with higher educational levels (e.g., post-Bologna Licenciatura, Master's, Doctorate) showed a higher intention to leave compared to those with lower educational levels (e.g., basic education). This suggests that more educated employees may seek better opportunities outside the organization.

## **5. DISCUSSION**

The primary objective of this study was to examine the impact of different leadership styles on organizational commitment and the intention to leave among the permanent staff of the Portuguese Army. The findings provide significant insights into how transformational, authentic, and liberal leadership styles influence these variables.

The first major line of investigation in this study focused on examining the influence of leadership styles on turnover intention. Transformational leadership showed the greatest impact in reducing turnover intention. This finding aligns with the literature by Bass and Riggio (2006), which describes transformational leadership as a style capable of inspiring and motivating subordinates to achieve high goals and a stronger sense of belonging to the organization. Transformational leaders tend to foster a shared vision, promoting greater commitment and, consequently, lower intention to leave the organization.

Transactional leadership also demonstrated a significant impact, although smaller than that of transformational leadership. The emphasis on management-by-exception and contingent reward can be effective in talent retention by establishing a clear link between performance and reward, as explained by Burns (1978). However, it may not influence military personnel emotionally to the same extent as transformational leadership.

Authentic leadership also had a significant influence on reducing turnover intention, as described in Walumbwa et al. (2008). This leadership style—characterized by transparency, self-awareness, and strong moral values—appears to build trust-based relationships, which may explain the decrease in turnover intention observed in this study. This suggests that leaders perceived as authentic foster a work environment in which military personnel feel more valued and connected to the organization, thereby reducing their intention to leave, as also supported by Cunha et al. (2007).

In contrast, laissez-faire or passive leadership showed the opposite effect, significantly increasing turnover intention. This result reflects the negative characteristics associated with this leadership style, in which a lack of involvement, guidance, and support from leaders can lead to frustration, demotivation, and ultimately, the intention to leave the organization. This observation confirms previous studies that associate

laissez-faire leadership with adverse organizational behaviors, as described by Skogstad et al. (2007).

The second line of investigation explored the influence of leadership styles on organizational commitment—specifically, continuance, affective, and normative commitment. According to the regression results, transformational and authentic leadership styles positively influenced all subscales of organizational commitment. Transactional leadership showed a significant positive effect on affective and normative dimensions but not on continuance commitment. Laissez-faire leadership, on the other hand, did not demonstrate a significant relationship with any dimension of organizational commitment

Transformational leadership, which stands out for its inspirational motivation, idealized influence, and intellectual stimulation, proved particularly effective in strengthening all three forms of organizational commitment. Its positive effect on affective commitment suggests that transformational leaders, through their ability to inspire and emotionally connect with military personnel, foster a strong identification with the organization, increasing the desire to remain for emotional reasons, as described by Walumbwa et al. (2008). Likewise, the positive impact on normative and continuance commitment suggests that transformational leaders also influence perceptions of moral obligation and calculated benefits, reinforcing the organizational bond.

Authentic leadership, characterized by consistency between words and actions and a focus on ethics and transparency, as described by Luthans and Avolio, also had a positive effect on all dimensions of organizational commitment. This result suggests that military personnel perceive authentic leaders as trustworthy and morally sound, which increases their loyalty (affective commitment), their sense of moral duty



(normative commitment), and their evaluation of the benefits of remaining with the organization (continuance commitment).

Although less impactful overall, transactional leadership had a significant positive effect on affective and normative commitment. The emphasis on performance recognition and reward-based management appears to reinforce perceptions of fairness and responsibility among military personnel, which may explain its influence on these two dimensions, as suggested by Bass & Riggio (2006).

Interestingly, laissez-faire leadership showed no significant influence on any dimension of organizational commitment. This reflects the passive nature of this leadership style, which likely fails to generate the engagement necessary to foster commitment among military personnel.

The third line of investigation aimed to explore the mediating role of organizational commitment in the relationship between leadership styles and turnover intention. Mediation analyses confirmed that organizational commitment significantly mediates the relationship between transformational, transactional, laissez-faire, and authentic leadership and turnover intention.

In the case of transformational and authentic leadership, the mediation effect of organizational commitment reinforces the idea that these leadership styles reduce turnover intention, which in turn enhances commitment. This suggests that leaders who inspire, demonstrate self-awareness, and act transparently are not only able to retain military personnel but also strengthen their organizational commitment, as supported by Bass and Riggio (2006).

In the case of transactional leadership, the mediation indicates that while this style may not directly influence turnover intention as strongly as transformational and authentic leadership, the reduction in turnover intention through management-by-exception and contingent reward indirectly contributes to strengthening commitment.

As expected, laissez-faire leadership demonstrated an inverse mediation effect, reducing organizational commitment and thereby increasing turnover intention. The lack of direction and support from laissez-faire leaders not only leads military personnel to consider leaving the organization but also weakens their bond with it.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

The study highlights the critical role of leadership in influencing organizational commitment and the intention to leave among the permanent staff of the Portuguese Army. By adopting transformational and authentic leadership styles, military leaders can enhance organizational commitment and reduce turnover, ultimately contributing to a more stable and effective military organization.

