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Servant Leadership and Teacher Stressors: A Qualitative Study

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**Servant Leadership and Teacher Stressors:
A Qualitative Study**

**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership**

by

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Abstract

Accountability practices increase teacher stress, restrict classroom autonomy, and force many teachers out of the field of education at alarming rates. Does a relationship exist between leaders who demonstrate perceived servant leadership characteristics and teachers' stress levels when faced with change and increased accountability? For this study, servant leadership was defined using the seven key dimensions of servant leadership identified by Ehrhart (2004) and Liden, Wayne, Zhao and Henderson (2008). Teacher stress was defined "as the experience by a teacher of unpleasant emotions resulting from aspects of their work as a teacher (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016, as cited in Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2012; Kyriacou, 1987, 2001; Liu & Onwuegbuzie, 2012). Findings of this study suggest that Servant Leadership provides a buffer for the stressors teachers face, but it does not make their occupational stressors nonexistent. When an administrator is a servant leader, they are aware of the pulse of the building, and they have foresight to develop systems that will reduce teacher stress.

Dedication

For Chad, Luke, Lucy, Lily, Mom, & Dad for their continuous support and encouragement during this journey. I could not have done it without all of you.

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ABSTRACT

DEDICATION

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Background

Teachers and administrators face more challenges in their careers than ever. Accountability practices increase teacher stress, restrict classroom autonomy, and force many teachers out of the field of education at an alarming rate (McCarthy, Lambert, Lineback, Fitchett, & Baddouh, 2016). Since the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2002), educators have seen state and national standards increase along with the expectations placed on public school teachers. NCLB and, subsequently, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) have aided American schools in closing the academic gap for many students; however, they also increased the work expectations of teachers. Such expectations merged with a global pandemic (COVID), educational mandates (funded and unfunded), fiscal crisis, teacher turnover, low morale, and high-stakes testing. These challenges added to the overwhelming pressure placed on teachers and administrators (Blackstein & Noguera, 2004; Jackson, 2005).

Unfortunately, teacher stress significantly contributes to teacher attrition and turnover (McCarthy, Lambert, Lineback, Fitchett, & Baddouh, 2015). Tickle, Chang, and Kim (2011) claim that job dissatisfaction concerning many of the expectations listed above leads to teacher stress and the desire to leave the profession. Yet job satisfaction increases when administrators support their teachers (Tickle, Chang, & Kim, 2011). Thus, educational leaders must find ways to promote teacher job satisfaction by providing leadership that empowers teachers to meet the evolving demands of the job.

Problem Statement

Teaching expectations and responsibilities have changed significantly over the past 25 years. In response, administrators have experienced calls to focus on curriculum and teacher growth rather than the traditional managerial aspects of the role. A key aspect of this evolution in leadership expectations has been the importance of building relationships with their teachers to encourage, foster, and support new learning. This approach to leading schools is often referred to as servant leadership. While servant leadership offers opportunities to support teacher learning, there is limited knowledge about how this support influences teacher stress. Thus, research is needed to examine how servant leadership impacts teachers as they cope with occupational stress.

Research Questions

1. What leadership characteristics do teachers perceive comprise servant leadership?
2. What is the relationship between teachers' occupational stress and leaders' engagement in servant leadership?
3. When K-4 teachers perceive their principals are servant leaders, does it lessen their occupational stress?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this research was based on Greenleaf's Servant Leadership theory. The goal was to determine if the perceived characteristics of the Servant Leadership Model could assist principals when looking for ways they can positively lead and support teachers during times of stress. Principals need to be aware of aspects of teachers' jobs that lead to higher stress and how they can make accountability practices more manageable. It is unlikely that leaders will stop trying to find the "silver bullet" to solve students' learning needs, and as

such, educational leaders need to find the best possible solution to support teachers through educational changes.

The ten characteristics of a servant leader from Robert Greenleaf's original writing on *Servant Leadership* (Greenleaf, 1970) are listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment, and building a community. These characteristics were the building blocks for this research in finding ways for educational leaders to support teachers when new mandates are implemented in the trenches. It was advantageous to view this problem through *Servant Leadership* because a servant leader has been identified as a particularly strong style for a leader to take an organization through a period of change (Keith, 2012, p. 27). A true servant leader works on problems and opportunities, but they do not carry a lot of ego baggage (Keith, 2012, p. 26). According to Keith, when following the pillars of servant leadership, an educational leader can keep teacher morale up yet encourage others to change (2012, p. 26), and this is the precise goal when educational leaders ask teachers to change their teaching practices and strategies based on accountability practices.

A study completed by Todd, Forstmann, Burgmer, Brooks, and Galinsky (2015), revealed that egocentric behaviors increase when people feel stressed, anxious, or uncertain about a situation. Leaders can often perceive this as a negative response when working with teachers. However, when acting as servant leaders, principals focus on the emotional contagion of others or catching the emotions of others (Todd, et al. 2015, Hatfield et, al. 1994). One of the characteristics of servant leadership is empathy or the conscious knowledge of what people think and feel, and if principals gain insight into the "cognitive component of empathic responses to the stress, it will eventually help individuals respond to the stressed individuals with prosocial behaviors" (White & Buchanan, 2016, p. 321). Psychologist Arthur Ciaramicoli, the author of

How to Fight Stress with Empathy (2017), argued that empathetic listening might be the key to reducing stress in our lives (p. 1). Principals who apply empathetic and listening practices when working with stressed teachers have better administrative productivity in the long run. In addition, leaders who promote teacher fulfillment, follower encouragement, and ethical behavior increase favorable working conditions, which lessens stress in the working environment (Jaramillo, Grisaffe, Chonko, & Roberts, 2009). Similarly, Mayer, Bardes, and Piccolo (2008) concluded that “servant leadership facilitated a fair and satisfactory environment, and their followers’ needs fulfillment and job satisfaction increased” (p. 111).

Context

Sugar Creek is one of 12 K-4 elementary schools in Bentonville, Arkansas. Bentonville, located in Northwest Arkansas, is the home of Wal-Mart, which has contributed to exponential growth in the region over the past 20 years. The increased development of the district has required the community to build an elementary school every two years since 1994.

Sugar Creek Elementary has 483 students and a staff of 65, including 42 certified and 24 classified individuals. The 42 certified staff include 20 classroom teachers, four alternate learning academy (ALE) teachers, eight special education teachers, four support staff, four activity teachers, and two administrators. Out of the 42 certified teachers, the average teaching experience is 13.06 years. Of the certified staff, 14 hold a master’s degree, three have a specialist’s degree, and 25 hold a bachelor’s degree.

The racial composition of the student population is 79% white, 5.4% of two or more races, 2.9% Asian students, 2.3% Native American, 2.5% Black/African American, and 7.9% Hispanic students. The students are 2% English Language Learners and 11% receive special education services.

Definition of Terminology

This section aims to clarify and explain key concepts in this qualitative study.

Occupational Stressors. The ongoing or progressing stress an employee experiences due to the responsibilities, conditions, environment, or other work pressures. Examples of occupational stressors are: student misbehavior or discipline problems, time pressure and workload, poor student motivation, large student diversity, conflicts with colleagues, lack of administrative support, lack of resources, lack of proper training, and value conflicts (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016).

Servant Leadership Pillars. Essential qualities utilized by servant leaders to develop followers. These pillars include: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to growth, community building (Greenleaf, 1970; Spears, 1998).

Listening. Servant leaders actively listen and are genuinely interested in others' ideas and opinions, often using words sparingly in mindful reflection (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006; Preskill & Brookfield, 2009; Spears, 1998).

Empathy. Servant leaders identify and emphasize commonalities, appreciating new perspectives and recognizing individual uniqueness (Beazley & Beggs, 2001; Spears, 1998).

Healing. Servant leaders foster an environment of restoration by being aware of followers' emotional needs and struggles (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2007; Spears, 1998). Both servant and leader recognize a need for wholeness and healing accomplished by serving others to meet their potential (Greenleaf, 2002).

Awareness. “General awareness, especially self-awareness, strengthens the servant-leader...It lends itself to view most situations from a more integrated, holistic approach” (Spears, 1998, p. 6).

Persuasion. A process used by servant leaders to convince and persuade followers to achieve goals in place of potential authority (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2007; Spears, 1998).

Conceptualization. “The ability to look at a problem from a conceptualizing perspective means that one must think beyond the day-to-day realities...a servant-leader must stretch their thinking to encompass broader-based conceptual thinking” (Spears, 1998, p. 6).

Foresight. A servant leader can fully comprehend a situation and predict potential outcomes based on their history and current environment (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2007; Spears, 1998).

Stewardship. “A steward in an organization is responsible for preparing it...for the betterment of society...a desire to prepare the organization to contribute to the greater good of society” (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2007).

Commitment to Growth. Servant leaders are committed to developing each follower, accepting responsibility to nurture others toward growth using all possible avenues (Spears, 1998).

Community Building. A field of practices directed toward the creation or enhancement of community among individuals within a regional area or with a common interest. Servant leaders understand the importance of their unlimited liability for a specific community-related group (Greenleaf, 2002, p. 53).

Servant Leadership. A leadership style that promotes the idea of placing the needs of the followers over those of the leader. This approach values the development of people through

service, personal relationships, and collaborative work (Crippen, 2006; Drury, 2007; Neil, Hayward & Peterson, 2007). Seven key dimensions of servant leadership include: behaving ethically, emotional healing, putting subordinates first, helping associates grow and succeed, empowering, creating value for the community, and conceptual skills (Ehrhart, 2004, Liden, Wayne, Zhao & Henderson, 2008).

Servant Leadership Model. Robert Greenleaf coined this term in 1970 when he presented his Servant Leadership Theory. Greenleaf said:

The servant-leader is servant first... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from the leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or acquire material possessions...The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them, some shadings and ends are part of the infinite variety of human nature (Greenleaf, 1970).

Teacher stress. The experience by a teacher of unpleasant emotions resulting from aspects of the work as a teacher (Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2012; Kyriacou, 1987, 2001; Liu & Onwuegbuzie, 2012).

Transformational Leadership. Leaders inspire and empower followers to achieve goals by focusing on followers' needs while developing their leadership capacity and demanding a metamorphosis change (Bass & Riggo, 2006; Burns, 2003).

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Today, public education faces challenges that would not have been imagined 25 years ago. Teachers' and administrators' roles in the United States educational system are in a constant state of change (Alliance for Excellence Education, 2008). There is a long history of school reform initiatives and state mandates that have dictated these changes. In many cases, these mandates increased teacher accountability for student performance on state assessments. As a result, pressure on schools to improve test scores increased teachers' stress (von Der Embse, Kilgus, Soloman, Bowler, & Curtiss, 2015 & von der Embse, Schoeman, Kilgus, Wicoff, & Bowler, 2017). Educational leaders are challenged to enforce accountability practices while keeping teacher stress low.

How do administrators handle the role of the lead learner, social/emotional supporter, and positive relationship-builder while maintaining positive morale and a low-stress teaching environment? It has been established that the principal's leadership style affects the school environment and the performance of the students and staff (Chu, Ahmad, Malik, & Batool, 2017). The purpose of this study was to explore if a relationship exists between leaders who demonstrate perceived servant leadership characteristics and teachers' stress when faced with change and increased accountability. This chapter begins by presenting key definitions and understandings of Robert Greenleaf's Servant Leadership Theory (1970) and then explores various occupational stressors teachers face.

Literature Sources

Multiple databases were used to review literature for this study. The University of Arkansas electronic library was utilized to access ProQuest, ERIC, and EBSCOhost databases. Dissertations were most applicable to this study, providing links to scholarly articles, peer-reviewed journals, and previous studies related to servant leadership and educational mandates. In addition, texts from courses within the doctoral program were also valuable resources.

The following key terms were used to search for documents related to the study topic:

1. Teacher Stressors
2. Servant Leadership Theory
3. Robert Greenleaf
4. Accountability Practices
5. Leadership Style and Servant Leadership
6. Principal Leadership and Teacher Morale
7. Relationships and Educators
8. Leadership Theories
9. Coping Strategies

While there was much written about teacher stress, there were gaps in the literature concerning ways educational leaders can alleviate stressors. Kyriacau (2001) claimed that teaching has always been considered a stressful occupation, but academic leaders did not begin to examine occupational stress in teachers until the late '70s and early '80s. Research into teacher stress has continued to grow since then contributing to a robust literature base related to teacher stress (Kyriacau, 2001). Greenleaf's Servant Leadership Theory has been a strong focus of both empirical, practitioner, and theoretical books and articles for over 50 years. Still, there

remains a gap in the literature on how Servant Leadership can assist principals when leading teachers through the obstacles of accountability practices that result in additional teacher stressors.

