



Leadership Styles and Flexible Work Arrangements as Determinants of Turnover Intention for IT Professionals

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Abstract

An increasing employee turnover rate remains a substantial concern to business leaders. The emergence of COVID-19 led to a sharp rise in employee resignations, dubbed the Great Resignation in 2021. Organizations scrambled and implemented flexible work arrangements (FWA) to curtail the spread of the pandemic. This study used a quantitative correlational approach to examine the relationship between leadership styles, FWA, and turnover intention of IT professionals in the US. The theoretical foundation for the study includes the path-goal leadership theory and the flexible firm model. An online survey collected participants' responses across all US regions. The researcher analyzed valid responses from a sample of 204 participants using SPSS. The study reveals that 89 percent of IT professionals in the US use one form or another of flexible work arrangements. The results indicate a significant negative relationship between path-goal leadership styles at the individual level and collectively with turnover intentions. The result did not establish a significant relationship between FWA and turnover intentions. However, FWA options, including flex-time schedule and compressed workweek, significantly and positively correlated with turnover intentions, while telecommuting did not significantly correlate with turnover intentions. This study implies that business leaders' leadership styles and FWA strategies can influence their IT workforce turnover. Business leaders should endeavor to develop and implement a mix of leadership styles and FWA strategies suitable to attract and retain a talented IT workforce in their respective organizations.

Keywords: leadership styles, flexible work arrangements, telework, turnover intention, path-goal, path-goal leadership

Introduction

Business leaders have always contended with the risk of employees voluntarily quitting their organization. Several factors, including family and work-related concerns, may influence individuals' intentions to exit their organizations (Alsam et al., 2013; Post et al., 2009). The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic led to a rise in the rate of employees resigning from their jobs, dubbed "The Great Resignation" (Serenko, 2022; Sheather & Slattery, 2021; Tessema et al., 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic made nations and companies implement measures, including flexible work arrangements (FWA), to reduce the spread of the pandemic and save the lives of citizens and the workforce. In September 2021, the rate of employee resignation increased to the highest spike level on record (Tessema et al., 2022). This period coincides with when businesses demanded their employees return to the office.

According to a study by Allman (2021), COVID-19 made most organizations (nine out of 10) accelerate their cloud adoption by migrating their IT infrastructure from on-premises to the cloud to enhance their business practices, including supporting remote work and other FWA. Is it possible there is a link between the demand by organizations for their workforce to return to the office and the surge in resignation rates? Understanding IT professionals' perceptions of the influence of FWA on their turnover intentions enables businesses to formulate the appropriate strategies for retaining their workforce.

This study may close the gaps identified in previous studies by examining the relationship between leadership styles, FWA, and turnover intentions using path-goal theory and the flexible firm model. The path-goal theory also referred to as the path-goal model or the path-goal theory of leader effectiveness, was developed in 1971 and revised in 1996 by Robert House. The model describes the leaders' behavior as contingent on subordinates' motivation, satisfaction, and performance. Path-goal theory serves as a framework that describes leaders' behavior that subordinates perceive as acceptable and a source of inspiration and satisfaction (Dixon & Hart, 2010; Hsu et al., 2003). Path-goal theory identifies directive, participative, supportive, and achievement-oriented leadership styles.

The specific business problem for this study is that many business leaders lack knowledge about the relationship between leadership style, flexible work arrangements, and turnover intention for IT professionals in the United States. Among the measures implemented by political and business leaders to curtail the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic are flexible work arrangements, such as remote work and flextime, to reduce physical contact between collocated employees. As organizations experiment with flexible work options, the management style deployed in managing a collocated workforce may likely not be suitable for driving a hybrid labor force.

It is vital for business and IT leaders to understand the influence of their leadership styles and FWA on their IT workforce turnover intentions to aid them in formulating and implementing the appropriate strategies aimed at curtailing the increasing resignation rate. This study uses positivism as the research paradigm based on existing theories. Thus, the path-goal theory or model was used to assess leadership styles (independent variable), and the flexible firm model was used to evaluate flexible work arrangements (independent variable). This research examines the influence of these two independent variables on turnover intentions (dependent variable).

