

# **INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT AND MEDIATION OF ORGANISATIONAL JUSTICE BETWEEN RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP AND EMPLOYEE TURNOVER INTENTIONS IN THE INDIAN HEALTHCARE SECTOR**

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## **Abstract**

This study investigates the mediating role of organizational justice (OJ) in the relationship between responsible leadership (RL) and employee turnover intention (TI) within the Indian healthcare sector. The research aims to determine whether OJ serves as a key mechanism through which RL influences employees' decisions to stay or leave their jobs. Data were collected from 387 healthcare professionals through both online and offline surveys. The analysis was performed using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) with Smart PLS 4. The results reveal a positive relationship between responsible leadership and organizational justice, suggesting that leaders who act responsibly are more likely to foster perceptions of fairness and justice within the organization. Furthermore, the findings show that organizational justice is negatively associated with turnover intention, indicating that when employees perceive fairness in their work environment, they are less likely to consider leaving their jobs. Importantly, the study confirms that organizational justice partially mediates the relationship between responsible leadership and turnover intention. This means that responsible leadership reduces turnover intention both directly and indirectly through enhanced perceptions of justice. The study underscores the importance of cultivating a just organizational culture through responsible leadership practices to reduce employee turnover in the healthcare industry. Given the critical role of healthcare professionals, reducing turnover through leadership-driven fairness can contribute to improved workforce stability, better patient care,

and organizational performance. The findings offer valuable insights for healthcare administrators and policymakers aiming to create supportive and ethical work environments.

**Keywords:** Responsible Leadership, Organizational Justice, Turnover Intention, Health-Care Sector, PLS-SEM, Mediation

## **Introduction**

This study investigates the mediating role of organizational justice (OJ) in the relationship between responsible leadership (RL) and employee turnover intention (TI) within the Indian healthcare sector. Employee turnover, especially in healthcare, remains a critical concern as it not only affects the quality and continuity of patient care but also imposes significant recruitment and training costs while weakening team cohesion and morale (Hayes et al., 2012; Buchan et al., 2014). As India continues to expand its healthcare infrastructure, employee retention becomes increasingly vital for ensuring efficient and patient-centered service delivery (Rao & Pilot, 2014). Responsible leadership, as conceptualized by Maak and Pless (2006), is a multidimensional leadership approach grounded in ethical values, stakeholder engagement, and sustainable practices. It goes beyond transactional or transformational leadership by focusing on the long-term welfare of all stakeholders, including employees. In healthcare settings, responsible leaders are expected to foster environments that support ethical behavior, open communication, and fairness—factors that can significantly influence workforce stability (Doh & Quigley, 2014; Waldman & Galvin, 2008). Previous studies have indicated that RL can reduce organizational stressors, promote inclusivity, and enhance job satisfaction (Voegtlin, 2011).

Organizational justice encompasses distributive, procedural, and interactional fairness and plays a central role in determining how employees respond to organizational actions (Colquitt et al., 2001). Employees who perceive fairness in treatment and decision-making are more likely to demonstrate organizational commitment and less likely to consider leaving (Elanain, 2010; Greenberg, 1990). In healthcare, where decisions often carry ethical and emotional weight, justice perceptions can greatly influence morale, trust, and turnover behaviors (Beugré, 2007).

Grounded in **Social Exchange Theory (SET)** (Blau, 1964), this study posits that responsible leadership enhances perceptions of organizational justice, which in turn decreases employees'

intention to leave the organization. SET suggests that when employees receive fair treatment and ethical support from their leaders, they feel obligated to reciprocate through loyalty and reduced withdrawal behaviors (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

To empirically test these relationships, data were gathered from 387 healthcare professionals across various institutions in India through a combination of online and offline surveys. The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) in Smart PLS 4. The results reveal that RL significantly enhances OJ and that OJ, in turn, negatively impacts TI. Moreover, OJ partially mediates the relationship between RL and TI. These findings provide strong evidence that fostering a culture of justice through responsible leadership can play a critical role in reducing turnover intention in the Indian healthcare sector. This research offers practical implications for healthcare administrators aiming to retain talent and promote a stable, ethical, and employee-oriented work environment.

