

COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES FOR
WORKFORCE RETENTION IN THE SERVICE SECTOR

by

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DISSERTATION

Presented to the Swiss School of Business and Management Geneva

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements

For the Degree

DOCTOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

SWISS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT GENEVA

NOVEMBER, 2025

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Dedication

To my husband, Carlos Marquardt, the love of my life, thank you for your unwavering strength, devotion, and endless support.

And to our future child(ren), may this work remind you that perseverance and love can overcome any obstacle.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Jose Bronet, for his outstanding guidance, responsiveness, and attention to detail throughout this research journey. His mentorship not only supported my academic growth but also reflected the values of integrity, empathy, and genuine care that make him an exceptional person and leader.

I wish to extend my sincere thanks to the Swiss School of Business and Management Geneva for enriching my academic journey and giving me the opportunity to advance my expertise to the highest academic level.

I would also like to express my gratitude to my parents for their continuous encouragement and belief in my abilities.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the many walks in nature with my dog, Finou, which offered moments of reflection on my studies, inspiration, and mental clarity throughout this journey.

ABSTRACT

COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES FOR
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2025

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Workforce retention remains challenging in today's service industry, where high turnover negatively impacts productivity, culture, and profitability.

This research investigates how leadership influences retention in the service sector and fills an empirical gap in high-confidence, sector-specific research in quantitative studies on turnover-minimising leadership strategies.

Drawing on a range of literature, the study examines how factors, such as adaptive leadership, workplace community membership, and feedback frequency, predict employee retention (ER). A cross-sectional survey of service-sector employees ($n = 389$) was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics, including Kendall's tau-b

correlations and regression at a 95% confidence level. Correlation analyses revealed weak but consistent positive associations between adaptive leadership and ER, as well as between leadership-promoted workplace community membership and ER. Simple regressions confirmed both adaptiveness and belonging as significant predictors of the retention composite. In the multiple regression model, adaptiveness emerged as the strongest predictor ($\beta = .24, p < .001$), while feedback frequency also demonstrated a smaller yet significant effect ($\beta = .12, p = .023$). While belonging was a significant predictor in the simple regression, it lost significance when adaptive leadership and feedback were included in the multiple regression model ($R^2 = .111$).

The findings provide quantitative evidence that adaptive leadership, supported by regular, constructive feedback, is most strongly associated with ER in service firms. These results contribute to the understanding of leadership's role in reducing turnover and offer practical insights for developing effective retention strategies in the service sector.

Keywords

Employee Retention; Leadership Strategies; Service Industry; Adaptive Leadership;
Workplace Community Membership; Feedback Frequency; 95% Confidence Level;
Quantitative Research

List of Abbreviations

CT: Cost of Turnover

EI: Emotional Intelligence

ER: Employee Retention

H1: Hypothesis 1

H2: Hypothesis 2

IC: Individualised Consideration

ICC: Interclass Correlation Coefficient

LCS: Leadership Composite Score

LMX: Leader-Member Exchange

MoE: Margin of Error

Q: Question(s) (Survey Item)

RCS: Retention Composite Score

TL: Transformational Leadership

VIF: Variance Inflation Factors

WLB: Work-Life-Balance

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In today's fast-paced and competitive business landscape, the retention of skilled employees stands as a challenge for organisations, particularly those operating within the service sector (Ellinger et al, 2002; Uhl-Bien, 2021; Van Hoek et al, 2020). Often, leaders are unaware of their impact on employee retention (ER) (Lucas, 2013); leadership plays an instrumental role in shaping retention patterns within firms (Ng'ethe et al, 2012; Rad and Yarmohammadian, 2006; Vecchio, 1985). However, despite the vast amount of research on effective leadership in reducing turnover rates, there is a gap in quantitative studies with a confidence level of 95% in the service sector.

Hence, the motivation for this research is to fill this gap in quantitative studies on leadership strategies for ER, as well as to address the challenges companies face in retaining their skilled employees amongst increasing competition and growing markets. Additionally, as turnover rates continue to rise, businesses face significant expenses related to hiring, training, and the departure of experienced staff, resulting in financial burdens (Krishna and Garg, 2022), which underscores the need to develop strategies to enhance ER. The costs related to employee attrition demand attention; according to Personio (2021), high costs, amounting to 120% of an annual salary, are incurred as a result of employee turnover. Further research indicates that the costs associated with bringing on a new team member for a company can vary from 50% to 200% of the yearly

salary earned by the previous employee (Hebenstreit, 2008). Therefore, employee turnover is often a crucial factor in a company's success, as the higher the turnover, the greater the costs for a company and the loss of valuable expertise (Glauser, 2021). This financial burden highlights the significance of addressing ER.

Moreover, this research holds implications for practice and knowledge advancement and aims to offer actionable insights and evidence-based recommendations for the service industry. Furthermore, this research's findings may empower leaders and decision-makers within the field with the necessary tools and strategies to foster retention practices.

Whenever 'turnover' is mentioned in this work, it refers to the voluntary departure of employees.

Table 1

Voluntary Turnover vs. Involuntary Turnover According to Fuchs (2022)

Voluntary Turnover	Employees choose to leave a company on their own terms.
Involuntary Turnover	The organisation initiates the separation of an employee from their role.

Furthermore, ER represents a company's ability to keep its employees (Patil, 2022).

1.2 Research Problem

As an illustrative example to elucidate the research problem, Company X, a mid-sized service firm, highlights ER challenges various service firms face. Company X has in the past been the sole competitor on the market. Nowadays, with many other organisations offering similar services, the level of competition has increased. According

to the management of Company X, leaders across the organisation have been facing an ongoing challenge of reducing turnover and keeping employees. They noted that in the past, the company attracted many skilled professionals, but over time, a significant number of valuable employees started leaving for competitors. This situation reflects what has been described as a “war for talent” (Jooss et al, 2022) in this sector. Additionally, service industries such as restaurants and hotels are grappling with employee shortages, leading to reduced operations and closures of certain sections (Morosan and Bowen, 2022). Consequently, service firms, such as Company X, experience difficulty in attracting talented staff and urgently need to retain their experienced and skilled employees. (Marquardt, 2023)

While competition is one of several factors impacting turnover, it illustrates the challenges of firms operating in the service sector. Other factors contributing to turnover include limited development opportunities for subordinates (Hausknecht et al, 2009).

Hence, this study emphasises the importance of evaluating leadership strategies aimed at minimising turnover and their impact on ER. Prior studies have highlighted the crucial role leaders play in retaining employees (Ng’ethe et al, 2012; Rad and Yarmohammadian, 2006; Vecchio, 1985), yet leaders often lack awareness of their influence on ER (Lucas, 2013).

Despite previous qualitative insights suggesting the significance of leadership strategies in minimising turnover (e.g., Marquardt, 2023), there remains a gap in understanding the quantitative dimensions of these strategies. Additionally, the absence

of comprehensive studies exploring the interplay between leadership practices and ER, with a high confidence level of 95%, within the service sector stresses this issue.

Consequently, the problem lies in the need to quantitatively analyse turnover-minimising leadership strategies in the service sector, providing objective insights and actionable recommendations. Therefore, this study aims to explore the impact of leadership strategies on ER within the service industry. In addition, it seeks to address the existing gap in the literature by conducting quantitative research with a high confidence level of 95%, incorporating hypothesis testing.

1.3 Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this study is to address the challenge of ER within the service sector and understand the quantitative dimensions of leadership strategies related to ER.

Thereby, the research seeks to establish a link between leadership practices and turnover through conducting a high-confidence quantitative analysis; the process of achieving this purpose addresses several objectives – conducting a literature review, designing a quantitative survey, quantitatively analysing data, testing hypotheses, and providing evidence-based recommendations for organisational practice.

Furthermore, the study aims to provide actionable insights into leadership strategies for ER within the service sector, potentially empowering leaders to achieve positive outcomes for the service industry. Through employing ethical considerations throughout the research process, the study seeks to provide objective findings to enrich the knowledge in business and management, specifically in the context of turnover-minimising leadership strategies within the service sector.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This research is necessary for addressing a research gap of quantitative research with a high confidence level of 95% that links ER with leadership styles. Despite the extensive research on ER, factors such as job satisfaction (Hausknecht et al, 2009), employee engagement (Tyagi, 2021), and job embeddedness (Mitchell et al, 2001), there remains a gap in the literature concerning high-confidence turnover-minimising leadership strategies in the service sector.

Therefore, the research holds significance for scholarship and the industry by addressing challenges faced by service firms, such as Company X (ER of skilled employees amidst rising competition and turnover). Furthermore, this research illuminates the substantial financial implications of turnover within service companies. By quantifying these costs using Switzerland as an illustrative example (Chapter 2.1), the study underscores the urgent need for effective turnover-minimising leadership strategies to alleviate the financial burdens. Additionally, the study seeks to equip leaders within service organisations with the tools to develop turnover-minimising practices by providing them with evidence-based insights and actionable recommendations.

Overall, this study's significance lies in fostering positive outcomes for service firms, enhancing leadership effectiveness, and advancing academic knowledge.

1.5 Research Purpose and Questions

The research purpose is to investigate leadership strategies for ER within the service sector. The research aims to establish a link between leadership practices and turnover through quantitative analysis, offering evidence-based insights and

recommendations to equip leaders with turnover-minimising tools.

The research question of this study is:

What high-confidence strategies can leaders in the service sector implement to effectively retain their employees?

This question guides the research objectives and hypotheses, seeking to explore the impact of leadership strategies on reducing turnover within the service industry.

1.6 Research Hypotheses

The study addresses two hypotheses related to the positive relationship between adaptive leadership styles and ER and the influence of workplace community membership on retention levels:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): There is a positive relationship between the implementation of adaptive leadership styles and employee retention.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Workplace community membership promotes higher levels of employee retention.

Through those hypotheses, the research aims to provide recommendations and contribute to knowledge advancement in business and management.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Attrition Costs

“Leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth” (Burns, 1978). Hence, scholarship seeks to understand the challenges of turnover and ER; researchers have identified leadership as a pivotal factor influencing retention rates (Ellinger et al, 2002; Uhl-Bien, 2021; Van Hoek et al, 2020). As scholars highlight the importance of effective leadership strategies in ER, it appears crucial to acknowledge that the costs are caused by employee attrition. According to Hinkin and Tracey (2000), Ramlall (2003) and Tracey and Hinkin (2008), turnover can lead to increased costs for companies, including the loss of knowledge and expertise. Additionally, apart from the increased costs related to resource loss, such as knowledge, turnover also generates expenses related to recruitment and time (Krishna and Garg, 2022). Therefore, companies started recognising knowledge as their primary valuable asset (Mutanga et al, 2021). Iqbal et al (2017) assert that ER is about maintaining valuable capabilities. Likewise, Hashemiamin and Ramezani (2022) and Anitha (2014) affirm that many companies now regard ER as their invaluable intangible asset. (Marquardt, 2023)

This study uses Switzerland as an illustrative example for quantifying the economic impact of turnover in the Swiss service industry to underscore the financial implications, providing insights applicable to organisations worldwide.

To quantify the cost of turnover within the Swiss service industry, data from Statista (2024) shows that as of 2022, the median monthly gross salary in the service sector was reported at 6,873 CHF (= 82,476 CHF per year). Additionally, an analysis of occupational mobility illustrates an attrition level of 19.4% among professionals pursuing employment activities in 2021 (Federal Statistical Office, 2023). Literature highlights that turnover costs may vary from 50% to 200% of the yearly salary of a former employee (Hebenstreit, 2008). To contextualise these figures, a mid-sized firm employing 100 people at an attrition rate of 19.4% may serve as an example. Such a firm would be expected to lose approximately 19 employees per year ($100 \times 0.194 \approx 19$). The cost of turnover (CT) can then be calculated using the formula below:

$$CT = N \times S \times C$$

N represents the number of employees leaving per year, S represents the average yearly salary, and C represents the turnover cost factor, ranging from 0.5 to 2. A factor of 0.5 indicates that replacing an employee costs half of their yearly salary, assuming low recruitment and onboarding expenses, whereas a factor of 2 suggests that replacing an employee can cost up to twice their yearly salary, considering additional expenses such as lost productivity and transition-related costs (Hebenstreit, 2008).

Using this calculation:

$$\text{Lower Bound CT: } 19 \times 82,476 \times 0.5 = 783,522 \text{ CHF}$$

$$\text{Upper Bound CT: } 19 \times 82,476 \times 2 = 3,134,088 \text{ CHF}$$

Extending the analysis to a larger company with 1,000 employees, with the same attrition rate, it anticipates a loss of approximately 194 employees annually

($1,000 \times 0.194 \approx 194$). The cost of turnover for the larger company is computed similarly:

$$\text{Lower Bound CT: } 194 \times 82,476 \times 0.5 = 8,000,172 \text{ CHF}$$

$$\text{Upper Bound CT: } 194 \times 82,476 \times 2 = 32,000,688 \text{ CHF}$$

All in all, the calculations highlight the financial burdens of turnover for companies of various sizes within the Swiss service sector. The insights provided may be used as a reference for organisations globally, as they demonstrate the significance of effective leadership strategies in minimising turnover and reducing costs.

Therefore, the following section explores leadership effectiveness in more detail.

2.2 The Effective Leader as an Adaptive Leader

Leadership is widely observed in scholarship. Hence, academic literature provides distinctive approaches and definitions of effective leadership (Doshi, 2021). However, despite the extensive research, leadership remains a construct that requires further understanding (Burns, 1978).

Dabke (2016) and Maheshwari and Rai (2022), for instance, define leadership effectiveness as determinable through the followers' perspectives. However, the abundance of theories indicates that there is no one-size-fits-all approach (Doshi, 2021), which suggests that adaptiveness and flexibility in leadership may be pivotal for achieving effectiveness. Mazarella and Smith (1989) align with this view by stating that effective leaders need to understand how to motivate people and adjust their approach accordingly. For example, Northouse (2020) differentiates assiduity and slothfulness in employees. Likewise, McGregor (1960) allocates workers as either inert (in Theory X) or

assiduous (in Theory Y); this underscores that leadership effectiveness is about adapting to the character attributes of employees and comprehending how to motivate them to ensure their lasting commitment to the company (Welch and Brantmeier, 2021).

Overall, the literature review unveils the importance of leaders adapting to distinctive employee characteristics and comprehending employee motivation in order to lead effectively. (Marquardt, 2023)

Consequently, this work delves deeper into the realm of motivation in ER.

2.3 Motivation and Employee Retention: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's (1954) Hierarchy of Needs indicates that human requirements encompass physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualisation needs, which ascend hierarchically, with higher-level needs pursued only after lower-level ones are met (Wanru, 2024).



Figure 1
Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Source: McLeod 2018)

However, esteem, love/belonging, safety, and physiological needs generally adhere to the principle that motivation diminishes as they are fulfilled, whereas the self-actualisation need exhibits a contrary trend, with motivation escalating as it is gratified (Bronet, 2023). Mazarella and Smith (1989) indicate that unmotivated employees are required to be pushed by their leaders, other than those who are motivated. Nevertheless, in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, there is room for self-improvement, as a part of self-actualisation (Bronet, 2023); hence, a leader might benefit from understanding how to tap into the highest level of self-actualisation of employees and learn about how to motivate employees to ensure their lasting commitment to the company (Welch and Brantmeier, 2021). To understand those motivation dynamics of individuals, and considering Mazarella and Smith (1989) in this context, who state, as mentioned prior, that unmotivated employees are required to be pushed by their leaders, other than those who are motivated, it seems imperative for leaders to cultivate adaptability in their leadership style, ensuring they can cater to the diverse motivational factors influencing each individual's journey towards self-actualisation. Therefore, testing the relationship between leadership adaptiveness and turnover appears crucial.

2.4 Motivation and Employee Retention: Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

According to Herzberg's (1959) Two-Factor Theory, there are two influencers on employee motivation and job contentment. As highlighted by Buchanan (2010), motivational factors, often termed content factors, encompass aspects of the job that lead to increased satisfaction, motivation, and effectiveness. He states that these factors encompass achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement, personal growth, and

the nature of the work itself. In contrast, hygiene factors, also referred to as context factors, are those elements that mitigate dissatisfaction but do not directly enhance motivation or performance; they include aspects like compensation, organisational policies, supervision, status, job security, and working conditions (Buchanan, 2010).

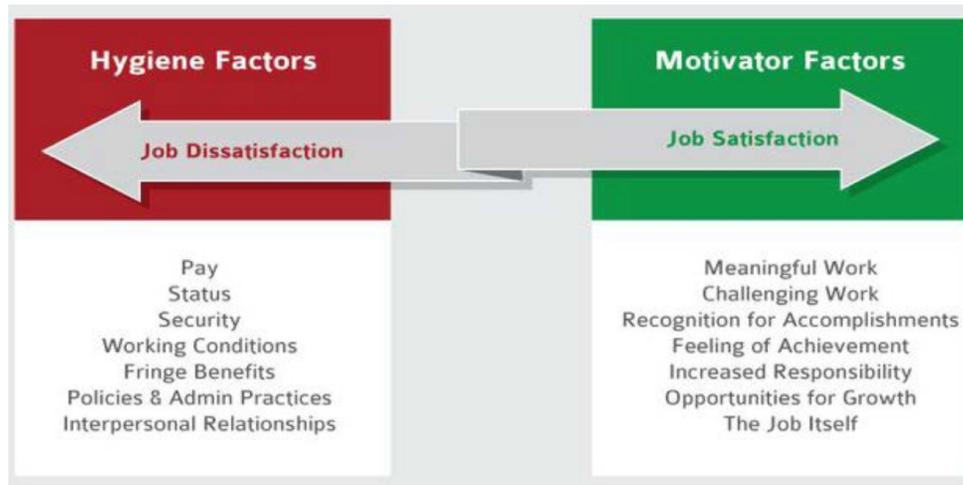


Figure 2
Herzberg's Motivator-Hygiene Theory (Source: Herzberg Motivation Theory n.d.)

Herzberg (2003) asserts that job satisfaction primarily stems from motivational factors, whereas job dissatisfaction predominantly arises from hygiene factors. Consequently, leaders seeking to increase motivation and performance, such as through job redesign, may benefit from prioritising the understanding and addressing of motivational factors (Buchanan, 2010). Herzberg (1987) suggests implementing “vertical loading” techniques, like reducing control and fostering responsibility, to enrich employees and enhance motivation (Buchanan, 2010). In this regard, the authoritarian leadership style may hinder intrinsic motivation, as it relies more on external rewards

(Fiaz et al, 2017). Bowen et al (1991) characterise authoritarian leadership as controlling members through distance and regulations, leading to rigid and fear-driven organisations, which struggle in dynamic and creative environments (Gabriel, 2011). In contrast, transformational leadership (TL) fosters intrinsic motivation by satisfying individuals' needs for autonomy and competence (Jensen and Bro, 2018). While leadership styles are crucial for enhancing employee motivation (Fiaz et al, 2017), Buchanan (2010) suggests that intrinsic rewards lead to quicker performance improvement compared to extrinsic rewards. However, Guillén (2021) argues that while extrinsic factors may not directly motivate employees, their absence can diminish motivation, indicating the importance of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators for job satisfaction. Dissatisfaction at work is a significant driver of turnover (Mardanov, 2021), highlighting the relevance of external motivators such as physical and mental security (Guillén, 2021) and work-life balance (Aguenza and Som, 2012; George, 2015; Hausknecht et al, 2009) in retaining employees. Iqbal et al (2017) posit that Maslow's hierarchy of needs directly correlates with individuals' desires and satisfaction within organisations, influencing their retention. (Marquardt, 2023)

Hence, learning about different motivation theories appears to be a sufficient strategy to minimise turnover; for example, transformational leaders utilise Inspirational Motivation as one of the Four I's (Table 2) of TL to encourage emotional investment in shared visions or objectives (Bass and Riggio, 2006). Research indicates that emotionally committed followers are more likely to remain loyal to their leader and their team, reducing turnover rates (Gyensare et al, 2017; Krishna and Garg, 2022). Additionally,

studies imply that employee engagement involves an emotional attachment to one's work (Kahn, 1990; Kossyva et al, 2022). Therefore, leaders may familiarise themselves with the factors influencing employee engagement, defined as the level of enjoyment and belief in one's tasks combined with the recognition received for one's efforts (Buchanan, 2010). Consequently, when employees fail to find emotional fulfilment in their roles, they often contemplate leaving, thereby diminishing the practical value of their participation (Nagpaul et al, 2022).

Scholarship suggests a connection between satisfaction and motivation; employee satisfaction fosters motivation and mitigates turnover (Krishna et al, 2022). Thus, as reviewed previously, leaders may benefit from understanding how to motivate employees effectively to foster long-term commitment to the organisation (Welch and Brantmeier, 2021), as leadership entails motivating and influencing others to achieve organisational objectives (Kesting et al, 2015). (Marquardt, 2023)

This leads the dissertation to discuss TL in ER.

2.5 Transformational Leadership and Employee Retention

TL, with its four I's – Inspirational Motivation, Idealised Influence, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individualised Consideration (Bass and Riggio, 2006) – is crucial in ER (Gyensare et al, 2017; Khan, 2015; Nasir and Mahmood, 2016). According to Jiang et al (2017), the four I's of TL affect ER. This underscores the important role of leaders in shaping organisational retention strategies (Khalid et al, 2016; Lambert et al, 2001; Noureen and Abbas, 2017; Sakiru et al, 2013).

Table 2

Transformational Leadership: The Four I's

I's	Definition
Inspirational Motivation	Transformational leaders inspire and motivate by adding meaning and challenges into their subordinates' roles (Bass and Riggio, 2006).
Intellectual Stimulation	Transformational leaders foster innovation and creativity by challenging assumptions and reframing issues (Bass and Riggio, 2006).
Idealised Influence	Transformational leaders are behaving as an example for subordinates, earning admiration, respect, and trust (Bass and Riggio, 2006).
Individualised Consideration	Transformational leaders prioritise individual growth and achievement through coaching and mentoring, resulting in enhanced capabilities among subordinates (Bass and Riggio, 2006).

Transformational leaders positively influence employees' job satisfaction more than other leadership styles (Krishna et al, 2022). According to Bass (1985), job contentment is affectable through TL. Discontent employees are more prone to considering other job options (Aguiar do Monte, 2012). Thus, TL impacts the satisfaction at work, and job satisfaction influences turnover (Djastuti, 2015; Kazaz et al, 2008; Wang et al, 2020).

In summary, comprehending and prioritising employee satisfaction may be important for leaders to retain talent within a firm. Patil (2022) aligns with that view by arguing that prioritising job satisfaction is essential for retaining workers within a company. (Marquardt, 2023)

Nevertheless, in exploring the dimensions of TL that contribute to ER, it is imperative to discuss Individualised Consideration (IC) as another dimension of TL.

2.5.1 Individualised Consideration and Employee Retention

IC by leaders prioritises employee growth and achievement through coaching and mentoring (Bass and Riggio, 2006). Ohunakin et al (2019) state that IC plays a pivotal role in enhancing job satisfaction and fostering ER, and as discussed previously, satisfaction is crucial in ER (e.g., Wang et al, 2020).

IC places emphasis on the needs of employees, showing empathy, recognising their accomplishments, and ensuring their well-being (Bass, 1998). According to Rafferty and Griffin (2006), individualised attention supports leaders to discern the motivations of each follower, improving factors such as communication. Communication, according to various studies, likewise minimises turnover within firms (Iqbal et al, 2017; Krishna et al, 2022). Similarly, Rafferty and Griffin (2006) argue that individualised attention is not merely about promoting familiarity with followers but rather about providing support. Avolio and Bass (1995) align with this view by stating that IC demonstrates general support for the endeavours of the followers, emphasising the importance of leaders recognising workers individually; recognition of employees impacts ER (Bichsel et al, 2022; Elstad and Vabø, 2021; Hörberg et al, 2023). Moreover, Bass and Avolio (1994) highlight the significance of cultivating a reliable and respectful relationship between leaders and followers, which enables an understanding of individual concerns and a holistic view of employees as individuals rather than mere employees. However, the significance of relationships in ER will be explored in the following chapter.

In conclusion, the above literature shows that IC fosters ER. Hence, it appears that leaders may enhance employee loyalty by attending to individuals' needs, recognising

their achievements, and ensuring their well-being as a leadership strategy to minimise turnover within a firm.

Building on the importance of individualised support, the following section explores leader-member relationships as a leadership strategy for ER.