Literature Review

Leadership as a subject has and continues to receive enormous attention in the literature, especially in the domain of leadership styles and their influence on employee job engagement, job satisfaction, performance, and turnover intentions (Belias & Koustelios, 2014; Golden & Eddleston, 2019; Guan et al., 2017). Leadership style is a leader's characteristic behaviors to direct, motivate, guide, and manage groups of people. A leader's leadership style affects employee performance, productivity, satisfaction (Nanjundeswaraswamy & Swamy, 2014), and turnover intentions (Maaitah, 2018; Puni et al., 2016).

FWA is one of the mechanisms organizations deploy to deal with current organizational challenges. FWA is an employment option that empowers employees to choose and adjust where and when they work (Putnam et al., 2014; Rahman, 2019). Studies indicate that FWA influences employees' work-life balance, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions (Masuda et al., 2012; McNall et al., 2009). The COVID-19 pandemic escalated the use of FWA by companies to reduce the virus infection rates and curtail the spread of the virus among their employees in compliance with mandated government restrictions. IT professionals were at the forefront of using FWA, particularly telecommuting during the pandemic, as their presence in the office was unnecessary due to organizations' adoption and adaptation of cloud services.

To properly understand the influence of leadership styles and FWA on turnover intentions, the following sections discuss the path-goal leadership theory, flexible firm model, FWA, and turnover intentions.

Path-Goal Leadership Theory/Model

The path-goal leadership theory is one of the situational leadership theories that has received increased scrutiny. The path-goal leadership model is unique because the leader tries to help followers achieve the goal (Northouse, 2016). Path-goal leadership theory serves as a framework that describes the success of leaders who are flexible in their leadership approach and can motivate subordinates by generating high work group effectiveness (Dixon & Hart, 2010). Leaders encourage employees by defining goals, clarifying paths, removing obstacles that impede obtaining objectives, and supporting subordinates (Northouse, 2016). The path-goal theory applies expectancy theory, which has three elements: motivation, reward, and value (Northouse, 2016).

A study by Silverthorne (2001) supported the path-goal leadership theory as the results revealed a relationship between managers and their subordinates, while no relationship existed between managers and peers. Another study shows that path-goal leadership style significantly and negatively influences turnover intensity with and without the mediating role of organizational commitment (Bhayapradesita, 2019).

To motivate employees successfully, influential leaders must understand and be sensitive to the needs of their employees by shifting their leadership styles accordingly. It has become vital for business and IT leaders to be mindful of their IT professionals' need for FWA and adopt leadership styles that enable this workforce to deliver on their tasks. Suppose the IT workforce preference is to use FWA; then, leadership must act by removing obstacles that may inhibit the provision of a suitable work environment that could decrease subordinates' turnover intentions. Path-goal leadership is classified into the following four leadership styles.

Directive Leadership

Several studies have examined the influence of directive leadership on subordinates' behavior, shared values, commitment to service quality, and turnover intentions. The results of the studies regarding the relationship between directive leadership and turnover intentions have been contradictory. Directive leadership involves providing specific guidelines and structure for members and detailing their expectations (Bickle, 2017; Fabac et al., 2022). Directive leadership is an autocratic, manipulative, and task-oriented form of leadership (Bass, 1981). It has been found to affect shared values and commitment to service quality negatively but positively influence employees' role clarity (Dolatabadi & Safa, 2010).

Supportive Leadership

The role of supportive leaders in organizations cannot be overemphasized. Supportive leaders are empathic and approachable. They do not just delegate activities but nurture and support their subordinates

until they complete their tasks (Bickle, 2017). According to Fabac et al. (2022), supportive leadership "includes a concern for the welfare of subordinates and the organizational climate" (p. 350). Several studies have alluded to the significant positive relationship between supportive leadership style, employee engagement, job satisfaction, and employee turnover (Irvine & Evans, 1995; Smith & Macko, 2014). A study by Lambert et al. (2001) examined the influence of work environment and demographic characteristics on worker job satisfaction and turnover intent. The study concluded that "job satisfaction is a highly salient antecedent of turnover intent" (Lambert et al., 2001, p. 233). The same research also reveals that job satisfaction is crucial to mediating between the work environment and turnover intentions (Lambert et al., 2001).

