CARINA ISABEL DA SILVA MARQUES

O IMPACTO DAS PERCEÇÕES DE LIDERANÇA SERVIDORA NOS NÍVEIS DE JOB BURNOUT DOS COLABORADORES

THE IMPACT OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP PERCEPTIONS ON EMPLOYEES' JOB BURNOUT LEVELS

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Aos meus pais e aos meus avós.

o júri

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palavras-chave

resumo

No atual contexto laboral, fortemente sujeito a mudanças e de exigência crescente, onde o bem-estar dos colaboradores é, muitas vezes, posto em causa, os líderes assumem um papel cada vez mais importante. Nesta conjuntura, um estilo de liderança positiva, como o de liderança servidora, na qual o/a líder é fonte de recursos e suporte, colocando as necessidades das suas pessoas em primeiro lugar, poderá contribuir para mitigar os efeitos negativos do *job burnout*, a nível pessoal e organizacional. Assim, esta investigação tem como objetivo estudar o impacto das perceções de liderança servidora nos níveis de *job burnout* dos colaboradores. A amostra é constituída por 79 participantes de diversas organizações e setores. Os resultados mostram que as perceções de liderança servidora têm um impacto negativo nos níveis de *job burnout* dos colaboradores, sendo que esse impacto é mais forte quando o líder é do género masculino. Os resultados obtidos corroboram a importância da liderança na vida organizacional e no bem-estar dos colaboradores, e contribuem para a literatura sobre o impacto que a liderança servidora tem no bem-estar dos colaboradores e a influência do género do líder nessa relação.

keywords

Servant leadership, job burnout, job demands, job resources.

abstract

In the current work context, constantly changing and increasingly demanding, in which employees' well-being is often at risk, leaders have become increasingly important. In this context, a positive leadership style, such as servant leadership, which postulates that the leader is a source of resources and support, and that the main priority are employees' needs, might contribute to decreasing the negative effects of job burnout, both on the individual and organisational levels. Therefore, this research aims at studying the impact that servant leadership perceptions have on employees' job burnout levels. The sample is composed of 79 participants from different organisations and sectors. The results show that servant leadership perceptions have a negative impact on employees' job burnout levels, being that impact stronger when the leader is male. The results not only confirm the importance of leadership within the organisational environment and to employees' well-being, but also add to the literature about the impact of servant leadership on employees' well-being and the influence of the gender of the leader in such relationship.

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TABLE INDEX

ACRONYM LIST

AB	Academic Background
ACC	Accountability
AUT	Authenticity
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
COU	Courage
COR	Conservation of Resources Theory
CWB	Counterproductive Working Behaviour
DIS	Disengagement
EMP	Empowerment
EXH	Exhaustion
FOR	Forgiveness
GEN	Gender
HUM	Humility
HW	Hybrid Work
JD-R	Job Demand-Resources Theory
LAR	Leader Age Range
LG	Leader Gender
LMX	Leader-Member Exchange Theory
MBI	Maslach Burnout Inventory
OBSE	Organisation-Based Self-Esteem
OCB	Organisational Citizenship Behaviours
OLBI	Oldenburg Burnout Inventory
POS	Perceived Organisational Support
RW	Remote Work
RWT	Remote Work Time
SEC	Seniority in the Company
SEP	Seniority in the Position
SLS	Servant Leadership Survey
STB	Standing Back
STE	Stewardship

I. INTRODUCTION

The current working life has become highly demanding with its increasing pressure and complexity (Franco & Antunes, 2020; Sinval et al., 2019), and organisations and leaders face challenging situations and circumstances, such was the case of the unpredicted Covid-19 pandemic. On the other hand, work plays an important role in individuals' life, as it "offers structure, purpose, and meaning" (Bakker & de Vries, 2021, p. 1) and people spend a considerable amount of their time working. Such transformation in and importance of the work context has an impact on employees' lives and health (Sinval et al., 2019), turning job burnout into a common phenomenon "due to the high levels of stress and emotional demands" perceived by employees (Sinval et al., 2019, p. 2).

According to Usman et al. (2020), considering the "harmful effects on employees and organisations, job burnout has become one of the central concerns that leaders are required to address" (Usman et al., 2020, p. 424). In addition, it is argued that human resources practices can influence both job demands and resources, thus contributing to individuals' well-being (Bakker & de Vries, 2021). It is also posited that leaders have a central role in the "social setting of most organisations" (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011, p. 261), being the leader behaviour a key element not only for the perceptions of their followers regarding how supportive their work environment is (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011), but also for the engagement of their employees (van Dierendonck, 2011), and their followers' health (Trépanier et al., 2019).

In this context, a leadership approach more focused on ethical behaviours and follower-oriented has been considered by a stream of academic works as an answer to the modern challenges faced by leaders and organisations (Franco & Antunes, 2020). Seeing as high priority has been given to employee's well-being, a leadership style "rooted in ethical and caring behaviour becomes of great importance" (van Dierendonck, 2011, p. 1228). Such is the case of servant leadership, which emerged as a possible solution to answer the current needs of organisations (Lemoine & Blum, 2021), seeing as it is argued to be the approach that is "most oriented towards the needs of employees" (van Dierendonck et al., 2017, p. 1).

Being servant leadership regarded as a holistic approach, it "emphasises ethical, spiritual and empathic leadership behaviour" (Paas et al., 2020, p. 639) and engages followers in those

relational, spiritual, emotional and ethical dimensions (Eva et al., 2019). Therefore, servant leaders display behavioural support for their people and "a desire to serve and satisfy followers, as well as emphasising employees' needs, development, and well-being" (Y. Li et al., 2018, p. 1078). On the other hand, job burnout is a psychological syndrome that may occur when people "face a stressful working environment and feel low resources to face high job demands" (Sinval et al., 2019, p. 2). Therefore, being servant leadership a potential source of support, namely leader support, it can have a positive impact on reducing the gap between what is required from employees and the tools they have to cope with their job demands.

Many of the characteristics and behaviours of servant leaders fit into female stereotypes (Lemoine & Blum, 2021), more specifically into female leadership stereotypes, perceived as more communal, such as the focus on development, caring for others, and building relationships (Lemoine & Blum, 2021). Whereas male leadership is usually regarded as agentic, with its focus on assertiveness, competitiveness, control, and striving to achievement (Hogue, 2016; Saint-Michel, 2018). Therefore, seeing as the female leadership stereotype is close to servant leadership style, it is plausible to believe that the strength of the relationship between servant leadership and job burnout will be influenced by the gender of the leader. Moreover, a male leader behaving as a servant leader does not agree with the stereotype, thus creating a more significant impact on its subordinates (Hentschel et al., 2018).

Figure 1 represents the proposed model.

Figure 1: Conceptual model

This research is divided into five chapters. This introductory chapter, presenting the general theme and the constructs studied, as well as the structure of the document, is followed by the literature review, Chapter II, which introduces relevant topics for each construct (servant leadership and job burnout) and the relationship between the two of them in its first section,

and presents the research hypotheses in its second section. The following chapter concerns the methodology and method, including the analysis of the sample. Chapter IV presents the results and is followed by their discussion and the conclusion in Chapter V, which includes the practical implications and the limitations of the research.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. SERVANT LEADERSHIP

1.1. CONCEPTUALISATION

The concept of *servant leadership* was first introduced by Robert K. Greenleaf in the 70's (Mcquade et al., 2021), inspired by Hermann Hesse's *Journey to the East* (Greenleaf, 2007). In this literary work, the main character, Leo, accompanies a party of men on a journey as their servant, being in charge of daily chores but also sustaining the group with his spirit and music. When Leo disappears, the "group falls into disarray and the journey is abandoned" (Greenleaf, 2007, p. 79). The narrator of the story, one of the participants in the journey, finds Leo several years later and finds out that Leo was actually the Head of the Order that had sponsored the journey in the first place. The story was interpreted by Greenleaf as meaning that "the great leader is seen as servant first, and that simple fact is the key to his greatness", adding that "leadership was bestowed upon a man who was by nature a servant. It was something given, or assumed, that could be taken away. His servant nature was the real man, not bestowed, not assumed, and not to be taken away" (Greenleaf, 2007, p. 79). Therefore, the premise of servant leadership, as proposed by Greenleaf (2007) is 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, 2007, p. 83), i.e., a servant leader aspires to serve before consciously choosing to aspire to lead (Huning et al., 2020). Moreover, Greenleaf (2007) also argues that servant leaders are those who are able to put others' needs ahead of their own and ensure that those needs are being served. In those terms, more than a managerial leadership style, servant leadership is conceptualised as a way of life (Parris & Peachey, 2013).

"Greenleaf's writings primarily answer the questions of *what* servant leadership is and to some extent *who* servant leaders are", lacking answers to "questions of *how, when, where* and *why* servant leadership impacts workplace outcomes" (Huning et al., 2020, p. 178). Thereby, servant leadership has been broadly defined based on Greenleaf's works, leading to a lack of consensus regarding construct definition and conceptualisation (Eva et al., 2019; Parris & Peachey, 2013). Lemoine and Blum (2021) argue that servant leadership is a system that promotes the growth of followers' motivation and their ability to become servant leaders,

emphasising on the ethical development and empowerment of subordinates. Moreover, the authors highlight that servant leadership is a set of behaviours that "emphasise all stakeholders, including but not limited to followers, customers, communities, and the organisation itself" (Lemoine & Blum, 2021, p. 5). Bavik (2020) stresses that servant leaders "must disregard their interests and first serve their subordinates, customers, and the community" (Bavik, 2020, p. 349). In their works, Y. Li et al. (2018) conceptualise servant leadership as a leadership approach characterised by the desire to serve and benefit followers, emphasising their needs, development and well-being. Newman et al. (2017) define servant leadership as an approach whose main concern is followers' interest, so that servant leaders strive to develop their followers and the communities they are part of, while encouraging subordinates to act as servant leaders themselves.

Due to the lack of consensus on a definition, Eva et al. (2019) proposed that servant leadership is "an other-centred approach to leadership manifested through one-on-one prioritising of follower individual needs and interests, and outward reorienting of their concern for self towards concern for others within the organisation and the larger community" (Eva et al., 2019, p. 114). It conceptualises servant leadership based on three main features: *motive, mode,* and *mindset*. The first feature translates into the other-centred orientation, i.e., the altruistic motivation to serve others; *mode* concerns the one-on-one relationship, acknowledging each follower's individual uniqueness, needs, strengths and limitations, and building a relationship based and focused on follower individuality; the last feature, *mindset*, corresponds to the concern for the well-being of the wider community (Eva et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2020). As stated by Eva et al. (2019), "servant leadership is about *(1)* someone or something other than the leader, *(2)* one-on-one interactions between leaders and followers, and *(3)* an overarching concern towards the well-being of the wider organisational stakeholders and the larger community" (Eva et al., 2019, p. 114).

The premise of servant leadership is that by focusing on followers' development, it is possible to achieve long-term organisational goals (Lee et al., 2020), so that servant leaders can influence the organisational outcomes by promoting their subordinates' growth and well-being and prioritising their needs (Franco & Antunes, 2020). Even though there is not a single conceptualisation of servant leadership, there seems to be some convergence regarding its "focus on follower development and de-emphasising the glorification of the leader" (Hale & Fields, 2007, p. 397), as well as its concern for organisational stakeholders

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and the wider community. The idea of leader de-glorification is reinforced by Parris and Peachey (2013), who stated that this leadership style contrasts the "traditional leader-first paradigm" (Parris & Peachey, 2013, p. 390). As described by Eva et al. (2019), servant leadership is "especially well-suited for organisations that desire long-term growth profiles designed to benefit all stakeholders" (Eva et al., 2019, p. 128), rather than organisations focused on short-term profits, beneficial for shareholders only. In addition, this leadership approach encompasses values such as trust, integrity, honesty, empathy and altruism (Bavik, 2020; Lee et al., 2020), highlighting the moral, emotional and relational dimensions of leadership (Franco & Antunes, 2020).

Conceptual Models

Several authors have developed different conceptual models on servant leadership, leading to an inconsistent set of dimensions incorporating the construct (Franco & Antunes, 2020). With reference to the previous works of Greenleaf, Spears (2010) identified ten main attributes: *(1) listening*, as it is crucial for a servant leader to carefully listen to others and their needs; *(2) empathy*, considering that a servant leader needs to understand and make followers feel respected and recognised; *(3) healing* oneself and the relationships with others; *(4) awareness*, both general and self-awareness; *(5) persuasion,* through which one reaches consensus rather than through coercion; *(6) conceptualisation*, seeing as servant leaders should have the ability to consider not only short-term goals, but also long-term goals; *(7) foresight,* which is related to conceptualisation, enables the servant leader to foresee the possible consequences of a given situation; *(8) stewardship*, meaning that servant leadership is committed to serving the needs of others; *(9) commitment to the growth of people,* striving to provide the resources to develop them both personal and professionally; *(10) building community* among those who work in a given organisation.

Based on the framework developed by Spears (2010), and for empirical purposes, Reinke (2004) conceptualised the ten proposed characteristics into three, namely *openness, vision*, and *stewardship*. Consequently, *openness* encompasses the empathy, listening, and awareness elements, emphasising the importance of stimulating open communication to build trust; the second characteristic, *vision*, includes Spear's conceptualisation and foresight, and is defined as "the degree to which leaders plan and anticipate for future needs, develop concrete mission or vision statements, and keep situations and problems in perspective"

(Reinke, 2004, p. 42); *stewardship* includes Spears' dimensions of healing, persuasion, stewardship, and commitment to the growth of people, thus highlighting the extent to which leaders prioritise their followers' needs over their own and stimulate their development.

In his doctoral works, Laub (1999) attempted to define the main characteristics of servant leadership, which were then used to design an assessment tool for this leadership approach – the *Servant Organisational Leadership Assessment (SOLA)* instrument. Hereby, the author proposes the division of servant leadership characteristics into six clusters – *valuing people*, *developing people*, *building community*, *displaying authenticity*, *providing leadership*, and *sharing leadership* (Laub, 1999). The first cluster, *valuing people,* includes the ability to believe in people, showing compassion and trust them; to prioritise others' needs; and to be a non-judgmental listener. *Developing people* concerns leader behaviours such as providing opportunities for people to grow and learn, stimulating the development of their full potential; acting as a role model; encouraging people. The third cluster, *building community*, encompasses enhancing relationships acting as a healer; teamwork; valuing people's individuality. *Displaying authenticity* relates to the leader's transparency, admitting their own mistakes and limitations or promoting the share of information; to the leader's willingness to learn, keeping an open mind and accepting criticism; and to the leader's honesty and integrity, being trustworthy and behaving ethically. *Providing leadership* is concerned with foresight, intuition, and the ability to give others hope; taking initiative, by taking risks and being courageous; having clear goals. The final cluster, *sharing leadership*, includes sharing power, by empowering others and influencing them through persuasion; sharing status, displaying humility, and rejecting self-promotion behaviours.

