



How Servant Leadership Handles Turnover In Government Internal Audit Body: The Role Of Job Embeddedness And Job Satisfaction

Mohamad Eran Zhahranshah ¹⁾; Fanny Martdianty ²⁾

¹⁾Department of Management Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia

²⁾ Department of Management Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia

Email: ¹⁾ zhahranshah@gmail.com ;²⁾ fanny.martdianty@ui.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the influence of servant leadership on turnover intention among internal auditors in the Indonesian government. Employee turnover in the public sector poses a serious threat to organizations, including a prominent government internal audit institution which is responsible for internal audit and governance oversight in the government of The Republic of Indonesia. This study used a cross-sectional method with purposive non-probability sampling. Questionnaires were distributed to 265 respondents. Data analysis employed CB-SEM revealed that job embeddedness plays a crucial role in strengthening the effect of servant leadership on turnover intention. In contrast, job satisfaction showed no significant impact on turnover intention. These findings provide important empirical insights for the government internal audit institution in developing human resource management strategies, particularly in enhancing employee retention to minimize turnover risks that could lead to substantial organizational costs.

INTRODUCTION

Employee turnover in the Indonesian public sector is currently considered a matter requiring careful consideration and appropriate intervention and foresight. Eventhough being a civil servant in Indonesia is generally perceived as a safe, secure profession (Kristianto, 2022), this does not guarantee that public sector employees will retain or stay in their job (Subali, 2018). One government institution that faces this problem is a prominent government internal audit institution responsible for ensuring robust governance oversight.

The data told that since 2015 until 2021, the ratio of voluntary turnover in this institution lays from 3,29%—6,13%, which this data specifically sort only the employees who were auditors (Sumardi et al., 2021; Muztaba, 2024). Eventhough the statistical data still show it as normal as

happened in an institution, this government internal audit institution states that voluntary turnover can be a serious problem which is needed to handle as early as possible before it causes a serious risk to the organization. The cost of voluntary turnover tends to cause higher losses to public sector organizations rather than a similar cause in privat sector organizations (An and Meier, 2022).

Various studies have found that voluntary turnover is inextricably linked to job satisfaction as a determinant. Job satisfaction has been identified as a critical factor influencing the dynamics of contemporary human resource development (Fauzi and Hidajat, 2024). O'Leary (2014) posited that job satisfaction plays a significant role in the operationalization of an organization. This finding suggests the need for a more comprehensive examination of the influence of job satisfaction on turnover intention.

However, some research indicated that job satisfaction may not always successfully mediate the influence of servant leadership on turnover intention, as highlighted by Huning et al. (2020). As Atchison (1999) broadening the understanding of other contributing factors is essential to fully grasp job satisfaction's impact on productivity and retention. On the other hand, Price and Mueller (1981) identified four key determinants of turnover: desire to stay, opportunities, general training, and job satisfaction.

The idea of examining factors beyond job satisfaction that contribute to an employee's sense of compatibility with their organization led the author to consider expanding the observational variables in the study of turnover intention to include job embeddedness. Mitchell et al. (2001) constructed job embeddedness based on three critical aspects essential for fostering attachment between employees and their organizations: 1) the extent of an employee's connections to other people and desired activities (links); 2) the degree to which their job accommodates or provides space for their personal life (fit); and 3) the perceived cost of leaving the job versus the benefits of staying (sacrifice). (Swider et al., 2011) revealed that job seekers with lower levels of embeddedness are more inclined to quitting their jobs. Furthermore, Holtom and Inderrieden (2006) demonstrated job embeddedness' significant influence on strengthening employee retention and attendance.

Karatepe in Thakur and Bhatnagar (2017) highlighted that research findings on job embeddedness are predominantly influenced by Western-based studies. In contrast, research on turnover intention through the lens of job satisfaction has been extensive but yields inconsistent results. For instance, studies have identified a significant negative relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention (Aman-Ullah et al., 2022; Westbrook & Peterson, 2022; Lee, 2017). Conversely, Huning et al. (2020) found that job satisfaction does not significantly impact turnover intention. This discrepancy underscores the need for further investigation into job satisfaction, particularly in the context of varying cultural backgrounds and research settings.

To date, research on the influence of job embeddedness on turnover intention, which is mediated by job satisfaction, remains a niche area. One study that incorporates elements of job embeddedness is Le et al. (2023). Afterall, this study primarily focuses on family support as a mediator between job satisfaction and turnover intention, rather than a comprehensive examination of job embeddedness. Family support, a component of job embeddedness, specifically addresses the fit aspect, which encompasses links, fit, and sacrifice (Mitchell et al., 2001). Therefore, evaluating a single aspect may not fully represent the overall impact of job embeddedness, necessitating a more holistic approach.

