UNIVERSITY OF REDLANDS

Perception is Reality: Teachers' Perceptions of the Presence of Servant Leadership
Characteristics in Public School Principals and Its Influence on Teachers

A dissertation presented in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Leadership for Educational Justice

By
Johnnie M. Simmons
October 2020

Dissertation Committee:
James Valadez, Ph.D. Committee Chair
Gregory Hamilton, Ed.D.
Christopher Hunt, Ed.D.

Copyright © 2020 by Johnnie M. Simmons
All Rights Reserved

We hereby approve the dissertation of

[Redacted Signature]

Nov 12 2020 09:54 PST

Candidate Signature—Full Legal Name Johnnie M. Simmons

Date

Candidate for the degree of Doctor of Education

[Redacted Signature]

Nov 14 2020 09:32 PST

Dissertation Chair Signature—Full Legal Name James R. Valadez

Date

[Redacted Signature]

Nov 12 2020 10:51 PST

Committee Member Signature—Full Legal Name IGregory Wayne Hamilton

Date

[Redacted Signature]

Nov 12 2020 11:49 PST

Committee Member Signature—Full Legal Name Christopher H. Hunt EdD

Date

[Redacted Signature]

Nov 19 2020 13:23 PST

Dean, School of Education— Mario C. Martinez, Ph.D

Date

ABSTRACT

Perception is Reality: Teachers' Perceptions of the Presence of Servant Leadership Characteristics in Public School Principals and Its Influence on Teachers

Johnnie M. Simmons

Doctor of Education, 2020

University of Redlands

Advisor: James Valadez, Ph.D.

This phenomenological study explored teachers' perceptions of the presence of servant leadership characteristics in their school principals and how the principals' use of servant leadership characteristics influenced teachers. The primary phenomenon was the teachers' perceptions of their principals' use of servant leadership characteristics based on their direct personal experiences with the principals and the intrinsic and extrinsic influence on their behavior.

A nonrandom sample of 16 public school teachers from Grades 1 through 12 from three similar districts in a southern California county was recruited. The elementary, middle, and high school teachers participated in one-on-one semistructured interviews. The data from the 16 oral interviews indicated that principals' use of servant leadership characteristics, as perceived by the teachers, intrinsically and extrinsically influenced the teachers. The interviews generated seven themes regarding perceptions held by the teachers regarding their principals' use of servant leadership characteristics.

When principals in public schools exhibit servant leadership characteristics, teacher satisfaction and retention are impacted. Therefore, consideration must be made for use of servant leadership as a framework and model for teachers' perceptions of their principals' use of servant leadership and how those perceptions influence teachers.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to all of my outstanding family members and close friends who have encouraged, empowered, and supported me in this educational journey. I am truly blessed beyond measure to have their continued prayers and support. “And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Galatians 6:9).

Acknowledgments

I thank and acknowledge God, my family, and my friends. I am grateful to God for being the head of my life and for giving me this opportunity to accomplish another of my educational goals. I give Him all the glory and all the praise.

I acknowledge and thank my sisters, [REDACTED] for always being my rocks. Their unwavering support and “gift of time” have propelled me to this next level. [REDACTED]’s last-minute all-nighter edits were invaluable. My children, [REDACTED] stayed up with me late at night and allowed me to write, without complaining. My goal is to encourage both to pursue higher education and to become lifelong learners.

My cousins, [REDACTED] watched my children and made sure that we had good food. My nieces and nephews, [REDACTED] were my inspiration. My close friends provided never-ending prayers. All of them motivated, encouraged, contributed, sacrificed, prayed, and supported me during this remarkable journey.

Dr. Conroy Reynolds gave initial guidance and helped me to understand qualitative phenomenological research. His willingness to help is truly appreciated. I thank Dr. Precious Flemings for her prayers, early editing, and daily motivation. She has been inspirational in completing my doctorate, and I will be forever grateful for her diligence and encouragement. I genuinely appreciate her red pen!

I thank my first and forever best friend, [REDACTED], for her editorial skills, understanding, and knowing how to re-create and reword my thoughts correctly. I could never have accomplished this without her guidance and many corrections. I appreciate her for always being available.

Finally, I thank the three Robins in my life, whom I call Robin Cube. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]’s words of encouragement and assistance at the beginning of my teaching career were

truly selfless; her assurance that I could finish calmed me when I wanted to quit. We started our educational journey together at the age of 18; 36 years later, we are sharing the alma mater.

I thank [REDACTED] for showing me how to be true to myself, my students, and my colleagues. She encouraged me and gave me the first opportunity to practice leadership. I am eternally grateful for that opportunity.

I could not imagine having this “ride” without “my ride or die” [REDACTED] How often she said, “Let’s write, we can do this, we can finish, we got this!” I am grateful for her service and for allowing me to invade her space, her mind, and her thoughts. Her selflessness has truly shown me the pure heart of a servant leader and taught me about leading others.

A special thank you goes to Dr. Valadez, my dissertation committee chair. He guided me and challenged me throughout this educational journey. I am eternally grateful for his peaceful and calm spirit. It was very encouraging. I thank my dissertation committee members, Dr. Hunt and Dr. Hamilton. Their guidance, knowledge, and encouragement helped to keep me going. I also appreciate the time, honesty, transparency, and positive energy that the participants in this study gave to me.

Table of Contents

Abstract	iv
Dedication	v
Acknowledgments	vi
List of Tables	x
List of Appendices	xi
Abstract	
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Background of the Problem	1
Statement of the Problem	5
Purpose of the Study	6
Research Questions	6
Significance of the Study	8
Definition of Terms	9
Assumptions	10
Limitations of the Study	13
Delimitations of the Study	13
Chapter Summary	14
Chapter 2: Literature Review	15
History of Servant Leadership	15
Servant Leadership Theory	16
Servant Leader Characteristics	19
Servant Leadership and Teacher Satisfaction	21
Servant Leadership and School Climate	21
Servant Leadership and Motivation	23
Servant Leadership and Intrinsic and Extrinsic Influences	24

Theoretical Frameworks	28
Chapter Summary	31
Chapter 3: Methodology	33
Research Questions	33
Research Design	34
Researcher Positionality	36
Participants	37
Sampling	38
Instrumentation	38
Research Setting	38
Data Collection	39
Validity and Reliability	43
Informed Consent	44
Limitations	44
Chapter Summary	45
Chapter 4: Research Findings	46
Demographic Background Analysis	46
Findings on Teachers' Perceptions of Servant Leadership	47
Chapter Summary	53
Chapter 5: Interpretations, Recommendations, and Conclusions	55
Discussion and Interpretation	55
Recommendations	59
Conclusion	60
Direction for Future Research	61
References	62
Appendices	69

List of Tables

Table 1: Participant Demographics	46
Table 2: Sample Demographics	47

List of Appendices

Appendix A: Recruitment Flyer	70
Appendix B: Teacher Interest Letter	72
Appendix C: Interview Protocol	74

Chapter 1

Introduction

Chapter 1 outlines the significance of this research study. The following topics are addressed: Background of the Problem, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study, Research Questions, Significance of the Study, Nature of the Study, Definition of Terms, Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations. This dissertation focuses on servant leadership theory, how teachers perceive their principal's use of servant leadership characteristics, and how that use influences teachers. Principals' servant leadership practices are viewed from the lens of teachers.

Background of the Problem

To increase the number of high-performing schools, education policymakers in the United States should establish organizations that are headed by leaders with practical and useful skills. Principals in public schools are responsible and accountable for adequate student achievement, positive school climate, and fair budgets. More important, they set a vision in which student performance is at the highest level. However, principals are faced with challenges when handling their responsibilities. These challenges include a high rate of teacher turnover, high demands by the public, and teacher satisfaction. It is imperative to investigate how teachers' perceptions of their principals' use of a leadership style can intrinsically or extrinsically influence the teachers. Servant leadership styles of the principal have a significant influence on several facets of the school, including organization, structure, planning, and, to no small extent, school climate (Choudhary et al., 2013).

Before 2002, principals were not focused on leadership; instead, they were focused on managerial and discipline tasks (Lynch, 2012). This focus began to change with enactment of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). During the NCLB movement, leaders were not only responsible for

accountability issues; they were also viewed as premier instructional leaders. Current principals have responsibility of leading teachers, students, and classified employees, which affects school culture and the overall strategic plan of the school (Lynch, 2012). As the significance of leadership becomes more important, instruction increases in value, which leads to higher student achievement (Goldring et al., 2007).

Bandura (1997) explained that efficacy comprises the attitude and beliefs that influence the courses of action that people choose when working toward a goal. Researchers agree that leaders who possess high levels of efficacy know that they can influence others. They also have the willingness to be the person of influence for those whom they lead (Garmston & Wellman, 2002). Positive verbal feedback from others can raise perceptions of efficacy. Negative feedback can lower perceptions of efficacy and individual capabilities (Bandura, 1977).

School principals must have a superior understanding of matters relating to the curriculum and identify the significance of teacher retention and teacher satisfaction. The person who takes the position of school principal must first go through an education system that offers effective instruction. The person must be confident enough to share, guide, and support teachers in the school setting. Principals should conduct classroom observations to ensure that teachers use required teaching practices and to help them to improve their teaching skills. The main expectation is for the principal to enhance students' performance while serving as a productive and skilled leader of teachers.

Public school principals can embrace any of several types of leadership. However, the most powerful and effective includes transformational leadership. According to Avolio (2005), this type of leadership is comprised of self-reflection and discovery. Further, it is a type of leadership that allows interaction between leaders and followers. Leaders who practice this type

of leadership concentrate on the higher needs of other people. Such obligations include self-realization, values, and self-fulfillment. Some of the known examples of transformational leaders are Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. These two leaders were said to have had a gift of transforming their followers through servant modeling and motivation. This type of leadership is said to correlate with the characteristics of servant leadership. However, the idea of serving in transformational leadership pertains to a group, not to a person. A transformational leader is tasked with ensuring that the needs of followers are met and that they the followers motivated to improve their performance.

In most cases, the terms *servant leadership* and *transformational leadership* are used interchangeably by researchers. Leaders who exercise servant leadership collaborate with their followers through the manner and eagerness of serving in such a way that both look forward to lifting the life of the other to greater heights. Nevertheless, researchers have conducted little empirical research regarding servant leadership.

The key elements of a strong foundation of a school include vision, climate, and culture. Public school principals should ensure that the culture that they set is conducive and inviting for everyone in the school setting. The concept of servant leadership in the workplace was strongly supported by Autry (2004), an expert in leadership. He asserted that, for public school leaders to make the school culture positive, they must see the correlation between work and beliefs. He posited that all human beings have four ways of living: acceptance, vulnerability, usefulness, and presence. If school leaders possess all four states of living, they will be in a position to gain the support and trust of their followers in the school setting.

Vision is an important aspect in the creation of positive school culture. Public school principals should share their vision with other members of the staff so that all have a sharp

picture of what the school aims to achieve in terms of values and mission. Through a proper articulation of the school's vision, the principal will build a strong relationship with the teachers, thus ensuring their retention, satisfaction, and influence. When teachers are satisfied with their job, the level of performance in the school is improved.

The school's climate refers to the general feeling in the school that affects the motivation of both teachers and students. School climate affects the levels of student achievement (Bradshaw et al., 2014). With time, there have been increased efforts and pressure to improve performance and success of students. Much of the pressure usually falls on the teachers, who are involved in imparting knowledge to the students. However, the effectiveness of most teachers is generally determined by the commitment of the principal who displays servant leadership characteristics with teachers (Trastek et al., 2014). The leadership styles of principals as perceived by the teachers play a significant role in determining the teachers' capability to deliver the best to students (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2014). The school's climate is relevant to supporting student performance and achievement.

Teachers are in direct contact with students. Their efforts are critical to the success of students. Hence, school principals should exercise supportive leadership styles for teachers. Ultimately, when principals practice servant leadership skills in public schools, they are likely to assist in attainment of the desired goals and objectives (Allen et al., 2015). Specifically, they will intrinsically and extrinsically influence teachers through motivation, job satisfaction, retention, achievement by students, and, consequently, improvement of the general climate of the school (Parris & Peachey, 2013).

Statement of the Problem

Leadership systems that have been adopted by many principals in high schools across the country and around the world have attracted much attention among educational practitioners. The principals' leadership styles determine, to a great extent, the level to which the schools achieve their goals. Various theoretical frameworks explain how the principal's leadership system affects achievement by students and the performance of the entire school system. In most cases, it has been determined that the presence of servant leadership qualities in principals may lead to attainment of the desired performance in schools. Research has reported a relationship between the principal's leadership style and the school climate (Savas & Toprak, 2014). The leadership system plays a significant role in the overall climate of the school, as well as the level of achievement by students. The style of leadership also determines the level of satisfaction of the employees. "Some studies have also shown that the level the principal's leadership style affects the school's climate is more dependent on the perception of the teachers" (Yusuf, 2012). The perceptions held by teachers are instrumental in discovering the leadership styles of the principals, who are likely to impact the climate of the school and influence the morale and job satisfaction of the teachers.

In their work of administering the school setting, school administrators are faced with many challenges that may bar them from achieving their goals. Educational policymakers in the United States should develop appropriate mechanisms to address these challenges for the administrators to succeed in their work. Many educational researchers have broadly supported the position that a principal plays a significant role in creating conditions for a better school. However, some secondary school principals do not possess the skills to solve problems such as teacher turnover and curriculum issues. Principals are allowed to question and choose the

appropriate leadership skills that will enable them to increase teacher retention and job satisfaction.

