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Navigating Servant Leadership Skills of School Administrator

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ABSTRACT

This study employed a qualitative-phenomenological approach navigating the servant leadership skills among schools administrators in Region XII. Results indicated that servant leaders are defined as inspiring leaders, serving others, and making goals clear. They adopted by prioritizing others growth and development. Implications for practice and future research are integrated.

Introduction

School administrators are crucial to creating a learning environment in complex educational institutions. Servant leadership is known for its focus on helping others, encouraging teamwork, and empowering employees. In an era when educational institutions face many obstacles, recognizing servant leadership in school administration is essential for effective leadership.

In complicated educational organizations, school administrators create a positive learning and development environment (Kershner & McQuillan, 2016). As for Khan et al. (2022), servant leadership is one of several leadership models, emphasizes service, teamwork, and empowerment. To build effective leadership methods in the face of complicated educational difficulties, it is crucial to understand servant leadership in school administration (Wieczorek & Manard, 2018).

Stein (2016) argued that school administrators have a role beyond administrative duties in the ever-changing education system. They foster development, welfare, and empowerment among their students and faculty. With Sendjaya (2015) discussion, leadership paradigm prioritizes others' needs, empowers individuals, and fosters personal growth through servant leadership. Recently, servant leadership in education has gained attention (Pawar et al., 2010).

Despite its rising acknowledgment as a paradigm shift in educational leadership, research rarely examines school administrators' servant leadership competencies (Gultekin & Dougherty, 2021; Kuykendall & Slater, 2020). Servant leadership principles like humility, empowerment, and empathy are valued by academics, yet school leadership research is few. Despite its links to student achievement and teacher job satisfaction (Obasuyi, 2019), few empirical research has examined how school administrators' servant leadership influences teachers' development, welfare, empowerment, and school atmosphere (Bhu-Mbi, 2021).

Thus, this study aims to enhance our comprehension of how servant leadership ideas are implemented and impact the dynamics of schools to the extent of understanding how they comprehend leadership and its approach. In essence, the research aims to add to the existing discussion on effective leadership in education and create opportunities for creating conditions that support the overall growth of its subordinates.

Statement of the Problem

I, as the research aims to unfold the servant leadership skill of school administrator in resonance to its subordinate support mechanisms. Further, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

1) What servant leadership skills do school administrators promote growth, well-being and empowerment of teachers?

2) How do these servant leadership skills for school administrators improve positive school climate?

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative-phenomenological approach. Qualitative research allows for the exploration of various contexts in which research can be conducted (Yan et al., 2022). It can be utilized in the fields of narratology, case study, multiple case study, ethnography, and grounded theory. Therefore, there is no requirement for statistical techniques to analyze the results.

Conversely, phenomenology is concerned with the subjective experiences and perceptions of individuals (Gagura, 2023). Therefore, the interpretation should be deduced from their conversation. Similarly, this approach focuses on doing comprehensive analyses of how these events have given significance to individuals (Stolz, 2023).

Overall, this work is qualitative as it does not rely on numerical data or statistical analysis. The fundamental concepts of this method are elucidating how servant leadership of school administrators empower its subordinates in terms of their growth and development.

Results and Discussions

Definition of Servant Leadership among School Administrators

The first research question encompasses the skills of school administrators in promoting growth, well-being, and empowerment of teachers. There are three organizing themes disclosed from the narrative quos.

Inspiring Leaders. Visionary educators motivate, develop, and unite teachers. Beyond administrative posts, these leaders embrace a compelling vision for educational performance, communicate it well, and persuade teachers to embrace it. Their genuine interest in education and compassionate assistance makes teachers feel valued, empowered, and motivated. Inspired leaders are passionate, honest, and always learning, establishing high standards for themselves and others and encouraging collaboration and creativity. Applauding teachers' successes and giving them authority and trust creates a healthy educational climate that prioritizes professional growth, student success, and positive school culture.

One of the participants connotes that the true power of a leader is by means of inspiring others.

"Servant leadership inspires by demonstrating that real power comes from serving others. It urges leaders to place the growth and welfare of their teams as their top priority through cultivating a culture of support, understanding, and teamwork." (Informant 1, Q1.1, L 1-6)

Further, putting others on top of their priorities enables others to be inspired in the workplace. He insisted that,

"For me, leading with a servant leadership approach means placing the needs and growth of those I lead at the forefront of my priorities to inspire them. I strive to listen attentively, offer support, and provide opportunities for development. Creating an environment where everyone feels valued, heard, and empowered is essential while enabling each person to thrive and contribute their best." (Informant 8, Q1.2, L 138-148)

The book of Murphy and Louis (2018) discuss that the inspired leaders create a good, dynamic school culture where teachers feel respected, motivated, and empowered to succeed by embodying vision, passion, and support. While Moreno (2023) confer that leadership through communication, encouragement, and recognition of achievements gives instructors a feeling of belonging and purpose, improving job satisfaction, retention, and effectiveness. In addition, inspiring leaders' mentor, guide, and provide opportunity for teachers to improve their skills. Inspiring leaders boost teacher morale and performance and help the school community achieve educational goals (Andriani et al., 2018).