## **Literature Review**

### **Responsible Leadership and Turnover Intention**

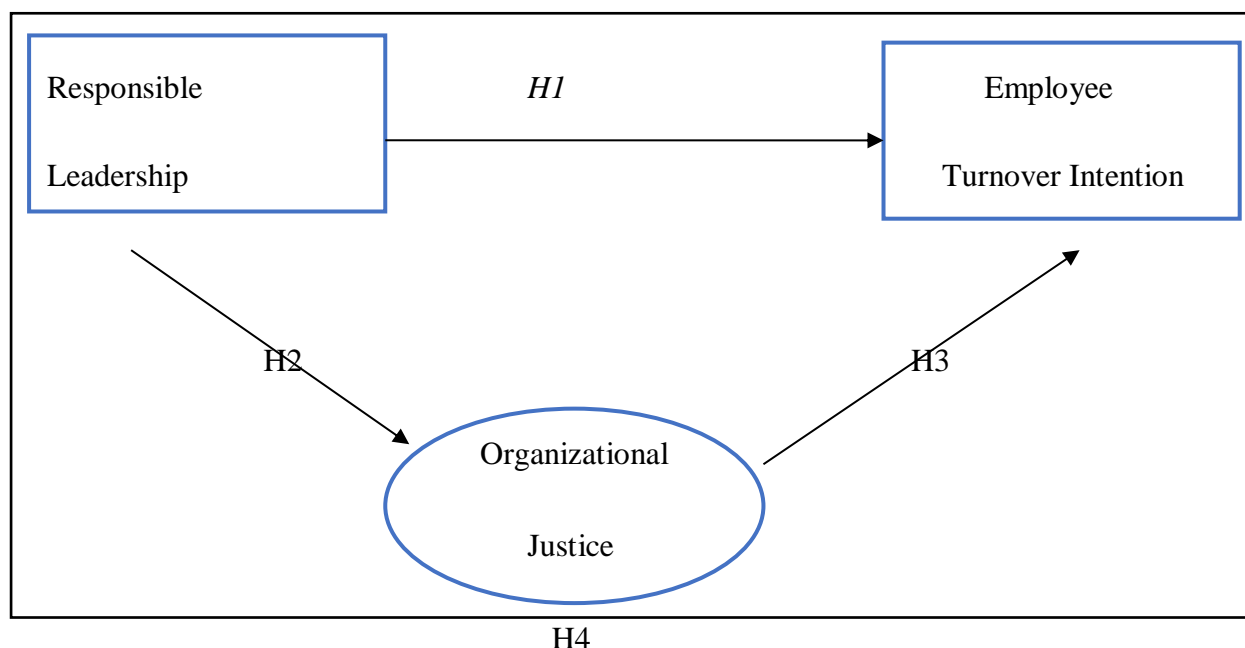
Responsible leadership (RL) is a contemporary leadership construct rooted in ethical conduct, stakeholder orientation, and sustainable decision-making (Maak & Pless, 2006). In contrast to traditional leadership styles focused on performance or control, RL emphasizes relational accountability and moral responsibility toward both internal and external stakeholders (Pless & Maak, 2011). In healthcare, responsible leadership is particularly crucial due to the high-stakes environment and ethical complexities (Haque et al., 2019). Leaders who act responsibly tend to cultivate trust, transparency, and respect, which are critical for employee retention.

Prior studies have indicated a negative association between responsible leadership and turnover intentions, suggesting that employees are more likely to remain with organizations where they perceive leadership to be ethical and supportive (Doh & Quigley, 2014). Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

### **Responsible Leadership and Organizational Justice**

Organizational justice (OJ) refers to the perceived fairness in organizational decision-making, resource distribution, and interpersonal interactions (Colquitt, 2001). Leaders play a central role in shaping justice perceptions, particularly through how they communicate, involve

employees in decisions, and demonstrate fairness in outcomes (Greenberg, 1990). Responsible leadership, by its ethical and stakeholder-centered nature, is theorized to promote a just work environment (Voegtlin, 2011).



**Source:** Self Constructed

Previous research has confirmed a positive relationship between RL and OJ, showing that responsible leaders are effective in building a culture of fairness (Miska & Mendenhall, 2018). Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated:

### **Organizational Justice and Turnover Intention**

Organizational justice has consistently been found to influence employee attitudes and behaviors. According to social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), when employees perceive fairness in their organization, they reciprocate through positive outcomes such as loyalty and reduced turnover intention. This is particularly relevant in the healthcare sector, where stress and workload can intensify sensitivity to justice issues (Elovainio et al., 2002).