Lowé and Gardner in Bellou and Dimou (2022) underscored the important role of leadership in fostering positive outcomes for individuals and organizations. Takeuchi et al. (2005) defined servant leadership as a holistic approach that encourages employee autonomy, enabling them to manage increasing job demands. Considering the demanding work environment of auditors at an aprominent government internal audit institution, which requires precision and tacit knowledge, the organization would benefit from leaders who embody servant leadership principles.

The findings that reveal the relationship between job embeddedness and job satisfaction align with Atchison's (1999) assertion regarding the importance of factors that foster a sense of fit between employees' conditions and their jobs to maintain job satisfaction and employee retention. Referring to the definition provided by Mitchell et al. (2001), these factors correspond to the concept of job embeddedness. The study by Huning et al. (2020) also discovered an indication that job satisfaction does not significantly influence turnover intention due to the looming economic threats that may arise if employees decide to leave their jobs. As a result, feelings of dissatisfaction do not directly lead employees to desire to quit their positions.

In this study, the authors designed a research model and hypotheses to examine the role of servant leadership in influencing turnover intention, both directly and indirectly through the mediating variables of job satisfaction and job embeddedness. The research demonstrated the significance of the effect of servant leadership on turnover intention through several alternative relational pathways that can be observed. The primary reference for this study is based on previous research by Huning et al. (2020) and Westbrook & Peterson (2022), both of which investigated the intersection of the same variables—servant leadership, job satisfaction, and turnover intention—but arrived at different conclusions. The gap identified in the findings of both studies suggests the presence of latent variables that should be included to strengthen the relationship between servant leadership and turnover intention through the mediation of job satisfaction. According to Ramaite et al. (2022), it is evident that job embeddedness has a significant positive association with job satisfaction.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Turnover

Hom et al. (2017) categorized the dynamics of turnover research into six distinct phases, beginning from the early phase of turnover studies in 1917 through to the post-2000 era, which marks the entry into 21st-century research. This structured timeline illustrates the increasing complexity and depth of turnover research over time. Each phase reflects evolving theoretical frameworks, methodological advancements, and expanding research scopes that collectively contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of turnover phenomena. The origins of turnover research as beginning with studies published in the *Journal of Applied Psychology* (JPA), which was launched in 1917 where the foundational study by Fisher (1917) is highlighted as a seminal work that examined the costs incurred by organizations due to employee turnover. Finally, the field entered the 21st century research phase (2000s to present), characterized by increasingly sophisticated and integrative approaches to understanding turnover phenomena.

Turnover Intention

Turnover intention refers to the desire or intention to leave, driven by specific factors that accumulate into a conflict between the employee and the organization, ultimately leading to the employee's desire to resign. Hom et al., as cited in Le et al. (2023), defined turnover intention as a state reflecting an employee's desire or intention to quit their job and leave the organization. Kreitner dan Kinicki (2013) categorized turnover intention as a factor closely linked to individual-organization value conflict. According to Moynihan and Pandey (2008), turnover, particularly turnover intention, is influenced by three factors: 1) environmental or economic; 2) individual employee differences; 3) organizational characteristic.

Job Satisfaction

Ariani (2012) describes job satisfaction as a positive emotional state reflecting the job situation. Meeting expectations for job satisfaction can enhance employee loyalty to the organization (Simarmata et al., 2024). Fisher in Huning et al. (2020) defined job satisfaction as a behavior encompassing cognitive (logical) and affective (emotional) elements. Afterall, job

satisfaction is usually more related to emotional response of the employees to their work (Putri et al., 2025). This sentiment impacts the development of outcomes including improved performance, retention, attendance, and psychological well-being (Rafferty & Griffin, 2009). Another perspective from Human Resource Management International Digest (2020) emphasized that job satisfaction is crucial in organizations due to its impact on individual behavior and performance.

