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Relations Between Servant Leadership and Middle Management Competencies

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Annotation. This study aims to reveal the relations between servant leadership (SL) and middle managers (MM) competencies in organisation. The study was constructed as qualitative research with assessments and focus group discussion. The results showed some managers are able to apply competencies typical for MM and there is a relation with SL competencies, but analysing relation between MM and the organisation identified the lack of organisation systematic approach for MM leadership development.

Introduction

The study aims to investigate and assess the leadership competencies possessed by middle managers in an organisation and their relationship with the competencies of a servant leader.

The challenges and opportunities of the 21st century are gaining pace in our societies, as the technological revolution that began in the middle of the 20th century gained momentum at the beginning of this century and dictated the further development of humanity. Living in a period of such changes on the scale of human civilisation, it is critical to understand and know the direction of travel, the vision, and the mission goals of each of us. This is why there is a great need for leadership, and its importance is more than ever crucial and necessary to ensure the sustainable further development of humanity.

Leadership has been studied and researched since ancient times, and its meaning and range of influence have evolved. Leadership is nowadays very widely studied in the science of organisational behaviour as well. It is closely linked to the economic and political development of organisations.

The everyday reality of today's times is forcing us to rethink all the truths and theories of leadership that have been defended until now. Uncertainty, a constantly changing environment, technology, and changes in people's thinking force us to think about innovative leadership (Boyatzis & McKee, 2006). Leaders have to be authentic with their leadership style which is based on their personal values (Altermark et al., 2022). Any organisation with effective leaders contribute to the improvements in business characteristics and team management (Porfírio, 2021).

Historically, an organisation's effective top managers are not only those who are effective because of their competencies and qualities as professionals but also because of their personal, human qualities. This is why managers at this level often invest in the development of effective leadership competencies. However, it is not only the top managers in an organisation's hierarchy. Objectives of the paper:

1. To describe the constructs of servant leadership and competencies of middle managers in the organisation based on the analysis of theoretical literature.
2. To describe the interaction between servant leadership and middle management competencies based on empirical research.

This analysis, looked at: What competencies do middle managers acquire in the organisation? How do these competencies relate with servant leadership competencies? What are the gaps between middle managers in an organisation and servant leaders in theory? After examining leadership theories, this study chose the concept of servant leadership as the object of research. The authors of the theory of servant leadership state that "when we have the opportunity and responsibility to influence the thinking, behaviour and development of others, the first thing we are called upon to respond to is to turn our gaze away from our own needs to the benefits and well-being of others for whom we are leading, i.e., the well-being of our followers" (Blanchard & Hodges, 2003, p. 23). The link between the competencies of middle managers and the competencies possessed by the servant leader is significant in theoretical and practical terms.

The American Robert T. Greenleaf, who discussed the concept in three essays, first used the term servant leadership: The Servant as Leader (1970), The Institution as Servant (1972) and Trustees as Servants (1972). Greenleaf argues, "The servant leader is first and foremost a servant. It begins with a natural feeling to serve, to serve first. Then a conscious choice leads to a desire to lead. This is different from the person who is primarily a leader, who is more concerned with satisfying an overwhelming need for power or acquiring wealth. For such people, service will be a later choice, after leadership is recognised. What comes first: leader or servant? These are two extreme types. The difference is that the servant leader first makes sure that other people's needs are met" (Greenleaf, 1970, p. 21).

However, other authors broaden the term and make it more detailed. The other author most cited in the literature on servant leadership theory has been Larry Spears. Based on the work of Greenleaf & Spears (1998) identified 10 functional characteristics of a servant leader, which are briefly described:

1. *Listening* – a critical communication tool, necessary for accurate communication and for actively demonstrating respect for others. According to Greenleaf, "Only a true natural servant automatically responds to any problem by listening first" (1970, p. 10).

2. *Empathy* – the ability mentally projects one's own consciousness into that of another individual. Greenleaf wrote, "The servant always accepts and empathises, never rejects" (1970, p. 12), and "Men grow taller when those who lead them empathise, and when they are accepted for who they are" (1970, p. 14).

