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# TURNOVER-MITIGATING EFFECT OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP ON JOB PERFORMANCE

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## ABSTRACT

Job performance is an extremely complex factor affecting organisational performance. The literature recognises factors impacting job performance positively and negatively. This article aims to verify the turnover-mitigating effect on the relationship between servant leadership and job performance. The developed moderated mediation model is empirically verified based on the data collected from 263 managers working in Poland's for-profit organisations. The results were analysed using Macro for IBM SPSS Statistics. It has been shown that employee turnover is a mediator in the job performance model based on turnover-mitigating servant leadership. Additionally, the influence of employees' dynamic capabilities has been analysed. The study revealed the significance of servant leadership in influencing job performance and the disruptive relationship between employee turnover and the impact of employees' dynamic capabilities in reducing employee turnover. This research provides practical implications for managers and organisations regarding selecting the right leadership style to improve employee job performance.

## KEY WORDS

**servant leadership, employee job performance, employee turnover, employees' dynamic capabilities, organisational performance**

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## INTRODUCTION

The contemporary literature provides numerous job performance models in the management science field (Schmitt & Chen, 1998; Campbell et al., 1993; Borman & Motowidlo, 1993). Many researchers

attempt to determine factors having a significant impact on employee job performance, including the quality and timeliness of their work and the achievement of their goals (Rich et al., 2010). Undoubtedly, managers are one of the main factors that influence

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employee work in an organisation (de Waal & Sivro, 2012; Choudhary et al., 2013; Liden et al., 2015; Alafeshat & Aboud, 2019). Their skills, behaviours and attitudes affect employee performance (Liden et al., 2015; Schwarz et al., 2016; Mcquade et al., 2020; Awan et al., 2012). Since the last decade, leadership studies have started strongly emphasising the interaction between leaders and followers (Avolio et al., 2009). Analysing the influence of a supervisor on an employee, different leadership types must be considered, so the leadership impact on job performance may be different (Widelska et al., 2018). The literature distinguishes many leadership types, including human relations leadership, democratic leadership, laissez-faire leadership, and autocratic leadership (Warrick 1981). Other popular leadership styles are transformational leadership and transactional leadership (Bass, 1985; Politis, 2001; Bhatti & Alyahya, 2021). Recently, servant leadership has been recognised as an important leadership form (Mcquade et al., 2020).

Hence, this article refers to the impact of servant leadership on employee job performance. Servant leadership is a people-oriented leadership approach (van Dierendonck, 2011) focusing on serving others to enhance their development. It is argued that servant leaders combine motivation to lead with a need to serve others. A positive effect of servant leadership on job performance in the context of the literature on the subject (Liden et al., 2015; Schwarz et al., 2016; Mcquade et al., 2020; Awan et al., 2012) seems obvious. The servant leadership approach improves employee work motivation and engagement (Krog & Govender, 2015), resulting in increased work results. It seems, however, that apart from the obvious job-related constructs, such as work motivation, job satisfaction or work engagement (Price & Mueller, 1975; Allen & Meyer, 1990; Li et al., 2013; Bonds, 2017; Shelly et al., 2011; Sajjad et al., 2013), servant leadership also influences the employee intentions to leave the organisation. It seems that employees who develop and utilise autonomy and feel more responsible for their work would not be interested in leaving. Even more so, the lack of intention to leave the organisation would probably have a greater effect on their job performance. Therefore, by reducing an employee's intention to leave indirectly (more than directly), servant leadership will affect employee job performance. Therefore, this study aims to prove the impact of this mediation and develop a job performance model based on turnover-mitigating servant leadership. This aim fits into the research gap as the

impact of servant leadership on employee performance through other factors has only been analysed to a very small extent (de Waal & Sivro, 2012), or analyses were performed in other research contexts (Krog & Govender, 2015; McCann et al., 2014).

Additionally, the article recognises the role of employees' dynamic capabilities in the analysed process of servant leadership impacting job performance. Different traits and features characterise employees. By analogy to the concept of dynamic capabilities by Teece (2009), it seems that nowadays, the employee potential expressed in their competences, i.e., knowledge, skills and characteristics, is becoming less important (Boyatzis, 1982) without the ability to use it depending on dynamically changing job needs. Employees' dynamic capabilities (EDC) is a concept developed by Bieńkowska & Tworek (2020). EDC can influence job performance through work motivation, job satisfaction, work engagement and, most importantly, PJ-fit. Hence, it seems that it may have the ability to mitigate the negative influence of employee turnover on job performance. Therefore, the study additionally aims to analyse the EDC influence on the relationship between servant leadership and job performance through employee turnover.

The expressed study aims are achieved by a systematic literature review concerning the analysed relations — presented in the first part of the article — and verified based on empirical studies presented in the second part of the article.