2.6 Leader-Member Exchange: A Relational Approach to Retention

The Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory, originated from the Social Exchange Theory (Emerson, 1976), is often conceptualised as a negotiation process where leaders offer incentives to employees in exchange for desired behaviours or outcomes (Covella et al, 2017). Scholars, such as Gerstner and Day (1997) and Hooper and Martin (2008), have explored LMX as a reliable predictor of various employee outcomes. According to Gerstner and Day (1997), LMX affects individuals' intentions to leave their current positions by emphasising the unique, dyadic relationships leaders form with subordinates, characterised as high-quality "in-group" or low-quality "out-group" exchanges, based on levels of trust, respect, and engagement (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995). Additionally, research by Bauer et al (2006) and Aarons et al (2020) establishes a correlation between LMX and turnover.

Based on the literature above, cultivating leader-member relationships may foster employee loyalty, which necessitates a leader's comprehension of LMX dynamics. To align with this view, Tyagi (2021) contends that leaders must grasp members' psychological and social needs as beliefs and actions are intertwined. Understanding the developmental stages of relationships – development, maturation, and stabilisation – is also crucial (Dimotakis et al, 2023). However, perceptions of relationships may vary

between parties (Dimotakis et al, 2023; Minsky, 2002), emphasising the importance of mutual agreement between leaders and employees regarding their LMX relationship (Gooty and Yammarino, 2016; Minsky, 2002). Mutual agreement fosters self-regulating behaviour, reducing ambiguity and enhancing predictability in social exchange processes (Eberly et al, 2011; Matta et al, 2015). Nevertheless, LMX agreements also act as situational moderators, positively influencing the relationship between LMX and follower performance (Yuan et al, 2023).

Thus, LMX may serve as a relational leadership strategy that fosters trust, emotional commitment, and ultimately reduces turnover within organisations. The literature supports the notion that positive leader-member relations foster emotional commitment to organisations, particularly when employees perceive their supervisors as highly transformative (Gyensare et al, 2017). Such emotional bonds enhance commitment and reduce turnover intentions (Erickson, 2016; Gyensare et al, 2017; Krishna et al, 2022), as emotionally committed followers are more likely to remain dedicated not only to their leaders but also to the organisation. (Marquardt, 2023)

Nonetheless, turnover may also depend on how embedded employees are in their roles and communities, a concept known as job embeddedness.

2.7 Job Embeddedness: Understanding Why Employees Stay

The theory of job embeddedness by Mitchell et al (2001) provides reasons why employees stay in organisations (Fuchs, 2022; Holtom and Darabi, 2018). According to Ma et al (2018), embeddedness consists of Fit, Links, and Sacrifice; Fit addresses the alignment among individuals and the firm, as well as their surroundings, Links involves

the connections within the organisation and the community, and Sacrifice refers to the tangible and psychological benefits that an individual would lose upon leaving a firm. The authors argue that these elements work together to enhance a sense of belonging and attachment, which in turn motivates employees to stay committed to their organisations.

However, scholarship shows that the impact of job embeddedness stretches beyond work-related situations (Fuchs, 2022; Mitchell et al, 2001). For example, according to Peachey et al (2014), embedded employees develop strong social connections with their leaders and colleagues, underscoring the significance of building relationships, which is relatable to the concept of Links. Similarly, Akgunduz et al (2023) show that high-quality LMX fosters job embeddedness. Likewise, Ma et al (2018) argue that leaders play a crucial role in enhancing external and internal connections, thereby strengthening embeddedness.

Nonetheless, there is limited research exploring the relationship between leadership styles and job embeddedness (Harris et al, 2011; Pimonratanakan et al, 2017). However, Ferreira's (2017) study shows a correlation between ethical leadership and job embeddedness. Additionally, Khalid et al (2021) examined the impact of TL on job embeddedness and concluded that TL significantly contributes to the development of job embeddedness. (Marquardt, 2023)

Overall, job embeddedness appears to foster a sense of meaning and attachment that naturally extends to employee engagement. The following chapter therefore examines employee engagement, including the role of 'fit', in fostering retention.

2.8 Employee Engagement: Motivation, Satisfaction, and Retention

The relationship between employee engagement and retention emerges as a recurrent theme in organisational research. For instance, the study of Tyagi (2021) corroborates the substantial positive impact of employee engagement on ER. Engaged employees, as stated by Radda et al (2015), demonstrate a heightened sense of care and commitment towards the organisation. Furthermore, May et al (2004) outline the profound impact of meaningful job roles on employee engagement, emphasising the need for roles that resonate with employees' emotions and physical presence. Therefore, the previously discussed concept of 'fit' at work emerges as a significant contributor to employee engagement and retention.

Lauver and Kristof-Brown (2001) underscore the association between person-organisation fit and positive workplace outcomes, including job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Similarly, Barrick and Zimmerman (2005) emphasise the importance of hiring and retaining employees who align with the values and requirements of the organisation, thereby reducing voluntary turnover. In this vein, Abdalla et al (2018) accentuate the importance of congruence between individual and organisational values in fostering favourable work attitudes and organisational commitment. Thence, alignment may emerge as an imperative for nurturing employee engagement and ER.

Baumeister and Leary (1995) characterised the need to belong as a longing to establish and sustain significant interpersonal connections. Hence, aligning within an organisation may result in the cultivation of a profound sense of belonging. Certain research indirectly supports this perspective; Bowers et al (2022) elucidate the

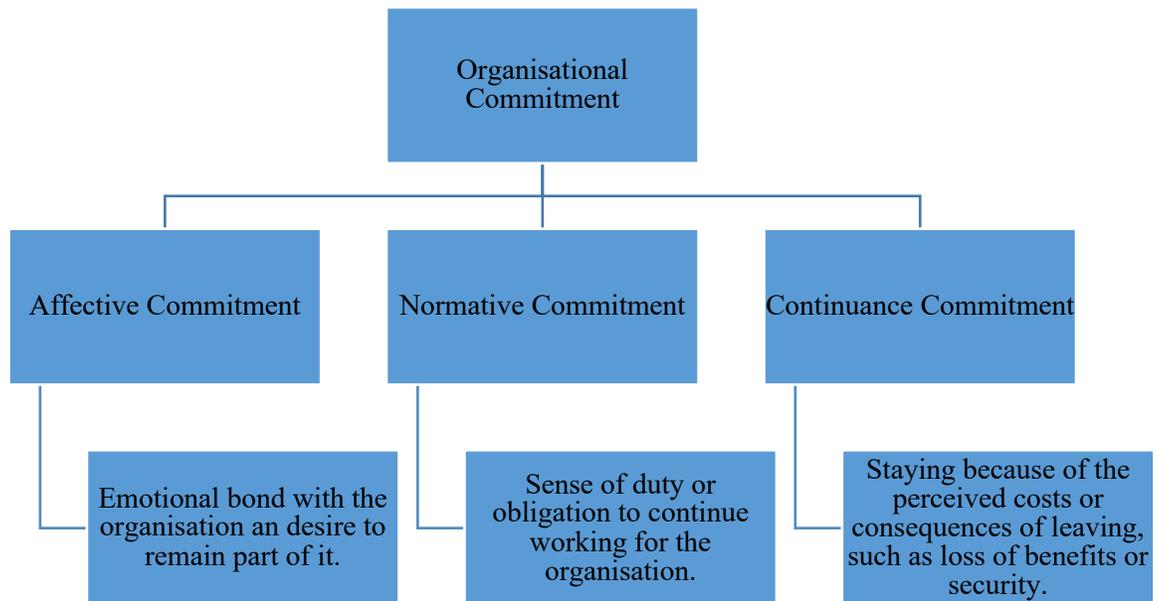
detrimental impact of loneliness on employee health, performance, and affective commitment, with lonely workers exhibiting significantly higher turnover intentions. Similarly, Jung et al (2021) highlight the effects of workplace loneliness on work engagement.

Employee engagement appears to be a concept that includes a wide range of facets that correlate with turnover and retention within organisations. As highlighted by numerous studies (May et al, 2004; Raza and Hasan, 2021; Tyagi, 2021), engaged employees not only contribute to enhanced productivity but also exhibit a stronger commitment to the organisation, thereby reducing turnover rates. For instance, the profound human need to belong, as characterised by Baumeister and Leary (1995), underscores the significance for leaders in creating an organisational environment where employees feel connected and valued.

This leads to the exploration of belonging in ER.

2.9 Sense of Belonging in Employee Retention

Different research unveils that sense of belonging is recognised as an essential human need (Baumeister and Leary, 1995). However, scholars describe belongingness in different ways (Jena and Pradhan, 2018). Within firms, belonging is often related to affective commitment; the theory of organisational commitment, developed by Allen and Meyer (1990), sets apart three components: affective, continuance, and normative commitment. Specifically, affective commitment refers to the emotional attachment employees feel when they experience acceptance, value, and connection with colleagues and the wider organisation.



*Figure 3
Three-Component Model of Organisational Commitment based on Allen and Meyer (1990)*

Research shows that greater levels of belonging are associated with stronger affective commitment and reduced turnover intentions (Van Dick and Haslam, 2012). This indicates that in service firms, where work appears highly relational, this sense of attachment plays a central role in retention. However, belonging appears to be fostered through specific leadership behaviours; leaders who recognise individual contributions, encourage inclusion, and promote team cohesion create the conditions that allow employees to experience belonging (Kreiner et al, 2006). Thus, recognition and inclusion may not be separate from belonging, but rather the mechanisms through which it is achieved. Hence, when such behaviours are absent, employees may feel excluded, impacting their attachment to the organisation even if a general sense of community

exists. To state this view, Jena and Pradhan (2018) developed and validated a workplace belongingness scale, showing the importance of belonging as context-specific. Hence, cultural contexts may matter, as the importance of belonging for retention appears stronger in collectivist cultures (Ma, 2018; Strayhorn, 2020), while in more individualistic contexts, autonomy and career development may carry greater weight (Wong and Cheng, 2020).

All in all, leaders may contribute to perceptions of inclusion through their behaviour, such as showing appreciation, inviting ideas, and being fair and equitable, which can fulfil the need for belongingness and uniqueness of workers (Shore et al, 2011). Moreover, research shows that alignment between individual and organisational values enhances belonging and strengthens employees' affective commitment (O'Reilly et al, 1991). In the service sector in particular, leaders play a pivotal role in creating these conditions, since relational exchanges are central to daily work (Sluss and Ashforth, 2007).

2.10 Workplace Community Membership and Employee Retention

Workplace community membership does not propose a new construct but integrates existing perspectives into an applied concept to study retention in service-sector organisations and is primarily based on the Social Identity Theory and the concept of organisational identification. Social identity is a component of a person's self-perception that arises from their awareness of belonging to a particular group or organisation, along with the importance and emotional meaning they attribute to that belonging (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). Organisational identification involves feeling united

and connected to a group, which can come from personal or indirect experiences of achievements and setbacks (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). Hence, workplace community membership, as theorised in this dissertation, reflects the sense of belonging and connection individuals feel with their organisation and colleagues and encompasses the emotional attachment and shared identity employees have with their firm, influencing their commitment and retention.

A study of Avanzi et al (2014) shows that social identification positively affects the perceived support of firms, which leads to minimised mental tiredness and is relatable to the intention to leave a firm. Additionally, the study shows that social identification plays a moderating role in the connection between organisational support and intentions to leave the company. Organisational identification, on the other hand, provides a robust psychological foundation that dissuades individuals from intending to leave their jobs across various organisational settings (Randsley de Moura et al, 2008). Hence, linking both concepts, it appears that being a member of the workplace community, and therefore belonging to a firm and its employees, influences ER. To validate this assumption, Kim et al (2010) define organisational identification as the sensation of belonging and unity to a firm. They state that understanding the impact of identification has long been acknowledged for its effects on employees' contentment, sense of belonging, and the overall effectiveness of the organisation. Thereby, a sufficient strategy for a leader to retain employees may be encouraging identification, as individuals identifying with a firm are more likely to offer their help to the organisation (Kim et al, 2010). Considering social identity in this context, Gillman et al (2023) assert that feeling a strong connection

with colleagues and experiencing less perceived threat is linked to lower stress levels. Furthermore, they state that social identification with team members and the firm, along with community assistance and reduced threat, is associated with higher life contentment, whereas higher stress levels, coupled with minimised social identification and life contentment, are connected to a greater likelihood of intending to leave the organisation. Therefore, when aiming to encourage identification to retain employees, prioritising job satisfaction is essential (Patil, 2022).

To foster workplace community membership and enhance ER, leaders could prioritise strategies that promote organisational identification among employees. As discussed previously, this may be achieved through an understanding of employee motivation, since being a member of a group is a need that impacts people’s behaviour, sustained involvement, and job contentment (Trinkenreich et al, 2024).



*Figure 4
Workplace Community Membership: Basic Visualisation*

Given its conceptual proximity to psychological safety, the following section briefly outlines psychological safety and its potential impact on turnover.

2.11 Psychological Safety and Employee Retention

According to Edmondson (1999) and Edmondson and Lei (2014), psychological safety, defined as the belief that ideas and concerns can be expressed without the fear of negative consequences, can lead to greater learning behaviour, collaboration, and innovation. Similarly, Frazier et al (2017) confirm its positive effects on team outcomes, which may indirectly support retention.

Nevertheless, Newman et al (2017) highlight that psychological safety is context-dependent, varying with organisational culture and leadership style. Furthermore, Edmondson and Lei (2014) argue that excessive psychological safety can reduce accountability if not balanced with performance expectations.

Research on its direct link to retention remains limited. Thus, while psychological safety appears relevant to service-sector settings where interpersonal risks seem common, more empirical work is needed to clarify its role in ER.

However, leaders' emotional competencies may represent an additional theoretical lens for understanding ER, which is briefly outlined in the following section.

2.12 Emotional Intelligence and Employee Retention

Emotional intelligence (EI) has been positioned as a key predictor of leadership effectiveness (Goleman, 1995; Mayer et al, 2016). Leaders high in EI are argued to better manage relationships, motivate employees, and reduce conflict, which contributes to job satisfaction and commitment (Goleman et al, 2013).

The work of Miao et al (2017) supports positive links between EI and work attitudes. However, EI has faced criticism for its conceptual overlap with personality and traditional leadership measures, raising questions about its incremental validity (Landy, 2005).

While evidence suggests EI may reduce turnover, much of this research is cross-sectional, limiting causal conclusions. Within the service sector, where emotional labour appears high, EI may be especially critical, but the field still lacks longitudinal studies examining how EI-driven leadership directly impacts retention over time.

Nonetheless, besides EI, culture may moderate how leadership influences attrition. Therefore, corporate culture is considered next.

2.13 Organisational Culture and Employee Retention

Organisational culture provides the broader framework within which leadership practices operate (Schein, 2010). Strong and inclusive cultures are associated with higher employee commitment and lower turnover (Hartnell et al, 2011).

Nonetheless, while cohesive cultures can support retention, rigid cultures may suppress diversity or innovation, thereby increasing turnover (Ogbonna and Harris, 2000). The interaction between culture and leadership is complex, as leaders may impact culture through their practices but are constrained by existing cultural norms (Schein, 2010). To state that argument, Groysberg et al (2018) suggest that leadership styles are more likely to succeed when they are aligned with organisational culture.

Overall, scholarship on culture in ER appears to represent a research gap, particularly regarding how leadership interacts with cultural norms to shape retention outcomes in the service sector.

The following chapter briefly outlines further leadership strategies for ER.

2.14 Additional Leadership Strategies Supporting Retention

Besides the previously reviewed leadership strategies to minimise turnover, effective leadership encompasses further strategies aimed at reducing turnover and enhancing ER. A few additional strategies are outlined in the table below.

*Table 3
Further Turnover-Minimising Leadership Strategies*

Strategy	Supporting Literature
Salary	Salary serves as a crucial tool in minimising turnover intentions (Gevrek et al, 2017; Iqbal et al, 2017).
Communication	Communication skills are integral to fostering employee satisfaction and reducing turnover (Hicks, 2011; Iqbal et al, 2017; Krishna et al, 2022; Marquardt, 2023).
Work-Life-Balance (WLB)	WLB positively affects ER (Syal et al, 2024). WLB influences the subordinates' intentions to leave a firm (Grigoryan, 2024).
Employee Development Opportunities	Investing in training and development opportunities is another essential leadership strategy to retain employees (Cloutier et al, 2015; Heathfield, 2008; Krishna and Garg, 2022; Lam et al, 2002; Marquardt, 2023).

2.15 Likert Scales in Survey Research

Likert scales allow survey participants to express their agreement or disagreement with statements (Likert, 1932). This ability to capture opinions makes them a widely used

tool in research, valued for their flexibility, simplicity, and suitability across research contexts (Joshi et al, 2015).

Often, Likert scales range from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”, including a midpoint (e.g., “neutral”); whilst 5- and 7-point scales are the most common, variations do exist (Jamieson, 2004). According to Dillman et al (2014) and Dawes (2008), smaller scales simplify choices for respondents. However, they state that larger scales capture more nuanced differences in attitudes. Furthermore, Likert scales have advantages; for example, respondents can quickly understand and complete Likert-scale surveys, which leads to enhanced quality of data and response rates (Revilla et al, 2014). Additionally, by calculating mean scores or sum values to create composite measures, researchers can provide a comprehensive view of the underlying construct (Joshi et al, 2015). Thence, Likert scales provide an effective means in research with the potential to gain data with high internal consistency, making them a reliable choice for assessing multi-item constructs (Carifio and Perla, 2007). Further studies indicate that 5- or 7-point scales tend to achieve optimal levels of reliability without overwhelming respondents with excessive response options (Sullivan and Artino, 2013). The decision of how many points to include on a Likert scale appears to depend on both the study design and the research objectives; for example, a 3-point Likert scale lowers the non-response bias (Wronski, n.d.). However, while 3-point scales simplify response options and minimise respondent fatigue, they may oversimplify responses by limiting the range of expression (Dawes, 2008). According to Fowler (2014), scales with at least five points are more likely to capture differences in opinion, leading to richer and more reliable data. Furthermore,

Allen and Seaman (2007) highlight the importance of using an appropriate number of scale points to improve data analysis, such as adopting a 5-point scale that allows for response variation while being compact enough to encourage full survey completion, especially on online platforms where lengthy and complex scales may negatively impact participation (Revilla et al, 2014).

All in all, Likert scales seem to be an effective method in quantitative research. Nevertheless, they require careful design and consideration of potential limitations, such as the risk of central tendency bias, where respondents choose the midpoint, potentially skewing results (Garland, 1991).

2.16 Novelty of this Research

The research fills a research gap within the service industry regarding the relationship between leadership strategies and ER. Despite a variety of research on ER, it appears that there is a lack of studies exploring the quantitative dimensions with a high confidence level of leadership practices and their impact on ER, particularly in the service sector.

Hence, this study conducts quantitative research with a 95% confidence level. Through addressing this novel approach of conducting high-confidence research, the study provides objective findings into the relationship between leadership strategies and ER within the broader service sector and offers practical recommendations to minimise turnover in the industry.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview of the Research Problem

Service firms around the globe struggle with high turnover rates despite their efforts to attract and retain skilled professionals (Allen and Vardaman, 2021).

As discussed in Chapter 2.1, turnover has a drastic financial impact on firms, particularly the Swiss service industry revealed an attrition level of 19.4% among professionals pursuing employment activities in 2021 (Federal Statistical Office, 2023). As mentioned previously, further literature suggests that turnover costs can vary significantly, ranging from 50% to 200% of the previous employee's yearly salary (Hebenstreit, 2008).

Hence, these insights into the financial implications of turnover within the service industry highlight the importance of effective ER strategies. Previous research emphasises the pivotal role of leadership in influencing ER (Ng'ethe et al, 2012; Rad and Yarmohammadian, 2006; Vecchio, 1985), yet it appears there remains a gap in understanding the specific leadership strategies that can mitigate turnover within the service sector. This study aims to address this gap by investigating the relationship between leadership strategies and ER and providing actionable insights for the broader service industry.

3.2 Operationalisation of Theoretical Constructs

To effectively examine the relationship between leadership strategies and ER, theoretical constructs were operationalised. Leadership strategies were measured through

various dimensions, such as motivational practices, adaptability, feedback frequency, and fostering a sense of belonging. ER was assessed through metrics including job satisfaction, intent to stay, and perceived organisational support. These constructs were quantified using structured survey items, employing Likert scales to capture the extent to which employees agree or disagree with statements related to these dimensions. This operationalisation ensured that abstract concepts are translated into measurable variables, facilitating rigorous statistical analysis.

3.3 Research Purpose and Questions

The primary purpose of this research was to identify and analyse high-confidence leadership strategies that significantly influence ER within the service industry.

Furthermore, the study aimed to provide evidence-based recommendations to improve retention rates and reduce turnover costs. Specifically, this research addressed the following research question:

What high-confidence strategies can leaders in the service sector implement to effectively retain their employees?

3.4 Research Design

This research followed a primarily deductive approach, as it was grounded in established theories, while including exploratory quantitative analysis to unveil further insights (Saunders et al, 2019). While the research adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional design, the sampling involved the administration of a structured survey and followed a non-probability, convenience-based approach due to the global and diverse target

population. The survey items were designed to measure leadership strategies and their impact on ER.

3.5 Population and Sample

A pilot study was conducted to test and refine the survey instrument and procedures before the full-scale data collection. Thereby, the objectives were to evaluate the clarity of the survey questions, identify potential issues with the survey design, test the functionality of the online survey platform, gather preliminary data to assess the reliability and validity of the survey items, and make necessary adjustments based on feedback and initial findings. The pilot study involved a small sample of 20 participants from a Swiss service firm, including both employees and leaders, to ensure the survey's applicability across different organisational levels. Results of the pilot test showed, as evidenced by the normality assessment, that the data were suitable for parametric testing, supporting the validity of subsequent analyses. Furthermore, the pilot test highlighted moderate internal consistency due to a small sample size. Hence, for the main study, the sample size was increased for more stable and accurate estimates of reliability (Costello and Osborne, 2005).

To ensure results with 95% confidence, the sample size (n) was calculated using the following formula for estimating sample size in a population larger than 1 million:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 \times p \times (1-p)}{MoE^2};$$

Z represents the desired confidence level (95%), p is the estimated

proportion of the population with a particular characteristic (0.5 for maximum variability), MoE is the margin of error (+5%) (Interceptum, n.d.). Thence, the aim was

to survey a sample size of approximately 384 individuals working in service firms, encompassing both leadership and employee positions.

3.6 Participant Selection

The sampling strategy for the main study employed a non-probability, convenience-based approach, meaning that participants were selected from the target population due to their accessibility and willingness to participate (Golzar et al, 2022).

Access to participants was facilitated through SurveyCircle, SurveySwap, and LinkedIn (Appendix D). SurveyCircle describes itself as the “largest community for online research”, with over 3.5 million study participations across more than 100 countries (SurveyCircle, n.d.). SurveySwap similarly positions itself as a major platform for survey exchange, reporting more than 2 million surveys exchanged and active users from over 130 countries and 5,000 universities worldwide (SurveySwap, n.d.); hence, these platforms ensured sample diversity and attracted users from diverse geographical and professional backgrounds. To ensure an adequate sample size for meaningful statistical analysis, the minimum required number of respondents was estimated using the standard formula for sample size calculation based on a 95 % confidence level and a 5 % margin of error (MoE) (Chapter 3.5). Although the sampling design was non-probabilistic, these parameters served as conventional guidelines to determine a sufficiently large and diverse sample.

The majority of responses were obtained via SurveySwap ($n = 385$) and SurveyCircle ($n = 47$), exceeding the initial target of $n = 384$. LinkedIn served as an additional source of participants. After data cleaning, which involved excluding

respondents who did not meet the inclusion criterion of working in the service sector (filter question), as well as removing incomplete submissions, 389 valid responses remained for analysis.

The timeframe for the entire sampling process, including the pilot test, was from 1 June 2024 to 3 April 2025. This duration allowed for sufficient data collection.

Participant confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained throughout the study. All data were only used for research purposes and remain confidential. Participants were assured that their responses were aggregated and reported in a manner that ensured individual identities were not disclosed.

The pilot test survey was facilitated through the author's employment in a Swiss service firm, and also distributed using Google Forms, with 20 participants receiving email and WhatsApp invitations from the researcher directly (Appendix B), containing a survey link and assurance about their anonymity, the survey duration, the significance of the survey, and the need for their subsequent feedback. After completing the pilot test survey, participants provided feedback on the clarity, length, and overall experience, indicating whether any items were confusing, if the response options were adequate, and if any technical difficulties were encountered (see Table 6).

3.6.1 Ethical Consideration and Informed Consent

This study adhered to the ethical guidelines of the Swiss School of Business and Management Geneva. All participation was voluntary, and confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained throughout both the pilot and main study.

As described earlier, pilot study participants received an invitation to the study by email or WhatsApp, including a cover letter explaining the study's purpose, confidentiality, and voluntary nature (Appendix A). The message also contained a link to the online survey. By completing the questionnaire, participants explicitly indicated their consent to take part in the study.