Participative Leadership

In participative leadership, leaders provide an enabling environment that enables subordinates to influence their decisions. A leader deploying a participative style seeks subordinates' views in "active group discussions, decision making, and task planning" (Bickle, 2017, p. 36). The leader consults the subordinate on the most appropriate approach before deciding. The participative leadership style is most effective when the tasks are ambiguous and unstructured and without a clear path to completing a task (Bickle, 2017). IT professionals face different challenges requiring immediate attention to nonstructured and vague activities. Participative leadership could help get everyone on the same page regarding the most appropriate deployment solution, which may result in reduced turnover intentions.

Achievement-Oriented Leadership

The achievement-oriented leadership style encourages employee growth and challenges followers to propel themselves and perform at the highest possible level. Achievement-oriented leadership focuses on challenging subordinates with high expectations for themselves and a desire to excel (Bickle, 2017). Good leaders offer achievement-oriented motivations to associates with high potential, enabling them to achieve their goals in line with organizational needs (Bickle, 2017; Van Wart, 2013).

Flexible Work Arrangements

FWA is becoming a prevalent tool organization deployed to meet today's business challenges. The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbates the use of FWA as organizations worldwide resorted to using one form of FWA or another. FWA refers to "any of a spectrum of work structures that alter the time and/or place that work gets done regularly" (Workplace Flexibility, 2010, p. 1). There are three ways by which organizations can implement FWA. (1) Flexible work schedule, (2) Flexibility in the number of hours worked, and (3) Flexibility in the place of work (Workplace Flexibility, 2010).

Flexible Work Schedule

Flexible work schedules are schedules that are nonstandard in the work setting. Examples of these arrangements include flextime, compressed workweeks, flexible shift arrangements, and flexible break arrangements (Workplace Flexibility, 2010). This study examines the influence of flextime and compressed workweek schedules on US IT professionals' turnover intentions. Flex-time is a work schedule that allows flexible starting and closing times (Christensen & Staines, 1990). Employees utilizing flextime must work 40 hours per week but can choose when they resume and close from work. Rahman (2019) investigated the impact of FWA options, including flex-time schedules, compressed workweek, telecommuting, and job sharing, on work-life balance and job satisfaction among female teachers in the higher education sector in Bangladesh. The measurement scale used was developed by Rawashdeh et al. (2016), and data obtained from 203 respondents were analyzed using Regression Analysis. The study concluded that flex-time schedules, job sharing, and telecommuting have a significant relationship with work-life balance and job satisfaction. At the same time, the study found that

a compressed workweek was not significantly related to job satisfaction or work-life balance (Rahman, 2019).

Flexibility in the Number of Hours Worked

Flexibility in the number of hours worked requires employees to choose the hours they work. These arrangements may involve part-time work, reduced-hour schedules, a transition from a significant life event (sickness, childbirth), and part-year work (Workplace Flexibility, 2010). This study did not measure any independent variable that falls within this category of FWA.

Flexibility in Place of Work

Flexibility in the place of work involves employees choosing the location where they work. The available options include telecommuting, virtual work, or remote work from a home office, telework from a satellite location, and alternating areas (Workplace Flexibility, 2010). Telecommuting has become famous for IT professionals as this was the primary means of FWA mandated by organizations during the COVID-19 pandemic. Recent studies exploring the relationship between telecommuting and job satisfaction and work-life balance have yielded contrary results.

Leadership Styles and Turnover Intentions

Several studies have examined or explored the influence of leadership styles on turnover intentions using various leadership theories. Siew (2017) used a quantitative multiple regression to assess the relationship between leadership styles and turnover intentions within small and medium-sized enterprises in Malaysia. The study used the multifactor leadership theory as the lens to examine leadership styles. The multifactor leadership questionnaire (MLQ) was utilized as the measurement instrument for the research. The study concluded that "leadership styles have a strong relationship with turnover intention" (Siew, 2017, p. 7).

Another quantitative study by Ming et al. (2021) examined the relationship between leadership styles and employee retention in Sibul, Sarawak's hotel industry. More specifically, the study looked at the impact of directive, participative, servant, and laissez-faire leadership styles in predicting employee retention in the hospitality industry. The study utilized Role Theory, comprising a sample of 230 participants. The Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was utilized to investigate the hypotheses. The study concluded that directive and servant leadership styles "are imperative elements to urge employees' intention to stay at the current workplace (hotels)" (Ming et al., 2021, p. 170).