Serving Others. School administrators who serve others understand that their work goes beyond management and requires them to empower, uplift, and advocate for their students. Administrators listen to teachers' concerns, provide timely assistance, and build an open and friendly atmosphere for growth and collaboration in this ethos of empathy, compassion, and active support. Serving others involves removing barriers to teachers' performance, whether through resources, professional development, or emotional support. In the end, administrators who prioritize helping others create a culture of mutual respect, trust, and reciprocity that creates a healthy educational community where teachers feel respected, supported, and encouraged to succeed.

Several of the responses confer those leaders that prioritizing other contributes in their skills to becoming a great leader.

"Okay, servant leadership inspired by showing true strength lies in serving others. It encourages leaders to prioritize the well-being and growth of their team above all else. By fostering an environment of support, empathy, and collaboration, servant leadership empowers everyone to reach their full potential" (Informant 8, Q1.1, L 129-137)

Meanwhile, prioritizing someone and guiding them as a way of helping them to grow and develop in the field. She resonates that,

"Practicing servant leadership involves prioritizing the well-being and advancement of those under my guidance. I am committed to attentive listening, providing support, and establishing pathways for growth. Posturing an inclusive culture where everyone feels respected, acknowledged, and empowered is crucial for enhancing each individual's accomplishments and influence." (Informant 10, Q1.2, L 179-189)

Consequently, a participant response stated that a servant leader has unselfishness in terms of their psychological and physiological being.

"In a servant leadership educational environment, leaders lead with an unselfish mindset, focusing their efforts largely on doing their part to directly support the efforts of each faculty member while encouraging members of the team to find and explore their sense of purpose." (Informant 13, Q1.1, l 231-239)

For Roos and Borowski (2021) argue that administrators prioritize teachers' needs, well-being, and professional progress to build a culture of trust, collaboration, and excellence in the educational institution. Consequently, Balyer et al. (2017) explain that administrators help teachers feel appreciated, respected, and empowered by listening to their problems, giving support and resources, and creating a sense of community. Administrators model servant

leadership for teachers, fostering a culture of reciprocity and mutual support in the school community (Bier, 2021). In addition, serving others shapes company culture, improving teacher retention, job satisfaction, and student success.

Making Goals Clear. Teachers are motivated to achieve academic achievement and student success by effective administrators who explain their job. Administrators define objectives, priorities, and performance benchmarks to help teachers focus on student learning and organizational goals. Goals help teachers identify areas for growth and progress professionally. Transparent goal communication motivates instructors to develop by instilling accountability and ownership. Administrators with clear goals build a coherent, purpose-driven educational community where instructors can effectively contribute.

One of the responses discussed that through empowerment, servant leaders give a direction in a certain goal.

"By nurturing an atmosphere of encouragement, empathy, and collaboration, servant leadership empowers everyone to unleash their full potential." (Informant 11, Q1.1, L 194-198)

While another participant said that serving a clear goal makes everyone win the journey.

"Servant Leadership is all about making the goals clear and then rolling up your sleeves and doing what it takes to help other people win." (Informant 15, Q1.1, L 263-266)

Administrators who show teachers how to succeed help them support the school's aims (Stronge & Xu, 2021). In addition, this clarity allows teachers purpose, direction, and focus to use effective teaching methods to boost student achievement. Teacher goals help identify areas for development and encourage learning. Because teachers understand and feel supported in accomplishing goals, transparent goal communication creates trust and responsibility in the school community (Garza et al., 2014; McLeskey et al., 2017). Thus, Schellenberg et al. (2022) discussed that setting the defined goals empowers teachers and prepares kids for success in a collaborative, goal-oriented environment.

The definition of servant leadership among school administrators

Global Theme	Organizing Themes	Basic Themes
Meaning of Servant Leadership	Inspiring Leaders	A leader who motivates and become the source of inspiration for teachers' growth and development.
	Serving Others	A leader with selfless dedication for others.
	Making Goals Clear	A leader who draws dreams and making them reality.

School Administrators Adopting to Servant Leadership Approach

The second and last research question divulges the school administrators adopting to servant leadership approach.

Prioritizing Other's Growth and Development. Servant leadership administrators understand that supporting teachers' growth and development is crucial to their success and the improvement of teaching quality and student outcomes. This means actively searching out opportunities to mentor, coach, and provide resources to improve teachers' abilities, knowledge, and instruction. Administrators encourage ongoing learning, innovation, and collaboration by prioritizing others' growth. They also nurture each teacher's talents and potential, empowering them to reach their greatest potential and contribute effectively to the institution's aims.