Based on twelve characteristics identified in previous literature, Page and Wong (2000) developed a conceptual framework for measuring servant leadership, composed of four domains: *character-orientation*, *people-orientation*, *task-orientation*, and *process-orientation*. *Character-orientation* is concerned with the extent to which the leader is committed to serving others in a humble and righteous way (Page & Wong, 2000), including integrity, humility, and servanthood as characteristics. *People-orientation* describes the extent to which a leader is committed to develop others and how does the leader relate to other people; it is associated to caring, empowering, and developing others. *Task-orientation* encompasses visioning, goal setting and leading, thus concerning whether a leader displays skills and execute tasks often linked to management and leadership, such as taking initiative,

decision-making and vision. The last category, *process-orientation* deals with the leader's ability to have an impact on organisational processes by promoting open decision-making, team building and modelling (Page & Wong, 2000).

A model developed by Russell and Stone (2002) proposed that servant leaders had nine functional distinctive attributes, being those v*ision, honesty, integrity, trust, service, modelling, pioneering, appreciation of others*, and *empowerment*. The first one mentioned, *vision*, is similar to what Greenleaf designated by *foresight*, i.e., the ability to foresee the future and the outcomes of the organisation and establish a strategic vision for it. *Honesty* and *integrity* are closely related, even though "honesty relates more to truthfulness, whereas integrity reflects adherence to an overall moral code" (Russell & Stone, 2002, p. 148). These two last attributes are critical to build *trust* in the leader and in the organisation, seeing as the latter is defined as "the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party" (Mayer et al., 1995, p. 712). *Service* is the goal of servant leadership, whose focus is on followers' needs and interests. *Modelling* concerns the ability of the servant leader to be a "visible personal example" through their actions and behaviours (Russell & Stone, 2002, p. 149). *Pioneering,* seeing as servant leaders must be agents of change, risk takers and courageous. *Appreciation of others* is related to the capability of the servant leader to "visibly appreciate, value, encourage, and care" for their followers (Russell & Stone, 2002, p. 151). Lastly, *empowerment* refers to the servant leader ability to entrust others, delegate and lead others to become servant leaders themselves (Russell & Stone, 2002). In addition, the authors also defined eleven accompanying attributes, namely *communication, credibility, competence, stewardship, visibility, influence, persuasion, listening, encouragement, teaching,* and *delegation*. Their main function was to support the core characteristics (Parris & Peachey, 2013), as stated by Russell and Stone (2002), who argued that the accompanying attributes "appear to supplement and augment the functional attributes. They are not secondary in nature; rather, they are complementary and, in some cases, prerequisites to effective servant leadership" (Russell & Stone, 2002, p. 147).

Patterson (2003) developed a conceptual model of servant leadership composed of seven constructs, regarded as virtues. *Agapao love* "means to love in a social or moral sense"

(Patterson, 2003, p. 3), considering others as a whole, i.e., their needs, wants and desires. In addition, when *agapao love* is present, the leader is more likely to focus on others first, on their talents and only then on how it can be beneficial to the organisation. Therefore, this type of love fits the servant leadership premise that servant leaders must consider their followers' needs. *Humility* encompasses the ability to put accomplishments into perspective without overestimating them, as well as being capable of focusing on others, de-emphasising the glorification of the self. The third dimension of this conceptual model is *altruism*, a human quality associated to helping others, often at the expense of self-sacrifice, with no selfish intentions attached, only focusing on the benefit of others. *Vision* is often referred to, in an organisational point of view, as having a "vision of the future destination of the organisation" (Patterson, 2003, p. 4). Nonetheless, Patterson (2003) defines servant leadership's vision as "the idea that the leader looks forward and sees the person as a viable and worthy person and seeks to assist each one in reaching that state", thus vision focus on what the individual may achieve and become. Another virtue included in Patterson (2003)'s model is *trust*, which is often associated to integrity, respect, and service in the organisation. According to the author, "trust is a building block to work from for servant leaders, a trust in the unseen potential of the followers, believing they can accomplish goals, a self-fulling prophecy", hence a servant leader seeks to be trustworthy and empower their workforce (Patterson, 2003, p. 6). *Empowerment* is one of the focus of servant leadership and it means "entrusting power to others" (Patterson, 2003, p. 6), promoting followers' development and growth. The last virtue, *service*, is the core of servant leadership, as it is based on servant leaders putting others' needs over their own interests.

Ehrhart (2004) developed a general measure of servant leadership, based on seven main categories of behaviours found in previous literature. The dimensions were *forming relationships with subordinates, empowering subordinates, helping subordinates grow and succeed, behaving ethically, having conceptual skills, putting subordinates first,* and *creating value for those outside the organisation* (Ehrhart, 2004).

Based on their works, Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) developed an integrated model of servant leadership composed of five factors: *altruistic calling, emotional healing, wisdom, persuasive mapping*, and *organisational stewardship* (Parris & Peachey, 2013). Seeing as the focus of a servant leader is to serve others and put their needs ahead of their own, the first dimension, *altruistic calling*, concerns the willingness and desire of the leader to

positively influence others' lives. *Emotional healing* is related to the leader's ability to promote their followers' spiritual recovery and "create environments that are safe for employees to voice personal and professional issues" (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006, p. 318). The third dimension listed above, *wisdom,* combines both the skill of being aware of the environment where one is and anticipating the outcomes of what they perceive from their surroundings. *Persuasive mapping* "describes the extent that leaders use sound reasoning and mental frameworks", influencing others to do things through persuasion (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006, p. 319). Lastly, *organisational stewardship* concerns the leader's ability to create a community spirit in the workplace and to lead the organisation in such a way that it has a positive contribution to society.

Liden et al. (2008) argued that the main dimensions of servant leadership are *(1) emotional healing*, i.e., "the act of showing sensitivity to others' personal concerns" (Liden et al., 2008, p. 162); *(2) empowering*, encouraging and facilitating followers in problem solving and work tasks completion; *(3) helping followers to grow and succeed*, by providing mentoring and support towards followers' development; *(4) behaving ethically*, "interacting openly, fairly, and honestly with others" (Liden et al., 2008, p. 162); *(5) putting followers first*, by showing them that the leader's priority is their needs; *(6) creating value for the community*, showing concern by the larger community; *(7) conceptual skills*, meaning that the servant leader must be knowledgeable of the organisation and the tasks developed, so that they can give the appropriate support to subordinates.

Sendjaya et al. (2008) presented a holistic model of servant leadership composed of six dimensions. *Voluntary subordination* emphasises the nature of the servant leader, who is "willing to serve others whenever there is a legitimate need regardless of the nature of the service, the person served, or the mood of the servant leader" (Sendjaya et al., 2008, p. 406). *Authentic self* relates to being able to consistently display humility, integrity, accountability, security, and vulnerability. Another dimension is *covenantal relationship*, described as "an intensely personal bond marked by shared values, open-ended commitment, mutual trust, and concern for the welfare of the other party" (Sendjaya et al., 2008, p. 407), in which the servant leader engages with others and accept them for who they are, treating them as equals. *Responsible morality* is related to the ethical predisposition of the servant leader, who ensures the legitimate morality of the means and aims of their actions. *Transcended spirituality* encompasses spiritual values. Lastly, *transforming influence* refers to the

transformation followers suffer when led by a servant leader, becoming themselves a servant leader.

Reed et al. (2011) presented a measure targeted to top executive behaviours, the *Executive Servant Leadership Assessment Scale* (ESLAS), composed of five factors. *Interpersonal support*, including behaviours such as helping others to succeed, sharing decision-making, listening to others, and establishing respectful relationships. *Building community*, within and outside the organisation, encompasses valuing individual differences, encouraging cooperation and organisational commitment. *Altruism* is defined as "unselfish concern for others manifested in constructive service" and it can be displayed "by serving others willingly with no expectation of reward, sacrificing personal benefit to meet employee needs, placing the interests of others before self-interest, and preferring to serve others over being served (Reed et al., 2011, p. 425). *Egalitarianism* rejects the leader superiority over other organisational members and emphasises the acceptance of constructive criticism and learning from employees (Reed et al., 2011). The last dimension is *moral integrity* and it is conceptualise by Reed et al. (2011) as "a behaviour that inspires employee trust and promotes transparency and honesty throughout the organisation" (Reed et al., 2011, p. 425).

In their works, van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) argued the existence of eight main servant leadership characteristics. *(1) Empowerment* is defined as "a motivational concept focused on enabling people and encouraging personal development", whose main issue is the leader's belief in the intrinsic value of each individual; *(2) accountability* relates to holding people responsible for their own actions and outcomes; *(3) standing back* is "the extent to which a leader gives priority to the interest of others first and gives them the necessary support and credits"; *(4) humility* concerns the ability to admit one's flaws and mistakes as well as "put one's own accomplishments and talents in a proper perspective"; *(5) authenticity* relates to the ability of the individual to behave and express oneself according to its inner thoughts and feelings; *(6) courage* concerns challenging the *status quo*, taking risks and trying new approaches; *(7) interpersonal acceptance* is related to empathy and the ability to understand the feelings and behaviours of others, creating a non-judgmental working environment; *(8) stewardship* is the "willingness to take responsibility for the larger institution and go for service instead of control and self-interest" (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011, pp. 251–252).

Even though authors have proposed different dimensions in their models of servant leadership, these overlap in some factors. Table 1 summarises servant leadership characteristics by model. Characteristics as *stewardship, building community, empowerment* and *focus on followers' needs* are present in almost every model. In addition, there is a tendency to consider a set of values, as *humility, trust, authenticity* and *integrity*, part of the servant leadership conceptualisation. Hence, notwithstanding the plurality that characterises the theoretical field of servant leadership, the conceptual models "include the fundamental dimension of servanthood or the willingness to serve others" (Parris & Peachey, 2013, p. 380), as well as the distinctive focus on serving multiple stakeholders (Lee et al., 2020; Lemoine & Blum, 2021).

	Accountability	Altruism	Authenticity	Awareness	Behaving ethically	Building community/Forming relationships	Caring and valuing others	Courage	Creating value	Decision-making	Egalitarianism	Empowerment	Conceptualisation and Vision	Honesty and Integrity	Humility	Initiative/Pioneering	Modelling	Persuasion	Servanthood	Stewardship	Transcended spirituality	Trust
Spears (2010)			X			X	X					X	X					X		X		
Reinke (2004)			X				X						X					X		X		
Laub (1999)		X				X	X					X	X		X	X		X				
Page and Wong (2000)							X			X		X	X	X	X				X			
Russel and Stone (2002)							X					X	X	X		X	X		X			X
Patterson (2003)		X					X					X	X		X				X			X
Ehrhart (2004)					X	X	X		X			X	X						X			
Barbuto and Wheeler (2006)		X					X						X					X		X		
Liden (2008)					X		X		X			X	X						X			
Sendjaya et al. (2008)			X	X	X													X	X		X	
Reed et al. (2011)		X				X	X				X						X					
van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011)	X	X					X	X				X			X					X		

Table 1: Summary of servant leadership characteristics by model

1.2. ANTECEDENTS

Literature on servant leadership antecedents is still scarce, with much attention being given to the outcomes of having a servant-led organisation, thus limiting the focus on its antecedents (Amah, 2018; Eva et al., 2019; Paas et al., 2020; van Dierendonck, 2011). Even

though limited, previous literature has tried to establish the main factors that can stimulate servant leadership behaviours.

Individual characteristics such as personality have been pointed as influencing factors that can enhance servant leadership behaviours (Eva et al., 2019; Hunter et al., 2013; Paas et al., 2020). Deriving from the Big Five Model, research has stated that individuals who display high values of agreeableness and low levels of extraversion, as well as high core self-evaluation, mindfulness and low levels of narcissism are more likely to adopt servant leadership behaviours (Eva et al., 2019; Paas et al., 2020). Seeing as servant leadership emphasises values such altruism, it is plausible to consider that leaders high in agreeableness, with a stronger orientation to generosity and willingness to help others (van Dierendonck, 2011) are more prone to be servant leaders.

As stated by Eva et al. (2019), individual personality relates only to a certain extent to servant leadership behaviours. Other personal characteristics such as gender are referred as antecedents of servant leadership, considering that previous literature has argued that female leaders are more likely to adopt servant leadership behaviours and are more prone to hold values such as altruism in comparison to male leaders (Paas et al., 2020).

In their studies, van Dierendonck (2011) proposed *self-determination*, *moral cognitive development* and *cognitive complexity* as individual characteristics that might enhance servant leadership behaviours. *Self-determination* is related to "a sense of choice in initiating and regulating one's own actions" and "follows from fulfilling three basic psychological needs" – feeling competent, feeling connected to others, and feeling autonomous (van Dierendonck, 2011, p. 1245). The fulfilment of these needs will likely enhance the individual's self-motivation and mental health, thus enabling them to make a better use of their personal resources, to build strong relationships and to help others developing their own self-determination (van Dierendonck, 2011). This feature seems particularly important to servant leadership, as its focus is followers' development and empowerment. *Moral cognitive development* relates to one's development of reasoning and values that "facilitate just and benevolent reasons behind social interactions" (van Dierendonck, 2011, p. 1245). Therefore, the higher an individual is in this development, the more likely it is for them to act as a servant leader (van Dierendonck, 2011). Lastly, *cognitive complexity* concerns an individual's ability to perceive social behaviour in a differentiated way (van Dierendonck,

2011). Individuals who display high levels of cognitive complexity are more likely to better judge social situations, which is crucial for servant leaders, seeing as they must balance between providing direction and standing back and foresee possible outcomes of different situations (van Dierendonck, 2011). The different types of human motivations are considered by several authors an antecedent of servant leadership. Based on previous studies, van Dierendonck (2011) argues that *power motivation*, concerning the need to cause impact and be influential, is a factor that positively relates to leaders' effectiveness. However, in the case of servant leadership, seeing as it is characterised by the de-glorification of the leader and the focus on followers, the power motivation concerns not the need to hold it, but the way power is dealt with (van Dierendonck, 2011). Therefore, servant leaders must combine this motivation to lead with a motivation based on one of the founding premises of servant leadership: to serve.

Motivation to lead is defined by Chan and Drasgow (2001) as "a leader's or leader-to-be decisions to assume leadership training, role, and responsibilities and his or her intensity of effort at leading and persistence as a leader" (Chan & Drasgow, 2001, p. 482). This construct includes three dimensions: *affective identity, non-calculative*, and *social normative*. The second dimension was the only one found to be significantly related to servant leadership (Amah, 2018). *Non-calculative motivation to lead* refers to the extent to which a leader chooses to lead without analysing the cost-benefit of engaging in such role (Paas et al., 2020). Leaders who have this characteristic are usually seen as altruistic and perceived as being more selfless and caring (Paas et al., 2020). Therefore, based on the premise that servant leaders strive to stimulate their followers' well-being, it is likely that they would present non-calculative motivation to lead.

Motivation to serve can be defined as the willingness a leader has to promote the interest of their followers (Amah, 2018) . In addition, motivation to serve "is deeply embedded in the servant leadership philosophy as one of the principal constructs that conceptually separate servant leadership from all other theories of leadership" (Paas et al., 2020, p. 641). Therefore, both motivation to serve and non-calculative motivation to lead positively relate to servant leadership, thus supporting Greenleaf's statement of a servant leader's priority being to serve (Paas et al., 2020).