## 1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

### 1.1. JOB PERFORMANCE AS A CRUCIAL FACTOR FOR ORGANISATION

The high complexity of employee job performance explains its numerous definitions in the human resource management literature (Darvish-motevali & Ali, 2020). Campbell et al. (1993) argued that perceptions of employee job performance are determined by their point of view, which may lean towards understanding employee job performance as outcomes or as behaviours. If an employee's job performance is considered in the context of outcomes, it is essential to remember that job performance can also be considered two-dimensionally: as about efficiency and as about productivity (Pritchard, 1992). The core of the difference between efficiency and productivity is that efficiency refers to the degree of

effectiveness in producing the desired result, while productivity is explained as the effectiveness of productive effort, measured by the rate of output per unit of input (Darvishmotevali & Ali, 2020; Sujowa et al., 2019).

However, the perception of employee job performance in the context of outcomes is seemingly expected to remain mostly related to the behavioural aspect, as job performance perceived by outcomes assesses the results of employee behaviour in the organisation (Darvishmotevali & Ali, 2020). Therefore, employee job performance in the human resource management literature is most often defined in terms of behaviours expected by a company from an employee (Campbell & Wiernik, 2015; Motowidlo & Kell, 2012).

According to the theory by Motowidlo and Kell (2012), job performance is the total expected value to the organisation represented by a set of certain behaviours that an individual performs over time. Thus, the core of this definition is to determine the set of employee behaviours determining a high level of job performance (Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1997; Smith, Organ, & Near, 1983). Researchers indicate that job performance is shaped by the general and organisation-specific knowledge, skills, and characteristics of employees (Campbell et al., 1993).

These observable individual behaviours demonstrated by employees affect the generated organisation's value and pursued goals (Cambell & Wiernik, 2015). The impact made by job performance on an organisation highlights the significance of this factor to organisational performance. Hence, the need exists for researchers to verify the job performance phenomenon and recognise the components that shape it.

## 1.2. ROLE OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP IN SHAPING JOB PERFORMANCE

Servant leadership was formally conceptualised by Robert Greenleaf, who stated that “the servant-leader is servant first [...] It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first, then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead” (Greenleaf, 1998, p. 4). Since then, there has been continuous advancement of research on servant leadership. Researchers examined definitions of servant leadership, its context, servant leader skills and behaviours, and scales to measure the concept (van Dierendonck, 2011; Parris & Peachey, 2013; Eva et al., 2019; Mcquade et al., 2020).

Most literature reviews servant leader's behaviour, characteristics, and skills (Mcquade, Harrison & Tarbert, 2020).

Many authors argue that servant leadership behaviour is demonstrated by empowering people (Spears, 1996), expressing stewardship (Spears, 1996; Russell & Stone, 2002; Brown et al., 2005), humility, and authenticity (van Dierendonck, 2011), inspiring, influencing (Sendjaya et al., 2008) and providing a direction to followers (van Dierendonck, 2011), and giving spiritual support (Avolio et al., 2009).

Empowerment aims to foster a proactive attitude among followers (van Dierendonck, 2011) and give them autonomy to make decisions about daily tasks (Krog & Govender, 2015). Employees perceive empowerment as a sign of trust from leaders, encouraging them to follow voluntarily and willingly. The notion of stewardship is derived from the stewardship theory (Davis et al., 2018). Leaders demonstrate a commitment to serving others' needs (Spears, 1996); however, their behaviour does not depart from the interest of their organisations. They behave pro-organisationally; hence, they are aligned with the objectives of their organisation (Davis et al., 2018). Servant leaders express humility admitting a possible benefit from the contribution and expertise of others (van Dierendonck, 2011). Humility is near modesty, demonstrated by retreating into the background and putting the interest of others first. Authenticity assumes expressing oneself truly, consistent with inner thoughts and feelings (Russell & Stone, 2002). Leaders demonstrate authenticity by doing what they promised and being honest.

Leaders also influence and inspire employees to approach situations from different angles and perspectives. They create a learning climate, where making mistakes is a practice to create self-awareness and develop self-efficiency. Provided directions allow employees to know what is expected from them. Leaders can provide the best direction towards planned goals by noticing followers' abilities and listening to their needs.

A leader's spiritual support aims to create a workplace that emphasises strong organisational values and a sense of meaning at work (Badrinarayan, 2008). Leaders have an important role in nurturing a spiritual workplace. They relate to employees' thoughts and beliefs to fulfil their spiritual needs at work. Spirituality and human-potential development are linked as leaders who create a spiritual workplace can reach the full potential of followers (Neck & Milliman, 1994).