Principals must create a school environment in which the needs of teachers are fully met, allowing them to attain their goals. They must make the school setting inviting and conducive for all school community members. To achieve this, they must recognize the significance of effort, research, and time to create this important environment. Principals should consider the views of teachers in order to choose the type of leadership that will ensure that the morale of teachers is boosted, leading to job satisfaction.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore how teachers perceive their principal's use of servant leadership characteristics and how that use intrinsically and extrinsically influences the teacher. The central phenomenon was the role that teachers' perceptions of their principals' use of servant leadership characteristics influence the teachers. A nonrandom sample of participants was chosen under criteria of an elementary, middle, or high school teacher; their lived experiences; and their teaching experience in Kindergarten through Grade 12 in a public school district.

This study examined the presence of servant leadership characteristics used by public school principals as those characteristics were perceived by teachers. The educational and practical purpose of the study was to provide district and school principals with an opportunity to examine how principals' leadership styles intrinsically and extrinsically influence teachers.

Research Questions

The leadership styles of principals are important in determining the climate, culture, vision, retention, and teacher job satisfaction in a school. Ideas that resulted from this study are

likely to assist current principals, assistant principals, and aspiring teachers to prepare to become influential leaders. Goddard et al. (2015) stated that principals should have close and fulfilling working relationships with teachers in order to pass on efficient leadership and support attainment of desired goals. Therefore, teachers can play a very important role in assessing the influence of leadership styles of school principals and the possible effects on the general climate of the school. Servant leadership characteristics play a major role in giving teachers a platform to shape and participate in the general progress of the school. The perceptions of teachers regarding the effectiveness of the principal's leadership style determine how that style affects the climate and, consequently, the success of a school.

Central Question

How do teachers perceive their principals' use of servant leadership characteristics and its influence on teachers?

Subquestions

1. What are the characteristics of a servant leader?
2. What are teachers' perceptions of servant leadership characteristics used by their principals?
3. What themes emerge that relate to principals' perceived use of servant leadership characteristics?
4. How do teachers' perceptions of principals' use of servant leadership characteristics intrinsically influence teachers?
5. How do teachers' perceptions of principals' use of servant leadership characteristics extrinsically influence teachers?

Research questions are proposed to narrow what the research study will examine. The central question leads to five to seven open-ended subquestions related to the overall study (Creswell, 2013).

Qualitative research questions are open-ended, evolving, and nondirectional. They restate the purpose of the study in more specific terms. They typically start with a word such as *what* or *how* rather than *why* in order to explore a central phenomenon. (Creswell, 2013, p. 138)

The subquestions split the fundamental question into chunks that are used to guide interview discussions to assist in data collection.

Significance of the Study

There has always been a call by relevant educational systems to reduce the performance gap between children in schools (Stephens et al., 2014). One technique for reducing gaps can be to initiate identifiable loopholes in the school system. This study provides insights into how teachers' perceptions of the principal as a servant leader affect the school climate. The findings of the study will likely encourage principals to evaluate how their leadership styles influence the teachers. This evaluation will act as a significant springboard for change in leadership styles and ultimately lead to successful implementation of objectives of the school. To a greater extent, adopting a more favorable leadership style can influence the school's climate, influencing teachers. Assistant principals and teachers who aspire to become principals are likely to use the results of this study to gain better servant leadership characteristics that will form a springboard for their success in future roles.

Secondary school principals are key pillars in education. They are assigned a wide range of duties. For instance, they are responsible for setting a clear mission, a good school budget, goals, and a school vision. Further, they are required to ensure that academic performance by

learners is improved. While trying to perform these duties appropriately, a secondary school principal must identify and fulfill the purpose to which they are called to serve.

The findings of this research study will add to the literature on servant leadership practices. Further, these research findings will be an important source of information for public school principals in southern California. Principals will be able to use these findings when creating their leadership philosophies. The results are essential to them in the sense that they will be in a position to understand the characteristics that a servant leader should possess. These findings will also be paramount for district educational administrators in their exercise of hiring school principals.

This study contributes to awareness of the need to increase servant leadership practices in public school principals. The findings could be used by district administrators to equip people in the teaching profession with a training program focused on servant leadership characteristics. These findings are likely to be used by other members of the teaching staff who aspire to adopt leadership roles in the future.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined as they are used in the study. Definitions used in a qualitative study should have two components: a conceptual meaning of the phenomena or experiences being investigated and a statement of how the phenomena will be observed.

Empowerment. Empowerment is the extent to which teachers feel that they are involved with decisions that are important to them (Sweetland & Hoy, 2000).

Extrinsic: The term defines something that originates from or on the outside (Merriam-Webster.com, 2020). According to Aacha (2010), extrinsic motivation of teachers includes external rewards such as salary/wages/fees, free accommodation, compensation for free medical

care, free meals, leave, and prepaid payments in case of financial problems, as well as extra teaching allowances.

Influence: Influence is the power or capacity to cause an effect in an indirect or intangible way (Merriam-Webster.com, 2020).

Intrinsic: The term defines something that originates within a body, organ, or part (Merriam-Webster.com, 2020). According to Aacha (2010), intrinsic motivation of teachers includes professional satisfaction, pleasure in the field, recognition, control over others, the challenging and competitive nature of teaching, career development, and teaching as the primary goal in life.

Servant leader: A servant leader has the natural feeling of desiring to serve others. The leader seeks to ensure that others' needs are met and advocates a group-orientated approach to decision making as a means of strengthening institutions and society (Greenleaf, 1977).

Servant leadership: Servant leadership is the ability to influence others through the relationship of service to people and purpose (Hunter, 2004).

Assumptions

According to Creswell (2013), certain philosophical assumptions and beliefs are always brought into research studies. *Philosophy* is defined as the use of abstract ideas and opinions that inform research. There must be an “understanding of the philosophical assumptions behind qualitative research, and it first begins with assessing where it fits within the overall process of research” (Creswell, 2013, p. 16).

When conducting a qualitative study, researchers use four philosophical assumptions: ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological. These assumptions are called *paradigms* (Creswell, 2013). Ontological assumptions emphasize the researcher embracing and

reporting through the participants' words various ideas that relate to the natural surroundings of the reality and its characteristics. For example, in this study it is assumed that leadership is real, an ontological assumption (Creswell, 2013).

According to Moustakas (1994), when writers compile a phenomenology, they report how individuals who participate in the study view their experiences differently. In epistemological assumptions, the researcher attempts to get as close as possible to the participant to understand how the known knowledge of the participant has been formulated through the subjective experiences of the participant's life. This means that servant leadership can be productively studied and something meaningful and useful about servant leadership can be learned. Epistemological assumptions are about what things can actually be known (Creswell, 2013).

In axiological assumptions, it is taken for granted that to learn about servant leadership would be a good thing and that there are right and wrong ways to go about doing it (Creswell, 2013). This kind of assumption means that something is assumed to be worthy and fitting. The researcher's presence is apparent in the text. The author admits that the stories represent an interpretation and presentation of the author as much as the study (Denzin, 1989).

In methodological assumptions, methods for learning about leadership are assumed. It is assumed that some methods of inquiry will be workable and others will not. These assumptions are characterized as inductive, emerging, and shaped by the researcher's experience in collecting and analyzing data. Thus, research questions may change in the middle of the study to reflect the questions to understand the research problem (Creswell, 2013).

Qualitative researchers embed philosophical assumptions within the interpretive frameworks that they use to conduct a study. This study used servant leadership as its framework

but also used social constructivism as an interpretive framework. People develop subjective meanings of their experiences directed toward particular objects or things. “The goal of the research is to rely as much as possible on the participants’ view of the situation” (Creswell, 2013, p. 14).

The goal of this study was to examine teachers’ perceptions of their experiences with their principals’ use of servant leadership characteristics and to determine whether that use of servant leadership characteristics intrinsically and extrinsically influenced teacher behaviors. The research involved asking open-ended questions to participants. The teachers’ interactions with the principals formed their interpretation of the study phenomenon, which eventually created a pattern of meaning (Creswell, 2013).

Research studies that lack relevant assumptions also lack meaning and purpose. The questions in this research study were comprehensive and wide ranging, permitting genuine conversations in which participants were asked to discuss their lived experiences with their principals. Three general assumptions were made. The first assumption was that the participants had direct knowledge of their principal’s use of servant leadership characteristics at their school and that they were willing to respond to interview questions with their personal and direct involvements and opinions. The second assumption involved the participants’ eagerness to be open and transparent about their experiences and not hold back information for fear of someone in their school finding out about their responses. I assumed that the data were reflective of the personal experiences that they had encountered with their principal’s use of servant leadership characteristics. The third assumption was that teachers’ perceptions of servant leadership characteristics would intrinsically and extrinsically influence the teachers.

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2015), researchers who use a phenomenological approach to design studies look at the lived experiences of the participants and how those lived experiences affected the participants' daily lives and their interactions with others. All participants in this research had personally experienced the phenomenon.

Limitations of the Study

Phenomenologists focus on describing what participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Ploth, 2017). Every research design has strengths and weaknesses, and phenomenological models are no different. The goal of the current study was to examine teachers' perceptions of the presence of servant leadership characteristics in their principals and how use of those characteristics intrinsically and extrinsically influenced the teachers. In phenomenological research, the researcher must limit biases, assumptions, and preconceived ideas related to the phenomenon of study.

The interviews were semistructured. Interview questions were developed before the interviews took place. Participants were encouraged to answer openly and honestly. The study was geographically delimited to public schools in one southern California county. The study was limited by the validity and consistency of the tools used in conducting the interviews. An additional limitation that could not be controlled was the participants' willingness to be honest in their responses, based on their direct personal experiences. Since the study involved only public school teachers from three districts in southern California, the findings are not generalizable to other locations.

Delimitations of the Study

Delimitations are based on specific unconscious and conscious controllable decisions made by the researcher (Creswell & Poth, 2017). This study examined teachers' perceptions of

their principals' use of servant leadership characteristics and how that personal experience intrinsically and extrinsically influenced the teacher. The study did not include principals, parents, or classified staff. The teachers who were selected to participate in the study came from three school districts in southern California. Other populations with other opinions about public school principals and their use of servant leadership characteristics were not explored.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provides an outline of this qualitative phenomenological study to explore the perceptions of teachers related to their experiences with their principals' use of servant leadership characteristics and how those experiences intrinsically and extrinsically influence teachers. There is a need to study this topic due to the limited research focused on teachers' perceptions of their school principals' use of servant leadership practices. Principals can empower, motivate, and inspire the teachers whom they lead. This study provides teachers an opportunity to examine their principals' use of servant leadership characteristics and how that use influences teachers.

The researcher addressed a social justice issue in the sense that servant leaders serve the interests of others and the community before their own interests. If principals follow this concept, they will have a positive influence on teachers, who, in turn, will have a positive effect on students. This shared experience will impact school achievement. Previous studies have established the importance of school principals to guarantee that all teachers receive equal recognition in their teaching career while empowering and motivating them and leading them to a feeling of appreciation (Bethel, 2006).

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This chapter examines relevant literature on teachers' perceptions of their principals' use of servant leadership characteristics and how it influences teacher behavior. This literature review explores the following topics: history of servant leadership, servant leadership theory, servant leader characteristics, job satisfaction, school climate, motivation, intrinsic and extrinsic influences, theoretical frameworks, and a synthesis of the literature.

History of Servant Leadership

But Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. But among you, it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant." (Matthew 20:25-26, NLT version)

Servant leadership has been in practice since Biblical times. Two main characters that displayed this type of leadership in the Bible were Moses and Jesus Christ. The Bible teaches that the way to true greatness is through serving. Moses displayed servant leadership characteristics on many occasions. He showed the characteristics of empowerment, delegation, compassion, selflessness, and love for his followers. He empowered and delegated his followers to rule Israel on minor matters (Exodus 18:25-26). According to Muzira and Muzira (2020), in addition to empowerment and delegation, Moses showed compassion and love for his followers when he requested that God remove his name from the book of life and save the life of the Israelites (Exodus 32:32). Traces of servant leader characteristics can be traced all through Moses' life. He was a very selfless servant.

Another example of a servant leader was Jesus Christ. Jesus practiced leadership in several ways. His servant leadership practice is revealed by His attitude and the influence that He had on his followers (Muzira & Muzira, 2020). In John 13, Jesus washed the feet of his disciples

(followers), even though He was their leader. This showed him to be a servant. He washed their feet to show what it was like to lead as a servant (Muzira & Muzira, 2020).

Servant Leadership Theory

The concept of servant leadership has been attributed to Greenleaf (1977). A servant leader wants to serve others before himself (Greenleaf et al., 2003) Leadership is about helping others. It begins with the desire to serve other people (Green, 2014). The theory of servant leadership can, therefore, be understood from the 1970s Greenleaf concept. Servant leadership theory has also been defined as a philosophical approach and a host of practices the aim of which is to improve people's lives, develop healthier organizations, and eventually produce a world that is just and caring (E. J. Russell, 2016).

