Investigating longitudinal Impact of Authentic Leadership, Organizational Cynicism and Turnover Intention among Elementary School Teachers

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ABSTRACT- The purpose of the present longitudinal study was to explore the relationship of authentic leadership style, organizational cynicism, and turnover intention in the elementary school teachers. The current study explored the mediating role of organizational cynicism between authentic leadership and turnover intention to fill the research gap. Moreover, a quantitative approach was utilized and eight hundred and seventy questionnaires were distributed to collect data from elementary school teachers working in Punjab region of Pakistan by using non-probability multistage sampling technique. A total of 711 questionnaires were returned out of which 668 questionnaires were scrutinized. Additionally, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM) were applied to analyze the data. The results revealed a partial mediating effect of organizational cynicism between the relationship of authentic leadership style and turnover intention. Moreover, the current study fosters the ongoing debate in organizational studies related to cynicism and it is a noteworthy for the elementary school teachers to understand the significant factors, which directly or indirectly affect the teaching attitude.

Keywords: Authentic Leadership, Organizational Cynicism, Turnover Intention, Social Exchange Theory

I. INTRODUCTION

Authentic leadership started receiving attention among scholars in the last decade (Clapp-Smith *et al.*, 2009). While there are several different conceptualizations of authentic leadership, the concept that dominates current empirical research is the one proposed by Avolio*et al.* (2005) (Gardner *et al.*, 2005). This concept goes beyond the notion of being true to oneself. More specifically, this concept of authentic leadership is comprised of four components; balanced processing, internalized moral perspective, relational transparency, and self-awareness (Walumbwa*et al.*, 2008). First, balanced processing refers to the fact that the leader objectively analyzes all relevant data before making decisions. Second, internalized moral perspective describes the fact that the leader is guided by internal moral standards and values and acts according to these, even against group, organizational, or societal pressures. Third, relational transparency refers to presenting one's authentic self to others, such as openly sharing information and expressing one's true thoughts and feelings in interpersonal interaction. Fourth, self-awareness refers to a process of reaching a deeper understanding of one's strengths and weaknesses. This includes constantly re-assessing one's self-concept through exposure and feedback from others, and being familiar with one's impact on other people (Gardner *et al.*, 2005).

Leaders could probably manage to develop certain characteristics in their personalities by admitting their strengths and weaknesses and ignoring them. Self-awareness allows a leader to exhibit a higher level of authenticity that is the main ingredient to maintain a transparent interpersonal relationship with others without displaying cynical behavior (Kernis, 2003). The authentic leader needs to recognize himself according to his implicit self-regulatory process that steers his code of conduct to internal ethics rather than external pressures, encouragement, social expectations or remunerations (Caldwell *et al.*, 2010). The researchers found that a genuine leader is indisputable in the sense that he does not stipulate fake qualities that replicate his real beliefs, values and moral intentions (Zhu, May and Avolio, 2004). Therefore, transparent attributes of leaders contribute to engender confidence and encouraging work results from their employees because of the alignment of their actions and words. Most recent research indicates that the requirement of perceived authentic leadership is to maintain the capability of self-

awareness, fidelity and willpower to be consistent and true to himself and supporting the real organizational mission and enthusiastically authorizing the organizational vision (May *et al.*, 2003).

Authentic leaders while setting high moral and ethical standards (for themselves or for others) demonstrate the aptitude of moral reasoning and take appropriate future oriented positions. They mostly stay obvious and crystal clear about their existence, personal codes, and ethical standards as they attempt to align their individual values to organizational standard and private ethics to their performance (Luthans and Avolio, 2003). Consequently, addressing all the aforementioned problems was the motivation of the present study. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate authentic leadership as predictor of organizational cynicism and turnover intention as its outcome in elementary school teachers of Punjab Pakistan.

