

# Enhancing migrants' job performance: the role of employees' dynamic capabilities driven by the perceived meaning of life

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – Amidst dynamic global changes, migrant workforce dynamics have become complex due to voluntary and forced migrations, coupled with talent competition. Paradoxically, many migrants experience deskilling and brain waste in host countries. To optimize migrant skills for enhanced job performance in fluctuating organizational and environmental contexts, it is vital to overcome this challenge. This study aims to verify the employees' dynamic capabilities (EDC) based job performance model among migrants, exploring how the moderating effect of a meaning of life influences the relationship between EDC and job performance, considering job-related attitudes.

**Design/methodology/approach** – We conducted empirical research based on a survey of 453 Ukrainian migrants currently residing in Poland.

**Findings** – The results indicate that EDC influences job performance through person-job fit, work motivation, and job satisfaction. Particularly, migrants with a positive meaning of life show stronger relationships between EDC and job performance.

**Originality/value** – The article's originality lies in exploring the concept of EDC within the context of migrant workers, bridging a gap in understanding how these capabilities impact job performance, particularly regarding brain waste and deskilling. The study delves into how EDC could mitigate the mismatch between migrant workers' qualifications and job placements, thereby enriching international human resources management strategies to foster inclusive workplaces and enhance migrant workforce success.

**Keywords** Employees' dynamic capabilities, Migrants, Dynamic capabilities, Migrant workers, Meaning of life

**Paper type** Research paper

## Introduction

In 2022, approximately 2.9 million Ukrainians resided in Poland. We may divide them into two groups. The first, around 1.35 million, migrated before the war, mainly for economic reasons (Duszczyk & Kaczmarczyk, 2022). The second group comprised over 1.6 million forced migrants from Ukraine (UNHCR, 2023). However, by 2023, the Government of Poland

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reported only 994 thousand active ID registrations ([The Republic of Poland's Open Data Platform \(2024\)](#)).

Integrating refugees and immigrants into society and the labor market, and utilizing their skills, pose challenges for host countries ([Crowley-Henry & Al Ariss, 2018](#)). Labor demand in these countries often favors simple work, which creates difficulties in tapping into migrants' potential ([Castells, 1975](#)). Harnessing their qualifications requires significant time and cost. Thus, many migrants find work in the secondary labor market ([Lipset & Bendix, 1959](#)), which potentially impacts their self-perception and sense of purpose ([Glaz'ev and Malkov, 1992](#)).

Eurostat 2021 data shows that over 40% of foreigners in the Polish labor market worked below their qualifications, compared to 20% of Polish workers ([Eurostat, 2023](#)). Ukrainian immigrants in Poland experience brain waste and deskilling, influenced by the host country's labor market needs and employer attitudes ([Elo et al., 2020](#)). A survey by the National Bank of Poland in November 2022 found that 46% of Ukrainian refugees and 33% of pre-war migrants worked below their qualifications ([Chmielewska-Kalińska, Dudek, & Strzelecki, 2023](#)).

Given Poland's aging population, authorities are developing strategies to optimize the use of migrant populations. Insights from countries with longer immigration histories highlight the complexities of leveraging migrant competencies. Efforts are underway to explore alternative paradigms for utilizing qualifications ([Pecoraro & Tani, 2023](#)) while considering the unique attributes of each migrant.

Recent literature highlights that competitive advantage is closely connected to the combinability and reconfigurability of competencies in the workforce ([Pithon & Putnik, 2002](#); [Giannakos, Mikalef, & Pappas, 2018](#); [Chatterjee, Chaudhuri, Gonzalez, Kumar, & Singh, 2022](#)). For this reason, we note the increase in the importance of employee dynamic capabilities (EDC), which, as a rule, allow employees to adapt to perform work in changing conditions within the organization and its environment ([Bieńkowska & Tworek, 2020](#)). Simultaneously, it seems that this issue is particularly important for migrant workers. After all, when arriving in the host country, they are interested in finding a job quickly, so they often decide to take positions that do not fully correspond to their qualifications or competencies. Then, to smoothly adapt to the requirements of the job and effectively perform their duties, they need to skillfully reconfigure their competencies using EDC. [Mahmud, Alam, and Härtel \(2014\)](#) seem to confirm this assumption. As they note, immigrant workers with specific skills and competencies must possess the ability to combine or reconfigure their resources to attain a competitive advantage and enhance their performance. This is easier for those, who have experience in working in the host country ([Mahmud et al., 2014](#)).

However, thus far, no research has verified the importance of the dynamic capabilities of migrant workers for building their job performance in the host country or explained the mechanism of this process. Moreover, no one has yet presented the boundary conditions triggering the impact of EDC on job performance of migrant workers. Hence, we aimed to validate the EDC-based job performance model within the context of migrant workers and investigate how the moderating influence of a meaning of life affects the relation between EDC and job performance while considering specific job-related attitudes.

Our analysis centered around the concept of EDC ([Bieńkowska & Tworek, 2020](#)), which stems from the dynamic capabilities view (DCV) approach by [Teece, Pisano, and Shuen \(1997\)](#). The EDC concept is relatively new. Thus, research in this area has focused primarily on managers rather than individual employees ([Bieńkowska, Koszela, & Tworek, 2021](#); [Tworek et al., 2023a, b](#)).