Job Embeddedness

Job embeddedness can be perceived as an aspect that emphasizes support for individuals in their roles as employees, encouraging them to remain committed to their current jobs. Mitchell et al. (2001) described job embeddedness as a broad spectrum that illustrates its influence on employee retention, encompassing three factors that are interconnected with various contextual elements, both on-the-job and off-the-job: links which refers to the relationships that illustrate the network of connections formed between employees and other individuals or groups, both formal connections and informal connections, fit that is defined as the employee's perception of the alignment or compatibility between the organization's needs and the employee's requirements, including the surrounding environment, and sacrifice that refers to the employee's perception of the material and psychological costs associated with the decision to stay or leave their job. Each of the elements shows what employee feels due to their experience during having the job that forms the reason why they stay in their job.

Servant Leadership

Servant leadership can be understood as a leadership style which is implemented to create a positive work atmosphere. Leaders who exhibit servant leadership qualities are regarded as having a moral and ethical foundation that is developed through their everyday leadership practices (Amah and Oyetuunde, 2020). Greenleaf, as articulated in Westbrook and Peterson (2022), views servant leadership as requiring several key attributes, including a willingness to listen, empathy, heal, sensitivity, persuade, conceptualize, foresight, stewardship, a commitment to growth, and community building. Song et al. (2022) stated that servant leaders exemplify a leadership style that can convince their subordinates that they deserve respect and that their presence is significant within the team or organization. Consequently, a leader who embodies strong servant leadership qualities is likely to foster a high level of work dedication among their team members in the workplace. According to Van Dierendonck & Nuijten (2011), there are 8 dimensions that constitute the characteristics of servant leadership, which include: 1) Empowerment; 2) Accountability; 3) Standing Back; 4) Humility; 5) Authenticity; 6) Courage; 7) Interpersonal Acceptance (Forgiveness); 8) Stewardship.

Servant Leadership and Turnover Intention

Servant leadership stands out as one leadership approach effective in curbing employee turnover. As detailed by Hunter et al. (2013), servant leadership offers a crucial contribution to the workplace, notably in alleviating conflict or friction among subordinates. Amah and Oyetuunde (2020) indicated that the characteristics of servant leadership are highly relevant as an effective leadership factor in mitigating turnover intention. Furthermore, studies by Westbrook & Peterson (2022) and Huning et al. (2020) found a significant negative relationship between servant leadership and turnover intention in their direct interaction. These findings imply that an increase in servant leadership practices will further decrease the likelihood of turnover intention among organizational employees. These support the formulation of the following hypothesis for testing as stated below as H1.

H1: Servant leadership negatively and significantly influences turnover intention.

Servant Leadership and Job Embeddedness

Amah and Oyetuunde (2020) found that servant leadership plays a significant role in employee voice within the workplace. Implicitly, this finding suggests that servant leadership has the potential to influence job embeddedness, where employee voice, or the opportunity for employees to express their opinions, is one means of placing employees in a comfortable work environment (Morrison, 2011).

This definition represents one element within job embeddedness, namely fit, which is defined as employees' perception of comfort (Mitchell et al., 2001). This assumption is supported by the research of Huning et al. (2020), which found a significant influence in the relationship between servant leadership and job embeddedness. This serves as a reference for the authors in formulating the following hypothesis:

H2: Servant leadership positively and significantly influences job embeddedness.

Servant Leadership and Job Satisfaction

An et al. (2020) affirmed that employees with high levels of job satisfaction tend to achieve positive outcomes beneficial to both themselves and the organization. Westbrook & Peterson's (2022) study reinforced this finding, indicated that the significant positive relationship between servant leadership and job satisfaction is effective not only for specific generational cohorts but across generations. Sendjaya and Sarros (2002) found that servant leadership characteristics, supported by various driving factors such as openness and proportional fairness, familiarity, and the creation of opportunities, can significantly stimulate an increase in employee job satisfaction. These form the basis for constructing the following hypothesis:

H3: Servant leadership positively influences job satisfaction.

Job Embeddedness and Turnover Intention

Faraz et al. (2023) emphasized that the supporting factors of job embeddedness—namely fit, link, and sacrifice—are key aspects that can restrain employees from the desire to leave or quit their jobs. Nguyen et al. (2023) and Huning et al. (2020) had proven that job embeddedness has a significant effect in reducing turnover intention. These studies serve as references for the authors in developing the following hypothesis.

H4: Job embeddedness negatively influences turnover intention.

Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intention

Several studies examining the influence of job satisfaction on turnover intention include the research conducted by Wesemann (2024) and Westbrook and Peterson (2022). Both studies share similarities in their model construction, wherein the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention is conceptualized as a direct effect observed prior to the main investigation, which positions job satisfaction as a mediating variable. Within the context of this direct relationship observation, each study found that job satisfaction significantly reduces turnover intention. This condition serves as a reference for the authors in formulating the following hypothesis:

H5: Job satisfaction negatively influences turnover intention.