Servant Leadership Theory

Leadership style is personal. DeSpain (2000) defined leadership as “an imperfect art practiced by those who lead in which the leader defines reality for their followers while creating and nurturing a vision of a new, better reality” (p. ix). Boleman and Deal (1995) further asserted that “leadership is an ethic, a gift of oneself to a common cause, a higher calling” (p. 106). Senge (1995) alleged that the “western culture largely believes in the traditional perspective of leaders as people who establish direction, hold the decision-making capacity and are responsible for followers” (p. 221). Senge (1995) suggested that “essentially Western cultural view was deeply rooted in an individualistic and non-systematic view of the social world culture” (p. 222). As Senge believed the above to be true about the western culture, he also noted that “leaders need to look at a leader as a designer, steward, and teacher” (1995, p. 221). He suggested that “Servant Leadership opened up a new caring paradigm of leadership because it builds on relationships and focuses on the service to others” (Senge, 1995, p. 223).

Drury (2005) believed that “Servant Leadership is a relatively new term for most people and is often confused with acts of service, or leadership that only serves, when in fact, this leadership style is more” (p. 10). “A servant-leader focuses primarily on the growth and well-being of people and the communities to which they belong” (p. 10). Servant-leaders share responsibility, put the needs of others first, and help people develop and perform as highly as possible. As Greenleaf (1970) described:

The servant-leader is servant first... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from the leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or acquire material possessions...The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them, some shadings and blends are part of the infinite variety of human nature. The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and difficult to administer, is: Do those served grow as persons? While being served, do they become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, and more likely to become servants? And what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit or at least not be further deprived (p. 34)

DuFour (2001) endorsed those administrators who incorporate a servant leader focus on building school settings where people work toward a "shared vision" and honor shared commitments to self and others.

Researchers have different opinions regarding why servant leadership continues to receive increased recognition. Laub (1999) opined that the reason for the growing trend toward the Servant Leadership Theory is because "it is a more caring leadership approach utilizing teamwork, relationships, and creating an environment for personal growth and fulfillment" (p. 64). Over the past several years, there has been little research on principals using the Servant Leadership Theory to lead their buildings. Few studies can be found that empirically assess the Servant Leadership style's effectiveness. Therefore, scholar-practitioners are left with a growing imperative to incorporate Servant Leadership concepts into their own practice, but with little direction on the effectiveness of a Servant Leadership Model.

Leaders need not focus on being a “servant” but on their dispositions and how they support organizations in times of change. Servant leadership is often characterized as a particularly effective leadership style to take an organization through change (Keith, 2012, p. 27). Keith identified dispositions of servant leaders who effectively move organizations through change. According to Keith, “a servant leader will not use an organization’s need for change as an excuse for building their power and position”, “a servant leader will not change based on personalities, factional politics, and competition between rivals”, “a servant leader will focus on meeting the needs of the organization and those it serves”, “a servant leader will listen, consult, and analyze information so that the organization can adapt and remain relevant to changing needs” (p. 27).

Is this the best leadership model when working with teachers from various ethnic backgrounds? When leading any organization through changes, leaders must consider the viewpoints of those from different cultures. Juana Bordas is a Nicaraguan American community activist specializing in leadership development and diversity training. Bordas’ book, *Salsa, Soul, and Spirit* (2007), pointed out that “servant leadership is deeply anchored in Black, American Indian, and Latino cultures that are centered on community responsibility, public welfare, and addressing the social structures that impede people’s progress” (p. 38). Bordas also noted that “leaders grow their communities by engaging people in the following practices (1) encouraging participation and building consensus, (2) creating a community of leaders, (3) generating a shared vision, (4) using culturally effective communication, and (5) weaving partnerships and connections” (p. 47). Leaders oversee setting high standards (like those mentioned above) and following the same rules as other community members. These sorts of cultural anchors may have

important implications for how the primary tenets of servant leadership are understood by leaders and how servant-oriented actions are perceived by teachers.

An essential educational practice is “generating a shared vision” (Bordas, 2007, p. 38). According to Blanchard (2007), “servant leadership provides better leadership because the vision and values are established upfront, and servant leadership requires a humility that brings out the best in both leaders and those they serve” (p. 132). Grissom, Egalite, and Lindsey (2021) proposed that other skills are needed to provide a servant leadership environment for teachers, support staff, parents, and the school community. The three components include “caring, communication, and building trust” (Grissom, Egalite, & Lindsey, 2021, p. 56). Under the servant leadership model, principals are charged with helping subordinates grow and succeed by fostering positive relationships. Grissom, Egalite, and Lindsey (2021) noted that “principals’ ability to both develop and demonstrate a sense of caring for teachers in the building can be a factor in positive relationship development” (p. 56).

Effective communication is also essential to servant leaders. “The ability to communicate effectively is another skill principals need to develop interpersonal relationships and positively influence school outcomes” (Grissom, Egalite, & Lindsey, 2021, p. 56). Clear communication is vital in empowering teachers and helping them grow and succeed. Lack of communication or unclear communication can lead to misunderstandings, lack of trust, additional stress, and anxiety.

Cultivating trust is an important, and foundational, aspect of servant leadership. Without trust, it is difficult to successfully implement any of the seven characteristics of servant leadership. A study completed with urban elementary school teachers found that teachers who felt empowered at work had higher levels of trust in their principals (Moye et al., 2005, as cited

by Grissom, Egalite, & Lindsey, 2021). In addition, a study completed by Price (2015) demonstrated the “interconnection between trust and how teachers perceive their relationship with their principal and show these factors inform teachers’ attitudes towards their students (Price, 2015, as cited by Grissom, Egalite, & Lindsey, 2021, p. XIV). In these, and previous studies, the characteristics of servant leadership are shown to assist in developing positive relationships, building trust, emphasizing the importance of clear communication, fostering empowerment, and cultivating the school community.

Pillars of Servant Leadership

Greenleaf’s theory has been adapted by other researchers. These researchers have worked to clarify the pillars of servant leadership and/or condense the number of pillars. Parriss and Peachy (2013) pointed out that even though the interest in servant leadership has increased, it remains poorly defined, unclear, and leaves scholars and practitioners struggling to operationalize the theory. Table 1A below demonstrates how servant leadership has evolved over time. The top portion of the table provides Greenleaf’s original pillars of servant leadership. The bottom portion of the table demonstrates the various adaptations of servant leadership by other researchers in the field.

Table 1A. Supporters of Servant Leadership Theory

Robert Greenleaf (1970)							
-Listening -Stewardship		-Empathy	-Healing -Commitment to the growth of people	-Awareness	-Persuasion	-Conceptualization -Building Community	-Foresight
Laub (1999)	Wong & Davey (2007)	Barbuto & Wheeler (2006)	Dennis & Bocarnes (2005)	Sendjaya, Sarros, & Santora (2008)	Van Dierendonck & Nuijten (2011)		
-Developing People -Sharing leadership -Displaying authenticity -Valuing people -Providing leadership -Building community	-Serving and developing others -Consulting and involving others -Humility and selflessness -Modeling integrity and authenticity -Inspiring and influencing others	-Altruistic Calling -Emotional healing -Persuasive mapping -Organizational Stewardship -Wisdom	-Empowerment -Trust -Humility -Agapa love -Vision	-Transforming influence -Vocubulary subordination -Authentic self -Transcendental Spirituality -Covenantal Relationship -Responsible morality	-Empowerment -Humility -Standing back -Authenticity -Forgiveness -Courage -Accountability -Stewardship		

(Source: Adapted from van Dierendonck, D., 2011. Servant leadership: A review and synthesis. *Journal of Management*, 37(4), 1228-1261. Copyright 2011 by Sage Journals. Adapted with permission (Appendix A)

Liden, Wayne, Zhao, and Henderson (2008) studied “leader behaviors that are based on serving the needs of followers and larger communities both within and outside of the organization” (p. 161). Results of this study suggested that “servant leadership may enhance both job performance and commitment to the organization” (p. 174). This study’s results “show promise for servant leadership as a framework for understanding how leaders influence immediate followers, and ultimately the culture of the organization and the larger community in which the organization is embedded” (2008, p. 175).

Research by Taylor, Martin, Hutchinson, and Jinks (2007) concluded that “by emphasizing service to others, personal development and shared decision making, servant leaders help to meet the needs of everyone in the organization that in turn enables the leader to grow and mature as well” (p. 405). Winston and Patterson (2005) advocated that Servant Leadership is an “action-oriented state of mind” that compels leaders to make available what followers need, to do what needs to be done for their personal growth and the improvement of the organization.

For this research study, I focused on seven attributes of servant leadership which are a combination of factors indicated by Ehrhart (2004) and Liden, Wayne, Zhao, and Henderson (2008). These factors include: behaving ethically, emotional healing, putting subordinates first, helping associates grow and succeed, empowering, creating value for the community, and conceptual skills (Ehrhart, 2004; Liden, Wayne, Zhao & Henderson, 2008). This is not to say current literature supports promoting servant leadership behaviors to the exclusion of other leadership styles, nor does it suggest that other leadership styles cannot help teachers overcome or ameliorate occupational stressors. However, it is apparent from the literature that all of the

factors of servant leadership are associated with positive educational and human resource outcomes.

Contrasting Servant Leadership with Other Leadership Styles

One of the most challenging aspects of being a leader is finding one's style. Many leadership models, such as the traditional authoritarian model of empowerment, participatory, transformational, and distributed leadership incorporate the concept of service into the leadership philosophy (Gronn, 2002; Page & Wong, 1998; Yukl, 1999 & 2006). Traditional leadership styles such as authoritarian, transactional, and participatory are based on a "power model" (Keith, 2012, p. 19). This type of leadership "is about how to accumulate and wield power, how to make people do things, how to attack and win," and "it is about clever strategies, applying pressure, and manipulating people to get what you want" (p. 19). These approaches to leadership are different from the "service model" upon which Servant Leadership is based. Power models tend to be particularly problematic, because they focus on having power and not necessarily using it wisely, define success as wielding the most power, focus less on benefiting the organization, and ultimately lead to more friction than unity in an organization (Keith, 2012). Finally, in the power model, the leader focuses more on themselves and has little time to focus on the vision and goals of the organization (Keith, 2012).

In contrast to Servant Leadership, transformational and transactional leadership have been investigated in numerous empirical studies since Burns (1978) first introduced the concepts. Transformational leadership is the most popular and most widely researched type of leadership (Judge & Piccolo, 2004), and it "occurs when leaders broaden and evaluate interests of their employees when they generate awareness and acceptance of the purposes and mission of the group, and when they stir their employees to look beyond their self-interest for the good of the

group” (Bass, 1990, p. 21). According to Covey (1991), in transformational leadership, “the goal is to move the followers to go beyond their self-interest for the good of their group, organization or community, country or society as a whole” (p. 33). Transformational leadership and servant leadership are both people-oriented, ethical, and inspirational approaches to leadership (Graham, 1991). Table 1B compares Servant Leadership with the Transformational Leadership Model based on definition, focus, influence, motivation, concern, and problem-solving.

Table 1B. *Comparison Between Servant Leadership and Transformational Leadership*

	Servant Leadership	Transformational Leadership
Influenced By	Based on work by Robert Greenleaf (1970)	Based on work by Burns (1978)
The focus of the Leader	Service to their followers; value the people who constitute the organization; relationships; trust their followers to undertake actions that are in the best interest of the organization even though servant leaders do not primarily focus on organizational objectives (Bass, 2000)	Getting followers to engage in and support the organization’s objectives through empowering followers to accomplish those objectives (Yukl, 1998)
Motivation	Servant Leaders are not to direct others but to motivate and facilitate service and stewardship by the followers themselves; they rely on assistance to establish the purpose of meaningful work to provide needed resources.	Transformational leaders rely on their charismatic abilities (personal power) to influence and motivate followers; they seek to get followers to commit to various organizations’ goals and facilitate organizational objectives.
Negative Aspects	Rely on reciprocity and potentially be used negatively if the servant leader has poor motives.	Rely on the charisma that can allow followers to overlook negative traits

(Source: Adapted from Gregory Stone, A. G., Russell, R. F., Patterson, K. (2004).

Transactional leadership relies on “hierarchical authority, task completion, and rewards and punishments” (Tracy & Hinkin, 1998, p. 221). Unfortunately, transactional leadership can result in workers not complying. The external incentives provided through rewards can decrease enthusiasm and commitment among workers in the long term (Bass, 1985). Transactional

leadership has also been called “laissez-faire” because many leaders that display this type of leadership lack skill sets for guiding workers and completing their supervisory duties (Bradford & Lippit, 1945).