The article contributes to two main theoretical streams. First, it contributes to the DCV approach by further analyzing the applicability of the EDC concept to investigate individuals and in this case, a very significant and specific group of individuals, i.e. immigrants, because migration, especially economic is selective. Migrants are typically self-selected from less developed countries, indicating a positive trend. The relative skill prices in various destinations influence their sorting process. Consequently, highly educated migrants are more inclined to settle in countries that provide better opportunities for their skills

(Grogger & Hanson, 2011). Young people with the greatest potential for the company are the ones who migrate most often (Kaczmarczyk, 2005).

Furthermore, the article contributes to the migration literature by focusing on the way specific abilities, included in the EDC concept may constitute a way to overcome brain waste and deskilling and thus help get migrants a job that would match their abilities, and thus prevent a waste of money spend in obtaining their qualifications and skills. Moreover, the article contributes to the international human resources management (IHRM) literature by showing that by focusing on migrants EDC, organizations may prevent brain waste and deskilling, as through IHRM they may be able to conduct more efficient recruitment, performance management, and build a not only inclusive workplace, but may also enable migrant workplace success.

## Theoretical background and hypothesis

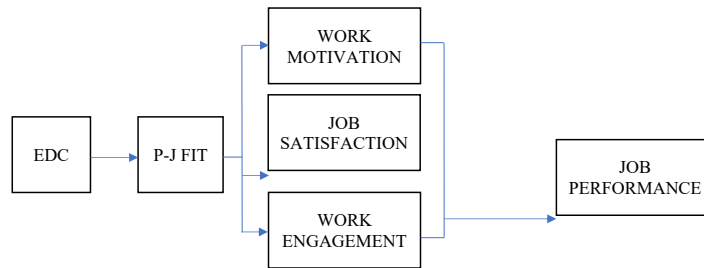
### *Employees' dynamic capabilities*

Employees' dynamic capabilities (EDC) (Bieñkowska & Tworek, 2020) is a relatively new concept that stems from the dynamic capabilities view (DCV) approach by Teece *et al.* (1997). According to Bieñkowska and Tworek (2020), scholars have primarily focused on the organizational level when utilizing the concept of dynamic capabilities (DC), viewing employees merely as contributors to the organization's dynamic capabilities. Most of the DC conceptualizations go back to the definition by Teece *et al.* (1997), who define DC as "the firm's ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external competencies to address a rapidly changing environment" (Teece *et al.*, 1997, p. 516). Dynamic capabilities enable the organization to respond to dynamic changes in the environment and therefore enhance its effectiveness (Helfat *et al.*, 2009; Teece & Pisano, 1994). Scholars also believe that DC is a derivative of a company's human capital resources, its acquisition, combination, development, and distribution (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000). However, the literature emphasizes that human resources are among organizations' most critical assets. According to the resource-based view theory, human resources are fundamental in differentiating how organizations operate, and together with the firm's capabilities, they play a pivotal role in creating the organization's competitive advantage (Barney, 1991; Barney, Wright, & Ketchen, 2001).

Individual employees and their human capital are one of DC fundamentals (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000) and according to Adner and Helfat (2003) DC of individual employees (in their case dynamic managerial competencies, DMC) may be one of the facilitators of DC on the organizational level. Following this logic, Bieñkowska and Tworek (2020) proposed the concept of EDC, which they defined using four dimensions: the ability to be sensitive toward change in the environment, the ability to adapt to changes in the environment, the ability to proactively solve problems and include innovations, and the ability for personal development and learning. Research has proved the significance of the EDC concept. It showed that EDC can influence job performance (Bieñkowska & Tworek, 2020; Al Wali, Muthuveloo, Teoh, & Al Wali, 2023) and that we can also translate it into the entire organization (Tworek *et al.*, 2023a, b). Furthermore, research showed a statistically significant, positive relationship between EDC and innovative work behavior (Al Wali *et al.*, 2023). Scholars also found it to be an enabler of IT adaptability (Tworek *et al.*, 2023a, b). Chaudhuri, Chatterjee, Vrontis, Galati, and Siachou (2023) also used an adaptation of the EDC concept. They focused on EDC as employee knowledge capability and the capability to upgrade skills, which according to their findings relates to the employees' intention to embrace digital technology.

### *Job performance model based on EDC*

The job performance model, based on the EDC model by Bieñkowska and Tworek (2020) (see Figure 1), illustrates how EDC influences job performance, primarily through person-job fit (P-J fit), and is mediated by work motivation, job satisfaction, and work engagement.



Source(s): Own elaboration

Figure 1. EDC-based job performance model (Bieńkowska & Tworek, 2020)

This conceptualization aligns with Hackman and Oldham's classical theory (Hackman & Oldham, 1974), with existing literature supporting the relationship between these variables. As defined by Rich, Lepine, and Crawford (2010), job performance encompasses employee behaviors contributing to organizational goals, with research indicating its multifaceted nature (Sonnentag & Frese, 2002; Ng & Feldman, 2010; June & Mahmood, 2011).

