

The Influences of *Servant Leadership* Implementation in Education

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Abstract. Servant leadership is a leadership model widely applied in various organizations today, including educational organizations. So far, there have been many studies on the impact of implementing servant leadership on the advancement of Education. However, comprehensive and balanced research on this topic has yet to be widely done. This study aims to fill this gap. The method used is meta-synthesis with a meta-aggregation approach. The articles analyzed were searched with the google scholar database and used Publish or Perish 8. Articles that met the inclusion and exclusion requirements were 20 articles. The analysis and synthesis results show that servant leadership can increase the growth and self-development of subordinates, commitment to service, the ability to manage conflict, cohesiveness in the work team, performance, job satisfaction, work climate, and organizational culture. These findings make significant contributions to the development of servant leadership theory. Moreover, this finding is an essential input for policymakers and school principals who are dedicated to developing the quality of human resources and advancing the world of Education.

Keywords: servant, leadership, Education, meta-synthesis

1 Introduction

Servant leadership is part of modern leadership theories. This concept can be applied to different areas of life. According to Keith: “*servant-leaders can be government officials, business executives, academic administrators, non-profit leaders, military commanders, coaches, friends, or neighbors*” [1]. In line with this view, this leadership theory is also applied in the field of Education. Much research on this topic has been done. Teachers generally expect principals to carry out their leadership role as stewards, focusing on building community, promoting the spirit of sharing, empathizing, listening actively, being humble, and being altruistic [2]. Therefore, Gandhi recommends that servant leadership be included in the school curriculum [3] so that servant leadership is applied to educational leadership.

What is the impact of implementing servant leadership in the field of Education? Many primary studies provide answers to this question, as can be seen in Diagram 1. However, so far, most of them have been single studies. The results of their research need to provide more basis for users, especially decision-makers, in making essential policies. Because of this, the need for comprehensive and balanced research results on applying servant leadership in Education is critical.

This research was done to fill the above gap. The aim is to synthesize the results of preliminary research on the effect of implementing servant leadership in Education. The

results of this study should provide a more comprehensive and balanced description of the effectiveness of servant leadership. Thus, policymakers and stakeholders committed to advancing the world of Education get an adequate foundation on the leadership model that must be applied.

2 Review of Literature

Servant leadership is one of the modern leadership theories in addition to authentic leadership, transformational leadership, spiritual leadership, charismatic leadership, visionary leadership, cultural leadership, moral leadership, ethical leadership, quantum leadership, personal leadership and entrepreneurial leadership [4].

According to him, a servant leader carries out a leadership role first and foremost as a servant, focusing on the welfare of his subordinates (the people he leads). He devotes his best ability to serving and ensuring better welfare for the people he leads. According to McManus, a servant leader's strength lies in his dedication. He became influential not because he was feared but because he was admired. He has great appeal because he optimizes his leadership function (power) to bring prosperity to the people he leads [5].

Servant leaders have various characteristics that empower them to move and influence subordinates so that they are encouraged to follow the organization's demands. Expert views on the characteristics of servant leadership are very diverse, as seen in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Characteristics of Servant Leadership

No	Author	Characteristics of Servant Leadership
1	Barbuto, J. E., & Wheeler, D. W.	<i>“emotional healing, altruistic vocation, wisdom, persuasive mapping and organizational stewardship”</i> [6]
2	Liden, R. C., Wayne, S. J., Zhao, H., & Henderson, D.	<i>“empowering; emotional healing; helping followers grow and succeed; behaving ethically; putting followers first; creating value for the community; and conceptual skills”</i> [7]
3	Sendjaya, S., Sarros, J. C., & Santora, J. C.	<i>“transforming influence, voluntary subordination, authentic self, transcendental spirituality, covenantal relationship, responsible morality”</i> [8]
4	van Dierendonck, D	<i>“empowerment, humility, love, altruism, trust, vision, service”</i> [9]
5	Burton, L., & Welty Peachey, J.	<i>“empowering and developing people, humility, authenticity, interpersonal acceptance, providing direction, stewardship”</i> [10]
6	Blanchard, K., & Broadwell, Renee	<i>“listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment, community building”</i> [11]
7	Franco, M., & Antunes, A.	<i>“empowering, helping subordinates grow and succeed, putting subordinates first, altruistic calling, wisdom or vision, organizational stewardship, ethical behavior, family atmosphere and identification with the leader”</i> [12]