Situational factors are also analysed as potential servant leadership antecedents, namely the cultural values of employees and the national culture (Bavik, 2020; van Dierendonck, 2011). Van Dierendonck (2011) argues that *humane orientation* and *power distance* are cultural antecedents of servant leadership. *Humane orientation* is characterised by working based on the need to belong and taking care of other people. Generally, humane-oriented cultures are driven by values such as concern for others, sensitiveness, friendliness and tolerance towards mistakes (van Dierendonck, 2011). Therefore, leaders within such cultures are likely to "display higher attention for empowerment, interpersonal acceptance and stewardship", values that are strongly related to servant leadership behaviours (van Dierendonck, 2011, p. 1246). *Power distance* was defined as "the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organisations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally" (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 61) . Thus, in cultures characterised by high power distance, employees are likely to be more obedient to authority figures, organisations tend to be centralised and power differences are accepted (van Dierendonck, 2011). On the other hand, in cultures with low power distance, organisations tend to be decentralised with less emphasis on formal respect (van Dierendonck, 2011). Therefore, it is expected that cultures with low power distance facilitate the existence of servant leadership, seeing as they seem to enable the development of a leader-follower relationship "based on a more equal foot" (van Dierendonck, 2011, p. 1246), thus fitting Greenleaf's premise of the servant leader as "primus inter pares" (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011, p. 250). In their works, Mittal and Dorfman (2012) studied the relationship between societal values and servant leadership, concluding that the different cultural dimensions would differently correlate with each servant leadership dimension. However, they highlight that societies highly performance-oriented would engage more in servant leadership than societies high in power distance (Mittal & Dorfman, 2012).

Literature also refers to other antecedents, such as *seniority* (Paas et al., 2020), *self-efficacy* (Amah, 2018) and *organisational identification* (Eva et al., 2019). The first factor concerns the length of time one is in a leadership role and in a volunteering role, seeing as Beck (2014) found out in their studies that longevity in such roles positively relates to the existence of servant leadership behaviours. As for *self-efficacy*, it was described as an "individual's ability to exert control over his or her motivation, behaviour and social environment, and exercise influences over events that affect his or her life" (Bandura, 1994, p. 71) , being

established by Amah (2018) as one antecedent for servant leadership. In their works, Peterson et al. (2012) also found *organisational identification* to be significantly related to servant leadership (Eva et al., 2019). Moreover, Barbuto et al. (2014) studied the hypothesis of *emotional intelligence* as an antecedent of servant leadership, having found that "a leader's ability to monitor the feelings, beliefs, and internal states of the self and others plays an important role in the leader's efforts to lead with a servant-leader ideology" (Barbuto et al., 2014, p. 321). Nonetheless, the authors also argue that while emotional intelligence predicts "the leader's efforts to lead with a servant-leader ideology", this factor does not predict servant leader behaviours (Barbuto et al., 2014, p. 321).

1.3. OUTCOMES

Even though there is not a general definition of servant leadership and its characteristics, it is generally agreed that this leadership approach is likely to have a positive impact on performance, effectiveness and interpersonal relationships at different levels: individual, team and organisational (Eva et al., 2019; Mcquade et al., 2021; Parris & Peachey, 2013). Servant leadership has not only follower behavioural and attitudinal outcomes, but also performance and team-related consequences (Eva et al., 2019), which are likely to cross organisational boundaries and positively impact followers outside the organisation.

Leader-related outcomes

Concerning leader-related outcomes, servant leadership contributes to enhancing the relationships between followers and leaders as well as the perceptions the latter has regarding the former. The Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory has been referred to in academia to explain the process by which servant leaders influence their subordinates to go beyond their job role, and to engage in positive behaviours for both the organisation and others within it (Newman et al., 2017). In other words, "LMX focuses on the relationship between the leader and individual subordinates", being concerned with "the quality of the dyadic relationship between a worker and his/her leader (supervisor)" (Hanse et al., 2016, p. 229). Servant leadership was found to be positively related to LMX (Hanse et al., 2016; Newman et al., 2017), thus corroborating the higher quality of the relationships between servant leaders and followers. "Strong LMX relationships are characterised by high levels of trust and support between leader and follower as well as the exchange of both material and non-

material benefits, above the specifications of the job description" (Newman et al., 2017, p. 52). Hence, servant leadership is positively correlated to trust in the leader (Joseph & Winston, 2005; Sendjaya & Pekerti, 2010), seeing as followers' perceptions of their leader trustworthiness are enhanced by servant leadership behaviours (Sendjaya & Pekerti, 2010). The same result applies at the team level, seeing as servant leadership develops collective trust in the leader, which "can be enhanced by the way that the servant leader empowers the group and provides support designed to assist the team meet its goals" (Lee et al., 2020, p. 4).

Organisational citizenship behaviours (OCB)

Previous literature on servant leadership has posited that servant leaders can enhance positive behaviours, such as organisational citizenship behaviours (OCB). OCB can be defined as "discretionary behaviour that is not recognised by the formal reward system and promotes the effective functioning of the organisation" (Newman et al., 2017, p. 49). These extra-role behaviours are likely to be enhanced by servant leadership through strong LMX relationships and psychological empowerment (Newman et al., 2017). In this way, as servant leaders display high levels of encouragement and prioritise their followers' needs, strengthening the LMX, subordinates are likely to reciprocate the positive treatment they receive by going "beyond what is required of them in their job description" (Newman et al., 2017, p. 54), thus displaying OCB (Lee et al., 2020). Servant leadership is a strong antecedent of OCB at both individual and team levels (Lee et al., 2020), predicting helping behaviour and the collaboration between team members (Eva et al., 2019; Parris & Peachey, 2013). On the other hand, Counterproductive Working Behaviour (CWB), which "comprises a collection of voluntary behaviours that detract from organisational objectives (such as unruliness, theft, or aggression) and ultimately harm organisational well-being" (Lee et al., 2020, p. 4), is mitigated by servant leadership (Lee et al., 2020).

Performance-related outcomes

According to Lee et al. (2020), "servant leadership has been shown to relate to various performance-related outcomes" (Lee et al., 2020, p. 4), positively influencing individual and team performance (Eva et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2020; Liden et al., 2008; Mcquade et al., 2021). The support and feedback provided by servant leaders and their concern with

developing subordinates improve followers' performance, enhancing their abilities to meet the required performance objectives (Lee et al., 2020).

At the team level, servant leaders also stimulate team performance through collective developmental support and emphasising team strengths (Lee et al., 2020). Peterson et al. (2012) argue that in exchange for the support and development efforts servant leaders have towards their subordinates, followers put effort in the collective performance. In addition, their strong conceptual skills, enable servant leaders to better guide their subordinates towards success (Peterson et al., 2012). Bavik (2020) posits that previous literature shows that the quality of the relationships established between servant leaders and their subordinates can have an impact on variables such as work performance.

At the organisational level, Choudhary et al. (2013) concluded that servant leadership has a positive impact on organisational performance, through the mediating effect of organisational learning, seeing as this leadership style impacts followers' learning and growth, thus promoting organisational learning, which ultimately fosters organisational performance. Effectiveness is also one of the measuring tools for organisational performance (Choudhary et al., 2013), and a positive relationship between servant leadership and organisational effectiveness was also found by Eva et al. (2019).

Individual-level outcomes

Servant leadership has shown a positive relationship with job satisfaction (Bobbio & Manganelli, 2015; D. M. Mayer et al., 2008; Mcquade et al., 2021). In their works, D. M. Mayer et al. (2008) concluded that servant leadership is directly correlated to need satisfaction, and that justice perceptions and need satisfaction act as mediators in the relationship between servant leadership and follower job satisfaction. Given the positive characteristics of servant leadership, such as focusing on followers' needs, empowerment and growth, as well as the leader moral orientation and ethical behaviour, it is likely that followers will be treated in such a way they perceive as fair, thus improving their justice perceptions (Mayer et al., 2008). In addition, "the notion that the satisfaction of basic needs improves one's satisfaction with his or her job" is often associated to job satisfaction (D. M. Mayer et al., 2008, p. 186). Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) and van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011), using different conceptual models and servant leadership measures, showed that this leadership style is positively correlated to job satisfaction, seeing as "servant leaders

prioritise their followers' legitimate needs above their own and demonstrate their commitment to follower development, inclusion in decision-making and the building of community" (Huning et al., 2020, p. 180). Servant leadership also contributes to positive feelings in the workplace as leaders provide the support and resources their followers need, thus improving workplace positive affect, which was found to mediate the relationship between this leadership approach and followers' life satisfaction (Y. Li et al., 2018).

Previous literature has argued that servant leadership has a positive impact on followers' well-being (Panaccio et al., 2015; Parris & Peachey, 2013), seeing as it promotes "the welfare of others by conveying support to individual group members, minimising relationship conflicts, and nurturing the broader potential of individual members and a sense of community within the work group" (Schaubroeck et al., 2011, p. 865). The premises of servant leadership as a people-centred approach, whose leaders focus on their followers' growth and well-being, as well as put others' needs above their own, posit that this leadership style will contribute to an enhancement of followers' well-being (Bavik, 2020; Panaccio et al., 2015). Conversely, servant leadership is negatively related to psychological variables such as emotional exhaustion and job cynicism, components of job burnout (Bavik, 2020; Bobbio, Dierendonck, et al., 2012; Rivkin et al., 2014; Tang et al., 2016).

Organisational commitment can be described as the psychological attachment an employee has towards their organisation (Bobbio, Dierendonck, et al., 2012), and is composed of three dimensions: *affective commitment,* "the employee's positive emotional attachment to the organisation"; *continuance commitment*, "the employee's commitment because of the high costs of losing organisational membership"; *normative commitment,* "the employee's felt obligation to remain with an organisation" (Bobbio, Dierendonck, et al., 2012, p. 235). Having the conceptual model of servant leadership developed by van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011), Bobbio, Dierendonck, et al. (2012) concluded that servant leadership positively influenced organisational commitment and that the different dimensions of this leadership approach had a different influence on each of the components of organisational commitment. Overstreet et al. (2014) concluded that servant leadership is directly and positively related to organisational commitment, suggesting that leaders who display "servant leadership characteristics can inspire higher levels of organisational commitment within their followers (Overstreet et al., 2014, p. 144). According to Miao et al. (2014), servant leadership positively influences organisational commitment, specifically enhancing

affective and normative commitment through affective trust, which develops from the emotional bounds between follower and leader, who engage in the process of social exchange.

Engagement is defined by van Dierendonck et al. (2014) in the following way: "similar to affective commitment, work engagement refers to an attachment to, identification with, and involvement in an object or activity, but in this case, the object of this attachment is the work itself rather than the organisation" (van Dierendonck et al., 2014, p. 548). In their studies, the authors concluded that servant leadership is related to work engagement through the mediating effect of need satisfaction (van Dierendonck et al., 2014). In addition, the quality of the relationships established between followers and servant leaders also influence such outcomes as employee engagement (Bavik, 2020), and servant leadership seems to have a positive influence on work engagement in high uncertainty contexts (Sousa & van Dierendonck, 2014). Overall, servant leadership is positively correlated to work engagement (Bobbio & Manganelli, 2015).

The positive effects of servant leadership are argued to cross organisational boundaries and cause positive work-family spillover (Bavik, 2020). Yang et al. (2018) developed and tested a model that posits that employees who have servant leadership and social support perceptions at work have higher organisation-based self-esteem (OBSE), i.e., "the employee's self-perceived value as a member of the organisation" (Yang et al., 2018, p. 596), which is regarded as a resource that facilitates employee attentiveness to their family, and enhances family satisfaction and quality of family life (Yang et al., 2018). Therefore, according to the authors, servant leadership has a positive effect on family life through the mediating effect of OBSE. On the other hand, Tang et al. (2016) based their works on work-family enrichment theory, which posits that resources acquired at work are transferable to the family sphere, thus helping employees meeting their family's requests and expectations. "Employees who perceive high levels of servant leadership are likely to consider their work and live as meaningful" (Tang et al., 2016, p. 288), thus feeling more prone to invest more time and effort into the organisation (Tang et al., 2016). As a result, employees are more likely to acquire positive affect or learn skills in the workplace that can then be transferred to their family domain (Tang et al., 2016). Therefore, servant leadership can have a positive influence on subordinates' work-family balance (Tang et al., 2016).

Furthermore, servant leadership was also found to be positively related to several outcomes, such as job crafting (Bavik et al., 2017), thriving at work (Walumbwa et al., 2018), organisational identification, turnover intention, as well as customer-oriented outcomes (Eva et al., 2019). Consequently, servant leadership has an array of positive outcomes at different levels, and as stated by Parris and Peachey (2013), it "is viable and valuable on an individual and organisational level, which can lead to increased overall effectiveness of individuals and teams" (Parris & Peachey, 2013, p. 386).

1.4. SERVANT LEADERSHIP vs OTHER LEADERSHIP STYLES

According to Lee et al. (2020), the conceptual overlap and possible redundancy of servant leadership when compared to other leadership styles has been extensively discussed. It is often argued that this leadership approach has several conceptual overlaps with other positive leadership styles, such as transformational leadership, authentic leadership and ethical leadership (Lee et al., 2020; van Dierendonck, 2011).

Transformational leadership is defined as "a leadership style with explicit attention to the development of followers through individualised consideration, intellectual stimulation, and supportive behaviour" (van Dierendonck, 2011, p. 1235). This conceptualisation might seem similar to definitions of servant leadership, as the latter overlaps to some extent with the former in features such as vision, influence and trust (Bavik, 2020), and both focus on followers' needs. However, the reason and level of priority given to it is different, seeing as transformational leaders are likely to focus on their subordinates' needs to enable them to reach organisational goals, whereas servant leaders focus on followers' development as an end in itself (Eva et al., 2019). Therefore, transformational leaders primarily focus on organisational objectives, and "the personal growth of followers is seen within the context of what is good for the organisation" (van Dierendonck, 2011, p. 1235), whereas servant leaders seek to serve their followers' interests as well as those of the wider community, even at the expenses of their own and the organisation's interests (Lee et al., 2020).

According to van Dierendonck (2011), "authentic leaders work through an increased self-awareness, relational transparency, internalised transparency, internalised moral perspective, and balanced processing to encourage authenticity in their followers. Authenticity is closely related to expressing the 'true self', expressing oneself in ways that are consistent with inner

thoughts and feelings" (van Dierendonck, 2011, p. 1235). Considering the previous conceptualisation of servant leadership, an overlap with authenticity and humility might be found, i.e., servant leadership also takes into consideration the importance of being authentic and true when interacting with others (Eva et al., 2019). However, what distinguishes these two leadership approaches is the "spiritual and/or altruistic motive to serve others", which is not included in authentic leadership, thus "servant leaders are authentic not for the sake of being authentic, but because they are driven either by a sense of higher calling or inner conviction to serve and make a positive difference for others" (Eva et al., 2019, p. 113).