Meanwhile, P-J fit refers to the alignment between individual abilities or desires and job demands or attributes (Lin, Yu, & Yi, 2014). It is positively correlated with job performance and work engagement (Lin *et al.*, 2014; de Beer, Rothmann, & Mostert, 2016). Moreover, scholars have linked career adaptability to P-J fit (Jiang, 2016) and found that it acts as a mediator between career adaptability and job outcomes (Kaur & Kaur, 2020).

As described by Kahn (1992), work engagement influences job performance positively (Sekhar, Patwardhan, & Vyas, 2018), while job satisfaction, defined as employee contentment with their job (Hackman & Oldham, 1974), exhibits varying relationships with job performance across studies (Iaffaldano & Muchinsky, 1985; Yang & Hwang, 2014; Peng & Mao, 2015; Vaculík *et al.*, 2016; Gazi, Islam, Shaturaev, & Dhar, 2022). This might be due to cultural differences (Ng, Sorensen, & Yim, 2009).

Intrinsic motivation, emphasized in this model, drives effective job performance (Hackman & Oldham, 1974) and is sometimes linked to P-J fit (Neumann, 2016). However, we can also analyze it separately (Aboramadan, Dahleez, & Hamad, 2020). Numerous studies affirm the positive relationship between intrinsic motivation and job performance (Trivellas, 2011; Moon, Hur, & Hyun, 2019; Jnaneswar & Ranjit, 2022), with intrinsic motivation also acting as a mediator in other relationships (Guo, Liao, Liao, & Zhang, 2014; Moon, Youn, Hur, & Kim, 2020).

Given the unique challenges that migrants face, further analysis is necessary to adapt this model to specific populations.

#### *Migrants in the workplace*

Often, migrant employees concentrate in the secondary labor market segments due to employers' insufficient recognition of their skills and qualifications, which leads to limited opportunities for them in the primary labor market. The primary segment encompasses workplaces perceived as attractive, and prestigious, offering opportunities for advancement and professional development. However, the secondary market includes occupations that do not require high qualifications, are low-paid and less stable (e.g. temporary or seasonal employment), offer limited advancement opportunities, and typically involve physical labor (Piore, 1979). Moreover, the rewards and benefits offered to migrant workers in primary roles may not be commensurate with their contributions and capabilities (Almeida & Fernando, 2017). If the job demands specific attributes such as local market knowledge, interpersonal skills, and informal social capital (Rosholm, Røed, & Schøne, 2013), securing such

employment can be more challenging. However, if the employer values social capital and social networks that tie the employee to their country of origin, it could serve as a distinct advantage for the applicant. An important factor that affects the relationship between migrant workers and the nature of the work they undertake is the skills transferability. Skills do not appear to be perfectly transferable across countries and cultures, as this process is influenced by the cultural and social backgrounds of individuals (Kostenko, Harris, & Zhao, 2012). For migrants, the transferability of skills and qualifications presents a multifaceted issue with significant practical and policy implications. Breen (2016) and Lancee and Bol (2017) emphasize the obstacles migrants encounter in getting their qualifications and skills recognized in their host country. Breen focuses on the particular difficulties that Irish migrants experience in Australia, while Chiswick and Miller (2009) and Bazzi, Gaduh, Rothenberg, and Wong (2016) delve into the broader impact of these challenges. Chiswick finds that skill transferability is often imperfect and Bazzi highlights the influence of location-specific human capital on productivity. Collectively, these studies highlight the urgent need for improved policies and practices to facilitate the recognition and transferability of skills and qualifications for migrants. We define skills transferability as the ability to use knowledge acquired by a migrant in another country. While qualification transfer is the formal ability to use the education obtained in the country of origin.

Migrants often encounter imperfect transferability of their human capital, which we can attribute to various factors. First, there is a prevailing prejudice among employers, especially in countries with lower development levels, that education and work experience acquired in another country are less valuable (Fang, Zikic, & Novicevic, 2009; Dietz, Joshi, Esses, Hamilton, & Gabarrot, 2015).

Friedberg (2000) emphasizes that immigrants' position in the labor market depends not only on their education and experience but also on how people in the destination country value and perceive these qualifications. We find echoes of this view in studies indicating that the transferability of qualifications depends on the comparability between the country of origin and the host country's economic conditions, education systems, industrial structure, institutional environment, and language (Basilio, Bauer, & Kramer, 2017).

Borjas (2000) suggests that the greater the complementarity between skills acquired in the country of origin and those acquired in the destination country, the higher the investment in human capital abroad for skilled migrants. However, Bauder (2003) identifies institutional constraints hindering the recognition of foreign qualifications, leading to barriers in accessing certain sectors like medicine (Brzozowski, 2008) or public administration (Zikic & Richardson, 2016), particularly affecting migrants' employment prospects in higher segments of the labor market.