The premise of servant leadership stresses that the servant leader focuses on serving others. Such leaders prioritize the interests, needs, and aspirations of their followers ahead of their self-desires and pursuits. In this case, the aims of the servant leaders should be centered on power sharing, developing followers, building and strengthening their communities, and ensuring that they act in an authentic manner (Braveman, 2016). A strong relationship between leaders and their followers is the nature of this relationship that dictates overall productivity. Servant theory has massive applications in the education sector, as demonstrated by studies that are cited in the subsequent sections.

The phrase *servant leader* was coined by Greenleaf (1998). He supported what many people termed as the “big idea” or the inspiration of a leader as a servant. According to him, the leadership in its final moments entails service. He stated that leaders, to be concerned with the various tasks at hand, must be conscious of the social problems, production concerns, and

concerns of their followers. He addressed multiple mechanisms that leaders could use to be effective and efficient in leadership without causing human problems.

Servant leadership theory asserts that leaders should always give their followers an upper position in the leadership model (Focht & Ponton, 2015). In other words, followers should play critical roles in the decision-making processes, instead of being managed and controlled. In the school context, principals should provide direction to teachers and students to ensure smooth learning. According to previous research, some principals have misused their positions by exerting excessive control over teachers and students (Meyer & Macmillan, 2011). Consequently, the teachers feel denied their freedom and autonomy and lack a driving force and motivation. The authors argued that exercising ultimate control over students reduces their willingness to study because they feel that too much pressure is exerted on them. Eventually, there is a decrease in school performance in these schools. Autocratic leadership, which contradicts the servant leadership model's premises, is not supportive of developing an organization such as a school. Although the servant leadership model may fail in some instances, it is appropriate in the school environment, especially in established cases where conflicts are not frequent.

Previous studies have established that, through servant leadership, leaders can develop followers, build healthy communities, value other people, and share leadership responsibilities (Salameh, 2011). Within the school context, it appears that principals who place their teachers' desires and aspirations beyond their self-interests are in a better position to build healthy communities. A stronger community creates an environment where individuals feel appreciated and interconnected relationships improve. Valuing their deliberations and contributions, teachers and students have a stronger desire to be associated with the school (Salameh, 2011). It is clear

that most decisions in the school environment concern students' performance. Unlike the principal, who is mostly involved with managing and operating a school, teachers must establish close relationships with their students and provide influence during the teaching process. The teacher must be well versed with issues facing their students to possess the necessary intellect to offer recommendations and solutions to student concerns. Studies have established that most students feel more connected to their teachers than to their school principals, citing hierarchal reasons (Lee et al., 2012). These authors suggested that principals give teachers substantial latitude in the school decision-making process to realize improved performance outcomes.

The Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OCDE], 2013) established that teachers should not exercise ultimate control over students. They argued that there should be free and cordial relationships between teachers and students. Unlike historical times, when leadership was characterized by charisma, control, power, and prestige, new developments and transformations have changed how leadership trajectory is portrayed.

According to CERI, people value listening and empathetic leaders whose decisions are determined by persuasion rather than by force. More important, new democracies are emerging, where individual freedom has been accorded much weight. In this connection, studies have established a strong desire by teachers to build a teacher-student culture that focuses on improving the traits that were mentioned above. Some of these studies have argued that the school environment is virtuous as teachers and students go beyond the call of duty (OECD, 2013). The building of an integrative culture that admonishes the violation of human autonomy is highly dependent on school administrators and their subordinate staff. Furthermore, the building trail of a transformative society that embraces servant leadership begins at the top of

hierarchical positions (Butler, 2013). School principals must demonstrate servant leadership if their followers are to follow suit.

Teachers should ensure that students are well informed about servant leadership; this must be demonstrated from the core. Students must embrace the new leadership model, such as servant leadership, to transform society from traditional premises to contemporary views about leadership. Eventually, recognition and support of the concepts mentioned above will improve the school's performance and extend the benefits to the larger society. Freedom is essential and control is a burden. Studies have established that independent organizations are more productive than those where ultimate control and supervision are the directive of the day (Butler, 2013).

Servant Leader Characteristics

The servant leader must possess servanthood qualities (Maxwell, 2007). According to Maxwell (2007), various specific marks are used to label a servant leader. Servant leaders are characterized as those who put the needs of others before their own needs (Frick & Sipe, 2009). These leaders can set aside their personal agenda (Church, 2007). School principals who possess the qualities of servanthood understand the needs of the school and are always available to help meet those needs. Servant leaders are mostly motivated by factors such as promotion and leadership positions (Maxwell, 2007). Leaders with servanthood qualities can identify their able and interested followers and develop appropriate ways to transform their followers to take up leadership positions in the future (Autry, 2004). When walking in a crowd, they move in slow motion to connect with other people (Maxwell, 2007). Through this, the servant leader can create a strong relationship with followers. Johnson (2007) asserted that high morals are raised in the working environment, where servant leadership is exercised.

Servant leadership has some characteristics that help in the enhancement of skills exhibited by servant leaders. These characteristics were identified by Spears (2004) and other researchers. According to them, each school administrator's essential skills must include communication and decision-making skills. Nevertheless, these administrators must listen to others for them to strengthen these skills. Servant leaders play a significant role in identifying the goals of their followers. They listen to others' ideas and creativity and then take time to reflect.

According to Spears (2004), three top characteristics are used to measure a leader's level of servant leader characteristic: good listener, empathetic, and healing. For a person to succeed in servanthood, he or she should rely on empathetic listeners. Spears asserted that servant leaders are aware that they have the opportunity to enhance the lives of those with whom they come in contact (Spears, 2004). Servant leaders influence leaders and managers, causing leaders to raise their standard of practice toward developing and utilizing servant leadership attributes (Spears, 2004).

Research conducted by Avolio and Bass (2002) identified the following servant leader characteristics: (a) the ability to care for others, (b) followers were more likely to remain with the organization, and (c) followers improved their own lives and their organizations. Patterson (2003) identified seven characteristics of servant leadership: agape love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service. Patterson's (2003) research developed into a theoretical model to examine followers' perceptions of servant leader characteristics. Reed et al. (2011) presented a significant analysis that defined servant leaders using the following four key terms: role model, concern for others, moral managers, and integrity.

Greenleaf had the main aim of ensuring that leaders who possessed the qualities of servant leadership encouraged their followers to decide whether the lives that they were living

related well with that of the servant leader and for them to make a reflection of their life (Borden & Nandram, 2010). Followers will rise to the position of servant leadership if they exhibit professional and personal growth and if they are served well by servant leaders (Northouse, 2009).

Servant Leadership and Teacher Satisfaction

Servant leaders in the contemporary world are faced with the challenge of protecting and enhancing the well-being of their followers. Public secondary schools in the United States have been facing high teacher turnover, which many principals have not addressed effectively because they have not created a strong relationship between the school context and the employees. Leaders should meet the needs of their followers fully (Gallos, 2006).

Many theorists regard servant leadership as the most appropriate type of leadership to fulfill followers' expectations. When servant leadership is implemented well in an organization, trust among followers is raised (Patterson et al., 2004).

One of the factors that help in determining the level of effectiveness and efficiency of the type of leadership used in a school community is teacher satisfaction (Bass & Bass, 2008).

Servant Leadership and School Climate

School principals who possess the qualities of a servant leader create an institutional climate with a strong relationship between leaders and followers, resulting in teacher satisfaction. There has been significant pressure on principals of high schools to deliver top-quality education. In many instances, principals may not be aware of the impact of their servant leadership style on educational performance and the general school climate (Glatthorn et al., 2016). The principal's servant leadership style informs the school environment and may determine student achievement. In most cases, the principal's behavior in terms of the organization and approach is likely to

affect achievement by students (Babakus et al., 2011). The main focus of all schools is performance by students. A student's performance is mainly contingent on many factors, including the principal's style of leadership. The principal's leadership has been ascertained to affect the school climate, although sometimes indirectly (Jacob et al., 2015). It is imperative to investigate the leadership styles adopted by principals and to understand how they contribute to a positive school climate.

Leadership styles exhibited by principals determine the school's capability to deal with challenges, gain a competitive advantage, and foster positive behavior by teachers and students (Aydin et al., 2013). Servant leadership practices usually encourage ethical behaviors that are in line with stated educational standards. Servant leadership practices are requisite for managing a diverse work force of teachers and equipping them to deliver to students efficiently and effectively (Ashman, 2014). When teachers' perceptions of leadership practices by principals are compromised, performance and, ultimately, achievement by students will be compromised.

According to Black (2010), a principal's leadership style always positively impacts the school climate from the teachers' perspectives. Due of the close relationship that is anticipated between the principal and teachers, teachers can be relied on to evaluate and give their opinions on the extent of servant leadership demonstrated by the principal and its impact on the school's climate (Branch et al., 2013). Teachers may understand how the principal's leadership style is likely to influence school climate. The current study identified a gap that it attempted to fill. No past studies have evaluated the impact of teachers' perceptions of servant leadership by high school principals. The current study was designed to fill the gap by identifying the views of teachers regarding the existence of servant leadership among principals and its possible impact on the school's climate.

Black (2013) stated that the servant leadership approach should be highly embraced in school corridors, churches, and corporate boardrooms. It should be considered the most appropriate leadership style that allows creativity to improve a productive environment. According to the servant leadership school of thought, principals who focus on improving their schools' climate are more likely to achieve increased efficiency in school outcomes (Black, 2010). Studies have established a strong relationship between the school climate and overall performance levels because a favorable environment favors outcomes and vice versa. Principals are at the helm of their schools and have the primary responsibility to create and maintain effective leadership of followers (teachers and students) to achieve optimal performance outcomes (Black, 2010). It follows that, through effective leadership, such an environment fosters teachers' motivation and improves student achievement.

Servant Leadership and Motivation

Leadership is a term that denotes the capability to mobilize, enlist, and motivate others to apply their skills and abilities to a course (Eyal & Roth, 2011). The context in this instance is educational settings, where principals as leaders influence teachers and persuade them to devote their utmost skills to the attainment of the goals, vision, and mission of the school. The leadership skills of a principal have a ripple effect on teachers' motivation. Excellent leadership skills, coupled with open and honest communication, are likely to result in a positive and holistic work environment. In contrast, poor leadership skills may negate fundamental aspects of communication and result in a negative and hostile work environment. A tolerable and friendly work and school environment has numerous benefits related to teacher motivation, teacher retention, and overall learning outcomes and objectives (Moore, 2016). A school principal represents the top leadership in the school and is often able to influence such an environment.

The most critical element of a successful school is leadership. A school principal is frequently responsible for clarifying the school's vision, mission, performance, organizational culture, and organizational citizenship goals and sustaining a good relationship with teachers and staff (Shila & Sevilla, 2015). A broad overview of teachers' expectations is that they expect the principal to support them and guide them in their interpersonal, individual, and professional lives. Inadequate principal support is among the factors that lead to the decision to leave the teaching profession. The discussion below is guided by understanding that school leadership is a closely intertwined concept with teacher motivation and the success of a school.

The link between educational leadership and teacher motivation has been the subject of recent studies (Eyal & Roth, 2011). *Motivation* is a term that denotes the willingness of a person to do something or to behave in a specific manner, which can change over time under certain circumstances (Kamery, 2004). To contextualize the definition, teacher motivation has been subject to scholarship since the 1990s. Sinclair (2008) defined *teacher motivation* as “what attracts individuals to teaching, how long they remain in their initial teacher education courses and subsequently the teaching profession, and the extent to which they engage with their courses and the teaching profession” (p. 81). In essence, teacher motivation provides fundamental aspects of attraction, retention, and concentration on the subject at hand (Sinclair, 2008). The delegation of power to trained and autonomous principals can influence proper teacher motivation, satisfaction, and overall well-being (Eyal & Roth, 2011).

Servant Leadership and Intrinsic and Extrinsic Influences

Demir (2011) studied the link between teachers' work motivation and student engagement. Student engagement is relevant because it is an indicator of whether or not learning is taking place. Intrinsic motivation refers to internal satisfaction resulting from accomplishing a

task, not related to attainment of material rewards or praise (Reiss, 2012). Intrinsic motivation has been found to correlate directly to meaningful student engagement (Demir, 2011). Extrinsic motivation is understood as requiring the performance of a task or responsibility (Reiss, 2012). Extrinsic motivation of a teacher also influences intrinsic motivation. Demir (2011) recommended that principals work toward improving the intrinsic motivation of teachers.

Pelletier and Rocchi (2016) stated that teacher motivation has a crucial role in promoting and maintaining a positive work environment. Contextual factors, such as the relationship with the principal, influence motivation. Pelletier and Rocchi (2016) recommended that principals ensure that their teachers are supported and are rightfully in their psychological state to ensure that they are encouraged and motivated to deliver learning outcomes and objectives. A motivated teaching force is key to better results for students and for teachers' self-satisfaction (Pelletier & Rocchi, 2016).

Transformational versus transactional leadership are models of leadership that have been explored in educational settings to understand the characteristics and the links of each to influencing teachers (Sahin, 2004). Transformational leadership is characterized by the leader influencing followers to exceed their expected behavior (Sahin, 2004). Followers are motivated to join the leader and collectively attain the organization's goals and vision. The leader's impact on followers is drawn from the leader's capacity to empower, nurture, and bring out the best skills of followers by instilling in them specific ethical and broad objectives that exceed their own goals. Further, these leaders foster critical thinking among followers to the extent that followers are encouraged to apply their minds to challenging underlying organizational and social assumptions (Sahin, 2004).