Occupational Stress in Teachers

Teaching is among the most stressful professions worldwide (Liao, 2019). The issues that have resulted in occupational stress for teachers can be traced back to the early 20th century with the expansion of the federal government (Wallace & Oates, 1998). President Roosevelt’s “New Deal” was the turning point of federalism (Wallace & Oates, 1998). The “New Deal” broadened the scope of the power of the federal government because of the Commerce Clause, which “gave the federal government the ability to mandate policies affecting states' public and private industry” (Wallace & Oates, 1998, p. 2). While the American public education system is a matter of state and local responsibility, there has been an increased federal presence since World War II.

Federal involvement in education peaked in the 21st century with the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2002). NCLB (2002) was a 1,100-page act that mandated standards, assessments, and accountability for schools, students, and teachers (New York State Education Department, 2009). Since that time, No Child Left Behind has morphed into the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015) which, among other provisions, mandated “challenging academic content” and proficiency standards for English language learners (National Conference of State Legislatures, n.d., p. 2). As a result of these laws established by the federal government, state educational lawmakers have doubled down the pressure placed on school districts to meet federal expectations and demands. As a result, occupational stressors in the teaching profession have increased tremendously.

The primary duty of teachers is to interact with and teach students. Yet, they must also meet the demands outlined in state and federal law while simultaneously dealing with student behavior issues, a competitive societal environment, staff relationships, time demands, and family responsibilities to meet educational goals (Sun, Qu, Wu, Yu, Liu, & Zhao, 2018). Before the 1970s and 1980s, there was little recognition of teachers' occupational stressors (Kyriacau, 2001). Since then, there has been a tremendous growth in research on the effects of occupational stressors teachers face (Kyriacau, 2001). Although there has been a vast growth and interest in teachers' occupational stressors, research gaps persist. There is very little research on teachers' mental and physical health in response to increased accountability and work demands. With the increased demands established by accountability pressures, teacher stress has changed (Von der Embse, Kilgus, Soloman, Bowler, & Curtiss, 2015). Due to these changes in occupational stressors, many researchers feel it is time to expand on previous research to further address how systems and leaders can better alleviate stressors (Harris, 2018).

Teacher stress has been defined as the experience by a teacher of unpleasant emotions resulting from aspects of the work (Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2012; Kyriacou, 1987, 2001; Liu & Onwuegbuzie, 2012). This definition was used to align with accepted definitions in other studies on teacher stress (Rosenburg, 2010, Akpochafo, 2014, & von der Embse, Schoemann, Kilgus Wicoff, 2015). Teacher stressors metamorphosize differently in every person and is an intricate process (Rosenburg, 2010). Job stress, particularly in teachers, has "deleterious consequences" on both educational goals and teachers themselves, thus compromising the intended outcomes of all stakeholders (e.g., students, parents, administrators, and government officials) (Martinez-Montegudo, Ingles, Granados, Aparisi, & Garcia-Fernandez, 2019).

Theoretical Background on Teacher Stressors

Cavanaugh, Boswell, Roehling, and Boudreau (2000) categorized teachers' stressors into challenge and hindrance-related stressors. A challenge stressor is "a type of stressor that requires effort but benefits a teacher's personal growth and achievement" (Cavanaugh, Boswell, Roehling, & Boudreau, 2000, p. 65). Causes of challenge stressors include job scope, responsibility, workload, and deadlines (Wu, Qiu, Dooley, & Ma, 2019). Hindrance-related stressors are stressors which "constrain personal achievement" and subsequently delay a teacher's goal progress (Cavanaugh, Boswell, Roehling, & Boudreau, 2000, p. 65). According to Cavanaugh et al. (2000), examples of this type of stressor include organizational politics, job vagueness, and job security. Both challenge and hindrance-related stressors could have "an adverse effect on teacher's psychophysiological well-being (Webster, Beehr, & Love, 2011). Hindrance related stress can also lead teachers to experience fatigue, tension, and cardiovascular disease, and challenge stressors can result in the emotional exhaustion of teachers (Stiglbauer & Zuber, 2018). Table 1C illustrates the two types of stressors teachers experience and provides examples of each (OECD, 2020).

Table 1C. *Two Types of Stressors and Examples*

Challenge Stressors Examples	Hindrance-Related Stressors Examples
Teacher Observations and Feedback -negative feedback with no solutions or plan for assistance -no feedback -no observations or walk-throughs	Organizational Politics -addressing parent concerns -meeting requirements of principal, district, state, and federal mandates
Job Scope -too much preparation required -too many lessons or objectives to teach	Job Vagueness -lack of expectations -no explicit curriculum or scope and sequence
Responsibilities -addressing modifications and accommodations for SPED, ESL, & 504 students	Job Security -Administrative work -federal mandates
Workload -extra duties when other teachers are absent -too much grading	
Deadlines -too much administrative work	
Pupil Behavior -maintaining classroom discipline -maintaining behaviors of students with trauma or psychological needs	

Responsibility for Student Achievement	
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Source: Adapted from Sullivan, S., 2020, The Top Ten Stressors for Teachers. September 15, 2020, Retrieved from Medium.com on February 6, 2020. & Cavanaugh, M. A.; Boswell, W. R.; Roehling, M. V.; Boudreau, J. W. An empirical examination of self-reported work stress among U. S. managers. *Journal of Applied Psychology*. 2000, 85, 65-74

The Wilson Stress Profile for Teachers (1991) describes additional sources of teacher stress. These stressors are: 1) Pupil behavior, 2) employee/administrator relations, 3) teacher/teacher relations, 4) parent/teacher relations, 5) time management, and 6) intrapersonal conflicts. The next section of the literature review focuses on the Challenge Stressors and Hindrance Stressors discussed in Table IC and the list of stressors from The Wilson Stress Profile for Teachers (Luh, Olejnik, Greenwood, & Parkay, 1991).

Pupil Behavior. Thirty-eight percent of stressed teachers struggle with classroom management and student behavior (OECD, 2020). Classroom management and student behavior are other stressors teachers face that take time to master. Student behaviors that contribute to teacher stress are lack of student motivation, difficulty controlling students in class, and not following directions (Luh, Olejnik, Greenwood, & Parkay, 1991). Kyriacou (2001) determined that teaching students lacking motivation and maintaining discipline are two primary teacher stressors.

Relationships Within the School Community. Central primary relationships are critical to a teacher's wellbeing. Relationships are the backbone of success in education. If there is no positive relationship among stakeholders, it becomes more difficult to meet educational expectations.

Employee Administrator Relations. Paramount among these is the relationship between the teacher and the administrator. According to Fimian (1984), lack of administrative support is a source of teacher stress for teachers. Not just help, but teachers also perceive the relationship and approval of the administrator (positive or negative) as a source of stress (Harris, 2018).

According to McCarthy, Lambert, Lineback, Fichett, and Baddouh (2015), mandates placed on teachers by their administrators add to teacher workload, a primary cause of stress.

Teacher/Teacher Relations. Boyle, Falzon, and Baglioni (1995) found that poor colleague relations accounted for 6.3% of the variance in stress. Relationships with fellow teachers are a significant part of a teacher's workplace experience. In many cases, teachers collaborate, plan, vent, and depend on their colleagues for their growth, release of stress, and managing daily work. When these relationships are not established, it can lead to isolation. Bainer and Didham (1994) stated that positive relationships among teachers are significant to elementary teachers.

Parent/Teacher Relations. Positive relationships with parents are essential to both teaching methods and parent involvement, which can reduce teacher stress (Fantuzzo, Perlman, Sproul, Minney, Perry, & Li, 2012). In many cases, parents and teachers have different opinions on discipline, academics, and social issues. This can lead to conflict between teachers and parents and increase teacher stress. According to Grayson and Alvarez (2008), "teachers are mediators between the parents and school, and this causes additional strain on teachers particularly if the parent and community support is poor" (p. 1352). Similarly, negative or poorly developed relationships with students create barriers for learning and belonging, which can cause stress for the teacher and student (Harris, 2018).

Time Management. Boyle, Borg, Falzon, and Baglioni (1995), using their 20-item, five-factor inventory of teacher stress, determined that teacher workload was the number one factor accounting for teacher stress, and it accounted for 32.1% of the teacher variance of stress. Many teachers that feel overloaded will eventually doubt their effectiveness as a teacher. When

teachers think they are ineffective due to their workload or other occupational stressors, this will increase their stress level (Boyle, et al, 1995).

Intrapersonal Conflicts. In many cases, teachers struggling with intrapersonal conflicts can lead to teacher burnout and job dissatisfaction (Luh, Olejnik, Greenwood, & Parkway, 1991). Balancing occupational stressors such as covering required material, classroom management, administrative jobs, and personal responsibilities with intrapersonal stressors, such as, fear, anxiety, frustration, and physical health result in an epic conflict that leads teachers to emotional and physical exhaustion. As mentioned earlier, emotional and physical exhaustion can lead to job dissatisfaction, leading to hindrance stressors such as doubts about job security and job vagueness (Luh, Olejnik, Greenwood, & Parkway, 1991).

Relationships Between Teacher Stress and Leadership Style

Several studies have determined a relationship between a principal's leadership style and teacher stressors. Leadership style was an important variable in predicting teacher stress in a study conducted in Texas (Lopez, Green, Carmody-Bubb, & Kodatt, 2011). These researchers found that leaders who were more servant-minded and considerate to subordinates resulted in teachers who were less stressed and less emotionally exhausted (Lopez, Green, Carmody-Bubb, & Kodatt, 2011). Similarly, a study completed by Harris (2018) indicated that teachers who perceived higher levels of servant leadership characteristics in their principals experienced less occupational stress (p. 34). von Fisher and Jong (2017) also demonstrated in their results that there is a "statistically significant relationship between principals' perceived servant leadership behavior and teacher job satisfaction" (p.77). Therefore, the type of leadership a principal displays has a substantial effect on the climate and function of the organization (von Fisher & Jong, 2017).

In the study conducted by Liden, Wayne, Zhao, and Henderson (2008), they determined that “servant leadership is a significant predictor of subordinate organizational commitment, community citizenship behavior, and in-role performance” (p.175). Their study also concluded that servant leadership shows promise as a framework for “understanding how leaders influence their immediate followers, and ultimately the culture of the organization and the larger community in which the organization is embedded” (Liden, Wayne, Zhao, and Henderson, 2008, p. 175). This study also revealed a relationship between servant leadership characteristics of “helping subordinates grow and succeed” “organizational commitment” and “behaving ethically” with subordinates” and “job performance” (Liden, Wayne, Zhao, and Henderson, 2008, p. 174). A study in Pakistan determined a positive relationship between a principal’s leadership style and teacher stress (Tasheen, 2010). Conversely, Tahseen found a positive relationship between autocratic leadership styles and stressors and a negative relationship between leadership styles like servant leadership and stressors (2010). In their study, Wu, Qiu, Dooley, and Ma (2019) determined that perceived servant leadership characteristics buffer between challenge stressors and emotional exhaustion. They concluded from these findings that it would positively affect teachers “psychological health” if they encouraged their principals to “display servant leadership behaviors daily” (Wu, Qiu, Dooley, & Ma, 2019, p. 12). However, Wu et al. also warned that “servant leadership can be a double-edged sword” because they found that leaders displaying servant leadership characteristics could cause teachers, who show high levels of hindrance stressors, an increased level of emotional exhaustion” (p. 12). As a result, the researchers advised leaders to look again at the teacher’s source of stress and lessen their workload (Wu, Qiu, Dooley, Ma, 2019).

Summary

The leadership style of administrators leading teachers is crucial. When teachers feel overburdened with external mandates, it often falls to a leader to build relationships, listen to their concerns, incorporate their strengths, and continue to challenge them to grow. . According to DuFour and Eaker, “the effectiveness of leadership has often been determined by the organizational culture, cohesiveness, goal attainment and follower satisfaction rather than solely on achievement, as is the case with school effectiveness” (1998, p. 56). Principals who are servant leaders do not just manage their teachers. Leaders build and foster relationships with their staff and create a school climate that encourages teamwork and discourages isolation. Principals who are servant leaders have been shown to improve reliability and increase helping behaviors in employees (Ehrhart, 2004; Walumbwa, Hartnell, Oke, 2010). This study aimed to help school leaders understand their role in reducing teacher stress by implementing perceived servant leadership characteristics as part of their leadership style.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Teachers and administrators face more challenges in their careers than ever. Both are now being asked to learn new strategies to meet the needs of their students in conjunction with following policies and procedures set by educational mandates. These accountability practices are frequently referred to as “occupational stressors,” and they lead to high numbers of teachers leaving the profession (McCarthy, Lambert, Lineback, Fichett, & Buddouh, 2016). Therefore, leaders must learn best practices for supporting teachers as new challenging mandates are passed.