The most important characteristic of servant leadership is the commitment to employee development manifested as an interest in the personal and professional life of followers (Spears, 1996). It is only possible if a leader possesses desired skills. Researchers state that a servant leader should possess empathy, have the ability to trust and be fair, and demonstrate communication skills (Spears, 1996; Avolio et al., 2009).

Servant leaders are considered empathic when they always accept and understand others. To perform, people need to feel accepted with all their features. Hence, empathy is an especially desired skill for leaders (Spears, 2010). Trust enables a leader to motivate followers to accomplish their goals (Krog & Govender, 2015). Employees trust leaders when they feel empowered. Fairness indicates leaders' sensitivity to the needs of others. Some researchers argue that leadership effectiveness depends on communication skills (Bass, 2000). The ability to articulate appropriately is essential for convincing and inspiring followers. However, listening is the most critical communication skill, manifested by automatically responding to any problem by intentionally listening to what has been said and unsaid. Servant leaders listen to understand followers' aspirations and to mentor them to achieve their goals (Schwarz et al., 2016)

Other attributes of a servant leader are honesty (Russell & Stone, 2002), integrity (Page & Wong, 2000), credibility, modelling (Schwarz et al., 2016), and creating a vision (Greenleaf, 1977). These features are observed in a specific leader's behaviour. There are still debates whether these are, in fact, skills or traits (Mcquade et al., 2020); however, both play an essential role in shaping servant leader behaviour. The current study proposes four key attributes: focusing on follower needs, stimulating, influencing, and developing others.

Servant leadership focuses on building a genuine, trust-based relationship with employees (Dutta & Khatri, 2017). This type of leadership, planting positive behaviours in the employees, encourages positive change, strengthening the employees' position in the organisation and, as a result, better fitting them to that organisation (Wong & Davey, 2007). Such leaders inspire employees to solve problems in various ways, create a learning space for employees, and give them a direction towards achieving goals by giving appropriate guidance (Greenleaf, 1997). A positive atmosphere allows employees to achieve work-related and mental goals (Kashyap & Rangnekar, 2016).

Many authors examine the relationship between servant leadership and other factors. Relationships have been found between servant leadership and employee empowerment, commitment, trust, and innovative behaviour (Krog & Govender, 2015), employee satisfaction (McCann, Graves, & Cox, 2014), organisational culture, organisational citizenship behaviour, and customer satisfaction (Setyaningrum, 2017), and organisational performance (de Waal & Sivro, 2012; Choudhary et al., 2013; Liden et al., 2015; Alafeshat & Aboud, 2019). One of the most significant relationships is with job performance (Liden et al., 2015; Schwarz et al., 2016; Mcquade et al., 2020; Awan et al., 2012).

Employee job performance is an extremely important factor that determines the performance of the whole organisation (Ugurluoglu et al., 2018). An organisation needs highly skilled, job-performing employees to achieve its goals, deliver quality products and services, and build its competitive advantage (Sriviboon, 2020).

The literature provides many interpretations of this factor. Schmitt and Chan (1998) classify job performance as "I can do", which refers to the knowledge and skills necessary to complete certain tasks, and as "I want to do", which is the level of an employee's motivation to work. For Campbell et al. (1993), performance theory was synonymous with observable behaviour. The effect of work has been understood as a direct result until June and Mahmood (2011) considered that the effects of work could also be determined by behaviour. Thus, the most relevant job-performance definition seems to be by Borman and Motowidlo (1993) as a set of behaviours that helps employees to perform their tasks and provide long-term work. Ensuring employee job performance is the most important task for managers, as people are considered one of the most important assets of an organisation (Ugurluoglu et al., 2018).

Liden et al. (2015) indicated three theoretical backgrounds explaining how servant leadership related to work outcomes at an individual level. First, servant leaders empower followers, fulfil their needs, and bring out their potential to enhance job performance. Leaders provide developmental support and autonomy creating the followers' self-efficacy. Empowerment and self-efficacy are positively related to job performance. Second, followers engage in work behaviours and perform required job duties well as a response to their leaders prioritising the followers' needs above their interest. Third, servant leaders act as role models by engaging in helping behaviours at

work and outside the company. Leaders have a strong sense of ethics, hence, employees trust and admire them, which ensures involvement in helping behaviours. Also, Schwarz et al. (2016) concluded that servant leadership was linked to job performance through role modelling emerging from the social learning process (Schwarz et al., 2016). Leaders shape employee job performance through their perceptions and attitudes. Servant leaders, being honest and trustworthy, also mobilise followers to become leaders themselves, hence, leading them towards higher work performance.

In the current study, job performance indicates employee productivity and is measured by work quality, timeliness, work efficiency and effectiveness in achieving goals.