Ethical leadership "focus on the promotion of appropriate conduct through interpersonal relationships and personal actions in organisations" (Lee et al., 2020, p. 8). Although both leadership approaches emphasise caring for people, integrity, trustworthiness, and serving the good of the whole, ethical leadership focus more on directive and normative behaviour, as in how should things be done, whereas servant leadership focus on how people want to do things and whether they can do it or not (van Dierendonck, 2011).

Even though there are common aspects between servant leadership and other leadership styles, this approach is argued to be conceptually distinct for its main motive and objective (Eva et al., 2019), in addition to the emphasis put on ethics and integrity (Lee et al., 2020). Servant leadership's focus on follower development and empowerment distinguishes it from other approaches such as transformational and empowering leaderships (Newman et al., 2017). Hence servant leaders are especially concerned with followers, focusing more on subordinates as individuals rather than on organisational objectives (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011), and putting others' interests above their own (van Dierendonck, 2011). Furthermore, Bobbio and Manganelli (2015) posited that servant leadership is distinctive for its leaders being follower-focused and striving to serve all stakeholders, as well as leading as *primus inter pares*, placing themselves as servants. Furthermore, incremental validity of servant leadership over other leadership approaches in domains such as creativity and team-level organisational citizenship behaviours has been provided by recent empirical research (Bavik, 2020; Lee et al., 2020). Table 2 summarises the differences and similarities between the different leadership styles.

	Servant leadership	Transformational leadership	Authentic leadership	Ethical leadership
Authenticity	X		X	
Caring for people	X			X
Directive and normative behaviour				X
Focus: organisational objectives		X		
Focus: subordinates as individuals	X			
Followers' development as an end in itself	X			
Followers' development to reach organisational goals		X		
Humility	X		X	
Influence	X	X		
Integrity	X			X
Spiritual/altruistic motive to serve others	X			
Trust	X	X		X
Vision	X	X		

Table 2: Main attributes of servant, transformational, authentic, and ethical leadership styles

2. JOB BURNOUT

2.1. CONCEPTUALISATION

In their studies, Maslach et al. (2001), defined job burnout as "a psychological syndrome in response to chronic interpersonal stressors on the job" (Maslach et al., 2001, p. 399), composed of three dimensions: *(1) exhaustion*, which refers to the feeling of "being overextended and depleted of one's emotional and physical resources", is considered the main individual stress dimension; *(2) cynicism* or *depersonalisation* is concerned with the negative or excessively detached response of the individual to different job-related factors; *(3)* the component of *reduced efficacy* refers to the individual feelings of incompetence, and the lack of achievement and productivity at work (Maslach et al., 2001, p. 399). The authors also distinguished burnout from depression, arguing that the former "is a problem that is specific to the work context, in contrast to depression, which tends to pervade every domain of a person's life", thus being burnout "more job-related and situation-specific than general depression" (Maslach et al., 2001, p. 404). However, individuals who are more prone to depression are more vulnerable to suffering from job burnout (Maslach et al., 2001).

Based on the work of the authors mentioned above, which has been widely used in subsequent studies (X. Li et al., 2021), other job burnout conceptualisations followed.

Upadyaya and Salmela-Aro (2020) defined this concept as a "prolonged reaction to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors at work", and considered the same three dimensions as Maslach and colleagues: *(1) exhaustion*, "characterised by strain and overtaxing at work"; *(2) cynicism*, which is regarded as a loss of interest and perceptions of meaningfulness towards work; *(3) feelings of inadequacy*, "often characterised by feelings of incompetence" (Upadyaya & Salmela-Aro, 2020, p. 404).

Usman et al. (2020) defined job burnout as "a gradual erosion of employees' energy and resources that makes them doubtful of their ability to work and cynical about the value of their work" (Usman et al., 2020, p. 424). According to X. Li et al. (2021), job burnout is defined as "a psychological syndrome caused by chronic high job stress and characterised by exhaustion, cynicism and low professional efficacy (X. Li et al., 2021, p. 1). Similarly, Wu et al. (2021) posit that this concept is a "prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors in the workplace and has a negative effect on physical and psychological health" (Wu et al., 2021, p. 75). According to Sinval et al. (2019), job burnout is a "syndrome (psychological in nature) that may occur when workers chronically face a stressful working environment and feel low resources to face high job demands" (Sinval et al., 2019, p. 2). For Bakker and de Vries (2021), "job burnout is an enduring psychological condition of ill-being signalling that employees are no longer able and no longer willing to invest effort in their work" (Bakker & de Vries, 2021, p. 3). For Turek (2021), job burnout is "understood as a state of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion caused by prolonged engagement in situations which are emotionally draining" (Turek, 2021, p. 61).

Although there are several definitions of this construct, most conceptualisations include both the dimensions of exhaustion and cynicism. Furthermore, Maslach et al. (2001) identified five common elements in the burnout phenomenon: *(1)* predominance of dysphoric symptoms (e.g., fatigue, depression, emotional or mental exhaustion); *(2)* more emphasis on mental and behavioural symptoms rather than on physical signals; *(3)* symptoms are related to work; *(4)* symptoms manifest themselves in people who have not previously suffer from any psychopathology; *(5)* negative attitudes and behaviours lead to decreased effectiveness and performance.

2.2. ANTECEDENTS

Previous literature has presented different factors that promote the emergence of burnout (X. Li et al., 2021; Maslach et al., 2001; Singh et al., 2012). Different circumstances influence the job burnout level experienced by individuals, such as *social factors*, including work-family conflict, social support and social culture; *job characteristics*, e.g., workload levels, role conflict and ambiguity, job demands and control, time pressure; *organisational factors,* such as perceived organisational support, organisational justice and culture, and workplace bullying; *individual factors*, which include variables such as gender, age and some personality traits (X. Li et al., 2021; Sinval et al., 2019; Usman et al., 2020; Wu et al., 2021).

Maslach et al. (2001) suggested that one antecedent of job burnout is a mismatch in the appropriate rewards for one's work. These include *financial rewards*, i.e., insufficient salary or benefits according to the employees' achievements; *social rewards*, when individual work is not recognized or appreciated by others; *intrinsic rewards*, such as pride in doing an important job or doing it well. A mismatch in rewards is usually associated to feelings of inefficacy, one of the job burnout dimensions (Maslach et al., 2001).

Similarly, a mismatch in workload is generally related to one of the main dimensions of burnout, *exhaustion*, seeing as factors such as work overload and time pressure are high demands that exhaust employee's energy, making them unable to recover (Maslach et al., 2001; Usman et al., 2020). Notwithstanding having a reasonable quantity of demands, the type of work might increase burnout levels, either because the individual lacks the necessary skills or they have an emotional work that requires them to display emotions inconsistent with their feelings (Maslach et al., 2001). In addition, both role conflict and role ambiguity show a correlation with job burnout, being the former defined as having to meet conflicting demands at the job and the latter concerning the lack of appropriate information to do a proper job (Maslach et al., 2001; Singh et al., 2012).

Previous studies have found a correlation between job burnout and lack of social support, especially if it is support from supervisors (Maslach et al., 2001). Therefore, when people do not perceived the existence of good connections in the workplace, are isolated, the social contact is impersonal or there are conflicts with others, negative feelings of frustration and hostility might arise, thus likely reducing social support (Maslach et al., 2001).

Another mismatch that is often associated to burnout levels is concerned with control and is related to the dimension of feelings of inefficacy (Maslach et al., 2001). This type of mismatch happens when employees do not have the control to manage their workload according to the resources they have or to adjust their work so that it will be consistent with their aims and values (Leiter et al., 2013). Furthermore, insufficient authority when compared to one's responsibility or to pursue their work in what they perceive to be the most effective way are also part of this mismatch in control (Maslach et al., 2001).

Factors such as hierarchy, rules, resources, space distribution or organisational values also have influence on job burnout, especially when they do not meet expectations of fairness and equity (Maslach et al., 2001). Perceptions of unfairness might happen when employees consider that there are inequities in workload or pay, or that promotions or evaluations are not appropriately assigned (Maslach et al., 2001). Those who feel treated unfairly are likely to experience emotional exhaustion by such treatment and to develop high levels of cynicism, thus influencing job burnout levels (Leiter et al., 2013; Maslach et al., 2001).

Values also play a role in influencing job burnout, seeing as employees might feel compelled to behaving unethically or in a way that is not in accordance with their own values, hereby causing a perception of inconsistency between their career aspirations and organisational values (Maslach et al., 2001). In addition, this mismatch can also include the inconsistency between the mission statement of the organisation and what is actually practiced (Maslach et al., 2001). Furthermore, perceived psychological breach might also contribute to the erosion of employees' well-being, seeing as employees consider that there is not reciprocity in terms of what they give to the organisation and what they obtain from it (Maslach et al., 2001).

Besides situational factors such as the ones described above, several individual factors, e.g., demographic variables, personality traits, job attitudes, were also found to be related to job burnout (Maslach et al., 2001). Previous works argued that the risk of burnout might be influenced by the individual's age, as younger employees seem to be more prone to register high burnout levels (Maslach et al., 2001). Regarding gender, the results vary, however male employees often register high levels of cynicism, while women are more likely to score highly on the exhaustion dimension (Maslach et al., 2001). In addition, employees who held

a higher level of education tendentially register higher burnout levels than those less educated (Maslach et al., 2001).

In terms of personality traits, the level of hardiness displayed might influence individuals' burnout levels, seeing as those who show less involvement in daily activities, have less sense of control over events and are more resistant to change are more likely to register higher job burnout scores (Maslach et al., 2001). In addition, those "who have an external locus of control (attributing events and achievements to powerful others or to chance) rather than an internal locus of control (attribution to one's own ability and effort)" often register higher burnout scores (Maslach et al., 2001, p. 410). Hence, individuals with low levels of hardiness, an external locus of control as well as with lower self-esteem, passive coping styles and high neuroticism, constitute a profile which is likely to register high levels of burnout (Maslach et al., 2001). Other risk factors include such variables as job expectations, which might be too high leading people to work in such a demanding way that eventually leads to exhaustion (Maslach et al., 2001; Singh et al., 2012).

Job stress also appears in the literature as a job burnout antecedent and one of the most important risk factors, seeing as it results in high levels of exhaustion. Job stress can lead to individual perceptions of lack of social support and support resources, consequently leading to higher job dissatisfaction and, ultimately, to job burnout (Sinval et al., 2019; Wu et al., 2021).

2.3. OUTCOMES

Job burnout can affect any employee and have several consequences both to the individual and the organisation, and in different domains, such as health, performance, individual well-being and cognitive functioning (Sinval et al., 2019; Usman et al., 2020). According to Lemonaki et al. (2021), "employees, who experience higher levels of burnout have difficulty in maintaining and mentally manipulating new information (i.e., working memory capacity). They also have difficulty in inhibiting a prepotent cognitive strategy (i.e., inhibition capacity), while they are more likely to report everyday cognitive slips and errors one year later" (Lemonaki et al., 2021, p. 9). Such outcomes usually carry significant costs to personal fulfilment and to organisational cost-effectiveness (Leiter et al., 2013; Sinval et al., 2019).

In health-related matters, job burnout is associated to mental disorders as well as physical illnesses, the feeling of dissatisfaction with life, insomnia, gastroenteritis and cardiovascular diseases (Leiter et al., 2013). According to Bakker and de Vries (2021), burnout can lead to depressive and anxiety disorders, drugs abuse (e.g., alcohol), sleep disturbances, headaches, gastrointestinal infections, and it is an independent risk factor for type two diabetes. In terms of job attitudes, previous studies showed that burnout is often related to turnover intention, and organisational commitment and job satisfaction (Turek, 2021), even though the latter is often posited to be also a burnout antecedent (Maslach et al., 2001; Wu et al., 2021). In addition, job burnout is often associated with such behaviours as absenteeism and withdrawal, from the assigned tasks or even the organisation itself, and poorer quality in job performance (Turek, 2021). Lemonaki et al. (2021) gives an overview of the associations established between job burnout and the outcomes mentioned above, stating that "burned out employees are physically, mentally and emotionally exhausted and have insufficient energy to adequately deal with their formal role requirements", hence a decrease in job performance (Lemonaki et al., 2021, p. 3). Furthermore, employees suffering from burnout usually feel disengaged from their work, so that they tend not to put so much effort in their work and are less willing to go the extra mile and display behaviours that are not formally required but would help the organisation to prosper (Lemonaki et al., 2021). As they feel more disengaged from and identify less with the organisation and their colleagues, burned out employees are more likely to be part of interpersonal conflicts (Turek, 2021).

In their studies, Bobbio and Manganelli (2015) argue that job burnout "usually lowers quality of life, organisational commitment, job performance, contextual performance, and increases intention of quitting" (Bobbio & Manganelli, 2015, p. 1183). Such job burnout outcomes have negative consequences and costs to the organisation, seeing as performance and productivity see their values decreasing (Usman et al., 2020). In organisational-related subjects, burnout has impact on absenteeism, intention and actual turnover (Maslach et al., 2001). However, for burned out employees who stay, their productivity and effectiveness, as well as their job satisfaction and commitment to the job and the organisation are likely to drop, whereas the probability of having conflicts with their colleagues or disrupting tasks and activities are higher (Maslach et al., 2001). In addition, as stated by Lemonaki et al. (2021), employees who experience burnout "are less likely to recall necessary information, to incorporate new information or to find a solution to a work-related problem, which limits

their task performance" (Lemonaki et al., 2021, p. 10), making them more prone to mistakes, "perceptual failures and misdirected actions", hence contributing to poorer levels of task performance (Lemonaki et al., 2021, p. 10).

According to Turek (2021), previous studies have regarded job burnout as a predictor of CWB. The Counterproductive Working Behaviours can negatively affect organisational productivity and are often displayed through abusing others, e.g., ignoring; sabotaging co-workers' tasks or destroying company property; theft; purposely decrease labour effectiveness; withdrawal, e.g., arriving late (Mercado et al., 2018; Spector & Fox, 2005; Turek, 2021). Whereas job burnout increases CWB, on the other hand it decreases OCB, as employees who experience job burnout might strive to preserve their psychological and physical resources, be demotivated to pursue extra-role behaviours and have higher levels of exhaustion, hence being unable to put more effort at work and not being willing to help their colleagues (Lemonaki et al., 2021; Turek, 2021). As argued by Turek (2021), "when employees' jobs affect them negatively in emotional or physical terms, they do not retain the discretionary energy needed to be good corporate citizens. Moreover, employees may interpret their suffering from job stress as a signal that their employer does not respect them, and they may experience this suffering as offensive, reducing their willingness to perform any activities that benefit the organisation" (Turek, 2021, p. 71)

Consequently, previous literature states that job burnout has negative consequences, affecting the individual, interpersonal relationships (within and outside the organisation) and the organisation itself.

3. SERVANT LEADERSHIP AND JOB BURNOUT

3.1. RESOURCES AND DEMANDS THEORIES

Within the studies of job burnout, the concepts of job resources and job demands, as well as their related theories, are widely present and considered relevant to understand this phenomenon (Turek, 2021).