The basis for this study was the belief that servant-leaders focus on the needs of others first to promote development and growth (Greenleaf, 2002; Mayer, Bardes & Piccolo, 2008; Neill, Hayward & Peterson, 2007; Taylor, Martin, Hutchinson, & Jinks, 2007; Spears, 1998). For this study, servant leadership was defined by the following characteristics: (1) behaving ethically, (2) providing emotional healing, (3) putting subordinates first, (4) helping subordinates grow and succeed, (5) empowering followers, (6) creating a value for the community, and (7) promoting conceptual skills (Ehrhart 2004; Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008). These seven characteristics were based on the ten pillars of Servant Leadership by Robert Greenleaf (1970).

Research Questions

The research questions that guided this study were:

1. What leadership characteristics do teachers perceive comprise servant leadership?
2. What is the relationship between teachers’ occupational stress and leaders’ engagement in servant leadership?

3. When K-4 teachers perceive their principals are servant leaders, does it lessen their occupational stress?

Rationale

To study this problem of practice, data were gathered using a Likert scale survey and multiple qualitative research approaches. Mertens (2005) described qualitative research methods as “methods used in research to provide an in-depth description of a specific program, practice, or setting” (p. 229). Creswell (1994) defined qualitative research as:

An inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed informants’ views, and conducts the study in a natural setting. (p. 12)

Qualitative research methods were used to analyze individual teacher experiences and perspectives related to the perceived characteristics of servant leadership and occupational stressors. The methodological approach to this qualitative study was the “practitioner research” approach (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The practitioner research approach “involves a range of systematic, inquiry-based research efforts that are directed toward creating and extending professional knowledge” (Ravitch & Carl, 2016, p. 24). According to Ravitch and Carl (2016), the practitioner research method assisted in gaining insight into factors that concern or confuse teachers about servant leadership; about what aspects of teaching are the most stressful; about what they want their roles to be as “supporters, advocates, collaborators, and change agents” (p. 25); and how they feel about the “parameters, possibilities, and constraints of their work setting” (p. 25). For the purpose of this study, I developed several inquiry-based experiences (interview, survey, and focus group discussions) to gather data.

Setting

Sugar Creek Elementary was established in August of 1990. The school is composed of 483 students and 65 staff members. Of those staff members, 42 are certified and 24 are classified. The 42 certified staff include 20 classroom teachers, four alternate learning academy (ALE) teachers, eight special education teachers, four support staff, four activity teachers, and two administrators. Of the 42 certified teachers, the average number of years of teaching experience is 13. Of the certified staff, 14 hold a master's degree, three hold a specialist's degree, and 25 hold bachelor's degrees. Since 2000, the school has had seven administrators. Since 2013, there have been four administrators, meaning there has been a turnover in leadership four times in the past six years. The last four principals have all had vastly different leadership styles, which has affected the morale and culture of the school. Table 3A shows the current demographic information at Sugar Creek Elementary.

Table 3A:

Demographics Information for Sugar Creek Elementary (2021)

Student Population Categories	Percentage (%)
Total Number of students: 483	
Caucasian	80.7%
African American	2.8%
Native American	2.4%
Hispanic	6.9%
Two or more Races	4.3%
English Language Learner	2.0%
Special Education Students	9.0%
Free and Reduced Lunches	25%
Not Part of Free & Reduced Lunch Program	75%

Source: Arkansas Department of Education School Report Card, 2021.

Before the participants were selected, Dr. Debbie Jones, Superintendent, and Mrs. Lisa St. John, Executive Director of Elementary Education, granted permission for the research to be conducted.

Sample

Once permissions were granted by the district administration, all certified staff were sent an email invitation to participate in the study, and 20 of the 42 volunteered and were included in the study. The same teachers participated in all three data collection methods: surveys, interviews, and focus groups. Surveys and interviews were conducted individually but focus group discussions were completed in person with the 20 teachers that volunteered to participate.

Data Collection Methods

Data collection procedures required permissions from the University of Arkansas Institutional Review Board (IRB). All participants' identities remained confidential. In addition to permission forms completed through the IRB, the school superintendent reviewed all research conducted to ensure all parts were performed ethically. Teachers who volunteered were given the Participation Consent Form (Appendix A). The consent information included permissions to gain consent for distributing the survey, conducting interviews, and focus group discussions. These permissions were granted by the administration and teachers that participated in the research study.

According to Creswell, accurate data collection depends on “a series of interrelated activities aimed at gathering good information to answer emerging research questions” (Creswell, 2007, p. 118). The triangulation of data from the interview, survey, and focus group discussions provided information that allowed the researcher to answer the research questions.

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews elicited data that provided a brief look into the teachers' perspectives on servant leadership and the occupational stressors they face. The interview protocol consisted of 9 items (see Appendix B). All interviews were audio-recorded and

transcribed to ensure the accurate analysis of data. Page numbers organized transcripts, and each line of the transcription was numbered. This provided a simple system for easy access during data analysis. After transcriptions of each interview were collected, they were uploaded into the MADQX system that was user-friendly and efficient when going back to review data and re-emerging themes.

Survey

The survey was conducted via a Survey Monkey questionnaire (see Appendix C). Surveys provided the opportunity for participants to share their perspectives anonymously, and this was considered particularly important given my role as principal at Sugar Creek Elementary. Teachers completed the survey before the focus group meetings and again after the focus group meetings to determine if their answers changed after receiving training on Servant Leadership.

Focus Group

Focus group meetings allowed for data collection that might be omitted via surveys or interviews. Participants were more willing to share their opinions in a group than in a one-on-one environment with their principal. During the focus group meetings, I observed and facilitated discussions surrounding teacher stress and perceived servant leadership characteristics. Focus groups allowed “participants to comment about each other’s thoughts, experiences, and responses to specific questions and this enabled emergent topics for group inquiry and discussion that go beyond responses to questions on the instrument” (Ravitch & Carl, 2016, p. 168). Focus group discussions were video recorded and teacher discussions were captured on chart paper during discussions (see Appendix D for focus group topics of discussion).

Reflective Journal

The reflective journal and field notes maintained throughout the data collection phases allowed me to describe my thoughts and feelings while conducting this research. According to Morrow and Smith (2000), using a reflective journal adds rigor to the qualitative inquiry as the investigator can record reactions, assumptions, expectations, and biases about the research process. The reflective journal was completed while the data were reviewed and organized from interviews, surveys, and focus groups. The field notes provided additional data for analysis as interviews and focus groups were conducted.

Timeline

After permission was granted from the IRB (see Appendix F) and Bentonville School District, participant selection occurred on August 12, 2021. Consent forms (see Appendix E) were emailed to each participant on August 20 with a due date of September 7. Surveys were distributed via email on September 7, 2021 using the Survey Monkey platform. Reminders were sent to participants who had not yet completed the study on September 21 and September 23, 2021. All surveys were due by September 24, 2021. To avoid conflicts with the beginning of the year activities, interviews were scheduled beginning on October 12, 2021.

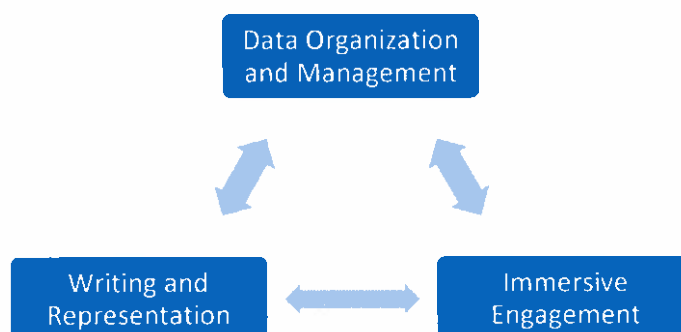
A list of interview dates and times were shared on a google doc with all participants, and each teacher scheduled their interview for a date and time most convenient for them. The last interview was held on October 26, 2021. Once interviews were conducted, the focus group began meeting weekly beginning Tuesday, November 9, 2021. All teachers were encouraged to participate in all discussions. Post surveys were emailed on December 8, 2021 with a deadline of December 17, 2021.

Data Analysis Methods

Researchers must examine all data to address the research questions (Creswell, 2007). Qualitative data analysis is a process where qualitative researchers study their data and look for themes and relationships that will assist them in making sense of the data that have been collected. Data analysis followed Ravitch and Carl's (2016) "three-pronged data analysis process" (p. 239). This data analysis process is illustrated in the diagram below (Figure 3).

Figure 3:

Three-Pronged Analysis Process



Note. Adapted from Ravitch and Carl (2016). *Qualitative Research: Bridging conceptual, Theoretical, and Methodological* (p. 239).

Data Organization and Management

The first step in the analysis process was organizing the data which is described as follows:

- (1) Timeline was developed. The timeline was developed from the point of proposal approval. The timeline kept me on track during data collection and analysis.
- (2) Data were organized with specific names and data source labels. All were labeled in the same format, including the type of data being collected, name of personal data gathered from interviews and surveys, date of collection, location of the group, time of collection, name of interviewer, and name of the person who transcribed the data.

(3) Data were transcribed. Storage of transcribed data was in Microsoft Word files for the interviews, focus group discussions, surveys, and notes from the reflective journal. All files were saved in Google Docs on a password-protected computer for which I only had access. Once data were organized and in specific files on a protected computer, all data were uploaded to the qualitative data analysis tool MAXQDA. I was the only person with access to this data, and it was protected under a login and password. When using the MAXQDA analysis tool to organize the files, I was able to retrieve them quickly and consistently.

For this study, I used the technique of pre-coding. “Pre-coding is the process of reading, questioning, and engaging with your data before you formally begin the process of coding the data” (Ravitch and Carl, 2016, p. 243). Pre-coding assisted in the organization of the data collected.

Immersive Engagement

According to Ravitch and Carl (2016), the first step of immersive engagement is reading the data many times. Data must be read in an unstructured format and then several times in a more structured process. Data were then coded to assign meaning to the information gathered (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). This study used the inductive coding approach because “it stays as close to the data as possible” and “uses participant’s words to label data segments instead of researcher created words and phrases” (Ravitch & Carl, 2016, p. 249). Codes were then combined if they could be categorized together (i.e., had the same definition). Once the codes were narrowed down, the researcher was able to look for themes within data. These themes were used to answer the research questions.

Writing and Representation

Writing is vital to qualitative data analysis. For this study, I wrote throughout the research project via memos and a reflective journal. According to Ravitch and Carl (2016), “Engaging with the data through multiple strategies, including various kinds of analytic writing, will help you determine how to best craft your final project” (p. 266). Analytic memos and the reflective journal also supported the validity of the study. Analytic memos and the reflective journal were ways I recorded decisions made throughout the study, reflected on findings, compared data, and examined relationships of data collected.

Ethical Considerations

It is imperative to maintain an ethical research design when conducting research. This involves keeping the privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality of participants. According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2019), privacy is “controlling other peoples’ access to information about research participants” (p. 201). For this study, privacy was maintained by keeping all research information in a password-locked data file of a personal computer. To preserve the anonymity of data collected, all personally identifying information was redacted, including names, addresses, email addresses, and phone numbers. Pseudonyms were given to each participant to further ensure confidentiality. Informed consent documentation used during this study can be found in Appendix 3D.

Trustworthiness

Strategies used to support the trustworthiness of this study included reflective journaling, prolonged engagement in the field, and triangulation. Reflective journaling was the first strategy that was used. In this study, reflective journaling allowed me to document thoughts and ideas learned from participants during interviews and focus group discussions. Reflective journaling

also facilitated reflexivity as I examined my assumptions and clarified my “individual belief systems and subjectivities” (Russell & Kelly, 2002, p. 2).

The second strategy was prolonged field engagement. As the principal at Sugar Creek Elementary, I was immersed in the field on a daily basis throughout the study (i.e., Spring 2021 through Fall 2021). Bloomberg and Volpe (2019) stated that “prolonged involvement facilitates a more in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study” (p. 203).

Triangulation was the third strategy used to establish trustworthiness. Triangulation is when the researcher uses multiple methods to validate the evidence the researcher has acquired in different ways (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). I compared data from the survey, interviews, focus group discussions, and reflective journal to determine if common themes and conclusions were determined. Triangulation of the data collected from the survey, interviews, focus group discussions, and reflective journal ensured that the gathered information was dependable and accurate.

Limitations

A potential limitation of this study was the truthfulness of the answers given by participants during the interviews and focus group discussions. Participants may have been reluctant to respond honestly to questions based on my role as their immediate supervisor and evaluator. I addressed this concern by establishing a safe environment that promoted open and honest conversations. This study was intentionally delimited to one public school in a city with 12 elementary schools containing grades K-4. Thus, the data gathered may not be representative of teachers’ experiences in other schools or districts.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH RESULTS

What leadership characteristics do teachers perceive comprise servant leadership?