Similarly, Dixon and Hart (2010) examined the impact of path-goal leadership styles on work group effectiveness and turnover intentions. Three path-goal leadership styles, instrumental, participative, and supportive, were evaluated in the study. 260 full-time blue- and white-collar employees in a manufacturing firm based in the southeast of the US participated in the study via surveys completed anonymously. A descriptive and multiple regression analysis was used to analyze the data. The result of the study indicates a statistically positive relationship exists between path-goal leadership styles and work group effectiveness. A significant negative relationship between path-goal leadership styles and turnover intention was partially supported.

Flexible Work Arrangements and Turnover Intentions

Several studies have investigated the relationship between FWA and employee turnover intentions. Tsen et al. (2021) examined the relationship between FWA (flex time, working from home, and flex leave), turnover intentions, and the moderating role of job independence. The study utilized a mixed-effect modeling analysis with data from the International Social Survey Program (ISSP). A total of 16,920 responses from 35 nations were received and analyzed. The study concludes that providing FWA

alone does not necessarily result in talent retention in organizations. The result also indicates that perceived job independence significantly moderates the relationship between FWA and turnover intentions. The study concludes that employees who view their jobs as highly independent certainly have lower turnover intentions when utilizing FWA.

Similarly, Choi (2020) examined the relationship between FWA and employee retention of federal employees. The study employed a quantitative longitudinal analysis to evaluate the effect of telework on employee turnover. Telework, a type of FWA, offers employees enhanced control over their work time and where they conduct their work activities. Doing so allows them to enjoy significant autonomy regarding their work, providing them with a better avenue to attend to their family needs (Choi, 2020). The study concluded that government "agencies with more teleworkers tend to experience lower rates of voluntary turnover of employees" (Choi, 2020, p. 487). Choi's study seems to align with previous studies (Baltes et al., 1999; Konrad & Mangel, 2000) that show that telework reduces employee turnover intentions. A recent article by Oludayo et al. (2018) concludes that a company that promotes flexible work hours experienced a rise in workers' morale as employees are motivated to operate daily (Anyia et al., 2021).

The Impact of Employee Turnover on Businesses

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS] (2022), the number of employees who quit in July 2022 alone was 4.2 million. The estimated cost of losing an employee is one and a half to two times the employee's annual salary (Gallup, 2019). Aside from the employee replacement cost, employee turnover presents additional challenges that include loss of talent (Roodt & Bothma, 1997), loss of corporate knowledge, lost productivity (Mobley, 1982), reduced employee morale, and diminished employer brand to businesses. Therefore, business leaders must identify the potential causes of employee turnover and implement corrective measures. This study presents an opportunity to examine the relationship between leadership styles, FWA, and turnover intentions, as this insight could aid business leaders in making informed decisions.

Methods

Based on the background and literature review, this study examines the relationship between leadership style, flexible work arrangements, and turnover intention for IT professionals in the United States. The quantitative, correlational design is used to answer two research questions (RQ1 and RQ2), with each having two hypotheses (Null denoted by H_0 and Alternate denoted by H_A) that measured the relationship between subordinates' perceptions of their boss's leadership styles and their turnover intentions and flexible work arrangements and their turnover intentions. This study evaluated path-goal leadership style as an independent variable at the dimension level, and four leadership styles, directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented, were subdimensions or subscales. FWA was examined at the dimension level as an independent variable, and FWA options, including flextime, compressed workweek, and telecommuting, were subdimensions. The study's dependent variable was employee turnover intention.

In line with best practices, p -value was utilized for hypothesis testing. The standard p -value threshold is 0.05. In hypothesis testing, a p -value less than 0.05 is considered significant and accepted, while a p -value greater than 0.05 is considered nonsignificant and rejected. Spearman's Correlation Coefficient was selected as the statistical test for each hypothesis.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

RQ1 – What is the relationship between subordinates' perceptions of their boss's leadership style and turnover intentions for IT professionals?

H1₀ - There is no significant relationship between subordinates' perceptions of their boss's leadership style and turnover intention for IT professionals.