Therefore, considering the above, the following hypothesis may be formulated: H1a. Servant leadership and job performance are related. The regularly changing trend in human resource management (HRM), increasingly focusing on the significance of employees in an organisation (Volosin & Volosinova, 2016), shows managers that people and their capital are becoming key to the success of the organisation (Sriviboon, 2020). Therefore, managers should focus on retaining the best employees in the organisation for as long as possible as the job performance of long-term staff can be beneficial (Armstrong, 2001). Therefore, HRM researchers increasingly focus on employee turnover (Hom et al., 2017).

This aspect has already been considered before, as many concepts and models describing the phenomenon of employee turnover have been developed so far (e.g., Mobley, 1977; Price & Mueller, 1975; Steers & Mowday, 1981; Allen & Griffeth, 2004). In the literature, the phenomenon of employee turnover can be presented in two ways: as a real factor for leaving employees and as an intention to leave. This conception has already been presented by Porter and Steers (1973). An employee's departure is defined as a process, while the intention to leave is a step in this process, determined by affective factors causing employee dissatisfaction (Aburumman et al., 2010). Unfortunately, the conducted research on employee turnover shows that it is impossible to clearly determine which factors or their group cause an employee's decision to leave the organisation (Berntal & Wellins, 2001; Bellini et al., 2019). It seems reasonable to investigate employee turnover causes in specific groups of influencing factors, i.e., individual, related to the job characteristics model (Loher et al., 1985; Lee & Wilbur 1985; Michaels & Spector, 1982), and

organisational, directly related to the HRM strategy (Ernst Kossek & Ozeki, 1998). Also, a leadership style seems to be a key factor (Fuller et al., 1999; Lok & Crawford, 2004; Burners, 2006; Lo, 2015). Researchers often indicate leadership as a factor related to employee turnover (Mobley, 1979; Clark, 2001; Elci et al., 2012).

The role of leadership is crucial in building a relationship between an employee and a leader. Moreover, as employees understand the organisation through the leadership style, it also impacts the organisational identity (Martin, 2009). Employee perception of the organisational identity influences their willingness to stay (Edwards & Edwards, 2013). Undoubtedly, leaders have a significant impact on employee behaviours and attitudes, including their motivation to stay or leave the organisation (Palanski et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2016; Turgut, 2017; Suifan et al., 2020). Leader characters, behaviours, decision-making and implementation methods influence employee attitudes and behaviours (Shipton, Sanders, Atkinson & Frenkel, 2016; Turgut et al., 2017). A leadership style, characterised by behaviours of leaders, methods used to make and realise decisions, their communication skills, and approach to people directly impact employees (Stone et al., 2004; Smith et al., 2004; van Dierendonck et al., 2014; Kashyap & Rangnekar, 2016).

Many servant leadership aspects successfully impact employees. Studies show that servant leadership also increases trust in the leader (Sendjaya & Pekerti, 2010), but above all, it improves cooperation between the leader and the organisation (Joseph & Winston, 2005; Stone, Russell, & Patterson, 2004; Zhang et al., 2012), and enhances organisational loyalty (Kool & van Dierendonck, 2012). Therefore, it especially positively impacts commitment to the organisation and willingness to stay (Liden et al., 2008; Dutta & Khatri, 2017). A leader with a natural tendency to serve followers prioritises employee developmental capabilities, is sensitive and empathic, which effectively increases employee job satisfaction (Mayer et al., 2008; van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011) and influences their turnover (Parris & Peachey, 2013; Jaramillo et al., 2009; Turgut et al., 2007). Based on the above consideration, the following hypothesis can be formulated: H1b. Servant leadership and employee turnover are related.

As mentioned above, employee job performance is extremely important in keeping organisational performance (Sriviboon, 2020). Currently, employee knowledge and talent have become a key factor in the

struggle for organisations to remain competitive in the marketplace (Smith & Kelly, 1997; Jamal & Saif, 2011; Johari & Yahya, 2012). New employees hired in place of those who left the organisation require attention and time, which costs money and reduces the performance of other employees (Beer, 1981; Butali et al., 2013). According to Armstrong (2001), an employee with long experience generally achieves better performance than a newly recruited staff member. Price (2001) also confirmed that the increased employee turnover rate resulted in lower productivity of the organisation due to the loss of qualified and experienced employees. This is particularly important as it turns out that employees with the highest job performance decide to leave the organisation more often (Jackosky, 1986). Such employees have a much greater choice of employment opportunities due to competition between organisations, facilitating turnover (Jackosky, 1984). Work engagement is also important for building an appropriate level of job performance, but it becomes irrelevant with a high rate of employee turnover, also decreasing job performance (Hulin et al., 1999).