Job Embeddedness and Job Satisfaction

Ramaite et al. (2022) found a positive and significant correlation between job embeddedness and job satisfaction in their study. The research results successfully revealed the influence of job embeddedness in increasing job satisfaction, where attaining moderate to high job embeddedness scores tends to enhance employee satisfaction in their work. The optimal job embeddedness condition described is characterized by uniformly high scores across fit, links, and sacrifice dimensions.

According to Shah et al. (2020), job satisfaction is an outcome of well-managed job embeddedness. This serves as the authors' reference for constructing the following hypothesis: H6: Job embeddedness mediates the relationship between servant leadership and job satisfaction.

Mediation of Job Embeddedness in The Relationship between Servant Leadership and Turnover Intention

Research conducted by Huning et al. (2020) shows the mediation of job embeddedness in the relationship between servant leadership and turnover intention. Implicitly, Amah and Oyetuunde (2020) also found a relationship between servant leadership and turnover intention mediated by components of job embeddedness, in this case primarily fit, based on the theory put forward by Mitchell et al. (2001) separately, such as career growth potential and promotional speed (career goals) as well as employee values (employee personal values). Although not conducted on all components within job embeddedness, this reinforces the assumption that there is an indication that job embeddedness is able to mediate the relationship of servant leadership in influencing turnover intention. This underlies the authors's construction of the following hypothesis:

H7: Job embeddedness mediates the influence from servant leadership to turnover intention.

Mediation of Job Satisfaction in The Relationship between Servant Leadership and Turnover Intention

Research conducted by Westbrook & Peterson (2022) demonstrated the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between servant leadership and turnover intention. According to Watts et al. (2025), servant leadership emphasizes the priorities and interests of followers (staff/employees), implicitly linking its aspects to job satisfaction.

This condition illustrates the catalytic role that job satisfaction can play for servant leadership in influencing turnover intention. This explanation leads to the formulation of the hypothesis as follows:

H8: Job satisfaction mediates the influence of servant leadership to turnover intention.

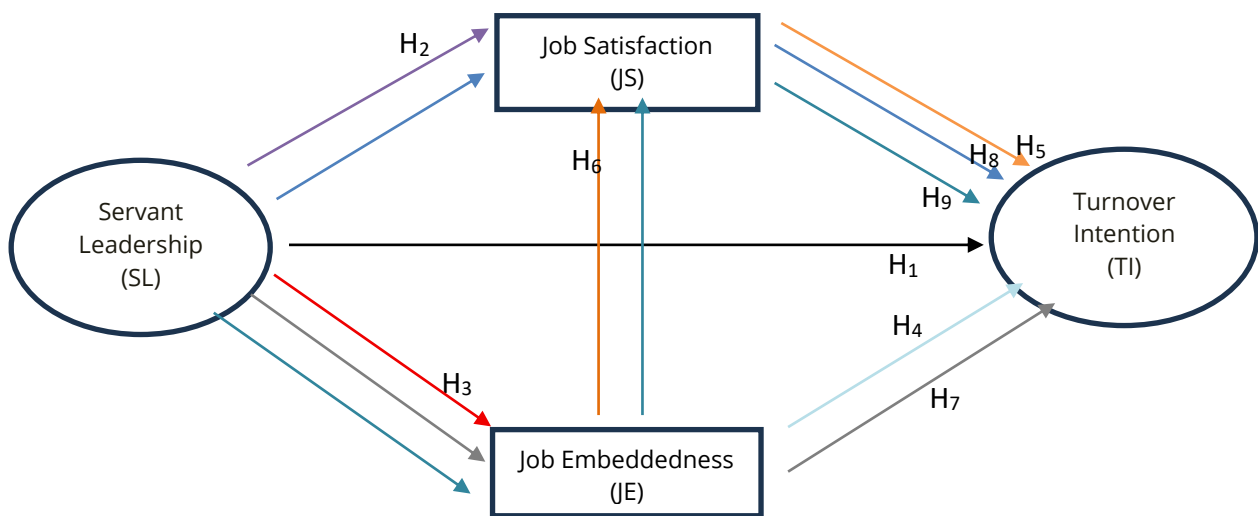
Mediation of Job Embeddedness and Job Satisfaction Serially in The Relationship between Servant Leadership and Turnover Intention

Research conducted by Westbrook & Peterson (2022) and Wesemann (2024) found that job satisfaction has a direct and significant negative effect on turnover intention. In another study, Ramaite et al. (2022) demonstrated that job embeddedness significantly and positively influences job satisfaction. Meanwhile, Huning et al. (2020) showed that servant leadership has a significant positive impact on job embeddedness.