3. *Healing* – greenleaf defined healing as "to make whole" (1970, p. 27). The Servant leader recognises the shared human desire to find wholeness in oneself and supports it in others.

4. *Awareness* – without awareness, "we miss leadership opportunities" (Greenleaf, 1970, p. 19).

5. *Persuasion* – an effective servant leader achieves group consensus through "gentle but clear and persistent persuasion, rather than seeking group compliance through the power of position. Greenleaf notes that a new way of looking at issues of power and authority is emerging, and people are beginning to learn, albeit slowly, to relate to each other in less coercive and more creatively supportive ways' (1970, pp. 3–4). Servant leadership uses personal rather than servant power to influence employees and achieve organisational goals.

6. *Conceptualisation* – a servant leader can come up with solutions to problems that do not currently exist (Greenleaf, 1970, pp. 23–25).

7. *Foresight* – "Foresight, or forecasting, is a better-than-average prediction of what will happen in the future and when" (Greenleaf, 1970, p. 16).

8. *Governance* – Managers, or 'trustees', are concerned not only with the individual employees of an organisation but also with the organisation as a whole, its impact and its relationship with society (Greenleaf, 1970, p. 31).

9. *Commitment to people's growth* – demonstrating appreciation and encouragement of others. According to Greenleaf: "The secret of building an institution is to be able to weld together a team of such people, raising them to grow higher than they would otherwise have grown" (1970, p. 14).

10. *Community building* – the emergence of large institutions has dismantled the community, the social pact that unites individuals in society. According to Greenleaf, "all that is needed to reconstitute the community as a viable form of life ... – is a sufficient number of servant leaders to show the way" (1970, p. 30).

The 7 dimensions are likened to biblical values, i.e., the seven blessings of Jesus (Patterson, 2003; Winston, 2003):

- Love for others.
- Humility.
- Altruism.
- Having a vision.
- Trust.
- Empowerment.
- Service.

The multidimensional model of servant leadership that was subsequently developed and validated is called the Servant Leadership Surve, developed by Van Diendonck and Nuijten (2011). They identified 8 dimensions of servant leadership. In servant leadership research, two unidimensional instruments known to measure this construct are Reinke (2003; 2004) and Ehrhart (2004). Ehrhart's (2004) popular unidimensional instrument consists of 14 statements that fall into 7 categories, which are identical to the 7 dimensions identified by Liden (2008) in a multidimensional model. The categories identified by Erhart (2004) cover two dimensions of servant leadership: ethical behaviour and concern for subordinates. According to the author (Erhart, 2004), the instrument comprises 7 categories of servant leadership, with two statements for each of them:

- Positive relationships with subordinates.
- Empowerment.
- Helping subordinates to grow and experience success.
- Ethical Behaviour.
- Conceptual skills.
- Interest of followers before own.
- Creating value for the community.

Overall servant leaders contribute positive effect to the organisation's excellence (Irfan, 2022). Middle managers have long been seen as the doers of organisational performance and their influence in organisations has been underestimated. Historically, there have been times when middle managers have been the first to be dismissed because organisations have found it difficult to justify the real impact of their role on the effectiveness of the organisation. They were perceived as weak leaders and businesses did not invest in their leadership competencies. In 1950, sociologist C. Wright Mills wrote, "...You are the cog and the beltline of the bureaucratic machinery itself... and such power as you wield is a borrowed thing. Yours is the subordinate's mark, yours is the canned talk... you are the servant of decision, the assistant of authority". Meanwhile, there were other views where the role of middle managers was reversed and perceived as indispensable to the sustainable and effective growth of the organisation. The economic historian Alfred Chandler, in his book The Visible Hand, examines the role of middle managers from a historical perspective in two cases: the first is that, with the advent of manufacturing at the beginning of the twentieth century, it is no longer enough for a company to have only workers to produce, but it also needs salespeople, marketers, and the development