The transactional leadership model is based on making rewards such as praise, recognition, and material things for compliance with the organization's rules and procedures, leading to efficient management. It involves a situation where there is an exchange between leaders and followers aimed to increase following through, ensuring adherence to the rules and policies of the organization. Transactional leaders focus on providing classroom practices; the curriculum is in order and appeals to teachers' and students' needs. In essence, transactional leadership is primarily focused on leader-follower exchange (Sahin, 2004).

Shila and Sevilla (2015) explored the influence of principals' respective leadership styles as perceived by teachers on teachers' job satisfaction and commitment to teaching. They reported a significant impact of transformational leadership on teachers' job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The preference for transformational leadership by principals, according to teachers, is that it fosters a positive relationship between transformational leadership and the overall concept and culture of the institution (Sahin, 2004). Principals' explanation for the preference for transformational leadership is that there is a positive relationship between transformational leadership and cooperative values for the institution's success, educational development, and fostering of school culture (Sahin, 2004). Therefore, principals should maximize opportunities to motivate teachers to be their best. They can do this by supporting the teachers' autonomy in decision making, promoting opportunities for development such as training sessions for professional development; giving positive feedback commending teachers' excellent work; and identifying areas that need improvement as part of intrinsic motivation (Demir, 2011). In contrast, laissez-faire leadership is a hands-off form of leadership with an inactive leader who leaves significant decisions to be made by followers, which translates to lower productivity.

Von Fischer and De Jong (2017) studied the servant leadership model for principals and their extrinsic and intrinsic influence on teachers. They undertook a study to determine the extent to which teachers' perceptions of their principals' servant leadership behaviors correlated with teacher job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is the emotional fulfillment that is related to carrying out a responsibility or task successfully. Research results indicated a statistically significant positive correlation between principals' servant leadership skills and job satisfaction. The outcome is particularly significant in countries, such as the United States, that have witnessed low job satisfaction among teachers, leading to poor teacher retention.

Conversely, there are positive outcomes related to teachers' job satisfaction, improved teacher retention, and better student learning activities geared toward developing cognitive skills. Moore (2016) explored factors that contribute to teacher retention and identified intrinsic and extrinsic motivators as part of the matrix. To remedy the situation of low job satisfaction leading to poor teacher retention, principals are urged to "promote teacher satisfaction both intrinsically and extrinsically" (Bogler & Nir, 2012, p. 302).

Bogler and Nir (2012) conducted a study to determine the mediating effect of teacher empowerment on the relationship between teachers' perceptions of school support and their intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction. Their findings indicated that teacher empowerment has a different influence on the intrinsic and extrinsic value components in job satisfaction (Bogler & Nir, 2012). Empowerment resulted in intrinsic satisfaction, a psychological element most strongly related to feelings of self-efficacy and importance. For the extrinsic component, empowerment contributed to its attainment by manifestation of parts of status and respect for the teacher. Teacher empowerment can facilitate job satisfaction (Bogler & Nir, 2012). To translate the theoretical findings to practical solutions, Bogler and Nir (2012) recommended that teacher

empowerment be incorporated into the overall organizational format of attaining job satisfaction. In essence, empowering teachers involves actualization of self-efficacy. It also promotes an internal sense of actualization that is unrelated to material rewards or praise.

The above discussion has highlighted various factors, both contextual and individual, that influence teachers. Leadership as a central tenet is offered by the principal, who ensures smooth operation of school activities. Most previous research discuss the importance of effective leadership to ensure both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, which in turn have an impact on the overall work environment in terms of teacher retention, teacher empowerment, positive learning outcomes, and student engagement. Dynamic models of leadership, ranging from transformational leadership to transactional leadership, and laissez-faire leadership are discussed to explore the merits of each model for a principal in influencing teachers, both intrinsically and extrinsically. The basis for discussing the models is that a principal's leadership style significantly influences the factors related to job fulfillment and commitment by teachers. Numerous articles and publications support the conclusion that most principals prefer the transformational leadership model (Sahin, 2004). Conversely, there is a shortage of research investigating the extent of influence on transactional leadership and laissez-faire models for principals. Based on this fact, there is a need to study the impact of these leadership models on factors that contribute to the success of institutions.

Theoretical Frameworks

Servant leadership theory is the theoretical framework that was used to support the literature review. The foundational ideas related to servant leadership are based on insights of Robert K. Greenleaf in 1970. Servant leadership is a theoretical framework that asserts that a

leader's primary motivation and role is service to others. Servant leadership theory challenges the perception of what social and equitable leadership should look like in schools today.

Servant leadership provided a framework to address a new leadership model. The new model would take a self-inventory style that would allow leaders to understand themselves better as they lead others. A common misunderstanding about servant leadership is that only people in traditional leadership roles can practice it. This fundamental misinterpretation about servant leadership's core principles detracts from what it is about, which is service.

Servant leadership theory is engrained in the obligation of serving first and leading second. It is a sure and effective path for leaders to empower change in their schools and eventually to strengthen interpersonal relationships, teams, and the organizational culture so that people come first. Putting people first, building relationships on mutual respect, and nurturing teams with high levels of trust are all integral values of the servant leadership model that can offer pathways for schools.

Several theorists, including Spears (1995), Laub (1999), R. F. Russell and Stone (2002), and Patterson (2003), have built on Greenleaf's (1970) servant leadership framework. Van Dierendonck and Patterson (2015) sought to clarify and integrate the various servant leadership models. They developed their servant leadership framework, which starts with the motivation to lead with compassionate love, followed by virtuous traits, and moves on to behaviors. Collectively, the motivation, characteristics, and practices of the leader drive the followers' well-being.

R. F. Russell and Stone (2002) described the following central tenets of servant leadership theory. The first is listening; most servant leader principals practice this behavior, recognizing that faithful natural servants respond to problems by listening first (Greenleaf,

1970). Second, servant leaders empathize with their followers. The third tenet is that healing is “to make whole” (p. 27). Greenleaf asserted that this means that servant leaders recognize that humans have a shared desire to find wholeness in themselves and then support it in their followers. The fourth tenet is awareness. “We miss leadership opportunities” (Greenleaf, 1970, p. 19).

The fifth tenet extends to persuasion. The effective servant leader forms group agreement through tender but determined and robust belief and does not utilize group submission through position power. Servant leadership uses personal power, rather than position power, to influence followers and achieve organizational objectives (R. F. Russell & Stone, 2002). The sixth tenet focuses on conceptualization, meaning that the servant leader can conceive solutions to problems that do not currently exist. The servant leader is proactive rather than reactive (Greenleaf, 1970).

The seventh tenet of servant leadership is foresight, which focuses on predicting what will happen in the future. The eighth tenet of servant leadership is stewardship. Greenleaf (1970) asserted that organizational stewards or trustees are concerned with the entire organization and not just individual followers (p. 31). The ninth tenet of servant leadership is the leader’s commitment to the growth of people. This is where leaders show appreciation for their followers and encourage them to grow (Greenleaf, 1970, p. 14). The tenth tenet of servant leadership is the characteristic of building a community. According to Greenleaf, “All that is required to restore community as a viable life form . . . is for enough servant-leaders to show the way” (1970, p. 30). Servant leadership theory uses these foundational tenets to bring meaning to the practice of servant leadership and to provide a call to action in school leadership. The current study focused on servant leadership practices in school principals and how that use of the characteristics influences teachers.

Phenomenological philosophy is another theoretical framework for phenomenological research (Peoples, 2020). “Two main theoretical frameworks that frame phenomenological studies are the philosophies of Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger” (p. 29). Husserl understood that phenomenology was presuppositional, which means that there can be no theoretical frameworks when using transcendental phenomenology. His philosophy does not allow for theoretical frameworks. According to Husserl, nothing should be assumed or taken for granted when trying to understand a phenomenon (Peoples, 2020).

The second theoretical framework for phenomenological research is based on work by Martin Heidegger. He bifurcated off from Husserl’s philosophy and created his philosophy. Heidegger contended that there was no way to bracket experiences because they are always in the world with others in the circumstances of existence. There is no way to separate oneself from being within the world (Peoples, 2020). Heidegger developed the hermeneutic circle, a description of the process of understanding. His philosophy encompasses how people make sense of the world. Heidegger’s framework can be seen as the use of lenses. Key terms within this framework (Peoples, 2020) include *dasein*, meaning being there or present. The second term is *fore-sight/fore conception*, which refers to preconceived knowledge about a phenomenon. The last word in this framework, *hermeneutic circle*, means interpretation as revision; it is a description of the process of understanding, not a technique (Peoples, 2020).

Chapter Summary

This chapter is a summary of the literature review of servant leadership theory and its influence on teachers. Shaw and Newton (2014) studied retention and satisfaction in teachers when principals are servant leaders. Researchers have determined that teachers are vital contributors to achievement by students. Therefore, the school’s leadership should seriously

promote teacher satisfaction and teacher retention, empowering teachers to develop into effective professionals in the classroom. The practice of servant leadership in schools is likely to impact institutions' performance profoundly, especially in public schools (Shaw & Newton, 2014). The literature review also indicates that teachers who perceive the principals as servant leaders tend to be highly committed and dedicated, working effectively toward attaining desired goals.

The reviewed literature provided a historical foundation for servant leadership, an overview of servant leadership, its characteristics, and how servant leadership can influence teachers. The literature focused on teachers' perceptions of their principals' use of servant leadership characteristics and its influence on teachers. It revealed how these experiences affect their ability to perform and to be empowered.

Chapter 3

Methodology

This study used a phenomenological design to explore how teachers' experiences with their principals' use of servant leadership characteristics influenced them. The goal was to understand how the teachers' perceptions of their principals' use of servant leadership characteristics intrinsically and extrinsically influences teachers. Individual face-to-face semistructured interviews were conducted. The data collected from the participants allowed for in-depth analysis and experiences of teachers' reality in their own words (Peoples, 2020). The methodology of this phenomenological study was to gather and explore the lived experiences of 16 teachers who experienced their principals' use of servant leader characteristics and to examine how these leaders' use of servant leadership influenced the teachers. These experiences provided a new level of insight regarding the impact of principals' use of servant leadership characteristics to influence teachers intrinsically and extrinsically.

Research Questions

Central Question

How do teachers perceive their principals' use of servant leadership characteristics and its influence on teachers?

Subquestions

1. What are the characteristics of a servant leader?
2. What are teachers' perceptions of servant leadership characteristics used by their principals?
3. What themes emerge that relate to principals' perceived use of servant leadership characteristics?

4. How do teachers' perceptions of principals' use of servant leadership characteristics intrinsically influence teachers?

5. How do teachers' perceptions of principals' use of servant leadership characteristics extrinsically influence teachers?

Research Design

According to Peoples (2020), "Phenomenological research study is used to answer the question, what is it like to experience a certain phenomenon?" (p 3). The goal of qualitative research is to gain understanding by discovering the depth and complexity that are innate in the phenomenon (Creswell & Ploth, 2017; Peoples, 2020). Phenomenological methods vary from qualitative approaches in a significant way. The groundwork of philosophy is a major factor in the difference (Peoples, 2020). A phenomenological methodology was appropriate for this study to illustrate the detailed personal meanings of lived experiences related to teachers' experiences of their principals' use of servant leadership characteristics. The purpose of phenomenology is to condense individual experiences with a phenomenon to illustrate the general essence or an understanding of the very nature of a thing (Creswell & Ploth, 2017). The present research used a phenomenological design to examine how teachers' perceptions of their principals' use of servant leadership characteristics influenced them. In a phenomenological study, the phenomenon to be observed focuses on perceptions or ideas (Creswell & Ploth, 2017).

There are four commonly used qualitative research designs for qualitative studies: ethnography, case study, phenomenology, and grounded theory. The ethnography method is utilized to ascertain mutual forms of a set; it was not suitable for this study because culture was not the focus of the study (Peoples, 2020). A case study approach, which allows for development of a thorough interpretation and case analysis, was considered; however, it did not fully meet the

requirements of focusing only on experience as lived. Creswell and Ploth (2017) stated that phenomenology is a specific type of qualitative research design that looks at a phenomenon and explains the shared meaning of lived experiences and feelings through impartial interaction. The emphasis is on describing what participants have in common as they experience a particular phenomenon. A phenomenon could be viewed as an event, a situation, and the uniqueness of an individual's lived experiences and reality or concepts (Creswell & Ploth, 2017). If a researcher's focus is on exploring the feelings or experiences of the participants, then this is significant for phenomenological qualitative research. If the researcher needs clarification, explanation, or a systematic approach, then the phenomenological study can raise awareness and increase insight into the phenomenon (Van Manen, 2016). Therefore, the overarching purpose of phenomenology is to decrease individual experiences with a phenomenon to a description of the composite core or an understanding of the very nature of a thing (Creswell & Ploth, 2017).