According to participants, the most crucial servant leadership characteristics for administrators to possess are: 1) listening skills, 2) empathy, 3) awareness of staff, student, and school community needs, 4) foresight, 5) commitment to growth. Furthermore, participants described principals that demonstrate servant leadership as: 1) someone who is empathic, 2) a leader dedicated to relationships and teamwork, 3) an active listener, 4) a planner with foresight, and 5) a leader with ethical awareness. Participants also identified nine factors which they believed contributed to growth among staff. These factors included: support, awareness, teamwork, listening, commitment, addressing issues, empathy, encouraging teachers to try new things, giving teachers voice and validation. Of these, the top five answers were as follows: 1) listening, 2) awareness of needs, 3) teamwork, 4) empathy, 5) commitment to giving voice and validation to teachers.

Teachers also expressed the characteristics they believed could stifle teacher growth, and 14 of the 20 teachers felt that persuading teachers to do things without a vested interest in developing relationships was the number one reason for many teachers' lack of growth. Other factors that could stifle teacher growth were: not allowing staff to have a voice, lack of follow-through, no awareness of staff needs, and lack of stewardship of fiscal and human resources.

Teachers were also asked to describe the various leadership approaches they had experienced. These data provided important insights into teachers' opinions and thoughts concerning what they want to see in a principal. Participant responses indicated that 15 out of 20 teachers had worked with a "hands-off" principal or a principal that was not present. Eight

teachers felt they had negative experiences working with micromanagers because they could not perfect their craft due to tight control. Other teachers worked under principals that had difficulty making decisions promptly. Last, several teachers felt that principals who were unable to handle confrontation failed to support them when talking with parents and teammates.

As I reviewed interview findings, the initial codes extended beyond the pillars of servant leadership, but were beneficial when narrowing the results from all 20 interviews (see Appendix G for Interview Dates and Duration). The initial codes included listening, empathy, healing, awareness, foresight, commitment, and growing community. As I listened to the interviews multiple times and transcribed them, themes surfaced that described the ways teachers perceived positive servant leadership traits. These themes included: developing relationships, being present (mentally and physically), validating opinions and feelings, allowing teacher and student voice in decision making, and being an empathetic listener. Teachers wanted to see servant leaders display the following characteristics:

1. Teachers want a servant leader that is vested in developing relationships with all staff.
2. Teachers want a servant leader that is present (physically and mentally), visible, and engaged in what occurs in the building.
3. Teachers want a servant leader that validates teachers' opinions by asking them to provide input in decision making.
4. Teachers want a servant leader that listens—not just nods and acknowledges, but someone who truly, actively listens empathetically.

What is the relationship between teachers' occupational stress and leaders' engagement in servant leadership?

Table 4A shows the participants' answers for the first part of the survey which asked teachers to rate their principal (i.e., the researcher) on displaying servant leadership characteristics.

Table 4A:

Pre/Post Survey Results from Teacher Sample pre-survey/post survey

My principal...	SA 1	2	3	4	SD 5
1) spends time to form quality relationships with teachers	7/12	6/2	6/5	1/1	0/0
2) creates a sense of community among teachers	6/10	10/7	5/2	0/1	0/0
3) decisions are influenced by teacher input	5/7	9/10	7/3	0/1	0/0
4) tries to reach consensus among teachers on essential decisions	5/9	11/10	4/1	0/0	0/0
5) is sensitive to teachers' responsibilities outside of the workplace	15/16	4/1	1/1	0/1	0/1
6) makes professional development of teachers a priority	7/8	12/9	2/4	0/0	0/0
7) holds teachers to high ethical standards	12/14	5/4	3/1	0/0	0/1
8) does what they promise to do	11/14	6/4	3/1	0/1	0/0
9) balances concern for day-to-day details with projections for future	3/10	12/8	4/2	1/0	0/0
10) displays wide-ranging knowledge and interests in finding solutions to work problems	7/13	11/4	2/3	0/1	0/0
11) makes me feel like I work with them, not for them	12/11	3/6	4/2	1/0	0/0
12) works hard at finding ways to help others be the best they can be	6/9	12/6	2/5	0/0	0/0
13) encourages teachers to be involved in community service and volunteer activities outside of work	5/6	13/8	3/7	0/0	0/0
14) emphasizes the importance of giving back to the community	1/4	9/10	10/5	0/1	0/0

The first survey item of focus was “my principal spends time to form quality relationships with teachers.” According to the data, seven teachers strongly agreed on the first survey and 12 teachers strongly agreed with this statement on the second survey. Although seven (first survey) and twelve (second survey) strongly agreed, data showed that six teachers from the first survey and five from the second survey chose a “3” rating. This indicates an area of needed improvement, as relationships are vital to servant leadership. The second area of improvement was “My principal emphasizes the importance of giving back to the community.” More teachers rated me with a “2” and a “3” than any other ratings. This shows that I need to focus on this and encourage community involvement.

The highest rated statement was “My principal is sensitive to teachers’ responsibilities outside of the workplace.” According to the data, 15 strongly agreed on the first survey and 16 strongly agreed on the second survey. Other high-rated statements were “my principal holds teachers to high ethical standards,” and “my principal does what they promise to do.” Overall, the data indicated that I display characteristics of servant leadership even though there are areas that need improvement.

The second portion of the survey focused on each teacher’s stress level while working under my leadership. Table 4B summarizes the data from the pre and post-survey regarding participating teachers’ level of stress.

Table 4B:

Survey of Teacher Stress Level pre/post survey results

	1 Never	2	3	4	5 Often
Difficulty controlling my class	3/8	13/7	3/3	1/1	0/1
Impatient/angry with my students when don't do what is asked	3/5	14/10	3/3	0/2	0/0
Lack of student motivation to learn	1/3	5/7	10/6	4/2	0/2
Students make my job stressful	2/3	8/7	8/4	2/5	0/1

I have difficulty in my working with my principal	11/15	7/4	2/1	0/0	0/0
My administrator makes demands on me that I can't meet	12/12	7/5	1/3	0/0	0/0
I feel I cannot be myself when I am interacting with my administrator	10/13	5/4	4/3	1/0	0/0
I feel my admin disapproves of the job I do	14/15	4/3	2/2	0/0	0/0
I feel isolated in my job	11/12	7/4	2/2	0/2	0/0
I feel my fellow teacher do not think I do a good job	11/10	7/8	1/2	1/0	0/0
Disagreements with my fellow teachers is a problem for me	14/10	6/7	0/3	0/0	0/0
I get too little support from teachers with whom I work	13/15	6/4	1/0	0/0	0/0
Parents of students are a source of concern for me	6/4	7/8	6/5	1/0	1/3
Parents disinterest in the child performance at school concerns me	0/3	6/3	5/6	6/4	3/4
I feel my students' parents are not doing a satisfactory job teaching their children	7/9	10/5	2/3	1/2	0/0
The home environment of my students concerns me	1/0	4/4	4/11	9/3	2/2
I have too much to do and not enough time to do it	0/0	2/2	5/6	3/4	0/0
I must take work home to complete it	1/0	1/3	5/7	4/1	0/0
I am unable to keep up with correcting papers and other schoolwork	3/2	4/2	8/7	3/4	3/2
I have difficulty organizing my time to complete tasks	1/1	12/9	3/7	2/2	2/1
I put self-imposed demands on myself to meet scheduled deadlines	1/0	7/5	4/4	6/2	0/0
I think poorly of myself for not meeting the demands of my job	1/1	10/9	6/8	2/0	1/1
I am unable to express my stress to those who place demands on me	1/1	10/9	6/8	2/0	1/2
Teaching is stressful for me	1/0	3/6	10/9	4/4	2/1
The frequency I experience one or more of the following symptoms is: Stomachs, backaches, elevated blood pressure, stiff neck and shoulders	1/1	5/7	5/6	7/5	2/1
I find my job does me out	0/0	4/3	5/9	0/0	0/0
I am tense by the end of the day	0/1	8/9	7/4	4/5	1/1
I experience headaches	1/4	9/4	7/8	3/4	0/0
I find myself complaining to others	0/3	13/12	5/2	1/2	1/1
I am frustrated and feel angry	2/2	13/12	3/4	1/2	1/0
I work about my job	3/2	9/9	1/5	5/3	2/1
I feel depressed about my job	7/5	7/8	4/5	1/1	1/1
I cannot use an effective method to manage my stress (such as exercise, relaxation techniques, etc.)	3/1	11/12	6/3	0/2	0/2
Stress management techniques would help me cope with the demands of my job	1/1	3/5	9/8	5/5	2/1
I feel powerless to solve my difficulties	6/2	8/0	4/4	0/2	2/2

Table Key: green highlight: areas that cause greatest stress; yellow highlight: areas that cause least amount of stress

The data from this portion of the survey revealed the top four reasons teachers in this sample felt stressed (highlighted in green): 1) "I have too much to do and not enough time to do it," 2) "I must take work home to complete it," 3) "I put self-imposed demands on myself to meet

scheduled deadlines,” 4) “I find my job tires me out.” The areas that revealed the least amount of stress for this group of teachers are, “my admin does not approve of the job I do,” “disagreements with my fellow teachers,” “I have difficulty working with my principal,” and “I get too little support from teachers I work with.” These results indicated that the teachers in this sample are experiencing systemic stress largely related to workload issues, but they feel they are supported by their principal and peers.

Questions five and six of the interview addressed stress teachers face daily. Both questions asked teachers how they experience stress and the most stressful parts of teaching. From these questions, the teacher expressed that the following were the top five causes of focus: 1) lack of time, 2) expectations/responsibilities, 3) student behaviors, 4) changing mandates, laws, and policies-especially during pandemics and 5) lack of social, emotional support during COVID pandemic. The majority of the teachers responded that they need more support dealing with students' behaviors and the vast amounts of data they are expected to keep daily, weekly, and monthly.

When K-4 teachers perceive their principals are servant leaders, does it lessen their occupational stress?

Question seven of the interview asked teachers to list three things servant leaders could do to support and guide teachers through stressful times and if any of these things fall under the servant leadership characteristics. The findings in these responses indicated that there are five ways principals can support teachers, and they are: 1) provide empathy, 2) encourage, 3) validation of work being done, 4) being present, and 5) offering constructive and positive feedback.

In addition, during week one of the professional development focus groups (see Appendix H for Focus Group Attendance), teachers discussed the leadership styles they were familiar with or had worked under, which included Micromanager, Hands-Off, Top Down, Tough, and a Servant Leader. During week one, we also discussed the top stressors teachers currently face. From notes taken on the chart paper, the group came up with 20 stressors that can be seen in Table 4C. These stressors are in no particular order.

Table 4C

Top Teacher Stressors from Discussion Group

1. Trying to cover all standards
2. Managing student behavior
3. Meetings
4. Extra "stuff"
5. Testing
6. Pandemic-COVID
7. Keeping up with data
8. Constant changes: curriculum and technology
9. Parents- expectations, lack of support, critical, not involved, not holding children accountable
10. TESS- teacher evaluation system
11. Team members that don't want to work as a team
12. Paperwork
13. Lack of communication-district
14. Money
15. Difficult to get students additional support for behavior
16. Student/teacher social emotional health
17. Not enough time
18. Lack of training for students with mental health disorders
19. Special Education- Am I doing all I can do?
20. Teacher support- self doubt

After a short PowerPoint about servant leadership, we discussed the question, "What are the negatives and positives of servant leadership?" The group provided the following: 1) leaders overextending themselves, 2) serving too much, 3) saying you are a servant leader and then not demonstrating characteristics-doing it for a show, 4) people who don't "practice what they preach," and 5) some people may feel smothered by a servant leader in the workplace. The group also discussed that leaders who display these negative attributes could cause more stress for

teachers because they are constantly trying to figure out what type of leader they are dealing with. The group provided the following positive responses concerning Servant Leadership: 1) “a Servant Leaders is transparent-makes leader more personable and shows they are human too”, 2) “they assume the best-makes a leader more approachable so that when here are stressors they don’t fear judgment”, “they are positive with specific intentional feedback”, 4) “they build relationships”, 5) “leads by example”.

When the group discussed the difference between Servant Leadership and other leadership styles, many of them answered that a servant leader was a type of leader that “leads by example” and “won’t ask you to do anything they wouldn’t do themselves.” One teacher mentioned that a servant leader “truly cares-it’s not a show.”

The second week discussion group focused on two facets: the most important characteristics of a servant leader and what servant leadership characteristics best meet their needs as a teacher. The teachers were divided into five groups to answer these two questions. As each group answered the questions they wrote their answers on chart paper. Once they were finished they hung them on the wall for the entire group to see. These charts were used as a data source for these discussions. Table 4D shares responses to both discussion topics by all five groups.