of new production systems. They are also engines of change, adaptation, regeneration and propulsion into a new era, fostering an entrepreneurial spirit (Aránega, 2023). Nevertheless, middle managers perceive their role as overwhelming, with a sense of huge responsibility and little power. They describe their role as reactive, they feel isolated and they enjoy making a difference in others' lives. Participants acknowledge the importance of developing support structures by building relationships with colleagues (Pepper & Giles, 2014). This demand requires leadership in specialist teams. This is why, at this stage, middle managers emerge as coordinators to ensure the company's effective growth, and secondly, as companies started to produce more than one product, there was a need to create teams across the spectrum to be led by middle managers. He believed that it was middle managers who were the professionals who contributed to the growth of the US economy (Chandler, 1993). It is also important, as what was captured in other research that the results of the research indicate that servant leaders can develop a culture of followers who are servant leaders themselves (Melchar & Bosco, 2017). In facing the speed of technological change, middle managers are increasingly recognised as overlooked critical talent within this context of unprecedented change, given their essential role in change management (Whysall et al., 2019). Other finding clearly indicates that organisational values have a strong influence on managers' competencies" (Gorenak & Ferjan, 2015). Furthermore, the subsequent exploratory review of leadership and digitalization literature suggests that middle managers must become digitally intelligent; they need to understand and make use of the power of technology. Soft skills are also becoming increasingly important (Henderikx & Stoffers, 2022).

The empirical study provided an opportunity to assess the current situation in the organisation and enabled recommendations on what are gaps between the current competencies of middle managers in the organisation and servant leaders. The aim of this study was to investigate and assess the leadership competencies possessed by middle managers in an organisation and their relationship with the competencies of a servant leader.

The following research methods were used to accomplish the objectives of this paper:
- Survey of middle managers in the organisation and their subordinates.
- Qualitative research with focus group discussion.

Methodology

A qualitative research design was used to explore the competencies of middle managers. Two focus groups of middle managers were selected as informants.

The scope of the research – middle managers (7) who meet the criteria for the survey, i.e., middle managers working in the organisation.

The study consists of two parts. The first part describes the constructs of servant leadership and middle managers' competencies and their interactions based on a litera-

ture review. The second part presents the methodology of the empirical study: the aim, objectives, and instruments used in the study. This paper provides a comprehensive analysis of the literature and recent research on the servant leadership and competencies of middle managers in organisations. The empirical study used instruments in a survey sample of middle managers in an organisation, examining:

The leadership competencies of middle managers were demonstrated in the organisation.

The presence of servant leadership criteria in middle managers' competencies in the organisation.

In the framework of the aim of the paper, the goal of the research is to empirically investige the link between servant leadership and the competencies of middle managers in an organisation. The link between the competencies of a servant leader and the competencies of middle managers in an organisation assumed to be effective in creating a sustainable organisation.

A convenient, purposive sampling strategy was employed to select relevant participants for the study. Participants were included in the sample based on their role as middle managers, their relevant working experience, and their willingness to share their working experiences. Seven middle managers (4 women and 3 men) with between 10 and 22 subordinates (train drivers, attendants, repairers, and accountants) under their supervision. All the middle managers in the study have had no training to develop their leadership competencies and therefore work with their subordinates solely based on their personal experience, perception, logic, and the organisation's objectives.

In this study method of data analysis key criteria were: validity, reliability, accuracy of data, stability, and flexibility. For data analysis, hermeneutic (understanding the understanding) and phenomenological methodologies used. All the participants coded, later the discussion was transcribed, data structured, and the conclusions were drawn.

The focus group discussion was structured in such a way that the participants had enough time to think about it, and everyone had the opportunity to express their views. The structure of the discussion was as follows: introduction, completing the evaluation questionnaires, break, focus group discussion based on the prepared questionnaire.

Before the focus group interviews began, according to the analysed documents, three types of evaluation questionnaires distributed to each participant:
1. Leadership Motivation Assessment Questionnaire.
2. Self-confidence assessment.
3. Emotional Intelligence Quotient Assessment.

The aim of this assessment was for middle managers to assess their own abilities and motivation to be a leader in order to identify one of the most important elements of servant leadership, the emotional intelligence quotient. The templates for the assessesments were used from the career and management learning solutions e-learning platform Mind Tools. One of the article authors is an official member of the platform.