These studies collectively indicate the potential emergence of a novel modeling pattern in examining the relationship between servant leadership and turnover intention through the serial mediation of two variables in sequence, namely job embeddedness and job satisfaction. Based on these findings, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H9: Job embeddedness and job satisfaction serially mediate the influence of servant leadership to turnover intention.

Due to the research that is being conducted, the authors reconstructs the research model into a conceptual framework as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. The Research Model

Source: Data Processed, 2025

METHODS

Participants And Procedure

This study employed a quantitative research approach using a cross-sectional design in a non-probability purposive sampling method. The primary data that is utilized in this research is collected through a questionnaire distributed to 265 respondents within a prominent government internal audit institution environment. The target respondents for the questionnaire include functional auditor officials across all levels of functional positions located in various work units of this institution throughout Indonesia. The questionnaire will consist of closed-ended questions that will be administered to the respondents.

In determining the sample size for CB-SEM research, Hair Jr. et al. (2019) recommended using the maximum likelihood estimation technique for sample determination. This technique calculates the number of measurement indicators (in this case, questionnaire items) with a coefficient of 5. Thus, the minimum sample size required is 47 questions multiplied by 5, or 235 respondents.

Measures

The indicators used in the questionnaire include questions that encompass four variables analyzed in the study: one independent variable (servant leadership), two intervening variables (job satisfaction and job embeddedness), and one dependent variable (turnover intention). The measurement for each question within these variables employs a Likert scale with 7-response options. The response categories available offer a range of options, with a spectrum from scale 1 (strongly disagree) to scale 7 (strongly agree).

Servant leadership. The measurement indicators for servant leadership utilize question items adapted from Van Dierendonck & Nuijten (2011). The question items target the impressions formed in employees' perceptions regarding the leadership characteristics, specifically servant leadership, of their direct supervisors, such as "My manager helps me to further develop myself", "My manager keeps himself/herself at the background and gives credit to others", and "My manager takes risks even when he/she is not certain of the support from his/her own manager". This instrument consists of 30 items that encompass 8 dimensions. This instrument comprises 30 items across eight dimensions, with "SL" serving as the item code. The

dimensions and their corresponding items include empowerment (SL1-SL7), standing back (SL8-SL10), accountability (SL11-SL13), forgiveness (SL14-SL16), courage (SL17-SL18), authenticity (SL19-SL22), humility (SL23-SL27), and stewardship (SL28-SL30).

Job satisfaction. The job satisfaction variable is measured using The Brief Index of Affective Job Satisfaction (BIAJS) developed by Thompson & Phua (2012). This measurement instrument is deemed more capable of addressing various issues associated with job satisfaction measurement tools, such as items that may lack proportionality, a tendency towards cognitive measurement that is less relevant for studies on job satisfaction that also consider affective aspects, and limitations in the development of systematic and valid instruments, particularly concerning differences in nationality, position, and job type. This instrument is a unidimensional parameter that assess the satisfaction employees feel regarding their current jobs, such as "I find real enjoyment in my job" and "I feel fairly well satisfied with my job". The instrument includes four questions, designated as JS1, JS2, JS3, and JS4, with "JS" as the item prefix.

Job embeddedness. The measurement indicators for the job embeddedness variable adopt the design of The Global Measure Job Embeddedness Scale (Crossley et al., 2007). This instrument is considered superior and more suitable for use in testing, particularly when the length of survey questions is a factor to consider in order to mitigate respondent fatigue, which could potentially reduce both participation rates and data quality (Crossley et al., 2007; Yang et al., 2011). Before beginning the questionnaire, respondents will be provided with instructions or guidance to answer the questions while considering both work-related factors (such as professional relationships, job fit, material and nonmaterial benefits associated with the job, and others) and non-work-related factors (such as relationships with neighbors, hobbies, community activities outside of work, and so on). This instrument includes 7 indicator questions that are related to the respondents' conditions or circumstances at the time of completion, with the questions such as "I feel attached to this organization" and "I feel tied to this organization". This indicator comprises specifically JE1, JE2, JE3, JE4, JE5, JE6, and JE7.