According to Bakker and Demerouti (2007), job resources are "physical, psychological, social or organisational aspects of the job that are either/or functional in achieving work goals; reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs; stimulate personal growth, learning, and development" (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, p. 312).

Job resources may be found at an organisational level, then including such features as career opportunities and salary; in interpersonal and social relations, i.e., support from the leader and co-workers, team environment; in the way work is structured, which includes role clarity and decision-making; at the task level, thus encompassing feedback, autonomy and task significance (Turek, 2021).

Bakker and de Vries (2021) argue that when resources "such as social support, autonomy, and skill variety are lacking, work starts to lose its meaning and thwarts the fulfilment of innate psychological needs" (Bakker & de Vries, 2021, p. 3), thus meaning that in the absence of important resources, employees are likely to develop negative attitudes towards work and lose interest in it, as they perceive that they do not have enough control over their work and cannot grow professionally (Bakker & de Vries, 2021). On the other hand, when individuals are in the presence of job resources, those are likely to attenuate the impact of job demands on burnout (Bakker & de Vries, 2021). Furthermore, in their work, Upadyaya and Salmela-Aro (2020) add that both work and personal resources, being self-efficacy, resilience and optimist examples of the latter, directly impact work engagement and their lack may increase burnout symptoms (Upadyaya & Salmela-Aro, 2020).

Job demands are "those physical, psychological, social or organisational aspects of the job that require either sustained physical and/or psychological (cognitive and emotional) effort or skills and are therefore associated with certain physiological and/or psychological costs" (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, p. 312). Even though job demands are not necessarily negative, they might turn into stressors if they require a great effort to meet them and occur simultaneously (Upadyaya & Salmela-Aro, 2020). Besides demands related to the job itself, such as workload, role ambiguity and conflict, problems with equipment, and time pressure (Bakker & de Vries, 2021; Upadyaya et al., 2016; Upadyaya & Salmela-Aro, 2020), employees also experience personal demands, such as long-term illness and personal financial problems, which are demands related to individual characteristics that are reflected in the effort one puts at work, and are associated with psychological and physical costs (Upadyaya & Salmela-Aro, 2020). Similar to the lack of job resources, the presence of job demands may increase job burnout symptoms and decrease job satisfaction.

Within job burnout literature, several theories related to the concepts of resources and demands have emerged, of which the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory and the Job

Demands-Resources (JD-R) Theory are examples, being the latter the predominant model used to explain the phenomenon of job burnout (Turek, 2021).

The COR Theory argues that "individuals strive to obtain, retain, foster, and protect those things they centrally value" (Hobfoll et al., 2018, p. 104). This argument is based on the human evolutionary need to obtain and preserve resources in order to survive, i.e., personal strengths and social bonds (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Such resources are employed to face stressful situations and to "build a reservoir of sustaining resources for times of future need", (Hobfoll et al., 2018, p. 104). In addition, acquiring and retaining "personal, social, and material resources creates in people, families, and organisations the sense that they are capable of meeting stressful challenges" (Hobfoll et al., 2018, p. 104).

Placing a higher weight on the resource loss rather than the resource gain, the COR Theory argues that stress occurs when there is the possibility of losing important resources, when there is their actual loss, or when the individual fails to gain important resources after a significant effort (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Such key resources might be "personal characteristics, social support, objects, conditions, and energy" that enable individuals to react to demands and stressful situations (Usman et al., 2020, p. 425). This theory also posits that the employees with more resources are less vulnerable to resource loss, and that stress affects individuals heterogeneously, considering their individual differences (Usman et al., 2020). The resources are interconnected and their loss in some domain will affect the resources in others, as individuals try to compensate losing in one domain by using resources from other domains (Usman et al., 2020).

The JD-R model posits that independent of the specific risk factors of each professional occupation, those factors can be classified into two main categories – job demands and job resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), and explains the job burnout phenomenon, arguing that the perception of job resources not being sufficient to meet the job demands is likely to increase the risk of burnout (X. Li et al., 2021). Thus, when employees face high job demands and job resources are scarcely available, their well-being is likely to be negatively affected and their chances of burnout increased (Gonçalves et al., 2020).

According to Bakker and Demerouti (2007), expanding the view of other theories, the JD-R model argues that different job demands and job resources may interact in predicting job strain. Furthermore, this model also claims that "job demands and job resources initiate two

different psychological processes", which will ultimately impact organisational outcomes (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, p. 316). As stated by Turek (2021), the risk of job burnout and other negative consequences, such as turnover intention, increases when job demands are high; on the other hand, job resources are likely to have a positive effect in variables such as performance and organisational commitment, as well as promote work engagement. As job burnout often results from high job demands, job resources "weaken the link between job demands and burnout because they facilitate efficient and healthy coping with the demands of work" (Bakker & de Vries, 2021, p. 3). In this sense, resources such as autonomy, feedback, social support and a good relationship with the leader are likely to buffer the negative impact of job demands (Bakker & de Vries, 2021). Likewise, the presence of personal resources (i.e., optimism, resilience) is likely to decrease the risk of job stress and burnout (Bakker & de Vries, 2021).

Given its other-centred characteristics and the positive outcomes associated to servant leadership, this leadership style is often regarded as a source of social support itself (Upadyaya et al., 2016).

3.2. PERCEIVED ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT

The organisational support theory posits that individuals develop global beliefs about the extent to which their contributions and well-being are valued by the organisation, so that they can determine its "readiness to reward increased work effort and to meet socioemotional needs" (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002, p. 698). In addition, Perceived Organisational Support (POS) is "valued as assurance that aid will be available from the organisation when it is needed to carry out one's job effectively and to deal with stressful situations" (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002, p. 698).

Several studies point out positive effects of POS such as reduced occupational stress, increased affective commitment, increased in-role performance, and reduced absenteeism and turnover intention (Bobbio, Bellan, et al., 2012; Turek, 2021). Furthermore, perceiving that the organisation values and cares about their needs and well-being creates in employees the obligation to reciprocally contribute and help the organisation to meet its goals, thus maintaining or increasing their engagement level in their work (Bobbio, Bellan, et al., 2012; Turek, 2021). It is also posited that social support and continuous feedback from leaders and

peers promote employees' motivation and work engagement (Gonçalves et al., 2020). However, when support is perceived as lacking, it is likely that individuals reduce their OCBs, as they strive to protect the resources they have, and might display negative behaviours such as incivility (Turek, 2021). As described by Wu et al. (2021), "when job-related relationships are thought to lack support and trust, there is a greater risk of burnout" (Wu et al., 2021, p. 2).

Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) propose that POS is related to positive outcomes. Based on the reciprocity norm, employees feel obliged to help the organisation reach its goals, enhancing their affective commitment to it; furthermore, seeing as employees perceive that their organisation meets their socioemotional needs, it produces a strong sense of belonging, thus enhancing the individuals' sense of purpose and meaning (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). When it comes to job-related effects, by "meeting socioemotional needs, increasing performance-reward expectancies, and signalling the availability of aid when needed", POS is expected to contribute to employees' job satisfaction (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002, p. 701). Seeing as POS might contribute to individuals' feeling of competence and worth, it might have a positive impact on their job involvement, by increasing their interest in their work (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). POS is also likely to have a positive impact on performance-related behaviours, especially those that are beyond their assigned tasks, e.g., helping colleagues, proactively protect the organisation from risk, giving improvement suggestions, and learning and acquiring skills that are helpful to the organisation (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

Furthermore, "POS is expected to reduce aversive psychological and psychosomatic reactions (i.e., strains) to stressors by indicating the availability of material aid and emotional support when needed to face high demands at work" (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002, p. 702). Organisational support is posited as having four main functions related to protecting employees from the negative effects of job stress: *(1)* promoting individual self-esteem, by signalling that the employee is valued and respected; *(2)* providing the necessary information to help individuals understand and cope with stressful events; *(3)* fulfilling the need of having affiliation; *(4)* providing the necessary material resources and services to cope with stress (Xu & Yang, 2021).

Even though it is theorised the effect POS has in job stress and burnout, some academics argue in favour of the buffering effect of organisational support, while others defend the direct-effect model. The buffering-effect model argues that organisational support "works when one is faced with a stressor that comes between the individual and the source of stress", thus protecting "the individual from the negative effects of the stressor" (Kim et al., 2018, p. 128); whereas the direct-effect model states that organisational support is important irrespective of a stressor being present (Kim et al., 2018). In their studies, Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) found that employees who experience high POS display fewer symptoms such fatigue, burnout or anxiety. Seeing as, when facing high demands in their job, employees receive high support, both material and emotional, from the organisation, their negative reactions to job stress are likely to decrease (Xu & Yang, 2021). Xu and Yang (2021) describe the interaction as follows, "job stress influences job burnout through POS: first, employees consider that many stressors (e.g., work overload, role ambiguity, role conflict) can be controlled by the organisation and then attribute a stressful environment to a lack of support from the organisation. Thus job stress reduces POS", which "may increase employees' burnout because low POS fails to fulfil employees' socioemotional needs" (Xu & Yang, 2021, p. 403).

Given its impacts on both individual and organisational variables, organisational support is regarded as an important resource in reducing the probability of burnout (Turek, 2021).

3.3. THE IMPACT OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP ON JOB BURNOUT

Even though the relationship between servant leadership and several individual, team and organisational outcomes has been studied, less attention has been given to the impact of servant leadership on employees' job burnout and well-being (Franco & Antunes, 2020; Lamprinou et al., 2021; Ma et al., 2021).

"Job burnout triggers in the organisational environment are highly connected to supervisors" (Lamprinou et al., 2021, p. 1075), seeing as they can play a critical role in preventing the effects of job strain and in reducing burnout among their employees (Bakker & de Vries, 2021; Lamprinou et al., 2021; Usman et al., 2020). Leaders are responsible for improving job characteristics, such as defining reasonable goals within their team's capacity, improving job demands and providing their employees with the necessary resources they need to face

those demands and address stressful situations (Bakker & de Vries, 2021; Usman et al., 2020), being those "guidance, feedback, and financial and informational resources" (Usman et al., 2020, p. 426). On the other hand, when leaders fail to provide feedback and support to their team, individuals are more likely to experience role stress, increased work alienation, thus exhausting personal resources and improving feelings of burnout (Usman et al., 2020). Therefore, and based on the JD-R Theory, leadership and POS might be considered job resources who play a critical role in reducing job burnout.

According to Huning et al. (2020), leaders "are often endorsed as the primary sources of POS, because they are responsible for the decisions that shape the policies and procedures influencing the direction of the company and its treatment of personnel (e.g. training, rewards)" (Huning et al., 2020, p. 179). Hence, by implementing appropriate policies and actions, leaders have the possibility to improve their employees' levels of POS, regarded as a "contextual resource that assists employees in accomplishing their goals" (Lamprinou et al., 2021, p. 1074) and can play an important role in reducing job burnout (Wu et al., 2021). Furthermore, employees would acquire the necessary resources to face their job demands and socioemotional needs, which in turn can reduce job stressors and increase the feeling that they have been successful in performing a task (Lamprinou et al., 2021).

As a social resource, servant leadership "has been demonstrated to manifest as an increase in employees' job satisfaction, and as a decrease in burnout symptoms" (Upadyaya et al., 2016, p. 101). Considering that the focus of this leadership style is to serve the needs of employees and to contribute to their empowerment and growth, servant leaders provide useful resources that decrease job burnout, including organisational and supervisor support and job clarity (Ma et al., 2021; Upadyaya et al., 2016). In their studies, Lamprinou et al. (2021) argue that servant leadership influences POS, seeing as these leaders "deliberately convey positive messages that an organisation supports employees' socioemotional needs" through organisational policies and practices (Lamprinou et al., 2021, p. 1082). In addition, perceived organisational support was also found to mediate the relationship between servant leadership and job burnout, with evidence showing that "servant leaders' impact on job burnout and work-life balance primarily occurs through the institutionalisation of appropriate support mechanisms" (Lamprinou et al., 2021, p. 1082). Furthermore, Ma et al. (2021) add to the literature by positing that as servant leadership focus on followers' well-being, servant leaders are able to deal with their employees' burnout, seeing as such leaders

usually provide the necessary support and nurture positive relationships with subordinates. Hence, besides servant leadership being associated with a reduction in burnout symptoms (Lamprinou et al., 2021; Upadyaya et al., 2016), "employees working under servant leaders might be less prone to burnout because they will receive the necessary job resources either to cope with high job demands or to recover from burnout" (Ma et al., 2021, p. 7).

4. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

4.1. SERVANT LEADERSHIP AND JOB BURNOUT

Servant leaders focus on their followers' needs, stimulate their empowerment and provide support, thus contributing to their employees' ability to share information, be proactive and "have lower levels of emotional exhaustion" (Eva et al., 2019, p. 124). In addition, servant leadership encompasses ethical behaviours, such as fairness as well as open and honest communication (Bavik, 2020).

Seeing as the emergence of job burnout is stimulated by the lack or low levels of perceived organisational support (Wu et al., 2021), by mismatches in employees' perceptions, such as of justice, and of their resources to face their work demands (Leiter et al., 2013; Maslach et al., 2001), servant leadership can be argued to have a negative impact on job burnout, as it focuses on their followers' development, growth and well-being, with leaders displaying supportive behaviours (Newman et al., 2017) and building trustworthy relationships (Bavik, 2020). Furthermore, servant leadership is also regarded as a social resource itself, thus contributing to employees facing job demands (Upadyaya et al., 2016).

Hence, the following research hypothesis was formulated:

H1: When followers perceive higher levels of servant leadership in their leaders, they tend to display lower levels of job burnout.

4.2. LEADER GENDER, SERVANT LEADERSHIP AND JOB BURNOUT

Previous works have posited that female communal behaviours encompass "nurturing, helpful, benevolent, and supportive demeanour" (Cenkci & Özçelik, 2015, p. 12). Servant leadership behaviours such as the emphasis on followers' development, concern for the broad range of stakeholders and caring for others are thus regarded as communal behaviours,

which in turn are associated with female stereotypes (Lemoine & Blum, 2021). Hence, it is posited that women are more prone to engage in servant leadership behaviours (Lemoine & Blum, 2021). However, when male leaders display communal behaviours, according to the communality-bonus effect, it is argued that they are perceived more positively than when the leader is a woman (Hentschel et al., 2018; Schreiner et al., 2018).

Therefore, the second research hypothesis was formulated as follows:

H2: The gender of the leader affects the relationship between follower's perceptions of servant leadership and job burnout.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHOD

5. RESEARCH APPROACH AND RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Wahyuni (2012), the research paradigm, "an overall conceptual framework within which a researcher may work" (Sobh & Perry, 2006, p. 1194), influences how a social study is undertaken "from the way of framing and understanding social phenomena" (Wahyuni, 2012, p. 69) and it includes three main elements: *methodology* (discussed in the following section), *ontology* and *epistemology* (Sobh & Perry, 2006). Regarding ontology, which concerns the nature of reality Saunders et al. (2009), this study follows an objectivist approach, as the researcher has an external, independent, objective perspective and the results are not influenced by the author's individual perceptions, which is in accordance with Saunders et al. (2009)' definition of such approach, i.e., it perceives that "social entities exist in reality external to social actors concerned with their existence" (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 110).