Further implemented a focus group disscution questionnaire, which consisted of twelve questions divided into several sub-groups (Figure 1): the middle manager's perception of leadership styles and management in the organisation; the relationship between manager and subordinates; the relationship between manager and organisation. The examples of focus group discussion questions: How do you understand leadership? What do you think about the role of the leader in the organisation? Identify the main aspects. What are the main criteria for success as a manager? How would you describe your current situation as a manager in your organisation? To what extent can you influence the organisation's strategic objectives?

Figure 1

Three Layers of Focus Group Discussion
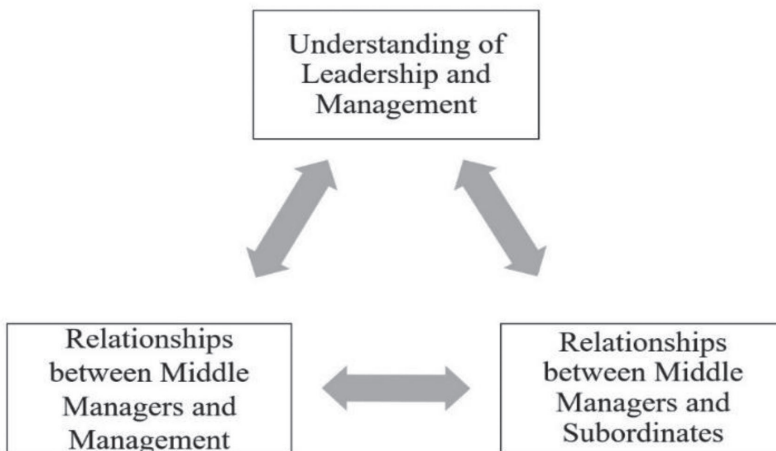
Note. This figure demonstrates 7 middle managers focus group discusion.

The aim of the focus group discussion questionnaire was to further develop the results of previous assessments by identifying the relation between the competencies of servant leadership and the competencies of middle managers in the organisation. To ensure the validity of the data in this study, the focus group discussion questions were first tested with a smaller group of 4 middle managers.
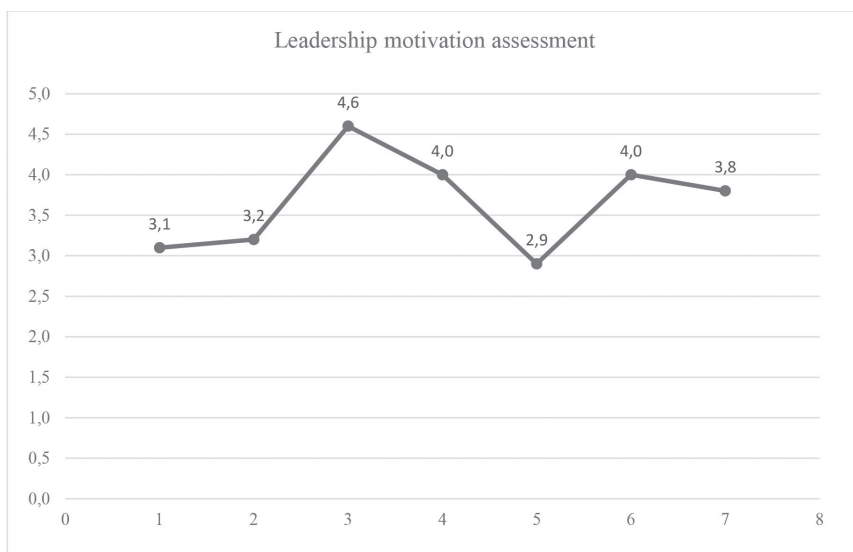
Results

In this paper, the middle management competencies discussed with middle managers in the Lithuanian Railways organisation, to find out to what extent the middle managers

can apply the competencies required for middle management and to what extent the competencies relate with the competencies of a servant leader.