The various views above can complement each other. However, Barbuto & Wheeler's view [6] has more value than others. They tested 11 potential dimensions of servant leadership according to the results of Spears' study of Greenleaf's work. They tested internal consistency, confirmatory factor analysis and the validity of each characteristic. The results show that there are five characteristics of servant leadership. Other characteristics are implicit in the five characteristics and are not typical dimensions of servant leadership. The five characteristics

are altruistic calling, emotional healing, wisdom, persuasive mapping, and organizational stewardship, which are conceptually and empirically distinct. The five characteristics of servant leadership can be explained as follows:

First, servant leaders have an altruistic calling. They are called to devote their lives to the good of their subordinates. They always put the interests of the people they lead above their interests. *Second*, servant leaders can provide emotional healing. They are great and sympathetic listeners. They are good at creating an environment where subordinates feel safe and open to sharing personal concerns. They are skilled in helping emotionally injured subordinates so that they can quickly move on and experience emotional healing.

Third, servant leaders have wisdom. They are sensitive to reading, feel the problem happening, and understand its implications. They are good at anticipating things that will happen in the organization. *Fourth*, servant leaders have persuasive mapping skills. They have a healthy way of thinking and mentality. They are skilled at mapping problems and offering various creative and intelligent alternative solutions. They encourage others to visualize the organization's future and offer compelling reasons why it should be done. *Fifth*, servant leaders have organizational stewardship. They are able to empower organizations to contribute positively to society. Leaders with these characteristics demonstrate a high responsibility for the welfare of society and ensure that the strategies and decisions taken reflect a commitment to making things better for the organization. They also always try to make the work environment a community that lives in a family spirit.

2 METHOD

This research was conducted using the meta-analysis method. The research steps refer to the views of Francis & Baldesari [13]. According to them, *meta-synthesis* is carried out in the following stages: (1) formulating research questions, (2) conducting a systematic literature search, (3) selecting research articles that meet the criteria, (4) analyzing and synthesizing primary research qualitatively, (5) maintain quality control, and (6) present research findings.

The question to be answered through this research is what is the impact of implementing servant leadership in the field of Education? Comprehensive and balanced answers to these questions are sought in primary studies. These studies were searched using the Publish or Perish 8 application from the Google Scholar database. Researchers searched for articles using the keywords: "servant leadership". That keyword was chosen for their inclusion criteria: English or Indonesian articles. Other inclusion criteria are articles published in national or international journals in 2012-2022, articles containing research results using qualitative or mixed-method methods, and the results of research on the application of servant leadership in the context of Education.

Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria in selecting relevant articles include articles written in languages other than English and Indonesian; articles published before 2012; articles containing research results with quantitative methods; articles containing research results on the application of servant leadership in fields other than Education; articles published in national or international proceedings; articles published in a book (chapter book). The use of inclusion and exclusion criteria is a form of limitation and control over the quality of the articles that are the object of analysis. Thus, the answers to research questions are quality answers with scientific references that can be accounted for.

The articles that met the inclusion criteria were analyzed and synthesized using a meta-aggregation approach. This approach is one of the models to synthesize [14]. The results of the primary research on the research object are summarized qualitatively so that users or

policymakers get a deeper and more comprehensive understanding [15] of the application of servant leadership in the field of Education. Furthermore, the results of the synthesis are presented in the results section and the discussion of the research results and emphasized in the conclusions section.

3 Results and Discussion

The results of the analysis and synthesis and their deepening are presented in two parts: articles that meet the inclusion criteria and the results of the analysis and synthesis. In the first part, the researcher describes the relevant articles following the inclusion criteria as explained in the research method section. Furthermore, the researchers analyzed and synthesized the impact of implementing servant leadership in the field of Education.