As outlined earlier, participants in the main study were recruited via SurveyCircle, SurveySwap, and LinkedIn. The survey link presented a concise introductory information statement outlining the purpose, anonymity, and eligibility criteria of the study (see Appendix C). Because the study was anonymous and posed minimal risk, an implied consent procedure was applied. Implied consent refers to participants' voluntary agreement to take part in a study through their actions (e.g., by proceeding with an anonymous survey) after being provided with sufficient information about the research (Sieber and Tolich, 2013). By proceeding to the questionnaire, participants indicated their informed and voluntary agreement to participate.

Participants could withdraw from the survey at any point before submitting their responses.

3.7 Instrumentation

The survey designed for the research on leadership strategies and ER within the service industry included 11 carefully crafted items to capture participants' perceptions and experiences. This chapter provides detailed documentation on the development of this study's survey questions. The process involved carefully reviewing and comparing academic research to strengthen the reliability and validity of the survey questions.

Question 1 (Filtering Question):

Are you currently working in the service industry?

- Yes
- No (If “No”, please exit the survey)

Rationale for Question 1:

To ensure the validity of the data collected, the survey included a filtering question as the first question to filter out respondents not relevant to the study. The utilisation of a binary (yes/no) format ensured only participants currently engaged in the service industry would continue with the survey, thereby enhancing the quality and relevance of the data collected.

Scholarship supports the use of filter questions and emphasises their importance in improving data quality; Fowler (2014) suggests that filter questions help prevent irrelevant responses, thus enhancing the validity of the study. Furthermore, Dillman et al (2014) highlight that filter questions can reduce non-response bias by ensuring that only qualified respondents contribute to the dataset.

Therefore, the implementation of a filtering question maximises the quality of this survey’s data and ensures that the insights are specifically applicable to the service industry.

Question 2:

Do you feel motivated by your leader(s)?

- Not at all
- Slightly

- Moderately
- Very
- Extremely

Detailed Documentation of the Development of Question 2:

The literature provided serves as the foundation for the development of Question 2:

Shah and Asad's (2018) findings unveil that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation affect ER. Furthermore, Shareef and Atan's (2018) research shows that intrinsic motivation serves as a complete mediator in the relationship between ethical leadership, organisational citizenship behaviour, and the inclination to leave a company. According to Smama'h et al (2023), the motivation of nurses is positively correlated with all styles of leadership.

Rationale for Likert Scale Selection in Question 2:

The decision to utilise a Likert scale for Question 2 was inspired by the approach adopted by previous researchers studying similar topics; Samuel and Chipunza (2009) investigate the influence of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on turnover across public and private sector firms. The research encompasses 1800 workers from various surveyed companies, with 145 respondents, and the data collection is based on a self-designed Likert scale questionnaire. Similarly, Welch and Brantmeier's (2021) research on ER and the intention of turnover that occurs voluntarily among research administrators explores motivational elements influencing ER and turnover intentions using a Likert scale.

Question 3:

Do you feel your leader(s) contribute(s) to your overall satisfaction within your current position?

- Not at all
- Slightly
- Moderately
- Very
- Extremely

Detailed Documentation of the Development of Question 3:

The literature provided serves as the foundation for the development of Question 3:

Literature shows that leaders impact employee satisfaction; Abualrub and Alghamdi (2012) highlight that nurses are content with leaders who demonstrate transformational behaviour. Likewise, Asghar and Oino's (2017) findings show that leaders applying a leadership style that is transformational positively impact satisfaction. However, they state that transactional leaders negatively impact job satisfaction. Hence, leadership behaviour impacts the job contentment of employees, illustrating that job satisfaction and ER are positively correlated (Biaison, 2020). Wakabi (2016) supports this idea by revealing that leadership behaviours affect ER in firms.

Rationale for Likert Scale Selection in Question 3:

The decision to utilise a Likert scale for Question 3 was inspired by the approach adopted by previous researchers studying similar topics. A variety of academic research

exists that investigated job satisfaction and its correlation with ER and turnover utilising Likert scales. For example, a study by Alam and Asim (2019) explored the impact of leadership on turnover, Abouraia and Othman (2017) identified a positive link among TL, job contentment, and commitment to a firm, and Lim et al (2017) investigated the relationship among TL, job contentment, and commitment to a company.

Question 4:

Do the leaders you work with closely promote your sense of belonging to the firm?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Consistently

Detailed Documentation of the Development of Question 4:

The literature provided serves as the foundation for the development of Question 4:

A variety of literature reveals that a sense of belonging fosters ER (Coqual, 2020). According to Silver et al (2024), much literature on ER centres on fostering compensation, work hours, workload, and welfare. They state that even though these factors are crucial, an important human need has often been overlooked – the sense of belonging. However, studies exist that indicate that ER is correlated with a sense of belonging; a study by Silver et al (2024) illustrates that mentoring among peers within the

initial year of starting a new academic role is helpful in establishing a sense of belonging, leading to the retention of all novice faculty staff. Another study shows that there are leadership behaviours that correlate with an elevated sense of belonging (Kennedy, 2021).

Rationale for Likert Scale Selection in Question 4:

The decision to use a Likert scale for Question 4 was inspired by the approach adopted by previous researchers studying similar topics. Several studies examining the sense of belonging and its impact on ER have gained knowledge through the utilisation of Likert scales in their surveys. For example, Reinhardt et al (2020) found that support at work and a sense of belonging lead nurses to remain within a firm. Another study tested the hypothesis that a sense of belonging among female subordinates in the healthcare industry is related to the likelihood of them leaving the firm; the findings show that leaders of healthcare companies could reduce turnover by enhancing belonging at work, particularly by fostering professional growth and establishing a culture that prioritises transparent communication (Schaechter et al, 2023).

Question 5:

Would you wish your leader(s) to be more adaptive to your needs?

- Not at all
- Slightly
- Moderately
- Very
- Extremely

Detailed Documentation of the Development of Question 5:

The literature provided serves as the foundation for the development of Question 5:

There is a gap in the academic literature that examines the effect of adaptability as a leadership skill and its effect on ER. However, the literature review presented previously provides evidence that effective leaders need to understand how to motivate people and adjust their approach accordingly (Mazzarella and Smith, 1989). For example, Northouse (2020) differentiates assiduity and slothfulness in employees. Likewise, McGregor (1960) allocates workers as either inert (in Theory X) or assiduous (in Theory Y); this underscores that leadership effectiveness is about adapting to the character attributes of employees and comprehending how to motivate them to ensure their lasting commitment to the company (Welch and Brantmeier, 2021). (Marquardt, 2023)

Thus, effective leadership is crucial in ER (Ng'ethe et al, 2012; Rad and Yarmohammadian, 2006; Vecchio, 1985). Elçi et al's (2012) study explored the effects of effective leadership on company members' inclination to stay and found that effective leadership plays a significant role in influencing employees' intentions to leave their jobs. A further study unveiled the important correlation between effective leadership and turnover (Riaz et al, 2017). Chen (2020), who surveyed 368 individuals, reported that effective leadership positively impacts job contentment and ER. Specifically, leadership agility and adaptability appear to be a significant leadership skill of effective leaders, as adaptive leaders are capable of moving fast and without difficulty between various realms of management, capable of managing intricate services, and adjusting to the dynamic

shifts within business environments (McPherson, 2016); this reinforces that adaptability is a key leadership skill with implications for ER and employee satisfaction.

Rationale for Likert Scale Selection in Question 5:

The decision to utilise a Likert scale for Question 5 was inspired by the approach adopted by previous researchers studying effective leadership and its impact on ER; Naseer et al's (2017) research explored the impact of nurses' leadership behaviours on employee turnover using a Likert scale survey. They found that when TL is practised more within a nursing environment, nurses are less likely to leave their positions, whereas when transactional leadership is employed, nurses are more inclined to consider leaving their positions. Additionally, Raziq et al (2021) used a Likert scale to unveil that TL positively affects ER in mid-sized firms, and according to Krishna et al (2022), transformational leaders positively influence job satisfaction more than other leadership styles.

Question 6:

How often do you receive feedback from your leader(s)?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Consistently

Detailed Documentation of the Development of Question 6:

The literature provided serves as the foundation for the development of Question 6:

A study by Guo et al (2014) shows that growth-oriented feedback positively affects intrinsic motivation and work performance. Likewise, Marthouret and Sigvardsson (2016) demonstrate that balanced and timely feedback can positively impact employee motivation and performance. As discussed previously, motivation is linked to ER; leaders must understand how to motivate employees effectively to foster long-term commitment to the organisation (Welch and Brantmeier, 2021). According to Miao et al (2020), feedback and self-efficacy play important roles in how different types of motivation (extrinsic and intrinsic) influence employees' intentions to leave their jobs. To align with this view, Marquardt's (2023) study unveils that the majority of participants believe that feedback, whether it is given to employees or received from them, is crucial for retaining staff and preventing them from leaving their jobs. This highlights the perceived value of feedback in ER strategies.

Rationale for Likert Scale Selection in Question 6:

The decision to utilise a Likert scale for Question 6 was inspired by the approach adopted by previous researchers studying similar topics. Van Waeyenberg et al's (2015) explored that turnover intentions among home nurses are affected by the effectiveness and frequency of feedback from leaders, using a Likert scale to gather responses. Equally, Joo and Park's (2010) paper investigated how employees' attitudes and intentions are influenced by their personal learning goals, the organisation's culture of learning, and

feedback on development, measured using Likert scales. They found that these factors predict commitment to a firm. Another research by Belschak and Den Hartog (2009) examined how employees' emotional responses to feedback from leaders impact their stance and intentions, such as turnover and commitment, utilising Likert scales for measurement. Their results indicate that feedback influences feelings, which in turn mediate its impact on these behaviours.

Question 7:

Please rate the importance of each factor in your decision to stay in your job:

- Not important
- Slightly important
- Moderately important
- Very important
- Extremely important

Rate the following factors:

- Salary
- Development and growth opportunities
- Effective communication
- Positive relationships with leaders and colleagues
- Being recognised and appreciated
- Alignment with company values

Detailed Documentation of the Development of Question 7:

The literature provided serves as the foundation for the development of Question 7:

Question 7 provides answer options that are all considered leadership strategies, or factors that can be influenced by leaders. For example, leadership strategies for retaining employees include communication (Gupta-Sunderiji, 2004; Iqbal et al, 2017; Krishna et al, 2022; Taylor, 2004), development opportunities (Cloutier et al, 2015; Heathfield, 2008; Krishna et al, 2022; Lam et al, 2002; Maertz et al, 2023; Taylor, 2004), the recognition of employees' contributions (Langove and Isha, 2017; Sija, 2022; Steiner et al, 2020), and the alignment with company values (Presbitero et al, 2016; Rice and Schiller, 2022). Furthermore, leaders can suggest reward systems to retain employees (Terera and Ngirande, 2014); Hausknecht et al (2009) highlight the importance of fair compensation in retaining employees and preventing turnover.

Rationale for Likert Scale Selection in Question 7:

The decision to utilise a Likert scale for Question 7 was inspired by the approach adopted by previous researchers studying similar topics. Rao et al's (2018) study investigated the relationship between workplace factors (reward and recognition, career advancement opportunities, performance evaluation) and their impact on ER. They collected data using a Likert survey. Their results revealed that rewards and recognition, career progression, and performance evaluations influence ER. Furthermore, Anis et al (2011) explored how factors like compensation, support by leaders, and job contentment affect ER in Pakistan's pharmaceutical market. Using Likert scale measurements, they

found that these factors positively influence organisational commitment, which is strongly associated with ER.

Question 8:

How long did it take you to complete this survey?

- Less than 3 minutes
- From 3 to 5 minutes
- From 5 to 10 minutes
- More than 10 minutes

Rationale for Question 8:

This research aimed to gather high-confidence data, which required high response rates. Therefore, this study's survey was short, as the longer a survey is, the higher the possibility of participants feeling idle or fatigued and potentially leaving the survey (Wronski, n.d.). According to Taylor (2021), electronic surveys that people can finish between 3 and 5 minutes are considered the "new standard and best practice for market research", as the typical focus span of a human is 8 seconds. Furthermore, people value their time and may be unwilling to invest 10 minutes in completing a survey (Kamburov-Niepewna, 2021). Hence, Likert scale surveys do not require much time and dedication to finish (WorkTango, n.d.), and higher response rates mean enhanced quality of findings (Taylor, 2021; Wronski, n.d.).

Considering this, the choice of a 5-point Likert scale for the main study's survey reduced the possibility of incomplete data through the use of online platforms for participant recruitment and a completion time of 3-5 minutes. Hence, it lowered the non-

response bias by maximising response rates and minimising the time and effort required for survey completion, which enhanced the reliability and validity of the gathered data.

Table 4
Rationale for the Survey Questions

Question	Justification	Rationale
Are you working in a service firm?	This binary “yes/no” question was designed to filter out individuals not relevant to the study.	Filter questions help prevent irrelevant responses, thus enhancing the validity of the study (Fowler, 2014). According to Dillman et al (2014), filter questions can reduce non-response bias by ensuring that only qualified respondents contribute to the dataset.
Do you feel motivated by your leader(s)?	This question measures the extent to which participants feel motivated by their leaders, using a Likert scale ranging from “Not at all” to “Extremely”.	Shah and Asad (2018), Shareef and Atan (2018) and Smama’h et al (2023) highlight the impact of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on ER. Samuel and Chipunza (2009) and Welch and Brantmeier (2021) utilised Likert scales for similar studies.
Do you feel your leader(s) contribute(s) to your overall satisfaction within your current position?	This question assesses the perceived contribution of leaders to overall job satisfaction with responses from “Not at all” to “Extremely”.	Abualrub and Alghamdi (2012) and Asghar and Oino (2017) show the impact of transformational and transactional leadership on job satisfaction. Alam and Asim (2019), Abouraiia and Othman (2017) and Lim et al (2017) used Likert scales to study job satisfaction and ER.

<p>Do the leaders you work with closely promote your sense of belonging to the firm?</p>	<p>This item evaluates whether leaders foster a sense of belonging, with options from “Never” to “Consistently”.</p>	<p>Coqual (2020), Silver et al (2024) and Kennedy (2021) discuss the importance of a sense of belonging for ER. Reinhardt et al (2020) and Schaechter et al (2023) used Likert scales to study the impact of belonging on ER.</p>
<p>Would you wish your leader(s) to be more adaptive to your needs?</p>	<p>This item explores the desire for leaders to be adaptable, using responses from “Not at all” to “Extremely”.</p>	<p>Northouse (2020), McGregor (1960) and Welch and Brantmeier (2021) emphasise adaptability as a key leadership skill. Ng’ethe et al (2012), Rad and Yarmohammadian (2006), Vecchio (1985), Elçi et al (2012), Riaz et al (2017), Chen (2020) and McPherson (2016) link effective leadership to ER. Naseer et al (2017), Raziq et al (2021) and Krishna et al (2022) used Likert scales for similar studies.</p>
<p>How often do you receive feedback from your leader(s)?</p>	<p>This question measures the frequency of feedback provided by leaders, with options including “Never”, “Rarely”, “Sometimes”, “Often”, and “Consistently”.</p>	<p>Guo et al (2014), Marthouret and Sigvardsson (2016), Welch and Brantmeier (2021), Miao et al (2020) and Marquardt (2023) emphasise the importance of feedback for motivation and ER. Van Waeyenberg et al (2015), Joo and Park (2010) and Belschak and Den Hartog (2009) used Likert scales to study the impact of feedback on ER.</p>

Please rate the importance of each factor in your decision to stay in your job: Salary, Development and growth opportunities, Effective communication, Positive relationships with leaders and colleagues, Being recognised and appreciated, Alignment with company values	The six items ask participants to rate the importance of various factors in their decision to stay in their job. These items aim to identify the key aspects of the work environment and leadership practices that are most critical for ER.	Gupta-Sunderiji (2004), Iqbal et al (2017), Krishna et al (2022), Taylor (2004), Cloutier et al (2015), Heathfield (2008), Lam et al (2002), Maertz et al (2023), Presbitero et al (2016), Rice and Schiller (2022), Terera and Ngirande (2014) and Hausknecht et al (2009) highlight the importance of various factors for ER. Rao et al (2018) and Anis et al (2011) used Likert scales to study similar factors.
How long did it take you to complete this survey?	This question ensures the survey's conciseness, and helps evaluating the respondent's experience, aiming to maximise response rates and data quality.	Wronski (n.d.), Taylor (2021), Kamburov-Niepowna (2021) and WorkTango (n.d.) highlight the importance of survey length for response rates and data reliability.

By addressing various dimensions such as motivation, satisfaction, sense of belonging, adaptability, feedback, and retention factors, the survey provided comprehensive data for analysing the relationship between leadership practices and ER. The use of Likert scales ensured that the responses were quantifiable and could be systematically analysed to draw meaningful conclusions.

3.7.1 Composite Score Construction and Validation

In the main study, two composite variables were created – the Leadership Composite Score (LCS) and the Retention Composite Score (RCS). Such scores combine variables into one overall value to represent a broader concept (Statistics Solutions, n.d.),

as they generally provide greater reliability and validity than individual measures (Individual Psychometrics, n.d.).

The LCS combined five leadership-related items: motivation by leaders, leaders' contribution to job satisfaction, promotion of belonging, adaptiveness to employee needs, and feedback frequency. Internal consistency was tested prior to aggregation. As reported in Chapter 4.2.3, the five-item composite showed moderate reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.573$), which improved to 0.743 when the item on adaptiveness was excluded. Accordingly, the LCS was computed as the mean of the included items and used as an independent variable in the correlation and regression analyses.

Similarly, the six retention-related items – salary, development and growth opportunities, effective communication, positive relationships, recognition and appreciation, and alignment with company values – were aggregated to form the RCS. This composite demonstrated good internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.805$), indicating that the six items reliably measure the same underlying construct. The RCS was calculated as the mean of its six items, representing employees' overall valuation of retention factors.

3.8 Pilot Study and Justification for Scale Adjustment

A pilot study was conducted with 20 participants prior to the main data collection to assess the survey's feasibility, clarity, and reliability. The initial survey design used a 3-point Likert scale, selected primarily to simplify response options and encourage higher response rates, as literature suggests that fewer options can reduce respondent burden and improve completion rates (Dillman et al, 2014). Therefore, a 3-point Likert scale was chosen to streamline the survey and reduce the response burden. As supported by Revilla

et al (2014), a 3-point scale minimises cognitive load, which was beneficial during the early stages of research, when the goal was to get a quick, initial sense of the participant's views on various ER strategies. A simpler scale also avoids potential confusion, particularly if the survey is complex or the respondents are not familiar with the content (Matell and Jacoby, 1971).

Table 5
Pilot Test Likert Scale

Pilot Test Items	Pilot Test Likert Scale
Do you feel motivated by your leaders?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not motivated - Somewhat motivated - Highly motivated
Do you feel your leader(s) contribute(s) to your overall satisfaction within your current position?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not at all - To some extent - Significantly
Do the leaders you work with closely promote your sense of belonging to the firm?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rarely or never - Occasionally - Consistently
Would you wish your leader(s) to be more adaptive to your needs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not at all - Somewhat - Very much
How often do you receive feedback from your leader(s)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rarely or never - Sometimes - Often
Please rate the importance of each factor in your decision to stay in your job: ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1-Not important - 2-Moderately important - 3-Very important
How long did it take you to complete this survey? ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Less than 3 minutes - From 3 to 5 minutes - From 5 to 10 minutes - More than 10 minutes

The preliminary pilot phase helped determine whether participants could understand and engage with the questions as intended and allowed for reliability testing of the instrument to ensure internal consistency.

During the pilot study, internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, calculated for key scales within the survey. This analysis provided initial evidence that the instrument's items were measuring constructs consistently, which was essential to validate before finalising the survey. Furthermore, the pilot study confirmed that the data met normality assumptions, justifying the use of parametric testing, and supported the decision to adopt a 5-point Likert scale; as prior research indicates that scales with more response options can improve data sensitivity and allow for more nuanced measurement (Allen and Seaman, 2007; Carifio and Perla, 2007). Moreover, a normally distributed Likert scale dataset is often well-suited for parametric analysis, which tends to produce reliable and precise results when these assumptions are met (De Winter and Dodou, 2010). Additionally, this choice aligns with established statistical practices that suggest parametric methods can robustly handle Likert-type data when distribution assumptions hold, thus enhancing the overall validity of the findings (Norman, 2010).

In addition, while the pilot confirmed the overall functionality and reliability of the survey, a review of methodological literature prompted a refinement in the Likert scale format (Chapter 2.15). Research widely supports the use of a 5-point Likert scale for capturing more nuanced responses and increasing the discriminatory power of the instrument (Bowling, 2005; Likert, 1932). A 5-point scale can help reduce forced-choice

limitations, allowing respondents to express a more nuanced level of agreement or disagreement with statements, which can lead to more robust data (Carifio and Perla, 2007).

Therefore, a 5-point Likert scale was used after the pilot test, as, firstly, the discovered use of online participant recruitment platforms such as SurveySwap and SurveyCircle has facilitated access to a large pool of respondents, making it feasible to implement a 5-point scale without concerns about reduced response rates. Expanding to a 5-point scale is consistent with evidence from Dawes (2008), who found that 5- and 7-point formats yield data characteristics similar to longer scales while remaining practical and reliable for analysis.

Thus, while the 3-point scale was ideal for preliminary testing, the 5-point scale was more suitable for the full study's requirements, capturing subtle differences in respondents' evaluations.

It should be noted that the pilot responses were not included in the final dataset, as the pilot served solely as a procedural test for functionality and reliability and was not intended for statistical analysis in the main study. Therefore, this scale adjustment does not compromise the integrity of the research findings. Hence, this approach maintains methodological rigour while ensuring that the final survey design aligns with established practices for collecting high-quality data.

In summary, the pilot study facilitated an effective preliminary test of the survey instrument's usability and reliability, allowing for a critical adjustment to a 5-point scale in alignment with literature-based recommendations. With the support of online

recruitment platforms, this decision enhanced the precision and richness of the data, ensuring that the survey is optimised for robust analysis in the final study.

3.9 Data Collection Procedures

The data collection procedures on leadership strategies and ER within the service industry were carefully planned and executed. Primary data was collected through structured electronic surveys via Google Forms. The surveys were thoroughly designed to capture relevant numerical data on leadership strategies and retention outcomes. Each survey question was developed based on existing literature to ensure reliability and validity (see Chapter 3.7).

The pilot test was conducted with a small group of respondents to identify any issues and make necessary adjustments. For example, as mentioned prior, each participant had to provide feedback regarding survey clarity, length, and overall experience after completing the survey. According to the participants’ feedback, none of the items were confusing, the response options were adequate, and no technical difficulties were encountered.

*Table 6
Feedback Insights*

Participants (P1-P7)	Feedback Insights
P1	“...easy and comprehensive survey.”
P2	“Was very easy to respond.”
P3	“There was no question that could harm anybody.”
P4	“I found the survey great. Especially, because it was super short and I suppose people are much more motivated to complete it this way.”

P5	“I just did it! The questions are all clear and they make sense! So it looks good.”
P6	“Was easy to respond and clear.”
P7	“I always read the questions twice, I always do, and it was super clear and comprehensive.”

Therefore, the main study involved the full distribution of the survey to a broader sample of employees and leaders within the service industry, with the Likert scale expanded from 3 to 5 points.

For the main study, responses were collected through LinkedIn and the survey exchange platforms SurveySwap and SurveyCircle, which facilitate the exchange of survey responses. For instance, SurveySwap enables researchers to participate in other users’ surveys in exchange for credits, which can then be redeemed to encourage participation in one’s own survey (SurveySwap, n.d.). Thus, a robust dataset could be obtained, while maintaining the study’s rigour and target confidence level of 95%.

The surveys were distributed using Google Forms, as in the pilot test. However, as discussed earlier, pilot test participants received personalised email and WhatsApp invitations with clear instructions on how to complete the survey. The invitations included the study’s objectives, procedures, potential risks, and benefits of participating. Additionally, a consent form was included at the beginning of the pilot survey to ensure voluntary participation (Appendix A). Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained, with data used solely for research purposes and responses aggregated to protect individual identities.

3.10 Data Analysis: Pilot Study

The data analysis for the pilot study was conducted using SPSS and involved several statistical techniques to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between leadership and ER.