Research shows that immigrants from non-EU countries are less valued in EU labor markets than natives with similar characteristics (Nieto, Matano, & Ramos, 2015). The higher the individual's level of education, the more overeducation we can expect (Tijdens & van Klaveren, 2016). Literature applies several concepts with regard to the use of migrants' qualifications. The term "brain waste" describes a scenario when an individual works in a job that requires significantly lower skills than those they possess (Reitz, 2001). This occurs when a skilled individual incurs the costs of education but fails to reap the benefits, such as when a highly qualified migrant is employed in an unskilled position. This mismatch results in losses for both the migrants and the host society (Sumption, 2013). Brain waste often stems from the low transferability of skills and education, which can be hindered by skill specificity or other factors like language barriers, making it challenging to apply these skills across borders (Chiswick & Miller, 2009). "Brain waste" is related to another concept relevant to migrants' challenges in utilizing their qualifications, known as "deskilling." Skill utilization refers to the degree of match or congruence between individuals' skills and the opportunity to use these skills in their work roles (O'Brien, 1980). Deskilling refers to the underutilization or complete lack of use of one's education in a specific job. When migrants remain in this situation for an extended period, their previously acquired competences can become obsolete due to

technological and organizational developments (De Grip & Van Loo, 2002). This scenario can occur not only due to migration but also in other contexts, such as long-term maternity leave. Deskilling most commonly affects those with higher education (Pecoraro & Wanner, 2019). Another concept related to the phenomenon of brain waste is overeducation, which occurs when an individual works in a job that requires less education than they possess. A broader term for this phenomenon that we may often encounter in the literature is overqualification, which encompasses formal education, informal education, and on-the-job training (Wirz & Atukeren, 2005).

These challenges on the use of qualifications and education can lead to frustration, decreased life satisfaction (Kogan, Shen, & Siegert, 2018), and a reassessment of life's meaning, which scholars have extensively linked with employment status (Danaher, 2017; Petunova *et al.*, 2018). Moreover, a sense of purpose in life has been associated with positive personal transformation and job satisfaction (Rundio, Dixon, & Heere, 2020; Albuquerque, Oriol, Brauer, & Pinheiro, 2023), influencing commitment, social functioning, organizational citizenship behavior, absenteeism, and intentions to leave (Ward & King, 2017).

The portability of human capital for migrants hinges not only on external factors but also on individual traits like aspirations and capabilities (Carling & Collins, 2018). Bosswick and Heckmann (2006) stress the importance of both structural and social dimensions of integration, indicating that individual capabilities are crucial for migrants' positioning in the labor market and within organizations (Czaika & Vothknecht, 2014).

#### *The validation of the EDC-based model of job performance for migrant workers*

The model has been tested on other employees, but we wanted to specifically explore its application in the context of migrant workers, as they are becoming an increasingly significant group in the European and Polish labor markets and consequently in organizations. The analysis of migrant's workers and their influence in terms of the EDC represents a novel perspective. As far we are aware, this approach has not been previously explored. However, we firmly believe that it is valuable to consider this perspective, given that migrants are becoming an increasingly crucial component of the workforce and significantly influence the employing organizations. This notion becomes even more compelling considering that migrants, especially economic migrants, are characterized by selectivity. This selectivity implies that individuals who are proactive, unafraid of embracing new challenges, and capable of adapting readily to new environments are more likely to choose migration as a path (Curran, 2002).

The EDC significance takes on a distinct dimension when considering migrants. Migration entails a transition to a new country, frequently involving a diverse culture and language. This transition invariably extends to employment. Furthermore, migrants often find themselves in positions that do not match their qualifications and skills, which results in the concerning occurrences of deskilling and brain waste, thus underutilization of their intellectual potential. As described in the subsection "Job performance model based on EDC," the EDC – job performance model shows an indirect influence of EDC on job performance, which is mediated by work motivation, job satisfaction and work engagement, as well as P-J fit. However, in the case of migrant workers, the nature of their work, and deskilling, we believe that work engagement will not have a significant role in this model. We find support for it in research by Tolsby (2000), who found that employees' deskilling led to a more task-oriented work approach rather than increased work engagement. Moreover, a study by Burgess and Campbell (1998) suggests that immigrants are very often at risk of developing a weaker attachment to their employers, which may in turn influence their work engagement. There is also a significant body of research suggesting that immigrants very often face inequalities, discrimination (Nardon, Hari, Zhang, Hoselton, & Kuzhabekova, 2022) in the workplace and are often placed in job positions with limited possibilities to move up in the organization hierarchy (Subeliani & Tsogas, 2005). Research has shown that overqualification influences job attitudes and workplace behavior (Liu & Wang, 2012). However, in accordance with



Hackman and Oldham (1974), we believe that the other variables will still mediate the EDC – job performance relationship. Therefore, we developed the following hypotheses (together with three detailed hypotheses).

*H1.* EDC influences job performance of migrants through P-J fit, work motivation and job satisfaction.

*H1a.* EDC influences job performance of migrants through P-J fit.

*H1b.* EDC influences job performance of migrants through work motivation.

*H1c.* EDC influences job performance of migrants through job satisfaction.