3.1 Articles that meet the inclusion criteria

The search results using the article search engine Publish or Perish 8 with the Google Scholar database show that in 2012-2022, there were 512 articles related to the keywords “servant leadership”. Articles that met the inclusion criteria were 20 articles [16], [10], [17], [18], [19], [20], [21], [22], [23], [24], [25], [26], [27], [28], [29], [30], [31], [32], [33], [34]. The classification of the article based on the year of publication can be seen in Diagram 1:

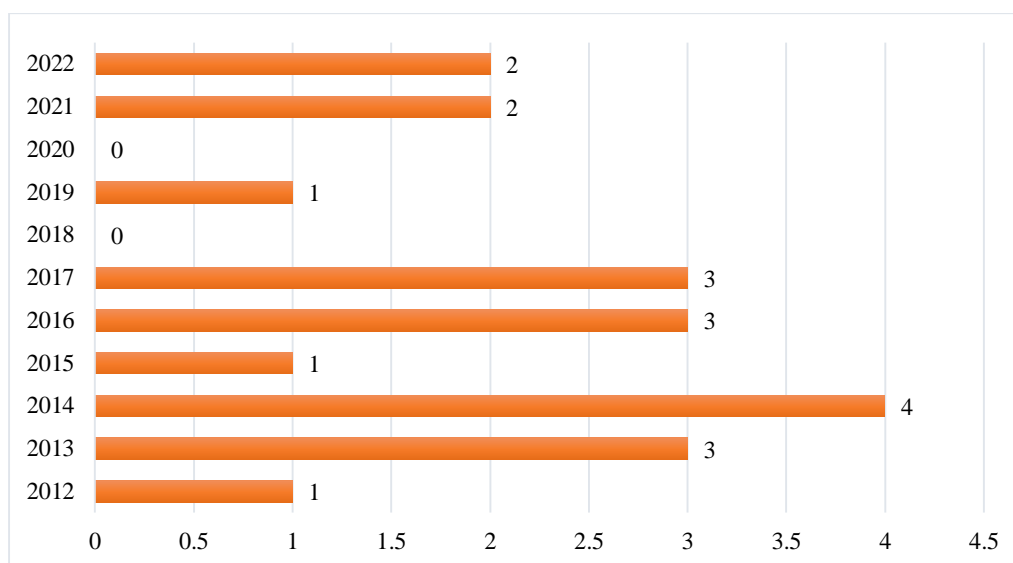


Diagram 1. Grouping articles by Year of Publication

Diagram 1 shows that research on this topic in the field of Education was mainly carried out in 2014, namely four primary studies, and in 2013, 2016, and 2017 3 primary studies, respectively. In other years, the number of studies on this topic that met the inclusion criteria was 0-2, respectively. The articles were published in 19 journals. Two articles were published in 1 journal, Quest and 18 other journals, each publishing 1 article, as seen in Diagram 2.



Diagram 2. Number of Articles by Journal

3.2 Analysis and Synthesis

What is the impact of implementing servant leadership in the field of Education? Several studies have shown that servant leadership is effectively applied in educational organizations [29], [22], [16]. Servant leadership is effective because the consistent application of servant leadership can increase the growth and self-development of subordinates, commitment to service, ability to manage conflict, cohesiveness in the work team, performance, job satisfaction, work climate, and organizational culture. This matter can be explained in more detail as follows:

3.2.1 The application of servant leadership can increase the growth and self-development of subordinates

The application of servant leadership has been empirically proven to increase the growth and self-development of subordinates [35], [36], [37], [24], [17], [28], [16]. This idea can happen because a servant leader always focuses on the self-development efforts of both teachers and students. Teachers led by school principals who apply servant leadership will be encouraged to improve their professionalism. They are also more motivated to work to the best of their ability for the betterment of the school.

Likewise, students are encouraged to grow and develop optimally in all their potential when taught, educated and guided by teachers who carry out their leadership roles as servants. This idea is in line with the views of Jennings & Stahl-Wert, who state that educators are, first of all, servants. They only deserve to be called leaders when they have served. As stewards, they are called to inspire, encourage, move and empower students. They prioritize students' self-development [38], [39] intellectually, spiritually, socio-emotionally, and kinesthetically. They must devote themselves to helping students grow and develop in all aspects of their

personality optimally. The results of this study are essential recommendations for school principals or teachers looking for the right way to help students' self-development.