H1_A - There is a significant relationship between subordinates' perceptions of their boss's leadership style and turnover intention for IT professionals.

RQ2 – What is the relationship between subordinates' perceptions of flexible work arrangements and turnover intentions for IT professionals?

H2₀ - There is no significant relationship between subordinates' perceptions of flexible work arrangements and turnover intention for IT professionals.

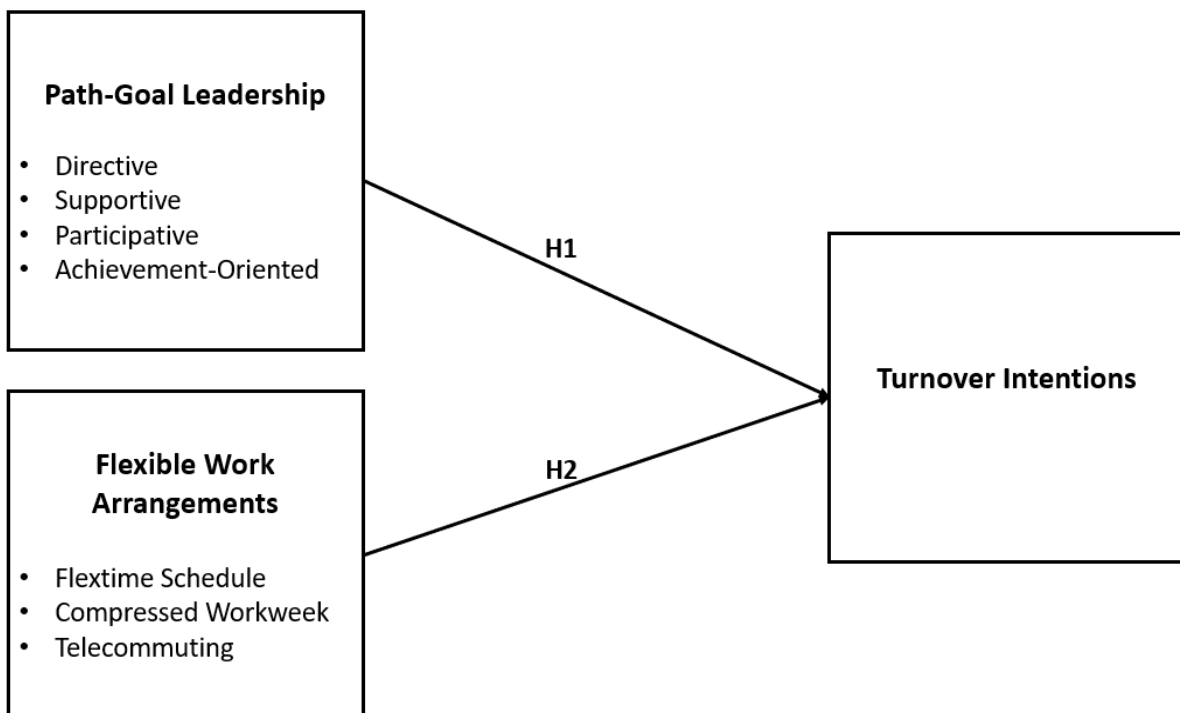
H2_A - There is a significant relationship between subordinates' perceptions of flexible work arrangements and turnover intention for IT professionals.

Model

The Path-Goal Leadership Theory (PGLT) and the Flexible Work Arrangements Model depicted in Figure 1 below were utilized in the study.

Figure 1

Path-Goal Leadership, Flexible Work Arrangements, and Turnover Intentions Model



Instrumentation

The study utilized a questionnaire comprising questions adapted from previous studies. The survey consisted of screening, demographics, and questions compiled from three existing instruments to measure all the variables. The instruments used include the Path-Goal Leadership Questionnaire (PGLQ) (Indvik, 1985), the Flexible Work Arrangement Questionnaire (FWAQ, Rawashdeh et al., 2016), and the Turnover Intention Scale (TIS-6) (Roodt, 2004).

The survey instrument comprises 20 questions from the Path-Goal Leadership Questionnaire (PGLQ), 14 questions from the Flexible Work Arrangement Questionnaire (FWAQ), six questions from the 6-item Turnover Intention Scale (TIS-6), and seven demographic questions. The demographics included gender, age, education, tenure in the organization, race, role, and FWA options. Aside from the demographic questions, all other survey questions were provided to participants using a Likert scale.