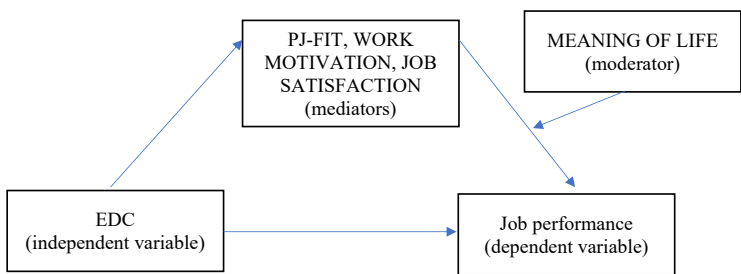
We may understand an individual's life-sense strategy as a cohesive mental framework, essential for a person. These forces shaping this framework are both the individual's personal experiences and the motivational factors that hold value for them. Through this intricate construct, the person gains the ability to interpret, comprehend, and interact with the external world (Kruteleva & Abakumova, 2013). For migrants, the question of the meaning of life is particularly important. On the one hand, they make the decision to emigrate to improve their material situation (economic migrants) or in search of a safer place to live (forces migrants). However, for them, this change is not always associated with improved life satisfaction. This shows that migrants and perceptions of their situation are under the influence of both rational and emotional factors (Carling & Collins, 2018). Usually, especially in the context of a professional path, this deteriorates in the host country. Migrants are working below their qualifications and most of them stay in this job (Leschke & Weiss, 2020). This is somewhat of a paradox, because, on the one hand, they receive better wages than in their country of origin. They live in a safe country, but for many, the lack of opportunities to leave unskilled jobs that do not provide opportunities for professional development and fulfillment of their career aspirations may translate into the quality of the work they do (Tian, Wang, & Chia, 2018). Noteworthy, working conditions for migrants are sometimes worse than for native workers (regarding contractual terms of employment, working hours, work-life balance, multidimensional deprivation, and job satisfaction) (Kowalik, Lewandowski, & Kaczmarczyk, 2022; García-Serrano & Hernanz, 2023). This may impact job related attitudes and engagement (Macey & Schneider, 2008; Neault & Pickerell, 2011). Considering the above, we developed the second hypothesis:

*H2.* The influence of EDC on job performance through P-J fit, work motivation, and job satisfaction is stronger among immigrants declaring that their life has meaning than among those declaring that their life has no meaning.

Thus, we believe that the perceived meaning of life influences the EDC impact on job performance mediated through P-J fit, work motivation, and job satisfaction. Therefore, we proposed the following theoretical model to explain the influence of migrant workers EDC on job performance (Figure 2).

### *Research methodology and results*

To verify the hypotheses, we conducted an empirical study. We based it on a questionnaire method as a tool for data gathering. We surveyed 453 migrants from Ukraine residing in Poland in August 2023. We conducted the research among Ukrainians, as they represent the largest group of foreigners in Poland and thus play a significant role in the labor market as they constitute an increasingly large workforce. The analysis included both Ukrainians who were in Poland before the war and refugees. We recruited respondents through a research panel, which operated by inviting registered respondents to participate in the survey. After completing the survey, participants received a specific number of points that they could later exchange for



Source(s): Own elaboration

Figure 2. Moderated mediation model of EDCs influence on job performance of migrant workers

monetary rewards. The selection of respondents was purposive rather than random as the sample consisted of registered users who considered the offered rewards as appropriate compensation for their involvement in the study. We believe that purposive sampling, which is a type of nonprobability sampling method is justifiable for research involving migrants and refugees, as previous studies have shown these populations to be challenging to recruit for research purposes (Kubiciel-Lodzińska, 2021). Although the focus of purposive sampling is on selecting respondents based on specific characteristic relevant to the study, rather than generating a representative sample and the results may not be statistically generalizable, they still allow to draw meaningful conclusions for the analyzed population. Table 1 shows the description of the obtained sample.

Variables: scales reliability and validity

To verify the formulated hypotheses, we used the following variables: employees’ dynamic capabilities (EDC), person-job fit (PJFIT), work motivation (MOT), job satisfaction (SAT), job performance (JOBPER), and meaning of life (LIFE).

We assessed EDC using a 5-point Likert scale with six items covering sensitivity to environmental changes, adaptability, problem-solving skills, and commitment to personal development. We evaluated PJFIT with a 5-point Likert scale comprising three items assessing the congruence between employees’ skills and job requirements. We appraised MOT with a 5-point Likert scale through three items measuring individuals’ willingness to execute tasks and exert extra effort. We measured SAT on a 5-point Likert scale with three items gauging employees’ outlook towards their jobs, including contentment and contemplation of work resignation. We evaluated JOBPER with a 5-point Likert scale using seven items assessing task proficiency and adherence to work discipline. We assessed LIFE with a single-item variable asking respondents if their life made sense, rated on a 5-point Likert scale.

Table 1. Sample description

		Time of leaving Ukraine			Total
		Lack of response	After February 24. 2022 (after invasion)	Before February 24. 2022 (before the invasion)	
Gender	Lack of response	4	0	0	4
	Female	0	222	172	394
	Male	0	12	43	55
Total		4	234	215	453

Source(s): Own elaboration



We employed Cronbach's  $\alpha$  and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to validate the measurement scales, ensuring reliability and appropriateness for the study. The scales creators previously validated them (Bieńkowska & Tworek, 2020). The results confirmed the one-factor solution for EDC, validating it based on a different sample. We took steps to mitigate method bias, ensuring reliability, and coherence of the measurement scales. Discriminant validity analysis confirmed the distinctiveness of the theoretical constructs represented by the variables, with Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) values below the threshold of 0.68, supporting their suitability for subsequent path analysis. See Table 2.