The purpose of this phenomenological design was to examine how teachers' perceptions of their principals' use of servant leadership characteristics intrinsically and extrinsically influenced them. The objective was to examine how public school principals' use of servant leadership characteristics influenced teachers. In a phenomenological study, the phenomenon is phrased in terms of a single concept or idea (Creswell & Ploth, 2017). The single thought or idea in this study was a principal's use of servant leadership characteristics. In phenomenological studies, if the researcher wants to put aside personal beliefs to pay attention to the experiences of the study participants, bracketing or epoche is used. Bracketing acknowledges that the researcher might share some of the same lived experiences as the participants (Creswell & Ploth, 2017; Peoples, 2020). According to Moustakas (1994), epoche or bracketing is seldom achieved. However, the attempt to remove one's biases is reflected in the description of the researcher

studying the phenomenon by recounting the researcher's experiences and bracketing those views before exploring the experiences of the participants.

The researcher in a phenomenological study utilizes a hermeneutical phenomenological approach to explain research oriented toward lived experiences while interpreting life to present a new perspective from the experiences of the phenomenon under the study (Creswell & Ploth, 2017). In this study, the phenomenon under study related to teachers' perceptions of their principals' use of servant leadership characteristics. The purpose was to explore how teachers' perceptions of their principals' use of servant leadership characteristics influenced them. The qualitative research method was preferred based on focusing on teachers' perceptions of their experiences with their principal. In this study, the participants' thoughts, feelings, and beliefs were critical to understanding the principals' use of servant leadership characteristics and its influence on teachers. The data allowed for in-depth analysis and interpretation of the participants' reality. There was limited empirical literature focusing on the research question: How do teachers perceive their principals' use of servant leadership characteristics and its influence on teachers?

Researcher Positionality

I have 24 years of teaching experience in public schools. As a result of my years of service, I have had personal experiences with 11 school principals. I have also observed numerous principals throughout my career. I held two positions as a school administrator, which allowed me to attend numerous professional development courses. I also graduated from a seminary and I am an ordained minister.

As an educator and member of the clergy, I decided to examine the experiences of teachers and their principals' use of servant leadership characteristics. I learned of servant

leadership while studying leadership in the seminary. In fall 2016, I took a leadership course that addressed leadership styles. As a result, I took what I had learned in the seminary regarding the characteristics of Moses and Jesus Christ and apply it to the 11 principals with whom I had worked in the past 24 years.

My personal biases led me to question my ability to exercise value and religion neutrality. However, after reading Culver's (2013) book, *Applying Servant Leadership in Today's Schools*, both my capability and obligation to discuss this topic were no longer questioned. This topic brings understanding to a significant challenge faced by both teachers and principals. My experiences as an ordained minister, a teacher in elementary, middle, and high school, and an elementary assistant principal brought insight into the investigation of this study. Therefore, it was reasonable for me to choose the described research design, which was expected to offer understanding of the phenomenon of teachers' perceptions of their principals' use of servant leadership characteristics in public schools.

Participants

I made potential participants aware of the study by a flyer (Appendix A) and an interest letter (Appendix B) distributed at the local teacher association representative council meeting. The flyer informed teachers of the study's title, purpose, significance; participant criteria; and my personal contact information. Twenty-five public school teachers from three school districts contacted me and scheduled a one-on-one semistructured interview. However, only 16 (5 males and 11 females) kept their interview appointments. The participants were from elementary, middle, and high schools located in southern California. Prior to each interview, participants were asked to sign a the consent form to participate in the research. The form outlined the details of the study and their agreement to be electronically recorded for this study. Participants were

informed that, if at any time during the interview, they felt uncomfortable, they could end the meeting.

Sampling

According to Barratt et al. (2015), purposive sampling is applicable when the researcher has a specific target or needs a unique sample that is likely to provide the desired information. The key focus of sampling in qualitative work is saturation, meaning that the researcher has reached a point where no more new information can be obtained from participants. Therefore, 8 to 15 participants comprise a good sample (Peoples, 2020). On the other hand, Creswell and Poth (2017) recommended 5 to 25 participants.

Instrumentation

Prior to 1998, there was no instrument available to measure servant leadership. In 1998, Page and Wong developed the Self-Assessment Servant Leadership Profile (SASLP; Page & Wong, 2000). Items were combined or deleted to create a 99-item instrument using a Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*). The researchers grouped the items into 12 categories. I used the themes from the Page and Wong survey and created 25 open-ended semistructured interview questions (Appendix C). I used the semistructured interview process because it helped to capture perceptions, thoughts, and feelings that related to the research questions. I conducted individual follow-up interviews to clarify preliminary information and evaluate the data until the meaning was exact (Giorgi, 1985).

Research Setting

The interviews were conducted through Zoom meetings held in my office due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Zoom meeting was a neutral, convenient electronic means to conduct the interviews following guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

and the county public health agency. The Zoom meeting was convenient, privacy was maintained through a meeting ID and password, and neither participant nor researcher had an advantage. The interviews were recorded for transcription.

Data Collection

This research study highlights significant features of the phenomenon as it was lived and how it was experienced. This emphasis on how something is experienced describes the lived characteristics of human phenomena. Descriptions of lived experiences are vital to avoid methods of investigation that are indirect (Giorgi, 1985).

According to Giorgi (1985), for the researcher to permit the essential methodical spontaneity of phenomenological research, a semistructured interview is used (Giorgi, 1985). Individual follow-up interviews are used to fill gaps in the collected data. Holes consist of either excluded data or areas that are implicit or deficient in any way. Follow-up interviews allow the lived essence of circumstances to operate spontaneously through the first interview and then be assessed more precisely. In phenomenological studies, the preliminary individual interviews, the follow-up interviews, and observations by the researcher are critical methods of collecting data (Giorgi, 1985).

Prior to the interviews, each participant signed a consent form. Each participant was informed of the potential threats and possible benefits of participation. Confidentiality was protected by giving each participant a code (P1 through P16). Codes were used in analyzing data, and the researcher is the only person to know the identities of the participants. The data were collected via semistructured interviews consisting of open-ended questions to collect participant perceptions, thoughts, and ideas. All participants were allowed to stop if they felt uncomfortable.

The data were recorded and then transcribed. The transcriptions were stored electronically on my password-protected laptop and flash drive. I used a professional, calm, and genuine tone of voice in the interviews. The goal was to keep the interviews friendly and professional. Participants were allowed to speak openly.

I did not use software to organize, classify, sort, arrange, or code the interview data into themes. I hand-coded data, rather than use qualitative data analysis software. According to Peoples (2020), “When using qualitative data analysis software, researchers can view transcripts as data rather than dwelling on what was said in the interview texts to ascertain the essence of the phenomenon being studied” (p. 66). The phenomenon in this study was teachers’ perceptions of their principals’ use of servant leadership characteristics. There were three reasons for not using data analysis software to analyze the data. First, qualitative data analysis software could limit the ability to dwell on a text because it essentially separates the researcher from the data (Goble et al., 2012). Second, qualitative data analysis software could hinder the ability to apply complete abductive reasoning (Van Manen, 2016). Third, qualitative data analysis software could instrumentalize the process of coding, which should be intuitive (Cross, 2011). In this study, I grouped the interview statements into themes to write an interpretation of what the participants had shed light on related to their views. The transcript of each participant interview was analyzed to highlight the significant statements, sentences, answers, and quotes that provided an understanding of how the participant had experienced the phenomenon (Peoples, 2020).

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2015), to form initial codes, researchers take notes in the margins and look for collective and individual themes. The two types of themes in this study were collective and individual. Themes are common across a group of participants and can be categorized into group statements or meaning units (Creswell & Ploth, 2017). Individual themes

are unique to one or a couple of participants. Categorizing data into themes allows the researcher to visualize the data and make meaning related to experiences that were discussed related to the research questions. In addition to collective and individual themes, data may be analyzed into conceptual themes that enable the researcher to create a structure of the phenomenon as the participants experienced it.

There were four components to this study: (a) a flyer that was distributed to potential participants at a teacher union function, (b) a one-on-one semistructured interview, (c) a pre-debriefing, and (d) a debriefing with each participant. The flyer described the research topic and how to contact the researcher if interested in participating. Once potential participants reached out to the researcher, she explained the study in detail, emailed the consent form, and scheduled the interview. The semistructured interviews were the source of data. The collection included direct interaction with participants on a one-to-one basis (Peoples, 2020). The qualitative approach was utilized because it formed an effective platform to determine the experiences of the participants from their personal views, as opposed to the point of view of the researcher (Creswell & Ploth, 2017; Punch, 2013). Qualitative research design assists the researcher in making sense of social phenomena. It derives meaning as given by the respondent who is in contact with the information.

According to Peoples (2020), data analysis is not entirely in line with phenomenological inquiry because *analysis* means to break into parts. In contrast, phenomenological research seeks to understand a phenomenon. Hermeneutic phenomenology uses the hermeneutic circle, meaning that the elements inform the whole and the whole informs the parts. If something is only broken into parts, the phenomenon is lost. Hence, the terms are appropriate in phenomenological research. *Explication* is one such term. Explication means investigating the constituents of a

phenomenon while keeping the whole (Hycner, 1999). The goal of phenomenological research is to illuminate the lived experience of a phenomenon; the method of analyzing data is emergent (Peoples, 2020). The purpose of phenomenological data analysis is to present a description from essential themes of personal experience in ways that are understandable and identifiable to anyone who has had that experience (Peoples, 2020).

Peoples (2020) identified six steps to data analysis. The first step consists of reading the individual transcript of each participant in its totality to discern the participant's complete story. The researcher goes through each transcript and deleted unnecessary repetitive statements or fillers ("um," "uh," "well," or "you know"). In the second step, the researcher creates preliminary meaning units (Giorgi, 1985). A meaning unit is defined as the allocation piece of data that reveals a feature or trait of the phenomenon being investigated (Peoples, 2020). In the third step, the researcher breaks down all preliminary meaning units to final meaning units or themes, informed by understanding of each participant's description of the phenomenon (Peoples, 2020). In the fourth step, the researcher examines the situated narratives. The situated narrative is a reiteration of the participant's story. In this step, the researcher organizes specifics and experiences thematically under the specific interview or survey questions. Each participant's experiences are highlighted in a theme, using direct quotes from the interview (Peoples, 2020).

The fifth step of data analysis deals with using general narratives. General narratives are taken from the situated narratives. They unify the participants' accounts in a general description of all the participants' narratives. The goal in this step is to organize data from the situated narratives while highlighting all participants' meanings of their experiences (Peoples, 2020).

The sixth step of the data analysis process is known as the general description. The general description phase moves away from the participants' everyday perspectives to themes

that are implicit in all or most of the participants' descriptions of their experiences (Peoples, 2020). The purpose is to unite the significant phenomenological themes into a united general description.

In this study, I organized and coded the interview questions into themes by hand coding. I went through the interview transcripts, highlighting statements and responses that explained how the participants experienced the phenomenon (Peoples, 2020).

Validity and Reliability

Creswell and Poth (2017) outlined eight steps that a researcher may utilize to ensure validity of the study. Not all of the steps are practical to review. However, two of the steps were engaged in this study: (a) explanation of researcher bias, and (b) detailed descriptions. It is the researcher's responsibility to take measures to safeguard the reliability and validity of research findings. Participants in a qualitative study must believe that the results are accurate. According to Thomson (2011), triangulation is used to verify the accuracy of perspectives. Triangulation is accomplished by cross-checking information from multiple angles. This step is time consuming and requires significant planning, organization, and resources. Therefore, I did not use triangulation in this study.

To establish validity of the findings in this study, I chose to explain researcher bias. Researcher bias consists of personal biases and preferences in journals, field notes, and data analysis protocol (Peoples, 2020). I explained researcher bias from the outset of the study by making a statement of researcher positionality. Also, I wrote detailed descriptions. By taking the entire transcribed interview responses back to the participants, I ensured that the responses had been transcribed correctly.

Silverman (2005) outlined several ways in which reliability can be addressed in qualitative research. In accordance with these suggestions, I recorded interviews and later transcribed the taped interviews verbatim. Participants reviewed the transcripts to verify accuracy. The detailed descriptions provided a detailed account of the participants' experiences, and the pattern and themes were placed into context (Peoples, 2020).

Informed Consent

A voluntary agreement to participate in a research study is termed an informed consent. Informed consent is always needed in a research study. Informed consent ensures that participants clearly understand the research and its risks. When potential participants in this study contacted me, they were informed about the risks and each was given an informed consent form to sign. I told all participants about their rights, the purpose of the study, the procedures, potential risks, benefits, and the benefits of participation. All participants were fluent English language speakers and signed an English informed consent form. Prior to the signature, I assured participants that their names, interviews, and personal information would remain private.

Limitations

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to examine the views and lived experiences of teachers in determining how their perceptions of their principals' use of servant leadership characteristics intrinsically and extrinsically influenced them. The central phenomenon was the principals' use of servant leadership characteristics as perceived by the teachers. The research was conducted to capture data from a selection of teachers from three public school districts with similar demographics.

The participation criteria for this study were current employment in public schools located in a southern California county with experiences with school principals regarding how

the principals used servant leadership characteristics. The goal was to interview 15 to 25 participants. However, only 16 participated in interviews. Because of the pandemic, all interviews were conducted using a Zoom meeting platform, which was challenging for a few participants due to family and home obligations.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented a description of the qualitative design used to examine how teachers' experiences with their principals' use of servant leadership characteristics influenced them. I used a phenomenological methodology to guide the study. All participants had experiences related to the phenomenon of study. The population for this study was public school teachers who had experience with their school principals' use of servant leadership characteristics and the intrinsic and extrinsic influences of that use on teachers. Since the teachers varied in grade levels taught, years of experience, age, ethnicity, and gender, themes emerged from the responses to the interview questions that aided in addressing the research questions.