II.   LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Relationship of Authentic Leadership Style with Organizational Cynicism

Wong and Laschinger (2013) conducted a study in acute care hospitals across Ontario Canada and data was obtained from 280 registered nurses. They found authentic leadership style to be more effective to build positive work environment and reduce cynical attitude among nurses by emphasizing relational transparency, balanced processing, moral conduct and self-awareness. Similarly, Williams *et al.* (2012) found that the most effective leadership behavior is to develop a positive organizational culture and to reduce the negative attitude among employees. Additionally, Zhu, May and Avolio (2004) examined the relationship of authentic leadership style and follower's attitude and behaviors. Results suggested that relational transparency, ethical conduct, balanced processing and self-awareness strongly reduce the negative attitudes and behaviors of employees.

Moreover, Yavas, Karatepe and Babakus (2014) investigated the relationship of leadership behavior with cynicism (as a dimension of burnout) and found a strong predictor of cynicism among workers. They argued that leadership behavior significantly mitigates the negative attitude of employees and is an essential factor in building a positive work environment. For instance, Mete (2013) investigated the relationship of ethical leadership and organizational cynicism and found that leadership behaviors have a strong negative impact on organizational cynicism. Additionally, Naus, Iterson and Roe (2007) reported that leadership incompetency is the main source of organizational cynicism. Further, he found that role of leadership is a strong antecedent of organizational cynicism.

Moreover, Kim *et al.* (2009) perceived that management was more often considered the main source of organizational cynicism. For instance, results indicated that organizational cynicism regarding the change in organization stemmed from the workers attribution about the incompetence of management to implement the past changes and this supports the notion that cynicism may have limited and varying causes and effects. On a macro - level, it has been observed that organizational cynicism increases when they perceive their managers to be unfair. Therefore, from aforementioned literature, it could be anticipated that the qualities of authentic leadership may be taken as encouragement towards positive work outcomes and discouraging tendency towards negative work like negative attitude of employees at the workplace. Thus it is important to investigate the relationship of authentic leadership and organizational cynicism.

H_1: There is a significant negative relationship between authentic leadership style and organizational cynicism.

2.2 Relationship of Authentic Leadership Style and Turnover Intention

According to Zhu, May and Avolio (2004) authentic leaders portray transparent behavior aligning consistently to their moral values and intentions, which may reveal to the subordinates a sense of assurance and the perception that the leaders core beliefs, values and characteristics are authentic and genuine. Inauthentic characteristics on the other hand develop a sense of auspiciousness about the authenticity and may develop the perception that leader is hiding his true convictions and motives and exhibiting his fake role. So when leaders' moral intentions regarding ethical behavior become doubtful, employee intentions to remain with the organization, commitment and satisfaction become weakened.

Similarly, May *et al.* (2003) contended that authentic and morally strong leaders have the capability to develop commitment and trust in their employees and create conformance with respect to obedience, and consequently employees too are encouraged to be authentic. Moreover, Wong *et al.* (2010) perceived authentic leadership as referring to trust in management, positive work outcomes and perception of support, and these qualities persuade the staff to talk about their concerns, and also motivate them to retain their jobs.

Moreover, Wong *et al.* (2010) insisted that perceived authentic leadership is the core of effective leadership that is needed to build trust because of its focus on positive role modeling of honesty, integrity and high ethical standards in leader-follower relationships. Dimensions of perceived authentic leadership may negatively predict turnover intention (Wong *et al.,* 2010). It was expected that perceived authentic leadership characteristics may be negatively related to turnover intentions among the subordinate staff nurses. Such a finding may suggest that authentic nurse leadership could be a significant factor in RN retention strategy, and that the turnover intentions of subordinate staff nurses may be reduced by enhancing nurse leaders' perceived authentic leadership characteristics (Walumbwa*et al.* 2008).