Turnover intention. The indicators used to measure the turnover intention variable are based on the six-item version of the Turnover Intention Scale (TIS-6) developed by Bothma dan Roodt (2013). This instrument simplifies the original 15 questions of the Turnover Intention Scale (TIS) into 6 items, which have been shown to maintain good reliability and validity, making them adequate for measuring turnover intention (Németh et al., 2024). In order to make the question items linear to the the other indicators, each item is personalised into a statement that is relevant to the response as required. For example, question "How often have you considered leaving your job?" is transformed to "I have considered to leave my current job", and so are the other items. This indicator uses the code "TI," with the overall items encompassing TI1, TI2, TI3, TI4, TI5, and TI6.

RESULTS

Description

Hair Jr. et al. (2019), explained that an indicator is considered valid if the standardized loading factor (SLF) of the observed latent variable meets the criterion of > 0.35 for a minimum sample size of 250 respondents. Reliability testing is conducted by calculating two criteria, namely construct reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) for each indicator. An adequate level of reliability is indicated with a CR value of ≥ 0.70 and an AVE value of ≥ 0.50 . The result of validity test shown the interval of SLF values ranged between 0,42 to 0,95 which mean all the items used are valid. Meanwhile, the CR values ranged from 0.85 to 0.97, and the AVE scores ranged from 0.54 to 0.80. Therefore, all indicators have met the reliability criteria. The results of validity and reliability, and the descriptive statistics—including min, max, mean, standard deviation, and grand mean of each variable and dimension (if any)—check are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Result of Validity and Reliability

No	Variable/Dimension/ Indicator	SLF	CR	AVE	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.	Grand Mean
1	Servant Leadership		0,96	0,67					
	a. Empowerment	0,7 4	0,93	0,63					5,76
	SL1	0,7 8			2	7	5,71	0,951	
	SL2	0,8 1			2	7	5,95	0,845	
	SL3	0,8 4			2	7	5,81	1,012	
	SL4	0,8 0			2	7	5,81	0,979	
	SL5	0,6 8			2	7	5,77	0,987	
	SL6	0,4 2			2	7	5,65	0,974	
	SL7	0,7 4			1	7	5,65	1,112	
	b. Standing Back	0,8 7	0,89	0,61					5,26
	SL8	0,7 8			1	7	5,20	1,229	
	SL9	0,8 2			1	7	5,34	1,251	
	SL10	0,7 4			1	7	5,25	1,169	
	c. Accountability	0,4 9	0,85	0,54					5,95
	SL11	0,8 4			4	7	6,10	0,729	
	SL12	0,7 7			3	7	5,97	0,823	
	SL13	0,5 6			3	7	5,78	0,863	
	d. Forgiveness	0,8 0	0,90	0,64					5,59
	SL14	0,6 7			1	7	5,70	1,200	
	SL15	0,9 0			2	7	5,51	1,030	
SL16	0,8 2			1	7	5,55	1,131		
e. Courage	0,7 5	0,94	0,80					4,89	
SL17	0,8 4			1	7	4,78	1,368		
SL18	0,9 5			1	7	5,01	1,270		
f. Authenticity	0,9 8	0,89	0,54					5,20	
SL19	0,8 6			1	7	5,37	1,224		
SL20	0,6			1	7	5,16	1,228		

No	Variable/Dimension/ Indicator	SLF	CR	AVE	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.	Grand Mean
	SL21	9 0,6 5			1	7	5,07	1,182	
	SL22	0,7 3			1	7	5,20	1,203	
	g. Humility	0,9 4	0,97	0,80					5,37
	SL23	0,9 2			1	7	5,33	1,217	
	SL24	0,9 1			2	7	5,40	1,160	
	SL25	0,8 6			1	7	5,26	1,216	
	SL26	0,8 8			1	7	5,45	1,080	
	SL27	0,9 0			1	7	5,39	1,092	
	h. Stewardship	0,8 9	0,89	0,62					5,58
	SL28	0,8 0			2	7	5,52	1,048	
	SL29	0,8 3			1	7	5,49	1,125	
	SL30	0,7 2			2	7	5,72	0,971	
2	Job Satisfaction		0,87	0,62					5,46
	JS1	0,8 0			3	7	5,77	0,842	
	JS2	0,8 1			2	7	5,17	1,125	
	JS3	0,8 0			3	7	5,44	1,036	
	JS4	0,7 3			2	7	5,46	1,083	
3	Job Embeddedness		0,92	0,74					4,92
	JE1	0,7 6			1	7	5.19	1.269	
	JE2	0,9 2			1	7	5.13	1.315	
	JE3	0,9 4			1	7	5.06	1.306	
	JE4	0,7 9			1	7	5.08	1.306	
	JE5	0,8 1			1	7	4.45	1.507	
	JE6	0,4 1			1	7	4.54	1.510	
	JE7	0,8 3			1	7	5.01	1.249	
4	Turnover Intention		0,89	0,58					3,53
	TI1	0,8 5			1	7	3.33	1.269	
	TI2	0,9 1			1	7	3.42	1.315	