Chapter 4

Research Findings

The purpose of this chapter is to explore teachers' perceptions of their principals' use of servant leadership characteristics and its influence on teachers. Interviews with participating teachers provided data that were compiled into findings. This chapter presents the analysis of the data in two parts: (a) demographic analysis of the participants, and (b) findings regarding the participant teachers' perceptions of their principal's servant leadership characteristics.

Demographic Background Analysis

Table 1 provides demographic data for the 16 teachers who participated in the study. The ages, gender, and years of service of the participants indicates a diverse sample. Table 2 shows the distribution of participant demographic data by categories.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Participant		Age		Gender	Years of service
P1	40	Female	16		
P2	49	Female	17		
P3	57	Female	13		
P4	53	Male	29		
P5	50	Female	24		
P6	52	Male	25		
P7	35	Female	13		
P8	48	Female	28		
P9	29	Male	1		
P10	28	Male	1		
P11	33	Female	11		
P12	52	Male	21		
P13	56	Female	15		
P14	59	Male	19		
P15	32	Female	4		
P16	53	Male	25		

Table 2*Sample Demographics*

Category and measure	<i>n</i>	%
Age group (years)		
20-29	2	12
30-39	3	19
40-49	3	50
50-59	8	19
Gender		
Male	7	44
Female	9	56
Years of service		
1-5	3	19
6-10	0	0
11-15	4	25
16-20	3	19
26-30	2	12

Findings on Teachers' Perceptions of Servant Leadership**The Emerging Themes**

The data analysis, through coding and comparison of similarities in the responses from the participating teachers, extracted five key themes: (a) servant leader characteristics exhibited by principals, (b) teachers' perceptions regarding who is a servant leader, (c) servant leadership exhibited by the principal and teacher satisfaction, (d) servant leadership exhibited by the principal and motivation of teachers and students, and (e) the effect of principals' strengths, weaknesses, and emotional reactions on others.

Servant Leader Characteristics Exhibited by Principals

The participants provided insightful responses regarding the characteristics of servant leadership. The first characteristic that was sharply defined was a visionary approach. According to P1, "My principal at my school shares the vision with the teachers. Therefore, teachers can work together with the principal in the realization of his vision." P2 stated, "Servant leadership involves a principal listening to others to get their insights and feelings." Thus, a principal can exhibit open leadership through the open door policy. The other characteristic that arises is that a principal exhibits leadership through support of teachers for professional development. P4 and P7 described their principals as coaches who demonstrate empathy to the teachers and freely take time to interact and get to know students. Servant leadership is shown in this case because it implies that the principal cares for both teachers and students. "My principal is always active and involved in school and staff activities such as games and other events as a role-player and not as the boss" (P7). Involvement in such activities assists in making the teachers and students close to the principal, making it easy for open communication and discussion on academic and other issues.

Most of the teachers reported that their principals delegate responsibilities. P8, P5, P14, and P16 stated that delegation is done mostly at leadership meetings. P8 explained, "Our principal holds meetings with the leadership team, and that is where our principal delegates most of the duties." Department chairs are primarily given the delegated power and responsibility to ensure that everything runs as expected. According to P16, "At my school the principal delegation is voluntary. The principal, in this case, identifies the areas that need to be delegated and ask individuals to volunteer in undertaking the given task." P15 stated, "My principal pursues delegation as a tool to empower others in the school. The delegation is done on meaningful projects, so it gives other teachers a chance to build valuable experience." P12 stated,

“Our principal delegates duties and allows individuals to undertake them without close supervision, but the principal is always ready and available for consultation and assistance. However, results are expected as agreed.” P11 stated that the principal was new in the school but was offering leadership and management through delegation. In this case, the administration team and department chairs and representatives in various sections were highly engaged.

The other characteristic that emerges from leadership by principals concerns the ability to inspire team spirit and communicate enthusiasm. For instance, according to P13, “My principal strives to ensure that the staff remains engaged in one another.” P2 stated that the principal forms committees to assist in undertaking various functions. The members of each committee are required to engage actively to ensure that their team achieves its objectives. The various departments are organized as teams in which teachers combine efforts to perform their respective roles, including teaching and managing departmental activities.

The aspect of engagement of staff in decision making emerged clearly. P1, P4, and P8 said that the staff is involved in giving ideas but the leadership team and administrators decide. P12 stated, “My principal allows vital decision making to be made at the staff meetings, departmental level meetings, and in leadership meetings.” Similarly, P6 and P14 stated that their principals engage teachers in decision making by allowing them to participate in decision making freely and actively in their respective departments.

Teachers’ Perceptions Regarding Who Is a Servant Leader

A servant leader is the one who connects with the people and strives to assist them in succeeding in their various roles. She also stated that she thinks that their assistant principal exhibits servant leadership by being readily available to assist the teachers on multiple issues. (P1)

This insight was supported by P4, who stated, “A servant leader is the one who is in charge but is focused on serving those working under him/her.” According to P2, “A servant

leader is someone who has the heart to serve and allow others to strive and achieve their goals.”

The implication is that the leader does not focus on the use of bestowed power and authority but is sympathetic and supportive to others. P3 stated that she perceives the servant leader to be the one who communicates expectations to followers and makes sure that the required resources and support are offered. She added, “Such a leader is sometimes involved in undertaking some work in the team of others for the expected result to be realized.”

P1, P12, and P13 described a servant leader as one who makes or strives to make others successful. In this case, the leader is willing to empower and support others. It is necessary that the principal hold the belief that the success of others is his or her own achievement. This insight was supported by P5, who said, “I think that a servant leader is the one who is concerned with the progress of all members of the group. He/she, in this case, is quick to help and support the growth of all in the group.” P7, P8, P9, and P11 agreed that a servant leader leads by serving others and by example. Such leaders are always ready to do anything for followers. P7 and P13 reported that they perceived a servant leader as one who provides assistance and guidance to others. P7 explained, “Such a leader puts the interest and overall good of others ahead of their agenda. He/she cannot oppress others for personal gains or achievements.” P4 stated that a servant leader serves and supports those whom they entrust to assist in the realization of organizational goals, vision, mission, and objectives. “This type of a leader is ready to work, flexible, willing to compromise, willing to share power through delegation, and demonstrates empathy to the views and issues raised by others,” asserted P4.

Servant Leadership Exhibited by the Principal and Teacher Satisfaction

A leader plays an essential role in the satisfaction of followers. The data indicated that principles who exhibit servant leadership influence teacher satisfaction in three ways. The first

way is through interaction with the teachers. P2 and P10 said that they feel satisfied at the workplace due to friendly interactions with their principals. P10 said, “I love work when I have a principal who is very understanding and communicates at a personal level with teachers.” This insight was supported by P1, P2, and P10, who said that they were highly satisfied because their principals listen to problems. As a result, the teachers receive the support required for developing into better educators and leaders. P9 stated, “Even though my principal is always busy, he is very approachable. Hence, one gets the chance to raise and discuss both work-related and personal issues.” These insights were supported by P1, who stated, “The teachers at my school are highly satisfied because our principal appreciates and acknowledges the hard work that is pursued by the staff.”

Second, servant leadership assists in teacher satisfaction through responses by the leader regarding the commitment of teachers outside the workplace. Teachers come from the community and families; their lives are not only about their work and career. P14 said, “My principal is always available through the phone, even in times when we are not at work.” This implies that a teacher can seek assistance or support on matters outside of workplace responsibilities. Teachers P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, and P8 stated that they were satisfied because their principals understand matters such as family and health and offer support on matters and circumstances that are beyond one’s control.

The third way in which teacher satisfaction is enhanced through servant leadership is through the principals convincing teachers that the principals are working *with* them and not *for* them. P13 stated, “The principal creates an environment of inclusion in which we all feel like [we] are part of the team.” In other words, satisfaction at the workplace arises from the respect, diversity, and cohesion created through the leadership by the principal. According to P1, P10,

P14, and P15, their workplaces are satisfying because the principals uphold teamwork, acknowledge the contributions of the teachers, and lead in the celebration of success. P8 and P13 stated that their principals are eager to collect opinions of teachers and strive to implement their ideas.

Servant Leadership Exhibited by the Principal and Motivation of Teachers and Students

The data indicated reveal that servant leadership is a reliable source of motivation for both teachers and students. One of the main ways of motivation is teacher satisfaction in the workplace. Second, involvement of principals in celebrating special occasions and events that foster school spirit is a source of motivation for teachers. For instance, P4 acknowledged that the principal supports a program in which, every Friday morning, teachers, students, readers, and some parents celebrate Accelerated Reader achievements. The students are motivated because their parents are welcomed. P1 reported that the principal triggers motivation by teachers and students by allowing every grade level to set targets and work toward their realization. The principal announces achievements and congratulates achievers. This motivates teachers and students to work hard to win recognition.

P8 highlighted three ways in which the principal motivates the staff. First, “During the 10th anniversary of the school, my principal bought shirts for both teachers and students. He also sponsored a classic party.” Second, the school has weekly activities, such as music every Friday during lunchtime. Third, the principal holds a staff breakfast at the end of each quarter, in which teachers are praised for their excellent work.

The Effect of the Principal’s Strengths, Weaknesses, and Emotional Reactions on Others

The strengths of principals, including the ability to motivate staff and create a satisfying work condition and environment, enhance the ability and commitment of teachers and students.

For instance, P8 stated, “Our principal is positive and asks the teachers for their inputs in decision making, is transparent and upholds open door policy, which positively influences the teachers.” P7 stated, “My principal is always open to discussions and always fulfills promises; the teachers appreciate him and the professionalism he adopts.”

However, weaknesses and emotional reactions can affect others in the institution. P5 and P13 stated that their principals are sometimes very emotional. This makes it difficult to stay with agendas in meetings as the conversations move away from priorities. According to P5,

At times, our staff fears getting on the wrong side of her because it could take up to a long time before we can get along again. This creates some fear and hence discourages creativity or us being able to raise our concerns or issues with her.

P13 stated that the principal becomes emotional, shows favoritism, and gives preferential treatment to some teachers without efforts to build conscience. This implies that cohesiveness of teachers does not exist. The teachers revealed a higher level of unity at the department level but little at the institutional level. P4 stated,

My principal has eroded the principal-teacher trust due to his negativity about some of the tasks undertaken by the teachers. Also, the principal does not engage parents in addressing some of the pertinent issues such as student performance and discipline, which adversely affect the overall performance.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of conducting this qualitative phenomenological research study was to examine the views and lived experiences of teachers related to their principals’ use of servant leadership characteristics. The research findings were extracted from the collected data through qualitative data analysis using coding and identification of emerging themes. The first theme was leader characteristics exhibited by principals, including being compassionate, sympathetic, and visionary. The second theme identified the perceptions held by teachers regarding who is a servant leader; it was clear that most of the teachers considered the servant leader to be one who

serves others and treats them with dignity. The third theme was that servant leadership exhibited by the principal was associated with teacher satisfaction. The servant-leader who creates a favorable working environment offers support and understands the need of followers enhances teacher satisfaction. The fourth theme was the association of servant leadership exhibited by the principal and motivation of teachers and students. It is evident that appreciating performance, understanding the needs of staff outside the workplace, supporting special programs, and being readily available enhances motivation of teachers and students. The fifth theme was that the principal's strengths, weaknesses, and emotional reactions affect others. The strengths of the principal, such as involvement of teachers in decision making, being empathetic, and being ready to serve others positively influence others in the institution. On the other hand, weaknesses and emotional reactions by principals negatively affect both teachers and students.

Chapter 5

Interpretations, Recommendations, and Conclusions

The purpose of this research was to investigate teachers' perceptions of their principals' use of servant leadership characteristics and its influence on them. The research was effectively undertaken through data collection and analysis, with the findings presented in Chapter 4. This chapter presents a discussion and interpretation of the results to address the research objectives, recommendations for leadership approaches, a conclusion, and directions for future research.

Discussion and Interpretation

The discussion provides an evaluation of the extent to which the research objectives were met. The researcher was designed to meet five objectives. The third objective of the study relating to principals' perceived use of servant leadership characteristics was achieved through analysis presented in Chapter 4. Therefore, this section discusses realization of Objectives 1, 2, 4, and 5.

Objective 1: To Investigate the Characteristics of a Servant Leader

The first objective of the study—to investigate the characteristics of a servant leader—was addressed through the research findings. The findings indicated that the participant teachers agreed that a servant leader is one who tends to serve others with compassion. Therefore, the leader is always ready to compromise personal aspirations and interests for the benefit and good of the people in which they are in charge. Such a leader is empathetic, supportive, and understanding, and upholds open door policy. The leader fosters positive working relationships with others in the organization, leaving subordinates free to air their views and raise concerns, including personal issues. The leader is a role player, ready to be flexible, to compromise, and to share power through delegation. The leader does not focus on being a boss or dictator; instead, the leader values input and roles played by others.

The insights in the literature review strongly support the findings in this case. Frick and Sipe (2009) and Church (2007) described the servant leader as one who puts the needs of others before their own needs; they set aside a personal agenda for the good of the people whom they lead. Reed et al. (2011) defined servant leaders as those who lead by being a role model, show concern for others, act as moral managers, and display integrity. Therefore, they are usually ready to do what is right and show the way for others by example. Braveman (2016) concurred with these insights, stating that a servant leader tends to uphold power sharing, supports development of followers, builds and strengthens the community, and acts authentically.