Green, Miller and Aarons (2013) examined the relationship of leadership behavior with turnover intention and found that leadership strongly and negatively predict turnover intention. Similarly, Islam *et al.* (2013) found a strong negative correlation between leadership behavior and turnover intention. Waldman, Carter and Hom (2012) found leadership as a strong antecedent of turnover intention and discussed that effective leadership behaviors significantly reduce turnover intention. Additionally, Palanski, Avey and Jiraporn (2013) found a strong negative association between leadership behaviors and turnover intention. Results suggested that effective leadership is the key factor to reduce the turnover intention. Thus, it is hypothesized that elementary school teachers perceived authentic leadership style may reduce negative attitude among nurses and may lead to reduce their turnover intention. Thus, it is hypothesized that elementary school teachers perceived authentic leadership style may reduce elementary school teachers turnover intention.

H_2: There is a significant negative relationship between authentic leadership style and turnover intention.

2.3 Mediating Effects of Organizational Cynicism

In prior studies, organizational cynicism has not been examined as a mediating variable among perception of ethical climate, horizontal violence, authentic leadership style and turnover intention. However, few authors have explored the mediating role of cynicism among different related factors. For instance, Schaefer (2010) found a strong mediating effect of organizational cynicism between leader-member exchange and job outcomes. Similarly, Wu *et al.* (2007) found significant mediating role of cynicism between transformational leadership and cohesion perception. Further, the authors highlighted the importance of organizational cynicism as mediating variable with other leadership behaviors. In line with the study, Kim *et al.* (2009) investigated a strong mediating effect of organizational cynicism between top management and job outcomes. Moreover, Laschinger and Fida (2013) found a partial mediating effect of burnout between authentic leadership and turnover intention.

H_3: There is mediating effect of organizational cynicism between authentic leadership and turnover intention.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Design and Sample

At first time measurement, a total of 790 questionnaires were personally administrated to the teaching staff in the elementary schools of Punjab, Pakistan, out of which 711 filled questionnaires were returned (actual response rate = 90%). During the data screening process, 9 questionnaires were eliminated because of the missing values and 34 questionnaires were excluded because of outlier values. Remaining 668 questionnaires were considered in the analysis (effective response rate = 84.5%). At second time measurement, a total of 730 questionnaires were personally administrated to the teaching staff of Punjab,

Pakistan, out of which 530 filled questionnaires were returned (actual response rate = 72.6%). During the data screening process, questionnaires 10 were eliminated because of the missing values and 20 questionnaires were excluded because of outlier values. Remaining 500 questionnaires were considered in the analysis (effective response rate = 68.5%). The demographic information of respondents was drafted in table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Information

Demographic	Demographic Features	Time 1		Time 2	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Age	Less than 30	290	43.4	173	33.5
	31-40	108	16.2	168	32.5
	41-50	196	29.3	104	20.1
	Above 50	74	11.1	72	13.9
	Total	668	100.0	517	100.0
Gender	Male	230	34.4	230	34.4
	Female	438	65.6	438	438
Qualification	Graduation	423	63.3	318	61.5
	Master	245	36.7	162	31.3
	Post-graduation	0	0	37	7.2
	Total	668	100.0	517	100.0
Job Experience	1-4 years	416	62.3	151	29.2
	5-9 years	36	5.4	137	26.5
	10-14 years	160	24.0	189	36.6
	15 or above	56	8.4	40	7.7
	Total	668	100.0	517	100.0

3.2 Measurement

Authentic Leadership Style: The construct of perceived authentic leadership style is operationalized by using the measures developed by Avolio*et al.* (2007). The four components of perceived authentic leadership will be utilized to operationalize the construct in elementary school teachers staff: (1) relational transparency (2) moral/ethical conduct (3) balanced processing and (4) self-awareness. A total of 16 items will be rated on a five-point Likert scale.

Organizational Cynicism: In the current study, organizational cynicism is operationalized by using the measures of (Dean *et al.,* 1998). They developed 14 items to measure organizational cynicism. A sample item is "I believe that my organization says one thing and does another". Shahzad and Mahmood(2012) utilized this instrument and reported Cronbach alpha .83 in their study. Another instance, Neves (2012) reported the value of Cronbach alpha .77 in his study.