From an epistemological point of view, which relates to what is or is not considered acceptable knowledge in a certain field (Maylor & Blackmon, 2005; Saunders et al., 2009), this research follows the positivist philosophy, which assumes that "reality can be measured by viewing it through a one way, value-free mirror" (Sobh & Perry, 2006, pp. 1195–1196) and, according to Saunders et al. (2009), posits that to collect credible data, the research is likely to develop hypotheses based on existing theory. Usually linked to Positivism is the deductive approach, involving "the development of a theory that is subjected to a rigorous test" (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 124). This type of research includes the deduction of hypotheses from theory and their definition as well as testing them to confirm or refute it and, if necessary, modifying it based on the research findings (Saunders et al., 2009). Furthermore, this is an approach that enables the explanation of casual relationships between variables (Saunders et al., 2009).

The research design includes the general approach undertaken to answer the research questions and the techniques used to collect, analyse and interpret data (Maylor & Blackmon, 2005). This study is characterised as an explanatory research, as it seeks to "establish casual relationships between variables" and focus on "studying a situation or a problem in order to explain the relationships between variables" (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 140). Furthermore

within the deductive approach, one of the most common research strategies in business and management is the survey, which often seeks to find *who, what, where, how much* and *how* (Saunders et al., 2009). Seeing as this strategy is often implemented using a questionnaire, the data collected is standardised and easily comparable, as well as quantitative and analysed by applying descriptive and inferential statistics, besides being used to "suggest reasons for particular relationships between variables and to produce models of these relationships" (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 144).

Following the quantitative research method, defined as "any data collection technique (such as a questionnaire) or data analysis procedure (such as graphs or statistics) that generates or uses numerical data" (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 151), this research was conducted using the survey technique, with answers based on a Likert scale. Furthermore, due to time constrains this research is a cross-sectional study, focusing on a particular situation at a particular time (Saunders et al., 2009).

6. QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire is divided into six parts with an introductory description of the aim of the study. The first section concerns the information on the confidentiality of data treatment within this research, in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation, and the second part of the questionnaire questioned if the participants had been working for at least twelve months; in the case of a negative answer, the questionnaire would end and display a message thanking for the collaboration. Twelve months working were the minimal time required as it seemed a period long enough for individuals to develop a reasonable perception of their leaders and their wellness at their job.

The third and fourth sections aimed at gathering other relevant information about the individuals and their working context. Section 3 included questions on personal data, such as gender, age, nationality, and academic background, whereas Section 4 focused on professional data, i.e., working location (district and city), company sector, current position, seniority in the company and in the position, gender, and age range of the direct leader, and whether the respondent had been working remotely at least in the last 12 months and for how long. The last two sections of the questionnaire focused on the respondents' leadership and job burnout levels perceptions, respectively.

The survey (see Appendix I) was developed using the FormsUA platform and implemented online, shared on social media networks such as LinkedIn and Facebook, and through the authors' informal contact network. The online questionnaire was active from January 2022 to April 2022.

7. MEASURES

7.1. SERVANT LEADERSHIP

In this study, the employees' perceptions of servant leadership are measured through the Servant Leadership Survey (SLS), seeing as this measure had overcome the limitations of previous instruments (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Most measures only considered the "people" aspect of servant leadership, disregarding the "leader" side of the relationship (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). The SLS focuses on both sides of servant leadership, hence "the SLS primarily focus on the leader-follower relationship measured from the perspective of the follower", aiming at covering the main aspects of servant leadership, being easily applied and being psychometrically valid and reliable (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011, p. 251).

Seeing as the study was conducted in Portugal, the servant leadership perceptions were assessed through the Portuguese version of the scale validated by Sousa and van Dierendonck (2014) for the Portuguese population. The measure is composed of 30 items which encompasses eight main characteristics of servant leadership. *Empowerment* includes 7 items (e.g.: "My manager gives me the information I need to do my work well"); *accountability* has 3 items (e.g.: My manager holds me responsible for the work I carry out"); *standing back* is composed of 3 items (e.g.: "My manager keeps himself/herself in the background and gives credits to others"); *humility* includes 5 items (e.g.: "My manager learns from criticism"); *authenticity* is composed of 4 items (e.g.: "My manager is open about his/her limitations and weaknesses"); *courage* has 2 items (e.g.: "My manager takes risks even when he/she is not certain of the support from his/her own manager"); *forgiveness* includes 3 items (e.g.: "My manager keeps criticising people for the mistakes they have made in their work"; *stewardship* has 3 items (e.g.: "My manager emphasises the importance of focusing on the good of the whole") (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). The items were

answered based on a Likert scale ranging from 1 ("Completely disagree") to 6 ("Completely agree") (Sousa & van Dierendonck, 2014).

7.2. JOB BURNOUT

The burnout construct was assessed through the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI) originally developed by Demerouti and Nachreiner (1998). According to Sinval et al. (2019), the OLBI "seems to be the most prominent alternative to MBI" (Sinval et al., 2019, p. 2), being the latter the Maslach Burnout Inventory, a wide used scale when studying job burnout (Sinval et al., 2019), originally developed by Maslach and Jackson (1981). Contrary to the MBI, the OLBI only includes two dimensions (*exhaustion* and *disengagement*), as different authors disagree on whether *professional efficacy* (included in the MBI measure) can be interpreted as a burnout dimension or as a burnout consequence (Sinval et al., 2019).

The Portuguese version of the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory was used, which is composed of 16 items, each one rated in a 5-point Likert scale from 1 ("Strongly disagree") to 5 ("Strongly agree") (Sinval et al., 2019). The *exhaustion* dimension includes eight items, such as "There are days when I feel tired before I arrive at work", and the *disengagement dimension* also has eight items (e.g.: "Over time, one can become disconnected from this type of work").

8. SAMPLE

The online survey registered 212 answers: 67 entries were not completed, thus were considered invalid; and 66 of the respondents had been working for less than 12 months. Therefore, the sample analysed is composed of 79 respondents, from which 77.22% are female (61 participants) and 22.78% are male (18 participants). The average age of the sample is 33.56 years old, being 49.37% of the participants under the age of 30. Furthermore, most of the respondents are Portuguese (97.47%), 1.27% are Brazilian and 1.27% are Ukrainian. Regarding their academic background, 87.34% of the respondents held an academic degree (49.37% have a Bachelor's Degree and 37.97% have a Master's Degree), 6.33% of the participants have completed High School and the remaining participants are divided across Doctor's Degree, Elementary School (6th grade), Elementary School (9th grade), MBA and Pre-Bologna Degree, corresponding to 1.27% each.

The respondents work mainly in the districts of Aveiro, Oporto and Braga (40.51%; 17.72%; and 17.72% respectively), followed by Coimbra and Lisbon (3.80% each), and Portalegre and Viseu (2.53% each). The remaining regions (Azores, Castelo Branco, Leiria and Santarém) represent each 1.27% of the participants. The survey also reached individuals working abroad (6.33%) in countries such as The Netherlands, England, and Switzerland. Concerning the preceding level of administrative division, the municipalities, 22.78% of the individuals work in Aveiro, followed by Guimarães and Braga (8.86% and 6.33% respectively).

Regarding their sector of activity, 32.91% of the respondents work in the industry sector, 13.92% in services, followed by commerce, consulting, education and information technology (7.59%; 7.59%; 6.33%; and 5.06% respectively). Other sectors represented in the sample include energy, research (each corresponding to 3.80%), as well as bank/finances/insurance, health, and marketing (representing 2.53% each). Sectors such as arts and culture, tourism, sports, logistics, management, and others had little representation.

Regarding the position held by the participants, the largest share belongs to administrative support positions (11.39%), followed by management and finances (10.13%), and positions in the areas of human resources (6.33%), sales (6.33%) and technical activities (6.33%). Other relevant positions are within the consulting, education and training, information technology, and quality areas (5.06% each).

In regard to seniority in the company, 31.65% of the participants have been working from 1 to 2 years in their current company, and 17.72% have been for less than 1 year with their current employer. On the other hand, 13.92% of the participants have been employed for more than 20 years in their current company, followed by the individuals whose seniority is within a period range of 3-4 years, 5-6 years, and 7-8 years (11.39%; 10.13%; 7.59%, respectively).

Concerning the participants' seniority in the position, 32.91% of the sample has been from 1 to 2 years in their current position; 26.58% has held their position for less than 1 year; followed by 10.13% of the participants who have been in their role from 5 to 6 years; 7.59% from 3 to 4 years; and 6.33% from 7 to 8 years. On the other hand, 6.33% of the individuals have been in their current role for more than 20 years. The remaining answers are divided along the period range of 9 and 20 years.

The survey also inquired about some characteristics of the participants' leader, namely gender and age range. Regarding the former, 56.96% of the respondents have a male leader and 43.04% a female leader. Concerning the latter, 36.71% of the leaders are between 40 and 49 years old; 26.58% are between 30 and 39 years old; and 26.58% are between 50-59 years old. Furthermore, 6.33% of the participants' leaders were within the age range of 60 and 69 years old; and 3.80% of the participants stated their leader's age is between 20 and 29 years old.

More than half of the respondents (59.49%) answered "Yes" to the question "Have you been remotely working in the last 12 months?". Most of these respondents experienced this remote working model for 12 months or less (63.83%); 12.77% have been working remotely for 13 months or more; from the latter, 6.38% corresponds to more than 24 months; 8.51% of the participants have been working in a fully remote model; and 14.89% did not give a specific answer regarding the duration of their remote work but referred that they have been working in a hybrid model.

IV. RESULTS

In this section two software programmes were used: IBM SPSS Statistics version 26.0, and SmartPLS 3. The mean and standard deviation of each variable as well as the correlations were calculated using SPSS.

To test *H1,* the measurement model was assessed, through structural equation modelling using SmartPLS, in its internal consistency, factor loading, composite reliability, convergent reliability, and discriminant validity. *H2* was tested through a multigroup analysis, also performed in SmartPLS.

9. CORRELATIONS

The correlations (bivariate Pearson Correlations) between the different variables are shown in Table 3. The Likert scales used were different in the two measurement instruments, i.e., the SLS used a 6-point Likert scale and the OLBI required a 5-point Likert scale. Therefore, within the servant leadership construct, the *accountability* dimension registered the highest mean (*M=4.9241*), followed by *empowerment* (*M=4.2966*) and *stewardship* (*M=4.0802*). Regarding the burnout construct, both dimensions displayed means at a 3-point level ($M_{exhaustion}=3.0744$; $M_{disengagement}=3.0237$).

All servant leadership dimensions displayed a significant correlation with each other, except for *accountability* and *courage*, and *forgiveness* and *courage,* having *empowerment* and *humility* the higher effect of all correlations (*r=.844; p<0.001*) (Howell, 2012). Both dimensions of burnout, *exhaustion* and *disengagement,* also registered a significant correlation with high effect (*r=.584; p<0.001*) (Howell, 2012). Between constructs, *empowerment, standing back, humility, authenticity* and *stewardship* were the ones displaying more significant negative correlations with both *disengagement* and *exhaustion*; *forgiveness* displayed a low significant negative correlation with *exhaustion*; the remaining dimensions did not register significant correlations with burnout dimensions. Between constructs, s*tewardship* and *exhaustion* were significantly correlated, with a medium effect (*r=-.445; p<0.001*) (Howell, 2012).

Concerning the control variables, *age* was negatively correlated with *forgiveness*, (*r=-.263; p<0.01*) and *disengagement* (*r=-.263; p<0.01*); *seniority in the position* was also negatively

correlated with *forgiveness* (*r=-.263; p<0.001*) and *disengagement* (*r=-.263; p<0.001*); *leader gender* was negatively correlated with *humility* (*r=-.249; p<0.001*) and *authenticity* (*r=-.223; p<0.001*)*;* and *remote work* had a positive correlation with *standing back* (*r=.285; p<0.001*)*, humility* (*r=.326; p<0.01*) and *authenticity* (*r=.282; p<0.001*)*.* Every effect was low, except for the correlation between *standing back* and *humility*, which registered a medium effect (Howell, 2012).

	M	SD	EMP	ACC	STB	HUM	AUT	COU	FOR	STE	EXH	DIS	GEN	AGE	AB	SEC	SEP	LG	LAR	RW	HW	RWT
EMP	4.2966	1.26350	-																			
ACC	4.9241	1.02664	.548***	-																		
STB	3.6540	1.14658	.597***	.307**	-																	
HUM	3.9190	1.41911	.844***	.369***	.709***	-																
AUT	3.7247	1.16616	.694***	.264*	.763***	.786***	-															
COU	3.7911	1.19991	.635***	.188	.470***	.541***	.571***	-														
FOR	3.7975	1.09313	.296**	-.230*	.284*	.466***	.259*	.166	-													
STE	4.0802	1.36105	.842***	.386***	.625***	.818***	.777***	.530***	.299**	-												
EXH	3.0744	.82346	-.388***	-.031	-.418***	-.425***	-.423***	-.205	-.261*	-.445***	-											
DIS	3.0237	.81455	-.407***	-.216	-.358***	-.369***	-.381***	-.192	-.104	-.387***	.584***	-										
GEN	-	-	.074	.100	.050	.134	.123	-.044	-.038	.191	-.206	-.193	-									
AGE	32.5570	9.4010	.008	.119	.034	-.079	-.020	-.142	-.263**	.015	-.128	-.263**	.097	-								
AB	-	-	-.233*	-.120	-.122	-.026	-.085	-.112	.192	-.123	.182	.154	-.083	-.358***	-							
SEC	5.9189	7.7755	.153	.070	.165	.130	.099	.075	-.058	.123	-.119	-.155	-.036	.773***	-.291**	-						
SEP	5.3586	8.0323	.069	.058	.062	-.078	.004	-.034	-.263***	.070	.151	-.225***	.012	.776***	-.558***	.705***	-					
LG	-	-	-.123	-.056	-.182	-.249***	-.223***	-.002	-.060	-.156	-.151	-.081	.106	.046	-.238*	.001	.081	-				
LAR	-	-	-.130	-.005	-.038	-.218	-.084	-.167	-.139	-.074	-.005	-.125	.003	.437***	-.137	.326**	.348**	.204	-			
RW	-	-	.198	.057	.285***	.326**	.282***	.169	.155	.125	-.142	-.139	-.105	-.172	.072	-.093	-.257*	-.249*	-.144	-		
HW	-	-	.114	.023	.108	.138	.093	-.020	.126	.036	-.151	-.119	-.063	.144	-.065	.258*	.052	-.089	-.016	-.257	-	
RWT	-	-	.112	-.049	.084	.090	-.027	-.030	.287	.038	-.100	-.008	-.254	-.168	-.013	-.154	-.106	-.113	-.207	C	-.190	-

Table 3: Correlations between variables (<0.050 | **<0.010 | ***<0.001 | C=impossible to calculate as at least one of the variables is constant; EMP=Empowerment | ACC=Accountability | STB=Standing back | HUM=Humility | AUT=Authority | COU=Courage | FOR=Forgiveness | STE=Stewardship | EXH=Exhaustion | DIS=Disengagement | GEN=Gender | AGE=Age | AB=Academic background | SEC= Seniority in the company | SEP=Seniority in the position | LG=Leader gender | LAR=Leader age range | RW=Remote work | HW=Hybrid work | RWT=Remote work time*

Within the control variables, *age* was positively correlated with *seniority in the position* (*r=.776; p<0.001*), *seniority in the company* (*r=.773; p<0.001*), both registering a high effect (Howell, 2012); it registered a medium effect in its positive correlation with *leader age range* (*r=.437; p<0.001*), and in its negative correlation with *academic background* (*r=-.358; p<0.001*) (Howell, 2012). The latter also was negatively correlated with *seniority in the company* (*r=-.291; p<0.010*), and *seniority in the position* (*r=-.558; p<0.001*), registering a low and a high effect, respectively (Howell, 2012). These two variables of seniority are positively correlated (*r=.705; p<0.001*), presenting a high effect (Howell, 2012). A positive correlation with a medium effect was registered between *seniority in the company* and *leader age range* (*r=.326; p<0.010*), and *seniority in the position* and *leader age range* (*r=.348; p<0.010*) (Howell, 2012). The remaining three significant correlations have a low *r* effect (Howell, 2012), being *seniority in the company* and *hybrid work* a positive correlation (*r=.258; p<0.050*); and *seniority in the position* and *remote work* (*r=-.257; p<0.050*), as well as *leader gender* and *remote work* (*r=-.249; p<0.050*) a negative correlation.