The assessment of leadership motivation (Figure 2) was carried out accordingly, with a score of 4 or more indicating a high motivation to lead, 2 to 4 indicating a somewhat unclear motivation to lead, and less than 2 indicating a low motivation to lead. The results of the Leadership motivation assessment showed that the vast majority of middle managers have unclear motivation, with one manager standing out the most, with the highest motivation to lead. It should also be noted that the responses of men and women differed (Figure 3). Female managers had a significantly lower motivation to lead, none of them reaching 4, whereas all male managers had motivation to lead of 4 or more. This suggests that the middle managers in the study are unlikely to be motivated to learn and acquire new and emerging leadership competencies, and that leadership education is not a priority for many.

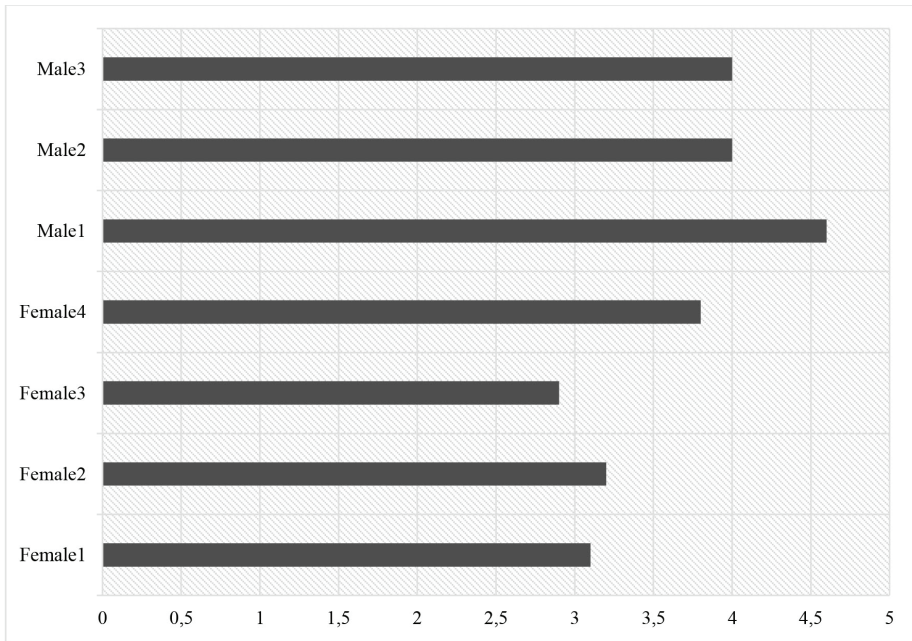**Figure 2**

Leadership Motivation Assessment

Note. This figure demostrates 7 middle managers leadership motivation assessment results.

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and emerging leadership competencies, and that leadership education is not a priority for many.

Figure 3

Leadership Motivation Between Women and Men

The self-confidence assessment (Figure 4) was designed to identify the extent to which managers have a sense of self-efficacy and the extent to which they are confident in their skills to succeed when faced with challenges. The self-confidence scoring system is similar to the leadership motivation scoring system: 4 and above indicate a sense of self-efficacy, and 2 below indicate a weak sense of self-efficacy, i.e., a general lack of confidence in one's skills to succeed when faced with challenges. The results of this assessment showed that the vast majority of middle managers do not have a strong sense of self-confidence, which means that they have doubts about whether they would succeed when faced with difficulties. It should be noted that only one manager out of seven has a strong sense of self-efficacy. This result shows that, despite their leadership motivation scores, self-confidence is not directly related. However, it is important to mention that self-efficacy is directly related to self-education, the higher the level of self-efficacy, the more self-oriented the person is in self-education, which determines the need to develop learning competencies and further skills to be acquired.

Figure 4
Self-Confidence Assessment

Note. This figure demostrates 7 middle managers self-confidence assessment results.

The Emotional Intelligence Coefficient assessment (Table 1) consisted of four parts: perception, appraisal, and expression of emotions; understanding and analysing emotions and using emotional knowledge; self-discipline; reflective regulation of emotions; and an overall assessment of emotional intelligence skills. Managers with a score of 4 and above have developed emotional intelligence and the skills to apply it in practice, while those with a score of 2 and below do not have emotional intelligence competencies. The results obtained from the middle managers who participated in the study suggest that all managers lack emotional intelligence competencies and sometimes find it difficult to express their own emotions and accept the emotions of others. This may make it difficult to work effectively with subordinates to ensure that the emotional climate in the team is acceptable to all.