Turnover Intention:The construct of turnover intention is operationalized with 6 items by using the measures developed by Wayne, Shore and Liden's (1997), to measure employee's turnover intention. Respondents gave their opinion from 1 as strongly disagree with 7 as strongly agree.

IV.   DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 CFA of Instruments

Table 2: Results of CFA

Time 1				Time 2			
Items	FL	AVE	CR	Items	FL	AVE	CR
Authentic Leadership Style							
RT1	.72			RT1	.76		

RT2	.81			RT2	.76		
RT3	.72			RT3	.48		
RT4	.67			RT4	.71		
RT5	.86			RT5	.82		
MC1	.79			MC1	.80		
MC2	.75			MC2	.71		
MC3	.58			MC3	.72		
MC4	.78	.79	.98	MC4	.70	.77	.97
BP1	.79			BP1	.78		
BP2	.76			BP2	.78		
BP3	.50			BP3	.43		
BP4	.69			BP4	.70		
BP5	.62			BP5	.62		
SA1	.77			SA1	.80		
SA2	.80			SA2	.78		
SA3	.66			SA3	.55		
Organizational Cynicism							
OC1	-----			OC1	.53		
OC2	.58			OC2	.62		
OC3	.69			OC3	.72		
OC4	.74			OC4	.53		
OC5	.72			OC5	.73		
OC6	-----			OC6	-----		
OC7	.63	.75	.94	OC7	.69	.80	.94
OC8	.72			OC8	.73		
OC9	-----			*OC9*	-----		
OC10	-----			OC10	-----		
OC11	.73			OC11	.76		
OC12	.81			OC12	.80		
OC13	.74			OC13	.75		
OC14	-----			OC14	-----		
Turnover Intention							
TI1	.87			TI1	.72		
TI2	.81			TI2	.67		
TI3	.91	.74	.93	TI3	.73	.80	.92
TI4	.85			TI4	.68		
TI5	.72			TI5	.71		
TI6	.62			TI6	.49		

FL= factor loading; AVE= average variance extracted; CR= construct reliability;
Italic and bold items are excluded in confirmatory factor analysis

In time 1, results of 4-factors model of authentic leadership style showed statistically good fit as $\chi2/DF_{T1}=441.963/108$; $\chi2/DF_{T2}=322.854/108$ were high and remaining values like $GFI_{T1}=.930$; $GFI_{T2}=.935$, $CFI_{T1}=.932$; $CFI_{T2}=.935$, $RMR_{T1}=.059$; $RMR_{T2}=.059$ and $RMSEA_{T1}=.068$; $RMSEA_{T2}=.062$ were in acceptable range. Moreover, Table 2 shows adequate factor loadings of all five factors ranged from .66 to .88 and .43 to .82 for Time 1 and Time 2 respectively which are quite acceptable.Furthermore, the results of single factor model of organizational cynicism were dramatically extremely good and Chi square value was also in good range. The values of goodness of fit index are $\chi2/DF_{T1}= 93.353/22$; $\chi2/DF_{T2}=66.652/23$ were high and remaining values like $GFI_{T1}=.971$; $GFI_{T2}=.975$, $CFI_{T1}=.976$; $CFI_{T2}=.983$, $RMR_{T1}=.030$; $RMR_{T2}=.026$ and $RMSEA_{T1}=.070$; $RMSEA_{T2}=.061$. After comparing the fit indices in all models, in the current study a single factor model was selected to examine the further analysis of organizational cynicism. The range of standardized factor loadings in the single factor model is .50 to .86 and .52 and .80 for Time 1 and Time 2 respectivelyas shown in table 2 which is in quite acceptable range. Moreover, the values of goodness of fit index for turnover intention are $\chi2/DF_{T1}= 23.350/7$; $\chi2/DF_{T2}=22.406/8$ was high and remaining values like $GFI_{T1}= .987$; $GFI_{T2}=.986$, $CFI_{T1}= .993$; $CFI_{T2}= .986$, $RMR_{T1}= .015$; $RMR_{T2}= .033$ and $RMSEA_{T1}= .063$; $RMSEA_{T2}= .059$. The range of standardized factor loadings after the model

specification was .62 to .91 and .49 to .72 for Time 1 and Time 2 respectively which are quite acceptable and above the set standard for retaining the items as shown in Table 2.