The present article aimed to analyze the influence of leadership styles on turnover intention and organizational commitment among personnel in the Portuguese Army, as well as to explore the mediating role of turnover intention in the relationship between leadership and organizational commitment. Based on the analyses conducted, it was found that leadership styles—particularly transformational and authentic leadership—play a crucial role in talent retention and in strengthening organizational commitment. These findings are consistent with existing literature and with the studies of Tucker and Turner (2011), Walumbwa et al. (2008), and Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi (2000).

The results indicate that transformational leadership had the strongest impact in reducing turnover intention and enhancing organizational commitment, confirming the hypothesis that transformational leaders—who inspire, motivate, and emotionally engage their subordinates—create a positive work environment that fosters a stronger desire to remain in the organization (Bass & Avolio, 1993). These results are in line with previous studies showing that transformational leadership is associated with

higher levels of organizational commitment and lower turnover rates across various organizational contexts (Avolio, Bass, & Jung, 1999).

Similarly, authentic leadership proved effective in reducing turnover intention and increasing organizational commitment. Leaders who demonstrate transparency and uphold ethical values are perceived as trustworthy and consistent. This leadership style has been associated with greater subordinate well-being and the creation of a healthier work environment, as reported by Gardner, Coglisier, Davis, and Dickens (2011). The trust fostered by authentic leadership strengthens organizational commitment, as military personnel feel more connected to the organization.

In contrast, laissez-faire or passive leadership showed a negative effect on both organizational commitment and turnover intention. This finding supports previous studies by Skogstad et al. (2007), which highlight that the absence of direction and involvement from laissez-faire leaders may lead to demotivation and a higher intention to leave. The lack of active support from such leaders contributes to frustration among subordinates, increasing the likelihood that they will consider leaving the organization. Transactional leadership also demonstrated a significant, though more moderate, effect on both turnover intention and organizational commitment. The use of contingent rewards and the performance-based focus characteristic of this leadership style appears to have a positive effect in some contexts. However, it may fall short of emotionally engaging military personnel, as observed by Judge and Piccolo (2004). While transactional leadership can effectively set clear goals and promote compliance with expectations, it may not inspire the same level of affective commitment as transformational or authentic leadership.

Mediation analysis confirmed that turnover intention plays a key role in the relationship between leadership and organizational commitment. Transformational and authentic leaders, by reducing turnover intention, reinforce military personnel's

connection to the organization. These findings support the framework proposed by Meyer and Allen (1991), who argue that organizational commitment is shaped by emotional, normative, and continuance components—and that effective leadership can strengthen these dimensions while reducing the desire to leave.

**Leadership Development:** The findings underscore the importance of developing transformational and authentic leadership qualities among military leaders. Training programs should focus on enhancing leaders' ability to inspire, motivate, and act ethically.

**Retention Strategies:** To reduce turnover, the Portuguese Army should prioritize creating a supportive and engaging work environment. This includes recognizing and rewarding employees' contributions, providing opportunities for professional growth, and fostering a culture of trust and transparency.

**Addressing Liberal Leadership:** Efforts should be made to minimize the prevalence of liberal leadership within the organization. This can be achieved through leadership training, performance evaluations, and feedback mechanisms that encourage proactive and engaged leadership.

**Leadership Theory:** This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by empirically validating the positive effects of transformational and authentic leadership on organizational commitment and the intention to leave within a military context. It also highlights the detrimental effects of liberal leadership, providing a comprehensive understanding of how different leadership styles impact employee outcomes.

**Organizational Commitment:** The study reinforces the importance of organizational commitment as a mediator between leadership styles and turnover intentions. It demonstrates that committed employees are less likely to leave the organization, emphasizing the need for leaders to foster a strong sense of loyalty and attachment.

**Leadership Training:** Implement training programs that focus on developing transformational and authentic leadership skills. These programs should include modules on ethical decision-making, effective communication, and motivational techniques.

**Employee Engagement:** Develop initiatives aimed at increasing employee engagement and satisfaction. This could include regular feedback sessions, career development opportunities, and recognition programs.

**Performance Management:** Establish a robust performance management system that identifies and addresses liberal leadership behaviors. Provide leaders with the tools and support needed to adopt more proactive and engaging leadership styles.

**Sample Size and Generalizability:** The study's sample size was limited to 228 respondents from the Portuguese Army, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. Future research should consider larger and more diverse samples to validate the results.

**Cross-Sectional Design:** The cross-sectional design of the study limits the ability to draw causal inferences. Longitudinal studies are recommended to examine the long-term effects of leadership styles on organizational commitment and turnover intentions.

**Additional Variables:** Future research could explore additional variables that may influence the relationship between leadership styles and employee outcomes, such as organizational culture, job satisfaction, and employee well-being.

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