The analysis began with descriptive statistics to summarise the data's central tendencies, dispersions, and distribution shapes from 20 observations ($n = 20$). Descriptive measures such as mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis were calculated for each of the 11 items related to leadership and ER. Specifically, the first five variables – “Do you feel motivated by your leader(s)?”, “Do you feel your leader(s) contribute(s) to your overall satisfaction within your current position?”, “Do the leaders you work with closely promote your sense of belonging to the firm?”, “Would you wish your leader(s) to be more adaptive to your needs?”, and “How often do you receive feedback from your leader(s)?” – were aggregated to compute the overall Leadership score. The next six items – “Salary”, “Development and Growth Opportunities”, “Effective Communication”, “Positive Relationships with Leaders and Colleagues”, “Being Recognised and Appreciated”, and “Alignment with Company Values” – were combined to compute the ER score. These items were tested for internal consistency, with a Cronbach's α of .504, which is moderate but expected given the small sample size (Costello and Osborne, 2005).

Next, the data's normality was assessed using the Shapiro-Wilk test and visual inspection methods, including normal Q-Q plots and histograms. The Shapiro-Wilk test results were crucial for validating the use of parametric tests in subsequent analyses.

Visual inspections further supported these results, showing that data points closely followed the expected normal distribution patterns.

Pearson's correlation coefficient was then employed to examine the linear relationship between leadership and ER. The correlation analysis aimed to reveal any potential associations between these variables, considering the impact of sample size on the reliability of the correlation coefficient.

To further explore the predictive power of leadership on ER, a linear and multiple regression analysis was conducted. The regression model evaluated the extent to which leadership could explain the variance in ER, considering the significance of the model and the coefficients.

Finally, the reliability of the 11-item scale was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha. This measure assessed the internal consistency of the items, with the inter-item correlation matrix highlighting areas of consistency and potential misalignment within the scale. The reliability analysis was essential for determining the robustness of the scale and identifying items that may require refinement. The pilot's moderate α reflected the small $n = 20$ and conceptual heterogeneity when leadership and retention items were analysed together.

Consequently, the main study proceeded with composite variables: a leadership composite (with and without adaptiveness) and a retention composite. This refinement, combined with the larger $n = 389$, improved measurement reliability and supported the composite-based analyses presented in Chapter 4.2.3.

3.10.1 Research Design Limitations: Pilot Test

The pilot study presents several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. One primary limitation is the small sample size of 20 observations, which may impact the statistical power and generalisability of the results. A limited sample size can lead to less reliable estimates and may not adequately represent the broader population (Julious, 2005), thus affecting the robustness of the conclusions drawn (Hertzog, 2008).

Another notable limitation is the potential for self-report bias. The data were collected through self-reported measures, which can be subject to various biases, including social desirability bias, where respondents might provide answers they perceive as more socially acceptable rather than their true feelings or behaviours (Van de Mortel, 2008). This bias can distort the actual relationship between leadership and ER, leading to an overestimation or underestimation of the effects.

Additionally, the study relied on a cross-sectional design, capturing data at a single point in time. This design limits the ability to draw causal inferences about the relationship between leadership and ER (Levin, 2006). Longitudinal studies would be more effective in understanding how these variables influence each other over time (Sedgwick, 2014).

3.10.2 Conclusion: Pilot Test

The methodology employed in this pilot study was designed to investigate the relationship between leadership strategies and ER in the service industry. Utilising a quantitative cross-sectional research design, a structured online survey was administered

to a small sample of employees and leaders ($n = 20$). The survey included 11 carefully crafted items, operationalised based on established theoretical constructs. The data collection process was planned, with detailed instructions and assurances of confidentiality provided to participants. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics, normality assessments, correlation, and regression analysis to explore the relationships between leadership strategies and ER, ensuring the reliability and validity of the findings through statistical rigour and reliability testing. Despite limitations such as the small pilot sample size and potential self-report bias, the pilot test ensured the instrument's suitability for the main study.

3.11 Data Analysis: Main Study

The data were analysed using SPSS and Excel, employing a combination of statistical techniques including descriptive statistics, Kendall's tau correlation analysis, normality testing, simple linear regression, multicollinearity, and multiple regression analysis.

Descriptive statistics were utilised to summarise the distribution of participants' responses, providing insight into how employees perceive various leadership behaviours and factors influencing their retention decisions.

Composite scores were created for leadership and ER. These composites were specifically used in the correlation and regression analyses to examine the overall relationships between leadership practices and ER.

Kendall's tau correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between leadership practices and ER. This method allowed for the identification of

ordinal associations between variables, making it suitable for data that may not meet the assumptions of normality (Field, 2013; Kendall, 1938). To assess the strength and direction of these relationships, p-values less than 0.05 were considered as the threshold for statistical significance (Cohen, 1988); this significance level ensured that only the relationships unlikely to have occurred by chance were considered meaningful.

Normality testing was first conducted to evaluate whether the data met the assumptions required for parametric statistical analyses, such as linear regression (Field, 2013). This step ensured the appropriateness of subsequent analyses by assessing the distribution of the variables involved.

Following this, simple linear regression analysis was used to explore the individual influence of each leadership factor on ER, offering preliminary insights into the strength and direction of these relationships (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2013).

To further examine the combined effects of multiple leadership variables on ER, multiple linear regression analysis was applied. This approach enabled the assessment of the contribution of each predictor while controlling for the influence of others.

Prior to interpreting the regression results, multicollinearity diagnostics were performed using variance inflation factors (VIF) to ensure that the predictors were not excessively correlated, thus supporting the reliability of the model (Hair et al, 2010). As with the correlation analysis, a significance threshold of $p < .05$ was used to determine the statistical relevance of each predictor, indicating whether specific leadership behaviours had a meaningful impact on retention outcomes (Cohen, 1988).

To ensure the validity of the multiple regression analysis, the assumptions of linearity, homoscedasticity, and independence of errors were visually inspected. The histogram of residuals indicated a roughly normal distribution, and the P-P plot confirmed no major deviations from normality. The residuals exhibited a constant variance across the range of fitted values, suggesting no significant violations of homoscedasticity. Further, the independence of errors was assumed, as no patterns were observed in the residual plots. Therefore, it can reasonably be assumed that the key regression assumptions have been met (Field, 2013).

To address the research questions and test the hypotheses, several statistical analyses were conducted. Each analysis type had a distinct purpose, providing an overview of the dataset and testing specific relationships between variables. Table 7 summarises the types of analyses performed, their objectives, the questions or hypotheses they addressed, and the rationale for their use in this study.

*Table 7
Overview of Statistical Analyses Conducted*

Analysis	Purpose	Questions Answered	Justification
Descriptive Analysis	Summarise data and understand overall distribution of responses (Field, 2013).	- General trends in leadership styles (Q2, Q5). - Overview of motivation levels (Q2). - Satisfaction and belonging (Q3, Q4).	Provides an understanding of the dataset and helps to highlight trends in leadership and retention, as well as respondents' motivation and satisfaction levels.
Regression Analysis	Test hypotheses on the relationships	- Relationship between adaptive leadership and ER	Directly tests the hypotheses; e.g., whether adaptive

	between variables (Field, 2013).	(H1). - Effect of workplace community membership on ER (H2).	leadership and a sense of community affect retention.
Correlation Analysis	Explore the strength of relationships between variables (Sheskin, 2004).	- Correlation between motivation and retention (Q2 and Q7). - Correlation between feedback frequency and ER (Q6 and Q7). - Correlation between job satisfaction and ER (Q3 and Q7).	Helps determine if and how different variables (e.g., motivation, feedback, job satisfaction) are related to retention.
Comparative Analysis	Compare subgroups (if relevant) for differences in responses (Field, 2013).	- Differences based on tenure (e.g., less than 1 year, 1-3 years, more than 3 years). - Differences between departments or leadership styles (e.g., transformational vs. transactional).	Not necessary in this case, as the main research goal was to understand general trends rather than comparing specific subgroups. This study's hypotheses were about overall relationships, not differences between subgroups.

3.11.1 Research Design Limitations: Main Study

The main study provides valuable insights into leadership strategies and ER. Nonetheless, it holds limitations.

First, the study's cross-sectional design limits the ability to establish causal relationships between leadership behaviours and ER, as data were collected at a single

point in time (Bronet, 2025; Field, 2013; Levin, 2006; Setia, 2016). Hence, longitudinal studies would be needed to determine how leadership behaviours influence retention over time (Sedgwick, 2014).

Second, reliance on self-reported survey data may introduce bias; data were collected through self-reported measures, which can be subject to various biases, including social desirability bias, where respondents might provide answers they perceive as more socially acceptable rather than their true feelings or behaviours (Van de Mortel, 2008). This bias might distort the actual relationship between leadership and ER (Podsakoff et al, 2003).

Third, sample characteristics appear to limit the generalisability of the findings. The online survey method may exclude employees with less digital access or motivation to participate, reducing representativeness of the wider service sector (Creswell, 2014).

Fourth, measurement limitations may exist, as the survey was designed for clarity and conciseness; certain constructs were assessed with single-item questions, which may reduce reliability compared to multi-item scales, which capture complex behaviours and attitudes more fully (Bryman and Bell, 2015).

Fifth, multicollinearity was tested and found to be acceptable, but other issues, such as specification errors or unexplained variance, cannot be fully ruled out (Hair et al, 2010). Hence, statistical limitations might be considered.

Finally, this research focused on selected leadership behaviours, while other styles (e.g., transformational, transactional) may also affect retention (Northouse, 2020); therefore, the scope and generalisability of the study appear restricted.

Likewise, results may not transfer directly to other industries (Bryman and Bell, 2015).

3.11.2 Conclusion: Main Study

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional methodology to explore high-confidence leadership strategies that can effectively enhance ER in the service sector.

Data were collected via a structured electronic survey distributed through platforms such as SurveySwap, SurveyCircle, and LinkedIn, resulting in 389 completed responses, exceeding the planned sample size of 384 based on the confidence level calculation.

The survey measured various leadership behaviours and their impact on ER using Likert-scale items. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS and Excel, including descriptive statistics, normality testing, Kendall's tau correlation analysis, assessment of multicollinearity, and multiple regression. Statistical significance was determined using a p-value threshold of .05.

While the study successfully identifies significant relationships between leadership practices and ER, it has limitations, such as its cross-sectional design.

CHAPTER IV:

RESULTS

4.1 Pilot Study Results

This section presents the results of the pilot study conducted to examine the relationship between leadership and ER. Various statistical tests were employed to ensure the robustness and reliability of the findings. The results include assessments of descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, linear regression analysis, and reliability analysis. Each subsection details the methodologies used and the implications of the findings in relation to the study's hypotheses. The dataset consists of 20 observations and includes 11 items related to leadership and ER. The survey completion time data showed that 14 respondents (70%) completed the survey in less than 3 minutes, while 6 respondents (30%) took between 3 to 5 minutes. This indicates that the survey was relatively quick for most participants, with all 20 respondents (100%) completing it within this timeframe. Hence, the survey length was appropriate, as the main study aimed to gather high-confidence data, which required high response rates. Therefore, this study's survey was kept short, as longer surveys increase the likelihood of participants feeling idle or fatigued and potentially dropping out (Wronski, n.d.).

4.1.1 Descriptive Statistics

These descriptive statistics suggest that most items related to leadership and ER show relatively low skewness and kurtosis, indicating that the distributions are fairly symmetric and not excessively peaked or flat. The mean scores vary, with items such as "Positive Relationships with Leaders and Colleagues" and "Being Recognised and

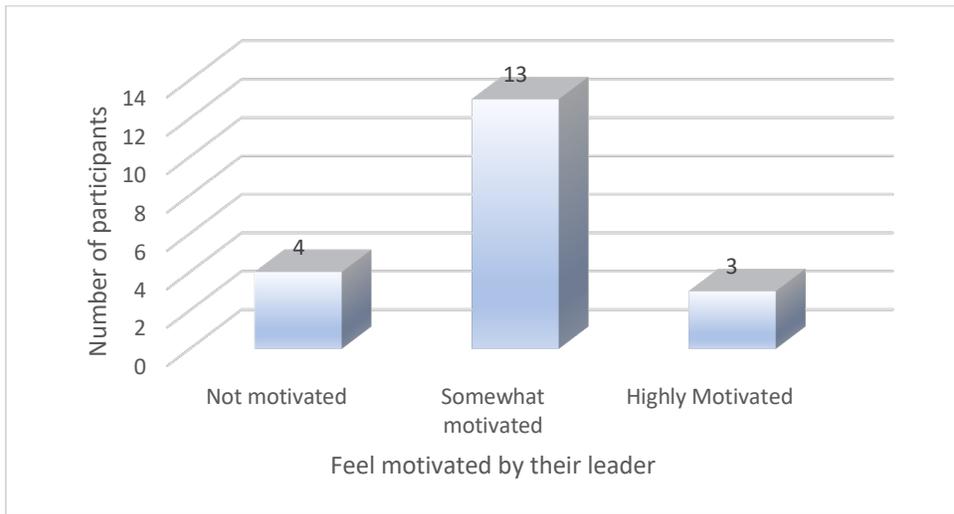
Appreciated” showing higher mean values, reflecting more positive perceptions among respondents. The standard deviations indicate the degree of variability in responses, with items like “How often do you receive feedback from your leader(s)?” and “Salary” showing higher dispersion.

Table 8
Descriptive Statistics

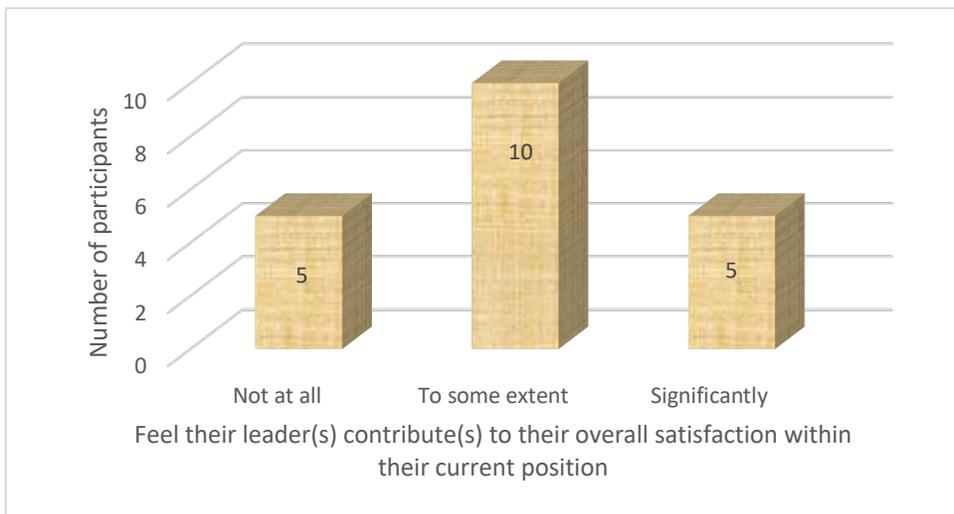
Items	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	Min	Max
Do you feel motivated by your leader(s)?	0.95	0.61	0.01	0.19	0	2
Do you feel your leader(s) contribute(s) to your overall satisfaction within your current position?	1.00	0.73	0.00	-0.93	0	2
Do the leaders you work with closely promote your sense of belonging to the firm?	1.10	0.72	-0.15	-0.88	0	2
Would you wish your leader(s) to be more adaptive to your needs?	1.35	0.67	-0.55	-0.55	0	2
How often do you receive feedback from your leader(s)?	0.75	0.79	0.50	-1.15	0	2
Salary	1.55	0.51	-0.22	-2.18	1	2
Development and Growth Opportunities	1.30	0.66	-0.40	-0.55	0	2
Effective Communication	1.60	0.50	-0.44	-2.02	1	2
Positive Relationships with Leaders and Colleagues	1.80	0.41	-1.62	0.70	1	2
Being Recognised and Appreciated	1.60	0.50	-0.44	-2.02	1	2
Alignment with Company Values	1.30	0.57	-0.04	-0.40	0	2

Figures 5 to 10 provide a visual summary of various aspects of the relationship between leadership and ER among respondents. Figure 5 shows that most respondents feel “Somewhat Motivated” by their leaders, while Figure 6 reveals that leaders contribute “To Some Extent” to overall job satisfaction. Figure 7 indicates that leaders “Occasionally” promote a sense of belonging within the firm. In Figure 8, respondents express a desire for leaders to be “Somewhat” more adaptive to their needs. Figure 9 illustrates that feedback from leaders is received “Sometimes” by the majority, with

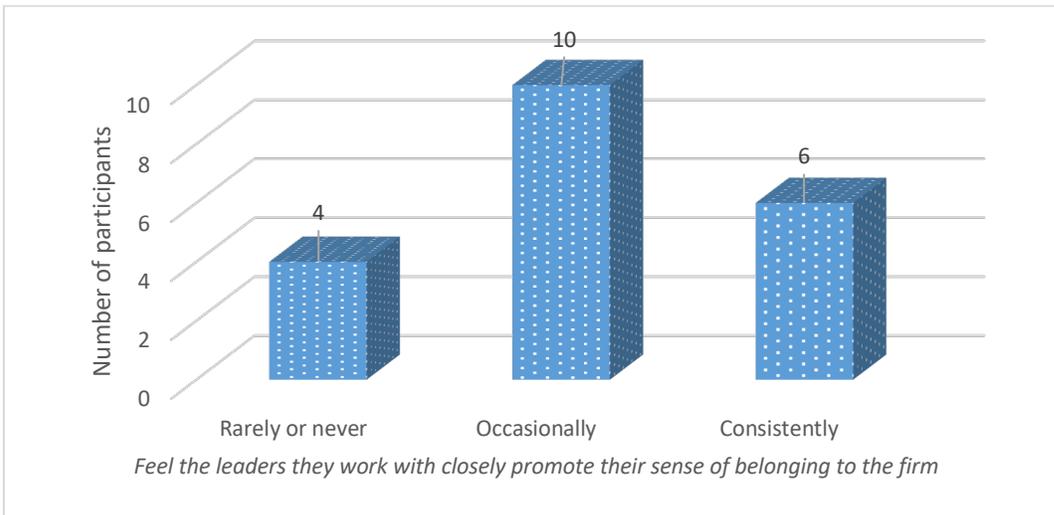
fewer receiving it “Often” or “Rarely or Never”. Finally, Figure 10 reflects a distribution of ER scores, with a slight skew towards higher levels, suggesting that respondents generally feel moderately to highly embedded in their jobs.



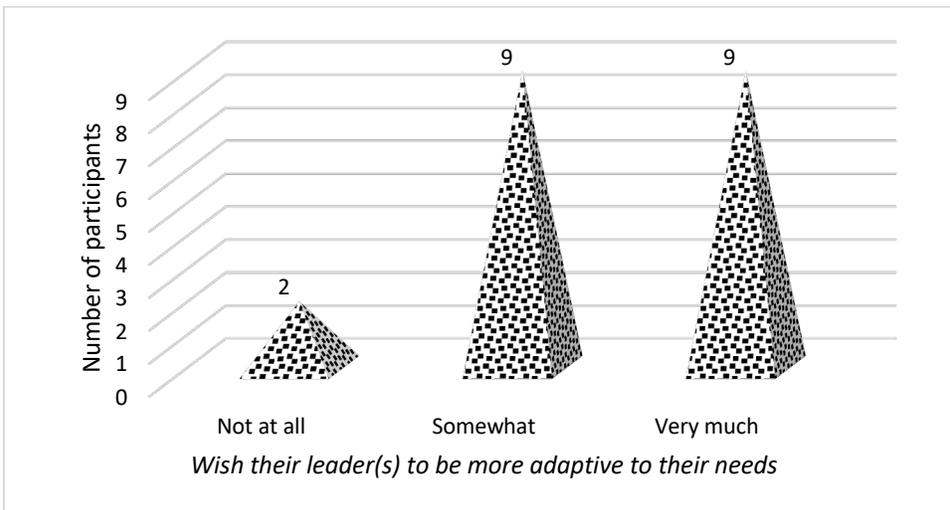
*Figure 5
Feeling Motivated by their Leaders*



*Figure 6
Feel their Leader(s) Contribute(s) to their Overall Satisfaction within their Current Position*



*Figure 7
Feel the Leaders they Work with Closely Promote their Sense of Belonging to the Firm*



*Figure 8
Wish their Leader(s) to be More Adaptive to their Needs*

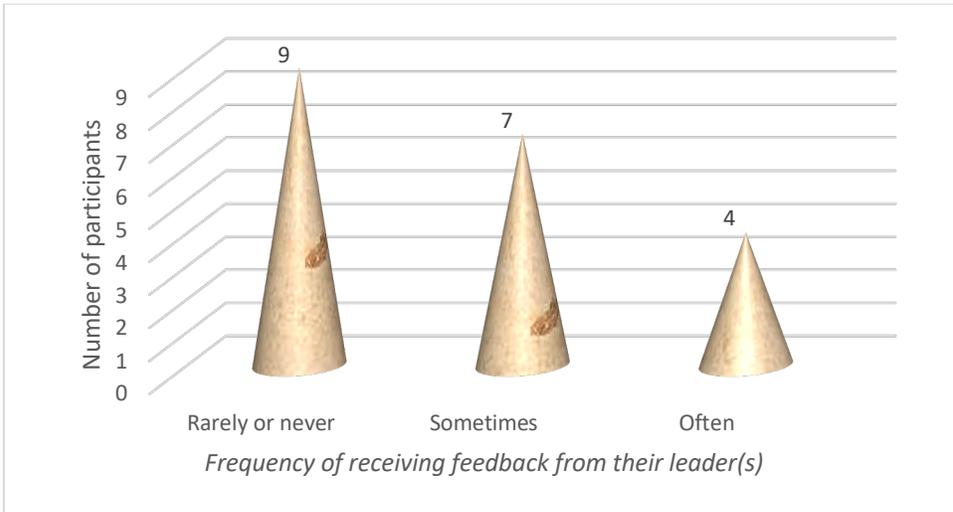


Figure 9
Frequency of Receiving Feedback from their Leader(s)

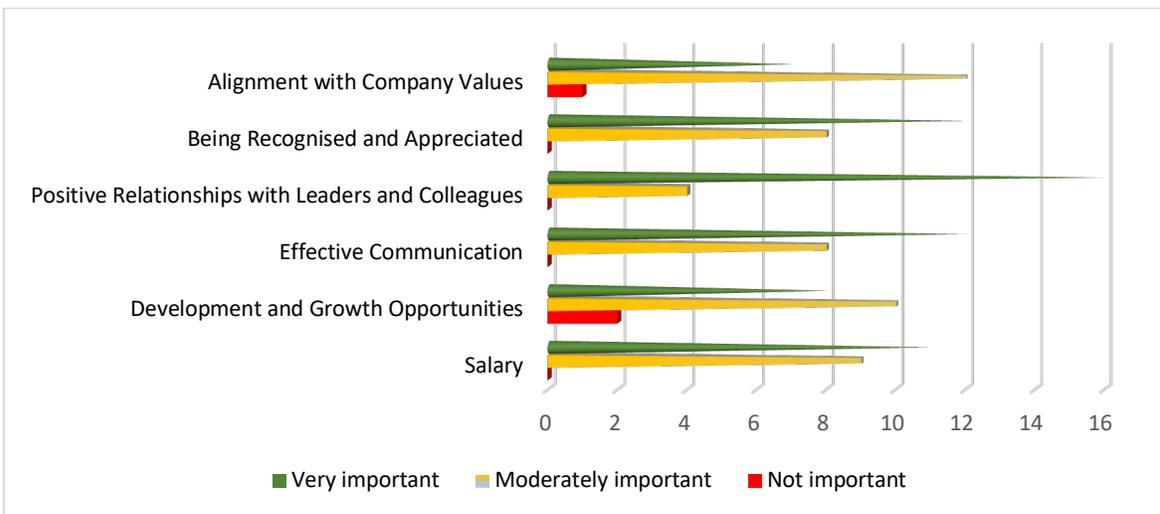


Figure 10
Employee Retention

4.1.2 Normality

The normality of the leadership data was assessed using the Shapiro-Wilk test and visualised through both a normal Q-Q plot and a histogram. The Shapiro-Wilk test

indicated that the data were normally distributed, $W(20) = 0.963, p = .595$. The normal Q-Q plot showed that the data points closely followed the diagonal line, indicating alignment with the expected normal distribution. Although minor deviations at the tails were observed, they were not substantial. The histogram further supported these findings, displaying a relatively symmetric distribution centred around the mean value of 5.15, with a standard deviation of 2.207. Both the statistical test and visual inspections confirm that the leadership data are approximately normally distributed (Field, 2018).