### *Multigroup path analysis*

First, we calculated the linear regression model using IBM SPSS. The primary objective was to ascertain whether the proposed independent variable exerts a statistically significant influence on job performance, while controlling for other pertinent factors that conventionally affect job performance (job-related attitudes) while introducing a control variable, i.e. gender. Furthermore, this analysis sought to evaluate the presence of multicollinearity among the variables, which we later used in the path analysis. Multicollinearity occurs when the independent variable in the model demonstrates significant correlation with other independent variables in the same model, which can impede the viability of path analysis. We evaluated this phenomenon through the variance inflation factor (VIF), which values should remain below 5.0 signifying the absence of multicollinearity, thus permitting the execution of path analysis, as outlined by Midi & Bagheri (2010).

We successfully established a statistically significant model characterized by an R-squared ( $R^2$ ) value of 0.089 and  $F(6,298) = 9.932, p < 0.001$ . Table 3 shows the coefficients associated with each variable. The obtained results allowed us to conclude that we could perform path

**Table 2.** Variables overview

Variable	Items	Alpha-cronbach	AVE
Satisfaction (SAT)	3	0.818	0.739
Motivation (MOT)	3	0.761	0.690
Meaning of life (LIFE)	3	0.714	0.636
Job performance (JOBPER)	4	0.890	0.755
Person – job fit (PJFIT)	3	0.773	0.688
EDC (EDC)	5	0.788	0.542

**Source(s):** Own elaboration

**Table 3.** Regression analysis results

Model	Coefficients			<i>p</i>	Multicollinearity	
	B	SE	<i>t</i>		Tolerance	VIF
Const	2.249	0.369	6.091	<0.001		
EDC	0.254	0.073	3.460	<0.001	0.918	1.090
PJFIT	−0.096	0.057	−1.670	0.096	0.549	1.822
SAT	0.016	0.050	0.317	0.752	0.788	1.269
MOT	0.138	0.071	1.949	0.052	0.455	2.198
LIFE	0.112	0.065	1.738	0.083	0.516	1.939
Gender	0.145	0.102	1.425	0.155	0.989	1.011

Source: Own elaboration

analysis based on the obtained sample (VIF values remained below 5 and EDC remained statistically significant predictor in a given model).

Based on such initial analysis, we performed the multigroup path analysis using IBM SPSS AMOS. The first group contained respondents, who evaluated their meaning of life as equal or below 3 (lack of meaning of life). The second group contained respondents, who evaluated their meaning of life as above 3 (meaning of life). The multigroup path analysis allowed for the identification of statistically significant and well-fitted model. Its baseline comparison showed that the unconstrained model characteristics were within the margins allowing to assume it for statistical reasoning. We conducted the full assessment of the model fit using comparative fit index (CFI) and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). We used CFI and Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) to assess the goodness of fit of the model. Both of them should remain above 0.8 according to [Hu & Bentler \(1999\)](#). We used RMSEA to assess the model's badness of fit. It should remain below 0.2 in social sciences according to [Hopwood & Donnellan \(2010\)](#). Moreover, the cut-off points should serve as guidelines and there is an extensive literature debate concerning their value for social sciences research (see [Chen, Curran, Bolle, Kirby, & Paxton, 2008](#); [Lai & Green, 2016](#); [Groskurth, Bluemke, & Lechner, 2024](#)). The goodness of fit was sufficient: CFI = 0.895, TLI = 0.911. The badness of fit was also sufficient: RMSEA = 0.121 (PCLOSE = 0.001). We assessed the model's statistical significance also using Chi2 (4) = 30.505;  $p < 0.001$  and found that the model may be a basis for statistical reasoning, as it was both well-fitted and statistically significant. [Tables 4 and 5](#) present the model overview obtained for both groups in the given sample. [Tables 6 and 7](#) present total and indirect effects occurring in the model.

The obtained model showed that EDC influences job performance through P-J fit, work motivation, and job satisfaction. Moreover, [Tables 4 and 5](#) show that all relations within the model obtained for the group of respondents declaring the positive perception of meaning of life were statistically significant, which did not happen in the case of the other respondent group (negative perception of meaning of life). It allowed us to accept [H1](#) hypothesis, stating that EDC influences job performance of emigrants through P-J fit, work motivation, and job

**Table 4.** Regression coefficients for Group 1 (lack of meaning of life)

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
PJfit	<—	EDC	0.158	0.129	1.229	0.219
SAT	<—	PJFIT	0.402	0.079	5.077	***
MOT	<—	PJFIT	0.466	0.061	7.636	***
MOT	<—	SAT	0.182	0.058	3.119	0.002
JOBPER	<—	MOT	0.168	0.085	1.988	0.047
JOBPER	<—	SAT	−0.057	0.072	−0.794	0.427

**Source(s):** Own elaboration

**Table 5.** Regression coefficients for Group 2 (meaning of life)

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
PJFIT	<—	EDC	0.398	0.133	2.983	0.003
SAT	<—	PJFIT	0.234	0.064	3.626	***
MOT	<—	PJFIT	0.523	0.056	9.287	***
MOT	<—	SAT	0.129	0.068	1.910	0.046
JOBPER	<—	MOT	0.139	0.063	2.184	0.029
JOBPER	<—	SAT	0.182	0.067	2.729	0.006