The increasing turnover rate is a negative phenomenon from the perspective of employees who decide to stay in the organisation. It may lower the morale of employees and their engagement in daily work, resulting in poorer job performance (Armstrong, 2009; Branham, 2007; Katcher & Snyder, 2007). This aspect is crucial for the organisation as leaving employees decrease organisational knowledge and impact staying employees. This negative relationship between the intention to leave and job performance has already been confirmed several times in the literature (Schwab, 1991; Lee & Whitford, 2008; Moynihan & Landuyt, 2008; Meier & Hicklin, 2008; Koszela, 2020; Koszela & Tworek, 2020). Based on the

above consideration, the following hypothesis can be formulated: H1c. Employee turnover and job performance are related.

In the context of the relationships described above, it seems there is a need to comprehensively explain the mechanism of the impact of servant leadership on job performance while analysing the mediating role of employee turnover. A leader with the servant leadership style can strengthen employee job performance (Gašková, 2020). However, it seems that considering these relationships in their entirety, including employee turnover, can explain the phenomenon of job performance strengthened by servant leadership. It will allow verifying and more comprehensively explaining the mechanism behind the servant leadership's influence on job performance. Servant leadership supports employees by improving their competence, creating a positive working and learning environment, and building a trust-based long-term relationship (Krog & Govender, 2015; Sendjaya & Pekerti, 2010). Trust in a leader certainly leads to trust in the organisation; therefore, it is essential in building long-term relationships with employees and strengthening their willingness to stay in the organisation (Stone, Russell & Patterson, 2004; Joseph & Winston, 2005; Wong & Davey, 2007; Zhang et al., 2012; Kool & van Dierendonck, 2012). Employees with a high level of willingness to stay in the organisation show higher levels of job performance under servant leadership (Liden et al., 2015; Schwarz et al., 2016; Mcquade et al., 2020; Awan et al., 2012). The employees assuming they will remain, are more involved in the life of the organisation and their work, so their job performance is higher (Armstrong, 2001). It is not by chance that the literature offers opinions on long-term employees being more productive than new staff members due to a better knowledge of the

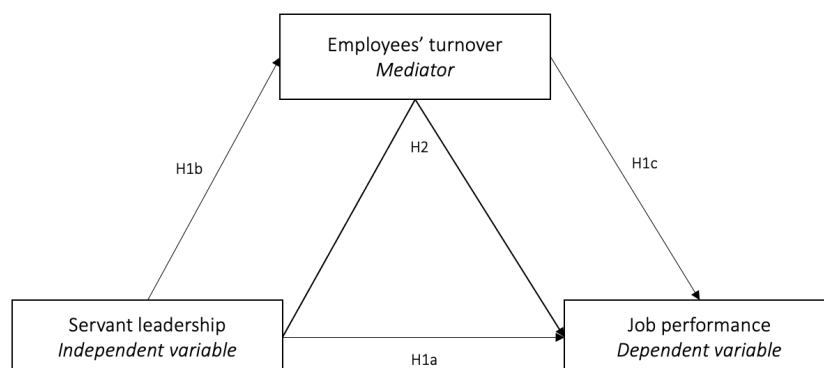


Fig. 1. Mediation model of the servant leadership's influence on job performance

business and internal processes of the organisation (Armstrong, 2001; Price, 2001; Beer, 1981; Butali et al., 2013). Therefore, in the light of the above, the main hypothesis should be formulated: H2. Servant leadership influences job performance (an indirect effect) through employee turnover (an intermediary variable).

### 1.3. MODERATING ROLE OF EDC IN SHAPING JOB PERFORMANCE BY SERVANT LEADERSHIP

EDC means employees' dynamic capabilities, determining their ability to use competences (potential) flexibly or contribute with their potential in the context of changing needs and requirements. It is understood as "the capability to integrate, build and reconfigure employee competencies to address a rapidly changing environment that directly influences the performance of tasks in the workplace" (Bieńkowska & Tworek, 2020). EDC has the following components:

- "the ability to be sensitive to changes in the environment (the ability to see changes and recognise opportunities and risks potentially affecting the performance of work at the workplace),
- the ability to adapt to changes in the environment (the ability to undertake preventive actions, preventing the occurrence of problems in the workplace),
- the ability to proactively solve problems arising in the workplace (if they occur), and include innovations in the workplace,
- the ability for continuous personal development and learning" (Bieńkowska & Tworek, 2020).

Bieńkowska and Tworek (2020) proved that EDC positively influences job performance, and this influence takes place through intermediary variables, i.e., in order of P-J fit, and then on work motivation, job

satisfaction, work engagement and organisational commitment (Bieńkowska & Tworek, 2020).