High levels of perceived justice can buffer the impact of work-related stressors and foster organizational commitment, thereby reducing employees' desire to leave (Elanain, 2010). Hence, we propose:

## **Mediating Role of Organizational Justice**

Building on the tenets of social exchange theory, it is reasonable to argue that the influence of responsible leadership on turnover intention may be mediated by organizational justice. Responsible leaders, through their fair and ethical conduct, shape employee perceptions of justice, which in turn affect their intention to stay or leave (Aryee et al., 2002).

Recent empirical work supports the mediating role of justice in leadership-outcome relationships (Afsar et al., 2020; Khan et al., 2021). This mechanism is particularly vital in healthcare settings, where leadership integrity and fairness can significantly influence employee morale and retention.

## **Objectives of the Study**

- To examine the impact of responsible leadership on employee turnover intention in the Indian healthcare sector.
- To analyze the relationship between responsible leadership and organizational justice.
- To assess the effect of organizational justice on employee turnover intention.
- To investigate the mediating role of organizational justice in the relationship between responsible leadership and turnover intention.

## **Hypotheses of the Study**

**H1:** Responsible Leadership has a significant negative effect on Turnover Intention.

**H2:** Responsible Leadership has a significant positive effect on Organizational Justice.

**H3:** Organizational Justice has a significant negative effect on Turnover Intention.

**H4:** Organizational Justice mediates the relationship between Responsible Leadership and Turnover Intention.

## **Research Methodology**

### **Research Design**

This study adopted a **quantitative, cross-sectional research design** to examine the mediating role of organizational justice (OJ) in the relationship between responsible leadership (RL) and employee turnover intention (TI) among healthcare professionals in India. A **deductive**

**approach** was used, grounded in **Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964)**, to test the proposed hypotheses and conceptual framework.

### ***Sample and Data Collection***

The target population comprised **healthcare professionals** (e.g., doctors, nurses, administrative staff) working in public and private healthcare institutions across multiple Indian states. A total of **387 valid responses** were collected through **online (Google Forms)** survey methods between January and March 2025. A **non-probability purposive sampling technique** was used to ensure participation from individuals with at least **one year of work experience**, enabling them to meaningfully assess leadership and justice perceptions.

### ***Measures***

All constructs were measured using **standardized, validated instruments** from existing literature. A **five-point Likert scale** (1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree) was used for all items.

- **Responsible Leadership (RL)**: Measured using a 5-item scale adapted from Voegtlin (2011), capturing ethical conduct, stakeholder orientation, and responsible decision-making.
- **Organizational Justice (OJ)**: Measured using the 12-item scale by Colquitt (2001), covering distributive, procedural and interactional justice dimensions.
- **Turnover Intention (TI)**: Assessed using a 3-item scale adapted from Mobley et al. (1978), which evaluates the intent to leave the organization.

All scales demonstrated **high internal consistency** with Cronbach's alpha values exceeding 0.70.

## **Data Analysis & Results**

The data were analyzed using **Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)** with **Smart PLS 4**. This technique was chosen for its robustness in handling **complex models** and small to medium sample sizes (Hair et al., 2021).

### 6.1 Measurement Model Assessment

The evaluation of the measurement model in PLS-SEM is a prerequisite to establishing construct validity and ensuring the accuracy of subsequent structural path analysis (Hair et al., 2019). This assessment focuses on three main aspects: **reliability**, **convergent validity**, and **collinearity**.

Construct	Items code	Loading	Cronbach's $\alpha$	AVE	VIF	CR
<i>RL</i>	RL1	0.782	0.933	0.602	2.636	0.943
	RL2	0.723			1.968	
	RL3	0.742			2.166	
	RL4	0.818			2.823	
	RL5	0.759			2.423	
	RL6	0.780			3.413	
	RL7	0.756			2.828	
	RL8	0.840			3.069	
	RL9	0.859			3.713	
	RL10	0.803			2.698	
	RL11	0.770			2.768	
<i>OJ</i>	OJ1	0.764	0.948	0.506	1.600	0.953
	OJ2	0.789			2.360	
	OJ3	0.769			2.194	
	OJ4	0.783			3.032	
	OJ5	0.766			2.553	
	OJI1	0.802			3.480	
	OJI2	0.774			3.437	
	OJI3	0.775			3.676	
	OJI4	0.770			3.319	
	OJI5	0.743			2.964	
	OJI6	0.760			3.171	
	OJI7	0.767			3.803	
	OJI8	0.706			2.538	
	OJI9	0.789			1.864	
	OJP1	0.729			2.373	
	OJP2	0.751			2.837	
	OJP3	0.718			2.525	
	OJP4	0.749			2.447	
	OJP5	0.741			3.620	
	OJP6	0.811			4.643	
<i>TI</i>	TI1	0.857	0.802	0.717	1.774	0.883
	TI2	0.861			1.788	
	TI3	0.821			1.637	

Table1: Measurement Model Result

Source: Authors' own work

### **Internal Consistency Reliability**

Internal consistency reliability was assessed using **Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ )** and **Composite Reliability (CR)**.