**Source(s):** Own elaboration

**Table 6.** Effects coefficients for Group 1 (lack of meaning of life)

	EDC	PJFIT	SAT	MOT
<i>Total effects</i>				
PJFIT	0.158	0.000	0.000	0.000
SAT	0.064	0.402	0.000	0.000
MOT	0.085	0.539	0.182	0.000
JOBPER	0.011	0.068	−0.027	0.168
<i>Direct effects</i>				
PJFIT	0.158	0.000	0.000	0.000
SAT	0.000	0.402	0.000	0.000
MOT	0.000	0.466	0.182	0.000
JOBPER	0.000	0.000	−0.057	0.168
<i>Indirect effects</i>				
PJFIT	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
SAT	0.064	0.000	0.000	0.000
MOT	0.085	0.073	0.000	0.000
JOBPER	0.011	0.068	0.031	0.000

**Source(s):** Own elaboration**Table 7.** Effects coefficients for Group 2 (meaning of life)

	EDC	PJFIT	SAT	MOT
<i>Total effects</i>				
PJFIT	0.398	0.000	0.000	0.000
SAT	0.093	0.234	0.000	0.000
MOT	0.220	0.553	0.129	0.000
JOBPER	0.047	0.119	0.200	0.139
<i>Direct effects</i>				
PJFIT	0.398	0.000	0.000	0.000
SAT	0.000	0.234	0.000	0.000
MOT	0.000	0.523	0.129	0.000
JOBPER	0.000	0.000	0.182	0.139
<i>Indirect effects</i>				
PJFIT	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
SAT	0.093	0.000	0.000	0.000
MOT	0.220	0.030	0.000	0.000
JOBPER	0.047	0.119	0.018	0.000

**Source(s):** Own elaboration

satisfaction (which also means accepting [H1a-H1c](#), which are the detailed hypotheses). Moreover, the relation between EDC and job performance was stronger in the case of respondents declaring the positive perception of meaning of life ( $t_{\text{eff}} = 0.047$ ), with high effect between EDC and work motivation, showing the importance of that influence for boosting job performance of employees through EDC. [Tables 6 and 7](#) also show that the moderation occurred within the proposed multigroup path model, as significantly different values of effects occur in the case of both groups and for all relations within the model. Thus, we accepted hypothesis [H2](#), stating that the influence of EDC on job performance through P-J fit, work motivation, and job satisfaction is stronger among migrants declaring that their life has meaning than among those declaring that their life has no meaning.

Figure 3 presents the final model showing the sequence of mediators and the moderator.

Discussion

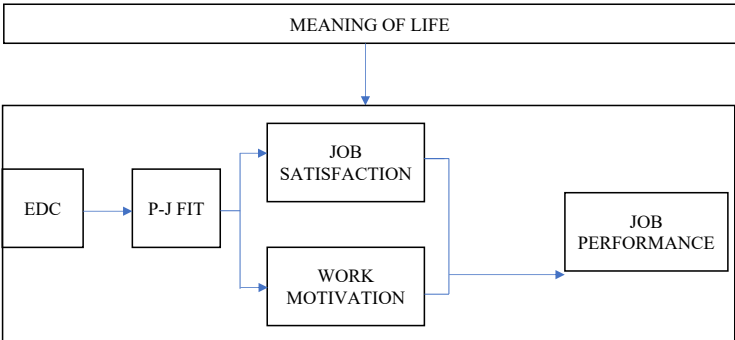
The conducted research and the obtained model validated the impact of EDC on job performance, mediated by the person-job fit, work motivation, and job satisfaction. Notably, the analysis revealed that the influence of EDC on job performance was particularly pronounced among migrants who reported a positive meaning of life, as evidenced by the significant and stronger relationships observed in this subgroup. Accordingly, the article showed that the model by [Bieńkowska and Tworek \(2020\)](#) is partially applicable to workers belonging to minority groups in the workforce, in this case, migrant workers. At the same time, the study showed that in the case of a diverse workforce, it is necessary to consider other specific variables that may affect the EDC–job performance relationship. In the case of migrants, that specific variable is the meaning of life.

Theoretical implications

This article constitutes a noteworthy theoretical contribution by advancing the understanding of EDC within the context of migrant workers, a specific and significant group within the labor force. In doing so, the article bridges the gap between the DCV approach and individual employees and expands the applicability of the EDC concept to encompass migrant workers. By examining the intricate relationship between EDC and job performance, mediated by person-job fit, work motivation, and job satisfaction, the article underscores the influence of these specific abilities on job performance.

The article contributes to the migration literature by demonstrating that the integration of EDC can potentially mitigate challenges like brain waste and deskilling that migrants face, which enables them to access job roles that align more closely with their competencies. This valuable insight not only contributes to our comprehension of how EDC can counteract these detrimental effects but also presents a strategic pathway to optimize the utilization of migrants’ abilities, ultimately benefiting both individuals and organizations. We emphasize the importance of considering not only the formal skills of migrants but also psychological factors, such as their self-perception and feelings about the work they perform when aiming to harness their potential.