No	Variable/Dimension/ Indicator	SLF	CR	AVE	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.	Grand Mean
	TI3	0,8 1			1	7	3.02	1.306	
	TI4	0,8 0			1	7	4.18	1.306	
	TI5	0,5 8			1	7	3.46	1.507	
	TI6	0,6 1			1	7	3.80	1.510	

Source: Data Processed, 2025

Goodness of Fit Model

The results of the fit test for both the measurement model and the structural model using goodness of fit indices indicate that the measurement model has met the good fit assumption. According to Hair Jr. et al. (2019), the good fit assumption is established when the fit measurement yields three or four index parameters that meet the minimum threshold values, with at least one parameter from the absolute fit indices and one from the incremental fit indices. The measurement results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Result of Goodness of Fit Index

Variable	RMSEA	SRMR	GFI	Normed χ^2	NFI	NNFI	IFI	CFI	AGFI	PNFI
Reference	$\leq 0,08$	$\leq 0,05$	$\geq 0,90$	$\leq 3:1$	$\geq 0,90$	$\geq 0,90$	$\geq 0,90$	$\geq 0,90$	$\geq 0,90$	$\geq 0,90$
SL (First Order)	0,075	0,056	0,81	$\approx 2,55:1$	0,95	0,97	0,98	0,98	0,76	0,84
SL (Second Order)	0,06	0,02	0,98	$\approx 2:1$	0,99	0,99	0,99	0,99	0,93	0,30
JS	0,16	0,03	0,97	$\approx 7,08:1$	0,98	0,94	0,98	0,98	0,86	0,33
JE	0,067	0,03	0,97	$\approx 2,27:1$	0,99	0,99	0,99	0,99	0,94	0,56
TI	0,078	0,03	0,97	$\approx 2,54:1$	0,98	0,98	0,99	0,99	0,93	0,53
Structural Model	0,072	0,065	0,84	$\approx 2,22:1$	0,96	0,98	0,98	0,98	0,80	0,83

Source: Data Processed, 2025

Hypotheses Testing

To prove the hypotheses, the construction of related conclusions is formulated based on the analysis results of the outputs from the direct relationships and mediation path analyses obtained. The outputs in question include the path coefficients (β), standard error, and t-value. The results proven from the testing shown the significance of the variable's role in either direct and indirect effect, are as explained in Table 3. The hypotheses formulated for the implementation of this study amount to nine hypotheses.

Observational facts indicate that there are three data points that do not support the hypotheses. The rejected hypotheses include H5 (job satisfaction influences turnover intention), H8 (job satisfaction mediates the effect of servant leadership on turnover intention) and H9 (servant leadership influences turnover intention through the serial mediation of job embeddedness and job satisfaction). Meanwhile, six other hypotheses are accepted based on the research data obtained.

Table 3. Hypotheses Result

Effect		Path Coefficient (B)	T-Value	Conclusion
Direct Effect				
1.	SL → TI	-0,1016	-1,67	Significant, negative
2.	SL → JS	0,2074	3,85	Significant, positive
3.	SL → JE	0,4017	6,24	Significant, positive
4.	JE → TI	-0,4588	-4,59	Significant, negative
5.	JS → TI	-0,1586	-1,48	Not significant
6.	JE → JS	0,6924	9,22	Significant, positive
Indirect Effect				
7.	SL → JE → TI	-0,1843	-3,72	JE mediates the influence of SL on TI
8.	SL → JS → TI	-0,0329	-1,39	No mediation
9.	SL → JE → JS → TI	-0,0441	-1,42	No serial mediation

Source: Data Processed, 2025

DISCUSSION

This study has shown that servant leadership has a significant direct effect in reducing turnover intention, aligns with prior research of (Huning et al., 2020; Westbrook & Peterson, 2022). The effect of servant leadership was also significant when mediated by job embeddedness. However, job satisfaction failed to mediate the relationship. Furthermore, the direct influence of job satisfaction on turnover intention also yielded non-significant results.