Self-discipline is critical to self-education, and the self-discipline scores presented in this assessment indicate that one of the biggest challenges for middle leaders is self-discipline and the ability to show initiative in self-education. Meanwhile, the overall emotional intelligence coefficient indicates the extent to which middle managers are open and flexible to develop their leadership skills and the extent to which they need the organisation's support in developing leadership education processes within the organisation.

Table 1

Emotional Intelligence Assessment

Participant	Perception, appraisal, and expression of emotions	Understanding and analysing emotions and using emotional knowledge	Self-discipline	Reflective regulation of emotions	Overall emotional intelligence score
Line manager No. 1	3.8	3.8	3.8	4.2	3.3
Line manager No. 2	4.4	3.8	3.4	3.8	3.5
Line manager No. 3	4.2	4.2	4.6	3.4	3.9
Line manager No. 4	4.2	3.6	3.6	3.2	3.6
Line manager No. 5	4.6	3.6	3.4	3.6	3.5
Line manager No. 6	4.2	3.6	3.4	3.0	3.6
Line manager No. 7	4.0	2.8	3.6	2.2	3.2

The second focus group duscussion was constructed with a questionnaire, which consisted of twelve questions divided into several sub-groups: the middle manager's perception of leadership and management in the organisation; the relationship between manager and subordinates; the relationship between manager and organisation.

During the discussion, managers expressed their perception of leadership, some clearly understand the concept of leadership, while others want to move away from the term and see themselves more as leaders. Some, such as Middle Manager No. 3, feel that a leader is primarily a person who is interested in innovation and continuous learning, and only second to working with a team. Other managers see leadership as a form of supervision of subordinates and the type of leadership can vary from democratic to authoritarian. Despite the desire to show a positive and friendly attitude towards leadership, some managers do not shy away from terms such as punishment or reprimand.

All participants agreed that the effectiveness of the team and the quality of the work directly depends on how much the manager knows his/her team members and the individual approach to each one, but at the same time, the manager's equal and fair treatment of each employee is equally important. According to the participants, each of them tries to ensure a sense of teamwork among their subordinates, but it is not always a priority because, for example, Middle Manager No. 4 manages a team of train drivers whose members hardly ever meet because the work is shift-based and each one of them has an individual job – driving a train. Despite the specific nature of the work, the managers try to keep the team spirit alive. However, I must mention that the organisation only provides guidelines, but does not develop the teamwork competencies of middle managers, so as with the other competencies mentioned above, middle managers decide individually and within the limits of their own understanding and knowledge how to ensure teamwork in their teams.

In the focus group discussion sub-group focused on the relationship between middle managers and the organisation, participants discussed their current position in the organisation, the extent of their influence, their involvement in decision-making, the influence that middle managers can exert in the organisation, and how and in what ways they would like to influence the organisation's future activities. Middle manager No. 2 "I never wanted to be a manager, but I must have had that path since the first grade, when I had to be a schoolboy, a pioneer and a Communist Party member, and in the district I had these positions when I came to work for the railways... 30 years ago... I've been through a lot of positions, very different... I have risen to the position of regional manager, I would like to be more in my life... I would be more interested in technical work... designing, drafting. If I could choose a speciality today, I would definitely choose IT. I'm more passionate about that kind of work than I am about management".

However, this result shows that no middle managers in the focus group discussion mentioned the leadership education process in which they had to participate and learn about the types of leadership that are prevalent and accepted in the organisation. This suggests that leadership education is not practised in the culture of the organisation, nor is self-education encouraged.

