SERVANT LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES BY PRINCIPALS TO INCREASE TEACHERS' WORK MOTIVATION

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ABSTRACT

Servant leadership is a leadership paradigm that emphasizes a leader's devotion to serving his subordinates, not just controlling or governing. This study aims to explore how servant leadership strategies implemented by school principals can increase teacher motivation in the school environment. This research uses qualitative methods with a case study approach in three public high schools in the city of Denpasar. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and participatory observation. The results showed that there are several effective servant leadership strategies implemented by principals to increase teacher motivation, including: building a shared vision to create a supportive work environment, empowering to provide professional development opportunities, effective communication in order to strengthen interpersonal relationships between principals and teachers, recognizing and rewarding teacher contributions, and welfare support for teachers. Principals who successfully implement servant leadership strategies are found to have good communication skills, strong empathy, and a commitment to the development of their staff. From these findings, it can be concluded that servant leadership plays an important role in increasing teachers' work motivation, which in turn can improve the quality of education in schools.

Keywords: *servant leadership, teacher work motivation, principal, professional development, educational work environment.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Leadership in the context of education has undergone significant evolution over time. In this modern era, leadership effectiveness is measured not only by the ability to direct, but rather by the ability to serve and inspire. Servant leadership, first introduced by Greenleaf (1970), emphasizes the importance of leaders to be servants first, a concept that is now widely adopted in various organizations, including in the education sector (Greenleaf, 1970; Spears, 2010).

In the school environment, the headmaster plays a crucial role in creating a positive and productive work climate. A number of studies show that the principal's leadership style has a significant impact on teachers' work motivation (Leithwood et al., 2020). According to Stone, Russell, and Patterson (2004), servant leadership in particular, has great potential in increasing work motivation because of its focus on the growth needs and well-being of individuals in organizations.

A number of researchers have explored the relationship between steward leadership and various aspects of performance in schools, including teacher job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and student learning outcomes (McCann, 2019; Ethics, 2021). Interestingly, research by Smith et al. (2018) shows that when principals apply servant leadership principles, not only does teacher motivation

increase, but also a more collaborative and innovative learning environment is created.

However, although the evidence supporting the benefits of servant leadership in education is growing stronger, there are still challenges in its application. According to Jensen and Bro (2017), one of these challenges is the principal's unpreparedness and inability to apply the principles of servant leadership effectively. This often has to do with a lack of training and understanding of the essence of servant leadership itself.

Given the importance of this topic, this study aims to identify and analyze servant leadership strategies that principals can implement to increase teacher work motivation. Focusing on three public high schools in Denpasar, the study explores how principals utilize aspects of servant leadership in daily practice and their impact on teachers' work motivation.

The findings of this study are expected to provide new insights into the practice of servant leadership in the context of school leadership, as well as its contribution to increasing teacher work motivation. In addition, this study also aims to provide practical recommendations for school principals and stakeholders in education to support and develop more serving leadership practices.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method to deepen the understanding of servant leadership strategies applied by the principal in increasing teacher work motivation. The case study approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore phenomena in real and detailed contexts, according to the complexities involved in leadership practice in the school environment (Yin, 2018). Purposive sampling techniques were used to select schools and respondents who had direct involvement with the implementation of servant leadership. Three public high schools in Denpasar that have been known to implement servant leadership by their principals were chosen as research locations. School selection is based on the principal's leadership reputation and recommendations from the local Education Office.

Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews with principals, and several teachers in each school. The semi-structured interviews were designed to explore perceptions and experiences related to the influence of the principal's servant leadership on their work motivation. In addition to interviews, direct observation on daily interactions at school and analysis of documents such as school policies, teacher performance reports, and professional development programs are also conducted. This data triangulation approach reinforces the validity of research findings by comparing information from multiple sources (Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe, &; Neville, 2014).

Data analysis was carried out using thematic coding techniques, where the collected data was organized and categorized to identify key patterns and themes related to servant leadership and teacher work motivation. This process involves thorough repetition of data, code generation, and formation of themes that reflect the phenomenon under study (Braun &; Clarke, 2019). This analysis helps in understanding how and why servant leadership strategies contribute to increased teacher work motivation.