10. MEASUREMENT MODEL

The model was evaluated in its internal consistency, construct reliability, as well as in its convergent and discriminant validities. The internal consistency was assessed through the Cronbach's alpha (α), ranging from *0.62* and *0.95*. Table 4 shows the α values for the different dimensions. Seeing as, according to Hair et al. (2015) the Cronbach's alpha values obtained ranged between moderate and high.

	Cronbach's Alpha
Empowerment	0.94
Accountability	0.82
Standing Back	0.65
Humility	0.95
Authenticity	0.83
Courage	0.62
Forgiveness	0.66
Stewardship	0.84
Exhaustion	0.88
Disengagement	0.91
Burnout	0.93
Servant Leadership	0.96

Table 4: Cronbach's alpha

The t-values as well as the loadings and cross-loadings of the dimensions of both scales are registered in Appendix II. As stated by Hair et al. (2019), "loadings above 0.708 are recommended, as they indicate that the construct explains more than 50 per cent of the indicator's variance" (Hair et al., 2019, p. 8), therefore the items with low loading values were excluded, namely *EXH3, EXH7, DIS7, DIS3, FOR2* and *AUT4*.

Table 5 shows the values for the Composite Reliability, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and the AVE Square Root. According to Hair et al. (2019), composite reliability values of at least *0.70* are acceptable, thus all dimensions have adequate reliability values as they range from *0.72* to *0.92*,. To evaluate convergent reliability, AVE was calculated.

	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	AVE Square Root	Correlations									
				EMP	ACC	STB	HUM	AUT	COU	FOR	STE	EXH	DIS
Empowerment	0.95	0.73	0.85	-									
Accountability	0.89	0.73	0.86	.548***	-								
Standing back	0.81	0.59	0.77	.597***	.307**	-							
Humility	0.96	0.84	0.92	.844***	.369***	.709***	-						
Authenticity	0.90	0.75	0.87	.694***	.264*	.763***	.786***	-					
Courage	0.84	0.72	0.85	.635***	.188	.470***	.541***	.571***	-				
Forgiveness	0.84	0.72	0.85	.296**	-.230*	.284*	.466***	.259*	.166	-			
Stewardship	0.90	0.76	0.87	.842***	.386***	.625***	.818***	.777***	.530***	.299**	-		
Exhaustion	0.91	0.63	0.80	-.388***	-.031	-.418***	-.425***	-.423***	-.205	-.261*	-.445***	-	
Disengagement	0.93	0.68	0.82	-.407***	-.216	-.358***	-.369***	-.381***	-.192	-.104	-.387***	.584***	-
Servant Leadership	0.97	0.52	0.72	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Burnout	0.94	0.56	0.75	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 5: Composite reliability

Seeing as all dimensions display an AVE of *0.50* or higher, it can be posited that "the construct explains at least 50 per cent of the variance of its items" (Hair et al., 2019, p. 9), thus ensuring convergent reliability. Finally, to measure discriminant validity, Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion was applied. According to this approach, a construct has discriminant validity when "the square root of each construct's AVE is higher than its correlation with another construct" and when "each item loads highest on its associated construct" (Henseler et al., 2015, p. 127). Thereby, having all the conditions been verified, it can be concluded that the constructs have discriminant validity.

11. STRUCTURAL MODEL EVALUATION

The structural model represented in Figure 2 shows that the relationship established between servant leadership and burnout is statistically significant (β=-0.476; $p<0.001$); thus, supporting hypothesis *H1*. The results demonstrate that burnout levels are 27% explained by the followers' servant leadership perceptions ($R^2=0.272$). Considering that *seniority in the position* and *age* have a significant negative correlation with burnout, it was added to the model. Nonetheless, within the structural model they did not register a significant statistic relationship with job burnout.
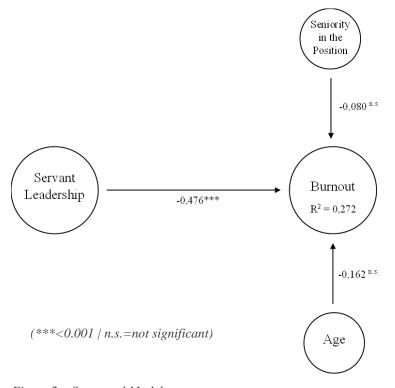

Figure 2 – Structural Model

12. MULTIGROUP ANALYSIS

A multigroup analysis for female leaders and male leaders was conducted following the three-step approach proposed by Henseler et al. (2016) to assess the measurement invariance of composite models (MICOM), namely "(1) configural invariance, (2) compositional invariance, and (3) the equality of composite mean values and variances" (Henseler et al., 2016, p. 412). Furthermore, only when measurement invariance is supported in the previous step, can one move forward with the procedure (Henseler et al., 2016). *Step 1* is fulfilled by using SmartPLS (Hoda et al., 2021). Table 6 shows the results from *step 2*, confirming the compositional invariance, seeing as "the permutation *p*-values are more than 0.05, and the original correlation is greater than 5.0% quantile for all constructs" (Hoda et al., 2021, p. 14). Regarding *step 3*, Table 7 shows that the invariance of variance was not established for the servant leadership construct, thus being concluded "that a partial invariance is established, sufficient to carry out the multigroup analysis" (Hoda et al., 2021, p. 14).

	Original correlation	Correlation permutation mean	5%	Permutation p-value	Compositional invariance
Servant Leadership	1.00	1.00	0.99	0.75	YES
Burnout	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.95	YES

Table 6: Compositional variance (Step 2)

	Mean – original difference	95% confidence interval		Invariance of mean	Variance – original mean	95% confidence interval		Invariance of variance
		2,5%	97,5%			2,5%	97,5%	
Servant Leadership	0.39	-0.48	0.46	YES	-0.75	-0.63	0.51	NO
Burnout	0.21	0.45	0.44	YES	0.22	-0.52	0.51	YES

Table 7: Composite equality (Step 3)

Table 8 shows the coefficient paths for both female and male groups, displaying the differences between the two groups, and Figure 3 represents the male leader model and the female leader model. When the leader is male, the relationship between servant leadership and burnout is statistically significant and servant leadership explains 53.6% ($R^2=0.536$) of the variability in burnout. Whereas when the leader is female, the relationship between the two constructs is not statistically significant.

					β difference		Confidence intervals			
							2,5		97,5	
	β female	R²	β male	R²	(female-male)	p-value	F	M	F	M
Servant Leadership – Burnout	-0.242	0.118	-0.719	0.536	0.42*	0.02	-0.60	-0.83	0.18	-0.52

*Table 8: Multigroup analysis (Female N=34; Male N=45 | *<0.05)*

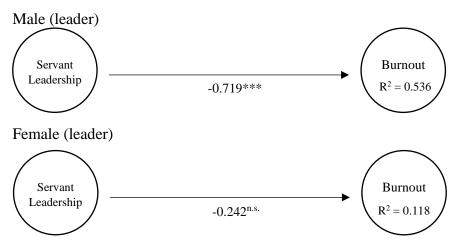Male (leader)

Female (leader)

Figure 3 –Structural model by gender

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

13. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The results registered in this study confirm previous literature, which posited that servant leadership perceptions had a negative impact on job burnout levels (Lamprinou et al., 2021; Ma et al., 2021; Upadyaya et al., 2016). Furthermore, this work shows that the way followers' perceptions of servant leadership interact with job burnout levels is influenced by the gender of the leader. It also supports previous leadership-related studies, which argue that men leaders are more positively evaluated when displaying behaviours usually described as communal (Hentschel et al., 2018; Schreiner et al., 2018).

Considering the average point of the Likert scales applied (1-6 for servant leadership; 1-5 for burnout), both constructs registered high moderate values, seeing as their mean values are above the mean point of the scale. Regarding correlations, there are significant negative correlations between *empowerment, standing back, humility, authenticity, stewardship* and the two burnout dimensions. Work engagement, a positive state of well-being at work (Trógolo et al., 2020), is often regarded as the antithesis of job burnout (Maslach et al., 2001; Sousa & van Dierendonck, 2014). Therefore, by comparison, these research results are aligned with Sousa and van Dierendonck (2014) explanation of how these servant leadership dimensions interact with the ones of work engagement. The former stimulate facing adversity with the support of "concrete and coherent action", as well as open relationships, which can be posited as improving social support (Sousa & van Dierendonck, 2014). Furthermore, considering Maslach et al. (2001) approach to job burnout antecedents being mismatches, namely in rewards, workload, social support, perceptions of fairness and equity, as well as control for one's work, the servant leadership dimensions mentioned above are argued to contribute to lower levels of *disengagement* and *exhaustion*. For instance, *empowerment, humility and standing back* are likely to contribute to reducing the perception of mismatches in workload and control for one's work, as they "create a sense of ownership and allow room for people to shape their work as they see fit" (Sousa & van Dierendonck, 2014, p. 883). In addition, leaders have the ability and authority to alter and adapt work resources as well as demands and conditions, thus contributing to decreasing the perceptions of mismatch.

Moreover, the results support *H1,* which is aligned, by comparison, with previous studies positing that work engagement, contrary to job burnout, is related to feeling connected and identification with one's work (van Dierendonck et al., 2014); and that servant leadership is positively correlated to work engagement (Bavik, 2020; Bobbio & Manganelli, 2015; van Dierendonck et al., 2014). Furthermore, as stated by Bakker and de Vries (2021), job resources facilitate employees' coping with job demands and contribute to lower levels of job burnout. Hence, servant leadership, regarded as a social resource (Upadyaya et al., 2016), has a negative impact on job burnout. This can be argued to be due to not only servant leaders' focus on their followers' needs, but also their displaying of stewardship, empowerment, interpersonal support (Bavik, 2020) and commitment to provide help (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006).

According to Paas et al. (2020), gender is one antecedent of servant leadership, and female leaders tend to be more prone to engage in such leadership behaviours, as they are often associated to communal behaviours (Lemoine & Blum, 2021). However, even though the relationship is significant for the whole sample, when it is divided into groups of female and male leaders, the relationship between servant leadership and burnout is only significant for the second group. Therefore, the results of this study demonstrate that the gender of the leader has an impact on the relationship between the way servant leadership is perceived and job burnout, thus supporting *H2*. Seeing as when the servant leader was male, servant leadership had more impact in explaining the variability of job burnout, thus displaying a stronger negative relationship between the two constructs, this research confirms the previous works of Hentschel et al. (2018) regarding communality-bonus effect. In their studies, they confirmed that "men receive a bonus for showing communal behaviours incongruent to their gender role stereotype" (Schreiner et al., 2018, p. 254). Therefore, when male leaders present communal behaviours are perceived more positively than when the leader is a woman, seeing as having such behaviours are often expected from women, which usually matches the gender role congruity theory and followers' stereotypes (Lemoine & Blum, 2021). Moreover, the result contradicts the argument that when followers experience dissonance by perceiving gender mismatch tend to judge their leader less favourably, seeing as even though male leaders are often expected to display more agentic behaviours (Lemoine & Blum, 2021), male servant leaders present more communal behaviours and are more positively evaluated by their followers.

14. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Being employees' well-being an important factor to not only a good work environment but also to achieve positive outcomes for the organisation and the team as well (Trépanier et al., 2019; Turek, 2021), understanding the relationship between leadership and job burnout may contribute to improve working outcomes at a practical level. In this sense, understanding which behaviours from leaders can stimulate their employees' well-being and reduce risk of burnout is of utter importance.

This research, aligned with previous works, contributes to a practical dimension as it shows that altruistic behaviours, social support, and care for others and their needs tend to produce a positive effect on individuals, teams and the broader community (Bavik, 2020; Mcquade et al., 2021). In addition, leaders are the ones who tend to have the means and authority to alter work conditions and actively change work demands and resources, thus reducing the gap between what employees perceive as mismatches (Parris & Peachey, 2013; Trépanier et al., 2019). Therefore, having an open communication culture and transparent processes, namely the ones related to promotion and evaluation, are likely to be helpful not only to reduce any gap in justice and fairness perceptions but also contribute to create an open work environment, where people feel safe to share information (Lee et al., 2020; Parris & Peachey, 2013).

Considering the negative consequences of job burnout at different levels, i.e., individual, organisational, and ultimately, to the broad community, promoting good human resources practices can have a positive impact on both job demands and resources, and be beneficial to employees' well-being (Bakker & de Vries, 2021). In this sense, understanding the main symptoms of job burnout and which practices, namely leadership behaviours, are more effective in preventing them might reduce the negative consequences of job burnout, e.g., low satisfaction and performance levels, and stress-related health-outcomes (Maslach et al., 2001).

Seeing the extraordinary pandemic situation to which the survey developed alluded, the results registered may also contribute to better cope with times of uncertainty and change. In such times, servant leadership behaviours are likely to contribute to a reduction of burnout risk, considering that servant leaders focus on their followers' needs and give the required

support that help reduce stress levels and uncertainty that individuals usually face in times of change (Maslach et al., 2001; Sousa & van Dierendonck, 2014).

15. RESEARCH LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This research includes some limitations that should be taken into consideration. One limitation was the sample size of only 79 valid respondents, which might not give a comprehensive perspective of the reality. However, due to time constraints and difficulty to access respondents in another way, the study proceeded with the sample that was possible to gather. Furthermore, this work follows a convenience sampling approach, thus the results should be interpreted with caution as it cannot represent the entire population.