Table 9
Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Leadership	.149	20	.200*	.963	20	.595
ER	.203	20	.030	.908	20	.059

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The descriptive statistics for leadership and ER were analysed to understand their central tendencies and distribution characteristics. The leadership variable had a mean of 5.15 ($SD = 2.21$), with a slight negative skewness (-0.113) and negative kurtosis (-0.735), indicating a relatively symmetric distribution with light tails. The ER variable had a mean of 9.15 ($SD = 1.27$), with a more pronounced negative skewness (-0.826) and positive kurtosis (0.712), suggesting a distribution that is moderately skewed to the left with heavier tails. Both variables showed no missing data; their ranges were 8.00 and 5.00, respectively, indicating the spread between the minimum and maximum values. These statistics suggest that the data for both variables are reasonably normally distributed, supporting the normality assumption for subsequent analyses (Field, 2018).

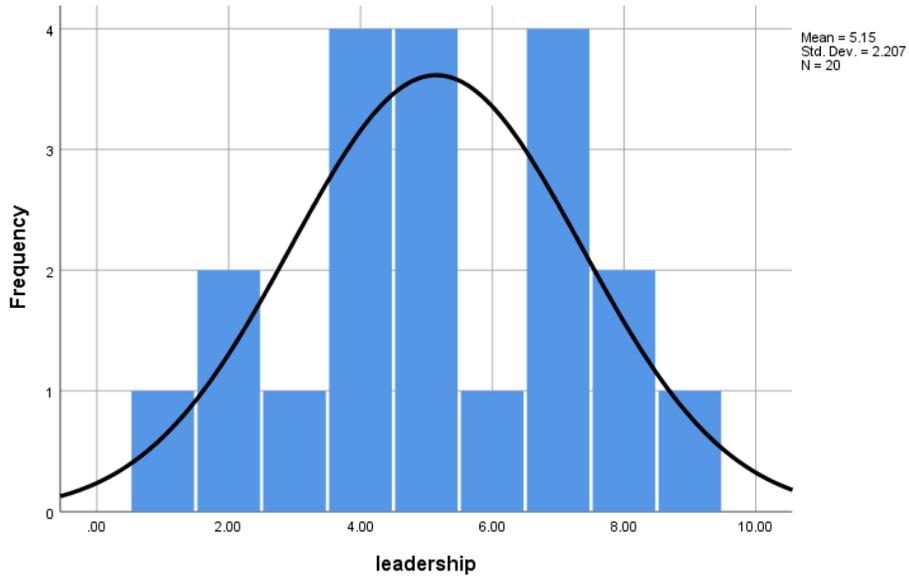


Figure 11
Histogram of Leadership

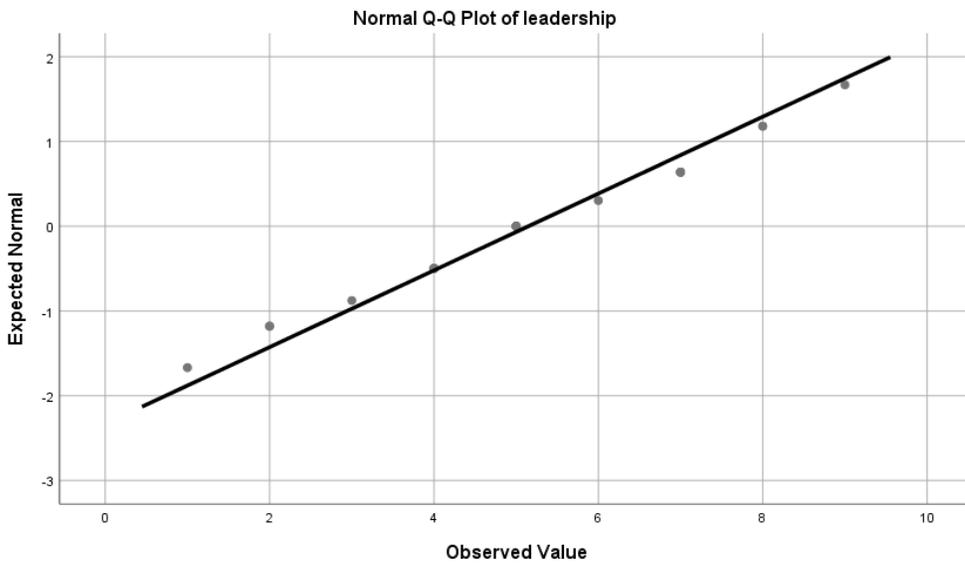


Figure 12
Q-Q Plot of Leadership

The normality of the ER data was assessed using the Shapiro-Wilk test and visualised through both a normal Q-Q plot and a histogram. The Shapiro-Wilk test indicated that the data were approximately normally distributed, $W(20) = 0.908, p = .059$. The normal Q-Q plot showed that the data points closely followed the diagonal line, indicating alignment with the expected normal distribution. The histogram further supported these findings, displaying a roughly symmetric shape centred around the mean value of 9.15 with a standard deviation of 1.268. Although minor deviations are present, particularly at the lower end, these are not substantial enough to reject the assumption of normality. Therefore, both the statistical test and visual inspections confirm that the ER data are approximately normally distributed (Field, 2018).

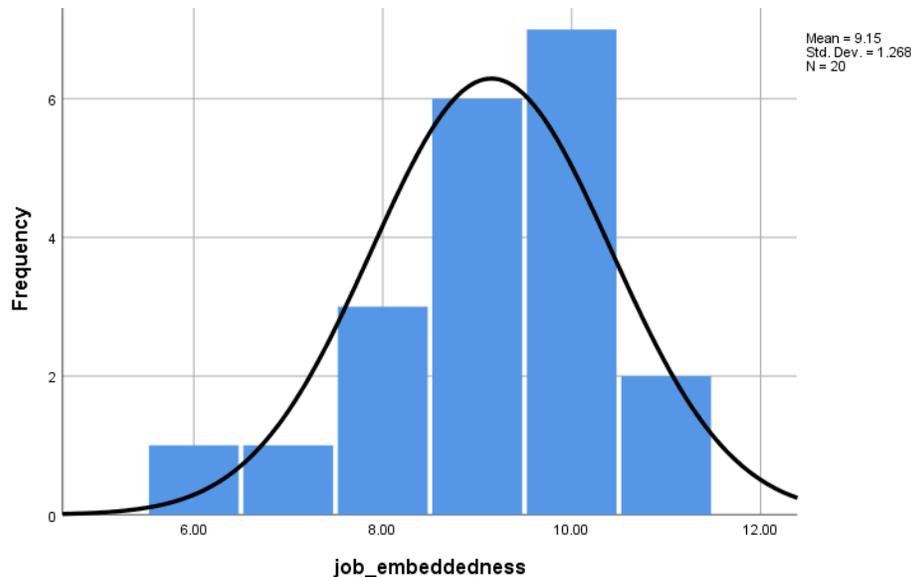


Figure 13
Histogram of Employee Retention

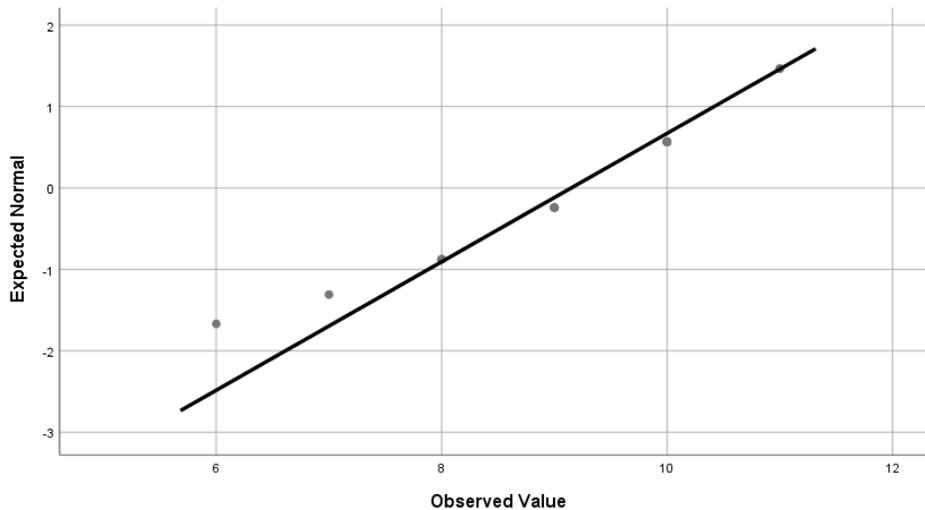


Figure 14
Q-Q Plot of Employee Retention

4.1.3 Hypothesis Test Description

H1: There is a positive relationship between the implementation of adaptive leadership styles and employee retention.

In the context of this hypothesis, ‘positive’ means that adaptive leadership behaviours contribute to enhancing ER. This implies that as adaptive leadership is practised more effectively, the rate at which employees stay with the company increases, demonstrating a favourable effect on ER; in a positive hypothesis test, evidence is examined that is expected to have the property of interest if the hypothesis is correct (Laughlin et al, 1999).

Adaptive leadership emphasises the need for flexibility and responsiveness to varying situations, highlighting that there is no single correct approach to leadership (Doshi, 2021). Effective leaders need to understand how to motivate people and adjust their approach accordingly (Mazzarella and Smith, 1989). For example, Northouse

(2020) differentiates assiduity and slothfulness in employees. Likewise, McGregor (1960) allocates workers as either inert (in Theory X) or assiduous (in Theory Y); this underscores that leadership effectiveness is about adapting to the character attributes of employees and comprehending how to motivate them to ensure their lasting commitment to the company (Welch and Brantmeier, 2021).

H2: Workplace community membership promotes higher levels of employee retention.

Workplace community membership refers to individuals' sense of belonging to their organisation and colleagues. This concept draws from Social Identity Theory, which highlights the importance of identifying with a group or organisation, and organisational identification, which emphasises feeling united and connected within a workplace setting (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Tajfel and Turner, 1979).

4.1.4 Correlation Analysis

Several associations emerged in examining the correlations among various workplace factors, marked by statistical significance ($*p < .05$).

H1: Adaptive leadership styles and ER

Positive relationships with leaders and colleagues exhibited a notable correlation with ER ($r = 0.68, p < .05$). This indicates that stronger leadership qualities are associated with higher levels of ER within the organisation.

Leadership demonstrated significant positive correlations with motivation by leaders ($r = 0.89, p < .05$), satisfaction ($r = 0.87, p < .05$), promotion of belongingness ($r = 0.75, p < .05$), and positive relationships with leaders and colleagues ($r = 0.44, p < .05$).

These correlations underscore the important role of effective leadership in shaping employee experiences.

H2: Workplace community membership and ER

Promotion of workplace community membership showed a significant positive correlation with contribution to satisfaction ($r = 0.71, p < .05$). This reinforces the idea that fostering a sense of belonging contributes positively to employees' overall satisfaction with their current roles.

ER displayed a positive correlation with positive relationships ($r = 0.59, p < .05$), indicating that workplaces fostering strong relationships among colleagues and leaders are likelier to retain their employees effectively.

Additional Findings

Motivation through leaders demonstrated robust positive correlations with both contribution to satisfaction ($r = 0.84, p < .05$) and promotion of belonging ($r = 0.62, p < .05$). This suggests that employees who feel motivated by their leaders tend to report higher levels of overall satisfaction and a stronger sense of belonging within the organisation.

Positive relationships with leaders and colleagues exhibited notable correlations with leadership ($r = 0.49, p < .05$) and ER ($r = 0.68, p < .05$).

These findings highlight the interconnected nature of workplace dynamics and underscore the importance of nurturing adaptive leadership behaviours and relationships for enhancing employee satisfaction, promoting a sense of belonging, and fostering higher levels of ER within organisations.

Table 10
Correlations between Leadership Styles and Employee Retention

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Leadership
Q1	—											
Q2	0.84*	—										
Q3	0.62*	0.71*	—									
Q4	-0.34	-0.43	-0.4	—								
Q5	0.64*	0.65*	0.42	-0.32	—							
Q6	0.09	0	-0.16	0.18	0.23	—						
Q7	0.31	0.33	0.49*	-0.37	0.36	-0.2	—					
Q8	0.1	0.14	0.12	0.28	0.13	-0.53*	0.22	—				
Q9	-0.04	0.00	-0.11	0.46*	-0.16	0.05	-0.35	0.10	—			
Q10	-0.07	0.00	-0.18	0.13	0.00	-0.12	0.06	0.17	0.10	—		
Q11	-0.26	-0.25	-0.21	0.26	-0.29	-0.24	-0.25	0.07	0.49*	0.44*	—	
Leadership	0.87*	0.89*	0.75*	-0.18	0.78*	0.11	0.37	0.25	0.04	-0.04	-0.25	—
ER	0.08	0.11	0.04	0.31	0.15	-0.05	0.32*	0.43*	0.47*	0.68*	0.59*	0.22*

4.1.5 Simple Linear Regression

The following analysis evaluated the relationship between leadership and ER using a linear regression model. The results, as shown in Table 11, indicate that leadership is not a statistically significant predictor of ER. The regression model produced an R-value of .217 and an R² value of .047, suggesting that leadership accounts for only 4.7% of the variance in ER. The standard error of the estimate is 1.27, which indicates the average distance that the observed values deviate from the predicted values.

Table 11
Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.217	0.047	-0.006	1.272

The ANOVA results reveal that the regression sum of squares is 1.441 with 1 degree of freedom, and the residual sum of squares is 29.109 with 18 degrees of freedom. The mean squares for regression and residual are 1.441 and 1.617, respectively. The F-value is .891 with a p-value of .358, indicating that the overall model is not statistically significant ($p > .05$).

Table 12
ANOVA (Pilot Study)

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1.44	1	1.44		
Residual	29.11	18	1.62	0.89	0.358
Total	30.55	19			

The coefficients provided further insight into the relationship between leadership and ER. The unstandardised coefficient (B) for leadership is .13 with a standard error of .132. The standardised coefficient (β) is .22, with a t-value of .94 and a p-value of .358, reinforcing that leadership is not a significant predictor of ER.

Table 13
Coefficients

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardised Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	95% Interval	Confidence
(Constant)	8.51	0.74		11.53	0.000	6.96	10.06
Leadership	0.13	0.13	0.22	0.94	0.358	-0.15	0.40

4.1.6 Multiple Linear Regression

A multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to explore the association between leadership behaviours and ER. The model, which included predictors such as feeling motivated by leaders, leader contributions to overall satisfaction, promotion of belonging by leaders, desire for leader adaptability, and feedback frequency, was statistically non-significant in predicting ER, $F(5, 14) = 0.654, p = 0.664$. The model explained a minimal amount of variance in ER ($R^2 = .189$, adjusted $R^2 = -.100$). Individually, none of the predictors significantly influenced ER: feeling motivated by leaders ($\beta = -0.149, p = 0.749$), leader contributions to satisfaction ($\beta = 0.297, p = 0.577$), promotion of belonging ($\beta = 0.029, p = 0.934$), desire for leader adaptability ($\beta = 0.455, p = 0.116$), and feedback frequency ($\beta = 0.183, p = 0.583$). The ANOVA results confirmed the lack of overall significance in the regression model (Regression: $SS = 5.785, df = 5, MS = 1.157$; Residual: $SS = 24.765, df = 14, MS = 1.769$; Total: $SS = 30.550, df = 19$). Thus, while some trends suggested potential influences, such as the desire for more adaptive leaders, none reached conventional levels of statistical significance in explaining ER.

Nevertheless, while regression analysis is not usually part of pilot testing, it was conducted to gain early insights into the potential relationship between leadership strategies and ER. However, the small sample size of 20 responses limits the statistical power and reliability of the findings. The results indicated that leadership was not a statistically significant predictor of ER, which was expected given the limited data.

Therefore, moving forward to the main study, the sample size was increased to achieve the necessary statistical power for meaningful regression analysis. This ensured that the final survey, aimed at collecting data from 384 participants, was robust, reliable, and valid.

Table 14
Association between Leadership Behaviours and Employee Retention

Model		Unstandardised		Standardised		95.0% Confidence Interval		
		B	Error Std.	Beta	t	Sig.	Lower	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	7.49	1.11		6.77	0.000	5.11	9.86
	Motivation	-0.31	0.96	-0.15	-0.33	0.749	-2.37	1.75
	Satisfaction	0.52	0.91	0.30	0.57	0.577	-1.43	2.47
	Sense of belongingness	0.05	0.61	0.03	0.09	0.934	-1.26	1.37
	Adaptiveness	0.86	0.51	0.46	1.68	0.116	-0.24	1.96
	Feedback	0.30	0.53	0.18	0.56	0.583	-0.83	1.42

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Retention

4.1.7 Reliability

The reliability analysis conducted on the dataset aimed to assess the internal consistency of a set of 11 items related to leadership and employee satisfaction. The Cronbach's Alpha for the scale was calculated to be .504, which is below the commonly accepted threshold of .70, indicating moderate reliability. This suggests that while there is some degree of consistency among the items, the scale may benefit from refinement to improve its reliability. The mean scores for the items ranged from 0.75 to 1.80, reflecting varying levels of agreement or frequency as perceived by the respondents. For instance, the item "Do you feel motivated by your leader(s)?" had a mean of .95 and a standard deviation of .605, indicating moderate motivation levels among respondents. In contrast,

“Positive Relationships with Leaders and Colleagues” had the highest mean score of 1.80 with a lower standard deviation of .410, suggesting a generally positive perception of relationships at work.

The inter-item correlation matrix revealed significant positive correlations between several items. For example, “Do you feel motivated by your leader(s)?” and “Do you feel your leader(s) contribute(s) to your overall satisfaction within your current position?” had a high positive correlation ($r = .840$), indicating that these two aspects are closely related in the respondents’ perceptions. However, some items showed negative correlations, such as “Would you wish your leader(s) to be more adaptive to your needs?” with other items, suggesting potential areas of dissatisfaction or differing expectations among respondents. The item-total statistics provided further insights into the scale’s reliability. Several items, such as “Salary” and “Alignment with Company Values”, showed negative corrected item-total correlations, implying that these items may not fit well with the overall construct being measured. Removing these items could potentially increase the Cronbach’s Alpha, indicating that they might be detracting from the scale’s internal consistency. The intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) was calculated for both single and average measures. The ICC for single measures was .085, which is quite low, indicating poor reliability for individual items. However, the ICC for average measures was .504, which aligns with the overall Cronbach’s Alpha, suggesting moderate reliability when considering the scale as a whole. In general, the reliability analysis indicates that while the scale has some degree of internal consistency, there are several items that may need to be revised or removed to improve the overall reliability. The

moderate Cronbach's Alpha and the findings from the inter-item correlations and item-total statistics highlight areas for potential refinement to enhance the measurement of leadership and employee satisfaction constructs.

The sample size of 20 could have a significant impact on the reliability of the pilot study. Smaller sample sizes can lead to less precise estimates of reliability, as they are more susceptible to sampling error. According to Field (2018), larger samples generally provide more stable and accurate estimates of reliability. With a small sample size, there is a higher likelihood of observing chance variations, which can affect the internal consistency of the scale. This could explain the moderate reliability observed in this analysis, suggesting that increasing the sample size might help to obtain more reliable estimates and enhance the validity of the scale. Regarding the minimum number of observations per item, Nunnally (1978) recommends a minimum of 10 observations per item to achieve reliable estimates of internal consistency. This recommendation is supported by later research, which suggests that having a larger sample size increases the stability and accuracy of reliability coefficients (Costello and Osborne, 2005). Therefore, for a scale with 11 items, a minimum sample size of 110 would be ideal to ensure reliable and valid results. Hence, as this study aimed for high-confidence results, the calculated sample size of this research was 384, ensuring reliable and valid findings.

Table 15
Reliability Statistics and Item Analysis

Cronbach's Alpha	0.504
Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardised Items	0.456
Number of Items	11

Table 16
Item-Total Statistics

Variables	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Do you feel motivated by your leader(s)?	13.35	5.608	.601	.732	.358
Do you feel your leader(s) contribute(s) to your overall satisfaction within your current position?	13.30	5.168	.606	.836	.328
Do the leaders you work with closely promote your sense of belonging to the firm?	13.20	5.747	.416	.652	.405
Would you wish your leader(s) to be more adaptive to your needs?	12.95	8.155	-.238	.679	.604
How often do you receive feedback from your leader(s)?	13.55	5.313	.486	.605	.369
Salary	12.75	7.776	-.120	.669	.553
Development and Growth Opportunities	13.00	6.526	.220	.452	.475
Effective Communication	12.70	6.853	.224	.666	.476
Positive Relationships with Leaders and Colleagues	12.50	7.32	0.10	0.51	0.50
Being Recognised and Appreciated	12.70	7.17	0.10	0.38	0.50
Alignment with Company Values	13.00	7.79	-0.13	0.55	0.56

4.1.8 Summary of Findings

This pilot study aimed to examine the relationship between leadership strategies and ER. Various statistical analyses, including descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, linear regression, and reliability analysis, were employed to ensure the robustness and reliability of the findings. The dataset consisted of 20 observations with 11 items related to leadership and ER.

The descriptive statistics indicated that most items related to adaptive leadership styles and ER displayed low skewness and kurtosis, suggesting symmetric distributions. Items such as “Positive Relationships with Leaders and Colleagues” and “Being Recognised and Appreciated” had higher mean values, reflecting more positive perceptions among respondents. Conversely, items such as “How often do you receive feedback from your leader(s)?” and “Salary” showed higher standard deviations, indicating greater variability in responses.

The normality of the data was evaluated using the Shapiro-Wilk test and visual methods, including the normal Q-Q plot and histogram. The Shapiro-Wilk test indicated that the data for leadership ($W(20) = 0.963, p = .595$) and ER ($W(20) = 0.908, p = .059$) were approximately normally distributed. Visual inspections confirmed these findings, supporting the normality assumption for further analyses (Field, 2018).

Pearson’s correlation coefficient was used to examine the relationship between leadership and ER. The analysis revealed a small, non-significant positive relationship ($r(18) = .217, p = .358$), suggesting a slight tendency for ER to increase with higher leadership. However, this relationship was not statistically significant, potentially due to the small sample size, which can affect the strength and reliability of the correlation (Field, 2013).

A linear regression model was constructed to assess the predictive power of leadership on ER. The model produced an R value of .217 and an R^2 value of .047, indicating that leadership accounted for only 4.7% of the variance in ER. The regression

analysis was not statistically significant ($F(1,18) = .891, p = .358$), and the coefficient for leadership was also non-significant ($\beta = .22, p = .358$).

The reliability analysis of the 11-item scale yielded a Cronbach's Alpha of .504, indicating moderate internal consistency. The inter-item correlation matrix showed significant positive correlations among several items, suggesting some degree of consistency within the scale. However, items such as "Salary" and "Alignment with Company Values" had negative corrected item-total correlations; while the current pilot study indicated some issues with these items, it is possible that using a larger sample in future studies could provide better results. The sample size of 20 could have a significant impact on the reliability of the pilot study. Smaller sample sizes can lead to less precise estimates of reliability, as they are more susceptible to sampling error. According to Field (2018), larger samples generally provide more stable and accurate estimates of reliability. With a small sample size, there is a higher likelihood of observing chance variations, which can affect the internal consistency of the scale. This could explain the moderate reliability observed in this analysis, suggesting that increasing the sample size might help to obtain more reliable estimates and enhance the validity of the scale. Regarding the minimum number of observations per item, Nunnally (1978) recommends a minimum of 10 observations per item to achieve reliable estimates of internal consistency. This recommendation is supported by later research, which suggests that having a larger sample size increases the stability and accuracy of reliability coefficients (Costello and Osborne, 2005). Therefore, for a scale with 11 items, a minimum sample size of 110 would be ideal to ensure reliable and valid results. Hence, as this study aimed for high-

confidence results, the calculated sample size of this research was 384, ensuring reliable and valid findings. Thus, both “Salary” and “Alignment with Company Values” were maintained for further data collection and analysis.

4.1.9 Conclusion

Based on the comprehensive data analysis, several conclusions can be drawn from this pilot study. The descriptive statistics provided a foundational understanding of the data distribution, revealing generally symmetric distributions with varying degrees of response variability. The pilot study confirmed that the data distribution met assumptions of normality, thereby supporting the suitability of parametric testing methods in the main study. To enhance the scale’s sensitivity without overburdening respondents, the questionnaire was adjusted to a 5-point Likert format. Prior research suggests that 5-point scales balance response variability and reliability while maintaining simplicity for participants (e.g., Dawes, 2008), making this transition appropriate without necessitating additional pilot testing.

The correlation analysis indicated a slight positive relationship between leadership and ER, although this relationship was not statistically significant, likely due to the limited sample size. The linear regression analysis further supported this finding, showing that leadership did not significantly predict ER within this sample, accounting for a small percentage of the variance.