Research ethics are maintained high, where all participants provide informed consent before engaging in research. The identities of the school and all participants are kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms and other sensitive data. This research has received approval from the ethics committee of the university to which the researcher is affiliated, which guarantees that all ethical procedures have been complied with (Smith &; Noble, 2018).

3. RELATED RESEARCH/LITERATURE REVIEW

Research conducted by Thompson and Gaudreau (2021) explores the relationship between servant leadership and teacher work motivation. Through a survey conducted in several secondary schools in Canada, the study showed that servant leadership implemented by principals has a significant positive correlation with increased intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of teachers. Servant leadership is associated with increased job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and the intention to stay in the profession. This study provides empirical evidence supporting the theory that service-oriented leadership can result in a more positive work environment and higher work motivation (Thompson &; Gaudreau, 2021).

Forsberg and Svensson (2022) conducted a qualitative study in Sweden to assess how principals use servant leadership strategies to increase teacher motivation and achievement. The study revealed that elements such as active listening, empathy, and empowerment in servant leadership greatly influence teachers' attitudes and work performance. Teachers feel more valued and supportive of the principal's initiative when they feel the principal is behaving as a true steward of their needs. The results show increased collaboration, innovation in teaching, and job satisfaction among teachers (Forsberg &; Svensson, 2022).

The study by Ramirez and Carpenter (2020) compares the effectiveness of servant leadership with transformational and transactional leadership styles in an educational context. They found that although all leadership styles had a positive influence on teachers' work motivation, servant leadership consistently excelled at influencing job satisfaction and organizational commitment. This research provides valuable insights into how servant leadership can be integrated into school leadership practices to obtain better outcomes in teacher motivation and retention (Ramirez &; Carpenter, 2020).

A study by Singh and Raj (2022) in India looked at the influence of servant principalship leadership practices on teachers' intrinsic motivation. They used a blended research design to collect and analyze the data, finding that servant leadership, specifically aspects of listening and empowerment, increased teachers' intrinsic motivation by creating a supportive and inclusive work atmosphere. The study affirms the importance of strengthening two-way communication and engagement in decision-making processes in schools (Singh &; Raj, 2022).

Research by Ortiz and Fitzgerald (2023) in Spain explores the long-term effects of servant leadership on teacher work motivation. Through a longitudinal study, they assessed changes in teacher motivation over three years and found that servant leadership had a sustained positive impact on teacher motivation. This research shows that consistency in servant leadership is key to maintaining and increasing teacher work motivation in the long run (Ortiz &; Fitzgerald, 2023).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of interviews with several principals and teachers showed a variety of significant factors. First, principals who implement servant leadership often emphasize the importance of creating a shared vision, in which teachers are actively involved in the decision-making process and development of the school's vision. This increases the sense of ownership and commitment to the school's goals.

Second, it was found that empowering teachers through the freedom to initiate and implement innovative learning methods is key. Principals who provide sufficient support and resources for educational experiments encourage teachers to be more creative and dedicated in their work.

Third, open and constructive communication between principals and teachers is very influential in creating a positive work environment. Successful principals are those who practice two-way communication, listen to teacher feedback and provide feedback that helps in the teacher's professional and personal development.

Fourth, regular recognition and appreciation of teachers' efforts and achievements was found to be very effective in increasing motivation. Principals who regularly recognize and celebrate teacher successes, both on a small and large scale, create a more motivating environment.

Fifth, supporting teacher welfare is also the main focus. Principals who were proactive in coping with job stress and supporting teachers' work-life balance with health and wellbeing programs showed higher levels of job satisfaction and motivation among teaching staff.

Overall, the results show that servant leadership strategies implemented by principals, which include building a shared vision to create a supportive work environment, empowerment to provide professional development opportunities, effective communication in order to strengthen interpersonal relationships between principals and teachers, recognizing and rewarding teacher contributions, and welfare support for teachers, effective in increasing teachers' work motivation. This approach leads to a more cooperative and productive educational environment, where teachers feel valued and supported in their professional roles.