Table 4D

Week Two Discussion Topics

Group #	What are the most important Characteristics for a Principal SL to possess/display?	What SL characteristics best meet your needs?
Group 1	Listener, empathy, awareness, building community	Transparency, being positive, offering empathy, build relationships, high expectations, understanding
Group 2	Humility, leading by example, assume the best, transparency	Assume the best Be transparent

Group 3	Not being reactive & pause to respond, purposeful praise, value individuality, listen	Listening and transparency
Group 4	Listening, transparent, serves other first, meets needs, follow through, offers help	Listener, being empathetic at work and about home life, offer support or suggestions when teachers struggle, sometimes just let me vent and move on, honest person
Group 5	A person that stops and pauses. A servant leader doesn't make assumptions, but surveys the situation, and listens to empower	If a leader possesses all these qualities, we will feel supported and as if our leader understands our situation/circumstances and will be acting on that understanding

During weeks three and four, there was more time for group discussions and whole-group sharing. All teachers were allowed to share their ideas and thoughts. For week three, the two topics for discussion were: how can a principal's servant leadership style assist with how teachers cope with stress, and why is it essential for servant leaders to recognize stress in their teachers? Table 4E shares teachers' answers on how servant leaders can help teachers cope with stress.

Table 4E:

How Can Servant Leaders Help Teachers Cope with Stress?

Open-door policy-willing to listen; 2. Support when teachers have "parent problems"; 3. Suggest to the district to cut out so many new programs and changes
A principal's understanding and support would lessen a teacher's stress level and help the teacher cope with the stress.
A principal's leadership style can positively or negatively impact how teachers cope with stress. Principals who value teachers' opinions and promote a collaborative school environment help reduce teacher stress. Principals who cultivate a family atmosphere with understanding and compassion and actively care about their teacher's emotional and physical well-being help teachers cope better with stress.
Acknowledging and noticing stressors and being supported as needed
Be consistent, prepared, and front load future events when possible
Be present at meetings (RTI, PLC, etc.) and solve a solution together.
Being aware: Don't add anything new, extra, or unnecessary. When things are happening, let us know well in advance that will affect our schedules. Be consistent. Be a kid's first principal - is it good and beneficial for the kids.
By being understanding and not pushing the small stuff.
Depending on the leadership style, teachers can feel pressure or support. Servant leaders will encourage and challenge teachers to help professionally and practice self-care.
I am having grace about filling in the gaps.
I don't know.
If that leadership style displays active listening, is willing to help and locate other ways of support teachers
It can help or add to the stress.
Just be aware and acknowledge that teachers want to help students learn. AND sometimes they must teach life skills too so that the students can succeed with academics.
Listening, support, and not extra things
The principal can support their teachers, especially with parents.

Open-door policy-willing to listen; 2. Support when teachers have "parent problems"; 3. Suggest to the district to cut out so many new programs and changes
A principal's understanding and support would lessen a teacher's stress level and help the teacher cope with the stress.
The principal should be understanding and give support when needed. Understand that we are doing the best we can for our students. Not to make assumptions that we are not doing our best.
Their leadership style can make a big difference in stress. If a principal is a micromanager, it will stress the teachers. If they can balance their management style with professional respect for the teacher, it will help.

When reviewing the answers, I was able to identify 12 ways a servant leader can alleviate teacher stress, including: listening, supporting, understanding, promoting collaboration, cultivating positive culture, acknowledging and noticing teachers, being present, being consistent and prepared, having a balanced leadership style, being aware, encouraging growth, and avoiding assumptions.

The second discussion topic for week three was why it was important for principals to recognize the stress in their teachers. Table 4F shows the participants' answers at the meeting on week three.

Table 4F:

Why is it Important for Principals to Recognize Stress in Teachers?

By recognizing stress in their teachers, they may be able to problem-solve with the educator or reach out to other educators to help them solve the issues causing the pressure within the building. Teachers recognize stressors among their students daily. If a student is stressed/upset, they will be unable to focus/work to the best of their ability. It can also affect their relationship with their peers and teachers.
Empathy is always a good quality in any leadership role. Principals who empathize with their staff can help when they notice teachers are in a stressful situation. Teachers can also use empathy when they see a student stressed about home life and school.
Good teachers are always the best at hiding stress. They want to handle everything themselves and often are the ones that "burn out" with no warning. They also tend to blame themselves when things aren't successful with their students. It is essential to recognize these teachers and "lighten their load." Often this is just with a positive talk or a questionnaire to ask if they need help with anything or feel stressed about anything. Teachers can make the same assumptions as servant leaders in their classroom by modeling behaviors and work ethics for their students.
Helping with teachers' stress will help them be better for students in the classroom.
If you know your teachers' needs, you will be able to create a work environment that is supportive and favorable. Teachers need to fulfill the same within their classrooms.
It is good people management-same for teachers.

<p>It is essential because we feel more supported when they empathize, and the stress might not feel so overwhelming. We can make the same assumptions as servant leaders in the classroom. Teachers should use the exact characteristics of their principal's expectations with their students.</p>
<p>It is essential for principals and teachers who strive to be servant leaders to recognize the stress in their teachers or students because it plays a massive part in their morale. If a teacher or student is stressed, it will affect their performance, mental state, and health. As leaders and teachers, we need to be aware of our teacher's and students' stress to perform at their highest potential.</p>
<p>Principals need to recognize stress in their teachers because their pressure can lead to teacher burnout and significantly impact student success in the classroom. Teachers can do the same in their classrooms with their students. They need to recognize when students are stressed and balance it with appropriate fun.</p>
<p>It's important to recognize stress and acknowledge it to pass along the classroom continuum. I then realize it in my students and offer support as needed.</p>
<p>Principals set the tone within the school - the teacher to the students often mirrors this tone. Students often have stressors in their lives that teachers need to be aware of.</p>
<p>Principals who recognize when a teacher feels that stress and act on it with support will have teachers who feel valued and supported. In turn, teachers would be more willing to share with principals when stressors occur.</p>
<p>Servant leaders honor, empathize and focus on the needs of their teachers. For principals to successfully meet the needs of their teachers, they must recognize teacher stress levels, realize the negative impacts of teacher stress on students and staff, and attempt to reduce and mitigate teacher stress. Yes, teachers as servant leaders choose to focus on student needs and recognize when there is a need or needs are not being met. Servant leaders strive to build relationships with and understand and empathize with their students. An essential part of this is creating a safe, trustworthy classroom environment that reduces stress, increases engagement, and de-escalates problematic situations. The focus remains on what is essential.</p>
<p>Servant leaders show empathy, awareness, and listening characteristics. If leaders show those characteristics, they will see their teachers' stress. Yes, teachers should be displaying those same characteristics to their students.</p>
<p>So they can understand what it is like in the classroom and have grace. Teachers need to be the same way with their students because they can't help that they went virtual/had school during a pandemic/have gaps from lack of structure.</p>
<p>Teachers need to feel recognized. Of course, teachers should think the same way and identify the needs and feelings of their students.</p>
<p>To recognize when teachers are overloaded with stress and lighten unnecessary responsibilities.</p>
<p>Yes, the teachers should be servant leaders with their students, just like the principals. Teachers are not productive when dealing with stress, and children cannot learn.</p>

When reviewing teachers' responses (Table 4F), four behaviors emerge that principals can exhibit to reduce stress in their teachers: help problem solve, offer support, offer empathy and encouragement, and build relationships.

During week four, the main discussion questions were related to teacher perceptions when principals display characteristics of servant leadership and the perceived relationship

between occupational stressors and servant leadership. Table 4G shows the discussion prompts and comments made during the discussion.

Table 4G

Week 4: What are teachers' perceptions of servant leader characteristics when displayed by leaders?

1. Supportive; 2. Understanding; 3. Nonjudgmental; 4. Willing to develop personal relationships
A highly knowledgeable person of each teacher, their style, their needs in the classroom, and their students. Someone who is highly involved and visible/available for support can follow through with help.
A principal with traits of servant leadership is willing to step in and help when needed. It could be that the teacher asks for help, or the principal recognizes that help is needed. They also know to check on their staff as individuals and not just in their roles as teachers. Servant leader also recognizes what their team needs, professionally, to be successful, and they are willing to help provide that for them. They are also ready to help with things like duties, as needed.
A principal that is a servant leader allows communication to be clear and straightforward, they are honest, and they work together with their teachers.
A principal that possesses traits of servant leadership allows input from students/staff. They are prepared with a proactive approach. They are comfortable letting a student/staff member know that they would like some "Think Time" before responding. They are willing to consider and possibly apply others' ideas.
A principal who is a servant leader is attentive, empathetic, encouraging, authentic, consistent, committed, ethical, sensitive to others, accepting, visible, focuses on the growth and well-being of teachers, alleviates unnecessary demands, and promotes a positive school environment.
A principal who possesses traits of a servant leader would be a good listener shows empathy, be aware, create a culture of trust, be sensitive to the needs of others, can relate to others, and be approachable.
A servant leader knows the pulse of their surroundings/school staff and makes decisions based on the group's vibe. This principal will spend time getting to know the team and their personalities. Principals who take the time to create genuine relationships will get significant buy-in from the staff because the staff can TRUST the decisions made were made with the team in mind.
A servant leader listens, challenges, and supports a community by example.
Kind, understanding, led by example, supportive
Listens, understands, supports, can see things through others' eyes, helps, or walks beside
Principals that listen and respect their teachers show servant leadership qualities. They have a team mentality - not a "my way or the highway" mentality.
Reflective, not reactive. Consistent. Strong communication skills. Organized. Available. Personable. Present.
The principal would listen to teachers, find solutions, and validate teachers' feelings.
They are willing to take time and listen. They are eager to step into the classroom and help. They act when help is needed from a teacher.
They share empathy, support, recognize when we are doing a good job, and struggle.
Validates and appreciates the work teachers do, encourages, is willing to help in whatever way possible, creates and maintains an atmosphere of respect, yet knows how to throw in a little fun and laughter.
Willing to do anything and everything to help teachers and staff.

When reviewing comments made during the discussion group, themes emerged that paralleled responses in interviews and surveys. Several recurring characteristics are emblematic of servant leaders, the most important of which was a “supportive principal.” Principals who support community involvement, assist with duties or other teacher jobs, deal with difficult parents and challenging student behaviors are perceived to be servant leaders. “Support” also means offering solutions. Teachers’ second characteristic of a servant leader was “active listener.” Servant leaders genuinely listen to teachers when they have problems or need a sounding board. The data also indicated that leaders should always listen to teachers when they brag about personal and classroom successes. It also included listening to teachers’ input and ideas and incorporating them when making decisions or identifying solutions. A third characteristic is “relationship builder.” Principals need to know the staff and their strengths and weaknesses to be a relationship builder. Showing respect for staff and their views and ideas, being personable, trusting your team to do the right thing, and avoiding micromanaging are important to building relationships. A principal who shows interest in work, personal struggles, and successes can establish relationships with teachers to support a culture of trust. Being understanding, present and visible, and a role model were also identified as important qualities.

The following discussion topic for week 4 focused on the central question of this study: is there a relationship between a principal displaying servant leadership characteristics and lessening teacher stressors? Table 4H displays the answers during our meeting. Groups discussed their answers and beliefs and then shared them at the end of the discussions. When looking at the solutions of the 19 teachers that were present, they all felt that a principal who strives to be a servant leader could reduce the stressors teachers are feeling.

Table 4H: *What is the relationship between teachers' occupational stressors and characteristics of servant leadership? Is there a relationship?*

1) I believe so. If you feel that we are all in this together and working to be better, it shows in how you think about working with students and colleagues
2) I believe that any time principals take time for genuine relationships with their teachers, they will know they are supported in the good and bad times. This would create a less stressful work environment.
3) I believe that it can lessen teachers' occupational stress because if they are using the cornerstones of servant leadership, they are leading in a way that allows the teacher the feeling of support and understanding. A servant leader recognizes the stressors and offers support.
4) There is a positive correlation between servant leadership and reduced occupational stress. When teachers perceive that their principal cares genuinely about their well-being, when they engage with teachers as whole individuals, and when their motivation is out of the desire to help and encourage, it lessens their stress levels. Teachers feel less stressed when they feel respected, valued, supported, and safe. Servant leadership can help create environments that allow teachers to teach effectively and become servant leaders themselves, ultimately decreasing occupational stress and increasing job satisfaction and student performance.
5) They recognize that they are not alone in this "fight." They know that their principals are willing to go to bat for them, help them when needed, and are there to help them be the best they can be.
6) I think so because teachers will not feel alone in this crazy career. Just knowing that your principal has your back and will support you is so important.
7) If a teacher knows that they are recognized and valued, the stress is reduced, and performance increases. Teachers want to be at work and do their best when a team approach is conducted.
8) It does lessen the teachers' occupational stress knowing that the principal is a servant leader who shares power, puts the needs of the employees first, and helps people develop and perform as highly as possible. Instead of the people working to serve the leader, the leader exists to serve the people.
9) It reduces the teachers' stress because they know their principal will support them. In addition, they see the principal has faith in their abilities and will not try to "micromanage" them. They know they can talk to the principal and collaborate on ideas.
10) Yes! Knowing you have admin support or that they have your back or understand can help teachers believe they can do what is needed, and we want to try harder.
11) Yes, an understanding, good listener, empathetic, and approachable principal reduces teachers' occupational stress. It allows the teacher to know her superior is supportive and understanding and recognizes their pressure. If a principal were not supportive and understanding, it would add to the teacher's stress level.
12) Yes because they feel like they have someone to lean on and help support them.
13) Yes, teachers appreciate principals that want to be servant leaders because they are easier to work with.
14) Yes, when teachers can see that their principal is trying to become a better leader, we know that we will have better support, recognition (excellent or constructive), and receive empathy for our job.
15) Yes. Teachers would feel listened to and take steps to find solutions to problems.
16) Yes. I feel able to come to my principal with work-related and personal issues when they are servant leaders. I feel comfortable knowing that they approach situations by considering my well-being as a person and an employee; they also focus on what is best for the student's academic, social, and emotional well-being rather than focusing on appearances.
17) Yes. It helps me feel I am not alone and that someone understands my stress.
18) Yes. People are always willing to work harder if everyone is rowing in the same boat.