Instrument Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability are two critical concepts in quantitative research. Validity is the "degree to which the measurement or study measures what it purports to measure" (Gliner et al., 2017, p. 120). Reliability, on the other hand, is "the extent to which the results can be reproduced when the research is repeated under the same conditions" (Middleton, 2022, para 2). The validity and reliability of the instruments used in the study have been adequately validated in previous studies.

Cronbach's alpha is generally acceptable for measuring the reliability of instruments. The Cronbach's alpha values for PGLQ are as follows: directive (0.81), participative (0.81), supportive (0.86), and achievement-oriented (0.69) (Indvik, 1986). The borderline reliability for achievement-oriented leadership was based on only two studies. Thus, Indvik (1986) recommended accumulating more samples for a meta-analysis test. The Cronbach's alpha value for the FWAQ is 0.80 > 0.60 (Rawashdeh et al., 2016). Further, Bothma and Roodt (2013) tested and confirmed the reliability TIS-6 to be 0.80, indicating high internal consistency.

The instrument for this study was tested by computing Cronbach's alpha coefficient using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The result is depicted in Table 1 below. It indicates an overall Cronbach's alpha value of 0.86, representing high internal consistency and reliability.

Table 1.

Reliability of the Survey Instruments

Dimension / Sub-Dimension	<i>n</i>	α
Path-Goal Leadership Questionnaire (PGLQ) Scale	20	0.88
Directive	5	0.67
Supportive	5	0.69
Participative	5	0.75
Achievement-Oriented	5	0.57
Flexible Work Arrangements Questionnaire (FWAQ) Scale	14	0.80
Flex Schedule	5	0.62
Compressed Workweek	5	0.64
Telecommuting	4	0.69
Turnover Intention Scale (TIS-6)	6	0.77
Overall Survey Instrument	40	0.86

Data Collection and Analysis

This quantitative correlational study investigated IT professionals' perceptions of the relationship between leadership style, flexible work arrangements, and turnover intentions. A total of 340 respondents participated in the survey. However, 219 (64%) individuals provided complete responses, while 121 (36%) were either disqualified as not meeting eligibility criteria or abandoned the survey halfway. The survey was administered to respondents using SurveyMonkey. The study population consisted of IT professionals working in the United States who had opted to be members of the SurveyMonkey panel. Participants were anonymous and informed of their rights to opt-out should they wish to exercise that right. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data received from respondents.

Population and Sample

The study's sample size was calculated using G*Power. The confidence interval (CI) utilized for the computation was 95%, with an effect size of 0.3, a power of 0.80, and a margin of error of 5%, resulting in a sample size of 84. Utilizing a power of 80% ($\beta = 20\%$) makes it possible to discover statistical differences when they exist (Miles, 2021; Walmsley & Brown, 2017). While the minimum sample size required for the study was 84, the study was conducted using the responses from 204 respondents after the data was cleaned for outliers.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 2 below depicts the demographic profile of the respondents. Notable is that there is almost an even split between the respondents' genders, with males at 51% and females at 49%. 34% of respondents have bachelor's degrees, 31% are in manager roles, 68% are white (non-Hispanic), and 30% have worked in their organizations for six to 10 years. 89% of respondents identify using one form of flexible work arrangement.

Table 2.

Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Baseline Characteristic	n	%
Gender		
Male	104	51.0%
Female	100	49.0%
Age		
18 – 24	21	10.3%
25 – 34	42	20.6%
35 – 44	59	28.9%
45 – 54	57	27.9%
55 – 64	19	9.3%
65 and above	6	2.9%
Education		
Elementary/Middle School	1	0.5%
High School, Diploma or Equivalent (GED)	37	18.1%