4.2 Correlation Analysis

Table 3: Correlation Analysis

Time 1					
Variables	**Mean**	**SD**	**ALS**	**OC**	**TI**
ALS	4.09	.494	1		
OC	1.85	.258	-.402**	1	
TI	1.86	.103	-.377**	.560**	1
Time 2					
Variables	**Mean**	**SD**	**ALS**	**OC**	**TI**
ALS	4.25	.417	1		
OC	1.89	.236	-.442**	1	
TI	1.94	.129	.037	.574**	1

**P<.01; SD= standard deviation; ALS= authentic leadership style; OC= organizational cynicism; TI= turnover intention

The mean value of authentic leadership style is 4.09 close to 4 it means the majority of the respondents were agreed and.494 is the standard deviation of authentic leadership style which shows 49.4% variation among responses. Moreover, authentic leadership style negatively and significantly correlated (r= -.40**, -.37**) with organizational cynicism and turnover intention at P<.01 respectively. The mean value of organizational cynicism is 1.85 close to 2 it means the majority of the respondents were disagreed and .258 is the standard deviation of organizational cynicism which shows 25.8% variation among responses. Moreover, organizational cynicism positively and significantly correlated (r= .56**) with turnover intention at P<.01 while the mean value of turnover intention is 1.86 which is close to 2, it means the majority of the respondents were disagree and total variation among their responses is 10.3%.

In time 1,the mean value of authentic leadership style is 4.25close to 4 it means the majority of the respondents were agreed and .417 is the standard deviation of authentic leadership style which shows 41.7% variation among responses. Moreover, authentic leadership style negatively and significantly correlated (r=-.44**, P<.01) with organizational cynicism and insignificantly correlated (r=.03, P<.01) with turnover intention. The mean value of organizational cynicism is 1.89 close to 2 it means the majority of the respondents were disagreed and .236 is the standard deviation of organizational cynicism which shows 23.6% variation among responses. Moreover, organizational cynicism positively and significantly correlated (r= .57**) with turnover intention at P<.01 while the mean value of turnover intention is 1.94 which is close to 2, it means the majority of the respondents were disagree and total variation among their responses is 12.9%.

4.3 Structure Equation Modeling

Table 6: Standardized Estimates of Path Analysis

Time 1						
Indications of relationship of variables			**Standardized Estimate**	**S.E.**	**C.R.**	**P**	**Results**
TI	<---	ALS	.071	.007	2.256	.024	Significant
OC	<---	ALS	-.228	.021	-5.524	***	Significant
TI	<---	OC	.531	.012	18.275	***	Significant
Time 2						
Indications of relationship of variables			**Standardized Estimate**	**S.E.**	**C.R.**	**P**	**Results**
TI	<---	ALS	.360	.011	9.765	***	Significant

| OC | <--- | ALS | -.442 | .022 | -11.181 | *** | Significant |
| TI | <--- | OC | .733 | .20 | 19.872 | *** | Significant |

ALS= authentic leadership style; OC= organizational cynicism; TI= turnover intention