It seems that the EDC level may be a factor influencing the servant leadership impact model on job performance through employee turnover. It will be a moderator of the relationship between employee turnover and job performance and between servant leadership and employee turnover, which means that EDC may have the potential to strengthen the relationship between servant leadership and job performance.

It should be assumed that EDC influences both employee turnover and job performance. While the impact on job performance is proven (Bieńkowska & Tworek, 2020), the impact on employee turnover has not been analysed so far and remains unclear. On the one hand, EDC allows an employee to adapt to changes in the organisation and its environment (internal impact). On the other hand, an employee with high EDC is more willing to change their job because they have a greater potential for adaptation (assuming they have due to the specifics of the EDC components described earlier), and thus lower barriers to leaving the organisation. However, they are held back by "benefits" from EDC: such as P-J-fit, work motivation or job satisfaction. In this context, one should first consider the situation when an employee has low EDC.

Low EDC is indicative of employee inability to adapt to necessary changes in their job, which may become the reason to leave it and which may naturally lower job performance. Independently of the intention to leave, an employee with low EDC fails to achieve high job performance (because of the inability to meet job requirements). Consequently, they may consider leaving their current job because they lack the potential to adapt to new working conditions. However, the higher are EDC, the better is the

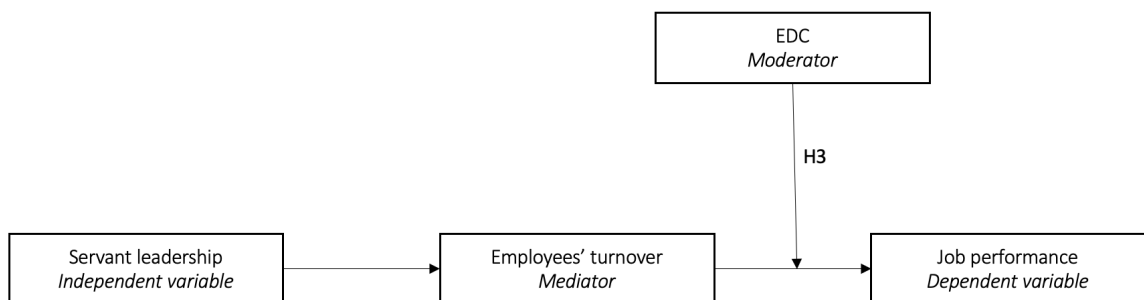


Fig. 2. Moderators of the model of servant leadership's influence on job performance

employee's ability to adapt to changing job requirements.

As a result, the employee's motivation and job satisfaction increase, the intention to leave is weakened, and the impact of employee turnover on job performance is stronger. In this context, the following hypothesis can be put forward: H3. The higher is the EDC, the stronger is the influence of employee turnover on job performance (in the mediation model).

The diagram illustrating the described research hypothesis is presented in Fig. 2.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The proposed hypotheses were verified based on an empirical study. The main research was conducted using a CAWI method in December 2019 in 263 organisations located in Poland, which was the only condition limiting the sample (organisations were surveyed regardless of their size, industry, the type of business etc.). The sample was obtained with the cooperation of an external company specialising in empirical research in social sciences, which ensured that questionnaires were filled by respondents in managerial positions with the view of the entire company.

It was preceded by the pilot survey conducted in the fourth quarter of 2019 in the group of 25 managers (acting as competent judges). According to obtained results, some ambiguous questions were rewritten. It was established that proposed questions were understood by respondents as intended by researchers (which is a prerequisite for establishing a questionnaire as a valid measurement method

(Czakon, 2019)). The overview of the sample is shown in Table 1. It confirms that the sample is sufficiently diversified to form scientific conclusions based on the obtained results. The results were analysed using Macro (v.3.5) for IBM SPSS Statistics (v. 25).

### 2.1. OVERVIEW OF VARIABLES

The hypotheses verification was based on four key variables: Servant Leadership, Employee Turnover, Job Performance and EDC. The variables were measured based on dedicated scales, including statements assessed using a 5-point Likert scale.

Servant Leadership was measured based on four items and reflected a relationship-based approach between a leader and a follower, a manager's focus on followers' needs, supporting them in development, inspiring, motivating, and influencing to achieve better performance. A 5-point Likert scale (from "I strongly disagree" to "I strongly agree" with a middle point "I have no opinion") was used as a basis.

Employee Turnover was measured based on the scale of the employee intention to leave the organisation. One item was used for measurement. A 5-point Likert scale (from "I strongly disagree" to "I strongly agree") was used as a basis.

Job Performance was measured based on four items covering work quality, timeliness, work efficiency and effectiveness in achieving goals. A 5-point Likert scale (from "I strongly disagree" to "I strongly agree") was used as a basis.