The reliability analysis highlighted moderate internal consistency within the 11-item scale, suggesting that while there is some degree of coherence among the items (“Salary” and “Alignment with Company Values” showed misalignment with the overall

construct), refinement in the sample size is needed. The small sample size of 20 observations leads to moderate reliability of the scale. Increasing the sample size to the calculated target of 384 provided more stable and accurate estimates of reliability (Costello and Osborne, 2005).

4.2 Main Study Results

The results section of this thesis presents a detailed analysis of the relationship between leadership strategies and ER. Using a quantitative approach (descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analyses), key leadership factors were explored. The findings reveal significant links between these leadership behaviours and ER, emphasising their role in fostering job satisfaction and reducing turnover.

4.2.1 Final Sample and Margin of Error

As calculated earlier in this dissertation (Chapter 3.5), the required sample size to achieve a 95% confidence level with a 5% MoE was 384 respondents. Nevertheless, this number was exceeded, with a total of 389 valid survey responses.

The MoE represents how much the survey results differ from the true values in the entire population; if it falls below $\pm 5\%$, results are usually considered reliable in social science research (Fowler, 2014).

The MoE is calculated using the formula: $MoE = Z \times \frac{\sqrt{p \times (1-p)}}{n}$, Z is the Z-Score, here 1.96, for 95% confidence, p is the estimated proportion of the population (as unknown, it is 0.5 for maximum variability), and n represents the sample size (Fowler, 2014); the MoE is: $MoE = 1.96 \times \frac{\sqrt{0.5 \times (1-0.5)}}{389} \approx 0.0497 \approx \pm 4.97\%$.

A MoE of $\pm 4.97\%$ shows that with 95% confidence, the population proportion is 4.97 percentage points above or below the observed sample proportion (Bryman, 2016).

4.2.2 Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive analysis summarises the responses to this thesis's survey questions. Bar charts are used to illustrate participants' perceptions of leadership and ER. As the variables are measured using ordinal Likert-type scales, statistical measures such as standard deviation are not included (Nick, 2007). Therefore, the analysis focuses on frequency distributions to describe the ordinal data.

Filter Question:

As 100% of participants are employed in the service industry, the goal of targeting solely individuals working within this sector was effectively accomplished.

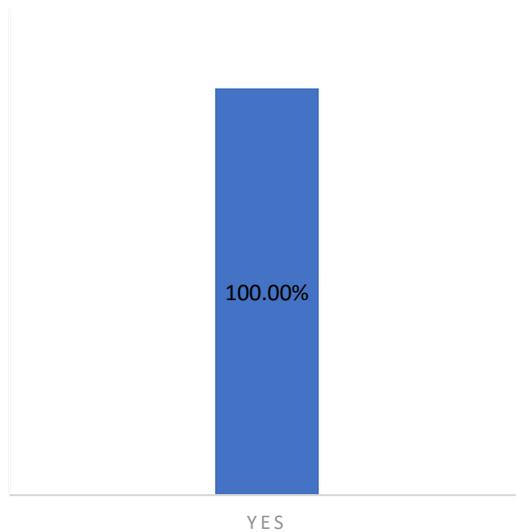


Figure 15
Filter Question "Do you Work in a Service Firm?"

Motivation by Leaders:

The data reveals that 13.4% feel “Not at all”, 33.9% “Slightly”, 32.7% “Moderately”, 17.7% “Very”, and 2.3% “Extremely” motivated. These results suggest that a large portion of the workforce experiences limited motivation from leadership, highlighting potential areas for improvement in leadership approaches.

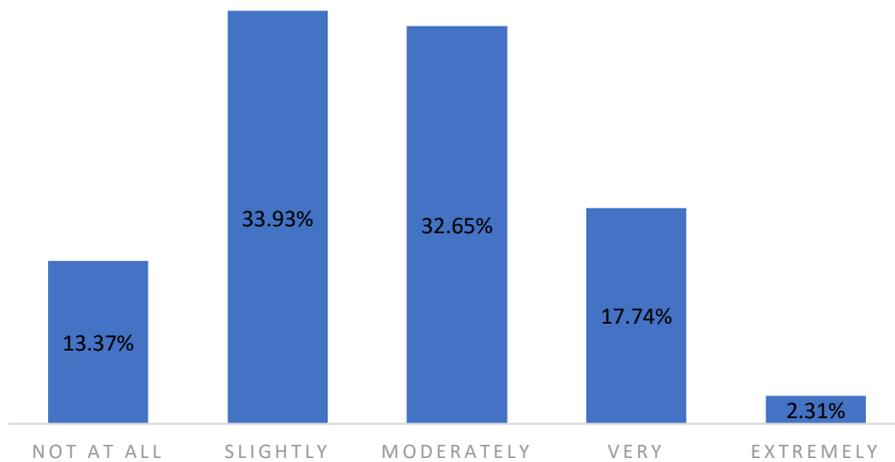


Figure 16
Percentage of Respondents Motivated by their Leader(s)

Leadership Contribution to Satisfaction:

According to the data, 10.8% of respondents are “Not at all” satisfied, 27% “Slightly”, 33.7% “Moderately”, 22.1% “Very”, and 6.4% “Extremely”. These results indicate that leadership does influence job satisfaction, but there is clear room for improvement.

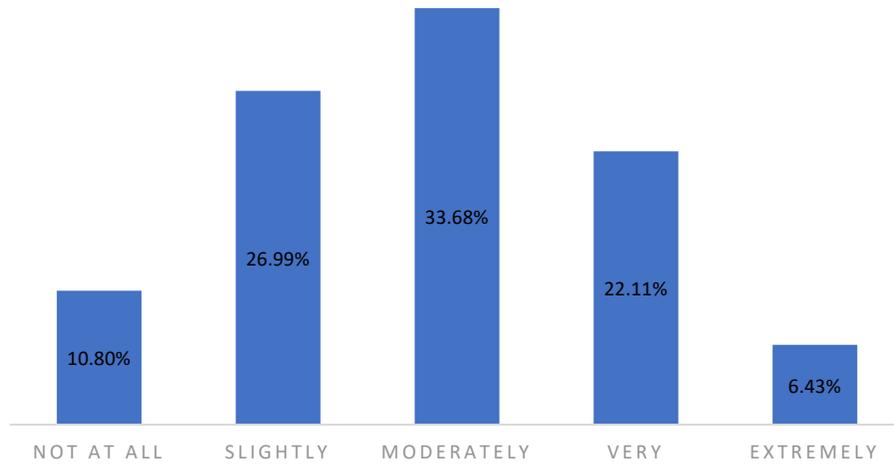


Figure 17
Percentage of Respondents Indicating Leaders Contribute to Overall Satisfaction

Leadership Contribution to Sense of Belonging:

The responses show that 4.4% of employees feel no contribution by leaders to their sense of belonging to their company, whereas 38.6% perceive their leader(s) contribute “Sometimes”, 22.9% “Rarely”, 27.5% “Often”, and 6.7% “Consistently” to their sense of belonging. This represents an opportunity for leaders to improve their efforts to foster a sense of belonging to the firm.

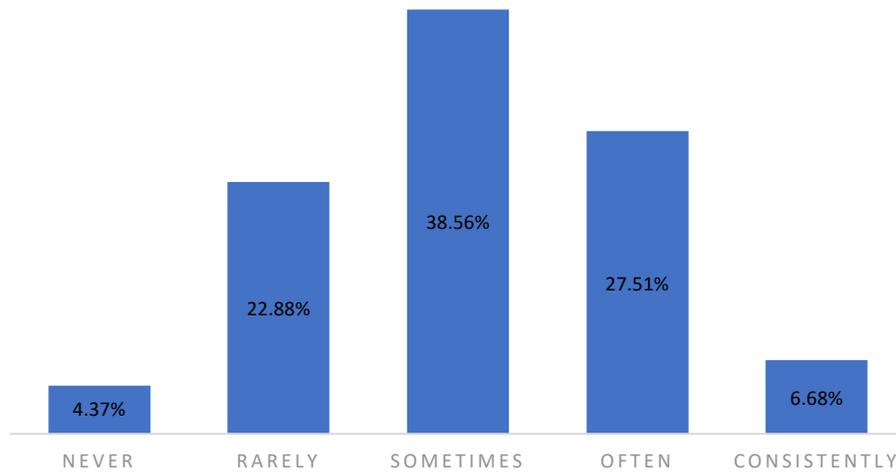


Figure 18
Percentage of Respondents who Feel a Sense of Belonging to the Firm Promoted by Leaders

Adaptability of Leaders:

Most respondents desire their leaders to be more adaptive to their needs: 13.1% wish their leader(s) adaptation to their needs to be “Extremely”, 37.3% “Very”, 23.4% “Moderate”, and 20.1% “Slightly”. Only 6.2% do not wish their leaders to adapt more to their needs. These results suggest a strong preference for adaptive leadership to employees’ needs.

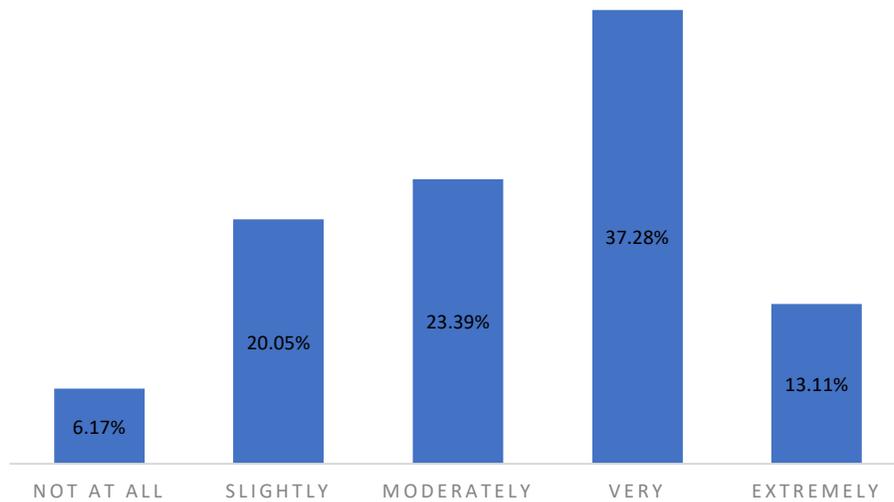


Figure 19
Percentage of Respondents Wanting their Leaders to be More Adaptive to their Needs

Feedback Frequency from Leaders:

According to the data collected, 5.4% of employees report never receiving any feedback from their leaders, while 21.6% receive feedback rarely; 37.3% indicate they receive feedback sometimes, and 28.3% state that it occurs often. Only 7.5% of respondents report receiving feedback consistently. While the majority of employees (over 60%) receive feedback at least sometimes or more frequently, nearly 27% experience infrequent feedback. This highlights a need for more consistent and structured

feedback practices implemented by leaders.

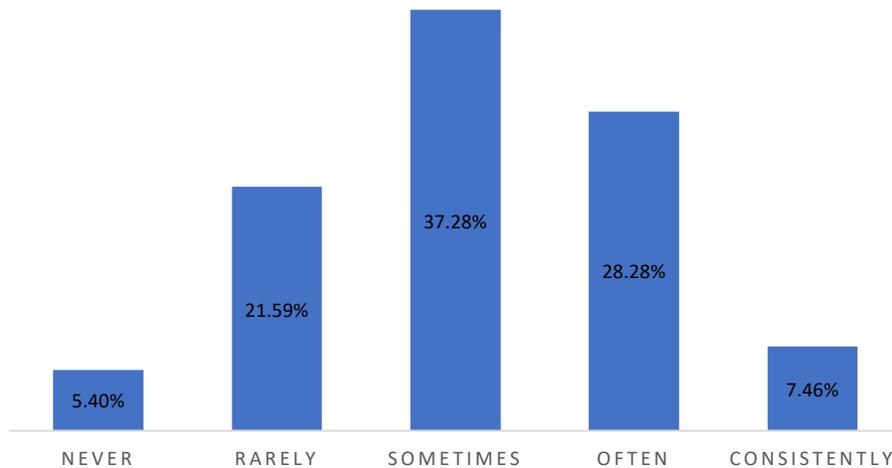


Figure 20
Percentage of Respondents Reporting Feedback Frequency from their Leaders

Importance of Salary:

Salary is viewed as a very important factor for 35% and as extremely important for 39.1% in deciding to remain with the firm, whilst only 3.1% deem it unimportant, 8.5% slightly important, and 14.4% moderately important. This underscores the importance of competitive compensation as a key element in ER efforts.

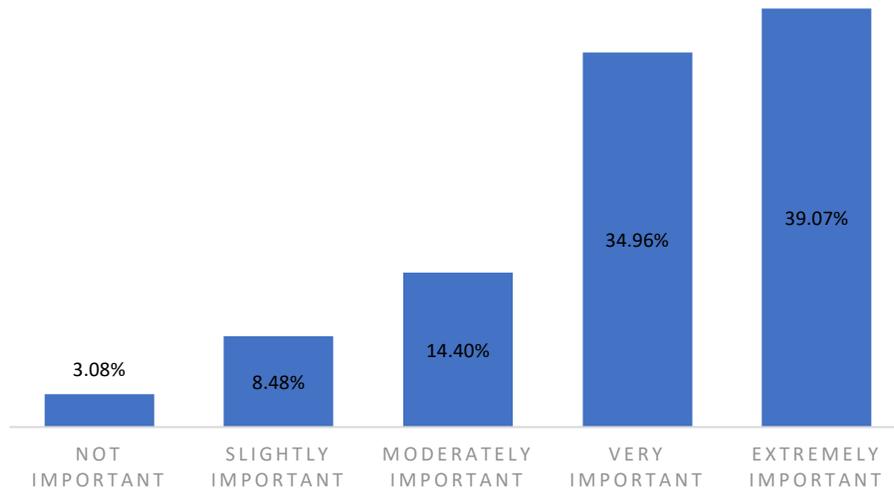


Figure 21
Percentage of Respondents Rating Salary as an Important Factor in Staying with the Firm

Development and Growth Opportunities:

Approximately 30.1% of respondents regard opportunities for development and growth for their job retention as “Extremely Important” and 38% as “Very Important”, while 16.9% find them “Moderately Important”, 11.3% “Slightly Important”, and only 3.6% do not find them significant. These results suggest that the majority of employees place high importance on development and growth opportunities for ER.

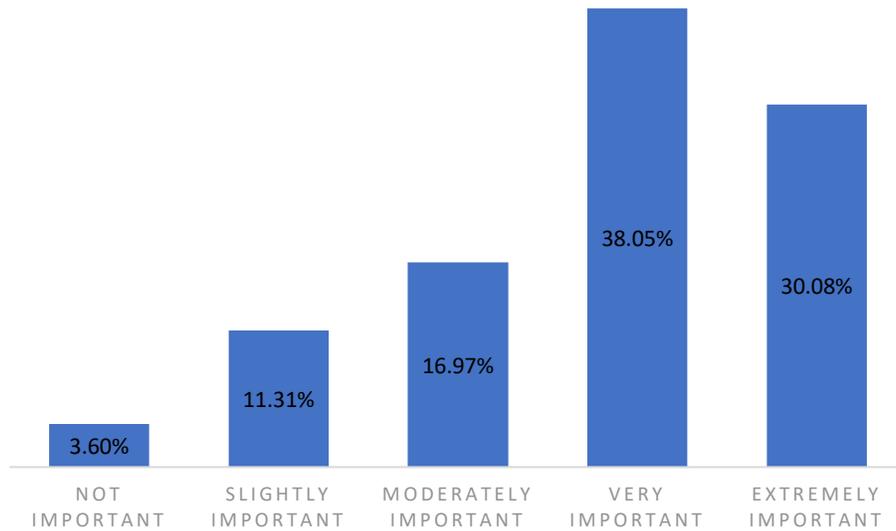


Figure 22
Percentage of Respondents Rating Development and Growth Opportunities as Important for Staying with the Firm

Effective Communication:

Effective communication is seen as extremely important by 29.3% and as very important by 39.9% of the respondents, while a total of approximately 9.5% do not prioritise it, and 21.3% find it moderately important. This discrepancy indicates that enhancing communication practices could be beneficial in creating a more cohesive workplace culture.

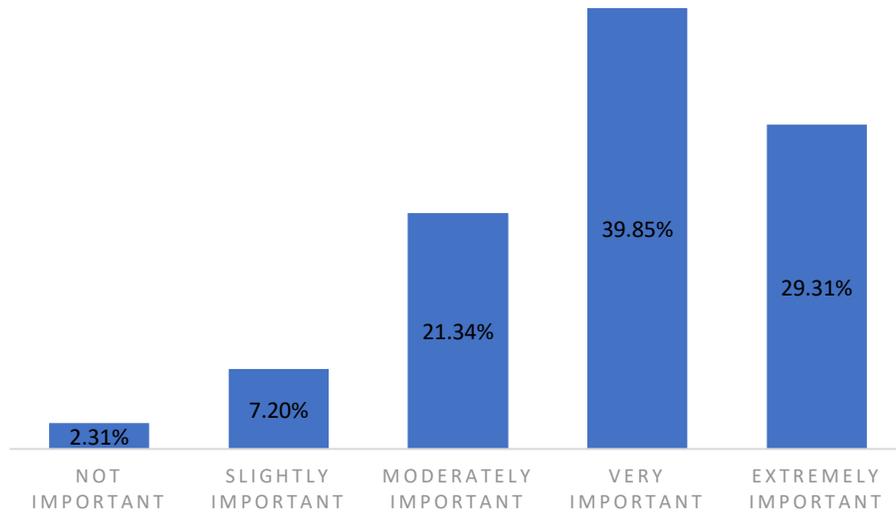


Figure 23
Percentage of Respondents Rating Effective Communication as Important for Staying with the Firm

Positive Relationships with Leaders and Colleagues:

In total, more than 70% value positive relationships with both leaders and colleagues as crucial for their decision to stay with the firm. This highlights the necessity of fostering a collaborative and supportive work environment.

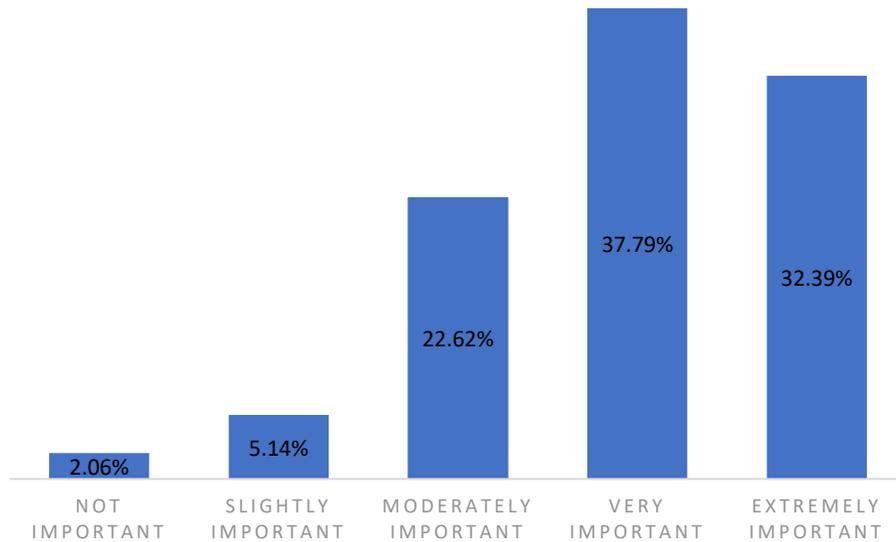


Figure 24
Percentage of Respondents Rating Positive Relationships with Leaders and Colleagues as Important for Staying with the Firm

Being Recognised and Appreciated:

An impressive 33.42% of participants view recognition and appreciation as vital to their work experience, 32.65% find it “Very Important”, 19.79% view it as “Moderately Important”, 11.31% as “Slightly Important”, and only 2.83% as not significant. This finding emphasises the importance of implementing recognition programmes to improve employee satisfaction and loyalty.

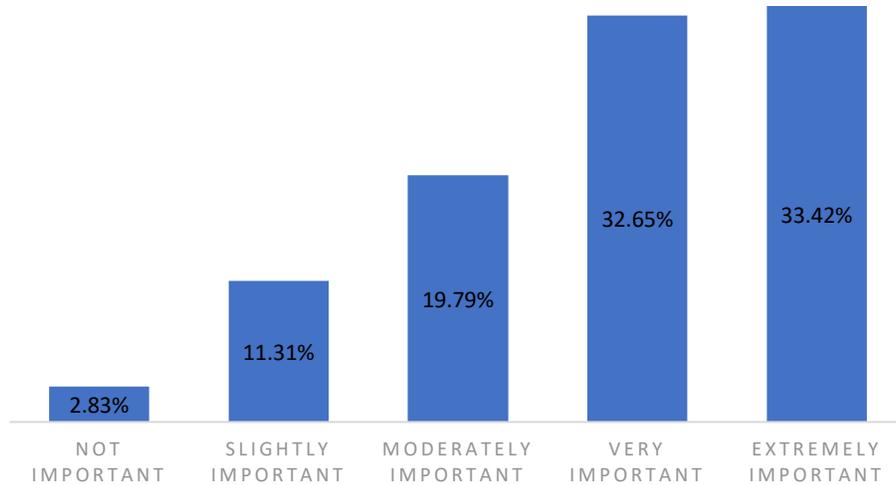


Figure 25
Percentage of Respondents Rating Recognition and Appreciation as Important for Staying with the Firm

Alignment with Company Values:

A strong 33.9% of respondents feel that alignment with the firm’s values is “Very Important” for their ongoing commitment to the organisation, 15.4% feel that it is “Extremely Important”, whereas 6.2% do not value it, 15.7% slightly, and 28.8% find its importance moderate. This suggests a deep connection between personal values and the overall company culture.

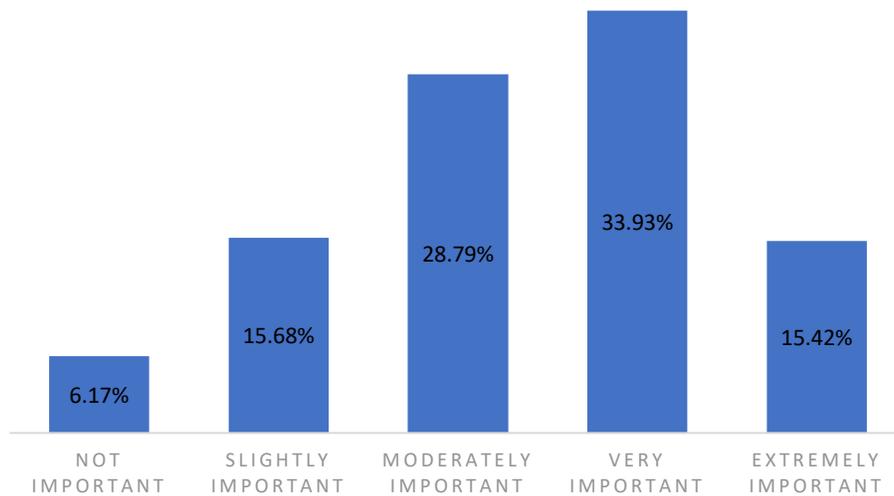


Figure 26
Percentage of Respondents Rating Alignment with Company Values as Important for Staying with the Firm

Survey Completion Time:

The time taken to complete the survey was generally short, with the majority of respondents finishing quickly: 66.8% completed the survey in less than 3 minutes, 26.7% took between 3 and 5 minutes, 5.4% took between 5 and 10 minutes, and 1% took more than 10 minutes. This shows that most participants found the survey quick and easy to complete, with the majority finishing in under 3 minutes, which is consistent with this survey design’s aim for a short completion time.

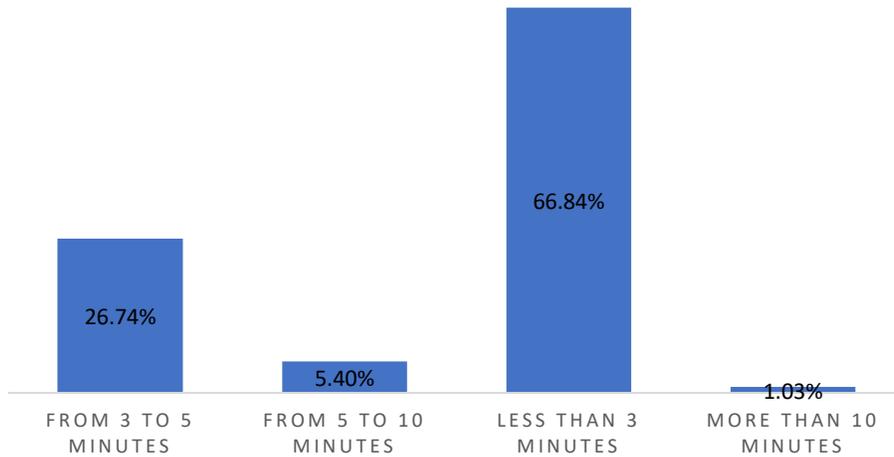


Figure 27
Survey Completion Time

Summary of Descriptive Findings:

The descriptive analysis shows that the study’s participants are moderately motivated by their leaders. However, there is room for improvement, particularly regarding the contribution of leadership to job satisfaction, sense of belonging, and the frequency of feedback. Furthermore, employees value factors such as salary, development opportunities, effective communication, positive relationships, recognition, and alignment with company values. Generally, these findings indicate the prioritisation of increasing adaptability, enhancing communication, and fostering a stronger sense of belonging by leaders to improve retention within the service sector.