One of the participants stated that,

"I am driven by the idea that by focusing on others' needs and growth, I can make a positive difference in their lives. Seeing how servant leadership transforms individuals and groups inspires me to keep practicing its principles. I also understand that servant leadership builds stronger bonds, foster trust, and leads to better outcomes for everyone in the long run." (Informant 1, Q2.1, L 4-13)

Another participant said that active listening and sharing information is the key to attaining growth and development.

"First, active listening, taking the time to gently listen to the concern, ideas and feedback of other demonstrates, empathy and willingness to serve their needs. Second, sharing information, transparent communication and sharing relevant information with team members empower them to make informed decisions and contribute effectively reflecting a servant leader's commitment to serving other truth, openness and trust." (Informant 5, Q2.1, L 94-105)

Lastly, leading as an example and modeling the behavior with values are important. He stressed that,

"Leading by example, modeling the behaviors and values associated with servant leadership, such as humility, integrity, and empathy, inspires others to follow suit and posters, a culture of service-oriented leadership." (Informant 13, Q2.1, L 267-271)

Through servant leadership, administrators change school culture by fostering teacher growth (Terosky & Reitano, 2016). In such, this priority stresses building a welcoming, empowering environment where educators feel valued, motivated, and ready to achieve. For Burns (2020), mentoring, coaching, and developing teachers, administrators establish a community of lifelong learners devoted to improvement and creativity. More so, this strategy promotes teacher job satisfaction, retention, and student achievement since empowered and supported teachers can better meet students' needs. While Kiersch and

Peters (2017) conclude that s dynamic educational community focused on cooperation, excellence, and shared purpose is created by prioritizing servant leadership development.

School Administrators adopting to servant leadership approach

Global Theme	Organizing Theme	Basic Themes
Living with Servant Leadership Approach	Prioritizing others' Growth and Development	A leader who prioritized the well-being of teachers to grow and become the best version of themselves.

Implications for Practice

In order to foster the development, welfare, and empowerment of educators more efficiently, educational administrators must give precedence to the development of servant leadership abilities. In accordance with the research, administrators could establish a favorable school environment that is conducive to the accomplishments of teachers and the overall excellence of the organization. Furthermore, to increase the positive school climate, administrators can cultivate a culture that emphasizes ongoing education, cooperation, and assistance.

Administrators should set an example by motivating instructors with a vision of educational excellence and really serving teachers and students. Administrators can provide teachers a feeling of belonging, purpose, and drive by listening, mentoring, and recognizing them.

In addition, they must also clearly convey goals and expectations that support the school's vision. Also, they enable teachers to take ownership and accountable for organizational goals by defining goals with them and giving continual feedback and support.

In such, administrators should promote teacher professional development in their leadership style. By providing professional development, coaching, and mentoring, administrators show their commitment to improving teachers' knowledge, abilities, and instruction. This fosters a collaborative, innovative, and effective educational culture.

Thus, by embracing servant leadership principles aligned with the identified themes and prioritizing teacher growth and development, school administrators can create a positive school climate where teachers feel valued, empowered, and motivated to succeed, improving student success and organizational effectiveness.

Implications for Future Research

Within the identified themes, future research should examine the complex relationship between school administrators' servant leadership skills and teacher growth, well-being, empowerment, and positive school climate. Investigations should focus on how specific servant leadership abilities effectively support and empower teachers. Exploring how these skills affect teacher motivation, job satisfaction, and professional development is also necessary.

Consequently, the intersectionality of these servant leadership qualities and their effects across multiple educational environments and teacher demographics should also be studied. Future studies should also examine how administrators' focus on teacher development affects school atmosphere. This requires evaluating both the direct effects of emphasizing teacher growth and development on school climate indicators like teacher collaboration, trust, and student involvement and the mediating and moderating factors that may affect them.

More so, longitudinal studies can also reveal how servant leadership affects school atmosphere and student outcomes over time. Future studies can strengthen theoretical frameworks and establish evidence-based approaches to improve educational leadership effectiveness and create good school environments for teacher and student achievement by addressing these research gaps.

Concluding Remarks

Finally, this study has shed light on the importance of servant leadership abilities demonstrated by school administrators in encouraging teacher growth, well-being, empowerment, and, ultimately, establishing a positive school atmosphere. The study's findings revealed that administrators who embody these characteristics foster an environment in which teachers feel appreciated, motivated, and equipped to perform in their professions. Administrators thus contribute to a positive school climate that values collaboration, trust, and collaborative efficacy.

Moving forward, educational scholars, policymakers, and practitioners must continue to investigate the complex relationships between servant leadership skills and their effects on teacher and student outcomes. By improving our awareness of these links and applying evidence-based strategies guided by the highlighted themes, we may improve educational leadership effectiveness and build school settings that benefit both teachers and children.

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