Objective 2: To Investigate Teachers' Perceptions of Servant Leadership Characteristics Used by Their Principals

The objective was met through the research findings. Participant teachers identified several characteristics exhibited by their principals. First, a principal who shares a vision, bringing on board others to assist in realizing the vision, is a servant leader. The sharing of the vision and bringing others together implies that followers can forward their opinions and be actively involved in decision making. For instance, creating an environment that enables teachers to take part in decision making in departments is a characteristic of servant leadership. Teachers consider their principals to be servant leaders if they adopt open-door policies and delegate critical roles to their followers. Servant leaders encourage followers to be involved in decision making on matters that affect their work in the organization (Salameh, 2011).

Delegation of critical duties and responsibilities is a tool used to empower teachers through the experience gained. Focht and Ponton (2015) held similar views, stating that servant leadership theory asserts that a leader should give followers an upper position by delegating roles and responsibilities and allowing them to undertake them with less control.

The participant teachers also perceived their principals to be servant leaders because of their high level of understanding, even on matters not related to workplace roles and responsibilities. These principals give the teachers support to address personal issues such as health and family needs. Shila and Sevilla (2015) stated that support, in this case, is how a servant leader can empower followers.

Objective 4: To Investigate How Teachers' Perceptions of Principals' Use of Servant Leadership Characteristics Intrinsically Influence Teachers

This objective was met through both research findings and insights from the literature review. According to Reiss (2012), intrinsic motivation is achieved through internal satisfaction, such as accomplishing a task, with less concern about material gains. It was evident from the research findings that principals who exhibited servant leadership delegated duties and roles to teachers and allowed them to pursue them as expected. Trusting teachers to oversee important projects and programs uplifts their esteem, which is a sign of satisfaction. Such teachers are even more satisfied and motivated if they accomplish the expected outcome from the delegated roles. Pelletier and Rocchi (2016) identified positive relationships with principals as a source of intrinsic motivation in teachers. The research findings indicated that the teachers who worked under servant leadership-orientated principals felt that they were understood and supported, which gave them internal motivation to play their respective roles effectively. The teachers also reported internal satisfaction in knowing that their principals' approach makes it easy for them to raise and discuss work-related and personal issues. Bogler and Nir (2012) stated that giving staff members a chance for development through empowerment and support to achieve work and career objective increases intrinsic satisfaction. Empowerment plays a crucial role in creating a feeling of self-efficacy and importance in the organization. The participating teachers revealed

that they felt important and were highly satisfied because the principal offers support required to develop a better educator and leader. Teachers who are intrinsically satisfied because of that empowerment are likely to go an additional mile to help students to achieve academic objectives and other aspects.

Objective 5: To Investigate How Teachers' Perceptions of Principals' Use of Servant Leadership Characteristics Extrinsically Influence Teachers

Reiss (2012) stated that extrinsic motivation and satisfaction arise from praise and material rewards. In the absence of praise and rewards, those who depend on extrinsic motivation are less likely to strive to achieve results. On the contrary, extrinsically motivated individuals may not perform as strongly as those who have attained intrinsic motivation. Several participating teachers stated that their workplaces were satisfying because the principals acknowledge the contributions of the teachers and led in the celebration of success. The acknowledgment and celebration of successes motivate the individual.

The working environment is the other source of extrinsic motivation. According to Salameh (2011), having a friendly work and school environment is a source of teacher motivation. Schools benefit from a high level of teacher retention and achievement of overall learning outcomes and objectives. In a favorable school environment, both teachers and students are engaged in activities other than academic work. For instance, one teacher stated that the principal supports weekly activities, such as music, sporting activities, and staff breakfast. All of the components in this case are likely to lead to extrinsic motivation. Unfavorable working conditions can adversely affect extrinsic motivation. The emotional reaction behavior of a principal negatively influences the working environment and motivation of employees. One of the teachers said that his school principal is highly emotional, making it difficult to communicate

and to move along amicably. The staff feel demotivated and cannot raise concerns or provide views, even on matters affecting their work as teachers. It would be difficult for teachers who are primarily extrinsic motivated to attend to their duties and to serve students effectively.

A teacher reported that they feel motivated when their principal makes announcements on what has been accomplished at the school and recognizes the achievers. Being mentioned in such an announcement creates an extrinsic motivation for a teacher. It is a form of appreciation and encourages a teacher to continue to undertake the underlying roles for the objectives to be realized and maintained. Simultaneously, teachers who are not praised on a given occasion could develop the desire to work hard to be among the ones to be recognized in the future.

Recommendations

These research findings would be of much value if put into practical use to enhance the situation in the research setting and in related fields. It is important to highlight recommendations based on the findings.

Recommendation 1: Open Door Policy

One of the key factors that facilitates realization of the benefits of servant leadership is the open door policy. Without freeness of teachers to raise needs or air their views, the principal may not offer the support that is required by the staff. The open door policy would enhance participation by teachers in decision making on matters that affect them and would influence their performance in the organization. Furthermore, through the open door policy, principals would bring teachers together and enhance teamwork to develop a cohesive work environment.

Recommendation 2: Delegation

One of the key pillars of servant leadership is empowerment of others. In this case, the leader strives to support the growth of followers, particularly regarding capabilities and career

development. Delegating leadership roles and responsibilities is an essential tool that a school principal could use. It is therefore recommended that the principal look for areas where delegation would be possible and accord those roles to reliable teachers. Through delegation, teachers gain practical experience on matters outside of their regular activities, which prepares them for leadership roles at the school or elsewhere. With significant delegation of duties, a school would run smoothly during the absence of the principal.

Recommendation 3: Inservice Training of Principals on Servant Leadership

Servant leadership may not be easy to adopt, particularly by those who do not understand it when they apply for dominant roles in their institutions. Considering the long-term benefits of servant leadership, education leaders should organize inservice training for principals on this topic. Those who desire to undertake school leadership roles should be trained on servant leadership skills to assist them in undertaking some of the characteristics and approaches of a servant leader. In addition to one-time training, learning materials on servant leadership should be sent to principal from time to time. Assessment to establish whether the precepts of servant leadership are adopted should also be undertaken.

Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to investigate teachers' perceptions of their principals' use of servant leadership characteristics and its influence on them. The research was undertaken effectively and the research objectives were achieved. Servant leadership has been adopted by many of the principals whose teachers were involved as participants in this study. Servant leadership is primarily focused on empowering others, leading by example, delegating duties, showing empathy, and upholding open door policies. This style of leadership is considered highly effective in the satisfaction of followers because it incorporates factors that trigger both

extrinsic and intrinsic motivation in followers. Based on the findings, three recommendations are proposed: (a) The principal should uphold the concept of an open door policy, (b) the principal should delegate duties, and (c) education sector leadership should offer inservice training to principals on servant leadership.

Direction for Future Research

Research, however successful, cannot be perfect due to limitations of the methodology applied and the fact that findings cannot exhaustively address the phenomena or the research questions. Therefore, it is appropriate to offer recommendations for future research. An interesting limitation of the current research was the lack of triangulation because the sole source of information was interviews with teachers. It is recommended that future researchers on the topic bring on board other tiers of participants. The researcher might conduct separate interviews with principals to understand the style that they use and some of the reasoning for their approaches. It is important to acknowledge that a large sample size is always considered the most appropriate. However, limitations in time and resources allowed for engagement of only 16 teachers in this study. In the future, it would be better to involve more teachers to achieve a broader perspective.

References

- Aacha, M. (2010). *Motivation and the performance of primary school teachers in Uganda: A case of Kimaanya-Kyabankuza Division, Madaka District* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda.
- Allen, N., Grigsby, B., & Peters, M. L. (2015). Does leadership matter? Examining the relationship among transformational leadership, school climate, and student achievement. *International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation*, 10(2), 1-22. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1083099.pdf>
- Ashman, A. (2014). *Education for inclusion and diversity*. Pearson Australia.
- Autry, J. A. (2004). *The servant leader*. Three Rivers Press.
- Avolio, B. (2005). *Leadership development in balance* (2nd ed.). Erlbaum.
- Avolio, B. J., & Bass, B. M. (2002). *Developing potential across a full range of leadership cases on transactional and transformational leadership*. Erlbaum.
- Aydin, A., Sarier, Y., & Uysal, S. (2013). The effect of school principals' leadership styles on teachers' organizational commitment and job satisfaction. *Educational Sciences: Theory and Practice*, 13(2), 806-811. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/The-Effect-of-School-Principals'-Leadership-Styles-Aydin-Sar%C4%B1er/af2d6b42021da0221399239c8b7582c30d22d483>
- Babakus, E., Yavas, U., & Ashill, N. J. (2011). Service worker burnout and turnover intentions: Roles of person-job fit, servant leadership, and customer orientation. *Services Marketing Quarterly*, 32(1), 17-31. 10.1080/15332969.2011.533091
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. Henry Holt & Co.
- Barratt, M. J., Ferris, J. A., & Lenton, S. (2015). Hidden populations, online purposive sampling, and external validity: Taking off the blindfold. *Field Methods*, 27(1), 3-21. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X14526838>
- Bass, B., & Bass, R. (2008). *The Bass handbook of leadership: Theory, research & managerial applications* (4th ed.). Free Press.
- Bethel, B. (2006). Critical approaches to inclusion in indigenous teacher education in Queensland: The case of RATEP. *International Journal of Pedagogies and Learning*, 2(3), 30-41. 10.5172/ijpl.2.3.30
- Black, G. L. (2010). Correlational analysis of servant leadership and school climate. *Journal of Catholic Education*, 13(4), 437-466. <http://dx.doi.org/10.15365/joce.1304032013>

- Bogler, R., & Nir, A. E. (2012). The importance of teachers' perceived organizational support to job satisfaction. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 50(3), 287-306. 10.1108/09578231211223310
- Borden, M., & Nandram, S. (2010). *Spirituality & business: Exploring possibilities for a new management paradigm*. Springer.
- Bradshaw, C. P., Waasdorp, T. E., Debnam, K. J., & Johnson, S. L. (2014). Measuring school climate in high schools: A focus on safety, engagement, and the environment. *Journal of School Health*, 84(9), 593-604. 10.1111/josh.12186
- Branch, G. F., Hanushek, E. A., & Rivkin, S. G. (2013). School leaders matter: Measuring the impact of effective principals. *Education Next*, 13(1), 62-69.
- Braveman, B. (2016). *Leading & managing occupational therapy services* (2nd ed.). F. A. Davis.
- Butler, E. (2013). *Foundations of a free society: Eamonn Butler*. Institute of Economic Affairs. <http://www.iea.org.uk>
- Choudhary, A. I., Akhtar, S. A., & Zaheer, A. (2013). Impact of transformational and servant leadership on organizational performance: A comparative analysis. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 116(2), 433-440. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-012-1470-8>
- Church, D. (2007). *Einstein's business: Engaging soul, imagination & excellence in the workplace*. Elite Books.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2017). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage.
- Cross, N. (2011). *Design thinking: Understanding how designers think and work*. Berg.
- Culver, M. (2013). *Applying servant leadership in today's schools*. Routledge.
- Demir, K. (2011). Teachers' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as predictors of student engagement: An application of self-determination theory. *Education Sciences*, 6(2), 1397-1409. 10.12739/10.12739
- Denzin, N. K. (1989). *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods* (3rd ed.). Prentice-Hall.
- DiPaola, M., & Tschannen-Moran, M. (2014). Organizational citizenship behavior in schools and its relationship to school climate. *Journal of School Leadership*, 11(5), 424-447. <https://doi.org/10.1177/105268460101100503>

- Eyal, O., & Roth, G. (2011). Principals' leadership and teachers' motivation. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 49(3), 256-275. 10.1108/09578231111129055
- Farr, S. (2010). *Teaching as leadership: The highly effective teacher's guide to closing the achievement gap*. Jossey-Bass.
- Focht, A., & Ponton, M. (2015). Identifying primary characteristics of servant leadership: Delphi study. *International Journal of Leadership Studies*, 9(1), 44-61.
- Gallos, J. (2006). *Organization development: A Jossey-Bass reader*. Jossey-Bass.
- Garmston, R., & Wellman, B. (2002). *The adaptive school: Developing and facilitating collaborative groups* (4th ed.). Four Hats Seminar.
- Giorgi, A. (1985). Sketch of a psychological phenomenological method. In A. Giorgi (Ed.), *Phenomenology and psychological research* (pp. 8-22). Duquesne University Press.
- Glatthorn, A. A., Jailall, J. M., & Jailall, J. K. (2016). *The principal as curriculum leader: Shaping what is taught and tested*. Corwin Press.
- Goble, E., Austin, W., Larsen, D., Kreitzer, L., & Brintnell, S. (2012). Habits of mind and the split-mind effect: When computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software is used in phenomenological research. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 13(2), 2-8. <http://dx.doi.org/10.17169/fqs-13.2.1709>
- Goddard, R., Goddard, Y., Kim, E. S., & Miller, R. (2015). A theoretical and empirical analysis of the roles of instructional leadership, teacher collaboration, and collective efficacy beliefs in support of student learning. *American Journal of Education*, 121(4), 501-530. 10.1086/681925
- Goldring, E., Porter, A., Murphy, J., Elliott, S., & Cravens, X. (2009). Assessing learning-centered leadership: Connections to research, professional standards, and current practices. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 8(1), 1-36. 10.1080/15700760802014951
- Green, M. T. (2014). *Graduate leadership* (2nd ed.). Mark T. Green.
- Greenleaf, R. K. (1970). *The servant as leader*. Center for Applied Studies.
- Greenleaf, R. K. (1977). *Servant leadership: A journey into the nature of legitimate power and greatness*. Paulist Press.
- Greenleaf, R. K. (1998). *The power of servant leadership*. Berrett-Koehler.
- Greenleaf, R. K., Beazley, H., Beggs, J., & Spears, L. C. (2003). *The servant-leader within: A transformative path*. Paulist Press.
- Hunter, J. C. (2004). *The world's most powerful leadership principle: How to become a servant leader*. WaterBrook Press.