3.2.2 The application of servant leadership can increase commitment to serve

A servant leader carries out his leadership role more as a servant. Teachers who feel their needs are met by the service of a school principal will be encouraged to return services by serving others (coworkers and students) following their primary duties and functions [23], [19]. This study's results align with social exchange theory [40]. This theory asserts that a person will be encouraged to make social exchanges when the person feels he has been helped a lot. The experience of being served, fosters a sense of debt and an obligation to reciprocate in the form of behaviour to help others. This theory asserts that a person will be encouraged to make social exchanges when the person feels he has been helped a lot. The experience of being served fosters a sense of debt and an obligation to reciprocate in the form of behaviour to help others. What he experienced fosters a willingness to help others even when the recipient does not have the ability to repay the help in kind.

The truth of the research results above is confirmed by the results of Fontataba's research. The results of his research show that servant leadership increases the commitment of subordinates to serve [41]. The service spirit of a leader fosters the same spirit in subordinates. They are also encouraged to follow the example of their leader's ministry.

The results of this study are essential inputs for policymakers in the field of Education. It can be used by school principals who need help with decreasing the spirit of devotion in teachers and education staff. This problem can be overcome by prioritizing the role of a servant in carrying out the leadership function as a principal.

3.2.3 The application of servant leadership can improve the ability to manage conflict

The ability to manage conflict is essential in the management of Education. Conflicts, both vertical (between principals and teachers) and horizontal (between fellow teachers), are always possible. This can be caused by individual differences such as perception, work experience, social support, locus of control, self-confidence, and hostility [42]. This situation causes stress which in turn can have an impact on decreasing individual and organizational performance. Therefore, the principal must have the ability to manage conflict.

Servant leadership is proven empirically effective in managing conflict because servant leaders put forward a persuasive, humane and participatory style in resolving conflicts. They always put forward a persuasive approach. They are good at convincing people involved in a conflict to do what is right, solely for their good. They have humility, patience, and an open heart to listen. They treat everyone humanely so subordinates involved in conflict feel valued. They are also encouraged to cooperate in finding the best solution to their conflicts [26]. Therefore, principals can resolve organizational conflicts using a persuasive and participatory approach.

3.3.4 The application of servant leadership can increase cohesiveness in the work team

A servant leader has organizational stewardship. With these characteristics, a servant leader always strives to be in a community work environment with cohesiveness as a family.

In line with this, servant leadership has been empirically proven to strengthen the cohesiveness of work teams in Education. This can happen because a servant leader builds a learning community based on mutual trust [43]. Mutual trust is the glue that strengthens the relationship between the principal and teachers, between teachers, and between teachers and students. Mutual trust fosters cohesiveness. Trust strengthens the cohesiveness of a work team [42].

A compact and robust staff work team is one of the keys to a successful leader in any organization, including educational organizations. Therefore, the principal is responsible for building the work team's cohesiveness. This task can be accomplished by showing the lead character of organizational stewardship, which is one of the dimensions of servant leadership.

3.2.5 The application of servant leadership can improve performance

Many variables affect the work of a teacher both qualitatively and quantitatively—likewise, the performance of students both academically and non-academically. One of the variables that influence it is leadership style. The results showed that servant leadership improved performance [44], [19]. The work of teachers, both qualitatively and quantitatively, in carrying out their main tasks and functions will increase if the principal consistently applies servant leadership. They are more motivated to develop and use their best abilities for the betterment of the school. Students' performance will also increase along with the increasing skills of teachers in carrying out their roles as servant leaders.

In addition to improving individual performance, the study's results also show that principals who carry out their leadership roles are more like servants and have a positive and significant effect on improving school performance [45], [46]. Improving the individual performance of teachers and students, in turn, has a positive impact on improving school performance. Thus, principals who are committed to the development and improvement of the performance of teachers, students and schools must intensify the application of servant leadership in carrying out their main tasks and functions.