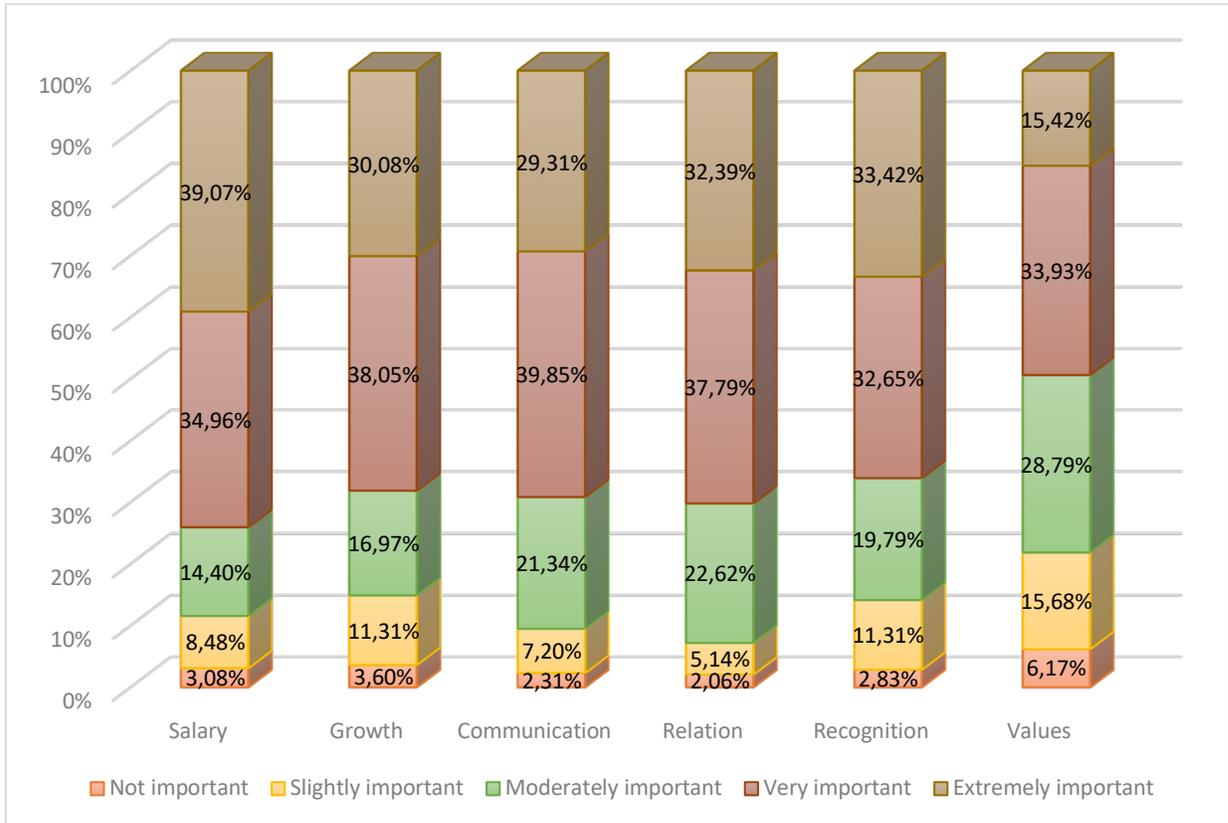


Figure 28
Percentage Distribution of Importance Ratings for Various Factors in Job Retention Decisions

4.2.3 Correlation Analysis

Kendall's tau was selected as the most suitable correlation estimator for this study, due to the ordinal nature of Likert-scale data and the potential for tied ranks, which this method handles more effectively than alternatives like Pearson's r or Spearman's rho (Sheskin, 2004).

Table 17
Correlation Analysis Choice Justification

Correlation Estimators	Suitability for this study	Justification
Kendall's tau	Highly suitable	Kendall's tau is non-parametric, works independent of data distribution, and is ideal for ordinal and ranked data (Data Science and Beyond, 2023), which aligns with the Likert-scale design of this survey; it evaluates the strength and direction of the relationship between variables by comparing pairs of data points (Okoye and Hosseini, 2024), making it a good fit for assessing leadership strategies and ER.
Spearman	Acceptable, but less ideal	Spearman's rho is non-parametric, depends on monotonic relationships, and can be used for ordinal data (Data Science and Beyond, 2023); however, it relies on differences in the ranks and Kendall's tau is often preferred for its more robust calculation through pairwise comparisons (Okoye and Hosseini, 2024).
Pearson	Not suitable	Pearson's correlation tests continuous variables and measures linear relationships (Okoye and Hosseini, 2024). Since this study's data deals with non-parametric ordinal data, this method is not appropriate, as it can lead to misinterpretations, due to missing ranked structure of responses (Field, 2013).

H1: There is a positive relationship between the implementation of adaptive leadership styles and employee retention

To test H1, Kendall's tau-b correlation analysis was conducted. This hypothesis was operationalised by examining the relationship between responses to Question 5, which asked whether employees wished their leaders were more adaptive to their needs, and the six individual ER factors listed in Question 7 (salary, development and growth

opportunities, effective communication, positive relationships with leaders and colleagues, recognition and appreciation, and alignment with company values).

The results revealed a statistically significant, weak but noticeable positive correlation between adaptiveness and salary ($\tau = .186, p < .001$), suggesting that employees who value adaptive leadership are also more likely to view salary as an important factor for staying in their job. Similarly, recognition and appreciation showed a weak positive correlation with adaptiveness ($\tau = .174, p < .001$), and effective communication demonstrated a smaller, yet still statistically significant, correlation ($\tau = .128, p = .003$).

Interestingly, the correlation between adaptiveness and development and growth opportunities was very weak ($\tau = .087, p = .040$), indicating a marginal relationship. The association with alignment with company values was also very weak but significant ($\tau = .104, p = .013$). Furthermore, there was no statistically significant association between adaptiveness and positive relationships with leaders and colleagues ($\tau = .049, p = .253$).

Cronbach's Alpha ($\alpha = 0.805$) indicated good internal consistency and was calculated to ensure the reliability of the six retention items. Based on this, an RCS was created by averaging the six retention factors.

Therefore, a correlation was calculated between adaptiveness and the RCS. The result ($\tau = .154, p < .001$) indicated a weak but noticeable positive correlation. This reinforces that employees who desire more adaptive leadership place higher importance on the factors that contribute to their retention.

Together, these findings support H1, highlighting that adaptive leadership traits are weakly but consistently associated with how employees value retention factors at work.

H2: Workplace community membership promotes higher levels of employee retention

To explore H2, Kendall's tau-b correlation analyses were conducted to examine the relationship between perceived belonging and various retention-related factors. Building on the structure established in H1, the analysis was approached in two stages. First, individual correlations were calculated between responses to the item "Do the leaders you work with closely promote your sense of belonging to the firm?" and each of the six retention factors (salary, development and growth opportunities, effective communication, positive relationships, recognition and appreciation, and alignment with company values). This item-level approach allows for a more detailed understanding of how workplace belonging may be connected to specific reasons employees consider when deciding to stay. Following this, the RCS, previously created in the context of H1, was used to assess the broader relationship between belonging and ER.

The results showed a statistically significant, very weak negative correlation between belonging and salary ($\tau = -0.103, p = .017$), indicating that employees who feel a stronger sense of belonging are slightly less likely to cite salary as a primary reason to remain in their jobs. Furthermore, weak but statistically significant positive correlations were found between belonging and the remaining five factors; correlations with development and growth opportunities ($\tau = .114, p = .008$), communication ($\tau = .143, p <$

.001), and positive relationships ($\tau = .148, p < .001$) suggest that employees with greater levels of perceived belonging place slightly more importance on these interpersonal and developmental aspects of their job. The correlation between belonging and recognition and appreciation ($\tau = .109, p = .011$) was weak but significant, indicating that those who feel a stronger sense of workplace community membership are more likely to value being acknowledged in the workplace. Likewise, the correlation between belonging and alignment with company values ($\tau = .138, p = .001$) shows that employees who feel more integrated into the workplace community view value alignment as more significant in their decision to stay in a firm.

To represent the general importance employees assign to all six retention factors, an RCS was used. Hereby, the analysis showed a weak but statistically significant positive correlation ($\tau = .133, p < .001$), indicating that employees who perceive a stronger sense of belonging, fostered by their leaders, are slightly more likely to value factors that influence their decision to stay.

Overall, the results support H2; while the strength of associations is modest, the statistical significance of both individual and composite analyses suggests that workplace community membership contributes to considerations employees view as important for staying in their job.

Leadership Composite and Retention

A composite score was created to examine the broader relationship between leadership practices and ER. This LCS combined responses from five items (Questions 2-6) covering motivation, satisfaction, belonging, adaptability, and feedback frequency.

However, the reliability of this composite was limited (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.573$), suggesting that the items may not all measure the same underlying construct.

An alternative composite was created to explore this by excluding the item on adaptability (Question 5), which resulted in significantly improved internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.743$), indicating that the remaining four items formed a more cohesive scale.

Kendall's tau-b correlation analysis showed a weak but statistically significant positive relationship between the full leadership composite (with adaptability) and the retention composite ($\tau = .203, p < .001, n = 389$). When adaptability was excluded, the correlation remained significant but slightly weaker ($\tau = .155, p < .001, n = 389$).

These findings suggest that leadership behaviours, particularly when including adaptability, are associated with the importance employees assign to key retention factors. Therefore, although the internal consistency of the full scale is limited, adaptability appears to enhance the strength of the relationship with ER considerations.

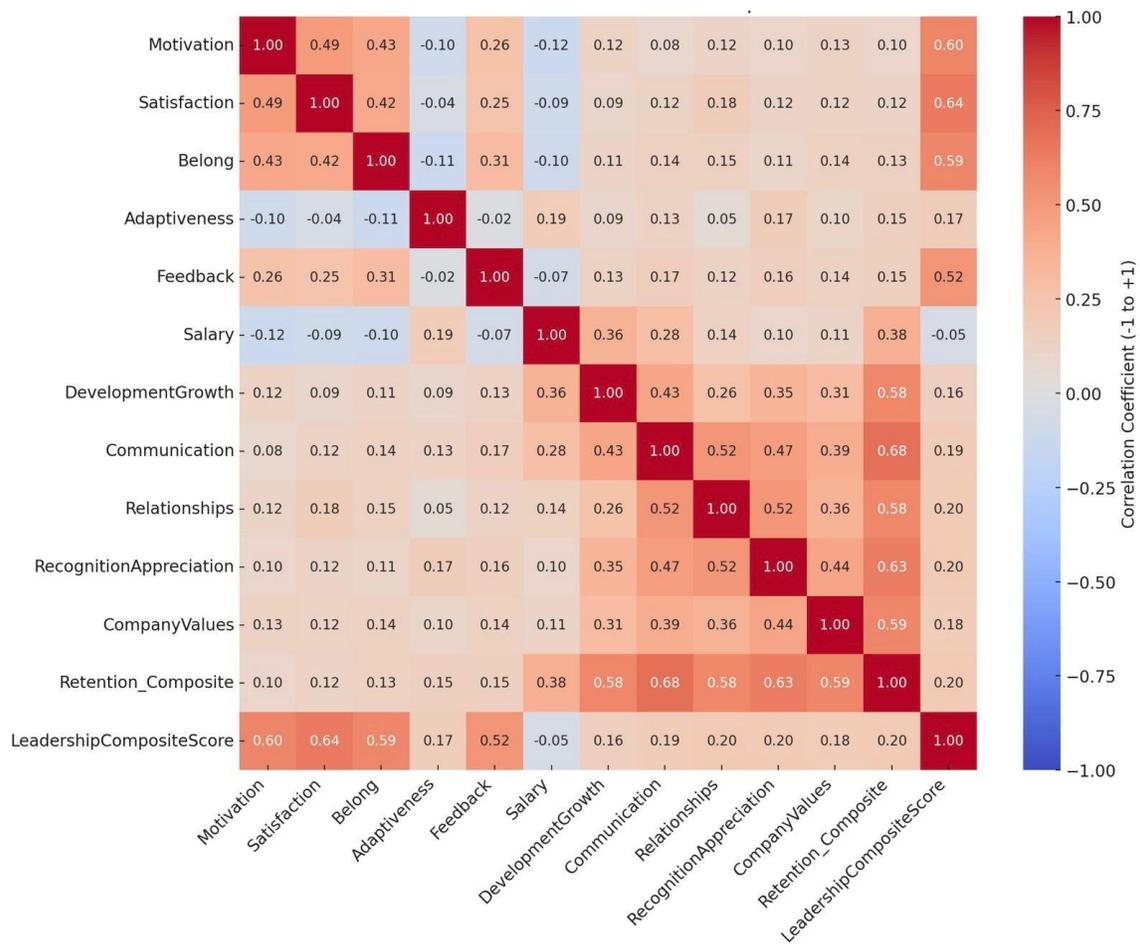


Figure 29
Correlation Heatmap of Leadership and Retention Variables

Figure 29 presents the overall correlation heatmap based on Kendall's tau-b coefficients between all measured variables. Stronger positive correlations are represented in red, while negative correlations are shown in blue. As shown, variables such as LCS, satisfaction, and retention display relatively high correlations with several others, indicating potential central roles in the dataset.

4.2.4 Normality Test for Linear Regression

Normality of residuals was assessed graphically. The histogram of residuals showed an approximately bell-shaped distribution centred around zero.

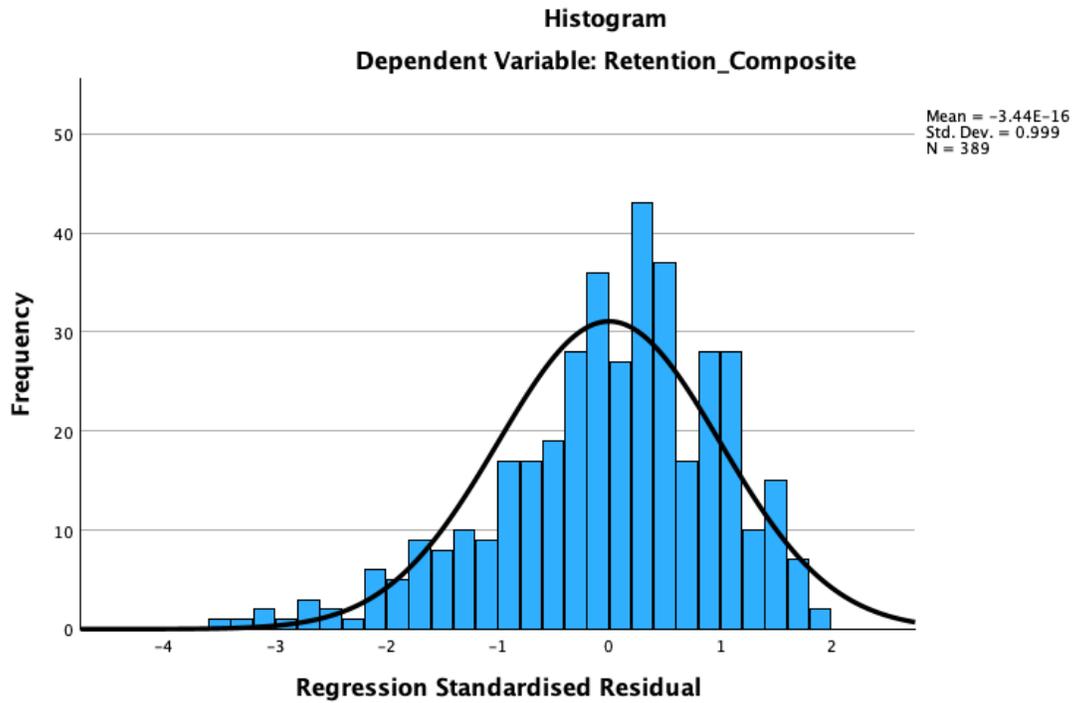


Figure 30
Distribution of Residuals

The normal P-P plot demonstrated that the points closely followed the diagonal line, indicating no major departures from normality.

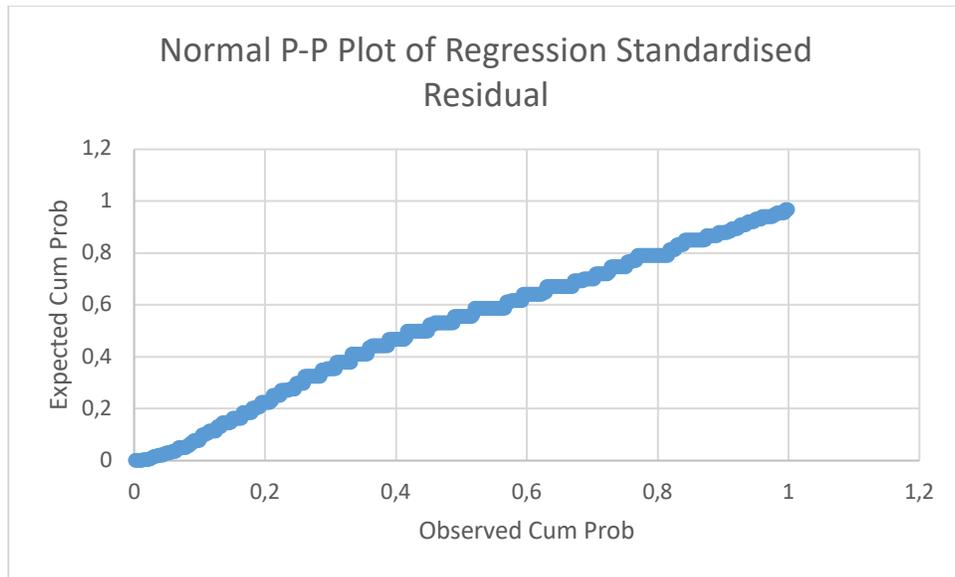


Figure 31
P-P Plot of Residuals

These visual diagnostics suggest that the assumption of normality is reasonably met, and linear regression is appropriate for further analysis.

4.2.5 Simple Linear Regression Analyses

Two simple linear regression analyses were conducted to further investigate leadership factors on ER, and to assess whether specific leadership behaviours could significantly predict employees' prioritisation of retention factors, as reflected in the RCS.

The first regression tested H1, using Adaptiveness (Question 5: "Would you wish your leader(s) to be more adaptive to your needs?") as the independent variable and the retention composite as the dependent variable.

Table 18

Regression of Leadership Adaptiveness on Retention Composite Score

Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients		95.0% Confidence Interval for B		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	3.307	.117		28.337	<.001	3.078	3.537
	Adaptivene ss	.147	.033	.219	4.414	<.001	.082	.213

a. Dependent Variable: Retention_Composite

The model was statistically significant, $F(1, 387) = 19.49, p < .001$, explaining approximately 4.8% of the variance in retention importance ($R^2 = .048$). The unstandardised coefficient for adaptiveness was $B = 0.147$ ($SE = 0.033$), indicating that for every one-point increase in the perceived need for leader adaptiveness, there was a corresponding 0.15-point increase in the importance employees place on retention factors. The standardised beta coefficient was $\beta = .219, t = 4.41, p < .001$, suggesting a weak but statistically significant positive relationship between adaptive leadership and retention factors.

Additionally, the 95% confidence interval for the unstandardised coefficient of adaptiveness was [0.082, 0.213]. This suggests that the true value of the coefficient can be estimated with 95% confidence to lie between 0.082 and 0.213; since zero is not included in this confidence interval, this provides further evidence that adaptiveness has a statistically significant effect on ER (Rachman et al, 2024). This interval reflects the precision of the estimate and reinforces the strength of the relationship between leadership adaptiveness and ER. Hence, H1 was supported.

The second regression tested H2, using belonging (Question 4: “Do the leaders you work with closely promote your sense of belonging to the firm?”) as the predictor variable.

Table 19
Regression of Leadership Belonging on Retention Composite Score

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients		Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t		Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	3.393		26.890	<.001	3.145	3.641
	Belong	.130	.168	3.347	<.001	.054	.207

a. Dependent Variable: Retention_Composite

This model was also statistically significant, $F(1, 387) = 11.20, p < .001$, explaining slightly less variance in the RCS ($R^2 = .028$). This indicates that for every one-point increase in leadership-promoted belonging, the RCS increases by 0.13 points. The unstandardised coefficient for belonging was $B = 0.130$ ($SE = 0.039$), and the standardised beta was $\beta = .168, t = 3.35, p < .001$. These results suggest that a greater sense of belonging promoted by leadership is weakly but significantly associated with a higher importance placed on retention-related factors. The 95% confidence interval for belonging was [0.054, 0.207]; as with adaptiveness, the confidence interval does not include zero, supporting the conclusion that this relationship is statistically significant (Field, 2013). Therefore, H2 was supported.

Additionally, motivation, satisfaction, and feedback were tested through simple linear regression, and all three demonstrated a statistically significant positive

relationship with retention. Motivation ($B = 0.107, p = .005$), satisfaction ($B = 0.121, p < .001$), and feedback ($B = 0.142, p < .001$) were all positively related to the RCS.

4.2.6 Multicollinearity

To ensure the validity of the multiple regression analysis, multicollinearity was assessed, as it can occur when independent variables are highly correlated (Field, 2013). Thus, the VIF and tolerance statistics were examined. In this analysis, all VIF values were below 5, and all tolerance values exceeded 0.20, indicating no problematic multicollinearity; these tests are essential when using multiple predictors to confirm that they are not excessively correlated, allowing the multiple regression model to provide reliable results (Field, 2013; Hair et al, 2010).

Table 20
Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Retention Composite Score

Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error				Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	2.517	.191		13.154	<.001	2.140	2.893		
	Motivation	.029	.046	.038	.621	.535	-.062	.119	.620	1.612
	Satisfaction	.057	.042	.082	1.348	.178	-.026	.140	.634	1.577
	Belonging	.072	.047	.093	1.547	.123	-.020	.164	.643	1.556
	Adaptiveness	.162	.033	.240	4.930	<.001	.097	.226	.980	1.020
	Feedback	.091	.040	.121	2.286	.023	.013	.169	.830	1.205

a. Dependent Variable: Retention_Composite

4.2.7 Multiple Regression Analysis

To further investigate the predictive relationship between leadership behaviours and ER (as measured through the RCS), a standard multiple linear regression was conducted using five leadership-related variables: motivation, satisfaction, belonging, adaptiveness, and feedback frequency. These variables were entered simultaneously as predictors.

The overall model was statistically significant, $F(5, 383) = 9.52, p < .001$, indicating that the set of leadership factors significantly predicts retention.

Table 21
ANOVA (Main Study)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	24.324	5	4.865	9.517	<.001 ^b
	Residual	195.789	383	.511		
	Total	220.114	388			

a. Dependent Variable: Retention_Composite

b. Predictors: (Constant), Feedback, Adaptiveness, Satisfaction, Belong, Motivation

The model accounted for approximately 11.1% of the variance in retention scores ($R^2 = .111$), with an adjusted $R^2 = .099$, suggesting a modest but meaningful effect.

Table 22
Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.332 ^a	.111	.099	.71498

a. Predictors: (Constant), Feedback, Adaptiveness, Satisfaction, Belong, Motivation

Adaptiveness was the strongest individual predictor ($B = 0.162, \beta = 0.240, p < .001$), indicating that higher perceived adaptability in leadership was significantly

associated with greater employee emphasis on retention factors; the 95% confidence interval for adaptiveness was [0.097, 0.226]. This means that, holding all other predictors constant, a one-point increase in the adaptiveness score corresponds to a 0.162-point increase in the RCS. Since the p-value is less than .05, it can be concluded that adaptiveness has a statistically significant positive effect on retention at the 95% confidence level.

Feedback frequency also showed a significant positive association ($B = 0.091, \beta = 0.121, p = .023$), suggesting that employees who receive more regular feedback are more likely to value retention-related drivers. The 95% confidence interval for feedback was [0.013, 0.169], indicating a positive but smaller effect than adaptiveness.