EDC was measured based on four items covering four components of EDC. A 5-point Likert scale (from "I strongly disagree" to "I strongly agree") was used as a basis.

Tab. 1. Research sample characteristics

ORGANISATION SIZE	MANUFACTURING ORGANISATIONS	SERVICE ORGANISATIONS	TRADE ORGANISATIONS	TOTAL
Micro (below 10 people)	12	11	9	32
Small (11–50 people)	37	15	11	63
Medium (51–250 people)	42	26	24	92
Large (above 250 people)	37	11	28	76
Total	128	63	72	263

Source: Tworek & Koszela (2020).



### 3. RESEARCH RESULTS

#### 3.1. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS AND THE RELIABILITY ANALYSIS OF SCALES

The reliability of scales for each variable was verified as a first step of the presented research. The results are presented in Table 2. The obtained results show that Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was high for every variable, which indicates a high internal reliability of the scales and measurements.

#### 3.2. MEDIATION MODEL

Three conditions must be met to establish the mediation model (Saks, 2006). First, there must be a relationship between the independent variables and the mediator. Second, there must be a relationship between the dependent variables and the mediator.

Third, a significant relationship between the independent variables and dependent variables must be reduced (partial mediation) or no longer significant (full mediation) when introducing the mediator.

Therefore, to verify those conditions, the r-Pearson correlation analysis was performed (Table 3). It was also a basis for the verification of hypotheses H1a–H1c.

The obtained results, presented in Table 3, clearly show a statistically significant and high correlation between all analysed variables. The correlation is the highest in the case of the relationship between leadership and job performance. It allows the initial acceptance of H1a, H1b and H1c hypotheses.

Therefore, such a conclusion enables the next step: to verify the mediation model of job performance. To do that, linear regression analysis with the mediator was performed for servant leadership as an independent variable and job performance as a dependent variable. The inverted employee turno-

Tab. 2. Defined variables along with the results of the reliability analysis of scales

NO.	VARIABLE	NO. SCALES	CRONBACH'S $\alpha$	FACTOR ANALYSIS [%]	M	SD
1.	EDC	4	0.742	56.369	3.43	0.76
2.	Servant leadership	4	0.777	60.065	3.40	0.82
3.	Employee turnover	1	--	--	3.44	0.99
4.	Job performance	4	0.816	64.721	3.69	0.75

Tab. 3. Correlation analysis between analysed variables.

VARIABLE		EMPLOYEES' TURNOVER	EDC	JOB PERFORMANCE
Servant leadership	r	-0.225	0.645	0.556
	Sig.	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
	N	255	255	255
EDC	r	0.086	1	0.623
	Sig.	0.165		<0.001
	N	263	263	263
Job performance	r	-0.403	0.623	1
	Sig.	<0.001	<0.001	
	N	263	263	263

ver was tested as the mediator in the model (employee turnover is assumed to have a negative mediating effect on the relationship between servant leadership and job performance; therefore, it was necessary to invert it to test the hypothesis). The results of the analysis are included in Table 4.

The obtained regression model with the mediator is statistically significant ( $F(2,252)=78.197$  and corrected  $R^2=0.618$ ). Moreover, employee turnover is a statistically significant mediator of the model ( $p<0.001$ ,  $\text{coeff.} = 0.210$ ,  $\text{se} = 0.038$ ). The mediating effect is also statistically significant, as can be observed in Table X (BootLLCI and ULCI are both above 0). The obtained model shows that employee turnover is a weak mediator of the relationship between servant leadership and job performance. Therefore, it allows accepting hypothesis H2.

### 3.3. MODERATOR ANALYSIS FOR THE EDC — RESEARCH RESULTS

The obtained mediation model (hypothesis H2) was analysed in the context of EDC to verify their statistical significance as moderators of the relationships given in the model. The hypotheses were tested using linear regression analysis with the moderator. To do so, a moderator was introduced as a new variable in the relationship. It was built as a product of two independent variables, which have been standardised.

The first one was a base one for comparison (and only independent variables were added as predictors). The second one used independent variables and the moderator as predictors. The aim was to verify the

occurrence of the moderating influence in the entire sample. To confirm it, the third model was introduced using the moderator and one independent variable as predictors. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 5.

The obtained research results show a cause-effect relationship between Servant Leadership, Employee Turnover and Job Performance, which is another way to verify the proposed model (H2). Moreover, the obtained results clearly show that EDC is a statistically significant moderator only in the case of the second relationship between Employee Turnover and Job Performance ( $F(4,250)=61.598$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Therefore, as shown in Table 5, obtained results are the basis for accepting hypothesis H3. The hypotheses can be accepted, stating that EDC is a moderator in a given mediation model.