Regarding the structural model, this research proposes a simple model, without analysing other constructs that could act as moderators or mediators of the relationship between servant leadership perceptions and burnout levels. In future research, it could be appropriate to study concepts such as perceived organisational support or the JR-D theory as moderators of this relationship, seeing as they were widely mentioned and studied in previous burnout-related literature (Turek, 2021).

In addition, the different results registered for male servant leaders and female servant leaders would benefit from being more extensively studied in future research, seeing as previous literature mainly studies which gender would be more prone and effective to engage in servant leadership behaviours. Moreover, only more in-depth studies of the topic will enable to better explain the different impact of servant leadership carried out by male or female leaders. Therefore, it is suggested that future research tries to reach a deeper knowledge of the reasons leading to this gap in subordinates' perceptions, as well as the different impact it has.

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APPENDIX

LIDERANÇA E BURNOUT EM CONTEXTO DE TRABALHO

O presente questionário insere-se num projeto de investigação, no âmbito do desenvolvimento da Dissertação do Mestrado em Gestão, da Universidade de Aveiro, que tem como objetivo compreender a relação entre a liderança e o *burnout*.

Os dados recolhidos destinam-se exclusivamente para fins de investigação, e são estritamente confidenciais e anónimos, como tal, em nenhum momento será pedido qualquer elemento que o(a) identifique.
O questionário demora cerca de 7 a 10 minutos a responder.

Caso deseje qualquer esclarecimento adicional, por favor, envie email para carina.marques@ua.pt

Obrigada pela colaboração,
Carina Marques
Aluna do Mestrado em Gestão, Universidade de Aveiro

SECÇÃO A: ACORDO DE CONFIDENCIALIDADE

De acordo com a Lei da Proteção de Dados Pessoais das Pessoas Singulares (Regulamento (EU) 2016/679), a informação recolhida através deste questionário será objeto de tratamento de dados pela Universidade de Aveiro, num contexto de investigação, garantindo-se a sua proteção e confidencialidade, abstendo-se de cedê-los a terceiros, salvo autorização expressa do seu titular. O presente termo de aceitação refere-se às condições e finalidades inerentes à utilização dos dados facultados, que o titular declara autorizar e aceitar. A informação será arquivada em fonte fidedigna e de forma totalmente anónima. Ao preencher este questionário expressa a sua concordância relativamente a este termo de aceitação. ☐Sim ☐Não

SECÇÃO B: SITUAÇÃO PROFISSIONAL

1. Exerce uma atividade profissional há pelo menos 12 meses? ☐Sim ☐Não

SECÇÃO C: DADOS PESSOAIS

1. Género ☐Feminino ☐Masculino ☐Não-binário

2. Idade [   ]

3. Nacionalidade [   ]

4. Grau Académico
 ☐Ensino Básico (4.ª Classe)
 ☐Ensino Básico (6.ª Classe)
 ☐Ensino Básico (9.º Ano)
 ☐Ensino Secundário (12.º Ano)
 ☐Licenciatura
 ☐Mestrado
 ☐Doutoramento
 ☐Outro

SECÇÃO D: DADOS PROFISSIONAIS

1. Distrito onde trabalha
    ☐Aveiro
    ☐Beja
    ☐Braga
    ☐Bragança
    ☐Castelo Branco
    ☐Coimbra
    ☐Évora
    ☐Faro
    ☐Guarda
    ☐Leiria
    ☐Lisboa
    ☐Portalegre
    ☐Porto
    ☐Santarém
    ☐Setúbal
    ☐Viana do Castelo
    ☐Vila Real
    ☐Viseu
    ☐Outro

2. Concelho onde trabalha

3. Setor em que trabalha

4. Qual a sua função atual?

5. Há quanto tempo trabalha na empresa atual?

6. Há quanto tempo exerce a função atual?

7. Género do superior direto   ☐Feminino ☐Masculino ☐Não-binário

8. Faixa etária do superior direto
    ☐20-29 anos
    ☐30-39 anos
    ☐40-49 anos
    ☐50-59 anos
    ☐60-69 anos
    ☐70 ou mais anos

9. Esteve em teletrabalho nos últimos 12 meses?   ☐Sim ☐Não

10. Se respondeu "Sim" na questão anterior, indique quanto tempo.

SECÇÃO E: LIDERANÇA

1. Por favor, classifique as seguintes afirmações de 1 ("Discordo completamente") a 6 ("Concordo completamente") de acordo com a sua experiência.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
[EMP1] (1) A minha chefia dá-me a autoridade para tomar decisões que tornem o meu trabalho mais fácil para mim	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
[ACC1] (2)A minha chefia responsabiliza-me pelo trabalho que eu faço	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
[EMP2] (3) A minha chefia encoraja-me para resolver eu próprio os problemas em vez de me dizer o que fazer	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
[EMP2] (4) A minha chefia dá-me a informação que eu necessito para fazer bem o meu trabalho	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
[ACC2] (5) Eu sou responsabilizado pelo meu desempenho pela minha chefia	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
[EMP4] (6) A minha chefia oferece inúmeras oportunidades para aprender novas competências	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
[ACC3] (7) A minha chefia responsabiliza-me e aos meus colegas pela forma como conduzimos o trabalho	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
[HUM1] (8) A minha chefia aprende com as diferentes perspetivas e opiniões dos outros	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
[HUM2] (9) A minha chefia aprende com as críticas	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
[STE1] (10) A minha chefia enfatiza a importância de focar no bem do todo	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. Por favor, classifique as seguintes afirmações de 1 ("Discordo completamente") a 6 ("Concordo completamente") de acordo com a sua experiência.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
[HUM3] (11) A minha chefia admite os seus erros ao seu superior	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
[STE2] (12) A minha chefia tem uma visão de longo prazo	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
[EMP5] (13) A minha chefia encoraja-me para eu usar os meus talentos	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
[HUM4] (14) Se as pessoas expressam crítica, a minha chefia tenta aprender com isso	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
[EMP6] (15) A minha chefia encoraja as pessoas que para ele trabalham a surgir com novas ideias	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
[EMP7] (16) A minha chefia ajuda-me no meu desenvolvimento pessoal	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
[STB1] (17) A minha chefia coloca-se num plano de fundo e dá crédito aos outros pelos resultados	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
[FOR1] (18) A minha chefia critica continuamente as pessoas pelos erros que fazem no trabalho	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
[COU1] (19) A minha chefia assume riscos mesmo quando não está certa do apoio do seu superior	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
[HUM3] (20) A minha chefia admite os seus erros ao seu superior	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. Por favor, classifique as seguintes afirmações de 1 ("Discordo completamente") a 6 ("Concordo completamente") de acordo com a sua experiência.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
[AUT1] (21) A minha chefia tem abertura relativamente às suas próprias limitações e fraquezas	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
[STB2] (22) A minha chefia não procura reconhecimento pelas coisas que faz pelos outros	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
[FOR2] (23) A minha chefia mantém uma atitude dura para com as pessoas que o ofenderam no trabalho	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
[COU2] (24) A minha chefia assume riscos e faz o que é necessário de acordo com a sua opinião	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
[AUT2] (25) A minha chefia fica sensibilizada pelas coisas que vê acontecer em seu torno	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
[AUT3] (26) A minha chefia mostra as suas reais emoções às pessoas em seu torno	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
[STB3] (27) A minha chefia aparenta apreciar mais os sucessos dos seus colegas do que os seus próprios	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
[FOR3] (28) A minha chefia acha difícil esquecer coisas que correram mal no passado	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
[AUT4] (29) A minha chefia está preparada para exprimir o que sente mesmo quando isso possa ter consequências indesejáveis	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
[STE3] (30)A minha chefia enfatiza a responsabilidade social do nosso trabalho	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

SECÇÃO F: BURNOUT

Por favor, classifique as seguintes afirmações de 1 ("Discordo fortemente") a 5 ("Concordo fortemente") de acordo com a sua experiência.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
[DIS1] (1) Encontro com frequência assuntos novos e interessantes no meu trabalho	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
[EXH1] (2) Há dias em que me sinto cansado antes mesmo de chegar ao trabalho	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
[DIS2] (3) Cada vez mais falo de forma negativa do meu trabalho	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
[EXH2] (4) Depois do trabalho, preciso de mais tempo para relaxar e sentir-me melhor do que precisava antigamente	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
[EXH3] (5) Consigo aguentar bem a pressão do meu trabalho	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
[*DIS3*] (6) Ultimamente tenho pensado menos no meu trabalho e faço as tarefas de forma quase mecânica	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
[DIS4] (7) Considero que o meu trabalho é um desafio positivo	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
[EXH4] (8) Durante o meu trabalho, muitas vezes sinto-me emocionalmente esgotado	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
[DIS5] (9) Com o passar do tempo, sinto-me desligado do meu trabalho	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
[EXH5] (10) Depois do trabalho, tenho energia suficiente para minhas atividades de lazer	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
[DIS6] (11) Às vezes, sinto-me farto das minhas tarefas no trabalho	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

[EXH6] (12) Depois do trabalho sinto-me cansado e sem energia	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
[DIS7] (13) *Este é o único tipo de trabalho que me imagino a fazer	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
[EXH7] (14) De uma forma geral, consigo administrar bem a quantidade de trabalho que tenho	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
[DIS8] (15) Sinto-me cada vez mais empenhado no meu trabalho	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
[EXH8] (16) Quando trabalho, geralmente sinto-me com energia	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Muito obrigada pela colaboração.

Para qualquer esclarecimento adicional, por favor, envie email para carina.marques@ua.pt

APPENDIX II – LOADINGS AND CROSS-LOADINGS

	t- values	Accountability	Authenticity	Courage	Disengagement	Empowerment	Exhaustion	Forgiveness	Humility	Standing Back	Stewardship
ACC1	21,658	**0,87**	0,33	0,23	-0,10	0,53	0,03	-0,01	0,40	0,23	0,35
ACC2	6,566	**0,77**	0,16	0,01	-0,18	0,32	-0,05	-0,27	0,18	0,27	0,24
ACC3	39,229	**0,92**	0,31	0,24	-0,25	0,55	-0,07	-0,11	0,39	0,28	0,41
AUT1	36880	0,31	**0,89**	0,69	-0,29	0,75	-0,31	0,41	0,74	0,72	0,75
AUT2	46,311	0,42	**0,91**	0,54	-0,30	0,78	-0,34	0,43	0,80	0,71	0,78
AUT3	8,849	0,07	**0,79**	0,35	-0,39	0,46	-0,46	0,29	0,61	0,60	0,57
COU1	22,592	0,18	0,63	**0,89**	-0,16	0,55	-0,13	0,31	0,57	0,48	0,48
COU2	9,183	0,19	0,41	**0,81**	-0,18	0,53	-0,21	0,09	0,34	0,32	0,42
DIS1	19,423	-0,14	-0,32	-0,24	**0,80**	-0,33	0,51	-0,09	-0,28	-0,30	-0,31
DIS2	28,232	-0,12	-0,35	-0,14	**0,85**	-0,36	0,74	-0,22	-0,34	-0,33	-0,38
DIS4	21,173	-0,21	-0,30	-0,19	**0,83**	-0,42	0,61	-0,06	-0,33	-0,27	-0,39
DIS5	31,048	-0,25	-0,33	-0,19	**0,87**	-0,43	0,58	-0,12	-0,38	-0,37	-0,37
DIS6	10,404	-0,12	-0,20	-0,12	**0,76**	-0,21	0,46	-0,04	-0,15	-0,23	-0,18
DIS8	21,919	-0,17	-0,32	-0,12	**0,83**	-0,35	0,55	-0,02	-0,32	-0,34	-0,34
EMP1	18,716	0,49	0,59	0,64	-0,26	**0,83**	-0,27	0,27	0,65	0,46	0,63
EMP2	8,164	0,60	0,43	0,41	-0,17	**0,72**	-0,10	0,22	0,52	0,37	0,46
EMP3	23,255	0,44	0,74	0,53	-0,38	**0,84**	-0,40	0,32	0,70	0,53	0,80
EMP4	26,779	0,48	0,62	0,45	-0,40	**0,84**	-0,38	0,34	0,74	0,54	0,73
EMP5	43,223	0,55	0,69	0,58	-0,42	**0,92**	-0,41	0,42	0,79	0,53	0,80
EMP6	33,005	0,45	0,78	0,54	-0,45	**0,88**	-0,38	0,43	0,83	0,56	0,77
EMP7	52,325	0,43	0,78	0,63	-0,42	**0,92**	-0,40	0,40	0,80	0,58	0,83
EXH1	21,619	-0,07	-0,28	-0,17	0,58	-0,37	**0,82**	-0,23	-0,34	-0,33	-0,32
EXH2	11,758	0,10	-0,25	-0,07	0,42	-0,23	**0,78**	-0,34	-0,28	-0,21	-0,30
EXH4	16,664	-0,07	-0,40	-0,24	0,61	-0,36	**0,81**	-0,26	-0,42	-0,52	-0,37
EXH5	10,111	-0,03	-0,42	-0,21	0,46	-0,36	**0,72**	-0,16	-0,38	-0,37	-0,38
EXH6	30,307	0,00	-0,34	-0,14	0,59	-0,33	**0,86**	-0,28	-0,38	-0,32	-0,37
EXH8	16,546	-0,07	-0,30	-0,07	0,67	-0,26	**0,77**	-0,09	-0,30	-0,29	-0,35
FOR1	31,639	-0,04	0,49	0,27	-0,14	0,44	-0,27	**0,95**	0,58	0,37	0,46
FOR3	4,59	-0,27	0,18	0,10	-0,03	0,18	-0,20	**0,73**	0,34	0,17	0,15
HUM1	41,008	0,36	0,76	0,51	-0,28	0,80	-0,38	0,53	**0,92**	0,59	0,72

HUM2	**69,483**	0,43	0,76	0,55	-0,34	0,83	-0,34	0,57	**0,94**	0,63	0,76
HUM3	**25,816**	0,24	0,75	0,49	-0,38	0,69	-0,54	0,54	**0,88**	0,65	0,74
HUM4	**75,211**	0,40	0,78	0,52	-0,29	0,80	-0,34	0,55	**0,94**	0,67	0,76
HUM5	**36,155**	0,38	0,79	0,46	-0,41	0,76	-0,44	0,44	**0,91**	0,73	0,78
STB1	**10,715**	0,26	0,67	0,39	-0,18	0,55	-0,30	0,39	0,61	**0,79**	0,52
STB2	**9,022**	0,24	0,51	0,36	-0,38	0,43	-0,28	0,17	0,50	**0,75**	0,44
STB3	**10,737**	0,19	0,61	0,34	-0,33	0,40	-0,41	0,23	0,53	**0,76**	0,48
STE1	**54,888**	0,40	0,79	0,47	-0,35	0,80	-0,38	0,40	0,79	0,61	**0,92**
STE2	**29,164**	0,41	0,68	0,56	-0,29	0,80	-0,35	0,39	0,75	0,47	**0,88**
STE3	**10,957**	0,22	0,66	0,35	-0,45	0,60	-0,42	0,27	0,58	0,55	**0,80**