3.2.6 The application of servant leadership can increase job satisfaction

Job satisfaction reflects a person's feelings towards his job. This is closely correlated with leadership behaviour. Leader behaviour can be accepted by subordinates as long as the behaviour is believed to bring satisfaction [47]. Servant leadership is one leadership model that can increase subordinates' satisfaction. Teachers whom a servant leadership style principal leads have a high level of job satisfaction [17]. The principal's leadership, who is altruistic and prioritizes a persuasive approach, makes teachers feel comfortable and happy at work. This leadership style contributes positively to teacher job satisfaction when principals apply a servant leadership style [48].

The results of several other studies with a quantitative approach align with the research results above. Leaders who carry out a leadership role as a servant prioritizing the fulfilment of the needs and welfare of subordinates have been shown to increase job satisfaction in subordinates [48], [49]. Thus, principals who are committed to increasing the job satisfaction of teachers and education personnel are recommended to apply servant leadership consistently.

3.2.7 The application of servant leadership can improve the school climate

School climate is a work atmosphere in the relationship between school members. This affects the teaching and learning process in schools [46]. A conducive school climate is characterized by an open, friendly attitude, mutual respect, and always trying to put common interests first. School conditions like this positively impact school progress [46].

One of the factors that influence the work climate is servant leadership. This leadership style fosters a conducive work climate for subordinates [50]; [51]; [34]. Principals who apply the servant leadership style will always prioritize the public interest above their own interests. He is also good at creating a climate that makes teachers comfortable and open to discussing their problems. Moreover, under the leadership of a servant leader, the teacher community develops into a learning community imbued with a family spirit. In short, principals who show characteristics as servant leaders contribute to improving the school climate so that the school community becomes more conducive in carrying out the educational process.

3.2.8 The application of servant leadership can improve organizational culture

Organizational culture is a set of values and norms that characterize an organization and are lived as a guide for attitudes and behaviour by its members. Many previous studies have shown that organizational culture is one of the critical factors for organizational progress. This culture affects organizational health [52], organizational commitment [53] and organizational effectiveness [54]. Therefore, efforts to build an organizational culture according to the norms and fundamental values of the organization are very important.

Organizational culture begins with its founder's philosophy (beliefs, values and basic assumptions). With that philosophy, they create organizational culture, among others, by making themselves role models for employees. Their words and actions encourage employees to identify with them and internalize their beliefs, values and assumptions. The leader of the organization then carries out this role as a model. Their words and actions should reflect and reinforce the norms that guide the attitudes and behaviour of their members [42]. Thus, it is clear that the leader has a central role in forming organizational culture. In the context of Education, the principal's leadership influences the process of building a quality culture [55]. The principal has a role in moving teachers, education staff and students to carry out tasks to the demands of a quality culture.

Robbins & Judge's theory is proven empirically in Crippen's research [27]. He researches servant leadership in Education and sports. He found that leaders who carry out more duties as servants can foster an organizational culture with characteristics such as a solid work ethic, humility, respect, responsibility and accountability to themselves, the team and the organization. The results of this study are in line with Robbins' theory of the process of forming organizational culture. The principal's leadership behaviour impacts strengthening the norms and values that characterize school culture [56]. When teachers feel the principal has served them, they are more motivated to imitate the principal's behaviour in accordance with the demands of the school culture. Therefore, the process of strengthening school culture can sustainably take place.

4 Conclusion

The results of the analysis and synthesis of 20 primary studies show that the consistent application of servant leadership according to its characteristics can increase the growth and self-development of subordinates, commitment to service, capability to manage conflict,

cohesiveness in work teams, performance, job satisfaction, work climate, and organizational culture.

The results of the analysis and synthesis above enrich the theory of servant leadership. More than that, the results of this meta-synthesis are essential inputs for policymakers in the field of Education in general and, in particular, school principals who are committed to optimally developing subordinates themselves and increasing dedication, ability to manage conflict, cohesiveness in work teams, performance, satisfaction work climate, and school culture.

This research has limitations. The relevant research only refers to the Google Scholar database with the help of the Perish or Publish 8 application. Moreover, the articles that are the object of analysis are only limited to articles published in the 2012-2022 period. Further research can be done by searching for articles in other databases with a more extended publication period. Thus, the analysis and synthesis results are expected to be more comprehensive.

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