In the current study, all the direct effects were investigated by using structural equation modeling then organizational cynicism was incorporated in between the relationship of perception of ethical climate and turnover intention. In time 1, when organizational cynicism was tested in between the relationship of authentic leadership style and turnover intention, the direct relationship of authentic leadership style was remained significant (β= .071; P<.05). Table 5 shows the total effect (β= -.050; P<.05) of authentic leadership style on turnover intention along the mediating effect of organizational cynicism while the direct effect (β= .071; P<.05) of authentic leadership style and turnover intention is less than the indirect effect (β= -.121; P<.05) as shown in table 5. Results indicated a partial mediation which shows that there is a partial mediating effect of organizational cynicism between the relationship of authentic leadership style and turnover intention in elementary school teachers staff. In time 2, when organizational cynicism was tested in between the relationship of authentic leadership style and turnover intention, the direct relationship of authentic leadership style was remained significant (β= .360; P<.05). Table 5 shows the total effect (β= .037; P<.05) of authentic leadership style on turnover intention along the mediating effect of organizational cynicism while the direct effect (β= .360; P<.05) of authentic leadership style and turnover intention is less than the indirect effect (β= -.324; P<.05) as shown in table 5. Results indicated a partial mediation that shows that there is a partial mediating effect of organizational cynicism between the relationship of authentic leadership style and turnover intention in elementary school teachers staff.
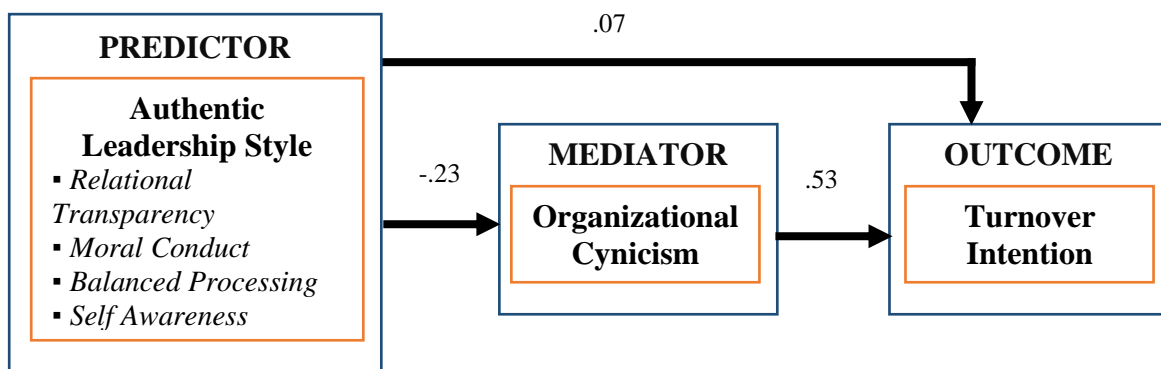

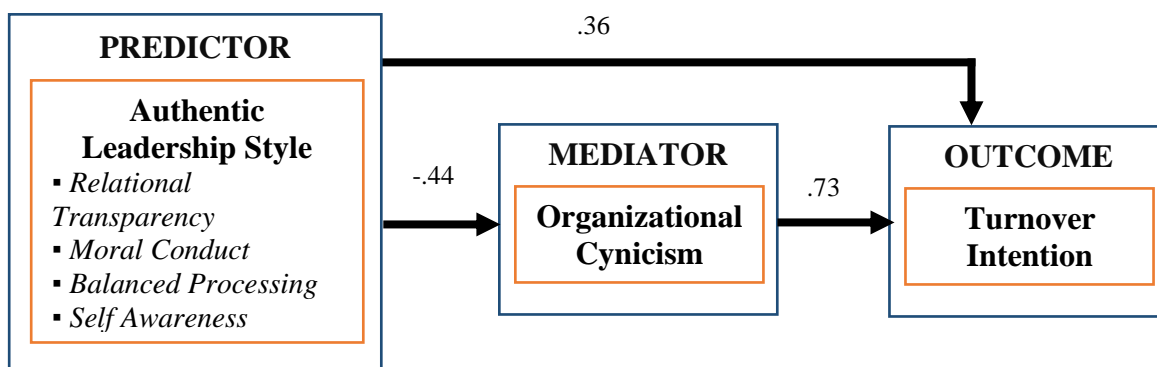**Figure 1**: *Structured Model of Authentic Leadership Style at Time 1*