In servant leadership's indicators, authenticity, humility, and stewardship contribute most significantly among the dimensions, indicating that auditors primarily perceive their superiors' leadership through genuine self-presentation, humble demeanor, and willingness to take responsibility while serving as role models. Additionally, standing back (a supportive attitude of the leader towards subordinates' circumstances) and willingness to appreciate subordinates' performance are also worth considering, as the SLF score shows a relatively close difference to the stewardship SLF score (standing back SLF score = 0.87). Based on the research findings, these dimensions can be considered as the priority as key primary indicators and keywords that the organisation can use to strengthen the role of servant leadership.

Questionnaire data showed higher mean scores for accountability (5.95) and empowerment (5.76) dimensions. However, these scores don't yet fully maximize servant leadership's potential impact on the dependent variable. The lower mean scores for authenticity and humility point to existing gaps that impede optimal SL effectiveness. The standing back dimension also showed decent validity but a low mean. To maximize TI reduction, organizations should focus on strengthening these specific servant leadership dimensions. These findings, without dismissing other dimensions, highlight key areas for strengthening servant leadership's impact on turnover intention. The items within job satisfaction exhibit relatively strong and consistent validity, with JS3 being the strongest and JS1 the weakest (SLF 0.72), yet closely aligned. This suggests that all JS items warrant consideration for strengthening this variable. Despite auditors generally liking their jobs, the mean score for JS2 (5.17), which measures job affection, falls notably below the grand mean of 5.46. Similarly, JS3's mean of 5.44, slightly below the grand mean, indicates that auditors' enthusiasm remains in a mid-to-lower range. Therefore, organizations should review policies to enhance auditors' job affection and overall work enthusiasm to boost job satisfaction.

For job embeddedness, JE3 demonstrates the highest validity (SLF=0.93), signifying an employee's deep organizational integration through various involvements, as captured by the statement "I am involved deeply enough in many things that I would find it difficult to leave the organization". Auditors' perception of this parameter (mean 5.06) is generally above the variable's grand mean (4.92), although the "somewhat agree" score suggests this involvement hasn't fully materialized. Expanding opportunities for personnel involvement in projects could further strengthen job embeddedness' influence. In the turnover intention variable, TI2 (SLF=0.91), TI1 (SLF=0.85), and TI3 (SLF=0.81) are the most significant contributors. This suggests auditors consider leaving primarily due to insufficient job incentives or lack of career development opportunities. However, the overall scores for these items remain below the variable's grand mean, indicating auditors are not generally inclined to leave.

Observations indicate that the job embeddedness-mediated path exhibits higher significance and a stronger relationship coefficient. This implies organizations should integrate job embeddedness principles when developing servant leadership to significantly reduce turnover intention. Effective leadership combines genuine authenticity—without pretense—with actively involving subordinates to foster their sense of value, proving far more impactful than mere authentic display. Prioritizing leadership behaviors based on the highest loading factors of servant leadership and the connecting bridge from job embeddedness will further enhance TI reduction.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study have provided several findings that can enrich the understanding and strengthen retention within government internal auditor organizations. The research reveals that servant leadership has been proven to reduce turnover intention levels, both directly and through mediating variables. However, among the two mediating variables used, empirical evidence indicates that not all mediators serve as adequate intermediaries. The findings demonstrate that only job embeddedness acts as a significant mediator in the relationship between servant leadership and turnover intention.

Furthermore, the results confirm that the mediating role of job embeddedness strengthens the influence of servant leadership on turnover intention. Servant leadership has also been proven to significantly enhance job embeddedness through the direct relationship between these two variables. Nevertheless, although job satisfaction shows an inverse relationship with turnover intention, its role cannot yet be considered ideal within the observed relationships in this study, whether in the direct relationship between the two variables or in the relationship between servant leadership and turnover intention mediated by job satisfaction, due to its non-significant effect on reducing turnover intention.

LIMITATION

There are several limitations that hinder the smooth progress of the study during conducting this research. The first limitation concerns the subjects who served as observation respondents in this research, which were limited to only one government agency. This results in the findings of this study not being directly generalizable to perceptions that reflect conditions in the public sector at large. Furthermore, the limited time available for research caused the research to be conducted using a cross-section method at a single point in time, so the results obtained do not provide a depiction over a certain time span. Considering that desires or intentions, including the intention to remain or to leave, can fluctuate over time, research employing a longitudinal approach over time would offer the opportunity for increasingly valid and reliable results.

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