Associate Degree	37	18.1%
Bachelor's Degree	71	34.8%
Master's Degree	40	19.6%
Doctorate Degree	18	8.8%
Role Level		
Single Contributor	47	23.0%
Supervisor	41	20.1%
Manager	64	31.4%
Director	28	13.7%
CISO, CSO, and above	24	11.8%
Race		
White (Non-Hispanic)	139	68.1%
Hispanic or Latino	23	11.3%
Black or African American	26	12.7%
American Indian or Alaska Natives	2	1.0%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	8	3.9%
Multiracial (Non-Hispanic)	6	2.9%
Tenure (Years)		
0 – 5	38	18.6%
6 – 10	61	29.9%
11 – 15	35	17.2%
16 – 20	33	16.2%
21 – 25	15	7.4%
26 and above	22	10.8%
Participants Utilizing FWAs		
Utilizing (FS, CW, or TE) *	181	88.7%
None	23	11.3%

Note. * FS = Flextime schedule, CW = Compressed workweek, and TE = Telecommuting. N = 204

Results and Discussion

To determine the type of correlational analysis, the researcher conducted several tests to determine the dataset's normality and distribution. Table 3 represents the dataset's numerical summary. The skewness and kurtosis values for the PGLQ, FWAs, and Turnover Intentions fall within the range of -1 to +1 and -2 to +2, respectively, and can be considered normally distributed (Grande, 2016).

Table 3

Numerical Summary of the Dataset

Dimension	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
PGLQ	5.19	0.92	-0.094	-0.637
Directive	5.49	1.19	-0.429	-0.859
Supportive	5.24	1.07	-1.129	-0.670

Participative	4.98	1.12	-0.257	-0.216
Ach.Oriented	5.06	0.95	-0.016	-0.623

FWAs	3.73	0.59	0.189	-0.345
Flex-time Schedule	3.74	0.70	-0.234	-0.267
Comp. Workweek	3.57	0.75	-0.016	-0.463
Telecommuting	3.89	0.73	-0.369	-0.399

Turnover Intention	2.84	0.83	0.080	-0.369

Further, additional preliminary statistics that include exploratory data analyses (EDA) were conducted to test the correlation assumptions. The assumptions test consists of the level of measurement (interval or ratio), no outliers, regular distribution of the data, linearity between the two variables, and homoscedasticity in the dataset. The tests include histogram, Q-Q Plot, Box Plot, Scatter Plot, and Homoscedasticity. A normality test was also conducted using Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) and Shapiro-Wilk tests, and both results indicate that the data is normally distributed, as represented in Table 4.

Table 4

Normality Test Results for Main Dimensions (Scale)

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Path-Goal Leadership Styles	.049	204	.200*	.988	204	.072
Flexible Work Arrangements	.042	204	.200*	.987	204	.050
Turnover Intentions	.093	204	<.001	.986	204	.036

The lack of linearity based on the result of the scatter plot encouraged the researcher to utilize Spearman's Rank Order Correlation (rho) testing. The result of Spearman's Correlation test is depicted in Table 5 below.

Table 5

Correlation Test Results for Path-Goal Leadership Styles, FWAs, and Turnover Intention

		Path-Goal Leadership Styles	Flexible Work Arrangements	Turnover Intentions
Spearman's rho	Path-Goal Leadership Styles	Correlation	1.000	-
		Sig. (2-tailed)	-	-
		N	204	-
	Flexible Work Arrangements	Correlation	.427**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	-
		N	204	204
		Correlation	-.320**	1.000

Turnover	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.077	-
Intentions	N	204	204	204

The result indicates a significant negative correlation between IT professionals' perceptions of their boss's leadership style and turnover intentions. Further, the result shows no significant relationship between IT professionals' perceptions of flexible work arrangements and turnover intentions. Table 6 below depicts the result of the hypotheses tested.

Table 6

Research Questions and Hypotheses Test Summary

RQ1	What is the relationship between subordinates' perceptions of their boss's leadership style and turnover intentions for IT professionals?	
H1 ₀	There is no significant relationship between subordinates' perceptions of their boss's leadership style and turnover intention for IT professionals.	Rejected
H1 _A	There is a significant relationship between subordinates' perceptions of their boss's leadership style and turnover intention for IT professionals.	Accepted
RQ2	What is the relationship between subordinates' perceptions of flexible work arrangements and turnover intentions for IT professionals?	
H2 ₀	There is no significant relationship between subordinates' perceptions of flexible work arrangements and turnover intention for IT professionals.	Accepted
H2 _A	There is a significant relationship between subordinates' perceptions of flexible work arrangements and turnover intention for IT professionals.	Rejected