- The Cronbach's alpha values were:
  - Responsible Leadership (RL): 0.933
  - Organizational Justice (OJ): 0.948
  - Turnover Intention (TI): 0.802

These values exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), indicating the high reliability of the measurement scales.

- Similarly, the CR values are:
  - RL: 0.943
  - OJ: 0.953
  - TI: 0.883

As per Fornell and Larcker (1981) and Hair et al. (2019), CR values above 0.70 indicate good internal consistency. Hence, all three constructs demonstrate excellent composite reliability, confirming that the indicators are consistently measuring the underlying latent variables.

### **Convergent Validity**

**Convergent validity** refers to the degree to which multiple items measuring the same construct agree. This is evaluated using the **Average Variance Extracted (AVE)**.

- AVE scores:
  - RL: 0.602
  - OJ: 0.506
  - TI: 0.717

According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), AVE values greater than 0.50 confirm that more than 50% of the variance is captured by the construct from its indicators. Therefore, all constructs meet the required standard for convergent validity. This suggests that the indicators share a high proportion of variance in measuring the same underlying construct.

### **Indicator Reliability (Outer Loadings)**

All indicator loadings exceeded 0.70 (Hair et al., 2011), with the lowest being 0.706 for OJ18 and the highest being 0.861 for TI2. This affirms that each indicator strongly correlates with its

corresponding construct and contributes significantly to construct measurement. Loadings above 0.70 are indicative of adequate indicator reliability (Chin, 1998).

### Multicollinearity (Co linearity Statistics – VIF)

The **Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)** was assessed to detect multicollinearity. All VIF values fall below the critical value of 5, ranging from 1.60 to 4.66. According to Diamantopoulos and Siguaw (2006), VIF values under 5 suggest that multicollinearity is not a significant concern. Thus, multicollinearity is within acceptable limits for all indicators, ensuring the stability of the regression estimates.

Criteria	Standard Threshold	Results in Study	Conclusion
Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ )	$\geq 0.70$	RL = 0.933, OJ = 0.948, TI = 0.802	Excellent reliability
Composite Reliability (CR)	$\geq 0.70$	RL = 0.943, OJ = 0.953, TI = 0.883	High internal consistency
AVE	$\geq 0.50$	RL = 0.602, OJ = 0.506, TI = 0.717	Good convergent validity
VIF	$< 5$	All between 1.6–4.66	No multicollinearity threat
Factor Loadings	$\geq 0.70$	All above 0.70	Strong indicator reliability

### Structural Model Assessment

In PLS-SEM, the structural model is assessed to evaluate the hypothesized relationships between constructs, their explanatory power, and predictive relevance. The results presented in Tables 2 to 4 indicate a well-fitting model with strong explanatory and predictive validity.

- **Responsible Leadership → Organizational Justice:**  $\beta = 0.62, p < 0.001$
- **Organizational Justice → Turnover Intention:**  $\beta = -0.48, p < 0.001$
- **Responsible Leadership → Turnover Intention:**  $\beta = -0.34, p < 0.01$

### Mediation Analysis

Organizational justice was tested as a mediator in the relationship between responsible leadership and turnover intention:

- **Indirect effect (RL → OJ → TI):**  $\beta = -0.30, p < 0.01$
- **Direct effect remained significant**, indicating **partial mediation**. The **Variance Accounted For (VAF)** was 47%, suggesting a meaningful mediating role of OJ.

Hypothesis Path		Result	Supported
H1	RL → OJ	Positive & significant	Yes
H2	OJ → TI	Negative & significant	Yes
H3	RL → TI	Negative & significant	Yes
H4	RL → OJ → TI Indirect effect significant Yes (Partial mediation)		

This study aimed to examine the mediating role of organizational justice (OJ) in the relationship between responsible leadership (RL) and employee turnover intention (TI) in the Indian healthcare sector. The findings provide empirical support for all proposed hypotheses and offer both theoretical and practical insights into how leadership and justice perceptions impact employee retention.