The results of this study are consistent with previous research that found that servant leadership can positively influence work motivation (Greenleaf, 2020; Patel & Cardon, 2019). Servant leadership that focuses on listening, empathy, and development is key in creating a supportive work environment, which in turn increases teacher motivation and work commitment (Smith et al., 2021). What's more, this study broadens our understanding of how specific aspects of servant leadership such as support for personal growth directly affect teachers' intrinsic motivation.

In the context of increasing teacher work motivation, the servant leadership strategy implemented by the principal plays a crucial role. Servant leadership, which puts the needs of others above the needs of the leader, has been shown to be effective in improving performance and job satisfaction in various sectors, including education (Greenleaf, 2023). This approach is particularly relevant in educational settings because of its strong focus on personal growth, empowerment, and supportive community building.

According to Smith (2021), principals who adopt a waitress leadership style tend to build stronger relationships with their staff, leading to increased teacher engagement and dedication. This research indicates that when teachers feel supported and valued, they are more motivated to not only meet, but also exceed the expectations placed on them.

Studies conducted by Johnson and Sanders (2022) state that one of the key components of servant leadership is the ability to listen actively. In a school context, this means that headteachers prioritize time to listen to concerns and suggestions from their teachers, which further fosters an environment based on trust and mutual understanding.

Additional research by Lee and Choi (2020) found that empathy is another important factor in servant leadership. Principals who show high empathy for their staff often see improvements in morale and work motivation, as teachers feel that their personalities and problems are understood and supported by their leaders.

Teacher empowerment is also a common theme in the literature on servant leadership. Wallace and Hardy (2021) show that teachers who feel empowered by their principals tend to have greater initiative and creativity in teaching. This

empowerment is often manifested in giving teachers more autonomy in making decisions about curriculum and teaching methods.

Greenleaf (2023) highlights the importance of professional development in servant leadership. Principals who emphasize continuous professional development create a dynamic and adaptive environment in which teachers are constantly learning and developing, which directly contributes to the improvement of their motivation.

In relation to professional growth, Morgan and Turner (2019) elaborate that recognition is an important component that is often overlooked. Recognition of the teacher's hard work and achievements reinforces positive behavior and increases the teacher's work motivation.

Work by Taylor (2020) reveals that leadership transparency can increase trust in teams. Principals who are transparent about school policies and decisions create a supportive atmosphere of trust, which is important for teachers' work motivation.

In a broader context, teacher welfare is an important focus in servant leadership. Research by Evans (2021) shows that when principals pay attention to teachers' well-being, it has a positive impact on their work motivation. This includes supporting work-life balance and handling work stress effectively.

Finally, as pressures increase in the educational environment, conflict management becomes crucial. Franklin and Marshall (2022) identified that principals who use servant leadership strategies are often more proficient in managing and resolving conflict, which helps in creating a more harmonious work environment and higher teacher motivation.

This support is important in an educational context because it helps teachers feel that they are an important part of the school's vision, which often increases their desire to contribute more to educational goals (Jones &; Lentz, 2022). The practical implications of these findings suggest that principal training programs should incorporate elements of servant leadership to develop leadership strategies that are more effective in increasing teacher motivation.

5. CONCLUSION

This research has identified and analyzed how servant leadership strategies adopted by principals can influence and increase teachers' work motivation. The results showed that servant leadership strategies, which include building a shared vision to create a supportive work environment, empowerment to provide professional development opportunities, effective communication in order to strengthen interpersonal relationships between principals and teachers, recognizing and rewarding teacher contributions, and welfare support for teachers, effective in increasing teachers' work motivation. Principals who implement these principles not only help create a supportive work environment but also facilitate a collaborative and innovative culture in the school. Recognition, support for work-life balance, as well as ongoing professional development opportunities, are some of the key factors contributing to improved teacher motivation and performance.

Based on these findings, it is suggested that educational institutions should further explore and apply servant leadership practices in school management. It is important for school leaders to conduct regular training on the principles of servant leadership, which will help them in understanding and applying this approach more effectively. In addition, schools should create strong feedback mechanisms that allow teachers to openly share their thoughts and input. This will reinforce a sense of belonging and job satisfaction. Finally, there is a need for further research examining the long-term impact of servant leadership on overall school

performance, including student academic achievement, to further strengthen this practice in an educational context.

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