The above tests were also conducted to examine the relationships between the sub-dimensions of Path-Goal leadership styles (directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented), flexible work arrangement options (flex-time schedule, compressed workweek, and telecommuting), and turnover intentions. The findings reflect that each sub-dimension of leadership styles negatively correlated with turnover intentions. However, flex-time schedules and compressed workweek significantly and positively correlated with turnover intentions, while telecommuting was not significantly correlated.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

This study adds to the body of knowledge on leadership and portrays the critical role that leadership styles play in employees' intentions to quit their organization. In addition, the study reveals how today's organizations have adopted the flexible firm model, as over 87% of respondents attested to using one form of flexible work option.

The emergence of COVID-19 allowed organizations to experiment with their workforce configuration as they struggled to navigate government-imposed restrictions. As demonstrated by this research findings, the leadership styles that managers deploy significantly influence choices of flexible work arrangements and employee turnover intentions. Therefore, it is essential to provide managers with appropriate training about the optimal mix of leadership styles based on specific situations. Further, HR and IT leadership must collaborate in designing and deploying flexible work options to retain a talented IT workforce in the United States.

Research Limitations and Assumptions

The first limitation of this study is the population under consideration, with participants only from the United States, which affected the rate of return and generalization. Secondly, this study focused on the subordinates' perception, not the leaders. Another limitation is related to limited outcomes associated with quantitative research as it relies on structured questionnaires involving closed-ended questions. While this study focuses on the relationship between leadership styles, flexible work arrangements, and turnover intentions, the researcher did not lose sight of the fact that other variables such as motivation, job satisfaction, salary, work stress, and benefits that could potentially influence these relationships were outside the scope of this study.

The study also assumes that respondents will provide truthful responses to each question, that all respondents are subordinates who report to leaders in their organizations, and that the survey instruments will accurately measure the variables under consideration.

Recommendations and Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between leadership styles, flexible work arrangements, and turnover intentions of IT professionals in the US. Future research can be expanded to other geographic locations from the European Union (EU), Asia, or globally. The study could also be extended to see if any independent variables predict the dependent variable in similar settings and geographic regions. Yet still, the study could be designed to examine two groups of participants – leaders and subordinates. It would be interesting to compare how leaders and their subordinates differ in their views on how leadership styles may influence their turnover intention.

A key recommendation for practice is exploring this study's result to minimize operational costs. Reducing employee turnover is one way that businesses can achieve this objective. As a function, human resources (HR) is constantly searching for modalities it can implement in compensation and benefits to retain top talent (Bryant & Allen, 2013). This study reveals some factors that organizational leaders can attribute to potentially impacting employee turnover.

In conclusion, employee turnover intention is a leading indicator of voluntary employee turnover. As O'Connell and Kung (2007) put it, "employee turnover is costly" (p. 1). Employee turnover costs include workforce replacement fees, workplace safety issues, loss of productivity, and morale damage (O'Connell & Kung, 2007). It becomes imperative that organizational leaders identify the factors that may be influencing their workforce turnover intentions.

The emergence of COVID-19 exacerbated employee turnover intentions when the US hit a crescendo in September 2021 dubbed "The Great Resignation." At the onset of the pandemic, nations, including the US and companies, instituted measures designed to curtail the spread of the virus. In the IT space, organizations have increased their adoption of cloud services. This move enabled IT professionals to work from anywhere across the globe through flexible work arrangements in virtual and hybrid forms. Managing this new way of working was challenging for leaders who were used to supervising a collocated workforce in traditional office settings. As soon as the pandemic began to subside, some business leaders wanted their employees to return fully to the office. This period coincided with a drastic increase in employee turnover across the US.

This study reveals a significant relationship between leadership styles at the dimension and sub-dimension levels and turnover intentions. The study did not identify a significant relationship between flexible work arrangements and turnover intentions at the dimension level. However, the sub-dimension levels revealed a significant relationship between flex-time schedule, compressed workweek, and turnover intentions. Telecommuting did not significantly correlate with turnover intentions. Business leaders, including HR practitioners, must take the time to identify the best mix of strategies at both the dimension and sub-dimension levels to implement to reduce their employee turnover intentions and retain top talent.

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