Motivation ($p = .535$), satisfaction ($p = .178$), and belonging ($p = .123$) did not have a statistically significant effect on the RCS at the 95% confidence level. These non-significant findings may suggest overlapping variance among predictors, particularly where adaptiveness and feedback may mediate broader satisfaction or motivation effects. This highlights the interconnectedness of leadership behaviours and their influence on retention; this multicollinearity or conceptual overlap may mask some individual effects (Hayes, 2018).

Table 23
Coefficients of Multiple Regression

Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients		95.0% Confidence Interval for B		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	2.517	.191		13.154	<.001	2.140	2.893
	Motivation	.029	.046	.038	.621	.535	-.062	.119
	Satisfaction	.057	.042	.082	1.348	.178	-.026	.140

Belong	.072	.047	.093	1.547	.123	-.020	.164
Adaptivene	.162	.033	.240	4.930	<.001	.097	.226
ss							
Feedback	.091	.040	.121	2.286	.023	.013	.169

a. Dependent Variable: Retention_Composite

To sum up, when all five variables were included in a multiple regression model, adaptiveness and feedback remained statistically significant, with adaptiveness showing the strongest effect ($\beta = .240$) and feedback a smaller but meaningful contribution ($\beta = .121$). This suggests that, while motivation, satisfaction, and belonging each influence retention, adaptiveness is the most important predictor when considering all factors together. The reason for this could be that adaptiveness captures much of what the other variables represent, making them redundant in the presence of adaptiveness.

4.2.8 Summary of Findings

Overall, the results of this study show that leadership behaviours influence ER; employees who find their leaders to be adaptive value factors such as salary, recognition, and communication. Furthermore, although belonging, fostered by leaders, showed an impact on ER, adaptiveness was shown to be the most significant predictor of retention factors.

Furthermore, motivation, satisfaction, and feedback had a positive effect on ER, but their effects were weaker when adaptiveness was taken into account. Hence, adaptability, as a key retention strategy in leadership, appears to foster ER, making it a key retention strategy.

Correlation analyses confirmed that adaptive leadership and workplace belonging are positively related to employees' valuation of retention factors. Notably, adaptability

emerged as a significant predictor across correlation, simple regression, and multiple regression analyses. The importance of regular feedback was also reinforced, particularly in multiple regression analysis.

Some leadership dimensions, such as motivation and satisfaction, did not reach statistical significance when considered with other variables, suggesting potential overlapping variance between predictors. Adaptive behaviour and feedback may mediate broader leadership effects. Despite these modest effect sizes, the statistical significance of these findings implies that even small shifts in leadership behaviours could have meaningful implications for improving ER.

The findings of this dissertation address the research question:

What high-confidence strategies can leaders in the service sector implement to effectively retain their employees?

Specifically, this study identifies adaptive leadership and frequent feedback as the most consistent predictors of ER factors across both simple and multiple regression analyses.

4.2.9 Limitations of Results

The study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings.

First, several correlations between leadership items and retention factors were weak, which indicates that unmeasured factors may also influence ER (Hair et al, 2010).

Additionally, the LCS showed a moderate internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.573$), which suggests that the combined items may not fully capture the same construct.

The composite score excluding adaptiveness showed improved internal consistency. This suggests that future studies may benefit from refining the measurement of leadership behaviours for reliability enhancement. According to Field (2013), Cronbach's Alpha values below 0.7 indicate potential reliability concerns, which may affect the accuracy of such composite measures in predicting retention factors.

Lastly, further retention items, such as work-life balance, were not considered, potentially leaving out key elements that affect ER.

4.2.10 Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings of this study suggest that leadership behaviours, particularly adaptiveness, play a significant role in influencing ER. Employees who perceive their leaders as adaptive tend to place greater importance on factors such as salary, recognition, and communication, showing that adaptive leadership is essential for enhancing retention. Furthermore, while belonging, fostered by leadership, showed an impact, adaptiveness emerged as the most significant predictor of retention factors.

Additionally, motivation, satisfaction, and feedback showed positive associations with ER. However, their effects were weaker in the context of adaptiveness, highlighting that leadership adaptability plays an important role in shaping ER decisions, and making it a key strategy for retention.

Correlation analyses confirmed that adaptive leadership and workplace belonging are positively related to employees' valuation of retention factors. Notably, adaptability emerged as a significant predictor across correlation, simple regression, and multiple

regression analyses. The importance of regular feedback was also reinforced, particularly in multiple regression analysis.

While some leadership dimensions, such as motivation and satisfaction, did not reach statistical significance when considered alongside other variables, this suggests potential overlapping variance between predictors. Adaptive behaviour and feedback may mediate broader leadership effects. Despite these modest effect sizes, the statistical significance of these findings implies that even small shifts in leadership behaviours could have meaningful implications for improving ER.

CHAPTER V:

DISCUSSION

5.1 Discussion of Results

This study examined the influence of several leadership behaviours on ER within the service sector. The normality assumption for linear regression was met, supporting the validity of the analyses. Correlation analyses using Kendall's tau showed that adaptive leadership and workplace belonging were weak but consistently associated with retention-related factors, such as salary, development opportunities, communication, relationships, recognition, and value alignment. Simple linear regressions revealed significant positive relationships between adaptive leadership and ER (H1), as well as between leadership-promoted workplace community membership and ER (H2). Furthermore, motivation, satisfaction, and feedback frequency were positively correlated with ER, though in the multiple regression model, only adaptive leadership and feedback remained significant.

The results that adaptive leadership impacts retention are supported through prior research that shows the importance of flexible leadership (Yukl and Mahsud, 2010). Adaptability is critical to leadership effectiveness (Pulakos et al, 2000), particularly during times of change and crisis (Sott and Bender, 2025; Uhl-Bien and Arena, 2018), and empirical evidence confirms that adaptive leadership predicts organisational outcomes like effectiveness (Nebiyu and Kassahun, 2021), which in turn is linked to ER (Djastuti, 2015). Hence, adaptive leaders can foster employee commitment, thereby

reinforcing adaptiveness as a strategy for improving ER. The descriptive results of this work also showed that a majority of employees wished their leaders were more adaptive to their needs. This also aligns with the regression findings and highlights the importance employees place on adaptability as a leadership trait for retention.

Furthermore, the positive link between workplace belonging and retention supports research on the importance of social identity and community (Baumeister and Leary, 1995; Haslam et al, 2009). However, belonging lost significance in the multiple regression, which indicates that it may not act independently. Instead, its influence may operate indirectly through leadership adaptiveness. Prior research highlights that leaders play a central role in shaping employees' sense of belonging by helping them navigate tensions between individuality and group membership (Kreiner et al, 2006). Building on this perspective, leadership adaptiveness can be expected to foster stronger feelings of belonging, which in turn may contribute to retention.

Moreover, the significance of feedback frequency in the multiple regression supports studies showing that regular, constructive feedback improves satisfaction and retention by clarifying expectations and reinforcing good behaviours (Kluger and DeNisi, 1996; Steelman and Snell, 2004). This suggests that feedback is one of the key leadership practices for reducing turnover. The descriptive findings of this dissertation indicate that almost one-third of participants in this study reported receiving feedback rarely or never.

While this reflects only the current sample, it points to potential shortcomings in feedback practices among leaders in the service sector.

However, motivation and satisfaction lost significance in the multiple regression analysis, suggesting that their effect on retention is explained by leadership behaviours. This interpretation is consistent with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, which emphasises that employees remain motivated when their psychological and social needs are supported through effective leadership (Maslow, 1943). As Bronet (2023) highlights, opportunities for self-improvement and growth, key aspects of self-actualisation, are essential for sustaining motivation and retention. Similarly, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory underscores the importance of recognition and responsibility (Herzberg, 1966), while LMX Theory unveils the quality of leader-employee relationships as a driver of motivation and satisfaction (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995).

The model accounted for a modest share of retention ($R^2 = .111$), which makes sense because retention is also shaped by factors like pay, culture, and organisational support (Allen et al, 2003). The LCS showed only moderate reliability, indicating that the measurement tool could be improved in future research.

5.2 Discussion of the Research Question

This section addresses this study's research question:

What high-confidence strategies can leaders in the service sector implement to effectively retain their employees?

The evidence from this study supports the implementation of leadership adaptiveness as a key strategy for ER in service firms. Adaptiveness allows leaders to respond to employees' needs and demands, thereby fostering engagement and reducing turnover intentions (Samosir, 2025). Furthermore, practical strategies include seeking

regular feedback from employees, adjusting communication styles, and providing personalised support to diverse workforce groups (Roberson and Perry, 2022; Shore and Chung, 2022).

Moreover, cultivating a strong workplace community or sense of belonging emerges as an important strategy. Belonging is not simply about social interaction, but about leaders creating inclusive environments where employees feel recognised, valued, and connected to the wider organisational purpose (Baumeister and Leary, 1995; Haslam et al, 2009). Hereby, leaders can foster belonging by encouraging team cohesion, recognising individual contributions, and aligning organisational practices with employee identities (Roberson and Perry, 2022; Shore and Chung, 2022). In addition, research shows that when leaders promote fairness and acknowledge diverse perspectives, employees are more likely to perceive inclusion (Shore et al, 2011) and experience psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999), which in turn may foster identification with the organisation and strengthen retention.

Regular, constructive feedback is also identified as a high-confidence retention tactic, serving as a mechanism through which leaders can clarify role expectations and reinforce valued behaviours (London, 2003). Structured performance discussions and frequent informal check-ins are recommended to be integrated into leadership practices.

Finally, while motivation and satisfaction are important for retention, their effects appear to be indirect or mediated by leadership behaviours. Thus, leaders may focus on creating an adaptive, inclusive environment that inherently enhances motivation and satisfaction, rather than addressing these factors in isolation.

In summary, this study reinforces the value of leadership adaptiveness, workplace belonging, and feedback as empirically supported, high-confidence strategies for reducing turnover in the service sector.

5.3 Discussion of Hypotheses

H1: There is a positive relationship between the implementation of adaptive leadership styles and employee retention.

This hypothesis was strongly supported by the data. Adaptive leadership had the most robust predictive power among the variables tested, aligning with theoretical models that underscore flexibility as essential for leader effectiveness (Yukl and Mahsud, 2010). Adaptiveness enables leaders to respond to employee needs and environmental changes, which enhances retention by increasing perceived organisational support and job satisfaction (Eisenberger et al, 1986).

The finding also corresponds with empirical studies linking adaptive behaviours, such as personalised support and responsiveness, to lower turnover rates (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995; Pulakos et al, 2000). The significant coefficient and confidence interval further strengthen the evidence that adaptiveness is a reliable, impactful predictor of retention outcomes.

H2: Workplace community membership promotes higher levels of employee retention.

This hypothesis received partial support. While belonging was significantly associated with retention in simple regression, it lost significance in the multiple regression context, suggesting its effect may be subsumed or mediated by other

leadership behaviours such as adaptiveness and feedback. This pattern echoes findings from Social Identity Theory, which posit that belonging influences retention indirectly through psychological engagement and identification (Haslam et al, 2009).

Nevertheless, the presence of a statistically significant simple relationship reinforces the importance of fostering belonging in the workplace. Leaders who nurture social connections and community can enhance retention by meeting employees' fundamental need for affiliation (Baumeister and Leary, 1995). Future research could explore the mediating mechanisms linking belonging to retention more explicitly.

CHAPTER VI:

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Summary

This research investigated high-confidence leadership strategies that effectively promote ER within the service sector and addressed the research question:

What high-confidence strategies can leaders in the service sector implement to effectively retain their employees?

Two hypotheses were tested:

H1: There is a positive relationship between the implementation of adaptive leadership styles and employee retention.

H2: Workplace community membership promotes higher levels of employee retention.

Using a quantitative approach, the study employed simple and multiple linear regression analyses to explore the relationships between adaptive leadership, workplace belonging, motivation, satisfaction, feedback frequency, and ER. Results confirmed a strong, positive link between adaptive leadership and ER, validating H1. Additionally, workplace community membership showed a significant positive correlation with retention in simple regression, but this effect diminished when considered alongside adaptive leadership and feedback, partially supporting H2.

The study also identified feedback frequency as a significant predictor of retention, suggesting that leaders who provide frequent, constructive feedback contribute

to lower turnover intentions. Conversely, motivation and satisfaction, while positively correlated with retention in isolation, did not maintain significance within the multiple regression model, implying these factors may be indirectly influenced by leadership behaviours.

These findings corroborate and extend existing literature on leadership and retention (Haslam et al, 2009; Yukl and Mahsud, 2010), emphasising the critical role of adaptive leadership in dynamic service environments and the importance of fostering belonging and continuous communication to reduce turnover.

6.2 Theoretical Implications

This research contributes to leadership and organisational behaviour theory by empirically reinforcing the significance of adaptive leadership styles in promoting ER. Adaptive leadership, conceptualised as flexibility and responsiveness to employee and situational demands, has been largely theorised (Heifetz et al, 2009) but less frequently quantified in relation to retention outcomes within the service sector. This study fills that gap and suggests adaptive leadership directly influences retention by enhancing employees' perceptions of organisational support (Eisenberger et al, 1986).

The findings also support Social Identity Theory frameworks, affirming that workplace belonging contributes to retention by fulfilling intrinsic social needs (Baumeister and Leary, 1995; Haslam et al, 2009). However, the interaction between belonging and adaptive leadership indicates that belonging may operate as a mediator or moderator rather than an independent driver, warranting more nuanced theoretical exploration.

Moreover, this research strengthens leadership theory by linking adaptive leadership to broader frameworks. Psychological safety emerges as a relevant explanatory lens: leaders who provide constructive feedback and recognition foster safe environments that reduce turnover intentions (Edmondson, 1999). Similarly, the results align with EI models, as adaptability, empathy, and recognition reflect core EI competencies (Goleman, 1995). Finally, the modest explanatory power suggests that ER would be better studied as a multidimensional phenomenon, shaped not only by leadership but also by cultural and organisational factors.

6.3 Practical Implications

For practitioners, the evidence highlights adaptive leadership as a high-impact ER strategy. Service sector leaders are encouraged to prioritise developing adaptive competencies, including active listening, flexibility in management practices, and responsiveness to employee feedback (Pulakos et al, 2000), for instance, through leadership training programmes that integrate these skills.

Moreover, fostering a strong sense of community within the workplace emerges as an essential complementary practice. Hence, leaders who create inclusive environments that promote social integration and recognition strengthen employee attachment and reduce turnover risks (Ostroff et al, 2012). To do so, leaders can build belonging by cultivating inclusive cultures, encouraging collaboration, and ensuring that employees feel recognised and valued – for instance, by retaining talent through understanding and adapting to diverse values and communication styles (Hofstede, 2001).

Finally, instituting frequent and structured feedback mechanisms to clarify expectations, support employee development, and build trust, all of which are linked to improved retention (Kluger and DeNisi, 1996; Steelman and Snell, 2004). Organisations could implement formal feedback systems, for example, through encouraging informal, ongoing communication.

6.4 Recommendations for Future Research

Future research could pursue several directions.

First, mediation and moderation models may clarify how belonging and feedback operate within the relationship between adaptive leadership and retention; mediation helps to explain how or why leadership influences turnover, whereas moderation tests when or for whom this effect is stronger or weaker (Baron and Kenny, 1986).

Second, longitudinal designs, which involve following the same participants over an extended period of time, might help establish causality by tracking turnover over time (Ployhart and Vandenberg, 2010).

Third, cross-cultural studies could assess whether these leadership strategies function across countries or whether cultural context moderates their effects (Hofstede, 2001).

Furthermore, qualitative research, such as focus groups, could also provide richer insights into employees' experiences of belonging, recognition, and adaptability. A prior qualitative study within a Swiss service firm by Marquardt (2023), which employed interviews, highlighted the relevance of leadership practices for ER, such as adaptiveness.

Finally, refining leadership measurement tools by, for instance, incorporating multi-source feedback, could strengthen the reliability and validity of findings. Multi-source feedback, also known as 360-degree feedback, refers to collecting evaluations from supervisors, peers, and subordinates rather than relying on a single source, providing a broader assessment of leadership (London and Smither, 1995).

6.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study affirms that adaptive leadership stands as a robust and high-confidence strategy for enhancing ER in the service sector. By tailoring leadership approaches to meet employee needs and environmental challenges, leaders have the potential to foster organisational commitment and reduce turnover. Workplace community membership and frequent feedback appear to be critical complementary factors that enhance the efficacy of adaptive leadership.

These findings advance theoretical understanding and offer actionable guidance for leaders aiming to retain valuable human capital in increasingly competitive service markets. Continued research and practice improvements based on these insights hold promise for building resilient, engaged, and stable service organisations.

APPENDIX A

PILOT STUDY: SURVEY COVER LETTER AND INFORMED CONSENT

Dear Participant,

I am a doctoral candidate at the Swiss School of Business and Management Geneva. As part of my doctoral research, I am conducting a **study** on leadership strategies for employee retention in the service sector.

The purpose of this study is to generate valuable insights into how leadership practices can improve employee satisfaction and retention.

The survey will take approximately **3 minutes** to complete. Please note:

- Participation is entirely **voluntary**.
- Your responses are **anonymous and strictly confidential**.
- Data will be used exclusively for **academic research purposes**.

By completing the questionnaire, you indicate your consent to participate in this study.

If you have any questions about the survey, please do not hesitate to contact me.

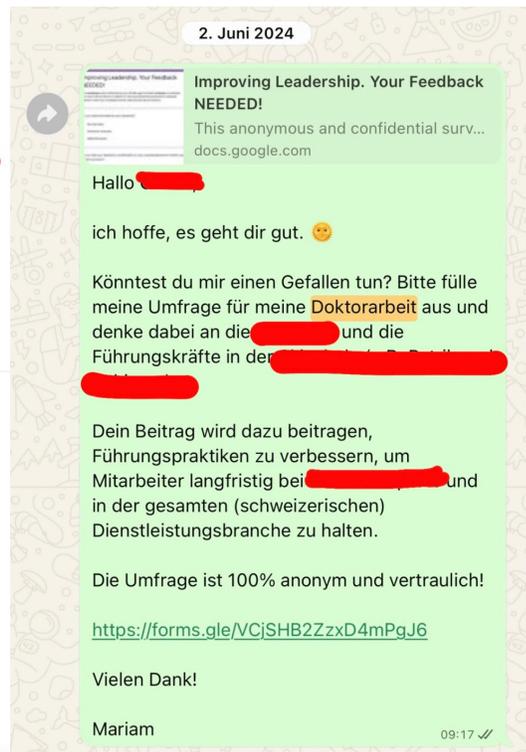
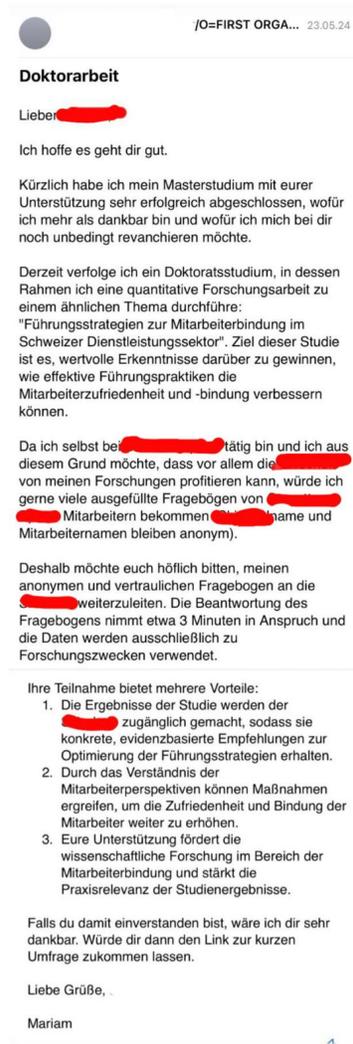
Thank you very much for your time and valuable contribution.

Sincerely,
Mariam Marquardt
Doctoral Candidate
Swiss School of Business and Management Geneva

APPENDIX B

PILOT STUDY: RECRUITMENT PROOF

Email and WhatsApp Invitation



APPENDIX C

MAIN STUDY: CONSENT STATEMENT AND RECRUITMENT PROOF

Google Forms Survey – Implied Consent Statement

The main study applied an implied consent procedure, meaning that participants' voluntarily agreed to take part in a study through their actions (e.g., by proceeding with an anonymous survey) after being provided with sufficient information about the research (Sieber and Tolich, 2013).

Improving Leadership
in the SERVICE
INDUSTRY. Your
Feedback is Needed.

This **anonymous** and confidential survey will take approximately **3 minutes** to complete. Your input will contribute to insights for improving leadership practices for employee retention within the service industry. All responses will be aggregated and analysed collectively to ensure your confidentiality.

IMPORTANT: This survey is for individuals employed in a service firm. Please do not participate unless you meet this requirement.

P.S: This survey contains credits to get free survey responses at SurveySwap.io

LinkedIn Recruitment Post

Mariam Marquardt · Sie
Doctoral Candidate | Entrepreneur | Globally Active
10 Monate · Bearbeitet · 🌐

Calling All Individuals Working In Service Firms: Your Insights Are Needed!

I am conducting doctoral research to improve leadership practices for employee retention in the service industry, and your feedback is essential!

Employee turnover costs companies millions in lost talent and productivity. According to Hebenstreit (2008), turnover costs can vary from 50% to 200% of a former employee's yearly salary, highlighting that employee turnover is a critical issue globally.

To illustrate this issue, consider the Swiss service sector with a 19,4% attrition rate (Federal Statistic Office, 2023) as an example: a mid-sized Swiss company with 100 employees could face annual costs of 773.994 CHF to over 3 million CHF. For larger organisations with 1000 employees, these costs can skyrocket to 32 million CHF or more. These insights highlight challenges relevant to the service industry worldwide!

This **3-minute, anonymous survey** will help identify effective leadership strategies to support workforce stability.

🔗 **Take the Survey:** <https://lnkd.in/eRT-wHBX>

📌 **Note: For individuals working in service firms only.**

Thank you for contributing to positive change in the service industry!

APPENDIX D

MAIN STUDY: SAMPLE SIZE AND DATA COLLECTION PROOF

SurveyCircle Study Dashboard Screenshot (showing total participants, duration, and completion status)

Your Current Survey						
Short Title	User Rating	Duration (in min)	Donation	Raffle	Participants (total)	Status
Improving Leadership in Service	(47)	3 - 5			47	Deactivated
Full title	Improving Leadership for Employee Retention in the Service Industry					
Keywords	Leadership, retention, service industry, management, business, leaders					
Field of study	Business / Management					
University	Swiss School of Business Management					
Survey Manager	Mariam Marquardt					
Reason for survey	Dissertation					
Language	English					
Target audience	▲ Participants currently employed in the service industry					
Online in	Region 1 (primary), Region 2					
Recommended devices						
Show star rating?	No					
Type of research:	Commercial research project					
Link to the survey (URL):	https://forms.gle/dYfncuagHhgVYc81A					
Link to the study on SurveyCircle	https://www.surveycircle.com/QHY2L4/					
Online from:	Tuesday, 10/29/2024 at 17:51					
Online until:	Saturday, 05/17/2025 at 23:59					
Extension possible from:	Saturday, 05/03/2025 at 00:01					
<p>Please note: In order for the participants of your study to be credited with points for their participation, the Survey Code of your study must always be visible on the last page of your questionnaire. Simply use this line of text</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Redeem the following Survey Code at https://www.surveycircle.com and get free survey participants through SurveyCircle. The Survey Code is: 5KFQ-TY6R-KZTR-ZZRV </p> <p>Additional recommendation: Give your participants reassurance (and additional motivation!) and let them know on page 1 of your survey that your study is listed on SurveyCircle. For example, add the following sentence at the end of your welcome text/introduction:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">PS: SurveyCircle users receive points for their participation, which can be used to recruit free survey participants at SurveyCircle.com </p>						

SurveySwap Respondent Summary Screenshot (showing total respondents and Karma points)

The screenshot displays the SurveySwap Respondent Summary interface. It is divided into several sections:

- Karma Summary:** Shows 'Total Collected: 1273' and 'Total Spent: 1140'. A green button indicates '133 Karma'.
- Survey Summary:** Shows the survey title 'Improving L...', 'Respondents: 385/385', and a blue button 'All respondents gathered'.
- Navigation:** A horizontal menu with 'Survey Ranking', 'Add Survey', 'My Surveys' (active), 'My Karma', and 'Refer & Earn'.
- Create a survey:** A section with the heading 'Create a survey' and the text 'Use our survey builder to create all types of surveys'.
- Survey Details:** A detailed view of the survey 'Improving Leadership for Employee Retention in the Service Industry'. It shows '385 / 385 respondents' and '1140 Karma used'. A 'Next steps' section includes the text 'Earn or buy Karma to get respondents' and a blue button 'Edit to get more respondents'.

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