Moreover, the article adds a significant layer of insight to the literature on international human resources management (IHRM) by highlighting the role of EDC in fostering migrant workplace success. By leveraging EDC, organizations can both address the pressing issues of brain waste and deskilling and enhance their recruitment and performance management



Source(s): Own elaboration

Figure 3. EDC-based job performance model of migrant employees

strategies. The findings suggest that focusing on migrants' EDC can facilitate the creation of a more inclusive and efficient workplace environment while aligning with the goals of IHRM to harness the potential of a diverse workforce. In essence, this article enriches the IHRM literature by showcasing how to leverage EDC to create a more inclusive, effective, and successful migrant workforce.

Overall, this article's theoretical contribution lies in its exploration of the nuanced interplay between EDC, migrant workers' job performance, and the introduction of the moderating effect of a meaning of life.

*Practical implications.* The research has important practical implications for organizations employing migrant workers. We have verified the mechanism of EDC influence on the job performance of migrant workers. Thus, it is possible to prepare a program that shapes or triggers EDC for this group of workers, as this will result in a better fit for their jobs and increase their motivation for work and job satisfaction, contributing to their job performance. We also found that meaning of life is a statistically significant moderator of the indirect effect of EDC on job performance. This means that migrants should receive support in rebuilding their sense of meaning of life, as this translates into realizing their potential in job processes. This underscores that in the process of supporting migrants in utilizing their qualifications, it is essential to provide not only language training, vocational education, and diploma recognition but also psychological and mentoring support. Such support services can help cope with stress and challenges which may relate to their migration experience. Moreover, organizations could establish employee assistance programs to offer a wide range of services, including financial advice, legal assistance, and mental health support. This would help migrants shift their mindset from considering themselves as "lesser" employees to having the confidence to seek employment in more attractive professions traditionally seen as "reserved" for native workers. Therefore, organizations employing migrant workers could develop targeted workplace integration programs, including customized onboarding programs, which would be tailored to migrants' needs. They could include, for example, cultural orientation and integration workshops. Furthermore, organizations could establish mentorship programs with experienced employees. Workshops could also target skill development, focusing both on hard and soft skills. Moreover, the findings show practical implications for teaching, as they can serve to educate and train managers and HR specialists about the importance of psychological support and building and fostering a sense of meaning in migrant workers' lives. Furthermore, the findings provide implications for policymakers, who could implement the findings into integration programs for migrants, emphasizing a holistic approach to integration that should focus on both professional development and psychological adaptation. Moreover, policies supporting the recognition of qualifications could provide additional resources to migrant integration processes. Policymakers could, therefore, launch public awareness campaigns about the benefits of employing migrant workers and the positive impact of EDC on their job performance. Finally, we can identify implications for the community, as by developing community programs and supporting the social integration of migrants, their overall life quality could be enhanced, which in turn could improve the local economy and society.

*Limitations and further research.* Future research should focus on searching for other moderators, which could be drivers of the EDC-job performance model. Those drivers could lie within the organization but also on the outside. One of the research directions could be the relational framework (Syed & Ozbilgin, 2009), which could collectively point towards new, significant variables through the inclusion of individual characteristics and choices, organizational processes, and structural conditions.

Furthermore, as this article has shown, the EDC-job performance model for migrant workers differs from the original model. Thus, it would be interesting to analyze how the EDC job performance model works for other diversity dimensions and whether other groups of employees require different impulses to perform in their jobs. It could be in line with the

diversity management postulate to consider various diversity dimensions in organizational management.

Although we are strongly convinced about the significance of the findings, the research that was conducted is not free of limitations. One of them relates to the purposive sampling. It is essential to acknowledge this type of sample selection when interpreting the results, as the sample was not representative. Moreover, the participants were individuals who perceived the financial reward as adequate compensation for their participation in the study. Furthermore, we conducted the study in a particular cultural setting: on Ukrainian immigrants in Poland, which is a limitation to the study and requires consideration when trying to apply the findings in other cultural settings. However, we believe that through the migration literature (Kogan *et al.*, 2018; Henderson, Trlin, & Watts, 2001), which points to similarities between different immigrants in different host countries, scholars will be able to use and apply the findings in other settings. Nevertheless, it would be interesting to conduct similar research in a different socio-cultural and economic setting.

### Conclusions

In recent years, the world has undergone significant transformations, reshaping the dynamics of work and challenging conventional paradigms of employee competencies and job performance. The research delved into the unique context of migrant workers, a critical yet often underexplored group within the labor force, management research, and international human resources management research. With an estimated 2.9 million Ukrainians residing in Poland, we focused on their integration into the society and labor market and addressed the issues of brain waste and deskilling that affect migrant job performance. Drawing from the EDC framework, we investigated the adaptive and proactive abilities of individual migrant employees to navigate changing conditions in their organizations. This article not only validated the impact of EDC on job performance but also introduced the moderating role of a meaning of life in this relationship. By examining the interplay between EDC, person-job fit, work motivation, job satisfaction, and the meaning of life, the article sheds light on how these factors collectively influence migrant job performance. By doing so, we highlighted the potential to address challenges unique to migrant workers. We also pave the way for further research and offer strategic insights for organizations, migration policymakers, and practitioners seeking to optimize the integration and performance of migrant employees.

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