Figure 2: *Structured Model of Authentic Leadership Style at Time 2*

V.   DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In the present study, two hypotheses were examined empirically to address objectives of this research. First, there is a significant negative relationship between authentic leadership style and organizational cynicism. The results of the current study support the hypothesis and found that authentic leadership style significantly and negatively affects the organizational cynicism in elementary school teachers staff for Time and Time 2. It means when authentic leadership style is followed in a hospital by the head nurses it reduces the negative attitude among elementary school teachers staff. The findings of the current study are consistent with the previous studies (Naus, van-Iterson and Roe, 2007; Kim *et al.*, 2009; Parry, 2008). Moreover, Wu, Neubert and Yi (2007) found a strong negative relationship of leadership style with cynicism. Rittschof (2013) investigated the relationship of leadership style with organizational cynicism and found a strong negative relationship between leadership style and cynicism. In another instance, Thomas and Lankau (2009) conducted a survey in healthcare services and investigated a strong impact of leadership on organizational cynicism. According to Laschinger and Fida (2013) authentic leadership style strongly reduced negative attitudes among employees.

Another hypothesis was investigated to address the objective of this research, whether authentic leadership style strongly and negatively affects turnover intentions among nurses. The results of the current study found a strong negative relationship between authentic leadership style and turnover intentions in Time 1 while authentic leadership style was insignificantly related with turnover intention in Time 2. As such the researcher concludes that authentic leadership style significantly mitigates the turnover intentions among elementary school teachers staff. The findings of the present study are consistent with the previous studies (Brown, Trevino and Harrison, 2005; Craig and Gustafson, 1998; Den-Hartog and De-Hoogh, 2009). Similarly, Green, Miller and Aarons (2013) examined the relationship of leadership behavior with turnover intention and found that leadership strongly and negatively predict turnover intention. Further, Munir and Rasli (2015) found a strong negative correlation between leadership behavior and turnover intention. Similarly, Waldman, Carter and Hom (2012) found leadership as a strong predictor of turnover intention and discussed that effective leadership behaviors significantly reduced turnover intention. Additionally, Palanski, Avey and Jiraporn (2014) found a strong negative correlation between leadership behaviors and turnover intention. Results suggested that effective leadership is the key factor to reduce the turnover intention. A possible reason for the strong negative correlation between authentic leadership style and turnover intention may be that nurses in Pakistan understood the role of leadership in their hospitals or it might be possible that nurses do not quit their jobs because of law and order situation in Pakistan and lack of job opportunities. Thus, they want to retain their jobs at any cost. Moreover, third hypothesis was identified to investigate the mediating effect of organizational cynicism between the relationship of authentic leadership style and turnover intention. Results found partial mediating effect of organizational cynicism between the relationship of authentic leadership style and turnover intention in Time 1 and Time 2. As evident by this research, authentic leadership style significantly decreased turnover intention and organizational cynicism among elementary school teachers staff. Theoretically, the findings of the current study are based on a single construct of each variable. Therefore, the researcher is unable to find out the possible answer as to whether organizational cynicism fully mediates among all the dimensions as found in exploratory factor analysis (EFA) of perception of ethical climate and turnover intention or if there is a possibility of partial mediation and no mediation. Similarly, does organizational cynicism partially mediates among all the dimensions of authentic leadership style and turnover intention or is there a possibility of full mediation and no mediation. The results of the current study can be generalized in other provinces of Pakistan. The future study should address this issue in private hospitals as well to get a clearer picture of organizational cynicism among the elementary school teachers staff. Finally, this model can be tested in other stakeholders of elementary school teachers staff like doctors, paramedical staff and administrative staff, to get a better perspective of the environment within the medical sector.

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