## 4. DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

The article mainly aimed to verify the job performance model based on turnover-mitigating servant leadership, determining the turnover-mitigating effect on the relationship between servant leadership and job performance. The research results proved that the formulated model was correct and should be developed further.

There is a direct relationship between servant leadership and employee turnover, where servant leadership supports the willingness of an employee to stay in the organisation. A servant leader creates positive conditions for employee development and ensures employee autonomy, contributing to

Tab. 4. Results of the regression analysis with the mediator

MEDIATOR	DIRECT EFFECT VALUE	INDIRECT EFFECT VALUE	BOOTLLCI	BOOTULCI	R <sup>2</sup>
Employee turnover	0.445	0.057	0.015	0.1155	0.618

Tab. 5. Regression models' statistics

MODEL DESCRIPTION	R <sup>2</sup>	DELTA R <sup>2</sup>	MODERATOR COEFF.	STANDARD ERROR	T STAT	P VALUE
Employee turnover, EDC, Moderator <i>dependent v.: job performance</i>	0.704	0.014	0.099	0.036	2.695	0.007

employee retention (Greenleaf, 1997; Kashyap & Rangnekar, 2016). As employees understand organisational identity through management style, the relationship with the leader affects organisational identity (Martin, 2009). There is also a relationship between servant leadership and job performance, which shows that a supporting leader can strengthen employee job performance. Furthermore, there is a direct relationship between employee turnover and job performance.

It means that if an employee is determined to leave the organisation, their job performance is lower, and if the intention to stay in the organisation is strong, their job performance is high. Identifying the negative relationship between employees' turnover and job performance is extremely important because finding the factors that reduce job performance will help to avoid this phenomenon and facilitate job performance, which is extremely important for the performance of the organisation as a whole (Srivi-boon, 2020).

Thus, the relationship between servant leadership and job performance mediated by employee turnover has been proven. This means that servant leadership strengthens job performance as long as employee turnover is low. Once it increases, the leader's support for job performance weakens or ceases to be relevant.

Therefore, to reduce employee turnover, EDC was introduced into the mediation model as a relationship moderator which supports job performance, which has already been proven (Bieńkowska & Tworek, 2020), and impacts employee turnover. As EDC supports employee fit for the job, motivation for work, or satisfaction with the job, it contributes to increasing the willingness to stay in the organisation. An employee with high dynamic skills adapts more quickly to any changes taking place in the organisation, so in the face of changes (Bieńkowska & Tworek, 2020), the employee does not decide to leave the organisation.

An employee's satisfaction with working conditions also weakens the desire to leave the organisation. This research provides vital information for organisations dependent on the right leadership style to take care of employee job performance. Employee turnover, expressed as employee willingness to leave the organisation, is a risk to this relationship. EDC not only reduces employee turnover but also supports job performance as an employee with such skills adapts to the job better, which makes work more efficient.

## CONCLUSIONS

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The article focuses on an essential aspect related to shaping employee job performance in an organisation through servant leadership.

Employee job performance is a vital aspect for an organisation due to the significant impact on organisational performance; therefore, knowledge of any factors that positively shape job performance is crucial for organisational performance.

However, based on research, this relationship is not as simple as might be expected, as it can be affected by employee turnover on the one hand and supported by EDC on the other. Therefore, it has been shown that employee turnover is a mediator in the job performance model based on turnover-mitigating servant leadership, i.e., when it reaches a high level, it mitigates the servant leadership's influence on job performance.

Moreover, EDC is a moderator that limits such influence on employee turnover and causes servant leadership to strengthen job performance. The formulated conclusions seem to be important for organisations as they not only indicate the kind of risks associated with high employee turnover but, most importantly, how they can be eliminated.

Therefore, the study provides essential information for the organisational managers about the significance of servant leadership in influencing job performance, but also about the disruptive relationship between employee turnover and the impact of EDC on reducing employee turnover. It is, therefore, essential for managers to develop an effective strategy for selecting employees for the organisation, focusing on verifying the level of their EDC, which reduces the negative effects of employee turnover.

So far, there have been no verified models which consider the negative impact of employee turnover that could be mitigated by EDC. Thus, it can be concluded that the research gap has been partially filled, and the current considerations on job performance have been significantly improved. Unfortunately, this research topic has not been fully exhausted in the article. Nevertheless, the results of the research and the indicated tips can serve as inspiration for further exploration of the job performance model based on turnover-mitigating servant leadership. The verified model can be further developed by adding other job-related characteristics. It is, therefore, worth finding additional factors that positively influence employee retention in the organisation.

The research can be improved with more empirical data. The statistical methods verifying research results have some limitations related to the use of a limited group of organisations located in Poland only.

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