Further attempts were made to elaborate on and further identify the concept of leadership of managers by asking: How do you understand leadership?What are the responsibilities? What are the limits? What are the opportunities from their experience. Middle manager No. 1: "You know how I tell my staff, I'm not here to punish you or do anything else, I'm here to give you every opportunity to do your job properly, on time and to a high standard... A manager is a person who helps, who makes it possible for his employees to do what the manager asks them to do... to advise, to scold the next time, to praise, to do something for him the next time... to show". Middle manager No. 5 agrees with the previous opinion and states that "The supervisor must show the direction in which the employee should move, not to punish, not to scold..., just to guide him in the right direction". Middle manager No.6 understands leadership in the following way: "We are like glue that has to stick the team together like a ball". Meanwhile, middle manager No. 3, agreeing with all the previous speakers, added another term to the concept of leadership: "Visionary and forward-looking, looking at how things are going to change and preparing for those changes immediately to make the impact as gentle as possible and when I generate work for people, I try to take into account those future challenges and so in a way reduce turbulence for the employees. But it doesn't always work, because often there is a lot of lead from all sides, and that, let's say, visionary quality gets a lot of flak... without visionary, it's difficult because it shows you where you're going and... how it sticks to one final decision, because the staff gets lost... keeping the direction of the manager, being a helper when something is not clear and you need to empower someone somewhere, that's the mission I have".

Figure 5 shows the relation between the competencies of middle managers and the competencies of servant leaders. The first column lists the competencies of middle managers, and the second column lists the competencies of the serving leader. The focus group discussion revealed that the list of middle management competencies developed by the organisation is in line with the competencies that are commonly developed in other organisations for this level of management, but further exploration of the competencies and requirements of the servant leader revealed that some of the competencies overlap, while others are quite different. As can be seen in the figure below, accountability and advocacy are not addressed in the list of servant leadership competencies, but they are important for the organisation. The communication competency is closely related to the listening and awareness competencies, but conceptually they are completely different, as the communication competency is more about the middle manager communicating certain messages and the employee being the listener, while the listening competency in the servant leader concept states the opposite, similarly with awareness. Cultural competency is intricately linked to empathy and healing competencies. However, this case is also like the communication competencies, as the task group of the empathy and healing competencies is the subordinates, and the cultural competency is the manager. Education, training and self-development competencies are very important because a leader who independently learns and develops new competencies can motivate his employees to learn as well, but the purpose of the concept of the servant leader is to develop the leader in such a way that he puts his subordinates' growth and development first and then himself. Meanwhile, the competence of the initiative corresponds to the conceptualisation of the servant leader. And these are complementary competencies, and when put together, a middle manager would be able to conceptualise and justify his initiatives. And this is crucial, keeping managers initiative-taking, and adding value to the organisation. Leadership competence encompasses several competencies of a servant leader: persuasion, foresight, and governance. Leadership competencies are perceived differently in the LTG organisation, according to the focus group dicussion, the organisation itself does not develop and has no systematic approach to the development or support of leadership competencies for middle managers, so different types of leadership can be identified in the organisation, ranging from democratic leadership to authoritarian leadership, but the competencies of the servant leadership model persuasion, foresight and governance could help to create a unified and systematic leadership direction in the organisation. Meanwhile, while teamwork is one of the competency of middle managers, the competencies of a servant leader – community building – makes you look even deeper into building team climate and relationships, and most importantly, community building ensures sustainable teamwork, which is important for both leadership and the organisation.

Figure 5

Relation Between Servant Leadership and Middle Management Competencies

Note. This figure demonstrates middle managers competencies and servant leadership competencies analysed in the literature and their relation after assessing the middle managers competencies in the organisation.

In summary, after assessing and reviewing the competencies of the middle managers and the servant leader, some of the competencies overlap, and some complement each other, some are not in the list of competencies of the middle managers, but they are an important component to ensure the sustainable performance of the leaders, their intrinsic motivation and the value added to the organisation.

Discussion

According to the literature, the theoretical concept of servant leadership shows that the role of middle managers are evolving and requires a wider range of competencies. Furthermore, higher-level managerial servant leadership trickles down to influence the in-role performance of lower-level employees through their supervisors. This effect is very important because it shows that leaders' behaviours are relevant for organisational outcomes and not only impact their direct collaborators, but act through them at different levels of the hierarchy (Stollberger & Heras, 2019).

Meanwhile, the empirical research carried out showed that middle managers in an organisation have certain attributes of servant leadership. However, this is more

a combination of their personal qualities and values, which do not always reflect the organisation's objectives. Personal characteristics and culture are positioned alongside the motivational dimension. Empowering and developing people, demonstrate servant leadership by expressing humility, authenticity, interpersonal acceptance and stewardship, and by providing direction (Dierendonck, 2011).