- Hycner, R. H. (1999). Some guidelines for the phenomenological analysis of interview data. In A. Bryman & R. G. Burgess (Eds.), *Qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 143-164). Sage.
- Jacob, R., Goddard, R., Kim, M., Miller, R., & Goddard, Y. (2015). Exploring the causal impact of the McREL Balanced Leadership Program on leadership, principal efficacy, instructional climate, educator turnover, and student achievement. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 37(3), 314-332. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0162373714549620>
- Johnson, C. (2007). *Ethics in the workplace: Tools and tactics for organizational transformation*. Sage.
- Kamery, R. H. (2004). Motivation techniques for positive reinforcement: A review. *Proceedings of the Academy of Legal, Ethical and Regulatory Issues*, 8(2), 91-96.
- Laub, J. A. (1999). *Assessing the servant organization; Development of the Organizational Leadership Assessment (OLA) model* (Publication No. 9921922) [Doctoral dissertation, Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.
- Lee, M., Walker, A., & Chui, Y. L. (2012). Contrasting effects of instructional leadership practices on student learning in a high accountability context. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 50(5), 586-610. [10.1108/09578231211249835](https://doi.org/10.1108/09578231211249835)
- Lynch, J. M. (2012). Responsibilities of today's principal: Implications for principal preparation programs and principal certification policies. *Rural Special Education Quarterly*, 31(2), 40-47. <https://doi.org/10.1177/875687051203100205>
- Maxwell, J. (2007). *The 21 indispensable qualities of a leader: Becoming the person others will want to follow*. Thomas Nelson.
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2015). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. Wiley.
- Merriam-Webster.com. (2020). *Merriam-Webster dictionary*. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/>
- Meyer, M. J., & Macmillan, R. B. (2011). Principal succession and the micropolitics of educators in schools: Some incidental results from a larger study. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, (117), 1-26.
- Moore, L. (2016). *Intrinsic and extrinsic motivators that impact teacher retention in challenging urban schools* (Publication No. 4944) [Doctoral dissertation, University of Central Florida]. Electronic Theses and Dissertations.
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Sage.

- Muzira, R. D., & Muzira, R. (2020). The concept of servant leadership in business management. *East African Journal of Education and Social Sciences*, 11(1), 24-32. 10.46606/eajess2020v01i01.0003
- Northouse, P. (2009). *Introduction to leadership: Concepts & practice*. Sage.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2013). *Leadership for 21st-century learning*.
- Page, D., & Wong, T. P. (2000). A conceptual framework for measuring servant leadership. In S. Adjiboloso (Ed.), *The human factor in shaping the course of history and development* (pp. 69-110). American University Press.
- Parris, D. L., & Peachey, J. W. (2013). A systematic literature review of servant leadership theory in organizational contexts. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 113(3), 377-393. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-012-1322-6>
- Patterson, K., Russell, R., & Stone, A. (2004). Transformational versus servant leadership: A difference in leader focus. *Leadership & Organizational Development Journal*, 25(4), 349-361. 10.1108/01437730410538671
- Patterson, K. (2003). *Servant leadership: A theoretical model*. Regent University School of Leadership Studies.
- Pelletier, L. G., & Rocchi, M. (2016). Teachers' motivation in the classroom. In W. C. Liu, J. C. K. Wang, & R. M. Ryan (Eds.), *Building autonomous learners* (pp. 107-127). Springer.
- Peoples, D. K. (2020). *How to write a phenomenological dissertation: A step-by-step guide*. Sage.
- Punch, K. F. (2013). *Introduction to social research: Quantitative and qualitative approaches* (3rd ed.). Sage.
- Reed, L. L., Vidaver-Cohen, D., & Colwell, S. R. (2011). A new scale to measure executive servant leadership: Development, analysis, and implications for research. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 101, 415-434. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-010-0729-1>
- Reiss, S. (2012). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. *Teaching of Psychology*, 39(2), 152-156. 10.1177/0098628312437704
- Russell, E. J. (2016). *In command of guardians: Executive servant leadership for the community of responders*. Springer.
- Russell, R. F., & Stone, A. G. (2002). A review of servant leadership attributes: Developing a practical model. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 23(3), 145-157. <https://doi.org/10.1108/01437730210424>

- Sahin, S. (2004). The relationship between transformational and transactional leadership styles of school principals and school culture (The case of İzmir, Turkey). *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice*, 4(2), 387-395.
- Salameh, K. M. (2011). Servant leadership practices among school principals in educational directorates in Jordan. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 2(22), 138-145.
- Savas, A. C., & Toprak, M. (2014). Mediation effect of schools' psychological climate on the relationship between principals' leadership style and organizational commitment. *Anthropologist*, 17(1), 173-182. 10.1080/09720073.2014.11891427
- Shaw, J., & Newton, J. (2014). Teacher retention and satisfaction with a servant leader as principal. *Education*, 135(1), 101-106.
- Shila, J. M., & Sevilla, A. V. (2015). The impact of the principals' leadership style on teachers' job satisfaction and organizational commitment: An Indian perspective. *Indian Journal of Positive Psychology*, 6(1), 37-43 10.15614/IJPP/2015/V6I1/88445
- Silverman, D. (2005). *Doing qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- Sinclair, C. (2008). Initial and changing student-teacher motivation and commitment to teaching. *Asia Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 36(2), 79-104. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13598660801971658>
- Sipe, J., & Frick, D. (2009). *Seven pillars of servant leadership: Practicing the wisdom of leading by serving*. Paulist Press.
- Spears, L. C. (2004). *Practicing servant leadership: Succeeding through trust, bravery, and forgiveness*. Jossey-Bass.
- Spears, L. C. (Ed.). (1995). *Reflections on leadership: How Robert K. Greenleaf's theory of servant-leadership influenced today's top management thinkers*. Wiley.
- Stephens, N. M., Hamedani, M. G., & Destin, M. (2014). Closing the social-class achievement gap: A difference-education intervention improves first-generation students' academic performance and all students' college transition. *Psychological Science*, 25(4), 943-953. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797613518349>
- Sweetland, S. R., & Hoy W. K. (2000). School characteristics and educational outcomes: Toward an organizational model of student achievement in middle school. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 36(5), 703-729. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00131610021969173>
- Thomson, S. B. (2011). Qualitative research: Validity. *JOAG*, 6(1), 77-82.
- Trastek, V. F., Hamilton, N. W., & Niles, E. E. (2014). Leadership models in health care: A case for servant leadership. *Mayo Clinic Proceedings*, 89(3), 374-381.

- Van Dierendonck, D., & Patterson, K. (2015). Compassionate love as a cornerstone of servant leadership: An integration of previous theorizing and research. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 128(1), 119-131. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-014-2085-z>
- Van Manen, M. (2016). *Phenomenology of practice: Meaning-giving methods in phenomenological research and writing*. Routledge.
- Von Fischer, P., & De Jong, D. (2017). The relationship between teacher perception of principal servant leadership behavior and teacher job satisfaction. *Servant Leadership: Theory & Practice*, 4(2), 53-84.
- Yusuf, A. F. (2012). Influence of principals' leadership styles on students' academic achievement in secondary schools. *Journal of Innovative Research in Management and Humanities*, 3(1), 113-121.

Appendices

Appendix A
Recruitment Flyer

LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD

Volunteers Needed

Let your voice be heard!

What?

Doctoral student seeks public school teachers who work in an urban school district to respond to a series of questions regarding their perceptions on the prevalence of servant leadership characteristics used by their school principal.

Why?

Interview responses will be used to determine teacher perceptions of their principals use of servant leadership characteristics and how the use of the skills have intrinsically or extrinsically influenced their teaching.

Who?

Public School Teachers

Let your voice be heard!

If you would like to participate in the study, please contact Johnnie Simmons at 909-478-4990 or email johnnie_simmons@redlands.edu

Appendix B
Teacher Interest Letter

Date:

Dear Teacher,

This is an interest letter to seek your participation in a dissertation research study examining the perceived presence of servant leadership in your school principals' leadership styles that may have an influence on school climate, teacher engagement, burnout, and teacher commitment to the teaching profession. It is intended that this study will add to the body of scholarly work, and provide insight on ways to reduce high teacher turnover and increase commitment to the teaching profession. You are not required to participate and will not be penalized in any way should you choose not to participate. Your participation will remain anonymous and confidential.

The study will utilize a semi-structured, individual interview, lasting approximately 1-2 hours and it will be taped for accuracy of information. The recording will be transcribed verbatim and a pseudonym name will be used to maintain confidentiality.

No identity information will be revealed to any other party. Your responses will only be used for this study. All information will be kept strictly confidential. All information that is obtained during the interview process will be assigned a code to ensure your privacy.

If you would like to participate in this voluntary interview, contact Johnnie Simmons at [REDACTED] (cell), or johnnie_simmons@redlands.edu.

Thank you in advance for all that you do for the teaching profession.

Sincerely,

Johnnie Simmons

Johnnie Simmons

ED.D Student

University of Redlands

Appendix C
Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol-Public School Teacher Interview Questions

Step 1: University of Redlands IRB Consent form-read through and have participant sign.

Time of Interview:

Script: I want to thank you in advance for participating in this research study interview. The major purpose of this interview is to seek and identify the presence of servant leadership characteristics used by public School Principals and how the use of servant leadership skills they might intrinsically and extrinsically influence teachers. The interview will take approximately one to two hours and will be taped for accuracy of information. The exercise is voluntary, and you may decide not to continue any time. The responses you give will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will be anonymous. The responses will only be used for this study. I therefore request you to be very honest and accurate with the responses. If there are questions, you can ask before we continue.

Step 2: Introductions; Describe Study to the participants; Thank them for their time.

Step 3: Ask participant's if they have any questions regarding the study.

Step 4: Ask participant's if they are okay with PI recording the session. If participants are not okay with being recorder, PI will write out responses.

Step 5: Remind participants that all the participants will remain anonymous.

Interview Protocol-Public School Teacher Interview Questions

Step 1: University of Redlands IRB Consent form-read through and have participant sign.

Time of Interview:

Script: I want to thank you in advance for participating in this research study interview. The major purpose of this interview is to seek and identify the presence of servant leadership characteristics used by public School Principals and how the use of servant leadership skills they might intrinsically and extrinsically influence teachers. The interview will take approximately one to two hours and will be taped for accuracy of information. The exercise is voluntary, and you may decide not to continue any time. The responses you give will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will be anonymous. The responses will only be used for this study. I therefore request you to be very honest and accurate with the responses. If there are questions, you can ask before we continue.

Step 2: Introductions; Describe Study to the participants; Thank them for their time.

Step 3: Ask participant's if they have any questions regarding the study.

Step 4: Ask participant's if they are okay with PI recording the session. If participants are not okay with being recorder, PI will write out responses.

Step 5: Remind participants that all the participants will remain anonymous.

Interview questions:

1. How many years have you been in the teaching profession?
2. What is your age and gender?
3. In a short statement, how would you describe the leadership style of your principal?
4. What are the techniques used by the principal's effort to empower teachers?
5. What is your perception of the principal's effort to empower teachers?
6. What are your thoughts as to the issues discussed in staff meetings regarding trust and openness?
7. How does your principal approach delegation?
8. How does your principal inspire team spirit and communicate enthusiasm and confidence in staff members?
9. Give an example of how your principal emphasizes setting and attaining goals in all staff members.
10. How does your principal engage other teachers in decision-making processes?
11. Describe a time when your principal was willing to share their power with teachers?
12. Describe how the principal seems to own both failures and successes for the school with teachers.
13. When you hear the phrase "Servant Leader," what type of individual do you think about?
14. Describe how your principal displays characteristics of servant leadership?
15. Describe how the principal spends time forming quality relationships with teachers?
16. How would you describe your personal interaction with the principal?
17. How responsive is the principal to teachers' responsibilities outside the workplace?
18. List several ways that the principal holds teachers to high ethical standards.
19. Describe how the principal makes teachers feel like they work with them and not for them.
20. What types of volunteer or community service activities does the principal encourage teachers to get involved in outside of work?
21. Describe how your principal celebrates special occasions and events that would foster school spirit.
22. How does your principal encourage every teaching department to their fullest potential?
23. How does your principal encourage staff to take the initiative in student achievement?
24. How do your principal's strengths, weaknesses, and emotional reaction affect others?
Think of a few specific examples.
25. Name examples of how your principal builds trust in the teaching staff.