

SELF-ESTEEM AND EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES: VOLUNTARY TURNOVER AMONG HIGH SELF-ESTEEM EMPLOYEES AND ELEVATED DISMISSAL RISK FOR MODERATE SELF-ESTEEM WORKERS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the relationship between self-esteem and employment transitions, focusing on voluntary turnover and involuntary dismissals. Utilizing a quantitative methodology, data were collected via Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) between August and September 2024 (N = 1,400), targeting job advertisement respondents across Poland's 15 largest cities, from which n-242 subjects fully participated in the study. Self-esteem was measured using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (SES), Polish adaptation by Dzwonkowska et al.

These findings suggest that high self-esteem individuals (H2) are more inclined to actively seek change in response to dissatisfaction or value incongruence, whereas low and moderate self-esteem individuals may exhibit inertia in adverse work contexts. Although Hypothesis 1 was not supported, the results indicated that individuals with moderate self-esteem constituted the largest proportion among the dismissed employees. From an organizational perspective, the findings underscore the dual role of high self-esteem as both an asset and a retention challenge. Additionally, they highlight the relevance of psychological profiling in HR decision-making, particularly in contexts of turnover risk and employee development strategies. The study contributes to the growing literature on psychological determinants of employment dynamics.

Keywords: employee self-esteem, work-related self-esteem, voluntary turnover

INTRODUCTION

Self-esteem is one of the key constructs in psychology, referring to the way individuals perceive and evaluate themselves. It is most commonly defined as a general attitude toward the self, encompassing both affective components—such as feelings of self-worth—and cognitive components, including beliefs about one's traits and competencies [1]. In classical conceptualizations, self-esteem functions as a regulator of social and emotional behavior and significantly influences psychological well-being [2].

Within the framework of positive psychology, Christopher Mruk [3] proposed a two-factor model of self-esteem, comprising a worth component (Do I feel like a valuable person?) and a competence component (Am I capable of achieving goals?). This dual approach allows for a more nuanced understanding of self-esteem and its impact on behavior. Importantly, it highlights that high self-esteem, while generally considered