In order for an organisation to be effective and innovative, it is necessary to develop new models of competency development for middle managers that are systematic, coherent, sustainable, and measurable. Furthermore, servant leadership values reflect and heal the organisational needs necessary in pioneering the road to recovery from economic recession (Brewer, 2015). The servant leader framework is critical to ensuring this. From the focus group discussion and the interviews, there is a conclusion that there is also a need for this among middle managers themselves. Therefore, the development of a Servant Leader competency development programme for middle managers is necessary and extremely beneficial not only for the organisation but also for its employees.

Conclusions

Developing middle managers as servant leaders is necessary because the changes in the work environment, in the relationship with employees, in the expectations of employees, require a change in attitude and in the management strategy of the organisation.

A theoretical analysis of the literature on servant leadership and middle managers in the organisations have shown that historically, middle managers were seen as important and significant in organisations, but with the pandemic, organisations have realised that middle managers are a critical channel for communicating with employees, ensuring business continuity and more. Meanwhile, the concept of servant leadership is relatively new, and there are not many sources on servant leadership in organisations. After analysing the theoretical literature, we identified the characteristics of the middle in organisations and the competencies of servant leadership, which were presented in the theoretical literature from different angles.

The self-assessments of middle managers revealed that middle managers have different perspectives on leadership, but also highlighted their need for developing servant leadership competencies within the organisation. The results of the motivation assessment showed that men and women have different levels of motivation to be leaders, and highlighted the difference in the distribution of leadership experience, which was evident in the assessment of emotional intelligence and self-confidence. Location, the field of activity, and the size of the team did not have a significant impact on the results.

The focus group discussions revealed that some managers are able to apply the competencies typical of middle managers and servant leadership, but that the organisation does not have a systematic approach and the culture of the organisation is not developed in such a way to provide a direction for middle managers to follow, leaving the leadership

competencies up to the manager to decide how and in what ways he or she should act. The best way a manager can lead workers is to affect the behaviour of collaborators by their own example (Mohelska, 2015). The hierarchical structure of the organisation also has a major impact on the motivation of managers, where middle managers do not always have the opportunity to be involved in decision-making, but are often only decision-makers. The middle managers are expected to be more entrepreneurial, but the findings indicate that centralised structures, although ensure the standardisation of systems and processes, resulting in a „top-down" approach to leadership and decision-making (Burgess, 2013).

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Tarnaujančios lyderystės ir vidurinės grandies vadovų kompetencijų sąsajos

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Santrauka

Šio tyrimo tikslas – atskleisti tarnaujančios lyderystės (TL) ir vidurinės grandies vadovų (VGV) kompetencijų sąsajas organizacijoje. Tyrime buvo taikyta patogi tikslinės atrankos strategija tyrimo dalyviams atrinkti. Dalyviai į imtį buvo įtraukti atsižvelgiant į jų, kaip vidurinės grandies vadovų, vaidmenį, atitinkamą darbo patirtį ir norą pasidalyti savo darbo potyriais. Tyrime dalyvavo septyni vidurinės grandies vadovai (4 moterys ir 3 vyrai), kuriems pavaldūs nuo 10 iki 22 pavaldinių: traukinių mašinistų, palydovų, remontininkų ir buhalterių. Duomenų analizei naudotos hermeneutinė (supratimo) ir fenomenologinė metodologijos. Buvo atliktas kokybinis tyrimas, kurio metu buvo atliekami VGV vertinimai ir fokus grupės diskusija. Rezultatai parodė, kad kai kurie vadovai geba taikyti VGV būdingas kompetencijas ir yra realus ryšys su TL kompetencijomis, tačiau analizuojant VGV ir organizacijos santykį nustatyta, kad organizacijoje nėra sisteminio požiūrio į VGV lyderystės ugdymą.

Esminiai žodžiai: *švietimas, lyderystė, saviugda, tarnaujanti lyderystė, įgūdžiai, vidurinės grandies vadovai.*