### Discussion of Findings

Consistent with previous research, responsible leadership was found to have a **positive and significant impact on organizational justice** (Voegtlin, 2011; Maak & Pless, 2006). Leaders who demonstrate ethical behavior, involve stakeholders in decision-making, and act in socially responsible ways contribute to a perception of fairness across the organization. In the healthcare context—where work is emotionally demanding and ethically complex—this leadership style appears particularly impactful.

In line with social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), organizational justice was found to **negatively influence turnover intention**, supporting the idea that when employees perceive fair treatment, they are more likely to reciprocate with loyalty and reduced intent to leave (Colquitt et al., 2001; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). The results also revealed that RL **directly reduces TI**, as well as **indirectly** through its positive influence on OJ. This partial mediation indicates that while RL can independently reduce TI, its effectiveness is significantly enhanced when it fosters perceptions of fairness within the workplace.

These findings confirm and extend earlier work on the impact of responsible leadership (Doh & Quigley, 2014; Pless et al., 2012), emphasizing the importance of justice perceptions in employee decision-making. Especially in the healthcare sector, where burnout and staff shortages are major concerns (Hayes et al., 2012), enhancing justice through ethical and inclusive leadership can be a viable strategy to reduce attrition.

### ***Theoretical & Practical Implications***

This study contributes to the growing body of research on responsible leadership by empirically testing its impact on turnover intention via organizational justice—a relatively underexplored mediating mechanism in the healthcare sector. By grounding the framework in social exchange theory, it offers a theoretical explanation for how and why RL leads to lower TI through justice perceptions. It also reinforces the multi-dimensional role of OJ, validating its relevance beyond Western contexts and highlighting its importance in emerging economies like India.

For healthcare administrators and HR professionals, the findings offer actionable strategies to address high employee turnover:

- **Promote Responsible Leadership:** Training programs and leadership development initiatives should emphasize ethical behavior, inclusive decision-making, and accountability.
- **Foster Organizational Justice:** Policies and practices should be transparent, fair, and consistently applied. This includes clear communication around decision-making, equitable resource allocation, and respectful interpersonal treatment.
- **Retain Skilled Staff:** Enhancing justice and responsible leadership together creates a workplace climate that encourages employee commitment and reduces withdrawal behaviors, which is crucial for service quality and organizational stability in healthcare.

### **Conclusion**

This study investigated the mediating role of organizational justice (OJ) in the relationship between responsible leadership (RL) and employee turnover intention (TI) within the Indian healthcare sector. Using data from 387 healthcare professionals and employing PLS-SEM for analysis, the results provide strong empirical support for the conceptual model. Responsible leadership was found to significantly enhance perceptions of organizational justice, which in turn was associated with reduced turnover intention. Moreover, organizational justice partially

mediated the relationship between responsible leadership and turnover intention, suggesting that fairness perceptions play a key role in translating leadership behaviors into employee outcomes.

These findings underscore the importance of adopting responsible leadership practices and fostering a just organizational environment to reduce employee attrition in healthcare settings. Given the high-stakes nature of healthcare delivery, minimizing turnover is not only a matter of organizational sustainability but also of patient care quality and safety. This study contributes to leadership and organizational behavior literature by integrating justice perceptions as a mechanism through which leadership influences employee retention, particularly in the context of emerging economies like India.

## **Limitations and Future Scope**

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations:

- **Cross-sectional Design:** The use of a cross-sectional survey limits causal-inferences. Longitudinal studies would offer a more dynamic understanding of how responsible leadership and justice perceptions evolve over time.
- **Self-Reported Data:** Data were collected through self-report questionnaires, which may be subject to common method bias. Future research could incorporate multi-source data (e.g., supervisor ratings, HR records).
- **Context-Specific Findings:** The study focused solely on the Indian healthcare sector. Findings may not be generalizable to other sectors or cultural contexts. Comparative studies across industries or countries could enhance generalizability.
- **Other Mediators or Moderators:** While organizational justice was explored as a mediator, other variables such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, or psychological safety might also explain the relationship between responsible leadership and turnover intention. Future research can test moderated mediation models to explore more complex relationships.

In conclusion, this research highlights the strategic importance of justice and responsible leadership in reducing turnover. As the healthcare industry continues to face workforce challenges, investing in ethical, fair, and inclusive leadership approaches may serve as a sustainable solution to enhance employee retention and organizational performance.

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