As one teacher stated, “I believe that it can lessen teachers' occupational stress because if they are using the cornerstones of servant leadership, they are leading in a way that allows the teacher the feeling of support and understanding.” Here, the speaker points out that if a principal uses the cornerstones of servant leadership, they will make the teachers feel supported and understood. Another teacher commented, “There is a positive correlation between servant leadership and reduced occupational stress. When teachers perceive that their principal cares genuinely about their well-being, when they engage with teachers as whole individuals, and when their motivation is out of the desire to help and encourage, it lessens their stress levels.” The responses in this group discussion unanimously support the conclusion that these teachers believe their level of stress would be reduced if principals genuinely cared about their well-being and engaged in servant leadership practices.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

This study aimed to examine the relationship between perceived principal servant leadership characteristics and teacher stress levels. Participants offered valuable insights about their perspectives on administrators who display servant leadership characteristics, and they also identified stressors teachers face today and how a servant leader principal could help reduce workplace stress. Although the teachers in this study indicated that a supportive leader empowers teachers and servant leadership characteristics could lessen teacher stress, the data also showed that a servant leader is not a panacea for making stressors disappear. Still, it can assist teachers in how they deal with pressure when they know they have a supportive leader. Throughout this research, it became apparent that teachers want a leader that listens and respects them and is engaged in attempting to meet their needs with positive solutions and support.

What is Servant Leadership and How Does it Matter?

The teachers in this study shared that they felt the features that most demonstrate servant leadership were:

1. Teachers want a servant leader that is vested in developing relationships with all staff;
2. Teachers wish to have a servant leader that is present-physically and mentally, visible, and engaged in what is going on in the building;
3. Teachers want a servant leader that validates teachers' opinions by asking them to provide input in decision making;
4. Teachers want a servant leader who listens, not just nods and acknowledges, but who truly and actively listens empathetically.

Pre- and post-surveys indicated that teachers feel stressed, but their principal displays many characteristics of servant leadership, even though there were areas in need of improvement. According to the surveys, characteristics their principal displayed were:

1. spending time building relationships,
2. creating a sense of community,
3. being a good listener,
4. ethical, and
5. trustworthy.

Characteristics the teachers felt their principal needed to work on were encouraging teachers to be more involved and give back to their community and finding ways for teachers to grow and meet their highest potential. This indicates that those attributes that are solely products of the leader's dispositions and behaviors (e.g., listening or ethics) tend to be more closely aligned with this leader's style than those leadership constructs that are defined more by outcomes and resulting teacher behavior or productivity (e.g., teachers growing toward their potential and engaging with their community). Overall, a common theme emerged that servant leadership could minimize stress in teachers when facing demanding situations.

Results of this study indicate that principals who are servant leaders do not just manage their teachers, they build and foster relationships with their staff and create a school climate that encourages teamwork and discourages isolation. However, at several opportunities in collecting data, participants alluded to the ways leaders manage systems and the importance of system management in either increasing or reducing workplace stressors. Participant comments identify both relationship and system management skills or outcomes as key components of reducing stress. For example, one teacher stated, "I believe that servant leadership can lessen teachers'

occupational stress because if they are using the characteristics of servant leadership, they are leading in a way that allows the teacher to feel supported and understood.” Another teacher stated,

“Servant leadership does lessen teachers’ occupational stress knowing that the principal is a servant leader who shares power, puts the employee’s needs first, and helps people develop and perform as highly as possible. Instead of the people working to serve the leader, the leader exists to serve the people.”

Previous research and this study indicate a strong connection between servant leadership and the mitigation of teachers’ occupational stressors. How the principal demonstrates these characteristics and weaves them into an effective style of culture defining, relationship building, and effective follow through will significantly affect their building’s morale and stress level.

There appears to be a relationship between teachers’ stress levels and servant leadership characteristics displayed by their principal. Based on the perceptions of teachers in this study, the characteristics that a servant leader must possess when teachers are stressed include: empathy/understanding, support, validation, being present, and providing feedback. The answers stated in the focus group discussions indicate a common theme: servant leadership could minimize stress in teachers when facing demanding situations. Teachers in these discussion groups stated if a principal shared power, provided support, actively listened, and displayed empathy, they could minimize teacher stress. Yet, the distinctions participants made between personal leadership dispositions and more dynamic outcome-based constructs of leadership style raise interesting questions about differences between perceived stressful situations and more chronic or systemic stress. It may be the case that the primary characteristics associated with Servant Leadership (e.g., listening, empathy, awareness, ethics) are more readily conceptualized

by teachers in this study as being valuable “in the moment” that situational stress arises. Along these lines it is interesting that when asked to identify factors that supported positive growth among staff, it is these sorts of relational aspects that rose to the top. Of these, the top five answers were as follows: 1) listening, 2) awareness of needs, 3) teamwork, 4) empathy, 5) commitment to giving voice and validation to teachers. However, when asked to identify the leadership behaviors or characteristics that would most stifle teacher growth, they were more likely to respond with system management behaviors, including lack of follow-through, no awareness of staff needs, and lack of stewardship of fiscal and human resources.

Implications for Practice

Based on what was learned from this study, I identified three implications for practice. The first implication is for educational leaders to be aware of their leadership style and listen to their staff when they share what they want from a leader. The second is for administrators to be mindful of teachers’ occupational stressors and ways to assist them that will foster growth and improve their mental health. Third, effective principals lead people through positive culture and trusting relationships, and they sustain a healthy work environment by managing systems that teachers rely on for support and growth. Situational and chronic stress are both aspects of workplace burnout and it is often different leadership skills and habits that are necessary to address these varied and complex stressors.

Educational leaders must be aware of their leadership style and how they deal with staff experiencing stressful or challenging times. Of the 20 teachers in this study, many of them provided characteristics of servant leadership in their description of their ideal leader. For example, the teachers in this study wanted a leader who was an empathetic listener, a person who builds and fosters relationships, a leader with foresight and awareness, and a leader who

validates teachers by giving them a voice. Characteristics that could not be classified under servant leadership that teachers wanted a principal to possess include: social-emotional support, positive and constructive feedback, and encouragement of self-care.

Being mindful of their teachers' stress levels during challenging times can be described as the "pulse" of the building. I found that being a servant leader who shows awareness is more than just knowing where the morale meter is in the building. Being a servant leader is having foresight and understanding of events and times that may cause teachers more stress and being prepared to assist them. It also includes time spent building relationships with teachers and staff. Leaders today may not agree with all facets of servant leadership. Still, the research indicates that if leaders listen, develop relationships, give teachers a voice, and are empathetic, they can help decrease stress in their building.

Suggestions for Future Research

When reviewing the methods used in this study, I felt that the Likert scale survey, combined with the qualitative approach of practitioner-research, was effective in gathering data. This approach allowed me to systematically gather information to extend my professional knowledge. However, I discovered some methods were better than others in eliciting rich responses to my research questions. For example, while the Likert scale offered cursory information about teachers' perception of my leadership, it did not allow me to understand teachers' perceptions in ways which were nuanced, contextualized, or explanatory. A survey with open-ended questions would have allowed teachers to provide more in-depth descriptions of their perceptions, and this information could have offered richer insights on their perspectives, experiences, and needs. Future research should provide teachers additional opportunities to

qualitatively share their experiences and perspectives related to teacher stress and servant leadership.

The second data collection method was individual interviews. The personal interviews allowed teachers to think and articulate their answers in a private setting. One of the two limitations mentioned in Chapter Three was the reliability of the answers given by the participants during the interviews and focus group discussions because all participants knew the interviewer as their principal. For this reason, conducting the research in another school setting or having someone else hold the interviews may have yielded different results. Although this is something to consider for future studies, the answers were helpful when determining teacher stressors and what they believe a servant leader looks like in this specific context, which was a primary goal of this problem of practice research project.

The third data collection method was the focus group discussions. This was the most robust data gathering method used in this study. It was clear that after the focus group meetings teachers were able to have more discussions on servant leadership and how its characteristics can assist teachers when dealing with occupational stressors. As such, I recommend the strategy of combining professional development with focus group discussions in other practitioner-research projects, as I believe this represents a valuable learning opportunity that can inform both research and practice.

The fourth method of data collection was the reflection journal and field notes. I found it useful to look back during each part of the study and document thoughts during different portions of the data gathering process by using these. The journal proved to be most helpful during the interviews and focus groups.

One way to further this research would be to include a larger group of teachers from various schools. Another way to promote this research would be to conduct a similar study with teachers in higher grades such as middle school, junior high, or high school. All teachers have occupational stressors, but they may look different depending on the grade level in which they teach. Another interesting study would be to explore whether teachers' geographic location or type of school (i.e., rural, suburban, urban) determines whether or not they prefer a servant leader to buffer their stress.

Conclusion

Teaching is a challenging profession but effective leaders can make the difference between schools being overwhelming or being defined by the sorts of challenges that are ultimately rewarding. Students are more likely to learn, grow, and thrive in schools where teachers are supported to learn, grow, and thrive. When administrators are leading like a Servant Leader, they are aware of the pulse of the building, and they have foresight to develop systems that will reduce teacher stress. This type of foresight can contribute to building and sustaining a vibrant and healthy school community. For Servant Leadership to truly be effective it requires attention not only to serving the interpersonal aspects of leadership, but also to managing and stewarding systems that assist teachers in managing their intrapersonal skills. Servant Leaders will ultimately assist teachers in handling their emotions and lowering the stress they feel when working through the challenges and demands educators currently face. As such, this work has the potential to serve as a powerful weapon in its ability to point administrators in the direction of being a servant leader and reducing the occupational stressors of teaching.

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Appendix A

Table 1A Permissions



Servant Leadership: A Review and Synthesis

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Appendix B

Individual Interview Protocols

1. Looking at the characteristics of Servant Leadership, please rate them from most important to least important to you for an administrator to display (teachers will have index cards with each characteristic on it. They will order them from most important to least important. Answer will be photographed and labeled with teacher's name, date, and time).

-Listening -Empathy -Healing -Awareness -Persuasion -Conceptualization -Foresight - Stewardship -Commitment to the growth of people -Building Community
2. There are many leadership styles in the world of education today. Servant Leadership is one of them. How would you describe a principal that claims to be a servant leader?
3. From the characteristics above (question 1), what do you believe encourages growth among staff?
4. Which characteristics of servant leadership do you think could stifle growth and learn among staff?
5. How do you experience stress-what does it mean to you?
6. What is the most stressful part of being a teacher? How can servant leaders assist with teacher stress?
7. What are three things a principal can do to assist teachers in lessening their feelings of stress? Do you think any of these things fall under the characteristics of servant leadership? Why or why not?
8. What leadership styles are you familiar with, and how successful have you been working under these different styles?
9. How much influence does a principal's leadership style affect teacher performance?

Appendix C

Survey Instrument

Part 1: Adapted Servant Leadership Scale

Each item is rated on a 5-point scale.

1= strongly agree 2 3 4 5= strongly disagree

1. My principal spends time forming quality relationships with teachers.
2. My principal creates a sense of community among teachers.
3. My principal's decisions are influenced by teacher input.
4. My principal tries to reach a consensus among teachers on important decisions.
5. My principal is sensitive to teachers' responsibilities outside the workplace.
6. My principal makes the personal development of teachers a priority.
7. My principal holds teachers to a high ethical standard.
8. My principal does what she or he promises to do.
9. My principal balances concern for day-to-day details with projections for the future.
10. My principal displays wide-ranging knowledge and interests in finding solutions to work problems.
11. My principal makes me feel like I work with him/her, not for him/her.
12. My principal works hard at finding ways to help others be the best they can be.
13. My principal encourages teachers to be involved in community service and volunteer activities outside of work.
14. My principal emphasizes the importance of giving back to the community.

Part 2: Wilson Stress Profile for Teachers (Luh, Olejnik, Greenwood, & Parkay, 1991)

Each item is rated on a 5-point scale.

1= Never 2 3 4 5= Very Often

1. I have difficulty controlling my class.
2. I become impatient/angry when my students do not do what I ask them to do.
3. Lack of student motivation to learn affects the progress of my student's negativity.
4. My students make my job stressful.
5. I have difficulty in my working relationship with my administrator(s).
6. My administrator makes demands of me that I cannot meet.
7. I feel I cannot be myself when I am interacting with my administrator.
8. I feel my administrator does not approve of the job I do.
9. I feel isolated in my job (and its problems).
10. I feel my fellow teachers think I am not doing a good job.
11. Disagreements with my fellow teachers are a problem for me.
12. I get too little support from teachers with whom I work.
13. Parents of my students are a source of concern for me.
14. Parent's disinterest in their child's performance at school concern me.
15. I feel my students' parents think I am not doing a satisfactory job of teaching their children.

16. The home environment of my students concerns me.
17. I have too much to do and not enough time to do it.
18. I must take work home to complete it.
19. I am unable to keep up with correcting papers and other schoolwork.
20. I have difficulty organizing my time to complete tasks.
21. I put self-imposed demands on myself to meet scheduled deadlines.
22. I think badly of myself for not meeting the demands of my job.
23. I am unable to express my stress to those who place demands on me.
24. Teaching is stressful for me.
25. The frequency I experience one or more of the following symptoms is: stomach aches, backaches, elevated blood pressure, stiff neck, and shoulders.
26. I find my job tires me out.
27. I am tense by the end of the day.
28. I experience headaches.
29. I find myself complaining to others.
30. I am frustrated and/or feel angry.
31. I worry about my job.
32. I feel depressed about my job.
33. I am unable to use an effective method to manage my stress (such as exercise and relaxation techniques, etc.).
34. Stress management techniques would be useful in helping me cope with the demands of my job.
35. I feel powerless to solve my difficulties.

Part 3: Demographics

1. Gender: Please specify your gender.
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Prefer not to answer.
2. Ethnicity origin (or Race): Please specify your ethnicity.
 - a. White
 - b. Hispanic or Latino
 - c. Black or African American
 - d. Native American or American Indian
 - e. Asian/Pacific Islander
 - f. Other
 - g. Prefer not to answer.
3. How many years have you been a teacher? _____ years
4. How many years have you been in your current school? _____ years
5. How would you classify your position?
 - a. Classroom teacher
 - b. Activity Teacher
 - c. Sped Teacher
 - d. Certified Support Staff (interventionist, coach, counselor, etc.)
6. If you selected classroom teacher, what grade do you teach? _____ grade
7. If you selected classroom teacher, what subjects do you teach?

- a. Math
 - b. Science
 - c. Literacy
 - d. Social Studies
 - e. All subjects
8. What is your highest degree or level of school you have completed?
- a. Bachelor's Degree
 - b. Master's Degree
 - c. Specialist Degree
 - d. Doctorate Degree

Appendix D

Focus Group Outline for Weekly Discussions

Week 1: What is Servant Leadership and what are the top teacher stressors?

Learning Topics

List styles of leadership

Teacher Stressors Today

History of Servant Leadership- PowerPoint

Discussion Questions:

What are the top teacher stressors you face today?

What are the positives and negatives of servant leadership?

When comparing Servant Leadership to other styles of leadership what stands out to you?

What do you perceive a principal to be like that possesses servant leadership characteristics?

Take Away from this Session.

Week 2: Characteristics of Servant Leadership and What do the experts say?

Learning Topics

What research says about Servant Leadership- Blanchard Video

Characteristics of a Servant Leader

Servant Leadership Characteristics and Teacher Stressors- is there are relationship.

Discussion questions:

Share opinions and concerns with Blanchard Video

Now that you are more familiar with the characteristics of servant leadership, with a partner, discuss what you feel are the most essential characteristics for a principal to possess and display.

What servant leadership characteristics would best meet your needs when dealing with the everyday stressors mentioned in previous discussions. Correlate characteristics to each stressor listed.

Take Away from this Session.

3: Teacher Stressors and Coping Methods

Learning Topics

Review Teacher Stressors: What are they? Has this year been different?

Discussion Questions

How can a principal's servant leadership style assist with how teachers cope with stress?

Why is it essential for principals striving to be servant leaders to recognize stress in their teachers? Can teachers make the same assumptions as servant leaders in their classrooms?

Week 4: Servant Leadership and Teacher Stress**Learning Topics**

Characteristics of servant leadership review

Principals, that possess these traits- how would you describe them? In groups of 4, discuss and be prepared to share out with the whole group

Discussion Questions

Small-Group Discussion Questions (write group's answers on chart paper to share out.)

What are teachers' perceptions of servant leadership characteristics when displayed by servant leaders? Are they positive, negative, or both?

What is the relationship between teachers' occupational stressors and characteristics of servant leadership? Is there a relationship? If not, why?

Do perceived characteristics of servant leadership k-4 principals possess positively impact lessening teachers' occupational stressors? If not, why?

Appendix E

Participation Consent Form

Identification of Investigators & Purpose of Study

You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Stephanie Summerford, a doctoral candidate at the University of Arkansas. The purpose of this study is to investigate if a relationship exists between leaders who demonstrate perceived servant leadership characteristics and teachers' stress levels when faced with change and increased accountability. This study will contribute to the researcher's completion of his dissertation.

Research Procedures

This study consists of a pre and post online survey that will be anonymously administered by email through a google survey. You will be asked to provide answers to a series of questions related to your perceptions of the principal in your building, the stress you feel from your work, and the demographic information to be used as control variables. You will also be required to participate in a focus group where discussions will take place over four weeks concerning the characteristics of servant leadership and its relationship to servant leadership. The pre-survey will be conducted before the focus group discussions, and the post-survey will be conducted after focus group discussions. The third part of this research study will be an interview that will be conducted with Stephanie Summerford that you will participate in individually.

Time Required

Participation in this study will require 10 minutes of your time to complete the pre-survey, and the post-survey will also take approximately 10 minutes of your time. The focus group will take one hour of your time for four days spanning four weeks. The interviews will take about 30 minutes of your time during the research study.

Risks

The investigator does not perceive more than minimal risks from your involvement in this study (that is, no risks associated with everyday life).

Benefits

There are no direct benefits from participating in this study. However, overall, the study could help inform educational leaders about the link between certain leadership qualities and their effects on teacher stress, which could inform administrative licensure training and hiring practices.

Confidentiality

The results of this research will be presented at a dissertation defense and potentially published in an academic journal. While individual responses are anonymously obtained and recorded online through a google survey, focus group discussions, and individual interviews. Data will be kept in the strictest confidence. Data will be collected and maintained on Stephanie Summerford's password-protected personal computer. No identifiable responses will be presented in the final form of this study. The researchers retain the right to use and publish non-

identifiable data. At the end of the study, all records will be destroyed. Final aggregate results will be made available to participants upon request.

Participation & Withdrawal

Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are free to choose not to participate. Should you decide to participate, you can withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. However, once your responses have been submitted and anonymously recorded, you will not be able to withdraw from the study.

Questions About Study

If you have questions or concerns during the time of your participation in this study or after its completion, or you would like to receive a copy of the final aggregate results of this study, please contact:

Stephanie L. Summerford
Educational Leadership Dissertation
University of Arkansas
ssummerford@bentonvillek12.org

Dr. John Pijanowski
Educational Leadership Dissertation Chair
University of Arkansas
jpijanow@uark.edu

Questions about Your Rights as Research Subject

Cathy Lirgg, IRB Chair
College of Education and Health Professions
University of Arkansas

Giving Consent

I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about this study. I have read this consent, and I understand what is being requested of me as a participant in this study. I certify that I am at least 18 years of age. By signing this form, and completing this anonymous pre-and post-survey, focus group discussions, and individual interviews, I am consenting to participate in this research study.

Printed Name of Participant _____

Signature of Participant _____

Date _____

Appendix F

IRB Approval Letter



To: Stephanie Lynn Summerford
From: Justin R Chmka, Chair
IRB Expedited Review
Date: 08/16/2021
Action: Expedited Approval
Action Date: 08/16/2021
Protocol #: 2107344642
Study Title: Servant Leadership and Teacher Stressors: A Qualitative Study
Expiration Date: 07/25/2022
Last Approval Date:

The above-referenced protocol has been approved following expedited review by the IRB Committee that oversees research with human subjects.

If the research involves collaboration with another institution then the research cannot commence until the Committee receives written notification of approval from the collaborating institution's IRB.

It is the Principal Investigator's responsibility to obtain review and continued approval before the expiration date.

Protocols are approved for a maximum period of one year. You may not continue any research activity beyond the expiration date without Committee approval. Please submit continuation requests early enough to allow sufficient time for review. Failure to receive approval for continuation before the expiration date will result in the automatic suspension of the approval of this protocol. Information collected following suspension is unapproved research and cannot be reported or published as research data. If you do not wish continued approval, please notify the Committee of the study closure.

Adverse Events: Any serious or unexpected adverse event must be reported to the IRB Committee within 48 hours. All other adverse events should be reported within 10 working days.

Amendments: If you wish to change any aspect of this study, such as the procedures, the consent forms, study personnel, or number of participants, please submit an amendment to the IRB. All changes must be approved by the IRB Committee before they can be initiated.

You must maintain a research file for at least 3 years after completion of the study. This file should include all correspondence with the IRB Committee, original signed consent forms, and study data.

cc: John C Pijanowski, Investigator

Appendix G

Interview Date and Duration

	20 Interviews Conducted	20 Surveys were completed		
Pseudonym of Participants	Date of Interview	Date of Survey	Date Complete	Duration
Sarah	10/18/2021	09/08/2021	2:15:01 pm	04:41
Joe	10/18/2021	09/08/21	2:49:10 pm	07:20
Kathy	10/12/2021	09/08/21	3:43:16 pm	08:26
Zane	10/12/2021	9/08/21	4:00:43 pm	12:22
Amy	10/12/2021	09/08/21	4:11:39 pm	06:17
Krystal	10/12/2021	09/11/21	9:09:23 pm	30:31
Joe	10/18/2021	09/12/21	4:04:44 pm	5:30
Sue	10/18/2021	09/12/21	5:56:50 pm	07:38
Nancy	10/18/2021	09/12/21	5:54:20 pm	39:60
Tom	10/12/2021	09/12/21	8:33:18 pm	05:37
Jane	10/25/2021	09/13/21	6:39:57 pm	06:12
Abbey	10/25/2021	09/20/21	3:02:29 pm	2:17:17
Lynn	10/25/2021	09/21/21	8:50:49 am	07:23
Kate	10/18/2021	09/21/21	10:11:35 am	1:17:05
Jenn	10/25/2021	09/21/21	10:49:36 am	2:05:24
Lori	10/25/2021	09/22/21	12:25 pm	05:50
Dan	10/25/2021	09/23/21	10:27:55 am	06:19
Jan	10/26/2021	09/23/21	11:14:00 am	55:20
Laura	10/18/2021	09/23/21	8:34:25 pm	13:43
Samantha	10/18/2021	09/23/21	9:23:32 pm	7:03

Appendix H

Focus Group Attendance

PD Group Meeting	Week 1: 11/09/21 Video Record 45:23:11	Week 2: 11/16/21 Video Record 45:23:11	Week 3: 11/30/21 Video Record 51:15:27	Week 4: 12/07/21 Video Record 40:23:12	
Pseudonym	Present	Present	Present	Present	Total Present
Sarah	X	X	X	X	4
Joe	Sick	X	X	X	3
Kathy	X	X	X	Sick	3
Zane	X	X	X	X	4
Amy	X	X	X	X	4
Krystal	X	X	X	X	4
Joe	Sick	X	X	X	3
Sue	Sick	X	X	X	3
Nancy	X	X	X	X	4
Tom	X	X	X	X	4
Jane	Sick	X	X	X	3
Abbey	X	X	X	X	4
Lynn	Funeral	X	X	X	3
Kate	X	X	X	X	4
Jenn	X	X	X	X	4
Lori	X	X	X	X	4
Dan	Sick	X	X	X	3
Jan	X	X	X	X	4
Laura	X	X	X	X	4
Samantha	X	Sick	X	X	3